



Smithsonian  
Folkways

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 7300  
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sings for children  
**lead belly**



Smithsonian Folkways

# lead belly sings for children



This new collection features delightful songs for young children as well as the work songs, blues, and spirituals Lead Belly used to teach children about the experiences and emotions of adult life. Originally recorded in children's concerts and studios for Asch and Folkways Records in the 1940s, the 28 songs and spoken introductions reveal the humor, humanity, and musical genius of one of the great artists of the twentieth century. Essential listening for all ages. 62 minutes. 28 page booklet.

1. More Yet 1:02
2. Boll Weevil 3:39
3. Little Boy, How Old Are You? 0:55
4. Skip to My Lou 2:11
5. Red Bird 2:54
6. Sally Walker 2:39
7. Ha Ha This A-Way 1:34
8. Grey Goose 1:24
9. Christmas Is A-Coming 1:04
10. Blue-Tailed Fly (Jimmie, Crack Corn) 2:17
11. Polly Wee (The Frog Song) 1:12
12. Pig Latin Song 1:35
13. When a Man's a Long Way from Home 2:56
14. Good Morning Blues 2:11
15. By and By When the Morning Comes 1:53
16. Every Time I Feel the Spirit  
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot  
They Hung Him on the Cross 3:22
17. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot 1:02
18. Rock Island Line 1:32
19. Cotton Fields 2:06
20. Old Man 2:35
21. John Henry 4:00
22. Julie Ann Johnson 2:51
23. Whoa Back Buck 2:09
24. You Can't Lose Me, Cholly 2:36
25. Midnight Special 2:01
26. Pick a Bale of Cotton 1:30
27. Take This Hammer 2:51
28. We're in the Same Boat, Brother 2:37



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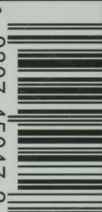
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FOLKWAYS



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# lead belly sings for children

reissue of *Negro Folk Songs for Young People, Folkways 7533 (1960), with additional tracks recorded by Moses Asch in New York, 1941-1948*

All songs written or arranged by Huddie Ledbetter/TRO-Folkways Music Inc., BMI, unless otherwise indicated by \*.

1. **More Yet** 1:02
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(Yip Harburg-Earl Robinson)

American folk singer Lead Belly (1888-1949) was a walking, talking, singing storehouse of American music and one of the most important folk musicians of this century. Over the sixty years of his life he collected, by his estimation, five hundred songs in his head. Music just came pouring out from Lead Belly and his big twelve-string Stella guitar. Lead Belly performed his music for anyone who wished to hear it but particularly enjoyed playing for a young audience. If one looks at photographs from his lifetime, one not uncommonly finds Lead Belly playing for children.

When Lead Belly performed for children, he did not select a completely juvenile repertoire. Children were considered able to learn about work songs and blues, and expected to sing along on both religious and secular songs. While some of the songs on this CD are endearing nonsense songs, others are hard-hitting songs about hard times. They are all rhythmic, lively, and often graced with introductions for the children.

Lead Belly recorded for a number of record companies, both by himself and with groups like the Golden Gate Quartet, but Moses Asch, who owned Asch, Disc, and then ran Folkways Records in New York from 1948 to 1986, was the person who recorded Lead Belly's music more than anyone else. Asch

was introduced to Lead Belly by Sy Rady, a Broadway producer. The first record that Asch released of Lead Belly was *Play Parties in Song and Dance as Sung by Lead Belly* (recorded in May 1941). Five of the six songs on the three-disc album are included on this disc ("Ha Ha This A-Way," "Sally Walker," "You Can't Lose Me, Cholly," "Red Bird," and "Skip to My Lou"). Columnist Walter Winchell wrote, "How could anyone make a children's record with a convicted murderer?" In truth, Lead Belly loved children and enjoyed performing for them. Asch recalled: "One Christmas Lead Belly gave a concert for children at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It was jam-packed, children all over the place, frantic parents. But the moment he started to play and sing, the audience hushed and the children grouped around him as if it was grandfather singing for them; some sang with him, others danced. The parents were bewitched" (Moses Asch from his introduction in the *Lead Belly Songbook* [New York: Oak, 1962]).

This Smithsonian Folkways release consists of many of the different types of music that Lead Belly performed. Many of the songs in this collection come from *Negro Songs for Young People*, an LP collection that Folkways Records released in 1960. This LP included some material from a California radio program. Listening to the radio show, it was

apparent that Lead Belly used these programs to teach children about many of the musical forms he learned growing up in Louisiana. He included work songs, religious songs, blues, children's game songs, and ballads. Lead Belly's repertoire actually was wider; his performances would even venture into cowboy songs, Hawaiian songs, and popular songs of the day. One thing that can be said, though, is that Lead Belly never failed to put his own stamp on anything he played.

The songs on this recording consist of several groupings. Early in the recording you can listen to children's rhymes and game songs. Next you hear blues and spirituals, followed by work songs. Included near the end are some of Lead Belly's best-known songs like "Pick a Bale of Cotton," "Take This Hammer," and "Midnight Special." If you are interested in more information about many of the songs included here, we suggest that you investigate the song annotations included in the *Lead Belly Legacy* series on Smithsonian Folkways (40044, 40045, 40105).

Lead Belly was born Huddie Ledbetter in the town of Mooringsport, Louisiana, in January 1888. Mooringsport is a small town in northwestern Louisiana, near the Texas border and in the area around Caddo Lake. It

is a prime farming region, and Huddie's father, Wes, was a sharecropper who raised cotton. Along with his half-Cherokee mother, young Huddie helped out in the fields. Huddie became interested in music quite early in life and learned to play a number of instruments while in school. He could play mandolin, guitar, harmonica, and jew's harp, but one of his favorite instruments was his little button accordion, called a "win'jammer." Huddie started playing his win'jammer for local country dances or sukey jumps while in his teens for fifty cents a night. At these sukey jumps, Huddie was also quite taken with the guitar playing, and soon it became his instrument of choice (Wolfe and Lornell: 17). He continued to perform sukey jump tunes during his shows for the rest of his life, even dragging out the old win'jammer on occasion.

While a teenager, much to the chagrin of his parents, Huddie started hanging out on Fannin Street in nearby Shreveport. Fannin Street was known for its bad reputation, night life, and music, and Huddie's repertoire grew as he fell in among the musicians there. Later, Huddie also became acquainted with Blind Lemon Jefferson, the legendary bluesman from the area around Dallas, Texas. Jefferson was the first country blues singing star of the 1920s. Huddie acted as Jefferson's "lead boy," helping the blind man get around, and the two men entertained on the streets of

Texas towns like Dallas and played for tips on trains between stops. Huddie learned a number of songs from Jefferson.

Unfortunately, trouble tended to follow Huddie, and he spent much of his young adulthood in jail. Convicted for both attempted murder and murder on two separate occasions, he spent time in Sugarland Prison in Texas and the notorious Angola Prison in Louisiana. There are many ideas about the source of his nickname, "Lead Belly," but it is most likely a prison nickname. Some of the other prisoners in Sugarland who recorded for the Library of Congress were "Iron Head" (James Baker) and "Clear Rock" (Moses Platt), so it seems not to have been uncommon for prisoners to have nicknames. Legend has it that Lead Belly earned an early release from Sugarland Prison by composing a song for the governor of the state of Texas, Pat Neff. He later wrote "Governor O.K. Allen," which allegedly helped quicken his release from Angola Prison. It is debatable whether it was the songs themselves or good behavior that was the prime cause of his release, but the story certainly helped build the myth surrounding Huddie.

John Avery Lomax and Alan Lomax headed the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Song during the 1930s. The Lomaxes trav-

eled the country with a disc-cutting machine (an early recording device) recording folk songs for the Library's collections. One theory they had was that prisons would be good places to find older folk songs which had not been affected by the popular culture of the day. Louisiana's Angola Prison was legendary as one of the most brutal prisons in the South, and it was there that they went looking for older African-American folk songs. During their visit in July 1933 they first encountered Lead Belly. Huddie was a definite find for the Lomaxes, as here was a man who knew hundreds of folk songs, but on that July day they only had time to record eleven, returning the following July to record fifteen more.

After Lead Belly's release from Angola Prison, the Lomaxes hired him as their driver. As Lead Belly traveled with the Lomaxes, assisting them with their recording work, he learned more songs, including "Rock Island Line" from a group of prisoners in Gould, Arkansas. The Lomaxes took Lead Belly to New York, where a few small concerts were arranged. However, while in New York, Lead Belly began to meet politically active people who were involved in the New York folk song movement. Through Alan Lomax, he met people like Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Aunt Molly Jackson, Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee, and Josh White, and all

of the musicians he encountered were influenced by Lead Belly's music. Lead Belly eventually parted ways with the Lomaxes, but remained friends with Alan for the rest of his life. He settled in New York City with his bride, Martha Promise. Their apartment on East 9th Street became a hub for local musicians, and people like Woody Guthrie, Sonny Terry, and Brownie McGhee could be found there (if not in temporary residence, then playing music). During the early 1940s, Lead Belly performed on many radio shows in New York and wherever else he could find work. As his music was considered old-fashioned by the hip nightclubs in Harlem, his shows were frequently for New York's political left at concerts and union rallies.

Jazz scholar Frederic Ramsey, Jr., was attempting to find the origins of jazz in African-American song and arranged to tape Lead Belly using the open-reel tape recorder he had acquired. In 1948, when he sat down with Lead Belly, this machine was a brand new technology which allowed for recording long segments of music (including Lead Belly's narratives). The previous discs would only record a song of about four minutes or so; anything longer would need to be broken in parts. These Ramsey sessions became the legendary *Lead Belly's Last Sessions* (Smithsonian Folkways 40068). "Blue-Tailed Fly," "Pig Latin Song," and

"Polly Wee" on this recording come from Ramsey's sessions.

Lead Belly became afflicted with Lou Gehrig's disease, a disease that affects the nervous system. Over time it became harder and harder for him to play his guitar, and eventually he was unable to complete his tours. He asked Richard Dyer-Bennet to finish for him in Texas. Lead Belly died on December 6, 1949, in Bellevue Hospital in New York. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to see the success of his song "Goodnight Irene," which became a major popular hit for the Weavers within the year. During the folk revival of the ensuing years, many of his songs became American folk song standards and appeared in many children's song books.

In addition to the songs from *Negro Folk Songs for Young People* (1960) and the Asch Records collection *Play Parties in Song and Dance* (1941), we have added other children's songs that Lead Belly recorded for Moses Asch like "Cotton Fields," "Midnight Special," and "Take This Hammer." We have included lyrics for each song for ease in singing along, for these songs are meant to be sung along with, whether at school, camp, or just at home. Enjoy.

— Jeff Place, Archivist

## THE SONGS

### 1. More Yet

(Ledbetter) from *Smithsonian Folkways 40105*

This short but simple song is a wonderful example of word play, where the name "Moe Yet" is interpreted by the child's friends as "Mo[re] yet." As will be clear in his introductions, Lead Belly loves word play.

*Walking down the road,  
And I picked up a little bowl,  
And I made me a seat,  
And everybody I meet wanna know  
How many can sit on that seat.*

*Some says one, and it's more yet.  
Some says two, and it's more yet.*

*Some says three, and it's more yet.  
Some says four, and it's more yet.*

*Some says five, and it's more yet.  
Some says six, and it's more yet.*

*Some says seven, and it's more yet.  
Some says eight, and it's more yet.*

*Some says nine, and it's more yet.  
Some says ten, and it's more yet.*

*That was the end of my friend,  
And all the men that could sit on that bowl.*

*His name was More Yet,  
And his name was More Yet.  
It was More Yet, it was More Yet.*

### 2. Boll Weevil

(arr. Ledbetter) from *Folkways 7533*

The boll weevil is an insect that attacks cotton plants and destroys the crops. It entered the United States around 1890. Like many agricultural pests, it is hardy (it survives the temperature extremes in both summer and winter) and in fact drove many migrant workers from their farms.

"A blues is a feeling—and when you get the blues, it'll make some people wear out their shoes and they got the blues when they wear out their shoes and blues is the sad news. The boll weevil—I'll tell you a little story about it—which is a little bug long years ago—robbed people of their homes—and ever since the boll weevil been gone—the people been singing this song:"

*You can talk about the latest,  
The latest of your home,  
These boll weevils,  
They will rob you of a home.  
They're a-looking for a home,  
They're a-looking for a home.  
One time I seen a boll weevil,  
He was sitting on a square,  
Next time I seen the boll weevil,  
He had his whole family there.  
He was looking for a home,  
He was looking for a home.*

*The farmer take the boll weevil,  
Put him in the sand.  
Boll weevil said to the farmer,  
"You treat me just like a man,  
And I'll have a home, and I will have a home."*

"I will have a home, I will have a home." (2x)

The farmer take the boll weevil,  
Put him on the ice,  
The boll weevil said to the farmer,  
"You is treating me mighty nice,  
And I will have a home, and I will have a home."

The old lady said to the old man,  
"I been trying my level best,  
Keep these boll weevils  
Out of my brand new cotton dress.  
It's full of holes, and it's full of holes."

The old man said to the old lady,  
"What do you think of that?  
I got one of them boll weevils  
Out of my brand new Stetson hat.  
And it's full of holes, and it's full of holes.  
It is full of holes, it is full of holes,  
It is full of holes, it is full of holes."

Now the farmer, he said to the merchant,  
"I never made but one bale.  
Before I'll let you have that last one,  
I will suffer and die in jail,  
I will have a home, I will have a home."

If anyone should ask you, children,  
Who made up this song?  
Tell 'em this is Huddie Ledbetter,  
He's done been here and gone,  
He's looking for a home,  
He's looking for a home.

He's looking for a home,  
He's looking for a home. (2x)

### 3. Little Boy, How Old Are You?

(Ledbetter) from Smithsonian Folkways 40105  
This is another simple song, carried along  
on Lead Belly's rhythmic guitar.

Chorus  
Little boy, how old are you? (3x)  
I'm only three years old.

Who told you so?  
My mama told me says.

(Chorus)  
What your mama say?  
My mama tell me, too.

(Chorus)  
How'd you know it, keep up with it so long?  
'Cause I never did forget it my age was.

I'm only three years old, my mama told me  
Only three years old, my papa told me  
Only three years old.

### 4. Skip to My Lou

from Smithsonian Folkways 40045 (included on Play  
Parties in Song and Dance)

A widely sung children's song, with many  
different verses.

"When you say 'Skip to My Lou,' little children  
got to skip to their partners. This means little girls  
got to skip to the little boys, and then they gonna  
dance around the ring."

Lost my partner, skip to my Lou, (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.  
I'll get another one prettier than you, (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.

Chorus  
Hey, hey, skip to my Lou. (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.

Can't get a bluebird, a jaybird'll do, (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.  
Little red wagon, painted blue, (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.

Fly in a sugar bowl, shoo, fly, shoo, (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.  
My old shoe is torn in two, (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.

(Chorus)  
Cows in the cornfield, two by two, (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.  
Stole my partner, what'll I do, (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.

(Chorus)  
I'll get another one quicker than you, (3x)  
Skip to my Lou, my darlin'.

(Chorus)

### 5. Red Bird

(Ledbetter) from Smithsonian Folkways 40045  
(included on Play Parties in Song and Dance)

"Red Bird," "Sally Walker," and "Ha Ha  
This-A-Way" were all "play party songs"  
—that is, songs that followed the movements  
of a children's game. Lead Belly describes the  
game a little, and the original 78 rpm album  
had photographs of children dancing them.

"Now this is another children's play song and the  
children is playing and they done got warm now,  
and they're playing and what they been doing has  
got pretty good to 'em. They got a little speed up.  
Now they gonna sing, they playing in the ring,  
they singing and playing 'Red Bird Soon in the  
Morning.' As they play 'Red Bird Soon in the  
Morning,' everybody goin' round in the ring,  
nobody inside the ring and they gonna swing and  
sing this time, 'You swing my partner and I'll swing  
yours' and keep all the way 'round the ring till you  
get back home. Then you settle down. They gonna  
sing 'Red Bird'."

Red Bird soon in the morning,  
Red Bird soon in the morning. (2x)

Red Bird, Red Bird soon in the morning,  
Red Bird, Red Bird soon in the morning. (2x)

What's the matter with the Red Bird,  
Soon in the morning? (4x)

Cat got the Red Bird, soon in the morning. (3x)  
Hawk got the Red Bird, soon in the morning. (3x)

What's the matter with the Red Bird,  
Soon in the morning? (3x)

Red Bird's gone, that's soon in the morning. (3x)

## 6. Sally Walker

(arr. Ledbetter) from *Smithsonian Folkways 40044*  
(included on Play Parties in Song and Dance)  
A widespread children's game.

"Now this is another little children's play song. They gonna play, and they gonna put one inside the ring, and they all gonna be going around and they gonna sing. And this one in the ring is sitting down in a chair. They gonna give this one in the chair a hankie. And when they holler, 'Rise, Sally, rise, wipe your weeping eyes,' she's gonna rise out of the chair. And when they say, 'Fly to the east, and fly to the west, fly to the one you love the best,' she gonna fly and catch one that's going around the ring and catch him by the hand. Gonna put him in the ring, and he's gonna sit down in the chair what Sally got out of. Now here's what they gonna sing while they all go round the ring:"

*Little Sally Walker sitting in a saucer,  
Weeping and a-moaning like a turtle dove.*

*Rise, Sally, rise, wipe your weeping eyes,  
Turn to the east, turn to the west.  
Turn to the one you love the best.*

"Now it's gonna be Jimmy Walker, now that's a little boy. Don't care who get in that ring, it's gotta be Walker."

*Little Jimmy Walker sitting in a saucer,  
Weeping and a-moaning like a turtle dove.*

*Rise, Jimmy, rise, wipe your weeping eyes,  
Turn to the east, turn to the west,  
Turn to the one you love the best.*

*Little Charlie Walker sitting in a saucer...*

*Little Jenny Walker sitting in a saucer...*

*Little Wally Walker sitting in a saucer...*

## 7. Ha Ha This a-Way

(Ledbetter) from *Smithsonian Folkways 40044*  
(included on Play Parties in Song and Dance)  
Another widespread children's game.

"Now this is a little children's play song. They makes a ring, and they sing, they put one inside of the ring, and as they go around and sing, holding on to each other's hands, they'll sing, 'Ha ha this a-way' and 'ha ha that a-way,' and the one in the ring, he gonna jump that a-way. And when he jump that a-way, the others gonna jump around the ring, and he gonna jump to the one and he gonna catch one by the hand and he gonna put him in the ring. And he gonna get out in the ring with the other children and go around, and here's what they sing:"

*Chorus  
Ha ha this a-way, / Ha ha that a-way,  
Ha ha this a-way, then, oh, then.*

*When I was a little boy, little boy, little boy,  
When I was a little boy twelve years old,*

*Papa went and left me, left me, left me,  
Papa went and left me, so I was told.*

*(Chorus)*

*Mama come and got me, got me, got me,  
Mama come and got me to save my soul.*

*Mama never whupped me, whupped me,  
whupped me, / Mama never whupped me,  
so I was told.*

*(Chorus)*

*I went to school, went to school, went to school,  
I went to school when I was twelve years old.*

*I obeyed the rules, the rules, the rules,  
Obeyed the rules as I was told.*

*(Chorus)*

*I went to a teacher, teacher, teacher,  
I went to a teacher to save my soul.*

*Teacher was a preacher, preacher, preacher,  
Teacher was a preacher, so I was told.*

*(Chorus)*

*I learned my lesson, lesson, lesson,  
Learned my lesson, to save my soul.*

*Wasn't that a blessin', blessin', blessin',  
Wasn't that a blessin', so I was told.*

*(Chorus)*

## 8. Grey Goose

(Ledbetter) from *Smithsonian Folkways 40044*

A song known to many of the prisoners in the South, this is a good sing-along number for children. Lead Belly introduces the story, and then sings it.

"Now this is the 'Grey Goose.' Down in my home, people go to church on a Sunday. A Baptist church—and they had a preacher which was a pastor of that church. Instead of he going to church that Sunday, he went out and tried to kill a grey goose, and the goose is still laughing at him."

*One Sunday mornin', Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.  
Preacher went a-huntin', Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.  
He carried 'long his shotgun, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.  
'Long come a grey goose, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.  
Gun went "a-boo-loo!", Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.  
Down come the grey goose, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.  
He was six weeks a-fallin', Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.  
He was six weeks a-haulin', Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.  
Then my wife an' yo' wife, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.*

*Give a feather-pickin', Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.  
They was six weeks a-pickin'  
Put him in a parboil.*

*He was six weeks a-fallin',  
And they put him on a table,  
And the fork couldn't stick him,  
And a knife wouldn't cut him,  
Then they throwed him in the hog bin,  
And the hog couldn't eat him,  
And he broke the hog's teeth out.  
And they put him in the sawmill,  
And the saw couldn't cut him,  
And he broke the saw's teeth out.  
Last time I see him, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd,  
Flyin' cross the ocean, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd,  
With a long thing of goslings, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd,  
And the hog went quack-quack, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd.*

## 9. Christmas Is a-Coming

(Ledbetter) from Folkways 7533

(also known as "Chicken Crowing for Midnight";  
"Almost Day"; and "Rooster Crowing for Midnight")

Another children's play song that is filled with the anticipation and excitement of Christmas.

"This is a children's play song on a Christmas night when they're looking for the Santa Claus to come. When they're looking for the Santa Claus to come, well, you know children stay up all day and all night and at midnight they get out in the yard and play 'Moonshine Tonight,' and the chickens be crowing for midnight and the children gonna make a ring and play, and here's what they sing while they play. Waiting for the Santa Claus to come."

*Christmas is a comin' and it's a jumpin'. (3x)*  
*Boys, it won't be long.*

*Chicken crows at midnight on a Christmas Day.*  
*Rooster crows at midnight on a Christmas Day.*

*Children get so happy on a Christmas Day. (2x)*  
*Santa Claus a-comin' and he's a-comin', (3x)*  
*Boys, it won't be long.*

*Santa Claus comes on a Christmas Day. (2x)*  
*Children run and shout to pappy on a Christmas Day. (2x)*

*Little children get so happy on a Christmas Day. (2x)*

## 10. Blue-Tailed Fly (Jimmie, Crack Corn)

from Smithsonian Folkways 40068

This is a classic song that has been interpreted many times in many ways.

Chorus

*Jimmie, crack corn, and I don't care. (3x)*  
*Jimmie, crack corn, and I don't care,*  
*My masta's gone away.*

*Rod-a, he ride him and he jumped a ditch.*  
*He ride-a, he rode him, and the pony did pitch.*  
*The pony, he felt a little bit shy,*  
*'Cause he's bitten by that blue-tailed fly.*

(Chorus)

*When I went down in Louisiana,*  
*I stayed a little while in Texarkana.*  
*Every once in a while, I felt a little bit shy,*  
*'Cause I was bitten by that blue-tailed fly.*

(Chorus)

*I was on my way to Shreveport, Louisiana,*  
*Then I stopped out in Caspiana.*  
*And I felt a little bit shy,*  
*'Cause I was bitten by that blue-tailed fly.*

(Chorus)

*When I was drivin' along in my car*  
*I was stoppin' most anywhere.*  
*Once in while I look up in the sky,*  
*'Cause I was bitten by that blue-tailed fly.*

(Chorus)

*Once in a while I do a little bit o' dance.*  
*And some of the people come around and says,*  
*"Will you allow me a little chance?"*  
*But every once in a while I feel a little bit shy,*  
*'Cause I was bitten by that blue-tailed fly.*

(Chorus) (2x)

## 11. Polly Wee (The Frog Song)

(Ledbetter) from Smithsonian Folkways 40068

This is a song about two frogs talking to one another in a pond. For a good recording of what frogs actually sound like, try *Sounds of North American Frogs* (SF 45060), narrated by Charles M. Bogert.

"Here's a little number, it's frogs. Down home these frogs in the millpond sure do talk to one another. You wouldn't know what they were saying, but I'm giving you an idea of what they were saying. This is a he-frog and a she-frog, up on a log. They're talking to one another. Folks say down home, I guess they're courting, and he gonna talk to her and she gonna talk to him. This is what they be sayin';"

Chorus

*Polly, Polly, Polly-Wee (4x)*  
*Polly, Yolla, Yolla, Yolla/Polly, Yolla, Yolla*  
*Polly Wee, Polly Wee, Polly Wee.*

*Like her mighty well. (4x)*  
*Polly, Yolla, Yolla, Yolla/Polly, Yolla, Yolla*  
*Polly Wee, Polly Wee, Polly Wee.*

*And I can tell, (2x)*

*Baby, I can tell. (2x)*  
*Polly, Yolla, Yolla, Yolla/Polly, Yolla, Yolla*  
*Polly Wee, Polly Wee, Polly Wee.*

(Chorus)

*I don't know/Baby, I don't know,*  
*And that ain't so. (2x)*  
*Polly, Yolla, Yolla, Yolla/Polly, Yolla, Yolla*  
*Polly Wee, Polly Wee, Polly Wee.*

## 12. Pig Latin Song

(Ledbetter) from Smithsonian Folkways 40068

At one time pig Latin (called "dog Latin" in the South) was very popular as a kind of children's secret language. It has nothing to do with Latin. Words are transformed by taking the first consonant and putting it at the end of the word, adding "ay" to it. Thus "you" becomes "ou-yay." "Come here" becomes "Ome-cay ere-hay." This must be one of the few songs totally in pig Latin.

"I'm gonna do a number in pig Latin.... Down home they call it 'dog Latin,' but up here they call it 'pig Latin.' You go down home and say 'pig Latin,' people wouldn't know what you are talking about. If you say 'dog Latin,' they know just exactly what you are talking about. Now I'm gonna sing this in pig Latin, but I am going to tell you exactly what I am going to sing to you before I sing so you can get it. I'm gonna say 'Come here' in pig Latin. I'm gonna say, 'Come here, I got something to tell you that you ought to know. Come here, I got something to tell you that you ought to know.' I'm gonna sing it to you in pig Latin."

*Ome-cay, ere-hay, ome-cay, ere-hay*  
*Et-lay, e-may, ell-tay, ou-yay*  
*Omething-say, at-thay, ou-yay, ought-ay,*  
*o-tay, ow-knay*  
*(repeat)*  
*Et-lay, e-may*  
*(Repeat Ome-cay, etc., twice)*  
*Ow-knay, ow-knay.*

### 13. When a Man's a Long Way from Home

from *Folkways* 7533

(also known as "Poor Boy")

Lead Belly clearly thought that children could be introduced to the feeling of the blues, and being a long way from home is something many children can identify with. This version incorporates the guitar part of Lead Belly's well-known song, "Fannin Street (Mr. Tom Hughes' Town)."

"Now I'm going to sing you the blues, 'When a Man's a Long Way from Home,' and he's a stranger in a town and that brings the boogie-woogie about—which is where the boogie-woogie comes from right now, I'm going to show you where it comes from—I've been playing it for 35 years."

*I'm a poor boy and I'm a stranger  
Blowed in your town, yes I am,  
I'm a poor boy and I'm a stranger  
Blowed in your town. (2x)  
I'm going where a friend can be found.*

*I'm a poor boy and I'm a great long  
Way from home, yes I am,  
I'm a poor boy and I'm a great long  
Way from home. (2x)  
Can't get nobody to go on the bus.*

*I'm gonna sing this verse and  
I won't sing it no more,  
I'm gonna sing this verse and  
I won't sing no more. (2x)  
I'm going back to Chicago.*

### 14. Good Morning Blues

(arr. Ledbetter) from *Folkways* 7533

(with Kid Ory's Creole Band)

Lead Belly frequently called this his favorite blues, and he sang it for all ages.

"Now I tell you about the blues. All Negroes like blues. Why? Because they was born with the blues. And now everybody have the blues. Sometimes, they don't know what it is. But when you lay down at night, turn from one side of the bed all night to the other and you can't sleep, what's the matter? Blues has got you. Or when you get up in the mornin', sit on the side of the bed, may have a mother or father, sister or brother, boyfriend or girlfriend, husband or wife around. You don't want no talk out of 'em. They ain't done you nothin', you ain't done them nothin'. What's the matter? Blues got you. Well, you get up and shove your feet down under the table and look down in your place, may have chicken and rice, take my advice, you walk away and shake your head, you say 'Lord have mercy. I can't eat. I can't sleep.' What's the matter? Why, the blues got you. They want to talk to you. You got to tell 'em something."

*Good mornin' blues, good...how do you do? (2x)  
I'm doin' all right, good mornin'—how are you?  
I laid down last night, turning from side to side,  
Yes, I was turning from side to side,  
I was not sleepin'—I was just dissatisfied,  
Yes I was.*

*When I got up this mornin',  
The blues walkin' 'round my bed,  
Yes, blues walkin' 'round my bed,  
I went to eat my breakfast and the  
Blues was all in my bread.*

*Blues, you're drivin' me crazy,  
What're you gonna do?  
Oh, what're you gonna do?  
I ain't got nobody to take my little troubles to.*

*I sent for you yesterday, baby, here ya  
Come a-walkin' today,  
Yes, and here ya come a-walkin' today.  
You got you mouth wide open and  
You don't know what to say.*

*I got a new way to spell it.  
It was Tennessee, go ahead, spell it!  
Yeah, spellin' it was Tennessee,  
Spell it for the children!  
Double E, double T, double NXYZ.*

### 15. By and By When the Morning Comes

from *Folkways* 7533

Lead Belly had a large repertoire of religious songs as well as secular ones. As is the case with many African-American church songs, the words and sentiments make sense outside of church as well as within a religious context.

"Now we going to sing 'By and By When the Morning Comes.' Now what this is—we're in the same boat, brother—we live together and we sing together and that's the way to keep peace. Now we going to sing 'By and By' so you come right with me—I'm going to sing the chorus first."

*Oh, by and by when the mornin' comes,  
All the saints of God is gatherin' home,  
We will tell this story, how we'll overcome,  
We will understand it better by and by.*

### 16. Every Time I Feel the Spirit

from *Folkways* 7533

As a way of introducing different religious songs to the children, Lead Belly identifies three denominations with a song he thought was characteristic of them.

"Methodist people—they got their own way to sing if I have to say, and they sing:"

*Every time I feel the spirit movin' in my heart,  
I will pray. (4x)*

### Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

"Now the Baptist people they come along and they sing:"

*Chorus  
Swing low, sweet chariot,  
Comin' for to carry me home. (2x)  
I looked over yonder far as I could see,  
Comin' for to carry me home  
It's a band of angels comin' after me,  
Comin' for to carry me home.  
(Chorus)*

### They Hung Him on the Cross

(Ledbetter) from *Folkways* 7533

(also known as "He Never Said a Mumbling Word")

"Well, you know the Holy Ghost people got their own way today, if I have to say, and they sing:"

*They hung Him on a cross, they hung Him on a cross,  
They hung Him on a cross for me.*

*One day when I was lost, they hung Him on a cross,  
They hung Him on a cross for me.*

*They speared Him in the side, they speared Him  
in the side,/They speared Him in the side for me.*

*One day when I was lost, they hung Him on the  
cross,/And they speared Him in the side for me.*

*And the blood come streamin' down,  
And the blood come streamin' down,  
And the blood come streamin' down for me.*

*One day when I was lost,  
They hung Him on the cross,  
And the blood come streamin' down for me.*

*He hung His head and died, He hung His head  
and died,/He hung His head and died for me.*

*One day when I was lost, they hung Him on the  
cross,/And He hung His head and died for me.*

*He never said a mumblin' word, He never said a  
mumblin' word,/He never said a mumblin' word  
for me.*

*One day when I was lost,  
They hung Him on the cross,  
And He never said a mumblin' word for me.*

*He's comin' back again, He's comin' back  
again,/He's comin' back again for me.*

*One day when I was lost, they hung Him on  
the cross,/And He's comin' back again for me.*

## 17. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

*from Folkways 7533*

Here Lead Belly takes a popular spiritual  
and has the children sing along.

*Chorus*

*Swing low, sweet chariot,  
A-comin' for to carry me home. (4x)*

*I looked over yonder far as I could see, a-comin'  
for to carry me home*

*It's a band of angels comin' after me, a-comin' for  
to carry me home.*

*(Chorus)*

## 18. Rock Island Line

*(arr. Ledbetter) from Folkways 7533*

This is a song identified with Lead Belly and  
is one he learned from some Arkansas pris-  
oners while traveling with the Lomaxes. It  
has become one of his most famous songs.  
He often told the story of how an engineer,  
using his whistle to communicate with a  
switchman, fools the switchman into letting  
him through.

"Now this is 'Rock Island Line.' These boys is cut-  
tin' with pole axes. A man's cutting right-handed.  
He's standing on the opposite side of the other  
man. The other man cut left-handed. He's stand-  
ing the other side. And these boys gonna sing  
about that Rock Island line, which is a mighty  
good road to ride. And in that road the man  
gonna talk to the depot agent when he's comin'  
out to cut with that Rock Island line freight train  
coming back from Moline this a-way. That man

blows his whistle down there different than men  
blow whistles here. 'Cause he talk to that depot  
agent and he's gonna tell him something. When  
that switch falls over the line, that means for that  
freight train to go into the hole. Man's gonna talk  
to him, 'I got goats, I got sheep, I got holes, I got  
cows, I got horses, I got all livestock, I got all  
livestock.' Depot agent let him get by. When he  
get by, he go iron!—he gonna tell 'em—he's  
goin' on now: I fooled you, I fooled you, I got  
iron, I got old pig iron, I got old pig iron."

*Chorus*

*Oh that Rock Island Line is a mighty good road,  
Oh that Rock Island Line is the road to ride,  
Oh that Rock Island Line is a mighty good road,*

*If you want to ride,  
You got to ride it like you find it,  
Get your ticket at the station  
On the Rock Island Line.  
Jesus died to save our sins—hooray to God,  
We're going to meet Him again!*

*(Chorus)*

*I may be right and I may be wrong,  
You are going to miss me when I'm gone!*

*(Chorus)*

*A B C W X Y Z,  
Cats in the cupboard, but they don't see me!*

*(Chorus) (2x)*

## 19. Cotton Fields

*(Ledbetter) from Smithsonian Folkways 40044*

This is another song identified with Lead  
Belly, and often performed as a sing-along.  
Lead Belly sings about growing up in north-  
western Louisiana.

"When I was a little baby, my mother used to tell  
me about how she used to take me to the field  
and rock me in the cradle. She was pickin' cotton  
for 25 cents a 100 pounds. When I got to be a  
boy, she was telling me all about and I got to  
pickin' cotton in Louisiana and I was pickin' 250  
pounds of cotton a day, and I was thinkin' about  
what my mother told me."

*When I was a little baby my mother would rock  
me in the cradle/In them old cotton fields back  
home. (Repeat line)*

*Chorus*

*Oh when them cotton balls get rotten  
You couldn't pick very much cotton  
In them old cotton fields back home.  
It was down in Louisiana,  
Just a mile from Texarkana,  
In them old cotton fields at home.*

*It may sound a little funny,  
But you didn't make very much money  
In them old cotton fields at home.*

*It may sound a little funny,  
But you didn't make very much money  
In them old cotton fields at home.*

*(Chorus)*

*I was over in Arkansas,  
People ask me, "What you come here for?"  
In them old cotton fields at home.  
I was over in Arkansas,  
People ask me, "What you come here for?"  
In them old cotton fields at home.*

*(Chorus)*

## 20. Old Man

(arr. Ledbetter) from *Smithsonian Folkways 40105*  
(also known as "Old Man, Will Your Dog Catch a Rabbit?")

Lead Belly adapted the song "Old Man, Will Your Dog Catch a Rabbit?" to a work song of working on the Mississippi River. This song was included by Moses Asch originally on a compilation of songs for children called *This Land Is Your Land: American Work Songs* (Folkways FP27, 1951).

"Here come that Big Bella Lee sailing down the Mississippi. You got to load it before you ride and sail. And the boys gonna load it this-a-way."

*Old man, I'm going up the Mississippi  
Yes I am, yes I am.*

*Old man, I'm going up the Mississippi  
Yes I am, buddy, yes I am.*

*I'm gonna sail on that Big Della Lee  
Yes I am, yes I am.*

*I'm gonna sail on that Big Della Lee  
Yes I am, buddy, yes I am.*

*Old man, will your dog catch a rabbit?  
Take him an' try him,  
You can take him an' try him.  
Old man, will your dog catch a rabbit?  
Take him an' try him, buddy,  
Oh take him an' try him. (2x)*

*Old man, will your horse tote double?  
Take him an' try him,  
You can take him an' try him.  
Old man, will your horse tote double?  
Take him an' try him, buddy,  
Oh take him an' try him. (2x)  
Old man, will your daughter take company?  
I don't know, I don't know.  
Old man, do your daughter take company?  
I don't know, buddy, I don't know;  
I don't know, buddy, an' I don't know.  
(Repeat first two verses)*

## 21. John Henry

from *Folkways 7533*

"John Henry" is one of the most popular American-folk songs. There are many interpretations of the story. Lead Belly's introduction is a lovely, poetic beginning to his performance.

"A work song is when you sing—that gives you a feelin' and keeps you from gettin' tired. And when you get hungry, if you sing, you won't—you forget about bein' hungry. And when you sing, you swing as you sing; and that's what you call a work song—it's a feelin'. John Henry was a steel-drivin' man—well, that's mighty fine—he was a double-jointed man, I don't guess you knew that, did you? That's made him drive so much steel. He drove steel from Newport News to Cincinnati, Ohio, and he drove all that by himself. So I'll tell you a story about it."

*John Henry was a newborn baby  
Sitting down on his mama's knee.  
Say "That Big Bend Tunnel on that  
Savannah Road,  
It is going to be the death of me, Lord, Lord,  
It is gonna be the death of me." (2x)*

*John Henry had two women.  
One was named Mary Magdalene.  
She would go out on the job and she would sing,  
"Can you hear John Henry's hammer ring, Lord,  
Lord, can you John Henry's hammer ring?" (2x)*

*John Henry had another little woman,  
Her name was sweet Polly Ann.  
John Henry taken sick, boy,  
and he had to go to bed.*

*Polly Ann drove steel like a man, Lord, Lord,  
Polly Ann drove steel like a man. (2x)*

"John Henry was sick, he called Polly Ann to his bedside, and this is what he asked her:"

*"Baby, who's gonna shoe your little feet?  
Baby, who's gonna glove your hand?  
Tell me, who's going to kiss your sweet little lips?  
Tell me, who's gonna be your man, Lord, Lord,  
Tell me, who's gonna be your man?" (2x)*

"This is what she told him:"

*"My papa's gonna shoe my little feet,  
My mama's gonna glove my hand.  
My sister's gonna kiss my sweet little lips,  
And you know I don't need no man, Lord, Lord,  
You know I don't need no man." (2x)*

*Then they take John Henry to the White House,  
And they bury him in the sand,  
And every locomotive comes a-rollin' by sayin'  
"There lie that steel-drivin' man, Lord, Lord,  
There lie that steel-drivin' man." (2x)*

## 22. Julie Ann Johnson

*(Ledbetter) from Folkways 7533*

This a rhythmic work song. Some wood chopping was done by a group of men in unison, and singing coordinated the work. Lead Belly describes this, and every "wha" indicates the axes striking the trees. It can be sung with all kinds of work, though, as well as hiking up steep hills.

"Now this is 'Julie Ann Johnson.' Twenty men on one log and they cuttin' four-foot wood apart—they using double-handled axes and the man in the lead, he's goin' to sing 'Julie Ann Johnson' and the boys are going to answer. But every time the ax comes down, all twenty of them axes falling at one time. Not one ax falls, and you hold your'n back—drop them axes in the log at one time—we'll talk about Julie Ann Johnson, which is a good-lookin' girl."

*Julie Ann Johnson, oh Lord,  
Julie Ann Johnson, oh man.*

*Julie Ann Johnson, oh Lord,  
Julie Ann Johnson, oh man.*

*Goin' to leave you, oh man, (2x)  
Look out Julie, oh man. (2x)*

*What the matter with Julie, oh man, (2x)  
Goin' to leave you, oh man. (2x)*

"Now all them axes is fallin', the boys going to sing 'Julie Ann Johnson' just to let you know that the rhythm is still goin' on—suppose those axes is fallin' you won't hear 'em right now but they'll come back directly—the boys are still singin' about Julie Ann Johnson."

*Julie Ann Johnson, oh Lord, etc.  
I'm going to leave you, oh Lord, etc.  
I'm going to get married, oh Lord, etc.  
Gonna marry Martha, oh Lord, etc.  
It's Martha Promise, oh Lord, etc.*

*"The axes comin' back now."*

*Julie Ann Johnson, oh Lord, etc.  
Drop them axes, oh Lord, etc.  
Drop 'em together, oh man, etc.  
Julie Ann Johnson, oh man, etc.  
Going to leave you, oh man, etc.*

## 23. Whoa Back Buck (Ox Driver's Song)

*(Ledbetter) from Smithsonian Folkways 40105*

This is an ox-driving song, imitating the shout of an ox-driver.

*Ta, whoa-ho, gee, back up!*

*Chorus  
Whoa, buck an' gee, by the lamb  
Who made the back band, oh, Cunningham.  
Whoa, buck an' gee, by the lamb  
Who made the back band, oh, Cunningham.  
Oh, ham, and oh Cunningham,  
Who made the back band, oh, Cunningham.*

*Eighteen, nineteen, twenty years ago,  
I taken my gal to a country store.  
Taken my gal to a country store,  
I bought my gal some calico.  
Tall-ya ho ho, gee, back up, yeah.*

*(Chorus)*

*I taken my gal to a country store,  
I bought my gal some calico,  
Taken my gal to a party-o  
Wouldn't let her dance but a set or so.  
Tall-ya hey hey, gee, back up, git over there,  
yeah.*

*(Chorus)*

*You take Sal and I'll take Jane/Both good  
lookin', but they ain't the same  
You swing Sal and I'll swing Sue,  
Mighty little different between them two.  
Tall-ya whoa, gee, back up, git over there, yeah.*

*(Chorus)*

*Tall-ya, whoa, gee, back up, git over there, yeah.*

## 24. You Can't Lose Me, Cholly

*(Ledbetter) from Smithsonian Folkways 40044*

*(included on Play Parties in Song and Dance)*

This song was on Lead Belly's first recording for Moses Asch, and may have had a children's game associated with it.

*Chorus  
You can't lose-a-me, Cholly  
You can't lose-a-me, boy. (2x)*

*Up to Widow Winston's I went a-roadin',  
Down on my knees I was a doin' a little courtin',  
Every time she turned around she said it so funny,  
(Chorus)*

*I went a-rowing and my gal went, too,  
Down on the river when the boat broke through,  
Every time she turned around she said it so funny,  
(Chorus)*

*Hog and the sheep, they went to pasture,  
Hog said to the sheep,  
"You better go a little faster."  
Every time she turned around she said it so funny,  
(Chorus)*

*Me and my brother went down the road,  
Trying to get some money to buy a gourd,  
We got to have a gourd to drink water out of.  
(Chorus)*

## 25. Midnight Special

(arr. Ledbetter) from *Smithsonian Folkways 40045*

A well-known prison song in the South, this song has been recorded by a number of singers, but Lead Belly's arrangement has become the best known. In the song the prisoner lies awake late at night and listens to the train passing by, imagining that it is taking him to freedom. Lead Belly has included names and places in the song which link it to Sugarland Prison in Texas.

Yonder comes Miss Rosie.  
How in the world do you know?  
Well, I know her by the apron  
And the dress she wore.  
Umbrella on her shoulder,  
Piece of paper in her hand,  
Well, I'm callin' that Captain,  
"Turn a-loose my man."

Chorus  
Let the Midnight Special shine her light on me.  
Oh let the Midnight Special shine her  
Ever-lovin' light on me.

When you gets up in the morning,  
When that big bell ring.  
You go marching to the table,  
You meet the same old thing.  
Knife and fork are on the table,  
Ain't nothing in my pan.  
And if you say a thing about,  
You have a trouble with the man.

(Chorus)

If you ever go to Houston,  
Boys, you better walk right,  
And you better not squabble,  
And you better not fight.  
Benson Crocker will arrest you,  
Jimmy Boone will take you down.  
You can bet your bottom dollar  
That you're Sugarland bound.

(Chorus)

Well, jumping Little Judy,  
She was a mighty fine girl.  
Judy brought jumping  
To the whole round world.  
Well, she brought it in the morning  
Just a while before day.  
Well, she brought me the news  
That my wife was dead.  
That started me to grieving,  
Whooping, hollering, and crying.  
And I began to worry  
About my great long time.

(Chorus)

## 26. Pick a Bale of Cotton

(Ledbetter) from *Smithsonian Folkways 40044*

(with the Oleander Quartet)

Lead Belly grew up in Louisiana and helped pick cotton on his parents' farm, so he sings here from experience. Those who know do point out that, even as strong as he was, Lead Belly couldn't have picked a thousand pounds in one day. He is joined here by a gospel group, the Oleander Quartet.

"Now this is when I was around Dallas, Texas, pickin' cotton. I was pickin' a thousand pounds of cotton a day. And the way you get a thousand pounds of cotton a day, you've got to jump around to get it. You can't fool around and pick a thousand pounds of cotton a day."

Jump down, turn around to pick a bale of cotton  
Jump down, turn around to pick a bale a day. (2x)

Chorus

Oh Lordy, pick a bale of cotton, oh Lordy,  
Pick a bale a day. (2x)

Me and my gal can pick a bale of cotton,  
Me and my gal can pick a bale a day. (2x)

(Chorus)

Me and my wife can pick a bale of cotton,  
Me and my wife can pick a bale a day. (2x)

(Chorus)

Me and my friend can pick a bale of cotton,  
Me and my friend can pick a bale a day. (2x)

(Chorus)

Me and my papa can pick a bale of cotton,  
Me and my papa can pick a bale a day. (2x)

(Chorus)

## 27. Take This Hammer

(Ledbetter) unreleased, from radio

This is another rhythmic work song for chopping wood. It is good for any kind of rhythmic activity.

Take this hammer (wah),  
And carry it to the captain (wah). (3x)  
You tell him I'm gone, you tell him I'm gone.

If he asks you (wah) was I running (wah), (3x)  
You tell him I was flyin' (wah),  
You tell him I was flyin' (wah).

If he asks you was (wah), was I laughing (wah), (3x)  
You tell him I was cryin' (wah),  
You tell him I was cryin' (wah).

I don't want no corn bread (wah), and molasses  
(wah). (3x)

It hurts my pride (wah),  
It hurts my pride (wah).

If he asks you was (wah), was I laughing (wah), (3x)  
You tell him I was cryin' (wah),  
You tell him I was cryin' (wah).

## 28. We're in the Same Boat, Brother

(Ledbetter) from Folkways 7533

This song speaks of interdependence and equality and a hope that the world Lead Belly grew up in would change for the better.

Chorus

We're in the same boat, brother. (2x)

And if you shake one end,  
You're going to rock the other,  
It's the same boat, brother.

Oh Lordy look down, from His holy place,  
Say "Lordy me, but I see a face,  
I am about to launch the human race,"  
So they give him a boat with a mixed-up crew,  
With eyes of black and brown and blue,  
So that's how come that you and I  
Got just one world with just one sky.

(Chorus)

So the boat rode on, through the stormy breeze,  
Of many a rock and many a reef,  
What kept them goin' was a great belief,  
So they had to learn to navigate.  
That human race—a special place,  
If they didn't wanna be in Jonas' shoes,  
They'd better be mates on this here cruise.

(Chorus)

But a ball of blue, somewhere in space  
Oh the keel was smashed and for your brain  
And the steam pulled out from all the main  
Oh it took some time for the crew to learn  
When it's bad for the boat, it ain't good for the  
stern,  
But it had to take fire in China Bay  
For the starboard deck goin' to blaze away.

(Chorus) (2x)

## OTHER SUGGESTED RECORDINGS

*Afro-American Music: A Demonstration Record* (by Dr. Willis James), Folkways 2692.

Lead Belly, *The Lead Belly Legacy Series*, Smithsonian Folkways 40044, 40045, 40105.

Lead Belly, *Lead Belly Sings Folk Songs*, Smithsonian Folkways 40010.

*Ring Games: Line Games and Play Party Songs of Rural Alabama*, Folkways 7004.

## RECOMMENDED READING

Asch, Moses, and Alan Lomax, eds. *The Leadbelly Songbook*. New York: Oak Publications, 1962.

Jones, Bessie, and Bess Lomax Hawes. *Step it Down*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Lomax, John A. and Alan. *Lead Belly: No Stranger to the Blues* (Lead Belly Songbook). New York: TRO/Folkways, 1998.

Wolfe, Charles, and Kip Lornell. *The Life and Legend of Lead Belly*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Also see the *Lead Belly Letter*, published by the Lead Belly Society, PO Box 6679, Ithaca, NY, 14851.

Reissue of *Negro Folk Songs for Young People*, Folkways 7533 (1960), with additional tracks recorded by Moses Asch in New York, 1941–1948

Reissue compiled and annotated by Jeff Place and Anthony Seeger

Mastered by Charlie Pilzer, AirShow, Springfield, VA

Sound and technical coordination by Pete Reiniger

Project supervised by Anthony Seeger and Atesh Sonneborn

Production coordinated by Mary Monseur and Michael Maloney

Edited by Carla Borden

Design by Visual Dialogue, Boston, MA

Cover photo courtesy of Folkways Archives

Back cover photo: Lead Belly singing at a birthday party, San Francisco 1945, by Bob Treuhaft, courtesy of Lead Belly Society

Lyrics transcribed by Kieran McManus

Additional Smithsonian Folkways staff: Heather Berthold, financial officer; Lee Michael Demsey, fulfillment; Kevin Doran, licensing; Brenda Dunlap, marketing director; Judy Gilmore, fulfillment; Matt Levine, fulfillment; Ronnie Simpkins, fulfillment; Stephanie Smith, assistant archivist

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## FOLKWAYS AT 50

This 50th anniversary honors the Folkways legacy and launches the Folkways Trust Fund. The fund will enable Folkways to preserve its historical collection at the Smithsonian Institution through the use of emerging technologies. Major sponsors include: BMI (The American Performance Rights Organization), Columbia Records and Sony Music Entertainment, KOCH International, Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, *Smithsonian Magazine*, and TRO (The Richmond Organization). For information on how to become a sponsor, contact Anthony Seeger, Director, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, by phone at (202) 287-3251 or by e-mail at [tony@folkways.si.edu](mailto:tony@folkways.si.edu)

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Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Moses Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are available on high-quality audio cassettes or by special order on CD. Each recording is packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

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Or request a printed catalogue by writing to: Catalogue, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 7300, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0953, USA. Or use our catalogue request phone; (202) 287-3262, or e-mail [folkways@aol.com](mailto:folkways@aol.com)