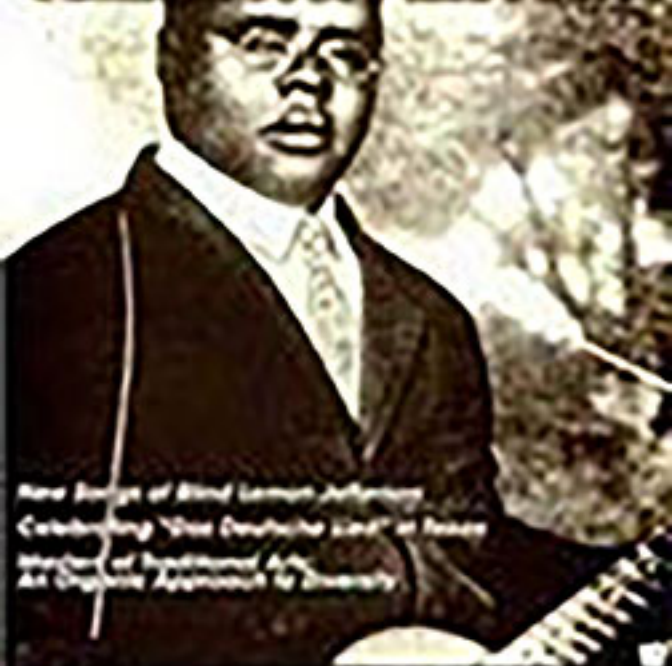


The Journal of
TEXAS MUSIC HISTORY



New Songs of Blind Lemon Jefferson
Celebrating "The Deutsche Lied" at Texas
Museum of Traditional Arts
An Ongoing Journey to Diversity

Letter from the Director



The Fall 2003 issue of the *Journal of Texas Music History* marks another important milestone for the Center for Texas Music History. With this issue, the *Journal* celebrates its third anniversary as the first academic journal to cover the entire spectrum of Texas and Southwestern music history. With readership now stretching across the nation and around the globe, the *Journal* has become the

centerpiece for our expanding programs devoted to the preservation and study of the Southwest's richly diverse musical heritage. We thank all the contributing authors and sponsors who have helped make the *Journal* such a resounding success.

We also are celebrating other important changes and accomplishments. Because it has grown into one of the state's largest and most successful publicly-funded universities, Southwest Texas State University has shortened its name to Texas State University to help reflect its growing stature in the academic community.

The long-awaited *Handbook of Texas Music*, which we co-produced with the Texas State Historical Association, the Texas Music Office, and the University of Texas at Austin, is now available through the Texas State Historical Association's website. (www.tsha.utexas.edu) The *Handbook*, which is the first comprehensive encyclopedia of Texas music history, already has become an invaluable resource for historians and music fans alike. I am very proud of our students, who contributed more than 100 articles to the *Handbook*.

I am also pleased to announce that the Center for Texas Music History recently moved into a new and larger facility in the historic Brazos Building on the Texas State University campus. This new space will allow us to continue our many ongoing projects while expanding our capability to develop new projects in the future.

In addition, I am very grateful to Richard Cheatham, Dean of Fine Arts and Communication, for inviting the Center to co-sponsor a concert at Texas State on October 24, 2003, featuring singing star Michael Martin Murphey, his band, and the Texas State Orchestra. This concert will serve, in part, as a fundraiser for the Center to help us continue our important work. Please contact the Center directly for more information about this event.

Our many other successful projects include: the *Travelin' Texas* CDs, Volumes 1, 2, & 3, featuring such great Texas artists as Delbert McClinton, George Strait, Tish Hinojosa, Asleep at the Wheel, Ruthie Foster, Joe Ely, Billy Joe Shaver, the Flatlanders, Toni Price, Pat Green, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Terri Hendrix, Jerry Jeff Walker, and others. These CDs, which have become an important fundraiser for our program, are available for only \$10 each through the Center; the online bibliography of books, articles, and other publications on Southwestern music, which our students helped develop in cooperation with the Texas Music Office, remains an important tool for researchers and music fans; our work continues with museums, schools, and other programs throughout the state in organizing exhibits, performances, and other educational activities; our "Texas Music History Unplugged" concerts, which bring prominent musicians to campus to perform and discuss how their music reflects the unique history and culture of the Southwest, continue to draw standing-room-only crowds.

As always, I am deeply grateful to all who have helped make our program so successful, especially the following: Kathryn Ledbetter, Gregg Andrews, Dee Lannon, Gene Bourgeois, Frank de la Teja, Vikki Bynum, the entire Texas State History Department, the CTMH Advisory Board, Ann Marie Ellis, Becky Huff, Nina Wright, Deborah McDaniel, Beverly Braud, Gerald Hill, T.Cay Rowe, Diana Harrell, César Limón, Francine Hartman, Rick and Laurie Baish, Lucky and Becky Tomblin, Kim and Robert Richey, Jo and Paul Snider, Margie First, Darrell and Barbara Piersol, Tracie Ferguson, Phil and Cecilia Collins, Ralph and Patti Dowling, Jerry and Cathy Supple, Dennis and Margaret Dunn, John Kunz, Kent Finlay, Mildred Roddy, Billy Seidell, and all of our other friends and supporters.

Please visit our website (www.txstate.edu/ctmh) or contact us to learn more about the Center and its unique and exciting programs.

Sincerely,

Gary Hartman, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Texas Music History
History Department
Texas State University-San Marcos
San Marcos, TX 78666
512-245-3749
gh08@txstate.edu

www.txstate.edu/ctmh



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Contributors **David Evans**
Jay Brakefield
Jean Heide
Luigi Monge

Reviews **Jean A. Boyd**
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The Center for Texas Music History is a nonprofit educational program designed to help students, scholars, and the general public better understand how music reflects the richly diverse ethnic and cultural heritage of the American Southwest. Within its first three years, the Center has developed a number of very successful projects focusing on the preservation and study of Southwestern music history.

In order to continue this success, we need your help. Your contribution will help fund continued publication of *The Journal of Texas Music History*, along with all the other important educational and preservational projects we have underway.

We are very grateful to the donors listed on this page. They have made a personal commitment to preserving the musical heritage of the Southwest. Their efforts will help us continue to increase awareness of how Texas music represents the unique historical development of the region.

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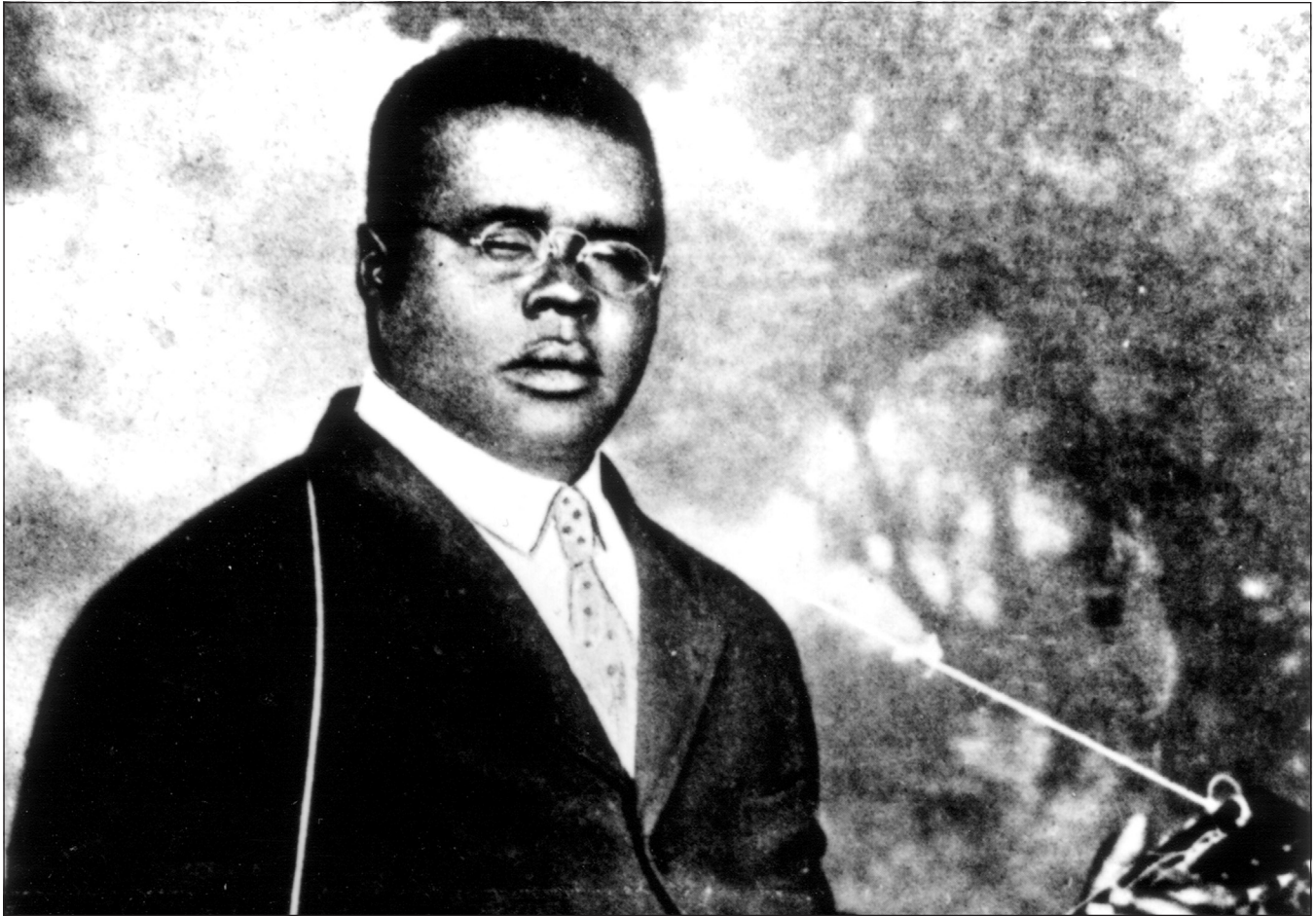
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Monge and Evans: New Songs of Blind Lemon Jefferson

New Songs of Blind Lemon Jefferson

Luigi Monge and David Evans



Blind Lemon Jefferson, ca. 1927, Courtesy Documentary Arts

The main purpose of this essay is to examine newly discovered material by one of the great creative forces in the blues, Blind Lemon Jefferson. We will attempt to explain the material's peculiarities and try to solve certain problems it presents.¹ By placing these new songs in the context of Jefferson's other known music and his blues in particular, as well as within the broader spectrum of American folk music tradition, we will try to show how they add to, confirm, or modify our understanding of Jefferson's life, personality, music, and artistic stature. In particular, we will investigate certain themes in the lyrics of these new songs. One of these is the theme of violent attacks and outbursts, either suffered or perpetrated by the blind singer. Another is the theme of blindness itself. As explained in an earlier article by Monge, the many cryptic visual references in Jefferson's lyrics unveil a psychological preoccupation with his blindness and constitute the sub-theme underlying the whole of his lyrical output.² In order to corroborate this theory, a complete list of Jefferson's visual references in the new songs is provided in the Appendix for statistical comparisons with the results obtained in the earlier article.

Blind Lemon Jefferson was the first important self-accompanied blues singer-guitarist to make recordings.³ Many of his records sold quite well, and he was a great influence on other musicians. Versions of his songs have continued to be performed and recorded to the present day, and his improvisational guitar style served as a prototype for modern electric lead guitar in the blues. His success also created opportunities for many more self-accompanied artists to make recordings. Jefferson was born in 1893 in Couchman, near Wortham, Texas. As best can be determined, he was blind from birth. However, he soon displayed a remarkable ability to get around and take care of himself. With little or no formal education, he showed an early interest in music and took up guitar playing and singing. By 1912 he was riding trains to Dallas and performing in the Deep Ellum and Central Track area. One of his musical partners in this early period was the influential Texas singer and songwriter Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter).

When the Wortham area experienced an oil boom in the early 1920s, Jefferson performed there for tips from "wildcatters" and "sports." By 1925, he was back performing in Dallas, where he was discovered by R. T. Ashford, proprietor of a record store and shoeshine parlor. Jefferson traveled to Chicago and made his first recordings in late 1925 or early 1926. Between then and the end of 1929, he recorded about 90 released titles, mostly blues, along with a few spirituals and other types of folksongs.⁴ All of these were made for Paramount Records in Chicago or in Richmond, Indiana, with the exception of one session in Atlanta in March, 1927, for Okeh Records, which resulted in the release of two songs. During this period, Jefferson traveled widely, performing in theatres and other venues. He died under uncertain circumstances in late December, 1929, in Chicago, either from a heart attack or from freezing to death, or perhaps a combination of the two. He is buried in Wortham.

The new material, most of which we present here for the first time, comes from typed and hand written copyright deposits of the Chicago Music Publishing Company at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and includes the following songs: "Laboring Man Blues," "Elder Green's in Town," "English Stop Time," "I Labor So Far from Home," "Light House Blues," "Money Tree Mama Blues," and "Pineapple Blues." Besides these, we will also discuss three alternate versions of already known songs, which in two cases bear completely different titles from Jefferson's previously issued recordings. We became aware of the existence of these copyright deposits through a number of different published sources, as well as our own research in the Library of Congress.⁵ Although the songs under discussion



here most likely were recorded by Jefferson at some point, any such recordings appear to have been lost or destroyed.

The importance of this material goes beyond helping to fill some of the gaps in Jefferson's discography. In fact, not only does the material

provide additional information about Jefferson's unissued recordings for Okeh Records, but it also includes previously unknown titles made for Paramount Records. In one of the earliest and most in-depth studies of Jefferson's artistry, Samuel Charters was the first to publish the music and lyrics of "Elder Green's in Town" and the music of the instrumental "English Stop Time."⁶ Since then, record collectors have searched unsuccessfully for possible test pressings of these titles. Because none has been found so far, we assume that recordings of these songs are lost forever. In this article we are now presenting the same material as Charters with some further comments, plus the new songs from all the other available copyright deposits.

At the time of his Okeh sessions, which took place on March 14 and 15, 1927, in Atlanta, Georgia, Jefferson had been recording for Paramount Records for more than a year. He recorded a total of eight songs for Okeh agent Polk Brockman, but only two sides ("Black Snake Moan" b/w "Match Box Blues," Okeh 8455) were issued, probably because Paramount Records claimed Jefferson as one of its exclusive recording artists and blocked Okeh's plans to release the other six titles.⁷ Since Chicago Music Publishing Company was Jefferson's publisher, and, since Jefferson probably had a closer relationship with its owner J. Mayo Williams than with the Paramount Record Company, our speculation is that Jefferson's temporary switch to Okeh would not have affected his publishing relationship with Chicago Music Publishing Company. Indeed, the two issued Okeh songs are as original as any other blues recorded by Jefferson around this time, but the other five known songs are all in some way "traditional." Possibly, Polk Brockman tried to get Jefferson to record only "traditional" songs so as to avoid negotiating and paying mechanical royalties to Chicago Music Publishing Company. However, Williams may have forced Okeh to pay these royalties for its two issued sides, perhaps in compliance with an exclusive publishing agreement between Chicago Music and Jefferson. Consequently, it is very likely that Okeh or Brockman assigned these titles to Chicago Music Publishing Company as some sort of settlement in the fallout over Jefferson's "illegal" Okeh sessions.

Evidently, Okeh was allowed to keep its lone 78 on the market, but the song copyrights had to be assigned to Chicago Music. All this may have caused the other titles to remain unissued, thus allowing Jefferson to re-record one of them for Paramount,

"Easy Rider Blues" (ca. April 1927, Paramount 12474). Jefferson had already recorded "That Black Snake Moan" (ca. November 1926, Paramount 12407), and he would soon re-record "Match Box Blues" twice, both takes of which would be paired with "Easy Rider Blues" on a Paramount record. Whatever the case, Brockman himself appears not to have tried to be the publisher or to claim authorship of any of the songs, although he claimed authorship of many other songs registered in the copyright office around this time that were recorded by artists with whom he was associated.

The only title known to have been recorded by Jefferson which remains untraced in any form is "Stillery Blues" (recorded for Okeh), clearly a song more or less thematically dealing with alcohol. This piece may have been composed by Polk Brockman, who would not have allowed Chicago Music Publishing Company to register it for copyright, or it may be an alternate version of some Paramount title that Jefferson recorded a few months before or after the Okeh session. In the latter case, we can assume that it would probably be similar to one of Jefferson's earlier (or later) Paramount recordings on the same subject, that is, "Chock House Blues" (ca. May 1926, Paramount 12373) or "Old Rounders Blues" (ca. August 1926, Paramount 12394), neither of which was registered for copyright. A connection with the former title is particularly suggestive if one considers the fact that "chock" is a type of homemade beer. The meaning may easily have extended to a beer house and is very likely a phonetic variant of the currently more common word "juke" or "jook." However, the title of the song would be inaccurate, as beer is fermented, not distilled.

The melodies printed on the lead sheets discussed here are unreliable indicators of what Jefferson actually sang. On the blues titles at least, the scribe virtually used generic blues melodies. At best, the melodic lines of Jefferson's real melody and that of the lead sheet might share the same general contour. We are especially inclined to this opinion on the basis of the three blues tunes that we have seen that are versions of known issued recordings. On the other hand, the lead sheets of "Laboring Man

Blues," "Elder Green's in Town," "I Labor So Far from Home," and "English Stop Time" are likely to be the most valuable for providing insight into Jefferson's actual melodies. "Light House Blues" might also be accurate to some degree, but the others are probably far from the mark.

Certain peculiarities of the style of notation and similarities in script suggest that all of the lead sheets were prepared by the same scribe for Chicago Music Publishing Company. In the melodies of the blues songs, in general there is no indication of a flatted or "blue" third in the first line, but the third is usually flatted in the second line and in melodic phrases where it follows the fourth degree of the scale (e.g., "Pineapple Blues"). The seventh degree of the scale is written as natural, with no suggestion of a blue note, except in "Laboring Man Blues." The fact that the lead sheets are all written in the "simple" keys of C and F should not be taken as an indication that Jefferson actually performed the pieces in those keys. This was a normal practice in writing lead sheets.

The same observations on the scribe's inaccuracy can be made for the transcription of the lyrics. The texts may not have been transcribed exactly, and it is quite possible that some or all of the texts are truncated, although our guess is that "I Labor So Far from Home," "Light House Blues," "Too Black Bad," "It's Tight Like That," "Money Tree Mama Blues," and "Pineapple Blues" are complete. Our presentation of the lyrics here is as in the copyright submissions, which include some evident mistakes. Moreover, there are slight textual discrepancies between the lyric sheet and the lyrics written under the musical notes. Only punctuation has been standardized, adding commas, periods, apostrophes, etc., where needed in order to make the texts more readable. Figure 1 reports all the available recording and publishing data on this group of songs.



"Laboring Man Blues"

It takes a hard working man to set a woman down,

Figure 1: Data on Jefferson's new songs⁸

Song Title	Author	Rec. Co.	Issue #	Place of Rec.	Matrix Number	Recording Date	Reg. Date	Reg. #
Laboring Man Blues	L. Jefferson	Okeh	unissued	Atlanta, Ga.	probably 80526-B	March 14, 1927	June 15, 1927	E667071
Easy Rider	L. Jefferson	Okeh	unissued	Atlanta, Ga.	probably 80527-B	March 14, 1927	April 5, 1927	E659646
Elder Green's in Town	L. Jefferson	Okeh	unissued	Atlanta, Ga.	probably 80528-B	March 14, 1927	April 5, 1927	E659647
English Stop Time	L. Jefferson	Okeh	unissued	Atlanta, Ga.	probably 80529-B	March 14, 1927	May 20, 1927	E664771
I Labor So Far from Home	L. Jefferson	Okeh	unissued	Atlanta, Ga.	probably 80536-B	March 15, 1927	May 20, 1927	E664772
Light House Blues	L. Jefferson	Paramount	unissued	Chicago, Il.	* 20035/6/7/8/ or 20072	Sept./Oct. 1927	May 31, 1928	E693046
Too Black Bad	L. Jefferson	Paramount	unissued	Chicago, Il.	* 20382/3	February 1928	June 21, 1928	E693572
It's Tight Like That	L. Jefferson	Paramount	unissued	Chicago, Il.	* 20748/52/53 or 20817	July or Aug. 1928	Oct. 18, 1928	E U.S. Unpub. 388
Money Tree Mama Blues	L. Jefferson	Paramount	unissued	Chicago, Il.	* 20748/52/53 or 20817	July or Aug. 1928	Oct. 18, 1928	E U.S. Unpub. 389
Pineapple Blues	L. Jefferson	Paramount	unissued	Chicago, Il.	* 20748/52/53 or 20817	July or Aug. 1928	Oct. 18, 1928	E U.S. Unpub. 392

* presumably

It takes a hard working man to set a woman down.

*A man loves to roustabout can't set you down,
A man loves to roustabout can't set you down.*

*If you can't do the shiveree,
You ain't got no business 'round here dipping in with me.*

*Takes a hard laboring man to give you all you need,
Takes a hard laboring man to give you all you need.*

*A man loves to gamble, can't set you down,
A man loves to gamble, can't set you down.*

*If your darling sugar quits you, what the world of that,
If you know what to do, you can gain her back.*

*The girl that I love and who I crave to see,
Is far 'cross the sea when (sic) I can't see.*

*I ain't got nobody in this town,
I ain't got nobody in this town.*

The text of "Laboring Man Blues" has been printed as 8 couplets (some of them AA, others AB), rather than 4 quatrains as in the lead sheet, so that it will conform to the melody. This is a two-line proto-blues. We know of no other tune quite like it, although it strikes us as having a strongly traditional flavor. The instrumental introduction appears to be derived from the second line of the melody. There are no breaks in the melody for guitar responses, which suggests that the lead sheet is inaccurate in this respect.

From the textual point of view, in the transcription we can note minor inconsistencies between the page of text and the page with music. The music transcription has "Now I ain't got nobody, nobody in this town," while the lyric transcription has "I ain't got nobody in this town." More important is the modified reprise of the subtle visual reference that Jefferson sang in his "Wartime Blues" (ca. November 1926, Paramount 12425), "Well, the girl I love and the one I crave to see/Well, she's living in Memphis, and the fool won't write to me," which is here disappointingly rendered (or perhaps only poorly transcribed) as "The girl that I love and who I crave to see/Is far 'cross the sea when (sic) I can't see."

From the linguistic point of view, it is interesting to note the

Laboring Man Blues

use of the word "shiveree." Paul Oliver uses the more common spelling "shivaree" and explains that these were "Mexican bands and mariachi groups who played in South Texas. They were also known as 'shivaree' bands, their name being a corruption of *charivari* by which Italian groups that played on homemade instruments were once known."⁹ In fact, only French dictionaries report this word, which is used with the same denotative meaning it has today in the American South, that is, a rowdy celebration or party, often following a wedding.¹⁰ In light of the mutual influence of Mexican and African-American music in the Southwest, especially during the first quarter of the twentieth century in Texas, it is not surprising that Jefferson encountered this expression and that it was part of his vocabulary.¹¹ In fact, Jefferson was born in and traveled extensively throughout Texas. The "shivaree" custom is known all over the United States and Canada, but it does seem to be especially common in the Lone Star State. In the context of this song, however, Jefferson more likely refers to a kind of dance or music, or even sexual activity, thus extending the word's meaning further, as also happens in words such as "zydeco," "jook," "rag," "boogie," "shimmy," "strut," "jump," etc., which are used to signify a type of music, a type of dance, a music/dance place, or event. In the case of "shivaree" the dance meaning might have been suggested by the similar sound of the word "shiver." Other occurrences of the word "shivaree" in the blues used with a similar meaning are in Earl McDonald's Original Louisville Jug Band's "Rocking Chair Blues" (March 30, 1927, Columbia 14226-D), Lillian Glinn's "Brown Skin Blues" (December 2, 1927, Columbia 14275-D), Robert Wilkins's "Alabama Blues" (ca. September 23, 1929, Brunswick 7205), Edward Thompson's "Showers of Rain Blues" (ca. October 23, 1929, Paramount 13018) and Blind Willie McTell's "East St. Louis Blues (Fare You Well)" (September 21, 1933, Vocalion unissued; JEMF 106).



"Easy Rider"

*Oh, tell me where my easy rider's gone,
The woman I love drove me away from home.*

*Easy rider died on the road,
I'm broke and hungry, got nowhere to go.*

*There's coming a time when a woman won't need no man,
Hush your mouth, woman, and don't be raising sand.*

This song could be either from the Okeh recording session in March, 1927, or an alternate take of the Paramount recording of "Easy Rider Blues." Since the latter is thought to have been recorded in April, and since the date of registration of the new song is April 5, it is more likely that the lead sheet is transcribed from the unissued Okeh recording.

The first full measure of stanza 1 opens with a half note that would be better written as two quarter notes. There are also two alternative notes at the beginning of measure 10, perhaps an

attempt to indicate melodic variation. The lead sheet has two identical versions of the last two measures, each containing two joined whole notes. The melody of the lead sheet is a considerably distorted version of the melody that Jefferson sings on the released version of “Easy Rider Blues,” preserving only the overall range of an octave and the generally descending contour of the lines. It lacks Jefferson’s characteristic syncopation and his metrical extensions at the ends of his lines, and it does not indicate his singing of blue notes at the third and seventh degrees of his melody. The instrumental introduction of the lead sheet is obviously derived from the third line of the vocal melody. Jefferson played guitar in G position of standard tuning on the issued version of “Easy Rider Blues,” although the lead sheet was written in the key of C. A transcription of his singing in the issued “Easy Rider Blues” has been transposed to C for ease of comparison.

Although the scribe’s transcription of this song is sketchy, it is safe to assume that this tune had a text similar in length, content, and

Easy Rider

The musical notation for "Easy Rider" is presented in three systems. The first system shows a melodic line with lyrics: "eas - y ri - der's gone. man. Tell me where my eas - y ri - der's". The second system continues the melody with lyrics: "woman won't need no. Comeing a time when a woman won't need no". The third system concludes the melody with lyrics: "gone man. Now the wo - man I love, drove me a - way from home, sand. Now you hush your mouth and don't be rais - in' sand."

structure to the Paramount version, which contains eight stanzas. This hypothesis is strengthened by two factors: 1) the issued and unissued songs basically present the same succession of strophes, the surviving three stanzas in the lead sheet corresponding to the first three in the issued version in spite of the text’s lack of any chronological story-line; 2) if it had not been a full recording, it would not have been submitted for copyright. Apart from a spelling problem (“comeing” [sic]), we notice the presence of “Now” and “Now you” respectively before “The woman I love” (first stanza) and “Hush your mouth” (third stanza), as well as the omission of “woman” in the musical transcription. These elements are not found in the lyric portion of the lead sheet.

“Easy Rider [Blues]” is one of many blues songs occurring in both black and white tradition beginning in the 1920s that contain the phrase “easy rider” or “see see, rider” along with other traditional verses. Jefferson’s melody and lyrics are rather different from most other versions. Jefferson’s song remains more or less non-thematic in text and reflects his early method of composing lyrics by combining traditional verses.¹² This approach often manifests itself through an apparently illogical narrative sequence of stanzas, which can be understood more clearly as associative and/or contrastive juxtapositions. As in the complete issued song, this fragment deals with abandonment/separation from different points of view. The first couplet describes the bluesman who

is searching for his woman at the station after their argument and his being driven away from home. The second couplet is probably the last in the logical sequence of events and summarizes the tragic facts that have occurred, i.e., the woman’s death on the road and Jefferson’s loneliness and homelessness. The third couplet reprises in dialogic form the couple’s altercation preceding the woman’s escape from home as it is recalled by the bluesman. This is the stanza putting an end to the quarrel and causing the woman to leave.

The highly visual content typical of Jefferson’s lyrics cannot be detected in the text only because the two visual references in the issued version of the song (“She left me this morning with a face that’s covered with frowns” and “fair brown”) are absent due to the truncation.



“Elder Green’s in Town”

*Elder Green’s in town, Elder Green’s in town,
He’s got it printed all over his old automobile, he’s Alabama bound.*

*Don’t worry me, don’t worry me [again],
When I get drunk and all down and out, don’t worry me.*

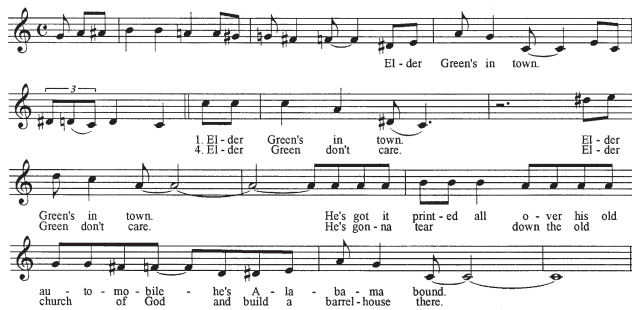
*I’ve got a high brown, and she’s long and tall,
Lawd, lawd, lawd, lawd, boys, she’ll make a panther squall.*

*Elder Green don’t care, Elder Green don’t care,
He’s gonna tear down the old Church of God and build a barrelhouse there.*

If we analyze the melody of “Elder Green’s in Town”, we immediately realize it is close to the standard melody of “Alabama Bound.” This could indicate either a more-or-less accurate transcription of Jefferson singing a traditional tune or simply the fact that the scribe had the standard melody in mind and imposed it on Jefferson’s singing. It appears to be a variant of a New Orleans melody that has migrated northward up the Mississippi River Valley and westward to Texas. It first shows up as “I’m Alabama Bound” published in New Orleans in 1909, credited to a white theatre pianist named Robert Hoffman.¹³ The tune can be viewed as a version of an AAB blues with the first two lines compressed in length, but retaining the convention of starting each line respectively with a suggestion of the tonic, subdominant, and dominant harmonies (I, IV and V). Blind Boone used the melody also in 1909 as one of the strains in his “Boone’s Rag Medley no. 2.”¹⁴ New Orleans pianist Jelly Roll Morton claimed to have created the tune in Mobile, Alabama, in 1905, but this probably has as much accuracy as his claim to have invented jazz in 1902.¹⁵ Nevertheless, it suggests an early acquaintance with this tune by a New Orleans musician. Morton called it “Don’t You Leave Me Here,” and it is a well known tune under this title.¹⁶

Early versions of “Don’t You Leave Me Here,” or, in some cases,

Elder Green's in Town



Blind Lemon Jefferson, "Elder Green's in Town", ca. April 1927

entitled more simply "Don't Leave Me Here," were recorded by Monette Moore (February 25, 1927, Victor 20653), Laura Smith (ca. March 1927, Banner 1977), Papa Harvey Hull (April 3, 1927, Gennett 6106 or Black Patti 8002), Henry Thomas (ca. October 7, 1929, Vocalion 1443), Washboard Sam [Robert Brown] (March 14, 1938, Bluebird B7501), and Merline Johnson (July 7, 1938, Vocalion 04331), most of them differing textually from one another. Other songs using this tune are Hattie Hudson's "Black Hand Blues" (December 6, 1927, Columbia 14279-D), Henry Thomas's "Don't Ease Me In" (June 13, 1928, Vocalion 1197), Cow Cow Davenport's "Don't You Loud Mouth Me" (May 12, 1938, Decca 7486), and Blue Lu Barker's (August 11, 1938, Decca 7506) and Merline Johnson's (October 4, 1938, Vocalion 04455) "Don't You Make Me High." More distantly related are the tunes of "Baby Please Don't Go," first recorded by Mississippi blues guitarist Big Joe Williams (October 31, 1935, Bluebird B6200), Alabama singer Vera Hall's "Another Man Done Gone" (October 31, 1940, Library of Congress 4049-A-4 and 4049-B-1, issued on *Archive of American Folk Song* 16), Natchez, Mississippi, bluesman Baby Doo's [Leonard Caston] "I'm Gonna Walk Your Log" (June 4, 1940, Decca 7773) and Cat-Iron's [William Carradine] "I'm Goin' to Walk Your Log" (1958, Folkways FA 2389). In these four pieces, the tune is usually in a pentatonic blues scale and does not suggest harmonic changes. Themes of violence and incarceration are prominent, but many versions mention New Orleans, linking the tune to its likely place of origin.

The figure of Elder Green, or some other reprobate preacher or church member, appears in a number of recorded versions of "Alabama Bound," such as those of Papa Charlie Jackson of New Orleans ("I'm Alabama Bound," ca. May 1925, Paramount 12289), Pete Harris of Texas (May 1934, Library of Congress unissued 78-B-3; Flyright SDM 265), Leadbelly of Texas/Louisiana (March 1, 1935, Library of Congress unissued [49-B]; Document DLP 602, and later versions), and Mance Lipscomb of Texas (1961, Reprise R2012 and RS 6404, 1964; Arhoolie 1077). Elder Green also appeared in early printed versions of "Alabama Bound" collected by Newman White in Alabama and Will H. Thomas and Gates Thomas in Texas.¹⁷ Mississippi bluesman Charley Patton recorded the only version of this tune with Elder Green in the title ("Elder

Greene Blues," ca. October 1929, Paramount 12972), which exists in two alternate takes. Its text mentions New Orleans. John Work published "Ol' Elder Brown's," essentially the same song with a change of color in the surname.¹⁸ It mentions the city of Shreveport, Louisiana. Work probably collected his version near Nashville, Tennessee. Natchez, Mississippi, blues guitarist Cat-Iron (William Carradine) recorded a "Jimmy Bell" in 1958 (Folkways FA 2389), which is also part of this complex, with its tune shorn of any suggestions of harmonic changes. Another related tune describing an unnamed preacher of questionable virtue is "The Preacher Got Drunk and Laid Down His Bible" (February 17, 1928, Brunswick 259) by the Tennessee Ramblers, a white string band.

Unlike Patton's longer versions of the song, Jefferson's text mentions Elder Green in only two of its four stanzas. Both of these are unique to Jefferson's text and are not found in any other known versions. The first of these stanzas clearly links his song to the better known "Alabama Bound" title. His last stanza provides a possible clue to Elder Green's denominational affiliation, if the word "church" is meant to be capitalized. The Church of God would have been a pentecostal or "sanctified" church, possibly the Church of God in Christ, where ministers are often called "Elder."¹⁹ Pentecostals are typically known for their highly emotional style of worship and singing and the incorporation of secular instruments, tunes, and styles into their music. The Pentecostal movement gained adherents rapidly following the Azusa Street Revival of 1906-07 in Los Angeles, particularly among black migrants to cities and in industrial and mining communities. Many of those who remained in older denominations or lived more secular lives ridiculed the "saints" or "holy rollers" and circulated rumors and reports of unholy doings in their services and of unscrupulous pastors.²⁰ Such reports could easily have coalesced around a possibly fictional, composite character known as Elder Green around 1909 when the "Alabama Bound" tune was popularized and the Pentecostal movement was in its initial phase of growth.

The stanzas about Elder Green/Elder Brown/Jimmy Bell give these songs, to some degree, the quality of a narrative folk ballad. This person is consistently depicted as a ladies' man, drinker, rambler, hustler, hypocrite, and all-around devilish fellow. The verses that describe him in these terms are always, however, mixed with other first-person verses with similar themes, suggesting a strong identification between the singer and the reprobate preacher. The verses about Elder Green, like blues verses in most cases, develop no chronological story-line but are instead merely a series of vignettes that could be sung in any order and illustrate Elder Green's character. Many folk ballads that originated in the African-American tradition around the beginning of the twentieth century, such as "Railroad Bill," "Stagolee," and "Casey Jones," display these characteristics—lack of a chronological story-line or a fractured chronology, and mixture of third-person and first-person verses. These characteristics, which have been noted in overviews of this material by such scholars as G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., and Paul Oliver, suggest that the story-line is often of minor

importance to singers and their audiences and that the interest lies instead in depictions of character and dramatic moments.²¹ The obvious identification of the singers with the characters and events of their songs, as well as the frequent use of a three-line form in these songs, led D. K. Wilgus to coin the term “blues ballad” to describe them.²² It should be noted that many of these “blues ballads” also circulate in Anglo-American folksong tradition, and some probably originated there.

From the more strictly textual viewpoint, it should first be noted that the term “old” in the second line of the first stanza was not present in Charters’s earlier printing of this song.²³ The reason for such a minor difference is irrelevant from the interpretive viewpoint and is very likely due to a mistake. In the second stanza we have printed the word “again” in brackets, because it is probably another mistake made by the scribe, who might have inadvertently introduced it to indicate a repetition of the verbal phrase “Don’t worry me,” similar to the repetitions in stanzas one and four. Our speculation is strengthened by the fact that this is the only unrhymed stanza in the song and one of the few in the vast corpus of related songs. Unfortunately, the musical transcription contains the words of only the first and fourth stanzas and not the second.

The references “He’s got it printed all over his old automobile, he’s Alabama bound” and the stronger descriptive “I’ve got a high brown, and she’s long and tall” confirm Jefferson’s tendency to visualize in his lyrics.

“English Stop Time”

Jefferson’s only known purely instrumental tune, “English Stop Time,” is in the style of ragtime guitar display pieces such as “Buck Dance,” “Candy Man,” and “Coonjine.” (Jefferson’s own “Hot Dogs” [ca. June 1927, Paramount 12493] has a tune related to that of “Candy Man.”) These ragtime tunes are normally performed in the key of C on the guitar and feature elaborate and syncopated right-hand picking with simple left-hand alternation of the primary positions of the tonic, subdominant, and dominant seventh chords (I, IV, V⁷). The left hand seldom ventures above the third fret of the guitar. Thus these pieces sound difficult and impressive to the non-musician but are actually fairly

easy to play. (An outstanding guitarist like Jefferson, of course, typically adds variations that truly are difficult.)

David Evans recorded two versions of “Stop Time” that are similar to one another. The first was from Babe Stovall on August 14, 1966, and the second from Eli Owens on July 24, 1970. Both had grown up near Tylertown, Mississippi, in the south central part of the state and were living in New Orleans and Bogalusa, Louisiana, respectively at the time of their recordings. A similar tune, with

"Blind Lemon's Penitentiary Blues"
by "Blind Lemon" Jefferson.

Oh-oh — isn't this terrible! Poor Blind Lemon Jefferson sobs and wails, "Walls in the jail, as high as the skies"—but it don't do no good. High walls, ball and chain, mean guards, rock pile, what a life! Don't miss this brand new Paramount Blues by Blind Lemon Jefferson and his famous guitar. Ask your dealer for Paramount No. 12666, "Blind Lemon's Penitentiary Blues", or send us the coupon.

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12665—Low Down Mississippi Bottom and Tom Cat Blues, "Mr. Freddie" Spruell; Guitar Acc.	12657—Rumbilin' And Rumbilin' Boon Constrictor Blues and Detroit Bound Blues, Blind Blake and His Guitar.
12668—Finny Woods Money Mama and Low Down Mojo Blues, Blind Lemon Jefferson and His Guitar.	12667—Ma's In The Jailhouse Now and Southern Rag, Blind Blake; Guitar and Banjo Acc.
12661—Prison Leaving Birmingham and The Escaped Convict, Harmonica Solo by George "Bollie" Williams.	12666—Pay Day Daddy Blues and Kizadie's Polky Blues, Ettaie Robinson.
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English Stop Time



piano and possibly two guitars—one of them played in the slide style—was recorded in Chicago on February 6, 1936, by Bumble Bee Slim (Amos Easton) and Memphis Minnie (Lizzie Douglas) and titled “New Orleans Stop Time” (Vocalion 03197). Memphis Minnie was born in Algiers, Louisiana, across the Mississippi River from New Orleans. The tune played by these musicians thus may have been originally a localized instrumental showpiece of the New Orleans area. It features sudden syncopations and pauses in the playing, perhaps intended to suggest or even accompany tap dancing. These pauses undoubtedly contribute to the tune’s title. A “Stock-Time” was recorded from an unknown guitarist at the Georgia State Penitentiary in Milledgeville on December 15, 1934,

by John A. and Alan Lomax (AFS 260B-1), containing the sound of tap dancing. The recording by Bumble Bee Slim and Memphis Minnie also contains a simulation of this sound.

Jefferson's tune is altogether different from the other versions, although it also contains suggestions of alternation of the three basic chords in the key of C and a suggestion of pauses. It has three distinct musical themes, although the third combines elements of the first two. It is possible, of course, that the lead sheet is a poor attempt at rendering Jefferson's guitar playing. It certainly is a simplified version of his tune, whatever that may have been, containing only a basic melody line without bass notes or harmonies. Jefferson, however, might have changed or personalized the more typical traditional tune as heard in the recordings discussed above. His use of the word "English" in the title suggests that his tune is some sort of special variant.



"I Labor So Far from Home"

*Old man went the other day his loving wife to see,
What did he see but someone's boots where his boots ought to be.
Wife, oh wife, dear loving wife, come quickly and tell to me,
Who's (sic) boots are these lying under my bed where my boots
ought to be.*

*You old fool, blind fool, old man, can't you see?
That's nothing but a coffee pot my mother sent to me.
Ten thousand miles I've traveled, ten thousand more [miles] I go,
I never saw a coffee pot with boot heels on before.*

*Old man went the other night his loving wife to see,
What should he see but someone's horse where his horse ought to be.
Oh, wife, oh wife, dear loving wife, come quickly and tell to me,
Whose horse is this hitched in my rack where my horse ought to be.
You old fool, blind fool, old man, can't you see?
That's nothing but a milk cow that my mother sent to me.
Ten thousand miles I've traveled, ten thousand more I go,
I never saw a milk cow with a saddle on before.*

*Old man went the other night his loving wife to see,
What should he see but someone's coat where his coat ought to be.
Wife, oh wife, dear loving wife, come quickly and tell to me,
Whose coat is this hanging on my rack where my coat ought to be.
Old fool, blind fool, old man, can't you see?
That's nothing but a blanket my mother sent to me.
Ten thousand miles I've traveled, ten thousand more I go,
I never saw a blanket with coat sleeves on before.*

*Old man went the other night his loving wife to see,
What should he see but some old man lying where he ought to be.
Oh wife, oh wife, dear loving wife, come quickly and tell to me,
What man is this lying in my bed where I ought to be.
You old fool, blind fool, old man can't you see?
That's nothing by (sic) a baby my mother sent to me.
Ten thousand miles I've traveled, ten thousand more I go,
I never saw a baby with whiskers on before.*

There is extensive literature on the background of Jefferson's "I Labor So Far from Home," because the origins of this song go back to an old European ballad. In fact, this is a version of Child no. 274, "Our Goodman," which was analyzed over a century ago by Francis James Child in his extensive compilation of English and Scottish ballads.²⁴ Therefore, what was already noted by scholars John Minton and Paul Oliver for another African-American version, Coley Jones's "Drunkard's Special" (December 6, 1929, Columbia 14489-D), is also true for Jefferson's version, which was recorded nearly two years earlier.²⁵ Oliver summarizes the ballad's history as follows: "A troubadour song which was popular in Europe, translated into German and published in Germany as a broadside in the late eighteenth century, it was known as 'Le Jaloux' in France and as 'Our Goodman' (Gudeman) or 'The Merry Cuckold' and 'The Kind Wife' in Britain."²⁶

In addition to Child's early commentary, British and North American versions of this international ballad type have been extensively studied by Coffin and Renwick, and Bronson.²⁷ It appears actually to be much better known in North America than in Great Britain. Jefferson's version seems to fall into textual Type A in which the deceptions take place on the same night, although Jefferson's phrase "the other night" is ambiguous and could refer to successive nights (Type C).²⁸ Jefferson's telling of the story in the third person is typical of many older versions of this ballad. His tune is quite unique and does not match any of the eight tune groups identified by Bronson, although it shares with Group F the characteristic of the second line ending on the supertonic.

The last section of the song—the man's response to his wife's deception—contains some metrical irregularities in the melody, and the section immediately before it seems to have two alternative endings. (It is presented here as in the copyright submission.) Jefferson frequently performed such irregular measures in his blues, but they seem odd in a traditional song such as this, stemming from the Anglo-American ballad tradition. Quite possibly, the scribe had some difficulty understanding Jefferson's rhythm, as the final section of the tune, as written, does not sing very well. Another awkward spot is the series of eighth notes for "nothing but a coffee pot my," which would sound better as two measures of quarter notes. The text accompanying the melody in the lead sheet has the next to last line as "Ten thousand miles I traveled, ten thousand miles I go."

From the textual point of view, the entire piece evidently turns on "seeing" and "travel." As for the former theme, the fact that it is found in a traditional folk ballad makes it even more interesting, because the blind performer actually *chose* this piece from the tradition and adapted it to his sensitivity. Of course, he may have performed it to please Polk Brockman. Since this Okeh agent's main interest was hillbilly music and, consequently, he liked the "old time" aspect of black music the best, it is likely that he tried to steer some of his artists in that direction. Besides being consistent with our already discussed speculation about Brockman's possible attempt not to pay mechanical royalties, this would further explain why Jefferson swung to the traditional side of his repertoire for the

Okeh session. Whatever the case, especially considering all the possible implications in the song's thematic development, it is not surprising that it appealed to Jefferson, and we can only regret that it is not available on record. As far as the theme of "travel" is concerned, it is certainly not new in Jefferson's lyrics. It is enough to refer to classics such as "Long Lonesome Blues" (ca. March 1926, Paramount 12354, two takes; ca. May 1926, Paramount 12354, one take), "Dry Southern Blues" (ca. March 1926, Paramount 12347), "Match Box Blues" (March 14, 1927, Okeh 8455; ca. April 1927, Paramount 12474, two takes), and "Sunshine Special" (ca. October 1927, Paramount 12593). The widespread use of the theme of travel in Jefferson's blues "signals its importance as an expression of feelings shared by much of the population of the black belt," and for Jefferson "physical mobility is equated with individual freedom."²⁹ Because traveling is one of those "activities requiring eye-body coordination,"³⁰ its function acquires a broader sense and does not merely confine itself to being "a mordant and individualistic response to the social malaise,"³¹ but is also revelatory of a *personal* pathological distress.

Juxtaposing this text to the rest of Jefferson's lyrical production, we immediately notice that it is so deeply imbued with visual references that it stands out even in his very visually-oriented repertoire. In fact, the texture of the lyric, the density of words and implications connected to sight and their interaction prompt us to say that, in this song, for the first and only time in Jefferson's repertoire we can speak of an *explicit* blindness subtext. Its development runs parallel to the main subject of the song, that of cuckoldry. Yet, blinding and castration (the psychological effect of cuckolding) are often associated in a Freudian sense. It is true, of course, that such a mutual—and from time to time almost symbiotic—relationship is already inherent in the traditional ballad and therefore does not directly reflect Jefferson's instinctive way of dealing with blindness when composing a song.

In general, in his other lyrics, Jefferson unconsciously tends to disguise and/or scatter visual references, so that "[R]eiterated hints at vision within the same piece seem to have a moderate impact on the main subject of the song, and no overall cumulative effect allowing one to speak of a real thematicism is ever reached, even in the most image-studded depictions."³² But in this song fuzzy images are focused, and sparse references are brought together to form a consistent unity. Although not a blues, it is still a secular song. We are far from "the rather inflexible—though sometimes very powerful—explicit thematic unity of some gospel songs" where visually impaired evangelists face their "sightlessness matter-of-factly, addressing God directly and lamenting" their "irretrievable condition" through straightforward mentions of blindness.³³ Jefferson's bold selection of this song for inclusion in his repertoire is mitigated, however, by his choice of narration in the third person. This gives him the option of consciously distancing himself from the "old man" protagonist of the ballad.

The appeal of this song to blues singers, who often deal with themes of sexual cheating and deception, is easy to understand.

But what is relevant here is the special irony it has for a blind singer, demonstrating that even sighted people can be "blind." Virtually all versions of this ballad state that the cuckolded man is "blind" or "cannot see" in a metaphorical sense. As best we can determine, Jefferson is the only blind singer of this ballad in the English language, although many singers who contributed versions to folklorists remain unidentified and normally the singer's ability or inability to see is not mentioned.

Apart from Coley Jones's "Drunkard's Special," other American black versions of this ballad that we have been able to examine are a North Carolina text from 1917 recited by Maude Stockton,³⁴ Lottie Kimbrough's [Beaman] "Cabbage Head Blues" (ca. mid-1926, Meritt 2201), Percy Ridge's "The Western Cowboy" (April 10, 1934, AFS 200 B-1; Rounder 11661-1821-2; a composite folksong containing verses from Child no. 274), Harry Jackson's "The Western Cowboy" (probably April 1939; another similar composite folksong), Mitchell Helton's [alias Egg Mouth] "Blind Fool" (probably April 1939), Will Starks's "Our Good Man" (August 9, 1942, AFS 6652-A-1), Tom Archia's "Cabbage Head - Part 1" and "Cabbage Head - Part 2" (July 1948, Aristocrat 803, vocalist "Doc" Jo Jo Adams), Sonny Boy Williamson's [Aleck Miller] "Wake Up Baby" (March 27, 1958, Checker 894), Johnny Q. Nuts's [John Knutz] untitled text (1960, collected by Mack McCormick), Professor Longhair's [Roy Byrd] "Cabbagehead" (September 1971, Rounder CD 2057), Lazy Bill Lucas's "Cabbage Head" (May 13, 1973, Philo 1007; apparently based mostly on Sonny Boy Williamson's version with further influence from Jo Jo Adams) and Buddy Scott's "Wake Up Baby" (1992, Gitanes 517 515-2; a modernized version of the same title recorded by Sonny Boy Williamson).³⁵ Jefferson himself used the theme of this ballad in a more personalized form in his "Cat Man Blues" (September 24, 1929, Paramount 12921):

*When I come home last night I heard a noise; asked my wife,
"What was that?"*

*When I come home last night I heard a noise; asked my wife,
"What was that?"*

*She said, "Don't be so suspicious, that wasn't a thing but a
cat."*

*I been all through the world, I've taken all kinds of chance,
I been all over the world, taken all kinds of chance,
I've never seen a cat come home in a pair of pants.*

"Cat Man Blues" was recorded later in variant form by Blind Boy Fuller (April 29, 1936, ARC unissued [take 1]; ARC 7-01-56 or Vocalion 03134 [take 2]).

If one compares Jefferson's "I Labor So Far from Home" with each of the other African-American texts deriving from the European ballad, one can notice great differences in both structure and choice of words, as well as the tunes and arrangements. In the case of Coley Jones, these dissimilarities are surprising, considering that he was from and worked in Dallas, where Jefferson was very active starting from 1912.³⁶ Textually, it is particularly interesting

Figure 2: Key words or phrases in the African-American versions of the ballad “Our Goodman.”

Vocalist	Song Title	a) man's perception	b) woman's counter-identification	c) incongruity
<i>Maude Stockton</i>	The Adulteress	dat tied out dar dat on de floor dat hangin' up dat in de bed	milch-cow churn strainer baby	saddle heel-tops brim mustache
<i>Lottie Beaman</i>	Cabbage Head Blues	head foot	cabbage head sweet potatoes	moustache toenails
<i>Blind Lemon Jefferson</i>	I Labor So Far from Home	boots horse coat old man	coffee pot milk cow blanket baby	boot heels saddle coat sleeves whiskers
<i>Coley Jones</i>	Drunkard's Special	mule coat head	milk cow bed quilt cabbage head	saddle pockets hair
<i>Percy Ridge</i>	The Western Cowboy	horse boots head	milk cow milk churn baby	saddle spurs [not stated]
<i>Harry Jackson</i>	The Western Cowboy	hoss [sic] head	milk-cow new-born baby	saddle and bridle wear[ing] boots and spurs
<i>Mitchell Helton</i> (alias Egg Mouth)	Blind Fool	head hat	cabbage head frying pan	moustache [not stated]
<i>“Doc” Jo Jo Adams</i> (Tom Archia's vocalist)	Cabbage Head - Part 1 Cabbage Head - Part 2	hat feet sticking in the shoes head thing in the thing	coffee pot empty pair of shoes cabbage head rolling pin	hat band feets hair rolling pin with a voutieoreenie
<i>Sonny Boy Williamson</i> (Aleck Miller)	Wake Up Baby	mule hat coat	milk cow washpan blanket	saddle hat band two sleeves in them (sic)
<i>Johnny Q. Nuts</i> (John Knutz)	untitled	[not stated] [not stated] hot-che-babba in	cabbage pair of house shoes baseball bat	with two ears with corns with two golf balls
<i>Professor Longhair</i>	Cabbagehead	horse hat fellow same old fellow in bed	milk cow old cabbage shadow next-door neighbor's little baby	saddle hat band stumbled over a shadow 5.6 foot baby
<i>Lazy Bill Lucas</i>	Cabbage Head	mule hat coat head	milkcow washpan blanket cabbage head	saddle hatband two sleeves in them (sic) mustache
<i>Buddy Scott</i>	Wake Up Baby	car head mule	tricycle cabbage milk cow	four wheels hair saddle

I Labor So Far From Home

1. Old man went the o-ther day his lov-ing wife to see. What did he see but
some-one's boots where his boots ought to be? *Wife, oh wife, dear lov-ing wife, come
quick-ly and tell to me, whose boots are these ly-ing un-der my bed where my boots ought to
be?" "You old fool, blind fool, old man, can't you see? That's no-thing but a cof-fee pot my
mo-ther sent to me." "Ten thou-sand miles I've tra-veled,
ten thou-sand more I go. I nev-er saw a cof-fee pot with boot heels on be-fore."

Blind Lemon Jefferson, "I Labor So Far from Home", ca. May 1927

to compare the three interconnected key words or phrases delineating the deception in each stanza, that is, a) the person, animal, part of the body or object perceived by the husband as extraneous; b) his wife's counter-identification; c) the term or expression revealing the incongruity in her objection (See Fig. 2).

Stockton's, Jefferson's, Ridge's, Jackson's and Williamson's are the only black versions analyzed in this study that do not use the "cabbage" image in any of the stanzas. Professor Longhair's, Percy Ridge's, and Harry Jackson's first stanzas present the same string of words ("horse"-milk cow"-saddle") as Jefferson's second stanza, while Jones, Williamson, Lucas and Scott prefer "mule" to "horse," and Maude Stockton simply refers to the animal as "dat tied out dar." The first identification in Jefferson's third stanza ("coat") is also found in Jones's second and Williamson's and Lucas's third stanza respectively. With the exception of the lexeme "beard," which does occur in some versions by white singers,³⁷ a large portion of the semantic field of hairiness is covered, from Stockton's, Beaman's, Helton's, and Lucas's "moustache" through Jones's, Archia's, and Scott's "hair" to Jefferson's "whiskers."

What strikes one immediately in comparing this text with the ones compiled by Child is Jefferson's ability to manipulate a centuries-old composition without marring the content. The refrain on the cuckold's blindness and his travel experience and all the interacting key expressions in Jefferson's "I Labor So Far from Home" can also be detected in the other available versions. Yet, the string of three images in each of Jefferson's four stanzas is very seldom exactly the same as in any of the fifty-eight versions transcribed by Bronson.³⁸ Only in two cases (transcriptions no. 32 and 58) is the series of objects denoting the husband's metaphorical blindness ("boots"-coffee pot"-boot heels") identical to the one in Jefferson's first stanza. In "Six Nights Drunk" the singers Emmet Bankston and Red Henderson used a string of references similar to Jefferson's but recorded their song for Okeh (45292) in 1928, that is, about one year after Jefferson recorded his own version for the same label.³⁹ The

triad "horse"-milk cow"-saddle" in Jefferson's second stanza is the most recurrent in Anglo-American and African-American versions. The two key words "coat" and "blanket" in Jefferson's third stanza are also somewhat common, but the same string can be found only in Bronson's transcriptions 8 and 39. The sequence "old man"-baby"-whiskers" in Jefferson's last stanza is reprised in Bronson's transcription no. 5, and, with slight variations, in transcriptions no. 16 and 50.



"Light House Blues"

*Michigan water [sure tastes like], Michigan water sure tastes like
Cherry wine,
It drinks so good it keeps me drinking all the time.*

*I love my gal, I love my gal, tell the whole wide world I do,
I'm just a fool about that woman and I don't care what she do.*

*This ain't my home, this ain't my home, I've got a lighthouse on the
sea,
I wonder do my rider ever think of me.*

*I'm worried today, I'm worried today, I'm worried all the time,
She's a high brown mama, can't keep her off my mind.*

*I laid down last night, laid down last night, talking out my head,
I got a letter this morning that the girl I love was dead.*

*If I die in Texas, if I die in Texas, mama, don't wear no black,
'Cause just as soon as I'm down, my ghost will come sneaking back.*

We are now dealing with Jefferson's Paramount recordings, which textually and musically tend to be less traditional than his Okeh recordings.

The wide melodic range of Jefferson's song, an octave and a fifth, is not uncommon for his blues. The specific melody, however, is not close to that of any of Jefferson's other recordings. The only other song in which he uses internal repetition in the first line is "Bad Luck Blues" (ca. December 1926, Paramount 12443). The printed lyrics were not placed beneath the melody in the lead sheet, and they do not precisely match the melody. This explains why the phrase "sure tastes like" in the first line of stanza one has been put in brackets. It is very unlikely that Jefferson sang it, as it is inconsistent with the structure of the other stanzas. Following a four-and-a-half bar instrumental introduction (apparently extracted and adapted from Jefferson's final four-and-a-half bars of vocal melody and perhaps some of his guitar work), there is a twelve-bar melody. This appears to be a composite of the melodic variations that Jefferson sang in his recording of the song, although we cannot be certain of this. Obviously, the first line of text in Jefferson's stanzas was sung again to form the second line of the tune (measures 5-8) but without the internal repetition found in the first line. The two-note harmonies in measures 1, 2, 6, and 9 probably are attempts to represent variants of the melody used in

Light House Blues



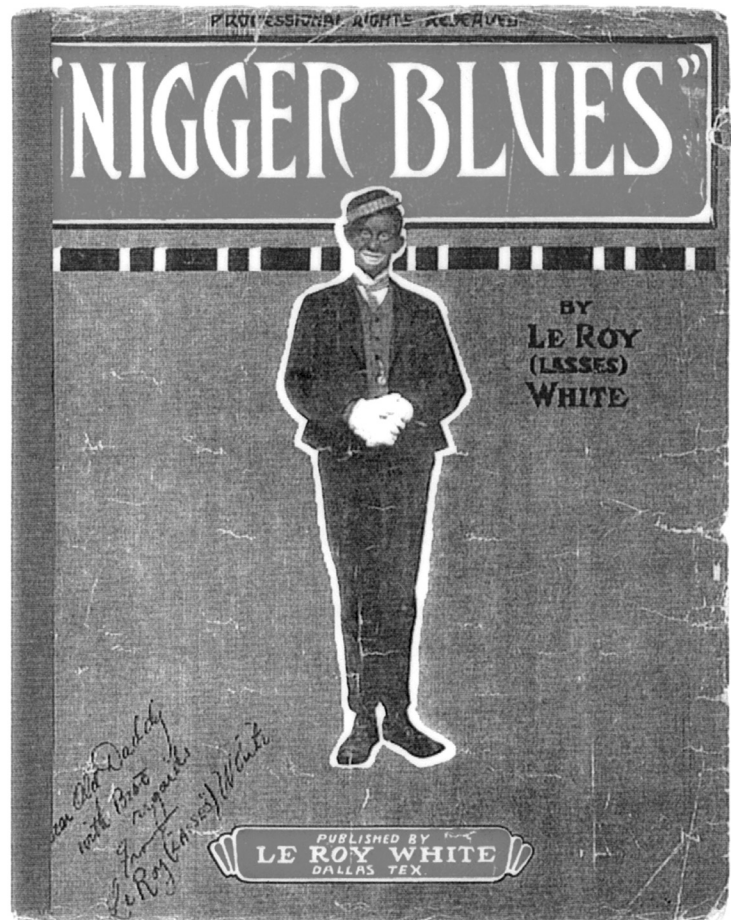
some stanzas. In the original lead sheet the first note of the third full measure of the introduction, low C, is written as a whole note. This is almost certainly an error and has been changed to a quarter note in order to give the normal four beats to the measure instead of seven. The last measure of the piece lacks the final quarter rest, which has been supplied here.

Contrary to what one might first assume, "Light House Blues" is not a version of "Michigan Water Blues," which was composed by Clarence Williams in 1923 and recorded by Sara Martin (ca. April 9, 1923, Okeh 8060), Alberta Hunter (May 1923, Paramount 12036), Viola McCoy (May 24, 1923, Columbia A3921), Hannah Sylvester (ca. late May 1923, Pathé Actuelle 021005), and Lena Wilson (August 9, 1923, Vocalion 14651, two versions). The first line of text in Jefferson's song, including the internal repetition, is indeed similar to the first line of "Michigan Water Blues," but Jefferson's melody is essentially different, being considerably more wide-ranging, and his text is otherwise different from Williams's composition. Like Williams's text, however, it is comprised of blues lyric commonplaces with no overall thematic unity.

In fact, in addition to its textual relationship in the first stanza to "Michigan Water Blues," Jefferson's "Light House Blues" is related textually and musically to an even older song, "The Negro Blues"/"Nigger Blues" by Leroy "Lasses" White of Dallas.⁴⁰ White registered his tune with a set of fifteen three-line stanzas for copyright on November 9, 1912, under the former title. In 1913, a shortened version of the piece was published under the latter infelicitous title, containing only six stanzas, five of which are close variants of stanzas in the longer version and one of which is new. All of the stanzas contain the internal repetition in the first line.⁴¹ White was a blackface minstrel who made some recordings in the 1920s and 1930s and appeared on the Grand Ole Opry. In 1912, however, his copyright application noted that he was associated with the Happy Hour Theatre in Dallas, and the publisher of the 1913 version was Bush & Gerts of Dallas. The address of the Happy Hour Theatre in the 1912 *Dallas City Directory* was 1520

Main Street.⁴² The Dalton Brothers are listed as the proprietors of this building, and they also ran the Orpheum Theatre across the street at 1521-3 Main. This is just east of Akard and not far from the old Union Depot where Jefferson used to perform around 1912. Apparently, Jefferson was often seen playing at the corner of Elm and Central, only a block or two away. As an itinerant vaudeville performer, Leroy White would undoubtedly have been in and out of Union Depot many times and would have had the opportunity to encounter Jefferson. Since he was interested in "Negro character" material, it is very likely that he would listen to performers like him.

Besides the use of internal repetition in the first line, White's tune and Jefferson's have their last five notes in common ("drinking all the time" in Jefferson's tune). Otherwise, the tunes are dissimilar. More interesting, however, are the lyric correspondences. The first line of Jefferson's third stanza is a variant of the first line of the eleventh stanza of "The Negro Blues," and Jefferson's entire sixth stanza is a variant of the ninth stanza of "The Negro Blues."⁴³ A variant of Jefferson's sixth stanza also occurs in a recording by Lasses [White] & Honey, "Alabammy Bound" (April 23, 1935, Bluebird B6742), a song which is part of the same folksong complex as Jefferson's "Elder Green's in Town" discussed earlier. Jefferson's third stanza, however, does not appear in the published "Nigger Blues," only



in the unpublished “The Negro Blues.” Moreover, the eighth line in the text of “The Negro Blues” (“I cried last night, also the night before”) is also found in variant form in the fourth stanza of Jefferson’s “Booger Rooger Blues” (“I cried all night and all that night before”), a blues recorded by Jefferson ca. December 1926 (Paramount 12425).

All of this suggests the interesting possibility that Leroy White may have learned “The Negro Blues” from none other than Jefferson, or at least from some intermediate source in Jefferson’s musical circle. It is clearly also possible that Jefferson heard White or some intermediary sing the long unpublished version. Whatever the case, the ultimate origin of these verses in African-American tradition is almost certain. Abbott and Seroff state the following about White’s song: “Obviously Lasses White did not *compose* these floating verses; for the most part, at least, he had to have *overheard* them, ‘collected’ them in the streets and vaudeville theatres of Dallas’s emerging African American entertainment community. The title of the song identifies, in generic fashion, the original source of the words and music.”⁴⁴

Leadbelly’s two versions of “Fort Worth and Dallas Blues” (January 24, 1935, ARC unissued, issued on Columbia CK46776; February 1935, Library of Congress unissued, issued on Rounder 1097), which he attributed to Jefferson from around the 1912 period, contain a variant of the last line of stanza four of Jefferson’s “Light House Blues.”⁴⁵ This fact adds weight to the hypothesis that Jefferson was singing some version of “Light House Blues” as early as 1912. The textual and musical similarities among “Light House Blues,” “Nigger Blues,” and “Michigan Water Blues” may have caused Jefferson’s recording to remain unissued.

Despite the fact that the first stanza is derived from Clarence Williams’s composition, and two more stanzas are in some way related to Leroy “Lasses” White’s “The Negro Blues,” this song epitomizes a typically Jeffersonian combination of traditional verses. Moreover, most of the images/themes in “Light House Blues” had already been used or would be used by Jefferson in his issued recordings, the only exception being the use of the term “light house” in the third stanza. Altogether, the second strophe reprises three of Jefferson’s verses. Two were later employed in his last two issued songs, “Mama, I love you, tell the whole round world I do” from “The Cheaters Spell” (September 24, 1929, Paramount 12933) and “Cause I’m a fool about that woman, don’t want nobody else” from “Bootin’ Me ‘Bout” (September 24, 1929, Paramount 12946). The phrase “Papa don’t care what you do” had been used by Jefferson in “Long Lonesome Blues” (ca. March 1926, Paramount 12354, two takes; ca. May 1926, Paramount 12354, one take). The fourth stanza is an extension of the line “I am worried about my mama, I can’t keep her off my mind” in “That Black Snake Moan no. 2” (ca. March 1929, Paramount 12756). The fifth mixes the first hemistich of the introductory stanza in “Lemon’s Worried Blues” (“I laid down last night with Lemon’s lowdown worried blues,” ca. February 1928, Paramount 12622) with the second hemistich of the final verse of “Old Rounders Blues” (“I got to dreaming so, I was talking all out of my head,” ca. August 1926, Paramount 12394). This

composite rhymes with a slight variant of the line closing “Gone Dead on You Blues” (ca. October 1927, Paramount 12578), “I got a letter this morning, my pigmeat mama was dead.”

If we include the final hemistich (“my ghost will come sneaking back”), we have a text replete with no less than five scattered (and apparently inconsistent) covert references to sight. Quite unusual among them is the first occurrence “This ain’t my home, this ain’t my home, I’ve got a light house on the sea” in the stanza giving the title to the song. This verse was sung in slightly changed form (“My home ain’t here, it’s in the lighthouse on the sea”) by the Southern Blues Singers to open and close their otherwise different composition bearing the same title (April 1, 1929, Gennett 6828 or Varsity 6043). Roger Garnett also recorded a “Lighthouse Blues” on May 23, 1939, for the Library of Congress (2677-A-2), but the song has not yet been issued on CD. More conventional references to sight are the descriptive “She’s a high brown mama” and Jefferson’s recurrent hints at reading (“I got a letter this morning”) and colors (“If I die in Texas, mama don’t wear no black”). The final depiction of the “ghost,” a relatively uncommon appearance in country blues lyrics,⁴⁶ has much more visual strength than its only other occurrence in Jefferson, the colloquial “Not a ghost of a show” (“Hot Dogs” [ca. June 1927, Paramount 12493]).



“Too Black Bad”

*I wonder why my partner sits around looking so sad,
He made (sic) a girl last night, if he quits her it’ll be too black bad.*

*She’s a well made woman and cunning as a squirrel,
But when she starts to loving, man, she’s out this world.*

*She’s a dark brownskin, color of chocolate drop,
She’s got this old fashioned loving, boys, it just won’t stop.*

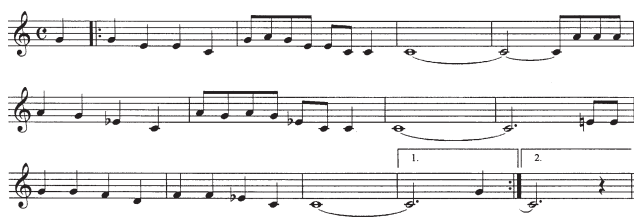
*When I first met this woman, I thought I’d made a hit,
But when she started to loving me, man, it just won’t quit.*

*I met her at a sociable, she acted just like a crook,
But when it came to loving, man, it ain’t in the book.*

Even from a superficial reading of the text, it is evident that “Too Black Bad” is either a bad transcription or an unissued alternate take of “Long Lastin’ Lovin’” (Paramount 12666), which is reported as having been recorded around March 1928.⁴⁷ The fact that the Library of Congress only holds a registered copyright for “Too Black Bad” does not help clarify the issue. On the one hand, it may favor the hypothesis that this is a faulty transcription of the issued take wrongly yet understandably registered with the song’s original title. On the other hand, it supports the hypothesis of an alternate take in that the entry is in any case “Too Black Bad” and not “Long Lastin’ Lovin’.” As a matter of fact, if we take into account that some of Jefferson’s extant recorded songs

are not filed for copyright, it is to be noted that the flipside of “Long Lastin’ Lovin’,” “Blind Lemon’s Penitentiary Blues” (ca. February 1928), is also not registered for copyright. Moreover, the substantial differences between the two lyrics—however unreliable Chicago Music Publishing Company’s scribe may have been—would again make us lean toward the hypothesis that “Too Black Bad” is an unissued alternate take. We can reasonably assume that, if this is an unissued take, it was very likely recorded at the same session as the issued one or at the one before it (ca. February 1928), as proposed by Swinton.⁴⁸

Too Black Bad



We can affirm without any doubt that “Too Black Bad” is not a version or cover of Madlyn Davis’s recording of the same title. In fact, the latter was recorded a few months later (ca. October 1928, Paramount 12703) and registered for copyright under the same title with words and music by Madlyn Davis on December 29, 1928, as E unpub. 2352 by Chicago Music Publishing Company. No composer credit appears on the Paramount record label for Madlyn Davis’s song.⁴⁹ Textually and musically it has no relationship to Jefferson’s piece, except for the use of the slang phrase “too black bad,” which is the key phrase in the Davis song but only a seemingly incidental phrase in Jefferson’s blues.⁵⁰ Upon closer examination, however, Jefferson’s use of “too black bad” is far from being casual, as each of the five stanzas of his song presents a current “hip” slang expression as its final phrase. Analyzing the song as a whole, one can go so far as to say that the whole point of Jefferson’s composition is to introduce these five idiomatic expressions, two of which, not accidentally, contain visualizations (“too black bad,” “in the book”), and four of which rhyme with very visually-oriented similes or images (“looking so sad,” “cunning as a squirrel,” “color of chocolate drop,” “she acted just like a crook”).

One would be mistaken to consider Jefferson as too naive to conceive such a complex and well-constructed idea. Throughout his career Jefferson repeatedly proved to be linguistically attentive.⁵¹ Although the title “Long Lastin’ Lovin’,” which was probably imposed by Paramount Records, conveys the song’s overall meaning, it does not suggest the hip phraseology that was meant to be immortalized, beginning from Jefferson’s original song title itself. In any case, the phrase giving the title to the song may be the reason Jefferson’s “Too Black Bad” was not issued, and the title

of the issued record was changed when he recorded an alternate take probably a few weeks later. In a way, this also strengthens the hypothesis that Jefferson’s “Too Black Bad” is the transcription of an unissued alternate take of “Long Lastin’ Lovin’.”

The tune of this piece, like that of “Light House Blues,” is written without any lyrics beneath the notes, and likewise it appears to be a composite tune approximating Jefferson’s melodic phrasing. It does not exactly fit any of the printed stanzas. The first line of each stanza is obviously meant to be repeated in order to make this a typical twelve-bar AAB blues. The final measure of the song in the lead sheet contains a half-note C joined to a quarter-note C followed by D. S. This has been normalized here by the use of symbols for repetition of the twelve-bar melody and the alternative ending of the final stanza.

“Long Lastin’ Lovin’” is performed with the guitar in the A position of standard tuning and has a vocal range of a flat tenth from low F sharp to high A. “Too Black Bad” has a more limited range from the tonic to the sixth above it. The transcribed melody of the first stanza of “Long Lastin’ Lovin’” has been transposed here to the key of C for ease of comparison.

We cannot, of course, know what the scribe for Chicago

Long Lastin' Lovin'



Music Publishing Company actually heard as the basis for his transcribed lead sheet. However, we know that in all other cases where Jefferson recorded alternate versions of the same song, he played in the same key each time. On some of his blues comprised of traditional verses, such as “Match Box Blues” and “Long Lonesome Blues,” he could display considerable variation in his lyrics, melody, and guitar part, although the latter always remained in the same key and tuning. On his more textually thematic and original blues such as this piece, however, his recorded versions of the same song display only minor variations. Consequently, there is a high likelihood that the actual melody and guitar part of “Too Black Bad” were much like those of the released version of the song titled “Long Lastin’ Lovin’.” It is not unusual for a lead sheet to have the melody transposed to a simple key such as C. All of the tunes presented here were submitted in the key of C except for “It’s Tight Like That,” which is in F, a key with only one flat in the key signature. However, the scribe

has offered an extremely simplified, in fact distorted, version of Jefferson's melody that ignores all the subtleties of his singing style and his metrical extensions. His melodic range of an octave and a third is compressed to a sixth, there are no spaces for his guitar fills, there is no sense of his melodic syncopation or rhythmic flexibility, and only the barest indication of his use of melodic "blue notes." If these differences are any indication, we should exercise considerable caution in viewing the other lead sheets as representations of the melodies that Jefferson actually sang and should view them instead merely as simplified melodic contours with possibly compressed ranges.

Jefferson's text presents a number of stylistically and linguistically significant variants. The most important are probably those in the final verse of the first stanza and in the whole fourth stanza. In the former, the phrase "He made (sic) a girl last night" may either have been the scribe's mistake for "met" or Jefferson's own mistake and therefore one more reason for not issuing the take. In the latter, we have the inconsequential conjunction "but." It should also be noted that these inconsistencies are not present in "Long Lastin' Lovin'." What remains basically unchanged, instead, is Jefferson's typical use of a very visual language. The visual references in "Too Black Bad" are almost the same as the ones in "Long Lastin' Lovin'," where a final spoken phrase including the colloquial expression "too black bad" is added.



"It's Tight Like That"

*Rats are bad in my kitchen, and I've lost my Maltese cat,
Gonna make up with my baby, man, it's tight like that.*

*I'm gonna start walking, gonna walk the shoes off my feet,
Been thinking about my mama, Lawd, that woman she is sweet.*

*I ain't got no suitcase, just got a bottle of gin,
Got to stay drunk to keep warm, 'cause my clothes are too thin.*

*Long lonesome freight train went past me a-flying,
But I was thinking about my baby and I didn't pay it no mind.*

*When you got a home and a car and a little Maltese cat,
And a good doing brownskin, man, it's tight like that.*

Most of the general observations made for "Too Black Bad" are valid for "It's Tight Like That." This song is also either a bad transcription or an unissued alternate take of one of Jefferson's issued performances, in this case "Maltese Cat Blues" (ca. August 1928, Paramount 12712). Again, we cannot be certain which is the case. No entry for "Maltese Cat Blues" is filed at the Library of Congress copyright office, but its flip side ("D B Blues," recorded at the same session) was registered on October 18, 1928, the same date as "It's Tight Like That." As in the case of "Too Black Bad," however, the dissimilarities between the transcriptions of "It's Tight Like That" and "Maltese Cat Blues," the fact that the entry at the Library of Congress copyright office is titled

only as "It's Tight Like That" (and not as "Maltese Cat Blues"), and the various possible reasons for not issuing the song indicate that this is probably an alternate take recorded at the 1928 July or August session and not a bad transcription of the issued one.

As was the case with Madlyn Davis's "Too Black Bad," the copyright registration date of Jefferson's "It's Tight Like That" enables us to assert that he also recorded this title before anybody else. The title "It's Tight Like That" is historically associated with Tampa Red (Hudson Whittaker) and Georgia Tom (Thomas A. Dorsey).⁵² In fact, Tampa Red's first two unissued Vocalion takes bearing this title were recorded on September 19, 1928, and October 8, 1928, respectively, while the first issued one was recorded a couple of weeks later (October 24, Vocalion 1216). It is musically and textually entirely different from Jefferson's song. State Street Music Pub. registered "It's Tight Like That" on October 29, 1928, as E unpub. 1852 and again on November 21, 1928, as E unpub. 1448, both in the name of Hudson Whittaker and Thomas A. Dorsey (Georgia Tom). It was very likely registered twice due to different arrangements. A piano and ukulele arrangement was registered by Melrose Bros. on December 10 and December 15 as E Pub. 1867. The merely incidental use of the lyric phrase in Jefferson's piece may again have been the reason the record company decided not to issue



Photo courtesy of David Evans, The University of Memphis

It's Tight Like That



Blind Lemon Jefferson, "It's Tight Like That", ca. October 1928

"It's Tight Like That."⁵³

Whether at the same session or at a later date, when Jefferson recorded "It's Tight Like That" again, he (or more likely the record company) changed its title to "Maltese Cat Blues," thus avoiding any possible confusion. It is possible that Tampa Red

and Davis heard these phrases from Jefferson's records, but it is equally possible that they were in common use at the time. Our guess is that Tampa Red and Davis did not appropriate these phrases after hearing Jefferson use them. They were simply part of the up-to-date slang that "hip" people were using and that all of these artists had the idea to employ in songs. It is difficult to say whether it was Jefferson himself who provided these titles, suggesting perhaps that the songs were his own treatment of the popular phrases at that time. But Jefferson probably was among the first (if not the first) to use these phrases on record, and certainly many people were listening to his records in that period. Other subsequent pre-war versions of the Tampa Red piece bearing the same title were recorded by Clara Smith (January 26, 1929, Columbia 14398-D), the Southern Blues Singers (April 1, 1929, Gennett 6828), and Slim Barton (ca. May 1929, QRS R7081). Rev. Emmett Dickinson in "Sermon on Tight Like That" (ca. November 1929, Paramount 12925), Rev. A. W. Nix in "It Was Tight Like That" (ca. February 18, 1930, Vocalion 1505), and Rev. J. M. Gates in "These Hard Times Are Tight Like That" (December 12, 1930, Okeh 8850) recorded topical sermons containing this phrase.

The melody of the lead sheet of Jefferson's song seems to be a composite designed to suggest the varying number of syllables in the different stanzas. The final measure contains a three-quarter note on low F. This has been normalized here as in the previous piece. This is the only lead sheet discussed here written in the key of F. We have retained the B flat in the key signature, as found in the lead sheet, even though this note never actually occurs in the melody. "Maltese Cat Blues," on the other hand, is performed with the guitar in the C position of standard tuning, tuned up to C sharp. In the last line of stanza 1 the lead sheet has "gal and" beneath the melody and "baby" in the textual transcription. The notes for "my" and "gal" are tied in the lead sheet. The first line of each stanza is obviously meant to be repeated in order to make this a typical twelve-bar AAB blues. The same observations made about "Too Black Bad" in comparison to "Long Lastin' Lovin'" apply to this song in comparison to "Maltese Cat Blues."

The text of "Maltese Cat Blues" is more cohesive than that of "It's Tight Like That," but the notable stylistic and linguistic variations are few. Unless it was not transcribed on the lead sheet on purpose, only in the issued take do we find the addition of the introductory spoken phrase ("Say, man, I went out gay-cattin' last night, and my gal, she threw a party for me. Ooh, gee, it was tight like that!"), which is closely connected to the third line in the first tercet and to the last verse of the blues. In the first stanza, we also have a change of adjective: "rats" are defined as "mean" in "Maltese Cat Blues" but they are "bad" in "It's Tight Like That," the same word used for "mosquitoes" in Jefferson's "Mosquito Moan" (September 24, 1929, Paramount 12899). Supposing that the transcription of "It's Tight Like That" is accurate, the only descriptive visual reference is reprised almost identically ("And a good doing brownskin" versus "And a good dark brownskin"). The addition of the word "car" in "It's Tight Like That" is also to be noted as an indirect visual reference, as one has to be able to see in order to drive.



"Money Tree Mama Blues"

*I've got my trunk all packed, but I ain't got no place to go,
Somebody stole my money tree, and, Lawd, it's worryin' me so.*

*I had a good gal, and I thought I was really in right,
I let her have her way too much, somebody stole my money tree last night.*

*Some joker has confided my brown into leaving me,
Some other man is shaking down my money tree.*

*She sure was a good gal, could get money anywhere,
Sometimes she'd come home to me with money sticking in her hair.*

*As long as I had this woman, I didn't know what it was to be broke,
But somebody stole my money tree, and believe me it ain't no joke.*

*I'm going to buy an ax, and search all over this town,
When I find that woman, I'm gonna chop my money tree down.*

"Money Tree Mama Blues" is an original song bearing more than one of Jefferson's typical compositional, thematic, and linguistic characteristics. Alice Moore's "Money Tree Man" (May 22, 1936, Decca 7227)—the only pre-war composition with a similar title—has no textual or musical resemblance with this piece. On the basis of its registration date (October 18, 1928) and registration number (E U.S. unpub. 389), one may suppose that "Money Tree Mama Blues" was recorded in July or August of the same year, together with seven more titles ranging from E U.S. unpub. 384 to 391. This song may not have been issued due to some technical problems and/or performance mistakes or for some other obscure reason.

The lead sheet of the music presents no particular problems, except for the fact that Jefferson undoubtedly did not hold the final syllables of his lines as long as indicated there. The lead sheet is regularized to an even twelve bars, yet we know that Jefferson usually extended his stanzas to more than twelve measures.⁵⁴ The contour of the melody in the lead sheet resembles one that Jefferson used in a number of his blues, e.g., "Lectric Chair

Money Tree Mama Blues

The musical notation for "Money Tree Mama Blues" is presented in three systems, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first system contains the first line of the song: "I've got my trunk all packed, and I ain't got no place to go." The second system contains the second line: "U'm, got no place to go. Some-bo-dy stole my mon-ey tree, and,". The third system contains the third line: "Lawd, it wor-ries me so." The notation includes various note values, rests, and ties, with the final note of each line being a half note on F.

Blind Lemon Jefferson, "Money Tree Mama Blues", ca. October 1928

Blues" (ca. February 1928, Paramount 12608). From the musical portion of the lead sheet we learn that in his performance Jefferson substituted an extended hummed note for the first phrase of line 2 of his first stanza. This practice also occurred in his "Bad Luck Blues" (ca. December 1926, Paramount 12443), "Rising High Water Blues" (ca. May 1927, Paramount 12487), "Teddy Bear Blues" (ca. June 1927, Paramount 12487, two takes), "Christmas Eve Blues" (ca. August 1928, Paramount 12692), "Sad News Blues" (ca. July 1928 and ca. January 1929, Paramount 12728, two versions), "Big Night Blues" (ca. March 1929 and ca. August 1929, Paramount 12801, two versions), and "Long Distance Moan" (September 24, 1929, Paramount 12852).

We can conclude that the melody of "Money Tree Mama Blues" as written on the lead sheet is very likely a simplified version of what Jefferson actually sang, since it resembles other recorded melodies by him. We cannot be certain that he actually performed this piece in the key of C, as indicated in the lead sheet, since transcription in the "simple" key of C may well have been part of the simplifying process. The lyric portion of the lead sheet contains two discrepancies in stanza 1 with the lyrics as printed in the musical portion (not counting the fact that the musical portion also reveals the lyrically truncated second line). In the musical portion, "and" is found in place of "but" in line 1, and "it worries me so" is found in place of "it's worryin' me so" in the final line. These discrepancies are consistent with the general pattern of carelessness evident in the lead sheets.

From the textual point of view, the special focus of "Money Tree Mama Blues" lies in the final stanza, where the theme of personal revenge emerges preemptorily, yet almost inevitably, from the recurrent treatment of unfaithfulness and abandonment. As we shall see in the conclusion, the spectacular image of a blind man swinging an ax is outstanding not only in itself, but also in light of Jefferson's currently available lyrical output as a whole. Altogether, the song presents four visual references. The first is the passing weak mention of the woman's skin color ("my brown"), while the next is the weak but very original "money sticking in her hair." It is true that this depiction can be perceived by feel as well as by sight, but the chronological and psychological precedence of the latter is evident, especially in the context of Jefferson's woman coming back home and in view of his ambivalent rapport with blindness. Enhanced by the very visual co-text surrounding them are the two conventional images included in the last strophe ("search all over this town" and "When I find that woman").



"Pineapple Blues"

*So much bomb throwing, what's a man to do?
Somebody blew my house up, must have been on account of you.*

*I can't swear to it, but I think it's my old use (sic) to be,
She's mad 'cause I quit her, and she's throwing pineapples at me.*

*I got a note from her the day before yesterday,
She said she'd blow my house up if I didn't send my other woman*

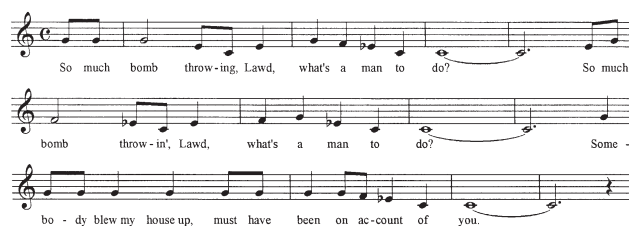
*I started out this morning, found a pineapple at my door,
This place ain't safe and I can't stay here no more.*

*I'm going to that woman waving a white flag for a truce,
Lawd, I wonder who in the world let that wild woman a-loose.*

"Pineapple Blues" is another Jefferson literary masterpiece. Like his other compositions of the same period, it is extremely well constructed and original. As we noted for "Money Tree Mama Blues," perhaps this song was not issued, because there were technical problems and/or performance mistakes or for some other reason.

Measure 9 of the melody is printed here as written in the lead sheet, although it probably should be written as a series of eight eighth notes. The text printed with the melody in the lead sheet

Pineapple Blues



contains the word "Lawd" in line 1, which is not found in the lyric sheet. The first line of each stanza is obviously meant to be repeated in order to make this a typical twelve-bar AAB blues. We cannot be certain, however, that Jefferson actually performed this as a twelve-bar blues, or whether he followed his normal practice of extending his lines. The melody in the lead sheet has a range of only a fifth, which is atypically narrow for Jefferson. This creates a suspicion that it is not a very accurate transcription of what Jefferson actually sang. It is unlike any of Jefferson's other known melodies.

A pineapple is evidently a hand grenade. This song possibly refers to anarchist activity in the 1920s, although some of the imagery stems from World War One. Jefferson must have been a great listener and heard many war stories. It is easy to visualize him sitting in the barbershop in Wortham, Texas, in the early 1920s listening to the "sports" and oil wildcatters telling war stories of France, Italy, Mexico, etc.⁵⁵ Jefferson's vivid imagination helped him re-elaborate these recollections into his First World War ("Wartime Blues" [ca. November 1926, Paramount 12425], "Lemon's Cannon Ball Moan" [ca. March 1928, Paramount 12639], "Rabbit Foot Blues" [ca. December 1926, Paramount 12454]), "Pineapple Blues") and Mexican campaign ("Dry Southern Blues" [ca. March 1926, Paramount 12347]) references. In any case, as is customary with blues lyrics, the apparent main

theme remains the man-woman relationship.

Three visual references are present in this composition. The first is "I got a note from her the day before yesterday," which lengthens the already long list of Jefferson's mentions of reading and writing.⁵⁶ The second is the more original "found a pineapple at my door." The third, "I'm going to that woman waving a white flag for a truce," is the temporary conclusion of a turbulent love battle (though not of the war), which these three images perfectly summarize.

Conclusion

Apart from the general consideration that these lead sheets are more valuable for their texts than for their music, two main conclusions may be drawn from the textual analysis of Blind Lemon Jefferson's newly discovered songs: (1) Jefferson's psychological need to give vent to his deepest feelings through violent imagery; (2) the confirmation of Monge's earlier conclusions about Jefferson's exorcism of blindness through an extensive use of more-or-less concealed visual references.

(1) Some of the new songs depict ravaging outbursts of violence, which is generally expressed by developing the two parallel themes of extreme personal violence and mass destruction. The former presents itself in the shape of potential brutality to be either perpetrated or suffered. In addition to the close of "Money Tree Mama Blues" and the implied destruction of the rats by the Maltese cat in "It's Tight Like That"/"Maltese Cat Blues," Jefferson's murderous impulse is at its peak throughout "Dynamite Blues" (ca. January 1929, Paramount 12739), especially in the following three stanzas:

*I feel like snapping, starting a great big old row,
I say, I feel like snapping, starting a great big old row,
Because the woman I love says she don't want me nohow.*

*The way I feel now, I could get a keg of dynamite,
I say, the way I'm feeling now, I could get a keg of dynamite,
Pour it all in her window and blow her up late at night.*

*I could swallow some fire, take a drink of gasoline,
I could swallow some fire, take a drink of gasoline,
Blow it up all over that woman and let her go up in steam.*

In most cases, however, Jefferson is the victim of violent or frightening assaults by people, objects, and creatures. Beside "Pineapple Blues" and the exhaustively examined plethora of references to fearsome or annoying animals, such as eagles, snakes, bearcats, mosquitoes, chinch bugs, etc.,⁵⁷ one could cite the blues songs dealing with legal execution, such as "Lectric Chair Blues" (ca. February 1928, Paramount 12608) and "Hangman's Blues" (ca. July 1928 [matrix number 20751] and ca. August 1928 [matrix number 20816], Paramount 12679), and "Lemon's Cannon Ball Moan" (ca. March 1928, Paramount 12639), where irony, violence and a sharp sense of vision are the ingredients of a very well-blended and effective cocktail.⁵⁸

*I got a dirty mistreater, she's mean as she can be,
Got a dirty mistreater, mean as she can be,
I didn't figure she was so mean till she dropped that cannon on me.*

*When my rider drawed the cannon, ooh, my flesh begin to crawl,
When my rider drawed the cannon, my flesh begin to crawl,
Any man feels kind of different when he faces a cannonball.*

*I stepped two feet forward, started to break and run,
I stepped two feet forward, started to break and run,
Hollered, "Man don't run a cannon, the same as a Gatling gun."*

Often within a very sexually/visually-oriented co-text, when Jefferson deals with violence, he does so in order to drive off a rival's attack, such as in "Cat Man Blues" (September 24, 1929, Paramount 12921):

*Tell me a cat got nine lives, honey, and I believe that's true,
Tell me a cat got nine lives, honey, and I believe that's true,
If the cat man has got nine lives, he gonna need 'em when I get through.*

or to reassure his woman that he has good intentions, such as in "Oil Well Blues" (ca. March 1929, Paramount 12771):

*Ain't nothing, mama, don't be scared at all,
It ain't nothing, mama, don't get scared at all,
There's a long distant well and it's blowing in oil, that's all.*

*Ain't nothing to hurt you, sugar, ain't nothing that's bad,
It ain't nothing can hurt you, honey, ain't nothing bad,
It's the first oil well that your little farm ever had.*

*I'm a long distance driller and wildcat the country through,
I'm a long distance driller that wildcat the country through,
But I'm done wildcatting if I bring in this well for you.*

*I'm a mean oil well driller, been a driller since I been a man,
I'm a mean oil well driller, been a driller since I been a man,
And I don't stop drilling till I strikes that Woodbine sand.*

or to resort to his self-control, such as in "Peach Orchard Mama" (ca. March 1929 or ca. August 1929, Paramount 12801):

*Went to the police station, begged the police to put me in jail,
Went to the police station, begged him to put me in jail,
I didn't wanna kill you, mama, but I hate to see your peaches tree fail.*

*Peach orchard mama, don't turn your papa down,
Peach orchard mama, don't turn your papa down,
Because when I gets mad, I acts just like a clown.*

When Jefferson is endangered or imagines himself to be endangered, he reacts to defend himself and his wife, such as in “Fence Breakin’ Yellin’ Blues” (September 24, 1929, Paramount 12921):

*They made a break at me and I broke for my pocket knife,
Made a break at me, broke for my pocket knife,
One had me cornered off while the other one talked about taking
my wife.*

*And when I went for my gun, you oughta seen them yellers breaking
that fence,
When I went for my gun, you oughta seen them yellers break the
fence,
I first thought they was crazy, but I found out they didn’t have no
sense.*

*You can take my money, I mean you can wear my best clothes,
I say, you can take my money, I mean you can wear my best
clothes,
Nothing won’t kill you no quicker but you bother with my
jellyroll.*

or resolves to take time, such as in “Bootin’ Me ‘Bout” (September 24, 1929, Paramount 12946):

*Her father told me, better not to come back no more,
I say, her father told me, better not to come back no more,
“If I catch you here, I’m gonna boot you through the door.”*

*I got to find me a scheme to get my gal off to herself,
I got to find a scheme to get my gal off to herself,
‘Cause I’m a fool about that woman, don’t want nobody else.*

or asks to be forgiven, such as in “Mean Jumper Blues” (ca. February 1928, Paramount 12631):

*I believe he’s looking for me, he’s up all hours at night,
I believe he’s looking for me, he’s up all hours at night,
She used to be my rider and he ain’t treating her right.*

*I met this joker one morning; he was out on the out edge of town,
I met this joker one morning; he was out on the out edge of town,
I had to talk and plead for to keep him from blowing me down.*

Some mainly traditional pieces envisage disruptive remedies to religious or political annoyances, such as Elder Green’s tearing down of the Church of God and the resort to an airplane and a submarine against the Kaiser in “Rabbit Foot Blues” (ca. December 1926, Paramount 12454). Jefferson sometimes provides solutions as violent and exaggerated—and often very visual in content—as the ones described, such as in “Mosquito Moan” (September 24, 1929, Paramount 12899):

*Lamp sitting in my kitchen, mosquitoes all around my screen,
If I don’t arrange to get a mosquito bomb, I’ll be seldom seen.*

*Lamp sitting in my kitchen, mosquitoes all around my screen,
If I don’t arrange to get a mosquito bomb, I’ll be seldom seen.*

Not surprisingly, Jefferson’s recourse to the description of prospective acts of violence seems to become more frequent from 1928, that is, when his compositions begin to become more thematic and consistent. Statistically, the episodes where Jefferson is the victim of persecution from a particular rival, lover, or animal largely prevail over those in which he acts as a persecutor. This may be due to Jefferson’s unconscious and individualistic rather than rational way of overcoming his physical—and consequently psychological—disability. In any case, both types of expression of extreme violence seem to put a curb on Jefferson’s increasing sense of fear and rage. As pointed out by Paul Oliver in a more general context, “the blues acts as a catalyst at times, the singer dispersing his anger or the irresponsibility of his intentions through the blues. The prevalence of some themes may indicate a particular function of the music, acting as a release for discharged energies which might otherwise seek more dangerous outlets.”⁵⁹ The British scholar also stated: “Many blues are aggressive in content and to canalize violence would appear to be one of the functions of the blues.”⁶⁰ The impression is given by these songs that if Jefferson had not had his music, he would have been a dangerous man to deal with.

(2) The conspicuous quantity of visual references in these new songs, as listed in the Appendix, corroborates the assumptions made in an earlier article by Monge. The average number of visualizations per song (3.7) is startlingly higher than the average (2.48) found in the complete body of Jefferson’s issued songs as well as the average (2.39) resulting from a randomly chosen sample of his work.⁶¹ The average number of visualizations of the new songs is even more startling, considering that these statistics a) do not take into account the two missing visual references of “Easy Rider,” which are not listed here due to the lead sheet’s textual truncation; and b) include “English Stop Time,” the only purely instrumental piece Jefferson ever recorded. These factors actually considerably reduce the average number of visualizations per song in these new compositions.

Being Jefferson’s first and only piece explicitly dealing with blindness as a subtext, “I Labor So Far from Home” contains many more visual references than the songs developing other themes in a more-or-less traditional manner. In this title, however, it is the quality and not the quantity of the mentions which matters. If we exclude “I Labor So Far from Home” from the statistics concerning this new material, the average number of visual references per song (2.44) turns out to be very close to the partial and total ones ascertained in the earlier study of Jefferson’s issued songs. All in all, these new lyrics strengthen the hypothesis of Jefferson’s attempt to exorcize his sightlessness by means of frequent textual visualizations.

From a broader perspective, this material has an even larger significance than what we might have expected before its examination. First, it enhances Blind Lemon Jefferson’s literary legacy, shedding new light on his persona and craftsmanship; second, it helps us better understand the diffusion of several early blues and folk tunes and their seminal contribution to the

development from unrecorded and unpublished music to the limelight of popular commercially recorded music; finally, it reveals Jefferson as an artist deeply immersed in a variegated folk musical tradition, which, in turn, he largely helped to expand and mold before, during, and (through phonograph records) after his unprecedented commercial success. ■

Appendix

Visual References in Blind Lemon Jefferson's New Songs, Presented Chronologically

Songs	Visual References
<i>Laboring Man Blues</i>	The girl that I love and who I crave to see Is far cross the sea when (sic) I can't see
<i>Easy Rider</i> [Two visual references missing due to truncation]	
<i>Elder Green's in Town</i>	He's got it printed all over his old automobile, he's Alabama bound I've got a high brown, and she's long and tall
<i>English Stop Time</i>	[instrumental: no lyrics]
<i>I Labor So Far from Home</i> see	Old man went the other day his loving wife to see What did he see but someone's boots where his boots ought to be Who's (sic) boots are these lying under my bed where my boots ought to be You old fool, blind fool, old man, can't you see?
before	I never saw a coffee pot with boot heels on
where	Old man went the other night his loving wife to see What should he see but someone's horse his horse ought to be Whose horse is this hitched in my rack where my horse ought to be I never saw a milk cow with a saddle on before What should he see but someone's coat where his coat ought to be Whose coat is this hanging on my rack where my coat ought to be I never saw a blanket with coat sleeves on
before	What should he see but some old man lying where he ought to be What man is this lying in my bed where I ought to be I never saw a baby with whiskers on before
<i>Light House Blues</i>	I've got a lighthouse on the sea She's a high brown mama I got a letter this morning Mama don't wear no black My ghost will come sneaking back
<i>Too Black Bad</i>	I wonder why my partner sits around looking so sad If he quits her it'll be too black bad She's a well made woman She's a dark brownskin, color of chocolate drop it ain't in the book

Money Tree Mama Blues

My brown
Money sticking in her hair
Search all over this town
When I find that woman

Pineapple Blues

I got a note from her
I'm going to that woman waving a white
flag for a truce
Found a pineapple at my door

NOTES

1. We would like to acknowledge the Music Division of the Library of Congress for helping us find this precious material, Samuel Charters and Paul Swinton for calling our attention to its existence, Lynn Abbott, Doug Seroff, Roger deV. Renwick, Joseph Hickerson, Bob Eagle, Charles Wolfe, Craig Wiggins, Roby Cogswell, Jay Orr, John Cowley, Alan Govenar and Jay Brakefield for their research help, and Stefano Danielli for his discographical help.
2. Luigi Monge, "The Language of Blind Lemon Jefferson: The Covert Theme of Blindness," *Black Music Research Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 35-81.
3. For more information on Jefferson and his music, see Samuel Charters, *The Country Blues* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1959), 57-72; Samuel Charters, *The Bluesmen: The Story and the Music of the Men who Made the Blues* (New York: Oak Publications, 1967), 175-189; Bob Groom, *Blues World* booklet no. 3 (Knutsford, England: Blues World, 1970); Bob Groom, "The Legacy of Blind Lemon," *Blues World* 16 (September 1967): 13; 18 (January 1968): 14-16; 20 (July 1968): 33-37; 21 (October 1968): 30-32; 23 (April 1969): 5-7; 24 (July 1969): 9-10; 25 (October 1969): 9-10; 27 (February 1970): 13-14; 28 (March 1970): 8-9; 29 (April 1970): 8-9; 30 (May 1970): 13-14; 35 (October 1970): 19-20; 36 (November 1970): 20; 40 (Autumn 1971): 4-6; 50 (1974): 8; Sheldon Harris, *Blues Who's Who: A Biographical Dictionary of Blues Singers* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1979), 274-276; Bruce Roberts, "It's A Long Old Lane Ain't Got No End," *Blues and Rhythm: The Gospel Truth* 119 (May 1997): 4-5; Paul Swinton, "A Twist of Lemon," *Blues and Rhythm: The Gospel Truth* 121 (August 1997): 4-9; David Evans, "Jefferson, Blind Lemon," in *International Dictionary of Black Composers*, edited by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., vol. 1 (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999), 604-609; the special issue of *Black Music Research Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2000), including articles by Alan Govenar, "Blind Lemon Jefferson: The Myth and the Man," 7-21, Kip Lornell, "Blind Lemon Meets Leadbelly," 23-33, Luigi Monge, "The Language of Blind Lemon Jefferson: The Covert Theme of Blindness," 35-81, David Evans, "Musical Innovation in the Blues of Blind Lemon Jefferson," 83-116; Robert Uzzel, *Blind Lemon Jefferson: His Life, His Death, and His Legacy* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2002).
4. Robert M. W. Dixon, John Godrich, and Howard W. Rye, *Blues and Gospel Records 1890-1943*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 442-445; Blind Lemon Jefferson, *Complete Recorded Works in Chronological Order, Volumes 1-4* (Document Records DOCD-5017-5020, 1991); Various Artists, *Too Late, Too Late, Vol. 1 (1926-1944)* (Document Records DOCD-5150, 1993); Various Artists, *Too Late, Too Late, Vol. 3 (1927-1960s)* (Document Records DOCD-5276, 1994); Various Artists, *Too Late, Too Late, Vol. 4 (c. 1892-1937)* (Document Records DOCD-5321, 1995); Various Artists, *Too Late, Too Late, Vol. 11 (1924-1939)* (Document Records DOCD-5625, 1998).
5. Charters, *The Bluesmen*, 175-189; Dixon, Godrich and Rye, *Blues and Gospel Records 1890-1943*, 442-445; Swinton, "A Twist of Lemon," 4-9.
6. Charters, *The Bluesmen*, 179, 181.
7. For further information on Jefferson's Okeh session, see Roger Brown, "Recording Pioneer Polk Brockman," *Living Blues* 23 (September/October 1975): 31.
8. For further reading on this subject as it is related to Chicago Music and other artists' unissued Paramount recordings, see John Cowley and Howard Rye, "Chicago Music and the Unissued Paramounts," in *Storyville 2000-1*, ed. Laurie Wright (Chigwell, Essex, UK: L. Wright, 2001), 122-174.
9. Paul Oliver, *Blues Off the Record: Thirty Years of Blues Commentary* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1988), 41.
10. An exclusively French origin of the word "shivaree" is attested to in all the following sources at our disposal: E. Bagby Atwood, "Shivarees and Charivaris: Variations on a Theme," in *A Good Tale and a Bonnie Tune*, edited by Mody C. Boatright, Wilson M.

- Hudson, and Allen Maxwell, Publications of the Texas Folklore Society, no. 32 (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1964), 64-71; John T. Flanagan, "A Note on Shivarree," *American Speech* 15 (1940), 109-110; Miles L. Hanley, "Charivaria: Serenade in New England," *American Speech* 8, no. 2 (April 1933): 24-26; Jay Scott Odell, "Charivari," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* vol. 5 (of 29 volumes), 2nd ed., edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 496-497; Moira Smith, "Shivarree," in *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Jan Harold Brunvand (New York: Garland, 1996), 665-666.
11. Peter Narváez, "Afro-American and Mexican Street Singers: An Ethnohistorical Hypothesis," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 42 (1978): 73-84; Peter Narváez, "The Influences of Hispanic Music Cultures on African-American Blues Musicians," *Black Music Research Journal* 14, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 203-224.
 12. David Evans, *Big Road Blues: Tradition and Creativity in the Folk Blues* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 75-81.
 13. For a discussion of this complex of songs, see Lynn Abbott and Doug Seroff, "They Cert'ly Sound Good to Me: Sheet Music, Southern Vaudeville, and the Commercial Ascendancy of the Blues," *American Music* 14, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 402-454; Paul Oliver, *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 115-118.
 14. For further information on John William "Blind" Boone, see Ann Sears, "John William 'Blind' Boone, Pianist-Composer: 'Merit, Not Sympathy Wins'," *Black Music Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1989): 225-247.
 15. Alan Lomax, *Mister Jelly Roll* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), 121.
 16. Perry Bradford describes a 1913 cutting contest in Chicago with Jelly Roll Morton: "I played and sang a whole gang of blues; among them was 'I'm Alabama Bound,' the song I changed the title to 'Don't Leave Me Here,' and then I played 'Cannon Ball Blues.'" See Bradford, *Born with the Blues* (New York: Oak Publications, 1965), 94.
 17. See Newman I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates Inc., 1965), 307-308, 353-354; Will H. Thomas, "Some Current Folk-Songs of the Negro," Austin: Folk-Lore Society of Texas, pamphlet 1 (1912): 12; Gates Thomas, "South Texas Negro Work-Songs: Collected and Uncollected," in *Rainbow in the Morning*, ed. J. Frank Dobie (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, 1965), 154-180, esp. 177.
 18. John Work, *American Negro Songs and Spirituals* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1940), 241.
 19. An Elder Green, described as "minister," is included in a 1910 list of black residents of Greenwood, Mississippi. See <http://www.rootsweb.com/~msafamer/mslflore1910Dir.txt>. We wish to thank Bob Eagle for calling our attention to this source. There is no way to determine if this Elder Green is the subject of this folksong.
 20. For further information on these themes, see Horace Clarence Boyer, *The Golden Age of Gospel* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 12-29; E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Shocken, 1964), 47-67; Joseph R. Washington, Jr., *Black Sects and Cults* (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1972), 58-82; Paul Oliver, *Songsters and Saints*, 199-228; Anthony Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound: Good News and Bad Times*, rev. ed. (New York: Limelight, 1985), 173-186.
 21. G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., *Native American Balladry: A Descriptive Study and a Bibliographical Syllabus* (Philadelphia: The American Folklore Society, 1964), 83-94; Paul Oliver, *Songsters and Saints*, 229-256.
 22. D. K. Wilgus and Lynwood Montell define a blues ballad as "a highly variable, subjective, lyrical, yet dramatic narrative which celebrates and comments on an event rather than presenting a straightforward, circumstantial account." See Wilgus and Montell, "Clure and Joe Williams: Legend and Blues Ballad," *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 81 (1968): 296.
 23. Charters, *The Bluesmen*, 179, 181.
 24. Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (New York: Dover, 1965), 88-95, 303-304. Originally published in ten volumes, 1882-98.
 25. John Minton, "'Our Goodman' in Blackface and 'The Maid' at the Sookey Jump: Two Afro-American Variants of Child Ballads on Commercial Disc," *John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly* 17 (Spring/Summer 1982): 31-35, 38-40; and Paul Oliver, *Songsters and Saints*, 229-230.
 26. Oliver, *Songsters and Saints*, 230.
 27. Tristram Potter Coffin and Roger de V. Renwick, *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*, edition revised by Tristram Potter Coffin, with a supplement by Roger de V. Renwick (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 143-145, 272-273; Bertrand Harris Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*, 4 Volumes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 95-129.
 28. Coffin and Renwick, *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*, 144.
 29. William Barlow, *Looking Up at Down: The Emergence of Blues Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 69.
 30. Monge, "The Language of Blind Lemon Jefferson," 60-62.
 31. Barlow, *Looking Up at Down*, 69.
 32. Monge, "The Language of Blind Lemon Jefferson," 50.
 33. For an analysis of two illuminating examples in gospel songs, see Luigi Monge, "Visual References in the Lyrics of Blind Pre-War Blues and Gospel Musicians," in *The Lyrics in African American Popular Music*, edited by Robert Springer (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2001), 100-103.
 34. See "The Adulteress," collected from Maude Stockton and included in Elsie Clews Parsons, "Tales from Guilford County, North Carolina," *Journal of American Folklore* 30 (1917), 199.
 35. We have not been able to examine the following versions: Jim Henry's "Where My Coat Used to Be" (March 8, 1937, AFS 885-B-2) and Will Starks's "Our Good Man" (August 9, 1942, AFS 6652-A-1). Colon Keel's "The Three Nights Experience" (June 1939, AFS 2709-B-1) is listed in Dixon, Godrich and Rye's *Blues and Gospel Records 1890-1943*. A note by the collector John A. Lomax, however, indicates that Keel was white. There is another version of "The Western Cowboy" by Don Mooney (February 27, 1936, AFS 604-A-1) that we have not examined, and thus we cannot state whether it contains verses from Child no. 274. Huddie Ledbetter [Leadbelly] recorded "The Western Cowboy" several times, but his versions do not contain any verses from this ballad. John A. Lomax, in a headnote to a transcription of Harry Jackson's version, stated that he had written down five variants of "The Western Cowboy" from the singing of Negro prisoners in Texas penitentiaries. The ballad also exists in black tradition in the Bahamas and the island of Nevis.
 36. Charles Wolfe and Kip Lornell, *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 44.
 37. See nos. 1, 3, 48 and 49 in Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*, 98, 99, 124 and 125.
 38. Ibid.
 39. Ibid., 114-115.
 40. Abbott and Seroff, "They Cert'ly Sound Good to Me," 409-412; Richard L. Riley, *Early Blues: Volume One*, Piano Mania, n.d. [ca. 1995], 5-8.
 41. White singer George O'Connor recorded "Nigger Blues" in 1916 (Columbia A-2064). The song was reissued on *Let's Get Loose: Folk and Popular Blues Styles from the Beginnings to the Early 1940s*, with liner notes by David Evans, New World NW 290, 1978. New Orleans-born vaudeville and blackface entertainer Al Bernard recorded it in early 1919 (Edison 3766, 50542), and Bernard or possibly White himself recorded only the first stanza with banjo accompaniment as part of "Lasses White Minstrels - Plantation Scene" (April 1923, Columbia A3871) by Lasses White and Company with Al Bernard.
 42. *Dallas City Directory* 1912, 587. We are indebted to Alan Govenar and Jay Brakefield for doing research on the exact location of the Happy Hour Theatre. For further information on the Dallas music scene, see Alan B. Govenar and Jay F. Brakefield, *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where the Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1998).
 43. It is also a variant of one line in the thirty-three stanzas collected by W. Prescott Webb in Beeville, Texas. See W. Prescott Webb, "Notes on Folk-Lore of Texas," *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 28 (1915): 295.
 44. Abbott and Seroff, "They Cert'ly Sound Good to Me," 410.
 45. Wolfe and Lornell, *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly*, 44. Two versions of Leadbelly's song were printed in John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Lead Belly* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), 136-137, and John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, *Leadbelly: A Collection of World-Famous Songs by Huddie Ledbetter* (New York: Folkways Music Publishers, Inc., 1959), 32.
 46. André Prévos, "Religious Words in Blues Lyrics and Titles: A Study," in *Saints and Sinners: Religion, Blues and (D)evil in African-American Music and Literature*, edited by Robert Sacré (Liège; Belgium: Société Liégeoise de Musicologie, 1996), 321, 325, 327.
 47. Dixon, Godrich and Rye, *Blues and Gospel Records 1890-1943*, 444.
 48. Swinton, "A Twist of Lemon," 7.
 49. Max E. Vreede, *Paramount 12000/13000 Series* (London: Storyville Publications, 1971), n. p.
 50. For the meaning of this colloquial expression see Jean Paul Levet, *Talkin' That Talk* (Levallois-Perret: Soul Bag, 1986), 25-26; Paul Oliver, *Blues Fell This Morning: Meaning in the Blues* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 73.
 51. For another example of Jefferson's conscious use of slang expressions

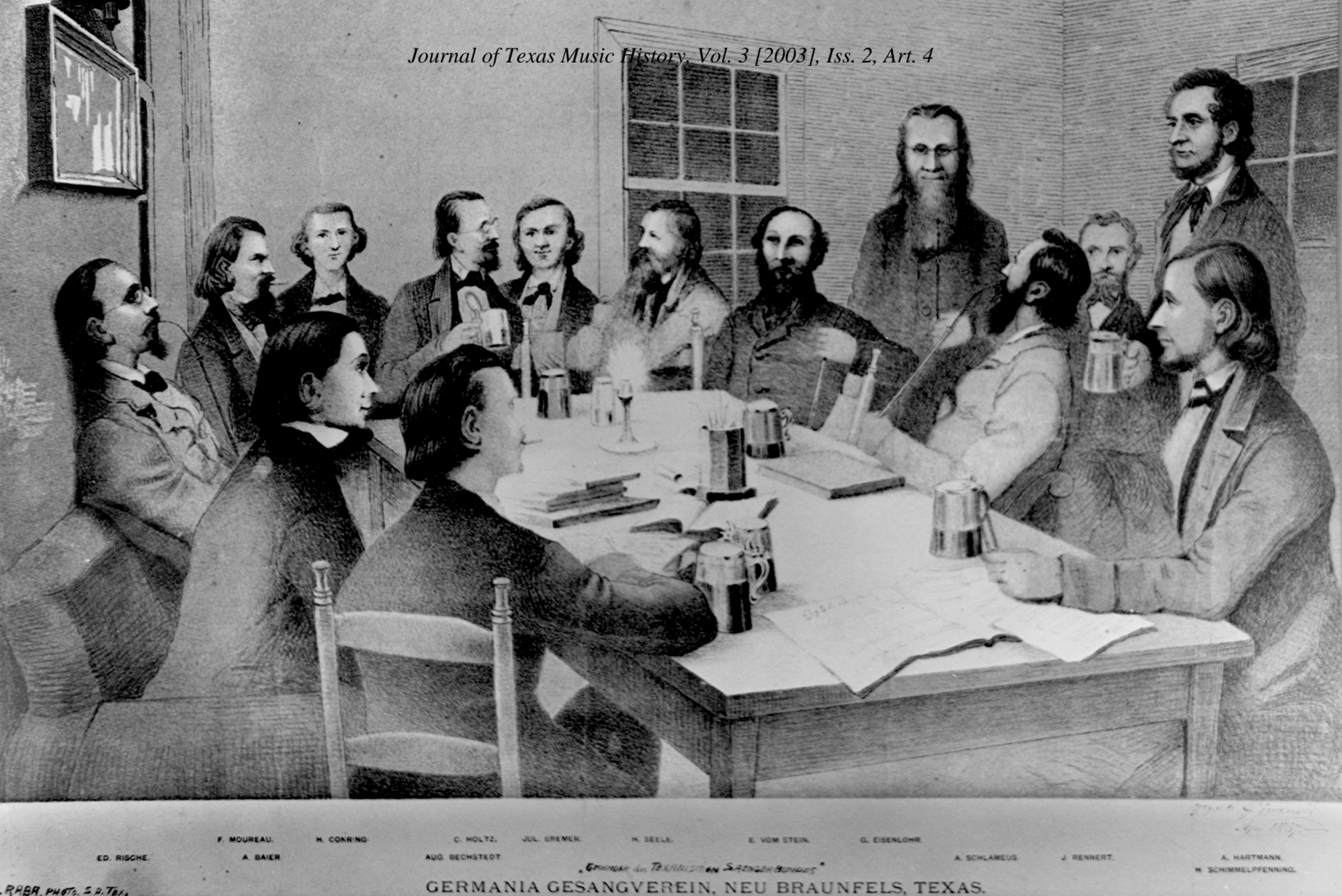
Celebrating "Das Deutsche Lied" in



Druck der "Freie Presse fuer Texas"

Ad from the 49th Annual Singing Festival of the Texas Hill Country Singers' League commemorating the Texas Centennial 1836-1936.
Courtesy of Beethoven Maennerchor Archives

Towards the end of the Republic of Texas and in the early days of statehood, German settlers began arriving at the Ports of Galveston and Indianola. They were coming to Texas largely because of promises made to them for a better political and economic life by the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas, the Adelsverein. The Adelsverein was an organization formed in 1842 by German noblemen who wanted to create prosperous new settlements in what is now central Texas.¹ The first group of German settlers to arrive under the auspices of the Adelsverein was led by Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels. On March 21, 1845, the Adelsverein established its first community in central Texas and named it "New Braunfels" in honor of the Prince's estate



Painting of Germania Gesangverein Neu Braunfels, Texas, courtesy of RABA Studio and Beethoven Maennerchor Archives

The first year in the new homeland was tenuous. Original plans made by the *Adelsverein* for the settlers provisions and welfare had not worked out as hoped. Money was short, provisions were scarce and housing was rather primitive, because of the limited availability of good building materials. Disease took its toll. Prince Solms-Braunfels eventually returned to Europe leaving these settlers to fend for themselves. Baron Ottfried Hans Freiherr von Meusebach (John O. Meusebach) stepped in to provide leadership and help make the settlements safe and secure.³ Due to the determination and steadfastness of these early settlers and under the capable leadership of Meusebach, the German communities soon prospered. As they flourished, new settlements began springing up further out into the countryside. Communities such as Fredericksburg, Comfort, Kerrville, Sisterdale, Bettina, Twin Sisters, and Boerne were established. Despite the success of these fledgling settlements, some, such as Fredericksburg, were plagued by on-going clashes with nearby Indian groups. In May 1847, Meusebach and a group of men, including Major Robert S. Neighbors, Indian Agent for the State of Texas, traveled to Fredericksburg and signed a peace treaty with local Comanches, which helped ensure the safety of the settlers from attacks.⁴

The Germans who came to Texas were, for the most part, well educated. They traveled to Texas in cohesive family groups and brought their German culture largely intact with them. Music, athletics, and shooting clubs had been a mainstay of their social life in Europe. After the first order of getting established in Texas

with a reliable food supply and new homes, the settlers had time to channel their energies into developing these esteemed pastimes. "Das Deutsche Lied," or "the German song," was central to family and community celebrations, and singing societies quickly began to appear in nearly every German settlement.

In *A Chronological History of the Singers of German Songs in Texas*, Oscar Haas describes the founding of the various community singing societies and details the highlights of their individual festivals. His book is an invaluable resource for documenting the formation and development of these organizations. Haas shows that the early years of these singing societies, especially before 1900, were the most critical in terms of shaping the identity, structure, and procedures of each individual group, and that the festivals after 1900 mainly followed the precedents set earlier in the nineteenth century.⁵

Since New Braunfels was one of the earliest German settlements in the new state, it was also the first to organize its own singing society and to hold the very first festival. The "Germania" singing society was established in New Braunfels on March 2, 1850, and its members soon held the state's very first singing festival, or *Sängerfest*, at Herman Seele's place known as "Elisenruhe," on the Guadalupe River. "Land was cleared for dancing and a wagon canvas was used for a roof. Tables and benches were placed in an arbor. French wine, coffee, and pastries were available." Singers from Austin and San Antonio also came to participate. Following the success of this first *Sängerfest*, Seele built the New Braunfels

Sängerhalle on his property in 1855.⁶

The earliest Sängersfests, however, not only reflected the immigrants' abiding love of German music, they also were an opportunity for *Gemütlichkeit* (fellowship), since they allowed the early settlers who lived in the more remote countryside to come together in a large group. These festivals served as an important forum for community and political interaction. The minutes from some of the festivals indicate that politics played an important part in the settlers' lives, and they often incorporated political discussions into their business meetings held during the festivals. One such meeting took place at a singing festival in May 1854 in San Antonio. Societies from Austin, La Grange, New Braunfels, Sisterdale, and San Antonio participated. On the last day of this Sängersfest, a German convention was held at "Vauxhall Garden" on Alamo Street in San Antonio. Certain political economists and idealists from Sisterdale proposed that attendees vote on a resolution that would abolish capital punishment, forbid speculation in land values, and declare slavery to be a "monstrous social wrong that should be abolished in conformity with the Constitution of the United States which declared in emphatic terms that 'all men are born free.'"⁷

As singing societies grew in number, certain clubs banded together to form leagues, including the West-Texas Hill Singers League, the Guadalupe Valley Singers League, and years later, the Comal Singers League. Eventually, these leagues joined together to form a state league—the Deutsch-Texanischer Sängerbund (German-Texas Singers League.) The smaller leagues held their own individual singing festivals and then joined together to hold an annual state song festival.

Travel to and from local and state song festivals was often difficult. Roads could be in poor condition or even impassable, and there was the ever-present danger of Indian attacks, especially in the earlier years. In 1875, the constant threat of confrontation with Indians from "the West to Comfort" prompted singers to form a scout company, which patrolled the area once a month. On August 10, 1875, the anniversary of the Battle of the Nueces from the Texas War for Independence, these riders were camped on the ground at which this battle had been fought. Among their group were "survivors of the battle" and "brothers of the fallen." As they paused to remember the battle, they sang Silcher's *Bardic Chorus* as a solemn tribute to their fallen comrades.⁸

In the early 1850s, German immigrants from New Braunfels, as well as those arriving directly from Europe at Indianola and Galveston, began moving increasingly into San Antonio—eventually becoming a major segment of the city's population. One such early immigrant to the Alamo City was Wilhelm Ludwig August Tampke, who came to Texas from Wolfenbüttel, Braunschweig, in 1853 and settled for a time in the downtown San Antonio area. Tampke was a circuit Methodist preacher who lived near the Alamo and also served as a volunteer fireman for the city. Because music played such an integral part in the lives of these early immigrants, it was only natural that Tampke would pay tribute to his fellow firemen by writing his "Fireman's Song" in 1871. Following is the English translation of his original song:

"Fireman's Song"

*In depth and the height
I'm often there in sight
The aid of ev'ry man
At fire with engine there
Of saving man's welfare
I am a fireman.*

*In ev'ry kind of weather
I haste with hook and ladder
On roofs as high as I can
The buildings, lives and ware
To save I only care
I am a fireman!*

*Is there an engine trial
I dare not wait awhile
I must be punctual then
Prepared for any hour
The engine shows her power.
I am a fireman!*

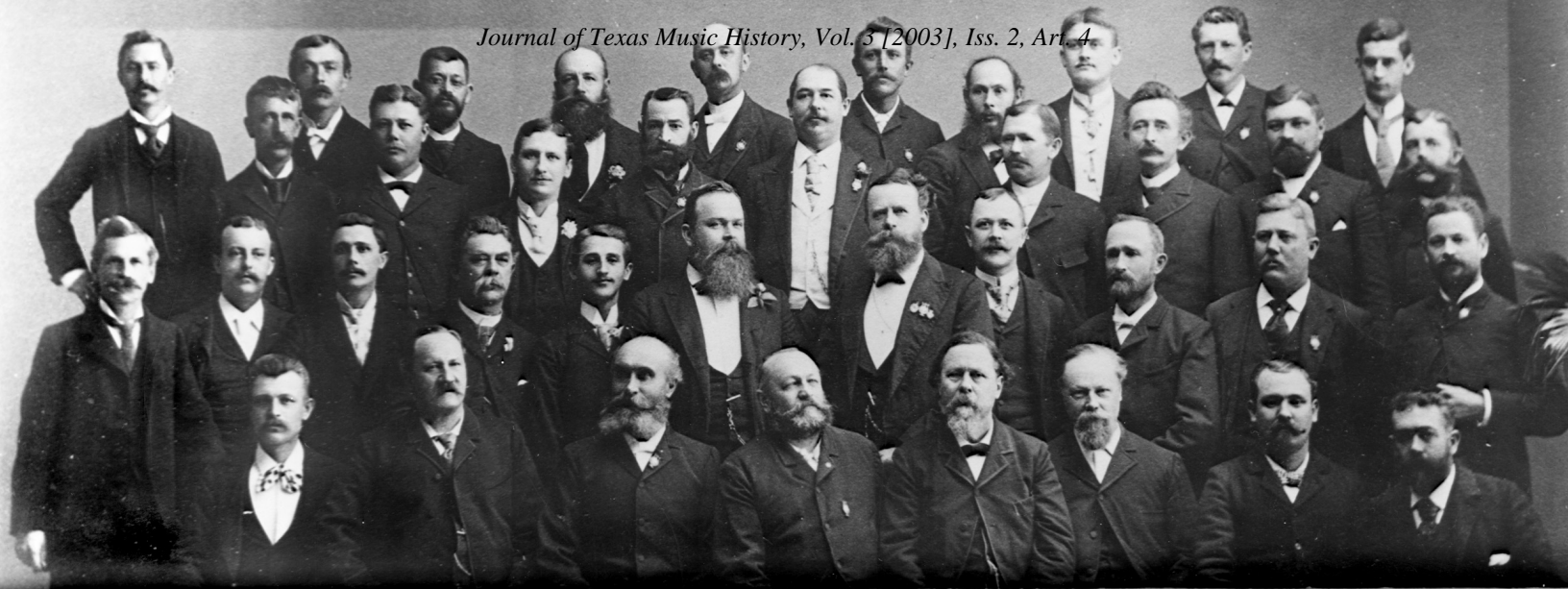
*When I am proper drilled
My mission have fulfilled
I'll be respected then
In uniform by going
In joy and distress showing
I am a fireman!*

*I'm cleaving to the banner
Marching in upright manner
Wherever I began.
The flag's ensign, inscription
Gives me the plain description
I am a fireman!*

*Now home, I dare rejoice
At New Hall, as my choice
With music Chief and men.
This day might be a Blessing
To all I am addressing.
I am a fireman!*

San Antonio, February 22, 1871
A. Tampke.⁹

San Antonio's early German culture was steeped in the arts and music. The city was also fortunate to have had two notable German singing societies by the late nineteenth century. One of the very first singing societies to form in San Antonio was the Männergesang-Verein, founded by Johann Nicholas Simon Menger in July 1847. This group held its rehearsals at the San Antonio Casino Club. Beginning in 1853, Adolf Douai, publisher of the German-language *San Antonio Zeitung*, served as



J. M'ALLISTER, JOS. KURTZ, F. M. HALBEDL, F. HENSEL, F. C. KLIEFOTH, WM. DAHNERT, E. A. TIPS, E. ENGELKE, W. WILKENS,
CASSIRER, BIBLIOTH,
CHAS. HORN, E. STEVES, ALEX ENGELHARDT, M. SUTOR, CARL BECK, S. E. JACOBSON, F. NAGEL, R. SEBBE, WM. M'ALLISTER,
DIRIGENT.
O. STAFFEL, DR. EG. MOECKEL, L. DREISS, F. HERFF, C. H. MUELLER, HY. CLEMENS, A. STEVES, A. LIGHTNER,
VIZE-PRES. PRES.
F. G. WANISZLAEBEN, A. WAHLSTAB, E. RABA, H. DREISS, C. FREY, C. A. R. CAMPBELL
B. BOLTE, C. HARNISCH, H. KARBER, C. H. CLAUSS, WM. SCHUWIRTH, A. DREISS, A. NORDMAN, A. F. BECKMANN.
SEC'Y.

ACTIVE MITGLIEDER DES BEETHOVEN MAENNERCHORS, DECEMBER 25, 1893.

Photo of Active Mitglieder Des Beethoven Maennerchors, December 25, 1893. Courtesy of RABA Studio and Beethoven Maennerchor Archives

director of the Männergesang-Verein until W. C. A. Thielepape (who eventually served as San Antonio's mayor from 1867 to 1872) took over as president on October 16, 1854.¹⁰ The Männergesang-Verein reorganized on February 24, 1867, and was renamed the "Beethoven Männerchor."¹¹ In 1895, members of the Männerchor built their first concert hall, the Beethoven Hall, in the heart of San Antonio across from La Villita. In 1913, a fire destroyed the concert hall, but it was rebuilt in 1914. The Beethoven Hall still stands in Hemisfair Plaza and is presently owned by the City of San Antonio.¹² In 1920, the Beethoven Männerchor moved to its present location in the King William Historic District of San Antonio.¹³

Sidney Lanier, proclaimed poet and musician of the late-nineteenth century, visited San Antonio in 1873. Lanier was invited to attend a Männerchor rehearsal by his friend, Andreas Schiedemantel (then Beethoven President), on January 30. In a letter regarding his experience with the Männerchor, Lanier describes what might well have been a typical rehearsal in those early days:

Last night at 8 o'clock came Mr. Schiedemantel, a genuine lover of music and a fine pianist, to take me to the Maennerchor, which meets every Wednesday night for practice ... Presently seventeen Germans were seated at the singing table. Great pipes were all afire. The leader, Herr Thielepape, an old man with a white beard and mustache, formerly mayor of the city, rapped his tuning fork vigorously, gave the chords by arpeggios of his voice (a wonderful high tenor ...) and off they all swung into such a noble, noble old full-voice *lied* [song] that imperious tears rushed to my eyes.¹⁴

The second singing society to form in San Antonio before 1900 was the San Antonio Liederkrantz, founded in 1892 by Reverend Henry Pfefferkorn, pastor of St. Joseph's Church on Commerce Street in downtown San Antonio. He served as the choir's director for the first five months of its existence. St. Joseph's Church was built specifically for the German Catholics in San Antonio so that masses could be conducted in their native tongue. The first rehearsals for the choir were held at the parish priest's home. A few months later, the rehearsals were moved to St. Joseph's Society Halle.¹⁵ Pfefferkorn was also an artist and his paintings of the Stations of the Cross, the Ascension, and the Assumption still hang in the church today.

Following Pfefferkorn's tenure as choir director for the Liederkrantz, Otto Hilgers took over on December 19, 1892. Hilgers served as director from 1892 to 1934, and he brought the Liederkrantz to regional prominence by having the choir perform "oratorios, theater performances, minstrel shows and 'Komik' operetta" at a variety of Catholic and Protestant services and events throughout the state.¹⁶

The third director of the Liederkrantz was Professor Bernhard Kalthoff, who served from 1934 to 1975. Kalthoff, who arrived in the United States in 1925, had studied in Europe with Professor Fritz Volbach, a well-known German conductor. Kalthoff played with Fort Sam Houston's 23rd Infantry Band and directed the San Antonio Liederkrantz, the Salatrillo Liederkrantz of Converse, Texas, the Hermann Sons Mixed Chorus, and the Fortschritt Bulverde.¹⁷

Colonel Wayne D. Marty began serving as director of the Liederkrantz in 1975 following Kalthoff. Under Marty's direction between 1975 and 1992, the Liederkrantz grew from 20 members

to approximately 100.¹⁸ Dr. Paul Gottschalk succeeded Marty as director and served until 1999. In January 2000, Thomas E. Ewing took over and is still directing the Liederkrantz. Janine Gittinger Parker, who served as accompanist to the Liederkrantz for many years, was an accomplished pianist and accordionist whose talents added to the success of the choir's performances.¹⁹

Some of the more notable early performances of the San Antonio Liederkrantz include: the opening of the National Convention of the Catholic Central Verein of America in 1920; the Bicentennial Celebration of the Founding of San Antonio attended by Cardinal Hayes in 1931; the 100th Year Remembrance of the Fall of the Alamo in 1936; the Texas Independence Day Field Mass at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park in 1938; and, fifty years later, the group's largest concert of all, which involved performing songs for 100,000 people attending the mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II in San Antonio.²⁰ In 1995, the San Antonio Liederkrantz performed in Germany at Sulz am Neckar, Dresden/Altenberg, Koblenz, and Wiesbaden. The Liederkrantz remains a vital and active part of San Antonio's musical culture. It regularly performs for the congregation at St. Joseph's Church during its "Fourth Sunday Services" each month. In 2002, the Liederkrantz held a very successful "Patriotic Concert in conjunction with the Hermann Sons German Band." On June 1, 2003, the choir performed a "Sacred Concert" at Laurel Heights Methodist Church in San Antonio.²¹

Before 1900, the city of Galveston also had its own singing society and celebrated with one of the most grandiose concerts of that time. Haas describes the elaborate celebrations of the annual state Sängersfests. The 13th Annual State Song Festival, held in Galveston from May 18-22, 1881, was just such an auspicious occasion. Extensive preparations included building a pavilion capable of seating 5,800 concert goers on the beach. The festival lasted five days, instead of the usual three. The program for that first year involved an official reception at the Union Depot with a torchlight procession to the Artillery Hall and a welcome by the Mayor, followed over the next few days by parades, rehearsals, an oyster roast, and a fish chowder dinner. Additional activities included a grand concert followed by a dance with a procession of all the singing societies, participation by the fire department and military companies, an afternoon picnic and orchestra concert in Schmidt's Garden, an excursion over the waters of the bay and Gulf of Mexico, with a reception and promenade concert at the Garden Club, and, on the final night, the Grand Kommers banquet.²²

Another prominent singing society founded before 1900 was the Austin Männerchor, formed in Austin in 1852. By invitation from the New Braunfels Germania Choir, the Austin Männerchor traveled to New Braunfels in 1853 for the first Sängersfest in Texas. As a special gesture, the wives of the Männerchor singers embroidered a commemorative banner that was presented to the newly organized Deutsch Texanischer Sängerbund (German-Texan Singers League). The banner stayed in that organization's possession until 1957, when it was donated to a museum in Austin.²³

Following the Civil War, the younger men from the Austin Männerchor formed the Austin Sängerrunde and chose William Besserer as director. With great energy and enthusiasm, these members began plans for the 1879 Sängersfest to be held in Austin. This was to be one of the biggest and most celebrated Sängersfests in the history of German music in Texas. On February 8, 1879, in a bookstore on Congress Avenue belonging to the choir's Secretary, C. F. Rumpel, the Austin Sängerrunde was officially formed. The name "Sängerrunde," or "singing circle," came from the songbook used by the group at that time.²⁴

To celebrate the founding of this new organization (consisting of both a men's chorus and a women's chorus), members held a banquet on February 10, 1879. Miss A. Buaas delivered the keynote address describing the "historical development" and "purpose" of the Sängerrunde. The new organization also began preparations to participate in the 25th Anniversary of the Deutsch Texanischer Sängerbund.²⁵ This grand 25th Jubilee Celebration of the State Singers' League was held in Austin beginning on April 16, 1879. As visitors entered the city, booming cannons heralded the start of the three-day festivities. The singing societies that took part in the festival included the Beethoven Männerchor from San Antonio, the Männerchor from New Braunfels, the Salamander from Galveston, the Sängerrunde and the Mixed Chorus from Austin, two delegates from Houston, Comfort, and La Grange, the Frohsinn Singing Society from Dallas, and the Germania from Brenham (the first time the latter two clubs had appeared).

The singers from Dallas, Brenham, and Galveston traveled by train, while those from San Antonio and New Braunfels arrived on 16 wagons. The entire festival committee rode out in their gala coaches three miles south of the city in order to meet the wagons and accompany the guests back into Austin. Two immense arches of honor had been erected—one at the foot of Congress Avenue, the other at the Opera House where the official concert was held. Congress Avenue from the Colorado River to the Capitol was ornately decorated with flags and bunting. At the Colorado River, festival participants unfurled banners representing the various societies and then marched up Congress Avenue to the Opera House.²⁶

Austin's ethnic German community held other festivals of this magnitude in 1889, 1900, and 1911. Partly because of widespread anti-German sentiment following World War I, Austin held a more "subdued" festival in 1922. However, in 1938, participants organized a "spectacular" festival at Camp Mabry in Austin with concerts at Gregory Gymnasium on the University of Texas campus. Nearly 1,000 people attended the banquet (Kommers) at Camp Mabry.²⁷

Eventually, members of the Sängerrunde formed an orchestra, which became "the start of the present Austin Symphony Orchestra." Musical directors throughout the years included William Besserer, Jermann Pfaefflin, Walter Tips, Christian Klaerner, and Hermann M. Bohn. One of the more notable concerts took place in 1963, with Hermann M. Bohn conducting the men's chorus and orchestra in a performance of Podbertsky's "Friedrich Rothbart."²⁸

Other German-Texan singing societies also existed in Austin during the 1800s. Aside from the Austin Männerchor and the Austin Sängerrunde, the largest singing society was a mixed chorus known as the "Austin Musical Union," which included about 100 members and was directed by Walter Tips. Another group, the "Immerlustig Society" also was part of the early Austin music scene, but it merged with the Sängerrunde on March 29, 1887. The Sängerrunde held some of its first singing practices in Horst's pasture, near the present-day intersection of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Red River Street. The club then moved to Jacoby's Garden on Lavaca and 15th streets. When conditions there became too crowded, Turner Hall was

the singers from Glückstadt came to Texas for the first time. Sängerrunde members returned the visit to Germany in 1968 and again in 1975. Glückstadt members made another trip to Austin in 1971 and then returned in 1979 to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Sängerrunde, as well as the 125th anniversary of the Deutsch Texanischer Sängerbund.³²

To date, the Austin Sängerrunde Männerchor, Damenchor, and newly formed Kinderchor (children's choir) continue as integral parts of Austin's social and cultural scene. The old Scholz Garten and adjoining Sängerrundehalle in downtown Austin are still the home of this organization. Under the capable leadership of Theodore Zoch, who has served as President since 1984, and

Partly because of widespread anti-German sentiment following World War I, Austin held a more "subdued" festival in 1922.

used. Then in 1901, the Sängerrunde moved to Scholz Garten, a German restaurant and beer hall established in 1866 on San Jacinto Street, where it still meets to this day.²⁹

In 1895, six years before it officially relocated to Scholz Garten, the Sängerrunde entered into an agreement to sublease the bowling alleys located next to the restaurant's beer garden. With members now able to access the bowling alleys and enjoy Sunday concerts held at Scholz Garten, membership in the organization increased quickly by 1907 to 167 members with 34 active singers. By 1947, membership had grown to 235 and has consistently remained near that level. The choir obtained a state charter on May 1, 1903. The Sängerrunde's principal activities were banquets, concerts with choral singing, solo artists, chamber music ensembles, comedy, speeches, and always "dancing at the end."³⁰

In February 1959, Hermann M. Bohn organized a women's chorus known as the "Austin Sängerrunde Damenchor," which gave its first performance at the 80th anniversary of the men's Sängerrunde. Unlike the first women's chorus that evolved into a women's auxiliary for the club, this organization has remained a vital component of the Sängerrunde's musical performances for over 44 years and consistently averages an annual membership of around 25 singers.³¹

The Austin Sängerrunde also has been active in promoting cultural exchange between the United States and Germany. During a visit to his hometown of Glückstadt, Germany in 1905, Sängerrunde member, Wilhelm Bohn, laid the groundwork for future visits to Texas from the German musical group "Quartett Lied Hoch," of which he became an honorary member. This early relationship helped lead to future cooperation in other ways, as well. For example, after World War II, the Austin Sängerrunde assisted the city of Glückstadt by sending warm clothes from the University of Texas Athletic Department for German war refugees. Through visits back and forth over the years, the members decided that these two organizations should come together for an official visit in Austin. In the fall of 1966,

with the assistance of Hans J. Mueller, the club's Secretary since 1985, the Austin Sängerrunde is thriving.³³ Members continue to hold weekly rehearsals and take part in the yearly Sängerfests as they have since the club's inception in 1879.³⁴

The Dallas Frohsinn was established soon after the Dallas Turnverein advertised in the *Texas Volksblatt* for interested persons to attend a meeting of the German Singing Society on Sunday, March 25, 1877. The newly organized Frohsinn participated in its first Maifest, or May festival, sponsored by the Dallas Turnverein on May 6-7, 1877. The original Frohsinn was actually made up of ethnic Germans and Austrians, as well as members of an old, inactive Swiss singing society. Professor Bauer served as the first Director of the Frohsinn, with Henry Boll acting as President and John E. Hess as Secretary.³⁵

The Frohsinn's first concert was held in conjunction with a theater performance and ball on December 1, 1877. The Frohsinn also attended the third Maifest held by the Dallas Turnverein in 1878. The choir performed for the first time at the Austin Sängerfest held April 15-17, 1879. According to many who attended, this was one of the most spectacular Sängerfests ever held, and it coincided with the 12th Sängerfest of the Deutsch-Texanischer Sängerbund. The Frohsinn continued participating in various Sängerfests up until World War I. During the war years, the Frohsinn continued to hold meetings and concerts under the direction of Curt Beck "in spite of a reduced membership."³⁶ On March 27, 1927, the Dallas Frohsinn celebrated its 50th anniversary with 35 singers participating.

During the Great Depression, the 36th Staatssängerfest scheduled for 1933 in Dallas was postponed until October 4-6, 1936. When the festival finally did take place, Dr. Paul van Katwijk directed the Dallas Symphony Orchestra with Mrs. Alex Keese as vocal soloist and Alice Holcomb performing on the violin. The Frohsinn Director, Professor Frank Renard, "officiated as the 'Fest Dirigent'." The Sacred Heart Choir of Muenster, directed by Leo Hensheid, also performed.³⁷

In May 1939, the Frohsinn traveled to Houston for the last Sngerfest before World War II. During the war years, the Frohsinn managed to stay intact, but, in 1948, it lost its "Gesangstunden" and no longer held rehearsals or performances. In 1951, the Frohsinn underwent a revival of sorts when employees of Chance Vought Aircraft (which had moved from Connecticut to Dallas) began singing with the choir. Many employees from the aircraft company were of German heritage and were happily accepted into the Frohsinn choir. The Frohsinn took its turn at hosting state Sngerfests in 1956, 1962, and 1968, despite the fact that it did not have a clubhouse, as most other societies did. The Dallas Frohsinn also has been active in international performances. In 1968, it joined the Chorgemeinschaft Texas on tour to Stuttgart, Germany for an "International Sngerfest."³⁸

The Frohsinn celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1977 by sponsoring the 31st Texas Sngerfest. The choir continues to sing at several nursing homes in Dallas during the Oktoberfest season, as well as performing for church services during Christmas. It actively participates in "German Day in Texas," as well as the Pioneer Ball at the annual State Fair of Texas. The Frohsinn has also hosted visiting choral clubs and orchestras from Germany throughout the years.³⁹

Some of the members of the Frohsinn formed the Texanische Schuhplattler (a traditional Bavarian folk dance group) as well as the Dallas Frohsinn Kapelle, performing concert tours in Germany and Austria. The Dallas Frohsinn Damenchor (formed in 1991) performs with the men's organization in a "Gemischter Chor" (mixed choir) and joined the Deutsch Texanischer Sngerbund in 1993. After 126 years, the Dallas Frohsinn members still follow their club's motto "Freie Bahn Dem Tchtigen" (an open path to the hard worker).⁴⁰

Over its 150-year-history in Texas, German music has gained

in popularity throughout the state. Concerts and state Sngerfests have always been important social events for German Texans to celebrate their history and cultural heritage. There are several notable directors whose contributions to German music in Texas should be acknowledged. Hermann E. Dietel, author, teacher, and musician, was born in Germany in 1857 and came to Texas in 1878. He took part in the first song festival of the West-Texas Hill Singers League in Boerne in 1881 as director of the Echo Singers Society of Smithson Valley in Comal County. Dietel also directed a mixed chorus in New Braunfels. He was a teacher at the Schumannsville School for 40 years from 1886 to 1926 while directing the mixed chorus and men's chorus there. Dietel also directed the New Braunfels' Echo men's chorus from 1896 to 1936. In 1926, he took over as director for New Braunfels' Concordia mixed chorus and was the author of *History of West-Texas Hill Singers League*, published in 1938. Dietel died in New Braunfels in 1941.⁴¹

Over the past 136 years of continuous operation, the San Antonio Beethoven Mnnerchor has had several notable musical directors, including Carl Beck (popular director of the 1800s), Carl Hahn (founder of the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra), Alfred Schaefer (Depression years and World War II), and Dr. Otto Wick (renowned New York conductor and composer of the 1950s.)

The Beethoven Damenchor was fortunate to have had Gisela Bauer, well-known singer and music teacher, as its director from 1932 until 1982. Shirley Donohue took over as director when Gisela Bauer became ill and is still serving as the Damenchor's director. Pianist Alice Murphy accompanied the Damenchor from 1947 to the mid-1980s. Several prominent artists of the latter 1800s performed at the Mnnerchor's Beethoven Hall in San Antonio, including Sarah Bernhardt, John Phillip Sousa, the Chicago Symphony, and Arthur Claassen, who served for a time

Photo of Beethoven Damenchor Austin, Texas, 1952. Courtesy of RABA Studio and Beethoven Maennerchor Archives



as the Männerchor's director.⁴²

Throughout the years, loyal members have played a crucial role in the success and continuity of these singing societies. One such member is Johannes Scholze. Scholze is a 101-year-old, still-active member of the Beethoven Männerchor in San Antonio who came from Dresden, Germany in 1925. He left Germany as a teenager, because both of his parents had died, and jobs were scarce following World War I. He first landed in New York, then took a boat to Galveston, and later traveled inland to San Antonio. Scholze had relatives in New Braunfels on his mother's side of the family (the Simmangs). So, he came to Central Texas to utilize the woodcarving and furniture making skills he had learned from Professor Winde at a trade school in Germany between 1920 and 1923. One of Scholze's first and most auspicious jobs upon arrival was to design and carve the Coat of Arms for the City of San Antonio. This Coat of Arms still hangs in the City Hall Chamber.

Scholze initially went to "the Beethoven" to enjoy the festivals, music and waltzes, and to meet other Germans who shared his same interests. He joined the Beethoven Männerchor in 1927 and sang as a second tenor in the choir. Scholze assisted Director Alfred Schaefer as the choir pianist for about 15 years. Scholze also entertained visitors to the Beethoven Home with his guitar music by holding impromptu performances in the bar room or performing on stage in the patio garden. He and Hans Mangold, another Beethoven member who played the zither, would often play duets for the concert crowd. Scholze received his 75-year-membership pin at the Beethoven's Stiftungsfest (annual anniversary party) in March, 2002. Like so many other German immigrants, Johannes Scholze, came to Texas in search of "a better life" and brought his love of "Das Deutsche Lied" with him.⁴³

As the choirs in the larger cities and towns continued to grow, singing groups in smaller German-Texan communities tended to lose membership. Some of the early singing societies eventually went the way of their own communities and slowly died out. Some groups that have managed to stay active have joined together into such umbrella organizations as the Texanischer Gebirgs Sängerbund (Texas Hill Country Singers

League), whose core members include the Arion Männerchor from Fredericksburg (1908), the Beethoven Damenchor (1932), the Beethoven Männerchor (1867), the Gemischter Chor Frohsinn from Clear Spring (1916), the Gemischter Chor Harmonie from New Braunfels (1937), the Heimatmelodie from Corpus Christi (1989), the Hermannsohn Gemischterchor from Fredericksburg (1934), and the San Antonio Liederkrantz (1892).⁴⁴

Despite the decline of some groups, certain new organizations also formed and flourished during the twentieth century. For example, in 1924, Constantin Janke began actively recruiting members into a new male chorus in Houston which, a year later, would become the Houston Liederkrantz. This new male chorus added to the number of social clubs already in existence in Houston, such as the Houston Sängerbund, Sons of Hermann, and Turnverein.⁴⁵

The official founding date for the Houston Liederkrantz was January 15, 1925. Both the Houston Sängerbund and old Liederkrantz had been formed in 1883 upon the dissolution

of yet an even older society called the Houston Männerchor. During its first two years, the Liederkrantz organized concert evenings, family nights, a riverboat ride, birthday parties, picnics, and a Christmas party. On March 16, 1927, the club acquired a five-year-old building from the First Church of the Nazarene at Abbott and Barnes Streets in The Heights district of Houston. On October 17, 1934, the club received its charter from the State of Texas as "The Houston Liederkrantz," a non-profit organization formed exclusively for social and recreational activities involving "German language, music, art and culture." Throughout the 1930s, the Liederkrantz continued to grow. Besides the male chorus, a group of women singers formed the Ladies Auxiliary on November 4, 1938, as a way to encourage participation of the non-singing women. Auxiliary members served as hostesses for the club's activities and fundraisers for the

club's programs. The Liederkrantz's membership declined during World War II. However, it increased again in the 1950s with the influx of post-war German immigrants. Partly as a result of this growth, members Paul Danjus and Oskar Sauerbrey started a theater group, which was directed for many years by Hermann



Stichweh.⁴⁶

The club's membership again declined in the 1960s. During that time, the women's and men's choirs combined to form a mixed choir, which increased membership in the 1970s. The oil boom in the Houston area brought in new German singers from throughout Texas and other parts of the United States. One such member was Texan-born Walter Fritsche, a fourth-generation German-American who became the choir's director in 1962. As the Liederkrantz's membership grew, so did the need for a bigger clubhouse. In 1974, members purchased an adjacent lot. After the 29th Sängertag (singing day) of the Deutsch-Texanischer Sängerbund in May 1975, the Liederkrantz's clubhouse was moved to the center of the three lots to make room for the new additions. Club members themselves performed the majority of the construction work over a period of six years, from 1976-1982.⁴⁷

In 1982, toward the end of the construction period, a commercial real estate company offered to buy the club property. The sale of the old property gave the Liederkrantz enough money to build a new clubhouse at 5100 Ella Boulevard. The members ratified the sale during the Annual General Meeting on January 9, 1983. Building Chairman Raymond Orsak and the club's president, Peter Knaut, supervised the construction of the new hall, which had its grand opening on September 17, 1983.

At the time of the writing of the festival program from which this history was obtained, Franz Schoennagel was optimistic about the future growth of the Houston Liederkrantz and ended his article with a poem written by an old-time, honorary Liederkrantz member, Otto Kuntscher:

Liederkrantz: Dein woll'n wir gerne	Liederkrantz: we give our utmost
uns'res bestes Streben weih'n	devotion to you
Sollst, der lieben Heimat ferne	You should be the fortress of
eine Burg des Deutschtum sein.	German heritage far away from home
Du wirst kraeftig Dich entfalten,	You will strongly unfold yourself
schnell erbluehn zu Macht und Glanz,	blossom fast to power and
brightness	
Bleib uns lange noch erhalten	Stay for a long time
Houston's schoener Liederkrantz. ⁴⁸	Preserve Houston's beautiful
Liederkrantz.	

Other new organizations have been established in recent years and continue to grow and expand. The Texas Bach Choir formed in 1976 under the direction of Robert Finster at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in San Antonio. This choir has enjoyed national recognition for its performances and has received high praise from both the *San Antonio Express-News* and *Texas Monthly* magazine. The Texas Bach Choir is currently in its 26th year and still going strong.⁴⁹ Another singing society, the Chorgemeinschaft Texas, was formed in 1967 and hosted the ESWE Chor from Wiesbaden, Germany in October, 1998.⁵⁰

Most of these organizations are members of state, national, and international coalitions. The Deutsch Texanischer Sängerbund is made up of the Beethoven Männerchor, Dallas Frohsinn Männerchor, Austin Sängerrunde Männerchor, Houston Sängerbund Männerchor, San Antonio Liederkrantz, Houston Liederkrantz, Beethoven Damenchor, Houston Sängerbund

Damenchor, Austin Sängerrunde Damenchor and the Dallas Frohsinn Damenchor.⁵¹ Most state leagues from Texas and elsewhere joined the Nord Amerikanischer Sängerbund (North American Singers Association). This organization, established in 1848, is made up of different leagues from "districts" throughout the United States and helps coordinate efforts among the various choirs throughout the country.⁵²

State Sängerbund are still held annually and alternate among the cities of Dallas, Houston, Austin, and San Antonio. The 56th Sängertag, held on May 5, 2002, in Dallas, which was hosted by the Dallas Frohsinn Damenchor, received letters of commendation and recognition from Governor Rick Perry, Hanno von Gravenitz (then Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany), and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison in honor of the singers and their day-long festival.⁵³

In more recent years, choirs and orchestras from the Federal Republic of Germany have visited Texas as guest performers of various singing clubs. For example, the Deutsch-Texanischer Sängerbund celebrated the 51st Sängertag on May 3-4, 1997, with guest performances by the Chorgemeinschaft Lied Hoch with its director, Udo Sternberg, from Glückstadt, Germany.⁵⁴ Other groups that have come from Germany to perform in Texas include the Original Böhmetaler Blasmusik Fallingbostal, the community band from Sevetal, the Shanty Chor Itzehoeer Störshipper from Northern Germany, and the Männergesangsvereins (men's singing societies) from both Illerberg-Thal and Heidelberg-Rohrbach. The Männerchor St. W. Nürnberg came to Texas in 1998. Jodler klw Neue Sektion St. Gallen, a yodeling club from Switzerland came to the Beethoven Home in San Antonio in 2000. For the past five years, Hotz & Plotz, a two-man band from the Hofbrau Haus in Munich, has performed during the Beethoven's annual Oktoberfest.⁵⁵ More recently, a band from Wewelsfleth toured Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, and Houston in October 2002. At the Beethoven Männerchor's Fiesta Concert in April 2003, Claus D. Heide, President of the Männerchor since 1982, President of the Deutsch-Texanischer Sängerbund for the past 16 years, and Second Vice-President of the Southern District of the Nord-Amerikanischer Sängerbund, received the German-American Friendship Award from Heiner Model, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, for his efforts in promoting these goodwill tours between Germany and the United States.

One of the largest singing festivals held recently was the 111th Sängerbund des Texanischen Gebirgs-Sängerbundes. It was celebrated at the Al Amin Shriner Hall in Corpus Christi on October 19, 2002 and hosted for the first time by the city's Heimatmelodie Club.⁵⁶ The present-day festivals are much the same as those of earlier years, although usually without quite as much citywide fanfare. Nevertheless, fourth and fifth generation descendents of those Germans who first arrived in Texas in the 1840s are still bringing their children to these festivals to celebrate their German ancestral heritage.

San Antonio's Beethoven Männerchor is the longest-surviving German choir still in operation in the state of Texas. In 1948, President Guido Ransleben provided some insight into why

German Texans have worked so hard to preserve and celebrate their musical traditions when he stated:

The expression of one's innermost feelings through song is the direct expression of the joy of living, and the happiness one experiences through freedom. Freedom from toils and cares of everyday life, freedom from illness or despair, freedom from the oppression of tyrannous rulers, freedom from oneself. This freedom is best expressed in an outburst of song which comes to a neighborly understanding when several voices are combined in harmonious unison, an understanding which the human soul alone appreciates and loves. It propagates a happier more joyful well being, a more

congenial view of life. It conquers the dark retiring character of Puritanism and sows the seeds of harmony and understanding between people of all nations, races or creeds in the only universal language, the language of music.⁵⁷

This philosophy reflects the central role music played in the daily lives of the early German settlers and has held true in the music of their descendants for over 150 years of celebrating "Das Deutsche Lied" in Texas. ■

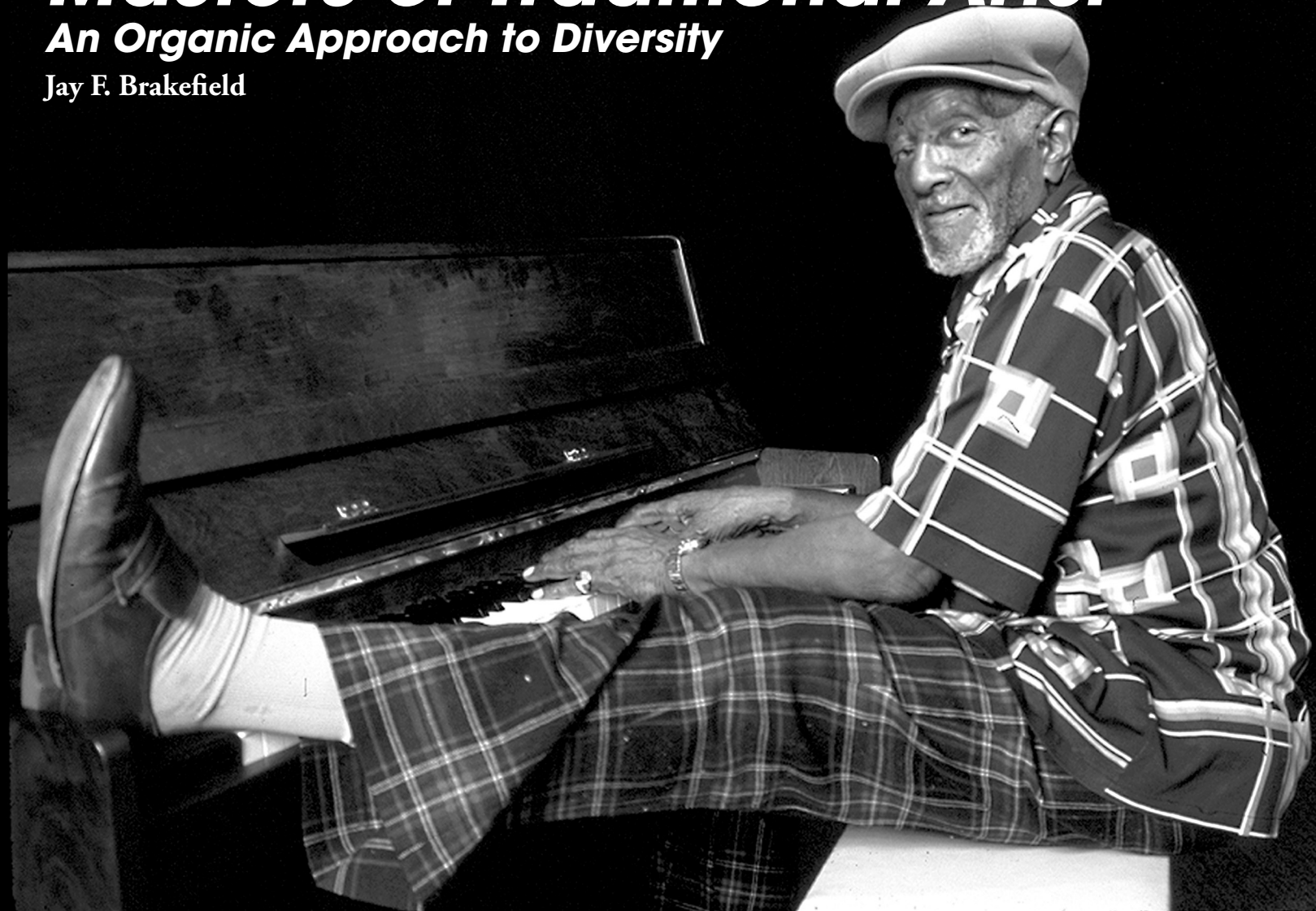
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Masters of Traditional Arts:

An Organic Approach to Diversity

Jay F. Brakefield



Alexander H. Moore, Sr., African-American Blues Pianist, Dallas, Texas, Photograph by Alan Govenar, Courtesy Documentary Arts

"Diversity" has become a popular word across the nation, as Americans continue to grapple with race and other potentially divisive social issues. Yet often as we pay lip service to inclusiveness, we enforce a numbing conformity reminiscent of the 1950s. As Diane Ravitch says in her book, *The Language Police*, in the name of sensitivity, we are sanitizing the language and producing textbooks and standardized tests so bland and inaccurate that they serve only to avoid controversy.¹ The theory behind this is that, by changing language we can shape thought; if children don't hear demeaning language they're less likely to use it. Experts disagree on the validity of this idea, but, as Ravitch points out, such an approach is doomed to failure when many, if not most, young people are also exposed to movies and song lyrics that are as explicit as the school materials are circumspect. One yearns at times for a middle ground between political correctness and gangsta rap.



Joseph Cormier, Cape Breton Fiddler, Waltham, Massachusetts, Photograph by Alan Govenar, Courtesy Documentary Arts

Texas's population is a microcosm, and its music is both an expression of that diversity and a force for cohesiveness. One indication of the importance that music plays in the state's history is that 13 of the 14 Texans selected for the prestigious National Heritage Fellowship have been musicians. The fellowships are awarded each September by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The National Heritage Fellowship program embodies the true meaning of diversity and the values we wish to impart, not only to our children, but also to our neighbors and fellow citizens. This year's awards bring to almost 300 the number of fellowships presented since the NEA created the program in 1982. The recipients come from virtually every racial and ethnic group and every region

A Program with Deep Roots

The seed of the National Heritage Fellowships was sown in 1977 when Bess Lomax Hawes, daughter of the groundbreaking Texas folklorist John A. Lomax, became director of the Folk and Traditional Arts Program at the NEA. She and Nancy Hanks, then chairman of the agency, began to explore ways to honor artists in the United States. Their model was Japan's Living National Treasures program, which singles out individual artists who are perceived as unique. Obviously, the answer was not to copy the Japanese program but to adapt it, and, for several years, members of consulting panels conducted a vigorous debate on how best to do that.

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of the country. All recipients practice art forms deeply rooted in their cultures, from music to boatbuilding and egg painting to rug weaving. A few have managed to make a living from their art; many others have worked at other jobs and pursued their passions on their own time, often at great sacrifice.

The program has grown even as the NEA has endured controversy and budget cuts in recent years. This year, the stipend for each recipient has doubled to \$20,000. Yet despite this growth and the program's virtues, it receives scant coverage in the news media. Many Americans are unaware of its existence, and it is only now making its appearance in the classroom. That will change, however, if Alan Govenar, a Dallas folklorist, writer, and filmmaker has his way.

Ultimately, it was decided to honor as many artists as possible annually. Each would receive a certificate and a check for \$5,000, "a sum that was agreed to as being simultaneously impressive but not so great as to encourage any recipient to change a lifetime's living pattern." Because government agencies are legally prohibited from giving honorary awards, the NEA decided on the word "fellowships," so that the honors would not appear to be achievement awards but "simple contributions toward the artistic future of the particular recipient." Twelve fellowships were awarded the first year. The number has remained roughly constant; this year, 10 fellowships are being awarded, as well as the Bess Lomax Hawes Award 2000 to recognize service to the folk and traditional arts field as a whole.²





Inez Catalon and her daughter, Mary, African-American Creole Singer, Kaplan, Louisiana, Photograph by Alan Govenar, Courtesy Documentary Arts

A Project that Grew

Dr. Govenar, a Massachusetts native who stayed in Texas after earning a doctorate in Arts and Humanities from UT Dallas, became involved nearly two decades ago when he began work on "Masters of Traditional Music," an award-winning 52-part radio series. For more than three years, with funding from the NEA and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Govenar traveled the country conducting interviews for the series. "All these little whirlwind trips were really very helpful," he said. "They gave me a sense of the texture of the country. The project originally had a much narrower scope. As I got more deeply into it, I saw what it could become."³

Discussions with Hawes, and her successors Dan Sheehy (now head of Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings) and Barry Bergey, led

to a plan to raise the profile of the National Fellowship Heritage program by producing a retrospective book, a new radio series and interactive media. Govenar started work on a book with Joseph Wilson, executive director of the National Council for the Traditional Arts. When Wilson had to withdraw for health reasons, Govenar moved forward and involved Documentary Arts, the nonprofit organization he founded in 1985. He contacted folklorists, writers, photographers, filmmakers, and community leaders nationwide and began the arduous task of building a database on each of the fellowship recipients. Govenar teamed up with Documentary Arts employee Andrew Dean and WGBH Radio, Boston, to produce a second 52-part radio series, "Masters of Traditional Arts," which focused not only on music, but also on artisans, dancers, and storytellers.



Over the years, Govenar interviewed about 200 of the Heritage Fellows himself and, as his work on the book and radio series moved forward, he recruited writers, editors, scholars, photographers, and filmmakers. At the same time, advancing technology expanded what could be done with the material. What originally was conceived as a CD-ROM became a DVD-ROM, a 2.67-gb disc that contains all the text in the two-volume book, more than 3,000 color and black-and-white photographs, 104 radio features, 15 hours of recorded interviews and music, and 227 edited videos. He also worked with Paddy Bowman, a curriculum specialist and director of the National Task Force on Folk Arts in Education, and Betty Carter, a nationally recognized authority on nonfiction books for young readers, to create an Education Guide that features the DVD-ROM as a learning resource.

The two-volume reference book, *Masters of Traditional Arts*, and the Education Guide with the DVD-ROM were published by ABC-CLIO in 2001 and 2002. Now, Govenar's goal is to get these materials into the schools.

"In putting together the Education Guide, I worked with a focus group of teachers and librarians, and discovered that libraries are the best way to impact the educational process. Librarians work with all students. ABC-CLIO targets school libraries nationwide. I hope that 'Masters of Traditional Arts' in all its forms—radio series, book, Education Guide and DVD-ROM—will be a catalyst for the folk and traditional forms to become a more integral part of our national dialogue.

"To further these efforts, Documentary Arts is firming up plans to donate all of its holdings on the National Heritage Fellowship program to a special collection at the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress. Moreover, I am committed to developing other books, which can help bring the Heritage Fellows more prominence in our national consciousness."

Last year, Govenar signed a contract with Candlewick Press to write and produce a color photographic young readers book (to be published in 2005) that he describes as "giant steps across America."

Entitled *Extraordinary Ordinary People*, the book will focus on five of the National Heritage Fellowship recipients—New York-based Chinese *wu-dan* performer Qi Shu Fang, Mardi Gras Indian Tootie Montana, Iowa weaver Dorothy Trumpold, Maine boatbuilder Ralph W. Stanley, and Texas-born *corona* maker Eva Castellanoz.

When asked "what keeps him going?," the question Govenar so often poses to the Heritage Fellows themselves, he says, "Each of these artists inspires me. Engaging in a dialogue with them helps me to better understand myself and to deepen my sense of the essential elements of the creative process. By bringing forth these experiences to the broadest possible public, I want others, of all ages, to realize that these qualities of life and work are possible. Mastery of whatever we can make is within reach." ■

For more information about Documentary Arts or any of the educational material mentioned here, please contact Alan Govenar at:

*Documentary Arts
P.O. Box 140244
Dallas, Texas 75214 USA
www.docarts.com*

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Great God A'Mighty! The Dixie Hummingbirds: Celebrating the Rise of Soul Gospel Music

By Jerry Zolten (Oxford University Press, 2003)

African-American gospel music's impact on popular culture is immense, though not widely appreciated by the general public. The fundamental elements of gospel have informed and shaped the evolution of various secular genres, most obviously blues and R&B but also jazz, country, rock, and pop. The rich musical legacy ranges from its distinctively emotive style of full-throated vocalizing to call-and-response rituals and heavily syncopated rhythms, as well as its rhetorical capacity to convey spiritual experience in terms that are palpably physical and intensely personalized. Such qualities have profoundly influenced mainstream American music, directly and indirectly, throughout the twentieth century.

But even among those with some generalized understanding about soul gospel's status as a major foundation of modern music, most remain only vaguely aware at best of the key figures in defining and developing the genre. And with the possible exceptions of "the father of modern gospel" (Thomas Dorsey) and the undisputed "queen" of the form (Mahalia Jackson), no such figures were more important than the amazingly long-lived group The Dixie Hummingbirds.

Jerry Zolten's new book tells the story of "the Birds" (as he often refers to the ensemble) from their South Carolina origins in the 1920s through their over seventy year existence, incorporating excerpts from his interviews with surviving members and many of their associates. Interweaving his oral historical research with facts and observations culled from analysis of old recordings and various previously published materials (as well as accounts of some of his own personal experiences and sociological musings), Zolten delivers an informative narrative, not only in regard to the career of this particular gospel group but also in relation to the music business at large. And in this latter respect, he illuminates an important Texas connection: the Birds' long-running affiliation with Don Robey's Houston-based Peacock Records during the major phase of

their career (1952-1973, which parallels the golden era of this once powerful independent record company).

Great God A'Mighty! consists of 370 pages comprising nine chapters and various appendices (including notes, bibliography, discography, general index, index of groups, and index of gospel song titles). Arranged in standard chronological order, each chapter is titled after a line from a different gospel song, and each covers a specific time period, starting with "A Wheel in a Wheel, 'Way Up in the Middle of the Air' (1916-1928)" and concluding with "Who Are We? (1977 and beyond)." It is a story that follows the group from its Deep South birthplace to the big cities of the nation (especially Philadelphia and New York), from small churches and youth talent shows to major auditoriums and recording studios.

Along the way, the Birds cross paths with numerous famous musicians in and beyond gospel, including jazz saxophonist Lester Young (with whom they gigged regularly in one of the first racially integrated nightclubs in New York), jazz icons Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington (with whom they shared hotels and restaurants while touring in the days of racial segregation), and the blues master Willie Dixon (who was the in-studio producer for several of their Chicago recording sessions). By the 1970s they were even recording with a younger generation of pop stars such as Stevie Wonder and Paul Simon (with whom they won a Grammy for the hit 1973 single "Loves Me Like a Rock").

Zolten's primary oral historical source is the now 87-year-old group founder James Davis, who at the age of twelve organized the a cappella singing group called the Junior Boys ("the first incarnation of the Dixie Hummingbirds"), which later morphed into the Sterling High School Quartet and began to tour to regional acclaim. After dropping out of school in the early 1930s to focus full-time on gospel singing, Davis gave the group its ultimate moniker. As the Dixie Hummingbirds they eventually expanded from four to five then

ultimately six members, with various other personnel changes over the years.

It is not surprising that many of the group's alumni had died by the time Zolten began his fieldwork in 1995. However, in addition to Davis, he did locate and interview two other important members of the Birds, Ira Tucker and Howard Carroll, whose memories and explanations add valuable details and personal insights. Zolten fleshes out the narrative with oral historical input from a wide variety of secondary sources. One example of special note is the former Peacock Records and Buffalo Booking Agency insider Evelyn Johnson, whose business savvy helped propel the Birds to the top level of their profession during their twenty-one year tenure with those Texas companies.

This comprehensive tale of the Dixie Hummingbirds' career, intriguing as it is on its own, is told against a larger backdrop of social history, particularly that of the modern music industry and the civil rights movement. It is the story of a young black man from the South who started out performing ancestral spirituals in church and ended up leading the preeminent soul gospel group, one that would eventually collaborate with superstars and play Carnegie Hall. Zolten has effectively placed that story in its broader cultural context, making it accessible and relevant to a broad range of readers.

Roger Wood
Houston Community College

The Roots of Texas Music

By Lawrence Clayton and Joe W. Specht. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2003

As Gary Hartman points out in his introductory chapter to *The Roots of Texas Music*, the fact that Texas was settled by many different ethnic groups who brought diverse music and culture with them, makes a book of this type a challenge to assemble. *The Roots of Texas Music* is not a chronological history of Texas music, nor is it truly a study of the roots of Texas music; rather it is a collection of specific essays dealing with limited subject areas, and written by contributors with varied specialties and viewpoints. Nonetheless, it is a good source book and a valuable contribution to Texas music scholarship.

There are but limited new ideas presented in these collected essays. For the most part, the contributors have sifted through existing major sources or, as in the case of the chapter on Texas jazz, reduced a monograph into a single chapter; however, this type of activity is important in that most general readers do not have the time or expertise to consult major sources for themselves. Someone who will not pick up an entire book on Texas jazz may be inclined to read one chapter on the subject.

The newest information comes from the chapter entitled "Black Creoles and the Evolution of Zydeco in Southeast Texas." It will come as a shock to most people, including this reviewer, that Zydeco was not entirely a product of French-speaking African Americans in Louisiana, but that there was a key Texas connection in the making of this music. It is

doubtful that this chapter will compel most people to incorporate Zydeco into the catalogue of forms of Texas music, but it was a daring move on the author's part.

The only chapter that really addresses specific roots of Texas music is the one entitled "Chicano Music, Evolution and Politics to 1950." However, it is more about politics and race relations in the Southwest than music.

It is nice to see a chapter devoted to classical music in Texas, although the author limits himself to a discussion of the German immigrants' contribution to the establishment of classical music and classical ensembles in the state. Much could have been added about composers, performers, and training programs in the state in the first half of the twentieth century.

It was a nice move to position the chapter entitled "Texan Jazz, 1920-50" near the beginning of the book, since so few people recognize Texas as a jazz center. It is unfortunate, however, that the author focused on those musicians who left the state and made their careers elsewhere, rather than on those who remained in Texas and created jazz for Texans.

One of the longest chapters in the book is devoted to Texas country music. As was the case in the jazz chapter, the author of the country music contribution focuses on country music performers who left the state rather than on those who remained in Texas.

Little is said of the tradition of cowboy ballads that fed into country music in Texas, or of the unique Texas fiddle tradition; and though the author claims unequivocally that western swing belongs to the "family" of country music, he does little to present this very important form of Texas music to his readers. Western swing is a type of fusion, a combination of country, jazz, and many other genres of music co-existing in Texas. Western swing, like other hybridized art forms, is often misunderstood. Jazz scholars ignore western swing because they consider it "country" music, and country music scholars limit it to the country field. Both sides miss an opportunity to fully address the most important and prominent form of music in Texas in the 1930s and 40s. Furthermore, this music never completely died out and has undergone a renaissance that is restoring its popularity with many Texans.

Much credit must go to Gary Hartman, whose introduction to *The Roots of Texas Music* created a framework that put all of these disparate essays into perspective. As is often the case with a book of collected essays, the writing styles and depth of information provided are not consistent throughout, but there are valuable chapters, and some new and daring viewpoints.

Jean A. Boyd
Baylor University

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

David Evans

is a Professor of Music at The University of Memphis, where he directs a doctoral program in Ethnomusicology (Regional Studies). He received his Ph. D. in 1976 from UCLA. Evans has been involved in blues research for the past forty years and is the author of *Tommy Johnson* (1971) and *Big Road Blues: Tradition and Creativity in the Folk Blues* (1982) as well as the editor of a special edition (2000) of *Black Music Research Journal* on Blind Lemon Jefferson. He is the editor of the "American Made Music" book series for the University Press of Mississippi and the winner of a Grammy Award in 2003 for Best Album Notes for his essay in "Screaming and Hollering the Blues: The Worlds of Charley Patton."

Jay F. Brakefield

has been a writer and editor of major Texas newspapers for more than three decades. He also co-authored *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where the Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged* with Alan Govenar. He now works part-time for Documentary Arts and takes his saxophone to blues jams around Dallas in a continuing quest to perform as well as write about music.

Jean A. Boyd

is a professor of music history and American music studies at Baylor University, as well as director of the academic division of the Baylor School of Music. Boyd has numerous publications on western swing, including *The Jazz of the Southwest: An Oral History of Western Swing* and *We're the Light Crust Doughboys from Burrus Mill: An Oral History*. Boyd is currently working on her third book, entitled *Southwestern Swing Bands, Then and Now*, which explores lesser known bands that have kept western swing alive and well in the Southwest.

Jean M. Heide

is a Senior Legal Secretary working in the litigation area of the Employment and Labor Department of the law firm of Holland & Knight LLP in San Antonio, Texas. Jean's passion is genealogy and early Texas history.

Luigi Monge

is a freelance teacher and translator in Genoa, Italy. He is one of the founders and secretary of the Cultural Association "Liguria Blues-Genova," a member of SIdMA (Italian Society of African American Musicologists), and a blues lecturer. In Italian he has written for the magazine *Il Blues*, for SIdMA's magazine *Ring Shout* and for the online magazine *All About Jazz Italy*. In English he has published articles in *Black Music Research Journal* (2000) and for *Peter Lang* (2001). He has contributed entries to *The Encyclopedia of the Blues*, forthcoming in 2004 from Routledge. Also forthcoming is an article for University of Illinois Press.

Roger Wood

is the author of *Down In Houston: Bayou City Blues* (University of Texas Press, 2003). His other most recent publications include a chapter in *The Roots of Texas Music* (Texas A&M University Press, 2003) and several articles in the *Handbook of Texas Music* (Texas State Historical Association, 2003). He is a regular contributor to *Living Blues* magazine.