OLD LOVE SONGS & BALLADS

from the Big Laurel, North Carolina

Recorded By Peter Gott & John Cohen
OLD LOVE SONGS & BALLADS

Pretty Saro
Fine Sally
Juba Neighbor Girl
Soldier Travelling from the North
Hicks Farewell In Zepo Town

Don't You Remember
Awake, Awake
Love Has Brought Me To Despair
Johnny Doyle
Conversation with Death
Mattie Grove
OLD LOVE SONGS & BALLADS
from the Big Laurel, North Carolina

Recorded By Peter Gott & John Cohen

To an observer from the North it is surprising how many young people in the mountains can make music on a guitar or banjo. They are characteristically modest about their skill, some of the best musicians requiring several hours of persuation before they will even admit that they can pick a tune. Their music consists almost entirely of modern country and bluegrass songs that they hear on radio and TV. Perhaps 10% of the musicians play the banjo, a few the fiddle, mandolin, or mouth harp, and the rest the guitar or electric guitar. Most of them know their way around a little on several instruments.

The number of young musicians, however, is few compared to the number of old ones. Nearly every shack has an old thin-shelled banjo in the attic with a dirt-blackened ground-hog hide, or a dusty fiddle that was laid aside when it was cracked over someone's head at a frolic. Most of the instruments haven't been picked up in 25 years or more, when several things happened to discourage people from making music.

Before radios, roads, or automobiles appeared in the mountains, home-made music was one of the few entertainments possible. Lee says that when he was a boy, 65 years ago, banjos were so scarce that you might have to walk ten miles to borrow one for a square dance. People often danced all night to no other music than someone slapping his knees and calling out sing-songy rhymes. He says that a good "juber patter" didn't have to worry about making a living. Back then ballad-singing around the fireside at night was also one of the chief forms of entertainment.

When banjos became available through mail order companies, instrumental music became more widespread. According to one farmer, when he was a boy about 40 years ago, banjo and fiddle tunes were nearly all you heard, and what singing there was was done mostly by older people, still without accompaniment. The custom of holding "workings," for which a good square dance would be the reward, provided an ideal atmosphere for banjo and fiddle music. Every family would have several workings a year—a bean-stringing, corn-shucking, fodder-pulling, or perhaps a log-rolling or barn-raising. They would bake pies and cakes all the day before and would kill about a dozen chickens that morning. It took three or four shifts for dinner, and when the dishes were done they would clear all the furniture out of the kitchen and tune up the fiddles and banjos. Usually there was a table in one corner with a bucket of water and a bucket of corn liquor side by side, with a dipper in each. Many a time they would dance and make music until daylight, and work again the next day.

The fun was first dampened when the virgin timber was cut and logging crews of rough men came in from the outside (about 50 years ago, in this area). People who hadn't been at a working would come drunk to the dance and would usually start a fight.

An unfortunate change also took place in the moonshiners' craft. When the government clamped down on moonshiners, they turned to using sugar and yeast, instead of pure corn sprouts, to hurry up the process and lessen the chance of being caught. The resulting brew makes a person so sick that he has to get roaring drunk before he begins to enjoy himself.

Finally the stage was reached where not a dance would go by without someone getting shot, and often killed (hence the nickname "Bloody Shelton Laurel"). The sad result was that the dances and workings stopped, and with them much of the fiddle and banjo music.

The radio and phonograph also discouraged many people from playing. When country music became commercial and new songs and complicated instrumental styles were invented faster than the average farmer could learn them, he laid his banjo down, for he was ashamed to play his age-old tunes when everyone wanted to hear the latest flashy tune on the radio.

Many of the old people here do not care for the new music. They say it is just a jumble of notes and that it takes the old tunes and twists them around so you can scarcely recognize them.
The guitar, as pretty as it sounds in present-day country music, is largely responsible for spicing the old music. When the guitar appeared in the mountains perhaps 25 years ago it took over banjo's function of supplying rhythm for the fiddle, and the banjo became a melody instrument requiring a single-note style and needing picks to be heard. It also introduced chords to the music. In the old "note-music" the banjo and fiddle would be tuned to suit the song, and the noting done on one string at a time, the others being circled or dropped. In the new "chord music" it became necessary to change and simplify many of the melodies to fit in with the chords. The old songs suffered even more than the dance tunes, by the use of guitar and chords. The flowing melodies and little grace notes simply cannot be heard with six strings playing at once, and the melodies of today have been reduced to simple tunes that fit in with the three basic chords and would be dull without accompaniment.

Present-day country music is often beautiful and exciting, but I believe much is lost when the old songs and dance tunes are fitted to the new styles. All the country people I have talked to who remember hearing the old songs and dance tunes sung and played in their traditional manner say that they sounded best that way.

PETER GOTT

OLD LOVE SONGS AND BALLADS

John Cohen

When Cecil Sharp came through the mountains in 1916 and 1917, he reported mainly the presence of unaccompanied ballad singing as the folk music of this region, and paid little regard to the instrumental music. In recent years, the instrumental music has developed in such a way as to almost entirely obliterate the ballad singing.

The area where this record was made, was the heart of one of Sharp's key areas of collecting. One can read how he collected over 30 tunes at Big Laurel between Aug. 16 and Aug. 18 in 1916 and another 29 tunes in nearby Hot Springs on Aug. 23.

Many people around this Big Laurel area remember Cecil Sharp's visit, and those who have seen his book 'English Folk Songs of the Southern Appalachians' look on it with a type of pride, and a sense of closeness...often they are more concerned with recognizing the names of their relatives who were Sharp's informants. Almost all of his informants are now dead.

Although ballad singing is somewhat scarce in this region now, the tradition seems strong in some families, or with particular individuals, and one does not sense that any particular type of person prefers this music. Naturally, more of the older people are associated with it, but amongst them there seems to be no patterns of similarity; some are strongly attached to the church, some play musical instruments and enjoy dancing. Some are married, re-married, separated from wives, or unmarried. Their choice of songs often seems to reflect their social position as well as their sentimental inclinations, or lack of same.

In this personalisation relation to the songs lies the strength of this record. They are doing more than relating a distant story. Their closeness to the words and ideas in the songs seems to run contrary to the often voiced theory of ballad singing being detached and remote. In their choice of songs, the singer often reveals some of the more delicate aspects of their nature. Berrilla Wallin sings songs very much in line with the feminine aspects of love while Billard Chandler seems preoccupied with the amorous side - yet his approach is colored with a personal sorrow that is revealed in all his songs.

It can be seen that ballad singing is not just an exercise of memory. With Billard Chandler the tunes are always shifting and changing. Sequences of verses and sometimes whole phrases change from one singing to another. We have recordings of his singing 'Awake, Awake' at intervals of several weeks, and can see how much the melody has been changed over this period of time. Even within the performance of this song on this record, one may hear melodic changes from verse to verse. The basic pattern of melodic lines within a single verse is ABAC, yet in the third verse, the pattern has become ABAD (with the introduction of 2 melodic changes). Verse 6 has one melodic variation making it ADAD.

More often than not, these changes heighten the emotional content of the song and also serve to accent certain narrative passages, as in 'Nethie Groves' verse 6 and 'Conversation With Death' verse 5. This improvisational quality is not cultivated as a conscious act. More likely, the singer would be embarrassed if it were pointed out, for the desire is to repeat the song as it was learned. Yet in another sense, these variations can be seen as the force which has kept this music vigorous and changing over the years, and has produced such a variety of tunes and texts to a single song.

Further, it can be seen that no two performers sing with identical stylistic mannerisms, and in this respect, musical notation is inadequate representation. A melody, or the relationships between a series of notes, is only a framework upon which a song exists. The real character of a song lies in the way it is sung. (See Charles Seeger's article on style in Journal of American Folklore for a further discussion of this point.) Neither is notation of a single verse or variation sufficient in presentation of a complete ballad, for it should be seen that constant variations appear, and still other possibilities exist with the singer, outside the particular performance given. With these considerations in mind, a notation of one verse of 'In Zepo Town' is presented here, to reveal some of the irregularities, (or the freedoms) in rhythmic presentation. Although this melody is similar to Sharp's notation of this song, certain passages must be made in regard to the different rhythmic structure.

A large range of singing styles within the same tradition is encountered in the Big Laurel region. Compare the exaggerated and vigorous singing of Cas Wallin to Lila Shelton's more 'even' approach. I did not sense that any aspect of stylisation made one singer preferable to another in the eyes of the community. More often, a 'good' singer was one who could sing with full force, and the older people often apologize for their voices lacking the power they used to have. 'Oh she used to be a good singer, you could hear her clear on the other side of the mountain'. However, full force and power are not to be mistaken with loudness of sound, for much of the singing is done with great restraint and a certain quietness.

Ballad singing as it is done around here in North Carolina seems to be very much a two-way affair, with both the singer and listener paying careful attention to the meaning of each song. This can be attested to by the range of comments before and after the ballad is sung. At one point Berrilla Wallin sang part of "Viola, the Lilly Of The West"...
a song wherein the narrator 'plunges a knife' into his love because he felt she had betrayed him. Immediately after singing this, Berrilla's son said that "no girl was worth all that trouble". She countered that the song showed "how deep and true love can be" and the trouble with people today was that love was no longer so strong, and so children had less respect for their parents, and husbands for their wives...that's why there is so much divorce now days."

During the singing of Dillard Chandler's ballads, especially at those moments in the narration which tell of the more intimate moments of affairs of love, Lee Wallin often interrupts with sounds expressing his humorous indignation at the 'taboo' ideas, as well as his enthusiasm for the action taken by the protagonist in the story. After Mathie Groves was finished, all the men present (Dillard, Lee Wallin, and his son Doug), had some comment to make as to what they would have done if they had been in Mathie's situation. One said he would have fought harder, another said he would have killed Lord Daniel, and the other said he would have 'smoked out the back door.

Lisha Shelton believes that the characters 'Dickie and Johnson' in his version of the ballad (The Three Butchers Sharp) both had 'Shelton' for their last name, and that the story took place shortly after the civil war, and he believes they were ancestors of his. Although Laws reports this song from British Broadside p. 156, it is significant that Lisha feels this closely connected to the song.

It is important to recognize that this style of ballad singing does not exist in relation to the past alone. Although the songs presented on this record are mostly ancient in character, it must be seen that Dillard also sings the 'Man Of Constant Sorrow'...with a few words changed to emphasize the love side of the song...and he says he learned it from Ralph Stanley's recording (The Stanley Brothers) which is in the bluegrass style. He also sings 'Old Shep' a sentimental country song about a dog, and he sings it with every bit as much feeling and intensity as he brings to the ballads. Further, he sings it in the same style he sings the old ballads, complete with the flourishes, grace notes and other mannerisms which give his singing its characteristics. In an understanding of folk song style in the mountains, one will encounter this phenomenon many times, where a style from one period will be applied to music from another, with no particular distinction between the two on the part of the performer. (See You Are My Sunshine by Grandville Bowlen on Mt. Music Of Ky. Folkways - FA 2317 for a similar example of this type of stylistic influence).

It shall be seen also that an affinity for unaccompanied ballad singing does not exclude an affinity for other types of music. Lee Wallin has the reputation of being an excellent ballad singer, but since he has lost his voice, his emphasis has been on banjo playing, clapping and cutting up, much in the fashion of Uncle Dave Macon (whom he greatly admires). Yet, when someone sings an old ballad, he is readily involved, if only as a listener. Lisha Shelton expends most of his musical energy playing the banjo to accompany his songs, and although he is adept at the local banjo style (picking the melody with the index finger while making drones out of the first and fifth strings), he generally uses a simplified strum, based on the Carter Family style, involving a strong rhythmic brushing across the banjo strings. Lisha tells how he remembers the Carter Family from years ago at a radio station, and how he taught AP Carter the song 'Engine 193'.

No further conclusions can be made from a record, limited in scope as this one. In effect, we have done here, very much the same as Cecil Sharp: presenting only the older songs and the older styles. Much of the instrumental music of this area has been presented on other recordings. 'Music For Moonshiners' L 3031 Judd is made by musicians of the Laurel River region. Baccom Lundasford, who recorded so many songs for the Library Of Congress, lives about 20 miles from here, and Obey Runsey lives just a few miles down the road from these performers. Indeed, they tell that Obey collects many of his songs from these people, although he adds his own accompaniments when he presents them on record.
My true love she won't have me, as this I understand. She wants a freeholder and I've got no land. But I can maintain her on silver and gold. And as many or the fine things that my love's house could hold.

It's I wish I was a poet and could write some fine
I would write my love a letter that she might understand, And I'd send it by the waters when the islands overflow, And I'd think of my darling wherever she goes.

And I'd think of my darling wherever she goes.

It's I wish I was a turtle dove, had wings and could fly. Just now to my love's lodging tonight I'd draw nigh. And in her lily white arms I would lie there all night. And I'd watch them little windows for the dawning of day.

Way down in a lonesome valley, way down in a lonesome grove. Where the small birds doth whistle, her notes to increase. My love is slender, both proper and neat. I wouldn't have no better pastimes than to be with my sweet.

Well I strolled through the mountains, I strolled through the plain. I strove to forget her, but it was all in vain. On the banks of Old Cowee, on the mound of said brow Where I once loved her dearly and I don't hate her now.

References
Sharp - II p. 10
McF. - III p. 285
Randolph IV - p. 234

FINE SALLY - Cass Wallin

There was a young lady from London she came. Fine Sally, fine Sally, fine Sally was her name. She had more money than a king could possess. And her beauties and her diamonds was worth all the rest.

There was a young doctor who lived close by. Upon this fair damsel he casted his eye. Fine Sally, fine Sally, fine Sally says he why can't you please tell me why our love can't agree.

I don't hate you Billy, nor no other man. But to say that I love you is more than I can.

Fine Sally took sick and she knew not for why She sent for this young man whom she had denied. Says are you the doctor can kill or can cure Are you the young man whom I have denied?

Yes I am the doctor can kill or can cure. But I will reward you for what's past and gone. Let what's past and gone be forever forgotten. And spare me a while longer on this world to live.

I won't spare you Sally nor (the endurance of my heart.) But I'll dance on your grave when you're laid in the earth.

It's off of her fingers pulled diamond rings three. Says take this and wear it and be no more seen. For the light of your colors remember poor me When you are through dancing on Sally your Queen.

References
Sharp - II p. 10, as "The Brown Girl"
Law. p. 253, as "Fitch Irish Lady"
Randolph, I p. 205
Cox - p. 366

JUBA - sung by Lee Wallin

Sold my cow and I sold my calf, All I got is a dollar and a half-coo.

Get that right hand lady by the hand. I don't think she's got a man-coo.

Combination song - hey

see old Daddy Will a-goin around the hill A-diggin up a 'tater hill-coo

Juba this and Juba that. Juba killed my yaller cat - wheee

Juba this and Juba that. Juba killed a yaller cat - wheeoo.

The clapping sound on this recording is achieved by the performer slapping his hands in rhythm against his knees, and chest etc. while calling out the words.

In the book Negro Folk Rhymes (Macmillan Co. 1932) Talley includes Juba, with some of the same verses as here. (Yaller Cat). "Negro folk rhyme was used for the dance...a circle formed...clapping hands together...and putting feet in rhythm time with the words of the rhyme being repeated. The task of the dancers...to execute a dance...feet would beat tattoo on the ground answering every word, and sometimes every syllable." "Many Negro folk rhymes were used as banjo and fiddle songs.

Bessie Jones and her friends from the Georgia Sea Islands, who today, are outstanding practitioners and performers of Negro dances, etc. also do this Juba game, while slapping their hands on thighs, knees, and chest.

Juba dancing was famous in the old Minstrel shows as well, and on occasion today they still can be seen. The name is the same, but the form of the dance has not been observed by this writer.

Reference
Talley, p. 9

NEIGHBOR GIRL - Lee Wallin - voice and banjo

When I get in the rocky field, I'll set down and cry. I'll think on the neighbor girl who used to feel so nice.

This good time tomorrow where do you reckon I'll be Down in old Tennessee with a woman on my knee.

I went upon the mountain, I looked back down the lane. It looked so dark and hazy I'm bound to go again.

It's grief and sorrow, enough to kill me dead. To think I am a pretty little boy, and I ain't got no sweetheart.

When I was a little boy, a sixteen inches tall. The way I courted them pretty little girls, I made my mamy cry.

The soldier travelling from the north (Child #899)

Dillard Chandler

The soldier travelling from the north As the moon shone bright and clearly. The lady knew the gentleman's horse. Because she loved him dearly.

She took his horse by the bridle ring And led him to the stable. Here's hay and oats for your horse my love. Go feed him you are able.
She took him by the lily white band
She led him to the table
Here’s cake and wine for you my love
Go eat and drink you’re welcome.

Well she pulled off her blue silk gown
She laid it on the table
It’s he pulled off his uniform suit
And he hopped in the bed with the lady.

I heard some trumpets sound
And I must go and meet it
Oh soldier dear don’t leave me here
For I am ruined forever.

When silver bells and conks shall stand
When you and I shall marry
Oh soldier dear don’t leave me here
For I am ruined forever.

Reference
Sharp - I p. 305, as “Trooper and the Maid”
N.C.J. - II p. 196
Brewster - p. 166

THE SAILOR BEING TIRED - Dillard Chandler

It’s the sailor being tired well he hung down his head (2)
Well he asked the little maid to show him the bed.
Well she showed him the bed like a maid ought to do (2)
Well he said my little honey won’t you come to bed too.

It’s the little maid being young not thinking any harm
Well she got in the bed and she rolled up in his arms.
It’s what I done there well I wouldn’t tell here, but I wish that night could’ve been a long year.

It’s a six months passed and eight rolled by (2)
It’s her shoes wouldn’t button well her apron wouldn’t tie.

If it is a boy child name it after me
Put a pistol in its pocket lord, dress it in blue
tell it to hug the women like its daddy used to do.
If it is a girl child hire it a nurse,
Set it on your knee lord, comb its curly head,
Lord, you can remember me when I am dead.

Reference
Laws, p. 162, as “Home, Dearie, Home”,
or “Bell Bottom Trousers”

HICK’S FAREWELL - Dillard Chandler

The time’s been swiftly rolling by
When I must faint and die.
My body to the dust returns
And there forgotten lie.

My loving wife, my bosom friend
The object of my love.
It’s oft times you have looked for me
And oft times saw me come.

But now the time rolls swiftly by
When I must faint and die.
My loving wife, my bosom friend
The object of my heart.
It’s oft times you have looked for me
And oft times saw me come.

But now the time rolls swiftly by
When I must faint and die.
It’s I can’t never come to you
Let not this grieve your heart
It’s you can shortly come to me
Where we will never part.

Reference
Sharp, II p. 142
N.C.J. III p. 189
Randolph IV p. 589 as “The Dying Preacher”

IN ZEPH TOWN

In Zeph town there lived a merchant; he had two sons,
and a daughter dear.
and many more there was, they were the post-office men.
It was the keep, both dear dear.

The following is the melody as sung by the singer, each measure is numbered + and the letters a, b, c, etc. after the numbers refer to the variations of each measure. The numbers before the letters indicate the verses in which the particular variant is sung.
IN ZEPHO TOWN (In Seaport Town) - Lisha Shelton

In Zepho Town there lived a merchant
He had three sons and a daughter dear
And among them all the prettiest boy
It was the daughter's dearest dear.

One evening they were in a room courting
Their oldest brother chanced to hear
He goes and tells his other brother
Let's deprive her of her dearest dear.

So they rose up so early next morning
A game of hunting was agreed to go
But little did he think of a bloody murder
A game of hunting he agreed to go.

They wandered over hills and valleys
And through a many of a place unknown
Till at last they became to a ditch of briars
And there they killed him dead alone.

So they returned home late in the evening
Their sister inquiring for the service boy
Oh we got him lost in the wildwoods hunting,
No more of him we could ever find.

Fails she lie upon her pillow
The service boy appeared in a dream
 Says your brothers killed me rough and cruel
All wallowed in a gore of blood.

But since your brothers has been so cruel
To rob and steal your own sweet life
One grave deserves both of our bodies
I'll stay with you as long as life.

So she returned home late in the evening
Her brothers asked her where she'd been
Just hold your peace you deceitful villains
For one alone you both shall hang.

Her brothers being deep convicted
To jump in a ship and find relief
The winds did blow and the waves overcome them
Their graves was both in the deep blue sea.

Reference
Sharp - II p. 103 as "The Lover's Lament"
Brewster - p. 196 as "Charming Beauty's Bright"
Cox - p. 342

DON'T YOU REMEMBER - Lisha Shelton

Don't you remember on last Friday night
What that you told me sitting by my side
You told me that you'd marry me so plainly in my breast
And excepting we get married no longer can I rest.

When her old parents came this to know
They looked her up and looked her secure
They looked her up and they looked her secure
Till I never anymore got sight of my dear.

But away to my love's window, away I did go
To see whether I could see my love or know
The answer that she give to me with tears all in her eyes,
I love that man who loves me and I'll love him till I die.

Away to the wars, to the wars I did go
To see whether I could forget my love or no
I stayed there one year and I served by my kind
And in one more long year I turned home again.

All on my way returning home (the moon was shining bright)?
Sweetest of my thoughts was my whole heart's delight
Her old mother saw me coming she wrung her hands and cried
Says my daughter loved you dearly and for your sake she died.

Where is her grave oh where may it be
Pray let me be by its side
Of all grief and sorrow that I do adore
My true love's in her grave and I wish I were there.

Reference
Sharp - II p. 103 as "The Lover's Lament"
Brewster - p. 196 as "Charming Beauty's Bright"
Cox - p. 342

AWAKE, AWAKE - Dillard Chandler

A Awake, awake, my own true lover
B Awake, awake it's almost day;
A How can you bear love to sleep and slumber
B And your true lover a-going away.
A I'll go all down on yander's river
B I'll spend my weeks, my months, my days,
A It's I'll eat nothing but green willow
B Nor I'll drink nothing but my tears.
A Come back, come back, my own true lover
B Come back, come back, in grief cried she
A It's go and ask your pappa if mayn't have you
B And if he says no please come back and tell me
C' It'll be the last time I'll bother you.
A Oh no I can't, nor I neither won't do it
B For he lies on his bedside at rest
A And in his hand he holds a weepen
B For to kill that boy who I love best.
A I'll go all down on yander's river
B I'll spend my weeks, my months, my days,
A It's I'll eat nothing but green willow
B Nor I'll drink nothing but my tears.
A Come back, come back my own true lover
B Come back come back in grief cried she,
A I will forsake both father and mother
B C I'll cry so loud and pity thee.

MATHER GROVE - Dillard Chandler (Child 61)

First core was dressed in red
The next come down was green,
Well the next come down was Lord Daniel's wife
As fine as any queen, queen, as fine as any queen.

Well she stepped up to little Mathie Grove
Go home with me tonight
I know very well by the ring you wear
You are Lord Daniel's wife, wife... (repeat last line)

It makes no difference who's wife I am
To you (or) no other man
Says my husband's away from home
He's in some distant land...
It's little Robert Port was a standing by
Hearing every word was said
If I don't die before day light
Lord Daniel shall hear this news...

He only had but fifteen mile to go
And ten of that he run
He run till he come to the broken down bridge
And he fell on his breast and he swam...

He swam till he came to the green river shore
And he sprung on his feet and he run, run...

He came to Lord Daniel's halls
And he rattled his bells and rung...

Oh what's the matter little Robert Port
Oh what's the matter now?
It's another man in the bed with your own true lover
Gonna be some hugging done...

He got him up a few good men
And he started out with a free good will
He put his hogs to his mouth
And he blew it loud and swell, swell...

It's little Mathie Grove was a-laying awake
It's time for me to go
So I hear your husband coming now
For I heared his bugle blow, blow...

Lie down, lie down little Mathie Grove
Lie down and go to sleep
That's nothing but my father's sheperd
A-calling for his sheep, sheep...

So they both fell off to huggin' and kissin'
And they both fell off to sleep
Next morning when they woke up
Lord Daniel was at their bed feet, feet...

So how do I like your pillow sir
Well how do you like my sheets?
Well how do you like your pretty fair miss
Who lies in your arms and sleeps, sleeps...

Very well do I like your pillows sir
Much better do I like your sheets,
Much better do I like your pretty fair miss
Who lies in your arms and sleeps, sleeps...

Get up, get up little Mathie Grove
Get up and put on your clothes
I never want it to be said
A naked man I slew, slew...

So give me a chance, so give me a chance (it's)
for my life
It's there you stand with two glittering swords
And me not as much as a knife, knife...

It's I will give you the best I've got
And I will take the worst
I will strike the very first lick,
And strike it like a man
I will strike the very next lick.
I'll kill you if I can, can...

It's little Mathie Grove took the very first lick
He struck an awful blow
Lord Daniel struck the very next lick
And he laid him on the floor, floor...

He took his little woman by the hand
He set her on his knee
Saying which one do you like the best
Little Mathie Grove or me, me...

Very well do I like your red rosy cheeks
Much better do I like your chin
But I wouldn't give little Mathie Grove
For you and all your kid...

He took his little woman by the hand
He led her through the hall
He placed a special against her head
Let her have a special hall, ball...

References
Sharp I p. 161
N.C.F. II p. 103
Randolph I p. 124
Cox - p. 34

LOVE HAS BROUGHT ME TO DESPAIR. - Berzilla Wallin

My father he was a rich old jade
My mother she was a lady fair.
And me a being the only heir
So love has brought me to despair.

It's when I wore my long silk gown
He followed me from town to town
But now apron just will tie
He passes my door and he won't stop in.

There is a street in yonder town
Where my true love walks up and down.
He takes another girl on his knee
And tells to her what he won't tell me.

He takes another girl on his knee
Oh ain't it a awful grief to me.

There is some flowers I've heard them say
That would cure false love both night and day.

And of these flowers I did pull
Until I got my apron full.

I gathered black and I gathered blue
But none of these flowers could I find
That would cure false love or ease my mind.

It's out of these leaves I made a bed
And out of the flowers a pillow for my head
It's down she lay and nary a word spoke
Until her aching heart was broke.

And in the green meadows round
I thought I heard a donesaul sound.

Laws (261) includes this amongst his American songs from British Broadside and reports one reference in America; in Brewster, Ballads & Songs of Indiana. Cox (§144) reports this song from West Virginia, and shows how there are several older songs mixed together here, including parts of three Child Ballads, "A Tavern in this Town" and the "Butcher Boy".

The second verse here ("apron just will pin") is also found in "Careless Love" and in 'Every Night When The Sun Goes In!' (Sharp 189). Laws cites an English source with

"I wish my babe were born
Set Smiling on its nurses knees,
And I myself was in my grave
And the green grass growing over me."

This verse also appears in Sharp 189. Another verse in Sharp says "how I wish that train would come"...this is also in "Careless Love" (Lunaford).

Apparently this song was the basis for the Carter Family song 'Carter's Blues' which includes the lines 'There is a flower I've heard them say', 'And if this flower I could only find, it would cheer this aching heart of mine', and 'To view the fields and meadows round, I thought I heard a lonesome sound'.

7
JOHNNY DIAL (Doyle) Burzil Wallin

I am a poor maiden all crossed in love
And I'll refer my case to the powers above
Such grief it is no pleasure (I'll count it no toil)
I'll ramble this world over with young Johnny Dial.

On last Saturday evening the moon was shining bright
Me and young Johnny was going to take a flight
My waiting maid a standing so plainly she did see
She rolled to my mother and told us on me.

My mother conveyed me to a room that was high
So no one could see me nor no one pass me by
She bundled up John's clothing, she bid him be stolen
So slowly, so slowly he moved along.

My father provided above a thousand pound
A fine horse and saddle for me to ride upon
And six noble horsemen to ride by my side
In order to make me young Samuel More's wife.

We rode and we rode all along to the town
We rode up to Squire Gardner's and there we got down
And the very moment the squire appeared at the door
My earrings they bursted and fell to the floor.

By young Samuel More's side they did force me to stand
And also they forced me to give him my hand
And when I should have spoken I scarcely could resign
For my poor heart were bleeding for young Johnny Dial.

Behind my oldest brother they carried me back home
And by my own mother's conveyed to my room
Mother oh mother, a bolt to the door
And don't you let in your Samuel More.

For before tomorrow morning my life shall end all strife
He never shall enjoy me nor call me his wife
And the last word she spoke was young Johnny fare you well
There's more love that my heart than my tongue can tell.

Oh daughter oh daughter, I'll send for young Johnny Dial
To send for young Johnny I think it quite worth while
And the last word she spoke was young Johnny fare you well
There's more love that in my heart than my tongue can tell.

References
Sharp II p. 27
Laws p. 130
N.C.F. II p. 365

CONVERSATION WITH DEATH - Burzil Wallin

Oh what is this I cannot see
With icy hands take hold on me
Oh I am Death that none can exell
I open the door of heaven and hell.

Now death, oh death, how can it be
That I must come and go with thee,
For death oh death how can it be
For I'm unprepared for eternity.

Yes I've come for to get your soul
Leave your body and leave it cold
To drop the flesh from off your frame
The earth and worms both have their claim.

Now death oh death, if this be true
Please give me time to reason with you
From time to time you've heard and saw
I'll close your eyes and lock your jaw.
I'll lock your jaws so you can't talk
I'll fix your feet so you can't walk
I'll dim your eyes so you can't see,
This very hour come go with me.

Now death oh death consider my age
And do not take me at this stage
My wealth is all at your command
If you will move my icy hand.
The old, the young, the rich, the poor
They alike with me will have to go
No age no wealth, no silver no gold
Nothing satisfies me but your poor soul.

Now death oh death please let me see
If Christ has burned his back on me
When you were called and asked to bow
You wouldn't take heed, and it's too late now.
Now death oh death, please give me time
To fix my heart and change my mind
Your heart is fixed, your mind is bound
I have the shackles to drag you down.
Too late, too late, to all farewell
My doom is fixed, I'm summoned to hell
As long as God in heaven shall dwell
My soul, my soul, shall scream in hell.

Reference
Randolph IV p. 98
also see Folkways Records - "Spirituals" - by Doc Reed and Vera Bell as "Death is Awful" "Dock Boggs" as "Oh Death"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brewster, P.G.,
BALLADS AND SONGS OF INDIANA; 1940, Indiana University Publication (Bloomington)

Cox, J.H.,

Laws, G.M.,
AMERICAN BALLADRY FROM BRITISH BROADSIDES; 1957, The American Folklore Society (Philadelphia)

Randolph, V.,
OZARK FOLKSONGS; 1946, State Historical Society of Missouri (Columbia)

Sharp, C.J.,
ENGLISH FOLKSONGS FROM THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS; 1932, Oxford Univ. Press (London)

White, N.I.,
General Editor, NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE; the Frank C. Brown Collection; 1922, Duke Univ. Press (Durham, N.C.)