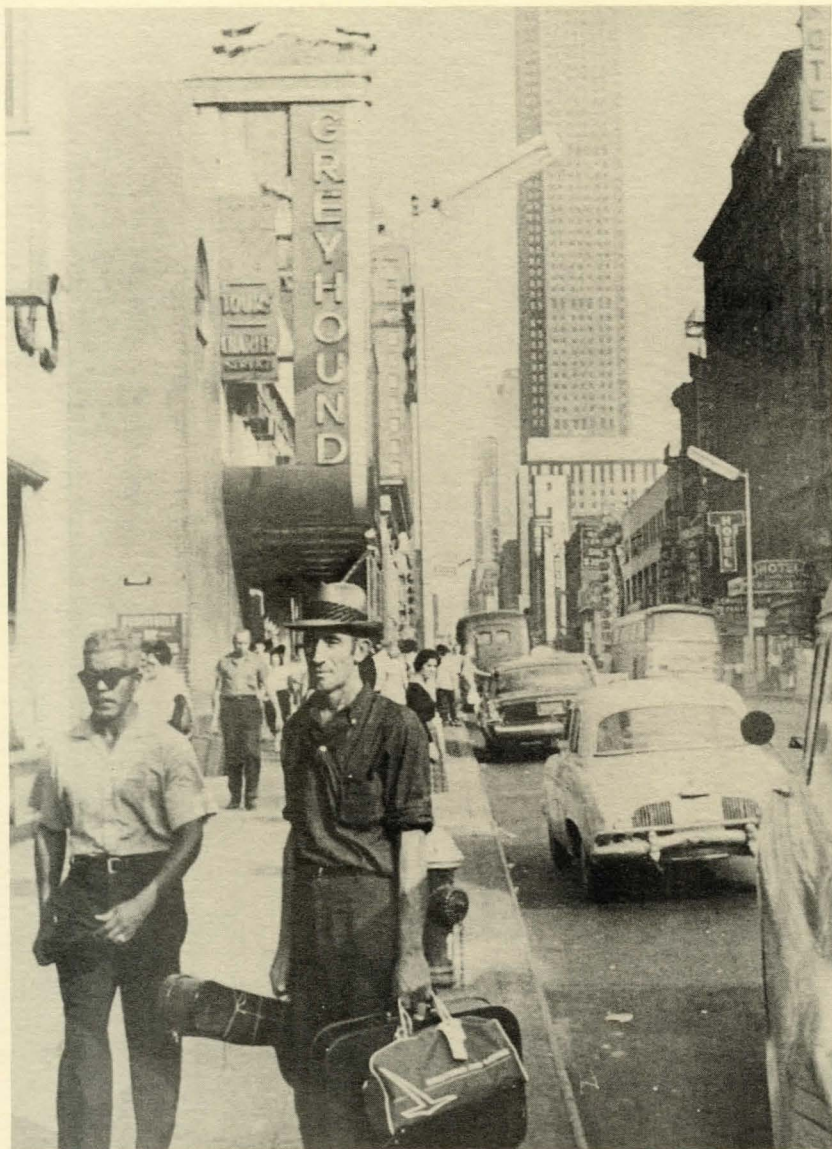


COUNTRY DANCE AND SONG

15

March

1985



Country Dance and Song

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Cover: Frank Proffitt arrives at Port Authority in New York City in 1961.

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Frank Proffitt: From Watauga County to Pinewoods Camp

edited by Jeff Warner

Editor's note: In June, 1984, Syracuse University Press published Traditional American Folk Songs: from the Anne & Frank Warner Collection, compiled and edited by Anne Warner. It is the story, in text, music, and photographs, of my parents' folk-song-collecting trips along the eastern seaboard, beginning in 1938. The following songs and profile of Frank Proffitt are taken from the book with the kind permission of Syracuse University Press, and from comments taped by the Warner family after a week with Proffitt at Pinewoods.

Frank Proffitt, farmer, carpenter, musical-instrument maker and singer, was born in Laurel Bloomery, Tennessee, in 1913. When Frank was a boy, his family moved to Watauga County, North Carolina, and it was there that Frank grew up, collecting songs, singing and playing music. Although he left school after the sixth grade, he read widely and until his death in 1965 corresponded with folk-song enthusiasts all over the world. Frank Proffitt was immensely proud of his mountain heritage and his people.

In January, 1961, after twenty-three years of friendship and correspondence with Frank Proffitt, Frank Warner convinced Proffitt to leave his mountain home to perform at the University of Chicago Folk Festival. Later that year, the Warner family took Frank Proffitt on a northern journey: to see New York City for the first time, to have his first contact with the Atlantic Ocean, and to be on the staff of Folk Music Week at Pinewoods Camp in Plymouth, Massachusetts. There he met and lived with, among others in the dance and song world, Douglas Kennedy, director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, and May Gadd, who first came to America from England in 1927 and was national director of CDSS from 1937 to 1972. The Pinewoods week and his explorations with the Warner family were experiences Proffitt would never forget. The following text is Frank Proffitt's own comments and observations.

Jeff Warner is a singer of traditional songs and president of CDSS.

I left home on the sixteenth of August [1961] at two-nineteen. A friend of mine come after me and we got in his car and went over to the town of Boone [North Carolina] and I caught the bus there. I arrived in Abingdon [Virginia] about four o'clock and transferred to a Washington bus. We come into Washington, D.C., sometime during the night. I was so sleepy I don't remember quite when I transferred to the other bus. The next day at ten o'clock I come into the great city of New York. I had saw a lot of pictures of New York City, and when I come to where I could begin to see the large buildings I knew that must be the place. I arrived at the station and there I was expecting to see my good friend, Frank Warner, perhaps reaching out his hand for me. I went into the station and everyone was in a hurry and a big run. I tried to ask around if there was a main station and a lot people just sort of went on by—they had other business—so I just stationed myself to where I knew if Frank come in that he couldn't miss me, and I stayed around almost two hours.

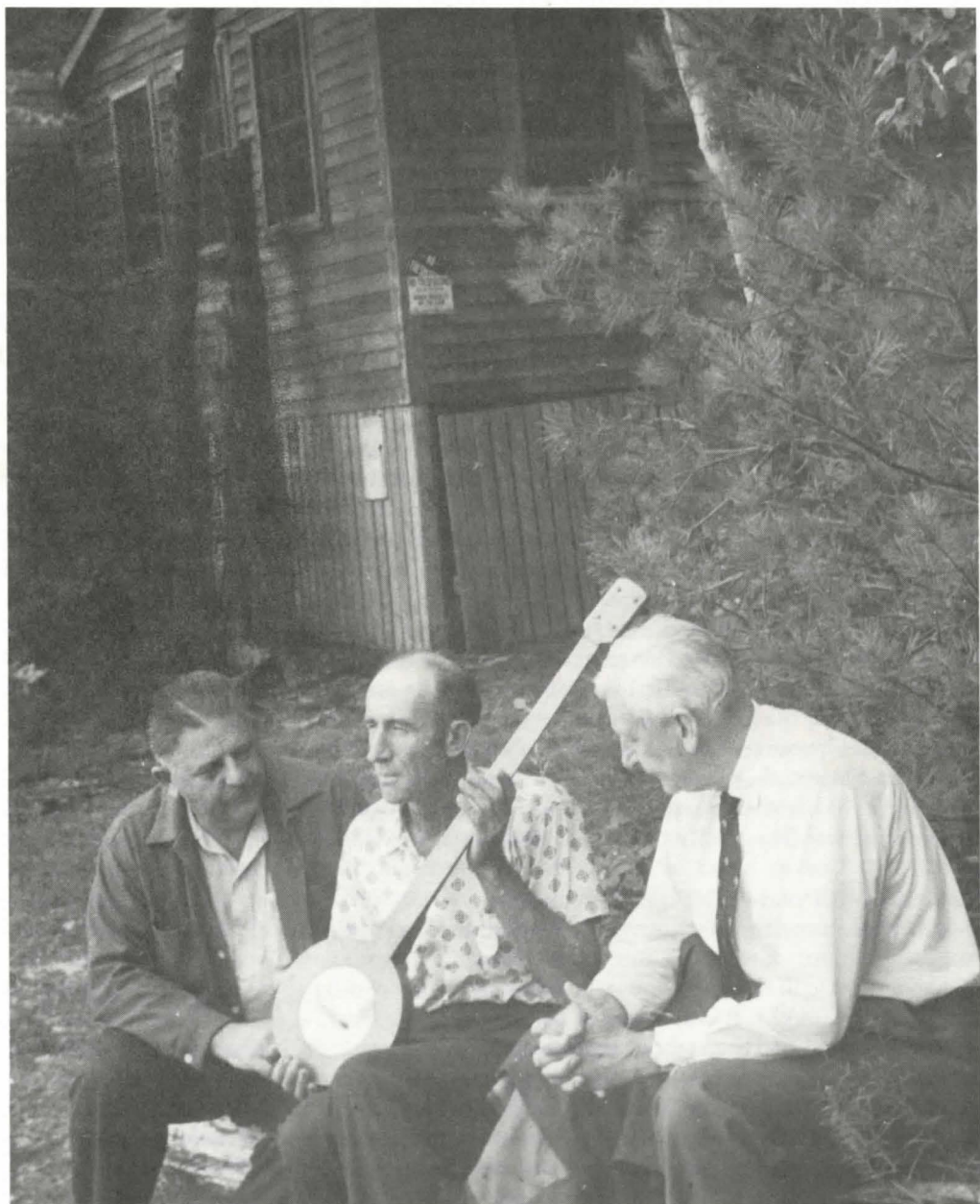
I don't know how he got behind me, but I turned around and there he stood, and he didn't speak for a minute, just looked. I don't suppose I ever saw anyone in my life that I was so glad to see.

Frank wanted to show me some of the sights, so we drove around New York City. We drove down Fifth Avenue; we went to a zoo and saw lots of animals I'd never seen before. We went down to what Frank called MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village and we went to see Wall Street where Frank said all the money was tied up or being circulated. The buildings was so large and there was so many people. I tried to look at the people and the buildings at the same time, which kept me very busy, and I was just astonished at it all, that there could be so much going on. In a way it looked like I expected it to, but it was on such an enormous scale that my mind could not adjust to it. So we drove out to Long Island. Frank said it was Long Island; I did not know, of course. It was good to visit the Warners. I never dreamed it would be possible for me to come such a long ways, but in Chicago Frank asked me there one day if I would like to go to Pinewoods and I told him I supposed I would. He showed me some pictures of groups at Pinewoods, of people just dressed in common everyday clothes, and I told him it did look like a good crowd to be in. He said it might be possible to make some arrangements to have me come up in August. Of course, I didn't hear anything more about it until up in May, but he finally wrote that I would have an invitation to come. So I didn't think of much else for a couple of months.

The day to leave for Pinewoods finally come, and we left Frank's home and drove to a place called Sturbridge Village. I noticed that all the waitresses wore clothing like was worn in the mountains many years ago, and maybe up to 1930. Lots of the older women never *did* give up that type of clothing: long dresses, flowing dresses, with bonnets on their heads. It brought back some very good memories to me.

Art* took me around and showed me the woodworking shop that I was interested in. I saw planes and bits and other handworking tools—draw knives and lathes and things that I had saw in the mountains working on a similar pattern. I could take up things and show the man

*Art Schrader, who was in charge of the music program at Sturbridge.



Douglas Kennedy and Frank Warner with Frank Proffitt (holding his fretless wood banjo) at Pinewoods.

that I knew the use of them. I sat down on what they call a shaving horse—you take a draw knife and you put your foot down against a shingle or board that they use to cover houses with, and you can thin it down with the draw knife. They had a pump augur that they bored logs with to pump water for long distances—a wood water pipe. Everything there was just good to see.

We had a big crowd on the Green. Art said it was the largest crowd that he had had. Seemed that everybody when they come by and heard what was going on, they seemed to just stop and stay and kept gathering around. It was wonderful. Jeff and Gerret sang and Frank sang, and I did. It seemed like the people all enjoyed it very much.

The next day we went on up into Massachusetts. I know that that evening we arrived at Plymouth, which I had read a lot about in my school books. After leaving Plymouth we got onto a road that led into wooded country, then we run off the hard-top onto a dirt road with perhaps some gravel on it. It was a lot like the roads down home. It wasn't long before I began to see signs that said "Pinewoods," so I knew we was getting close to our destination. On arriving there I began to see cabins in the woods, little rustic cabins. Frank and Anne pointed out that that would be the type of cabin I would stay in. I was assigned number two cabin, which was very close to the dining room. Jeff and Gerret was very close so I would not feel like I would be too lonesome. I was pleased to be close to the dining room. That night I heard the bell ring so I went to the dining room and found a large crowd lined up and we went in and picked up what food was there. There was a lot of noise—clinking spoons and rattling dishes—a lot of slapping me on the back, maybe when I was getting ready to take a bite of something! Everyone was so friendly but I was a little bit worn out that night because I had lost quite a bit of sleep. But the next morning I was feeling very good and I got up real early, way before the bell rang. I walked down to the dining room and soon was joined by other people. All the food was good and everybody was so friendly that I soon lost some of my shyness. Of course, I never did get over all of my mountain shyness.

The most interesting person that I met there—although everyone was interesting to me, everything that was said and done—but there was a wonderful gentleman from England whose name was Douglas Kennedy, and along with him was his wife, Helen. Most charming people. I had never heard in my life before a genuine Britisher talking. He gave some wonderful lectures. I will always remember his descriptions of things and of songs. He also sang a lot of funny songs—humorous. He had the greatest sense of humor I believe I ever heard.

I had my banjo in the camp house, standing up on the mantel of the fireplace, and it looked very good, I thought. It was made of black walnut. Several people had asked me about a banjo but when I told them about my banjo and that it was for sale, they didn't say whether they would buy that one or not. But on the last night I was sitting there when someone announced that they had decided—the camp had—to present my banjo, everyone donating some amount of money to make the price, to Mr. Kennedy and his wife to take back to England. This was all unknown to me. They brought the banjo over and asked me to present it to the Kennedys, and I did. I don't remember it all too clearly because I was so excited, but I do know that Mrs. Kennedy hugged my neck and gave me a wonderful kiss, and Mr. Kennedy got me by both hands and we had a very touchy scene there, I suppose! I don't know of anything . . . I have never felt more honored than to have my banjo to go to England

over there so far away. To have my banjo over there makes me feel a little closer to the land from which my people probably come.

The dance place [the C # dance pavilion] over there . . . I had never saw so many people all doing the same thing in my life before. I heard the noise of the dance and the music before I got to the place where they was dancing, and when I got there I saw everyone having a wonderful time. They was swinging and the music was very stimulating and you just got to feeling you ought to be doing something! I am afraid if I got up there I might have been carried away too much! But I would have liked to be into it. I was a little shy of being up there too. I was afraid the pattern would not fit the simple dances I knew from the mountains. People asked me about the type of dance we do in the mountains and that was hard for me to say because our dancing was not classified under names—I mean like in the books. Maybe they would call a dance “The Dog Run” or a four-hand reel, or some such name. It is hard for me to describe the kind of dancing when people asked me.

I went to an evening concert of recorder music and I thought that was very beautiful music. It brought out something very deep in me that I can’t describe. It was a feeling of wanting to go back to somewhere, like something coming back from a long time back. In the woods I could hear [recorders] and I don’t know anything like it. It is a feeling of a little bit of sadness and a little bit of gladness, maybe. You just can’t hardly describe it in a setting like those pinewoods in the whiteness of the evening. To hear somebody just playing on one or two in a cabin above or below. I think it was the most wonderful sound that I ever heard. I have heard some high-class music played by a brass band maybe, but that don’t give me the feeling of this type of thing, the recorder music. And what was that instrument . . . the harpsichord? That interested me. The sound would just be a sudden sound—it did not dwell.

It was a great experience to meet Miss Gadd. She was such a jolly type of person, so enthused about everything. Someone told me they called her Miss Gay instead of Miss Gadd because of her gaiety, and I see why they did. Of course I never did get to talk to her as much as I would have liked. We always tried to talk to each other where there was a crowd and a lot of noise—and, frankly, she talks very fast and she would have several things said before I could get it through my mind what she was saying. I think if we had been in a quiet place though, we might have had some very fine conversations.

While at Pinewoods Camp, I got a letter from home saying everyone was fine. Maybe a little better than if I was there! I went away once to work and was gone for two months and when I got back home I found that not too many people even knew I’d been away! I thought I would tell them about all my adventures and they did not seem to know I had been anywhere. That was a little disappointing! It will be hard to try to tell people about Pinewoods. Pinewoods is more of an experience—it goes deeper than words. The friendliness of the people and the spirit of the thing goes deeper than any words that I have and, I believe, than any words that anyone may have. It is a thing of emotions. As Mr. Kennedy pointed out, it is not all in your head or mine, but it stirs up things down deep in you, and so you just have to experience it before you are able to get it across, I think.

After Pinewoods, we went out on the Cape. The Warners told me it was the Cape, though; of course, I didn’t know. I did see signs that said “Cape Cod” and we went out there and were driving along and turned down a road towards Hyannisport and I began to see a

little water through the buildings. Then we got to a place by the water and parked. There was a few people there but not so very many. The Warners suggested that I walk down to the edge of the ocean and put my finger in the water. I was afraid that I might mire up in the sand, but I know that we went down and I watched the water. I noticed the movement of the water, which fascinated me. I just did not want to speak to anybody or have anyone speak to me. I just wanted to sit there and watch that—the movement of that water surging backwards and forwards, like the ticking of an old-timey clock, it seemed to me. I would like sometime to be able to spend a whole lot of time at the ocean side. That is a wonderful place out there on the Cape. I would have liked to go farther out.

We went out to have supper one night. Bert's—in Plymouth. I know we had a window where we could look out and see lobster boats. They gave me a menu which I have now; I am going to take it home just to show. Anyway, I looked at the menu and I did not know many of the things, so the Warners had to order for me. I know they suggested that I would like swordfish and they ordered lobster. When they brought it out I didn't know whether it was made to eat or was made to eat people! I know that it was a dangerous-looking thing to me. But there was a tool with which to work on it. I had a bite and it was a very wonderful taste, but I don't think I would want to come in contact with a live one at all. It is rather like a crawfish of an enormous size. But the swordfish—that was a wonderful kind of fish. I enjoyed that very much.

This has been the greatest experience of my life. I looked forward to it for many years and did not know whether it would ever be possible—and it has been far greater a trip than I could imagine. All of the things seen, all of the friends; it is something I will remember for many a day.

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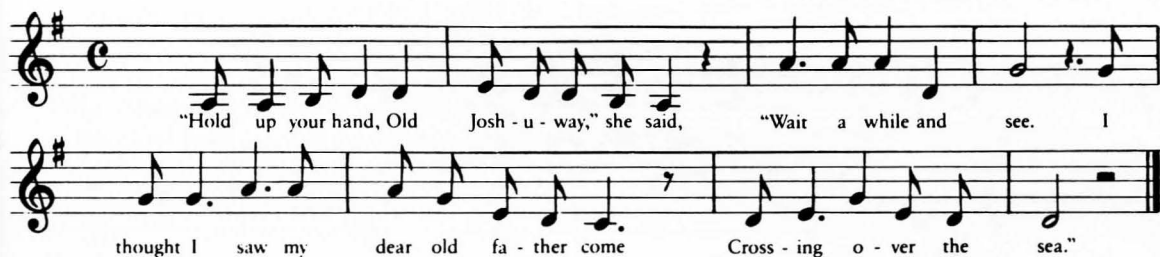
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The following songs, told to Anne and Frank Warner by Frank Proffitt, are collected in *Traditional American Folk Songs from the Anne and Frank Warner Collection* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984) and song notes are brief excerpts from the Warners' comments. Both are reprinted with the kind permission of the publisher. For more details on individual songs, see notes and referenced bibliography.

Hang Man

Frank Proffitt learned this version of "The Maid Freed from the Gallows" from his Aunt Nancy Prather, his father's sister. It has been collected very widely in this country and abroad—on the continent as well as in Great Britain. In some texts the condemned singer is a man. In Frank's version the "crime" for which the maid is to be hanged is stated—"For I have stole a silvery cup." Usually the reason for the execution is not mentioned.

See: Belden, 66; Brown, Vol. 2, 143; Child No. 95, 200 ("The Maid Freed from the Gallows"); Coffin and Renwick, 91, 243



"Do you have any money for me,
Gold for to pay my fee?
For I have stole a silvery cup
And hangeth I am goin' to be."

"I don't have any money for you,
Gold for to pay your fee.
I have just come for to see you hang
On yonders gallows tree."

"Hold up your hand, Old Joshuway," she said,
"Wait awhile and see.
I thought I saw my dear old mother come
Crossing over the sea."

"Do you have any money for me,
Or gold for to pay my fee?
For I have stole a silvery cup
And hangeth I'm a-goin' to be."

"I don't have no money for you,
Or gold for to pay your fee.
I have just come for to see you hang
On yonders gallows tree."

"Hold up your hand, Old Joshuway," she said,
"Wait awhile and see.
I thought I saw my own true love come
Crossing over the sea."

"Do you have any money for me
Or gold for to pay me fee?
For I have stole a silvery cup
And hangeth I am goin' to be."

"Yes, I have some money for you,
And gold for to pay your fee.
I have just come for to save your neck
From yonders gallows tree."

James Campbell

Also known as "Bonnie James Campbell" and "Bonnie George Campbell," this ballad was considered by Proffitt "in part a Proffitt family ballad. It was 'James Camill,' and we thought of it as an old riding song, with a swing . . . The tune would be called a fiddle tune, and that's how we thought of it. The words weren't sung much." That makes it even more interesting that the Scottish words and phrases and the name of the River Tay came down intact in oral tradition. Proffitt learned the song from his father and from Nancy Prather.

See: Bronson, Vol. 3, 291; Child No. 210, 497 ("Bonnie James Campbell"); Coffin and Renwick, 126, 258

The image shows three staves of musical notation in G-clef and common time (C). The melody is written on a single line. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Boot - ed and spurred And bri - dled rode he, A plume in his". The second staff contains: "sad - dle And a sword— at his knee. Back come the". The third staff contains: "sad - dle All bloody— to see. Home come his steed,— But nev - er come he." The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests, with a double bar line at the end of the third staff.

Boot - ed and spurred And bri - dled rode he, A plume in his
sad - dle And a sword— at his knee. Back come the
sad - dle All bloody— to see. Home come his steed,— But nev - er come he.

Riding on the highlands,
Steep was the way,
Riding in the lowlands,
Hard by the Tay.

Out come his old mother
With feet all so bare.
Out come his bonnie bride
Riving [tearing] of her hair.

The meadows all a-falling
And the sheep all unshorn.
The house is a-leaking,
And the baby's unborn.

But Bonnie James Campbell
Nowhere can you see,
With a plume in his saddle
And a sword at his knee.

For to home come his saddle
All bloody to see.
Home come the steed,
But never come he.

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Long-sword Dancing in England

Part II: Aesthetics and Regional Style

by Anthony G. Barrand

Long sword is a dancer's dance. It rarely produces the "oohs" and "aahs" of a strenuous caper dance in the style of the Cotswold morris, but it touches feelings in the performers and the audience that may be much more fundamental and lasting. The flowing, repeated circular figures of any of the long-sword dances can draw an audience in like no other form of the morris. Long-sword dancing does not yell "Look at me!"; it whispers and seduces and hypnotizes.

It is also largely misunderstood within the folk-dance revival. At the Christmas Country Dance School sponsored by Berea College in Kentucky, long sword has been offered for many years as a dance for children, girls as well as boys, presumably because it involves relatively little jumping and sweating. Yet the dances seem to have been maintained in England exclusively by men and there were, at least until recently, no women's teams performing long-sword dances in the contemporary mania for things morris. Even in North America, where the gender of morris dancers has not been the emotional issue that has colored the English dance landscape, there are only a couple of stable women's long-sword teams.

This has to be understood, however, in light of the fact that there are very few long-sword teams of *any* gender in North America. Many groups "put on" or "work up" a long-sword dance to perform with a death-and-resurrection type of play at Christmas time for a local pageant, but sword dancing has been a largely peripheral activity for most morris dancers. In this second part of my survey of the genre, I wish to introduce a set of observations on the

Anthony G. Barrand is Associate University Professor of Anthropology at Boston University and a specialist in English morris and sword dance.



Photo by Robert Hendry Brown

The author, a member of the Green Mountain Mummies, holding the lock.

richness and complexity of the long-sword dances as a regional phenomenon in Yorkshire and County Durham, England, and to suggest a framework for understanding the intrinsic aesthetic appeal of the dances.¹

Regional Variation

Long-sword dancing, like Cotswold morris dancing, has been taught until recently as a broad-scale regional phenomenon with differences conceived as a reflection merely of individual repertoire. When I finally was able to observe long-sword teams in Yorkshire, I was unprepared for the wide range of ways in which the dances differ, apparently according to their location within Yorkshire and County Durham.

The map (see Figure 1) shows the locations for which dance notations exist. Even without considering the performance contexts of these traditions, the choreography differs in five principle ways:

1. The relative importance of the sound of the feet on the floor and the movement quality of the basic step.
2. How many locks are made, if any at all, and what shape they are.
3. The combination of mirror-image and follow-the-leader figures.
4. How many figures involve different combinations of partners.
5. The number of speed and rhythm changes.

Let us examine these briefly.

The sound of the feet and the movement quality

Sharp does not convey much of an impression of variation in the basic step in his descriptions and notations in *The Sword Dances of Northern England*.² For years teachers at Pine-woods Camp had passed on a delightful but restrained general movement as appropriate for all of the long-sword dances, a step Sharp described as "a kind of leisurely tramp, or jog-trot, not unlike that used by soldiers when they advance slowly at the double."³ Earlier Sharp had written, "It is essential that the dance should be performed smoothly and easily and without any apparent fluster or excitement."⁴

When these effects are combined, one gets the general movement quality one sees in the group of dances from the Cleveland area of Yorkshire. This is currently best exemplified by the Loftus Sword dancers, though the Sleights and North Skelton variants are better known.⁵ Sharp published his description of the step for the dance from Kirkby Malzeard and later cited it for a number of the other traditions, including Haxby,⁶ Askham Richard,⁷ and Grenoside⁸ ("... similar to that used in the Kirkby dance, but firmer and less elastic"⁹). Rolf Gardiner, however, saw the traditional Kirkby side in 1924 and wrote:

There was no running but a very speedy quick-march step, the feet slithering over the floor, not shuffling quite, yet still never leaving the floor for more than a fraction of an inch. The dance was far compacter than we generally make it and gave rather more the impression of a rapper dance than the open Handsworth fashion.¹⁰



Figure 1. Distribution of long-sword dance traditions with extant notations (adapted from Trevor Stone, *Rattle Up, My Boys*).

Dancing meriting such a description produces a performance very much like that which can be seen in the Barnsley Sword Dancers' interpretation of the Kirkby dance, as taught by Ivor Allsop.¹¹

However, at Grenoside and Handsworth in the Sheffield area of South Yorkshire, the dance is driven either by the steady tramp of the iron-shod clogs (Grenoside), which evolves after each phrase into a "shuffle-off," or by the distinct drop onto the right foot (Handsworth).¹² In both dances the sound is critical to the aesthetic impact of the dance all the way through and the rhythms change from beginning to end. Sharp remarked of the Kirkby Malzeard dancers:

The steps fall on the first and middle beats of each bar of the music, and it is imperative that the tramp of the feet should be clearly heard and should synchronize with the rhythm of the music.¹³

Most of the other locations did not make notable use of the sound of the feet on the floor. At Bellerby¹⁴ and Greatham¹⁵ in the northern part of the long-sword area, the men danced with a hitching step, raising themselves up on the toe but not quite enough to make the movement a skip or a hop. At Flamborough the whole dance is performed with a skipping step, a movement which has led many teachers in the revival to see the dance, erroneously, as especially suitable for children.¹⁶

On the North Yorkshire moors in the area known as Cleveland (North Skelton,¹⁷ Loftus, Lingdale,¹⁸ Goathland,¹⁹ Sleights²⁰), however, the dancers move smoothly and seem almost to glide over the surface with each step being placed carefully and quietly on the ground.

The number of locks

Also in Cleveland, the dancers proceed through a set of "figures," each of which begins with a clash of the swords and a series of circular movements and ends with the lock being made, held aloft, and broken. Typically, the lock is made a different way each time. At Loftus the swords are locked together and broken six times, and at Sleights five. At most locations, the lock is made only once during the dance and that usually at the end. At Grenoside, however, the lock is made almost at the beginning of the dance and at Greatham the lock is not made at all during the dance but rather at a particular point in a play of which two dance sequences are part.²¹

For the most part, the lock is the familiar six- or eight-point star into which a character's head is put. In some places there is no decapitation (Handsworth) and in at least one, Kirkby Malzeard, Sharp was told that the traditional lock was triangular (see page 19).²² Trevor Stone speculates that other shapes of locks such as the eight-sword square lock (depicted in Figure 2) might have been common if, as seems likely, the dance developed and existed independent of a play of any sort.²³ He reasons that if there is no need to leave an opening for someone's head, then the swords can be in any configuration. In fact, the square lock can be made by eight dancers following procedures for making a six-sword triangular lock.²⁴

The Handsworth, Haxby, and Kirkby Malzeard dances are dominated by what I will call follow-the-leader figures.²⁵ These involve movements by all of the dancers moving one at a time under or over one or two swords with the general flow being all in one direction, usually counterclockwise. In England, we used to call this "Indian file." The appearance is of a continuously flowing circle with a perturbation at one point as the dancers negotiate their way over a sword or pop through under an arch. Haxby and Kirkby also have the two classic mirror-image figures in which a pair of dancers go over or under a sword together and separate to either side before returning back to place. Mirror-image figures dominate the

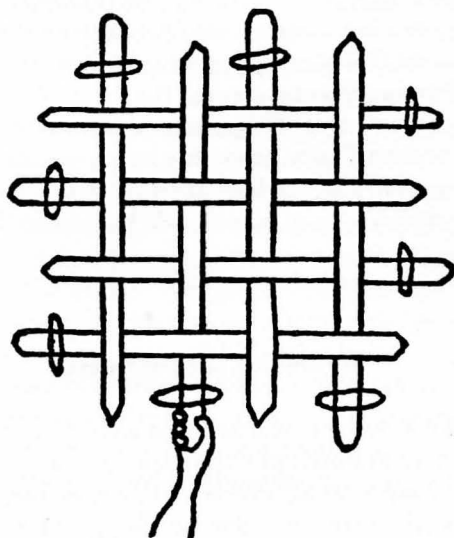


Figure 2. Eight-sword square lock (from Trevor Stone, Rattle Up, My Boys).

long-sword dances of the northern part of Yorkshire and County Durham, especially the Cleveland family. It is, in fact, notable that in the complex dances from the Cleveland area the follow-the-leader figures seem to be completely missing. The most northerly of the long-sword dances, Greatham, has a figure called the "roll," which is for all the world like the rapper movement called "curly." In this figure the repeated movements made by dancers going under an arch and returning to place give the appearance of a pair of symmetrical circles, which is typical of rapper-sword dances from County Durham and Northumberland immediately to the north.

Summarizing, there is, broadly speaking, a *tendency* for the dances to emphasize the follow-the-leader figures in the south and mirror-image figures in the north.

Both sets of figures, of course, involve all six or eight dancers. Without exception, however, all long-sword dances have at least one figure that involves fewer dancers working together. Dancers can move individually without being linked as, for example, in a hey for three (Loftus) or in a circular hey for six (Grenoside). Dancers can move linked in pairs ("windows" and the "roll" in the Cleveland dances, "poussette" at Greatham). At Ampleforth, the unique "three-reel" figure is performed by two groups of three connected dancers.²⁶

Some dances, for example Handsworth and Kirkby, take very little advantage of these different groupings, whereas others such as the current Loftus dance and Grenoside make great use of them.

Change of speed and rhythm

Similarly, some dances introduce contrast into the performance with changes in the speed and rhythm of the music. At Grenoside, two songs and three tunes, each with a different rhythm (slip jig, jig, and hornpipe), occur during the dance. At Handsworth and Haxby, the "snake" or "over your neighbor's sword" figure is done to a different tune from the rest of the dance. At Sleights, the fifth figure needs two more dancers, making eight, and begins with a slow part, the "No Man's Jig," which then picks up into the regular tempo of the earlier sequences. These differences of speed and rhythm are less regional in their distribution.

Aesthetic Considerations

What are the aspects of the dance that make it so attractive to dancers?

The first feature emerges out of the intense need for teamwork inherent in the choreography. To make a figure happen at all, everyone has to be working together. Long sword demands that the individual dance with the whole set for the dance to work. Garland dancing shares some of this quality, but, with sword dancing, the dancers are connected in such a small space that there is little room for error. For the dancer who is challenged by the experience of creating and being embedded in the larger unit of the set, sword dancing demands more and gives back more in ways that other morris forms do not. All team activities benefit when interactive cooperation occurs between the participants; sword dancing simply cannot be done without it.

Hard as it may be for lovers of solo-display dance forms such as clog or break dancing to understand, there is deep psychological satisfaction to be found in the loss of self that occurs in the best set dancing. In my experience, it is rarely achieved to a point where one gets the unmistakable feeling that something else is in charge, that the power and the movement is being given from outside one's self or even from outside the set, but when it does occur it is very vivid and in a different league from anything experienced as a solo performer. The dancer becomes a vital part of something much larger and more powerful than the cluster of dancers who comprise the group. Long sword brings the dancer to a level of cooperative

movement with other people that sets up the conditions under which that feeling is more likely to occur.

There are also special visual qualities for the performer and the audience. Unexpected, magical things happen when the dancers gather around a cauldron of circular, hypnotic, monotonous motion. The making of the lock is particularly appealing; spectators are never sure how it is done. Is it by magnets, or mirrors, or magic? However many times one has woven the swords together and released the lock so it can be held aloft at the end of a figure, there is still a very satisfying thrill when it goes together quickly with a sharp rasp of steel against steel, looks pretty and evokes a gasp or a round of applause from the crowd.

People familiar with meditation techniques will be aware of the power of repetition and monotony. Monotony has negative connotations in our culture; we insist on the new and the original for our basic diet. Repeated movements, however, are hypnotic and touch primitive and sometimes uncomfortable parts of our psyches. I suspect that the quality of seeming both very old and yet very alive at the same time is a lasting memory for someone seeing a sword-dance performance. The viewer may not fully understand what is going on, but it gnaws away at him and makes food for thought for a very long time. For the dancer, the monotony of the circles produces a special sort of involvement in the set. On the choreographic side, circles are hard figures to make well. Most sword dances consist of a series of small or large circles. Done well, the changes through different sizes of circle give the appearance of measured breathing which is at once soothing and musical, dramatic and full of surprises. But a sword dance is more than just a series of circles. Much of the magic for an audience comes from the sudden changes of direction and the shapes that evolve in the figures. Some dances exploit this by making a long series of sudden changes from six linked men dancing together to a figure with couples linked, from dropping swords and separating for a hey to making a tunnel with raised arches. The current Loftus team has put together sequences of figures that evolve through a bewildering array of transformations. A spectator is necessarily puzzled, much as at a magician's performance, as to how some things are possible when everyone is connected and how the dancers got from one formation into another so quickly.

Art delights by making unexpected changes. Traditional art forms have the added benefit of willingly absorbing and incorporating the past with the present; they are not artifacts of another time and place. Long-sword dancing is a contemporary entertainment form that establishes a sense of place, tells about the people who shaped the dances at other times and serves as an expression of the individuality of the dancers who now join together.

Although long-sword dancing developed as the exclusive property of a limited number of locations throughout Europe and especially the County of Yorkshire in England, my own experience dancing for ten years with the Green Mountain Mummers in southern Vermont assures me of its ability to take root anywhere. I encourage the reader to get a team started, to establish regular times and locations for dancing. If you already do a sword dance, there is great reward to be found in raising its status from party piece to community representative.

1. "Long-sword Dancing in England, Part I: Definition and Resources," *Country Dance and Song*, 14, May 1984, pp. 15-21.
2. Sharp, Cecil, *The Sword Dances of Northern England*, Wakefield, England: E.P. Publishing Ltd. (originally Novello & Co., London), 1977 (1912).
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 41.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 39.
5. Witnessed and recorded on videotape by the author, December 1982.
6. Sharp, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 87; also witnessed and recorded on videotape by the author, December 1982.
7. Sharp, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 78.
8. Cf. author's films from December 1976 and July 1979 (available on Barrand, A.G., *Ceremonial Dance in England*, 1979, videotape series, CDSS, 1979, Tape #10) and videotape of December 1982.
9. Sharp, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 56.
10. Barrand, A.G. (ed.), *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes, Vol. IV, Sword Dances*, CDSS, 1984, "Northeastern Long Sword," p. 24.
11. Witnessed and recorded by the author on videotape, December 1982.
12. Sharp, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 37-49; also author's films, 1976 and 1979, *op. cit.*, and videotape of December 1982.
13. Sharp, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 41.
14. Karpeles, Maud, "Some Fragments of Sword Dance Plays," *JEFDS*, 2nd Series: 2 (1928), 35-48.
15. Peacock, N. "The Greatham Sword Dance," *JEFDS*, 8:1 (1956), 29-39; also, A.G. Barrand, *Ceremonial Dance in England*, *op. cit.*, Tape #10.
16. Sharp, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 28-39.
17. Kennedy, Douglas N., "The 'North Skelton' Sword Dance," *JEFDS*, 2nd Series 1 (1927), 28-42.
18. I do not know of a notated source for the Lingdale Primrose dances. I have a copy of a film made by Roy Dommett at the Albert Hall (1965). Partial notation exists in Barrand, A.G., *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes, op. cit.*, Vol. IV, in "Longsword in Cleveland."
19. The Goathland dance has recently been revived. James Morrison witnessed and notated it and taught the dance at Pinewoods Camp in 1981; see also, Karpeles, *op. cit.*
20. "Longsword in Cleveland," *op. cit.*; Sharp, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 13-27.
21. Peacock, *op. cit.*
22. Cited by Roy Dommett in Barrand, "Northeastern Long Sword," *op. cit.*
23. Stone, Trevor, *Rattle Up, My Boys: The Story of Longsword Dancing—A Yorkshire Tradition*, Bradford, W. Yorkshire, England: privately published, 1979.
24. Please refer to "The Triangular Lock," which follows this article.
25. I am indebted to my students Cynthia Sughrue and Kari Smith for their invaluable suggestions on the descriptions of these figures.
26. Sharp, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 50-76.

The Triangular Lock

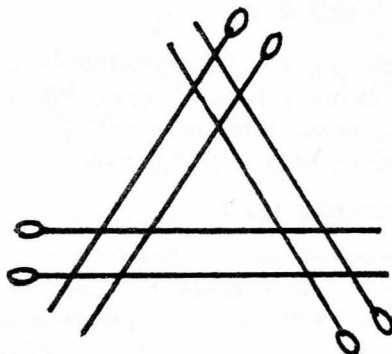
by Anthony G. Barrand

This is one way of making the triangular lock that Sharp reported as the traditional lock for the Kirkby dancers in his field notes. At that time, no one on the side knew how to do it. I devised this pattern in the spring of 1983. Dancers are numbered counter-clockwise.

1. Cross hands right over left as in the standard right-over-left lock until you are able to take the point of your left-hand neighbor's sword in your right hand. Let go with your left hand and bring it out from under your right hand and grasp the new point so that the hands are now uncrossed (keep knuckles together).
2. #1, #3 and #5 do nothing yet. #2, #4 and #6 pass their hilts (right hand) to the left-hand dancer (#2 to #1, #4 to #3, #6 to #5) so that this sword lies parallel to and inside the sword held by that person (making a double triangle).
3. #1, #3, and #5 take the new handle in the right hand, and #2, #4, and #6 take the hilt from this person in the right hand. (At this point dancers should be standing shoulder to shoulder in pairs. Readjust hands so that #1 has #2's hilt and #2 has #1's hilt, and the pair of swords each holds is not crossed. Each dancer still has a hilt in the right hand and a point in the left.
4. Make the first lock by crossing right under left; then make the third joint by #1 placing the point in his left hand under the hilt in the right hand of #2, etc.

The only tricky part is after #2 has passed the hilt the hands have to uncross swords to get into position to lock them correctly. One key is for pairs to be shoulder to shoulder.

The triangular lock can be made in a count of 12 (6 measures) but 16 (8 measures) is comfortable (8 to do the first pass, 4 for the next and 2 each for the locks.)



Double triangular lock from Kirkby Malzeard, as reported by Cecil Sharp.

"Hi Ho the Rattlin' Bog": An Interview with John Langstaff

by Jerry Epstein

Much of John M. Langstaff's biography, at least through 1945, is contained in the interview presented here. Jack, to those who know him, was instrumental in starting Early Music Week and Folk Music Week at Pinewoods Camp in 1956. He had an extensive career as a concert baritone in North America and Great Britain. At the same time, he never lost his deep interest in and dedication to traditional music and dance. He currently works full time for Revels, Inc., of Cambridge, Massachusetts, providing artistic direction for Christmas Revels in Cambridge, New York, Hanover [New Hampshire] and Washington, D.C.

The impetus for the following interview was countless conversations with Jack over many years. They demonstrate a vast knowledge of a "middle period" of the folk revival—the 1930s—after the very first students of folk music had begun their work, thus laying the basis for what came afterward. Jack's stories give a valuable perspective to several aspects of the folk revival during that time. The material reprinted here was taped at the Pinewoods Folk Music Club weekend in October, 1981.

Jerry Epstein: What kind of music was in your home when you were a child? When did you first hear folk songs?

Jack Langstaff: Lomax had started to collect; Sharp had collected, but the general public didn't know much about American folk music. It was European folk music that we knew about. But my mother did have these big books of Sharp's on the piano. We called them "silhouette books" because they had wonderful silhouette illustrations in them.

Jerry: These were songs your mother sang?

Jerry Epstein, founder of the New York Pinewoods Folk Club, has been a member of the CDSS Executive Committee for nine years. He has sung throughout the eastern United States, England and Scotland, is music director of the New York Revels, and dances with the Greenwich Morris Men. He has accompanied John Langstaff on piano, concertina, and guitar in numerous concerts and programs.

Jack: She sang them, and of course she played the piano, so I never heard anyone sing unaccompanied. She probably sang to me in bed unaccompanied, but I don't remember that. But I do know the first note I sang! If she would start on, let's say, a G, I would sing a C at the end. I learned this song also later in school—it was done terribly in school:

There were three gypsies come to my door,
And downstairs ran this a-lady O,
One sang high and the other sang low
And the other sang "Bonny, bonny Biscay . . . O."

And that "O" is what I would sing, that would be my note. I couldn't sing any songs, but I sang the last note. Another song she sang that made a great impression on me was "The Four Marys." She told me a wonderful, romantic story about it (which was all wrong)—that it was made up by Mary Queen of Scots when she was about to be beheaded. I later found in my father's library that Andrew Lang had written pages on this song, about the Russian aspect and so on. Much later, at the first Folk Music Week, we studied the ballad with Evelyn Wells.¹

Jerry: Did your father sing?

Jack: He did sing, but most of the songs in the family were with piano and they weren't really folk songs, like "O No, John." My father had made a great collection of Christmas songs and carols before most people knew about them (he got them out of books, of course). Among them was the carol "*King Herod and the Cock*." He always used to sing it—that was *his* song, and I heard him sing it many, many times. He still sings it, although he doesn't always get the words quite right. He's ninety-seven.

Jerry: At what point did you become aware that there was a classification called "folk music"?

Jack: I never did. It was all music. Of course at choir school I was learning other kinds of music. But I had a teacher, a wonderful teacher who had a great influence on my entire life, not just in music, but in the entire field of teaching and working with children. Hers were the paths that led me to Dr. Vaughan Williams and Douglas Kennedy and the others you'll hear about later.

Jerry: How old were you?

Jack: I was ten or twelve years old [in the early 1930s], and she was teaching at a little progressive school in Brooklyn. I was so painfully shy at that time—how I got up in front of people to sing I don't know—but my mother said, "I think you'll like your teacher at your new school."

I was scared and I said, "How do you know?"

"Well," my mother said, "she really likes Robin Hood."

I thought that anyone who liked Robin Hood would be okay. So I went to this school, and this teacher, Carol Preston, introduced us to things like . . . dancing—country dancing, which I'd never done before. Carol Preston was then living with two other women, May Gadd,

who was recently over from England, and a doctor named Peggy Stanley-Brown, who became one of the first presidents of the American branch of the EFDSS. It was through them that I first met Philip Merrill. There sometimes comes a time in life when someone like Carol Preston plays a role that even your parents can't play. Carol Preston didn't treat me like a child; our friendship was on that basis.

She wanted to go down to the South to see a friend named John Powell. She thought I could go and be a kind of handyman. I couldn't drive or anything. She had this little car, and there were times. . . . I remember the car overheated, and she went into a gas station to get something. I got a hose to squirt water on the engine; it held us up for hours while the engine dried out. I was a great handyman!

But we made it down to the mountains and headed for a place called White Top Mountain. At the bottom of this mountain was a place called Hungry Mother State Park. It had some college buildings and people interested in folk music came and stayed in these dormitories. I was the only young kid around and of course what they were talking about was way over my head. But it was a great experience because I was with Carol Preston, and she was close to John Powell.

Jerry: Powell was a collector?

Jack: He was a collector. He was also one of our earliest fine American pianists. He was very interested in what they called at that time "Negro music." His "Negro Rhapsody" was one of the big works played around the country at that time. Powell was really a wild, eccentric person. He was very into *Beowulf*. About midnight he'd just start to gear up. By three or four in the morning he'd be reading me *Beowulf*, and by that time I'd think I understood it!

Powell was down there giving lectures on folk music. One day people were getting up and singing songs, and Powell stormed in—he was very outspoken. It wasn't what he wanted to hear, it was some songs they had heard on the radio. I could see this whole thing happening where the mountain people were amazed that anyone was interested in the *other* kind of songs they knew—the songs they sang in their cabins that weren't on the radio.

Then, I remember, a Mr. Russell got up on the stage; it was the first time I had heard a really traditional singer. He didn't have much of a voice, and it amazed me that he would get up in public and sing that way. Also he had no accompaniment—no piano! I had never heard that. I know it's hard to believe today, but some of the records I made in England later were some of the first unaccompanied songs recorded commercially.

He got up and sang this carol:

Jesus born in Bethlea, Jesus born in Bethlea,
Jesus born in Bethlea, and in a manger lay.
And in a manger lay, and in a manger lay;
Jesus born in Bethlea and in a manger lay.

There was also another man—Mr. Ward—who was an incredible banjo player. He played like I never had heard.² I've got a picture of this man; I had an old Brownie box camera. Well, during the day we would all drive up White Top Mountain; then late at night we'd come down and sleep in these college dormitories where there had been lectures I was later able to

Jesus Born In Bethle-a

Je-sus born in, Beth-le-a Je-sus born in

Beth-le-a Je-sus born in Beth-le-a And

in a man-ger lay And in a man-ger

lay and in a man-ger lay

Je-sus born in Beth-le-a and in a man-ger

lay

draw into Pinewoods at the first Folk Music Week. Mrs. Roosevelt was there, George Pullen Jackson, John Lomax—Alan Lomax was probably there as a young man too. The mountain people came . . . in cars, trailers, wagons and on horses; they camped out and they danced, sang and told stories.

One of the people I met there was "Sailor Dad" Hunt. There are records of him in the Library of Congress. . . . I haven't done these songs in so long, I hope I can remember:

O you talk about your harbor girls
And round the corner Sally:
'Way, haul away, haul away me Rosie,
'Way, haul away, haul away me Rosie-O.

What amazed me too about the best of these singers, as I started to study this material more, was the tremendous sense of rhythm they had: real rhythm—what rhythm is all about—and a natural sense of phrasing.

Another man there was the marvelous blind singer, one of the greatest they ever found in the mountains, Horton Barker. He was a person I always wanted to get to Pinewoods but was never able to.

I remember a story: Once John Powell got a group of these people together, and they all came to the White House to see the Roosevelts. Sailor Dad was asked by the press what he thought of the President, but he had something to say about Mrs. Roosevelt: "She's such a common woman." The reporter didn't understand, but Sailor Dad was using that wonderful word: She was common to everyone.

Also, once when Douglas Kennedy was in this country (Douglas told me this story)—he, John Powell and Horton Barker were doing a radio show for NBC in New York. They came out in the evening on Fiftieth Street; blind Horton Barker grabbed Douglas' arm and said: "Smell the sea!" How many people in the middle of Manhattan smell the sea? Douglas, being a seaman himself, appreciated that. Here's another story. It's way back so you'll just have to believe it. . . .

Jerry: This is at that same White Top Festival?

Jack: Same White Top Festival. There was a wonderful singer there who sang ballads. He had a price on his head, and he was being hunted by the police all through the counties around there. They'd been hunting for some time. It seems that everyone knew him as the great ballad singer around there, so they made a deal. He could come to the festival, and he was to sing the first night, which he did. They would give him that night to get away, then he would again be hunted down as of the next day. We were there in that audience, and the sheriff's men were all around listening to him sing. The next morning he was gone, and the sheriff's men were gone too. It was marvelous to think that that could happen in this country.

Another man that I met there who made a great impression on me was Richard Chase. He was a young man then, and actually it was through him that I got into morris dancing. I had seen morris in New York, but I was just a shy kid. Richard actually got me dancing; he introduced me to one of the mountain girls, and she just grabbed me and pulled me into

dancing. We did that big set as well as the small four-couple set, and I've just been dancing ever since.

Richard at that time was collecting songs, and he was also collecting the folk tales. Right there in our dormitories he had brought two old men, two farmers, from whom he collected all those *Jack Tales*.³ It was marvelous for me in a lot of ways. These men didn't write and they didn't read, and I'd never known people like that really. To talk to these men was very special, and I really had the sense that these men had something you could never find in New York City.

One more story about Richard, because I think it tells a lot about Richard and how tradition is passed on. He was earning some money going around doing Punch and Judy, and once he took me along in this old rattletrap car. He'd set up in some little town, and people would come to watch his Punch and Judy. I had never seen it before, and I've never seen it since the way Richard did it, though I've seen many puppeteers do it. He was a traditionalist and he had studied it a lot. He did it in a very traditional manner. Then he'd pass the hat—make about thirty or forty cents. Well, we were driving out of town and he saw a bunch of boys leaning up against a fence. He stopped the car: "Hey boys! Come over here. Have you even done a sword dance?"

They didn't know what he was talking about. "A sword dance?" They were high-school kids.

"You go down in the bushes there and cut me some of those long sticks."

So they got sticks, and as he was talking, they were peeling. He showed them how to make a lock and so on. Well, they made the lock, they wound underneath and circled all around. When it was learned, he got up on the fence with his harmonica or three-hole pipe and played some tunes, "Girl I Left Behind Me" or something. They went through this thing, ending with this star which they held up. Then he said good-bye and we left. I often wonder . . . those fellas would be a little older than I am. . . I wonder if they ever get together and dance.

Jerry: Was it around that time that you started dancing in New York?

Jack: Yes, because Carol Preston introduced me to it. In those days CDSS had incredible festivals I must say. When I got to be sixteen or seventeen they put me on the morris team. I don't know how I danced with all those fellows on the team who were six foot three or four: Bob Hider, Russ Houghton, Ken Knowles and the rest.

It was interesting that so many of us were taught morris by women. I often think of that when I hear about women's morris having had a bit of a time developing their own thing. There was Lily Conant, May Gadd, Helen Kennedy, Maud Karpeles.

I've seen the dancing change a lot. Douglas Kennedy is such a natural dancer—animalistic you might say, he wouldn't mind me saying that. He believes in natural movement. There's nothing academic in his dancing, but I remember in those early days everyone wore white sneakers. And when you danced you were practically falling on your face. It's of course better to have your body forward than back, but it got ridiculous. Nowadays things are much more natural. I'm sure it was always natural, it was just when some of the revival people picked it up.

In those days at the Christmas festival, people literally wore evening dress. I wanted to take one of my classmates. Her mother called up my mother and said: "Esther, Joan has her evening dress on, but she says that Jack says she has to wear sneakers with it. What's up?"

Jerry: I remember you saying that you had seen Indians in the Southwest do a dance similar to morris dance.

Jack: Southwest and Indian tradition is another interest that was introduced to me by Carol Preston. That's another story for another time. But one of my great disappointments was that I always hoped we could get a grant to bring Douglas Kennedy to this country and have him go to the Southwest to study those Indian dances. He would have put his finger on things that no one else could. He knew not only English dance, but African dance, Eastern European; others have put down dance steps, but Douglas understood it in terms of the meaning that comes from the movement of the whole body.

Jerry: You mentioned Philip Merrill, whom you met through Carol Preston.

Jack: Yes. One summer Carol Preston had borrowed a cottage from a friend, quite near here in Kent [Connecticut]. I spent the summer there with her and Phil. Phil had gone to the Eastman School of Music. He had three great friends there, Melville Smith, Alec Wilder and Jimmy Quillian. They were all interested in dancing, and it seems that Philip was a really magnificent dancer. He was struck with tuberculosis and was in Saranac Lake for a couple of years. When I met him he had just gotten out and was still very weak. He never was able to dance again, but he's a wonderful pianist. One thing I learned from Philip, and I feel very strongly about this: his playing has a great sense of "dance." When he plays, or when Douglas sings, it has that same quality; when Horton Barker sings, that same quality.

I remember at the first Folk Music Week at Pinewoods [1956] Melville Smith gave a lecture on rhythm; the next night Douglas gave a lecture on rhythm the exact opposite of what Melville Smith had said. Melville Smith had spent a year with the Benedictine monks at Solesmes, which is the greatest place in the world to hear Gregorian Chant. Douglas approached rhythm from a very different standpoint—of nature, waves and the body.

Jerry: I guess you, like many others, were interrupted in following tradition by the war?

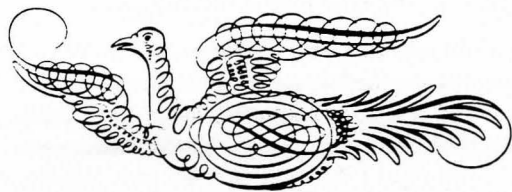
Jack: Just before the war I wasn't really involved in traditional music. I was at the Curtis Institute, where I had a scholarship as a singer. I was studying under Richard Bonelli, and I had some of the greatest teachers of my life—Leo Rosenek and others. Later on I was singing in England, accompanied by Gerald Moore, who told me that Rosenek was a person he had always admired.

You've heard of Mrs. Bok; it was her money that put us all there and gave us these incredible teachers. Zimbalist was the head, but the head just before Zimbalist was Randall Thompson. Thompson didn't last long. He had some "crazy" ideas. For example, he thought some of the singers should actually make music *together*, instead of just working on their arias. I remember a group actually got together to sing Christmas carols, and it was awful!

Thompson also felt that singers should hear other kinds of music—traditional music of our country. Unfortunately, what he brought in was John Jacob Niles!⁴ I don't think Mrs.

Bok thought much of that, since his bel canto wasn't so . . . this or that. That was one reason that I started thinking at Curtis that it was terrible that these young composers were all brought up in a Germanic background. They were missing so much because everything was coming through Brahms instead of through our own music as well, which would give them all sorts of other qualities, such as the modal qualities.

I did have a great teacher there, however, named Jean Behrend, who was really a pioneer in American music. She introduced me to Charles Ives and others of this country I've sung ever since.



Jerry: If I remember, you were in the hospital at the end of the war, having been shot up at Okinawa. Didn't they tell you that you'd never sing again?

Jack: Yes. I had these wounds of the chest; they said I'd be there three years. I was there only a year and a half; they said: "Your lungs are overdeveloped. Why would that be?"

I answered that as a singer I used my lungs in a certain way. Later they told me that for some of the thoracic patients, they would do therapeutic singing with them to try to develop their lungs.

When I was in Walter Reed I got a call from Lynn Rohrberg, who ran the *Delaware Cooperative*. They produced those little books called *Songs of All Time*. He wanted to know about a song I'd sung for years called "All Round My Hat," which I had learned from Douglas Kennedy. It was one of the first songs I heard Douglas sing.

Jerry: When would that have been? When did you first meet Douglas Kennedy?

Jack: It was probably in Washington just before the war. He was here teaching and giving lectures. He gave a wonderful lecture at Columbia University—which I didn't get to, I was away at school—but my mother went and took a lot of notes. I still have those notes. He sang that song.

In fact, I'll tell you another interesting story about that song, concerning another wonderful person you should know about. Years later I was doing a concert out in Nantucket, German and French music I think, and at the end I had sung some encores when someone called out from the back: "All Round My Hat."

I must have looked puzzled that anyone would know it, because someone else said: "Song is being requested by Mrs. John C. Campbell."

I said: "Well I'll sing this song, but then I want to meet Mrs. Campbell." After that, whenever Nancy and I went to Nantucket we always went to see her. We used to sit and talk with her about her school at Brasstown that she and her husband had started.

Jerry: She was instrumental in informing Sharp that versions of English songs existed in the Appalachian mountains.

Jack: That's a story you really must hear. Don't let me forget; but here's the song she wanted:

All round my hat I will wear a green willow,
All round my hat for a twelve-month and a day;
If anybody ask me the reason why I wear it,
It's all because my true love is far, far away.

My love she was fair, and my love she was kind too,
And many were the happy hours between my love and me;
I never could refuse her whatever she'd a mind to,
But now she's far away, far across the stormy sea.

O will my love be true or will my love be faithful,
Or will she find another swain to court her where she's gone?
The men will all run after her, so pretty and so graceful,
And perhaps she may forget me lamenting here alone.

So all round my hat. . . .

Jerry: Perhaps we should say a few words about Sharp and Mrs. Campbell?

Jack: Yes, I think so.

Jerry: The Folk Song Society in England had been a very academically oriented group that collected songs to put them into journals in a museum sort of way. Sharp had a missionary zeal, both with the songs and the dances, to return the tradition to the segments of the English population that forgot they had a tradition. It was not known by educated people that there was such a thing; you went to Hungary or some place to learn about folk music. I remember Suzanne Szasz telling me that her mother in Hungary told her there's no such thing as Hungarian folk music! So Sharp is in some very long-term way responsible for us all being here today. He was interested not just in preserving songs and dances in books, or even in presenting them on stage, but in ordinary people doing them for recreation as part of their everyday lives.

It was Mrs. Campbell who informed Sharp that there were many English songs to be found, often in more ancient form, in the Appalachian mountains.

Jack: What happened was that the EFDSS American branch invited teachers over from England. They used to run a summer camp at Amherst, Massachusetts. Mrs. James Storrow became very interested in the dance, and she had this large property around Long Pond where she had a large dance pavilion built. This woman was in her late eighties when I first met her. She'd be working on the rumba, the tango, I was amazed. When I first went to Pinewoods, this woman in her eighties would get up earlier than anyone in camp and go out and clear trees.⁵ She was indeed amazing.

She brought Sharp over, and he was staying with her one summer in Lincoln, and he had the gout.

Jerry: This would have been 1915.

Jack: Someone sent an introduction to Mrs. Storrow that Mrs. Campbell had come from the mountains and would like to see Mr. Sharp. Well she came, and Mrs. Storrow said: "All right, you can talk to Mr. Sharp, but you've got just twenty minutes, because he's not well. Then I'll interrupt you." Mrs. Campbell told this story to Nancy and me. She found Sharp with his foot up, having tea. Mrs. Storrow shut the door and they were left alone. She showed Sharp a little book that she had put together from the songs the mountain people sang. Among the wonderful things that these folk schools did was that they didn't just teach out of books, but they kept alive the crafts, dances and songs of the people there.

Mrs. Campbell was something of a musician, and she was interested enough to copy down as best she could some of these songs. She had twelve or fifteen of them in this little book to show to Sharp.

Well he looked at them and made a remark—I forget exactly what she told us—"Mrs. Campbell this is very fine, though they're not very scientific." In other words, they weren't really accurate, but it set a great fire under him.

When Mrs. Storrow opened the door to indicate "Time's up," Sharp waved her away. Three times Mrs. Storrow opened the door to get rid of this woman, and three times Sharp said "No."

As a result, Sharp saw that the songs were older than were the same songs he was collecting in England, and he had an intense desire to return. Mrs. Storrow said she would set it up for him. He came back the next year with Maud Karpeles and collected all those songs.

The first volume of Appalachian songs he published with the piano accompaniments, and he included the songs from Mrs. Campbell and gave her credit. A later volume he dedicated to Mrs. Storrow, because it was she that really enabled him to do it. When I first went to Pinewoods—I hate to say this now—you paid I think twenty dollars a week. Mrs. Storrow underwrote almost everything.

By the way, when you go to Pinewoods nobody erase this.* Whenever I go back, I find nobody has erased it; it's too high up. Edward Tatnell Canby was there for one of the early folk music weeks to talk to us about modes and he made this great design up there.

Jerry: That goes back to 1956?

Jack: Yes, when we were teaching people to read modes.

Jerry: Do you have a song to end with for today?

*Jack pointed up to some notes written on the beam. Written in chalk on a green painted background are these notes

C D EF G A BC

The spacing of the letters indicates whole steps and half steps. This notation has survived untouched since the first Folk Music Week at Pinewoods almost thirty years ago. —JE

Jack: Well, years ago I heard about a man named Seamus Ennis. I knew he was a great scholar; I had liked his translations from the Gaelic. I was in Ireland, doing some sort of a program, and I went to see him. I wanted to ask him for a song I could bring back for the kids I was teaching at a school in Washington. I forget the town, but they told me, "Down there, just turn left. . . ."

I went down and didn't see anything. I asked if anyone knew where he was. They said: "Over there, see him . . . ?"

I looked and there was a car with these two trousered legs sticking out from underneath. Well I didn't quite expect that, but I called out "Seamus Ennis!" and out came this man covered with grease. We sat there on the running board—do you know what a running board is?—and he sang me this song. I'll sing it the way he taught it, not the way I've since elaborated upon it:

[Chorus]: Hi ho the Rattlin' Bog, and the bog down in the valley-O,
Hi ho the Rattlin' Bog, and the bog down in the valley-O.

Now in this bog there was a tree,
A rare tree a rattlin' tree,
The tree in the bog and the bog down in the valley-O. [Chorus]:

Now on this tree there was a limb,
A rare limb a rattlin' limb,
The limb on the tree, and the tree in the bog,
And the bog down in the valley-O. [Chorus]

On this limb there was a branch . . .

nest
bird
egg
bird
egg
bird
egg
bird

1. Evelyn Wells, former professor of English at Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA. wrote *The Ballad Tree* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1950).
2. Wade Ward, who performed at the White Top Festival in 1934.
3. *Jack Tales*, collected by Richard Chase, is a book of folk tales for young readers published by Houghton Mifflin in 1943.
4. John Jacob Niles, collector, arranger and composer of American folk music, was a concert artist noted for his use of the male alto C-sharp, emphasizing the highest notes in his melodic range.
5. Pinewoods Camp is on the land that was originally Mrs. Storrow's Girl Scout camp.

Dick Harlan's Tennessee Frolic; Or, A Nob Dance

by G. W. Harris

You may talk of your bar hunts, and your deer hunts, and knottin' tigers tails thru the bung holes of barrels, an' cock fitin', and all that; but if a regular-bilt frolic in the Nobs of "Old Knox" don't beat 'em all blind for fun, then I'm no judge of fun, that's all! I said *fun*, and I say it agin, from a *kiss* that cracks like a wagin-whip up to a *fite* that rouses up all out-doors—and as to laffin, why they invented laffin, and the last laff will be hearn at a Nob dance about three in the morning! I'm jest gettin' so I can ride arter the motions I made at one at Jo Spraggins's a few days ago.

I'll try and tell you who Jo Spraggins is. He's a squire, a school comishoner, over-looker of a mile of Nob road *that leads towards Roody's still-house*,—a fiddler, a judge of a hoss, and a hoss himself! He can belt six shillins' worth of cornjuice at still-house rates and travel—can out-shute and out-lie any feller from the Smoky Mounting to Noxville, and, if they'll bar one feller in Nox, I'll say to the old Kaintuck Line! (I'm sorter feared of him, for they say that he lied a jackass to death in two hours!)—can make more spinin' wheels, kiss more spinners, thrash more wheat an' more men, than any one-eyed man I know on. He hates a circuit rider, a nigger, and a shot gun—loves a woman, old sledge and sin in eny shape. He lives in a log house about ten yards squar; it has two rooms, one at the bottom an' one at the top of the ladder—has all out ove doors fur a yard, and all the south fur its occupants at times. He gives a frolic onst in three weeks in plowin' time, and one every Saturday-nite the balance of the year, and only axes a "fip" for a reel, and two "bits" fur what corn-juice you suck; he throws the galls in, and a bed too in the hay, if you git too hot to locomote. The supper is made up by

Known for his Sut Lovingood yarns in the 1860s, George W. Harris (1814-1869) was a humorous writer of the old Southwest. "The Knob Dance" was his first full-length story, printed in New York's Spirit of the Times on July 16, 1845.

the fellers; every one fetches sumthin'; sum a lick of meal, sum a grab of taters, or a pocket-full of pease, or dried apples, an' sum only fetches a good appetite and a skin chock full of particular devilry, and if thars been a shutin' match for beef the day before, why a *leg* finds its way to Jo's sure, without eny help from the balance of the critter. He gives Jim Smith (the store keeper over Bay's Mounting) *warning* to fetch a skane of silk fur fiddle strings, and sum "Orleans" for sweetnin', or not to fetch himself; the silk and sugar has never failed to be thar yet. Jo then mounts Punkinslinger bar backed, about three hours afore sun down, and gives all the galls *item*. He does this a letle of the slickest—jist rides past in a peart rack, singin',

"Oh, I met a frog, with a fiddle on his back
An axin' his way to the fro-l-i-c-k?
Wha-a-he! what he! wha he! wha he! he-ke-he!"

That's enuf! The galls nows *that* aint a jackass, so by sundown they come pourin' out of the woods like pissants out of an old log when tother end's afire, jest "as fine as silk" and full of fun, fixed out in all sorts of fancy doins, from the broad-striped home-spun to the sunflower calico, with the thunder-and-lightnin' ground. As for silk, if one had a silk gown, she'd be too smart to wear it to Jo Spraggins's, fur if she did she'd go home in hir petticoate sartin, for the home-spuns wud tare it off of hir quicker nor winkin'; and if the sunflowers didnt help the homespuns, they wouldn't do the silk eny good, so you see that silk is never ratlin about your ears at a Nob dance.

The sun had about sot afore I got the things fed an had Barkmill saddled (you'll larn directly why I call my pony Barkmill), but an owl couldent have cotch a rat afore I was in site of Jo's with my gall, Jule Sawyers, up behind me. She hugged me mity tite she was "*so feered of fallin off that drated pony.*" She said she didn't mind a fall, but it mought break hir leg, an then good-bye frolics—she'd be fit fur nuthin but to nuss brats ollers arterwards. I now hearn the fiddle ting-tong-ding-domb. The yard was full of fellers, and two tall fine-lookin galls was standing in the door, face to face, holdin up the door-posts with their backs, laffin, an castin sly looks into the house, an now an then kickin each other with their knees, and then the one kicked wud bow so perlite and quick at that, and then they'd laff agin. Jo was a standin in the hous helpin the galls to hold the facins up, and when they'd kick each other he'd wink at the fellers in the yard an grin. Jule, she bounced off just like a bag of wool-rolls, and I hitched my bark-machine up to a saplin that warn't skinned, so he'd git a crawl-full of good fresh bark afore morning. I giv Jule a kiss to sorter molify my natur an put her in heart like, and in we walked. "Hey, hurray!" said the boys; "My gracious!" said the galls, "if here aint Dick an Jule!" jist like we hadent been *rite thar* only last Saturday nite. "Well, I know we'll have reel now!" "Hurraw!—Go it while you're young!" "Hurraw for the brimstone kiln—every man praise his country!" "Clar the ring!" "Misses Spraggins, drive out these dratted tow-headed brats of yourn—give room!" "Who-oo-whoop! whar's the crock of bald-face, and that gourd of honey? Jim Smith, hand over that spoon." "You, Jake Snyder, don't holler so!" says the old 'oman—"why you are worse nor a pointer." "Holler! why I was jist *whispering* to that gall—*who-a-whoopee!* now I'm beginning to *holler!* Did you hear *that*, Misses Spraggins, and be darned to your bar legs? You'd make a nice hempbrake, you would." "Come here, Suse Thompson, and let me pin your dress. Your back looks adzactly like a blaze on a white oak!"

"My *back* aint nuffin to you, Mister Smarty!" "Bill Jones, quit a smashin that ar cat's tail!" "Well, let hir keep hir tail clar of my ant killers!" "Jim Clark has gone to the woods for fat pine, and Peggy Willet is along to take a lite for him—they've been gone a coon's age. Oh, here comes the lost 'babes in the wood,' and *no lite*!" "Whar's that lite! whar's that torch! I say, Peggy, whar *is* that bundle of lite wood?" "Why I fell over a log an lost it, and we hunted clar to the foot of the holler for it, and never found it. It's no account, no how—nuthin but a little pine—who cares?" "Hello, thar, gin us 'Forked Deer,' old fiddle-teaser, or I'll give you forked litnin! Ar you a goin to tum-tum all nite on that old pine box of a fiddle, *say*?" "Give him a soak at the crock and a lick at the patent bee-hive—it'll *ile* his elbows." "Misses Spraggins, you're a hoss! cook on, don't mind me—I didnt aim to slap *you*; it was Suze Winters I *wanted* to hit." "Yes, and it's well for your good looks that you didn't hit to hurt me, old feller!" "Turn over them rashes of bacon, they're a burnin!" "Mind your own business, Bob Proffit, I've cooked for frolics afore you shed your petticoates—so jist hush, an talk to Marth Giffin! See! she is beckonin to you!" "I ain't, marm! If he comes a near me I'll unjint his dratted neck! No sech fool that, when a gall puts hir arm round his neck, will break and run shall look at *me*, that's flat! Go and try Bet Holden!" "Thankee, marm, I don't take your leavins," says Bet, hir face lookin like a full cross between a gridiron and a steel-trap.

"Whoop! hurraw! Gether your galls for a breakdown! Give us 'Forked Deer!' " "No, give us 'Natchez-under-the-hill!' " "Oh, Shucks! give us 'Rocky Mounting,' or 'Misses McCloud!' " " 'Misses McCloud' be darned, and 'Rocky Mounting' too, jist give us

"She woudent, and she coudent,
And she didnt *come* at all!"

"Thar! that's it! Now make a brake! *Tang*! Thar is a brake—a string's gone!" "Thar'll be a head broke afore long!" "Giv him goss—no, give him a horn, and every time he stops repeat the dose, and nar another string 'ill brake to nite. Tink-tong! all rite! Now go it!" and if I know what *goin* it is, we *did* go it.

About midnite, Misses Spraggins sung out "Stop that ar dancin, and come and get your supper!" It was sot in the yard on a table made of forks stuck in the ground and plank of the stable loft, with cotton tablecloths. We had danced, kissed, and drank ourselves into a perfect thrashin-machine appetite, and the vittals *hid* themselves in a way quite alarmin to tavern-keepers. Jo sung out "Nives is scase, so give what thar is to the galls, an let the balance use thar fingers—they was invented afore nives, eny how. Now, gents, jist walk into the fat of this land. I'm sorter feerd the honey wont last till daybreak, but the liquor will, *I think*, so you men when you drink yourn, look to the galls fur sweetnin—let them have the honey—it belongs to them, naturaly!"—"Hurraw, my Jo! You know how to do things rite!" "Well, I rayther think I do! I never was rong but onst in my life, an then I mistook a camp meetin for a political speechifyin, so I rid up an axed the speaker if he'd *ever seed the Elephant*?" He said no, but he had seen a *grocery walk*, and he expected to see one *rot down* from its *totterin* looks purty soon! Thinks I, Jo, you're beat at your own game; I sorter felt mean, so I spurr'd and sot old Punkinslinger to cavortin like he was skeered, an I wheeled and twisted out of *that* crowd, and when I *did* git out of site, the way I did sail was a caution to turtles and all the other slow varmints."

Well, we danced and harrowed without anything of *very* perticular interest to happen, till about three o'clock, when the darndest muss was kicked up you ever did see. Jim Smith sot down alongside of Bet Holden (the steel-trap gall), and jist gave her a hug, bar fashion. She tuck it very kind till she seed Sam Henry a looking on from behind about a dozen galls, *then* she fell to kickin', *an* a hollerin', *an* a screetchin' like all rath. Sam he come up and told Jim to let Bet go! Jim told him to go to a far off countrie whar they give away brimstone and throw in the fire to burn it. Sam hit him strate atween the eyes, *an* after a few licks the fitin' *started*. Oh, hush! It makes my mouth water now to think what a beautiful row we had. One feller from Cady's Cove knocked a hole in the bottom of a fryin'-pan over Dan Turner's head, and left it a hangin' round his neck, the handle flyin' about like a long que, and thar it hung till Jabe Thurman cut it off with a cold chissel next day! That was *his share*, fur that nite, sure. Another feller got knocked into a meal-barrel; he was as mealy as an Irish tater and as *hot* as hoss-radish; when he bursted the hoops and cum out he rared a few. Two fellers fit out of the door, down the hill, and into the creek, and thar ended it, in a quite way, all alone. A perfect mule from Stock Creek hit *me* a wipe with a pair of windin blades; he made kindlin-wood of them, *an* I lit on him. We had it head-and-tails fur a very long time, all over the house, but the truth must come and shame my kin, he warped me *nice*, so jist to save his time, *I hollered!* The lickin he gave me made me sorter oneasy and hostile like; it wakened my wolf wide awake, so I begin to look about for a man I *could* lick and *no mistake!* The little fiddler come a scrougin' past, holdin' his fiddle up over his head to keep it *in tune*, for the fitin' was gettin' tolerable brisk. You're the one, thinks I, and I jist grabbed the dough tray and split it plumb over his head! *He* rotted down, right thar, and I paddled his tother end with one of the pieces!—while I was a molifyin' my feeling in that way, his gall slip'd up behind me and fetcht's me a rake with the pot-hooks. Jule Sawyer was *thar*, and jist *anexed* to her rite off, and a mity nice fite it was. Jule striped and checked her face nice, like a partridge-net hung on a white fence. She hollered fur hir fiddler, but, oh, shaw! he coudent do hir a bit of good; he was too busy a rubbin' first his broken head, and then his blistered extremities; so, when I thought Jule had given her a plenty, I pulled hir off, and put her in a good humour by givin' her soft sawder.

Well, I thought at last, if I had a drink I'd be *about done*, so I started for the creek; *and* the first thing I saw was more stars with my eyes shut than I ever did with them open. I looked around, and it was the little fiddler's *big brother!* I *knowed what it meant*, so we locked horns without a word, thar all alone, and I do think we fit an hour. At last some fellers hearn the jolts at the house, and they cum and *dug us out*, for we had fit into a hole whar a big pine stump had burnt out, and thar we was, up to our girths a peggin' away, face to face, and *no dodgin'!*

Well, it is now sixteen days since that fite, and last nite Jule picked gravels out of my knees as big as squirrel shot. Luck rayther run agin me that nite, fur I didnt lick eny body but the fiddler, and had three fites—but Jule licked her gall, that's some comfort, and I suppose a feller can't *always* win! Arter my fite in the ground we made friends all round (except the fiddler—he's hot yet), and danced and liquored at the tail of every reel till sun up, when them that was sober enuff went home, and them that was *wounded* staid whar they fell. I was in the list of wounded, but could have got away if my bark-mill hadn't *ground* off the saplin and

gone home without a parting word; so Dick and Jule had to ride "Shanks' mar," and a rite peart *four-legged* nag she is. She was *weak* in *two* of her legs, but tother two—oh, my stars and possum dogs! they make a man wink jist to look at 'em, and feel sorter like a June bug was crawlin' up his trowses, and the waistband too tite for it to git out. I'm agoin' to marry Jule, I swar I am, and sich a cross! Think of the locomotive and a cotton gin! Who! whoopee!

**In Memoriam
Ralph Page
1903 - 1985**