

RBF RECORDS



RF 51

M 1630.18 M17 U54 1967

UNCLE DAVE MACON

Re-Recordings from the original masters, conceived by Pete Seeger, selected and edited by Norman Tinsley, Bob Hyland, and Joe Hickerson

SIDE I

- Band 1: CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN DEER RACE
- Band 2: ALL IN DOWN AND OUT BLUES
- Band 3: FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN
- Band 4: THE GAL THAT GOT STUCK ON EVERYTHING SHE SAID
- Band 5: I'VE GOT THE MOURNING BLUES
- Band 6: HOLD THAT WOOD-PILE DOWN
- Band 7: JOHNNY GRAY
- Band 8: JORDAN IS A HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL

SIDE II

- Band 1: MY DAUGHTER WISHED TO MARRY
- Band 2: THE OLD MAN'S DRUNK AGAIN
- Band 3: OVER THE ROAD I'M BOUND TO GO
- Band 4: RISE WHEN THE ROOSTER CROWS
- Band 5: TOM AND JERRY
- Band 6: TWO-IN-ONE CHEWING GUM
- Band 7: WHEN THE TRAIN COMES ALONG
- Band 8: WRECK OF THE TENNESSEE GRAVY TRAIN

How this LP came to be: In 1961 by accident I met Norman Tinsley in an elevator in a Montreal hotel. We discovered we were both fans of Uncle Dave Macon. What a shame, we agreed, that young folks can't learn directly from his records. Now he's dead and isn't making new records, and his old records are out-of-print and unavailable.

Mr. Tinsley and his friends owned copies of all of Uncle Dave's old 78 RPM records. Fortunately, it is possible to reissue 14 of them in this present form. Of course there's a couple hundred more wonderful ones there was not room for.

But here is Uncle Dave now, with all his zest for life. Hot dog!

- Pete Seeger

by Norman Tinsley

Back in 1939 Republican Studios in Hollywood, California, after sending a representative to visit the Grand Ole Opry of Radio Station WSM in Nashville, Temmessee, decided to make a motion picture of the show. Since it was impossible to get all the stars of the Grand Ole Opry of that time into one movie, the choice was narrowed down to and included Uncle Dave Macon and his son, Dorris, Roy Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys, with Little Rachel, and George D. Hay, "The Solemn Old Judge", from who's dream the Grand Ole Opry got its start and who for many a year thereafter controlled its destiny.

The motion picture was made in 1940 and was an immediate success. If you've missed it, watch your television programs. It's still being primarily shown on "Late Shows".

Uncle Dave Macon was the star of the picture. Not because he wanted to be or even tried to be. It just worked out that way. Kindliness, human understanding, humor, combined with dignity, have a way of making themselves felt. This is a description of Uncle Dave Macon.

But this is not all the story. The man and his music must be cultivated, studied and understood and the intense enjoyment thereafter cannot be entirely explained in words. You will know what we mean after playing this record.

We started talking about Uncle Dave's motion picture first instead of giving his birth date, etc., because we wanted to tell a story as it was related to us. Biographical details can come later.

In 1940 Uncle Dave Macon was a young man of seventy years. Behind him was an eminently successful career. He was one of America's greatest folk singers. He was known and loved by millions and did not need to worry about money if the "house needed a new roof". Still he was a man of nature, of the soil upon which he was raised. He did not make a motion picture because of a need or desire for money; but because he was a folk singer -- and such people must sing. But on to our story.

Uncle Dave traveled from Tennessee to California in Roy Acuffs station wagon. Before leaving home he packed one of his own home-smoked Tennessee hams in a wooden box to take along for the trip. By the time they all got to Hollywood the ham was all eat up. So, Uncle Dave, who was about to make a picture which would net him enough to buy quite a few lumber yards, took the empty box to Roy Acuff and asked that it be carefully stowed in the wagon and taken back home because it would make a good hen's nest.

We tell this little story as an introduction to this record, for the philosophy herein is part and parcel of his songs and his style of rendition. He had a song for everyone who has been broke, or hungry, or happy, or drunk, or in love. He touched each of these with a tender humor that never judges but only understands.

David Macon was born at Smart Station in Cannon County, Tennessee on October 7, 1870. He sang a song about the Cannon County Hills, which was never recorded.

The words went like this:

In the Cannon County Mountains
They have bright and growing fountains,
In every hill they have a still;

But just you remember

One hundred and forty-nine days from next

November,

There'll be moonshine in the Cannon

County Hills

Chorus:

On those Hills; Those beautiful hills
There'll be moonshine in the Cannon County
Hills
Bright Lights on Broadway -The sun shines bright in Dixie
But there's moonshine in the Cannon County
Hills

If you want to sing this song, although Uncle Dave deviated somewhat, the music to the State song of West Virginia, "Oh! Those Beautiful Hills," fits.

He was one of a large family, which was customary in those days. The Macons were prosperous farmers admired by and a credit to their community. Still today the name of Macon is highly respected locally. The name is also known intimately throughout the south and by lovers of folk music throughout the world. World fame was the doing of "Uncle Dave;" but more about this later. Suffice it to say that the Macon family were and are the kind of people who make this country great.

When David was still a little boy the family moved from the farm to Nashville, Tennessee when they had purchased and intended to operate a hotel on Brood Street. Nashville was a cultural Center in those days, as it still is in the folk/country music fields as well as others. Most of the leading musical, or, for that matter dramatic shows of the country passed through the city. Many of these entertainers often stayed at the Macons' hotel. Young David Macon was enchanted by his surroundings, the people, their stories and their music. He acquired a five-string banjo. His friends in show business taught him how to play. Very soon he was going very well indeed although his avocation was somewhat limited by chores and school. Dave Macon attended what is now known as the Hume - Fogg High

Evidence of his early acquaintance with the banjo is contained in the following picture taken when the young man was sixteen years old:



All of this happened seventy-six years ago as of this writing. Uncle Dave died in March of 1952 at the age of eighty-two. He never retired. Just a couple weeks prior to his death he made his regular appearances at the Grand Ole Opry, Radio Station WSM, Nashville, Tennessee and brought down the house as always. Following is a picture of Uncle Dave taken late in life:



For over sixty-six years Uncle Dave Macon, also fondly known as the "Dixie Dew Drop" or "King of the Banjo Pickers" or "King of the Hillbillies", or "The Squire of Readyville", entertained many millions of Americans by playing his three banjos (he always carried three, each tuned to a different key), and singing the old, a few of the new southern folk songs and ballads, as only he could. Over the years he lightened the burdens of these millions. He brought cheer into sick rooms, taught children to respect their parents, taught parents to love their children and each other. During the Great Depression he brought sunshine into every home that could afford a five dollar used radio, or knew someone who could. During World War II, as an old man far past normal retirement age he not only kept up the pace but added to it by entertaining service people whenever he had a chance.

Although Uncle Dave has been purported to have enjoyed "corn liquor" throughout most of his life, he gave it up for religious convictions as brought out in his song "From Earth to Heaven" recorded on Burnswick record number 329. Be this as it may, Uncle Dave knew the Bible from front to back and back to front as evidenced by his many religious recordings and his inimitable quotes. During his extensive travels through the length and breadth of this land, he never hesitated to lay down the banjo to preach a sermon in some little out-of-theway community. But Uncle Dave was not only a musician, a folk artist, and a preacher; he was above all a man, an American, and an individualist. He knew both sides of the old King's English. He "shore" could cuss. But his cuss words were always appropriate and never off-color.

Above all, Uncle Dave was a man who never grew old. He was as young as eighty as most of us were or are at twenty, or thirty, or even forty or more.

At this point, we would like to quote, with permission for which we are very grateful from a book written by George D. Hay, the Solemm Old Judge of the Grand Ole Opry and entitled "A Story of the Grand Ole Opry."

"Back in about 1939, our station, WSM, received a tentative offer from Republic Studios, in Hollywood, to make a picture of the Grand Ole Opry. They dispatched a representative to Nashville to 'catch' the show and look over the situation. We asked Uncle Dave if he would mind entertaining our friend at his farm in the Cannon County Hills, knowing that the producer would get the right background and become acquainted with a true representative of the Opry. Uncle Dave was delighted. He asked his cook to prepare a real, sho' 'nuf Tennessee dinner with all of the trimmings and we drove down from Nashville on a beautiful day.

Friends, we hope some day that some of you will be fortunate enough to be Uncle Dave's guests at dinner. Until that day arrives, we fear that you will have missed a great deal in the realm of culinary art and true Southern hospitality. Uncle Dave asked the blessing and we were served a dinner which is not for sale anywhere in these United States, more is the pity. We were forced to satisfied with rich country ham, fried chicken, six or seven vegetables, done to a Tennessee turn, jelly preserves, pickles, hot corn bread and white bread. Then came the cake. Oh, well, why carry this any further. . . .

After dinner Uncle Dave invited us to be seated under a large tree in his front yard, where we discussed the possibility of the Grand Ole Opry picture. As the producer and your reporter drove back to Nashville, that experienced executive said "I have never met a more natural man in my life. He prays at the right time and he cusses at the right time and his jokes are as cute as the dickens." Needless to say, Uncle Dave was chosen to be one of the stars of the Opry picture. Roy Acuff and his boys and Little Rachel and the Solemn Old Judge were the other representatives of the Opry in the picture which was produced in 1940 in Republican Studios, by Armand Schaefer, and directed by Frank McDonald. Uncle Dave was the most popular man in the picture. Everybody loved him.

In 1932 about twenty of us, including Uncle Dave, played a large picnic in the woods of West Tennessee, promoted by a Mr. Dowland. We got there early in the morning and, on a crude bandstand, played to eight or ten thousand people throughout the day, putting on about five one-hour shows. Uncle Dave was our star and he shined forth in all of his glory that day. The next year we repeated it and for three or four years we played two picnics a year for Mr. Dowland in Tennessee and Kentucky. It was on one of these occasions that we saw Uncle Dave without a word to say-no comeback when the boys played the celebrated 'badger game' on him. Usually, he thinks very quickly on his feet, but on that occasion all he could do was to say 'Shucks'!"

We ran across a picture of Uncle Dave, taken when he was eighteen. He was very carefully dressed with his little coat buttoned closely beneath his white collar and tie, topped off by a hat of soft felt, turned up in front. His banjo was in his lap. He was a city dude, -- no mistake about it. However, it was not until thirty years later at the age of forty-eight that Uncle Dave left his farm with his boys and started on his professional career as 'King of the Banjo Pickers.'

That was twenty-seven years ago. What a career, started at an age that many of us are hunting a soft place to light for the latter years.

Asked how he finally made up his mind to turn professional entertainer, Uncle Dave told us:

'All of my life I had played and sung for fun. My neighbors always asked me to play at picnics and special occasions. Finally one very self-important farmer approached me and asked me to play at a party he was planning. I was very busy and a bit tired, so I thought I would stop him. I told him I would play at his party for fifteen dollars. He said "okay, it's a deal." It was a large affair and in the crowd was a talent scout for Loew's Theatres.

My act seemed to go over very well. When I had finished, the theatre man offered to book me at a leading theatre in Birmingham, Alabama at several hundred dollars a week. They held me over many weeks and booked me throughout the country. I was in the show business and I have been in it ever since."

Uncle Dave has been ably assisted by his son, Dorris, who plays the guitar and sings with him occasionally. Dorris is a fine, upstanding farmer, who looks after his dad under all circumstances.

Besides his son, Dorris, (incidentally Uncle Dave had seven sons, Dorris being the fifth), Uncle Dave was often jointed on records, radio and personal appearances by his close associates Sam and Kirk McGee (The McGee Brothers) and Sid Harkreader (fiddle or guitar). There was also a Mitzi Todd (fiddle) on some of the Fruit Jar Drinkers sides recorded by the Vacalion Record Corporation.

As a matter of interest to real died-in-the-wool folk collectors, Uncle Dave plays the guitar on one Vacalion record of "The Girl I Left Behind Me" with Fiddlin' Sid Harreader on the fiddle. Real "old timers" will also recall that Uncle Dave Macon could play piano as on some occasions, for variety, the Solemn Old Judge would ask Uncle Dave to sit down at the "old three-legged piano" and play "The Girl I Left Behind Me" or "Eli Green's Cake Walk", just for example.

Besides being one of America's greatest banjo players, rendering our heritage of old time folk music in any appropriate style, Uncle Dave was also a great showman and a trick banjo artist. Many have tried to imitate his style but none have succeeded.

This is a kinda' mixed up thumb nail sketch of the Grand Old Man. This is Uncle Dave "with his gates-a-jar collar, gold teeth, three banjos, great big Tennessee smile and NO MAN'S COLLAR DOES HE WEAR! How many times have us old timers heard him introduced this way!

Following are some more pictures and-a-complete discorgraphy of everything Uncle Dave put on records commercially. The value of this discorgraphy cannot be put down in terms of dollars and cents. It is the result of painstaking work for many years by many lovers of American folk music. Foremost credit is given to the efforts of Robert Hyland (Ohio), Joe Nicholas (Michigan), Eugene Earle (N.J.) and the late John Edwards of Australia.







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VOCALION:
   15439, 5001 (Peliverance Will Come
(Uncle Pave's Peloved Solo
15440, 5002 (Wouldn't Cive Fe Sugar In Fy Coffee
  15440, 5002 (Wouldn't Tive Fe Sugar in My Gollee (Arcade Flues
15441, 5003 (The Old Man's Trunk Again
(In the Good Old Surmer Time
15442, 5004 (Something's Always Sure To Tickle Me
(In the Good Old Days of Long Ago
15443, 5005 (Sourwood Mountain Medley
(The the Old Complian State (Where the
                            (In the Old Carolina State (Where the Sweet l'agnolias Bloom)
   15444, 5006 (Sassy Sam
                           (Sassy Sam
(Stop That Knocking At My Door
(Shout Mourner, You Shall Pe Free
(My Girl's A Migh Born Lady
(I Don't Care If I Never Wake Up
    15445, 5007
    15446, 5008
                           (Them Two Gals of Fine
(I Ain't Got Long To Stay
    15447, 5009
   (We Are Up Against It Now Shoo Fly, Don't Rother Me (Ain't It A Shame To Keep Your Money In the Rain Uncle Ned
                             Braying Mule
    15451, 5012 (Diamond In the Rough
   15452, 5013 (Hold On To the Sleigh
   (Tossing the Baby So High
15453, 5014 (Never Make Love No Fore
   (Cross-Ryed Butcher and the Cackling Hen
14847, 5040 (She Was Always) Chewing Gum
(I'm Going Away To Leave You, Love
(Papa's Fillie Goat
   (Reep My Skillet Good and Greasy 14849, 5042 (Bile Them Cabbage Pown (Down By the River 14850, 5043 (The Old Faid's Last Hope
   The Fox Chase
14864, 5046 (Jonah and the Whale
                            (Little Old Log Cabin In the Lane (with Sid Harkreader)
                           (Love Somebody (labled Sid Harkreader, acc. by Uncle Dave) (Soldier's Joy (" " " " " Macon)
    14887, 5047
    14904, 5051 (Hill Billie Blues
   (All I've Got's Gone
15032, 5060 (Run, Nigger, Run
(I Don't Reckon It'll Fappen Again
    15033, 5061 (Old Dan Tucker
   (Old Ship of Zion (with Sid Harkreader)
15034, 5062 (Down In Arkansaw (With Sid Harkreader)
(Girl I Left Behind Me (""
15063, 5065 (Watermelon Smilin' On the Vine
   (by Sid Harkreader)

15076, 5067

(All Go-Hungry Hash House

(From Jerusalem To Jericho

(Save l'y l'other's Ficture From the Sale
   15101, 5071 (Muskrat Medley
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VOCALION:
  15192, 5081 (Arkansas Travelers
                                                      (with Sid Harkreader)
                    (Going Across the Sea
(I've Got the Fourning Flues
(Last Night When Fy Willie Came Fome
(Death of John Henry
  15819, 5095
                                                                            (guitar, by Sam FoGee
  15320, 5096
                      On the Dixie-Bee Line
   15321, 5097
                     (Rise When the Rooster Crows
                     (Way Down the Old Plank Road (The Fible's True
  15322, 5098
                     (He Won the Heart of My Sarah Jane
(Only As Far As the Gate, Dear Ma
  15323, 5099
                     (Whoop 'Ram Up Cindy
(Just Tell Them That You Saw Ye
(Poor Sinners, Fare You Well
  15324. 5100
  15325. 5104
                     (Old Ties
                    ( (by Sam McGee)
(I Tickled Nancy
(Station Will Be Changed After Awhile
  15341, 5109
                    (Bake That Chicken Pie
                                                             (with Fruit Jar Drinkers)
            5152
                    (Grey Cat On the Tennessee Farm (with Fruit Jar Prinkers)
                    (Rock About, My Saro Jane ("""")
(Jordan Is A Hard Road To Travel (with Fruit Jar Drinkers)
(Tell Her To Come Pack Home ("""")
                    (Hop High Ladies, the Cake's All Dough (with Fruit Jar Drinker:
                   (Walk, Tom Wilson, Walk
(Sail Away Ladies
(Pickaninny Lullaby Song
(Rabbit In the Pea Patch
            5155
                                                               (with Fruit Jar Prinkers)
                                                               (with Fruit Jar Drinkers
                     Sleepy Lou
                    (I see Gwine Back To Dixie (wi
Take Ne Home, Poor Julia
(Folly Farried A Traveling Fan
            5157
                                                             (with Fruit Jar Drinkers)
            (Poor Old Pad
5161 (Heartaching Blues
(Mocking Bird Medley
5163 (Roe Rire, Poor Gal
                                                        (with McGee Brothers)
                     When Rueben Comes To Town
            5164
                    (Got No Silver Nor Gold Blues
                    Backwater Blues
                   Go Along Mule
(Tom and Jerry
                                                  (with Fruit Jar Drinkers)
                   (You've Been A Friend To Ne (with McGee Brothers)
            5172
                   (You've Been A Friend To l'e (" " )
(Coon That Had the Razor (banjo-guitar by Sam l'cGee)
            5261
                    (The New Ford Car
                   (Jesus, Lover of My Soul
(by Freeman Quartet)
(Farm Relief
            5316
                   (Farm Relief
(Mister Johnson (with Sid Harkreader)
(Life and Death of Jesse James (with Sid Harkreader)
(Man That Rode the Fule 'Round the World " " " (with Sid Harkreader)
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VOCALION:
   5380 (Parling Zelma Lee (with Sid Harkreader)
(Susie Lee
5397 (Hush Little Faby, Pon't You Cry
(Put l'e In l'y Little Fed (with Sid Harkreader)
 PRUNSWICK:
             (Death of John Henry
    112
             (On the Dixie-Bee Line
(Never Make Love No More
(Diamond In the Rough
   113
            (Hold On To the Sleigh
(Cross-Eyed Butcher and the Cackling Men
(Comin' Round the Yountain (with Sam YoGee)
(Governor Al Smith (guitar, by Sam McGee)
(Gal That Got Stuck On Everything She Said
(Worthy of Estimation (banjo-guitar by Sam McGee)
(Buddy, Won't You Roll Down the Line (banjo-guitar by Sam McGee)
(Tim the Child To Fight
   114
             (Hold On To the Sleigh
    263
    266
    292
              I'm the Child To Fight
Over the Road I'm Bound To Go
    329
                                                                      (banjo-guitar by Sam l'cGee)
              From Barth To Heaven
              New Coon In Town
Uncle Pave's Travels - Part 1 (Fisery In Arkansas)
    340
             Over the Mountain
Uncle Dave's Travels - Part 2 (Around Louisville, Kentucky)
Tennessee Jubilee
Uncle Dave's Travels - Part 3 (In and Around Nashville)
   349
    355
             (Since Baby's Learned To Talk
(Uncle Dave's Travels - Part 4 (Visit At the Old Faid's)
             (Comin' Round the Fountain (with Sam FcGee)
(by Luther & Robison)
    425
            (Rock About, My Saro Jane
(Death of John Henry
80093
                                                                (with Fruit Jar Prinkers)
                                                  (with Fruit Jar Prinkers)
 80094
             (Sail Away Ladies
                     (by Crockett Family)
Note: - Brunswicks 425, 80091, 80094 are reissues of earlier releases.
SUPERTONE:
   2041 (Cross-Eyed Futcher and the Cachling Hen
(Since Baby's Learned To Talk
2042 (Hold On To the Sleigh
             Uncle Dave's Travels - Part 4 (Visit At the Old Faid's)
Note: - Supertone sides are from Brunswick masters.
OKEH:
            (Tennessee Red Fox Chase
(Wreck of the Tennessee Gravy Train
  45507
                                                                             (with Sam McGee, banjo-guitar)
   45522
              (Mysteries of the World
                                                                                         (with Sam McGee)
             (Was You There When They Took I'y Lord Away (She's Got the Foney Too (with Sam (Ch Faby You Pone Fe Wrong ""
   45552
                                                                   (with Sam PoGee)
CHAMPION:
  16805, 45105 (Thank God For Everything
  (When the Train Comes Along Pon't Get Weary Children (He's Un With the Angels Now
                                                                             (with Sam & Kirk McGee)
  $259 (Don't Get Weary Children
(He's Up With the Angels Now
$355 (Thank God Wor Everything
                                                                 (with Sam & Kirk FcGee)
            (When the Train Comes Along
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Note: - Decca sides are from Champion masters of the old Gennett division.

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(One Fore River To Cross
(All In Down and Out Plues
   7347
            The Bum Hotel
   7348 (Honest Confession Is Good For the Soul
(Fame Apart From God's Approval
7349 (From Jerusalem To Jericho
   (by Southern Felody Poys)
7350 (Two-In-One Chewing Gum
(Travelin' Down the Road
7884 (Give Me Back My Five Dollars
            She's Got the Money Too
           Johnny Grey
   7885
            The Gayest Old Dude That's Out
           (Don't Get Weary Children
(He's Up With the Angels Now
    8029
 Mote: Montgomery Ward sides are from Bluebird (Victor) masters except 8029, which is from Champion.
 BLUKEIRD:
   5842 (When the Harvest Days Are Over
           One More River To Cross
   5873 (I'll Tickle Nancy
(I'll Keep My Skillet Good and Greasy
5926 (Over the Mountain
            Just One Way To the Pearly Gates
   7174 (Honest Confession Is Good For the Soul
            From Jerusalem To Jericho
           (Two-In-One Chewing Gum
   7234
           (Travelin' Down the Road
(All In Down and Out Blues
(The Bum Hotel
   7350
   7385 (Fame Apart From God's Approval
   (by Monroe Brothers)
7549 (He Won the Heart of Sarah Jane
            She's Got the Foney Too
           (Peek-A-Boo
(Summertime On the Beeno Line
   7770
                                                           (with Smoky Mt. Glenn)
   7951 (Cumberland Mountain Deer Race
           (Country Ham and Red Gravy
(Things I Don't Like To See
           (Working For My Lord
(Give Me Back My Five Pollars
                                                        (with Smoky Mt. Glenn)
    8325
           (Railroadin' and Gamblin'
    8341 (Bautiful Love
           (Wait Till the Clouds Roll Py
                                                         (with Smoky Mt. Glenn)
   8379 (Johnny Grey _______ (The Gayest Old Dude That's Out)
VICTOR: (album) 274 (Cumberland Fountain Peer Race
FOLKWAYS: (LP)
   FP-253 Buddy, Won't You Poll Powr the Line
             Way Down the Old Plank Road
    The following are Gennett master numbers and titles of sides cut by
Uncle Dave Macon that were never issued.

M19653 The Train Done Left Me and Gone (with Sam & Kirk McGee)
M19654 You've Been A Friend To Me
   M19656 There's Just One Way To the Pearly Gates (with Sam & Kirk FcGee) N19657 The Grey Cat N19659 Tennessee Tornado
    N19661 Eli Green's Cake Walk
   N19662 The Good Old Bible Line (with Sam & Kirk McGee)
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MONTGOMERY WARD:

4819 (When the Harvest Days Are Over

LITHO IN U.S.A STATE 3150