AMERICAN BANJO-
SCRUGGS STYLE

JOE STEWART
Shortenin' Bread
Cacklin' Hen

SNUFFY JENKINS
John Henry
Big-Eared Mule
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

OREN JENKINS
Spanish Fandango
Cripple Creek
Shout Lulu
Down the Road
Old Hen She Cackled

JUNIE SCRUGGS
Sally Anne
Sally Goodin

PETE ROBERTS
Irish Washerwoman

DON BRYANT
Turkey in the Straw
Jenny Lynn

SMILEY HOBBS
Rosewood Casket
Pig In a Pen
Cotton Eye Joe
Train 45

J. C. SUTPHIN
Don't Let Your Deal Go Down
I Don't Love Nobody

EUGENE COX
Wildwood Flower

VERONICA STONEMAN COX
Lonesome Road Blues

DICK RITTLE
Cindy

KENNY MILLER
Ruben's Train
Come Back Little Pig

BOB BAKER
Ground Hog

Also: LARRY RICHARDSON,
MIKE SEEGER, ERIC WEISSBERG

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET
During the fifteen year period from 1930 to 1945 the five-string banjo was used rarely in commercial country music. In 1945, however, a well known mandolin picker and lead singer in Kentucky, Bill Monroe organized a different type of band from those already in existence. His new-found banjo picker, Earl Scruggs had developed a style of three-finger picking which enabled the banjo to play the lead or melody. Three-finger picking was used in the twenties by such well-known recording artists as the Carolina Tar Heels and Charlie Poole, but at that time it was used for backin' hardly ever for lead. Scruggs worked with Monroe for a short time before he and Lester Flatt, then Monroe's guitar picker, organized a band of their own. Before long this type of music was becoming popular in the South. The banjo along with many of the "old-time" songs, had been revived and numerous "bluegrass" bands, patterned on those of Scruggs and Monroe, were soon doing performances and making recordings for well-known companies. The term "bluegrass" refers to that section of Kentucky where Bill Monroe originally lived and where the music was most popular at the outset. It was applied to this music by disc-jockeys and is descriptive of a band usually consisting of a guitar and bass, used for backing, and one or two fiddles, a banjo and a mandolin used for lead or solo playing. The songs themselves, if not actually folk or "old-time" songs, generally are closer to that tradition than to the modern tradition of popular Tin Pan Alley or hillbilly songs.

Regardless of the term one might choose to designate a particular style of five-string banjo picking, only the most general idea of a technique can be conveyed by any term. The most significant fact about any style is the person who is using it, for, as is evident in this recording, any number of people may use a style tagged as "three-finger picking" or "Scruggs-style" and each one of these pickers creates a distinctive style within a style. About the only means whereby one can group together a number of seemingly heterogenous styles under one term is by determining how many fingers the picker is using and just what he is doing with them.

One of the most popular old-time banjo styles is called flatpicking, frailing or thumbing the banjo. The basic strum consists of a combination of both picking individual strings and strumming whole chords. Another well-known method, consisting of picking without any strumming, makes use of the thumb and one other finger (usually the index finger). This generally is called "double thumbing" or "two-finger picking", the first term referring to the thumb's fairly regular alternation between one of the first four strings and the fifth or drone string. There are also various "three-finger" styles which were used by "old-timers", but, with the exception of three pickers in this recording, the styles represented here are modernized versions of three-finger picking, based on the style as it was developed and popularized by Earl Scruggs.

The only stylistic element which the fifteen banjo pickers in this recording have in common is that they all use three fingers, (the thumb, middle and index fingers) to pick the strings. J. C. Sutphin's style is an excellent example of the old-time, pre-Skruggs type of three finger picking. Sutphin learned the two pieces which he plays on this record from the aforementioned singer and instrumentalist, Charlie Poole (v. Folkways Anthology of American Folk Music, Volume I, number 20) who made many fine recordings for Columbia during the '20's. Neither his style of playing lead ("I don't love nobody") nor his style of playing backing ("Don't let your deal go down") is as smooth and as incisive as that of the pickers who have benefited from the Earl Scruggs development of three-finger picking.
and Smith Hamlitt, two men "from around home", about 1930. Since 1935 he has been working for radio station WJS in Columbia. He is accompanied on the guitar by a friend. "John Henry", "Lonesome Road Blues", "Big-Eared Mule", "Winkie, Winkie Little Star".

Oren Jenkins, born in Harris, North Carolina in 1932 got his first banjo lessons from his uncle, Snuffy, but soon developed a style quite different from that of his uncle. He has made several commercial recordings with Jim and Jesse McReynolds and picks the guitar as well as he does the banjo, although it is the banjo that he plays on his recordings. Verne Jenkins, another uncle, accompanies Oren on the fiddle in four of these recordings. "Spanish Pandango", "Cripple Creek", "Shout Lulu", "Down the Road", "Old Hen, She Cackled".

Junie Scruggs, like Snuffy Jenkins, was influenced by Hamett and Brooks. He tells us that these two men used to "pick the two Gallies" ("Sally Anne" and "Sally Goodin") about the way he performs them here. Both his father and his sister picked the banjo, frailing style; Junie being older than Earl, learned to pick before his brother did, and played for fiddle contests during the '30's. He was kind enough to record these two pieces despite the fact that rarely during the past twenty years has he picked the banjo. Mike Seeger plays the guitar accompaniment. "Sally Anne", "Sally Goodin".

Larry Richardson was born in Galax, Virginia in 1925. His father used to play the banjo, but Larry started by using a flat pick. He has been picking three-fin-

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The Performers

Joe Stewart was born in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1927. He has been playing music since the age of seven, and plays the banjo, fiddle and guitar equally well. He has picked the banjo with Bill Monroe and with other "bluegrass" bands. This recording was made at New River Ranch, Rising Sun, Maryland. "Shortenin' Bread", "Cacklin' Hen".

Snuffy Jenkins, raised in Southern, North Carolina, is now living in Columbia, South Carolina where with his band, "Snuffy Jenkins and the Hired Hands", he is active in T.V. and radio shows as well as in personal appearance dates. He learned to pick from Rex Brooks.
ger style for nine years, and has played and recorded with Bill Monroe and other bands as well as his own. Many songs which he has written have been recorded by other groups. In addition to the five string, Larry picks the guitar and the mandolin. Mike Seeger plays the guitar accompaniment.

Pete Roberts, eighteen years old, was born and raised in Arlington, Virginia. After picking the banjo for two and a half years, he won the Warrenton Banjo Contest in September, 1956. He plays the fiddle, guitar mandolin and bass and is a collector of old-time hillbilly records and a "disc-jockey". Mike Seeger accompanies him on the guitar. "Irish Washerwoman".

Don Bryant is in his early twenties and has already made a name for himself by picking banjo with "The Foggy Mountain Boys" as a substitute during the winter of 1955-56 when Earl Scruggs was recovering from an automobile accident. He has worked with other well known "bluegrass" bands and won the Warrenton Banjo Contest in 1955. He is accompanied on the guitar by Pete Roberts. "Turkey in the Straw", "Jersey Lynn".

Smiley Hobbs, born in Johnson Country, North Carolina, about 30 years ago, now lives in Manassas, Virginia. He plays the fiddle, mandolin, guitar and banjo equally well and has worked with many "bluegrass" bands. He has been picking the banjo for only two years. Tom Morgan accompanies him on the guitar and does the vocals on "Rosewood Casket". Pete Roberts is on the mandolin and Mike Seeger plays the bass. "Fog in a Pan" (Vocal by Smiley), "Rosewood Casket", "Wildwood Flower", "Cotton-eye Joe", (Vocal by Smiley), "Train 45".

J. C. Setphin was born about seventy years ago in Pulaski, Virginia. He plays a standard five-string banjo picking with the left hand and fretting with the right without retuning the instrument. He also plays a fine-sounding old-time fiddle. Hazel Dickens, Mike Seeger and Bob Shanklin accompany him on the banjo, mandolin and guitar respectively. "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down", "I Don't Love Nobody".

Eugene Cox was born in Winchester, Virginia twenty-four years ago, and now lives in Carmody Hills, Maryland. In 1956 he won the banjo award at the Camerilla Music Festival. He also picks the guitar. Veronica Cox accompanies him on the guitar. "Wildwood Flower".

Veronica Stoneman Cox is about twenty years old. She is one of the thirteen children of Ernest and Hattie Stoneman, well-known recording artists of the twenties (v. Folkways Anthology of American Folk Music, Volume III, numbers 64 and 65.) She took second place in the banjo contest at the Camerilla Music Festival, second only to her husband, Eugene who accompanies her on the guitar in this recording. "Lonesome Road Blues".

Dick Rittler was born in Baltimore about seventeen years ago. He has been picking the banjo for two and a half years and also picks the mandolin and guitar. Bob Baker is the guitarist and lead-singer on this recording. Bob Shanklin accompanies on the mandolin, Hazel Dickens on the banjo, and Mike Seeger on the guitar. "Cindy".

Kenny Miller was born near Rising Sun, Maryland in 1940. He has been picking the banjo for two years and also plays the fiddle. During the past year he has picked the banjo with both Bill and Charlie Monroe and has also played regularly at New River Ranch, Rising Sun, Maryland. Mike Seeger is playing a second banjo part on "Ruben's Train". "Please Come Back Little Fiddl" is a double recording with Kenny doing both banjo parts. Kenny's mother plays the guitar accompaniment on "Ruben's Train", "Ruben's Train", "Please Come Back Little Fiddl".

Mike Seeger was born in New York City in 1933 and brought up in Chevy Chase, Maryland. He has been picking the banjo for four years but has been playing three-finger style for two and a half years. He also plays the fiddle, mandolin, guitar and harmonica. The lead singer and guitarist in "Ground Hog" is Bob Baker. "Ground Hog".

Eric Weissberg, born in New York City in 1939, has been picking the banjo since the age of ten. For the past two years he has been playing three-finger style. He also plays the mandolin, guitar, fiddle and bass. Ralph Rinzler accompanies him on the guitar and Mike Seeger on the mandolin.
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