

DEEP RIVER OF SONG



ROUNDER CD 0000 © © 2003 Rounder Records Corp.,
One Camp Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140 USA.
ROUNDER is a registered trademark of Rounder Records Corp.
<http://www.rounder.com> email: info@rounder.com
www.alan-lomax.com

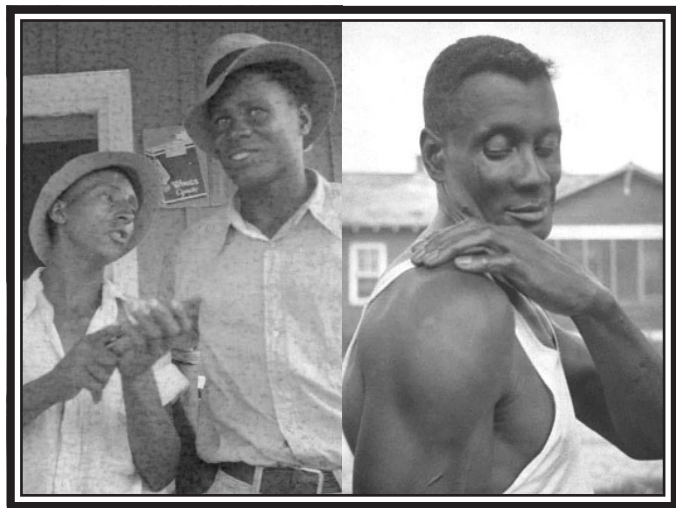
DEEP RIVER OF SONG



Louisiana

Barrelhouse, Creole and Work Songs





Left to right: Ernest Lafitte & Paul Junius Malveaux, John Bray
 Photos courtesy of the Library of Congress

INTRODUCTION — John Cowley, Ph.D.

John A. and Alan Lomax began collecting folk music using a cylinder machine, the earliest audio recording technology employed by field researchers. They set out in 1933, traveling through Texas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia and it was in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on July 15, 1933, that they first switched to the newly-manufactured portable aluminum disc apparatus. The remainder of their 1933 recordings were made using this novel mechanism.

The 1933 Louisiana sessions date from a visit to the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola (July 16–20) and constitute a simple snapshot of Louisiana's black music repertoire. They were disappointed to find that the prison authorities had suppressed group work songs, but the Lomaxes' were delighted by their landmark meeting with the extraordinary songster Huddie Ledbetter, about whom Alan enthused, "Lead Belly, however, was some consolation: 'I's the king of the twelve-string guitar players of the world!'"¹ Although not represented here, the first smattering of ballads and blues in the repertoire of this most influential of black folk singers was committed to aluminum discs during the Lomaxes' 1933 Angola fieldwork.

It was not until father and son returned to Louisiana in 1934 that they made a comprehensive attempt to document the different styles of folk music in the state (including Lead Belly's repertoire). Thus, John A. Lomax wrote:

For six weeks we have worked among the Acadian

(French) people of southern Louisiana, in that section known as the Evangeline country. These people yet invite groups of French singers to be present at weddings to sing folk songs for the entertainment of guests, the singing being prolonged often until a late hour. Drinking and singing always go together, the songs being passed along by "word of mouth" instead of by the printed page. We made records of many of these songs, some of which we believe show undoubted evidence of indigenous origin, though others are carry-overs from French sources. In any event, the changes that have taken place in the process of oral transmission through generations should furnish matter of interest to scholars. It seems important to put into permanent form the actual singing of these songs while the rural life of that section of Louisiana remains distinctly French in manners and in speech."²

Alan undertook some of these recordings while accompanying Louisiana folk-song researcher Irène Thérèse Whitfield.³ John A. and Alan supervised other sessions. A representative sample of these sides, comprising examples of many different styles of black and white Louisiana folk music, can be heard on *Classic Louisiana Recordings, Cajun and Creole Music, 1934–37*, 2 vols., (Rounder CDs 1842 and 1843) in the *Alan Lomax Collection*.

The present *Deep River of Song: Louisiana* anthology focuses on black music collected in 1934 and also in 1938 and 1940, putting the earliest Lomax sides in historical perspective and illustrating important facets in the evolution of the music of this distinctive region.

The Lomaxes' recordings of *ring shouts* — a remarkable

genre of collective singing in the African-American tradition — are unique. Widespread in the New World, this genre goes by different names and may serve different functions in different regions. In Louisiana, where the term “ring shout” is not used, Alan found variants rendered in a French-Creole form known as *juré*, from the French word for “swear” or “testify” — in homage to the deity. These are performed by Jimmy Peters and group, accompanied by a washboard (tracks 9 and 11). In the English-language religious repertoire of Louisiana the genre was sometimes known as “Easter Rock,” although the Lomaxes do not appear to have encountered this term. On this disc the English-language shouts usually involve Joe [Washington] Brown and two other singers, Sampson Brown and Austin Coleman. (tracks 1–4). (Joe Brown and Washington Brown appear to have been the same person, though this is not absolutely certain.)

The Lomaxes saw the ring shout as direct evidence of West African cultural survival in the Americas:

We have seen “shouts” in Louisiana, in Texas, in Georgia and in the Bahamas; we have seen vaudou dancing in Haiti; we have read accounts of similar rites in works upon Negro life in other parts of the Western Hemisphere. All share basic similarities (1) the song is “danced” with the whole body — with hands, feet, belly, and hips; (2) the worship is, basically, a dancing-singing phenomenon; (3) the dancers always move counter-clockwise around the ring; (4) the song has the leader-chorus form, with much repetition, with a focus on rhythm rather than on melody, that is, with a form that invites and ultimately enforces co-operative group activity; (5) the song continues to be repeated sometimes more than an hour, steadily

ly increasing in intensity and gradually accelerating, until a sort of mass hypnosis ensues.⁴

In 1942, Alan described the context of the Louisiana ring shouts he had recorded in 1934 this way:

In certain isolated parts of the South one may still find survivals of the earliest type of Afro-American religious song — the ring-shout. True to an age-old West African pattern, the dancers shuffle round and round single file, moving in a counter-clockwise direction, clapping out the beat in complex counter-rhythms. This religious dance was universal in the days of slavery, and it was a serious part of religious observance for the Negroes. There were various strict rules. For instance, the participants were not supposed to cross their legs as they danced; such a step would have meant that they were dancing and not “shouting.” Dancing, according to their newly acquired Protestantism, was “sinful” and taboo for church members.⁵

He noted how “in rural Louisiana, the community had recently reintroduced the ring-shout as a means of attracting and holding in the church the young people who wanted to dance.” There, on Saturday nights, he observed:

It was permissible for the community to gather in the church and promenade together in couples round and round the outside aisle. Since instruments were tabooed, the singing orchestra provided the music. Three young men, a leader and two in the chorus, joined together, using their hands and feet as an orchestra of drums. The floor of the church furnished the drum head. The lines of

the song are partly religious and partly satirical, using as material the groaning delivery of the Negro minister and the shrill screams of the sisters in the throes of religious hysteria.⁶

In 1987, Alan still recalled the performances vividly as among “the most remarkable experiences in my recording career.” His entrée had been made possible by “working with two much-revered spiritual singers” who made him “familiar to the Jennings community.” Thus:

One weekday evening some young fellows took me to a local Baptist church and with their friends demonstrated the style of sung dances then commonly performed at church socials. While I set up my microphone and ran the cable out to my Model A, where the recording machine was located, some of the boys and girls formed couples and began to dance round and round the church, in a shuffling, body-shaking fashion very much like the [Georgia] Sea Island shouts. The music was made by a trio of singers and rhythm makers. The lead improvised new lines; the accompanying duo responded in overlap with a repeated refrain. Meanwhile, all three clapped and beat a red-hot polyrhythmic accompaniment that at a distance sounded as though there were an African drum ensemble in the church.⁷

Lomax recognized that these forms conformed with “the tradition of sung dance that is perhaps the principal musical style of West Africa and the West Indies, where melodies are built around a refrain that has a danceable rhythmic shape and that enables the group of singers to make music for collective dancing.”⁸

The phenomenon of the ring shout has received greatest attention in the Georgia Sea Islands, where observation began during the U.S. Civil War.⁹ Alan Lomax’s recordings made for the Library of Congress in 1935 and in a parallel field trip in 1959 form part of this body of knowledge (see *Southern Journey*, vols. 12 and 13: *Georgia Sea Islands: Biblical Songs and Spirituals* [Rounder CD 1712], and *Georgia Sea Islands: Songs for Everyday Living* [Rounder CD 1713]). Alan Lomax and John Work pursued the subject in Mississippi in 1941 (see “Rock Daniel” by the Reverend Savage and group in *Mississippi Saints and Sinners* in the *Deep River of Song* series [Rounder CD 1824]); and in 1942, Lea and Marianna Seal, supplemented by Harry Oster in 1958, also described the Easter Rock in Louisiana, always in religious or quasi religious contexts.¹⁰

The secular nature of many of the ring shouts documented on this CD (both in English and French Creole) marks them as a bridge between the African slave diaspora to the Americas and subsequent black ceremonial customs in North America and the Caribbean. Caribbean wake commemorations, where the sacred and profane are integral elements — in antithesis to mainstream Christian doctrine — mirror similar West African practices.¹¹ While Lomax was recording in Louisiana, the link between religious and secular was brought home to him when “a fight broke out at the peak of the session, and I had to pick up my machine and leave hastily” (liner notes to *Classic Louisiana Recordings, Cajun and Creole Music, 1934–37*).

Besides shouts, another early reported form of black music in the United States is the work song, performed

by an individual or collectively in call-and-response fashion by gangs of laborers. The repertoire (sung solo) of 75 year-old Sam "Old Dad" Ballard is illustrative of railroad maintenance traditions (tracks 5 and 6), as is the call-and-response singing of "Julie Montgomery" (track 7) by an unidentified male section group with steel tamping accompaniment (also heard in Ballard's "Big Leg Ida" [track 6]). Joe Massie's French-Creole songs, (tracks 12 and 13) performed "for his own amusement while running the dummy engine on the Saint John's Plantation, for the last nineteen years" in St. Martinsville, Louisiana fall into the category of individual performance. Massie's improvised satirical lines about the presence of John A. Lomax are examples of the tradition of extemporaneous repartee, long a feature of African-American performance.

Other French Creole recordings on this disc include two examples by the Jimmy Peters group of *juré* based on old-time French-Acadian folk songs (tracks 9 and 11) — "Là-bas chez Moreau," a melancholy duet with elements of call-and-response singing (characterized by the Lomaxes as a "blues lament") by Cleveland Benoit and Darby Hicks (track 10); and the vocal and harmonica duo Ernest Lafitte and Paul Junius Malveaux, who perform interpretations of Louisiana-French traditions by black musicians (tracks 8 and 14).

There are strong historical and cultural connections in Louisiana between the black Creole and the Cajun communities, both of whom shared, in part, religion, festivals, food, language, and music. Cajun traditions were brought from Nova Scotia by displaced French settlers following their forced removal in 1755. Louisiana's black popula-

tion is also linked to cultural development in the French-speaking Caribbean through the huge influx of people that occurred at the time of the Haitian revolution (1791–1803), when French Creole-speaking slaves and planters from the former French colony of Saint Domingue (on the island of Hispaniola) dispersed as far as Trinidad at the southernmost tip of the Caribbean archipelago to Louisiana in mainland North America. This was but one significant component in Louisiana's complex population-mix.

A later example of population fluidity — this time within the United States after World War I — was the migration of French-Creole-speaking black people in search of employment from the Gulf Coast of southern Louisiana to the burgeoning urban center of Houston, Texas. A participant in this translocation was Anderson Moss (b. 1917), who arrived in Houston with his family in 1927. As a child in rural Louisiana, he had witnessed many black Creole dances. Taking up the accordion in his new abode, he became a significant participant in the urban development of *zydeco*,¹² though like his contemporary Willie Green (who cut sides for Arhoolie in 1961) he didn't record until the 1980s. His two performances on this CD were originally recorded for a Houston TV station in the 1980s. "Allons à Lafayette" (track 16) is a well-known standard waltz in the corpus of Cajun dances. The lyrics to "Zydeco pas salé" (track 15) are recognized as the source of the term *zydeco* (there are variant spellings), as modern black French and English Creole music sung in Louisiana is called. The term is considered a phonetic of the first two words of "*les haricots sont pas sales*" — literally, "the snap beans aren't salted" — an expression connoting hard times (when salted meat to season the

beans was scarce) as well as a food metaphor with sometimes sexual connotations. All encompassing, *zydeco* can refer to every aspect of generic presentation, including song, dance, musical realization, a shouted exhortation to dancers, the location, and the occasion. The phrase "*les haricots sont pas sales*" occurs in the *juré* "J'ai fait tout le tour du pays" (track 9), recorded in 1934, pointing to a possible association between the tempo of the ring shout and the rhythmic evolution of *zydeco* performance. Characteristic of the latter is the accordion (generally the piano accordion) and the *frottoir*, an adaptation of the washboard worn on the torso and played with a scraper — note the presence of a washboard in the 1934 Peters' recordings.¹³

Although the accordion is now generally associated with Louisiana, black musicians used the instrument in many southern states from before the Civil War. It was one of several instruments played by Huddie Ledbetter. He first learned the "windjammer" (after he was given one by his uncle, Terrell Ledbetter) before taking up the guitar (a gift from his father). He also played harmonica, mandolin, and bass fiddle (all learned, presumably, during his youth), and a primitive "barrelhouse" style of piano. Lead Belly's vocals and twelve-string guitar accompaniment were featured in an extended Lomax session on July 1, 1934, while he was still incarcerated in the Louisiana State Penitentiary. His recordings included ballads, barrelhouse songs, blues, a cowboy song, a reel, and a work song. There was also, in waltz time, a version of his special sentimental adaptation of a nineteenth-century parlor song, "Irene," known otherwise as "Irene Goodnight" or "Goodnight Irene." Born in 1889 in northwest Louisiana, near Lake Caddo close to the bor-

der with Texas, Huddie Ledbetter belonged to the "songster" generation of black performers who made their living (or supplemented their incomes) by providing music of all kinds for different functions and who also took up street singing when the need arose. Romantic pieces like "Irene" were elements of the broad-based repertoires of these entertainers.

The ballad component of Lead Belly's musical portfolio ranged from black American narrative songs to traditional British lyrics of a similar nature. His 1938 recording of "Mama, Did You Bring Me Any Silver?" (track 18) belongs to the ballad family known as "The Maid Freed From The Gallows" (Child No. 19). The cycle of this long-lived composition includes versions in several languages from northern and southern Europe, indicating the widespread distribution of the story line. It seems likely that it entered the African-American repertoire during the period of slavery. At least, that is the opinion of Dorothy Scarborough, who discovered several versions that can be traced to that era.¹⁴

String bands also became prevalent among black inhabitants in the United States during the period of slavery. "Liza Jane" (track 19), recorded in June 1934, provides an approximate sample of the kind of music (mediated by Emancipation) played by these groups. It features Wilson Jones, vocal and guitar, Octave Amos, fiddle, and Charles Gobert (possibly), vocal and banjo. Reports indicate that the guitar was not a regular instrument in the slavery period, thus this lineup is more representative of late nineteenth-, early twentieth-century string units, as are other aspects of the band's repertoire. In his analysis of the ex-slave narratives collected by the Works Progress

Administration in the 1930s, however, Robert Winans notes three instances in which interviewees recalled a dance tune and song named “Miss Liza Jane.”¹⁵ Although it is not certain if it is exactly the same piece as that played by Jones and his associates, it does give some indication of the historical and musical context of the song.

The tradition of topical lyrics in African-American music is illustrated by John Bray’s “Trench Blues” (track 20), recorded by John A. Lomax in 1934, and representing one of the then-contemporary developments in the evolution of African-American secular vocal music. It concerns the experience of a black soldier in World War I (a rather rare subject on records). John A. Lomax also recorded the string-band musician Joe Harris (a guitarist) during a recording expedition to Shreveport in northern Louisiana in 1940. Harris’s repertoire comprised a number of old-time pieces, including “Baton Rouge Rag” (track 21). When Lomax spotted him, Joe Harris was playing music in a cafe with Kid West (mandolin) and the well-known slide guitarist Oscar Woods. All three recorded for the Library of Congress though only Harris is heard on this disc. Woods’ style of playing was in a local tradition — the guitar flat in his lap with a slider stroking the strings as he picked them with his other hand, a technique sometimes employed by Lead Belly, whose familiarity with Shreveport was one reason for Lomax’s visit. Ledbetter frequented similar establishments when he lived in the vicinity. The rapid introduction of pay-per-play coin-operated phonographs — juke boxes — meant that the fashion for live music in these cafes and juke joints was soon to be a thing of the past. John A. Lomax recorded Woods and his compatriots just before this pat-

tern of employment altered decisively in favor of the machines. The musicians had been fulfilling a role also undertaken by pianists who performed in sporting houses, barrelhouses, juke joints and similar places of entertainment throughout the south.

Schools of black piano players developed in different regions, connecting rural and urban locations as they traveled from juke joint to juke joint in their respective territories. Sometimes pianists traversed several territories and were skilled in playing in many different styles, from “sophisticated” to “primitive” interpretations that might include ragtime, jazz, blues, or music performed in a more European manner. This was the case with the celebrated pioneer New Orleans jazz pianist and composer Jelly Roll Morton, whom Alan Lomax recorded in Washington D.C. in 1938.

The research of Lawrence Gushee shows that Morton’s antecedents settled in New Orleans, Louisiana, as a result of the revolution in Saint Domingue, thereby connecting him with that momentous cultural and population diaspora. Jelly Roll Morton was born in the “Crescent City” in 1890 and assimilated its vibrant and varied musical disciplines into his career as a performer. By his mid-teens, it appears, he became a pianist in barrelhouses on Rampart Street and in similar locations where he was exposed to the traditional repertoire of the city’s tenderloin district. Thus, he explained to Alan Lomax:

Hilma Burt’s was on the corner of Custom House and Basin Street, next door to Tom Anderson’s Saloon — Tom Anderson was the king of the district and ran the

Louisiana legislature, and Hilma Burt was supposed to be his old lady. Hers was no doubt one of the best-paying places in the city and I thought I had a very bad night when I made under a hundred dollars. Very often a man would come into the house and hand you a twenty- or forty- or a fifty-dollar note, just like a match. Beer sold for a dollar a bottle. Wine from five to ten, depending on the kind you bought. Wine flowed much more than water — the kind of wine I’m speaking about — I don’t mean sauterne or nothing like that — I mean champagne, such as Cliquot and Mumm’s Extra Dry. And right there was where I got my new name — Wining Boy.

Morton told Lomax that the term *wining* referred to the mixture of wine he consumed at closing time, but, as the famous New Orleans banjo player Johnny St. Cyr told Lomax, when asked the meaning of the nickname, “‘Winding Boy’ is a bit on the vulgar side. Let’s see — how could I put it? — means a fellow that makes good jazz with the women. See, Jelly lived a pretty fast life. In fact, most of those fellows round the District did. They were all halfway pimps, anyway . . . Jelly’s ‘Winding Boy’ tune was mighty popular in the early days.” Morton’s sobriquet of “Jelly Roll” also falls into this class of sexual innuendo.¹⁷ The lyrics to “Winding Boy” (track 22) confirm the name’s bawdy character and are in line with similar pieces in the barrelhouse piano repertoire, such as the “Dirty Dozens” (Morton recorded a variant for Lomax); the “Ma Grinder” (a standard for the “Santa Fe” school of pianists, who centered on the railroads around Houston, Texas); and “Shave ‘Em Dry” (recorded by pioneer 1920s blues vocalists Ma Rainey and Papa Charlie Jackson, among others).¹⁸

Although this music was a staple of the sporting house and barrelhouse, where the dances were uninhibited by “standard” social norms, there were other musical traditions at play in the evolution of black dance music in the Americas. One strand that is reported across the continents was the absorption and adaptation of European ballroom dances, ranging from the waltz to the reel, and including the mazurka and quadrille. In the United States, such dances might be the fare of black string bands playing for white patrons at plantation house receptions or “low down” variants performed at “sukey jumps” attended by black participants. There were also mixed-instrument groups who generally accompanied at assemblies held in urban-center dance halls, such as the famous “quadron balls” that were a feature of nineteenth-century New Orleans.

How a nineteenth-century quadrille was transformed into the celebrated “Tiger Rag” is the subject of the interview that concludes this anthology (track 23). Whether his claim to the composition of this melody is genuine or not, Jelly Roll’s explanation of the way in which such dances contributed to the evolution of ragtime and jazz is highly instructive. There are parallel developments in indigenous black music styles that matured in the Caribbean, such as the mazouk and biguine in Martinique and castilian and *paseo* in Trinidad. (For examples see the *Caribbean Voyage* CDs *Martinique: Canefields and City Streets* [Rounder 1730] and *Trinidad: Carnival Roots* [Rounder 1725].)

The performances on this disc, the most varied of the *Deep River of Song* series, illustrate the extraordinary cultural richness of Louisiana’s varied population settle-

ments and geographical environments. These range from the primary Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico port of New Orleans, dubbed the cradle of jazz — via a fiercely independent French-Creole speaking community in the southern bayous — to the oil boom city of Shreveport, situated on the Red River in the north. The state's distinctive history has had a profound influence on the music performed there and has imparted to it qualities that distinguish Louisiana's black music from that of all other southern states.

— **Kings Langley, England, 2002**

SONG NOTES

AFS numbers in parentheses after the song titles refer to Library of Congress American Folk Song catalog numbers

1. HALLELUJAH (LAMB ON THE ALTAR)

(AFS 108-B1)

Sung by Joe [Washington] Brown with Austin Coleman and Sampson Brown.

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Jennings (Lake Arthur), Louisiana, in June 1934.

Previously unreleased.

The first two tracks in this collection are religious ring shouts, sung entirely in English. These same performers are heard in “Feel Like Dying In His Army,” with a chorus in French Creole (track 19) on *Classic Louisiana Recordings: Cajun and Creole Music II, 1934-1937* (Rounder CD 1843).

*I got a lamb on the altar — hallelujah, (3x)
How long he been there? Hallelujah.*

*I got a lamb on the altar — hallelujah. (Etc.)
Etc., as above: My Lord, [. .] been there —
I got a lamb on the altar.
My Lord, he been there.
I got a lamb on the altar.
Oh, lamb, lamb, lamb.
He got a girdle go 'round his head.
He got a crown go 'round his head.
He got a girdle round his waist.
How long he been there?*

*I got a lamb on the altar (etc.)
Baby, I know he's been there.
Well, well, well, well.*

*I got a lamb on the altar.
Yeah-eah-eah — heheah.
That lamb got a skirt.
He got a [?] crown.*

*All 'round his head.
He got a girdle go round his waist.
Baby, I know he's been there.
He's been there three days.
I got a lamb on the altar.*

2. NEW CALVARY (AFS 108-B3)

Sung by Joe [Washington] Brown with Austin Coleman and Sampson Brown.

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Jennings (Lake Arthur), Louisiana, in June 1934.

Previously unreleased.

*[. .] Remember me on New Calvary,
Oh, sinner, where you running?
Fare you well — hallelujah,
Ah, running from the fire,*

*Fare you well — hallelujah,
Remember me — eeh,
Remember me, mmm,
On New Calvary — eeh. (Etc.)*

3. LORD, LORD, SHORTY (AFS 109-A1)

Sung by Joe [Washington] Brown with Austin Coleman and Sampson Brown.

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Jennings (Lake Arthur), Louisiana, in June 1934.

Previously unreleased.

The words in this secular performance invoke the places where Shorty might have traveled, from East Texas and Louisiana, to distant locations.

*Lord, Lord, Shorty,
Wonder where is Shorty?*

Refrain: *Lord, Lord, Shorty.* (after every line),
*Gone to live in [Jersey (?)]
Gone way up to Illinois, Shorty gone to Beaumont. Goin'
to live in Illinois.*

*Shorty gone up to Charles [?].
He goin' to bring me back a Stetson hat. Etc., as above,
with Galveston, Alabama, Illinois, Lake Charles, “back
out of town,” “Shorty told me,” “Well, well.”*

4. GOOD LORD

(Train Piece / Run Old Jeremiah)

(AFS 109-B1)

Sung by Joe [Washington] Brown with Austin Coleman and Sampson Brown.

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Jennings (Lake Arthur), Louisiana, in June 1934.

When released by the Library of Congress this piece was called “Run, Old Jeremiah,” suggesting a confusion with “Run Here, Jeremiah” by Alberta Bradford and Becky Elsey (AFS 106 B 1) recorded by the Lomaxes at Jennings during the same period. This song, however, depicts a religious journey on the railroad and does not mention Jeremiah.

*By myself — good Lord (etc.)
You know I've got to go — good Lord (“Good Lord” after
every verse),*

I got to run.

*I got a letter,
Ol' brownskin.*

*Tell you what she say,
“Leavin' tomorrow, / Tell you goodbye”
O my Lordy, Well, well, well.*

*I've [you] got a rock — good Lord,
[I looked at that rock. (?)]*

*Got on my shoes, On my way.
Who's that ridin, the chariot?
Well, well, well.*

New lead singer: *One morning,
Before the evening.*

*Sun was going down,
Behind that western hill.*

*Heard number 12
Coming down the track.*

*Blew black smoke.
See that old engineer,
Told that old fireman,
[To] Ring his ol' bell
With his hand.
Rung his engine bell,*

Well, well, well.
He was steady saying,
"I got your life,
In my hand."
Well, well, well,
Old fireman told —
Told that engineer, "Ring your [black] bell,
Ding, ding, ding." (Etc.)
Old fireman say, "I'm so glad I [. . .]
[. . ?] a prayer.
I got a preaching —
That morning,
Well, well, well (etc.)
I'm gonna grab my
Old whistle so, "Wah, wah wah!" (etc. with mmm and
o-o-o)
Soon, soon, soon, I was traveling,
I was riding (etc.)
Over there. This is the chariot.
Look at that rock and rolling [?] (etc.)
Look at that preacher's face,
Watching those [kids (?)].
Preacher [?] in the chariot,
Mmmmmm — good Lord — (etc. with well, well, well)

5. CATCH THAT TRAIN (AFS 100-B1)

Sung by Sam Ballard.
Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in New Iberia, Louisiana,
on June 22, 1934.
Previously unreleased.

Sam "Old Dad" Ballard was in his seventies at the time of
this recording. He contributed a number of railroad work
songs that, in light of his age, probably date from the late

nineteenth or early twentieth century.

Oh Lord, train a-coming — mm,
Oh, train a-coming — hey,
Catch this train.

Mm, you better get your ticket, oh, hoo (Etc., as above) /
Been a-rolling in the lowland //
Got this train a running [how you know she's running?]
// And you better get your [money], // And you got this
train a-comin' (etc.) Catch — yes, yes.

John A. Lomax (spoken): *These songs have been sung*
by "Old Dad," of New Iberia, Louisiana, on June the
twenty-second, nineteen-hundred-and-thirty four. "Old
Dad" says he was a baby during the Civil War, and that
means that he is about seventy-five years old.

6. BIG LEG IDA (AFS 99-B2)

Performed by Sam Ballard (vocal) with steel tamping.
Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in New Iberia, Louisiana,
on June 22, 1934.
Previously unreleased.

This work song identifies two local railroad lines:
Morgan's Louisiana and Pacific Railroad ("hello the
Morgan") and the Texas and Pacific Railroad ("The TPO /
TPE line"). The Lincoln may be a railroad engine.

Big leg Ida,
Oh, big leg Ida,
Big leg Ida,
Leg goin' my way.

Etc. with: *That won't do (etc.), / Fore, the [knee bow*
down]// Capt' got a section (etc.), / Be — to be your
straw. // Hello Ida, / Hello the Morgan / [And] the TPO
line. // Hello the Morgan, / Hello the Moma, / Oh, the
[knee bow down]. // Hello, Riley, / Cause the [knee bow
down] // Capt' got a section (etc.) / Be — to be your
straw. // Hello, Molly, / Big Leg [Gator], / Big Leg [Gator].
/ Leg goin' my way. // That won't do you (etc.) / [Po bo
knee bow down]. // Hello, Captain (etc.), / Gone to [ride
old coon]. // Hello Ellen (etc.), / Wonder where you gone.
// That won't do you (etc.), / [Po bo knee bow down]. //
Capt' got a [rider] (etc.), / Caught a right old coon. //
Hello the Morgan (etc.), / Oh the TPE line. // That won't
do (etc.), / [Po bo knee bow down]. // Hello the Lincoln
(etc.), / Hello the Mama, / Oh the [. .] go down.

John A. Lomax (spoken): *These additional songs of*
track-laying and other songs have been sung by "Old
Dad"— what's your other name?

Sam Ballard: *Sam Ballard.*

John A. Lomax: *Otherwise known as Sam Ballard, in*
New Iberia, Louisiana, for the Library of Congress
through funds provided by the Carnegie Corporation of
New York City.

7. JULIE MONTGOMERY (AFS 97-A2)

Sung by an unidentified male section group, with steel tamping.
Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Alma Plantation, near
Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in July 1934.
Previously unreleased.

This group work song is performed in call-and-response
fashion by a male section gang doing maintenance. The
M and O is the Mobile and Ohio railroad. The significance

of "Willie Willie Weaver" and "Julie Montgomery" is
unknown but they appear to be hobo monikers.
Tell you 'bout a hobo,
Partner, he got killed on the M and O —
Willie Willie Weaver.
Tell you 'bout hobo,
Partner, he got killed on the M and O.

Oh, Julie Montgomery — 'gomery
Is the girl I love.
She always [hard to find],
[. .]
Julie Montgomery
Is the girl I love.
Partner, she got killed on the M and O —
Julie Montgomery.

Oh Willie Willie Weaver
Is a mighty hobo,
Partner, he got killed on the M and O.
Willie Willie Weaver
Is a mighty hobo,
Jack, he got killed on the — on the M and O.

Willie Willie Weaver
Was a mighty hobo,
Partner, he got killed on the M and O.
Willie Willie Weaver
Is a mighty hobo,
Yes, he got killed on the M and O.

8. BYE-BYE, BONSOIR, MES PARENTS

(**Bonsoir “Ti Mon”**) (AFS 85-A2)

Performed by Paul Junius Malveaux, harmonica (probably);

Ernest Lafitte, vocal (probably).

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Jennings (Lake Arthur),

Louisiana, on August 2, 1934.

This song is a variant of the “Orphan’s Waltz” first recorded by Amédée Ardoin and more recently by the Balfa Brothers. The tune was also used by Iry Lejeune in his “Viens me chercher”; the last stanza recalls Lejeune’s biting criticism of unfaithful women. Though relatively unrecorded commercially, the harmonica was a popular instrument in Cajun and Creole non-public music. Since, like its larger cousin the accordion, it is based on the diatonic scale, it could be used to play most popular dance tunes. It also fit conveniently in a shirt pocket and was handy for filling in lunch breaks and other such casual moments with music. This is a fine example of Creole harmonica style. —Barry Jean Ancelet.

Dis bye-bye, bonsoir, mes parents.

Je suis orphelin il y a beaucoup d’années.

*Je suis obligé de prendre ma misère comme ça vient,
cher petit monde.*

Mes parents, il y en a plus un qui veut me revoir.

Quand ça me voit, ça m’appelle trainailleur.

Chaque fois fois quand je te vois, cher petit monde,

On dirait qu’il faudrait moi, je m’en vas

Et passer devant la porte de ta maison, catin.

*Dans cinq ans, je vas te revoir une autre fois, cher
petit monde,*

Mais avant que toi tu te maries.

Là après, tu pourras t’en aller puis te marier,

Mais quand toi, tu pourras.

Translation: *Say goodbye, goodnight, my family. / I’ve been an orphan for many years. / I must take my misery as it comes, dear heart, / No one in your family will see me. // When they see me, they call me a vagabond. / Each time I see you, dear heart, / It seems that I should go / And pass by your front door. // In five years, I’ll see you again, dear little heart, / Before you marry. / After that, you’ll be free to marry / Whenever you like.*

9. J’AI FAIT TOUT LE TOUR DU PAYS

(**Les Haricots Sont Pas Salés**) (AFS 79-A1)

Performed by Jimmy Peters and ring dance singers

(vocal with washboard).

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Jennings (Lake Arthur),

Louisiana, in June 1934.

Although shouts were generally based on a confluence of Afro-American religious traditions, Louisiana French *jurés* were often secular. The text of this one is based on a French Acadian folk song, “J’ai fait tout le tour du grand bois,” but the style, with its improvised percussion and remarkable vocal counterpoint, is clearly Afro-Caribbean. The refrain represents a recurring conversation between the singer, who asks for beans to eat, and his “mama,” who tells him that the beans are not salty. He asks her how she expects him to eat unsalted beans? (See note to “Dégo / Zydeco” [track 13] in *Classic Louisiana Recordings: Cajun And Creole Music, 1934–37*. The melody recalls the popular Cajun dance tune “J’ai été au bal,” which in turn is partially based on the Anglo-

American folksong “Cindy.” The inclusion of a fragmented dance call (“*trape donc leurs belles*”) suggests square- or round-dance influence.

—Barry Jean Ancelet

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.

O yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.

Mais o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

J’ai fait tout le tour du pays

Avec ma jogue sur le plombreau.

Et j’ai demandé à ton père

Pour dix-huit piastres, chérie.

Il m’a donné que cinq piastres.

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.

Mais o chéri, les haricots sont pas salés.

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.

Mais o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

Toi, comment tu veux je te jas voir

Mais quand mon chapeau rouge est fini?

Toi, comment tu veux je te vas voir

Mais quand mon suit est tout déchiré?

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.

Mais o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

J’ai fait tout le tour du pays

Avec ma jogue sur le plombreau.

J’ai demandé à ton père pour dix piastres.

Il m’a donné que cinq.

Comment donc tu veux, mais, manger?

Mais, o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.

Mais o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

Comment tu veux je te jas voir

Mais quand mon chapeau rouge est fini?

Comment tu veux je te vas voir

Mais quand mon suit est tout déchiré?

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.

Mais o chérie, les haricots sont pas salés.

Mais o mam, mais ‘trape donc leurs belles.

Mais o mam, mais ‘trape donc leurs belles.

Comment tu veux je te vas voir

Mais quand mon suit est tout déchiré?

Comment tu veux je te vas voir

Mais quand mon chapeau rouge est fini?

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.

O Nénaine, mais donnez-moi les haricots.

Mais O mam, les haricots sont pas salés.

Mais O mam, mais ‘trape donc leurs belles.

O mam, les haricots sont pas salés.

Mais O yé yaie, mais comment je vas faire?

J’ai fait tout le tour du pays

Avec ma jogue sur le plombreau.

J’ai demandé à mon père pour dix piastres.

Il m’a donné que cinq.

Mais O yé yaie, mais comment je vas faire?

Mais O mam, les haricots sont pas salés.

*Mais O yé yaïe, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
O mam, les haricots sont pas salés.*

Translation: Chorus: *Oh, mama, give me the beans. / Oh, yé yaïe, the beans aren't salty. / Oh, mama, give me the beans. / Oh, yé yaïe, the beans aren't salty. / I went all round the land / With my jug on the pommel. / And I asked your father / For eighteen dollars, dear. / He only gave me five dollars. (Chorus) / How do you expect me to go to see you / When my red hat is ruined? / How do you expect me to go to see you / When my suit is all torn? (Chorus) / I went all round the land / With my jug on the pommel. / I asked your father for ten dollars. / He gave me only five. /*

How do you expect [me] to eat? / Oh, yé yaïe, the beans aren't salty. / Oh, mama, give me the beans. / Oh, yé yaïe, the beans aren't salty. / How do you expect me to go to see you / When my red hat is ruined? How do you expect me to go to see you / When my suit is all torn? / Oh, mama, give me the beans. / Oh, dear, the beans aren't salty. / Oh, mama, let each catch his sweetheart. / Oh, mama, let each catch his sweetheart. / How do you expect me to go to see you / When my suit is all torn? /

How do you expect me to go to see you / When my red hat is ruined? / Oh, mama, give me the beans. Oh, godmother, give me the beans. / Oh, mama, the beans aren't salty. / Oh, mama, let each catch his sweetheart. / Oh, mama, the beans aren't salty. / Oh, yé yaïe, what will I do? // I went all round the land / With my jug on the pommel. / I asked my father for ten dollars. / He gave me only five. // Oh, yé yaïe, what will I do? / Oh, mama, the beans aren't salty. / Oh, yé yaïe, give me the beans. / Oh, mama, the beans aren't salty.

10. LÂ-BAS CHEZ MOREAU

(Malheureus Nègre) (AFS 81-A1)

Sung by Cleveland Benoit and Darby Hicks.

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Jennings (Lake Arthur), Louisiana, on August 1, 1934.

In this blues lament, as the Lomax's termed it, two singers alternate verses of irregular lengths, often using the last line of one verse as the first line of the next. Both singers are black Creoles; Cleveland Benoit's language resembles Cajun French as spoken in the northwestern part of French Louisiana, Darby Hicks's Creole is that usually associated with the eastern bayou regions.

The subject of several Louisiana songs, Moreau's was often described as a place where one could get coffee and *candi* (see "S'en aller chez Moreau" by Jimmy Peters and ring dance singers in *Classic Louisiana Recordings: Cajun and Creole Music* [Rounder 1843]). The obvious translation is candy, but it is unlikely that Moreau actually sold sweets. In the blues, candy was often used as a euphemism for drugs or sex. Interestingly, in Haitian Creole, the term *kandia* refers to a love potion or charm, and in Malabars Creole, the term *kandi* refers to a rice pudding used in folk medicine. The motif of love lost after a promise of marriage is complicated by the mention of compromising situations associated with Moreau's place. The young man in question visits the girl there to pick up his clothes. Later, one of the singers talks of drinking coffee before getting up from bed. The singers' preoccupation with coffee may have something to do with a coffee-colored child or lover. *Café* or *café crème* was often used to describe light-skinned Mulattos. The African Creole community traditionally observed a complex social sys-

tem based on color distinctions generally unrecognized by whites. Light-skinned Mulattos sometimes employed such tests as comparing skin color to a paper bag, or passing a comb through the hair, to exclude darker-skinned Creoles from their social events.

—Barry Jean Ancelet

*O là-bas chez Moreau,
O cherche ton candi,
O là-bas chez Moreau.
O malheureux nègre,
O malheureux nègre,
O c'est malheureux.
O j'ai pas venu ici pour tracas,
O j'ai venu après mon linge,
Cher ami, nègre.
Mmm, cher ami, nègre,
Pas vini ici pour faire toi misère.
Mmm, juste vini ici pour chercher mon linge.
O soleil après coucher,
O la lune après lever.
Mmm, mon nègre est pas arrivé.
Mmm, malheureux, nègre,
O c'est malheureux.
O mais quinze jours passés,
Mmm, tu m'as fait des promesses,
Mmm, toi, malheureuse.
Mmm, toi malheureuse, nègre,
C'est malheureux tu fais comme ca.
O mais qui tu m'as dit,
Mmm, quinze jours passés,
Mmm, chère amie, négresse.
Mmm, ta mère puis ton père
Té 'mandé marier toi.*

*O ta mère m'a dit non,
Mmm, ton père m'a dit ouais,
Mmm, chère petite Française.
Mmm, peut-être un jour qui va vini
Si mon l'idée pas changé.
O là-bas chez Moreau.
Mmm, moi va voler toi.
Après ça, ta mère et puis ton père
Va connaître comment parler leur garçon.
O mais va chez Moreau,
Cherche ton café,
Mmm, cherche ton café, chère.
Mmm, ton café, chère.
M'a rejoindre ton nègre, nègre,
Ton nègre, m'a rejoindre à l'autre
bord de chemin de fer.
O là-bas chez Moreau,
O cherche ton candi.
Mmm, malheureuse, pour fait comme ça.
O mais quinze jours passés,
O les promesses tu m'as fait,
O chère amie, mon nègre.
O soleil apé coucher,
Toi connais la promesse tu me fais moi
Sur un jeudi soir qui passé.
O la lune après lever,
O soleil après coucher,
Mmm, là-bas chez Moreau.
O cherche ton candi, nègre.
Mmm, roulé, roulé,
Roulé dans tous les mauvais temps,
Mmm, pour faire plaisant.
Mmm, sur un jour qui va vini,
Mmm, c'est moi qui gâté toi.*

O c'est malheureux, chérie,
O qui tu m'as fait.
O tu m'abandonnes.
Mmm, malheureux,
Ouais, c'est malheureux.
Quinze jours passés,
O les promesses tu m'as fait,
Mmm, quinze jours passés.
Mmm, m'en aller, m'en aller,
O m'en aller demain matin.
O va chez Moreau,
O cherche ton candi,
Mmm, bois ton café.
Mmm, bois ton café,
Mmm, avant toi levé.

O j'ai pas venu ici pour tracas.
O j'ai venu ici après mon linge.
O chère amie, mon nègre.
Mmm, chère amie,
C'est moi qui gâté toi.

O mais va chez Moreau
O cherche ton café.
Mmm, va chez Moreau,
Mais cherche ton café, chérie.
Mmm, ton café,
C'est moi qui fais le.
O sérin qui te vas vini.
O malheureux, mon nègre,
Mmm, malheureuse, chérie,
Tu m'as abandonné pour toujours,
Mmm, quinze jours passés.
Mmm, jongler tout le temps,

O jongler à toi.
O jongler à toi,
Mmm, jour et la nuit,
Mmm, jour et la nuit, chère.
Mmm, soleil apé coucher.
C'est mon cœur qui fait moi mal,
Mmm, mon cœur fait moi mal.
O mon nègre est pas arrivé,
Mmm, la lune après lever.
Mmm, mon nègre pas arrivé,
Mmm, la lune apé lever.

Unidentified voice (spoken): This song was composed by Cleveland Benoit and the mighty Darby Hicks, Jennings, Louisiana. [Au]just the first in 1934.

Translation: Oh, over at Moreau's, / Oh, search for your candy, / Oh, over at Moreau's. Oh, poor man, / Oh, poor man, / Oh, it's so sad. / Oh, I didn't come here for trouble, / Oh, I came for my clothes, / My dear friend. / Mmm, my dear friend, / Didn't come here to cause you pain. / Mmm, just came to get my clothes. / Oh, the sun is setting, / Oh, the moon is rising. / Mmm, my man is not home. / Mmm, my poor man, / Oh, it's so sad. / Oh, fifteen days ago, / Mmm, you made promises to me, / Mmm, poor girl. / Mmm, you poor girl, / It's a shame for you to do that. / Oh, what you did tell me, / Mmm, fifteen days ago, / Mmm, dear friend, lady. / Mmm, your mother and your father / Were asked for your hand. / Oh, your mother told me no, / Mmm, your father told me yes, / Mmm, dear little French girl. / Mmm, the day may come / If I don't change my mind. / Oh, over at Moreau's. / Mmm, I will steal you. / Then your mother and your father / Will know how to speak to their son. /

Oh, go then to Moreau's / Look for your coffee, / Mmm, look for your coffee, dear. / Mmm, your coffee, dear. / I'll meet your man, / Your man I'll meet on the other side / of the railroad tracks. / Oh, over at Moreau's, / Oh, search for your candy. / Mmm, poor girl, for acting like that. / Oh, fifteen days ago, / Oh, the promises you made to me, / Oh, dear friend, my friend. / Oh, the sun is setting, / You know the promise you made to me. / On a Thursday night past. / Oh, the moon is rising, / Oh, the sun is setting, / Mmm, over at Moreau's. / Oh, search for your candy, friend. / Mmm, wandering, wandering, / Wandering in all kinds of weather, / Mmm, looking for good times. / Mmm, a day will come, / Mmm, I'll be the one to spoil you. / Oh, it's so sad, dear, / Oh, what you've done to me. / Oh, you're leaving me alone. / Mmm, so sad, / Yes, it's so sad. / Fifteen days ago, / Oh, the promises you made me, / Mmm, fifteen days ago. / Mmm, going away, going away, / Oh, I'm going away tomorrow morning. / Oh, go to Moreau's / Oh, search for your candy, / Mmm, drink your coffee. / Mmm, drink your coffee, / Mmm, before getting out of bed. / Oh, I didn't come here for trouble. / Oh, I came for my clothes. / Oh, dear friend, my friend. / Mmm, dear friend, / I'm the one who spoiled you. / Oh, then go to Moreau's / Oh, search for your coffee. / Mmm, go to Moreau's, / Search for your coffee, dear. / Mmm, your coffee, / I'm the one who made it. / Oh, the ruckus that will come. / Oh, poor fellow, my friend, / Mmm, poor fellow, dear, / You left me alone forever, / Mmm, fifteen days ago. / Mmm, thinking always, / Oh, thinking of you. / Oh, thinking of you, / Mmm, day and night, / Mmm, day and night, dear. / Mmm, the sun is setting. / My heart is aching, / Mmm, my heart is aching. / Oh, my man is not home, / Mmm, the moon is rising. / Mmm,

my man is not home, / Mmm, the moon is rising.

11. JE VEUX ME MARIER [Chère Ami]

(AFS 79-B2)

Performed by Jimmy Peters, vocal with washboard, and ring dance singers.

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax, in Jennings (Lake Arthur), Louisiana, in June 1934.

Like "J'ai fait tout le tour du pays" above (track 9) this *juré* is based on an old Acadian song, in this case, a cumulative song describing a young man's efforts to marry his sweetheart despite her parents' objections — that the chickens aren't laying, that he has no shoes, nor money, and so on. In typical *juré* style, the text is highly repetitive to stretch the song for dancers. The singers also take liberties with the basic melody line and add counterpoint background vocals. The *frottoir* (washboard) used for percussion is a descendent of the Afro-Caribbean notched gourd. —Barry Jean Ancelet

*Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver.
O c'est malheureux.
Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver.
Mais comment donc je vas faire?*

*Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver.
Mais Mam et Pap veut pas.
Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver,
Mais o c'est malheureux.*

Je veux me marier,
J'ai pas d'argent,
J'ai pas de souliers,
Mais o c'est malheureux.
Comment donc
Tu veux moi, je fais,
Mais comme un pauvre misérable?

Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver.
O c'est malheureux.
Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver,
Mais, o chère amie.

Je veux me marier
Mais Mam et Pap veut pas.
Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver.
Mais o c'est malheureux.

Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver.
Mais o chère amie.
Pas de souliers,
Pas d'argent,
Mais o c'est misérable.

Malheureux, mais comment donc
Tu veux moi, je vas faire?
T'après donc mais t'en aller
Avec un autre que moi.

Je veux me marier

Mais Mam et Pap veut pas.
Pas de souliers, pas d'argent,
Mais comme un pauvre misérable.

Pas de souliers, pas d'argent,
Mais comment moi, je vas faire?
Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver.
Mais o c'est malheureux.

Cher ami, mais regardez donc,
Mais quoi t'as fait avec ton nègre.
T'après donc mais me quitter,
Mais o chère amie,
Dans les manches mais moi tout seul,
Mais comme un pauvre misérable.
Malheureuse, mais chère petite fille,
Mais comment moi, je vas faire?

Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver.
Petite, c'est malheureux.
Chère petite fille,
Pas de souliers,
Pas d'argent, chérie.

Spoken: All right, keep quiet. [. . .].
Alan Lomax: This record was made by Jimmy Peters,
with a washboard and spoon accompaniment in
Jennings Louisiana, June 1934.

Translation: I want to marry, / I can't find [anyone]. /
Oh, it's sad. / I want to marry, / I can't find [anyone]. /
Whatever will I do? // I want to marry, / I can't find [any-
one]. / And mama and papa won't allow it. / I want to

marry, / I can't find [anyone]. / Oh, it's so sad. // I want
to marry, / I have no money, / I have no shoes, / Oh, it's
sad. / What then / Do you expect me to do, / Such a
miserable wretch? // I want to marry, / I can't find [any-
one]. / Oh, it's so sad. / I want to marry, / I can't find
[anyone]. / Oh, dear friend. // I want to marry, / But
mama and papa won't allow it. / I want to marry, / I
can't find [anyone]. Oh, it's so sad. // I want to marry, / I
can't find [anyone]. / Oh, dear friend. / No shoes, / No
money, / Oh, it's so sad. // Poor girl, what then / Do you
expect me to do? / You are going away / With someone
else besides me. // I want to marry, / But mama and
papa won't allow it / No shoes, no money, / Such a mis-
erable wretch. // No shoes, no money, / Whatever will I
do? / I want to marry, / I can't find [anyone]. / Oh, it's so
sad. // Dear friend, look then, / At what you've done to
your man. / You're leaving me, / Oh, dear friend, / Along
the pathways all alone, / Such a miserable wretch. /
Poor good, dear little girl, / Whatever will I do? // I want
to marry, / I can't find [anyone]. / Little girl, it's so sad. /
Dear little girl, / No shoes, / No money, dear.

12. MOI MALHEUREUX (AFS 82-A1)

Performed by Joe Massie, vocal.

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in St. John's Plantation, St.
Martinsville, Louisiana, in June 1934.

Previously unreleased.

The most notable aspect of this song and the next are
that they are largely improvised. Joe Massie seems to
have misunderstood John A. Lomax's instructions. In an
interview prior to the performance Lomax had told
Massie that he can could sing as long as he liked. Massie
apparently understood this to mean that he should sing

as long as could, with the result that he starts making up
French verses about the man recording him, which he
could be certain were not understood by him: "That man
there is looking at me" and so on. —Barry Jean Ancelet

O Mam,
Mais, oui, moi malheureux.
Moi malheureux,
Hé, moi malheureux.
Oui, c'est ça la cause que
M'a fait moi dans tracas.
Moi peut pas di, o,
Moi peut pas di.
Oui, m'allé là-bas, nègre,
Mais oui, mais causer avec toi.
C'est toi la cause, oui,
Que moi malheureux.
Moi vini ici, mais oui,
Dans Ibérie
Avec un homme qui
Dormait dans la barre.
Voir que d'ici, mais,
Mais, moi pas peur li.
Moi pas peur li, non,
Mais moi pas peur li.
C'est un vaillant 'n homme,
Tout le monde connaît li.
C'est un vaillant 'n homme,
Tout le monde connaît li.
Li m'a fait courri, mais,
Moi, moi, moi tout seul.
M'allé là-bas, oui,
Di, m'allé là-bas.
Li m'a fait parti, Lord, mais

Oui, moi, moi tout seul.

M'allé là-bas,

M'allé là-bas.

'coutez bien donc ça

M'apé di, oui, vous autres,

Mais, oui, aujourd'hui,

Mais, oui, aujourd'hui.

Translation: Oh, Mama, / Well, yes, I'm sad. / I'm sad, / Hey, I'm sad. / Yes, that's the reason that I got into trouble. / I can't say, oh, / I can't say. / Yes, I'm going there, man, / Yes, to speak with you. / You're the reason, yes, / That I'm so sad. / I came here, yes, / To Iberia / With a man who / Was sleeping in the bar. / To show that here / I'm not afraid of him. / I'm not afraid of him, no, / I'm not afraid of him. / He's a nice man, / Everyone knows him. / He's a nice man, / Everyone knows him. / He made me go, well, / Me, all alone. / I went there, yes, / Say, I went there. / He made me leave, Lord, / Yes, I'm all alone. / I went there, / I went there. / Listen well to what / I'm telling, yes, you all. / Yes, today, / Yes, today.

13. SI LI, LÉ BAT (AFS 82 A 2)

Performed by Joe Massie (vocal).

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in St. John's Plantation, St. Martinsville, Louisiana in June 1934

Previously unreleased.

Si li, lé bat, nous gain pour bat.

Oui, mais m'a pas couri, mais, la maison.

Ta ta ta...

Si li, lé bat, nous gain pour bat.

Si li lé bat, si li lé bat.

Ta ta ta...

Si li lé bat, si li lé bat.

L'homme là apé 'garder moi.

'gardez li, 'gardez li.

To crois pas li, mais ça to pas connais,

Si to pas connais li, moi, moi connais.

Ta ta ta...

Si li lé bat, nous gain pour bat.

Ta ta ta...

Si li lé bat, si li lé bat.

Ta ta ta...

Si li lé bat, nous gain pour bat.

Ta ta ta...

Si li lé bat la maison,

Si li lé bat, nous tout gain pour bat.

Écoutez ça bien, ça m'apé di,

M'apé chanter z-autres,

Si li lé bat,

Si li lé bat, nous gain pour bat.

M'apé vini [...]

Écoutez ça bien ça, ça l'apé dit.

John A. Lomax (spoken): These songs have been sung by Joe while running the dummy engine on the Saint John's Plantation, for the last nineteen years. These are the songs that he sings for his own amusement while he works with the dummy engine. All right!

Translation: If he wants to fight, we'll have to fight. / Yes, but, I will not leave my home. / Ta ta ta... / If he wants to fight, we'll have to fight. / If he wants to fight, if he wants to fight. / Ta ta ta... / If he wants to fight, if he wants to fight. / That man there is looking at me. / Look at him, look at him. / You don't believe him, but what you don't know, / If you don't know him, I do. / Ta

ta ta... / If he wants to fight, we'll have to fight. / Ta ta ta... / If he wants to fight, if he wants to fight. / Ta ta ta... / If he wants to fight, we'll have to fight. / Ta ta ta... / If he wants to fight in the house, / If he wants to fight, we'll all have to fight. / Listen well to what I'm saying, / I'm singing to you all, / If he wants to fight, / If he wants to fight, we'll have to fight. / I'm coming [...] / Listen well to what he's saying.

14. BONSOIR, PETIT MONDE (AFS 85-A1)

Performed by Paul Junius Malveaux, harmonica probably;

Ernest Lafitte, vocal (probably).

Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Jennings (Lake Arthur), Louisiana, on August 2, 1934.

Previously unreleased.

Another tale of a frustrated courtship in which the suitor is rejected for being an orphan, as in "Bonsoir Mes Parents" (track 8), above. Many of the verses are stock material. The first verse (sung to an entirely different melody) also occurs in "J'ai Fais Mon Idée en Faisant mon Paquet" by Alphe and Shirley Bergeron and the Veteran Playboys (Lanor 1000). —Barry Jean Ancelet

O fais ton idée,

O fais ton idée,

En faisant ton paquet.

O bonsoir, petite fille,

O bonsoir, petit monde.

Moi, je suis après m'en aller.

O j'ai demandé à ta mam',

Ta vieille mam' m'a dit, "Non,

Va-t'en, toi, orphelin."

O je m'ai mis sur mes genoux

Et j'ai levé ma main droite

De jamais t'oublier,

Toi, ma chère orpheline.

O je m'ai mis sur mes genoux

Et j'ai levé ma main droite

De jamais t'oublier,

Toi, ma chère orpheline.

O j'ai été-z-au village,

J'ai revenu à la maison.

J'ai cogné-z-à la porte.

C'est minuit était passé.

O c'est là qu'elle m'a dit,

"Va-t'en, toi, vieux nègre.

C'est minuit est passé."

Hé bye bye, chère petite fille,

Moi, je suis après m'en aller,

Depuis à l'âge de quinze ans.

O bonsoir, petit monde,

O bonsoir, petit monde,

Dis bye bye pour toujours.

O bonsoir, petite fille,

O bonsoir, petite fille,

Moi, je suis après m'en aller.

O je m'ai mis sur mes genoux,

*O je m'ai mis sur mes genoux.
J'ai levé ma main droite.*

Translation: *Oh make up your mind, / Oh make up your mind, / While packing your stuff. [On your way out.] // Oh goodnight, little girl, / Oh goodnight, little world. / I'm going away. // Oh I asked your mama. / Your old mama told me, "No, / Go away, you orphan." // Oh I got down on my knees, / And I raised my right hand. / Swearing to never forget you, You, my dear orphan. // Oh I got down on my knees, / And I raised my right hand, / Swearing to never forget you, You, my dear orphan. // Oh I went to town, / I went back home. / I knocked at the door. / It was passed midnight. // Oh it was then that she told me, / "Go away, you, old man. / It's passed midnight." // Hey goodbye, dear little girl, / I'm going away, / Since the age of fifteen. // Oh, goodnight, little world, / Oh goodnight, little world, / Say goodbye for ever. // Oh goodnight, little girl, / Oh, goodnight, little girl, / I'm going away. // Oh, I got down on my knees, / Oh, I got down on my knees. / I raised my right hand.*

15. ZYDECO PAS SALÉ

Performed by Anderson Moss, vocal and accordion;
Edward Ducrest, steel washboard; Fred Milburn, drums.
Recorded by Paul Jaeger (?), at Prejean's Lounge,
Houston (?), Texas, c. 1980s.
Previously unreleased.

Asked by John Minton about the origin of the phrase "*les haricots sont pas salés*" during "a late-1980s 'oil bust' in Houston, Texas," Anderson Moss explained, "What you call this pressure is a high-class *depressure*. That other

one in nineteen twenty-seven, twenty-eight, twenty-nine, into the thirties — there was plenty of work, now. You want to work, you have the work, but the salary — you know what I'm talking about? But if you had five or six children, you could feed them for twenty-five cents a day, you understand? Meat — what you pay a dollar sixty for it — or a dollar fifty a pound — in them days you pay ten cents a pound. Said the neck — cost you six cents a pound. Pork bones — things like that — three cents a pound. You understand? But go down there in them stores and try to get that. Ain't nothing but a zydeco [i.e., beans but no meat], that's all it is [laughs]! Yeah. You'll have to pay, man."¹⁹

In a session for a Houston TV station, Moss performed this truncated version of the song that defines the musical genre.

*Les zydeco est pas salé
O malheureux,
Malheureux, moi tout maudit.*

Translation: *The zydeco ain't salty / Oh, unhappy me, / Unhappy me, I'm completely damned.*

16. ALLONS A LAFAYETTE

Performed by Anderson Moss, vocal and accordion;
Edward Ducrest, steel washboard; Fred Milburn, drums.
Recorded by Paul Jaeger (?), at Prejean's Lounge,
Houston (?), Texas, c. 1980s.
Previously unreleased.

A nineteen twenties 78-rpm release of this Cajun standard sparked the fashion for commercial recordings of

Louisiana-French vernacular music. In his *Cajun Sketches*, Lauren C. Post described the dramatic effect of the publication, "First to record was now-famous singer and accordion player Joe Falcon of Rayne. About 1926 [27 April 1928] he recorded 'Allons à Lafayette,' ('Let's Go to Lafayette,') for an apprehensive recording company. Once the recording hit the market of south Louisiana, Acadians bought several records at a time so they would never be without one, no matter what happened. A new era had opened up. Other singers and recording companies went into the business of recording Acadian folk songs for the south Louisiana market."²⁰

The song's symbolic significance was recognized by Anderson Moss, who sang it when asked "Do you have one that's really more French than anything else?" His verse is based on Joe Falcon's original recording.²¹

*Allons à Lafayette,
C'est pour changer ton nom.
Comment tu veux t'appeler?
Madame, Madame Comeaux.
Petite, t'es trop mignonne
Pour faire la criminelle.*

Translation: *Let's go to Lafayette, / It's to change your name. / What do you want to be called? / Mrs. — Mrs. Comeaux. / Little girl, you're too cute / To act so mean.*

17. (GOODNIGHT) IRENE

(AFS 124-A2; AFS 124-B1)
Performed by Huddie Leadbetter (Lead Belly), vocal and guitar.
Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in the Louisiana State Penitentiary, Angola, on July 1, 1934.

In *Negro Songs as Sung by Lead Belly*, the Lomaxes wrote, "Before Lead Belly was sentenced for murder in Texas, he learned the refrain of this song with a couple of verses from his Uncle Terrell. He sang it throughout the penitentiary system (where it is now one of the most popular songs), adding verses as he thought of them, filling out the details of the song until it had developed into a semi-ballad. When he went to Angola, he took 'Irene' and his twelve-string guitar. 'Irene' was his most popular song with the convicts, the guards, and the visitors whom he entertained."²²

The Lomaxes speculated on the possible nineteenth-century origin of this piece but were unable to trace anything specific. Recently it has been suggested that it may be based on an 1886 publication by the African-American composer Gussie Lord Davis. The words and tune, however, have undergone a complex process of evolution.²³

Chorus:
*Irene goodnight,
Irene goodnight,
Goodnight Irene,
Goodnight Irene,
I get's you in my dreams.*

*Quit ramblin' an' quit gamblin',
Quit stayin' out late at night,*

Go home to yo' wife an' yo' family,
Sit down by the fireside bright. (Chorus)

Last Sat'day night I got married,
Me an' my wife settle down,
Now me an' my wife have parted,
Goin' take me a stroll uptown. (Chorus)

I asked your mother for you,
She told me you was too young,
I wish the Lord that I never seen your face,
I'm sorry we ever was born. (Chorus)

One day, one day, one day,
Irene was a-walking 'long,
Last word that I heard her say,
I want you to sing this song: (Chorus)

[. . .] and she caused me to moan,
She cause me to leave my home,
Last words that I heard her say,
I'm sorry you ever was known. (Chorus)

I love Irene, God knows I do,
Love her 'till the sea run dry,
If Irene turn her back on me,
Goin' take morphine and die. (Chorus)

18. MAMA DID YOU BRING ME

ANY SILVER? (Gallis Pole) (AFS 2501-A)

Performed by Lead Belly, speech, vocal and guitar.

Recorded by Alan Lomax in Havers Studio,
New York, New York on November 26, 1938.

According to John Minton, this version of "The Maid Freed From the Gallows" (Child No. 95) "was overwhelmingly the most popular of the Child ballads in black tradition, where it appears not only as folksong, but as a *cante-fable*, a folk drama, a dance, and a game."²⁴ He also observes how "the injunction to hangman or judge usually found in Child 95" is omitted "and the scene is neither the courtroom nor the scaffold, but rather the jail-house where the prisoner stands looking out through the bars."²⁵

In her comprehensive study of this ballad, Eleanor Long draws attention to Lead Belly's unique sequence of relatives: the mother appears first, followed by father, wife, and friend. In addition, "the usual sequence of refusals followed by acquiescence is reversed: all the members of the family offer all they have and only the friend refuses."²⁶ This recording is an example of what became Lead Belly's hallmark performance style, combining spoken narrative and song.

Spoken: Ah, yes! Oh, whip it to a gravy! Now this is a boy who was in jail. In them times, you could buy yourself out; way long time ago, 'bout a hundred years ago, you might say. It wasn't so much money to support jail-houses in that time. It takes money. And this woman's son was in jail, and everytime [her] mother would come he asked her, "What did you bring me, mother?" Father

come, he wanted to know, 'cause if they go hang him, just for three days in front of that time. And so, if he get a little money, they turn him a-loose, 'cause that'll help support the jail. And when his mother come, his mother come, [...] what he said (sings:)

Mother, did you bring me any silver?
Mother, did you bring me any gold?
What did you bring me, dear mother,
To keep me from the gallow's pole?
Yes,— what did you — bring,
What did you —
What did you bring me,
Keep me from the gallow's pole?

Spoken: She brought everything she could rake and scrape (sings:)

Son, I brought you some silver,
Son, I brought you some gold,
Son I brought you I'll everything,
To keep you from the gallow's pole.
Yes — I brought it,
Yes, mama, I thought it,
You would bring me,
Keep me from the gallow's pole.

Spoken: Here come his father. The poor boy was a-hollerin' at the father as he run up — when he saw his father, he's so glad, 'cause the mother done been there and she done left somethin'. So when he walked up here what he said to his father (sings:)

Father, did you bring me any silver?
Father, did you bring me any gold?
What did you bring me, dear father,
To keep me from the gallow's pole?

Yes — I brought it,
Yes, papa, I thought it,
You would bring me,
Keep me from the gallow's pole.

Spoken: His father looked at his son and here's what he said (sings:)

Son, I brought you some silver.
Son, I brought you a li'l gold.
Son, I brought you a li'l everything,
To keep you from the gallow's pole.
Lawd — I brought it,
Yes, I brought it,
Son, I brought you
To keep you from the gallow's pole.

Spoken: Oh, whip it! — Yeh! Here come his wife. He had a wife at that time. When his wife come, he was so glad to see his wife he want to know what she bring (sings:)

Wife, did you bring me any silver?
Baby, did you bring me any gold?
What did you bring me, dear darling,
To keep me from the gallow's pole?
Yes — what did you — bring,
What did you,
What did you bring me,
Keep me from the gallow's pole?

Spoken: You know she done bring everything that was in town if she could get it (sings:)
Babe, I brought you some silver.
Babe, I brought you some gold,
Babe, I brought you a little everything,

*To keep you from the gallow's pole.
Yes — I brought it,
Yes — you oughta thought it,
I brought you,
To keep you from the gallow's pole.*

Spoken: *Oh, whip it — to a gravy! Now here come his so-called friend. His friend liked him when he was outside but when he got behind the bars, that's just the place he want to see him. So he run up and saw his friend, he didn't think to have nothin' to bring him, but he want to see the face and see how they talked about it. Here what he said to him (sings):
Friend, did you bring me any silver?
Friend, did you bring me any gold?
What did you bring me, my dear friend,
Keep me from the gallow's pole?
Yes—what did you—bring,
What did you,
What did you bring me,
Keep me from the gallow's pole?*

Spoken: *Now here what they brought (sings):
I never brought you no silver,
Never brought you no gold,
Just come here to see you,
Hung up on the gallow's pole.
Yes—he knowed it.
Yes! Yes! Yes!
I done brought you,
Get on the gallow's pole.*

Spoken: *He goes on, the last word he told his friend (sings):*

*Never brought me no silver,
Never brought me no gold,
Just come here to see me,
Hung up on the gallow's pole.
Yes—I thought it,
Yes—he never brought it.
Come to see me,
Hung up on the gallow's pole.*

Spoken: *Oh whip it to a gravy! (plays) — Oh whip it!*

Alan Lomax: *This version of "The Young Maid Freed From The Gallows," was played and sung by Huddie Ledbetter in New York City, November [sic] the twenty-sixth, nineteen-thirty-eight. Mr. Ledbetter learned this song in the South when he was a young man and played to fast time. And he's sung it for the Archive of American Folk Song in the Library of Congress. This song, nor this record — neither this song or this record may be used without permission — written permission, from Mr. Ledbetter. What's you address Huddie?— Three-fifty-six, West Fifty-Second Street, New York City.*

19. (LITTLE) LIZA JANE (AFS 94-B1)

Performed by Wilson "Stavin' Chain" Jones, vocal and guitar; Octave Amos, fiddle; Charles Gobert, (possibly) vocal and banjo. Recorded by John A. and Alan Lomax in Lafayette, Louisiana, in June 1934.

The leader of this string band, Wilson Jones, took the nickname "Stavin' Chain" which, as John A. Lomax noted in 1936, "is the name of a Negro hero à la Paul Bunyan. John Henry could only manage that hammer, Stavin' Chain could do anything. He was the great woman man of the South."²⁷ Although Jones did perform a version of

the "Stavin' Chain" song for the Lomaxes, it is very unlikely that he was the originator of the piece or the appellation (see track 22 for more about Stavin' Chain.)

The repertoire of Wilson Jones' group ranged from ballads to reels. The dance-song tune, "Miss Liza Jane" is reported from the slavery period, and "Eliza" or "Liza Jane" remained a popular name for dance tunes into the twentieth century. "Little Liza Jane," words and melody apparently copyright to Countess Ada de Lachau in 1916, is similar to the reel played here by Stavin' Chain and his group. In 1918–19, in the Hampton Institute Series, Natalie Curtis-Burlin published a series of *Negro Folk Songs* which included a Dance-Game Song ("Stealin' Partners") entitled "Liza Jane." Burlin also prints another set of words sung by black soldiers in France during the First World War.²⁹ Another variant is "Square Dance Calls" performed for John A. Lomax by Pete Harris in Richmond, Texas, in May 1934 (track 13) on *Deep River of Song: Black Texicans: Balladeers and Songsters of the Texas Frontier* (Rounder 1821). There is also a second and different song entitled "Liza Jane" with the chorus, "Poor little Liza, poor girl, she died on the train."³⁰

*Don't you hear little Liza say,
Eliza Jane.
I say, don't you hear little Liza say,
Little Liza Jane.*

Chorus:

*I say [I mean], little Liza, little Liza,
Little Liza Jane,
Say, little Liza, little Liza,
Little Liza Jane.*

*Yes, I see little Liza walkin' 'round,
Little Liza Jane.
Yes, I see little Liza walkin' 'round,
Little Liza Jane. (Chorus)*

*Yes, people say Liza don't steal,
Little Liza Jane.
Yes sir, people told me Liza won't steal
Little Liza Jane.
And I caught little Liza in my cornfield,
Little Liza Jane.
Yes sir, I caught little Liza in my cornfield. (Chorus)*

*Yes, little Liza is dressed in blue,
Little Liza Jane.
And I can't see how she know what to do,
Little Liza Jane. (Chorus)*

*Now, tomorrow morning, 'fore day soon,
Little Liza Jane.
Yes, tomorrow morning, 'fore day soon,
Little Liza Jane. (Chorus)*

*Yes, got your mule in my cornfield,
Little Liza Jane.
Oh yes, you got your mules in my cornfield,
Little Liza Jane. (Chorus)*

*I'm goin get my hound, with its own [...]
Little Liza Jane,
I'm goin get my hound, with its own [...]
Little Liza Jane.
I'm goin to call my dog before your horse,
Little Liza Jane,*

*I'm goin to call my dog before your horse,
Little Liza Jane.* (Chorus)

20. TRENCH BLUES (AFS 93-A)

Performed by John Bray, vocal and guitar.

Recorded by John A. Lomax, near Morgan City, Louisiana,
on October 17, 1934.

This song appeared in *Our Singing Country* (1941), where
the Lomaxes described John Bray this way:

*"Big Nig" of Amelia, Louisiana, stood six feet and seven
inches in his socks. Alan, on one of our visits, measured
the spread of his mighty arms as an inch longer. When he
works, "Big Nig" is the singing leader of a gang of
Negroes who snake cypress out of the Louisiana
swamps. "Big Nig" booms his signals to the flatboat out
on the black bayou; the engineer toots his reply, and the
logs come busting through the tangled swamp forest. Ten
whistles means "a man dead."*

*On our first visit we mistakenly tipped "Big Nig" in
advance of his singing, only to find out later that he had
become too drunk to sing. A year or so afterwards
repeated visits put on records the singing and guitar
picking of this remarkable man.*

*The "Trench Blues," according to "Big Nig," was com-
posed during the World War when he was a soldier in
France. "They didn't give me a gun," said "Big Nig"; "all
the weapons I ever had was my guitar, a shovel, and
a mop."³¹*

World War I is mentioned only occasionally in black music

in commercial releases issued during the 1920s³² and in
some later performances, including field recordings like
this one.³³

*I went a-stealin' across the deep blue sea,
Lord, I was worrying with those submarines,
Worrying with those submarines,
Hey hey hey hey.*

*My home's in the trenches, living in a big dugout,
Lord, my home's in the trenches, living in a big dugout,
Home's in the trenches, living in a big dugout,
Hey hey hey hey.*

*We went a-hiking to the firing line,
Lord, I was standing hearing mens a-crying,
Standing hearing mens a-crying,
Hey hey hey hey.*

*We went a-hiking to old [Mountsac (?)] Hill,
Lord, forty thousand soldiers called out to drill,
Forty thousand soldiers called out to drill.
Hey hey hey hey.*

*I went to Belgium, blowed my bugle horn,
Lord, time I blowed [motherless] Germany gone,
Time I blowed [motherless] Germany gone,
Hey hey hey hey.*

*We went to Berlin, went with all our will,
Lord, if the whites don't get him the niggers certainly will,
Whites don't get him the niggers certainly will,
Hey hey hey hey.*

*Last old words, heard old Kaiser say,
Lord, he was calling them Germans long ways 'long
the wind,
Calling them Germans long ways 'long the wind,
Hey hey hey hey.*

*Here she comes with her headlights down,
Lord, here she comes with her headlights down,
Here she comes with her headlights down,
Hey hey hey hey.*

*[The Berlin?] women no — a-non comprend,
Lord, the women in France hollering "non comprend,"
The women in France hollering "non comprend,"
Hey hey hey hey.*

*Raining here, storming on the sea,
Lord, raining here, storming on the sea,
Raining here, storming on the sea,
Hey hey hey hey.*

*Whistle blow, big bell sadly tone,
Lord, many soldiers, Lord, is dead and gone.
Many a soldier, Lord, is dead and gone,
Hey hey hey hey.*

*Called him in the morning, chased him in the night,
Lord, hit him in the head, make him read the
Americans right,
Hit him in the head, make him read the Americans right,
Hey hey hey hey*

John A. Lomax (spoken): *Two songs by John Bray,
better known as 'Big Nig', near Morgan City, Louisiana,*

*October the Seventeenth, Nineteen-Thirty-Four. Sung by
the Library of Washington "[sic]."*

21. BATON ROUGE RAG / Interview

(AFS 3990 B 2)

Performed by Joe Harris, guitar.

Recorded by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax in Shreveport, Louisiana,
on October 9, 1940.

When John A. Lomax recorded him, Joe Harris was in his
early fifties. Born in about 1888, he had lived much fur-
ther south, in New Iberia, and spoke French Creole.
"Baton Rouge Rag" was also recorded commercially in
1937 by Kitty Gray and her Wampus Cats. Composer
credits are to [Joe] Harris and J[immy] Davis, the old-
time music singer and Louisiana Governor (1899–2000)
who also composed "You Are My Sunshine," Louisiana's
state song.³⁴ Harris's guitar playing style suggests he
performed this piece with the Wampus Cats for Vocalion
(although it was not issued until the 1970s). In the inter-
view he tells John A. Lomax that he had learned the tune
from a trumpet player in Bunkie, Louisiana, in about
1907. His guitar instrumental, however, has a banjo-like
theme, with heel-and-toe dance timing.³⁵

John A. Lomax: *Joe, where did you get this song —
this rag?*

Joe Harris: *Oh, I jus' studied it up myself.*

Lomax: *Didn't you tell me that somebody started you
off on it?*

Harris: *Yes sir, I sure did. The boy was a trumpet player
and — eh, he learned it to me.*

Lomax: *How long ago?*

Harris: *Been around thirty-three years ago.*

Lomax: *And how — where was the place? Where did you live at, at the time?*

Harris: *I was livin' at Bunkie, Louisiana.*

Lomax: *Where?*

Harris: *Bunkie, Louisiana.*

Lomax: *Where is that?*

Harris: *Down in South Louisiana.*

22. WINDING BOY (AFS 1656-B)

Performed by Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton, vocal and piano.

Recorded by Alan Lomax in the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., in May/June 1938.

Introducing his second two-part recording of this piece (AFS 1687) for Alan Lomax, Jelly Roll explained the significance of “Winding Boy” in his repertoire, “This happens to be one of my first tunes in the blues line down in New Orleans. In the very early days, when people first start to playing piano in that section — of course when a man played piano the stamp was on him for life — the femininity stamp. And I didn’t want that on, so, of course, when I did start to playing — the songs were sort of smutty — a bit; not so smutty, but something like this.”³⁶

Bawdy lyrics served to cover Morton’s insecurity in the bordellos where he found employment as a singer and pianist. The bawdiness of the barrelhouse blues of the rural juke joints might have likewise functioned as a cover for the insecurities of the manual workers who frequented them. In “Winding Boy” Morton compares himself with a character of legendary prowess associated with the barrelhouse (who may have been based on a real person): Stavin’ Chain. Alan Lomax reported that he “lived off women,” and was “the hero of a long, rambling

ballad, known all through the Southwest.”³⁷ The association of Stavin’ Chain with the barrelhouse is confirmed by Richard M. Jones, who reported hearing ‘a tall powerful negro’ with this sobriquet play boogie piano in 1904 around Donaldsonville, Louisiana, at Bayou la Fouce during the construction of the Texas and Pacific Railroad between Shreveport and New Orleans.³⁸ Morton may be describing the same performer when he told Lomax, “Stavin’ Chain didn’t amount to very much. There was just a song around him. He was a very low-class guy. Belonged to the honky tonk gang. Just a lady’s man. Was an ugly gawky fellow. Nothing to make nobody think about him the second time. “Stavin’ Chain” don’t mean a thing. They named him for a nickname.”³⁹ In this, the moniker parallels Morton’s appellation Winding Ball or Winding Boy (as this song is titled).

[Alan Lomax?] Spoken: *It’s terrible, isn’t it?*

Spoken: *“Winding Boy,” oh yes.*

Yes, winding boy, don’t deny my name,

Winding boy, don’t deny my name.

Winding boy, don’t deny my name,

Pick it up and shake it, like Stavin’ Chains.

I’m the winding boy and don’t deny my name.

I want a mama that’s nice and kind,

I want a mama, baby, that’s nice and kind.

I want a mama that’s sweet and kind,

So she can shake that big buh-hind.

I’m the winding boy, don’t deny my name.

I like a gal that’s good to me,

Yes, like a sweet mama that’s good to me.

*I like a sweet little mama, she’s good to me,
Let me have that thing, really free.*

I’m winding boy, don’t deny my name.

Oh, this winding boy, don’t deny my name,

I’m the winding boy, don’t deny my name.

Yes, winding boy, don’t deny my name,

Pick it up and shake it, like Stavin’ Chains.

Winding boy, don’t deny my fucking name.

When I see that gal coming back to me,

When I see my girl coming back to me.

When I see my bitch coming back to me,

*I know I’m going to make her sing “Nearer My God
to Thee.”*

Winding boy, don’t deny my name.

23. TIGER RAG / Interview (AFS 1648-B, 1649-A/B)

Performed by Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton, vocal, and piano.

Recorded by Alan Lomax in the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., in May/June 1938.

The New Orleans origin of “Tiger Rag” — the melody for which was copyright by Nick LaRocca’s Original Dixieland Jazz Band in 1918, after they recorded the piece — is a matter for critical discussion and is best summarized by Marshall Stearns (1956) and most recently by Jack Stewart (2001).⁴⁰ It seems clear, however, that the tune to “Tiger Rag” was traditional and had been played under a variety of titles for many years before anyone had the idea of copyrighting it for commercial gain. Regardless of the respective merits of Morton and LaRocca’s claims to authorship, in this interview, Jelly Roll gives a vivid and eloquent demonstration

of how, in “Tiger Rag,” European and African-derived music were synthesized to produce an original new form of American music. Morton’s claim to have named the piece (from “making the Tiger on my elbow” or the sound “like a tiger howling”) notwithstanding, Alan Lomax’s explanation of the name may be closer to the mark. He points out that in barrelhouse lingo *tiger* meant the lowest hand a man could draw in a poker game — seven high, deuce low, and without a pair, straight, or flush.” Referring to Morton’s prowess as a card shark, Lomax adds, it takes nerve to hold onto a tiger and bluff it to win, but Jelly Roll had the nerve to take the pot with bluff alone. He had learned some tricks from Sheep Eye, the gambler, as well as from Tony Jackson. All he had was the music of the Storyville bordellos — it was his tiger and he bet his life on it.”⁴¹

Jelly Roll Morton (spoken): *Jazz started in New Orleans and this, er, “Tiger Rag” happened to be transformed from an old quadrille that was in many different tempos, and I’ll no doubt give you an idea how it went. This was the introduction, meaning that every one was supposed to get their partners: (plays) “Get your partners, everybody, get your partners.” And people would be rushing around the hall getting their partners. They’d maybe have — maybe five minutes lapse between that time. And of course they’d start it over again and that was the first part of it. (plays) And the next strain would be a waltz strain, I believe. (plays) — that would be the waltz strain. Also, they’d have another strain that comes right belon — right beside it: (plays) — the Mazouka [mazurka] time — (plays) Of course, that was that third strain. And of course, they had another strain. And — er, that was in a different tempo: (plays). (Alan Lomax,*

spoken: *What time is that?*) **Morton:** *That's a two-four time (plays). Of course they had another one. (Lomax: That makes five.) Morton: Yeah. (plays) Now, I'll show you how it was transformed. It happened to be transformed by your performer at this particular time. "Tiger Rag" for your approval.*

Lomax: *Who named it the "Tiger Rag?"*

Morton: *I also named it — came from the way that I played it by making "the tiger" on my elbow. And I also named it. A person said once, "That sounds like a tiger howling." I said, fine. To myself I said, that's the name. So, I'll play it for you: (plays) (Spoken: Hold that tiger!)*

That was many years before the Dixieland had ever started, when I played the "Tiger Rag." Of course we named it "Tiger Rag," but we had a lot of other numbers around that it was supposed to be good . . .

REFERENCE

- Ancelet, Barry Jean. "Zydeco / Zairico: Beans, Blues and Beyond." *Black Music Research Journal* 8: 1 (1988), 33–49.
- Archive of American Folk Song, Report of the Librarian of Congress for the fiscal year ending 30 June 1933. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933, pp. 97–99.
- Archive of American Folk Song, Report of the Librarian of Congress for the fiscal year ending 30 June 1934. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934, pp. 124–128.
- Borneman, Ernest. "Boogie Woogie" in Sinclair Trail and Gerald Lascelles, eds., *Just Jazz*. London: Peter Davis, 1957, pp. 13–40.
- Curtis-Burlin, Natalie. *Negro Folk Songs*. Hampton Institute Series. New York: G. Schirmer, 1918–19, reprinted Mineola, New York: Dover, 2001.
- Gushee, Lawrence. "Would you believe Ferman Mouton?" *Storyville* 95 (June-July 1981): 164–68.
- . "Would you believe Ferman Mouton? (A Second Look)." *Storyville* 98 (December 1981–January 1982): 56–59.
- . "A Preliminary Chronology of the Early Career of Ferd 'Jelly Roll'

- Morton." *Storyville* 127 (October 1986): 11–18, 23–33.
- Kmen, Henry A. *Music In New Orleans: The Formative Years 1791–1841*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966.
- Lomax, Alan. "'Sinful' Songs of The Southern Negro." *Southwest Review* 19: 2 (January 1934): 105–131.
- . Liner notes to *Afro-American Spirituals, Work Songs, and Ballads, Library of Congress: Album 3* [AAFS 11-15], AFS L 3 (LP). Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, circa 1942.
- . *Mister Jelly Roll: The Fortunes of Jelly Roll Morton, New Orleans Creole and "Inventor of Jazz."* London: Cassel, 1952.
- . Liner notes to *The Classic Louisiana Recordings: Cajun And Creole Music 1934/1937*. 2 Vols., *The Alan Lomax Collection*. Rounder Records CDs 1842 and 1843 (1999 [first published 1987]).
- Lomax, John A. *Adventures of a Ballad Hunter*. New York: Macmillan, 1947.
- . *Negro Folk Songs As Sung By Lead Belly*. New York: Macmillan, 1936.
- . *Our Singing Country: A Second Volume of American Ballads and Folk Songs*. New York: Macmillan, 1941.
- . *Folk Song U.S.A.* New York: Duell, Sloan and Pierce, 1947.
- Long, Eleanor, "The Maid" and "The Hangman": Myth and Tradition in a Popular Ballad." *Folklore Studies* No. 21. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.
- Meade Jr., Guthrie T., and Dick Spottswood and Douglas S. Meade. *Country Music Sources: A Biblio-Discography of Commercially Recorded Traditional Music*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Minton, John. "'Our Goodman' in Blackface and 'The Maid' at the Sooky Jump: Two Afro-American Variants of Child Ballads on Commercial Disc." *J.E.M.F. Quarterly* 17 (Spring-Summer 1982): 31–40.
- . "Houston Creoles and Zydeco: The Emergence of an African American Urban Popular Style." *American Music* 14 (1996): 480–526.
- Niles, John Jacob. *Singing Soldiers*. New York: Charles Scribners, 1927.
- Noblett, Richard A. "Stavin Chain: A Study of a Folk Hero." Part 1. *Blues Unlimited* 131-132, (September-December 1978): 31–33; Part 2. *Blues Unlimited* 134 (March-June 1979): 14–17 Part 3. *Blues Unlimited* 139 (Autumn 1980): 31–33; Part 4. *Blues Unlimited* 142 (Summer 1982): 24–26.
- Odum, Howard W. *Wings on My Feet*. Indianapolis: Bobbs: Merrill, 1929.
- Oliver, Paul. Liner notes to *Jerry's Saloon Blues: 1940 field recordings from Louisiana, Flyright-Matchbox Library of Congress Series Vol. 8*. Bexhill on Sea: Flyright FLY LP260, Flyright Records, 1978. LP.
- . *Screening The Blues: Aspects of the Blues Tradition*. London: Cassell, 1968.
- . *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Oster, Harry. "Easter Rock Revisited: A Study In Acculturation." *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany* 3 (1958):21–43.
- Porterfield, Nolan. *Last Cavalier: The Life and Times of John A. Lomax*. Urbana:

- University of Illinois Press, 1996.
- Post, Lauren C. *Cajun Sketches: From the Prairies of Southwest Louisiana, Baton Rouge*. Louisiana State University Press, 1974.
- Rijn, Guido van. *Roosevelt's Blues: African-American Blues and Gospel Songs on FDR*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997.
- Rosenbaum, Art. *Shout Because You're Free: the African American Ring Shout Tradition in Coastal Georgia*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998.
- Savoy, Ann Allen. *Cajun Music: A Reflection Of A People, Vol. 1*. Eunice, Louisiana: Bluebird Press, 1984.
- Scarborough, Dorothy. *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*. Hatboro, Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates, 1963 [reprint of 1925 ed.].
- Seale, Lea and Marianna, "Easter Rock: a Louisiana Negro Ceremony." *Journal of American Folklore* 55: 218: 212–218.
- Stewart, Jack. "The Strangest Bedfellows: Nick LaRocca and Jelly Roll Morton." *Jazz Archivist* 15 (2001): 23–31.
- Whitfield, Irène Thérèse. *Louisiana French Folk Songs*, revised ed. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.
- Winans, Robert B., "Black Instrumental Music traditions In The Ex-Slave Narratives." *Black Music Research Journal* 10: 1 (Spring 1990): 43–53.
- Wolfe, Charles, and Kip Lomell. *The Life And Legend Of Leadbelly*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

DISCOGRAPHY

- Caribbean Voyage: Martinique: Cane Fields and City Streets*. Alan Lomax Collection. Rounder 1730.
- Caribbean Voyage: Trinidad: Carnival Roots*. Alan Lomax Collection. Rounder 1725.
- Classic Louisiana Recordings: Cajun and Creole Music I, 1934 / 1937*. Alan Lomax Collection. Rounder 1842.
- Classic Louisiana Recordings: Cajun and Creole Music II, 1934 / 1937*. Alan Lomax Collection. Rounder 1843.
- Deep River of Song: Black Texicans: Balladeers and Songsters of the Texas Frontier*. Alan Lomax Collection. Rounder 1821.
- Deep River of Song: Black Appalachia: String Bands, Songsters and Hoedowns*. Alan Lomax Collection. Rounder 1823.
- Deep River of Song: South Carolina: Got the Keys to the Kingdom*. Alan Lomax Collection. Rounder 1831.
- Jelly Roll Morton, Kansas City Stomp: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 1*. Rounder 1091.
- Jelly Roll Morton. Anamule Dance: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 2*.

- Rounder 1092.
- Jelly Roll Morton. The Pearls: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 3*. Rounder 1093.
- Jelly Roll Morton. Winnin' Boy Blues: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 4*. Rounder 1094.
- Lead Belly. Midnight Special: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 1*. Rounder 1044.
- Lead Belly. Gwine Dig a Hole to Put the Devil In: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 2*. Rounder 1045.
- Lead Belly. Let It Shine On Me: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 3*. Rounder 1046.
- Lead Belly. The Titanic: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 4*. Rounder 1097.
- Lead Belly. Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 5*. Rounder 1098.
- Lead Belly. Go Down Old Hannah: The Library of Congress Recordings Vol. 6*. Rounder 1098.
- Zydeco—the Early Years*. Arhoolie CD 307.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ John A. Lomax, *Adventures of A Ballad Hunter* (New York, Macmillan, 1947), pp. 119–121; "Archive of American Folk Song," *Report of the Librarian of Congress for the fiscal year ending 30 June 1933* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 98; Alan Lomax, "'Sinful' Songs Of The Southern Negro," *Southwest Review* 19: 2 (January 1934): 126.
- ² "Archive of American Folk Song," *Report of the Librarian of Congress for the fiscal year ending 30 June 1934* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934), pp. 126–27.
- ³ Irène Thérèse Whitfield, *Louisiana French Folk Songs*, revised ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), pp. 17–23.
- ⁴ John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, *Folk Song U.S.A.* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pierce, 1947), p. 335.
- ⁵ Alan Lomax in liner notes to *Afro-American Spirituals, Work Songs, and Ballads*, Library of Congress: Album 3 [AAFS 11-15], AFS L 3 (LP), Washington, D.C. Library of Congress, circa 1942.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ Alan Lomax in the introduction to *Classic Louisiana Recordings: Cajun and Creole Music 1934/1937*, 2 vols. (Rounder 1842, and 1843 [1999, first published in 1987]).
- ⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ See Art Rosenbaum, *Shout Because You're Free: The African American Ring Shout Tradition in Coastal Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).

¹⁰ See Lea and Marianna Seale, "Easter Rock: A Louisiana Negro Ceremony," *Journal of American Folklore* 55: 218: 212–218 and Harry Oster, "Easter Rock Revisited: A Study in Acculturation," *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany* 3: (1958): 21–43.

¹¹ For recordings of Caribbean wake celebrations see *Caribbean Voyage: Saraca: Funerary Music of Carriacou* (Rounder 1725) and *Caribbean Voyage: Tombstone Feast: Funerary Music of Carriacou* (Rounder 1726) in the *Alan Lomax Collection*.

¹² John Minton, "Houston Creoles and Zydeco: The Emergence of an African American Urban Popular Style," *American Music* 14 (1996): 492–95.

¹³ Barry Jean Ancelet, "Zydeco / Zairico: Beans, Blues and Beyond," *Black Music Research Journal* 8: 1 (1988): 37.

¹⁴ Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs* (Hatboro, Penn: Folklore Associates, 1963), reprint of 1925 ed., pp. 33–42.

¹⁵ Robert B. Winans, "Black Instrumental Music Traditions in the Ex-Slave Narratives," *Black Music Research Journal* 10: 1 (Spring 1990): 51.

¹⁶ Lawrence Gushee, "A Preliminary Chronology of the Early Career of Ferd 'Jelly Roll' Morton," *Storyville* 127 (October 1986): 11–18, 23–33.

¹⁷ Alan Lomax, *Mister Jelly Roll* (New York: 1949; London: Cassell, 1952), pp. 37–38 [reprinted, Berkely: University of California Press, 2001].

¹⁸ Paul Oliver, *Screening the Blues* (London: Cassell, 1968), pp. 168–70 ("Winding Boy"), 225–32 ("Shave 'Em Dry"), 235–46 ("Dirty Dozens").

¹⁹ Minton, "Houston Creoles and Zydeco: The Emergence of an African-American Urban Popular Style," *American Music* 14: 4 (Winter 1996): 499.

²⁰ See Lauren C. Post, *Cajun Sketches: From the Prairies of Southwest Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), p. 160

²¹ Ann Allen Savoy, *Cajun Music: A Reflection of A People*, Vol. 1 (Eunice, Louisiana: Bluebird Press, 1984, pp. 106–107).

²² John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Lead Belly*, New York, Macmillan, 1936, p. 235.

²³ Charles Wolfe and Kip Lornell, *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly*, New York, Harper Collins, 1992), pp. 52–56.

²⁴ John Minton, "Our Goodman" in Blackface and 'The Maid' at the Sooky Jump: Two Afro-American Variants of Child Ballads on Commercial Disc," *J.E.M.F. Quarterly* 17 (Spring-Summer 1982): 36.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Eleanor Long, "The Maid" and "The Hangman": *Myth and Tradition in a Popular Ballad*, *Folklore Studies* No. 21 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 48.

²⁷ From John A. Lomax's jacket notes to the recordings by Stavin' Chain II (Wilson Jones) dated 1936.

²⁸ For a study of Stavin' Chain see the four-part article by Richard A. Noblett

"Stavin Chain: A Study of a Folk Hero," *Blues Unlimited* 131/132 Sept./Dec. 1978): 31–33; 134 (Mar./June 1979): 14–17; 139 (Autumn 1980): 31–33; 142 (Summer 1982): 24–26.

²⁹ Natalie Curtis-Burlin, *Negro Folk Songs, Hampton Institute Series* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1918–19, reprinted Mineola, New York: Dover, 2001), pp. 158–67.

³⁰ Guthrie T. Meade, Jr., with Dick Spottswood and Douglas S. Meade, *Country Music Sources: A Biblio-Discography of Commercially Recorded Traditional Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 498–99, 516–517.

³¹ John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, *Our Singing Country: A Second Volume of American Ballads and Folk Songs* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 202.

³² For examples on commercial record, see Paul Oliver's *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 133–34, 226–77; and Guido van Rijn, *Roosevelt's Blues: African-American Blues and Gospel Songs on FDR* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), pp. 5–9.

³³ See also John Jacob Niles's *Singing Soldiers* (New York: Charles Scribners, 1927), Howard Odum's *Wings on My Feet* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1929), and Natalie Curtis-Burlin, *Negro Folk Song*, mentioned earlier..

³⁴ George VI of England declared Davis's "You Are My Sunshine" his favorite song. It is featured in the 2000 movie, *O Brother Where Art Thou*.

³⁵ More information can be found in Paul Oliver's liner notes to the LP *Jerry's Saloon Blues: 1940 field recordings from Louisiana* (Flyright-Matchbox Library of Congress Series Vol. 8, Flyright FLY LP 260, Bexhill on Sea, Flyright Records, 1978), pp. 2–3.

³⁶ AFS 1687 A in *Winin' Boy Blues: The Library of Congress Recordings, Volume 4* (Rounder 1094), CD.

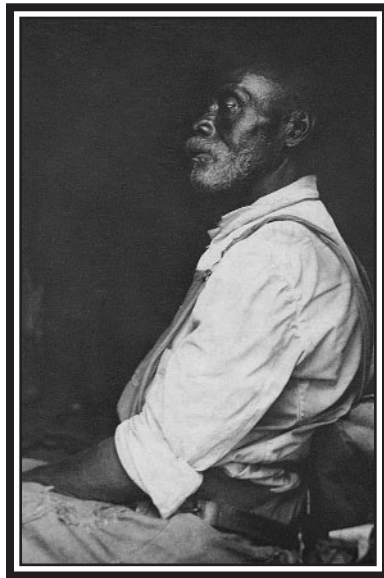
³⁷ Alan Lomax, *Mister Jelly Roll* (London: Cassell, 1952), p. 48.

³⁸ Ernest Bornemann, "Boogie Woogie," Sinclair Trail and Gerald Lascelles, eds. *Just Jazz* London: Peter Davis, 1957, p. 15.

³⁹ Hand-written notes by Alan Lomax, to Jelly Roll Morton's Library of Congress recordings.

⁴⁰ See Marshall W. Stearns, *The Story of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 [first published 1956]), pp. 73–74; and Jack Stewart, "The Strangest Bedfellows: Nick LaRocca and Jelly Roll Morton," in *Jazz Archivist* 15: (2001): 26.

⁴¹ Alan Lomax, *Mr. Jelly Roll* (London: Cassell, 1952), p. 68.



Sam Ballard

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

The **Alan Lomax Collection** is planned to include 150 or more albums. The Collection is organized into various series, yet will also contain other unique releases as well. The Rounder Records website will always have the most up-to-date information, and the Alan Lomax Collection portion of the website can be directly accessed at: http://www.rounder.com/rounder/artists/lomax_alan/ or for more info, email: info@rounder.com

The Collection currently comprises:

The Alan Lomax Collection Sampler

Southern Journey Series

Caribbean Voyage

Classic Louisiana Recordings

Portraits Series

Prison Songs

Christmas Songs

World Library of Folk and

Primitive Music

Deep River of Song

Italian Treasury

**Folk Songs of England, Ireland,
Scotland & Wales**

The Concert and Radio Series

Spanish Recordings

American Patchwork Videos

Lomax film work available through
Vestapol Videos

*Deep River / Deep River, Lawd / Deep River, Lawd,
I want to cross over in a ca'm time.*

— From *American Ballads and Folk Songs*, by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax

About THE DEEP RIVER OF SONG series: More than half a century separates us from the performances in this series, and nearly all of the artists who gave them to us have “crossed over” in that time, leaving us these treasures in trust so that we might be delighted, informed, and edified by them. Each song tells its own story, but together they form an epic of a people seeking to ford a turbulent river of oppression and disadvantage, a people who brought forth another life-giving river of untold riches; a deep river of song from which all may draw.

It was this tradition that John A. Lomax and his son, Alan, sought to preserve and document when they began their field recording for the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress in 1933, and it was this same source that Alan Lomax sought to replenish in 1981 when he and Peter B. Lowry reviewed more than a thousand field recordings of black music made by the Lomaxes in the South, the Southwest, Haiti, and the Bahamas.

Alan Lomax spent the summer of 1978 in Mississippi with John Bishop and Worth Long, shooting the program *Land Where the Blues Began*. “I discovered to my consternation that the rich traditions that my father and I had documented had virtually disappeared,” he wrote. “Most young people, caught up by TV and the hit parade, simply did not know anything about the black folklore that their forebears had produced and that had sustained and entertained generations of Americans. I resolved to try to do something about this situation, so far as I could.”

Lomax and Lowry eventually compiled 12 albums at the library, with more planned. The compilations were “organized in a way that might help to show blacks and other Americans the beauty, variety, the regional traits and African characteristics of this great body of song.” These albums bear witness to a transformative moment that saw the creation of a new singing language, new musical forms, and thousands of songs that belong in the first rank of human melodies. They evoke now-vanished musical worlds, showing how black style developed as settlement moved westward from the Carolinas to Texas, and how regional styles branched forth along the way.

“This music is a thing of very great beauty — a monument to the extraordinary creativity of the black people of North America,” Lomax wrote. “No song style exists anywhere that can surpass this material for sheer variety, originality, and charm. Yet its most genuine aspects are little known today and are fast fading out of currency under the pounding of the media.” He hoped that this series could help “restore to the American consciousness, and especially to African-Americans, a heritage that is about to be altogether lost.” Perhaps now, as we enter the twenty-first century, we are close enough to the “ca'm time” of songs and dreams for this restoration to take place.

C R E D I T S :

Original field recordings produced and recorded between 1934 and 1940 by Alan Lomax, John A. Lomax, and Ruby Terrill Lomax, and Paul Jaeger, c. 1980.

Collection Producers: Anna Lomax Chairetakis, Jeffrey Greenberg

Deep River of Song series researched and compiled by Alan Lomax and Peter B. Lowry

Deep River of Song Series Editor: David Evans, Ph.D., University of Memphis

Prepared for release by Anna Lomax Chairetakis and Matthew Barton

Introduction: John Cowley, Ph.D.

Song Notes: John Cowley and Barry Jean Ancelet

French Creole translations: Barry Jean Ancelet

Sound Restoration / Mastering Producer: Steve Rosenthal

Mastering: Phil Klum, Jigsaw Sound, NYC

Disc transfers: Michael Donaldson, Sound Recording Laboratory, the Library of Congress

Art Direction and Design: J Sylvester Design, NYC

Photos: Courtesy of the Library of Congress. Photo of Alan Lomax by Shirley Collins

Copy Editor: Nathan Salsburg

Associate Editor: Ellen Harold

Series Coordination for Rounder Records: Bill Nowlin

Series Consultants: Bess Lomax Hawes, Gideon D'Arcangelo

Special Thanks:

Bob Groom, David Evans, Dick Spottswood, Richard Noblett, Paul Oliver, Howard Rye, Stephen Wade, the Association of Cultural Equity, and Hunter College of the City University of New York

The compilation of this series was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Every effort has been made to make these historic recordings sound as good as they did when Alan Lomax, John A. Lomax and Ruby Terrill Lomax and Paul Jaeger (?) made them in the field. All transfers were made, whenever possible, from the original source materials using the Prism 20-bit A-to-D converters and the Prism 20-bit Noise Shaping System. Remastered to 20-bit digital from the original metal and acetate field recordings. These unique historic discs contain imperfections and surface noise typical of the technology of their era.