DOCK BOGGS
volume 2

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INTRODUCTION

The life of Dock Boggs is measured out not only in decades but in entire cultures. When he was a child, he often followed a local Negro musician up and down the dusty roads pestering the man to play a tune on the banjo. The man, perhaps in irritation and perhaps in an amused and calculated effort to fathom the boy’s desire for the music, refused repeatedly and kept walking, and so the boy dogged his steps sometimes for miles. Inevitably, the man gave in and sat down on the roadside to play and the boy to listen. Like many musicians of his generation, Dock can still vividly describe the passion with which he heard music as a child, the vision it became to him, the preciousness and rareness of its sound.

Today Dock in his old age moves easily through the modern world of jet liners and engagements coast to coast, of Carnegie Hall audiences and Newport ovations and television interviews. A long way from the dusty road. But the passion of the child hearing his first precious notes of music remains to awe us, we whose brains are so chock full of electronic echoes and broadcast jangle that we will never, never hear music the way Dock heard it from that banjo player in his boyhood. But then, we have not earned the right to hear as has Dock.

Night came to the Cumberlands during Dock Boggs’ lifetime. It was while he was still young that his people abandoned their heritage of working the earth and of hunting and herding animals under the sun and attuned to the seasons and went down under the ground to labor in stinking holes like machines, cutting away the mineral at the coal face, not breathing air or seeing sunlight or knowing the seasons any longer. The new life was a change so simple and so profound that it will never occur again: it was the exact moment people ceased living on the natural earth and began living under and over and away from it and it only happens once. Its terrible toll among Dock’s people--all of us, really--is still being taken.

(I once asked Dock why the people of the Cumberland, especially during the years when he was a young man, so often resorted to violence, why so many of them seemed in despair, why their lives were cheap and their peace of mind so rare: what was the temper of his time? He said simply, “People were afraid. I thought then--and now--that the reason why Dock had survived from the one culture to the other is because he was not afraid.)

...law and order that came into the hills with the railroads and tipples, accelerated by Prohibition and its degeneration of the traditionally upright rural lawman into a corrupt cop. Like any man human enough to want to uphold the integrity of his property, his family, and his person against the anarchy that was the plateau in the 1920’s and 1930’s, Dock Boggs carried his own protection stuck in his belt. It was a .38 Special and Dock by his own admission could use it well. He also by his own admission drew it on another man in anger and with full intention to use it on at least one occasion that we know of. Yet, Dock Boggs, in a time when life was so cheap that a murder sentence often consisted of two years in the penitentiary with time off for good behavior--and to accommodate the horde of convicted killers who otherwise would have inundated the penal system under normal terms of punishment--Dock Boggs had the courage not to pull the trigger, the courage to face down his enemy and thus defeat him rather than merely destroy him, the courage to live rather than die a little with the man killed. Today, many otherwise respectable middle-aged mountain men can still brood over the bitterness scored into their youths by a sentence, however brief, for killing another man--but Dock Boggs is serene and free and his vision unclouded by spectral prison walls. He was not afraid. He did not pull the trigger in fear.

As a young married man, Dock went to work in an industry in which men fought and died for the right to work. A mine job meant more than a living: it meant self-respect, self-sufficiency, and simple survival. Even so, Dock Boggs had the courage to walk off a job in those days rather than work in substandard safety conditions, the courage and pride in self to demand to work like a man rather than be driven in animal fear to labor in brute apathy of the contempt of King Coal. Now, one commonly encounters in Dock’s land legless men, armless men, blind men, men with crushed and twisted backs and pelvises, men with weakened and enlarged hearts, men with burned out lungs, wheelchair men, men, widows and orphans of men who literally--had to be scraped out of the mine shafts with scoop shovels to be buried. Mine victims all: they were afraid. Dock Boggs is whole and hearty at 67, and if he tells you occasionally of his shortness of breath due to the coal dust on his lungs, still you know there is none on his heart.

Even in his retirement Dock’s courage has stood him in good stead. Without the two principal elements of his life, hard work and music, Dock found his physical and mental vitality siphoned off into restless and futile automobile trips through the mountains, burning up, as he has said, “twenty or thirty dollars a month” worth of gasoline aimlessly searching for--he hardly knew what. Then he had the courage to take up his music again in the face of strong community social and religious pressures because he knew the preciousness and passion of it, the pride of it and the beauty, and once again he hadn’t the fear that the know nothings had. He did it partly for us who love his music and partly for himself, for of all his enemies, the stagnation of old age was the one he had the roughest time facing down.

Now, he loves to see the youngsters learning his songs, trying to play the banjo as he does, picking up his tunings and turnings of phrase--and he lives through the music. “I’ll live longer this way,” he has said of his new career of traveling and performing for college and city audiences. I think he has said that a few other times in his life, too.

Like the staunchest of William Faulkner’s southerners, Dock Boggs has not only lived through Cumberland’s long night but has prevailed over it. He has mastered it and infused its raw spirit and tragic temperament into his old songs and brought the gift of his life to us all.

Listen: Do the best of men and the worst of times always together?

Jon Pankake
July, 1965
SIDE A, BAND 1
MIXED BLUES:

"Well, the 'Mixed Blues', it's my own Composition..."

Banjo tuning: GDGBD

1 Oh, you caused me trouble, woman, and you caused me to kill a man, Caused me trouble, and you caused me to kill a man, Oh, now I'm in the jailhouse, got to do the best I can, best I can.

2 Oh, it's hard to be in trouble and all bound down in jail, Hard to be in trouble and all bound down in jail, All your friends done forsaken you, and no one to go your bail, go your bail,

3 Goin' away now, baby, I'm a-goin' away for a spell, Goin' away now, woman, and I'm goin' away for a spell, But to leave my wife and babies, I'd rather be in Hell.

4 It's all right to flirt, mama, and it's all right to roll high, It's all right to flirt, and it's all right to roll high, Providin' you feel that you're safe, and your man ain't standin' by standin' by.

5 Oh, the train that I ride, it's sixteen coaches long, Train I ride, it's sixteen coaches long,

SIDE A, BAND 2
OLD JOE'S BARROOM

"It was recorded by some musician on a guitar, if I remember right, and I liked the words of it and the way it sounded... so I learned the song and I sung it very near the (original) tune. I might have changed it just a little bit in order to fit my way of playing it on the banjo... It must have been re-
recored something like thirty-eight or forty years ago... "I composed that verse to it... I been working in these old coal mines'... I was working in the coal mines and I sung that quite a lot while I was a-loading coal. So it just come in nice and come in handy for I worked in the coal mines in Kentucky about twenty-five years and altogether about forty-one years in the mines... I'd sing a lot of times to pass off the time and I sung 'Old Joe's Barroom a lot so I just made one verse or so and added to it because it fit in so well.

Banjo tuning: GCGBD sung in G

1 I was down-at old Joe's barroom,
A corner by the square.
The drinks were served as usual, Well, a goodly crowd was there,

2 On the left stood Joe McKenzie, His eyes all bloodshot red.
He gazed at the crowd about him; Boys, this is what he said.

3 As I passed Saint James' Infirmary, I seen my good gal there.
She was all stretched out on a cold, white table, So cold, so sweet, so fair.

4 I may be killed on the ocean, May be struck by a stray cannonball. You can write in life's history That a woman was the cause of it all.

5 If I die, little woman, won't you bury me? On my tombstone write the letters in black, Sayin', 'There lays my hard workin' daddy, Great G! won't you please bring him back?'

6 I work in these old coal mines Sundays and all night long, Tryin' to provide for my wife and baby, But now she's took it and gone,

7 Let her go, let her go, God bless her, She's mine wherever she may be, She may travel this whole world over, She'll never find a pal like me,

8 Want eight easy dice rollin' hustlers, Four black-headed women to sing a song. Fill my casket with moonshine whisky So I can drink while the hearse rolls on.

9 Oh, now you've heard my story, I'll take another shot of booze, If anybody happens to ask you, You can tell 'em I've got the poker-playin' blues.

Dock said he composed stanza 6

SIDE A, BAND 3

DANVILLE GIRL:

"I'd have to say I learned that from my brother Roscoe Boggins. I don't know whether brother John played that much or not, but I've heard my brother Roscoe play it and sing it."

Q: "Did they play it anything like you?"

Dock: "Very near. Played it in the same key, in D. Course, where I pick with two fingers, why my brothers just played with one... Brother Roscoe, he didn't pick the 'knock-down' way but he just picked with one finger and a thumb... and some pieces he picked pretty well."

Banjo Tuning: F#DGAD

Oh, I went down to Danville, Got struck on a Danville girl. You bet your life she's out of sight, She wears those Danville curls.

She wears her hair on the back of her head Like all high-toned people do. The very first train that leaves this town I'm goin' to bid that girl adieu.

I don't see why I love that girl, For she never cared for me, But still my mind is on that girl Wherever she may be.

Look up look down this lonesome road, Hang down your head and cry, The very best friends have to part sometime, Then why can't you and I?

It's forty miles through the rock, It's sixty through the sand, Oh, I relate to you the life Of a many poor married man.

SIDE A, BAND 4

COLE YOUNGER:

(learned from Lee Hunsucker, his brother-in-law)

"I learned a lot of these old songs, half of them or more that I know, from him cause he didn't play any kind of music-instrumental music-but he was a good singer and he was all the time singing... he could just memorize, seemed like, a song (if he heard) it sung a couple times and could sing it very near word by word and the songs stuck with him..."

Banjo tuning-GDGBD

1. I am a noted bandit, Cole Younger is my name, To many a death procession My friends I brought to shame.

2. Of robbing of a Northfield bank's A thing I can't deny. Now I'm a poor prisoner, In the Stillwater jail I lie.

3. The first of my many robberies I will relate to you, Was a poor Californian miner, And the same will surely rue.

4. I taken from him his money, And I told him to go his way, The same will check my conscience Until my dying day.

5. I went home, And brother Bob did say, "We'll buy fine horses and together ride away."

6. We started out for Texas, That good old Lone Star State, All on the new prairie There the James boys meet.

7. With knives and revolvers We all set out to play, A-drinking good corn whisky, boys, To pass the time away.

8. The Union Pacific We first did surprise, A-murdering of your own heart's blood Would bring tears to your eyes.

9. Brother Bob was shot and wounded, All in Northfield he did lie, ** All on the new prairie There the bullion lie.

* Dock said it should have been The James boys we did meet.

** Dock said it should have been All in Northfield he did die.

When Dock sang the song for us on 5-9-65, he sang this stanza between stanzas 5 & 6.

To avenge our father's death, We each other will strive, Off to the new prairie Until the day we die.

SIDE A, BAND 5

SCHOTTISCHE TIME:

"I remember very distinctly who I heard play that. His hands had kind of gotten stiff, but he used to play a banjo some and he's a blacksmith... at Dorchester, Virginia and I happened to be over on Guest's River—that's just across the hill from Dorchester—one Sunday. I had my banjo and we was up there in the field and we'd sent down to a place where they had drinks-get us a drink of whiskey— and we're just sitting around there maybe eight or ten up there in the field kind of out in the woods, and he taken up my banjo—Jim Begley, from Tennessee—and he showed me that 'Schottische Time'. He told me it was 'Schottische Time' and gave me the time and how it was played. After he showed me, why I tried it and I learnt kind of how to play it very near the way he played it. I never heard him play anything only just with finger and thumb or two fingers and thumb. He never picked no 'knock-down', he just picked it..."

Banjo tuning-GCGBD

SIDE A, BAND 6

PAPA, PAPA BUILD ME A BOAT

Charlie (Powers) used to play the guitar with me some and he used to play banjo with his father in the Powers Family band. And he played a
few pieces on my banjo every now and then. If I was playing in contests he'd always pick my banjo against me, and Scott Boatright was with us then and he'd pick the guitar against Scott, and he'd play the fiddle against Melvin Roberat (the fiddler with Dock's band). And he was pretty tolerable good on all the instruments. And I learned 'Papa Build Me a Boat' from Charlie Powers."

Banjo tuning-GDGBD

1 Papa, papa build me a boat,
   So on this river I can float.
   Every ship I chance to see
   I'll inquire of Sweet Willie.

2 Captain, Captain tell me true,
   Does Sweet Willie sail with you?
   No, oh no, he don't sail with me,
   He got drowned in the deep blue sea.

3 I'm a-goin' away, little darlin' girl,
   I'm a-goin' away for awhile,
   But I will return to you, sweetheart,
   Should I go ten thousand mile.

4 Stars may rule the oceans, sweetheart,
   And heavens may cease to be,
   This earth will lose its motion,
   Should I prove false to thee.

SIDE A, BAND 7

LITTLE BLACK TRAIN:

"...I learned that from my brother-in-law, Lee Hunsucker. Of course I arranged it on my banjo...it's my own arrangement that way."

Banjo tuning-GCGAD
(usually plays with 5th string tuned to F#. Probably forgot to tune it.)

1 God sent to Hezekiah
   A message from on high,
   "You better set your house in order,
   For you must surely die."

2 He turned to the wall in weeping,
   We see him there in tears,
   He got his business fixed all right,
   God spared him fifteen years.

CHORUS 1: There's a little black train a-coming,
   Fix all your business right.
   There's a little black train a-coming,
   And it may be here tonight.

3 Go tell that ballroom lady
   All dressed in the worldly pride
   That death's dark train is coming,
   Prepare to take a ride.

4 I see that train with engine
   And one small baggage car.
   Your idle thoughts and your wicked deeds
   Will stop at the judgment bar.

CHORUS 2: There's a little black train a-coming,
   Fix all your business right.

SIDE B, BAND 1

BANJO CLOG:

"I wouldn't know hardly who to give credit for learning that from. I played that some and heard a colored fellow by the name of Jim White-blue-eyed Jim White-used to be at Dorchester-play something very near the same kind of time and I heard another col.-ed fellow that plays in a band over there pick something very near the same time. And...then Byrd Moore, we played off and on together for about fifteen years...he picked some of the 'Banjo Clog' but he didn't pick it hardly like I play it. I've heard different ones play it, but...I never seen no one play it just exactly like I play it."

Banjo tuning-GCGBD

SIDE A, BAND 9

GLORY LAND:

"There's an old minister, a traveling evangelist, a fellow by the name of Osborne. I don't know where he's from, but he had that song back about twenty five or thirty years ago...and he gave it to my oldest sister, gave her the ballot of it-the words and more or less the tune that I sing it in is my own arrangement. I just arranged it myself 'til I could sing it."

Banjo tuning-F#DGAD

1 If you have friends in Glory Land
   Who left because of pain,
   Thank God, up there they'll die no more,
   They'll suffer not again.

2 Then weep not, friends, I'm going home,
   Up there we'll cry no more,
   No coffins will be made up there,
   No graves on that bright shore.

3 The lame will walk in Glory Land,
   The blind up there will see,
   The deaf in Glory Land will hear,
   And the dumb will talk to me.

4 The doctor will not have to call,
   The undertaker, no.
   We'll have no pain up there to bear,
   Just walk the streets of gold.

5 We'll need no sun in Glory Land,
   The moon and stars won't shine,
   For Christ himself is light up there,
   Pure rays of love divine.

6 Then look away to that good land
   Where peace and joy sublime
   Shall fill our hearts to running o'er,
   There's shoutin' all the time.

7 Now won't you mothers meet us there,
   With all your children too,
   To live in bliss forevermore,
   And never say adieu.

8 Then what a land our Lord's prepared,
   No death, no pain, no tears,
   He made our robes as white as snow
   And built us mansions there.

SIDE B, BAND 2

WISE COUNTY JAIL:

"As far as me ever singing them jailhouse songs like that, why a lot of
people think that I spent a lot of time I guess in jail... I've been arrested for fighting or being drunk or something like that... I've been put in jail a time or two... I've stayed from twelve o'clock to daylight and I've stayed from evening to the next morning. But as far as I ever pulling a jail sentence, I never did. 'Course if I'd been tried and got justice, I guess I'd've pulled them, maybe been behind the grey walls. But still there's not many of us that hasn't done anything to what we'd have gone to the penitentiary for. We had some law back along I'll say from Kentucky up to... thirty two or something like that in Wise County here... the jailhouse it wasn't so sanitary as it is today... And we have good law, law, and had good law back then... a lot of them were good fellows... I mean they done their duty and done the way the law required them to do. But we had some that was just very near outlaws. And they would treat an outsider or a person out of state... maybe they'd see them come in here, if they had a Kentucky tag or Tennessee, or New Jersey or New York, or somewhere, why blow them over to the side of the road when he (the officer) wasn't even anything more than a game warden or not even a state police, and curse a man out and call him bad names, maybe haul off and slap him in the face... and abuse fellows, strangers, or tourists... or people coming through here and they sure wasn't very well liked.

There's a lot of (people around Norton)* would remember the fellow I'm really referring to and I think the law that raised with him and went with him was really afraid of him. I don't know what the judges, some of them, wasn't kind of afraid of him when he come in to court, cause he was awful over bearing and he just wanted to make people kneel to him and just do what he said do.

So I went over into Kentucky* and this song, I made it along about 1928. I composed the words and put a tune to it, this 'Wise County Jail'. I didn't make it for any reflection or to try to run down my home state or my home county or my hometown where I live or to hurt anybody's feelings... but it's in very well a lot of points with a certain officer who used to be around here. He was killed up here on Guest's River, the man that I made mostly that song about. Of course I never called his name and of course I'm sorry he got killed... but the way he was a living and the way he was a treating people, he couldn't live. There's nobody could go on living long a-doing that... he caused me a right smart of trouble.

"And I sure don't mean any reflection on our present law enforcement or judges or anything of our state on account of making this song."

Q: “Did you sing it around very much at the time?”
Dock: “Well, not too much. I sung it in Kentucky several times but I never sang it very much in Virginia because I didn't know how people would take it. I never wanted to hurt people's feelings or say something where it wasn't necessary, where it wouldn't be no benefit, and so I was just kind of conscientious about it.

Still, the song I think, for the way it was composed and why it was composed and all, I think it's allright, it's very true...”

Banjo tuning-GCGBD
11 And it's just another story, playing it on banjo about thirty to
CHORUS: body play it on a banjo
but it was accompanied by a guitar, if
off a phonograph record. I can't re-
that was riding on the ties.

4 Then he got to safety,
To make successful land,
Then there comes that old, old story,
One misstep or slip of hand.

5 Far from darkness came destruction,
And the truth we'll never know,
Of the feelin' of that train crew
Up there on the C. and O.

6 Quick the angel cock was opened,
But, alas, it came too late,
Jerry's soul had departed
Through that far off golden gate.

7 Then we see the tool car passing
With the boom a-swinging low
As if it was mournin' for Jerry
Up there on the C. and O.

8 Jerry, we miss you and we wonder
If you see the C. and O,
And your friends that are still
mournin' for you
Where the Marrowbone waters flow.

9 Jerry, we hope you're among the angels
Way up there above the stars,
Where there'll be no more worry,
Ridin' heavy trains or cars.

10 Now you're sleeping, gently
sleeping,
Where the Big Sandy breezes blow,
But your memory's still with us
Up and down the C. and O.

11 And it's just another story,
While friends sometimes must part,
While your soul has gone to Glory,
There remains a broken heart.

SIDE B, BAND 5

RAILROAD TRAMP:

The best I remember I learned that
off a phonograph record. I can't re-
member the person who recorded it
but it was accompanied by a guitar, if
I remember right. I never heard no-
body play it on a banjo...I been a-
playing it on banjo about thirty to
thirty-five years.

Banjo Tuning-GCGBD

1 I'm a poor old railroad man,
Just an N. and S. section hand,
And the weight is slowly creeping
Now hard times is coming on,
And my last gold dollar is gone,
And this song is what I learned to
sing and play.

CHORUS: Oftimes you see the path
Of a poor misfortune tramp.

He has no home and has no
place to fill.
As you see him pass along,
And he sings his little song,
Please remember that the
poor tramp has to live.

2 My health broke down out on the
track
With heavy loads upon my back,
Now I have to make way the best
I can,
We never know when we are young,
These words is from a broke down
section hand.

CHORUS:

3 Yes, my health is broken down,
As I tramp from town to town,
Sing and play, take whatever you
may give,
While I try to play and sing,
Just divide your little change.
And remember that the poor tramp
has to live.

CHORUS:

SIDE B, BAND 6

POOR BOY IN JAIL

"Well that's a song, some poetry that
I picked up. I don't know where I got that
at. But the words of it, I liked it, and
I just... put the tune to the song and
fixed it up and arranged it myself. I
just composed (the tune)... made it my-
self what would go with the song. The
sound seemed to fit in with the poetry
and with the words... I never heard no-
body else play it like I did... cause I'm the
one who put the tune to it the way it is."

Banjo Tuning-GDGBD

1 Oh, my mama's in the cold, cold
ground,
My daddy, he went away,
My sister married a gamblin' man,
And now I'm gone astray.

2 I sit here in this old jail,
And I do the best I can,
Get to thinking about the woman I
loved,
She ran away with another man.

3 She ran away with another man,
poor boy,
She ran away with another man,
Get to thinking about the woman I
loved,
She ran away with another man.

4 I went out on the prairie,
And I stopped the Katy train,
Took a bag of mail from standing there,
* And I walked away in the rain.

5 They got the bloodhounds on me,
And they run me up a tree,
Said, "Come down from there, my
boy,
And go to the penitentiary."

6 I said, "Mister judge, Mister judge,
What you goin' to do to me?"
*Said, "If the jury finds you guilty,
my boy,
I'm goin' to send you to the
penitentiary."

7 They took me to the railroad station,
A train come rollin' by,
I looked in the window, saw the
woman I loved,
And I hung my head and cried.

8 I hung my head in shame, poor boy,
I hung my head and cried,
I looked in the window, saw the
woman I loved.
And I hung my head and cried.

* Dock says it should have been
Took a bag of mail from the baggage
coach,

SIDE B, BAND 7

BROTHER JIM GOT SHOT

"A family came into this country
when I was just a little boy, I'll say it's
been about fifty five years ago--it may
have been fifty eight years ago--I was
very small... and this here Lineback
Family had a boy and a girl... I believe
one of them played a bass fiddle... The
father, old man Lineback himself,
picked a guitar and a banjo and he
played fiddle and his wife, why she
played the guitar, the best I remember.
And (that was the) first time ever I
seen anybody where they put their arms
around each other's neck, one note the
other... the banjo and one picked the
guitar and the other picked the banjo... And he played
this here 'Hard Luck' or 'Brother Jim
Got Shot'! He played that piece in a
school at Sutherland, Virginia... It's
long since been worked out. There's
no post offices or no houses up there
now. There used to be I guess five
hundred or maybe a thousand houses
up there. There's not over two or
three a-standing anymore. These
people came up there whenever it was
a-booming.

"There's two or three nights I know
they stayed up there... and several of
those old songs... I didn't get all the
words of the song when I could have
got it, cause they was a-selling bal-
lots, if I'd had the ten cents or a
quarter to give... Seemed to me like
they had a book, the Lineback Family
Songbook. I won't say for sure, but
they had songs and had pictures... and
I memorized the words to the most of that
song from hearing at that time... That's
the only tune I remember that they
played..."

*See Folksways record FN 5458, An
Interview with Dock Boggs Side B,
Band 4.

Banjo Tuning-GGGBD

1 Me and my brother Jim went to a
restaurant one night,
Through some other parties we got
into a fight.
Shot all the way through me, they
killed my brother Jim,
Hard luck, hard luck, they placed me
on the spot.
CHORUS 1: Jury said it wasn't me, my brother Jim got shot. Jury said it wasn't me, my brother Jim got shot.

2 Well, my wife had a mouth big enough for both. She got frightened in her sleep one night, and a mouse ran down her throat.

CHORUS 2: Hard luck, hard luck, they placed me on the spot. Jury said it wasn't me, my brother Jim got shot.

3 Got me a cat and a piece of cheese, and I placed it on her chin. My wife got frightened in her sleep one night, took rat, cat, cheese and all in.

SPOKEN: Wasn't that an awful dose? Here's how Dock did it on Brunswick 133

HARD LUCK BLUES

1 Me and my brother Jim went into a restaurant one night, Through some other party we got into a fight.

2 Shot all the way through me, they killed my brother Jim. Shot all the way through me, they killed my brother Jim.

CHORUS: Hard luck, hard luck, they placed me on the spot. Jury said it wasn't me, my brother Jim got shot.

3 Well, my wife, she had a mouth big enough for both. She got frightened in her sleep one night, and a mouse ran down her throat.

CHORUS: Hard luck, hard luck, they placed me on the spot. Jury said it wasn't me, my brother Jim got shot.

4 Got me a cat and a piece of cheese, and I placed it on her chin. My wife got frightened in her sleep one night, took rat, cat, cheese and all in.

CHORUS:

Here's the version John McGhee did on Gennett 6546.

HARD LUCK JIM

* 1 "Jump right in the swim," I've heard the people say. No matter what they say or do things are bound to come their way. But I am of a different sort, I go lie on the shelf, I've thought the matter over, and I'm a Jonah to myself. Hard luck, hard luck, a man to me once said That he was pretty certain I had brake wheels in my head.

* I'm not sure about Jump, my record has a dig there.

2 Well, I went into a restaurant just a week ago tonight. My brother Jim was with me, and we got into a fight. Well a waiter pulled out a great big gun, I stepped in front of him, And the bullet went right straight through me and killed my brother Jim. Hard luck, dead hard luck, they hung me on the spot. The jury said it was through me my brother Jim got shot.

3 I've got another brother, and the people call him Jake. He fell into a coal hole, it was just the other day. Well, he got five thousand damages just to walk a little lame. I saw a coal hole open and I tried that same old game, But hard luck, dead hard luck, when I fell in that hole. Instead of getting damages, six months for stealin' coal.

4 My wife has got a great big mouth, it's big enough for both. Well, the other day she fell asleep, and a rat ran down her throat. I went and got a piece of cheese, then I got a cat. I put the cheese upon her tongue and waited for that rat. But hard luck, dead hard luck, when the rat he left his stall. Well, the cat she jumped and my wife swallowed rat, cat, cheese and all.

SIDE B, BAND 8

JOHN HENRY

"Well, now I'd have to give credit to many of a different people about that because back whenever I first learned some of the words of John Henry... there wasn't but a few white men around through this country that picked a guitar. There's several that played a banjo but it was colored people—there was a negro used to walk from Dorchester to Sutherland and on weekends he'd take his guitar and be walking up the track—there's about three miles from Dorchester to Sutherland—and... I lived in what they called Needmore and I'd follow him and beg him to follow him. They called him 'Go Lightning'—and he was very nice and kind and I'd beg him—I was just a little boy—cause music always thrilled me when I was a boy—seemed like I just could hear a piece, a sad piece or a lonesome piece, why it thrilled me from the top of my head to the sole of my feet—I'd walk along after him—I didn't have any nickels or dimes to give him, or quarters or anything—of course he picked and he'd take up collection or lot of the time people give him money to play. But I'd beg him set down on the end of the ties—microphone were kindly loaned for these recordings by Newport Folk Foundation. A copy Nagra was made available by Peter Siegel.

Text transcriptions by Willard Johnson, so that he won't correct them after printing. Guitar accompaniment by Mike Seeger.

Photos, clippings, and ballot courtesy Dock Boggs unless otherwise noted.

Cover photos by Mike Seeger