Edited by KENNETH S. GOLDSTEIN FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 8718

AUSTRALIAN Folksongs and Ballads

Sung by JOHN GREENWAY

Accompanying Himself on Guitar

Cover design by Ronald Clyne

Photograph by John Greenway

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Australian Folksongs and Ballads

SUNG BY john greenway

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AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

by

John Greenway

If Jesse James were still terrorizing Missouri farmers, if Judge Roy Bean were still hanging supernumerary Chinese laundrymen west of the Pecos, if Davy Crockett were still drunkenly exaggerating his backwoods exploits over a Washington bar, we would be living as close to our folklore as Australians today are living to theirs. Many of the 400 songs I collected in Australia came directly from persons intimately acquainted with the situation they describe; of the songs on this record, for example, I learned "Peter Clarke" from the grand niece of the victim of that most unusual bushranger killing, and "Ben Hall" from a woman who was delivered in childbirth by Ben Hall's sister.

If John Henry were still hammering steel on the elusive Big Bend Tunnel, we might also understand the almost complete lack of interest shown by Australians to their folklore until very recently, for appreciation of a country's folklore requires a clear detachment in time. Jesse James in his time was admired about as much as mass-killer Charles Starkweather is in ours; Davy Crockett's reputation among his fellow congressmen was about as exalted as that of the late Senator Bilbo. Just as many Negroes refuse to sing spirituals because they recall slavery days, so Australians are generally too conscious of their proximity to their lawless frontier times to appreciate folksongs and folklore. If Australians think so little of their own culture that there is in no Australian university a professorship of either Australian history or literature, what serious interest can be expected for the history and literature of the folk?

This situation is changing now, largely through the interest shown in Australian folklore by Americans. The first record album of Australian folksong was issued by an American company. The attention of the Australian man-in-the-street to his folksong was first drawn less than a half-dozen years ago by the visit of Burl Ives; the attention of the academicians, I like to think, was first drawn by my own visit during 1956-1957 (the fact of an American Ph.D.--a degree the Aussies over-value enormously--coming 7000 miles to study their bush songs was a startling experience); the attention of the cultured Australians was first drawn two years ago by the visit of baritone William Clauson. Last year the first grant was awarded by an Australian university for the collection of bush songs; this year the first scholarship in the subject was awarded to Edgar Waters, who was well known to everybody but Australians for his work in England with Alan Lomax.

American influence has been impressive because Australians regard Americans as brothers. I even had a tooth filled free in Australia--because I was an American. There are many reasons why each people should regard the other as "favorite foreigners." Australia was founded

ABOUT THE SINGER

JOHN GREENWAY is America's leading folklorist in the field of songs of social protest. His pursuit of knowledge in this specialized area has never been an easy one, for he has been attacked frequently by other folklorists for his position in maintaining that many social protest songs are indeed folksongs as well. His major contribution to this area of study has been a published book, AMERICAN FOLKSONGS OF PROTEST (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), a revised writing of his doctoral dissertation, "American Folksongs of Social and Economic Protest."

A Phi Beta Kappa honors graduate from the University of Pennsylvania (from which school he was the recipient of A.B., M.A. and PhD. degrees), Greenway was also a prize winning playwright, chess champion, and a varsity track team member in his collegiate days. He has taught in the English departments of the University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers University, and the University of Denver, and is presently an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Colorado.

The recipient of a Fulbright Award to collect folksongs in Australia, Dr. Greenway spent 1956 and 1957 in the land down-under procuring numerous tape recordings of traditional Australian singers. The songs and ballads included in this album form but a small part of the materials he learned from those tape recordings.

Dr. Greenway's work in the field of folklore and song covers diverse areas other than protest and Australian songs, and he is the author of several outstanding articles appearing in leading scholarly publications.

Most recently, Dr. Greenway, in accordance with his belief that future students and academicians in the field of folklore will be trained in sociology and anthropology rather than in English literature, has changed his teaching discipline to Anthropology.

Dr. Greenway has previously recorded an album of TALKING BLUES (FH 5232) for FOLKWAYS RECORDS.

K.S.G.

with convicts who would have been shipped to this country had the Revolutionary War not ended in our favor; the two countries are almost exactly the same size and shape (though Australia is upside down and inside out); the history of westward expansion in both countries is similar. Because of these and many other basic resemblances, many aspects of culture in Australia and America are remarkably alike. One of these is folksongs.

Again and again we find the same themes repeated: Australia has her swagmen (migratory workers), sundowners (migratory non-workers), and duffers (sedentary non-workers), just as America has her hoboes, tramps, and bums. Both countries have songs about these characters; sometimes, as with other folksongs, they share the same songs (one of the more widespread hobo songs in the United States is "The Great American Bum," which is found in Australia in a somewhat different guise, "Hang the Man Who Works"). The bushman complains about his steady diet of "Tea, Damper, and Mutton," while the American outbacker complains about "Beans, Bacon, and Gravy." The Aussie "free selector" sings of his poor accomodations in songs like "Freehold on the Plain"; the American homesteader of his bad housing in songs like "The Lane County Bachelor." Where the whole country is bad, songs like "The Arkansas Traveller" or "Charlie Brannan" are typical in America; similar areas in Australia produce songs like "The Cockies of Bungaree." All down the line the same ideas are reflected, even to children's folklore--American kids play "cops and robbers" while Australian children play "bushies and bobbies."

Similarity in themes is due to similarity in conditions which among a basically British people in both countries produce the same reactions. But there are other likenesses that can be more precisely traced, such as the origin of tunes used in the folksongs. The cultural flow here has been predominantly in one direction--from America to Australia, though we have versions of "The Wild Colonial Boy," "Bold Jack Donahue," "Bound for South Australia," "Botany Bay," and a few other Australian folksongs. "Click Go the Shears" is sung in Australia to the tune of a song written by Henry Clay Work, the popular post-Civil War American composer whose fame has been unfortunately eclipsed by that of Stephen Foster, and Work's hand is discernible in other Australian folksongs. "Wild Rover No More" is our "Strawberry Roan"; that delightful bush character Sam Holt has his amusingly ribald adventures told to the American tune, "Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt"; and "The Old Bullock Dray" is the American fiddle tune, "Turkey in the Straw." Many of these tunes came to Australia in the days of gold; America had her gold rush in 1849, and when gold was discovered in Australia three years later, some of the American miners emigrated, taking their songs with them.

There has been no stronger impact on native American folksong than that of the frontier, and since Australia's opening of the West was occasioned by the same conditions, this is true for its folksong also. Thus the earliest widely-developed native theme in both countries was the bushranger-outlaw motif. It is curious that both peoples tended to make heroes out of criminals; indeed, both Americans and Australians extend this courtesy to juvenile delinquents --the Aussie admires Johnny O'Meally and the American cherishes Billy the Kid to his bosom. The attitudes are also very much alike; the bushranger-outlaw successfully defies an oppressive law, he robs the rich and gives to the poor, he speaks courteously to women and small animals. Possibly this is due to the British Robin Hood tradition, and even though, like Robin himself, none of these alleged re-distributors of wealth can stand close scrutiny, the folksongs make heroes out of nearly all of these romantic thugs (one exception is "Peter Clarke"). Even down to the present time this attitude persists: the Australian song, "The Ned Kelly Gang" and the American Dust Bowl ballad of "Pretty Boy Floyd" express almost identical sentiments--that "some men will rob you with a six-gun, some with a fountain pen."

NOTES BY JOHN GREENWAY

SIDE 1, Band 1: BOTANY BAY

In 1786 there were according to one contemporary estimate 100,000 criminals in English jails under sentence of "transportation"--exile. Until the American Revolutionary War, convicted felons were shipped to this country and sold to planters, but the colonists' revolt put an end to this slave trade, and the English prisons filled up with convicts. England solved the problem by founding the new colony of Australia and shipping the lot to what Dampier called "the barrenest spot on the globe." The "First Fleet" of 1788 anchored in Botany Bay (named for the botanical collections made there by Captain Cook's naturalist, Solander) with 717 convicts--Australia's "Mayflower settlers." But Captain Phillips, the fleet's commander, thought the spot too inhospitable even for felons. He accordingly sailed up the coast to the wonderful harbor that Cook had noticed but had not entered, named it Sydney, and dumped his convicts there.

So, no convicts ever were landed at Botany Bay, but the name became for the English and Irish native felonry the place of exile, and is so perpetuated in numerous music-hall songs with the title, "Botany Bay." This version is the best known of all, but the earliest record of the words dates only from 1885. Sydney now has over two million people, but Botany Bay, on its southern outskirts, is still barren, flanked by oil storage tanks and the Kingsford Smith airport.

Farewell to old England forever,
Farewell to my rum culls as well;
Farewell to the well-known Old Bailey
Where I used for to cut such a swell

CHORUS:
Singing too-ral li-oor-al li-ad-ditty,
Too-ral li-oor-al li-ay;
Too-ral li-oor-al li-ad-ditty,
We're bound for the Botany Bay.

Not the captain as is our comman-ider,
Nor the bosun nor all the ship's crew;
Nor the first nor the second-class passengers,
Knows what we poor convicts go through

'Taint leaving old England we cares about,
'Taint 'cause we misspells what we knows,
But because all we light-fingered gen-i-try
Hops around with a log on our toes

Oh, had I the wings of a turtle-dove!
I'd soar on my pinions so high,
Slap-bang to the arms of my Polly-love,
And in her sweet presence I'd die

Now all you young Dukies and Duchesses,
Take warning from what I've to say:
Mid all is your own that you touchesses,
Or you'll join us in Botany Bay.

SIDE 1, Band 2: THE OLD BULLOCK DRAY

Along with the convicts came thousands of Loyalists who had been expelled from the American colonies, "remittance men" (who were paid by their families to stay away from England), and other free settlers of the most rapacious sort, the most successful of whom became "squatters," who quickly snapped up the little arable, well-watered land that exists in Australia's outback. By the middle of the century those small farmers and bush workers who contended with the large land owners found themselves on the wrong side of the law, and many became bushrangers in intent or fact. Some amelioration was attempted in 1861 with Sir John Robertson's New South Wales Free Selection Act, comparable to our Homestead Act. Songs like "The Old Bullock Dray" (a heavy, two-wheeled wagon drawn by teams of bullocks) which chronicled the apparent victory of the small farmer in his fight for a share of Australian land, are certainly datable from this period, for later songs

pointed up their disillusionment at finding that the only land worth taking had already been usurped by the squatters.

Oh, the shearing is all over and the wool is coming down,
And I mean to get a wife, boys, when I go up to town;
Every thing that has two legs presents itself to view,
From the little pademelon to the bucking kangaroo.

CHORUS:
So it's roll up your blankets and let's make a push;
I'll take you up the country and I'll show you the bush.
Oh, I'll bet you won't get such a chance another day,
So come and take possession of my old bullock dray.

Now I've saved up a check and I mean to buy a team,
And when I get a wife, boys, I'll be all serene;
For in calling at the depot, they say there's no delay
To get an off-sider for the old bullock dray.

Oh, we'll live like fighting cocks, for good living I'm your man,
We'll have leather-jacks, johnny cakes, and fritters in the pan;
Or if you'd like some fish, I'll catch you some soon,
For we'll bob for barramundies round the banks of the lagoon.

Oh, yes, of beef and damper I'll take care we have enough,
And we'll boil in the billy such a whopper of a duff,
And our friends will dance around to the honor of the day
To the music of the bells around the old bullock dray.

Oh, we'll have plenty girls, yes, we must mind that;
There'll be flash little Maggie, and Buckjunping Pat;
There'll be Stringybark Joe and Greenhide Mike,
Yes, my colonials, just as many as you like.

Now we'll stop all immigration, we won't need it any more;
We'll be having your colonials, and twins by the score.
And I wonder what the devil Jackie Robertson would say
If he saw us promenading 'round the old bullock dray.

SIDE 1, Band 3: THE DYING STOCKMAN

A frontier theme in both American and Australian folksong is the Dying-Cowboy--Dying-Stockman motif. Apparently there is something about the cattle industry that turns its practitioners into sentimental idiots; the American cowboy, as rough-hewn as the Aussie "stockman" ("cowboy" in Australian lingo is a male milkmaid), dedicated to hard liquor and hard living, longs to be buried out on the prairie where the coyotes can't get at him; so also the Australian stockman wants his final repose among the sweet wattles and somewhere out of reach of the dingoes. The most famous folksong on this theme in the United States is "Streets of Laredo"; the most famous folksong on this theme in Australia is "The Dying Stockman"; curiously, both derive from the Irish lament for a bad boy, "The Unfortunate Rake," and both tunes are much-changed derivatives of a tune known generically as "Old Rosin the Beau," next to "Villikins and His Dinah," the most ubiquitous of all folk melodies, though it takes a skillful ear to hear the resemblance.

A fine stalwart stockman lay dying,
His saddle supporting his head;
While his mates all around him were crying,
He rose on his elbow and said:

CHORUS:
Wrap me up in my stockwhip and blanket
And bury me deep down below,
Where the dingoes and crows can't molest me
In the shade where the coolibahs grow.

Then cut you two stringybark saplings,
Place one at my head and my toe;
Carve on them crossed stockwhip and bridle
To show there's a stockman below.

And bring out the battered old billy,
Put the pannikins all in a row,
And drink to the health of the stockman
Who soon will be lying below.

But hark! 'Tis the howl of the dingo--
Watchful and weird--I must go;
For he tolls the death knell of the stockman
Who soon will be lying below.

SIDE 1, Band 4: BLUEY BRINK

Australia's fantasy-land is the "Speewa," where Paul Bunyan's exploits would hardly be worth mentioning. Bluey Brink must have been a Speewa man, for Australians are not hard drinkers, despite A1L. Lloyd's story about the bushwhacker who went into a drug store and ordered prussic acid with a sulfuric acid chaser, warning the druggist not to "go dilutin' it with that ammonia, neither." If anyone doubts this statement--and Australians are obliged by national pride to dispute it--let him imagine well-enforced laws prohibiting liquor on America's gold fields in the days of forty-nine and later, if he can (such a thought boggles the imagination). Yet such laws were enforced on Australia's frontier, and the only obtainable liquor in the gold towns was weak potations supped surreptitiously in "slygrog" shops. Australians, on the other hand, are really prodigious beer-drinkers. Even in civilized Sydney pub customers overflow well out into the street during the "six o'clock swill"; in the outback, things are much wetter. The famous bar in Alice Springs, for example, had a urinal running the length of the bar, and men bought and sold places at it, leaving only for sleep.

There once was a shearer by name Bluey Brink,
A devil for work and a devil for drink;
He could shear his hundred a day without fear,
And drink without winking four gallon of beer.

Now, Jimmy the barman, who served out the drink,
He hated the sight of this here Bluey Brink
Who stayed much too late and who come much too soon
At morning, at evening, at night, and at noon.

One morning as Jimmy was cleaning the bar
With sulfuric acid he kept in a jar,
Old Bluey came yelling and bawling with thirst,
"Whatever you got, Jim, just hand me the first."

Now, it ain't in the history, it ain't put in print,
But Bluey drunk acid with never a wink,
Saying, "That's the stuff, Jimmy, well, strike me stone dead,
It'll make me the ringer of Stevenson's shed."

Now, all that long day as he served out the beer
Poor Jimmy was sick with his trouble and fear,
Too worried to argue, too anxious to fight,
Seeing the shearer a corpse in his fright.

Well, early next morning he opened the door,
And there was the shearer, asking for more!
With his eyebrows all singed and his whiskers deranged
And holes in his hide like a dog with the mange.

Says Jimmy, "And how did you like the new stuff?"
Says Bluey, "It's fine, but I ain't had enough;
It gives me great courage to shear and to fight,
But why does that stuff set me whiskers alight?"

SIDE 1, Band 5: ONE OF THE HAS-BEENS

The problem of how a man comes to terms with life when he grows old and loses his strengths is a persistent one in all literatures. In the United States and in Australia it is the theme of the two greatest plays produced in either country--"Death of a Salesman" and "The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll." In both, the protagonists are destroyed by the illusions they created to protect themselves. A more healthy attitude of mind is that of the old shearer of this song, who is content to remember that once he was a great shearer.

This is one of a number of songs for whose preservation we must thank the greatest of Australian collectors and scholars, A.L. Lloyd, a native of England who spent nine years as a station hand all over eastern Australia, collecting the old bush songs.

I'm one of the has-beens, a shearer, I mean;
I once was a ringer, I used to shear clean.
I could make the wool roll off like the soil from
the plow,
But you may not believe it, because I can't do it
now.

CHORUS:
I'm as awkward as a new-chum, and I'm used to the
frown
That the boss often shows me, saying "Keep them
blades down!"

I've shore with Pat Hogan, Bill Bright, and Jack Gunn,
Charlie Fergus, Tommy Layton, and the great Roaring
Dunn;
They brought from the Lachlan the best they could
find,
But not one among them could leave me behind.

Well, it's no use complaining, I'll never say die,
Though the days of fast shearing for me have gone by;
I'll take the world easy, shear slowly and clean,
And I merely have told you just what I have been.

SIDE 1, Band 6: BRISBANE LADIES

Australia has always lived very close to the sea, both because of the omni-present consciousness of her great isolation from the rest of the English-speaking world and the progressive worthlessness of the land as one moves inland. For the first fifteen years of the colony's history, not even the explorers were able to penetrate beyond the Blue Mountains, just fifty miles west of Sydney; and for the next 150 years, all but a comparative handful of Australians have preferred to remain east of the mountains. For these reasons sea-songs have contributed much to Australian folksong, both in words and music. "Brisbane Ladies" is the well-known fo'c'sle song, "Spanish Ladies," adapted to describe a fairly common theme in Australian folksong, that of the journey from the outback cattle and sheep "stations" (ranches) to the coastal cities. The place names in this fine song can all be traced on the map in a direct line from east-central Queensland to Brisbane, but one mistake must be noted: Nanango is not in sheep country, as the song alleges.

Farewell and adieu to you, Brisbane ladies,
Farewell and adieu to the girls of Toowong;
We've sold all our cattle and got to get going,
But we hope we'll be seeing you again before long.

CHORUS:
And we'll rant and we'll roar like true Queenland
drovers,
We'll rant and we'll roar as onward we push,
Until we return to Augathella station,
For it's flamin' dry going through the old
Queensland bush.

The first camp we make, we call it the Quart-Pot,
Caboolture and Kilcoy, then Colinton hut;
We pull up at Stonehouse, Bob Williams's paddock,
And early next morning we cross the Blackbutt.

It's on past Taromeo to Yarraman Creek, boys,
It's there where we'll make a fine camp for the day,
Where the water and grass is both plenty and good,
boys,
And maybe we'll butcher a fat little stray.

It's on through Nanango, that hard-bitten township
Where the out-of-work station hands sit in the dust,
And the shearers get shorn by old Timms the contractor,
And I wouldn't go by there, but I flamin' well must.

Oh, the girls of Toomancie, they look so entrancin,'
Like young bullin' heifers, they're ready for fun,
With the waltz and the polka and all kinds of dancin,
To the rackety old banjo of Henery Gunn.

So fill up your glasses and drink to the lasses,
We'll drink this town dry, then farewell to all;
But when we return again from Augathella,
We'll always be willing to pay you a call.

SIDE 1, Band 7: THE CASTLEREAGH RIVER

Unlike the folksong of the rest of the English-speaking world, approximately seventy percent of Australian folksong incorporates some element of socio-economic protest, for the Aussies have always been great "whingers" (chronic complainers). The reason for this are complex, but main causative factors are the heavy percentage of Irish in the national population (the First Fleet had been docked only two weeks when the first Irish convict revolt occurred), the tradition of enmity between the large landowners and small farmers in the outback, the continuing presence of the frontier and its generation of independence (the Turner Thesis is more valid for Australia than it is for the United States), and the strong labor union movement in Australia. There are always reasons, but for many Australians they have disappeared in a tradition of complaint for the simple sake of complaining, like the prospector who sang,

Damn the teamsters,
Damn the track,
Damn Coolgardie
There and back;
Damn the goldfields,
Damn the weather,
Damn the bloody country
Altogether.

"The Castlereagh River" was allegedly written by A. B. "Banjo" Paterson, the greatest of Australian bush poets, but Paterson's probity in these matters was not always above suspicion.

The reference to Chinese shearers reflects a continuing friction in Australian social history--the "White Australia" policy which no party in the country, not even the Communists, would dare disavow. Australians live in continual fear of the enormous mass of Asians crowded above their own sparsely-populated country, and a free-immigration policy cannot be imagined in Australia. Because of the imminence of Japanese invasion during World War II, Australia embarked upon a program of bringing as many European settlers in as wanted to come, with the result that since the war over a million settlers have been brought in--more than ten percent of the nation's population.

It is ironically appropriate that the Castlereagh River was named for the most hated oppressor of the poor workers in England's long history--Viscount Castlereagh, whose suicide in 1822 was cause for national celebration. Even the poet Shelley spoke of him libellously:

I saw Murder on the way,
He had a mask /face/ like Castlereagh.

I'm riding down the Castlereagh and I'm a station
hand,
I'm handy with a whip and handy with a brand;
And I can ride a rowdy colt or swing the ax all day,
But there's no demand for a station hand along
the Castlereagh.

So shift, boys, shift, for there ain't the slightest
doubt,
It's time to make a move to the stations farther out;
So I loaded up my packhorse and I whistled to my dog,
And I'm travelling across the country at the old
jig-jog.

I asked a feller for shearing once along the
Marthaguy;
"We shear non-union here," said he; "I call it scab,"
says I;
I took a look along the board before I turned to go--
There was twenty flamin' Chinamen shearin' in a row.

So shift, boys, shift, for there ain't the slightest
doubt,
It's time to make a move with the leprosy about;
So I loaded up my packhorse and I whistled to my dog,
And I left his scabby station at the old jig-jog.

I went to Illawarra where my brother's got a farm;
They have to ask the landlord's leave before they
lift their arm.
The landlord owns the countryside; man, woman, dog,
and cat,
And they haven't the cheek to dare to speak without
they lift their hat.

So shift, boys, shift, for there ain't the slightest
doubt,
Their flamin' landlord god and I would soon have
fallen out.
Was I to raise my hat to him? Was I his blasted dog?
So I'm travelling across the country at the old jig-jog.

SIDE 1, Band 8: CLICK GO THE SHEARS

To give an appropriate cross-section of Australian folk-song, half the songs on this record would have to deal with sheep-shearing. This is the greatest difference between American and Australian folksong: that despite the fact that the American sheep industry is half as large as Australia's, there are no English-language shearing songs at all in this country, whereas an absolute majority of Australian songs deal with this subject. All through Australian folklore runs the theme of the shearer, good and bad--from the fabulous Jacky Howe, whose record of 328 sheep shorn in an eight-hour day with spring shears still stands, to the nameless old snagger who managed a respectable tally but whose production of fleece was extraordinarily low because the dogs kept jumping in the fleece box to get at the meat.

Although its tune is American in origin, "Click Go the Shears" is the best-known of all shearing songs. Interspersed in its description of a shearing shed in action is the situation of the champion of the shed being beaten by an old, inferior shearer who luckily drew out of the pen a sheap with little wool on its belly. Though it is itself a parody of Henry Clay Work's "Ring the Bell, Watchman," "Click Go the Shears" has been frequently parodied, sometimes in versions unfit to print.

Out on the board, my lads, the blade-shearer stands
Grasping his shears in his thin bony hands,
And his bleary eyes are fixed on a blue-bellied ewe,
Saying, "If I only get you, well, I'll make the
ringer go!"

CHORUS:
Click go the shears, boys, click, click, click;
Wide is the blow and his hands are moving quick,
And the ringer looks around and he's beaten by a
blow,
And he curses the old snagger with the blue-
bellied ewe.

Out on the floor in a cane-bottomed chair
Sits the boss of the board with his eyes everywhere;
He looks at each fleece as it comes to the screen,
Saying, "By the living Jesus, can't you take 'em
off clean?"

The tar-boy is there, waiting on demand,
With his tarry pot and his stick in his hand;
He sees an old merino with a cut upon her back--
This is what he's waiting for: "Oh, tar here, Jack!"

You take off the belly wool and finickle out the
crutch,
Then go up the neck, for the rules they are such;
Clean around the horns, and the first shoulder down,
A long blow up the back and then turn around.

CHORUS:
Click, click, click, that's how the shears go;
Click, clickety click, oh, my boys, it isn't slow;
You pull out a sheep and he lands you a kick,
And still you hear the shears a-going click, click,
click.

When the shearing's over and we've all got our
check,
We'll roll up our blueys and we're off on the track;
The first pub we come to, well, it's there we'll
have a spree,
And everyone that comes along, it's "Have a drink
on me!"

SIDE 1, Band 9: BOLD JACK DONAHUE

The earliest bushranger songs are Irish before they are Australian, as were the bushrangers themselves; "bold," for example, is a familiar adjective in native Irish hero songs. Jack Donahue was the first of the great Australian outlaws. Transported from Ireland to Australia in 1825, Donahue grew tired of working "for government," and resumed his trade as highwayman between Sydney and the Nepean. For two hectic years he and his gang eluded capture, but on the first day of September, 1830, his hearties and himself were surrounded; Donahue was shot fatally (in the head, not the heart), but his companions escaped. Webber was shot a month later; Underwood was shot in 1832; Walmsley turned informer and saved his neck. This is the earliest bushranger ballad to come down to us through oral tradition, and unlike most ballads, tells a fairly accurate story. Donahue's defiant statement, despite the unlikely heroics, was reported in The Sydney Gazette of Sept. 7, 1830, and was followed by the paper's verdict that "Thus is the Colony rid of one of the most dangerous spirits that ever infested it...."

In Dublin town I was brought up, in that city of
great fame,
My honest friends and parents will tell to you
the same;
'Twas for the sake of five hundred pounds I was
sent across the main,
For seven long years in New South Wales, to wear
a convict's chain.

CHORUS:
So come all my hearties, we'll roam the mountains
high,
Together we will plunder, together we will die;
We'll wander through the valleys, and gallop o'er
the plains,
And scorn to live in slavery, bound down with iron
chains.

I'd scarce been there twelve months or more upon the
Australian shore
When I took to the highway, as I'd ofttimes done
before;
There was me and Jackie Underwood, and Webber and
Walmsley, too,
These were the true associates of bold Jack Donahue.

Now, Donahue was taken, all for a notorious crime
And sentenced to be hanged upon the gallows tree so
high,
But when they came to Sydney jail he left them in a
stew,
And when they came to call the roll, they missed
bold Donahue.

As Donahue made his escape, to the bush he went
straightway;
The people they were all afraid to travel night or
day,
For every week in the newspapers there was published
something new
Of this brave and dauntless hero, the bold Jack
Donahue.

As Donahue was cruising one summer's afternoon
Little was his notion his death would be so soon;
When a sergeant of the horse police discharged his
carbine
And called aloud on Donahue to fight or to resign.

"Resign to you? You cowardly dogs! Such a thing I'd
never do!"
For I'll fight this night with all my might!" cried
bold Jack Donahue.
"I'd rather roam these hills and dales like wolf
or kangaroo

Than work one hours for government!" said bold Jack Donahue.

He fought six rounds with the horse police until that fatal ball
Which pierced his heart and made him start--caused Donahue to fall;
And as he closed his mournful eyes, he bade this world adieu,
Saying, "Convicts all, pray for the soul of bold Jack Donahue!"

SIDE 1, Band 10: THE WILD COLONIAL BOY

Later in the century "Bold Jack Donahue" became an expression of political protest, and was recognized as such by the authorities, who made its singing an offense punishable with inconvenient if not severe penalties. Because of the official opposition, "Bold Jack Donahue" was probably generalized into "The Wild Colonial Boy" (the efforts that have gone into the search for a real "Jack Dulan" approach in assiduousness the efforts that in the United States have been expended in the search for a real "John Henry"--with equal success), which aside from "Waltzing Matilda," is the most popular of all Australian folksongs. There are many versions of both text and tune, but always the protagonist has the initials "J.D."--like his forebear, a fact I find significant, though when John Meredith first made this observation, a skeptic said that was like saying Jesus Christ and Julius Caesar were the same person. Russel Ward sees in the derivation of "The Wild Colonial Boy" an excellent example of the tendency in Australian folksong to "collectivize" the early folk heroes--to substitute for the individual rebel an eptomized symbol of a great many rebels. "The Wild Colonial Boy" was, understandably enough, the favorite song of the greatest of the bushrangers (also the greatest of all Australian heroes), Ned Kelly, whose gallows observation is a common Australianism: "Such is life."

'Tis of a wild colonial boy, Jack Dulan was his name,
Born of honest parents in the town of Castlemaine;
He was his father's only hope, his mother's pride and joy,
And dearly did his parents love their wild colonial boy.

He was just sixteen years of age when he left his father's home
And through Australia's sunny clime, a bushranger to roam;
He robbed the wealthy squatters, their stock he did destroy,
And a terror to Australia was the wild colonial boy.

CHORUS:
So come all my hearties, we'll roam the mountains high;
Together we will plunder, together we will die.
We'll wander through the valleys and gallop o'er the plains
And scorn to live in slavery, bound down with iron chains.

In '61 this daring youth commenced his wild career;
With a heart that knew no danger, no foeman die he fear.
He stuck up the Beechworth mailcoach and robbed Judge McEvoy,
Who trembling cold gave up his gold to the wild colonial boy.

He bade the judge good morning and told him to beware;
He'd never rob a hearty chap that acted on the square,
But a man who'd rob a mother of her son and only joy--
He could expect no mercy from the wild colonial boy.

One day as he was riding the mountainside along
Listening to the kookaburra's pleasant laughing song,
Three mounted troopers rode along, Kelly, Davis, and Fitzroy,
With a warrant for the capture of the wild colonial boy.

"Surrender now, Jack Dulan, you see it's three to one;
Surrender now, Jack Dulan, you daring highwayman!"
He drew a pistol from his belt and he fired the wicked toy--

"I'll fight but I won't surrender!" said the wild colonial boy.

He fired at Trooper Kelly and brought him to the ground,
And in return from Davis, received his mortal wound;
All shattered through the jaws he lay, still firing at Fitzroy,
And that's the way they captured him, the wild colonial boy.

SIDE 2, Band 1: WALTZING MATILDA

To the rest of the world there is nothing more symbolic of Australia than "Waltzing Matilda." To Australians, only the fiction of the country's voluntary allegiance to the British crown keeps it from being the national anthem, and there is a strong movement afoot to raise it to this status, the wish for God to save the Queen notwithstanding. Despite the fact that the inevitable remark made by Australians to whom I was introduced as a collector of Australian folksong was "Oh, but we have only one folksong, don't you know--"Waltzing Matilda," there is some question as to whether it is a folksong at all. Certainly it was that at the turn of the century, but the text and tune established by Banjo Paterson, its putative composer, have stopped change by oral transmission and have removed it from the province of the intellectually unsophisticated, who are the only begetters of folklore.

Paterson's own connection with the song is equivocal, though Sydney May (The Story of Waltzing Matilda) and Bill Beatty ("Come a-Waltzing Matilda") accept his story of its origin. Paterson, so the legend goes, was stopping at the home of his fiancee, Sarah Riley, deep in the Queensland outback. While there, he visited a neighboring station (ranch) and heard that a few days previously a swagman (hobo) was drowned in a billabong (flooded river effluent) while attempting to escape the squatter (station owner) and the mounted police who had come to arrest him for stealing a jumbuck (sheep) and stuffing it into his tucker bag (food bag). Banjo pulled out his pencil and scribbled the words, to which the sister of his host, Christina McPherson, fitted a tune she had heard a couple of years earlier at a Victorian race meeting. One can believe this if one wants to, but one does not have to. Surely there is at least one serious flaw in the story: the tune must have come first, because the 18th century military song, "The Bold Fusilier," provides the prosody and the syntax for the chorus:

"Who'll be a soger, who'll be a soger,
Who'll be a soger for Marlbro' with me?"
And he cried as he tramped the dear streets of Rochester,
"Who'll be a soger for Marlbro' with me?"

The more probable facts of the matter are that Paterson lifted the song from some anonymous bush poet (neither Paterson or his companion at the head of Australia's laureates, Henry Lawson, were above this sort of Shakespearean plagiarism) and sold it as his own work among a "lot of old junk" to a Sydney publisher for a couple of quid.

The version on this record is doubtless a folk product, though its relationship to the Paterson text is difficult to discern. John Meredith, who is convinced that Paterson has received undeserved credit for the song, collected it in Queensland from old shearers who insisted that it was being sung in Queensland sheds in the 1880's.

Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong
Under the shade of a coolibah tree,
And he sang as he sat and waited till his billy boiled,
"You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."

CHORUS:
Waltzing Matilda, Matilda my darling,
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me;
Waltzing Matilda, leading a waterbag,
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.

Down came a jumbuck to drink from the billabong,
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee;
And he sang as he stuffed that jumbuck in his
tuckerbag,
"You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."

Down came the squatter, riding on his thoroughbred,
Down came the troopers, one, two, three;
"Whose is the jumbuck you've got in your tuckerbag?
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."

Up jumped the swagman, sprang into the billabong,
"You'll never take me alive," said he;
And his ghost may be heard as you ride by the billabong,
"You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me."

SIDE 2, Band 2: THE DOG SAT IN THE TUCKERBOX
(NINE MILES FROM GUNDAGAI)

In the nondescript little town of Gundagai, N.S.W., stands a pathetic little statue of a dog sitting on a tuckerbox, set up to illustrate a legend preserved as part of the town's voluminous folklore (see "Lazy Harry's" below). A swagman, it is said, once left his food box in the care of his dog while he went off to attend to other urgent business. An unforeseen fate carried him off, and the dog, ever faithful, sat guarding the box for the master who never returned, eventually pining to death. There's hardly a word of truth in this touching story, but it does have a certain interest for the folklorist, for it is the only legend I know that grew out of a misused preposition.

First of all, like another popular misconception, the returning boomerang, the psychology is all wrong. No swagman in his right mind would leave his food in the care of his voracious dog; moreover, swagmen kept dogs only to have something to kick. Originally the story had nothing to do with swagmen, but with another breed of itinerant worker, the bullock drivers who, before the few railroads penetrated the outback, hauled in all supplies in heavy wagons pulled by multiple teams of bullocks. Since no roads led to the isolated stations, and since all land was the property of some squatter or other, the bullock drivers were continuous trespassers. Since pasturage was so valuable that only a handful of landowners--properly remembered in folklore--permitted the bullocks to feed, they were also continuous thieves. This situation made outlaws of the bullockies, who were accordingly so constantly hounded by squatters and general bad luck (see Tom Collins' Australian classic, Such Is Life), that they evolved the most colorful expressions of exasperation in the rich Australian vocabulary. And that's what this song is about: a bullock driver who had the ultimate in bad luck--not only did his wagon axle break and the team get bogged in the mud and his matches get soaked in the rain, but his dog capped the climax by s...itting (there is an aspirate missing) in--not on--the tucker box!

I'm used to driving bullock teams across the hills
and plains,
I've teamed outback these thirty years in blazing
droughts and rains;
I've lived a heap of troubles through, without a
bloomin' lie,
But I can't forget what happened me, nine miles
from Gundagai.

'Twas getting dark, the team got bogged, the axle
snapped in two,
I lost me matches and me pipe, now, what was I to
do?
The rains came down, 'twas bitter cold, and hungry,
too, was I,
And the dog sat in the tuckerbox, nine miles
from Gundagai.

Some blokes I know has all the luck, no matter how
they fall,
But there was I, Lord love a duck, no flamin' luck
at all;
I couldn't make a pot of tea, nor keep me trousers dry,
And the dog sat in the tuckerbox, nine miles from
Gundagai.

I could forgive the blinkin' team, I could forgive
the rain,
I could forgive the dark and cold, and go through
it again;
I could forgive me rotten luck, but hang me till
I die!
I won't forgive that bloody dog, nine miles
from Gundagai!

SIDE 2, Band 3: LAZY HARRY'S
(FIVE MILES FROM GUNDAGAI)

Gundagai is the most famous town in Australian folksong. As the mid point between the two largest cities of Melbourne and Sydney, and as the way station from the Riverina into Sydney, it was an essential port of call for all travellers in New South Wales. Though it has little to attract the tourist, few wayfarers were able to get past it--if the songs are to be trusted. So there are songs entitled "Two--""Three--""Five--""Nine--" and "Twelve Miles from Gundagai," all having to do with travellers who for one reason or another bogged down in Gundagai. Sometimes the bogging-down was the literal truth: the Hume Highway, the main road from Sydney to Melbourne, runs over a swamp near Gundagai; in 1956 several heavy trucks happened to cross the floating patch of concrete at the same time, and everything sank, twelve miles from Gundagai.

Well, we started out from Roto when the sheds had
all cut out;
We'd whips and whips of rhino as we meant to puch
about.
So we humped our blueys serenely and we made for
Sydney town
With a three-spot check between us as wanted
knocking down.

CHORUS:
And we camped at Lazy Harry's on the road to Gundagai,
The road to Gundagai, five miles from Gundagai;
Yes, we camped at Lazy Harry's on the road to
Gundagai.

Well, we crossed the Murrumbidgee near the Yanco
in a week
And we passed through old Narrandera, and
crossed the Burnett Creek,
But we never stopped at Wagga, for we'd Sydney in
our eye,
But we camped at Lazy Harry's on the road to
Gundagai.

We tossed our flamin' swags off and we walked up
to the bar
And we called for rum-and-raspberry and a shilling-
each cigar,
But the girl who served the poison, she winked
at Bill and I,
So we camped at Lazy Harry's on the road to
Gundagai.

Well, I've seen a lot of girls, my lads, and drunk
a lot of beer,
And I've met with some of both as has left me
pretty queer;
But for beer to knock you sideways and for girls
to make you cry,
You should camp at Lazy Harry's on the road to
Gundagai.

In a week the spree was over and our check was all
knocked down,
So we shouldered our matildas and we turned our
back on town;
And the girls stood us a knobbler as we sadly
said "Good-bye,"
And we tramped from Lazy Harry's on the road to
Gundagai.

SIDE 2, Band 4: BEN HALL

Though Ben Hall--"the best of the bushrangers"--came from an unpromising household (his mother and father were both convicts, and his father picked his mother out of a marriage line at the Parramatta Female Factory), he was known as an honest, industrious farmer until his wife ran off with another man, taking their child with her (she did not, as the song alleges, "sell off his abode"-- Ben sold the homestead later for a pittance). Ben went to pieces thereafter, and was arrested on suspicion of armed robbery as a member of Frank Gardiner's notorious gang of bushrangers. He was, however, acquitted of this and a later charge; but, harried by the police (especially by the monumentally inept Sir Frederick Pottinger who, as Russel Ward puts it, "finally shot himself, more, it seems, through clumsiness, than out of chagrin at his unpopularity and his failure to capture the outlaw"), he took to the bush in earnest with bushrangers Dunn and Gilbert. Though Hall was never accused of shedding blood, his gang was a pretty rough bunch, and after Gilbert shot a policeman during the robbery of the Gundagai-Yass stagecoach, "dead or alive" instructions were given to the police, and Ben Hall was shot to death twelve miles from Forbes, N.S.W., in 1865. The police "riddled all his body as if they were afraid," and the discovery that 30 bullets had been pumped into Ben Hall instilled into his neighbors a bitterness against the police that is still remembered.

Hall's companions-in-crime ended in a motley manner: Johnny Dunn was captured and executed a year after Hall's death; Johnny O'Meally, the Australian Billy the Kid, was shot in 1863; John Gilbert died with Dunn (Gilbert's sister achieved distinction in a different line of endeavor: she became successively an Irish lady, wife of a baronet, a nun, and finally, a mother superior, dying at 97); and the leader of the gang, Frank Gardiner, the most successful of all the bushrangers, was released after seven years in prison, emigrated to San Francisco where he opened a saloon, and possibly was shot to death in a poker game in Colorado in 1903.

Come all you young Australians, and everyone beside;
I'll sing to you a ditty that will fill you with
surprise,
Concerning of a bushranger whose name it was Ben Hall,
Who cruelly murdered was this day, which proved his
downfall.

An outcast from society, he was forced to take the
road
All through his false and treacherous wife who sold
off his abode;
He was hunted like a native dog from bush to hill
and dale
Till he turned upon his enemies and they could not
find his trail.

All out with his companions, men's blood he scorned
to shed;
He ofttimes stayed their lifted hand with vengeance
on their heads.
No petty, mean, or pilfering act he ever stooped
to do,
But robbed the rich and haughty man and scorned to
rob the poor.

One night as he in ambush lay all on the Lachlan
plain,
When thinking everything secure, to ease himself
he'd lain;
When to his consternation and to his great surprise,
And without one moment's warning, a bullet passed
him by.

And it was soon succeeded by a volley of lead;
With twelve revolving rifles all pointed at his head.
"Where are you, Gilbert? Where is Dunn?" he loudly
did call;
But they had fled and left him there to suffer his
downfall.

They riddled all his body as if they were afraid,
But in his dying moments he breathed curses on their
heads;
That cowardly-hearted Condel, the sergeant of police,
He crept and fired with cowardly glee till death
did Ben release.

It's through Australia's sunny clime Ben Hall will
range no more,
His name is spread both near and far to every
distant shore;
For generations parents will to their children call
And rehearse to them the daring deeds committed by
Ben Hall.

SIDE 2, Band 5: WALLABY STEW

"Dave," said Dad, mechanically brushing the flies from his face, "you get that kangaroo out of the well--all of him."

Australia's Tobacco Roaders (without the sexual propensities of Jeeter Lester's relatives) are the delightful family of Dad and Dave and the other residents of Shingle Hut--Mother, Mabel, Sal, Dan, Joe, and Cranky Jack. Originally the creation of the first great Australian humorist, Steele Rudd (Arthur Hoey Davis) in his books On Our Selection and Our New Selection, Dad and Dave were the archetypes of the hard-working but hard-luck free selectors described in "The Old Bullock Dray"; but the characters were taken away from him and became progressively more lazy and more stupid until they made even the "Cocky from Bungaree" look noble. "Wallaby Stew" is a shameful example of the degeneration of the Rudd family (as the tune is a degeneration of the "Bungaree" melody), but it represents an important area of Australian folklore. And besides, it is a very singable ditty.

Poor Dad, he got five years or more, as everybody
knows,
And now he lives in Maitland jail, broad arrows on
his clothes;
He branded old Brown's cleanskins and he never left
a tail--
So I'll relate the family's fate since Dad got put
in jail.

CHORUS:
So stir the wallaby stew, make soup of the kangaroo's
tail;
I'll tell you things is pretty crook since Dad got
put in jail.

Our sheep all died a month ago of rot and flaming fluke,
Our cow was shot last Christmas by my big brother, Luke;
But Mother has a shearer forever within hail--
The family will have grown a bit when Dad gets out of
jail.

Our Bess got shook upon some bloke, he's gone we
don't know where;
He used to act around the sheds, but he ain't acted
square.
I sold the buggy on my own, the place is up for sale,
That won't be all that has been junked when Dad gets
out of jail.

They let Dad out before his time, to give us a surprise;
He calmly looked around us, and gently blessed our eyes,
Shook hands with the shearer cove, and said that things
seemed stale--
Then he left him here to shepherd us, and he battled
back into jail.

SIDE 2, Band 6: LES DARCY

About the only way to get an Australian annoyed at Americans is to make him very drunk and then say something critical of Les Darcy. Fights have been known to start this way. This is the stuff that myth--and folksongs--are made on. It matters not at all that Les Darcy fought only a few opponents of wide reputation, that his record as a putative middleweight champion was mediocre, that his first fight against

the wilting McGoorty was publicly denounced as a "tank job," that he was accused of dodging Harry Reeve, and that when he stowed away on a freighter bound for the United States during the First World War, Australia was first to call him a slacker and a coward. These are only facts; truth is something greater. The truth is that Les Darcy was the symbol of his country, a land of promise and potentiality, frustrated by a force too great to contend against. Most important, Les Darcy died young; he did not

...swell the rout
of lads that wore their honours out.

So with all folk heroes, from Arthur to Ike. Les Darcy has a long way to go, but he is beginning well; already he is chronicled in at least four traditional folksongs. Within a year of his death from pneumonia (U.S. autopsy) or poison (Australian autopsy) in Memphis, Tennessee, May 24, 1917, newspapermen were writing that he could have beaten the giant Jess Willard. Otto Floto, of the Denver Post, composed for him a eulogy that sets a remarkable height even for sportswriting bathos:

"They wound their tentacles around the heart of this strong young man and it shrunk until it was no longer able to beat true and strongly--and he fell victim to a malady that would have caused him no serious concern had he been himself. He died of a broken heart and because his fellow men had forgotten that six feet of earth makes us all of one size."

In Maitland cemetery lays poor Les Darcy,
His mother's pride and joy, Australia's bonny boy.
All we can think of each night
Is to see Les Darcy fight;
How he beats 'em, simply eats 'em
Every Saturday night.

The critics by the score said they had never saw
A boy like Les before upon the stadium floor.
Oh, the Yanks called him a skiter
But he proved himself a fighter,
So they killed him--yes, they killed him
Down in Memphis, Tennessee.

SIDE 2, Band 7: THE STOCKMAN'S LAST BED

The most surprising thing about this fairly ordinary song on the well-known "Dying Stockman" theme is its apparent antiquity. An article in the Sydney Bulletin (the "bushman's bible") June 23, 1888, traces it back almost to the beginning of the cattle industry in Australia. Like nearly every Australian folksong, it is an adaptation of an earlier song--in this case "The Boatswain's Last Whistle," composed by Charles Dibdin. Dibdin's work, incidentally, deserves serious attention from folklorists, for of the hundreds of songs he composed before his death in 1814, many have become genuine folksongs. Another music-hall song writer is tangentially concerned in the composition of "The Stockman's Last Bed"--Charles Thatcher, whose prolific pen blotted out nearly the whole of traditional song in the Australian goldfields. Thatcher's "The Digger's Lone Grave" contains several lines that bear a clear evolutionary resemblance to "The Stockman's Last Bed."

Be you stockman or no, to my story give ear:
Alas for poor Jack, no more shall we hear
The crack of his stockwhip, his steed's lively trot,
His cheery loud voice, his jingling quart pot,

CHORUS:
For we laid him where wattles their sweet fragrance shed
And the tall gum-tree shadows the stockman's last bed.

While drafting one day he was borned by a cow;
"Alas!" cried poor Jack, "It's all up with me now;
I never shall spring to the saddle again
Nor bound like a wallaby over the plain;

A swagman near Lithgow, NSW, May 1956

CHORUS:
I shall lie where the wattles their sweet fragrance shed
And the tall gum-tree shadows the stockman's last bed.

His whip now is silent, his dogs sadly mourn
And his steed looks in vain for his master's return;
No friend to bemoan him, unheeded he lies,
Save Australia's dark children, a few know where he lies,

CHORUS:
For we laid him where wattles their sweet fragrance shed
And the tall gum-tree shadow the stockman's last bed

So stockman, if ever on some future day
You're after wild cattle that roam far away,
Tread softly where gum trees and sweet wattles grow,
It may be a stockman is sleeping below.

SIDE 2, Band 8: PETER CLARKE

"Peter Clarke" is a most unusual outlaw ballad, both in the strange story it tells and in its lack of sympathy with the bushranger (all over the world, from Turkestan to Texas, the outlaw is praised by the folk for his successful flouting of aristocratic law).

In April, 1864, three brothers, Peter, James, and Acton Clarke, with John Conroy and a twelve-year-old boy named Samuel Carter, were riding toward Culgoa, near Warland's Range. The bushranger, later identified as Harry Wilson, 20 years old, "bailed up" the crowd, but Peter fought with him. Wilson shot Conroy and James Clarke, but was unable, as the ballad tells, to release himself from the dying grasp of Peter Clarke, who was shot fatally in the struggle. Wilson was taken to Maitland, tried, convicted, and hanged on October 4. The Clarke party in taking him to Maitland found two men tied to a tree, whom Clarke had robbed a few hours previously.

Murrurundi, 92 miles west of Maitland (the home of Les Darcy), is also remembered in Australian folklore as the home of Ben Hall.

On Walden's Range at early morn
The sun shone brightly down;
It shone across the winding Page
Near Murrurundi town.

It glittered o'er the burning mount
Where murky shadows fell,
Across a path to travellers known,
To some, alas, too well.

There stands a simple block of stone
Erected as a mark
To show the spot where he fought and died,
The gallant Peter Clarke.

And if you will but listen awhile
To you I will relate
What happened there to Peter Clarke
And Jimmy Clarke, his mate.

They camped one night close by the range;
In songs the hours flew past,
And little did poor Peter think
That night would be his last.

At dawn they toiled the steep ascent,
They had scarcely reached the top
When a voice in accents stern and bold
Commanded them to stop.

"Hand up your money, watch, and chain,"
The robber sternly cried.
"Who takes my money takes my life,"
The angry Clarke replied.

Then laughed the robber loud in scorn
As he his pistol drew;
Said he, "My hand is firm and strong
And my aim is ever true."

And he who will my word gainsay,
Though he be earl or knight,
I swear by all I sacred hold
He ne'er shall see morning light.

So give up your money, now, my lad,
And do not idly rave;
Resist and by the God above
This night you'll fill the grave."

"Those are but words and idle words,"
The daring Clarke replied,
And with one rapid bound he strode
Close by the robber's side.

And now commenced the struggle
For life between them both;
One hand of Clarke's the pistol grasped,
And the other grasped his throat.

Now, haste you, haste you, Jimmy Clarke
And seek for help in need;
Your comrade's welfare, nay, his life,
Depends on your good speed.

But hark to that loud pistol shot
In a second rends the skies;
A human being on the sod
In his death struggle lies.

But still in his last dying gasp
Poor Peter seemed to say,
"Revenge, revenge for Peter Clarke,"
And so he passed away.

But the robber frightened by his deed
In terror now did lie;
For the hand of Clarke upon his throat
Grows tighter as he died.

And so indeed was Clarke revenged,
For God has said it so,
"Who takes a life must yield a life,"
And the murderer met his doom.

SIDE 2, Band 9: THE COCKIES OF BUNGAREE

Since the time of Cain and Abel cattlemen and farmers have been at each other's throats, with the farmers losing all the battles and winning all the wars. The contempt of the free-roaming stock worker for his grubby-handed brother is well known in American folksong; in Australia the theme is even more strongly enunciated. In both countries it often coalesces with the theme of the "hard country," which probably came to both nations from Ireland (cf. "The Praties They Grow Small"). There is much more hard country in Australia than any Aussie will admit. As I stated in another article,

Out in the Northern Territory of Australia there are some cattle ranches ten times the size of Rhode Island, where many a stockman was born, lived out his Biblical allowance (plus a healthy Australian bonus), and died, without ever leaving the property. Out where the continent's largest river may dry up for eighteen months, fence riders are still using camel trains. But this is the Northern Territory, which is somewhat crowded--counting the naked aborigines, a population the size of Beverly Hills has an area twice the size of Texas to live in. Now, 'way out west of sunset, right out back of beyond, out by Woop Woop, past the Black Stump, where the hand of man has never set foot, it's considerable lonelier. In fact, it's so far out, the people don't know beer.

The reason for the sparse population is hard country. One of the most amazing accomplishments of the human race is the ability of the aborigines to make a living on land about as productive in growing things as an asphalted parking lot. Even in the well-watered eastern part of the country things are tough. Just a few miles north of Melbourne is Bungaree, land so poor that all that the farmers can raise are cockatoos--hence they are called by the stockman, "cockies." This classic plaint tells of a stockman who was forced to take up sedentary employment with a cockatoo farmer.

The well-trained ear will recognize this tune as the one used in this country for numerous songs from "The Unreconstructed Rebel" to "Ramblin Wreck from Georgia Tech." It is also ubiquitous in Australian folksong.

Come all you weary travellers, that's out of work,
just mind:
You take a trip to Bungaree and plenty there
you'll find;
Have a trial with the cockies, you can take it
straight from me,
I'm very sure you'll rue the day you first saw
Bungaree.

Well, how I come this weary way I mean to let you
know:
Being out of employment, I didn't know where to go;
So I went to the register office, and there I did
agree
To take a job of clearing for a cocky in Bungaree.

His homestead was of surface mud, the roof of
mouldy thatch;
The doors and windows hung by a nail with never a
bolt or catch.
The chickens walked over the table, such a sight
you never did see,
One laid an egg on the old tin plate of the cocky ir
Bungaree.

Well, it's early the very next morning, it was the
usual go;
He rattled a plate for breakfast before the cock
did crow.
The stars were shining glorious and the moon was
high, you see,
I thought before the sun would rise I'd die in
Bungaree.

By the time I came in to supper it was just on
half-past nine,
And when I had it et, well, I reckoned it was my
bedtime;
But the cocky, he came over to me and he said with
a merry laugh,
"I want yez now for an hour or two to cut a bit
of chaff."

Well, when the work was over, I'd to nurse the youngest
child.
Whenever I cracked a bit of a joke, the missus she
would smile;
The old fellow got jealous, looked like he'd murder me,
And there he sat and whipped the cat, the cocky in
Bungaree.

Well, when I'd done my first week's work, I reckoned
I'd had enough;
I went up to that cocky and I asked him for my stuff;
I come down into Ballarat and it didn't take me long,
I went straight into Sayers' Hotel and blued me one
pound one.

SIDE 2, Band 10: WILD ROVER NO MORE

Although the flow of folksong influence between Australia and America has been almost entirely toward the Antipodes, several Australian songs have become common currency in the United States, including a number of the songs in this album ("Bold Jack Donahue," "The Wild Colonial Boy," "Bluey Brink," and "Botany Bay"), but the best-known importation is "Wild Rover No More." The migration of the parent song, the British sailor-rake broadside "The Green Bed," among the English colonies seems to be at this remove impossible to to trace; my own guess is that the original song came to both countries via the sailors and that there was interchange again about the time of the discovery of gold in Australia and America. The tune, of course, is familiar to Americans as "The Strawberry Roan."

Those who feel that the Wild Rover is putting on wicked airs, with his staying up till midnight and roaring and all, should remember that electric lighting has extended enormously the hours of riot in modern civilization.

I've been a wild rover for many a year
And I've spent all my money on whiskey and beer,
But now I'm returning with gold in great store
And I never shall play the wild rover no more.

CHORUS:
It's no, no, never,
Never no more;
I never, never, never shall play
The wild rover no more.

I dropped into a shanty I used to frequent
And I told the landlady my money was spent;
I asked her for credit, she answered me "Nay,
Such custom as yours I can have any day."

Then I drew from my pockets ten sovereigns so bright
And the landlady's eyes opened wide with delight;
Said she, "I have whiskeys and wines of the best,
And the words that I told you were only in jest."

There were Kitty and Betsey and Margaret and Sue
And three or four more that belonged to our crew;
We'd stay up till midnight and make the place roar--
I've been a wild boy but I'll be so no more.

Now I'm a prisoner, to Nugget was sent,
On a bed of cold straw to lie and lament;
At last I have got what so long I looked for--
I've been the wild boy but I'll be so no more.

I'll go home to my parents, confess what I've done
And I'll ask them to pardon their prodigal son;
And if they will do so as they've done before,
Then I never shall play the wild rover no more.

GLOSSARY

BILLABONG: A flooded river effluent.

BILLY: A tin can used in the outback to brew tea; derived from French bouille, beef, on labels of cans of meat imported into Australia during gold rush days.

BLOW: In shearing, a stroke with the shears.

BLUEY: A generic term, with SWAG, for the blanket pack carried by swagmen. If the bluey is carried in a tight cylinder across the back, it is called a DRUM: if it is tied loosely and carried over one shoulder, it is called a MATILDA.

BOARD: The line of shearers in a shed.

BROAD ARROWS: The British insignia signifying government property.

BULLOCKY: Bullock-driver.

CLEANSKINS: Unbranded cattle.

COCKY: "Cockatoo farmer"--a farmer of land too poor to raise anything but the Australian winged pest, the cockatoo.

COOLIBAH: A species of gum tree.

CROOK: Bad.

DAMPER: Unleavened bread baked in the ashes of a fire.

DINGO: A species of wild dog, the only non-marsupial quadruped in Australia; resembles our coyote.

DUFF: Here, a pudding; as a verb, to rustle cattle.

HUNDRED, TO SHEAR A: To shear a hundred sheep in an eight-hour day--the tally of a master shearer.

JUMBUCK: Sheep--corruption of an aboriginal word.

KOOKABURRA: The "laughing jackass"--a bird about the size of a crow with an enormous head.

MATILDA: See BLUEY.

NEW CHUM: A recent English immigrant, held in great contempt among bushmen.

OFFSIDER: An assistant who rode by the side of a team or herd; here, a wife.

OLD BAILEY: The famous English debtors' prison.

ONE POUND ONE: About $2.36.

PADEMELON: A small species of kangaroo; from the French pied-de-melan, so called for its black feet. Sometimes confused with PADDYMELON, a small cucurbitaceous vegetable.

PUSH: As a noun, a gang.

QUID: Slang for one pound--about $2.23.

RINGER: The fastest shearer in a shed.

SHED: The enclosure where sheep are shorn.

SKITER: A braggart.

SQUATTER: A large landowner.

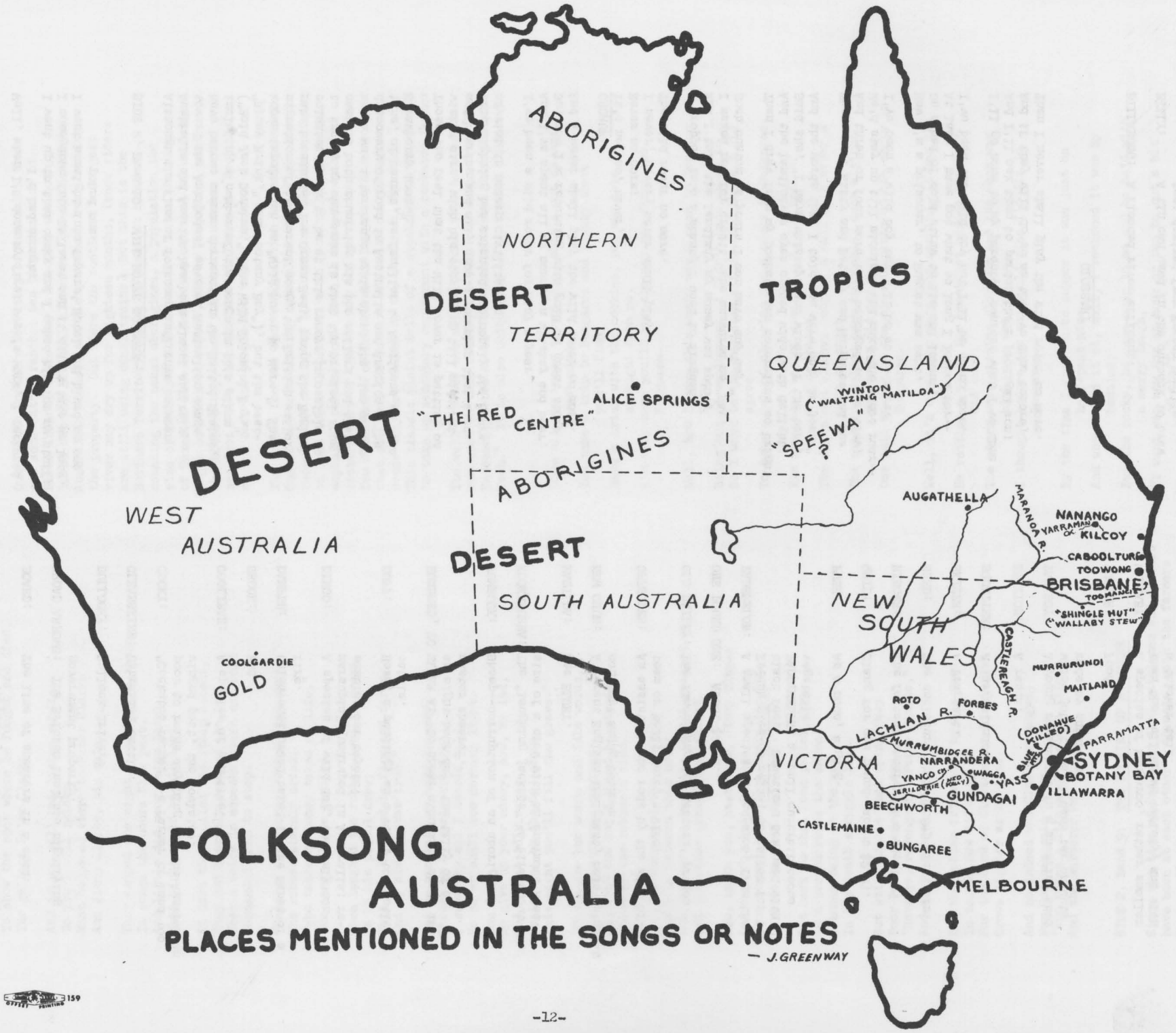
STATION: A ranch.

TAR BOY: A young rouseabout in a shearing shed whose job it was to daub tar on cuts made by shearers.

TUCKER: Food.

WALLABY: A species of kangaroo, rather smaller than the well-known variety, and with a thicker tail.

WHIPPED THE CAT: Complained.



FOLKSONG AUSTRALIA

PLACES MENTIONED IN THE SONGS OR NOTES

— J. GREENWAY

LITHO IN U.S.A.