



*The Boarding Party*  
*'Tis Our Sailing Time*

Folk-Legacy CD-97

# THE BOARDING PARTY

## *'Tis Our Sailing Time*

CD-97

1. Bristol Channel Jamboree (3:19)
2. Haul Awa' (2:58)
3. Otho's Song (2:51)
4. The *Alabama* (3:47)
5. The Cruiser *Baltimore* (1:39)
6. The Hogeys Man (1:44)
7. Solid Fas' (3:17)
8. The Seaman's Hymn & Eternal Father (2:47)
9. Come Down, You Roses (2:56)
10. Dead Horse (1:42)
11. Johnson Girls (2:05)
12. Truxton's Victory (2:48)
13. The Sailor's Alphabet (3:59)
14. The Shanghaied Dredger (3:19)
15. Shallow Brown (2:33)
16. The Farewell Shanty (2:29)

Folk-Legacy Records

<http://www.folklegacy.com>

# THE BOARDING PARTY

## *'Tis Our Sailing Time*

As you listen to *'Tis Our Sailing Time*, the exuberance, enthusiasm, and love that The Boarding Party has for this music is quickly apparent. Each song has been thoroughly discussed and arranged, using the group's vast collective knowledge of the sea, ships, music and lore. What was not known was researched – be it slang terms, ship's parts, pronunciation of words, geographical locations or whatever. The harmonious blending of voices and vibrant delivery are the result of hundreds of hours of singing together.

An often sea-related term of “motley crew” is one I sometimes affectionately call this group of fine singers, for in its real meaning “motley”, according to Webster, means: of many colors; of many different elements; heterogeneous – which aptly describes both the songs “The Boarding Party” sings and the group itself. Washington, D.C., based, the five members come from both sides of the Atlantic and bring an extensive background of music, performing, and nautical experience to this record.

Tom McHenry left his native West Virginia fifteen years ago and has been a Washington, D.C., area resident ever since. A financial manager with the Navy, he spends a great deal of his “spare time” as a chief medical corpsman in the Naval Reserve, with nearly twenty years of service. Tom's musical background runs the gamut from jugbands and country-western to the harmony singing of “Rock Creek” (a group which can be heard on Folk-Legacy's Sharon Mountain Harmony – FSI-86) and sea shanties. He has owned and learned his way around on his own sailing vessel. Tom has an incredible repertoire of songs and is a storehouse of nautical and historical information.

K.C. King, with thirty years as a musician and sailor under his keel, adds a “fo'c's'le tenor” to “The Boarding Party” and provides banjo and concertina to the occasional instrumental numbers. As a data processing consultant, he has worked on five continents, using his music as a language and cultural barrier breaker. Off shore, he has skippered and crewed sailing craft, as well as served on the sloop Clearwater, thereby acquiring a wealth of nautical experience and lore. K.C. says “The Boarding Party” combines his love for sailing, good music, and good times all into one.

Bob Hitchcock came to the U.S. from Sussex, England, eight years ago – definitely the colonies' gain. He met up with the rest of the “The Boarding Party” when he moved to

Washington, D.C., in 1978. A computer systems analyst/programmer, he has been playing the guitar for twenty of his thirty-two years (he prides himself in being the youngest member of the group). Descended from generations of officers in the Royal Navy, he has always loved ships and the sea. Bob is well rooted in traditional British music, versed in many other styles, and plays mandolin in addition to guitar.

Jonathan Eberhart has been involved in folk music since the late 1950's and has been singing shanties since the early '60's. He helped sail the Hudson River sloop Clearwater down the Atlantic Coast on her maiden voyage, using shanties as the work songs they are. Jonathan is especially interested in the backgrounds and styles of the songs he sings, as well as in the people who lived and sang them, and researches constantly. A singer, guitarist, and songwriter, his recordings include an album of shanties with Louis Killen and his own album, *Life's Trolley Ride* (Folk-Legacy's FSI-82). Jonathan is the Space Sciences Editor of *Science News* magazine.

Dave Diamond is a Londoner who has lived for many years in the United States and is currently working as a data processing manager at the U.S. Embassy in London. The recording session cleverly coincided with his home leave. Dave has sung with both British and American shanty groups. Among this eclectic group one finds a total of over 100 years of singing traditional music!

Diverse, well researched, and presented with "The Boarding Party's" striking blend of voices, the songs on this album will absorb all who listen to the call of the sea.

*Mia Gardiner*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*'Tis Our Sailing Time* reflects the contributions of many people, some of them from before it was even contemplated, and all of us in "The Boarding Party" are grateful for their involvement. Several of these songs, for example, have appeared nowhere else on record (or even in books) to our knowledge, and our sincere thanks go to those friends and acquaintances, named elsewhere in these notes, through whom these rarities came to us. Also, documenting such songs (as well as some of the better known ones), often from sketchy or conflicting information, was aided by the efforts of numerous "consultants", including but not limited to Gerry Parsons and Joe Hickerson at the

Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress and Eva Slezak of the Pratt Library in Baltimore. All of these people have helped with what we hope is not only a satisfying musical experience, but a meaningful addition to the music of the waters.

Thanks, too, to Bob Anderson, who took the striking cover photo as a generously self-imposed assignment during which we were pleased to see him find the setting as inspiring for photography as we do for singing. Sandy and Caroline Paton wove a comfortable environment around the actual recording of the songs, which surely shows in the results. Joanne Silberner crossed the ocean and reunited us with a Fisherman's Friend, while Amy Shiver provided a mandolin in time of need. In the longer (and still on-going) run – or haul – Gail McHenry, Nancy King and Molly Diamond have our gratitude for putting up with the disruptions caused by “The Boarding Party’s” sometimes crazed schedule. Another kind of appreciation goes to Nancy Brennan of the Constellation Foundation, for caring about that great ship in particular and about those who share that feeling.

(There is some music of the islands on this record, and we're thankful also for certain other island activities that played a part, carried on by Pusser's Ltd. on Tortola in the British Virgin Islands and by the Laphroaig Distillery on Islay in Scotland's Inner Hebrides.)

Finally our special thanks to Mia Gardiner, for caring about this “motley crew” and helping in numerous ways with long hours and a sense of order that has contributed not only to this record but to “The Boarding Party” as a group.

*Jonathan Eberhart*

## THE SONGS

### 1. BRISTOL CHANNEL JAMBOREE

*Led by Bob Hitchcock*

How better to begin this album than with a shanty – one of the worksongs of the sea – used to keep the hands together while heaving at the windlass to weigh anchor before setting sail? The verses of this one actually tick off the landmarks on the way into port, but they could thus have been inspirational to sailors anticipating those welcome sights on the trip home.

Shantymen strung together familiar place names from each of the great ports of England. One London version begins all the way out at the Lizard Light, at the mouth of the English Channel, and continues right into the Blackwell Docks. A Liverpool variation starts with the first sight of Holyhead in Anglesey, 70 miles short of home (another commences even farther away, as the Irish coast first comes into view). The version Bob sings here came from Erik Ilott of Bristol, a valued friend of ours (and wonderful source of songs and lore) who has sailed the seven seas in Britain's Royal and Merchant Navies and well knows the way up his own beloved Bristol Channel – “to me,” he says, “always one of the most beautiful runs in the world.” Erik pieced the song together from fragments recalled by another old sailor, Jim Crissup, and filled it in from his own experience.

The approach to the channel, he says, “takes you up the North Devon and Somerset coast, passing the Island of Lundy, Steep Holm and Flat Holm with England to the starboard and beautiful Wales on your port. It was a run full of interest, especially if the destination was the Bristol City docks with the tow up the River Avon of about seven miles. Then past the village of Pill, the village which has always been the home of the Bristol Channel pilots - and still is. Then on past

Shirehampton, round the horseshoe bend, past the old Roman dock of Sea Mills. Then the most glorious bit of all through the Avon Gorge. What a magnificent sight! Under old Brunel's Suspension Bridge into the locks and Floating Harbor, right into the center of the city. At one time this was a forest of ships' masts. Bristol was then known as 'the city of church spires and masts.'”

This description, by the way, comes from 25 pages of exhaustive, illustrated notes Erik wrote for an album of his own, Shipshape and Bristol Fashion. (You can get a cassette of it, notes and all, from Erik himself by sending £6.50 – work out the proper exchange rate for yourself – to Montague Hill, Kingsdown, Bristol BS2 8ND England.) Many of his songs are ones he collected from the retired seamen who comprise the Bristol Shiplovers Society, for which he was long the shantyman. In “Bristol Channel Jamboree,” he adds, “the reference to ‘dump your bed and stow your gear’ alludes to the custom of dumping the mattresses filled with straw (the donkey's breakfast) over the side. After a long time at sea, the straw was usually in tiny bits, the mattress iron-hard and more than likely full of bed bugs, the curse of the sailor.

Thinking of Erik also reminds us often of his good wife Katy, whom we met all too briefly in 1981 and who passed away the following year, just a week before we reached

lock. "I was about eight when he left the boat, but I helped him," Otho reminisced many years later. "I helped him open the gates, turn the paddles up and leave the water in or out. I helped him do anything that's supposed to be done around a lock." By about 1916, however, he was back on the boats again. "Boating was never lonesome to me," he said, "because you'd see different things every day... it never got tiresome." (He made those remarks to Elizabeth Kytle, whose wonderful book, *Home on the Canal*, filled with history, lore and first-person recollections by Otho Swain and other canal folk – but no songs, unfortunately – has just been published by Seven Locks Press, Box 72, Cabin John, Maryland 20818 \$19.95.)

Otho sang this song one day in 1975 for Reed Martin, who had gone to see whether this old canal fellow might be interested in taking part in the first annual Maryland Folklife Festival. Otho declined, saying he only knew the one song, and we've found only two others in years of hunting. Reed taped the song, and played the tape the same day for Jonathan. We do it with Jonathan singing lead and playing the guitar, Tom on harmonica, K.C. on banjo and Bob on mandolin. It didn't come with a title, so we've named it after Otho himself, as close a link with the living C&O as one could hope to find. Otho Swain died in the summer of 1976.

The "G.L." in the song was George

L. Nicholson, general manager of the canal for nearly half a century. He would regularly ride his lavish "pay-boat," complete with chef, the length of the canal to bring the lock-tenders their wages, but the boatmen themselves had to go up to Nicholson's office in the Canal Towing Company building, which still stands in Washington at the foot of Wisconsin Avenue. "Wardell's" was a bar (Tom can vouch for it first-hand) near the canal in Paw Paw, West Virginia, frequented by the boatmen.

I was comin' 'round the mountain and  
the wind did blow, honey.  
Comin' 'round the mountain and wind  
did blow,  
Couldn't hear a thing but the rudder  
blade row,  
Honey, oh, darling of mine.

Well, I ain't got no whiskey but I will  
have some, honey (yes I will),  
I ain't got no whiskey but I will have some  
When this boat gets to Washington,  
Honey, oh, darling of mine.

Well, I ain't got no money but I will  
have some, honey (uh-huh),  
Ain't got no money but I will have some  
When this boat gets to Washington,  
Honey, oh, darling of mine.

I'll go up to the office and I'll see G.L., honey,  
Goin' up to the office and I'll see G.L.,

England on a performing tour. We will miss her.

Now me lads be of good cheer,  
For the Isle of Lundy it draws near,  
So dump your bed and stow your gear,  
Oh, Jinny, keep your tail-piece warm.

Whup jamboree, whup jamboree,  
Ring-tail black man come up behind,  
Whup jamboree, whup jamboree,  
Jinny, keep your tail-piece warm.

Now Hartland point it is in sight,  
On the port bow is Lundy's light.  
We'll be stokin' of the fire tonight.  
Jinny, keep your tail-piece warm.

A pilot-cutter is up ahead.  
To the weather, me lads, a-heavin' of the lead.  
Tonight we'll sleep in a feather bed.  
Jinny, keep your tail-piece warm.

Now we're near the Foreland Light,  
And Bridgewater Bay it hoves in sight.  
We're clear of the Culver sands all right.  
Jinny, keep your tail-piece warm.

Oh, Brean Down, Steep Holm and  
Walton Bay.  
Ah, soon, me lads, we'll be getting' our pay.  
We've waited a long time for this day.  
Jinny, keep your tail-piece warm.

Now we're hauling through the lock  
And the pretty girls to the locks do flock,  
And there's my Jinny in a brand-new frock.  
Jinny, keep your tail-piece warm.

Oh, now I'm safe and on the shore;  
I don't give a damn how the waves do roar.  
I'll swallow the anchor, go to sea no more.  
Jinny, keep your tail-piece warm.

## **2. HAUL AWA'** (*trad./Simpson*) *Led by Tom McHenry*

Tom learned this plaintive lament from Lucy Simpson, but, unfortunately for such a beautiful song, all too little seems to be known about it. Robin Roberts (now Robin Howard) recorded it in the late 1950's as "Love is Kind," and says she heard it from a Massachusetts (she thinks New Bedford) woman named Mrs. Walsh, who had gotten it in turn from "a retired clipper ship's sailor." As Robin learned it (and sang it on her album, *Fair and Tender Ladies, Tradition TLP 1033*), the chorus went "Ee awa," and Norman Kennedy notes that in Gaelic, the phrase "I a bha," pronounced the same, would essentially mean "She that's gone," certainly appropriate to the theme of a lost love. "Haul awa'," in our version, is fitting in another way, with the song's gentle rhythm evoking, for example, the measured hauling of oars that may be taking the sailor to



his ship, and to a long separation from life ashore. (The last two verses, by the way, are Lucy's own, although Tom sings "story" where Lucy sings "blessing.")

Love is kind to the least of men,  
Haul awa', haul awa',  
Though he be but a drunken tar,  
Haul awa'.

Once I had a star-eyed maid;  
I was content with her to lay.

In the comfort of her bed,  
Let me lay until I'm dead.

Take my body to the shore.  
Star-eyed maid, I'll sail no more.

Here's my story – let it be.  
May you love as she loved me.

Love is kind to the least of men,  
Though he be but a drunken tar.

### 3. OTHO'S SONG

*Led by Jonathan Eberhart*

The Chesapeake and Ohio canal, running along the Potomac River's Maryland side, is certainly a different environment from the deep water that inspires most of our songs, but it holds a special meaning for "The

Boarding Party" as a part of our home waters. Nowadays, mules tow its barges only on short tourist runs over the few miles between Washington, D.C., and Great Falls, but at one time the canal extended nearly 185 miles to Cumberland, moving more than 500 boats a day filled with coal, grain, stone and other cargo. Begun in 1828, it took 22 trouble-filled years to complete, with an investment equivalent, as a percentage of the gross national product, to the effort of putting a man on the moon. For the people who tended its locks and captured its boats, the C&O was a way of life, until a catastrophic flood and competition from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (ironically begun the same day as the canal's ground-breaking) ended its operation in 1924. Songs from the C&O's working years, however, are rare indeed, and we're pleased to be able to include one of them here, learned from a man who came as close as anyone ever did to having the canal flowing in his veins.

Otho Swain was born on a C&O canal boat at Stop Lock at Great Falls, on July 24, 1901. His grandfather helped build the canal. His father, besides spending many years as a lock-tender (Swain's Lock was named for him), was also a canal boatman, as were Otho's several uncles and uncles-in-law, and Swains still abound in C&O country. Otho stayed with the boat where he was born for several years, then moved with his father to live at the

Get some money just as sure as hell,  
It's honey, darling of mine.

And on my way I'll stop at Wardell's, honey,  
And on my way I'll stop at Wardell's,  
I'll get some whiskey just as sure as hell,  
It's honey, darling of mine.

So when we get them mules I'll say, darlin'.  
When we get them mules I'll say  
"I'll feed 'em corn and you feed 'em hay,"  
Honey, oh, darling of mine.

Oh, when we reach that boat I'll say, darlin'.  
When we reach that boat I'll say,  
"I ain't gonna work, gonna drink all day."  
Honey, darling of mine.

I was a-comin' 'round the mountain and  
the wind did blow, honey.  
Comin' 'round the mountain and the  
wind did blow,  
Couldn't hear a thing but the rudder  
blade row,  
Honey, darling of mine.  
It's comin' 'round the mountain and the  
wind did blow,  
Couldn't hear a thing but the rudder  
blade row,  
It's honey, oh, darling of mine.  
Honey, oh, darling of mine.

#### 4. THE ALABAMA

*Led by K.C. King*

The Civil War confrontation between the Confederate States Steamer *Alabama* and the U.S.S. *Kearsarge* marked the end of an era: it was essentially the last major sea-battle between wooden-hulled ships. Fought in international waters outside the French port of Cherbourg on Sunday, June 19, 1864, it brought together a notorious (or famous, depending on your sympathies) southern raider and a Yankee avenger who had been anticipating his chance for almost two years. The shanty that tells the story appeared not long after the event, and has been used at both halyards and pumps, and probably as a forebiter as well, much as K.C. sings it here. And there is plenty to be read between the lines of this bizarre but true tale.

"The *Alabama's* keel was laid" – but not as that of the *Alabama*. The Confederate commerce-raider-to-be was built in England, but Union spies were everywhere, so she was identified only by her construction number, 290, and said to be destined for Italy. Even so, her secret purpose was discovered, and officials of the Crown (after desperate weeks of arm-twisting by America) were literally only hours away from permanently blocking her departure, when... "Down the Mersey River she sailed then" – but only because a Confederate agent, learning of the plan, hastily

fading from the scene of wooden-hulled combat vessels, almost no new warships were built for the U.S. Navy for nearly two decades. The *Baltimore* was part of the “new Navy” – a so-called “protected cruiser,” armored with four inches of steel on deck and three inches on the turrets of her 10 six-inch guns (and weighing 4,600 tons as a result), yet capable of speeds above 20 knots. Built in Philadelphia, she was commissioned on Jan. 7, 1890, but it was four months before she paid a visit to her namesake city. When she arrived on May 8, the effect on some Baltimoreans was more like that of a visit from the space shuttle than from a ship of war. “The city went wild,” says one contemporary account, and the celebration lasted five days as thousands of people swarmed over the vessel, eager to wine and dine the crew and share vicariously in America’s reemergence on the high seas. (The ship would later play a major role as part of the famous “White Squadron” – the first group of American warships to maneuver as a fleet – in Admiral George Dewey’s one-sided “victory” in the Philippines in 1898.) On May 9, with the hubbub at its height, Itzel’s song was added into the third act of a play (*A Dark Secret*) at Ford’s Opera House (opening, strangely, a scene during which the Henley Regatta takes place on stage), where it was sung by members of the West Baltimore Amateur Musical Association. Printed copies of the words (but not the music) were handed out to

the audience – and it may be one of those that Andy Wallace discovered in the same magic trunk that had produced “The Shangaied Dredger.” We were anxious to add it to our “local waters” collection, so Jonathan and Bob composed a tune; when we subsequently found the original to sound more like a Sousa march than like something nautical, we decided to keep our own.

Hurrah for the cruiser *Baltimore*,  
Hurrah for the clipper ships of yore  
That flung their white wings to the breeze  
And led the van in all the seas.  
The *Baltimore*, the *Baltimore*,  
And all the clipper ships of yore.  
The *Baltimore*, the *Baltimore*,  
And all the clipper ships of yore.

By freemen forged from deck to keel,  
Her iron ribs and plates of steel.  
And every plank by freemen trod  
Drew life and strength from freedom’s sod.  
The *Baltimore*, the *Baltimore*,  
The gallant cruiser *Baltimore*.  
The *Baltimore*, the *Baltimore*,  
The gallant cruiser *Baltimore*.

Look where she floats, all trim and neat,  
The swiftest racer of our fleet,  
Manned by a bold and valiant crew,  
In freedom’s cause to dare and do.  
Oh, seamen now and evermore,

contrived to have her sent on a “brief shake-down cruise,” made respectable-looking by a party of well-dressed ladies who were even more hastily invited to have lunch on the deck, so that even the shipyard hands at Laird’s assumed she’d be back. Launched under the pseudonym *Enrica*, she was barely underway when a prearranged tugboat whisked away the passengers, and the ship headed straight for the open sea and off to the Azores. Only then, in a ship-to-ship rendezvous while she was supposedly taking on coal, was she “Liverpool-fitted with guns and men” – a crew described by her own skipper as “a motley gang...swept up from the grogeries of Liverpool in the belief that they were shipping on a sort of privateer, where they would have a jolly good time and plenty of license.” And, oh, the skipper: Raphael Semmes (a local boy to us, born in Charles County, Maryland), who had been in the U.S. Navy since 1826, but who had secretly started shipping munitions to the South at the first hints of secession. Now a captain for the rebels, Semmes took *Enrica* out from the “Western Isles” (the Azores) and, under cover of darkness, ran up the Confederate flag, rechristened his ship with her true name – *Alabama* – and set out “to destroy the commerce of the North.” He nearly succeeded. Or at least he earned the sincere gratitude of many English merchant ship-owners when they found out how many Yankee merchants were refusing to ship their

goods across the Atlantic in Union vessels. In 22 months, *Alabama* captured 63 Northern merchant ships, sank a Yankee warship on the high seas and did more than \$6,500,000 worth of damage to the enemy’s commerce. (The other 11 raiders sent out by the Confederacy together accounted for only about \$9,000,000 more.)

On June 11, 1864, however, she sailed into Cherbourg for an overhaul – and the die was cast. Even as Semmes was requesting permission to use the French government dock, a cable flashed to Capt. J.A. Winslow of the *Kearsarge*, then in the Netherlands, alerting him to the enemy’s presence and condition. (Ironically, the two seamen had once been on the same side, sharing a stateroom during the Mexican War in the 1840’s. But Winslow had also been one of three Union skippers who later cornered Semmes aboard another command – the Confederacy’s *Sumter* – from which plight the turncoat was merely set free.) Steaming straight for Cherbourg, Winslow sent a message via the American consul, challenging Semmes and the *Alabama* to come out and fight. This time, the word had gotten around to more than secret agents. By the time the renowned raider emerged from the harbor to take up the gauntlet, some 15,000 people from both sides of the channel had gathered on the coastal bluffs to watch. The battle lasted about 65 minutes, as *Alabama’s* bulwarks were progressively shot

away, her guns dismantled and her decks splintered. The final blow was an 11-inch shell that crashed in at the waterline and exploded in the engine room. “The *Alabama* was seen no more.”

But even the fight itself was more than met the eye. In this “last battle of wooden-hulled ships,” Winslow had draped the engine room area of *Kearsarge’s* hull with an improvised armor – lengths of chain that normally resided in the chain locker below decks but were now hung outside against the planking, concealed by painted boards. Even Semmes could tell, as his own ship was being destroyed around him, that some of *Alabama’s* solid shot seemed to be bouncing off. But mismatch or not, the conflict was the stuff of legend. “The victory of the *Kearsarge* over the *Alabama* raised me up,” later wrote the famed Admiral Farragut. “I would sooner have fought that fight than any other ever fought on the ocean.”

Oh, The *Alabama’s* keel was laid,  
Roll, *Alabama*, roll,  
It was laid in the yard of Jonathan Laird,  
Oh, roll, *Alabama*, roll.

It was laid in the yard of Jonathan Laird,  
It was laid in the town of Birkenhead.

Down the Mersey River she sailed then,

She was Liverpool-fitted with guns and men.

From the Western Isles she sailed forth  
To destroy the commerce of the North.

To fight the North, Semmes did employ  
Any method to kill and destroy.

Into Cherbourg port she sailed one day  
To take her share of the prize money.

Every sailor then he saw his doom,  
When the *Kearsarge* she hove into view.

Then a ball from the forward pivot that day  
Shot the *Alabama’s* stern away.

At the three-mile limit in ’64  
The *Alabama* was seen no more.

## 5. THE CRUISER *BALTIMORE*

Led by Jonathan Eberhart

A quarter-century after the saga of “The *Alabama*” reflected the ending of one era in American naval history; this song came along from the beginning of the next. The Sun newspaper of Baltimore commissioned it in 1890 from local composer Adam Itzel, Jr., “dedicated... to the gallant warship that bears the name of the monumental city.”

Following the Civil War, and the

Keep bright her name of *Baltimore*.  
Oh, seamen now and evermore,  
Keep bright her name of *Baltimore*.

A thousand hearts will follow thee  
To every port and every sea,  
Brothers and friends where storm winds blow  
Or beats the sun or falls the snow.  
All hail with joy the wide world o'er  
The twice dear name of *Baltimore*.  
All hail with joy the wide world o'er  
The twice dear name of *Baltimore*.

## 6. THE HOG EYE MAN

*Led by Bob Hitchcock*

This shanty dates from the California gold rush of 1849-50 and is probably of American origin, although it became common enough among British deep-water sailors. As no transcontinental rail service yet existed (although the gold rush would help it along), people and supplies often had to sail from East Coast ports on the long trip around Cape Horn at the southern tip of Chile and up to the coast of California, with San Francisco being the primary port. A “hog-eye” is said to have been a type of barge that was probably used to transport supplies in from the deep-water ships to their ultimate destinations. The term “navvy” is normally used to describe a

railway construction worker (derived from “navigator,” which in England referred to the Irish laborers who built the canals and railways), who at the time of this song in America would have been mostly Irish or black. Versions of this song have been collected on both sides of the Atlantic, and folklorist Vance Randolph found some in southern Missouri, which might indicate that it was picked up in New Orleans by the inland watermen working on the Mississippi and then transferred to hill folk of the Ozarks, more than 1,000 miles from the sea.

Most collectors of this song have reported that it was largely unprintable (and therefore not printed), so this version has been pieced together from various texts. Most of the offensive references have been changed. Bob sings it to a tune from *Sea Songs and Shanties* by Capt. W. B. Whall, who in 11 years at sea wrote down the songs just as he heard them, and never “searched through the British Museum” for some “correct(?)” version.

Go and fetch me down my riding cane,  
For I'm going to see my darling Jane.  
With a hogeye;  
Railroad navvy with a hogeye.  
Row ashore with a hogeye, oh,  
She wants a hogeye man.

Oh, the hogeye sailors roll and go

National Lifeboat Institution, as well as by maritime services in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. William Whiting wrote the words in 1860, and they were set to John B. Dykes' tune, "Melita", the following year. Later verses have been composed for those whose service is on land and in the air, but this record is of the sea, and for those who sail the waves.

Come all ye bold seamen, wherever  
    you're bound,  
And always let Nelson's proud memory  
    go 'round.  
And pray that the wars and the tumult  
    may cease,  
For the greatest of gifts is a sweet,  
    lasting peace.  
May the Lord put an end to these cruel,  
    old wars,  
And bring peace and contentment to all  
    our brave tars.

Eternal Father, strong to save,  
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,  
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep  
Its own appointed limits keep,  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee  
For those in peril on the sea.  
Amen.

## 9. COME DOWN, YOU ROSES

*Led by Jonathan Eberhart*

This fascinating song – or shanty –

or mantra – was collected in the Bahamas in August of 1935 by Alan Lomax, Zora Neale Hurston and Mary Elizabeth Barnicle, and we're grateful to Bob Walser for a copy of the transcription he wrote out from listening to their original field recording. We don't know that it was a shanty, but it has that character, and if so, it's a remarkable one. Whereas most shanties and similar worksongs merely alternate between a line from the shantyman or leader and a response from the crew, this one offers... counterpoint!

As it was done by Henry Lundy and "Pappie", one of them would sing a line of a verse (actually, the verses are only one line long, or else the whole song is one continuous verse), and then continue on with the chorus, while the other joined in with an overlapping, but rhythmically different chorus part. We've separated it into three parts, with Jonathan taking the lead while Bob Hitchcock and K.C. sing what used to the leader's chorus part (leaving more room to stretch out the lead lines), as Tom and Dave handle another part of the chorus. As Jonathan sings it, the verses never come out the same way twice – in fact he gets downright carried away – but improvisation is very much a part of the tradition, particularly in the West Indies, though few if any other shanties, even there, offer such chances for having fun with the rhythm.

The source of the song poses the

When they come down to San Francisco.

And Sally's in the garden, picking peas;  
Her golden hair hangs down to her knee.

And Sally's in the garden, shelling peas;  
Her little hogeye a-sitin' on her knee.

And Sally's in the kitchen, making duff;  
The cheeks of her arse go chuff, chuff, chuff.

Oh, it's who's been here since I've been gone?  
A railroad navy with his seaboots on.

It's a hogeye ship and a hogeye crew,  
A hogeye mate and skipper, too.

## 7. SOLID FAS'

*Led by Jonathan Eberhart*

This rowing shanty, used on the whaleboats out of Barouallie on the Caribbean island of St. Vincent, comes not as a relic of a century or more ago, but from a 1966 field recording by Roger Abrahams, who found it still in use for its intended purpose. It appears in his book, *Deep the Water, Shallow the Shore* (the only book we know of devoted to West Indian shantying, but unfortunately out of print), and we were particularly drawn to it by the “un-nautical” harmonies in the last line of the chorus when he generously sent us a copy of

his original tapes.

It is clearly related to the song “Shenandoah,” often used as a capstan shanty and the resemblance is not only in the tune. One can easily imagine the “We are bound away from this world of misery” evolving in the West Indies from an unfamiliar “...across the wide Missouri,” and traders and whalers recruited enough of their “checkerboard crews” in the islands for the change to have been a natural one. Different renditions have varied in their similarity to the original “Shenandoah”: Abrahams encountered one that included the line “Salambo, I love your daughter,” with only the name altered, and Jack Stanesco found one two years later in the same village with even “Shenandoah” restored (he later sang it with the Golden Ring on their album *Five Days Singing, Vol. 1*, Folk-Legacy FSI-41). In the version Jonathan sings here, however, no trace of the “Shenandoah story” remains. Instead, it describes the hunting of the blackfish whale, a trade said to have been taught to the men of the local islands by a failed Scots sugar planter and former whaler in the late 1880's. (We've titled the song after the captain's shout when the quarry has been struck by the harpoon.) Six to a boat, and starting from the shore rather than a ship, the crewmen would often face long hauls, sometimes late at night and in squally weather, the melancholy circumstance in which this version was most commonly sung. A West



Indian influence is evident in many shanties – sometimes we can only wonder as to who learned what from whom – and after singing this one awhile, we found the characters and their calls and laments speaking to us in a prideful but poignant way of what whaling in small boats must have been like, not only for the black man in the Caribbean, but for the dour Yankee out of New Bedford as well.

Solid fas', I come to tell you.  
Hurrah, my rolling river.  
"Solid fas'," our captain cry out.  
We are bound away from this world of misery.

Nobody knows about our toilin'.  
Only God Almighty knows about our danger.

"Whale ahead," my little gunman cry out.  
"Solid fas'," my little captain answer.

And on our way, she roll and shiver.  
Down in our way, she spout dirty water.

"Make her so bold," my strokeman cry out.  
"Haul and gi' me," my centerman cry out.

Nobody knows about our hardship.  
Our shipowner, she don't know our hardship.  
Misery into the ocean.  
Misery in the deep, wide ocean.

## 8. THE SEAMEN'S HYMN and ETERNAL FATHER

*Led by Jonathan Eberhart and Bob Hitchcock*

The words of "The Seamen's Hymn" were written by the late A.L. Lloyd, a folklorist, collector and wonderful singer (whom you might have seen as the shantyman aboard Capt. Ahab's *Pequod* in the film of *Moby Dick*). He made the song to provide an ending to a BBC radio program he was producing for Trafalgar Day, commemorating the death of Lord Horatio Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar on Oct. 21, 1805. The tune he apparently found in a group of hymns collected by a Welsh minister, and it bears a strong resemblance to the shape-note hymn, "Prospect", which can be found in the *Original Sacred Harp* (Denson Revision) and several similar compilations. Jonathan learned the song from Louis Killen in 1968, as they were preparing to help sail the Hudson River Sloop *Clearwater* down the Atlantic coast from its Maine birthplace. We have retained the one change Louis made from the original, substituting "all our brave tars" for "all British tars" to broaden this powerful song's appeal.

"Eternal Father" has been the hymn of the U.S. Navy since 1879, when it was first sung at close of worship in the Naval Academy chapel at Annapolis, Maryland, but it is also used by Britain's Royal Navy and Royal

same old mystery. Sailing ships certainly picked up and dropped off crewmen in the islands, and there were enough shanties like “Come Down, You Bunch of Roses” and related “shore songs” to have at least suggested the phrase. But was there really a connection?

An editorial: If you are interested in sea shanties, but think they’ve all been found and published in books already, you’re wrong! Bob Walser found this one, for example, by spending time in the Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress in Washington, listening to their largely uncombed treasure-trove of field recordings, and there are songs on this album that resulted from looking in old trunks, talking to local residents and other kinds of exploration. Go hunting! The unearthing of this song is clear evidence of the musical riches just waiting for anyone with the diligence to seek them out. We’ll all be the richer for it.

*Low chorus:*

Come down, come down you roses, come down.

Come down, come down you roses, come down.

*High chorus:*

Come down, you bunch of roses.

Come down, you bunch of roses.

*Lead voice:*

Oh, come on, you roses  
Oh, you rose in the garden  
Come on, my sweet little roses  
Come on, my little red roses  
Oh come on, you bunch of roses  
Oh come on, you little red roses,  
Little white roses, little red roses  
Oh come on, you rose in the garden,  
come down

Oh come on, my rose in the garden,  
Sweet little roses, oh you roses  
Oh come on, you little red roses, come down  
Oh come on, you lovely roses  
Oh, you bunch of little red roses  
Oh come on, you sweet little roses  
Roses, roses,  
Row, row, roses  
Oh come on, you sweet little roses,  
Little red roses, rose in the garden  
Little black roses, oh my roses,  
Come down, oh my roses  
Come down, you sweet little roses,  
come down

Come down, you sweet little roses  
Oh, little rose in the garden  
Oh come on, you sweet little roses,  
Little red roses, bunch of roses  
Oh you roses, come down roses  
Come down, you sweet little roses,  
come down

Oh, my rose in the garden  
Oh come on, you sweet little roses,  
Little red roses, little white roses  
Oh you roses, a bunch of roses, come down  
Come down, you sweet little roses,

The U.S. frigate *Constellation* was launched near Fell's Point in Baltimore on Sept. 7, 1797, one of the first three ships in the new American Navy. Thereafter, she served through five wars and was continuously on the Navy's lists for an astounding 158 years. In 1854, she had been modified into a sloop-of-war, and enough of her timber has since been replaced through repair and restoration that some quibble about whether the *Constellation* is really there. But still moored in Baltimore Harbor, square-rigged and black-hulled, *Constellation* carries on her tradition with all the charisma of America's oldest warship still afloat. And when added to the feeling of being in our own home waters, singing this song – nearly as old as the ship herself – from her actual foredeck is quite an experience. It was written in March of 1799, only days after the news was received, during the nation-wide orgy of self-congratulation triggered by the American Navy – and *Constellation's* triumphant first victory at sea. Its hero was Capt. Thomas Truxtun, a former privateer and crack skipper who had been sent to the Caribbean three months before to deal with the French ships that were molesting American commerce during the strange, undeclared “quasi-war” with France.

The revolutionary council governing France at the time had been waging a war of survival with Great Britain, and American merchantmen, trying to stay out of the middle,

were finding themselves attacked by both sides. The United States had signed a temporary treaty with Britain, but that merely made the French angrier. By the beginning of 1799, Truxtun and the *Constellation* were on their way to the West Indies. The first few weeks were relatively uneventful. At noon on Saturday, Feb. 9, however, a sail was sighted a few leagues north of the island of Montserrat. Truxtun raised signal flags which should have produced certain others in response from a British man-of-war, but got an incorrect reply; next he signaled for an American warship, and got no response at all. Heading toward the mystery vessel, he was watching as she replaced her American ensign with the French tricolor, and the chase was on. By 3:00, *Constellation*, later referred to as “The Yankee Racehorse,” had nearly closed a gap of perhaps fifteen miles. It was a one-sided battle. With the “enemy's” guns aimed high (in an effort to damage rigging but not hull), the American was able to sail up one side and start down the other, firing full broadsides all the way, until the French commander finally struck his colors and surrendered with heavy casualties. *Constellation's* only fatality was a seaman who had been struck down by his own officer for running from his post.

The victory became even more notable when the loser turned out to be *l'Insurgente*, a frigate reputed to the fastest in the

come down  
Come down, you sweet little roses,  
come down  
Come down, you bunch of roses, come down  
Oh come down, you sweet little roses,  
come down  
Come down, oh you roses, come down  
Oh come down, you sweet little roses,  
Little red roses, little blue roses  
Oh you roses, big black roses  
Come down, you sweet little roses,  
Come down, come down you roses,  
come down.

## 10. DEAD HORSE

*Led be Bob Hitchcock*

This shanty is one of the rare examples used by deep-water sailors for ceremonial purposes. In the days of sail, seamen joining merchant ships were often given an “advance note” equivalent to a month’s wages for signing on. It was intended to be used for the purchase of warm clothing, foul-weather gear and the like, but with the willing help of boarding-house masters and others in port, the money usually went for alcohol and women of questionable morality. The result was that the first month at sea was spent, in a sense, working for no pay – “working for a dead horse”. And at the end of that month, the ceremony of “paying off the dead horse” took place. On that occasion, as approximate effigy of a horse, made

of sailcloth stuffed with straw and weights, would be shouldered or hauled down the deck by the crew to where the captain, or “Old Man,” was waiting (sometimes passing out a ration of grog). “Old man, your horse will die”, proclaims the shanty, and to its rhythm the horse would be attached to a line and hoisted up to the main yardarm, where a waiting crewman, knife in hand, would cut loose the effigy into the sea.

The shanty itself was also used at the halyards and sometimes the capstan on ships from both sides of the Atlantic, although Joanna Colcord, born at sea of a long line of New England seamen, wrote that she had never heard of the actual ceremony being performed aboard an American vessel. It was an impressive though jocular rite, however, and demonstrations of it can be observed regularly at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut. The version Bob sings here is adapted from Stan Hugill’s *Shanties From the Seven Seas*.

A poor old man come a-riding by.  
And we say so, and we hope so.  
I says, “Old man, your horse will die.”  
Poor old horse.  
And if he dies, we’ll tan his hide,  
And if he don’t, we’ll ride him again.

One month this rotten life we’ve led,  
While you lays on your feather bed.

But now your month is up, old Turk.  
Get up, ya swine, and look for work.

Get up ya swine, and look for graft,  
While we lays on and yank you aft.

We'll yank you aft to the cabin door,  
And hope to never see you more.

He's dead as a nail in the lamproom door;  
He's dead as a nail, that son of a whore.

And we'll hoist him up to the main yardarm;  
We'll hoist him up to the main yardarm.

And we'll drop him down in the bottom  
of the sea;  
We'll drop him down in the bottom of the sea.

## 11. JOHNSON GIRLS

*Led by Tom McHenry*

The black crewmen of *The Boys*, a menhaden fishing vessel out of Mayport, Florida, were using this unusual shanty to haul in a well-filled net when Robert Cornwall and Robert Cook recorded them on July 2, 1940. As the crew sang, they were standing in two small “purseboats” that formed a triangle with the ship, and were pulling up the self-closing purse seine net from the water's depths within the formation. They were using the song in a way that was the reverse, in a sense, from how

most sea shanties were applied. The raising of a sail, for example, would typically be done to the rhythm of certain key beats in the chorus. Aboard *The Boys*, however, the men were silent during their actual hauling of the net, singing only when they had stopped to get a new grip, which is the reason for the pauses between verses. Bob Walser learned the song from the original field recording; Tom McHenry learned it from him, and sings it here.

Johnson girls is a-mighty fine girls,  
Walk around, honey, walk around.  
Johnson girls is mighty fine girls,  
Walk around, honey, walk around.

Neat in the waist and got mighty fine legs.  
Neat in the waist and got mighty fine legs.

Great big legs and teeny-eensy feet.  
Great big legs and teeny-eensy feet.

Beefsteak, beefsteak, make a little gravy.  
Your thing, my thing make a little baby.

Way down south, they got the jewmaka jam.  
Hot like cayenne, but it's good, goddamn.  
Johnson girls is a-mighty fine girls.  
Johnson girls is mighty fine girls.

## 12. TRUXTUN'S VICTORY

*Led by Jonathan Eberhart*

French navy and which had outrun every British ship that had chased her. Further embellishing the incident that would so arouse the American public was the fact that *l'Insurgente* had formerly been commanded by Joshua Barney, who had gone to France after quitting the American Navy in a seniority dispute. And as a final touch, Truxtun was able to bring his prize intact to his Caribbean rendezvous port of St. Kitts, as a trophy of the triumph.

By early March, the word had reached the American mainland, triggering festivities on every hand. In Boston, a day of celebration was declared, salutes were fired from shore batteries and the harbor, and “brave Truxtun cock’d and round hats” were sold in the shops. At the Federal Street Theatre, the audience was regaled with “a new patriotic song by Mrs. Rowson” and called “Truxtun’s Victory”. We found out about it 182 years later, when a friend, Dolores Nichols, called Jonathan and mentioned it just 10 days before we were to give a concert from *Constellation’s* foredeck. She had only the words, so Jonathan, who sings them here, wrote a tune, seeking to combine the style of the British ballads that were often adapted for compositions of the day with the martial spirit of the event.

Come all you Yankee sailors,  
With swords and pikes advance.  
‘Tis time to try your courage

And humble haughty France.  
The sons of France our seas invade,  
Destroy our commerce and our trade.  
‘Tis time the reckoning should be paid  
To brave Yankee boys.

On board the *Constellation*  
From Baltimore we came.  
We had a bold commander,  
And Truxtun was his name.  
Our ship she mounted forty guns,  
And on the main so swiftly runs,  
To prove to France Columbia’s sons  
Are brave Yankee boys.

We sailed to the West Indies  
In order to annoy  
The invaders of our commerce,  
To burn, sink and destroy.  
Our *Constellation* shone so bright,  
Those Frenchmen could not bear the sight,  
And away they scampered in a fright  
From brave Yankee boys.

’Twas on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February,  
At Montserrat we lay,  
And there we spied *l’Insurgente*,  
Just at the break of day.  
We raised the orange and the blue  
To see if they our signal knew –  
The *Constellation* and its crew  
Of brave Yankee boys.

measures too short for the words, so we “expanded” it. Given the intended melody, the sound of Bob on mandolin and K.C. on concertina feels just about right, as Jonathan sings the verses. The song’s age is uncertain, but we suspect it to be from about 1880 or 1890, given the presence of other, more datable items in the trunk (such as “The Cruiser *Baltimore*”) and the fact that the oyster industry in the Bay was in its “golden age” at about that time. This doesn’t mean that life for the oystermen then was necessarily golden. There were conflicts over territorial rights to the oyster beds, sometimes between the Bay’s eastern and western shores (one would hear the phrase “eastern shoreners,” pointedly rhyming with “foreigners”) and well as between Virginia and Maryland. Another heated issue was the harvesting of oysters by dredging, usually pronounced “drudging”, in competition with the less-efficient method of long-handled tongs. Short-handed crews would sometimes be augmented by shanghaiing men from Baltimore, Washington and elsewhere later “paying them off with the boom” – knocking them on the head and turning the boat (such as the pungy in this song) away from the wind so that the boom would swing across and sweep them over the side.

The last two lines of the third verse are our own addition (the original broadside, for some reason, simply went straight into the

chorus from “...and then began the fight,” leaving the plot unresolved), but pistols – and heavier arms – were not foreign to the “Oyster Wars” of the time. One police officer in 1906 was described as carrying “a .45-70 rifle which used a lead bullet about the size of a thumb that mushroomed when it hit. One long-time waterman, Edwin W. Beitzell of St. Mary’s County, Maryland, recounts the following anecdote in his book, *Life on the Potomac River*: “Several oystermen,” he writes, “sitting around the pot-bellied stove at Lewis Mattingly’s store on Canoe Neck Creek, were discussing hell. All had had their say except one of the group. When called upon for an opinion he replied, ‘Oh, I ain’t worried none about Hell.’ ‘Well, how is that, Billy – you’re a God-fearing man?’ ‘Yes, sir, I am,’ he replied, ‘but there’s too many drudgers died and gone there – they done tore that place down long ago.’”

Upon the far-off Eastern Shore  
An oyster dredger lay,  
With the seat wore out of his oilskin pants –  
His hat had blown away.  
His clothes were rather seedy,  
And his chance, he knew, was slim  
Of ever reaching Baltimore  
In the pungy he was in.

Now, in spirit he could fancy himself  
In a restaurant again,  
Ordering plates of liver

Then all hands were called to quarters  
While we pursued the chase,  
With well-primed guns, our tompions out,  
And well-spliced the mainbrace.  
Then soon to France we did draw nigh –  
Compelled to fight, they were, or fly.  
These words were passed: “Conquer or die,  
My brave Yankee boys.”

Then loud our cannons thundered,  
With peals tremendous roar,  
And death upon our bullets’ wings  
Then drenched their decks in gore.  
The blood did from their scuppers run;  
Their chief exclaimed, “We are undone!”  
Their flag they struck, the battle was won  
By brave Yankee boys.

Then to St. Kitts we steered  
And brought her safe in port.  
The grand salute was fired,  
And answered from the fort.  
Now sitting ‘round the flowing bowl,  
With hearty glee each jovial soul,  
Drink as you fought – without control –  
My brave Yankee boys.

Now here’s a health to Truxtun,  
Who did not fear the sight,  
And all those Yankee sailors  
Who for their country fight.  
John Adams in full bumpers toast,  
George Washington, Columbia’s boast,  
And now to the girls that we love most,

My brave Yankee boys.

### 13. THE SAILOR’S ALPHABET

*Led by Dave Diamond*

This one has been both a fo’c’sle song, sung by the crew during off-hours in their quarters in the forecandle or fo’c’sle, and a shanty, used mostly at the pumps, where hours-long shifts in the ever-leaking bilges would prompt virtually any song that could ease the work. Dave’s been singing his version for so long that he doesn’t remember just where he got it, but it doesn’t really matter. Sea shanties, like blues, make abundant use of stock phrases and interchangeable “floating” or “zipper” verses, and even such a structured shanty as this one shares some verses with another called “The Bosun’s Alphabet.” One also may find a “Whaleman’s Alphabet,” a “Lumberman’s Alphabet” and variations for other professions. Dave, in fact, once wrote an “alphabet” poem called “A Programmer’s ABC’s” for computer types (“*C stands for COBOL. What a pity it was designed by a committee*”). Its meter is too varied for use as a shanty, even if, say, some nuclear submariner had a use for it and wanted to give it a try, but you can find it in the March 1975 issue of *Datamation*.

A’s for the anchor that lies at our bow,  
B’s for the bowsprit that the jibs all lie low.



C's for the capstan that we all blunder 'round,  
D's for the davits to lower the boats down.

Merrily, merrily, so merry sailed we.  
No mortal on earth like a sailor at sea.  
And it's heave away, haul away, the ship  
rolls along.

Give a sailor his grog and there's nothing  
goes wrong.

E's for the ensign that at our peak flew,  
F's for the fo'c'sle where lives our whole crew.  
G's for the galley where the saltjunk  
smell's from,

H for the halyards we hoist with a song.

I's for the eyebolt, no good for the feet,  
J's for the jib, boys, stand by your lee sheet.  
K's for the knighthead where the petty  
officer stands,  
L's for the lee side, marked "banned" by  
new hands.

M's for the mainmast, it's stout and it's strong,  
N's for the needle – it never points wrong.  
O's for the oars of our own jolly boat;  
P's for the pinnacle, so lively do float.

Q is the quarterdeck where the officers stand.  
R is the rudder, keeps the ship in command.  
S is the stuns'l to drive us along.  
T is the topmast, to get there takes long.

U is the uniform, most of all hat.  
V is the vang's running from the main gaff.  
W is the water – we're on the pint and the  
pound.  
X marks the spot where Old Stormy  
was drowned.

Y is the yardarm – needs a good sailorman.  
Z is for Zoe – I'm her fancy man.  
Z's also for zero in the cold wintertime,  
And now we have brought all the letters  
in rhyme.

#### 14. THE SHANGHAIED DREDGER

*Led by Jonathan Eberhart*

Oystering has been a way of life on the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac for more than 200 years, yet this is the only old song we've ever come across or even heard of on the subject. Jonathan got it from Andy Wallace, a fine musician and close friend (he's on much of Jonathan's solo Folk-Legacy album), who unearthed it by accident in the classic fashion of such discoveries: the one-page broadside was literally in the bottom of an old, dusty trunk that had been locked in a little, overlooked room in the basement of a house where Andy was living in 1970.

Published in Baltimore, it was written by Edward Hammond to be sung to the tune of "The Irish Exile," but that tune is four

For himself and Shorty McLain.  
The dredgers stood around him,  
Their eyes could scarcely see  
From drinking five-cent whiskey-  
Oh, what a glorious spree.

*chorus:*

Then lay me in the forepeak  
With my face toward Baltimore,  
Prayin' I never get shanghaied again  
Down on the Eastern Shore,  
Where they feed you on corn dog  
And sour belly twice a day,  
And you're counted a lucky dredger  
If you ever get your pay.

Our steward, he was a colored man,  
The best cook in the fleet.  
At making India-rubber bread  
He never could be beat.  
His shadow soup was excellent,  
And on a Christmas Day  
We'd eat dead duck that he'd picked up  
While sailing down the bay.

And, oh, that Galway skipper  
I never shall forgive  
He'd halloo like a porpoise  
To throw away the jib.  
On Sundays while at rest he'd swear,  
"I'm only for your good;  
So come up, me little hearty,  
And saw up all the wood."

*(chorus)*

It was on a chilly evening after working  
all the day,  
The captain saw with his telescope  
The police sloop far away.  
With sails trimmed aft and topsail set,  
Our gallant pungy flew  
Over to the forbidden grounds  
To catch a jag or two.

But scarce we'd started working  
When the police sloop hove in sight.  
"Haul down your jib!" was his command,  
And then began the fight.  
Our captain hauled his pistol  
While the sloop to round us tried,  
But we raised our dredge and made away  
Upon the foggy tide.

## 15. SHALLOW BROWN

*Led by Tom McHenry*

Among ourselves, we refer to this shanty as "Slow Shallow," to distinguish it from another we call "Fast Shallow" (actually a variation of "Blow, Boys, Blow" or "The Congo River"), but both relate to slaving, and there are other versions as well. With various rhythms and tempos, it's been used at the pumps, the halyards and other tasks, but we just sing it at a

from Erik's Bristol. We learned the full set of words while in England. We think both the words and the mood provide a fitting conclusion to this recording.

It is time to go now.  
Haul away your anchor.  
Haul away your anchor.  
'Tis our sailing time.

Get some sail upon her.  
Haul away your halyards.  
Haul away your halyards.  
'Tis our sailing time.

Get her on her course now  
Haul away your foresheets.  
Haul away your foresheets.  
'Tis our sailing time.

Waves are breaking under.  
Haul away down-channel.  
Haul away down-channel.  
'Tis our sailing time.

When my time is over,  
Haul away for Heaven.  
Haul away for Heaven.  
God be at my side.

*Recorded by Sandy Paton  
Digital master by Robin Paton  
Notes by the Boarding Party  
Cover photo by Bob Anderson  
Graphics by Sandy Paton*

*Copyright © © 2000  
Folk-Legacy Records, Inc.  
Sharon, CT 06069  
folklegacy@snet.net*

*To view our entire catalog of  
CDs, cassettes, LPs and books,  
visit our web site at  
<http://www.folklegacy.com>*

*Special thanks to Susan O. Friedman for  
her kind assistance in this production.*

pace suitable to its sorrowful words and potential for a rich harmony that we think of as “fattening.” Its origin, as with most shanties, is unclear. In 1917, Capt. John Robinson, a former seaman, wrote of a version he’d heard sung at a South Pacific guano island by the black crew of an American ship out of New York. “My girl’s a bright mulatto,” went one verse. “She hails from Cincinnati.” Stan Hugil, a former shantyman and author of several books on the subject, believer at least one version to be of West Indian origin, since its leading lady’s name was sometimes written Challoe Brown, “challo” being “a West Indian word of Carib extraction meaning a half-caste.” The version Tom sings here is similar to one collected in the early part of this century by Cecil Sharp, containing the line, “Bound away to St. George’s.” This could refer to the capital of Grenada, but it could also mean the town in French Guinea, the island at the northeast end of Bermuda, or several other places. Knowing the answer would not necessarily pin down the song anyway. Sea shanties went through countless shantymen, crews and ports of call, ingredients in an ever-evolving musical bouillabaisse, stirred by all the currents of the ocean.

Fare thee well, I’m bound to leave you,  
Shallow, oh, Shallow Brown,  
Fare thee well, I’m bound to leave you,  
Shallow, oh, Shallow Brown,

Oh, my master’s going to sell me,  
Going to sell me to a Yankee.

Going to sell me for the dollar,  
For that great big Yankee dollar.

Juliana, I truly love you,  
But I’m going away to leave you.

Fare they well, I’m bound to leave you;  
Fare thee well, my Juliana.

## 16. THE FAREWELL SHANTY

*Led by Bob Hitchcock*

We first heard some verses of this lovely song of parting from Erik Illott, who sang them for us one night in Jonathan’s living room. We’d just sung him “The Seamen’s Hymn,” and asked if he knew something similarly moving. He certainly did. All too little is



known about it – was it ever actually used as a shanty? – except that it was discovered in a 19<sup>th</sup> century chapbook by Mervyn Vincent of North Cornwall, England, not far down the coast

# *The Boarding Party*

## *'Tis Our Sailing Time*



CD-97

### **The Program**

1. Bristol Channel Jamboree (3:19)
2. Haul Awa' (2:58)
3. Otho's Song (2:51)
4. The Alabama (3:47)
5. The Cruiser Baltimore (1:39)
6. The Hogege Man (1:44)
7. Solid Fas' (3:17)
8. The Seaman's Hymn & Eternal Father (2:47)
9. Come Down, You Roses (2:56)
10. Dead Horse (1:42)
11. Johnson Girls (2:05)
12. Truxton's Victory (2:48)
13. The Sailor's Alphabet (3:59)
14. The Shanghaied Dredger (3:19)
15. Shallow Brown (2:33)
16. The Farewell Shanty (2:29)

Copyright © p 2000  
 Folk-Legacy Records, Inc.  
 Box 1148 Sharon, CT 06069  
[www.folklegacy.com](http://www.folklegacy.com)

### **Introduction**

As you listen to 'Tis Our Sailing Time, the exuberance, enthusiasm, and love that The Boarding Party has for this music is quickly apparent. The harmonious blending of voices and vibrant delivery are the result of hundreds of hours of singing together.

An often sea-related term of "motley crew" is one I sometimes affectionately call this group of fine singers, for in its real meaning "motley", according to Webster, means: of many colors; of many different elements; heterogeneous – which aptly describes both the songs "The Boarding Party" sings and the group itself. Washington, D.C., based, the five members come from both sides of the Atlantic and bring an extensive background of music, performing, and nautical experience to this record.

Mia Gardiner

COMPACT  
 disc  
 DIGITAL AUDIO



7 10146 00972 9