

I'll Be So Glad When the Sun Goes Down

Field recordings from Alan Lomax's
"Southern Journey"
1959 - 1960



SIDE ONE

A1. Did You Ever See the Devil, Uncle Joe?
Charlie Higgins, fiddle; Wade Ward, banjo;
Bob Carpenter, guitar.
Galax, Virginia. August 31, 1959.

Uncle Wade Ward (1892-1971) was the scion of a musical family whose roots in Southwestern Virginia went back generations. He learned to pick the banjo at eleven and play the fiddle at sixteen; by the time he was eighteen he and his older brother Davy Crockett Ward were playing as a duo popular for dances, house-raising, and other social functions around their home in Independence, Virginia. Wade recorded commercially, both solo and with his Buck Mountain Band, for the Okeh label in the 1920s. Alan Lomax's father, John A. Lomax, recorded him in 1937 with Crockett's string band, the Bogtrotters; solo with banjo and fiddle; and with his nephew Fields Ward, with whom he performed a version of "Did You Ever See the Devil, Uncle Joe" (as "Hop Light, Ladies," with Wade on mandolin). Alan, with Pete Seeger in tow, met him at the 1939 Galax Fiddler's Convention. Another session in 1941 brought the total number of Library of Congress records featuring Ward to nearly two hundred.

Uncle Charlie Higgins was eighty-one years old in 1959 and he and Wade had known and played with each other for many decades. Their regular gig was as the house band at Parsons' Auction Company, in which capacity they helped diffuse many heartrending episodes of household liquidation brought on by debt or death with musical distraction. Higgins explained: "We kindly entertain the crowd and make it possible so when they get onto a little squabble there, we can help 'em straighten it out by fiddling a little."



Prisoner and visiting child, Parchman Farm
(Mississippi State Penitentiary).

A2. Jesus On the Mainline.
James Shorter and Viola James, lead vocals, with
the Independence Church congregation.
Independence Church, Tyro, Mississippi.
September 23, 1959.

James Shorter and Viola James, neighbors of bluesman Fred McDowell in Como, were sought-after singers in churches throughout the Mississippi Hill Country. Their repertoires were comprised primarily of modern gospel compositions from the 1920s and '30s; music that, by the mid-1950s, had large-

ly supplanted the spirituals and shouts of the nineteenth century and before. Lomax lamented the disappearance of the spirituals, and saw the main virtue of performances like this one as being that they "still provide an outlet for congregational singing, which the modern gospel tradition has almost routed out of the black church." The foot-stomping heard here was once a widespread accompaniment to Southern black hymnody but it is now quite rare.

"Jesus On the Mainline" is one of America's most enduring and ubiquitous gospel compositions, and the most well-known of the sacred technological-metaphor songs to emerge from the early part of the twentieth century - among them "Heaven's Radio," "The Heavenly Airplane," "The Christian Automobile," and "The Royal Telephone" or "Telephone to Glory."

A3. Green Sally Up.

Mattie Gardner, Ida Mae Towns, and Jessie Lee Pratcher, vocals.
Como, Mississippi. September 21, 1959.

"The jingles, riddles, silly ballads, wistful lullabies, jiggy tunes and game songs belonging to the children of the American frontier will one day make a book far more warm and witty than the traditional Mother Goose," Alan Lomax wrote in 1960. "The best song-makers for children are the folk, whose rhymes are rubbed clean and hard against the bone of life, whose fantasies are heart-warming and fertile because they rise out of billions of accumulated hours of living with and caring for children." Although he didn't say so, Lomax would have agreed that children themselves also rank among the best of those composers, knowing instinctually which rhymes and games are most



Hemphill girls, Senatobia, Mississippi.

piquant and the most useful for their own amusement. He made the effort to document children's songs in many of the locales where he recorded: among them Spain, Scotland, the Caribbean, and the American South.

Alan saw syncopated game songs like this one, performed by several young Mississippi Hill Country women, as the collective inheritance to American children from the days of slavery. Writing of "Green Sally Up," he asked parents to let their children "grow up with it, so that these songs can tie them with many invisible bonds to the childhood of this country."

A4. Woke Up This Morning.

Fred McDowell, vocal and guitar.
Como, Mississippi. September 25, 1959.

Fred McDowell was a farmer who emerged from the woods on the first day of fall, 1959, and ambled over to his neighbor Lonnie Young's front porch

in his overalls with a guitar in hand. Lomax had no idea what he was in for, but after McDowell's first song he knew he was in the presence of one of the most original, talented, and affecting country bluesmen ever recorded.

McDowell showed few outward signs of conflict he might have felt by playing sacred and "sinful" music in the same setting. A 1964 record of Fred's, "My Home Is In the Delta" (which wasn't actually the case), devotes its first side to blues and its second side to spirituals and church hymns sung with his wife Annie Mae. Unlike Robert Wilkins, who left off blues altogether when he got religion, or Son House, who spent his life deeply tormented, torn between the two, McDowell could move from a blues about a cheating lover into this earnest religious piece. This recording was the only he ever made of "Woke Up This Morning."

A5. Joseph Looney.
Ollie Gilbert, vocal.
Mountain View, Arkansas. October 6, 1959.

Aunt Ollie Gilbert, born in 1892 in Hickory Grove, Arkansas, was sixty-seven when Lomax and Collins visited her and her husband Oscar ("the fightingest man in the county") at home in Mountain View. Jimmy Driftwood - singer, songwriter ("Tennessee Stud" was his composition), and de facto folk-music ambassador of the Ozarks - called Ollie "a walking storehouse of early American folk songs." This locally composed religious piece, of relatively recent vintage, declares a unwavering faith in the wickedness of this world, even in the midst of a loving family, and anticipates the glories of the hereafter for "all you lovely Christians," each of whom will "come be a valiant soldier for Jesus crucified." Oscar and Ollie told

Shirley Collins that the composer, Elihu Gray, took down the words as they were spoken by Joseph Looney on his death bed. Aunt Ollie's repertoire was not only deep, but wide. Collins remembers her slyly singing some especially lewd numbers - "ugly songs," Ollie called them - but she only sang them to Shirley in the privacy of the outhouse, so recording any of them was unfortunately out of the question.

A6. Calvary (#300).
United Sacred Harp Convention.
Led by Syble Wootten.
Old Corinth Church, Fyffe, Alabama.
September 12, 1959.

The recordings made at the 1959 United Sacred Harp Convention in Fyffe, Alabama, were the first made of four-part "fa-so-la" singing in stereo. Lomax had, as he later wrote, "tried and failed, as had many others, to record this music monaurally" at The Sacred Harp Singing Society of Birmingham, Alabama, in 1942, and hoped to "finally do justice to its haunting beauty." Over the course of the two-day convention nearly two hundred songs, memorial lessons, and prayers passed over the heads of his Ampex recorder, with Alan's notations filling the margins of his notebook: "stately," "militant," "lively," "fascinating performance," "exciting sound." "Marvelous," Lomax wrote of "Calvary," page 300 in *The Sacred Harp*. This Isaac Watts hymn, composed in 1707, embodied for Lomax the stark Calvinism of the pioneer religious experience: "My thoughts that often mount the skies, / Go search the world beneath, / Where nature all in ruin lies, / And owns her sov'reign - Death!" The United Sacred Harp Musical Association commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of Lomax's historic recordings by returning to Old Corinth Church for their annual convention in September, 2009.

A7. The Old Country Church.

The Mountain Ramblers: James Lindsey, Cullen Galyen, Charles Hawkes, Eldridge Montgomery, and Thurman Pugh. Hillsville, Virginia, August 29, 1959

The Mountain Ramblers were formed in Hillsville in 1954 by James Lindsey and played Friday night dances at one-room schoolhouses around Galax and Carroll Counties in Southwest Virginia. They were influenced both by local old-time legends Ernest V. Stoneman and the Bogtrotters as well as by the pioneering bluegrass of the Monroe and Stanley Brothers, but Lindsey preferred their music to be called "mountain music," in the tradition of his neighbors and forebears Wade Ward and Charlie Higgins (see A1). He didn't think the band was good enough to record when Lomax arrived at Hillsville in 1959. In a 1977 interview with Kip Lornell, Lindsey recalled that the tenor singer had only been with the group for two weeks. Referring to Lomax's recordings, the band's first, Lindsey remarked "it's not real smooth... but we got a lot of good publicity out of it. We had people visit from Miami, Florida; New Orleans; Texas; from California, who had played the records over the years and wanted to meet us." James D. Vaughn, one of the pioneers of the country gospel publishing industry, composed "The Old Country Church" in the 1920s.

A8. One of These Days.

Willis Proctor, lead vocal, with Joe Armstrong, Jerome Davis, John Davis, Peter Davis, Bessie Jones, Henry Morrison, and Ben Ramsay. St. Simons Island, Georgia. October 12, 1959.

Alan Lomax first visited the Georgia Sea Island

of St. Simons in 1935, a trip for which his collaborator Zora Neale Hurston blacked his face with walnut juice oil so as not to call attention to their interracial research group. He found there an ensemble called the Spiritual Singers of Coastal Georgia, organized by Lydia Parrish (wife of painter Maxfield Parrish) two years earlier. Parrish was devoted to preserving the spirituals, ring-plays, and shouts of the island's rich, isolated folk culture, with its roots running deep through the Antebellum South to West Africa.

Lomax later wrote of the Sea Islanders that they "kept to the speech of their ancestors and, in some places, still speak dialects in which many African words and syntactical features survive. Their folk and animal tales show a rich admixture of European and African traits at an early stage of blending. Their funeral customs, their religious ceremonies, indeed, their whole way of life bear the stamp of antebellum days. Yet this is no decadent culture. It has simply grown strong around a conservative base that is part pioneer, part planter gentility, and part African."

Among the original members of the Spiritual Singers that Lomax met in 1935 were Henry Morrison, Big John Davis, and Willis Proctor. Proctor kept a store on Proctor Lane on St. Simons, and he was one of the oldest members of the group and its acknowledged leader. Parrish's book *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands* included a photo of him leading "One of These Days." Sung at the end of a prayer meeting, it was an affirmation of the spiritual and cultural community, in which each member's name was mentioned and during which hands were shaken all around. Bessie Jones said of it: "It's so sad, 'cause one of these days you won't be there. I hate to sing it."

A9. Sally Anne.

Norman Edmonds & the Old Timers: Norman Edmonds, fiddle; Paul Edmonds, guitar; Rufus Quesinberry, banjo. Hillsville, Virginia.

August 28, 1959.

Fiddler Norman Edmonds had the distinction of being one of only two artists recorded by Lomax in 1959 who had made a commercial record in the pre-war hillbilly recording era. In Edmonds' case, it was at Ralph Peer's legendary 1927 Bristol sessions that he cut two gold-standard sides with singer and banjo player J.P. Nestor. When Lomax met him, Uncle Norman was seventy years old and still going strong with his string-band, the Old-Timers, featuring his sons Paul, John, and Cecil on guitar and Rufus Quesinberry on banjo. (Paul was the only son to play for Lomax.) The group was a fixture on the radio in nearby Galax, Virginia, broadcasting for fifteen minutes a week for over a dozen years.

SIDE TWO

B1. Three Little Babes.

Texas Gladden, vocal.

Bluefield, Virginia.

August 24, 1959.

Over a dozen years had passed since Lomax had last seen the talented multi-instrumentalist Hobart Smith and his gifted ballad-singing sister, Texas Gladden. In 1946, the siblings had left their homes in Southwest Virginia's Blue Ridge for a trip to New York, a concert with Jean Ritchie at Columbia University, and a session at Decca Stu-



Alan Lomax with Texas Gladden and her husband Jim. Salem, Virginia.

dios, where Lomax was then serving as a producer of an American folk music album series. Alan Lomax considered Texas one of the three best ballad singers he ever recorded (the others being Almeda Riddle of Arkansas and Scotland's Jeannie Robertson). He wasn't alone in admiring her - several folklorists had collected her songs in the 1930s, and, two years after hearing her sing at the White Top Festival in 1933, Eleanor Roosevelt invited Texas and her brother Hobart to perform at the White House.

Lomax's first stop in 1959 was to visit the Smith family, although he found that failing health had somewhat constricted the abilities Texas had demonstrated in '46 and earlier, in 1941, when Alan first recorded her. She performed a number of brief pieces for Lomax - short love songs, lullabies,

and this Child ballad (#79), the only full ballad she sung during the session. Despite her popularity, she was never much inclined to travel for the concerts folk revivalists were putting on in the mid-1960s. Besides, when Alan wondered why she'd never made much "professional use" of her singing, she replied that she'd "been too busy raising babies! When you bring up nine, you have your hands full. All I could sing was lullabies." Texas died in 1967.

B2. Banging Breakdown.
Hobart Smith, banjo.
Bluefield, Virginia.
August 25, 1959.

Lomax had recorded Hobart Smith's "Banging Breakdown" - also called "Buck Dance" after the dance done to it and "John Greer's Tune" after the fellow who taught it to Smith - twice before, in 1942 and 1946. In 1959, Alan found Hobart to be as nimble a musician as ever. In addition to his mastery of the banjo, fiddle, guitar, and piano, Smith was also an accomplished dancer, who told Lomax in 1946 that he'd "never lost a dancing prize." He'd gotten his dancing shoes from his parents, and was proficient in the buck and wing, the clog, and "old-timey" steps like the back-step and the side-shuffle. John Cohen wrote of this breakdown: "It is very unusual in structure and technique, and quite different from most other banjo tunes. Despite its uneven timing, it can also be danced to, and Smith's experience as a dancer may have shaped its form." Stephen Wade recalls it as one of Hobe's most famous tunes, although "Hobart... gauged his own performance of the 'Banging Breakdown' by how well he could beat out the rhythm and dance the tune." During one concert he asked for the rug to

be rolled up before he played it. "I ain't got no board," he said during another carpeted appearance. "The rug kinda holds me down."

Lomax's 1946 sessions, released on Moses Asch's Disc label in 1948, and his 1959 recordings of Hobart Smith deeply inspired many young folk revivalists, who began earnestly copying Smith's fiddle, banjo, and guitar styles. Meanwhile, according to John Cohen, Hobart was "going on old-age pension and worrying about his future." In 1963 Alan helped arrange concerts for him at Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music, Club 47 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and for the Friends of Old-Time Music in New York; a Newport Folk Festival appearance came in the summer of 1964. In this period, Cohen continues, "Hobart Smith's music was as fine and as distinctive as it was when he made his early recordings, but his chances of achieving the stature of his contemporaries" - other heroes of the Revival like Clarence Ashley and Roscoe Holcomb - "were cut short by death." Smith's health began failing later that year, and he died in January of 1965.

B3. Clarksdale Mill Blues.
John Dudley, vocal and guitar.
Dairy Camp, Parchman Farm (Mississippi State Penitentiary), Parchman, Mississippi.
October 7 - 9, 1959.

John Dudley was sixty years old and a prisoner when Lomax met him at Parchman Farm in September 1959, but as a younger man in the 1920s and '30s he had played for country dances in Tunica County. Here, in the northern part of the Mississippi Delta, he might well have encountered some of the era's legendary players also on the circuit, among them Son House, Tommy Johnson, and Charley Patton.



Prisoner and visitor, Mississippi State Penitentiary (Parchman Farm).

In this recording Dudley shows his familiarity with the blues of that period: Dudley's reference to the Clarksdale mill almost certainly comes from Patton's "Moon Going Down" (1930), which begins with the same stanza, and he provides his own interjections a la Patton's recording partners Willie Brown and the erstwhile Henry Sims. "Moon Going Down" shared its tune with Tommy Johnson's "Big Road Blues," portions of which Dudley also modifies for this performance. Elements of a 1927 side made by North Carolina's Julius Daniels called "My Mama Was A Sailor" - echoes of which can be heard in Patton's record - also appear in "Clarksdale Mill Blues." Dudley worked at Parchman's dairy facility, and Lomax recorded him there.

B4. All Night Long.

Miles Pratcher, vocal and guitar; Bob Pratcher, fiddle. Como, Mississippi. September 22, 1959.

The Pratcher brothers were neighbors of Fred McDowell in Como, and also farmers, but were of an earlier musical generation. Miles and Bob were repositories of the raggy country dance music that would have been heard at picnics and other social occasions in the fin-de-siecle Mississippi Hill Country. "Their music represents an early, important, but little known stage in the development of the blues," Lomax wrote, "for the fiddle and banjo were the common instruments of country blacks before the guitar and piano became dominant." Although Miles Pratcher occasionally sat in with Fred on second guitar, he didn't play McDowell's more modern brand of blues, and the style he displays here has more in common with a minstrel or songster's banjo than a bluesman's guitar. "Here the blues are still happy," Lomax continued, noting that the Pratchers "grinned bawdily through all their performances."

B5. The Juice of the Forbidden Fruit.

Neal Morris, vocal and guitar. Mountain View, Arkansas. October 6, 1959.

Neal Morris was father of Jimmie Driftwood (see A5) and himself a font of Ozark ballads, lyric pieces, and irreverent comic songs like "The Juice of the Forbidden Fruit." Lomax remarked that the song "belongs to the class of somewhat ribald drinking songs once popular among the independent liberated wits in the West." H.M. Belden of the Missouri Folk-Lore Society collected another Ozark version in that state in 1906, suggesting that it might have originated on the burlesque or minstrel

stage. Neal told Lomax that he believed the song was written while Robert Ford and Frank James were still living, though he'd "never heard anybody else sing it - only my people." He had learned it from his father, who had learned it from his. He thought that his grandfather - a singer of some renown - might have composed it.

B6. Lazarus.
Henry Morrison, vocal.
St. Simons Island, Georgia.
October 12, 1959.

Lomax found it curious that the work songs of coastal North Carolina and Virginia shared much of the same imagery and many of the same characters with the Parchman Farm work-songs. The singers of those songs were by necessity a migratory sort, and many had combined experience as muleskinners, gandy-dancers, roustabouts, and with the Southern prison farms, and thus were familiar with the work-song repertoire. In this context the poor Lazarus of the New Testament, who suffered in life to find succor in heaven, became a wanted, doomed, but defiant outlaw who robbed the commissary and had "never been arrested," and who made for an obvious favorite subject among the prisoners. Henry Morrison of the Georgia Sea Island Singers provided this version that combines the wanted Lazarus theme with a question posed to raggedy Old Aunt Dinah, so ubiquitous in black folklore: "Do your dog run rabbit?" Sexually suggestive, but it may also, as Lomax ventured, "evoke the image of Lazarus being hunted down like an animal." Alan wrote that Morrison was "a charter member of the Spiritual Singers," and Lydia Parrish noted that he was at one time a leader of a stevedore crew, with a large repertoire of chanties and work songs. In 1959 Morrison was running a tavern in the live-oak woods on St. Simons three days earlier).

Lucius' music was already rare in the Hill Country in 1959, and was certainly unrepresented outside of its vernacular context. As he tells Shirley Collins here, "you hear on the radio - ain't nobody play 'em like that." David Evans wrote in 1978 that "the banjo has practically died out in the folk music tradition of Tate and Panola Counties, and Lucius Smith may be the last competent player yet." Lucius Smith died in 1980, and the local banjo tradition indeed died with him.

B7. I'll Be So Glad When the Sun Goes Down.
Ed Lewis & prisoners, with hoes.
Camp B, Parchman Farm (Mississippi State Penitentiary), Parchman, Mississippi.
September 19 or 20, 1959.

Alan Lomax first experienced the group work songs of Southern black prisoners in 1933, when he was seventeen years old. He and his father John A. Lomax visited penitentiaries that year in Texas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Mississippi, making the first audio recordings of a music remarkable for its intensity, creativity, and nobility in spite of the brutal conditions in which it was spawned. The Lomaxes were initially interested in the remote, insulated prison farms as potential repositories of antebellum black song; as Alan Lomax, Bruce Jackson, and others have noted, they were for all intents and purposes twentieth-century replicas of the slave plantation, with unpaid black laborers working under the whip and the gun. But what the Lomaxes found there was nothing less than a new music. The work songs adapted the field holler - the free-metered, unaccompanied solo song of protest and complaint that sired the blues - into many-voiced chants propelled by the rhythmic striking of axes and hoes, and whose purpose was, as Jackson has put it, "making it in Hell."

The Lomaxes returned to Angola (Louisiana) and Parchman Farm in 1934 for more recordings, and Alan made three more trips to Parchman alone in 1947, 1948, and 1959. "In the pen itself," Lomax wrote in 1957, "we saw that the songs, quite literally, kept the men alive and normal." He saw the songs, "coming out of the filthy darkness of the pen, touched with exquisite musicality," as "a testimony to the love of truth and beauty which is a universal human trait." This hoeing song, sung while clearing weeds out of a drainage ditch or cleaning up a crop, was led by Ed Lewis. Thirty-six years old at the time, he had another seventeen-and-a-half years of his sentence remaining.

B8. Leather Britches.
Sidney Carter, vocal.
Senatobia, Mississippi.
September 26, 1959.

Sidney Carter was the daughter of Sid Hemphill, legendary multi-instrumentalist, songwriter, bandleader, and musical patriarch of the Mississippi Hill Country. Lomax had recorded Blind Sid and his band in 1942, but worried that when he returned to Panola County in 1959 he'd find, as he had on many other occasions, "that the best people had passed away or withered and their communities had gone to pieces." However, not only was Sid "still alive and fiddling," as Lomax wrote, but his extended family was on hand to offer performances of their own. Ms. Carter's large repertoire of ring-play songs, comic ditties, and lullabies made her especially popular with children. She learned this reel from her father, who recorded a version with his string band for Alan Lomax in 1942. Played on the fiddle, it's one of America's most widespread traditional tunes.



Prisoner, Mississippi State Penitentiary
(Parchman Farm).



All recordings made by Alan Lomax on an Ampex 602-2, "Suitcase Model" tape machine. Assisted by Shirley Collins (1959) and Anna Lomax (1960). Photo of Alan Lomax and Wade Ward by Shirley Collins. All others by Alan Lomax.

Compiled and annotated by Nathan Salsburg in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the "Southern Journey." Acknowledgment is due to those who have previously written about these musicians, their recordings and Lomax's "Southern Journey" field trip: Alan Lomax, Anna Lomax Wood, Matthew Barton, John Cohen, Ron Cohen, Shirley Collins, John Cowley, David Evans, Andrew Kaye, and John Szwed. Thanks also to Don Fleming, Todd Harvey, Bob Moses, Howard Wuelhing, and Bert Lyons. Mastering engineer: Timothy Stollenwerk, Stereophonic Mastering, Portland, Oregon.

Also available as an LP through Mississippi Records. (c) (p)2010 Odyssey Productions, Inc. Courtesy of the Alan Lomax Archive. All Rights Reserved.

Front cover photo: John Dudley, Dairy Camp, Mississippi State Penitentiary (Parchman Farm).

Back cover photo: Couple at Charlie Houlin's place, Hughes, Arkansas.

The Southern Journey 50th Anniversary Series
is a co-production by:

The Association for Cultural Equity
New York, NY

&

Mississippi Records
4007 N. Mississippi
Portland, OR 97227

Global 
Jukebox

www.culturalequity.org