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The Carter Family: Traditional Sources for Song

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THE CARTER FAMILY:
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THE CARTER FAMILY: SOURCES FOR SONG

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The recorded repertory of the original Carter Family was analyzed for traditional influences. Of the 119 songs examined, it was found that fifty-five, roughly one-fourth of their total repertory, have definite roots in one or more traditional sources. The Carters employed traditional texts within their repertory throughout their professional career. Three genres of song were analyzed: sentimental songs, religious songs, and ballads. Of these, sentimental songs was the largest catagory with 113 songs. These songs were found to be remarkably similar in thematic content and moral sensibilities to Victorian parlor songs (ca. 1880-1910). The religious songs were shown to be influenced by several religious persuasions current in the Southern mountains. Black influences were most significant in the Carter spiritual repertory, roughly 17 percent of their sacred numbers deriving from Black sources. Carter Family balladry exhibits the most influence from tradition. The Carters recorded four Child ballads, six British broadsides, and six traditional American ballads. As a whole, the Carter family repertory demonstrates the Carters' eclectic approach to music as they employed texts and tunes from a variety of traditional and contemporary musical resources.

INTRODUCTION

In August of 1927, three musicians from Scott County, Virginia, responded to an advertisement in the Bristol News Bulletin by traveling to Bristol to demonstrate their musical talents for the Victor Talking Machine Company. From that first recording session in 1927 to their last session in 1941, the original Carter Family singing group recorded more than 230 songs. In recent scholarship, the Carter Family are recognized as major influences in the history of country music. Robert Shelton maintains that "this family group was to have a pervasively deep effect on all the currents of American country and folk music from 1927 until today."[1] Not only have the trio left an impressive legacy of "hillbilly" songs which they popularized, but their unique musical style had a strong formative influence on a new genre of music. Their use of three-part harmony, autoharp/guitar accompaniment, and original lead guitar style firmly planted the roots from which "Bluegrass" emerged in the 1950s.[2]

I propose that the Carter Family recorded repertory, which was to have a profound effect upon popular culture, was

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[1]Robert Shelton, The Country Music Story (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), p.71.

[2]Ibid.

solidly based upon a variety of earlier song materials current within the Southern Appalachian mountains. The music of the Carter Family can be shown to be rooted in several traditions that were mingling in the relatively isolated Southeast Appalachian communities of the 1930s.

Prior to the understanding of the effect and significance of the Carter Family upon popular culture and traditional music, their entire repertory must be analyzed for traditional and non-traditional elements. The pronouncement of larger theories must be firmly based upon researched evidence and an understanding of this data. Evidence for further scholarship is presented in this study through a detailed examination of the multiple sources for song texts recorded by the Carter Family.

The field of the folkmusic scholar is expanding with time. Until recently, the analysis of "hillbilly" musicians, such as the Carter Family, would have been considered outside the realm of traditional folk studies. However, as folklorists continue to expand and refine the definition of folk studies, the scope of folklore scholarship remains flexible. In July 1965, this fact was clearly illustrated by the publication of a "Hillbilly Issue" of the Journal of American Folklore. Such scholarly periodicals as the J.E.M.F. Quarterly, Journal of Country Music and Journal of Popular Culture are now replacing ephemeral publications as research tools for the hillbilly music scholar.

Country music enthusiasts have been joined by such dedicated folkmusicologists as Archie Green, Norman Cohen, and D.K. Wilgus in researching hillbilly music. At the same time, detailed histories, such as Country Music USA, by Bill Malone, A History and Encyclopedia of Country Music, by Linnell Gentry, and The Country Music Story, by Robert Shelton, have added greatly to the reference material available.

Scholarship in hillbilly music has, for the most part, concentrated upon the musical characteristics of the genre and the effects that this musical expression has had upon the development of popular music. Edward A. Kahn expanded the scope of hillbilly musicology by exploring one major hillbilly singing group and the history of their career. His socio-anthropological study, The Carter Family: A Reflection of Changes in Society, was the single most valuable study on the Carter Family available for my research. Kahn states that the Carter repertory is a reflection of the sociological changes occurring in the 1930s era. However, before one can state that the Carter Family songs expressed a change in society, the totality of their repertory must be researched and analyzed for origins. Kahn, himself, admits the necessary limitations of his study and suggests that folkloric research must encompass the search for traditional elements and influences in the Carter repertory. The music of the Carter Family may reflect changes in society; however, it can be demonstrated that the Carter Family repertory also reflects their traditional background. In addition to strictly

traditional material, this study will attempt to demonstrate how other unexplored musical persuasions, such as media influences and organized church music, swayed the Carter Family. It has been noted by D.K. Wilgus that "the music performed in the 1930s became less and less 'traditional' in that the repertory of necessity expanded beyond the mountaineer's folk inheritance."[1] My study will explore the ways in which the Carter Family borrowed material from several sources, altered the songs to fit their distinctive style, and yet still represented the Southern mountain tradition of music. In discovering and analyzing these major sources for song texts, I hope to demonstrate the interplay of traditional and popular music in the development of the Carter repertory. I have been able to establish a few facts and to present much supportive evidence about many Carter Family repertory sources and the manner in which the materials were combined.

The Carter repertory derived from several types of Anglo-American mountain music: sentimental parlor songs, traditional and modern gospel music, mountain blues, instrumental stringband music, original compositions, and traditional balladry. As in the case with many folk musicians, it is difficult to separate the traditional elements from the creative inventions of the Carters. This problem is compounded

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[1]D.K. Wilgus, "Country Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," in The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition, ed: Americo Paredes and Ellen Stekert (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1971), p. 146.

by the fact that A.P. Carter was an especially avid song collector. In addition to saving song texts sent to him from fans, he sometimes "went away for weeks collecting songs."[1]

My overall task was to isolate and identify the several roots of the Carter textual repertory and draw some conclusions upon how traditional and non-traditional elements combined to shape their music. To accomplish this end, I first listened to each recorded song and transcribed the texts. My study is limited to songs recorded by the original Carter Family singing group and does not include songs found only on radio transcriptions. This research was made possible by my access to the complete taped collection of the recordings of the Carter Family.[2]

For the convenience of study, the next research procedure involved separating the Carter songs into workable "genres," examining each genre for overall characteristics and historical development. The three categories I have selected are: sentimental parlor songs, religious songs, and ballads. Although the Carter repertory includes categories other than these three (blues, instrumentals, etc.), they are the most pervasive and clear-cut genres within their music. A categorized discography is contained in Appendix A.

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[1]Archie Green, "The Carter Family's 'Coal Miner's Blues'," Southern Folklore Quarterly 25 (December 1961):17.

[2]Taped recordings of all Carter Family releases were donated to Western Kentucky University Folklore and Folklife Collection by Mr. Freeman Kitchens of Drake, Kentucky, Mr. Kitchens is President of the Original Carter Family Fan Club and has been a disc collector for over forty years.

The texts were then compared to published songs in collections, hymnbooks, songsters and music histories. Texts or partial texts with traceable origins are presented with their source. Most songs, however, were unrecorded in available reference sources. Discussions and correspondence with Jeanette Carter, daughter of A.P. and Sara, were helpful in pinpointing several possible influences. Similarly, fieldwork with Freeman Kitchens was indispensible for tracing recording dates and professional history.[1]

My findings are presented in three chapters, paralleling the three major song divisions. Chapter I considers the sentimental songs recorded by the Carter Family, by far the most numerous category within their repertory. Many of these Carter texts are rewritten verse from printed sources, and a few were traced to nineteenth century sheetmusic. Although the majority of texts can not be identified definitively, many are similar in theme and sensitivity to turn-of-the-century popular sheetmusic. I have tried to point out the major themes current within the genre and list the Carter songs that illustrate these characteristics. In conjunction with this research, speculations are made regarding the popularity of this song genre within the folk community.

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[1]Much of my research was made possible by my acquisition of all Carter Family Fan Club publications, such as the Sunny Side Sentinel. The complete set is now deposited within Western Kentucky University Folklore and Folklife Collection.

The second chapter deals with the Carters' religious song expression. The multi-traditional religious heritage of the Southern mountains, shaped by numerous spiritual practices and customs, is shown to be the major source for the Carter religious repertory. Traditional gospel techniques, hymns of the Methodist faith, "Singing School" texts, and camp meeting songs all have found their way into the Carter Family repertory. The true eclectic nature of A.P. Carter's creativity is clearly shown within this genre.

Chapter III explores the origins of the recorded Carter ballads. G. Malcolm Laws succinctly defines the ballad as "a narrative folksong which dramatizes a memorable event."[1] Moreover, a ballad possesses a dramatic core, or plotline, whereas a lyric song will merely express an emotion or state of mind. Using this definition, the Carter Family recorded twenty-six ballads, the texts of which are contained in Appendix B.

Ballads recorded by the Carter Family may be found within the three major research sources for American balladry: the Child collection, Laws' Native American Balladry, and Laws' American Balladry From British Broadsides. In addition to these ballads, many Carter texts seem to be original compositions and locally collected texts. The impact of the recording industry and the interplay of traditional/contemporary elements in ballad-making is discussed in Chapter III, com-

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[1]G. Malcolm Laws, Native American Balladry (Philadelphia: Publications of the American Folklore Society, 1964), p.2.

bining such questions as unconscious plagiarisms and copyright problems.

My study is limited to one singing group and their song sources. However, the Carter Family trio of traditional singers became remarkably influential in the music world as a result of circumstance and impressive talent. The forces that shaped their singing style and repertory were diverse and numerous. These forces would eventually have an impact upon all country, gospel, and Bluegrass music by virtue of their influence on the Carters and their formative music. The discovery and analysis of the several traditions shaping the Carter Family repertory can therefore tell us something of the formative influences upon all hillbilly music. The exposition of these traditional and non-traditional sources is a necessary step toward the understanding of traditional folk and popular music.

My findings are limited by the research tools available to me and the short time allotted for my study. Prior to a knowledge of the effects that the Carter Family and groups contemporary with them had upon music history, folk music scholars must accomplish much basic research. Further investigation is needed in the field to reveal the myriad influences upon other influential hillbilly musicians and the role that traditional music plays within their repertories. Only upon completion of this initial task will we begin to understand the significance of hillbilly music to the folklorist.

The Carter Family were atypical among the traditional singers in the Southern mountains in gaining widespread popularity in the commercial field of music. They were typical of hillbilly musicians in reflecting within their repertory both Anglo-American song tradition and the contemporary forces of society in the 1930s. It is my hope that this examination of the songs in the Carter Family repertory will yield useful insights for scholarly application in studying the musical offerings of many, or possibly all, hillbilly performers. I have tried to show how the Carter Family were influenced by the Southwestern Virginia folk environment of the 1930s, garnering their artistic material from the various influences abroad within their cultural framework. They modernized traditional music to fit the commercial recording industry, just as they utilized popular music in a traditional style. In this manner, they are firmly set within their time, at once traditional and contemporary in the "Golden Age of Hillbilly Music."

> Tradition, then, is not merely a matter of time past or of time present, or even of both. . . . Tradition stretches back across centuries to the dim recesses of pre-history, tradition has not yet ceased to grow and evolve. . . . Thus it would seem that it is a sense of tradition that makes one most aware of his own place in time, that makes one most truly contemporary.[1]

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[1]Charles W. Joyner, Folk Song in South Carolina (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), p.7.

CHAPTER I

SENTIMENTAL SONGS

Of the 235 songs recorded by the Carter Family, 114, or roughly half of them, can be classified as "sentimental."[1] This is a broad classification which includes not only songs directly traceable to nineteenth century parlor tunes, but also those songs which show a marked similarity in textual content, imagery, and poetic structure to the songs popular in the Victorian era.

The repertory of rural singers in an isolated community such as the one that produced the Carter Family derives from many and varied types of song, clearly following an eclectic principle. Drawing from a vast store of traditional material, singers from a rural environment added to this a wealth of more contemporary musical material, seemingly with little regard for, or knowledge of, the original sources. These songs, through direct contact and media presentations, seemed to capture the attention and speak to the emotions of the folk audience: in short, they appeared to fulfill the folk aesthetic.

An examination of the early recordings of the Carter

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[1]See Appendix A.

Family reveals their repertory to be significantly enriched by musical material deriving from, or patterned after, turn-of-the-century parlor songs. It would seem that the relatively isolated, conservative folk communities of the South identified strongly with the sensibilities of the Victorian parlor ballad. The Carter Family is one group that has modified, condensed, and preserved these sentimental songs in a living tradition. For example, their theme song, and perhaps most well-known number, "Keep On The Sunny Side," was modeled after a song of the same name copyrighted in 1906 by Teddy Morse.[1]

The Carter Family are perhaps representative of singers throughout the whole Southern Appalachian area in that many songs they popularized were current within their community. Hence, their repertory may be seen, in part, as a musical indicator of the sentiments and artistic taste of this folk environment.

Scott County, Virginia, in the late 1920s and 1930s, was an isolated area whose residents were members of a tenaciously conservative rural environment. During this period, the community was experiencing the general post-war confusion encountered by all rural and small town areas in the United States. From this milieu, the Carters emerged as a commercial singing family. It has been said that they expressed the unbendingly conservative essence of their community and yet re-

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[1]Sigmund Spaeth, A History of Popular Music in America (New York: Random House, 1948), p.337.

flected the social chaos and change that was present during the period between World War I and World War II.[1]

Through an examination of the Carter Family sentimental song texts, several sources may be pinpointed and general thematic similarities may be established between the Carter songs and Victorian broadsides. By focusing upon the various thematic and musical aspects of Victorian sentimental song, speculations may be drawn as to their strong appeal to a hillbilly group such as the Carter Family. These songs seem to have survived in folk societies long after they had disappeared from the mainstream of American culture, eventually finding their way into the Carter repertory.

The setting that originally fostered the popularity of "polite" sentimental music was the Victorian drawing room of the up-and-coming middle class. Although the songs were being published as early as 1825, the "Golden Age of Parlour Music" is generally agreed to be 1880 to 1910.[2] The tone of the music conformed to the aspects of the total environment: genteel and decorous. This setting sharply contrasts with the mountain homes of the Appalachian people during the depression of the 1930s. However different the environment,

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[1]An in-depth study of the sociological changes expressed in the music of the Carter Family is given in Edward A. Kahn, The Carter Family: A Reflection of Changes in Society (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, #574378, 1971).

[2]Michael Turner, The Parlour Songbook: A Casquet of Vocal Gems (New York: Viking Press, 1972), p.1.

the sentimental parlor songs found a lasting popularity in the homes of the Southern Highlands.

By the close of the nineteenth century, parlor singing was losing favor in the cities. Amid rapid social change, the sentimental song ceased to express the values of the new urban middle class. However, while parlor singing was in vogue, the rise of both simple piano accompaniment and the phenomenon of glee club harmonizers and singing quartets was to have an enduring effect upon the history of American music.[1] The far-reaching influences of accompaniment and harmony may be established by listening to both the secular and religious music that emerged from rural communities, such as Scott county, Virginia, in the 1920s and 1930s.

Forty years prior to the discovery of the Carter Family as a singing group, Victorian society was singing about the good, clean life of hearth, home, and harmony. In the Gay '90s "Ballads extolled and sentimentalized over the noblest standards of propriety and behavior while condemning the baser attitudes."[2] The highly moral tone of the parlor ballad expressed the deeply religious, conservative propriety that pervaded the "good life." These attitudes were cherished also in rural Virginia when A.P., Sara, and Maybelle Carter were singing for friends. The rapidly changing South was longing

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[1]Turner, The Parlour Songbook, p.4.

[2]David Ewen, Great Men of American Popular Music (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1971), p.46.

for a time of lost tranquility.

The 1890s had seen the emergence of the industrial revolution, female emancipation, abolition, and temperance movements. The rural areas of America in the 1930s were contending with a new industrialization, out-migration, and a breakdown of an older value system. The intrinsic merits of strong family ties were being replaced with monetary values. It was at this time that the Carter Family became immensely popular, representing "the domestic tradition of performance and song-making and warm, intimate family values."[1]

The major themes in parlor songs reflect these changes and express a simple longing for an imagined past, when life had stability: a home, a mother, a true love, and enough money to get by. One of the most poignant and universal motifs found in parlor ballads is a longing for home. During the Victorian era "Home Sweet Home" is cited as one of the most popular songs to emerge, having a universal appeal.[2] The period between 1840 and 1900 was a time of mass emigration to America, as millions of new citizens arrived from Europe. Similarly, the period between World War I and World War II was a time of mass out-migration for rural Americans as they fled to the industrial centers in the North and East. A deep-seated longing for the security of the family and the

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[1]D.K. Wilgus, "Country Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," in The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition, Americo Paredes and Ellen Stekert, ed. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1971), p.144.

[2]Spaeth, A History of Popular Music in America, p.58.

familiar home place can be heard in the music of the Carter Family.

The Victorians composed a number of "home" songs, among them "Log Cabin Song," "Little Old Cabin in the Lane," "Old Cabin Home," and "Cottage By the Sea." Similarly, the Carter Family exploited this home theme in fifteen songs: "Little Log Hut in the Lane," "My Old Cottage Home," "My little Home in Tennessee," "Longing for Old Virginia," "Little Poplar Log House on the Hill," "My Home Among the Hills," "My Native Home," "Home By the Sea," "A Distant Land to Roam," "When the Roses Bloom in Dixieland," "When the Springtime Comes Again," "In The Shadow of Clinch Mountain," "Mid the Green Fields of Virginia," "My Clinch Mountain Home," and "Mountains of Tennessee." This repertory is an amalgam of original songs such as "My Clinch Mountain Home," composed by A.P.: collected songs popular in the Scott County community: and nineteenth century sheetmusic such as "Mid the Green Fields of Virginia," copyrighted in 1898,[1] or "Home in Tennessee," written in 1915.[2]

Although few of these songs are directly traceable to Victorian broadsheets, snatches of text and general thematic content seem linked to turn-of-the-century popular song. "Cottage By the Sea," first published in 1883, was to be copyrighted no less than twenty-three times in thirty years.[3]

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[1]Spaeth, A History of Popular Music in America, p.261.

[2]Deac Martin, Deac Martin's Book of Americana (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970), p.87.

[3]Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

The vast popularity of this song and its subsequent circulation may have had a strong influence upon A.P. Carter's "My Old Cottage Home" or "Home By the Sea," to name only a few similar enough for comparison.

A theme closely related to home is the perennial symbol of family life--mother. Anthems praising mother written during the late nineteenth century illustrated the beginnings of the great omnipotent "Mom" image. Mother was stability, the center of home life and, therefore, the hub of the universe. Mother was the one person from whom one expected unconditional love, and there seems to have been a dearth of imperfect "moms" at the turn of the century. The Carters sing of mother in the same reverent manner in eleven songs. True to the nineteenth century aesthetic, their most nostalgic songs are concerned with the theme of a long-suffering, but ever-loving, mother. In several songs, pitching the emotion to an even higher plane, mother is either dead or dying. "I Have an Aged Mother," "Two Sweethearts" (or "At The Club"), "Picture On the Wall," "Bring Back My Boy," "They Call Her Mother," "The Dying Mother," "Your Mother Still Prays for You, Jack," and "There's No One Like Mother to Me" are several of these Carter Songs. Of these tributes to mother, one may be pinpointed as Victorian in origin. "Picture On the Wall" was published in 1880, listing J.P. Shelley as composer. It was republished at least two times, in 1885 and 1900, before the Carters were to know and record it.[1]

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[1]Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

In the Victorian mind, mother is linked unequivocally with religion. Mother was the moral pedagogue of the family and is remembered as a model, saint-like being, bringing God and family closer together. In "Little Log Cabin By the Sea" the Carters sing reverently of "the Bible that my mother gave to me." Mother dwells in heaven, of course, upon her demise and several songs concern her benevolent soul in paradise: "Will My Mother Know Me There?" and "Just a Few More Days" are characteristic of the genre. "Hello Central, Give Me Heaven" is a maudlin song of a child attempting to call mother in heaven. Written by Charles K. Harris in 1901[1], this song was adopted by the Carter Family and was to become one of their biggest "hits," thirty years after its composition.

It is difficult to separate the religious from the sentimental in the folk repertory, as so many songs overlap in theme. Hymns were extremely popular at the turn of the century, the church being one of the central forces in the community. Newly composed religious songs were adopted quickly, for as long as the words were morally uplifting, tunes could be borrowed from secular sources. Although love of home and love of mother were significant virtues for the Victorian songwriters and hillbilly singers, love of God was perhaps the most important of all. The extensive sacred repertory of the Carter Family is discussed in Chapter III.

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[1]Spaeth, A History of Popular Music in America, p.261.

American musical heritage reflects the perennial interest of romantic love. At the time of Victorian courtship, this love was set upon an unrealistic pedestal. It is this theme which lifted parlor song to its sentimental zenith. Carnal knowledge was ignored and a heart could be won with a kiss and broken with a sigh. That this idealized form of romance survived in song to emerge on the radio of the 1930s seems testimony to the general moral appeal of the sentimental ballad.

Sentimental songs of the Carter Family concern both fortunate and unfortunate love affairs. In keeping with the melancholy mood, many of their songs recount unhappy romances, jilted bride and dead lover tales. Thirty-one Carter songs deal with broken romances: "Forsaken Love;" "Sweet Fern," an unusual perversion of "Sweet Birds;" "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes;" "Bring Back My Blue-Eyed Boy;" "Bury Me Beneath the Willow;" "Fond Affection;" "Lover's Farewell;" "Broken-Hearted Lover;" "Why There's a Tear in My Eye," recorded with Jimmie Rodgers; and "I Never Loved But One" are just a few of these songs of dead or unfaithful lovers.[1] Again, it is nearly impossible to establish a definitive origin for most of these songs, however, more than a few are reworkings of popular Victorian sheetmusic. "Sweet Fern" was first copyrighted in 1876 by T.P. Westendorf and G.W. Persley as "Sweet Birds."[2]

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[1]A complete song list is given in Appendix A.

[2]Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

It is interesting to note that the oral process seems to have played a part in the Carters' learning of the song, thus changing the title and the quality of the text in their version. T.B. Ransom copyrighted "I'll Be All Smiles Tonight" in 1879. This broadside was to be recorded by the Carter Family on the Bluebird label in 1934. However, as in the case of several Carter Family songs, the song was previously released by another hillbilly group. Luther Clark and the Blue Ridge Highballers recorded the song for Columbia in 1926 (15069-D).[1] It is therefore uncertain whether the Carters obtained the song from printed, oral, or media sources.

Songs concerning jilted brides are also present in the later folk repertories. "He Never Came Back" and "The Broken Engagement" are two sung by the Carter Family. More heart-rending are the Carter songs dealing with dead, or dying, lovers such as "No More the Sun Shines on Lorena," a song from blackface minstrelsy dealing with slave plantation life.[2] Others include "Darling Nellie Across the Sea," written by Sara Carter, and "Happiest Days of All."

Blushingly ecstatic love songs also had their appeal to the rural singers. Recorded by the Carter Family, we find a representative sampling of this genre in such songs as: "Meet Me By Moonlight Alone," written by J.A. Wade in 1861

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[1]Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

[2]Spaeth, A History of Popular Music in America, p.197.

for Victorian audiences;[1] "Little Darling Pal of Mine," a traditional favorite; "Birds Were Singing of You;" "Winding Stream;" "Amber Tresses," a reworked version of "Amber Tresses Tied in Blue" by H.B. Danks and Samuel Mitchell (1874);[2] "I'll Never Forsake You;" "Dixie Darling;" "By the Touch of Her Hand;" "Bonny Blue Eyes;" "My Honey Lou," of 1904 vintage by Thurland Chattaway;[3] and "Give Me Your Love, I'll Give You Mine." Of particular interest are the numerous flower-love analogy songs popularized by the Carter Family. "Wildwood Flower," derived from the original "Pale Amaryllis," was also published in 1888 as "I'll Twine Mid the Ringlets" by Maude Irving and J.P. Webster.[4] "When The Roses Come Again" was copyrighted seventeen times between 1874 and 1907, first claimed by Arthur W. French and J.W. Persley.[5] "I Found You Among the Roses," "Sweet as Flowers in Maytime," "You Are My Flower," and "My Wildwood Rose" all rely upon the same floral imagery.

The nineteenth century parlor songs exhibited a comic as well as a serious side. Several of these songs deal with courtship and love-marriage situations. The Carter Family

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[1]Helen Kendrick Johnson, Our Familiar Songs and Those Who Made Them (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1881), pp.374-6.

[2]Spaeth, A History of Popular Music in America, p.197.

[3]Washingtin D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

recorded a few of these: "Chewing Gum," "Over the Graden Wall," by G. Fox-Hunter (1879);[1] "Funny When You Feel That Way;" "Give Him One More As He Goes;" and "Kissing Is a Crime."

The United States experienced a tragedy during the nineteenth century that was to create far-reaching consequences throughout the nation. Civil War, an agent of grief and despair among all Americans, was the inspiration for numerous war ballads to be remembered by future generations. The ballads of the American Civil War were of lasting popularity among the folk, for they seemingly touched their sentiments:

> Such songs have retained their popularity because the music has universal and stirring appeal. . . . author and composer intensify or strengthen in musical form what the populace is already thinking or feeling.[2]

These songs sidestepped the unpleasantness and real horror of war. Instead, the battle is over and grief is expressed perhaps through a soldier's last words, as in "The Dying Soldier" recorded by the Carter Family for Victor Records. Other songs tell of weeping at home, of a sweetheart or mother whose boy will never return. Perhaps the most popular war ballad recorded by the Carter Family was "Faded Coat of Blue," or "The Nameless Grave," a melancholy Civil War song of 1865, written by J.H. McNaughton.[3]

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[1]Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

[2]Willard A. & Porter W. Heaps, The Singing Sixties (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p.7.

[3]Ibid., p.260.

Aside from war, death was a very real presence in the Victorian household, and their songs reflected this fact. Infant mortality and premature demise resulting from disease and poverty were common occurrences. One need only visit a typical graveyard in the rural South to discover that this phenomenon did not end with the dawning of the twentieth century. Michael Turner feels that the middle-class society of the nineteenth century was seeking to remove the sting of death by romanticizing the reality of it.[1] In any case, sentimentalized death became overwhelmingly stylish with both the Victorian and later rural Southern societies. The cliché of the dying infant was especially exploited in these songs, usually predicting a better life in heaven and pointing out a suitable moral to those still in the living world. The Carter Family song that has best preserved this theme is "Darling Little Joe," a righteously maudlin last soliloquy of a dying child. This song was composed in 1876 by Charles E. Addison as "Little Joe," and was later to be recorded in 1934 by both the Carter Family and Bradley Kincaid.[2] "Will the Roses Bloom in Heaven" and "The Orphan Child" also center on the dying child theme. Other songs of the Carter Family which concern the topic of death include: "See That My Grave is Kept Green," which was recorded by Blind Lemon Jefferson

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[1]Turner, The Parlour Songbook, p.18.

[2]Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

in 1928[1] and released by the Carter Family five years later; and "Give Me the Roses While I Live." "Gathering Flowers From the Hillside," recorded by the Carter Family in 1935, was copyrighted in 1859 as "Faded Flowers."[2] The firm belief of both singers and audience in a hereafter accounts in part for the popularity of these death themes.

The appeal of the textual aspects of the parlor songs to the rural Southern community is enhanced by their musical form. The music of these sentimental gems was significant, perhaps contributing to their survival in oral tradition among the hillbilly singers of the 1930s.

Musically, the most pertinent quality of the parlor ballads is that they were composed to be absolutely singable. The music publishers at the turn of the century were not concerned with artistic quality, but rather with sales quantity. The very "raison d'etre" for most of these songs was to create a profit for the music publishing house by becoming a "hit." One sure way that a song could become a smash success was to be so infatuatingly simple that consumers would hear the song once on the stage and simply have to purchase the sheetmusic.[3]

The music of the parlor ballad was participation music, designed for easy readability and memorization. This "sing-

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[1]Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

[2]Henry M. Belden, Ballads and Songs Collected By the Missouri Folklore Society (St. Louis, Missouri: University of Missouri Studies, 1955), p.216.

[3]Turner, The Parlour Songbook, p.19.

ability" was accomplished in several ways, however, two traits are most important to the oral transmission of the tune. The accompaniment of parlor songs, on piano in the nineteenth century and on guitar and autoharp by the Carter Family, revolved around the three major chords of the key played (tonic, dominant, and subdominant). This practice enables the singer to predict the changes readily and allows for "the maximum of showiness with the minimum of technique."[1]

The second trait is the simple harmonic language employed within these sentimental songs. The songs stick close to the security of the home key and always resolve on the tonic note, frequently returning to the tonic during the course of the melody. The songs have an absolute cadence, or strong beat, usually 4/4 or 3/4 timing.

These traits, common to most "folksongs" in the hillbilly mode, combine to make a pleasing sound that is easy to follow and adopt. On hearing an old parlor song sung by the Carter Family, one can almost predict every change in the melodic sequence and sing along after one hearing. Naturally these characteristics would make the sheetmusic of the nineteenth century easily adaptable to an orally transmitted repertory, and the folk singers readily incorporated the songs into their musical lists. Archie Green explains that the Carter Family "perpetuated a particular rhythmic beat in country music, preserved instrumental patterns developed to

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[1]Turner, The Parlour Songbook, p.20.

complement vocal sounds of traditional music. . . ."[1] These musical qualities are identical with the features that made parlor ballads so popular.

There are several possible avenues that the parlor song may have travelled to reach the rural audiences of the 1930s. Popular entertainments noted for introducing new music to the mass audiences of America were vaudeville, travelling family troupes of singers, showboats, ballad concerts, medicine and minstrel shows. The minstrel show and medicine show were the first forms of public entertainment to disseminate music directly to the folk, rendering them the most influential forms of imported entertainment in the isolated mountains of Appalachia.

The first minstrel shows were disorganized and somewhat spontaneous affairs. touring the rural South in the 1830s and 1840s.[2] They provided much needed variety entertainment to the Americans living apart from the civilization of urban society. A combination of several acts, the show included several musical numbers, usually performed by Whites in blackface. Employing the traditional instruments of the rural communities (banjo, fiddle, bones, etc.), the minstrels would return the old songs and fiddle tunes that were familiar, mixed with Negro dialect "Coon" songs, and newly composed sentimental numbers.

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[1]Archie Green, "The Carter Family's 'Coal Miner's Blues'," Southern Folklore Quarterly 25, (December 1961), p.226.

[2]Turner, The Parlour Songbook, p.20.

Although it is hard to gauge the effect that minstrelsy had upon the rural Southern musical repertory, an examination of such works as the Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore and listening sessions to the early recorded music of rural America reveal numerous examples of "Coon" songs and sentimental numbers popular with minstrel troupes.

Jeanette Carter remembers attending a travelling musical show with A.P. and her sister Gladys. It was located three miles from her home in ". . . Mendota, Virginia, and the whole valley went."[1] In addition to attending travelling shows in the area, A.P. Carter was employed briefly with a medicine show.[2] Parlor songs of former years may have entered their repertory as a result of this exposure.

There are several other ways that the sentimental ballad may have reached the rural communities of the South. As early as 1825, people were buying small cloth-bound volumes containing about one hundred songs or more. These songsters contained no music, as the tunes were well known. Such publications as "The Temperance Songster," "Yankee Songster's Pocket Companion," "Forget-Me-Not Songster," "Virginia Warbler," and the "American National Songster" had an extremely widespread distribution in the nineteenth century and may have found their way into the folk households in original form. The songster tradition continued through the years, especially

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[1]Jeanette Carter to writer, 11 February 1975, possession of writer.

[2]Ibid.

in the rural South. A popular songster, current in many rural areas in the 1970s is the "Sweet Songster," a source for many songs in the folk repertory. The songs contained in these volumes include hymns, native ballads, composed "folksongs," "slave songs," and poems set to music.

The sheet music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sold in great quantity and these popular "broadsides" were perhaps disseminated throughout middle-class American society and quite possibly were orally transmitted to the rural areas. Many sentimental ballads found popular in folk communities can be traced to "Tin Pan Alley." The "Alley" was a conglomerate of professional lyricists and tune composers in New York City who sustained a living by grinding out the popular music of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Realizing a gold mine when they saw one, they exploited the sentimental ballad to the hilt. By the late 1890s, many composers, sophisticated and cynical, wrote their songs with tongue-in-cheek and the parlor ballad passed from pathos to bathos.[1] Ironically, the songs were seriously taken by the public.

A typical "Tin Pan Alley" denizen was Charles K. Harris. Harris worked variously as a bell-hop, banjo-player, and pawnbroker before striking it rich in the music business. He had the talent to express the undaunted naivete of the Victorian period and was to compose two of the Carter Family's biggest hits of the 1930s, "Mid the Green Fields of Virginia" (1898)

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[1]Turner, The Parlour Songbook, p.16.

and "Hello Central, Give Me Heaven" (1901).[1] These songs would later be mistakenly attributed to A.P. Carter.

Another lesser-known medium of song transmission at the turn of the century was the wax cylinder phonograph. Although the market for these novelties was the urban sophisticate, the musical fare relied heavily upon rural influences. The medium gained popularity so rapidly that in 1891 The Columbia Phonograph Company of Washington, D.C. had a ten page catalogue.[2] The invention of disc records, which retained the sentimental, topical, comic fare of the wax cylinder, greatly extended the market after the turn of the century. By no means did all rural families in the early twentieth century own a phonograph machine; however, the effects of the invention reached the rural environment. The creation of a method of reproducing the same performance over and over naturally aided in the retention and transmission of sentimental music. The wax phonograph machine had an effect upon the Victorian urban society somewhat analogous to the profound impact the radio had upon the rural audiences of the 1930s.[3]

There is uncertainty concerning the exact source of many songs in the Carter repertory that can be traced to the nineteenth century. It is certain, however, that the Carters,

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[1]Ian Whitcomb, After the Ball (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p.1.

[2]Edward A. Kahn, The Carter Family: A Reflection of Changes in Society (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, #574378, 1971), p.69.

[3]Ibid.

especially A.P., were collectors as well as transmitters of music. That sheetmusic was consulted is attested to by Leslie Riddles, a family friend who accompanied A.P. on several collecting trips. Mr. Riddles remembers that "if you had some old sheetmusic that was thirty-five, forty years old he would come by and see if he could get it from you."[1] During their tour of personal appearances in the Southwestern Virginia area, the Carter Family gathered songs from the people in the area. They would learn the song and then "fix it up to suit their style."[2]

That this style was infectious may be seen in their immediate success and lasting popularity. Although few remember the "Pale Amaryllis," we hear several versions of "Wildwood Flower" today. The Carters' garbled version of "Sweet Birds" became "Sweet Fern" and has been found in several folklorists' collections in this form, including the Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore.[3] "Little Darling Pal of Mine" has also invaded the oral repertory of the folk in the Carter Family form. These are only a few of the songs that have been popularized by the Carter Family and fed back into the folk environment.

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[1]Kip Lomell, "'I Used to Go Along and Help': Leslie Riddles Remembers Song Hunting With A.P.," in The Carter Family: Old Time Music Booklet I, ed: John Atkins (London: Old Time Music Inc., 1973), p.35.

[2]Kahn, The Carter Family, p.55.

[3]Newman I. White, ed., The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, III (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1952), pp.351-3.

Of the 114 Carter songs classified as "sentimental," eighteen have been firmly established with nineteenth century origins within this paper. For the other songs, the degree of influence exerted upon the Carter Family by nineteenth century sentimental song is difficult to gauge. However, the textual framework, thematic dimensions, and musical arrangements all combine to link these Carter songs to the popular music of the Victorian period.

The overwhelmingly popular themes of death, tributes to mother, yearnings for home, and remorse over broken love affairs are treated repeatedly in both Victorian and Carter Family songs. Simple musical progressions and strictly conforming time patterns characterize each song tradition and the use of identical cliché imagery is illustrated clearly upon text comparison.

The Carter Family did much to preserve the spirit of nineteenth century sentimental music. Similarly, the form and texts of turn-of-the-century sheetmusic had a lasting effect upon the Carter repertory, which emerged forty years later.

There exists a confusing overlapping of genres within the Carter repertory, as many of their "sacred" numbers also have roots within the parlor-song broadside tradition. Nineteenth century sheetmusic, however, exists as merely one of the multiple origins for Carter Family spirituals. In the next chapter the varied roots of the Carters' religious heritage affecting their music are explored.

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS SONGS

During the fourteen years of the original Carter Family professional career, they recorded sixty "spiritual" or "sacred" numbers, approximately one-fourth of their repertory.[1] These songs, forerunners of modern country-gospel music, were to establish the Carters' image firmly as a wholesome, God-fearing, clean-living family. Their gospel musical style, borrowing from tradition, is still heard in the gospel songs popular today.

Religious and moral attitudes as they existed in the Southern Appalachian mountains during the 1920s and 1930s were major shapers of the Carter Family's music and are reflected in their sacred repertory. These Carter songs express the religious attitudes and beliefs of their contemporary Appalachian folk community, and they may be shown to derive from several distinct traditions. Fundamentalism, Methodism, "singing school" traditions, nineteenth century popular song, Black spirituals, traditional White gospel song, camp meetings, and the shape-note songster tradition have all played a part within the Carter Family religious musical ex-

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[1]See Appendix A.

pression. Diverse as these various influences may seem, they all existed within the cultural milieu of the Southern Appalachians, musical sphere and home of the Carters.

The first settlers to establish roots in Southwestern Virginia were politically independent and strongly Calvinistic in religious leaning. Scotch Presbyterians, French Huguenots, Palatine Germans, and English Independents all retained their strong denominational lines in the Virginia mountains. James Raine succinctly gave an early twentieth century interpretation of religious life in the mountains: "The mountain man has an inherited conviction of God, a vivid sense of His management of the world. You would probably call him a fatalist."[1]

Before 1785, the Church of England was the official state church of Virginia. However, the westernmost regions of the state were so isolated that control over congregations was lax. As a result of this lack of communication and the reluctance of qualified ministers to enter the back-country, Appalachian congregations practiced their own form of religious observance and established a tradition of fundamentalism lasting through generations. This form of fundamentalism was to be inherited by members of the Carter clan. As late as 1958, a survey taken in these mountain regions disclosed that the majority of residents read the Bible literally and believed in its absolute truth. Two-thirds of the persons interviewed

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[1]James Raine, Land of the Saddle-bags (New York: Council of Women, 1921), p.191.

retained a fundamentalist religious view.[1]

During the early 1920s church organization in the Appalachians has been described as loosely structured, with little machinery. The church governing body consisted simply of a preacher.[2] In 1926 there were 1.5 million church members in the 190 counties of Southern Appalachia, with two out of five being Southern Baptists. Most congregations were small, half the rural churches listing fewer than forty-five members. Eighty-five percent of the church buildings were located in open country, usually consisting of one room with a meager budget for operations.[3] A later study (1958-59) reveals little change in the religion of the mountaineers. Less than fifty percent of the people belonged to an official church; the more isolated the region, the lower the church membership. Religion was still a personal experience to most Christians, with two-thirds citing their home as the most significant place of worship.[4] Within this religious sphere, the Carters were raised in the Methodist faith.

In 1766 the first Methodists settled in Appalachia.[5] By 1926 Methodism was the second largest denomination in

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[1]W.D. Weatherford and Earl Brewer, Life and Religion in Southern Appalachia (New York: Friendship Press, 1962), p.92.

[2]Raine, Land of the Saddle-bags, p.198.

[3]Weatherford and Brewer, Life and Religion in Southern Appalachia, p.70-74.

[4]Ibid., p.132.

[5]Elizabeth K. Nottingham, Methodism and the Frontier (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p.4.

Southern Appalachia, with over one-half million members. On a percentage basis, Methodists in this area were twice as numerous as in the country as a whole.[1] These early spiritual influences are reflected in the Carter Family songs.

Mollie Arvelle Carter, A.P.'s mother, was one of five children raised strictly by her father, a member of Friendly Grove Methodist Church. Her future husband, Robert C. Carter, was "a drinking fellow" who played banjo at local dances. The union of these two people illustrates the combination of fundamentalist religion and musical talent that marked the Carter Family career. The Carter children grew up with a strong tradition of balladry and religious song, surrounded by a deep love of rural mountain music.[2] Bob Carter gave up drinking and stopped playing banjo after his marriage, in accordance with the religious convictions of his new bride. However, he continued to sing the "old songs" and ballads of his family heritage. Hymns from the primitive and missionary Baptist churches were also alive in his family religious tradition. He continued to sing these sacred numbers after he "got religion."[3] Mollie Carter, a traditional balladeer herself, was a major source for A.P.'s balladry in later years.

The Carter, Dougherty, and Addington families were richly endowed with musicians. Uncles, aunts, parents, and

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[1]Weatherford and Brewer, Life and Religion in Southern Appalachia, pp.70-71.

[2]Kahn, The Carter Family, p.43.

[3]Ibid., p.42.

siblings of the recording Carter Family we remember today were talented and practicing musicians themselves and contributed significantly to the Carter recorded repertory. Although many people have attrubuted "Keep On The Sunny Side," the spiritual theme song of the Carter Family, to A.P. Carter, it was actually a song handed down in family tradition. A.P. leaned the song, originally published in 1906,[1] from his uncle Flanders Bayes, who was another significant influence on his musical career.[2]

Mollie Carter's prohibition against the banjo did not deter the family members of the Carter household from practicing the wicked act of instrument-playing. A.P.'s brother, Jim, reportedly had a banjo hidden away, and Grant, Jim, and A.P. learned to play fiddle.[3] Another brother, Ezra (Eck), a fair musician, became the husband of Maybelle Addington. He was "a student of the Bible" who ran a grist mill and worked for the railroad.[4] A.P.'s two sisters were also musically endowed. His younger sister, Sylvia, played guitar and sang with the Carter Family occasionally on their tours, while Virgie sang the older ballads unaccompanied, in the tradition

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[1]Spaeth, A History of Popular Music in America, p.337.

[2]Ed Romaniuk, interview with Sara Carter, at her home in Angel's Camp, California, 1971.

[3]Kahn, The Carter Family, pp.42-43.

[4]June Carter, "I Remember the Carter Family," Country Song Round-Up XVIII, No. 90, (October 1965):17.

of her mother.[1]

Both Sara and Maybelle grew up in a similar atmosphere of musical expression. Maybelle, one of ten children in the Addington family, learned to play guitar from her brothers. It was said that Maybelle "sometimes played with her brothers until dawn."[2] Sara's Uncle Millburn Nicholas was a fiddler. Crowds gathered at their house on weekends to hear him and Ap Harris, another fiddler, play.[3]

This all-pervasive musical atmosphere fostered the knowledge and retention of many "sacred songs" passed on through tradition in the folk communities of America. For instance, "Little Moses," a religious ballad recorded by the Carter Family in 1929, was collected as "Moses In the Bull-rushes" in Missouri (1905) and elsewhere reported in tradition in Tennessee.[4] As they passed from tradition to phonograph, such Carter Family favorites as "Sowing On the Mountain," "God Gave Noah the Rainbow Sign," "On the Rock Where Moses Stood," "Diamonds In the Rough," and "Little Moses" made a major mark on the development of White gospel singing. The singing Carter Family had such a major effect upon sacred

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[1]Kahn, The Carter Family, p.44.

[2]Carter, "I Remember the Carter Family," p.17.

[3]Kahn, The Carter Family, p.38.

[4]Belden, Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folklore Society, pp.55-6.

song in country music that it has been said, ". . . had they recorded nothing but their religious songs they'd undoubtedly be famed today as the foremost White gospel singers of their times."[1]

At the time of the Carter Family recording career, the family attended Mount Vernon Methodist Church. With a congregation of roughly fifty, the church held services every Sunday, augmented by prayer meetings every Wednesday evening.[2] Jeanette, A.P. Carter's daughter, recalls that the religious prohibition of playing instruments was a tenet of their church: "Back before, when I was a child, it was frowned on to a certain extent. Although Daddy, Mother and Maybelle played churches--not ours."[3] Religion played a significant role in the lives of the people of Scott County. "The worry of every God-fearing person in the valley was only that death was certain and the fear of the devil was the worst worry."[4] Within the many active churches in the valley, singing was an integral part of the services. According to Jeanette Carter's memory of Mount Vernon Methodist Church, "There was a choir, but mostly everyone sung (sic), old time three-part gospel har-

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[1]Bob Coltman, "Sowing On The Mountain: An Appreciation of A.P. Carter," in The Carter Family: Old Time Music Booklet I, p.26.

[2]Interview with Jeanette Carter, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 28 March 1975.

[3]Jeanette Carter to writer, 11 February 1975.

[4]Carter, "I Remember the Carter Family," p.16.

mony. . . . There were books, but most of the songs were sung from memory, 'Amazing Grace,' 'What a Friend,' etc. . . ."[1]

The fact that traditional gospel singing flourished in the mountains of Virginia during the 1920s and 1930s is supported by William Tallmadge. He contends that "By the 1930s, gospel song had lost much of its impetus in the Northern White churches. It continued strong, however, in the White churches of the South. . . ."[2] The techniques of this particular form of choral music were probably developed within "The anthems, motets, and secular pieces of early nineteenth century composers."[3] These techniques may be clearly heard on the Carter Family spiritual releases.

Two of the distinctive characteristics of White gospel music are antiphony and rhythmic responsorial techniques, both used by the Carter Family to the extent of being a hallmark of their style. In antiphonal passages, two voices (Sara and Maybelle) lead off. As they reach a long tone they are answered by the bass part (A.P.) in a rhythmic imitation. In the responsorial passages one voice (Sara) makes a melodic statement. As she arrives at the long tone, the other two voices respond in rhythmic imitation. The Carter Family popularized this traditional form of singing, influencing not

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[1]Jeanette Carter to writer, 11 February 1975.

[2]William H. Tallmadge, "The Responsorial and Antiphonal Practice in Gospel song," Ethnomusicology VII, No.2 (May 1968) p.219.

[3]Ibid., p.223.

only popular gospel song, but also exerting a shaping persuasion upon secular Bluegrass music of the early 1950s. Parts used in the three-part harmony of Bluegrass are "lead" (sung by Sara), "tenor" (Maybelle's harmony slightly above lead), and "third" (the bass part of A.P.). Bluegrass vocals are also distinguished by tense, high-pitched voices, "flatting of held pitches, rising attacks, falling releases, and grace notes,"[1] all of which the Carter Family employed throughout their musical career. It cannot be doubted that church singing in the mountains of Appalachia had a formative influence on Carter Family vocal style.

Singing style was not the only aspect of the Carters' music to be influenced by the musical expression of the church. Their repertory is liberally spiced with reworked church hymns. "They recorded a lot /of songs/ that were sung in church. I mean, a lot they had heard all their lives from childhood and handed down."[2]

A clear illustration of such a familiar sacred song, reshaped into a unique Carter spiritual, is "Wayworn Traveler." The verses concern the well-known theme of the religious pilgrim, but the chorus is a widespread church hymn: "Palms of victory, crowns of glory; Palms of victory I shall wear." These lines are found in the Social Harp attributed to Henry

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[1]L. Mayne Smith, "An Introduction to 'Bluegrass'," Journal of American Folklore, Vol.78, No.309 (July-September 1965), p.247.

[2]Jeanette Carter to writer, 11 February 1975.

F. Chandler (1854) as "Palms of Victory."[1] They are also found in Jackson's Down East Spirituals under the title "Deliverance Will Come."[2] It is interesting to note that although the chorus text of "Palms of Victory" served as inspiration for "Wayworn Traveler," the first verse was lifted and employed as the second verse of "We'll March Thru the Streets of the City":

> Come thou font of every blessing,
> Tune my heart to sing thy grace,
> Streams of mercy never ceasing,
> Call for songs of loudest praise.

This familiar verse is also attributed to Robert Robertson (1758) who wrote "Come Thou Font of Every Blessing," found in The Methodist Hymnal.[3] The case appears more complicated when it becomes clear that the third verse of "We'll March Thru the Streets of the City" is identical with the opening verse of "Hark , The Voice of Jesus Calling" by Daniel March, also found in The Methodist Hymnal.[4] To create "We'll March Thru the Streets of the City," A.P. Carter eclectically gathered these bits and pieces of standard church hymns, combined them with a few original lines and set them to the tune of "Gathering Flowers From the Hillside," a secular song in

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[1]John G. McCurry, The Social Harp (Philadelphia: T.K. Collins, 1855), p.53.

[2]George P. Jackson, Down East Spirituals and Others (New York: J.J. Augustin Publishers, 1939), p.514.

[3]The Methodist Hymnal (Nashville, Tenn.: Whitmore and Smith, 1939), #23.

[4]Ibid., #288.

the Carter repertory.

Another popular Carter spiritual owing great debts to the church hymnal is "On the Sea of Galilee." The first two verses are identical with the opening two verses of "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" by Isaac Watts (1674-1748).[1] Further confusion arises from the fact that Southern Harmony attributes the same verses to F. Price for "Christian Soldier."[2] Whether A.P. Carter garnered these lines from The Methodist Hymnal, Southern Harmony, or from tradition is unclear. The fact remains that he has employed composed verse along with his own unique chorus lines to again create an amalgamation that gained enough favor with the folk audience to be transmitted in this new form.

"The Church in the Vale" by William S. Pitts, (1865)[3] is an example of the Carter Family's use of a complete hymn text set to a different tune. In "The Church in the Wildwood," the two verses and chorus lines are identical, but the melody is very much changed from the original hymn. Both "On the Sea of Galilee" and "Church in the Wildwood" employ the traditional gospel techniques of antiphony and responsorial call-answer chorus, which are changes in the melody apparently

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[1]The Methodist Hymnal, #284.

[2]William Walker, Southern Harmony and Musical Companion (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1939), p.45.

[3]Richard C. Mackenzie, ed., Old Favorite Songs and Hymns (Garden City, New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1946), p.66.

made by the Carter Family, and a trademark of their spiritual song style. They serve to illustrate how tune and text of "standard" hymns were treated as independent of each other within the Carter repertory.

Another Carter spiritual clearly drawn from literary sources of the church is "I'd Like to Have Been With Him Then." Although never recorded, this song was sung by the family on their radio transcriptions for station XERA. Upon text comparison, it is found to be a hymn written by Jemima Luke in 1841 under the title "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story of Old."[1]

As these songs illustrate, the Carter Family were strongly influenced by organized religious music. It is known that A.P. Carter sang in his church choir as a youth and that the singing family played at local church functions in their early professional career. One of the first appearances for A.P. and Sara was at Newhope Methodist Church on Christmas of 1915.[2] Later, when Maybelle joined the group, they frequently played for social functions at churches in the area. These occasions were informal, and the family mingled with the audience before, during, and after the show. A.P. always served as M.C., beginning the program with the same song, "How Do You Do?" each time.[3] This light-

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[1]Harold V. Milligan, ed., The Best Loved Hymns and Prayers of the American People (Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishers, 1942), p.210.

[2]Kahn , The Carter Family, p.47.

[3]Interview with Jeanette Carter, 28 March 1975.

hearted "ice-breaker" would add to the relaxed atmosphere of the Carters' personal appearances. These were times when there most likely was an exchange of "sacred" as well as secular numbers. A.P. Carter's eager search for new musical material probably acquainted him with hymns from the various churches in the valley.

Closely linked to the established church in Virginia is a tradition that flourished in Appalachia long after its demise in the Northern states, the "singing school." The Carter Family, like Bluegrass and gospel singers of today, owe much of their singing style to shape-note psalm singing and the secular "singing schools." Singing schools not only fostered a definite style of choral expression but also disseminated a number of texts that found their way into the traditional repertory.

The singing school tradition in the United States began in New England, where "singings" and conventions began to be held in the 1720s. The "fa, sol, la" scale and peculiar "shape-note" notation taught in the lessons marked the beginning of a musical revolution. The eighteenth century saw the emergence of singing by the masses, as the common man in America was learning to sing both sacred and secular music. George Pullen Jackson describes the secular singing schools as "music's declaration of independence,"[1] as they were truly

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[1]George P. Jackson, White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1965), p.8.

run "for, by, and of the people." A singing school teacher would travel to a town and start a popular subscription to pay for the lessons. For a small fee the townsfolk could learn the essentials of the shape-note system in a series of meetings held at a local gathering place.

By the early nineteenth century, singing schools were dying in the Northeast as urban sentiment turned away from the old style of singing to the European "do, re, mi" system. Consequently, the "Yankee Singing Masters" began migrating West and South to the rural areas where "economic prosperity, European musical influences and the growth of cities" were not problematical.[1] The singing schools travelled South from Pennsylvania into the Shenandoah Valley and finally further West and South. They found little popularity in the tidewater lowlands of Virginia, but flourished in the isolated mountainous regions, where older rural traditions were very much alive.

The music taught by the singing schools was modal and unaccompanied, a tradition that ballad-singers could be comfortable with and readily accept. Furthermore, the singing school songs were written in three parts (air, bass, counter), a traditional form of harmony. The "air" was the lead voice, sung by high-pitched male voices. This part, in the Carter Family song style was sung by Sara, who has an unusually low-pitched female voice corresponding to a tenor. "Bass" was

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[1]Jackson , White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands, p.22.

the part sung by lower-voiced males and would go to A.P., while "counter" was the high tenor part sung by the females and corresponding to Maybelle's close harmony above Sara.

"This arrangement, by which the men sing the tune and the high-voiced women sing a part that corresponds fairly well to present-day tenor was "... a tradition that went back to the very beginnings of song in America."[1] The mainstays of the rural singing schools were men, whose style of high-pitched lead singing is echoed in Sara Carter's deep, rich female tones. Shape-note polyphony and style can also be heard in the delayed entries and counterpoint harmonies of the Carter Family.

The communities around Maces Spring, Virginia, were exposed to the singing school tradition which A.P. Carter's family was instrumental in promoting. A.P.'s uncle, Mollie Carter's brother, was a music teacher and church choir master. A.P. Carter sang bass in the church choir and "...knew music, learned it from his Uncle Flanders Bayes."[2] Jeanette Carter recalls that when she was a child, a singing school was held in the community "about once a year -- by my /great/ uncle Flanders Bayes. One of the best singers I ever knew. Uncle Flanders had 12 children, all learned music, all could play and sing. He taught singing school, no doubt in a 3 state area -- a really good and talented man....The whole community attended /singing school/ although they all didn't learn music

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[1]Jackson, White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands, p.28.

[2]Jeanette Carter, letter to writer, 11 February 1975.

....We went to Mt. Vernon to singing school and other churches close."[1]

Although Jeanette does not remember having any "songsters" in the family, it is a fact that many music teachers were also composers and "the home of the compiler was, in most cases, the center of his book's sphere of influence."[2] Between the years 1798 and 1855, thirty-eight books were written employing four types of shape-note notation.[3] Of these numerous texts, six were written in the mountains of Virginia by five authors. It is probable that two of the most influential shape-note songsters in the community of Maces Spring were Songs of Zion (1820) and Virginia Harmony (1831). Both books were written by James P. Carroll (1787-1854) of Lebanon, Virginia. Lebanon is a community thirty miles northwest of Abingdon and just "over the Clinch Mountain" from the Carter Family home. Known as "Uncle Jimmy," Mr. Carroll wrote eleven songs himself, compiled his songbooks and became well-to-do in his lifetime. Although these texts were published one hundred years prior to the start of the professional career of the Carter Family, the songsters enjoyed a long life in the communities of the Virginia mountains and many are still employed today. It is a strong probability that A.P. Carter used several songsters during his earlier "singing school"

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[1]Jeanette Carter, letter to writer, 11 February 1975.

[2]Jackson, White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands, p.24

[3]Ibid.

days and ran across them again in his later collecting years.

Copies of Songs of Zion and Virginia Harmony were unavailable for my research, and an examination of many similar shape-note songsters in search of conclusive evidence of their influence on the Carter repertory proved disappointing. Although intriguing, findings are few. The Carter song, "Can't Feel at Home," employs the same theme and incorporates the title of "This World is not My Home" by John Massengate in The Sacred Harp.[1] "Honey in the Rock," a favorite Carter spiritual, uses the same analogy and imagery as several shape-note hymns: "Weary Pilgrim" (Sacred Harp), "Sweet Canaan" (Social Harp), "Farabee" (Hesperian Harp), and "Consolation" (Christian Harmony). All utilize the comparison of the sweetness of heaven to honey, and urge the good Christian to "come and taste" or "taste and see." Finally, "Wake Up," found in the Social Harp,[2] is a variant of the ballad "Drowsy Sleepers," (Laws M4). This, in turn, is comparable to the secular "night visit" Carter Family song, "Who's That Knocking at My Window?"

Many of the Carter Family's best spiritual numbers in later years can be shown to be Black in origin, for example, "Wade in the Water," "God's Gonna Trouble the Water," and "River of Jordan." Moreover, Black musical taste may be

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[1]B.F. White and E.J. King, The Sacred Harp (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1968), p.310.

[2]George P. Jackson, Another Sheaf of White Spirituals (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1952), p.193.

heard in their blues munbers and guitar style, which were influenced by Black musicians, including Leslie Riddles. This fact is significant for "Nearly every one of the /White/ country-music influentials has had significant contact with Negro musicians,"[1] and this contact has altered the shape of White country music.

Riddles, himself, is responsible for several songs, both sacred and secular, used by the Carter Family. "Bear Creek Blues," "Cannonball Blues," and "Motherless Children" are three numbers contributed by this family friend.[2] In addition to these blues numbers, the Carters reportedly learned several "sacred" songs from Riddles.

In a recent interview, Sara Carter recalled to Ed Romaniuk that the singing trio had learned three of their spiritual standards "from a colored boy in Kingsport, Tennessee."[3] This was John Jackson, who taught them "Fifty Miles of Elbow Room," "There'll Be No Distinction There," and "Keep on the Firing Line." Although the Carters learned the song from a Black source, "Fifty Miles of Elbow Room" originated in Tin Pan Alley, written by F.M. Lehman in 1917.[4]

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[1]Robert Shelton, The Country Music Story: A Picture History of Country and Western Music (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), p.232.

[2]Kip Lornell, "'I Used To Go Along And Help': Leslie Riddles Remembers Songhunting With A.P.," in The Carter Family: Old Time Music Booklet #I, p.34.

[3]Ed Romaniuk, interview with Sara Carter at her home in Angel's Camp, California, 1971.

[4]Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

Aside from direct influence by personal contact with Black musicians, the Carter Family were further inspired by Black spiritual song, a fact reflected in their song texts. A.P. Carter, especially near the end of his career, wrote several sacred numbers in the Black gospel tradition. "Anchored in Love," if nothing else, employs the same imagery as the Black spiritual, "My Soul's Been Anchored in De Lord."[1] "I Wouldn't Mind Dying" by the Carters is a variant of "The Gambler," a Negro slave "goodnight."[2] "Lonesome Valley," recorded by the Carters in 1936, refers to the period of mourning which is a necessary ordeal for Black religious conversion. This song, "Let the Church Roll On," and "March Winds Gonna Blow My Blues Away," all seeming to derive from Negro tradition, were incorporated into the Carter repertory. "Little Black Train," recorded by the Carters in 1935, was originally released in 1926 as "Death's Little Black Train is Coming" by a Black evangelist, the Rev. J.M. Gates. The song was extremely popular in its original form, selling 3,000 copies in three weeks. Although most people would consider the music of the Carter Family to be thoroughly rooted in rural White tradition, these examples illustrate the eclectic nature and broad range of their songs.

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[1]Mackenzie, Old Favorite Songs and Hymns, p.119.

[2]Washington, D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

[3]Ibid.

Another mistaken assumption held by many is that the Carter Family, and hillbilly musicians contemporary with them, were unaffected by current events and the urbanizing world around them. The fallacy of this supposition is clearly represented within the songs themselves. The effects of media and technology were widespread even within the isolated mountain regions of Virginia. Media and the rapidly changing culture have had an impact upon all aspects of rural life, including religious practices and beliefs.

A religious survey conducted in the Southern Appalachians in 1958 revealed that ten percent of the rural populace associated the radio or television set with their most significant religious experiences. Moreover, "Some mentioned placing their hands on the radio or television set during periods of prayer."[1] It is interesting to note that a higher percentage of those interviewed placed these technological "wonders" above the conventional church apparatus (prayer books, collection plates, etc.) as possessing religious power. The Carter Family recorded a few spiritual songs of particular interest in which they express both a wonderment at technology and religious awe. These songs reflect a more contemporary influence in the Carter repertory.

"Heaven's Radio," "No Telephone in Heaven," and "Hello Central, Give Me Heaven" all concern the two modern "miracles" of the 1920s and 1930s -- the radio and the telephone. These

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[1]Weatherford and Brewer, Life and Religion in Southern Appalachia, p.132.

objects would, of course, be of utmost interest to the Carter Family and their audience. "No Telephone in Heaven" and "Hello Central, Give Me Heaven" concern the poignant plight of children attempting to reach their mothers in heaven through the telephone. The failure and frustration encountered in their attempt aptly points out the finality of death and the ultimate power of God's Will over man's technology. "Heaven's Radio" further expounds upon this theme:

> There's a wonderful invention they call the radio,
> You can hear it everywhere you chance to go,
> But the static in the air sometimes makes it hard to hear,
> Well, it is not so with HEAVEN'S RADIO.

Between World War I and World War II, the coming of the Great Depression fostered an upsurge in religious observance. During this low point in economic history, religion assumed a new importance. "No Depression in Heaven" is an apt example of how the Carter Family expressed these topical sentiments in song, being one of a number of songs looking toward an afterlife for relief. "This World is Not My Home" and "It Is Better Farther On" also deal with the traditional attitude of complacency with the subcelestial world and silent anticipation of the "reward" in paradise. Along similar lines, the Carters recorded a Blind Alfred Reed song, "There'll Be No Distinction There," in which paradise will be the cure for racial inequality as well as many other social ills.

Closely tied to the songs dealing with the paradise of afterlife are several "Judgement Day" spirituals recorded by the Carter Family, which warn sinners to "righten their

wrongs" for that great day when heavenly justice will prevail. These songs reflect a strict moral attitude and a belief in punitive justice to eventually balance the unfairness of a life of rural poverty. This judgment was something both feared and anticipated by the people of Southern Appalachia.

The 1958 survey conducted by the Ford Foundation found that the rural residents viewed God primarily in fundamentalist Old Testament terms as "the righteous Judge of all men." There was great stress on living a clean Christian life and conquering the innate tendency toward sin, for religious salvation would come after death. As a few parishoners expressed it "...the church is comprised of sinners, we're not all perfect....If a person is saved it just means a passing out of this troublesome life into a happy life -- if not saved, it is a passing on to eternal punishment."[1] "Where Shall I Be?" and "We Shall Rise" are examples of Carter spirituals concerning divine judgment, but the ambiguous attitude toward death is perhaps best expressed in their song "I Wouldn't Mind Dying, If Dying Was All."

Many of the Judgment Day spirituals recorded by the Carters arise from "camp meetings" or "revivals." In the 1950s eighty percent of rural Appalachian churches were holding revival meetings annually.[2] Jeanette Carter recently re-

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[1]Weatherford and Brewer , Life and Religion in Southern Appalachia, p.102, 117.

[2]Ibid., p.79.

called attending camp meetings as a child in the 1930s.[1] The songbooks employed at these gatherings seem to be yet another source for Carter inspiration. "Where Shall I Be?" is identical with "When The First Trumpet Sounds," a revivalist hymn of the 1880s; while "Room in Heaven For Me" is reminiscent of "Room Enough in Paradise," another revivalist hymn dated 1868.[2] The Carters also recorded a spiritual entitled "There's No Hiding Place Down Here" which compares to "Hiding Place," "Where Will You Stand?" and "Great Day," all songs from the camp meeting tradition. This song is also known in Black spiritual tradition as "No Hiding Place."[3] "When the World's On Fire" is a revival-style A.P. Carter spiritual that employs the same tune as the secular "Little Darling Pal O'Mine." This melody gained widespread popularity in the 1950s as the vehicle for Woody Guthrie's anthem, "This Land is Your Land."

The Carter Family became one of the most influential musical acts of their time. Their popularity was based not only upon their musical talent, but upon the fact that they were an example of "good family living," a symbol of the virtues of hearth and home. This fact is reflected in their repertory, which is liberally enriched with religious and sentimental song. These songs derive from numerous traditions:

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[1]Interview with Jeanette Carter, 28 March 1975

[2]Jackson, Another Sheaf of White Spirituals, p.17, 34.

[3]Frederick J. Work, Songs of the American Negro (Nashville, Tenn.: Work Brothers, 1907), p.30.

the established church, singing schools, Black gospel song, revival and camp meetings, and traditional oral sources. It is the combination of these influences that has made the Carter Family repertory of religious songs simultaneously unique and traditional.

In summary, twenty-one of the sixty spiritual numbers recorded by the Carter Family have been linked to older, traditional sources current in the mountains: three each from established hymnals, songster-singing school tradition, and the camp meeting tradition. There is one traditional religious ballad and one nineteenth century sentimental hymn, with ten songs deriving from Black sources. The remaining spiritual numbers thematically demonstrate a variety of socio-religious beliefs owned by the mountain people of Appalachia.

Of the Carter spirituals traced to original source in this study, almost one-half, roughly twenty percent of their entire sacred repertory, derive from Black tradition. In religious imagery and musical structure, the Carters borrowed from Negro religious song extensively, thus integrating Black and White tradition within a musical framework. This rich musical heritage of Black religiosity is used comprehensively by the Carters, in combination with their own Anglo religious traditions, therefore forecasting the great debt that modern White gospel song owes to Black tradition.

Thematically, the Carter spirituals rely heavily upon the promise of afterlife and the threat of Judgment Day, while a few express the confused awe inspired by technology. These

songs reflect the basic fundamentalism of religious belief in the mountains as well as the rapid changes forced upon that society by technological advances.

Just as the multifaceted religious heritage of the Southern mountains is expressed within the Carters' sacred songs, so their traditional Anglo-American musical background is demonstrated within their balladry. Chapter III explores the types and origins of the ballads recorded by the Carter Family.

CHAPTER III

BALLADS

The Carters were raised in a ballad-singing family in a rural area rich in ballad tradition, circumstances that influenced both their songs and their singing style. To an even greater extent than in the chapters on sentimental and religious songs, statements regarding sources and influences of Carter ballads must be somewhat speculative. However, the significance of traditional balladry in the Carter Family repertory is unmistakable.

The term "ballad" has been defined by Gerould as "a folksong that tells a story"[1] and by Laws as "a narrative folksong which dramatizes a memorable event."[2] Moreover, a ballad possesses a dramatic core which presents a plotline, whereas a lyric song may merely express an emotion or state of mind. Using these criteria, I have chosen twenty-six Carter songs for inclusion as "ballads," the texts of which are presented in Appendix B.

As with all musical offerings of the Carter Family, the classification between genres is difficult. Although "Little Moses" offers a Biblical narrative, it also expresses

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[1]G. Malcolm Laws, Native American Balladry (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society Publications, 1964), p.2.

[2]Ibid.

the fundamental religious attitudes alive in the Southern Appalachians. Classification of this song as "spiritual" rather than "ballad" is somewhat arbitrary, but appropriate to this study. Aside from the spiritual-secular ambiguity, there are many traditional songs which defy classification as "ballad" or "song." This confusion is a problem for the ballad scholar in America, as "it is ultimately impossible to say where narrative leaves off and lyric begins."[1] It is therefore difficult to say whether the Carter Family song "Storms Are On the Ocean" is a true variant form of "The Lass of Roch Royale" (Child #76), or merely a version of the love lyric, "Who Will Shoe Your Pretty Little Foot?" Within my study, I have chosen those songs which seem to meet the overall characteristics of balladry above and beyond elements typical of other classifications.

The several ballads in the Carter repertory include four distinct types. They sang variants of Child English and Scottish Popular ballads, British broadside ballads, native American ballads listed by G. Malcolm Laws, and originally composed and collected ballads similar in form and style to those listed by Laws. This chapter will deal with these genres consecutively, exposing the traditional and non-traditional sources for the Carter ballads. Past scholarship in American balladry has revealed the vast influence of media upon folk music. The Carter ballads exhibit alterations fostered by

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[1]Bertrand H. Bronson, The Ballad as Song (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p.3.

early media, as well as a desire for individual expression. Although A.P. Carter is credited as the composer of most of the Carter Family songs, many were obviously "traditional material which the family had preserved and made popular by the addition of harmony and the use of instrumental accompaniment."[1]

The singing Carter Family were fifth generation Americans; however, June Carter maintains that the Carter Anglo ancesters imported "many an English and Irish ballad which was later sung by the Carter Family."[2] More importantly, the Carter Family were far-reaching in their roles as collectors and transmitters of balladry. The Carters learned their songs from friends, neighbors, fans, relatives, and strangers. They retained those elements that appealed to their taste and molded the songs to their style. It is only natural that the traditional balladry alive in Southwestern Virginia would emerge in modified form within the Carters' repertory.

As the family performed at church socials and neighborhood functions, they absorbed the music around them. Following a personal appearance, they would socialize in the area and on these occasions often gathered new material. It is said that A.P., Sara, and Maybelle also went out actively collecting from older people in the area. They would learn tune and text, then alter the material to suit their taste.[3]

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[1]Shelton, The Country Music Story, p.187.

[2]Carter, "I Remember the Carter Family," p.17

[3]Kahn, The Carter Family, p.55.

Several songs recorded by the Carters were partially or wholly in the public domain. Like a good many recording artists following him, A.P. Carter took the precaution to copyright his repertory regardless of authorship, protecting his distinctive adaptation of the material. The Carter Family versions of ballads vary from original sources in tune and text, and are cut to fit record length.

Variation in folk music may be the result of forgetfulness, misunderstanding, or the singers' desire to improve upon the text. "Because human memory is not infallible, every ballad version recovered will be different in some respect from all others."[1] Alterations in text occur frequently, as stanzas may be added or deleted from the ballad story. The most striking and common variation in the ballads of the Carter Family and American balladry as a whole is the loss of entire stanzas.

Balladry undergoes an "acculturation" process when travelling to a new locale. The English, Irish, and Scottish ballads surviving in the Carter repertory exhibit certain characteristic changes fostered by American culture. There are word and name changes, altered to fit the American landscape; as in most American balladry, references to royalty or the supernatural are missing; finally, there are linguistic and musical changes resulting from the natural processes of oral transmission. Under normal circumstances, time results

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[1]Laws, Native American Balladry, p.82.

in the loss of detail and melodic flourishes, this fact is borne out in the Carters' renditions of the Child ballads, which exhibit typical American simplification of the British tunes and texts.

The recordings of the Carter Family contain ballads that are altered almost beyond recognition. Laws has stated that "from the ways in which ballads vary we can learn something about the mental processes of the singers, their taste in subject matter, and even their attitudes toward the songs they sing."[1] Although the Carters improvised upon their traditional material, they also adapted new material into customary folk patterns. They set traditional ballad lyrics to new tune variations, simplified for instrumentation and harmony. Conversely, they set newly composed verse to standard folk melodies. This retention of traditional musical elements in combination with original expression is typical of the Southern mountain musician and reflects the cultural conservatism that pervades life in Appalachia.

In the summer of 1930, while collecting folksongs in Appalachia, Dorothy Scarborough noted that her informants "were somewhat puzzled over my enthusiasm for some ballads and my indifference to new and popular tunes they had heard on phonograph records."[2] As early as 1930, the influence of

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[1]G. Malcolm Laws, American Balladry from British Broadsides (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1957), p.94.

[2]Dorothy Scarborough, A Song Catcher in the Southern Mountains (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p.20.

the hillbilly recording industry was being felt on traditional song. Although the impact of phonographs upon balladry is difficult to establish, it is a matter of record that the Victor Talking Machine Company issued five million copies of "The Wreck of the Old 97" alone.[1] Recent scholarship reveals that , "of 172 ballads sought for on hillbilly phonograph recordings, sixty-six have been discovered."[2]

There has been a growing awareness of the importance of media upon the folk environment and upon the creative expression that emerges from it. The fact that many traditional singers today incorporate recorded Carter Family songs into their repertory is testament to their vast influence upon the course of subsequent Southern folk music. A few Carter songs that have entered tradition are found in the Folklore and Folklife Archive of Western Kentucky University. Lynwood Montell and D.K. Wilgus, while collecting in Metcalf County, Kentucky, recorded a version of A.P. Carter's "Cyclone of Rye Cove" in 1965. The informant, naming his song "Judgment Cyclone," learned the ballad from a Carter Family record. Although he retained only a fragmentary version, the singer proudly contended that "...that's the way they had it on the record."[3]

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[1]Laws, Native American Balladry, p.49.

[2]D.K. Wilgus, "An Introduction to Hillbilly Music," Journal of American Folklore 78 (July-September 1965): 202.

[3]Bowling Green, Kentucky, Western Kentucky University, Folklore and Folklife Collection, T-7-65-79.

In 1956, Howard Quisenberry collected a version of "The Fate of Dewey Lee" in Louisville which was identical to the Carter recorded version.[1] The informant, however, had learned the song from a friend who claimed to know Dewey Lee and therefore the song was returned to an orally transmitted state.

Commercial recording companies released approximately twenty to thirty thousand titles in the Southern tradition between 1920 and 1948.[2] This vast issue of recorded song has been likened to the earlier broadside tradition in its impact. Bertrand Bronson maintains that recordings render folksongs static, without regional differentiation. He laments the loss of melodic variation and the changes occurring in the oral process. The record denies this, for despite the influence of the recording industry, regional variation and oral transmission seem to be well maintained in folksong collections today. Rather than eliminating variants, ballads on phonograph records have frequently added one more version to existing texts and perhaps salvaged a few ballads otherwise destined for extinction.

Balladry in hillbilly music derived from the Southern domestic tradition of Anglo-American folksong. D.K. Wilgus

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[1]Bowling Green, Kentucky, Western Kentucky University, Folklore and Folklife Collection, T-7-56-149.

[2]Judith McCullough, "Some Child Ballads on Hillbilly Records," in Folklore and Society: Essays in Honor of Ben A. Botkin, ed: Bruce Jackson (Hatboro, Penn.: Folklore Associates, 1966), p.107.

found that one-third (fifty-nine) of the ballads listed in Laws' Native American Balladry could be found on no fewer than 578 releases of hillbilly records, most of those from the 1920s. Moreover, an examination of many regional folksong collections reveals several ballad texts which "seem to have been learned directly or indirectly from phonograph recordings."[1] The impact of the recording industry upon ballad texts is perhaps best illustrated by song length. The 78 rpm disc had a set time limitation, approximately two and one-half minutes. It was therefore necessary for ballad singers to shorten or lengthen their songs to fit the disc. Laws states that "some record versions have been so drastically cut that only the introduction and conclusion of the ballad stories remain."[2] This restriction upon length at times rendered ballads totally meaningless in plotline and certainly fostered the loss of detail. Jeanette Carter corroborates this in revealing that although the Carter Family knew an extensive, coherent version of "Sinking in the Lonesome Sea" ("The Golden Vanity"), they were forced to shorten the ballad to six stanzas when recording.[3] The song was further truncated to a confusingly brief three stanzas in their radio broadcasts from Del Rio, Texas, over station XERA.

Hillbilly music, rooted in traditional song and fos-

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[1]Laws, Native American Balladry, pp.50-51.

[2]Ibid., p.50.

[3]Interview with Jeanette Carter, Lincoln Memorial University, Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, 1 September 1974.

tered by the recording industry, had perhaps its greatest effect upon the older Child ballads. The passage of time combined with the journey across the ocean had stolen from the ballads many elements of the supernatural and much of their dramatic suspense and poetic phrasing. These alterations were accelerated with the emergence of media influences upon the ballad singers in America. However "mutilated" the ballad texts became when recorded, they continued to exist and be transmitted by folksingers. A great contribution of the hillbilly recording industry was their unconscious perpetuation of the traditional Anglo-American ballad within the folk community.

The Carter Family recorded versions of four Child ballads: "The Golden Vanity," "The Lass of Roch Royale," "The Gypsie Laddie," and "The Mermaid." Typical of selective retention, those elements closest to the "emotional core" of the ballads were remembered and transmitted. It is virtually impossible to pinpoint a positive source for the English and Scottish ballads within the Carter repertory. A.P. Carter's mother, Mollie, sang the old ballads and reportedly taught her children a number of them, including "Sinking in the Lonesome Sea." However, A.P. Carter may have learned several ballads from his collecting in the area. Leslie Riddles recalls travelling with A.P. on a song-collecting trip: "One time we went over to the other side of Gate City, about nine miles up there in the mountains. There was some old lady up there who had some songs that were over a hundred years

old! About fifteen or twenty of them. He collected them and brought them back home."[1]

Whether collected, or passed on in family tradition, "The Storms Are on the Ocean" was recorded by the Carter Family on 1 August 1927, in Bristol, Tennessee. This was their first recording session and the song was destined to be one of their most popular numbers. This song qualifies here as a true variant of "The Lass of Roch Royale" (Child #76), even though it includes several bits of other traditional songs current in Southern folk singing. The quality of the Carter narrative and their peculiar combination of stanzas indicate a foundation in traditional British balladry.

The original storyline, missing in most American versions, concerns a young, pregnant woman who journeys across the ocean to find her lover. His jealous mother disguises her voice as her son's and refuses to appear at the door. The girl subsequently drowns with her baby, causing her lover (usually Lord Gregory) to commit suicide. In the early 1930s, A.K. Davis, who includes twenty-one texts of this ballad, states: "No complete or nearly complete text of this ballad has been recovered in Virginia. Only two stanzas definitely belonging to the ballad have been found, the 'shoe my foot' stanzas."[2] This analysis applies to the recorded version of the Carter Family.

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[1]Lornell, "Leslie Riddles Remembers Songhunting With A.P.," p.35.

[2]Arthur K. Davis, Traditional Ballads of Virginia (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929), p.10.

In America, the "who will shoe my foot" verses have been lifted and used as whole songs, in conjunction with other verses,and as "filler" verses for any lyric song concerning parting lovers. The stanzas are widely found in the United States, cropping up in several song texts and making the job of the ballad scholar more arduous. Some collectors, such as Dorothy Scarborough, include all songs with the "Shoe" verses as variants of "The Lass of Roch Royale." Other scholars, Belden for one, hesitate to name any of these composites as true variants.

The Carter Family version of Child #76 employs the "Shoe" verses in conjunction with other characteristic lyric stanzas. Their song begins with a parting lover promising to return even if he goes "ten thousand miles." This stanza is found in several lyric songs, including "The False True Lover" and "Farewell, Parting Lover" collected in Virginia by Henry. The chorus stanza employed by the Carter Family is less commonly found; however, this verse may be viewed as one of a series of "proving" verses. Lovers swear to be true even though "the earth may freeze and the sea may burn." In the Carters' case, "This world may lose its motion, love, if I prove false to thee." These stanzas are found widely in Southern folksong, although mention of "storms on the ocean" is quite rare. The final stanza is the popular title verse from "Turtle Dove," which frequently found its way into variants of "The Lass of Roch Royale." This particular combination of lyric and ballad stanzas is rarely found outside

the Appalachian region, and Brown includes it as a variant form of Child #76 in North Carolina Folklore.

Although most of the plotline has vanished from the Carters' "Storms Are on the Ocean." their variant is typical for the American folksong collections. Henry, Scarborough, Coffin, Chappell, Davis, Belden, and Brown have all collected fragmentary lyric songs, believed to be derivative from "The Lass of Roch Royale." Whether the Carters ever knew a more extensive version will perhaps never be known; however, they did much to preserve the ballad in its fragmentary form.

Child ballad #200 has been copyrighted by at least three performers: A.P. Carter, T. Texas Tyler, and Warren Smith.[1] The Carter version, entitled "Black Jack David," is identical with Coffin's type A.[2] Typical of American variants of "The Gypsie Laddie," they have retained the appearance of the gypsy, mention of the lady's boots of "Spanish leather," and an ending comparison between her former state and her new-found poverty. As one collector notes, "Few American texts miss the comparison between the warm featherbed and the cold, cold ground."[3]

The original English texts concerned a lady, reportedly the wife of Lord Cassilis of Scotland, bewitched by gypsies

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[1]Wilgus,"An Introduction to Hillbilly Music," p.198

[2]Tristram P. Coffin, The British Traditional Ballad in North America (Philadelphia: Publications of the American Folklore Society, 1950), p.121.

[3]Belden, Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folklore Society, p.73.

to travel with their chief, Johnnie Faa. She rejects her husband and former life to adopt the life of a gypsy. In America, the supernatural "bewitching" elements are lost and the story becomes a mere case of adultery. In most American texts, also, there is a refrain or repetition of the last line which is missing in British texts. Aside from these changes, the ballad has been well preserved in the United States, losing little of its narrative sequence.

The Carter Family version of this ballad exhibits the hallmarks of a model American version, including the common addition of a stanza from "Seventeen Come Sunday" (Laws O 17). The question-answer verse of this song has migrated frequently into American versions of "The Gypsy Laddie." Child #200 had been so popular in the United States that it is found virtually all over the country and was even burlesqued in DeWitt's Forget-Me-Not songster (1872).[1]

"The Gypsie Laddie" was recorded by several hillbilly musicians, an indication of its vast popularity. Cliff Carlisle recorded a version on 26 July 1939, entitled "Black Jack David."[2] This Decca release is similar in text to the Carters' rendition, recorded on 4 October 1940 for Okeh. It is uncertain whether the Carters were familiar with Carlisle's version; however, it is possible that their source for this ballad was the media rather than tradition.

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[1]Belden, Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folklore Society, p.74.

[2]Bowling Green, Kentucky, Western Kentucky University, Folklore and Folklife Collection, Kitchens' Collection.

"Sinking in the Lonesome Sea" ("The Golden Vanity") is a Carter Family ballad that exemplifies the mutilation of text as a result of recording time limitations. In 1935, the Carter Family recorded a six-stanza version of this ballad (Child #286) for the ARC label. The first four verses follow in logical sequence, ending with the young sailor swimming off to sink the "Turkish Rebelee." The last two verses are his farewell, leaving no explanation as to why he is left to drown in "the lonesome low." When performing on radio, the Carter Family sang the first three verses, merely the exposition of the setting, for their audiences. Obviously, anyone attempting to rationalize the plotline would be confused. A reasonable assumption is that the musical rendition was important enough to justify the drastic shortening of text. Possibly it was assumed that the rural audience were familiar enough with the ballad that they could fill out the missing stanzas from memory. It is interesting to note that even in this truncated form, the Carter Family included the poignant stanza of the sailor refusing to sink the "Merry Golden Tree" out of regard for the captain's daughter and his shipmates. This verse has been found only in the South and the Midwest.

Child ballad #289, "The Mermaid," is one of the most widely-published ballads in broadside form and songster tradition. The earliest record unearthed by Child dates from 1765 and the narrative is steeped in supernatural elements.[1] A

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[1]White, Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, p.195.

ship sets sail on Friday, a day of ill omen, and encounters a mermaid. Mermaids are malicious beings whose magical qualities are lost to American versions of this song. Originally, it is the appearance of a mermaid which incites the desperate speeches of the various shipmates. The version sung by the Carter Family as "Wave on the Sea" conforms to American texts in that the devastating storm seems a natural, not supernatural, phenomenon. The chorus lines employed by the Carters, although similar to the broadsides, seem to be unique to their rendition:

> The waves on the sea how they roll,
> The chilly winds how they do blow,
> My own true love got drownded in the deep,
> And the ship never got to the shore.

"Wave on the Sea," recorded on 14 October 1941, was one of the final songs to be issued by the Carter Family. From their first recording session in 1927 until their last release in 1941, the Carter Family employed traditional British balladry within their repertory.

Aside from the older ballads listed within the Child canon, the British Isles were the well-spring of "broadside" or "stall" ballads, a few of which found their way into the Carter repertory. Broadside ballads, sensational in plot and less poetic than traditional Anglo-Saxon balladry, are usually characterized by an intrusive narrator. In most cases the story is related from a first person point of view, losing the objectivity of older balladry. Broadsides enjoyed a wide popularity on both sides of the ocean and the songs themselves

frequently passed into oral tradition. The tabloid format of the plotlines and the emotional expression of these ballads mirrored the popular attitudes of society.

The Carter Family recorded six ballads which directly derive from British broadsides listed in Laws' American Balladry From British Broadsides. In 1937, they recorded a tragic murder ballad for Decca entitled "Never Let the Devil Get the Upper Hand of You." This is a rather extensive, ten verse rendition of "The Cruel Miller" (Laws P 35). Known by several titles, this British broadside is widespread in America, Laws having found approximately fifty printed texts in the United States.

The early English versions, known as "The Berkshire Tragedy" or "The Wittam Miller" seem to have emerged in the eighteenth century. It was later reprinted in Boston as "The Lexington Miller" during the nineteenth century. The story, a familiar plot of an unfortunate girl murdered by her seducer, has been drastically shortened in the American variants. The English broadsides, sometimes forty-four verses long, are explicit concerning the girl's pregnancy and her mother's pressure toward the offending miller to marry her. They also describe his conversations with Satan concerning his intended crime. Although the devil's influence has remained, there is no direct mention of pregnancy in the Carter Family interpretation. As in most American renditions, the Carters have retained the verses concerning the murderer covering up his "sin" and meeting his "servant John," while losing the narra-

tive of the discovery of the body. Instead, the ballad ends before this point, concluding with a standard American moralizing stanza.

The Carter Family recording seems to be a representative version of the American variants of "The Cruel Miller." One variation is the locale of "Lanson Town," differing from the usual "Knoxville" or "Lexington" settings. This ballad is often confused with "Nell Cropsey" and "The Oxford Girl," all three having fairly common murdered-girl plots. Laws states that "The Cruel Miller" has been recomposed at least six times and six forms have entered tradition.[1]

"The Rambling Boy" (Laws L 12) has been a popular British broadside with hillbilly musicians. In addition to the Carter Family, Wade Mainer recorded it on the Bluebird label and the Carolina Tar Heels recorded a version entitled "The Rude and Rambling Boy."[2] The ballad is a highwayman's "goodnight," thought to be Irish in origin. As in the Carters' version, the man generally turns to robbery to support his wife, and the song concludes with his funeral directions.

The ballad is well-known in England. Laws states that "in the broadside texts the narrator robs lords, dukes, and earls, including Lord Mansfield, and is captured by 'Fielding's gang.'"[3] Although these elements are lost in the Carter

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[1]Laws, American Balladry From British Broadsides, p.120.

[2]Mike Seeger & John Cohen, The New Lost City Ramblers' Songbook (New York: Oak Publications, 1964), p.146.

[3]Laws, American Balladry From British Broadsides, p.172.

family song, they retain the five stanzas that are commonly found in American collections.

A broadside widely found in tradition is "The Sailor Boy," or "The Faithful Sailor Boy," (Laws K 13). Chappell, Fuson, and Brown have all collected interpretations of this ballad in the 1920s. The similarity in text between versions suggests a wide printed circulation as well as persistence in oral tradition. "The Sailor Boy," recorded on 11 December 1934 for Bluebird, is a Carter rendition identical in text with most collected variants.

The English custom of the "night visit" has been preserved in several broadside ballads depicting this practice. Perhaps the most widespread ballad is "Drowsy Sleeper" (Laws M 4), beginning with the characteristic lines: "Awake, awake you drowsy sleeper" or "Who is that at my bedroom window?" The song is a dialogue between a young girl and her lover, who is at her bedroom window. He asks to come in, or to marry her, and she refuses for her parents are violently opposed to the match. In some versions she goes with her lover, in others both lovers commit suicide, and in many versions the outcome is left unresolved. Most American texts are confused with "The Silver Dagger" and adopt the tragic ending of this ballad.

Common American variants of "The Drowsy Sleeper" seem to be most closely related to a nineteenth century broadside

published by H.J. Wehman of New York.[1] On 8 June 1938, the Carter Family recorded a version entitled "Who's That Knocking at My Window?" for Decca. It is a curious combination and a unique interpretation of the ballad. The first verse, from "The Drowsy Sleeper" is typical, and their inclusion of the refusal verses from "The Silver Dagger" is also common. The third stanza, stating the lover's intention to "whisper in your ear" and "win you of your mother," is rarely found. The last verse is from the folk love lyric "Little Sparrow" or "Fair and Tender Ladies." Other versions of "The Drowsy Sleeper" have been recorded by the Blue Sky Boys and the Callahan Brothers (as "Katie Dear") and the Stanley Brothers (as "Tragic Love").

Aside from these clear-cut examples of British broadside balladry, the Carter Family recorded two ballads which are probably variants of broadsides listed in Laws. "I Have No One to Love Me (But the Sailor on the Deep Blue Sea)" is the Carter Family recording of "The Pinery Boy" or "Captain Tell Me True" (Laws K 12). The Carters' rendition of this tragic ballad is more journalistic and less poetic than the usual variants. Rather than beginning with the lyric line, "A sailor's life is a weary life," it commences with "It was on one summer's evening, just about the hour of three." Although the ballad usually mentions the maiden's request to her father to build a boat so that she may find her lover on

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[1]White, Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore II, p.255.

the sea, the Carters have lost this verse and have added a pathetic stanza concerning the girl's orphaned state. They have retained the important "Captain, tell me true" verse, ending with her suicide upon learning of her sailor's death. John Lomax states that this ballad "is known in print and tradition in all Britain, Maritime Canada, Southern Mountains, and the Midwest.[1] However, the Carters have managed to add and subtract enough of the text to render a unique version of the song.

Criminal "goodnights" have been generally popular in broadside tradition and have survived in the repertory of hillbilly musicians in America. The Carter Family recorded "Behind Those Stone Walls," a ballad most similar in quality to "The Boston Burglar" (Laws L 16b). This ballad, in turn, derives from the older British stall ballad, "Botany Bay."

"Behind Those Stone Walls" exhibits all the hallmarks of a broadside criminal farewell. The ballad begins by stating the criminal's birthplace revealing that he was "brought up by honest parents." It continues by exposing his crimes and describing his subsequent arrest, trial, and conviction. The bitter anguish caused to his parents is mentioned, although in this case they are dead. Finally, the ballad ends in a warning. Although there are numerous "goodnights" circulating in tradition, I have located only one version close to "Behind Those Stone Walls" in the American collections.

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[1]John A. Lomax, The Folksongs of North America (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1960), p.112.

Randolph lists a ballad entitled "Saint Louis, Bright City," collected in Arkansas in 1941.[1] The informant learned the song in the late 1880s or early 1890s, and it is a less complete version of the same ballad text recorded by the Carter Family in 1935.

Textual analysis of these ballads deriving from British tradition suggests that the Carters learned many, or most, of them from American oral tradition. Variations upon the texts conform to the characteristic alterations occurring in American balladry.

Of all the ballad forms current in the United States the hillbilly recording industry has done more to foster the tradition of the "native American ballad." D.K. Wilgus notes that the repertory of hillbilly radio performers greatly emphasized American material, with only a few of the older British ballads being aired.[2] In thematic content, American balladry is similar to the broadside tradition. There is a realism, missing in traditional British balladry, expressed through plots that lean heavily on scandals, tragedies, occupational hazards, crimes, death, and current events.

Laws feels that many American ballads are honest attempts to present the facts of an event artistically.[3] Although there are locale and name changes, the basic stories

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[1]Vance Randolph, Ozark Folksongs, 4 vols. (Columbia, Missouri: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1946-50), 2:151.

[2]Wilgus,"An Introduction to Hillbilly Music," p.198.

[3]Laws,Native American Balladry, p.56.

within the ballads have remained fairly consistent, retaining many details that are usually forgotten with time. Most American ballads sung today are less than one hundred years old, many are trite, yet they exhibit a tenderness and sincerity missing in the objective stance of the Child ballads. Of the two hundred and fifty native American ballads listed by Laws, the Carter Family have recorded six.

According to several sources, Sara Carter met A.P. at her Aunt Susie Addington Nickolas' house. She was playing the autoharp and singing "Engine 143." This ballad, also known as "The Wreck of the C & O" or "George Allen" (Laws G 3), recounts the unfortunate death of engineer George Alley who died in Hinton, West Virginia, on 23 October 1890. He was killed "when his engine was overturned as the result of a landslide."[1] The Carter Family recorded a full, five-stanza version of this ballad for Victor records. Cox lists several variants from West Virginia which closely resemble the Carters' rendition.

Another train tragedy in the Carter repertory, this one on an underground mine railroad, is "Reckless Motorman" (Laws G 11). Better known as "True and Trembling Brakeman," the ballad was also recorded by Asa Martin and Aulton Ray on the hillbilly "Challenge" label, and the Stanley Brothers included it in their first song folio.

Complete versions of "The True and Trembling Brakeman" usually have eleven verses. The first five of these stanzas,

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[1]Laws, Native American Balladry, p.214.

dealing with the crash itself, are not included in the Carters' rendition. Interestingly, the Carter Family version commences in the midst of the action, similar to the retention of a "dramatic core" in the older traditional ballads. The final six verses, sung as a complete song by the Carters, deal with the death scene. Included are typical last words to the brakeman's sister and brother, and a description of the "cars stacked up on him." The Carter Family sing a final stanza which seems to be unique and which borrows a phrase from one of their spiritual numbers:

> Go and tell my father who is weighman,
> What he weighs, to weigh it fair;
> There'll be no scales up in heaven,
> To that meeting in the air.

Aside from this verse, which may have been composed by A.P., the Carter version coincides with the variants collected in tradition. George Korson discovered that a mine worker named Orville J. Jenks wrote the ballad shortly after witnessing the accident in 1915.[1]

Another West Virginia ballad, recorded by the Carters for Victor in 1928, is the Negro ballad "John Hardy" (Laws I 2). It has been noted that "John Hardy" is one of the only examples of a Negro ballad that incorporates White ballad touches.[2] However, the exchange between Black and White balladry is perhaps more clearly illustrated by the Carter Family version,

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[1]Laws, Native American Balladry, p.217.

[2]Josiah Combs, Folksongs of the Southern United States (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1967), p.80.

"John Hardy Was a Desperate Little Man," which retained many of the Black ballad cliches in a White hillbilly recording. Mention of the hero's firearms and his difficulty in obtaining bail are Black commonplaces that have survived. The symbolic preoccupation with the color of the women's clothing is also a part of the Carters' rendition. These features are part of the stock material employed in Negro balladry.

Ballads concerning criminal activity are also widely found in the White tradition, a common framework being the "goodnight." Laws' ballad E 15 ("Young Companions") tells of a young man leaving home, committing a murder and being condemned to die. His farewell warning begins:

> I was born in Pennsylvania,
> Among the beautiful hills,
> And the memory of my childhood,
> Is warm within me still.

"Don't Forget This Song," recorded for Victor, begins similarly:

> My home's in old Virginny,
> Among the lovely hills,
> The memory of my birthplace,
> lies in my bosom still.

The Carter Family version of this song is fragmentary, exhibiting many of the anticipated changes occurring within the oral process. Although the narrator admits his guilt, the actual crime is rarely mentioned. There may also have been several conscious changes made, including the last request: "You may forget the singer, but don't forget this song."

One of the most complete and "unadulterated" texts sung by the Carters is "Cowboy Jack" (Laws B 24). In 1934, they recorded a full seven-stanza version of this ballad,

which coincides exactly with most collected folk texts.

Finally, the Carters were responsible for a popular "western-style" version of Laws H 2, "Ten Thousand Miles Away From Home." Recorded for Victor under the title "Western Hobo," this ballad includes yodeling and slide guitar instrumentation, characteristic of the Jimmie Rodgers style. Mellinger Henry collected a Virginia variant entitled "Wild and Reckless Hobo," and other collectors have found the ballad existing in Mississippi and Kentucky. The Carter Family recorded five stanzas, reserving the usual opening lines for the final verse.

In addition to these six ballads, the Carters recorded a song closely related to text B 2 listed in Laws' Native American Balladry. "Away Out on Old St. Sabbath" is similar in theme and sentiment to "Bury Me Not On the Lone Prairie." Both ballads deal with the horror of death in an unmarked grave. Both narrators plead not to be left on the prairie, a sentiment clearly stated in the Carter Family chorus.[1] Although it is related, "Away Out on Old St. Sabbath" is evidently a different song from Laws B 2. This, perhaps, is an A.P. Carter composition which employs a borrowed theme. It has been noted that "the folk-song maker as an unconscious plagiarist is notorious. He borrows from other songs at will, and extensively."[2]

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[1]See Appendix B.

[2]Combs, Folksongs of the Southern United States, p.33.

A.P. Carter was known to rework his collected material. He would fill in the holes of collected fragments, take verses of traditional lyrics for his own compositions and alter his songs to the form and length he wanted. Although the rewriting of ballads has been largely ignored by the collector-scholars, it is a valid cause for text variation and complicates the search for ballad origins. On 17 January 1938, A.P. Carter copyrighted a ballad entitled "Jim Blake's Message" for the Southern Music Publishing Company. The same song had earlier been copyrighted for this company as "Jim Blake, the Engineer" by William Wheeler and M.E. Lamb (1931). Four years earlier, "Jim Blake" had been written and copyrighted by Pete Condon and Carson Robison, then recorded for Brunswick by Vernon Dalhart (June 1927). Finally, all of these ballads are derivative from a Victorian broadside ballad entitled "Midnight Express," written by J.C. Grasmak (1888).[1] Obviously, the task of tracing ballad authorship can be a difficult and unending process.

A.P., Sara, and Maybelle Carter were all song composers and incorporated their original material within the group's recorded repertory. A.P. Carter was the most prolific composer and reportedly created the texts for several of the ballads sung by the Carter Family. Although there is no conclusive proof of authorship for many, the group recorded several ballads in the folk manner that can not be found within

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[1]Washington, D.C., Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song, Subject File.

the collections accomplished at the time. These are either composed or collected song texts, most likely from the immediate Southwestern Virginia area.

As stated before, the distinction between ballad and folk lyric is hazy; however, I have chosen eight additional Carter Family songs to include as ballad texts. In the early 1930s, while collecting folk songs in Eastern Tennessee, Mellinger Henry noted that "the simplest domestic incident in a family is sometimes turned into song."[1] This fact is illustrated aptly in A.P. Carter's "Cyclone of Rye Cove." In 1938, on a radio transcription recorded for station XERA, A.P. Carter and "Brother Bill Reinhardt" exchanged these words concerning "The Cyclone of Rye Cove:"

> BROTHER BILL:A.P., come up here just a minute and tell these folks about that number you just sang, will you?
>
> A.P.: Thank you, Brother Bill. That was a tragedy song that I composed about a cyclone that came through Scott County, Virginia, and killed probably twenty, twenty-five little school children and wounded several others.
>
> BROTHER BILL: Yes sir, a true story put to song.[2]

"The Cyclone of Rye Cove" is perhaps A.P. Carter's most well-known composition that can be traced to his authorship. Possessing the pathos of native American balladry, this ballad has a unique Carter-style call-answer chorus dis-

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[1]Mellinger E. Henry, Folksongs From the Southern Highlands (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1938), p.23.

[2]Bowling Green, Kentucky, Western Kentucky University, Folklore and Folklife Archive, Kitchens Collection.

tinguishing it from most American ballads.

In the same year (1938), the Carters recorded a sentimental ballad entitled "Cuban Soldier." The ballad is comparable in form and sentiment to several "dying soldier" farewells, i.e. "Buena Vista," "The Battle of Mill Springs," and "Brother Green." Also in 1938 "Young Freda Bolt" was recorded for Decca. Other versions of this ballad concerning the murder of Freda Bolt by her lover, Dearon Harmon, are not to be found within the folksong collections consulted. The ballad possesses all of the "murdered girl" plot characteristics. The lovers leave to talk of their wedding day; instead of marriage, Freda finds death at the hands of her lover, who leaves her to die of starvation while pinned beneath a stone. The theme has remained conservatively unchanged from such murdered girl classics as "Florella," "Oma Wise," "Pearl Bryant," "Lula Viers," and "The Oxford Girl."

Other ballads recorded by the Carters and seemingly unique to their repertory are: "The Girl On the Greenbriar Shore," "Jimmy Brown, the Newsboy," "St. Regious Girl," "The Fate of Dewey Lee," and "Blackie's Gunman." These ballads are included in Appendix B and possess the qualities characteristic of native American balladry. As is the case with most of the American texts referred to in Laws' index, authorship for these Carter ballads cannot be definitely established, although A.P. Carter is the most reasonable choice for composer. "A considerable portion of American balladry has been produced by part-time song-makers who had talent for telling

a story in ballad form."[1] A.P. Carter was a talented man who possessed a gift for song composition in the folk manner. It is reasonable to assume that a great portion of the Carter Family repertory was the creation of this man.

Of the twenty-six ballads recorded by the Carter Family, over half (sixteen) have definite traditional sources and widespread circulation within the folk community. Four Child ballads, six British broadsides, and six traditional American ballads have been adopted by the Carters and preserved on their phonograph recordings. The influence of traditional balladry upon the Carter Family has significantly added to their song repertory; however, these ballads have been largely altered in their transition from traditional folk ballads to hillbilly recordings. The texts of all twenty-six ballads are included in Appendix B for purposes of text comparison.

The Child ballads recorded by the Carters are drastically shortened and incorporate several folk lyric verses from other songs, while their British broadsides exhibit linguistic changes and theme ommission. These characteristic changes are common to most American variants of Anglo ballads and suggest American oral sources rather than British printed sources for these Carter ballads. The native American ballads recorded by the Carters are frequently comparable to the originals recorded by Laws, however, they too have been transformed at times with loss or addition of stanzas and name changes.

Both media requirements and individual taste seem to

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[1]Laws, Native American Balladry, p.43.

have played a significant role in the modification of the Carters' traditional ballads. Simplified melodies suited to the hillbilly commercial audience and adaptable to harmonizing and instrumentation have resulted in a loss of melodic flourish and irregular timing characteristic of traditional balladry. Textually, the ballads have been reduced to a dramatic core, remaining within the two and one-half minute recording time limitation. This restriction has resulted in the loss of detail: such traditional elements as incremental repetition, sub-plots, and supernatural references are missing. Changes within the Carters' native American ballads are much less drastic, many conforming exactly with Laws' primary texts. A partial explanation is that these ballads have not existed in tradition as long as the older British texts and they arise from the American folk environment.

A large amount of music was recorded during the 1920s and 1930s specifically for the rural Southern audience. The fact that these hillbilly recordings were profitable and widely distributed was bound to have an effect upon the traditional song patterns of the folk community. Collectors have recognized that the folksinger fails to make a distinction between traditional and commercial music. Singers will sing those songs that appeal to them, regardless of source. In this manner, Carter Family ballads have entered the repertories of traditional folksingers.

The Carters relied upon their traditional background for the source of many songs. However, of all the song genres

discussed, balladry seems to be most clearly affected by the folk music of the Southern mountains.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the possible and probable musical influences upon the Carter Family and speculate upon how these influences may have shaped their music. Many musical persuasions left their marks on the Carter family repertory. Victorian popular song, church hymnals, singing schools, minstrel and medicine shows, camp meetings, Black music, British balladry, American traditional balladry, and media artists contemporary with them have all had a formative effect upon the music of the Carter Family.

In summary, of the 200 songs analyzed in the Carter repertory, fifty-five, roughly one-fourth, have definite roots in one or more traditional sources:

GENRE	TOTAL NUMBER	NUMBER TRADITIONAL	PERCENT TRADITIONAL
SENTIMENTAL	114	18	15%
RELIGIOUS	60	21	35%
BALLADS	26	16	61%
TOTAL	200	55	27%

There was no significant change-over from traditional to contemporary and original material as the Carters' professional career progressed. Discographical analysis reveals that there is no time correlation to be made. From their

first recording session in 1927, when they recorded "Storms Are On The Ocean," to their last session in 1941, when their rendition of "Wave On The Sea" was cut, the Carters incorporated traditional material throughout their repertory, fairly evenly distributed with originally composed songs.

Very few of the Carters' sentimental songs have been definitely traced to original sources. However, the fact that they recorded such a large number of sentimental songs (114) is, in itself, significant. Striking parallels between the Carter Family songs and nineteenth century sheetmusic may be drawn. The Carter sentimental songs employ the same musical and poetic structure, rely upon the same thematic content, and incorporate the same cliché imagery as songs emerging from the Tin Pan Alley tradition. Carter songs found to be composed turn-of-the-century sheetmusic may have been learned through a variety of traditional sources: minstrel and medicine shows travelling through the Virginia area, sheetmusic collected by the artists, or traditional singers in the area.

Whatever their specific source, the number of sentimental songs in the Carter Family repertory illustrates the immense popularity of this type of song for the hillbilly musician. The similarities in sensitivity and presentation of these songs suggest parallel moral and ethical sensibilities between mainstream American society of the 1890s and the isolated rural societies of the 1930s.

Religious songs of the Carter Family illustrate further the traditional morality of the Appalachian commun-

ities. As they served to establish the Carters' reputation as wholesome family entertainers, these gospel numbers derived from the myriad religious traditions current within the Southern mountain communities. Of the twenty-one traceable spirituals recorded by the Carter Family, sources for ten are from Black tradition. This fact supports the speculation that White gospel tradition and country-spiritual songs are greatly indebted to Black religious song. The wedding of Black and White spiritual tradition is revealed by the analysis of the Carter religious repertory.

Sixteen of the Carter Family ballads have traditional sources; however, they all exhibit certain changes when recorded by the Carters. Shortening of texts, word and name changes, simplification of melodic line, missing subplots, and garbled texts fostered by the process of oral transmission are the most notable alterations in the Carter Family ballads. Older Child ballads and British broadsides have received the most drastic changes, while native American ballads are closest to original texts. This adherence to American texts may reflect the fact that most American ballads have been in oral circulation for little more than 100 years. Also, these ballads arise from the same traditional environment as the Carters themselves, thus necessitating little thematic alteration.

Ballads composed by the Carter Family exhibit a marked similarity in diction and textual structure to ballads classified as "native American ballads" by Laws. Modifications

of traditional balladry recorded by the Carters seem to fulfill media requirements and personal taste. Truncated texts fit the two and one-half minute recording time limitation, and simplification of traditional melodic structure allows for the addition of harmonizing and instrumentation.

The fact that Carter Family balladry can be traced to traditional sources to a much greater extent than either sentimental or religious song is not wholly significant. Explanations for this occurrence must include the fact that, to date, most scholarship in the field of American folk musicology has been accomplished in the area of balladry. There are easily available reference works and numerous ballad collections to consult. Research materials and collections available on sentimental and religious song are more difficult to locate and less comprehensive in scope.

A major limitation of this study is the fact that my research was restricted to those reference materials available to me within the time span of the study. A thorough search of the copyright files of the Library of Congress would, perhaps, yield several sources for sentimental songs in the Carter repertory. It is my hope that other scholars may accomplish this task, thus expanding our knowledge of this genre, so extensively used by hillbilly musicians. Time limitations and travel restrictions limited my fieldwork. Interview sessions with both Maybelle and Sara Carter would be desirable to corroborate speculations on song sources. Another limitation to this study is the fact that the music of

Carter songs is given only a cursory investigation. It is the task of the folk musicologist to explore the similarities and alterations of melody between the Carter songs and their original sources. Once musical origins are established and the alterations occurring analyzed, a search for patterns within these changes may be accomplished, yielding insight into the complex transitional process from traditional song to commercial "hit."

In conclusion, the Carter Family are representative of all hillbilly groups in that they demonstrate the transition from traditional music to modern country-Bluegrass music. The Carter repertory became somewhat catalytic in function as it bridged the gap between these two musical genres. The study of their traditional origins yields research data for the student of popular culture who may wish to explore the effects of the Carter Family upon later musical history.

It has been shown that the Carter Family maintained an eclectic approach to their music, garnering texts and tunes from a variety of traditional and contemporary music. Many times these borrowings seem to be unconscious, thus rendering them "original" compositions. The reworking of existing music was a common practice for the Carter Family. Although their unique adaptation pervades all of their music, producing the unmistakable Carter Family sound, it has been demonstrated within this study that the Carter Family repertory is firmly grounded in tradition.

APPENDIX A

RECORDED SONGS OF THE ORIGINAL CARTER FAMILY*

SENTIMENTAL SONGS

1. Amber Tresses (Vi 23701)
2. Answer to Weeping Willow (De 5254)
3. Are You Lonesome Tonight? (De 5240)
4. Are You Tired of Me, Darling? (Bb 5956)
5. Beautiful Isle O'er the Sea (Pe 16-102)
6. Birds Were Singing of You (Vi 23541)
7. Bonnie Blue Eyes (De 5304)
8. Bring Back My Blue-Eyed Boy (Vi 40190)
9. Bring Back My Boy (De 5649)
10. Broken Down Tramp (De 5518)
11. Broken-Hearted Lover (Vi 23791)
12. Bury Me Beneath the Willow (Vi 21074)
13. By the Touch of Her Hand (ARC 6-09-59)
14. Charlie and Nellie (De 5702)
15. Chewing Gum (Vi 21517)
16. Dark Haired True Lover (De 5447)
17. Darling Daisies (Bb 5586)
18. Darling Little Joe (RCA CNV-102)
19. Darling Nellie Across the Sea (Vi 23513)
20. A Distant Land to Roam (Vi 40255)
21. Dixie Darling (De 5240)
22. Don't Forget Me, Little Darling (ARC 6-01-59)
23. Dying Mother (Conq, 9569)
24. Dying Soldier (Vi 23641)
25. Evening Bells are ringing (Bb 5856)
26. Faded Coat of Blue (Bb 5974)
27. Farewell Nellie (De 5677)
28. Fond Affection (Vi 23585)
29. Forsaken Love (Vi 40000)
30. Funny When You Feel That Way (De 5411)
31. Gathering Flowers From the Hillside (ARC 6-01-59)
32. Give Him One More As He Goes (Conq. 9664)
33. Give Me the Roses While I Live (Vi 23821)

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*Songs are listed with their first recording release numbers, subsequent release numbers are not given. For a listing of ballads recorded by the Carter Family, see Appendix B.

34. Give Me Your Love, I'll Give You Mine (De 5318)
35. Gold Watch and Chain (Vi 23821)
36. Grave On the Green Hillside (Vi 40150)
37. Happiest Days of All (Vi 23701)
38. Happy or Lonesome? (Bb B-5650)
39. He Never Came Back (De 5447)
40. He Took a White Rose From Her Hair (Ba 33462)
41. Home By the Sea (MW M-7146)
42. Home in Tennessee (RCA CNV-104)
43. I Cannot Be Your Sweetheart (RCA CNV-104)
44. I Found You Among the Roses (Conq. 9575)
45. I Have an Aged Mother (MW M-7446)
46. I Loved You Better Than You Knew (Vi 23835)
47. I Never Loved But One (Vi 23656)
48. If One Won't, Another One Will (Vi 23761)
49. I'll Be All Smiles Tonight (Bb 5529)
50. I'll Never Forsake You (OK 05843)
51. I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes (Vi 40089)
52. In a Little Village Churchyard (De 5386)
53. In the Shadow of Clinch Mountain (De 5430)
54. In the Shadow of the Pines (De5359)
55. In the Valley of the Shenendoah (Bb 8869)
56. Just Another Broken Heart (De 5254)
57. Keep On the Sunny Side (Vi 21434)
58. Kissing is a Crime (ARC 35-05-53)
59. Last Move For Me (De 5386)
60. Let's Be Lovers Again (ARC 35-09-23)
61. Little Darling Pal of Mine (Vi 21074)
62. Little Girl That Played on My Knee (De 5677)
63. Little Log Cabin By the Sea (Vi 21074)
64. Little Log Hut In the Lane (Vi 40328)
65. Little Poplar Log House On the Hill (OK 06078)
66. Lonesome For You (Vi 23599)
67. Longing For Old Virginia (Bb 5856)
68. Lover's Farewell (Vi 40277)
69. Lover's Lane (De 5430)
70. Lover's Return (Bb 5586)
71. Lulu Walls (Vi 40126)
72. Meet Me By Moonlight Alone (Vi 23731)
73. Mid Green Fields of Virginia (Vi 23686)
74. Mountains of Tennessee (Bb 5956)
75. My Clinch Mountain Home (Vi 40058)
76. My Home Among the Hills (OK 06078)
77. My Honey Lou (De 5241)
78. My Little Home in Tennessee (RCA CNV-102)
79. My Native Home (De 5241)
80. My Old Cottage Home (Vi 23599)
81. My Virginia Rose is Blooming (ARC 7-02-58)
82. No More the Moon Shines On Lorena (Vi 23523)
83. Oh, Take Me Back (De 5565)
84. One Little Word (Bb 5771)
85. The Only Girl (De 5411)
86. Over the Garden Wall (MW M-7354)
87. Picture On the Wall (Vi 23686)

88. Poor Little Orphaned Boy (RCA CNV-101)
89. Poor Orphan Child (Vi 20877)
90. Schoolhouse On the Hill (RCA CNV-101)
91. Stern Old Bachelor (De 5565)
92. Sweet As Flowers in Maytime (Vi 23761)
93. Sweet Fern (Vi 40126)
94. Tell Me That You Love Me (Vi 23656)
95. There's No One Like Mother To Me (De 5242)
96. There's Someone Waiting For Me (Vi 23554)
97. They Call Her Mother (De 5596)
98. Two Sweethearts (Vi 23791)
99. Wabash Cannonball (Vi 23731)
100. When Silver Threads Are Gold Again (De 5304)
101. When the Roses Bloom In Dixieland (Vi 40229)
102. When the Roses Come Again (RCA CNV-103)
103. When the Springtime Comes Again (Vi 40293)
104. Why Do You Cry Little Darling? (Bb 33-0502)
105. Why There's a Tear In My Eye (Bb 6698)
106. Wildwood Flower (De 5692)
107. Will the Roses Bloom in Heaven? (Vi 23748)
108. Winding Stream (Vi 23807)
109. You Are My Flower (De 5692)
110. You Denied Your Love (De 5702)
111. You Tied a Love Knot In My Heart (RCA CNV-105)
112. Your Mother Still Prays For You, Jack (Ba 33462)
113. You're Gonna Be Sorry You Let Me Down (RCA CNV-105)
114. You're Nothing More To Me (De 5722)

RELIGIOUS SONGS

1. Anchored In Love (Vi 40036)
2. Beautiful Home (Conq. 9568)
3. Can the Circle Be Unbroken (Ba 33465)
4. Can't Feel at Home (Vi 23569)
5. Church in the Wildwood (Vi 23776)
6. Diamonds in the Rough (Vi 40150)
7. Fifty Miles of Elbow Room (Bb 9026)
8. Glory to the Lamb (Ba 33465)
9. God Gave Noah the Rainbow Sign (Vi 40110)
10. Gospel Ship (ARC 6-07-56)
11. Happy in the Prison (De 5579)
12. Heart That Was Broken For Me (De 5662)
13. Heaven's Radio (OK 05931)
14. Hello Central, Give Me Heaven (Bb 5529)
15. Hold Fast to the Right (De 5494)
16. Honey in the Rock (De 5452)
17. I Wouldn't Mind Dying (Vi 23807)
18. I'll Be Home Someday (Bb 5911)
19. I'm Working On A Building (Bb 5716)
20. It Is Better Farther On (De 5692)
21. Just a Few More Days (De 5632)

22. Keep On the Firing Line (Bb 9026)
23. Let the Church Roll On (Vi 23618)
24. Little Black Train (ARC 7-07-62)
25. Little Moses (Vi 40110)
26. Lonesome Valley (Vi 23541)
27. Look Away From the Cross (OK 06030)
28. Look How This World Has Made a Change (De 5451)
29. March Winds Gonna Blow My Blues Away (Bb 5990)
30. Meeting In the Air (OK 05931)
31. No Depression in Heaven (De 5242)
32. No Telephone in Heaven (Vi 40229)
33. On A Hill Lone and Gray (Bb 5961)
34. On My Way To Canaan's Land (Bb 8167)
35. On the Rock Where Moses Stood (Vi 23513)
36. On the Sea of Galilee (Vi 23845)
37. River of Jordan (Vi 21434)
38. Room In Heaven For Me (Vi 23618)
39. Something Got A Hold On Me (Bb 8947)
40. Sow'em On the Mountain (Vi 23585)
41. Spirit of Love Watches Over Me (Vi 23748)
42. Sun of the Soul (Vi 23776)
43. Sunshine in the Shadows (Vi 23626)
44. Sweet Heaven In My View (De 5318)
45. There'll Be Joy, Joy, Joy (Bb 5911)
46. There'll Be No Distinction There (OK 05982)
47. There's No Hiding Place Down Here (Bb 5961)
48. This Is Like Heaven To Me (Vi 23845)
49. Walking In the King's Highway (De 5579)
50. Wayworn Traveler (De 5359)
51. Weary Prodigal Son (Vi 23626)
52. We Shall Rise (OK 06030)
53. We'll March Through the Streets of the City (Vi 23672)
54. When the World's On Fire (Vi 40283)
55. When This Evening Sun Goes Down (De 5467)
56. Where Shall I Be? (Vi 23523)
57. Where We'll Never Grow Old (Vi 23672)
58. Will My Mother Know Me There? (MW M-7355)
59. Wonderful City (Bb 6810)
60. You've Got To Righten That Wrong (OK 05982)

MISCELLANEOUS SONGS (BLUES, WESTERNS, ETC.)*

1. Bear Creek Blues (Conq. 9574)
2. Buddies In the Saddle (Conq. 9570)
3. The Cannonball (Vi 40317)
4. Carter's Blues (Vi 23716)
5. Coal Miner's Blues (De 5597)
6. Cowboy's Wild Song To His Herd (Bb 5908)
7. East Virginia Blues (Bb 5650)

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*Not included in this study.

8. East Virginia Blues #2 (Ba 33463)
9. Foggy Mountain Top (Vi 40058)
10. Goodbye To The Plains (De 5532)
11. Hello Stranger (De 5479)
12. I Ain't Gonna Work Tomorrow (Vi 21517)
13. I Never Will Marry (RCA CNV-7111)
14. It'll Aggravate Your Soul (Bb 5817)
15. It's a Long, Long Road To Travel Alone (Conq. 9665)
16. Jealous Hearted Me (De 5214)
17. Kitty Waltz (Vi 40277)
18. Lay My Head Beneath The Rose (De 5283)
19. Lonesome, Homesick Blues (Bb 33-0502)
20. Lonesome Pine Special (Vi 23716)
21. Motherless Children (Vi 23641)
22. My Heart's Tonight In Texas (Bb 5908)
23. My Home's Across the Blue Ridge Mountains (De 5532)
24. My Texas Girl (ARC 6-09-59)
25. No Other's Bride I'll Be (ARC 7-08-69)
26. See That My Grave Is Kept Green (Vi 23835)
27. Single Girl, Married Girl (Vi 20937)
28. The Wandering Boy (Vi 20877)
29. When I'm Gone (Vi 23569)
30. Where the Silvery Colorado Wends Its Way (De 5263)
31. Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone? (Vi 21638)
32. Worried Man Blues (Vi 40317)
33. You Better Let That Liar Alone (De 5518)
34. You've Been a Friend To Me (De 5283)
35. You've Been Fooling Me, Baby (Bb 5771)

ABBREVIATIONS USED

Ba = Banner
Bb = Bluebird
Conq. = Conquerer
De = Decca
MW = Montgomery Ward
OK = Okeh
Pe = Perfect
Vi = RCA Victor
RCA CNV = RCA limited custom pressing
ARC = American Record Company

APPENDIX B

BALLAD TEXTS

1. AWAY OUT ON OLD ST. SABBATH (Bb B-5817)

1. Away out on the old St. Sabbath, laid down to take my rest,
My knapsack for my pillow and my gun across my chest.

CHO. Please don't bury me on the lone prairie,
Please don't bury me on the lone prairie,
You can bury me in the East, you can bury me in the West,
Please don't bury me on the lone prairie.

2. My father he lies sleeping beneath the deep blue sea,
I have no father, no mother, there's none but hell and me.

CHO.

3. My mother she lies sleeping beneath the churchyard sod,
Her body lies there mouldering and her spirit has gone to God.

CHO.

2. BEHIND THOSE STONE WALLS (ARC 6-03-51)

1. Was in St. Louis city where I first saw the light,
Brought up by honest parents in the pathway of right.
I was left as an orphan at the age of ten years,
On mother's grave I've shed many a tear.

2. I'd scarcely reached manhood when I left my old home,
With some other fellows to the West we did roam.
Seeking employment though scarce we could find,
We seemed so poor and the people unkind.

3. Was in New York City where we first met our fate,
We were arrested while roaming the streets.
The charge it was burglars, the theft it was small,
But they said it would place us behind those stone walls.

4. We were marched next morning to the courthouse for trial,
   My pal was down-hearted, so I gave him a smile.
   We pleaded for mercy, but were shown none at all,
   They gave us twenty years behind those stone walls.

5. We were handcuffed next morning and marched to the pen,
   We arrived there at midnite with a few other men.
   The doors were thrown open, we marched in the hall,
   Said, "Learn to be a convict behind those stone walls."

6. While lying at night on a pallet of stone,
   I swore I would never again break the law.
   There is none but your mother to bear your downfall,
   When you are a convict behind those stone walls.

7. Come all you young fellows and listen to me,
   When you lose life's pleasure, you've lost everything.
   I've tasted life's pleasure, it's bitterer than gall,
   It will lead to a cell behind those stone walls.

3. BLACK JACK DAVID (OK 06313)

1. Black Jack Davy came riding through the woods,
   And he sang so loud and gaily,
   Made the hills around him ring,
   And he charmed the heart of a lady,
   And he charmed the heart of a lady.

2. How old are you my pretty little miss,
   How old are you my honey?
   She answered him in a ...* way,
   I'll be sixteen next Sunday.

3. Come go with me my pretty little miss,
   Come go with me my honey,
   I'll take you across the deep blue sea,
   Where you never shall want for money.

4. She pulled off her high-heeled shoes,
   All made of Spanish leather,
   She put on those low-heeled shoes,
   And they both rode off together.

5. Last night I lay on a warm feather bed,
   Beside my husband and baby,
   Tonight I'll lay on the cold, cold ground,
   By the side of Black Jack David.

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*unintelligible

4. BLACKIE'S GUNMAN (OK 06313)

1. I was known as Blackie's gunman,
The fastest gun in the land.
I could shoot the ace of diamonds,
With a rope from either hand.

2. With the dice I had no equal,
Some of them are with us now.
Most of them are sadly sleeping,
'Neath the weeping willow bough.

3. Many a cowboy's came to played in,
Left that night with all their gold.
As a sport I was broken,
As a sport I let it go.

4. I once loved a girl named Nellie,
How we loved no tongue can tell,
But I know I'll never meet her,
Oh, it's hard to say farewell.

5. Her eyes were like the deep blue water,
And her hair was golden curls,
And her cheeks were crimson velvet,
And her teeth were snow white pearls.

6. Together we lived in a cottage and ...*
And the angels they watched o'er us,
Made our last one dream.

5. THE CYCLONE OF RYE COVE (Vi V-40207)

1. Oh listen today and a story I'll tell,
In sadness and tears...*
Of the dreadful cyclone that came this way,
And blew our schoolhouse away.

CHO. Rye Cove (Rye Cove), Rye Cove (Rye Cove),
The place of my childhood and home,
Where in life's early morn I once loved to roam,
But now it's so silent at home.

2. When the cyclone appeared it darkened the air,
And the lightning flashed over the sky,
And the children all cried, "Don't take us away,
"And spare us to go back home."

CHO.

3. There were mothers so dear and fathers the same,
That came to this horrible scene,
Searching and crying, each found their own child,
Dying on a pillow of stone.

6. COWBOY JACK (Bb B-8167)

1. He was just a lonely cowboy,
With a heart so brave and true.
He learned to love a maiden,
With eyes of heaven's own blue.

2. They learned to love each other,
And named the wedding day,
When a quarrel came between them,
And Jack, he rode away.

3. He joined a band of cowboys,
And tried to forget her name,
But out on the lonely prairie,
She waits for him the same.

4. One night when work was finished,
Just at the close of day,
Someone said, "Sing a song, Jack,
"We'll drive those cares away."

5. When he reached the prairie,
He found a new-made mound,
His friends they sadly told him,
They laid his loved one down.

6. They said as she was dying,
She breathed her sweetheart's name,
And asked them with her last breath,
To tell him when he came.

7. Your sweetheart waits for you, Jack,
Your sweetheart waits for you,
Out on the lonely prairie,
Where the skies are always blue.

7. CUBAN SOLDIER (De 5662)

1. Far away in a Spanish dungeon, a Cuban soldier lay,
Slowly dying from the torture inflicted day by day.
He begged to send a message but this kindness was denied,
So he called his comrades to him and told this story
ere he died.

2. When Cuba gains her freedom and the Spaniards cease to
reign,
There's a loved one on that island I will never see
again,
Oh find her for me comrades, and tell her you were by
my side,
And I bid you take this message to a soldier's promised
bride.

3.Tis the same old story comrades, love weeps when beauty is done,
When Cuba was struggling for her freedom, I was ordered to my gun,
Though I'm a captain dying, the struggle will soon be o'er,
Tell her I said to meet me where the soldiers fight no more.

8. DON'T FORGET THIS SONG (Vi 40328)

1.My home's in old Virginny, among the lovely hills,
The memory of my birthplace lies in my bosom still.
I did not like my fireside, I did not like my home,
I have a mind for rambling so far away from home.

2.It was on one moonlit evening, the stars were shining bright,
And with an ugly dagger, I made the spirit fly.
T'was then the soul bird struck me as plain as you can see,
I'm doomed, I'm ruined forever, throughout eternity.

3.I courted a fair young lady, her name I will not tell,
Oh why should I disgrace her, when I am doomed for hell.
But now I'm up on my scaffold, my time's not very long,
You may forget the singer, but don't forget this song.

9. ENGINE #143 (Vi 40089)

1.Along came the F.F.V., the swiftest on the line,
Running o'er the C & O road just twenty minutes behind,
Running into central headquarters on the line,
Receiving her strict orders from a station just behind.

2.George's mother came to him with a bucket on her arm,
Saying, "My darling son, be careful how you run,
"For many a man has lost his life, been trying to make lost time,
"And if you run your engine right, you'll get there just on time."

3.Up the road she darted, against the rocks she crushed,
Upside-down the engine turned and George's breast did smash,
His head was against the firebox door, the flames were rolling high,
"I'm glad I was born for an engineer to die on the C & O road."

4.The doctor said to Georgie, "My darling boy, be still.
"Your life may yet be saved, if it is, God's blessed, it will."
"Oh no," said George, "that will not do, I want to die so free,
"I want to die for the engine I love, one-hundred & forty-three."

10. THE FATE OF DEWEY LEE (Ba 33463)

1.Twas on one Saturday evening about the hour of ten,
In a little mining town where trouble did begin,
Everybody there were drinking, there were whiskey everywhere,
Dewey Lee got to thinking he had no business there.

2.He was so tall and handsome, his heart so true & brave,
Joe Jenkins pulled his pistol and sent him to his grave.
He took the life of Dewey when life had just began,
And Dewey went to heaven, while Joe went to the pen.

3.He took the life of Dewey because he would not tell,
We know he murdered Dewey for here his pistol fell,
His mother sits now weeping, she weeps and mourns all day,
She prays to meet her boy in a better world someday.

4.So harken to my story and what I have to say,
Get right with your maker, we'll meet him again someday,
...* and listen to your crime,
They sent him down to Richmond to serve out his time.

5.Young men all take warning, for this you must outlive,
Don't take the life of anyone for what you cannot give,
You may possess great riches, but may lay beneath the sod,
But money won't hire a lawyer when you stand before your God.

11. GIRL ON THE GREENBRIAR SHORE (Bb B-8947)

1.Was in the year of ninety-two,
In the merry month of June,
I left my mother and a home so dear,
For the girl I loved on the Greenbriar shore.

2.My mother dear, she came to me,
And said, "Oh son, don't go,
"Don't leave your mother and a home so dear,
"To trust a girl on the Greenbriar shore."

3.But I was young and reckless too,
And I craved a reckless life,
I left my mother with a broken heart,
And I choosed that girl to be my wife.

4.Her hair was dark and curly too,
And her loving eyes were blue,
Her cheeks were like the red, red rose,
The girl I love's on the Greenbriar shore.

5.The years rolled on and the months rolled by,
She left me all alone,
Now I remember what my mother said,
"Never trust a girl on the Greenbriar shore."

12. I HAVE NO ONE TO LOVE ME (BUT THE SAILOR ON THE DEEP BLUE SEA) (Vi 40036)

1.It was on one summer's evening,
Just about the hour of three,
When my darling started to leave me,
For to sail upon the deep blue sea.

2.Oh he promised to write me a letter,
He said he'd write it to me,
But I've not heard from my darling,
Who is sailing on the deep blue sea.

3.Oh my mother's dead and buried,
My Pa's forsaken me,
And I have no one to love me,
But the sailor on the deep blue sea.

4."Oh captain, can you tell me,
Where can my sailor be?"
"Oh yes, my little maiden,
He is drownded on the deep blue sea."

5."Farewell, to friends and relations,
"It's the last you'll see of me,
"For I'm going to end my troubles,
"By drowning in the deep blue sea."

13. JIM BLAKE'S MESSAGE (De 5467)

1.Jim Blake, your wife is dying,
Went over the wires tonight,
The message was brought to the depot,
By a lad all trembling with fright.
He entered the office crying,
His face was terribly white,
"Send this message to Dad in his engine,
"That mother is dying tonight."

2.In something less than an hour,
Jim's answer back to me flew,
"Tell my wife I'll be there at midnight,
"I'm praying for her too."
I left my son in the office,
Took the message to Jim's wife,
There found the dying woman
Was scarce of breath of life.

3.O'er hill and dale and valley
Thunders the heavy train,
Its engine is sobbing and throbbing,
And under a terrible strain.
But Jim hangs on to her throttle,
Guiding her crazy flight,
And his voice cries out in the darkness,
"God speed the express tonight."

4.I telephoned the doctor,
"How is Jim's wife?" I asked.
About the hour of midnight,
Is as long as she can last.
In something less than an hour,
The train will be along,
But here I have a message,
Oh God, there is something wrong.

5.The message reads disaster,
The train is in the ditch,
The engineer is dying,
Derailed by an open switch.
And there's another message,
To Jim's wife it is addressed,
"I'll meet her at midnight in heaven,
"Don't wait for the fast express."

14. JIMMY BROWN THE NEWSBOY (Vi 23554)

1.I'm very cold and hungry sir, my clothes are worn and thin,
I wander about from place to place, my daily bread I win.

2.But never mind how I look, don't swear at me or frown,
I sell the morning paper, sir, my name is Jimmy Brown.

3.I sell the morning paper, sir, my name is Jimmy Brown,
Most everybody knows I am the newsboy of the town.

4.My father was a drunkard sir, I've heard my mother say,
But I am helping mother as I journey on the way.

15. JOHN HARDY WAS A DESPERATE LITTLE MAN (Vi 40190)

1.John Hardy was a desperate little man,
He carried two guns every day,
He shot a man on the West Virginia line,
You ought to see John Hardy getting away.

2.John Hardy got to the East Stone bridge,
He thought that he would be free,
And up stepped a man and took him by the arm,
Saying, "Johnny, walk along with me."

3.He sent for his poppy and his mommy too,
To come and go his bail,
But money won't go a murdering case,
And they locked John Hardy back in jail.

4.John Hardy had a pretty little girl,
The dress that she wore was blue,
She came a'skipping through the old jail hall,
Saying "Poppy, I've been true to you."

5.John Hardy had another little girl,
The dress that she wore was red.
She followed John Hardy to his hanging ground,
Saying, "Poppy, I would rather be dead."

6.I've been to the East and I've been to the West,
I've been this wide world round,
I've been to the river and I've been baptised,
Now I'm on my hanging ground.

7.John Hardy walked out on his scaffold high,
With his loving little wife by his side,
And the last words she heard poor John'o say,
"I'll meet you in that sweet bye-and bye."

16. NEVER LET THE DEVIL GET THE UPPER HAND OF YOU (De 5479)

1.My tender parents brought me up, provided for me well,
Twas in the city of Lanson Town they placed me in a mill.
It was there I spied a pretty fair miss on whom I cast my eye,
I asked her if she'd marry me and she believed a lie.

2.Three weeks ago, last Saturday night, of course it was the day,
The devil put it in my mind to take her life away.
I went to her sister's house at eight o'clock one night,
But little did the creature think on her I had my spite.

3.I asked her if she'd take a walk with me a little way,
That she and I might have a talk about our wedding day.
We walked along until we came to my little desert place,
I grabbed a stick off of a fence, and struck her in the face.

4. I run my fingers through her coal black hair to cover up my sin,
I drug her to the riverside and there I plunged her in.
I started back unto my mill, I met my servant John,
He asked me why I was so pale and it so very warm.

5. Come all young men and warning take, unto your lovers be true,
And never let the devil get the upper hand of you.

17. RAMBLING BOY (Bb 33-0512)

1.Oh I was rich but a rambling boy,
Through many a city I did enjoy,
And there I married me a pretty little wife,
And I loved her dearer than I loved my life.

2.She was pretty, both neat and gay,
She caused me to rob the broad highway,
I robbed it too, I do declare,
I made myself ten thousand there.

3.Many dry goods for to carry me through,
My pistol-sword right by me too,
My forty-four, she never fails,
My true love comes for to go my bail.

4.My mother says she has no home,
My sister says she's all alone,
My wife is left all by herself,
With a broken heart and a baby fair.

5.When I die don't bury me at all,
Just place me away in alcohol,
...*
Please tell them all I'm just asleep.

18. RECKLESS MOTORMAN (De 5722)

1.Yonder stands a reckless motorman,
Who says his age is twenty-one,
Standing by his mainline motor,
Saying, "Folks, what have I done?"

2."Is it true I killed my brakeman?
"Is it true that he is dying?
"Oh I tried to stop my motor,
"But I could not stop in time."

3.See the cars stacked up on him,
See him raise his weary head,
See his sister standing by him,
Crying, "Brother, are you dead?"

4."Sister, sister I am dying,
"Soon I'll be on yonder's shore,
"Soon I'll have a home in heaven,
"There'll be no braking anymore."

5."Go and tell my youngest brother,
"Take these words to him send,
"To never start his day of braking,
"For his life is sure to end."

6."Go tell my father who is weighman,
"What he weighs to weigh it fair,
"There'll be no scales up in heaven,
"To that meeting in the air."

19. SAILOR BOY (Bb 5974)

1.'Twas on one dark and stormy night,
The snow was on the ground,
The sailor boy was at his post,
His ship was outward bound.

2.His sweetheart standing by his side,
She mourned a bitter tear,
Though as he pressed her to his side,
He whispered in her ear,

3."Farewell, my own true love,
"This parting gives me pain,
"And you will be my guiding star, till I return again."

4."And then I'll think of you my love,
"While storms are raging high,
"Oh sweetheart, remember me, your faithful sailor boy."

5.Was sad to say, the ship returned, without the sailor boy,
For he had died while on the sea,
His flag was half-mast high.

REPEAT VERSE #3

6.And as his shipmates stepped on shore to tell that he was dead,
The letter that he gave to her, these words did sadly read,

7."Farewell, my own true love,
"On Earth we'll meet no more,
"Though we may meet in heaven above,
"Where parting is no more."

20. SINKING IN THE LONESOME SEA (ARC &-12-63)

1.There was a little ship, and she sailed upon the sea,
And she went by the name of the "Merry Golden Tree,"
As she sailed upon the low and lonesome low,
As she sailed upon the lonesome sea.

2.There was a little sailor unto his captain said,
"Oh Captain, Captain, what'll you give to me,
"If I sink them in the low and lonesome low,
"If I sink them in the lonesome sea."

3."Two hundred dollars I will give unto thee,
"And my oldest daughter I'll wed unto you,
"If you sink them in the low and lonesome low,
"If you sink them in the lonesome sea."

4.He bowed upon his breast and away swam he,
Till he came to the ship of the "Turkish Rebelee,"
As she sailed upon the low and lonesome low,
As she sailed upon the lonesome sea.

5.If it wasn't for the love of your daughter and your men,
I would do unto you as I did unto them,
I would sink you in the low and lonesome low,
I would sink you in the lonesome sea.

6.He bowed his head and down sank he,
"Farewell, farewell to the 'Merry Golden Tree,'
"For I'm sinking in the low and lonesome low,
"I'm sinking in the lonesome sea."

21. ST. REGIOUS GIRL (De 5649) *

1.In a pine shaded grave by the river,
Where the nightingale sings sad and low,
All alone lies the St. Regious maiden,
Who did sing this sad song years ago.

2.Nevermore will my heart fill with gladness,
As I stroll through the forest again,
For to prison they're taking my lover,
That's why my poor heart's filled with pain.

3.When in prison you're dying of sorrow,
I hope you'll recall those past days,
That together we spent in this valley,
And the vows that we shared on its quay.

4. Oh if I could but burn down that prison,
To steal you away for awhile,
They could carry me off to the gallows,
And I'd go to my doom with a smile.

5.When the moon is high in the heavens,
And the mountains do gleam in its light,
How often I'll dream of you sweetheart,
As I mourn there alone in the night.

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*questionable, sentimental lyric-ballad.

6.There will be a green grave in the forest,
And people when passing that way,
Will think of the St. Regious maiden,
As she lies there alone in the clay.

7.A shadow has crossed o'er the valley,
Where once only sunshine did reign,
But wherever this pathway may lead me,
I shall ever remember our dream.

8.In the future someday I will meet you,
On the bright shore so far from this world,
And there before God I will greet you,
That's the dream of the St. Regious girl.

22. STORMS ARE ON THE OCEAN (Vi 20937)

1.I'm going away to leave you, love, I'm going away for awhile,
But I'll return to you sometime, if I go ten thousand miles.

CHO. The storms are on the ocean, the heavens may cease to be,
This world may lose its motion, love, if I prove false to you.

2.Who will dress your pretty little feet, who will glove your hand?
Who will kiss your ruby red cheeks while I'm in a far-off land?

3.Pappa will dress my pretty little feet, and mamma will glove my hand,
And you can kiss my ruby red cheeks when you return again.

4.Oh have you seen those mournful doves, just flying from pine to pine?
A'mourning for their own true loves, just like I mourn for mine.

5.I'll never go back on the ocean, love, I'll never go back on the sea,
I'll never go back on my blue-eyed girl till she goes back on me.

23. WAVE ON THE SEA (Bb 33-0512)

CHO. Oh the waves on the sea, how they roll,
The chilly winds, how they do blow,
My own true love got drownded in the deep,
And the ship never got to the shore.

1.Oh the first on the deck was the porter of the ship,
And a rough-looking fellow was he,
Says, "I care no more for my wife and my child,
"Than I do for the fish in the sea."

2.Well I left my dear darling grieving,
Oh I left my dear darling grieving,
I left my dear darling grieving after me,
For I never expect to see her anymore.

24. WESTERN HOBO (Vi 40255)

1.A wild and western hobo, who left his happy home,
Started upon a western trip, all by himself alone.

2.Upon this western trip, going to have lots of fun,
But upon his western trip, this is the song he sung,

YODEL

3.I stepped up on a platform, smoking a cheap cigar,
Waiting to catch a freight train, to catch an empty car.

4.I buttoned my coat up closely, walked off down the track,
I caught the steps of a sleeper car, I never did look back.

YODEL

5. My pocketbook is empty, my heart is filled with pain,
Ten thousand miles away from home, riding an old freight train.

25. WHO'S THAT KNOCKING AT MY WINDOW? (De 5612)

1.Who's that knocking at my window,
Knock so loud yet won't come in?
It's your own true-hearted lover,
Oh rise you up and let him in.

2.Go away, go away, you'll wake my mother,
For love's a thing she can't endure,
She's been the ruin of many a lover,
She'll be the ruin of many more.

3.I've come to whisper in your ear, love,
Do you think it any harm?
I've come to win you of your mother,
Oh trust yourself in your true love's arms.

4.Go away, go away, you'll wake my father,
For he is on his bed of rest,
And on his breast he carries a weapon,
To kill the one that I love best.

5.I wish I was a little sparrow,
I'd fly up high like a turtle dove,
I'd fly away to a lonesome valley,
And settle down in the land of love.

26. YOUNG FREDA BOLT (De 5612)

1.Amid the Blue Ridge mountains, there lived a maiden fair,
Whose life was pure as heaven, whose heart was free from care.
She dreamed of love and romance, with heart so glad and free,
No gloom was in the future, young Freda Bolt could see.

2.Nearby lived Dearon Harmon, a boy she loved so well,
And of these two young lovers, a story I will tell.
'Twas late one Thursday evening, the stars were shining dim,
That Dearon called his sweetheart to come and go with him.

3.He told her on tomorrow that they would surely wed,
But little was she thinking he'd take her life instead.
They motored to Bent Mountain, a place so dark and lone,
And there her form so helpless he placed beneath a stone.

4.Away from home and mother, that Freda loved so well,
Her bitter pain and anguish no mortal tongue can tell.
Through tears she pled for mercy but heeding not her cry,
Young Harmon left his sweetheart in agony to die.

5.We think that God in heaven must've surely heard her cry,
And sent a band of angels to linger very nigh,
And bear her spirit over to yonder's happy shore,
Where dying comes, no never, and parting is no more.

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