

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

jean ritchie ballads

from her appalachian family tradition



Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage | 750 9th Street. NW | Suite 4100 Smithsonian Institution | Washington DC 20560-0953 | www. folkways.si.ed SFW CD 40145 @ © 2003 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

jean ritchie ballads from her appalachian family tradition

1 gypsy laddie 2:57 2 false sir john 4:18 3 hangman 1:57 4 lord bateman 6:03 5 the house carpenter 4:19 6 lord thomas and fair ellender 6:27 7 the merry golden tree 2:08 8 old bangum 1:52 9 barbary allen 5:01 10 the unquiet grave 3:57 11 sweet william and lady margaret 6:49 12 there lived an old lord 5:26 13 cherry tree carol 3:45 14 edward 2:32 15 lord randall 2:51 16 little musgrave 12:03

JEAN RITCHIE IS A NATIONAL TREASURE, one of America's finest and best known traditional singers. She grew up in Viper, Kentucky, and is part of a large family, the famous "Singing Ritchies of Kentucky." The ballads on this recording are outstanding Appalachian versions of the "Child ballads," English and Scottish narrative songs collected and published by scholar Francis James Child in the late 19th century. The songs tell of true and lost love, jealousy, treachery, grief, death, and the supernatural. This reissue of her landmark Folkways recordings of British traditional ballads in Appalachia brings her clear, pure voice and timeless songs to new generations of listeners. Extensive notes, 73 minutes.



jean ritchie ballads from her appalachian family tradition

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

1 gypsy laddie 2:47 2 false sir john 4:18 3 hangman 1:57 4 lord bateman 6:03 5 the house carpenter 4:19 6 lord thomas and fair ellender 5:27 7 the merry golden tree 2:08 8 old bangum 1:52 9 barbary allen 5:01 10 the unquiet grave 3:57 11 sweet william and lady margaret 6:49 12 there lived an old lord 5:26 13 cherry tree carol 3:45 14 edward 2:32 15 lord randall 2:51 16 little musgrave 12:03

SFW CD 40145 @ 2003 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

JEAN RITCHIE: BALLADS FROM HER APPALACHIAN FAMILY TRADITION

Jean Ritchie is a national treasure, one of America's finest and most beloved traditional singers. She grew up in Viper, Kentucky, and is part of a large family known for their rich repertoire of songs. This reissue of her landmark 1961 Folkways recordings of British traditional ballads in Appalachia brings her clear, pure voice and timeless songs to new generations of listeners. These are the "Child" ballads, English and Scottish narrative songs that were collected and published by scholar Francis James Child in the late 19th century. The ballads were brought to America by English, Scottish, and Ulster settlers and flourished particularly in Appalachia. The ballads on this recording are outstanding examples of this historical song tradition. The songs tell of true and lost love, jealousy, treachery, grief, and death and the supernatural.

Forty some years have passed since this recording appeared. In the album's original notes the late Kenneth S. Goldstein, a folklorist who specialized in Anglo-American folksong traditions, observed that Jean Ritchie is one of the great tradition bearers. This is equally true today; she has continued to sing, sharing her family's treasured ballads and songs with all who will listen, and garnering many new accolades. In 2002, Jean Ritchie was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship Award from the National Endowment for the Arts, in recognition of her significant contributions to folk and traditional arts. She received the Folk Alliance Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998. She is the subject of a 1997 Kentucky Educational Television production called *Mountain Born: The Jean Ritchie Story.* Her recording *None But One* won a *Rolling Stone* Critic's Award in 1977. Her autobiography *Singing Family of the Cumberlands* has remained in print since 1955. As a singer of traditional songs, a songwriter, a musician, a writer, a teacher, a folklorist, a collector of songs, and a performer known around the



world, she is without peer. Despite her many talents and achievements, she remains an extremely modest person.

It is with pleasure that Smithsonian Folkways reissues this recording of classic ballads sung by Jean Ritchie. The original notes by Kenneth Goldstein have been updated where appropriate, and the song references removed because extensive ballad reference resources are available on the Web. Jean Ritchie has provided some additional clarifications, which are included below.

STEPHANIE SMITH, 2003

CHILD BALLADS IN THE RITCHIE FAMILY

Back in the days when Balis and Abigail Ritchie's big family was "a-bornin' and agrowin'," none of them had ever heard of Francis J. Child, nor had anyone else in that part of the Kentucky mountains, I believe. The word "ballad," or "ballit" meant, in our community, the written-down words for a song. I remember hearing one old lady near home say proudly to another, "Now I've got Barbry Ellen up there in my trunk. Joe's Sally stopped in and she writ me out the ballit of it."

"Writing out the ballit" for our family songs was rarely done. All of us, Mom, Dad, and all thirteen children, could write, but these old songs and their music were in our heads, or hearts, or somewhere part of us, and we never needed to write them down. They were there, like games and rhymes and riddles, like churning-chants and baby-bouncers and gingerbread stackcake recipes, to be employed and enjoyed when the time came for them. Nobody got scholarly about them, and I have a feeling that's why they have been genuinely popular all these years.

These are old story songs, now. We sang and listened to them, for themselves. For the excitement of the tale, or the beauty and strength of the language or of the graceful tunes, for the romantic tingle we got from a glimpse of life in the long-ago past, for the uncanny way the old, old situations still fit the present. Heads nodding over Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender, "Ain't that right, now? That's j'st what he ort to a-done to her!"

As I remember, it took a special time for us to appreciate these "big" ballads. Of course, we hummed them about the housework, and when walking along the roads, and in the fields, but that wasn't really singing them out. It had to be a quiet time for that, as when the family gathered on the front porch evenings, and after awhile the house clatter ended and the talk dwindled and died. Then was the time for "Lord Bateman," or "The Gypsie Laddie" to move into our thoughts. Or it could be a time at play-parties, when the players dropped down to rest between spells of dancing that was a time to listen to a good long tale.

JEAN RITCHIE [1961]



Rereading Kenny Goldstein's introductory notes and his comments on the individual ballads, I think that no additional notes are needed, but a few clarifications could be made. When Dr. Goldstein says, "Jean learned this one from her father," he is referring to Balis W. Ritchie, who was born in Knott County in 1869, lived at the head of Clear Creek on his family land for several years, and then moved the family to Hindman, the county seat, so that his children could attend the new Settlement

School there. The move to Perry County came when Mom inherited her share of her father's land in Viper, about 1914.

"From her mother" refers to Abigail Hall Ritchie, born in 1877 in Viper, Kentucky. She was the daughter of John Henry Hall and Patty Pratt Hall. The family home was at the mouth of Mace's Creek, near the rural village of Viper. A large family—nine children—lived to grow up. The Halls owned a great deal of land in that region, and so Abigail's share was about two hundred acres, mostly woodland. Homes and gardens were placed whenever possible in the bits of level land down near streams or branches, as they're called there. For cornfields, a patch of forest had to be cleared from a nearby hillside.

Uncle Jason Ritchie was actually not our uncle but Dad's first cousin. He stayed in what was then Knott County, married and raised his family on the Ball Fork of Troublesome Creek, lived in his prime at Hindman, was fairly well educated, and practiced law for several years. Both he and Balis were deeply interested in education. They read all they could find, and Dad went to Normal School in Ohio (rode as far as he could on the train, then walked the rest of the way, carrying his trunk on his back). He returned home and taught school in his community for ten years or so. He and Jason were both much aware of the old ballads and songs around them. In Perry County, Dad met new singers and heard their variants of the old family songs. He had the first printing press in those parts, which was ordered by mail and brought the last forty miles to his home with mules and wagon. In time he put together a little songbook, about twenty pages, and for its spine he laid the ten sheets of paper in a stack, flat, and sewed down the middle with a sewing machine, using the large-stitch setting. The content was mostly old family songs like "Jackaro," "I've Been a Foreign Lander," and "Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender." But he was very proud to include some modern ones, learned from the occasional traveler through the hills who would

stop and stay the night. Dad and the visitor would sit around the fireplace after supper, and Dad would soon get the talk around to what music the man knew, and so he learned a few songs from Tin Pan Alley in this manner. "Bill Bailey Won't You Please Come Home" and "Kitty Wells" are in his book alongside the old ones.

And lastly, the ballads "learned by older sisters at Hindman Settlement School" were known by everybody in that community (Hindman was Balis Ritchie's home then with his young family—the first nine, up to baby Edna). The Settlement School's songbooks were made up of songs brought in by the children from their families' repertoires. Thus, the titles credited as having been learned at the school were versions of ones our family already knew, at least in part if not the whole song. The Settlement folks put everyone's "parts" together if they thought that would make a more complete story. That's not as much tampering as it may sound—most folks around knew the same melodies and were, on the whole, most pleased to learn back "the verses that Granny forgot." Of course, quite often a child (sometimes a Ritchie child, with one like "Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender") would bring in a ballad whole and complete and so spellbinding when sung that nothing was ever added nor taken away.

10

JEAN RITCHIE, 2003

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Between 1882 and 1898, the greatest single scholarly investigation of ballad literature was published. This five-volume study, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, edited by Professor Francis James Child of Harvard University, is the best modern study of British traditional ballads. It is not surprising, therefore, that these ballads have come to be known as the "Child" ballads and that Child's system of numbering them is still observed.

Child edited 305 ballads with more than 1,000 versions. George Lyman Kittredge, who carried the work to completion after Child's death, believed that it "comprised the whole extant mass of the material." Since then, however, diligent collectors of folksongs have taken down many thousand more variants and versions of these ballads in England, Scotland, Ireland, and North America.

Though Professor Child was aware that some of these ballads were still in oral circulation in America amongst the descendants of the original and later British immigrants to the colonies, he was completely unaware of the extent of this oral tradition in North America. He certainly would have doubted that this tradition existed in America to a greater degree than it did in the British Isles. This, however, proved to be the case.

There is more than a bit of gentle irony in the situation as it developed. An American scholar had taken it upon himself to make the definitive study of the balladry of Britain... when less than a quarter of a century later, an English collector-scholar would make the major collection of living balladry in America.

Cecil J. Sharp, coming from England in search of survivals of British traditional songs in the New World, found in the United States a living tradition of the "Child" ballads in isolated parts of the Southern Appalachians. And this only ten years after Sharp himself had nostalgically written, "The English ballad is moribund; its account is well nigh closed."

Since Sharp's initial forays into this area, many other ballad collectors have made notable finds in both this and other sections of the country rich in ballad tradition. Within twenty years of the initial publication of Sharp's Appalachian collection, American ballad hunters produced collections from almost every state of the Union as well as the Maritime Provinces of Canada. And this work has continued in the last 20 years, without a year going by that does not result in still more grist being added in an already well-stocked mill. Nor is the end in sight, for, while authorities have been proclaiming its death every few years since the turn of the century, the "Child" ballads persist in oral tradition and circulation in this country. Though it is true that conditions favoring such circulation have been vanishing rapidly, these ballads remain alive wherever they have the slightest chance, clinging tenaciously to the folk. And this, in itself, is perhaps the greatest commentary on the excellence, both textually and musically, of the British traditional ballad in America.

As a result of my own folksong collecting in the Southern mountains, New England, and Scotland, I have come to the conclusion (which is undoubtedly shared by other collectors as well) that a vital folksong tradition is dependent upon more than a great amorphous mass of "ordinary" folksingers. To be sure, they are an essential part of the picture. But far more important are those few highly gifted tradition bearers whom the "ordinary" folk themselves recognize as the best or great singers of their respective communities. These are the folk with the largest repertoires, the finest voices (in terms of a folk aesthetic), the most representative and engaging singing styles, and who are the greatest creative and re-creative singing personalities. These are the folk who are the major inspirational force in a singing community—it is their songs, their versions, and their style which are borrowed, copied, or imitated by their

10

friends, neighbors, and relatives. If folksong tradition is vanishing, it is mainly because there are far fewer of these "great" singers alive today than there were in past decades and centuries.

In Jean Ritchie, we have the personification of one of these "great" tradition bearers. The youngest number of the famous "Singing Ritchies of Kentucky," Jean is not only recognized as a highly talented singer in her own community but has also become the best known traditional singer in America. This is no mean feat in a nation where there is a sharp cleavage between the "natural" rural native and the "sophisticated" urbanite, the "real"-and-simple and the phony-and-brash, the relaxed-andunselfconscious and the affected-and-pretentious. That Jean has been widely proclaimed by audiences on both sides of the vast socio-psychological barrier is perhaps the finest testament to her "greatness" as a folksinger.

Hers is one of the largest repertories of any singer in America; her singing style is the finest representative of what may be broadly referred to as the "southern white mountain style"; and her performances, whether of ballads or songs, are enthralling. Today, when a collector finds someone who knows three or four Child ballads, he is apt to turn somersaults; to find as many as twenty in an entire state would be a major collecting experience. So, finding one singer who has that number in her repertory is a near-world-shaking occurrence. But Jean's repertory of these ballads is not to be congratulated merely for its size, for both her texts and tunes are superb examples of their kind. And in Jean's performance of them we are treated to one of the great experiences of ballad listening. We should be grateful for the invention and perfection of the tape recorder and long-playing phonograph record, for they give us an opportunity to bring this experience into our living-rooms; it is the next best thing to seeing her perform these ballads.

KENNETH S. GOLDSTEIN [1961]



THE BALLADS

1. gypsy laddie (Child #200)

Tradition has it that this ballad is connected to several historical characters of the 17th century, but there appears to be no factual support for such tales. In 1624, a well-known gypsy chieftain, Johnny Faa (mentioned in early versions of the ballad), was hanged. His execution appears to have made such a strong impression that the ballad tale was attributed to him. Towards the end of the century, a story circulated concerning the wife of the Earl of Cassilis who ran off with Sir John Faa, who came to the castle disguised as a gypsy. As the legend goes, the earl returned in time, went in pursuit, captured and hanged his wife's abductor. History has it otherwise; no such incident is known to have happened to any member of the Cassilis family. Nevertheless their names appear in many British versions of this ballad.

The ballad still exists widely in tradition in both Britain and America. T.P. Coffin indicates eight versional forms for the ballad as it exists in this country. The American versions have dropped several important features still found in Old World variants: no mention is made of the gypsies casting a spell over the lady, none of the gypsies are hanged or punished, and the names Faa and Cassilis are omitted.

Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her uncle Jason Ritchie, is closest to Coffin's type C version, in which the gypsy casts the lady off in the end. A more common ending for American versions of the ballad is for the lady to refuse to return to her husband and to ride away forever with her gypsy lover. For an unusual cowboy version of this ballad see "Clayton Boone" as sung by Harry Jackson in *The Cowboy:* His Songs, Ballads & Brag Talk (Folkways FH 5723).

2. false sir john (Child #4)

In the opening lines of his more than 40 pages of notes, analogues, and texts of this ballad (under the title "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight"), Child writes: "Of all ballads this has perhaps obtained the widest circulation. It is nearly as well known to the southern as to the northern nations of Europe." Undoubtedly as a result of such widespread tradition, the ballad has been subjected to extensive study with major contributions to its analysis having been made by scholars from several countries. The Norwegian scholar, Sophus Bugge, believed the ballad to be an off-shoot of the biblical story of Judith and Holofernes, but little weight need be given to this theory when one considers the frequency with which Bluebeard-type stories occur. In recent years, two highly detailed studies of this ballad have been made. In livar Kemppinen's "The Ballad of Lady Isabel and the False Knight" (Helsinki, 1954), the author comes to the conclusion that the ballad probably originated between 1100 and 1200, citing philological and musical evidences in support of his claims. And Holger Nygard's "The Ballad of Heer Halewijn" (FFC #169, Helsinki, 1958) gives an analysis of its forms and variations in Europe and its course of transmission through Western European countries.

In most recently collected variants of the ballad, both in Europe and America, the character of the antagonist has been changed from that of a supernatural being (an elf or demon) to a human creature—the ballad now concerns a totally human drama.

Of the five variant forms of the ballad as outlined by T.P. Coffin, Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her Uncle Jason, is closest to Coffin's story type A.

An indication of the popularity of this ballad in English-language tradition is the collection of the 141 texts with tunes published by B.H. Bronson. This number

can probably be doubled when the number of textual variants collected without tunes are considered.

3. hangman (Child #95)

This ballad, referred to by Child as "The Maid Freed from the Gallows," is a prime example of the use of incremental repetition as a ballad device. In that capacity, this ballad has served as a pawn for those scholars who followed the "communal" school theorizing about ballad origins.

A truly international ballad, it is known in most European countries in a much fuller form than that found in any of the English-speaking nations. British and American variants have reduced the ballad tale to the attempt by a prisoner to be saved by the intervention of various members of his or her family, with the wife or sweetheart finally coming to the rescue. In this form (and with the aid of the incremental device), the ballad has maintained a very firm framework upon which many interesting forces of variation have played. It has also been found as a folk drama, as a children's game, as a prose tale and as a cante-fable, and is one of the best known of the traditional ballads among African Americans and West Indians.

The original form of the ballad appears to have referred to the potential victim as a female, but most recently collected versions (as in this version of Jean Ritchie's, learned from her father) have a man awaiting execution. This version conforms with T.P. Coffin's story type C for American ballad versions. For a unique version of the ballad, in which the victim waits in vain for the usual rescue and is left by his sweetheart to be hung, see Harry Jackson's version in *The Cowboy: His Songs, Ballads and Brag Talk* (Folkways F-5723).

4. lord bateman (Child #53)

This is one of the most popular of the Child ballads and has circulated widely in England, Scotland, and America. Part of its textual popularity has undoubtedly been due to the frequency with which it appeared on broadsides and in songsters of the 19th century, and this also certainly explains the relative textual stability of both English and American versions.

Attempts have been made to indicate the ballad tale is derived from the legend of Gilbert 'a Becket, father of St. Thomas of Canterbury, who was supposed to have had an adventure similar to that of the ballad hero. Little credence has been given to this theory, though there is no doubt that the legend has indeed affected the ballad. In early Scottish texts, the hero's captors bore a hole through his shoulder and place a draw-tree through it so that he can be worked as a draught animal. This barbarous treatment has been modified in modern texts, and in Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her father, Bateman is simply chained to a tree, which, strangely enough, grows inside the prison.

5. the house carpenter (Child #243)

The versions of this ballad included by Child in his volumes appear under the title "James Harris or The Daemon Lover." In most versions collected in America (and practically every published collection includes one or more variants of "The House Carpenter"), any suggestion of the returning lover's supernatural or demonic character has been eliminated.

The Child A text of this ballad (a blackletter broadside from the Pepysian collection) is typical of the low order of composition turned out by the hack broadside

scriveners of the 17th century. It was Child's opinion that this broadside was the original or ancestor of the other variants of the ballad which he included in his corpus. If such was indeed the case, then we have an excellent example of what Barry termed "communal recreation," for in the course of oral circulation it has become one of the finest English-language ballads.

Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her father, is closest to the form of Coffin's story type B, in which some slight degree of the lover's demonic character is still evident from his ability to interpret the woman's vision of their destination, after the ship sinks.

6. lord thomas and fair ellender (Child #73)

Child thought that the Scottish version of this ballad which Percy included in his Reliques was "one of the most beautiful of our ballads, and indeed of all ballads." Child's evaluation of this ballad appears to have paralleled the tastes of the British and American folk, for it has proved to be one of the most popular of all ballads on both sides of the Atlantic.

The ballad tale involves the ever-popular literary cliché of the love triangle—but the tale ends rather gruesomely with the death of all three parties. Frequently, the ballad ends with the popular commonplace of the love-animated plants that spring from the graves of the dead lovers, a motif not found in Jean Ritchie's version.

Though the oldest known versions of this ballad were Scottish, American texts appear to stem not from any Scottish source but from a frequently printed 17th-century English broadside text. Jean's version was learned from her father.

7. the merry golden tree (Child #286)

The earliest known text to this favorite ballad is a broadside version from the Pepysian collection dating back to the last half of the 17th century. In that version, the villain-captain is Sir Walter Raleigh, but in later texts ballad singers have deleted all references to him. There seems to be no actual historical event, concerning Walter Raleigh or any other naval figure, to which this ballad is connected.

Details of the ballad vary greatly in the many versions collected since Child. Aside from the usual havoc wreaked by oral circulation on names and places, an unusual amount of variation exists in the emotional contents of the ballad's ending. In some versions, the cabin-boy hero is amply rewarded for his ship-wrecking activity, in others he is left to drown, or is pulled aboard too late and dies on deck. Some few texts end with the cabin-boy taking his revenge by returning in ghost form and sinking the ship.

Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her mother, corresponds to Coffin's story type A, certainly the most common form for the ballad in American tradition.

8. old bangum (Child #18)

Modern variants of this ballad show in gross detail the degree to which a ballad can degenerate with the passage of time. The original ballad, titled "Sir Lionel" by Child, was, in all probability, based on the courtly romance of "Sir Eglamour of Artois," though the ballad story has been so garbled that it is barely recognizable today. Its degeneration, perhaps through stage influences, has resulted in its current status as a comic burlesque, in which form it has survived more vigorously in the United States than in England. The changed mood is best illustrated by its various

nonsense refrains. Gone are the lady in distress and the cruel giant; all that remains of this tale of medieval pagentry is a fight between a knight and a boar, and, in some versions, an involvement with a wild woman.

Jean Ritchie's version, rather typical of the American forms of the ballad in modern tradition, was learned from her mother's cousin, Ellen Fields.

9. barbary allen (Child #84)

In his diary entry for January 2, 1666, Samuel Pepys wrote, "In perfect pleasure I was to hear her (Mrs. Knipp, an actress) sing, and especially her little Scotch song of Barbary Allen." Many others have shared his "perfect pleasure" since Pepys' days, for "Barbary Allen" is certainly the best known and most widely sung of the Child ballads.

The consistency of the basic outline of the ballad story and the amazing number of texts which have been reported on both sides of the ocean is no doubt due, in large part, to the numerous songster, chapbook, and broadside printings of the ballad in the l9th century. A widespread oral tradition has, however, left its mark, for no ballad shows, in its different variants, so many minor variations.

It is interesting to note that while the heroine's name has remained constant in almost every known version an both sides of the ocean (undoubtedly due to its frequent use as a rhyme word throughout the ballad), the dying lover's name varies greatly except in Scotland, where it has almost always been John Graeme.

Jean Ritchie's family sings this ballad to two different tunes, with the texts differing only slightly.

erates in service brainingues in when deep is her produces at more viscound with the Cash different data in Legibard. The Protect protect is react planeters for the sugress

20

10. the unquiet grave (Child #78)

It is possible that this is only a fragment of a once longer popular ballad, for it contains lines very reminiscent of stanzas in several other Child ballads, including "Sweet William's Ghost" (Child #77) and "The Two Brothers" (Child # 49). Child preferred to believe that the ballad as it has come down to us is an imperfect survival and states that "Even such as it is... this fragment has a character of its own."

The ballad is extremely widespread in England and was known in the 19th century in Scotland, but it has rarely been reported in America. Fewer than a half dozen texts have been reported in this hemisphere.

Jean Ritchie's Kentucky version, learned from her Uncle Jason, is almost identical (with a few minor verbal variations) with Child's A text. It is notable for its exhibition of several universal popular beliefs, including a talking ghost, the idea that excessive grief on the part of mourners disturbs the peace of the dead, the trothplight that binds lovers even after death (with the death-kiss perhaps indicating a return of the troth), and the belief that the kiss of a dead person may result in death. Jean Ritchie's version, truly exquisite as to both its poetry and music, is a valuable addition to our recorded ballad lore.

11. sweet william and lady margaret (Child #74)

This ballad traces back to at least the beginning of the 17th century, for two stanzas from it are quoted in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle" (ca. 1611). By the end of the 18th century, it had been printed frequently as a broadside or stall ballad, which may account for its popularity in tradition. Similarly, in America, where it has been collected frequently in versions quite far removed from

the Child texts, frequent printings in early popular songsters may have accounted for its widespread distribution.

Like "The Unquiet Grave," this ballad is a rich repository of popular superstitious beliefs: in it we find ghostly visitants, gruesome dream omens, the death kiss, and the continuity of love after death in the rose-and-brier motif.

Jean's version, learned from Justis Begley of Hazard, Kentucky, corresponds closely to Coffin's story type A.

12. there lived an old lord (Child #10)

One of the most widely distributed of all British traditional ballads, "The Two Sisters" (as Child titled it) has proved excellent material for detailed study. Of the 27 texts published by Child, the earliest is a broadside dating from the middle of the 17th century, though it may have been sung in Britain at an earlier date.

In an extensive study of the ballad ("The Two Sisters," FFC #147, Helsinki, 1953), Paul G. Brewster comes to the conclusion that it is definitely Scandinavian in origin. Starting in Norway prior to the 17th century, the ballad spread from there to other Scandinavian countries, and then to Scotland and England. Archer Taylor has made a strong case for his belief that American versions of the ballad derive from English rather than Scotlish tradition. Child considered the heart of the ballad to be the making of a musical instrument from the drowned sister's body, the instrument in turn revealing the identity of her murderer. Most recently collected texts have entirely eliminated this supernatural motif. Despite the loss of this motif (or perhaps because of the loss of such an intriguing element of the ballad tale), and the resultant simplification of the narrative, this ballad has been collected with a greater number of story variations than any Child ballad found in America; Coffin lists 14 story

types. Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her sister Una, corresponds to Coffin's story type A, certainly the most common of the American forms of the ballad tale.

13. cherry tree carol (Child #54)

This is surely the most popular of English religious folk ballads. The ballad tale is derived from the Pseudo-Matthew's gospel, Chapter XX, and, in medieval times, was frequently dramatized in folk plays and pageants, as, for example, the mystery pageant annually produced by the Grey Friars at Coventry.

In the pseudo-gospel, the tree which bows to Mary is a palm; as Child has noted: "The truly popular carol would be sure to adapt the fruit to its own soil," and so in England and America the tree is always a cherry.

A feature found in American texts, but unknown to English versions, is the matter of Jesus's birthday. As Sharp has pointed out, the date usually given is old Christmas day, that is, January 5, 6, or 7, according to one period or another of calendar revision: from 1752 to 1799, Old Christmas was January 5; in 1800, a day was dropped, making it January 6; and finally, in 1900, another day was dropped, making it January 7. We might deduce from this that Jean Ritchie's version, mentioning "the sixth day of January," is traceable to a 19th century text.

The ballad is still widely sung in England and America and has been collected in Scotland as well. The texts in most cases are very similar, having been standardized in tradition by its many appearances in popular print (it was frequently published in penny carol books and on broadsheets during the 19th century).

Jean's version was learned from the singing of her Uncle Jason.

14. edward (Child #13)

The high esteem in which Child held this ballad is stated in his introductory notes: "Edward... has ever been regarded as one of the noblest and most sterling specimens of the popular ballad." Such praise is certainly deserved, for the ballad, employing throughout a simple dialogue device, builds to a climactic emotional peak perhaps unsurpassed in any other Child ballad. "Edward" is known throughout the Northern European countries, its dialogue form being maintained in every instance. Since Child's time most reported texts do not implicate the mother in the crime, which in almost every case is fratricide (rather than patricide as in the Child B text). In his full length study of the ballad ("Edward and Sven I Rosengård," Chicago, 1931), Archer Taylor concludes that the fratricide factor relates recent findings to the earliest British texts, from which the Scandinavian forms of the ballad stem.

The excellence of the ballad has resulted in an attack being made upon its traditional character by a number of scholars who point out that Percy's version (Child A text) is most assuredly a consciously artistic rather than folk creation. The wide collection of this sterling ballad from authentic oral tradition in recent years should serve to answer the critics; Percy's text not withstanding, the ballad is certainly a gem of tradition.

The ballad has been collected rather frequently in America. Until the 1950s, it had been unreported in Britain for over a century; two excellent versions were collected in Aberdeenshire, including "Son David," sung by Jeannie Robertson, and published by Bronson. An English version from Hampshire was reported in 1938.

Jean Ritchie's version, learned from her sisters Patty, Edna, Una, and May (who first learned it at the Hindman Settlement School), is similar to most versions collected in the Southern Appalachians, differing only in the omission of any stated reason for the commission of the crime, which would normally appear after stanza 3.

15. lord randall (Child #12)

One of the mostly widely circulated of popular ballads, "Lord Randall" or its foreign analogues is well known throughout Europe, having been reported from both the Northern countries and Italy as well as in Eastern Europe. The ballad story remains fairly constant: treachery is revealed by means of a dialogue between a mother and her son, the ballad ending with the son bequeathing various items to his relative and poisoner.

An Italian counterpart, "L'Avvelenato," was first reported in print early in the 17th century, the earliest English-language text appearing at the end of the 18th century. Still very much alive in oral tradition in both Britain and America, it has been subjected to much study, mostly concerning the name of the hero, which varies greatly from version to version. In America, the hero's noble title is frequently dropped and replaced with a common first name.

Its great popularity, almost totally unaided by songster or broadside printings, is undoubtedly due to the art and compactness of the ballad; as Coffin has commented (in Flanders, p. 175): "With its incremental repetition, its dialogue and testament, and its popularity, it makes the model folk song."

Jean's version, learned from her Uncle Jason, is similar to many of the versions collected in the Southern Appalachians.



The earliest appearance in print of this ancient ballad was in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle" (ca. 1611). It appears to have been published rather frequently in 17th- and 18th-century England in various drolleries and

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

on broadsides, and though popular in British tradition in the 19th century, it has not been reported in England or Scotland in the 20th century.

In America, however, the ballad has frequently been reported from every section of the country in a tradition which has had little or no recourse to print. Phillips Barry was of the opinion that the American texts of this ballad, being more vivid and incisive than Child's British versions, were probably older and that the ballad has been sung in this country for over 300 years.

American variants show certain traits in common with each other that either do not appear or appear only rarely in British variants. The lady is never as aggressive in English texts as in American. The expression "they cost me deep in the purse" (when the lord is telling of his two swords) appears only in one of Child's texts, though it appears almost universally in American texts (but not in Jean Ritchie's version). The attempt to bribe the page and the suggestion of a past affair between the bedmates appear nowhere in America though found frequently in Child's texts.

Jean's version, learned from her Uncle Jason, appears to be a fascinating Kentucky reworking of one of the oldest British texts, for it follows Child's A text (from two 17th-century English drolleries) very closely. Even the odd place name "Bucklesfordberry" is retained in the Kentucky text nearly 300 years after it first turns up in Britain: But there is no doubt about the traditional nature of Uncle Jason's text, for almost every line contains the changes, emendations, and additions of a vital oral tradition. The original notes to the ballads on the two Folkways recordings included selected references to major ballad collections for additional texts and tunes. Ballad scholarship since 1961 has flourished such that there is not the space here to include all the references. Moreover, the World Wide Web provides access to several indexes to ballad and folksong sources, in particular the Traditional Ballad Index, compiled and edited by Robert B. Waltz and David G. Engle. It is available at: http://www.csufresno.edu/folklore/BalladIndexTOC.html and indexes both printed and recorded sources for ballads. The Folk Music Index compiled and maintained by Jane Keefer indexes recorded sources, at: http://www.ibiblio.org/folkindex/index.htm. See also: http://www.heritagemuse.com.

The essential printed sources for versions of the Child ballads sung on this recording by Jean Ritchie are as follows.

Bronson, Bertrand Harris. 1959–1972. The Traditional Tunes of The Child Ballads, 5 vols., Princeton, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Child, Francis James. [1882–1898] 1956, 1965. The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, 5 vols., New York: Reprinted by The Folklore Press and Dover Publications.

Coffin, Tristram Potter. [1950] 1963, 1977. The British Traditional Ballad in North America. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society; Austin: University of Texas Press.

And the state of the second second

CREDITS

DISCOGRAPHY

Jean Ritchie (on Smithsonian Folkways)

The Appalachian Dulcimer: An Instructional Record (1964) F-8352
Children's Songs and Games from the Southern Mountains (1957) F-7054
A Folk Concert in Town Hall, New York Jean Ritchie, Oscar Brand, David Sear (1959) F-2428
Jean Ritchie and Doc Watson at Folk City (1990) Reissue of F-2426 from 1963 with additional music. SFW CD-40005

Marching Across the Green Grass and Other American Children's Game Songs (1968) F-7702 Precious Memories (1962) F-2427

The Ritchie Family of Kentucky (1958) F-2316

Other Recordings by Jean Ritchie (available at www.jeanritchie.com) Carols for All Seasons (1959) Tradition Childhood Songs (1997) Greenhays Field Trip (1954) Greenhays Kentucky Christmas, Old and New (1997) Greenhays Mountain Born (1996) Greenhays The Most Dulcimer (1992) Greenhays None But One (1977) Greenhays

For further information about Jean Ritchie, her tour schedule, to buy CDs and/ or instruments, please visit her homepage at http://www.jeanritchie.com. Originally compiled, produced, and annotated by Kenneth S. Goldstein for Folkways Records in 1961 Additional reissue notes and updates by Jean Ritchie and Stephanie Smith Reissue mastered by Pete Reiniger Reissue production supervised by Daniel Sheehy and D.A. Sonneborn Reissue production managed by Pete Reiniger and Mary Monseur Edited by Peter Seitel Design by Sonya Cohen Cramer, Takoma Park, MD Photos by George Pickow

Additional Smithsonian Folkways staff: Judy Barlas, manufacturing coordinator; Carla Borden, editing; Richard Burgess, marketing director; Lee Michael Demsey, fulfillment; Betty Derbyshire, financial operations manager; Mark Gustafson, marketing; Sharleen Kavetski, mail order manager; Helen Lindsay, customer service; Margot Nassau, licensing and royalties; John Passmore, fulfillment; Jeff Place, archivist; Ronnie Simpkins, audio specialist; John Smith, marketing and radio promotions; Stephanie Smith, archivist; Norman van der Sluys, audio-engineering assistant.

Special thanks to David Gahr and Jon Pickow



About Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

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 by special order on high-quality audio cassettes or CDs. Each recording includes 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, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, Monitor, and Paredon 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, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, Monitor, and Paredon recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Mail Order 750 9th Street, NW, Suite 4100, / Washington, DC 20560-0953 phone 1 (800) 410-9815 (orders only) / fax 1 (800)853-9511 (orders only) (Discover, MasterCard, Visa, and American Express accepted)

For further information about all the labels distributed through the center, please consult our Internet site (www.folkways.si.edu), 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). To request a printed catalogue write to the address above or e-mail **folkways@aol.com**.





Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage | 750 9th Street, NW | Suite 4100 Smithsonian Institution | Washington DC 20560-0953 | www.folkways.si.edu SFW CD 40145 (P) (C) 2003 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings