

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 31031

⌘ The Country Gentlemen, Vol. 4: ⌘

# GOING BACK TO THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS



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COVER PHOTO BY PAUL NELSON

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

MUSIC LP

⊙ The Country Gentlemen, Vol. 4: ⊙

# GOING BACK TO THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

*This time tomorrow evening  
Reckon where I will be  
Out in some lonesome valley  
Drinkin' my — swingin' from a white oak tree*

Here are vintage performances by one of the most durable groups in bluegrass. For over fifteen years they have been touring, recording and enlivening night spots in Washington, D.C.'s famous Georgetown. In the aftermath of groups like the Kingston Trio, Limeliters and others of that ilk the Gentlemen were among the first to be recognized who came from authentic bluegrass roots. Their repertoire is vast and it includes everything from ancient ballads to current pop, although these live performance recordings come from the 1960's, they contain the same fresh, lively and irreverent approach for which the Gentlemen still are famous.

*Going Back to the Blue Ridge Mountains* is on the other side of an old Delmore Brothers hit from the 40's. Here the Gentlemen add both speed and spice, making it sound as though it was written as a bluegrass tune. *Going to the Races* comes from Carter Stanley's "Gonna Paint the Town," and was the first tune ever recorded by the Country Gentlemen back in 1957. *Blue Bell* is a good example of banjoist Eddie Adcock's sophisticated approach. He's one of the few who can do Travis-picking on the banjo and make it work. *Dark As a Dungeon* also derives from the fertile imagination of Merle Travis and is nearly as well known today as his other famous coal-mining piece "Sixteen Tons." *Billy in the Low Ground* and *Cripple Creek* are among the many old mountain breakdown tunes which have passed into the hands of every bluegrass band. The subtle duet between Duffey's mandolin and Adcock's banjo in *Cripple Creek* is one of the highlights of this album. *Copper Kettle* came to the Gentlemen from the singing of Joan Baez, much as she got "Long Black Veil" from them. *I Saw the Light* was written in the 40's by Hank Williams. Somewhat later Bill Monroe recorded a quartet version that remains a bluegrass perennial. *Brown Mountain Light* is an original by Scott Wiseman, of Lulu Belle and Scotty. I'm told the light may be frequently observed even today. *Electricity* was written and first recorded over twenty years ago by the legendary Jimmy Murphy, whose version is a prized collector's item. Charlie Waller duplicates many of Murphy's famous guitar licks and provides not a few of his own. *Daybreak in Dixie* comes from the mandolin piece of now-retired Bill Napier, who recorded it with the Stanley Brothers. Like Bill Monroe's "Rawhide" it is one of the classical mandolin test pieces which separates the men from the boys.

*Mary Dear* is one of many old-time songs depicting the tragic human wastes of war. Bill Clifton learned it from an old recording by Charlie Poole and passed it on to the Gentlemen. Fiddlin' Arthur Smith is responsible for *Sad and Lonesome Day* and first recorded it in 1938. The late Red Smiley is the man who sang it often and planted it firmly in bluegrass tradition. *Don't This Road Look Rough and Rocky* and *Mule Skinner Blues* are bluegrass classics. Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs introduced the former in the early 50's and it remained in their songbag until they broke up in 1968. *Mule Skinner* was first sung by Jimmie Rodgers. Bill Monroe appropriated it in 1939, six years after Rodgers' death, and he has rarely given a performance since without singing it.

Thus the Country Gentlemen are inheritors of a long and beautiful tradition of American music — music that was born and nurtured in the southern mountains and perpetuated by groups like this who have dressed it up and brought it to town. In 1973 their appeal is as broad and timeless as it was in the 1960's. Their many admirers will welcome the discovery and release of this great "lost" concert. It represents the Gentlemen at their best, which is to say very good indeed.

*Notes by Richard Spottswood*

This record has not been previously released.  
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simulate Stereophonic  
FOLKWAYS  
STEREO FTS 31031

## Side 1

- Band 1 — **GOING BACK TO THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS** (Delmore Bros.)
- Band 2 — **GOING TO THE RACES** (Carter Stanley)
- Band 3 — **AZZURO CAMPANA** (arr. Adcock & Duffey)
- Band 4 — **DARK AS A DUNGEON** (Merle Travis)
- Band 5 — **COPPER KETTLE** (Duffey & Waller)
- Band 6 — **BILLY IN THE LOW GROUND** (arr. Duffey, Adcock, Waller)
- Band 7 — **I SAW THE LIGHT** (Hank Williams)
- Band 8 — **TOM DOOLEY #2** (arr. Duffey & Waller)

## Side II

- Band 1 — **BROWN MT. LIGHT** (Scot Wiseman)
- Band 2 — **ELECTRICITY** (Jimmy Murphy)
- Band 3 — **DAYBREAK IN DIXIE** (Bill Napier)
- Band 4 — **MARY DEAR** (arr. John Duffey)
- Band 5 — **SAD AND LONESOME** (arr. Duffey & Roberts)
- Band 6 — **CRIPPLE CREEK** (arr. Adcock & Duffey)
- Band 7 — **DON'T THE ROAD LOOK ROUGH & ROCKY?** (arr. John Duffey)
- Band 8 — **MULESKINNER BLUES** (Jimmy Rodgers)

## OTHER RECORDINGS BY THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN:

Charlie Waller, John Duffey, Pete Roberts, Eddie Adcock, Tom Gray

**Vol. 1: "Country Songs Old & New"** Folkways FA2409 (16 songs)  
Roving Gambler, The Little Sparrow, Drifting Too Far, Weeping Willow, Tomorrow's My Wedding Day, The Story of Charlie Lawson, Turke / Knob, Paul & Silas, Ellen Smith, The Long Black Veil, Honky Tonk Rag, Jesse James, Have Thine Own Way, Good Woman's Love, The Double Eagle, Darling Alakee.

**Vol. 2: "Folk Songs & Bluegrass"** Folkways FA2410 (16 songs)  
Train 45, Little Bessie, The Fields Have Turned Brown, They're At Rest Together, Strutting on the Strings, Remembrance of You, The Red Rocking Chair, Will the Circle Be Unbroken, Handsome Molly, Victim to the Tomb, Behind These Prison Walls of Love, Wear a Red Rose, I'm Coming Back But I Don't Know When, South Bound, Come All Ye Tender Hearted, Standing in the Need of Prayer.

**Vol. 3: "Country Gentlemen On the Road"** Folkways FA2411 (13 songs)  
Handsome Molly, The Sunny Side of Life, Poor Ellen Smith, The Long Black Veil, Grandfather's Clock, I Ain't Got No Home, Heartaches, Little Glass of Wine, Walking in Jerusalem, I Am a Pilgrim, A Letter to Tom, Rawhide, Blue Ridge Mountain Blues.

**THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN:** Winner of the bulk of the 1972 Muleskinner News Bluegrass Awards, including: Band of the Year, Best Blue Grass Singer (Charlie Waller), Best Vocal Group, Best Album of the Year. Folkways presents the original group with Charlie Waller, John Duffey & Tom Gray (now members of The Seldom Scene), Eddie Adcock (now member of 2nd Generation), and Pete Roberts.

"Topped every listener poll taken over the past two summers . . ."  
Muleskinner News, 1973

" . . . the group deserves a Northern version of a rebel yell."