

Rounder 0619



North American Traditions Series

Philip Kazee



A Family Tradition

The selections:

1. *The Wagoner's Lad*
2. *Dance Around My Blue Eyed Girl*
3. *The Blind Man's Song*
4. *Poor Boy Long Ways from Home*
5. *Cripple Creek*
6. *John Henry*
7. *The Old Gray Mare*
8. *East Virginia*
9. *Barbara Allen*
10. *Amazing Grace*
11. *Roll On John*
12. *Shady Grove*
13. *The Yellow Pups*
14. *Steel Going Down*
15. *Jesse James*
16. *The Lady Gay*
17. *John Hardy*
18. *Old Joe Clark*
19. *The Sporting Bachelors*
20. *Short Life of Trouble*
21. *The Unclouded Day*
22. *Savior, More Than Life to Me*

Autobiographical statement:

I was born February 23, 1933 in Morehead, Kentucky in the parsonage of the First Baptist Church, my father having become the pastor beginning in 1929. While my father played the banjo often, he played the piano as much and my thoughts of his singing are much more of the latter than with the banjo.

While I "picked" the banjo as a child would a toy, I originally had no more interest than that--as a toy. But I had a great deal of exposure to classical music due to our father playing records of Caruso, Richard Crooks, and the like. I grew up in a college town where I graduated from Breckenridge Training School, a high school connected with what was then called Morehead State Teachers College. My life was filled with sports (especially basketball) and hunting and fishing. Hunting was a passion as we always had bird dogs.

I then went to Georgetown College with a basketball and track scholarship and graduated in 1955. I enlisted into the Army in July following graduation. Following the Army, I taught school one year in Georgetown, Kentucky, and then entered

Southern Seminary in Louisville, graduating in 1962.

I married Delores J. Adams on January 28, 1956 while in the Army and while serving at Fort Carson, Colorado. I was then transferred to the Headquarters, Fifth Army in Chicago, Illinois, where our first child, Sharon Lee, was born. Our second child, Vickee Lynn, was born in Lexington, KY while serving a church in Lexington through seminary days. Our son, Philip, was born in Huntington, West Virginia, while I was serving in my first full time church in Ceredo, WV. It was at this time



that I became interested in playing the banjo. I borrowed my father's banjo, but he was beginning to play with the Folk Revival, so my wife sold a few antiques we had collected at junk stores and, unknown to me, bought me a Gibson "Folk" Banjo, which has two extra frets to lower the tone. I practiced my father's stroke, which is the only way I know to play. The first song I learned was "The Wagoner's Lad."

I retired in 2000 from the First Baptist Church of Oneida, Tennessee, after thirty-three years of service in that church and Delores has now retired from school teaching as well. My daughter, Sharon (Jones), works for the Scott County School resource Center in Georgetown, Ky., while Vickee (Hollifield) works as the head softball coach at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee. My son Philip is an attorney right here in Oneida and lives just across the street from Delores and me.

--- Philip Kazee (2008)

Biographical note:

Philip Kazee is part of a prominent musical family. His father, Buell H. Kazee, cut 58 sides for Brunswick Records in the late 1920s (with 52 released) and was included in Harry Smith's influential set of recordings, *Anthology of American Folk Music* (1952). However, he became a full-time Baptist minister rather than pursuing a musical career. He was rediscovered and became a strong influence during the Folk Revival of the 1960s. Buell grew up on Burton Fork, an isolated hollow in rural Magoffin County, Kentucky, at a time when the performance of ballads and songs as well as fiddle and banjo music was common among many of his neighbors and was entertainment for the rest.

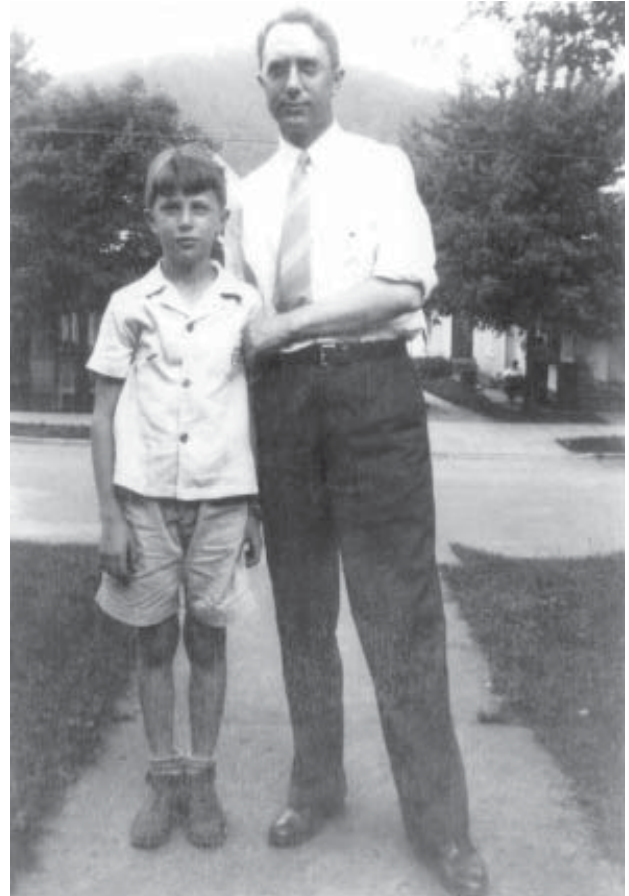
Philip also became a full-time Baptist minister, but he learned to play the banjo in the style and numerous tunings of his father, and he also learned his extensive repertory of ballad and songs. Although his voice is lower than his father's tenor, he has the same extraordinary range and intensity. His banjo picking and his voice sound remarkably like Buell Kazee. Although he has mainly kept his folk music separate from his church music and pastoral work, as his father did, he has performed over the years, and in recent times he has appeared at festivals and other events. In 1999, the Berea College Appalachian Center released a cassette recording, Reverend Philip Kazee: Rocky Island (AC006). He retired from the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Oneida, Tennessee, in 2000, and he now has more time to devote to his second love—traditional music.

Other descendants of the Kazee family have made a name for themselves in music. Philip's first cousin Ned Kazee, who also learned to play the banjo from Buell, migrated to Ohio to become a salesman for Swift & Company in order to provide for his family. There he performed on banjo and guitar in local gospel and country groups and produced recordings under his Kale Records label. His two sons, both graduates in music from Morehead State University, are full-time musicians. David, a session musician on piano, produces the music for the Kentucky Opry in Prestonsburg and is music director at the first Baptist Church of Salyersville. He runs a state-of-the-art studio on Mashfork, Magoffin County, where he produces music for scholarship and beauty pageants, theme parks, and other venues across the country. He also arranges music for numerous events. Jeff Kazee, a keyboardist, singer, and songwriter living in New York, tours with Bon Jovi and in 2007 did a European tour with Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes (formerly the T-Birds). Jeff and David speak fondly of growing up with traditional and country music all around them just as a part of life and of how this experience has benefited their careers. Jeff has played with many well-known contemporary musicians, and some have asked, "Are you related to Buell Kazee?" One was G.E. Smith, leader and guitarist for the Saturday Night Live band and former lead guitarist for Bob Dylan's band. Smith said that

Dylan had turned him on to the importance of Buell Kazee as a traditional musician. Jeff commented, “I was very proud to know that one of America’s greatest songwriters was a fan of Buell Kazee. I actually performed one of Buell’s songs [“East Virginia”] with G.E.” Jeff has a photo of Buell with banjo on his website.

Philip Kazee was born February 23, 1933 in Morehead, Kentucky, site of what was then known as Morehead Teachers

College, where his father was pastor of the First Baptist Church. He remembered that, while his father picked the banjo often, he played the piano just as much, and that he also played classical and operatic music on the record player. Philip took piano lessons for two or three years. He picked the banjo as a child but remembers it more as a toy than as a musical instrument. He attended Breckinridge Training School, a high school operated by the college, where he was involved in sports, especially basketball, and he was also interested in hunting and fishing. He went on to Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky, on a basketball and track scholarship, graduating in 1955. After graduation, he joined the army and then married Delores J. Adams, a teacher. His army service was at Fort Carson, Colorado and the Fifth Army Headquarters in Chicago where



Buell and Philip, Morehead, Ky 1944

their first child, Sharon Lee, was born. After his discharge, Philip taught school for a year in Georgetown and then enrolled at the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville. While studying for the ministry, he served a church in Lexington. Their second daughter, Vickee Lynn, was born in Lexington. After graduating from the seminary, he served a church in Ceredo, West Virginia, where their third child, Philip Adams, was born.

By the time he had finished the seminary and accepted the West Virginia pastorate, he was aware of a rediscovery of folk music in America that resulted in the Folk Revival of the 1960s and this rekindled his interest in the banjo and a desire to learn his father’s songs and tunes. He borrowed his father’s banjo that Buell had bought before venturing to New York to record for Brunswick in 1927. However, Buell was being rediscovered by folklorists and invited to play at folk festivals (such as at Newport, the University of Chicago, the Seattle Folklore Society, and Berea

College) and made it known that he wanted his banjo back. Delores Kazee sold several of their antique household items in order to buy Philip one of the long-neck Gibson “Folk” banjos that had been popularized by Pete Seeger. Many male voices aren’t suited to the usual banjo tuning of G, so this banjo has a longer neck with two extra frets. Thus, when Phil tuned it in G with a capo on the second fret and then removed the capo, he would actually be singing in the key of E that better suited his baritone voice. He played this banjo during the Sixties and early Seventies when his father was fairly active at folk festivals and other musical events, and sometimes he joined his father in concert. However, when his father died in 1976, Philip inherited “The Gibson,” and he has played it ever since, usually in the G tuning, but he sometimes lowers the pitch below standard G to better suit his voice (all tunings for the numbers in this recording are given in the musical notes, and Buell’s various tunings are included).

Philip commented on his music:

I pretty much play like Dad. He would come back up once and a while with his thumb [to get extra notes], and I try very hard to do it, but I can’t emulate him. He never did double-thumb, but he was a master at pulling off of strings for extra notes. Because it is hard to slide down across a fret as a lot of banjo pickers do, Dad would pick the string, hammer down on it with his index finger, and then depress the same string on the next fret with his third finger [*i.e.* ring finger] to get the sliding effect, thus getting three notes with this movement. I don’t double-thumb either, but I do pull off on strings and hammer down and do the two-finger roll from one fret to the next for the sliding effect, as Dad did. I play like he did, only not as well, and I mean that sincerely.

Philip is modest about his playing and singing. He is competent as a musician, in tuning in the various keys, and also in executing the tune in the way he has learned it. He has no desire to learn the more modern tricks of banjo playing but is content to play what he learned from his father in a similar manner. His father always avoided the various terms that folklorists and others have used in describing his banjo playing, such as calling it the “clawhammer” or “frailing” style. Buell always insisted that he “picked” the banjo, even though various experts have reserved that term for the upward motion of fingers on the strings. Buell “picked” out the melody with a downward motion of his index finger while his thumb played off-beat notes on the thumb string, with an occasional upward hook of his thumb on the second or third string. Philip picks the tune in the same way, with thumb counter notes on the fifth string and by pulling-off, hammering, or sliding down on strings he is noting. The result from both “pickers” on a ballad tune, say, “The Lady Gay,” is a welter of sound that double-times the actual cadence, with the tune clearly discernable creeping along at their singing cadence. Thus his banjo makes a wonderful accompaniment to the ballad. On the instrumentals such as “Cripple Creek” and “Hook and Line,” the notes



Buell's parents: Frank and Abbie Jane Kazee

of the tune are distinctly “picked” with the nail of the index finger.

Philip admits influence from other members of his family, particularly from his first cousin Ned Kazee who learned to pick the banjo from Buell and played with him many evenings while he was a student at the University of Kentucky and Buell was pastor of a church in Lexington:

This was just kind of a heritage thing, I guess. The only times I really played with others and heard a lot of things about our family was with cousins up on Mashfork. They're all guitar players and they heard Dad's tunes on records and played them for years. They knew them better than I did. They played those records 'til they wore out the grooves. And so, when we got together, we would play a lot of those [tunes]. Now, they would play a lot of other songs, you know, because another generation was coming along. Most of them are guitar pickers, but there are electric guitars as well as regular, all kinds. Ned's son David Kazee goes all over the United States playing gigs. . . . Jeff, his brother, tours with Bon Jovi. Ned's sisters, Christine and Maxine, they told me things about Dad and the family. They all grew up on Mashfork and so they bridged the gap between me and my father and my grandparents. They knew the history. So it was nice to get with them.



Mashfork School: Buell is next to the schoolmaster

Philip makes it clear that he has never thought of himself as a performer. The ministry was his vocation until he retired in 2000 after serving the First Baptist Church of Oneida, Tennessee, for thirty-three years. He did solos in church or at revivals as a part of services, but he saw this as just a part of his ministry. He commented that there were times after evening services when some members and friends would ask him to play the banjo and sing. He confessed that he had a great deal of trouble making such a quick change from worship to entertainment and said that he eventually just quit doing it at all. He noted that his father did a lot more with folk music after he retired than before. Buell had often said that he kept his secular music pretty completely separate from his preaching mission and his religious music. Philip felt the same need. Now that he is retired, Philip has spent more time with traditional music. He says:

I am trying to bridge and instill, especially in my children, a love of the tradition. It is just precious to me, and I hate to see the tradition kind of float out to the woods, but I fear it will. I guess that is historically true of everything, but it has a melancholy place in my life and an appreciation. I can still touch back there in history with it. When I play and sing, it is mostly

self-entertainment. I enjoy doing it. It has a lot of memories in it. But I must say that my appetite has been whetted more in the past few years than ever before, and maybe age has something to do with it.

Philip also has a strong bond with his father in terms of his ministry and in his basic theology. They shared a strong belief in their call to preach the gospel, and both were conscious of and proud adherents to the dissenter aspect of the Baptist tradition. Buell was frequently at odds with his fellow Southern Baptists, mainly over the emphasis on its Cooperative Program that raised funds for foreign and home missions, children's homes, and other such programs. His humorous comment was that "You could preach the Book of Mormon, but as long as you give to the Cooperative Program, you are in fellowship." He was also critical of the emphasis on numbers, as in the slogan of "A million more in '54." He called it a policy of "dipping and dropping," meaning converts were baptized into the church but not into discipleship. Eventually he left the Southern Baptist and Kentucky Baptist conventions to found an Independent Baptist church in Lexington. During this time, he taught Old Testament at Lexington Bible College, hosted by the Ashland Avenue (Independent) Baptist Church. He could also be critical of famous preachers, including Billy Graham, as being too impressed by worldly achievement, for example when Graham had sports and music stars on his crusades. However, he was quick to acknowledge that Graham had preached the gospel to more people than any other preacher. Buell was philosophical and usually humorous about theological and other matters. A favorite saying was, "Who knows what it would have been if it hadn't been like it was."

Philip feels that his father would probably be more at home in the current conservative swing of the Southern Baptist Convention back toward a more Calvinistic doctrine and states that he believes his father was twenty years ahead of those who now preside over the Convention. Philip himself has been a faithful servant in the Southern Baptist Convention, but he is a critic of some aspects of its new direction in that he feels that there is still too much emphasis on numbers and worldly success as evidence of God's favor, and he is troubled by the attempt to impose a rigid orthodoxy in a church that historically has tolerated dissent, individual freedom of conscience, and local church autonomy.

The Calvinist religious tradition that has sustained and nurtured the Kazees has had an effect on their attitudes about the human condition and about their musical and other abilities. It has given them a profound humility that is common in Appalachian culture. They see human nature as flawed, as in what St. Paul wrote, that we do what we ought not to do and we fail to do what we should do. They believe further that we are saved and forgiven of our sins by the grace of God and not through our works or inner goodness. I have found that Buell Kazez and other musician of his generation were modest in their approach and humble about their musical or other abilities. They were grateful that they were endowed with special gifts but would never brag

about them. On the other hand, they might not even admit that they were as gifted as they actually were. Many folklorists and other song collectors have discovered that they had to listen to several disclaimers and explanations from performers about why they might not do as well as expected before they would perform. Both Buell and Philip Kazez belong to this modest tradition.

Philip's only sibling, Allen, who died in 2003, was also an ordained Baptist minister. He was not a musician but a lover of music. He spent two years at Georgetown College and then enlisted in the Air Force where he served for ten years, was discharged but reenlisted in the Army for another ten years where he was a chaplain's assistant. After his second discharge, he served as pastor of Baptist churches.

Philip Kazez and the Kazez family are middle-class people from the mountains of eastern Kentucky who are devoted to traditional music but may play and enjoy many other kinds of music. Folklorists and collectors have generally sought out those that they thought to be more authentic performers partially because the mountain elite have sometimes made a point of casting off what appeared to be backward ways. Yet, there are many educated musicians, like Philip, who have a profound love and respect for the traditional arts that appear to some to be unneeded or embarrassing practices from the past. Philip Kazez is a singer of great range, artistry, and intensity, and his banjo-picking is extraordinary. We are proud to present this CD to bring him a wider audience.

Loyal Jones
Berea, Kentucky

[Information for these notes came from interviews with Buell Kazez, Philip Kazez, and others, and also from the notes for Reverend Philip Kazez: Rocky Island (AC006) produced and with musical notes by Steve Green and released by the Appalachian Center at Berea College CPO 2335, Berea, KY 40404.]

Notes on the Kazez family repertory:

Besides the additional biography of Philip he has supplied within the Berea College tape release, Loyal Jones has provided a very full biography of Buell Kazez within the recent CD reissue of June Appal 009 (much of which stems from old recordings of mine). Loyal's evocative essay includes many fine quotations from Buell himself and will be of great interest to any purchaser of this CD (I might also mention that several of Buell's theological writings are available online and can be easily found by googling his name). Philip has supplied me with a host of materials that allow deeper insight into the processes that framed this family repertory and I will devote the bulk of my share of these notes to tracing these matters through. Of the greatest assistance in this regard is a typed song collection whose contents are listed below in an appendix. Its origins are as follows. Sometime in the 1960's,

*Buell Kazez*

a local woman named Karen Collins took banjo instruction from Buell and typed up a "ballad book" for him of approximately eighty songs (Collins now lives in Austin, Texas). In 1969, when he gave the Pacific Northwest concerts where I first met him, he would place this book on a table beside him, when he gave several Chautauqua-style lecture/concerts that ran over the course of several evenings. Plainly, some of the items in the book ("Michael, Row the Boat Ashore") were added (possibly under the initiative of the transcriber) in case Buell might be required to conduct a Hootenanny style sing-along session (for such were the times). Other songs seem to have been included only for discussion purposes, rather than for intended performance (e.g., "Old Smoky"). Sometimes the transcribed lyrics match book sources more closely than Buell's normal performance (Philip has entered many handwritten corrections to this effect in the manuscript). Philip also later included several pieces that he had transcribed from his dad's records absent from the original typescript, as well as several pieces that he had learned independently of his father (these supplements are marked in the list below). I've also attached a * to the items for which I know of an extant recording by Rev. Kazez.

Buell told Philip that he had obtained the bulk of his active "folk song" reper-

tory from his two older half-sisters, Molly and Lizzie Hilton, as well as a Preacher Caudill who lived down the creek. There were quite a few banjo pickers in the region and Philip especially recalls mention of one Bert Lemaster. Oscar and Olney Patrick over in Burning Fork made an excellent banjo and fiddle team and later, when Oscar moved to Morehead, Buell greatly enjoyed playing duets with him. It is a great pity that Buell's only recorded fiddle and banjo recording (that I know about) was executed upon an impromptu basis with the late Jim Gaskin and Asa Martin (it is available on Rounder Rounder 0394; Buell had hoped to record with J.P. Fraley if we could have finished the LP project that we had initiated).

This family ballad book provides a direct window into the factors that shaped Buell's thinking about folk song during his college years and shortly thereafter. In the early years of the previous century, following various European precedents, various American art song performers began to flesh out their repertoires utilizing native folk materials. In particular, two of the earliest published American folk song collections (Wyman and Brockway's Lonesome Songs and Josephine McGill's Folk Songs of the Kentucky Mountains) directly arose through the authors' visits to Kentucky's celebrated Pine Mountain Settlement School in search of useable concert materials. Thus Lorraine Wyman had formerly specialized in "French and English song in costume," but, after her Kentucky sojourn, adapted her performances to largely Appalachian folk songs employing a dulcimer as an exotic prop. Judging by the fliers preserved in the University of Iowa's remarkable "Traveling Culture" website collection, the team (Howard Brockway was her piano accompanist) traveled widely upon the Chautauqua circuit with considerable success.

Although Buell had, from an early age, planned to enter the ministry full time, in the period between his college graduation in 1923 and his first full-time ministry in 1929 in Morehead, he earned his living through voice lessons and with work in sundry music stores first in Ashland (where he encountered a representative from Brunswick Records) or in a store of his own in Corbin (the Great Depression soon doomed most of these musical efforts, including Brunswick Records itself). In 1928 he also taught voice at Cumberland College near the Tennessee border. Buell was familiar with the works of Percy Grainger and other Europeans who employed folk song for art song



purposes and, in fact, later published several cantatas of his own in this vein. This encouragement stemming from the art song culture must have helped the young Appalachian frame his own appreciation of the aesthetic value of his childhood heritage.

In any case, the family ballad book reveals that Buell depended upon a second book by Wyman and Brockway (Twenty Kentucky Songs) as well as Carl Sandburg's American Songbag even during his first recording session (specifically, "Sporting Bachelors" and "Gambler's Blues"). In many instances, he probably used these



Buell with Mark Wilson at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, B.C., 1969

sources as a means of filling out songs with which he was already familiar. For example, his version of "The Swapping Song" (which I hope to release in the near future) is close to Wyman and Brockway's, but he also told me that he first heard the song from a neighbor (on another occasion, he remarked that he could often construct better version of songs if he consulted the folk song books). Likewise, his text for "Jay Gould's Daughter" (JA 009) is close to Sandburg's, but Buell employs the same melody and unusual D tuning for the piece that has been elsewhere recovered from Eastern Kentucky (on the June Appal recording, Buell elected to pick out the melody with his thumb, although in his warmups he played the song in the traditional overhand style which depends upon that specific banjo tuning for its ambience).

Quite conceivably, he had originally

heard the piece as a banjo song with only a single, stray quatrain about "Old Jimmy Jones." In other cases, one is less certain; it would be hard to determine whether his version of "The Inconstant Lover" (available on MT 342) came entirely from Wyman and Brockway or whether he had heard a traditional prototype earlier and utilized their finely wrought arrangement as a memory refresher.

Although Buell continued to play the banjo at home and upon suitable social occasions, it is likely that his active repertory was largely solidified within the 1925-30 period. As a kid, Philip always enjoyed his father's playing and fooled with the

banjo some himself, but it was only later that he sat down to learn some of his favorites out of a desire to keep this cherished aspect of his family’s heritage alive. Accordingly, he has not attempted to expand his repertory much beyond those limits with the occasional exception of a “Jesse James” or two. As the listener will immediately discern, he has carried out this family-directed ambition ably and remarkably. Unlike Buell, Philip never enjoyed formal vocal instruction beyond a few tips from his father, but he has a naturally beautiful voice that does great justice to his father’s memory. In our selections here, we have largely avoided duplicating the Berea College tape issue (Berea AC006) that Loyal Jones mentions above. Interested parties should certainly visit their online store for a copy.

In the notes below, I have marked prior recordings of these songs by either Buell or Philip as well as the banjo tuning employed (both sometimes tune below pitch to accommodate their vocal ranges, but I’ve noted the string relationships without incorporating these adjustments). “Br” indicates Brunswick Records (and Buell’s other 78 issues); “FS,” Folkways; “JA,” June Appal; “AC,” Berea Appalachian Center and “Rdr,” Rounder.

MY HORSES AIN'T HUNGRY 27

1. My horses ain't hungry they won't eat your hay, So fare you well Pol-ly, I'm go-ing a-way, Your
 2. I know they don't like you, but why do you care, You know I'm in your Pol-ly, You know I'm your dear, I
 3. Yes, I will go with you, you're poor I am bold, It's your love I'm wanting, not sil-ver and gold, We'll
 4. I hate to leave ma-ma, she treats me so kind, But I'll do as I promised that Johnny of mine, So
 parents don't like me, they say I'm too poor, They say I'm not wes-ty to en-ter your door.
 know your my Pol-ly, but I've not long to stay, So go with me dar-ling, we'll speed on our way.
 load our belongings, we'll drive till he come, To some lit-tle cab-in, we'll call it our home.
 good-bye dear ma-ma, I'm leav-ing to-day, We'll journey on farther and speed on our way.

Asher Sizemore and Little Jimmie's Favorite Songs

--Mark Wilson

1. *The Wagoner's Lad* (Br 213 and 437; FS 3810; JA 009; gDGBD). Through its 1952 inclusion upon the well-known *Anthology of American Folk Music*, this piece has become one of Rev. Kazez's best known songs. Apparently, it was widely heard on Kentucky radio in the 'Thirties, for Bradley Kincaid's and Asher Sizemore's contemporaneous song folios both contain specimens. The "hard is the fortune" verse migrates bizarrely betwixt serious and humorous contexts.

In the Kazez songbook, the following extra verses appear (some, but not all, of which Buell sings in the concert recording issued upon June Appal 009):

After verse 2:

"I loved you so dearly, I thought you loved me
 "But now you are leaving, you want to be free;
 "Oh, must you then leave me to see you no more
 "To stay here a-weeping on the wild river shore?"

After verse 3:

"I know they don't like you, but what do you care?
 "For I am your true love and I am your dear;
 "I would have consented your wife for to be
 "But my parents aren't willing for you to have me."

"I came to your city to stay for a while
 "I left my dear parents, drove many a mile;
 "But you want a freeholder and I have no land--
 "Now that is your true love as I understand."

"So, early this morning I then did arise
 "To cross the wide river with tears in my eyes;
 "I'm going to Georgia and there I will roam
 "And then I'll make Georgia to be my new home."

"On top of the mountain I'll look back this way;
 With tears in my eyes my last goodbye say;
 I'll ride onto Georgia and write you my mind
 For I mean to marry and leave you behind."

These emendations tie Buell's Brunswick text (which Philip employs out of preference) to the wider complex of songs to which it belongs: "I'm Going to Georgia," "The Red River Shore," "Pretty Saro," "Rye Whiskey" and, in its original British guise, "At the Foot of Yonder Mountain." The rather formalized boy/girl dialog may suggest a prior stage usage.

Oh, hard is the fortune of all womankind
 They're always controlled, they're always confined
 Controlled by their parents until they become wives
 Then slaves to their husbands the rest of their lives.

Oh, I am a poor girl, my fortune is sad
 I've often been courted by the wagoner's lad
 He's courted me daily by night and by day*
 And now he is loaded and going away.

"Your parents don't like me because I am poor
 "They say I'm not worthy of entering your door
 "I work for my living, my money's my own
 "And if they don't like it, they can leave me alone."

"Your wagon needs greasing, your whip is to mend
 "Come sit down by me as long as you can."
 "My wagon is greasy, my whip's in my hand
 "So farewell, darling, no longer to stand."

"Your horses are hungry, go feed them some hay
 "Come sit down here by me as long as you stay."
 "My horses ain't hungry, they won't eat your hay
 "So, farewell, darling, I'll feed on the way."

2. *Dance Around My Blue Eyed Girl* (FS 3810; gCGBD). Appearing commonly across the South in a wide variety of forms (such as "Fly Around My Pretty Little Miss"), this sprightly tune provides an ideal frame for an excellent fiddle and banjo duet (with the prime fiddle key set to D). Here Philip follows his father in breaking the "fine" part of the melody into highly punctuated short phrases using sweeping right hand arpeggios. This capacity to "punch up the rhythm" was traditionally regarded as one the banjo's prized attributes but such techniques have become largely abandoned by younger players in favor of a greater degree of melodic literalism. Old-fashioned guitar players typically employed a wider range of *ad libitum* brushes and hesitations than their modern counterparts as well. As Buell indicates in his banjo instructor, many country banjoists will tune to gCGCD for such melodies, but the Kazezes employ the more flexible tuning variation that had been favored by the professional players of the nineteenth century.

Dance around my blue-eyed girl
 Dance around my daisy
 Dance around my blue-eyed girl
 You're about to drive me crazy.

*Philip sang this phrase in a reversed order by mistake.

If I had a needle and thread
 As fine as I could sew
 Sew my true love to my side
 Down the river I'd go.

3. *The Blind Man's Song* (Br 352; JA 009; Rdr 0394; AC006; gDGCD).

This song was widely transmitted throughout Eastern Kentucky through the travels of the itinerant street fiddler and pioneer recording artist J.W. ("Blind Bill") Day (known as "Jilson Setters" in Jean Thomas's books). In fact, Rev. Kazee told me he recalled seeing "the Day brothers" (which presumably meant Bill and his brother Robert, who both recorded separately for the Library of Congress), although I do not recall him associating this particular song with Day (rather, "it was an old banjo tune that they used to play in my childhood"). However, the song is plainly based upon some older original I've never found. For example, Emma Dusenberry's "The Blind Fiddler" in Randolph's *Ozark Folksongs* utilizes a closely related tune, although it seems to be largely unrelated lyrically. Norm Cohen reminds me that Johnny Crockett recorded a version for Crown as an "old song he learned from his mother." Day, undoubtedly, did compose many songs, but the exact degree of their originality is now hard to establish, partially because of Jean Thomas' meddling interest in promoting him as a "folk bard." Certainly, the number of nineteenth century compositions that associate blindness with spiritual concerns is vast and difficult to chart. And the many handicapped street musicians like Bill Day who made their livings by traveling from one court day to another across the South would have found such material congenial to their trade. On Rounder 0376,



J.W. ("Bill") Day

Alva Greene of Sandy Hook plays a stirring version as an violin air. Alva steadfastly refused to sing me a single note but told me, "There are a lot of old dudes in this countryside who could sing that for you if you like." Unfortunately, I couldn't continue my fieldwork long enough at that time to track down any of these "old dudes."

In 1972, in one of my very first efforts at commercial recording, Rev. Kazee began a record project with me for Rounder, which we halted partially because the company was growing politically militant in a manner that would have embarrassed him. However, we did manage to capture good takes of eight numbers, which have now been released on Rounder, June Appal, and Musical Traditions. Buell normally played the present song in normal G tuning (with the thumb string lowered to E), chorded in Emi. This is the version that was eventually released upon JA 009. How-

ever, in the discussion immediately afterward, I inquired how he had originally heard the piece back home and he replied, “Oh, they used the ‘Lonesome John’ tuning on all of the songs like that, but that pitch generally makes them too high for me to sing.” With the luxury of time not permitted in a concert setting, we decided to assay “The Blind Man’s Song” once again in the old-fashioned setting (this is the version published on Rounder 0394). I found it interesting that Philip has adopted the older setting for his own performances (he only rarely gives concerts, so he can retune in as leisurely a manner as he wishes).

Thomas’ *Ballad Makin’ in Eastern Kentucky* provides a verse supplementary to the Kazee family version.

‘Mid sorrow, mid sadness I am destined to roam
 Forlorn and forsaken I wander alone
 For all the works of nature are hidden from my view
 The pleasures of life I must ever bid adieu.

I can hear the merry laughs where they gathered in the throng
 Where friends meet friends as they hurry along
 In groups on their way for some pleasure to find
 Oh God, what an affliction it is to be blind.

I can hear the babbling brook as it rolls on its way
 Reflecting its water on bright summer days
 Its sweet and low murmurs are pleasant to me
 Its bright and sparkling waters I nevermore can see

I can feel the gentle breeze as it sweeps over the field
 Bringing in sweet fragrance the flowers do yield
 Their sweet and fragrant odors are pleasing to me
 Their bright and gay colors I never can see.

4. *Poor Boy, Long Ways from Home* (Br 217; f#DF#AD). This is a particularly fine member of a large class of mountain blues songs that range from the familiar “Reuben’s Train” and “Joe Brown’s Coal Mine” to “My Last Gold Dollar is Gone” and “I’m Leaving You, Sweet Florena” (for an excellent study of the family, see Norm Cohen’s *Long Steel Rail*). The family becomes even larger when one includes the many black artists (Bukka White, Gus Cannon, Julius Daniels) who have frequently constructed extended songs around the “Poor Boy, Long Ways from Home” theme. Often these are performed with a slide guitar echoing the vocal complaint, utilizing a guitar open D tuning related to the banjo tuning that Philip employs. I’ve been told on several occasions that such songs came into the mountains with the railroad crews in 1890’s. Philip’s variant of the melody is particularly exquisite.

Poor boy, long ways from home (2)
 Long ways from home and his momma's house
 And he can't bum a freight back home.

Nine hundred miles from home (2)
 Ain't got no money; ain't got no friends
 Ain't got no place to go.

Oh, darling, sidetrack your man (2)
 Sidetrack your man and go with me.
 Oh, darling, sidetrack your man.

Oh, darling, you don't love me (2)
 You love some old rounder but you don't
 love me
 Poor boy that works so hard.

Oh, darling, you told me a lie (2)
 You told me more lies than diamonds in the
 sky
 Oh darling, I'll never marry you.

Oh, darling, count the days I am gone (2)
 Count the days I am gone for it may be long
 Oh, darling, count the days I am gone.



Philip at Berea College

5. *Cripple Creek* (gDGBD). Possibly the best known of American banjo tunes, and a good fiddle tune as well.

Me and my wife and a bob-tailed hound
 Going up Cripple Creek, bumming around.

Refrain: Going up Cripple Creek, going in a run
 Going up Cripple Creek to see some fun.

Roll my britches to my knees
 Going up Cripple Creek when I please.

6. *John Henry* (FS 3810; gDGBD) Philip sings several more verses than Buell includes on his Folkways recording, although he forgot to include this one:

John Henry called his woman
 She came all dressed in blue
 And the very last words she told John Henry
 She said, "Honey, I've been true to you."

A continuing schedule of scholars have attempted to track down “the historical John Henry” reliant, perforce, upon rather speculative data. Whether such attempts will prove successful is unclear, but each attempt has revealed many forgotten facets of American industrial life in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

John Henry was a steel driving man
 He drove for many a crew
 And every time his hammer went down
 You could see that old steel going through (2)

John Henry married him a woman
 Her name was Polly Ann
 John Henry got sick in the tunnel one day
 And Polly drove steel like a man (2)

John Henry stepped up to his captain
 Said, “Captain, here I stand
 “If I can’t beat that steam-driving drill
 “I’ll die with the hammer in my hand” (2)

John Henry said to his shaker
 “Oh, Shaker, you’d better pray
 “For if that old hammer misses steel
 “Tomorrow will be your burying day.” (2)

John Henry hammered on the mountain
 ‘Til his hammer caught on fire
 And the very last words I heard him say
 Is “Cool drink of water before I die” (2)

John Henry had a little boy
 He could hold him in the palm of his hand
 And the very last words John Henry said to him
 Is “Son, don’t be a steel driving man.” (2)

7. *The Old Gray Mare* (FS 3810, gCGBD). In its longer versions, this children’s song describes a foundering baptism by the horse and her subsequent skinning by the disgusted narrator.

Once I had an old gray mare (3)
 She couldn’t see and she couldn’t hear.
Refrain: Hi dum a dinkdum, diddle a day (2).

Took her out to the field to plow (3)
 Darned old thing, she didn’t know how.

I got down on my knees to pray (3)
Scared the old thing and she ran away.

I got up and followed her tracks (3)
Found her in the mud hole flat on her back

8. *East Virginia* (Br 154; FS 3810; JA 009; gDGCD). One of the evocative of old love songs set for the banjo, wonderful versions have also been recorded by Walter Williams, Tom Ashley, Banjo Bill Cornett, Pete Steele, and many others. In its “Greenback Dollar” form or the Carter Family’s recasting as “East Virginia Blues,” the piece was widely performed upon “hillbilly” radio shows in the 1930’s. Derivatives of Buell’s influential Brunswick recording can often be spotted through the inclusion of its trademark elongated verse.

Oh, I was born in East Virginny
North Carolina I did go
And there I met a fair young maiden
What was her name, I did not know.

Her hair, it was of a light brown color
Her cheeks they were of a rosy red
And on her breast she wore white lilies
Where I longed to lay my head.

Her papa said that we might marry
Her momma said it would not do
So come here, dear, and I will tell you
Oh, I’ll tell just what we’ll do
On some dark night we’ll take a ramble
And I will run away with you.

Oh, I’d rather be in some dark holler
Where the sun refuses to shine
Than to know that you’d be some other man’s woman
Than to know that you’d never be mine.

9. *Barbara Allen* (Berea AC006, Child 84; gDGCD). Dust-to-Digital has recently issued a recording of Buell on *The Art of Field Recording 2* singing this best loved British ballads, but not in this version. Instead, Buell employs a gDGAD banjo tuning behind the customary American melody for the lyrics. So I was quite astonished when I first heard Philip sing the piece as we hear it here, in its striking gDGCD banjo setting. Clearly, Buell must have known the song in two ways. Philip observes that his dad associates the gDGAD tuning with “Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender” in his banjo tutor but that he had never heard his dad play that song (prob-

ably because of its length--Buell would only pull out the banjo from under the bed to play on occasion, largely to keep himself in performance trim). We can only be grateful that Philip managed to learn “Barbara Allen” in this gorgeous setting, as it is one of the most striking versions that I’ve heard. The melody (which was essentially employed by the late Jo Stafford in her own great, “art song” approach to the piece) is close to that found in Lonesome Tunes, but it is the interlacing of voice with banjo that makes Philip’s rendition so exceptional.

In Scarlet Town where I was born
There dwelt a fair young maiden
She was the fairest among them all
And her name was Barbry Allen.

Oh, it was in the month of May
When the green buds they were swelling
Sweet William Green on his deathbed lay
And he called for Barbry Allen.

They sent his servants through the town
To her own father’s dwelling
“Sweet William’s sick and has sent for
you
“If your name be Barbry Allen.”

Then slowly, slowly she got up
And slowly she went to him
But all she said when she got there
Was “Young man, I think you’re dying.”

“I’m sick, oh, so sick
“Death’s within me dwelling
“I’ll never see you before my time
“If I don’t get Barbry Allen.”

“Oh, don’t you remember in yonder town
“At your own father’s dwelling?
“You treated me like the ladies around
“And you slighted Barbry Allen.”

“Yes, I remember in yonder town
“At my own father’s dwelling
“I treated all the ladies around
“But I love only Barbry Allen.”



Then slowly, slowly she got up
 And slowly she went from him
 She'd only gone three miles or more
 When she heard the death bells tolling.

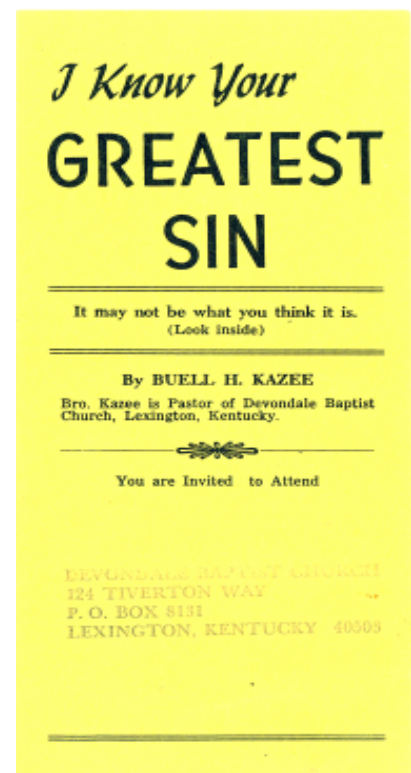
They rang so loud, they spoke to her
 "Hard-hearted Barbry Allen"
 She looked to the east, she looked to the west
 Until she spied the pale corpse coming.

"Oh, bring to me that lovely corpse
 "And let me gaze upon him
 "Sweet William died for love today
 "I must die for sorrow."

They buried him in the old churchyard
 And Barbry not far from him
 And from his grave there sprang a rose
 And a green briar out of Barbry's.

They grew and grew to the old church top
 'Til they could not grow no higher
 They wrapped and twined in a true lover's knot
 The red rose and green briar.

10. *Amazing Grace* (FS 3810; JA 009). As is well known, the verses were composed by the onetime slave trader John Newton and published in his *Olney Hymns* of 1779. A good account of the song's complex declination can be found in Steve Turner, *Amazing Grace, The Story of America's Most Beloved Song* and the Library of Congress's "American Memory" website provides an excellent selection of musical examples. However, Philip's version, acquired from his father, is unusual in several ways. First of all, it carries a gorgeous mountain melody, rather different from the "New Britain" strains that have gradually become canonical for these words (it also differs from the other Eastern Kentucky airs with which I am familiar, including those on Rounder 1704, SFW 40106, and SFW 40077). It also includes a long interpolation of which Philip only sings the opening verse (as stanza two below). It then continues:



I saw one hanging on a tree
 In agonies and blood
 Who fixed His languid eyes on me
 As near the cross I stood.

Sure, never 'til my latest breath
 Can I forget that look
 It seemed to charge me with His death
 'Though not a word He spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt
 And plunged me in despair
 I saw my sins His blood had shed
 And helped to nail Him there.

Alas, I knew not what I did
 But all my tears are vain
 Where could my trembling soul be hid
 For I the Lord had slain?

A second look He gave that said,
 "I freely all forgive
 "This blood is for thy ransom paid
 "I died that thou mayest live."

It then returns, as Philip demonstrates, to Newton's own text (including a verse that Philip here omits). In its entirety, the interpolation seems thematically askew to Newton's original, although the second verse, taken in itself, proves neatly concordant and suggests, as Philip remarked to me, Newton's regret for his activities within the slave trade. Oddly, Buell sings yet another stray verse to the text on JA 009. The last verse here, although entirely traditional, was not composed by Newton. The popularity of the ubiquitous "New Britain" setting now preferred by Scottish pipe bands and television evangelists appears to trace, via the performer Judy Collins, to an impromptu Newport Folk Festival performance by Jean Ritchie, Doc Watson, and others.

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
 That saved a wretch like me
 I once was lost but now am found
 Was blind but now I see.

In evil long I took delight
 Unawed by shame or fear
 'Til a new objective met my sight

And stopped my wild career.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come
Twas grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Then when we first begun.



11. *Roll On John* (Br 144; JA 009; gDGBD). Two lengthy discussions of the variegated tune family to which this song belongs can be found in Archie Green's Only a Miner and Norm Cohen's Long Steel Rail. Green quotes a letter from Buell:

It is among my first memories and I have no idea how long before that it was sung. Like most of the songs which we knew it had come down with the heritage. It is connected to no historical event that I know. The tune follows the pattern of "Roll On, Buddy" although the time and the mood are radically changed. This I attribute to the old style of banjo playing which I and others did. All the stanzas that I know of "Roll On, John" were definitely sung with this song from my first memory, but I had never heard of "Roll On, Buddy" in those early years--that probably was being sung over on some other creek. I first heard it in Corbin, Kentucky about the time I was recording.

Indeed, in this form one would hardly know that its opening and closing verses were derived from a work song and Green comments upon the fact that Buell did not think of it as such, unlike his "Steel A-Going Down" which was specifically inspired by hearing railroad gangs sing when Buell worked for a summer in 1917 in the big railway yards in Williamson, West Virginia.

Oh, roll on, John, oh, make your time
For I'm broke down and I can't make mine.

I dreamed last night old Lou was dead
With an apron string wrapped around her head.

Oh, who was there since I've been gone?
It was old Aunt Jenny with her nightcap on.

Above my chin, below my nose
Where a many of a quart and a gallon goes.

Oh, roll on, John, oh, roll your coal
When the sun goes down we'll roll no more.



Williamson yards

12. *Shady Grove* (JA009; gDGCD). Buell would have undoubtedly known this as a boy, but the comment in the songbook below marks Jean Ritchie's pivotal role in turning an old banjo tune with a few vagrant verses into a canonical "Kentucky mountain folk song."

Cheeks as red as the blooming rose
Eyes of the deepest brown

You are the darling of my heart
Stay until the sun goes down.

Shady Grove, my little love
Shady Grove, I'm bound
Shady Grove, my little love
Meet you when the sun goes down.

Shady Grove, my little love
Shady Grove, my dear
Shady Grove, my little love
I'm bound to leave you here.

Shady Grove, my little love
Shady Grove, standing in the door
Shoes and stockings in her hand
Little bare feet on the floor.

Wish I had a big fine horse
Corn to feed him on
Pretty little girl to stay at home
Feed him when I'm gone.

Shady Grove, my little love
Shady Grove, I'm bound
Shady Grove, my little love
Meet you when the sun goes down.

Shady Grove, my little love
Shady Grove, I say
Shady Grove, my little love
Wait 'til the Judgement Day.



13. *The Yellow Pups* (FS 3810; gDGAD). Allied forms of cante-fable can be found in Charlie Woolbright's "Rabbit Chase" and Wade Ward's "Fox Hunt." Philip's children had always liked to hear this one, especially when he included the names of the family pets.

14. *Steel A-Going Down* (Br 330; JA 009; gDGBD). The Kazee songbook includes this note by Buell: "Written in the early 1920's. Steel driving, both in the rocks and in tie spikes was dying out. Machinery was taking its place. This was written as a memorial of that time and event." In this same period, Buell composed and recorded a number of secular songs and remained especially fond of this one. His original setting is in 6/8 time and, when we were discussing how to record it again in 1972, he

had wanted an ensemble that could emulate the hammer imitations utilized on the old Brunswick recording. Philip prefers approaching the piece in his father's old-fashioned banjo style, elongating the phrasing until it fits over a 4/4 banjo rhythm (very successfully, in my opinion). Both Buell and Fields Ward remarked to me how striking it was to hear the railroad gangs singing at work and a good number of classic banjo pieces (including "Roll On, John" above) represent such work gang to banjo transfers. The strongly subdominant harmonic shift upon "Soon that whistle blows loud and strong" supplies an unexpected "art song" release to the composition.

Steel a-going down under my old hammer
 I'm a-getting weary in my bones
 Steel a-going down and my hammer's getting heavy
 I'm a-getting weary, working alone.

Soon that whistle blows loud and long
 And they'll look around for me but I'll be gone
 Just a few more days going to swing my hammer
 I'm getting weary, I'm a-going home.

Steel a-going down under my old hammer
 I'm a-getting weary, working so long
 Steel a-going down and my hammer's getting heavy
 Soon be another singing my song.

Over there beyond the dark comes a call
 So I'll lay my hammer down and leave it all
 Steel a-going down and I'm laying down my hammer
 Hear the whistle blowing, I'm a-going home.

15. *Jesse James* (Laws E1; gDGBD). Except for religious numbers, Philip performs very few songs that were not included in his father's repertory. However, this piece, which he learned "from some folk group on a record," pleased him and inspired him to take up the banjo more seriously. Almost certainly, that record was Roy Clark's Family Album by the popular Hee Haw performer now resident in Branson, Mo. Clark's version is quite idiosyncratic and suggestive of heavy rewriting, although some of its anomalous elements can be found in earlier texts. His father knew a more standard set of word to "Jesse James" and remarked to Philip, "You know, I should really work that up for myself."



Jesse James was a man who rambled through the land
 He robbed many banks and trains
 He was a leader man of that bold and wicked band
 And many are the people that were slain.

Chorus: No more Jesse James, no more Jesse James
 They laid poor Jesse in his grave
 When he went to turn his head, little Bobby shot him dead
 And they laid poor Jesse in his grave

Jesse was an expert shot and his bullets found the mark
 His aim was deadly and true
 With his pistol by his side he rambled far and wide
 As many bad robber men do.

Jesse James had a wife who mourned all his life
 Because of Jesse's wicked ways
 But she couldn't stay his hand or stop the robber band
 Her grief made her old and gray.

Jesse's end came at last from a bullet swift and fast
 From a comrade he had trusted in his band
 But the debt he paid was just when they laid in the dust.
 For he had been such a terror in the land.

16. *The Lady Gay* (Br 212; JA 009; eDGBD; Child 79). As suggested above, possibly this was one of the childhood songs that Buell later encountered in college, in its "Wife of Usher's Well" form (which often appeared as "specimens of popular balladry" in anthologies of the time).

Philip omits several standard verses that Buell had included upon his 1969 concert recording, presumably through learning the piece from Buell's original Brunswick recording (only a transcription of the latter appears in the family ballad book). After the second verse, the longer version continues:

"There is a King in heaven," she cried
 "He wears a starry crown.
 "Pray send me down my three little babes
 "Tonight or tomorrow morn."

After the fifth verse:

She fixed a bed in a little back room
 And over it she put white sheets
 And over it the golden spread
 Where those three babes might sleep.

“Take it off, take it off,” cried the oldest one
“Take it off, take it off,” cried she
“For yonder stands our Savior dear
“And with Him you soon will be.”

Buell told me that he had to shorten the song for Brunswick to meet the time limitations available upon a 78 record. As such, his full test and tune are comparable to others recovered along the West Virginia/Kentucky line. I once enjoyed the privilege of hearing the great Molly O’Day sing me a closely similar version in text and tune. Molly was originally from McVeigh, Kentucky about thirty miles east of Mashfork. As observed above, if Buell had heard this played as a banjo song in his youth, it would have undoubtedly been in gDBCD tuning (in his banjo tutor, Buell seems to indicate that only “Wild Bill Jones” had been originally performed in the present tuning).

There was a lady and a lady gay
Of children she had three
She sent them away to the north country
For to learn their gramaree.

They had not been there very long
Scarcely six months and a day
‘Til Death, cold Death, came a-hastening along
And stole those babes away.

It was just about Old Christmas time
The night’s being cold and clear
When she looked and she saw those three little babes
Come running home to her.

She set a table both long and wide
And on it she put bread and wine
“Come eat, come drink your wine, children
“Come eat, come drink of mine.”

“We want none of your bread, Mother
“Neither do we want your wine.
“For yonder stands our Savior, dear
“And to Him we must resign.”

“Green grass grows over our heads, Mother
“Cold clay lies under our feet
“And every tear you shed for us
“Only wets our winding sheet.”

17. *John Hardy* (Br 144; FS 3810; Rdr 0394; Laws I2: gDGBD).

The West Virginia Archives and History website (www.wvculture.org/History) provides useful background information pertinent to this song, including this clipping from the Wheeling Daily Register of January 20, 1894:

WILD E, W. VA., January 19. - John Hardy, for killing Thomas Drews, both colored, was hung at 2:09 p. m. today. Three thousand people witnessed his death. His neck was broken and he died in 17 1/2 minutes. He exhibited great nerve, attributed his downfall to whiskey, and said he had made peace with God. His body was cut down at 2:39, placed in a coffin, and given to the proper parties for interment. He was baptized in the river this morning. Ten drunken and disorderly persons among the spectators were promptly arrested and jailed. Good order was preserved. Hardy killed Drews near Eckman last spring in a disagreement over a game of craps. Both were enamored of the same woman, and the latter proving the more favored lover, incurred Hardy's envy, who seized the pretext of falling out in the game to work vengeance on Drews, who had shown himself equally expert in dice as in love, having won money from Hardy. Hardy drew his pistol, remarking he would kill him unless he refunded the money. Drews paid back part of the money, when Hardy shot, killing him. Hardy was found guilty at the October term.

With the singular exception of "John Henry," intrepid scholarship has gradually managed to trace firm historical origins for an impressive number of characteristically American songs of this type, usually arising within a span stretching between 1880 and 1910.

Through the researches of Gus Meade, Norm Cohen, and others, we now know that a fair portion of the earlier material found in the standard folk song collections represent altered derivatives of popular material originally composed for the stage



(and this descent may hold true of older instrumental tunes as well). Yet songs like "John Hardy" do not follow this pattern and the question of how they managed to spread so widely across America within a relatively short period of time remains a mystery (as is the fact that the "folk" versions of popular songs are often quite homogeneous in format, although markedly distinct from their composed song originals). I fancy that such song dissemination clues correlate with parallel shifts in interactions between economic and social classes during the same time frame, although I am totally unprepared to substantiate this thesis rigorously.

This song remains popular in the South and the majority of banjo players know some version of the tune. Many of these versions trace to the influential recording by the Carter Family, although Buell's disc predated theirs. Many of the bluegrass versions trace to Flatt and Scruggs' version, which is directly copied from the Carters'.

John Hardy was a desperate little man
He carried a knife every day
He shot down a man on the West Virginia line
Ought to see John Hardy getting away, poor boy,
Seen John Hardy getting away.

John Hardy stood in the barroom door
So drunk he could not see
Along came the police and took by the arm
Saying, "Johnny, come and go with me, poor boy."

John Hardy's mama came to him
Saying, "Johnny, what have you done?"
"I killed a man in a poker game
"Oh, standing on the barrel of my gun, poor boy,
"Oh, standing on the barrel of my gun."

John Hardy married him a loving little wife
The dress she wore was blue
She threw her arms around Johnny's neck
Saying, "Honey, I've been true to you, poor boy."

"I've been to the east and I've to the west
"I've been this world around
"I've been to the river and I've been baptized
"So take me to the hanging ground, poor boy,
Oh, take me to the hanging ground."

The night John Hardy was to be hanged
There came a storm of hail
It blew the hanging scaffold down
They threw John Hardy back in jail, poor boy,
They threw John Hardy back in jail.

18. *Old Joe Clark* (gDGCD). Philip knows more verses to this and wishes that he had included them. Still it is nice to hear the old fashioned "mountain modal" setting he employs for the tune.

I used to live on a mountain top
Now I live in town
I'm living at the big hotel
Courting Betsy Brown

Farewell, old Joe Clark
 Goodbye Betsy Brown.
 Farewell, old Joe Clark
 I'm going to leave this town.

19. *The Sporting Bachelors* (Br 157; JA 009; gDGBD). As indicated above, this text is quite close to that supplied in Twenty Kentucky Mountain Songs, attributed there to some unidentified informant from Letcher County. Based upon its internal construction, I would suspect a stage origin for this song, but the songster expert Norm Cohen tells me he has never run across a specimen text. Norm usefully points to affinities within the opening verse of the “Rain and Snow” song encountered in North Carolina (Obray Ramsey and Dillard Chandler), although these echoes strike me as simple migrations of an older lyric into the “Ain’t Got No Honey Baby Now” song matrix. Norm suspects a more intimate connection; perhaps some fugitive document will some day settle the matter.

Philip accompanies the song in the galloping manner of the original 78, although Buell had elected to pick out the melody with his thumb when he recorded it for me in 1969--I believe on the grounds that “the banjo gets monotonous if it’s always played in the same way” (little did he suspect the degree to which banjoists evidence an endless hunger for the overhanded style). But a thumbed and strummed approach to ballads was, in fact, quite traditional in Eastern Kentucky. Another influential early recording of this piece was “Never Be as Fast as I Have Been” by Grayson and Whitter.

Come all you sporting bachelors who wish to get good wives
 And never be deceived as I am
 I married me a wife, makes me weary of my life
 Let me strive to do all that I can, can, can
 Let me strive to do all that I can.

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SPORTING BACHELORS
 (Letcher County, Kentucky)

The Words collected by
 LORLAINE WYMAN

Melody collected and
 Pianoforte accompaniment by
 HOWARD BROCKWAY

Allegro molto spiritoso

VOICE

1. Come all you sporting bachelors who wish to get good wives,
 2. Who I married me a wife, makes me weary of my life,
 Let me strive to do all that I can, can, can,
 Let me strive to do all that I can.

PIANO

wish to get good wives, And never be deceived as I am
 just like me a - lone, My poor joints trem - bling with
 fear; I mar - ried me a wife, Makes me
 weary and she'll love, She'll...

Twenty Kentucky Mountain Songs

She dresses me in rags, in the very worst of rags
 While she dresses like a queen so fine
 She goes to town by day and she goes to town by night
 Where the gentlemen do drink wine, wine, wine
 Where the gentlemen do drink wine

When I come home, I'm just like one alone
 My poor old heart is trembling with fear
 She'll pout and she'll glower and she'll frown and look sour
 'Til I dare not stir for my life, life, life.
 'Til I dare not stir for my life.

When supper is done, she tosses me a bone
 And swears I'm obliged to maintain her
 Oh, sad the day I married, oh, that I had longer tarried
 'Ere I to the altar was led, led, led.
 'Ere I to the altar was led.

20. *A Short Life of Trouble* (Br 214; JA 009; gDGBD). Brunswick 214 was never issued but a production copy somehow survived in the company vaults (*mirabile dictu*: archival material was usually reprocessed for their raw materials during the war years). I had obtained a taped copy from Gus Meade and sent it on to Buell; he had barely remembered the song at all. It is quite possible that Jack Kapp or someone else at the company had asked him to record the piece, in competition to Columbia's Burnett and Rutherford 1926 recording which was a popular seller (Buell's text is quite close to Dick Burnett's and unlike the Grayson and Whitter recording which seems to be the source of most contemporary renditions). In preparing their recent reissue, June Appal apparently found the tape I had sent Buell and mistook it for a home recording (the 78 has also been issued, in somewhat better shape, on Yazoo 2200). I had regarded the number as one of Buell's finest recordings and, after hearing it, Rev. Kazez told me that he had liked it too. Philip never heard his father sing the song in person and first encountered it only in going through his father's old tapes. In elongating its normally 3/4 meter to fit the overhand banjo style, the Kazez version augments its melancholy as well.

A short life of trouble
 A few more days apart
 A short life of trouble, dear girl
 Poor boy with a broken heart.

You know what you've promised
 It's been some time ago
 You promised you would marry me
 Standing on the ballroom floor.

repeat verse one

I hear that train a-coming
 She's going past the station door
 I'd rather be dead and be in my grave
 Than to see my darling girl go.

I see my coffin coming
 The crowd's all standing around
 Oh, take me to some lonesome graveyard
 And let the grave be my home.

And when I'm dead and buried
 Will you come strow some flowers?
 To show the people 'round about you
 The heart that you've broken lies there.

Weeping on my bedside
 My eyes all wet with dew
 I'd give this world and half of my life
 If I were married to you.

repeat verse one

21. *The Unclouded Day* (gDGBD). In exploring the more latent portions of Philip's repertory, I asked if he knew this late nineteenth century gospel favorite, loved by banjo players and fiddlers everywhere. "Oh sure," he immediately replied, "That's one of my favorites." It was composed by an Ohio minister, Josiah K. Alwood, in the early 1870's.

Oh, they tell me of a home far beyond the skies
 Oh, they tell me of a home far away
 Oh, they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise
 Oh, they tell me of an unclouded day.

Chorus:

Oh, the land of cloudless days
 Oh, the land of an unclouded day
 Oh, they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise
 Oh, they tell me of an unclouded day.

Oh, they tell me of a home where my friends have gone
 Oh, they tell me of a home far away
 Where the tree of life in eternal bloom
 Spreads its fragrance through the unclouded day.

Oh, they tell me that He smiles on His children there
 And His smiles drive their troubles all away
 And they tell me that no tears ever come again
 In the land of an unclouded day.

22. *Savior, More Than Life to Me.* In the same vein, I asked Philip what was his father's favorite song and he remarked that it was this Fanny Crosby composition tracing to *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* of 1875. Crosby (of Connecticut) wrote the lyrics and W. Howard Doane (of Cincinnati) composed the music. Ira David Sankey wrote in *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns*:

Tune preceded words in this instance. It was in 1875 that Mr. Doane sent the tune to Fanny Crosby, and requested her to write a hymn entitled "Every day and hour." Her response in the form of this hymn gave the blind hymn-writer great comfort and filled her heart with joy. She felt sure that God would bless the hymn to many hearts. Her hope has been most fully verified, for millions have been refreshed and strengthened as they have sung it. At the suggestion of Mr. D. W. McWilliams, who was superintendent of Dr. Cuyler's Sunday school for twenty-five years, it was put into *Gospel Hymns*.



Among his secular songs, Buell once indicated that "The Poor Orphan Girl" was his own favorite, although he humorously suggested that the "protest song" designation it later received from the revivalists had spoiled some of its charm for him.

Savior, more than life to me, I am clinging, clinging, close to Thee;
 Let Thy precious blood applied, Keep me ever, ever near Thy side.

Refrain:

Every day, every hour, Let me feel Thy cleansing power;
 May Thy tender love to me Bind me closer, closer, Lord to Thee.
 Through this changing world below, Lead me gently, gently as I go; Trusting Thee, I cannot stray, I can never, never lose my way.

Refrain

Let me love Thee more and more, 'Til this fleeting, fleeting life is o'er; 'Til my soul is lost in love, In a brighter, brighter world above.

Refrain

Appendix 1: Songs in Kazez Ballad Book

As mentioned above, the family has converted Rev. Kazez's old concert notes into a family songbook, with a few additions by Philip. The following is a list of its contents and annotations where * indicates that recording by Buell is extant.

Abdul Abdullah Amir

**Amazing Grace*

Barbary Allen

**Black Jack Davy or Gypsy Davy*

**The Blind Man's Song*

(Go) Bring Me Back My Blue-eyed Boy

**The Butcher's Boy*

**Careless Love*

Come, All You Fair and Tender Ladies

**The Cowboy's Farewell*

**The Cowboy Trail*

**Darlin' Corey*

Down in the Valley

The Dying Cowboy

**Frog Went a-Courtin'*

Glorious Prospect or My Soul's Full of Glory ("This song, with additional stanzas, was sung quite often in the old United Baptist Church on Mashfork, Magoffin County, Kentucky, by Milt Tackett, a lay preacher of that denomination. He had a fine high tenor voice, untrained, and sang with unique, quaint interpretation with sublime facial expression. These stanzas are recorded in George Pullen Jackson's *Spiritual Folk Songs of Early America*, pp. 133 and 134. 'John G. McCurry places his name as composer at the top of the page where this song is found in the *Social Harp* and dates it 1852.' I heard 'Brother Tackett' sing it at least as early as 1910 and many times thereafter.--Buell Kazez.")

Goin' Down to Town ("Sandburg Collection")

Go Tell Aunt Rhody

**The Hobo's Last Ride*

**The Inconstant Lover* ("Harlan Co.--Brockway likeness")

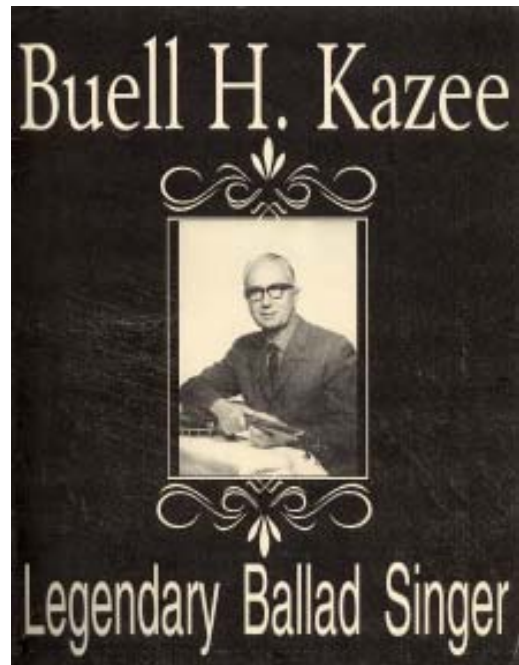
In the Pines ("Last two stanzas from Mr. and Mrs. H.P. Robertson, Dillard Fla.")

I Once Did Love with Fond Affection

I Wish I Was a Single Girl Again

Jack Went A-Sailing or Jacky Frazier ("Sharp")

**Jay Gould* ("Sandburg, from Collection of John Lomax. 'The blind baggage car, with a platform but no front door, hooked on just back of the engine tender, was a place bums rode; engine crews



sometimes gave them hot water.”)

Jesse James (Philip’s version in Philip’s hand)

**John Hardy*

**John Henry*

**Lady Gay* (in different type, with note: “by Buell Kazee, vocal with banjo, New York City, January 16, 1928.”)

Leatherwing Bat (in Philip’s hand; indirectly from Burl Ives through a friend)

The Letter Edged in Black

**Little Bessie*

Little Maggie (Darlin’ Cory)

**The Little Mohea*

The Little Rosewood Casket

**Lonesome Road* (additions in Philip’s hand to match recording)

**Lord Randall*

Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender or *The Brown Bride*

The Lover’s Farewell

**Madam, I Have Come A-Courting*

The Maple on the Hill

Marching Through Georgia

Mary Hamilton

Michael, Row the Boat

**Moonshiner*

Nine Pound Hammer

**O Bury Me Beneath the Willow*

The Orphan Girl

**Gambling Blues* (in Philip’s hand)

The Old Churchyard

**The Old Maid* (concluding chorus in Philip’s hand)

**Old Smoky* (“Note: This song has been frequently mixed with others, for example, ‘The Wagoner’s Lad,’ ‘Little Mohea’ (especially the melody). It is likely a variant from ‘The Inconstant Lover,’ a version of which was collected by Brockway-Wyman in Harlan Co., Ky, and published by Oliver Ditson in *Twenty Kentucky Mountain Songs*, 1920.”)

**Poor Boy Long Ways from Home*

**Poor Little Orphan Boy* (in Philip’s hand)

Pretty Fair Maid

Pretty Polly (copied from Brockway’s *Twenty Kentucky Mountain Songs*)

Prisoner’s Song

*Red River Valley***Red Wing*

**Rocky Island* (“The title is of local origin. The stanzas from this song may be found in many others. It came to us from no particular source.”)

Roll On John* (in Philip’s hand)The Roving Cowboy**The Roving Gambler**The Rowan County Crew***Shady Grove* (“Part from Ritchie”; some additions in Philip’s hand)*Shenandoah***Snow Deer***Sourwood Mountain**The Soldier’s Sweetheart***Sporting Bachelors*

**Steel A-Goin’ Down* (Two texts are included. The first reads: “By Buell H. Kazee (Copyright 1970). Note: written in the early 1920’s. Steel driving, both in the rocks and in tie spikes was dying out. Machinery was taking its place. This was written as a memorial of that time and event.”)

**Swapping Song*

Sweet Betsy from Pike (“Sandburg Collection”).

This Mornin’, This Evenin’, So Soon (“From Sandburg book”)

*Turkey in the Straw***The Wagoner’s Lad or Going Back to Georgia***Wild Bill Jones*

The Water is Wide (“Collected by Cecil Sharp many years ago (England) and titled by him “Waillie, Waillie.” Copyright by Novello & Co., Ltd., 1908, 1936.”)

The Wexford GirlWhen I Was Single***When Mother Wields the Shingle* (“Tennessee Mt. Song”)**Who Killed Cock Robin?**Wildwood Flower**Will They Miss Me When I’m Gone?*

Willie Brook (“Copied from an undated and unsigned, handwritten ballad from the Ed Conley house, Mashfork, Kentucky”).

You Are False, but I’ll Forgive You (“Collected from Curtis & Ocie Creech, students (brother and sister) at Cumberland College, 1928”).

(*Editor’s note:* Rev. Kazee knew many more songs than these. For example, he once sang me a gorgeous version of “Charley Brooks and Miss Adair” that he appears to have never recorded).



Appendix 2: Buell Kazez's Banjo Instructor

Introduction. All folk styles of playing a banjo are difficult to explain without demonstration, but we give here the best explanation we can of what is commonly known as the “frailing” style, which we use with adaptations.

The melody is played mainly with the index finger of the right hand. The hand is somewhat relaxed in a fist-like curl with the thumb projecting slightly wide so as to work along the line of the thumb string. Kazee plays usually just over the end of the fret board where the neck of the banjo joins the head. This allows his arm to rest on the banjo head just back of the highest point in the curve, making the hand drop naturally at that point on the strings.

The hand works loosely at the wrist with a very slight motion of the arm from there back to the elbow. The curved hand in the right position allows the finger nail of the index finger to be nearly parallel with the strings, the nail pointing back toward the banjo head. The stroke is downward, making the nail hit the string and slide off in a quick, picking stroke just at the forward corner of the nail next to the thumb (this nail serves as a substitute for a pick). The thumb works the little short string (fifth string) exclusively (there are other methods which employ the thumb to pick melody). The flesh of the index finger may brush the string and soft playing of the string may be obtained by allowing more of the flesh to brush the string. Conversely, the louder tones are obtained by a more positive and stiff stroke of the nail.



Buell in concert, Seattle, Wa 1969

After the beginner has found the idea indicated, he should now allow the thumb to lie loosely on the neck of the banjo (at the position already indicated) while practicing picking the melody out on the strings below (note: don't get in a hurry--Kazee began when he was five and he is now fifty-eight). As one practices, one will come to see that relaxation of the hand is an art as well as being so necessary. Relaxation is not a slump of the muscles but positive freedom. There is a great difference.

Choosing a melody to learn is difficult. It should be a tune of very narrow range or one in which progression is easy to follow. We suggest “Dance Around My Pretty Little Miss” or “Going Down to Town,” which is in a different tuning.

Tuning the banjo. Of course, for playing the banjo in conventional style there is only one tuning, but for the folk banjo player there are many. In his style of pick-

ing, the object is to get as many open strings as possible, thereby eliminating as much noting as possible. Conventional-style tuning is, beginning with the long string at the underside of the neck: first string, D above second C (coming down the scale); second string, B; third string, G; fourth string C; and the fifth (or thumb string) G above D of the first string. Now to get more open strings for folk playing, raise the second string to C above middle C (just a step). This brings the succession into this tuning: D,C,G,C,G above second C, the only change being the raise in the second string indicated above. This is one of the two most popular tunings for the banjo, which is, of course, the key of C playing. In the list of tunes played in this tuning are "Pretty Little Miss," "Soldier's Joy," "Rocky Island," "Moonshiner," "Old Gray Mare," and a long list of "hoedowns" or dance tunes such as "Chase the Rabbit, Chase the Coon," "Skip to My Lou," "Old Jackie Wilson," "Rock Little Julie," "Baby-O," "Going Down the river," and others. Among the ballads in this tuning are "New Jail" (old style), "Rowan County Crew," etc (note: the tuning above was always spoken of as tuning for "Going Down the River" or "Love Somebody"--i.e., "Soldier's Joy").

The other popular tuning is for "Cripple Creek." The fifth string is left in the same position. Lower the second string to the B position of the conventional tuning. Raise the bass or fourth string from C to D. Now you have, beginning with the first string, D,B,G,D,G above second C. This is the key of G major. Many hoedowns and ballads can be played here. Among the hoedowns are: "Cripple Creek," "Down the Line," "Goin' Down to Town," "Cackling Hen," "Shortenin' Bread," etc. Ballads include "John Hardy," "John Henry," "Wagoner's Lad," "Roll On John," "Little Bessie," etc.

The next easiest tuning from where we are and most popular for minor tunes is as follows. Simply raise the second string from B to C. This brings the tuning for "Lonesome John," a tune everybody recognized but few could "pick"; but it served as a guide for tuning. In this tuning we can play "The Blind Man" (a ballad composed in America), "The Butcher's Boy," Old Joe Clark," "Roving Cowboy," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "East Virginia," etc.

Again: Lower the second string back to B (as in the key of G above); now lower the fifth or thumb string to E [text has B] immediately above D of the first string. Now you are in tune for "Wild Bill Jones," the only tune I ever played in this tuning.

Again: Put the fifth string back to F above second C; now raise the second string to C (above middle C) and the bass string to F above middle C. Now you are in tune for "Shady Grove" and for hoedowns like "Heel Over Head and Toe Like a Trigger," "Buck Creek Gals" and maybe others.

Again: tune in this fashion---D,A,G,D,G above second C. Now you are in tune for "The Yaller Pups." Also the ballad "The Brown Girl" or "Lord Thomas and Fair

Ellender,” although sometimes this may be played in another tuning. This is the first tune I learned on the banjo, picking out the melody with the index finger alone. There is another tune to this ballad which is minor (see Brockway-Lyman, Twenty Kentucky Mountain Songs) which I consider nearer the original. It is played in the tuning for “Lonesome John.”

Again: Tune in this fashion-- D,A,F#,D,F# above second C. Now you are in tune for some “blues” like “Lonesome Road” (as we knew it in the mountains) and “Po’ Boy, Long Ways rom Home.” This last is a “bum ballad” with disconnected stanzas depicting a forlorn condition.

Again: now lower the third string to E and you will have D,A,E,D, F# above second C. Here you play “Frankie and Johnnie,” “Jay Gould” and a few other snatches of tunes.

Again: Lower the bass string to B below middle C and you have the tuning for “Cumberland Gap.” I know of no other tune played in this tuning.

One more, and a very odd tuning, for “Darling Cory.” Here is a case where you don’t need one string, so you just tune it out by making it match exactly with another. The first and second strings are tuned D,D and the third A and the fourth D. The fifth string is left at F#. This is the only tune I know played in this tuning but I never knew of it played in any other.

If some of these pitches seem to be too high for singing, as well they may be in some cases, we remedied that by simply lowering the strings to a comfortable pitch and keeping the tuning in the same order. In other words, transposing. This totals eleven different ways besides the conventional tuning. Most of the tunes played in the first open string tuning (for “Love Somebody”) I play from conventional tuning. Thus I would not say that all the above is the best way, but it was the way I learned and the usual way among banjo players.

Playing the banjo. If the beginner has now learned the idea of picking out a melody with the fingernail, he may begin to advance to some of the complicated doubling of this finger exercise. Place the finger on the third string and, forgetting about the melody, pick the third string, then the first, in succession. If tuned for the key of C[D,C,G.C,G], the succession should be 3-1,3-1,3-1,3-1,3-1 and so on until you have learned this action. Now whenever the melody leads from one string to another, the first string should be played alternatively with the melody note, giving a double action as indicated in the exercise above. In the melody "Pretty Little Miss," you would have a playing something like this: 112-1 33 4-33-2 11 (note: this will not sound right until the proper fretting is done). How to make this more intelligible, we will spread it out and place the fretting below each step. The numbers below the string number are the finger and fret.

1 1 2——1 3 3 4——3
 3-2 3-3 open 3-2 3-2 open 3-4 open
 3——2 3——2 1 1
 open open 3-2 open 3-2 3-1

This includes the first two lines of the melody. Here it is in simple notation (dots show where the melody stays).



Using musical syllables, you have: mi,mi,do,do,la,sol,mi,sol,sol,la,do,mi,mi. Note that in playing this on the banjo, when you come back to the first do, do not repeat the second but revert back to the mi instead to give the doubling effect desired on the banjo. Same with other places where the long dash is indicated.

Now we come to the third stage of the fingering with the right hand. This is a triple stroke, including the two described plus the thumb stroke. Set the middle finger of the left hand on the first string, second fret, and hold it there while doing this exercise: Strike the first string with the nail of the index finger as indicated above.

Pick the thumb string with the left side of the thumb, letting it brush off the string with a solid but not harsh stroke; then strike the second string with the index finger as above; now thumb again on the fifth string; now the index finger on the third string, the thumb again, the second string again, and so on. Do this slowly at first, gradually increasing as the technique develops. This should give a rollicking rhythm. In musical notes the progression should be:

mi mi mi mi
 do do
 sol sol

Now add another, which we call double-noting. For this, to begin with, just steady the thumb on the edge of the neck in the thumb position. Now, with the same fretting as above, stroke downward with the index nail, quickly picking the string with the fretting finger and replacing it before the string is picked again. Musically, coming down the scale, the effect will be:

mi mi mi
 re re re
 do do do

in quick succession, but the index finger will be making the first and third stroke while the middle tone will be played with the fretting. This can be worked into any series of melody notes and at intervals where time is being marked in longer notes. The reverse exercise is good also, starting with the second string open, picking the first string with the fretting finger, then the stroke on the first string with the fretting finger immediately on the second fret.

Then you will have:

 mi mi mi
 re re re
 do do do

and so on.

This will need much practice, but it gives a rippling effect when playing. (Note: remember, at all times the hand should not be stiff but positive enough to give a solid stroke. Nobody can teach you this; it comes with practice. But when your hand or fingers begin to stiffen, you will know you are headed in the wrong direction. Short, quick strokes are best and the feeling that the hand is heavy is also best).

I use another technique for a doubling effect, and for variations, by letting the thumb--after it has picked the thumb string--go down to about the second string and lightly drag back over the second, third and fourth strings, then picking the thumb string again. This adds still more of the rollicking effect, but, like all the rest, comes with practice. Like the rest of the hand, the thumb is loose but positive. Then, there is the roll of the right hand. This is executed with the nails of all four right hand

fingers dragging backward in immediate succession, making the tips of the nails stroke all four strings. In fact, even though the index finger is making the melody and other notes clear, the other fingers are allowed to brush the strings lightly to give background tones and keep the prominent notes from being so harsh. This is also a partial roll.

There is one other technique with the fretting finger. This is to make one fretting of a string play two notes in succession. Take this melody in the key of C.



This begins on the open third string. The next note is on the second fret of that string. Pick the third string and quickly fret it with the middle finger on the second fret and you will get two notes with one picking. Now you pick the second string open, then pick the first string and quickly fret it on the second fret and you will get a repeat of what you did on the third string. Much of the melodic progression is done this way. When the melody goes up to G--the thumb string--give a roll with the playing hand and pick the thumb string with the thumb once or twice as the rhythm or melody may determine.



Delores and Philip. Delores is holding the Gibson trapdoor recently refurbished for Mark by Gary Cornett



Credits:

Produced by Loyal Jones and Mark Wilson

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