SONGS OF A NEW YORK LUMBERJACK

Sung by Ellen Stekert, Accompanying Herself on Guitar

Edited By Kenneth S. Goldstein

FOLKWAYS FA 2354
BOUNDING THE U.S.
The Hills Of Glenshee
The Western Pioneers
The Two Sisters (Child #10)
Johnny Troy
Poor Old Anthony Rolly (Child #278)
Pat Murphy Of The Irish Brigade
The Drummer Boy
The Trouble Down at Homestead
The Fox
The Cumberland And The Merrimac
The Singular Dream
The Lakes Of Ponchartrain
The Black Cook
Abe Lincoln Went To Washington
The Shanty Boy And The Farmer's Son
The Raftsman's Song
The Jealous Lover

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Ronald Clyne
ABOUT THE SINGER

ELLEN STEKERT, a native of Great Neck, Long Island, is presently an instructor in the English Department at Indiana University, where she is also working on her Master's Degree in folklore. As an undergraduate student at Cornell University, she had more than the average student's interest in folk music, and was assistant to one of New York State's senior folklorists, Professor Harold W. Thompson, in addition to having had a weekly program of folksongs on radio station WVR.

Miss Stekert has had considerable experience both as a collector and singer of folksongs. She has recorded folksongs from traditional singers in various parts of the United States and Europe, as well as in her native New York State. She has previously made several excellent albums of folksongs for three different record companies. This is her first recording for FOLKWAYS RECORDS.

The eighteen songs in this album are from the repertory of one man, Mr. Ezra ("Fuzzy") Barhight, age eighty-one, of Cohocton, New York. He learned most of these songs in his younger years from his mother and from the lumbermen he worked with in his travels across Northern Pennsylvania and southern New York State. Of the nearly one hundred songs Fuzzy sang for me, there were only about ten that he could comment on as to where and when he had learned them and most of these he learned from his mother. But while his memory of how he learned his songs is vague, his feeling about them certainly is not.

After I had pestered him awhile about the origin of a song, he leaned forward in his chair and said to me in a loud voice, "These are all real songs. These ain't none of your old humbug, hop-and-go-fetch-it dancing songs." He seldom listens to his radio and vows that he never learned a song from a book, just from people who sing. It was in 1920, he says, that he learned his last new song.

INTRODUCTION

by Ellen Stekert
It is sometimes assumed that a collection of folk-songs has worth only in so far as it is representative of a group of people. The songs in this collection cannot be called "Songs of New York State" or "Lumberjack Songs." They are the songs of one man, Ezra Barhight and resident of New York State. But the fact that all of these songs have been collected from one man makes them no less worthy of recognition than a collection of songs from many people in one area or occupation. The body of American traditional songs cannot be torn apart and classified in any but an arbitrary way. The songs and traditions of one geographical area or of one occupation are the products of the melting of many traditions. And just as many individuals bring their folk backgrounds together to blend into the folklore of New York State or the folklore of the Lumberjack, one man in his lifetime, in contact with many traditions, finds these traditions blended in himself and finds in himself the voice of American folklore.

The songs that Mr. Barhight sings would fill the table of contents of any folklore book admirably. His songs range from Child ballads, to work songs, to children's songs to popular sentimental songs of the late nineteenth century. He sings of Abraham Lincoln, Napoleon Bonapart, and Johnny Troy with the same familiarity that he sings of the girl who is more to be pitied than scorned at, never hesitating to translate the song into his own terms. In explaining the story of the "Two Sisters" to me he simply said, "Just one girl pushed the other in the crick and drowned her just because she wanted the feller." But most often Mr. Barhight felt, like some modern poets, that the songs spoke for themselves. When asked about a certain turn in the story he would quite often simply sing it to me again rather than explain it, and when pressed for an explanation would not hesitate to place his tongue in his cheek and make up a whopper such as, "Well, I know, 'cause I was there."

The fact that Mr. Barhight is so much intimate terms with the songs he sings seems to place him apart from our modern world, where people listen to radio and watch television with half an effort, expending the other half to talk about the noise. He seems to be from a golden age that some folklorists like to imagine, an age where every family, town, and occupation had its own songs and stories in which they took pride. Despite the fact that he spent a good part of his life singing at local country dances and in lumber camps, he still sings with the piker face of the "traditional" singer, stopping now and then to speak a word for emphasis instead of singing it. Although he does play the five-string banjo, he prefers to sing unaccompanied. Both words and music are of equal importance to him and he has often refused to even tell me the jist of a story unless he can remember the tune. Most of the tunes he sings are Irish, which can be accounted for by the fact that, according to Fuzzy, most of the men who sang in lumber camps in the nineteenth century were of Irish origin.

But it is not simply because Mr. Barhight and his songs are representative of American folk tradition that they should be published. A more important point, and a point often overlooked, is that these songs are of a high quality both in their music and their texts. I do not have enough faith, as many other folklorists do, to say that a folksong will survive because it is good. People differ too much in what pleases them for the certain statement to be made that what is good will last longest. The taste of the individual folksinger accounts for the quality of his repertoire, not only in what songs he knows, but also in the minor changes he inevitably makes in them. The fact that Mr. Barhight is a remarkable man with an active imagination and a good musical ear accounts for the quality of the songs in this collection.

Of course, any individual is also a product of his age. In this collection there is a short section entitled "Songs With A Moral and Sentimental Message." Actually, over a quarter of the songs Mr. Barhight sang for me were of this type. They were the so-called "popular" or "hit" songs of the eighteen hundreds that contain little that is similar in the way of folk tradition to the songs that came before them. They are the persistent problem of folklorists today who wonder whether or not they should classify them as "folksongs." The problem is, that these songs, most of which have music and texts greatly inferior to older songs (such as Child ballads) are continually collected side by side with older songs. These popular sentimental songs have passed into the stream of folk tradition in the sense that they are now seldom learned from books, but are passed on orally, from person to person. The fact that these songs are closer to us in terms of time and space, along with the fact that they are artistically inferior, inclines me to be doubtful about them as folklore. They can be considered folklore in the sense that they have been kept alive through oral tradition and obviously mean as much, if not more, than the older ballads, to the man who sings them. But their roots in time are shallow, and while they may eventually be viewed as the beginning of new folk tradition, they are still too close to us in their origin to be of immediate concern to the folklorist. They are more the concern of the historian and sociologist.

Fuzzy was born in Galalee, Wayne County, Pennsylvania. His mother was born in the same town of German parents and his father, whom he never saw, was also American born. He traveled across northern Pennsylvania with his mother and step-father, Thomas Clark. They were always quite poor, his step-father taking odd jobs, hauling lumber, logs and burl, and then moving on. Fuzzy worked, as he says, ever since he was old enough to hold onto a line, and everywhere he went he sang and learned new songs. Most of his sentimental songs were learned from semi-professional performers. Of one of these songs he says, "I learned that when I used to go over there to Sio and play second rhythm. They was always singing to these dances, you know. Old fashion days, the old fashion dances, they used to sing and dance. We had a helluva time." Most of his tall tales and lumbermen and sailor songs he learned "evenings, just singing evenings in the lobby of the camp (lumber camp)." We used to get together thirty, forty of us and sing songs till midnight." Of other songs he would say, "I learned that when I was on my mother's knee."

The way I came to meet Mr. Fuzzy Barhight is any folklorist's dream come true. Fuzzy had gotten in touch with a Mrs. Pawling, a schoolteacher whom he knew, and persuaded her to write a letter to Cornell University. The letter read that Mr. Barhight knew over a hundred old songs and didn't want to die without leaving them after him. The letter finally reached Mrs. Edith N. Fox, curator of the Cornell University Archives, who contacted me, and a month later, in March, Mrs. Fox and I drove out eighty miles to the west of Ithaca to Fuzzy's place.
We found Fuzzy waiting for us, all ready to sing, full of energy and extremely friendly. In the year I have known him I have never known him to be any different. He loves people, is always asking me to bring a group of friends along, and can sing without stopping for hours on end at the same sitting, instructing me when to turn my tape machine on and off. He delights in scolding and teasing me, especially about the questions I ask him. For example when I asked him to tell me what a raftsman was, he answered, "Way up to college and she can't tell me what a raftsman is? What are they learning you up there? You come up to the country before you graduate and then you'll commence to know something. A raftsman is a man who run logs down the stream years ago when there was logs big enough to run 'down the stream." An afternoon with Fuzzy is enough to wear me out. I am sure there are few men more alive than he. His imagination, his sense of humor, and his energy are all in his songs. And here they are, SONGS OF A NEW YORK LUMBERJACK.

Notes by KENNETH S. GOLDESTIN and ELLEN STEKERT

SIDE I, Band 1: BOUNDING THE U. S.

The middle of the 19th century found the U. S. stretching north to Canada, south to Mexico, and bounded on the East and West by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, respectively. There was plenty of room for everyone and fortunes were to be made by enterprising young people with imagination and spirit. There was land to be settled and industries to be built, but the U. S. needed people to do the work. And the call went out to people around the world. Post advertisements of shipping companies extolled the greatness of the country, and poets and songwriters saw their duty and wrote in glowing and optimistic words, the greatness that was, and was to be. "Bounding the U. S." is probably the creation of some professional songwriter of the last half of the 19th century. Such songs were common enough in pocket songsters and sheet music of the period, and many of these songs soon passed into oral circulation, largely due to the ease with which a printed text could be referred to if a singer or singers forgot lines or verses of the songs.

Of all the mighty nations in the East and in the West Why, the glorious Yankee nation is the wisest and the best. There is room for all creation, and the banner is unfurled; It's a general invitation to the people of the world.

CHORUS:
Come along, come along,
Make no delay;
Come from every nation, come from every way,
Our land it is broad enough, and don't you be alarmed,
Uncle Sam is rich enough, he'll give you all a farm.

The St. Lawrence bounds our Northern line, the chrysalis waters flow,
And the Rio Grande, the southern bound, way down in Mexico.
From the great Atlantic Ocean where the sun begins to dawn,
It peaks the Rocky Mountains, clear away in Oregon.
In the South, they raise the cotton, in the West, the corn and pork,
While New England's manufacture, they do the finer work,
And the little creeks and waterfalls, that force along our hills,
Are just the thing for washing sheep and driving cotton mills.

For additional texts and information, see:


SIDE I, Band 2: THE HILLS OF GLENSHEE

A favorite with farm workers in Scotland for many years, this song is a prime example of a composed ballad passing into widespread oral circulation. It has been fairly well ascertained that the song was written by Andrew Sharpe, a shoemaker from Perth, Scotland, around the turn of the 19th century. Sharpe is supposed to have been a man of considerable talents, for in addition to his shoemaking he is known to have played and taught the German flute, painted landscapes and taught drawing, and to have composed and sung love songs.

The ballad has persisted in tradition for more than 150 years, partly due, no doubt, to several broadside printings in 19th century Britain. In this country, it has been collected in Michigan, Vermont, California, and in both the Catskill and Adirondack mountains of New York State.

It was on a May morning,
When the day was all dawning
And the winds they did echo
Their loud beaming glee,
I spied a fair maiden
As homeward I was riding,
She was herding her flocks
On the hills of Glenshee.

Her cheeks were like roses
Adorned with their dimples,
And bright was the gleam
In her bonnie blue eye,
Her looks was so sweet
And her smile so enchanting
That my heart soon belonged
To that maid of Glenshee.

Well, I stepped up to her,
Says I, "Bonnie lassie,
If you will but go
To St. Georgetown with me,
There's nobody there
Shall stop forth in my castle,
And none shall be clothed
More fine than thee.
"And for pleasure you'll have a carriage for to ride in,
And when people do speak, they'll say "Ma'am" unto thee;
Servants to wait on and do as you bid them,
I will make you my bride, oh my maid of Glenshee."

"Don't bother me now with your carriage for to ride in,
Or neither your servants to wait upon me,
For I feel just as happy in my own highland claddies,
A-herding my flocks on the hills of Glenshee."

Come set down beside me and don't talk so lightly
Though bullets fly around me my bride you will be,
And this very night in my arms I'll embrace you."
She smiled and consented and I took her with me.

Galedonia's bright waters may alter their courses,
They may alter their course and run back from the sea,
And the bright rolling sun may be bound down in tatters,
But I will still love you, my maid of Glenshee."

For additional texts and information, see:


SIDE I, Band 3: THE WESTERN PIONEERS

The annals of America's early western pioneers contain many highly dramatic and exciting tales of adventure, heroism, bravado and sacrifice. The lot of the pioneer was a hard one, with death at the hands of the Indians a possibility at any time. It is no wonder, then, that so many western tales and songs concern themselves with the struggle against the Redmen.

This ballad does not appear to have been previously reported from tradition, though its lines tell a familiar story of death and rescue. It was obviously written some time after the Civil War when the great expanses of the west were made safe for settlement as a result of numerous Indian wars which ended with the Indians being forced off their lands and made to settle in reservations. Such typically western ballads as "The Western Pioneers" were brought back to the east by soldiers and Indian fighters who took up new occupations back home when the Indian wars ended.

In eighteen hundred and sixty eight, a little immigrant band,
They were massacred by Indians bound west by overland,
They scalped our noble fathers, our mothers had to die,
And the only living captives was two small girls and I.

We were rescued from the Indians by a brave and noble man,
He trailed those thieving Indians and fought them hand to hand,
He was noted for his bravery while on the enemy's track,
And he had a noble history, his name was Texas Jack.

Oh, Jack could tell you the story if he were only here,
Of the trials and the hardships of the western pioneers,
He would tell you how our fathers and mothers lost their lives,
And how our aged parents were scalped before our eyes.

Now the cowboy's name is "Butcher" by papers in the east,
And when he's in the city, he's treated like a beast,
But in his native country, his name is ever dear,
You can bet he's always welcome by the western pioneers.

I am a roving cowboy, my saddle is my home,
And I'll always be a cowboy, no difference where I roam,
And for my noble namesake, his help I'll volunteer,
You can bet he's always welcome by the western pioneers.

SIDE I, Band 4: THE TWO SISTERS (Child #10)

One of the most widely distributed of all British traditional ballads, "The Two Sisters" has proved excellent material for detailed study. Paul G. Brewster, who has made an extensive study of the ballad, believes it is definitely Scandinavian in origin, having started in Norway prior to the 17th century, spreading from there to other Scandinavian countries and then to Scotland, England and America.

Child considered the heart of the ballad to be the making of a musical instrument from the drowned sisters body, the instrument in turn revealing the identity of the murderer. Most recently collected texts have eliminated this supernatural motif entirely. No so with the version recorded here. Fuzzy's version is one of the few American texts in which the "singing breastbone" motif is even partly found. This text is also a rare one on another ground, for in only one other reported version does the younger sister drown the older sister. In terms of social history, this point is entirely believable, for according to popular social convention the younger sister would not have been allowed to marry until the elder was already wed, or dead.
Also of considerable interest to scholars have been the various refrains employed in this ballad. The "bineely and binoly" refrain of this version relates it to considerably older texts. Fuzzy reported having learned this version from his mother.

There was two sisters lived in the West, Bineely and binoly,
Was two sisters lived in the West,
Down where the waters is a-rolling.

There came a young lord and he courted them both,
There came a young lord and he courted them both.

To the eldest he gave her his heart and hand,
To the youngest he gave her a gay gold ring.

As these two sisters was crossing a bridge,
The youngest she pushed her sister in.

Oh, sister, oh, sister, give me your hand,
You can have the young lord and all of his land.

But she floated down to the miller's dam,
And the miller with his hook, well, he pulled her in.

Of her breastbone they made a harp,
Bineely and binoly,
Of her breastbone they made a harp,
Down where the waters is a-rolling.

For additional texts and information, see:


Dean-Smith, M., A GUIDE TO ENGLISH FOLK-SONG COLLECTIONS, University Press of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1954.

SIDE I, Band 5: JOHNNY TROY

The ballad of "Johnny Troy", together with "Bold Jack Donahue" and "The Wild Colonial Boy" make up a fascinating trilogy of Australian bushranger ballads which have been popular with lumbermen in the United States and Canada. All three ballads relate the tale of Irish criminals who were transported to Australia, probably to serve as convict colonizers. In Australia they turn to "bushranging", a questionable occupation akin to that of the British highwayman. And all three men are presented not as criminals, but as "gallyant" heroes in the tradition of Robin Hood. The sympathy with which the ballad muse has portrayed these characters is consistent with the universal habit of the folk of all lands to view the badmen as a hero, for he represents to them, whatever his crimes may be, a symbol of revolt against the social and political order that made their own lives so miserable.

Of the three ballads, less is known concerning the ballad of "Johnny Troy" than either of the other two. Jack Donahue has successfully been identified as a young native of Dublin who was killed in a gun battle with police near Sydney, Australia, in 1830. Jack Dowling (the Wild Colonial Boy) is said to have been a bushranger of the 1870's, though some folklorists believe him to have been Jack Donahue, previously mentioned, and the ballad of "The Wild Colonial Boy" to be merely another versification of the same theme. No information concerning a bushranger named Johnny Troy has to date been uncovered. And interestingly enough, while broadside and songster versions of the other two ballads have been found in both the British Isles and America, as well as in Australia, "Johnny Troy" has been reported only in this country. The version sung here is one of the most complete texts ever collected.

Come all you daring bushrangers
and outlaws of the land,
Who mean to live in slavery
or join the convict band;
Come listen free to what I say,
I'll tell it to you true
The chilling fate I will relate
of gallyant Johnny Troy.

Young Troy was born in Dublin,
that city of great fame,
Brought up by honest parents
and the country knew the same,
For the robbing of a widow
he was sent far o'er the main;
Fifteen long years in New South Wales
he'd wear that ball and chain.

Young Troy'd not been in Sydney long
'fore he'd made up his mind,
Bound down to cruel keepers
who never treat him kind,
Bound down to cruel keepers,
not long with them he'd stay,
But like some daring bushranger,
go robbing the King's highway.

There was three well armed constables
all seated in the bow,
It was our act surprised, my boys,
when Troy he made the vow,
It was our act surprised, my boys,
when Troy he made the rush,
When him and his brave comradess
pulled nobly from the brush.

"Well, now we've gained our own, my boys,
we'll pull a good stiff oar,
I'll smash and break these handcuffs
when we do reach the shore;
When we do reach the shore, brave boys,
we'll sing and dance with joy,
We'll hiss and damn those constables,"
cried gallyant Johnny Troy.

Well there's four in our brave number now
whose names I will make known:
There's Johnny Troy, Jack Harrington,
Jim Jackson and Jack Dunn.
Said Johnny Troy to Harrington,
"Let each man load his piece,
For this very night I mean to fight
against those horse police."
Well, the very first they chanced to meet
was an old man by the way;
He quickly stepped up to him,
and unto him did say:
"Your gold watch and your money
I quickly do demand,
Or I'll blow your brains out instantly,
if you refuse to stand."

"No watch or clock I never had,"
The old man did reply,
"But for a large family
I always did provide.
I was banished from old Erin
for being a being a brave wild boy." --
"Well, if that is true, you'll not be robbed
by gallyant Johnny Troy."

Young Troy got on his own horse then
and rode a little way,
Then turned unto the old man,
and unto him did say:
"Here's fifty pounds for you, old man,
t'll cheer you on your way.
The poor I'll help most any time,
but the rich I will annoy,
I'm known quite well this country 'round,
they call me Johnny Troy."

At length young Troy was taken
and was condemned to die;
He was to be hanged
on that Sydney gallows high.
The poor all gathered 'round him,
sent up the dismal cry,
"Alas, there hangs that gallyant youth,
they called him Johnny Troy."

For additional texts and information, see:

SIDE I, Band 6: POOR ANTHONY ROLLY (Child #278)
Francis James Child included this ballad in his great textual compilation under the title "The Farmer's Curst Wife." It is probable that in the earliest forms of the ballad, the farmer made a pact with the devil in order to secure help to plow his fields. In return, the devil was to receive the soul of some member of the family at a later date. Modern forms of the ballad do not relate this incident, but merely have the devil calling on the farmer to claim some member of the family. In this version, the farmer instructs the devil to take his wife instead of his son; in most versions, the devil takes the wife by choice.

As long as the battle of the sexes continue, songs with motifs such as this will be sung. It is no surprise, then, that this ballad has had a long history and is one of the most widely collected ballads in the United States. As with most American versions, the ballad ends on a humorous philosophic note extolling one of womankind's most unique virtues.

Of entertaining interest is the almost numberless varieties of refrains recorded with this ballad. In this respect, the version sung here is of special note, as the "Anthony Rolly" refrain, most often found appended to the nursery song "Frog Went a-Courting", has only been collected once previously as part of "The Farmer's Curst Wife."

There was a man when he was first born,
Poor old Anthony Rolly,
There was a man when he was first born,
He had no horse to plow his corn.
With his right leg, left leg, upper leg, under leg,
Poor old Anthony Rolly.
So he hitched the pig with his old cow,
And plowed the corn, the Devil knows how.

Well the Devil he came to the old man's plow,
"It's your oldest son that I'm after now."

"You cannot have my oldest son,
You'll have to take the old woman or none."

So the Devil he took her all onto his back,
And like an old fool he went carrying his pack.

Well, he carried her over three fields more,
At length he came to his own trap door.

There sat little Devils all bound in chain,
She upped with her shovel and knocked out their brains.

Then one little Devil all with a red cap,
She upped with her shovel and gave him a slap.

Then three little Devils peeped over the wall,
Crying: "Carry her back, she'll brain us all."

So the Devil he took her all onto his back,
And like an old fool he went carrying her back.

Well, he carried her over three fields more,
At length he came to the old man's door.

Now that shows that the women they're worse than the men,
They'll go to hell and come back again.

For additional texts and informations, see:
Dean-Smith, M., A GUIDE TO ENGLISH FOLK SONG COLLECTIONS, University Press of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1954.

SIDE I, Band 7: PAT MURPHY OF THE IRISH BRIGADE
During the Civil War, many Irish-American citizens and recent Irish emigrants from the British Isles and Canada fought on the side of the North. Part of this spirited showing was no doubt due to affection for
their new country. But to many other Irishmen it was a way of taking arms against an ally of the British. The American government believed that Britain's supposed neutrality during the war indicated sympathy for the southern cause; and England's importation of southern cotton and the building of Confederate ships in British shipyards found little favor with the north, and Irish-Americans specifically. Many of these men were recruited into Irish Brigades. This song appears to date from that period in our history.

Says Pat to his mother, "It looks strange to see Brother's fighting in such a queer manner, But I'll fight till I died if I never got killed For America's bright starry banner."

CHORUS:
Far away in the East was a dashing young blade, And the song he was singing so gayly, Twas honest Pat Murphy of the Irish Brigade And the song of the splintered shillelagh.

The morning soon broke, and poor Paddy awoke, He found rebels to give satisfaction, And the drummers were beating the Devil's sad tune, They were calling the boys into action.

(CHORUS)
Sure, the day after battle, the dead lay in heaps, And Pat Murphy lay bleeding and gory, With a hole through his head by some enemy's ball That ended his passion for glory.

CHORUS:
No more in the camp will his letters be read, Or his song be heard singing so gayly, But he died far away from the friends that he loved, And from the land of shillelagh.

SIDE I, Band 9: THE DRUMMER BOY

Although this song contains many elements which occur in Anglo-American songlore, this particular song has not been previously reported. The refrain, "So hard fortune", is a common one, and the ballad convention of twenty-four ladies going out to play is found in various British songs, suggesting a possible British origin for this song as well. Drummer boys were popular and romantic figures after a war, and there are several songs about them, including "The Drummer Boy of Waterloo" and "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh."

Other common folksong themes found in this song include that of the soldier-lover, and familial opposition to marriage. The tune to which Fuzzy sang this song is usually associated with the very common "One Morning In May."

Early one morning, on a bright summer's day, When 24 ladies went out to play, And a regiment of soldiers was passing thereby, The drummer on one of them cast a rude eye, And it's so hard fortune.

So he went to his comrade, and this he did say, "Twenty-four ladies I saw yesterday, And one of them has my poor heart won, Now if she denies me I'm surely undone, And it's so hard fortune."

So early next morning this drummer arose, And he dressed himself up in a suit of fine clothes; With a watch in each pocket, a cane in his hand, He went to the lady, she stepped on the strand, And it's so hard fortune.

"Come, pray, little drummer, now what do you mean? My father's a man of great honor and means. I'm his own only daughter, that ever can be."

"Little drummer, you're making too free, And it's so hard fortune."

So he turned himself round for to bid her farewell, "I'll soon send my soul to Heaven or Hell; You've wounded my heart, and you gave me no cure, In less than a minute I'll die at your door, And it's so hard fortune."

"Now go to the stable and harness a horse; To London we'll go and married well be, And what can they say when the deed it is done? -- I'll tell them that you won me with the roll of your drum, And it's so hard fortune."

SIDE I, Band 9: THE TROUBLE DOWN AT HOMESTEAD

This song is the only union song collected from Fuzzy. He originally learned the song in Potter County, Pennsylvania. The "trouble down at Homestead" refers to a strike which took place in the small mining town of Homestead, a few miles southeast of Pittsburgh, in 1892. The strike was carried out by the National Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers against the Carnegie Steel Company, and was one of the bitterest labor struggles in the history of the United States. The strike lasted 143 days and ended in a victory for the Carnegie Company. The arrival of 200 Pinkerton detectives resulted in a riot in which 7 men were killed and more than 20 wounded. In order to restore order, the governor of Pennsylvania sent the entire state militia to Homestead.

Since Fuzzy was in no way associated with the strike or showed any interest in other matters of social or economic protest, it appears that his interest in the song was determined by its singability. Certainly the song could have no meaning to him some 65 years after the incident it describes occurred.

George Korson collected a fuller text in New Kensington, Pennsylvania, in 1940 from a 70 year old man, and reports that the ballad was also sung in the bituminous coal camps of Pennsylvania.

Our trouble down at Homestead, it came about this way, The grasping corporation had the audacity to say; "If you'll renounce your union and forswear your liberty, We'll give you all a chance to live and die in slavery."

CHORUS:
Then a man that fights for honor, none can blame him, May look at him wherever he may roam, And no son of his can ever live to shame him While liberty and honor rules the home.
See that band of sturdy workingmen
start at the break of day
With determination in their face
that's surely meant to say:
"No man can drive us from our homes
for which we've toiled so long,
No man can take our places
for here's where we belong."

A woman with a rifle
and her husband in the crown,
She handed him the weapon,
they cheered her long and loud;
He kissed her, then said:
"Mary, go home till we are through."
She answered: "No, if you must die,
my place is here with you."

See that band of tramp detectives
come without authority,
Like thieves at night while decent men
are sleeping peacefully;
Would you wonder that our decent men
with indignation burn,
The lowly worm that crawls the earth
when tread upon will turn.

For additional text and information, see:

SIDE II, Band 1: THE FOX

Tales of the sly fox with almost human characteristics have been in popular tradition for centuries. The particular incident described in this song, that of the fox robbing a barnyard, appears in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales in the 14th century, and in many children's nursery rhymes and songs of the 17th and 18th centuries.

This song has been collected frequently in this country, the story told being almost identical in all cases. Fuzzy's version differs from most variants in that neither the farmer or his wife appear in the ballad. The fox is the sole hero of the tale, with hounds taking the place of human beings as his enemies. As a result of this exclusion of humans from the ballad, the fox himself takes on a more pronounced human character through the lack of contrast with human beings.

Fuzzy's text is, for the most part, extremely old, bearing a close resemblance to the 18th century English nursery rhyme on this same theme. His last verse has been reported rarely in this country, and is nearly identical with the first verse of the version in Halliwell's "The Nursery Rhymes of England" (1846).

A fox went out one moonshiny night,
The sky it was clear and the snow it lay light;
"Hot Scott," said the fox, "I never feel right
Till I get out of this town-o,
Town-o, town-o,
Till I get out of this town-o."

At length, he came to the farmer's gate,
Where he had been both early and late,
And then he began for to shiver and shake
For he heard the yelps of a hound-o,
Hound-o, hound-o,
For he heard the yelps of a hound-o.

At length, he came to the farmer's yard,
Where ducks and geese were all abroad,
And then he began for to shiver and shake
For he heard the yelps of a hound-o,
Hound-o, hound-o,
He heard the yelps of the hound-o.

"Oh, ducky, ducky, ain't you fat,
Oh, goosy, goosy, think of that,
Well the fattest of you shall ride on my back,
And I'll gallop you out of this town-o,
Town-o, town-o,
I'll gallop you out of this town-o."

At length, he came to his old wife's den,
Where she had young ones nine and ten;
"Oh, daddy, daddy, go again
For this is a happy town-o,
Town-o, town-o,
For this is a happy town-o.

How the fox and his wife they live in disguise,
They never eat mustard in all their whole lives,
And they eat all their vittals without fork or knife,
And they long to be picking a bone-o,
Bone-o, bone-o,
They long to be picking a bone-o.

For additional texts and information, see:


SIDE II, Band 2: THE CUMBERLAND AND THE MERRIMAC

This Civil War ballad commemorates the valiant fight of the Union ship "Cumberland" with the Confederate iron-clad "Merrimac" off Newport News, Virginia, on March 8th, 1862. The "Cumberland", a wooden-hulled ship, sank quickly after being rammed by the iron prow of the "Merrimac." Many sick and wounded men were drowned in the sinking, and the crew of the "Cumberland" is said to have fought to the very end.

Numerous poems were written describing the battle, including those of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and George H. Boker. But none of these highly literate descriptions became as popular in the public mind as did two broadside ballads published shortly after the incident. The best known of these was "The Cumberland's Crew", which became a favorite with sailors and lumberjack's. Considerably less known was the ballad sung here, though it was equally melodramatic and starkly descriptive in its account.
of the battle. It is interesting to note that this ballad, too, was a favorite with lumberjacks and that the few times it has been collected have been in lumbering country. For another version of this ballad, listen to the Folkways record "WOLF RIVER SONGS" (P 1001), in which Warde Ford, a former lumberjack from Wisconsin, sings an eight stanza version which clearly shows, when compared with Fuzzy's version, the interesting changes and variations resulting from the oral circulation of the song.

It was on last Monday morning, just at the break of day, when the good ship called the Cumberland lay anchored in her way, and the man upon our lookout to those below did say, "I see something like a house-top, on our leeward she does lay."

Our captain seized his telescope, and he gazed far o'er the blue, and then he turned and spoke to his brave and loyal crew, "That thing which yonder lies floating, that looks like some turtle's back, it's that infernal rebel steamer, and they call her Merrimac." Our decks were cleared for action, and our guns were pointed through, but still she kept a-coming up across the water blue, and on, still on, she kept coming, till no distance stood apart, when she sent a ball a-humming till at length that rebel pirate was, and he gazed far o'er the blue, just at the break of day, saying, "Haul down your flying colors now, or I'll sink your Yankee boat."

Our captain's eyes did glisten, and his cheeks turned pale with rage, and then in tones of thunder, to that rebel pirate said: "My men are brave and loyal, too, they're true to every man, and before I'll strike my colors down, you may sink me in the sand."

Well, the Merrimac she left us then for a hundred yards of more, then with her whistles screaming out on our wooden side she bore, she struck us at our midship, and her ram went crashing through, and the water came a-pouring in, on our brave and loyal crew.

Well, our captain turned unto his men, and unto them he did say, "I never will strike my colors down while the Cumberland rides the wave, but I'll go down with my gallant ship for to meet a watery grave, and you, my loyal comrades, you may seek your lives to save."

They swore they never would leave him, but would man their guns afresh, poured broadside after broadside, till the water reached their breasts; and then they sank far down, far down into the watery deep, the stars and stripes still flying from her mainmast's highest peak.

SIDE II, Band 3: THE SINGULAR DREAM

It is very probable that most of us have heard some version of the widely circulated popular story of "The Three Dreams" or "The Dream Bread Story", in which three men agree that the one who dreams the best (largest) dream will win a prize, usually food, wanted by all three. In its prose versions, this tale exists in innumerable variants, with the dreams frequently relating to a journey to Heaven or Hell. Only two ballad versions of this tale have been reported, one of which contains the dreams related to the journey to the other world.

Fuzzy's version of this tale in song form has been reported only once previously, as collected from a housewife in Salt Lake City, Utah. This version retains the major features of the traditional story, but, instead of the journey to Heaven or Hell, the dreams relate to an enormous turnip and the gigantic kettle needed to boil it in. The ballad and prose variants of this story usually end with one of the participants eating the prize while the others have been dreaming.

Oh, Johnny Bull was an Englishman, went out on a tramp one day, with three cents into his pocket to bear him a very long way. He travelled on for many a mile and no one did he see, till at length he fell in with an Irishman by the name of Paddy McGee.

"Good morning," then says John to Pat, "and where are you going to?" "Indeed, I hardly know, sir, I'm searching a job to do." "Have you any money about you?", at length said Paddy McGee; "Indeed, if that's what you're searching for, I haven't got any for thee."

So they travels on for many's a mile and no one did they meet, at length fell in with a Scotsman, like themselves he was out for work; "Have you any money about you?", at length one upped and said... "Indeed, if that's what you're searching for, I haven't got a red."

"Well, says Johnny Bull, "I have three cents, now what'll we do with that?" "We'll buy three cents worth of whiskey, it'll cheer us up," says Pat. "Oh no," said the Scotsman, "I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll buy three cents worth of oatmeal, and make a little McGrew."
"Oh, I will go and buy a loaf,"
Johnny Bull did say,
"We'll go down by yonders haystack,
and sleep our hunger away;
We'll take a drink of water
from yonders pearlring stream,
And the loaf will be his in the morning
that dreams the most singular dream."

"Well," says Scottie,
"I've been dreaming of fifty thousand men,
Been ten years digging a turnip,
the largest ever was seen;
At length they got that turnip dug,
by digging night and day,
And it took just fifty thousand teams
to draw that turnip away."

Says Johnny, "I've been dreaming
of fifty thousand men,
Been ten years making a boiler,
the largest ever was seen.
"What was your boiler made of, sir,
sure was it copper or tin?"
"By the powers that be it was copper, sir,
to boil your turnip in."

Well the Irishman 'rose in the morning
and told what he had dreamed:
"Sure I dreamed I was under the haystack
down by the pearlring stream,
I dreamed that Scottie and you was there,
as sure as I must go,
By the powers, I dreamed I was hungry,
I got up and I ate the loot."

For additional information and texts, see:
Baum, P. F., "The Three Dreams, or 'Dream Bread' Story", Journal of American Folklore, Volume XXX, 1917. (pp. 378 ff.)
Hubbard, L. A., "A Utah Version of 'The Three Dreams'", Western Folklore, Volume XV, 1946. (see pp. 128 ff.)

SIDE II, Band 4: THE LAKES OF PONCHARTRAIN

The origin of this song is a mystery, though it appears to be an imitation of the widely known "The Little Mohea." The basic theme is a common one in oral songlore, and forms the basis for other songs as well. Various groups have adapted the song to their own occupation, including the cowboy and lumberjack. Most singers are unfamiliar with the name Ponchartrain, and they invariably change it to a more meaningful one, e.g., "Poncho Plains" in a Cowboy version, "Lake Upton" in an Iowa text.

The Lakes of Ponchartrain are located in Louisiana. Fuzzy, however, insisted they were in Georgia.

Over swamps of alligators
I made my weary way,
Over ties on railroad crossings
my weary feet did play,
Till at length towards shades of evening
that higher land I would gain,
It is there I met with a Creole girl
on the Lakes of Ponchartrain.

Says I, "My pretty fair maiden,
my money does me no good,
If it weren't for the snakes and the alligators,
I'd sleep out in the wood."
"You're welcome, welcome, stranger,
although my home is plain,
For I ne'er will turn a stranger
out on the Lakes of Ponchartrain."

Well, she took me to her father's house,
and treated me right well,
Her hair in golden ringlets
down on her shoulders fell;
I tried for to win her beauty,
I tried that all in vain,
So handsome was the Creole girl
on the Lakes of Ponchartrain.

"Farewell, my pretty fair maiden,
you never will see me more,
But I'll never forget your kindness
in a cottage by the shore;
And at each social circle,
the flowing bowl I'll drain,
I will drink a health to the Creole girl
on the Lakes of Ponchartrain."

For additional texts and information, see:

SIDE II, Band 5: THE BLACK COOK

This interesting ballad does not appear to have been previously reported in this country. Edith Fowke, the Canadian folklorist, has collected several versions entitled "The Jolly Jack Tars" in Ontario and Quebec.

It has always proven a difficult thing for Doctors to obtain dead bodies on which to experiment or dissect for purposes of investigation and teaching, and various European folktales turn on this point. This ballad may be a broadside versification, from the 10th or 19th century, of this theme.

If you listen a while, I will sing you a ditty,
Concerning a doctor that lives in Cartown;
By seamen so bold he was fairly outwitted,
And fifty gold guineas was forced to pay down.

Those jolly Jack-tars and their comrades all groggled,
Their money was spent and their credit far gone,
From Fairport's bright town to the Keys I had rambled,
And bound to obtain some money or fun.

So the cook of our ship, being one of our number,
A bold lad was he and his color was black,
For wit and for wisdom he always was ready
For to think of a way to get cash in a crack.

So he said to his comrades, "I hear people saying
That a corpse might be sold quite readily here,
So take me alive, tie me up in my hammock,
And sell me to buy the whiskey and beer."
Well, the sailors being glad to accept of this offer, 
Away to the town where the doctor did dwell,
And into his ear most softly did whisper,
Saying, "Doctor, I have a fine corpse for to sell."

"Oh, a corpse," cried the doctor, like one in amazement, 
"Oh, where did you get it, come tell me, I pray?
Go get it, and bring it unto me this evening,
And 50 gold guineas to you I will pay."

Well, the sailors being glad to accept of this offer, 
Away to the ship why they quickly did steer.
And now pay attention to all I may mention,
And the rest of my story you quickly shall hear.

Why, they took the black cook, tied him up in his hammock,
And he being a lad both steady and strong,
Under his coat in the pocket of protection
Carried a knife with a blade about half a yard long.

That night, about twelve, when the streets were deserted,
The sailors struck out with the cook on their back;
When they came to the house where the doctor resided,
Was in a dark room they concealed that poor black.

Then after the doctor he'd paid them their money,
They told him their cook he had died upon sea,
And rather than have his dead body for to bury,
"We've sold him to you, now you's out of the way."

Soon the doctor went up for the tools to dissect him,
And soon he came down with a saw in his hand;
When he entered the room where the corpse it was lying,
Why, Jack with his cutlas so boldly did stand.

And, there stood the doctor like one in amazement,
He thought the black cook was a very rich prize.
With a voice loud as thunder Jack boldly beheld him,
Saying, "Damn you eyes, doctor, I'll skin you alive."

Why, the doctor was glad to retreat in a hurry,
And of his late bargain was soon to repent;
While Jack he walked out where his comrades were drinking,
And the rest of the night was all happily spent.

SIDE II, Band 6: ABE LINCOLN WENT TO WASHINGTON

Listeners will recognize the tune to this song as that of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," a Civil War song attributed to Mr. Patrick Gilmore, official bandmaster of the Union Army, who published the song under the pseudonym Lois Lambert in 1863. The tune passed quickly into oral tradition, and new words were set to it. It became the tune for the college song "Billy McGee McGaw," and is found as the tune of a sea chanty known as "Johnny Fill Up the Bowl." The chorus of this chanty is identical with that of the chorus of "Abe Lincoln Went to Washington." This song has been collected both in the North and South, the difference of political opinion between the two regions being made clear in the different versions of the songs.

In eighteen hundred and sixty one,
For bowls, for bowls,
In eighteen hundred and sixty one,
For bowls, says I,
In eighteen hundred and sixty one,
Abe Lincoln Went to Washington,
And we'll all drink stone blind,
Johnny fill up the bowl!

In eighteen hundred and sixty two
Old Abe he put the rebellion through.
In eighteen hundred and sixty three
Old Abe he set the slaves free.
In eighteen hundred and sixty four
Old Abe he called for a million more.
In eighteen hundred and sixty five
John Booth he took Abe Lincoln's life.

For additional texts and information, see:
Randolph, V., OZARK FOLKSONGS, Volume II, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, 1948. (see under title: "In Eighteen Hundred and Sixty One.")
Thomas, J., BALLAD MAKIN' IN THE MOUNTAINS OF KENTUCKY, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1939. (see p. 54.)
Dolph, E. A., SOUND OFF, Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, New York, 1929. (see pp. 359-360)

SIDE II, Band 7: THE SHANTY BOY AND THE FARMER'S SON

This well known lumberman's song has been widely collected throughout lumbering country with little variation in text and tune. Although the song might indicate otherwise, there was little rivalry between the lumberman and the farmer. Indeed, E. C. Beck has commented: "It will be noted in lumberwoods literature, that these choppers and sawyers and raftsmen looked forward to the time when they would take each one a little wife and settle on a farm."

The form of the song, that of a debate, is still popular in Great Britain, where songs occur in which the merits of one occupation over another are discussed. There is an old world song which draws a similar comparison between the farmer's son and a sailor, and this may have been the pattern for "The Shanty Boy and the Farmer's Son."

Fuzzy's tune is in the Mixolydian mode, whereas other tunes to the song, although similar, have been recorded in major keys. The term "mossback" is one of ridicule used by lumbermen when describing farmers. Local versions of the song usually have familiar place names substituted in the first verse of the song, as a means of local identification.

As I strolled out one evening
as the sun was going down,
I strolled along quite carelessly
till I come to Scranton town;
There I overheard two fair ladies,
as slowly I passed by,
One said she loved her farmer's son
while the other loved the shanty boy.
Now the one that loved her farmer's son,
these words I heard her say,
The reason why she loved him,
at home with her he'd stay.
He would stay at home all winter,
to the woods he would not go,
And when the spring it did come in,
his land he'd plow and sow.

"Now as for plowing and sowing your land,"
this other one did say,
"If your crops should prove a failure,
your debts you could not pay.
If your crops should prove a failure
or your grain market be low,
The sheriff oftentimes would sell those crops
for to pay the debts you owe."

"Now, there's no need of going in debt
when you own a good farm,
For every day you earn your bread,
not work through rain or storm,
For every day you earn your bread,
not work through storm or rain,
While the shanty boy works hard all day
his family to maintain."

"How I don't like this soft talk,"
this other one did say,
"For some of them they are so green,
the cows would eat for hay;
How plainly you can tell him
when he rolls into town,
You'll hear him cry out from a small boy up,
"Why Dick, how are you down?"

"Now I do like my shanty boy
that goes out in the fall,
For he is tough and rugged
and fit to stand the squall;
He gets big pay all winter
and in the spring when he comes down
His money with me he will spend free
while the mossback sons have none."

"Well, here is to your shanty boy,
I hope you'll pardon me,
And of my ignorant mossback,
I'll try now and get free,
And if ever I gain my liberty,
with a shanty boy I'll go,
And I'll leave that ignorant mossback
with his land to plow and sow."

For additional texts and information, see:
Rickaby, P., BALLADS AND SONGS OF THE SHANTY-BOY,

Beck, E. C., THEY KNEW PAUL BUTYAN, University of

Gardner, E. E., & Chickering, G. J., BALLADS AND
SONGS OF SOUTHERN MICHIGAN, University of Michigan
Press, Ann Arbor, 1939. (see under title: "The
Mossback").

SIDE II, Band 8: THE RAFTSMAN'S SONG

Logging men often wrote new words, telling of some
local happening, to old tunes. This song appears to
be such an example, for the tune is usually sung to
bawdy texts, and the refrain is a familiar one both
to sailors and lumberjacks.

Fuzzy maintained that the story of the song was true
though he had not seen the incident and knew of no one
who had. He had, however, been along the Delaware
River, and identified all the places mentioned in the
song. The fact that the locale of the song was
authentic and identifiable was sufficient reason for
him to believe that the incident actually did occur.

Come all you jolly raftsmen
who run the river down,
Be careful where you run your raft
or you will run aground.

CHORUS:
And boys shove your log around,
The scores are on their own,
For we're the boys that fear no noise,
Although we're far from home.

Well, we sailed around Old Butler
and nothing did we fear,
Until we came to Sawmill Riff
and plunged against the pier.

Now, Henry Lodge stood at the car,
his voice so firm and strong,
For when he struck the rock, by God,
it almost knocked him down.

There was one among our number,
and his name was Little Moe,
He plunged right in among the logs
and saved most all our clothes.

SIDE II, Band 9: THE JEALOUS LOVER

Fuzzy's version of this song is similar, both
textually and melodically, to variants found all
over the United States. The song often takes its
title from the name of the murdered girl whose
identity may change from one locale to another, though
most of the names given are similar sounding, e.g.,
Florella, Floretta, Flo Ella, Lorella, Louella, Ella,
Ellen, etc. The name of the young man is more
constant, usually being either Edward or the favorite
ballad name, William or Willie.

H. M. Belden believed it to be quite unique among
'murdered girl' ballads. In most other ballads of
this nature, the man kills the girl simply to get rid
of her; in this ballad the motive is jealousy.

The ballad appears to be an indigenous American pro-
duct, for no Old World variants have been reported.
But unlike most native creations, extensive research
into the origin of the ballad has uncovered no infor-
mation capable of tying the ballad to a specific and
actual murder. The ballad is also quite remarkable in
that it has been circulated completely by oral means,
for no broadside or songster printings of it have been
so far reported.

Way down in yonder's valley,
Where the violets fade and bloom,
There lies my own fair Ellen,
So silent in the tomb.

She's died, not broken hearted,
Or by disease she fell,
But in one moment parted
From the friends she loved so well.
One night when the moon shone brighter
Than it ever shone before,
Down to this maiden's cottage
This jealous lover bore.

Saying, "Love, come let us wander
Down in the woods so gay,
And while we talk, we'll ponder
Upon our wedding day."

Deep, deep into the forest
He led his love so gay;
Deep, deep into the forest
Did the jealous lover stray.

"Oh, I care not, love, to wander
Down in the woods so gay,
I care not, love, for to ponder
Upon our wedding day."

"Retreat your way, no never,
These woods no more you'll roam,
So bid farewell forever
To your parents, friends and home."

Then down on her knees before him,
She pleaded for her life;
Deep, deep into her bosom
He plunged the fatal knife.

"Oh, Willie, I'll forgive you
With my last parting breath,
Oh, Willie, I'll forgive you."
Then she closed her eyes in death.

Though a banner waves high o'er her
Until the bugle sounds,
A stranger came and found her
Cold and lifeless on the ground.

For additional texts and information, see:


