

Dowell

DOC WATSON

HOLCOMB

SBILL

ARTHUR

ANNIE BIRD

MONROE

FRIENDS OF OLD TIME MUSIC

BLUE GRASS BOYS

the
NEW LOST CITY

RAMBLERS

CLARENCE ASHLEY

Hobart

Smith

GAITHER CARLTON

BOYS

SAM &

MISSISSIPPI

ER JOHN HURT

We dedicate this album to the living legacy of Ralph Rinzler, whose passion for the musicians and the music they played helped make these concerts a reality, whose generous spirit welcomed their recording for future generations, and whose foresight nurtured a record company that could give them new life decades later.

DISC ONE

1. DOC AND ARNOLD WATSON
I'M TROUBLED
(ARR. DOC WATSON / HILLGREEN MUSIC, BMI)

2. DOCK BOGGS
THE COUNTRY BLUES
(ARR. DOCK BOGGS / STORMKING MUSIC INC., BMI)

3. FRED MCDOWELL
GOING DOWN TO THE RIVER
(FRED MCDOWELL / TRADITION MUSIC CO., ADMIN BY BUG, BMI)

4. ROSCOE HOLCOMB
EAST VIRGINIA BLUES

5. MAYBELLE CARTER
THE STORMS ARE ON THE OCEAN
(A.P. CARTER / PEER INTERNATIONAL CORP., BMI)

6. THE STANLEY BROTHERS
THE DREAM OF THE MINER'S CHILD
(ROBERT DONNELLY - WILL GEDDES)

7. HOBART SMITH
SOLDIER'S JOY

8. MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT
COFFEE BLUES
(JOHN HURT / WYNWOOD MUSIC CO. INC., BMI)

9. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS
LIVE AND LET LIVE
(WILEY WALKER - GENE SULLIVAN / PEER INTERNATIONAL CORP., BMI)

10. THE WATSON FAMILY
LONELY TOMBS
(ARR. DOC WATSON / SOUTHERN MELODY PUBLISHING, BMI)

11. JESSE FULLER
ROCKIN' BOOGIE
(JESSE FULLER)

12. GAITHER CARLTON AND DOC WATSON
BROWN'S DREAM
(ARR. GAITHER CARLTON - DOC WATSON)

13. DOCK BOGGS
DOWN SOUTH BLUES

14. SAM MCGEE
KNOXVILLE BLUES
(SAM MCGEE / UNCLE FULLER MUSIC, BMI)

15. THE STANLEY BROTHERS
HAVE A FEAST HERE TONIGHT
(CHARLIE MONROE / BERWICK MUSIC CORP., BMI)

16. JOHN DAVIS AND THE GEORGIA SEA ISLAND SINGERS
RILEY
(ARR. JOHN DAVIS / TRO LUDLOW MUSIC INC., BMI)

17. JESSE FULLER
BUCK AND WING
(JESSE FULLER / HILLGREEN MUSIC, BMI)

DISC TWO

- 1. ARTHUR SMITH**
HELL AMONG THE YEARLINGS
- 2. THE GREENBRIAR BOYS**
AMELIA EARHART'S LAST FLIGHT
(DAVID D. MCENERY / STASNY MUSIC CORP., BMI)
- 3. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS**
THE BRAKEMAN'S BLUES
(JIMMIE RODGERS / PEER INTERNATIONAL CORP., BMI)
- 4. MAYBELLE CARTER**
FOGGY MOUNTAIN TOP
(A.P. CARTER / PEER INTERNATIONAL CORP., BMI)
- 5. DOC WATSON**
HICKS' FAREWELL
(ARR. DOC WATSON / HILLGREEN MUSIC, BMI)
- 6. THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS**
JORDAN IS A HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL
(DANIEL EMMETT)
- 7. FRED MCDOWELL**
WRITE ME A FEW OF YOUR LINES
(FRED MCDOWELL / TRADITION MUSIC CO., ADMIN BY BUG, BMI)
- 8. JOSEPH SPENCE**
BIMINI GAL
- 9. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS**
SHADY GROVE
- 10. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS**
GREY EAGLE
- 11. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS**
WALKIN' THE DOG
(TEX GRIMSLEY - CLIFF GRIMSLEY / UNICHAPPELL MUSIC INC., BMI)
- 12. JESSE FULLER**
SAN FRANCISCO BAY BLUES
(JESSE FULLER / TRO-HOLLIS MUSIC INC., BMI)
- 13. DOC AND ARNOLD WATSON**
SHORT LIFE OF TROUBLE
- 14. ROSCOE HOLCOMB**
JOHN HENRY
- 15. STANLEY THOMPSON**
KNEELIN' DOWN INSIDE THE GATE
- 16. MCKINLEY PEBBLES**
TELL ME WHY YOU LIKE ROOSEVELT
(OTIS JACKSON)
- 17. MAYBELLE CARTER**
BURY ME UNDER THE WEEPING WILLOW
(ARR. MAYBELLE CARTER / PEER INTERNATIONAL CORP., BMI)
- 18. THE STANLEY BROTHERS AND THEIR CLINCH MOUNTAIN BOYS**
MANSIONS FOR ME
(BILL MONROE / BILL MONROE MUSIC, BMI)
- 19. BESSIE JONES AND THE GEORGIA SEA ISLAND SINGERS**
BEFORE THIS TIME ANOTHER YEAR

DISC THREE

- 1. MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT**
MY CREOLE BELLE
(ARR. JOHN HURT / WYNWOOD MUSIC CO. INC.)
- 2. JESSE FULLER**
"GUITAR LESSON"
- 3. JESSE FULLER**
CINCINNATI BLUES
(JESSE FULLER / HILLGREEN MUSIC, BMI)
- 4. DOCK BOGGS**
POOR BOY IN JAIL
(ARR. DOCK BOGGS)
- 5. MAYBELLE CARTER**
HE'S SOLID GONE
(A.P. CARTER / PEER INTERNATIONAL CORP., BMI)
- 6. THE CLARENCE ASHLEY GROUP**
MAGGIE WALKER BLUES
- 7. ED YOUNG AND EMMA RAMSAY**
CHEVROLET
(ARR. ED YOUNG - LONNIE YOUNG / HILL & RANGE SONGS, BMI)
- 8. ROSCOE HOLCOMB**
RISING SUN BLUES
- 9. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS**
LORD, BUILD ME A CABIN IN GLORY
- 10. MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT**
FRANKIE AND ALBERT
(ARR. JOHN HURT / WYNWOOD MUSIC CO. INC.)
- 11. THE STANLEY BROTHERS AND THE CLINCH MOUNTAIN BOYS**
HARD TIMES
(RALPH STANLEY / ZAP PUBLISHING CO., BMI)
- 12. HORTON BARKER**
THE MILLER'S WILL
- 13. CLARENCE ASHLEY**
THE COO COO BIRD
- 14. GAITHER CARLTON AND DOC WATSON**
DOUBLE FILE
- 15. ANNIE BIRD**
THE WANDERING BOY
(R.S. HANNA)
- 16. JESSE FULLER**
STRANGER BLUES
- 17. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS**
I SAW THE LIGHT
(HANK WILLIAMS / ACUFF-ROSE MUSIC CORP., BMI)
- 18. MAYBELLE CARTER**
SUGAR HILL
- 19. THE CLARENCE ASHLEY GROUP**
AMAZING GRACE

FRIENDS OF OLD TIME MUSIC PETER SIEGEL

From 1961 through 1965, the Friends of Old Time Music (F.O.T.M.) brought fourteen concerts of traditional folk music, old time country music, bluegrass, blues, and religious music to New York City audiences. The concerts represented the first New York appearances—often the first performances before urban “folk” audiences—by many of the most influential traditional musicians of the 20th century including Clarence Ashley, Doc Watson, Mississippi John Hurt, Maybelle Carter, Fred McDowell, Roscoe Holcomb, and Dock Boggs.

The three founding directors of the Friends of Old Time Music were Ralph Rinzler, John Cohen, and Israel Young. With substantial contributions from other folk music advocates, musicians, and folklorists—including Mike Seeger, Alan Lomax, Jean Ritchie, and Sam Charters—F.O.T.M. played a major role in developing a new paradigm for the presentation of traditional music in concert.

Ralph Rinzler (1935–1994) had studied European classical music as a boy and young man. While a student at Swarthmore College, he met Pete Seeger and other folk singers who inspired in him a passionate interest in traditional folk music. Rinzler worked throughout his adult life to bring traditional music and culture to broad urban audiences. He was a natural strategic thinker, and by all accounts a stunningly persuasive advocate. First as a director of F.O.T.M., then as the manager of Doc Watson and Bill Monroe, later as a director of the Newport Folk Foundation, and finally as an assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Rinzler marshaled tremendous personal, public, and private resources to realize his goals for traditional music.

PHOTO: JOHN COHEN





PHOTO: UNKNOWN

When F.O.T.M. was formed, Ralph Rinzler was playing music as a member of the New York City-based bluegrass group the Greenbriar Boys. John Cohen was performing traditional country music as a member of the New Lost City Ramblers.

Cohen, born in 1932 and raised in eastern Long Island, was living in a Third Avenue loft in the midst of several quite different aspects of New York's art scene. He had studied painting with Josef Albers at Yale, and had photographed Beat writer Jack Kerouac, poets Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso, and painters Franz Kline and Red Grooms. In 1959, Cohen visited eastern Kentucky to record and photograph traditional musicians. The trip produced the seminal Folkways album *Mountain Music of Kentucky*, which introduced the music of Roscoe Holcomb, among many others. A return trip in 1962 yielded Cohen's first film, *The High Lonesome Sound*.

Israel Young, born in 1928 to immigrant Jewish parents on New York's Lower East Side, owned the Folklore Center at 110 MacDougal Street. In addition to selling books, magazines, records, and musical instruments, "Izzy" Young produced folk music concerts in his store and in rented halls. The artists he presented included the New Lost City Ramblers, Reverend Gary Davis, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Peggy Seeger, Dave Van Ronk, and Bob Dylan.

When Rinzler, Cohen, and Young decided to call their new organization the Friends of Old Time Music, they were referring to language that had been



PHOTO: ALAN LOWMY

used by the commercial recording industry almost four decades earlier.

RECORDING COMMUNITY-BASED MUSIC IN THE 1920S, '30S, AND '40S

By the 1920s, the fledgling American record companies were aware that the United States was a nation of immigrants, diverse ethnic groups living in their own communities, defining their own musical traditions. One of the industry's marketing strategies was to record music by musicians representing a particular group and sell the records back to that group in its own communities. Labels such as Victor, Columbia, Brunswick, Gennett, and Okeh created special ranges of catalog numbers for records by Irish, Italian, Jewish, Greek, German, and Chinese musicians.

During the early 1920s, the record companies began sending recording crews to the American South to record traditional music by Black and White musicians. Records by African-American blues singers and songsters were typically marketed as "race records." Those by White fiddlers, banjo players, and family singing groups were sold as "old familiar tunes" or simply "old time music."

The record companies did an extraordinary job of documenting rural Southern music throughout the 1920s until their recording activities were sharply curtailed by the Great Depression. Among those who recorded during the heyday of the '20s were Clarence Ashley, Uncle Dave Macon, Mississippi John Hurt, the Carter Family, Furry Lewis, and Dock Boggs.

The Depression was not kind to the rural recording artists of the 1920s. As record sales declined, many musicians returned to farm work, coal mining, and factory work. Outside their immediate communities, little was known or thought about them. When country music recording resumed in earnest after World War II, the music was more modern and more homogenized. The quirkier regional musicianship of the rural 1920s seemed a thing of the past.

Elements of the old styles persisted, however, in the bluegrass recordings of Bill Monroe, the Stanley Brothers, and Flatt and Scruggs. And during the 1930s and '40s the Library of Congress's Archive of Folk Song was recording such distinguished traditional musicians as Woody Guthrie, Horton Barker, and Son House. During



Gennett Records Catalog, 1928

the 1940s, Moses Asch's Disc and Asch labels produced a number of important recordings by Lead Belly, Hobart Smith, Texas Gladden, and other traditional artists.

THE TRADITIONAL MUSIC "REVIVAL" OF THE 1950S AND '60S

By the early 1950s, a new interest in rural traditional music was developing among city people. Pete Seeger had learned the 5-string banjo from the playing of many of the artists who had recorded for the commercial record companies and the Library of Congress. Seeger had employed traditional banjo styles in his work with The Almanac Singers and later The Weavers.

In 1947, with guidance from Alan Lomax, Brunswick Records had released two 78 rpm albums, *Mountain Frol-ic* and *Listen to Our Story*, that reissued songs by Uncle Dave Macon, Furry Lewis, Dock Boggs, and other traditional musicians for the new "folk" audience. During the 1950s, city-bred musicians such as Tom Paley, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, and Billy Faier mastered a number of traditional styles. Jean Ritchie, a Kentucky-born ballad singer living in New York, became a regular at concerts and radio shows featuring folk music.

In 1952, Folkways Records released Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music*, a 6-LP set that reissued 84 records of traditional music recorded by the commercial labels in the 1920s and '30s. The set included songs by Clarence Ashley, the Carter Family, Mississippi John Hurt, Furry Lewis, Cannon's Jug Stompers, and Dock Boggs. The *Anthology* became the most influential document of the traditional music revival. It introduced thousands of young musicians to a previously unknown world of music and culture, and offered whole new ways of thinking about songwriting, singing, playing, and performing.

During the late 1950s and early '60s, a whole new generation of young people began playing traditional music in cities and college campuses across the country. This new generation was keenly concerned with "authentic" performance style. The New Lost City Ramblers duplicated the styles of many of the singers on the *Anthology*. The Greenbriar Boys performed in the bluegrass style pioneered by Bill Monroe. And hundreds of young musicians were learning the vocal and instrumental nuances of Mississippi John Hurt, Dock Boggs, and the dozens of other musicians on the *Anthology*.

But very little was known about these older musicians. They had recorded in the 1920s and '30s and now appeared only as disembodied voices emanating from the grooves of six Folkways LPs. Among the urban interpreters, the vacuum of information about the old-timers was filled by all kinds of legends and tall tales. But before long, such tales would give way to a previously unimagined reality: Several of the old time musicians on the *Anthology*, long presumed to be dead, would perform live concerts in New York City.

BIRTH OF A NEW ORGANIZATION

On December 23, 1960, Israel Young's Folklore Center presented a concert by the New Lost City Ramblers and Elizabeth Cotten at 13 Astor Place. "Libba" Cotten was a North Carolina-born guitarist, then living in Washington, D.C., who had developed her own distinctive picking style and had written the song "Freight Train." John Cohen was at the concert as a member of the New Lost City Ramblers, and Ralph Rinzler was in the audience. The concert turned out to be a key event in the development of the Friends of Old Time Music. John Cohen recalls:

A week later, Ralph came over to my house, and he was responding to the concert: how nice it was to have Libba,

Folklore Center presents
The
**NEW
LOST
CITY
RAMBLERS**
Mike Seeger, Tom Paley, John Cohen
&
FOLKWAYS
RECORDING
ARTISTS
**ELIZABETH
COTTEN**
Traditional Guitar Picker
FRI. DEC. 23 (8TH ST. & B'WAY) 13 ASTOR PLACE
TICKETS \$2.00 & \$2.25 AT FOLKLORE CENTER
110 MACDOUGAL STREET TEL. GR 7-5987

how nice it was to bring in traditional artists from somewhere else, to have us introducing them. He said that was great. And based on that, we then cooked up the idea... and partly he was proposing that we have an organization to do more things like that.

I don't know if the idea of just doing strict traditional concerts was there yet. I think that was the desire—to bring traditional artists to the city so people could hear them. But where were we going to get an audience?!

1 John Cohen, interviewed by author, February 18, 2005.

The answer to that question, and indeed the crystallization of Ralph Rinzler's vision, came in discussions between Cohen and Rinzler in the days that followed. A framework for the Friends of Old Time Music was created quite quickly, and the first concert was presented in February 1961.

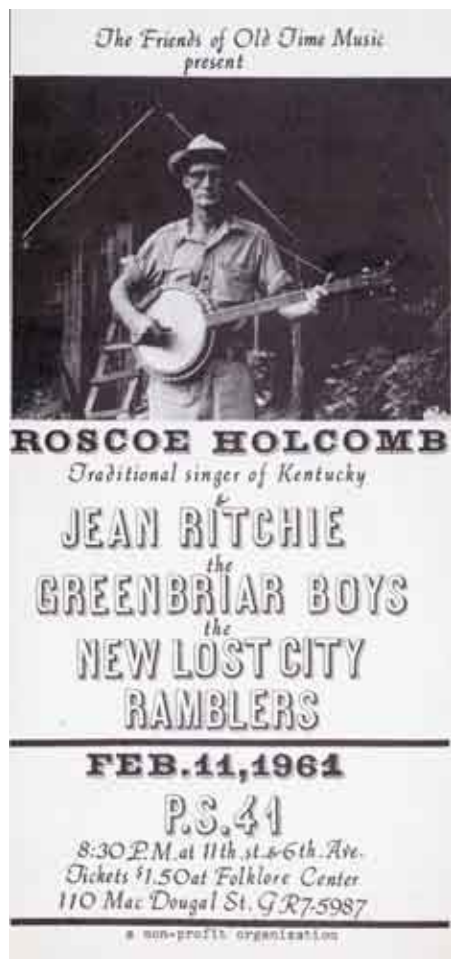
John Cohen and Ralph Rinzler were both traveling frequently with their respective performing groups. Recognizing that the new organization would need a reliable physical presence in New York, they called Israel Young, whose Folklore Center became F.O.T.M.'s hub for flyer distribution, mailings, and ticket sales. In anticipation of non-profit status, a governing board was formed, consisting of Rinzler, Cohen, Young, Jean Ritchie, and folk dance advocate Margot Mayo.²

The Friends of Old Time Music was an all-volunteer organization whose board, directors, and concert production workers received no pay. Income from ticket

money and occasional donations was reserved to pay the performers and the expenses of putting on concerts.

THE EARLY CONCERTS: 1961-1963

The new organization planned a concert for February 11, 1961. The featured artist would be Roscoe Holcomb, a particularly intense Kentucky singer whom John Cohen had met on his 1959 trip. In order to assure an audience, the concert would also include three acts already popular among New York City folk audiences: the New Lost City Ramblers, the Greenbriar Boys, and Jean Ritchie. These performers would donate their services so all the available money could go to Roscoe Holcomb. The event



2 The organization was eventually incorporated as The Society for Traditional Music. Friends of Old Time Music" was essentially a trade name.

would be held in the auditorium of P.S. 41 in Greenwich Village.

During January and early February, John Cohen created the first of the F.O.T.M. flyers, and Izzy Young successfully drummed up an audience, distributing flyers and talking up the concert in his store. The concert began with a short set by the New Lost City Ramblers. Then, using language that captured the new organization's views of itself, its audience, and its performers, John Cohen introduced the evening's featured singer:

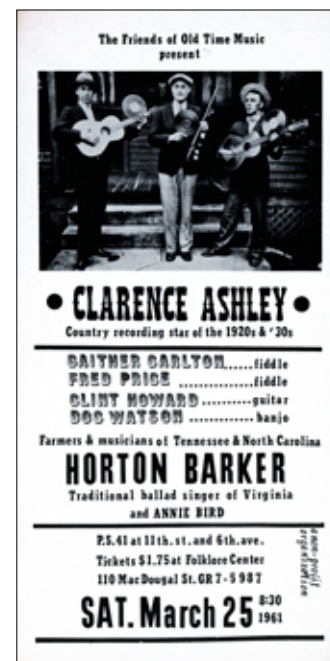
Well, thank you very much. And now it's my great privilege—and I guess all of our great privilege—to meet Roscoe Holcomb, who... He's a construction worker, he lives down in Kentucky near Hazard, in a little town called Daisy. I met him several years ago when I was down there collecting songs and trying to find out what the music was about, see where it came from. And now I guess we're giving you and ourselves a chance to hear what it really sounds like. So here's my friend, Roscoe Holcomb.

Roscoe could not have been more perfectly cast for the role of introducing the new organization. He stepped forward to the mike and delivered a powerful, banjo-driven rendition of "East Virginia Blues." The audience loved it. The Friends of Old Time Music had begun.

Nearly a year earlier, Ralph Rinzler had made a startling discovery that led directly to the second F.O.T.M. concert, which was held in March 1961. On Easter weekend of 1960, Ralph had attended the Old Time Fiddlers' Convention at Union Grove, North Carolina, as a member of the Greenbriar Boys. The story of Ralph Rinzler's encounter with Clarence "Tom" Ashley that weekend has been widely recounted. Here is another perspective, given by John Herald, the Greenbriars' lead singer and guitarist, shortly before he died in 2005. The story begins in New York, well before the fateful Easter weekend meeting, and illustrates Rinzler's role as a teacher of his peer musicians:

Ralph came down to help me paint my apartment, and he brought down all these old-timey tapes. It was my introduction to old time music. One of the people he played me was Clarence Ashley. We wanted to study the real McCoy, and we went to a place called Union Grove, which was one of the oldest and the biggest fiddlers' contests in the South.

What they would do at Union Grove is they would assign each act to a classroom at the Union Grove High School to warm up. When we had warmed up, I said to Ralph and Bob,³ "I'm going to go see some of the other players."



3 Bob Yellin, the Greenbriar Boys' banjo player.

We were at one end of a long hallway, and I went from classroom to classroom until I finally got to the other end of the school. And I walked into this room, and there was a crowd of people watching this banjo player sitting in a chair. And I asked them who it was, and they said, "It's Clarence Ashley."

Now I remembered—from Ralph helping me paint my apartment—he had told me about Clarence Ashley. I went back to Ralph and I said, "Was Clarence Ashley one of the guys that you played for me?" and he said, "Yes." And I said, "Well I think he's down at the other end of the school." Ralph's jaw dropped, and he said, "Really?" and he went just tearing down to the end of the Union Grove school, and made a date with him immediately.

I guess he had carte blanche with Folkways Records to record whatever he might have wanted to, and he came back later to record Clarence, and that's how Doc Watson was discovered in Clarence Ashley's band. Ralph came back from that recording session, and said, "John, I found a guitar player who's going to set the world on fire, who the world is not going to believe."⁴

4 John Herald,
interviewed
by author,
March 4, 2005.

FOLK GROUP GIVES 'VILLAGE' CONCERT

Quintet From the Blue Ridge Offers Program of Ballads, Spirituals and Hoedowns

Five farmers from the Blue Ridge Mountains brought a ripe harvest of traditional music to the city Saturday night.

The quintet from the Tennessee and North Carolina hills, led by Clarence (Tom) Ashley, was heard at Public School 41 in Greenwich Village. The concert continues the wholesome trend of putting the folk back in folk music that was reflected in the February festival at the University of Chicago.

This program was sponsored by the Friends of Old Time Music, a sort of Anglicized, folk-oriented Pro Music Antiqua. The nonprofit group is dedicated to the proposition that traditional music and its rural makers deserve an urban hearing. The concert augurs well for the whole idea of cultivated-change between the city and the country.

Down-To-Earth Group

Mr. Ashley's group offered a wide range of ballads, hoedowns, white blues and spirituals and instrumental breakdowns. Unlike the slick, technically flashy Bluegrass bands that roam the South today, Mr. Ashley's group is as down-to-earth as the open collars and galluses they wore. Their work has the well-worn quality of fine antiques, a rut and a scratch here and there only heightening the character of a family heirloom.

The leader of the group is an easy-voiced singer with a weaving, word-swallowing style, a low-pressure banjo delivery and a whimsical stage manner. Appearing with him were Arthel (Doc) Watson, a pleasant singer and sure-fingered guitarist who, as accompanist, was the workhorse of the evening; Gaither Wiley Carlton, banjoist and fiddler; William Clint Howard, guitarist-singer, and Fred Price, fiddler.

High Points Noted

A few of the evening's best moments merit mention. "The Coo-Coo Bird" was a lulling modal song in which Mr. Ashley's banjo and Mr. Watson's guitar whispered a sensitive colloquy that was almost reminiscent of fine chamber music. "Sally Ann" was a dance romp played with foot-tapping vigor, and "Amazing Grace" was an old hymn reverently voiced by the group in organlike harmonies against Mr. Carlton's plaintive fiddling.

Also appearing was Anne Bird, a promising, pungent-voiced singer and Autoharp player in the Carter Family tradition. Horton Barker, the ballad singer, was prevented from traveling from Virginia by illness. Ralph Rinzler was the master of ceremonies when Mr. Ashley's bobbing, good-natured informality did not take over.

The Friends of Old Time Music represents a refreshing interest in real folk music, without any personal or commercial axes to grind. The group deserves all the support and recognition it can muster. And it deserves to have its guests heard in some midtown auditorium with more than the 450-seat capacity and the soggy acoustics the school auditorium provides.

ROBERT SHELTON.

On March 25 1961, F.O.T.M. presented Clarence Ashley and his group, which included Arthel "Doc" Watson, as well as fiddler Fred Price, guitarist Clint Howard, and Doc Watson's father-in-law, fiddler Gaither Carlton. For this concert, the Ashley group was joined by Annie Bird, a Virginia singer then living in New York. Ballad singer Horton Barker was advertised but could not appear for health reasons. The concert was a huge hit with its audience, and garnered an enthusiastic review by Robert Shelton in the *New York Times*.

F.O.T.M. introduced traditional bluegrass to its concert schedule with a show by the Stanley Brothers on June 9, 1961. The Stanleys were an appropriate choice for this role as they hewed more closely to the old time music style than did the other "big name" bluegrass bands performing at the time.

The Stanley Brothers concert was the first of eight F.O.T.M. events held at halls belonging to New York University. These halls were obtained at no cost through an arrangement with a newly formed folk music club at NYU. This club was founded by Richard Rinzler, Ralph's younger cousin and a student at NYU. NYU's folk music club appears to have had only one function: to obtain halls at the university for Friends of Old Time Music concerts.

After presenting three concerts in rapid-fire order, FOTM paused for the balance of 1961 and most of 1962. During that time,

Ralph Rinzler became manager and booking agent for the Clarence Ashley Group. While the Ashley Group was performing at the Ash Grove in Los Angeles in April 1962, Clarence became ill with laryngitis and could not perform. Doc Watson became the group's temporary leader as well as the onstage focus of its performances.

Ralph Rinzler, who was already keenly aware of Doc's strengths as a musician, now saw his potential as a group leader. Rinzler began making arrangements for FOTM's fourth concert, which would feature Doc as leader of his own family group, along with his older brother Arnold and father-in-law Gaither Carlton. Arnold Watson was a superb harmonica player with a voice well suited to providing harmonies for Doc's lead vocals. He was also an excellent banjo player. Gaither was a fiddler who played

The Friends of Old Time Music
And the NYU Folk Music Society
present

FRI. JUNE 9 8:30

LOEB STUDENT CENTER
566 W. 4th St. on Washington Square
Tickets \$1.75 at Folklore Center
110 MacDougal St. GR 7-5987

Traditional & Bluegrass
music
ON STAGE • IN PERSON



THE STANLEY BROTHERS

CARTER and RALPH

And Their **CLINCH MOUNTAIN BOYS**

New York
Times, March
27, 1961

in a much older style than—for example—Fred Price, the primary fiddler of the Ashley Group. Together, Doc, Arnold, and Gaither made an old time sound that was both rich and idiosyncratic.

The F.O.T.M. concert of October 12, 1962, paired the Watson Family with Jesse Fuller, an African-American songster and one-man-band then living in the San Francisco Bay area. Fuller, born in Georgia in 1896, performed blues, folk songs, and his own compositions, most of which were based on ragtime-style chord progressions. He was the author of "San Francisco Bay Blues," which was being performed in coffeehouses by Ramblin' Jack Elliott, and of "You're No Good," which Bob Dylan had included in his first Columbia album.

As a one-man-band, Jesse "Lone Cat" Fuller accompanied his singing with a 12-string guitar, a harmonica, a kazoo, a high-hat cymbal, and a pedal-struck bass contraption that he called a "fotdella." During his Friends of Old Time Music performance he also performed a spirited buck dance, accompanying himself on guitar. Fuller's old time blues and songs provided a perfect foil for the Watson family's archaic-sounding hill melodies.

November 30, 1962, saw a return appearance by the Stanley Brothers, accompanied by Vernon Derrick on fiddle and Curley Lambert on mandolin. F.O.T.M. continued its exploration of traditional bluegrass on February 8, 1963, with a full concert by Bill Monroe, known as "the father of bluegrass." Monroe was joined by an extraordinary band that included Jack Cooke on lead vocals and guitar, Del McCoury on banjo, and Kenny Baker on fiddle. Jean Ritchie acted as onstage presenter.


The FOTM directors were their own source of expertise in the areas of old time music and bluegrass. But to organize a concert of Memphis blues, they reached out to Sam Charters. Charters, author of the widely read 1959 book *The Country Blues*, had made numerous recording trips to the South, during which he had rediscovered great blues stars of the past and met impressive younger artists. On June 7, 1963, Charters hosted an FOTM concert featuring Gus Cannon, Furry Lewis, and Memphis Willie "B."

Gus Cannon was a singer and banjo player born in Mississippi in 1885. His jug band *Cannon's Jug Stompers* had been recorded by Victor Records in the 1920s. Just a few months before the FOTM concert, Cannon's composition "Walk Right In" had topped the Billboard charts in a new arrangement by the Rooftop Singers. Walter "Furry" Lewis had been recorded by Vocalion and Victor in the '20s, and by Sam Charters for Folkways in 1959. Cannon and Lewis had both been heard on Harry Smith's *Anthology*. Memphis Willie "B." was a younger blues singer whom Sam Charters had recorded for Prestige Records in 1961.

FOTM again worked with an outside expert to present a concert by Hobart Smith and Almeda Riddle on September 6, 1963. The organizer and onstage presenter of this concert was the preeminent American folklorist Alan Lomax.



THE FRIENDS OF OLD TIME MUSIC
PRESENT



DOC WATSON
GAITHER CARLTON
ARNOLD WATSON
Farmers & musicians of North Carolina

JESSE FULLER
San Francisco Bay blues singer

NYU School of Education 35 W. 4th st.
Tickets \$1.75 at Folklore Center
110 MacDougal St. GR7-5987

FRI. OCT. 12 8:30
1962

Since 1961, the Friends of Old Time Music have presented the only programs of traditional folk music in NYC. They have introduced Roscoe Holcomb, Tom Ashley & Band, Doc Watson, The Stanley Bros., Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys, Gus Cannon, Memphis Willie B. and Furry Lewis.

The Friends of Old Time Music present

Almeda Riddle
From Arkansas
The understanding of her style of ballad singing is a prerequisite to the singing of bluegrass music.

• & •

Hobart Smith
From Virginia
One of the most vigorous instrumentalists in the mountains.
Banjo, guitar, fiddle & piano.

Tickets \$1.75 at Folklore Center
110 MacDougal St. GR 7-5987

Sept. 6
- 35 W 4th STREET
NYU SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Hobart Smith was an accomplished instrumentalist and singer from Saltville, Virginia. Smith's distinctive banjo, guitar, and fiddle styles had first been recorded by Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress in 1942. An album of 78 rpm records by Smith and his sister Texas Gladden had been released by Moses Asch's *Disc* label in 1948. And Lomax had again recorded Smith as part of a major collecting trip to the South in 1959.

Lomax's 1959 trip had also yielded several important new discoveries including Almeda Riddle, an extraordinary ballad singer from the Ozark Mountains. Riddle's subtle vocal techniques and lovingly collected repertoire eventually made her a favorite at folk festivals around the country.

A concert by Dock

Boggs and Mississippi John Hurt, held on December 13, 1963, illustrates the changing roles and relationships of FOTM's directors. Earlier in 1963, Ralph Rinzler had been hired by the Newport Folk Foundation as Director of Field Research Programs. While the December concert marked the first New York appearances for Boggs and Hurt, both had appeared at the Newport Folk Festival several months earlier.

The Friends of Old Time Music would present only one concert in 1964, a program of New York City ethnic traditions substantially unrelated to FOTM's core Southern music programs. In 1965, the final four FOTM concerts would be produced in collaboration with the Newport Folk Foundation.

The concert by Dock Boggs and John Hurt was an extraordinary event. Mike Seeger, who had recently rediscovered Dock Boggs in Norton Virginia, hosted the show and accompanied Dock gracefully on guitar. The evening

highlighted some striking parallels and contrasts in the careers of Boggs and Hurt.

Each had visited New York once before, Boggs to record for Brunswick in 1927, Hurt to record for Okeh in 1928. Each was back in New York for the first time in over three decades. Hurt was a Black musician influenced by White country artists such as Jimmie Rodgers. Boggs was a White musician influenced by blues artists. At the F.O.T.M. concert, Dock mentioned Sara Martin as the source of his "Mistreated Mama Blues."

Decades earlier, both men had been contacted by W. E. Myer, a Richlands, Virginia, businessman and songwriter who sent song poems to each. Myer eventually signed Dock Boggs to his *Lonesome Ace* label, for which Boggs set to music and recorded several of Myer's poems. His modal-sounding recording of Myer's "Old Rub Alcohol Blues" includes the stanzas

*Have never worked for pleasure
Peace on earth I cannot find
The only thing I surely own
Is a worried and troubled mind...*

*When my worldly trials are over
And my last goodbye I've said
Bury me near my darling's doorstep
where the roses bloom and fade*

At the F.O.T.M. concert, John Hurt performed Myer's lyrics for "Let the Mermaids Flirt with Me," which he had set to the melody of the Jimmie Rodgers song "Waiting for a Train:"

*I do not work for pleasure
Earthly peace I cannot find
The only thing I can call my own
Is a troubled and worried mind*

*When my earthly race is over
Cast my body out in the sea
Save all the undertaker's bills
Let the mermaids flirt with me*

Dock Boggs and John Hurt collaborated on one piece for their New York audience: the evening's final tune, "Banjo Clog," featured banjo by Boggs and clog dancing by Hurt. The two then parted ways and pursued their new recording and performing careers.

LATER CONCERTS: 1964-1965

F.O.T.M.'s only 1964 concert presented music of New York's diverse communities and drew on the knowledge and connections of several of the organization's friends and volunteers. For the first time Israel Young was the onstage presenter. Izzy's thick New York accent and nasal voice made him a natural for the job. Ralph Rinzler was not present.

Some of the performances were excellent, but the concert lacked the consistent quality of previous F.O.T.M. concerts, all of which had been organized by people with in-depth knowledge of their respective fields of music.

DEC. 13 FRI. 8:30
The Friends of Old Time Music

tickets \$2.00 Folklore Center 110 MacDougal st GR7-5987

present NYU School of Medicine Alumni Hall, 1st ave & 32 st

DOCK BOGGS

MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT



Perhaps the musical highlights of the evening were a powerful group of Galician Bagpipers and the extraordinary gospel singer McKinley Peebles. The Galician pipers, representatives of a centuries-old Spanish tradition, had been referred to F.O.T.M. by the quintessential recordist of New York sounds, Tony Schwartz. McKinley Peebles, a friend and singing partner of Reverend Gary Davis, was presented as a New York street singer.

Norman Studer, principal of the progressive Downtown Community School, presented a group of his students demon-

strating children's rhymes and games. An F.O.T.M. volunteer named Walter Gundy introduced an a cappella pop group he had met while on his Parks Department job in Brooklyn. And Israel Young presented his mother Pola Young performing Yiddish songs as sung by early 20th-century immigrants to the Lower East Side. A Salvation Army band booked for the concert did not show up.

From February to May of 1965, F.O.T.M. returned full force with its final four concerts, all billed as co-productions with the Newport Folk Foundation. These concerts closely resembled—both in planning and presentation—the F.O.T.M. concerts of 1961-1963. It seems likely that Ralph Rinzler was playing his familiar role again, this time from his position with the Newport Folk Foundation. Each show was presented at The New School in New York, and traveled to Boston and Philadelphia as well.

The first of the 1965 concerts, held in New York on February 12, paired Maybelle Carter with the Tennessee trio Sam and Kirk McGee and Arthur Smith. Mike Seeger organized and hosted the concert.

Maybelle Carter had been the guitarist of the original Carter Family throughout their recording career. Brothers Sam and Kirk McGee had known Fiddlin' Arthur Smith since the late 1920s. The three had played together for years as the Dixieliners and had, in various combinations, accompanied Uncle Dave Macon at shows and recording sessions.

Maybelle Carter was arguably the most influential guitarist in the history of country music. Arthur Smith was a seminal country fiddler, and Sam McGee played a major role in adapting the blues to country guitar. By



1965, these three musicians had profoundly influenced country musicianship. The F.O.T.M. concert afforded them an opportunity to affect an entirely new group of up-and-coming old time musicians.

On March 26, Music of the Mountaineer included a second appearance by Roscoe Holcomb as well as the New York debut of the Galax String Band. Dillard Chandler, a North Carolina ballad singer, was scheduled to appear but was unable to travel to New York. He was replaced on the program by Horton Barker, who himself had been unable to appear at the F.O.T.M. concert of March 25, 1961.

Roscoe Holcomb, who by this time had considerable performing experience, was more polished than he had been at his 1961 appearance, but no less commanding. Horton Barker, a blind ballad singer born in Tennessee in 1889, entranced the audience with centuries-old songs. Galax String Band stalwarts Kyle Creed and Fred Cockerham were joined for this appearance by fiddler Ernest East. Presenter Ralph Rinzler played an active teaching role, explaining musical styles to the audience and frequently asking



different musicians to perform the same song for the sake of comparison.

For its last two concerts, F.O.T.M. again turned to Alan Lomax and Sam Charters, who had made extensive field recordings in the Georgia Sea Islands and The Bahamas, respectively.

On April 9, Alan Lomax presented Bessie Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers, Mississippi bluesman Fred McDowell, and Mississippi cane fife player Ed Young. Lomax had recorded all these musicians and was well aware of the differences and similarities among the venerable traditions they represented. He encouraged the Sea Island Singers, McDowell, and Young to perform separately as well as in various combinations. The results were persistently powerful and complex. The New York Times called the concert “a vibrant excursion into transplanted authentic folk song.”⁵

The Friends of Old Time Music presented its last concert on May 14, 1965. The evening featured Joseph Spence, the legendary Bahamian guitarist first recorded by Sam Charters in 1958, in his first appearance before a concert audience. Spence was joined by his sister Edith Pinder, an accomplished singer in the traditional Bahamian “rhyming” style. Also appearing were rhymers Stanley Thompson and Clifford Ellis and an accompanying singer, Ethel McPhee.

⁵ Robert Shelton, *New York Times*, April, 10, 1965.

The Friends of Old Time Music & Newport Folk Foundation present

Bessie Jones
& GEORGIA SEA ISLAND SINGERS

Hand icon

Fred McDowell
MISSISSIPPI DELTA BLUES

APRIL 9
NEW SCHOOL - 66 West 12th Street
Tickets \$2.00: Folklore Center - 321 Sixth Avenue
YU 9-1992

Sam Charters presented the concert. The groundwork had been laid by Pete Seeger, who had located the musicians while on a trip to Nassau. The concert inspired an F.O.T.M. volunteer and an audience member to make a recording trip to The Bahamas a few weeks later. The trip yielded four new albums of traditional Bahamian music.⁶

Several of the key participants in the Friends of Old Time Music—notably Ralph Rinzler, John Cohen, and Mike Seeger—were also instrumental in the simultaneous development of the University of Chicago Folk Festival and

The Newport Folk Foundation. Through their work with FOTM, Chicago, and Newport, they experimented with different methods for the presentation of traditional music to public audiences. One was the use of a presenter to inform the audience about the music being performed, and often to consult with the musicians in selecting and sequencing repertoire. Another was the presentation of workshops where the musicians could share techniques of playing and performing with audience members. Onstage presentations and accompanying program notes were aimed at increasing audiences' appreciation of traditions, cultural contexts, and performance styles. Ralph Rinzler brought all these elements to the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which has in turn provided a blueprint for concerts and festivals throughout the country.

The Friends of Old Time Music concerts, along with related programming efforts such as those of the Chicago and Newport folk festivals, left an indelible imprint on the folk music revival. Bob Dylan, John Sebastian, Maria Muldaur, David Grisman, and many other accomplished performers have reported that they were powerfully impressed by musicians brought to New York by FOTM.

With the release of the Smithsonian Folkways album *Friends of Old Time Music*, new generations of listeners will be able to hear a unique group of concerts performed in the 1960s by highly influential folk musicians born in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Almost all of the recordings in this album are being released for the first time in 2006.

PETER K. SIEGEL Brooklyn, N.Y., February 2006

The Friends of Old Time Music & Newport Folk Foundation present

MUSIC OF THE
BAHAMAS

Portrait of Joseph Spence

Joseph Spence
GUITAR INVENTIONS

Frederick McQueen
& Bahama Singers

RHYMING TUNES, ANTHEMS & SONGS

Sun. **MAY 16** 8:30
NEW SCHOOL - 66 West 12th Street
Tickets \$2.00: Folklore Center - 321 Sixth Avenue
YU 9-1992

⁶ The Real Bahamas, Volumes I and II, Nonesuch Explorer Series 79725-2 and 79733-2; Joseph Spence and the Pinder Family: *The Spring of '65*, Rounder Records CD 2114; *Kneelin' Down Inside the Gate: The Great Rhyming Singers of the Bahamas*, Rounder Records CD 5035 (all recorded by Peter K. Siegel and Jody Stecher).

FRIENDS OF OLD TIME MUSIC

JOHN COHEN

2006

The formation of the Friends of Old Time Music was the braiding together of separate threads that were working their way through the folk revival in the early 1960s. We (Ralph Rinzler, Izzy Young, Mike Seeger, Jean Ritchie, and I) were all occupied with our own beliefs and our own projects at that time. Mike Seeger remembers that there was a lot of energy about this music being passed between Ralph, him, and me (he called it a cabal). It was rare that we ever sat down and articulated the philosophy we shared. Probably we didn't know we had a philosophy:

Instead, we had a music that we enjoyed playing, and we had commercial 78 recordings of earlier musicians from the 1920s and 1930s that inspired us. There were field recordings from the Library of Congress as well. We knew some folklore scholarship from books, as well as from popularized collections. We knew the predecessors who had established organizations to broadcast their ideas (such as Margot Mayo's American Square Dance Group and *Sing Out!* Magazine), as well as a network of friends, fellow musicians, and collectors who shared our ideas. And we had a common "foe" in the

commercialization of folk music by the music industry.

Two years earlier, the New Lost City Ramblers (Mike Seeger, Tom Paley, and I) had formed, with a focus on performing old time music, and shortly after, the Greenbriar Boys (Ralph Rinzler, John Herald, and Bob Yellin) came together with their attention on bluegrass. There were little fanzines, mimeographed productions (*Caravan*, *Gardeyloo*) that wrote about what was going on in New York City scene. The NLCR were finding out that there was a receptive audience for traditional music, especially at colleges and coffee houses. The NLCR's Midwest tour in 1960 helped set the stage for the 1961 University of Chicago Folklife Festival.

In December 1960, the NLCR did a concert at 13 Astor Place in New York City and presented Elizabeth Cotten as our special guest. (We had done a concert with her earlier that year in Washington, D.C.). The response was most enthusiastic, and a few days later, Ralph came to my loft to talk about forming an organization to present concerts of traditional (old time) musicians. This idea was unprecedented, but we sensed that such an organization was needed. We were thrilled by the prospect of exposing a New York City audience to a full evening with a traditional musician. Ralph, Mike, and I had been making recordings of authentic rural musicians, so we knew the richness and rewards that were there. But F.O.T.M. had the possibility of conveying the person who made the music, not just the sound.

Further, although there were coffee houses and small concerts around New York City (i.e., the Folksingers Guild, and the Folklore Center concerts), they were presenting urban performers who were interpreting and inventing folk music. (Bob Dylan arrived in New York just two weeks before the first F.O.T.M. concert.)

Ralph and I looked for name for our proposed organization, one that would avoid the pitfalls of the word "folk," for we needed to establish our own distinct identity as something apart from the folk revival. We talked about a reputable group involved in classical music called the Friends of Music. We thought of ourselves with a similar mission, so we added "Old Time" to that title, and Ralph went to check out getting us established as a non-profit organization so we could put on our concerts. The Friends of Music wouldn't allow us to use that name, so we became officially registered as "The Society for Traditional Music." F.O.T.M. was our "trademark."

Since Ralph and I were traveling a lot at that time, we asked Izzy Young to become the third partner in F.O.T.M. (He had been in Margot Mayo's American Square Dance Group and was a firm believer in authentic folk music. I think he gauged all developments by their proximity or distance from the goals of the ASDG.). Izzy's Folklore Center on MacDougal Street gave us a specific address, a place to sell tickets and publicize the concerts. Izzy also became the treasurer, with the caveat that all checks had to have a second signature from Ralph or me. We asked Jean Ritchie and Margot Mayo to be on our "board of directors," and we conceived

of our first concert to present Roscoe Holcomb, a great and unknown singer from Daisy, Kentucky (I had recorded him in 1959).

Then we tackled the question of how we were going to get people to come out to hear an unknown singer. The solution was to draw upon our joint “reputations” to create an audience. That is why our first concert had a supporting cast of Jean Ritchie, the Greenbriar Boys, and the New Lost City Ramblers. We all waived our fees to get this thing going. We were also acting on our belief that the folk song movement should plough back some of the “profits” into the promotion of traditional sources. F.O.T.M. was our way to acknowledge and repay our debt to traditional musicians, who were the source for our own music. It also set a high-minded tone, and contrasted us to the commercial ventures uptown. It was sort of absurd, because our own concerts made very little money. But we were taking the moral high road, by suggesting that this form of tribute was the appropriate path to be followed. I recall that the phrase “millions for defense and not a penny for tribute” was ringing through my head.

Of course, we had no money to finance any of these initial forays and improvised our way through. To save money (i.e., to spend as little as possible) I produced the concert announcement by hand, one letter at a time. I used “press type,” an inexpensive, time-consuming process that bypassed commercial typesetting costs. I figured that by cutting a sheet of paper in half, we could get two posters for the price of one. This is how I got the vertical format of our announcements, which evoked old 19th-century broadsides. I looked for typefaces that I had seen on rural handbills for country and blues music, and I recycled wood type fonts that I had previously used on covers for Folkways records. We didn’t advertise and had no mailing list. It was handbills and word of mouth at the Folklore Center.

As a non-profit organization, we got access to public school auditoriums (P.S. 41 in the Village), and later, we used the Folksong Club of NYU to gain access to their concert halls. During the intermission at the first concert, somebody asked, “How do I join the Friends of Old Time Music?” My response was improvised: “You become a member by attending the concert and putting your name on the mailing list. The ticket (\$ 1.75) pays your dues.”

For Ralph, the Friends of Old Time Music was the testing ground for a pattern that became his life’s work: finding traditional artists and presenting them in concert and festival

settings. He continued this kind of work for the Newport Folk Festival Foundation, and eventually for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the Mall in Washington, D.C., which continues to this day forty years later.

Ralph was very resourceful, and used his well-placed friends and relatives to keep things going. His cousin Richard Rinzler played an indispensable role in making arrangements for putting on the concerts (he was the NYU Folksong Club connection) and dealt with the logistics of putting up performers. Ralph’s other cousin Alan Rinzler was an editor at Simon & Schuster publishers at that time, and together with him, Ralph conceived and engineered a book called the *Young Folk* song book. Ralph went around and convinced certain emerging singers to contribute their songs and their royalties to F.O.T.M. These included Peggy Seeger, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Jack Elliot, the Greenbriar Boys, and the NLCR. Pete Seeger wrote the introduction, and the book was dedicated to Woody Guthrie, with an appreciation for Libba Cotten. Earl Robinson transcribed the songs from recordings. By 1963 the book’s royalties stabilized our finances, and we were able to buy a Nagra tape recorder for use in better-quality field recordings. Henrietta Yurchenco used it for Mexican recordings; Peter Siegel recorded Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard’s first record; I recorded Dillard Chandler, *High Atmosphere*, *Mountain Music of Peru*, and the sound tracks to 14 films about traditional music.

Ralph went on to manage Doc Watson and Bill Monroe, and Mike was performing with and without the NLCR, producing recordings and rediscovering artists such as Dock Boggs. Izzy’s store remained at the center of things in Greenwich Village until he went off (with the checkbook) to Sweden. I continued making paintings in my loft, photographing, making films, producing record notes and articles, or going out to perform music. In New York City, where I lived, pop artists, the Abstract Expressionists, and the Beat Generation poets coexisted with the music scene on MacDougal Street. F.O.T.M. was part of the mix. For me, the new paintings by Franz Kline were as exciting and stimulating as Roscoe Holcomb’s singing.

We knew that our efforts paled in comparison to all else that was going on, yet Bob Shelton reviewed some of the F.O.T.M. concerts in the *New York Times*. He probably recognized their significance as an alternative to the direction the folk revival had taken.

Over a four-year period, F.O.T.M. put on concerts by musicians who we thought had passed on years earlier, but here they were, alive and picking: Clarence Ashley, Dock Boggs, Mississippi John Hurt, Joseph Spence, Hobart Smith, Gus Cannon. We also presented the founders of Bluegrass—Bill Monroe and the Stanley Brothers, and new discoveries such as Doc Watson. For some of us the concerts were a dream come true, while for newcomers such as David Grisman and Peter Siegel, these concerts shaped their own dream of music.

JOHN COHEN Location., 2006



TITLE?

JODY

STECHER

The time span in which the Friends of Old Time Music concerts took place coincided with most of my adolescence. The first concert was presented when I was fourteen years old and the last one two weeks before my nineteenth birthday. I attended most of them, and I retain vivid memories of them. At the time I did not appreciate the historical significance of these concerts, I simply enjoyed them; and of course I did not know the important role many of the featured musicians would have in my life. But to say I “enjoyed” the concerts may not convey the full impact. I breathed them in, I ate them up, I experienced them as an active listener, as if I were making the music myself. In retrospect I can see that these concerts helped form the basis of my own musical aesthetic and contributed mightily to what I think good traditional music is all about.

The vision of each of the three principal presenters played no small part in creating the experience of attending an F.O.T.M. concert. Ralph Rinzler was an iconographer, John Cohen an iconoclast, and Izzy Young a chronicler and facilitator.

John and Ralph had each experienced something both precious and powerful in their contacts with Southern rural musicians that they wished to share with their fellow New Yorkers. Ralph made sure the tone of the concerts reflected the dignity of the musicians. We saw the people on the stage throw themselves

into their music, which sometimes expressed deep emotion, but it was always done with decorum. We the audience were meant by Ralph to see it that way. John seemed to trust circumstances to unfold in a way that might include the contradictions and ironies that are often present in real life, and he did not find these complexities to be undignified. As for Izzy, he had a very wide vision in which dignity, irony, and old time music occupied but a corner. I think the plurality of vision may have helped make these concerts so very great.

The concerts reflected the state of Southern vernacular music as sung and played by some of its best practitioners at the time, and these recordings illuminate some differences between then and now. Reinventing the tradition was part of the tradition at that time and self-conscious preservation of culture was not widespread. There were clear parameters of style and technique, as well as recognizable regional tendencies, but there were few people with the inclination to enforce musical rules and certainly no canon of correctness about these things as there is today. The musicians embodied local and broader traditions and they freely personalized style, technique and repertoire within the parameters of those traditions. The music was part of them and part of life. Vocal music was highly developed and highly regarded, and not incidental to instrumental music. On these discs, songs outnumber tunes ten to one and fully half of the music is modal. My impression was that the same was true at the concerts and in the musicians’ greater repertoire.

The demarcating lines that are supposed to separate genres were more fluid then. There was a wide variety of fiddle styles, banjo techniques, and ways of singing. Most of the guitar players used their thumb and finger(s) to sound the strings whether they played blues, rags, old time, or bluegrass music. This is in striking contrast to the prevailing view four decades later that the use of the flatpick belongs to the old time and bluegrass genres, use of thumb and fingers to ragtime and the blues, that “fingerpicking” is its own delicate genre and “flatpicking” its own bombastic one.

Today there is far more access to repertoire and to reliable information about traditional instrumental techniques than there was at the time of the F.O.T.M. concerts. I hope this glorious set of three compact discs will inspire listeners who want to be new or better practitioners to go beyond technique and repertoire, to sink deeply into the mysteries, wonders and contradictions at the heart of this music, and perhaps to rise to inspire others.

JODY STECHER Location., 2006

DISC ONE

1. DOC WATSON I'M TROUBLED

Doc Watson, voice and guitar; Arnold Watson, voice and harmonica. Recorded October 12, 1962.

Throughout the history of country music, some of the most beautiful duet singing has been performed by siblings. We may never know how much the vocal blends of the Monroe Brothers, the Blue Sky Boys (Bill and Earl Bolick), and the Stanley Brothers owed to genetic relationships and how much to histories of singing together from childhood. At the Watson Family concert of October 1962, Doc Watson and his older brother Arnold sang two duets, both of which are included in this album. Arnold's soulful harmonica and Doc's pristine guitar created a surprisingly contemporary "folk" sound that captivated the New York City audience.

"I'm Troubled" shares verses with "On Top of Old Smoky," "I'm Goin' to Georgia," and other related songs. It was recorded as "I'm Troubled, I'm Troubled" by the Blue Sky Boys at their first recording session in June 1936. The Blue Sky Boys' record was Doc's source for this song.⁷

2. DOCK BOGGS THE COUNTRY BLUES

Dock Boggs, voice and banjo, accompanied by Mike Seeger, guitar. Recorded December 13, 1963.

"The Country Blues" is one of the two Dock Boggs songs that were known to urban listeners via reissue on the *Anthology of American Folk Music*. Dock had recorded it for Brunswick at his New York City session in 1927. A few months before his FOTM concert, he had recorded it again for Folkways Records. At the concert, Dock told the audience:

Here's an old piece I learned from a photographer—traveled through the country, he could play a banjo or a fiddle, either one. He had a piece he called "Hustling Gamblers," and when I put this piece on record, I called it "The Country Blues." Of course it changed just a little bit, but it's a piece he used to sing, and he brought it up into Virginia from down in Tennessee.

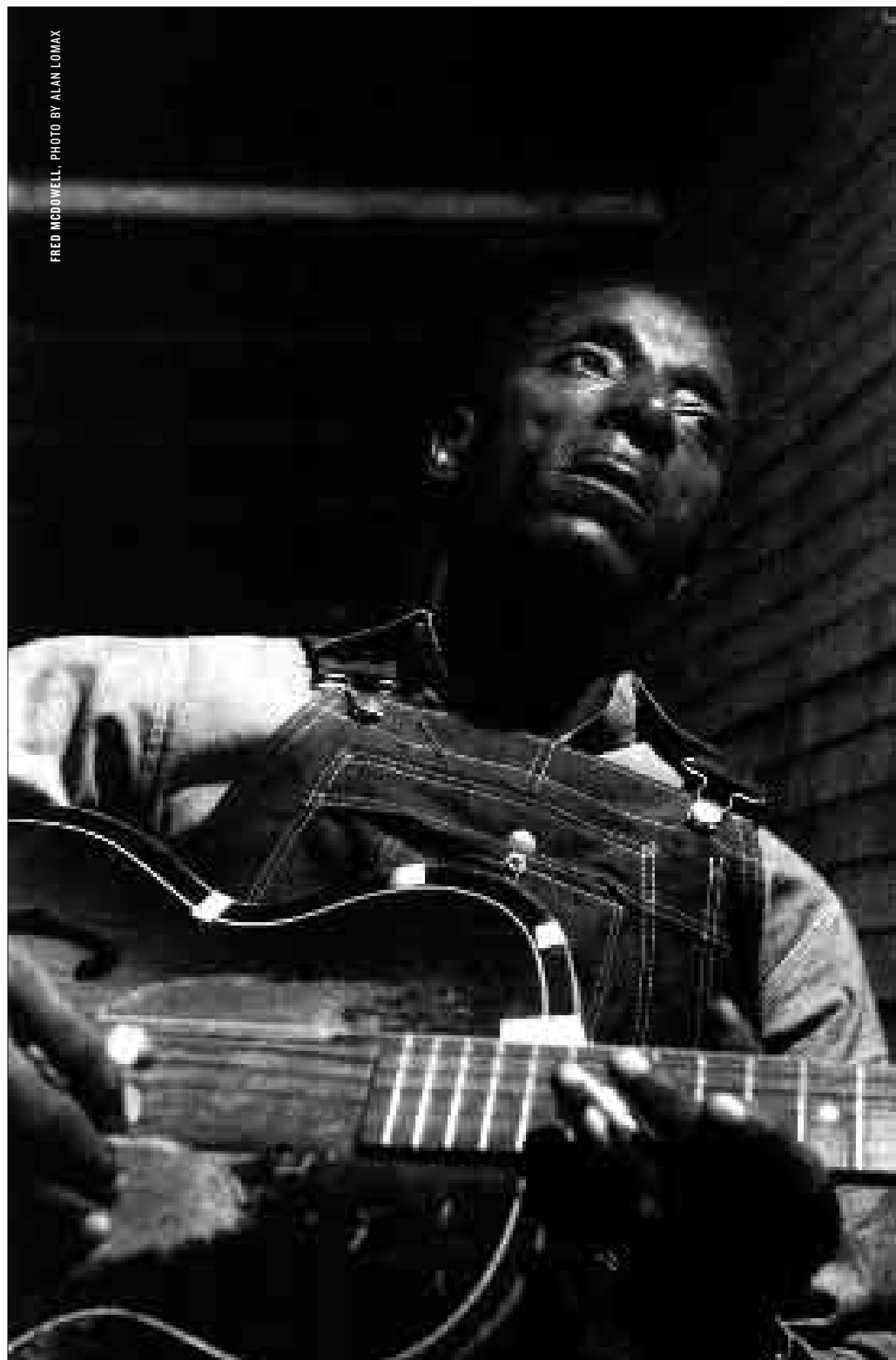
In interviews with Mike Seeger, Dock identified the photographer from whom he learned this song as Homer Crawford.⁸ Dock's performance of this song at the FOTM concert has a very different feel from either of the previous recorded versions, and is the only recording of "The Country Blues" on which Dock's banjo is joined by an accompanying guitar.

3. FRED MCDOWELL GOING DOWN TO THE RIVER

Fred McDowell, voice and guitar. Recorded April 9, 1965

Fred McDowell was born in Rossville, Tennessee, but was living and farming in Como, Mississippi, in 1959 when he was first recorded by Alan Lomax. McDowell, who was then in his 50s, went on to tour and record extensively until his death in

From Fred McDowell I learned to use a slide and to be a musical freight train. Full steam ahead, and hold her steady! js



FRED MCDOWELL. PHOTO BY ALAN LOMAX

1972. Several recordings by Fred McDowell are entitled "Going Down to the River." Some of these are melodically and textually similar to each other, while others are completely distinct songs. The piece recorded at the FOTM concert of April 1965 shares lyrics with some of the other recordings but appears to have a unique melody.

⁷ Wilgus, D.K., album notes for *The Watson Family*, Folkways Records FA 2366.

⁸ See album notes for *Dock Boggs: His Folkways Years, 1963-1968*, Smithsonian Folkways SF40108.

4. ROSCOE HOLCOMB EAST VIRGINIA BLUES

Roscoe Holcomb, voice and banjo, introduced by John Cohen Recorded February 11, 1961; identity of recordist not known.

Roscoe Holcomb was the first traditional musician brought to New York by the Friends of Old Time Music, and “East Virginia Blues” was the first song he played. Against a driving banjo accompaniment, Roscoe sang “East Virginia Blues” with the earnest intensity characteristic of eastern Kentucky tradition. His performance provided a fitting introduction to authentic traditional music for FOTM’s first audience. Roscoe’s debut performance, recorded at the concert of February 1961, is his only recording of “East Virginia Blues” with banjo accompaniment. He may be heard singing the song with guitar on the album *Mountain Music of Kentucky*.⁹

5. MAYBELLE CARTER THE STORMS ARE ON THE OCEAN

Maybelle Carter, voice and autoharp, accompanied by Mike Seeger, guitar. Recorded February 12, 1965.

On August 1, 1927, Maybelle Carter played guitar and sang harmony on “The Storms Are on the Ocean” at the Carter Family’s first recording session. Although A.P. Carter claimed authorship of the song, the verses can be traced to a centuries-old ballad collected by Francis James Child.¹⁰ Hobart Smith of Saltville, Virginia, has recorded a very similar song called “Stormy Rose the Ocean.”¹¹ Saltville is approximately 50 miles from the Carter Family’s home at Mace’s Springs, Virginia. In February 1965, “Mother” Maybelle Carter, accompanied by Mike Seeger, performed the version heard here.

6. THE STANLEY BROTHERS THE DREAM OF THE MINER’S CHILD

The Stanley Brothers and their Clinch Mountain Boys: Carter Stanley, lead voice and guitar; Ralph Stanley, tenor voice and banjo; Curley Lambert, mandolin; Vernon Derrick, fiddle; Carl Hawkins, bass. Recorded November 30, 1962.

This may be the only available recording of the Stanley Brothers singing “The Dream of the Miner’s Child” as a duet. A recently released 1956 Stanley Brothers album features the song as a vocal solo by Carter Stanley.¹² “The Dream of the Miner’s Child” originated in England, where composer Will Geddes and lyricist Robert

Five-string banjo players have devised dozens of tunings to enhance the sonic atmosphere of particular musical pieces and of the modes in which many are set. Because of the great variety in American modal melodic behavior and tonal content, there has never been a pan-modal banjo tuning or one tuning that is more modal than another. Holcomb’s banjo is sensibly tuned gDGBD, not gDGCD, the tuning erroneously thought to be “modal.” The latter tuning would disturb the balance here because “C,” the natural fourth, is entirely absent from the mode of his rendition, a beautiful set of melodic patterns using both natural and neutral sevenths and thirds. js

Donnelly copyrighted it in 1910 as “Don’t Go Down in the Mine, Dad.” It was popularized in America by Vernon Dalhart, who recorded the song for four different record companies during a ten-day period in 1925.



HOBART SMITH. PHOTO BY ALAN LOMAX

7. HOBART SMITH SOLDIER’S JOY

Hobart Smith, banjo. Recorded September 6, 1963.

Hobart Smith played two banjo solos at the F.O.T.M. concert of September 1963. One of those performances, “Last Chance,” may be heard on Rounder Records.¹³ The other, “Soldier’s Joy” is presented here. In October 1963, Hobart recorded two more excellent versions of “Soldier’s Joy,” one on banjo, the other on fiddle.¹⁴

“Soldier’s Joy,” sometimes called “Pay Day in the Army,” has been widely recorded and is thought by some to celebrate obstreperous behavior following the receipt of military pay. A 1929 recording by Gid Tanner & His Skillet-Lickers includes the verse:

Twenty-five cents for the morphine, fifteen cents for the beer

*Twenty-five cents for the morphine, gonna carry me away from here.*¹⁵

8. MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT COFFEE BLUES

Mississippi John Hurt, voice and guitar. Recorded December 13, 1963.

Metaphoric use of the word “spoonful” has been part of recorded blues history at least since 1929, when Charley Patton recorded “A Spoonful Blues.”¹⁶ Patton biographers Stephen Calt and Gayle Wardlow characterize the Patton piece as “a song about cocaine,”¹⁷ although John Fahy’s earlier Patton biography classifies it among songs

¹³ See *Hobart Smith: Blue Ridge Legacy*, Rounder 11661-1799-2.

¹⁴ See *In Sacred Trust*, Hobart Smith, Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40141.

¹⁵ See *The Skillet Lickers*, County CO-3509-CD.

¹⁶ See *Charlie Patton: Founder of the Delta Blues*, Yazoo 2010.

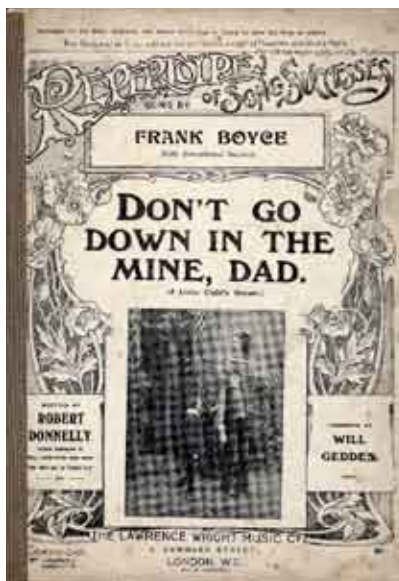
¹⁷ Calt, Stephen, and Gayle Wardlow, *King of the Delta Blues Singers*. (Newton, N.J.: Rock Chapel Press, 1988), 209; see also page 95.

⁹ *Mountain Music of Kentucky*, Smithsonian Folkways CD 40077.

¹⁰ Child, Francis James, ed., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, five vols., (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1882-1898). See “The Lass of Roch Royal,” Child ballad #76

¹¹ See *Hobart Smith of Saltville, Virginia*, Folk-Legacy CD-17

¹² *The Stanley Brothers: An Evening Long Ago: Live 1956*, Legacy Recordings CK86747.



Sheet Music, UK 1910

18 Fahey, John, *Charley Patton* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), 68.

19 See *Howlin' Wolf: Moanin' in the Moonlight*, Chess CHD-5908.

20 John Sebastian, interviewed by author, March 4, 2005.

“referring to sexual matters.”¹⁸ Howlin' Wolf's 1960 recording of the Willie Dixon composition “Spoonful”¹⁹ uses the term as a sexual or romantic metaphor.


“Coffee Blues,” ostensibly about Maxwell House Coffee, is Mississippi John Hurt's celebration of “that lovin' spoonful.” “Coffee Blues” was not among the songs that Hurt recorded for Okeh Records in 1928. Urban audiences first heard it following Hurt's “rediscovery” by Tom Hoskins in 1963. John Sebastian and Zal Yanofsky were inspired by this song to name their band The Lovin' Spoonful.²⁰

John Hurt's enigmatic music seems simple until one tries to replicate it. Because it sounds so benign one may be blinded to its power, akin to the power of nonviolence. His “Coffee Blues” would not let go of me. I went home and tried to get my guitar to say “spoonful.” js

THE FRIENDS OF OLD TIME MUSIC PRESENT

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BILL MONROE

& his **BLUE GRASS BOYS**

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9. BILL MONROE LIVE AND LET LIVE

Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys: Bill Monroe, lead voice (verses), tenor voice (choruses), and mandolin; Jack Cooke, lead voice (choruses) and guitar; Del McCoury, baritone voice and banjo; Kenny Baker, fiddle; Bessie Lee Mauldin, bass.

Recorded February 5, 1963.

Bill Monroe performed for FOTM in February 1963. He brought an extraordinary group of musicians including Jack Cooke, Del McCoury, Kenny Baker, and Bessie Lee Mauldin. “Live and Let Live” was penned by the old time country duet of Wiley Walker and Gene Sullivan, who recorded it for Okeh Records in 1941. The flip side of that record was Walker and Sullivan's classic “When My Blue Moon Turns to Gold Again.” “Live and Let Live” became a country standard, and was recorded by Jimmie Davis, Johnny and Jack, Carl Smith, and Webb Pierce. At the time of the FOTM concert, “Live and Let Live” was a timely selection for the Blue Grass Boys, who had recorded it for Decca Records on November 10, 1961.

10. THE WATSON FAMILY LONELY TOMBS

The Watson Family: Doc Watson, lead voice and guitar; Arnold Watson, bass voice and banjo; Gaither Carlton, fiddle. Recorded October 12, 1962.

Songs about the dead's ability to speak audibly from the grave go back at least to “The Unquiet Grave,” collected in the 19th century by Francis James Child.²¹ “Lonely Tombs” may be related to another such song in Doc Watson's repertoire, “The Lone Pilgrim.”²² “Lonely Tombs,” sometimes called “Oh, Those Tombs,” was recorded by Wade Mainer in 1938,²³ and later by J. E. Mainer's Mountaineers,²⁴ the Stanley Brothers,²⁵ and Preston and Hobart Smith and Texas Gladden.²⁶ “Lonely Tombs” is the only song on this album on which the Watson Family uses the classic old time instrumental combination of fiddle, banjo, and guitar. The ensemble sometimes suggests the sound of an old church organ, as sustained notes in the bass singing combine with drones in the fiddling and rich bass notes in the guitar accompaniment.

11. JESSE FULLER ROCKIN' BOOGIE

Jesse Fuller, voice, 12-string guitar, fiddle, bass, cymbals, and harmonica. Recorded October 12, 1962.

This appears to be Jesse “Lone Cat” Fuller's only recording of “Rockin' Boogie.” Not so much a song as a collection of verses, “Rockin' Boogie” serves as a vehicle for improvisation and instrumental interplay within the context of the one-man band. The dialogue between Jesse's guitar and harmonica makes it easy to forget that there is only one musician on this recording.

12. GAITHER CARLTON BROWN'S DREAM

Gaither Carlton, fiddle; Doc Watson, guitar. Recorded October 18, 1962.

Ralph Rinzler frequently arranged additional performances for FOTM artists in conjunction with their concert appearances. A week after the Watson Family

21 Child, Francis James, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. See “The Unquiet Grave,” Child ballad #78.

22 See *The Watson Family*, Smithsonian Folkways CD SF 40012.

23 See *How Can I Keep from Singing, Vol. 2: Early American Religious Music & Song*, Yazoo 2021.

24 See *Mainer's Mountaineers, Good Ole Mountain Music*, King Records 666.

25 See The Stanley Brothers, *The Early Starday King Years, 1958-1961*, King KBSCD-7000

26 See *Southern Journey Vol. 4: Brethren, We Meet Again*, Rounder CD 1704

concert of October 12, 1962, Doc Watson and Gaither Carlton were still in New York, although Arnold Watson had returned home. Ralph secured a job for Doc and Gaither at a short-lived West Village coffee house called Blind Lemon's. "Brown's Dream" was recorded at Blind Lemon's on October 18. It is the only selection in this album that was not recorded at a Friends of Old Time Music concert.

"Brown's Dream" or "John Brown's Dream" is a well-known fiddle tune that was recorded in 1927 by Ben Jarrell with Da Costa Woltz's Southern Broadcasters,²⁷ and in 1963 by Hobart Smith.²⁸ Gaither and Doc had recorded this tune previously in July 1961.²⁹ Doc's guitar accompaniment on the 1961 recording is fairly straightforward, including bass runs reminiscent of the blind Georgia guitarist Riley Puckett. The Blind Lemon's recording features a much more active guitar backup approaching the complex melodic style that later became nationally recognized as a hallmark of Doc's playing.

13: DOCK BOGGS DOWN SOUTH BLUES

Dock Boggs, voice and guitar, accompanied by Mike Seeger, guitar. Recorded December 13, 1963.

Dock Boggs felt strongly about the banjo as a blues instrument. He recalled jamming with a couple of other musicians who asked him to hold off the banjo while they played a blues piece:

I said "You think them blues ain't on this banjo neck the same as they are on that guitar?" I said "They're just as



Dock Boggs trading card by R. Crumb, 1985

much on this banjo neck the same as they are on that guitar or piano or anywhere else, if you know where to go to get it."³⁰

Dock learned "Down South Blues" in the 1920s, from a record by a woman blues singer with piano accompaniment. Several such recordings existed at that time, and he could not be sure which one it was. Dock recorded the song with banjo and guitar on March 10, 1927.

14. SAM MCGEE KNOXVILLE BLUES

Sam McGee, guitar. Recorded February 12, 1965.

Sam McGee's solo guitar style and repertoire were profoundly influenced by blues. As a young boy, he lived for a year in Perry, Tennessee, where he was intrigued by the music of the African-American street musicians who would meet in his father's store to play. Country music historian Charles Wolfe quotes McGee as saying that the blues and rags brought to Perry by these traveling musicians "would just ring in my head."³¹ Sam McGee recorded "Knoxville Blues" as a guitar solo for Vocalion Records in 1926,³² and again for Folkways in 1957.³³

15. THE STANLEY BROTHERS HAVE A FEAST HERE TONIGHT

The Stanley Brothers and their Clinch Mountain Boys: Carter Stanley, lead voice and guitar; Ralph Stanley, tenor voice and banjo; Curley Lambert, mandolin; Vernon Derrick, fiddle; Carl Hawkins, bass. Recorded November 30, 1962.

Ralph is capoed on the 10th fret, which gives the banjo an unnaturally high-pitched quality but also increases the tonal edge, further charging the already electric atmosphere. js

"Have a Feast Here Tonight" is popularly associated with the Monroe Brothers. But Bill and Charlie Monroe may have learned it from the Prairie Ramblers, who recorded the song for Bluebird Records in 1933. Like the Monroes, the Prairie Ramblers hailed from western Kentucky. In fall 1932, they moved to

Chicago, where they appeared regularly on radio station WLS.³⁴ Between 1932 and 1934, the Monroe Brothers toured extensively as dancers with WLS road shows and had the opportunity to meet and hear the members of the Prairie Ramblers.³⁵ The Monroe Brothers recorded "Have a Feast Here Tonight" for Bluebird in 1938. Bill Monroe recorded the song again in 1964 with Doc Watson singing lead and playing guitar.³⁶

16. JOHN DAVIS RILEY

John Davis, lead voice; the Georgia Sea Island Singers, accompanying voices. Recorded April 9, 1965.

"Riley" is a chantey of African-American origin. According to Alan Lomax, who arranged for the 1965 concert appearance by the Georgia Sea Island Singers, "Riley" was sung in the port of Brunswick, Georgia.³⁷ In *Folk Songs of North America*, Lomax wrote:

In 1935 I recorded a batch of chanteys like "Riley," which were being used even then for launching small boats, for pulling timber, or for any job of heavy lifting. "Big John

30 See Excerpts from Interviews with Dock Boggs, Folkways Records FW05458.

31 Wolfe, Charles K., "Sam McGee," in Tom Ashley, Sam McGee, Bukka White: Tennessee Traditional Singers, ed. Thomas G. Burton (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981).

32 See Sam McGee: Sam McGee: Complete Recorded Works, 1926-1934, Document DOCD-8036.

33 See The McGee Brothers and Arthur Smith, Folkways Records FA 2379.

34 Wolfe, Charles K., *Kentucky Country* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 57.

35 Rosenberg, Neil V., *Bluegrass: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 30.

36 See Bill Monroe and Doc Watson: Live Recordings 1963-1980, Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40064.

37 See album notes for *Southern Journey Volume 13: Earliest Times*, Rounder CD 1713.



JOHN DAVIS, PHOTO BY ALAN LOMAX

Davis," the lead singer, could not tell me anything about "old Riley." He may have been an escaped slave, or a house servant who accompanied his master on a trip to England.³⁸

The notion of Riley as an escapee suggests that the song could be related to Lead Belly's "Old Riley," about a prisoner who "walked the water" (walked in a shallow river to evade scent-sniffing hounds).³⁹ "Riley" also appeared in Lydia Parrish's 1942 collection *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*.⁴⁰ According to Parrish, variants of the song have Riley going to London Town and Mobile Bay in addition to Liverpool. John Davis's 1965 version of "Riley" shares some lyrics with a better-known chantey, "Pay Me My Money Down."⁴¹

17. JESSE FULLER BUCK AND WING

Jesse Fuller, voice, guitar, and buck dance. Recorded October 12, 1962.

"Buck and Wing" is a song about—and a vehicle for—Jesse Fuller's buck dancing. As a one-man band, Fuller could perform multiple musical parts flawlessly and expressively. Here he dances on the auditorium's wood stage while accompanying himself on 12-string guitar.

³⁸ Lomax, Alan, *Folk Songs of North America* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960), 517.

³⁹ See *Lead Belly: Where Did You Sleep Last Night*, Smithsonian Folkways CD 40044.

⁴⁰ Parrish, Lydia, *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, [1942] 1992); see "Good-bye My Riley 0," p. 215.

⁴¹ See Bruce Springsteen: *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions*, Columbia 82867

DISC TWO

1. ARTHUR SMITH HELL AMONG THE YEARLINGS

Arthur Smith, fiddle, accompanied by Sam McGee, guitar, and Kirk McGee, banjo. Recorded February 12, 1965.

"Hell among the Yearlings" was first recorded in 1928 by the Kessinger Brothers,⁴² actually fiddler Clark Kessinger accompanied on guitar by his nephew Luches (or "Luke.") Arthur Smith was a commercial performer and Grand Ole Opry star who retained the character and eccentricities of traditional fiddle music. In Smith's rendition of "Hell among the Yearlings"—as in Clark Kessinger's—the last line of the tune's first part is elongated—two beats longer than the first three lines.

ARTHUR SMITH, PHOTO BY MIKE SEEGER



2. THE GREENBRIAR BOYS AMELIA EARHART'S LAST FLIGHT

John Herald, lead voice and guitar; Ralph Rinzler, baritone voice and mandolin; Bob Yellin, tenor voice and banjo; unidentified bass player. Recorded February 11, 1961; identity of recordist not known.

Here we have Ralph Rinzler as performer, with his group the Greenbriar Boys, at the FOTM concert of February 1961. The celebrated aviator Amelia Earhart captured the public's imagination in 1932 when she became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. In 1937,

⁴² See *Kessinger Brothers Vol. 1 1928 - 1929*, Document DDCD-8010.

she and her copilot Frederick Noonan disappeared over the Pacific while attempting a flight from New Guinea to Howland Island. "Amelia Earhart's Last Flight" was written and recorded by "Red River Dave" McEnery. In his liner notes for the Greenbriar Boys' first album, Ralph Rinzler wrote:



"Amelia Earhart's Last Flight" was recorded by an obscure singer, Red River Dave. John Herald found the disc in a pile of old records in a Brooklyn shop.⁴³

Moses Asch's Disc Records released another version by Cornelius Greenway's Smokey Mountaineers in 1947.⁴⁴

3. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS THE BRAKEMAN'S BLUES

Bill Monroe, voice and mandolin; Jack Cooke, guitar; Del McCoury, banjo; Kenny Baker, fiddle; Bessie Lee Mauldin, bass. Recorded February 5, 1963.

Bill Monroe's repertoire included a number of songs composed by Jimmie Rodgers, "the singing brakeman." These included "Brakeman's Blues," "Blue Yodel No. 4," and "Mule Skinner Blues," which was the first song ever recorded by the Blue Grass Boys. Monroe typically performed the songs of Jimmie Rodgers as vocal solos with yodeling, and relied heavily on his fiddlers to set the tone of the arrangements. His performance of "The Brakeman's Blues" at his FOTM concert includes two blues-derived fiddle breaks by Kenny Baker. Jimmie Rodgers recorded "The Brakeman's Blues (Yodeling the Blues Away)" on February 14, 1928.⁴⁵

"The Brakeman's Blues": A fortuitous accident during Kenny Baker's first fiddle solo replicates the thrilling, deliberate dissonance of Monroe's vocal harmonies. Kenny extends the first melodic line with a flattened seventh note, but Jack Cooke has already made the chord change. Because the timing and intonation are so good, what might have been a train wreck comes across as a moment of brilliance. js

4. MAYBELLE CARTER FOGGY MOUNTAIN TOP

Maybelle Carter, voice and guitar, accompanied by Mike Seeger, guitar. Recorded February 12, 1965.

The original Carter Family recorded "Foggy Mountain Top" on February 15, 1929. For that recording, Maybelle played slide guitar, and Sara Carter provided a second guitar accompaniment. In this 1965 performance, Maybelle plays in her thumb-lead style, which has come to be known as the "Carter scratch." Mike Seeger, always careful to avoid eclipsing the main performer, plays an accompanying guitar so gently that it is often felt rather than heard.

Sheet Music, 1937

5. DOC WATSON HICKS' FAREWELL

Doc Watson, voice and guitar; Gaither Carlton, fiddle. Recorded October 12, 1962.

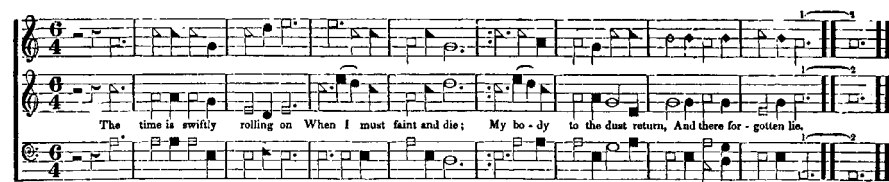
Doc Watson learned "Hicks' Farewell" from the singing of his family. The song appeared in William Walker's 19th-century hymnbook *The Southern Harmony*,⁴⁶ which offered a brief attribution and history:

This song was composed by the Rev. B. Hicks, (a Baptist minister of South Carolina,) and sent to his wife while he was confined in Tennessee by a fever of which he afterwards recovered.

It seems likely that the Watson Family learned "Hicks' Farewell" from *The Southern Harmony*, as most of the essential elements of William Walker's history have found their way into Doc's spoken introduction. Almost four decades after the Watson Family's FOTM concert, John Cohen wrote of this performance:

HICKS' FAREWELL. C. M.

Wm Walker 19



The impact of his singing "Hicks' Farewell"—done with just fiddle and voice—was powerful and had a spareness and mournful truthfulness that conveyed the sense of morality and love in the rural life on the frontier more than a century earlier. My appreciation for Doc and Gaither was established at that moment.⁴⁷

6. THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS JORDAN IS A HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL

Tom Paley, voice and banjo; John Cohen, guitar; Mike Seeger, fiddle. Recorded February 11, 1961; identity of recordist not known.



The New Lost City Ramblers played a crucial role in popularizing old time music among city audiences. Here, at the concert of February 1961, they perform "Jordan Is a Hard Road to Travel," which had been recorded in 1927 by Uncle Dave Macon⁴⁸ and in 1928 by Riley Puckett.⁴⁹ Tom Paley's banjo work on this song is an example of the three-finger old time style he frequently played with the Ramblers. Tom Paley left the New Lost City Ramblers in 1962 and was replaced by Tracy Schwarz.

⁴⁶ Walker, William, *The Southern Harmony & Musical Companion* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, [1854] 1987).

⁴⁷ See album notes for *there is no eye: music for photographs*, Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40091.

⁴⁸ See *Uncle Dave Macon: Keep My Skillet Good & Greasy*, Bear Family BCD-15978.

⁴⁹ See "The Other Side of Jordan" on *Riley Puckett with Clayton McMichen: Old Time Greats, Vol. 1*, Old Homestead OHCD4114.

⁴³ See notes to *The Greenbriar Boys*, Vanguard VRS 9014.

⁴⁴ See *America's Favorite Songs Vol. II as sung and played by Cornelius Greenway's Smokey Mountaineers*, Disc Album 633.

⁴⁵ See *Jimmie Rodgers: The Singing Brakeman*, Bear Family BCD 15540.

7. FRED MCDOWELL WRITE ME A FEW OF YOUR LINES

Fred McDowell, voice and guitar. Recorded April 9, 1965.

As an exemplary country blues singer and slide guitarist touring in his prime in the 1960s and '70s, Fred McDowell was in a position to influence many younger musicians. Perhaps his best-known protégé is Bonnie Raitt, who recorded "Write Me a Few of Your Lines" on her 1972 album *Takin' My Time*.⁵⁰ John Sebastian & the J Band recorded the song on their 1999 album *Chasing Gus' Ghost*.⁵¹

50 See Bonnie Raitt: *Takin' My Time*, Rhino 78379.

51 See John Sebastian & the J Band: *Chasing Gus' Ghost*, Hollywood Records HR-62227-2.

8. JOSEPH SPENCE BIMINI GAL

Joseph Spence, voice and guitar. Recorded May 14, 1965.

The brilliant, highly idiosyncratic Bahamian guitarist Joseph Spence was first recorded in Nassau by Sam Charters in 1958. The following year, Folkways Records released an album of recordings from that session.⁵² As word of the recordings spread, Spence became something of a legend among musicians. "Bimini Gal" was current in The Bahamas in 1935, when Alan Lomax and Mary Elizabeth Barnacle recorded a version by a Nassau string band and vocalist.⁵³ Joseph Spence performed "Bimini Gal" at his first New York appearance, the FOTM concert of May 1965. Spence's playing was unique among guitarists but incorporated rhythmic and melodic elements of Bahamian traditional singing. In his hands, this old song became a vehicle for improvisation in a style that only he could have invented.

Joseph Spence transferred Bahamian sacred vocal polyphony to the guitar, and punctuated his solo music with vocalisms that evoked the rhythms of a large instrumental ensemble. js

52 See Joseph Spence: *The Complete Folkways Recordings, 1958*, Smithsonian Folkways SFW40066.

53 See *Deep River of Song: Bahamas 1935, Volume II*, Rounder 82161-1832-2.

JOSEPH SPENCE, PHOTO BY GUY DROUSSART



BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS, PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN



9. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS SHADY GROVE

Bill Monroe, lead voice (verses), tenor voice (choruses), and mandolin; Jack Cooke, lead voice (choruses) and guitar; Del McCoury, banjo; Kenny Baker, fiddle; Bessie Lee Mauldin, bass. Recorded February 5, 1963.

For more than 70 years, the title "Shady Grove," has been applied to two melodically distinct pieces. These sometimes share verses but are sometimes so different from each other that they may be regarded as separate songs. Bill Monroe's performance, which uses a melody similar to that of "Fly Around My Pretty Little Miss,"⁵⁴

is representative of the tune most commonly played by string bands. This string band version goes back at least to a 1933 recording by Monroe's western Kentucky neighbors the Prairie Ramblers.⁵⁵ The other "Shady Grove" tune⁵⁶ is most often heard with "claw-hammer" banjo accompaniment, typically using what Clarence Ashley called the "sawmill" or "lassy-makin'" tuning (gdGCD).

Bluegrass was developed by Monroe as a form of professional entertainment, but it quickly became a vernacular musical art form. The bulk of its practitioners are amateurs whose principal venue is outdoors, often between parked cars. js

54 See "Pretty Little Pink" on *The Original Recordings of Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley*, Smithsonian Folkways SF40029/30.

55 See Bona Fide Bluegrass & Mountain Music, BMG Heritage 75517-43600-2.

56 See "Shady Grove" on *The Original Recordings of Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley*.

10. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS GREY EAGLE

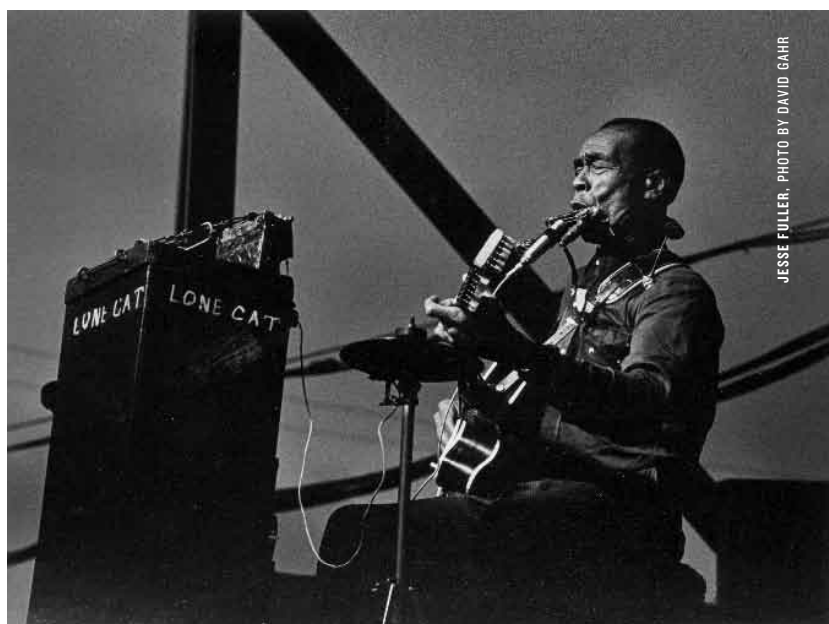
Kenny Baker, fiddle; Bill Monroe, mandolin; Jack Cooke, guitar; Del McCoury, banjo; Bessie Lee Mauldin, bass. Recorded February 5, 1963.

Bill Monroe made a practice of featuring his lead singer, fiddle player, and banjo player by asking them to perform their own numbers at each show. Here is fiddler Kenny Baker playing his version of “Grey Eagle.” Baker played and recorded with Bill Monroe on and off from 1956 to 1984. His warm tone and precise, jazz-influenced style were important facets of the sound of the Blue Grass Boys during much of Monroe’s career. Kenny Baker also recorded a number of solo albums during a long and successful relationship with County Records. In 1993, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded him a National Heritage Fellowship.

11. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS WALKIN’ THE DOG

Jack Cooke, voice and guitar; Bill Monroe, mandolin; Del McCoury, banjo; Kenny Baker, fiddle; Bessie Lee Mauldin, bass. Recorded February 5, 1963.

“Walkin’ the Dog” is a showcase vocal performance by Jack Cooke, Bill Monroe’s lead singer and guitarist. Cooke, born in Wise County, Virginia, was a veteran of the Baltimore bluegrass scene. He had recorded as the Blue Grass Boys’ guitarist in 1958 and 1959 following the sudden death of Monroe’s former lead singer and guitarist Edd Mayfield. In 1969, Jack Cooke joined Ralph Stanley’s Clinch Mountain Boys as bass player and singer. Cooke’s membership in the Clinch Mountain Boys has lasted more than 35 years at the time of this writing. “Walkin’ the Dog” was composed by fiddler Tex Grimsley and his brother, guitarist Cliff Grimsley. It has been recorded by a number of country and rockabilly artists including Webb Pierce, Patsy Cline, and Charlie Feathers.



JESSE FULLER, PHOTO BY DAVID GAHR

12. JESSE FULLER SAN FRANCISCO BAY BLUES

Fuller, voice, 12-string guitar, fiddle, bass, cymbals, harmonica, and kazoo. Recorded October 12, 1962.

“San Francisco Bay Blues” is certainly Jesse Fuller’s most famous composition. He first recorded it in the mid-1950s for a small label called World Song.⁵⁷ By 1961 the song was being performed in clubs by Ramblin’ Jack Elliott, Bob Dylan, and

Jesse Fuller lived most of his life in urban California, but his music is full of pine trees and snakes. js

Jim Kweskin. It has since been recorded by a long list of artists including Richie Havens, Eric Clapton, Paul McCartney, Janis Joplin, and Peter, Paul, and Mary. Jesse’s one-man-band rendition of “San Francisco Bay Blues,” recorded at his FOTM concert in October 1962, concluded with a spirited kazoo solo that evokes the great jug bands of the 1920s.

13. DOC AND ARNOLD WATSON SHORT LIFE OF TROUBLE

Doc Watson, voice and guitar; Arnold Watson, voice and harmonica. Recorded October 12, 1962.

Here is another duet by Doc and Arnold Watson accompanying themselves on guitar and harmonica. “Short Life of Trouble” was recorded in the 1920s and ’30s by Burnett & Rutherford, the Blue Sky Boys, Grayson & Whitter, and [Clarence] Ashley & Greene. A bluegrass version by Earl Taylor and the Stoney Mountain Boys was included on the Folkways album *Mountain Music Bluegrass Style* in 1959.⁵⁸ The song has become a bluegrass standard and has been recorded by Ralph Stanley, John Hartford, and the Charles River Valley Boys.

57 Jesse Fuller: Working on the Railroad, World Song WS 1.

See Mountain Music Bluegrass Style, Smithsonian Folkways SFW40038.

ARNOLD WATSON, PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN



14. ROSCOE HOLCOMB JOHN HENRY

Roscoe Holcomb, voice and banjo; John Cohen, guitar. Recorded February 11, 1961; identity of recordist not known.

John Cohen coined the phrase “the high lonesome sound” as the title for his first film,⁵⁹ which focused on traditional music from eastern Kentucky. He later used the phrase as the name of Roscoe Holcomb’s first solo album.⁶⁰ Here, from the FOTM concert of February 1961, is an example of the high lonesome sound, Roscoe Holcomb’s only recording of “John Henry.” Roscoe’s high-pitched singing and near-bluegrass banjo picking infuse his performance with the intensity often heard in eastern Kentucky music.

59 Cohen, John, interviewed by author, March 1, 2006.

60 Roscoe Holcomb/*the High Lonesome Sound*, Folkways FA 2368.

15. STANLEY THOMPSON KNEELIN’ DOWN INSIDE THE GATE

Stanley Thompson, lead voice; Clifford Ellis, bass voice; Edith Pinder, Joseph Spence, and Ethel McPhee, accompanying voices. Recorded May 14, 1965.

Here is an example of rhyming, a traditional Bahamian singing style in which a lead singer or “rhymmer” improvises verses—typically based on biblical texts—over a repeated chorus sung by one or more accompanying vocalists. The rhyming can be rhythmically complex, highly syncopated, and emotionally intense. Rhyming had its heyday during the sponge-fishing days of the 1930s. Crews of sponge fishermen, on trips that might last several days, tied their boats together at sunset and sang all night. Since this recording was made, rhyming has largely disappeared from The Bahamas as the older generation of singers has passed on. “Kneelin’ Down inside the Gate” was widely known during rhyming’s glory days. Frederick McQueen sang it for Folkways Records in 1958,⁶¹ and the Pinder Family and Joseph Spence re-

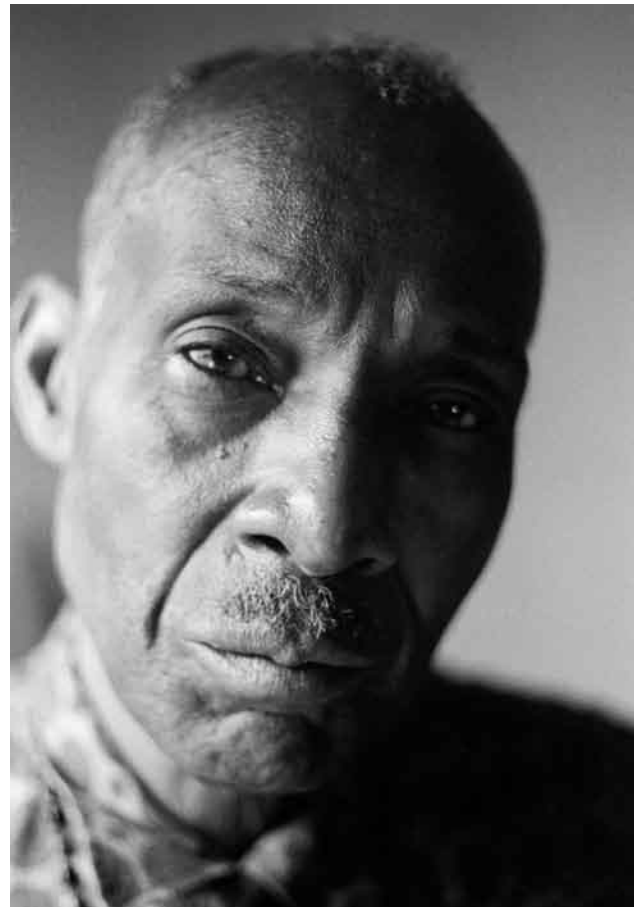
61 See *Bahaman Ballads and Rhyming Spirituals*, Folkways Records FW03847.

62 See *The Real Bahamas, Volume II*, Nonesuch 79733-2.



THE STANLEY BROTHERS, PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN

MCKINLEY PEBBLES, PHOTO BY ???



corded it just a few weeks after Stanley Thompson’s performance was taped.⁶²

16. MCKINLEY PEBBLES TELL ME WHY YOU LIKE ROOSEVELT

McKinley Peebles, voice and guitar. Recorded by Peter Bartok, May 2, 1964.

McKinley Peebles was recorded at F.O.T.M.’s “New York Concert” where, although a Southerner by birth, he appeared as a New York City street singer. Peebles, also known as “Sweet Papa Stovepipe,” was born in 1897 in Virginia’s coastal area near the North Carolina border.⁶³

During the 1950s, he had preached and sung with Reverend Gary Davis on New York street corners.⁶⁴ Peebles may also be heard on recordings made at the home of Reverend Davis in 1953.⁶⁵ “Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt” was written by Otis Jackson, a Miami disk jockey who recorded the song with The Evangelist Singers in 1946 and with The National Clouds of Joy in 1949.⁶⁶ McKinley Peebles learned the piece from an Apollo record by Preston York and the Reliable Jubilee Singers.⁶⁷

63 Mikofsky, Anton J., in *Encyclopedia of the Blues*, Second Edition, ed. Gérard Herzhaft (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 197.

64 Mikofsky, 197.

65 See Reverend Gary Davis: *If I Had My Way, Early Home Recordings*, Smithsonian Folkways SFW CD 40123

66 Van Rijn, Guido, *Roosevelt’s Blues* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), 197.

67 Mikofsky, Anton J., unpublished interview with McKinley Peebles, New York City, 1974

17. MAYBELLE CARTER BURY ME UNDER THE WEEPING WILLOW

Maybelle Carter, voice and guitar, accompanied by Mike Seeger, guitar. Recorded February 12, 1965.

“Bury Me under the Weeping Willow” was the first song ever recorded by the original Carter Family. At their

debut session in Bristol, Tennessee, in 1927, an 18-year-old Maybelle punctuated the family's church-like singing with two deliberate guitar solos.⁶⁸ According to Charles Wolfe, "Bury Me under the Weeping Willow" was a 19th-century parlor song that Sara and Maybelle had known from childhood.⁶⁹ At her FOTM concert in 1965, Maybelle delivered a particularly confident and sentient performance of the song, a perfect complement to the awe-struck innocence of the 1927 recording.

68 See *The Carter Family: Anchored in Love*, Rounder CD 1064.

69 See album notes for *The Bristol Sessions*, Country Music Foundation CD CMF-011-D.

18. THE STANLEY BROTHERS MANSIONS FOR ME

Carter Stanley, lead voice and guitar; Ralph Stanley, tenor voice and banjo; Curley Lambert, mandolin; Vernon Derrick, fiddle; Carl Hawkins, bass. Recorded November 30, 1962.

"Mansions for Me" was written by Bill Monroe, who recorded it for Columbia Records in 1946.⁷⁰ Introducing the song at the Stanley Brothers' second concert for the Friends of Old Time Music, Carter Stanley said of Monroe:

He's a great friend of ours, and I feel proud to mention his name wherever we appear because his work helped make our work possible. He was the Thomas Edison of country music in my opinion, and I think that should explain it. That's the great Bill Monroe.

Carter and Ralph were in great form, singing just like the guys on my Stanley Brother records and activating the hair on my neck and arms. The instruments filled the gaps between sung phrases, each player supporting the vocals and accommodating Ralph's distinctive banjo style. This was a full-blown revelation because bluegrass in New York at that time was pretty much everybody playing flat-out all the time, each musician playing everything they knew all at once.

70 See *The Essential Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys 1945-1949*, Columbia/Legacy CD 52478.

19. BESSIE JONES BEFORE THIS TIME ANOTHER YEAR

Bessie Jones, lead voice; the Georgia Sea Island Singers, accompanying voices. Recorded April 9, 1965.

"Before This Time Another Year" is a spiritual that appears in *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*.⁷¹ According to Alan Lomax, Bessie Jones learned this song from her grandparents.⁷² The last song of the FOTM concert of April 1965, "Before This Time Another Year" continues as a reprise after the applause and ends with a few parting words from Bessie Jones.

71 Parrish, Lydia, *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*, 220.

72 See album notes for *Southern Journey Vol. 12: Georgia Sea Islands—Biblical Songs and Spirituals*, Rounder CD 1712.



BESSIE JONES, PHOTO BY ALAN LOMAX

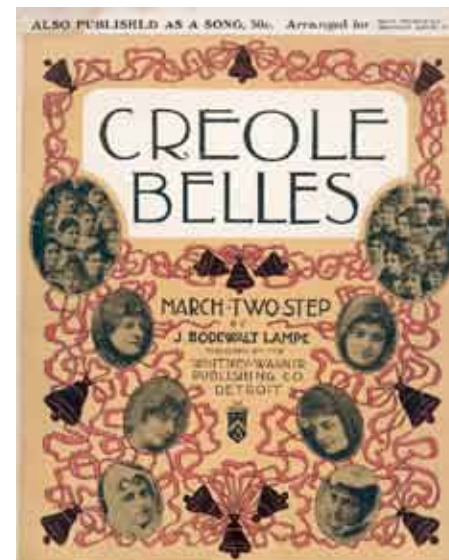
DISC III

1. MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT MY CREOLE BELLE

Mississippi John Hurt, voice and guitar. Recorded December 13, 1963.

This song started out as "Creole Belles," a "march-two-step" written by J. Bodewalt Lampe in 1900. In the early years of the 20th century, "Creole Belles" was recorded as a march by (John Philip) Sousa's Band, and as a ragtime piece by the "classic" 5-string banjo player Vess Ossman. While Lampe's composition has three distinct parts, the melody sung by John Hurt is based only on the second part. Lampe's 1901 sheet music shows the lyrics of that part to begin:

*My Creole Belle, I love
her well
Around my heart she
has cast a spell...*



2. JESSE FULLER "GUITAR LESSON"

Jesse Fuller, voice and 12-string guitar. Recorded October 12, 1962.

Here, Jesse Fuller, born in Georgia in 1896, demonstrates some old ways of playing blues on the guitar. His two musical examples use an "E" tuning, first played open and then barred at the fifth and seventh frets to create "A" and "B" chords. Because 12-string guitars are typically tuned two full steps lower than their 6-string counterparts, Jesse's "E" tuning actually produces music in the key of "C."

3. JESSE FULLER CINCINNATI BLUES

Jesse Fuller, voice and 12-string guitar. Recorded October 12, 1962.

Continuing in the open "E" tuning, Jesse Fuller demonstrates "knife style" guitar. Early country blues players used closed pocketknives and bottle necks as slide devices. In October 1962, few New Yorkers had ever seen a guitar played with a knife. On "Cincinnati Blues," most of the actual sliding is done on the guitar's treble strings; the lower strings provide intricately picked bass figures. Lyrics of old country blues songs flash by, Gus Cannon's "Poor Boy, Long Ways from Home" and Tommy Johnson's "Big Road Blues."

4. DOCK BOGGS POOR BOY IN JAIL

Dock Boggs, voice and banjo, accompanied by Mike Seeger, guitar. Recorded December 13, 1963.

"Poor Boy in Jail" is a new bad-man ballad composed by Dock Boggs. This recording, made at the FOTM concert

of December 13, 1963, is Dock's earliest record of the song. He told his audience, "I think I just picked this up and put me a tune to some poetry." Dock recorded "Poor Boy in Jail" for Folkways Records in 1964.⁷³ The "Katy train" refers to the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad, or MKT, which came to be called simply the "Katy."

I had been trying to emulate Dock Boggs since age twelve and gaining little ground. At the F.O.T.M. concert I realized his tunings and techniques were not what I had imagined them to be. I began to understand the benefit of distrusting my assumptions. js

73 See *Dock Boggs: His Folkways Years, 1963-1968*, Smithsonian Folkways SF 40108.

5. MAYBELLE CARTER HE'S SOLID GONE

Maybelle Carter, voice and guitar; Mike Seeger, autoharp. Recorded February 12, 1965.

"He's Solid Gone" is a reworking of "The Cannonball," which the original Carter Family recorded for Victor Records in 1930.⁷⁴ Lesley Riddle taught "The Cannonball" to the Carter Family and also taught Maybelle the picking technique she used on both versions of the song.⁷⁵ Riddle was an African-American singer and guitarist who became a close friend and associate of A.P. Carter. Riddle accompanied A.P. on numerous "song-hunting" trips throughout the Southeast. Riddle's adept musical memory allowed him to learn songs heard on the trips and teach them to the Carter Family later.

74 See *The Carter Family: When the Roses Bloom in Dixieland*, Rounder CD 1066.

75 See album notes for *Lesley Riddle: Step by Step*, Rounder CD 0299.



MAYBELLE CARTER, PHOTO BY DAVID GAHR

6. THE CLARENCE ASHLEY GROUP MAGGIE WALKER BLUES

Clint Howard, voice and guitar; Doc Watson, lead guitar; Fred Price, fiddle. Recorded March 25, 1961; identity of recordish not known.

"Maggie Walker Blues" is the Clarence Ashley Group's version of "The Girl I Left Behind," a poignant ballad that appeared in Cecil Sharp's *English Folksongs from the Southern Appalachians*.⁷⁶ Other recordings of the song include Buell Kazez's 1927 "Roving Cowboy"⁷⁷ and a 1959 performance by Spencer Moore⁷⁸ of Chilhowie Virginia. The Spencer Moore version, recorded by Alan Lomax, sounds traditional but includes mandolin solos by Everett Blevins that essentially replicate Bill Monroe's "Pike County Breakdown." The Clarence Ashley Group had previously recorded "Maggie Walker Blues" in September 1960.⁷⁹ On this recording, made at the F.O.T.M. concert six months later, Doc Watson plays a much more active role, punctuating the piece throughout with driving guitar improvisations.

76 Sharp, Cecil J. *English Folksongs from the Southern Appalachians (two volumes)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932). See Volume II, 62-65.

77 See *Buell Kazez: Legendary Kentucky Ballad Singer*, British Archive of Country Music BACM-027-CD.

78 See *Southern Journey Vol. 2: Ballads and Breakdowns*, Rounder CD 1702.

79 See *The Original Recordings of Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley*, Smithsonian Folkways SF40029/30.



FRED PRICE, CLARENCE ASHLEY, CLINT HOWARD, PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN

7. ED YOUNG & EMMA RAMSAY CHEVROLET

Ed Young, voice and cane fife; Emma Ramsey, voice; members of the Georgia Sea Island Singers, hand clapping. Recorded April 9, 1965.

In 1959, Ed Young and his brother, drummer Lonnie Young, recorded "Chevrolet" for Alan Lomax in Como, Mississippi.⁸⁰ Ed and Lonnie Young were representative of a Black fife and drum band tradition that is believed to date to the 19th century. At the F.O.T.M. concert of April 1965, Ed Young performed the piece as a dialogue with Georgia Sea Island Singer Emma Ramsay. Authorship of "Chevrolet" has been widely attributed to Lonnie Young, but the song was recorded by Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe in 1930 as "Can I Do It for You?"⁸¹ A recording by Geoff and Maria Muldaur with the Jim Kweskin Jug Band⁸² seems to descend from both the Young brothers and Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe.

80 See *Sounds of the South* (box set), Atlantic 82496.

81 See "Can I Do It for You? Parts 1 & 2," *Memphis Minnie: Queen of Country Blues 1929-1937*, JSP Records JSP7716.

82 See *Jim Kweskin & the Jug Band: Acoustic Swing And Jug*, Vanguard CD 79521.



ED YOUNG, PHOTO BY ALAN LOMAX

14. ROSCOE HOLCOMB RISING SUN BLUES

Roscoe Holcomb, voice and guitar. Recorded March 26, 1965.

Roscoe's version of the "House of the Rising Sun" was recorded at his second F.O.T.M. appearance, the *Music of the Mountaineer* concert of March 1965. Although the song is now widely known, there are few traditional sources. One is Georgia Turner of Middlesboro, Kentucky, who sang it for Alan Lomax in 1937.⁸³ Turner's performance, as adapted by Lomax, appears to have been the original source for most of the subsequent recordings of the song. Clarence Ashley recorded "Rising Sun Blues" in 1933 and again in 1962.⁸⁴ Roy Acuff recorded it in 1938. Ashley, who believed he had learned the song from his grandmother, claimed to have taught it to Acuff when the two were traveling together in a medicine show.⁸⁵

9. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS LORD, BUILD ME A CABIN IN GLORY

Bill Monroe, tenor voice and mandolin; Jack Cooke, lead voice and guitar; Del McCoury, baritone voice and banjo; Kenny Baker, fiddle; Bessie Lee Mauldin, bass. Recorded February 5, 1963.

Bill Monroe recorded "Lord, Build Me a Cabin in Glory" in February 1958 for an LP album of gospel songs called *I Saw the Light*.⁸⁶ Like many of Monroe's bluegrass gospel recordings, the 1958 version featured a vocal quartet accompanied only by guitar, bass, and mandolin. At his F.O.T.M. concert five years later, Monroe performed the song as a vocal trio with full band accompaniment. "Lord, Build Me a Cabin in Glory" has been recorded by a number of country and bluegrass musicians including Roy Acuff, Carl Story, and David Parmley.

83 Lomax, Alan, *Folk Songs of North America*, 280.

84 See *The Original Records of Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley*, Smithsonian Folkways SF40029/30.

85 See album notes for *Old Time Music at Clarence Ashley's*, Vol. Two, Folkways Records FA 2359.

86 *Bill Monroe: I Saw the Light*, Decca DL 8769.



BILL MONROE, PHOTO BY DAVID GAHR

MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT, PHOTO BY DAVID GAHR



10. MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT FRANKIE AND ALBERT

Mississippi John Hurt, voice and guitar. Recorded December 13, 1963.

John Hurt first recorded his retelling of the "Frankie and Johnny" story as "Frankie" for Okeh Records in 1928. That recording became known to city audiences in 1952 through its reissue on Harry Smith's *Anthology*. Hurt's performance of the song at his F.O.T.M. concert seems to flow effortlessly, his voice floating over a rich guitar accompaniment in an open G tuning.

11. THE STANLEY BROTHERS HARD TIMES

Ralph Stanley, banjo; Carter Stanley, guitar; Curley Lambert, mandolin; Vernon Derrick, fiddle; Carl Hawkins, bass. Recorded November 30, 1962.

"Hard Times" features a string-bending technique that raises goosebumps, especially in those hearing it for the first time. Audiences love it, and Ralph Stanley is the king of it. js

"Hard Times" is a banjo instrumental composed by Ralph Stanley and recorded by the Stanley Brothers for Mercury Records in August 1954. The banjo is tuned in an open D tuning (aDF#AD.)

12. HORTON BARKER THE MILLER'S WILL

Horton Barker, unaccompanied singer. Recorded March 26, 1965.

Ballad singer Horton Barker was born in eastern Tennessee in 1889. At the time of his appearance for the Friends of Old Time Music, he was living in St. Clair's Creek, Virginia. Barker had recorded for the Library of Congress in the 1930s and for a Folkways album released in 1962.⁸⁷ "The Miller's Will" can be traced

Cecil Sharp would have been delighted with Horton Barker's masterful rendition, which is thoroughly English in both execution and melodic shape. Sharp visited southern Appalachia (1916–1918) seeking songs that would support his vision of the area as a cultural frontier outpost of England. js

to a 17th-century British broadside.⁸⁸ It tells the story of an old miller trying to decide which of his three sons will inherit his mill. In the end, he leaves the mill to the son who will do the best job of cheating the customers. As the piece concludes, the audience can be heard laughing. Apparently the song reached across time and space and rang true to a group of New Yorkers in 1965.

87 *Horton Barker: Traditional Singer*, Folkways Records FA 2362.

88 Laws, G. Malcolm, *American Balladry from British Broad-sides* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1957), 56.



CLARENCE ASHLEY & DOC WATSON, PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN

13. CLARENCE ASHLEY THE COO COO BIRD

Clarence Ashley, voice and banjo; Doc Watson, guitar. Recorded March 25, 1961; identity of recordist not known.

Long before Clarence Ashley's F.O.T.M. concert, New York folk musicians were familiar with his signature song "The Coo Coo Bird" through his 1929 recording, which had been reissued on the *Anthology of American Folk Music*. While the 1929 record is quick and delicate, Ashley's 1961 performance is turbulent and powerful. The banjo and guitar sound almost like

one instrument as Doc Watson goes note for note with Ashley's pentatonic banjo solos. "The Coo Coo Bird" was well known in the South when Clarence Ashley was growing up. Several versions were included in Cecil Sharp's *English Folksongs from the Southern Appalachians*.⁸⁹ Hobart Smith performed it at his F.O.T.M. concert in 1963, and recorded it later the same year.⁹⁰ The album *Black Banjo Songsters of North Carolina and Virginia* includes three striking versions by John Snipes, Dink Roberts, and Rufus Kasey.⁹¹

The banjo and guitar sound like one large exotic instrument. It's impressive what the presence of a steady tapping foot and a small increase of bass frequencies (brought out by the room) can do. It sounds like midnight. js

⁸⁹ *English Folksongs from the Southern Appalachians*, 177-83.

⁹⁰ See *In Sacred Trust*.

⁹¹ *Black Banjo Songsters of North Carolina and Virginia*, Smithsonian Folkways CD 40079.

14. GAITHER CARLTON DOUBLE FILE

Gaither Carlton, fiddle; Doc Watson, guitar. Recorded October 12, 1962.

"Double File" is a fiddle tune from Gaither Carlton's repertoire. It does not appear on any of the Watson Family or Clarence Ashley CDs, and much of what we know about it comes from Doc's spoken introduction:

I love the contrast between the fiddle's stable tones with the tones that are upwardly mobile. Note the verve and elegance of Doc's guitar. js

It's an old tune they used to square dance to a long time ago. They used to have some of them old shindigs and just

about shake the log cabins down. Boy, they'd really romp it up, I'm telling you.

Another performance of this tune by Gaither and Doc was recorded at Blind Lemon's⁹² and released on the 1964 Folkways LP *Friends of Old Time Music*,⁹³ an early precursor to the current CD set. Other recordings of "Double File" appear to derive from Gaither's rendition of the tune.

⁹² See track note to "Brown's Dream," disc 1 track 12 of this set.

⁹³ *Friends of Old Time Music*, Folkways FA 2390.



DOC WATSON & GAITHER CARLTON, PHOTO BY JOHN COHEN

15. ANNIE BIRD THE WANDERING BOY

Annie Bird, voice and autoharp, accompanied by Doc Watson, guitar. Recorded March 25, 1961; identity of recordist not known.

Annie Bird appeared as a supporting act at the Clarence Ashley Group's FOTM concert. Bird, a Virginia-born traditional singer, was living in New York at that time. Most of her performance repertoire came from the Carter Family, whose spirit she seemed to summon effortlessly and perfectly. She had performed at the Indian Neck Folk Festival and the Old Fiddler's Convention of Galax, Virginia. In New York she sang duets with Maria D'Amato (later Muldaur) and participated in an LP record called *Folksingers of Washington Square*,⁹⁴ along with Sandy Bull, Bruce Langhorne, and Logan English. Sara and Maybelle Carter performed "The Wandering Boy" at the Carter Family's debut recording sessions in Bristol, Tennessee, in 1927.⁹⁵ In this 1961 recording, Annie Bird evokes the unusual timing used by the Carter Family on that recording. Bird's intuitive, nuanced sense of time contributes mightily to the poignancy of the piece.

⁹⁴ *The Folksingers of Washington Square*, Continental Records CLP-4010.

⁹⁵ See *The Carter Family: Anchored in Love*, Rounder CD 1064.

16. JESSE FULLER STRANGER BLUES

Jesse Fuller, voice, 12-string guitar, fottella bass, cymbals, and kazoo. Recorded October 12, 1962.

"Stranger Blues"—and a number of similarly titled songs by Brownie McGhee, Tampa Red, Elmore James, and others—all draw from a common pool of verses about the experience of the outsider. This 1962 recording gives us a vivid recounting of that experience by Jesse "Lone Cat" Fuller, a one-man band who traveled the country alone.

17. BILL MONROE AND HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS I SAW THE LIGHT

Bill Monroe, tenor voice and mandolin; Jack Cooke, lead voice and guitar; Del McCoury, baritone voice and banjo; Kenny Baker, fiddle; Bessie Lee Mauldin, bass. Recorded February 5, 1963.

"I Saw the Light" was written by Hank Williams, who recorded it in 1947.⁹⁶ Its opening notes are carved into Hank's gravesite memorial,⁹⁷ and the song is held in high esteem by many country musicians. During a brief tour of Israel in the 1980s, a septuagenarian Bill Monroe arranged to be baptized anew in the Jordan River. He emerged singing "I Saw the Light."⁹⁸

Bill Monroe was relaxed and confident. Del McCoury wore red shoes. I focused on Kenny Baker the whole evening, fascinated by the beauty of his bowing. Backstage, Monroe offered me his mandolin to try, and I still remember the feel and sound of this instrument. It was like a living creature. js

18. MAYBELLE CARTER SUGAR HILL

Maybelle Carter, banjo. Recorded February 12, 1965.

In February 1965, Maybelle Carter, who may have been country music's most influential guitarist, told her audience about her banjo playing:

I used to play banjo when I was a kid, but after I started playing guitar I just laid it aside and never tried to play it anymore.... So y'all don't expect too much because I haven't played banjo for 30 years.

When Maybelle did start playing guitar, she developed several guitar styles. Perhaps the most influential of these was her trademark technique, in which the thumb plays melody notes on the lower strings and the fingers strum the high strings. This technique incorporated the rhythms of the banjo styles that Maybelle had played as a girl. Maybelle's banjo-derived guitar style strongly influenced the playing of Woody Guthrie, and through him the playing of Jack Elliott and countless folk guitarists who followed them.

Maybelle Carter was often asked whether she had used bare fingers, thumbpick, fingerpicks, or flatpick on particular recordings. Her answer was always "oh, whatever was at hand." js

"Sugar Hill" was well known when Maybelle was growing up. A classic 1929 recording,⁹⁹ featuring banjo and voice by Dad Crockett, was chosen by Alan Lomax for reissue in the 1947 Brunswick set *Mountain Frolic*.

19. THE CLARENCE ASHLEY GROUP AMAZING GRACE

Doc Watson, lead voice; Gaither Carlton, fiddle; Clarence Ashley, Fred Price, Clint Howard, and Annie Bird, accompanying voices. Recorded March 25, 1961; identity of recordist not known.

"Amazing Grace," the final song of the Clarence Ashley Group's concert, became an anthem of the folk song revival, often the last song of a performance. Typically, all those present—whether audience members at a concert or friends at a home song-swapping session—joined in singing it. The song is the subject of an entire book called *Amazing Grace: The Story of America's Most Beloved Song*. In it, author Steve Turner writes:

John Cohen of the New Lost City Ramblers believes

that the popularity of "Amazing Grace" with East Coast folksingers of the 1960s can be dated back to a performance that the guitarist and singer Doc Watson gave in New York in 1961 as part of Clarence Ashley's band.... "There were about four hundred of us there, mostly musicians, and we were really moved," said Cohen. "The experience was heightened because it was a blind man singing it and it made us realize that this was a personal statement of the course of someone's life. We had no experience of something like this and it was happening right in front of us. It was an interesting thing. We were mostly non-religious people, we didn't go to church or synagogue, but this song cut through."¹⁰⁰

I saw Clarence Ashley in the big tent at the Fiddler's Convention in Union Grove, North Carolina. He sang "The Old Account Was Settled Long Ago" seated alone on stage with his thumbs tucked behind his suspenders. He'd pull them forward and back in time with the music. There must have been seven hundred people in there. He had Dem all hypnotized. js



CLARENCE ASHLEY. PHOTO BY DAVID GAHR

100 Turner, Steve, *Amazing Grace: The Story of America's Most Beloved Song*, ECCO / Harper Collins, New York, 2003, pp 171-172

96 See Hank Williams: *The Original Singles Collection*, Mercury Nashville 847 194-2.

97 Williams, Roger M., *Sing a Sad Song: The Life of Hank Williams*, 2nd edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 227.

98 Smith, Richard D., *Can't You Hear Me Callin': The Life of Bill Monroe, Father of Bluegrass* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 2000), 249.

99 See Crockett's *Kentucky Mountaineers: Classic Old Time String Band Music*, British Archive Of Country Music BACM-023-CD.

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These 3 discs contain highlights of the
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It was not possible to include all the
artists and performances presented by
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