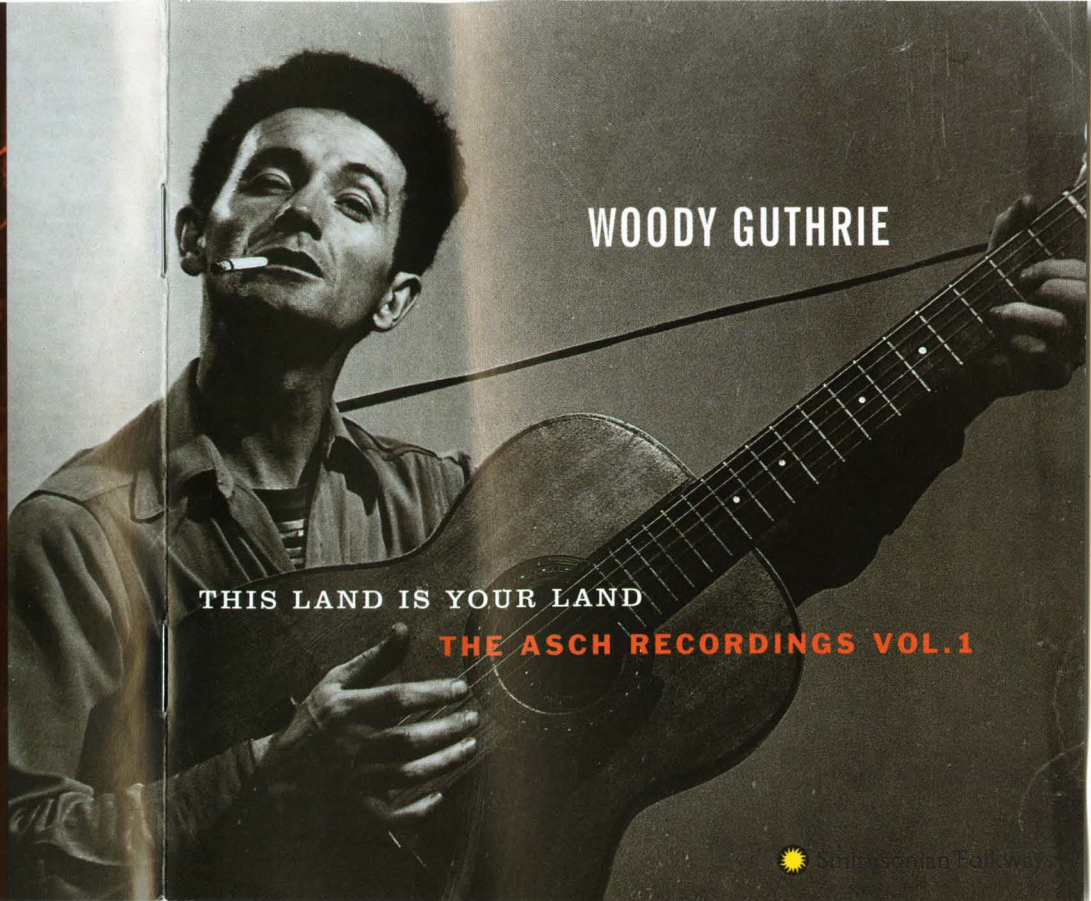


Smithsonian
Folkways

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies
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WOODY GUTHRIE

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

THE ASCH RECORDINGS VOL. 1



Smithsonian Folkways

WOODY GUTHRIE THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

THE ASCH RECORDINGS VOL.1

COMPILED BY JEFF PLACE AND GUY LOGSDON ANNOTATED BY GUY LOGSDON AND JEFF PLACE

1. **THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND** 2:16
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
2. **CAR SONG** 1:49
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Folkways Music, Inc., BMI)
3. **RAMBLIN' ROUND** 2:13
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
4. **TALKING FISHING BLUES** 3:03
(W. Guthrie/Sanga Music Inc., BMI)
5. **PHILADELPHIA LAWYER** 2:28
(W. Guthrie/Woody Publications Inc., BMI)
6. **LINDBERGH** 3:10
(W. Guthrie/Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI)
7. **HOBOS LULLABY** 2:22
(Goebel Reeves/Fall River Music, Inc., BMI)
8. **PASTURES OF PLENTY** 2:24
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
9. **GRAND COULEE DAM** 2:09
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
10. **END OF THE LINE** 2:49
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
11. **NEW YORK TOWN** 2:35
(arr. by W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
12. **GYPSY DAVY** 2:48
(arr. by W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
13. **JESUS CHRIST** 2:36
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
14. **THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND** 2:43
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
15. **DO-RE-MI** 2:30
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
16. **JARAMA VALLEY** 2:51
(P. Seeger, W. Guthrie, L. Hays/Stormking Music, Inc.)
17. **BIGGEST THING MAN HAS EVER DONE** 2:17
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
18. **PICTURE FROM LIFE'S OTHER SIDE** 3:05
(Charles E. Baer)
19. **JESSE JAMES** 2:57
(Huddie Ledbetter & W. Guthrie/TRO-Folkways Music, Inc., BMI)
20. **TALKING HARD WORK** 3:22
(W. Guthrie/Sanga Music Inc., BMI)
21. **WHEN THAT GREAT SHIP WENT DOWN** 3:17
22. **HARD, AIN'T IT HARD** 2:41
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
23. **GOING DOWN THE ROAD FEELING BAD** 2:55
(W. Guthrie & Lee Hays/TRO-Hollis Music, BMI)
24. **I AIN'T GOT NOBODY** 2:31
(arr. by W. Guthrie/Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI)
25. **SINKING OF THE REUBEN JAMES** 2:58
(W. Guthrie & Almanac Singers/W. Guthrie Pub. Inc., BMI)
26. **WHY, OH WHY?** 3:27
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
27. **THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND** 0:52
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)

INTRODUCTION

by Guy Logsdon

There was once a time when I thought I had listened to as many Woody Guthrie recordings as anyone. But no longer do I believe it, for I now know that Jeff Place sets new records every time he cues up a track of Woody's voice. As Archivist for the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies, which includes the archives and master recordings of Moses Asch and Folkways Records, Jeff has listened to each of the many Woody Guthrie recordings in the Asch/Folkways Archives. And as he listened to the recordings while transferring them from fragile master discs to digital tape and compact disc, he envisioned the songs Woody recorded for Moses Asch edited and compiled into a single collection: *Woody Guthrie: The Asch Recordings*.

There will be four volumes in the collection, but not all of the Asch/Guthrie recordings will be included, for some no longer exist, some are beyond transferring and restoration, and some seem unworthy. But there are enough songs, some previously issued and some unissued by Moses Asch, to showcase Woody's creativity and talent as well as to demonstrate his vast knowledge and mental storehouse of country/western/folk music.

MOSES ASCH AND FOLKWAYS RECORDS

Moses "Moe" Asch was a man obsessed with sounds—musical sounds, cultural sounds, political sounds, and nature's sounds—an obsession that led him to become a pioneer in audio recording. Born in Warsaw, Poland, he was a son of the novelist Sholem Asch; his father's work carried them to Berlin and then to Paris, and when Moe was eight years old the family moved to Brooklyn, New York. He grew up learning the songs of French children, his mother's Yiddish songs, the songs of English-speaking children, and later popular and jazz songs. As a teenager he developed an interest in radio and recording. At sixteen he traveled to Europe to study electronics and became acquainted with the folk songs of fellow students from Brazil, Holland, Austria, and Russia; he later wrote: "I learned the meaning of folk song as it expresses a HOME feeling of belonging and association." Later, while vacationing in Paris, he found a copy of John A. Lomax's *Cowboy Songs* (1910 edition) and "became filled with the meaning of the cowboy and the West."

In Brooklyn he worked as an engineer for a radio firm until the Great Depression, when he went into business for himself. He built broadcast equipment for radio stations and installed sound recorders for air use, and his interest in folk music continued to grow. He started manufacturing and producing records in 1939, spe-

cializing in international ethnic music and using Asch Records as his company name. His first commercial recording venture that featured American folk expression was the 1941 release, *Play Parties in Song and Dance as Sung by Lead Belly*. Other singers of folk songs such as Burl Ives and Josh White turned to him as an outlet for their talents; Asch became the primary producer of folk recordings with marginal commercial demand, recognizing the talents of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Cisco Houston, and hundreds of other singers and musicians. (See: Moses Asch, "Folk Music—A Personal Statement," *Sing Out!* 11 [February-March 1961] 1: 26-27.)

His success in the 1940s was made possible, in part, through his affiliation with Herbert Harris, who owned a record store in Manhattan and produced Stinson Records, and who had access to shellac, a scarce resource during World War II. Asch had no shellac, which was necessary for manufacturing records, but he had a studio, engineering skills, and access to musicians eager to record their music. Asch and Harris combined their resources, and issued records under the Asch-Stinson label. This relationship and its ultimate termination created discographic confusion, for some albums issued during those years require three different descriptions even though the album number, notes, cover illustration, disc number, and matrix numbers are

often the same. An example is Burl Ives's *The Wayfaring Stranger*, originally issued as Asch 345 with a cover illustration by David Stone Martin and with Asch disc labels; later it was issued with a photo of Ives on the cover. Subsequent copies were issued on Asch albums with Stinson disc labels, followed by Stinson albums with Stinson disc labels. The Asch/Harris split that created this discographic confusion came after the war ended.

Harris claimed that recordings made and issued during their partnership were also his and could be issued under the Stinson label. While Asch had most of the master recordings, a few were at the plate maker's plant in New Jersey, and Asch had no second copies. Every approved recording went to the plate maker, where the metal plate and a test pressing were made. Asch went bankrupt in 1947, and since he owed the plate maker money, the plates were seized by the maker, who sold them at auction. Some of the plates were purchased by Pickwick Records in California, and Harris obtained some plates for Stinson. When Harris had no master or plate, he copied the record that had been issued; thus, some recordings issued by Stinson are extremely poor in sound quality. Additionally, for many years other companies claimed to have a license to reproduce Stinson discs, perpetuating the poor sound; in some cases the reproductions are pirated. Many recordings issued

by Asch prior to his bankruptcy were also issued under the Stinson Records label along with some recordings that Asch lost and had never issued copies of. Asch always considered them to be his recordings, for they were made in his studio and he owned the contracts. But after bitter litigation, Asch knew that he could not prevent Harris from using them.

During his career, Asch produced records under several different labels: Asch Records, Asch-Stinson Records, Disc Recordings, Disc Company of America, Folkways Records, and others. He produced approximately 2,200 titles during his forty years of Folkways Records' ownership. He issued recordings of Woody Guthrie on each label that he produced.

The relationship between Woody and Moses Asch was that of record producer and artist, friends and adversaries—a relationship that made money for Asch and gave Woody a source of money when he needed it. Woody also reviewed recordings for Asch, which gave Asch a different perspective about his product and gave Woody a broader knowledge of the world of music.

In the Moses Asch/Folkways Records Archives at the Smithsonian are many of Woody's unpublished songs and poems as well as his commercially issued recordings and unissued master recordings. The unissued masters are takes rejected by Woody and/or Asch for various reasons, e.g., the topic of the

song did not fit the album being issued or a line was forgotten or skipped by Woody.

When Woody started recording in 1940, the commercially viable format was the 78 rpm disc. Once the needle was set on the master disc, there was no stopping. Mistakes could not be edited. If Woody lost the tune or sang the wrong words, he had to start over on a new master disc, so there are cuts in the Asch/Folkways Collection that Woody never heard or approved, for he made mistakes on them. The physical composition of the discs also varied: they were shellac, acetate on glass, and acetate on aluminum. Unfortunately, glass discs break easily and acetate on aluminum flakes off, so some songs in this collection can no longer be transferred from their master discs. A few recordings were lost merely by touching the master disc. Some of the songs in this collection are from those master recordings Moses Asch decided not to use for other projects, while others are previously issued songs chosen as representative of his best works.

WOODY GUTHRIE

More of Woody's story as told by fellow Oklahoman Guy Logsdon will appear in each volume of this collection.

Woody Guthrie played a major role in developing the foundation for the song and social movement now referred to as the urban folk

song revival during the 1940s and '50s. He remains an inspirational figure for folk songwriters, social protest and topical songwriters, and rock and folk rock songwriters. His friendship with Lead Belly, Pete Seeger, Cisco Houston, Sonny Terry, and other legendary folk artists is well documented, and he unselfishly shared his musical and cultural experiences and ideas with them. His influence on Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, John Mellencamp, and other contemporary musicians and songwriters is also well documented. His children's songs have helped parents and teachers rear, teach, entertain, and challenge young people for decades. And songs and poetry about the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression, and labor history still provide an important dimension to our understanding of life during those years. Woody's creative contributions to our culture are legion in the form of printed books as well as handwritten and/or typed manuscripts, paintings and drawings, and recorded songs.

He was Woodrow Wilson Guthrie, born the third of five children to Charley Edward Guthrie and Nora Sherman Guthrie on 14 July 1912. Charley Guthrie came to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) in 1897 from south Texas, and worked as a cowboy for H.B. Spaulding and other ranchers east of Okmulgee in the Creek Nation. After three years of cowboying, he turned to teaching penmanship,

and in 1902 went to work as a bookkeeper and clerk for a merchant in Welty, near Okemah. Nora Sherman Guthrie, Woody's mother, came to the Creek Nation with her parents from Kansas around 1900 (the exact year is not known). Her father was a farmer and her mother a school teacher in the Creek Nation schools. Charley and Nora were married 14 February 1904.

Woody's family heritage was culturally diverse—a microcosm of Oklahoma culture: his father was a Southerner, his mother a Northerner, and his uncles (his father's half-brothers) of Native American descent.

The Huntington's disease that eventually felled Woody was a tragic aspect of his family heritage, coming through his mother and maternal grandfather, who drowned in a flooded creek near Castle, Oklahoma. In *Bound for Glory* Woody writes about his Tanner uncles (his mother's half-brothers) and about his childhood in Okemah, which provided him a social conscience, an educational foundation, and many stories to tell; he grew up in a community that had an uncommon history.

Built on land leased from Creek Indians, Okemah was planned as the junction point of two train lines. Only one was actually even laid, the Fort Smith and Western Woody often used for his railroad stories. On 22 April 1902 an estimated 3,000 persons gathered to purchase townsite lots at an auction. The first

permanent business was a bank; its tent flaps opened immediately after the auction. Residential tents soon followed. On 16 May 1902 the post office was established—Okemah was a town. Agriculture was primary, dominated by cotton, pecans, peanuts, corn, and cattle. It was not always a quiet agricultural community, for many of the farmers who moved into the area were or became socialists.

Woody's father Charley Guthrie was a staunch Democrat, as were many other Okemah citizens, and as the socialist movement became powerful throughout rural Oklahoma, Charley fought them with pen and paper and sometimes fists. Charley and Nora had set up house in nearby Castle, but in 1907 as statehood neared and elections were being held for political offices, Charley filed for and won the office of District Court Clerk. The Guthries then moved to Okemah, where Charley became a leader. As the Socialist Party grew to become a third major party, its candidates came close to winning key statewide elections. Charley battled them in a series of newspaper articles and on the streets. On 14 July 1912, when his third child was born, Charley's political enthusiasm for the Democratic presidential candidate inspired him to name his son Woodrow Wilson Guthrie.

As U.S. involvement in World War I approached, Socialists lost members and influence, for they opposed the war and encouraged

draft resistance. Many Socialist tenant farmers in counties adjacent to Okfuskee County organized the Working Class Union. During August 1917, their protests grew into overt, often comic action. They burned a few bridges and out-buildings some thirty-five miles southwest of Okemah and stole green corn from the fields for food. For this reason, their insurrection became known as the Green Corn Rebellion; they planned to march on Washington, gaining size as sympathizers joined them, and to overthrow the government. But their movement died in the corn fields. Their actions deepened resistance to socialism in Oklahoma.

Okemah had been a multicultural environment for years before Woody was born. The town was on Creek Indian land, and there was a significant African-American presence in the area. One year after Okemah was founded, 13 miles west of it, another railroad town—Boley, an all African-American community—was established. In the days leading to statehood in 1907, Boley and Okemah battled to become the county seat of Okfuskee County. Okemah won.

Coal mining and glass manufacturing were major industries in Henryetta and brought European immigrants to the area. And while very little oil was discovered in the immediate vicinity of Okemah, major fields were discovered in the surrounding area. In 1923 the Cromwell field was brought in, just thirteen miles southwest of Okemah. As a railroad town

Okemah boomed as much as Cromwell; the population jumped from 2,000 to 10,000 almost overnight. Within a few years it fell as quickly as it grew. This particular boom time was the inspiration for some of Woody's best stories in *Bound for Glory*.

Bound for Glory represents the Okemah Woody knew, the cultural diversity he witnessed or heard about, and the hometown he loved. But in *Bound for Glory* Woody focuses on other childhood experiences: his heart-rending description of his sister Clara's death, a gang fight chapter as humorous as any childhood episode written by Mark Twain, and the gradual disintegration of his family through calamitous fires and his mother's deteriorating mental and physical condition. The reader of *Bound for Glory* should keep in mind that it is an autobiographical novel, not an autobiography. Woody always referred to it as his "novel."

Woody was a master storyteller who did not let fact stand in the way of a good story. He did not mention his younger brother, George, and his younger sister, Mary Jo. In the chapters about his Texas experiences, he did not mention his wife and children. A factual autobiography would at least have mentioned them and have given a semblance of accurate dates. Instead, *Bound for Glory* is Woody's powerful, well-written autobiographical novel in which tragedy and humor beautifully intertwine.

Woody remembered rumors about his older

sister Clara's death by fire—that she committed suicide or that her mother murdered her. Taunts from other children about his "crazy" mother stayed with him. In June of 1927, when his father was severely burned, it was told around town that Nora had thrown burning kerosene on Charley in a fit of anger. Because of this, the local Masonic Lodge took the responsibility of committing Nora to Central State Hospital for the Insane in Norman, Oklahoma. Nora was not insane, but little was known about Huntington's disease at that time. The erratic behavior, depression, and involuntary flailing of the arms symptomatic of the disease can make its victims appear insane.

In the Spring 1942 issue of *Common Ground* (p. 35) Woody wrote: "At 14, I first hit the road and followed it down to the Gulf Coast. The country was booming with real-estate deals, and a family of my friends had moved in down there to get started on a truck farm." It was the Mosier family, and Bud and Pete Mosier were his childhood friends (Woody called them the Mosely family). Woody was a few weeks away from being fifteen when his mother was committed and the family broke apart, and he joined the Mosiers. He worked his way down to Texas often playing his harmonica for food or money. In a manuscript Woody gave to the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Culture, he wrote:

But my family hit a little hard luck and I



had to hit the road in 1927 when I was about 15 years old. I rambled around for a good long time, down to east Texas, and along the Gulf of Mexico, and then across Texas again—up to the panhandle plains, the big wheat country, the big oil country, the big cattle country. But ever so often, I'd find myself a driftin back down the draw toward Oklahoma, and when I'd get back there I couldn't make a livin, so I'd haf to take off again—just anywhere.

Woody did travel during the summers, but he always returned to Okemah and high school. In 1929 during his junior year he was “Joke Editor” for the school newspaper, and in the school annual he was listed as being a member of the Publication Club and a member of the Boys’ Glee Club. Woody seems to have shown a quick wit, good sense of humor, and a talent for entertaining. This is not the image that writers often develop about Woody, and it is not necessarily the image that Woody wanted people to have after he became a social protest songwriter. Nevertheless, he was well liked and gregarious, small in stature, creative, and energetic as a bantam rooster. At the end of his junior year, he left Okemah and went to Pampa to join his father and the rest of the family.

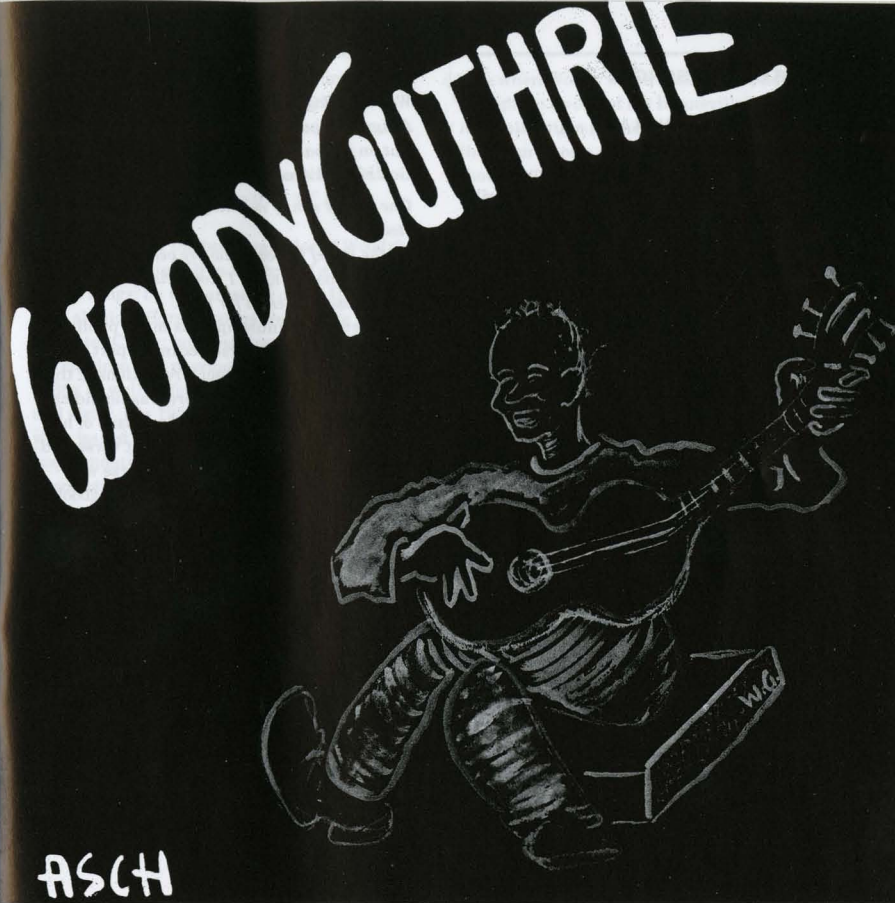
(To be continued on Volume 2)

WOODY GUTHRIE AND MOSES ASCH

Woody Guthrie's first studio recording session was on 21 March 1940, when Alan Lomax interviewed him for the Library of Congress, and his last session was on 7 January 1952, when he recorded two songs for Decca Records. During these twelve years, he also recorded for RCA Victor, the Bonneville Power Administration, Keynote Recordings, General Records, and many radio shows, but the bulk of studio recordings made by him were engineered and mastered by Moses Asch. The exact number of recordings made by Woody for Asch is unknown, for Asch did not keep accurate documentation of his sessions.

The documentation that exists in Asch's log ledger is often difficult to understand. Information is not listed chronologically, and first names or initials are used instead of complete names. For some entries, no name is listed. Jeff Place has compared the surviving master discs with the log book and has compiled the most accurate listing of Woody's recordings for the Archives; the list is being integrated into Guy Logsdon's “Biblio-Discography of the Songs of Woody Guthrie” and is the source for much of the discographic information in this collection.

Cover of Asch 347



NOTES ON THE SONGS

1. THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(Recording date unknown, from the master for Folkways 2481; also on Smithsonian Folkways 40001)

Written 23 February 1940, "This Land" is Woody's best-known song and one of the most widely sung songs in the United States; it has even been championed as a new national anthem. Its social significance lies in its inclusive statements, and its popularity is derived from a simple melody that can be sung by all. Woody's stated reason for writing it is possibly open to criticism—he said he was tired of hearing Kate Smith, one of the nation's most popular singers during the 1930s, sing "God Bless America." So he voiced a different perspective on the United States, ending each verse with "God blessed America for me." Later he changed the last line to "This land was made for you and me."

The melody is similar to the gospel song "When the World's on Fire"; this was a popular melody also adapted for the tune of "Little Darling, Pal of Mine."

Woody wrote six verses, of which two were about Great Depression experiences and were not heard when the song was first issued in 1951 on the 10" lp *This Land Is My Land* (Folkways FP 27, reissued FC 7027, 1961).

They were:

*Was a big high wall there that tried to stop me
A sign was painted said: Private Property.
But on the back side it didn't say nothing—
God blessed America for me.*

*One bright sunny morning in the shadow of the
steep*

*By the Relief Office I saw my people—
As they stood hungry, I stood there wondering if
God blessed America for me.*

When the manuscript was made public, the "Private Property" verse became a part of Arlo Guthrie's and Pete Seeger's renditions of the song. In the manuscript there was no indication of a chorus, but on that first issue of his recording, Woody repeated his first verse and it became the chorus. A seventh verse was added when he mimeographed his songbook, *Ten of Woody Guthrie's Songs: Book One* (3 April 1945), and sold them for twenty-five cents; the verse is:

*Nobody living can ever stop me
As I go walking my freedom highway
Nobody living can make me turn back
This land was made for you and me.*

It was believed that Woody did not record any of the missing verses, but as Jeff Place systematically transferred each master in the Folkways Archives to a compact disc, he discovered Woody's singing of the "Private Property" verse. It is number 14 in this collection.

2. CAR SONG

(alternate titles: "Riding in My Car"
& "Take Me Riding in My Car")
Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(No recording date or matrix number available, Smithsonian Acetate 073, 10" glass acetate)

This is one of the best examples of Woody's ability to put himself in the role of a child and create songs; he was an adult child. He said that all his children's songs were made by his daughter Cathy; however, he wrote songs for his children in a previous marriage in the late 1930s as well as for Cathy and her brothers and sister. His 1946 and 1947 children's songs were issued under the DISC label and earned commendations from the Parent-Teachers Association and the National Education Association, but this song was released later under the Folkways label. It was on *Songs to Grow On, Nursery Days, Vol. 1* (F 5, FOL 105, F 105, FC 7005, FC 7705, and FC 7675).

3. RAMBLIN' ROUND

(original title: "Ramblin' Blues")
Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar/harmonica
(Words by Woody Guthrie, melody adapted from "Goodnight Irene"; probably recorded in late April 1947, matrix D 201, Smithsonian Acetate 159, from master tape for Folkways 31001)

A dated manuscript does not exist to indi-

cate when Woody wrote these lyrics, but it is thought to be one of his Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)/Columbia River songs that expresses a migrant worker's nostalgic thoughts.

In April 1947, Asch received a telegram from the BPA requesting Woody to sing for a Rural Electric Cooperative meeting in Spokane, Washington, telling the people that dams and electricity were good for them and their agriculture. When Woody returned, Asch suggested that he record a few Columbia River songs; Woody agreed, providing he could include some Dust Bowl songs. The collection was issued that year as *Ballads from the Dust Bowl* (Disc 610, three 78 rpm discs). "Ramblin' Blues" was side 5011 A. It is the recording that has been used as "Ramblin' Round" on subsequent issues such as *This Land Is Your Land* (Folkways FTS 31001) and *Woody Guthrie: Columbia River Collection* (Rounder 1036). Since the migrant theme is common to both topics, a few songs such as this one can be used as Columbia River songs or Dust Bowl ballads. For additional information, see: *Sing Out!* 14 (April, May) 2:18 and number 8 in this collection.

4. TALKING FISHING BLUES

Woody Guthrie, vocals/guitar
(From *Bound for Glory* [Folkways FP 78/1, reissued as FW 2481], recorded 25 April 1944,

matrix MA 75, Smithsonian Acetate 189, from master tape for Folkways 2481; also on A *Fish That's a Song* [Smithsonian Folkways SF 45037])

Pete Seeger wrote that when he and the Almanac Singers met Woody they were "mightily impressed with his 'Talking Blues' form: two lines that rhyme, two more that rhyme, then two or three irregular, free form lines following as a comment, before the next stanza" (*Talkin' Union* 6 [April 1983]: 4). Although many believe Woody to be the creator, the "talking blues" is a form of country music novelty song dating back to the 1920s. The form is credited to a South Carolinian, Chris Bouchillon, who in April 1926 recorded the original "Talking Blues" (see: Charles Wolfe's notes on *Chris Bouchillon "The Original Talking Blues Man"* [Old Homestead OHCS 181]). However, "Talking Blues" with the often-copied opening line of many talking blues, "If you want to get to heaven, let me tell you how to do it....," is also reported from a "Negro minstrel show" heard in 1915 in Louisville, North Carolina (Newman I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* [reprint Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, 1968], p.135).

Bouchillon's recording sold over 90,000 copies, and numerous folk, country, and blues entertainers such as Woody Guthrie and Robert Lunn embraced the style and often adapted the lyrics (see: "We Shall Be Free,"

Lead Belly Sings Folk Songs [Smithsonian Folkways SF 40010], with Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston, and Sonny Terry). Woody used the "talking blues" as a musical vehicle to express his thoughts about many, many topics (see number 20 in this collection). For additional information about the "talkin' blues," see: John Greenway, *The Talking Blues*, notes by Kenneth S. Goldstein (Folkways FH 5232, 1958).

5. PHILADELPHIA LAWYER

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal
(From *Folkways: The Original Vision* [Smithsonian Folkways SF 40001], recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 36, Smithsonian Acetate 025)

In the summer of 1937, Woody Guthrie and his cousin Jack Guthrie landed jobs on a radio show over KFVD, Hollywood, California. Jack left the show, and a mutual friend, "Lefty Lou" Crissman, became Woody's singing partner on the "Woody and Lefty Lou Show." One day she showed Woody a newspaper article about a jealous cowboy shooting a "Philadelphia lawyer" in Reno, Nevada (during Woody's time, the term meant a shyster or an ambulance chaser). Woody thought it was funny—a cowboy shooting a lawyer. Originally calling it "Reno Blues," he apparently set his words to the traditional American ballad, "Jealous Lover (Florella)" (Laws F 1). He included it in

the song book *Woody and Lefty Lou's Favorite Collection Old Time Hill Country Songs* (Gardena, CA: Spanish American Institute Press, circa 1937, p. 8).

Woody and Jack Guthrie sang it in bars up and down the California coast; as a young singer listening outside bars, Rose Maddox learned it from their singing. She and her brothers entertained and recorded as "The Maddox Brothers and Rose," and "Philadelphia Lawyer" became a popular song when they recorded it with Rose doing the vocal (Four Star 1289, 1949).

6. LINDBERGH

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(From *Hard Travelin'* [Disc Records LP 110, 1964])

Charles A. Lindbergh became a world-renowned aviation figure in May 1927, when he made the first nonstop solo flight across the Atlantic. He was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1902, but his childhood was spent in Minnesota and Washington, D.C. His father, Charles Augusta Lindbergh, was a five-term progressive U. S. Representative from Minnesota, and received much criticism for denouncing war propaganda prior to the U.S. entry into World War I.

Lindbergh married Anne Morrow, and in 1932, their son was kidnaped and murdered, which was the most notorious crime of the

1930s; the publicity drove the family to Europe. In 1936, he warned about Germany's growing air power; however, in 1938, he received a decoration from the German government (Woody's reference to his "German cross"), and upon returning to the United States in 1940 gave speeches along with conservative politicians encouraging American neutrality in the expanding European war. President Roosevelt was critical of his speeches and position; Woody's position is expressed in this song. Woody also is critical of individuals who remained neutral, and he mentions Father Charles E. Coughlin, a Roman Catholic priest who developed a massive radio audience and espoused hatred of Roosevelt, communism, and European intervention.

The melody is similar to "White House Blues," a song about the assassination of President McKinley.

7. HOBO'S LULLABY

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(Words and music by Goebel Reeves; from *Folkways: The Original Vision* Smithsonian Folkways SF 40001, recorded 25 April 1944, matrix MA 109, Smithsonian Acetate 055, from master for Smithsonian Folkways 40001)

This has been reported to be Woody's favorite song; it was recorded by its composer, Goebel Reeves, 13 August 1934, in San Fran-

cisco, but apparently not issued. Later that month, 31 August, he recorded it in Chicago (Champion 45181); when or where Woody learned it is not known, but he included it in his unpublished manuscript "Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938. Woody wrote:

A hobo's life moves swiftly, broadly, talking and moving in terms of states, countries, seasons; instead of the narrow, suffocating, life of City Living so hemmed in on every side.... Friendless, and alone he dwells among us, drifting like a tumbleweed across the earth... seeking a freedom that you have only dimly felt at times.

Reeves's life was similar to Woody's, but he did not write social protest songs. He was born 9 October 1899 in Sherman, Texas; his mother was a musician, and his father was a salesman who later was elected to the Texas House of Representatives. After serving in the army during World War I, he started performing with his guitar and traveling across the country, eventually performing over small radio stations. When he tired of that life, he would ship out as a merchant seaman. He became known as "The Texas Drifter" and also sang and recorded under other names. In the 1930s, he appeared on nationwide radio shows often using his songs and poems about hobo life, but he became disillusioned with

the entertainment world and left it. Reeves died 26 January 1959 in Long Beach, California (see: *Goebel Reeves: Hobo's Lullaby* [Bear Family BCD 15680], notes by Fred Hoepfner).

8. PASTURES OF PLENTY

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar/harmonica (Probably recorded in late April 1947, from Smithsonian reel-to-reel tape #31- take 2, matrix D-199, Smithsonian Acetate 0033)

The Bonneville Power Administration sells and distributes the electricity generated by the hydroelectric dams along the Columbia River system. When Congress created it in 1937, the BPA, as did other rural electric administrations in the nation, faced public relations problems. Many citizens were skeptical of the value to be gained by providing subsidized electricity to most homes in the nation. Large power companies waged an advertising war against rural electrification the same way that insurance companies fought Social Security; the BPA therefore decided to use the movies to sell the value of the dams and electricity, and they hired Woody to write songs for a movie eventually titled *The Columbia* (see: Woody Guthrie, *Roll On Columbia: The Columbia River Collection*, Bill Murlin, ed. [Sing Out Corp., 1991]).

Woody said that he wrote twenty-six songs in twenty-six days. Even though this may be somewhat exaggerated, the fact is that he did

write twenty-six songs about the project and the conditions that drove families to the Northwest in the 1930s. Not known to be a hard worker at manual labor himself, he did listen to migrants and other laborers and transformed their stories, problems, aspirations, tragedies, loves, and work experiences into first-person narratives that still evoke emotional responses from those who read and listen. "Pastures of Plenty" is one of those lasting, powerful products of Woody's short time with the BPA that he included in *Ballads from the Dust Bowl* (Disc 610, side 5010 A; also on: *Folkways: The Original Vision* [Smithsonian Folkways SF 40001]). He wrote at least ten verses; however, the most popular variant has five quatrain verses. For additional information about his BPA days see number 3 in this collection.

9. GRAND COULEE DAM

(alternate titles: "Big Grand Coulee Dam" and "Ballad of the Great Grand Coulee")

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar (Probably recorded in 1944, matrix MA-17; Smithsonian Acetate 118, 10" shellac disc, issued as Asch 78 347-1B)

This song was one of the songs that Asch included in his first Woody Guthrie collection (Asch 347). Woody included it in his mimeographed songbook, *Ten of Woody Guthrie's Songs: Book One* (3 April 1945); he

wrote: "...The rich ones hired airplanes full of entertainers and stars to come up to Oregon, Washington, Montana, and Wyoming and tell the people that they didn't need no Coolee (sic) Dam at all; that is, not for the next couple of centuries.... The world didn't need no more houses with electricity in them.... Then I sung another little song to sort of put these airplane loads of fonies back in their place."

Manuscripts indicate he originally composed at least eight verses to this song (see: Woody Guthrie, *Roll On Columbia: The Columbia River Collection*, Bill Murlin, ed., [Sing Out Corp., 1991]), but later cut it to six verses. He wrote that he recorded it for the BPA and for the United States Office of War Information as well as for the Asch Record Company. For more information about the BPA, see numbers 3 and 8 in this collection.

10. END OF THE LINE

(alternate title: "Mile an' a Half from th' End of th' Line")

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica

(Probably recorded in late April 1947, from master for Folkways 31001)

Another of his lesser-known Columbia River (BPA) songs, this is a fast-tempo statement that carries the listener through the decade of the '30s—one year per line. The first half could be a Dust Bowl song; they

move out of the drought area "fifteen mile from th' Bonneville Dam," but they are still "a mile from th' end of th' line" without the benefit of electricity. A typescript copy in the Folkways Archives has a penciled statement, "Talk it." It is not Woody's handwriting—apparently Asch believed the song might flow better as a talking blues.

It was not issued until Woody received his Distinguished Conservation Service Award from the United States Department of the Interior in April 1966, in recognition of his musical contributions to making "our people aware of their heritage and the land." A BPA substation on the Columbia River was also named "The Woody Guthrie Substation." To complement the award, Asch issued *Woody Guthrie: Bonneville Dam & Other Columbia River Songs* (Verve Folkways FV 9036, 1966; reissued as *This Land Is Your Land* [Folkways FTS 31001, 1967]; see: Woody Guthrie, *Roll On Columbia: The Columbia River Collection*, Bill Murlin, ed. [Sing Out Corp., 1991]).

11. NEW YORK TOWN

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal
(Recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 21, from Asch 347-3B)

This is an example of Woody adopting an African-American musical style. "New York Town" is similar to "One Dime Blues" recorded

by Blind Lemon Jefferson. In fact, Woody recorded "One Dime Blues" for the Library of Congress on 4 January 1941. He also used this structure and melody for his BPA song "Ramblin' Blues (Portland Town)" (see: "Ramblin' Blues," *Woody Guthrie: Columbia River Collection* [Rounder Records 1036, 1987]).

The first Woody Guthrie album issued by Moses Asch was titled *Woody Guthrie* (Asch Records 347, three 78 rpm discs, released in the fall of 1944); "New York Town" was side 347-3B. Woody and Cisco Houston had recorded it during that initial marathon one-day recording session, 19 April 1944, in which they recorded over fifty-five songs.

12. GYPSY DAVY

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(Recorded late April 1944, matrix MA 139, Smithsonian Acetate 90, from Asch 78 347-2B)

This British traditional ballad (Child Ballad 200) is known by numerous titles: "Gypsy Laddie," "Black Jack Davie (Davy)," "Amos Furr," and many more. Texts are known to exist dating to the mid-18th century, but, no doubt, it is much older. As the song traveled through various traditions it became regionalized by the singers; Woody's version is a combination of Texas and Oklahoma texts (see: Alan Lomax, *The Penguin Book of American Folk Songs* [Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964, p. 112]). He recorded it for the Library of

Congress on 4 January 1941, and it was included in the first collection of folk songs issued by the Library of Congress, *Folk Music of the United States: Anglo-American Ballads AAFS 1* (1942).

It is possible this is a song that as a child Woody heard his mother or father sing, for in an unpublished manuscript he wrote:

Wimmens hearts is like guitars—and here is the song and tale of a woman who decided to leave her husband and wealth and go with a Gypsy Davy, and she loved all the songs played on the strings of her heart—except one string. She couldn't bear the thoughts of leaving her purty little Blue-Eyed Baby. I dont reckon they is anybody knows how old this song is. I've heared it all my life.

—"Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938)

He recorded it for Asch in late April 1944, and it was included in *Woody Guthrie* (Asch Records 347, three 78 rpm discs), released in the fall of 1944, side 347-2B. An interesting occupational adaptation of Woody's version is cowboy singer Don Edwards' "Gypsy Davey" on *West of Yesterday* (Warner Western 46187).



13. JESUS CHRIST

(alternate title: "They Laid Jesus Christ in His Grave")

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(Recording date unknown, Smithsonian Acetate 161-1, 16" glass acetate)

Woody was a religious man, but not in the conventional sense. He was well-read in biblical scriptures as well as in Oriental religions and philosophies. There are three manuscripts of this song in the Folkways Archives, and on an early dated version he wrote:

I wrote this song looking out of a rooming house window in New York City in the winter of 1940. I saw how the poor folks lived, and

then I saw how the rich folks lived, and the poor folks down and out and cold and hungry, and the rich ones out drinking good whiskey and celebrating and wasting handfuls of money at gambling and women, and I got to thinking about what Jesus said, and what if He was to walk into New York City and preach like he use to. They'd lock Him back in Jail as sure as you're reading this. "Even as you've done it unto the least of these little ones, you have done it unto me."

On 5 February 1947 he added four additional verses; he made his first recording of it on 22 March 1940 for Alan Lomax and the Library of Congress (see: Woody Guthrie: *Library of Congress Recordings* [Rounder Records 1041/2/3]), and recorded it for Asch in late April 1944, and it was included in *Woody Guthrie* (Asch Records 347, three 78 rpm discs) released in the fall of 1944, side 347-2B.

14. **THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND** (alternate take) Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar (Recorded late April 1944, matrix MA-114, Smithsonian Acetate 164, 10" shellac disc) (See number 1 in this collection.)

15. **DO-RE-MI** (alternate title: "If You Ain't Got the Do Re Mi") Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar (Recording date unknown, from *Folkways*:

The Original Vision [Smithsonian Folkways SF 40001])

Written in 1937, this is one of Woody's early songs about Dust Bowl migrants; it is the first song in his *Woody and Lefty Lou's Favorite Collection Old Time Hill Country Songs* (Gardena, CA: Spanish American Institute Press, circa 1937). He wrote:

For years people have been pickin' up and leavin' out of the drought country and dust bowl parts...a-comin' to California.... I ain't a-discouragin' nobody...but to those who are just a-comin' to be comin'...I present the above song.... It ain't so much on poetry, but it tells a LOT of truth.

In 1941, with the guidance of Alan Lomax, one of Woody's many fake books was copied (typed) by staff members at the Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress; this song was dated as an original song by Woody in that collection. He recorded it for the Library of Congress during his first session with Alan Lomax, 21 March 1940, and one month later recorded it for Victor Records as a selection in his *Dust Bowl Ballads, Vol. I*, side 26620-A. He probably recorded it for Asch in late April 1947, but it was not issued by Folkways until it appeared in 1956 on *Bound for Glory* (Folkways FP 78/1, reissued as FW 2481). It remains one of Woody's most popular Dust Bowl migrant songs.

16. **JARAMA VALLEY** Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar (Recording date unknown, from master for Folkways 5437)

The Abraham Lincoln Battalion was composed of approximately 3,200 Americans who fought for Republican Spain, the legally elected government, in a civil war against insurgent forces led by General Franco, who supported Hitler, Mussolini, and fascism. More than 1,500 of the battalion were killed, and scores were wounded. Jarama Valley was where they fired their first shots in the war in February 1937. During World War II, many of the survivors served in the United States military. With Pete Seeger's encouragement, Asch recorded this song and five others with Seeger, Tom Glazer, Baldwin "Butch" Hawes, and Bess Lomax Hawes to honor the men and women in *Songs of the Lincoln Battalion* (Asch 330). There is no evidence that Woody wrote "Jarama Valley," nor is there information about when and where he learned it or when he recorded it. He may have learned it by listening to the recording by Seeger and the others. Asch used Woody's version in *Songs of the Spanish Civil War, Vol. II* (Folkways FH 5437, 1962).

17. **BIGGEST THING MAN HAS EVER DONE** (alternate title: "The Great Historical Bum") Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar (Recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 15, from Asch disc 432-3B)

Nineteenth-century American frontier life encouraged the tall tale and the braggart, and it inspired an irreverence toward the Bible and, to some extent, toward the classroom. "I Am a Highly Educated Man" was written by H.C. Verner and Harry C. Clyde in 1894. This late nineteenth-century popular song combines these prevailing themes into biblical and historical comedy. The writers composed a song that is easily adaptable, which is what Woody Guthrie did when he wrote "The Biggest Thing That Man Has Ever Done." The first documented title change from the original, "I Am a Highly Educated Man," was when Fiddlin' John Carson recorded it as "When Abraham and Isaac Rushed the Can," circa March 1924, Atlanta, Georgia (Okeh 40181). The following year Kelly Harrell recorded it, using the title "I Was Born About 10,000 Years Ago," circa August 1925, Asheville, North Carolina (Okeh 40486). Both Vernon Dalhart and Uncle Dave Macon recorded "I'm the Man That Rode the Mule Around the World," and that is the title that Woody included in his 1938 unpublished manuscript, "Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One

Hundred and One Songs." He used the theme for a BPA song, and it was easily adapted into this World War II variant, which was first issued as a 78 rpm disc in *Folksey* (Asch Records 432).

18. PICTURE FROM LIFE'S OTHER SIDE

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, vocal harmony/guitar; Bess Hawes, harmony
(Words and music by Charles E. Baer, 1896; recorded 25 April 1944, matrix MA82, from *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs with Cisco Houston and Sonny Terry* [Folkways FA2484], Smithsonian Acetate 190, 10" shellac disc)

Woody used this song in his radio show over KFVD, Hollywood, and included it in the song book, *Woody and Lefty Lou's Favorite Collection of Old Time Hill Country Songs* (Gardena, CA: Spanish American Institute Press, circa 1937, p. 9). It was a late nineteenth-century sentimental song that appealed to folk and country singers. Vernon Dalhart popularized it, but it was first recorded by Smith's Sacred Singers, 22 April 1926, Atlanta, Georgia (Columbia 15090-D). The composer, Charles E. Baer from Pennsylvania, worked for the Baldwin Locomotive Works, but his passion was writing sentimental parlor songs. One of his lesser-known songs was "Let the Love Light Linger Longer Lady Lou."

19. JESSE JAMES (LEAD BELLY'S VERSION)

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(Words by Woody Guthrie, music adapted from "Out on the Western Plains" by Huddie Ledbetter; possibly recorded 25 April 1944; from *Cowboy Songs on Folkways* [SF 40043])

Robbing from the rich and giving to the poor as well as seeking revenge against powerful and impersonal organizations and individuals have been popular folk themes. Betrayal and death by a trusted friend add to the outlaw mystique. Jesse James was the epitome of each theme, and with the help of dime novelists, and eventually the motion pictures, he became the Robin Hood of the West. He also captured the imagination of song makers. However, he was not a cowboy; he was a farmer. But since outlaw songs are usually included in the larger body of cowboy songs, "Jesse James" is considered to be a cowboy song.

In 1951 Moses Asch planned to issue an anthology of cowboy songs, and even though he made a mock-up of the album and advertised it, he never released it. Woody Guthrie's singing of this song is on the mock-up, and the typed label reads, "Jesse James (Lead Belly's Version)." Yet there is no evidence that Lead Belly wrote it. Two verses and the refrain are from "When I Was a Cowboy," but it is sung to a different melody. It is probable that Woody wrote the other verses and set it

to the different tune. It is a significant Jesse James song, for it does not romanticize him. Woody knew the traditional Jesse James song, and he also wrote another entirely different, but unrecorded, song about the outlaw.

20. TALKING HARD WORK

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(From *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs*, Vol. 2 [Folkways 2484], also on *Folkways: The Original Vision* ("Woody's Rag") [Smithsonian Folkways 40001], recording date unknown, from master for Folkways 2484)

One of many talking blues songs that Woody composed, this one was not released until 1964 on *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs*, Vol. 2 (Folkways 2484); for more information about the talking blues form, see number 4 in this collection.

21. WHEN THAT GREAT SHIP WENT DOWN

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica
(Recorded 25 April 1944, matrix MA 91-1, Smithsonian Acetate 85-1, 12" glass acetate)

Disasters have always inspired songwriters, who often view them as signs of God's wrath. Almost immediately after news flooded the nation that the *Titanic* had sunk (15 April 1912), songwriters started cranking out versions of the event. Within the year over 125

songs about the disaster were copyrighted, and public fascination with the *Titanic* and its 1500-plus victims seems destined to extend into the 21st century. The songwriters often used popular public domain songs for their lyric structure and tune.

22. HARD, AIN'T IT HARD

(alternate title: "There Is a House in This Old Town")

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar
(Recorded 16 April 1944, matrix LM 1, Smithsonian Acetate 089, from *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs*, Vol. 2 [Folkways 2484], from master for Folkways 2484)

Moses Asch's log book indicates that this was the first song Woody and Cisco recorded for him—16 April 1944; but Woody had already recorded it on 4 January 1941 for the Library of Congress (4491-B4, unissued) and on 7 July 1941 as an Almanac Singer for General Records, issued on *Sod Buster Ballads* [General Album G-21 (5019-B)] with Pete Seeger (banjo/harmony) and John "Peter" Hawes (guitar/harmony). A variant of the song is in his unpublished manuscript "Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938.

Alan Lomax documented it as an "original treatment" of the once-popular college drink-

ing song "There Is a Tavern in the Town" and "stemming from the 'Butcher Boy' tradition" (Lomax, *The Folk Songs of North America* [Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1960, p. 439]). The "Butcher Boy" is Laws P 24, a British broadside that has become traditional in America. Eldon Baker & His Brown County Revelers, the Delmore Brothers, and others recorded the variants "It's Hard" or "Ain't It Hard to Love" in mid-1938 and later.

23. GOING DOWN THE ROAD FEELING BAD

(original title: "Lonesome Road Blues"; numerous alternate titles)
Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica
(Recorded 24 April 1944, matrix MA 711, Smithsonian Acetate 451, 10" shellac disc)

Variants of this song have traveled across this nation for over one hundred years; the identity of its writer has been lost in the passage of time, and Woody is just one of many who adapted it as his own. In his writings and recordings there are at least three variants, and he used the tune for other compositions and for a radio theme song. It is in his unpublished manuscript "Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938, as "Lonesome Road Blues." Its blues form suggests its origin in Southern

African-American culture, and its verses intermingle with those of other blues.

When and where Woody learned it is not known, but it is probable that he heard recordings of it. By 1938, nearly forty singers or bands had recorded variants under a wide variety of titles. Asch first used Woody's version on *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2* (Folkways 2484, 1964).

No less than six variants were collected by the W. P. A. California Folk Music Project during the late 1930s; one manuscript states that "since 1933 it has become the song of migrant families who were tracted out of Texas, dusted out of Oklahoma, and flooded out of Arkansas." Woody wrote that, when they were shooting Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (circa late 1939), he was invited to the studios and asked to sing a song that most "Okies" would know: "This was the first song that popped to my mind, so without thinking, I sung it." He also said they used it in the book (*Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People* [New York: Oak Publications, 1967, p. 215]). In the Folkways Archives there are many manuscripts, including some of Woody's typescripts of the song. One indicates that he, Pete Seeger, and Lee Hays wrote verses to support a national minimum wage law. Woody also wrote his "original version" in January 1939 while singing over KFVD Radio in Hollywood, "Blowin' Down This Road."

24. I AIN'T GOT NOBODY

(alternate title: "I Don't Love Nobody")
Woody Guthrie, vocal/lead guitar; Cisco Houston, rhythm guitar
(Recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 6, Smithsonian Acetate 007, 10" shellac disc)

This was the eighth song Woody and Cisco recorded for Asch, but it was not released until Asch issued *Hard Travelin'* under the Disc label in 1964 (Disc 110). Apparently not many copies were pressed, for it is one of the most difficult Woody Guthrie long-play records to find. The melody is similar to the old-time fiddle tune, "I Don't Love Nobody," which is easily adapted to other instruments such as the guitar and banjo. "Don't Love Me" was popular with early jazz bands. Elizabeth Cotton plays it as a blues on *Freight Train and Other North Carolina Folk Songs and Tunes* (Folkways 3526, 1958; reissued as Smithsonian Folkways 40009); it was recorded as a bluegrass vocal on *Red Allen & the Kentuckians* (Folkways FTS 31065, 1979) and as a banjo piece by J. C. Sutphin on *American Banjo Three Finger and Scruggs Style* (Folkways 2314, 1957; reissued by Smithsonian Folkways 40037). Both Elizabeth Cotton and Red Allen sing lyrics, but they differ from the two short verses Woody sings—ones that he probably wrote.

25. SINKING OF THE REUBEN JAMES

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(From Woody Guthrie, *Bound for Glory* [Folkways FP 78/1, 1956 (FA 2481, 1961)], reissued on *That's Why We're Marching* [Smithsonian Folkways 40021], recorded 25 April 1944, matrix MA 80, Smithsonian Acetate 081, 10" glass acetate)

On 31 October 1941, the U.S. Navy reported that a Nazi U-boat torpedoed the destroyer *Reuben James*; under the command of Lieutenant Commander H. L. Edwards, the ship sank west of the Iceland coast with only forty-four of the one hundred and twenty crewmen rescued.

Woody Guthrie was living in the Almanac House when he wrote his tribute to the lost sailors. He had trouble with a chorus, for he wanted to list all of the lost seamen's names. One of the Almanacs suggested using "What were their names," instead of listing the names. Millard Lampell wrote the last verse; so credits usually read "by Woody Guthrie and the Almanac Singers." Even though Woody adapted "Wildwood Flower" ("I'll Twine 'Mid the Ringlets") for the verse melody, the tune for the chorus (according to Pete Seeger) was composed by Woody.

It has long been stated that guitar players east of the Mississippi River start their picking career playing "Wildwood Flower." The song was popularized by the Carter Family,

who recorded it on 10 May 1928 in Camden, New Jersey. It was released as Victor V40000, with Sarah Carter singing the lyrics. However, it was a popular 19th-century parlor song written in 1860 under the title "I'll Twine 'Mid the Ringlets"; the music was composed by Joseph Philbrick Webster, who also composed the tunes to "Lorena" and the hymn "That Sweet By and By," and the lyrics were by Maud Irving. Through the traditional transmission process, the lyrics were modified, sometimes into phrases with no clear meaning.

26. WHY, OH WHY?

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar/harmonica (No recording date available, from *Why, Oh Why?* [Folkways FC 7016, 1985]; reissued on *Songs to Grow On for Mother and Child* [Smithsonian Folkways 45035], from master for Smithsonian Folkways 45035)

Most of Woody's children's songs are written in language a child can sing, but this one is written for a parent, grandparent, or adult to sing to and with the child. It has a sophisticated form of questions and answers. Moses Asch encouraged Woody to write a series of children's songs; on the manuscript in the Folkways Archives dated 3 February 1947, Woody wrote twelve verses with the statement: "Add your own verses from here on in." The recording session was held later in 1947,

but Asch did not use this song until 1985 when Sam Charters compiled and edited *Why, Oh Why?: and other nonsense and activity songs for very early childhood with Woody Guthrie* (Folkways FC 7016).

27. THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND (reprise) Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar; Cisco Houston (No recording date or matrix number available, Smithsonian Acetate 388, 16" glass acetate)

Woody and Cisco recorded different versions of a musical train ride across the nation narrating the towns visited and the problems confronted when "riding the rails." They used a variety of tunes for the lengthy musical trip from the West Coast to the East Coast and later to points south; this "reprise" is an opening statement on one of those musical trips. In this variant Woody changes the lyrics to "Redwood Forest" and "Canadian Mountains" and retrospectively states "East Coast here I come!"

During early 1944, on break from the Merchant Marine, Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston visited Moses Asch's New York studio for a series of recording sessions. The following sessions produced hundreds of sides representing the bulk of the recorded legacy of both artists. They were joined frequently by Sonny Terry and on occasion by Pete Seeger. Unless we discovered differently by listening to the original acetate, the titles come from Moses Asch's original recording log book.

April 16, 1944

Hard Ain't it Hard LM-1

More Pretty Gals Than One LM-2

April 19, 1944

Golden Vanity (Lonesome Sea) MA1

When the Yanks Go Marching In MA2

So Long It's Been Good to Know You MA3

Dollar Down and a Dollar a Week MA4

Hen Cackle MA5

I Ain't Got Nobody MA6

Ida Red MA7

Columbus Stockade MA8

Whistle Blowing MA9

John Henry MA10

Hammer Ring (Union Hammer) MA11

Muleskinner Blues MA12

What Are We Waiting On MA13

Ship in the Sky MA14

The Biggest Thing Man Has Ever Done MA15

Stewball MA16

Grand Coulee Dam MA17

Talking Sailor (Talking Merchant Marine)

MA18-20, MA 22

New York Town MA 21

Reckless Talk MA23-24

Last Nickel Blues MA25

Guitar Rag MA26

Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Feet?

MA27

Brown Eyes MA28

Chisholm Trail MA29

Sowing on the Mountain MA30-31

Right Now MA32

Train Harmonica MA33

Sally Don't You Grieve MA34

Take a Whiff on Me MA35

Philadelphia Lawyer MA36

Kissin' On (Gave Her Kisses) MA37

Little Darling MA38

Baltimore to Washington (Troubles Too) MA39

Poor Boy MA40-41

Ain't Nobody's Business MA42

Take Me Back MA43

Going Down This Road Feeling Bad MA44

Bed on the Floor MA45

One Big Union (Join It Yourself) MA46

Worried Man Blues MA47

What Did the Deep Sea Say? MA48

Foggy Mountain Top MA49

99 Years MA50

Gambling Man MA51

Cindy MA52

Into Season MA53
Strawberry Roan MA54
Red River Valley MA55
Dead or Alive (Poor Lazarus) MA56
Pretty Boy Floyd MA57
John Hardy MA58
Bad Lee Brown MA59
Whistle Blowing MA66
Billy the Kid MA67
Stagger Lee (Stackerlee) MA68
Take a Whiff on Me MA69

April 20, 1944

Down Yonder MA674
Guitar Blues MA675
Pretty Baby MA680
Give Me That Old Time Religion MA687
Glory MA688
Hard Time Blues MA689
Rubber Dolly MA690
Bus Blues MA691
Devilish Mary MA692
Cripple Creek MA693
Sandy Land MA694

April 24, 1944

Old Dan Tucker MA695
Bile Them Cabbage Down MA696
Old Joe Clark MA697
Buffalo Gals (Bottle in My Hand) MA698
Rain Crow Bill MA699
Skip to My Lou MA700
Lonesome Train MA701-2

Blues MA703
Harmonica Breakdown MA704
Harmonica Rag MA705
Harmonica Rag #2 MA706
Crawdad Hole MA707
Bury Me Beneath the Willow MA708
Ride Around Little Dogies (I Ride an Old Paint) MA709
Blue Eyes MA710
Going Down This Road Feeling Bad (Lonesome Road Blues) MA711
Old Dog a Bone MA712
Having Fun MA713
Blues MA714

April 25, 1944

Talking Fishing (Fishing Blues) MA75
Talking Sailor (Talking Merchant Marine) MA76
Union Burying Ground MA77
Jesse James MA78
Ranger's Command MA79
Sinking of the Reuben James MA80
Put My Little Shoes Away MA81
Picture from Life's Other Side MA82
Will You Miss Me MA83
Bed on the Floor MA84
900 Miles MA85
Sourwood Mountain MA86
Hoecake Baking MA87
Ezekiel Saw the Wheel MA88
Little Darling MA89

Lonesome Day MA90
Cumberland Gap MA91
Fiddling Piece MA92
Carry Me Back to Old Virginny MA93
Stepstone MA94
House of the Rising Sun MA96
Brown's Ferry Blues MA98
What Would You Give in Exchange for Your Soul? MA99
When That Great Ship Went Down MA91-1
Guitar Rag MA101,1230
Going Down the Road Feeling Bad MA103
Dust Bowl MA100
I Ain't Got Nobody MA102
Polly Wolly Doodle MA104
Blowing Down This Old Dusty Road MA1231

April 1944 (shortly after the 25th)

Hey Lolly Lolly MA105
Budded Roses MA106
House of the Rising Sun MA107
I Don't Feel at Home in the Bowery MA108
Hobo's Lullaby MA109
Frog Went A-Courtin' (Mouse Went A-Courtin') MA110
Bad Reputation MA111
Snow Deer MA112
Ladies Auxillary MA113
This Land Is My Land MA114
Hang Knot (Slip Knot) MA115
Breakdown MA116
Go Tell Aunt Rhody MA117

Union Going to Roll MA118
Who Broke Down the Hen House Door? MA119
What Did the Deep Sea Say? MA120
When the Yanks Go Marching In MA122
Bed on the Floor MA123
We Shall Be Free MA124
Right Now MA125
Jackhammer John MA126
Woody MA127
Woody MA128
Keep Your Skillet Good and Greasy MA129-1
Lost You MA131
Slip Knot (Hang Knot) MA134
Jesus Christ MA135
Little Black Train MA137
Cannon Ball MA138
Gypsy Davy MA139
Bile Them Cabbage Down MA140

March 1, 1945

Git Along Little Dogies MA860
Waltz MA861-2
Union Breakdown MA863
Cackling Hen MA864
Chisholm Trail MA865

ARCHIVIST'S REMARKS

During the decade of the 1940s, Woody Guthrie recorded more songs for Moses Asch than any other artist. In April of 1944, Woody, his frequent sidekick Cisco Houston, and others recorded 160 songs for Asch. Asch considered Woody to be another Walt Whitman and tried to record everything he could get from him. Woody often spent time in Asch's office composing topical songs about the day's current events. Hundreds of typewritten pages of these songs can be found in the Asch Collection at the Smithsonian.

During the last ten years music buyers have seen the replacement of the vinyl LP by the compact disc as the medium of choice for home listening of audio recordings. This replacement of one format by another is not the first time that there has been competition between media in the audio world. Wax cylinders were replaced by 78 rpm discs, which were in turn replaced by LPs ("Long Playing records" as they were called). The same evolutionary processes also occurred in the recording studio masters for these formats.

Magnetic audiotape technology did not exist before World War II. It first came into use for audio recording in the late 1940s. Before then, most mastering had been done directly on to discs. There were several sorts of disc technology; some machines recorded

directly onto aluminum discs, others recorded onto acetate or shellac discs. The recordings here fall into the latter two categories.

Most master discs were recorded at about 78 rpm and consequently could not hold more than three minutes of music. Selections that ran longer often had to be broken up into two parts. Later on, but still before he moved to magnetic tape, Asch used 33 1/3 rpm masters to record longer pieces on disc.

Acetate discs of the type used for recording these tracks consisted of an aluminum or glass base covered with a layer of lacquer. During the war, when many of these discs were recorded, the glass base was used because metal was dedicated to military uses. With the passage of time, the lacquer may begin to peel off the base like old paint, so it is important that these acetate discs be transferred to a more stable medium as soon as possible. Shellac discs are more stable than acetate and are more like the vinyl discs we are familiar with. They are, however, quite brittle. Here at the Smithsonian we have undertaken the slow and laborious task of transferring all 5,000 acetates in the collection.

During the 1940s, Moses Asch's studio was an open house to many of the recording artists in the New York area. Many of the acetates in this collection were recorded during this time. Asch's recording log is a fascinating list of many of the top jazz and folk music perform-

ers of the day. Visitors included Woody and Cisco, Burl Ives, Josh White, Sonny and Brownie, Langston Hughes, James P. Johnson, Mary Lou Williams, Coleman Hawkins, and Pete Seeger, among others. Woody Guthrie would drop by Asch's office whenever the spirit moved him. Woody would often get up in the morning, read the newspaper, and then sit down at his typewriter and reel off a number of topical ballads. Many of these typewritten pages are now stored in the archive here at the Smithsonian, and many of the songs were recorded for Asch.

During World War II, when these recordings were made, discs of this type were in short supply. Moses Asch had the studio and the musicians ready to record, but he had nothing to record them on. Herbert Harris of the Stinson Trading Company had blank discs. Asch and Harris went into a short partnership as Asch-Stinson Records. Both men continued to put out much of the same material after their partnership ended, leading to much discographical confusion. Because of the shortage of discs, Asch could not afford second or third takes. For this reason, many of the songs he recorded have small mistakes in them. Some of these masters were released on Moses Asch's Asch and Disc labels.

During the summer of 1990, Lori Taylor, Leslie Spitz-Edson, Alex Swęda, Suzanne Crow, and I went through the approximately

5,000 master recording discs which had been in the possession of Moses Asch. We gently set down the needle on each disc for a brief moment and tried to discover the contents (acetates do not bear repeated playings). Most of the recordings on this disc were rediscovered during this process. We have now made preservation and reference copies of all of the Guthrie material in the Smithsonian archive. We will be releasing the best of these performances in a multi-volume series over the coming years. This process has aided in the creation of these compact discs and hopefully there are more to come in the future as we work on preserving the rest of the Asch Collection.

Jeff Place, *Archivist, Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies, Smithsonian Institution (1996)*

ABOUT THE COMPILERS

Jeff Place has been the archivist for the Folkways Collection since soon after its arrival at the Smithsonian in 1987 and has overseen the cataloging of the Moses Asch Collection. He has a Masters in Library Science from the University of Maryland and specializes in sound archives. He has been involved in the compilation of a number of compact discs for Smithsonian Folkways including Woody Guthrie's *Long Ways to Travel: The Unreleased Folkways Masters*, which won him the 1994 Brenda McCallum Prize from the American Folklore Society, and *That's Why We're Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement*. He has been a collector of traditional music for over twenty-five years. He lives in Mayo, Maryland, with his wife Barrie, daughter Andrea Rose, and son Lee.

Born and reared in Ada, Oklahoma, Dr. Guy Logsdon is a Smithsonian Institution Research Associate, and in 1990–91 was a Smithsonian Institution Senior Post-Doctoral Fellow compiling a biblio-discography of the songs of Woody Guthrie. He received a two-year grant, 1993–95, from the National Endowment for the Humanities to complete the Woody Guthrie project. Logsdon has written numerous articles about Woody Guthrie, cowboy songs and poetry, and authored the highly acclaimed, award-winning book, *"The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing" and Other Songs Cowboys Sing*. He compiled and annotated *Cowboy Songs on Folkways* (Smithsonian Folkways SF 40043) and *Cisco Houston: The Folkways Years 1944–1961* (Smithsonian Folkways SF 40059). Former Director of Libraries and Professor of Education and American Folklife, University of Tulsa, Logsdon works as a writer and entertainer. Logsdon and Place have collaborated on other Smithsonian Folkways collections: *Woody Guthrie: Long Ways to Travel, The Unreleased Folkways Masters 1944–1949* 40046 and *That's Why We're Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement* 40021.

For additional information about Woody Guthrie (1912–1967), read his autobiographical novel *Bound for Glory* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1943); also see: Joe Klein, *Woody Guthrie: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980); Woody Guthrie, *Pastures of Plenty: A Self Portrait*, edited by Dave Marsh and Harold Leventhal (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990); and Pete Seeger, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone* (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out, 1993). For information about Moses Asch (1905–1986), see: Tony Scherman, "The Remarkable Recordings of Moses Asch," *Smithsonian* 18 (August 1987) 5, pp. 110–21; Gary Kenton, "Moses Asch of Folkways," *Audio* 74 (July 1990) 7, pp. 38–46; and Israel Young, "Moses Asch: Twentieth Century Man," *Sing Out!* 26 (May/June 1977) 1, pp. 2–6, and 26 (July/August 1977) 2, pp. 25–29.

Lyrics are available in many songbooks, including: *Woody Guthrie Songs*, edited by Judy Bell and Nora Guthrie (New York: TRO-Ludlow Music, 1992).

Other selected Woody Guthrie recordings: *Bound for Glory*, Folkways 2481; *Columbia River Collection*, Rounder 1036; *Dust Bowl Ballads*, Rounder 1040; *Library of Congress Recordings*, Rounder 1041; *Long Ways to Travel: The Unreleased Folkways Masters*, Smithsonian Folkways 40046; *Nursery Days*,

Smithsonian Folkways 45036; *Poor Boy*, Folkways 31010; *Songs to Grow On for Mother and Child*, Smithsonian Folkways 45035; *Struggle*, Smithsonian Folkways 40025; *This Land Is Your Land*, Folkways 31001; *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs*, Smithsonian Folkways 40007; *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs*, Vol. 2, Folkways 2484.

Other relevant recordings:

Cowboy Songs on Folkways, Smithsonian Folkways 40043; *Folk Song America: A Twentieth Century Revival*, Smithsonian Collection of Recordings RD 046; *Folkways: A Vision Shared* (Woody and Lead Belly's songs performed by modern popular musicians), Columbia 44034; *Folkways: The Original Vision*, Smithsonian Folkways 40001 (Woody Guthrie and Lead Belly); *Songs for Political Action*, Bear Family 15720 (anthology of 1930s–1950s topical American folk song); *Songs of the Spanish Civil War*, Folkways 5437; *That's Why We're Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement*, Smithsonian Folkways 40021; *Songs to Grow On*, Vol. 3, Folkways 7027.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For discographical information, we are indebted to Guthrie T. Meade's unpublished "Discography of Traditional Songs and Tunes On Hillbilly Records," in the Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, Archive of Folk Culture, Washington, D.C. For their encouragement and assistance, we express sincere appreciation to Dr. Anthony Seeger and Dr. Amy Horowitz, Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies Archive and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., and to Joseph C. Hickerson and the Reference Staff in the Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Culture. Additional thanks to Harold Leventhal, Nora Guthrie, Rachel Crane, George Arevalo, Jesse Weinraub, Steve Laronga, and Ryan Brown.

CREDITS

Compiled by Jeff Place and Guy Logsdon
Annotated by Guy Logsdon and Jeff Place
Project supervised by Amy Horowitz and Anthony Seeger
Original recordings by Moses Asch, 1944–1947, New York City
Acetate transfers by Jeff Place and Pete Reiniger, Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies, Smithsonian Institution.
Mastered by David Glasser, LeAnn Sonenstein, and Charlie Pilser at Airshow, Springfield, VA
Technical support by Pete Reiniger
Cover photograph courtesy of Nora Guthrie and the Woody Guthrie Archives
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Photo on rear card and page 7 courtesy of Seema Weatherwax. Photo by Seema Weatherwax.
Production coordinated by Mary Monseur and Michael Maloney
Editing by Peter Seitel and Carla Borden

*For additional information about this recording visit our Web site
<http://www.si.edu/folkways>*

ABOUT SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch and Marian Distler in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are now available on high-quality audio cassettes, each packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes, recordings to accompany published books, and a variety of other educational products.

The Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, and Paredon record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies. They are one of the means

through which the Center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, and Paredon recordings are all available through:

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For further information about all the labels distributed through the Center, please consult our internet site (<http://www.si.edu/folkways>), which includes information about recent releases and a database of the approximately 35,000 tracks from the more than 2,300 available recordings (click on Data Base Search).

Or request a printed catalogue by writing to Catalogue, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 2600, Smithsonian Institution MRC 914, Washington, DC 20560, USA. Or use our catalogue request phone: (202) 287-3262, or e-mail folkways@aol.com



WOODY GUTHRIE THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

THE ASCH RECORDINGS VOL.1

COMPILED BY JEFF PLACE AND GUY LOGSDON ANNOTATED BY GUY LOGSDON AND JEFF PLACE

The first in a series of four, this recording presents many of Woody Guthrie's best-known songs taken from the original masters. Included here is the original version of Woody's anthem "This Land Is Your Land," which contains never-before issued lyrics. A major force in the urban folk song revival, Guthrie created an intimate portrait of America—its land and people. He has influenced many contemporary artists, among them Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Billy Bragg, and Bruce Springsteen. During the 1930s and '40s, Woody Guthrie wrote more than a thousand songs, recording hundreds of them for Folkways founder Moses Asch. The surviving masters now reside in the Folkways Archive at the Smithsonian Institution. *Running time: 72 minutes; 36-page booklet includes historical and biographical notes on Woody Guthrie.*

1. **THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND** 2:16
2. **CAR SONG** 1:49
3. **RAMBLIN' ROUND** 2:13
4. **TALKING FISHING BLUES** 3:03
5. **PHILADELPHIA LAWYER** 2:28
6. **LINDBERGH** 3:10
7. **HOBOS LULLABY** 2:22
8. **PASTURES OF PLENTY** 2:24
9. **GRAND COULEE DAM** 2:09
10. **END OF THE LINE** 2:49
11. **NEW YORK TOWN** 2:35
12. **GYPSY DAVY** 2:48
13. **JESUS CHRIST** 2:36
14. **THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND** 2:43
15. **DO-RE-MI** 2:30
16. **JARAMA VALLEY** 2:51
17. **THE BIGGEST THING MAN HAS EVER DONE** 2:17
18. **PICTURE FROM LIFE'S OTHER SIDE** 3:05
19. **JESSE JAMES** 2:57
20. **TALKING HARD WORK** 3:22
21. **WHEN THAT GREAT SHIP WENT DOWN** 3:17
22. **HARD, AIN'T IT HARD** 2:41
23. **GOING DOWN THE ROAD FEELING BAD** 2:55
24. **I AIN'T GOT NOBODY** 2:31
25. **SINKING OF THE REUBEN JAMES** 2:58
26. **WHY, OH WHY?** 3:27
27. **THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND** 0:52

SHAFTER

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