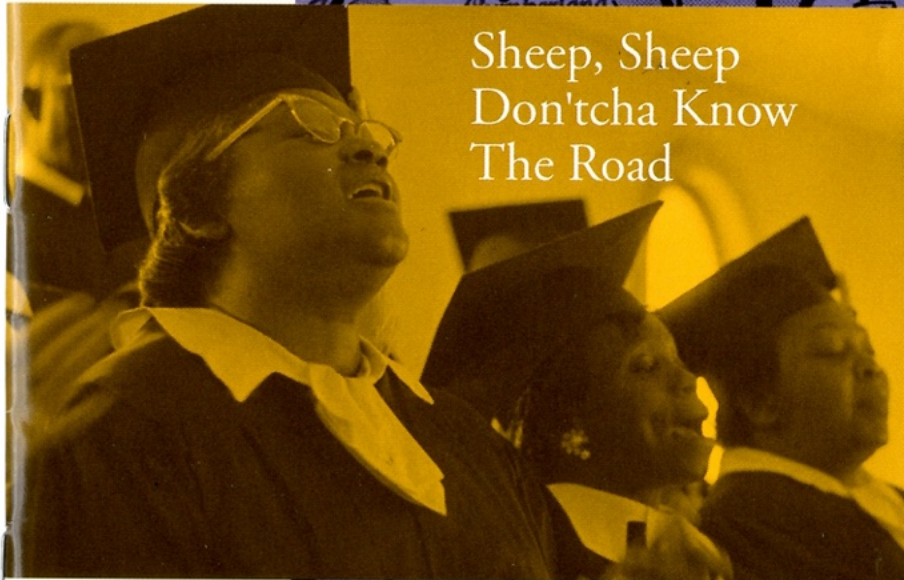
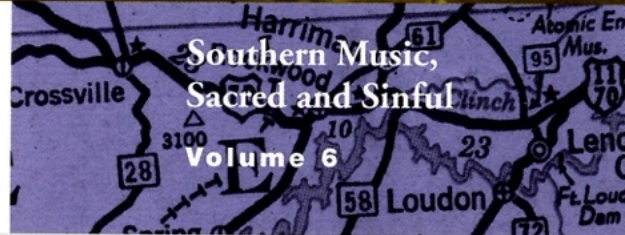


35


SOUTHERN JOURNEY



Sheep, Sheep
Don'tcha Know
The Road



Southern Music,
Sacred and Sinful
Volume 6



Don'tcha
know the road

by the playin' of the song?

Don'tcha know the road

by the singin' of the song?

This expanded edition of Alan Lomax's

original long-playing record explores the boundaries of "sacred" and "sinful" musical expression in the Southern communities that Lomax visited in 1959-60. The "sacred" music in this collection — hymns, spirituals, and gospel quartets — emerges from the South's unique history as a place where evangelical religions have flourished, and where the good-evil split has long been crystal clear to many. "According to an age-old Protestant tradition," Lomax wrote, "the Lord fixed a deep gulf between the things of the spirit and the things of the flesh. As one preacher averred, 'When the Lord fixes something like that, he *fixes* it!'"¹

Rural isolation, deprivation, and the hardships of frontier life bred a need for the consolations that could be supplied by an evangelical religion, which held out the promise in the hereafter of all the good that was elusive in the here-and-now. There were also, of course; the unremitting efforts of the mainstream Protestant denominations. The requirements of making communal music have cultivated a tradition of vibrant communal singing, as in the Old Regular Baptists' moving performance of a lined-out hymn ("Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah," track 16) and the Sea Islands' worship community's uplifting call-and-response spiritual ("Sheep, Sheep Don'tcha Know the Road," track 1).

¹ Alan Lomax, liner notes to *Southern Journey 5: Deep South: Sacred and Sinful* (Prestige International Int 25005). Other unsourced Lomax quotations in these notes are taken from the original liner and song notes for this album.

The grass-roots religious movements of the rural South fostered generations of folk composers and performers adept in adding life and vibrancy to New Testament imagery, as in the Bright Light Quartet's "The Prayer Wheel" (track 15) and Estil Ball's original composition "Tribulations" (track 11).

The old dichotomy between the sacred and sinful, rooted in the Reformation, in Calvinist doctrines, and in the conformism demanded by the early Protestant communities in the New World, persists in the Southern culture to this day. It might be described as an all-out war against evil and a striving for perfection on the one hand, and an abandonment to "wicked ways" on the other, and is present in different manifestations among both whites and blacks. Sacred and sinful represent two opposite and separate ways of life. Those who seek fellowship at church halls, picnics and outings are on the side of heaven; those who congregate at the bars and juke joints to dance, drink or use drugs are believed by many to be headed in another direction. Observers of Southern culture have long appreciated the irony that not far from the old country church, stood the backwoods still; or, that among those who worship on Sunday morning are those who revelled Saturday night. These contradictions have not escaped the attention of folk

poets, as witnessed by songs concerning drink ("Juice of the Forbidden Fruit," track 2; "Drunken Hiccups," track 5) and songs lampooning religious pieties ("Corn Dodgers," track 9). And it is possible that the anonymous genius who named a fiddle tune "The Devil's Dream" (track 3) was playfully teasing those who believed that secular music, and certainly the fiddle, belonged to the devil's realm. In "You Done Tol' Everybody" (track 6) the narrator scolds the heavens for his misfortunes, and concludes with the wistful and perhaps ironic observation that "have been so many people strollin' way from home, Lord, Lord." "Sacred and sinful," Lomax tells us, are "two sides of the same music-culture coin."

1. SHEEP, SHEEP, DON'TCHA KNOW THE ROAD

performed by Bessie Jones, leader; John Davis, Peter Davis, Henry Morrison, and Willis Proctor, vocals and handclapping. Recorded April 11, 1960 in Fredrica, St. Simons Island, Georgia.

The struggle to stay on the right path remains a widespread theme in Southern religious practice. Here, the pastoral New Testament image of believers as sheep comes to life in a vibrant call-and-response spiritual. Lomax has commented, "In

true African style the path for the sheep into the fold of the church is laid out in images of sound — the playing (improvising and syncopating) of the song, the chanting of prayers, the sound of rhythmically marching or dancing feet, the clapped polyrhythms."²

Bessie Jones, who often sang lead with the Sea Island Singers, was a remarkable repository of African-American folk music. As Mrs. Jones herself remarked, she had had the good fortune of having known and learned from all four of her grandparents. She inherited much of her repertory, including the present spiritual, from grandparents born into slavery in the 1840s. A version entitled "De Ol' Sheep Done Know De Road" ("De Young Lam's Mus' Fin' De Way") was published in James Weldon Johnson's *Second Book of American Negro Spirituals* (New York: Viking Press, 1940 [1926]). Lomax believes the present performance to be the first recording of this spiritual.

Chorus:

Sheep, sheep, don'tcha know the road

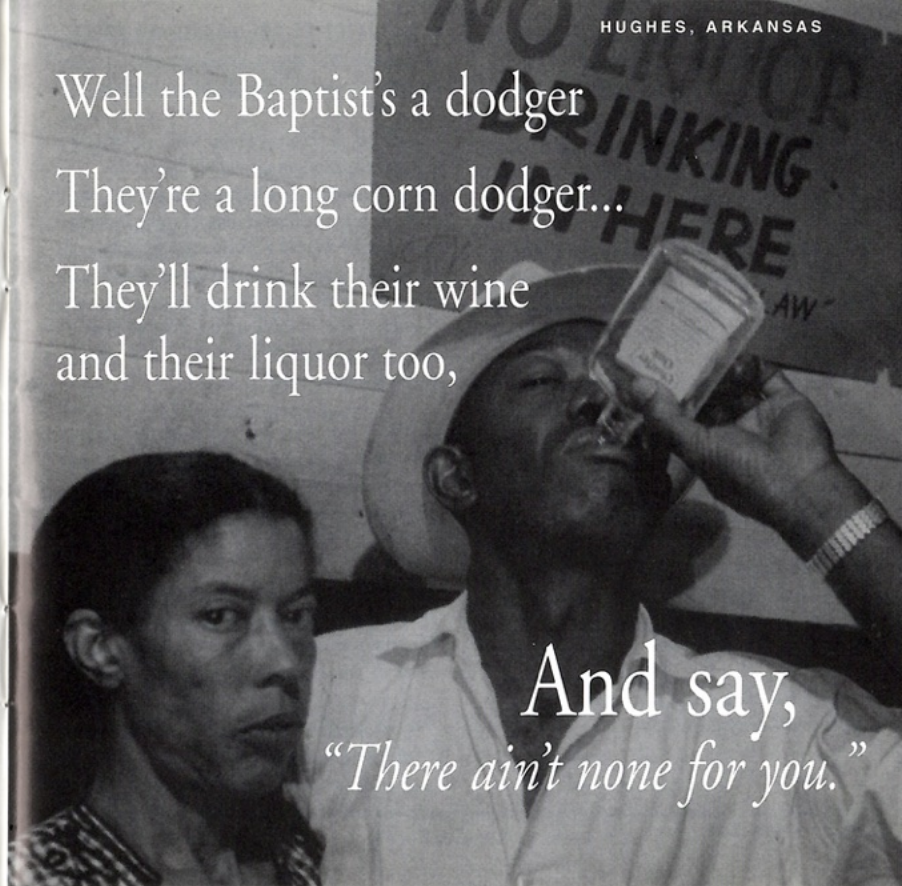
Yes, my Lord, I know the road.

(2x)

² Alan Lomax, song notes to *Georgia Sea Island Songs* (New York, New World Records, 1977), p. 10. An enhanced reissue of the two volumes of *Georgia Sea Island Songs* comprising the original *Southern Journey* series also appears in the *Alan Lomax Collection* [Rouner 1712 and 1713].

Well the Baptist's a dodger
They're a long corn dodger...
They'll drink their wine
and their liquor too,

And say,
"There ain't none for you."



*Don'tcha know the road
by the playin' of the song?
Yes, my Lord, I know the road.*
*Don'tcha know the road
by the singin' of the song?
Yes, my Lord, I know the road.*

*Don'tcha know the road
by the prayin' of the prayers?
Yes, my Lord, I know the road.*

(2x)
Chorus

*Don'tcha know the road
by the marchin' on home? etc.*
Chorus

*Don'tcha know the road
by the clappin' of your hands? etc.*

*Now, young sheep, don'tcha know the road?
Yes, my Lord, I know the road.
Old sheep, don'tcha know the road?
Yes, my Lord, I know the road.*

*Don'tcha know the road
by the prayin' of the prayers? etc.*
Chorus

2. THE JUICE OF THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT
performed by Neil Morris, vocals and guitar.
Recorded October 6, 1959, in Timbo, Arkansas.

In this song, the Bible's famous words on temptation and evil are a springboard for humorous reflections on the universal appeal of intoxicating drink. Lomax commented that this song "belongs to the class of somewhat ribald drinking songs once popular among the independent liberated wits in the West." H. M. Belden reports that a Missouri version of this song was collected from the oral tradition in 1906, but that it may have originated on the stage.³

*Way back in old times, long years before the war,
When the apple tree Eve she did climb,
She threw down the core that made her feel sore,
For Adam, her husband to chau.*

Chorus:
*And ever since then all manner of men:
The blind, the lame, and the mute,
The bankers and clerks, politicians and Turks
Drank the juice of that forbidden fruit.*

*When the leader has time,
from his chair he will climb,*

*And the others will all follow suit.
Walk up to the bar, not for a cigar,
But the juice of the forbidden fruit.*

Chorus

*There was Charles and Bob Ford,
drank it out of a gourd
In order just to suit.
Frank James, out on bail, drank it out of a pail,
The juice of that forbidden fruit.*

Chorus

*I've a girl, Sarah Ann, she'll take down her can,
Whenever we have a dispute.
And when we make up, together we'll sup
The juice of that forbidden fruit.*

Chorus

3. DEVIL'S DREAM
performed by Hobart Smith, fiddle.
Recorded April 28, 1960 in Williamsburg, Virginia.

In Southern communities, many pious folk believe that instrumental music belongs to the realm of the Devil. Perhaps no instrument conjures more powerful images of hellfire than the fiddle in the

hands of a master. In *Folk Songs of North America*, Lomax reports the folk belief that "To be a master fiddler...you had to meet the Devil at midnight at the crossroads or in the graveyard and enter into a contract with him."⁴ Hobart Smith, one of America's greatest virtuosos of the instrument, performs this display piece with characteristic gusto.

4. YOU GOT DIMPLES IN YOUR JAWS
performed by Willie Jones, vocals and guitar;
Roland Hayes, drums; "Forrest City" Joe B. Pugh,
harmonica. Recorded October 1, 1959
in Hughes, Arkansas.

Lomax remembered recording this driving performance of downhome rhythm and blues in "the wilds of the Arkansas bottom, where the Mississippi blues singers used to go when things got too hot in the East. Here, on one memorable night in a gambling dive, surrounded by gun toters and hard-headed women, I recorded the hectic and city-influenced blues style of the deep South of today."

*You got dimples in your jaws (5x)
You's my baby, got my eyes on you.*

*I see you every day (5x)
You's my baby, got my eyes on you.*

³ H. M. Belden, ed., *Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folk-Lore Society* (Columbia: University of Missouri Studies, 1955), p. 441.

⁴ Alan Lomax, *Folk Songs of North America* (New York: Doubleday, 1960, p. 225).

*You got dimples in your jaws (5x)
You's my baby, got my eyes on you.*

*I see you every day (5x)
You's my baby, got my eyes on you.*

*You got great big legs (5x)
You's my baby, got my eyes on you.*

5. DRUNKEN HICCUPS

performed by Hobart Smith, fiddle.
Recorded August 24, 1959 in Bluefield, Virginia.

The fiddle's "hiccuping" pizzicati returns us to the theme of drink. Also known as "Rye Whiskey," "Jack o' Diamonds" and "The Moonshiner's Song," "Drunken Hiccups" offers a vivid glimpse of the debauched life of the drunkard and gambler. Lomax commented, "In Scotland and Ireland there are many songs in praise of whiskey. In America, the temperance songs outnumber hymns to Bacchus. Our best-known piece about whiskey asserts an undying loyalty to the bottle but ruefully admits its evils."⁵

*Jack of diamonds, jack of diamonds,
I know you of old.
You robbed my old pockets
Of silver and gold.*

Chorus:
*Hiccup! O Lordy, how bad do I feel.
Hiccup! O Lordy, how bad do I feel.*

*You robbed my old pockets,
You picked my old purse,
You made my old clothes
Look worse and worse.*

Chorus

*I'll drink and I'll gamble,
My money's my own.
It's nobody's business
How much I do owe.*

6. YOU DONE TOL' EVERYBODY

performed by Fred McDowell, vocals and guitar.
Recorded September 25, 1959 in or around Como,
Panola County, Mississippi.

The narrator of this blues complains of a variety of ills, including gossip, deceit, abandonment, and the sinful life. The last line "Have been so many people strollin' away from home" reminds us how far we are, in the universe of the blues, from the good road referred to in the spiritual opening this collection.

His encounter with Mississippi bluesman Fred McDowell was for Alan Lomax one of the high points of his 1959 Southern field recording adventure. "In him," Lomax wrote, "the great tradition of the blues runs pure and deep and no note in one of his performances lacks a touch of great and gentle melancholy."

*Lord, you done tol' everybody
in your neighborhood (2x)
You was a dirty mistreater, Lord,
you didn't mean me no good.*

*I wouldn't hate it so bad, baby,
but you broke my diamond ring. (3x)*

*Lord, I'm goin' to the sergeant,
I'm gonna call that chief of police. (2x)
Lord, my baby done quit me,
I can't see no peace. (2x)*

*I looked down the road, baby,
just as far as I could see. (2x)
Lord, a gang of women,
they was followin' right after me.*

*Yes, I know somethin' goin' on wrong. (2x)
I know my baby woke up, Lord,
she found her mister gone;
Have been so many people strollin' 'way from home,
Lord, Lord.*

7. THE HOUSE CARPENTER (Child No. 243)

performed by Almeda Riddle, vocals. Recorded
early October, 1959 in Heber Springs, Arkansas.

The "House Carpenter" is a variant of "James Harris," or "The Daemon Lover" (Child No. 243), a ballad widely known in the Anglo-American folk repertory. It can be traced as far back as the 17th century in England, where it appears in the Pepys broadside collections. Ozarks folk singer Almeda Riddle's version, with some local adaptations, resembles several of Cecil Sharp's finds in North Carolina in 1916 and 1918.⁶ Riddle had an enormous love of old ballads, and developed her own masterly style of unaccompanied ballad singing. Here she demonstrates remarkable control of pitch and effective use of vibrato, tremolo, glissando, and vocal breaks. In her oral biography, Riddle recalls hearing this song from her father, who often sang to her at bedtime. Appalled by the image of a

⁶ Cecil Sharp, *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, ed. by Maude Karpeles (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 244-258.

⁷ *A Singer and Her Songs: Almeda Riddle's Book of Ballads*, ed. by Roger D. Abrahams (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), p. 10.

⁵ Alan Lomax, song notes to *Southern Journey 4: Banjo Songs, Ballads and Reels from the Southern Mountains* (Prestige International Int 25004).

*They'll go to see the girl
and they'll tell her
that they
love her,*

*And the next thing you know
they're lookin'
for another.*

mother abandoning her infant, Riddle remembered her "great satisfaction out of the thought that she got her just desserts" by drowning.⁷ Appropriate to Riddle's perspective, this song about temptation followed leads the adulterous couple to the black hills of Hell.

"Well met, well met, my own true love."

*"Well met, well met," quoth he,
"Now I could have been married
to a King's daughter fair,
and would have but for love of thee,
I would have, but remembered thee."*

*"Now if you could have married
a King's daughter fair,
I'm sure you're much to blame,
For I am now married to a house carpenter,
And I think he's a fine young man,
And I proudly wear his name."*

*"Now if you leave your house carpenter
And will come and go with me,
I'll take you where the grass grows green
On the banks of the sweet Willie,
And pleasure we will see."*

*"And if I leave my house carpenter
And go along with thee,
What have you to maintain me on
To keep me from poverty —*

To keep me from poverty?"

*"Well, seven ships on the ocean sail,
And the eighth one brought me in,
A hundred and ten big nigger men
Will come at your command —
They'll come at your command."*

*Now, she picked up her sweet little baby
And kisses gave it three,
Said "Stay at home with father, my darling,
And keep him company,
And try to remember me."*

*Then she dressed herself in a scarlet dress,
Most beautiful to be seen,
And she wrapped herself in a purple cloak,
And she looked like a gypsy queen,
O she looked like a gypsy queen*

*Now they hadn't been sailing but about two weeks,
I'm sure it was not three,
When this lady began to weep
And she wept most bitterly,
O she wept most piteously.*

*"Now, why do you weep, my own true love?
Is it for more gold or store?
Or is it for that house carpenter,
We left on England's shore,
That you'll never see anymore?"*

"Cursed be your gold and silver;
Thrice cursed be your store.
I'm weeping for my own little baby,
I left on England's shore,
Will I see it anymore?"

"Cheer up, cheer up, my own true love,
Cheer up, cheer up," said he.
"For as I live, you will not return,
I will keep you here with me,
And land you'll never see."

Now they sailed on about three weeks,
I'm sure it was not four,
When the bottom of the ship sprung a leak
And the ocean in did pour,
And the flames began to roar.

"O cursed be a sailor's life,
Thrice cursed all men of the sea,
One has taken me from my house carpenter,
And now he's drowning me,
Or else he is burning me."

"What are those hills, my love," she said,
"They look as white as snow."
"Those are the hills of heaven, my love,
Where your little baby will go,
But you and I will not know,
Heaven will never know."

"And what are those other hills," she said,
"They look as black as night."
"Those are the hills of Hell," he said,
"Where you and I'll unite,
Where you and I'll unite."

8. STRAIGHTEN 'EM

performed by the Bright Light Quartet, vocals and guitar. Recorded May 5, 1960 in Weems, Virginia. Previously unreleased.

This rousing spiritual reminds church members that if they don't find the straight and narrow path in their lifetime, Death will "straighten 'em." The Bright Light Quartet sing in a smooth, highly professional quartet style. At the time of these recordings, they worked by day as menhaden fishermen.

Chorus:
Well, when he come, little children,
When he come, oh my good Lord,
Death goin' straighten out all you members,
when he come, when he come.

Chorus repeats
Well, we've had members in our church,
in our home, in our town,
I can't straighten 'em, you can't straighten 'em,
Father can't straighten 'em,
mother can't straighten 'em,
Sister can't straighten 'em,
brother can't straighten 'em,

Deacon can't straighten 'em,
preacher can't straighten 'em,
Elders can't straighten 'em,
members can't straighten 'em,
Jesus can straighten 'em, knows how,
Death goin' straighten out all you members,
when he come, when he come

Chorus

Well, we've got liars in our church,
in our home, in our town (etc.)

Chorus

Well, we've got singers in our church,
in our home, in our town (etc.)

Chorus

Well, we've got deacons in our church,
in our home, in our town (etc.)

Chorus

9. CORN DODGERS

performed by Neil Morris, vocals and guitar.
Recorded October 6, 1959 in Timbo, Arkansas.
Previously unreleased.

In the cocky, debunking style long familiar in American letters, politics, and popular culture, "Corn Dodgers" takes relish in shooting down established professions and categories, including religious denominations, to which four of its verses

are devoted. The song was apparently popular in the Ozarks, and one entry also appears in a collection of North Carolina folklore.⁸ A master of Ozarks wit and song, Neil Morris's satirical barbs at religion undoubtedly rankled some of his listeners. Morris was the father of Jimmie Driftwood (James Morris), himself an influential Ozarks singer and folklorist.

Well, the doctor he's a dodger,
He's a long corn dodger,
And the doctor he's a dodger,
And he's a dodger too.
He'll go to see his patient
And he give a dose of pills,
And the next thing you know
He's dodgin' for his bill.

Chorus:

And it's all a-dodgin', it's a long corn dodger,
And it's all a-dodgin'-
That's the way with the world.

Then, the lawyer he's a dodger,
He's a long corn dodger,
And the lawyer he's a dodger,
And he's a dodger too.
He'll plead your case and wish you well,

⁸ Vance Randolph, *Ozarks Folksongs* (Columbia: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1948), Vol. III, p. 218; Newman Ivey White, ed., *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1952), Vol. III, p. 387.

And the next thing you know, he'll wish you...
Chorus

*Well, the Methodist's a dodger,
They're a long corn dodger.
And the Methodist's a dodger,
And they're a dodger too.
They'll talk about hell and heaven on high,
And the next thing you know
They're dodgin' for the pie.*
Chorus

*Well, the Baptist's a dodger,
They're a long corn dodger,
And the Baptist's a dodger,
And they're a dodger too.
They'll drink their wine and their liquor too,
And they'll drink it all up
And say "There ain't none for you!"*
Chorus

*Well, the Camelot's a dodger,
He's a long corn dodger.
And the Camelot's a dodger,
And he's a dodger too.
He's got his religion and
He don't know where he got her,
And he'll swear the way to heaven
Is through a hole of water.*
Chorus

*Well, the Holiness's a dodger,
They're a long corn dodger,
And the Holiness's a dodger and
They're a dodger too.
They'll jump and roll and whoop and yell,
For everybody else is a goin' to hell.*
Chorus

*Well, the young girl's a dodger,
She's a long corn dodger.
And the young girl's a dodger,
And she's a dodger too.
She'll spend every time
With the powder and the paint,
To make a boy think he's gettin' what he ain't,*
Chorus

*Well, the old maid's a dodger,
She's a long corn dodger,
And the old maid's a dodger,
And she's a dodger too.
She'll spend every time a primpin' and a paintin',
And if she can't catch a boat
She'll catch a fella faintin',*
Chorus

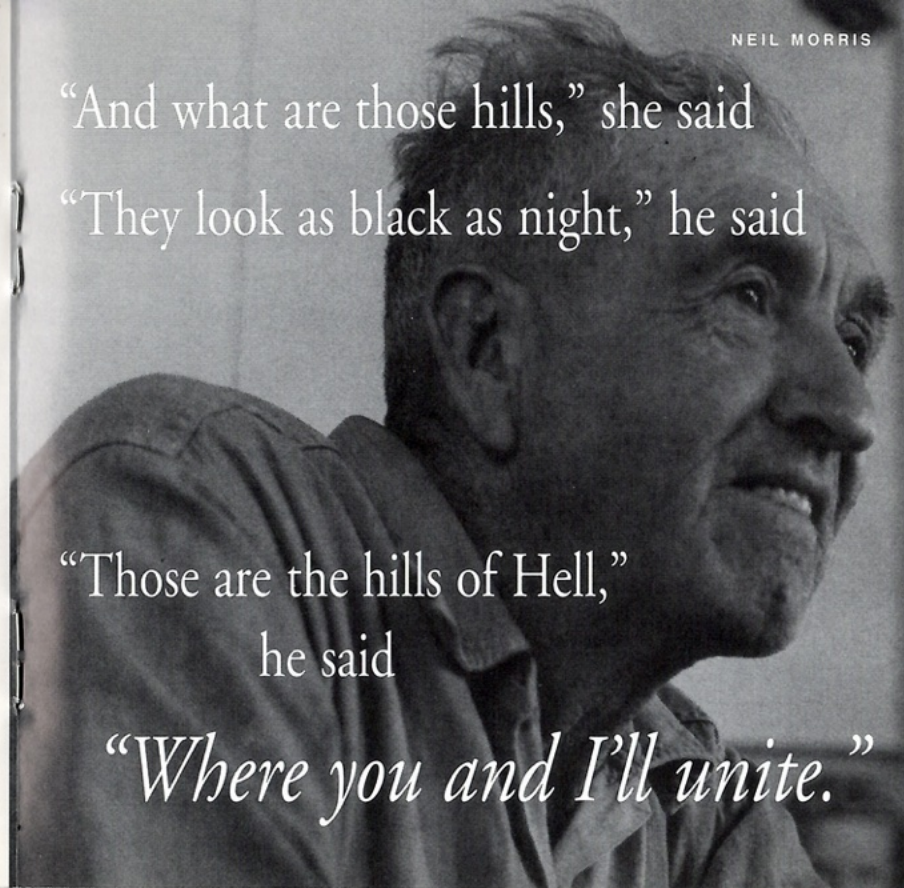
*Then, the boys they're a dodger,
They're a long corn dodger,
And the boys they're a dodger,
And they're a dodger too.
They'll go to see the girl,*


"And what are those hills," she said

"They look as black as night," he said

"Those are the hills of Hell,"
he said

"Where you and I'll unite."





When he come, little children
...Death gonna
straighten out all you members,
 when he come,
 when he come.

*And they'll tell her that they love her,
 And the next thing you know,
 They're lookin' for another,
 Chorus*

*Well, the preacher he's a dodger,
 He's a long corn dodger.
 And the preacher he's a dodger
 And he's a dodger too.
 He'll tell you his religion,
 And he'll take you through.
 And if you got any money
 He'll take that, too.
 Chorus*

*Then, the infidel's a dodger,
 He's a long corn dodger,
 And the infidel's a dodger
 And he's a dodger too.
 Swear there ain't no hell
 Nor heaven on high,
 But he'll get all shaken up
 In the sweet bye-and-bye,
 Chorus*

Alan Lomax: *What's the story on that one, Neil?*
 Neil Morris: *Well, that's it!*
 Oscar Gilbert (laughing): *That's just it!*
 Neil Morris: *I've heard it all of my life, my people*

*sang it. My grandfather sung it and my father sung
 it, and I learned it through them. And that's how I
 got it.*

10. I WISHED I WAS IN HEAVEN

performed by Denise Gardner and Mattie Gardner,
 vocals; and Fred McDowell, vocals and guitar.
 Recorded late September 1959 in or around
 Como, Panola County, Mississippi.

Alan Lomax's recording of this deeply-felt spiritual
 was the result of a pleasant surprise: "This is a frag-
 ment, a small portion of a song, yet nonetheless
 moving and evocative for that. We never intended
 to record it or even to keep it. The two women, at
 night at a party where well-known singers were
 performing, shyly sang it. The machine was run-
 ning. It was an accident, but perhaps a magical
 one."

*Lord, I wished I was in heaven sittin' down, (2x)
 Oh angel, Oh my Lord,
 Wished I was in heaven sittin' down.*

*Lord, I wished I had wings like Noah's dove, (2x)
 Oh angel, Oh my Lord,
 Heist my wings and go on above. (2x)*

Lord, I'm goin' home on the mornin' train, (2x)

⁹ Alan Lomax, *Folk Songs of North America* (New York: Doubleday, 1960), p. 276, 283.

*Oh angel, Oh my Lord,
I'm goin' home on the mornin' train.*

11. TRIBULATIONS

performed by Estil C. Ball, vocals and guitar; and Lacey Richardson, vocals and guitar. Recorded August 31, 1959 in Rugby, Virginia. Previously unreleased.

At the time of this recording, Estil Ball was active as a singer and composer of gospel hymns for local churches and as a radio performer. His original composition, with a text based upon the Book of Revelation, captures the Fundamentalist belief that salvation is reserved only for true believers, with fire and brimstone awaiting all others. Ball's warm, relaxed and deeply resonant voice, Lacey Richardson's mellifluous harmony singing, and the two guitars' gentle accompaniment, stand in stark contrast to the text's imagery of Judgment Day.

Ball: *This is E. C. Ball of Rugby, Virginia, recording a song that I composed from the last book in the Bible, Revelations. The title of this song is "Tribulations."*

*Trials, troubles, tribulation,
Such as never been before.
When the angels pour upon us,
Their vows of wynth forever more.*

Chorus

*When the fire comes down from heaven,
And the blood shall fill the sea.
I'll be carried home by Jesus,
And forever with Him be.*

*The beast with horns will come upon you,
One with seven, one with ten.
Men will cry unto the mountains,
They'll pray to die but cannot win.*

Chorus

*The mark must be upon your forehead,
These worldly goods you then can buy.
"Depart from me, I never knew you,"
You'll hear my Blessed Savior cry.*

Chorus

12. NO ROOM AT THE INN/ THE LAST MONTH OF THE YEAR

performed by Vera Ward Hall, vocals.
Recorded October 10, 1959 in the vicinity of Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

In the original liner notes, Lomax recalled his first encounter with this original and moving version of the Nativity story: "When I was interviewing Vera Hall for her biography in 1945, I asked her for a Christmas song and she responded by telling me the story of the Nativity as she had told it to her

Sunday School class in the country near Livingston for many years. It seems to me that this tale belongs in the first rank of Christmas stories, along with *A Christmas Carol* and *The Gift of the Magi*. The animals, and not man, take compassion on Mary and become the heroes of their story. The oxen, who, the folks say, fall on their knees at midnight on Christmas eve, back off in corners so Jesus will have a place to be born in the hay. The moral is that we love Jesus because He had a hard time in this world, a comment that comes straight out of the wounded heart of a sensitive girl who grew up in the backwoods of Alabama forty years ago."⁹

*There was no room, no room, no room,
There was no room, no room,
no room at the hotel.
And the time had fully come
For our Savior to be born,
There was no room, Lord, no room, no room.*

*That mother she got worried,
And she began to cry.
'Cause she was to deliver a man-child,
And the time had fully come
For our Savior to be born;
There was no room, Lord, no room, no room.*

⁹ Lomax's biographical portrait of Vera Hall was published as part one of *The Rainbow Sign: A Southern Documentary* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1959).


*That bell-boy, potry [porter],
matron and wait [waiter],
They saw that haughtish look,
As they turned poor Mary away;
There was no room, Lord, no room, no room,
There was no room, no room in the hotel.
And the time had fully come
For our Savior to be born;
There was no room, Lord, no room in the hotel.
And the time had fully come
For our Savior to be born.
There was no room, Lord, no room, no room.*

Spoken: *Jesus, little baby Jesus, didn't have no room, no place in the world to be born. Everywhere Mary went — Jesus's mother Mary — for him to be born, there was no room, and nobody would let her come in. They turned her away everywhere she went. She went to the hotel. They had a big hotel there and they had plenty of room, whole lot of rooms. Joseph carried her up the walk there to the old manger place where he was sittin'. He looked at her; the bellboy, the potry [porter], the matron, the wait [waiter], his servants, was standin' there and they saw that harsh, mean look that he had on his face and he turned poor Mary away. Said, "No room, no. No room here." You know, I wish I'd a' been there. I'd have give her my bed and I'd have got up, and sit up; if I had to sit*

up on the floor. I couldn't have turned 'em away that way. I'd a' let her laid in my bed until Joseph, her husband Joseph — I reckon that was her husband, must have been — carried her somewhere else to their home. They wasn't gonna live there always. And so they had went everywhere they know'd to go. Mmm, that was bad, too. Joseph was ridin' a mule, him and Mary. He made her sometime ride on the mule and he walk, and then he ride and she be walkin'. Poor Mary, she was sufferin' in pains. Jesus was to be born. So as nothin' else, Joseph 'cided in his mind that it was a shame to just lay down on the ground right there for Jesus to be born; he wanted to get 'em some kind of shelter. Mary and Joseph journeyed on back down to this barn where they had left the mule they was ridin'. He had a place to stay and they didn't. Those steers and those bulls was lookin' through big ol' cracks in the barn. They was lookin' at them comin' on down that way. They was lookin' at them as to say out of the eyes, "I wish they would come in here; we'll get back and let Jesus be born. They was just lookin' at her, breathin' with big ol' wishful eyes. I do believe their eyes was full of water. Old, big, mean lookin' bulls — they were better to Mary than people was. They got back, got off in corners, and made room for Mary to come in so that she could lay down and Jesus be born. He had to be born in that stable on that nasty ol' hay, trodded in by those cows and things all night. The oxens got back and let little baby Jesus be borned on the hay, and they breathed their warm breath there to keep him warm. He was naked; he

didn't have a thread layin' in the hay. You know what hay is, don't you, child? I can remember when I was a child, we had a very, very gentle cow. Her name was Mary; and my older sister used to out and milk her. She sit on the box and be milkin' her and I'd stand in the front of her, cold, frosty mornin', white frost, and I'd be just wringin' my hands like this, and her warm breath would keep my hands warm. I'd walk up and let her breathe down in my bosom so she could keep me warm down there. It was chilly. That's the way they did to baby Jesus. They breathed their warm breaths; all of 'em breathe at once to keep him warm till his mother Mary could find something to wrap him up in. If I had been there, I sure would have give her one of my old dresses to wrap him up; anything she would have took or wanted in my house, I would have give it to her. I love Jesus. He had a hard time comin' into this world. He had to go, and be born in an oxen manger, in a stable, be borned on hay. And that's the reason I love him 'cause we has a hard time, you know that yourself, we do; we have a hard time, lots of times. And I want you all to remember that Christmas is Jesus's birthday. And I want you all to remember this song, and don't ever forget it...Jesus's birthday, the month that Jesus was born in. You bigger girls should remember and sing it to the little ones, hear?

What month was Jesus born in?
Last month of the year
(2x)



Have been so many people
strollin' 'way from home
Lord,
Lord.

Chorus:
*Oh Lord, you January, February,
March, oh Lord!
You got April, May, and June, Lord,
You got July, August, September,
October and-a November,
You got twenty-fifth day of December,
It's the last month of the year.*

*I'm talkin' 'bout Mary's baby,
Last month of the year.*
(2x)

Chorus
*He was borned in a oxen manger,
Last month in the year*
(2x)

Chorus
13. MY MOTHER DIED AND LEFT ME
performed by James Shorty, vocals and Fred
McDowell, guitar. Recorded late September, 1959
in the vicinity of Como, Panola County, Mississippi.

Lomax wrote, "James Shorty, one of Fred
McDowell's neighbors, was well known for his
solos in local churches. His favorite songs came
out of the genre of blues-influenced spirituals of a
melancholy cast that became popular in the '20s

and '30s with singers like Blind Willie Johnson.
As far as I know, this sorrow-laden testament of the
orphan boy is Shorty's own composition."

*Ever since my mother been gone,
I been beat from door to door,
Well I goes down on my knees,
Talk to Jesus 'til I am pleased,
Oh then Father stand by me.*

*Mother reads from the Bible,
Sent me to Sunday School,
Now she's gone and left me,
Don't want to break my mother's rule.
Yes, now I go down on my knees,
Talk to Jesus 'til I am pleased,
Oh heavenly Father stand by me.*

*Sometimes, supposed to be in company,
Then again I wants to be alone,
Worried 'bout my mother,
I once had in my home,
Yes, now I go down on my knees,
Talk to Jesus 'til I am pleased,
O heavenly Father stand by me.*

*Sometimes midnight hours,
My mother walked the floor,
I remember my mother,
Yes, she'd go from door to door,
Well, then drop down on her knees,*

*Well, to say one word for me,
O heavenly Father, stand by me.*

*Late one Friday evenin'
The sun was almost down,
I didn't have nobody on my buryin' ground.
Well now, I fell on my knees,
Talk to Jesus 'til I was pleased,
O heavenly Father, stand by me.*

14. BUTTERMILK
performed by Miles Pratcher, vocals and guitar;
and Bob Pratcher, vocals and fiddle. Recorded late
September, 1959 in or around Como, Mississippi.

"Buttermilk" is "sinful" music of a rarely recorded
type. Lomax noted, "Miles and Bob Pratcher are
characters straight out of Faulkner. Scratching a
living on an eroded hill farm in Northern
Mississippi, they enliven the neighborhood
Saturday nights with their old-time reels. Their
music belongs to an almost forgotten era of black
folk song — the days of the square dance, when
the black fiddler Africanized and syncopated the
tunes he had heard from his cracker peers, creating
a genre of music that was to lead to ragtime and
eventually to jazz."

*Long time, so bad, (4)
Take me back, take me back now.
That's all right.*

*Gal I had you, you wouldn't do.
Got me another one, don't want you.
Long time, so bad.*

15. THE PRAYER WHEEL
performed by the Bright Light Quartet, vocals and
guitar. Recorded May 5, 1960 in Weems, Virginia.

As in E. C. Ball's "Tribulations," the text of this
spiritual evokes vivid imagery drawn from the
Books of Ezekiel and Revelation as well as, Lomax
wrote, "the hellfire of rural Negro ministers. In
this quartet piece, however, the terror of the vision
is diminished by the playful interplay between
tenor lead and bullfrog bass. The Bright Light
Quartet is famous among their friends for this
one."

Chorus 1:
*Well, don'tcha know my God called this mornin'?
Aye, Lord, Jesus.
Well, my God called this mornin'
Just a little while before day.*
Chorus 1 repeats

*Well, I stopped and listened
How sweet the voice did sound,
Sounds the big, big bell of the angels ringin'
When that baby come down.
Well, I stopped and steadied myself,
I looked, but saw no one.*

*Then I looked, 'way up in heaven, Lord,
Saw God's baby Son.*

Chorus 2:

*An the prayer wheel start, started movin',
And the spirit of God sent my soul a-jumpin',
And the prayer wheel turned over,
And I moved one step into glory,
And I rose up and shouted,
"Lord God-a-mighty!"
Well, my God called me this mornin', child,
Just a little while before day.*

Chorus 1

*Well, I heard the rumblin' thunder,
Aye, Lordy,
Then I saw the sinners goin' under
Just a little while before day,
Well, I saw the zig-zag lightnin'
Aye, Lordy,
Then I heard the hell hounds barkin'
Just a little while before day.
Well, now, stop! Let me tell you
What my God said to me,
"Well," He said, "if you want to make it
to my kingdom, Lord,
You got to get on your bended knee."*

Chorus 2

Chorus 1

End of Verse 2
Chorus 2

16. GUIDE ME O THOU GREAT JEHOVAH

sung by members of the Mt. Olivet Old Regular Baptist Church, led by Ike Caudill.

Recorded September 5, 1959 in Blackey, Letcher County, Kentucky.

This lining hymn returns to an idea presented first in "Sheep, Sheep, Don'tcha Know the Road," the need for strength and guidance in following the difficult path of life. The original hymn was composed in Welsh in 1745 by William Williams, and translated into English in 1777. It remains a national favorite in Wales, and is sung frequently at public gatherings. In the lining-hymn style sung by this Old Regular Baptist congregation, the leader first sings each line of text ("lines out") and the congregation repeats it, keeping a very slow tempo. The ideal sound is not a perfectly-coordinated tonal and rhythmic blend, but a sea of individual voices, each giving a heartfelt rendition of the same melody and text. This results in an extraordinary heterophony in which the wavelike melody surges and ebbs in cascades of sound.

*Caudill: Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land...*

Congregation: Pilgrim through this barren land.

Caudill: I am weak but Thou art mighty..

Congregation: I am weak but Thou art mighty,

Caudill: Hold me with Thy powerful hands. (etc.)

Bread of heaven, bread of heaven

Feed me till I want no more.

Open Thou the crystal fountains,

Whence the healing streams do flow.

With the fiery cloudy pillar,

Lead me all my journey through.

Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,

Be Thou still my strength and shield.

Feed me with the heavenly manna.

In this barren wilderness,

Be my sword and shield and banner...

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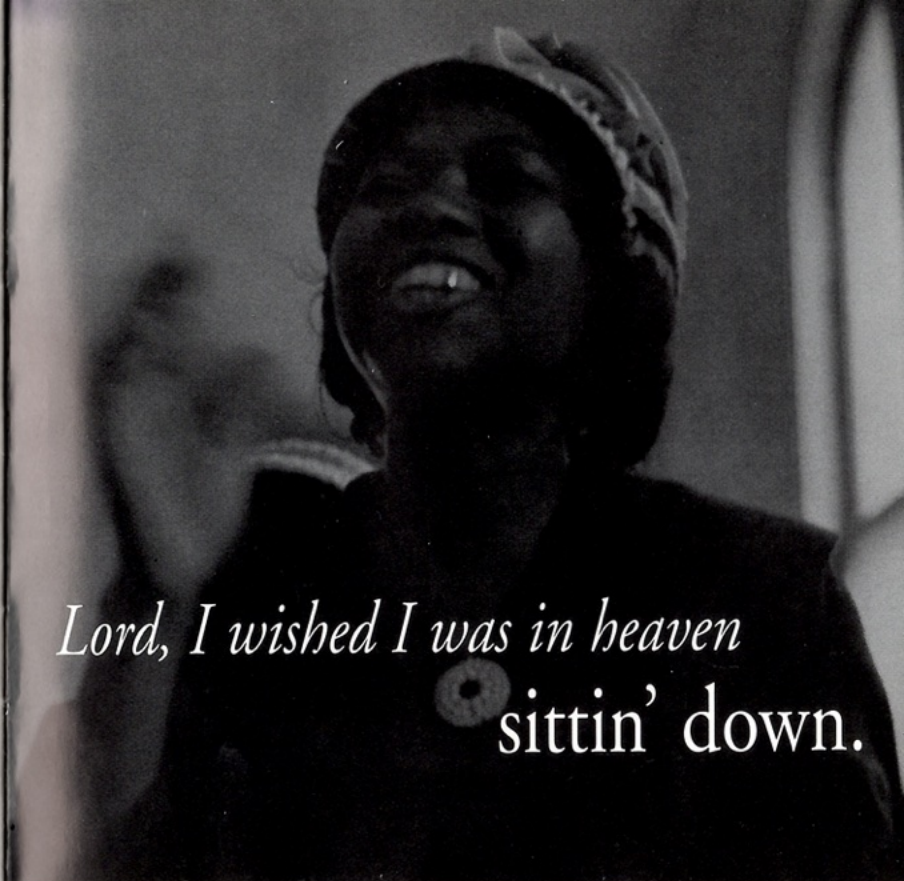
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Every effort has been made to make these historic recordings sound as good as they did when Alan Lomax made them in the field. All transfers were made, wherever possible, from the original source materials using the Prism 20 Bit A to D converters and the Prism 20 Bit Noise Shaping System.



*Lord, I wished I was in heaven
sittin' down.*