

WOODY GUTHRIE

MULESKINNER BLUES

THE ASCH RECORDINGS, VOL.2



Smithsonian
Folkways

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies
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THE ASCH RECORDINGS, VOL.2

COMPILED BY JEFF PLACE AND GUY LOGSDON ANNOTATED BY GUY LOGSDON AND JEFF PLACE

- MULESKINNER BLUES** 2:49
(Jimmie Rodgers-George Vaughn, APRS, BMI)
- WRECK OF THE OLD 97** 2:11
(Whitter-Noell-Lewey; Spairo Bernstein & Co., ASCAP)
(words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- SALLY GOODIN'** 2:26
- LITTLE BLACK TRAIN** 2:29
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- WHO'S GONNA SHOE YOUR PRETTY LITTLE FEET** 2:28
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- BALTIMORE TO WASHINGTON** 2:53
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- RUBBER DOLLY** 2:11
- 21 YEARS** 3:13
(Bob Miller, MCA Inc., ASCAP)
- SOWING ON THE MOUNTAIN** 2:23
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- BED ON THE FLOOR** 2:21
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- TAKE A WHIFF ON ME** 2:41
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- STEPSTONE** 2:53
(J.O. Webster)
- PUT MY LITTLE SHOES AWAY** 2:44
(Mitchell-Pratt)
- HEN CACKLE** 2:16
- POOR BOY** 2:26
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- STACKOLEE** 2:57
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- JOHNNY HART** 2:27
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- WORRIED MAN BLUES** 2:57
(A.P. Carter, APRS, BMI)
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- DANVILLE GIRL** 2:58
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- GAMBLING MAN** 2:19
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- RYE STRAW** 2:46
- CRAWDAD SONG** 2:52
- IDA RED** 2:59
- KEEP MY SKILLET GOOD AND GREASY** 2:43
(adapted by Woody Guthrie)
- TRAIN 45** 2:39

INTRODUCTION

by Guy Logsdon

Woody Guthrie (1912–1967) played a major role in developing the foundation for the song and social movement now referred to as the urban folk song revival during the 1940s and 1950s. He also became and remains an inspirational figure for folk songwriters, social protest and topical songwriters, and rock and folk-rock songwriters. His friendship with Lead Belly, Pete Seeger, Cisco Houston, Sonny Terry, and other legendary folk artists is well documented, and he unselfishly shared his musical and cultural experiences and ideas with them. His influence on Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Billy Bragg, and other contemporary musicians and songwriters also is well documented. His children's songs have helped parents and teachers rear, teach, entertain, and challenge young people for decades. And his documentation in songs and poetry of historical events such as the Dust Bowl and Great Depression still provides an important dimension to the interpretation of life during those years. Woody's creative contributions to our culture are legion, in the form of printed books as well as handwritten and/or typed manuscripts, paintings and drawings, and recorded songs.

Most of Woody Guthrie's recordings are at the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies, which houses

the archives and master recordings of Moses Asch and Folkways Records. Jeff Place is the Sound Archivist for the Center's entire sound collection. This means that he has listened to more Woody Guthrie recordings than anyone as he transfers sound from fragile master discs to tape and compact disc. While listening to the vast numbers of Woody Guthrie recordings, he decided that the songs Woody recorded for Moses Asch should be compiled into a collection: *Woody Guthrie: The Asch Recordings*.

There will be four volumes in the collection; however, not all of the Asch/Guthrie recordings will be in it, for some no longer exist, some are beyond transferring and restoration, and some are unworthy of reproduction. But there are enough songs, some previously issued and some unissued by Moses Asch, to showcase Woody's creativity and talent as well as to emphasize his vast knowledge and mental storehouse of country/western/folk music.

This second collection in the series *The Asch Recordings* consists of Woody Guthrie's interpretations of early traditional folk songs, early country music recordings, and nineteenth-century sentimental songs, songs Woody learned in Oklahoma, Texas, and California. Much of the material comes from two Folkways LP releases, *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2* (FW 2484) and *Poor Boy* (FW 31010). Volumes 1 and 3 in this series feature Woody's own compositions, and volumes 2 and 4 include traditional material.

MOSES ASCH, FOLKWAYS RECORDS, AND WOODY GUTHRIE

Moses "Moe" Asch was a man obsessed with sounds—musical sounds, cultural sounds, political sounds, and nature's sounds. Born in Warsaw, Poland, he was a son of the novelist Sholem Asch; his father's work carried the family to Berlin and then to Paris, and when Moses was eight years old they moved to Brooklyn, New York. He grew up learning the songs of French children, his mother's Yiddish songs, the songs of English-speaking children, and later popular and jazz songs. As a teenager he developed an interest in the electronics of radio and recording. At the age of sixteen he traveled to Europe to study electronics and became acquainted with the folk songs of fellow students from Brazil, Holland, Austria, and Russia; he later wrote: "I learned the meaning of folk song as it expresses a HOME feeling of belonging and association." Later, while vacationing in Paris, he found a copy of John A. Lomax's *Cowboy Songs* (1910 edition) and "became filled with the meaning of the cowboy and the West."

He started manufacturing and producing records in 1939, specializing in international ethnic music and using Asch Records as his company name. His first commercial recording venture featuring American folk expression was the 1941 *Play Parties in Song and Dance as Sung by Lead Belly*. Other singers of folk

songs such as Burl Ives and Josh White turned to him as an outlet for their talents; Asch became the primary producer of folk recordings with limited commercial demand. During the 1940s, Moses Asch's studio was an open house to many of the recording artists in the New York area. Asch's recording log is a fascinating list of many of the top jazz and folk music performers of the day, including Woody, Cisco Houston, Burl Ives, Josh White, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee, James P. Johnson, Mary Lou Williams, Coleman Hawkins, and Pete Seeger, among others. (See: Moses Asch, "Folk Music—A Personal Statement," *Sing Out!* 11 [February–March 1961] 1: 26-27.)

During his career, Asch produced records under different labels: Asch Records, Asch-Stinson Records, Disc Company of America, Folkways Records, Disc Recordings, and others. Asch issued Woody Guthrie recordings on each label that he produced. Woody would drop by Asch's office whenever the spirit moved him. Woody would often get up in the morning, read the newspaper, and then sit down at his typewriter and reel off a number of topical ballads. Many of these typewritten pages are now stored in the archive at the Smithsonian, and many of the songs were recorded for Asch.

The relationship between Woody and Asch was that of record producer and artist, of friends and adversaries—a relationship that made money for Asch and gave Woody a source

for money when he needed it. Woody also reviewed recordings for Asch, which gave Asch a different perspective about his product and gave Woody a broader knowledge of the world of music.



WOODY GUTHRIE IN TEXAS AND CALIFORNIA (1929–1939)

For the early years of Woody's story as told by fellow Oklahoman, Guy Logsdon, see: This Land Is Your Land, The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1 (Smithsonian Folkways 40100). Woody's story will be continued in each volume.

Woodrow Wilson Guthrie was born in Okemah, Oklahoma, to Charley and Nora Guthrie on 14 July 1912. His childhood and adolescence in the town of Okemah provided him a social conscience, an educational foundation, and many stories to tell. Before his fifteenth birthday, though, his family seemed to be disintegrating. His sister Clara had died in a fire; his mother, whose deteriorating mental and physical condition was actually due to Huntington's disease but who was generally considered insane, was committed to an institution; his father's optimistic, creative, and aggressive personality changed as he worried about keeping his family together. It has been reported that Charley drank heavily, but according to those who knew him well and were with him in Pampa, Texas, and later in Oklahoma City, he rarely took a drink of alcohol. To a great extent, it was Woody who wrote exaggerated accounts of Charley's actions, for Woody considered his father to be a hero who under the aforementioned pressures lost part of his spirit for life. Through all of this turmoil and tragedy, Woody maintained a sense of humor—he probably survived because he

could laugh. Many years later he wrote:

...I took part in Okemah's plays almost every year. I jig danced and cracked jokes between the acts. I never took part in a play, but always worked in front of the curtain. I seldom knew what I was going to do or say till the curtain rolled down behind me, and then I'd commence messing around and talking and the people would get tickled at that [and] clap for more. I won second place in [a] glee club singing contest in my 8th or 9th year. I was cartoonist and editor of poetry on our high school paper, the "Panther." ...I played the harmonica, rattled the bones, danced, sang songs, and told jokes.... After my father and mother were hurt in a fire, I took a gunny sack and picked up all kinds of junk up and down alleys, which I sold at our city junk yard. I made enough to eat on. I slept in our ganhouse which is described in my book, Bound for Glory. I got a job washing and polishing spittoons to pay rent on a shoe shine chair in a pool hall and barber shop and averaged from \$7 to \$13 a week, which sum was big money back in those days.

(This quotation and the following quotations about Oklahoma and Texas are from an unpublished and undated manuscript, circa 1951, in the TRO Richmond Music archives titled "Woody Guthrie, by Me." The misspelled words are Woody's style; to put *sic* after each would be distracting.)

For two years, he lived with the Sam White family—thirteen people in a two-room house—and at the end of his junior year of high school, in May 1929, Woody left Okemah for Pampa, Texas. He wrote:

I left Okemah after working at a hotel nights and going to school days, working at a tailor shop, a drug store, selling papers, and a few odd jobs entertaining.... My dad wanted me to come out to the high cow country (where the oil fields were just newly moving).... [He] wrote me several letters begging me to come out to west Texas and get a job and go to school.... I hitch hiked from Okemah to Pampa, Tex.... I got a job in a domino hall, washing off tables between games, selling root beer, and selling Jamaica Ginger, (a so called patented medicine 99.99% pure alcohol) which is described more fully in my book Bound for Glory. I got drunk on the Jamaica Ginger and lost my root beer job.

The exact date that Charley took a job managing a row of "old rotten wooden firetrap buildings" isn't known, but it became Woody's responsibility to:

...see to it that you found the right bed at night and the right door out the next morning, and to clean up rooms, collect room rents, kill rats, and argue with roaches, bedbugs, flies, and ants, bugs, termites of all kinds which had a habit of living in our

rooms, cafes, stores, somehow without registering on the books or paying rent. This was the hardest and the dirtiest and the best job that I had got ahold of so far.

Woody enrolled in the Pampa high school; he did not graduate. To his credit his intellectual curiosity was not limited to the standard high school curriculum, for with Charley's support Woody studied many correspondence or "mail order" courses. According to Woody he studied *...law, medicine, religion, literature, gambling, magnetic healing, mind reading, metaphysics, telepathy, hypnotism, psychology, animal breeding, soil recovery and conversion, zoology, botany, general science, osis's and isms, ology's of all sorts and kinds. I looked through the microscope of an old Doctor there at half of the slimey waters and ooze, spittles, juices, salivas, and bloods, to see the germs, plasms, amebas, protozoas, protoplasm, politicians, and gangsters, and people at work. I prepared myself for the priesthood and applied at the Catholic Church there, but canceled my date and went off with a fiddling uncle of mine, Jeff Guthrie....*

While it is probable that many of his Pampa friendships came from his high school involvement, he also developed a broad kinship of friends by just being himself and through the hard times and broadening difficulties of the Great Depression that others shared. And his

relationship with his Uncle Jeff was more than genetic—he, too, loved music and taught Woody additional musical skills. But it was his friendship with Matt Jennings, another Oklahoman who had moved to Pampa with his parents, and with Cluster Baker that had the greatest influence on him. They were the Corn-cob Trio: Matt played the fiddle, Cluster was a good guitarist, and Woody played the harmonica, the mandolin, and other instruments. They played for house dances and other small events, and by 1936 with the addition of three more members and uniforms (chaps, cowboy hats, and shirts) became the Junior Chamber of Commerce band in Pampa. But even before the band grew, Woody fell in love with Matt Jennings's sister, Mary.

In October 1933, when Woody was twenty-one and Mary Jennings considerably younger, they were married and soon were traveling with his Uncle Jeff and Aunt Allene and a tent show from a west Texas ranch to entertain a few small gatherings; with Matt and the Corn-cob Trio they played additional shows:

I got married to an Irish farm girl by the name of Mary Jennings.... Her brother, Matt, played the fiddle, and we traveled around together and worked all the fairs, centennials, picnics, rodeos, carnivals, and pie suppers, ranch dances, banquets, etc., etc., in that whole part of the country. We played all over the oil fields at the shack

towns of the oil workers, and in the Company camps, in saloons, road houses, (throwing our hats down on the floor and playing and singing for our tips).



In 1935, he also wrote and completed his first collection of songs, *Alonzo M. Zilch's Own Collection Of Original Songs And Ballads* (a copy that contains both typed and handwritten songs is in the Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress). One of the songs is a parody of the 1934 popular song "Ole Faithful"; Woody's lyrics reflect his humor and indicate his awareness and concern about the plight of farmers during the drought/Depression years:

Old Rachel!

*We'll starve to death together.
Old Rachel!
My wheat won't stand this weather.
When the harvest days are over—
We'll turn the property over
To the bank. Old Rachel, pal o' mine.
His "Parody to Home on the Range" is another example:
O, leave me alone
Said his darling, his own,
I'm not in the humor to play;
He was amazed when he heard
Her discouraging words—
He decided he'd better not stay.
Strange, strange, it is strange
She was getting more stubborn each day;
All that he heard was discouraging words,
And her love, it was fading each day.*

Not all of his early efforts were parodies—"Cowboy's Philosophy," dated April 1935, was a very good poem—but most of the entries are humorous. The last page is a theme song, which indicates that the trio did sing some of the songs on a radio show (there was a small, unlicensed "garage" radio station in Pampa in 1935); and this collection may have been used by the Corn-cob Trio as their lyrics book.

Hard times were everywhere in the Texas Panhandle. The Great Depression was taking its toll on the people. Cotton, which had been a staple agricultural crop for a century, had lost its value in competition with foreign cotton—

cotton was no longer king anywhere in this nation. Wheat had become the major cash crop after World War I, but crops were dying in the fields due to the lack of rain. Tractors and other forms of mechanization were making migratory farm labor and tenant/sharecropper farmers unnecessary. Suitcase farmers, men who lived in town with regular paying jobs and ran their tractors over the fields on weekends, were displacing the professional or "lifetime dedicated" farmers. Roosevelt's farm policy helped the land owners but ignored the tenant/sharecroppers. (Tenant farmers usually owned livestock and farm implements, and received a larger share of the year's profits—and in some cases paid rent for the land and got all of the profits; sharecroppers owned nothing and provided only labor in exchange for housing and a small percentage of the annual profits.) By 1935, these combined problems had an even greater impact on Woody's Oklahoma friends and farmers than they did in Texas. Displaced Anglo cotton farmers, basically tenant and sharecropper farmers, migrated west looking for work and became known as "Okies"—a derogatory term in many western states even today. African Americans from southern states migrated to northern cities and became factory laborers. Woody eventually became a voice for both groups of workers.

The dust storms eventually became the focal point for all victims. They did not recognize or

understand the economic, technological, or socio-logical events taking place, but they could see the dust storms; thus, drought became the visible enemy and was blamed for all problems. Woody was no different from his neighbors and friends; he believed what he could see, hear, and comprehend:

I got to where I could look at the dust hanging up in the sky and tell you just what state it was blowing in from. It got so dark at times that you couldn't see a meal on your table nor find a dollar in your pocket.... Even the old settlers thought it was the end of the world because the men had insulted the soil of the earth and the winds of the sky with their low down hateful, mean, and stealing ways.

The worst dust storm in the known history of the Great Plains region was Sunday, 14 April 1935. It started as a bright, clear day with almost record-high temperatures throughout the southern high plains as the faithful gathered in their churches once again to pray for rain. By late afternoon the skies were darkened, not by rain clouds but by the "black blizzard" traveling in a southerly direction. Death, destruction, damage, and injury were inflicted as total darkness that lasted over forty minutes traveled with the blizzard. Temperatures fell over 30 degrees within a few minutes' time; the relative humidity decreased to less than 10 percent. Topsoil from the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas was driven at a velocity of 40 to 70 miles an hour; the billow-

ing cloud was rolling like "a great wall of muddy water." Estimates were that the "black blizzard" was nearly 500 miles wide. This is the dust storm that Woody describes in his interview with Alan Lomax on his Library of Congress recordings, but Woody was not overly disturbed by the event and times. He had already experienced hard times during "good times," and considering all that happened in 1935, it was a fairly good year for him.

Woody's family obligations were growing, for in November 1935 their first daughter, Gwendolyn, was born. During those Pampa years, Woody not only made money with his music, but also painted signs and did other art work. However, not much money made its way to the support of his family; Mary's parents carried that basic responsibility. Woody spent freely what little he earned, or he might give his money to someone he thought needed it more than he did. He also would leave town hobnobbing his way around the region, so he became known as a likeable, irresponsible husband/father figure. His wanderlust was understood neither by family or friends nor by Woody himself, but it often drew him away from home and responsibilities.

By 1937, Woody had developed a strong desire to become a country music performer. He and his friends were listening to recordings of Jimmie Rodgers and other "hillbilly" performers, but for Woody the most influential group

was the Carter Family. He listened to their recordings, and their Mexican "border radio" station broadcasts could be heard in Pampa at night. Woody patterned his guitar style after the Carter Family style and eventually used many of their tunes, which were often traditional tunes, as the basis for his melodies. And during those years, he also learned an amazing number of traditional songs to complement the country songs. This collection reflects the influence of this material learned in the 1930s, some of it in California.

In the early summer of 1937, Woody suddenly said that he was going to California; he had already made one westward trip, and with Mary expecting delivery of their second child within a few weeks, he decided that his future was in California. Matt Jennings drove him to the edge of Pampa and let him out of the car on Highway 60 (now designated in Texas as the Woody Guthrie Memorial Highway) that took him to Amarillo and Highway 66. He thumbed his way to Los Angeles, where he had relatives with whom he could stay. When their second child, Sue, arrived in July, Woody was already in California.

Not long after arriving in Los Angeles, he teamed up with his cousin Jack Guthrie. Jack was younger than Woody, born 13 November 1915, in Olive, Oklahoma; his family had moved often before settling in California. His birth name was Leon Jerry Guthrie, but he did

not like either name and became "Jack" and "Oklahoma." He, too, worked at a wide variety of jobs—for a few years he was a rodeo cowboy, until a back injury took him out of the arena—but he was a songwriter and had the great desire to be a western entertainer. Jack was taller than Woody; both were slim and good-looking, and each had a distinctively different musical style. Jack played the guitar, fiddle, and bass fiddle, and developed his style upon that of Jimmie Rodgers, including yodeling. As previously stated, Woody was influenced by the Carter Family. The differences posed no problems, for each respected the other, and they did not attempt to sing duets; each merely backed the other while he was performing. They presented an excellent, entertaining musical show, and were featured with the popular Beverly Hill Billies on a few shows. Jack wrangled a radio show for them over KFVD, Hollywood, and on 19 July 1937, they played their first show—"The Oklahoma and Woody Show." It was a well-received fifteen-minute show that Woody later said gave them "enough prestige around the saloons to ask for a Two Dollar guarantee" instead of the "lousy" one dollar most singers received.

We played and sang in every door that had a neon sign above it from Tia Juana, Mexico, up to Chico, California. Leon Jack Guthrie (a cowboy yodeler and truck driver, roof shingler, house painter, yard fixer, tree

pruner, gravel shoveler, mechanic, horse borrower, joint hopper, etc., etc.) and me played on a radio station for fifteen minutes a day for several months....

Jack was married and had a young son to support; unlike Woody, he genuinely was dedicated to supporting his family, and worked a daytime construction job. He decided that the schedule they were keeping was too much for him; therefore, he left the show. Woody asked Maxine "Lefty Lou" Crissman to join him. She was a daughter of a friend of Jack's who worked on the construction site with him; Jack had introduced Woody to the family, and they were often together in the evening making music. Maxine harmonized well with Woody, so Woody chose her to be his singing partner. The show became "The Woody and Lefty Lou Show." Jack occasionally would join them on a show.

Woody and Lefty Lou became an immediate hit. The fan letters poured into the station, and soon their air time was expanded to thirty minutes. By then Woody had sent for Mary and their children to join him; it looked as if he might have a future as a country radio singer. In fact, Woody's future looked so promising that Uncle Jeff, Aunt Allene, and other family members who wanted to be radio singers moved to California wanting Woody to use them on the show—which he did.

One afternoon while waiting as Lefty Lou prepared for the radio show, Woody was on the

back porch tuning an instrument. A little neighbor came in and asked, "Where did you come from, Mister?" Woody replied, "I come from the Oklahoma hills." He then went in the house and asked for pencil and paper, and within fifteen minutes had written one of his best-known songs, "Oklahoma Hills." Woody never did record it, but Jack did. Woody and Lefty Lou often sang the song during their show, and Jack would join them when he could. Jack learned it during those shows, but the lyrics of the chorus were slightly different from those in the popular version. Apparently, over a period of years Jack smoothed it into a better song. Lefty Lou's sister Ruth and Jack were close friends; Ruth put up the money for Jack to record the song in 1944 for Capitol Records. When released in 1945, it quickly moved to the top of the charts and became a number one hit, and Jack became a potential star. Unfortunately, in early 1948, Jack died from tuberculosis. The copyright states that both Woody and Jack wrote the song, for, indeed, Jack made important changes and popularized it—but Woody wrote it.

With Mary and their children with him and with a popular radio show, it looked as if Woody had found his calling in life. "The Woody and Lefty Lou Show" was considered to be the most popular KFVD show, and it was the time in radio history when song folios were sold over the air waves. Woody decided to compile a song book, so he typed a thirty-page collection of his

original songs and a few "old" songs and had it mimeographed. Then he and Mary with their daughter's help assembled and stapled the copies. It was titled *Woody and Lefty Lou's Favorite Collection: Old Time Hill Billy Songs*.

The legendary Cliffe Stone had a disc jockey show, "Wake Up Ranch," five mornings each week over KFVD and recalled, "The station owner, J. Frank Burke, came in and said, 'We have this fellow who works for nothing, just sells his book—give him a plug.' Woody always came in early with his guitar and little harmonica. We all sat around and laughed at him, but it turned out to be a great live show. Her voice was a natural, true voice, and she sang harmony to him. He had a great mail pull, used to sell 50, 60, 70 books a morning." The demand was so great for the song book that Burke had it printed under a modified title with the KFVD logo on the cover.

Their popularity continued to increase, so the station increased the show to thirty minutes and paid them twenty dollars a week. The important thing was that they were letting Woody sing and say anything he wanted, but popularity and success created other demands:

We quit KFVD, L.A., and moved down to XELO, Tia Juana, Mexico, where we signed a contract with the United Drugs Trades Products Corporation...where I got \$45 a week, and Lefty Lou got \$30. We moved our families and relatives, four carloads of us,



down to San Diego, and drove to work every day across the border to Tia Juana. I refused to pay the chief of police, mayor, sheriff, and a few judges and lawyers a cut out of my \$45 a week, and they called me a 'communist,' and ran me out of the country after one week. We applied for a Passport Permit to work.... They held up the issuance of these, and we were about to get jailed. My uncle Jeff Guthrie, his wife and family, my cousin Leon, Lefty Lou and her sister, mother and father, and myself, my wife and children were all caught over the border one night and threatened with arrest.... [T]hey let everybody else go back home excepting me. They held me for a few hours asking me questions, then they told me that I was a

'communist' again, and to get out of the country. I told them, "Well, boys, I don't even know what a communist is. I never did see one to know him. I don't even know what that means, but I'll tell you one thing, now! I'm going back up to Los Angeles and get my job back on KFVD and work 30 minutes a day up there, and me and Lefty Lou is both going to tell the whole world about this crooked bunch of robbers that steal the people's money.... And as far as the 'communist' goes, I'm going to go and look till I find out what they are, and I'm going to join up with them and be one of them for the rest of my life!" (I said this back over my shoulder from the American side of the gate.)

...Lefty Lou and me went back to KFVD and they put us back on the air for an HOUR a day, 30 minutes early in the morning, and 30 minutes at midnight. We got more than twenty thousand letters from farmers, town workers, movie workers, ships at sea, gold prospectors, desert rats, dude ranches, mountain lodges, slums, skid rows, tenements, churches, school houses, and people of all colors and kinds.

As their popularity increased, it seems that Woody started reacting against it, as he had done when he received support and encouragement from his father. With a successful radio show as his platform, he decided that he should speak out more against the evils in life; accord-

ing to Mary in later years, Woody was always working for those who had very little means. Woody was becoming an expresser of political beliefs, for he was listening to Mike Quinn and other voices heard on KFVD. But then the Crissmans decided to leave the Los Angeles area.

Lefty Lou finally went up north to Chico where her dad and mama got a little rent farm. I bummed around with them for a while and then I saw so much crooked work and starvation going on all around me that I drifted back down to Los Angeles after a while and got back on KFVD once again. This time by myself. Just me, my harmonica, and my old guitar.

Will Geer and Cisco Houston had met while working in a little theater group; they had similar political beliefs and became friends. They heard Woody during one of his radio shows and decided to go meet him. Woody and Cisco created a singing duo that lasted for nearly twelve years. Born in Delaware, Gilbert "Cisco" Houston was a well-known singer in his own right (see Smithsonian Folkways 40059). Cisco's steady guitar and vocals frequently helped Woody keep a regular rhythm and a fixed pitch. Will Geer, who would later be better known as playing Grandpa Walton on television during the 1970s, wanted to get a group of entertainers to travel around performing free shows for migratory workers in their camps as well as in the government camps.

So we drove all over the mountains and deserts in my \$45 1931 Chevrolet until it finally shook completely to pieces. It heaved its last quiver up on top of that high mountain pass that runs from Los Angeles, 150 miles over to Bakersfield. We saw lots of the Vigilante (Deputy Thug) Patrolmen at work with their brass knucks, billies, hoses, lead pipes, axe and pick handles, and sawed off shotguns, as well as gas bombs, and sub machine guns turned against the working people in order to try to make them work cheaper. After several months of this traveling and keeping the radio program going too, Will went back to New York to go to work as Jeeter Lester in the play, Tobacco Road....

Woody was becoming more outspoken about what he perceived to be the evils and ills in society, but he and the KFVD owner had a falling out—probably over Woody's unreliability. In late 1939, Woody, Mary, and now three children returned to Pampa, but Woody had already decided to try New York City.
(*To be continued on Volume 3*)

For more information about Woody Guthrie's work with Moses Asch, please consult Volume 1 in this series as well as *Woody Guthrie, Long Ways to Travel: The Unreleased Folkways Masters, 1944–1949* (Smithsonian Folkways 40046).

NOTES ON THE SONGS

1. MULESKINNER BLUES

(Blue Yodel #8)

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal; Pete Seeger, banjo (Words and music by Jimmie Rodgers and George Vaughn; words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; Asch Records A432, 78rpm, 432-1A, recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 12; mastered from 78)

First recorded by Jimmie Rodgers on 11 July 1930 in Hollywood, California, and released as Victor V 23503 (now available on Rounder Records 1060), this Rodgers song is generally considered to be the highlight of his Blue Yodel series; it became a standard bluegrass and country music number with singers as diverse as Woody Guthrie, Bill Monroe, and Dolly Parton recording it. Rodgers, known as "The Singing Brakeman," "The Father of Country Music," and "The Blue Yodeler," was the son of a railroad man and grew up around rail yards learning the language, lore, and songs of that work force. As Rodgers worked frequently with Black railroad workers, it is possible that this song had its origin in African-American traditional song; at least some of the lyrics appear in modified form in traditional songs. Since Rodgers's recordings were popular among Blacks as well as Whites, it is also probable that some of his lyrics entered African-American tra-

dition (see: Nolan Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979], Norm Cohen, *Long Steel Rail* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981], and Dorothy Horstman, *Sing Your Heart Out, Country Boy*, 3rd ed. [Nashville: Country Music Foundation Press, 1996, p. 317]).

The basic differences between Jimmie Rodgers's and Woody's versions are that Woody rarely yodeled, which was a trademark of Rodgers; also, when Woody's version is printed as couplets, the first line is repeated, making it a three-line verse. Rodgers also sings two additional verses. This is a rare, but not unique, example of Woody using a Rodgers's song. It is also one of only a few songs recorded with Pete Seeger. For lyrics see: Woody Guthrie, *Woody Guthrie Folk Songs* (New York: Ludlow Music, 1963, p. 209) and *The Collected Reprints from Sing Out! Volumes 1–6* (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out Corporation, 1990, p. 34).

2. WRECK OF THE OLD 97

Woody Guthrie, vocal; Cisco Houston, guitar (Words and music by Henry Whitter, Charles Noell, and Fred Lewey; words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; from *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2* [Folkways Records FA 2484]; recording date and matrix unknown; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 087, 10" aluminum-based disc)

In the early days of the recording industry,

the record company, the composer of the song, and the publisher made most of the money; the performer, as a general rule, made the advance he or she got, and usually not much more. With many public domain songs that are given a new life and generate large amounts of revenue, individuals emerge from all walks of life claiming to be the composer. Such is the case of "The Wreck of Old 97." In December 1923, hill-billy music pioneer Henry Whitter recorded his version of "The Wreck on the Southern Old 97." His recording was soon followed by the North Carolina blind singer, Ernest Thompson, recording a slightly different version for Columbia, and in May 1924, Vernon Dalhart recorded Whitter's version for Edison. (Vernon Dalhart was the stage/recording name for Marion Try Slaughter, a Texan who became a popular and light opera singer in New York City and who eventually recorded under at least 110 names.) The Edison recording sold well enough for Dalhart to persuade Victor to record it as the flip side of the immensely popular "Prisoner's Song;" the recording was thus the first hill-billy/country music recording to sell over one million copies. Dalhart also recorded it for over ten different labels, so the claims for composing or owning the rights to "The Wreck of Old 97" multiplied. Sheet music claiming Henry Whitter, Charles W. Noell, and Fred J. Lewey as composers was published, but litigation eventually ended in court with RCA Victor pit-

ted against David Graves George's claim as the composer. In January 1940, the U.S. Supreme Court denied a rehearing of the case that had been decided in favor of Victor. For the complete story, see: Norm Cohen, *Long Steel Rail* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981, pp. 197-226); Cohen starts his study by stating the song is a parody of Henry Clay Work's popular 1865 song, "The Ship That Never Return'd."

Although the tragedy was obscured by the song and litigation, indeed Number 97, a mail train that ran between Washington and Atlanta on the Southern Railway in the early 1900s, was wrecked. When the engineer, Joseph A. "Steve" Broady, took the controls on Sunday, 27 September 1903, in Monroe, Virginia, they were one hour behind schedule. In his attempt to make up the time, combined with a lack of knowledge about the track, Broady literally flew the train off the tracks near Danville, Virginia, killing himself and eight others—perfect material for a tragic ballad.

Woody does not sing the usual place names associated with the event, and there is no documentation about when and where he learned it. He did use the melody and general structure for the "Wreck of the 1939" in his unpublished manuscript, "Songs of Woody Guthrie," Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress, 1941, p. 38.

3. SALLY GOODIN'

(also spelled: "Sally Gooden" and "Sally Goodwin")

Woody Guthrie, vocal/fiddle; Cisco Houston, guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica
[From *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2* (Folkways Records FA 2484); recorded 24 April 1944, matrix MA 713; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 449, 10" shellac disc)

The fiddle is usually associated with dancing—a wide variety of dancing; thus, it is known as the "devil's box" and by other sobriquets. The fiddle was *the* musical instrument that helped open each frontier as our nation expanded westward; if the government ever declared an official national folk instrument, it would have to be the fiddle, for it knows no ethnic boundaries or age barriers and requires no formal education to play and/or appreciate. The traditional tunes and/or variants of well-known tunes that are considered fiddle tunes are limitless, for each fiddler is an individualist and does to the tune what he wants to do. Woody's Uncle Jeff, his best friend Matt Jennings, and his cousin Jack all played the fiddle. It was only natural that Woody would gain some knowledge and skill at playing it. However, to say that he was a good fiddler would be exaggerating, for he was only fair at fiddling.

Woody had the style and tone of an old-time fiddler, and the expression "sawin' on the fiddle" was an appropriate description. The use of

the bow has much, much to do with the tone of the music; old-time fiddlers generally use about one-third of the upper end of the bow, while western swing fiddlers use the "long bow" technique—the entire length of the bow. Woody had limited bowing skill and used a stiff, sawing technique.

A breakdown is a fast tempo tune to which a single dancer can clog or jig; "Sally Goodin'" is usually considered to be a Southern fiddle breakdown tune. Woody's lyrics follow the traditional ones. This recording is enhanced considerably by Sonny Terry's harmonica. "Sally Goodin'" recorded as a solo fiddle tune by a Texan, A.C. "Eck" Robertson, on 1 July 1922 in New York City by Victor Records (Vi 18596), was the first commercial recording of what is now considered to be "country music." For more information about the fiddle, see: Alan Jabour, "Fiddle Music," in *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Jan Harold Brunvand (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996, pp. 253-256).

4. LITTLE BLACK TRAIN

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; from *Bed On the Floor* [Verve Folkways FV/FVS 9007], reissued as *Poor Boy* [Folkways Records FT 1010 and 31010]; recorded April 1944, matrix MA 137; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 3789, 10" shellac disc)

The song is attributed to the Carter Family,

yet little is known about its origin. It is generally considered to be an African-American gospel song; it has the often-used "black train to carry you away" imagery. This is the language of the hell-fire-damnation frontier preacher or, in the twentieth century, the holy-roller preacher. In fact, the few citations listing the song are all from after the turn of the century, but Norm Cohen in *Long Steel Rail* states that he believes it was composed in the late 1800s. Nevertheless, it was and is equally popular among Black and White singers.

The first recording of it was "Death's Black Train Is Coming" in 1926 by The Reverend J. M. Gates, an African-American minister from Atlanta who recorded "sermons with singing." Two years later the first hillbilly recording was made by Emry and Henry Arthur for the Brunswick Company, but the Carter Family did not record it until 1935 for American Record Corporation—not issued until 1937 as ARC 7-07-62. Most of Woody's lyrics are near enough to the Carters' to indicate a definite influence, but he had to have written some—they do not appear in the known variants. They even differ from the lyrics he typed in the unpublished manuscript "Songs of Woody Guthrie," Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress, 1941, p. 132.

*Your million dollar fortune, your mansion
glittering white,
You can't take it with you when the train*

rolls in tonight.

Get ready for your Savior, and fix your business right.

You've got to ride that Little Black Train and make that final ride.

At places in the recording, it sounds as if Sonny Terry plays a subtle harmonica melody line, but it probably is Woody's guitar harmonics. For additional information, see: Norm Cohen, *Long Steel Rail* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981, pp. 625-628) and Newman I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, reprint 1965, pp. 65-66).

5. WHO'S GONNA SHOE YOUR PRETTY LITTLE FEET

(alternate titles: "Green Valley Waltz," "Green Valley Waltz Blues," and many others)
Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; Asch Records A432, 78rpm, 432-4 B, reissued on *Bed On the Floor* [Verve Folkways FV/FVS 9007], reissued as *Poor Boy* [Folkways Records FT 1010 and 31010]; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 27; mastered from 78)

Generally considered to be a Southern folk song with roots in the "ancient" Scots ballad, "The Lass of Roch Royal" (Child 76), the regionalized version has lost the narrative and drama of the original ballad that was documented as early as 1790. It is the story of Lady Margaret

taking her illegitimate son to see his father, Lord Gregory. While Lord Gregory is sleeping, his mother tells Margaret that he is gone. Margaret with her son gets in a small boat intending to find Gregory; when a storm capsizes the boat, they both drown. Gregory awakens and sees them drown; the tragedy also kills him. The line "Who will shoe my bonny feet?" became a commonly used song motif. Thus, hundreds of traditional songs can claim kinship to this old Scots ballad.

Woody knew the lyrics as "Them Green Valley Blues" at least by 1938, and included the song in his unpublished manuscript "Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938. The lyrics he sang at that time are slightly different; the addition of "...on the train and gone" almost makes it a train song. The earliest recordings of this variant type were titled "Green Valley Waltz," with the first to be issued by the McCartt Brothers & Patterson (Columbia 15454-D), 1928. By 1936, twelve additional groups playing and singing it were recorded, including one under the title "Hyter's Favorite Waltz." The first recording to use the title "Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Feet" was by the Renfro Valley Boys (Paramount 3321), March 1932. For additional information and lyrics, see: Alan Lomax, *The Folk Songs of North America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1960, pp. 200-

201, 216), MacEdward Leach, *The Ballad Book* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955, pp. 253-256), and *The Collected Reprints from Sing Out! Vols. 1-6* (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out Corp., 1990, p. 101).

6. BALTIMORE TO WASHINGTON

Woody Guthrie, vocal/harmony/guitar; Cisco Houston, vocal/harmony/guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; from *Bed On the Floor* [Verve Folkways FV/FVS 9007], reissued as *Poor Boy* [Folkways Records FT 1010 and 31010]; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 39; mastered from analog master for FT 31010)

This variant of "Cannonball Blues" and "White House Blues" appears to be a combination of Woody's lyrics blended with more traditional phrases. It is probable that Woody learned the melody from listening to the Carter Family, for "The Cannonball" was issued in 1930 with A.P. Carter singing it as a solo (Victor V40317), and they were singing it through the 1930s on their radio shows. The Carter Family song is a variant of "White House Blues" as first recorded by Charlie Poole and His North Carolina Ramblers, issued in 1926 (Columbia 15099-D) (see Smithsonian Folkways 40090). Poole's version stems from African-American blues that were composed about the assassination of President McKinley on 6 September 1901 at the Pan American

Exposition in Buffalo, New York—thus, the line used by the Carters and others, “From Buffalo to Washington.” But Woody changed his version to “Baltimore to Washington,” and he sings a more lyrical song than is usually found in the blues. Woody also used the melody for songs such as “Lindbergh” and “My Dirty Overhauls.”

For more information about “Cannonball/White House Blues,” see: Norm Cohen, *Long Steel Rail* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981, pp. 413-425) and Neil V. Rosenberg, “The ‘White House Blues’—‘McKinley’—‘Cannonball Blues’ Complex: A Biblio-Discography,” *John Edwards Memorial Foundation Newsletter 4* (June 1968) 10, pp. 45-58. Woody included it as “Cannon Ball Blues” in his unpublished manuscript “Woody & Lefty Lou’s One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs,” dated April 1938, and in that version the Carter Family influence is definite.

7. RUBBER DOLLY

(alternate titles: “Back Up and Push,” “Rubber Doll Rag,” and others)

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica

(Unreleased alternate version; recording date unknown; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 075, 10" aluminum-based disc)

In the 1930s and early 1940s in Oklahoma,

if a group of small boys decided that a young girl liked or was “sweet on” a boy, they would sing this song to her to make her life miserable. The age of this traditional song has not been determined, and it has traveled through tradition as both a song and an instrumental tune. As an instrumental *tune* it is considered to be a Southern fiddle breakdown that is also known by the title “Back Up and Push.” As an instrumental song it can be sung up-tempo, but is usually slowed a little as Woody and Cisco did in their version. Also, Cisco plays a lead guitar break, which was not common in their recording sessions.

The first recording using the “Rubber Dolly” title was by Uncle Bud Landress and the Georgia Yellow Hammers, playing and singing “The Rubber Doll Rag” (Victor V40252), recorded in late 1929 and issued in September 1930.

8. 21 YEARS

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar
(Words and music by Bob Miller; previously unissued; from Smithsonian reel-to-reel tape 93; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 50; mastered from analog tape 093)

This was a popular early 1930s country music recording that was soon collected by a few folk song scholars; it was assumed to be traditional, and G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., even classified it as a Native American Ballad (a

ballad which is native to America), “About Criminals and Outlaws.” However, it was a song written and recorded by Bob Miller in 1930. Miller was a composer, author, singer, and publisher, who was born in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1895. He was a musical child prodigy, becoming a professional pianist at the age of ten, and later moved to New York City, where he wrote and recorded most of his songs. He wrote under many pseudonyms, and his songs include “Leven Cent Cotton, Forty Cent Meat,” “Chime Bells,” “There’s a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere,” “Seven Years with the Wrong Woman,” and hundreds more.

He wrote and published two or three versions of this song in which a prisoner is serving “21 Years” for a murder he did not commit in order to protect the woman he loves; he is asking her to go to the governor and get him a “pardon” or even a parole. He realizes she does not love him and tells all young men, “Don’t bet on the wrong kind of woman, you’re beat if you do,” for “twenty-one years, boys, is a mighty long time.” One version has the young woman telling the story. Miller also wrote “Twenty-One Years—Part 2,” “New Twenty-One Years,” “Answer to Twenty-One Years,” “Ninety-Nine Years,” and “Answer to Ninety-Nine Years.”

Miller and Barney Burnett recorded the first song on 21 March 1930 (Gennett 7220), and within a few months many other popular country singers had recorded it: Lester McFar-

land and Robert Gardner (Mac & Bob), Riley Puckett, Carson Robison, Frank Luther, Edward L. Crain, Asher Sizemore, and later Marc Williams. When and where Woody learned it are not known, but his verses are fairly true to Miller’s. However, he changes their sequence. At one point, Woody inserts a line taken from Lead Belly’s song “I’m Going Home to Mary” featuring the lyric, “If I had that governor where the governor got me, by Tuesday morning that governor’d be free.” “I’m Going Home to Mary” is the song that Lead Belly supposedly sang to Governor Pat Neff to gain his release from a Texas prison, although later research indicates he was released for good behavior. In his unpublished manuscript, “Woody & Lefty Lou’s One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs,” dated April 1938, Woody wrote: “Another Ringer! Another Hit of Hits! Twenty One Years! Will live Twenty one Hundred years! Jest naturally got what it takes to make its way into yore heart and find a permanent home.” Woody liked the song.

Although the selection begins abruptly, this is the only remaining recording of Woody and Cisco singing this song; the acetate master no longer exists.

9. SOWING ON THE MOUNTAIN

(alternate title: "Sow'em on the Mountain")
Woody Guthrie, harmony vocal (bass line);
Cisco Houston, lead vocal/guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie;
from *Lonesome Valley* [Folkways FA2010];
recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 30; mas-
tered from Smithsonian Acetate 112, 10" glass
acetate disc)

This recording marks one of the rare times
when Woody sings harmony to Cisco; he sings
the bass line harmony, while Cisco plays the
guitar and sings the lead line. The label for this
song on *Lonesome Valley* states "Cisco Houston
and Woody Guthrie," and they sing a strong
church-influenced harmony. This Southern
White gospel song was first recorded by the
Carter Family on 25 November 1930 (Victor
23585), and was not recorded again until 1938
by the Coon Creek Girls. It apparently was not
widely known. For the lyrics, see: *The Collected
Reprints from Sing Out! Vols. 1-6* (Bethlehem,
PA: Sing Out Corp., 1990, pp. 308-309).

10. BED ON THE FLOOR

(alternate titles: "Bed on Your Floor," "Make Me
a Pallet on Your Floor," and other variations)
Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco
Houston, harmony vocal/guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie;
from *Bed On the Floor* [Verve Folkways FV/FVS
9007], reissued as *Poor Boy* [Folkways Records

FT 1010 and 31010]; recorded 19 April 1944,
matrix MA 45, Smithsonian Acetate 092; mas-
tered from analog master FT 31010)

This is one of those songs that seems famil-
iar, and yet rarely is it mentioned in folk song
books. It appears on many blues and jazz
albums, though—in fact, W.C. Handy used it in
some of his works. After Woody and Cisco
recorded it and sang it around the urban folk
scene, it seemed to spread among folk singers.

Its roots are in Southern African-American
music traditions, particularly among the blues-
men. One narrative in Alan Lomax's *The Land
Where the Blues Began* (New York: Pantheon
Books, 1993, p. 415) states that when the man
is away from the house, the woman and her
younger lover always put a blanket on the floor
so as not to mess up the bed:

*Make me down a pallet on yo flo', (3 times)
Now make it so yo man won't never know.*

And other informants in his book mention the
song; also, see: Howard W. Odum and Guy B.
Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs* (Chapel
Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1925).

Woody first heard this played on a phono-
graph in the Crystal Theater in Okemah, Okla-
homa, when he was a boy; he and Cisco gave
an unusual twist to the introduction and end-
ing, for they do a relatively poor-quality imita-
tion of Jimmie Rodgers's yodeling. It does show
that Cisco was a better yodeler than Woody.
Country musicians were recording it in the late

1920s and 1930s—the first being the Leake
County Revelers in 1928 (Columbia 15264-D).
Woody included it with his own lyrics in his
mimeographed songbook, *Ten of Woody
Guthrie's Songs: Book One* (3 April 1945, pp. 3
& 12). For lyrics as sung by Cisco (basically the
same as this version), see: *The Collected
Reprints from Sing Out! Vols. 1-6* (Bethlehem,
PA: Sing Out Corp., 1990, pp. 331).

11. TAKE A WHIFF ON ME

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/guitar; Cisco
Houston, harmony vocal/guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie;
from *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2*
[Folkways Records FA 2484]; recorded 19 April
1944, matrix MA 69; mastered from Smithsoni-
an Acetate 1425, 10" shellac disc)

John A. and Alan Lomax in *Folk Song
U.S.A.* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce,
1947, pp. 290-291) state that they collected
verses to this song in Texas, Louisiana, and
New York, indicating that it was widespread
among cocaine users. To them, it was a song
straight from the cities, from "the red light dis-
trict," "skidrows," "gambling hells," and "dens
of vice." "...It followed the cocaine habit out
into the levee camps and the country barrel-
houses of the Deep South." They point out that
there was a time when opium and cocaine
could be purchased at the drug store, and
songs about cocaine, like "Rye Whiskey" about

alcohol, were known nationally. The hopheads
(drug addicts) and snowbirds (cocaine users)
produced most of these songs, and while this
particular song had its origin in African-Amer-
ican song and imagery, it and cocaine had no
ethnic boundaries. However, when Charlie
Poole and The North Carolina Ramblers
recorded it in 1927, they changed it to "Take a
Drink on Me" (Columbia 15193-D).

12. STEPSTONE

(alternate titles: "Old Stepstone," "Dear Old
Stepstone," and "Goodbye to My Stepstone")
Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco
Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry,
harmonica; Bess Lomax Hawes, harmony vocal
(Words and music by J.O. Webster, from *Bed
On the Floor* [Verve Folkways FV/FVS 9007],
reissued as *Poor Boy* [Folkways Records FT
1010 and 31010]; recorded 25 April 1944,
matrix MA 94, Smithsonian Acetate 111; mas-
tered from analog master FT 31010)

This nineteenth-century sentimental parlor
song, written in 1880 by J.O. Webster, may
have appealed to Woody's often hidden senti-
mental side, for there is a sadness in his voice
as he sings. He included it in his unpublished
manuscript, "Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thou-
sand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One
Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938;
this may have been one of the songs his mother
played on the piano, but, if so, he makes no

mention of the fact. It was first recorded by Bascom Lamar Lunsford in 1928 (Brunswick 231), followed with recordings by Peg Leg Moreland, Ernest Stoneman & the Dixie Mountaineers, and the Floyd County Ramblers.

13. PUT MY LITTLE SHOES AWAY

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica
(Words by Samuel N. Mitchell and music by Charles E. Pratt; words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; from *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2* [Folkways Records FA 2484]; recorded 25 April 1944, matrix MA 81; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 186, 10" shellac disc)

Published in 1873, this sentimental parlor song retained its popularity well into the twentieth century, particularly among some bluegrass groups. It appeared in numerous song books prior to the turn of the century, at which time it had already entered oral tradition. The words have remained fairly close to Samuel Mitchell's originals; Woody sings a few word variations, moves lines within the verses, and he sings a slightly different chorus—and on the recording he leaves out a verse. The major difference is his melody. It is probable that this was a requested song on his KFVD radio show, for it is in his unpublished manuscript, "Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thousand and One Laffs and

Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938. He wrote: "I've went off to sleep a many a time to the sound of my Mother's voice a singing this good old song..."

The first recording was by Riley Puckett in 1927 (Columbia 15125-D), and was followed by Henry Whitter, Vernon Dalhart, Lester McFarland and Robert Gardner (Mac & Bob), Girls of the Golden West, Wilf Carter, the Chuck Wagon Gang, and others. Between 1927 and 1937, it was recorded at least sixteen times.

14. HEN CACKLE

(alternate titles: "Cacklin' Hen," "Old Hen Cackled," and others)
Woody Guthrie, fiddle; Cisco Houston, vocal/guitar

(Unreleased alternate version; recording date unknown, mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 561, 10" glass acetate disc)

This is a different version of "Hen Cackle" than the one Moses Asch released on *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2* (FW 2484); it is an instrumental. Woody attempts to make his fiddle sound like a cackling hen. This is another Southern fiddle breakdown that is widespread in popularity. Fiddlin' John Carson recorded it in 1923 (Okeh 4890), followed by Gid Tanner and Riley Puckett and at least ten others by 1928.

15. POOR BOY

(alternate titles: "Coon Can Game," "Gambling Man," "My Mother Called Me to Her Deathbed Side," "Boston Burglar," and "Ninety-Nine Years")

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; from *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2* [Folkways Records FA 2484]; even though the cover and liner notes text list the song as "Gambling Man," it is actually "Poor Boy"; also issued on *Bed On the Floor* [Verve Folkways FV/FVS 9007], reissued as *Poor Boy* [Folkways Records FT 1010 and 31010]; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 50; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 064, 10" shellac disc)

Woody may have learned this from B.F. Shelton's recording, "Cold Penitentiary Blues," recorded in 1927 (Victor V40107), for the opening is the same—the narrator was called to his mother's deathbed for a warning. The warning is ignored; he kills the man who ran away with his gal and who later left her. D.K. Wilgus in his liner notes for *Native American Ballads* (RCA Victor LPV-548, 1967) stated that this body of songs had "distinctive regional distribution," and that this variant was from Texas convicts, even though Shelton was not from Texas but from Kentucky. Therefore, it is also possible that Woody learned it from someone in the Pampa area; Woody's melody is the same as the traditional melody, only his lyrics vary.

The general theme is that of a jailhouse or penitentiary ballad; he tells his story of either killing his unfaithful girlfriend or the one with whom she ran away. In the "Coon-Can" variants, he sits down in a gambling game and sometimes kills a gambler. Coon-can (derived from the Mexican word and game *conquian*) is a card game (thus, "the gambling game") of rummy played by two or more people with two decks of cards using two jokers.

In 1926, Carl T. Sprague, a Texan, recorded his version under the title "Boston Burglar" (Victor 20534); other titles of variants followed including Shelton's: "I've Still Got Ninety-Nine," "Gamblin' Jim," "Poor Boy," etc.

16. STACKOLEE

(alternate titles: "Stagolee," "Stagger Lee," "Stack Lee," and others)

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; from *Bound For Glory* [Folkways Records 2481 78/1]; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 68; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 1423, 10" shellac disc)

This "Native American Ballad" (ballads native to America) grew out of the lore of Southern African Americans. Stackolee became a legend because he was big, tough, and mean—in fact, in one version of the song, the Devil does not even want him in hell. Memphis is where he loaded cotton and killed Billy de

Lyons over a Stetson hat; again, there are questions about what started the argument, but all Stackolee wanted was an excuse to kill.

Sung by blues singers for decades, there are numerous variants. Woody's story is the traditional story, but his lyrics vary from many available printed texts as well as the text in his unpublished manuscript, "Songs of Woody Guthrie," Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress, p. 127. For additional information, see: John A. and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1934, pp. 93-99).

17. JOHNNY HART

(alternate titles: "John Hardy," "John Hardy Was a Desperate Little Man," and "Johnny Harty")

Woody Guthrie, vocal/guitar
(Additional words and adaptation of words and music by Woody Guthrie; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 58; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 1422, 10" shellac disc)

John Hardy killed another man, Tom Bruce, over a small amount of money in a gambling game, either dice or cards. John A. and Alan Lomax, in *Folk Song U.S.A.* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947, p. 288), state that John Hardy went to a gambling table, "...slapped down his forty-five and said [to his gun], 'Now I want you to lay here and the first man who steals my money, I mean to kill him.'"

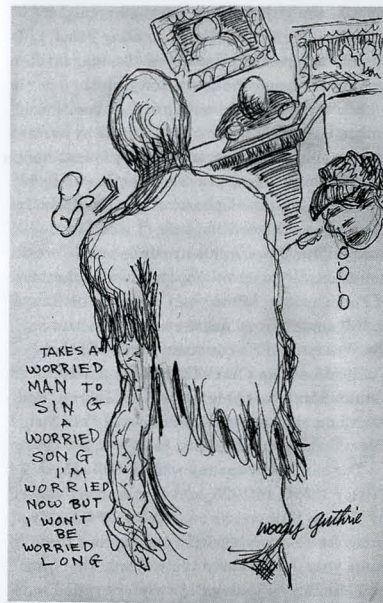
He was drinking heavily and started losing; he accused Bruce of stealing, so Bruce returned his money. Hardy picked up his pistol and shot him, saying, "Man, don't you know I wouldn't lie to my gun?" Hardy was tried for murder, found guilty, and hanged in Welch, McDowell County, West Virginia, on Friday, 19 January 1894.

It did not take long for a song to appear, for the story contains all the ingredients for a traditional ballad. Who wrote it is not known, but by 1924 it was being recorded, first by Eva Davis (Columbia 167-D). The following year Ernest V. Stoneman recorded it, followed by Buell Kazee, and in 1928 the Carter Family (see Smithsonian Folkways 40090) recorded it, which was probably Woody's source. In 1940, Woody used the melody for his powerful ballad, "Tom Joad." For lyrics, see: *The Collected Reprints from Sing Out! Vols. 7-12* (Bethlehem, PA: 1992, p. 130-131).

18. WORRIED MAN BLUES

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar
(A.P. Carter; words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 47; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 3791, 10" shellac disc)

As well known as this song is, it was not recorded until 24 May 1930 in Memphis, Tennessee, by the Carter Family (Victor V40317), and only two other groups recorded it in the



1930s. Woody learned it listening to the Carter Family, and its popularity seems to have come from his own influence on the urban folk music scene. The lyrics he sang for this take are almost identical to those he wrote in his unpublished manuscript, "Woody & Lefty Lou's

One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938; he also wrote:

What are the Links in the Chain of Trouble that shackles your legs so you caint follow the call of your ambition? Fear is a Link. Greed is a Link. Laziness is a Link. Ignorance is a Link. Hatred is a Link. Impatience is a Link. There are lots more of them. And they is an Axe that'll cut those Links—any of them, all of them, in one strong, determined, stroke. Friendship. Faith. Love. Call it whatever you want.

Woody could have been an amazingly successful evangelistic preacher.

Who composed this song and when are pure speculation. On 5 June 1930, a man named Joe McCoy registered a copyright for the words and music. On 30 October 1930, A.P. Carter, leader of the group, registered himself and Southern Music as the composer/publisher; and on 3 January 1933, a Walter Davis registered a copyright. As with other public domain songs, a little success brings many claims.

19. DANVILLE GIRL

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/guitar; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 40; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 448, 10" shellac disc)

The lyrics are from the "Poor Boy" family

and sung to the traditional "Cannonball Blues" melody. Pete Seeger in his *Bells of Rhymney* (New York: Oak Publications, 1964, p. 32) included his version of "Danville Girl" with some verses similar to those in Woody's version. Seeger stated: "This song is my own composition of half-a-dozen similar songs—among them some of the all-time favorite verses sung by hobos during the early years of this century." It is probable that Woody did the same thing in compiling his version.

For the lyrics, see: *The Collected Reprints from Sing Out! Vols. 7–12* (Bethlehem, PA: 1992, p. 105).

20. GAMBLING MAN

(alternate title: "The Roving Gambler")
Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 51; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 086, 10" shellac disc)

In this variant there are two song types: "The Roving Journeyman" and "I would not marry...." The "roving" songs have traveled around the world, and in the United States the rover became a gambler. They tell of a traveling man arriving in town and meeting and courting a girl or girls; and the girl tells her mother she loves him and runs away with him even though her mother objects. The "roving gambler" either

marries the girl, ending the song happily, or leaves her, gets in another gambling game, kills a man, and goes to prison. And the song is often localized to a specific community.

When the "I would not marry..." type is used within the song, it offers mild humor by allowing the singer to insert any occupation, although usually these verses provide no action and add nothing to the development of the story. Woody knew one version without the "I would not marry..." as typed in his unpublished manuscript, "Songs of Woody Guthrie," Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress, 1942, p. 180, and there is a different manuscript in the Woody Guthrie Archives, Woody Guthrie Publications, New York City. He probably obtained some of these lyrics from John A. and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1934, pp. 150–151).

The earliest recording was by Kelly Harrell (Victor 19596) in 1925, which was soon followed by Vernon Dalhart; he recorded it at least six times for as many recording companies the same year. In the early 1950s Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys even recorded it as a western swing dance tune.

21. RYE STRAW

Woody Guthrie, fiddle; Cisco Houston, guitar; Bess Lomax Hawes, mandolin
(Recording date and matrix undetermined, but possibly the "Fiddle Piece" 25 April 1944, matrix

MA 92; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 079, take 1, 10" glass acetate disc)

This is another example of Woody's fiddling style, and while it shows the same technique as "Sally Goodin," Woody seems to be a little more relaxed with this tune. On the original acetate it is listed as "Fiddle Tune," but Woody introduces it as "Rye Straw" during an unreleased recording session for Asch with Rambling Jack Elliott in 1952. Typical of fiddle tunes, "Rye Straw" does not always get played note for note from fiddler to fiddler, but it is an old breakdown known in the Ozarks and Oklahoma. These tunes are also played by five-string banjo pickers. The first recording of "Rye Straw" was by Uncle Am Stuart in 1924 (Vocalion 14843) with the fiddle and banjo as the instruments. Uncle Dave Macon also played it unaccompanied on the banjo. Woody probably learned it from his Uncle Jeff or Matt Jennings.

22. CRAWDAD SONG

(alternate title: "Crawdad Hole" and "Sweet Thing")

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica
(Recorded 24 April 1944, matrix 707; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 1635, 10" shellac disc)

Crawdads are known to some people as crayfish and crawfish; they are eaten by both humans and fish, and among Cajuns they are a

delicacy. Crawdads are essential to some people's livelihoods and possibly survival as their basic food source; this song has been popular even where crawdads are scarce. It was a play-party song (a dance where the closest a man gets to a woman is holding hands or locking arms at the elbow), and among African Americans it was a blues. "Sweet Thing" was the blues from which the song came; fiddlers and banjo pickers adapted to their tempo and the lyrics became more satirical about poverty. There was a time when most young men in Texas and Oklahoma knew the song.

The first known recording to be issued was by Honeyboy and Sassafras (Brunswick 417), cut in Dallas, Texas, in 1929, followed by Girls of the Golden West, Lone Star Cowboys, The Tune Wranglers, and a few others. In his unpublished manuscript, "Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938, Woody typed fourteen lines for individual verses; for lyrics for the best-known version, see: *The Collected Reprints from Sing Out! Vols. 1–6* (Bethlehem, PA: 1992, p. 190).

23. IDA RED

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica; Bess Lomax Hawes, harmony vocal
(From *Hard Travelin'* [Disc Records LP 110, 1964]; recorded 19 April 1944, matrix MA 7;

mastered from analog master for Disc 110)

At the top of his "Ida Red" manuscript in the Smithsonian Folkways Archives, Woody typed, "My Version of an Old Square Dance Break-down," and, indeed, the way they play and sing it makes it an excellent square dance number—even though there is no fiddle. Woody and Cisco sing a verse or two and the chorus with a square-dance-caller's cadence, then Woody starts a few traditional square dance calls.

"Ida Red" is also listed by John A. Lomax as a "Negro Bad Man" song; the singer laments a jail term that keeps him from Ida Red. G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., considered the Lomax version to be a "Native Ballad of Doubtful Currency in Tradition" (Laws dI 23). The Lomax verses and refrain have the same meter or cadence as the breakdown; see John A. and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1934, pp. 110-111).

This can be considered an instrumental song, for the first recording was by Fiddlin' Powers and Family with the vocals by Carson J. Robinson (Victor 19434) in 1924. Its popularity is indicated by nineteen different known recordings of it by 1941. Woody included it in his unpublished manuscripts "Songs of Woody Guthrie," Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress, 1941, p. 102, and "Woody & Lefty Lou's One Thousand and One Laffs and Your Free Gift of One Hundred and One Songs," dated April 1938.

24. KEEP MY SKILLET GOOD AND GREASY

Woody Guthrie, lead vocal/mandolin; Cisco Houston, harmony vocal/guitar; Sonny Terry, harmonica
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; from *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs, Vol. 2*, [Folkways Records FA 2484]; recorded April 1944, matrix MA 129-1; mastered from Smithsonian Acetate 187, 10" shellac disc)

Woody's and Cisco's introduction of "woowoowo" almost makes this into a semi-nonsense song, but when they sing the lyrics, they bring it back to the traditional, lyrical song. It is an interesting interpretation, for Woody rarely changes musical key in the entire song. This gives a strange sound that falls short of the fifth-string repetition on the five-string banjo.

Pete Seeger on his *Darling Corey* album, reissued on *Pete Seeger: Darling Corey and Goofing-Off Suite* (Smithsonian Folkways 40018), refers to the song as one that African Americans derisively called a "peckerwood song" ("peckerwood" being a term used by Blacks to describe bigoted Whites). Even though its origins are in Black music, it was mostly performed by White musicians. It usually is a banjo tune with a driving tempo; Uncle Dave Macon was the first to record it as a banjo tune with a vocal in July 1924 (Vocalion 13330-1), and it is a song frequently associated with him.

25. TRAIN 45

(alternate titles: "900 Miles," "Reuben's Train," and "Reuben")
Woody Guthrie, vocal; Bess Lomax Hawes, mandolin; Butch Hawes, guitar
(Words and music adapted by Woody Guthrie; recording date and matrix unknown, Smithsonian Acetate 160 [a variant was recorded 25 April 1944, matrix 85], 16" aluminum based disc)

According to John A. and Alan Lomax in *Folk Song U.S.A.* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947, p. 245), this was one of the songs Woody learned from an African-American shoeshine boy in his hometown, Okemah, Oklahoma. It is one of the most beautiful melodies in folk music, and appears in many regional variations. Considered to be a Black blues that became a hillbilly blues, it has a variety of titles. G.B. Grayson and Henry Whitter recorded it in 1927 as "Train 45" (Gennett 6320), and Wade Mainer, Zeke Morris, and Steve Ledford recorded it ten years later under the title "Riding on That Train Forty-Five" (reissued on *Smokey Mountain Ballads* RCA Victor LPV 507). Woody's recordings made the "900 Miles" title and version the best known through the urban folk revival, but it has also been popular among bluegrass musicians as an instrumental number.
It was an instrumental with Woody playing the fiddle when released on *Folksay: American Ballads and Dances* (Asch Records A432) in 1944; Cisco Houston, Bess Lomax Hawes, and

Butch Hawes accompanied him. This version has Bess Hawes and Butch Hawes playing the instruments, and it seems to be pitched a little high for Woody's voice. For additional information, see: Norm Cohen, *Long Steel Rail* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981, pp. 503-517); for the lyrics, see: *The Collected Reprints from Sing Out! Vols. 1-6* (Bethlehem, PA: 1992, p. 225).

On shore leave from the Merchant Marine during the Second World War, Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston took part in a series of marathon recording sessions for Moses Asch in April 1944. These sessions, listed here, represent the bulk of the songs that Guthrie recorded during his entire career, and most of the songs in this collection come from them. Guthrie recorded many more times for Asch until 1952.

April 16, 1944

Hard Ain't it Hard LM-1
More Pretty Gals Than One LM-2

April 19, 1944

Golden Vanity (Lonesome Sea) MA1
When the Yanks Go Marching In MA2
So Long It's Been Good to Know You MA3
Dollar Down and a Dollar a Week MA4
Hen Cackle MA5
I Ain't Got Nobody MA6
Ida Red MA7

Columbus Stockade MA8
Whistle Blowing MA9
John Henry MA10
Hammer Ring (Union Hammer) MA11
Muleskinner Blues MA12
What Are We Waiting On MA13
Ship in the Sky MA14
The Biggest Thing Man Has Ever Done MA15
Stewball MA16
Grand Coulee Dam MA17
Talking Sailor (Talking Merchant Marine)
 MA18-20, MA22
New York Town MA21
Reckless Talk MA23-24
Last Nickel Blues MA25
Guitar Rag MA26
Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Feet
 MA27
Brown Eyes MA28
Chisholm Trail MA29
Sowing on the Mountain MA30-31
Right Now MA32
Train Harmonica MA33
Sally Don't You Grieve MA34
Take a Whiff on Me MA35
Philadelphia Lawyer MA36
Kissin' On (Gave Her Kisses) MA37
Little Darling MA38
Baltimore to Washington (Troubles Too) MA39
Danville Girl MA40-41
Ain't Nobody's Business MA42

Take Me Back MA43
Going Down This Road Feeling Bad MA44
Bed on the Floor MA45
One Big Union (Join It Yourself) MA46
Worried Man Blues MA47
What Did the Deep Sea Say? MA48
Foggy Mountain Top MA49
99 Years MA50
Gambling Man MA51
Into Season MA53
Strawberry Roan MA54
Red River Valley MA55
Dead or Alive (Poor Lazarus) MA56
Pretty Boy Floyd MA57
John Hardy MA58
Bad Lee Brown MA59
Whistle Blowing MA66
Billy the Kid MA67
Stackolee (Stackerlee) MA68
Take a Whiff on Me MA69

April 20, 1944

Down Yonder MA674
Guitar Blues MA675
Harmonica Breakdown MA676
Lost John MA679
Pretty Baby MA680
Old Dog a Bone MA681
Give Me That Old Time Religion MA687
Glory MA688
Hard Time Blues MA689
Rubber Dolly MA690

Bus Blues MA691
Devilish Mary MA692
Cripple Creek MA693

April 24, 1944

Old Dan Tucker MA695
Bile Them Cabbage Down MA696
Old Joe Clark MA697
Buffalo Gals (Bottle in My Hand) MA698
Rain Crow Bill MA699
Skip to My Lou MA700
Lonesome Train MA701-2
Blues MA703
Harmonica Breakdown MA704
Harmonica Rag MA705
Harmonica Rag #2 MA706
Crawdad Hole MA707
Bury Me Beneath the Willow MA708
Ride Around Little Dogies (I Ride an Old
Paint) MA709
Blue Eyes MA710
Going Down This Road Feeling Bad
(Lonesome Road Blues) MA711
Old Dog a Bone MA712
Having Fun MA713

April 25, 1944

Talking Fishing (Fishing Blues) MA75
Talking Sailor (Talking Merchant Marine)
 MA76
Union Burying Ground MA77
Jesse James MA78
Ranger's Command MA79

Sinking of the Reuben James MA80
Put My Little Shoes Away MA81
Picture from Life's Other Side MA82
Will You Miss Me MA83
Bed on the Floor MA84
900 Miles MA85
Sourwood Mountain MA86
Hoeecake Baking MA87
Ezekiel Saw the Wheel MA88
Little Darling MA89
Lonesome Day MA90
Cumberland Gap MA91
Fiddling Piece MA92
Carry Me Back to Old Virginny MA93
Stepstone MA94
House of the Rising Sun MA95
Brown's Ferry Blues MA98
What Would You Give in Exchange for Your
Soul? MA99
When That Great Ship Went Down MA91-1
Guitar Rag MA101,1230
Going Down the Road Feeling Bad MA103
Dust Bowl MA100
I Ain't Got Nobody MA102
Blowing Down This Old Dusty Road MA1231

April 1944 (shortly after the 25th)

Hey Lolly Lolly MA105
Budded Roses MA106
House of the Rising Sun MA107
I Don't Feel at Home in the Bowery MA108
Hobo's Lullaby MA109

Frog Went A-Courtin' (Mouse Went A-Courtin') MA110
Bad Reputation MA111
Snow Deer MA112
Ladies Auxillary MA113
This Land Is My Land MA114
Hang Knot (Slip Knot) MA115
Breakdown MA116
Go Tell Aunt Rhody MA117
Union Going to Roll MA118
Who Broke Down the Hen House Door? MA119
What Did the Deep Sea Say? MA120
When the Yanks Go Marching In MA122
Bed on the Floor MA123
We Shall Be Free MA124
Right Now MA125
Jackhammer John MA126
Woody MA127
Woody MA128
Keep Your Skillet Good and Greasy MA129-1
Lost You MA131
Slip Knot (Hang Knot) MA134
Jesus Christ MA135
Little Black Train MA137
Cannon Ball MA138
Gypsy Davy MA139
Bile Them Cabbage Down MA140

ARCHIVIST'S REMARKS

During the last fifteen years music buyers have seen the replacement of the vinyl LP by the compact disc as the medium of choice for home listening of audio recordings. The replacement of one format by another has a history in the audio world. Wax cylinders were replaced by 78 rpm discs, which were in turn replaced by LPs ("Long Playing records," as they were called). The same evolutionary processes also occurred in recording studio masters for these formats.

Magnetic audiotape technology did not exist before World War II; it first came into use for audio recording in the late 1940s. Before then, most mastering had been done directly on to discs. Most master discs were recorded at about 78 rpm and consequently could not hold more than three minutes of music. Selections that ran longer often had to be broken up into two parts. Later on, but still before he moved to magnetic tape, Asch used 33 1/3 rpm masters to record longer pieces on disc.

With the exception of the narratives, all the music on this project was made by Moses Asch during the 1940s on various types of disc. There were several sorts of disc technology; some machines recorded directly on to aluminum discs, others recorded on to acetate or shellac discs. The recordings here fall into the latter two categories.

Acetate discs of the type used for recording

these tracks consisted of an aluminum or glass base covered with a layer of lacquer. During World War II the glass base was used because metal was dedicated to military uses. With the passage of time, the lacquer may begin to peel off the base like old paint, so it is important that acetate discs be transferred to a more stable medium as soon as possible. Shellac discs are more stable than acetate and are more like the vinyl discs we are familiar with. They are, however, quite brittle. Here at the Smithsonian we have undertaken the slow and laborious task of transferring all 5,000 acetates in the collection.

During World War II, when these recordings were made, discs of this type were in short supply. Moses Asch had a studio and musicians ready to record but nothing to record them on. Herbert Harris of the Stinson Trading Company had blank discs. Asch and Harris went into a short partnership as Asch-Stinson Records. Both men continued to put out much of the same material after their partnership ended, leading to much discographical confusion. Because of the shortage of discs Asch could not afford second or third takes. For this reason, many of the songs he recorded have small mistakes in them. Some of these masters were released on Moses Asch's Asch and Disc labels.

While working on this series, Pete Reiniger and I have tried to clean up the often scratchy sound by using No-Noise digital editing software. Some of the acetates are in better condi-

tion than others, and some either no longer exist or are in too bad condition to use. In these cases we have substituted the recordings from the analog LP production master. It is our philosophy to try to clean up the noise without sacrificing the sound. Certain types of noise can be easily cleaned up this way; others cannot be without eliminating the high-frequency sound. Many historical reissues sound muffled for this reason. We would rather have the crisp sound of the original with some noise. We hope you agree.

During the summer of 1990, Lori Taylor, Leslie Spitz-Edson, Alex Sweda, Suzanne Crow, and I went through the approximately 5,000 master recording discs which had been in the possession of Moses Asch. We gently set down the needle on each disc for a brief moment and tried to discover the contents (acetates do not bear repeated playings). Most of the recordings on this disc were rediscovered during this process. We have now made preservation and reference copies of all of the Guthrie material in the Smithsonian archive. We will be releasing the best of these performances in this multi-volume series over the next two years. This process has aided in the creation of these compact discs and hopefully will lead to more in the future as we work on preserving the rest of the Asch Collection.

Jeff Place, *Archivist, Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies, Smithsonian Institution (1997)*

For additional information about Woody Guthrie (1912–1967), read his autobiographical novel *Bound for Glory* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1943); also see: Joe Klein, *Woody Guthrie: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980); Woody Guthrie, *Pastures of Plenty: A Self Portrait*, edited by Dave Marsh and Harold Leventhal (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990); and Pete Seeger, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone* (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out!, 1993). Another important resource is the Woody Guthrie Archives (250 W. 57th Street, Suite 1218, New York, NY 10107; 212/541-6230).

For information about Moses Asch (1905–1986), see: Tony Scherman, "The Remarkable Recordings of Moses Asch," *Smithsonian* 18 (August 1987) 5, pp. 110-21; Gary Kenton, "Moses Asch of Folkways," *Audio* 74 (July 1990) 7, pp. 38-46; and Israel Young, "Moses Asch: Twentieth Century Man," *Sing Out!* 26 (May/June 1977) 1, pp. 2-6, and 26 (July/August 1977) 2, pp. 25-29. For information about Jack Guthrie, see: Guy Logsdon, "Jack Guthrie: A Star That Almost Was," *Journal of Country Music* Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 32-38, and Jack Guthrie: *Oklahoma Hills* (Bear Family Records, BCD 15580), notes by Guy Logsdon.

Lyrics are available in many songbooks, including: *Woody Guthrie Songs*, edited by Judy Bell and Nora Guthrie (New York: TRO Ludlow Music, 1992).

Other selected Woody Guthrie recordings: *Bound for Glory*, Folkways 2481; *Columbia River Collection*, Rounder 1036; *Dust Bowl Ballads*, Rounder 1040; *Library of Congress Recordings*, Rounder 1041; *Long Ways to Travel: The Unreleased Folkways Masters*, Smithsonian Folkways 40046; *Nursery Days*, Smithsonian Folkways 45036; *Poor Boy*, Folkways 31010; *Songs to Grow On for Mother and Child*, Smithsonian Folkways 45035; *Struggle*, Smithsonian Folkways 40025; *This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1*, Smithsonian Folkways 40100; *Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs*, Smithsonian Folkways 40007.

Other relevant recordings:

Cowboy Songs on Folkways, Smithsonian Folkways 40043; *Folk Song America: A Twentieth Century Revival*, Smithsonian Collection of Recordings RD 046; *Folkways: A Vision Shared* (Woody and Lead Belly's song performed by contemporary popular musicians), Columbia 44034; *Folkways: The Original Vision*, Smithsonian Folkways 40001 (Woody Guthrie and Lead Belly); *The Anthology of American Folk Music*, Smithsonian Folkways 40090; *Songs of the Spanish Civil War*, Folkways 5437; *That's Why We're Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement*, Smithsonian Folkways 40021; *Work Songs to Grow On, Vol. 3*, Folkways 7027.

ABOUT THE COMPILERS

Jeff Place has been the archivist for the Folkways Collection since soon after its arrival at the Smithsonian in 1987 and has overseen the cataloging of the Moses Asch Collection. He has a Masters in Library Science from the University of Maryland and specializes in sound archives. He has been involved in the compilation of a number of compact discs for Smithsonian Folkways including Woody Guthrie's *Long Ways to Travel: The Unreleased Folkways Masters*, which won him the 1994 Brenda McCallum Prize from the American Folklore Society, and *That's Why We're Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement*. He has been a collector of traditional music for over twenty-five years. He lives in Mayo, Maryland, with his wife Barrie, daughter Andrea Rose, and son Lee.

Born and reared in Ada, Oklahoma, Dr. Guy Logsdon is a Smithsonian Institution Research Associate, and in 1990–91 was a Smithsonian Institution Senior Post-Doctoral Fellow compiling a biblio-discography of the songs of Woody Guthrie. He received a two-year grant, 1993–95, from the National Endowment for the Humanities to complete the Woody Guthrie project. Logsdon has written numerous articles about Woody Guthrie, cowboy songs and poetry, and authored the highly acclaimed, award-

winning book, *"The Whorehouse Bells Were Ringing" and Other Songs Cowboys Sing*. He compiled and annotated *Cowboy Songs on Folkways* (Smithsonian Folkways SF 40043) and *Cisco Houston: The Folkways Years 1944–1961* (Smithsonian Folkways SF 40059). Former Director of Libraries and Professor of Education and American Folklife, University of Tulsa, Logsdon works as a writer and entertainer. Logsdon and Place have collaborated on other Smithsonian Folkways collections: *Woody Guthrie, Long Ways to Travel: The Unreleased Folkways Masters 1944–1949* 40046, *That's Why We're Marching: World War II and the American Folk Song Movement* 40021, and *Woody Guthrie, This Land Is Your Land: The Asch Recordings, Vol. 1* 40100.

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CREDITS:

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Annotated by Guy Logsdon and Jeff Place
Project supervised by Anthony Seeger and Amy Horowitz
Original recordings by Moses Asch, 1944–1947, New York City; from the Moses and Frances Asch Collection at the Smithsonian Institution
Analog reel-to-reel and acetate transfers by Jack Towers, Tom Adams, David Glasser, Jeff Place, and Pete Reiniger
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Editing by Carla Borden
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Back cover photograph of the London House, Okemah, Oklahoma. The house in which the Guthrie family lived (circa 1917–18 as mentioned by Woody Guthrie in his autobiographical novel *Bound for Glory*). Photograph taken at the time the Guthries lived there. Photograph courtesy of Guy Logsdon.

ABOUT SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch and Marian Distler in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Moses Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are available on high-quality audio cassettes, each packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes and recordings to accompany published books, and other educational projects.

The Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, and Dyer-Bennet record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Stud-

ies. They are one of the means through which the Center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, and Dyer-Bennet recordings are all available through:

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WOODY GUTHRIE MULESKINNER BLUES

THE ASCH RECORDINGS, VOL.2

COMPILED BY JEFF PLACE AND GUY LOGSDON ANNOTATED BY GUY LOGSDON AND JEFF PLACE

The songs on this recording, the second in a series of four, represent a selection from the vast storehouse of American folk and country songs that Woody Guthrie learned and incorporated into his early radio career and the song books he sold on the air. In the early 1940s, upon coming to New York, Guthrie and frequent partner Cisco Houston recorded hundreds of songs for Folkways Records founder Moses Asch (160 alone in 1944). This series represents the best of these historic recordings. *Muleskinner Blues* highlights the non-original material that Guthrie recorded for Asch and includes American folk song standards, many of which became part of the American folk song canon due to Guthrie's influence. *Running time: 67 minutes; 40-page booklet includes historical and biographical notes on Woody Guthrie.*

1. **MULESKINNER BLUES** 2:49
2. **WRECK OF THE OLD 97** 2:11
3. **SALLY GOODIN'** 2:26
4. **LITTLE BLACK TRAIN** 2:29
5. **WHO'S GONNA SHOE YOUR PRETTY LITTLE FEET** 2:28
6. **BALTIMORE TO WASHINGTON** 2:53
7. **RUBBER DOLLY** 2:11
8. **21 YEARS** 3:13
9. **SOWING ON THE MOUNTAIN** 2:23
10. **BED ON THE FLOOR** 2:21
11. **TAKE A WHIFF ON ME** 2:41
12. **STEPSTONE** 2:53
13. **PUT MY LITTLE SHOES AWAY** 2:44
14. **HEN CACKLE** 2:16
15. **POOR BOY** 2:26
16. **STACKOLEE** 2:57
17. **JOHNNY HART** 2:27
18. **WORRIED MAN BLUES** 2:57
19. **DANVILLE GIRL** 2:58
20. **GAMBLING MAN** 2:19
21. **RYE STRAW** 2:46
22. **CRAWDAD SONG** 2:52
23. **IDA RED** 2:59
24. **KEEP MY SKILLET GOOD AND GREASY** 2:43
25. **TRAIN 45** 2:39

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