

CAMP SONGS

WITH

ELLA JENKINS

& FRIENDS



Smithsonian Folkways

CAMP SONGS WITH ELLA JENKINS & FRIENDS

SFW CD 45082

1. ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT 1:01
2. DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE 3:22
3. VIVE LA COMPAGNIE 2:01
4. THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND 3:28
(Woody Guthrie/TRÖ-Ludlow Music, Inc. o/b/o Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc., BMI)
5. TUMBALALAIKA 1:24
6. SHALOM CHAVERIM 0:57
7. TZENA, TZENA, TZENA 2:21
(Music: Issachar Miron-Words: Jehiel Haggas/EMI Mills Music, Inc., ASCAP)
8. KUMBAYA 3:50
9. DOWN IN THE VALLEY 2:51
10. UNION MAID 2:30
(Woody Guthrie/TRÖ-Ludlow Music, Inc. o/b/o Woody Guthrie Publications, Inc., BMI)
11. ONE BOTTLE OF POP 1:48
12. HILL WAS STEEP AND TALL (WHEN I SIGNED UP FOR THIS HIKE) 4:03
(Music: Oscar Brand/TRÖ-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI-Words: Karin Hubbard)
13. MRS. MURPHY'S CHOWDER 2:48
(Music: Willy White-Words: Harry White & E. Leslie)
14. SIPPING CIDER THROUGH A STRAW 1:18
15. THE DAMPER SONG 0:59
(Arranged by Ella Jenkins/Eli-Bern Pub. Co., ASCAP)
16. TO STOP THE TRAIN 0:55
(James Wild)
17. THE COURT OF KING CARACTACUS 4:10
(Rolf Harris/Beechwood Music Corp., BMI)
18. SWEETLY SINGS THE DONKEY 0:59
19. THE CUCKOO 0:55
(Arranged by Ella Jenkins/Eli-Bern Pub. Co., ASCAP)
20. MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE 1:51
21. EVERYBODY LOVES SATURDAY NIGHT 7:53
(Pete Seeger-Ronnie Gilbert-Lee Hays-Fred Hellerman/TRÖ-Folkways Music Publishers, Inc., BMI)
22. I'M ON MY WAY 2:13
23. SLOOP JOHN B. 3:27
(Adapted by Lee Hays/TRÖ-Folkways Music Publishers, Inc., BMI)
24. THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE 1:53
25. GOODNIGHT, IRENE 3:07
(Huddie Ledbetter-John A. Lomax/TRÖ-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)



THE STORY BEHIND THIS RECORDING

Ella Jenkins has wanted to record an album of camp songs for over 15 years and, finally, here it is. When Ella was young, she learned songs her brother brought back from the Boy Scouts, and she later sang for children at camps in the Chicago area. She still has fond memories of the people she knew at the camps and her experiences there—like getting lost on a hike (track 12). Having known her for many years, I was delighted to have the opportunity to produce this recording and to perform on it with her. I also have a very long connection to camps and camp songs. My parents owned Camp Killooleet, a residential children's summer camp in Vermont now run by my sister Kate Seeger and her husband, Dean Spencer. We have been singing to children there for over 50 years.

Ella sent us a list of songs she thought were good camp songs. I knew most of them except for "The Damper Song" (which will be obvious when you hear us sing it on track 15) and "Vive la Compagnie" (track 3). Even though every camp has its own musical culture, many songs are shared among camps. Kate and I suggested some songs from our camp repertory, including some rounds, memory songs, movement songs, and some more sing-alongs we thought would sound nice with the children's chorus.

Ella wanted to include some of the Chicago-area musicians she had performed with before. They were all associated with the renowned Old Town School of Folk Music. Absolutely essential was Erin Flynn, a musician and music teacher who organized the participation of a group of young children (sometimes accompanied by the teachers and the adults who had brought them to the studio). Erin Flynn, Bucky Halker, Ella Jenkins, Judy Seeger, Kate Seeger, Tony Seeger, Barbara Silverman, and Chris Walz and a chorus of young children all contributed their wonderful musicianship to this album.

When we finally got together in 2015 to record, Ella found that her singing voice was not as strong as she had hoped it would be. So she asked the rest of us to sing some of her songs as well as our own. Kate and I were familiar with this problem, since our uncle Pete Seeger had lost most of his voice as he aged and had always asked other people to sing with and for him—which they did. It was the same with Ella. Even though she could not do as much song leading as she had wanted, Ella is almost everywhere on this recording—with her singing, her harmonica playing, her teaching, her reminiscences about camp, her engagement with children and their parents, and of course through her selection of the songs and bringing together of the musicians.

Here is a group of songs we hope you will enjoy listening to, singing along with, and teaching to other people. For some of you this collection may be a trip down memory lane. Enjoy the stroll! Others may be hearing some of the songs for the first time. The melodies are mostly pretty simple, and we provide the lyrics to all of the songs in the booklet (both in the CD and online at folkways.si.edu). Most of these songs have been sung by generations of campers. Try singing them. Write some new verses. Compose a parody and try it out in your school or camp. Follow the example of the children here—and have fun.

WHY CAMP SONGS?

According to the American Camp Association, over 14 million children and adults attend camp every year in the United States, at over 5,000 residential (overnight) camps and 7,000 day camps. Long after they have left their camps, many people remember the songs they sang as campers because they were so much part of a shared camp life. Even people who never went to camp learned songs from friends who did.

There is lots of time for singing at camps. Children sing on buses, on hikes, hanging out with friends and cabin-mates, and in performances for the whole camp. Many camps also put on adaptations of musicals. Children devote much more time to music at camps than most of them are able to do at school. They also write parodies of songs by changing some of the words or performance styles. Some of them write their own songs, others learn to play an instrument to accompany themselves with, and a few learn how to lead groups of friends in sing-alongs. Some campers later return to camps as counselors, bringing with them a repertory they remember from their own camp experiences. This is how camps can develop their own distinctive repertories and styles. Other things influence what music is performed at camps, such as the place and time when campers sing together (not only at campfires!), the age and gender of the campers, the musicality of the staff, and the support of the administration.

Some camps have published their own songbooks, like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Others have made recordings for distribution among the camp parents (see the Alma Mater Records collection in the Ralph Rinzler Archives and Collections at the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage), and a few camps appear on commercial recordings (1958 recordings from Killooleet are featured on Folkways FW07510 and FW06105), or today on the Internet. But the best way to pass on songs is in live performances.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CAMP SONG?

Almost any song can be a camp song. The repertory at many camps is a mixture of old and new popular music, some old folk songs, silly children's songs that are fun anyway, some movement songs, some rounds, maybe some political songs, and some sing-alongs. This album includes all of them. They are often sung on different occasions: sing-alongs at campfires, pensive songs back at the cabin, silly songs at the dining hall, everything on the bus. Many favorite sing-along camp songs are based on African American spirituals. These beautiful songs often have a call-and-response structure, can be sung with instruments or unaccompanied, and have lyrics that are easy to learn and to change to fit new situations. Popular music from previous generations has provided many good songs to camps, where they may live on—or be revived—long after their popularity has waned in the music industry.

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY SING-ALONG SONGS ON THIS ALBUM?

Singing together can transform a group of nervous or homesick campers into a cohesive and active group. Focusing on something together, and sharing the experience of learning something new together, breathing together, and sometimes moving together, can form a community. Ella Jenkins has spent her life teaching children to sing along with her, to move their bodies to music, and to make rhymes and rhythms together. This recording continues a tradition begun with her first small LP in 1957, but with a repertory for children who are a little older than she has usually performed for. The sing-alongs are both a normal part of camp repertories and also part of Ella's teaching philosophy and method.

WHY THIS SEQUENCE?

Many people listening to these songs will sample individual tracks through a digital service, including Smithsonian Folkways' own site, www.folkways.si.edu. But for those of you listening to the whole album, we did have a strategy for ordering the tracks. We begin with the children's chorus singing a round by themselves, then with them singing along with Ella Jenkins and Kate Seeger. This is an album of music by and with children, and we wanted to start with them. The children recorded a number of rounds, and we inserted them from time to time. But adults often lead the singing at camps and sometimes perform together, so the next few songs are performed by adults without the children's chorus (but with very singable choruses). We scattered a selection of performance numbers throughout the album to give it variety—one of the most lively of these being "Tzena, Tzena, Tzena." Then we bring in some of Ella's memories of camp with related songs, examples of her teaching songs to us, and some activity songs. The last five songs are meant to resemble a campfire sing-along—a series of songs performed with a strong chorus of children and their parents led by Kate and me. The heat rising from a campfire makes it difficult to hear quiet songs on the other side from the performer, so participation songs work best. There is one rest for the "Sloop John B." by Chris Walz with Ella, because children need to rest their voices from time to time during a campfire. Camp Killooleet campfires and community sings often end with the 1950 hit parade song written by Huddie Ledbetter (known as Lead Belly), called "Goodnight, Irene." So does this CD. But you don't have to turn on your flashlight and go back to your cabin to bed when the song is over—you can sing them all over again.

THE PERFORMERS

CHILDREN'S CHORUS MEMBERS ON ALL SONGS:

Chloe Athanasiou
Elvis Babcock
Rocky Cytrynbaum
Chaya Rose Duarte
Gabriel Galindo
Sofia Galindo
Jeremiah Johnson
Joel Kumar
Marina Nichole Martinez
Caleb Schlag
Amelia Schmidt
Liliana Vujic
Daniella Xu

(“EVERYBODY LOVES SATURDAY NIGHT”
INCLUDES SEVERAL ADDITIONAL
SINGERS.)

THE ADULT MEMBERS OF THE MIXED CHORUS:

Katherine Athanasiou
Jarod Facknitz
Tim Ferrin
Erin Flynn
Donald Garfield
Tonya Johnson
Krishna Kumar
Sanna Longden
Albert Martinez
Tina Rose
Renee Schmidt
Daniel Sheehy
Christine Tiseo
Kimberly Vujic

ADULT MUSICIANS:

Erin Flynn
Bucky Halker
Ella Jenkins
Judy Seeger
Kate Seeger
Tony Seeger
Barbara Silverman
Chris Walz

1

ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT (ROUND)

ELLA JENKINS. HARMONICA. CHILDREN'S CHORUS

People of all ages know this round. Ella Jenkins starts it off and ends it on harmonica, and she adds a new dimension to this familiar song. The children sing it in unison at the start and finish.

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.



2

DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE

KATE SEEGER. GUITAR AND VOCALS. CHRIS WALZ. MANDOLIN. CHILDREN'S CHORUS

This song is also known by the name "Ain't Gonna Study War No More." It is an old African American spiritual with known roots back to before the Civil War. The Fisk Jubilee Quartet recorded it in 1920, and other recordings by many kinds of singers have appeared ever since. This song has also been used as an anthem of several anti-war movements.

I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield [CLAP CLAP]
Down by the riverside [CLAP CLAP] (2X)
Down by the riverside.
I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield [TWO CLAPS]
Down by the riverside
Gonna study war no more.

CHORUS: I ain't gonna study war no more. (6X)

I'm gonna lay all my burdens down [CLAP CLAP] . . .

CHORUS

I'm gonna shake hands around the world [CLAP CLAP] . . .

CHORUS

I'm gonna walk with the Prince of Peace [CLAP CLAP] . . .

CHORUS

3

VIVE LA COMPAGNIE

ERIN FLYNN AND KATE SEEGER, VOCALS; CHRIS WALZ, VOCALS AND GUITAR; ELLA JENKINS, HARMONICA

This song, also known as “Vive l’Amour,” may have been sung in England as early as 1818 and in France as well. We know that sheet music for it was published in Baltimore in 1844 with drinking song lyrics. The verses have been changed several times over the song’s nearly 200 years, but it retains some of the boisterousness and emotion of a drinking song. Long live love! Long live our group! (The literal translation of *compagnie* is “company,” as in military company.)

Let every good fellow now join in our song
Vive la compagnie!
Success to each other, and pass it along
Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS:
Vive la, vive la, vive l’amour. (2x)
Vive l’amour, vive l’amour,
Viva la compagnie!!

A friend on your left, and a friend on your right
Vive la compagnie!
In love and good fellowship, let us unite
Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS
Now wider and wider, our circle expand
Vive la compagnie!
We’ll sing to our comrades, in faraway lands
Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS
With friends all around us, we’ll sing out
our song
Vive la compagnie!
We’ll banish our troubles, it won’t take
us long
Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS
Should time or occasion compel us to part
Vive la compagnie!
These days shall forever enliven our heart
Vive la compagnie!

CHORUS (2X)

4

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

BUCKY HALKER, GUITAR AND VOCALS; ELLA JENKINS, HARMONICA;
TONY SEEGER, BANJO AND VOCALS; KATE SEEGER, JUDY SEEGER, VOCALS; CHILDREN’S CHORUS

This is probably Woody Guthrie’s best-known song. There is no better place to sing its poetic verses than under the “endless skyway” on a clear night in summer. When Woody first wrote the song, it included the verse about the hungry people asking “Is this land made for you and me?” but it and the following verse were omitted in many performances and songbooks. Bucky Halker sings most of Guthrie’s original lyrics. Ella plays harmonica, and lots of us join in on the chorus.

CHORUS:
This land is your land, this land is my land
From California to the New York island
From the redwood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and me.

As I was walking that ribbon of highway
I saw above me that endless skyway
I saw below me that golden valley
This land was made for you and me.

CHORUS

I’ve roamed and rambled and I followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts
And all around me a voice was sounding
This land was made for you and me.

CHORUS

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

CHORUS

Nobody living can ever stop me
As I go walking that freedom highway
Nobody living can ever make me turn back
This land was made for you and me.

CHORUS

5

TUMBALALAIKA

ELLA JENKINS, SPOKEN INTRODUCTION AND HARMONICA;
KATE SEEGER, VOCALS

Many children of Jewish immigrants attended summer camps, and some of their songs were added to camp repertoires. Ella Jenkins learned some songs in Yiddish when she played at Jewish camps. Here she plays the harmonica and sings the beautiful chorus of a well-known Yiddish-language song with Kate Seeger. The chorus refers to the sound of playing a stringed instrument called the balalaika, and ends "play balalaika, balalaika may we be happy."

Tumbala, tumbala, tumbalalaika, (2X)
Tumbalalaika, shpiel balalaika
Tumbalalaika - freylach zol zayn
(REPEATS ONCE)



6

SHALOM CHAVERIM (ROUND)

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

This is another song learned from the children of Jewish immigrants, a three-part round in the Hebrew language. A free translation could be "Peace and farewell friends, 'til we meet again."

Shalom, chaverim, Shalom, chaverim
Shalom, shalom / L'hitra'ot, l'hitra'ot
Shalom, shalom.



7

TZENA, TZENA, TZENA

CHRIS WALZ, BANJO AND VOCALS; BARBARA SILVERMAN, GUITAR AND VOCALS; ERIN FLYNN, VOCALS

This arrangement of a Hebrew-language song composed in 1941 was popularized by a group called the Weavers and released by Decca Records as a “single” (an analog disc with one song on each side) in 1951. It reached number 2 on the hit parade that year, and the song on the other side of the disc, “Goodnight, Irene” (the last song on this album), was number 1. This is a performance number, and the instrumentalists take it into new territory. It would be a very lucky camp indeed that had such a group of fine musicians to perform for its campers. But it does sometimes happen. It is good to give children’s voices a rest and expose them to some exciting listening from time to time.

HEBREW TRANSLITERATION:

*Tzena, tzena, tzena, tzena ha-banot u-r’ena hayalim ba-Moshava
Al na, Al na, Al na, Al na, al na tifhavi’ena Mi-ben hayil, ish tzava*

TRANSLATION:

Go out, go out, go out girls and see soldiers in the *moshava*
(farming community).
Do not, do not, do not hide yourself away from a virtuous man
[a pun on the word for “soldier”], an army man.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tzena,_Tzena,_Tzena, consulted May 6, 2016)

8

KUMBAYA

ELLA JENKINS, HARMONICA AND VOCALS; CHILDREN’S CHORUS; WITH TONY SEEGER, JUDY SEEGER, AND KATE SEEGER, VOCALS

“Kumbaya” is an African American spiritual that was first recorded in 1926 for the Library of Congress and appeared in books and transcriptions soon after. It became such a well-known camp song that it was used to make fun of summer camps and to characterize a kind of optimistic innocence—a “Kumbaya moment” that was doomed to fail. But it is a lovely, quiet, and reflective song, good for changing the pace after some fast songs and nice to harmonize on.

Kumbaya, my Lord, kumbaya (3x)
Oh Lord, kumbaya.

Someone’s crying . . .
Someone’s singing . . .
Someone’s dreaming . . .
Someone’s laughing . . .
Come by here my Lord, come by here . . .



9

DOWN IN THE VALLEY

CHRIS WALZ, GUITAR AND VOCALS; ELLA JENKINS, HARMONICA AND VOCALS

This is a lovely version of an old standard whose origins are apparently lost in time. It was part of the repertoire of many summer camps in the 1950s and 1960s.

Down in the valley, the valley so low
Hang your head over, hear the wind blow
Hear the wind blow, love, hear the wind blow
Hang your head over, hear the wind blow.

If you don't love me, love whom you please
Throw your arms 'round me, give my heart ease
Give my heart ease, love, give my heart ease
Throw your arms 'round me, give my heart ease.

Roses love sunshine, violets love dew
Angels in heaven know I love you
Know I love you, dear, know I love you
Angels in heaven know I love you.

(REPEAT 1ST VERSE)

10

UNION MAID

BUCKY HALKER, GUITAR AND VOCALS; ELLA JENKINS, HARMONICA AND VOCALS; TONY SEEGER, JUDY SEEGER, AND KATE SEEGER, VOCALS

Songs of labor, politics, and injustice can be as much a part of camp repertory as rounds and nonsense songs. It depends on the counselor, the camp, and sometimes the larger political environment (in the 1950s my father told me never to play this song with the windows open). This lively union song with a truly memorable chorus was written by Woody Guthrie in 1940 to the tune of "Little Redwing," itself based on a 19th-century composition by Robert Schumann called "The Merry Farmer." It is one of Ella's favorite songs, and she sings it with Bucky Halker on an album built around ideas of unity, cooperation, and labor unions called *A Union of Friends Pulling Together* (SFW 45046). The last verse was written later, and reflects changes in women's roles in the workplace that have occurred since Woody wrote the song.

There once was a union maid, she never was afraid
Of the goons and the ginks and the company finks and the deputy
sheriffs who made the raid.
She went to the union hall when a meeting it was called,
And when the Legion boys come around
She always stood her ground.

CHORUS:

Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union, I'm sticking to the union.
Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union 'til the day I die.

This union maid was wise to the tricks of the company spies,
She couldn't be fooled by the company stool, she'd always
organize the guys.
She always got her way when she struck for higher pay.
She'd show her card to the National Guard
And this is what she'd say:

CHORUS

You gals who want to be free, just take a tip from me;
Break out of the mold we all been sold, you've got a fightin' history
The fight for women's rights with unions must unite
Like Mother Jones move those bones to the front of every fight.

CHORUS (2X)

11

ONE BOTTLE OF POP (ROUND)

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

This three-part round is a little complicated but fun and pretty easy to learn.

One bottle of pop, two bottles of pop, three bottles of pop,
four bottles of pop, five bottles of pop, six bottles of pop,
seven bottles of pop. POP!

Don't throw your junk in my backyard, my backyard,
my backyard; don't throw your junk in my backyard;
my backyard's full.

Fish and chips and vinegar, vinegar, vinegar; fish and chips
and vinegar, vinegar and POP.

12

HILL WAS STEEP AND TALL (WHEN I

ELLA JENKINS, SPOKEN INTRODUCTION AND HARMONICA; TONY SEEGER, BANJO AND VOCALS; KATE SEEGER, VOCALS; CHRIS WALZ, GUITAR

This track begins with Ella Jenkins reminiscing about taking her campers on a hike when she was a young counselor and getting lost. Fortunately, everything turned out all right. Going on hikes away from camp is an important part of a child's experience and can be challenging for counselors as well. Most camps have day hikes, and some have overnight hikes. This song was written by a camp counselor from Sweden in the 1950s at Camp Killooleet; Tony Seeger added the last verse. The melody is found in several European countries and begins like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

When I signed up for this hike, I thought I'd found one that I'd like
But after I had climbed two feet, I was really beat
Lugged my pack, broke my back
But the hill was steep and tall, and I'm so very small.

SIGNED UP FOR THIS HIKE)

When I got to the first rise, I lay down and closed my eyes
But the counselors pushed me on, and I did what I could
Slipped and slid, flipped my lid
Lugged my pack, broke my back
But the hill was steep and tall, and I'm so very small.

When I got up about halfway, I saw some berries, decided to stay
But just as I was getting my share, they made me go away
I wanted to stay, they pulled me away
Slipped and slid, flipped my lid
Lugged my pack, broke my back
But the hill was steep and tall, and I'm so very small.

When we finally reached the top, I was so tired I thought I'd drop
But there was nothing there to do, so we just passed on through
Nothing to do, passing through
Wanted to stay, they pulled me away
Slipped and slid, flipped my lid
Lugged my pack, broke my back
But the hill was steep and tall, and I'm so very small.

Then we hiked down to a lake, saw some leeches and a snake
Skinny dipping is great sport, so we did what we could
Off with our clothes, into the creek
Nothing to do, passing through
Wanted to stay, they pulled me away
Slipped and slid, flipped my lid
Lugged my pack, broke my back
But the hill was steep and tall, and I'm so very small.

When we finally hiked back to camp, all my clothes were very damp
So I sat down and wrote this song, so you can sing along
Wrote this song, sing along
Off with our clothes, into the creek
Nothing to do, passing through
Wanted to stay, they pulled me away
Slipped and slid, flipped my lid
Lugged my pack, broke my back
But the hill was steep and tall, and I'm so very small.

13

MRS. MURPHY'S CHOWDER

KATE SEEGER, GUITAR AND VOCALS; TONY SEEGER AND JUDY SEEGER, VOCALS

This is a nonsense song about a chowder with some pretty unusual ingredients, possibly inspired by a 19th-century song “Who Put the Trousers in Mrs. Murphy’s Chowder?” The challenge of learning the chorus is one of the attractions of the song, as are the claps that punctuate the beginning of every verse. The enjoyment may be heightened by campers’ suspicions about the ingredients of the stews in the dining hall.

Won't you bring back [CLAP]
Won't you bring back [CLAP CLAP]
Mrs. Murphy's chowder?
It's a tune full,
Every spoonful
Made you yodel louder.
Now, after dinner Uncle Ben
Used to fill his fountain pen
From a bowl of Mrs. Murphy's
chowder.

CHORUS:
'Cause it's got ice cream,
cold cream,
Benzene, gasoline,
Soup beans, string beans,
Floatin' all around.
Sponge cake, beef steak,
Mistake, stomach ache,
Cream puffs, earmuffs,
Many to be found.
Silk hats, doormats,
Bed slats, Democrats,
Coco bells, doorbells,
Beckon you to dine.
Meatballs, fish balls,

Mothballs, cannonballs,
Come on in, the chowder's fine!
Won't you bring back [CLAP]
Won't you bring back [CLAP CLAP]
Mrs. Murphy's chowder?
Every helping you'll be yelping
For a headache powder.
The plumber died the other day
They embalmed him right away
In a bowl of Mrs. Murphy's
chowder.

CHORUS

Won't you bring back [CLAP]
Won't you bring back [CLAP CLAP]
Mrs. Murphy's chowder?
You can lock it, you can stock it
All around the larder.
And if they had it where we are
You might find a brand new car
In a bowl of Mrs. Murphy's
chowder.

CHORUS

14

SIPPING CIDER THROUGH A STRAW

ELLA JENKINS, LEAD VOCALS; KATE SEEGER, RESPONSE VOCALS; CHRIS WALZ, GUITAR

Originally published in 1919, this song survives as a camp song. One of the reasons for its success is that it can be done as a call-and-response song, with everyone singing “was sipping cider through a straw” together. Ella’s lyrics are a little different from the ones Kate Seeger knew. On this track Ella is teaching it to Kate, and with her hands she conducted the long, drawn-out “straw” at the end.

The prettiest little girl (the prettiest little girl)
I ever saw (I ever saw)
Was sipping cider from a straw

Said I to her
Whatcha doing that for
A-sipping cider from a straw?

Said she to me
Why, don't you know
That sipping cider's all the go?

Then cheek to cheek
Jaw to jaw
We both sipped cider through the straw

The straw it slipped
The straw it slipped
Then I sipped cider from her lips

That's how I got
My mother-in-law
From sipping cider through a straw

Now 16 kids
All call me “Maw”
From sipping cider through a straaaaaaaw.

15

THE DAMPER SONG

ELLA JENKINS, SPOKEN INTRODUCTION AND HARMONICA; TONY SEEGER, VOCALS

This track begins with Ella Jenkins reminiscing about her brother singing songs with gestures when he got home from Boy Scout camp. Then she teaches "The Damper Song" to Tony Seeger. The gestures are pushing and pulling on an imagined damper (in a fireplace or a stove) and then twirling one's hands up into the air like swirling smoke. This was the first time Tony had ever sung the song. Although he doesn't get the melody right, Ella reassures him at the end.

You push the damper in and you pull the damper out

And the smoke goes up the chimney just the same

Just the same, just the same, and the smoke goes up the chimney just the same

You push the damper in and you pull the damper out

And the smoke goes up the chimney just the same.
(Ella: "That's good!")

16

TO STOP THE TRAIN (ROUND WITH GESTURES)

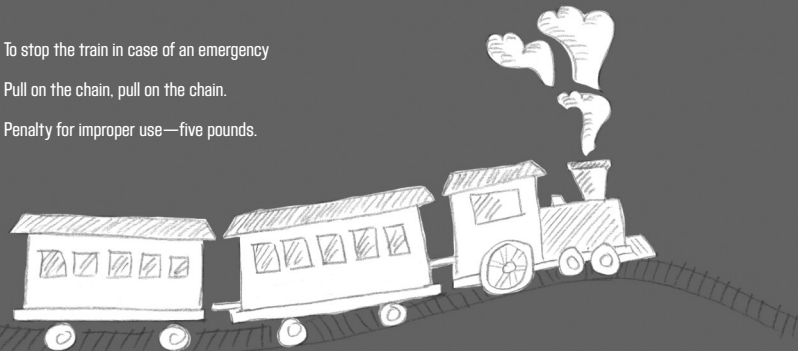
CHILDREN'S CHORUS

This is a round with movements written to the words on a sign that used to be found on English trains. It instructed passengers what to do in an emergency and indicated that there was a five pound fine for a false alarm. This shows you can make a good song out of anything! We usually sing the round twice or three times, and then the last time through do it only with the gestures—but that doesn't work well on a recording!

To stop the train in case of an emergency

Pull on the chain, pull on the chain.

Penalty for improper use—five pounds.



17

THE COURT OF KING CARACTACUS

KATE SEEGER, LEAD VOCALS AND GESTURES; TONY SEEGER, VOCALS AND GESTURES; CHORUS OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS

This is a challenging gesture song, with an additive structure. King Caractacus was a first-century British chieftain who led the opposition to the Roman conquest. He probably did not have a harem. But this song isn't about history, it's about memory and learning both words and gestures quickly.

Oh the court of King Caractacus was just passing by (4X)

Oh the ladies in the harem of the court of King Caractacus were just passing by (4X)

Oh the noses on the faces of the ladies of the harem of the court of King Caractacus were just passing by (4X)

Oh the boys who put the powder on the noses on the faces of the ladies of the harem of the court of King Caractacus were just passing by (4X)



Oh the scintillating stitches on the britches of the boys who put the powder on the noses on the faces of the ladies of the harem of the court of King Caractacus were just passing by (4X)

Oh the fascinating witches [who] put the scintillating stitches on the britches of the boys who put the powder on the noses on the faces of the ladies of the harem of the court of King Caractacus were just passing by (4X)

If you want to take a picture of the fascinating witches who put the scintillating stitches on the britches of the boys who put the powder on the noses on the faces of the ladies of the harem of the court of King Caractacus...

...you're too late! They just... passed... by!

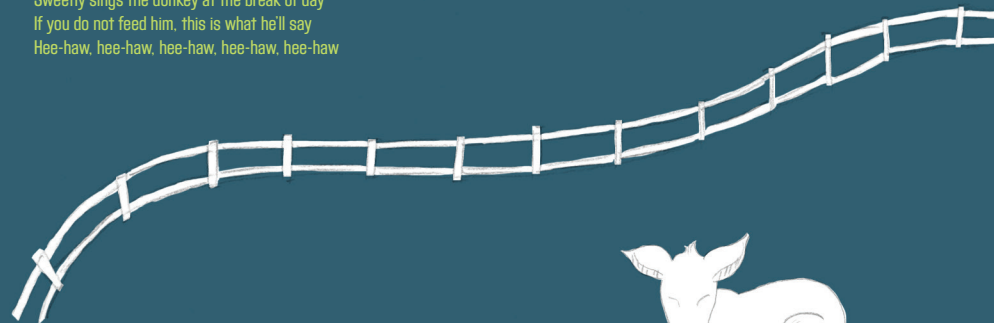
18

SWEETLY SINGS THE DONKEY (ROUND)

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

This is a simple three-part round that many children already know, and it sounds quite lovely when the parts get going.

Sweetly sings the donkey at the break of day
If you do not feed him, this is what he'll say
Hee-haw, hee-haw, hee-haw, hee-haw, hee-haw



19

THE CUCKOO

ELLA JENKINS, VOCALS AND HARMONICA; TONY SEEGER AND KATE SEEGER, VOCALS

Ella plays the harmonica, and Tony and Kate Seeger add a response to the one verse. This is a lovely old English song with a long history in the United States.

Gonna build me (uh-huh) a little castle (uh huh) in the mountains so high (uh-huh)

So I can (uh-huh) hear the cuckoo (uh-huh) as she goes flying by (uh-huh).

20

MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE

TONY SEEGER, BANJO AND VOCALS; ELLA JENKINS, VOCALS; KATE SEEGER, GUITAR AND VOCALS; JUDY SEEGER, VOCALS; CHILDREN'S CHORUS

"Michael Row the Boat Ashore" is another African American spiritual that became a camp sing-along standard. A report from the 1860s indicates it was also sung while rowing boats. It has a nice, easy tempo, an easy response, and it is easy to make up new verses for.

Michael row the boat ashore, halleluiah (2x)

Michael's boat is a music boat, halleluiah (2x)

Sister help to trim the sails, halleluiah (2x)

Michael row the boat ashore, halleluiah (2x)

River Jordan is chilly and cold, halleluiah
Chills the body but not the soul, halleluiah

Michael row the boat ashore, halleluiah (2x)

21

EVERYBODY LOVES SATURDAY NIGHT

TONY SEEGER, BANJO AND VOCALS; CHILDREN'S AND PARENTS' CHORUS AND VOCALS ALSO INCLUDING: BRYNA CYTRYNBAUM, GABRIEL DAVID MARTINO, JESSICA HERGOTT MARTINO, ELLORA TELLIS-NOYAK, NICOLE SANDU, CAROLE LANIALOHA LEE-SUMBERG, PAIGE HINANO SUMBERG, ALAN KAMAE SUMBERG

Many camps make an effort to include music from a variety of places and in a number of languages. The origins of this song appear to be debated still, but the idea is simple: take a phrase and sing it in as many languages as people in the room can manage. In this version the children sing only the first line ("Everybody loves Saturday night") in different languages, and the rest of each verse is sung in English. The song can also be sung with the entire verse in the other languages.

CHORUS:

Everybody loves Saturday night (2x)

Everybody, everybody, everybody, everybody

Everybody loves Saturday night. (REPEAT THE VERSE)

SERBIAN: *Svi vole subotu večer* (Liliana Vujic)

MANDARIN: *dàjiā dōu ài xīngqīliú wǎnshàng!* (Liliana Vujic)

HINDI: *Sabko shanivaar ki raat pasand hai* (Elora Tellis-Noyak)

ITALIAN: *Tutti amano sabato sera* (Elora Tellis-Noyak)

ROMANIAN: *Toata lumea iubeste sambata noaptea* (Nicole Sandu)

HEBREW: *Kulanu ohavim leyl Shabbat*
(Erin Flynn, Bryna Cytrynbaum, Rocky Cytrynbaum, and Sanna Longden)

YIDDISH: *Yeder einer hot lib Shabbos bainacht*
(Bryna Cytrynbaum, Sanna Longden, and Gabriel David Martino)

FRENCH: *Tout le monde aime le samedi soir*
(Christine Tiseo, Jessica Hergott Martino, and Gabriel David Martino)

SPANISH: *Todos aman sábado en noche*
(Marina Nichole Martinez and Albert Martinez)

HAWAIIAN: *Pilialoha kakou po a `ono*
(Carole Lanialoha Lee-Sumberg, Paige Hinano Sumberg, and Alan Kamae Sumberg)

NIGERIAN: *Bobowaro faro satodeh* (Tony Seeger)

Everybody, everybody, everybody, everybody
Everybody loves Saturday night.

CHORUS

22

I'M ON MY WAY

TONY SEEGER, BANJO AND VOCALS; CHILDREN'S AND PARENTS' CHORUS

This is another song based on an African American spiritual. It has a call-and-response structure, with the song leader singing a line and the chorus singing it back, until the last line, which they all sing together. This song was also sung during the U.S. Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. There are many verses from which to choose for different purposes and sentiments. At camps, setting out on a hike is one of them.

I'm on my way
I'm on my way
And I won't turn back
And I won't turn back (3x)

I'm on my way
Great God I'm on my way

I'm on my way to the freedom land . . .

I asked my sister to come with me . . .

If she says no, I'll go alone . . .

I'm on my way and I won't turn back . . .

23

SLOOP JOHN B.

CHRIS WALZ, GUITAR AND MANDOLIN; ELLA JENKINS, HARMONICA AND VOCALS

This traditional song from the Bahamas was first collected in 1916. A 1950 recording by the Weavers brought it to a larger audience, and it has subsequently been recorded by many groups into the 21st century. At Camp Killooleet we usually avoided this song during the early weeks of summer camp because of campers' homesickness, but after a while camp became "home" and everyone could comfortably sing the chorus.

We come on the sloop John B.
My grandfather and me
Around Nassau town we did roam
Drinking all night, I got into a fight
Well I feel so break up, I want to go home.

CHORUS:

So hoist up the John B. sails
See how the mainsail sets
Send for the Captain ashore, let me go home
Let me go home, I wanna go home
I feel so break up, I wanna go home.

Well the first mate he got drunk
And broke up the people's trunks
The constable come on board to take him away
Sheriff John Stone, please leave me alone
I feel so break up, I wanna go home.

CHORUS

Well the poor cook he got the fits, threw away all of our grits
And then he went and he ate up all of our corn
Please let me go home, please let me go home
For this is the worst trip since I have been born.

CHORUS WITH THE LAST LINE REPEATED

24

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

TONY SEEGER, BANJO AND VOCALS; CHRIS WALZ, GUITAR; KATE SEEGER, AUTOHARP AND VOCALS; JUDY SEEGER, VOCALS; CHILDREN'S AND ADULT CHORUSES

This is yet another African American spiritual that has been adapted to summer camp use. It was also used during the marches and demonstrations of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement of the mid-20th century. I began this performance telling the children that everybody is different, and everybody has his or her own light. This is a song about letting your light shine everywhere: in school, in camp, and all around the world.

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (3X)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine (3X)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Down at my school, I'm gonna let it shine (3X)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Back at my camp, I'm gonna let it shine (3X)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

All around the world, I'm gonna let it shine (3X)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

25

GOODNIGHT, IRENE

TONY SEEGER, BANJO AND VOCALS; CHORUS VOCALS; ELLA JENKINS, HARMONICA

This song was one of the many that Huddie Ledbetter, known as Lead Belly, taught musicians in the folk revival. The Weavers' recording of it was number 1 on the popular music hit parade in 1950.

Last Saturday night I got married
Me and my wife settled down
Now me and my wife are parted
I'm gonna take a little stroll downtown.

CHORUS:
Irene, goodnight, Irene goodnight
Goodnight Irene, goodnight Irene
I'll see you in my dreams.

Stop your ramblin'/Stop your gamblin'
Stop stayin' out late at night
Come home to your wife and your family, Lord
Stay home by your fireside bright.

CHORUS

Sometimes I live in the country
And sometimes I live in the town
Sometimes I take a great notion
To jump into the river and drown.

CHORUS

Sometimes she wears pajamas
Sometimes Irene wears a gown
But when they are both in the laundry
Irene is the talk of the town.

CHORUS (2X)



FURTHER LISTENING

Folkways Records, now part of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, released a number of camp music LPs in the late 1950s.

Camp Songs. 1955. The Song Swappers. Folkways Records FW07628.

We've Got Some Singing to Do. 1958. The Folksmiths. Folkways Records FW02407.

The Songs of Camp. 1959. Recorded and produced by Ed Badeaux. Folkways Records FW07510.

An immense amount of material is available on YouTube, but of a highly variable quality.

FURTHER READING

(these sources have their own bibliographies):

Averill, Patricia. 2014. *Camp Songs, Folk Songs.* Bloomington, IN: Xlibris LLC. www.xlibris.com.

Cohen, Judah M. 2006. "And the Youth Shall See Visions": Songleading, Summer Camps, and Identity Among Reform Jewish Children," in Susan Boynton and Roe-Min Kok, eds., *Musical Childhoods and the Cultures of Youth*, 187–207. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Seeger, Anthony, and Kate Seeger. 2006. "Beyond the Embers of the Campfire: The Ways of Music at a Residential Children's Summer Camp." *World of Music* 48(1): 33–65.

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CAMP SONGS

WITH

ELLA JENKINS

& FRIENDS

Renowned children's performer Ella Jenkins has vivid memories of singing at summer camps, and if you were a camper, you must too! She and her friends invite you to share those experiences and celebrate her 60 years as a Folkways artist with this recording. Ella assembled a group of children, parents, and teachers from the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago, along with Tony and Kate Seeger from Camp Killooleet, to sing these classic camp songs, rounds, silly songs, and campfire sing-alongs with you. Move along with them and make them your own! Most of all, have fun!

62 MINUTES, 36-PAGE BOOKLET WITH SONG LYRICS INCLUDED.

1. ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT 1:01
2. DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE 3:22
3. VIVE LA COMPAGNIE 2:01
4. THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND 3:28
5. TUMBALALAIKA 1:24
6. SHALOM CHAVERIM 0:57
7. TZENA, TZENA, TZENA 2:21
8. KUMBAYA 3:50
9. DOWN IN THE VALLEY 2:51
10. UNION MAID 2:30
11. ONE BOTTLE OF POP 1:48
12. HILL WAS STEEP AND TALL (WHEN I SIGNED UP FOR THIS HIKE) 4:03
13. MRS. MURPHY'S CHOWDER 2:48
14. SIPPING CIDER THROUGH A STRAW 1:13
15. THE DAMPER SONG 0:59
16. TO STOP THE TRAIN 0:55
17. THE COURT OF KING CARACTACUS 4:10
18. SWEETLY SINGS THE DONKEY 0:59
19. THE CUCKOO 0:55
20. MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE 1:51
21. EVERYBODY LOVES SATURDAY NIGHT 7:53
22. I'M ON MY WAY 2:13
23. SLOOP JOHN B. 3:27
24. THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE 1:53
25. GOODNIGHT, IRENE 3:07



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