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FOLK MUSIC OF THE UNITED STATES

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Long-Playing Record L55

FOLK MUSIC FROM WISCONSIN

Edited by

Helene Stratman-Thomas

Preface

The Wisconsin folk music recording project was initiated in 1939 by Leland A. Coon, professor of music at the University of Wisconsin. A joint sponsorship by the Library of Congress and the University of Wisconsin was arranged, with Mr. Coon as chairman of the project. In the summers of 1940 and 1941, recording trips through Wisconsin were made by field workers Robert F. Draves, recording technician and Helene Stratman-Thomas, faculty advisor. Travel restrictions during the war years prevented resuming the project until 1946, when the field staff included Aubrey Snyder as recording technician, Phyllis Pinkerton, research assistant and Miss Stratman-Thomas.

The folk music recorded in Wisconsin depicts the state's history. Included is music of the Wisconsin Indian, of the colorful pattern of immigration from the many European countries, of the westward and northern migrations of early American colonists, and of the industrial development of the state.

It is the purpose of this recording to present only songs and ballads in the English tongue. English-speaking people brought their songs to Wisconsin either directly from the British Isles or from earlier settlements in Canada or the eastern and southern areas of the United States. The American-born songs include some indigenous Wisconsin ballads. (In evaluating Wisconsin as a ballad-making state, it must be kept in mind that early Wisconsin was a state of many languages. If an immigrant were inclined to compose

a ballad he would probably do so in the language most familiar to him. For example, indigenous Wisconsin ballads in the Luxemburg dialect have been recorded.) The English-speaking Irish seem to have been the principal bards of the lumber camps.

Names of Wisconsin rivers and towns occur frequently in both indigenous and transplanted ballads. The accepted privilege of a singer to change the place name, to designate a locality of his choosing, creates difficulties in determining the correct point of origin of many a song.

References in connection with the individual songs are given so that one may acquaint himself with variants or similar versions, with facts or conjecture as to the origin of the song, and with the different areas in which the song has been collected. The full bibliographical data for the sources indicated in these references is listed at the end of this pamphlet.

[Sung by Dora Richards at Platteville, 1940. Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

This child's singing game was a favorite of immigrants who came to the lead-mining area of southwestern Wisconsin from the county of Cornwall, England, around 1830 -- 1840. The name of the deceased varies in the different versions collected in England -- Old Rogers, Sir Roger, Poor Johnnie, Cock Robin, Poor Toby; in the American versions -- Pompey, Old Willis, Old Bumpy, Poor Robin, Old Granddaddy. However, the incidents of the story vary only slightly. The game is treated at length in Gomme's Dictionary of British Folk-Lore under the title "Old Roger is Dead."

The children stand in a ring singing the song. As the characters and incidents of the story unfold, the individual children step to the center of the ring to characterize the deceased, the tree, the apple, or the old woman, performing whatever action is described. The story itself is believed to have grown out of a popular superstition that the tree planted over the head of the deceased has a spirit connection with the deceased.

Miss Richards' ancestors were among the early Cornish settlers of Mineral Point. They lived, at one time, on Shakerag Street in the stone cottage now known as Pendarvis House.

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Pompey is dead and laid in his grave,  
     laid in his grave, laid in his grave,  
 Pompey is dead and laid in his grave,  
     oh, oh, oh.

They planted green apple trees over his head,  
     over his head, over his head,  
 They planted green apple trees over his head,  
     oh, oh, oh.

The apples are ripe and beginning to fall,  
     beginning to fall, beginning to fall,  
 The apples are ripe and beginning to fall,  
     oh, oh, oh.

There came an old woman a-picking them up,  
     picking them up, picking them up,  
 There came an old woman a-picking them up,  
     oh, oh, oh.

Pompey jumped up and gave her a thump,  
gave her a thump, gave her a thump,  
Pompey jumped up and gave her a thump,  
oh, oh, oh.

Then the old woman went hippety hop,  
hippety hop, hippety hop,  
Then the old woman went hippety hop,  
oh, oh, oh.

And there she went up to Strawberry Hill,  
Strawberry Hill, Strawberry Hill,  
There she went up to Strawberry Hill,  
oh, oh, oh.

Then she sat down and made her a will,  
made her a will, made her a will,  
There she sat down and made her a will,  
oh, oh, oh.

Maggie shall have the old gray mare,  
old gray mare, old gray mare,  
Maggie shall have the old gray mare,  
oh, oh, oh.

The saddle and bridle lay under the shelf,  
under the shelf, under the shelf,  
The saddle and bridle lay under the shelf,  
oh, oh, oh.

If you want any more you can sing it yourself,  
sing it yourself, sing it yourself,  
If you want any more you can sing it yourself,  
oh, oh, oh..

#### References

Brown University, No. 50; Eddy, pp. 176-177; Flanders and Brown, pp. 182-183; Goume, Vol. II, pp. 16-24; Henry, pp. 408-409; JAFL, XXXV, p. 407; Pound, American Ballads..., pp. 232-233; Randolph, III, pp. 381-382.

A2

#### HOW HAPPY IS THE SPORTSMAN

[Sung by J. L. Peters at Beloit, 1946. Recorded by Aubrey Snyder and Phyllis Pinkerton.]

This ballad was brought to Wisconsin from England by the Cornish who settled in the lead-mining area of southwestern Wisconsin in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Mr. Peters learned the song, when a small boy in Mineral Point, from hearing his father and grandfather sing it. Baring-Gould, who collected the song in England, refers to it as a very old ballad which dates back at least to the early seventeenth century. Around 1888 he obtained the song from an old quarryman at Merrivale Bridge in Devon, near the border of Cornwall. The Baring-Gould version begins "There were three jovial Welshmen" and refers to the fox as Reynard. In Mr. Peters' song the fox is called Bowena. The verses of the two versions are similar, but the melodies have little in common.

Mrs. Margaret Gullickson Anderson, as a little Norwegian girl among the Cornish children in Dodgeville, learned the song from them. In later years she sang it to all her children and grandchildren. Her version includes the verse:

The next to come was a fair maid  
A-combing out her locks  
She said she saw poor Reyny  
Among the hills and rocks.

- - -

How happy is the sportsman who love(s) to hunt the fox,  
Hunting for Bowena among the geese and ducks.  
Come hic, come hic, come high-low, along the merry stream,  
With a ra-ta-ta, ti-pa-ti-pa-tan,  
And with the royal bow-wow-wow, roodle-doodle-doo,  
The bewbine zing, fiddle-diddle-dee and dye-dee,  
And through the woods we'll run, brave boys,  
And through the woods we'll run.

The first he saw was a farmer, a-hoeing in his corn.  
He said he saw Bowena across the waters lorn.  
Come hic, come hic, come high-low, along the merry stream,  
With a ra-ta-ta, ti-pa-ti-pa-tan,  
And with the royal bow-wow-wow, roodle-doodle-doo,  
The bewbine zing, fiddle-diddle-dee and dye-dee,  
And through the woods we'll run, brave boys,  
And through the woods we'll run.

The next he saw was a blind man, as blind as he could be.  
He said he saw Bowena run up a hollow tree.  
Come hic, come hic, come high-low, along the merry stream,  
With a ra-ta-ta, ti-pa-ti-pa-tan,  
And with the royal bow-wow-wow, roodle-doodle-doo,  
The bewbine zing, fiddle-diddle-dee and dye-dee,  
And through the woods we'll run, brave boys,  
And through the woods we'll run.

## References

Baring-Gould, p. VII, pp. 154-155, Notes, pp. 21-22;  
Cox, pp. 476-477; Eddy, pp. 202-204; Flanders, Ballard,  
Brown and Barry, pp. 196-197; Linscott, pp. 290-292;  
Opie, p. 423; Randolph, I, pp. 326-327.

A3

### LORD LOVEL (Child No. 75)

Sung by Winifred Bundy at Madison, 1941. Recorded by  
Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.

Miss Bundy's earliest memories went back to the singing of  
"Lord Lovel" by her grandfather, James D. Morgan. This  
version bears a close similarity to many of those collected  
in the southern states and in Ohio. Miss Bundy firmly be-  
lieved that her version is one handed down in her grand-  
father's family in England and came with him to Canada  
and then to Wisconsin at the time of the Civil War.

Miss Bundy's style of singing "Lord Lovel" is well-  
expressed in Sandburg's quotation of Reed Smith of the  
University of South Carolina: "'Lord Lovel' clearly shows  
how necessary it is to deal with ballads as songs and not  
merely as poems. The text of 'Lord Lovel' is sad and  
mournful. The tune, however, is lilting and rollicking,  
and with the triple repetition of the last word of the  
fourth line, turns the tear into a smile. The difference  
between reading it as a poem and singing it as a song is  
the difference between tragedy and comedy."

In the closing verses of "Lord Lovel" the love after  
death motif is expressed by the rose and the briar growing  
from the graves of the departed lovers, and entwining toward  
Heaven. Motherwell states, "This phenomenon is common to  
all ballads, in which two lovers are buried near each other."

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Lord Lovel he stood at his castle gate,  
A-combing his milk-white steed,  
When along came Lady Nancy'Belle,  
A-wishing her lover good speed, speed, speed,  
A-wishing her lover good speed.

"O where are you going? Lord Lovel," she cried,  
"O where are you going?" cried she.  
"I'm going, my dear Lady Nancy Belle,  
Strange countries for to see, see, see,  
Strange countries for to see."

"When will you be back, Lord Lovel?" she cried,  
"When will you be back?" cried she.  
"In a year or two, or three, or more,  
I'll return to you, Lady Nancy, cy, cy,  
I'll return to you, Lady Nancy."

He had not been gone but a year and a day,  
Strange countries for to see,  
When languishing thoughts came into his mind,  
Lady Nancy Belle he would see, see, see  
Lady Nancy Belle he would see.

He rode and he rode on his milk-white steed,  
'Till he came to London town,  
And there he heard the church bells ring,  
And the people all mourning around, round, round,  
And the people all mourning around.

"O who is dead?" Lord Lovel he said,  
"O who is dead?" said he.  
"A lady is dead," the people all said,  
"And they call her the Lady Nancy, cy, cy,  
And they call her the Lady Nancy."

He ordered the grave to be opened forthwith,  
The shroud to be folded down,  
And there he kissed her clay-cold lips,  
Till the tears came trickling down, down, down,  
Till the tears came trickling down.

Lady Nancy she died as it might be today;  
Lord Lovel he died tomorrow.  
Lady Nancy she died out of pure, pure grief;  
Lord Lovel he died out of sorrow, sorrow, sorrow,  
Lord Lovel he died out of sorrow.

Lady Nancy was laid in the cold church-yard;  
Lord Lovel was laid in the choir,  
And out of her bosom there grew a red rose,  
And out of his backbone, a briar, briar, briar,  
And out of his backbone a briar.

They grew and they grew till they reached the church top,  
And they couldn't grow up any higher.  
And there they entwined in a true lovers' knot,  
Such as true lovers ever admire, mire, mire,  
Such as true lovers ever admire.

#### References

Chappell, pp. 27-28; Child, pp. 159-161; Cox, pp. 78-82; Eddy, pp. 39-45; Flanders and Brown, pp. 215-216; Gardner and Chickering, pp. 43-45; Linscott, pp. 233-235; Motherwell, pp. 203-204; Percy, pp. 358-360, p. 399; Pound, American Ballads..., pp. 4-7; Randolph, I, pp. 112-115; Sandburg, p. 70; Scarborough, pp. 98-103; Sharp, English Folk Songs..., I, pp. 146-149.

#### A4            AWAKE, ARISE, YOU DROWSY SLEEPER

[Sung by Lester A. Coffee at Harvard, Illinois, 1946. Recorded by Aubrey Snyder and Phyllis Pinkerton.]

English, Scottish and Irish origins have been claimed for this ballad. To Mr. Coffee, it was "just another old song I learned as a boy in Pittsville, Wisconsin." The ballad has circulated widely throughout the United States and is found in folk-song collections under various titles -- "Who is that under my bedroom window?", "Oh Mary dear, go ask your mother," "Drowsy sleeper," "Who is tapping at my window?" and others. Some versions contain the tragic ending of the ballad "The Silver Dagger," in which the girl and her lover commit suicide with the silver weapon.

A version "Oh Mary dear, go ask your mother" came to northern Wisconsin from Kentucky with the Jacobs family at the turn of the century. Recordings were made from the singing of Mrs. Ollie Jacobs and of her daughter, Mrs. Pearl Jacobs Borusky.

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"Awake, arise, you drowsy sleeper,  
Awake, arise, 'tis almost day,  
And open wide your bedroom window  
Hear what your true love has to say.

"Oh Mary dear, go ask your father,  
Whether you my bride may be,  
And if he says no, love, come and tell me,  
It's the very lasttime I'll trouble thee."



"I dare not go to ask my father,  
For he lies on his couch of rest,  
And by his side he keeps a weapon  
To slay the one that I love best."

"Oh Mary dear, go ask your mother,  
Whether you my bride may be,  
And if she says no, love, come and tell me,  
It's the very last time I'll trouble thee."

"I dare not go to ask my mother,  
To let her know my love is near,  
But dearest dear, go court some other,"  
She gently whispered in my ear.

"Oh Mary dear, oh dearest Mary,  
It is for you my heart will break.  
From North to South to Pennsylvania,  
I'll roam the ocean for your sake."

"And now I'll go down by some silent river,  
And there I'll spend my days and years,  
And there I'll plant a weeping willow;  
Beneath its shade I'll shed my tears."

"Come back, come back, my wounded lover,  
Come back, come back to me, I pray,  
And I'll forsake both father, mother,  
And with you I'll run away."

#### References

Barry, p. 83; Chappell, pp. 81-82; Cox, pp. 348-349;  
Eddy, pp. 92-95; Gardner and Chickering, pp. 86-88;  
JAFL, XX, p. 260, XXIX p. 200, XXX pp. 338-343, pp. 362-  
363, 388, XXXV pp. 356-357, LII p. 31; Pound, American Bal-  
lads..., pp. 51-53; Randolph, I, pp. 244-249; Rickaby,  
MS., V, 18a,b; Scarborough, pp. 139-142; Sharp, English  
Folk Songs..., I, pp. 358-364.

A5            I'LL SELL MY HAT, I'LL SELL MY COAT

[Sung by Mrs. Pearl Jacobs Borusky at Antigo, 1940. Re-  
corded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

The original song, "Shule Aroon," is included by Joyce  
in the collection, Old Irish Folk Music and Songs. He  
attributes its origin to the period between 1691 and 1745,

when the Irish Brigade sought enlistment in the French armies.

In the Joyce version the young girl sells her only spinning-wheel to buy for her love a sword of steel. The version sung by Mrs. Borusky shows the influence of the little song's association with the westward trend of American migration. "I'll sell my hat, I'll sell my coat, To buy my wife a little flat boat," and "I'll sell my pants, I'll sell my vest, To get enough money to go out west," are truly American sentiments. The Gaelic text of the chorus of Joyce's version has developed into a rigmarole which reflects the influence of the southern barbeque.

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I'll sell my hat, I'll sell my coat,  
To buy my wife a little flat boat.  
Down the river we will float.  
Come bib-ble in the boo-shy-lo-ree.

Chorus:  
Shule, shule, shule-i-rue,  
Shule-i-rack-a-shack, shule-a-bar-be-que.  
When I sell my sally bab-a-yeal,  
Come bib-ble in the boo-shy-lo-ree.

Chorus:  
Shule, shule, shule-i-rue,  
Shule-i-rack-a-shack, shule-a-bar-be-que.  
When I sell my ally bab-a-yeal,  
Come bib-ble in the boo-shy-lo-ree.,

#### References

Eddy, pp. 126-128; Joyce, pp. 236-237; JAFL, XXII, pp. 387-388, n.; XXV, pp. 402-405; LII, p. 22; Lomax, American Ballads..., pp. 298-299; Randolph, I, pp. 400-402; Sharp, English Folk Songs..., II, p. 50.

A6        ONCE I COURTED A CHARMING BEAUTY BRIGHT  
            (LOVER'S LAMENT)

[Sung by Mrs. Pearl Jacobs Borusky at Antigo, 1940. Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

Mrs. Borusky learned this song from her mother, Mrs. Ollie Jacobs, who had learned it from Joshua Jacobs in Kentucky. Around 1890 there was a migration of Kentucky families into the cut-over timber lands of northern Wisconsin. The Kentuckians brought with them a rich heritage of folk songs and ballads. The Jacobs family settled near Antigo. The son and Asher Treat (of Antigo) became close friends. During his many visits to the Jacobs home, Treat wrote down the melodies and texts of the songs he heard sung. A number of them were published in the Journal of American Folklore in 1939. Ollie Jacobs' version of "Once I Courted a Charming Beauty Bright" was recorded in 1941. A comparison of the recordings of the daughter and her mother clearly shows the style of singing and vocal inflection to be as traditional as the melody and text.

- - -

Once I courted a charming beauty bright,  
I courted her by day and I courted her by night.  
I courted her for love, and love I did obtain,  
And I'm sure that she had no right to complain.

She had cruel parents I came for to know  
To gather their daughter and away we would go.  
But they put her in confinement and locked her  
up secure  
And I never, no, never got sight of my dear.

First to the window I thought I would go  
To see if she had forgotten me or no.  
But when she saw me coming, she wrung her hands  
and cried,  
"I never would forget you until the day I died."

Then to the war I thought I would go  
To see if I could forget her or no.  
But when I got there, the army shining bright,  
I bore all my troubles to my own heart's delight.

Then seven long years I spent in Mexico,  
And then back home I thought I would go.  
But her mother saw me coming; she ran to me  
and cried,  
"My daughter loved you dearly, and for your sake she  
died."

Then I was struck like a man that was slain,  
The tears from my eyes fell like showers of rain,  
Saying "Oh, oh, this grief I cannot bear,  
My darling's in her silent grave, and soon shall  
I be there."

## References

Cox, p. 342; JAFI, LII, p. 33; Randolph, I, pp. 346-349; Scarborough, pp., 311-312; Sharp, English Folk Songs..., II, pp. 103-108.

A7

### BRENNAN ON THE MOOR

[Sung by William Jacob Morgan at Berlin, 1946. Recorded by Helene Stratman-Thomas and Aubrey Snyder.]

At least three generations of the Morgan family have sung "Brennan on the Moor." William J. Morgan learned it from his father, James D., who came, at the age of twelve, with his father from Manchester, England to Canada and later to the United States to fight in the Civil War.

Joyce, in his Old Irish Folk Music and Songs, includes a version of "Brennan on the Moor" collected in Ireland. In both text and melody there is a remarkable similarity between Mr. Morgan's song and the one collected by Joyce. Joyce describes Brennan as "a noted highwayman, who, in the eighteenth century, ran his career in the Kilworth mountains near Fermoy in Cork, and in the neighbourhood."

Place-names in ballads of this type are apt to vary as the ballad is passed on from one singer to another. Sometimes the singer purposely uses the name of a place with which he is identified. Sometimes the changes are merely phonetic in character and cannot be identified with any particular place. In Mr. Morgan's version the Kilworth Mountains have changed to Kilford Mounts, Clanmore to Timoor, the Mayor of Cashel to the Mayor of Meadows, and Pedlar Bawn to Julius Long. Similar changes occur in the version from Oregon collected by Lomax.

When I asked Mr. Morgan how he could keep so many verses in his mind, he told me that he sang his songs to keep himself company as he drove his truck on his route from Berlin to Green Bay.

- - -

It is of the bold highwayman I am a-goin'  
to tell,  
Whose name was Willie Brennan, and in Ireland  
he did dwell.  
'Twas on the Kilford Mounts he commenced his  
wild career,  
And it's many a wealthy gentleman before him  
shook with fear.

Chorus:

Oh, it's Brennan on the Moor, Brennan on  
the Moor,  
Bold, gay, and undaunted stood young Brennan  
on the Moor.

Now Brennan, being weary, sat down upon  
the ground;  
Up came the Mayor of Meadows, a mile outside  
of town.  
The Mayor knew his features. "I think, my man,"  
said he,  
"That your name is Willie Brennan; you may come  
along with me." Chorus.

Now, Willie's wife was going to town, some  
provisions for to buy,  
And when she saw her Willie taken, she began  
to weep and cry.  
"Oh, give to me that ten-penny [\*tenpence]," the  
words were scarcely spoke,  
When she handed him a blunderbuss concealed  
beneath her cloak. Chorus.

Now Brennan got the blunderbuss, my story  
I'll unfold.  
He caused the Mayor to tremble, and deliver up  
his gold.  
Five thousand pounds was offered for his  
apprehension there,  
And with his horse and saddle, to the mountains  
he'd repair. Chorus.

Now Brennan, he's an outlaw, all on the  
mountains high.  
With infantry and cavalry, to catch him  
they did tray,  
But he only laughed at them, until I heard  
it said  
By a false-hearted female he was brutally  
betrayed. Chorus.

Now Brennan met a peddler by the name of  
Julius Long.  
They jogged along together till the day  
began to dawn.  
The peddler missed his money, likewise his  
watch and chain;  
He then encountered Brennan and he robbed  
him back again. Chorus.

\*Tenpence - a rebel term for musket in 1798. (See Sharp,  
Folk Songs from Somerset.)

Now Brennan, seeing the peddler was as good  
a man as he,  
He chose him on the King's highway, his comrade  
for to be.  
The peddler threw away his pack without any  
more delay,  
And he's proved a faithful comrade until  
his dying day. Chorus.

It was on Tipperary, a place they call  
Timoor,  
Where Brennan and his comrade that day did  
suffer sore.  
They laid themselves down on the grass that  
grew amid the field,  
And it's many a one received a wound before that  
they would yield.

Chorus:  
Oh, it's Brennan on the Moor, Brennan on  
the Moor,  
Bold, fierce, and undaunted stood young  
Brennan on the Moor.

Now Brennan, he's a pris'ner, and in strong  
irons bound;  
They dragged him off to prison, where high walls  
did him surround.  
The jury passed a verdict and the judge made  
this reply:  
"For robbing on the King's highway, you're both  
condemned to die." Chorus.

"Farewell, my little family, my wife and children  
three.  
There is my poor old father, who will shed tears  
for me;  
Likewise my tender mother, as she wrung her  
hands and cried,  
'Oh, would to God that Willie had within his  
cradle died.'" Chorus.

#### References

Flanders and Brown, pp. 98-99; JAFI, XXII, p. 374; Joyce,  
pp. 186-188; Lomax, Our Singing Country, pp. 317-319;  
Randolph, II, p. 168; Rickaby, MS., V, 24; Sharp, Folk  
Songs from Somerset, Set II, p. 18.

[Played on the "Viking" cello by Mrs. Otto Rindlisbacher at Rice Lake, 1941. Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

The "Viking" cello (Mrs. Rindlisbacher's name for the instrument on which she played the melody of "The Pinery Boy") is a refined model of the lumberjack cello. Although her cello was built by a professional instrument-maker, it followed the design of the ingenious lumberjack who fastened a wooden cracker-box to a pitchfork. The prongs provided a floor rest; the long handle served both as a support for the sound box and as a neck. It was a one-string instrument, played with a bow, and produced a wailing quality as the finger slid from one pitch to another.

"The Pinery Boy" is a lumberjack adaptation of the English ballad "The Sailor Boy." The broken-hearted girl's search for her sailor boy, drowned in the ocean, has become a search for the pinery boy, who was lost from a lumber raft in the Wisconsin River in the dells at Lone Rock. Rickaby collected "The Pinery Boy" from Mrs. M. A. Olin at Eau Claire around 1920. In 1947 a few verses and a melody were recalled by Roy Parkin of Coloma.

#### References

Rickaby, Ballads and Songs..., pp. 85-6, p. 210; Rickaby, MS., I, 17a.

[Played on the fiddle and piano accordion by Mr. and Mrs. Otto Rindlisbacher at Rice Lake, 1941. Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

The title of this dance tune is very expressive to the lumberjack. The swamper's job was to cut the limbs from the fallen trees and clear the trail for skidding the logs. This tune was played at the stag dances in northern Wisconsin lumber camps. As a distinguishing mark, each lumberjack who was a lady for the evening tied a handkerchief around his arm. Dance calls which Mr. Rindlisbacher remembered were: "Squeeze ze lady, hold heem tight" - "Heavy on the cowhide" - "Tamaracker down" - "Give her tarpaper."

A10

THE COUDERAY JIG

[Played on the fiddle and piano accordion by Mr. and Mrs. Otto Rindlisbacher at Rice Lake, 1941. Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

The popularity of this dance tune at the Couderay lumbercamp in Sawyer County, Wisconsin gave rise to the title, "The Couderay Jig." The lumberjack, from whom Mr. Rindlisbacher learned the tune, claimed that it originated at the Couderay camp.

A11

LUMBERJACK DANCE TUNE

[Played on a cigar-box fiddle by Otto Rindlisbacher at Rice Lake, 1941. Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

A typical lumberjack instrument was the fiddle with a cigar-box as the sound body and part of a broom-handle as the neck. A pliant branch of a sapling and hair from a horse's tail provided materials for the bow.

Mr. Rindlisbacher owns one of the finest private collections of folk instruments. (It is displayed at the Buckhorn Tavern.) He constructed the fiddle, on which he played the "Lumberjack Dance Tune," from a cigar-box and a broom-handle. The quality, which is superior to the average crude instrument of the lumbercamp, is attributable to Mr. Rindlisbacher's fine workmanship and his use of a standard violin bow.

A12

PIG SCHOTTISCHE

[Played on the fiddle by Otto Rindlisbacher at Rice Lake, 1941. Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

Mr. Rindlisbacher referred to the Pig Schottische as an example of lumberjack humor. The fiddle's imitative Oink! Oink! made it a favorite entertainment number in Wisconsin lumbercamps.



[Sung by Emery DeNoyer at Rhinelander, 1941. Recorded by Robert F. Draves.]

Emery DeNoyer was blinded by an accident when a young boy. Gifted with a fine singing voice, he became an entertainer. On Sundays his father would take him to the various lumber-camps, where he sang for the lumberjacks and learned more and more of their ballads, which he added to his repertory.

Although this song is generally known as "The Shanty Boys and the Pine," Mr. DeNoyer preferred to call it "Shantyman's Life," since it depicts the routine of the lumberjack. The origin of the song is made difficult by the nature of the lines, which are easily adapted to any river or crew. Mr. DeNoyer designated the locality in his last line, "Three hundred able-bodied men are wanted on the Pelican drive." (The Pelican River flows into the Wisconsin at Rhinelander.) James Egan, Neshkoro, contributed a thirteen-verse version which places the drive on the Flambeau River, in north central Wisconsin, and includes the lines, "And now pin down these verses, I'm sure that they are true. I know it by experience up in Riley's crew. It was composed and sung there...." James Fliegel, Lake Tomahawk, from whom Mrs. Isabel Ebert collected the song, names the place of origin as Mike Dolan's shanty. Rickaby's "Jim Porter's Shanty Song" takes its name from the lines, "For it was in Jim Porter's shanty, this song was sung with glee.... It was composed by me." Charles Ring of Hayward, who went to work in the woods, when 13, driving oxen, also called this song "Shantyman's Life." He said his mother taught it to him, and that it was composed on the St. Croix River, in northwestern Wisconsin. His version parallels Mr. DeNoyer's in text and melody.

Beck states that it was sung in Michigan from Lake Huron to Lake Michigan. He collected versions which name Lockwood's, Murphy's, Porter's, Francisco's, Dorcey's Gilbert's and Robertson's camps, as well as Robbins' Hotel as the place where the song was composed.

Two shanty songs of the same genus, "Turner's Camp on the Chippewa" and "Johnny Carroll's Camp," celebrating two Michigan lumbering crews, can be heard on Library of Congress recording L 56, Songs of the Michigan Lumberjacks.

Come all you jolly fellows, come listen  
to my song;  
It's all about the pinery boys, and how  
they get along,  
They're the jolliest lot of fellows, so  
merrily and fine;  
They will spend their pleasant winter months in  
cutting down the pine.

Some will leave their friends and homes, and  
others they do love dear,  
And into the lonesome pine woods their pathway  
they do steer,  
Into the lonesome pine woods all winter  
to remain,  
A-waiting for the spring-time to return  
again.

Spring-time comes, oh glad will be  
its day;  
Some return to home and friends, while  
others go astray.  
The sawyers and the choppers, they lay  
their timber low,  
While swampers and the teamsters, they  
haul it to and fro.

Next comes the loaders, before the break  
of day;  
"Load up your sleighs five thousand feet, to  
the river haste away!"  
Noon-time rolls around, our foreman loudly  
screams,  
"Lay down your tools, me boys, and we'll haste  
to pork and beans."

We arrive at the shanty; the splashing  
then begins,  
The banging of the water pails, the rattling  
of the tins.  
In the middle of the splashing, our cook for  
dinner does cry;  
We all arise and go, for we hate to lose  
our pie.

Dinner being over, we into our shanty  
go;  
We all fill up our pipes and smoke till ev'ry  
thing looks blue.  
"It's time for the woods, me boys," our foreman,  
he does say;  
We all gather up our hats and caps, to the woods  
we haste away.

We all go out with a welcome heart and a well  
contented mind,  
For the winter winds blow cold, among the  
waving pines.  
The ringing of saws and axes, until the sun  
goes down.  
"Lay down your tools, me boys, for the shanties  
we are bound."

We arrive at the shanty with cold and  
wet feet;  
Take off our over boots and packs, at supper  
we must eat.  
Supper being ready, we all arise  
and go,  
For it ain't the style of a lumberjack to lose  
his hash, you know.

At three o'clock in the morning our bold cook  
loudly shouts,  
"Roll out, roll out, you teamsters, it's time  
that you were out."

The teamsters, they get up in a fright, and  
manful wail,  
"Where's my boots, oh where's my packs, my rubbers  
have gone astray."  
The other men, they then get up, their packs  
they cannot find;  
And they lay it to the teamsters, and they curse  
them till they're blind.

Spring-time comes, oh glad will be  
its day.  
"Lay down your tools, me boys, and we'll haste  
to break away."  
The floating ice is over, and business  
now destroyed.  
Three hundred able-bodied men are wanted on the  
Pelican drive.

#### References

Beck, pp. 100-107; Gardner and Chickering, p. 260; Rickaby,  
Ballads and Songs..., pp. 69-75; Rickaby, MS., I, 13 a-c.

## THE BOLD McINTYRES

[Sung by Arthur (Happy) Moseley at Black River Falls, 1940.  
Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

The elegant bold McIntyres, so Mr. Moseley told us, were real Wisconsin people. He was acquainted with some of the family. The song was sung in the lumber-camps on the Black and Chippewa Rivers.

- - -

In County Kildare on Hibernia shore  
Lived a fam'ly of John McIntyres.  
There was Mike and Tim, the twins, as they stand  
upon their pins;  
We're the elegant bold McIntyres.

There's the Reillys and the Kellys and the ocean and sea;  
There's the Caseys and all the McGuires.  
O, bow down to us low, as walking we go;  
We're the elegant bold McIntyres.

There is old Uncle Pat with his high beaver hat;  
He can whale any braggart McGuire.  
There is Mike and Tim, the twins, as they stand  
upon their pins;  
We're the elegant bold McIntyres.

## THE LITTLE BROWN BULLS

[Sung by Charles Bowlen at Black River Falls, 1941. Re-  
corded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

Lumberjacks agree that the log-skidding contest described in this ballad actually occurred, but they do not agree as to the location of the contest.

Barry regards the ballad as western, but believes that the owner of the winning team, "Bull (Bold)" Gordon and his swamper, "Kennebec" John Stebbin, were Maine men. Rickaby (Ballads and Songs...) reports the history of the song as he obtained it in 1923 from Fred Bainter of Lady-smith, Wisconsin. "According to Mr. Fred Bainter...the ballad was composed in Mart Douglas's camp in northwestern Wisconsin in 1872 or 1873. It was in this camp and at this date, he said, that the contest between the big spotted steers and the little brown bulls was waged."

The lumberjacks whom we met on our recording trips all placed the contest in Wisconsin but voiced varied opinions as to the exact location. Dan Grant of Bryant said that McCluskey and "Bold" Gordon were local characters and that his father had worked with McCluskey. Charles Bowlen, whose version is found on this record, was very positive that the song originated in a logging-camp on the Chippewa about 1870. He learned the song from an uncle, who always declared that he was in the camp the winter the song was first sung. Arthur Moseley of Black River Falls placed the contest somewhere on the Black or Chippewa Rivers. Emery DeNoyer of Rhinelander also was of the opinion that the contest took place on the Chippewa. He thought the man who wrote it was Pat Murphy from Chippewa Falls. Mr. DeNoyer said that he once met McCluskey and sang the ballad for him. Harry Dyer, Madison, placed the contest on the Black River. Henry Hunter of Galesville quoted the opening lines, "Not a thing on Black River McCluskey did fear." Robert Walker of Crandon sang, "For the biggest day's work on Wolf River ever was done." Adolph Williams of Hayward said, "Ed Collett of Hayward knows just where this song was made up -- out on Highway 77 on the Torch River."

By no means has Wisconsin been the only state to stake a claim. One of Beck's informants says that the ballad recalls a contest near Fife Lake, Michigan.

Carl Lathrop, a Michigan lumberman, sings it on Library of Congress recording L 56, while Emery DeNoyer sings the version on record L 1.

- - -

Not a thing on the river McCluskey did fear,  
As he swung his gord stick\* o'er his big spotted  
steers.  
They were slick, smooth, and handsome, girding nine  
foot and three,  
Says McCluskey, the Scotchman, "They're the laddies  
for me."

Next came Bull Gordon, whose skidding was full,  
And he shouted, "Whoa hush," to his little brown bulls.  
Short legged and shaggy, girding seven foot nine.  
"Too light," says McCluskey, "to handle our pine."

---

\*goad stick

"For it's three to the thousand the contract does call.  
The skidding is good and our timber stands tall."  
Says McCluskey to Gordon, "I'll make a day full,  
And I'll skid two to one to your little brown bulls."

"Oh no," says Bull Gordon, "that you cannot do,  
Though I well know your steers are the pets of the crew;  
But I'll tell you, my laddie, you'll have your hands full  
When you skid one more log than the little brown bulls."

So a day was appointed, and soon it drew nigh,  
When for twenty-five dollars their fortunes to try.  
'Twas early next morning as we came around,  
The judges and scalers appeared on the ground.

With a whoop and a yell came McCluskey in view,  
With his big spotted steers, the pets of the crew.  
Said he to his chainer, "We'll make this day full.  
We'll skid two to one to those little brown bulls."

Next came Bull Gordon, with his pipe in his jaw;  
His little brown bulls, their cuds they did gnaw.  
But little we thought, as we saw them come down,  
That a hundred and forty they could jerk around.

Says McCluskey to Sandy, "Now strip to the skin.  
We'll dig them a grave and we'll tumble them in.  
We'll mix 'em a dose and we'll feed it red-hot.  
We'll learn a damn Yankee to face a bold Scot."

Said Gordon to Johnny, with blood in his eye,  
"Today we must conquer McCluskey or die."  
Said Johnny to Gordon, "You need have no fear,  
For you ne'er will be beat by those big spotted steers."

The sun had gone down and the foreman did say,  
"Turn in, boys, turn in, 'tis enough for today.  
Each man has been counted and scaled to his team,  
And well do we know which one tips the beam."

The supper being over, McCluskey appears,  
With a belt ready made for his big spotted steers.  
For to make it he tore up his best mackinaw,  
But was forced to conduct it according to law.

For up spoke the scaler, "Just hold you a-while.  
Your big spotted steers are behind just a mile.  
You've skidded a hundred and ten and no more,  
While Gordon has beat you by ten and a score."

The boys all did shout, while McCluskey did swear,  
As he tore out great handfuls of long yellow hair.  
Says he to Bull Gordon, "My colors I'll pull,  
And you take the belt for the little brown bulls."

So here's to Bull Gordon and Kennebec John,  
For the biggest day's work on the river was done  
So it's fill up your glasses, and fill them brim full,  
And drink to the health of the little brown bulls.

#### References

Barry, pp. 30-31, 98; Beck, pp. 66-69; Botkin, pp. 849-851; Gardner and Chickering, p. 266; Laws, p. 152; Lomax, Our Singing Country, pp. 224-226; Rickaby, Ballads and Songs..., pp. 65-68, pp. 206-207; Rickaby, MS., I, 12.

B4

#### YOUNG JOHNNY (SPRINGFIELD MOUNTAIN)

[Sung by Winifred Bundy at Madison, 1941. Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

Miss Bundy learned "Young Johnny" when she was a small girl from a neighbor woman, Harriet Hunt Winslow. Had Mrs. Winslow been living in 1941, she would have been well over a hundred years old, and as Miss Bundy said, "That dates the song somewhat!" Miss Bundy was not aware that she was singing a version of the famous American ballad, "Springfield Mountain."

The tragedy which occasioned the composing of the song occurred in 1761, although it is not known with certainty whether the song itself dates back so far (Cf. Barry in BFSSN). The exact form of the record is quoted by Peck: "Timothy Mirrick, the son of Lt. Thomas and Mary Mirrick, was bit by a ratel snake on August the 7th, 1761, and died within about two or three ours, he being 22 years, two months and three days old and vary near the point of marridg."

The tragicomic character of Miss Bundy's version is far removed from the seriousness of the original song. This change in character is indicative of the transformation through which a folk-song may pass as it is handed down by oral tradition.

In 1840 the song appeared in print as "The Pesky  
Sarpent: A Pathetic Ballad."

- - -

One day young Johnny he did go  
Down in the meadow for to mow.  
A-too-dah-nick-ah, too-dah-nick-ah di-do day.

He scarce had mowed twice round the field  
Before a serpent hit his heel.  
A-too-dah-nick-ah, too-dah-nick-ah di-do day.

He threw his scythe upon the ground  
And shut his eyes and looked around.  
A-too-dah-nick-ah, too-dah-nick-ah di-do day.

He took that serpent in his hand  
And went right home to Sally Bland  
A-too-dah-nick-ah, too-dah-nick-ah di-do day.

"Oh Sally dear, and do you see  
This pesky serpent has bitten me?"  
A-too-dah-nick-ah, too-dah-nick-ah di-do day.

"Oh Johnny dear, why did you go  
Down in that meadow for to mow?"  
A-too-dah-nick-ah, too-dah-nick-ah di-do day.

"Oh Sally dear, you know, you know,  
'Twas Father's hay I had to mow."  
A-too-dah-nick-ah, too-dah-nick-ah di-do day.

Now all young men a warning take  
And don't get bit by a rattlesnake!  
A-too-dah-nick-ah, too-dah-nick-ah di-do day.

#### References

BFSSN, no. 7: pp. 4-5, no. 8: pp. 3-6, no. 9: pp. 8-10, no.  
10: pp. 6-8, no. 11: pp. 13-15, no. 12: pp. 6-8; Botkin,  
pp. 828-829; Brown University, no. 26; Cox, p. 292;  
Flanders and Brown, pp. 15-18; Eddy, pp. 248-252; Gardner  
and Chickering, pp. 120-121; JAFI, XXXV, pp. 415-417;  
Laws, pp. 38-39, pp. 213-214; Linscott, pp. 285-286; Lomax,  
Cowboy Songs, pp. 194-197; Peck, p. 79; Pound, American  
Ballads..., pp. 97-100; Randolph, III, pp. 167-170; Rick-  
aby, MS., VII, 10a.



[Sung by Luther Royce at White Lake, 1941. Recorded by Robert F. Draves.]

When the Wisconsin poet, Eben E. Rexford, author of "Silver Threads Among the Gold," submitted "The Ride of Paul Venarez" to the Youth's Companion for publication, little could he dream that years later his poem would come back to Wisconsin in disguise, to be recorded as an anonymous folk song. At White Lake, less than sixty miles north of the poet's home of Shiocton, a recording was made of "Billy Vanero," from the singing of Luther Royce. This song came to Wisconsin from Kentucky. Royce had learned it from a collection "on old pieces of paper in handwritin'," from his Kentucky grandmother.

In referring to "The Ride of Billy Venero," as collected by John Lomax among the cowboys in the Southwest, Louise Pound states, "Another piece well executed for folk-song and dealing apparently with genuine cowboy material is The Ride of Billy Venero. But this, with a few localizings and adaptations, is unmistakably The Ride of Paul Venarez by Eben E. Rexford." She credits Prof. E. F. Piper of Iowa City, Iowa, with first identifying "The Ride of Billy Venero" with Rexford's poem.

After its publication, "The Ride of Paul Venarez" seems to have had great popularity as a recitation. One wonders who adapted it and gave it a tune.

- - -

Billy Vanero heard them say, in an Arizona  
town one day,  
That a band of Apache Indians was on the trail  
of death;  
Heard them tell the murd'ring done, three men  
killed at Rocky Run,  
"They're in danger at the cowranch," he whispered  
under his breath.

Cowranch forty miles away, in a little spot  
that lay  
In a deep and shady valley, in a mighty wilderness.  
Sharp and clear, a rifle shot woke the echoes  
of the spot.  
"I am wounded," cried Vanero, as he swayed from  
side to side.

And then he never spoke, as he dipped his  
bit of oak  
From the warm blood that was flowing from a  
wound above his side.  
"Take this message, if not me; straight to  
little Bessie Lee."  
And he tied himself to his saddle and gave  
his horse the rein.

Then at dusk, the horse of brown, wet with sweat,  
came padding down  
To the little lane at the cowranch, and stopped  
at Bessie's door.  
But her cowboy was asleep, and his slumbers were  
so deep,  
Little Bess could never wake him though she tried  
forevermore.

#### References

Larkin, pp. 25-29; Lomax, Cowboy Songs, pp. 197-200;  
Pound, Poetic Origins..., pp. 226-227, p. 229 n.; Ran-  
dolph, II, pp. 222-227.

B6

#### CRANBERRY SONG

[Sung by Mrs. Frances Perry at Black River Falls, 1946.  
Recorded by Helene Stratman-Thomas and Aubrey Snyder.]

Cranberries are an important crop of Jackson County. Mrs. Perry attributed the "Cranberry Song" to Barney Reynolds and explained, "At each marsh every year, new verses are composed about the workers present at that season. Romances, accidents, humorous incidents are incorporated so that each year the song changes. I have sung, I believe the Barney Reynold's original song. I think you could place the "Cranberry Song" at about fifty years ago."

- - -

You ask me to sing, so I'll sing you a song;  
I'll tell how, in the marshes, they all get along,  
Bohemians and Irish and Yankees and Dutch,  
It's down in the shanties you'll find the whole clutch.

Did you ever go to the cranberry bogs?  
Some of the houses are hewed out of logs.  
The walls are of boards, they are sawed out of pine,  
That grow in this country, called Cranberry Mine.

It's now then to Mather their tickets they'll buy,  
And to all their people they'll bid them goodbye.  
For fun and for frolic, their plans they'll resign,  
For three or four weeks in the cranberry clime.

The hay is all out and the wheat is all stacked;  
Cranberries all ripe, so their clothes they will pack,  
And away to the marshes to rake they will go,  
And dance to the music of the fiddle and bow.

All day in the marshes their rakes they will pull,  
And feel the most gayest when boxes are full.  
In the evening they'll dance till they're all tired out,  
And wish the cranberries would never play out.

B7                                    ON THE LAKES OF PONCHARTRAIN

[Sung by Mrs. Frances Perry at Black River Falls, 1946.  
Recorded by Helene Stratman-Thomas and Aubrey Snyder.]

The song of the Creole girl has been collected from Nova Scotia to Texas. In the many versions the course may lie "through the swamps and alligators," "O'er hills and tides and meadowlands," from Orleans to Jackson, from Louisiana to Texas, but the faithfulness of the Creole girl never changes. Mrs. Perry learned her version from a family of Georgia mountaineers who settled in Jackson County about 1915.

- - -

Through swamps and alligators I wend my weary way;  
O'er railroad tracks and crossings my weary feet  
did stray,  
Until the shades of evening some higher ground did  
gain.  
'Twas there I met the Creole girl on the lakes of  
Ponchartrain.

"Good evening, pretty fair maiden, my money does  
me no good,  
If it was not for the alligators, I'd sleep out in  
the wood,"

"Oh, welcome, welcome, stranger, although our house  
is plain,  
We never turn a stranger out on the lakes of  
Ponchartrain."

She took me to her father's house and treated me  
quite well;  
Her hair, which hung in ringlets, upon her shoulders  
fell.  
I tried to paint her beauty, but alas, it was in  
vain,  
So charming was this Creole girl on the lakes of  
Ponchartrain.

I asked her if she'd marry me; she said it never  
could be.  
She said she had a lover and he was far at sea.  
She said she had a lover, and true she would remain,  
Until he returned to greet his bride, on the lakes  
of Ponchartrain.

"Adieu, adieu, fair maiden, I never shall see you more.  
I never shall forget your kindness, or the cottage  
by the shore,  
And at each social gathering, a dripping bowl I'll  
drain;  
I'll drink to the health of the Creole girl, on  
the lakes of Ponchartrain."

#### References

Creighton, pp. 299-300; Flanders, Ballard, et al., pp. 147-  
148; Gardner and Chickering, p. 133; JAF, XXXV, pp. 387-  
388; Larkin, pp. 31-33; Laws, p. 225; Pound, American  
Ballads..., pp. 127-128; Rickaby, MS., IX, 4.

B8

#### THE MILWAUKEE FIRE

[Sung by Robert Walker at Crandon, 1941. Recorded by Robert  
F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

Before dawn on January 10, 1883, Milwaukee suffered one  
of its worst disasters. Seventy-one lives were known to  
be lost in the burning of the hotel, The Newhall House.  
Since the hotel register was lost in the fire, no exact  
check of the number missing could be made.

In 1884 the ballad "The Milwaukee Fire; or The Burning of the Newhall House," with words and music by J. W. Kelley, was published by S. Brainard's Sons. Mr. Walker had no knowledge of the published ballad. He learned it in the Wisconsin lumber-camps. His melody is an abbreviated version of the original. Mr. Walker's stanzas 1-5, 7 and 8, with one omission and a few minor changes, comprise the stanzas of the published song, but stanzas 6 and 9-11 have been added in folk fashion by some unknown singer. The added stanzas expand on the incidents of the fire and express public opinion on the findings at the inquest.

The Newhall House, at the corner of Broadway and Michigan, was opened on August 26, 1857. It was a brick structure, six stories high, with 300 rooms. Built at a cost of \$155,000, it was considered the finest and largest hotel in the West. Previous fires had occurred in 1863 and 1880. The substance of the statement made following the inquest was that the Newhall House was set on fire by a person or persons unknown; that, notwithstanding the facts that the Newhall House was easy of egress, devoid of intricate passages, and had outside escape ladders, the owners of the Newhall House, knowing that many fires had taken place at various times in the hotel, were guilty of culpable negligence in not having provided more outside escapes in case of fire.

In 1946 a recording was made of "The Milwaukee Fire" sung by Mrs. Ella Mittelstaedt Fischer, Mayville, who, as a girl of twelve, was an eye-witness to the fire. Even after sixty-three years, her recollection of the horror was so vivid that she could not sing the song without being overcome by emotion.

- - -

'Twas the grey of early morning when the dreadful  
cry of fire,  
Rang out upon that cold and piercing air.  
Just that little word alone, was all it did require,  
For to send dismay and panic ev'rywhere.

The firemen worked like demons as to all was in  
their pow'r,  
To save a life or try to soothe a pain.  
It'd made the strongest heart sick, for within  
less than half an hour,  
All was hushed, and further efforts were in vain.

When the dreadful 'larm was sounded through that  
oft-condemned hotel,  
They rushed in mad confusion ev'ry way.  
The smoke was suffocating, and blinding them as well;  
The fire king could not be held at bay.

From ev'ry window, men and women wildly would beseech  
For help, in tones of anguish and despair.  
What could have been their feelings, when the ladder  
would not reach,  
And death clasped around them ev'rywhere?

Up in the highest window stood a servant girl alone,  
And the crowd beneath all stood with bated breath.  
They turned away their faces with many the stifled  
groan  
When she jumped to meet perhaps as hard a death.

In one window you could see a man, his wife stood  
by his side;  
They tell us that this man was a millionaire.  
To save him from this dreadul fire, they left no  
means untried;  
Gold nor treasure had no value there.

A boy stood in the window, and his mother down below,  
And when she saw the flames approaching wild,  
With upraised hands to pray for him, she knelt down  
in the snow,  
And the stoutest heart could not restrain a tear.

She madly rushed toward the fire, and she wildly  
tore her hair,  
Saying "Take me, O God, but spare my pride, my joy."  
She saw the flames surround him, and then in darkest  
fear,  
Said, "O God, have mercy on my only boy."

They tell us now that this hotel had been on fire  
before,  
And not considered safe for sev'ral years,  
But still the men that owned it let it run on as  
before,  
But they are not to blame, it now appears.

Incend'arism this time, has been the cause, they say,  
But who the fiend is they cannot tell,  
But Milwaukee will not rest neither by night or day,  
Till the matter is investigated well.

But that will be no benefit to those that passed  
away,  
In this, Milwaukee's greatest fun'ral pyre,  
And peace be to their ashes, the best that we can say,  
For the victims of this great and dreadful fire.

#### References

Bleyer; Milwaukee Daily Journal, Jan. 10-Feb. 6, 1883; Milwaukee Sentinel, Jan. 10-Feb. 6, 1883; Laws, pp. 212-213; Pound, American Ballads..., pp. 138-140.

B9

#### REUBEN WRIGHT AND PHOEBE BROWN

[Sung by Hamilton Lobdell at Mukwonago, 1941. Recorded by Robert F. Draves and Helene Stratman-Thomas.]

Mr. Lobdell learned the yarn about Reuben and Phoebe from his older brother, Dwight, who used to perform it at singing-school and spelling-bee socials near Mukwonago. The words of this bit of Americana are contained in Songs A LA PRESTIDIGITATIVE OIL DE HAMLIN, an advertisement for Ham-Iin's Wizard Oil (no date). The text appears in Garrett's compilation as "Love, Murder, and Almost Matrimony."

- - -

Lines in parentheses are spoken.

In Manchester a maiden dwelt; her name was Phoebe  
Brown.

Her cheeks were red,  
(And her hair was black, and she was considered by  
all good judges, to be, by all odds,)  
The best looking gal in town.

Now Reuben was a nice young man, as any in the town,  
And Phoebe loved him dearly,  
(But on account of his bein' obliged to work out  
for a livin', he couldn't make himself very  
agreeable)

To old Mister and Misses Brown.

But Phoebe's heart was brave and strong; she feared  
no parent's frown,  
And as for Reuben Wright so bold,  
(I've heard him say more'n a dozen times, with the  
exception of Phoebe, he didn't give a ---- cent)  
For the whole race of Browns.

So Reuben Wright and Phoebe Brown determined they  
would marry.

Three weeks ago last Tuesday night,  
(They started for old Parson Brown's, in Webster,  
determined to enter the dismal swamp of matrimony,  
although it was tremendously dark)  
And it rained like the Old Harry.

Old Captain Brown was wide awake; he loaded his old  
gun.

He then pursued the lovin' pair,  
(And he overtook 'em when they'd got about half-way  
to the parsonage, when Phoebe and Reuben)  
Started off on the run.

Old Brown, he took a deadly aim right at young  
Reuben's head,  
But oh, it was a burning shame,  
(Stead of that, you see, he saw his only daughter,  
Phoebe,)  
Drop right down, stone dead.

The anguish filled young Reuben's heart, and vengeance  
craved [crazed] his brain.  
He drew a tremendous jack-knife out,  
(Two foot and a half long, and he plunged that  
fifty, sixty times right into old Brown, and  
'twas doubtful whether he'd ever)  
Come to again.

Then Reuben Wright with frenzy tore the hair from  
off his head,  
And when thus scalped the pain was such,  
(That he woke, found himself sitting up in bed, boot-  
jack on his chest, for having been out to a tea-  
party the night before, he so regaled himself with  
buckwheat cakes, all hot,)  
That he had the nightmare on getting into bed.

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Garrett, pp. 106-107.



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