

Recording Laboratory AFS L56

Songs of the Michigan Lumberjacks

From the Archive of Folk Song

Recorded by Alan Lomax and Harry B. Welliver

Edited by E. C. Beck

Library of Congress Washington 1960

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number R60-1805

Available from the Library of Congress
Music Division, Recording Laboratory
Washington, D.C. 20540

PREFACE

The lumberjacks of yesteryear in Maine and the Great Lakes States went into the woods in the fall and did not come out until the logs boomed down the streams in the Spring. During those winter nights in the shanties if the lumberjacks, or shantyboys, had any entertainment, they furnished it themselves. Under such conditions these songs and ballads were composed.

When Alan Lomax made a two-and-a-half-month survey of Michigan folk-song for the Library of Congress in 1938, one of his primary objects was the location of the remaining survivors of the lumberwoods singing tradition. With the help of Dr. E. C. Beck he found some of them in the midland area around Mt. Pleasant and still more around Newberry, Munising, and Greenland on the upper peninsula. With the exception of Jim Kirkpatrick's version of "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks," which was made ten years later by a joint project of the University of Michigan and the Library of Congress, all of the singers were grizzled veterans of the Michigan forests. All have retired to the top berth in the big shanty. Bill McBride was 88 when he departed; his mind was keen to the last. Carl Lathrop was not quite so old, and his voice remained firm.

References for Study

For songs of the lumberjacks it might be well to read Roland P. Gray's *Songs and Ballads of the Maine Lumberjacks* (Cambridge, Mass., 1924), Franz Rickaby's *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (ibid., 1926), E. C. Beck's *Lore of the Lumber Camps* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1948), William M. Doerflinger's *Shantymen and Shantyboys* (New York, 1951), and E. C. Beck's *They Knew Paul Bunyan* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1956). Most of the songs on this record appear in one or more of these publications. A few other sources for specific songs will be mentioned from time to time in the course of these notes.

For background one can mention Harold W. Felton's *Legends of Paul Bunyan* (New York, 1947), Maurice McGaugh's *Settlement of the Saginaw Basin* (Chicago, 1950), Richard Dorson's *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), and Mary Cober's *Remarkable History of Tony Beaver* (New York, 1953).

Two excellent sources of additional bibliography are pages 142-159 of George Malcom Laws' *Native American Balladry* (Philadelphia, 1950), and pages 630-634 of Charles Haywood's *Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong* (New York, 1951).

SONGS OF THE MICHIGAN LUMBERJACKS

A1—ONCE MORE A-LUMBERING GO. Sung by Carl Lathrop at St. Louis, Mich., 1938. Recorded by Alan Lomax.

Carl Lathrop from Pleasant Valley, Michigan, knew lumberjacks and lumberwoods. He did some railroading on the narrow-gauge logging-roads. He died not long after Alan Lomax made these recordings. "Once More A-Lumbering Go" must have been brought to the Great Lakes by Maine lumberjacks. A version retaining mention of Maine and its Penobscot River is quoted on page 29 of *Lore of the Lumber Camps*. The Tittabawassee in Carl's version is one of the Saginaw streams. In the lumbercamps the jacks joined in the chorus. This chorus is just right for the sort of tenors and bassos who sat on the bunks under drying socks.

Come all you sons of freedom and listen to
my theme,
Come all you roving lumberjacks that run
the Saginaw stream.
We'll cross the Tittabawassee where the
mighty waters flow,
And we'll roam the wild woods over and once
more a-lumbering go.

Chorus:
And once more a-lumbering go.
We will roam the wild woods over
And once more a-lumbering go.

When the white frost hits the valley, and the snow
conceals the woods,
The lumberjack has enough to do to find his
family food.
No time he has for pleasure or to hunt the
buck and doe;
He will roam the wild woods over and once
more a-lumbering go. Chorus.

With our cross-cut saws and axes we will
make the woods resound,
And many a tall and stately tree will come
crashing to the ground.
With cant-hooks on our shoulders to our boot
tops deep in snow,
We will roam the wild woods over and once more
a-lumbering go.

You may talk about your farms, your houses
and fine places,
But pity not the shantyboys while dashing
on their sleigh;

For around the good campfire at night we'll
sing while wild winds blow,
And we'll roam the wild woods over and once
more a-lumbering go. Chorus.

Then when navigation opens and the water
runs so free,
We'll drive our logs to Saginaw once more
our girls to see,
They will all be there to welcome us and
our hearts in rapture flow;
We will stay with them through summer then
once more a-lumbering go.

Chorus:
And once more a-lumbering go.
We will stay with them through summer,
Then once more a-lumbering go.

When our youthful days are ended and our
stories are growing old,
We'll take to us each man a wife and settle
on the farm.
We'll have enough to eat and drink, contented
we will go;
We will tell our wives of our hard times,
and no more a-lumbering go.

Chorus:
And no more a-lumbering go
We will tell our wives of our hard times,
And no more a-lumbering go.

A2—MICHIGAN I-O. Sung by Lester Wells at Traverse City, Mich., 1938. Recorded by Alan Lomax.

Labor for the lumber barons and jobbers was recruited by an agent often known as "the preacher of the gospel." Transportation was paid only for those who stayed all winter. The life was too rugged for some homesick boys. The name of the river varies with the singer. Lester Wells of Traverse City, who did his lumbering in the Saginaw Valley, mentions the Rifle River, which empties into Lake Huron north of the mouth of the Saginaw. Lester speaks the last word rather than singing it, a common practice among the oldsters, which can be heard repeatedly on this record.

"Michigan I-O" is a member of a large family of songs descended from the English sea song "Canada I-O." Two other members of the family "Colley's Run I-O" and "The Buffalo Skinner," which came

from the Pennsylvania lumbermen and the Texas cowboys, appear on record number L28 of the Library of Congress series. For a brief genealogy of the family the reader should consult the notes of that record. A more detailed study is made in Fannie H. Eckstorm's article, "Canada I-O," in the *Bulletin of the Folksong Society of the Northeast*, No. 6 (1933), page 10.

(It was) early in the season, the fall of
'sixty-three;
The preacher of the gospel, one day he come
to me.
He says, "My clever fellow, how would you
like to go
For to spend a winter a-lumbering in
Michigan I-O?"

O, so boy I stepped up to him, these words
to him did say,
"I'm going out there a-lumbering depends
upon the pay.
If you will pay good wages, my passage to
and fro,
I'll go spend a winter a-lumbering in
Michigan I-O."

Oh it's "I will pay good wages, I'll pay your
passage out,
Providing you'll sign papers that you will
stay the route.
Oh but if you do get homesick and swear it's
home you'll go.
I'll not pay your passage over to
Michigan I-O."

Oh and by that kind of flattery we enlisted
quite a train,
Oh some twenty-five or thirty young able-bodied men.
Oh we had a pleasant voyage on the road we
had to go,
Oh they landed us in Saginaw called
Michigan I-O.

Oh it's now our joys are ended and our troubles
they've begun.
Oh Smith and Williams' agents, how they come
rolling in.
Oh they sent us in a country, the road we
did not know;
Oh 'twas upon the Rifle River in
Michigan I-O.

For to tell the way we suffered, it is beyond
the heart of man,
But to give the fair description, I'll do the
best I can.

Our grub the dogs they'd laugh at, our beds
built on the snow.
Oh God grant there is no bigger Hell than
Michigan I-O.
Our grub the dogs they'd laugh at, our beds
built on the snow.
Oh God grant there is no bigger Hell than
Michigan I-O.

Oh it's now the winter is finished and it's
homeward we are bound.
It's in this cursed country, no longer we'll
be found.
We'll go home to our wives and sweethearts,
tell others not to go
To that God-forsaken country-o called
Michigan I-O.
We'll go home to our wives and sweethearts,
tell others not to go
To that God-forsaken country-o called
Michigan I-O.

A3—THE JAM ON GERRY'S ROCKS (I). Sung by
Bill McBride at Mt. Pleasant, Mich., 1938.
Recorded by Alan Lomax.

It may not be too much to say that the most popular lumberjack song is "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks." Its strongest competitor is "Lumberjack's Alphabet" (B2). Lumberjacks from Maine to Washington can point out the "original" site of the jam; as a consequence nobody knows with certainty where the tragedy occurred. It is true, however, that most of the singers from all timber areas mention the girl from Saginaw town; and Saginaw is on the east coast of Michigan. Fannie Eckstorm told the fascinating story of her search for the true facts of the ballad in "The Pursuit of a Ballad Myth," a chapter in *Minstrelsy of Maine* (Boston, 1927), which she compiled together with Mary W. Smyth.

Since the song is so popular, two versions are included here. Both are sung by Irish jacks; the Irish furnished many of the best woods entertainers. Bill McBride has a brogue less noticeable than that of Jim Kirkpatrick from Brimley in upper Michigan, not too far from the Minnesota and Wisconsin forests. McBride may have diction troubles, for his school was the logging-camps and river drives. But with a canthook or peavey he was a master even in his eighties. The "deacon seat" in the first stanza of Bill's version was a long, shelf-like bench, often the shanty's only seating accommodation other than the floor. Bill was particularly fond of the version he sings here because, unlike the one sung by Jim Kirk-

patrick and those sung by most other jacks, it spares
the lives of the six brave Canadian boys.

Come all you true-born shantyboys
wherever ye may be,
Come set ye on the deacon seat and
listen unto me.
I'll sing you the song of Gerry's Rocks
and a hero you should know—
The bravest of all shantyboys is our
foreman, young Monroe.

It being on one Sunday's morning ere
the daylight did appear;
Our logs were piling mountains high, we
could not keep them clear.
"Cheer up, cheer up my every man, revolve
your heart of woe.
We'll break the jam on Gerry's Rocks,"
cries our foreman, young Monroe.

Some of those boys were willing while
others they hid from sight,
For to break a jam on Sunday they did not
think it was right,
When six of our Canadian boys did
volunteer to go
And break the jam on Gerry's Rock with
her true love, young Monroe.

They had not picked off many logs when
Monroe to them did say,
"I must send you back up the drive, my
boys, for the jam will soon give away."
Alone he freed the key log then, and when
the jam did go,
It carried away on the boiling flood our
foreman, young Monroe.

When the rest (of) the boys got back to
camp, the sad news came to hear,
In search of his dead body down the river
they did steer.
When there they found to their surprise,
their sorrow, grief and woe,
All bruised and mangled on the beach laid
the corpse of young Monroe.

They picked him up most tenderly, smoothed
down his waving hair.
There was one fair form among them whose
cries did rend the air—
The fairest lass of Saginaw let tears of
anguish flow,
But her mourns and cries could not awake
her true love, young Monroe.

The Mrs. Clark, a widow, lived by the
river side;
It was her only daughter, Monroe's intended
bride.
The wages of her dearest love the boss to
her did pay,
And a gift of gold was sent to her by the
shantyboys next day.

When she received the money, she thanked
them tearfully;
But it was not her portion long on earth
for to be—
For it was just six weeks or so when she
was called to go,
And the shantyboys laid her to rest by
her true love, young Monroe.

They buried her quite decently, 'twas on
the fourth of May.
Come all you true born shantyboys and
for your comrade pray.
Engraved upon a hemlock tree where by
the beach does grow
Is the name and date of the mournful fate
of our shanty boy Monroe.

A4—THE JAM ON GERRY'S ROCKS (II). Sung by
Jim Kirkpatrick at Sault Sainte Marie, Mich.,
1948. Recorded by Harry B. Welliver.

See preceding note, A3.

Come all of you bold shantyboys (and)
list while I relate
Concerning a young river lad and his
untimely fate.
Concerning a young shantyboy most manly,
true and brave—
'Twas on the jam of Gerry's Rock that he
met his watery grave.

'Twas on a Sunday morning as you will
quickly hear;
Our logs were piled up mountain-high, we
could not keep them clear.
Our foreman said, "Turn out brave boys,
your hearts devoid no fear.
We'll break the jam on Gerry's Rock and
for Reganstown (?) we'll steer."

Some of them were willing while others
they were not.
To work a jam on Sunday, they did not
think they'd ought.

But six of our Canadian boys did volunteer
to go
To break the jam on Gerry's Rock with their
foreman, young Monroe.

They had not rolled off many logs when they
heard his clear voice say,
"I'd have you boys be on your guard for the
jam will soon give way."
These words were scarcely spoken and the
mess did break and go.
It carried off those six brave youths and
their foreman, young Monroe.

When the rest of our bold shantyboys the
sad news came to hear,
In search of their dead comrades to the
river they did steer.
Some of their mangled bodies a-floating
down did go;
There crushed and bleeding near the bank
lies the form of young Monroe.

They took him from his watery grave, brushed
back his raven hair.
There was one fair form among them whose sad
cries rose through the air—
One fair girl among them, a maid from
Saginaw town,
Whose moans and cries rose through the skies
for her true love who'd gone down.

Fair Clara was a noble girl, the riverman's
true friend;
She and her widowed mother dear lived at
the river's end.
The wages of her own true love the boys to
her did pay,
And for the shanty they rigged up a generous
purse next day.

They buried him in sorrow deep, it was on the
first of May.
Now come you tender shantyboys, it's for your
comrade pray.
Engraved upon a hemlock tree that by the grave
did grow
Was the name and date of the sad, sad fate of
that river lad, Monroe.

Fair Clara did not long survive, her heart
broke in the grief;
And scarcely two months afterward there came
to her relief.
When the time had passed away and she was
called to go,
Her last request was granted her: to be
laid by young Monroe.

Come all of you bold shantyboys, I would
have you come and see
The two green mounds by the riverside where
grows a hemlock tree.
The shantyboys cleared out the wood and there
the loves laid low,
The handsome Clara Vernon and her true love,
Jack Monroe.

A5—JACK HAGGERTY. Sung by John Norman at
Munising, Mich., 1938. Recorded by Alan
Lomax.

"Jack Haggerty" or "The Flat River Girl" is one
of the most widely known shantyboy songs of Mich-
igan origin. Flat River is in what once was the great
pine belt of Michigan, rising in Six Lakes, with a
fine mill-site at Greenville, the scene of the story,
and emptying into the Grand River near Lowell.
The ballad was composed in the late sixties by a
burly Irishman named Dan McGinnis who was both
a clever entertainer and a good raftsman. The cir-
cumstances which inspired McGinnis to compose
the ballad are related in *Lore of the Lumber Camps*
and *They Knew Paul Bunyan*. The curiously garbled
second line in John Norman's second stanza means
something like "My virtue's departed, by a lass I'm
defamed," and of course the "dark blots" of the
following line make reference to Cupid's darts.

I am a bold raftsman, from Greenville I came.
My name it's engraved on the rocks of St. George.
From housetop to bar shop I'm very well known:
They call me Jack Haggerty of Flat River town.

Me occupation 'tis a riverman where the white
waters roll.
My devirture and departure at last I defane.
The dark blots of Cupie has caused me much grief;
My heart's struck with a thunder and I can ne'er
get relief.

My troubles I'll tell to you without much delay:
A sweet little lassie my heart stoled away.
She was the blacksmith's daughter on Flat River
side;
I always intended to make her my bride.

I dressed her in jewels and the finest of lace;
The costiest of muslin to her I embrace.
I gave to her my wages for her to keep safe,
And begrudged her of nothing that I had on this
earth.

"Till one day on the river a letter I received
And she said from her promise herself she'd relieve;
To be married to another, who had long been delayed,
And that the next time I saw her she would ne'er
be a maid.

To her old mother, Jane Tucker, I laid all the
blame.
She caused her to forsake me and darken my name,
And to cast off the rigging which God would soon
tie,
And it's left me to wander along the Flat River side.

Then adieu to Flat River. For me there's no rest.
I will shoulder my peavey, and I will go West.
I will go to Muskegon some pleasure to find,
And leave my own Annie, my true lover behind.

So it's come all you bold rivermen with a heart
stout and true,
Never depend on a woman; you're beat if you do.
And if ever you meet one with a dark chestnut curl,
Just think of Jack Haggerty and his Flat River girl.

B1—THE LITTLE BROWN BULLS. Sung by Carl
Lathrop at St. Louis, Mich., 1938. Recorded by
Alan Lomax.

"The Little Brown Bulls" is the song of a skidding contest between McCluskey the Scotchman with his big spotted steers and Bull Gordon the Yankee with his little brown bulls. Fred Bainter told Franz Rickaby (*Ballads and Songs of the Shantyboy*, page 206) that the song was composed in the camp of Mart Douglas in Northwestern Wisconsin. *Lore of the Lumbercamps* (p. 66) reports Art Goodenough's claim that it was composed near Fife Lake, Michigan, in one of the camps of the Thayer Lumber Company. Leon May of Fife Lake has been one of the best known singers of the song. The Library of Congress has previously issued the ballad as sung by Emery DeNoyer and Charlie Bowlen, two Wisconsin jacks, on records L1 and L55.

Bull Gordon won the skidding contest by "ten and a score," probably by thirty logs. The timber was good, for it takes three 16-foot logs 20 inches in diameter to cut one thousand board feet of lumber. Kennebec, as Carl Lathrop calls him, or Sandberry John, as Leon May calls him, was the swamper for Bull Gordon. The swamper kept the underbrush cleared away for the skidder; he had more than a little to do with winning the contest.

Many of the shantyboy singers get the audience into the song by using the chorus "Derry-down-

down-down, derry-down" after each stanza. Carl Lathrop himself so sang "Little Brown Bulls" when among his woods companions.

Not a thing on the river McCluskey did fear,
As he pulled the stick o'er the big spotted
steer.
They were young, quick and sound, girting eight
feet and three.
Said McCluskey, the Scotchman, "They're the
laddies for me."

Bull Gordon, the Yankee, of skidding was full,
As he said "Whoa hush," to his little brown bulls—
Short legged and soggy, girting six feet and nine.
Said McCluskey, the Scotchman, "Too light for our
pine."

'Twas three to the thousand our contract did call;
The skidding was good for the timber was tall.
McCluskey he swore that he'd make the day full,
And he'd skid two to one of the little brown bull.

"Oh no" said Bull Gordon, "that you cannot do,
Although we all know you've the pets of the crew.
But mark you, my boy, you will have your hands full
If you skid one more log than my little brown bull."

The day was appointed and soon it draw nigh,
For twenty-five dollars their fortunes to try.
Each eager and anxious that morning were found
As the scalers and judges appeared on the ground.

With a whoop and a yell came McCluskey to view,
With his big spotted steers, the pets of the crew.
Both chewing their cud, "Oh boys, keep your jaws
full,
For you easily can beat them, the little brown bulls."

Then up stepped Bull Gordon, with pipe in his jaw,
With his little brown bulls with their cud in
their mouths.
And little did we think when we see them come
down,
That a hundred and forty they could jerk around.

Then up spoke McCluskey, "Come strip to the skin,
For I'll dig you a hole and I'll tumble you in.
I will learn a damned Yankee to face a bold Scot,
I will cook you a dose and you'll get it red hot."

Said Gordon to Stebbin, with blood in his eye,
"Today we must conquer McCluskey or die."
Then up spoke old Kennebec, "Oh boy, never fear,
For you never will be beaten by the big spotted steer."

The sun had gone down when the foreman did say,
"Turn out, boys, turn out, you've enough for the day."

We have scaled them and counted them, each man to
his team;
And it's well do we know now, which one kicks the
beam."

After supper was over, McCluskey appeared
With a belt ready made for his big spotted steers.
To form it he'd torn up his best mackinaw;
For he swore he'd conduct it according to law.

Then up spoke the scaler, "Hold on, you, a while,
For your big spotted steers are behind just one mile.
You've skidded one hundred and ten and no more,
And the bulls have you beaten by ten and a score."

The shanty did ring and McCluskey did swear
As he tore out by hands full his long yellow hair.
Says he to Bull Gordon, "My colors I pull;
So here, take the belt for your little brown bulls."

Here's health to Bull Gordon and Kennebec John;
The biggest day's work on the river they've done.
So fill up your glasses, boys fill them up full;
We will drink to the health of the little brown bull.

B2—LUMBERJACK'S ALPHABET. Sung by Gus
Schaffer at Greenland, Mich., 1938. Recorded
by Alan Lomax.

In the cypress swamps of Dixie, in the Northeast
and the Northwest, in the lumber camps of the
Great Lakes, and from Nova Scotia to British
Columbia the lumberjacks sing their alphabet song.
No two versions are exactly alike, but they all fol-
low the pattern of this one sung by Gus Schaffer
from Greenland in the upper peninsula of Michigan.
Every singing jack seems to have his own chorus, on
which he expects the boys in camp to join him.
Many other trades have their own alphabet songs
along the same lines as those of the lumberjack.
"The Sailor's Alphabet" is sung by Captain Leigh-
ton Robinson on Library of Congress record L26.
"P is for Peerless," the brand of chewing tobacco
well-known in the lumber camps of Minnesota,
Wisconsin, and Michigan. Peerless was strong enough
for Paul Bunyan himself. The ending is strictly
Schaffer's; the song is more likely to end with some-
thing like:

W is the woods we leave in the Spring
And now I have sung all I'm going to sing.

A is for axe which we swing to and fro,
B is for boys that handles them so,
C is for canthooks, the logs we make spin,
D is for danger that we're always in.

Chorus:
And so merry, so merry, so merry are we,
We are the boys when we're out on a spree.
Sing Hi-derry col-derry, hi-derry-dum;
Give the lumberjacks whiskey and nothing goes wrong.

E is for echo which through the woods rang, and
F is for foreman that pushes our gang,
G is for grindingstone, the axes we ground,
H is for handle that turns them around. Chorus.

I is for ink which our letters we've wrote, and
J is for jacket we wore for a coat,
K is for kindling, the fires we'd light,
L is for lice that bothers by night. Chorus.

M is for money, which everyone owes,
N is for needle that patches our clothes,
O is for oxen the road we swung through, and
P is for Peerless, which everyone chews. Chorus.

Q is for quiet, when we are asleep,
R is for rabbits which everyone eats,
S is for sleigh so stout and strong, and
T is for teams that tote them along. Chorus.

U is for use which we put ourselves to,
V is for valley, we tramp it right through,
W is for women when we're down in the Spring,
And triple-X beer is the best beer to drink.

B3—THE FALLING OF THE PINE. Sung by Lester
Wells at Traverse City, Mich., 1938. Recorded
by Alan Lomax.

This song dates back to the days of square-timber
logging. Fannie Eckstorm (*Minstrelsy of Maine*, p.
21) estimated its time of origin to be around 1825.
At that time, logs prepared for export were squared
off by hand in the woods to conserve shipboard
space. Scoring, lining, and chipping off with a well-
aimed broadaxe were all stages in the square-timber
process. "The Falling of the Pine" probably came
from Maine or Canada, but Rickaby reports a
Minnesota version and Beck has heard it sung by
Michigan jacks Tommy Agan of Buckley and
Tommie Webster of Au Gres, as well as by Lester
Wells who sings it here. Lester was 84 when he made
this recording.

You Irishmen that wanted,
Oh you Irish hearts undaunted,
Return unto the shanty-o before your youth's decline.
For the spectators they will ponder,

And they'll look upon us with wonder.
Our noise succeeds like thunder when we go and fall
the pine.

The shanty is our station
And it is our occupation.
Each man is at his station oh some to score and line.
Oh when it's eight foot of a block,
We'll chip out at every knock.
And We'll cause the woods to shock at the falling of
the pine.

Just as the daylight is breaking,
From our slumbers we're awaking.
Our breakfast we have taken, our axes we'll go grind.
Oh it's far in the woods advance,
Where our axes clear doth glance;
And like brothers we'll advance of days, we'll go
and fall the pine.

Oh it's now the winter is finished,
From our shanties we're diminished,
From our shanties we're diminished all for a little time.
Oh when it's far apart we're scattered
Until to the booms we're gathered,
Where we will collect our timbers in some handsome
rafts of pine.
Oh when it's far apart we're scattered
Until to the booms we're gathered,
Where we will collect our timbers in some handsome
rafts of pine.

When we get into Quebec,
Brave boys, we won't forget
Our whistles for to wet with some whiskey or good wine.
With some pretty girl we'll boast,
'Till our money it is all used,
Then, brave boys, we won't refuse for to go and fall
the pine.
With some pretty girl we'll boast,
'Till our money it is all used,
Then, brave boys, we won't refuse for to go and fall
the pine.

B4—THE WILD MUSTARD RIVER. Sung by Carl
Lathrop of St. Louis, Mich., 1938. Recorded by
Alan Lomax.

There is white water in "The Wild Mustard
River." Carl Lathrop's solid voice, though more
than threescore and ten, is about as good an un-
trained voice as usually sings this tragedy of Johnny
Styles. Johnny's name is usually pronounced *Stile*,
without a final s, no matter how it is spelled. It has
not been easy to locate the Wild Mustard River;
some old-timers call it the Omuska and some call it

the Old Musky. The dam has several names, depend-
ing on the singer: Emric, Hemlock, Tamarack. A
Michigan variant is printed in John and Alan
Lomax's *Our Singing Country* (New York, 1949),
page 228.

Down by the Wild Mustard River,
Down by the old Emry Dam,
We arose from our blankets one morning
To flood from the reservoir dam.

When the waters come rustling and rolling,
Our peaveys and pikes we'd apply,
Not thinking that one of our number
This day had so horribly to die.

On the river there was none any better
On a log than our friend Johnny Styles.
He had worked there more than any other,
But he always was reckless and wild.

But today his luck went against him,
His foot it was caught in the jam;
And you know how that creek runs a-howling
When you flood from the reservoir dam.

But we were all there in a moment,
Just as soon as he gave his first shout;
And you know how that creek runs a-howling—
It rolls in, but it never rolls out.

We worked for an hour and a quarter,
We worked till our time come to spare.
And we had a hole well worked through her
When like lightning she hauled out of there.

We rode her down and pulled up in dead water;
We worked till the sweat down us poured;
We pulled his dead body from in under,
But it looked like poor Johnny no more.

His flesh was all cut up in ringlets
And rolled out as flat as your hand.
We'll hold peace on this earth for his body
While the Lord holds his soul in command.

B5—TURNER'S CAMP ON THE CHIPPEWA. Sung
by Bill McBride at Mt. Pleasant, Mich., 1938.
Recorded by Alan Lomax.

Bill McBride had one of those remarkable memo-
ries found now and then among folk-singers. His
large repertory amazed such veteran collectors and
authorities as John and Alan Lomax and Stith
Thompson. Bill had been a chopper, swamper, team-
ster, top-loader, and riverhog for some of the biggest

outfits of the Great Lakes pinewoods. On a log he was as agile as a cat, almost the equal of the famous Billy Girard of Gladstone.

Michigan's Chippewa River is one of the streams feeding the Saginaw, source of some of the world's best white pine. "The Cumberland Crew," which the balladist refers to, is a song of the Civil War (see L29) which was as popular with the Michigan and Wisconsin jacks as it was with the Great Lakes sailors. The other two songs, "Johnny Troy" and "Jack Donohue," had somehow reached the lumber camps from faraway Australia.

Come all you jolly shantyboys that work the shanty
and go,
Come listen to my story, and I will tell to you
Our trials and our hardships we undergo each day
While working up in Turner's camp along the Chippewa.

I started up from Saginaw to go up the Chippewa.
I landed in a place called Clare about eleven
o'clock that day.
The place, it being so stumpy, I thought I was
next to Hell;
So I jumped on board of old Sax's stage and
came to Isabelle.

While laying around in Isabelle I thought I'd go
to work
Away up in the lumber camp where there was no time
to shirk.
I started after dinner time to take a little tramp;
I fetched up just at supper time to Charlie Turner's
camp.

At three o'clock next morning the cook his horn
did blow
For to call the boys unto their hash and for the
woods to go.
At first they put me sawing, but they found that
would not pay,
So when the boys from Quebec left we went to
load a sleigh.

In loading up those darned old sleighs, of course
I being so green,
The piling up of those top logs I never before
had seen.
The driver, being in a hurry for to get upon his
route,
Would kick the log and roll the log and shove
the log about.

When the last load was on the sleigh to the
river we would go,
To sing the songs of many things that happened
years ago.

Some would sing of Johnnie Troy, the other
"The Cumberland Crew,"
But of all the songs that I loved best was
"Bold Jack Donohue."

'Twas on the sixteenth day of May when bright
the sun did shine.
Our camps had got all busted up and our men had
got their time.
Our teams had got all through hauling in; the
birds began to sing.
They commenced to break their rollways and I
knew it must be Spring.

B6—JOHNNY CARROLL'S CAMP. Sung by Bill
McBride at Mt. Pleasant, Mich., 1938. Recorded
by Alan Lomax.

Like the foregoing selection, "Johnny Carroll's Camp" is another of the many songs generally descriptive of the shantyboy's day-to-day routine and designed to celebrate a specific crew. Often entire songs of this type were passed around from one camp to another, with changes only in the names. Like Charlie Turner, Johnny Carroll operated on the banks of the Chippewa. The jacks' pronunciation of his name was more like *Carl* and with the possessive, it frequently came out "Carlses."

One evening in November I happened for to stray
To Johnny Carroll's lumbering camp on the banks
of the Chippewa
With him I tried to grub and chop and level down
the roads,
To make ready for our wintery snow through which
our logs are towed.

With grub hoes, pries, and axes we loosened the
roots and stumps
And we filled up all the hollows as we leveled
down the lumps.
Now to be a perfect woodsman and to learn the
lumbering trade,
You must spend a certain length of time a-toiling
on the grade.

Now choppers, grind your axes and sawyers, file
your saws,
And teamsters, mend your harnesses, for these
are lumbering laws.
The blacksmith and the tinker, they mend our
tools so neat;
We dare not fear the work, brave boys, our
tools they're all complete.

Our cooks they are good natured, we get the
best of board;
We get the best variety our country can
afford:
Potatoes, apples, turnips, beans, and syrup, so
pure and sweet.
Although we have no appetite we cannot help but
eat.

There's bread and biscuits, pie and cookies, all
seasoned to our taste;
And our cooks be very careful there is nothing
goes to waste.
Our sleeping camp is well arranged with bunks
long, wide and deep;
And as night upon us reaches, boys, we quickly
go to sleep.

The chore boy in the morning gets up and starts
the fires,

And keeps our camp so neat and clean we cannot
but admire.
You'd ought to see us working as the weather is
mild and fair;
With chains, cant hooks, peaveys, how we work the
stately pine.

From daylight until dark, brave boys, we toil
day after day
A-working in the pinewoods on the banks of
the Chippewa.

When winter 'tis all over and our lumbering 'tis
all done
We'll go out on the river, boys, and there we'll
have some fun.
We'll start our logs a-floating and we'll drive
them down the stream.
And before we'll face for home, brave boys, we'll
sing the lumbering theme.