

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7858

Songs for Children from New York City

Annotated and Recorded by Dr. Edna Smith Edet

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID GAHR



M
1997
E22
S698
1978

MUSIC LP

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7858

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(Lowery Neighborhood School)
- Band 2 a) Sissy In De Barn
(L.N.S.)
b) Bamalam A Cummala
(L.N.S.)
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b) Miss Sue From Alabama
(Children's Circle)
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(Headstart)
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(Regent School)
b) Where Is Thumbkin?
(Regent School)

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Songs for Children from New York City

Annotated and Recorded by Dr. Edna Smith Edet

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7858

Songs For Children From New York City

"East Side, West Side, all around the town"



Edna Smith Edet

New York is a pluralistic city populated by many diverse peoples. There are people of European derivation from England, France, Italy, Ireland, and other European countries; Asians from China, Japan, India, and Indochina; and peoples of African heritage from the United States, West Indies, Africa, and parts of Central and South America. The children of all these peoples have some knowledge of the children's songs of their own cultures as well as the songs learned in New York City.

New York City is also a culturally diverse city. Many of its peoples live in neighborhood ghettos which are racially and culturally isolated. There are Italian communities in Brooklyn, Little Italy, Queens, and the North Bronx; Haitian communities in Manhattan, Crown Heights, and in Queens; Puerto Rican barrios in Spanish Harlem and in the South Bronx, Jews in Williamsburgh, Queens, and parts of the North Bronx, Blacks in Harlem, Central Brooklyn and the lower Bronx; and Chinese in China Town. In addition to these Ghetto like communities, there are communities in transition such as the North Bronx, Bensonhurst, lower Manhattan, parts of Staten Island, and Queens where you will find many racial groups co-existing.

These are some socio-economic influences on the song repertoire. Black children in the ghetto communities for example, sing some songs which comment on the realities of street life and the black experience. Middle class Black children in the transition neighborhoods have little or no knowledge of these songs.

Because of the diverse backgrounds of New York City children, it is possible to find many songs from different cultures in the area.

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Dr. Edna Smith Edet is a musician, educator, author and lecturer. She is a recognized authority on Black and African music. She has had a long and varied career in the field.

She was a base player and arranger for the Sweethearts of Rhythm, Vi Burnsides Band, Edna Smith Trio, and other professional organizations.

Dr. Edet was the Head of Music at the University of Nigeria where she did extensive research in West African music. She is a professor of music and coordinator of music at Medgar Evers College, City University of New York.

She has been a guest lecturer and workshop leader for many colleges and prestigious organizations. She has had numerous articles published in scholarly journals and magazines. She is the compiler and editor of Songs for Nigerian Children and The Griot Sings, Medgar Evers College Press.

The children of New York do sing, "Ring Around The Rosie," and "London Bridge Is Falling Down." They also sing many other songs which are not a part of the Anglo-American repertoire because the children of New York are of many nations, races and cultures.

The songs/games in this recording represent a small sampling of the available material. Variants of these songs have been found in the West Indies, other parts of the United States, England, France, and Spain. "Let's Get the Rhythm of the Head," for example, was also recorded in the Virgin Islands. "Miss Mary Mack," "London Bridge," and "Punchinells," are variants of songs sung in Europe. "Engine, Engine, Number Nine," "Sissy In The Barn," and "Here We Go Willowby," have been collected in other parts of the United States. All of these songs have been changed and adapted by New York children for their use.

These recordings were obtained in the summer camps, play grounds, and schools in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. The songsters were of African, Asian, and European heritage.

The children learned the majority of their songs at home or on the streets from other children. There were many variants among the songs. I found eight variants of the song, "Here We Go Willowby," in a ten block area. Individual improvisation accounted for some of the differences but most of the renditions had set patterns and were varied only in the placement of stanzas or inclusion of additional verses. Some children also included other game songs in their version. The ethnic composition of New York is changing. In 1970, there were 68.75% whites in New York, 21.9% non-whites, and 10.3% Puerto Rican. In 1975, however, the schools of New York were 68% non-white. The exodus of whites from the city has been accompanied by an influx of non-whites from various parts of the world. These new immigrants settle in the ghettos or form their own ghetto like communities and also contribute to the cultural diversification of New York City. Children in the ghettos and in the transition communities have different musical repertoires. There are some songs common to both groups. These are usually the songs learned in schools or through exposure to T. V. and Radio. The street songs and those learned in the original homelands of the children may differ from community to community.

In the ghetto communities, the song repertoire is more homogeneous. White children may not know the Puerto Rican songs or the Black songs, but may know the songs sung by other white children in different localities. Geographical differences seem to be negligible. The song repertoire is similar whether the Puerto Rican child lives in Brooklyn or in the Bronx or the Black child lives in Harlem or Jamaica. Children of the ghettos, regardless of racial origin, are insular and lack exposure to children of other cultures. They seldom travel more than a few blocks from their homes unless accompanied by an adult on a shopping or recreational expedition or on a visit to relatives or friends.

Since they do not play with children of other cultures or races, their song repertoire is limited to the songs learned in school or taught by older children of their own racial group.

In the transition communities, the repertoire is more varied. Children in these communities meet other children at play or in school. Consequently, their song repertoire may include songs from various parts of the world.

Some of the street songs entered the children's repertoire from the media or adult songs. "Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang," for example, was borrowed from the title of a movie and "Twi Le Le," was adapted from a popular song of the sixties.

Most of the street songs were accompanied by hand clapping or foot stomping. Accompaniments varied from simple punctuations on the second and fourth beats to intricate patterns.

The rest of the song repertoire was learned in the schools. Because of the formalized manner of instruction, there were few textual or melodic variations in this material. Most of these songs were familiar to all of the children who had attended school in New York City. Some of the street songs were also known to all the children regardless of ethnic origin.

Sometimes we adults worry that the children's creativity is being

stifled by their exposure to the "boob" tube. It was gratifying to find that small children still play on New York streets. They still sing at play and the songs they sing are still creative reflecting upon their own social setting, and realities of their own lives.

"East Side, West Side, All around the town,
Miss Sue's From Alabama""London Bridge is Bouncing
Down"

Side 1

1. Lowery Neighborhood School

Here We Go Zodiac

Here we go Zodiac, Zodiac, Zodiac,
Here we go Zodiac all night long.
Here we go Zodiac, Zodiac, Zoaiac
Here we go Zodiac all night long.

Step back Sally, Sally, Sally,
Step back Sally all night long.
Oh I looked over there and what did I see.
I saw a big fat man from Tennessee.
I bet you five dollars I can beat that man
To the front, to the back, to the side side side.
To the front, to the back, to the side side side.

I saw the doctor, I saw the nurse.
I saw the lady with the alligator purse she said
Do what your granny do. Um chi wa wa,
Um chi wa wa, um um chi wa wa.

Do what your mommy do.
Do what your daddy do.
Do what your sister do.
Do what your brother do.
Do what they all do.

This dance is a combination of three ring games. The children face their partners in a circle. On "Here we go..." they criss cross hands with their partners and pull in time to the music. On "Step back Sally..." they back away from their partners. On "Trucking through..." they change places with partners.

The then mime the rest of the words.

2A Lowery Neighborhood School

Sissy In De Barn

Sissy in de barn, de barn de leary.
Prettiest little gal I ever did see.

Oh barn, barn put your arms around me.
Say pretty sissy won't you marry me.
Oh step back gal, don't you come near me.
All those sassy words you say.
Oh barn, barn put your arms around me.
Say pretty sissy won't you marry me.

The children circle holding hands during the first part of the game. The child in the middle picks a partner and dances with him. The partner rejects the child with exaggerated movements on "step back gal." They reconcile and dance again at the end. The partner now becomes the new "Sissy."

2B Lowery Neighborhood School

Bamalam A Cummala

Bamalam a cummala cummala beef steak.
Bamalam a cummala cummala beef steak.
Oh no no no no no no no beef steak.
Oh no no no no no no no beef steak.
Beef steak
Beef steak
Beef steak
Beef steak

The children stand in a circle facing the leader in the middle. They alternate between clapping their own hands and clapping hands with the person next to them in the circle. The song can be continued using any kind of food.

3a. Regent School

We're Going To Kentucky

We're going to Kentucky,
We're going to the fair
To see the Senorita
With Flowers in her hair.

Oh shake it Senorita
Shake it if you can
So all the boys around your block
Can see you if they can.

Rumble to the bottom,
Rumble to the top
And turn around and turn around
Until you make a stop.

East, West, who do you like the best
North, South, shut your big fat mouth.

The children stand in circle with one child in the middle. During the first verse, they circle the child. The child performs the motions indicated during the next two verses and chooses a partner at the end.

3b. Regent School

Punchinella

Look who's here
Punchinella little fellow.
Look who's here
Punchinella in the shoe.

2. Oh what can you do?
3. Oh we can do it too.
4. Oh whom do you choose.

The children circle the "Punchinella" while the child performs the motions. At the end the child chooses another child.

4a. Children's Circle

Miss Sue From Alabama

Miss Sue, Miss Sue,
Miss Sue from Alabama.
Now so let's have a party
Chicka boom, chicka boom,
Chicka boom boom boom.

Now let's have a tic, tac toe.
A tic a tac a tic tac toe.

Mommy's in the kitchen
peeling white potatoes
Father's in the alley
Drinking white label.
Brother's in the kitchen
Waiting for the clock to go
Boom tick tock, boom tick a wally wally.

The children circle during this game pausing only to move their hands on, "Chicka boom," move their feet on, "Tic, tac, toe," and waddle and shake shoulders on, "Boom tick tock..."

4b. Children's Circle

Miss Sue From Alabama

Miss Sue, Miss Sue,
Miss Sue from Alabam.
My mother had a baby
And father's going crazy.
But if it is a girl,
I'll give it a curl
If it is a boy,
I'll give it a toy.
Wrap it up in tissue paper,
Send it down the elevator,
First floor stop ticking over
Second floor stop think it over.
Third floor you better watch out
Cause S T O P spells stop.

The children circle during the first part of the song waving their hands in and out. They mime, "curl, toy, wrap, and down." They freeze on "stop." The game ends with the children tickling each other.

5. Children's Circle

London Bridge

London Bridge is bouncing down, my baby,
Bouncing down, my baby, bouncing down, my baby.
London bridge is bouncing down, my baby.
Step in _____.

She's got the hips to move my baby
Rock and roll
She's got the hips to move my baby
Rock and roll
She's got the hips to move my baby
Rock and roll.
So step out _____.

This is a rhythmic variant of an old English song
The children circle and shake down to the ground on
'bouncing down,' They mime the words for the rest of the
song.

6. Headstart program

San Serenin

San serenin a la buena, buena vida.
Hacen asi, a si las lavanderas.
Asi asi asi, asi me gusta a mi.

The children stand in a circle. They clap hands during the first line and follow the words on the other two lines. The game continues using different professions. Las planchadoras (Ironers) Los Cabineeros, Los Carpenteeros.

Who Stole the Cookie

Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?
 Number one stole the cookie from the cookie jar.
 Who me? Yes you. Couldn't be. Then who?

The children sit or stand in a circle. Each child is chosen in turn to respond to the leader. Numbers or names can be used to designate the children. The game continues until someone makes a mistake. The child is then eliminated from the game. This continues until one child is left who becomes the next caller.

Side 2

1. P.S. 112

Head and Shoulders Baby

Head and shoulders baby, one two, three.
 Head and shoulders baby, one two, three.
 Head and shoulders, head and shoulders baby
 one, two, three.

2. Knee and ankle.
3. Press the button
4. Around the world
5. Shake the baby
6. Drink your milk
7. Rock and roll
8. Soul music
9. Comb your hair
10. Cut the grass.
11. Milk the cow

This game is found in many parts of the United States. It is usually played by two girls. The participants touch the parts of the body mentioned or mime the phrase. For example, on "Soul Music," they perform a little dance. On "One, two, three," they clap their own hands and then clap their partner's hands. The game ends with a fast backwards reprise of all the motions.

Engine, Engine Number Nine
 (Let's Get the Rhythm of the Head)

Engine, Engine number nine
 Going down Chicago line.
 If the train goes off the track,
 Do you want your money back.

Now let's get the rhythm of the head, ding dong.
 Let's get the rhythm of the feet, ding dong.
 Let's get the rhythm of hand, ding dong
 Let's get the rhythm of the hot dog.
 Put them all together and what do you get?
 Ding dong, (stamp feet) (clap hands) hot dog.

The children stand in any formation. They sing and walk during the first verse. They nod their heads, stomp feet, clap hands, and move their hips (hot dog) when these parts are mentioned.

2b. P.S. 112

Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang

Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang
 Sitting on a fence.
 Trying to make a dollar out of fifteen cents.
 She missed, she missed, she missed like this.

This is a clapping game usually done with two children. One child holds her left hand up and right hand down while the other child faces her with opposite hands. They interchange their clapping hands on, "Chitty chitty bang bang," and jump alternating between crossing feet and sticking feet out sideways on, "he miss..." The other child must match the leader's position at the end of the song or the leader wins. The game continues until the leader is out.

2c. P.S. 112

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Chitty, Chitty bang bang
 I know Karate.
 Chitty, Chitty bang bang
 I can shake my body.
 Chitty, Chitty bang bang
 Oops I'm sorry.

This is a clapping game with no discernable objective other than rhythmic play. Two or more children stand facing their partners and mime the words, "karate" and "shake my body," and conclude with a hit to the forehead on, "oops I'm sorry."

Miss Lucy had a baby, a baby, an baby.
Miss Lucy had a baby and this is what she did.
She did a um um, um um, um-----um.

2. Husband
3. Doll
4. Bra
5. Girdle

This is a hand clapping game performed by two people. The partners alternate between clapping their own hands and their partner's hands. They then mime rocking a baby, hugging a husband, rocking a doll, putting on a bra, and putting on a girdle.

Miss Lucy

Miss Lucy had a baby
She named him Tiny Tim.
She put him in the bathtub
To see if he could swim.

He drank up all the water.
He ate up all the soap.
He tried to eat the bathtub,
But it wouldn't fit down his throat.

Miss Lucy called the doctor
Miss Lucy called the nurse.
Miss Lucy called the lady
With the alligator purse.

In walked the doctor,
In walked the nurse.
In walked the lady
With the alligator purse.

Chicken pox said the doctor
Measles said the nurse
Mumps said the lady
With the alligator purse.

This is a variant of an English song. It is used for hand clapping. Two girls stand facing each other and alternate between clapping their own hands and their partner's hands.

Miss Mary Mack

Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack.
All dressed in black, black, black.
With silver buttons, buttons, buttons,
All down her back, back, back.

She asked her mother, mother, mother
For fifty cents, cents, cents,
To see the elephant, elephant, elephant
Jump over the fence, fence, fence.

She jumped so high, high, high,
That she reached the sky, sky, sky,
And he never came back, back, back,
Till the fourth of July, ly, ly.

This clapping game is played in two ways. The children may clap and perform the actions indicated by the words or they may alternate placing crossed hands on shoulders, hands on thighs, right hand clapping partner's hand, clapping own hands, and left hand clapping partner's hand.

Strawberry Shortcake

Strawberry shortcake cream on top
Tell me the name of your sweetheart.
A B C D

Johnny and _____ went for a ride
All around the country side
Johnny asked _____ to be his wife.
Yes, no, maybe so.

Where will they get married at?
House, church, toilet bowl.

How many babies will they have?
1 2 3 4

This chant is used for jumping rope. The girl in the middle jumps until she misses. She then gives the name of her sweetheart using the letter she missed on. The game continues to tell the fortune of the jumper.

Sardines

Sardines, hey a pork and beans
 Hey a sardines
 Everytime by the river side.
 Sardines.
 I see the people they was by my side.
 Sardines.
 Everytime when I go to the store.
 Sardines
 I see the people they was begging for more.
 I have sardines on my plate and I don't need no steak with
 Sardines, hey a pork and beans
 I have sardines on a Monday or Tuesday hey.
 Sardines on a Wednesday d and Thursday hey.
 Sardines on a Friday and Saturday hey
 Sardines on a Sunday.
 Sardines

This song is performed in a circle. The leader sings
 the call while the others respond with "sardines."
 It may be unaccompanied or performed with hand claps.

5c P.S. 112

Two On Time

Two on time don't be late
 got a date bout
 half past eight.
 If she's late she'll lose her date
 so don't be late.

This song can be used as a counting down song for jumping
 rope or as a choosing song in a circle game. When jumping
 rope they count after the verse until the child misses.
 During the circle game the children are called at random.

5d P.S. 112

Una dos y tres

Una dos y tres.
 My mommie told me
 Six years ago
 There was a lady
 Knocking at my gate singing
 Sha na na na , na na na na
 Na na na na na

The children stand in a circle taking turns leading this song.
 The leader improvises the words.

6. Children's Circle

HAM BONE

Afro American

1. Hambone, hambone where you been?
 Round the world and back again.
2. Hambone, hambone where's your wife?
 In the kitchen cooking rice.
3. Hambone, hambone have you heard?
 Pops going to buy me a mocking bird.
4. If that mocking bird don't sing,
 Pops going to buy me a diamond ring.
5. If that diamond ring don't shine,
 Pops going to buy me a bottle of wine.
6. If that bottle of wine should break,
 Pops going to give me a bootie ache.

NOTES Slave children had no instruments or play toys.
 They improvised by using the "ham bone" as a rhythm
 instrument. The song, "Ham bone", is an antiphonal
 song in which there is a rhythmic answer to the call.
 The children beat out intricate rhythms using the back
 and palm of the hand against the thigh, abdomen, and
 behind. Skilled performers of this song may also
 utilize foot stomping and mouth clicking as percussive
 devices.

Rhythms



7. Minisink Day Camp

Here We Go Willowby

Here we go Willowby, Willowby, Willowby,
 Here we go Willowby all night long.
 Step back Sally, Sally, Sally.
 Step back Sally all night long.

I call the doctor and the doctor said,
 I got a pain in my back and it hurts
 I got a pain in my side and it hurts.
 I got a pain in my head and it hurts.

Roller roller sick in bed
Roller Roller sick in bed
Um chi wa wa, um chi wa wa.

Roller Roller sick in bed
Roller Roller sick in bed
Um chi wa wa, um chi wa wa.

I looked down the alley and what did I see
I saw a big fat lady from Tennessee
She wears her dresses above her knee
And she shake it, shake it, shake it from Tennessee.

Ah she turns around, she touches the ground.
and she Boogaloo and boogaloo all night long.

Walking down the alley, alley, alley
Walking down the alley all night long
Oh here comes another one, just like the other one
A little bit (description) but tha's all right.

This line dance is a variant of "Here We Go Zodiac." The children stand in two lines facing their partners. At the beginning of the song, the partners extend crossed hands and pull in time to music. They step back clapping in time to music. They then mime the aches and pains by holding the designated spot.

On "Roller, Roller..." they roll arms and change places walking on "Um chi wa wa..." They then mime the rest of the words with exaggerated movements.

On "Walking down the alley..." one child does a solo turn followed by another child who is described in the last line.

8a Headstart

Eency Wincy Spider

Eency wincy spider went up the water spout
Down came the rain and washed the spider out.
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain
So the eency wincy spider went up the spout again.

This song is used for finger play. The children use their fingers to mime the words.

8b Headstart

Open Shut Them

Open shut them, open shut them,
Give a little clap, give a little clap.

Open shut them, open shut them,
Put them on your lap, put them on your lap.

Put your finger to your chin
Open up your mouth

Open, shut them is a finger playing song. The children mime the words with their fingers. The teacher is using the end of the song to teach children not to put their fingers in their mouths.

9a Regent School

The Hammer Song

Johnny works with one hammer,
One hammer, one hammer.
Johnny works with one hammer
Then he works with two.

2. Two hammers
3. Three hammers
4. Four hammers
5. Five hammers
6. Six hammers
7. Johnny goes to sleep now.

The children use the parts of the body indicated below as hammers in this song.

One hand
Two hands
Two hands and one foot
Two hands and two feet
Two hands, two feet and head.
Body

They then mime sleeping as indicated in the song.

9B Regent School

Where Is Thumbkin

Where is Thumkin, Where is Thumkin?
Here I am, here I am.
How are you this morning?
Very well I thank you.
Run away, run away.

2. Where is pointer?
3. Where is middle finger?
4. Where is ring finger?
5. Where is pinky?
6. Where are all the men?

This song is used for finger play. The children wriggle the appropriate fingers when they are called. On "Run away," they hide the fingers behind their backs.