

Recording Laboratory AFS L61

# Railroad Songs and Ballads

From the Archive of Folk Song

Edited by Archie Green

Library of Congress Washington 1968

*Library of Congress Catalog Card Number R67-3179*

*Available from the Library of Congress  
Music Division, Recorded Sound Section  
Washington, D.C. 20540*

## PREFACE

Few folksong collectors in the United States have not encountered at least one railroad song, and few scholars have resisted the temptation to comment on the meaning of such material. For a century and a half the iron horse raced across the continent; this journey was as much in the imagination as it was over the land. When a train is seen in oral or written literature and music as a mythical steed it effaces human riders and handlers. Yet in life each train is directed and cared for by muscle and nerve. Hence, railroad lore fuses the sounds of machines with the emotions of workers. Right-of-way construction hands as well as operating and maintenance craftsmen perceive locomotives, cabooses, roundhouses, or track-sections as other mechanics view their own work sites. But a railroad is more than a place to earn a living. Precisely because a train is an artifact in culture which can be labeled "iron horse," it is a highly important symbol in folk tradition.

There may have been a legendary time when only railroaders sang their songs and told their stories. But today their lore belongs to all Americans. No industrial lore is as widespread as that of the rails; it seems as much the possession of editors and teachers as of car knockers or hoppers. Consequently, bankers and Boy Scouts feel quite familiar with "Casey Jones" and "John Henry." We are all in debt to authors Ben Botkin, Frank Donovan, Alvin Harlow, Freeman Hubbard, and Archie Robertson for a rich presentation of railroad folklore in their books. We are also fortunate that the commercial phonograph industry offered train songs to the public almost from the inception of sound recordings. In the 1890's "A Night Trip to Buffalo" was popular in cylinder catalogs. In 1966 RCA Victor released a serious anthology, *The Railroad in Folksong*.

One illustration of the ubiquity of railroad balladry tells something of its function even on the contemporary scene. On Easter Sunday, 1967, the Stoneman Family—an Appalachian string-band group with deep roots in tradition—presented an all-train-song concert to a tremendous television audience. The Stonemans could well have performed an all-sacred program, but perhaps their sponsors felt that the train itself was a hallowed enough object to be honored at Easter. Not only were the numbers presented with verve, but Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman, the family patriarch and him-

self a former Norfolk and Western employee, added a bit of oral wisdom to the program. He indicated that firemen used to knot red bandanas around their necks to keep from being burned by cinders before diesel fuel supplanted coal. The Stonemans sang folksongs; "Pop" related a folk belief to the television announcer. All folksingers ought to be given a similar opportunity to bedeck songs with custom and belief, for every folksong deserves a protective bandana as its own kind of pennant.

A disciplined collector asks folksingers questions which go beyond songs. In a sense, the folklorist "flags" a song almost as a signalman flags a train. A seemingly peripheral anecdote may reveal much about a ballad's background or meaning. Such contextual data are best presented when folksongs appear in printed or sound-recorded anthologies. Ideally, each collector should edit phonograph albums following his own field work, for he can best recall a singer's stance or feelings. But an outside editor who presents other fieldworkers' songs labors under a severe handicap. Although I am fortunate enough to have gathered railroad lore from traditional singers, in this Library of Congress recording I am working entirely with other collectors' findings. Hence, I open the brochure for L61 with a brief comment on how the recording was put together.

The first curator of the Archive of Folk Song in the Library of Congress was Robert Winslow Gordon, a man who knew railroaders and their songs intimately. During the 1920's Gordon conducted an "old songs" column in *Adventure Magazine*. He was in constant touch with boomers who opened their hearts to him. Gordon was the first folklorist to collect a rail labor union song, "The ARU," dating from the Pullman strike of 1894. I desired to use this song but, unfortunately, Gordon did not record it, although he did make many cylinder recordings before the Archive perfected portable battery and electrically driven disc equipment in the 1930's.

Gordon's successor in the Archive was John Avery Lomax. His work is well represented on this album. John Lomax and his son Alan gathered enough material for many railroad records. They used these songs in all their printed anthologies and consequently played a significant role in popularizing occupational material.

It has been the constant policy of the Archive to encourage field workers not on the staff to contribute their findings to the Library of Congress.

Hence this LP contains 20 songs, one chant, and one instrumental recorded by 16 different collectors between 1936 and 1959. It is unlikely that any other editor would have lighted on these exact songs; in short "my" gathering is highly personal. It is based on listening during 1965 and 1966 to a fair sample of the thousands of available pieces deposited in the Archive. However, I have excluded from this recording those railroad songs already released on previous Library of Congress phonograph records. (This list is found in the appendix to the brochure.)

The items presented on L61 are intended to represent a broad array of type and style as well as a wide range in time and space. Nevertheless, not every aspect of railroading is represented. Trainmen sang bawdy songs because such pieces were fun, and also because so much rail construction took place in workcamps isolated from "polite" society. Scholars and scholarly institutions have not yet learned to present occupational erotica in context. Also excluded from this recording are songs not in English. Every immigrant group to America helped tamp ties, shovel coal, or load freight. The Archive does contain a handful of occupational songs in foreign languages, but to put together such a railroad anthology today would require fresh recordings of material that is little known. A final and obvious omission from this recording is any song of specific industrial relations (trade union or tycoon) content. Although railroad workers were, and are, highly organized and have made a substantial contribution to laborlore, only one of their union songs, to my knowledge, was deposited in the Library of Congress. Similarly, only one deposited ballad portrays a railroad entrepreneur in a heroic role. Neither of these dual commentaries was available to me for this anthology.

Side One of the recording focuses on the construction of the railroad and railroading as a craft. Side Two features the symbolic values found in the train: conquest, escape, resignation, love, death. If one sees the iron horse as a romantic steed, not unlike the cowboy's bronco or an Indian's pony, it becomes possible to fuse into railroad lore such disparate pieces as hobo and outlaw ballads, or bawdy and gospel songs. In folk imagination trains do lead to heaven and to hell as well as to Hoboken and to Hackensack. It is ironic to contemplate that, in song, trains probably will continue to travel to the legendary abodes long after service has been discontinued to many earthly hamlets.

Not only did Americans create songs about the construction of the railroad and about the uses to

which it could be put, but instrumentalists improvised train imitations in which the performer himself became the clicking, pulsating juggernaut. The mouth-harpist, fiddler, guitarist, or pianist was the train; he brought the engine's snort directly into his cottage or boardinghouse room. One senses in listening to the great body of rail music that Meade Lux Lewis' classic piano solo, "Honky Tonk Train," tells as specific a story as the widely recorded "Wreck of the Old Ninety-Seven." Folklorists place narrative ballads in quite separate categories from lyric instrumentals. Yet there seems to be a tracklike thread which connects the countless rail narrative songs to the most poignant blues and floating lyric folksongs.

I use the term "countless" deliberately. The earliest identified railroad music is a piano piece published at Baltimore in 1828, but no one knows when or where the first railroad worker put together his own song or train imitation. One can only speculate about the "first" railroad number—formal or folk—which entered tradition. The melody, and possibly some stanzas, of "I've Been Working on the Railroad" ("Dinah") goes back to pre-Civil War minstrel days. "Poor Paddy Works on the Railway" dates itself in the period 1841-47; it became a folk-song at least a century ago.

A fascinating problem can be posed on the question of the origin of American railroad songs. Many welled directly out of the experiences of workers and were composed literally to the rhythm of the handcar. Others were born in Tin Pan Alley rooms or bars. But regardless of birthplace, songs moved up and down the main line or were shunted onto isolated spur tracks. This recording, of course, brings together numbers of complete anonymity as well as recent compositions traceable to particular sheet music printings or records.

By analogy this LP is a train made up of widely different boxcars which are loaded with assorted freight and consigned to scattered destinations. Every rail fan will at one time or another have observed a passing train and noted the now familiar, now strange emblems: goats, beavers, leaves, trees, maps, brandlike initials. Any anthology drawn from a tremendous variety of field discs and tapes is likely to be integrated only in the mind of the editor. But I do hope that each listener to this LP will feel that I have coupled its numbers into a "train" of thematic unity that catches something of the locomotive's pulse as well as the trainman's heart-beat.

Obviously, this brochure cannot develop full case studies of included songs, let alone any overview of

the place of railroad song in American tradition. I shall hold my headnotes mainly to discographical and bibliographical references on the assumption that listeners to this recording will search out comparative material. Where books or articles are cited more than once I use the author's last name only for second citations. Where neither printed sources nor recorded analogues are known to me I shall appreci-

**A1—CALLING TRAINS.** Sung by an unidentified old train-caller of New Orleans, La., 1936. Recorded by John A. Lomax at State Penitentiary, Parchman, Miss.

It is appropriate to open the Library of Congress' first railroad recording with "Calling Trains" by an old convict whose name is unknown. His place-name sequence declaims the route of the Illinois Central's "Panama Limited." No formal study of the tradition of calling trains is known to me. Each listener may know something of parallel forms: street vendor calls, circus roustabout chants, midway barker spiels, tobacco auctioneer patter.

All out for Illinois Central.  
New Orleans.  
Ponchatoula.  
Hammond.  
Amite, Independence.  
Fluker, Kentwood, Osyka, Magnolia, McComb.  
Brookhaven, Wesson, Hazelhurst, Crystal Springs.  
Terry, Byram, Jackson, Tougaloo, Ridgeland, Gluckstadt, Madison, Canton.  
Vaughan, Pickens, Goodman, Durant, Winona, Grenada.  
Sardis, Memphis, Dyersburg, Fulton, Cairo, Carbondale.  
Centralia, Effingham, Matoon, Champaign, Kankakee, Chicago.  
Train on Track Four.  
Aisle Number Two.

**A2—THE BOSS OF THE SECTION GANG.** Sung by Mrs. Minta Morgan at Bells, Tex., 1937. Recorded by John A. Lomax.

The immigrant group which contributed most to American folklore was the Irish. Although numerous work songs are known from Irish broadsides, pocket songsters, and folios, this piece about a tough but honest workingman seems unreported as a folksong. Mrs. Morgan told collector Lomax in 1937 that "The Boss of the Section Gang" was

ate such data from readers or listeners.

For help in editing this album, I wish to thank Mrs. Rae Korson, Joseph C. Hickerson, and John E. Howell of the Library of Congress, Music Division; Mrs. Linda Peck of the University of Illinois, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations; Norman Cohen of the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, University of California, Los Angeles.

carried to Texas by Kentucky boys about 45 years ago. Her sense of time was accurate. During 1893 J. R. Bell of Kansas City published "I'm Boss of the Section Gang" by "Cyclone" Harry Hart. However, I am uncertain that he was the song's original composer. Today Hart's sheet music is a rare bit of Americana, and it is unlikely that his song lives in the memories of traditional singers.

1. I landed in this country  
A year and a month ago.  
To make my living at laboring work,  
To the railroad I did go.  
I shoveled and picked in a big clay bank,  
I merrily cheered and sang,  
For my work is o'er—you plainly see,  
I'm the boss of the section gang.
2. Then look at Mike Cahoolley,  
A politician now,  
Whose name and fame he does maintain  
And to whom all people bow.  
I'm the walking boss of the whole railroad,  
For none I care a dang,  
My name is Mike Cahoolley  
And I'm the boss of the section gang.
3. When the railroad president comes 'round  
He takes and shakes my hand.  
"Cahoolley, you're tough, you bet you're the stuff,  
You're an honest workingman.  
They never shirk when you're at work  
Nor at the boss will flang."  
They shrink with fear when I am near,  
I'm the boss of the section gang.
4. Then look at Mike Cahoolley,  
It's the last of him you'll see,  
For I must go to my darling wife  
And happy we will be.  
Come one and all, come great and small,  
And give the door a bang,  
And you'll be welcomed surely  
By the boss of the section gang.

**A3—JERRY WILL YOU ILE THAT CAR.** Sung by Warde H. Ford of Crandon, Wis., 1939. Recorded by Sidney Robertson Cowell at Central Valley, Calif.

Warde Ford's fragment is important for its tune which differs from the melody known through Harry McClintock's 1928 recording of "Jerry Go Ile That Car." The ballad, a humorous elegy to a section-gang foreman, is listed in Laws (H 30), but other references are also available. The earliest printed text known to me appears in *The Flying Cloud*. The fullest text was sent to Robert W. Gordon in 1924 by R. M. MacLeod from Winnipeg, Canada. It is found in the Gordon manuscript collection at the Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Song.

- Harry McClintock, "Jerry Go Ile That Car" on *The Railroad in Folksong*, Victor LPV 532.  
M. C. Dean, *The Flying Cloud* (Virginia, Minn., 1922), p. 26-27.  
G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., *Native American Balladry* (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 244.

You should see old Jerry in the winter time  
When the fields are white with snow.  
With his old soldier coat buckled 'round his throat,  
To the section he would go,  
To work all day in the boiling sun,  
Or in the storms of snow,  
And it's while the boys were a-shimmin' up the ties,  
"Oh, it's Jerry will you ile the car."

**A4—LINING TRACK.** Sung by Henry Hankins at Tuscumbia, Ala., 1939. Recorded by Herbert Halpert.

Fortunately, Negro railroad construction songs are well known through recordings and printed collections. The building of any roadbed section involved myriad skills: timber falling, brushing, blasting, grading, tie and steel unloading, track laying and lining, spike driving, tie tamping. Each detailed function called for a characteristic rhythm that drew to itself hundreds of floating lyrics. Henry Hankins' "Lining Track," which mentions the Biblical Noah as well as a worldly Corinna, is but one example of hundreds of Library of Congress field recordings for this genre. Excellent analogs by Henry Truvillion are found on LC recordings L8 and L52. A recent article by Ambrose Manning leads to

earlier readings. I cite but two commercial 78 rpm discs to note material which preceded field recordings.

- Texas Alexander, "Section Gang Blues," Okeh 8498.  
T.C.I. Section Crew, "Track Lining," Paramount 12478.  
Ambrose Manning, "Railroad Work Songs," *Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin*, 32:41-47 (June 1966).

1. God told Noah about the rainbow sign,  
No more water but a fire next time.  
Hey boys, can't you line, hey boys, just a hair,  
Hey boys, can't you line, hey boys, just a hair.

All right, we're movin' on up the joint ahead.

2. Capt'n keep a-hollerin' 'bout the joint ahead,  
Ain't said nothin' about the hog and bread.  
Hey boys, can't you line, hey boys, just a hair,  
Ho boys, line them over, hey boys, just a hair.

Better move it on down to the center head.

3. Capt'n keep a-hollerin' about the joint ahead,  
Ain't said nothin' 'bout the bowl and bread.  
Hey boys, can't you line, hey boys, just a hair,  
Ho boys, line them over, hey boys, just a hair.

Ol' soul, let's move ahead children.  
All right, is you right? Yes we're right.

4. Gone to town, goin' to hurry back,  
See Corinna when she ball the jack.  
Hey boys, can't you line, hey boys, just a hair.

5. All right, Capt'n keep a-hollerin' about the joint ahead.  
All right, children will you move?  
Move on down ol' soul,  
Is you right children? Yes we're right.

6. Goin' to town, gonna hurry back,  
See Corinna when she ball the jack.  
Hey boys, can't you line, ho boys, just a hair.

**A5—ROLL ON BUDDY.** Sung by Aunt Molly Jackson of Clay Co., Ky., 1939. Recorded by Alan Lomax at New York, N.Y.

Hammer songs, seemingly, are the chief denominators in railroad folksong. Hammer lyrics initially functioned directly as an integral part of the work experience; at times they were extended into banjo

or fiddle pieces which, in turn, became standards in hillbilly and bluegrass string-band repertoires. Occasionally hammer lyrics merged into ballad stories such as "John Henry." Aunt Molly Jackson's version of "Roll on Buddy," particularized to the L. & N. Railroad, is a fine example of the family also called "Nine Pound Hammer." This song complex crosses ethnic, regional, and occupational lines. Perhaps the best known family offshoot is the popular "Take This Hammer." The Alan Lomax anthology which I cite leads to additional references. The two 78 rpm discs noted are the first recorded under the dual names for this hammer song group.

Charlie Bowman and His Brothers, "Role on Buddy," Columbia 15357.

Al Hopkins and His Buckle Busters, "Nine Pound Hammer," Brunswick 177.

Alan Lomax, *The Folk Songs of North America* (New York, 1960), p. 284.

1. I been a-workin' ten years on the L. & N. Railroad;  
I can't make enough money for to pay my board.
2. I went to the boss, I asked him for my time.  
Oh, what do you think he told me, I owed him one dime.
3. Ah, roll on, buddy, and make up your time;  
I'm so weak and hungry I can't make mine.
4. I looked at the sun and the sun looked low;  
I looked at my woman and she said, "Don't go."
5. Ah, some of these days you'll look for me,  
And I'll be gone back to Tennessee.
6. Yes, some of these days you'll call my name,  
And I'll be gone on an old freight train.
7. I looked at the sun and the sun looked high;  
I looked at my woman she begin to cry.
8. Ah, roll on, buddy, don't roll so slow,  
I'm so weak and hungry I can't work no more.

**A6—WAY OUT IN IDAHO.** Sung with guitar by Blaine Stubblefield of Weiser, Idaho, 1938. Recorded by Alan Lomax at Washington, D.C.

The two preceding items demonstrate a straight functional work song and an extension of a work-derived song into general repertoire. "Way Out in Idaho" focuses on the tribulations of a particular railroad laborer in first-person narrative form. The

ten-pound hammer driller on the Oregon Short Line (Union Pacific) is now a ballad hero. Although no case study is available, Austin Fife provides an excellent list of references to "Way Out in Idaho" in the context of a study of "The Buffalo Range." Jan Brunvand adds to the list. Both folklorists cite Blaine Stubblefield's excellent version of the ballad transcribed by Ruth Crawford Seeger for *Our Singing Country*, the first published anthology to use extensively Library of Congress field recordings as sources for texts and tunes.

Jan Brunvand, "Folk Song Studies in Idaho," *Western Folklore*, 24:231-248 (October 1965).

Austin and Alta Fife, *Songs of the Cowboys by N. Howard ("Jack") Thorp* (New York, 1966), p. 196, 218.

John and Alan Lomax, *Our Singing Country* (New York, 1944), p. 269-270.

1. Come all you jolly railroad men, and I'll sing you if I can  
Of the trials and tribulations of a godless railroad man,  
Who started out from Denver his fortunes to make grow  
And struck the Oregon Short Line way out in Idaho.  
  
Way out in Idaho, way out in Idaho,  
A-working on the narrow-gage, way out in Idaho.
2. I was roaming around in Denver one luckless rainy day  
When Kilpatrick's mancatcher stepped up to me and did  
say,  
"I'll lay you down five dollars as quickly as I can  
And you'll hurry up and catch the train, she's starting  
for Cheyenne."
3. He laid me down five dollars, like many another man,  
And I started for the depot—was happy as a clam.  
When I got to Pocatello, my troubles began to grow,  
A-wading through the sagebrush in frost and rain and  
snow.
4. When I got to American Falls, it was there I met Fat  
Jack.  
They said he kept a hotel in a dirty canvas shack,  
Said he, "You are a stranger and perhaps your funds are  
low,  
Well, yonder stands my hotel tent, the best in Idaho."
5. I followed my conductor into his hotel tent,  
And for one square and hearty meal I paid him my last  
cent.  
Jack's a jolly fellow, and you'll always find him so,  
A-working on the narrow-gage way out in Idaho.
6. They put me to work next morning with a cranky cuss  
called Bill,

And they give me a ten-pound hammer to strike upon a drill.

They said if I didn't like it I could take my shirt and go,  
And they'd keep my blankets for my board way out in Idaho.

7. Oh it filled my heart with pity as I walked along the track

To see so many old bummers with their turkeys on their backs.

They said the work was heavy and the grub they couldn't go,

Around Kilpatrick's dirty tables way out in Idaho.

8. But now I'm well and happy, down in the harvest camp,  
And I'll—there I will continue till I make a few more stamps.

I'll go down to New Mexico and I'll marry the girl I know,

And I'll buy me a horse and buggy and go back to Idaho.

Way out in Idaho, way out in Idaho,

A-working on the narrow-gage, way out in Idaho.

**A7—OH, I'M A JOLLY IRISHMAN WINDING ON THE TRAIN.** Sung by Nobel B. Brown at Woodman, Wis., 1946. Recorded by Aubrey Snyder and Helene Stratman-Thomas.

During post-Civil War decades the Irish laborer was a stock figure on the variety and vaudeville stage. No matter whether he was portrayed as an inept or inebriated hodcarrier, teamster, stevedore, or gandy-dancer, he always managed to get through his workday and was sometimes rewarded by an idyllic return to old Erin's shore. Nobel Brown sings a fragment of a long piece usually titled "Shaughnessy" or "Braking on the Train." Austin Fife suggests that it is a "servile parody" of a cowboy classic, "The Tenderfoot." I feel that the railroad number is older than the cowboy satire, but future study will have to uncover the age of the section hand turned brakeman. M. C. Dean prints a full early text; Stewart Holbrook discusses the song; MacEdward Leach offers a good tune.

Dean, p. 16-17.

Stewart Holbrook, *The Story of American Railroads* (New York, 1947), p. 437.

MacEdward Leach, *Folk Ballads and Songs of the Lower Labrador Coast* (Ottawa, 1965), p. 99.

1. Oh, I'm a jolly Irish lad, an' O'Shaunessy is me name,  
I hired out in section three to go winding on the train.  
Oh, they sent me out to number ten, 'twas there my duties did begin,  
But where in the divil they all come in, it nearly wrecked my brain.

2. Oh, they sent me out on the upper deck, 'twas there I thought I'd break me neck,

I hung onto the ring bolts till me hands and feet grew lame.

I could no longer stand upon me pins, 'twas then I thought of all me sins,

An' if God will forgive me I'll never again go winding on the train.

3. Oh, they wanted me to turn the switch an' I fired two boxcars in the ditch,

An' the brake, he called me a son of a witch while winding on the train.

**A8—THE ENGINEER.** Sung by Lester A. Coffee at Harvard, Ill., 1946. Recorded by Aubrey Snyder and Phyllis Pinkerton.

Although "The Engineer" is directly related to the parlor ballads of the 1880's, I have not encountered it in sheet music or pocket songster form. Lester Coffee learned the ballad at about 1893 and it was "an old song then." Two Illinois geographical clues (Harvard, place of collecting; Elgin Branch, named in text) may indicate that the song was locally composed or that it was an "outside" number localized to the area. Surely a rail fan will know this ballad's background.

1. Oh yes I'm getting old, dear Joe, and never can hope again

To take my place on the engine deck and pull out the Lightning Train.

It needs a younger head, I know, and a steadier hand than mine

To carry the many precious lives in safety o'er the line.

2. More than thirty years of my life, dear Joe, has been spent on the iron rail.

I've had my share of the danger, too, yet never was known to quail.

I sometimes thought my time had come though I seldom felt afeared,

For you know they used to reckon me a first class engineer.



3. I never forget that awful night while running the thunder, Joe,  
That Christmas Eve near the Elgin Branch, whoo, didn't it blow and snow.  
I could not see the winding track nor neither the driver's turn,  
The night was pitchy dark, Joe, and our headlight wouldn't burn.
4. I felt a strange and sudden fear as we ran across the fill.  
My heart beat wild as we neared the bridge just beyond the graveled hill.  
When suddenly the sterling light beamed down along the track  
And I shouted "Jump for your life, Joe," and I pulled the lever back.
5. I'll never forget that awful shock, and it makes my blood run cold  
As I hear again the wintry air, the knells both engines tolled.  
They tolled for the dying engineer underneath the sterling deck;  
They tolled for the many precious lives that went out in that awful wreck.
6. They are tolling now in this heart of mine for my darling, my only child.  
Oh God, when I saw her fearful fate no wonder that I was wild.  
When I saw her lying cold and dead with a smile upon her brow,  
A smile that I often see, dear Joe, when I think of my darling now.
7. I never forget just what she said last time I took her hand,  
"Goodbye, papa, 'til we meet somewhere," I didn't just understand.  
But it always seemed to me, dear Joe, since I lost my little lamb,  
As though the angels were watching me and she was one of them.
8. But now I'm forever laid aside and will open the valves no more,  
But I'll watch and wait for the sound of the bell from the train on the other shore.  
Though old and crippled they'll put me on board and the run will be quick, dear Joe,  
And I'll meet my long lost child again, the darling that loved me so.

A9—GEORGE ALLEN. Sung with banjo by Austin Harmon at Maryville, Tenn., 1939. Recorded by Herbert Halpert.

"The Wreck on the C. & O." (Laws G 3) is a well-known and widely recovered native ballad which stemmed from an accident on October 23, 1890, near Hinton, W. Va. Folksong collector John Harrington Cox first placed the piece in historical context; his research is cited by Laws. One of the earliest serious studies using hillbilly records as source material was written by Alfred Frankenstein about the C. & O.'s heroic engineer, George Alley. Fresh versions are still being added to this song's corpus. In 1966 Doc Watson recorded an "F.F.V." learned from his mother in Watauga County, N.C.

Doc Watson, "F.F.V." on *Home Again*, Vanguard VRS 9239.

Alfred Frankenstein, "George Alley," *John Edwards Memorial Foundation Newsletter*, 2:46-47 (June 1967); reprinted from *Musical Courier* (April 16, 1932).

Laws, p. 214.

1. Along come that F.F.V., the swiftest on the line,  
Travelin' o'er that C. & O. road twenty minutes behind the time.  
He pulled in at Sunville, his quarters on the line,  
Just taking off strict orders from the signal just behind.
2. When he got to London, his engineer was there,  
His name was Georgie Allen with his curly golden hair.  
His fireman Jack Dickson was standing by his side  
Awaiting for his orders and in his cab to ride.
3. Along come Georgie's mama with a bucket on her arm,  
"Be careful, George, my darling son, be careful how you run,  
If you run your engine right you'll get there just on time,  
Been a many a man who's lost his life by trying to make lost time."
4. "Oh mother, I know your advice is good and later I'll take heed,  
But my ol' engine she's all right—I'm sure that she will speed.  
O'er this road I mean to go with a speed unknown to all,  
When I blow my whistle at the old stockyard they'd better heed my call."
5. Oh Georgie said to his fireman Jack, "There's a rock ahead I see,  
Oh there's death awaiting to receive both you and me,  
All from this engine you must go your darling life to save  
For I want you to be an engineer when I'm sleeping in my grave."

6. "No," says George, "That won't do; with you I'll stay and die."

"No," says George, "That won't do; I'll die for both you and I."

From this engine Jack did go—the river was rolling high,  
He waved his hand at Georgie as the runaway train dashed by.

7. Down the track she darted, against the rocks she crashed,

The engine she turned upside down on Georgie's tender breast.

The doctors hastened to him says, "George, my son, lie still,

The only hope to seek for your life it would be God's holy will."

8. His head was lying in the firebox door while the burning flames rolled on,

His face was covered up in blood, his eyes you could not see.

The last words that poor Georgie said was, "Nearer my God to thee."

**A10—THE WRECK OF THE ROYAL PALM.** Sung with guitar by Clarence H. Wyatt at Berea, Ky., 1954. Recorded by Wyatt Insko.

The Southern Railway Wreck memorialized in this homiletic ballad occurred on December 23, 1926, near Rockmart, Ga. The piece itself was composed by Andrew Jenkins in Atlanta while newspaper and radio reports were current; his daughter Irene Spain (Futrelle) arranged the music. (Something of Mrs. Spain's role as her father's amanuensis and as a music transcriber is made known in a *Western Folklore* article by Judith McCulloh.) The ballad was originally copyrighted by Polk Brockman of Atlanta on February 14, 1927, and the next day was recorded by Vernon Dalhart in New York. Subsequently, he and fellow artists recorded it for other companies. "The Wreck of the Royal Palm" is an example of a "recent" song which entered tradition directly from phonograph discs. Laws cites it as a "native ballad of doubtful currency in tradition." Folklorists are trained to study song origin, dissemination, and variation but are not yet fully equipped to delve into a "commercial" history. As a publication, "The Wreck of the Royal Palm" moved considerably in four decades. During the depression Polk Brockman transferred the ballad's original copyright to the M. M. Cole Company in Chicago and the Rev. Andrew Jenkins renewed this claim in 1954. Upon the dissolution of Cole's firm in 1964,

this piece, and others by Jenkins, was transferred to the Westpar Music Company in New York.

Vernon Dalhart, "Wreck of the Royal Palm," Brunswick 101.

Frank Luther, "Wreck of the Royal Palm," Grey Gull 4200.

Laws, p. 273.

Judith McCulloh, "Hillbilly Records and Tune Transcriptions," *Western Folklore*, 26:225-244 (October 1967).

1. On a dark and stormy night  
The rain was falling fast.  
The two black trains on the Southern road,  
With a screaming whistle blast,  
Were speeding down the line  
For home and Christmas Day.  
On the Royal Palm and the Ponce de Leon  
Was laughter bright and gay.

2. The coming down the curve  
At forty miles an hour,  
The Royal Palm was making time  
Amid the drenching shower.  
There came a mighty crash,  
The two great engines met,  
And in the minds of those who live  
It's a scene they can't forget.

3. It was an awful sight  
Amid the pouring rain,  
The dead and dying lying there  
Beneath that mighty train.  
No tongue can ever tell,  
No pen can ever write,  
No one would know but those who saw  
The horrors of that night.

4. On board the new great train  
The folks were bright and gay.  
When like a flash the Master called,  
They had no time to pray.  
Then in a moment's time  
The awful work was done,  
And many souls that fatal night  
Had made their final run.

5. There's many a saddened home  
Since that sad Christmas Day,  
Whose loved ones never shall return  
To drive the blues away.  
They were on the Royal Palm  
As she sped across the state,  
Without a single warning cry  
They went to meet their fate.

6. We're on the road of life  
 And like the railroad men,  
 We each should do our best to make  
 The station if we can.  
 So let us all take care  
 To keep our orders straight,  
 For if we get our orders mixed  
 It'll surely be too late.

**A11—TRAIN BLUES.** Played by Russell Wise on the fiddle and Mr. White on the guitar at Cherry Lake Farms, Madison, Fla., 1936. Recorded by Margaret Valiant.

The lyric folksongs and ballads on Side One of this recording show railroading as a craft. "Train Blues" is "workless" but it, too, tells a story in the animated voices of a country fiddle and guitar. In addition, this "Train Blues" is particularly interesting for it parallels in mood and form "The Orange Blossom Special," a related Florida composition of the late 1930's. A discography of instrumental train imitations would be a most useful tool in American folk music studies. I cite "The Special" as well as four other pieces on LP's as examples of stylistic variety in the genre.

- Garley Foster, "Crescent Limited" on *The Carolina Tar Heels*, Folk Legacy FSA 24.  
 Meade Lux Lewis, "Honky Tonk Train" on *Great Jazz Pianists*, Camden CAL 328.  
 Byron Parker's Mountaineers, "C. & N.W. Railroad Blues" on *A Collection of Mountain Fiddle Music: Volume 2*, County 503.  
 The Rouse Brothers, "The Orange Blossom Special" on *The Railroad in Folksong*, Victor LPV 532.  
 Bukka T. White, "The Panama Limited" on *The Mississippi Blues: 1927-1940*, Origin Jazz Library OJL 5.

**B1—THE NEW RIVER TRAIN.** Sung and played by the Ridge Rangers at Cincinnati, Ohio, 1938. Recorded by Alan and Elizabeth Lomax.

A good engine hauls many cars; a good folksong carries as great a load of symbols. Side Two of this recording is a mixed "train"; ramblers, dreamers, lovers, sinners. "The New River Train" is a familiar nonsense ditty, elastic in structure. The Ridge Rangers could crowd only two stanzas onto their field disc while Vance Randolph netted ten stanzas

in the Ozarks (LC field recording AFS 5327A1). The piece is an example of a traditional folksong adopted by the music industry. Fields Ward's family learned it at Galax, Va., about 1895 (AFS 1371A2), and Henry Whitter, who worked in a cotton mill at New River's edge in Fries, Va., first recorded it in 1924. Twelve years later an arrangement was copyrighted by Maggie Andrews, a pseudonym for Carson J. Robison. This "Andrews" version was then included by Harry McClintock in a 1943 anthology. Country music enthusiasts who know "The New River Train" in many guises will relish the swingy treatment of the classic by the Ridge Rangers. They performed at Cincinnati Music Hall, March 27, 1938, during the Ohio Valley Folk Festival, sponsored by radio station WCKY.

Henry Whitter, "The New River Train," Okeh 40143.

Sterling Sherwin and Harry McClintock, *Railroad Songs of Yesterday* (New York, 1943), p. 35.

1. Leaving on that New River train,  
 Leaving on that New River train,  
 Same old train that brought me here  
 Is gonna carry away tomorrow.
2. Darling you can't love but one,  
 Darling you can't love but one,  
 Can't love but one and have any fun,  
 Oh darling you can't love but one.  
  
 Yea man, it sure does!
3. Darling you can't love two,  
 Darling you can't love two,  
 Can't love two and have your heart be true,  
 Oh darling you can't love two.

**B2—THE TRAIN IS OFF THE TRACK.** Sung by Mrs. Esco Kilgore of Norton, Va., 1939. Recorded by Herbert Halpert at Hamiltontown, near Wise, Va.

When Mrs. Kilgore sang "The Train Is Off the Track" for collector Halpert she identified it only as a "silly little song." Her fragment is a delightful member of the family "Reuben's Train." One form appeared in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1909; more recent references are found in *A Treasury of Railroad Folklore*. "Reuben" demonstrates the horizontal movement in lyric folksong for it shares commonplaces with similar amorphous

pieces: "Train Forty-Five," "Nine Hundred Miles," "The Longest Train," "In the Pines," "John Brown's Coal Mine," "When You Hear That Whistle Blow." Although this complex demonstrates wide musical variation, it is usual for "Train Forty-Five," "Nine Hundred Miles," and "Reuben" to share the tune used by Mrs. Kilgore. Of the numerous available recordings I cite only the first 78 rpm disc and a reissued 78 on an LP album.

Fiddlin' John Carson, "I'm Nine Hundred Miles From Home," Okeh 40196.

Wade Mainer, "Old Reuben" on *Old-Time Southern Dance Music: Ballads and Songs*, Old Timey LP 102.

Louise Rand Bascom, "Ballads and Songs of Western North Carolina," *Journal of American Folklore*, 22:244 (April 1909).

B. A. Botkin and Alvin Harlow, *A Treasury of Railroad Folklore* (New York, 1953), p. 464.

1. Oh the train's off the track  
And I can't get it back,  
And I can't get a letter to my home,  
To my home, to my home,  
And I can't get a letter to my home.
2. If you say so  
I'll railroad no more,  
I'll sidetrack my train and go home,  
And go home, and go home,  
I'll sidetrack my train and go home.
3. If you like-a me  
Like I like you,  
We'll both like-a like the same.
4. Come on my love  
This very day  
I'd like for to change your name,  
Your name, your name,  
Oh I'd like for to change your name.

**B3—GONNA LAY MY HEAD DOWN ON SOME RAILROAD LINE.** Sung by Will Wright at Clinton, Ark., 1936. Recorded by Sidney Robertson Cowell.

Many songs picture the railroad as a cause of accidental death; few use the train as a tool in suicide. I have not found an exact parallel to Will Wright's blues. However, his lead line, "Gonna Lay My Head Down on Some Railroad Line," appears in the durable "Trouble in Mind Blues" composed in

1924 by Richard M. Jones. The line also is found in narrative contexts such as "Joseph (Mica) Michael" (Laws I 16), which is part of the "Casey Jones" family. A particularly interesting ballad version was recorded by Texas professor Newton Gaines who made hillbilly records under the name, Jim New. There is a good story hidden in the movement of a single line from Gaines' ballad and Jones' classic blues to Wright's plaintive soliloquy, but it awaits future study.

Thelma La Vizzo and Richard M. Jones (piano), "Trouble in Mind Blues," Paramount 12206.

Newton Gaines, "Wreck of the Six Wheeler" on *Native American Ballads*, Victor LPV 548.

Laws, p. 254.

Spoken: Gonna lay my head down on some railroad line.

Gonna lay my head down on some railroad line,  
And take some train to satisfy my mind.  
Honey when I die, honey don't you wear no black, hey, hey,  
Honey when I die, honey don't you wear no black,  
Then if you do my ghost come sneaking back.  
Yonder comes a train, yonder comes a train,  
Comin' down the railroad line,  
Yonder comes a train, yonder comes a train,  
Comin' down the railroad line, hey, hey, comin' through  
buddy.  
It takes some train to satisfy my mind.

My mamma told me, my daddy told me too,  
Says, "Son, everybody grin in your face,  
You ain't no friend to you."

Spoken: That's all.

**B4—I RODE SOUTHERN, I RODE L. & N.** Sung with guitar by Merle Lovell at Shafter, Calif., 1940. Recorded by Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin.

Many venerable folksongs were collected in California farmworker camps during the "Grapes of Wrath" era. But migrants also cherished contemporary hillbilly hits learned from discs by Jimmie Rodgers, Gene Autry, Bob Wills, and other popular western artists. Folksinger Merle Lovell identified himself "from East Oklahoma" to collectors Todd and Sonkin, and he told them that "I Rode Southern, I Rode L. & N." came directly from a Homer Callahan disc. In turn, it was probably deliberately composed in the Rodgers idiom, for the line appears

in his "Blue Yodel #7" recorded in 1929. Such white, country blues freely drew on a fantastic wealth of Negro tradition. Paul Oliver transcribed texts of 37 race records with railroad images similar to those used by Callahan and Rodgers.

Homer Callahan, "I've Rode the Southern and the L. & N.," Conqueror 8557, as well as Banner, Melotone, Oriole, Perfect, and Romeo 351011. Jimmie Rodgers, "Blue Yodel #7" on *Jimmie The Kid*, Victor LPM 2213.

Paul Oliver, *Blues Fell This Morning* (London, 1960), p. 46-75.

1. I've rode the Southern, I've rode the L. & N.,  
I've rode the Southern, I've rode the L. & N.,  
And the way I've been treated, I'm gonna ride them  
again.
2. The way I've been treated, sometime I wish I was dead,  
The way I've been treated, sometime I wish I was dead,  
But I've got no place to lay my weary head.

YODEL

3. I've rode the Southern, I've rode the L. & N.,  
I've rode the Southern and I've rode the L. & N.,  
And the longest one I've ever rode is years now began.
4. I'm a rambling man, I ramble from town to town,  
I'm a rambling man, I ramble from town to town,  
Been looking for a-two blue eyes and now my baby's  
found.

YODEL

5. I gave her my watch and I gave her my chain,  
I gave her my watch and I gave her my chain,  
I gave her all I had before she let me change her name.

YODEL

**B5—THE LIGHTNING EXPRESS.** Sung by Jim Holbert at Visalia, Calif., 1940. Recorded by Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin.

The theme of the stern conductor assisting a little boy or girl without fare to get home, to reach a dying parent, or to beg a governor's pardon for a parent was widely used in Tin Pan Alley songs. Common titles for parallel items are usually "The Lightning Express" and "The East Bound Train." Variant titles for each are "Please Mr. Conductor" and "Going for a Pardon." J. Fred Helf and E. P.

Moran composed "Please, Mr. Conductor, Don't Put Me Off the Train" in 1898 when it was published by Howley, Haviland & Company. In 1925 Triangle Music published sheet music for "The Lightning Express" which it attributed to E. V. Body (a code name for a traditional source). The fact of popular song-folksong interplay is well known; it can be documented by a study of this complex. Vance Randolph prints four texts; I cite two early recordings and an available LP.

Blue Sky Boys, "The Lightning Express" on *Blue Sky Boys*, Camden CAL 797.

Nelstone's Hawaiians, "North Bound Train," Victor 40065 ["East Bound Train"].

Ernest Thompson, "The Lightning Express," Columbia 145.

Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs* (Columbia, Mo., 1950), vol. 4, p. 184-187.

Spoken: The Lightning Express.

1. Oh, the Lightning Express from the depot one night  
It started on its way,  
And all the people that boarded that train,  
They seemed to be happy and gay.
2. Except a little boy set on a seat by himself  
A-reading a letter he had.  
It was plain to be seen from the tears in his eyes  
Its contents is what made him sad.
3. The strange conductor he started his train  
And takin' the tickets of everyone there,  
And when he reached the side of the boy  
He briefly commanded his fare.
4. "I've got no money to pay my way  
But I'll pay you back some day."  
"I'll put you off at the next station," says he.  
These words the boy did say:
5. "Oh, please, Mr. Conductor,  
Don't put me off of this train,  
For the only friend that I ever had  
Is waiting for me in pain.  
They expectin' her to die of a moment  
And may not live through the day  
I want to kiss mother goodby, sir,  
Before God takes her away."
6. "Mother was sick when I left home  
And needed a doctor's care.  
I come to your city employment for work  
But couldn't find none anywhere."

Note: The following lines sung by Mr. Holbert were not included on the original recording, but were noted by the collectors Todd and Sonkin in their field notes.

And a little girl setting on a seat close by  
Said, "To put this boy off is a shame."  
And takin' a hat and a collection she made,  
And paid this boy's fare on the train.  
"Much obliged to you misses for your kindness to me,"  
"You're welcome, you need never fear."  
And every time the conductor passed there  
These words would ring in his ear. . .

**B6—RAILROAD RAG.** Sung with guitar and mandolin by Joe Harris and Kid West at Shreveport, La., 1940. Recorded by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax.

When ragtime piano style became an integral part of American popular music, many rags and rag-like pieces entered tradition. Frequently, the transition was difficult to trace because ragtime itself drew heavily on folk music. "That Railroad Rag" illustrates one sequence in this process. Nat Vincent wrote the words, Ed Bimberg the music and it was published by Head Music Company on April 3, 1911. It was recorded soon after by Walter Van Brunt and other popular artists. In 1940 Joe Harris and Kid West could tell collector Lomax only that the song was about 35 years old. In 1947 MacEdward Leach encountered a "railroad rag" echo worked into a "Southern Jack" lyric fragment.

Walter Van Brunt, "That Railroad Rag," Victor 16876.

MacEdward Leach and Horace Beck, "Songs from Rappahannock County, Virginia," *Journal of American Folklore*, 63:282 (July 1950).

1. Have you ever heard about that railroad rag?

Oh, oh, oh, that's a joyful gag.  
See that engine comin' round the curve,  
Ah, ah, ah, how that engine did swerve.  
The engine does a-swervin' with peculiar strain,  
'Round my heart cause I feel a pain  
Everybody on the train—they caught the gag,  
Everybody wanna sing the railroad rag.

2. Oh, oh, that railroad rag,

Ah, ah, that railroad rag.  
It's so entrancing, hon,  
It will make you fall asleep in Fargo and you'll wake up  
in Chicago—  
Hear that engine hum,

That train is goin' some,  
Here come that choo, choo, choo, choo, choo, toot  
toot—  
That railroad rag.

3. Oh, that railroad rag,

Ah, ah, that railroad rag.  
It's so entrancing, hon,  
It will make you fall asleep in Fargo and you'll wake up  
in Chicago—  
Hear that engine hum,  
That train is goin' some,  
Here come that choo, choo, choo, choo, choo, toot  
toot—  
That railroad rag.

**B7—THE RAILROADER.** Sung with guitar by May Kennedy McCord at Springfield, Mo., 1941. Recorded by Vance Randolph.

In his discussion of "The Roving Gambler" (H 4), Laws notes that its "variant forms . . . are legion, and it has become almost inextricably entangled with other folksongs." Ballad scholar H. M. Belden's treatment (cited in Laws) of this complex under the title "The Guerrilla Boy" is especially rich in displaying the fantastic network of variation a folksong can achieve. Belden traces both gambler and guerrilla to mid 19th-century British broadsides of "The Roving Journeyman." The basic theme is a young man's boast of amatory success, but one of the song's derivatives is built around the pattern of a girl's stance—acceptance or rejection—in marriage. I do not know how early or under what circumstance the "I would not, I would, marry" formula was grafted onto "The Roving Gambler" tree, but in 1907 "A Railroad Boy" was composed by C. B. Ball and published by the Jaberg Music Company in Cincinnati. Ball may well have put his stamp on an item known to him traditionally. Until more is learned of the "I won't marry" role in the gambler-journeyman family, it is best to state only that May Kennedy McCord's "The Railroader" is close to the Russ Pike version on LC recording L20, and that both are short forms of Ball's 1907 piece. I cite but one early recording which employs a melody distinct from Mrs. McCord's.

John Ferguson, "Railroad Daddy," Challenge 159. Botkin, p. 465: transcription of Russ Pike, "A Railroader for Me" on *Anglo-American Songs*

*and Ballads*, ed. Duncan Emrich, Library of Congress AAFS L20. Laws, p. 231.

1. I would not marry a farmer,  
He's always in the dirt.  
But I would marry an engineer  
Who wears a striped shirt.

A railroader, mother, a railroader,  
A railroader for me.  
If ever I marry in all my life  
A railroader's bride I'll be.

2. I would not marry a blacksmith,  
He's always in the black.  
But I would marry an engineer  
Who pulls the throttle back.

A railroader, mother, a railroader,  
A railroader for me.  
If ever I marry in all my life  
A railroader's bride I'll be.

B8—THE T. & P. LINE. Sung by Mrs. Mary Sullivan at Shafter, Calif., 1941. Recorded by Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin.

Mrs. Mary Sullivan from Warm Springs, Tex., was one of the best folksingers encountered in California's Farm Security Administration camps on the eve of World War II. Her "T. & P. Line" was unfamiliar to me until, to my pleasure, I "discovered" it while editing this recording. In addition to her number an Arkansas tape made during 1954 by Virgil Lane was available to me (AFS 11894A40). The first transcription of the piece in a folksong collection reports it as a Texas cowboy item carried to Utah. As frequently happens in searching for song history one must turn to commercial records. Eugene Earle, president of the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, supplied me with tape copies of two discs related to the song collected in California, Arkansas, and Utah. Earle's tape whetted my curiosity, for one record indicated that composer's credits were shared by Almoth Hodges and Bob Miller. The former is unknown; the latter is well known, and Robert Shelton marks his role. Recently, Dean Turner, a Texas singer "re-wrote" "The T. & P. Bum" from his memory of hearing it in the late 1920's, and recorded it for a current folk-country label.

A comparison of the seven "T. & P." songs known to me reveals considerable variation in text,

and perhaps some confusion with respect to the railroad's name. Collectors Todd and Sonkin heard "T. & P.," but astute listeners to Mrs. Sullivan's rendition might concur with the person who transcribed the Hodges-Miller piece for copyright registration (December 28, 1929) by hearing "T. M. P. Line" in some of the stanzas. However, no western line with these initials can be found in standard railroad references. It is possible that Mrs. Sullivan and Hodges either learned or conceptualized "T. M. P." (or even "T. N. P.") instead of the famous Texas & Pacific abbreviation, but we lack any statements from the performers which would indicate their intent.

Almoth Hodges with Bob Miller's Hinky Dinkers, "The Hobo from the T. & P. Line," Brunswick 399.

Clayton McMichen, "Bummin' on the I. C. Line," Varsity 5097.

Dean Turner, "The T. & P. Bum" on *Dean Turner and His Guitar*, Bluebonnet BL 102.

*Rocky Mountain Collection* (Salt Lake City, 1962), p. 23.

Robert Shelton and Burt Goldblatt, *The Country Music Story* (Indianapolis, 1966), p. 188.

1. I left Beard one beautiful night,  
The stars in the heavens were shining bright.  
I was riding the bumpers which suited me fine,  
Much better than the handouts on the T. & P. Line.
2. I landed in Wellford about three p.m.  
The cop watched me and I watched him,  
I made him no effort, I give him no sign  
That I had been bumming on the T. & P. Line.
3. I decided to dress up in style,  
Not look like a bummer, no, not by a mile.  
Rare back on my budget give each man a dime  
And that would beat bumming on the T. & P. Line.
4. A ten dollar suit and a five dollar hat,  
A high standing collar and a flying cravat,  
A new pair of boots—how the leather did shine,  
Much better than the handouts on the T. & P. Line.
5. I met up with a man by the name of Will Wright,  
He says, "I will hire you if you will work right."  
"Well, I will work right and put in good time."  
Much better than the handouts on the T. & P. Line.
6. I got in the wagon and home with him went,  
The work he gave me—God to me had sent.  
The work it was easy and it suited me fine,  
Much better than the handouts on the T. & P. Line.

7. Will Wright had a daughter at the age of sixteen,  
The fairest and prettiest that ever I've seen.  
And when I was with her I was always on time,  
Much better than the handouts on the T. & P. Line.
8. Me and Ethel begin to chat,  
I helped gather eggs, do this and do that.  
Her kisses were sweet and her features was fine,  
Much better than the handouts on the T. & P. Line.
9. I was called to the office, to the office one day,  
Will Wright says, "What's this I hear the folks say?  
They say you're a bumner all dressed up for blind,  
That you have been bumming on the T. & P. Line."
10. "Well, I don't know as that concerns you,  
I do all the work you require me to do.  
If my work it don't suit you, just give me my time,  
And I'll remain bumming on the T. & P. Line."
11. I went by the house to bid Ethel farewell,  
The grief and the sorrow no tongue can ne'er tell.  
There were tears in her eyes and so were in mine,  
She says you're no bumner on the T. & P. Line.
12. I struck out right down the highway,  
I could think of nothing but Ethel that day.  
I love her till yet, and I'll see her some time  
If I have to bum my way on the T. & P. Line.

**B9—THE DYING HOBO.** Sung with guitar by George Lay at Heber Springs, Ark., 1959. Recorded by Mary C. Parler.

It is virtually impossible to separate hobo and railroad folklore. Listeners who feel the intensity of George Lay's spoken introduction to "The Dying Hobo" may want to search out books by Nels Anderson or George Milburn on the itinerants' subculture. This ironic ballad, a parody of the poem, "Bingen on the Rhine," is extremely widespread and well documented in *Laws* (H 3). However, there is no available study of the many related industrial or occupational songs which derived either from "The Dying Hobo" or descended directly from the parent poem, although William Wallrich has organized a fine array of Air Force parodies.

*Laws*, p. 231.  
William Wallrich, *Air Force Airs* (New York, 1957), p. 215-232.

Spoken: My name's George Lay. I picked up this song along with several others in the hobo jungles in the late '30's when we was trying to scam around over the country

and find a dime which is hard to do and is a lot harder to keep it after you found it. There's a lot of guys along there that—a—the ink was still wet on diplomas from their colleges and there's a lot of guys that had never been inside of a school. 'Bout the only entertainment we had were these old songs at night. Now I don't know what the name of this one is—it's just one they used to sing a lot.

1. Just out of San Francisco one cold December day,  
Beneath an eastbound boxcar a dying hobo lay.  
His comrade stood beside him, his hat was in his hand,  
For he knew that his old buddy was goin' to a distant land.
2. "Go tell my girl in Frisco no longer will I roam,  
I've caught an eastbound boxcar and I'm on my way  
back home.  
I'm goin' to a better land where you don't have to  
change your socks,  
Where beer and foam come trickling down the rocks."
3. The dying hobo closed his eyes and drew his last breath,  
His comrade stole his coat and hat and kept on headin'  
West.

**B10—THE BIG ROCK CANDY MOUNTAINS.** Sung with guitar by Harry McClintock at San Pedro, Calif., 1951. Recorded by Sam Eskin.

This colorful fantasy seems a perfect sequel to "The Dying Hobo" for it sums up one dream of the hereafter. The song has various levels of meaning which are discussed by John Greenway. It is likely that the piece was in tradition before 1906, for in that year a version by Marshall Locke and Charles Tyner was published by the Rock Candy Music Company in Indianapolis. The story of "The Big Rock Candy Mountains" has not been written nor is Harry McClintock's role in disseminating it fully known. Collectors will enjoy comparing this 1951 rendition with Mac's original recording of 1928. Folklorists knew McClintock as a gifted singer-composer. Railroaders recall him as a boomer poet, entertainer, and recording star who used the moniker "Haywire Mac." Freeman Hubbard's obituary to his friend ends with a stanza from "The Big Rock Candy Mountains."

Harry McClintock, "The Big Rock Candy Mountains," Victor 21704.  
John Greenway, *American Folksongs of Protest* (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 197-204.  
Freeman Hubbard, *Railroad Avenue*, rev. ed. (San Marino, Calif., 1964), p. 431-433.



1. One evening as the sun went down  
And the jungle fire was burning,  
Down the track came a hobo hiking.  
And he said, "Boys I'm not turning,  
I'm headed for a land that's far away,  
Beside the crystal fountains,  
So come with me, we'll go and see  
The Big Rock Candy Mountains."
2. In the Big Rock Candy Mountains  
There's a land that's fair and bright,  
Where the handouts grow on bushes,  
And you sleep out every night.  
Where the boxcars all are empty,  
And the sun shines every day  
On the birds and the bees,  
And the cigarette trees,  
And the lemonade springs  
Where the bluebird sings  
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.
3. In the Big Rock Candy Mountains  
All the cops have wooden legs,  
And the bulldogs all have rubber teeth,  
And the hens lay softboiled eggs.  
There the farmer's trees are full of fruit,  
And the barns are full of hay,  
And I'm bound to go  
Where there ain't no snow,  
And the rain don't fall,  
And the wind don't blow  
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.
4. In the Big Rock Candy Mountains  
You never change your socks,  
And the little streams of alcohol  
Come a-trickling down the rocks.  
There ain't no shorthanded shovels,  
No axes, spades, or picks,  
And I'm bound to stay  
Where they sleep all day,  
Where they hung the Turk  
That invented work  
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.
5. In the Big Rock Candy Mountains  
All the jails are made of tin,  
And you can walk right out again  
As soon as you are in.  
Why the brakemen have to tip their hats,  
And the railroad bulls are blind,  
There's a lake of stew,  
And a gin lake, too,  
You can paddle all around 'em  
In a big canoe  
In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

**B11—I'M GOING HOME ON THE MORNING TRAIN.** Sung by E. M. Martin and Pearlina Johns of Alligator, Miss., 1942. Recorded by Alan Lomax at Clarksdale, Miss.

During the first quarter of the 19th century when the American camp meeting spiritual was shaped, the locomotive was still a little wood burner driving through a wilderness. Early revivalists denounced railroads as the Devil's invention or Sabbathbreakers. But, in time, preachers turned to the train image to replace Biblical chariots and vessels. The railroad itself "entered" hundreds of new, beautiful sacred songs, and today we cherish this heritage. "I'm Going Home on the Morning Train" is known in white and Negro tradition. Newman White encountered the stanza in various Negro religious songs while teaching at Auburn, Ala., in 1915. I cite his collection as well as three LP recordings which illustrate variation in the song.

R. C. Crenshaw and Congregation, "I'm Goin' Home on the Morning Train" on *Negro Church Music*, Atlantic 1351.

Molly O'Day, "I'm Going Home on That Morning Train" on *Molly O'Day Sings Again*, Rem LP 1001.

Dock Reed, "I'm Going Home on the Morning Train" on *Negro Folk Music of Alabama: Volume V, Spirituals*, Folkways FE 4473.

Newman I. White, *American Negro Folk Songs* (Cambridge, 1928), p. 60-63.

1. Get right church, and let's go home,  
Get right church, and let's go home,  
Get right church, get right church (have mercy),  
Get right church, and let's go home.
2. I'm goin' home on the mornin' train (on the mornin' train, my father),  
I'm goin' home on the mornin' train (my Lordy)  
I'm goin' home (have mercy), I'm goin' home (keep travelin'),  
I'm goin' home on the mornin' train.
3. The evenin' train may be too late (might be too late, my brother),  
Evenin' train may (might) be too late (oh Lordy),  
The evenin' train, the evenin' train,  
Evenin' train may be too late.
4. I'm goin' home on the mornin' train (the mornin' train),  
I'm goin' home on the mornin' train,  
I'm goin' home, I'm goin' home,  
I'm goin' home on the mornin' train.

5. I see trouble down the road (down the lonesome road,  
so lonesome),  
I see trouble down the road (my Lordy),  
I see trouble, I see trouble,  
I see trouble down the road.
6. Oh, get right church, and let's go home,  
Get right church, and let's go home (my Lordy),

- Get right church, get right church (have mercy),  
Get right church, and let's go home.
7. I'm goin' home on the mornin' train (the mornin' train,  
have mercy),  
I'm goin' home on the mornin' train (my Lordy),  
I'm goin' home, I'm goin' home,  
I'm goin' home on the morning train.

## APPENDIX

### A LIST OF RAILROAD SONGS AVAILABLE ON OTHER LIBRARY OF CONGRESS RECORDS

- L2 *Anglo-American Shanties, Lyric Songs, Dance Tunes, and Spirituals.*  
 Roll on the Ground. Sung with 5-string banjo by Thaddeus C. Willingham.  
 John Henry. Played by Wallace Swann and his Cherokee String Band, with square dancing.  
 The Train. Played on harmonica by Chub Parham with clogging.
- L3 *Afro-American Spirituals, Work Songs, and Ballads.*  
 Run Old Jeremiah. Sung by Joe Washington Brown and Austin Coleman.  
 John Henry. Sung by Arthur Bell.
- L8 *Negro Work Songs and Calls.*  
 Unloading Rails. Called by Henry Truvillion.  
 Tamping Ties. Called by Henry Truvillion.  
 Hammer, Ring. Sung by Jesse Bradley and group.  
 The Rock Island Line. Sung by Kelly Pace, Charlie Porter, L. T. Edwards, Willie Hubbard, Luther Williams, Napoleon Cooper, Albert Pate, and Willie Lee Jones.
- L16 *Songs and Ballads of the Anthracite Miners.*  
 On Johnny Mitchell's Train. Sung by Jerry Byrne.
- L20 *Anglo-American Songs and Ballads.*  
 A Railroader for Me. Sung with guitar by Russ Pike.
- L21 *Anglo-American Songs and Ballads.*  
 I Wish I Was a Mole in the Ground. Sung with banjo by Bascom Lamar Lunsford.  
 Heavy-Loaded Freight Train. Played on 5-string banjo by Pete Steele.
- L29 *Songs and Ballads of American History and of the Assassination of Presidents.*  
 Zolgotz (White House Blues). Sung with 5-string banjo by Bascom Lamar Lunsford.
- L30 *Songs of the Mormons and Songs of the West.*  
 Echo Canyon. Sung by L. M. Hilton.  
 The Utah Iron Horse. Sung by Joseph H. Watkins.
- L50 *The Ballad Hunter, Part IV, Rock Island Line: Woodcutter's Songs and Songs of Prison Life.*  
 The Rock Island Line. Sung by Kelly Pace and group.  
 John Henry. Sung by Arthur Bell.
- L52 *The Ballad Hunter, Part VII, Spirituals: Religion Through Songs of the Southern Negroes.*  
 If I Got My Ticket, Lord. Sung by Jim Boyd.
- The Ballad Hunter, Part VIII, Railroad Songs: Work Songs for Rail Tamping and Track Laying.*  
 Can't You Line 'Em? Sung by group of eight men.  
 Track Laying Holler. Sung by Henry Truvillion and group.  
 Wake Up Call. Sung by Henry Truvillion.  
 Track Calling. Sung by Henry Truvillion.  
 The Dallas Railway. Sung by Will Roseborough, Will Brooks, H. Davis, and Jess Alexander.  
 No More, My Lord. Sung by group of men.  
 Steel Laying Holler. Sung by Rochelle Harris.  
 Pauline. Sung by Allen Prothero.
- L53 *The Ballad Hunter, Part X, Sugar Land, Texas: Convict Songs From a Texas Prison.*  
 Little John Henry. Sung by James (Iron Head) Baker.  
 Shorty George. Sung by James (Iron Head) Baker.
- L59 *Negro Blues and Hollers.*  
 Depot Blues. Sung with guitar by Son House.
- L60 *Songs and Ballads of the Bituminous Miners.*  
 The Dying Mine Brakeman. Sung by Orville J. Jenks.

