

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS * MUSIC DIVISION
ARCHIVE OF AMERICAN FOLK SONG

- 16A. 1. I DON'T MIND THE WEATHER. Sung by Jim Henry, Parchman, Mississippi, 1937.
 - 2. DIAMOND JOE. Sung by Charlie Butler, Parchman, Mississippi, 1937.
 - 3. JOE THE GRINDER. Sung by Irvin Lowry, Gould, Arkansas, 1939.
- Recorded by John A. Lomax.

The lonely Negro worker piling up dirt on the levees, plowing in the cotton fields, at work in the lonely mist of the riverbottoms; the convict leaning on his hoe; the worker walking home across the fields in the purple evening—have poured their feelings into songs like these. The songs are addressed to the sun and the choking dust, to the stubborn mules, to the faithless woman of the night before, to the hard-driving captain; and they concern the essential loneliness of man on the earth. Out of this singing style, which is perhaps the most primitive of all the Afro-American styles current in the United States, has developed the blues. The listener will notice the same use of falsetto stops, the same drop of the voice at the end of lines, that characterize the blues. The singers generally do not refer to these work-songs as sung at all. They say they are "just hollerin'."

The words are improvised each time the songs are sung, the lines coming out of a stock of phrases and verses that have been sung before or else directly out of the immediate thoughts of the singer. Each singer generally has his own personal melody or "holler"; but these melodies are so free that each time the song is enunciated it is a new re-creation of the singer's feelings at the moment of performance. The "hollers" on this record were recorded in the penitentiary and for this reason the texts are colored by the thoughts of the convict. Line five in the first song expresses the singer's desire to leave the South. The second song refers to a character mentioned often in American folk song; but, so far as my questioning has gone, no one has yet explained who he was. The melody of this song marks a departure from the ordinary "holler" and the singer was known in the whole prison as the man who could sing "Diamond Joe." Line three in song 3 means "when I have served out my long sentence, I'll go home."

For material on Negro "hollers," see John A. and Alan Lomax, *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Lead-belly*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1936; *Our Singing Country*, The Macmillan Company, 1941; *American Ballads and Folk Songs*, The Macmillan Company, 1934; Howard W. Odum, *Rainbow Round My Shoulder*, The Bobbs Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1928. A. L.

16A. 1. I DON'T MIND THE WEATHER

- 1. Mmmm—, Boys, I've got a boychild in Texas, he ought to be 'bout grown.
- 2. O—, Go marchin' to the table, O Lord, find the same old thing.
- 3. Ummm—, Boys, I'll be so glad when payday comes.
O—, Captain, captain, when payday comes.
I'm gonna catch that Illinois Central, O Lord, goin' to Kankakee.
Mmmm—.

- 2. Ain't gonna tell you no story,
An' neither word of lie;
Wonder what my Maybelle say,
Didn't she keep on by. Chorus.

Diamond Joe, where'd you find him?
Diamond Joe, where'd you find him?
Diamond Joe, where'd you find him?
Diamond Joe.
(First chorus repeated.)

- 3. Ain't gonna work in the country, etc.
Diamond Joe, come a-gittin' me,
Diamond Joe, come a-gittin' me,
Diamond Joe,
My black Joe.

16A. 2. DIAMOND JOE

- 1. Ain't gonna work in the country,
And neither on Forrest's farm;
I'm gonna stay till my Maybelle comes,
An' she gonna call-uh me Tom.
Diamond Joe, come a-gittin' me,
Diamond Joe, come a-gittin' me,
Diamond Joe, come a-gittin' me,
Diamond Joe.

16A. 3. JOE THE GRINDER

- 1. O Lord, a few days longer, now, man.
- 2. They call me Joe the Grinder, O baby.
- 3. When I roll my long time down, I'm goin' home.

16B. 1. ANOTHER MAN DONE GONE. Sung by Vera Hall, Livingston, Alabama, 1940. Recorded by John A. Lomax and Ruby Pickens Tartt.

It seems likely that the Negro "blues" is a fairly recent outgrowth. The earliest examples we have date from the period between 1890 and 1910, when this form seems to have crystallized. Most of these early examples have the same stanza form as Vera Hall's enigmatic song—that is, one verse four times repeated, or one verse repeated three times with a final single line, usually unrhymed. The modern blues form is a three-verse stanza.

Vera Hall, who lives on the outskirts of a small town in the red-lands of central Alabama, sings religious and secular songs equally well. This song tells enigmatically of the escape of a Negro from the county "chain-gang." The singer, if she knows anything about the runaway prisoner, certainly will tell you nothing. The song is full of shadows and hidden meanings. The last line, which has no apparent connection with the rest of the stanzas, means: "I'm going to chastise you."

For background material, see pages 17 ff. of Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1926; W. C. Handy, *Blues, an Anthology*, Albert and Charles Boni, New York, 1926. A. L.

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|---|---|
| 1. Another man done gone,
Another man done gone,
Uh—from the county farm,
Another man done gone. | 4. He killed another man,
He killed another man,
He killed another man,
He killed another man. |
| 2. I didn't know his name,
I didn't know his name,
I didn't know his name,
I didn't know his name. | 5. I don' know where he's gone,
I don' know where he's gone,
I don' know where he's gone,
I don' know where he's gone. |
| 3. He had a long chain on,
He had a long chain on,
He had a long chain on,
He had a long chain on. | 6. I'm going to walk your log,
I'm going to walk your log,
I'm going to walk your log,
I'm going to walk your log. |

16B. 2. BOLL WEEVIL BLUES. Sung by Vera Hall, Livingston, Alabama, 1940. Recorded by John A. Lomax and Ruby Pickens Tartt.

The boll weevil is a parasite which bores into the green cotton boll and kills it before it opens. As the Texas version of the boll weevil ballad truly says,

"The boll weevil is a little *black* bug,
From Mexico, they say;
Come all the way to Texas
A-lookin' for a place to stay,
Just a-lookin' for a home."

He made his illegal entry into the United States about 1890 and in the years following marched across the South, "with his whole family, looking for a home," doing millions of dollars of damage to the cotton crop, the staple of the South.

The Negro tenant farmers and farm laborers, who were also "looking for a home," felt some kinship with the "little *black* bug" and they made a ballad which followed the boll weevil from the flatlands of Texas to the tidewaters of Virginia. Vera Hall's is the Alabama version, much shorter than the usual form. The word "square" refers to the shape of the cotton boll before it blossoms.

For other versions see pages 252 and 8 ff. of Carl Sandburg, *The American Songbag*, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1927; also page 112 of John A. and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1934. A. L.

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|---|---|
| 1. First time I seen the boll weevil,
He's settin' on the squsre;
Next time I seen him,
He had his family there. | 3. Well, the farmer asked the merchant
Uh—for some meat and meal.
"T ain't nothing doin', old man;
Boll weevil's in your field." |
| 2. Boll weevil here,
Boll weevil everywhere;
They done ate up all the cotton and corn,
All but that new ground square. | 4. "Hay-a-ay, boll weevil,
Where is your native home?"
"Way down in the bottom
Among the cotton and corn." |

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17A. 1. TWO WHITE HORSES. Sung by Smith Casey with guitar, Brazoria, Texas, 1939. Recorded by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax.

"When your heart stops beating and your toes get cold,
Ain't nothin' gonna do you but the cypress grove."

One of the basic themes of Negro songs, sacred and secular, is that "everybody's got to die someday"—the democracy of death. This song, first popularized on a phonograph record by Blind Lemon Jefferson, revels in the whole idea of death and burial. The guitar is played in an adapted Hawaiian style (although the performer certainly never heard of the islands); a knife held in the left hand plays both the high and low strings, achieving orchestral effects as it imitates the church bells and the rumble of clods on the top of a pine coffin. The instrument also takes part in the singing as it "speaks" the last words of the second and third lines of the stanza. The highest praise that a guitarist can win in the South is—"He can make that box *talk!*"

A. L.

1. Now, two white horses standin' in a line,
Now, two white horses standin' in a (guitar)
Now, two white horses standin' in a (guitar)
Gonna take me to my buryin' ground.
2. Did you ever hear that coffin sound? (guitar makes coffin sound)
Did you ever hear that coffin? (guitar)
Did you ever hear a coffin? (guitar)
You know now poor boy's in the ground.
3. Please dig my grave with a silver spade,
Please dig my grave with a silver (guitar)
Please dig my grave with a (guitar)
You can let me down with a golden chain.
4. It's one kind favor I'll ask of you,
It's one kind favor I'll ask of (guitar)
It's one kind favor I'll ask of (guitar)
Take pains see my grave be kept clean.
5. Did you ever hear that church bell tone? (guitar makes bell sound)
Did you ever hear that church bell? (guitar)
Did you ever hear that church bell? (guitar)
You know now poor boy's dead and gone.
6. Now, two white horses standin' in a line,
Now, two white horses standin' in a (guitar)
Now, two white horses standin' in a (guitar)
Gonna take me to my buryin' ground.
7. Did you ever hear a coffin sound? (guitar makes coffin sound)
Did you ever hear that coffin? (guitar)
Did you ever hear now? (guitar)
You know now poor boy's in the ground.

17A. 2. COUNTRY RAG. Played by Smith Casey on the guitar, Brazoria, Texas, 1939. Recorded by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax.

A piece of country jazz, the sort of melody popular at rural Negro dances in the Southwest. Here only one guitar is used. Whether this is an early jazz composition or whether it is a recent adaptation of jazz ideas, it shows how free and merry and warm-hearted jazz is when it is performed by and for country Negroes, from whom its original strength derives.

For general background for sides A and B, see W. C. Handy, *The Blues, An Anthology*, Albert and Charles Boni, New York, 1926; John A. and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1934, and *Our Singing Country*, The Macmillan Company, 1941; Howard Odum, *Rainbow Round My Shoulder*, The Bobbs Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1928; John A. and Alan Lomax, *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Leadbelly*, The Macmillan Company, 1936.

A. L.

17B. 1. **SHORTY GEORGE.** Sung by Smith Casey with guitar, Clemens State Farm, Brazoria, Texas, 1939. Recorded by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax.

2. **BLUES.** Sung by "Little Brother" with guitar, Texas State Penitentiary, Huntsville, Texas, 1934. Recorded by John A., Ruby T., and Alan Lomax.

The blues is the Negro folk lyric type *par excellence*. Next to the Negro spiritual it is the most original, and today it is the most influential of all American folk-song styles. Into the blues the folk Negro has poured all his frustration, his restless hunger for a better life, all his irony, all his bitterness about human relations. One singer says:

"If the blues was money, I'd be a millionaire."

But, since bitterness and irony spring only from hope, there comes one of the recurring stanzas of the blues:

"Sun gonna shine in my back door someday,
Wind gonna rise and blow my blues away."

Ever since the 17th century in England "to have the blues" has meant "to be despondent" or "depressed" or "downhearted." After naming his lyric songs "the blues" the Negro personified this idea. He says,

"*The Blues* jumped a rabbit, run him a solid mile;
When *The Blues* overtook him, he hung his po' head
and cried."

The blues are always individual songs, usually accompanied on the guitar or the piano, and among the folk Negroes of the South they are used mainly for dancing. The first of these blues is a dirge for a dead comrade. The second comes from the penitentiary and is a collection of miscellaneous stanzas. Bud Russell was the officer who formerly carried the prisoners from the county jails of Texas to the state penitentiary.
A. L.

17B. 1. SHORTY GEORGE

1. Mmm——, wonder what's the matter now?
Lord, what's the matter now?
——?—— by myself.
2. Yes, he died on the road,
Yes, he died on the road,
Had no money to pay his boa'd.
3. Ah——, he was a friend of mine,
Yes, he was a friend of mine;
Every time I think now I just can't keep from cryin'.
4. I——— stole away and cried,
Yes, stole away and cried;
Never had no money, now I wasn't satisfied.

17B. 2. BLUES

1.
Funny man, stole my gal of mine.
2. Lord, you light weight skinnors, you better learn to skin,
Mmm——, you better learn to skin;
Old Mister Bud Russell, I tell you, he wants to starve the men.
3. O my mama, she called me, I'm gonna answer "mam,"
Mmm——, I'm gonna answer "mam."
"Lord, ain't you tired of rollin' for that big-hat man?"*
4. She's got nine gold teeth, long black curly hair,
Mmm——, long black curly hair;
Lord, if you get on the Santa Fe,** find yo' baby there.
5. I been prayin' Our Father, Lord, Thy kingdom come,
Mmm——, Lord, Thy kingdom come;
Lord, I been prayin' Our Father, let Yo' will be done.
6. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine,
Mmm——, five, six, seven, eight, nine;
I'm gonna count these blues, she's got on her mind.

*Working for the prison guard. The southern guards wear big felt hats.
**The Santa Fe Railroad.

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18A. COUNTRY BLUES.

18B. I BE'S TROUBLED.

Sung by McKinley Morganfield with guitar, Stovall, Mississippi, 1941. Recorded by Alan Lomax and John Work.

McKinley Morganfield (nicknamed Muddy Waters), a shy, handsome young Negro, lives and works on a huge cotton plantation near the Mississippi river, not far from Clarksdale, Mississippi. Saturday evenings he makes a few dollars by playing for the local dances and parties of his Negro neighbors. He learned to play the guitar only three years ago, learning painfully, finger by finger, from a friend. Since that time he has learned a great deal more by listening to commercial records of blues guitarists from other parts of the country. His style is largely derived from the records of Robert Johnson, who recorded for the Columbia Phonograph Company in the 1930's. Robert Johnson grew up only a few miles away, but Muddy Waters never saw him face to face.

Muddy Waters' blues represent what might be called an American equivalent of the *flamenco* style—a complex, subtle, controlled interweaving of melodic line against an intricate and varied guitar accompaniment. He plays with a broken bottle neck on the little finger of his left hand (again, an American adaptation of the so-called Hawaiian style), sometimes using the first three fingers of his left hand to fret his instrument, sometimes using the bottleneck!

Both of these blues talk about trouble between man and woman, both are songs expressive of the anxiety, frustration and lack of security that seem to typify the relations of Negro couples. Muddy Waters told me that he composed "I Be's Troubled" while he was changing a tire.

For general background for sides A and B, see W. C. Handy, *Blues, an Anthology*, Albert and Charles Boni, New York, 1926; John A. and Alan Lomax, *American Ballads and Folk Songs*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1934, *Our Singing Country*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941, and *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Leadbelly*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1936; Howard W. Odum, *Rainbow Round My Shoulder*, The Bobbs Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1928. A. L.

18A. COUNTRY BLUES

1. An' it's gettin' late over in the evenin', chile, I feel like,
 Like blowin' my horn;*
 I woke up this mornin', find my,
 My little baby gone, hmn.
 Late up in the evenin', man, man,
 I feel like, like blowin' my horn;
 Well, I woke up this mornin', baby,
 Find my little baby gone.
2. Well, now, some folks say the worried,
 Ol' blues ain't bad;
 That's the miseri'est feelin', child, I most,
 Most ever had.
 Some folks tell me, man, that the
 Worried, ol' blues ain't bad;
 Well, that's the miseri'st ol' feelin', honey, now,
 Wo—o, well, gal, I most ever had.
3. Well, brooks runnin' into the ocean, the ocean runnin'
 Into the sea;
 If I don't find my baby, somebody gonna,
 Gon' bury me, hmn—
 Brooks runnin' into the ocean, chil',
 Ocean runnin' to the sea;
 Well, if I don't find my baby now,
 Wo—o, well, gal, you gon' have to bury me.
4. Yes, minutes seem like hours an' hours
 Seem like days;
 Seems like my baby would stop her,
 Her lowdown ways—
 Minutes seem like hours, chil', an' hours
 Seem like days;
 Yes, seems like my woman now,
 Wo—o, well, gal, she might stop her lowdown ways.
 (Voice) Well, play that thing, man.
5. Well, now, I'm leavin' this mornin' if I hadda,
 Wo—o, ride the blinds;**

I feel mistreated, girl, you know now
 I don't mind dyin'—ha!
 Leavin' this mornin'—
 If I hadda, now, ride the blinds;
 Yes, I been mistreated, baby, now,
 Baby, an' I don't mind dyin'.

18B. I BE'S TROUBLED

1. Well, if I feel tomorrow
 Like I feel today,
 I'm gonna pack my suitcase
 An' make my getaway.
 Chorus:
 Lord, I'm troubled,
 I'm all worried in mind,
 An' I'll never be satisfied,
 An' I just can't keep from cryin'.
2. Yeah, I know my little ol' babe,
 She gon' jump an' shout,
 That ol' train be late, girl,
 An' I come walkin' out. Chorus.
3. Yeah, I know somebody
 Sho' been talkin' to you,
 I don't need no tellin', girl,
 I can watch the way you do. Chorus.
4. Yeah, now, goodbye, babe,
 Got no more to say;
 Just like I been tellin' you, girl,
 You gon' have to leave my bed. Chorus.
5. Yeah, my baby, she quit me,
 Seem like mama was dead;
 I got real worried, gal,
 An' she drove it to my head.* Chorus.

*Singing.

**To go on the bum, to hobo.

*That is, "drove the worry to my head."

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19A. LOST JOHN.

19B. FOX CHASE.

Played by Sanders Terry on the harmonica, Durham, North Carolina, 1938. Recorded in New York, N. Y., by Alan and Bess Lomax.

Blind Sanders Terry, from Durham, North Carolina, has a genius for his harmonica such as the gypsies of central Europe have for their violins. He plays a cheap harmonica, but, as it lies in his cupped hands, he stops it with his fingers and produces the chromatic notes for which concert harmonica players require the large complex, chromatic instrument. His blindness just allows him to tell "light from darkness"; yet when he plays, his hands make a shadowy and intricate dance pattern before his sunken eyes.

"Lost John" is the tale in sound of a poor old boy who got lost in the woods as he walked home from the house of his mistress. He took out his harmonica and through it called for help, moaned out his fright and terror of the deep hot night in the black river-bottom woods.

In the "Fox Chase," "Son" Terry describes what a southern fox hunt sounds like. In the South the hunters do not ride to the hounds in the vigorous English fashion. On the contrary, they take their hounds to the hills, turn them loose, then sit comfortably around a campfire on a mountain top while the chase goes on below them. Their pleasure in the hunt is purely auditory and imaginary. They can tell every hound by his bark, and from the kind of bark just how the chase is developing. All night long they comfortably pursue the fox from the edge of the campfire, trade lies about their dogs, and indulge in gossip about the neighborhood.

A. L.

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- 20A. 1. ALL HID? Sung by Hettie Godfrey.
 2. LITTLE GIRL, LITTLE GIRL. Led by Ora Dell Graham.
 3. PULLIN' THE SKIFF. Led by Ora Dell Graham.
 4. OLD UNCLE RABBIT. Sung by Katherine and Christine Shipp.
 5. SEA LION WOMAN. Sung by Katherine and Christine Shipp.
 6. AIN' GONNA RING NO MO'. Sung by group of girls.
 7. SHORTENIN' BREAD. Led by Ora Dell Graham.

Recorded in Mississippi and Alabama by John A. Lomax and Herbert Halpert.

Children's games everywhere retain some of the oldest elements of folk culture, but often they are much influenced by the fashions of the year and of the locality in which they are sung. The second of the songs on this side, "Little Girl, Little Girl," stems from a very old chasing game known as "Old Witch." This game is part of the same tradition as "The Hawk and Chickens," variants of which have been recorded in many European languages. Yet in the present version a steam locomotive appears, furnishing a syncopated refrain for a little fancy stepping by the players.

All of the seven songs are dances rather more than games. The main focus of interest in Negro children's games is on individual dancing rather than on the elaboration of the story idea of the game. The first song is a counting rhyme for hide-and-go-seek. The sixth song may well be a version of the original song which gave rise to the famous ragtime tune, "It Ain't-a Gonna Rain No Mo'." The newly freed slave sings with delight that the plantation bell will no longer call him to work and announces his intention of filling his pockets with money from the plantation coffers before he leaves for the great, free world.

For general background material for sides A and B, see Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1925; Lydia Parrish, *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*, Creative Age Press, Inc., New York, 1942; B. A. Botkin, *The American Play-Party Song*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1937; pages 70ff., John A. and Alan Lomax, *Our Singing Country*, The Macmillan Company, 1941. A. L.

20A. 1. ALL HID?

Chorus:
 All hid?
 All hid?
 Five, ten, fifteen, twenty,
 'S all hid?

1. Way down yonder by the devil's town,
 Devil knocked my daddy down.
 Is all hid? Chorus.
2. Six little horses in the stable,
 One jumped out and skinned his nable.
 Is all hid?
3. Old man Ned fell out the bed,
 Cracked his head on a hot piece of lead.
 Is all hid? Chorus.

20A. 2. LITTLE GIRL, LITTLE GIRL

L: Little girl, little girl?
 C: Yes, mam.
 L: Did you go down town?
 C: Yes, mam.
 L: Did you see my brown?
 Did he buy me any shoes?
 Stockin's too?
 Put him on the train?
 The bell ring?
 Whichaway did he go?

C and L:
 Choo-choo!
 All night long
 Choo-choo! Etc.

20A. 3. PULLIN' THE SKIFF

1. I went downtown
 To get my grip;
 I come back home
 Just a-pullin' the skiff. (2)
2. I went upstairs
 To make my bed,
 I made a mistake
 And I bumped my head
 Just a-pullin' the skiff. (2)
3. I went downstairs
 To milk my cow;
 I made a mistake
 And I milked that sow,
 Just a-pullin' the skiff. (2)
4. Tomorrow, tomorrow,
 Tomorrow never come;
 Tomorrow, tomorrow,
 Tomorrow's in the barn.
 An-a hump-unh, an-a hump-unh,
 an-a hump-unh, hump-unh, hump-unh.
 (The children all laugh.)

20A. 4. OLD UNCLE RABBIT

1. L: If I live,
C: Chool-dy, chool-dy,
L: To see nex' fall,
C: Chool-dy, chool-dy,
L: I ain' gon' raise,
C: Chool-dy, chool-dy,
L: No cabbage at all,
C: Chool-dy, chool-dy.
2. L: Ol' Uncle Rabbit,
Got a habit,
In my garden,
Eatin' all my cabbage.
3. An' if I live
To see nex' fall,
I ain' gon' raise
No cabbage at all.

20A. 5. SEA LION WOMAN*

1. L: Sea lion woman,
C: See lie,
L: She drink coffee.
C: See lie,
L: She drink tea,
C: See lie,
L: And the gander lie,
C: See lie.
2. L: Way down yonder
'Hind the log,
And the rooster crowed,
And the gander lied.

(The first verse is repeated twice.)

*See lyin' [?]

20A. 6. AIN' GONNA RING NO MO'

Ring, ring the big bell,
Ain' gonna ring no mo';
Fill me a pocket befo' I go,
It ain' gonna ring no mo'.

20A. 7. SHORTENIN' BREAD

Chorus:
I do love
Shortenin' bread,
I do love
Shortenin' bread.
Mama love
Shortenin' bread,
Papa love
Shortenin' bread,
Everybody love
Shortenin' bread.

1. Two little babies layin' in bed,
One play sick an' the other'n play dead.

I do love
Shortenin' bread,
I do love
Shortenin' bread.

2. Ever' since my dog been dead,
Hog's been rootin' my 'tater bed. Chorus.

3. Old Aunt Dinah sick in the bed,
Sent for the Doctor; Doctor said,
"All she need's some shortenin' bread." Chorus.

20B. 3. ROSEY. Sung by Mr. and Mrs. Joe McDonald.

4. GON' KNOCK JOHN BOOKER TO THE LOW GROUND. Sung by Harriet McClintock.

5. RUN, NIGGER, RUN. Sung by Moses Platt.

Recorded in Alabama and Texas by John A. Lomax, Ruby Pickens Tartt and Alan Lomax.

The Negro slaves, deprived of their drums, rattles and native African instruments, nevertheless still kept up their dancing, furnishing their own music of voice and hand. Indeed it was their dancing rather than their singing which first attracted the attention of white men. The slave children played ring games, many of the tunes for which were adaptations of white game songs and country dance tunes. Three of these ring games follow, the last of them a very famous song. It speaks of the "patrollers" who watched the roads in many parts of the South on the lookout for slaves who were away from their plantations without passes or who had overstayed the time allowed them in their passes for visits to neighboring plantations. The patrol system was set up partly to guard against slave uprisings. The song has been recorded all over the South, where it was undoubtedly spread by companies of black face minstrels.

A. L.

20B. 3. ROSEY.

Rosey, babe, little Rosey,
Hah-a, Rosey.

Grab you a pardner an' promenade around,
Hah-a, Rosey.
Pin my true love by my side,
Hah-a, Rosey.
You do that now, you do that again,
Hah-a, Rosey.

Chorus:

Rosey, babe, little Rosey, } 2
Hah-a, Rosey.

Let's us do like the possum done, } 2
Hah-a, Rosey.

Hid his head in the hollow stump,
Hah-a, Rosey. Chorus.

(The next stanzas repeat what has gone before.)

20B. 4. GON' KNOCK JOHN BOOKER TO THE
LOW GROUND

Gon' knock John Booker to the low ground, } 2
Tu-da darlin' day.
That lady bow to beat you, } 2
Tu-da darlin' day.
That gentleman bow to beat you, } 2
Tu-da darlin' day.

Chorus:

Hey-ay-ay, (2)
Hello, my lover, (2)
Kep' a-gwine on,
Hello, my lover,
Kep' a-runnin' on,
Hello, my lover,
Kep' a-gwine,
That ol' mule buck,
That ol' mule buck,
Kep' a-gwine,
That ol' mule buck,
Kicked the saddle off,
That ol' mule buck,
Kep' a-gwine.

(The next lines repeat what has gone before.)

You know, just swingin', just swingin'! Q: Us?
Who? A: Me, an' all of my playmates. Q: Out in the
big yard? A: Yassuh! And in the house, too.

20B. 5. RUN, NIGGER, RUN

... nigger flew,
The nigger lost his Sunday shoe.

Chorus:

Run, nigger, run, the paterol 'll catch you,
Run, nigger, run, you better get away.

1. The nigger run, the nigger flew,
The nigger lost his Sunday shoe. Chorus.
2. The nigger run by my gate,
"Wake up, nigger, you slep' too late." Chorus.
3. Look down yonder what I see,
Great big nigger behind that tree. Chorus.

20B. 1. POOR LITTLE JOHNNY. Sung by Harriet McClintock, Livingston, Alabama, 1940. Recorded by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax and Ruby P. Tartt.

Aunt Harriet McClintock (McClention?) is now well over eighty years old. She was born a slave on an Alabama plantation, and on this record she gives us three songs that she sang as a young girl on the plantation. All three undoubtedly date from the period of the Civil war and earlier. Aunt Harriet said that "Poor Little Johnny" was sung as a cotton picking song.

Little Johnny is picking in the wet river bottom field where the cotton has been rotted by exposure to damp. Therefore he won't be able to pick a hundred pounds of cotton in a day. One hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy pounds a day is considered good picking for a strong woman, two hundred up to five hundred for a man.

A. L.

1. Way down in the bottom
Wha' the cotton so rotten,
You won't get yo' hundred here today. } 2

2. Po' little Johnny,
He's a po' little fellow,
He won't get his hundred here today.

Q: Aunt Hattie, how did you ... where did you get this song? A: My mama learnt it to me. Q: How long ago? A: Woo! I don't know. She been dead 'bout near thirty year. Q: Did you ever pick any cotton? A: Me? Yas-suh! Q: How much did you pick a day? A: I pick about a hundred and fifty, an' a hundred and twenty-five.

20B. 2. GO TO SLEEP. Sung by Harriet McClintock, Livingston, Alabama, 1940. Recorded by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax and Ruby P. Tartt.

This lullaby has quieted restless babies throughout the whole South for at least a hundred years and probably more. Where other lullabies are generally localized, this one pops up everywhere and in innumerable forms. Aunt Hattie's version is not particularly full, but her rendition of it, taken as she rocked her own great-grandchild to sleep in front of the microphone, is completely authentic.

A. L.

1. Go to sleep, (2)
Go to sleepy, little baby,
Mama gone away
An' papa gone, too,
Go to sleepy, little baby.

2. Go to sleep (2)
Go to sleepy, little baby,
Mama gone away
An' daddy, too,
Go to sleepy, little baby.

(The singer hums a stanza.)