



CLASSIC RAILROAD SONGS

from SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS



Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage 750 9th St NW Smithsonian Institution Washington, DC 20560-0953 www.folkways.si.edu
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FROM SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

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1. **An excerpt from "Rail Dynamics"**
RECORDED BY EMORY COOK 0:24
 2. **Train 45** THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS 2:18
 3. **Kassie Jones** FURRY LEWIS (Furry Lewis) 2:56
 4. **Jay Gould's Daughter** PETE SEEGER 2:38
 5. **Railroad Bill** WALT ROBERTSON 2:08
 6. **Linin' Track** LEAD BELLY 1:15
 7. **Freight Train** ELIZABETH COTTEN 2:43
(Elizabeth Cotten / Sanga Music, BMI)
 8. **Drill, Ye Tarriers, Drill** CISCO HOUSTON 2:30
(Thomas F. Casey)
 9. **Zack, the Mormon Engineer** L. M. HILTON 2:02
 10. **Lost Train Blues** THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN BOYS 2:57
 11. **The F. F. V.** ANNIE WATSON 3:52
 12. **He's Coming to Us Dead** THE NEW LOST CITY
RAMBLERS 3:15 (Gussie Davis)
 13. **The Train That Carried My Girl from Town**
DOC WATSON 2:18 (arr. Doc Watson / Stormking
Music, BMI)
 14. **Rock Island Line** LEAD BELLY 2:03 (arr. Huddie
Ledbetter / TRO-Folkways Music Publishers Inc., BMI)
 15. **Lonesome Train** SONNY TERRY, WOODY GUTHRIE,
AND CISCO HOUSTON 3:31
 16. **John Henry** WOODY GUTHRIE AND CISCO HOUSTON 2:42
 17. **The Wreck of the Number Nine** ROSALIE SORRELS
1:36 (Carson Robison / Universal MCA, Music
Publishing, ASCAP)
 18. **Freight Train Blues** BROWNIE MCGHEE 3:36
(Thomas A. Dorsey-Everett Murphy)
 19. **The New Market Wreck** MIKE SEEGER 3:39
(Robert Hugh Brooks)
 20. **Jerry, Go Oil That Car** HAYWIRE MAC 2:37
 21. **Way Out in Idaho** ROSALIE SORRELS 3:34
 22. **Old John Henry Died on the Mountain**
HENRY GRADY TERRELL 1:55
 23. **Casey Jones** JOHN D. MOUNCE 0:20
(T. Lawrence Seibert-Eddie Newton)
 24. **Wreck of the Old 97** POP STONEMAN 2:51
(Whitter-Noell-Lewey)
 25. **Midnight Special** LEAD BELLY 2:03
(arr. Huddie Ledbetter / TRO-Folkways Music
Publishers, BMI)
 26. **Wabash Cannonball** DOC WATSON 3:17
(William Kindt; arr. A.P. Carter / APRS, BMI)
 27. **Lost Train Blues** VERNON SUTPHIN 1:13
 28. **New River Train** IRON MOUNTAIN STRING BAND 4:26
 29. **Excerpt from "Three Little Engines and 33 Cars"**
RECORDED BY VINTON WIGHT 0:25
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Compiled and annotated by Jeff Place

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INTRODUCTION

JEFF PLACE

Over the years, Folkways Records (now Smithsonian Folkways) has continuously produced and distributed high-quality recordings of American folk music. Folkways founder Moses Asch made a commitment to artists that their Folkways recordings would never go out of print. This recording is intended as an introduction to many of these recordings on the label, and a chance for listeners to experience them—perhaps again, perhaps for the first time. The Smithsonian has subsequently acquired other fine small labels.

In 2002, Smithsonian Folkways released a collection called *Classic Bluegrass from Smithsonian Folkways* (SFW 40092). It was well received, and the label decided to go back into its vaults to assemble other “classic” releases. These “classic” releases are intended to be doors into a larger world. If you hear singers or musicians you particularly like, explore them further. This recording presents some of the best of the railroad songs in the Smithsonian Folkways collection.

I will not dwell on the history of railroads

or these individual songs; for more information, consult *Long Steel Rail*, Norm Cohen’s important work on the subject. Cohen goes into great detail about most of these songs, reflecting deep research into the backgrounds of the events and the people involved. These liner notes are in debt to much of Cohen’s information.

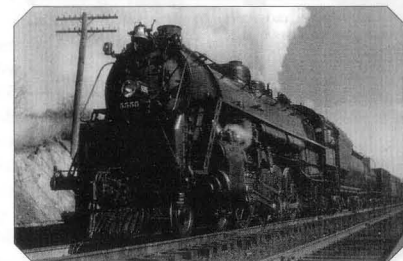
In this era of instant communication with any part of the planet, the ability to hop a quick flight to Tokyo, or the overnight delivery of a package, it’s hard to imagine having to wait months or even years to achieve such goals. Before the railroads, it took months to deliver a letter or ship a package to far-flung parts of the United States of America. The era of the railroad began in the 1830s, and rails began to expand all over the country. In 1869, two “golden spikes” were driven in Promontory Point, Utah, linking the country’s east and west coasts by rail. This event had tremendous effects on everyone’s lives. The railroads have since been superseded by other means of transportation, commerce, and

communication—but in the 19th century, the appearance of the railroads had as much effect on people’s lives as the appearance of the information highway today. With the railroad, suddenly one could travel to the West and home to visit others, if need be. The railroads delivered goods and mail more quickly. The railroads improved the country’s defense of its Western zones in case of war. Those keen on moving to the new territories could more easily make the journey than their pioneer ancestors had done. The railroad made a great change in day-to-day life.

For centuries in England, newsworthy events were chronicled in printed sheets called broadside ballads. Such publishing was a cheap and quick way to get the news out. Most of these ballads have been lost to time; a few others are remembered, even if the events in question are not. Songs about titillating news events became big sellers and occupied people’s minds until more-interesting news events came along. The situation has not changed: even today, the nightly news is usually preoccupied with the latest sordid crime or disaster of the month. Songwriters understood the popular need for news, and they catered to it. The railroad became a thing of musical fascination and fodder. Songs told of the struggles of building the railroads and the catastrophic accidents that sometimes occurred. Engineers, conductors, and other railroad-men became legends, along with the outlaws who robbed those frequently perceived as greedy

railroad bosses. The train also became a metaphor for escape and freedom.

Much as it was with the songs of the sailors on the great sea (who fulfilled many of the same purposes as the railroaders), songs were sung about great exploits for entertainment, and songs were composed, often by improvisation, to accompany the work of laying and moving heavy rails. Many great folksongs came from African-American gandy dancers, who did this strenuous and heavy work.



This collection includes examples of all of these types of songs, drawn from what had been released by Moses Asch and Folkways Records.

Moses Asch (1905–1986) founded Folkways in 1948 in New York. He had been involved in the record business since 1939 with his former Asch and Disc labels. In 1940, acting on a tip from Broadway producer Sy Rudy, he recorded blues

songster Lead Belly—which was his first stab at releasing American vernacular music. During the 1940s, Asch released recordings by other well-known American folk musicians, such as Burl Ives, Pete Seeger, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Woody Guthrie, and Bess and Butch Hawes, and Virginia mountain singers Hobart Smith and Texas Gladden.

Asch worked in his early days in radio in New York for WEVD (named for Eugene V. Debs) and WNYC, radio stations that produced the bulk of the folk and political music programming in the city. He had access to these musicians, and his studio was in the same building as WEVD. Musicians would drop by the studio, record, and get paid a small amount of money. It was a symbiotic relationship that worked for both. On a given day, the studio might see a combination of musicians, such as Woody, Cisco, Pete, Sonny, Brownie, or Lead Belly, playing together and sharing songs they knew. (Asch referred to some of these sessions as his Folksay sessions.) Asch recorded hundreds of glass acetate discs during the 1940s, and these became some of his key recordings for his Asch and Disc labels, the record labels that preceded Folkways.

Asch began to fill his catalog with recordings from all over the world, including those of traditional and urban folksingers, world-music traditions, spoken word, and natural and manmade sounds. By the time of his death, he had released almost 2200 albums of the sounds of the 20th

century, a self-described encyclopedia, all of which remain in print.

In 1987, Ralph Rinzler (1934–1994), folk musician, record producer, and talent scout for the Newport Folk Festival, then Assistant Secretary for Public Service at the Smithsonian Institution, negotiated the donation of the Folkways label to the museum. The following year, the Smithsonian Folkways record label was founded. Rinzler had been involved in earlier Folkways albums, and he knew the value of the collection. From the beginning, Smithsonian Folkways has set out to reissue material from its archives, with expanded liner notes and updated sound. The Smithsonian has since acquired other smaller, like-minded record companies: Cook, Paredon, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk Musical Magazine, Monitor, Collector, and M.O.R.E. These labels comprise what is called the Smithsonian Folkways Collection, and they include folk recordings in their catalog. More than 3000 titles are available through the Smithsonian on on-demand compact disc. To understand the breadth of Asch's work, we suggest you explore the Smithsonian Folkways website, which offers short audio examples for all 40,000 tracks. In addition, please explore the Smithsonian Global Sound website, where all these tracks are available for download. If you like a track, we suggest you learn more about the rest of the recording it came from.

JEFF PLACE, AUGUST 2005

SONGS

1. AN EXCERPT FROM RAIL DYNAMICS

(from *Rail Dynamics* Cook 1270, recorded in 1950)

Emory Cook (1915–2002) was an audio engineer, inventor, recordist, and record-company owner. Starting with his Sounds of Our Times label in 1952 (later followed by the Cook label), Cook released some of the most aurally pristine LPs of his day, and one of his most popular titles was *Rail Dynamics*. Cook made many recordings, and was interested in powerful sounds, so naturally the sounds of railroad trains drew him in. In 1950, he recorded these sounds of the New York Central Railroad standing by the tracks near the station at Peekskill, New York. Emory and Martha Cook donated their recordings to the Smithsonian in 1990.



2. TRAIN 45 THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS

The New Lost City Ramblers: Tracy Schwarz, fiddle and vocal; Mike Seeger, banjo; John Cohen, guitar (Also related to "900 Miles," "500 Miles," and "Ruben's Train"; also called "Riding on that Train 45"; from *Gone to the Country* Folkways 2491, 1963)

In mid-1958, the New Lost City Ramblers—Mike Seeger (b. 1933), John Cohen (b. 1932), and banjo player, Tom Paley (b. 1928)—came together to preserve and perform important old-time American

music that all three members had grown to love. At that time, many young American musicians were turning to folk music. Influenced by Harry Smith's *The Anthology of American Folk Music* and classic recordings from the 1920s and 1930s, the Ramblers actively sought after older recordings, taking part in the exchange of reels of tape through a network of collectors which held dubs of vintage 78-rpm recordings. Mike Seeger and his friend Ralph Rinzler offered to help catalog Harry Smith's record collection, which by that time had been sold to the New York Public Library in order to attain access to those sounds. There was no such thing as too many good songs.

During a time when hundreds of urban folk groups were coming into being, there was a constant search for older songs to fill out set lists. Songs were appropriated by groups and singers who often claimed to be the author or arranger. The Ramblers made a point of including rich discographical information on the source of their songs in liner notes, giving full credit and helping educate their fans about their musical forefathers. They also revived the older country humor of earlier recordings by groups like the Skillet Lickers and mixed it into their performances. Paley left the group in 1962, and was replaced by Tracy Schwarz (b. 1938), who is featured on this recording. Schwarz has continued to record on his own over the years with his family band, The Strange Creek Singers (with Mike Seeger), and recently with his wife, Ginny Hawker. Over the years, John Cohen has worked as a college professor, photographer, filmmaker, field recorder, and recording artist. For information on Mike Seeger, see track 19.

The group learned its version from the 1937 recording of Wade Mainer, Zeke Morris, and Steve Ledford, which was featured on RCA's important early collection of stringband music, *The Smoky Mountain Ballads* (P79 (78); 507 (LP)). This collection was quite influential as a source for many performers' songs; Woody Guthrie performed and recorded almost every song on the set. Another important early recording of the song was the 1927 one by Grayson and Whitter. The song shares a melody with the well-known tune "Reuben's Train," and a melodic variant preformed since the folksong revival is "900 Miles."

Botkin 1953:464-465; Cohen 2000:503-518; Lomax and Lomax 1947:245-246; Meade 2002:413; *Sing Out!* vol. 3, no. 4, 1952; Grayson and Whitter (County 3517 (CD)); Mainer, Morris, and Ledford (Rounder 1143 (CD)).

3. KASSIE JONES FURRY LEWIS

Furry Lewis, guitar and vocal

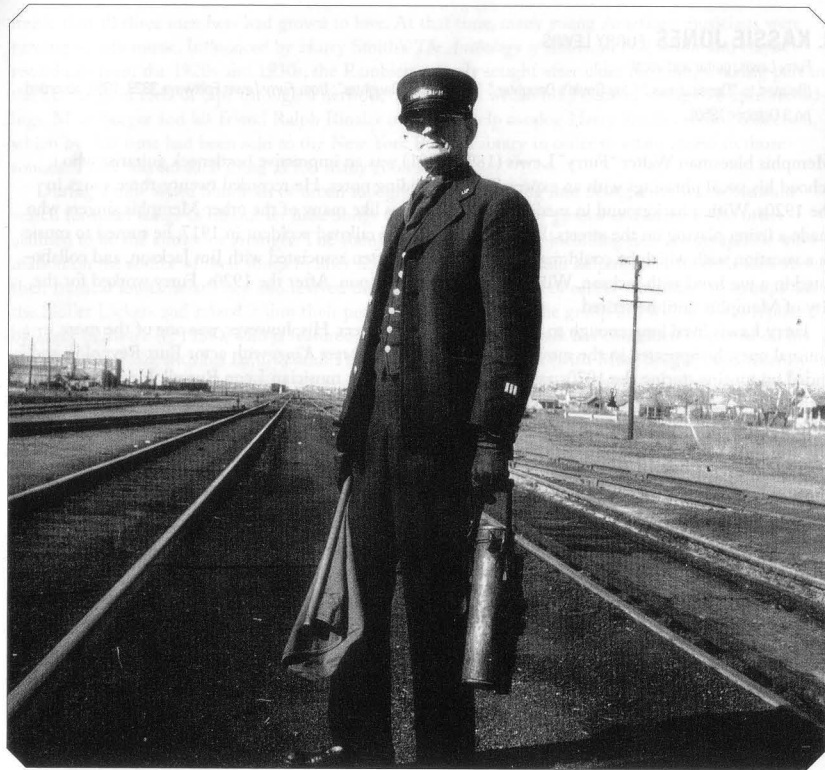
(Related to "Casey Jones," "Jay Gould's Daughter," "Vanderbilt's Daughter"; from *Furry Lewis Folkways* 3823, 1959; recorded on 3 October 1959)

Memphis bluesman Walter "Furry" Lewis (1893-1981) was an impressive bottleneck guitarist who echoed his vocal phrasings with an expressive set of sliding notes. He recorded twenty-three songs in the 1920s. With a background in medicine shows, he was like many of the other Memphis singers who made a living playing on the streets. Having lost a leg in a railroad accident in 1917, he turned to music as a vocation with which he could make money. He was often associated with Jim Jackson, and collaborated in a jug band with Jackson, Will Shade, and Gus Cannon. After the 1920s, Furry worked for the city of Memphis until he retired.

Furry Lewis lived long enough to experience a second career. His, however, was one of the more unusual ones: he appeared in the movie *W. W. and the Dixie Dance Kings* with actor Burt Reynolds, and ended up touring during the 1970s as the opening act for rock musician Leon Russell. He also toured with a traveling rock ensemble group called the Alabama State Troupers, who presented a package of different styles of music mixed with rock. Singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell's song "Furry Sings the Blues" was composed after a visit to Lewis's rooming house in Memphis during the 1970s (Place, notes to SFW 40090).

"Kassie Jones" was originally released in two sections (see SFW 40090). This version was recorded in 1959 by Samuel Charters and is an abridged version of Lewis's original. Lewis's version shares a melody with the African-American railroad song "Charley Snyder" and the hobo song "Jay Gould's Daughter" (Asch, Dunson, and Raim 1973:64) and is one of a number of songs based on the life and death of the engineer Casey Jones (see track 23).

Asch, Dunson, and Raim 1973:64; Furry Lewis (Victor 21664, 1928; SFW 40090 (CD)); Sackheim 1969:258-259.



4. JAY GOULD'S DAUGHTER PETE SEEGER

Pete Seeger, banjo and vocal

(related to "Casey Jones," "Vanderbilt's Daughter," "Milwaukee Blues"; Laws 125d; from *American Ballads* Folkways 2319, 1957)

Pete Seeger (b. 1919) is the dean of 20th-century folksingers. As of this writing, he has been performing and lending his energies to causes he believes in for more than 60 years. Born to a musical family, Pete grew up surrounded by music. His father was the eminent musicologist Charles Seeger, and his mother, Constance, was a concert violinist. His siblings, Mike, Peggy, and Penny, and various cousins and relatives by marriage have had successful recording careers.

He began to record for Moses Asch in 1943. Over the next 40 years, he recorded more than five dozen albums for Asch. Seeger has been a leading interpreter and presenter of traditional folksongs and an important composer of topical songs. He was a major figure of the folksong revival and a major influence on many other musicians. Much like Woody Guthrie, Seeger believes strongly in the use of his music for the betterment of humankind. Pete Seeger is still active, well into his 80s. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Seeger created his *American Favorite Ballads* series (SFW 40150–40154), in which he recorded dozens of great American folksongs. His recording of "Jay Gould's Daughter" dates from this period.

Jay Gould (1836–1892), a 19th-century railroad baron, owned a number of railroad lines, including the Union Pacific. Usually, this song refers to Gould's daughter or the daughter of Cornelius Vanderbilt, another railroad owner. The "blind" is a baggage car in which hobos frequently rode, but the rods under the cars were a dangerous and uncomfortable place to ride (Sandburg 1927:364–365). Norm Cohen turns up no historical evidence that Gould or his daughter made this directive (Cohen 2000:386).

5. RAILROAD BILL WALT ROBERTSON

Walt Robertson, guitar and vocal

(Laws 113; from *Walt Robertson Sings American Folk Songs* Folkways 2330, 1959; recorded 4 March 1959)

Walt Robertson (1928–1994) was a longtime folk-music performer from the Seattle, Washington area. Starting in the early 1950s, he had a local television show, "The Wanderer," on which he performed folksongs. As an actor, he was involved in stage, film, radio, and television. He had numerous jobs,

including those of technical writer, logger, firefighter, ranch hand, and taxi driver (Bob Nelson, *Sing Out!* vol. 39, no. 4, Feb. 1995:24–25). A beloved member of local folksinging circles, he put his acting talents into his singing (*Seattle Times*, 27 September 1994). Robertson recorded two albums for Folkways.

According to Alan Lomax, “Railroad Bill” was an African-American turpentine worker from Alabama, whose real name was Morris Slater. The conditions that turpentine workers lived in drove him to a life of crime, and he broke into railroad cars and stole the goods (Lomax, *Sing Out!* vol. 6, no. 1, Oct.–Nov. 1961). Slater’s life has become legend in this song.

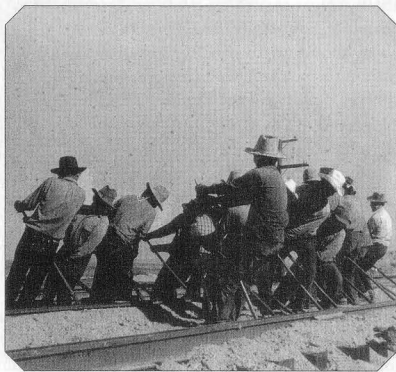
Cohen 2000:122–131; Houston 1965:79; Lomax and Lomax 1934:118–120; Lomax 1960:557; Meade 2002:67; Sandburg 1927:384; *Sing Out!* vol. 11, no. 4, 1961; *Sing Out!* vol. 16, no. 1, 1966.

6. LININ’ TRACK LEAD BELLY

Lead Belly, vocal

(from *Lead Belly Legacy*, Vol. 4 Folkways 2034, 1953 / *Bourgeois Blues* Smithsonian Folkways 40045, 1997; recorded in May 1944)

Huddie Ledbetter (Lead Belly) (1888–1949) was one of the 20th century’s most important repositories of traditional American song. Throughout his life, he would hear a song, commit it to memory, and adapt it to make it his own. He performed blues, spirituals, pop songs, children’s games, work-songs, and a myriad of other genres. Lead Belly was discovered in prison by John Avery Lomax from the Library of Congress, and much mythology exists as to the extent that a song he wrote for the governor of Louisiana, delivered by Lomax, earned him an early release. Moving to New York, he was introduced to Northern folksong audiences, and he fell into a group of musicians that included Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Aunt Molly Jackson, Sonny Terry, and Brownie McGhee and Josh White. Also



operating in the same circle was Moses Asch.

Moses Asch was the perfect person for Lead Belly to record for, and it was a relationship beneficial to both men. Lead Belly was allowed to record the full variety of his material for Asch, and as a result the majority of his recordings were done on the Folkways label. Other record companies had difficulty understanding the marketing of Lead Belly’s music, for he was more than a blues singer. Lead Belly’s first album was the catalyst that expanded Asch’s Folkways label beyond the scope of ethnic recordings. This event would have far reaching consequences.

This is one of the better-known track-lining songs. These songs were sung in unison to regulate the tempo of lining the rails on a railroad track. The workmen, called gandy dancers, would sing these songs as they worked. The track would be moved in time with the response line. Moses Asch recorded this song and released it along with “Bring Me a Little Water, Sylvie,” “Julie Ann Johnson,” and “Whoa Back Buck” as a medley of worksongs. The song was later recorded by a number a folk groups, including the Minneapolis group Koerner, Ray, and Glover. (Place, from the notes to SFW 40045).

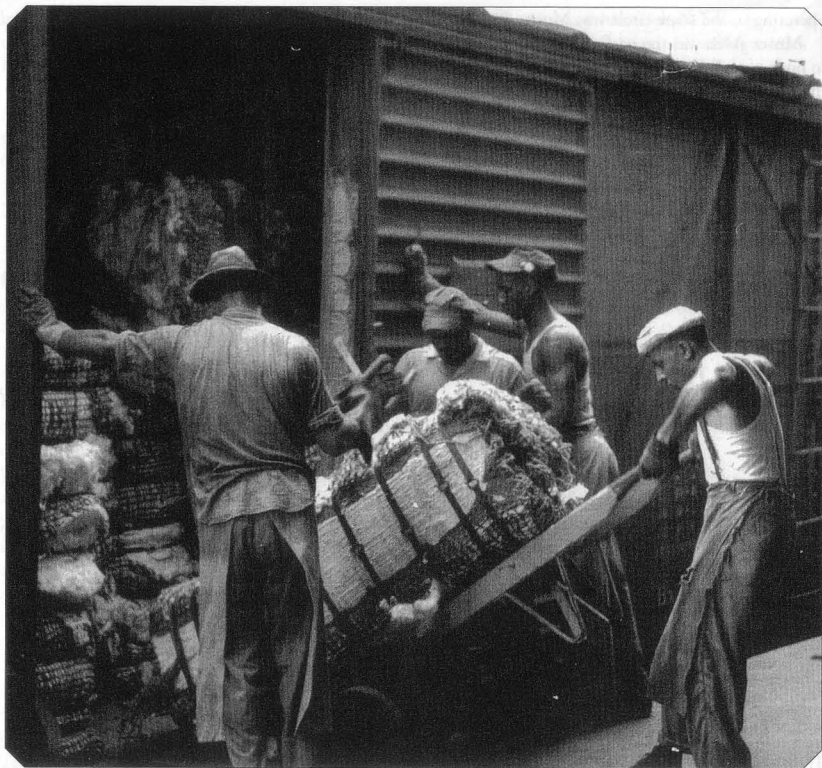
7. FREIGHT TRAIN ELIZABETH COTTEN

Elizabeth Cotten, guitar and vocal

(from *Freight Train and Other North Carolina Folk Songs and Tunes* Folkways 3526, 1958 / Smithsonian Folkways 40009, 1989)

Elizabeth “Libba” Cotten (née Nevills) (1895–1987) was born in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to a musical family. In 1940, after living in North Carolina and New York City, she settled in Washington, D.C. By 1946, she had not played guitar in years, and was instead working at Lansburgh’s department store. After returning a lost child, Peggy Seeger, to her mother in the store, she was hired by the Seeger family as a housekeeper.

Living in the Seeger household gave Libba the opportunity to pick up the guitar again. Her first recording, made by Mike Seeger, was made at her home in 1957. It became her first Folkways album (SF 40009). She began to play concerts and folk festivals, and became a beloved figure of the folksong-revival. She performed the Newport Folk Festival, the Philadelphia Folk Festival, the University of Chicago Folk Festival, the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, and elsewhere. She received many honors, including a Grammy award, a Grammy nomination, and a National Heritage Fellowship Award from the National Endowment for the Arts. She was the composer of several well-known songs, including “Freight Train,” “Shake Sugaree,” and “Babe, It Ain’t No Lie.” She spent her last nine years in Syracuse, New York.



She composed “Freight Train” when she was a child. It became her best-known song, and has been covered by dozens of artists.

Blood and Patterson 1988:233; Cohen 2000:521–523; *Sing Out!* vol. 14, no. 4, 1964.

8. DRILL, YE TARRIERS, DRILL CISCO HOUSTON

Cisco Houston, guitar and vocal

(from *Sings American Folk Songs* Folkways 2346, 1968, recorded 4 August 1958)

Cisco Houston (1918–1961) was another of the cast of characters who recorded for Moses Asch in his early years. Houston spent his youth working various jobs in the West, including that of a ranch hand, picking up songs along the way. During World War II, he served in the Merchant Marine with his frequent musical partner, Woody Guthrie. Houston and Guthrie recorded many duets for Asch, and it was Cisco whose keener sense of musical meter would keep Woody on time. Unfortunately, Houston lost his battle with cancer at the young age of 42, too early to enjoy the fame he would have likely had during the folk revival of the 1960s.

The song “Drill, Ye Tarriers, Drill” is “generally attributed to Thomas F. Casey” and was published in 1888 (Cohen 2000:555). The tarriers were the men who worked at drilling and blasting away rock to make way for track. Casey, in addition to being a tarrier, was an entertainer, and the song was included in the musical *A Brass Monkey*, in 1888 (Cohen 2000:555). It has been recorded numerous times, and was frequently performed during the folksong revival.

Blood and Patterson 1988:254; Botkin 1953:442–443; Cohen 2000:553–559; Houston 1965:53; Lomax 1960:408; Meade 2002:411.

9. ZACK, THE MORMON ENGINEER L. M. HILTON

Lalovi M. Hilton, vocal

(from *Mormon Folk Songs* Folkways 2036, 1952; recorded on 5 September 1951)

Lalovi M. Hilton (1896–1980) was recorded in 1951 by Willard Rhodes. At the time of the recording, Hilton was a police officer in Ogden, Utah, and worked as Superintendent of the Bureau of Identification and Records. Rhodes’s recordings of Hilton are now in the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Culture.

A humorous railroad song from Utah, "Zack, the Mormon Engineer" deals with practice of polygamy, in which a man took multiple wives. This song concerns the adventures of Zack Black, a Mormon bishop, who worked on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.

Botkin 1953:444; *Sing Out!* vol. 9, no. 1, 1959.

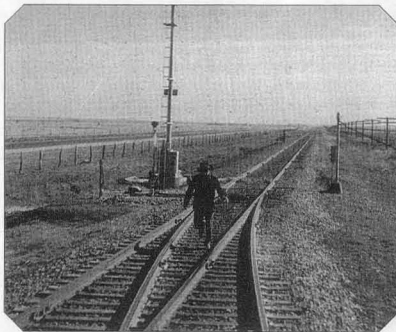
10. LOST TRAIN BLUES THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN BOYS

The Virginia Mountain Boys: Glen Neaves, fiddle; Cullen Galyean, banjo; Bobby Harrison, guitar; Mike Bedwell, guitar; Ivor Melton, mandolin; Marvin Cockram, bass

(Also known as "New Lost Train Blues"; from *The Virginia Mountain Boys*, Vol. 2 Folkways 3833, 1977; recorded in November 1974)

Eric H. Davidson (b. 1937) approached Moses Asch in 1972 with a proposal for a bluegrass project involving the Virginia Mountain Boys, consisting of musicians he had recorded for several earlier albums of old-time music. It had previously been known as the Pipers Gap Bluegrass Band, and the Bluegrass Buddies. Several different combinations of members of this group recorded four albums for Folkways in the 1980s. From the musically rich area around Galax, Virginia, the core of the group was Glen Neaves, Cullen Galyean, Ivor Melton, and Bobby Harrison.

Galyean still lives in Lowgap, North Carolina, and is a former member of Ralph Stanley's band. He currently performs around Galax with Cullen Galyean and the Bluegrassers. For decades, Galyean and Harrison were musical partners, playing as the Virginia Mountain Boys and the Foothill Boys. Harrison still resides in Woodlawn. Meade 2002:779.



11. THE F. F. V. ANNIE WATSON

Annie Watson, vocal

(Also known as "The Wreck of the C&O," "Engine 143,"

"The Brave Engineer," "The Wreck of the F. F. & V.;"

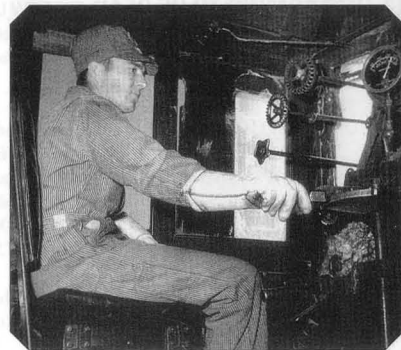
Laws G3; previously unreleased; recorded 2 August 1962)

The history of the train "The Fast Flying Vestibule" (also known as the "Fast Flying Virginian," or "F. F. V.") can be found in Harry Smith's notes to the *Anthology of American Folk Music* (SFW 40090). A brief summary of the facts is that the wreck was that of the C&O's number 4 train, engineered by George Alley (1860–1890), which on 23 October 1890 struck a rock near Don, Virginia.

Best known as the "Wreck of the C&O," the song is also known as "Engine 143" from the Carter Family's 1929 recording of the song. (Norm Cohen (2002:188) pointed out that the engine was actually 134, not 143). The Carter Family's version is well-known to modern music enthusiasts because of its inclusion in the *Anthology of American Folk Music*. Ballad scholar John H. Cox collected ten different but similar versions of the song in the South between 1915 and 1918, and because of their similarities, Norm Cohen (2000:188) believes them to be of Anglo-American origin, all coming from the same unknown writer 25 years after the event.

The song was first recorded by George Reneau in 1924 as "C&O Wreck" (Meade 2002:46). This rendition is by Annie Watson, the mother of guitarist Doc Watson. She was recorded by folklorist Ralph Rinzler in Deep Gap, North Carolina in August 1962. This version has not previously been released commercially.

Botkin 1953:451–454; Carter Family, "Engine 143" (SFW 40090 (CD); Cohen 2000:183–196; Cox 1963:221–230; Meade 2002:46; *Sing Out!* vol. 12, no. 4, 1962.



12. HE'S COMING TO US DEAD THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS

The New Lost City Ramblers: Tracy Schwarz, fiddle and vocal; Mike Seeger, guitar; John Cohen, banjo
(Also known as "The Boys in Blue," "Roamin' Jack"; from *Remembrance of Things to Come* Folkways 31035, 1973; recorded 30 November 1966)

"He's Coming to Us Dead" possibly concerns a dead soldier being returned from the Civil War (for other possibilities see Cohen 2000:301) by express freight. It was published by Gussie Davis in 1899 and first recorded in 1927 by, who else but, the ubiquitous Henry Whitter and his partner, G. B. Grayson. The Grayson-Whitter version differs from the published Davis song and is more their own. The song was later recorded by Wade Mainer and Molly O'Day. It has been collected by various folksong collectors over the years and has appeared in songbooks. The New Lost City Ramblers learned their version from the Grayson and Whitter recording.

For information about the New Lost City Ramblers, see track 2.

Cohen 2000:300-303; Grayson and Whitter (County Records 513); Meade 2002:18.

13. THE TRAIN THAT CARRIED MY GIRL FROM TOWN DOC WATSON

Doc Watson, guitar and vocal

(Also called "The Train That Carried the Girl from Town," "Train Carry My Girl Back Home"; from *The Watson Family* Folkways 2366, 1963 / Smithsonian Folkways 40012, 1990, recorded in August 1962)

Doc Watson (b. 1923) was born in Stoney Fork Township, North Carolina (later known as Deep Gap). Arthel Watson, nicknamed "Doc" as a teenager, was surrounded by music as a child. Many of the members of his family were singers and musicians (see *The Watson Family* Smithsonian Folkways 40012). In 1960, Ralph Rinzler traveled to Tennessee to record Clarence Ashley and encountered Watson for the first time. Thrilled by his discovery, he went on to manage Watson and introduce him to concert and nightclub audiences around the country. Rinzler produced Doc's first albums for Folkways, starting with *Old Time Music at Clarence Ashley* (Smithsonian Folkways 40029) in 1961.

Over the next 40 years, Watson achieved a status as one of the finest acoustic guitarists alive. He has continued to perform, recording dozens of albums and winning numerous awards, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences in 2004.

This song is a superb example of Doc's guitar prowess. It is an old mountain tune, which owes much to the early recording by West Virginia guitarist Frank Hutchison (1897-1945). Watson remembered, "Ever since I can remember hearing music on our family's graphophone, I've heard this tune. Frank Hutchison is the guy who did the record of "The Train That Carried My Girl from Town"; he tuned the guitar to an open D and played it with a bottleneck or pocket knife" (Watson 1971:29). Hutchison learned it from Bill Hunt, an African-American neighbor in Logan County, West Virginia (Cohen 2000:427).

Cohen 2000:426-430; Hutchison, on *White Country Blues* Columbia 47466 (CD); Meade 2002:549; *Sing Out!* vol. 24, no. 5, 1975.



14. ROCK ISLAND LINE LEAD BELLY

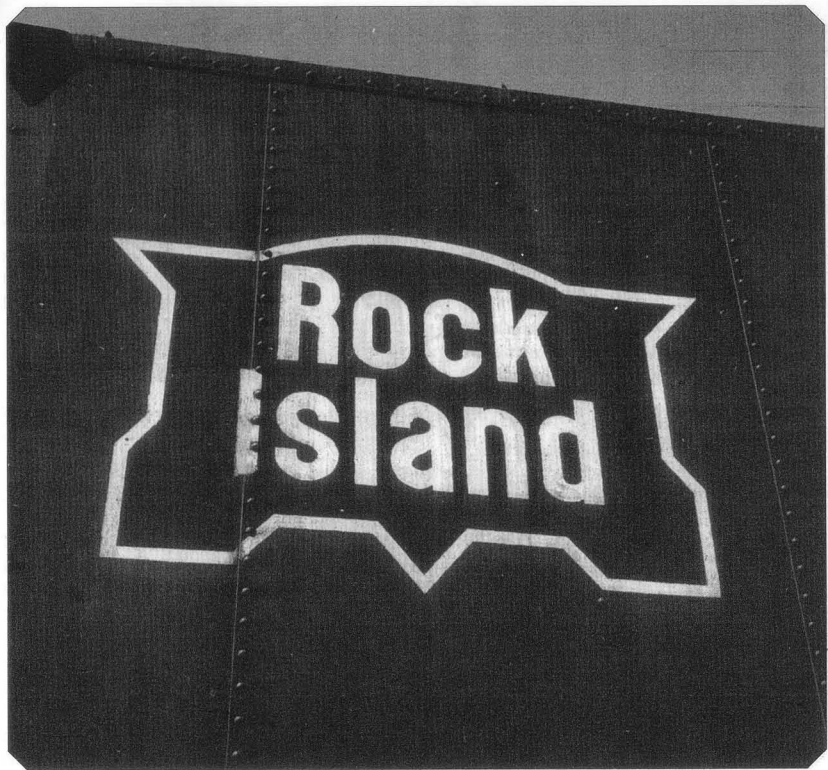
Lead Belly, guitar and vocal

(from *Lead Belly Legacy*, Vol. 2 Folkways 2014, 1953 / *Where Did You Sleep Last Night* Smithsonian Folkways 40044, 1996; recorded at New York City, 20 February 1942)

In October 1934, Lead Belly was traveling with John Lomax and his son Alan and acting as their driver. During a trip to record convicts at Cummins State Farm in Gould, Arkansas, Lead Belly first heard "Rock Island Line," a song later to be associated closely with him. It became a hit in the late 1950s for British skiffle musician Lonnie Donegan. Cohen (2000:476) believes it originated as a work song in Arkansas in the early 1900s.

For information on Lead Belly, see track 6.

Blood and Patterson 1988:235; Cohen 2000:472-477; *Sing Out!* vol. 2, no. 8, 1952.



15. LONESOME TRAIN SONNY TERRY, WOODY GUTHRIE, AND CISCO HOUSTON

Sonny Terry, harmonica and whoops; Cisco Houston, guitar; Woody Guthrie, guitar
(from *The Asch Recordings, 1939–1947, Vol. 1: Blues, Gospel and Jazz Folkways* AA1, 1966; recorded on 24 April 1944)

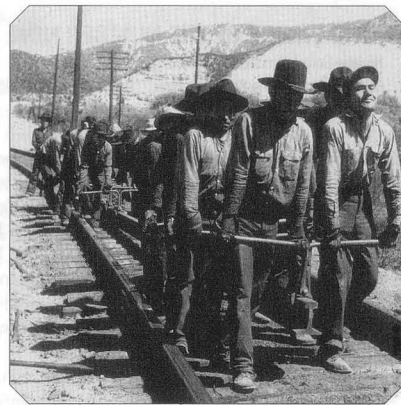
Sonny Terry (1911–1986) was a blind harmonica player from Durham, North Carolina. For many years, he preformed with his partner, Brownie McGhee. The duo were a popular act from the 1940s through the 1970s. Because of the ease with which harmonicas can imitate trains, most harmonica players have a train showpiece or two in their repertoire.

This recording comes from one of Moses Asch's "Folksay" sessions. In these sessions, any number of top folk performers in New York would stop by the studio and record dozens of songs that came to mind. This session was a marathon one in April, 1944, when Woody, Cisco, and Sonny recorded dozens of songs.

16. JOHN HENRY WOODY GUTHRIE AND CISCO HOUSTON

Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal; Cisco Houston, guitar and vocal
(Laws I1; from *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs Folkways* 2483, 1962 / *Smithsonian Folkways* 40007, 1989; recorded 19 April 1944)

When one thinks of the classic image of a folk-singer with a harmonica rack and a guitar slung over his shoulder, it is the image of Woody Guthrie that comes to mind. Guthrie (1912–1967) was a prolific songwriter, author, and artist. He composed more than 2000 songs, including the American classics "This Land Is Your Land" and "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You." He made the vast majority of his recordings for Moses Asch in Asch's



cramped little New York studio, albeit only ultimately recording about one tenth of the songs he wrote. Guthrie was a fine interpreter of traditional American folk and country songs and a marvelous composer of topical songs commenting on the political issues of the times.

"John Henry" is probably the most famous and frequently performed American folksong. As of this writing, there are more than 180 different renditions of the song in the Smithsonian folklife archive. The song deals with the legendary John Henry and the digging of the Big Bend Tunnel in West Virginia. It has been interpreted many ways, and some of the variants include West Virginia's Williamson Brothers and Curry's "Gonna Die with a Hammer in my Hand," "The Death of John Henry" by Uncle Dave Macon (1870–1952); "New John Henry Blues" by Bill Monroe (1911–1996); and "Spikedriver Blues" by Mississippi John Hurt (1893–1966). Folksinger Josh White devoted an entire side of one of his LPs to versions of the song. The first recording of the song was by Fiddlin' John Carson in 1924 (Meade 2002:61).

Blood and Patterson 1988:146; Botkin 1944:230–240; Cohen 2000:61–89, 574–576; Garst 2002:92–129; Lomax 1960:551; Meade 2002:61; Sandburg 1927:24.

17. THE WRECK OF THE NUMBER NINE ROSALIE SORRELS

Rosalie Sorrels, vocal; Jim Sorrels, guitar

(Also known as "The Brave Engineer," "On a Cold Winter's Night"; Laws G26; from *Folk Songs of Idaho and Utah* Folkways 5343, 1961)

Rosalie Sorrels (b. 1933) has been performing folksongs since the 1950s. Her first album was recorded for Folkways and released in 1961. She has numerous albums available, many on the Green Linnet label. She lives in Idaho and is well versed in the folksongs of the area.

The song is a fictional ballad written by Carson J. Robinson (1890–1957), first copyrighted in 1927, and recorded by Vernon Dalhart shortly thereafter. Dalhart was the first million-selling recording artist, and his records were hugely influential on singers in the Southern Appalachians. His repertoire included a number of "disaster ballads."

Cohen 2000:267–274; Houston 1965:56; Meade 2002:72.

18. FREIGHT TRAIN BLUES BROWNIE MCGHEE

Brownie McGhee, guitar and vocal

(from *Traditional Blues*, Vol. 1 Folkways 2421, 1960; recorded in New York City)

Walter "Brownie" McGhee (1915–1996) is well-known because of his decades-long partnership with harmonica player Sonny Terry. Originally from Knoxville, Tennessee, McGhee was part of a group of folk and blues musicians who played together in New York in the early 1940s and came to the attention of Moses Asch. McGhee went on to have an illustrious career as a blues singer and guitarist, recording with Terry and solo for numerous labels. He spent his final years in California.

This is an urban blues first recorded by two Smiths: first, Trixie, and then Clara, in 1924. It was written by Thomas A. Dorsey (1899–1993). Dorsey had an early blues career as Georgia Tom before he became one of the most important gospel-music composers of the 20th century, penning such standards as "Precious Lord" and "There'll Be Peace in the Valley." Brownie McGhee adapted it to a melody he had learned from Elizabeth Cotten (notes to FW 2421).

Cohen 2000:446–449; Trixie Smith, on *Singing the Blues* (MCA 4064).

19. THE NEW MARKET WRECK MIKE SEEGER

Mike Seeger, vocal and autoharp, Tracy Schwarz, vocal and guitar

(from *Tipple, Loom and Rail* Folkways 5273, 1977; recorded in April 1965)

Mike Seeger (b. 1933) is a member of the musical Seeger family, half brother to Pete, and son of the musicologist Charles. As a musician and a member New Lost City Ramblers, Mike was one of the most prolific recording artists on the label. Also, he was involved in recording and producing recordings by the McGee Brothers, Kilby Snow, the Stoneman Family, Dock Boggs, Elizabeth Cotten, and others.

Mike Seeger has had a long career as a performer as documenter of American music; in the process, he has become proficient at numerous instruments. He is one of the nation's authorities on American vernacular music. In recent years, he has again begun to record new collections of his music for Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

The "New Market Wreck" occurred on 24 September 1904 (not 24 December, as the lyrics state), when two Southern Railway trains collided in the vicinity of Hodge's Station, Tennessee (near New

Market). The conductor on the westbound train had misread the instructions; the local train (Number 15) was supposed to pull off on a side track and give the other train right-of-way. Sixty-two people were killed, including most of two separate funeral parties that were traveling on the eastbound train, the Carolina Special. The song was composed and copyrighted by Robert Hugh Brooks in 1906 and published as a broadside. It was a pamphlet; hence the lyric "You'll see a picture of the wreck just over on the back." It was first recorded by George Reneau (Meade 2002:51). A later version was recorded during the important Bristol, Tennessee, recording sessions in 1927 by Mr. and Mrs. Jim Baker. Seeger learned this song from the Baker version, but could not make out all the words, so his is a combined version with that of Reneau's (Archie Green, notes to FW 5273).

Bakers, on *The Bristol Sessions* (Country Music Foundation 11 (CD); Cohen 2000:227–231; Meade 2002:51.

20. JERRY, GO AND OIL THAT CAR HAYWIRE MAC

Haywire Mac, guitar and vocal

(Also known as "Jerry, Go Ile That Car"; Laws H30; from *This Land is Your Land: American Work Songs—Songs to Grow On*, Vol. 3 Folkways 7027, 1961)

Harry K. McClintock (1882–1957), known throughout his career as "Haywire Mac," spent his life as a hobo, singer, and composer. He performed for I.W.W. union meetings and on the radio. He is best known for his compositions "The Big Rock-Candy Mountain" and "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum." He had a brief moment of exposure to modern audiences when his voice was used for the opening credits for the acclaimed film *O Brother, Where Art Thou*.

Journalist Charles Lummis collected a version of "Jerry, Go Ile That Car" in 1884 during his travels. He researched the song, and wrote that "It was written in 1881, a product of the Santa Fe route. I know it was written by a roving Connaughtman who has



no other name of record than "Riley the Bum" (Cohen 2000:544). During the 19th century, many of the men who built the railroads were Irish immigrants. The song later found its way into the published songbooks of John Lomax and Carl Sandburg. It was first recorded by Haywire Mac in 1928. This version comes from a well-known children's album, *This Land is Your Land: American Work Songs—Songs to Grow On*, Vol. 3, published in 1961 by Folkways—an album that included Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston, and others.

Botkin 1953:441–442; Cohen 2000:543–546; Lomax 1960:407; Meade 2002:60; Sandburg 1927:360.

21. WAY OUT IN IDAHO ROSALIE SORRELS

Rosalie Sorrels, vocal; Jim Sorrels, guitar

(from *Folk Songs of Idaho and Utah* Folkways 5343, 1961)

In the late 19th century, the track that was laid for the Oregon Short Line (later the Union Pacific) was "narrow gauge," only 3 feet wide, compared to the standard 4 feet, 8½ inches (Sorrels, notes to F-5323). This ballad deals with the travails of a worker on this line.

Rosalie Sorrels learned this version from Blaine Stubblefield of Weiser, Idaho, who had learned it from his father. Stubblefield had recorded a longer version for Alan Lomax and the Library of Congress in 1938 (Sorrels, notes to F-5323). It is similar to the folksong "The State of Arkansas" (also titled "My Name is John Johanna").

For information on Rosalie Sorrels, see track 17.

Botkin 1953:440–441; Cohen 2000:560–566; Lomax 1941:269–270; Stubblefield, on *Railroad Songs and Ballads* (Rounder 1508 (CD))

22. OLD JOHN HENRY DIED ON THE MOUNTAIN HENRY GRADY TERRELL

Henry Grady Terrell, vocal and percussion

(from *Folk Visions and Voices: Traditional Music and Song in Northern Georgia* Folkways 34162, 1984; recorded in Athens, Georgia, 3 July 1981)

"Old John Henry Died on the Mountain" comes from a body of railroad worksongs that use John Henry as a theme. Henry Grady "Big Boy" Terrell (1918–1988), of Athens, Georgia, sings this song. It

comes from a collection of field recordings done in North Georgia by Art Rosenbaum in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Rosenbaum's work became the book *Folk Visions and Voices* and the accompanying two recordings released by Folkways in 1984. Terrell lived his whole life around Athens. He was a concrete finisher who sang as he worked. Terrell was also a gospel singer and a member of the Gospel Pilgrims (Rosenbaum, personal communication, August 2005).

Johnson 1929:71–83; Rosenbaum 1983:122–123.

23. CASEY JONES JOHN D. MOUNCE

John D. Mounce, harmonica

(Related to "Kassie Jones," "Jay Gould's Daughter," "Vanderbilt's Daughter," "Casey Jones (The Union Scab)"; Laws G1; from *Music from the Ozarks Folkways* 3812, 1964; recorded August 1958)

Many songs deal with the legend of railroad engineer Casey Jones. The best-known is the song written by vaudevillians Eddie Newton and Lawrence Seibert and published in 1909. When interviewed, Seibert and Newton stated that they got the song from an "old Negro song, started by a roundhouse worker named Wallace Saunders" (Cohen 2000:140).

John Luther Jones (1863–1900) was raised in Cayce, Kentucky; hence his nickname. He was killed when the train he was driving, the Southbound Passenger Train No. 1 of the Illinois Central Railroad, collided with part of a stopped freight train on 30 April 1900. True to the song, the fireman, Sim Webb, leapt from the train at the last moment and survived (Cohen 2000:136). Through the popularity of the songs about him, "Casey Jones" has become an American legend. This song was first recorded by Fiddlin' John Carson in 1923 (Meade 2002:44).

This is a short instrumental version of the song by harmonica player John Mounce, who was recorded by Don Hill and David Mangurian in Delaney, Arkansas, during a field-recording trip to the Ozark Mountains in 1958. At the time of this recording, Mounce was 22 years old, and played locally for "square dances, parties, clubs, and family gittotogethers" (Mounce, notes to FW 3812).

Blood and Patterson 1988:230; Botkin 1944:245–246; Cohen 2000:132–147; Lomax and Lomax 1934:36–39; Lomax and Lomax 1947:248–250; Lomax 1960:553–555; Meade 2002:44; Sandburg 1927:366; *Sing Out!* vol. 7, no. 3, 1957; *Sing Out!* vol. 8, no. 3, 1959.

24. WRECK OF THE OLD 97 POP STONEMAN

The Stoneman Family: Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman, guitar and vocal; Hattie Frost Stoneman, fiddle; Gene Stoneman, guitar; Vann Stoneman, bass; Gene Cox; banjo

(Also known as "Wreck of the Southern Old 97"; Laws G2; from *Old Time Tunes of the South Folkways* 2315, 1957; recorded in 1957)

Ernest V. Stoneman (1893–1968) was born in Carroll County, Virginia. He came from a musical family and grew up learning many of their songs. He married Hattie Frost in 1918, and settled in Bluefield, West Virginia, where he worked as a carpenter. By his own claim, in 1924 he heard a recording by fellow West Virginian Henry Whitter and felt that he could certainly sing better than that. He asked for and received auditions with Columbia and Okeh Records in New York. Stoneman's repertoire often consisted of songs written to commemorate news events and disasters. Examples include his hugely popular recording of "The Titanic" and "The Wreck of the C&O" (see track 11). As Stoneman said, "Any song with a story will go to the people's hearts because they love stories. They love stories of tragedy, a wreck or something." (*JEMF Quarterly* 7(Sept. 1967):19).

Stoneman continued to play music during the 1940s and 1950s while supplementing his income with other work. During part of this time, he worked at a Naval Ordnance Factory in Washington, D.C., where he was involved in an active bluegrass scene. His family played together as the Stoneman Family and variously in different bluegrass groups. Musician and song collector Mike Seeger recorded the Stonemans in 1957 for Folkways, thereby exposing them to folk-revival audiences. The patriarch of a large musical family, Stoneman recorded with the Stoneman Family during the 1960s and made numerous television appearances. The Stoneman Family were embraced by the mainstream country and western music audiences, and one of their LPs refers to them as "The First Family of Country Music," although the Carters could probably make a good case. Stoneman by this time had earned the respectful name of "Pop" Stoneman. He died in 1968. Guitarist Gene Stoneman passed away in 2005.

The "Wreck of the Old 97" is arguably one of the best-known American railroad songs, and its history is discussed at length in *Long Steel Rail* (Cohen 2000:197–226). On 27 September 1903, a mail train, the 97, was traveling from Washington, D.C., to Atlanta. Behind schedule, at Monroe, Virginia, a new crew, led by engineer Joseph A. "Steve" Broady, took over and tried to make up for lost time. Traveling through Danville, Virginia, the 97 failed to make a curve leading up to a bridge. The train flew off the bridge, and all eight aboard died.

The song was first recorded by Henry Whitter (1923), and then by Vernon Dalhart (1924). The Dalhart version is historically significant because his recording (backed with the "Prisoner's Song") was the first million-selling country record. It is interesting to note that a few words and names were changed in the Dalhart version. One can trace the source of many of the modern folk and country-music versions of the song by which words are used (e.g., whether Joseph Broady is "Steve" or "Pete," etc.).

After its popularity rose, the song became the topic of one of the first large copyright legal cases. The case involved the claim of authorship by David Graves George against the claim of Charles Noell, Fred Lewey, and Henry Whitter. After years of back-and-forth court cases, the case was eventually settled in favor of Noell, Lewey, and Whitter. The melody of the song is taken from Henry Clay Work's 19th century song "The Ship That Never Returned."

Botkin 1953:449–450; Cohen 2000:197–226; Dalhart (King 3620 (CD); Houston 1965:37; Meade 2002:45–46.

25. MIDNIGHT SPECIAL LEAD BELLY

Lead Belly, guitar and vocal

(from *Bourgeois Blues* Smithsonian Folkways 40045, 1997)

According to Alan Lomax (interviewed during the film *Folkways: A Vision Shared*), this song was created in Sugarland Prison in Texas: it referred to the Midnight Special, a train that ran by the prison at night and became a symbol for freedom. If written in Texas, it certainly spread quickly, for the Library of Congress recorded versions of it as sung by prisoners in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, all during the 1930s. Cohen (2000:479) cites research that traces elements in the song to a Houston jailbreak that occurred in 1923. It was recorded and frequently performed by Dave Cutrell with McGinty's Oklahoma Cowboy Band in the mid-1920s. Lead Belly's arrangement of it became the standard one for many of the folk groups of the 1960s and for the rock group Creedence Clearwater Revival in the early 1970s (Place, notes to SFW 40045, 1997).

For information on Lead Belly, see track 6.

Cohen 2000:478–484; Lomax and Lomax 1947:292; Meade 2002:422; Sandburg 1927:26–27.

26. WABASH CANNONBALL DOC WATSON

Doc Watson, guitar, harmonica, and vocal

(Also known as "The Cannonball," "From Shore to Shore"; from *Jean Ritchie and Don Watson at Folk City Folkways* 2426,

1963 / Smithsonian Folkways 40005, 1990; recorded in 1963)

The *Wabash Cannonball* was originally a mythical train, the train of hoboes' dreams. Eventually, more than one train on the Wabash Railroad (later part of the Norfolk and Western) were christened the "Wabash Cannonball" (Cohen 2000:374).

Copyrighted by William Kindt in 1904, the song was based on an earlier song, the "Great Island Route," copyrighted in 1882 by J. A. Roff (Cohen 2000:374). It has been recorded many times, but the two most significant versions were those of the Carter Family (1929) and Roy Acuff (1936). Doc Watson credits both Acuff and the Carters for his version.

For information about Doc Watson, see track 13.

Acuff, Capitol 91621 (CD); Blood and Patterson 1988:236; Botkin 1953:462; Carter Family, Rounder 1066 (CD); Cohen 2000:373–381; Lomax 1960:410–411; Meade 2002:310; Seeger 1961:85; *Sing Out!* vol. 16, no. 4, 1966.



27. LOST TRAIN BLUES VERNON SUTPHIN

V. L. Sutphin, harmonica

(from *Close to Home: Old Time Music from the Mike Seeger Collection* Smithsonian Folkways 40097, 1997; recorded near Witman, Md., early winter 1956)

Vernon L. Sutphin (1921–1995) was recorded by Mike Seeger in the late 1950s. He was given his first harmonica by Henry Whitter, who was probably his source for the song (Mike Seeger, notes to SFW 40097, p. 4).

28. NEW RIVER TRAIN IRON MOUNTAIN STRING BAND

The Iron Mountain String Band: Eric Davidson, banjo and vocal; Caleb Finch, fiddle; Brooke Moyer, guitar
(from *Walkin' in the Parlor Folkways* 2477, 1975; recorded in May 1975)

The Iron Mountain String Band has been playing old-time music for forty years. The core of the group has been Eric Davidson (b. 1937) and Caleb Finch on banjo and fiddle, respectively. Davidson and Finch and their associates began traveling to the southern Appalachians to seek out the older old-time stringband musicians from whom they could learn (Davidson, notes to FW 2477). The recordings of these musicians they made while there led to numerous Folkways releases.

Founded in New York City, the group was influenced by the music of the legendary Grayson County Bogtrotters, the greatest of the Galax, Virginia, stringbands in the 1930s (Davidson, notes to FW 2477). They were able to play and study with Wade and Fields Ward, two of the original members of the Bogtrotters.

Working as biologists in Southern California, Davidson and Finch still have the group together, and it recorded a new album in 2002.

Brooke Moyer, who joined the group in 1974, accompanies them on guitar.

The "New River Train" is a popular country and bluegrass tune. The New River runs from North Carolina into central West Virginia. Norm Cohen believes the song to be from Virginia, as the earliest references to the song and the earliest recordings of the song are from musicians from south-central Virginia (Cohen 2000:468). The area around Galax, Hillsville, and Fries, Virginia has long been a fertile



ground for old-time music. The song was first recorded by Henry Whitter (of Fries, Virginia) in 1924 (Meade 2002:528).

The train mentioned in the song is probably the one on the section of the Norfolk and Western railroad running through Galax and Fries and following the New River in Virginia (Cohen 2000:467). Blood and Patterson 1988:89; Cohen 2000:466–471; Meade 2002:528; Seeger 1961:74.

29. EXCERPT FROM "THREE LITTLE ENGINES AND 33 CARS"

(from *Sounds of Steam Locomotives, No. 3: Colorado Narrow Gauge Stack Music Folkways* 6154, 1958; recorded by Vinton H. Wight)

An authority on railroads, Vinton Wight (1908–1995) recorded and produced four albums of the sounds of steam locomotives for Folkways in the 1950s. He retired from a career in audio-engineering, and pursued a lifelong interest in trains. After hearing a steam engine passing while on vacation in the Canadian Rockies, he realized that the days of the steam locomotive were numbered and they needed to be documented. These albums were part of the Folkways "science series," marketed to schools and libraries.

These recordings are of a train climbing Cumbres Pass on the Colorado–New Mexico border. Wight donated his original railroad recordings to the Smithsonian in 1990.



Complete lyrics for this recording can be found on the Smithsonian Folkways web page (www.si.edu/folkways). Sample audio files of all the tracks in the Smithsonian Folkways collection can also be found on our website, and can be bought through the site Smithsonian Global Sound, www.smithsonianglobalsound.org.

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- Also consult *Sing Out!*, a magazine published in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and the journal *JEMF Quarterly*.

SUGGESTED LISTENING AND OTHER FOLK RECORDINGS FROM SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

- F-2013 *900 Miles and Other Railroad Songs* Cisco Houston (1953)
- F-5003 *Frontier Ballads* Pete Seeger (1954)
- F-5273 *Tipple, Loom and Rail: Songs of the Industrialization of the South* Mike Seeger (1966)
- Rounder 1128 *Steel Rails: Classic Railroad Songs, Vol. 1* (1997)
- Rounder 1129 *Mystery Train: Classic Railroad Songs, Vol. 2* (1997)
- Rounder 1143 *Train 45: Railroad Songs of the Early 1900s* (1998)
- Rounder 1144 *Night Train: Classic Railroad Songs, Vol. 3* (1998)
- Rounder 1152 *Freight Train Blues: Classic Railroad Songs, Vol. 4* (2002)
- Rounder 1508 *Railroad Songs and Ballads* (1997) (From the Library of Congress collections)
- Smithsonian Folkways 40090 *The Anthology of American Folk Music* (1952, 1997)

C R E D I T S

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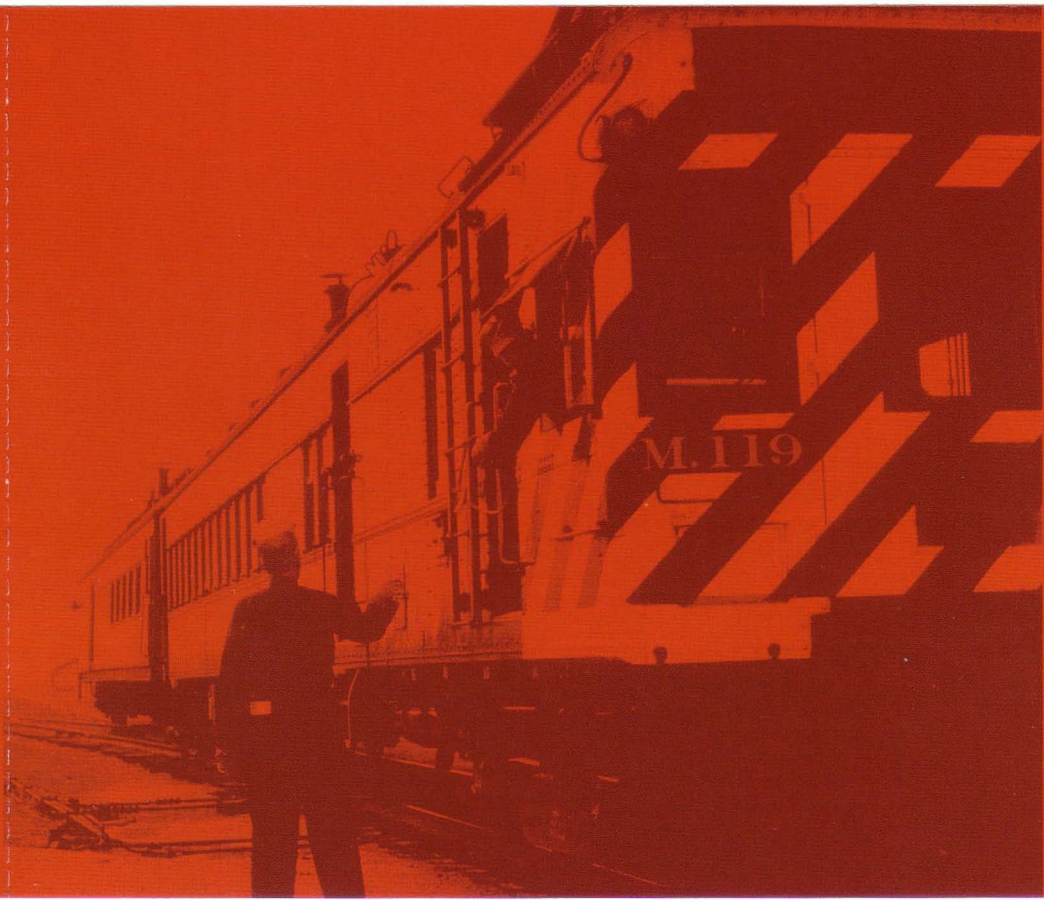
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CLASSIC RAILROAD SONGS

SFW CD 40192 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings • Compiled and annotated by Jeff Place

As 19th-century America expanded, so too did the “ribbons of iron” that crisscrossed the vast landscape and sparked the imagination of music-makers. Work songs, ballads recounting riveting exploits, and instrumental echoes of the once familiar sounds of the steam locomotive have enshrined the railroad in our musical memory. *Classic Railroad Songs* mines the Smithsonian Folkways archives to create this tribute to a favorite American source of inspiration. **EXTENSIVE NOTES, 36-PAGE BOOKLET, 71 MINUTES.**

1. **An excerpt from “Rail Dynamics”**
RECORDED BY EMORY COOK 0:24
2. **Train 45** THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS 2:18
3. **Kassie Jones** FURRY LEWIS 2:56
4. **Jay Gould’s Daughter** PETE SEEGER 2:38
5. **Railroad Bill** WALT ROBERTSON 2:08
6. **Linin’ Track** LEAD BELLY 1:15
7. **Freight Train** ELIZABETH COTTEN 2:43
8. **Drill, Ye Tarriers, Drill** CISCO HOUSTON 2:30
9. **Zack, the Mormon Engineer** L. M. HILTON 2:02
10. **Lost Train Blues** THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAIN BOYS 2:57
11. **The F. F. V.** ANNIE WATSON 3:52
12. **He’s Coming to Us Dead** THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS 3:15
13. **The Train That Carried My Girl from Town**
DOC WATSON 2:18
14. **Rock Island Line** LEAD BELLY 2:03
15. **Lonesome Train** SONNY TERRY, WOODY GUTHRIE,
AND CISCO HOUSTON 3:31
16. **John Henry** WOODY GUTHRIE AND CISCO HOUSTON 2:42
17. **The Wreck of the Number Nine** ROSALIE SORRELS 1:36
18. **Freight Train Blues** BROWNIE MCGHEE 3:36
19. **The New Market Wreck** MIKE SEEGER 3:39
20. **Jerry, Go Oil That Car** HAYWIRE MAC 2:38
21. **Way Out in Idaho** ROSALIE SORRELS 3:34
22. **Old John Henry Died on the Mountain**
HENRY GRADY TERRELL 1:55
23. **Casey Jones** JOHN D. MOUNCE 0:20
24. **Wreck of the Old 97** POP STONEMAN 2:51
25. **Midnight Special** LEAD BELLY 2:03
26. **Wabash Cannonball** DOC WATSON 3:17
27. **Lost Train Blues** VERNON SUTPHIN 1:13
28. **New River Train** IRON MOUNTAIN STRING BAND 4:26
29. **Excerpt from “Three Little Engines and 33 Cars”**
RECORDED BY VINTON WIGHT 0:25



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