ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

PRODUCTION NOTE

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Urbana-Champaign Library
GEORGE AND GERRY ARMSTRONG

George and Gerry Armstrong will appear in a free concert for the members of the Campus Folksong Club on Friday, Jan. 5. The concert will be held in 180 Bevier, at 8 pm. The couple will feature English ballads and bagpipe and dulcimer instrumental music. George teaches at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago, and just recently he and Gerry appeared in the first of a series of folk presentations at the Birdhouse, a popular Chicago jazz spot. An excellent account of the Armstrong activities follows, elsewhere in this edition.

ELLEN STEKERT

On Feb. 8, to open the new semester, Ellen Stekert will appear in a free concert for Campus Folksong Club members at the Hillel Fnd. Miss Stekert is a graduate student in folklore at the Univ. of Pa., working under Dr. MacEdward Leach. She will be the first singer-collector who is also an academic scholar to appear on the U. of I. campus. Miss Stekert has done extensive field collecting and has recorded songs for Folkways, Stinson, Elktra, and Riverside.

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FINAL 1961 FOLKSONG
FRIDAY NIGHT DEC. 15
ROOM 25 SMITH MUSIC HALL

A PAT ON THE BACK

Yes, we are congratulating ourselves. A year ago there was no Campus Folksong Club. People sang folksongs, it is true; a number of students used to gather at the Channing-Murray Fnd. and in their private rooms to sing and strum. But there was a good deal missing, and that was an organized group that could use the resources of a great university to promote the singing of folksongs, the study of folklore, and the respect for tradition that is the heart and soul of folk culture.

Now there is a center, a recognized group of students and faculty who can come together to lend meaning to the upsurge of folksinging that has caught the hearts of American youngsters in recent years. Also we have a pipeline to other academic centers of folklore study.

We have done this by (1) giving students an opportunity to hear and sing traditional folksongs, (2) allowing them to hear recognized authorities discuss the subject at seminars, and (3) bringing them traditional folk singers and instrumentalists.

This is a pretty big order. But it has been filled within the year, 1961. Can you blame us for a touch of feeling? Pardon the immodesty, but we did it ourselves. That little brown membership card in your wallet is a medal. Carry it with pride.
George and his wife, Gerry, and their two children, Becky and Jenny, live in Wilmette, Illinois, where George makes his living as a book illustrator. However, most of the social life of the family centers around the pursuit of folklore—the songs, tales, games and customs that comprise our folk heritage. The songs they sing are drawn from a tradition that is shared by the people of the British Isles and those in America who trace their origins to those islands. But in a larger sense, these songs could be considered the common heritage of all of us who speak the English language.

The Armstrongs have collected their songs from many sources—from books and records, but primarily from people who have learned these songs in childhood and have grown up in those communities and families where the old songs and traditions are still kept alive. In 1954 they spend several months in England and Scotland singing and learning the folk songs of those countries. They have collected songs from singers in Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Missouri and Arkansas, as well as in the vicinity of their own home near Chicago. George and Gerry have made many good friends through folk music and they say that this is perhaps the most rewarding aspect of their hobby.

George often begins their program with the bagpipe which he has played since the age of twelve. They also demonstrate folk toys which they have acquired or made. The accompaniments to their songs are provided by the guitar and three Appalachian dulcimers. These dulcimers are held on the lap and plucked with the fingers or strummed with a plectrum made from a goose quill. One of these instruments is a double (or courting) dulcimer played by two persons seated facing each other. Gerry and George both play all the instruments.

The Armstrongs are heard frequently on Chicago FM radio station WFMT (especially on Studs Terkel’s program) and on Oscar Brand’s folk music program on WNYC in New York. They have been seen on several TV programs on WTTW, Channel 11 in Chicago and twice on the Montage series on KMOX in St. Louis. They have given numerous concerts over the years, including ones at the English Folk Song and Dance Society Festival at Stratford-on-Avon in 1954, The University of Chicago Folk Festival in 1961, and at Chicago’s folk song nightclub, The Gate of Horn.

George and Gerry Armstrong can be heard on a 12 inch LP recording entitled SIMPLE GIFTS. It is on the Folkways label. Included songs are:

Mairi's Wedding  
Corn Stalk Fiddle  
Jealous Brothers  
Richard of Taunton Deane  
Dulcimer Medley  
Went to See my Suzie  
Lady from the West Country  
Froggy Went a - Courtin'  
Black Jack Davy  
Derby Ram  
Ground Hog  
Dear Companion  
Peggy-0  
Polly Vaughn  
Play Party Medley  
Seven Joys of Mary  
Deaf Woman's Courtship  
Blow ye Winds I-O  
The Wind and the Rain  
Simple Gifts

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George and Gerry Armstrong In Concert Friday Night Jan. 5, 1962, 180 Bevier Hall.
A trip to Chicago last August netted discovery of a new folksinger's gathering place--THE FRET SHOP--located on 57th Street, in Hyde Park, near the University of Chicago. The proprietor, Pete Leibundguth, is a real friendly sort, easily persuaded to stop and talk for awhile. He has just about everything under one roof that a person interested in the folk arts might want.

We stopped in to see Pete again over Thanksgiving and ended up having a long chat with John Cohen of the New Lost City Ramblers, during an impromptu hoot. (There always seems to be one in progress.)

THE FRET SHOP has a very large selection of folk instruments from the common guitars, banjos, mandolins, fiddles and autoharps, to the less common instruments such as dobros, triple strung mandolins, zithers, mandolas, string basses, etc. In addition, the shop has new instruments running the whole price range. If you want a long necked banjo, or any other string instrument repair work done, Pete can also take care of that.

In the line of song books, a very extensive selection of song material is available, including many of the obscure and hard-to-obtain booklets. A selection of music is also available such as recorder music, and classical accompaniment for Elizabethan ballads. Furthermore, folk music on LP records is available at discount prices. Just about any type of accessory needed can be found, too, such as D'Angelico strings for long necked banjos (probably the best banjo string made), National fingerpicks, and just about any kind of capo.

If all of this were not an adequate reason to stop in, there is also the advantage of meeting people from the Chicago scene. Almost everyone seems to congregate there for conversation and music. Best of all, we are happy to note that Pete Leibundguth is a member of our Campus Folksong Club.

THE FRET SHOP, 1551 EAST 57TH STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
In recent years several record companies have begun to notice the importance of traditional Southern mountain music and Negro blues. Many of these are well established companies—Verve, Prestige, Columbia; others have just recently been formed, such as the Arhoolie Record Company.

Early in this year, Chris A. Strachwitz, a school teacher and Negro blues fan, and Bob Pinson, a printer who is interested in mountain music, pooled resources and formed the Arhoolie Record Company. Their intent was to present valid examples of folk music. Primarily through field recordings which Pinson and Strachwitz have made, Arhoolie has been able to present such people as Big Joe Williams, Mance Lipscomb, Black Ace, and the Hodges Brothers with John White.

The liner notes to the Hodges Brothers album contain a very fine short history of Southern mountain music. A portion of the notes are presented below:

During World War II, with the mass migration of workers from the mechanizing rural South to the northern, western, and eastern industrial centers, the United States saw a boom in what was then generally referred to as "hillbilly" music. The country had become aware of these "Native American Melodies" and "Old Time Melodies of the South," as they were referred to on publicity sheets distributed by the Victor Company during the prosperous Twenties when the record industry discovered that there was quite a market for this music. Most of the early records were recorded and sold in the South and strong emphasis was placed on locally-known performers and material. Much of the "folk music" of America was recorded for commercial firms during the late 20s until the Depression hit the land and phonograph records became a luxury which the rural public could no longer afford. However the music, just like other traditions, did not die; after all, this music was not dependent upon the record business for it's continued existence, as is the case with the "pop" music of today. The music moved with the people, changed, and was influenced by other musical styles, and by the late 40s its main stream had been funnelled into the hands of Tin Pan Alley. But just as in the case of the Negro blues, the traditional, old-time style continued "back home".... Very much in the way in which the "country" blues evolved into "Rhythm and Blues" and later "Rock and Roll", so did the old-time music of the white Southerners change to "hillbilly", "Country and Western", and finally "Rock-a-billy" utilizing gimmicks of the electronics industry to create odd and weird sounds, neglecting and even frowning upon the natural qualities of string instruments....

The notes above from the Hodges Brothers Arhoolie F 5001 "Watermelon Hangin' On The Vine," illustrate the serious approach to folk music by Chris Strachwitz and Bob Pinson. What is remarkable about their operation is that it is a complete labor-of-love. In their little record company they have preserved the amateur spirit in folksong. For further information on their company or catalogs you may write to:

ARHOOLIE RECORD CO.
P/O BOX 671
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA
Nestled in a corner of Argentina, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Rio de la Plata, lies the dingy village of la Boca. This tiny town was settled many years ago by emigrants from Spain. Being very poor, these settlers brought with them only memories of their homeland. They were from such cities as Sevilla, Madrid, and Granada, and consequently they brought with them the beloved songs of these faraway places.

Today in la Boca, one may still hear the century old songs of Sevilla and Granada played to the tune of accordions in much the same manner as they were played some four or five centuries ago. La Boca is famous in the entire country of Argentina for its wild, merry, musical nights, gay dancers and singing mozos, or waiters. During a typical evening at one of the restaurants in la Boca, the visitor is given a large vase full of wine, a piece of home-made bread, and a full evening of musical entertainment. The tables are all shoved side by side. This provides an excellent dancing floor for all who are interested in table-top dancing. The mozos then bring out the accordions, and all in the restaurant sing the familiar songs. With more wine, the restaurant becomes one tremendous sing fest, which lasts until dawn of the following morning.

The morning after the night before, the entire village of la Boca is once again quiet and tranquil. No one would suspect the madness, the merriment, the re-living of old Spain that went on the previous night.

Although the night may be easily forgotten, the music of that night will never be forgotten; for this music that has been passed down from generation to generation, from century to century, is as much a part of the life of the inhabitants of la Boca, as the English language is to the American.
On Friday night, December 17, the Campus Folksong Club presented Jimmie Driftwood to the University of Illinois. The verdict was one of approval. For a much-too-short two hours Jimmie held some 400 people in the palm of his hand, entertaining, educating, and generally delighting them with guitar, banjo-guitar, mouth bow, and sometimes with just the sound of his own husky voice. Any one of the 400 can tell you it was a happy, singing evening.

Some of us in the Club, however, were privileged to hear Jimmie offstage. At a Thursday evening dinner given in his honor by the Executive Committee, at a faculty reception later that night, and at a pre-concert seminar, Jimmie Driftwood proved himself to be a most remarkable man.

It would be pointless, perhaps even disrespectful, to try to take Jimmie Driftwood apart and describe him. Suffice to say that everyone who listened and talked to him was charmed, for he talks as sincerely as he sings. As a folklorist he has the warmth required for deep appreciation of people and their feeling; as a teacher, he brings scholarship and thoroughness to his work; as a man he carries with him long years of experience that make his own life a sizeable chunk of American history. Superimpose this on his natural talent as folksinger-composer and his wide knowledge of the American singing tradition and the result is, in a word, delight.

This is precisely what we felt when Jimmie began spinning yarns and singing ballads. He charmed and educated everyone he met here, just as he had previously caught the attention of his Arkansas pupils. And to seal the package, he invited everyone to visit his Ozark farm. This was not rhetoric; he meant it. And Jimmie, we're gonna try to make that trip—soon.
Jimmie Driftwood: Traditional Singer and Pop Composer
by Dick Adams

When a traditional folksinger begins to realize a certain amount of popularity, he faces, oftentimes, a rather difficult decision. There are a number of directions in which he can turn. The most obvious, perhaps, but not the easiest, is to remain traditional; to remain true to whatever culture produced him and the songs he sings, and to go on singing them in the same way. This choice does not lead to "smash" commercial popularity, but to a more-limited acclaim. Leadbelly is a prime example; in the blues field Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee are others.

In another direction, the traditional folksinger may become a singer of folk songs, in the sense that he ventures beyond the area or climate which produced him, begins singing other folk songs, and begins popularizing both his own materials and the songs he has learned from other settings. The Clancy brothers, for example, appear well on their way to popularity as singers of Irish folk songs. Starting out as traditional Irish singers, performing the songs they learned "at their mother's knee," etc., their path away from their culture and toward popularity and commercialism is catalogued in their records—from their "in the field" appearance on The Lark in the Morning, on their own Tradition Company label, to their current Columbia LP. In his own way, Josh White has followed this same path from traditional folksinger to singer of folk songs. (There are many, of course, who must start out as singers of folk songs because, like Pete Seeger and Joan Baez, coming from middle class backgrounds, they have no viable body of folklore to fall back on or to perpetuate. Like the New Lost City Ramblers, the most they can do is attempt to imitate or copy a traditional style, and to perpetuate it in that way.)

But Jimmie Driftwood turned in neither of these directions. A traditional folksinger, he turned instead to the writing of folk-type songs—songs which in many cases are indistinguishable from modern pop ballads. And, indeed, perhaps they are justifiably considered pop numbers. For what distinguishes one of his historical ballads—like the "Battle of New Orleans" or the "Tennessee Stud"—from any Tin Pan Alley product? Perhaps as he explains, any given number can be folk, pop, country, or rock 'n roll, depending on who happens to perform it, and how.

Thus a Jimmie Driftwood concert contains a mixture of antique Anglo-American ballads, in their Ozark variants, and what really must be considered popular songs. Because of the nature of the traditional songs he sings—"House Carpenter" and "Little Moses" are well-known examples—and as a result of his own particular singing style, the pop numbers he has composed sound almost exactly like his traditional ballads.

This really makes it difficult for "folksong purists." A "purist" should admire Jimmie Driftwood as a traditional Ozark singer, but should shun him as a popular composer and singer. You almost have to have the Child Collections at your side for reference during a concert in order to know which numbers to applaud and which ones not to.

Again, perhaps it is commercialism that has pushed Driftwood in the direction of popular song composition. He claims he would like to stop recording the bland pop stuff for RCA Victor, and form his own record company. This, he says, would give him a chance to put on discs a number of traditional Ozark songs, and to make more use of old folk instruments. Presumably, this would include the pickin' bow, which he now uses mainly as a publicity gimmick and as a come-on for his concerts. A return on his part to exclusively traditional Ozark songs would be appreciated by "purists." However, Driftwood, in concert, conveys no sense of conflict between his dual roles as folksinger and pop composer. Instead he tells us much of the gifted utilization of traditional folk themes and styles in a contemporary setting.
WOODY GUTHRIE'S "1913 MASSACRE"
-BY BILL BARKER-

One of Woody Guthrie's lesser known songs provides a perfect example of his ability to illustrate vividly conditions that he felt were social injustices. Guthrie was born in 1912; consequently his "1913 Massacre" was written from other than personal involvement, but that does not destroy the force of the story it tells. (Early in his life Guthrie's songs were composed almost entirely from personal experience, while later in life, after settling in New York, the opposite was true.)

The song itself is fairly typical of a great number of songs dealing with Labor's bloody drive to form an organized body with the persuasive power to fight for better conditions. This song is made more powerful than most, however, by forcibly taking the listener to Calumet, Michigan, on Christmas Day, 1913. The listener is made a direct observer of the action, eg: "I will take you...."

Historically, the song is only slightly inaccurate. Wages paid were $3.48 for a 10 1/2 hour day (although some teenagers made as little as $1.25), rather than "less than a dollar a day...." Seventy-two people died, some of whom were adults, rather than Guthrie's seventy-three.

John Greenway (American Folksongs of Protest, 1953) published a melody line, although it differs somewhat from Guthrie's melody on the original recording. Jack Elliott's melody (see below in discography) seems to be a cross between the Greenway melody, and Guthrie's original. It might be added that the determination of a Guthrie melody line is not easy, since he will change it three or four times within a song.

Of the recordings listed for this ballad, the only one readily available is the Prestige by Jack Elliott. This record along with Cisco Houston's Vanguard provides a good introduction to Guthrie's songs and playing style. Playing style is best heard on the Elliott disc. If you want to hear the real thing, at least five recordings by Guthrie, alone, are currently available, and are also listed below. Cisco Houston and Jack Elliott were both Guthrie's intimates and traveling companions. Elliott has devoted much effort toward preventing Guthrie's insight from being lost in the deluge of pseudo-folk material currently flooding the market.
DISCOGRAPHY

A. "1913 Massacre"

Woody Guthrie
Jack Elliott
John Greenway
Jack Elliott
Asch 360 (1944) Original 78 rpm
Topic T 5 (1956) English 33 rpm
Wattle C 1 (1957) Australian 33 rpm
Prestige Int 13016 (1961) United States 33 rpm

B. Related Guthrie material on current LP's

a) Woody Guthrie
   " " Folkways FA 2011 "Talking Dust Bowl"
   " " FA 2486 "Bound for Glory"
   " FC 7005 "Songs to Grow On--Nursery Days"
   " FC 7015 "Songs to Grow On for Mother & Child"
   " FC 5485 "Ballads of Sacco and Vanzetti"

b) Woody Guthrie & Cisco Houston
   Stinson SLP 44 "Folk Songs, Volume I"
   SLP 53 "More Songs, Volume II"

b) Cisco Houston
   Vanguard VRS 9089 "Songs of Woody Guthrie"

d) Jack Elliott
   Prestige Int 13016 "Songs of Woody Guthrie"
   Folkways FC 7501 "Woody Guthrie's 'Songs to Grow On'"

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Take a trip with me in 1913
To Calumet, Michigan, in the copper country.
I will take you to a place called Italian Hall,
Where the miners are having their big Christmas ball.

I will take you in a door and up a high stairs;
Singing and dancing is heard everywhere.
I will let you shake hands with the people you see,
And watch the kids dance round the big Christmas tree.

You ask about work and you ask about pay:
They'll tell you they make less than a dollar a day.
Working the copper claims, risking their lives,
So it's fun to spend Christmas with children and wives.

There's talking and laughing and songs in the air,
And the spirit of Christmas is there everywhere.
Before you know it, you're friends with us all,
And you're dancing around and around in the hall.

Well, a little girl sits down by the Christmas tree light
To play the piano, so you gotta keep quiet.
To hear all this fun you would not realize,
That the copper boss thugmen are milling outside.

The copper boss thugs stuck their heads in the door;
One of them yelled and he screamed, "There's a fire!"
A lady she hollered, "There's no such a thing."
Keep on with your party, there's no such a thing.

A few people rushed, and it was only a few,
"It's just the thugs and the scabs fooling you."
A man grabbed his daughter and carried her down.
But the thugs held the door and they could not get out.

And then others followed, a hundred or more,
But most everybody remained on the floor.
The gun thugs they laughed at their murderous joke,
While the children were smothered on the stairs by the door.

Such a terrible sight I never did see;
We carried out children back up to their tree.
The scabs outside still laughed at their spree,
And the children had died, there were 73.

The piano played a slow funeral tune;
And the town was lit up by a cold Christmas moon.
The parents they cried and the miners they moaned,
"See what your greed for money had done."

This is an international songbook containing "84 songs from all over the world." The introductions and commentaries are by Mr. Bikel, and the piano settings are by Milton Okun. "Translations are provided where necessary, and piano arrangements are accompanied by indications for performance with guitar." The sections are titled Languages of Love; Of Shepherds and Mule Drivers; Gypsies; Sleep, Little One; Boys, Good and Bad; Farewell; The Twilight Years; Rabbi Dances; From the Darkness of Slavery to the Light of Freedom; Study War No More; Funny Ones; A Minstrel's Miscellany. While the versatile Mr. Bikel's rich baritone can be heard on records in 17 languages, this book lacks an international variety. Of course, "songs from all over the world" cannot be expected in a book containing only 84 songs, but it is an interesting book in most other ways.

Guthrie, Woody. **BOUND FOR GLORY.** Dolphin, C 248, New York illustrated with sketches by the author, $0.95.

Here's Woody Guthrie. It's his autobiography of the days of the Great Depression, all "writ and drawn by himself." The title comes from one of his best known ballads (he has written more than a thousand others), and, considering his vigorous and constant optimism, it would be difficult to imagine anything more appropriate. If you want to spend a couple hours with one of America's best known balladeers, riding the rails with him, hoeing figs, painting signs, singing for your supper, and getting in an occasional brawl, here is a fine opportunity. You will be dong some hard travelling but it will be a rollicking, jolly old trip every inch of the way.

Humphreys, Henry S. **SONGS OF THE CONFEDERACY.** Willis Music Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1961, illustrated, $2.00. **SONGS OF THE UNION.** Willis Music Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1961, illustrated, $2.00.

These are companion volumes and should be considered together. In fact, one feels they should have been published as a single volume. The illustrations and foreword are identical. Each volume has the words and music of 32 songs, and each song has a prose introduction which sometimes suffers from irrelevancy. There were literally thousands of songs written during the Civil War (some persons of "divided sympathies" composed songs for both sides), so the job of selecting 32 typical songs must have been difficult. It seems, though, that the editor has done his job well: in each book we find something stirring, something sombre, something comical, totalling an accurate reflection of the times.


The title of this book is misleading; only the first 21 pages (out of 102) are devoted to Ivy League songs. This is an awkward book; too many of the lyrics are wrenched; the selections cover an immense range, and they are tossed together with extreme disorder; the editing is sad. Save your money.
FOLKLORE SEMINAR

CAMPUS FOLKSONG CLUB

Presents

Dec. 5
Henri Stegemeier
Dept. of German
"The Grimm Tales"

Jan. 9
Joseph R. Gusfield
Dept. of Sociology
"Urban vs. Rural Folklore"

AT THE Y.W.C.A. AUDITORIUM:
ON TUESDAYS
AT 4 P.M.