MIKE SEEGER
OLD TIME COUNTRY MUSIC

DESIGN & PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN
RICHMOND COTILLON
THE BALDHEADED END
OF A BROOM
SAD AND LONESOME DAY
LORD THOMAS
OH MY LITTLE DARLING
BONAPARTE'S RETREAT
FRANKIE
WILL THE WEAVER
ROLLIN' ON

DON'T LET YOUR DEAL
GO DOWN
WORRIED BLUES
THE STORY OF
THE MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI
I'M A MAN OF
CONSTANT SORROW
HANDSOME MOLLY
JOHN HARDY
JOHNSON CITY BLUES
FISHERMAN'S LUCK
SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN
OLDTIME COUNTRY MUSIC
Sung and Played on Fiddle, Banjo, Dulcimer, Guitar, Mouth-harp, Mandolin & Autoharp

by MIKE SEEGER

Miscellaneous Notes

This record is a result of continuing efforts to record an LP of oldtime music started in 1957. One double recording from 1957, East Virginia, was used on the first New Lost City Ramblers record in late 1958, as were several of the songs: Old Fish Song, Colored Aristocracy, Roving Gambler, It's a Shame to Whip Your Wife on Sunday, Sailor on the Deep Blue Sea, and (on Vol. 3) Johnson Boys. Partly as a result of the foregoing, but more because of having learned a great deal in the past five years, the nature of the record expanded considerably. Only John Hardy and Handsome Molly remain as before.

This record was recorded during August and September, 1962 in the living room of our home in Roosevelt, New Jersey, in the hurried moments between playing engagements and house moving. Tracy Schwarz handled the controls and nursed the tape machines through numerous breakdowns, as well as helping with artistic and technical problems such as how to fret only the middle string of the dulcimer, etc. The recordings were made on my antique Ampex 600 and a tandberg model 3B (for over-dubs) with a recently rebuilt RCA 77B microphone.

I am also indebted to the record collectors who have allowed me to copy their oldtime discs of songs used here: Ralph Rinzler, Howard Cole, Willard Johnson, Norman Tinsley, Eugene Earle, Pete Kuykendall, Bob Pinson, Archie Green, John Cohen, Moe Asch, and Harry Smith (Anthology of American Folk Music, Folkways FA 2951, FA 2952, FA 2953.) Sources are listed under song titles and are not meant to be complete discographies. Song texts (excepting John Hardy which is a composite) are taken from the original record rather than being transcribed from performances on this record.

SIDE I

Richmond Cotillion

Frank Neal and his Boys-Challenge 407 B

The Baldheaded End of a Broom

Jerry Jordan Supt 9454 B

Oh love is such a very funny thing
It catches the young and old,
It's just like a plate of boardinghouse hash
And to many a man it's sold

* Introductory notes for this album by Ralph Rinzler will be issued in the near future.

It makes you feel like a freshwater eel
And it cause your head to swell
You'll lose your mind for love is blind
And empties your pocket as well.

CHORUS:
Boys keep away from the girls I say
And give them lots of room
For you'll find when you're wed they'll bang you
Til your dead
With a bald-headed end of a broom

When a man is going with a pretty little girl
He talks as gentle as a dove
He spends all his money and he calls her honey
For to show her he's solid in love
When his money is gone and his clothes is hooked
You'll find the old saying is true
That a ______ on the arm is worth two on the ______
But what is he going to do

When married folks have lots of cash
The love is firm and strong
But when they have to feed on hash
The love don't last so long
With a wife and seventeen half starved kids
I'll tell you it's no fun
When the butcher comes around to collect his bill
With a dog and a double barrel gun
Young fellows all take my advice
Don't be in a hurry to wed
You'll think you're in clover til the honeymoon's over
And then you'll think you're dead
With a crosseyed baby on each knee
And a wife with a plaster on her nose
You'll find true love don't run so smooth
When you wear your second hand clothes

Sad and Lonesome Day

The Carter Family - Perf 7-04--53 (17480)
Oh today has been a lonesome day
Today has been a lonesome day
Today has been a lonesome day
And it seems tomorrow'll be the same old way
Oh they carried my mother to the burying ground
They carried my mother to the burying ground
They carried my mother to the burying ground
And watch the pall-bearers let her down
If you ever hear a church bell tone
If you ever hear a church bell tone
If you ever hear a church bell tone
You may know by that she's dead and gone
Oh dig my grave with a silver spade
Oh dig my grave with a silver spade
Oh dig my grave with a silver spade
And mark the place where I must lay
There's one kind favor I ask of you
There's one kind favor I ask of you
There's one kind favor I ask of you
That's to see my grave is kept green

Lord Thomas

From unknown singer in Garwick Collection; KL 56 bl.
Come father, come father come riddle to me
Come riddle it all in one
And tell me whether to marry fair Ellen
Or bring the Brown girl home

The Brown girl she has house and land
Fair Ellender she has none
And there I charge you with the blessing
To bring the Brown girl home

He got on his horse and he rode and he rode
He rode 'til he came to the home
And no one so ready as Fair Ellen herself
To rise and bid him in
What news have you brought unto me Lord Thomas?
What news have you brought unto me?
I've come to ask you to my wedding
A sorrowful wedding to be
Oh mother, oh mother would you go or stay
Fair child, do as you please
I'm afraid if you go you'll never return
To see your mother any more
She turned around and dressed in white
Her sisters dressed in green
And every town that they strode through
They taken her to be some queen

They rode and they rode 'til they came to the hall
She pulled at the bell and it rang
And no one so ready as Lord Thomas himself
To rise and welcome her in
He taken her by her lily white hand
When leading her through the hall
Saying fifty gay ladies are here today
But here is the flower of all
The Brown girl she was standing by
With knife ground keen and sharp
Between the long ribs and the short
She pierced fair Ellender's heart

Lord Thomas he was standing by
With knife ground keen and sharp
Between the long ribs and the short
He pierced his own bride's heart
By placing the handle against the wall
The point against his breast
Saying this is the ending of three true lovers
God sends us all to rest
Oh father, oh father go dig my grave
Go dig it wide and deep
And place fair Ellender in my arms
And the Brown girl at my feet

Oh My Little Darling

Thaddeus C. Willingham with banjo-Gulfport, Miss., Herbert Halpert, 1939. AAFS 3115 Bl.
Oh my little darling don't you weep and cry
Some sweet day's a-coming, marry you and I
Oh my little darling don't you weep and moan
Some sweet day coming, take my baby home
Up and down the railroad 'cross the county line
Pretty little girl funny, wife is always crying
--- drives the wagon, ----- holds the line
Kill yourself a-laughing, see them ------ flying

Bonaparte's Retreat

A. A. Gray-Okeh 40110

Frankie

Mississippi John Hurt-Okeh 8560 (400221), re-issued on Folkways' Anthology of American Folk Music FP 251.
Frankie was a good girl, everybody knows
She paid a hundred dollars for Albert's one suit of clothes
He's her man and he done her wrong.
Frankie went down to the corner saloon, didn't go to be gone long
She peeped through the keyhole in the door, spied Albert in Alice's arms
He's my man and he done me wrong
Frankie called Albert, Albert says I don't hear
If you don't come to the woman you love, going to haul you out of here
You're my man and you done me wrong
Frankie shot old Albert, and she shot him three or four times
Says stroll back out the smoke of my gun, let me see is Albert dying
He's my man and he done me wrong
Frankie and the judge walked down the stand, they walked out side by side
The judge says to Frankie, you're going to be justified
For killing a man and he done you wrong
Dark was the night, cold was on the ground
The last word I heard Frankie say, I done laid old Albert down
He's my man, and he done me wrong
I ain't going tell no story, and I ain't going to tell no lie
Well Albert passed about an hour ago, with a girl he called Alice Fry
He's your man and he done you wrong

Will The Weaver

Charlie Parker and Mack Woolbright - Col. 15694 (145197)
Son oh son what's the matter, does she lie or does she tatter
Does she do the tattering go, on with Will the Weaver-o
She don't lie and she don't tatter, she don't scold nor she don't flatter
But she does a tattering go on with Will the Weaver-o
Son oh son go home and love her, do not find no fault above her
And if she does not do well, pick up a stick and beat her well
He went home and a friend he met him thus he said but just to fret him
Saw your wife awhile ago, on with Will the Weaver-o
He went home in a devil of a wonder, knocked at the door just like thunder
Who is that the weaver cried, that's my husband you better hide
Up the chimney Will he ventured, through the door his husband entered
Searching all the walls around, not a soul could be found
He set down by the fireside weeping, up the chimney got to peeping
There he spied the wretched soul, sitting on the pot-rack pole
He built on a rousing fire, just to suit his own desire
His wife she cried with a free good will, don't do that the man you'll kill
He put on a little more fuel, his wife she cried my love why do you
Take him down and spare his life, if you want me to be your loving wife
He reached up and down he took him, like a raccoon dog he shook him
Where he was white beat him red, made poor Weaver wish he was dead
He went home his wife she met him, up with a stick and down she set him
Where he was red beat him blue, every word of this is true

Rollin' On

Monroe Bros. Bb 7598A
Wish I was in south land
Setting in a chair
One arm 'round my old guitar
The other 'round my dear

CHORUS:
I'm rollin' on (I'm rollin' on)
I'm rollin' on (I'm rollin' on)
I'm rollin' on through life
Just rollin' on

Setting in the moon light
Blue as blue can be
Strumming on my old guitar
To give my poor heart ease

(CHORUS)

Whether I'm in the country
Whether I'm in the town
My old guitar is near me
Whether I'm up or down

(CHORUS)

Maybe someday I'll marry
If I can find a girl
I'll always love my guitar
As much as I love her

(CHORUS)

See Page 5 for additional verses

SIDE II

Don't Let Your Deal Go Down

Fiddling John Carson and his Virginia Reelers - Okeh 45096 A

CHORUS:
Don't let the deal go down, little girl
Don't let the deal go down
Don't let the deal go down, little girl 'Til your last gold dollar's done gone

Who's going to shoe them pretty little feet?
Who's going to glove your hand?
Who's going to kiss them sweet little lips?
Lord it's, who's going to be your man?

(CHORUS)

Pappa will shoe my pretty little feet
Momma will glove my hand
Nobody's kissing my sweet little lips
For John's going to be my man

(CHORUS)

Where did you get them high-top shoes?
Dresses you wear so fine?
Got my shoes from a railroad man
And my dresses from a driver in the mine

(CHORUS)

Worried Blues

Frank Hutchinson-Okeh 45114 (80-782)

I've got the worried blues, got no heart to cry (2)
If the blues don't kill me, boys I'll never die
Some people say the worried blues are not bad (2) They're the worst old thing a man ever had
They make you believe the world is upside down (2) I've traveled this world, boys it's
When you got the blues you can't eat nor sleep (2) You'll walk around like a police on his beat
I dreamt last night, lied all back in bed (2) I dreamt last night that the woman I love was dead
That woman I love she's done dead and gone (2) She left me here trying to sing my ragtime song
Went to the graveyard looked in my woman's face (2) I love you honey, sure can't take your place
Take my chair to the river, boys and I'll sit down (2) If the blues overtakes me, going to rock overboard
and drown
I woke up this morning, freight train on my mind (2) I believe old rounder I better hike on down the line
Going to leave this country, sure going to leave it soon (2)
Going to leave this country, sure going to leave it soon
When I leave here just hang crept on the door (2) I won't be dead I just won't be here no more

The Story of the Mighty Mississippi
(Harrell - Stoneman)
Ernest Stoneman - Vi 20671
Way out in the Mississippi Valley, just among those plains so grand
Rose the flooded Mississippi River, destroying the works of man
With her waters at the highest that all man has ever known
She came sweeping through the valleys, and destroying lands and home
There were children clinging in the treetops who had spent those sleepless nights
And without a bit of shelter or even a spark of light
With their prayers going up to their father for the break of day to come
That they might see some rescue party who would provide for them a home
There were some of them on the house tops with no way to give an alarm
There were mothers wading in the water with their babies in their arms
Let us all get right with our maker as he doeth all things well
And be ready to meet in judgment when we bid this earth farewell

I'm A Man of Constant Sorrow
Stanley Brothers
Col. 20816, Emry Arthur-Para 3289. Text is from Ralph Stanley's recording. Tune is composite of the two with a mixture from the singing of Lee Moore's wife, Juanita, whose show I recorded at New River Ranch in 1956.
But up steps the sheriff and takes him by the arm
Says Johnny come along with me, poor boy
Johnny come along with me
He sent for his momma and his poppa too
To come and go his bail
But there weren't no bail on a murder change
So they threw John Hardy back in Jail
Threw John Hardy back in Jail.

John Hardy had a pretty little girl
The dress that she wore was blue
She threw her arms around his neck
Saying daddy I have always been true
Daddy I have always been true
I've been to the east and I've been to the west
Travelled this wide world around
Been to the river and I've been baptized
And now I'm on my hanging ground
Now I'm on my hanging ground.

Johnson City Blues
Clarence Green - Col. 15461 (147190)
Went upon the Lookout Mountain
As far as I could see
I was looking for the woman made a monkey out of me
I come down to the depot
In time to catch the Cannonball
Got the blues in Chattanooga
I won't be back 'til late next fall

Down in Memphis
On East main Street
I was watching evry body that I chanced to meet
I saw my sweet daddy
Coming around the flat
He was dressed in a tailor-made suit
And a John B. Stetson hat
Daddy -- sweet daddy
I know you're going to quit me now
But I don't need no daddy nohow
Oh it's trouble, trouble
Is all I ever find
Going back to Johnson City
For going to worry you off my mind

Down in
As far as I could go
Was the darnedest bunch of soldiers that you ever saw
On the Tennessee River
Down below the lock and dam
I was looking for my good gal
Think she

Down in Johnson City
For hospitality
Are the finest bunch of people in the State of Tennessee
I'm tired of roaming this way
Going back to Johnson City
I'll go back and stay someday

Fisherman's Luck
Dixon Brothers MW M-7855B
One day I went a-fishing and I used a frog for bait
I swung it in the water and I pulled me out a snake
I had me a bottle of moonshine to keep me feeling right
You should have been a-watching well it was an awful sight
I pulled his mouth wide open and I poured some whiskey in
And when I turned that snake a-loose and I used my frog again
I caught me a great big jack-fish but one thing I did hate
That doggone greedy pounder had gobbled down my bait
I then got busy thinking and I got to feeling blue
I could not find another frog and I didn't know what to do
I soon got tired of thinking and I leaned against a tree
I was calmly smoking when something come to me
It touched me on the shoulder I looked around to see
That doggone water rattler had come to trade with me
Frogs I think a dozen he brought them to the bank
There where I was a fishing to trade them in for drink
The frogs was all around me the snake piled on the ground
He smiled and winked his eye at me and he drank my whiskey down
Now this will end my story that rattler headed south
He crawled away so happy with my bottle in his mouth.

Sourwood Mountain
Who doesn't know sourwood mountain?

Rollin' On
Here are a couple of verses from a different version of this song which I forgot about when I recorded. They are from 'Rollin' On!' (composer credit: Salty Holmes) - Prairie Ramblers MW M-4483 A (Eb B 5395 A).

after the second verse above:
I have no home nor money
Everyone's turned me down
I always stick to my old guitar
It's the only true friend I found

(Chorus)

after the fourth verse:
My guitar and I will travel
We'll travel from shore to shore
And when we find that little girl
We'll never travel no more

Mike Seeger has participated in the production of many Folkways record albums -- as performer (solo and with The New Lost City Ramblers), editor and recorder.

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