CLASSIC BANJO

FROM SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS



Smithsonian Folkways

CLASSIC BANJO

FROM SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

I.	Pete Seeger Fly Around My Blue-Eyed Girl/ Cripple Creek/Ida Red/Old Joe Clark	2:35	10. Josh Thomas Mississippi Heavy Water Blues (Robert Hicks)	3:37
2.	Hobart Smith Banging Breakdown	1:17	11. Rufus Crisp Walk Light Ladies	1:28
3.	Frank Proffitt Johnson Boys	1:41	12. Bill Cornett Buck Creek Girls	1:00
4.	Wade Ward Peachbottom Creek	1:24	13. Don Vappie and the Creole Jazz Serenaders	
5.	Dink Roberts Coo Coo	2:10	Gut Bucket Blues (Louis Armstrong/MCA Publishing, ASCAP)	4:15
6.	Mike Seeger Josh Thomas's Roustabout	2:38	14. Mick Moloney Skylark/Roaring Mary	3:24
7.	Willie Chapman Jaw Bone	0:52	15. Ken Perlman	
8.	Dock Boggs Bright Sunny South	3:36	St. Anne's Reel/La Renfleuse Gorbeil (arr. Ken Perlman)	2:50
-	Pete Steele	1:52		

SFW CD 40209 @@ 2013 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings COMPILED AND ANNOTATED BY GREG C. ADAMS AND JEFF PLACE

16. Roger Sprung Smokey Mokes (Abe Holzmann/EMI Feist Catalogue Inc,	2:21	24. Ola Belle R Foggy Mount (A.P. Carter/Po
ASCAP) 17. A.L. Camp Golden Bell Polka (J.H.Jennings)	2:25	25. Doc Watsor Rambling Ho 26. John Snipe Old Rattler
18. Tony Trischka with Bill Evans Banjoland (Joe Morley)	3:00	27. Elizabeth C Georgia Buck
19. Snuffy Jenkins Sally Ann	1:10	28. Irvin Cook I Wish to the 29. Roscoe Hol
20. Roni Stoneman Lonesome Road Blues	1:12	Black Eye Sus
21. Lee Sexton Fox Chase	0:56	the Blue Gr Bluegrass Bre
22. John Tyree Hop Along Lou	1:08	(Bill Monroe/H
23. "Big Sweet" Lewis Hairston Cotton Eyed Joe	1:23	

24. Ola Belle Reed Foggy Mountain Top (A.P. Carter/Peer International, BMI)	2:29
25. Doc Watson Rambling Hobo	1:37
26. John Snipes Old Rattler	2:46
27. Elizabeth Cotten Georgia Buck	1:42
28. Irvin Cook I Wish to the Lord I'd Never Been Born	3:07
29. Roscoe Holcomb Black Eye Susie	1:24
30. Bill Keith with Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys	
Bluegrass Breakdown (Bill Monroe/Hill + Range Songs, BMI)	3:09



Introduction

This installment of the Smithsonian Folkways Classic series serves as an introduction to the banjo recordings in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections at the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. It consists of songs and tunes from the Folkways and BRI record labels and the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife. Over the years, one of the Center's primary goals has been to maintain its vast collections of American traditional music and distribute its over 40,000 recordings through the Smithsonian Folkways label. Folkways Records (now Smithsonian Folkways) has been one of the few American record labels to continuously produce and distribute high-quality recordings that include traditional American music, and it has done so more than others.

Folkways founder Moses Asch (1905–86) made a commitment to artists that their Folkways recordings would never go out of print. Asch, whose involvement in the record business dated from 1939, founded Folkways with Marian Distler (1919–64) in New York City in 1948. During the 1940s, Asch released American vernacular music performed by artists such as Lead Belly, Burl Ives, Pete Seeger, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Woody Guthrie, and Virginia mountain singers Hobart Smith and Texas Gladden. His release in 1952 of Harry Smith's legendary compilation, the *Anthology of American Folk Music*, made available for the first time in decades vintage commercial recordings of mountain music and string bands from the 1920s and '30s. Smith's *Anthology*, and other Folkways releases, would have a major effect on a new generation of young musicians and enthusiasts.

During this period, the banjo became an important and enduring part of the record label's releases, influencing some of the ways in which Folkways shaped popular awareness of traditional music. In 1953, Asch released Bascom Lamar Lunsford's *Smoky Mountain Ballads* (FW 2040). Lunsford, a singer, banjoist, and ballad collector from western North Carolina, was one of the stars of the *Anthology*. Later, in 1958, Asch released a recording of songs and interviews with Kentucky banjoist and singer Buell Kazee, another performer from the *Anthology*.

Also in 1958, the Kingston Trio had a nationwide hit with the ballad "Tom Dooley," which was originally collected by Frank Warner from North Carolina banjo player Frank Proffitt. Soon every major record label was looking for its own "Kingston Trio" to cash in on the folk music craze. College students were forming bands that included the banjo, and musicians were looking for material by seeking out the great song collections such as those by Folkways, the Lomaxes, the Seegers, Carl Sandburg, Benjamin Botkin, and others, as well as the venerable <code>Sing Out!</code> magazine.

Some of the more adventurous of these musicians began to travel and search for the people who were the sources of these songs. It was from these folklorists and collectors that Asch received a vast trove of traditional music. Between 1958 and 1966, Asch released 44 albums of traditional material. Among these titles were recordings of Dock Boggs, Roscoe Holcomb, the McGee Brothers, Wade Ward, Doc Watson, Clarence Ashley, and Pete Steele. Many of the banjo recordings on this release were made for Asch during this period.

Several key individuals made the banjo an important part of Folkways. In New York in the late 1950s, one of the young groups on the scene was the New Lost City Ramblers. The Ramblers made a point of recording older country and mountain songs and staying true to the original sound. Unlike many groups who appropriated older songs and claimed to have written them, the Ramblers always included discographies of the original sources in their liner notes and educated their fans about the music. Not surprisingly, two of the group's members, Mike Seeger (1933–2009) and John Cohen (b. 1932), were heavily involved in collecting and docu-

menting traditional music that became associated with Folkways. Mike Seeger, a member of the musical Seeger family—half-brother to Pete (b. 1919) and son of the musicologist Charles (1886–1979)—was one of the more prolific recording artists on the Folkways label. He was also involved in producing recordings by the McGee Brothers, Kilby Snow, the Stoneman Family, Dock Boggs, Elizabeth Cotten, and others. Similarly, John Cohen traveled throughout the South and brought back many classic recordings, including his 1959 Kentucky recordings of Roscoe Holcomb.

Another key figure Mike Seeger brought into Folkways circles was his friend Ralph Rinzler (1934–94). This connection resulted in Rinzler producing recordings for Folkways, including contributions to the notes for Folkways' *American Banjo Tunes and Songs in Scruggs Style* (FW 2314). As a chief talent scout for the Newport Folk Festival, Rinzler was the first to discover and record Doc Watson (1923–2012). In 1987 Rinzler, then Assistant Secretary for Public Service at the Smithsonian Institution, negotiated the acquisition of the Folkways label by the Smithsonian, preserving Asch's legacy with Folkways Records. The following year, the Smithsonian Folkways record label was founded.

From its beginnings, Smithsonian Folkways has reissued material from the Center's vast archives with expanded liner notes and updated sound. In the last 14 years, Smithsonian Folkways has seen the reissue of the Doc Watson–Clarence Ashley recordings, Bascom Lamar Lunsford, Dock Boggs, Roscoe Holcomb, anthologies of the New Lost City Ramblers, and the heralded 1997 GRAMMY-winning reissue of the *Anthology of American Folk Music*. We will continue to mine the vaults for new collections in the future and remain committed to bringing traditional music to new listeners.

JEFF PLACE, SEPTEMBER 2012



The Banjo's Distant Past and Our Recent History

GREG C. ADAMS

Classic Banjo from Smithsonian Folkways comes from a pool of over 330 Smithsonian Folkways releases as well as hundreds of other banjo performances found in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections. Applying a "classic" designation to these selections means that each performance is somehow iconic, instructive, or reflects some of the more notable ways in which people have used the banjo over time. It also means that the performances should be viewed against a broader cultural backdrop where the banjo functions as a musical symbol whose often-contested past fits within a spectrum of denigrating stereotypes, on one hand, and celebratory revitalization, on the other.

Banjo history stretches across a complex international terrain. It spans the instrument's West African heritage and development in the 17th-century Caribbean basin, its 18th-century transmission into North America, and its 19th-century international commercialization under the influence of blackface minstrelsy. Through the early 19th century, the banjo moved across

many landscapes through live performance. By the 1840s and '50s, banjo music was increasingly shared through published sheet music, instruction books, and musical manuscripts. The ability to play back recorded sound by the late 1870s and the advent of additional technologies throughout the 20th century continuously supplemented the banjo's dissemination in both popular and vernacular contexts.

Now, in the 21st century, people use new technology to rapidly transfer digital content around the world. With this quickening of access to the sounds of the banjo, the instrument's actual multicultural lineage is sometimes obscured, and along with it knowledge of the contexts in which the banjo was used by previous generations of tradition-bearers and innovators. One of the purposes of this recording is to encourage listeners to discover how multiple banjo traditions survive, thrive, and evolve within our communities. Exploring historical context, instrument construction, and playing technique are just some of the ways we can better realize how to connect the banjo's distant past with our recent history.

The banjo's use is well documented in genres such as blackface minstrelsy, ragtime, jazz, country, bluegrass, old-time, and Irish traditional music. Yet, by comparison, the contexts of the banjo's early history are often overlooked—in part because this history is uncomfortably tied to the forced displacement of millions of people, the violence of slavery, and the eventual appropriation of aspects of African American identity for musical and theatrical commercialization.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Caribbean basin became one of many destinations for abducted Africans. In this new, unfamiliar environment, enslaved Africans maintained a sense of identity, even in the most adverse conditions. They created a unique plucked stringed instrument based on one or more African traditions while incorporating some attributes of European instruments, such as flat fingerboards and tuning pegs. European writers and artists observed aspects of an evolving banjo tradition and provided readers with exotic instrument names such as bangil, banza, bania, banja, strum strump, and merrywang (Epstein 2003). These early forms of the banjo and related references to West African plucked lute traditions were documented

on the islands of Jamaica, Haiti, St. Croix, Antigua, Martinique, Trinidad, and other islands, as well as in mainland South America's Suriname and Cartagena, Colombia (ibid.; Price and Price 1979; Sandoval 1627: 27-28).

The most clearly documented form of the early banjo consisted of a neck crafted with a flat fingerboard that ran through the full length of a gourd (or sometimes calabash) body. The opened side of the gourd was covered with an animal hide sound table held in place with tacks. It had four strings—three long strings and a short thumb string—that were attached to the end of the gourd body and on the neck with friction tuning pegs. Here, the strings sat on a bridge placed on the sound table. These attributes served as the foundation for all banjo construction that followed.

As the banjo appeared in North America—documented as early as 1736 in New York City ("The Spy" 1736)—European and Euro-American writers continued to make note of it throughout the 18th and into the 19th centuries. Most period references to the banjo before 1840 are found largely in the upper South, including Maryland and Virginia (and southern Pennsylvania), as well as in parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi (Conway 1995, 61). In many of these contexts, African American banjo players were described in runaway slave advertisements, personal papers, and newspapers and magazines.

By the 1790s, depictions of instruments created in North America included physical characteristics that maintained continuity with those documented in the Caribbean (Mazow 2005; Shames 2010; Sloane 1707; Price and Price 1979). By the turn of the 19th century, though, public perceptions of the banjo were shifting, as the instrument was more frequently referenced in both literary and theatrical settings. These evolving perceptions of the banjo as a black vernacular instrument, literary motif, and art object were among the factors that set the stage for the instrument's eventual use in blackface minstrelsy. Representations of the banjo and blackface imagery became more prevalent on sheet music covers, while misrepresentations of African American dialect were captured in the lyrics (Mahar 1988).

In 1843, the Virginia Minstrels secured the banjo's ascendancy into full-form blackface minstrel performances, which included performers wearing exaggerated clothing and applying burnt cork to blacken their faces (Nathan 1962). The banjo's popularization in blackface minstrelsy is largely attributed to Joel Walker Sweeney (1810–60), who began publicly performing with the banjo as early as 1836 (Carlin 2007, 163). Sweeney's popular significance was recognized even at the time of his death; one obituary declared that he "enjoyed probably a greater reputation than any other man as a banjoist, having been the first white man to introduce the banjo to the public" ("Death of 'Old Joe Sweeney'" 1860). The banjo's international popularity grew as the instrument arrived in the British Isles by 1842, was introduced to Japan and Australia by the 1850s, and was presented before South African audiences by 1865 (Roxworthy 2008, 28; Carlin 2007, 85, 145; Cockrell 1987, 419).

Banjo construction rapidly evolved by the 1840s and '50s with significant innovations beyond the gourd- and calabash-bodied predecessors. For example, over the broader course of the 19th century, in urban settings, luthiers made banjos with bodies of wrapped, steam-bent wood, sometimes with spun-over metal rims, and eventually included other parts such as tone rings to help enhance the sound. Tensioning hardware connecting the animal hide sound table to the body varied from instrument to instrument, and fretted necks soon became a popular standard (Gura and Bollman 1999).

After the Civil War, commercial manufacturers and publishers promoted the instrument to "elevate" the banjo from its vernacular roots in African American culture and blackface minstrelsy (Linn 1991). The banjo became redefined as part of a "classic era" of banjo music during the late 19th and early 20th centuries—an era connecting the banjo's popular use with parlor performances, concert halls, banjo orchestras, and ragtime music (Winans and Kaufman 1994). By the turn of the 20th century and through the 1920s, commercial variants of the five-string banjo—most notably four-string tenor and plectrum banjos (typically played with a flat pick)—helped maintain the banjo's commercial presence in popular culture through ragtime, jazz, Dixieland, and other forms of dance music. The commercial music industry of the 1920s and '30s also achieved further success with stereotyped performance categories based on race, ethnicity, and class, including

the creation of hillbilly and country music (for white musicians) and race records (for African American musicians) (Miller 2010). Over the following decades, the banjo's evolving public presence became associated with the folk revival of the 1950s and '60s and continued to thrive within bluegrass, old-time, and other vernacular and commercial music scenes.

Many of the tracks on this compilation reflect how performances and recordings from our recent history intersect with the banjo's distant past. This intersection includes making meaning-ful connections between multiple forms of banjo playing techniques. For instance, new learners can discover how old-time downstroke techniques such as *clawhammer*, *rapping*, or *frailing* share the same fundamentals with 19th-century downstroke techniques known as *banjo style*, *stroke style*, or *thimble style* playing. They might learn how bluegrass musicians generally use a three-finger picking technique where the thumb, index, and middle finger are fitted with picks and pluck the strings in an upward motion, in kinship with multiple 19th- and 20th-century finger picking techniques that use two, three, or four fingers. They can study how players of four-string tenor and plectrum banjos use a flat pick to pluck or strum melodies, rhythms, and chords that are found in American forms such as ragtime, jazz, and Dixieland music as well as in Irish traditional music. They can also discover how some musicians use a mixed-methods approach, combining both downstroke and finger picking techniques in their performances.

Classic Banjo from Smithsonian Folkways also serves as a gateway into the label's in-depth catalog and the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections. For example, the Smithsonian Folkways catalog includes recordings of the banjo being used in places such as Nigeria (FW4532), Haiti (FW4432), Guyana (FW4239), St. Lucia (SFW40416), the Bahamas (SFW40405), South Africa (FW88710), Tanzania (ILAMTR170), and Peru (SFW40469). These types of exploration reveal that we are now in a place where we can view tradition from multiple perspectives, whether through academic, social, or local community-based lenses. In the end, we are at more than a musical crossroads. We are in a place where the deeper veins of tradition welcome us to move in new directions as we redefine the course of our travel. We do so because tradition is seldom static and unflinching.

Songs

1. FLY AROUND MY BLUE~EYED GIRL / CRIPPLE CREEK / IDA RED / OLD JOE CLARK

Pete Seeger, vocal and banjo

(FROM SFW 40018, 1993; RECORDED BY MOSES ASCH, 1943)

Pete Seeger (b. 1919) is the dean of 20th-century folk singers and has been performing and supporting a variety of causes for more than 60 years. Pete grew up surrounded by music. His father was the eminent musicologist Charles Seeger (1886–1979), and his mother Constance (1886–1975) was a concert violinist. Pete, his siblings (Mike, Peggy, and Penny), and various cousins and relatives have enjoyed successful recording careers.

Beginning in 1943, and over the next 40 years, Seeger recorded more than 60 albums for Moses Asch, becoming a major figure during the folk song revival and a major influence on many of the musicians who started performing during that time. His self-published book, *How to Play the 5-String Banjo*, became a highly influential primer for future generations of urban banjo players.

One of the very first things Seeger recorded for Asch was this banjo medley. Here, he tackles old standards with a good deal of zest, capturing his essence as a virtuosic musician with rapid-fire playing and an engaging vocal style.



2. BANGING BREAKDOWN

Hobart Smith, banjo

(FROM SFW 40141, 2005; RECORDED BY FLEMING BROWN, 1963)

Hobart Smith (1897–1965) was a multi-instrumentalist from Saltville, Virginia. A lifetime musician, Smith played locally in southwest Virginia, including the well-known White Top Festival during the 1930s. Alan Lomax recorded both Smith and Gladden for the Library of Congress in 1942. He was still alive to enjoy his rediscovery during the folk revival.

Fleming Brown made this recording in 1963 in Chicago. One of Brown's students, banjo player and scholar Stephen Wade, assembled Brown's tapes for the 2005 Hobart Smith release *In Sacred Trust: The 1963 Fleming Brown Tapes*. In his notes to the album, Wade describes "Banging Breakdown" as "one of [Smith's] most recorded and crowd pleasing pieces." Smith's performance is a compelling mix of melody, foot-stomping downbeats, and punctuated tapping on the head of the banjo. The fast tempo and precise percussive articulations reflect his mastery of the instrument and his showmanship.

3. JOHNSON BOYS

Frank Proffitt, vocal and banjo

(FROM FOLKWAYS 2360, 1962; RECORDED BY SANDY PATON, 1960)

Frank Proffitt (1913–65) was from the Beech Mountain area of North Carolina. A number of his relatives performed the old ballads and maintained the tradition of the "Jack tales." Proffitt learned many of his songs from family, including the local murder ballad "Tom Dooley." His mother, who taught him the song, claimed she had known personally both Tom Dooley and Laura Foster, the song's two main figures. In 1938, folklorist Frank Warner met Proffitt and started collecting songs from him, including "Tom Dooley." The Kingston Trio recorded the

song, which is often credited with kicking off the "folk music boom" of the 1950s and '60s. In the 1960s, Proffitt was frequently featured at northern folk festivals and on college campuses and was recorded by Sandy Paton, resulting in albums both on Folkways and Folk Legacy Records.

Proffitt starts this piece with a line from the old murder ballad "Drowsy Sleeper" or "Silver Dagger," and then performs "Johnson Boys." Scholar Gus Meade (2002, 127) suggests the melody is an adaptation of the Irish ballad "Doran's Ass" from around 1860. It also shares melodic elements with the song "Finnegan's Wake."

4. PEACHBOTTOM CREEK

Wade Ward, banjo

(FROM FOLKWAYS 2363, 1962; RECORDED BY ERIC DAVIDSON, JULY 1961)

Wade Ward (1892–1971) was a beloved member of the musical Ward family from around the Galax-Hillsville area of Virginia. Wade, along with his older brother Crockett, his nephew Fields, and neighbor Eck Dunford, were members of the Galax string band, the Bogtrotters, renowned in the area in the 1930s and '40s. Alan Lomax recorded them for the Library of Congress in 1937, and the recordings led young folklorists to seek out the band's members in the 1950s. For many years, young music enthusiasts traveled to Galax to visit and learn from Wade.

Working primarily as a farmer, Wade played music on the side and was a frequent participant at regional festivals and fiddler's contests. Both John Cohen and Eric Davidson recorded him for Folkways (this recording was made by Davidson). In the original liner notes, Davidson describes how Ward suspected that the tune had African American origins, but since he "could not recall its proper name," he thought "Peachbottom Creek" would be an appropriate title. Peachbottom Creek flows through Grayson County, Virginia, near where Ward lived.

5. Coo Coo

Dink Roberts, vocal and banjo

(FROM SFW 40079, 1998; RECORDED BY CECELIA CONWAY, 1970S)

Dink Roberts (1894–1989) occupies a significant place as a musician who represents the banjo's ongoing multicultural legacy. Cece Conway and Scott Odell, in their liner notes to *Black Banjo Songsters*, cite Dink's description of the contexts in which he would play music: "three nights a week for Blacks, three nights a week for Whites" (p. 4). In her book *African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia*, Conway also describes the complexities of her relationship with Roberts as the two were "separated in culture and experience by age, race, ethnicity, class, education, and gender. I was young, white, middle-class, college-educated, and female. Our communication sometimes faltered. I wish I'd known the questions I'd like to ask him now. But we were southerners, and we did talk. I'm thankful we had a chance to be together" (Conway 1995, xxii).

During a session at his home, Conway writes in the notes (p. 5), "Dink began to sing the words to the 'Coo Coo,' unperturbed that his wife Lily was chatting with musician Tommy Thompson...across the room while I was recording. At the end of this performance he sang, 'Who's gonna' do your loving when I'm gone?' And then for emphasis he spoke the gal's answer, 'I don't know who's gonna' do it.' Tommy's quick laughter on the recording indicates that Dink's wit was not missed."

6. JOSH THOMAS'S ROUSTABOUT

Mike Seeger, vocal and banjo

(FROM SFW 40107, 1998; RECORDED 1997)

A musician and member of the New Lost City Ramblers, Mike Seeger (1933–2009) was one of the more prolific recording artists on the Folkways label. Seeger also was involved in the field

recording and production of albums by the McGee Brothers, Kilby Snow, the Stoneman Family, Dock Boggs, Elizabeth Cotten, and others. Seeger's long career as a performer and as a documenter of American music enabled him to become proficient at numerous instruments. He was one of the nation's authorities on American vernacular music and in the last years before his passing, he began to record new collections of his music for Smithsonian Folkways.

One of these, in 1997, was *Southern Banjo Sounds*, showcasing the different kinds of banjos he owned and the styles they represented. In his liner notes he commented that Josh Thomas's "Roustabout" was in "an African-Virginian style I've heard only from one remarkable player, Josh Thomas of Hollins, Virginia, near Roanoke. I'm indebted to Cliff Endres, who shared three hours of recordings he made of Thomas in 1970, when Thomas was about 80. This piece is a 19th-century African-American banjo song becoming the blues" (p. 9).

7. JAW BONE

Willie Chapman, banjo

(FROM SFW 40077, 1996/FOLKWAYS 2317, 1960; RECORDED BY JOHN COHEN, 1959)

When John Cohen traveled to eastern Kentucky to record local musicians in 1959, one of his "finds" was banjo player Willie Chapman. Chapman was from Lothair, near Hazard, and was a retired coal miner. In his liner notes, Cohen described Chapman as a "two-finger style" player who was "in love with the banjo tunes" (p. 26). Cohen also explained that aspects of Chapman's playing (and those of his contemporaries) reflected the blending of Afro- and Anglo-American traditions and that "[c]ertain banjo styles also were derived from 19th-century Minstrel shows and Medicine shows" (p. 8). Cohen identifies Chapman's "Jaw Bone" as representative of this distinct blending of banjo styles.

Additional recordings of Chapman are in the John Cohen Folk Music of Kentucky collection (AFS 1960/006) at the Library of Congress.

8. BRIGHT SUNNY SOUTH

Dock Boggs, vocal and banjo

(FROM SFW 40108, 1998/FOLKWAYS 2351, 1964; RECORDED BY MIKE SEEGER, DECEMBER 14, 1963)

Moran Lee "Dock" Boggs (1898–1971) was from the coal-mining town of Norton in the Virginia panhandle. After recording for Brunswick Records in the late 1920s, Boggs had hoped for a music career that might help him avoid a life in the mines. Instead, he worked as a miner most of his life, retiring in 1952. He was rediscovered by Mike Seeger in the 1960s and played various folk festivals including the 1963 Newport Folk Festival and the 1969 Festival of American Folklife. In 1963 Seeger conducted extensive interviews with Boggs, excerpts of which were published on Folkways 5458 (Jeff Place, from notes to SFW 40090).

"Bright Sunny South" shares multiple musical and lyrical links with several 19th-century songs and 20th-century variants. For example, Gus Meade (et al.) points to sources such as "Sweet Sunny South" by W. L. Bloomfield (1853) and lyrics found in *Buckley's New Orleans Serenaders Song Book For the Parlour* (Meade et al. 2002, 343). Boggs's version, which he learned from his brother-in-law Lee Hunsucker in the 1920s or '30s (Seeger, notes to SFW 40108), may evoke sentiments to an evolving southern identity after the American Civil War, although it is not as explicit as the 1918 version in John Harrington Cox's *Folk-Songs of the South* (1925, 280).

9. COAL CREEK MARCH

Pete Steele, banjo

(FROM FOLKWAYS 3828, 1958; RECORDED BY ED KAHN AND ART ROSENBAUM, 1957)

Pete Steele (1891–1985) was an exemplary banjo player from Kentucky. He spent 18 years working as a miner before ill health made him look for new ways to support his family. In the 1930s he relocated to Hamilton, Ohio, where he lived for most of his remaining years, working

in various jobs. In 1938, he recorded songs for Alan Lomax and the Library of Congress, one of which was "Coal Creek March." Because of the strength of his recordings for the Library, music enthusiasts in the 1950s and '60s began searching for Steele to learn about his music and playing technique. One visitor was the late folklorist Ed Kahn, who recorded Steele for a 1957 Folkways album. More recently, Stephen Wade has dedicated an entire chapter to exploring Steele's life, music, and this tune in his book *The Beautiful Music All Around Us: Field Recordings and the American Experience* (University of Illinois Press, 2012). "Coal Creek March" was originally associated with the 1891 Coal Creek Rebellion in Coal Creek, Tennessee (now Lake City), where a battle ensued over the mine owner's use of convict labor.

10. MISSISSIPPI HEAVY WATER BLUES

Josh Thomas, vocal and banjo

(FROM BRI RECORDS 008, 1988; RECORDED BY CLIFFORD ENDRES, SPRING 1970)

Very little information is available about Josh Thomas (Joshua Latina Robert Thomas, ca. 1880s—ca. 1970s). According to Vaughan Webb's Blue Ridge Institute (BRI) liner notes, Thomas described himself as the son of a slave "who worked for both the railroad and the coal industry" as a teenager. At some point in his life he was "permanently blinded in a boxing match," which eventually led him to the Roanoke area where "in the late 1960s Thomas, who at the time was in his eighties, was 'discovered' by local, white teenagers and college students."

"Mississippi Heavy Water Blues" comes from Georgia bluesman Barbecue Bob Hicks (1902–31), who recorded the song for Columbia in a popular 1927 release (John Cohen, notes to SFW 40144). Thomas's flexible interpretation of the song highlights the ability of the banjo's voice to evoke the blues.

BENEATH ITS VENEER THE STORY OF THE BANJO CREATIVITY AND MUSICAL TRADITIONS

OF OLD TIME ICON, IS ONE OF ENORMOUS ADAPTATION TO MANY AROUND THE WORLD.

11. WALK LIGHT LADIES

Rufus Crisp, banjo

(FROM FOLKWAYS 2342, 1972; RECORDED BY MARGOT MAYO AND STU JAMIESON, SEPTEMBER 1946)

Rufus Crisp (1880–1956) of Allen, Kentucky, learned to play the banjo as a teenager but abandoned the instrument in his 20s; it would be more than fifteen years before he picked it up again. In 1905, he married Lwellyn "Lulu" Clark, the cousin of Margot Mayo. In the mid-1920s, Mayo's sister Gladys sent Rufus a banjo that she acquired in New York City so that Rufus could resume his playing. In her liner notes to Folkways 2342, Mayo states that "Rufus, like many of his generation in the mountains, had little formal education. And, like many of his neighbors, he never traveled far from home" (p. 1). Yet somehow Crisp managed to internalize an incredible amount of repertoire.

Mayo's liner notes describe "Walk Light Ladies" as being played in a double-C tuning (gCGCD). Crisp's performance is steady and articulate with pleasing contrasts between the low pockets of sound in the first part and a playful push to the fifth string in the second part.

12. BUCK CREEK GIRLS

Bill Cornett, vocal and banjo

(FROM SFW 40077, 1996/FOLKWAYS 2317, 1960; RECORDED BY JOHN COHEN, 1959)

The first person John Cohen recorded during his recording trip to eastern Kentucky in 1959 was Bill Cornett (1890–1959), who Cohen reports at the time was a member of the Kentucky legislature. A resident of the town of Hindman, Cornett ran a general store and was known for having written the song "Old-Age Pension Blues" (see liner notes to SFW 40077). While some reel-to-reel tapes originally owned by the family were said to be lost, Cornett's son had cassette copies, which the Field Recordings Collective released as *The Lost Recordings of Banjo Bill Cornett*.

While this recording was originally created for documentary purposes, Cornett clearly evokes the passion and excitement that would have moved people to dance.

13. GUT BUCKET BLUES

Don Vappie, banjo; Stan Joseph, drums; Richard Moten, bass; Don Suhor, clarinet; Wendell Brunious, trumpet; Steve Pistorius, piano

(FROM SFW 40118, 1999; WRITTEN BY LOUIS ARMSTRONG; RECORDED BY JOHN TYLER, 1990S)

New Orleans native Don Vappie (b. 1956) has been playing banjo since the 1970s. His use of the banjo reflects long-held New Orleans traditions as related to jazz, marching and parade music, ragtime, blues, Creole music, and Mardi Gras. Nick Spitzer and Leslie Spitz-Edson describe Vappie's evolution as a banjoist: "Out of this solo work, along with his experience on the guitar, he has developed his own style, adding solos, rolls, and trills where many traditionalists would not play them" (liner notes for SFW 40118).

Don is also part of more recent events that look to nurture awareness of the banjo's multicultural heritage. In 2005 he participated in the Black Banjo Gathering Then and Now and the 2010 Black Banjo Gathering Then and Now Reunion, both held at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. His collaborations in exploring banjo traditions include the studio project *Recapturing the Banjo* with Otis Taylor, Corey Harris, Guy Davis, Alvin Youngblood Hart, and Keb' Mo' (Telarc CD 83667).

His performance here on "Gut Bucket Blues," on a six-string banjo (a guitar neck and a banjo body), reflects his incredible range of ability as a plectrum player, soloist, and ensemble member.

14. SKYLARK / ROARING MARY

Mick Moloney, banjo; Robbie O'Connell, guitar; James Keane, accordion; Johnny McGreevy, fiddle; Jerry O'Sullivan, uilleann pipes

(FROM THE 1983 FESTIVAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLIFE, TAPE 1983-0368; RECORDED JUNE 26, 1983)

Born in Limerick, Ireland, multi-instrumentalist Mick Moloney (b.1944) has become an important champion and player of Irish traditional music both in Ireland and the United States. Over his career he has been a member of the groups the Johnstons and Emmet Spiceland and performed with many others, including Eugene O'Donnell and Seamus Egan. He has been a mentor to many young musicians and is one of the foremost scholars of Irish music. He was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship in 1999 and teaches at New York University in the Irish Studies Program.

This track features the 4-string "tenor banjo," which reached the height of its popular use in the 1920s. Later in the 20th century, it was incorporated into Irish traditional music. Moloney learned these tunes from the famous Irish accordionist Joe Cooley (1924–73); they make up two-thirds of a set that Cooley played, "The Humours of Tulla / Skylark / Roaring Mary." Cooley's version can be found on the album *Cooley*, released by Gael-Linn Records.

Moloney, with his masterful aesthetic awareness and solid technique, is one of the best living practitioners of traditional Irish music using a tenor banjo. His driving melody incorporates well-articulated triplets, one of the key forms of embellishment in traditional Irish music.

15. St. Anne's Reel / La Renfleuse Gorbeil

Ken Perlman, banjo; Bob Jones, guitar (FROM FOLKWAYS 31098, 1983; RECORDED 1983)

Ken Perlman is one of the more notable innovators of clawhammer banjo technique, repertoire, and instruction. In the 1970s and '80s, Perlman adapted his technique to fashion arrangements for playing melodic material note-for-note, as opposed to using the banjo as accompaniment for a fiddler. In addition to developing "melodic clawhammer" technique, his many books, articles, and albums also attest to his work as a folklorist and an important leader in creating learning opportunities for banjo students at banjo camps throughout North America.

Perlman's performance of the medley "St. Anne's Reel / La Renfleuse Gorbeil" reflects his well-developed skills as a melodic player. With his banjo tuned to gCGCD (and the capo on the second fret to play in D major) Perlman builds his performance with "a scaled-down version the first time through, followed by a more complex variation with lots of triplets" (Perlman, liner notes to Folkways 31098, p. 2).

16. SMOKEY MOKES

Roger Sprung, banjo; Doc Watson, guitar; Willie Locker, mandolin; Ollie Phillips, bass; Bob Thomas, drums

(FROM FOLKWAYS 2370, 1963; WRITTEN BY ABE HOLZMANN, 1899; RECORDED 1963)

Banjo player Roger Sprung (b. 1930) first recorded for Folkways during the folk revival of the early 1960s and was a frequent participant in the weekly jam sessions at Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village. Influencing many budding banjo players through these sessions, Sprung formed the Shanty Boys with Lionel Kilberg and Mike Cohen (the older brother of the New Lost City Ramblers' John Cohen).

Sprung learned to play Scruggs-style banjo in 1948, but his own style was marketed as "progressive bluegrass" because he incorporated elements of jazz and popular music into his sound. Folkways recorded five "progressive bluegrass" albums between 1963 and 1974. Sprung's arrangement of "Smokey Mokes" is based on the original sheet music but presents the melody in traditional bluegrass fashion, where each instrument plays a solo.

Sprung continues teaching and is still active at festivals such as Clifftop, West Virginia's Appalachian String Band Festival, and the Old Fiddler's Convention of Galax, Virginia.

17. GOLDEN BELL POLKA

A.L. Camp, banjo; Marjorie Michels, piano

(FROM FOLKWAYS 3525, 1965; COMPOSED AND PUBLISHED BY J.H. JENNINGS, 1894; RECORDED 1961)

Born in Covington, Georgia, Archibald L. Camp (1876–1968) grew up in Greeley, Colorado, and learned to play music from a variety of sources—fiddle from a "hired man" at the age of 10 and formal music instruction by the age of 14 (Camp, liner notes to Folkways 3525, p. 2). In the 1890s, Camp was involved with the mandolin, banjo, and guitar glee club at Colorado State College, coming under the influence of major players such as Alfred Farland, Vess Ossman, and Fred Bacon (ibid.). Between making a living in a music store, working as a musician, and teaching, Camp claimed to have been playing the banjo for over 70 years by the time of this recording (ibid.).

Part of Camp's significance to banjo history and Folkways Records resides in the fact that Camp serves as a living link to a popular form of banjo playing from the late 19th century, amidst the new waves of banjo players inspired by the folk revival of the 1950s and '60s. Keeping in mind he recorded the piece when he was in his 80s, Camp's "Golden Bell Polka" still reflects a musical precision of purpose that communicates an in-depth awareness of style, form, and technique.

18. BANJOLAND

Tony Trischka, banjo; Bill Evans, banjo

(FROM SFW 40169, 2008; RECORDED BY TOM TEDESCO, 2007)

Normally identified with bluegrass music, Tony Trischka (b. 1949) maintains an evolving appetite for the banjo. Coming to the instrument in his home state of New York, Trischka's performance trail since the 1960s includes playing with bands such as the Down City Ramblers, Cooking Country, Breakfast Special, Monroe Doctrine, Skyline, and Psychograss. Trischka, never setting limits on the banjo's potential, consistently navigates both traditional and progressive approaches to banjo music, repertoire, and technique. Bob Carlin notes that Trischka's interest in a diversity of approaches to banjo playing was nurtured at the 1988, 1990, and 1992 Tennessee Banjo Institutes: "For Tony, the Banjo Institutes pushed his music in a different direction. It was there that he originally heard British classic banjo virtuoso Chris Sands, saw African musicians up close, and was first introduced to gourd banjo visionary Scott Didlake" (2008, 11).

If A.L. Camp provides that living link to the classic banjo techniques and repertoire of the 1890s, then Tony Trischka and Bill Evans's performance of Joe Morley's "Banjoland" (published in 1919) represents a fully realized and expressive precision of the performance possibilities of that style. In a traditional ensemble arrangement with Trischka taking the lead and Evans providing accompaniment, "Banjoland" incorporates more than just melody and rhythm—it incorporates the banjo's percussiveness with a harsh rasping of the strings at the bridge and tapping the banjo's drumhead.

19. SALLY ANN

Snuffy Jenkins, banjo

(FROM SFW 40037, 1990/FOLKWAYS 2314, 1956; RECORDED BY MIKE SEEGER, 1956)

In 1956, Mike Seeger recorded and produced the first bluegrass LP, American Banjo Tunes and Songs in Scruggs Style. He wanted to illustrate the style of banjo playing commonly associated with banjo virtuoso Earl Scruggs but as performed by other musicians. Scruggs popularized the three-finger picking style that caught on with bluegrass fans and young folk song enthusiasts, and while many thought the style originated with him, it did not. One of the most important players to pre-date (and influence) Scruggs in that three-finger style was Dewitt "Snuffy" Jenkins (1908–90). In addition to Scruggs, and as a testament to Jenkins's importance, both Ralph Stanley (Rosenberg 1985) and Don Reno (liner notes to Rounder 0005) cite Snuffy as the source of their learning three-finger playing.

Coming from North Carolina, Jenkins learned his style of playing from neighbors Smith Hammett and Rex Brooks (liner notes to SFW 40037). By the 1930s, Jenkins was heard on WIS in Columbia, South Carolina, playing banjo and doing comedy with Byron Parker's Mountaineers. After Parker's death in 1949, Jenkins continued playing with long-time bandmate Homer "Pappy" Sherill (1915–2001) as the Hired Hands until Jenkins's death. For more information, consult "The Snuffy Jenkins Story" in *Bluegrass Unlimited* 2, no. 5 (November 1967).

20. LONESOME ROAD BLUES

Roni Stoneman, banjo; Eugene Cox, guitar

(FROM SFW 40037, 1990/FOLKWAYS 2314, 1956; RECORDED BY MIKE SEEGER, 1956)

Veronica "Roni" Stoneman (b. 1937) is a member of the legendary Stoneman Family. The family patriarch, Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman, was a best-selling recording artist by the 1920s.

He and his wife Hattie (see SFW 40090) created a family band with most of their 13 children, including Roni. Beginning in the 1950s, the Stoneman Family Band performed bluegrass in the Washington, D.C., area as the Blue Grass Champs and appeared in local clubs, on radio shows, and on television.

Roni Stoneman is best known as a country music personality and former cast member of the television show *Hee Haw*. Aside from her comedy, she is also a brilliant banjo player—the "first lady of banjo." "Lonesome Road Blues" (also known as "Going Down the Road Feeling Bad" or "Chilly Winds") is one of the most widespread songs in the South (Ralph Rinzler, liner notes to SFW 40029).

21. FOX CHASE

Lee Sexton, banjo

(FROM SFW 40077, 1996/FOLKWAYS 2317, 1960; RECORDED BY JOHN COHEN, 1959)

Lee Sexton (b. 1928) is one of the finest of the eastern Kentucky banjo players. Growing up in Linefork, Kentucky, Lee was influenced by many of his musical relatives; he also spent time listening to and learning from local radio shows. Sexton began performing professionally in 1941 and during his career worked with fiddler Marion Sumner (1920–1997) (see SFW 40094 and SFW 40077). Although unable to make a living in music, he continued to play during the 30 years he worked in the coal mines and can still be found playing in the Appalachian region with the Lee Sexton Band. Sexton is a recipient of the Kentucky Governor's Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts. June Appal Recordings also released a fine collection of Lee's work (JA 0080, 2001).

"Fox Chase" is a popular instrumental tune among traditional musicians. Often played on harmonica, it is one of a number of songs that allow players to imitate animal or mechanical sounds with the instrument.

22. HOP ALONG LOU

John Tyree, banjo

(FROM BRI RECORDS 001, 1978; RECORDED BY KIP LORNELL, JANUARY 13, 1977)

For John Lawson Tyree (1915–82) of Franklin County, Virginia, "Hop Along Lou" was an important piece of square dance music. In his liner notes, Kip Lornell writes that Tyree played it for square dances "in the basement of his home" as part of a local dance tradition that lasted through the early 1970s (p. 12). Tyree's father and uncle taught him the banjo, and he was also a vocalist. "Hop Along Lou" was a tune he "learned from his uncle and, although it bears a title similar to a song recorded by Tom Ashley and others, it's not the same piece" (ibid.). Tyree closes his performance with a statement that suggests something about the type of dancing people did at the time. After the wonderfully syncopated instrumental ends, Tyree proclaims, "That's an awful good piece to dance off of."

23. COTTON EYED JOE

"Big Sweet" Lewis Hairston, vocal and banjo

(FROM BRI RECORDS 001, 1978; RECORDED BY KIP LORNELL, SEPTEMBER 28, 1977)

"Big Sweet" Lewis Hairston (b. 1929) was born in McDowell County, West Virginia, but lived in Henry County, Virginia, and he was both an instrumentalist (banjo, guitar, fiddle, mandolin) and a vocalist. Kip Lornell explains in his liner notes that at the time of this recording Hairston was also a fan of bluegrass music and that he had incorporated "many Bill Monroe and Flatt and Scruggs numbers...in his repertoire" (p. 10). Hairston's robust, well-rounded voice and punctuated picking style give "Cotton Eyed Joe" a refreshing energy with its strong upbeat pulse.

24. FOGGY MOUNTAIN TOP

Ola Belle Reed, vocal and banjo; Bud Reed, guitar; Kevin Roth, dulcimer

(FROM SFW 40202, 2010/FOLKWAYS 2329, 1978; WRITTEN BY A.P. CARTER; RECORDED BY KEVIN ROTH, 1978)

Ola Belle Reed (1916–2002) learned to play the banjo at an early age and also began writing songs about her life in the mountains of North Carolina. During the Depression, she moved with her brother Alex to Rising Sun, Maryland, and performed on radio stations across the state. In 1951, together with her husband Bud, she founded the New River Ranch, a well-known and popular country music venue in Maryland. In addition to writing over 200 songs, including "High on a Mountain" and "The Leading Role," Reed was a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship Award.

"Foggy Mountain Top" is an old song from the Appalachian region. Cecil Sharp collected a version in 1916 in Carmen, North Carolina; it was first recorded by Samantha Bumgarner and Eva Davis in 1924 (Meade et al. 2002, 532). The Carter Family of Maces Springs, Virginia, had the first popular version of the song in 1929, and Ola Belle sings their lyrics. The song has also become a bluegrass standard recorded by such luminaries as Bill Monroe and Flatt and Scruggs.

25. RAMBLING HOBO

Doc Watson, banjo

(FROM SFW 40012, 1990; RECORDED MARCH 1976)

Doc Watson (1923–2012) was born in Stoney Fork Township, North Carolina (later known as Deep Gap). Arthel, nicknamed "Doc" as a teenager, was surrounded by music as a child; many of the members of his family were singers and musicians (see SFW 40012). In 1960, when Ralph Rinzler traveled to Virginia to record Clarence Ashley, he encountered Watson for the first time. Thrilled by his discovery, he went on to manage Watson and introduce him to concert

and nightclub audiences around the country. Beginning in 1961, Rinzler produced Doc's first albums for Folkways, starting with the project *Old Time Music at Clarence Ashley's* (Smithsonian Folkways 40029). Over the next 40 years, Watson achieved the status of one of the finest acoustic guitarists alive and was awarded numerous honors, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences in 2004.

In 1976, as part of an interview with British folklorist A. L. Lloyd, Watson played this piece, which he referred to as the first banjo tune he learned, in 1934. He got the song from Baxter Kendall.

26. OLD RATTLER

John Snipes, vocal and banjo

(FROM SFW 40079, 1998; RECORDED BY CECELIA CONWAY, 1970S)

John Snipes of Orange County, North Carolina, spent much of his life farming. He and several of his siblings played music, inheriting traditions from those they encountered in and around their home and community. Snipes learned repertoire from musicians such as Dave Alston (an elderly neighbor), Will Baldwin (a tenant farmer), and Duke Mason (a medicine show performer). He became "a marathon dance musician, especially on favorite occasions like the Fourth of July" and could play "at breakneck speed for as long as an hour for sets or buck dancers" (liner notes to SFW 40079). Having learned "Old Rattler" (or "Fox Chase") from Duke Mason, Snipes evokes the sounds of a dog chasing the fox. In his interpretation of "Old Rattler," Snipes's performance shares a kinship with other musicians who played versions of this song such as DeFord Bailey, Uncle Dave Macon, and Gid Tanner.

27. GEORGIA BUCK

Elizabeth Cotten, vocal and banjo

(FROM SFW 40009, 1989/FOLKWAYS 3526, 1958; RECORDED BY MIKE SEEGER, 1957-58)

Elizabeth "Libba" Cotten (formerly Elizabeth Nevills) (1895–1987) was born in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She lived in North Carolina, Washington, D.C., and New York City; in 1940 Cotten settled in Washington, D.C. By 1946, she was working at Lansburgh's department store and had not played guitar in years. After returning a lost child, Peggy Seeger, to her mother in the store, Libba was hired by the Seeger family as a housekeeper.

Living in the Seeger household gave Libba the opportunity to resume her interest in music. Her first recording, made by Mike Seeger at her home in 1957, became her first Folkways album (SFW 40009). She began to play concerts and folk festivals—among them the Newport Folk Festival, Philadelphia Folk Festival, University of Chicago Folk Festival, and the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife—and became one of the beloved figures of the folk revival. During her long life she also received many honors, including a GRAMMY award, a GRAMMY nomination, and a National Heritage Fellowship Award from the National Endowment for the Arts. She composed a number of well-known songs, including "Freight Train," "Shake Sugaree," and "Babe, It Ain't No Lie." She spent her last nine years living in Syracuse, New York.

"Georgia Buck" is frequently played in the Appalachian and Piedmont areas of the South. The song itself seems to have been in the region for some time, as Cecil Sharp collected a version as early as 1916 in Dewey, Virginia.



28. I WISH TO THE LORD I'D NEVER BEEN BORN

Irvin Cook, vocal and banjo; Leonard Bowles, fiddle

(FROM BRI RECORDS 001, 1978; RECORDED BY KIP LORNELL, OCTOBER 10, 1976)

Irvin Cook (b. 1924) of Henry County, Virginia, learned to play his two-finger style of banjo picking from his father. Kip Lornell notes that "I Wish to the Lord I'd Never Been Born" represents a thematic variation of several other mid-1920s versions of songs such as "The Longest Train I Ever Saw" and "Been To The East, Been To The West" (liner notes, p.7). Lornell explains, "Cook and Bowles said they learned this tune from local blacks during the 1940s. The reference to 'old black Annie' in stanza four is unique and may stem from local black sources…" (ibid.).

Cook often played music with local fiddler Leonard Bowles (1919–2005). In this song, Cook delivers the lyrics with a veritable sincerity, while his banjo and Bowles's grinding fiddle form a groove that makes the performance invigorating as both a song and a dance piece.

29. BLACK EYE SUSIE

Roscoe Holcomb, vocal and banjo

(FROM SFW 40144, 2003; RECORDED BY JOHN COHEN, 1963)

Roscoe Holcomb (1911–81) has "attained legendary status as a hard-hitting singer and banjo player although he has never been widely known" (John Cohen, liner notes to SFW 40104). Living most of his life around Daisy, Kentucky, Holcomb worked as a miner and at a lumber mill. His music was a combination of Kentucky mountain music, songs from the church, and African American blues, all of which he learned from the people around him as well as through recordings. Known for his heartfelt singing, Holcomb performed at folk festivals in the 1960s, was the subject of John Cohen's film *High Lonesome Sound*, and received a GRAMMY nomination in 1965 for the album of the same name.

"Black Eye Susie" is a popular old-time song that has been frequently performed and recorded over the years. Gid Tanner and Riley Puckett, of north Georgia, first recorded the song in 1924 (Meade et al. 2002, 517).

30. BLUEGRASS BREAKDOWN

Bill Keith with Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys: Bill (Brad) Keith, banjo; Bill Monroe, mandolin;
Peter Rowan, guitar; Tex Logan, fiddle; Everett Lilly, bass

(FROM SFW 40063, 1993; WRITTEN BY BILL MONROE; RECORDED BY RALPH RINZLER, OCTOBER 31, 1964)

Bill Monroe (1911–96) is the founder of bluegrass music, a distinct musical genre named after Monroe's band, the Blue Grass Boys. Except for Monroe, the Blue Grass Boys changed personnel frequently over the years, which many times caused a change in the sound of Monroe's music—and the style of the banjo player often made the most difference. The evolution is apparent when comparing the early sound of Stringbean's plucking banjo to Earl Scruggs's revolutionary three-finger style. One of players who influenced the Blue Grass Boys' sound was banjo player Bill Keith (b. 1939). While in the group, Monroe called Keith "Brad" because, as he said, "there couldn't be two Bills in the band."

Keith, a Boston-area native, came out of the urban folk song revival and local bluegrass bands. Urban folklorist and musician Ralph Rinzler had strong ties to the revival, and during Rinzler's tenure as Monroe's manager in the early 1960s, a number of northeastern musicians became Blue Grass Boys—Keith being the first (others included Richard Greene and Peter Rowan).

"Bluegrass Breakdown" is one of a number of instrumental Monroe compositions that showcase the virtuosity of the band members. In this context, Keith demonstrates his uniqueness—a "Keith style"—to the group, which maintained many of the elements innovated by Scruggs but was more melodic, following some of the contours typically heard on the fiddle and lending a more improvisatory feeling to the sound.

References Cited

Carlin, Bob. 2007. The Birth of the Banjo: Joel Walker Sweeney and Early Minstrelsy. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company.

Cockrell, Dale. 1987. "Of Gospel Hymns, Minstrel Shows, and Jubilee Singers: Toward Some Black South African Musics." *American Music* 5, no. 4 (Winter): 417–32.

Conway, Cecelia. 1995. African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia: A Study of Folk Traditions. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Cox, John Harrington, ed. 1925. Folk-songs of the South. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

"Death of 'Old Joe Sweeney." 1860. Sun (Baltimore), November 1.

Epstein, Dena. 2003. Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music Through the Civil War. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Gura, Philip F., and James F. Bollman. 1999. America's Instrument: The Banjo in the Nineteenth Century. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Linn, Karen. 1991. That Half-Barbaric Twang: The Banjo in American Popular Culture. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Mahar, William J. 1988. "'Backside Albany' and Early Blackface Minstrelsy: A Contextual Study of America's First Blackface Song." American Music 6, no. 1 (Spring): 1-27.

Mazow, Leo G. 2005. Picturing the Banjo. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Meade, Guthrie T., Richard Keith Spottswood, and Douglas Shannon Meade. 2002. Country Music Sources: A Biblio-Discography of Commercially Recorded Traditional Music. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Miller, Karl Hagstrom. 2010. Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Nathan, Hans. 1962. Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Price, Richard, and Sally Price. 1979. "John Gabriel Stedman's Collection of 18th-century Artifacts from Suriname." *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 53, nos. 3–4 (June): 121–39.

Roxworthy, Emily. 2008. The Spectacle of Japanese American Trauma. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Sandoval, Alonso de. 1627. De instauranda Aethiopum salute. Reprinted in Treatise on Slavery: Selections from De Instauranda Aethiopum Salute. Edited and translated, with an introduction, by Nicole von Germeten. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

Shames, Susan P. 2010. The Old Plantation: The Artist Revealed. Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Sloane, Hans. 1707. A Voyage to the Islands of Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica.... London: Printed by B.M. for the Author.

"The Spy." 1736. "Utopia, April 10." The New-York Weekly Journal, March 7. 1-2.

Winans, Robert B., and Elias J. Kaufman. 1994. "Minstrel and Classic Banjo: American and English Connections." *American Music* 12, no. 1 (Spring): 1–30.

Credits

Recordings made by Folkways Records, BRI Records, and at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife 1971–1983. The Festival recordings have been preserved and digitized thanks to a grant from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

Compiled and annotated by Greg C. Adams and Jeff Place

Mastered by Pete Reiniger

Cover photo, pp. 4, 15, 22-23, and 36 courtesy of Jim Bollman Collection; p. 8 courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division; sheet music courtesy of Greg Adams.

Executive producers: Daniel E. Sheehy and D. A. Sonneborn

Production managed by Mary Monseur

Edited by Carla Borden

Art direction, design, and layout by Joe Parisi (flooddesign.com)

Additional Smithsonian Folkways staff: Richard James Burgess, director of marketing and sales; Betty Derbyshire, director of financial operations; Laura Dion, sales and marketing; Toby Dodds, technology director; Claudia Foronda, customer service; Henri Goodson, financial assistant; Emily Hilliard, fulfillment; Meredith Holmgren, web production specialist; David Horgan, online marketing specialist; Helen Lindsay, customer service; Keisha Martin, manufacturing coordinator; Margot Nassau, licensing and royalties; Jeff Place, archivist; Ronnie Simpkins, audio specialist; John Smith, sales and marketing; Stephanie Smith, archivist; Jonathan Wright, fulfillment.

Special thanks to:

Kristina Ackerman, Barbara Adams, Maggie Corfield-Adams, Eli Kaufman, Steve Lorenz, Kip Lornell, Jack Manischewitz, Katie Ortiz, Shlomo Pestcoe, Ashok Raife, Anthony Seeger, Ronnie Simpkins, Max Smith, Barbara Taylor, Stephen Wade, Bob Winans, and members of the website www.classic-banjo.ning.com

ABOUT SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is the nonprofit record label of the Smithsonian Institution, the national museum of the United States. Our mission is the legacy of Moses Asch, who founded Folkways Records in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. The Smithsonian acquired Folkways from the Asch estate in 1987, and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings has continued the Folkways tradition by supporting the work of traditional artists and expressing a commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding among peoples through the documentation, preservation, and dissemination of sound.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Folkways, Collector, Cook, Dyer-Bennet, Fast Folk, Mickey Hart Collection, Monitor, M.O.R.E., and Paredon recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Mail Order Washington, DC 20560-0520 Phone: (800) 410-9815 or 888-FOLKWAYS (orders only) Fax: (800) 853-9511 (orders only)

To purchase online, or for further information about Smithsonian Folkways Recordings go to: www.folkways.si.edu. Please send comments, questions, and catalogue requests to smithsonianfolkways@si.edu.



CLASSIC BANJO

SFW CD 40209 PC2013 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings Washington DC 20560-0520 www.folkways.si.edu Smithsonian Folkways

SFW CD 40209 PC 2013 Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

The banjo is a "bigger than life" ins	trument, a symbol of deep southern American heritage. At the same
ime, beneath its veneer of old-time ico	n, the story of the banjo is one of enormous creativity and adaptation
o many musical traditions around the v	orldfrom Africa, to the Caribbean, to North America, to Europe, and
beyond. In Classic Banjo from Smiths	onian Folkways, banjo connoisseurs Greg Adams and Jeff Place cul
o gems of banjo artistry from more that	n 300 albums in the Folkways collections, offering a gateway into the
leep and varied veins of banjo history.	64 minutes, 44-page booklet with extensive notes and photos.
1 PETE SEEGER	16 ROGER SPRUNG

1.	I LIL JLLULK		10. ROULE STRONG	
	Fly Around My Blue-Eyed Girl/	2:35	Smokey Mokes	2:21
	Cripple Creek/Ida Red/Old Joe Clark		17. A.L. CAMP	
2.	HOBART SMITH		Golden Bell Polka	2:25
	Banging Breakdown	1:17	18. TONY TRISCHKA WITH BILL EVANS	
3.	FRANK PROFFITT		Banjoland	3:00
	Johnson Boys	1:41	19. SNUFFY JENKINS	16:01
4.	WADE WARD		Sally Ann	1:10
	Peachbottom Creek	1:24	20. RONI STONEMAN	
5.	DINK ROBERTS		Lonesome Road Blues	1:12
	Coo Coo	2:10	21. LEE SEXTON	
6.	MIKE SEEGER		Fox Chase	0:56
	Josh Thomas's Roustabout	2:38	22. JOHN TYREE	
7.	WILLIE CHAPMAN		Hop Along Lou	1:08
	Jaw Bone	0:52	23. "BIG SWEET" LEWIS HAIRSTON	
8.	DOCK BOGGS		Cotton Eyed Joe	1:23
	Bright Sunny South	3:36	24. OLA BELLE REED	
9.	PETE STEELE		Foggy Mountain Top	2:29
	Coal Creek March	1:52	25. Doc Watson	
0.	JOSH THOMAS		Rambling Hobo	1:37
	Mississippi Heavy Water Blues	3:37	26. JOHN SNIPES	
1.	RUFUS CRISP		Old Rattler	2:46
	Walk Light Ladies	1:28	27. ELIZABETH COTTEN	
2.	BILL CORNETT		Georgia Buck	1:42
	Buck Creek Girls	1:00	28. IRVIN COOK	
3.	DON VAPPIE		I Wish to the Lord I'd Never Been Born	3:07
	Gut Bucket Blues	4:15	29. ROSCOE HOLCOMB	1
4.	MICK MOLONEY		Black Eye Susie	1:24
	Skylark / Roaring Mary	3:24	30. BILL KEITH WITH BILL MONROE	
5.	Ken Perlman		AND THE BLUE GRASS BOYS	
N	St. Anne's Reel/La Renfleuse Gorbeil	2:50	Bluegrass Breakdown	3:09







COMPILED AND ANNOTATED BY GREG C. ADAMS AND JEFF PLACE

(C) 9628)



