

Recording Laboratory AFS L30

Songs of the Mormons
and
Songs of the West

From the Archive of Folk Song

Edited by Duncan Emrich

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PREFACE

SONGS OF THE MORMONS (A side)

The traditional Mormon songs on the A side of this record are secular and historical, and should be considered wholly in that light. They go back in time seventy-five and a hundred years to the very earliest days of settlement and pioneering, and are for the opening of Utah and the West extraordinarily unique documents. As items of general Americana alone they are extremely rare, but when we also consider that they relate to a single group of people and to the final establishment of a single State, their importance is still further enhanced. The reason for this lies, not alone in their intrinsic worth as historical documents for Utah, but also because songs of this nature, dealing with early pioneering and settlement, are virtually non-existent in the folk tradition for any other State in the Union. True, there are individual songs dealing with the pioneer days of various States (on the B side of this record there are examples), but a full bodied group such as this from Utah does not appear elsewhere. It should be noted further that these six songs are a selection only, and that still other secular and historical songs of Utah are to be found in the collections of the Library of Congress. All these songs are sung by Mormons living in Utah, and all were acquired traditionally in the folk manner, either at first hand from those who first "made them" or as they were handed down orally within a family or community group from generation to generation.

The preservation of these songs for the Library of Congress is the result primarily of the efforts of Professor Austin E. Fife and his wife, Alta Fife, of Occidental College. On several field trips (two very important ones in 1946 and 1947), they travelled

the length and breadth of Utah, gathering a large collection of songs of which those on this record are representative. In addition to their work in Utah, they also retraced the entire Mormon route from upper New York State across the country to Nauvoo and thence to Utah itself, and, beyond that, visited and travelled in the western Mormon areas adjacent to Utah. On all these trips, their chief purpose was the collection of traditional material relating to the early life and history of the Mormons, including not only songs, but legends, tales, anecdotes, customs, and early practices of the Mormons as well. It is fortunate for us that their sympathetic interest has resulted in the preservation of this great body of traditional material.

Anyone who has visited Utah is aware of the vastness and the power of the land. This is a land of space, a land of desert and mountain. It is impressive to the visitor today. Let that same visitor, however, move back in time a hundred years, to the days when there were no habitations, to the days when the persecuted and driven Mormons first saw "the Place," and he will then have some conception of the land against which these songs were sung. East and west were great and unfriendly distances, and the land upon which the Mormons had chosen to settle was itself barren and dry. It took courage beyond our present-day reckoning of courage, and faith beyond our knowledge of faith, to stay upon the land and turn it from desert to what Utah is today. That courage and faith are reflected in these songs. They serve as a touchstone to the Utah past, and to the pioneer days of the West.

REFERENCES FOR STUDY

The chief source for the study of Mormon and Western material in the folk tradition is the *Western Folklore*, published by the University of California Press for the California Folklore Society; membership in the Society, including subscription for the *Quarterly*, is open to all interested in the traditions of the West, and inquiries should be addressed to the Press at Berkeley, California. Apart from this

general source, specific references dealing with traditional Mormon songs are: Austin E. Fife and Alta Fife, "Folksongs of Mormon Inspiration," *Western Folklore*, Vol. 6 (1947), 42-52; Levette J. Davidson, "Mormon Songs," *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 58 (1946), 273-300; Lester A. Hubbard, "Songs and Ballads of the Utah Pioneers," *Utah Humanities Review*, vol. 1 (1947), 74-96. Three collections of

Mormon songs also contain a few songs falling within the traditional folk category: The Daughters of Utah Pioneers, *Pioneer Songs* (Salt Lake City, 1932) with music arranged by Alfred Durham; George F.

Briegel, *44 Old Time Mormon and Far West Songs* (New York, 1933); and Utah Centennial Commission, *Source Book, Arts Division* (Salt Lake City, 1946) mimeographed, bound.

SONGS OF THE MORMONS A (A side)

A1—ON THE ROAD TO CALIFORNIA, or THE BUFFALO BULL FIGHT. Sung by William T. Morris, with piano, at St. George, Utah, 1947. Recorded by Austin E. Fife.

In the volume *Pioneer Songs*, there appears a song titled "On the Way to California" which is, like this one, to the tune of "Old Dan Tucker." The headnote to the song states that it was "sung in camps in 1847," and also that "songs of this kind were made to order and could be heard around campfires at night and occasionally while [the Mormons were] plodding their weary way by day." There is no reason to doubt this, and the present song sung by Mr. Morris merely corroborates it. Mr. Morris's song, however, is one which was sung by members of the Mormon Battalion, whereas the one in *Pioneer Songs* was clearly one used on the westward trek. These words occur in the latter:

Now in the spring we'll leave Nauvoo,
And our journey we'll pursue.

The chorus as it appear is:

On the way to California,
In the spring we'll take our journey,
Pass between the Rocky Mountains,
Far beyond the Arkansas fountains.

The headnote also states that to the early Mormons moving westward anything beyond the Rocky Mountains was termed "California," and since the Utah Territory did not come into being until after the war with Mexico, this seems reasonable and explains "California" rather than "Utah."

In the song as sung by some members of the Mormon Battalion, however, California is actually meant and understood. It will be remembered that with the outbreak of war with Mexico in 1846, the Mormons, encamped at Council Bluffs, offered to contribute troops. President Polk accepted the offer, and 500 men were enlisted as the Mormon Battalion. They accompanied General Kearney to Santa Fe and on to California. Upon being mustered out,

many returned to Salt Lake, and this song came back to Utah with those who returned.

The author of the text appears to have been one Levi W. Hancock. Daniel Tyler, in his book, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War, 1846-47* (1881) says that "our cheerful camp singer, Levi W. Hancock, oftentimes amused and entertained us while around the campfires and often composed songs to fit the occasion as the following will show." A quite lengthy and detailed, as well as "literary," text is given, of which the two opening stanzas and the last stanza are related to Mr. Morris's variant. These three stanzas are given here for purposes of comparison:

Under command of Colonel Cooke,
When passing down San Pedro's brook,
Where cane-grass, growing rank and high,
Was waving as the breeze passed by,

There, as we gained ascending ground,
Out from the grass with fearful bound,
A wild ferocious bull appeared,
A challenged fight, with horns upreared.

And when the fearful fight was o'er,
And sound of muskets heard no more,
At least a score of bulls were found,
And two mules dead upon the ground.

There is nothing improbable in assuming that the "gentleman of Scandinavian birth," from whom Mr. Morris states he learned the song, was a member of the Mormon Battalion. It was collected from Mr. Morris in 1947, very close to, if not actually, an exact hundred years after it was first sung. In this connection also, it is interesting to note that Morris learned it at the time of the semi-centennial, premising its transfer from its originator to us through two persons in two steps, each step separated by fifty years:—origin of song with Levi Hancock, 1847, and acquired by the "Scandinavian gentleman;" transfer to Mr. Morris, 1897; recorded by Professor Fife from Morris, 1947. The song itself is a most unusual one, recounting a frontier episode, and most prop-

erly begins this record of Mormon and Western material. The type of event which it describes has vanished forever.

The Mormons, lead by Colonel Cooke,
While passing down St. Pedro's brook,
Just turning o'er a little rise,
The grass was up to our mules' eyes.

Refrain:

On the road to California,
On that hard and tedious journey,
Far across the Rocky Mountains,
Crystal streams and flowing fountains.

Just as our mules begun to pull,
Out from the grass there jumped a bull;
As soon as he appeared in sight,
He raised his head all ready for a fight.

I saw a man as I passed by,
A bull had hooked him in the thigh;
And from the thigh the blood did pour,
Three inches deep it made a gore.

When this bull battle it was o'er
And sound of musket heard no more,
We went next day and there found slain
Four mules, twelve bulls upon the plain.

"During the rendition of music gathered by Evan Stephens for the semicentennial, he collected these words. And they were sung by a gentleman of Scandinavian birth, who sang in dialect. We became fascinated with his dialect and, as boys will, learned to imitate him. So I have sung this song as we used to sing it together as boys."

A2—THE HANDCART SONG. Sung by L. M. Hilton at Ogden, Utah, 1946. Recorded by Austin E. Fife.

The first Mormon handcart company left Iowa City on June 9, 1856, while the last handcart company to cross the plains arrived in Salt Lake on September 24, 1860. There was no handcart travel in 1858, but in each of the other four years several companies crossed the plains, with the heaviest travel in 1856 and 1857. The emigrants who used this mode of travel and transportation were chiefly of English and Scandinavian origin, all anxious to reach Utah, but unable to afford wagons and teams for the crossing after contributing to their passage by ship and railroad as far as Iowa City, the terminus of

the Rock Island Railroad. In 1855, President Brigham Young had written to the presiding head of the British Mission: "We will send experienced men to that point [Iowa City] with instructions to aid them in every possible way; and let the Saints who intend to immigrate to Utah the coming season understand that they are expected to walk and draw their carts across the plains. Sufficient teams will be furnished to haul the aged, infirm, and those who are unable to walk. A few good cows will be sent along to furnish milk, and some beef cattle for the people to kill along the road. Now, have them gird up their loins and come while the way is open."

The emigrants girded their loins. They had need to, for the walk from Iowa City to Salt Lake was 1300 miles.

Typical of the companies which crossed the plains were those under the direction of James G. Willie and Edward Martin. Willie's Company was made up of "500 souls, 120 carts, 5 wagons, 24 oxen, 45 Beef cattle;" Martin's Company had "575 souls, 146 carts, 7 wagons, 30 oxen, and 50 beef cattle." The carts themselves were two-wheelers made of sturdy hickory or oak, with shafts running forward from under the body of the cart; a connecting bar of wood across the shafts linked them in front, so that one or two persons walking behind the bar could push on it. Others, walking behind, pushed at the rear of the cart. On each cart were loaded flour, food, bedding, clothing, cooking utensils, and a tent. Small children also rode on them. The crossing of the plains by most of the companies was begun during the first week of June, and the arrival in Salt Lake attained during the last week of September, averaging fourteen weeks for the trip. The majority of the crossings were successful, and the number of deaths—in spite of the obvious hardships—was held to a minimum. Willie's and Martin's Companies, which have been cited, were, however, unfortunate in this respect. Like the ill-fated Donner party, the reason for the disasters which befell them was chiefly that they both started westward very late in July, all persons fully aware of the danger lying ahead. On September 4, Captain Willie's cattle were run off by Indians, and rations had to be reduced at North Bluff Creek, six hundred miles from Iowa City. On September 30, the Company reached Fort Laramie with 500 miles still to go through mountainous country. On October 12, the rations were cut again: ten ounces for men, nine for women, six for children, and three for infants. On October 19, the last flour was used, and the first snow fell that night; the following morning undrifted snow on the

level was 18 inches deep. Word of the plight of this Company and of Martin's, which was suffering in the same way, had gone ahead to Salt Lake, however, through Elder Franklin Richards returning on horseback from the east. Brigham Young immediately ordered twenty-seven trained scouts, with provisions, to go to the rescue. These men travelled to the east of Fort Bridger before locating the unfortunate Company. For some there arrival was too late: nine persons died that night, and over one-sixth of the Company had perished altogether. The scouts gave what provisions they could to the Company and urged its despairing members forward to Fort Bridger, where Brigham Young had sent 50 wagons to bring them in to Salt Lake. They arrived in Salt Lake City on November 9.

Of Martin's Company, some sentences from the reports of the scouts will suffice:

"When we overtook the Martin Company, we found them strung out for miles. Old men were tugging at loaded carts, women were pulling sick husbands, and children struggling through the deep snow . . . They camped that night in a place where there was neither wood nor shelter and it was bitter cold. Several deaths occurred that night and others were dying."

For these Companies, there was no "dancing upon the plains." They were rescued, however, with expeditions from Salt Lake City; and had Brigham Young and others in Salt Lake known of their late departure and straitened circumstances, the rescue parties would have reached them earlier. Without the rescue parties, disaster to these Companies would have been complete.

"The Handcart Song" comes down to us from the 1857-1860 period, and, in happier circumstances than those of the Willie and Martin Companies, buoyed the courageous pioneers on their westward trek to the "valley."

[In the preparation of the foregoing note, extensive use has been made of the article "Handcart Pioneers of Utah" in *Heart Throbs of the West*, 1939, vol. 1, pp. 71-86, the official publication of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers.]

"This song was sung by those who crossed the plains in handcarts, made up on the way, and has been a song that everyone loved to sing in Utah ever since pioneer days. My grandmother sang it to me when I was a baby, and I can't remember when I didn't sing it and know it and love it."

Ye saints who dwell on Europe's shore, prepare yourselves
for many more [forever more?]

To leave behind your native land, for sure God's judgements are at hand.

For you must cross the raging main before the promised land you gain,

And with the faithful make a start to cross the plains with your handcart.

For some must push and some must pull, as we go marching up the hill,

So merrily on our way we go, until we reach the valley-o.

The lands that boast of modern light, we know are all as dark as night,

Where poor men toil and want for bread, where peasant hosts are blindly led;

These lands that boast of liberty you ne'er again would wish to see,

When you from Europe make a start to cross the plains with your handcart.

For some must push and some must pull, as we go marching up the hill,

So merrily on our way we go, until we reach the valley-o.

As on the road the carts are pulled, 'twould very much surprise the world

To see the old and feeble dame thus lend a hand to pull the same;

And maidens fair will dance and sing, young men may [more] happy than the king,

And children, too, will laugh and play, their strength increasing day by day.

But some will say, "It is too bad, the saints upon the foot to pad,

And, more than that, to pull a load as they go marching o'er the road."

But then we say, "It is the plan to gather up the best of men,

And women, too, for none but they will ever travel in this way."

And long before the valley's gained, we will be met upon the plains

With music sweet and friends so dear, and fresh supplies our hearts to cheer;

And then with music and with song, how cheerfully we'll march along,

And thank the day we made a start to cross the plains with our handcarts.

When you get there among the rest, obedient be and you'll be blessed,

And in God's chambers be shut in while judgements cleanse the earth from sin;

For we do know it will be so, God's servant spoke it long ago,

We say it is high time to start to cross the plains with our handcarts.

A3-TITTERY-IRIE-AYE. Sung by Joseph H. Watkins at Brigham City, Utah, 1946. Recorded by Austin E. Fife.

Like the first song on this record, "Tittery-Irie-Aye" comes to us from pioneer days orally transmitted directly through two persons, "Brother Ensign" and Mr. Watkins. Beyond what Mr. Watkins has to say of it—suggesting that it was sung on the handcart journey or, more probably, made up very shortly after arrival in Salt Lake—there seems to be nothing known. It contains historical references to the expulsion from Nauvoo and the halt at Council Bluffs, and describes early houses of folk architecture and construction at Salt Lake City. In addition, however, the leavening note of humor "concerning spiritual women that make a hell of a fuss" should be noted, as should also the irreverent comment on polygamy indicating that within the Mormon ranks themselves there would soon be a ready willingness to abandon that institution. Mr. Watkins says that "Brother Ensign" sang this song "in the gatherings," and one assumes from this that it must have been hugely enjoyed and quite popular. In itself this is a tribute to the breadth of understanding and the humanness of the Mormons then and now: only those persons who have the sense to relate themselves objectively to the world around them have also the mother wit to term themselves "strange people" and enjoy it. This, too, in spite of persecution.

"This is Joseph H. Watkins of Brigham City, eighty-five and a half years old. I'm going to try to sing for you an old pioneer song. It was sang when the people was coming across the plains. And a good many years after, we had Brother Ensign, an old pioneer, that came across with the handcarts, sing this song in the gatherings where the people were gathered. This song is as follows . . ."

Come all my good people and listen to my song,
Although it's not so very good, it's not so very long.
And sing tittery-irie-aye, sing tittery-irie-o.

Now concerning this strange people, I'm now a-going to
sing,
For the way they have been treated, I think it is a sin.
And sing tittery-irie-aye, sing tittery-irie-o.

They've been driven from their homes and away from
Nauvoo,
For to seek another home in the wilderness anew.

Oh, they stopped among the Indians, but they don't deem
to stay,
And they'll soon be a-packing up and jogging on their way.

They made a halt at Council Bluffs, but there don't mean
to stay;
Some feed the cattle rushes, and some per-rarie hay.

Oh, of logs we build our houses, of dirt we have for floors,
Of sods we build our chimneys, and shakes we have for
doors.

There is another item, to mention it I must.
Concerning spiritual women that make a hell of a fus.

Some men have got a dozen wives, and others have a score,
And the man that's got but one wife's a-looking out for
more.

Now, young man, don't get discouraged, get married if you
can,
But take care don't get a woman that belongs to another
man.

Now concerning this strange people, I've nothing more to
say,
Until we all get settled in some future day.

A4-ECHO CANYON. Sung by L. M. Hilton at Ogden, Utah, 1946. Recorded by Austin E. Fife.

"Echo Canyon" and "The Utah Iron Horse" which follows it are two songs dating from the period of the construction of the last link in the transcontinental railroad. "Echo Canyon" was sung by Mormon men working on the final stretch of the Union Pacific, coming from the west; and "The Utah Iron Horse" was sung by Mormons working on the Central Pacific, coming from the east. This work, undertaken in 1868 through a contract let to Brigham Young by the railroads, resulted in the completion of the final link and the attendant golden-spike-driving ceremonies at Promontory Point on May 10, 1869. The first song, "Echo Canyon," is optimistic and jubilant in tone. It also, within the text, reflects something of the way of life of the men—the "ten hours" daily work, the sober and industrious attitude towards their work, and the anticipation of returning home when the railroad is completed. Within the song also, in the next to last stanza, is specific recognition of the end of one era and the beginning of a new. The railroad marked the final opening of the West.

"This is L. M. Hilton, Ogden, Utah. I'm going to sing 'Echo Canyon,' or 'Hurray! Hurrah! The railroad's begun.' Mormon boys and men, under the direction of Brigham Young, who helped build the railroad into Utah in 1868 and '69 composed this song, and it has been sung in Utah ever since. My grandparents taught it to me when I was a small boy, and I have sung it all my life."

In the Canyon of Echo, there's a railroad begun,
And the Mormons are cutting and grading like fun;
They say they'll stick to it until it's complete,
For friends and relations they're longing to meet.

Hurray! Hurrah! The railroad's begun!
Three cheers for our contractor, his name's Brigham
Young;
Hurray! Hurrah! We're light-hearted and gay,
Just the right kind of boys to build a railway.

Now there's Mister Reed, he's a gentleman, too,
He knows very well what we Mormons can do;
He knows in our work we are faithful and true,
And if Mormon boys start it, it's bound to go through.

Our camp is united, we all labor hard,
And if we are faithful, we'll gain our reward;
Our leader is wise and a great leader, too,
And all things he tells us, we're right glad to do.

The boys in our camp are light-hearted and gay,
We work on the railroad ten hours a day;
We're thinking of fine times we'll have in the fall,
When we'll be with our ladies and go to the ball.

We surely must live in a very fast age:
We've travelled by ox team and then took the stage,
But when such conveyance is all done away,
We'll travel in steam cars upon the railway.

The great locomotive next season will come
To gather the saints from their far distant home,
And bring them to Utah in peace here to stay
While the judgements of God sweep the wicked away.

A5—THE UTAH IRON HORSE. Sung by Joseph H. Watkins at Brigham City, Utah, 1946. Recorded by Austin E. Fife.

"The Utah Iron Horse," unlike "Echo Canyon," strikes a somewhat sceptical note, expressing sentiments not held by Mormons today, but, nevertheless, historically valuable and complementing the mood of "Echo Canyon." By way of background to an understanding of the sceptical mood, it should be

remembered that the Mormons had carved their inland empire out of the desert and, at long last, had found a home, after the ceaseless and despicable persecutions which had driven them the width of the country. Even in Utah, the United States Army had been sent against them, and this in spite of the Mormon contribution to the War with Mexico. It is small wonder, then, that certain of the Mormons had their doubts about the "civilization" that would be brought to them with the completion of the railroad; they still had very vivid memories of that "civilization"—at Nauvoo and elsewhere—which they had left behind.

The last two lines of the second stanza should be understood as coming from the tourists and outlanders who would visit Utah, and whose eyes would be round with ignorant wonder over the outrageous things they had heard and expected to see, rather than looking to the real achievements of the Mormons—irrigation, settlement, industry, unity. In this connection, the Danites were supposedly the alleged "secret police" of Brigham Young, meting out punishment to those who strayed from the fold. Actually, there is historical controversy over this. There was, of course, strict but just discipline within the Mormon ranks—how else account for the hand-cart companies, the Mormon Battalion, and the settlement of arid southern Utah? Decisions were taken, orders given, and the orders obeyed. This very discipline, however, which created Utah and gave the Mormons their strength, seemed incomprehensible to non-Mormons pushing westward on the frontier, and itself gave rise to unfounded exaggerations of enforced "police action." Also, the lawless non-Mormon elements of the neighboring frontier were quick to seek a scapegoat for their crimes, and found a ready one in the maligned Mormon. Evil rumors then, as in other periods of our history, travelled swiftly—and senselessly.

It should be noted that this song first appeared in print in *The Bee-Hive Songster*, published in Utah in 1868, where the text is considerably longer. It was reprinted in the official publication of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 1943-44, vol. V, p. 521. Apart from being longer, the printed text differs in other respects from the song as sung by Mr. Watkins, and it is doubtful that he ever saw it in print. It is to be presumed that he learned it orally as a boy eight years old, in 1869, as he says. The fact that it comes to us directly from that period is in itself remarkable. The offensive word, "nigger," is, of course, merely a barbarous relic of the era.

The iron horse draweth nigh, with its smoke nostrils high,
Eating fire while he grazes, drinking water while he blazes,
Then the steam forces out, whistles loud—"Clear the route!"

For the iron horse is coming with a train in his wake.

We have isolated been, but soon we shall be seen,
Through this wide mountain region, folks can learn of our religion:

"Count each man many wives, how they're held in their hives,
And see those dreadful Danites, how they lynch many lives."

"Civilized" we shall be, many folks we shall see,
Lords and nobles, quacks and beggars, anyhow we'll see the niggers;
Saints will come, sinners, too, we'll have all that we can do,
For this great Union Railroad it will fetch the Devil through.

"My name is Joseph Hammond Watkins, Brigham City. I learned this song in 1868, or '69, rather. This song was composed by some people from Logan that had a contract on the Central Pacific Railroad in Weber Canyon in 1868. And the other . . . the railroad was coming in from the west, the Union Pacific, and this song was made appropriate for that occasion. This was in 1868, and the two railroads met at Promontory Point in 1869."

A6—ST. GEORGE. Sung by Rudger McArthur at St. George, Utah, 1947. Recorded by Austin E. Fife.

The first and last stanzas of this humorous, as well as prideful, song come very close to describing accurately the conditions faced by the early Mormon pioneers who settled southern Utah at the direction of Brigham Young. When certain families were notified by the authorities that they had been "elected" to emigrate there from Salt Lake to establish farms and communities, they "shuddered." Men came home from the meetings, and slapped their hats

down with a rebellious "I won't do it!" Overnight reflection, however, and a consciousness of their duty led them to ultimate acceptance of the task, and the wagons trekked south out of Salt Lake in the direction of Utah's "Dixie." The first street was nothing more than a strip of barren desert separating two lanes of wagons; women forgot what flowers had looked like; dust, alkali, and heat made life almost unbearable. Yet the pioneers stuck it out, and, for those at least who live there today, St. George is "a place that everyone admires!"

Oh, what a dreary place this was when first the Mormons found it,

They said no white man here could live, and Indians prowled around it.

They said the land it was no good, and the water was no gooder,

And the bare idea of living here was enough to make men shudder.

Refrain:

Mesquite! Soap-root! Prickly-pears and briars!

St. George ere long will be a place that everyone admires!

Now green lucerne in verdant spots redeems our thriving city,

Whilst vines and fruit trees grace our lots with flowers sweet and pretty,

Where once the grass in single blades grew a mile apart in distance,

And it kept the crickets on the hop to pick up their subsistence.

The sun it is so scorching hot, it makes the water sizz, sir,
And the reason that it is so hot is just because it is, sir.

The wind with fury here doth blow, that when we plant or sow, sir,

We place one foot upon the seeds and hold them till they grow, sir.

"The song was written by Charlie Walker, an early pioneer in the St. George Valley of Utah, in Washington County. The words and music was written by Mr. Walker, and the song was sung quite consistently by Samuel L. Adams, who was my grandfather."

PREFACE

SONGS AND BALLADS OF THE WEST (B side)

The songs and ballads on the B side of this record reflect certain other aspects of Western life than those dealing with the Mormons on the A side. They deal with varied subjects ranging from peaceful pursuits ("Starving to Death on a Government Claim," "Freighting from Wilcox to Globe") to outlaw life ("Sam Bass") and frontier Indian warfare ("Custer's Last Stand"). The record also includes two California songs ("Joe Bowers," "Root Hog or Die") and the Whitmanesque song which celebrates the names of the rivers of Texas ("The Brazos River"). This record, with its combination of Mormon and Western material, plus the long-playing record dealing with the cowboy songs of Texas (Library of Congress L28) serve as a solid introduction for teacher and student to the authentically traditional songs of the area commonly known as the Far West. For purposes of general study, the *Western Folklore*, published by the University of California Press, is again recommended to the student.

B1—ROOT HOG OR DIE. Sung by Jimmy Denoon, with guitar, at Bradleyville, Missouri, 1941. Recorded by Vance Randolph.

The original "Root Hog or Die" appears to have been a minstrel song dealing with the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, and it appeared in print in *The Dime Song Book* (Boston, 1859). It was very popular and parodies upon the original text were numerous. The present California version—via an eastward drift to Missouri—describes the poker, whisky, and calaboose vicissitudes of an emigrant.

Well, I went to California in the month [year] of
Seventy-six,
When I landed there, I was in a terrible fix,
Didn't have no money for victuals for to buy,
And the only thing for me was to—Root hog or die.

Well, I went from there down to Berloo,
I met with a feller who said he'd put me through,
'Twas in a game of poker that he gave the cards a sly,
And he took all my money, saying—Root hog or die.

Well, I got mad, and I begin to swear,
Poured down the corn juice till I got on a tear,

Marshall of the city he was standing there near by,
Took me to the calaboose to—Root hog or die.

Well, they took me to court next morning just at ten,
There stood the judge and a dozen other men,
They found me twenty dollars, that I thought was rather
high,
But there's no use a-whining, it was—Root hog or die.

Now come, young fellers, and take my advice,
Don't go to shooting poker, go to playing any dice,
For if you do, you'll get too much of rye,
And you land in the calaboose to—Root hog or die.

B2—STARVING TO DEATH ON A GOVERNMENT CLAIM. Sung and recorded by Vance Randolph at Galena, Missouri, 1941.

This song, located here in Lane County, Kansas, is sung by Vance Randolph, who learned it from the singing of Mr. C. C. Bayer of Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1917. Mr. Bayer, in turn, had acquired it traditionally from a family named Lampson, who lived near Fayetteville, Arkansas. It recounts in considerable detail the hardships of the early pioneer settler, hardships which he leavened with a sense of humor and thus made bearable. The song has been frequently collected, and is undoubtedly the best of "Government claim" or early settlement type. References: Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs*, Columbia, Missouri, 1948, vol. II, p. 186.

My name is Frank Taylor, a bachelor I am,
I'm keeping old batch on an elegant plan,
You'll find me out West in the county of Lane
A-starving to death on a Government claim.

Hurrah for Lane county, the land of the free,
The home of the bedbug, grasshopper and flea,
I'll sing of its praises and boast of its fame
A-starving to death on a Government claim.

My clothes they are ragged, my language is rough,
My bread is case-hardened and solid and tough,
But I have a good time and live at my ease
On common sop-sorghum and old bacon grease.

How happy am I when I crawl into bed,
With rattlesnakes rattling just under my head,
And the gay little bedbug, so cheerful and bright,
He keeps me a-going two-thirds of the night.

How happy am I on my Government claim,
I've nothing to lose and I've nothing to gain,
I've nothing to eat and I've nothing to wear,
And nothing from nothing is honest and fair.

Oh, come to Lane county, there's room for you all,
Where the wind never stops and the rains never fall,
Oh, join in the chorus and sing of her fame,
A-starving to death on a Government claim.

Oh, don't be down-hearted, you poor hungry men,
We're all just as free as the pigs in the pen,
Just stick to your homestead and fight with your fleas,
And pray to your Maker to send some more breeze.

Now all you poor sinners, I hope you will stay
And chaw on your hardtack till you're toothless and grey,
But as for myself I don't aim to remain
And slave like a dog on no Government claim.

Farewell to Lane county, the pride of the West,
I'm going back East to the girl I love best,
I'll stop in Missouri and get me a wife,
And live on corn dodgers to rest of my life.

B3—JOE BOWERS. Sung by Charles Ingenthron at
Walnut Shade, Missouri, 1941. Recorded by
Vance Randolph.

The source of this song has been much disputed,
ranging from those who consider it to be of Cali-
fornia minstrel origin to Mr. Ingenthron's explana-
tion that it is a *true song* made up by Joe Bowers
himself. With "Sweet Betsy from Pike" it has long
been a favorite in the West. It should be noted that
Mr. Ingenthron here sings it to the same tune he
uses for "Caroline of Edinburgh Town" on Library
of Congress record AFS 67B. For full references see
Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs*, Columbia, Mis-
souri, 1948, vol. II, p. 191.

My name it is Joe Bowers, I have a brother Ike,
I came from old Missouri, yes, all the way from Pike;
I'll tell you why I left there and how I came to roam,
And leave my dear old mother so far away from home.

I used to court a gal there, her name was Sally Black,
I axed her if she'd marry me, she said it was a whack!
But she says to me, "Joe Bowers, before we hitch for life,
You ought to have a little home to take your little wife."

"Oh, Sally, dear Sally, oh, Sally, for your sake,
I'll go to Californy and try to raise a stake."
Says she to me, "Joe Bowers, you are the man to win,
Here's a kiss to bind the bargain," and she hoved a dozen
in.

I: "Could you stop it, or..."

R: I've already stopped it..."

I: "Well, that's what I..."

R: "Just take your time..."

I: "Them songs, you know, that I...that I'm not used to
singing, I hang up on 'em. That's the trouble. I've
spoilt two."

R: "Just take your time, Charley."

When I got in that country, I hadn't nary red,
I had such wolfish feelings I wished myself most dead,
But the thoughts of my dear Sally soon made those feelings
git,
And whispering hopes to Bowers—I wish I had them yet.

At length I went to mining, put in my biggest licks,
Went down upon the boulders just like a thousand bricks;
I worked both late and early, in rain and sleet and snow,
I was working for my Sally, 'twas all the same to Joe.

At length I got a letter from my dear brother Ike,
It came from old Missouri, yes, all the way from Pike;
It brought to me the darndest news that ever you did hear,
My heart was almost busted, so pray excuse this tear.

It said that Sal was false to me, her love for me had fled,
Said she'd got married to a butcher, and the butcher's hair
was red;
And more than that the letter read, 'twas enough to make
me swear,
Said Sally had a baby, and the baby had red hair!

B4—CUSTER'S LAST CHARGE. Sung by Warde H.
Ford at Central Valley, California, 1938. Re-
corded by Sidney Robertson.

This bloody and gory account of the Battle of the
Little Big Horn very naturally elevates "blond-
haired Custer" to the rank of hero, whereas there
has actually been considerable military criticism of
his rather foolhardy attempt to subdue the Sioux
with the small force at his command. Certainly the
battle was not a "massacre" as it has been fre-
quently termed, since Custer, with his fully armed
troops, sought out the battle, rather than being
engaged in any ambush. The engagement, in which
Custer's troops were wiped out, took place on the
Little Big Horn in Montana on June 25, 1876. The
present text appears to be not far removed from
"literary" creation.

Across the Big Horn's crystal tide, against the savage Sioux,
A little band of soldiers charged, three hundred boys in
blue;
In front rode blond-haired Custer bold, pet of the wild
frontier,
A hero of a hundred fights, his deeds known far and near.

"Charge, comrades, charge! There's death ahead, disgrace
lurks in our rear!
Drive rowels deep! Come on, come on!" came his yells with
ringing cheer.
And on the foe those heroes charged—there rose an awful
yell,
It seemed as though those soldiers stormed the lowest gates
of hell.

Three hundred rifles rattled forth, and torn was human
form,
The black smoke rose in rolling waves above the leaden
storm;
The death groans of the dying braves, their wounded pierc-
ing cries,
The hurling of the arrows fleet did cloud the noonday skies.

The snorting steeds with shrieks of fright, the firearms'
deafening roar,
The (fire) war song sung by the dying braves who fell to rise
no more;
O'er hill and dale the war song waved 'round craggy moun-
tain side,
Along down death's dark valley ran a cruel crimson tide.

Our blond-haired chief was everywhere 'mid showers of
hurling lead,
The starry banner waved above the dying and the dead;
With bridle rein in firm-set teeth, revolver in each hand,
He hoped with his few gallant boys to quell the great Sioux
band.

Again they charged—three thousand guns poured forth their
last-sent ball,
Three thousand war whoops rent the air, gallant Custer
then did fall;
And all around where Custer fell ran pools and streams of
gore,
Heaped bodies of both red and white whose last great fight
was o'er.

The boys in blue and their savage foe lay huddled in one
mass,
Their life's blood ran a-trickling through the trampled prai-
rie grass,
While fiendish yells did rend the air, and then a sudden
hush,
While cries of anguish rise again as on the mad Sioux rush.

O'er those strewn and bloodstained fields those goading
redskins fly,

Our gang went down three hundred souls, three hundred
doomed to die;
Those blood-drunk braves sprang on the dead and wounded
boys in blue,
Three hundred bleeding scalps ran high above the fiendish
crew.

Then night came on with sable veil and hid those sights
from view,
The Big Horn's crystal tide was red as she wound her valleys
through;
And quickly from the fields of slain those gloating redskins
fled—
But blond-haired Custer held the field, a hero with his dead.

B5—SAM BASS. Sung by Lannis F. Sutton at Palo
Alto, Calif., 1949. Recorded by Sam Eskin.

An article by W. P. Webb, "The Legend of Sam Bass" (*Publications of the Texas Folklore Society*, vol. III, 226-230) gives the pertinent facts relating to Sam Bass. The following is quoted from it: . . . Samuel Bass was from Indiana. He was born July 21, 1851, came to Texas, raced horses, made his headquarters in Denton County, participated in some bank robberies and train holdups. He became the recognized leader of his band and enjoyed a wide reputation, which he achieved before he was twenty-seven years old. In the summer of 1878, he left Denton County with the intention of robbing a bank or train. With him were Murphy, the man who had arranged to sell him out to the officers of the law, also Seaborn Barnes and Frank Jackson. The plan was made to rob the Round Rock Bank on Saturday, July 20, 1878. En route to Round Rock, Murphy sent a note to Major John B. Jones, adjutant general of Texas, giving their plan. The result was that when Bass reached Round Rock the town was full of Texas Rangers and other officers of the law. On Friday, Bass, with Jackson and Barnes, went into Round Rock to look over the ground before their attempt to rob. While purchasing tobacco in a store adjoining the bank, they were accosted by officers of the law, and a battle ensued. Barnes was killed on the spot, along with an officer. Bass escaped with a mortal wound, was found next day in the woods, and died the following day, Sunday, July 21, 1878. On that day he was twenty-seven. Frank Jackson made good his escape and has never been heard from since.

Sam Bass was buried at Round Rock and a rather elaborate monument erected to him by friends. It bears simply his name, the dates of his birth and

death, and age. Beside him, beneath a simpler sandstone marker, lies his companion, Seaborn Barnes, and on the marker are the words—"He Was Right Bower to Sam Bass." Both Bass's monument and Barnes's gravestone have been mutilated and chipped by insensitive and non-historically minded souvenir hunters. May they join Jim Murphy in his "scorching."

Sam Bass was born in Indiana, that was his native home,
When at the age of seventeen, young Sam begin to roam;
He first came out to Texas a cowboy for to be—
A kinder-hearted fellow than Sam you never see.

Sam used to deal in race stock, one called the Denton mare,
He matched her in scrub races and taken her to the fair;
Sam used to coin the money and spend it very free,
He always drank good liquor wherever he may be.

Sam left the Collins ranch in the merry month of May
With a herd of Texas cattle the Black Hills for to see,
Sold out in Custer City and there got on a spree —
A harder set of cowboys you hardly ever see.

Sam had four companions, four bold and daring lads,
There was Richardson, Jackson, Joe Collins, and Old Dad;
A daring set of cowboys than Texas ever knew,
They whipped the Texas Rangers and run the boys in blue.

On their way back to Texas they robbed the U. P. train,
And then split up in couples and started out again;
Joe Collins and his partner was overtaken soon,
With all of their good money they had to meet their doom.

Sam had a good companion, called Arkansas for short,
He was shot by a Texas Ranger by the name of Thomas
Floyd;
Old Tom's a tall six-footer and thinks he's mighty fly,
Though I can tell his racket—he's a deadbeat on the sly.

Sam got back to Texas all right side up with care,
Rode into the town of Denton his friends all there to share;
Sam's life was short in Texas for the robbery he did do,
He robbed all off the passenger, mail, and express train,
too.

Jim Murphy was arrested, and then released on bail,
He jumped his bond at Tyler and taken the train for Terrell;
Old Major Jones had posted Jim, and that was all a stall,
It was a plan to capture Sam before the coming fall.

Sam met his fate at Round Rock, July the twenty-first,
They pierced poor Sam with rifle ball and emptied out his
purse;
Poor Sam is now a corpse and a-molding in the clay,
While Jackson's in the bushes a-trying to get away.

Jim borrowed Sam's good gold and did not want to pay,
The only way Jim thought to win was to give poor Sam
away;
He give poor Sam away and left his friends to mourn —
Oh, what a scorching Jim will get when Gabriel blows his
horn!

B6—THE BRAZOS RIVER. Sung by Mrs. Irene Carlisle at Farmington, Arkansas, 1942. Recorded by Vance Randolph.

So far as is known, "The Brazos River" has never been collected except for the single instance here given. Mrs. Carlisle learned it herself in 1921 from a hired man who had lived in Texas, but beyond that nothing is known of its origin or of its wider dissemination. It is a most unusual song celebrating the great rivers of Texas, and was very evidently created by some who knew and loved the land, and who also loved the names of the land. It deserves to be more widely known — certainly in the Lone Star State.

We crossed the broad Pecos, we forded the Nueces,
We swum the Guadalupe, we followed the Brazos,
Red River runs rusty, the Wichita clear,
But down by the Brazos I courted my dear.

Then lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, give me your hand,
Lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, give me your hand,
Lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, give me your hand,
There's a-many a river that waters the land.

The fair Angelina runs glossy and gliding,
The crooked Colorado runs weaving and winding,
And the slow San Antonio, it courses the plain,
But I never will walk by the Brazos again.

Then lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, pole the boat on,
Lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, pole the boat on,
Lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, pole the boat on,
My Brazos River sweetheart has left me and gone.

She kissed me, she hugged me, she called me her dandy,
The Trinity's muddy, the Brazos quicksandy,
She hugged me, she kissed me, she called me her own,
But down by the Brazos she left me alone.

Then lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, give me your hand,
Lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, give me your hand,
Lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, give me your hand,
The Trinity's muddy, but the Brazos quicksand.

The girls of Little River, they're plump and they're
pretty,
The Sabine and the Sulphur have many a beauty,
On the banks of the Natchez, there's girls by the
score,

And down by the Brazos I'll wander no more.
Then lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, give me your hand,
Lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, give me your hand,
Lie, lie, lie, lee, lee, lee, give me your hand,
There's a-many a river that waters the land.

B7—FREIGHTING FROM WILCOX TO GLOBE.

Sung by Abraham John Busby at Chandler, Arizona, 1949. Recorded by Peter Tufts on a joint project for The Library of Congress and the University of Arizona Folklore Committee.

Songs by and about the men who hauled freight in their great wagons in the early West are few and far between. There was ample time and opportunity for creating songs, however, and there is considerable evidence in Western literature that the men did sing songs of their own making, as well as other traditional songs handed on to them but not related to freighting. "Joe Bowers," for example, was a widely known favorite. With the passing of the bull whip and the heavy wagons, those songs directly related to freighting disappeared, just as the shanties and songs of the sailors disappeared with the passing of sail. A special effort deserves to be made in the West to collect those that may remain. This one from Arizona reflects something of freighting life, and also the individual American's unflagging and unregimented right to "cuss the boss." The slang phrase "pull your freight" may have had its origin

with the freighters, if not with this song. The refrain of "home, dearest, home" goes back to an earlier song honoring New England rather than the Gila, and has also since been adapted into an army song. For a more complete text of the present song, see John A. Lomax, *Cowboy Songs*, New York, 1938, p. 394.

Come all you jolly freighters that ever hit the road,
That ever hauled a load of coke from Wilcox to Globe,
That's the way I've made my living for ten long years or
more,
Hauling coke for Leverman and Myers, no wonder I am
poor.

So, it's home, dearest, home, home you ought to be,
Over on the Gila in the white man's counteree,
Where the poplar and the ash and mesquite will ever be,
Growing green along the river, there's a home for you and
me.

Barb wire and bacon is all that they would pay,
You get a check on Leverman to get your grain and hay,
You ask them for five dollars, old Myers'd scratch his pate,
And the clerks in their white collars say, "Get down and
pull your freight."

Perhaps you'd like to know, boys, what we have to eat,
A little bit of bread and a dirty piece of meat,
A little bit of coffee, and sugar's on the sly,
So it's go it if you like it, boys—Root hog or die.

