

I'M OLD BUT I'M AWFULLY TOUGH

TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF THE OZARK REGION



RECORDED IN THE FIELD BY THE MISSOURI FRIENDS OF THE FOLK ARTS.

MADE POSSIBLE BY GRANTS FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS AND THE MISSOURI ARTS COUNCIL.



... the scenery is almost destitute of everything which is agreeable to human nature; nothing yet appears but one vast trackless wilderness of trees, a dead solemnity, where the human voice is never heard to echo, where not even ruins of the humblest kind recal its history to mind, or prove the past dominion of man. All is rude nature as it sprang into existence, still preserving its primeval type, its unreclaimed exuberance."

Nuttall, T.: *A Journal of Travels into the Arkansas Territory during the year 1819*. Philadelphia: Palmer, 1821.

"On returning from the woods yesterday, the hunters had not yet arrived with our canoe, but made their appearance at dusk, accompanied by several neighbors and friends in their canoes, who also came down to trade, making a party of twelve or fourteen in all. Whiskey soon began to circulate freely, and by the time they had unloaded their canoes, we began plainly to discover that a scene of riot and drinking was to follow . . . Every mouth, hand, and foot, were in motion. Some drank, some sang, some danced, a considerable proportion attempted all three together, and a scene of undistinguished brawling and riot ensued."

Schoolcraft, H.R.: *Journal of a Tour into the Interior of Missouri and Arkansas Performed in the Years 1818 and 1819*. London: Phillips, 1821.

"A much earlier settlement was made by Chevalier de Tonti, who, in 1685 . . . entered the Arkansa, and proceeded up to the village of that nation, with whom he made an alliance, and left 10 of his people, at their earnest request, to settle among them. This small party, occasionally augmented by the Canadians who descended the river, keeping on peaceable terms with the natives, and intermarrying amongst them, continually maintained their ground, though rather by adopting the manners of the Indians, and becoming hunters, than by any regular industry or attention to the arts and conveniences of civilized life."

Nuttall, T.: *A Journal of Travels into the Arkansas Territory during the year 1819*. Philadelphia: Palmer, 1821



"He Daniel Boone was nearly always humming or whistling some kind of a tune, in a low tone; another habit of his lonely days in the woods."

Bryan, W.S. and R. Rose: *A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri*. St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1876.

"Our approach was announced by the loud and long continued barking of dogs, who required repeated bidding before they could be pacified; and the first object worthy of remark which presented itself on emerging from the forest, was the innumerable quantity of deer, bear, and other skins, which had been from time to time stretched out, and hung up to dry on poles and trees around the house . . . He had several acres of ground in a state of cultivation, and a substantial new-built log-house, consisting of one room, which had been lately exchanged for one less calculated to accommodate a growing family. Its interior would disappoint any person who has never had an opportunity of witnessing the abode of man beyond the pale of the civilized world. Nothing could be more remote from the ideas we have attached to domestic comfort, neatness, or conveniency, without allusion to cleanliness, order, and the concomitant strain of household attributes, which make up the aim of human felicity in refined society."



The dress of the children attracted our attention. The boys were clothed in a particular kind of garment made of deer-skin, which served the double purpose of shirt and jacket. The girls had buck-skin frocks, which it was evident, by the careless manner in which they were clothed, were intended to combine the utility both of linen and calico, and all were abundantly greasy and dirty. Around the walls of the room hung the horns of deer and buffalo, rifles, shot-pouches, leather-coats, dried meat, and other articles, composing the ward-robe, smoke-house, and magazine of our host and family, while the floor displayed great evidence of his own skill in the fabrication of household furniture. A dressed deer-skin, sewed up much in the shape the animal originally possessed, and filled with bear's oil, and another filled with wild honey, hanging on opposite sides of the fire-place, were too conspicuous to escape observation . . .

Schoolcraft, H.R.: *Journal of a Tour into the Interior of Missouri and Arkansas Performed in the Years 1818 and 1819*. London: Phillips, 1821.

"A volunteer who has no romance in his disposition, and who has no pleasure in the reckless frolic or the daring escapade, soon sickens and dies with lumbago or pleurisy. He must be always ready to dance, drink, flirt, race and be shot at."

Edwards, J.N.: *Shelby and His Men; or, The War in the West* (1867)

"The 'new comers', like a mountain torrent, poured into the country faster than it was possible to provide corn for bread stuff. Some families came in the spring of 1815; but in the winter, spring, summer and autumn of 1816, they came like an avalanche. It seemed as though Kentucky and Tennessee were breaking up and moving to the 'Far West.'"

Rev. Dr. John Mason Peck quoted in Stevens, W.B.: *Centennial History of Missouri*. St. Louis: S.J. Clarke, 1921.



"Whilst we were waiting for the river to rise great preparations were making to celebrate Christmas Eve by a ball at one of the taverns, and although I am not a great frequenter of balls I was very anxious to be present at this . . . A faint idea of the nature of the affair and of the style of the ball had already been given to me by a person who had attended one of the preceding year. There were about 100 men and 3 women. The men had their hats on, and danced armed with pistols and bowie knives, whilst the landlord, assisted by two of his people, with his hat cocked on one side, took pitchers of strong whiskey-punch round the room, and clapping the gentlemen on the back gave them to drink. As this was the principal business of the evening, and the pitchers unceasingly went round, the whole party soon got amazingly drunk, but were very good-natured, 'for there were only a few shots fired in fun.'"

Featherstonhaugh, G.W.: *Excursion Through the Slave States*. London: John Murray, 1844.

" I have heard the guitar resound soon after sun-set, with the complaints and amorous tales of the village swains, and heard the same hand, which toiled all day in the wilderness and in the waste, strike tender notes of love in the evening. The custom seemed to pervade all ranks. Nearly every house had its group, and every group its guitar, fiddler, story-teller or singer. As the evening advanced and the heat diminished, walking commenced, and towards midnight the music of the village united, the little world crowded to the spot and danced with infinite gaiety, and mirth till past one in the morning . . ." Thomas Ashe's description of a Missouri French village as quoted by Sampson, Francis A.: "Glimpses of Old Missouri by Explorers and Travelers," *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. LXVIII (October 1973)



"No man in those days would settle in this country unless he had a spring of running water. The next thing of importance to him and for which he sought was timber, and coming from a woodland country in Tennessee and North Carolina, where they didn't know how to make a field unless they hewed it out of a forest, they would go down on a spring branch and clear three or four acres for a field, which would cost them more labor than it would have to build a forty-acre field in a prairie."

Hubble, Martin J.: *Personal Reminiscences of Springfield*. Springfield, Missouri: the author, 1908

"Mr. Nichols removed with his family to Callaway county, Mo., in 1824, and entered the land upon which Fulton is situated. Mr. Nichols built the first cabin in Fulton, and had to go ten miles to get men to help him raise it. They came before sunrise on the appointed day; had the cabin completed before the sun went down, and danced in it the same night."

Bryan, W.S. and Rose, R.: *A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri*. St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1876.

"The Missourian's cabin was from fourteen to sixteen feet square, seldom as much as twenty feet. It was built ordinarily without glass, nails, hinges or locks. Large logs were placed in position as sills. Upon these were laid strong sleepers, and upon the sleepers rough-hewed puncheons to serve as floors. The logs for the cabin walls were then built up until the desired height for the eaves was reached. On the ends of the building were placed logs longer than the other end logs, projecting some eighteen inches over the sides, these were called 'butting poles sleepers.' And on their projecting ends were placed the 'butting poles,' which gave the line to the first row of clapboards. The clapboards were split, and, as the gables of the cabin were built, were so laid on as to lap a third of their length. They were usually kept in place by a heavy weighted pole laid across the roof parallel to the ridge pole. The cabin was then chinked and daubed."



"A large fireplace was built in one end of the house, where, in the days before the coming of stoves, there was fire for cooking purposes and in the winter for warmth. Sometimes the ceilings were covered with the pelts of the wolf, the opossum and the raccoon, adding to the warmth of the cabin. Greased paper served for windows. Often a log would be left out on one side and sheets of paper greased with coon grease or bear oil placed in its stead, let in the light for the cabin. Bedsteads were sometimes so contrived as to be drawn up and fastened to the wall in the day time or when not in use, affording more room on the cabin floor for the family. The furniture was ordinarily entirely made with ax and auger. Knives and forks were often not to be found in the cabin. Horse collars were made of braided husks of corn sewed together. Oxen were ordinarily used for transportation purposes."

Walter Williams quoted in Stevens, W.B.: *Centennial History of Missouri*. St. Louis: S.J. Clarke, 1921

"The settlement of Sugar-Loaf Prairie consists at present of four families, located within the distance of eight miles, but is so recent that a horse-path has not yet been worn from one cabin to another . . . These people subsist partly by agriculture, and partly by hunting. They raise corn for bread, and for feeding their horses previous to the commencement of long journeys in the woods, but none for exportation. No cabbages, beets, onions, potatoes, turnips, or other garden vegetables are raised. Gardens are unknown. Corn, and wild meats, chiefly bear's meat, are the staple articles of food. In manners, morals, customs, dress, contempt of labor and hospitality, the state of society is not essentially different from that which exists among the savages. Schools, religion, and learning, are alike unknown. Hunting is the principal, the most honourable, and the most profitable employment. To excel in the chase procures fame, and a man's reputation is measured by his skill as a marksman, his agility and strength, his boldness and dexterity in killing game and his patient endurance and contempt of the hardships of the hunter's life.



They are, consequently, a hardy, brave, independent people, rude in appearance, frank and generous, travel without baggage, and can subsist anywhere in the woods, and would form the most efficient military corps in frontier warfare which can possibly exist . . . Their habitations are not always permanent, having little which is valuable, or loved, to rivet their affections to any one spot; and nothing which is venerated, but what they can carry with them; they frequently change residence, travelling where game is more abundant. Vast quantities of beaver, otter, raccoon, deer, and bear-skins are annually caught. These skins are carefully collected and preserved during the summer and fall, and taken down the river in canoes, to the mouth of the Great North Fork of White River, or to the mouth of Black River, where traders regularly come up with large boats to receive them. They also take down some wild honey, bear's bacon, and buffaloe-beef, and receive in return, salt, iron-pots, axes, blankets, knives, rifles, and other articles of first importance in their mode of life."

Schoolcraft, H.R.: *Journal of a Tour* . . .

"We put up a log cabin, which having no chimney, but merely a hearth in the middle of the room, required an open roof for the escape of the smoke. When the day's work was over, we lay down to sleep around the family hearthstone, the entire family of eighteen occupying the only room. Our food was boiled corn and honey, the latter procured from bee trees which we made a business of hunting, and when found we carried off the spoils in a sassafras log, which we had dug out like a canoe. Hitching our horse to this awkward contrivance, we drew our honey home. Our bread was obtained from pounding corn in a mortar, and our clothes were of buckskin which we tanned ourselves. On Sunday we donned our best suits, and went to call on our nearest neighbors, who lived twenty miles away. We all had chills, but nobody died until a doctor came to the country." Account in *Campbell's Gazetteer* quoted in Stevens, W.B.: *A Centennial History of Missouri*. St. Louis: S.J. Clarke, 1921



"Missourians were separated from their neighbors often by miles. There were no churches in many sections to call them together, no regular services outside of the few towns. Hence it was with much cheerfulness these pioneer Missourians accepted invitations to house-raising, log-rollings and corn-huskings. To be present at these occasional gatherings it was considered no hardship to go long distances. . . . Whenever a man husked a red ear of corn he was entitled to a kiss from any one of the girls. This frequently excited much fuss and scuffle, which was intended by both parties to end in a kiss. It is said to have been a general practice that whiskey was used at these husking frolics, men and women drinking together out of a bottle, without glass or cup. The dance followed the completion of the husking. Jigs and four-handed reels and three-handed reels were usually engaged in. Seldom was there drunkenness. No sitting down was indulged in. Every one stood up or danced."

Walter Williams quoted in Stevens, W.B.: *A Centennial History of Missouri*. St. Louis: S.J. Clarke, 1921

"Jacob Ish, of Saline county, tired of pounding corn with pestle in a mortar, went to the Boone's Lick mill to get some corn meal ground. He crossed the Missouri river at Arrow Rock and encamped in the river bottom on the opposite bank, with a number of other settlers from different parts of the country on their way with corn to be ground at the mill. Around the campfire stories were told of encounters with Indians and wild beasts, of adventures in the war of 1812, and there was heard the spirited music of the violin. There were two or three good performers on the instrument, and some of the members of the camp were 'limber as to feet and frisky as to heels.' Pigeon wings and double shuffles were executed in admirable style to the admiration of the lookers-on. The next morning camp was broken up early and the settlers started for the mill. Many of them had brought corn and shelled it on the wagon as they traveled. Upon reaching the mill it was thronged with customers, many of whom had been there for a week, patiently waiting their turn. The mill ran night and day." Walter Williams as quoted in Stevens, W.B.: *A Centennial History of Missouri*. St. Louis: S.J. Clarke, 1921



"It was on the 4th of July, 1822. Some brought bread and some brought a whole hog and a number of them brought a quarter of beef and lots of good corn. All meat was barbecued over a furnace by an old colored man. Now comes Halbert's Major, a man of color, with his fiddle, an entirely new sight to most of the youngsters of Murphy's Settlement. Having tuned his fiddle, he spoke as follows: 'Now ladies and gentlemen, I am going to do my very best for you. I have never drawn this bow across these strings for any one to dance since I left Old Carolina. Now draw your partners.' Major began the old tune:

Joe cut off the pig's toe, hung it up to dry;
The gals begin to laugh at Joe and Joe begin to cry.

I, myself was in perfect ecstasy of joy and delight. I forgot to mention that one gentleman had bullet buttons on his coat and epaulettes on his shoulders and they rattled while he danced. Another danced with his spurs on. . . ." Account in the *Farmington (Mo.) Times* quoted in: Stevens, W.B.: *Centennial History of Missouri*. St. Louis: S.J. Clarke, 1921.

"An old pioneer of South Bear Creek had a 'log rolling,' which, as usual, wound up with a dance. During the night one of his guests became very warm from the exercise of dancing, and pulling off his pants he continued to dance in the airy costume of a buckskin hunting shirt. The old pioneer became offended at his free and easy manner, and led him out of the house by the ear, remarking that he 'didn't allow any such exhibitions in his house.' But his guest argued the question with him, and finally convinced him that there was nothing so neat and elegant to dance in as a buckskin hunting shirt. So the old pioneer pulled his pants off too, and both went back and danced in that 'light fantastic costume' until morning." Bryan, W.S. and Rose, R.: *A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri*. St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1876.



"Old man Mulligan came in with a fiddle buttoned up under his coat, with the neck protruding forward. Behind him came Jim Sawyers, holding in his hand two small sticks about the size of soda straws. Mr. Mulligan was given a seat in a corner near the fireplace, and Jim sat down by him, facing the fiddle. Mulligan began thumping the strings and twisting the screws and spitting on them to make them hold. When the fiddle was tuned to his liking, he drew the bow across the strings a time or two, and struck up the tune 'Sally Gooden.'

As there was no other fiddler to assist by playing the second, Jim Sawyers beat on the base strings with the two little sticks. This was called 'beatin' straws.' In a short time, the fiddler stopped playing and again began tuning his fiddle."

Hogue, Wayman: *Back Yonder, an Ozark Chronicle*. New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1932

"There were no chairs to sit on. Our seats consisted of split logs set up on legs. There was a greasy goods box on which were two tin plates and a broken case knife. This was their table. By the fireplace were a frying pan, a skillet and lid, and a tea-kettle, and in the back part of the house was a scaffold made of unbarked poles, on which rested a mattress that was made of straw. There was nothing else to indicate that the house was occupied, except an old banjo that hung on the wall.

We asked Bill to play for us, and he seemed willing to accommodate. He seized the banjo and struck up the tune, 'Molly Hare.' Mrs. Osburn sat on the bench and kept time with her foot.

I have often thought of Bill Osburn and his wife living there alone, far removed from the financial and social problems of the world, and have wondered if theirs was not the greater happiness. Hogue, Wayman: *Back Yonder, an Ozark Chronicle*. New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1932

SIDE ONE

I'm Old But I'm Awfully Tough: Traditional Music of the Ozark Region is a collection of field recordings made in southern Missouri and in northern Arkansas over the period of 1975-76 by members of the Missouri Friends of the Folk Arts. The singers, instrumentalists, and storytellers who appear on these records reveal the variety and richness of the folk traditions in the Ozark region. Many of these tunes and songs are unique and none of these performers has appeared on record before. Some of the music may surprise you because it is not normally associated with the Ozark region. Some of the conversation may enlighten you, providing a historical perspective not often found in Ozark history books. We hope that all of it will entertain you.

Barry Bergey



Credits:

Field Recording:

Julia Olin, Jim Olin, Barry Bergey

Remastering and Editing:

Steve Fuller, MultiSound, Inc.

Layout and Design:

Elizabeth Shepard

Photography:

Cover photograph of Otto Sulltrop, muleskinner, Franklin County, Missouri by Scott Dine/St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Back Cover — Barry Bergey, Julia Olin

Pressing:

Wakefield Mfg., Inc.

LEE FINIS CAMERON "TIP" MCKINNEY
unaccompanied singing

- 1 I'm Old But I'm Awfully Tough (1:23)



EMMANUEL WOOD AND FAMILY
fiddle, guitars, bass

- 2 Lighthouse (1:42)
- 3 Story (1:10)
- 4 Dixie Blossom (2:00)
- 5 Walk Along John (2:13)
- 6 Spokane Waltz (2:25)
- 7 Bear Creek Sally Goodin (2:32)
with spoken introduction



GREEN BERRY HORTON
banjo

- 8 Rattlesnake and the Texas Pony (1:28)
- 9 Story (1:11)
- 10 Over the Woods and Through the Snow (37 sec.)
- 11 Bunker Hill (1:33)
- 12 Midnight Shuffle (42 sec.)

Total Time for Side One: 19:38

SIDE TWO



TROY LEE, REX AND RAY OFFUTT
fiddle, mandolin, guitar

- 1 Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (2:37)
- 2 Old Fort Smith (2:03)
with spoken introduction
- 3 Unnamed Schottische (1:42)
- 4 Durang's Hornpipe (2:02)
with spoken introduction
- 5 Whiskey Before Breakfast (3:08)
- 6 Kentucky Waltz (1:38)



LEE FINIS CAMERON "TIP" MCKINNEY
unaccompanied singing

- 7 Gone to View That Land (2:59)
- 8 Gypson Davy (4:07)
with spoken introduction
- 9 Wandering Boy (4:07)
- 10 Heaven Bells Are Ringing (1:23)

Total Time for Side Two: 26:31

SIDE THREE



JAKE HOCKEMEYER AND RUSS ORCHARD
fiddle, guitar

- 1 Dance Around Molly (1:56)
- 2 Coming Down From Denver (1:51)
- 3 Marmaduke's Hornpipe (1:47)



LAWRENCE BAKER
unaccompanied singing

- 4 The Death of the Old Sow (1:16)
with spoken introduction
- 5 The Old Man Who Lived in the West (2:28)



VESTA JOHNSON AND DON WOMACK
fiddle, guitar

- 6 She Oughta Been a Lady (58 sec.)
- 7 Story (1:19)
- 8 Fat Meat and Dumplings (1:27)



FRANK REED AND ALVA LEE HENDREN
fiddle, banjo

- 9 Middlegrove (1:15)
- 10 Stoney Point (1:21)
- 11 Massa Bill (1:22)
- 12 Fox Chase (1:26)

Total Time for Side Three 17:36

SIDE FOUR

ROSE PRATT
(not pictured)

- unaccompanied singing*
- 1 Story of La Guignolee (37 sec.)
 - 2 La Guignolee (1:49)
 - 3 Story (1:01)

CHARLIE PASHIA AND JOE POLITTE
lead fiddle, second fiddle

- 4 La Guignolee (1:39)



CHARLIE PASHIA
fiddle

- 5 Rustic Dance (1:28)
- 6 Father's Schottische (2:13)



JOE POLITTE
fiddle

- 7 Jenny Put the Kettle On (54 sec.)
- 8 Story and Unnamed Tune (2:34)
- 9 Molly Musk (2:00)
- 10 Mule Stories (3:46)
- 11 The Old Rock Road (1:40)
- 12 Old Man Portell's Tune (1:10)
- 13 Grand Picnic (1:50)

Total Time for Side Four: 23:48

Missouri Friends of the Folk Arts
Box 307
New Haven, Missouri 63068

Booklet Enclosed

I'M OLD BUT I'M AWFULLY TOUGH



**This project is dedicated to those musicians and their families
whose love of the music has meant its survival.**

Thanks for picking up our record and booklet, **I'm Old but I'm Awfully Tough, Traditional Music of the Ozark Region**. We hope that you will find this printed material helpful in understanding and appreciating the recorded music collected in this project. If this is the first time that you've listened to traditional music of this sort, perhaps we should do some explaining. Traditional music consists of instrumental tunes (in this case on fiddle, banjo, guitar and mandolin) and songs, accompanied and unaccompanied, which have been passed along from generation to generation usually by oral or aural means. Everything that you hear on these records was recorded in the field; that is, it was recorded in homes, on front porches, and in barber shops, rather than in a studio. It is no longer popular music, at least not in a commercial sense, thus the esthetic underpinnings of the music are a bit different than the current AM/FM radio standards.

Perhaps it would be good to say a few more words about what this music is not; in some ways that is easier than telling you what it is. We hope that the records will speak for themselves. The material recorded here is not representative of the entire state of Missouri, but rather it concentrates on the geographic area known roughly as the Ozark region. There are many fine traditional performers in northern Missouri and southern Arkansas and they also deserve close attention. Likewise, the records do not exhibit the rich heritage of black music in Missouri, which again is a lengthy study of its own and one that we hope to do in the future. Also, many fine folk musicians of the Ozark area already have albums of their own, so we have not recorded such people as Almeda Riddle, Glenn Ohrlin, Ollie Gilbert and Max Hunter, although they certainly merit your attention if this music interests you.

We hope that, with these qualifications, **I'm Old but I'm Awfully Tough** still represents a fairly broad sampling of the musical traditions of the Ozark area and that it will be the first of a series of records and projects focusing on this region. If you perform music of this sort or know of someone who does, please let us know. This recording project came about because we were convinced that many of the fine traditional musicians of the Ozarks had been overlooked in the past and now we present these

recordings with the humbling realization that we probably have overlooked many fine performers ourselves.

Speaking of overlooking people, the Ozark mountains have also had a hard time gaining deserved attention. In fact they've really had trouble convincing people that they are a bonafide mountain range. Although the Ozark uplift is one of the older highland areas in North America, it wasn't afforded the luxury of a definitive, violent upheaval which is characteristic of so many of our more well-known mountainous regions. The Ozarks went about it the hard way. Most of these hills resulted from a long tortuous weathering process, as fast running streams carved their way into soft sedimentary rock, leaving more gently sloping hills and valleys. This prompts many natives to comment that the Ozark hills aren't higher than any other mountains, but the valleys certainly are deeper. The Ozark hills are not Paleozoic intrusions, but merely remnants of a long encounter with the elements; they have endured and their unique character is a product of that experience.

In like respect, many of the people who settled in the Ozark hills very early on have endured and have taken on the character of the region. The traditions which these people have retained in story, tune, and song have also acquired personalities of their own — sometimes weathered with the changing seasons. However, the hard-rock persistence of the traditions which remain is reassuring.

As hinted earlier, the Ozark "mountains" have not always fared so well with people who have visited them with romantic expectations of Alpine splendor. An English traveller, Thomas Nuttall, in 1819 commented on the Ozarks' "rude nature" saying "the scenery is almost destitute of everything which is agreeable to human nature." We're sure that Mr. Nuttall either missed the more beautiful of the Ozark vistas, or he came with outlandish expectations. We prefer the eloquent description of the Ozarks by Charles Morrow Wilson: "Discovery or rediscovery of the Ozarks continues to tell that the Ozarks will keep on providing refuge for those who seek refuge, revival of spirit for those who

require it. The Ozarks are old and in great part slow and silent. But they are also a land of singing winds, racing shadows and brave young leaves. And of yesterday wedded with tomorrow."

Over the years the Ozark settlers have been treated little better than the hills — often victims either of hillbilly stereotyping or complete misunderstanding. Our friend Nuttall said: "These people, as well as the generality of those who, till lately inhabited the banks of the Arkansa, bear the worst moral character imaginable, being many of them renegadoes from justice, and such as have forfeited the esteem of civilized society." More recently, H. L. Mencken, in a letter to Charles Morrow Wilson, commented: "I've now had the opportunity to glimpse and smell a few of the quaint Ozark folk whom you adore so avidly. I can't prove they are any lower than whale manure on the ocean bed, but I doubt if they are very much higher." Well, we hope that this record in a sense answers those charges, for we find beauty, dignity, and, yes, character in the material contained herein. For us the most exciting aspect of this project has been the opportunity to meet, befriend, and live with some of the finest people on earth.

There is an Ozark story about John Wilson, an early settler in the region of Tavern Creek, who used to throw large dances in a bluff cave just above his cabin. When he died in 1850, in accordance with his dying wish, his family buried him, with a keg of whiskey, in the cliff above the entrance to the cave. The family then spread the word that in twenty years his friends and relatives were to break the seal of the tomb, dance in the cave, and drink the whiskey to his memory. However, sometime during the Civil War the whiskey disappeared and no dance was ever held. In spite of the fact that his children were unable to dance and drink to his memory, the great-grandchildren still visit the cave, play in the entrance, explore the dark passages, and tell the story of John Wilson's dances and of his dying wish. People pass along, whiskey disappears, and dances cease, but our thanks to those with a memory, to those great-grandchildren who discover caves and explore the dark passages, and to those who are old but awfully tough.



A History of Settlement in the Ozark Region

The French Of The Middle Mississippi Valley

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the French established their presence on the North American continent with the founding of settlements on the lower St. Lawrence. Stimulated by the profits of the fur trade, they soon advanced to the interior, making use of the extensive and convenient water routes at their disposal — from the St. Lawrence Basin through the Great Lakes chain to their westernmost extension, thence by easy portage to the Mississippi Basin, and inevitably, to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Ozarks, (situated midway along the western banks of the Mississippi River in what is now Missouri and northern Arkansas), were thus located on this great pioneer highway between eastern Canada and the Gulf of Mexico, and became the scene of French enterprise before they had been on the continent a century. On the east, the English colonists had at this time progressed barely a hundred miles from open sea, their way not shown by waterways as in the north. They soon confronted the Appalachian barrier, which was not crossed by any large numbers of them until nearly a century after French settlement in the Mississippi Valley.

In Canada, a rapid increase in population combined with limitations of soil and climate led some of the surplus population to drift west in search of furs, milder climate and better land. In the 1670s the explorations of Marquette, Joliet, La Salle and others provided much favorable information concerning the middle Mississippi Valley. These reports were rapidly disseminated in Canada and led to exploitation and settlement of the region.

As early as 1686, the men of De Tonti (one of La Salle's chief lieutenants) established a post at the mouth of the Arkansas River amongst the friendly Quawpaw (later known as the Arkansas) Indians. This place, which came to be called the Arkansas Post, developed as a center for the fur trade conducted with the Indians that inhabited the Arkansas region, and served as a stopping place for travelers along the Mississippi. The main thrust of French-Canadian immigration, however, was directed toward the Illinois country further to the north. The first permanent settlements in that region

were Cahokia and Kaskaskia (1699 and 1700 respectively), located on the east bank of the Mississippi between the mouths of the Missouri and Ohio rivers. After the French secured a foothold near the mouth of the Mississippi, immigration from Lower Louisiana and directly from France occurred. Yet, the settlement of the Middle Valley came first from the north, and Canadian stock remained dominant in the region.

At an early date, probably prior to 1700, the French of the Illinois country became acquainted with the territory on the west side of the river, and learned of its mineral wealth. They were soon making temporary visits across the river to mine lead and visit the salt springs while, for the most part, maintaining their residences in the Illinois villages as the mining country was rather rough and uninviting.

Tales of the mineral wealth of the region were carried to Lower Louisiana and thence to France, apparently becoming somewhat inflated in the process until they included reports of gold and silver being present in the country along the west bank. In France, speculation ran high that their New World Colony might produce great riches as had the Spanish colonies of Peru and Mexico.

With such high hopes having been stimulated, it is not surprising that the various expeditions shortly dispatched from France to explore the region met with disappointment at finding only lead deposits in the area. Yet the myth of the existence of silver mines continued. In 1719, the Sieur Renault embarked from France with an imposing mining expedition of several hundred. Upon surveying the territory, he quickly surmised that the wealth of the region lay in its lead deposits, not silver, and he promptly commenced mining and smelting operations. Renault's activities mark the beginning of organized mining in the area. In 1723, he received the earliest documented land grant in Upper Louisiana, which included a tract known as the "Old Mines."

For a time operations flourished, and by 1735 Saint Genevieve had been founded on the west bank of the Mississippi, directly across from Kaskaskia, to serve as a shipping depot for the mines. Because

lead occurred as a residual or "float" ore at or near the surface, it was mined simply by digging shallow pits in the earth. Because of the great extent of these shallow deposits, no shafts were sunk in the region for years to come. Smelting was conducted in as primitive a manner, by throwing the ore on heaps of burning logs, which resulted in a loss of about two-thirds of the lead. Once smelted, the lead was molded into collar shapes, hung about the necks of pack mules, and transported down Indian trails which led from the interior mining sites to the river depot.

As a result of the collapse of the Royal Company of the Indies, Renault lost his financial backing, and in 1742 returned to France. Although many of his miners departed with him, a number of them seem to have remained behind in Missouri. In 1803, when the even then ancient "Old Mines" claim of Washington County was granted to the thirty-one concessionaires who were established on it, descendants of Renault's miners, who first worked the property in the 1720s, numbered among them. To this day, descendants of these first French miners reside in the district. The "Old Mines" is quite possibly the site of the oldest permanent interior settlement on the west side of the river.

In 1745, the population on the western side of the river in what is now Missouri was estimated to be only three hundred persons. In 1760, there was only one permanent settlement, (of which there is certain knowledge, at least) located at Saint Genevieve, plus a floating population of hunters, fur traders and miners. However, in 1763, as a result of their defeat in the French and Indian War, the French ceded their territory east of the Mississippi River to England. This event caused a transfer of the French populations from the east to the west bank of the river to begin in earnest, the settlers believing that they were removing to an area still under control of their mother country. For some time, they remained unaware that the entire Louisiana Territory had been ceded by France to Spain in 1762. Yet even after this news arrived, movement proceeded, the French preferring to live under the auspices of Catholic Spain on the Missouri side rather than those of Protestant England on the east. Later movement of the French

across the river again gained momentum as a result of the Revolutionary War and the Ordinance of 1787, which prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory. Consequently, the majority of the French in Upper Louisiana had now transferred their residence to Missouri.

In addition to a considerable increase in the population of Saint Genevieve and the interior mining districts, several new settlements were established along the Mississippi River border. The area of French occupation was included in a strip of territory approximately sixty miles in width, extending along the Mississippi from a few miles north of the mouth of the Missouri River to the Arkansas Post near the mouth of the Arkansas River, with the vast majority of the settlements lying within the boundaries of the present-day state of Missouri.

Though the Spanish now controlled the territory, Upper Louisiana never became Spanish in population or spirit. Billion writes in his *Annals*: "The intercourse of the people with each other and their governors, their commerce, trade, habits, customs, manners, amusements, marriages, funerals, services in Church, parish registers — everything was in French. The governors and officials all spoke French — it was a sine qua non in their appointment. The few Spanish that settled in the country soon became Frenchmen, and all married French wives; no Frenchman became a Spaniard. . . ."

Inhabiting a country where the necessities of human existence could be acquired with little effort, the French lived in unambitious peace and were described by travellers of the day as a congenial and joyous people who had, to a considerable degree, acquired the art of happy living. They combined mining, farming, hunting and fur trading in a desultory fashion to sustain themselves, and pursued the customs of their ancestors, with ample time given to the pleasures of music, dance and gaming. John F. Darby, one of the early majors of Saint Louis, said in his *Recollections* that the people were the most happy and contented and believed in enjoying life. There was a fiddle in every house and a dance somewhere every night. No man locked his door, and they lived in security. Relations

with the Indians of the neighborhood were good, and intermarriage was not uncommon.

The well-developed social instincts of the French led the majority of them to settle together in villages. Their dwellings were usually one-story plastered huts with large porches or galleries on from two to four sides of the house. The more substantial residences were made of hewn logs placed side by side in a vertical position, which were then sunk into the ground, and plastered with mud on the outside. This method of building was referred to as "poteaux en terre."

Each household kept a large, well-tended garden and orchard to the rear of the house. A large field in the bottoms was held in common for cropland, as in traditional European farm villages, and each family was assigned a long, narrow lot within it for cultivation. Farming practices were somewhat lax; once the crops were sown, they were generally left to nature, and received no further attention until harvest. Pasturage and woodland were also held in common outside the village, and the stock ranged at will. In the autumn after the harvest, many of the French resorted to the mines, where they labored until the onset of severe weather.

As the Eighteenth Century drew to a close, a series of events began which was to disrupt the rather idyllic existence of the French in the eastern Ozarks of Missouri. Until 1795, the Spanish regime had officially forbade the predominantly Protestant Americans to settle in Upper Louisiana but the Spanish authorities reconsidered their immigration policies. The strong anti-British sentiments of the American frontiersman made him appear as a likely defender against possible English aggression. The Spanish therefore decided to encourage American immigration as a means of strengthening their isolated settlements in the Middle Valley. The inducements held out to prospective settlers were indeed attractive: the pioneers were offered free land, exemption from taxes, and, in some cases, free animals, seeds and tools.

Although many Americans felt reluctant to remove to a foreign territory under the control of a Catholic monarch, a number of factors combined to enhance

the attractiveness of the Spanish offer. The Ohio River, a main artery of westward migration led directly to Upper Louisiana. By the end of the eighteenth century, the vanguard of American settlement had extended itself to the mouth of the Ohio and into western Kentucky and Tennessee, with many a restless pioneer ready for new countries to open. At that time, the prairie lands which began a short distance north of the Ohio were considered unsuited for agriculture. But reports received from the Frenchmen, who were continually encountered by the Americans on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, indicated that the Trans-Mississippi region was a likely place for agricultural pursuits, and contained as well the rich lead mines. This territory was considerably closer to New Orleans, the only market then available, and settlers on the west bank were assured free access to it at all times. In the Northwest Territory slavery had been prohibited by the Ordinance of 1787. At this time, public lands there could only be purchased in tracts of 4000 acres. Almost the entire area of Illinois was still held by Indian tribes. In Kentucky land titles were often defective and frequently contested. South of the Ohio, land values and taxes were generally on the rise, and the country was rapidly filling up.

Given the existing conditions, it is not surprising that a number of Americans were ready to emigrate to the Spanish territory across the Mississippi as soon as the way was made clear. The majority of the early immigrants were of Southern extraction, with Kentucky and Tennessee contributing the largest number of settlers. A generation before, these states had received the overflow from the seaboard states. Now, in their turn, they served as distributing centers for the newer regions being opened in the west and south. Other states easily connected with the Ohio River system soon began to be represented as well in the trans-Mississippi migration, most especially Virginia and the Carolinas.

Carl O. Saur, in his excellent book, *Geography of the Ozark Highlands*, cites the following reasons for the extensive movement of people out of the southern states: "Emigration from the southern states was due in the first place to the economic

pressure caused by extensive, wasteful farming, largely with slave labor, which demanded large farms, depleted the soil, and tended to drive out farmers who were not slave-owners. The lack of manufactures and the primitive condition of commerce in the southern states prevented the absorption of the surplus farm population into other pursuits. The result was the first great wave of emigration from the seaboard to the west, which was not spent until it had overspread the Mississippi Basin as far west as Texas and Kansas. Southern Missouri was so situated as to intercept a large part of this westward moving stream of population, especially that which descended the Ohio, Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers."²

The Mississippi River Border

"American immigrants settled at first within the original area of settlements, either locating in those settlements already established or in the unoccupied territory within the frontier lines."³ Beginning in Southeast Missouri in areas adjacent to the mouth of the Ohio River, American settlements were soon spotted up and down the Mississippi River Border from New Madrid in the Bootheel to north of Saint Louis.

Though most of the Spanish grants to Americans were agricultural lands, the lead mining district attracted many Americans, as it had the French before them. In 1797, Moses Austin (the father of Stephen Austin) migrated from the lead mines of Wythe County, Virginia to Mine a Burton near the present-day town of Potosi, Washington County, Missouri. There he received a mining grant from the Spanish government and commenced operations. He sunk the first regular shafts for raising the ore, built the first reverberatory furnace, and introduced other improvements as well. As a consequence of American immigration and the resulting increase in prospecting activities, a number of important new bodies of ore were discovered, and new mines opened.

In but a few short years, the American immigrants had numerically overwhelmed the French inhabitants of Upper Louisiana and by 1803 comprised fifty-six percent of the population. In contrast to the French, the Americans preferred to

establish themselves on detached farms. While the French generally had chosen riparian locations for their settlements, frequently malarial in nature, the Americans selected sites in the more healthful uplands. Much more attention was paid to agriculture by the newcomers, and they consequently pursued it with considerably greater success than did the French. The dominance of Catholicism in the region was challenged by Protestant frontier religions, namely the evangelistic Methodist and Baptist sects, which crossed the Mississippi early on and found fertile field amongst the pioneers of the Trans-Mississippi area.

In 1802, control of Louisiana was returned by Spain to France, whereupon the United States began negotiations with Napoleon for the purchase of New Orleans in order to secure an outlet for produce of its western lands. In 1803, France offered the entire Louisiana Territory, (over 800,000 square miles), to the United States for fifteen million dollars, or about four cents an acre. This offer was promptly accepted, and a representative of the United States government arrived in Saint Louis to take formal possession of the territory in March of 1804.

The Missouri River Border

The immediate effect of the transfer was an increase in immigration. While the Mississippi River Border continued to increase in population, Americans had also begun to make their way into the interior of Missouri. Violette writes: "The first movement into the interior was up the Missouri River. Several things contributed to give this direction to the movement: first, the Missouri River was the one great natural route leading far into the interior; second, the rough and hilly country in the southeastern part of the state, Washington, Iron and Madison counties, and the swampy region in Bollinger and Stoddard Counties, formed natural barriers in the way of early expansion directly west of the original strip of settlements along the Mississippi; third, not only were these regions just west of the original strip of settlements difficult to pass through, but they were ill adapted to the purposes of the immigrants. The settlers were seeking farming lands, and these they could find in greatest abundance along the Missouri. As a result

of this deflection of the current of American immigration into Missouri, the central interior was fairly well-populated before the region just beyond the second tier of counties west of the Mississippi to the south of the Missouri began to be occupied."⁴

One of the first important settlements on the Missouri was located in the fertile bottoms of Femme Osage Creek about fifty miles upstream from the mouth of the river. Here, in 1797, Daniel Boone and his colony from Kentucky established themselves. A few settlers, mostly Kentuckians and a few French traders, were located above the Boone settlement as far up the river as Loure Island, Montgomery County, a large tract of Missouri River bottom land insular only at high water. The hostile attitude of the Indians prevented settlement above the Loure River at this time, and some settlers even withdrew from their exposed locations.

The next permanent settlements of note along the Missouri River were made in 1810 in an area known at the time as the Boonslick country, located approximately two hundred miles upstream from the mouth of the river. Violette says that "the name Boon's Lick was first applied to that spot in Howard County where the Boones made salt in 1807, later it was applied to all the territory along the Missouri above Cedar Creek, and finally it was used to designate the whole interior of the state."⁵ "The Boonslick country contained numerous salt springs, good water, fine grass, sufficient timber, the largest areas of loess soils in the state, and many good bottoms. It amply supplied, therefore, the necessities of pioneer life. The fame of this new country spread quickly, and one of the most notable rushes of immigrants in the annals of the state resulted."⁶

Though settlement commenced in 1810, the autumnal fevers that broke out in the Boonslick settlements in 1811, and the Indian troubles caused by the war of 1812 caused immigration to slacken considerably for several years. But by 1817, people were coming in droves. "The whole current of immigration set towards this country, Boon's Lick, so called. . . . Boon's Lick was the common point of union for the people. Ask one of

them whither he was moving, and the answer was, 'To Boon's Lick, to be sure' . . . And thus wave propels wave."⁷

The settlement of the Boonslick country in the center of the state was followed by the filling up of territory between it and the older settlements to the east. Lands were taken up all along the Missouri River between Boonslick and Saint Louis. Meanwhile, west of Boonslick, movement continued up the Missouri until it reached the western boundary of the state. Here, in and around the counties of Clay and Jackson, where Kansas City is today located, a population center developed comparable in density to that of Boonslick and the area of original settlements in the Mississippi River Border.

At the same time movement up the Missouri was occurring, a similar movement, though not so strong at first, was headed for the so-called Salt River country, located a hundred miles to the north of Saint Louis. Here, tributaries of the Mississippi opened the way westward far into the interior north of the Missouri River. As settlement spread westward through this region, it eventually met up with a corresponding movement of population north of the Missouri, radiating from the Boonslick country.

The wide band of settled territory that extended east to west across Missouri from the Mississippi to the western border of the state and included the Salt River and Boonslick countries had attracted, in the main, a certain type of immigrant. Most were respectable families of some means who frequently held slaves, and came primarily from Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia. Kentuckians and Virginians of the planter type predominated in the central Missouri River Border counties, and it was here that the overwhelming majority of slaves held in the state were concentrated. Many of the Virginians coming through the Cumberland Gap had found Kentucky already too crowded for their tastes, and had moved directly on to central Missouri. On the other hand, North Carolinians moving westward entered the less crowded Tennessee, (the settlement frontier having moved less quickly through this state than through Kentucky) and,

finding abundant land still available, stayed to settle. Hence they were not as well-represented in the early days of settlement in Missouri as were the Virginians. Tennesseans came to Missouri in numbers second only to Kentucky migrants, but "Tennessee's plantation settlers . . . came . . . 'too little and too late.' It is a truism that lowland people emigrate to the lowlands, highland people to the highlands. When the lowland, or plantation people of Tennessee were getting ready to emigrate they found new homes to the south and west more accessible than to the northwest. They were close to the new states of Alabama and Mississippi and later were attracted to Arkansas and Texas."⁸

The Missouri River Border counties and those adjacent to them form a transitional zone between the Ozarks and the Corn Belt. They contained more slaves than any other large contiguous area outside the South itself, and have maintained strong political and cultural ties with the South since the early days of settlement. The majority of the inhabitants not surprisingly held strong Confederate sympathies during the Civil War. It was either at the time of the war itself, or around 1872, when the right to vote was being restored to Southern sympathizers, that the area came to be called "Little Dixie." "Little Dixie" established itself as a Democratic Party stronghold at that time, and to a considerable extent has remained so to the present day.

The Western Border

"The western border of the Ozarks, although more favored in resources, was settled many years later than the eastern and northern borders. The reasons were: (1) the region lies two hundred miles west of the Mississippi Valley and it therefore had to wait until emigration had moved well beyond this river. (2) It was accessible by no large streams, the only navigable ones being the Osage, White, and Neosho. All of these are small and connect with the Mississippi by circuitous routes. (3) To the east is the rough Ozark hill country, which was a barrier to direct immigration. (4) The region was mostly prairie and hence not considered desirable, nor was it generally suited to early settlement. (5) Its great mineral wealth was not known until after the middle of the nineteenth century."⁹

The White River rises in northwest Arkansas, curves upward through southern Missouri, and then reenters Arkansas, flowing southeastward until it reaches the Arkansas River, a few miles above the place where this river empties into the Mississippi. The Neosho River has its headwaters in southwest Missouri from which it flows through eastern Oklahoma, heading southward to meet the upper Arkansas. These two rivers provided the dominant routes of immigration for the early settlers of the Western Border. As the wide valley of the Arkansas River was settled fairly early on, settlements soon began to extend up its tributaries. The White River valley in particular afforded excellent (though due to the form and size of the valley, not too numerous) sites for homesteads. Therefore a thin chain of settlement rapidly extended itself upstream during the first decades of the nineteenth century. The White and Neosho River country also had a reputation as being excellent hunting territory, and was well-known on this account in Tennessee especially.

The southern margins of the Springfield Plain received the earlier settlements made in the Western Border region, which, as in other prairie regions, were located in valleys at the edge of the timber. The region was most accessible from Tennessee, and that state was the source of a large majority of the early immigrants, with Kentuckians and natives of Arkansas being well-represented among them.

Stock-raising attained particular importance in the Western Border region for several reasons. The distance to any market for articles of export was great, and transportation facilities were lacking. Stock could transport itself. The early settlers, even if they had been so inclined, lacked adequate implements for breaking the tough prairie sod for cultivation. As long as this remained the case, (as it was in the early days), each farmer had practically at his back door, an excellent and abundant pasturage in the form of the prairie. Housing stock was unnecessary because the winters were relatively mild and the snowfall light. Stock-raising was thus a very inexpensive proposition, and profitable, the disadvantages of isolation notwithstanding.

Other routes of immigration into the Springfield Plain area of the western Ozark border soon came into use. One early overland route, originating in Saint Louis, was an upland trail that followed the crest of several long divides across the Ozarks, and ran diagonally northeast to southwest across the state. Other more heavily-traveled routes descended from points on the Missouri River. Roads from Jefferson City and Boonville near the center of the state skirted the northwestern margin of the Ozark hill country and then continued south to the Springfield Plain. Beginning in the 1830s, the Osage River, which rises in the plain and flows northeasterly to the Missouri River, became an important artery of immigration.

"Springfield, settled in 1822-23, became the most flourishing town on the western border. It was located on the margin of the Kickapoo Prairie, one of the finest and largest bodies of farmland in the Ozarks, and controlled the trade of this prairie. The site of the village was determined by an excellent spring and power site."¹⁰ It became the terminus of all the various routes leading into the region.

The Western Border entered its second stage of development around 1850 when great deposits of lead were discovered at Granby, Newton County, in the southwestern corner of the state. The town grew up almost overnight, and miners were attracted from all over the world. New deposits were being discovered through the 1880s, most notably in the Joplin district in 1870 and at Aurora in 1886. In 1870, not a single house stood at Joplin. But by 1874 it was a city of 3,000, with 1,000 miners and 13 furnaces. Zinc became as important a product as lead in the mining districts when, in the 1870s, a satisfactory method of processing the zinc blends was developed.

The mining districts provided a home market for agricultural products, and thus farming experienced a marked invigoration. The extension of rail service to the area after the Civil War ended its former isolation rapidly and effectively. The value of the once-despised prairies was realized, and by 1881 the handbook of the Missouri State Board of Immigration stated that they were "the most valuable agricultural land in southern Missouri. The

ease with which they can be cultivated, through the introduction of labor-saving machinery, has given them a marked preference over the timbered lands."

After the introduction of the railroads to the Western Border, a second large agricultural immigration into the Springfield Plain took place. Unlike the majority of earlier pioneers, these settlers came from the north where they had previously appropriated lands in northern Missouri, Iowa and Illinois. Southwestern Missouri, not easily accessible, was inviting to these immigrants as it offered good cheap lands, with farming conditions similar to those in the midwestern states they left behind.

The Ozark Center

Successively the eastern, northern and western border regions of the Ozarks were settled. On the south, the Ozark Highlands extend downward almost to the Arkansas River. As did the Missouri somewhat earlier, the Arkansas River provided a great natural route far to the interior of the state, and its wide valley was the focus of the earliest American immigration into the region. Settlement north of that river then spread along the eastern and western borders of the state, avoiding the Arkansas Ozarks.

The Ozark Center encompasses the rough hill country of north-central Arkansas and south-central Missouri, and, in both of these states was the last region to be settled. Because of its poverty and isolation, the area held little attraction to the agriculturalist. Only where the stream valley led from the border regions back into the hills did a limited number of farmers find homes in the occupation of valley lands. "Gradually there was a slow immigration into the central regions, the process of settlement being slowest in the Courtois and Osage-Gasconade River hills, and longest delayed on the remote Missouri-Arkansas border. . . . The region has experienced no marked periods of rapid growth, except after the Civil War, and nothing that may be called a boom. Settlement has been by gradual and unobtrusive infiltration."¹¹

Those who were attracted to this region were of a

different type from those who settled the border areas. For the most part, they were hunter frontiersmen, although some were attracted to the region by the pine timber, saltpeter, and iron to be found there. The region became a haven for those who lived by their guns and traps, compelled by their devotion to the chase. As the Ozark borders filled in, men such as these, unsuited for and disinterested in ordered occupations, withdrew further into the hills. "To these men the hills of the central Ozarks were by no means an undesirable region. They cared little for fertile soil and less for transportation facilities. Here was a healthful country, abundant game, springs of cold, clear water, patches of bottom land sufficient to produce the small amount of corn and cotton which they needed, and the elbowroom which men of this stamp desired."¹²

In the estimation of the hunter frontiersman, the White River country ranked first. The White River and its numerous forks and tributaries drain at least two tiers of counties on either side of the Missouri-Arkansas border except to the east, where the Ozarks are terminated by the extensive lowlands of the Mississippi River Valley. Schoolcraft, writing in 1818, said that "the furs and peltries are taken down that river at certain seasons in canoes, and disposed of to traders, who visit the lower parts of that river for that purpose. Here they receive, in exchange for their furs, woolen clothes, rifles, knives, and hatchets, salt, powder, lead, etc."¹³ At this time a thin chain of settlement extended along the upper reaches of the White River from Batesville, Arkansas to Forsyth, Missouri. Other early locations were on the upper Black in Reynolds County and at Poplar Bluff.

These frontiersmen formed little attachment to their place of habitation, being ready to move on when game became scarce or the proper claimant of the land appeared and forced them to remove. "The nomadic habits of the frontier were developed to the highest degree in this footloose group. . . . This was typical, of course, of almost every frontier. It existed in greater purity, however, in the Ozark hills, and remained longer there than in most sections, because of the small and belated competition from agricultural immigrants. As Missouri (and Arkansas)

developed, many men of this type moved west with the frontier. Others retreated into the hills south of the Missouri (and north of the Arkansas). Since the Ozark hills were almost unoccupied agriculturally for years after the surrounding regions had been converted to farming uses, this section long served as a refuge for the hunter frontiersman. Thus many became detached from that westward moving frontier of which they had been a part and remained in the hills. They gradually accepted agricultural habits, with varying degrees of success, or formed a local proletariat, working at teaming, tie hacking, clay digging, and other occasional jobs."¹⁴

The central Ozarks attracted and became, by and large, the domain of hill people from central and east Tennessee. Here they found a country similar to that which they had left behind, and so suited to their tastes. In some respects, particularly with regard to accessibility, soil and water, it was an improvement over the regions from which they had emigrated. Because the area was free of competition from the wealthier and more efficient farming classes, they were able to move in with relative ease, and did so.

The Graduation Act of 1854 greatly aided the settlement of the rough hill country. Heretofore, the minimum price of \$1.25 per acre for public land had proved an obstacle to the settlement of the poorer tracts, as they were not considered to be worth the price. By this act, however, the price of public lands were reduced in accordance with the length of time they had been up for sale. Land that had been offered for at least ten years was reduced to a dollar an acre with further reduction made to twelve and one-half cents per acre for land that remained unpurchased after thirty years.

Very few slaves were ever held in the Ozark Center, and during the Civil War, most of the hill people supported the Republican Party, and afterwards as well. Following the war, immigrants from Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and the New England states joined the flow of Tennessee settlers to the region, taking advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862. The act granted a quarter section to each family head and each other person twenty-one years of age or over, thus enabling families of little

means to establish themselves in reasonable comfort.

Open range stock-raising and the chase, combined with marginal farming were the main occupations in the region as it became somewhat more settled. With regard to other pioneer occupations, the region did not differ significantly from the border regions, except that because of their isolation, the hill people were forced to be more self-sufficient to a greater degree and for a longer period of time than the pioneers of other sections. As a result, cotton-growing, spinning, and weaving, and other such industries associated with a pioneer lifestyle remained common here long after they had been abandoned in other areas. "By moderate labor they could secure enough to supply their small wants. By additional labor they gained little more, working in the fashion to which they had become accustomed. One man made about as much as his neighbor and both were satisfied."¹⁵

The German Immigration

The latest immigration into the Ozarks on a large scale was effected by the Germans. While thousands made the city of Saint Louis their home, the larger part of the rural population located in the Missouri and Mississippi River Borders in fairly compact areas, where they have largely displaced the earlier American settlers.

The major period of German immigration began about 1830 and continued until after 1850. At this time, due to adverse economic, social, and political conditions at home, a tremendous emigration from German states occurred. A majority chose the United States as their destination. "The Napoleonic Wars had been followed by a constitutionalist movement, which was supported especially by university circles. The 'Jungdeutschland' movement was suppressed by a reactionary government, and many of those who participated in it were forced to flee or chose to leave the country. Following the years 1832-33 and 1848-49 thousands of Germany's ablest men, young and old, left their native land and a large part of them came to America. A second group, a small one, came to the New World because they had tired of convention-

ridden civilization. The spirit of romanticism was then strong in many quarters, and there were some who put into practice, more or less consistently, the principles of Rousseau in the wilderness of the West. A third group consisted of religious Separatists, for whom the free and full development of their ideals depended on escape from the repressive land of an established church. For all of them the frontier was the best place to realize these ideals, each group hoping to build its community uninfluenced by established institutions. Others, probably the largest single class, came solely to better their fortunes."¹⁶

The publication of a book in 1829 by Gottfried Duden entitled, *Reise nach den westlichen Staaten*, influenced many of the German immigrants to choose locations along the Missouri River for the establishment of their communities. Duden lived, during the years 1824-25, along the Missouri River in Warren County, a few miles upstream from the Femme Osage Creek valley where Daniel Boone and his family had settled. "He wrote in glowing terms of the beautiful Missouri Valley, the wooded uplands, the mild climate, and the charm of pioneer life. He seems to have experienced two abnormally mild winters. At any rate, unintentionally, he led many to expect a climate almost Italian in its moderation. . . . The publication of the geographic romance bore almost immediate fruits."¹⁷

There were at least thirty-three German families on the Missouri and twenty in the old Boone settlement on the Femme Osage by the end of the year 1832. In 1834, a colony was sent over by the Emigration Society of Giessen, which located near the place Duden had lived. This society was the first of several which had as their goal the establishment of a "Germania" in America, a German state in the wilderness of Missouri. The town of Washington was founded on the Missouri River in Franklin County by the Berlin Society, and the Solingen Society established a community on Tavern Creek, also located in Franklin County. The largest effort toward the establishment of a "German state," however, was undertaken by the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia. An agent of the

society, sent west to purchase land, selected a site on the bluffs along the Missouri because it reminded him of his former home on the Rhine. (The similarity of the Missouri River Valley to the Rhineland proved often to be an important factor in the attraction held for German immigrants.) Twelve thousand acres were purchased. In the year 1838, two hundred and thirty persons arrived from Germany, Alsace, and Switzerland and the town of Hermann was founded.

Other settlements were established on the Missouri River Border for the purposes of religious solidarity, the earliest being at Westphalia, Osage County, which was settled by Catholics from Muenster in 1833. Around the center grew seventeen other Catholic settlements in the following years which collectively contained six hundred families by 1840.

For a hundred miles above Saint Louis along the Missouri, German settlements were soon in the majority, with immigration continuing to spread up river. Almost concomitant with the influx of Germans to areas along the Missouri was a movement into several counties along the Mississippi River south of Saint Louis, most especially Cape Girardeau, Perry and Saint Genevieve counties, the immigrants being attracted by the cheap land there available. Most of these settlements were made for purposes of religious solidarity, with German Catholics comprising the majority. An interesting exception were the Saxon Lutherans, or "Old Lutherans," who had comprised a conservative minority in the Saxon State Church, and who, fearing repression at home, had come to establish themselves in America. They chose a remote location in eastern Perry County for the site of their theocratic community. This colony became a nucleus for the establishment of other "Old Lutheran" congregations in the area, and represented the beginnings of the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church.

"The chief geographic bases of German settlement in Missouri, besides the frontier location, were the accessibility of the region from Europe by way of New Orleans and the Mississippi River, the low cost of land, and the similarity of soil, climate, and vegetation to conditions in their native land. This immigration antedated the construction of western

railroads and also, in the main, of canals between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley. The state of Missouri was reached more easily therefore, than states farther north and also more easily than large tracts of desirable land further east. The majority of the newcomers established themselves in the river hills."¹⁸

Americans had occupied the bottoms and later the prairies, leaving room in the river hill country for the Germans. These loess-veneered lands had been avoided by Americans because of their uneven surface. "The Germans, however, who were accustomed to careful farming on a small scale, were able to cultivate the hill soil so as to avoid erosion, and were willing to expend upon it the additional labor which its topography required. Properly tilled, the bluff lands yielded excellent regular returns. The settler was able, therefore, not only to establish himself at small outlay, but to save a surplus and later to buy more desirable lands."¹⁹

After 1848-49 Germany's large, surplus rural population supplied the bulk of that country's emigrants, and they were mostly of the peasant class. These immigrants spread over much of the United States. Missouri, because of the large number of Germans already established in the region, received its share.

"The German settlements in the Ozarks increased rapidly around the original nuclei of settlement. Although some expansion pushed outward, for the most part growth took the form of a filling-in of areas within the bounds of the original settlements. . . . Germans preferred to settle among their own kind. . . . The literature is replete with references to the German practice of buying out non-German neighbors, as a means of both expanding landholdings, and of obtaining land of higher quality. This process was facilitated both by a willingness among Germans, in many cases, to pay higher than market value for their neighbor's land and, frequently, by a desire among non-Germans to move away from areas dominated by the clannish Germans."²⁰

Having once established themselves on the land, the Germans demonstrated a certain distinctive

stability in retaining their holdings. "Where Germans have located in most cases they have remained. . . . Property is handed down from father to son, and in many cases the descendants of the original entrymen still retain the land."²¹

FOOTNOTES

1. Billion, *Annals of St. Louis*, pp. 67-77.
2. Saur, *Geography of the Ozark Highlands of Missouri*, p. 102.
3. Violette, "Early Settlements in Missouri", p. 48.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
6. Saur, p. 110.
7. Flint, *Recollections*, p. 202.
8. Shoemaker, *Missouri's Tennessee Heritage*, p. 131.
9. Saur, p. 138.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
13. Schoolcraft, *View of the Lead Mines*, pp. 249-250.
14. Saur, pp. 151-152.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
20. Gerlach, *Immigrants in the Ozark, A Study in Ethnic Geography*, pp. 59-60.
21. Saur, p. 173.



LEE FINIS CAMERON EMMANUEL WOOD "TIP" MCKINNEY AND FAMILY

1. I'm Old But I'm Awfully Tough — unaccompanied.

"I'm Old But I'm Awfully Tough" was recorded by "Uncle Josh" Cal Stuart and was first listed in the February, 1902, edition of the Victor Catalogue. A two part article on Cal Stuart written by Jim Walsh appears in his regular column of *Hobbies* magazine, entitled "Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists" (January and February, 1951, p. 20). Walsh describes the record as a "Laughing Song" and tells us "Uncle Josh" is a jolly old fellow who claimed to be near 73. This type of tune was a specialty of Stuart's who recorded both cylinders and discs. A song by the same name was collected in July, 1939 by Sidney Robertson from Hubert Brady of Columbia, California. Described as "a staid song about San Francisco" leads one to believe it was different from Tip's.

1. *I've been to New England; I've sailed on the Maine.*

Been around this world three times and I'm going again.

I've slept in the cinder pile where it was rough;

I'm old but I'm awfully tough.

Chorus:

*I'm old but I'm awfully tough, you see
Heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh; ha, ha,
ha, ha, ha*

*Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha; ha, heh, heh, heh,
heh.*

I'm old but I'm awfully tough.

2. *I've been in the booze joints, drank whiskey and rum.*

I'm a great deal of feller for to have lots of fun.

I've slept in the cinder pile where it was rough;

I'm old but I'm awfully tough.

Chorus:

According to Emmanuel, the Woods came originally from England, prudently deciding to leave the country after some member of the family was caught borrowing a few of the King's apples. They first settled in North Carolina and later emigrated to Kentucky where Thomas Wilson Wood, Emmanuel's father, was born in 1826 in Cumberland County. During the Civil War, Thomas joined the Union Army, and was captain of Company "C" of the 13th Kentucky Volunteer Cavalry. The company was formed for protection against the depredations of Confederate guerilla bands active on the southeastern Kentucky-Tennessee border.

After his home in Kentucky was destroyed as a result of the war, Thomas joined his military comrades and homesteaded in Illinois. Not satisfied with this country, he shortly removed to Kansas. But, being originally a hill man, he couldn't adjust to the flat, muddy prairies. He left Kansas to settle finally in Taney County, in the White River country of southwest Missouri, where the rocky hills and springs reminded him of his native Kentucky.

After establishing himself in Missouri, Thomas was married for a second time (his first wife having died) to Mathilda D. Essary, a native of Taney County. Emmanuel, born in 1900, was the second of three children, his father being 74 years of age at the time of his birth.

Emmanuel says times were hard in his youth, and he often had to rely on hunting to supply food for the family. He jokingly once told us that he had to leave Taney County because he'd killed all the rabbits and squirrels that there were in that country.

Emmanuel and his family have for some time resided in the town of Ozark in Christian County, a little south of Springfield. Here, every weekend for over twenty-five years, in a little storefront on the town square, Emmanuel has held his "Grand Old Opry," where friends gather for an evening of old-time music and dance.

Accompanying him on these recordings are Emmanuel's two sons Rex and Ray Wood, and his daughter Thelma Hermilla. Rex plays guitar, while Ray and Thelma trade off on guitar and bass.

2. Lighthouse 1:42 key of D

Emmanuel learned this piece of music from Art Galbraith of Springfield, Mo. Melodically, the tune is related to "Old Dubuque" and to "Five Miles Out of Town," both of which are included in R. P. Christeson's book, "The Old Time Fiddlers Repertory" (Columbia, Mo., University of Missouri Press, 1973). It is a fairly common tune in the Midwest.

3. Story

Emmanuel Wood: I'll tell you, when I was about ten, eleven years old my uncle come down to our place and sit there, we had us a fiddle made out of a cigar box and he'd sit and play that 'til midnight, and I'd sit right by him and listen to it and finally I got to where I could play.

Thelma Hermilla: But it was you mother's dad that taught you the other tunes, your grandpa?

E.W. Well, granddad played the fiddle and granddaddy was a jig dancer and he was a part Indian and his hair hung way down here and twisted up in rolls, one on each side. He was a blacksmith and he done a lot of huntin'. He'd get out of a night, he had a 38-40 Winchester and hang it on the saddle horn, he had a old gray horse, he'd put a bell on that old horse and he'd ride out underneath a turkey roost and shoot him off a turkey, wild turkey. They put a bell on that horse and they'd think it was a loose horse or something. Well the cattle and horses all had bells on 'em, down in the hills, and they wouldn't pay no attention to him, he'd ride up under a roost and shoot him off a turkey.

4. Dixie Blossom 2:00 key of G

Emmanuel also learned this tune from Art Galbraith. We haven't heard this tune outside of the Ozarks, although it is quite possible that it is played elsewhere. We recently collected a similar piece in Reynolds County, Missouri, entitled "Chicken Pie."

5. Walk Along John 2:13 key of G

At one time "Walk Along John" was fairly widespread in the Ozarks and the Southwest. We've collected the following words that are associated with the tune:

GREEN BERRY HORTON

*Walk along John with your paper collar on
Once you git it off you'll never get it on
Walk along John with your paper collar on
Susie's in the kitchen sewin' buttons on.*

"Walk Along John" has appeared in two written collections of fiddle music, "The Fiddle Book," by Marion Thede (Oak Publishing Co.) and "The Old Time Fiddler's Repertory," by R. P. Christeson. In places the tune sounds similar to "Stoney Point," and may be a variant of that tune. Also, the tune may be descended from a minstrel song with the same title credited to Dan Emmett in 1844.

6. Spokane Waltz 2:25 Key of C

Emmanuel learned this waltz from his brother. He never knew the correct title for the tune, but named it "The Spokane Waltz" because his brother moved to Spokane, Washington.

7. Story

E.W. All right, I'll tell you, there was a man moved in here, he was the daddy of 16 kids and he was a fiddler. He came down there and got to playin' it, and I learned it from him, Milt Little, and that's the only guy I ever heard play it. Well, I couldn't learn it from him. There was another guy came to me and he said, "Do you play the 'Bear Creek Sally Goodin?'" I said, "No, I don't." But I had it in my brain and I said, "Well, I'll learn to play that." And I just picked it up from what little I heard him play it and what I could remember about it. I'd always second for him, and it just got stamped on my brain and that's where I play it.

Bear Creek Sally Goodin 1:48 Key of A (Fiddle tuned AEAC # coarse to fine)

This is an Ozark variant of the ever popular "Sally Goodin." This is the only tune on the album in which the fiddle is tuned to other than standard violin tuning. Unfortunately, the use of open tunings, at least in Missouri, is almost a thing of the past. This is a shame, because many of the oldest and most beautiful tunes were played using open tunings. The decline of their use can be at least partially attributed to modern fiddle contest rules, which usually prohibit them. The reasoning behind this is to eliminate "trick tunes" from the contests. While this ruling may effectively eliminate the "trick tunes," it also eliminates much of the beauty of the old tunes.

We first met Berry while attending the annual folk festival held in Mountain View, Arkansas in 1968. He was standing amongst the crowd in the courthouse square, which had gathered to hear the music. A stranger pointed him out to us, and said that he could play the banjo the "old-time way." We talked him into playing, and later just talked — got to know one another. He invited us over to his farm, and said he would show us some rough country. Over the years our friendship has grown.

Berry's farm lies in Barren Hollow (pronounced Barn Holler) about seven miles east of Marshall, the seat of Searcy County, which is located in northwestern Arkansas. Taking a trip to Berry's place is like stepping back into time, for his self-sufficient style of living is more reminiscent of the 19th century than the 20th. He has been a farmer all his life. When he was ten years old, his father gave Berry and his older brother each a horse and a patch of cleared ground, and told them to plant a crop of corn. Every year since then, Berry has put in a crop, over sixty consecutive years.

It's hard to imagine that anything could be made to grow in that rocky land, but Berry can and does grow tomatoes the size of a softball. (We became intimately acquainted with the size of Berry's tomatoes one summer, when we happened to drop in for a visit at pickin' time, and altogether too familiar with the copperheads who like the climate under the vines.) He keeps a garden as well, and it's a rare day when there's anything on the supper table that he didn't grow himself.

Though he's primarily a farmer, Berry is as well a barber, blacksmith, musician, doctor, water-witcher, storyteller, and a big tease. Walking through the woods with him is quite an education in itself, for he can name every tree, bush, or weed that grows in his area, and what's more, can tell you exactly how it can be used, medicinally or otherwise.

Music is and always has been a source of great joy to Berry. His childhood was filled with it, for numerous aunts and uncles played the banjo or fiddle. Abbie and Absie Morrison, Berry's uncles, were among the finest fiddlers in the area. Uncle El Horton played the banjo, and Berry learned many

tunes from him. Most all of his family had come to Arkansas from Tennessee, as had most of the early settlers of Searcy County.

Berry Horton is a very special person, for he is truly a lover of life and people. In return, people love him. And that includes all of us.

8. Rattlesnake and the Texas Pony 1:28 key of A

Fiddle versions of this dance tune are usually titled "Wolves a'Howlin'." (Stripling Brothers, County 401, and Earl Collins, Briar 4204) Berry plays a tune on the fiddle which he calls "Wolves a'Howlin'," but it is in the key of G rather than A and has a different melody than this piece. It is interesting to note that all of Berry's banjo pieces are either played in D or A, while most of his fiddle pieces are in G or C.

9. Story

Jim Olin: Did your grandpa Horton, did he come into Arkansas?

Berry Horton: Yeah.

J. O. Where did he come from?

B. H. Tennessee. Yeah, he come from Tennessee here, yup.

J. O. What did he come here for?

B. H. Oh, this was a huntin' territory, you see there was animals, all kinds of animals here. He come here to hunt. And they settled here. This was all wilderness then. Wasn't nothin' here but just animals, and they come here to hunt. See this was all in wilderness here. There wasn't no cleared land or nothin'. He homesteaded this and settled down there and cleared all this land out and he just stayed there as long as he lived. Never did leave. No. They come here to hunt. There was every kind of animal here then, just like there is over in the jungles, you see. Bear, deer, and lions, and just everything. Turkey, they hunted to get their meat. You know, they didn't have no meat. Just had to get out and kill it.

10. Over the Woods and Through the Snow 37 sec. key of A

Doc Watson plays a very similar version of this tune with the title "Down the Road." (The Watson Family, Folkways FA 2366) The tune has also been done

TROY LEE, REX AND RAY OFFUTT

up Bluegrass style. The melody is related to the fiddle tune "Ida Red."

Berry's title is the first line of a couplet he recited to us:

*"Over the river and through the snow
I can't get a letter from down the road."*

11. Bunker Hill 1:33 key of A

Versions of this tune appear throughout the Southeastern U.S. A very similar version was recorded by George "Dad" Crockett of Kentucky in 1929. (Reissued by Historical Records HLP-8003.) Berry plays a similar piece in D, which he calls "Sugar on the Hill."

12. Midnight Shuffle :42 key of D

Berry learned this tune from his Uncle Ed Pruitt. Berry used to pick several pieces on the banjo, but due to injuries to his right hand most of his banjo playing today is done in frailing or clawhammer style.

Troy P. Lee was born in Yardell, Newton County, Arkansas on March 23, 1916. Newton County lies in the Boston Mountains, one of the most beautiful and rugged sections of the Ozarks. Shortly before the Civil War, Troy's grandfather and several of his brothers decided to leave Tennessee and settle in Arkansas, and agreed upon a place to meet. But the outbreak of the war disrupted their plans — only Troy's grandfather made it to Arkansas, the other brothers being scattered elsewhere. The family was never reunited.

Troy became interested in playing the fiddle at the age of fourteen when he heard a prisoner in the Newton County Jail playing. He pestered his father (who was himself a fine fiddler) for his own instrument until his father finally traded something for one. He told Troy to take it to the barn and leave it there until he learned to play it. According to the neighbors, Troy was shortly in great demand to play for local square dances.

One of the primary influences on his fiddling was the playing of his wife Vesta's father, L.S. Robinson. Vesta was herself a fine musician, and used to accompany Troy on the piano until illness prevented her from continuing. Troy stopped playing the fiddle during the years he and Vesta were raising their family, and did not pick one up again until around 1968.

At the time these recordings were to be made, Vesta (unknown to us) lay critically ill in a Texas hospital. Knowing that we were heading for their home near Western Grove, Arkansas to record Troy, she whispered to one of her daughters to send him home to do the session, for he would never have left her side had she not expressly requested him to do so. Troy rode all night on a bus to be home in time to meet us. There is no way we can ever adequately express our gratitude to both of them for their actions on this occasion.

— — —

In a letter, Rex Offutt related to us the story of his involvement with music: "As for myself, I worked at a sawmill for 25c per hour in 1934 and saved enough money to buy my first mandolin. Paid

\$14.95 for it — Montgomery Ward — I was fourteen at the time — born April 15, 1920 — at New Edinburg, Cleveland County, Arkansas. None of my family played any kind of instrument except an older brother, he played guitar. We played for square dances and church socials, school functions, etc., until I was graduated from high school in 1937. My brother married in 1938 and I quit playing. There was a brief period when I was in the service (1942-45) that I played a little — I picked up a mandolin in Germany and carried it for awhile. . . . When I was discharged I sort of forgot about making music until about 1965. I moved from Pine Bluff, Arkansas to Valley Springs in January 1971 — shortly after we moved here I got acquainted with Troy and we have had many pleasant hours making music together since that time."

"Ray was born in Pine Bluff on July 26, 1961 — he had never shown any interest in playing an instrument until about four years ago when some of us were discussing how difficult it was to learn to play, he said, 'It doesn't look that hard to me — I think I'll learn to play a guitar'. In a few weeks he was a regular in our sessions and has continued to improve since that time. He is in the eleventh grade at Valley Springs High School — loves camping out and motorcycle riding."

1. Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star 2:37 key of G

Troy told us he learned this tune from his father-in-law. The tune has been recorded commercially several times by fiddlers from Virginia to Texas. Troy's version is one of the most beautiful.

2. Old Fort Smith 2:03 key of G

Troy Lee: "Now 'old Fort Smith,' to me, is one of your really old fiddle tunes, played by the old fiddlers around here. I don't know if I do as good a job as they did or not, but they enjoyed it."

Evidently this tune was named after the town of Fort Smith, Arkansas, which lies on the south bank of the Arkansas River and straddles the Arkansas-Oklahoma state line. The site of Fort Smith was known to the early French traders as Belle Pointe. A United States Army post was established there in 1817, and the town was laid out in 1821. During

LEE FINIS CAMERON "TIP" MCKINNEY

Lee Finis Cameron "Tip" McKinney is the only folk artist appearing on the album who has previously made commercial recordings. Tip was lead singer (and also played mandolin and guitar) with Pope's Arkansas Mountaineers, a fine string band whose members hailed from the Searcy area in White County. Organized and promoted by J.D. Pope, a local music store owner in Searcy, the group traveled to Memphis in February of 1928, where they recorded eight sides for Victor. (Six of their pieces have been reissued by County Records on a three-volume series of LP's entitled "Echoes of the Ozarks").

Although the three 78 rpm records issued by Victor from the Memphis session in 1928 sold fairly well throughout the South, Pope's Arkansas Mountaineers never had the opportunity to record again. Dissatisfaction on the part of some of the band members led them to inquire of a local Searcy banker just what sort of financial gain J.D. Pope himself was receiving from the sale of their records. (He was indeed the recipient of all royalties from the record sales, while the musicians had received only a flat fee for their efforts.) Pope, apparently deciding that the group was becoming somewhat too troublesome, cancelled plans to send Pope's Arkansas Mountaineers to Chicago and New Jersey for further recording sessions. As Tip, who refused to participate in the investigation of Pope's financial arrangements put it, "The boys come back here and messed themselves up."

Pope dropped the band entirely and proceeded to organize another band, Reeves White County Ramblers, to replace them. Sad to say, Pope's Arkansas Mountaineers were never heard from again.

Tip was born in 1897 near the community of Rosebud in White County, Arkansas to Nancy Elizabeth (Cooper) and Guy Cameron McKinney. There were ten children in the family, six boys and four girls. According to Tip, both sides of the family had originally come from North Carolina from whence they emigrated to Kentucky and finally to Arkansas.

Great-grandfather Cooper having died in North Carolina, Great-granny loaded up her family of ten,

the Civil War, Fort Smith was strongly in sympathy with the Confederacy. The state militia seized the fort in 1861 and Union forces reoccupied it in 1863. There was considerable unrest due to border bushwacking throughout the war, and several skirmishes took place there in 1864.

After the Civil War, Fort Smith had a reputation for being a wide open frontier town. Neighboring Oklahoma was still Indian Territory and a favorite hiding place for such outlaws as Belle Star and Cherokee Bill. The notorious hanging judge Izak Parker held court in Fort Smith.

Marion Thede published a version of Fort Smith in "The Fiddle Book" and offers a couple of explanations as to the possible origin of the tune.

A 78 rpm recording entitled "Fort Smith Break-down" was recorded in the 1920s by Luke High-night's Ozark Strutters. This tune has been reissued on Echoes of the Ozarks, vol. 2 (County Records # 519). However, Troy's version of the tune doesn't seem to have been influenced by the earlier recorded version.

Cyril Stinnet of Oregon, Missouri and Lonnie Robertson of Springfield, Missouri both play versions of this tune that are fairly similar to the way Troy plays it here.

3. Unnamed Schottishe 1:42 key of D

According to Alan Jabbour, the term "Schottishe" is German for "Scottish" and was used to describe a 19th Century continental dance fancied to be in the Scottish style.

Most Ozark area fiddlers play at least one or two Schottishes and at a country dance in Missouri or Arkansas older couples still do the dance.

Troy didn't remember the title of this piece, but stated that he learned it when he was a young man from older fiddlers in Newton County. The melody is quite similar to the well known Canadian fiddle tune "St. Anne's Reel."

4. Durang's Hornpipe 2:02 key of D

This is one of the most common fiddle tunes found today in the Ozark region. Virtually every fiddler we have met or heard knows a version of this tune.

Joseph T. Wilson, Executive Director of the National Council for the Traditional Arts, tells us that the tune was named after John Durang, the first American dancer of renown. Durang was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1768 and began a long career in 1784. He became a featured performer in the J. B. Rickett's Circus troupe, and danced for audiences from Quebec to Washington, D. C.

A well known, three-foot-tall New York fiddler named Hoffmaster was commissioned by Durang to create this piece.

Although Durang and Hoffmaster have both been forgotten, the tune that bears Durang's name continues to be a favorite throughout much of the nation today.

5. Whiskey Before Breakfast 3:08 key of D

Troy's version of this tune is quite similar to the other versions of it that are in circulation today, the only difference being the extra beat at the end of each part. Troy did not say where he learned this piece, but other Ozark area fiddlers who play it have stated that they learned it from recent vintage recordings of Canadian fiddlers.

6. Kentucky Waltz 1:38 key of D

This waltz appears to be fairly old, although it became quite popular with Bill Monroe's 1948 recording of it.

and removed to Kentucky. Here, Jerry Cooper (Tip's grandfather), the oldest of her children, fell in love with and married Minerva Elizabeth McKinney. As the outbreak of the Civil War approached, old Granny Cooper became uneasy. Tip relates: "Closter it got on to the war, why Great-granny said, 'We're goin' to Arkansas, and we're goin' just as far back as we can get in some them mountains back there to try to save my children.' And she landed way over there on Brush Creek back in Cleburne County over yonder. (Located in the Ozarks of north-central Arkansas, it was the last county to be formed (1883) in the state. Way over there where there wasn't nobody hardly lived a'tall . . . And the war broke out and 'em all. All the boys — Jerry, Jed, John, Elish, Henry, Jim, and Joe . . . The war broke out and they mustered them out . . . All of them made it back. Some of them was in the Northern army and some of them was in the Southern army."

Tip's father, Guy Cameron McKinney, did not come into Arkansas from Kentucky until 1870. When, presently, he wished to wed Nancy Elizabeth Cooper, they had to travel to Poplar Bluff, Missouri to have the ceremony performed, as it was permitted in Missouri for first cousins to marry. (Guy's father and Nancy's mother were brother and sister.)

Tip says all the Coopers were musicians, and his father, Guy McKinney, was a fine singer. In his immediate family almost everybody played some instrument and sang as well. The entire McKinney family performed frequently at local functions during Tip's youth.

Even as a child, Tip loved entertaining people: "I used to know a lot of these comically songs and 'talkin' off' pieces way back yonder when I was a boy growing up. They'd get me out on a stump somewhere and I'd have a whole big bunch of them out there and, boy, I'm talkin' about they'd just die laughin'. They plenty enjoyed themselves, you know, because I'd really entertain 'em. Even the old folks would get out and listen at me. I was very gifted that way. 'Course, every man ain't talented the same, no way. Everybody in the world got a different talent."

When we met Tip in 1973, he no longer accompanied himself on guitar or mandolin due to his arthritis. But, when he sang for us, his voice was clear and strong, his delivery powerful and magnetic. We realized that we were having the rare privilege of witnessing a performance by one of the finest traditional singers in the country.

7. **Gone To View That Land** 2:59

1. *My mother's gone to view that land,
to view that land, to view that land.
My mother's gone to view that land and
singing them cheering songs.*

Chorus:

*Away over yonder, on the other side
of Jordan.*

*Away over yonder, they will sing them
cheerful songs.*

2. *I always hope to view that land,
to view that land, to view that land.
I always hope to view that land,
and singing them cheerful songs.*

Chorus:

3. *My father's gone to view that land, etc.*

Chorus:

4. *My brother's gone to view that land . . . etc.*

Chorus:

5. *I always hope to view that land . . . etc.*

Chorus:

It is quite possible that Tip learned this song when attending rural singing schools in his community. His performance style is reminiscent of that which is described in accounts of the singing schools where the songleader and members of the community used their hands to mark time with the music. Tip conducts himself with a swaying motion with one or both hands in the air and is as entrancing to watch as he is to hear.

"Resurrected" (*The Original Sacred Harp, Denson Revision — 1971 Edition*, no. 53) is essentially the same hymn. The words and music parts were arranged by S.M. Denson in 1903. "Resurrected" is cited by George Pullen Jackson in *White Spirituals of the Southern Uplands*

(Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 1933, p. 246).

Yet another variant, "Away Over Jordan" is found in Jackson's *Down-East Spirituals and Others* (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1943, p. 224). "Away Over Jordan" also appears in many collections of Black Spirituals to which Jackson refers, i.e., William E. Barton's *Befo' De War Spirituals* (1880-1887) and Thomas P. Fenner's *Cabin and Plantation Songs as sung by the Hampton students* (1874).

8. **Gypson Davy** 4:07

Tip McKinney: "That Gypson Davy is an old song. It's a hundred and some years old. I don't know, my daddy said that he heared that song when he was a young feller over there in Kentucky, you know. Well uh, I don't know, you know, just how old it would be, you know. I can't tell you only I'll tell you this much; it's an old song. It was sung way back. I don't know who really sung it. He didn't tell. He might-a knowed who sung it. Might-a been some good writer, that wrote it up, or some good poet, or some good artist that wrote it up. Uh, you know back them days, don't you see. I wouldn't know, I didn't ask him all those questions which I ought to have. You know, it would have been, I could have wrote it down, it would have been a right smart history of old fashioned songs and things, you know. You know, it would have helped out.

1. *Go catch out that little black horse,
The speediest one of any.
I'll ride down to the maple swamp and
See if I can overtake her.*

Chorus:

*Straddle (or sa-vaddle) I liddy, liddy, liddy
Straddle I liddy liddy li-dee
Straddle I liddy, pretty all day
She's gone with the Gypson Davy.*

2. *So I rode down to the maple swamp;
It looked so deep and muddy.
I looked over on the other side and
There I spied my lady.*

Chorus:

3. *So I looked over that sheathing ridge;
It looked so brisk and gaily.
Enough to make the wild woods ring and
Charm the heart of a lady.*

Chorus:

4. *In the night I lay in my warm bed
With arms on my sweet baby.
Tonight I lay in these wild woods
In the arms of the Gypson Davy.*

Chorus:

5. *And you forsake your house carpenter,
And you forsake you baby,
And you forsake you own lord's son,
And go with the Gypson Davy.*

Chorus:

"The Gypson Davy", Child no. 200, is a ballad which has been widely collected in England, Scotland and the U.S. Despite the many different forms it has taken it has remained in the minds and hearts of the "folk" a great favorite. H.M. Belden explains, "What apparently most pleased American singers is the contrast between domesticity, security and luxury on the one hand and the homeless poverty of the wandering gypsies on the other. (*Ballads and Folksongs*. Columbia: U. of Mo. Press, 1940, p. 73). Tip's version is abbreviated but the basic elements of the ballad remain. One of his verses is borrowed from "The Daemon Lover" of "The House Carpenter" (Child no. 243).

The ballad probably arose not long after the expulsion of the gypsies from Little Egypt by an Act of Parliament, 1609. Child ballad no. 200, "The Gypsy Laddie", associates the story with Johnnie Faa, chief of the gypsies, and the wife of the Earl of Cassilis.

"The Gypsy Davy" is found in Randolph's *Ozark Folk Songs*, Vol. I, pp. 152-160 with five examples.

Belden lists three versions of "The Gypsy Laddie" in *Ballads and Folksongs*, p. 73.

9. Wandering Boy 4:07

1. *Out in the cold world and far away from
home.
Somebody's boy is wandering alone.
No one to guide him or keep his footsteps
right.
Some mother's boy is homeless tonight.*

Chorus:

*Bring back to me my wandering boy.
There is no other that's left to give me joy.
Tell him his mother with faded cheeks and
hair,
At the old home is waiting him there.*

2. *Search 'til you find him and bring him back
to me.
Far, far away wherever he may be.
Tell him his mother with faded cheeks and
hair,
At the old home is waiting him there.*

Chorus:

3. *Out in the hallway there sits a vacant chair.
Under is the shoes my darling used to
wear.
Empty is the cradle that he loved so well.
Oh, how I miss him no one cannot tell.*

Chorus:

4. *I do remember those parting words he
said,
"I'll meet you all up there where farewell
tears are shed.
There will be no good-bye on this old earth
so fair.
When done with life I meet you all up
there".*

A rendition of "The Wandering Boy" played for Vance Randolph by Pauline McCulloch, Blue Eye, Mo., in 1938, is similar in text to the one here. Randolph did not transcribe the melody. (*Ozark Folk Songs*. Vol. IV, No. 845, p. 370.) "The Wandering Boy" was recorded by Sonny Miller and the Southern Mountain Boys on Folkways record "Galax, Virginia — Old Fiddlers Convention."

10. Heaven Bells are Ringing 1:23

Chorus:

*Oh, the heaven bells are ringing and I'm
a-going home
I'm a-going home, and I'm a-going home.
Oh, the heaven bells are ringing and I'm
a-going home.
Climbing over Zion's wall.*

1. *You better mind mother you'll be too late
You'll be too late, you'll be too late.
You'd better mind mother you'll be too
late,
Climbing over Zion's wall.*

2. *You better mind father, you'll be too late
... etc.*

Chorus:

"Heaven Bells Are Ringing" is a type of hymn in form and content which is common in Black and White tradition alike. One version of the song called "Heaven Bells Ringin' and I'm A-goin' Home" is printed in William E. Barton's compilation of *Old Plantation Hymns: A collection of hitherto unpublished melodies of the Slave and the Freedman, with historical and descriptive notes* (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe and Co., 1899, p. 20). Barton's text is very close to Tip's. The "you'd better mind" motif contained in so many Southern hymns is not included in the Barton text.

JAKE HOCKEMEYER AND RUSS ORCHARD

Jake Hockemeyer lives in Mokane, Callaway County, Missouri, a town located along the Missouri River near the center of the state. Grandfather Hockemeyer came to Pennsylvania from Germany sometime after the Civil War. He left Pennsylvania for Missouri and settled in Franklin County, later moving up the Missouri to Callaway County.

Jake's interest in fiddling was encouraged by his Uncle Harry O'Neal, his mother's brother, who gave him his first fiddle. Uncle Harry was a radio fiddler who played on Pappy Cheshire's program, broadcast from St. Louis many years ago.

Jake, who plays left-handed, is considered to be one of Missouri's finest contest fiddlers. His repertoire and style of playing are, generally speaking, fairly representative of central Missouri.

The development of his playing was influenced, he says, by George Morris, "the Fiddlin' Sheriff," and other local fiddlers who played over the radio in the area during the 1920's and 30's. Stations WOS in Jefferson City and KFRU in Columbia devoted considerable air time in those days to fiddle music. WOS, in the early years of radio, was one of the most powerful stations in the Midwest and was beamed toward the southwest especially; thus it could be picked up as far away as Texas. For this reason, it is possible to conjecture that the fiddlers of central Missouri exerted an influence that extended well beyond the boundaries of the state. For a time, WOS sponsored the Missouri State Champion Fiddle Contest, which was broadcast live from the rotunda of the state capitol building in Jefferson City. The winner was decided by the listeners who sent in their votes by telegram.

Jake is one of the younger fiddlers appearing on the album, and, unlike many of the older musicians, his repertoire is continually growing and his style evolving.

1. Dance Around Molly 1:56 key of A

This tune is very popular among contest fiddlers in Missouri. Jake didn't remember where he first heard it. According to R. P. Christeson, "Dance Around Molly" came into this area via record around 1953 and was played by Tommy Magness, Roy Acuff's fiddler.

2. Coming Down From Denver 1:51 key of A

This piece of music is based on Lardner's Reel, and was published by Howe in Boston in 1864. This tune is played by several Central Missouri fiddlers and is quite popular at local fiddle contests in the area.

3. Marmaduke's Hornpipe 1:47 key of D

No collection of Ozark area folk music would be complete without the inclusion of this piece. In Missouri this tune is played with great frequency. It is about as common as Soldier's Joy, Eighth of January, or Mississippi Sawyer.

Evidently the tune was named after J. S. Marmaduke, Confederate Civil War general and former governor of Missouri (1884-1887).

Old timers say the tune was popularized by Daniel Boone Jones of Boone County, Missouri, who represented Missouri in one of Henry Ford's contests in the 1920s.

Christeson has a version in his book from Bill Driver, a Black fiddler from Miller County, Missouri. Driver's version can also be heard on record ("The Old Time Fiddlers Repertory," University of Missouri Press, Columbia, Missouri 65201).

According to Jake, other fiddlers played at it but it was George Morris, the fiddling sheriff, who turned Marmaduke's Hornpipe into a "real" fiddle tune. In the 1930s George Morris played on the radio in Jefferson City, Missouri at WOS and also in Columbia over station KFRU.

Melodically, Marmaduke's Hornpipe is derived from or at least related to what fiddlers in other areas call "Cricket on the Hearth," "Rockey Mountain Goat," or "Hell Among the Yearlings."

LAWRENCE BAKER

Lawrence Baker was born in Newberg, Oregon on August 12, 1906. George Baker, Lawrence's father, worked primarily in the timber industry and his occupation took the Baker family back and forth across the country a good deal. Their usual mode of transportation was a horse-drawn covered wagon.

In 1908, when Laurence was two, the West Coast timber industry went into a slump, so the Bakers moved to Russelville, Arkansas to do levee work on the Arkansas River. They lived in Russelville two years. When work got slack, they headed for eastern Illinois where they had relatives. Later they went to Florida, but things just didn't work out and they sold all their belongings and moved back to Oregon.

In 1915 George Baker met a man who owned 200 acres of land near Salem, Missouri and he traded the man some Oregon property for the Missouri tract. Both men traded for land they had never seen. Once again, the Bakers got into the covered wagon, this time heading for Missouri. According to Lawrence we "took off across the country like gypsies." In addition to the wagon his father brought along a buggy, five or six horses to trade along the way, and a Jersey cow. His mother helped out by selling salve, magazine subscriptions, and anything else she could. They left on July 16 and arrived at their destination in Missouri on Thanksgiving Day.

Times got hard in 1916 and the family wandered again. They went from the lead mines in Oklahoma, to a farm near Houston, Texas, to oilfields in Kansas, only to end up going back to Oregon again. In 1920 they went back to Salem, Missouri and the farm they'd left there. With all the traveling, Lawrence spent five years in the fourth grade.

The family finally settled down in Salem and Lawrence married his highschool sweetheart, Martha Holland, his wife of 48 years.

After highschool they both took the exam for teachers and obtained certificates. They were well into their teaching careers before they went to college and got degrees.

The two songs on this record Lawrence learned from people he lived with in Dent County, Missouri. He was fascinated with the hill people he knew there and can relate many interesting stories.

4. The Death of the Old Sow 1:16

Lawrence Baker: "The Death of the Old Sow" is an old ballad I learned up in the Missouri Ozarks in Dent County, Missouri from the Shaffer girls, oh, I guess probably 40 some odd years ago.

1. *What are you gonna do with the old sow's ear?
Make the best tear wiper ever wiped a tear
Wipe a tear, tear wiper, no such thing
Old sow had the measles when she died
last spring.*
2. *What you gonna do with the old sow's nose?
Make the best shovel that ever shoveled rows
Shovel rows, rows shovel, no such thing
Old sow had the measles when she died
last spring.*
3. *What you gonna do with the old sow's skin?
Make the best side saddle you ever rode in.
Side saddle, saddle side, no such thing
The old sow had the measles when she
died last spring.*
4. *What you gonna do with the old sow's hair?
Make the best bustle woman ever did wear.
Bustle woman, woman bustle, no such
thing
Old sow had the measles when she died
last spring.*
5. *What you gonna do with the old sow's tail?
Make the best whip popper you ever saw.
Whip popper, popper whip, no such thing
The old sow swallowed a lizard when she
died last spring.*

"The Death of the Old Sow" is not an uncommon song, and appears in many collections. Randolph collected "The Measles in the Spring" from Lewis Kelley, Cyclone, Mo., August 10, 1931 (Ozark

Folk Songs, vol. III, no. 412, p. 149). A version of this tune does not appear in Belden but is cited in the Brown collection of *North Carolina Folklore* under the title "The Old Sow's Nose" (North Carolina, Duke University Press, 1952, vol. III, p. 218).

5. The Old Man Who Lived in the West 2:28

1. *Now there was an old man and he lived in the West
Ta-may ta-may, clash ta-da my clingo.
There was an old man and he lived in the West
He had an old woman who was none of the best
Man beered a meered blag a dag cood a may
Clash ta-da my clingo.*
2. *This little old man came in from work one day
Ta-may ta-may clash ta-da my clingo.
This little old man came in from work one day
and never a good word to his woman could say
Man beered a meered blag a dag cood a may
Clash ta-da my clingo.*
3. *There's meat in the pot and bread on the shelf
Ta-may ta-may clash ta-da-my-clingo.
There's meat in the pot and bread on the shelf
If you want any more you can cook it yourself.
Man beered a meered blag a dag cood a may
Clash to-da-my-clingo.*
4. *This little old man went to his old sheep pen
Ta-may ta-may clash ta-da-my-clingo.
This little old man went to his old sheep pen
Jumped the old woman right out of his skin.*

*Man beered a meered blag a dag cood
a may
Clash ta-da-my-clingo.*

5. *He threw the hide over his old woman's back
Ta-may ta-may clash ta-da-my-clingo.
He threw the hide over his old woman's back
Took two little sticks went whickety-whack
Man beered a meered blag a dag cood a may
Clash to-da-my-clingo.*
6. *Now you can tell your father, your mother,
and all the rest of your kin,
Ta-may, ta-may clash ta-da-my-clingo.
You can tell your father, your mother, and
all the rest of your kin
This here is a coat made of old wether skin
Man beered a meered blag a dag cood a may
Clash to-da-my-clingo.*

The story of a man who marries a shrewish girl who won't work is a common theme in many songs such as "The Farmer's Curst Wife." His response to her obstinance is to beat her with a rod after wrapping her in a "wether" or sheep's skin, a method which prevents him from being accused of his deed. The wife is defenseless in proving him guilty of anything except tanning a sheep's hide.

"The Old Man Who Lived in the West" is an often collected ballad. In Child (vol. V, no. 277, p. 104) variations come under the title "The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin." Child states, "The story of the ballad was in all likelihood traditionally derived from the good old tale, 'The Wife Lapped in Morrel's (horse's) Skin,' . . . printed earlier than 1575. American survivals of Child no. 277 have many different titles, such as "Dandoo," "Gentle Fair Jenny," and "The Wee Cooper of Fife." H. M. Belden includes two collected versions, A. "Dandoo," from W. S. Johnson, Miller Co., Mo., 1904, and B. "The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin," communicated by Mrs. Case, Harrison Co., Mo., 1916. (*Ballads & Songs*, Columbia, Mo., University of Missouri Press, 1940, p. 92-94.)

VESTA JOHNSON AND DON WOMACK

The refrain of each song takes a different form, parallels for which may be found in Child. Belden's first example is sung with a Dandoo-clish-ma-clingo refrain, the type which has been collected often in the Midwest and is most similar in meter and sound to what "Mr. B." sings. A "rosemary-thyme" refrain, possibly borrowed from "The Elfin Knight" (Child no. 2) is presented in Belden's B. example. "Dandoo" is the title of this song in Randolph's Ozark Folk Songs, vol. I, no. 35, p. 187, collected in 1933 from Frank Payne of Galena, Mo. Tristram Coffin indicates that in the collected "Dandoo" texts, the wife is not reformed but just warned that if she tries to expose her husband he will plead innocent. (*The British Traditional Ballad in North America*, Philadelphia, American Folklore Society, 1963, p. 146-7.) This observation holds true in the present case of "The Old Man Who Lived in the West."

Vesta (Wilson) Johnson was born May 10, 1922 on a farm near the village of Heckla, Linn County, Missouri in the north central part of the state. She grew up in a musical family where both parents played the fiddle, as did numerous uncles, cousins, and neighbors. Vesta believes that her father's family had been in Missouri for several generations. Her mother's people, originally from Virginia, had lived in Kentucky and Ohio before coming to Missouri. One of Vesta's earliest musical memories, outside the playing of her own family, was of Dennis Wolfsgale, a former slave who frequently played the banjo and fiddle around the courthouse square in Chillicothe, a major town in the area.

Although Vesta had a natural talent for the fiddle and learned to play at an early age, her family did not think it appropriate for women to become too involved in such activities. They therefore did not encourage her to play.

In 1935, the family moved to another farm near Yukon, Texas County, Missouri in the central Ozarks. In 1940, Vesta married Steve Johnson, and since World War II has made her home in the St. Louis area.

After the war, when Steve returned home from Japan, he brought a fiddle with him for Vesta; it was the first time in her life that she had ever had her own instrument.

Like many fiddlers, Vesta laid aside her instrument while raising her family. But about ten years ago Vesta began to play again, her interest in music having been rekindled by some young friends who were at that time discovering American traditional music. She and her husband Steve are active in the promotion of old-time music and the organization of musical events.

Perhaps because of her own past experiences, Vesta has consistently given strong encouragement to young people who have taken up the music (and especially to young ladies who have taken up the fiddle).

6. *She Oughta Been a Lady* 58 sec. key of D

This is a tune that has been in Vesta's family a

couple of generations now. Vesta's mother also plays this piece and remembers a man who lived near her as a child who played this tune and sang some words to it.

The tune is a version of the Irish reel, "Beaux of Oak Hill."

7. *Story* 1:19

Don Womack: Vesta, how did you learn to play the fiddle, when did you first start playin' the fiddle?

Vesta Johnson: Well, I used to set up in the bed, you know, when I was right little, playin' with it, you know, like I want you to do your grand kids. But ah, then when I was about seven years old I brought home this sheet of Christmas seals. You know kids were supposed to sell for a dollar or so, you know. Of course that was back in hard times, you know, if you sold one or two you done well. Then when this old cousin of my mom's was staying with us he promised me he'd buy a dollars worth but I had to learn to play the fiddle, and he had an old fiddle there so he started teaching me to play the fiddle. He had this finger off. That's why I'm only a three-fingered fiddler today. He had this finger off, so he only had these three. I use these three and ah, anyway my first tune was "Golden Slippers," and I've hated that tune ever since. I learned to play enough of it he bought a dollars worth of stamps. I thought I was really something. Go to school with a whole dollar. That's how really what got me started. Of course, it was in the family, just took a little effort, I guess.

8. *Fat Meat and Dumplings* 1:27 key of C

Vesta learned this tune from Cyril Stinnett of Oregon, Mo. Cyril is regarded by many fiddlers in the area as "the best there is." Cyril learned this tune from his father, who came from Wheatland, Mo.

FRANK REED AND ALVA LEE HENDREN

Floyd Franklin Reed (Frank Reed) was born on April 20, 1904, near the central Missouri town of Huntsville, in Randolph County. Frank's father was James Thomas Reed and his mother was Mattie Specie Reed. The Reeds came to Missouri from England by way of Pennsylvania, while the Specie side of the family was French Canadian and settled in Grundy County, Illinois.

Frank's father, a native born Missourian, was a farmer all his life. Frank spent his early days helping his father raise crops of oats, wheat, barley, and corn. He learned how to split rails, make shingles, hunt, fish, and trap furs. From his father, Frank also learned how to fiddle. Although Thomas Reed, a very fine fiddler, would never play out for dances or public affairs, he would frequently play in his home with family, friends, or relatives. Mattie Reed accompanied him on piano, pump organ, or accordion. At the age of four, Frank was crawling up the backs of old cane chairs to watch his father and friends fiddle. At the age of nine, Frank bought a fiddle for himself with money he earned by selling soap and began to teach himself how to play. After Frank had learned a few tunes, his father got him a better instrument and Frank has been fiddling ever since, the fiddle being his main musical instrument.

Frank modeled his fiddling after his father and Clate ("Peggy") Ramzel, a native of Moberly, Missouri and a good friend of Thomas Reed. "Peggy," so named because of his wooden leg which he himself whittled, would visit the Reed household and play all night, with Frank hovering behind his chair watching all he did and learning his tunes. Frank copied "Peggy's" style of holding the bow, and says of "Peggy", "He was a good fellow, everybody liked him. He played by note at first, then he took off and played by ear." Frank is a particularly smooth and fluid fiddler, and yet claims that his father was an even sweeter fiddler than he.

Up until the time he left the farm, Frank would work in the fields from dawn to dusk, and then go fiddle well into the night. When Frank was older, he left the farm and travelled extensively throughout the Midwest for several years, working odd jobs and fiddling whenever the opportunity arose. Over the years, Frank has played for a wide variety of

audiences and situations. He has played at private parties on the banks of the Kankakee River near Chicago. He's played on radio stations, for wrestling matches, and of course, for many a Saturday night square dance. Frank says, "I played with one group of friends for a square dance every Saturday night for five years."

Randolph County, being a part of "Little Dixie," had a relatively higher concentration of Blacks than other parts of Missouri. Although on a public level there was seemingly very little interchange between Black and White musicians, their musical traditions overlapped. The fiddle-banjo combination prevalent in this locality was shared by both peoples. On a private level, however, tunes were exchanged between Black and White musicians. Frank, for example, learned some of his tunes from Walt Doughterty, a Black fiddler from Higbee, Missouri (Randolph County.) Walt was born into slavery, and when slavery was abolished he was taken in and raised by Whites, since he was without his family. Walt was well-liked by all. He played for many White square dances, as he was considered to be an exceptional fiddler by those in Randolph County.

In turn, White musicians were at times hired to play for Black gatherings. Frank played for a Black picnic on August 4, in the 1920's, a local celebration of the day the Blacks were freed. Along with Frank were Elmer Lily, a guitarist, and Rattler Pog, a clawhammer banjo player and a fiddler. Frank and Rattler traded off playing fiddle and banjo, as Frank can also play banjo clawhammer style, although he rarely does anymore.

Frank learned banjo from his uncle, Robert Specie, who played all over the country according to Frank. When Frank was seven, Uncle Robert bought him a little banjo which served Frank as something on which to learn. Frank still says that "it played real good, just like a big un." The banjo tradition that is found in this area of Missouri is quite interesting in that the fiddle and banjo combination, where the banjo matches the fiddler's melody line, is reminiscent of traditional fiddle-banjo duets found in Kentucky. This is not surprising, considering the large number of Kentuckians who settled in this region. Frank's fiddling reflects this banjo influence.

Frank now resides in Overland, Missouri, with his third wife, Ann. He is the father of seven children, grandfather of forty-two children, and great-grandfather of twenty-two children. He has finally begun to settle down, but he continues to play music and so will never grow old. If you ask Frank how old he is, he'll tell you with a twinkle in his eye that he's seventy-three years young, and he's very right.

- - -

Alva Lee Hendren was born on November 1, 1929 in Huntsville, Missouri, of Randolph County. Her father, Luther Wilson, was Frank Reed's close friend and a banjo player. Luther Wilson was born in Bynumville, Missouri, of Cheriton County, on February 6, 1895. He moved to Macon County for two years, and then settled in Moberly, Missouri. He was a coal miner all his life, farming only to raise food for his family. Alva Lee's mother, Rose Belle Wallace, was born in Macon County and moved to Moberly after she married Luther Wilson. Alva Lee's grandfather on her father's side, Joe Wilson, was born in Kentucky in 1854. He moved to Illinois and finally settled in Randolph County. Alva Lee's grandfather on her mother's side, William Richards Wallace, was born in Macon County, Missouri, and lived there all his life as did his wife, Rosetti Ann Seviars. Grandfather Wallace played banjo, fiddle, mandolin, french harp, and juice harp.

At about age fourteen, Alva Lee learned how to play banjo from her father, playing with a two-finger up-picking style the way her father did. Her father was influenced by a banjo player named Columbus Raider. Alva Lee's banjo playing strongly resembles clawhammer banjo playing in sound and rhythm even though she uses a two-finger up-picking style. Alva Lee has been playing the banjo ever since she learned, with her father and his friends, and still today with Frank Reed. Alva Lee learned to play the fiddle later on, because "they needed a fiddler to play in the band" that she and some friends got together. Alva Lee also plays guitar, providing a steady and full back-up.

Alva Lee lives with her husband, Kenneth Hendren, and their two sons in a rural area near Moberly. Alva

CHARLES WYCKIN AND JOE POLYETS

Lee's fine banjo playing is at one with the fiddling of this area, as you can hear when she and Frank play together. And her coffee is the best to be found anywhere.

9. Middlegrove 1:15 key of G

Banjo and fiddle duets are quite a rarity in Missouri these days. However, in certain areas of Missouri such music was quite common in the not too distant past. Frank said this tune was named for the community of Middlegrove, east of Moberly in Monroe County. Frank learned it from Bill Leppert and several other old fiddlers when he was a boy. He also plays a piece with a similar first part entitled, "Ten Miles Below Leasburg."

10. Stoney Point 1:21 key of G

"Stoney Point" is descended from Kelton's Reel, published in *Ryan's Jigs and Reels*, Boston, 1883. It was later published as "Pig Town Fling" in *White's Unique Collection of Jigs and Reels*, Boston, 1896.

Frank's version adds a third part to the tune. Some fiddlers also add a fourth part to it. Because the tune was so common when Frank was a boy, he didn't learn his version from any one person in particular.

11. Massa Bill 1:22 key of G

Frank learned this tune from Negro fiddler Walt Dougherty, of Higbee, Mo. Frank said that some fiddlers called it "Never Get Your Money Back."

The tune has three parts, and the first part is melodically similar to "Run Nigger Run." According to R. P. Christeson, "Massa Bill" is a floating title associated with many melodies.

From what information I have been able to gather, one or two generations ago Negro fiddlers were fairly common in many sections of the state. It is hard to determine just how much Black-White musical interchange took place, but Frank mentioned that Walt Dougherty was frequently hired to play music at White dances. Frank, too, was frequently hired to provide square dance music for Negro picnics held on August 4, a day set aside in his community as a holiday for Blacks to celebrate

the gaining of their freedom. Frank admired the way the Blacks square danced, said a good time was had by all, and that the pay was excellent.

12. Fox Chase 1:26 key of G

Frank also learned this piece from Walt Dougherty. Tunes mimicking a fox chase have long been part of Anglo-American and Afro-American folk music traditions. There are recorded versions on fiddle, bagpipes, harmonica, and banjo, and probably other instruments as well.

ROSE PRATT

THE FRENCH OF OLD MINES

The village of Old Mines in Washington County, Missouri, is today the last remaining enclave of the French, who were the first Europeans to settle in the Ozark region. Here, centered around the village and dispersed throughout the surrounding countryside, they occupy solidly an area of about fifty square miles.

The early French were attracted to the region by the extensive lead deposits. When these became depleted, many of the miners turned to farming, although a few continued to hand-mine small surface deposits that were not considered to be worth the time and trouble of the mining companies.

Sometime after the Civil War, a new mining industry began to develop in the former lead-mining districts. It was discovered that barite, a heavy multi-colored spar that had been but a nuisance to the lead-miners, was valuable. Barite is locally known as tiff, probably a corruption of the French word "tuff," which means "waste." It is today used as a pigment in paints, as a lubricant for oil-drilling bits, and as a source of barium. A large majority of the population soon became involved in this new mining industry. For years tiff was hand-mined by individuals. Ruth Fitch Hopson, in her article "Barite Mining in Southern Missouri" thus describes the process: "A primitive type of mining equipment is used to get the tiff from the rocky clay ground. It consists of a windlass made from scrap lumber, a short length of peeled log, a rope and bucket or tub with improved bail. A handle at one end of the log enables a miner to lift a bucket full of heavy tiff from the hole with little effort. . . . The holes are seldom more than twenty feet deep."

"Tiff is cleaned with 'tiff hatchets'. . . a 'rattle box' . . . is also used to clean tiff. This box is operated by filling it with tiff and shifting the box, on its two center legs, to the right and left by an upright handle on the side of the box.

Some of the boxes are made entirely of wood slats, and resemble vegetable crates."

"Picks, shovels, and crow-bars complete the . . . mining equipment."

After mining and cleaning, the tuff was hauled to a processing station where it was crushed, and then shipped. The industry was carried on mostly by the local French, for the pay was low, the work hard and dangerous. Hence it did not attract any number of people from outside the community.

In the 1930's, mechanization of the industry began, and the individual hand-mining techniques were replaced with power shovels, which left ugly scars all over the countryside. Although a few people were employed by the companies, many more became unemployed as a result of the newly-mechanized industry. The area has not yet recovered from the economic slump which it entered as a result of the modernization of barite mining.

The French community at Old Mines is comprised of about 400 families, all of them Roman Catholic. Although work is difficult to find in the area, even the younger people have shown a reluctance to leave, for the French family ties are strong. Most have married within the community, and everybody is at least third cousin to everybody else.

Old Mines remained fairly isolated for a long period of time, and there was not even a paved road to St. Louis until 1949. Partly because it is a tight-knit community, and partly because of its isolation, French culture has survived here and nowhere else in the region. Many of the older people still speak French, and some still remember and can sing some of the old French songs. The fiddlers of the area have a distinctive style and play many tunes not to be found elsewhere.

The French of Old Mines are a warm and hospitable people. Though it seems that times have never really been easy there, they are

folks who know how to laugh and have a good time. They still possess a living French heritage and are beginning to realize that it is something to be proud of.

One day, when on our way home from visiting friends near Old Mines, we stopped to see St. Joachim's Church located there in the village. (The Old Mines parish is one of the oldest west of the Mississippi and east of the Rockies). Noticing a sign in the church mentioning that booklets on the history of Old Mines were for sale at the rectory next door, we went over to buy one. We were greeted at the door by Rosie Pratt, longtime housekeeper there, and got to talking with her about the community and music. Though we hadn't planned to, we were soon running to the car for the tape machine.

Rose's family has long resided in Old Mines, and she grew up speaking French, as did most people her age. In fact, she is still fairly fluent in the language. We could not stay long, and so did not learn as much about Rose as we would have liked. So we'll just let her speak for herself.

1. Story of La Guignolee :37 sec.

Rose Pratt: Well you see every year the people used to on New Year's Eve, they used to blacken their face and this group of men they'd blacken their face and they'd go from house to house you know, and they'd knock at the door. If you wanted to let them in, you open the door and they'd go in and sing the Guignolee and dance. Then there's this certain little part to the Guignolee where they'd go and get a girl and the girl dances with him you know, that's a certain part of it. I used to love it here when they used to come once in a while. See, the older men died you know.

2. La Guignolee 1:49

Bons'r le maitre et la maitresse, y'etent le bonne du logis.
Pour la dernier jour d'l'annee, c'etait la guignolee vous vous duevez
Si vous voulez rien nous donnez, dite nous le, (bis)
On vous demande seulement une echinee.
Une echinee n'est pas grand chose, aux deux quatre vingt dix pieds de long. (bis).

Va-t-aller dire a ma maitresse qu'alle ait toujours,
Qu'alle ait toujours le coeur joyeux, point de tristesse.

Toutes les figures qui ont point d'amant, comment vieillient eilles?

C'est les amours qui la reveillent, hon que l'empechent de dormir. (bis).

Quand on arrive au milieu du bois, no fumes a l'ombre.

J'ai attendu le cou-cou chanter, c'est la colombe.
On te fera faire bonne chaire; On te fera chauffer les pieds (bis).*

"Good night to the master and mistress, and to all the people of the household! For the first day of the year you owe us the Guignolee. If you have nothing to give us, say so. We do not ask you to give us much, only a chine of pork ninety feet long, 'tis no great thing. Again we do not ask for much, only the eldest daughter of the house; we will feast her and keep her feet well warmed. Let us dance the rag dance, let us dance the rag dance so. Good night to the master and mistress of the household."**

*Included here is a transcription of Rose's words. A complete text, though not collected in Old Mines, may be found in Belden's *Ballads and Folksongs* (Columbia: U. of Mo. Press, 1940, p. 515).

** From Primm, Wilson. "New Year's Day In The Olden Time Of St. Louis." *Missouri Historical Society Journal*. January, 1900, p. 15.

The "courier la guignolee" or running the guignolee was a traditional event in Old Mines until about ten years ago which was similar in nature to Hallowe'en trick-or-treating or English wassailing. It was partially sacred and mostly social. The band of costumed visitors who went from house to house were always accompanied by at least one fiddler who, along with the leader, would "line out" the verses. The ensemble would repeat afterwards. At different houses the party would receive pledges to contribute food for a King's ball to be held a few weeks later. The running of the guignolee was not only practiced in Old Mines since the early 1700's, but also in settlements such as Ste. Genevieve and Prairie du Rocher.

CHARLIE PASHIA AND JOE POLITTE

3. Story 1:01

Rose Pratt: Well you see when we lived at Cannon Mines there was four of us girls and my father would send us to the store and the merchant he could speak French and so did the boys could understand French. And my dad would send us into the store and of course if we got in there and we didn't know if the boys were in there. They didn't understand us sometimes you know. Well, my dad would send us up there and all the way up to the store we'd say what we wanted in English in case the boys would be there.

Joe Wilson: Because you didn't speak enough English?

Rose Pratt: We didn't speak English at all. That's right we didn't speak English at all.

But I don't know, you know, it was great old days. The peoples were happier than they are now. Peoples got lots and lots more than they used to have. My father used to go out there and maybe work all week for a load of tiff. He'd send that load of tiff in and we was happier than we'd be now with what we got.

Charlie is a well-known fiddler in the Old Mines community, and frequently performs at local affairs. He is a jolly fellow and has many friends. Quite a few of his tunes are ones he learned from his father and other older French fiddlers in the area. Charlie during his lifetime has cut timber, mined tiff, and been a farmer. His music is light and gay, and his style unique to his community.

The generally acknowledged master among the local French fiddlers is Joe Politte. Joe, now seventy-two, has been playing the fiddle since he was seven. He has been a wagoner, mule-trader, and miner, as well as having pursued many other occupations and opportune employments throughout his life. But his first love and pride has always been his music. The rich musical environment of his childhood was not lost upon him, and he absorbed the tunes of the many old Frenchmen whose music he heard in the days of his youth. Many of these tunes have survived to the present day through his playing alone. But whatever tune he plays, it bears the stamp of his unique style.

4. La Guignolee 1:39 key of G

Charlie Pashia: Boy, ain't that some bow? I'll play the Guignolee now. You know I get all them little parts in there with them other parts.

Joe Politte: Oh yeah, they go in there.

This session was recorded on a Saturday afternoon in Roy Boyer's barber shop in Old Mines. It is a day I'll not soon forget. People would actually jig dance their way into the barber shop, usually with a six-pack of beer under one arm.

Roy Boyer would cut hair for a while then grab his fiddle and play a few tunes, then go back to cutting hair. Also present were half a dozen members of the M.F.F.A. as well as three reporters and photographers from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch sent out to cover the action. There was a whole lot of music and not just a little confusion that afternoon.

CHARLIE PASHIA and JULIA OLIN 5. "Rustic Dance" 1:28 key of C

This piece is in the repertory of many old time

fiddlers and is also in several of the early printed tune collections.

6. Schottische 2:13 key of D, G, & A

Charlie learned this three part tune from his father but doesn't remember any title for it.

JOE POLITTE and JULIA OLIN

7. Jenny Put The Kettle On :54 sec. Key of D

Recorded versions of this tune have come from all parts of the south, we've also recorded several Missouri versions, yet Joe's version is uniquely embellished.

Joe Politte: Yeah, they used to play that one for picnics.

8. Story and Unnamed Tune 2:34 Key of D

I'll play you one, this fella over here he only knowed two tunes and they give a picnic out there at new store they called it, to send this girl to the hospital. She was a walkin' bow legged, you know. So this old man, he got drunk, I told him he was drunk and he said, "Yeah I'm a goin'." So when we come by there well we come by with a wagon. At that time there wasn't no cars, only wagons, you know. And I had a bass fiddle, double bass, and I had two four year old mules and a wagon my brother was drivin' 'em and I was holdin' my bass in the back, didn't want to break it. So this old man come with us. When we got over there another feller said, "If you need help, I'll help ya." "We don't need no help, about the best fiddler in the United States right there." And I'd play that bass fiddle, they knowed that, they heared that bass fiddle three miles and a half way down there in that holler down there. And that old man he'd play, you know, and we'd holler up and boy he'd cut down on that fiddle, boy you oughta heared him. I'll play you the tune he used to play. That's what he used to play down there and he'd holler like a lion. We had two guitars and a banjo and a bass fiddle, one of them big double bass.

The old man Joe refers to above was Kerick Portell, one of his wife's relatives. Joe has no title for the majority of the tunes he plays but he usually remembers the person who he first remembers playing the piece.

9. Molly Musk 2:00 key of A

Joe Politte: We'll play old "Molly Musk." I know you know that.

This tune is usually known as "Money Musk," and this version is fairly similar to the way other Missouri fiddlers play it. The tune is believed to be of Scottish origin first appearing in print in the 18th Century. It has been spread throughout the British Isles and North America.

10. Mule Stories 3:46

And I traded another feller, I had a mule and a horse and he wanted the horse to mate his. And the mule did run away, I traded with him, I don't know the horse so well. So after he went home that night, that horse laid down and died. And next mornin' they came in and got on for me about it. I told 'em, I said, "I don't know nothin' about your damn horse," I said, "I traded with you, that's all I knows." And he said, "Well he died." I said, "I guess she's all right if she's dead he won't have to work no more." "I'll sue you." "All right." So he went and sued me. Well he couldn't do anything about that, but the sheriff come and got me out there in the yard and brought me in. I told him I swapped him the horse, but I can't, I didn't have his life insured, I didn't know how long that thing would live. I said, that's the way I am I couldn't tell anything about his mule, he coulda laid down there and died I said just as well as that horse. I swapped a lot of 'em, they got off my hands and they died that way.

Marguerite Politte: Yeah, you burnt dad on one of 'em too, one time he bought one from you, I think he lived two days.

Joe: Who?

M. P.: My old dad. That time you sold dad that mule I think he lived two days . . . about all.

Joe: I got so I couldn't get a horse trade at all. Oh hell yeah. They wouldn't fool with me at all.

I swapped one here, a great big mule. His foot you know, them wood parts there, you know, above it. They was swell up that big around. He was layin' down over there, and I never knowed that old mule to run from nothin'. And he drove over here, you know, he turned around and said, "You got any mules to trade?" "Oh, I don't know," I says, "I only got two mules," I says, "two big mules." So I swapped him that mule. And whenever he come and looked at it, the damn mule just got up and he

took off. Well good for you buddy, that's more than I can do. And the mule started, he run up to the corner of the fence never did get scared of nothin'. Even shoot with a gun over his head and the damn thing wouldn't move. Just still, like he'd a been dead. And he had rheumatism that's when he was a layin' down over there for. He was dowdy, couldn't get up. But when that feller walked up there a-oof, and hell he jumped up and took off. I said, "Well I'll go over and see your mules. I went over and seed his mules and seven years old. That mule was about thirty or thirty five. "Well," I said, "give me twenty five dollars difference, I'll trade with you." "Well, if I had the money, I'd give it to ya, but I ain't got the money. I like that big mule, he's a good mule." And I wanted him to haul him over here and come and get his because I wouldn't have made it there with him. "Well," he said, "haven't got the money, if I did I'd trade with you." I said, "Well, you get a truck, we'll haul this thing over and I'll give you a bigger pile of bones than you're giving me, I know for one thing."

And he hauled it and loaded it. When he got away started pawin' to lay down in the truck. "You better get the hell away from here with that thing before he jumps off the truck. He's pawin', he's gonna get out of there. He took off with his truck and he thought sure he burned me. He told them he was gonna set me afire so he asked five fellers to go see that mule he got. Well, they went by, they went and oh, this feller was drivin' the truck when he got on the road out there, he looked and he said, "I believe that mule he jumped the truck." Said, "I don't see 'em." So he got out and he looked and that mule was a layin' in the truck. Whenever he got over there, he told them fellers about the mule you know, to come and see the mule and whenever they got over there it took all five of 'em to unload the mule out of the truck.

M. P.: That's since we lived here.

J. P.: Huh?

M. P.: That's since we lived here.

J. P.: Oh yeah.

M. P.: I was just lookin' for that mule to lay down there 'fore he got it loaded, he put it on that bank out there you know, to load it up.

J. P.: Well he was ready to take a nap . . . the hell with him. I wanted him to get that thing off of there. No, I've traded a horse and mules all my life, that's all they had at the time, and ah, I've seen the time I

couldn't get a horse trade, if I wanted to buy one I couldn't have got one. Oh, hell no.

11. Old Rock Road 1:40 key of C

We have never heard this piece anywhere else. R. P. Christeson collected a version in Texas County, Missouri.

12. Old Man Portell's Tune 1:10 Key of D

Joe learned this tune from Clay Portell. We have never heard it elsewhere. R. P. Christeson collected the same piece in Nebraska from Uncle Bob Walters who called it "Hell Agin The Barn Door."

13. Grand Picnic 1:50 Key of D

Joe learned this piece from Jules Boyer. It's one of Joe's loveliest melodies. We haven't heard this piece outside of Washington County, Missouri.

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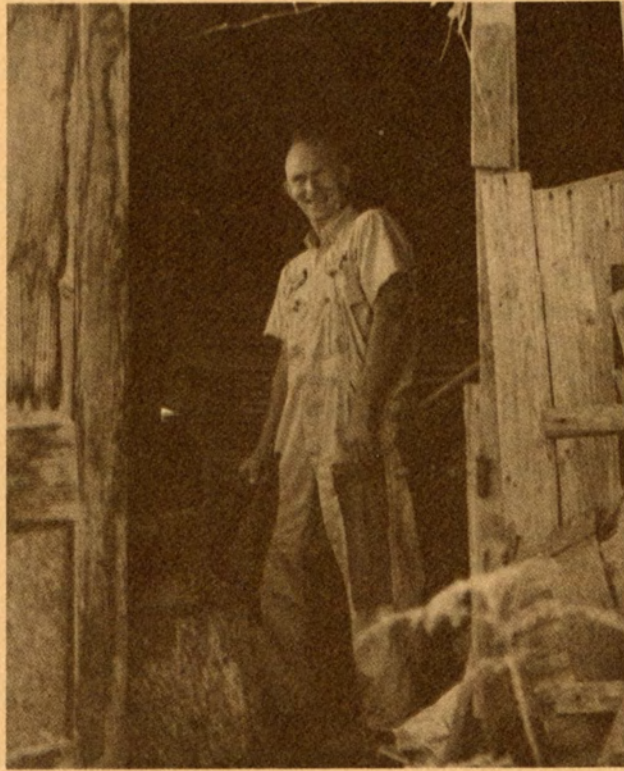
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I'M OLD BUT I'M AWFULLY TOUGH



M.F.F.A.

