



Pete Seeger
AMERICAN FAVORITE BALLADS



Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

vol. **4**

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AMERICAN FAVORITE BALLADS



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PETE SEEGER AND FOLKWAYS RECORDS
JEFF PLACE, 2006

The 1950s and early 1960s were a prolific time for Pete Seeger and Folkways Records. Seeger recorded and released 38 albums for Folkways between 1950 and 1964. His five-record series *American Favorite Ballads* (1957–1962) became a cornerstone in his work with Folkways and presented great American songs known by children growing up in America during the 20th century. These songs were sung in schools and around campfires, many having their roots in the mid and late 19th century.

Issued during the height of the folk revival, this series was essential for students to learn folk songs and expand their repertoire. As the 21st century begins we are reissuing the complete series for current generations of folk song enthusiasts. It will include 5 CDs, containing all of the *American Favorite Ballads* series along with selections from other Seeger material on Folkways (like *Frontier Ballads* [1954] and *American Ballads* [1957]). This CD contains primarily material from the original issues of *American Favorite Ballads*, Vols. 4 and 5 (FW 2323 and 2445). Guy Logsdon continues his five-part biography of Pete Seeger in the following section.

INTRODUCTION
GUY LOGSDON AND JEFF PLACE, 2006

Pete Seeger's *American Favorite Ballads* series was and is an amazing collection of songs known, performed, and recorded within a short period of time, 1957 to 1962. As narrated in previous volumes, during those years Pete defended himself from attacks by the House Un-American Activities Committee, Senator Joseph McCarthy, right-wing political activists, and others who opposed his right as a citizen of the United States to express his beliefs. He verbalized personal convictions with clear and honest statements and with songs that expressed traditional and/or historical activities and attitudes. He spoke and sang about his faith in the Constitution of the United States, a document written by liberal leaders of the day, and he spoke and sang words that enraged those who had less faith, belief, and confidence in freedom of speech.

Starting in the late 1960s, Pete and Toshi Seeger began to involve themselves in environmental concerns, and they led a campaign to clean up the Hudson River (for more details, see the liner notes to SFW 40152). With their sloop, *The Clearwater*, Pete and others traveled up and down the Hudson River performing concerts along the way. Pete has always shown a love and keen interest in his home area of New York State. He recorded two records for Folkways in which he sang ballads and historical songs of the region. These "American" ballads are not included in this series, but they can be acquired separately.

In 1960, Folkways released Pete's *Champlain Valley Songs*, with notes by folklorist Kenneth Goldstein and local New York historian Marjorie Lansing Porter. The record included songs collected in the field by Porter from local residents, including Seneca Indians and French Canadian settlers and interpreted by Pete. In 1976, he worked with Ed Renehan to release another collection, *Fifty Sail on Newburgh Bay and Other Songs of the Hudson River*. The set chronicles the history of songs from the region—from those of the native peoples to historical ballads. The complete liner notes for both

of these recordings can be downloaded from www.smithsonianglobalsound.org.

At the same time as he recorded his collections of “ballads” for the adult market, Pete was recording important American children’s songs for Folkways. In some cases, they were the same songs. Pete has not been just a folksong singer and folk-music entertainer: he has been a teacher and an educator. America’s favorite traditional songs, along with songs written by him and presented in his contemporary style, were enjoyed by folks of all ages; additionally, he taught listeners new songs from around the world and how to sing and enjoy them. He performed and recorded songs directed specifically to young listeners that were also enjoyed by parents. His constantly positive attitude and qualities as an entertainer and human being made it necessary for him to share his songs and stories with young people.

Among the records Folkways released during this period were the album *American Folk Songs for Children* (Folkways Records FP 701), issued in 1953. The songs were selected from *American Folk Songs for Children: In Home, School and Nursery School* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1948) and *Animal Folk Songs for Children: Traditional American Songs* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1950), written by his stepmother, Ruth Crawford Seeger.

A similar collection was issued in 1962 under the title *American Game and Activity Songs for Children*. It primarily included play-party songs, with instructions about how to dance or “play” some of the items. Both *American Folk Songs for Children* and *American Game and Activity Songs for Children* were reissued as CDs by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings in 2000 with the title *Pete Seeger: American Folk, Game & Activity Songs for Children* (SFW CD 45056).

In 1955, *Birds, Beasts, Bugs & Little Fishes: Animal Folk Songs* (Folkways 710) was released and dedicated to Ruth Crawford Seeger, who had died in late 1953. Pete included suggested line drawings for the various animals and birds, and told how and why he used them, one line at a time, to encourage group participation. Then in 1956 *Birds, Beasts, Bugs & Bigger Fishes: Animal Folk Songs* (Folkways 711) was issued. Both albums were reissued by Smithsonian Folkways in 1998 on CD as *Birds, Beasts, Bugs & Fishes Little & Big: Animal Songs*.

Other collections for children followed, containing traditional songs, songs written by Pete, and story songs by Pete. *Sleep-Time Songs & Stories* (Folkways F 7525) was issued in 1958 and reissued as *Pete Seeger: Abeyoyo and Other Story Songs for Children* in 1989 by Smithsonian Folkways (SFW CD 45001). The title song, “Abeyoyo” (later changed to “Abiyoyo”), was a South African folktale and lullaby adapted by Pete; it became a classic story song that remains popular as a recording and as a children’s book. In 1960, Pete recorded more songs for children of all ages issued as *Song and Play*

Time (Folkways FC 7526); the songs were either well known at that time or became well known because of Pete’s concerts and recordings.

Without doubt, no other individual in history has lifted his or her voice to the millions of people—all ages, all religions, all ethnic groups, all nations—as has Pete Seeger, and he has always led into *singing-together songs*, especially “seeing-eye-to-eye songs,” which express a variety of beliefs from around the world. Pete has brought voices together to sing belief in the human race and has sought to bring all humans and all nature together in peace and harmony, no matter what the discords, disputes, or variations may be. His performances on Folkways, now Smithsonian Folkways, reflect his dedication to and love for all humankind. His willingness to forgive is the reflection of one who believes in all of us.

In his “Introductory Notes” to *With Voices Together We Sing*, Pete stated that most people in the audience were “teen-agers and young adults” and that most folks remember “the warm and exciting feeling of a mass of people singing together.” He continued with most of us can remember “when a song leader, out of tune with the audience, tried unsuccessfully to get a group to loosen up and sing.” Pete then proceeds with steps to take and what not to do to inspire a group to sing along with the leader, such as: “Too much talk is the death of the spirit of music. . . . Rhythm and pacing are the most important things. . . . Pitch a song in a key everyone can sing. . . . Keep the tempo.” Since Pete is the greatest singer and leader of traditional music, it would be wise for those who aspire to perpetuate folk-music traditions to read his “Introductory Notes” to this album over and over again.

The 1980s started well for Pete and Toshi, for Pete was booked on 11 January 1980 to give a concert at Harvard. In his “Introduction” to the annotations for the album *Pete Seeger: Singalong; Demonstration Concert* (Folkways FXM 36055; reissued SFW CD 40027/8) he explained:

Before my voice, memory, and sense of rhythm and pitch were too far gone, I decided, at age sixty, to ask Folkways Records to document one of my two-hour “concerts” such as I have given for over twenty-five years, usually at colleges. They are not concerts so much as singalongs. My main purpose is to show people how good it is to sing together.

This live recording highlights Pete’s dedication to the value of singing—singing together. For those who love and respect the sounds of group singing but have not experienced the beauty, happiness, and charisma of Pete Seeger, this collection is essential.

A longer version of these liner notes, with more background on Pete Seeger’s children’s recordings, is available on the Smithsonian Folkways website. Additional information about Pete and Toshi in the 1980s up to the 2006 era will be in volume 5.

THE SONGS
GUY LOGSDON AND JEFF PLACE

1. BANKS OF THE OHIO

Pete Seeger, vocal and 12-string guitar (Also known as "The Banks of the O. B. D.," "Down Beside the Ohio," "Down on the Banks of the Ohio," "Miss Julie," and others; traditional; Laws F5; from *Folkways* 2323, 1961)

Murder was and is a common folk-ballad topic. It appears so often that the murder ballad is a genre in many ballad and folksong books, and many movies and television shows use murder as a theme. In short, murder remains interesting. This ballad is native to the United States, but it is distinctly related to murder ballads from other countries. Perhaps murder is popular around the world! It portrays a young man who murders "the only woman I love, because she would not be my bride." The reason for the bride's rejection is not always stated, but the concept that the sanity of a sick person, even lovesickness, justifies murder remains constant until after the crime. The afterthought is usually a rationalization and an apology for the murder. There were and are many murder

ballads and stories, but no matter the reason or justification, the murder remains a crime.

Between 1927 and 1937, this ballad was recorded by eleven singers, some with backup musicians, and since then many recordings have been made; it is in many songbooks, but very little research into its origin and development exists. See *Brunnings* 1981:21; *Laws* 1964:154; *Sing Out!* 7 (Winter 1958) 4:3; *Meade* 2002:42.

2. YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (From *Folkways* 2323)

This song is credited to Jimmie Davis, who recorded country songs and blues for Victor as early as 1929. His last recording session for Victor was in 1933; he then moved to Decca Records with his first session in September 1934, and recorded "You Are My Sunshine" on 5 February 1940, accompanied by the Charles Mitchell Orchestra, also known as Charles Mitchell & His Texans. The song was actually

recorded by the Rice Brothers' Gang in September 1939, but the Davis recording became a great hit, with eventually 350 artists recording it, including Bing Crosby, Gene Autry, and Ray Charles. Davis was twice elected Governor of Louisiana, capitalizing on his and the song's popularity. Pete's inclusion of this song was and is appropriate, for it remains a popular and excellent song for group singing. See *Brunnings* 1981:354; *Ginell* 1989:168, 239; *Kingsbury* 1998:136; *Weill* 1977.

3. HALLELUJAH, I'M A BUM

Pete Seeger, vocal and 12-string guitar (Also known as "Hallelujah, Bum Again" and "Hallelujah on the Bum"; from *Folkways* 2445, 1962)

For many years, "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" circulated as a folksong with no known authorship. By 31 March 1928, when Harry ("Haywire Mac") McClintock made the first recording of the song for Victor Records, it had been sung by many folks from all walks of life, broadcasted over radios, printed on sheet music, and altered by numerous changes to the verses, along with new verses. It was a popular song of the day, and many were making money publishing and singing it. McClintock decided to claim its authorship.

As a young person in Nashville, Tennessee, he had learned the revival song "Revive Us Again," sometimes known as "Hallelujah! Thine the Glory." He became a hobo—at time, the term

for a migratory worker. While riding in railroad boxcars in the 1890s, he started writing new verses or parodies to the gospel song and sang them to others in the boxcars and along the roads. In the early 1900s, he became a member of the I. W. W. (Industrial Workers of the World), and by 1909 songs were printed and circulated as Wobbly songs—"Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" was one of them. Many recordings and published versions give him credit for "words" and "music," but he did not compose the music.

John Jenkins Husband was born in England around 1760. He moved to the United States in 1809 and settled in Philadelphia, where he taught music and became a church leader. The exact date of the composition of the tune, other than during the early 1800s, is not known. A wide variety of individuals wrote lyrics for his melody, but it was many years later when the Rev. William Paton Mackay wrote the words that became the standard: "Hallelujah! Thine the glory; revive us again." Credits cited in gospel songbooks are "Husband" and "Mackay."

McClintock became a unique figure in the history of traditional songs, for he recorded many cowboy songs for Victor and had his own radio show in San Francisco. In 1981, an interesting and informative booklet, "Haywire Mac" and "The Big Rock Candy Mountain," by Henry Young, was published by the Stillhouse Hollow Publishers, but no place of publication was printed. Young was a retired Santa Fe Railway

locomotive engineer who used many railroad photos and information as well as telling Haywire Mac's story. See: Brown and Butterworth 1906:416–417; Brunnings 1981:118; Fowke & Glazer 1973:126–127; Greenway 1953:197–204; Kornbluh 1968:71–72; Meade 2002:312; Milburn 1930:98–101.

4. THE FOGGY DEW

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "The Foggy, Foggy Dew" and "The Bugaboo"; traditional; Laws O 3; from Folkways 2445, 1962)

There are different versions of this controversial ballad, but most tell the same basic story. The narrator works at "the weaver's trade" or "the ramblin' trade"; he courts or protects "a fair young maid" and sleeps with her to "keep her from the foggy, foggy dew" or "the bugaboo." In bowdlerized versions, they are married; in less chaste versions, they make love and live together. Why they sleep together makes no difference, for a son is born. Every time he looks into her eyes or his son's eyes, he remembers "the foggy dew." Her reason for fearing "the foggy dew" or "the bugaboo" varies among folk musicologists and folksingers. The "foggy dew" represents virginity, and the "bugaboo" is the devil or a legendary demon. It was a British broadside dating to the late 1600s.

This ballad enjoys origin-controversy, as well as melodic and lyric variations. A. L. Lloyd supplied an interesting variant and wrote about the origin of some of the words in his *Folk Song*

in *England*. His ballad starts, "When I was in my prenticeship and learning my trade, I courted my master's daughter"; she rejected him until he paid a friend to dress like a "Bogle bo" or "ghost" and scare her into his bed. When they awaken, she realizes what has happened and agrees to marry him; he is happy and vows never to tell her about "the joke."

Alan Lomax in *Folk Songs of North America* included two variants: "East Anglian version" and "The Midwestern Sandburg version." His East Anglian version is from "the English region where it has been most often recorded," and his Sandburg "somewhat censored form" was spread by popular folk-music entertainers. He wrote that "we shall never know precisely how the 'The Foggy Dew' got from East Anglia to the Middle West. . . . The likelihood is that this rather bawdy ditty was not carried by prudish New Englanders, but by English settlers who came to America during the Ohio land boom." Bradley Kincaid, a Southern singer, recorded "Foggy Dew" for Decca in 1934.

On 24 April 1916, in Dublin, Ireland, there was a rebellion against British control, known as the Easter Rebellion; it resulted in much destruction and many deaths. Using the melody of "The Foggy Dew," the lyrics were changed to reflect the anguish felt by the Irish over their lost brothers: "But to and fro in my dreams I go, and I kneel and pray for you; For slavery fled, oh, Rebel dead, when you fell in the foggy dew."

It is known as the "Easter Rebellion Song," and on the internet as "A Terrible Beauty—Dublin, Easter 1916." See Brunnings 1981:97–98; Laws 1957:227–228; Lloyd 1967:59, 213–214; A. Lomax 1960:77–78, 89–90; Meade 2002:10; Sandburg 1927:14–15; Sharp 1932:2:174; *The Collected Reprints from Sing Out!* 1990:22–23.

5. MOLLY MALONE

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "Cockles and Mussels" and "In Dublin's Fair City"; traditional; from Folkways 2445, 1962)

There has been a general belief that this ballad has been known and sung for more than three centuries in many different cultures; however, it is not three hundred years old. It is not in any of the collections of Irish traditional songs, or in any field collected collections, and current documentation shows that it first appeared in print in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1883. The following year, it was published in London as a comic song written by James Yorkston of Scotland. It may have been published earlier in Scotland (see "Irish Historical Mysteries: Molly Malone" on the internet at <http://homepage.tinet.ie/~seanjmurphy/irhismys/molly.htm>).

No matter its age, it did become very popular, for it carries the traits of traditional ballads. It can be considered traditional, for it has been sung by many and recorded by a wide variety of singers. The setting is in the first line: "In Dublin's fair city," and through the years Dublin has not been replaced by any other city. In fact,

it has become "the unofficial anthem of Dublin." It apparently became popular among many who participate in pub or tavern activities, for on the internet there are numerous "Molly Malone" pub, tavern, and/or restaurant webpages—in Dublin, Ireland; Prague, Czech Republic; Limassol, Cyprus; Singapore; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; numerous other sites in the United States, as well as other towns and cities around the world—and there are "Molly Malone" gift shops.

Burl Ives recorded it and included it in *Burl Ives: Irish Songs*. Boni's *Fireside Book of Folk Songs* lists it as an Irish folksong. It has been published in many other 20th-century folksong collections. Indeed, cockles and mussels were gathered and sold by many folks, and there were probably many "Molly" girls, as "Molly" is merely a nickname for "Mary." Some of the interested folks, past and present, believe that Molly worked another trade at night. Nevertheless, it is ironic that a song written by a Scotsman has become identified as an Irish folksong. When you hear Pete's recording of "Molly Malone," its beauty overpowers speculation about age, origin, and occupations. See Boni 1947:22–23; Brunnings 1981:205, 56; Ives 1958:22–23.

6. OLD MAID'S SONG

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "Take Me Out of Pity," "Don't Let Me Die an Old Maid," "The Black Chimney Sweeper," and many more; traditional; previously unissued; from Archive reel FW-3358 (CDR 244))

This song has not only a variety of titles, but also a variety of versions; however, the theme is always the old maid wanting to marry. Where and when Pete learned his previously unissued version is not documented, but Peggy Seeger recorded it for Folkways in 1955, as issued on *Songs of Courting and Complaint* (Folkways 2049). In *Sing Out!* (11 [February-March 1961] 1:38), Peggy's version, basically the same as Pete's, was printed with the introductory statement from Norman Cazden's *The Abelard Folk Song Book* that the old maid was a young lady, not a middle-aged woman, and that the song was sung for humor. According to John Renfro Davis ("Old Maid in the Garret," www.contemplator.com/england/oldmaid.html) its origin might be dated to mid-1636 as a London broadside; he states that the Irish version, "The Black Chimney Sweeper," says that a chimney sweep marries the old maid out of pity. No doubt it traveled many miles during numerous decades, and it possibly reached the United States in the early 1800s. The Seeger version is the American version.

There is an interesting website for "The Old Maid's Society" which is "for the determined old maid, the sweet spinster, the 'unclaimed treasures', and for anyone wanting to get a laugh at

us as well." It carries interesting quotes, such as "Men mature well underground," and there are sections that, indeed, reflect much humor: "Old Maid's Poetry," "Old Maid's Songs," "Old Maid's Quips," "The Christian Single Sister's Society," "Featured Portraits of Old Maids," and "For You Poor Bachelors." "The Old Maid's Song" is in the song section. See Brunnings 1981:232; <http://ylcf.org/old-maids>.

7. OH, HOW HE LIED

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "The Deceiver," "He Told Her He Loved Her," and "The Villain and the Maiden"; traditional; from Folkways 2323, 1961)

There was a time in many religious homes when to tell a lie was an unforgivable sin, and to call a person a liar was a greater sin, even if that person had earned the title. There are probably many people who continue to believe this rule, but with so many lies told in modern society by individuals who seek power and/or wealth, it is difficult to believe that this rule has the control over lives that it once had. The "villain" of this story certainly should be called a liar, for he "told her he loved her"—he lied. In some versions, she played the guitar while he smoked a cigar and told him she loved him—she did not lie. To go to a funeral "just for the ride" was and is an unforgivable venture, but it was the lie that sent him to be "frizzled and fried" while "she went to heaven." He was, indeed, the unforgivable sinner. The origin and villain of this song can be adapted to

all parts of any nation; Dick and Beth Best placed it in their songbook as a college song. See Best 1955:69; Brunnings 1981:228, 271.

8. WHERE THE OLD ALLEGHENY AND THE MONONGAHELA FLOW

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Traditional; from Folkways 2323, 1961)

The Allegheny and Monongahela rivers meet in Pittsburgh at the Point State Park area and there form the Ohio River. For *Pennsylvania Songs and Legends*, edited by George Korson, Jacob A. Evanson, formerly a music teacher in Pittsburgh, compiled the songs in the chapter "Folk Songs of an Industrial City," basically songs from the steel industry in Pittsburgh. His version was sung in 1947 by J. J. Manners, who told him he had composed the verse, but that in 1942 another man had composed the chorus. Another informant told that he had learned it in 1910 while in a quartet, and another related that it was a favorite sung by the Smokey City (Pittsburgh) Quartet. Pete's rendition is only the chorus, not the verse, as notated by Evanson. See Brunnings 1981:343; Korson 1949:434-435.

9. LEATHERWING BAT

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "The Bird Song," "The Birds' Courting Song," "The Birds' Conversation," and others; traditional; from Folkways 2445, 1962)

In his *How to Play the 5-String Banjo*, Pete wrote, "Here is a favorite song of mine." He provided the first verse and chorus, and then direct-

ed the reader to *Best Loved American Folk Songs* (the second printing of *Folk Song U. S. A.*) by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax. The fourth song in their opening chapter, "Critters and Chillun'," is "Leatherwing Bat." In their explication they state, "people who live and work close to animals and depend directly upon them for food and for helpful work, the folk endow them with human characteristics, including the power of speech." Until modern times, tales of talking animals were not rare. After relating an ex-slave's story of barnyard fowls telling tales about the Civil War, they continue with "there is no reason to believe that the pretty birds of the woods cannot chatter about love." They close with "there are more pretty girls than one' has been said in every language, but nowhere more merrily and more fitly than by the leatherwing bat and his friends." See Brunnings 1981:175; Lomax 1947:5, 18-19; Seeger 1962:28.

10. JOHNNY HAS GONE FOR A SOLDIER

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "Shule Aroon," "Shule Agrah," "Buttermilk Hill," and many more; traditional; from Folkways 2323, 1961)

This song enjoyed popularity for many decades in the United States. It is believed to have stemmed from the traditional Irish song "Shule Agah," which dates back to the late 1600s. There is no doubt that it was taken across the Atlantic by many immigrants and that it became an Americanized song. Russell Ames wrote, and it

still is true, “No matter how patriotic the soldier, there was always the sorrow of parting from home and loved ones.” He added that this song was likely “the most beautiful song sung by Washington’s men”; others have written that it gained great popularity during the Revolutionary War, and Burl Ives described it as “an anonymous American song popular with the colonials.”

Alan Lomax explained that when an Irish immigrant landed on American soil, he or she was happy immediately to become an American and that a high percentage of the colonial army were of Irish descent. He wrote that the Irish meaning of *shule agra* is “come with me, my love,” and that in 1691 after the Treaty of Limerick, young Irishmen went to France to fight; the girl left behind “dyes her petticoat red to show that she is engaged and loyal to her absent Johnny.” It has been adapted into various musical settings, printed in numerous folksong books, and collected in many states. The basic theme, “Here I sit and cry my fill,” applies to all wars. See Ames 1955:39; Brunnings 1981:160; A. Lomax 1960:34–35, 47–48.

11. FARTHER ALONG

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Traditional; from Folkways 2445, 1962)

This song appeared in *Sing Out!* (6 [Winter 1957] 4:3) as a “Southern gospel hymn” with the credit “Words and music adapted from W. P. Jay.” In *The Bells of Rhymney and Other Songs and*

Stories from the Singing of Pete Seeger, Pete wrote “I coupled one of my favorite hymns with a sequel written to it years ago by Woody Guthrie”; the song written by Woody is “I’ve Got to Know.” The credit given is the same as in *Sing Out!*; however, others have claimed credit. Virgil O. Stamps’s *Radio Song Album* (Dallas, Texas: Stamps-Baxter Music Co., 1937, no. 165) gave credit to the Rev. W. B. Stevens as the source for the words and the music with “arrangement by J. R. Baxter, Jr.” and “copyright, 1937, Stamps-Baxter Music Company.” One of the “Farther Along” internet entries (http://library.timeless-truths.org/music/Farther_Along/) states that it was published as early as 1911, credited to “Anonymous.” It has been recorded by numerous singers in several musical genres. It is another example of the diversity of Pete’s material. See Brunnings 1981:92; Seeger 1964:48.

12. GO DOWN, MOSES

Pete Seeger, vocal and 12-string guitar (Traditional; from Folkways 2323, 1961)

For many years, this African-American spiritual has been included in songbooks for youths and in many organizations and denominations, and it has been sung across the United States and in other countries. Its theme is “let my people go,” a cry heard around the world for centuries and into modern times—but the “cry” that inspired this song was heard during slavery days in the United States.

According to John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, the engineer who ran the underground railroad from the South toward freedom was Harriet Tubman, a woman who had escaped slavery, and that African-Americans believed her to be God-driven. She was the Moses of her time; thus, this song was written about her. Dena J. Epstein wrote that the first mention of “Go Down, Moses” was 4 September 1861, by Reverend Lewis Lockwood, who heard it sung at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, and “by December 2 he had sent an extended text of the song to the secretary of the YMCA in New York.” That secretary sent it to the New York *Tribune*, which published it, apparently as “the first publication of the complete text of a Negro spiritual.” See Brunnings 1981:108; Epstein 1977:244–246, 248–251; Lomax 1947:342, 372–373.

13. ALL MY TRIALS

Pete Seeger, vocal and 12-string guitar (Traditional; from Folkways 2323, 1961)

Little is known about this song other than it traveled far and wide before returning to the United States. Pete sings it as a lullaby—a spiritual lullaby—expressing the thoughts of a “mama born to die.” James F. Leisy wrote that it “apparently originated with a Baptist hymn that was current in the South after the Civil War” and was in the Bahamas before being revived in the United States; his published verses have spiritual overtones. The song was printed in *Sing Out!* (7[Fall

1957]3:5) with the statement “This sounds like a West Indian version of this spiritual,” which implies that it was a Negro spiritual. Its origin has not been documented; therefore, it remains a spiritual lullaby that expresses a mother’s spiritual and social concerns. See Brunnings 1981:7; Leisy 1964:174–175.

14. MONSIEUR BANJO

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as “Michie Banjo,” “Mister Banjo,” “Mister Banjo—Look at the Dandy,” and others; traditional; from Folkways 2323, 1961)

This is another song that has had little information printed about it. Margaret Bradford Boni called it “A gay, satirical Creole song from Louisiana. The word ‘creole’ is derived from the Spanish word ‘criollo,’ meaning native to the locality.” Pete performs it with the cheerful rhythm and vocalization that make fun of the dandy who egotistically parades like a peacock with tailfeathers spread for all to see and hear. See Boni 1952:251; Brunnings 1981:206.

15. NO MORE AUCTION BLOCK

Pete Seeger, vocal and 12-string guitar (Also known as “Many Thousand Go”; traditional; from Folkways 2323, 1961)

Russell Ames wrote that a “secret song, traced to slaves forced by General Beauregard to build Confederate fortifications [was]. . . No More Auction Block for Me.” Later Tom Glazer wrote that the song “may have been written to honor Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, 1863. . . .

It was sung by Black soldiers of the North, ex-slaves." John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax included "Many Thousand Go" with quotes from *Slave Songs of the United States* (Allen, Ware, and Garrison 1867). It seems that "Many Thousand Go" was the original title, for in *Slave Songs of the United States* it was printed without the apostrophe. Other than the opening verse, the lyrics are the same, and there is no mention of an auction block. The following information, as printed here, was a footnote following the lyrics:

A song "to which the Rebellion had actually given rise. This was composed by nobody knows whom—though it was the most recent doubtless of all these 'spirituals,' and has been in secret to avoid detection. It is certainly plaintive enough. The peck of corn and pint of salt were slavery's rations." T. W. H.—Lt. Col. Trowbridge learned that it was first sung when Beauregard took the slaves to the islands to build fortifications at Hilton Head and Bay Point.

Eileen Southern included "No More Auction Block for Me" as found in Gustavus D. Pike's *The Jubilee Singers, and Their Campaign for Twenty Thousand Dollars* (Boston, Mass.: Lee and Shepard, 1873); Pike's inclusion of the song is the first printing with the opening verse as now known and followed by the verses of "Many Thousand Go." Who wrote the auction-block

verse and/or when have not been documented; however, Pete's rendition of this slave song was a major influence in its revival, and it was adapted by Bob Dylan as the melody for his popular "Blowin' in the Wind." See Ames 1955: 156–157; Brunnings 1981:219; Glazer 1970: 248–249; Lomax and Lomax 1934:577; *Slave Songs of the United States* 1867:48, song 64; Southern 1997:160–161.

16. HOLE IN THE BUCKET

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "The Bucket Song," "Jug Hot en Loch, Der," "Leiwel Heindrich," "Hole in the Bucket," and more; traditional; from Folkways 2323, 1961)

A generation or two of Methodist youth learned this song during outings, summer church camps, and other Methodist youth gatherings, for it was a popular song in *Lift Every Voice*, a small songbook to encourage young people to sing. In the "Accompaniment Edition," the editor wrote that it "is an English version of a famous old Pennsylvania Dutch song," and included a version in the dialect of those folks that had been published in 1949 in *The Pennsylvania Dutchman*. The editor of that publication was quoted as saying "when he was studying and traveling in Germany in 1937–1938, he had found versions of the song in no less than twelve different regions." The Pennsylvania Dutch are descendants of Germans, Swiss, and other Europeans who immigrated to the United States in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and

this song is of similar origin. It was probably taken across the Atlantic by those who became known as Pennsylvania Dutch. Pete performs it with the distinctive and humorous conversation between a male and female. See Brunnings 1981:129; *Lift Every Voice* 1953:53.

17. WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THE DRUNKEN SAILOR

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "The Drunken Sailor," "Early in the Morning," "Hooray an' Up She Rises," and others; traditional; from Folkways 2323, 1961) c1891

A sea shanty (chanty) is a worksong for sailors at sea. Stan Hugill, a genuine seaman, wrote, "Early shantying was from what we know, little more than primitive chanting and wild aboriginal cries to encourage the seamen to keep time and work harder," and he called this a "stamp-an'-go song," of the sort that was usually heard on ships with large crews. This type of shanty was when sailors were pulling a sail up the mast, stamping up the deck, and "with all hands roaring out the song in unison." He identified this song as "one of the oldest known Anglo-Saxon shanties. . . . It appears with music in *Incidents of a Whaling Voyage* (1839) by Olmstead."

It is well known even today, for it is entered in many folksong books. Joanna C. Colcord in her book about American songs called it a "run-away song" with the crew "tailing on to the rope and running with it down the deck to the stomp and go of the music." Pete lets the banjo be a mild supporting instrument while he sings with

a seaman's gusto, for while not having served on an old-time sailing ship, he is a seaman. See Brunnings 1981:338, 80; Colcord 1964:73–74; Hugill 1966:1, 133–135; Hugill 1977:170–171.

18. ARMY LIFE

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "Gee, But I Want to Go Home," "I Don't Want No More Army," and others; words and music by Gitz Rice; from Folkways 2323, 1961)

There are few professional soldiers in the United States, and the armies that have fought in American wars have been composed mostly of "citizen-soldiers." That does not mean that professionals did not fight and die; it means that the majority of soldiers were either drafted or volunteered: they were not professionals. Usually each war has called upon a different decade of citizens, and each has developed its own "soldier verse and soldier balladry." John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax wrote that "From the very first days of training, . . . the most popular of all soldier songs in World War II was 'Gee, But I Want to Go Home.' This is an adaptation of a British song of World War I composed by Lt. Gitz Rice." Rice was born in Nova Scotia, and during the Great War (World War I) served with the Canadian Army in Europe. He was a songwriter and pianist; he fought in battles, but became deeply involved in creating entertainment for the other soldiers. This song is just one of many that he wrote.

When adapted by U. S. soldiers, the song became a bitter, but humorous statement about

army life. Pete served in World War II and knew that the experience was not humorous, but humor can be a valuable defense. Pete's friend Lead Belly recorded it in 1948 during his last sessions, using the title "I Don't Want No More Army Life" (SF 40068/71). See Brunnings 1981: 8, 105; Lomax and Lomax 1947:115, 124–25; www.collectionscanada.ca/gramophone.

19. BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKE

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "The Belle of Long Lake," "Come All Ye Good Fellers," and others; traditional; Laws C 20; from Folkways 5003, 1954)

This is an American lumberjack ballad depicting a fight at Blue Mountain Lake in upper New York. There are other Blue Mountain Lakes in the United States and other lumbercamp fights, but this story song is set in the New York site that has a rich timber industry. The story is that a man named Bill Mitchell took care of the shanty (shack) and was lazy and mean; lumberjack Jim Lou got mad at him and "beat the hell" out of him. Everyone was glad, including Mitchell's wife; their cook was young, "short, thick, and stout" and known as "The Belle of Long Lake." John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax depict life in a logging camp as "primitive" with long working hours, "in the sub-zero weather of the woods[. . . cheerful acceptance of crumbs, long hours, low pay, bad food, months of isolation[. . . always honing for a fight]" and "is still remembered by old-timers in the lumbering community of Glen

Falls[. . . where it happened." It may be an adaptation of "Moosehead Lake," a similar song collected in Maine by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, and it has been adapted into other states and incidents.

As a long-time resident of New York, Pete possibly heard an old-timer sing it; however, before Pete's recording, the same version was recorded a few times for Moe Asch (Folkways) by Frank Warner. Warner and his wife, Anne Locher Warner, as reported in *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Jan H. Brunvand, were: "Collectors, performers, and interpreters of American folksong[. . . especially in the Northeast." Therefore, it is possible that Pete obtained it from Warner. See Brunnings 1981:32; Brunvand 1996:740; Laws 1964:156–157; Lomax 1941:226–128; Lomax 1947:156–157, 168–169; Lomax 1960:104–105, 225–227.

20. LADY MARGARET

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "Lady Margaret and Sweet William," "Fair Margaret and Sweet William," "Fair Margaret's Misfortune," and others; traditional; Child 74; from Folkways 2319, 1957)

In most variants of this ballad, Lady Margaret commits suicide after being rejected by Sweet William; after confronting her ghost, he dies. The action varies, but the story is the same: rejection, her death (usually by suicide), and then the appearance of her ghost, followed by his death. In his notes to *American Ballads* (F 2319) Pete wrote:

This ballad was one of the first I ever learned, in 1935, from the country lawyer and old-time banjo picker of Asheville, North Carolina, Bascom Lunsford. My thanks to him. It is a medieval vignette, and the last verses describing the conversation between Lady Margaret's ghost and her false lover are as close as we get to superstition in this LP.

In his collecting and research, Francis James Child found this ballad in the 1765 edition of Percy's *Reliques* and quotes Percy as finding it published as early as 1611. Pete's version after it crossed the Atlantic has seven verses, but Child has one variant with twenty verses. Tristram Coffin found numerous printings and titles and stated, "This song is very popular in America, but the New World texts are not really close to any Child version." It has appeared in many folksong and ballad books; Pete included it with credit to Lunsford in *The Bells of Rhymney*. See Brunnings 1981:170, 189; Child, 1885:3: 199–203; Coffin 1977:70–72; Seeger 1964:24.

21. JOHN HARDY

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "Johnny Hard," "John Hardy Was a Desperate Little Man," "Johnny Harty," and others; traditional; Laws I 2; from Folkways 2319, 1957)

This ballad sometimes is mistakenly thought to be "John Henry"; however, it is a traditional song about an actual event, even though the locale

and victims often differ, because of a singer's memory or imagination. "John Hardy" was an African-American in West Virginia who worked as a railroad hand and was hanged on 19 January 1894 for killing another black man, whom "he had accused of stealing twenty-five cents." In his *American Ballads* (Folkways 2319) notes, Pete wrote:

Here again research has traced the ballad to its source (if there can ever be such a thing as one source for a ballad showing the handiwork of many musicians), to court records in West Virginia of the trial and execution of John Hardy, in 1894. Beyond that, we cannot vouch for the fictional or factual status of the song, since so many verses are common to other ballads as well.

As is well known, Pete and Woody Guthrie were friends, and this was a traditional ballad sung by Woody. Woody adapted the tune for the melody of his "Tom Joad." Where and when he learned it is not known, but he was singing it before 1940 and called it "John Harty." While the story is basically the same, the versions differ, especially in length; Woody sang nine verses. In the magazine *Goldenseal* 18 (Spring 1992) 1:47–51), published by the State of West Virginia, the complete story is told by Richard Ramella in "John Hardy: The Man and the Song." Ramella included a letter written in 1916 by the man who was governor at the time of the

trial and hanging and apparently thought that he was writing about John Henry.

"John Hardy" was first recorded by Eva Davis for Columbia in 1924; by 1939, it had been recorded eight times by country-music singers such as Ernest V. Stoneman, Buell Kazee, and the Carter Family. It has been published in many ballad and folksong books, and recorded by numerous individuals and groups from many musical genres, including the Kingston Trio. See Brunnings 1981:158; Guthrie 1958/1960:16; Laws 1964:246–47; Meade 2002: 75. See also Lomax 1947:287–288, 306–307; Lomax 1960: 264–265, 271–273; *Sing Out!* 14 (September 1964) 4:14–15.

22. JOHNSON

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "The Three Butchers," "The Two Butchers," "Young Butcher Boy," and numerous others; traditional; Laws L 4; from Folkways 2319, 1957)

This ballad has many, many variants and titles. Both ballad scholars and singers—and Pete is both—often thought it to be a Child ballad; it is not, at least it has not been cited as a Child ballad in many contemporary studies and has not been located by title variants in the original Child *Ballads*. However, it has traveled and been adapted as much as any other ballad. It always involves at least one man, sometimes up to three, who often while riding with great sums of money, hears or hear the cries of a woman, often a naked woman, in distress. He or they help her

and ride toward town; she makes a sound, and one or more men come to rob and kill those who tried to help her. The battles vary with the villains being killed and/or brave men being killed; usually, the woman in distress kills her savior, or is killed while trying to kill. The message is not always explicit.

Under the title "The Three Butchers," Cecil Sharp collected four variants in four different Southern states. In variant formats, it has been collected as far north as Maine under the title "The Three Worthy Butchers of the North." As a broadside in England, it dates back to the 1600s. Pete's version is one of many Americanized variants. See Brunnings 1981:311, 160; Flanders 1966:241–244; Laws 1957:166–167; Sharp 1932: 1:370–372.

23. JOHN RILEY

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "Pretty Fair Maid," "The Broken Token," "As I Walked Out One Summer's Morning," and many others; traditional; Laws N 42; from Folkways 2005, 1950, Smithsonian Folkways 40018)

When a young woman goes walking and a sailor asks her to marry him, she says that her "heart is with Riley," who has been gone for three years, and she will never marry. He discloses to her that he is Riley, and in some variants they marry. It is a story of constant, unconditional love, and has been found in many variants across the country. Jean Ritchie told that when her older sister, May, got married, one woman at the wedding wanted to have "everybody" sing "John

Riley." It may seem to be a strange wedding song, but all the guests knew it and sang it.

In his notes for *Darling Corey* (Folkways FP 3; Smithsonian Folkways 40018) Alan Lomax wrote:

'John Riley,' that's my favorite song" many an old-time balladeer has told me. Although the ballad originated in England, American singers have connected it with whatever was the latest war and with the separations and reunions this war had caused. . . . Pete sings this sentimental 18th-century come-all-ye with the delicate restraint of the old-time ballad-rememberer, a reserve which permits the listener to step into the garden and hear the lovers' conversation among the ancient roses.

John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax collected it in Kentucky in 1937, and later put it in a chapter on "social songs." Alan Lomax placed it as the opening song in his "Across the Blue Ridge" chapter as a true Southern mountain song. See Brunnings 1981:159; Laws 1957:224–225; Lomax 1941:168–170; Lomax 1960:154–156, 161–162; Ritchie 1955:229–231.

24. WASHER LAD

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "Four Pence a Day"; traditional; from Folkways 5801, 1960)

This is a labor song that tells the sad story of those who barely survived or survive on starva-

tion wages or less. Its origin is England, where long hours and low wages were common in the industrial trade. When it made its way to the United States is not known; however, the theme was known here and is still known around the world, for sweat shops using individuals of most ages still exist, particularly in the milling industry. As long as huge profits take priority over human welfare, they will continue.

The song is from Pete's *American History in Ballad and Song* (Folkways 5801); it is a part of American history, and excessively low wages were not and are not uncommon. Pete and others have written and have sung songs to improve workers' lives, and his album *American Industrial Ballads* (SFW CD 40058) is an extension of his honest battle for a fair wage for a good day's labor. See Brunnings 1981:100; *Reprints from Sing Out!* 3, New York (Oak Publications, n. d.):56.

25. TALKING BLUES

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "The Original Talking Blues"; from Folkways 2445, 1962)

When Woody Guthrie made his way to New York City, he played and sang songs in his "talking blues" style. Many of the early day folk song revivalists, including Pete, thought that he had originated his own genre of blues, or had learned a black blues style. They were wrong, for the "talking blues" was a singing/guitar-picking style from Chris Bouchillon, who was born into a

musical family in the western hill country of South Carolina became a singer and mandolinist; his two brothers played fiddle and guitar. In 1926, having been unsuccessful as a recording family trio, they tried again as "The Greenville Trio" and recorded two numbers under Chris's name. According to Charles Wolfe (*Chris Bouchillon "The Original Talking Man"* Old Homestead Records OHCS 181, 1986), Frank Walker, the recording director or Artist & Repertoire chief, recalled that he did not like the singing, but did like Chris's voice: "I said, 'Can you play the guitar while you are talking?' He said, 'Yes.' So I said 'Let's do it, let's fool around with something like that. He had a little thing called a 'blues thing' and tried to sing it. I said don't sing it, just talk it. Tell them about the blues but don't sing it." The record was released in early 1927 under the title "Talking Blues" on the Columbia label (Co 15120-D), and sold 90,000 records, an amazing number during those days. The "talking blues" genre was born, and Woody Guthrie used the genre for many topics: "Talking Dust Bowl Blues," "Mean Talkin' Blues," "Talking Constitution," "Talking Hitler to Death," and many more unpublished songs.

Bouchillon was a comedian at heart, and the opening phrase, "If you want to get to heaven, Let me tell you what to do," has been the beginning of many humorous songs. See Brunings 1981:302; Kingsbury (Charles Wolfe) 1998:45-46.

26. LOLLY TOO DUM

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "The Fit Comes On Me Now," "I Must and I Will Get Married Now," and others; traditional; from Folkways 2445, 1962) 1844

In their 1941 book, *Our Singing Country*, John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax placed "Lolly Too Dum" in the "Courting Songs" portion of the chapter on "social songs." Their explication of it was:

One familiar form of folk song carries forward its theme by question and reply of two actors, usually a boy and a girl—a form often used a generation ago in courting bees, neighbor concerts, and on the amateur stage. In America such songs were sometimes called "answer-back" songs.

However, in this song, the mother does the questioning, and then starts the humorous portion with "now, I'm on the market, too." The daughter responds with a common attitude, as old as you are "who would marry you?" In their *Folk Song U. S. A.*, they have a much longer statement in the unit "When You Go A-Courtin'," and emphasize that on the frontiers of the United States the marriage of young maidens was common and that a female unmarried at the age of twenty-two was usually considered to be an old maid.

There is a variant in which a "widow woman" during verses one through four tells her daughter to whistle and she will get a cow, a pig, and a sheep; the daughter responds that she cannot whistle and cannot get the animals. In the fifth verse it is "Whistle, daughter, whistle, and

you will get a man." The daughter starts whistling loudly. The collection containing this variant states, "Here is another set of words for this same tune," and the words that follow are almost the same as sung by Pete. The last line Pete sings is "That fit is off of me," and in the "whistle variant," a footnote states, "There is a 17th century country dance with the title 'The Fit Comes on Me Now'." The meaning of the word *fit* can be 'seizure', 'outburst', 'proper', 'attack', and many more; therefore, the reader or listener can make a personal interpretation of the meaning. It is a traditional American folk-song, probably from the 1840s, started by folks in the Southern mountains, and it spread to many other regions. See Brunings 1981:184; Chase 1956:138-139; Lomax 1941:126-27; Lomax 1947:33-34, 46-47.

27. T. B. BLUES

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (From Folkways 2445, 1962)

Pete and his banjo present a sharp contrast in style to the "T. B. Blues" recording of Jimmie Rodgers and his guitar accompanied by steel guitarist Charles Kama, and it is a song that indicates the diversity of sources that provide the music Pete sings and plays. This is a song well known among older country musicians and fans, as well as by all fans of Jimmie Rodgers. It was recorded by Rodgers on 31 January 1931 for Victor Records, and recorded two months later, also for Victor, by Gene Johnson, a name used at that time

by Gene Autry, one of many singers who imitated Rodgers. The Rodgers recording earned approximately four million dollars for Victor during his short lifetime.

Tuberculosis, referred to as "T. B.", was killing and did kill Rodgers, but he did not compose this song. Nolan Porterfield, in *Jimmie Rodgers: The Life and Times of America's Blue Yodeler*, wrote that during the mid-1920s, Rodgers, a railroad man and singer of many railroad songs, met Raymond Hall, an ex-convict, near a railyard in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; they traded songs, including "Take Me Back Again," written by Hall. Later, Hall was back in prison in Texas; he wrote to Rodgers asking for help, and they developed friendship through correspondence. "T. B." was not a new theme in folk music, for it was an often-used theme among African-American blues singers, such as Lead Belly and Josh White. Rodgers wrote to Hall asking for any verses he knew about tuberculosis; Hall sent verses for Rodgers to use as he wanted, and was paid fifty dollars by Rodgers. Jimmie Rodgers is always listed as the writer of the song, but the Victor file card lists Rodgers and Hall as cowriters.

About Rodgers, Pete recalled that "A man once told me in a Montana saloon, 'The reason I like Jimmie Rodgers is everything he sings is true'—the highest praise a folksinger could ever have." See Porterfield 1979:56-57, 280. For more information about Hall, see Malone 1985:89; Seeger 1972:206-207.

28. SUMMERTIME

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo (Also known as "Summertime an' the Livin' Is Easy"; from Folkways 2445, 1962)

The opera *Porgy and Bess* by George and Ira Gershwin and DuBose Heyward was a Theatre Guild production in 1935. In 1926, the novel *Porgy* by DuBose Heyward was published; it was about the community life of African-Americans in Charleston, South Carolina, Heyward's home, and he also wrote a play based on the novel. After reading the novel and seeing the play, George Gershwin believed that he could write an opera libretto based on Heyward's play; Heyward agreed, but it was in 1934 before Gershwin started the project.

Gershwin traveled to the Charleston region to observe, study, and assimilate African-American culture in order to turn it into an inspiring opera. When completed, the opera was "three acts and nine scenes, of which the manuscript score contains 700 pages of closely written music. . . . It contained three hours of music, including arias and recitatives." It was an American grand opera; however, Broadway was not the opera staging sector: scenes and musical numbers were cut, and it became a Broadway musical production. It was not until 1975 that the original Gershwin version was seen and heard in the United States, when the Houston Grand Opera Company produced it with an all-black cast.

"Summertime" was written as an operatic

lullaby, not a children's lullaby, and became for many years a well-known song sung and heard across the nation. While Ira Gershwin wrote many of the *Porgy and Bess* musical lyrics, the "Summertime" sheet music credits "Lyrics by DuBose Heyward." It is another beautiful example of the diversity of Pete's song sources and interests. See Chase 1987:546-549; Fuld 2000:538-539.

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