

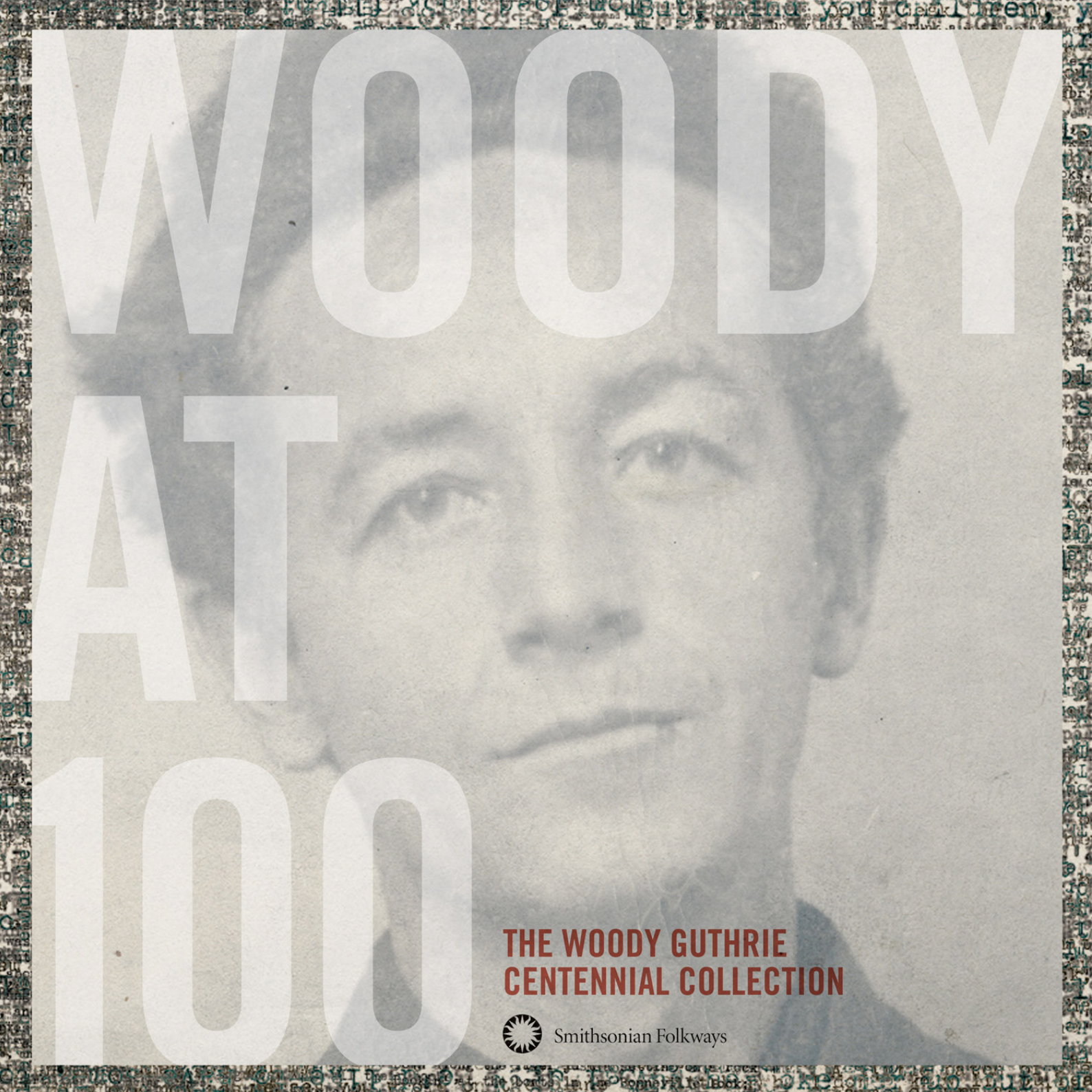
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SMITHSONIAN
**FOLK
WAYS**
RECORDINGS

**THE WOODY GUTHRIE
CENTENNIAL COLLECTION**



Smithsonian Folkways



WOODY AT 100

**THE WOODY GUTHRIE
CENTENNIAL COLLECTION**



Smithsonian Folkways

WOODY

AT

THE WOODY GUTHRIE
CENTENNIAL COLLECTION

PRODUCED AND ANNOTATED BY JEFF PLACE AND ROBERT SANTELLI

100

Woody at 100: The Woody Guthrie Centennial Collection
SFW CD 40200

Produced and annotated by Jeff Place and Robert Santelli

Published in 2012 by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560

www.folkways.si.edu

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Sound recordings © Smithsonian Folkways Recordings unless otherwise noted.

Album cover art © 2012 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

This book includes bibliographic references.

Printed in China by Tri-Plex Packaging www.tri-plexpkg.com. Discs manufactured in the United States.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record has been requested for this book.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9704942-4-5

CONTENTS

2	TRACK LISTINGS
4	WOODY AT 100
10	THE MUSIC OF WOODY GUTHRIE
22	WOODY GUTHRIE'S LOS ANGELES RECORDINGS
25	DISC ONE
31	DISC TWO
36	DISC THREE
40	SOURCES & SUGGESTED READING
41	AVAILABLE RECORDINGS
43	RECORDING SESSIONS

TRACK LISTINGS

DISC ONE

1. **THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND**
(ALTERNATE VERSION) 2:44
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
2. **PASTURES OF PLENTY** 2:25
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
3. **RIDING IN MY CAR (CAR SONG)** 1:49
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Folkways Music Publishers Inc., BMI
4. **THE GRAND COULEE DAM** 2:10
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
5. **TALKING DUST BOWL** 1:51
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
6. **SO LONG, IT'S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YUH**
(DUSTY OLD DUST) 3:40
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Folkways Music Publishers Inc., BMI
7. **RAMBLIN' ROUND** 2:14
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
8. **PHILADELPHIA LAWYER** 2:28
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
9. **HARD TRAVELIN'** 2:31
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
10. **PRETTY BOY FLOYD** 3:00
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
11. **HOBO'S LULLABY** 2:23
Goebel Reeves / Sanga Music Inc. & Figs D. Music, BMI
12. **TALKING COLUMBIA** 2:28
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
13. **THE SINKING OF THE REUBEN JAMES** 3:00
Woody Guthrie / Universal MCA Music Publishing, BMI
14. **JESUS CHRIST** 2:37
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
15. **GYPSY DAVY** 2:49
arr. Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
16. **NEW YORK TOWN** 2:35
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
17. **GOING DOWN THE ROAD (FEELING BAD)** 2:56
Woody Guthrie-Lee Hays / WGP & TRO-Hollis Music Inc., BMI
18. **HARD, AIN'T IT HARD** 2:42
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
19. **THE BIGGEST THING THAT MAN HAS EVER DONE** (THE GREAT HISTORICAL BUM) 2:17
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI

20. **THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND**
(STANDARD VERSION) 2:16
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
21. **JARAMA VALLEY** 2:52
Woody Guthrie-Pete Seeger-Lee Hays / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc.-Stormking Music Inc., BMI
22. **WHY, OH WHY?** 3:27
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
23. **I'VE GOT TO KNOW** 5:22
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI

DISC TWO

1. **BETTER WORLD A-COMIN'** 3:05
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
2. **WHEN THAT GREAT SHIP WENT DOWN**
(THE GREAT SHIP) 3:17
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
3. **A DOLLAR DOWN AND A DOLLAR A WEEK** 1:35
Cisco Houston / Sanga Music Inc., BMI
4. **TALKING CENTRALIA** 3:24
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
5. **1913 MASSACRE** 3:35
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
6. **DIRTY OVERALLS** 1:55
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
7. **MY DADDY (FLIES A SHIP IN THE SKY)** 2:33
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
8. **WORRIED MAN BLUES** 2:58
A.P. Carter-Sara Carter-Maybelle Carter / Peer International Corporation, BMI
9. **HANGKNOT, SLIPKNOT** 2:30
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
10. **BUFFALO SKINNERS** 2:16
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications, BMI
11. **HOWDI DO** 1:40
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
12. **JACKHAMMER JOHN** 2:36
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
13. **THE RANGER'S COMMAND** 2:49
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
14. **SO LONG, IT'S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YOU**
(WWII VERSION) 2:45
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Folkways Music Publishers Inc., BMI
15. **WHAT ARE WE WAITING ON?** 2:07
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI

16. **LINDBERGH** 3:10
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
17. **LUDLOW MASSACRE** 3:28
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
18. **BAD LEE BROWN (COCAINE BLUES)** 2:14
arr. Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
19. **TWO GOOD MEN** 3:45
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
20. **FARMER-LABOR TRAIN** 2:49
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
21. **THE JOLLY BANKER** 2:50
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
22. **WE SHALL BE FREE** 3:01
Huddie Ledbetter / WGP & TRO-Folkways Music Publishers Inc., BMI

DISC THREE

THE LOS ANGELES RECORDINGS

1. **I AIN'T GOT NO HOME (IN THIS WORLD ANYMORE)** 3:26
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
2. **THEM BIG CITY WAYS** 2:27
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
3. **DO RE MI** 3:33
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
4. **SKID ROW SERENADE** 3:00
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
5. **RADIO PROGRAM: THE BALLAD GAZETTE WITH WOODY GUTHRIE** 14:20

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI

WHAT DID THE DEEP BLUE SEA SAY?
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI

BLOW YE WINDS

TROUBLE ON THE WATERS
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI

BLOW THE MAN DOWN

NORMANDY WAS HER NAME
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc., BMI

THE SINKING OF THE REUBEN JAMES
Woody Guthrie / Universal MCA Music Publishing, BMI

6. **BBC: CHILDREN'S HOUR JULY 7, 1944** 10:19

INTRO-WABASH CANNONBALL

900 MILES
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI

STAGGER LEE

PRETTY BOY FLOYD
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
7. **PEOPLE'S SONGS HOOTENANNY** 8:53

LADIES AUXILIARY
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI

WEAVER'S LIFE
Dorsey Dixon / Wynwood Music Company Inc., BMI
8. **WNYC RADIO PROGRAM: FOLK SONGS OF AMERICA DECEMBER 12, 1940** 16:24

JOHN HARDY
adapted and additional words by Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI

JESSE JAMES

TOM JOAD
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
9. **RECKLESS TALK** 1:42
Woody Guthrie / Woody Guthrie Publications Inc., BMI
10. **ALL WORK TOGETHER** 2:39
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Folkways Music Publishers Inc., BMI
11. **MY LITTLE SEED** 2:30
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI
12. **GOODNIGHT LITTLE CATHY** 2:20
Woody Guthrie / WGP & TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI

WOODY AT 100

Robert Santelli

They called him Woody, short for Woodrow—Woodrow Wilson Guthrie. Being named after an early 20th century Nobel Peace Prize-winning president, who wore a black top hat, starched shirts, and a stone-cold countenance, just didn't seem to fit the scrawny five-foot-six folksinger with his tousled hair, work clothes, and aversion to formality. So "Woody" was the perfect nickname.

He came from Okemah, Oklahoma, a small prairie town south of Tulsa and east of Oklahoma City. But he seemed to be from anywhere and everywhere. At times he lived in Texas, California, New York, and a whole lot of places in between. But he never really made a lasting and true home in any of them. The way Woody saw it, they were all just stops on the endless highway.

To say that he was restless and always on the move would not be an exaggeration. He picked up and packed up at will, regardless of responsibility or circumstance. He saw the entire breadth of America as his big backyard and wandered through it and in it, by rail and by car, sometimes by thumb or by foot, whenever the fancy struck.

Along the way, Woody Guthrie described what he saw and heard. He filled notebooks with stuff: essays, poems, lyrics, letters, descriptive notations, illustrations, cartoons, funny things, and philosophical things. You could read a piece of his prose and swear that it was penned by a person who worked in the Texas Panhandle oil fields under a hot sun, or hammered fence posts into Oklahoma's flatland.

Woody certainly did a bit of that blue-collar work, but he really wasn't much of a common laborer. He was more apt to write or sing about the workingman with the calloused hands than join him. People who knew Woody well understood that underneath the Okie veneer was a complex artist whose need to express himself was every bit as strong as his need to see the light and seek the truth.

It's hard to know how much of Woody's style was entirely his own. Clearly, he was cut from the same cloth as that plain-speaking, common-thinking fellow Oklahoman, Will Rogers. And for a man who claimed to read books on politics, religion, and history, his vocabulary was remarkably homegrown when it needed to be. Most of the time he preferred to speak in a deliberate Southwest drawl, much like the people he sang about, rather than as a learned man who lived in New York City, though he could do that, too. Fellow folksinger Pete Seeger once said that Woody Guthrie was the perfect embodiment of the "genius of simplicity."

Guthrie knew the great American novelist John Steinbeck, the actor Will Geer, and the musicologist Alan Lomax, among many other erudite friends and associates. They all loved Woody for his carefree ways and his roughhewn disposition. They said he was an authentic Okie: someone who had been displaced from Oklahoma in the 1930s due to the wind and the dust that robbed the soil of its nutrients, failed the crops, and led the bank to take the land and the farmer to take to the road and end up in California, looking to feed his family and keep his dignity. Woody came from these roots, to be sure. He looked the part and played it, and eventually became the Okie poster boy, especially in East Coast intellectual circles.

But Woody was no ordinary Okie, not unless all Okies could write songs that beautifully and artfully reflected an America in crisis and put their finger on the pulse of a people and the pain they felt, the disappointment they experienced, and especially the hope they lost. Guthrie could do all that, and more. In his lifetime he gave us songs—great and necessary songs—that have become a soundtrack of an era and a vital part of our folk song treasury.

Guthrie wrote children's songs. Guthrie wrote protest songs. He wrote love songs and patriotic songs and sad song stories that make your eyes well up each and every time you hear them. Guthrie wrote anti-war songs and even pro-war songs, especially when he fumed at Adolf Hitler and the World War II Nazi war machine. Some of his very best songs were history lessons. And, by God, he wrote songs about the Dust Bowl. Come to think of it, he even wrote songs about Him, too, and His Son. "This Land Is Your Land" was once called "God Blessed America," and "Jesus Christ" will always be one of Woody's true gems.

Woody wrote and wrote—literally hundreds and hundreds of songs and partial songs, with lyrics and verses just waiting for a finishing touch. Guthrie needed to write like he needed to breathe and to roam. And though his guitar picking was only adequate and his voice both nasal and lacking deep soul, the odd combination of all of the above turned him into an American music icon.

Woody Guthrie was born one hundred years ago on July 14, 1912, which is Bastille Day, a day when we celebrate a revolution—how appropriate, since Guthrie was certainly an American revolutionary. He stood for change—not violent change, mind you, but the kind that happened when people got together and pressed for it with song. He thought the banks and the bigwigs had done in the workingman. He couldn't figure why America had failed its poorest folks during the Great Depression when they needed help the most. Listening to his Dust Bowl songs today is like staring at a Dorothea Lange photograph. With both, you can taste the dust on your tongue and the dryness in the air.

Despite being a one-of-a-kind folk poet, Woody wasn't a saint. Indeed, he had his faults. He couldn't hold a job, though he was a pretty fair sign painter and radio host. Responsibility wasn't his forte, especially when it came to caring for his family. He had good intentions when he married—three times—and fathered his children—eight—but somehow he'd lose his domestic focus and then he'd be off somewhere, singing for striking farm workers or hopping freights. It wasn't that he was lazy or callous to commitment. Inside Woody lived an urgency to sing and write and hit the road, and when that spirit grabbed hold of him, there was nothing that could curtail the energy boiling his blood. And so off he went, with nary a worry and sometimes not even a word as to his destination.

Guthrie traveled and wrote prolifically; he did enough of both to fill two, maybe three, lifetimes by mid-century standards. And it all happened in such a condensed period in his life—from the mid-1930s to the late 1940s, a decade and a half in all. Before heading to California in early 1937, he roamed and rambled a bit around Oklahoma and Texas, getting a taste for the road and developing an insatiable curiosity that carried him along. He played music and painted signs, earning whatever he could in the darkest days of the Depression, all the while creating a base for a body of music that would soon come splashing out of him.

Many of his best songs were short stories put to music. Steinbeck, author of the seminal Depression novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, marveled at how much Guthrie could pack into a song. "It takes me a whole novel to say what the little bastard says in a few verses," Steinbeck once said. Complex themes found remarkably simple yet wonderfully effective interpretations in Guthrie songs. And when he didn't author an idea, musical or otherwise, he simply borrowed one or two. If Guthrie liked a melody and figured he couldn't write a better one, he took it and put his words to it. Today, music business lawyers might call what Guthrie did theft, intentional or not. Woody would have shrugged at the insinuation, perhaps suggesting, like the bluesmen of the day and even other folk artists and groups, including the seminal Carter Family, that to use an old melody for a new song was just part of the American folk process, which it was.

Guthrie's songwriting career was cut short by Huntington's chorea, a gnawing, particularly nasty disease that robbed him of his wit, then his body, then finally, in 1967, his life. His was a slow death. By the early 1950s it was clear to his family and those who knew him well that something was definitely wrong with his health. By the mid-'50s he had been hospitalized for good; an early diagnosis was alcoholism, followed by insanity, and finally the real reason for his mental and physical disintegration.

He continued to write, but the genius was gone. As control of his muscles withered, so did his ability to sing and play. Slowly, the ever-restless Woody Guthrie became bedridden, a mere memory of his former self. The road beckoned, but Guthrie couldn't answer. A young Bob Dylan, fresh in from Minnesota, picked up where Woody left off. Others, too, used him as a source of inspiration. The list is long, but some names stand out more than others: Phil Ochs, Country Joe McDonald, Joan Baez, John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen, Billy Bragg, Ani DiFranco, John Mellencamp, Tom Morello.

Arlo Guthrie took not only inspiration but also some of his father's ways with language and his Will Rogers-like sense of humor. Arlo accepted the challenge of being Woody's son and at the same time struck his own unique presence in American folk music (remember "Alice's Restaurant," anyone?). Pete Seeger also could be on the list of those inspired by Woody Guthrie since he undoubtedly fell under Guthrie's influence, especially in the late '30s and '40s. But, unlike the others, Pete Seeger

was also a contemporary of Woody's: a singing partner, a close friend, and a fellow foot soldier in folk music's first great revival in the 20th century.

Actually, Seeger's status in American folk music comes closest to Guthrie's; Seeger's career was much longer and his battles against the Establishment more intense. In the 1950s, when American folk music was under siege by parts of the government and rabid anti-communists sought out anyone with previous socialist connections, Seeger endured while Woody became infirmed. Seeger, too, is an American folk treasure, and without his tireless efforts to keep so many of Guthrie's songs at the forefront of American folk music, we might not know Guthrie as well as we do today.

Seeger could have been Woody's press agent, so resolutely did he keep Guthrie's name and music alive during the tough times in the 1950s when the House Un-American Activities Committee branded most any song or artist with a presumed taint of red a dangerous communist and an agent of the Soviet Union. With Woody sick and unable to defend himself, his songs, or the value of folk music in general, Pete Seeger took up the fight, as did a handful of other brave folk souls. Because of them, both the political and social protest music tradition in America remains intact. All that needs to happen is for someone to start the engine again.

It was Seeger and Springsteen who sang Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" at President Barack Obama's inaugural celebration in January 2009 on a cold but spiritually very warm day in Washington, D.C. There they were, two of the most important artists in American roots music, singing a song that some people believe is our alternative national anthem. You have to wonder, though, how many millions of Americans watching that historic event knew "This Land Is Your Land" was written by Guthrie as a rebuttal to Irving Berlin's "God Bless America."

It wasn't that Guthrie had anything personal against Berlin or Kate Smith, the singer who debuted the song on American radio in 1938. (It's true that a number of music historians believe otherwise; however, there is no hard evidence that Guthrie harbored hatred for "God Bless America" or its author. He simply got tired of hearing the song.) Interestingly, the now classic "God Bless America" is also considered an alternative national anthem by many Americans, but not necessarily the same ones who give similar status to "This Land Is Your Land." Back in 1940, when he wrote "This Land Is Your Land," Guthrie sought to put his views of America into a song less euphoric than "God Bless America" but equally passionate and patriotic. Little did he know at the time how much he succeeded in his task.

Guthrie had seen a good part of America, and from his vantage point some of its best physical virtues were off-limits to everyone except the owners of the vast stretches of "private property" he had come across in his travels. You don't get that message from the "This Land" lyrics most people are familiar with. But there are a couple of verses almost always left out in any singing of the song that tell the rest of Guthrie's story. Those lyrics have to do with a great land grab of what he thought was the people's land. Another forgotten verse acknowledges Depression-era American families finding it hard to put food on the table and clothes on their kids' backs.

As I went walking I saw a sign there
And on the sign it said "No Trespassing."
But on the other side it didn't say nothing,
That side was made for you and me.

In the shadow of the steeple I saw my people,
By the relief office I seen my people;
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking
Is this land made for you and me?

Seeger and Springsteen sang "This Land Is Your Land" on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial as a celebration of America. The country had just elected its first African American president, something that was unthinkable in Guthrie's day. Racial equality was one element of American injustice that Guthrie fought tirelessly for in his music and his actions. Sadly, Woody wasn't around to see it, but his song was sung on that historic day. It was a triumphant moment for both Woody Guthrie and for American folk music.

Woody Guthrie is in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. He should

be in the Country Music Hall of Fame, and maybe someday he will be. His music is in the Grammy Hall of Fame, and he's been honored with numerous other awards. He's even on an American postage stamp. He wasn't much for these kinds of accolades, but they were well deserved nonetheless.

In Cleveland in 1996, the Rock Hall celebrated Guthrie's legacy in its first ever American Music Masters program. The event included an education conference, exhibit, hootenannies, children's programs, and a major concert at Severance Hall, home of the esteemed Cleveland Orchestra. Woody's music was performed again and again that weekend. Springsteen, Seeger, and Arlo Guthrie were there, as were Country Joe, Ani DiFranco, and the Indigo Girls. Even Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Woody's old friend, came in from California.

With all the hoopla that surrounded Woody that weekend in September, I remember wondering what Arlo thought his father would have made of all the fuss. Arlo pondered the question. "Woody wouldn't have been much of a rock and roller had he lived to take part in all that has happened to American music since his passing," said Arlo. "But I suspect he would have gone on along for the ride."

Another great musical revolutionary, Bob Marley, might not have been aware of Woody Guthrie in the teeming ghetto of Kingston, Jamaica, where he wrote his early masterpieces of political and social protest including "Get Up, Stand Up," "Dem Belly Full (But We Hungry)," and "Redemption Song." But clearly Marley had evoked Guthrie, even if he didn't realize it. "Me father was jus' like Woody Guthrie," recalled his son Ziggy. "They had the same soul, the same dreams, the same strength, and the same drive, y' know, to speak the truth with their music" (Marley 2011).

And yet, as far-reaching as Woody's influence has been in American music in the post-World War II years and beyond, it is strikingly odd that in our nation's recent Great Recession so few of our young folk and rock artists have recalled Guthrie's songs and legacy. Because so many Americans have been out of work and the newspapers filled with foreclosures and bank bailouts—the very issues that Guthrie railed against nearly three-quarters of a century ago—the spirit of Woody Guthrie is as restless and as anxious as it's ever been. If he were still alive, he'd have more songs to write than he could handle.

With our nation caught in a self-constructed economic torture chamber, where the workingman feels the pain the most, America needs a few good Guthrie-esque tunes to remind us of what's at stake and to bring emotional clarity to the economic confusion that engulfs so many of us. This year, in his centennial celebration, have we forgotten what Guthrie stood for? Has music simply become sonic wallpaper, coming to young people in ear buds that fill the head, but not the heart or soul?

In America, music has always been an agent for social and political change. You could trace such action all the way back to our nation's war for independence when lyricists sold politicized verses called broadsides on colonial street corners, new words attached to old melodies. Those words had a purpose: to inform, to rally, to inspire colonists to think like a new nation and break free from the bondage of Great Britain. The idea that songs and lyrics are a weapon in any national struggle remains both important and valid.

So, Woody Guthrie certainly wasn't the first to use music to foster change in this country. It started long before he came along. But the sheer breadth of his work—so many songs that we're still discovering them, more than a thousand in all, so far—makes Guthrie the most prolific protest tunesmith of them all. He was the one songwriter who was most wedded to the idea that a good song could do good work.

Though many of Guthrie's best songs were politically motivated, they also possessed a poetic and narrative genius that ranks Guthrie right up there with writers who sought to capture the essence of this country with words and ideas. I'm thinking about Walt Whitman, Carl Sandburg, John Steinbeck, Jack Kerouac. And it wasn't just songs that Guthrie gave us. Bound for Glory, which he called his mid-1940s autobiographical "novel," is a delicious slice of American folk literature, rich in dialogue and detail and ripe with accounts of a traveling troubadour, on the road meeting the real America for the first time.

Guthrie is our folk music laureate. And today, as much as yesterday, and probably even more so tomorrow, we need to remember his best songs, relearn them if we're musicians, relisten to them if we're not. Teach them to our kids. Recall them when we need to be reminded of the power of song. Here in this set are not only the best of what Guthrie wrote and recorded, but also rarities and radio programs never before contained in any record package. Included too are newly discovered songs and versions of old songs that add new life to the originals, and a sort of "essential" collection of Guthrie tunes, pulled from the hundreds still stocked in the Smithsonian and Library of Congress.

I have to admit that, as a folk fan and music historian, I've been pretty impacted by Woody Guthrie

for much of my life. As a Baby Boomer, I came to him the same way many other Boomers did: first we heard Dylan, and then we worked backwards, discovering Guthrie songs here and there, and then when we poked deep enough, out gushed all the great songs—the Dust Bowl Ballads, the Asch and Folkways recordings, and then *Bound for Glory*, and eventually the wonderful biographies by Joe Klein (*Woody Guthrie: A Life*) and Ed Cray (*Ramblin' Man: The Life and Times of Woody Guthrie*).

You don't have to agree with Woody's politics to be moved by him. You can embrace him merely for his ability to write great American folk songs. But I also believe you can't help but admire his courage to speak out and show concern for the common man in this country. Whatever Woody Guthrie was or wasn't, one thing is for sure: he genuinely cared for those down on their luck. They struck a nerve in Woody's heart, and he did the thing he thought he could do best to help them: he sang to them and wrote songs about them.

Before Jeff Place and I began work on this set and before I kicked into a second draft of my book, *This Land Is Your Land: Woody Guthrie and the Journey of an American Folk Song*, I had this yearning to trace Woody's tracks, to visit the places where he'd been and sang his songs. Living in Los Angeles and working downtown, it was easy for me to walk over to Skid Row where Woody would often play for the hobos in the late 1930s. I checked out nearby Glendale where he lived with Mary, his first wife, and their young family and wrote a number of his early classics. I drove over to Topanga Canyon, where he lived for a short time later on in his life.

I had already been to Okemah, Oklahoma, his birthplace, and stood on the foundation of what once was the Guthrie family home. I attended the Woody Guthrie Folk Festival there, and had been many times to the Woody Guthrie Archives in Manhattan and then in Mount Kisco, New York. I'd also been to Coney Island where he lived with his second family, and once even visited the old northern New Jersey site where Greystone Hospital stood. Guthrie spent some of his final days there.

But it was driving through the Texas Panhandle last year on my way to Pampa, the place where Woody first began playing music, which left the biggest impression on me. Pampa is a town that I'd never been to before, and no wonder. It takes a long time to drive there from most anywhere but Amarillo. It took me a few hours to get to Pampa from Dallas where I had rented a car. The place is hardly a tourist destination. Situated in the top reach of the Panhandle, near the Oklahoma border, Pampa sort of sits up there by itself, minding its own business, its people trying to make ends meet.

On the way to Pampa, I played the tracks that would ultimately fill this set. Sitting behind the wheel, the window open to let the warm Panhandle air and occasional smell of livestock into the car, it struck me how much of Guthrie's soul still resonates in the dry flat land there. Here it was, nearly a half century since his passing, and I couldn't help but recall the reams of songs originally inspired by the Panhandle landscape and the people who once populated it.

Back when Woody was here, however, the Panhandle was in the midst of a great drought that created the Dust Bowl. It was a place practically condemned by Mother Nature. "Dusty ol' dust" was the way Guthrie often described the Panhandle air and the land back then. Clouds of dust roamed the sky, now and then coming together to form a destructive storm that would coat everything in sight—people, furniture, homes, animals, cars, crops.

I got into Pampa late-morning and met a few folks at the Woody Guthrie Folk Music Center there. It's housed in the old drugstore where Woody worked as a young man before heading to California in the mid-1930s. I told them who I was and why I was there, excited to be finally in the place where Woody cut his musical teeth.

In no time, I found myself doing the same bit of explaining all over again, this time from a podium on the stage of a local chamber of commerce meeting. I hadn't really been invited to speak, but my Pampa contact, a feisty eighty-something-year-old woman named Thelma Bray, more or less muscled me onstage. Thelma, the good soul that she is, has been in Pampa ever since Woody resided there and has since taken up the responsibility for keeping his legacy alive in these parts.

I stepped up to the microphone. I didn't own a business in town; in fact, I had no business even being there. I looked over at Thelma and she said from the side of the stage, "Tell them about Woody. Tell 'em why they ought to be proud of him and tell 'em about the centennial, too."

I smiled lightly at Thelma, not sure if I should be doing what she wanted me to do and wondering how she managed to pull this whole thing off. I got the distinct feeling that I was not the chamber of commerce's idea of a keynote speaker. A heavy-set man in a white short-sleeve shirt and a dark tie, his glasses falling down his nose and his hands the size of a catcher's mitt, had just finished explaining how the new health-care plan was going to ruin the local economy with all those socialist ideas that were embedded in it. I figured I had my work cut out for me.

I told the nice folks at that meeting, who later fed me a wonderful lunch and poured me more iced tea than I could ever drink even on the hottest of days, why I thought Woody should be celebrated in Pampa. People listened, but didn't say anything. One person wearing an awfully loud pair of cowboy boots walked out, clearly uninterested in my comments. Shortly thereafter, another chamber member followed him out the door.

I kept talking. I told them that Woody Guthrie and the music he made came from a place that reflected what is inherently great about America. The freedom to speak your mind and sing your thoughts—and to do so with a righteous commitment to better the place you come from—was what Woody was really all about. I told them that Woody Guthrie loved the possibility of America. He saw the natural beauty and the deep drive of her people and he sang about both, the way he thought he should. And even if you didn't agree with all that came from his words and songs, you couldn't begrudge his intentions.

I figured I'd leave it at that. I got a smattering of applause. But the real pay-off came when another nice lady handed me a hefty plate full of chicken and potatoes, with the gravy practically pouring over the side. I ate and listened to the rest of the speeches and announcements, which included things about church suppers and local fundraisers and carwashes. When the meeting was over, Thelma said thanks for my words and that I should hurry up with my lunch because there was plenty to see in Pampa that would interest any fan of Woody Guthrie.

The rest of the day in Pampa was spent driving and walking around town with Thelma pointing out the sights—the old library where Woody did most of his reading, the street where Woody and wife Mary lived, the train tracks and the highway that carried many a Pampa farmer to California during the Depression. Finally, we went back to the Woody Guthrie Folk Music Center where Thelma had arranged for a private concert of sorts with local musicians playing Guthrie classics and original pieces inspired by Guthrie. It was quite a day.

Before I left that evening, Thelma handed me a copy of a little book she had written about Guthrie's time in Pampa called *Reflections: The Life and Times of Woody Guthrie*. "It's a parting gift for you," she said. I couldn't help but be struck by Thelma's endless energy for a woman her age, and also her determination to make sure Woody got his due in Pampa. I asked her why that was so.

She smiled, looked one way, and then another, as if to ascertain that no one was listening but me. "Well, not everyone in these parts thinks we ought to be honoring Woody Guthrie, you know. Some people 'round here don't really know what to make of him. Some think he was a communist and really not one of us. But there are others, like me, who, of course, think otherwise." She grabbed my arm and drew closer. "I think he was a great man. I think Pampa ought to be proud that he came from here, don't you?" I nodded. "And, well, I'm doin' something about that."

Thelma made me promise that I wouldn't be a stranger to Pampa, especially not in 2012, Woody's centennial year. I told her I'd try to visit again but that, if nothing else, I'd let people know that Pampa was a must-stop on anyone's Woody Guthrie itinerary. She gave me directions to my next destination—central Oklahoma—and a hug, and off I went, happy to have met Thelma Bray, Woody Guthrie advocate extraordinaire.

I have mixed feelings about centennials. Of course it's a good thing to look back at one hundred years and recall the man and his music. With Woody Guthrie there is so much to remember—all his songs, his writings, his incredible life story. The music alone in this box set will keep Guthrie fans connected to his legacy for a long time to come.

But with any centennial celebration comes a responsibility. Looking back in time isn't enough. The challenge is how to limit naturally occurring sentiments of nostalgia and fondness for a bygone era and focus more on keeping Guthrie's music and all the things he stood for alive for another century. What good is it to remember a man like Woody Guthrie on the hundredth anniversary of his birth and then put him and his songs in the attic until his next significant anniversary occurs?

One good listen to Woody at 100 and it's obvious that many of the songs in this set remain remarkably relevant. I wish it weren't so. It's sad to think that some of the issues that inspired Guthrie to write the songs he did—economic exploitation, racism, immigration reform, human rights—remain ongoing problems in America today. Guthrie's songs were meant to be sung, to be played in order to rally people to action and to shine a light on a path that leads to a greater, more just America. Listening to these songs again, you can feel the energy rising in them, their souls stirring.

Woody Guthrie never forgot about the people for whom the American Dream was far out of reach. It was as if he had made a promise blessed in blood never to ignore the plight of the struggling

American, no matter who he was, where he came from, or why he had hit hard times. Woody Guthrie sought to be the voice of the jobless, the homeless, and voiceless. And he was.

Here's hoping that Woody and his songs continue to be that voice for the next hundred years.

THE MUSIC OF WOODY GUTHRIE

Jeff Place

It was March 1940 in New York City, and a concert to benefit the John Steinbeck Committee to Aid Agricultural Organization was taking place at the Forrest Theater. The concert had been organized by the actor and social activist Will Geer. Geer had written a friend of his, a country music singer in California, to come east and join in the folksong revival taking place. The concert included many of the “top names” in the urban revival that started in the 1930s and 1940s. These urban musicians felt their music should be used to further progressive causes and saw folksongs as a true expression of the people and a way to speak out against wrongs in the system.

The concert began with Aunt Molly Jackson, an activist from the coal camps of Kentucky, who came out to sing her compositions. When she was finished, Woody Guthrie ambled out on the stage and said “Howdy.” He proceeded to impress the audience with his own “folk ballads” and wry social commentary thrown in between, à la the great country humorist Will Rogers. The New York folk audience had never seen anything like it.

Guthrie biographer Ed Cray cited a close friend of the Almanac Singers who commented that “for a New York Left that was primarily Jewish, first or second generation American, and was desperately trying to get Americanized, I think a figure like Woody was of great, great importance” (Cray 2004, 216).

This evening was a significant fusion of two different strains of American folk music: the urban “folkies” and the folk singers from rural America. Guthrie, who was very much a product of his background, was a figure from the Great West. He had grown up in a world where he was exposed to country string bands, hillbilly radio shows, and traveling tent shows. It was a world where music was often played by non-professionals at country dances and picnics. Guthrie mixed this music with his strong political fervor, acquired from experiencing the Dust Bowl and the plight of his fellow “Okies” and “Arkies” in California; he witnessed the people the capitalist system was not working for. The complicated person the audience embraced that night in New York was a summation of these forces and was what many of the folk enthusiasts had been looking for: “a poet of the people.”

When Woody Guthrie was born in 1912, Oklahoma was still the “Wild West.” It had been awarded statehood only five years prior through an act combining the Oklahoma Territory with Indian Territory. Guthrie’s hometown of Okemah, Oklahoma, was located in the Creek Nation of the Indian Territory, a region set aside in 1837 by the United States government for then-displaced Indian tribes. In 1902, the Kickapoo chief Okemah built the first bark house in what would soon be the town bearing his name. The Indian residents sold their land and speculators moved in, incorporating the town of Okemah in 1902. Soon oil was discovered in Oklahoma, creating a period of economic booms and busts. In the mid 1920s, the oil discovered in Okemah drove the population from 1,000 to 4,000. Like many families, the Guthries participated in the boom.

Guthrie’s friend and musical colleague Lee Hays described what it was like for them at that time: “Woody and I grew up about one hundred miles apart from each other, he in Oklahoma and I in Arkansas. About that time we were beginning to hear about Will Rogers. Every kid in the West wanted to be another Will Rogers. A lot of his manner on stage, his timing, his ability to tell stories and make a point and get people to laugh with him was very much like the Chautauqua lecturers and performers in tents, Toby shows, talking cowboys” (Hays and Koppelman 2003, 153).

Guthrie’s earliest musical memories were hearing an elderly African American harmonica player in town and wanting to get one of those “french harps” for himself. His mother would sing him “dark old ballads” and his dad, Charley, was known to pick up a fiddle. Woody would sing the songs his mother taught him. They loved visiting the local movie theater; one of Woody’s favorite actors was Will Rogers, the Cowboy Philosopher (Partridge 2002, 25).

When Woody was growing up in Okemah, his father was a successful businessman and local politician. The Guthries were well-off; his younger sister Mary Jo later remarked that “Clara and Roy and Woody experienced the good times with the family because during that time our dad was one of

the richest men in Okfuskee County” (Brown and Leventhal 1984). But the family’s wealth was not to last, and when the “bust” hit, Charley Guthrie lost it all. Soon afterwards, Woody’s mother began to act strangely. She was later institutionalized and diagnosed with Huntington’s chorea, an incurable and degenerative genetically inherited disease that attacks the nervous system. Woody’s mother was subject to fits, one of which caused her to set fire to her husband Charley.

Charley Guthrie moved to Pampa, Texas, while he recovered from his severe burns. After staying behind and living with neighbors in Oklahoma, Woody later joined his father in Texas where his Uncle Jeff and Aunt Aileen played country music. Once in Pampa, Woody started dabbling with fiddle and guitar and taking lessons from Uncle Jeff. His friend Matt Jennings also learned to play and they started making music together. When a third friend, Cluster Baker, joined Woody and Matt, they formed the Corncob Trio. Matt Jennings, when interviewed in the 1980s, remembered that the boys “had a lot of practice trying to learn these instruments...We played parties here and there” (Brown 1984).

Woody also played in a trio with his Uncle Jeff and Aunt Aileen, and they performed locally. They had a radio show in Pampa, and it was for that show that Woody started writing some of his own songs: “I started making up little songs, true stories, wild tales, long and short hauls about things I saw happen to the oil people, cattle people, wheat folks, on the upper north plains of high Texas, where the wind and the dust was born. I got onto a Pampa, Texas, radio station of six or eight watts, every morning, and I sung and played by myself and with other musicians around at outdoor platforms of parking lot beer joints. My dad and myself made up crazy songs just for the fun of it. ‘Flapper Fanny’s Last Ride,’ ‘Barbary Ellen’s Likker Pot,’ ‘Windy River Blues,’ ‘Dust Pneumonia,’ ‘Talkin’ Dustbowl Blues,’ and all kinds of tall tales with the names of our kinfolks stuck in” (Guthrie 1965, 23).

In April 1935, one of the worst dust storms yet struck. Things began to worsen. Woody, newly married to Matt Jennings’ sister Mary and now the father of two children, was getting restless. In 1937, he finally decided to head out alone and try his luck in Los Angeles; after a short time, Mary and their children moved to be with him.

Woody and his cousin Jack formed a duo for Jack’s country music show on KFVD in Los Angeles. Jack was a handsome cowboy singer with a Jimmie Rodgers style, and Woody was the comic sidekick. Jack had dreams of becoming a big star and would later have a hit in 1944 with Woody’s “Oklahoma Hills.” Jack eventually left the show, and Woody continued with a new partner named Maxine Crissman, better known as “Lefty Lou from Old Missou.” Woody also put together songbooks that he sold on the show, such as Woody and Lefty Lou’s *One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs*. The songs on their show appealed to a broad audience, including new migrant workers, and the duo quickly gained popularity. As Lefty Lou explained: “We had a built-in audience of more-or-less displaced persons from the Dust Bowl, and they made up a good part of our audience, and because it was the same kind of songs they’d always known, we used to have a good audience right away, friends not fans. When we first started out we didn’t have too many songs and that was how Woody started putting his own versions to original old songs. And then after a while we ran out of those, and he started writing his own” (Brown 1984).

In January 1938, they got out of their contract with KFVD and moved the show to XELO, a border radio station in Tijuana. These stations across the border were able to circumvent the limits on broadcast strength in the United States and could be heard all over North America, especially after dark. They were the last bastion of the old medicine show doctors selling dubious products. Unfortunately, the station owners tried to control Woody and Lefty Lou, which never sat well with Guthrie; he was never one to do things anyone else’s way. In addition, Guthrie and Lefty Lou’s work permits were not in order, and so their experience was short-lived. They returned the show to Los Angeles but that, too, was over by June. (For details about Guthrie’s years in Los Angeles, see the accompanying essay by Peter LaChapelle, page 28).

In early 1940, Guthrie took Will Geer up on his offer to come to New York. He lived at Geer’s apartment and became inseparable from Geer’s wife Herta’s guitar. Geer was organizing a series of concerts, and Guthrie’s first appearance in New York was at the Mecca Temple in a show to benefit refugees from the Spanish Civil War. A week later, he appeared at another of Geer’s concerts, the aforementioned Steinbeck “Grapes of Wrath” benefit on March 3, 1940. When Woody ambled onto the Forrest Theater stage, he scratched his head with a guitar pick and said “Howdy”; he didn’t mind singing a few songs as long as he was around (Klein 1980, 146). With guitar in hand, Woody started in with some of his Will Rogers-like observations on New York: “[The] trains were so crowded today,

you couldn't even fall down. I had to change stations twice, and both times I came out with a different pair of shoes on" (Klein 1980, 155).

This concert was where he first met folk singer Pete Seeger (b. 1919) and folklorist Alan Lomax (1915–2002). Lomax and his father John Avery Lomax (1867–1948) were the famous father-son folk collectors who ran the Archive of American Folk Song for the Library of Congress during the 1930s and 1940s. The Lomaxes traveled extensively, recording traditional musicians with their Presto disc-cutting machine. The elder Lomax was a conservative Texan, while his son definitely was not. Alan was interested in the politics of folk music, and with Guthrie, he felt he'd really found the "great folk poet" of the people. Alan Lomax remembered the concert where "the audience was new to ballads and thought we were special until Woody came along, his guitar slung behind his right shoulder by a buckskin thong, like a rifle ready at hand. He stood up to the microphone... As he sung his famous Okie ballads, the theater seemed to fill with the presence of all Woody's Southwestern kin. He made us see the people he spoke of and his rawhide wit lashed us into laughter" (Lomax in *The Library of Congress Recordings*, Rounder, 1988).

Alan Lomax was keen to hear more of what Guthrie had to say and arranged a recording session in Washington, D.C., at the Library of Congress a few weeks later. The first sessions took place March 21 and 22, 1940, in the Department of Interior, Radio Broadcasting Division. Lomax prompted Guthrie with questions about his past in Oklahoma. Originally from Texas, Lomax was familiar with the world Guthrie came from. The persona Guthrie presented to Lomax during these sessions was the "stage" Woody; he turned up the Oklahoma accent and interjected his usual quips, and had Lomax following right along with him. These were the first recordings of many of his classic "Dust Bowl" songs. On March 27, Guthrie returned for another go-round. These recordings, initially made for documentation purposes for the Library, were not intended for commercial release—they remained unreleased until Elektra issued a box set in 1964 during the "folksong" revival.

Lomax recommended Guthrie to RCA Victor Records, and in April and May of 1940 he cut thirteen sides for the company. In the wake of John Steinbeck's popular novel and its subsequent film, *The Grapes of Wrath*, a set of songs about the Dust Bowl by a native Oklahoma balladeer seemed like a promising commercial possibility. RCA Victor was intrigued by Woody's songs but wanted more—in particular, a song about Tom Joad, the main character from Steinbeck's book. The recordings were released as two 78-rpm albums. This early form of the "album," similar to modern photo albums, opened from the spine out and usually contained three or four discs inside paper sleeves; the term referring to a collection of songs has since migrated to LPs, CDs, and downloads. Although only several hundred copies were sold in the first release, the Dust Bowl Ballads recordings have since proven to be highly influential and iconic.

With Guthrie, Lomax had found a great resource for his other projects. He produced and directed numerous radio dramas in New York in the early 1940s, and Woody fit into his plans perfectly. Lomax was also impressed with Woody's prodigious output of writing: "One morning I planned to tell his story on my CBS broadcast. I asked him to write out a brief paragraph about his life which I could incorporate into the script...When I came back that evening he had for me about 25 typed pages, single spaced" (Lomax in *Library of Congress Recordings*, Rounder, 1988). Lomax enlisted Woody as the perfect person to add commentary to a book he had always wanted to compile: a collection of topical and protest songs from American history to be called *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People*. Working with Lomax and Pete Seeger exposed Guthrie to many other topical songwriters in American vernacular music. There were protest songs from all over the country: songs of the textile mills, the coal mines, and the farms. Publishers rejected the book, viewing it as too controversial in the 1950s. It finally saw the light of day when it was published by Oak Publications in 1967.

Meanwhile, Lee Hays, Pete Seeger, and Millard Lampell had formed a group in New York, the Almanac Singers. The Almanacs wrote topical songs and performed for the unions and political groups. They also recorded *Songs of John Doe*, a set of songs strongly opposing the involvement of the United States in the war in Europe. On June 22, 1941, Hitler broke a standing peace pact by attacking the Soviet Union. The pro-Soviet Almanacs immediately began to compose and perform passionately worded pro-war and anti-fascist songs. Around this time, Guthrie showed up at the Almanacs' door, guitar in hand. His guitar would soon display the motto "This Machine Kills Fascists."

The Almanacs lived together, ate together, and created together in their communal house. Boy, did they create. Eventual housemates would include Peter Hawes, Butch Hawes, Bess Lomax, and even Agnes "Sis" Cunningham and Gordon Friesen, who went on to form *Broadside* magazine in 1962.

Pete Seeger described the Almanac Singers as “the forerunner of lots of groups of musicians around the country who decided they’d like to sing country music, old-fashioned music, folk music, whatever you want to call it” (Brown 1984). Lampell, Hays, and Guthrie wrote songs constantly, and Woody spent days at the typewriter composing endless prose. Lee Hays wrote that “in the Almanac House there was such a prodigious amount of creativity going on, songwriting on demand, and a lot of good art work” (Hays and Koppelman 2003, 162). Bess Lomax Hawes remembered talking about songs all the time: “We used to try to figure out what it took to make a great song, where were the ‘great ones’ to be found and what they might mean, and how you knew them when you found them, what kind of condition they might be in, and how they got there. It was kind of like an enormous Easter egg hunt” (Cray 2004, 235).

During this period, Guthrie wrote his autobiographical novel *Bound for Glory*. Only a fraction of the pages he wrote made it into the book. Lee Hays was there when the editor picked up the manuscript: “The lady that was to edit Woody’s book *Bound for Glory* came to the apartment one morning to pick up the manuscript. I was there. Woody was away somewhere. He left the manuscript on the floor. It looked to me like a stack of typewritten pages about two feet high, all tied up with ropes. She must have had ten or twenty times the material there as she had use for” (Lee Hays Papers).

Soon after his arrival at the Almanac House, Guthrie recorded two albums with the group for General Records. One was an album of sea chanteys, *Deep Sea Chanteys and Whaling Ballads* (General Records, G-20), and the other of folksongs, *Sod Buster Ballads* (G-21). The group performed for New York audiences and traveled across the country. When he was with the group, Guthrie was the witty front-man, using his commentary to move the program. Millard Lampell called him “a powerhouse of energy...Woody performed about the same way as he drove. As though his brakes were shot and he wasn’t too sure what was coming next. His playing was peppered with sharps, flats, hits and misses, and several notes never before heard on land, sea or air. But it was harsh and honest and exploding with life” (Lampell 1972, 2). The unions were one of the group’s targeted audiences. According to Pete Seeger, “There was singing for unions, singing for civil rights, singing about peace or war. I think the common agreement we had was basically one of feeling that the working people of the world were the most important sector of the world” (Brown 1984). The Almanacs were busy; member Arthur Stern reported that between June 10 and November 1, 1942, they made 107 appearances—mainly for labor unions—but they were still broke (Cohen 2010, 109).

This was the start of a prolific writing period for Guthrie. He spent countless hours in front of the typewriter. Interestingly enough, one class he really enjoyed in school was typing. Others around him remembered finding stacks of typed pages at the end of the day. Besides his novel *Bound for Glory*, he created songs at a rapid pace, and of this work wrote: “I read in the papers about wrecks, accidents, fires, floods, droughts, hurricanes, cyclones, rapings, killings, and family squabbles, lovers’ troubles, rackets and racketeers, gangster fights, bad houses, slum diseases, tragedies of all kinds... Any event which takes away the lives of human beings, I try to write a song about what caused it to happen and how we can all try to keep such a thing from happening again, everywhere you look, out of books, magazines, daily papers, at the movies, along the streets, riding buses or trains, even flying along in an airplane, or in bed at night, anywhere” (Guthrie 1965, 72). Pete Seeger, one of Guthrie’s friends, remembered of Woody: “Since he frankly agreed that he couldn’t tell which of his songs would be good and which would soon be forgotten, he adopted a kind of scatteration technique—that is—he’d write a lot of songs, on the theory that at least some of them will be good” (Murlin 1988). One of Guthrie’s songs did not initially impress Seeger: “He had the genius of simplicity. When I first heard ‘This Land Is Your Land’ I didn’t perceive how famous it would become. I thought to myself, ‘that song is just too simple.’ I actually believed it was one of Woody’s lesser efforts. Shows you how wrong you can be” (Santelli 1999, 25).

Guthrie’s songwriting during this period was mainly topical in nature. He thought of songs as being created to serve a political purpose, not as purely entertainment. Whereas other writers tend to write songs bordering on musical journalism, Guthrie felt you had to tell the story through metaphors and imagery in the lyrics. He also felt that these songs were not meant to exist perpetually in the same form, they needed to constantly change to reflect new realities. He would likely not have a problem with his songs existing today in a modified form to address our current concerns. Woody wrote in a letter to the Almanacs on July 7, 1941: “Our job ain’t so much to go way back into history; that’s already been done, and we caint spare the time to do it all over again. Our job is the Here & now, Today. This week. This month. This year. But we’ve got to include a Timeless element in our songs. Something that will not tomorrow be gone with the wind. But something that will be as true as it is

today” (Woody Guthrie Papers, Smithsonian Institution).

It is easy to assume that the “protest” song is something of recent vintage, a creation of the Guthries and Dylans of the world. When “protest” singers are parodied, it is the scruffy guitar player with a harmonica rack who is pictured. However, protest songs have existed as long as music has; surely ancient musicians commented on life around them. In the 16th and 17th centuries, there existed what came to be known as “broadside ballads”: in years before newspapers, television, Internet, and social media, news traveled by more primitive methods, such as singing troubadours and ballad makers. Broadside ballads were written about current events, printed, and sold for pennies on the streets of England. Many old standard folksongs and rhymes started out as these political satires of an event sometimes long forgotten: ditties like “Frog Went A-Courting” and “Little Jack Horner” were about political events when first written. Throughout American history, songs have been written about the problems of life: anti-British songs from the Colonial days through the American Revolution, songs about wars, songs about slavery (“No More Auction Block”), and songs about the travails of the frontier (“Starving to Death on My Government Claim”).

Many of the pro-union songs of the working man that Woody favored started during the Industrial Revolution of the late 19th century. There were songs against the “robber baron” owners, automation (“Peg and Awl”), and working conditions. The early 20th-century union struggles inspired an impressive body of song. One of the most important “singing unions” was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) or “Wobblies.” The Wobblies’ most important and prolific songwriter was a Swedish immigrant, Joseph Hagglund (Hillstrom) (1879–1915), better known as Joe Hill. These tunes were printed in the IWW book of songs, nicknamed the “Little Red Songbook.” In the upper right corner it would note “to the tune of ____.” Hill frequently used Methodist hymns; the standard “In the Sweet Bye and Bye” became “Pie in the Sky.” The IWW used songs as a part of their labor agitation, and Hill was quoted as saying that “A pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over” (correspondence to editor of *Solidarity*, 29 November 1914. Quoted in Smith 1969, 19). Following the tradition of these union songwriters, Guthrie used well-known songs for his melodies.

Other trades also had great songwriters like John Handcox, an African American sharecropper from Arkansas; The Dixon Brothers, Ella May Wiggins, and David McCarn, textile workers from the Carolinas; and the Garland Family, coal miners from Kentucky. Cowboy bards wrote songs about their lives and work.

Starting in the 1920s, the record companies began to notice this rural music. Georgia fiddler John Carson was first recorded in 1923 and blues singer Mamie Smith in 1920, creating the first 78s recorded in the country music and blues styles, respectively. With the success of Carson’s record, the record companies realized they could make money selling these types of records. Some of the best-selling country records of the 1920s were songs about disasters and news stories: murders, train wrecks (“Wreck of the Old 97”), ship wrecks (“When that Great Ship Went Down”), and even the story of a man trapped in a Kentucky cave (“The Death of Floyd Collins”). The singing Carter Family of Maces Springs, Virginia, recorded hundreds of songs from 1927 through the early 1940s. Their music consisted of mountain songs, old sentimental ballads, and spirituals that group leader A.P. Carter had collected and arranged from the local Appalachian Region. The Carters also wrote songs about local news stories such as “The Cyclone of Rye Cove” and “The F.F.V.” There was no single musical group more important to the development of Guthrie’s music than the Carters. Many of his songs used Carter Family melodies, and his guitar style was taken from Maybelle Carter’s “pluck-strum” playing that she had learned from an African American neighbor, Leslie Riddle.

Among blues players and African American singers, there were many songs written about the hardships of working in the post-Civil War South. Railroad songs sung by “gandy dancers” helped time the lining of the railroad, and allowed for free verses that often commented on the plantation owner or overseer in a slightly disguised way. Guthrie’s friend, African American folk singer Huddie Ledbetter (a.k.a. Lead Belly), knew dozens of these.

There was a good deal of musical communication between black and white musicians in the South. People who normally would not associate socially shared musical ideas. African American musicians had influenced many of the best-known white country music stars such as Bill Monroe, Jimmie Rodgers, Earl Scruggs, and the aforementioned Maybelle Carter. This was the world where Guthrie grew up, honed his musical skills, and created the music that he brought to New York.

As mentioned before, topical songs were often written to the melodies of well-known songs. Some were straight ballads, but many were made for group singing, and the singers could seamlessly learn

the song and join in singing immediately if they already knew the tune. One might be tempted to say that Guthrie did not write most of his melodies (especially in the early part of his career), but that would deny the necessity of this time-honored approach to folksong writing. If he had done otherwise, his songs would have been much less (if at all) successful. Guthrie used to argue with his fellow Almanac Singers when they wrote a song using an exotic melody like a calypso tune; he felt that “the people” could not identify with that music. Guthrie used some of the same melodies over and over for different songs. Some of his favorites were “Brown’s Ferry Blues,” “Pretty Polly,” “White House Blues,” and “The Wabash Cannonball.”

The melodies used in Guthrie’s songwriting merit mention. It is frequently thought that Guthrie used old folksongs of less than recent vintage for his melodies. In some cases, yes, but it can be argued that Guthrie used those melodies more frequently only after he met Alan Lomax and the other folksong scholars in the urban folk world. In reality, many of his early topical songs and his Dust Bowl ballads came from recent country music hits. “Brown’s Ferry Blues,” which he used for 1937’s “Big City Ways,” was released by the Delmore Brothers only four years earlier in 1933. The Carter Family melodies all came from the ten-year period before Woody began his compositions. Again, these were songs the country people knew. Woody enjoyed using Roy Acuff’s song “Wabash Cannonball” from 1938 for his writing in the early 1940s. Later in his career, he started using his own melodies more often, but in the early days, many came from existing sources.

In the spring of 1941, Guthrie received a letter asking if he was interested in writing songs for a film the Department of the Interior was making to publicize the dam-building projects along the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest. These dams would create much needed hydro-electric power and, better yet, many jobs. He accepted and moved Mary and the kids up to Portland, Oregon. For a month, Woody Guthrie was employed by the government. People marvel that he was able to create thirty songs in thirty days, many of which are considered some of his best. During this period of his life, he was capable of this high level of creativity. Bill Murlin, editor of *Roll on Columbia: The Columbia River Collection*, recalled: “They put him in a car with a driver for approximately two weeks, traveled up and down the length of the Columbia River, went to Grand Coulee Dam, saw the construction work going on there, went to Bonneville Dam, saw the locks, went to the orchards, saw a lot of what turned out to be a lot of Okies and people that had migrated out of the Dust Bowl, and he was writing songs about them. He’d come back periodically and type away on a typewriter in the office—a typewriter was provided for him—and write out these songs, a couple a day sometimes” (Brown 1984). After the project was completed, he headed back to New York. Mary and the children stayed behind, having tired of repeatedly being uprooted. He was on his own.

In the fall of 1941, he was back with the Almanacs in New York, where they were visited by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, IWW activist and colleague of Joe Hill. She gave the group a collection of Joe Hill’s papers which Guthrie “perused quite carefully” (Lee Hays in Garman 2000, 94). Hill’s political parodies were put to the tunes of old songs, and Guthrie studied his song craft.

In New York, Guthrie became involved with a dancer named Marjorie Mazia. She would become his second wife and a very important person in his life. Woody was hired to provide the music for Sophie Maslow’s dance company’s show *Folksay*. Woody had difficulty playing his songs the same way twice in a row; he often threw in an extra measure or started singing when he felt like it. The dancers were used to movements choreographed exactly to his Dust Bowl Ballads record, and the inconsistency caused confusion. Marjorie helped Guthrie learn how to count out the music, and they became a pair, later marrying.

In 1944, Woody Guthrie visited the small office of Asch Records’ owner Moses Asch (1905–1986) for the first time. Asch certainly knew of Guthrie from his reputation around New York, and was part of the same group of folk music enthusiasts as Guthrie. Guthrie’s associates all knew that Asch was one of the few individuals who would release the kind of music they were performing: he had recorded both Lead Belly in 1941 and Pete Seeger in 1943. Asch said that “Woody drifted to me. Friends told him about me. And he came to this studio one day, flopped on the floor, looked up at me and said, ‘I want to record.’ And I told him, ‘The studio is yours.’ And ever since then he used to come at all hours, day and night, and in the studio at times was Sonny Terry, was Lead Belly, Pete Seeger, Bess Lomax. And whenever they were there in the studio he’d sing along with them and they’d sing along with him. And eventually about five hundred songs were recorded” (Moses Asch interview, *Son of Gumbo* radio show). Asch also said of Guthrie that “He came to me and said, ‘This is my home. I want to express myself here.’ And we understood again, each other, that this, if you want to call it hippy-hippy today, you should have seen Woody then because he was the most unrestricted, uninhibited

human being in the world, wild hair, and he wouldn't sit on a chair, had to flop on the floor. He got tired. He went to sleep right then and there, the person most illustrative of Walt Whitman that I've ever come across... Walt Whitman was such a person. And Woody and I got together and sure enough, as you know, the many records I did with Woody" (Moses Asch, interview by Tony Schwartz, 11 March 1971).

Bess Lomax Hawes remembers Asch as being Guthrie's benefactor: "He also supported Woody almost 100 percent when Woody was really down. He hired him at twenty-five dollars a day to sit up there and record every single song he knew. And Woody, you know, had them all written down in those notebooks. I remember going up there frequently and there was Woody on the stool with a notebook over here, and he'd turn the page and start the next song, get through that and turn the page and sing the next one. And he literally recorded his entire repertoire, and Moe had no use for it all. But, it was a way to pay Woody and keep him alive" (Dunaway and Beer 2010, 64).

Asch was born in Poland and spent his childhood in Europe as the son of the well-known writer, Sholem Asch. He was working as a radio engineer in New York and opened a business called Radio Laboratories. In 1939, Asch discovered a niche market for records that was not being served, that of Jewish recordings. He first recorded a group called the Bagelman Sisters (later called the Barry Sisters). Over time he crafted his idea to create an encyclopedia of sound. He was not primarily interested in popular singers, but instead in what his artists had to say. He was one to take a chance on artists when no one else would.

Asch claimed he "was the pen with which these artists write." He preferred setting up a microphone and letting the artist perform. During the early 1940s, a who's who of great musicians in New York came into his studio: Coleman Hawkins, Mary Lou Williams, Carlos Montoya, Burl Ives, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Lead Belly, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, and others. Asch said that "It is there, not because it sells more than another, but any person that has something to say that I feel is legitimate that should be on the record is on a record. Yes, some artists sell more than others and they have more of a popular appeal. But I can't use stars. We never issue a 'best of' because there is no such a thing. Every recording, every song when all is done is the best he can do because the people may or may not want it now, but maybe in 30 or 40 years, that record which had not sold the best will sell then" (Moses Asch interview, Son of Gumbo radio show).

During World War II, Woody served two tours in the U.S. Merchant Marine with Cisco Houston and their friend Jimmy Longhi. In April 1944, Woody and Cisco were on leave and came into Asch's studio. Guthrie's first recordings were done on April 16—only two songs, "More Pretty Gals Than One" and "Hard Ain't It Hard." Asch would later issue these two songs as a double-sided 78-rpm disc on the Folk Tunes label. Next came the marathon sessions. Perhaps Woody and Cisco were feeling mortal, having been torpedoed twice during the war. They unloaded with everything they knew. Recording blanks were hard to come by during the war, so Asch could not afford multiple takes. They played each song once. On April 19 they recorded sixty-two songs, fifteen more on April 20, nineteen on April 24, and thirty on April 25. Thirty-five more were recorded on an undocumented day a week later. These sessions make up the vast majority of the songs Guthrie recorded during his short career, and most every recording of Guthrie's currently available comes from these sessions. Asch, who was not great at keeping records of his sessions, dutifully recorded all the songs in his log book and assigned each take a "matrix" number. These numbers are listed on each side of a 78-rpm disc and identify take and recording information.

These sessions consisted of Guthrie on guitar or mandolin (and occasionally fiddle or harmonica) with accompaniment by Cisco Houston, Sonny Terry on harmonica, occasionally Bess Lomax Hawes, and, in one instance, Pete Seeger on banjo. They took on the feeling of a free-form jam session with everyone gathered around a single microphone. Guthrie enjoyed recording that way. Fellow Almanac singer Lee Hays described it as such: "Moe Asch, who generally let him have his way, he thought the only way to record is to get a bunch of old boys in the studio and just let them start singing and put a microphone down on the table in the middle of them. As a result, Moe Asch did a lot of recordings that way" (Lee Hays Papers).

In 1945, Guthrie returned for more sessions including one session on May 24 where he recorded a new series of topical songs. Impressed by a book on labor history written by labor activist Ella "Mother" Bloor, he had written two new songs: "1913 Massacre" and "Ludlow Massacre."

Fortunately for contemporary fans of Woody Guthrie, Asch was in the habit of recording radio shows off the air, both from stations WEVD and WNYC. The remaining radio shows he recorded include some of the shows Guthrie did in New York, copies of which might not have survived otherwise.

Around the time of the historic Guthrie and Houston recording sessions, Moses Asch had entered into a partnership with Herbert Harris of the Stinson Trading Company, which lasted from 1943 to 1945. There was a rationing of shellac during World War II, and a company's shellac ration was based on pre-war production. Since Asch went into business in 1939, he did not have much of a history. Herbert Harris had run a movie house in New York in the 1930s that screened Soviet films and, along with his partner Irving Proskey, Harris ended up with the Soviet record concession at the 1939 World's Fair, leaving them with a good number of Soviet 78s after the event. Harris distributed them through his company the Stinson Trading Company. His storefront was at Union Square in New York, at the intersection of Broadway and 4th Avenue, a location with a long history of hosting radical speakers. Harris had the shellac and 78s to sell; Asch had the studio and the artists. They came together in a marriage of convenience. The 78-rpm albums released during this period often had either an "A" prefix or an "S" prefix and were marketed as Asch-Stinson albums. Guthrie's first Asch album (#347) and his Documentary #1: Struggle album (#360) were released during this period. The Struggle album featured a lovely pen-and-ink drawing by artist David Stone Martin. Asch was an innovator in the use of cover art on his records. Nominally, the recordings were made by Asch. Harris was a financial partner, but his importance to the creation of these discs cannot be overstated. If not for his money and involvement, it would have been impossible for Asch to create and release the recordings.

In 1945, the partnership between Asch and Harris dissolved and the two principals battled over the ownership of the masters recorded during this three-year period, stored at the pressing plant in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The plant wanted to move the discs out of its warehouse and tried to get the two parties to agree on where they should go. Most of these masters ended up with Stinson, while Asch himself had other masters and additional copies of some of the same recordings. This has led to much confusion about these Guthrie recordings that persists to this day. Over the next three decades, both Stinson and Asch continued to release Guthrie material, and there seemed to be an equilibrium that came into place. Stinson, by and large, published Guthrie's recordings of traditional American folk and country songs, likely to cater to the demand for these recordings during the folksong revival of the 1950s. Asch, true to his business philosophy, published more of Woody's original songs, the topical and political songs. There was not generally much overlap in the titles issued, and only some of the songs were issued on records from both labels.

After Asch Records went bankrupt, Asch re-grouped and started a new venture, Disc Recordings of America. He continued to record the same artists, including Guthrie. Disc Records also had a strong jazz catalog and released recordings by popular artists such as Nat King Cole.

Returning from World War II, Guthrie, Seeger, Houston, and others felt they had fought the great fight and defeated fascism. They were creating a better world for all—the working people of the world and people of all races. The American Left became disillusioned when the system returned to exactly the way it was before the war, with owners and workers and Jim Crow laws. Moses Asch explained, "Well, what happened was that [Guthrie], Cisco Houston, Lead Belly, and many others, at the end of the war, was so disillusioned. They thought they were fighting for a better world. But when they saw what the peace treaty did, when they saw the League of Nations fighting among themselves, when they saw the capitalistic movement taking over, Woody lost hope and disintegrated. The same thing happened to Cisco and the same thing happened to Lead Belly. There was no more a will to fight for the rights of people" (Moses Asch interview, Son of Gumbo radio show).

One interesting side project that did not work out as planned was the Sacco and Vanzetti project. To stoke Guthrie's creativity and get him work, Moses Asch commissioned Guthrie to write a series of songs about the Italian immigrants, political anarchists, and labor martyrs Ferdinando Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. They were arrested for a murder committed during a payroll robbery in South Braintree, Massachusetts, convicted, and executed for the crime. Many felt they had been framed. Since Woody did not normally write to order, he struggled with this one. Although he was never one to be free with his money, Asch paid for Woody and Cisco to travel up to Boston to tour the sites of the case, hoping to inspire them: "He and Cisco Houston went to Boston under the auspices of Folkways Records and he spent there three months and he dug up the facts and he came back and he created the album about Sacco and Vanzetti. He was that type of a person" (Moses Asch interview, Son of Gumbo radio show). Of the songs he wrote for the project, the only interesting song was "Two Good Men"; the others were long-winded and not very musical. They were recorded shortly after Guthrie wrote them, and they sound as if he is reading from the page as he sings. The project was not released until 1960.

During the period when he was supposed to be working on the Sacco and Vanzetti songs, Guthrie

continued to suggest a myriad of other projects, including a series on labor martyrs. He was also inspired by a song he composed about an African American serviceman who was severely beaten and blinded shortly after being discharged, titled "The Blinding of Isaac Woodward." The incident took place in South Carolina, and caused nationwide outrage. However, the song was apparently never recorded. In other letters he suggested recordings of sea chanteys, fiddle tunes, pioneer songs, and cowboy songs.

In 1946 or 1947, Guthrie made quite a number of varied recordings for Asch. During that time, however, Asch was not good at keeping records of his sessions and one can only estimate dates based on references in letters to projects. At this time, Guthrie started a series of cowboy and western songs including a children's song, "Cowboy Ranch," and the songs "Red Runner," "Wild Cyclone," and "Pancho Villa." In April 1947, Guthrie was asked to come to Spokane, Washington, again to sing in support of the Bonneville Power Administration. The BPA requested that Asch put out an album of Bonneville songs (Woody Guthrie to Moses Asch, 22 April 1947, Woody Guthrie Papers). Guthrie subsequently recorded a number of his Dust Bowl and Bonneville songs for Asch, who released some of them as a 78-rpm album, *Ballads from the Dust Bowl* (Disc 610). He was also upset by a March 1947 mining disaster in Centralia, Illinois, and wrote the series of songs, "Three Songs for Centralia," which were published in the *People's Songs Bulletin*. He recorded them for Asch: "We had meetings at least once a week in which we discussed the topics of the day and what should be recorded. And so he wrote, I don't know whether you know about 10,000 songs that are available in manuscript form. Eventually, I hope some of them will see the light of day. But that was his life, that's creating and writing" (Moses Asch, interview by Tony Schwartz, 11 March 1971).

The birth of Woody and Marjorie's daughter Cathy, playfully nicknamed "Stackabones," was a major change for Woody. He reveled in spending the day playing with her. Her brother, Arlo, was born in 1947, and then a brother Joady and a sister Nora. He was inspired to begin typing children's songs. Putting together words from statements made by Cathy, he wrote what even to this day are some of his most enduring songs. Woody said: "I've been playing and singing songs I made up now for nearly twenty years and Cathy at 3½ already can outrhyme, outplay, and outsing me any old day" (Partridge 2002, 154). Marjorie helped Woody with the sessions that took place in the Asch studios in 1946. Among the great songs that came out of those sessions are "Car Song," "Put Your Finger in the Air," "Why Oh Why," "Clean-O," and many, many others; snippets and unreleased songs still exist in the archives. Woody said, "I don't want you to use these songs to split your family apart, to give kids something to do while you do something else. I want to see you throw down your book, your paper, magazine, your worries and your troubles, and to come and join in with the kids" (Marsh and Leventhal 1990, 178). Woody put his heart and soul into this project, designing cover art and booklet layouts for Asch. He created lovely watercolors for each song on the record. They were released on the Disc label as *Songs to Grow On: Work Songs for Nursery Days* (Disc 602) and *Songs to Grow On: Nursery Days* (Disc 605). Asch considered them some of his most important recordings, and they were among the first records Asch issued when he started a new label or moved to a new playback format. Another of Asch's side projects in the final days of Disc Records of America was a children's label, Cub Records. Cub Records had covers more consistent with the children's market, though only a dozen or so were issued. The Cub disc included Woody's songs such as "Put Your Finger in the Air," "Grassy Grass," and "Don't You Push Me Down."

In July, Guthrie received a letter, addressed to Woodward W. Guthrie, from RCA, with whom Guthrie had started recording in 1940 on Alan Lomax's suggestion. The letter read: "It is not our intention to release these records again for public sale for the time being. It is entirely conceivable that some time in the future when we feel that the market is in better shape we might release one or both of the albums once more" (J. L. Hallstrom to Woodward W. Guthrie, 26 July 1948, Woody Guthrie Papers). He tried to engage RCA in future projects, but they were not interested. Keeping with his stated goal of making important material available to the public, Asch felt it was the public's "right-to-know," and with Woody's permission and RCA's letter in hand, he reissued the *Dust Bowl Ballads* in 1950 (Folkways FP11): "He and I had a discussion, they had to be kept alive. So we copied the RCA records. He wrote RCA and they never answered him. He wrote me a letter saying, 'I authorize you to do this in my name'" (Moses Asch interview by Guy Logsdon, 8 July 1974). "He was very disappointed in the way they treated his recordings. They didn't think it was worthwhile to do more. At the same time, you know, other singers also recorded for large record companies: Burl Ives for Columbia and Andrew Rowan Summers for Columbia and so forth. And they didn't feel that there was a market" (Moses Asch interview, *Son of Gumbo* radio show).

As the 1940s progressed, Guthrie's behavior became more erratic, and many thought he was drinking too much. However, Guthrie had admitted during the war to his shipmates Houston and Longhi that he suspected he might have inherited his mother's disease, Huntington's chorea. By the beginning of the 1950s, Guthrie had become a lot less productive; the effects of the disease had become apparent. His formerly flawless handwriting had become more childlike, and his songs less focused.

By the end of the decade, his old friends Lee Hays and Pete Seeger had a new group, The Weavers. The Weavers' version of Lead Belly's "Goodnight Irene" went to the top of the pop charts in 1950. They were recording orchestrated versions of folksongs for Decca produced by Gordon Jenkins. Fortunately for Guthrie, they began to record some of his songs, giving them much wider distribution than they ever had before. In 1951, they recorded "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You." Woody was asked to come in and write some newer, "pop-friendly" lyrics. Jack Elliott recalled that Guthrie was pleased with the version: "We were in a bar somewhere in New Jersey ... Woody went over and put a nickel in the juke box and kept playing 'So Long, It's Been Good to Know You,' but never would tell nobody who he was or that he wrote the song" (Brown 1984). The Weavers got their friend Woody an audition with Decca Records. In January 1952, he recorded a two-song demo, "This Land Is Your Land" and a song called "Kissin' On." He faltered his way through both songs. The recording was never released.

Guthrie would not record again until 1954. By this time, he had divorced Marjorie and married a third time. In 1953, while living in Florida, he burned his arm badly using kerosene to light a fire. From then on, he had trouble using his arm. Guthrie, Jack Elliott, and Sonny Terry went into Moses Asch's studio, joined by Myrtle Scott and Alonzo Scales. The whole session was a mess. Between the obviously present alcohol and the Huntington's disease, he was barely able to play. The session finished with the group trying for about ten minutes to remember the words to "The Sinking of the Reuben James." Only one song has ever been released, "Railroad Bill," and it was part of the soundtrack to a biographical film on Jack Elliott. The rest should never be released.

After returning to New York in the early 1950s, Guthrie was hospitalized several times, receiving multiple incorrect diagnoses before his Huntington's chorea was recognized. During the time Guthrie was sick in the hospital, Marjorie Guthrie and the Weavers' manager, Harold Leventhal, organized the Woody Guthrie Children's Trust Fund. The purpose of the trust was to set aside funds for any of Woody's children who might contract Huntington's later in life. Guthrie's friends also began ensuring that Guthrie's songs were copyrighted. While Guthrie's health continued to decline, the popularity of his songs continued to increase. The Weavers recorded Woody's songs until the full weight of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the post-World War II Red Scare came down on them, adding them to the ever-growing blacklist. Woody's songs had started to appear in summer camp songbooks and progressive music education publications. Many of the children who heard these songs became the "folk-crazed" college students of the latter half of the 1950s, taking up banjos and guitars and embracing folk music whole-heartedly, Woody's friend Pete Seeger serving as their unacknowledged song leader. While the Weavers' recordings had spread the word, it was Pete Seeger (after he left the group) who, through endless touring, truly championed Woody's music. Blacklisted and banned from appearing on television or recording with major record labels, Seeger took to a stealth existence, doing hundreds of small college and university shows that were frequently announced only shortly before to avoid right-wing protests. Moses Asch, who was not interested in blacklists, recorded dozens of Seeger albums, many including Guthrie songs. "This Land Is Your Land" became an extremely popular national folksong purely through these camps, schools, and songbooks. An edited version of the original recording was released by Guthrie as part of a Folkways children's album as late as 1951, but this record was not widely distributed. By the time the track was released by the Weavers in 1958, it had already become well known.

As the folksong revival began to take shape, a group of small independent folk labels became very important to the movement, including Folkways, Stinson, Vanguard, and Elektra. By this time, Guthrie had become a significant figure among folk fans and a forefather of the movement. Guthrie's material was still owned by two record companies: Asch's current label, Folkways; and Stinson. The record business was now releasing recordings on the longer LP (long-playing) format, making it possible to go back to the vaults and issue more Guthrie material.

In 1948, Asch founded his third label, Folkways Records and Service Corporation. Asch added the "Service Corporation" in order to argue his company did not purely produce records, but also existed to provide "information" to the public. The label included a wide array of every sound imaginable:

spoken word, nature sounds, world ethnic traditions, children's music, blues, jazz, folk, and more. Guthrie's recordings were some of the core recordings in the catalogue.

Stinson Records continued to put out recordings of Guthrie, almost entirely from the 1944 and '45 New York sessions, originally releasing a series of 10" LPs similar to the 78 albums, including *Southern Mountain Hoedowns*, *Cowboy Songs*, and two volumes of *Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston*. Stinson also expanded significantly on *Folksay*, an album originally compiled and recorded by Moses Asch. That album featured traditional American folksongs performed by key folk artists in freeform jam sessions which were recorded in Asch's studios. There was a wealth of material available from those sessions. Noted folklorist Kenneth Goldstein, who edited hundreds of recordings of traditional American folksongs for all the folk labels, compiled the recordings and wrote liner notes. His annotations gave the history of the songs, which was of great interest to folksong enthusiasts. Goldstein worked with Stinson's copies of these recordings and found many previously unreleased gems. There would eventually be seven *Folksay* albums; the later ones added material recorded in subsequent years by singers from the revival. Stinson also released one recording of Woody and Cisco from a later session titled *Chain Gang*. From the sound of Woody's voice, it was likely recorded at the end of the 1940s or the very beginning of the 1950s. *Chain Gang* is a collection of American folksongs with Woody and Cisco frequently inserting the phrase "chain gang" into older folksongs.

In the 1950s, Stinson Records had moved from its storefront offices at Union Square, New York, to Southern California. Herbert Harris and his family had opened a second retail business with a store and record distributorship on Pico Boulevard in downtown Los Angeles; Harris' daughter Trudy and her husband Jack Kall lived in an apartment above the store. After establishing the Los Angeles location, the Kalls bought a new house and moved the label operation to the San Fernando Valley; the address that would grace all Stinson LPs from then on was PO Box 3415, Granada Hills, California, where Trudy and Jack Kall helped run the label. Following Herbert's death in 1956, Stinson Records was owned by his widow, Sonia Harris, until her death in 1988. During the years of her ownership, Jack and Trudy Kall continued to run the label, including during the heyday of the folk movement in the 1950s and 1960s when they released lovely gate-fold LPs, some pressed on vibrant red vinyl. The Kalls became owners of Stinson after Sonia's death, working with their children to run the label. Some of the Stinson LPs were released on compact discs in the late 1980s, and the full catalog was also available on cassette tapes. The label is still owned by the Kall family; Herbert's granddaughter Karen Williams is the sole owner.

With Woody's popularity during the folksong revival, Moses Asch also went back into his vaults and began to reissue material. Will Geer narrated some of Woody's prose, and it was combined with some of his greatest songs in the 1956 LP *Bound for Glory*. In 1962 and 1964, Asch put together two LPs, *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs Vols. 1 and 2*. He also finally released the Sacco and Vanzetti material in 1960. Asch, through a licensing agreement with MGM Records, provided material to a joint project known as the Verve/Folkways label, which released two Guthrie collections drawn from the 1944 and 1947 sessions. The first was called *Bed on the Floor* and contained unreleased material of Guthrie's (reissued on Folkways as *Poor Boy* in 1968). The second was a reissue of the Disc Label Ballads from the *Dust Bowl 78* album, including some additional tracks. As this collection was mainly songs from Guthrie's Columbia River project, it was more accurately called *Bonneville Dam and Other Columbia River Songs* (reissued on Folkways as *This Land is Your Land* in 1967). For the United States Bicentennial in 1976, Asch thought it important to reissue the *Documentary #1: Struggle* collection on LP with additional songs from the 1945 session.

RCA, also taking notice of folk music's growing popularity, reissued the *Dust Bowl Ballads* in 1964. The album again reappeared in 1977, not long after a major motion picture of Woody's novel *Bound for Glory* starring David Carradine was released, and again in 2000 on the Buddah subsidiary with an additional alternative version of "Talking Dust Bowl."

In 1988, Rounder Records released the noteworthy album *The Columbia River Collection*. The original acetate discs recorded in 1941 had sat for years at the Bonneville Power Administration and had been thrown out in the process of cleaning. Fortunately, an employee saved them from destruction. Archivist Bill Murlin discovered their existence and found previously unreleased songs among the discs. Working with Murlin, Rounder issued these and other Columbia River songs licensed from Folkways. During this period, Rounder also reissued the Library of Congress Recordings as a set of three compact discs.

In reality, this great urban folksong revival started in the 1930s and 1940s among the political Left, but enthusiasm for folk music became much more widespread in the late 1950s. The touchstone

frequently credited as starting the great “folk boom” of the late 1950s and early 1960s was the release of the North Carolina murder ballad “Tom Dooley” by the Kingston Trio. The song went to number one on the charts; the Weavers’ “Goodnight Irene” had done the same seven years earlier. In the eyes of many these young musicians, Woody was the “Godfather of the Revival.” The mythology of Woody Guthrie, started by Woody’s own self-description as the hobo troubadour riding the rails of America, caught on and became the stuff of legend. Young musicians made pilgrimages to the hospital to see Woody. Two friends of his, the Gleasons, brought him to their home in New Jersey on weekends where people came to see him. Woody’s old colleagues, now elder statesmen, were asked “You really knew him? Wow!” Lee Hays said: “I once asked a bunch of kids down at Washington Square, in the days singers used to congregate there on a Sunday, to tell what they knew about Woody. I remember getting ten or twelve different stories. Most of them legendary to my knowledge or mythical” (Lee Hays Papers). Cisco Houston recalled being puzzled by college students who told him how they wanted to drop out of college, ride the rails, and be free spirits like him and Woody. Cisco could only comment: “You know we did that because we had to in those times, it’s no fun freezing your ass off in a rail car—stay in college, take advantage of what you have” (Cisco Houston interview by Lee Hays, April 1961).

The insiders who knew him had a far more measured concept of Woody Guthrie. Of Woody, Lee Hays said: “There were the great days, he really made such a tremendous contribution and opened the way for a lot of young people, inspired them to go on and on and these are the important things that will live forever” (Cisco Houston interview by Hays, 1961).

Pete Seeger called Guthrie “one of the best songwriters, maybe the best songwriter of this century in the USA” (Brown 1984). Cisco Houston recalled that “[Guthrie] was writing as though he wanted to be known as, not another Will Rogers, but at least of that stature and certainly as a folk poet,” and that “there was always a great contradiction of always never wanting to prostitute anything, that he was generally himself and yet, wanting to be recognized on the biggest scale as possible for what he was” (Cisco Houston interview by Hays, 1961). Lefty Lou Crissman said, “Woody wouldn’t believe” his songs would be as well known as they are today (Brown 1984).

“From my evaluation I think Woody was one of the great American poets. I think as time goes on people will start to realize he was a poet. He was a great American creative person. I never doubted this from the moment I met him and talked with him, and his discussion with me of how he sees things and what he’s doing” (Moses Asch interview by Guy Logsdon, 8 July 1974). Woody Guthrie spent the last thirteen years of his life in the hospital, his health slowly declining. He passed away October 3, 1967.

The past twenty years have seen the reissuing of many Woody Guthrie recordings. The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways Records from the Asch Family in 1987, and all of the original recordings in Asch’s possession were moved to Washington, D.C. During the 1990s, these recordings were digitized, making it possible to listen to all of the tracks in the archives, many for the first time in decades. One set of previously unreleased material was issued in 1994 as *Long Ways to Travel* by Smithsonian Folkways, a new label created to carry on the tradition of Folkways Records. Throughout the remainder of the decade, many other Asch recordings of Woody were issued, including the children’s songs. Guthrie had also recorded numerous World War II songs, which were left unissued as the war ended before they could be released. These songs saw the light of day in 1996 on the collection *That’s Why We’re Marching*. Most of the recordings that Guthrie made for Moses Asch were released on a series of CDs during the 1990s.

The Woody Guthrie Foundation received a wonderful recording of a Woody Guthrie concert recorded in 1949 on a magnetic wire recording. Wire recording media was invented in the 1890s, but became popular only in the 1940s and 1950s. Produced as a reel of thin metal wire, they had wonderful fidelity but became easily tangled and were difficult to work with. This concert recording, called *The Live Wire*, gave listeners a chance to hear what a full Guthrie concert sounded like. It was awarded the 2008 Grammy Award for Best Historical Album.

Woody’s daughter Nora runs the Woody Guthrie Archives, a research center where scholars can study the lyrics, writings, artwork, and recordings created by Guthrie that are preserved within the collection. Through the Archives, Nora has been actively involved in keeping the knowledge of Woody’s music in the eye of the public. Over the years, she has invited contemporary musicians into the Archives, encouraging them to write their own music to accompany Guthrie’s previously unpublished words. Woody did not write musical notation, so the melodies for thousands of his songs, housed at the Woody Guthrie Archives and the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives, are unknown. The best-known of

these projects was the two-part series by Billy Bragg and Wilco, named Mermaid Avenue for Woody's old street in Coney Island, Brooklyn. Guthrie also recorded dozens of these songs for his publisher, The Richmond Organization. In 1950, Guthrie's publisher Howie Richmond sent him a reel-to-reel audio recorder and blank tapes, upon which Guthrie performed dozens of his songs, many of which appear in the 1963 Ludlow Music publication "The Nearly Complete Collection of Woody Guthrie Folk Songs." A copy of these recordings is on deposit at the Woody Guthrie Archives.

In 2012, we celebrate the work of Woody Guthrie. Many young people today are discovering his music for the first time, and we continue to know him better. Guthrie left behind vast amounts of inspired output from the creative years of his life, some of which is still being discovered. More will continue to surface: Lee Hays witnessed that Guthrie would "leave things tucked away in books and encyclopedias, in Bibles and dictionaries and they'd turn up sometimes years later. I don't know who he was writing for or why he was writing. He just sort of shed these things like leaves as he went along" (Cisco Houston interview by Hays, 1961). I have a feeling he still has some surprises for us.

WOODY GUTHRIE'S LOS ANGELES RECORDINGS

Peter LaChapelle

Are these four tracks the oldest known recordings Woody Guthrie ever made? And are they a long lost remnant of actual broadcasting from his Los Angeles radio show? The answer to the first question is yes, it is highly likely, although not completely certain, that these are the oldest recordings of Guthrie.

The answer to the second question remains much more uncertain. We simply cannot tell if they were made as part of a broadcast or in some other fashion. Whatever the case, they certainly give us a new glimpse into Guthrie's earliest days as a radio performer. The story of how I uncovered them is also filled with twists. These four tracks connect Woody Guthrie, quite unexpectedly, with another prominent 20th-century social activist, and pose important questions about Woody's ambitions as a young performer.

In 1999, I was a young graduate student doing a dissertation on the connections between the Dust Bowl migration and country and folk music. I had looked through pages upon pages of Guthrie's column in the *People's World* and had done some rudimentary work on Woody's performances in Los Angeles on radio station KFVD in the late 1930s. My advisor suggested I contact the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, a fascinating library and archive in South Central that documents much history of the Los Angeles Left.

I phoned an archivist and had a long talk. She suggested that I interview veteran activist Harry Hay (1912–2002), who had been active in promoting the library in a variety of ways over the years. I looked Hay up at my university library and located Stuart Timmons' biography of Hay. Lo and behold, Hay was credited with founding the Mattachine Society, an early gay rights organization. Although there are some who contest the claim, many scholars and activists, in fact, consider Hay to be a founder, if not, the founder, of the modern-day gay rights movement. Hay had led an illustrious life, cutting his teeth as a union organizer, joining and then later parting ways amicably with the Communist Party, and founding the Radical Faeries, a gay movement focused on Native American spiritualism, in the 1970s.

I contacted Hay and during our conversations he mentioned that he met Woody through a mutual friend, actor Will Geer of *The Waltons* fame. Hay had been active in the Communist Party in the 1930s and 1940s during which time he had taught a labor, college-type music appreciation class for workers. Hay mentioned that there were two phonograph records that Woody had recorded while in Los Angeles in the late 1930s. He said these had been made as an "air check," recorded off the air while Guthrie was performing on KFVD and that he had played them for years at cocktail parties for members of the Los Angeles Left.

Those recordings, it turned out, were still around. Perhaps not realizing their historical value, Hay had donated them along with other commercially recorded 78-rpm recordings to the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research several years prior. I ran down to the library with Hay's description, and after about two hours of searching, I located two lacquer-covered aluminum discs, both covered with bright orange Presto labels. Titles to four songs were scratched into the

“lead out,” the innermost grooves of each side of each disc, and one of the lead outs also had the word “Woody” etched into it in a handprint that resembles Guthrie’s writing in other places. The words “Woody Guthrie 1937” were also hand-printed in pencil on one of the storage sleeves. However when I returned to view the records in 2008, that sleeve had apparently disappeared.

Although the voice and songs on the discs were clearly those of Woody, I was suspicious from the start about the 1937 date. As I discuss in footnotes of my book *Proud to Be an Okie: Cultural Politics, Country Music, and Migration to Southern California*, it is much more likely that Woody made these recordings in 1939. Two of the songs performed on the discs are dated 1939 in two separate songbooks which Guthrie compiled during the era and which are now housed separately in the Library of Congress and the Woody Guthrie Archives. Hay passed away in 2002, and so can offer no further insight.

A 1939 date would also make sense because Woody performs alone on the discs. If they were made in 1937 or 1938, Woody would have likely appeared with Maxine “Lefty Lou” Crissman who up until that point had been his singing partner on the Woody and Lefty Lou program. After Crissman’s departure, Guthrie renamed his program Woody, the Lone Wolf Show.

If they were recorded in 1939, they would certainly be the oldest known Guthrie recordings because Woody’s famed Library of Congress recordings with Alan Lomax did not take place until 1940 after Guthrie had moved back East.

Do these two Presto discs actually constitute a long lost “air check” of Woody singing during a broadcast on KFVD? Michael Kieffer, a vintage recording expert who helped secure recordings of the discs for this set, doubts it. He argues that the relatively high quality of the recordings suggest they were not recorded from the air, but may have been done in some sort of booth, sort of a demo that Guthrie might have used to get the attention of broadcasters and record companies.

Alan Graves, an expert on Presto records, argues that these discs were likely cut in a radio studio. The Presto Recording Company was a New York-based manufacturer that in 1934 began making both the easy-to-use pre-grooved lacquer-coated blank discs and the lathes, the machines that actually cut the record. Once recorded, a Presto disc could be played on a standard 78-rpm phonograph. This technology soon became the radio industry’s standard way of recording broadcasts whether for future airplay or for archival and legal purposes. It also became a standard way for folklorists to record folk songs. By the late 1930s, Presto had begun to offer less expensive home-versions of the recorders and discs.

After viewing photos of the two Woody Guthrie Prestos, Graves said that the “lead out” indicates these Prestos were made by a larger mastering lathe, not a home recorder. The discs, however, are of the cheaper home-use variety. Graves also noted that many broadcasters made “line checks” rather than “air checks” by simply recording Prestos directly from the radio station microphone while a performer was broadcasting, rather than transcribing them off of the air.

Ultimately, this presents three possible scenarios each equally plausible:

- a) Woody snuck into the KFVD studio and recorded his own demo with his own discs using KFVD’s equipment. (Free spirit that he was, Woody was certainly not above such antics.)
- b) Woody recorded them with permission from the station owner without broadcasting
- c) Woody recorded them from an internal line in the station while broadcasting.

So what then about the purpose? Did he record these discs because he was trying to get the attention of broadcasters or record companies? In his biography of Guthrie, Ed Cray notes Guthrie’s excitement in 1938 when the sponsors of the Chicago National Barn Dance, a prominent hillbilly program akin to Nashville’s Grand Ole Opry, expressed interest in having Guthrie and Lefty Lou on that program. That performance never happened for reasons that have never been entirely explained. Perhaps Guthrie was hoping to make a second stab at a national commercial radio career by cutting the four songs on these discs? We may never know, but it is intriguing to consider whether he might have

been pitching them around in an effort to launch a commercial hillbilly career.

Perhaps more importantly, the four songs give us a glimpse into Woody as a songwriter during a period in which he was making a dramatic shift. I contend in my book that Los Angeles, not New York, appears to be the place which drew Guthrie into politics. These four songs certainly suggest a period of transition in which Guthrie moved from writing songs that were merely topical to songs that were much more political. The first two of these songs do not appear in any of Guthrie’s other recordings and so this collection will constitute their first release.

Guthrie’s banter at the beginning of “Big City Ways” offers a glimpse of what his personality

might have been on the air: under- or unrehearsed, heavy on the rustic, with perhaps a hint of anti-intellectualism thrown in for good measure (“here’s a song...that’s got sorta thee ay uh college education in it”). The song itself, one of two from the discs that do not appear to have been recorded elsewhere, is set to the tune of the Delmore Brothers’ “Brown’s Ferry Blues.” It details the ways in which migrants were taken advantage of in the big city, as well as the types of humiliation that might be endured by a family of rural transplants. Although the name of the city is unmentioned, it appears to be part of a larger group of songs from this era in which Guthrie explores “Lost Angeles,” a city plagued by significant problems—downtown traffic congestion, a corrupt jail system, greedy finance companies, overpopulated skid rows, and disease-ridden flophouses. In “Big City Ways,” Guthrie envisions the urban landscape as a place filled with uncontrolled materialism and distorted morals. Guthrie made similar critiques in his non-musical writing. Turning the Southern California citrus orchard motif on its head, Guthrie argued in the side notes of one song book that the “Big City” was “like a bunch of warts on yer hide, formin’ and growin’ like bacteria on an orange, and a spreadin’ its racket and noise and greed and heartbreaks and selfishness in every direction.” There is also something eerily conventional about the gender politics of the song in that its women seem either predatory or in need of protection; it is not exactly the kind of verse one would find in later, more feminist songs such as “Union Maid.” Yes, “the working man he gets run down,” but the narrator also complains that sister “married a gigolo honey” and that “Brother’s a-payin’ alimony.”

The other previously unreleased song, “Skid Row Serenade,” depicts a skid row on Hollywood Boulevard populated by hundreds if not thousands of homeless people in the late 1930s. Such ballads drew contrasts between the down-and-out residents of these sections and the more well-heeled residents of other parts of town, but they also explicitly blamed the political system. “My senator,” Guthrie sings on the Presto as if to alleviate any doubt, “sent me down on the Skid Row.” Guthrie was well versed on conditions on Hollywood Boulevard, having published columns in the Hollywood Tribune describing skid rows on both Fifth Street and Hollywood Boulevard in 1939.

Much has been written about the best-known and probably the oldest of the four songs, “Do Re Mi,” a composition he would later include on his Dust Bowl Ballads album. Unlike the final song of the four, “Ain’t Got No Home,” which seems to focus on the most desperate of Dust Bowl migrants, this song focused on relatively more comfortable, land-owning migrants, warning them against selling off the farm. California was after all no “garden of Eden.” “Do Re Mi” reserved its ire for its Californians: the LAPD officers who were sent unconstitutionally to the Arizona border in 1936 to bar Dust Bowl migrants such as Guthrie entry into California. Guthrie’s experience with the LAPD’s “foreign legion,” however, was vicarious at best because he had not entered California until a year after the checkpoint was dismantled. Guthrie most likely read of the blockade in the press.

The final song, “Ain’t Got No Home,” depicts the same Dust Bowl migrant but now at a much more desperate stage, that of a sharecropper reduced to an itinerant “wandering worker.” Like “Do Re Mi,” it too takes aim at the police for singling out the most desperate. The song may in fact reflect the very real observations Guthrie made in late 1938 when he was asked by KFVD’s liberal owner, Frank Burke Sr., to serve as “special hobo correspondent” for the Democratic-aligned paper *Light*. During that time, he observed the most desperate of migrants, those who attempted to get into the California by hopping trains or working on foot. In one piece, Guthrie argued that railroad guards harassed the “starvation armies of wandering workers” by callously ordering stowaway passengers off boxcars in the middle of the scorching Mojave Desert in late summer.

DISC ONE

1. This Land Is Your Land (alternate version)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded late April 1944; matrix MA-114

During his travels in early 1940, Woody Guthrie kept hearing the same song played on the jukebox everywhere he went: Kate Smith's patriotic "God Bless America." He listened to the imagery in Irving Berlin's lyrics and felt the song did not speak to the Americans he knew and the things he had seen in his travels all over the nation. He sat down and wrote his own song, originally called "God Blessed America." It told of his America, from "California to the New York Island," his imagery of the United States. Since 1940, the song, now known as "This Land Is Your Land," has become almost a second national anthem.

The song is now known by school children all over the country. If you ask someone who Woody Guthrie was and get a blank stare, ask again and say, "This Land Is Your Land." You will get an "Oh yeah, I know that, he's the guy who wrote it?" Over the years, the song has been edited to leave out two original verses that precisely date the song to the end of the Great Depression. The two verses were political commentary: one discussed people waiting in "bread lines;" the other spoke of a "sign that said private property, on the back side it didn't say nothing, that side was made for you and me." The original recording, including these two verses, sat on a shelf until 1997, when it was finally released by the Smithsonian.

While home from the hospital one weekend in the late 1950s, Guthrie made a point of teaching his son Arlo the full version of the song so that it would not be forgotten. Pete Seeger and Arlo Guthrie have continued to perform the entire song in the years since. For the standard version and details about "This Land Is Your Land," see track 21.

2. Pastures of Plenty

Woody Guthrie, vocal, guitar, and harmonica

Recorded late April 1947; matrix D-199

This is one of Guthrie's most popular songs. It was written for the Bonneville Dam project, and it extolls "the beauty of the Columbia River Valley. It is possibly one of the most poignant songs ever written about the migrant workers and fruit pickers in the West whom Woody encountered during his tours of the Columbia River.

The lovely lyrics were put to the tune of the tragic mountain ballad, "Pretty Polly." The song was first released in 1947 on the Ballads from the Dust Bowl (Disc 610) set.

3. Riding in my car (Car song)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 1946; no matrix

Of the many children's songs Guthrie composed, this is the best known and beloved. It is a song shared by many families riding down the highway, and it has been included on numerous children's albums, including Moses Asch's collection Songs to Grow On—Nursery Days, Vol. 1 (Folkways 105).

4. The Grand Coulee Dam

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-17

The Grand Coulee Dam is located on the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest. Guthrie was hired in 1941 by the Bonneville Power Administration to provide a film soundtrack of pro-dam songs. "Grand Coulee Dam" became one of the best known from the project, and Asch chose it to be in the first Guthrie album he released. It became a "hootenanny" favorite during the folk revival of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

5. Talking Dust Bowl

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 21 March 1940; 3411-A2

Guthrie got his "talking blues" style from country singer Robert Lunn (1911–1966), a performer at the Grand Ole Opry in the 1930s. It was a comic style that worked perfectly for Guthrie's biting social satire. The first country musician to use this style was South Carolinian Chris Bouchillon, the "Original Talking Blues Man." The style has roots in African American music, but Bouchillon started using it after it was

suggested that he was not a great singer and should perhaps speak his way through his songs. He recorded “Talking Blues” in 1926 for Columbia Records (15120). Guthrie also wrote a variant on Bouchillon’s “Born in Hard Luck.”

“Talking Dust Bowl” was one of the early songs Guthrie wrote in Pampa, Texas; it shows off his wit. The song was recorded during the Library of Congress sessions and became one of the core songs on Guthrie’s Dust Bowl Ballads. It tells the story of poor farmers who, after losing everything they had, loaded up their old cars with whatever fit, hit the 66 highway, and headed to California where they could “sleep out every night.”

6. So Long, It’s Been Good to Know Yuh (dusty old dust)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded 21 March 1940; 3410 B-2

On April 14, 1935, a terrible dust storm hit Pampa, Texas. Guthrie recalled, “We watched the dust storm come up like the red sea closing in on the Israel children. It got so black, when that thing hit we all run into the house. Dust so thick it was black, the overhead light bulb looked like a cigarette. Those who were religious thought it was the end, someone in the group said, ‘So long, it’s been good to know you’” (Partridge 2002, 48-49).

Guthrie re-purposed this song over the years for different causes. The melody of the chorus comes from the folk song “Billy the Kid.” The Weavers recorded a popular version of the song in 1951.

7. Ramblin’ Round

Woody Guthrie, vocal, guitar, and harmonica
Recorded late 1947; matrix D-201

This is one of the twenty-six songs written by Guthrie during his employment by the Bonneville Power Administration in 1941. It is a classic Guthrie “ramblin’” song based on his observations of the migrant workers. When he played it for Pete Seeger, Seeger pointed out that whether he realized it or not, Woody had borrowed the tune from Lead Belly’s “Goodnight Irene” for the melody. The song was originally known as “Rambling Blues.”

8. Philadelphia Lawyer

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar
Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-36

A “Philadelphia lawyer” is a fast talker who can twist the facts around to benefit his client and win over the jury. In 1937, Woody’s singing partner Lefty Lou Crissman showed Woody a newspaper article. She remembered that she “found this clipping of the cowboy being shot in an argument over a girl in Reno, so Woody came up and he looked at it and he wrote ‘Reno Blues’... When we did it on the air, this man, a friend of the cowboy, wrote this letter to us and sent a picture of the cowboy who had been shot” (Brown 1984).

“Philadelphia Lawyer”, originally called “Reno Blues” is one of the songs Guthrie performed in his California period. A California country group called The Maddox Brothers and Rose—“America’s Most Colorful Hillbilly Band”—recorded the song in 1949 for the small independent Four Star label. The song became a regional country hit, one of the first times a Guthrie composition became popular on the radio. Vocalist Rose Maddox remembered: “We’d set up in a bar and play, and right across the street from us in another bar was Woody Guthrie and Jack Guthrie playing and doing the same thing we was, playing for tips, so they could get some food to put in their stomachs. And I would stand outside and listen, and that’s where I learned ‘Reno Blues’” (Brown 1984).

9. Hard Travelin’

Woody Guthrie, vocal and mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica
Recorded 1947; Smithsonian acetate 2767

“Hard Travelin’” was composed during Guthrie’s time in the Pacific Northwest, although it was not recorded until later (Logsdon, SFW 40101). The lyrics and imagery are quintessential Guthrie.

10. Pretty Boy Floyd

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-57

Charles Arthur “Pretty Boy” Floyd (1904–1934) was a notorious outlaw in the 1920s and 1930s. Floyd started his career with a payroll robbery in 1925 and continued robbing and killing from Oklahoma to Ohio (Logsdon, SFW 40103). By 1934, he was listed as “Public Enemy No. 1” by the FBI. He was killed by FBI Agents in East Liverpool, Ohio, in October 1934.

“Pretty Boy Floyd” is part of a long line of American outlaw ballads. Unlike a “Robin Hood” figure, Pretty Boy Floyd was not a character who deserved sympathy. The song is one of Guthrie’s best known and features one of his most famous lines, “some will rob you with a six gun, some with a fountain pen.”

11. Hobo’s Lullaby

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 25 April 1944; matrix MA-109

Although “Hobo’s Lullaby” is frequently associated with Guthrie, it was not one of his compositions. It was written by cowboy singer Goebel Reeves (1899–1959) and recorded in 1934. Among the stage names Reeves adopted was the “Texas Drifter.” He was one of many country/folk performers in the style of the “Singing Brakeman” Jimmie Rodgers, the best-selling country singer of the 1920s and 1930s after whom many subsequent singers modeled their performances.

“Hobo’s Lullaby” was a favorite of Guthrie’s and it appeared in his unpublished song book from the Los Angeles period, Woody and Lefty Lou’s One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs (Logsdon, SFW 40100). Arlo Guthrie recorded the song in 1972, and it became the title track of one of his most successful albums.

12. Talking Columbia

Woody Guthrie, vocal, guitar, and harmonica

Recorded 1947; from Disc 78-610

Guthrie wrote this song in 1941 when he was living in the Pacific Northwest. It recounts the plan to provide electric power for the Northwest and, in Woody’s view, more jobs on the Columbia River. The talking blues format worked perfectly to comment on a “river going to waste” and the need for “E-lectricity.”

Woody recorded this song for Asch upon his return from his second trip to the Columbia River in 1947. It was included in Asch’s Ballads of the Dust Bowl album, although it was not a Dust Bowl song. It was later released on the This Land Is Your Land LP with other songs from the session.

13. The Sinking of the Reuben James

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 25 April 1944; matrix MA-80

This song has been a favorite for folk singing gatherings since it was composed by Guthrie and the Almanac Singers in November 1941. The song refers to the sinking of the US destroyer Reuben James by a German U-Boat on Halloween 1941, a month before the attack on Pearl Harbor. At the time, German U-Boats in the Atlantic were torpedoing any ships presumed to be aiding the Allies. The Reuben James was sunk off the coast of Iceland, and only 44 of the 159 sailors aboard survived (Logsdon, SFW 40100). This incident occurred before the American entrance into World War II and helped flame pro-war sentiments.

With typical zeal, Guthrie wrote a long ballad about the event, initially intending to name all of the dead soldiers he found listed in the newspaper. His band mates suggested the current chorus as a better alternative. The last verse was written by fellow Almanac member Millard Lampell (Logsdon, SFW 40100).

For the melody of the verses, Woody used perhaps the most famous of all the Carter Family’s songs, “Wildwood Flower.”

14. Jesus Christ

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recording date unknown; Smithsonian acetate disc 161-1

A timeless song written by Guthrie in 1940, “Jesus Christ” is as relevant in the 21st century as it was when it was first written. Woody’s typewritten message under the lyrics read:

“I wrote this song looking out of a rooming house window in New York City in the winter of 1940. I saw

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

Asch chose this song to be among the six titles on the first Woody Guthrie album he produced (Woody Guthrie, Asch 347).

15. Gypsy Davy

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded late April 1944; matrix MA-139

This is one of the many old ballads Guthrie learned from his mother, to which he added his own touches. This British Isles ballad is known by many titles: "Black Jack Davey," "Raggle Taggle Gypsy," "Whistling Gypsy," and "Gypsy Laddie," among others. It is one of the many ballads collected, cataloged, and published by folk song scholar Francis James Child between 1882 and 1898; it is number 200 in Child's collection and dates as far back as the 17th or 18th century.

Guthrie recorded "Gypsy Davy" for the Library of Congress in 1940, and it was one of the tracks included in the library's series of record releases. Asch included his own recording of the song in the 1945 Woody Guthrie album.

16. New York Town

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar

Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-21

After moving to New York, Guthrie was quick to write about his adopted new town. Many of his compositions are humorous observations about life in the big city. Here Guthrie takes Blind Lemon Jefferson's song "One Dime Blues" and adapts it to the story of someone "down and out" in New York. When in Los Angeles, Woody spent a lot of time playing music for people on "Skid Row." When he got to New York, he was struck by how much worse off the men were in the Bowery.

This song is from Woody and Cisco's marathon recording sessions in 1944.

17. Going Down the Road (Feeling Bad)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica

Recorded April 24, 1944; matrix MA-711

While Guthrie originally wrote this song as the Dust Bowl ballad "Blowin' Down This Road," he changed the lyrics over time to fit his current cause—much as he did with "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You." The song, a popular string band standard, is also known as "Chilly Winds" or "Lonesome Road Blues."

Guthrie would have heard the tune over and over when growing up; Guthrie Meade's extensive discography of early country music recordings features an extensive entry for the song (Meade 2002, 542–44).

Woody Guthrie kept up the self-image of being a citizen of the road. When staying with Alan Lomax in 1940, he insisted on eating at the sink and sleeping on the floor, commenting "I'm a road man, I don't want to get soft" (Lomax in *The Library of Congress Recordings*, Rounder, 1988).

18. Hard, Ain't it Hard

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar

Recorded 16 April 1944; matrix LM-1

On April 16, 1944, Asch invited Guthrie into his studio to make audition recordings of two songs. "Hard, Ain't It Hard" was the first song Guthrie recorded for Asch; the second was "More Pretty Girls Than One." Interestingly, Asch released these two songs as a single 78-rpm on the Folk Tunes label, listed as "recorded by Asch Studios." The record is undated.

Performed by Woody when he got to New York, "Hard, Ain't It Hard" is related to the old British folk ballad "The Butcher Boy." "The Butcher Boy" was recorded over a dozen times by country musicians in the 1920s and 1930s (Meade 2002, 12).

19. The Biggest Thing That Man Has Ever Done (The Great Historical Bum)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-15

This song had been performed and recorded numerous times both before (and later, after) Guthrie's take. It began its life in 1894 as the humorous song "I'm a Highly Educated Man," written by H.C. Verner and Harry C. Clyde (Logsdon, SFW 40100). It became a popular novelty song in country music, and was first recorded with the title "When Abraham and Isaac Rushed the Can" in 1924 by Georgian "Fiddlin" John Carson, one of the earliest recorded country musicians. Grand Ole Opry stars Uncle Dave Macon, Charlie Poole, and Vernon Dalhart recorded it as "I'm the Man Who Rode the Mule around the World." (Meade 2002, 448–49). Its most popular title was a variation on "I Was Born 10,000 Years Ago." Like the "talking blues," this song provided a perfect frame for Guthrie to hang his political commentary on. He used it in the set of Bonneville songs and again for this anti-Hitler version. He also called the song "The Great Historical Bum."

20. This Land Is Your Land (standard version)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 1946; from Folkways 7027

This later recording of "This Land Is Your Land" is the version most people know. This edited version first appeared on a Folkways children's album, *Work Songs to Grow On*; however, the song became very well known in the folk music community through channels other than records—*Work Songs to Grow On* was not a big seller, and "This Land Is Your Land" was not recorded by others widely until the late 1950s. Instead, due to the fact it was copyrighted and included in many songbooks (some for schools and summer camps), many of the young people who became the musicians of the folk revival knew the song well by the time they started their own music careers.

Woody's daughter Nora remembered her and her brother Arlo's first day at a progressive school. The class started the day by singing "This Land." The Guthrie children were shocked; they were the only ones who did not know the words (personal communication).

It has been said that Woody got the melody from the Carter Family's "Little Darling Pal of Mine," but it could also be from the Carters' "When This World's on Fire." Maybelle Carter's guitar introduction to the latter song is identical to the melody of "This Land."

21. Jarama Valley

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recording date unknown; from Folkways 5437

In the years preceding World War II, almost three thousand Americans volunteered to fight for the Spanish government in the struggle against the insurgent fascists commanded by Francisco Franco. During the Spanish Civil War, members of the "folk song movement" in New York were supportive of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion of American volunteer fighters. Many of the veterans who returned to New York later volunteered for the United States military in the war against Hitler.

Moses Asch released a set in 1944 entitled *Songs of the Lincoln Brigade* featuring Pete Seeger, Butch Hawes, Bess Hawes, and Tom Glazer. When Asch reissued the recording as two LPs in 1961 and 1962, he also included the original 78 collection released by the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and some additional material, including Guthrie's "Jarama Valley."

Guthrie used the melody of "Red River Valley" for this song about the soldiers who fought at the Battle of Jarama from February 6 to February 27, 1937. It was one of the fiercest battles of the war and its casualties included 1,800 members of the International Brigade.

22. Why, Oh Why?

Woody Guthrie, vocal, guitar, and harmonica

Recorded 1946; from Folkways 7016

"Why, Oh Why?" is one of the playful songs Woody wrote for his daughter Cathy in 1946. He based many of the lyrics on questions his young daughter would ask him. Oddly enough, Asch did not release the song on Folkways in any of Guthrie's children's albums until shortly before his death in 1986; it was included on the album *Why Oh Why?* with the fun subtitle "Very Early Songs for Mother and Child by Stackabones and Mommy and Woody Guthrie." Even with its delayed release, it is still one of Guthrie's most popular

children's songs.

In this case, he repurposed the melody he used for "Danville Girl (Good Morning, Mr. Railroad Man)."

23. I've Got to Know

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 1951

Written later in Woody's life, this song has become known over the years through cover versions by other artists. One has to search hard to find this version by Guthrie. Contained on the Richmond Recordings, this song was released as part of the soundtrack to the film *Bob Roberts* (1992) and as part of a Bear Family 10-CD set of political songs, *Songs for Political Action*. Had Woody recorded it during his prime, the song would have probably become one of his best-known pieces. Although it is a lesser-known Guthrie tune, it is still frequently performed at Guthrie tribute concerts. The melody is from the old hymn, "Farther Along."

DISC TWO

1. Better World A-Comin'

Woody Guthrie, vocal and mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar
Recording date unknown; Smithsonian reel FW-032

Woody and many others from the political Left felt that the fight against fascism world-wide would lead to all unions, races, and creeds fighting together. They hoped that their struggle would bring greater equality for all people in a new post-war world. This song expresses the great optimism in that vision of the future.

2. When That Great Ship Went Down (The Great Ship)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica
Recorded 25 April 1944; MA-91-1

The sinking of the RMS Titanic in 1912 was one of the most compelling news stories of the early 20th century. In the African American community, many saw the event as God's vengeance for not allowing Black passengers on the journey. Many topical songs were written about it, including numerous blues songs such as Lead Belly's "Titanic" and Blind Willie Johnson's "God Moves on the Water." One of the best selling recordings of the 1920s was Virginian Ernest "Pop" Stoneman's 1924 version, "The Titanic." Woody first heard this song as a young man in Okemah, Oklahoma.

3. A Dollar Down and a Dollar a Week

Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston
Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-4

This song is from the *Struggle* album. Guthrie placed the "finance company" at the top of his "evil people" list. He had seen family houses foreclosed and had numerous automobiles repossessed. In this tune, Guthrie and Cisco get in a few barbs on the finance man.

Commenting on the all-mighty dollar, Guthrie quipped: "I hear George Washington once threw a dollar across the Potomac; I guess a dollar went further in those days."

4. Talking Centralia

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded 1947; Smithsonian acetate 156

Guthrie was disturbed by the March 25, 1947, disaster in Centralia No. 5 mine, which killed 111 people. This is one of the three "Songs for Centralia" composed by Guthrie in 1947 and published in the *People's Songs Bulletin*.

5. 1913 Massacre

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded 24 May 1945; matrix MA-901

During the period when Woody worked with Moses Asch, Asch suggested they publish a "singing newspaper." So Guthrie began writing a series on labor martyrs. He had recently read a book by labor activist Mother Bloor (Ella Reeve Bloor, 1862–1951) called *We Are Many*. It recounted the tragic story of a Christmas party held for a group of striking mine workers in Michigan. Copper mining had become big business in Michigan, drawing workers into the state. Many joined the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), an affiliate of the Industrial Workers of the World, or the Wobblies. The WFM separated from the Wobblies and went on strike against the Michigan mines. The incident described by Bloor and retold in Guthrie's song happened on Christmas Eve 1913: during the party, one of the company thugs yelled, "Fire!" and locked the doors. Seventy-three children were trampled to death trying to escape (Partridge 2002, 145).

"1913 Massacre" is one of two "massacre" songs written by Guthrie. Later, some of his "musical and actual children," including Bob Dylan and Arlo Guthrie, would create humorous talking blues songs which they called "Masacreets."

6. Dirty Overalls

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar
Recording date unknown

“Dirty Overalls” is another example of Woody recycling his melodies. He had used the melody from the Carter Family’s “Cannonball Blues” for his “Baltimore to Washington.” Here he strips away almost all of the lyrics to create a new song about one of his favorite topics, working men.

7. My Daddy (Flies a Ship in the Sky)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-14

This song was composed in November 1941 at the Almanac House in New York City (Cray 2004, 233). It was created shortly before Pearl Harbor and encouraged all Americans to work together to defeat the enemy, no matter what their job. The song is written from the perspective of a child.

8. Worried Man Blues

Woody Guthrie, vocal and mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar
Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-47

This song is frequently associated with Woody and is one he played often. It also comes from the Carter Family and was one of their popular recordings (Victor 40317, 1930). Thanks to Woody’s version, this song became standard fare during the 1950s and 1960s folk music revival and was recorded by groups such as the Kingston Trio. It also has become a popular song in the bluegrass world.

9. Hangknot, SlipKnot

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded late April 1944; matrix MA-115

When Woody was a boy in Oklahoma, he often heard the horrible local story about a teenage boy from the nearby African American town of Boley who, in 1910, was accused of shooting a deputy sheriff in the leg. The boy and his mother were arrested. A mob carried them across the bridge and lynched them, leaving the mother’s baby alive and crying. “Slip Knot” was Woody’s reaction to the story. Among Woody’s pen-and-ink drawings in the Smithsonian collection is a sketch of a bunch of bodies hanging from underneath a bridge.

10. Buffalo Skinners

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded 24 March 1945; matrix MA-903

This is an interesting example of Guthrie writing in a minor key; he plays a D-minor chord throughout the song. Guthrie got the tune from a cowboy song called “Boggy Creek,” published in John A. Lomax’s book *Cowboy Songs* (Logsdon, SFW 40103). He added his own lyrics to make the song a first-person story about a young cowboy who joins up with “buffalo skinners.”

This song appeared on the *Documentary #1: Struggle* album, a series of topical and protest songs; it is, in its own way, a cowboy protest song.

11. Howdi do

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded 1946; Smithsonian acetate 100

Woody often tried to take the kinds of things young children might say and spin them into songs. “Howdi do” is one of these whimsical children’s songs.

12. Jackhammer John

Woody Guthrie, vocal and mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica
Recorded late April, 1944; matrix MA-126

Guthrie wrote two “Jackhammer” songs—“Jackhammer John” and “Jackhammer Blues”—and the titles are frequently confused. “Jackhammer John” was written during the Bonneville Dam project and is listed under this title in the sheet music book *Woody Guthrie Folk Songs* (Ludlow Music). It is called “Jackhammer Blues” on the Columbia River recording. The lyrics in the Columbia River recording, although similar, are slightly different than those printed in the sheet music. In this song, Woody returns to perhaps his favorite melody: “Brown’s Ferry Blues,” a popular country tune recorded by the Delmore Brothers in 1933. Guthrie himself recorded a version during his marathon sessions for Asch in 1944.

Woody references “battle” in “Jackhammer John,” placing the tune among his patriotic war songs. However, in light of the scattered sexual and erotic references in his prose (as well as in his drawings), it can be viewed with a “wink” and an acknowledgment of perhaps other forces at work in the song.

13. The Ranger’s Command

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded 25 April 1944; matrix MA-79

This song is Woody’s reworking of the cowboy tune “Fair Lady of the Plains” (Texas Rangers–Laws a8). The protagonist in the original song fought against Indians; Woody changes it to “rustlers.” Ramblin’ Jack Elliott claims that Woody wrote this song to encourage women to be active in the war against Hitler and fascism (Logsdon, SFW 40103).

The song was included on Woody’s first album for Asch. Guthrie also performed the song in a newsreel, one of a handful of examples of Guthrie on film.

14. So Long, It’s Been Good to Know You (WWII version)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal
Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-3

One of the war songs Guthrie recorded was a new version of his song “Dusty Old Dust,” also known as “So Long, It’s Been Good to Know You.” This was one of many times he’d changed the lyrics of his song to speak to a different topic or concern. Had Guthrie remained healthy, he would likely have produced many more versions of his songs updated to deal with ongoing current events. This recording was not released until 1996.

15. What Are We Waiting On?

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-13

During World War II, Guthrie and the Almanac Singers were passionately anti-fascist and wrote dozens of songs against Hitler and Mussolini. In the unpublished lyrics stored in the Smithsonian and the Woody Guthrie Foundation and Archives, there are pages and pages of anti-war songs. Moses Asch released only a small number of them.

Among the recordings Asch made for potential albums were war songs performed by both Guthrie and Pete Seeger. The war ended before Asch could release these recordings and they returned to the shelves. A group of songs was finally released by the Smithsonian in 1996: *That’s Why We’re Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement*. “What Are We Waiting On?,” previously unreleased, was one of the gems discovered and released through this project. It was recorded during the marathon 1944 sessions. Woody’s lyrics describe how the labor unions will work together to defeat fascism and Hitler (Logsdon, SFW 40102). In his manuscripts, Woody also called this song “Great and Bloody Fight.” The melody comes from “John Henry.”

16. Lindbergh

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar
Recording date unknown; no matrix from Disc LP-110

Charles Lindbergh was one of the great American heroes of the early 20th century. His May 1927 non-stop air-flight from New York to Paris, flown in his Spirit of St. Louis, was one of the great milestones in aviation history. Lindbergh returned to ticker-tape parades and was so popular that a dance craze, the Lindy Hop, was named after him.

In the 1930s, Lindbergh became involved with the isolationist America First movement, which urged the United States to stay out of the impending war in Europe. Many participants in the movement were also sympathetic to Hitler and Mussolini’s policies. On a visit to Berlin in 1938, Lindbergh accepted the Service Cross of the German Eagle in honor of his trans-Atlantic crossing. The award was from the German government acting on behalf of Hitler. Lindbergh’s act is referred to in Guthrie’s song.

Others mentioned by Guthrie in “Lindbergh” include senators Burton K. Wheeler and Gerald Nye, congressman James B. Clark, and the inflammatory radio host Father Charles Coughlin. Coughlin, a Catholic priest, was a pioneer in using the radio to further his anti-Semitism and other extreme beliefs. Guthrie wrote this song while living in the Almanac House. It was a prolific period of writing for Guthrie; anyone supporting the fascists was seen as an enemy to be reckoned with.

“Lindbergh” uses the melody of Charlie Poole’s “White House Blues.”

17. Ludlow Massacre

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 24 May 1945; matrix MA-902

This song is part of the collection that became the Documentary #1: Struggle album. It was written during a period when Guthrie composed a number of songs about labor martyrs.

The song tells a true story from the 1913–14 Colorado Coal Strike. The United Mine Workers of America struck against the large coal companies in Colorado. On April 20, 1914, twelve thousand striking miners living in a tent city were attacked by the Colorado National Guard. During a party to celebrate Greek Easter, twenty-one people—including women and children—perished. The mostly immigrant workers were being paid an average daily wage of \$1.60 (Logsdon, SFW 40102). The Ludlow Tent Colony Site where these miners lived is now a National Historic Landmark.

18. Bad Lee Brown (Cocaine Blues)

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-59

This is an old American folk song, adapted by Guthrie. Better known as “Little Sadie,” it was first recorded as “Penitentiary Blues” in 1928 by Buddy Baker (Meade 2002, 66). This song presents yet another tough guy braggart, a figure who recurs in a number of Guthrie songs.

Hank Thompson recorded the song in 1958 as “Cocaine Blues,” and Johnny Cash included it on his famous Live from Folsom Prison album.

19. Two Good Men

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

Recorded 1947; from Folkways 5485

“Two Good Men” is from the Sacco and Vanzetti song project. It tells the story of Ferdinando Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Italian immigrants who lived in Massachusetts. The men were anarchists who were accused of a payroll robbery and sentenced to death. Many on the Left, including Joe Hill, felt Sacco and Vanzetti were framed because of their anarchist beliefs. Moses Asch commissioned Guthrie to write a song cycle about the case. It is one of the few instances of Guthrie writing to order. Guthrie struggled to find inspiration for the project; “Two Good Men” stands out as the strongest of the final set of songs he was able to produce.

The old song “Poor Howard” provides the melody for this tune.

20. Farmer-Labor Train

Woody Guthrie, vocal and mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal and guitar

Recorded possibly 1947; Smithsonian acetate 047

“Farmer-Labor Train” is a campaign song written by Guthrie to the tune of the then-popular Roy Acuff hit “Wabash Cannonball.” Woody and others in the political Left had been fighting for progressive causes. When they returned from the war, they found to their chagrin that the “better world a-coming” for which they had fought had not yet emerged. Many subsequently threw their weight behind the Progressive Party’s 1948 presidential candidate Henry Wallace, former vice president under Franklin Roosevelt. Members of People’s Songs, a group founded in the mid-1940s by folk musicians including Seeger, Hays, and Guthrie, campaigned for Wallace. Numerous pro-Wallace songs were published in the People’s Songs Bulletin. Unfortunately for the group, Wallace did not come close to winning.

Even though this song was recorded in the 1940s, it was not released until 1994.

21. The Jolly Banker

Woody Guthrie, vocal and guitar

also known as “The Banker’s Lament”; Recorded 22 March 1940; 3414 A-2

During the Library of Congress sessions, Alan Lomax asked Guthrie if he had made up any songs about how the sharecroppers and farmers felt about the bankers. “The Jolly Banker” was his response.

Wileo recorded the song in 2009 at the suggestion of Nora Guthrie. Nora felt the song was equally effective as a comment on the economic situation of 2009 as it was on the situation of the 1930s.

22. We Shall Be Free

Lead Belly, guitar and vocal; Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal; Cisco Houston, vocal; Sonny Terry, harmonica and vocal

Recorded April 1944; matrix MA-124-1

This is an example of the kind of free-form session that took place in Asch's studio. Guthrie recorded quite a few times with his friends Lead Belly, Sonny Terry, and Cisco Houston.

DISC THREE

The third disc in this collection is made up of radio programs from the 1940s in which Woody Guthrie was involved. Guthrie appeared on numerous New York area radio shows in the early 1940s, frequently as a cast member. Fortunately, Moses Asch recorded many of these.

This disc also includes a few unreleased and obscure Guthrie performances from the Smithsonian collections.

The Los Angeles Presto Disc Recordings

Woody Guthrie, guitar, harmonica, and vocal

These recordings were made by Guthrie in 1937 on a Presto disc cutting machine and are discussed in greater detail in the essay by Peter LaChapelle (page 28).

1. I Ain't Got No Home (In This World Anymore)

Of this song, Guthrie said: "This old song to start out with was a religious piece called 'I Can't Feel at Home in This World Anymore.' But I seen there was another side to the picture. Reason why you can't feel at home in this world anymore is mostly because you ain't got no home to feel at" (Lomax 1967, 64). Woody learned the song from the Carter Family's "I Can't Find a Home in This World Anymore." He wrote the words while in Los Angeles, and these lyrics make references to California that differ from his later RCA version.

2. Them Big City Ways

Woody used the Delmore Brothers' country hit "Brown's Ferry Blues" to write a song about how the city of Los Angeles corrupted new migrants (LaChapelle 2007, 70).

3. Do Re Mi

"Do Re Mi" is one of the best known of Guthrie's Dust Bowl Ballads. It really captures the experience of the migrants trying to get into California and was popular among his audiences on KFVD radio in Los Angeles.

4. Skid Row Serenade

Skid Row is an area of Los Angeles on Main Street between Third and Seventh Streets. Woody liked to go there and drink beer and sing songs with the men. "Skid Row" and "Them Big City Ways" have never previously been released.

5. Radio Program: The Ballad Gazette with Woody Guthrie This Land Is Your Land, What Did the Deep BLUE Sea Say?, Blow Ye Winds, Trouble on the Waters, Blow the Man Down, Normandy was her name, The Sinking of the Reuben James

Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal

From WNEW-AM 16 October 1945, 14:45; Smithsonian acetate 2117

Guthrie briefly had a radio show called "The Ballad Gazette," on WNEW, one of the biggest stations in New York City. The show began in December 1944 and aired on Sunday afternoons at 4:45 pm. Programs began with an announcer saying "Now your editor-in-chief, Woody Guthrie." Woody would sing a bit of "This Land Is Your Land" as his theme and then launch into a rapid-fire fifteen-minute medley of songs on a particular theme. The theme for this program was sea chanteys.

Guthrie felt that fifteen minutes was too short a period to get his message across and lobbied on air to expand the show to thirty minutes. On one show, he spent the entire program pleading for more air time.

It was on the first of his WNEW shows that Guthrie famously remarked "I hate a song that makes you feel like you are not any good." The show lasted only twelve episodes. As of this writing, recordings of copies of only two of the shows are known to still exist.

"What Did the Deep Blue Sea Say? (Where is My Sailor Boy?)" is an old folk song that was performed

by the Carter Family and Bill Monroe, among others. “Blow the Man Down” and “Blow Ye Winds” are 19th-century sea chanteys from the Golden Age of Sail. “Blow the Man Down” references Paradise Street in Liverpool, “the red light district.” These were mainly sea songs where young sailors are relieved of their pay by disreputable young ladies or “shanghaied” and sent off to sea again.

“Trouble on the Waters” and “Normandy Was Her Name” are both Guthrie originals. Neither has ever been released commercially. The SS Normandie was a massive French ocean liner. In 1939, the ship arrived in New York Harbor where it stayed until France was occupied in 1940, at which point the U.S. Coast Guard took possession of the ship. In 1942, the War Department began to modify it into a troop ship to carry men to the war. An accident with a welder’s torch caused a huge fire, and the ship ultimately sank in New York Harbor. It was later sold for scrap metal.

For information on “The Sinking of the Reuben James,” included in this radio program, see track 13 (Disc 1).

6. BBC: Children’s Hour July 7, 1944

Intro—Wabash Cannonball, 900 Miles, Stagger Lee, Pretty Boy Floyd

Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal

Radio Program—BBC with Woody Guthrie, Children’s Hour, 7 July, 1944;

from cassette tape, Smithsonian collections

Cisco Houston and Woody Guthrie were on their second tour of duty with the Merchant Marine when their ship, the Sea Porpoise, was torpedoed. They were put ashore in England with plans to catch an outgoing ship from Scotland. While they waited, the men visited the BBC in London.

Both Woody and Cisco had been involved in an Alan Lomax-produced radio drama called the “The Martins and The Coys” which also included Sonny Terry, Pete Seeger, Burl Ives, members of the Coon Creek Girls, and others. Lomax was unable to sell the show on American radio, so he arranged for the BBC to cover the costs and broadcast it. The story built on the famous Hatfield and McCoy clan battle in Kentucky, bringing the feuding mountain families together to defeat Hitler and Mussolini. Guthrie played a lead role as “Alex Coy.”

While recording the show in July 1944, Guthrie visited the BBC studios where he was pre-announced as a member of the “Martins and Coys” cast. He specifically paid a visit to the BBC’s “Children’s Hour,” a popular show broadcast from 1922 to 1964, 5 to 6 pm, every day. During the war, “Children’s Hour” was broadcast through the BBC World Service and was thus likely to have been widely heard. It appears that the host, Evelyn Gibbs, did not quite know what to make of Guthrie; she simply announced that he was going to “sing a program about trains.” Guthrie began with Roy Acuff’s “Wabash Cannonball,” one of the most popular country music songs of the time. He continues with “900 Miles” followed by a couple of outlaw ballads, the folk tune “Stagger Lee” and finally his own “Pretty Boy Floyd.”

7. People’s Songs Hootenanny

Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal; Lee Hays, vocal; Pete Seeger, banjo and vocal; possibly Bess Lomax Hawes, Cisco Houston and others

Recorded ca. 1945–1947; from Smithsonian acetate 077

After the members of the Almanac Singers returned from World War II, they (with others) created an organization known as People’s Songs dedicated to creating, promoting and distributing songs of labor and the American people (People’s Songs Bulletin, No. 1, 1945). The organization’s weekly newsletter announced events like hootenannies and gatherings to play music together. Many People’s Songs “hoots” were staged to help raise money for the organization. Moses Asch recorded this snippet on lacquer disc. The date and players are unidentified, but many are obvious: Lee Hays and Woody Guthrie are the main voices, and Pete Seeger’s banjo can distinctly be heard. The “debate” between Hays and Guthrie captures their wry wit and provides a glimpse into what one of these shows might have sounded like.

Ladies Auxiliary

According to Pete Seeger, the Ladies Auxiliary of the CIO approached the Almanac Singers about having a theme song written for them; Guthrie created this song (Logsdon, SFW 40102). The Congress of Industrial Organizations is one of the most powerful labor unions.

Weaver’s Life

In the early 20th century, textile workers in the Carolinas were involved in labor struggles against cotton mill owners. Many of the mill hands—or “lint heads”—were musicians, including some great songwriters.

One such group was the Dixon Brothers, Dorsey (1897–1968) and Howard (1903–1951). Dorsey Dixon penned a number of important textile union songs: “Babies in the Mill,” “Weave Room Blues,” and “Weaver’s Life,” as well as the country standard “Wreck on the Highway.” He worked at several cotton mills including Darlington Cotton Mill Company in Darlington, South Carolina. In 1929, Dorsey started writing poems and songs, some of which were used in strikes in the early 1930s.

The song “Weaver’s Life” was included in the book *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People*, where Woody commented that “Something about this song that gets me. You could take this and sing it easy as falling off a log. This comes from way down south in the mills, and shows you that the weavers are looking forward to better times” (Lomax et al. 1967, 132).

8. WNYC Folk Songs of America: Lead Belly 12 December 1940

John Hardy, Jesse James, and Tom Joad

Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal

From a digital audio tape transfer from the WNYC Archives

From 1940 to 1943, Lead Belly had a weekly radio program produced by anthropologist Henrietta Yurchenco on WNYC, the publicly owned station in New York. He started and ended each show with his theme, “Irene.” His guests included Anne Graham and the gospel group the Oleander Quartet. Woody, a friend of Lead Belly’s, appeared on one of the earliest shows in December 1940. In the middle of the program, Woody was introduced as the “dustiest dust bowler of them all,” and made a cameo appearance performing three songs.

He began with “John Hardy,” a song from the Carter Family about the arrest and execution of an African American named John Hardy in West Virginia. When Guthrie first heard the record, he played it over and over. He then sang the traditional folk song “Jesse James” about the famous western outlaw. Not surprisingly, Guthrie used “John Hardy” as the basis of one of his most famous songs, “Tom Joad.”

“Tom Joad” was written specifically for his Dust Bowl Ballads recording. RCA Victor wanted to piggyback on the success of the novel and motion picture *Grapes of Wrath*, and asked Guthrie to provide a song telling the story of the book. Pete Seeger said: “I remember the night he wrote the song ‘Tom Joad.’ He says, ‘Pete, do you know where I can get a typewriter?’ I said, ‘Well, I’m staying with someone who has one.’ He says, ‘Well, I’m gonna write a ballad. I don’t usually write ballads to order but Victor wants me to do a whole album of Dust Bowl songs and they say they want one about Tom Joad, the character in the movie, *The Grapes of Wrath*.’ I said, ‘Have you read the book?’ He said, ‘No, but I went and saw the movie, great movie.’ My friend said, ‘Sure you can use my typewriter.’ Woody had a half-gallon jug of wine with him. He sat down and started typing away and stood up every few minutes to test out a verse on his guitar and then sat down and typed some more. About one o’clock me and my friend got so sleepy we couldn’t stay awake. In the morning we woke up and there was Woody curled up under the table, half-gallon of wine was almost empty and the completed ballad was sitting near the typewriter. It’s still one of his masterpieces” (Pete Seeger, interview 1 March 1964, London).

Fortunately, both Moses Asch and Frederic Ramsey recorded Folk Songs of America off the air for posterity. Many of these recordings reside in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections at the Smithsonian. This particular program was discovered by Andy Lanset in the WNYC Archives in New York.

9. Reckless Talk

Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal; Cisco Houston, guitar and vocal

Recorded 19 April 1944; matrix MA-23

This song was recorded during the April 1944 recording sessions. It was written during Woody’s time at the Almanac House as one of many war songs. It cautions what a “loose tongue” can do when dealing with an enemy. It has never previously been released.

10. All Work Together

Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal

Recorded 1946; issued Disc 5075B

This is one of the songs from the children’s sessions. It was released on an early Disc 78-rpm set, but was not included in subsequent LP issues. It brings Woody’s pro-union stance into his children’s music.

11. My Little Seed

Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal

Recorded 1946; issued Disc 5075A

This is the flip-side of the previous song and was also only previously issued on 78-rpm.

12. Goodnight Little Cathy

Woody Guthrie, guitar and vocal; Marjorie Mazia Guthrie, vocal

Recording date unknown, ca. 1946

One of the songs Woody composed for his children's albums was a lullaby called "Goodnight Little Darling." He also recorded it as "Goodnight Little Arlo." It is based on an old string band tune "Bonnie Blue Eyes" recorded numerous times in the 1920s and 1930s. Marjorie Guthrie frequently came along with Woody when he was recording these sessions and helped out in the process. This is an outtake from Moses Asch's studio, an unreleased snippet recorded for their daughter Cathy, who tragically perished in a fire at the Guthrie home when she was only four years old.

Sources and Suggested Reading

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Woody Guthrie's Commercially Available Recordings

78-rpm era

Almanac Singers

Deep Sea Chanties and Whaling Ballads. General G-20 1941.

Sod Buster Ballads. General G-21. 1941.

Woody Guthrie

American Documentary #1: Struggle. Asch 360. 1945.

"At My Window" b/w "Bed on the Floor." Asch-Stinson 626. 1945.

"Babe of Mine" b/w "Song for Bridges." Keynote 304. ca. 1941.

Ballads from the Dust Bowl. Disc 610. 1947.

"Boomtown Bill" b/w "Keep That Oil a-Rollin'." Keynote 5000. 1942.

"Chicken Sneeze" b/w "Brown Eyes." Asch/ Stinson 625. ca. 1945.

Dust Bowl Ballads, Vols. 1 and 2. Victor-P-27 and 28. 1940.

"Hard Ain't it Hard" b/w "More Pretty Girls Than One." Folk Tunes 150 (n.d.)

"Poor Boy" b/w "John Henry." Asch-Stinson 628. 1945.

"Railroad Whistle" b/w "Lolly Lo." Asch-Stinson 627. 1945.

Songs to Grow On: Nursery Days. Disc 605. 1946.

Songs to Grow On: Nursery Days, Vol. 1. Folkways FOL5. 1951.

Songs to Grow On: Work Songs for Nursery Days. Disc 602. 1947.

Woody Guthrie. Asch 347. 1944.

Woody Guthrie with others

Folksay: American Ballads and Dances, Vol. 1. Asch/Stinson 432. 1944.

Midnight Special (with Lead Belly). Disc 726

Songs for Victory: Music for Political Action. Asch 346. 1945.

LP era recordings

Woody Guthrie

Ballads of Sacco and Vanzetti. Folkways 5485. 1960.

Bed on the Floor. Verve/Folkways 9007. ca. 1968. (Reissued as Poor Boy. Folkways 31010 (1968)

Bonneville Dam and Other Columbia River Songs Verve/Folkways 9036. 1967. (Reissued as This Land Is Your Land. Folkways 31001 1967).

Bound for Glory: The Songs and Stories of Woody Guthrie (with Will Geer). Folkways 2481. 1956.

Chain Gang, Vols. 1 and 2. Stinson 7 and 8. 1950s.

Columbia River Collection. Rounder 1036. 1987. (also issued on compact disc)

Cowboy Songs. Stinson 32. 1950s.

Dust Bowl Ballads. RCA Victor Vintage Series 502. 1964. (Reissued as Woody Guthrie: A Legendary Performer. RCA Victor 2099 (1977).

Dust Bowl Ballads Sung by Woody Guthrie. Folkways 5212. 1964. (Reissue of Talking Dust Bowl Folkways 11/2011 (1950).

Library of Congress Recordings. Elektra 271/272. 1964. (Reissued by Rounder 1041/2/3. 1988).

Original Recordings, 1940-1946. Warner Brothers 2999. 1977.

Songs to Grow on for Mother and Child. Folkways 7015. 1950, 1953.

Southern Mountain Hoedowns. Stinson 54. 1962.

Struggle. Folkways 2485. 1976.

Talking Dust Bowl. Folkways 11/2011. 1950. (reissued with additional tracks as Folkways 5212)

Why Oh Why? And Other Nonsense and Activity Songs for Very Early Childhood. Folkways 7016. 1985.

Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston. Stinson 44. 1950s.

Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston: More Songs. Stinson 53. 1950s.

Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 1. Folkways 2483. 1962.

Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2. Folkways 2484. 1964.

Woody Guthrie with others

American Folksay: Ballads and Dances, Vol. 1. Stinson 5.

American Folksay: Ballads and Dances, Vol. 2. Stinson 6.

American Folksay: Ballads and Dances, Vol. 3. Stinson 9.

American Folksay: Ballads and Dances, Vol. 4. Stinson 11.

American Folksay: Ballads and Dances, Vol. 5. Stinson 12.

American Folksay: Ballads and Dances, Vol. 6. Stinson 13.

Folkways: The Original Vision (with Lead Belly). Smithsonian Folkways 40001. 1989.

Greatest Songs of Woody Guthrie. Vanguard 35/36.

Compact Disc Recordings

Woody Guthrie

The Asch Recordings (complete). Smithsonian Folkways 40112. 1999.

Ballads of Sacco and Vanzetti. Smithsonian Folkways 40060. 1996.

Buffalo Skinners: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 4. Smithsonian Folkways 40103. 1999.

Cowboy Songs/Southern Mountain Hoedowns. Stinson 32. ca. 1990.

Dust Bowl Ballads. Buddah 99724. 2000.

Hard Travelin': The Asch Recordings, Vol. 3. Smithsonian Folkways 40102. 1998.

Library of Congress Recordings. Rounder 1041/3. 1988.

Live Wire: Woody Guthrie: in performance, 1949. Woody Guthrie Foundation. 2007.

Long Ways to Travel: The Unreleased Folkways Masters, 1944-1949. Smithsonian Folkways 40046. 1994.

Muleskinner Blues: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 2. Smithsonian Folkways 40101. 1997.

Nursery Days. Smithsonian Folkways 45036. 1992.

Songs to Grow On for Mother and Child. Smithsonian Folkways, 45035. 1991.

Struggle. Smithsonian Folkways 40025. 1990.

This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1. Smithsonian Folkways 40100. 1997.

Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs. Smithsonian Folkways 40007. 1989.

Woody Guthrie and Others

Folkways: The Original Vision (with Lead Belly). Smithsonian Folkways 40001. 1989. (Later reissued as SFW 40000 2005).

Other Suggested Listening

DeVito, Don, Joe McEwen, Harold Leventhal, and Ralph Rinzler, eds.,
Folkways: A Vision Shared. Columbia 44034. 1988.

Elliott, Rambling Jack, Ramblin' Jack Elliott Sings Woody Guthrie and
Jimmie Rodgers. Monitor 380. 1962.

_____, Sings the Songs of Woody Guthrie. Prestige 7453. 1968.

_____, Songs to Grow On by Woody Guthrie. Folkways 7501.
1961.

English, Logan, Woody Guthrie's Children's Songs. Folkways 7503. 1974.

Guthrie, Sarah Lee, Go Waggaloo. Smithsonian Folkways 45069. 2009.

Houston, Cisco, The Folkways Years, 1944-1961. Smithsonian Folkways
40059. 1994.

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Lonesome Valley: A Collection of American Folk Music. Folkways 2010.
1951.

Mazia, Marjorie, Dance Along. Folkways 7651. 1950.

McDonald, Country Joe, Thinking of Woody Guthrie. Vanguard 6546. 1969.

Pastures of Plenty; An Austin Celebration of Woody Guthrie. Dejadisc 3207.
1992.

Place, Jeff and Guy Logsdon, eds., That's Why We're Marching: World War
II and the American Folk Song Movement. Smithsonian Folkways 40021.
1996.

Rare Family Songs of Woody Guthrie. Rounder 8087. 2001.

Seeger, Pete, Pete Seeger Sings Woody Guthrie. Folkways 31002. 1967.

Songs of the Spanish Civil War, Vol. 2. Folkways 5437. 1962.

Songs to Grow On, Vol. 3: American Work Songs. Folkways 7027. 1951.

Tribute to Woody Guthrie. Warner Brothers 2586. 1972.

Welcome Home Woody: An Oklahoma Tribute to Woody Guthrie. WGC 001.
2004.

Woody Guthrie's We Ain't Down Yet. Cream 1002. 1976.

The Woody Guthrie Recording Sessions

Used with permission from the Woody Guthrie Biblio-discography by Guy Logsdon.

Discographical information written and compiled by Guy Logsdon.

Additional entries by Jeff Place.

Hollywood, California—Presto Disc Recordings

Peter LaChapelle found four air checks made by Woody while he was working for KFVD in 1937; they are on 78-rpm acetates in the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research. They are the earliest known recordings made by Woody. For decades it had been the general belief that no recordings from the West Coast era existed. The songs are "Do Re Mi," "Ain't Got No Home," "Skid Row," and "Big City Ways." These are the only known recordings of the latter two songs. LaChapelle now thinks they might have been recorded in 1939.

Library of Congress Sessions

All titles in this section were recorded in Washington, D.C., in **March 1940** by Alan and Elizabeth Lomax. An alphabetized listing of these titles can be found in Country Directory 1 (November 1960) pp. 6–7. Titles not marked by an asterisk (*) were issued on Woody Guthrie: Library of Congress Recordings, Elektra Records EKL-271/272 (3-12" LPs), 1964, notes by Alan Lomax, Robert Shelton, and Woody Guthrie, produced and edited by Jac Holzman; reissued by Rounder Records CD 1041/2/3 (compact disc) and C-1041 Part 1 & Part 2 (cassette), 1988 (notes are edited to fit format). The editor (Holzman) deleted portions from most monologues and dialogues.

Autobiography of Woodrow Wilson (Woody) Guthrie 3407-3423

21 March 1940, Department of Interior, Radio Broadcasting Division, interviewed by Alan Lomax:

Monologue: Boyhood of Woody Guthrie [3407 & 3408]

"The Train" ("Lost Train Blues"), harmonica/guitar [3407-A]

"Railroad Blues," harmonica [3407-B]

"Rye Whiskey," vocal/guitar [3408-A, B1]

"Old Joe Clark," vocal/guitar [3408-B2]

"Beaumont Rag," harmonica/guitar [3408-B3]

Dialogue on the "Green Valley Waltz" [3408-B4]

* "Green Valley Waltz," harmonica/guitar [3409-A]

Monologue on the Youth of Woody Guthrie [3409-A, B1]

"Greenback Dollar," vocal/guitar/harmonica [3409-B1]

"Boll Weevil Song," vocal/guitar/harmonica [3409-B2]

also issued in part on The Ballad Hunter, Part VI, Library of Congress, Music Division, AAFS L51 originally issued on 16" disc (33 1/3 rpm) recorded in New York, Radio Recording Division, National Broadcasting Co.

* "Midnight Special" and dialogue vocal/guitar/harmonica [3410-A1]

Dialogue on Dust Storms [3410-A2, B1]

Dialogue on Outlaws [3412-B1]

* "Billy the Kid," vocal/guitar (fragment) [3412-B2]

"Pretty Boy Floyd," vocal/guitar [3412-B4]

"Pretty Boy Floyd," continued [3413-A]

Dialogue about Jesse James [3413-B1]

* "Jesse James," vocal/guitar [3413-B1]

"They Laid Jesus Christ in His Grave," vocal/guitar [3413-B2]

"They Laid Jesus Christ in His Grave" continued [3414-A1]

"I'm a Jolly Banker" ("Jolly Banker," "Banker's Lament") vocal/guitar [3414-A2]

Dialogue on Bankers [3414-A2, A3]

"I Ain't Got No Home in This World Anymore" ("I Ain't Got No Home"), vocal/

guitar/harmonica [3414-A3, B1]

"Dirty Overhauls (overalls)," vocal/guitar [3414-B2], "Dirty Overhauls" continued [3415-A1]

* "Mary Fagin" and dialogue [3415-A2, B1]

"Chain Around My Leg" and dialogue vocal/guitar [3415-B2]

Dialogue on the Blues [3416-A1]

also issued on The Ballad Hunter, Part II, Library of Congress, Music Division, AAFS L49 originally issued on 16" disc (33 1/3 rpm) recorded in New York, Radio Recording Division, National Broadcasting Co.

* "The Bluest Blues" (900 Miles?) and dialogue vocal/guitar [3416-A2]

"Worried Man Blues," vocal/guitar [3416-B1]

Church House Blues—"Lonesome Valley," vocal/guitar [3416-B2]

Dialogue on Walking Railroad Ties [3416-B2]

Monologue: Railroads and Men Out of Work [3417-A]

"Railroad Line Blues" ("Walkin' Down That Railroad Line") vocal/guitar [3417-B1]

* "Goin' Down the Frisco Line," with dialogue vocal/guitar [3417-B2]

"I'm Goin' Down the Road Feelin' Bad," vocal/guitar [3418-A1]

* "Seven Cent Cotton," vocal/guitar (fragment) [3418-A2]

* "Wagon Yard Blues," vocal/guitar (fragment) [3418-A3]

"Dust Bowl Refugees," vocal/guitar [3418-B1]

Dialogue about man going to California for contract work [3418-B2], Dialogue about man going to California, continued [3419-A]

"Great Dust Storm" ("Dust Storm Disaster") and dialogue, vocal/guitar [3419-B1]

"I'm Sittin' on the Foggy Mountain Top" ("Foggy Mountain Top"), vocal/guitar [3419-B2]

27 March 1940, Department of Interior, Radio Broadcasting Division, interviewed by Elizabeth Lomax:

Story of Oil Booms and Dust Storms [3420-A1]

"Dust Pneumonia Blues," vocal/guitar [3420-A2]

* "Dust Bowl Blues," vocal/guitar [3420-B1]

Dialogue about California [3420-B1]

"California Blues," vocal/guitar [3420-B2]

Dialogue about Jimmie Rodgers, "California Blues," and California [3421-A]

* "Do Re Mi," vocal/guitar [3421-B1]

Living Conditions in California [3421-B1]

* "Dust Bowl Refugees" and dialogue vocal/guitar [3422-A]

Dialogue about Okies in California, Pride in Oklahoma, and Will Rogers [3422-B1]

"Highway 66" ("Will Rogers Highway"), vocal/guitar [3423-A1]

"New Years Flood," vocal/guitar [3423-A2]

Songs by Woody Guthrie with guitar, recorded 4 January 1941 in the Phonoduplication Studio by Alan Lomax and John Langenegger 1 16" disc [4491]:

"Stewball," vocal/guitar [4491-A1]

"Stagolee," vocal/guitar [4491-A2]

"One Dime Blues," vocal/guitar [4491-A3]

"Whoopee Ti Yi Yo, Git Along Little Dogies," vocal/guitar [4491-B1] issued in part on The Ballad Hunter, Part III, Library of Congress, Music Division, AAFS L50 originally issued on 16" disc (33 1/3 rpm) recorded in New York, Radio Recording Division, National Broadcasting Co.

"Trail to Mexico," (fragment) vocal/guitar [4491-B2] issued in part on The Ballad Hunter, Part III, Library of Congress, Music Division, AAFS L50, originally issued on 16" disc (33 1/3 rpm) recorded in New York, Radio Recording Division, National Broadcasting Co.

"The Gypsy Davy," vocal/guitar [4491-B3] issued on Anglo-American Ballads, edited by Alan Lomax, Library of Congress, Music Division, AAFS 1 (10" discs) and on AFS L1 (LP), notes say recorded in Washington, D.C., 1940 (should be 1941), by Alan Lomax LC 14, AAFS 2A, matrix A4357; AAFS 1 reissued as Anglo-American Ballads, Volume One: Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Culture, introduction by Wayne D. Shirley, Rounder Records 1511

(compact disc), 1999; "The Gypsy Davy" also issued on A Treasury of Library of Congress Field Recordings, selected and annotated by Stephen Wade, Rounder Records 1500 (compact disc), 1997.

"There Is a House in This Old Town" ("Hard Ain't It Hard"), vocal/guitar [4491-B4]

American School of the Air

2 April 1940, CBS Radio. This folk music series, written and narrated by Alan Lomax, was inaugurated in October 1939. The folk song topics varied: "Lumberjack Songs," "Trail Songs," "Nonsense Songs," "Railroad Songs," "Blues," etc. Woody Guthrie was introduced to the radio audience during the segment "Farm Songs," aired 2 April 1940.

"So Long, It's Been Good to Know You," vocal/guitar [3410-B2] Dialogue on the Dust Bowl [3410-B3]

Dialogue on the Dust Bowl, continued [3411-A1]

"Talking Dust Bowl Blues" [3411-A2, B1]

Dialogue on Experiences in California [3411-B2]

"Do Re Mi," vocal/guitar/harmonica [3411-B3]

22 March 1940, Department of Interior, Radio Broadcasting Division, interviewed by Alan Lomax:

"Hard Times," vocal/guitar [3412-A1]

* "Bring Back to Me My Blue Eyed Boy" [3412-A2]

* Dialogue on Love Songs [3412-A3]

Dialogue on Outlaws [3412-B1]

* "Billy the Kid," vocal/guitar (fragment) [3412-B2]

"Pretty Boy Floyd," vocal/guitar [3412-B4]

"Pretty Boy Floyd," continued [3413-A]

Dialogue about Jesse James [3413-B1]

* "Jesse James," vocal/guitar [3413-B1]

"They Laid Jesus Christ in His Grave," vocal/guitar [3413-B2]

"They Laid Jesus Christ in His Grave" continued [3414-A1]

"I'm a Jolly Banker" ("Jolly Banker," "Banker's Lament") vocal/guitar [3414-A2]

Dialogue on Bankers [3414-A2, A3]

"I Ain't Got No Home in This World Anymore" ("I Ain't Got No Home"), vocal/guitar/harmonica [3414-A3, B1]

"Dirty Overhauls (overalls)," vocal/guitar [3414-B2], "Dirty Overhauls" continued [3415-A1]

* "Mary Fagin" and dialogue [3415-A2, B1]

"Chain Around My Leg" and dialogue vocal/guitar [3415-B2] Dialogue on the Blues [3416-A1]

also issued on The Ballad Hunter, Part II, Library of Congress, Music Division, AAFS L49 originally issued on 16" disc (33 1/3 rpm) recorded in New York, Radio Recording Division, National Broadcasting Co.

* "The Bluest Blues" (900 Miles?) and dialogue vocal/guitar [3416-A2]

"Worried Man Blues," vocal/guitar [3416-B1]

Church House Blues—"Lonesome Valley," vocal/guitar [3416-B2]

Dialogue on Walking Railroad Ties [3416-B2]

Monologue: Railroads and Men Out of Work [3417-A]

"Railroad Line Blues" ("Walkin' Down That Railroad Line") vocal/guitar [3417-B1]

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"I'm Goin' Down the Road Feelin' Bad," vocal/guitar [3418-A1]

* "Seven Cent Cotton," vocal/guitar (fragment) [3418-A2]

* "Wagon Yard Blues," vocal/guitar (fragment) [3418-A3]

"Dust Bowl Refugees," vocal/guitar [3418-B1]

Dialogue about man going to California for contract work [3418-B2],

Dialogue about man going to California, continued [3419-A]

"Great Dust Storm" ("Dust Storm Disaster") and dialogue, vocal/guitar [3419-B1]

"I'm Sittin' on the Foggy Mountain Top" ("Foggy Mountain Top"), vocal/guitar [3419-B2]

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Story of Oil Booms and Dust Storms [3420-A1]

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* "Dust Bowl Blues," vocal/guitar [3420-B1]

Dialogue about California [3420-B1]

"California Blues," vocal/guitar [3420-B2]

Dialogue about Jimmie Rodgers, "California Blues," and California [3421-A]

* "Do Re Mi," vocal/guitar [3421-B1]

Living Conditions in California [3421-B1]

* "Dust Bowl Refugees" and dialogue vocal/guitar [3422-A]

Dialogue about Okies in California, Pride in Oklahoma, and Will Rogers [3422-B1]

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"New Years Flood," vocal/guitar [3423-A2]

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"Stewball," vocal/guitar [4491-A1]

"Stagolee," vocal/guitar [4491-A2]

"One Dime Blues," vocal/guitar [4491-A3]

"Whoopee Ti Yi Yo, Git Along Little Dogies," vocal/guitar [4491-B1] issued in part on The Ballad Hunter, Part III, Library of Congress, Music Division, AAFS L50 originally issued on 16" disc (33 1/3 rpm) recorded in New York, Radio Recording Division, National Broadcasting Co.

"Trail to Mexico," (fragment) vocal/guitar [4491-B2] issued in part on The Ballad Hunter, Part III, Library of Congress, Music Division, AAFS L50, originally issued on 16" disc (33 1/3 rpm) recorded in New York, Radio Recording Division, National Broadcasting Co.

"The Gypsy Davy," vocal/guitar [4491-B3] issued on Anglo-American Ballads, edited by Alan Lomax, Library of Congress, Music Division, AAFS 1 (10" discs) and on AFS L1 (LP), notes say recorded in Washington, D.C., 1940 (should be 1941), by Alan Lomax LC 14, AAFS 2A, matrix A4357; AAFS 1 reissued as Anglo-American Ballads, Volume One: Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Culture, introduction by Wayne D. Shirley, Rounder Records 1511 (compact disc), 1999; "The Gypsy Davy" also issued on A Treasury of Library of Congress Field Recordings, selected and annotated by Stephen Wade, Rounder Records 1500 (compact disc), 1997.

"There Is a House in This Old Town" ("Hard Ain't It Hard"), vocal/guitar [4491-B4]

American School of the Air

2 April 1940, CBS Radio. This folk music series, written and narrated by Alan Lomax, was inaugurated in October 1939. The folk song topics varied: "Lumberjack Songs," "Trail Songs," "Nonsense Songs," "Railroad Songs," "Blues," etc. Woody Guthrie was introduced to the radio audience during the segment "Farm Songs," aired 2 April 1940.

"Boll Weevil," Alan Lomax, lead vocal/guitar; Woody Guthrie, harmonica; Golden Gate Quartet, vocals/chorus Library of Congress [4507A4]

"It's Hard on We Poor Farmers," Alan Lomax, lead vocal/guitar; Woody Guthrie, harmonica; Golden Gate Quartet, vocals/chorus Library of Congress [4507A3]

"Train Blues," Woody Guthrie, harmonica solo Library of Congress [4508A1]

"So Long, It's Been Good to Know You," Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar; Alan Lomax, vocal Library of Congress [4508A2]

"Talking Dust Storm," Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar Library of Congress [4508A3]

RCA Victor Sessions

26 April 1940, New York. Woody recorded eleven songs that day, but with

"Tom Joad" recorded in two parts, he actually recorded twelve separate tracks. Of the twelve takes, only one title, "Talkin' Dust Bowl Blues," was recorded twice (the second take was issued); the others required one recording only. On typescripts of "Dust Can't Kill Me" and "Dust Pneumonia Blues," Woody stated: "Recorded Friday, 3 May 1940, Studio #3," and according to the RCA log, Woody was correct: those two songs were recorded on that date with one take for each song. Of the thirteen titles ("Tom Joad" required two bands on the issued records), two, "Dust Bowl Blues" and "Pretty Boy Floyd," were not issued when the two albums, 78-rpm, 10" discs, were released: Dust Bowl Ballads, Vol. 1, Victor Records P-27, and Dust Bowl Ballads, Vol. 2, Victor Records P-28, notes by Woody Guthrie. They were included in the 1964 reissue Dust Bowl Ballads RCA Victor LPV-502 Vintage Series (12" LP), 1964, notes by Peter J. Welding, produced by Frank Driggs, also reissued in England RCA Victor (Decca Record Co.) RD-7642; reissued as Woody Guthrie: A Legendary Performer RCA CPL1-2099(e), 1977, notes by Guy Logsdon; reissued as Dust Bowl Ballads by Rounder Records, 1040 (cassette and compact disc); and reissued in Dust Bowl Ballads Buddah Records 74465 99724, 2000, notes by Woody Guthrie and Dave Marsh.

Woody Guthrie vocal:

"The Great Dust Storm" ("Dust Storm Disaster"), guitar (26622-A) [BS-050145-1]

"Talkin' Dust Bowl Blues," guitar (26619-A) [BS-050146-2]

"Dust Pneumonia Blues," guitar (26623-B) [BS-050147-1]

"Dusty Old Dust" ("So Long, It's Been Good to Know You"), guitar (26622-B) [BS-050148-1]

"Dust Bowl Blues," guitar LPV-502 [BS-050149-1]

"Blowin' Down This Road" ("I Ain't Going to be Treated This Way"), guitar/harmonica (26619-B) [BS-050150-1]

"Tom Joad, Part 1," guitar/harmonica (26621-A) [BS-050151-1]

"Tom Joad, Part 2," guitar/harmonica (26621-B) [BS-050152-1]

"Do Re Mi," guitar (26620-A) [BS-050153-1]

"Dust Bowl Refugee," guitar/harmonica (26623-A) [BS-050154-1]

"I Ain't Got No Home in This World Anymore," guitar/harmonica (26624-A) [BS-050155-1]

"Vigilante Man," guitar/harmonica (26624-B) [BS-050156-1]

"Dust Can't Kill Me," guitar/harmonica (26620-B) [BS-050600-1]

"Pretty Boy Floyd," guitar LPV-502 [BS-050601-1]

With Woody's encouragement (but not with RCA's license), Moses Asch took copies of the RCA Victor records and issued them as Talking Dust Bowl Folkways Records FP 11 (10" LP), notes by John Asch and Woody Guthrie, 1950, using only eight cuts, with titles as follows: "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You," "Dust Storm Disaster," "Talking Dust Bowl Blues," "Dust Can't Kill Me," "Blowing Down This Road Feeling Bad," "Dust Bowl Refugee," "Tom Joad parts 1 & 2"; reissued as FA 2011; reissued with additional songs as issued on the original RCA albums as Dust Bowl Ballads Folkways Records FH 5212 (12" LP), with additional cover notes by Millard Lampell, 1964; reissued as a part of 38 Favorite American Folk Songs Disc/Folkways Records FF1. The placement of songs on the disc varies on each reissued album. In 1947 on the Disc label, Asch released Woody Guthrie's Ballads from the Dust Bowl Disc Album 610, but these were different songs from those listed above.

Lead Belly Radio Show—Narrated by Woody Guthrie

19 June 1940, New York City. Little is known about this radio show beyond what its title indicates. Arnold S. Caplin (Biograph Records) obtained a copy of the show, but it contained no information other than the date and city. Joe Hickerson of the Library of Congress obtained a copy that appears to be the master 16" disc; it contains information indicating that it was an audition for NBC, possibly an audition tape for a radio show. Apparently it was never aired. Caplin issued the show along with seven other cuts under the title Early Lead Belly: 1935–1940: Narrated by Woody Guthrie Biograph Records BLP-12013, 1969, notes by Chris Albertson; reissued on the compact disc Good Morning Blues Biograph Records BCD 113, 1990.

Side 1: This radio show was recorded 19 June 1940 and narrated by Woody Guthrie. While no Guthrie songs are included, it is important, for his comments and conversation with Lead Belly reveal that he was far more sophisticated than he usually portrayed himself.

Back Where I Come From

19 August 1940, program #10 in the CBS Radio Forecast series. This series was an attempt to "try out new radio ideas;" each program was an introduction to a proposed radio series. Back Where I Come From was about notions on which everybody has an opinion. Literary critic Clifton Fadiman was the host of the show, written by Alan Lomax and Nicholas Ray; featured performers were Woody Guthrie, The Golden Gate Quartet, Len Doyle, Burl Ives, Josh White, and Willie Johnson. The first topic was "weather," and each performer stated "Back where I come from, we always say," completing the sentence with a local belief or phrase. The cast sang "Erie Canal," but Woody cannot be heard as a distinctive voice if indeed he was singing with the others. He was introduced as having sung in every bar between Oklahoma City and Los Angeles, and he responded that he changed trains (subway) three times getting to the show: "It was so crowded that every time I changed trains, I come out with a different pair of shoes on... This weather talk reminds me of Texas... last winter the Santee Fee train blew the whistle and the steam froze right there in the air and the next summer it thawed out and scared half the cattle out of the Panhandle." The dialog progressed to the discussion of storms; Woody said, "Storms hurt people, drive people out of their homes and take their living away from them, and that very thing is happening right today back in the 'Dust Bowl' where I come from... Well, I come from Okemah, Oklahoma, out in that country ain't nothing in the world to stop that north wind but a barbed wire fence, and that ain't much." He starts singing: "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You," Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar (1st verse) and entire cast joins in singing the chorus; the cast acts out the other verses with Burl Ives playing "Paw." Woody sings the verse about the preacher calling, and then the cast and Woody use dialog to move Woody onto the highway traveling west. Following a folk sermon by Willie Johnson and The Golden Gate Quartet, Woody and the entire cast close the musical portion of the show with the chorus of "So Long."

The entire show was issued on Folk Music Radio by Radiola, Release #133 CMR-1133 (cassette) side B, ca. late 1970s.

Cavalcade of America, Program # 199

6 November 1940, Wild Bill Hickok. On a TRO Richmond Music manuscript ca. 1944, Woody typed: "Cavalcade of America (DuPont): Show based on a ballad I wrote on the life of Wild Bill Hickock [sic]." The program log for this series indicated that program #199 was about Hickok: "The story of the fighting frontier marshal during a violent and colorful era in the growth of America." It starred Kenneth Delmar playing the role of Wild Bill Hickok, and Agnes Moorehead played the role of Calamity Jane. In the recorded introduction, the announcer stated: "Cavalcade of America presents an original musical melodrama 'Wild Bill Hickok: The Last of Two Gun Justice,' written by Peter Lyon, featuring an original ballad specially composed and sung by Woody Guthrie famous for his Dust Bowl Ballads." Woody sang a few lines for the opening, periodically sang verses during the presentation, and repeated his opening lines as the ending of the show. His original title was apparently "The Ballad of Wild Bill Hickock [sic]." However, in a variant typed 20 June 1951 in the TRO Richmond Music files, Woody changed the title to "Wild Bill Hickock's [sic] Ruff Time." This variant was 25 verses long, considerably longer than the version he sang over the radio.

"Bower and Guthrie"

Ca. late 1940, Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, recorded late one night in a New York City apartment on a borrowed home disc recorder. Woody plays harmonica/mandolin, and Pete plays banjo/guitar—an excellent recording. Woody's voice has no pretensions. Donated by Mike Seeger to the Archive

of Folk Song, Library of Congress.

"Train Whistles"

"Ida Red"

"Arkansas Traveler"

"Things about Coming My Way"

"900 Miles"

"Folk Songs of America"—WNYC, new york 12 December, 1940.

Woody Guthrie appears as a guest on the show "Folk Songs of America."

The show, which aired from 1940 to 1942, was produced by Henrietta Yurchenco. The show featured Lead Belly as its main performer. Woody is announced as the "Dustiest of Dust Bowlers." After Lead Belly performs two songs, Woody is introduced and provides three songs.

"John Hardy"

"Jesse James"

"Tom Joad"

Bonneville Power Administration—Columbia River Songs

May 1941, Portland, Oregon. Woody Guthrie often stated that he wrote twenty-six songs, one per day, during his short term employment by the Bonneville Power Authority (BPA) and recorded a few in a basement studio of the BPA in Portland. The songs were to be used in the BPA movie *The Columbia* (issued ca. 1949); only three were used. Bill Murlin, audiovisual specialist for the BPA, was authorized to locate and compile information about the BPA for its semi-centennial celebration in 1987. The master acetates recorded by Woody had disappeared, but as Murlin publicized his project, former BPA employees gave him copies they had made in the 1940s from the original discs (see: Woody Guthrie, *Roll on Columbia: The Columbia River Songs*, Portland, OR: BPA, 1987). He received six discs containing fourteen recordings, or twelve songs (two songs were duplicated). Eleven of the twelve songs were included on Woody Guthrie: *Columbia River Collection*, Rounder Records C 1036 (cassette) and CD 1036 (compact disc), 1987. The six discs with the names of the donors are housed in the National Archives, Washington, D.C., items 305.01 to 305.06.

Disc #1 (305.01): 10" Clair Recordings, 33 1/3 rpm "Pastures of Plenty," as used in the movie *The Columbia*; not on Rounder C/CD 1036

"The Biggest Thing That Man Has Ever Done," as used in the movie *The Columbia*, this cut is not on Rounder C/CD 1036

"Roll Columbia, Roll," vocal/guitar, opening theme for the movie *The Columbia*; included on *Hard Travelin'*, Arloco Records ARL-284 and Rounder C/CD 1036

Disc #2 (305.02): 10" acetate, 78-rpm "Washington Talkin' Blues," vocal/guitar, Rounder C/CD 1036

"The Biggest Thing That Man Has Ever Done" vocal/guitar, Rounder C/CD 1036

Disc #3 (305.03): 12" acetate, 78-rpm "Ramblin' Blues" ("Portland Town"), vocal/guitar, Rounder C/CD 1036

"It Takes a Married Man to Sing a Worried Song" ("Worried Song" and "Worried Blues"), vocal/guitar, Rounder C/CD 1036

"Song of the Grand Coulee Dam" ("Way Up in That Northwest"), vocal/guitar, Rounder C/CD 1036

Disc #4 (305.04): 12" acetate, 78-rpm "Roll On, Columbia," vocal/guitar, Rounder C/CD 1036

"The Grand Coulee Dam," vocal/guitar, Rounder C/CD 1036

Disc #5 (305.05): 12" Duodisc acetate, 78-rpm "Jackhammer Blues," vocal/guitar, Rounder C/CD 1036

"The Grand Coulee Dam," vocal/guitar; this cut not on Rounder C/CD 1036

Disc #6 (305.06), 12" Duodisc acetate, 78-rpm "Columbia Waters" ("Good Morning, Captain"), vocal/guitar/harmonica, Rounder C/CD 1036

"Talkin' Columbia Blues," vocal/guitar, Rounder C/CD 1036

Other Unissued Recordings in the Library of Congress

"Home Disc Recordings" made by members of the Almanac Singers in

New York City in **January 1942**,

accessioned by the Library of Congress in February 1942: 2 10" and 4 12" glass base records. M 173 A 8 6100-6105

Three Ditties from "The People, Yes" sung by Earl Robinson [6100-A]

"Round and Round Hitler's Grave," Almanac Singers – lead singer Pete Seeger, Sis Cunningham/accordion; Lee Hays, and others (Woody/guitar?) [6100-B]

"Hulabalobalay," Almanac Singers – unidentified male lead, Pete Seeger/banjo, Sis Cunningham/accordion [6101-A]

"Taking It Easy," Almanac Singers – lead singer Woody Guthrie; Pete Seeger/banjo; Sis Cunningham/accordion; and others [6101-B]

"There's a Job to Do," sung by Earl Robinson [6102-A]

"Biggest Thing That Man Has Ever Done," sung by Woody Guthrie/guitar [6102-B]

"High Cost of Living," Almanac Singers – lead singer Pete Seeger/banjo, Woody Guthrie/guitar, unidentified male and female voices [6103-A]

"Sinking of the Reuben James," Almanac Singers – lead singer Bess Lomax Hawes, Woody Guthrie/guitar, Pete Seeger/banjo, Sis Cunningham/accordion, unidentified male voice [6103-B]

"Come a ti-yi yippy, Come a ti-yi yea," sung by Alan Lomax with John A. Lomax [6104-A]

"Goin' Down the Road Feelin' Bad," Woody Guthrie/vocal/harmonica, Pete Seeger/banjo [6105-A]

Asheville, North Carolina, Folk Festival August 1941

"Pretty Boy Floyd" [4793-A1]

Keynote Recordings

Ca. June 1941, New York City. Of these Keynote recordings, "Babe O' Mine," "Boomtown Bill," and "Keep That Oil A-Rollin'" have been reissued on *Songs for Political Action*, Bear Family Records BCD 15720, discs 3 and 4.

Woody Guthrie/vocal/guitar; Lee Hays/vocal; Millard Lampell/vocal; Pete Seeger/banjo/vocal

"Song for Bridges," Almanac Singers (K 304 A) [QB 1548]

Woody Guthrie/guitar/vocal/harmonica; Pete Seeger/banjo

"Babe O' Mine," Woody Guthrie (K 304 B) [QB 1549]

Ca. June 1942, New York City Woody Guthrie/mandolin/harmonica/vocal; Pete Seeger/banjo/vocal; Baldwin "Butch" Hawes/guitar/vocal; Arthur Stern/vocal; (mandolin may be Bess Lomax Hawes)

"Boomtown Bill," Almanac Singers (5000-A) X-5000 (Seeger/lead vocal)

"Keep That Oil A-Rollin,'" Almanac Singers (5000-B) X-5001 (Guthrie/lead vocal)

General Records

7 July 1941, recorded at Reeves Sound Studio, New York City, by Alan Lomax. Woody Guthrie, John "Peter" Hawes, Lee Hays, and Pete Seeger were the singers and instrumentalists in this session; two albums, 78-rpm, three 10" discs in each album, were issued: *Deep Sea Chanties* and *Whaling Ballads*, General Album G-20, and *Sod Buster Ballads*, General Album G-21. With the exception of "The State of Arkansas" and "House of the Rising Sun," each song had a chorus that was sung by all four men, and it is probable that John "Peter" Hawes played the guitar, when one was used, instead of Woody Guthrie. All of the following general session songs have been reissued on *Songs for Political Action*, Bear Family Records BCD 15720, disc 3, 1996, and on *The Almanac Singers: Their Complete General Recordings*, MCA Records MCAD 11499, 1996.

"Blow Ye Winds, Heigh Ho," Pete Seeger/lead vocal/banjo, Peter Hawes/guitar (5015-A) [R-4160]

"Away Rio," Peter Hawes/lead vocal, Woody Guthrie/harmonica, Pete Seeger/banjo (5017-A) [R-4161]

"Blow the Man Down," Woody Guthrie/lead vocal, Pete Seeger/banjo/recorder, Peter Hawes/guitar (5016-A) [R-4162]

"The Golden Vanity," Pete Seeger/lead vocal/banjo, Woody Guthrie/harmonica, Peter Hawes/guitar (5016-B) [R-4174]
"The Coast of High Barbary," Pete Seeger/lead vocal/banjo (5017-B) [R-4175]

"Haul Away, Joe," Peter Hawes/lead vocal, Pete Seeger/banjo/recorder (5015-B) R-4176 issued on Deep Sea Chanties and Whaling Ballads, General Album G-20, reissued on Commodore Album CR-11, and reissued on The Soil and the Sea, Mainstream Records 56005 (LP); released in Japan (1992) King KICP 2223 (compact disc)

"House of the Rising Sun," Woody Guthrie/lead vocal/harmonica (no chorus), Pete Seeger/banjo, Peter Hawes/guitar (5020-B) [R-4163]

"Ground Hog," Pete Seeger/lead vocal/banjo, Peter Hawes/guitar (5018-B) [R-4164]

"State of Arkansas," Lee Hays/vocal (no chorus), Pete Seeger/banjo (5019-A) R-4165

"I Ride An Old Paint," Woody Guthrie/lead vocal/guitar, Pete Seeger/banjo (5020-A) R-4169

"Hard Ain't It Hard," Woody Guthrie/lead vocal/harmonica, Pete Seeger/banjo, Peter Hawes/guitar (5019-B) [R-4170]

"The Dodger Song," Lee Hays/lead vocal, Pete Seeger/banjo, Woody Guthrie/harmonica, Peter Hawes/guitar (5018-A) [R-4171] Issued on Sod Buster Ballads, General Album G-21, reissued on Commodore Album CR-10, and reissued on The Soil and the Sea, Mainstream Records 56005 (LP); released in Japan (1992) King KICP 2223 (compact disc)

"The Weaver's Song," the group singing together, unissued in US [R-4168]
"Greenland Fishing," Pete Seeger singing lead, unissued in US [R-4172]
These two titles were issued on The Soil and the Sea, King KICP 2223, Japan (compact disc), 1992; Woody does not sing the lead on either title.

Labor for Victory

29 August 1942, Office of War Information (OWI); the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) in cooperation with NBC Red network, OWI # E12556; NBC 16" SF transcription; Library of Congress, tape LWO 5554, group 15, reel 4B, item 2 of 3, acetate discs. This fifteen-minute show was broadcast from 10:15 pm to 10:30 pm as propaganda to encourage farm and city laborers "to learn to work together to defeat fascism." Woody Guthrie sang a verse with mandolin accompaniment, of his "Farmer-Labor Train," and an unidentified female (possibly Bess Lomax Hawes) sang the chorus with him. As the train traveled through regions of the United States (starting in the South), dialog about workers and possible problems in the region was shared and resolved by encouraging rural and city workers to work together, and Woody would sing a verse as the train moved to another region.

"Farmer-Labor Train," Woody Guthrie, vocal/mandolin

Outpost Concert Series, Music of the People No.2

No date, ca. 1942, Office of War Information, Overseas Branch; Woody sings the opening song and the Almanac Singers and Burl Ives sing the other songs; a copy is in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Institution.

"Foggy Mountain Top" Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar

Ballad Gazette

16 October 1945, The announcer starts this show with "The Ballad Gazette with your editor and chief, Woody Guthrie;" following Woody's first verse of "This Land Is Your Land," the announcer introduces him as, "A man who knows Americans as they really are." This is a live broadcast; Woody moves from one song to another with a few guitar chords without any dialog; a copy is in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Institution.

"What Did the Deep Sea Say?"

"Blow Ye Winds in the Morning"

"Trouble on the Water" (fragment that sounds as if he made it up as he was singing)

"Blow the Man Down"

"Sinking of the Normandie"

"Sinking of the Reuben James"

Another **Ballad Gazette** was found in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Institution. by Jeff Place; it contained the information **28 January 1945**, WNEW Radio Program. When Woody is introduced, he establishes a musical key and sings each song in that key. This program is about trains:

"This Land Is Your Land"

"Bound for Glory"

"900 Miles"

"Casey Jones" (different from the standard version; similar to that of Furry Lewis)

"New River Train"

"Muleskinner Blues"

"Cannonball Blues"

"Good Morning, Mr. Railroad Man"

"Waiting for a Train"

"I've Been Working on the Railroad"

"Union Hammer (Railroad Hammer)"

"900 Miles" and "This Land Is Your Land"

The Martins and The Coys: A Contemporary Folk Tale

Ca. late March 1944, recorded in the Decca Studios, New York City, written by Elizabeth Lomax, arranged by Alan Lomax, and directed by Roy Lockwood. This radio show was conceived by Alan Lomax for patriotic entertainment, but no American network was interested. He sold the idea to the British Broadcasting Corporation; they funded the production, but it had to be recorded in New York City. It was broadcast **26 June 1944**.

The liner notes stated: "Contemporary Songs by Woody Guthrie and the Almanacs." The "Soloists" were Burl Ives, guitar; Woody Guthrie, guitar; Pete Seeger, banjo and mandolin; and Lily May Ledford, guitar and bass. The "Cast" included Burl Ives as the Narrator, Will Geer as Uncle Boone Martin, Geoffrey Bryant as Ben Martin, Jimmy Dobson as Oaty Martin, Katherine Raht as Dellie Coy, Helen Claire as Sary Coy, and Woody Guthrie as Alec Coy. Other cast members, group singers, and musicians were Fiddlin' Arthur Smith, Hally Wood, John Mitchell, Carson Robison, Carl Emory, Robert Haag, Donald Bain, Tom Glazer, Gilbert "Cisco" Houston, Margaret Johnson, Bella Allen, Rosalie Allen, and Sonny Terry. The "Notes" also indicated that they were presenting "Contemporary American Life"; this contemporary life was set in the Smoky Mountains with the feuding Martin and Coy families facing the problems of World War II. A Romeo and Juliet (Ben Martin and Sary Coy) conflict was resolved when the two families were brought together by a common interest in fighting fascism. There were approximately fourteen songs performed; the following were written and performed by Woody Guthrie:

"You Better Get Ready" Woody Guthrie/vocal/guitar, Sonny Terry/harmonica, group singers on the chorus

"You Fascists Bound to Lose" Woody Guthrie/lead vocal/guitar, Pete Seeger/banjo, Sonny Terry/harmonica, group singers on the chorus

Other songs:

"Bound for the Mountain" Burl Ives/vocal, Pete Seeger/banjo

"Run, Boys, Run," Arthur Smith/fiddle, Pete Seeger/banjo, group singing

"Black Is the Color of My True Love's Hair," Burl Ives/ vocal/guitar

"On Top Of Old Smoky," Lily May Pearson/vocal/guitar, Pete Seeger/mandolin

"Gonna Take Everybody (All Work Together)," female harmony, group singing, Pete Seeger/banjo

"When We March into Berlin" (adaptation of "When the Saints Go Marching In"), group singing, Sonny Terry/ harmonica

"How Many Biscuits Can You Eat," female harmony/ guitar/banjo

"Smoky Mountain Gals (Buffalo Gals) Won't You Come Out Tonight," group

singing/guitar, Arthur Smith/fiddle, Pete Seeger/banjo
 "Turtle Dove," Burl Ives/vocal/guitar, Lily May Pearson/vocal
 Fiddle tune/square dance calls with Arthur Smith/fiddle
 "Round and Round Hitler's Grave," Pete Seeger, Burl Ives, and Lily May Pearson each singing verse, cast singing the chorus, Pete Seeger/banjo, guitar/not identified
 "The Martins and the Coys," Pete Seeger/vocal/banjo with the cast singing The Martins and The Coys. Rounder Records 11661-1819-2, 2000 (CD), [issued in the Alan Lomax Collection, The Concert & Radio Series]; edited and with notes by Dave Samuelson; afterword by Robert Cantwell. The entire ballad opera is issued on this compact disc.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Recordings

7 July 1944. Woody was a Merchant Marine, "washing dishes on a Liberty ship," the troop ship Sea Porpoise that carried troops to the Normandy beach in early July 1944. After the troops were sent ashore, the ship hit a mine but still made its way back to England. Woody was routed through London toward Glasgow, Scotland, then toward the United States. On a song manuscript dated "July 13th, 1944," Woody wrote: "this train is carrying me outside from London now; on up towards Belfast, and Glasgow." While in London, he went to the offices of the BBC where he introduced himself as a member of The Martins and the Coys and was given the opportunity to sing on the Children's Hour. After an autobiographical statement, he was recorded singing with his guitar accompaniment:
 "Wabash Cannonball"
 "900 Miles" (this is the minor key melody that Cisco made popular)
 "Stagalee"
 "Pretty Boy Floyd"

Cavalcade of America, Program #415

25 December 1944, America for Christmas, NBC Radio broadcast about an itinerant USO camp show troupe performing for homesick GIs on a small Pacific island; music by Woody Guthrie and Earl Robinson, script by Peter Lyon, starring Walter Huston, Earl Robinson, and the Spokesmen Quartette.

Statement in the introduction: "songs from all over the land we love." Woody Guthrie is not featured as a singer, but spoken credits were "indebted to Woody Guthrie for use of songs arranged by Earl Robinson." Of the approximately eleven songs used in the show, those written by Woody were:
 "Roll on Columbia," the chorus only, sung by the group
 "Hard Travelin'," Earl Robinson/vocal, one verse only
 "Pastures of Plenty," Earl Robinson/vocal, two verses only
 "Grand Coulee Dam (Biggest Thing Man Has Ever Done)," Earl Robinson with group singing
 The show ends with the cast singing "Roll on Columbia."

Asch, Disc, and Folkways

Moses Asch issued records on a variety of labels: Asch, Asch-Stinson, Asch-Signature-Stinson, Cub, Disc, Folk Tunes, Folkways, and Verve/Folkways. Unfortunately, he kept limited information about recording sessions. Jim Kweskin visited Asch and copied as much of the session information as he could find and Asch would supply; his list was published under "Exploratory Research of Woodie[sic] Guthrie's Asch-Folkways Recordings" in Record Research, issue 161/62, February/March 1979, p. 13, and issue 163/64, May/June 1979, p.13. Jeff Place and I have compared Kweskin's printed discography to the Asch ledger in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Institution, and made a few corrections. The combined efforts follow with emphasis on Jim Kweskin's contributions; this is what he wrote:

I went to see Moe Asch of Folkways records awhile back to see if he could help me put together a Woody Guthrie discography. I was hoping

that maybe he kept records and matrix charts or something. Well all he had was a very old, handwritten ledger with scribbles and notes and lists of his sessions in the forties with everyone from Lead Belly to Mary Lou Williams. I did the best I could to decipher and extract all that I could about Woody. This list is the result of that work. (Record Research, issue 161/62, p.13)

11 March 1944. Kweskin believed that this was a session with Woody; however, Woody did not participate in this session. He was aboard the William Floyd, and did not return to New York until later in the month. Asch listed this session as the Union Boys, a collective name for the individuals recording material that might be used in a union album [Songs for Victory: Music for Political Action Asch 346] as well as anti-fascist collections (Guy Logsdon with information from Dave Samuelson).

"Soviet Union," 610
 "You Better Get Ready" (with Tom Glazer), 611
 "Sally Don't You Grieve," 614
 "All of You Fascists Bound to Lose," 615
 "Martens [sic] and the Coys" (Union Boys), 616
 "Move Into Germany" (Union Boys), 617
 "You Better Get Ready" (with Burl Ives) (Union Boys), 618
 "We Shall Not Be Moved," 619, Asch 346-3B
 "UAW-CIO" (Union Boys), 620, Asch 346-2A
 "Hold On" (Union Boys), 621, Asch 346-1B
 "Solidarity," 622
 "Dollar Bill" (Union Boys), 623, Asch 346-2B
 "You Better Get Ready" (with Burl Ives), 624

Asch entered shortened titles for the songs recorded during the following sessions. After listening to the surviving masters and transferring them to DAT and compact disc formats, Jeff Place supplied the better-known titles with alternate titles in parentheses. The list is basically what Kweskin used in his article, but it is more complete and includes some corrections (Guy Logsdon).

16 April 1944

"Hard Ain't It Hard," LM-1, Asch S150-A
 "More Pretty Gals Than One," LM-2, Asch S150-B

19 April 1944 (Woody Guthrie & Cisco Houston)

"Golden Vanity," MA1
 "When the Yanks Go Marching In," MA2
 "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You," MA3
 "Dollar Down Dollar A Week," MA4
 "Hen Cackle," MA5
 "I Ain't Got Nobody," MA6
 "Ida Red," MA7
 "Columbus Stockade," MA8
 "I'm Going Down to Join One Big Union," MA9
 "John Henry," MA10, Stin 27
 "Hammer Ring" ("Union Hammer"), MA11
 "Muleskinner Blues" ("New Road Line"), MA12, Asch 432-1A
 "What Are We Waiting On" ("Bloody Fight"), MA13
 "Ship in the Sky" ("My Daddy"), MA14
 "The Biggest Thing Man Has Ever Done," MA15, Asch 432-3B
 "Stewball," MA16
 "Grand Coulee Dam," MA17, Asch 347-1B
 "Talking Sailor" ("Talking Merchant Marine"), MA18
 "Talking Sailor" ("Talking Merchant Marine"), MA19
 "Talking Sailor" ("Talking Merchant Marine"), MA20, Asch 347-1A
 "New York Town" ("My Town"), MA21, Asch 347-3B
 "Talking Sailor" ("Talking Merchant Marine"), MA22
 "Reckless Talk," MA23
 "Reckless Talk," MA24

"Last Nickel Blues," MA25
 "Guitar Rag," MA26
 "Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Feet?" ("Don't Need No Man"), MA27, Asch 432-4B
 "(Those) Brown Eyes," MA28, Stin 625B
 "Chisholm Trail," MA29
 "Sowing on the Mountain," MA30
 "Sowing on the Mountain," MA31
 "Right Now" (Crawdad Song-union lyrics), MA32
 "Train-Harmonica," MA33
 "Sally Don't You Grieve," MA34, Asch 346-3A
 "Take a Whiff on Me," MA35
 "Philadelphia Lawyer," MA36
 "Kissin' On" ("Gave Her Kisses"), MA37
 "Little Darling," MA38
 "Baltimore to Washington" ("Troubles Too"), MA39
 "Poor Boy" ("Danville Girl" incorrect title), MA40
 "Poor Boy" ("Danville Girl" incorrect title), MA41, Stin 628
 "Ain't Nobody's Business," MA42
 "Take Me Back Babe," MA43
 "Going Down the Road Feeling Bad" ("Won't Be Treated This Way" & "Lonesome Road Blues"), MA44
 "Bed on the Floor," MA45
 "One Big Union" ("Join It Yourself"), MA46
 "Worried Man Blues," MA47
 "What Did the Deep Sea Say?," MA48
 "Foggy Mountain Top," MA49
 "99 Years" (21 Years), MA50
 "Roving Gambler" ("Gambling Man"), MA51
 "Into Season," MA53
 "Strawberry Roan," MA54
 "Red River Valley," MA55
 "Dead or Alive" ("Poor Lazarus"), MA56, Asch 432-2B
 "Pretty Boy Floyd," MA57, Asch 360-1B
 "John Hardy," MA58
 "Bad Lee Brown" ("East Texas Bill"), MA59
 "Whistle Blowing," MA66
 "Billy the Kid," MA67
 "Stagger Lee" ("Stackerlee"), MA68

20 April 1944

"Down Yonder," 674
 "Guitar Blues," 675
 "Harmonica Breakdown," 676
 "Fox Chase," 677
 "Train," 678
 "Lost John," 679, Asch 360-3A
 "Pretty Baby," 680
 "Old Dog a Bone," 681
 "Turkey in the Straw," 682
 ("Fox Chase," "Train," and "Lost John" were probably Sonny Terry, but Woody was capable of playing the tunes on the harmonica.)

20 April 1944

"Give Me That Old Time Religion," 687
 "Streets of Glory," 688, Asch 432-2A
 "Hard Traveling," 689
 "Rubber Dolly," 690
 "Bus Blues," 691
 "Devilish Mary," 692
 "Cripple Creek," 693
 "Sandy Land," 694

24 April 1944

"Old Dan Tucker," 695
 "Bile Dem Cabbage Down," 696, Stin 716 B
 "Old Joe Clark," 697
 "Buffalo Gals" ("Bottle in Hand"), 698
 "Rain Crow Bill," 699
 "Skip to My Lou," 700,
 "Lonesome Train," 701
 "Lonesome Train," 702
 "Blues," 703
 "Harmonica Breakdown," 704
 "Harmonica Rag," 705
 "Harmonica Rag #2," 706
 "Crawdad Hole," 707
 "Bury Me Beneath the Willow," 708
 "I Ride an Old Paint" ("Ride Around Little Dogies"), 709
 "Blue Eyes," 710
 "Going Down the Road Feeling Bad" ("Lonesome Road Blues"), 711
 "Old Dog a Bone," 712
 "Sally Goodin'," 713
 "Blues," 714

25 April 1944

"Talking Fishing Blues" ("Fishing Blues"), MA75
 "Talking Sailor" ("Talking Merchant Marine"), MA76
 "Union Burial Ground," MA77, Asch 360-3B
 "Jesse James," MA78
 "Ranger's Command," MA79, Asch 347-2A
 "Sinking of the Rueben James," MA80,
 "Put My Little Shoes Away," MA81
 "Picture from Life's Other Side," MA82
 "Will You Miss Me," MA83
 "Bed on the Floor," MA84
 "900 Miles" ("Lonesome Fiddle"), MA85, Asch 432-1B
 "Sourwood Mountain," MA86
 "Hoecake Baking," MA87
 "Ezekiel Saw the Wheel," MA88
 "Little Darling" (At My Window), MA89
 "Lonesome Day," MA90
 "Cumberland Gap," MA91
 "Fiddling Piece" (Rye Straw), MA92
 "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny," MA93
 "Stepstone," MA94
 "House of the Rising Sun," MA96
 "Brown's Ferry Blues," MA98
 "What Would You Give in Exchange for Your Soul?," MA99
 "When That Ship Went Down," MA91-1, Stin 717-B
 "Dust Bowl," MA100
 "Guitar Rag," MA101
 "I Ain't Got Nobody," MA102
 "Going Down the Road Feeling Bad" ("Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way" & "Lonesome Road Blues"), MA103
 "Guitar Rag," 1230
 "Blowin' Down This Old Dusty Road," 1231, Asch 550-3B

8 May 1944

Woody (title not found), MA1240

19 May 1944

"Hey Lolly Lolly," MA105
 "Budded Roses," MA106
 "House of the Rising Sun," MA107
 "I Don't Feel at Home in the Bowery," MA108

"Hobo's Lullaby," MA109, Stin 716 A
 "Frog Went A-Courtin'" ("Mouse Went a Courting"), MA110
 "Bad Repetation," MA111
 "Snow Deer," MA112
 "Ladies Auxiliary," MA113
 "This Land Is My Land," MA114
 "Hang Knot" ("Slip Knot"), MA115
 "Breakdown," MA116
 "Go Tell Aunt Rhody," MA117
 "Roll the Union On," MA118
 "Who Broke the Lock on the Hen House Door?," MA119
 "What Did the Deep Sea Say?," MA120
 "Strawberry Roan"(probably Cisco Houston), MA121-1
 "When the Yanks Go Marching In," MA122-1
 "Bed on the Floor," MA123-1
 "We Shall Be Free," MA124-1
 "Right Now" (Crawdad Song-union lyrics), MA125-1
 "Jackhammer John," MA126-1
 "I Love Little Willie," MA127-1
 "Springfield Mountain," MA128-1
 "Keep Your Skillet Good and Greasy," MA129-1
 "Home" (?), MA130-1
 "Lost You," MA131
 "Slip Knot" ("Hang Knot"), MA134
 "Jesus Christ," MA135, Asch 347-3A
 "Hobo Bill," MA136
 "Little Black Train," MA137
 "Cannon Ball," MA138
 "Gypsy Davy," MA139, Asch 347-2B
 "Bile Them Cabbage Down," MA140

1 March 1945

"Get Along Little Dogies," 860
 "Waltz," 861
 "Waltz," 862
 "Union Breakdown," 863
 "Cackling Hen," 864
 "Chisholm Trail," 865
 "Bed on Your Floor," 866
 "Rye Whiskey," 867

23 March 1945

"Old Joe Clark," 868
 "Long Ways to Travel," 869
 "Woody Blues," 870
 "Down Yonder," 871
 "Gal I Left Behind," 872

24 May 1945

"Mean Talking Blues," 900,
 "1913 Massacre," 901, Asch 360-2B
 "Ludlow Massacre," 902, Asch 360-2A
 "Buffalo Skinners," 903, Asch 360-1A
 "Harriet Tubman" [part 1], 904
 "Harriet Tubman" [part 2], 905

26 January 1947–31 January 1947 Sacco & Vanzetti Sessions

There were multiple takes of each song done.

"The Flood and the Storm"
 "I Just Want to Sing Your Name"
 "Old Judge Thayer"
 "Red Wine"
 "Root Hog and Die"
 "Suassos Lane"

"Two Good Men"
 "Vanzetti's Letter"
 "Vanzetti's Rock"
 "We Welcome to Heaven"
 "You Souls of Boston"

(In an autobiographical manuscript ca. 1944, Woody typed: "I made 132 records for the Asch Record Company with Cisco Houston and Blind Sonny Terry." Guy Logsdon)

The following are recordings Guthrie made for Moses Asch that are in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections in Smithsonian. There is no listing of recording dates available. Many, including a number Guthrie recorded after returning from his second visit to the Bonneville area in 1947, were done for Disc Records. They were done primarily between 1946 and 1948.

"Along in the Sun and the Rain"
 "Another Man Done Gone"
 "Better World A-Comin"
 "Cowboy Song"
 "Cowboy Waltz"
 "Danville Girl"
 "Dirty Overhalls"
 "Do Re Mi"
 "Dust Storm Disaster"
 "Dying Miner"
 "End of the Line"
 "Farmer-Labor Train"
 "Fastest of Ponies"
 "Get Along Mister Hitler"
 "Going Down the Road Feeling Bad"
 "Good Morning Blues" (with Sonny Terry and Cisco Houston)
 "Green Corn"
 "Guitar Blues"
 "Hanukkah Dance"
 "Happy Hanukkah"
 "Hard Travelin," D-200
 "Helping Hand" (12/29/49)
 "How Many Biscuits Can You Eat?"
 "I Ain't Got No Home in This World Anymore"
 "I Ride an Old Paint"
 "If I Lose My Money, Let Me Lose" (with Sonny Terry and Cisco Houston)
 "It's Hanukkah"
 "Jarama Valley"
 "Lay Down Little Dogies"
 "Lindbergh"
 "Long John"
 "The Many and the Few"
 "A Million Miles"
 "Miner's Song"
 "New Found Land," D-204
 "New York City"
 "900 Miles"
 "On Top of Old Smokey"
 "Oregon Trail"
 "Pancho Villa"
 "Pastures of Plenty," D-199
 "Prison Cell Dream"
 "Prisoner's Wife"
 "Put on My Traveling Shoes" (with Sonny Terry)
 "Ramblin' Round," D-201
 "Red River Valley"
 "Red Runner"

"The Return of Rocky Mountain Slim and Desert Rat Shorty"
 "Riding Down the Rocky Canyon"
 "Rocky Mountain Slim and Desert Rat Shorty"
 "Roll On"
 "Rubaiyat"
 "Seattle to Chicago"
 "Struggle Blues"
 "Sugar in the Gourd"
 "Talking Centralia (Talking Miner)"
 "Talking Columbia," D-202
 "Talking Dust Bowl"
 "Talking Hard Work"
 "This Land Is Your Land" (shorter version) "Train 45"
 "Train Medley"
 "Train Narration"
 "True Believer"
 "Vigilante Man"
 "Waiting at the Gate"
 "Waltz by Ki-Ki"
 "Warden in the Sky"
 "When the Curfew Blows," D-203
 "Who Broke Down the Hen House Door?"
 "Whoopie Ti Yi Yo, Get Along Little Dogies"
 "Wiggledy, Giggledy"
 "Wild Cyclone"
 "Wreck of Old 97"
 "Wreck of the #9"
 "Yellow Gal" (solo)

Moe Asch says that Woody's children's songs were all recorded in February or March 1947. Guthrie biographer Ed Cray has it in February and March 1946, which seems more likely.

"A B C Song"
 "All Work Together," D595, Disc 5075B
 "Bling Blang"
 "Bubble Gum"
 "Build My House," D596, Disc 5073A
 "Candy Tree"
 "Car Song"
 "Choo-Choo"
 "Clean-O," D302, Disc 5050B
 "Come See"
 "Cowboy Ranch"
 "Dance Around," D304, Disc 5051A
 "Don't You Push Me Down," D305, Disc 5052A, Cub 9B
 "Goodnight Little Arlo"
 "Goodnight Little Darling"
 "Grassy Grass Grass (Grow, Grow, Grow)," Cub 4A
 "Howdjadoo"
 "I See Mama"
 "I Want Milk (I Want It Now)"
 "I'll Eat You, I'll Drink You"
 "I'll Write, I'll Draw," Cub 10B
 "Jig Along Home," D306, Disc 5052B
 "Jiggy Jiggy Bum"
 "Little Sack of Sugar"
 "Make a Bubble"
 "Merry Go Round"
 "My Dolly"
 "My Little Seed," D594, Disc 5075A
 "My Yellow Crayon"
 "Needle Sing," D592, Disc 5047A
 "One Day Old"

"1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8"
 "Pick It Up," D597, Disc 5074B
 "Pretty and Shiny-O," D593, Disc 5073B
 "Put Your Finger in the Air," D303, Disc 5051B, Cub 9A
 "Race You Down the Mountain"
 "Rattle My Rattle"
 "Sleepy Eye"
 "Swimmy Swim Swim," Cub 4B
 "Take My Penny"
 "Tippy Tappy Toe"
 "Train Song," Cub 10A
 "Wake Up," D301, Disc 5050A
 "Want to See Me Grow"
 "Washy Wash Wash"
 "Who's My Pretty Baby?"
 "Why, Oh Why?"

Asch, Possibly October 1946.

"Alabama Bound" (with Lead Belly), D-669
 "Ham and Eggs" (with Lead Belly), D-670
 "Yellow Gal" (with Lead Belly), D-671
 "Stewball" (with Lead Belly), D-672
 "Grey Goose" (with Lead Belly), D-673
 "Fiddler's Dram" (with Lead Belly), D-674
 "Green Corn" (with Lead Belly), D-674
 "Midnight Special" (with Lead Belly), D-674

Hootenanny

10 March 1947, CBS Radio, broadcast featuring Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Sonny Terry, Eddie Smith, Brownie McGhee, Hally Wood, Sidney Bechet, Pops Foster, Cisco Houston, and the Coleman Brothers with John Henry Faulk as host, written and produced by Alan Lomax. A mixture of nine songs including folk, blues, gospel, and jazz simulated, as Faulk stated, "forty-eight states doing a musical jamboree." "Raise a Ruckus Tonight" was the theme song with Woody adding a square dance verse when they ended it as the opening song. The following songs feature Woody:

"Raise a Ruckus Tonight" Pete Seeger, banjo/vocal; Sonny Terry, harmonica; Woody Guthrie and entire cast vocals
 "Hard Ain't It Hard" Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar; Cisco Houston, vocal harmony/guitar; Pete Seeger, banjo/vocal harmony; Sonny Terry, harmonica; Pops Foster, bass fiddle; Eddie Smith, fiddle
 Woody finishes his song and says, "Here before you, you see an Oklahomeean [sic], nothin' up my sleeves and nothin' in my pocket, nothin' in my pocketbook, nothin' but just a purty good little piece of advice—don't cost nothin' to listen to it—goes like this."
 "Talkin' Blues" Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
 "John Henry" verses sung and/or performed by members in the cast to show how one song can be performed in many different musical styles; Woody is heard singing with Pete Seeger.
 The entire show was issued on Folk Music Radio by Radiola, Release #133 CMR-1133 (cassette) side A, ca. late 1970s.

Woody Guthrie Concert

December 1949, YM-YWHA's Fuld Hall, Newark, N.J. recorded by Paul Braverman on two spools of wire with a wire recorder. The program presented a concert by Woody Guthrie moderated by his wife, Marjorie Mazia Guthrie who taught dance at the Y. It was released in 2007 by the Woody Guthrie Foundation as *The Live Wire: Woody Guthrie in Performance 1949* and accompanied by a 72-page book. The set was reissued by Rounder Records in 2011.
 "Intro- How much, how long" (Narration)
 "Black Diamond"

"I was there and dust was there" (narration)
 "The Great Dust Storm"
 "Folk singers and dancers" (narration)
 "Talking Dust Bowl"
 "Tom Joad"
 "Columbia River" (narration)
 "Pastures of Plenty"
 "Grand Coulee Dam"
 "Told by Mother Bloor" (narration)
 "1913 Massacre"
 "Quit Sending Your Inspectors" (narration)
 "Goodbye Centralia"
 "A cowboy of some kind" (narration)
 "Dead or Alive"
 "Jesus Christ has come" (narration)
 "Jesus Christ"

Woody Guthrie Concert

14 April 1951, St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland, recorded by J. W. Mavor Jr. on a wire recorder using a handheld mike while sitting on the front row. Forty to fifty people in attendance including Mike and Peggy Seeger and Glenn Yarbrough with comments made from the stage by Woody's wife, Marjorie Guthrie. This tape was donated to the Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Culture, by James Mavor Jr.; it is an interesting tape even though the sound quality is poor, made a few months before his illness was diagnosed.

Woody is showing his sickness, although he sounds as if he is intoxicated (both conditions were probable); the concert is Woody, vocals/guitar. Woody talks about the Bonneville Power songs and then sings "Grand Coulee Dam"
 "Jesus Christ" (has to hold notes while he tries to remember the words)
 "Goodbye, Centralia, Goodbye"
 "Gypsy Davy" (forgets the words)
 "So Long" (starts, stops, changes key; sings a verse while Marjorie leads audience in singing; changes key and sings the first verse and others of the original version and the audience sings the chorus).

Richmond Recordings

March 1951, Woody's music publisher Howard Richmond, owner of Ludlow Music, TRO, and other music publishing firms, gave Woody a tape recorder and blank tapes, upon which Guthrie recorded over two hundred songs. Several of these songs have been released for use in projects, including "I've Got To Know," used in the Bob Roberts film soundtrack, 1992.

Decca Recordings

7 January 1952, Woody recorded two songs for Decca; they were never issued, but "This Land" was included on Songs for Political Action, Bear Family Records BCD 15720, disc 10, 1996.
 "Kissin' On," matrix 82077
 "This Land Is Your Land," matrix 82078

Guthrie, Elliott, and Terry Session

18 January 1954, Woody, Jack Elliott, and Sonny Terry were enjoying a day of drinking when they decided to record some of their favorite songs. They went to the Asch Studio and attempted to perform; Woody was sick and the others were inebriated. Guthrie also had burned his arm and could barely play the guitar. Eventually Asch turned off the recording machine; there are no songs that should be issued. However, "Railroad Bill" was used as track 5 on the ballad of ramblin' jack: Original Soundtrack Vanguard 79575-2.
 "When the Saints Go Marching In," Woody Guthrie, Sonny Terry, others
 "New River Train," Woody Guthrie, Sonny Terry, others
 "Carolina Bound," Sonny Terry, others
 "Boy from Home," Sonny Terry

"Crawdad Hole," Woody Guthrie, Sonny Terry, Alonzo Scales
 "Female Doctor," Woody Guthrie
 "So Fine," Sonny Terry, Woody Guthrie
 "By the Bedside," Alonzo Scales, Sonny Terry
 "Irene," Sonny Terry, Woody Guthrie, Myrtle Scott
 "mandolin solo," Woody Guthrie
 "On Top of Old Smoky," Woody Guthrie, Sonny Terry, others
 "Put on My Traveling Shoes," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Sukey Jump" tune (fiddle tune), Woody Guthrie
 "Rubber Dolly," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott
 "Ryestraw," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott
 "How Long, How Long," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott
 "Take This Hammer," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Railroad Bill," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Alabama Bound," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott
 "Worried Man Blues," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, others
 "New Morning Train," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Harmonica Rag," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Rubber Dolly," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "More Pretty Girls than One," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Rubber Dolly," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Bound for Glory," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Wabash Cannonball," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Give Me That Old Time Religion," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Nine Pound Hammer," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Ezekiel Saw the Wheel" (fragment), Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Ezekiel Saw the Wheel," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Freight Train Blues," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Railroad Bill," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Move Across the River," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Bed on the Floor," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry
 "Sinking of the Reuben James," Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, Sonny Terry

JEFF PLACE

Jeff Place has been the archivist for the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage since January 1988. He has overseen the cataloging of the Center's collections. He has a master's degree in library science from the University of Maryland and specializes in sound archives. He has been involved in the compilation of fifty CDs for Smithsonian Folkways Recordings including Woody Guthrie's Long Ways to Travel: The Unreleased Folkways Masters, for which he won the 1994 Brenda McCallum Prize from the American Folklore Society, the Lead Belly Legacy Series, Lead Belly Sings for Children, the Pete Seeger American Favorite Ballads series, and The Asch Recordings of Woody Guthrie. Place has been nominated for four Grammy Awards and eleven Indie Awards, winning two Grammys and five Indies. He was one of the producers and writers of the acclaimed 1997 edition of the Anthology of American Folk Music and The Best of Broadside, 1962–1988 (2000). Place has overseen the recording of a number of regional folk festivals in addition to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival (1988 to present). He was on the curatorial team for a number of exhibitions including the traveling Woody Guthrie exhibition, This Land is Your Land. He also co-curated the 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program on Appalachian culture.

ROBERT SANTELLI

Robert Santelli is executive director of the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles. He is the author of This Land Is Your Land: Woody Guthrie and the Journey of an American Folk Song and co-editor of Hard Travelin': The Life and Legacy of Woody Guthrie. He has also written nearly a dozen other books on American music and held positions at both the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, where he celebrated Guthrie in the museum's first-ever American Music Masters series, and the Experience Music Project in Seattle.

Credits

Produced by Jeff Place and Robert Santelli
Annotated by Jeff Place and Robert Santelli
Additional essay by Peter LaChapelle
Discographical information by Guy W. Logsdon
Audio restoration and compilation mastered by Pete Reiniger
Prior audio restoration and mastering on tracks previously issued by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings by: Eric Conn, Joe Gastwirt, David Glasser, Mickey Hart, Charlie Pilzer, Pete Reiniger, LeAnn Sonenstein, and others.
Transfers, Disc 3, tracks 1–4 by Michael Kieffer
Sources: Disc 1, tracks 5 and 6; Disc 2, track 21, courtesy of American Folklife Center, Library of Congress; Disc 3, track 8, courtesy of WNYC Archives
Image licensing and caption text by Tiffany Colannino, Woody Guthrie Archives
Publisher copyright research by Anna Canoni, Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc.
Executive producers: Daniel E. Sheehy and D.A. Sonneborn
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Special thanks to Nora Guthrie, Michael Kleff, Anna Canoni, Tiffany Colannino, Peter LaChapelle, John Burnside, Rukshana Singh, Cary Ginell, Michael Kieffer, Ronnie Simpkins, Michael Barnes, Peter Alyea, Aja Bain, Heather Darnell, Andy Lanset, Abigail Kabaker, Christopher Gibson, Andy Irvine, Guy Logsdon, Anthony Mancini, Bill Pearson, Aurélie Beatley, Cedar Mathers-Winn, Lisa Horan, Andrea Boltz, Solomon Salvador, Caroline Morel, Jason Roth, Adam Caraher, and Katharina Budnik

The Woody Guthrie Foundation & Archives

The Woody Guthrie Foundation & Archives is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote, perpetuate, and preserve the social, political, and cultural values that Woody Guthrie contributed to the world through his life, his music, and his work. Open to the public in 1996, the Archives holds the largest collection of Woody Guthrie material in the world, and has provided primary source material for many award-winning publications, special projects, exhibitions, and films.

The collection contains over 10,000 items including Woody Guthrie's original song lyrics, notebooks and diaries, manuscripts, photographs, correspondence, personal papers, scrapbooks, artwork, films, and audio recordings, all of which document his life and artistry as musician, writer, illustrator, and political activist.

In addition to supporting research, the Foundation & Archives also curates thematic exhibits for museums worldwide, delivers educational multimedia presentations that brings Guthrie's life and legacy to the public, supports an annual Woody Guthrie Fellowship, and has piloted an International Exchange Program.

For more information about Woody Guthrie, his life, and legacy, and for a complete listing of All Things Woody, please visit: www.WoodyGuthrie.org

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