



WOODY GUTHRIE

BUFFALO SKINNERS

THE ASCH RECORDINGS, VOL. 4



Smithsonian  
Folkways

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage  
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 7300, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC 20560  
© © 1999 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings



Smithsonian Folkways



# WOODY GUTHRIE BUFFALO SKINNERS

## THE ASCH RECORDINGS VOL. 4

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

- RANGER'S COMMAND** 2:48  
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
- BUFFALO SKINNERS** 3:15  
(arr. W. Guthrie/Fall River Music, Inc., BMI)
- BILLY THE KID** 2:00  
(Andrew Jenkins)
- COWBOY WALTZ** 2:03
- PRETTY BOY FLOYD** 2:58  
(W. Guthrie/Fall River Publications, Inc.)
- ALONG IN THE SUN AND THE RAIN** 2:27  
(W. Guthrie/Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc. BMI)
- WHOOPIE TI YI YO, GET ALONG  
LITTLE DOGIES** 2:48
- FROGGIE WENT A-COURTIN'** 3:26
- BUFFALO GALS** 2:32  
(arr. W. Guthrie/Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc., BMI)
- I RIDE AN OLD PAINT** 2:56
- DEAD OR ALIVE (POOR LAZARUS)** 2:53  
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
- SLIPKNOT (HANGKNOT, SLIPKNOT)** 2:30  
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
- COCAINE BLUES (BAD LEE BROWN)** 2:13  
(arr. W. Guthrie and C. Houston/Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc., BMI)
- GO TELL AUNT RHODY** 2:49
- CHISHOLM TRAIL** 2:24
- STEWBALL** 3:26  
(arr. W. Guthrie/W. Guthrie Publications, Inc., BMI)
- WILD CYCLONE** 3:57  
(W. Guthrie/W. Guthrie Publications, Inc., BMI)
- TRAIN BLUES** 3:31  
(W. Guthrie/Stormking Music, Inc., BMI)
- RED RIVER VALLEY** 2:52
- FASTEST OF PONIES** 4:15  
(W. Guthrie/Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc., BMI)
- STEWBALL (with Lead Belly and Cisco Houston)** 2:27  
(arr. H. Ledbetter/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
- SNOW DEER** 2:31  
(Jack Mahoney-Percy Wenrich)
- WHEN THE CURFEW BLOWS  
(CURFEW BLOW)** 1:42  
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
- LITTLE DARLING (AT MY WINDOW SAD  
AND LONELY)** 2:12  
(W. Guthrie/Stormking Music, Inc., BMI)
- BLOWING DOWN THAT OLD DUSTY ROAD  
(GOING DOWN THE ROAD FEELIN' BAD)** 3:02  
(W. Guthrie/TRO-Hollis Music, Inc., BMI)
- THE RETURN OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN SLIM  
AND DESERT RAT SHORTY** 2:34  
(W. Guthrie and C. Houston/Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc., BMI)

## INTRODUCTION

by Guy Logsdon

The Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage houses the archives and master recordings of Moses Asch and Folkways Records, as well as other small independent record labels. Most of Woody Guthrie's recordings are in the Asch/Folkways Archives in the Center, and Jeff Place is the archivist for the entire sound collection. Jeff has listened to more Woody Guthrie recordings than anyone as he transfers sound from fragile master discs to tape and compact disc. While listening to the vast numbers of Woody Guthrie recordings, he decided that the songs Woody recorded for Moses Asch should be compiled into a collection: *Woody Guthrie: The Asch Recordings*.

This is the fourth and final volume in the collection; however, not all of the Asch/Guthrie recordings are in these four compact discs, for some no longer exist, some are beyond transferring and restoration, and some are unworthy of reproduction. But there are enough songs, some previously issued and some previously unissued by Moses Asch, to showcase Woody's creativity and talent as well as to emphasize his vast knowledge and mental storehouse of country/western/folk music. This fourth volume emphasizes Woody's roots in the West with his well-known recordings of "Buffalo Skinners" and "Ranger's Command" as the lead songs, and there are traditional cowboy songs as well as previously unissued western songs written by him.

In 1996 at the Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada, Bess Lomax Hawes was the keynote speaker. Her speech, titled "Cowboy Poetry and Song: Collecting and Recollecting," was centered around her father, the legendary song collector John A. Lomax, and his contributions to cowboy/western music and folk culture; she stated, "Father always said that Woody was the best cowboy singer of the modern times.... Woody sang the way cowboys used to sing, Father said, without guile or seductiveness—flat out, tense, masculine, serious, often strained." She continued that Woody wanted the listener to hear the rhyme and rhythm of a poem or song "...in all its human inevitability. He wanted you to hear and understand the shared humanity of the story it was bringing you." Indeed, this is Woody Guthrie and the West that he loved.

## WOODY GUTHRIE

Woody Guthrie played a major role in developing the foundation for the song and social movement of the 1940s and 1950s, now referred to as the urban folk song revival. He also became and remains an inspirational figure for folk song writers, social protest and topical song writers, and rock and folk rock song writers. 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, Billy Bragg, and other contemporary musicians and



songwriters also is well documented. His children's songs have helped parents and teachers rear, teach, entertain, and challenge young people for decades. And his documentation in songs and poetry of historical events such as the "Dust Bowl" and Great Depression decade still provides an important dimension to the interpretation 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.

*Volume 1* in this series reveals the diverse subjects to which Woody Guthrie directed his creative energies—children, war, peace, migrants, the West. *Volume 2* reflects the massive number of traditional, gospel, and country songs that Woody carried in his memory—songs learned in Oklahoma, Texas, California, and along his well-traveled early road of life—songs that he carried to New York City and introduced to the urban folk song movement. *Volume 3* exhibits his creative imagination in adapting songs in his memory to labor, social, and political issues that he believed to be important. He loved musical expression and was a poet by nature. Therefore, Woody did not hesitate to use his imagination to adapt songs to his own style of performance and philosophies, and he readily modified tunes to fit his own creations. He truly was a folk or traditional composer, for he took what was available from his memory and creatively produced out of it an amazing body of new poems and songs.

#### MOSES ASCH AND FOLKWAYS RECORDS

Moses "Moe" Asch was a man obsessed with sounds: sounds made by others, musical sounds, cultural sounds, political sounds, and nature's sounds; this obsession led him to become a pioneer in recording sounds. Born in Warsaw, Poland, he was a son of the novelist Sholem Asch; his father's work carried to 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, and as a teenager he developed an interest in the electronics of radio and recording. He later wrote: "I learned the meaning of folk song as it expresses a HOME feeling of belonging and association." 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."

He started his manufacturing and production of records in 1939, specializing in international ethnic music, with Asch Records as his company name. His first commercial recording venture using American folk expression was in 1941, with *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 limited 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 and Goldsmith 1998.)

During his career, Asch produced records under different labels: Asch Records, Asch-Stinson Records, Disc Company of America, Folkways Records, Disc Recordings, and others. The Folkways label was created after Asch declared bankruptcy in 1947; he produced approximately twenty-two hundred titles during his forty years of Folkways Records ownership. For the most part, these were artists and music that the large recording companies did not consider to be commercially viable. Asch issued Woody Guthrie recordings on each label he produced.

Since 1987, the Moses Asch/Folkways Records archives have been a part of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage archives at the Smithsonian. In the Woody Guthrie portion of this collection there are unpublished songs and poems as well as commercially issued recordings and unissued master recordings. The unissued masters are taken rejected by Woody and/or Asch for various reasons, e.g., the topic in the song did not fit in an album being issued, or a line in the song was forgotten or skipped by Woody. 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 Woody's best works.

When Woody started his recording career in 1940, the commercially viable format for recording and reproduction was the 78 rpm disc. When

the needle was set on the master disc, there was no stopping to correct mistakes; they 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 they contained mistakes. The composition of the discs also varied; they were shellac, acetate on glass, acetate on aluminum, and vinyl. Unfortunately, the glass discs break easily, and the acetate on aluminum flakes off; therefore, there are songs in this collection that can no longer be transferred from the master disc, for the master was lost during the transfer process. And there are a few recordings lost from merely touching the disc.

Instead of listing the complete title of each Smithsonian Folkways Recordings release in the following notes, only the issue number will be listed. The complete titles appear in the back of the booklet.

#### WOODY GUTHRIE: HIS LATER YEARS

*For the early years of Woody's story as told by fellow Oklahoman, Guy Logsdon, see: This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1 (Smithsonian Folkways 40100), Muleskinner Blues: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 2 (Smithsonian Folkways 40101), and Hard Travelin': The Asch Recordings, Vol. 3 (Smithsonian Folkways 40102). This fourth volume concludes Woody's story.*

Woodrow Wilson "Woody" Guthrie was the third of five children born to Charley and Nora



Guthrie of Okemah, Oklahoma. Named for the Democratic presidential candidate and president for two terms, Woody was the son of a staunch Democrat. He was proud that his birth date, 14 July (1912), was Bastille Day (14 July is celebrated in France somewhat like the 4th of July in the United States, to symbolize the revolution against royal tyranny in 1789). Woody was destined to become a revolutionary against what he perceived to be economic tyranny.

His father was a successful small-town politician and businessman, and his mother was the dutiful housewife/mother of that era. They were a handsome and popular couple in Okemah. However, by the time Woody was six years old, tragedy in many different forms had started striking the family: their new house burned; his sister Clara died from burns; his mother started showing symptoms of the genetic illness Huntington's Disease; and his father's land holdings started shrinking. Years later Woody stated that his father lost a farm a day for a month, implying that it occurred during the Great Depression, but Charley's losses were the result of Nora's illness and his concern and love for her and occurred long before the Depression years. It was the medical diagnosis that she was going insane; Woody suffered the taunts from other kids that he had a "crazy" mother.

Woody was a few weeks away from the age of fifteen when Charley was severely burned. It was generally believed that somehow Nora was responsible; she was committed to Oklahoma's institution for the insane, for the doctors knew

little to nothing about Huntington's Disease. Charley and his two younger children were taken to Pampa, Texas, to be cared for by relatives. Woody decided to stay in his hometown and fare for himself selling newspapers, shining shoes, picking up scrap iron in alleys, and doing anything else he could to survive. The foundation for Woody's attitudes, philosophies, beliefs, and desire to champion those who are down and out was formulated during his those years—the years when tragedy tore his middle-class family apart. But through it all, he never lost his sense of humor—he probably survived because he could laugh, a personality trait that too many fans and scholars seem to forget.

During the summers he wandered across Oklahoma and Texas, always returning to Okemah in time for school, but at the end of his junior year in high school, Woody went to Pampa to live with his father. A few years later he married Mary Jennings, the sister of his good friend, Matt Jennings. He learned to play a variety of instruments while there, and entertained at ranch dances and for a wide variety of audiences with his uncle and aunt Jeff and Allene Guthrie. It was also there where he experienced the fury of the dust storms. In mid-1937 he left Pampa and his family to make his way to southern California to become a radio personality.

First he teamed with his cousin Jack Guthrie on a radio show over KFVD Hollywood. Jack left the show to work a construction job to support his family; Woody invited their mutual friend Maxine "Lefty Lou" Crissman to sing with him,

and the show became "The Woody and Lefty Lou Show." They soon became the most popular performers the station broadcast.

As Woody became more concerned about the poverty of migrant agricultural workers and other inequities in the capitalistic economy, he slowly developed the belief that socialism would spread the nation's wealth among the working people in a more equitable way. He met members of the Communist Party and other left-wing organizations and attended their meetings, some held in the homes of prominent Hollywood personalities. He became more outspoken about what he perceived to be the evils and ills in society, for his years of picking up junk in Okemah alleys as well as other menial tasks for survival were not forgotten. Woody loved his hometown, his native state, and his nation, but he believed that the economic system was failing.

He and the KFVD owner had a falling out, probably over Woody's unreliability, so in late 1939 Woody, Mary, and, by then, three children returned to Pampa. But Woody had already decided to join his friend Will Geer in New York City. In January 1940, Woody thumbed his way to New York City and found temporary lodging with Geer. Within a couple of months he had a following of folk artists and fans who considered him to be a genuine "dust bowl refugee." Alan Lomax recorded him for the Library of Congress (the sessions included cowboy songs), and RCA Victor issued the two-volume collection of his *Dust Bowl Ballads*. Radio and nightclub engagements added more financial success and name

recognition, but he rebelled against being told what to sing and say as well as how to dress for his shows. In January 1941 he and his family, who had joined him in New York City, left for the West; in May they were in Portland, Oregon, where he worked for nearly a month writing songs about the Columbia River for the Bonneville Power Authority. Some of them have become well-known and much-loved Woody Guthrie classics.

In New York City his friends Pete Seeger, Lee Hays, and Millard Lampell were singing as the Almanac Singers and were writing labor songs. They needed Woody's writing skills to assist them with their projects, so they encouraged him to return to New York City. Before Woody made his way back, they recorded a controversial album, *Songs for John Doe* (described in SF 40021), opposed to intervention in the European war. After he rejoined them, they recorded two albums for General Records, *Deep Sea Chanties and Whaling Ballads* and *Sod Buster Ballads*. They also traveled across the country singing labor songs. During this time, when his marriage to Mary was fading, Woody met Marjorie Mazia, a highly talented dancer, and they fell in love.

World War II changed the nation and the world—Woody included. He and his friends became dedicated anti-Hitler and anti-fascist advocates. They wrote and sang songs encouraging the fight against Hitler and a few anti-Japanese songs and extolled the virtues of labor unions and working people in the fight. Woody's



autobiographical novel *Bound for Glory* was published and established him as a major twentieth-century author; critics declared him to be a new Walt Whitman. The original manuscript was over one thousand pages, but with Marjorie's help, it was edited to a publishable length. Earlier that year their daughter Cathy Ann was born, but they were still married to different spouses.

As the war grew in intensity, death, and destruction, Woody, Cisco Houston (who was legally blind), and their friend Vincent "Jimmy" Longhi joined the Merchant Marine and shipped out in June 1943. In 1944, they shipped out on two other voyages—their first boat was torpedoed, and later another ship hit a mine. Their experiences are narrated in entertaining detail in Longhi's book, *Woody, Cisco, and Me: Seamen Three in the Merchant Marine* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

It was between two sea voyages in March/April 1944 that Woody went to Moe Asch's studio and participated in a series of marathon recording sessions. In a somewhat limited recording ledger kept by Asch are listed sixty-one sides cut by Woody and Cisco on 19 April 1944; no doubt some takes were not completed, but most of them were. During a few days following that session, over sixty more sides were recorded. Many of the selections in this four-volume collection come from those sessions.

As the war in Europe drew to a close, the military services were being less selective in their draftees. The day Germany surrendered

Woody was inducted into the army; he was discharged 20 December 1945. By this time, Woody was experiencing early symptoms of Huntington's Disease.

Back in New York City in order to allow Woody the freedom of writing and now married to him, Marjorie worked as a dancer, while he spent much time with their daughter Cathy as well as writing. He often stated that many of his children's songs were written by her, and, indeed, she did inspire most of the children's songs he wrote in 1945 and later. However, Woody also had written songs for his children from his first marriage. He had an imagination and fantasy that made him almost childlike in many of his actions, and he could put himself into a child's shoes. His younger sister recalled that when she was little, Woody, when speaking to her, would always get down where he could look her in the eye—she did not have to look up at him as with all other adults. With this belief in the simplicity and innocence of childhood Woody became a contemporary Rousseau; the child is a free spirit of nature. Moe Asch recognized this, and in 1946 called Woody into the studio for recording sessions of children's songs. The album *Songs to Grow On: Nursery Days* (Disc 605) was issued that year, followed the next year by *Songs to Grow On: Work Songs for Nursery Days* (Disc 602). Both collections were prepared under the supervision of the child specialist, Beatrice Landeck, and won accolades and awards from numerous parent/teacher organizations. Since Marjorie

was Jewish, Woody also wrote a collection of Hanukkah songs for Cathy (see Volume 3 of this series). Woody's following and influence were expanding.

Perhaps Woody's most understated poem about his affinity with children is:

*Creation's ores float through my veins like  
little flowers, specks and flakes,  
I feel creation cry in me to build, to create,  
and to make.  
I hit a sandbar soon in my life,  
Got picked by buzzards and by hand,  
But little children hauled me home and  
showed me how to build again.*

In 1945, while he was in the service, Woody heard a recording of his song "Oklahoma Hills" on a jukebox; singing it was his cousin, Jack Guthrie. The recording became a major country/western hit that year and ultimately a favorite western swing song. Woody had written the song in late 1937, and with Lefty Lou's assistance set it down on paper in April 1938. They often sang it on their radio show, and Jack performed it with them on different occasions. In those days Woody would write that the songs did not cost anything, so anyone could have them. Jack told Capitol Records that it was his own song, but when Woody called and claimed it, Jack agreed (for Jack Guthrie's story, see: Guy Logsdon's "Jack Guthrie: A Star That Almost Was," *The Journal of Country Music* 15[2]:32-38). Subsequent recordings and published versions carry both

names on the copyright—indeed, Jack made it a better song. Years later Marjorie recalled that after getting his first royalty check, Woody had it converted to one-dollar bills and brought it home in a shoe box yelling "We're rich!" and throwing bills all over the room. For days afterwards she found one-dollar bills in strange places. This momentary success inspired Woody to continue writing "western" songs, hoping to make some money.

He did enjoy another country/western hit when in December 1949, the Maddox Brothers and Rose recorded "Philadelphia Lawyer" for 4 Star Records in California. Woody wrote the song in late 1937 after Lefty Lou Crissman showed him an article about a cowboy shooting an attorney in Reno, Nevada, over a girl. A "Philadelphia lawyer" is a shyster ambulance-chasing lawyer. Woody thought the article was humorous and wrote a song titled "Reno Blues." Rose Maddox as a young girl learned it by listening to Woody and Jack singing in West Coast bars—being underage, she stood outside and listened. She also may have heard him sing it on the KFVD radio shows. The recording featuring Rose attained moderate success, but the Maddox family and Woody received not one cent for the recording; it merely gave additional attention and pride to Woody, and inspired him to write a few more western songs.

When he heard the Maddox Brothers and Rose recording, Woody was so impressed that he wrote one of his lengthy letters telling how he liked them, the record, and their other



recordings. It was published in Jonny Whiteside, *Ramblin' Rose: The Life and Career of Rose Maddox* (Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1997). He also wrote:

*I've been listening to records all of my natural life, and have cocked my ear to the horn and speaker to listen unto several tens of thousands of songs on records. I went to the Library of Congress several trips and sat and played through their piles of commercial and non-commercial recordings, the famous Lomax shelves, and heard a dozen songs about everything from a wild cyclone to a gambling hall shooting craps, good and bad men, good and bad women, fast and slow horses, shipwrecks, boat races, train wrecks, floods and the shouts of the saints and the sinners. My life has been glued to a song on a record for as long as I can recollect. (pp. xi-xii)*

He almost wrote his own eulogy and did state his belief in the power of music when he continued with:

*Just always remember that you are handling a power in your music and in your singing that is older and stronger than any known or unknown form of atomic energy. Your songs can rest and comfort the living heart and soul of the human race. You can make a person feel like trying to build up a whole new world but here, all by himself, single handed. You can cause workers to work, and the sick to feel better, the heart to laugh, and*

*the lovers to multiply the earth. You can sing and teach living history, past, present, and future, in ways that a thousand sour lectures and sermons can never do. Your work can sing on the wings of the clouds from this end of the world unto the other end...[A]s long as there are voices to sing and hearts to listen, your work, your songs, and your labors will spread to bless and fertilize the land. (p. xiv)*

To help keep Woody's creative juices flowing, Moe Asch had him write reviews of the records Asch produced, no matter what language they were in or what their country of origin was, and Woody would write "the most important critiques of my records that I ever had.... He was always interested in any and all productions I issued, outside of jazz. It didn't have content to him" (interview with Guy Logsdon, 1974). In 1945, Woody mimeographed a few songs to sell under the title *Ten of Woody Guthrie's Songs, Book One*, so Asch had him put together a song book with commentary and published it as *American Folksong* (New York: Moe Asch, 1947). Woody and other artists who had fought against the Nazis and fascism were becoming disillusioned—the war had not changed national and international politics significantly. To help them regain perspective Asch sent Woody and Cisco to Boston to study and write about the Sacco-Vanzetti trial and executions. The trip resulted in a series of songs and recordings not released until 1960 under the title *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti*

(Folkways 5485, Smithsonian Folkways 40060). But other problems were distracting Woody, most of which at that time no one understood.

With Marjorie's support and Asch's encouragement, Woody continued to write during the late 1940s. He wrote about outlaws and western figures he thought had been ignored in American balladry, such as Belle Starr, Calamity Jane, and the petty Oklahoma outlaw/escape artist Matt Kimes. He wrote about all topics, including religion, for he was a man who read the Bible and considered religious beliefs to be important—he could not divorce himself from his Oklahoma/Texas background in the Baptist and Church of Christ churches. When completing questionnaires that asked "religion," he always answered "all." And when he read in the newspapers about an incident that he thought to be unfair to working people, he would write a series of songs about it, i.e., the Centralia, Illinois, mining disaster.

In 1950, he gained recognition with "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You." The Weavers—Pete Seeger, Lee Hays, Ronnie Gilbert, and Fred Hellerman—were recording hit songs, and "So Long" became a hit for them and Woody, followed by "Hard, Ain't It Hard" in 1952. However, the actions of the House Un-American Activities Committee cut their career short and haunted Woody's life for years.

Woody was a voracious reader and wrote in the margins of the books he owned, and he continually wrote long, personal letters to friends. But he was beginning slowly to show

the symptoms of his undiagnosed illness, which eventually eroded both his writing and his marriage. Moe Asch and other friends believed that Woody's use of alcohol, his escapades with women, and his adaptation to middle-class life were eating away at his creativity. Marjorie kept the money coming in and gave birth to three more children—Arlo, Joady, and Nora—but Woody was becoming moody and occasionally violent with Marjorie. Again, alcohol was suspected, but Woody had indicated that he was afraid he had his mother's illness:

*Woody paused to pull out a cigarette. "But I'm sure that she was not insane. I'm sure she had a physical illness of some kind. The talk in our family is that she inherited it." He struck a match. "And the fact is that I'm beginning to suspect that I have it too." I couldn't see Woody's face, but I could see that the light of the match trembled slightly. "The doctors don't know much about it—maybe only Jesus can help me." Woody fell silent. (Jim Longhi, Woody, Cisco, & Me [1997], pp. 62-63)*

Woody and Moe Asch had a falling out in the late 1940s over copyright issues and Moe's attitude about him and alcohol. In March 1951, when Woody was first hospitalized, he had developed a business relationship with Howard Richmond, who had become his publisher and was the owner of Ludlow Music, The Richmond Organization (TRO), and other music publishing firms. Richmond took a reel-to-reel tape



recorder to him and encouraged him to record as many songs as he could. Woody recorded over two hundred songs. None of those recordings have been issued. (Copies are in the Woody Guthrie Archives in New York.) A few weeks later at a concert in Maryland, he could not remember the words or the chords to his songs, and again, most thought him to be drinking heavily.

Because of the unpredictable and sometimes violent nature of the disease, Marjorie was advised by doctors to get a divorce for her safety and the children's. Woody wrote to Charley:

*Last week in July 1953*

*Dear Poppa,*

*Got a divorce from Marjorie headed for the hills of California about a year ago and bought myself a ten acre patch of canyon cliff about twenty miles north of where George, Emily and Chris live [his brother, sister-in-law, and nephew]. Went down to Florida with wife number three to type my book up about how we left Pampa and went down to the Chisos Mountains to look for Paw Jerry's mine which I am now calling by the name of Seeds of Man. I got about half of it retyped and spilled a can of white gasoline on my arm and tried to burn the dang thing off and had to come back to Cal. To finish the book... I left several hundred songs on rolls of tape for my agent in N.Y.C., and...every time he makes a cold million he sends it to me....When you get down to your last few million and your last few strings of Packards*

*and Cadillacs like I am now, it teaches you the most valuable lesson in life, that it is better to tittle now than to tittle later and better to smoke here than hereafter...and its fun to be a nun but more to be a whore and other common proverbs that travel from lip to mouth amongst the working masses.... Chris is also proving his true Guthrie blood by sticking his head out the car window and biting all the girls that go past him.... Goodby. Love Woody*

Later he wrote:

*....[T]hey tell me I've got the first early signs & symptoms of a dizzy disease called Huntington's Chorea, same disease that mamma had, which lets me stay dizzy in my head everyday without paying my barman one penny...*

He slowly lost his battle with Huntington's and by 1955 was permanently hospitalized, taking occasional visits outside when friends or family cared for him. Tragedy seemed to stalk him all of his life, particularly fire and Huntington's. His families were not spared either, for of the eight children Woody had, only three, Arlo, Joady, and Nora from his marriage to Marjorie, survive. Indeed, Woody was surrounded by tragedy, but he never lost his sense of humor, his faith in music, his love for his country, or his optimism.

After he was hospitalized and as the "urban folk revival" developed momentum, it was Marjorie Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Harold Leventhal, and a few other friends who continued to introduce the public to his works and to protect his

creativity through copyright filing. Soon hundreds of thousands began singing his songs, many not knowing they were written by Woody. However, his importance also lies in bringing attention to Huntington's Chorea; Marjorie organized the Committee to Combat Huntington's Disease using Woody as the example of its effects, and stimulated medical research that has discovered much about the disease and its treatment. Thus, Woody's legacy transcends art, entertainment, and social problems.

After years of hospitalization, Woody died on 3 October 1967. The United States Department of the Interior had given him their Conservation Service Award on 6 April 1966, and named a substation on the Columbia River for him. He was installed posthumously in the Nashville Songwriters' Hall of Fame, 9 October 1977, and in 1988 in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Cleveland, Ohio.

His life and philosophy may best be described by his lines in "Pastures of Plenty":

*It's always we rambled, that river and I,  
All along your green valley I will work  
till I die;*

*My land I'll defend with my life if need be,  
'Cause my pastures of plenty must always  
be free.*

About Woody, John Steinbeck wrote:  
*Woody is just Woody. Thousands of people do not know he has any other name. He is just a voice and a guitar. He sings the songs of a people. And I suspect that he is, in a way,*

*that people. Harsh voiced and nasal, his guitar hanging like a tire iron on a rusty rim. There is nothing sweet about Woody, and there is nothing sweet about the songs he sings. But there is something more important for those who will listen. There is the will of a people to endure and to fight against oppression. I think we call this the American Spirit. (Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People, p. 9)*

When *Bound for Glory* was published in 1943, Clifton Fadiman reviewed it for the *New Yorker* and wrote:

*Someday people are going to wake up to the fact that Woody Guthrie and the ten thousand songs that leap and tumble off the strings of his music box are a national possession, like Yellowstone and Yosemite, and a part of the best stuff this country has to show the world.*

No exact inventory of Woody's works is possible, for each year new items are uncovered, but he did write well over one thousand songs and poems, recorded hundreds of songs, wrote hundreds of personal letters to family and friends, numerous diaries, two autobiographical novels and one proletarian novel, drew hundreds of illustrations, painted oil paintings, and wrote essays and reviews—all of this accomplished in approximately eighteen years from 1935 to 1953. No one can predict what new treasures will be found in future years.





Pen and ink drawing by Woody Guthrie, April 23, 1946.  
Courtesy of Folkways Archives.

## NOTES ON THE SONGS

### 1. RANGER'S COMMAND

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Words and melody adapted by Woody Guthrie;  
recorded 25 April 1944, matrix MA79, first  
issued on Asch Records 347)

Jack Elliott often sings this song with the prefatory statement that Woody wrote it to encourage women to be active in the war against Hitler and fascism; indeed, the cowgirl is the one who "arose from her bed...with a gun in each hand," and led the cowboys into battle against rustlers. It is in the "come all ye" ballad tradition with a structure similar to "Texas Rangers" (Laws A 8); in this song many rangers are killed fighting Indians. The melody is the same Woody used for "Stewball." This is a great example of Woody's singing style in which he holds a note for a measure or two. Lyrics are in *Sing Out!* 10 (April/ May 1960) 1:8; for a discussion of "Texas Rangers" see: Alan Lomax (1960), p. 325.

### 2. BUFFALO SKINNERS

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Words and melody adapted by Woody Guthrie  
from "Buffalo Skinners;" recorded 24 March  
1945, matrix 903, first issued on Asch 360; reissued on Folkways 2485/Smithsonian Folkways 40025)

Unlike those in many other occupations, cowboys sang very few protest songs. Mild complaints about working in adverse weather conditions, bad horses, or wild cattle occasionally

were expressed, but usually through humor. Since cowboying was an occupation of choice, the men knew, as they know today, that not much money could be earned and that bad weather, cropped off fingers, broken bones, a few bad horses, crazy cattle, and possibly death were just part of the job. They did and do expect decent food and respect from their boss.

Woody Guthrie took these lyrics from a song called "Boggy Creek" in John A. and Alan Lomax's *Cowboy Songs* (1938) and set them to music. It is a cowboy version of "Buffalo Skinners"; yet, in the Lomax version no mention is made of buffalo skinners. Woody's version tells about an unemployed cowboy who agrees to work on a cattle drive into New Mexico, and after successfully combating the drive problems and delivering the herd, he and the rest of the cowboys kill the drover when he tries to cheat them out of their pay. Woody left out one verse and changed "out in New Mexico" to "on the trail of the buffalo." It is a genuine cowboy protest song.

Lomax & Lomax (1938) used the title "Boggy Creek," and Alan Lomax (1960) titled it "On the Trail to Mexico." Jim Bob Tinsley (1981) called it "The Hills of Mexico" and didn't include the verse about killing the drover.

A melody in a minor key and no guitar chord changes, combined with Woody's singing style of holding a syllable for emphasis, make this one of Woody's most forceful recordings. The guitar style sounds more like Cisco Houston's than Woody's.

For texts and additional information see: *Sing Out!* 6 (Summer 1956) 3:12-13; Alan Lomax (1960), pp. 359-60; Lomax & Lomax (1938, 1986), pp. 41-42; Tinsley (1981), pp. 32-35.

### 3. BILLY THE KID

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Adaptation of "Billy the Kid" by Rev. Andrew Jenkins; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA67, outtake from Folkways AA3; from analog reel FW-5950)

Woody believed this song to be a folk song, and as early as 1940 used an adaptation of the melody for "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You." However, it was written by Rev. Andrew Jenkins on 20 January 1927 and recorded for two different labels by Vernon Dalhart (Marion Try Slaughter) a few weeks later. Dalhart's popularity quickly disseminated the song across the country. Professional singers including Marty Robbins and the Sons of the Pioneers and folklorists such as John A. Lomax also assumed the ballad to be traditional, and through the song transmission process, indeed it has become a traditional song. When Woody learned it is not known, but it is assumed that he heard one of the recordings. He recorded a fragment of the song during the Library of Congress sessions.

William H. Bonney, known as Billy the Kid, became a popular outlaw figure in western lore. The murders he committed occurred primarily in the Lincoln County War area of New Mexico during the late 1870s; he was killed by Sheriff Pat Garrett on 14 July 1881. Hollywood and



television writers have produced numerous shows about him and the New Mexico problems, of which most, if not all, are totally romanticized. For the lyrics, see: Lomax & Lomax (1938, 1986), pp. 141-42.

#### 4. COWBOY WALTZ

Woody Guthrie, fiddle; Bess Lomax Hawes, mandolin; unidentified, bass fiddle (possibly Alex Stewart)  
(Traditional waltz adapted by Woody Guthrie; recorded January 1945, matrix unknown, issued on Folkways 2010 and AA3; from Smithsonian Acetate 517; 12" acetate on aluminum disc)

Variants of this tune have circulated in the West for decades; it has an opening phrase that Tex Owens used for his popular song, "Cattle Call." Woody was not a great fiddle player, but his fiddling does have the same honesty and rough edges that make his singing so unique. There were two fiddlers in Pampa, Texas, who influenced him and were close friends—his uncle Jeff Guthrie and his former brother-in-law and best friend Matt Jennings. From whom he learned this song is not known.

#### 5. PRETTY BOY FLOYD

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Words and music by Woody Guthrie; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA57, first issued on Asch 360; reissued on Folkways 2485/Smithsonian Folkways 40025)

This is one of Woody's best-known ballads; he made an American Robin Hood out of an

Oklahoma murderer. Of course, the reason Floyd, Robin Hood, and other thieves did not steal from the poor is that the poor had nothing to steal, but Pretty Boy Floyd did have many friends who helped him elude the law for a few years. Charles Arthur Floyd was born on 3 February 1904 in Georgia to parents who were basically hard-working, honest, illiterate rural laborers. Not long after his birth the family moved to eastern Oklahoma near the small town of Akins in the Cookson Hills, where numerous outlaws had hidden during the late nineteenth century. At the age of eighteen he married, but did not want to farm as a living to support his wife and son. In 1925 he joined migrant harvesters working northward, and along the way robbed a \$12,000 payroll in St. Louis, Missouri. He was arrested and sentenced to five years in the Missouri penitentiary, and was paroled in 1929.

The name "Pretty Boy" was given to him by a gangster madame in Kansas City, and his robberies and killings ranged from Oklahoma to Ohio. Indeed, he did share some of his loot with relatives and friends and Cookson Hills farmers who during those early Depression days hated banks and bankers, but his killings negated any generosity. By 1934, Floyd was listed as "Public Enemy #1," and on 22 October 1934 near East Liverpool, Ohio, he was killed by FBI agents led by Melvin Purvis. It continues to be believed that twenty thousand people attended his funeral. Not all Oklahomans considered Floyd to be a Robin Hood.

Woody's story as related in his song is mostly incorrect, but it follows the typical plot of a Robin Hood-type folk hero. Possibly Woody had heard an uncle of his tell of being wounded by gunfire late one night while returning to Seminole, Oklahoma, where he was an oil field worker; an automobile stopped, and a man helped him into the car and took him to the Seminole hospital. Since there were a submachine gun and other weapons in the car, his uncle always believed that it was Pretty Boy Floyd who had helped save his life. When Woody wrote the song is not known, but he did record it during his 1940 Library of Congress sessions.

For lyrics, see: *Woody Guthrie Songs* (New York: TRO Ludlow Music, 1994), p. 30, and for additional comments by Woody, see: *Sing Out!* 20 (July/August 1971) 6:20-21 and *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People* (New York: Oak Publications, 1967), pp. 114-15.

#### 6. ALONG IN THE SUN AND THE RAIN

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Words and music by Woody Guthrie; no date or matrix number, issued on Smithsonian Folkways 40046; Smithsonian Acetate 554; 12" acetate on aluminum base, 33 1/3 rpm, side A)

This song is Woody's life. He says that he has come a long way, seen a lot of things, kissed a lot of lips, seen a lot of towns, had a lot of fights, and shaken a lot of hands; the sun and the rain are analogous to his good times and hard times. The tone of the lyrics combined with movement back and forth from the minor

chord to the major chord and back to the minor is as symbolic of his life as are the sun and the rain. Woody never complained about the hard times he experienced; he enjoyed life too much to complain. He was an optimist, and the last line of this haunting, repetitive personal statement is his epilogue—"I'm gonna get my job done," and he did. It is a tragedy that he was unable to work longer.

#### 7. WHOOPIE TI YI YO, GET ALONG LITTLE DOGIES

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar  
(Recorded 1 March 1945, matrix 860, issued on Folkways 2484; reissued on Folkways 2485/Smithsonian Folkways 40025, also on Smithsonian Folkways 40043; from analog master FW 2484)

The opening line, "As I walked out one morning..." is the introduction to many English-Scottish-Irish ballads, and this cowboy song that dates back to the early trail drive days is a variant of the Irish ballad, "The Old Man Rocking the Cradle." The earliest notation of this song is found in the 1893 journal of Owen Wister, author of the classic western novel *The Virginian*. Since Wyoming was the cowboys' destination, the song is presumed to have been composed after 1870-71, when Texans first herded cattle northward into Wyoming Territory.

Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston recorded this for the *Documentary #1 Struggle* album issued by Asch Records in 1946. It was not



included in the original album, but was added to the long-play album issued in 1976. The album is a documentary portraying the struggles of the working people in this country. In contrast to the original song that emphasized the struggles confronting the dogies, Woody rewrote portions of the song to reflect the struggles of cowboys on the trail drives.

The first commercial recording of the standard version was made by Harry "Mac" McClintock, 1 March 1928 (Victor V40016).

For a thorough discussion of the history of this song, see: White (1975), pp. 16-26; for additional texts, see A. Lomax (1960), pp. 356-58, 372-74; Lomax & Lomax (1934), pp. 385-89 and (1938, 1986), pp. 4-7; Tinsley (1981), pp. 40-45.

#### 8. FROGGIE WENT A-COURTIN'

(alternate titles: "Frog Went A-Courtin'," "The Frog's Courtship," "Here's to Cheshire," and "Mouse Went A-Courting")

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica  
(Recorded late April 1944, matrix MA110, previously unissued; from analog reel 558)

This song has many, many variants and titles; it is usually classified as a children's song. However, its history indicates that it was a 16th-century English satirist's barb nursery. Queen Elizabeth I often gave different animal nicknames to those around her. She had her frog, her lap dog, her ape, and many more; the "frog" in her court was reported to be a man

intent on marrying her. It seems that the satirical songwriters had a field day with her characters, and "Froggie Went A-Courtin'" emerged as a favorite in English-speaking countries.

Its original satirical intent has long been lost, while it remains a popular children's song. This song is an example of some of the loose sessions that took place in Moses Asch's studio when any number of musicians would stop by. When Woody learned it is not known, but the first recording in this country was by Buell Kazee on 21 April 1927.

#### 9. BUFFALO GALS

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston/harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, vocal/harmonica  
(Words and melody adapted by Woody Guthrie; recorded 24 April 1944, matrix 698, issued on Folkways 2484; Smithsonian Acetate 452; 10" shellac disc)

Like so many old-time dance tunes, this song had numerous titles, and the "gal" was from wherever the song was sung—"Alabama Gal," "Louisiana Gal," "New York Gal," "Buffalo Gal," "Bowery Gal," and many more. The song was popular nationwide. It also is known as "Dance by the Light of the Moon," "Round Town Girls," "Ain'-Ya Comin' Out Tonight," and, during World War II, was sung as "Dance with a Dolly with a Hole in Her Stocking" by the Andrew Sisters. Its origin dates back to the 1840s in this country, but it probably was a traditional play party song before then.

Woody's words seem to be his own interpretation of a good dance—they emphasize dancing and drinking. The first recording on 3 August 1924 seems to have been "Alabama Girl" by Gid Tanner and Riley Puckett; by 1940 over thirty-five others had recorded it under different titles. Woody probably grew up hearing it, and surely performed it at the ranch dances he and his uncle Jeff played in the mid-1930s.

#### 10. I RIDE AN OLD PAINT

(alternate title: "Ride Around Little Dogie")  
Woody Guthrie, lead vocal; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar  
(Traditional with additional lyrics by Woody Guthrie; recorded 24 April 1944, matrix MA709, first issued on Verve/Folkways 9007; reissued as Folkways 1010/31010; Smithsonian Acetate 137; 10" shellac disc)

Woody Guthrie recorded one version of this with Pete Seeger, 7 July 1941, for General Recordings (released on *Sod Buster Ballads*, General Album G-21); Woody is credited with writing the verse that starts, "I've worked in your town, I've worked on your farm." He wanted it to sound more like a worker's song than a lyrical cowboy song. He learned it from Alan Lomax, who learned it from Margaret Larkin. Larkin was a writer/poet who grew up on a New Mexico ranch; she was singing folk songs in New York City in the 1920s, including those she had collected from the North Carolina textile worker, Ella Mae Wiggins, and she provided cowboy songs for the Broadway play

*Green Grow the Lilacs* and authored one of the best cowboy song books, *Singing Cowboy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931). The song has been a popular cowboy song since the early 1930s; for additional information, see: Jim Bob Tinsley (1981), pp. 126-129. It was first recorded as "Riding Old Paint, Leading Old Bald" by Stuart Hamblin, 3 March 1934, Los Angeles, California (Decca 5145), and on a Woody Guthrie manuscript in the Smithsonian Folkways archives he typed "My Version of an old Folk Song" with additional verses including:

*You fair skin women ought to come to the sun  
Cause my dark skin woman is prettiest of  
you all  
Her breast is sweetest that I ever did press  
And her skin is the warmest that I ever felt.*

#### 11. DEAD OR ALIVE (POOR LAZARUS)

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Words and music adapted from the traditional song "Poor Lazarus"; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA56, issued on Asch 432; from Asch 78 432-2B)

"Poor Lazarus" (Laws I 12) is a work song about a southern African American who was a fugitive thief and was shot by a posse. Woody's adaptation is a strong statement about incarceration versus death, as with Lazarus, death being the choice over "a hard rock hotel." When Woody wrote this is not documented, but some event triggered his creativity.



**12. SLIPKNOT**

(alternate title: "Hangknot, Slipknot")  
 Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
 (Words and music by Woody Guthrie; recorded late April 1944, matrix MA115, first issued on Verve/Folkways 9007; reissued as Folkways Records 1010/31010, also issued as "Hang Knot" on Folkways 2485/Smithsonian Folkways 40025; Smithsonian Acetate 3787; 10" shellac disc)

Woody wrote, "Dedicated to the many negro mothers, fathers, and sons alike, that was lynched and hanged under the bridge of the Canadian River, seven miles south of Okemah, Okla., and to the day when such will be no more" (*Pastures of Plenty: A Self-Portrait* [1990], p. 37). In 1910, a deputy sheriff was shot in the leg by a thirteen-year-old African American from Boley, an all-black town thirteen miles west of Okemah; the deputy bled to death. A "committee," fearing that punishment would be inadequate, took the young man and his mother to the bridge and lynched them. Soon it was rumored in Okemah that Boley citizens were going to invade the town and kill all they could, and in Boley it was rumored that the white citizens were on their way. Each community armed itself as much as possible and posted men to guard the town; after a few days with no invasions and no gunfire, the communities slowly returned to routine daily life.

Woody grew up in an all-white town, where African Americans could only work and trade during the day. They had to leave town by sundown; the same was true for white people in

Boley. So it was natural for Woody to use terminology that was racist. In California during a radio broadcast he used the word "nigger" or "colored"; after the show a man called and told Woody how offensive it was. He never made that mistake again, and by the time he wrote this song, dated 2 February 1940, he was a changed man. The power of this song indicates how far he had come in his ideas about race relations and how deeply he felt about the evil of lynching.

**13. COCAINE BLUES**

(alternate titles: "Bad Lee Brown" and "East Texas Bill")  
 Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
 (Recorded 19 April 1944 as "Bad Lee Brown," matrix MA59, previously unissued take; Smithsonian Acetate 3767; 10" shellac disc)

This song is difficult to trace. It was recorded by Luke Jordan on 16 August 1927 in Charlotte, North Carolina, for Victor Records; it is doubtful that anyone recorded it earlier. Jordan was a black blues singer from western Virginia who apparently learned this from traveling bluesmen. Where and from whom Woody learned it is not known, but it is in the same tradition as Woody's "Take a Whiff on Me" (Vol. 2, No. 11). About that song John A. and Alan Lomax in *Folk Song U.S.A.* (1947, pp. 290-291) stated that to them it was a song straight from the cities, from the "redlight district," "skidrows," "gambling hells," and "dens of vice...." It followed the cocaine habit out into

the levee camps and the country barrelhouses of the Deep South. They point out that there was a time when opium and cocaine could be purchased at the drug store, and songs about cocaine were known nationally. The hopheads and snowbirds (cocaine users) produced most of these songs, and while this particular song had its origin in African-American song and imagery, it and cocaine had and have no ethnic boundaries.

When "cocaine" songs entered the country music genre is not known, but shortly after Jordan's recording was released, hillbilly blues singers were using the song along with "Take a Whiff on Me." The melody might be traced to origins in the centuries-old "Butcher's Boy." In more contemporary times, Johnny Cash recorded it for his album *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison* (Columbia 9639), and Jack Elliott learned his version from the preacher/street singer Reverend Gary Davis.

**14. GO TELL AUNT RHODY**

(alternate titles: "Go Tell Aunt Nancy," The Old Grey Goose," and "The Old Grey Goose Is Dead")  
 Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica  
 (Traditional; recorded late April 1944, matrix MA117, issued on *Sonny Terry and Other Great Artists Get Together* [Verve/Folkways 9010]; from analog reel 473)

Generally considered to be a children's song, it has a rather morbid theme—death—and little

is known about its origin. It was recorded by the Carolina Tar Heels in 1929 and the Pickard Family the following year. Asch released it as a Sonny Terry issue, and as recorded, it has the high spirit of a dance song, not for children.

**15. CHISHOLM TRAIL**

(alternate title: "The Old Chisholm Trail")  
 Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar  
 (Probably recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA29; matrix 865, issued on Disc D-110; from analog master DSC110)

This is the granddaddy of cowboy songs, deriving its title from the original post-Civil War cattle trail, the Chisholm Trail. Jesse Chisholm was a mixed-blood Cherokee Indian who ranched in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) and blazed a wagon trail from his ranch to a trading post on the North Fork of the Canadian River, then on to the Washita River. The trail that started below San Antonio, Texas, and terminated in Abilene, Kansas, took the name of the man who had developed the wagon road. Other trails were soon opened, but none surpassed the Chisholm Trail in legend and song.

"The Old Chisholm Trail" possibly has more verses (two-line couplets), many of which are bawdy, than any other song in the English language. John A. Lomax collected many verses that he could not include in his *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (1910), so he rewrote and placed them in a sequence he thought to be logical. His book became the most popular song



book ever to circulate among working cowboys, and they memorized the verses in his sequence—at least those who sang clean verses did. Nearly all cowboy singers since then have sung the Lomax variants, and Woody was no exception. He obviously learned them from Lomax, or else from someone who had. The melody may have come from Stephen F. Foster's "Old Uncle Ned," or from an early folk song. This song probably has appeared in more school music texts and song books than any other cowboy song.

#### 16. STEWBALL

(alternate titles: "Skew Ball" and "Stewbally")  
Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Traditional with words adapted by Woody Guthrie; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA16, previously unissued; Smithsonian Acetate 1424; 10" shellac disc)

Woody wrote his own version of the traditional "Stewball" song (see: "Stewball" [version 2] track 21 in this collection), and he set it to the same melody used for "Ranger's Command" (track 1 in this collection). In this version he does not sing it as a work song; it is more of a ballad form, and is more concise. For more details on the history of this song see the annotation for the track 21.

WILD CYCLONE  
by WOODY GUTHRIE

*Teenagers  
and  
Groomappers*

THE LAST BIG BUFFALO HUN IS DONE  
AND THE HIDE IS STRIPPED AND GONE,  
I'M STANDIN' HERE IN DEAD GHOST CITY  
ON A PILE OF BASTLE'S HORNS,  
THREE PHONO PETS HUNS DOWN MY STREET  
HE'S YELLIN' 'OUT HIS LONGS  
THERE'S A WILD STAMPED DOWN! DOWN THEM TOWNS  
AN' IT'S LED BY THE WILDE CYCLONE!

I DROGGED IN BACKA SOME BALES OF HAY  
AS THE WILD HERN J'GRIELED PAST,  
I COULD NOT SPOT THESE LEADER GOSS  
'CAUSE THEY ALL WENT PAST SO FAST!  
A WINDMONT GIRL RODE IN SLAT HEND  
AND I SEEN HER TOSSE HER LOOP  
HER HOSS HE FELL AS' TH' GIRL DID YELL,  
'I'VE KISSED THAT WILD CYCLONE!

I LIFTED HER UP FROM THAT DUSTY STREET  
ON TOPPA MY BALES OF HAY,  
SHE PULLED HER HAIR AND CRIED AND SAID,  
'THAT CYCLONE'S GOT AWAY!  
SHE SAID, "I TRAILER HIM SIX LONG YEARS  
SINCE HE WAS JUST A COLT!"  
I SQUEEZED HER HAND AWY DAYS, "I'LL HELP YOU  
SHAP THAT WILD CYCLONE!"

WE BOUGHT FOR HER A SADDLING DINN  
WITH AN LEATHY BRIDLE, TOO,  
WE STROPPED OUR PACE ON A SHAYBACK BAY  
AND TRAILER FOR A WEEK OR TWO,  
IN THE GRASS VALLEY WE FITORED CAMP  
WHERE COLDWATER SPRINGS DID HUE  
WE SAID EVERY TRAP IN THE MOUNTAIN BOOK,  
BUT WE MISSED THAT WILD CYCLONE!

ONE DAY JUST WHEN THE SUN JUMPS UP  
MY LADYLOV FRIEND RIDES IN,  
SHE THROWS A ROSSLOP ON A HARE  
AND HER TOLD ME WITH A GRIN  
'WE'LL BUILD A PEN 'ROUND THIS FRESH MARE  
AND THE CYCLONE'S BOUND TO COME,  
BEFORE TOO MANY MOONS HELL BY  
WE'LL HAVE THAT WILD CYCLONE!'

A SMALL NAIL FENCE WE BUILT 'ROUND  
THIS PAIR YOUNG HICKERY MARE,  
THAT BAME OLD NIGHT AS THE MOON GOT BRIGHT  
OLD WILD CYCLONE WAS THERE,  
HE PUNCHED THE GATES OF THE NAIL CORRAL  
AND HE HURLED HIS LADY'S HOSS,  
WE LACED OUR GATES WITH LEATHRY STRAPS  
AND WE TRAPPED THAT WILD CYCLONE!

MY WINDMONT GIRL DID FEEL SO GAY  
SHE KISSED MY LEATHRY CHEEK,  
THEN BOTH RODE BACK TO DUNBORN TOWN  
TO THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE,  
WE FROD THIS PAIR AND FETTERFUL MARE  
TO THE STORMY WILD CYCLONE,  
AND IT'S NOW OUR LIME KIDS PAST US  
ON THE FASTEST HOSSSES GROWN.

\*\*\*30\*\*\*  
WORDS & MUSIC BY  
WOODY GUTHRIE  
5500 Herwald Avenue,  
Brooklyn, 24, New York.  
JULY 14th, 1949,  
Bastile Day.....  
My 38th BIRTHDAY.....

*Woody Guthrie*

30

#### 17. WILD CYCLONE

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Words and music by Woody Guthrie; recorded probably in 1949, no matrix, previously unissued; Smithsonian Acetate 427; 16" acetate on aluminum disc)

Another of Woody's truly western songs. He dated the manuscript "JULY 14, 1949, Bastile Day.....My 38th BIRTHDAY," but no other statement was written. It is a long ballad with few mnemonic devices; thus, it is not as easily memorized as some of his other songs are. The practice described in the song of using a mare in heat to attract a stallion is part of the breeding process for horses. Woody's terminology throughout the ballad indicates a knowledge of western lore. He also wrote other unpublished western songs such as "Cowboy Ranch" (a children's song), "Red Runner," and "Sunbaked Ranch House."

#### 18. TRAIN BLUES

Woody Guthrie, guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica  
(Recording date unknown, matrix unknown, issued on Folkways AAA4; from analog master FWAA4)

Woody knew a variety of train songs that he played on the harmonica in which the main musical goal is to simulate the sounds of a steam-driven train; he played them a little slower and with less flourish than Sonny Terry. He sounded much better when he played a hand-held harmonica instead of using a rack, but even then he was not as accomplished as Sonny. This duet is a tribute to their friendship.

#### 19. RED RIVER VALLEY

(alternate title: "Cowboy's Love Song")  
Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar  
(Recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA55, previously unissued; Smithsonian Acetate 82; 10" shellac disc)

This is one of the most popular and widely recorded cowboy songs as well as one of the most popular folk songs in this nation, and the theme of parted lovers is rare in the cowboy song genre. It was known as "The Bright Mohawk Valley" in New York and "Sherman Valley" or "Bright Sherman Valley" in some southern mountain regions; it was printed in 1896 as "The Bright Mohawk Valley" with words and music credited to James J. Kerrigan. However, it is believed to have been sung as early as 1869 in Canada, for it does not refer to the Red River that separates Texas and Oklahoma, but to the Red River in Manitoba, Canada. Cowboys were quick to locate the song in the region with which they were familiar.

The Montana cowboy poet, D. J. O'Malley, wrote a poem in the 1880s that was sung to "Red River Valley," and there were reports that it was known in Iowa long before its publication in 1896 in New York. It is apparent that it made its way southward into Texas. For a more detailed study of this song, see: Jim Bob Tinsley's *He Was Singin' This Song* (1981), pp. 210-11.

The first recording issued of it was "Sherman Valley" by Bascom and Blackwell Lunsford in



1925; that same year the Texas cowboy singer Carl T. Sprague recorded it as "The Cowboy's Love Song." The first to record it under the "Red River Valley" title was the hillbilly duo, Hugh Cross and Riley Puckett, in 1927. In between the first recording and 1936, over thirty-five recordings were issued with most, but not all, carrying the "Red River Valley" title. This is a song that Woody must have heard many, many times by a wide variety of singers.

## 20. FASTEST OF PONIES

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Words and music by Woody Guthrie; recorded circa 1949, matrix unknown, previously unissued; Smithsonian Acetate 153; 16" acetate on aluminum disc)

This is another of Woody's songs for which no documentation has been found. It may have been written about the time he wrote "Wild Cyclone." He plays a D minor chord and sings the melody all around it; in many songs he holds notes for unusual lengths, but in this he holds the guitar chord. His theme—the fastest horse—is the title of the song; however, it is a song that is not limited to the west in its possible setting.

## 21. STEWBALL (VERSION 2) (LAWS Q 22)

(alternate title: "Skew Ball," "Stewbally")  
Lead Belly, vocal/guitar; Woody Guthrie, vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, vocal/guitar  
(Arr. by Huddie Ledbetter, recorded October 1946, matrix D672, first issued on Midnight Special Disc 726; reissued on *Lead Belly Sings Folk*

*Songs* [Folkways 2488/ Smithsonian Folkways 40010], and as *Lead Belly: Keep Your Hands Off Her* [Verve/Folkways 9021]; from SF40010)

A skewball horse in the West is a horse with patterns of white on any basic color other than black; however, there are those who believe the skewball to be a horse with patterns of brown on the basic white color. Therefore, the title of this song infers that it is about a horse, and the text reveals that it is a race horse.

John A. and Alan Lomax in *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (1934) wrote:

*Skew Ball was an Irish race horse of broadside fame. The song came over to America and was turned into a work song by the slaves.... And now Skew Ball has become "Stewball" and his race is sung in the prisons.... It is the most widely known of the chain-gang songs in the states we visited, and by far the most constant as to tune and words....* (pp. 68-71)

In a race near Kildare, Ireland, over two hundred years ago, legend tells that Sku-Ball, a skewball horse, was matched against Miss Portly, a grey thoroughbred mare, and won. According to G. Malcolm Laws in *American Balladry from British Broad-sides* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1957), "...Half way around the course, Skewball speaks to his rider and promises to win much money for his master" (p. 283). The upset win of a common horse owned by commoners over a thoroughbred owned by nobility pleased most of the Irish, and a broadside soon appeared. In 1829 it was print-

ed in this country, and when the slaves absorbed it changes occurred—the locale became this country and a variety of states, the horse became Stewball and in some variants changed to Molly. The popular bluegrass song "Molly and Tenbrooks" may have been influenced by this song. For a text and additional information, see: *Sing Out!* 11 (Summer 1961) 3:3.

## 22. SNOW DEER

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar  
(Words by Jack Mahoney, music by Percy Wenrich; recorded late April 1944, matrix MA112, previously unissued; Smithsonian Acetate 108; 10" shellac disc)

Following the success of the popular song "Red Wing," published in 1907, a series of romanticized songs about Indian maidens hit the pop market, of which "Snow Deer," released in 1913, was one. A "cowboy lover" steals an Indian maiden away from her people, and they race away with bullets flying to safety at the ranch house. It became a favorite among fiddle players as an instrumental, and can still be heard among old-time fiddlers. Woody's version is unusual in that he sings it; he knew it as early as 1937, for it is in *Woody and Lefty Lou's Favorite Collection Old Time Hill Country Songs*, under the title "My Pretty Snow-Deer," but when he learned it is not known. The song was first recorded in 1924 by Ernest Thompson, a blind street singer; it is possible that Woody was influenced by him, for Thompson recorded as a vocal-ist with guitar and harmonica—possibly the first

to record using a harmonica rack. The following year Jimmie Wilson and His Catfish String Band recorded it as an instrumental. Ernest Stoneman and Buell Kazee also recorded it with vocals in the late 1920s.

## 23. WHEN THE CURFEW BLOWS

(alternate title: "Curfew Blow")  
Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar and harmonica  
(Words and music by Woody Guthrie; recorded

WHEN THE CURFEW BLOWS  
 Woody Guthrie  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 THE LOWDOWNING SOUND, BOYS,  
 I EVER HEARD SOUND, GITS,  
 OF THE CURFEW OF MIDNIGHT  
 HEAR THE CURFEW BLOW  
 BY BULLY BILL HANG, BOYS,  
 OF THE BANQUAN'S MOVE, BOYS,  
 ON THE GALLIE POLE, BOYS,  
 WHEN THE CURFEW BLOWS.  
 CHORUS:  
 HEAR THE CURFEW BLOWING  
 HEAR THE CURFEW BLOWING  
 IN THE COAL BLACK MIDNIGHT.  
 HEAR THE CURFEW BLOW.  
 THE SHERRIFF'S MEN, BOYS,  
 ARE ON MY TRAIL, BOYS,  
 IN THE MIDNIGHT WIND, BOYS,  
 HEAR THE CURFEW BLOW,  
 AND WHEN THEY CATCH ME  
 BY BULLY BILL HANG, BOYS,  
 ON THE GALLIE POLE, BOYS,  
 WHEN THE CURFEW BLOWS.  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 I was just saying to Gordon Freeman, head accordion center for  
 his wife, Sis Ouniocham, of the Almanac Singers, that these old women  
 and men, on a radio dial, would sound almost out of place, jutting  
 from the other kinds of noise and music all around the dial.  
 It is like something coming from the deepest part of your conscience  
 like a sad reminder that a whistle, a song, whether it come from a bird  
 or a steamboat, sounds a whole lot different to some people than it does  
 to others.  
 To a soda jerk on a fast college corner, a song, or a program of  
 songs like this, might cause him and his customers to look up and ask  
 themselves "what is wrong with the radio?" But, even there, in just such  
 a crowd, if this kind of music was properly understood, everybody would  
 get a lot of deep enjoyment out of listening, for a little while. I don't  
 claim this kind of music should drip through the radio speakers all of  
 the time, nor that any particular brand of music should crowd the other  
 kinds out; but, certainly, this would sound no more out of life, no more  
 disconnected, no more out of place than the music which is true, than to  
 hear our song spread and cheering over symphonies drifting through the  
 weather-leaking walls of 10,000,000 houses in the south, west, and that  
 hear our song spread, and the men, too soon; because, while this old  
 song is going, maybe, to the extreme on the sad and mournful end, it is  
 a fact that it is just as God, created a harmful, nervous, insincere,  
 unreal state of mind for you to be hypnotized to the Broadway wise-crack  
 littering stuff. In these times of war against fascism, when we've got  
 to find all of our real strength, all of our real courage, all of our  
 real honesty in ourselves before we can learn to trust, unite, organize,  
 and work with others, let's try to be sure that we don't laugh at the  
 ones who have cried.  
 Woody Guthrie



circa 1947, matrix D203, issued on Disc 610 [5011]; Smithsonian Acetate 3691; 10" shellac disc [broken]

Written as a Dust Bowl song, Woody put this together while performing as an Almanac Singer. In some areas of California there were curfews against migrant workers being on the streets after posted hours, and in many southern cities there were curfews for African Americans. Woody could easily have written this against racial hatred. He wrote on a manuscript of the song:

...[T]hese old moanful songs, on a radio dial, would sound almost out of place, judging from the other kinds of noise and music all around the dial.... It is like something coming from the deepest part of your conscience, or like a sad reminder that a whistle, a song, whether it comes from a bird or a steamboat, sounds a whole lot different to some people than it does to others.

#### 24. LITTLE DARLING

(alternate title: "At My Window Sad and Lonely")

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar (Words and music by Woody Guthrie; recorded 19 April 1944, possibly matrix MA38, first issued on Verve/Folkways 9007, reissued as Folkways 1010/31010; Smithsonian Acetate 113; 12" acetate on glass disc)

This has the sound of a Carter Family country music song, but on a manuscript in the

Smithsonian/Asch Archives of a song titled "At My Window" with slight modifications and fewer verses, Woody typed *Made up on the Tenth Day of March in Los Angeles California United States of America This Country*. The year is not given, but the tone of the song and statement indicate that it was probably in the late 1930s.

#### 25. BLOWING DOWN THAT OLD DUSTY ROAD

(alternate titles: "Blowin' Down This Road" and "Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way") Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar and harmonica (Music traditional, words by Woody Guthrie; recorded 25 April 1944, matrix 1231, issued on Asch 78 550-3B; Smithsonian Acetate 73; 12" acetate on glass disc)

On his typescript of this song in "Songs of Woody Guthrie" (1941, p. 203) in the Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Culture, Woody typed: *This is an original version of an old folk song written by W. W. Guthrie, January 1939 KFVD Los Angeles, California*. Woody first learned it under the original title, "Lonesome Road Blues," and later gave the song a Dust Bowl theme.

Variants of "Lonesome Road Blues" (see Vol. 1 in this series) have traveled across this nation for over one hundred years; the identity of the 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 as well as his recordings there are at least three variants, and he used the tune for other songs as well as for a radio theme song in California. It is a blues, and probably had its origin in southern African-

American culture with verses that intermingle with other blues.

Henry Whitter with his harmonica and guitar recorded it 10 December 1923 as "Lonesome Road Blues" (Okeh 40015); Whitter's recording career started that year, resulting in a few of his recorded songs becoming standards among country singers; he was one of the first country music recording figures to use a harmonica rack, which became a fixture with Woody and folk singers influenced by Woody. By 1938, nearly forty singers or bands had recorded variants under a wide variety of titles. In printed form it was published in 1919 by the Pace & Handy Music Company with words and music by William Nash, but it was around long before then.

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 ('Going Down the Road Feeling Bad' not 'Blowin' Down This Road') was the first song that popped to my mind, so without thinking, I sung it." He also stated that they used it in the movie (unverified; from *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People* [1967], p. 215).

Woody used "Blowin' Down This Road" on his 1940 Victor *Dust Bowl Ballads*, and in *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People* he wrote: *I put this song on a Victor record.... The three verses marked with \* ain't on the record. I just sing them by heart.*

#### 26. THE RETURN OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN SLIM AND DESERT RAT SHORTY

Woody Guthrie, narration/guitar; Cisco Houston, narration/guitar (Words and music by Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston; recording date unknown, previously unissued, Smithsonian Acetate 285; 10" home recording ([broken])

From the 1920s through the 1950s, border or Mexican radio stations that broadcast western and country music, fundamentalist evangelists, and patent medicine pitches were popular nighttime entertainment particularly in rural communities in the South and Southwest. During that same time, most radio stations in this country relied on live talent for many of their shows, and "country humor" was common and popular. And many of the performers had song books to sell. Woody and Cisco not only listened to these radio shows, they also performed on them.

When Woody traveled to California in 1937, he and his cousin Leon "Jack" Guthrie wrangled their own show, "The Oke and Woody Show," over KFVD Hollywood. When Jack left, Maxine "Lefty Lou" Dempsey joined Woody on the "Woody and Lefty Lou Show." They soon had a song book to sell, *Woody and Lefty Lou's Favorite Collection of Old Time Hill Country Songs*. They also enjoyed a short tenure as performers on the border station XELO, Tijuana, Mexico. Woody dressed as and acted the role of the hillbilly clown. It is highly probable that the humor in this selection is the same



that he used in his early radio days, only it is directed at making fun of border radio shows. Woody and Cisco recorded this on a home recording machine. Two different skits were recorded on the disc. One was released on SF 40046, and this one appears for the first time. Since this recording was copied, the original no longer exists.

For an excellent account of border radio, see: Gene Fowler and Bill Crawford, *Border Radio* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1987).

Additional information about some songs in this collection can be found in: Guy Logsdon, *"The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing" and Other Songs Cowboys Sing* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Alan Lomax, *The Folk Songs of North America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1960); John A. and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934); Bess, Lomax, John A., and Alan Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938, reprinted 1986); Jim Bob Tinsley, *He Was Singin' This Song* (Orlando: University Presses of Florida, 1981); John I. White, *Git Along, Little Dogies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

#### ARCHIVIST'S REMARKS

This fourth and final collection in the series *The Asch Recordings* consists primarily of Woody Guthrie's performances of western, cowboy, and outlaw ballads mixed with more of the traditional material Woody knew. It completes the re-release of all of the Guthrie material that was released on Folkways Records (1948-1987) as well as a number of unreleased performances.

During the last twenty 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. The 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 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. All of the music on this project was made by Moses Asch during the 1940s on various types of disc. 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 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 performers 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 were in short supply. Moses Asch had a studio and musicians ready to record but 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 of the 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.

While working on this series, Pete Reiniger and I have tried to clean up the often scratchy sound by using No-Noise digital editing software. Some of the acetates are in better condition than others, and some either no longer exist or are in too bad shape to use. In these cases we have substituted the recordings from the analog LP production master. It is our philosophy to try to clean up the noise without sacrificing the sound. Certain types of noise can be easily cleaned up this way, others cannot be without eliminating the high-frequency sound. Many historical reissues sound muffled for this reason. We would rather have the crisp



sound of the original with some noise. We hope you agree.

In 1990, Lori Taylor, Leslie Spitz-Edson, Alex Sweda, 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 (see list). This process has aided in the creation of these compact discs and hopefully will do more in the future as we work on preserving the rest of the Asch Collection.

Jeff Place, Archivist,

Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage,  
Smithsonian Institution (1999)

## APPENDIX

Surviving recordings in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archive and Collections, Smithsonian Institution, made by Woody Guthrie for Moses Asch, 1944–1952:

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 45035  
1913 Massacre 40025, 40102  
21 Years 40101  
900 Miles 40007  
Alabama Bound (with Lead Belly) 40045  
All Work Together  
Along in the Sun and the Rain 40046, 40103  
Another Man Done Gone  
Baltimore to Washington 40101  
Bed on the Floor (Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor) 40101  
Better World A-Comin' 40059, 40102  
Biggest Thing Man Has Ever Done (Great Historical Bum) 40100  
Bile Them Cabbage Down  
Billy the Kid 40103  
Bling Blang 45035  
Blow Ye Winds  
Blow the Man Down  
Blowing Down This Dusty Road 40103  
Boll Weevil 40007  
Bound for Glory (with Jack Elliott)  
Brown Eyes 40007  
Bubble Gum 45036  
Budded Roses 40046  
Buffalo Gals 40103  
Buffalo Skinners 40025, 40103  
Build My House 45037  
Candy Tree  
Car Song 40100, 45036  
Chisholm Trail 40103  
Choo Choo  
Clean-O 45036  
Cocaine Blues (Bad Lee Brown) 40103  
Columbus Stockade  
Come See 45036

Cowboy Ranch  
Cowboy Song  
Cowboy Waltz 40103  
Crawdadd Song 40101  
Cumberland Gap  
Dance Around 45036  
Danville Girl 40101  
Dead or Alive (Poor Lazarus) 40103  
Dirty Overhalls 40007  
Do-Re-Mi 40001, 40100  
Dollar Down, Dollar a Week 40025  
Don't You Push Me Down 45036  
Dust Storm Disaster  
Dying Miner 40025  
End of the Line 40100  
Ezekial Saw the Wheel  
Farmer-Labor Train 40046, 40102  
Fastest of Ponies 40103  
Female Doctor (with Alonzo Scales)  
Fiddle Tune  
Fiddler's Dram (with Lead Belly) 40010  
The Flood and the Storm 40060  
Foggy Mountain Top  
Freight Train Blues  
Froggie Went A-Courtin' (with Sonny Terry and Cisco Houston) 40103  
Gambling Man 40101  
Get Along Mr. Hitler  
The Girl I Left Behind Me 40046  
Give Me That Old Time Religion  
Going Down the Road Feeling Bad 40100  
The Golden Vanity  
Goodnight Little Arlo 45035  
Goodnight Little Darling  
Good Morning Blues (with Sonny Terry and Cisco Houston)  
Go Tell Aunt Rhody (with Sonny Terry and Cisco Houston) 40103  
Grand Coulee Dam 40100  
Grassy Grass Grass (Grow, Grow, Grow) 45035  
Green Corn  
Green Corn (with Lead Belly) 40105

Greenback Dollar  
Grey Goose (with Lead Belly) 40105  
Guitar Blues 40007  
Guitar Rag  
Gypsy Davy 40100  
Ham and Eggs (with Lead Belly) 40105  
Hang Knot 40025  
Hangin' Around (with Lee Hays, Pete Seeger, Brownie McGhee, and Sonny Terry)  
Hanukkah Dance 40102  
Happy Hanukkah  
Hard, Ain't It Hard 40100  
Hard Travelin' 40001, 40046, 40102  
Harmonica Solo  
Harriet Tubman 40046  
Helping Hand  
Hen Cackle 40101  
Hobo's Lullaby 40001, 40100  
House of the Rising Sun 40007  
How Many Biscuits Can You Eat?  
Houdjadoo 40102  
How Long, How Long (with Jack Elliott)  
I Ain't Got No Home in This World Anymore 40001, 40102  
I Ain't Got Nobody 40100  
I Just Want to Sing Your Name 40060  
I Ride an Old Paint 40103  
I See Mama  
I Want Milk (I Want It Now) 45035  
I'll Eat You, I'll Drink You 45035  
I'll Write and I'll Draw 45035  
Ida Red 40101  
If I Lose My Money, Let Me Lose (with Cisco Houston and Sonny Terry)  
Irene (with Sonny Terry)  
It's Hanukkah  
Jackhammer John 40007  
Jarama Valley 40100  
Jesus James 40043, 40100  
Jesse Christ 40001, 40100  
Jig Along Home  
Jiggy Jiggy Bum 45036



Johnny Hart 40101  
 John Henry 40007  
 Keep My Skillet Good and Greasy 40101  
 Kissin' On 40046  
 Ladies Auxiliary 40102  
 Lay Down Little Dogies  
 Lindbergh 40100  
 Little Black Train 40101  
 Little Darling (At My Window Sad and Lonely) 40102  
 Little Sack of Sugar 45035  
 Lonesome Day  
 Long John  
 Long Ways to Travel 40046  
 Lost John 40025  
 Ludlow Massacre 40025, 40102  
 Make a Bubble 45035  
 The Many and the Few 40102  
 Mean Talking Blues 40102  
 Merry Go Round 45036  
 Midnight Special (with Lead Belly) 40105  
 A Million Miles  
 Miner's Song 40102  
 Miss Pavlichenko 40021, 40102  
 More Pretty Girls Than One  
 Move Across the River (with Sonny Terry)  
 Muleskinner Blues 40101  
 My Dolly 45036  
 My Little Seed  
 My Yellow Crayon 45036  
 Needle Sing 45035  
 New Found Land 40102  
 New Morning Train  
 New River Train  
 New York City 40046  
 New York Town 40100  
 Nine Pound Hammer (with Jack Elliott)  
 Old Joe Clark  
 Old Judge Thayer 40060  
 On Top of Old Smoky  
 One Day Old 45035  
 Oregon Trail 40007, 40102

Pancho Villa  
 Pastures of Plenty 40100  
 Philadelphia Lawyer 40001, 40100  
 Pick It Up 45035  
 A Picture from Life's Other Side 40100  
 Poor Boy 40101  
 Pretty Boy Floyd 40001, 40103  
 Pretty and Shiny-O 45035  
 Prison Cell Dream  
 Prisoner's Wife  
 Put My Little Shoes Away 40101  
 Put Your Finger in the Air 45036  
 Put on My Traveling Shoes (with Sonny Terry)  
 Race You Down the Mountain 45036  
 Railroad Bill (with Jack Elliott)  
 Railroad Blues 40102  
 Rain Crow Bill 40046  
 Ramblin' Round 40100  
 Ranger's Command 40103  
 Rattle My Rattle 45035  
 Reckless Talk  
 Red River Valley 40103  
 Red Runner  
 Red Wine 40060  
 The Return of Rocky Mountain Slim and Desert Rat Shorty 40103  
 Riding Down the Rocky Canyon  
 Rocky Mountain Slim and Desert Rat Shorty 40046  
 Roll On 45036  
 Roll the Union On  
 Root Hog and Die 40060  
 Rubaiyat (excerpt on 40102)  
 Rubber Dolly 40101  
 Rye Straw 40101  
 Sally Don't You Grieve 40021, 40102  
 Sally Goodin' 40101  
 Seattle to Chicago 40046  
 Ship in the Sky 40102  
 Sinking of the Normandee  
 Sinking of the Reuben James 40021, 40100  
 Sitting on Top of the World

Skip to My Lou  
 Sleepy Eye 45036  
 Slip Knot 40103  
 Snow Deer 40103  
 So Long, It's Been Good to Know You (War version) 40021, 40102  
 Sowing on the Mountain 40101  
 Springfield Mountain 40007  
 Stagge Lee (Stackolee) 40101  
 Steptone 40101  
 Stewball 40103  
 Stewball (with Lead Belly) 40103, 40010  
 Streets of Glory  
 Struggle Blues 40025  
 Suassos Lane 40060  
 Sugar in the Gourd  
 Swimmy Swim Swim 45035  
 Take My Penny  
 Take a Whiff on Me 40101  
 Take This Hammer (with Sonny Terry and Jack Elliott)  
 Talking Centralia (Talking Miner) 40046  
 Talking Columbia 40102  
 Talking Dust Bowl  
 Talking Fishing Blues 40100, 45037  
 Talking Hard Work 40001, 40100  
 Talking Hitter  
 Talking Sailor (Talking Merchant Marine) 40021, 40102  
 This Land Is Your Land 40001, 40100  
 Tippy Tappy Toe  
 Train 45 40101  
 Train Blues 40103  
 Train Harmonica  
 Train Medley 40046  
 Train Narration 40046  
 Train Song  
 Trouble on the Waters  
 True Believer  
 Two Good Men 40060, 40062  
 Union Burying Ground 40025  
 Union Hammer  
 Union Maid 40102

Vanzetti's Letter 40060  
 Vanzetti's Rock 40060  
 Vigilante Man 40001, 40102  
 Wabash Cannonball  
 Waiting at the Gate 40025  
 Wake Up 45036  
 Waltz By Ki-Ki  
 Want to See Me Grow  
 Warden in the Sky 40046  
 Washy Wash Wash 45035  
 Weaver's Life  
 We Shall Be Free (with Lead Belly) 40001, 40007  
 We Welcome to Heaven 40060  
 What Are We Waiting On? 40021, 40102  
 What Did the Deep Sea Say? 40007  
 What Would You Give in Exchange for Your Soul?  
 When That Great Ship Went Down 40100  
 When the Curfew Blows 40103  
 When the Saints Go Marching In  
 When the Yanks Go Marching In 40021, 40102  
 Which Side Are You On?  
 Who Broke Down the Hen House Door?  
 Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Feet? 40101  
 Who's My Pretty Baby? 45035  
 Whoopie Yi Yi Yo, Get Along Little Dogies 40043, 40103  
 Why, Oh Why? 40100, 45035  
 Wiggledy, Giggledy 40046  
 Wild Cyclone 40103  
 Will You Miss Me? 40007  
 Worried Man Blues 40101  
 Wreck of the #9  
 Wreck of the Old 97 40101  
 Yellow Gal (with Lead Belly) 40044, 40105  
 Yellow Gal (solo)  
 You Souls of Boston 40060



**Recordings of Woody Guthrie made and/or released by Moses Asch on Asch, Disc, Folkways, and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1944–1998:**

Woody Guthrie, Asch 347 (78 rpm), 1944; *Struggle: Asch American Documentary, Vol. 1*, Asch 360 (78 rpm), 1946; *Songs to Grow On: Nursery Days*, Disc 605 (78 rpm), 1946, Folkways 5/105 (78 rpm), 1951; *Ballads from the Dust Bowl*, Disc 610 (78 rpm), 1947; *Songs to Grow On: Work Songs for Nursery Days*, Disc 602 (78 rpm), 1947; *Talking Dust Bowl*, Folkways 11/2011 (LP), 1950; *Songs to Grow On, Vol. 1: Nursery Days*, Folkways 7005 (LP), 1950; *Songs to Grow on for Mother and Child*, Folkways 7015 (LP), 1950; *Lonesome Valley*, Folkways 2010 (LP), 1950 (with others); *Bound for Glory*, Folkways 78-1/2481 (LP), 1956 (with Will Geer); *Ballads of Sacco & Vanzetti*, Folkways 5485 (LP), 1960, Smithsonian Folkways 40060, 1995; *Sings Folk Songs with Lead Belly, Cisco Houston, Sonny Terry, Bess Hawes*, Folkways 2483 (LP), 1962, Smithsonian Folkways 40007, 1989; *Dust Bowl Ballads Sung by Woody Guthrie*, Folkways 5212 (LP), 1964; *Hard Travelin'*, Disc 110 (LP), 1964; *Woody Guthrie Sings Folks Songs, Vol. 2*, Folkways 2484 (LP), 1964; *Bed on the Floor*, Verve/Folkways 9007 (LP), n.d.; *Bonneville Dam and Other Columbia River Songs*, Verve/Folkways 9036, 1967; *This Land Is Your Land*, Folkways 1001/31001 (LP), 1967; *Poor Boy*, Folkways 1010/31010 (LP), 1968; *Struggle*, Folkways

2485 (LP), 1976, Smithsonian Folkways 40025, 1990; *Why, Oh Why?*, Folkways 7016 (LP), 1985; *Folkways: The Original Vision*, Smithsonian Folkways 40001, 1988 (with Lead Belly); *Songs to Grow on for Mother and Child*, Smithsonian Folkways 45035, 1991; *Nursery Days*, Smithsonian Folkways 45036, 1992; *Long Ways to Travel 1944–1949: The Unreleased Folkways Masters*, Smithsonian Folkways 40046, 1994; *That's Why We're Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement*, Smithsonian Folkways 40021, 1995 (with others); *This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1*, Smithsonian Folkways 40100, 1997; *Muleskinner Blues: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 2*, Smithsonian Folkways 40101, 1997; *Hard Travelin': The Asch Recordings, Vol. 3*, Smithsonian Folkways 40102, 1998; and *Buffalo Skinners: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 4*, Smithsonian Folkways 40103, 1999. There are also early 78 recordings released on the Cub and Folk Tunes labels. For a complete discography of Woody Guthrie write Guy Logsdon, 4645 S. Columbia Ave., Tulsa, OK 74105.

**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 contemporary popular musicians), Columbia 44034; *The Anthology of American Folk Music*,

Smithsonian Folkways 40090; *The Lead Belly Legacy Series*, Smithsonian Folkways 40044, 40045, 40105; *Songs of the Spanish Civil War*, Folkways 5437; and *Work Songs to Grow On*, Vol. 3, Folkways 7027.

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: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990); and Pete Seeger, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?* (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out!, 1993). For information about Moses Asch (1905–1986), see: Peter D. Goldsmith, *Making People's Music: Moe Asch and Folkways Records* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998); Tony Scherman, "The Remarkable Recordings of Moses Asch," *Smithsonian* 18 (August 1987) 5:110-21; Gary Kenton, "Moses Asch of Folkways," *Audio* 74 (July 1990) 7:38-46; and Israel Young, "Moses Asch: Twentieth Century Man," *Sing Out!* 26 (May/June 1977) 1:2-6, and 26 (July/August 1977) 2:25-29. For information about Jack Guthrie, see: Guy Logsdon, "Jack Guthrie: A Star That Almost Was," *Journal of Country Music* 15(2):32-38, and *Jack Guthrie: Oklahoma Hills*, Bear Family Records BCD 15580, notes by Guy Logsdon.

For more detailed information about Woody Guthrie's work with Moses Asch, please consult *Volume 1* in this series as well as SF 40046, and for lyrics of some of the songs in this collection, see: *Woody Guthrie Songs*, edited by Judy Bell and Nora Guthrie (New York: TRO Ludlow Music, 1992); *The Collected Reprints from Sing Out!*, Vol. 1-6 1959–1964 (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out Corp., 1990); *Woody Guthrie: Roll on Columbia, The Columbia River Collection* (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out Publications, 1991); *California to the New York Island*, edited by Millard Lampell (New York: Oak Publications, 1958); *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People*, by Alan Lomax, Woody Guthrie, and Pete Seeger (New York: Oak Publications, 1967). Another important resource is the Woody Guthrie Archives (250 W. 57th Street, Suite 1218, New York, NY 10107; 212/541-6230).



## ABOUT THE COMPILERS

Jeff Place has been the head 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 is currently on the Preservation and Technology Committee for the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. 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, the *Asch Recordings* of Woody Guthrie, and the *Lead Belly Legacy Series*. Place also won two 1998 Grammy Awards for best historical release and best liner notes for his work on *The Anthology of American Folk Music* (1997 edition). He has been a collector of traditional music for over twenty-five years. A native of Palo Alto, California, 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 and cowboy songs and poetry; authored the highly acclaimed, award-winning book, *The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing* and *Other Songs Cowboys Sing*; and 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), *That's Why We're Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement* (40021), and *Woody Guthrie: The Asch Recordings, Vols. 1-4* (40100-40103).

## 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 Anthony Seeger, Matt Walters, Amy Horowitz, and Atesh Sonneborn, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage 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, Andy Irvine, Billy Bragg, Stephanie Smith, Dudley Connell, Ronnie Simpkins, Tom Adams, Heather Berthold, Harris Wray, Lori Taylor, Leslie Spitz-Edson, Bryan Adeline, T. Chris Aplin, David Arkush, Stacy Baird, Doug Bell, David Dennie, Ian Eagleson, Dan Gilbert, Matt Kaminsky, Kieran McManus, Bob Kaiman, Heather Berthold, and Danny Meltzer.

## CREDITS

Compiled and annotated by Jeff Place and Guy Logsdon  
Original recordings by Moses Asch, 1944–1949, New York City; from the Moses and Frances Asch Collection at the Smithsonian Institution  
Analog reel-to-reel and acetate transfers by Jack Towers, David Glasser, Jeff Place, and Pete Reiniger  
Mastered by David Glasser and Charlie Pilzer, AirShow, Springfield, VA  
Technical coordination by Pete Reiniger  
Project supervised by Anthony Seeger and Atesh Sonneborn  
Production coordination by Mary Monseur and Michael Maloney  
Editorial Assistance by Carla Borden  
Cover photograph courtesy of Nora Guthrie and the Woody Guthrie Archives  
CD design and layout by Visual Dialogue, Boston, MA  
Inside graphics from the Moses and Frances Asch Collection, Smithsonian Institution  
Back cover photograph courtesy of Guy Logsdon  
Additional Smithsonian Folkways staff:  
Lee Michael Demsey, fulfillment; Kevin Doran, licensing; Brenda Dunlap, marketing director; Judy Gilmore, fulfillment; Matt Levine, fulfillment; Ronnie Simpkins, fulfillment; Stephanie Smith, assistant archivist.



HDCCD® and High Definition Compatible Digital® are registered trademarks of Pacific Microsonics, Inc., Patent No. 5,479,168



## FOLKWAYS AT 50

This 50th anniversary honors the Folkways legacy and launches the Folkways Trust Fund. The fund will enable Folkways to preserve its historical collection at the Smithsonian Institution through the use of emerging technologies. Major sponsors include: BMI (The American Performance Rights Organization), Columbia Records and Sony Music Entertainment, KOCH International, Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, *Smithsonian Magazine*, and TRO (The Richmond Organization). For information on how to become a sponsor, contact Anthony Seeger, Director, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, by phone at (202) 287-3251 or by e-mail at [tony@folkways.si.edu](mailto:tony@folkways.si.edu)

## ABOUT SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch 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 Moses Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are available on high-quality audio cassettes or by special order on CD. Each recording is 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 and recordings to accompany published books and other educational projects.

The Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, and Dyer-Bennet record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. 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, Paredon, and Dyer-Bennet recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Mail Order  
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 7300,  
Washington, DC 20560-0953  
phone (202) 287-7298  
fax (202) 287-7299

orders only 1 (800) 410-9815

*(Discover, MasterCard, Visa, and American Express accepted)*

For further information about all the labels distributed through the Center, please consult our Internet site ([www.si.edu/folkways](http://www.si.edu/folkways)), which includes information about recent releases, our catalogue, and a database of the approximately 35,000 tracks from the more than 2,300 available recordings (click on *database search*).

Or request a printed catalogue by writing to: Catalogue, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 7300, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0953, USA. Or use our catalogue request phone, (202) 287-3262, or e-mail [folkways@aol.com](mailto:folkways@aol.com)

