

Old Mother Hippletoe: Rural and Urban Children's Songs

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The concept of childhood as a period requiring special institutions, such as schools, is fairly recent. For centuries children were integrated into the world of adults, regarded as a blessing because of their capacity to enter early into the family enterprise. Clothing, food portions, and work tasks were scaled to the size and strength of the children, and they were expected to undertake adult tasks. Almeda Riddle (New World Records NW 245, *Oh My Little Darling* and 80294-2, *The Gospel Ship*), a singer from rural Arkansas, was brought up in such a tradition. As a young girl she followed her father and mother around just because she liked to be with them. But as soon as she was able, she aided her father at plowing the fields and sawing logs, and her mother at housekeeping, sewing, cooking, and child care.

Today we are losing sight of the family as a unit that produces and consumes. We take it for granted that both children and the elderly are removed from basic productivity. Children are sent to school, where, ideally, they will come to know more than their parents and in time "realize their potential." The elderly, bereft of their age-old responsibility to pass on traditions and wisdom as they care for the young, increasingly live in enclaves, passing most of their time in each other's company.

When children's life and labor were integrated with those of their elders, they mimicked them in their play, enacting scenes of child rearing, seasonal work, recreation, religious events, ill health and healing, aging, death, and burial. Bessie Jones (80252-2, *Roots of the Blues*, and 80278-2, *Georgia Sea Island Songs*), a black woman from a farming community in Georgia, has recounted playing at farmers-and-wives in her youth. Girls and boys played together with families of grass dolls made by the girls. They built miniature farms, gathered "crops" of seeds, and hitched up beetles to sardine cans to serve as horses drawing the crop to market. In "town" the "men" spent the money from the sale of the crop, while the "women" cared for the babies and scolded the children. On one occasion these playmates dug a fair-size grave for a play burial. Their mourning was interrupted just as they threw the first ceremonial shovel of earth over the child "corpse," and they all got thrashings.

In like fashion, the folk singers Sarah Gunning and her brother James Garland, from a Kentucky mining community, recall playing miners-and-wives. The boys dug large "mine shafts" into the hillside and sometimes had accidental cave-ins. The girls brought lunch to the "miners" and tended the home and the children.

The potter Lanier Meaders, son of a Georgia potter, has evidence of such playing at being grown-ups in a photograph of himself and his siblings with a tableload of miniature pottery made on their father's wheel and fired in a miniature kiln that they had built themselves. Their uncle took a load of their ware to sell along with the crocks, jugs, and churns turned by their father for use in food storage, preparation, and preservation.

In the context of such play, the songs sung at work, church, and secular celebrations were rehearsed by the young. The elderly sometimes assisted these enactments with food and props, knowing that they were serious rehearsals for the labor and sex roles of adulthood. Children were the young ethnographers of their society, observing and judging critically the implications for culture stability and culture change in a changing world.

In such traditional communities, where occupational strategies and cultural traditions were passed down by example and word of mouth, adults often unselfconsciously played the singing games we ascribe only to children today. Bessie Jones tells of the children, family, and neighbors gathering around evening fires to play together. Her formidable grandfather, who had been a slave brought from Africa as a child, felt strongly about the vocal and rhythmic aesthetic and the meaning of the games. Through them he interpreted life's perplexities and expressed his ethical system. The games were of souls who vowed through their words and motions to rise through hard labor and help others to rise with them, to avoid senseless conflict over possessions, to eat and share their food in hearty fellowship, to live morally and mete out punishment to transgressors, and to be proud and dauntless in the face of the terrible oppressions of white society.

Another game tradition shared by grown-ups and children was that of the play-party. Folk singer Jean Ritchie, of Kentucky, tells of family play-parties at which her parents recalled their courting. The development and disappearance of the play-party dancing games afford a dramatic glimpse at the effect of changing cultural patterns on the traditional repertoire. Play-parties developed when waves of Calvinistic religious revival brought about the suppression of dancing to instrumental accompaniment in the mid-nineteenth century. Courting-age youngsters of religious communities called singing dances "just innocent games." The games were composed from elements of children's singing games judiciously

combined with elements from traditional country dancing. By euphemistically calling these dances “games,” “josies,” “frolics,” or “play-parties,” thereby removing them from the onus of association with instrumental accompaniment and alcohol, adolescents and adults agreed to retain an important rural entertainment for the single purpose of socializing and courting, but an entertainment that could accompany communal occasions like barn raising, quilting bees, and corn shuckings.

The play-party was dropped as courting patterns changed. Cars transformed country districts into suburbs of the nearest town, with its attractions of private courting— dance halls, movies, soda fountains, pool halls—and the car itself afforded privacy. At consolidated schools, which replaced oneroom schoolhouses, children were increasingly segregated by age and sex, and long bus rides ate up free play time. High-school proms and going steady put the emphasis on couple dancing. At some country schools, teachers, under pressure from ministers and parents, attempted to stamp out play-parties. At others, the tradition was appropriated for spring and fall celebrations.

The profound break with tradition caused by the shift to urban occupations and urban schooling cannot be underestimated. Combined with the invasion of pop culture from movies, Tin Pan Alley, Nashville, radio, and television, these factors have effected a thorough cultural discontinuity.

A few play-parties continue to be taught by enterprising schoolteachers. In the classroom, played by younger children, play-parties have lost their original courtship function. Only the children's singing games, which had been appropriated by the rebellious teenagers to de-emphasize the danciness of the event, reverted to the playground, where “London Bridge,” “A-tisket, A-tasket,” and “Little Sally Water” can still be found.

Given the integration of work and play in traditional communities, it should not be surprising that very few songs can accurately be categorized as children's songs. Children listened to whatever grown-ups sang. Carrie Grover (Side One, Band 1, Item 3), originally of Nova Scotia, describes her brothers and sisters sitting around the fire after dinner, when their parents had gone out visiting, “playing being grown-ups” by repeating the nightly ritual of singing lengthy old ballads and songs of their family repertoire, probably consoling themselves and fending off the fear they felt at being left alone.

Several of the songs on Side One are grownup songs of great antiquity that have probably been perennial favorites with children, dealing as they do with subjects that in less disguised form would be considered unsuitable for children. For example, “Frog Went A-courtin’” is a story of a lively wedding interrupted by the untimely death of the groom, “Old Mother Hippletoe” is a song of the fox's unabashed murder of the gray goose, and “Robin Hood and the Peddler” is a song of unwarranted attack and attempted robbery. By requesting these songs, children could buffer their exposure to violence and death by the humor and warmth of the family.

Along with the three ancient ballads mentioned above, two songs of relatively recent origin are not children's songs. “Round to Maryanne's,” a drinking song in music-hall style, depicts the attractions of spending Sunday night at Maryanne's alehouse. “Little Sally Water,” with its refrain borrowed from a venerable ring game, relates a story of love for love's sake and of blissful marriage.

Two songs are responses to slavery. “Jim Crack Corn” reflects the delight of a house slave at his master's death. “The Gray Goose” portrays the death and resurrection of a tough and determined goose, implying the slaves' ability to rebound from all bodily attacks, including death itself.

“Little Rooster” and “Oh, Blue” stand apart from the rest of these songs. The first expresses the delight of feeding one's animals and listening to their sounds; the second expresses desolation. Many adults can remember tearfully reading and rereading episodes like the death of Beth in *Little Women* or of the monkey in *Toby Tyler*. The wistful singing of “Oh, Blue” on this record suggests this catharsis.

Side Two illustrates a variety of children's musical activities, including learning, playing, and sleeping.

Games and sports are the most codified aspects of children's culture. Through them children learn the give and take of social transaction, learn to love each other and to share their innermost thoughts and feelings, to exercise leadership, foment and resolve conflicts, and form their own ethical systems.

The girls' repertoire of jump-rope and ring games is composed of humorous elements that appeal to children. These games, favorites of six- to nine-year-olds, provide formulaic sanction for provocative dancing and wordplay, for revelation of love secrets, for teasing comments about grown-ups, and for plain competition. They are usually played to include all comers, jump-rope being preceded by a call for places in line, a ring game initiated by a pair of clapping girls and opening out into a circle to accommodate more and more children. The games represent an intersection of Afro- and Anglo-American cultural strains.

Games of all sorts are played in diverse languages: Spanish, Cajun French, native American tongues. Wherever such a language group preserves its cultural identity, children of the group are apt to learn its games and nursery lore. Sensitive teachers can encourage pride in such treasures, which are too often lost, dropped by children trying to adapt to Anglo-dominated culture. Games and sports are not shared by all children alike. Isolated for reasons of prejudice, home culture, ill health, time constraints, or personal inclination, children sometimes spend hours pouring their souls into song and musical mastery. We seldom find such ephemera on records: the virtuoso whistling, blowing of leaves, playing of the Jew's harp, cane fife, saw, bow, home-made banjo or guitar, and store-bought harmonica. Occasionally an impassioned child-musician grows up to entertain a broader community.

Joe Patterson's panpipe playing (Side Two, Band 1, Item 3), carried uncharacteristically beyond childhood, vibrates with the joviality with which children entertain themselves in their solitary pursuits. Lonnie Pitchford (Side Two, Band 1, Item 2) plays a one-string "guitar" made of baling wire strung onto a tin barn. His song about a fight between his sister and brother, composed when he was ten, is the epitome of a child's rumination. Ed Young's early distinctive mastery of the cane fife (Side Two, Band 1, Item 1) enabled him to play for dances and stay out late without getting a beating. He continued to play for his community for most of his life.

In addition to selections from the children's repertoire, Side Two contains three intersections of children's and adults' traditions: schooling chants, cheerleading, and nursery lore. In traditional communities, school was often taught by a more literate member of the community using methods and materials from oral tradition: songs, marching drills, rhyming chants, and moral plays from sacred tradition that warn young children about worldly ways. These teachers also used written materials that reflected oral tradition. Such were the books of singing sums and ABCs. "B-A-Bay," "Dos y Dos Son Cuatro," and "Today Is Today" derive from the schooling-chant tradition.

Cheerleading has developed in the century as an accompaniment to college sports events. Adults teach the art to girls as a highly competitive activity. On the playground, however, cheers serve other purposes and aesthetic criteria, as is shown in the black girls' elaboration of the medium, elements of which derive from their African heritage.

In nursery lore, finger naming and facial play, knee bouncing and tickling, songs and games, sayings for feeding and dressing, and lullabies are used by young and old alike to entertain a new member of the family. The record ends with three timeless lullabies.

In summary, Side One contains songs from the traditional adults' repertoire that children enjoy and that adults think are all right for them to enjoy. Like many of the Grimms' Household Tales, most of the songs were originally conceived by adults for adults. Their co-option for children has taken place relatively recently, probably during the period when childhood was being defined as a separate status and a suitable repertoire for children's songbooks and schooling was developed.

Side Two contains games, tunes, and songs from the children's repertoire, past and present, and songs from the intersection of adults' and children's repertoires. Here we can observe the reworking of adult materials into forms suitable to children's concerns, forms that convey the intensity, vitality, and originality of America's playground poets.

Fun Songs and Story Songs

Side One

Band 1, Item 1

Frog Went A-courtin'

Almeda Riddle, vocal. Recorded in Heber Springs, Ark. Originally issued on Atlantic 1350 (also available on Minstrel JD-203).

Earliest mentions: The Complaynt of Scotland (1548) and Ravenscroft's Melismata (1611).

The many traditional versions of “Frog Went A-courtin'” demonstrate a fine play of sense and nonsense. For example, the anthropomorphic nonsense verses are open to inexhaustible elaboration by adding guests— cow, rabbit, bee, fly, bedbug, snail, and others—to the tale of the wedding of the frog and the mouse. The names of the guests can be rhymed with descriptions of how the animals danced, ate, played music, or made fools of themselves. Other guests can be disposed of through a variety of accidents or through the acts of various predators.

The syllables of the chorus undergo playful variation also. In 1850 an elderly English gentleman reported a refrain for this song that he remembered from his childhood:

Kymyary kalty cary,
Kymtary kymy,
Strimstram paradiddly,
Larrabona ring ting,
Rigdum bullydimy kymy.

Almeda Riddle has suggested that children's songs like “Frog Went A-courtin',” unlike the “classic” ballads, are open to interpretation, in keeping with the need to interact with children and to engage their attention (*A Singer and Her Songs: Almeda Riddle's Book of Ballads*, Roger D. Abrahams, ed.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970). Some traditional singers even playfully add mimetic animal sounds to their “Frog” renditions and a big scary grab at the child when the frog gets swallowed by the snake at the end of the song.

Now, frog went a-courtin', and he
did ride,
Rop, strop, bye, Mister Gamble.
Had a sword and a pistol buckled
at his side,
Rop, strop, bye, Mister Gamble.

Chorus

Heemo-imo, keemo-kimo,
Ral-de-ral-de-ray,
Oh, rop, strop, penny-winkle,
Flannel-doodle, yellow-bugger,
Rop, strop, bye, Mister Gamble.

He rode right up to Miss Mouse's
house.

Said, “Please won't you marry
me, Miss Mouse?”

“Sir, I cannot tell you that.

You'll have to ask my uncle Rat.”

(Chorus)

Now, Uncle Rat gave his consent,
And a weasel wrote out the publishment.

(Chorus)

“Where will the supper be?”
“Way down yonder in a hollow
tree.”
“What will the supper be?”
“Buttercups and dewdrop tea.”
(Chorus)

“Who will our waiters be?”
“A black-eyed gnat and a pink-eyed
flea.”
(Chorus)

And the first came in was a big
white moth,
She spread her wings for a tablecloth.
Next came in was a big black gnat,
And he sat down, but on Uncle Rat.
(Chorus)

Now, the frog come swimmin
across the lake,
But he got swallowed by a big
black snake.
(Chorus)

Band 1, Item 2

Old Mother Hippletoe

J. D. Dillingham, vocal. *Recorded January, 1937, in Llana, Tex., by John A. Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 898 A2.*
Earliest mention: “Bold Raynard the Fox,” in Gammer Gurton's Garland (1783). Dillingham version: Ruth Crawford Seeger, *Animal Folk Songs for Children*.

The fox of the Raynard cycle of stories (like that of Aesop's fables and the Br'er Rabbit cycles) was an allegorical animal with human traits who acted diversely as a braggart, trickster, buffoon, good guy, and bad guy. The fox in “Old Mother Hippletoe” (generally titled “The Fox”), however, is characterized by his simple eagerness to eat farm animals and his swiftness in retreating ahead of the farmer.

Early in the eighteenth century, “The Fox,” portraying the farmers' fight against a predator of domestic animals, was sung at all harvest suppers in the West of England. By the mid-nineteenth century, “The Fox” was considered a children's song and was printed in a collection of nursery rhymes. In *The Ballad Book* (New York: Barnes, 1955, p. 749), MacEdward Leach noted that, in America, “As early as the latter part of the 18th century it had become a nursery ballad, and in the 19th century it was appropriated by the Negroes to become one of their favorite songs.”

Old fox walked out one moonshine
night
On his silver hind legs, and he
took a mighty fright.
Says, “I'll have some meat for
my supper tonight,
Before I leave this old towny-oh!
This old towny-oh, (Twice)
Before I leave this old towny-oh!”

He walked on down to the
farmer's gate,
And there he spied an old black
drake.
Said, "Old black drake, come and
go on with me,
I'm the honest'st old fellow in the
towny-oh!
In the towny-oh,..."

Old drake set still, and he cried
out, "No!
You can never eat no meat till you
eat meat tonight,
You'll never eat no meat in this
towny-oh!
In the towny-oh,..."

He walked on down to the captain's
school,
And there he spied an old gray
goose.
Said, "Old gray goose, come and
go along with me,
I'm the hones't old fellow in the
towny-oh!
In the towny-oh,..."

Old goose set still, and she cried
out,
"No! You'll never eat no meat till
you eat meat tonight,
You'll never eat no meat in the
towny-oh!
In the towny-oh,..."

Old fox stepped back, he gave a
short attack,
He seized the old gray goose by
the neck.
Her wings went flip-flop over his
back,
And her heels knocked ringle-dingle-
darney-oh.
Dingle-darney-oh,...

Old Mother Hippletote, a-lying in
the bed,
Heisted up the window, and she
popped out her head.
Said, "Old man, old man! The gray
goose is gone!
I think I heard her holler, 'Quinkquarney-
oh!
Quink-quarney-oh!..."

Old man jumped up by the light of
the moon
With his pipe in his mouth and his
britches in his hand.
Said, "Old Brother Fox, you'd
better move away from here,
You'll have some music behind
you!
Behind you, ...

Run the old fox into his den,
Out come the young ones, nine or
ten.
Said, "Old Father Fox, where
have you been tonight?
You're the luckiest old fellow in
the towny-oh!
In the towny-oh,..."

Band 1, Item 3

Robin Hood and the Peddler (Child 132)

Carrie Grover, vocal.

Recorded April, 1941, at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., by Alan Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 4454 A1.
Earliest mention: "Robin Hood Rimes," in William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (1377). Annotated collection of 15th-19th century published manuscripts: Francis J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1894, reprint 1965).

The Robin Hood ballad cycle of English tradition arose as the "poetic expression of popular aspiration in the North of England during a turbulent era of baronial rebellions and of agrarian discontent which culminated in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., 1978, XIII, p.615). Anglo-Saxon England had at that point been under foreign domination by Norman nobility for two centuries. In the thirteenth century ". . . the sheriff was most prominent as a local representative of law and order and . . . there was a great resentment against those laws of the forest that restricted hunting rights" (*ibid.*).

Robin Hood was the leader of a band of brigands who robbed and killed representatives of secular and sacred authority. The Robin Hood of the early ballads was devout, honorable, courteous to ladies, devoted to the king, the kind benefactor of the humble, a subtle trickster, and a formidable master of hand-to-hand combat and the bow.

From the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century the ballads enjoyed new popularity. They were disseminated as broadsides in English cities and provinces by the popular press. These versions portrayed Robin Hood in less than epic proportions, and his victims became the heroes. Broad-sides of the Robin Hood cycle were also printed and sold in the United States; the ballads, however, are extremely rare in American oral tradition.

The American experience unleashed a flood of original songs and reworkings of the old robber tradition. When new concentrations of wealth appeared, a new Robin Hood arose. Jesse James, Pretty Boy Floyd, Billy the Kid, and Sam Bass are all heroes indigenous to the American ballad tradition. Their ballads and lore recount bold holdups, skirmishes, enraged posses, and narrow escapes. Ultimately, however, they were always betrayed like Robin Hood.

Carrie Grover wrote in the introduction to *The Grover Heritage* (Gould Academy, Bethel, Me., n.d.) that her Welsh great-grandfather brought twenty-three Robin Hood ballads to the New World. Of these, Carrie's grandmother learned three and her father learned only the one that Mrs. Grover sings here.

'Tis of a peddler, a peddler trim,
A peddler trim he seemed to be.
He strapped his pack all on his
back,
And he went linkin' o'er the lea.

He met two men, two troublesome
men,
Two troublesome men they
seemed to be.
And one of them was bold Robin
Hood,
And the other Little John so free.

“What have you there?” cries
bold Robin Hood,
“What have you there, pray tell
to me.
“I have six robes of the gay green
silk,
And silken bow strings two or
three.”

“If you have six robes of the gay
green silk,
And silken bow strings two or
three,
Then by my faith,” cried bold
Robin Hood,
“The half of them belong to me!”

The peddler he took off his pack,
He hung his long bow by his knee,
Saying, “The man who beats me
three feet from that,
The pack and all, it shall go free.”

Bold Robin Hood drew his nutbrown
sword,
The peddler he drew out his brand.
They fought until they both did
sweat:
“O peddler, peddler, stay your
hand!”

“O, fight him, master!” cried
Little John,
“O, fight him, master, do not
flee!”
“Now, by my faith,” cried the
peddler trim,
“Tis not to either he or thee!”

“What is your name?,” cried bold
Robin Hood,
“What is your name, pray tell to
me.
“No, not one word,” cried the
peddler trim,
“Till both your names you tell to
me!”

“One of us is bold Robin Hood,
The other Little John so free.”
“Oh, now I have it at my good will
Whether my name I'll tell to thee.

“I am Gambol Gold of the gay
Green Wood,
Far, far beyond the raging sea.
I killed a man on my father's land
And was forced to leave my own
country.”

“If you're Gambol Gold of the gay
Green Wood,
Far, far beyond the raging sea,
Now, you and I are sisters' sons!
What nearer cousins can we be?”

They sheathed their swords with
friendly words,
And so like brothers did agree;
Then unto an alehouse in the town,
Where they cracked bottles merrily.

Band 1, Item 4

Bobby Halsey

Probably E. C. Ball, vocal and fiddle instrumental.

Recorded (date unknown) in Virginia by Alan Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 5234 A1.

Some extremely charming and ear-catching songs defy rational explanation. We will probably never know just who Bobby Halsey was, nor why he went chinquapin hunting, if indeed that is what he did. (The chinquapin tree grows wild in many parts of the South and yields a small nut that is an important source of food for small game animals and other wildlife.) There is no available information about the performer or the tune. Perhaps “Bobby Halsey” is a fragment of an older hunting song. In any event, its words and tune have the simplicity and lilt of a knee-bouncing song for a young child. To older children, it's just plain funny.

Halsey, Halsey, Halsey, Halsey,
Oh, Bobby Halsey, Halsey,
Halsey, (Twice)
Hey!
Chinquapin a-huntin', huntin',
huntin', (3 times)
Hey!

Band 2, Item 1

Round to Maryanne's

Kenneth Atwood, vocal.

Recorded 1976 at Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folklife, Washington, D.C.

“Round to Maryanne's” is a grown-up song that children like. It pokes fun at policemen who ignore obvious infringements of the law, at the mock heroism of sea captains, and at the “bravery” of generals in battle. It is the kind of song that your favorite uncle would always sing after Thanksgiving dinner, while your mother would object, “Not in front of the children.” (Such songs are often those that children remember with the greatest affection.) Its humorous advocacy of the workingman's right to license is sure to appeal to young boys in search of a manly role model.

Maryanne's is an Irish alehouse. The song probably stems from the period of the nineteenth century when the potato famines in Ireland drove many farmers from their homes to seek a livelihood in America. As a result of the influx of poor Irish competing for work, many songs were written from the fifties to the nineties both for and against the Irish, and the Irish policeman and the Irish biddy joined the ranks of American ethnic stereotypes (80265-2, *Don't Give the Name a Bad Place: Types and Stereotypes in American Musical Theater—1870- 1900*).

Kenneth Atwood is a lumberman who has worked most of his life in Utah. His repertoire reflects his identification with the American workingman. His original song "The Turkey Trail" tells of a wagon-busting, man-challenging trail littered with boulders strewn as thickly as hailstones, an image reminiscent of the Paul Bunyan tales. Other songs of his tell of the rigors of farm life or detail a hardened sailor's advice to a green sailor boy. Atwood learned "Round to Maryanne's" from a cousin.

Sunday night in your town,
Sunday night in ours,
Nothing to do on the outside, nothing
to do indoors.
They even shut the movies, soon
as it is dark;
They drive the people off the
streets, and then they lock the
park.
But there's one place you can
always find to go,
And as soon as the drugstore
closes, you will hear somebody
say:

Chorus

"Let's all go around to
Maryanne's
And pick 'em a tune upon the
pianola!
There's something nice, it's
always on the ice,
And you don't have to ask her
twice
For a drink of Coca-Cola.
Her front-door key's always in
the lock,
The door is standing open, and you
never have to knock,
For Mary is Irish, and so is the
cop that beats it around the
block,
So you'll never go home till morning.
You're round to
Maryanne's!"

Terrible thunder and lightning and
storm from out the sky,
The good ship Helen Blaise is just
struck on the rock.
One-half of the passengers lost
their lives,
And the first mate lost his sock.

Well, then the captain cried, "It's
up to you!"

And then the second assistant
cook says, "I know what let's
do:

(Chorus)

Cannonballs was flying, the fight
was almost won,
Millions of people were dying,
they had no place to run.
The general, he's the byros [sic],
the pride of Mexico,
Was digging a hole to China, there
or some other place to go.
And as he dropped his spade to
take a rest,
The captain fell off from a bucking
mule and cried, "Well, I suggest:
(Chorus)

Band 2, Item 2

Diez Perritos

Arseño Rodriguez, vocal and guitar; Quinqu Rodriguez, vocal.

Recorded 1964 in New York City by Ralph Rinzler.

"Diez Perritos" describes a child who loses his puppies, one after another. The singers imitate the child throwing a tantrum and the (spoken) responses of the child's irritated father. This duet is an example of songs of elimination or of diminution in number, which are often used in elementary schools to teach number relationships. "Twenty-nine Bottles of Beer on the Wall" is a common students' parody of this type of song.

Arseño Rodriguez was a leading figure in the composition of Afro-Cuban music (80244-2, *Caliente = Hot*). He was born in the mountains of Matanza Province, Cuba. The influences of African music in Cuba are strong. The Rodriguez brothers learned songs and rhythms of such peoples as the Congolese, Yoruba, Arara, and Carabalie.

Yo tenía diez perritos.
Uno se callo en la nieve.
No me quedan más que nueve.

De los nueve que me quedan,
Uno lo mató el mocho.
No me quedan más que ocho.

De los ocho que me quedan,
Uno lo mató Un machete.
No me quedan más que siete.

De los siete que me quedan,
Uno lo mató el rey.
No me quedan más que seis.

De los seis que me quedan,
Uno se mató en un brinco.
No me quedan más que cinco.

De los cinco que me quedan,
Uno lo mató un gato.
No me quedan más que cuatro.

De los cuatro que me quedan,
Uno lo cogio José.
No me quedan más que tres.

De los tres que me quedan,
Uno lo llevo Margo.
No que quedan más que dos.

De los dos que me quedan,
Uno se lo dió a Bruno.
Ese uno que me queda
Ese se lo di a Brito.
No me quedan más perritos,
No me quedan más ninguno.

Yo quiero mi perrito,
Papá, mi perrito.

Translation

I had ten puppies.
One fell in the snow.
Now I have only nine.

From the nine that were left,
One was killed by the butt of a
gun.
Now I have only eight.

From the eight that were left,
One was killed by a machete.
Now I have only seven.

From the seven that were left,
One was killed by the king.
Now I have only six.

From the six that were left,
One was killed when he jumped.
Now I have only five.

From the five that were left,
One was killed by a cat.
Now I have only four.

From the four that were left,
One was picked by José.
Now I have only three.

From the three that were left,
One was taken by Margo.
Now I have only two.

From the two that were left,
One was given to Bruno.
The one that was left
I gave to Brito.
I have no more puppies,
I have none left.

I want my puppy,
Daddy, my puppy.

Band 2, Item 3

Little Sally Water

Captain Pearl R. Nye, vocal.

Recorded June, 1937, in Akron, Ohio, by John A. Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 1009 B2.

“Little Sally Water,” a song of true love rewarded by eternal marital bliss, appropriately takes its refrain from a children's game of partner selection. The song was probably composed in the last century, as Pearl R. Nye, born in 1872, learned it as a child. Captain Nye was born on, grew up on, and worked on the Ohio Canal. The life and labor of canalers was his great love, an account of which he struggled to preserve on recordings and in writing. He possessed a vast repertoire of oral history, occupational lore, and popular songs, Child ballads, minstrel songs, canal and river songs, religious and didactic songs, and those of his own composition.

As Rebecca Schroeder pointed out in “An Informant in Search of a Collector: Captain Pearl R. Nye of Ohio” (*Journal of the Ohio Folklore Society*, II/3 [winter, 1973], pp. 12-28), “[Nye's] favorite categories of songs were religious song, those that related to the Canal and anything that praised mother and warned of married life.” His songs are a rogues gallery of unfaithful and domineering wives, henpecked husbands, and truculent bachelors. “Little Sally Water” is unusual for his repertoire.

Little Sally Water was a fine
young gal.
She met, fell in love with a skipper
of the canal.
All things went well, till one day
her father said,
“I'd rather see you buried than to
this canaler wed.”
She asked for the reason why he
turned so cold
Toward her true lover, so manly,
kind, and bold.
“That life is too romantic, and for
you I fear
That you would sure regret it, if
you seek his life to share.”

Chorus

Little Sally Water, sitting in the
sun,
Weeping, crying for her skipper to
come.
Rise, Sally, rise, wipe your eyes
out with your frock.
Your little cappie's billed for
here, and at this port will
dock.

Oh, when he arrived, she quickly
told him all:
Her father would ask him on her
no more to call.
She said, "If you love me, I will
go with you
And prove to all that we can live a
life most noble-true."
He quickly consented and to the
parson went.
They're married, so happy, a
pleasant life well spent.
Like two little birds they sing and
float along,
And Sally often chuckles while
they sing this little song:
(Chorus)

Yes, they are so happy in a world
their own,
A canalboat their palace, match-
less home sweet home.
All things are theirs, 'tis a life of
golden dreams.
And next door to that heavenly
land of beautiful,
Whatever may come, their hearts
are full of joy.
There's flowers about them, no
matter where they go.
They live for each other, run and
drift along,
And how they smile and chuckle as
they sing this little song:
(Chorus)

Band 2, Item 4

Je Me Suis Mis-t-à Courir

Sabry Guidry, vocal.

Recorded May, 1977, in Abbeville, La., by Barry Ancelet.

This song was probably brought to Louisiana from Canada in the eighteenth century by Acadians driven from their farms by the British. It predates the Cajun style, which emerged in southwest Louisiana as a French-language blend of Acadian, French, African, Spanish, and English musical influences. The song is of the type that can easily be improvised on to produce more stanzas on the model of the first.

Each stanza presents a common sound misconstrued as a threat. Such misunderstandings are a common theme in European and American folktales. For example, in "The Town Musicians of Bremen" the scratch of a cat in the dark, the bite of a dog, and the kick of a mule are thought to emanate from a witch, a man, and a monster, and the crow of a rooster is interpreted as the command of a judge, "Bring me the rascal."

Latin, used by priests in Catholic ritual, was a foreign language to the laity, and there are mock folk masses that imitate the sound of Latin but are composed of funny remarks in French. In the last stanza of this song the "*Alléluia*" of a priest is misinterpreted as "*Oh, le voilà!*" ("Oh, there he is!"), presumably pointing out the escaping raconteur to the cock that threatens to cut his throat, the geese that threaten to grab him, and the pigeons that threaten to swallow him.

J'ai passé côté [à côté d'] un'
maison.
J'entendais les games chanter,
"Cou-rou-cou-cou, cou-rou-coucou!"
Que je croyais qu'ils me disaient,
"J'te coup le cou, j'te coup le
cou!"

Chorus

Je me suis mis-t-à courir,
Sans cela j'aurais été pris.
(Twice)

J'ai passé côté un pommier.
J'entendais les pommes tomber,
"Pa-ti-pa-ta, pa-ti-pa-ta!"
Que je croyais qu'ils me disaient,
"Oh, si je t'attrape! Oh, si je
t'attrape!"
(Chorus)

J'ai passé côté un magasin.
J'entendais les oies chanter.
"Quin-chin-quin-chin, quin-chinquin-
chin!"
Que je croyais qu'ils me disaient,
"Oh, si j'te tiens, oh, si j'te
tiens!"
(Chorus)

J'ai passé côté un pigeonier.
J'entendais les pigeons chanter,
"Cou-lou-cou-cou, cou-lou-coucou!"
Que je croyais qu'ils me disaient,
"Oh, si j't'englous, oh, si j't'englous!"
(Chorus)

J'ai passé côté un' église.
J'entendais le prêtre chanter,
"Al-lé-lu-ia, al-lé-lu-ia!"
Que je croyais qu'il me disait,
"Oh, le voilà, oh, le voilà!"
(Chorus)

I passed by a house.
I heard the cocks sing,
"Coo-roo-coo-coo, coo-roo-coocoo!"
I thought they were saying,
"I'll cut your throat, I'll cut your
throat."

Chorus

I began to run away,
Otherwise I would have been
caught.
(Twice)

I passed by an apple tree.
I heard the apples falling,
“Pa-ti-pa-ta, pa-ti-pa-ta!”
I thought they were saying,
“Oh, if I catch you, Oh, if I catch
you!”
(Chorus)

I passed by a barn.
I heard the geese singing,
“Ka-chank-a-chank, ka-chank-achank
!”
I thought they were saying,
“I’ll grab you, I’ll grab you!”
(Chorus)

I passed by a pigeon house.
I heard the pigeons singing,
“Coo-loo-coo-coo, coo-loo-coocoo!”
I thought they were saying,
“I’ll swallow you, I’ll swallow
you!”
(Chorus)

I passed by a church.
I heard the priest singing,
“Hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le-lu-jah!”
I thought he was saying,
“Oh, there he is, oh, there he is!”
(Chorus)

Band 2, Item 5

Jim Crack Corn

Uncle Alec Dunforn, vocal.

Recorded October, 1937, in Galax, Va., by John A. Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 1365 A3.

“Ethiopian” minstrel entertainment, for which “Jim Crack Corn” was composed, arose in northeastern American cities in the eighteen-thirties and continued to flourish through the Civil War. Minstrel shows were performed by white musician-actors and dancers in blackface. The composers of the minstrel songs incorporated melodic elements from European art music and Afro- and Anglo-American folk music. The dancing, the polyrhythmic instrumental style, and the instruments themselves (banjo, tambourine, bones, fiddle, accordion, triangle, and others) were borrowed from black performance. Song and dramatic texts were written in artificial dialect for the caricatured subjects of the genre: illiterate slaves and city workmen (Gumbo Chaff, Sambo), and sophisticated city dandies (Zip Coon).

While the minstrel theater did present racist stereotypes, it was a forum for opposing views of slavery. The sentiments expressed by songwriters reflected the degree of their empathy for the black experience of slavery. For instance, Henry Clay Work grew up in a family that aided slaves escaping on the Underground Railroad (for which activity his abolitionist father was jailed). His compositions were rallying songs for taking over plantations and joining the Union Army and were not lost on slaves behind the Confederate lines.

In contrast, Dan Emmett grew up in a tough, “Indian-fighting” town in Ohio and brought his frontier humor to his song. He developed stock black caricatures and wrote numerous racist plays and songs. His song “Dixie,” a popular favorite in both North and South, became the symbol of Southern resistance. Emmett himself became an entertainer-hero in the postwar South, although his minstrel compositions were originally written for and performed in northern cities, particularly New York, Boston and Chicago. (See notes to 80202- 2, *Songs of the Civil War*.)

Emmett's “De Blue Tail Fly” (1844), also known as “Jim Crack Corn,” caught on in the South, as did many other minstrel songs. The original words about a master pitched to his death by a bucking mule were elaborated on from traditional animal-song formulas. A variant of one of the stanzas on this album illuminates the meaning of the verses and the refrain, “Jim crack corn, I don't care,” when sung by slaves:

Oh said the black bird to the crow,
What makes the white folks hate
us so?
Stealing corn has been our trade
Ever since the world was made.

(Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs*, II [Columbia, Mo.: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1949], p.356)

The irony of the slaves' situation as producers but not recipients of gain is expressed in lines from another slave song:

The old bee makes the honeycomb,
The young bee makes the honey.
Colored folks plant the cotton and corn,
And the white folks gets the money.

(Newman I. *White, American Negro Folk Songs* [1928; reprinted Hatboro, Pa., Folklore Associates, 1965], p.158)

One can sympathize with the sentiment seemingly expressed in the slave verses of “Jim Crack Corn”—that a slave is not much disturbed by a master's death or by crows stealing corn from the fields. The hidden meaning may have been that if slaves steal in order to eat, they have a right to.

Big old owl with his eyes so
bright,
On many a dark and stormy night
I've often heer'd my true-love
say:
“Work all night and sleep all
day!”

Chorus
Jim crack corn, I don't care, (3
times)
Old master's gone away.

Said the blackbird to the crow:
“Down to the cornfield let us go.
Pulling up corn has been our trade
Ever since Adam and Eve was
made.”
(Chorus)

Said the shagpoke to the crane:
“When do you think we'll have
some rain?
The pond's so muddy and the
brook's so dry,
If it wasn't for the tadpoles, we'd
all die.”
(Chorus)

When I was a boy I used to wait
On master's table and pass his
plate.
I always passed the ham when
[unintelligible] dry,
And brushed away the blue-tail
fly.
(Chorus)

Band 3, Item 1

My Little Rooster

Almeda Riddle, vocal.

Originally issued on Atlantic 1350.

“My Little Rooster,” a cumulative song like “The Twelve Days of Christmas” and “The Green Grass Grew All Around,” has great appeal to children because of its use of repetitions and because of its imitation of animal cries. Almeda Riddle's rendition is distinguished by her delightful sense of timing and by the way the verses accumulate asymmetrically. It can please a lapbaby and its older brothers and sisters as well.

I love my little rooster, and my
rooster loves me.
I cherish that chicken 'neath the
green bay tree.
My little rooster goes,
“Cockadoodledoo-doodledooddledoo.”

I love my little hen, and my little
hen she loves me.
I cherish my hen 'neath the green
bay tree.
My little hen goes, “Cluckcluck.”
My little rooster goes,
“Cockadoodledoo-doodledooddledoo.”

I love my little pig hog, and my
hoggy loves me.
I'm goin' to cherish that hog 'neath
the green bay tree.
Little hog goes, “Mmmmmmm.”
(Cumulative refrain: hen, rooster)

I love my little duck, and my
ducklin' loves me.
I cherish my duck 'neath the green
bay tree.
My little duck goes, "Quackquack."
(Cumulative refrain: hen, hog, rooster)

I love my little guinea, and my
guinea loves me.
Cherish my guinea 'neath the
green bay tree.
Little guinea goes, "Poderack."
(Cumulative refrain: hen, hog, duck, rooster)

And I love my little doggy, and my
doggy loves me.
Going to cherish that dog 'neath
the green bay tree.
My little dog goes, "Bowwow."
(Cumulative refrain: hen, hog, duck, guinea, rooster)

Band 3, Item 2

Oh, Blue

Thelma, Beatrice, and Irene Scruggs, vocals.

Recorded May, 1939, near Burnsville, Miss., by Herbert Halpert. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 2994 B1. Ruth Crawford Seeger, Animal Folk Songs for Children.

Hunting dogs are highly prized by southern country people, and numerous songs express their owners' pride in and friendship for their dogs. "Oh, Blue," or "Old Blue," has been widely collected from both black and white singers but is generally thought to be of black authorship. The melodies of the collected versions are diverse. Some versions include syllables imitating a howling hound, but most exhibit a striking stability of text and paint the picture found here: the preliminary boast about a favorite dog, the possum hunt, the dog's sickness, the doctor's verdict, the dog's death, his burial, and a stanza about meeting him in heaven. One variant ends:

Blue, Blue, you rascal, you,
I wish it was me instead of you.

Although the burial with a silver spade and a golden chain is borrowed from English tradition, "Oh, Blue" is an American song through and through.

According to the collector's notes, the Scruggs sisters (fifteen, sixteen, and thirteen years old respectively) sang together often, sometimes with guitar and sometimes with piano accompaniment.

Had a dog, and his name was Blue,
Bet your life he's a rounder too!
Oh, Blue, Blue, Blue, oh, Blue.

Similarly

Every night just about good dark,
Blue goes out and begins to bark.
Everything just in a rush,
Blue tree'd a possum up a white
oak bush.

Possum walked out on the end of a limb.

Blue set down and talked to him.

Blue got sick and very sick,
Sent for a doctor to come quick.

Doctor come, and he come in a run.
Says, "Old Blue, your huntin's done."

Blue died, and he died so hard,
Scratched them holes all round in the yard.

Laid him out in a shady place,
Rubbed him over with the possum's face.

Dug his grave with a silver spade,
Laid him down with a golden chain.

When I get to heaven I'll tell you
what I'll do,
I'll take my horn and blow for Blue.

Band 3, Item 3

The Gray Goose

Washington (Lightnin'), vocal.

Recorded December, 1933, at Darrington State Farm, Sandy Point, Tex., by John A. Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of Folk Song AFS 182 A. Ruth Crawford Seeger, Animal Folk Songs for Children.

John and Alan Lomax heard "The Gray Goose" in several Texas penitentiaries. Alan Lomax wrote in notes for the Library of Congress about the song:

The folk have always loved humble heroes who were absolutely invincible, who could endure any hardship or torture without fear or harm. For the southern Negro, faced with the problem of sheer survival under slavery, and later as the substandard economic group, this pattern has dominated his ballads and folk-tales. The ballad of the heroic goose [a variant of which is heard here], who, after being shot, picked, cooked, carved and run through the sawmill, was last seen with a large, derisively honking flock of goslings flying over the ocean [none of these occur in this version], epitomizes the Negro's belief in his own ability to endure any hardship.

The design of the song is the African leader-chorus form, and this version is used on the Texas prison farms for hoeing—a whole gang moving forward together, their hoes flashing together in the sun, across an irrigation ditch, thus:

"Well last Monday mornin', Lord, Lord, Lord!..."

It was last Monday morning,
Lord, Lord, Lord.
(Twice)

Similarly

Well, my daddy went a-hunting.

He didn't think it's 'gainst religion.

And he took along his shotgun.

And he spied a goose a-coming.

Well, he throwed his gun way
back.

And he r'ared his hammer way
back.

And the trigger went a-clickclack.

And the gun went a-boo-loo.

Well, he shot that old gray goose.

Well, the wagon couldn't haul him.

Oh, it's your wife and my wife.

Yes, they give a feather-picking.

Oh, but they couldn't pick him.

Well, they throwed him in the
hogpen.

Well, the hogs couldn't eat him,

'Cause he broke a sow's jawbone.

And they put him on a desert.

Well, the last time they seen him,

He was skipping 'cross the desert,

Goin' a-quick-quack, a-quick-quack.

Well, my father got angry.

Well, the fire wouldn't cook him.

And my wife she couldn't pick
him.

Oh, the mules couldn't pull him.

Well-a, oh, oh, gray goose.
I'll never go to huntin'.

Instruments Children Play

Side Two

Band 1, Item 1

Untitled fife tune with clapping accompaniment

Ed Young, cane fife; Bessie Jones and Georgia Sea Islanders, clapping.

Recorded 1965 at New School for Social Research, New York, by Ralph Rinzler. Quotes from interview with Ralph Rinzler.

The late Ed Young was born in 1910 into a musical family. The whole family sang religious music together, and two maternal uncles were also banjo players.

Though widespread and popular, the banjo was by no means the only musical instrument played in Ed Young's home country, the Yazoo Delta of northwestern Mississippi (NW 236, *Going Down the Valley*, and 80252-2, *Roots of the Blues*). Fife and drum, originally instruments of martial music, were played in the Youngs' community for dancing at picnics. Of his first encounter with fife and drum at age eight or ten, Young recalled, "When that drum started playing, I didn't know what to think of it.... I remember my mother holding me....I was just fixing to run.

He and his brother Lonnie rapidly mastered the instruments and became favored performers at picnics. Other musicians

... didn't want to see us around... drummers just fall out with us on that account.... ...I was a pretty testible little fellow anyhow, and I liked to blow sort of fast pieces that people could get out there and clown some on.... I never tried to run no races or beat no one doing anything, but whatever I was going to do, I just loved to get out there and do whatever I can.

Ed Young made his cane fife with six holes but played only five; the sixth improved the tone quality. He developed a unique style, playing some of the notes by either sliding his fingers on and off the holes or using his tongue to bend the notes and create a tremolo. "I always had a way of making [the sound] go this way this time, and the other way the next....I don't care who's playing fife, if I pick it up, everybody will tell you who got it."

On this recording Bessie Jones backs up Ed Young with clapping. Clapping, stamping, and pounding a stick on a resonant floor constituted the basics of a polyrhythmic percussive accompaniment for songs on plantations, where slaves were not allowed to make and play drums (80278-2, *Georgia Sea Island Songs*). The slave owners feared the potential use of "talking drums" to send messages from plantation to plantation, so the percussion music of Africa was adapted to the mediums at hand - proof that you can deny a people their musical instruments, but you cannot take away their music making.

Band 1, Item 2

Apple Tree Song

Lonnie Pitchford, vocal and one-string "guitar."

Recorded 1976 at Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folklife, Washington, D.C.

At ten years of age, Lonnie Pitchford "wanted to go into the musician business," so he constructed a one-string "guitar" by nailing the top and bottom of a long wire to a tin barn and sliding a can under the wire to raise it, a construction learned from his older brothers (his mother played piano and his father and brothers played and sang blues and spirituals). He created his songs (which he sings in highly ornamented melismatic vocal style) to express his feelings of sadness or exuberance.

Lonnie composed the "Apple Tree Song" in his teens. It expresses reflections about a fight between his brother and sister. The perspective of the song text slips dreamlike from third to first person as he sings about his brother and then about himself as though both were one person. The text changes with every rendition, as Lonnie never felt it necessary to stabilize the words. In one rendition the song ends

I've got this apple always in my view.
I'm going to eat this apple
If it's the last thing that I do.

In *The Negro and His Songs: A Study of Typical Negro Songs in the South* (Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1964 (reprint of 1925 edition), p. 156), Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson write about the southern black repertoire: “. . . it is certain that the majority of [black] social songs owe their origin to [an] ability to create song from the ordinary experiences of . . . everyday life or to make entirely new adaptations.” Lonnie Pitchford exemplifies the creative musician making his songs from the fabric of life itself.

My brother got mad at sister one day,
Then he went out to the orchard to get away.
When he got there, climbed a high old tree.
When my brother stumbled, then
he fell back to the ground.
When he he got back up, he kicked
the tree to get it down.
Then he went up to the next tree,
Started throwing at every apple he see.
Then one day a cow came in his path,
Said, “You gotta stake your life somewhere else,
'Cause two dumb peoples can't get along.”
When the cow saw the apple hanging there,
Said, “I want that apple—
I want to eat it right now.
Now I told the cow,
“This apple belongs to me.
I'm gonna eat this apple
If it's the last thing I do.”

Band 1, Item 3

Catfish

Joe Patterson, vocal and panpipe.

Recorded 1965 in Ashford, Ala., by Ralph Rinzler.

The text of “Catfish” is part of a large repertoire of animal songs of which phrases, lines, and stanzas move freely from song to song. It can be found in association with stanzas like the following:

As I come down the new-cut road,
I met Mister Bullfrog and Miss Toad,
And every time Miss Toad would sing,
Old Mister Bullfrog cut a pigeonwing.
(Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs*, II, p. 354)

Such songs seem like condensed references to the allegorical figures of the Br'er Rabbit stories, many of which have direct African forebears.

The panpipe (syrinx) is one of the world's oldest and most widespread instruments (NW 80252-2 *Roots of the Blues*) and is still played in Rumania, Peru, and elsewhere. Joe Patterson learned to play the panpipe as a child from his father, who often played panpipe duets with Joe's uncle. In 1965, when he was sixtyeight, Joe Patterson was the only performer in this country known to play a ten-note panpipe. His repertoire consisted primarily of dance tunes (of which “Catfish” is an example), songs, and “whooping pieces” (NW 223, *I'm on My Journey Home: Vocal Styles and Resources in Folk Music*, Side One, Band 1) in which he alternated playing notes with singing falsetto or “whooped” notes. The whoops were sung to fill in gaps in the limited scale of the home-made instrument. Patterson also picked up a few melodies from the calliope of a traveling circus. He sometimes accompanied his music with a home-made tambourine of tincan tops nailed onto a crude wood paddle.

At one time the panpipe—often known as “quills” in the South—was quite common in the United States, in both its double (ten-tone) and single (fivetone) forms. Bluegrass musician Bill Monroe (NW 225, *Hills and Home*, and NW 287, *Country Music South and West*), who played a four-note set as a child, has said that when he was growing up in western Kentucky, children made quills and tuned them with a mixture of sand and pitch. He also heard them played by adult roustabouts with traveling tent shows.

Catfish, catfish, swim up the stream.
I ask that catfish, “What do you mean?”
Grabbed that catfish by the snout.
He just kept a-wigglin' his tail about.
I love sweet watermelon, (3 times)
Just as sweet as it can be.

Ring Games and Jump-Rope

Band 2, Items 1, 2, 6, and 7

Ring Games: Sally Died; Ronald McDonald; Zodiac; Zing-Zing-Zing

Washington, D.C., schoolgirls, vocals.

Recorded 1976 at Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folklife, Washington, D.C.

City children have preserved ancient games and lore with extraordinary tenacity, resisting the discontinuities of the change from rural to urban homes, from farm labor to schoolwork. The modern communications industry, which induced a shift from traditional to pop culture, has enhanced rather than diminished the children's repertoire.

In ring games the players may sit on the ground, stand in place, or move. They may remain in a ring or weave, add to a group in the center, or add to a line until there is no ring. The ring may be empty or have a leader in the center or outside. The players may hold hands, clap hands, or not touch. They may or may not mime a text. They may skip, slide, walk, chase, fall down, or stand still. They may take turns or be eliminated one by one. In the United States the games derive from British and African traditions, the result of interaction of children from two cultures.

“Sally Died” is played with a leader in the center who chooses her replacement. “Ronald McDonald” is played in a ring, in couples, or in lines (ring games are not necessarily played in rings). Each child claps her partner’s hands with right palm down and left palm up. On the refrain they make a motion symbolizing the food mentioned. “Zodiac” is generally played in two lines. It ends with the children “walking down the alley” by ones or in couples between the lines. “Zing-Zing-Zing” is a game of elimination. The rules are often bent to accommodate differing levels of skill. As can be seen from the texts, children are constantly making up new games, a good sign that singing games are still alive and well in our cities.

Sally Died

Slow

CALL: Sally died! (Girl in center chants)

RESPONSE: How did she die? (Girls in circle chant)

CALL: Oh, she died like this! (Leader strikes death pose)

RESPONSE: Oh, she died like this! (Circle mimics)

CALL: Sally died!

RESPONSE: How did she die?

CALL: Oh, she died like this! (New death pose)

RESPONSE: Oh, she died like this! (Circle mimics)

CALL: Sally's living!

RESPONSE: Where's she live?

Double time; unison

Oh, she lives in a country called Tennessee! (Scissors jump)
She wears short, short dresses up above her knee!
She can shake that thing wherever she goes! (Satirical dance motion)
She can shake that thing wherever she goes!
Hands up, tussie, tussie, tussie, tus! (Raise hands)
Hands down, tussie, tussie, tussie, tus! (Hands ankle height)
Turn around, tussie, tussie, tussie, tus! (Full turn jump)
Touch the ground, tussie, tussie, tussie, tus! (Touch ground with jump)

Oh, she never went to college!
(Circle chants while leader whirls in place with hand covering eyes, other arm extended)
She never went to school!
But I found out
She was an educated fool!

The girl in the center stops abruptly on "fool," pointing to the new leader.

Ronald McDonald

Ronald McDonald lo-o-o-oves a french fry! (Twice)

Ooh, s-s-wah-wah!
A french fry!
I found my lover.
A french fry!
He's so sweet,
A french fry!
Just like a cherry treat.
A french fry!

Additional stanzas may be about a hamburger, a milk shake, and so on, or the game may be expanded to include such nonedibles as the Jackson Five.

Zodiac

Here we go zodiac, zodiac,
zodiac,
Here we go zodiac, all night long!
Oh, step back, Sally, Sally, Sally,
Step back, Sally, all night long!
Oh, a-walkin' down the alley,
alley, alley.
A-walkin' down the alley, all night long!
Oh, what did I see
I saw a big fat man from Tennessee!
I bet you five dollars I can beatthat man!
To the front. to the back, to the si'-si'-si'. (Twice)

I called the doctor, and the doctor said
I got a pain in my si', oooo-chi-ah!
(Twice)
I got a pain in my si'.

Zing-Zing-Zing

Zing-zing-zing, and away we go
To the Jackie Gleason studio.
Calaree! Calarah!
One apiece,
No repeats
Or hesitations
Or demonstrations!
Name some...

Foods: "Ham." "Turkey." "Eggs." "Cheeseburger." "Bacon," "Sausage." "Hot dog." "Watermelon." "What?" "Watermelon." "Toast." "Hamburger." "I said hamburger." "No you didn't," ALL: "Yes she did. You out!"

Cars: "Mustang." "Pinto." "What!? What you all naming? Oh." "Mustang II." "Firebird." "Mercury." "Cutlass Supreme." "Cadillac." "Mustang." "Supreme II." "Cutlass S." "Um ...F'irebird." "You out!"

Band 2, Items 3-5

Jump-rope rhymes: George Washington; Bump, Bump, Bump; Salome

Washington, D.C., schoolchildren, vocals.

Recorded 1976 at Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folklife, Washington, D.C.

Jump-rope rhymes are of recent origin, developed by girls in this century as they took over a former boys' sport. Many girls dropped the older singing games and created a new genre by adding rhymes to a sport that had formerly emphasized virtuoso athleticism. In creating the rhymes, girls borrowed eclectically from every musical and textual source they deemed pithy and humorous—children's counting-out rhymes, ring games, formulas for divination, autograph rhymes, school lessons, and lullabies, and pop songs and TV and radio commercials. They delighted in slightly outrageous and derogatory sayings that touch an emotional chord. The rhymes ranged from kindergarten humour to broadsides at teachers and school and expressions of jealousy toward babies and courting teenage sisters.

But elementary-school girls were most interested in telling stories they could apply to themselves:

Cinderella, dressed in yella,
Went upstairs to kiss a fella.
Made a mistake and kissed a snake.
How many kisses did it take?

The games are kept lively by beckoning and dismissing girls in succession, by giving commands for actions, and by counting and spelling out in order to make predictions about love and marriage, answer impertinent questions, and eliminate as many jumpers as possible. Rhythmic precision in motion and chant gives the games a uniquely satisfying effect.

The poetry of social interaction in jump-rope games should be appreciated: the cooperation of a group of girls taking turns, calling out games, and shifting back and forth from rope handling to jumping. This camaraderie is the deeper meaning of the poetry of the playground.

George Washington

George Washington
Never told a lie,
So he went around the co-o-orner
And stole a cherry pie!
How many pies did he take?
Ten, twenty, thirty, forty....

Bump, Bump, Bump

Bump, bump, bumpin' at the doorway,
Hearing Tony at the doorway,
Tony is the one
Who is having all the fun,
So we don't need Sherry any more.
Go home!

The children are called one by one to replace the child who is jumping as each jumper is told to go home.

Salome

Salome was a dancer,
She danced before the king.
And every time she danced,
She wiggled everything.
“Stop!” said the king,
“You can't do that in here!”
“Baloney!” said Salome,
And kicked the chandelier.

Cheerleading

Band 3

Think; Your Left; Cheering Is My Game; Hollywood Now Swingin' / Dynamite

Barbara Borum and other Washington, D.C., schoolgirls, vocals.

Recorded 1976 in Washington, D.C., by Kate Rinzler.

Unlike the more communal games, neighborhood cheerleading as performed by girls in Washington, D.C., requires rehearsal and is often dominated by a single dynamic girl who solicits recruits and kicks out slackers. Girls practice by themselves, best friends cheer together, groups proliferate, and everyone who wants to gets into the act.

In 1973-75, fieldwork for the Festival of American Folklife revealed cheerleading girls taking turns doing a dance step or a simple gymnastic trick. In 1976, perhaps because of the popularity on television of the Olympic Games, there was a sudden citywide interest in gymnastic pyrotechnics: complete frontward and sideward splits, forward and backward flips, and cartwheels ending in jumped splits.

The texts of the cheers suit the girls' growing sense of attractiveness, group solidarity, and allegiance to school and boyfriend. They also attest to their knowledge and misinformation about forbidden subjects —inebriation, aggression, sexuality—and to their interest in the heroes and heroines of movies that exploit these subjects.

Think

CALL: You better think!

RESPONSE: Think!

CALL: How you goin' tell your mother?

RESPONSE: How you goin' tell your mother?

Similarly

How you goin' tell your father?

How you goin' tell your sister?

How you goin' tell your brother?

Don't let the Skins heat the pants offa you!

Only advice I can give to you-ou,

Only thing I got t' tell you to do,

I-i-is

Sta-a-ay

Home!

Your Left

Your left, your left,
Your left, right, left.
I say my back is aching!
My skirt's too tight!
My hips swinging like dynamite!
(Twice)
Go, go, go, go, the mighty Skins!
Fight, fight, fight, fight, the
mighty Skins!
Win, win, win, win, win, the
mighty Skins!
Go, go, go, go, go, go, whooo!

Cheering Is My Game

Dn, dn, dn, dn, dn. (Twice)
CALL: Barbara. Barbara is my
name.
RESPONSE : Dn, dn, dn, dn, dn,
similarly
Cheering, cheering is my game.
Freddie, Freddie was my man.
But Ken is my main man.
Dn, dn, dn, dn, dn. (Twice)
Cheer continues us each girl
announces her name and boyfriends.

Hollywood Now Swingin' / Dynamite

Hollywood now swingin'! (4 times)
CALL: Name is Nita.
RESPONSE: Hollywood now swingin'!
Similarly
I know how to swing.
Every time I swing,
Stevie come around.
CALL: He popped me once.
He popped me twice!
All I felt was—dynamite!
RESPONSE: Dynamite, dynoinite!
(Twice)
Dynamite!
CALL: Here she is.
RESPONSE:Dynamite!
Similarly
Foxy Brown!
You mess with me,
I'll shoot you down!
Down, down,
To the ground, Up, up,
CALL: Just out of luck!
RESPONSE: Dynamite, dynamite!
(Twice)

Games and Dances from the Past

Band 4, Item 1

All Hid

Bessie Jones, vocal. Recorded c. 1970 in Los Angeles by Bess Hawes.

Hide-and-seek is one of the most widely played hiding games in this country and is known in a multitude of variations around the world. A nineteenth-century English countout for hide-and-seek is chanted:

One a bin, two a bin, three a bin, four,
Five a bin, six a bin, seven gie o'er:
A bunch of pins, come prick my shins,
A loaf of brown bread, come knock me down. I'm coming.
(Gomme, p.211: see Bibliography)

Black children playing hide and- seek in the South borrowed and revised such verses to sing as the seeker waited for the other children to hide.

The words of "All Hid" derive from three sources. The variations of the query "All hid?," the responses from hiding children, and the counting out by ones, twos, and so on are commonplaces in hide-and-seek as played in England and America; the countout formula ("One, two...") is a counting rhyme like the well-known "One, two, buckle my shoe"; and the verses about acquiring a lame horse to cross a river are borrowed from humorous songs of black tradition.

Honey, honey, bee ball,
I can't see y'all.
All hid?
"No-o-o!"
Is all hid?
"No-o-o!"

I went to the river, I couldn't get across.
I paid five dollars for an old gray horse.
One leg broke, the other leg cracked,
And great Godamighty how the horse did rack.
Is all hid?
"No-o-o!"
Is all hid?
"No-o-o!"

I went down the road,
The road was muddy.
Stubbed my toe
And made it bloody.
'S all hid?
"No-o-o!"
Is all hid?
"No-o-o!"

Me and my wife and a bobtail dog,
We crossed that river on a hickory log.
She fell in, and I fell off,
And left nobody but the bobtail dog.
Is all hid?
"No-o-o!"
Is all hid?
"No-o-o!"

One, two,
I don't know what to do.
Three, four,
I don't know where to go.
Five, six,
I'm in a terrible fix.
Seven, eight,
I made a mistake.
Nine, ten,
My eyes open—
I'm lookin'.

Band 4, Item 2

I'm Runnin' on the River

Three 12-13-year-old girls, vocals.

Recorded May, 1939, in Tupelo, Miss., by Herbert Halpert. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 2960 A4.

Herbert Halpert, the noted American folk-song collector, recorded fourteen game songs from black children in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1939. Seven of the games proved to have English antecedents recorded in Lady Alice Gomme's nineteenth-century collection. Variations of five can still be found played by black children in Washington, D.C., and contemporary British variations of three were taught by British visitors at the Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folklife in 1976.

“I'm Runnin' on the River,” however, appears to be indigenous to the time and place in which it was recorded. Its text probably reflects the familiar steamboats on the Mississippi; its form is the African-derived call and response. We do not know how the game was played.

I'm runnin' on the river,
So fare you well,
So whistle and tell your true love.
So fare you well.
I'm 'na tell on you!
Fitili-dil,
Miss Ellen Bess,
Fitili-dil,
She's dead and gone.
Fitili-dil,
Ain't got no [corn, comb?],
Fitili-dil.

Band 4, Item 3

La Puerta Esta Quebrada

Govita Gonzalez and group, vocals. Recorded 1934 in San Antonio, Tex., by John and Alan Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 6 B2.

We are rarely made aware of the rich American heritage of singing games in languages other than English, since they are frequently played only within the language group. The largest body of non-English games belongs, probably, to our Spanish-speaking children, because of the early Spanish settlement of the Southwest and California and the steady influx of immigrants from Latin America.

Spanish-language singing games are numerous. Many can be traced back to medieval Spain, and they show the same stability and perseverance as those of English origin. Children in Argentina and Puerto Rico are apt to dance to melodies familiar to their Spanish-speaking cousins in New Mexico and Texas.

“La Puerta Esta Quebrada” is played in a “London Bridge” formation, with a line of children passing under an arch formed by the arms of two others. Eventually the *puerta* (door) closes, and someone is trapped.

La puerta esta quebrada,
Ya la van a componer
Con cascara de huevos
Y pedazos de oropel.
Que pase el rey, (Twice)
Que ya pase el coronel.
(Repeat)

La puerta esta quehrada,
Ya la van a componer.
El que pase ha de paser,
Y el que no se ha de quedar.
(Twice)

The door is broken,
It will now be repaired
With eggshells
And gold leaf.
The king should pass, (Twice)
Since the colonel has already
passed.
(Repeat)

The door is broken,
It will now be repaired.
He who has to pass should pass,
And he who does not should stay.
(Twice)

Band 4, Item 4

Ojibwa War Dance Song

Albert, Vernon, and James Kingbird, vocals; drum accompaniment.

Recorded 1970 in Redby, Mich., by Thomas Vennum, Jr.

The Ojibwa people, also known as Chippewa, lived originally at the east end of Lake Superior and were excellent fishermen, hunters, and trappers. They entered the fur trade with the early French explorers and settlers and became middlemen between the other tribes of the area and the traders. Ojibwa thus became the lingua franca of the upper Great Lakes.

Guns bought from the traders helped the Ojibwa drive the Sioux and Fox out of Upper Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. To stop their sporadic warfare with the Sioux (and in order to annex Ojibwa land), reservations were established for the Ojibwa through a series of treaties beginning in the midnineteenth century.

The Kingbird family, whose three teenage sons sing this song, live in Ponemalt, a small fishing community on the Red Lake Peninsula in northern Minnesota. All the boys are singers and learned from their father.

Today war dancing is used as social dancing at powwows held on various reservations on summer weekends. The dancers—men, women, and children—move clockwise in a circle around the drummers and singers, using a toe-heel war-dance step.

Band 4, Item 5

Chariot

Group of girls, vocals. *Recorded in 1940 in Drew, Miss., by John and Ruby Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 4014 A1.*

The field collection in the Library of Congress of nine games in which “Chariot” appears contains a beautiful set of very African-sounding games. The children’s perfect unison of response and their musical delivery remind one that all over the South at the time of this recording it had not been long since call-and-response field chants were sung to lighten labor through unison effort. The text of “Chariot” derives from spirituals, which made frequent reference to deliverance from this life, or metaphorically, from slavery, by the jubilation of the coming judgement.

Leader: Chariot,

Group: Jubilee!

Similarly

Chariot.
Yonder comes the chariot
Comin’ round the mountain.
Side by side,
You and I
Gonna take a ride
(Twice)

Chariot,
Chariot.
Yonder comes the chariot,
Comin’ round the mountain
Six white horses,
Side by side,
You and I
Gonna take a ride.

Learning Songs

Band 5

Dos y Dos Son Cuatro

(Mexican counting song)

Alicia Gonzalez, vocal. *Recorded 1977 in Washington, C.C., by Bess Hawes.*

B-A-Bay

(spelling song)

Mrs. A.P. Wilson, vocal.

Recorded in 1942 in Marrowbone, KY., by Alan Lomax and George Pullen Jackson. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 6720 B6.

Today Is Monday

(days of the week song)

Mississippi schoolchildren, vocals.

Recorded 1937 in Brandon, Miss., by John A. Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 886 B1.

Learning songs have a long history of publications as teaching tools, as well as a venerable oral tradition. An early alphabet rhyme was mentioned in a publication in 1671, and an English chapbook of the period printed another, “The Tragical Death of A, APPLE PYE Who was Cut in Pieces and Eat by Twenty-five Gentlemen with whom All Little People Ought to be Very well acquainted.”

American schoolchildren often memorized the singing alphabet without understanding the mystery of “elemenopee” (L M N O P). Spelling and syllabification were also taught by rote, as in “B-A Bay.” An ambitious formula required sounding syllable by syllable and spelling cumulatively the following meaningless collection of syllables and words: “cis-ne-cris-to-ver-van-pro-van-time-tam-tire-lire-mack-fare-will-done-squire.” Arithmetic formulas were likewise memorized (“Dos y Dos Son Cuatro”), as were the days of the week (“Today is Monday”), months of the year, and capitals of states. “Today Is Monday” was published in numerous school and scouts songbooks. On this recording it is sung with the verve of children’s oral tradition.

Dos y Dos Son Cuatro

Dos y dos son cuarto,
Y cuatro y dos son seis.
Seis y dos son ocho,
Y ocho diez y seis.

Cuenta, nina, la tablita.
“Yo ya la conte.”
(Twice)

Town and two is four,
And four and two is six.
Six and two is eight,
Plus eight is sixteen.

Count the tablet, little girl.
“I already counted it.”
(Twice)

B-A-Bay

B-A-Bay, B, B,
B—biddie-bye, B-O bo.
Biddie-bye-bo, B-O bo.
Biddie-bye-bo, boo, bye.

C-A-kay, C, C
C-I-kiddie-kye, C-O-ko,
Kiddie-kye-ko, C-O-ko,
Kiddie-kye-lo, koo, kye.

Today Is Monday

Is everybody happy? Well, I should say!

Today is Monday. (Twice)
Monday, wash day.
Is everybody happy? Well, I should say!

Today is Tuesday (Twice)
Tuesday, string beans,
Monday, wash day.
Is everybody happy? Well, I should say!

Similarly

Today is Wednesday

Wednesday, soup!...

Today is Thursday.

Thursday, roast beef,...

Today is Friday.

Friday, fish,...

Today is Saturday.

Saturday, steak, ...

Today is Sunday.

Sunday, church day,...

Is everybody happy? Well, I should say!

Rabbit Songs

Band 6, Item 1

Mister Rabbit

Susie Miller and two boys, vocals.

Recorded 1939 in Vicksburg, Miss., by Herbert Halpert. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 3074 B1. Ruth Crawford Seeger, Animal Folk Songs for Children.

Like "Catfish," "Mister Rabbit" is from the large animal-song repertoire. In one widely used formula the rabbit is asked numerous questions, which he answers in rhyme, in call-and-response fashion, as in the following examples:

"Your coat's mighty gray"

"'Twas made that way"

"Your feet's mighty red."

"I'm almost dead."

"Your tail's mighty white."

"And I'm getting' out o' sight."

The collector's notes state that this is a ring game in which pairs of children clap hands and an odd man out steals a partner.

Call: So go, rabbit

Response: Rabbit, rabbit.

Leader: Mr. Rabbit, what makes your ears so thin?

Rabbit: Always hopping right in the wind.

Call: So go, rabbit,

Response: Rabbit, rabbit.

(Twice)

Band 6, Item 2***Old John the Rabbit***

Four girls, vocals. *Recorded 1939 in Amory, Miss., by Herbert Halpert. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 2975 A3.*

According to Herbert Halpert, the ring game “Old John the Rabbit” was played by a circle of children with a lead singer in the center. The tune and response are the same as those that Bessie Jones teaches for “Shoo, Turkey.” At the end of her game, a line of children sit on their haunches and, to the refrain “Shoo, turkey, shoo, shoo,” hop in the fashion children also use to imitate rabbits. In tradition, games frequently change. They are added to and subtracted from as the aesthetics and knowledge of games vary from group to group. One can easily imagine “Old John the Rabbit” acquiring a rabbit hop from the “Shoo, turkey, shoo” of the game with identical vocal form. As other words are found with this tune, so other tunes are found with these words.

In *American Negro Rhymes, Wise and Otherwise* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat, 1968 (reprint of 1922 edition), pp. 263-71), Thomas Talley gives a glimpse of the process of floating texts from one game to another. A game like “Old John the Rabbit,” played by young and old alike,

Commonly went on continuously for a quarter of an hour or more....It was considered...an accomplishment for a leader to be able to sing “calls” for so long a time...and still a greater accomplishment to sing the calls both in rhyme and with meaning.

Call: Old John the rabbit

Response: Yes, ma’am.

Similarly

Got a mighty bad habit,
Going in my garden,
Cutting down my cabbage.
My name is Mary.
Got sweet potatoes.
And if I live
To see next fall,
I ain’t gonna pick
No cotton at all

Band 6, Item 3***Rabbit***

Four girls, vocals. *Recorded 1939 in Amory, Miss., by Herbert Halpert. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 2975 A4.*

“Rabbit” ’s rhythm and tune are reminiscent of marching calls and auctioneering. In black country schools, Bessie Jones recalls, children were taught “drills”-chanting, marching, and changing formations. Such drills, and games that sound like drills, may have originated in the teachers and children expressing their pride in the military training of black troops who figured decisively in the Civil War.

The sentiment expressed in the text, that a a rabbit would make a good pot of stew, probably derives from the fact that farmers cooked many wild animals. Bessie Jones recalls that she and her childhood friends sometimes shot small birds and cleaned, cooked, and ate them, just like grown-ups.

In *American Ballads and Folk Songs* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), Alan and John Lomax give a game text with variations of lines of this song, to be accompanied with “hambone” percussion-clapping hands and slapping thighs and face.

Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit,
See that rabbit sticking in the sand,
I wish I had him in my pan.
Ol’ rabbit skipped,
Ol’ rabbit hopped,
Ol’ rabbit jumped
Right in my pot.

Play-Party Songs

Band 7

Rabbit in the Pea Patch

Angie Clark, vocal. Recorded 1937 in Mullins, S.C., by John A. Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 1030 B3.

Old Grandpaw Yet

Mrs. Nell Hampton, vocal.

Recorded 1937 in Salyersville, Ky., by Alan and Elizabeth Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 1585 B2.

Roxie Anne

Samuel Clay Dixon, vocal.

Recorded 1938 in Mt. Vernon, Ind., by Alan and Elizabeth Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 1749 B1.

“Play-party,” “josie,” and “frolic” were singing games played at gatherings. They were composed of borrowed elements from children’s games and the “twistifications” of square dancing: grand right and left, partner-to-partner progression, and the daring waist swing, among others.

Play-parties flourished in rural communities before canned entertainment offered alternatives. They were held winter or summer, indoors or out, with refreshments or without.

If you heard about it, you were invited, and everyone in a rural community was apt to hear about a party. All ages attended, but the dancers were usually unmarried young people with a few marrieds mixed in. Sometimes the players grouped by age in separate rooms and played different games. A play-party didn’t serve its function unless there were opportunities to meet privately with a loved one. Drinking at the well and the escort home served this purpose.

Instrumental music, drinking whiskey, and rowdy behavior were frowned on. Undesirable individuals were ostracized. Occasionally a fight might break out because of jealous competition, but this was unusual.

The social dynamics of a play-party can be glimpsed in the appendix of B. A Botkin’s *American Play-Party Song* (pp. 361 and 371). In one community,

The typical leader is usually some boy that’s well-liked...loud-mouthed and funny....Not a smart aleck...He goes to all the parties (and) knows all the game they play...if it’s “old Joe Clark is a married man,” he substitutes someone’s name...to embarrass them.

In another community, girls usually led, but the role was similar: the leader had to introduce strangers and make them feel at home, see that they had partners, and get the crowd’s attention if the stranger had a new game to teach. The leader would tell jokes and tease people and had to take a teasing herself in good humor. When one leader ran out of steam, another would take over.

The games translated courting into an art form. Performers could act, clown, turn on the charm, or dance shyly. The games formalized choosing loved ones, stealing others, changing partners, flirting, teasing, and rejecting. They mixed everyone in progressions. A young person might leave with someone other than expected and give rise to plenty of gossip.

In “Rabbit in the Pea Patch,” couples skip hand in hand around a lone boy, who steals the girl of his choice. Her partner then becomes the loner. “Old Grandpaw Yet” seems to be a game with a loner sitting in a chair in the center of a ring. “Roxie Anne” is a variation of the Virginia reel.

Rabbit in the Pea Patch

Rabbit in the pea patch, shoo-lye love, (3 times) Shoo-lye love, my darling.

You love Miss Dreslo (or other name), shoo-lye lover, ...

You stole my partner, shoo-lye love, ...

But I'll get another one, shoo-lye love, ...

Pretty as the other one, shoo-lye love,...

Old Grandpaw Yet

Old Grandpaw Yet,
Not a soul can he get,
And he's tired of living here alone, here alone,
And he's tired of living here alone.

Some of you young girls,
Take pity on his case,
And make him a wife of his own, of his own,
And make him a wife of his own.

You can rise to your feet
And kiss the first you meet,
For there's plenty all around the chair, chair, chair
There's plenty all around the chair.

Old Grandma Yet,
Not a soul can she get,
And she's tired of living here alone, here alone,
And she's tired of living here alone.

Some you young men,
Take pity on here case,
And make her a husband of her own, of her own,
And make here a husband of her own.

You can rise to your feet
And kiss the first you meet,
For there's plenty all around the chair, chair, chair,
There's plenty all around the chair

Roxie Anne

Roxie Anne's a-fooling me,
I'll fool her after a while.
She's been a long time fooling, fooling,
She's been a long time fooling me.
Never mind Roxie Anne,
Never mind a while.
She's been a long time fooling, fooling.
She's been a long time fooling me.

Lullabies

Band 8

Go to Sleep, Little Baby

Lester Powell, vocal.

Recorded 1940 in Wiergate, Tex., by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax. Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song AFS 3973 B6.

Dors, Dors, 'tit Bebe

Barry Ancelet, vocal. *Recorded 1978 in Abbeville, La., by Barry Ancelet.*

Come Up, Horsey

Vera Hall, vocal. *Recorded 1939 in Livingston, Ala., by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax. Alan Lomax private collection T-920.*

Many of the songs on this album might be considered children's folk songs-animal songs; songs with tall tales, tongue twisters, and cumulative stories; play-party and game songs. These songs, it has been said, served children's fancy but were not originally composed for children.

While any of these songs and many others might be used to lull, lullabies are a special category. They are especially composed for children and talk to them, telling them to go to sleep, threatening, offering protection, drawing attention to soothing sounds, and promising all manner of rewards-short'nin'bread," "raisins and almonds," "little horses," and marvelous things to be swapped for other marvelous things if they don't please the child.

Whatever the circumstances of the lulling, the purpose was always the same, to communicate love and security to the small child. In *Step It Down* (p. 8), Bessie Jones speaks of the child's awareness of his need for this security when going to sleep:

...you hum sometimes, just a little hum to him and he'll hum himself-some of them will...Well, he know he needs that attention, that's why...He need that humming, and that be the only way he'll get it, humming himself.

Go to Sleep, Little Baby

Go to sleep, little baby, do not cry,
You should be a big boy by and by.
You should have a boat and hatchet, too.
You should ride on the water in your own canoe.

Dors, Dors, 'tit Bebe

Dors, dors, 'tit bebe,
Ecoutes la riviere, (Twice)
Dors, dors, 'tit bebe,
Ecoutes la riviere
Couler.

Sleep, sleep, little baby,
Listen to the river. (Twice)
Sleep, sleep, little baby,
Listen to the river
Running.

Come Up, Horsey

Words and New Music Adaptation by Vera Hall. Collected and Adapted by Alan Lomax. TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc.-BMI. Used by Permission.

Momma's gonna buy him a little lapdog,
(3 times)

Put him in his lap when she goes out.

Come up, horsey, hey, hey. (Twice)

Go to sleep, and don't you cry.
Momma's gonna give you some apple pie.

Come up, horsey, hey, hey, (Twice)

(Hums)

(Whispered) He's asleep now!

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Step It Down. Mary Jo Saran, ed. Rounder 8004.

Videotapes with Teacher's Manuals (all Office of Museum Programs, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.)
 Stu Jamieson Teaches Play-Parties from the Southern Anglo-American Tradition. Kate Rinzler, ed.
 Bessie Jones Teaches Children's Games from the Southern Black Tradition. Kate Rinzler, ed.
 Alison McMorland Teaches Children's Games from the British Tradition. Kate Rinzler, ed.

Side One

Total time 27:02

Band One

FROG WENT A-COURTIN'2:46
 Almeda Riddle, vocal
OLD MOTHER HIPPLETOE 2:12
 J D. Dillingham, vocal
ROBIN HOOD AND THE PEDDLER (Child 132)2:44
 Carrie Grover, vocal
BOBBY HALSEY2:15
 Probably E. C. Ball, vocal and fiddle

Band Two

ROUND TO MARYANNE'S3:04
 Kenneth Atwood, vocal
DIEZ PERRITOS1:52
 Arseño Rodriguez, vocal and guitar
LITTLE SALLY WATER2:14
 Captain Pearl R. Nye, vocal
JE ME SUIS MIS-T-À COURIR1:32
 Sabry Guidry, vocal
JIM CRACK CORN 1:23
 Uncle Alec Dunforn, vocal

Band Three

LITTLE ROOSTER1:50
 Almeda Riddle, vocal
OH, BLUE 1:41
 Thelma, Beatrice, and Irene Scruggs vocals
THE GRAY GOOSE3:14
 Washington (Lightnin'), vocal

Side Two

Total time 22:45

Band One

UNTITLED FIFE TUNE WITH CLAPPING ACCOMPANIMENT1:32
 Ed Young, cane fife: Bessie Jones and Georgia Sea Islanders, clapping
APPLE TREE SONG 2:20
 Lonnie Pitchford, vocal and one-string "guitar"
CATFISH 1:19
 Joe Patterson, vocal and panpipe

Band Two

**SALLY DIED; RONALD McDONALD; GEORGE WASHINGTON;
BUMP, BUMP, BUMP; SALOME; ZOODIAC; ZING-ZING-ZING** 4:07
Schoolchildren from Washington, D.C., vocals

Band Three

**THINK; YOUR LEFT; CHEERING IS MY GAME;
HOLLYWOOD NOW SWINGIN' / DYNAMITE** 2:28
Barbara Borum and other schoolgirls from Washington, D.C., vocals

Band Four

ALL HID 1:44
Bessie Jones, vocal
I'M RUNNIN' ON THE RIVER 0:30
Three 12-13 year-old girls, vocals
LA PUERTA ESTA QUEBRADA 0:30
Govita Gonzales and group, vocals
OJIBWA WAR DANCE SONG 0:37
Albert, Vernon, and James Kingbird, vocals; drum accompaniment
CHARIOT 0:47
Group of girls, vocals

Band Five

DOS Y DOS SON CUATRO (Mexican counting song) 0:25
Alicia Gonzalez, vocal
B-A-BAY (spelling song) 0:19
Mrs. A. P. Wilson, vocal
TODAY IS MONDAY (days-of-the-week song) 1:20
Mississippi schoolchildren, vocals

Band Six

MISTER RABBIT 1:25
Susie Miller and two boys, vocals
OLD JOHN THE RABBIT 0:47
Four girls, vocals
RABBIT 0:56
Four girls, vocals

Band Seven

RABBIT IN THE PEA PATCH 0:47
Angie Clark, vocal
OLD GRANDPAW YET 0:47
Mrs. Nell Hampton, vocal
ROXIE ANNE 0:35
Samuel Clay Dixon, vocal

Band Eight

GO TO SLEEP, LITTLE BABY 0:35
Lester Powell, vocal
DORS, DORS, 'TIT BEBE 0:32
Barry Ancelet, vocal
COME UP, HORSEY 1:03
(publ. TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc.)
Vera Hall, vocal

Full discographic information for each selection may be found within the individual discussions of the works in the liner notes.

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