

# FOLKSONGS OF SASKATCHEWAN

Collected and with notes by Barbara Cass-Beggs / Folkways Ethnic Library FE 4312



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Sung by Cree, Sioux and Assinboine

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FOLKSONGS OF SASKATCHEWAN

Cover design by Ronald Clyne

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## INTRODUCTION

by Barbara Cass-Beggs

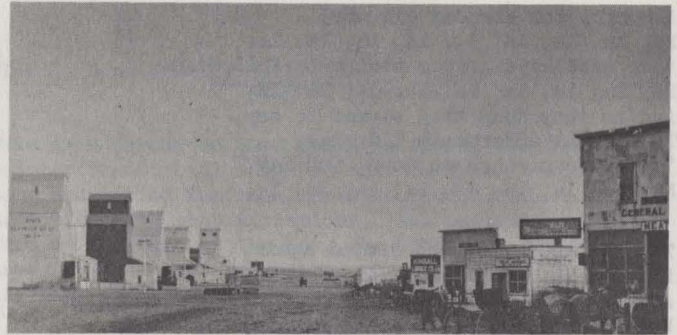
In the first fifty years of Saskatchewan's existence, the typical Saskatchewan community was the tiny prairie village dominated by the grain elevators. Now, as elsewhere, with rural electrification and the discovery of natural gas, oil, and minerals, agricultural sources do not contribute more than 60 percent of the Province's economy.

With the change in the economy there is a change in the people's way of thinking and living. It is significant that in this pattern of change, people are more concerned about their past--its stories, trails and songs. Now they want to relate what they are to what they were, and what better media is available than our folk songs?

To the local inhabitants of Saskatchewan, it seems somewhat incredible that there should be any collection of Saskatchewan folk songs. It is possibly true that there is not the wealth of folk song material here which has been, and is still being, found in the older provinces---notably Quebec, the Maritimes, and now Ontario. This seeming scarcity of songs however, may well be accounted for by the nature of the country and the manner of its settlement.

Saskatchewan is a huge province, including one-third of the agricultural land of Canada and only one-twentieth of its population. Because of the huge distances and severe weather conditions, settlers were isolated and obliged to work exceedingly hard if they were to survive. In addition, settlement in the Prairie Provinces came later and there was little direct settlement from Europe. Settlers came East first and moved on West when they could no longer make a good living or when they could no longer satisfy their longing for adventure--new land and greater riches. For the same reason, people moving into Saskatchewan did not always stay--they continued to move on further West. None of these were ideal conditions for the retention of folk song material.

Nevertheless, there are many sources of folk material scattered about the Province, and one reason for this is that the people of Saskatchewan came from a wide range of ethnic origins. In other Provinces groups from places other than the British Isles may form a small minority. In Saskatchewan they constitute almost two-thirds of the population. Most of the songs sung by these groups belong directly to the country of their origin. On the other hand, some of the larger groups - for example, the German, French, Ukrainian and Icelandic communities -- have become so much a part of the life of the Province that a number of songs which are sung in these communities are now part of Saskatchewan's folk song heritage.



Railway Street, Vanguard, 1913. (A typical prairie village at that time.)



P.R. Minifie (on binder); Frank Boyd standing behind stook. Malvern Link district, (Vanguard), 1915.

The folk song material falls roughly into four categories:

1. Songs from Great Britain, sung by people who came from Great Britain directly to Saskatchewan or who settled first in the East and moved here later.
2. Songs from other parts of Europe that have been kept and further developed in their original languages through several generations.
3. Songs made up by the local inhabitants, usually to celebrate some particular historical event in the Province, or some humorous incident, and which have remained alive in the community where they were first sung because of their relevance and folk quality.
4. Songs of the Indian and Metis people, our original inhabitants, without whom no musical picture of Saskatchewan would be complete.

This record includes a few songs from each of these four groups in an attempt to give an overall picture of what can be found in the Province of Saskatchewan.

SIDE I - Band 1: A HUNGRY FOX

Sung by Wellington Thompson of Regina.

This is a children's song inspired by one of Aesop's Fables and picked up by Wellington Thompson when he was a small boy. Many will have come across the instructive stories written by Maria Edgeworth in 1833 for small children which were much in vogue in those days, and this type of song belongs in that period.

A HUNGRY FOX

A hungry fox one day did spy,  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la,  
Some nice ripe grapes that hung full high.  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la,  
And as they hung they seemed to say,  
To him who underneath did stay,  
"If you can reach me down, you may."  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

The fox he jumped and jumped again,  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la,  
And tried to reach them, but in vain,  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la,  
He smacked his lips for more'n an hour  
But found the prize beyond his power,  
And then he said, "The grapes are sour."  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

SIDE I, Band 2: O BURY ME NOT ON THE LONE PRAIRIE

Collected from Wellington Thompson and sung by Herbert Sills, a member of the Regina folk choir.

This song, known also as the 'Dying Cowboy' is one of the best known of all cowboy songs. It was patterned on an older song called "The Ocean Burial" written by the Rev. Edwin H. Chaplin and published in 1839. His verses were set to music by George N. Allen and this song became very popular both aboard ship and in lumber camps. Many different stanzas and refrains have been noted and this one contains some interesting variations. However, the really interesting difference lies in the tune which although reminiscent of the well known melody is quite different. Mr. Thompson said this was the tune he learned from a cowboy in Saskatchewan.

Wellington Thompson was born in 1866 in the Township of Minto County, Wellington, in the Province of Ontario. He worked on the railroad and then came West and was on a farm in Pense, Saskatchewan, for forty years, coming to Regina when he retired. He died in the Spring of 1962.

His father, William, came from Banbury England where he was a brick maker.

OH BURY ME NOT ON THE LONE PRAIRIE

"Oh bury me not on the lone prairie"  
These words came slow and mournfully,  
From the tired lips of a youth that lay  
On his dying cot, at the close of the day.

He'd wasted his life til on his brow  
Death's shades were gathering quickly now.  
He thought of home and the loved ones by,  
As the cowboys gathered to see him die.

"O I want to be laid by my father's side  
In the old churchyard, on the green hillside.  
At my father's side let my grave be,  
O bury me not, on the lone prairie."

"O I want to be laid, where a mother's prayer  
And a sister's tears may mingle there.  
And my friends may come and wait for me,  
O bury me not on the lone prairie."

"It matters not, so I've oft been told,  
Where the body's laid when the heart grows cold;  
But grant oh grant this boon to me,  
And bury me not on the lone prairie."

"O bury me now" but his voice sank there,  
And they paid no heed to his dying prayer.  
In a narrow grave just six by three  
They buried him there, on the lone prairie.

Where the dewdrop falls, and the butterfly rests,  
Where the wild rose blooms on the prairie's crest.  
Where the coyotes howl, and the wind blows free,  
He's resting there, on the lone prairie.

SIDE I, Band 3: BARBARA ALLEN  
Sung by Molly Galbraith

This old Scottish ballad has probably more variations than any other similar ballad. It is usually identified as Child No. 276, and has been collected all over the British Isles and North America.

Molly Galbraith came out to Canada to Forget, Saskatchewan, in 1924. Her husband, Alvin, had come out as a boy to work with horses. He returned to Ireland in 1915 where he met and married Molly. Molly Galbraith's father was a singer, and her family home was at Ballylennon, County Donegal, where she learned this ballad.

BARBARA ALLEN

Christmas comes but once a year,  
And the green leaves they are fallin,  
Young Jammie Grove on his death bed lay  
For the love o' Barbara Allen.

"Get up, get up," her mother said,  
"Get up and go and see him."  
"O' Mother, Mother dear, do you mind yon day  
You told me for to shun him."

"Get up, get up," her father said  
"Get up and go and see him,"  
"O' Father, Father dear, do you mind yon day  
You brought out your gun to shoot him."

Slowly, slowly, she got up,  
And slowly she got on her  
And slowly to his bed side went,  
And she said "Young man you're dying".

"O yes, O yes, I feel very sick,  
But I think that you could spare me,  
One kiss from your ruby ruby lips" he said,  
"And name me, Barbara Allen."

"One kiss from me you never will see,  
If I saw your heart's blood flying,  
For in the garden walking one day,  
You slighted Barbara Allen."

"A kiss from you, I was ever true,  
And I am not denying,  
I plucked a rose for the ladies there  
But I still loved Barbara Allen."

"Look up, look up, at my bed head,  
And there you'll see hanging  
A watch and chain, a diamond ring,  
I bought for Barbara Allen."

"Look down, look down, at my bed side,  
And there'll you see lying,  
A napkin stained with my wet tears,  
For the love o' Barbara Allen."

He turned his pale face to the wall,  
And death came to him creeping  
"Mother, Mother dear," he said to her  
"Be kind to Barbara Allen."

She went out for a morning walk,  
She saw a corpse a coming,  
The birds of the air, they seemed to say,  
"Hard hearted Barbara Allen."

"O' Mother, Mother, dig my grave,  
And dig it long and narrow  
For the love that died for me today,  
I will die for him tomorrow."

One was buried in St. Paul,  
The other in Mary's Tower,  
And out of her grave grew a red red rose,  
And out of his grave grew a brier.

They grew so high, so very very high  
That they could grow no higher,  
They twisted at the top, to a True Lovers Knot  
And there they remain forever.

SIDE I, Band 4: JOHNNY SANDS  
Sung by Grace Carr

This humorous ballad was composed by John Sinclair in 1842 and was very popular in America in the nineteenth century. It was played by itinerant bands like the "Continental Vocalists" and the "Hutchison Family". It is a later version of the old British ballad usually known as "The Old Woman of Slapsadam".

JOHNNY SANDS

There was a man named Johnny Sands  
Who married Betty Hague,  
And though she brought him gold and lands  
She proved a terrible plague.

For oh she was a scolding wife,  
In love, caprice and whim.  
He'd say that he was tired of life  
Then she was tired of him!

Said he, "then I will drown myself,  
The river runs below"  
Said she "Pray do you silly elf,  
I wished it long ago.

Said he "Upon the brink I'll stand  
Do you run down the hill  
And push me in with all your might",  
Said she "my dear I will".

"For fear that I may courage lack  
And try to save my life,  
Just tie my hands behind my back".  
"I will", replied his wife.

She tied them fast, as you may think  
And when securely done,  
"Now stand", said she, "upon the brink,  
And I'll prepare to run".

Then down the hill his loving wife,  
She ran with all her force  
To push him in, he stepped aside  
And she fell in of course.

Now, splashing, dashing like a fish  
"Oh save me Johnny Sands"  
"I can't my dear, though much I wish  
For you have tied my hands,  
For you have tied my hands."

SIDE I, Band 5: "HENRY MY SON"  
Sung by Grace Carr

This is a parody on Lord Randall, one of the most popular traditional songs in America which has a long and varied European, British and American tradition with many variations. The variations turn on the name of the boy, the different poisons used, a variety of murderers, many different titles, and many different things to eat for supper.

In this particular version the name "Henry" is used and it is unusual in naming the father as the murderer. The tune has a flippant touch which suggests a parody. A somewhat similar English version, "Ennery My Son", is given on Folkways 2428.

Grace Carr's grandparents lived in Ontario, having come from England and Pennsylvania. Her father came to Winnipeg where he met her mother who parents had come out from England. In 1903 they went to Wolseley, Saskatchewan, and later took a homestead south-west of Moose Jaw where they had eight children. As there were no schools in that area, the mother taught the family everything including these songs.

Grace Carr married a farmer and has a family of two.

HENRY, MY SON

"Where have you been all day, Henry my son?  
Where have you been all day, my beloved one?"  
"In the meadow, in the meadow.  
Make my bed, I've a pain in my head  
And I want to lie down and die."

"Who gave you poisoned berries, Henry my son?  
Who gave you poisoned berries, my beloved one?"  
"Father, dear Mother, Father, dear Mother.  
Make my bed, I've a pain in my head  
And I want to lie down and die."

"What will you give your brother, Henry my son?  
What will you give your brother, my beloved one?"  
"My watch for brother, my watch for brother.  
Make my bed, I've a pain in my head  
And I want to lie down and die."

"What will you give your sister, Henry my son?  
What will you give your sister, my beloved one?"  
"Silks and satins, silks and satins.  
Make my bed, I've a pain in my head  
And I want to lie down and die."

"What will you give your mother, Henry my son?  
What will you give your mother, my beloved one?"  
"Love to Mother, love to Mother.  
Make my bed, I've a pain in my head  
And I want to lie down and die."

"What will you give your father, Henry my son?  
What will you give your father, my beloved one?"  
"A rope to hang him, a rope to hang him.  
Make my bed, I've a pain in my head  
And I want to lie down and die."

SIDE I, Band 6: LAKES OF PONTCHARTRAINE  
Sung by Mrs. Sarah Ann Bartley

This song is not very old and probably dates from the nineteenth century. It comes from the state of Louisiana and is well-known throughout North America. Instead of a "pretty little girl" it usually tells of the "Creole girl".

Sarah Ann Bell was born in Markdale, Ontario in 1872 and married James Henry Bartley in 1890. They came to Saskatchewan in 1906, living first at Davidson and then at Elbow. They had four children and she died in the spring of 1961. She had a big repertoire of songs which she and her husband continued to sing. When this one was taped, she was in hospital dying of cancer.

#### LAKES OF PONTCHARTRAINE

Through swamps of Allegheny I made my weary way,  
Over railway ties and crossings my weary feet  
did stray,  
Until at dusk of evening some higher point to gain,  
'Twas there I met that pretty little girl on the  
Lakes of Pontchartraine.

"Good evening, my pretty fair maid, my money does  
me no good.

If it wasn't for the alleigators I'd sleep out in  
the wood".

"Oh no, you're welcome, stranger, our cottage to  
remain,  
We never turn out strangers, on the Lakes of  
Pontchartraine".

She took me to her father's house; she treated  
me right well  
Her hair in golden ringlets upon her shoulders  
fell.

I tried to paint her beauty, but found it was in  
vain,  
So handsome was that pretty little girl, on the  
Lakes of Pontchartraine.

I asked her if she'd marry me; she said that could  
not be,  
She said she had a lover, and he was far at sea  
She said she had a lover and true to him she'd  
remain  
Until he came to claim her, on the Lakes of  
Pontchartraine.

"Adieu, adieu, my pretty fair maid, I ne'er shall  
see you more,  
But I'll not forget your kindness in that cottage  
by the shore.

And in some social circle, a drinking my champagne,  
I'll drink to the health of that pretty little girl  
on the Lakes of Pontchartraine."

SIDE I, Band 7: THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS  
Sung by John Thomas

John Thomas came from Osweetry, the Welsh border country, to Calgary, Alberta, where he met and married Megan Morris, and came to live at her family home of Bangor, Saskatchewan, in 1936.

Megan's parents left Wales to go to Patagonia in 1902, objecting to some types of control by the Patagonian government, they came to Saskatchewan along with other dissatisfied Welsh folk and the area where they settled they called Llewellyn and Bangor. In those early days it was a flourishing community; now there are few of the original settlers left.

John Thomas heard "The Twelve Days of Christmas" as a child in Wales. Compared with the old English cumulative carol which is now so well-known, this one has some interesting differences: "hawks a-swimming", "donkeys racing", and "roaring bulls". Compare the version on Folkways FW 6835.

#### THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS (Welsh version)

Au yr unfed dydd or Gwyliau  
Fy Nyhariad a ddanferrodd ir mi  
Petusen or pren gerlli.

Au yr ailfed dydd or Gwyliau  
Fy Nyhariad a ddanferrodd ir mi  
Dwy golomen ddof  
Petusen or pren gerlli.

Tair Iar Fraine  
Pedwer deryn Point  
Punr Modrwy aur  
Cheve wydd yn fwy  
Saith gwalch yn nofir  
Wyth ffeif yr ffeiffio  
Naw dyn yr dawnsio  
Deg drwm yr drwmir  
Un nullerday yr rasio  
Deuddey Harw yr rhuo

On the first day of Christmas  
My true love sent to me  
A partridge in a Pear Tree.

On the second day of Christmas  
My true love sent to me  
Two tame doves  
And a partridge in a Pear Tree.

Three French Hens, etc.  
Four Storm Cocks, etc.  
Five GOLDEN RINGS, etc.  
Six Live Geese, etc.  
Seven Hawks a-swimming, etc.  
Eight Fifes Fifing, etc.  
Nine Gents Dancing, etc.  
Ten Drums a-drumming, etc.  
Eleven Donkeys Racing, etc.  
Twelve Roaring Bulls, etc.

#### THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS (English version)

On the first day of Christmas  
My true love sent to me  
A Partridge in a Pear Tree.

On the second day of Christmas  
My true love sent to me  
Two Turtle Doves and  
A Partridge in a pear tree.

Three French Hens, etc.  
Four Calling Birds, etc.  
Five GOLD RINGS, etc.  
Six Geese a-laying, etc.  
Seven Swans a-swimming, etc.

Eight Maids a-milking, etc.  
Nine Ladies dancing, etc.  
Ten Lords a-leaping, etc.  
Eleven Pipers piping, etc.  
Twelve Drummers drumming, etc.

SIDE I, Band 8: THE ORPHAN GIRL  
Sung by John H. Gerwing

This song is not contained in any German folk song book that Mr. Gerwing possesses and he says it is an old song that he heard his father sing. He himself sang it as he did the farm work or to keep awake when he was driving the cattle home at night. He sings others which are in the little German Song book 'Klingende Heimat' published in Hamburg.

Mr. Gerwing was born in 1853. His father came from Germany to Minnesota and took a homestead. He was the first passenger on the new railway to Winnipeg. He had a family of 12. John Gerwing came to the Lake Lenore district in Saskatchewan in 1903 because of the German Catholic Settlement there known as St. Peter's Colony. Mr. Gerwing married and had eight boys and four girls. All read and speak German.

THE ORPHAN GIRL

Nur noch ein mal, in diesen meinen leben,  
O, konnt ich doch meine eltern wieder sehen.  
Was wurde ich dafur nicht alles geben  
O konnte dies nur einmal noch geschehn.

Ich wurde sie als dann mit holden blicken  
Und o, mit welchlichen kindlichen vertrau  
All hier an meinen treuen busen drucken  
Und wonnevol dan in ihr antlitz schauen.

"O mutter die du mich in schmerz geboren,  
Ich weis du liebtest mich gewiss recht sehr.  
Ich habe dich auf immer nun verloren,  
Und auch mein vater lebt schon langst nicht mehr.

Drumm kinder die ihr stets das gluck geniesset,  
Das euere eltern noch am leben sind  
Sorgt das ihr ihre tage stets versuzet,  
Wie es sich gehurt fur yedes gutekind."

If just once more in my life  
I could see my parents again,  
What would I give,  
If only this could be accomplished?

I would gaze at them now as then, with fondest  
love,  
And oh, with such childlike trust,  
I would press them to my heart  
And with childlike joy, I would gaze at their  
countenances.

"O Mother, you who bore me with such pain,  
I know your love for me was always true,  
But now I have lost you forever,  
My father, too, has long since been gone.

Therefore, children, you who are so fortunate  
To have your parents living still,  
Take care to see that their days are all happy,  
As it behooves every good child."

Translated by Rosemary Gerwing - his daughter.

SIDE I, Band 9: IN THE CARPATHIAN HILLS  
Sung by Patricia Pasieka

This is a folk song which all the family sing and Patricia has learned it from them and sings it in Ukrainain.

The Ukrainain communities take their culture very seriously. They learn Ukrainain reading and writing, they speak the language and they learn the folk songs and dances from their parents.

The family is Greek Catholic. As a child, Patricia's mother came from the west Ukraine in 1929. Her father was born in Arran, Saskatchewan, but his parents also came from the Province of Sokal in the West Ukraine. They now live in Regina and Patricia was born in Regina in 1947.

SONG: IN THE CARPATHIAN HILLS

Stanza 1

Tells of the desirability of living in the Carpathian Mountains from where one may get a panoramic view of the countryside.

Refrain:

The gentle warbling of the birds is heard against the background of the sounds of the shephards flute, this adding to the gaiety of the surroundings.

Stanza 11

Compares the beauty of the Carpathian girls to the beauty of the poppy flowers and makes reference to the songs and gaiety of their surroundings, and lively dances.

SIDE I, Band 10: THE XMAS SONG

The Xmas Song, sung by Andy Halapatz is well known in the Ukrainain community and is now included in the Ukrainain hymn book.

Mr. Halapatz's parents imigrated to Canada from the Ukraine in 1928. Later they settled in Saskatchewan, moving to Regina, where Andy was born in 1934. They are members of the Ukrainain Community and Greek Catholics.

Ukrainian songs are very varied. Originally the Ukraine was a Cossack state - and the Cossacks were the first rebellious peasants in Poland who escaped from feudal states to seek freedom in the Eastern Steppes.

As a freedom loving people, they continued to travel, coming to Canada in search of greater freedom.

SIDE I, Band 11: A SONG OF SUMMER  
Sung by Mrs. Olina Asgeirsson Struthers

The first Icelandic immigration to Canada occurred in the year 1875 when a small group settled in Gimli, Manitoba. It included Mrs. Struthers' maternal grandmother who came as a young child with her parents. With the opening up of homestead lands in the Canadian West, new communities were founded in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The major Icelandic groups in Saskatchewan are in the Church-bridge area and the Quill Lake district.

Mrs. Struthers' father is a relative newcomer as he came to Winnipeg directly from Iceland shortly before the first world war when he homesteaded at Mozart, Saskatchewan, where her parents still farm.

Icelandic is still spoken and read by Mozart and these songs are frequently heard at community gatherings. One of the major social events of the year is the celebration of "The First Day of Summer" when this "Song of Summer" is sung. It says something like this: "Oh, my land is beautiful on a summer day. Green leaves soften the landscape and a flock of sheep plays on the meadow. The hills lift their blue expanse into the bright sunshine, the ponds listen, the meadows glow and all is beautiful."

SIDE I, Band 12: CHANSON DE LA GRENOUILLERE

Pierre Falcon's "Chanson de la Grenouillere" sung by Father Rufin Turcotte.

References:

Pierre Falcon's Chanson de la Grenouillere collected by Margaret Complin of Regina and published in transactions of the Royal Society of Canada 1939.

Other versions are found in Songs of Old Manitoba - Margaret Arnett MacLeod - published 1959.  
Falcon's Song - Canada's Story in Song - Edith Fowke, Alan Mills and Helmut Blume - published 1960.

This song, which has been the occasion of much research, rightly belongs in Manitoba, but I am including it here for the following reasons:

1. Margaret Complin, who did much valuable research on it, was a Regina woman.
2. We know that a clerk who lived at Fort Qu'Appelle heard the older Metis of Lebret and Katepwa singing it in 1809. These Metis were descendents of French and Scottish Nor'Westers who came from the White Horse plain to Qu'Appelle, the parents of many of them having left Red River in the early seventies.
3. Pierre Falcon was essentially a bard of the Prairies and the Prairies, as such, do not take any great account of Provincial divisions.

The song as sung here and given by Margaret Complin was taken down from Falcon's grandchildren by Father Pierre Picton of St. George's down from Falcon's grandchildren by Father Pierre Picton of St. George's.

The Metis in the Qu'Appelle Valley from whom I collected the other Metis songs on this record, knew of this song, but did not know it well enough to sing it, so it is sung by a French Priest in Regina who knows many of the old folk songs. He sings the whole song and one verse each of the two variations of the melody.

CHANSON DE LA GRENOUILLERE

Voulez-vous écouter chanter  
Un' chanson de vérité?  
L'dix-neuf de juin, la band' des Bois-brûles  
Sont arrivés comm' des braves guerriers.

Arrivant à la Grenouillère',  
Avons pris trois prisonniers.  
Trois prisonniers des Arkans  
Qui sont ici pour piller notr' pays.

Etant su' l'point de débarquer,  
Deux d'nos gens s'mirent à crier.  
Deux de nos gens se sont mis à crier:  
Voilà l'Anglais qui veut nous attaquer!

Aussitôt avons déviré,  
Avons 'té les recontrer.  
J'avons cerne la band' des grenadiers,  
Sont immobil's, ils sont tout demontes.

J'avons agi comm' gens d'honneur,  
Envoyai ambassadeur:  
Le Gouverneur, voulez-vous arrêter  
Un p'tit moment, nous voulons vous parler.

L'Gouverneur qu'était enrage,  
Dit à ses soldats: Tirez!  
Le premier coup, c'est l'Anglais qu'a tiré,  
L'ambassadeur a manqué de tuer.

L'Gouverneur qui s'croit empereur  
Veut agir avec rigueur;  
Le Gouverneur qui se croit empereur,  
A son malheur agit avec rigueur.

N.B. Cet arrangement des paroles a été fait par le R.P. Rufin Turcotte, O.F.M. pour être chanté sur l'air censé original.

SIDE I, Band 13: CHANSON DE RIEL  
Sung by Joseph Gaspard Jeannotte

This is purported to have been written by Riel when he was in prison.

In one sense the history of Riel is a romantic one although to many people he was a trouble maker, to others he was a hero and the Metis of the Qu'Appelle think of him kindly and with veneration. We drank to his memory before this song was sung (which to my knowledge has not been recorded before).

Soon after confederation, the new Dominion Government arranged to take over Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company. To prepare for new settlers, land was marked off which cut across the Metis farms. Fearing that they were going to lose their land, they protested to the Dominion Government. They received no satisfactory reply, so they began to organize. Led by Louis Riel, they set up a provisional government of "The Republic of the North West", and drew up terms for uniting with Canada. Unluckily Riel executed a young Orangeman, Thomas Scott by name, and this enraged Protestant Ontario. Prime Minister MacDonald sent Colonel Wolseley out to the Red River with twelve hundred soldiers and when they reached Fort Garry in 1870 Riel fled to the U.S.A. He returned to Canada many times to visit his family and friends and he was even elected to parliament in 1873 and 1874 but Eastern hostility made it impossible for him to take his seat. From 1874 to 1879 he was under sentence of banishment. After that he returned from time to time, and in 1885 came back to lead the Saskatchewan Metis in the North West Rebellion. He was finally taken prisoner, imprisoned, and hung in Regina in November, 1885.



He wrote a number of verses and some songs. A song to his sister is included in Canada's Story in Song and a "Song of the Metis Maiden" in Songs of Old Manitoba.

Many of the older Metis in the Qu'Appelle Valley were followers of Louis Riel and his songs were handed on and remembered. Joseph Gaspard Jeanotte's grandparents came to Saskatchewan from Dakota in 1905. He lives in Lebret and sings at all local social occasions.

CHANSON DE RIEL  
(Riel Song)

C'est au chantier bataille,  
J'ai fait cri' mes douleurs.  
Vou' est 'cun dout' surpasse,  
Ca fait frémir les coeurs.

Or je r'çois t'une lettre  
De ma chérie maman.  
J'avais ni plum' ni encre  
Pour pou(r) voir leur z'écriture.

Or je pris mon ganife,  
Je le trempi dans mon sang,  
Pour écrire' t'un' vieu' lettre  
De ma chérie maman.

Quand ell' r'coivra cette lettre  
Tou(s) écriture en sang,  
Ses yeux baignant dans larmes,  
Son coeur s'en va mourant.

S'y jett' à g'noux par terre  
En (ap)pelant sis enfants:  
Priez pour votr' p'tit frère  
Qui l'est au régiment.

Mourir, s'est pour mourir(e),  
Chacun meurt à son tour;  
J'aim' mieux mourir en brave,  
Faut tou(s) mourir un jour.

Chantée par Joseph Gaspard JEANNOTTE.  
Words transcribed from tape - Father Rufin Turcotte.

It is on the battle field,  
I cried my pains,  
You no doubt surpass yourself,  
It makes the heart sudder.

So I receive a letter,  
From my dear mother,  
I had no feather, no ink,  
To write to them.

So I take my pen knife,  
I dipped it in my blood,  
To write an old letter,  
To my dear mother.

When she will receive this letter,  
All written in blood,  
Her eyes bathed in tears,  
Her heart dying slowly

She throws herself on her knees,  
Calling her children;  
Pray your little brother,  
Who is at the regiment.

To die is for dying.  
Each die on is turn,  
I prefer to die as a brave,  
We all have to die one day.

SIDE II, Band 1: A POOR LONE GIRL IN SASKATCHEWAN

Sung by Mrs. Anne Halderman of Shaunavon. As mentioned in the introduction, the settlers moved west - and then when southern Saskatchewan and Alberta were settled, they moved north to the Peace River country, the Yukon and the North-west Territories.

This song was first sung by Anne's mother in Ontario as "The Poor Lone Girl in Ontario" (see a similar folk song collected by Edith Fowke - "The Poor Little Girls of Ontario" Folkways FM 4005) and brought to Manitoba in 1882 when she came West. Anne remembers singing it as a small child. Later Anne came to Saskatchewan to teach and changed the words to suit the Saskatchewan picture. All the people mentioned are local people who lived around the Regina Beach area.

Ann Halderman is married and has two children.

A POOR LONE GIRL IN SASKATCHEWAN

Oh, have you not heard of that plaguey pest,  
That's known by the name of the Great North West?  
For that wond'rous land of the setting sun,  
Has taken my beaus away, every one.

CHORUS:  
For one by one they have all cleared out,  
Hoping to better themselves, no doubt,  
Caring but little how far they have gone,  
From a poor lone girl in Saskatchewan.

First, I was sweet on a man named Len,  
He owned a good farm, but he had a yen  
To see the Peace Country and try his luck,  
Now he's at Grande Prairie, and here I'm stuck.

(CHORUS)

There was dear Billie Mack now, I thought okay,  
I hinted he'd better get spliced and stay  
But he said to me, "though I think you're pretty -  
I have urgent business in Dawson City."

(CHORUS)

My lover, Ern Seifert, had rheumatiz,  
In spite of that, I was bound to be his,  
But with Rawleigh's liniment he cured the ache,  
And soon he was headed for Great Bear Lake.

(CHORUS)

Then there was Bob Black, oh, what a catch!  
I thought it would be "the perfect match",  
But he seemed in no hurry to take a wife,  
Now - he's prospecting at Yellowknife.

(CHORUS)

I've made reservations with T.C.A.,  
I'm off to the North and I'm going to stay,  
I won't give up till I find a mate,  
If I have to follow to Bering Strait.

SIDE II, Band 2: FLUNKY JIM

Sung by Mel Bowker, grandson of Dan Ferguson of Saskatoon.

Here is a song from the depression years when the government paid a bounty on gopher tails.

The words were written by Dan Ferguson, an early pioneer who came to Saskatchewan from Ontario in 1902 to homestead at Aylesbury. Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson had twelve children, all of whom trapped gophers and collected money for their tails. The song was written about Gordon who was six at the time and always tagged along with the others.

Dan Ferguson was born in 1875

The tune is sung to an adaptation of the well known Irish folk song - "The Wearing of The Green."

I AM THE FLUNKY OF THE YARD  
(GOPHER TAILS)

I am the flunky of the house, they call me Flunky  
Jim,  
You'll find me knocking about the yard in a hat  
without a brim;  
My overalls are shabby and I have no shirt at all,  
But I'm going to get a new outfit with my gopher  
tails next fall.

REFRAIN:

Knocking around the yard, boys, knocking around  
the yard,  
Isn't that an easy job? Don't fool yourself,  
old pard

My overalls are shabby and I have no shirt at all,  
But I'm going to get a new outfit with my gopher  
tails next fall.

At night when Pa comes from the field, he calls  
for Flunky Jim,  
He pats me on my curly head, and my hat without  
a brim.  
He's apt to say O Flunky Jim, your clothes are far  
too small,  
But I'm going to get my new outfit with my gopher  
tails next fall.

I counted all my gopher tails, I've almost got  
enough  
To buy a hat, a fancy shirt and pants that have  
a cuff  
And then I'll hand my old ones down, they really  
are too small  
Oh I'll be swell when once I sell my gopher tails  
next fall.

SIDE II, Band 3: SASKATCHEWAN  
Sung by Jim Young of Regina.

Here is another song of the depression years -  
the 1930's called the 'Dirty Thirties' by those  
in the west. This version is included in Canada's  
Story in Song.

A succession of dry years had turned the top soil  
into dust, crops and soil disappeared in the high  
winds and any grain that escaped was eaten by  
grasshoppers. The farmers' experience was written  
into this song by William W. Smith, a Swift Current  
business man - using the well known hymn tune  
'Beulah Land' as his melody.

"Saskatchewan" was based on an older parody called  
'Dakota Land' that had circulated in the States,  
and Mrs. Charles Budle of Watrous Saskatchewan,  
says that in 1905 when she went on a homestead at  
Dana, Saskatchewan, the people in that area were  
singing a shorter version of the song then, under  
the title "Oh Prairie Land".

Alberta and Manitoba both have similar ditties.

It is interesting to note that this popular hymn  
tune was also used to carry Suffragette words dur-  
ing their campaign.

SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan, the land of snow,  
Where winds are always on the blow,  
Where people sit with frozen toes,  
And why we stay here no one knows.

CHORUS:

Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan,  
There's no place like Saskatchewan,  
We sit and gaze across the plains,  
And wonder why it never rains,  
And Gabriel blows his trumpet sound,  
He says: "The rain, she's gone around".

Our pigs are dyin' on their feet,  
Because they have no feed to eat,  
Our horses, though of bronco race,  
Starvation stares them in the face.

The milk from cows has ceased to flow,  
We've had to ship 'em East, you know,  
Our hens are old and lay no eggs,  
Our turkeys eat grasshopper legs.

But still we love Saskatchewan,  
We're proud to say we're native ones,  
So count your blessings drop by drop,  
Next year we'll have a bumper crop.

SIDE II, Band 4: E.P. WALKER

Sung by Frank Hanson, now of Regina, formerly of  
Swift Current.

This song was collected from Mrs. Winnifred (W.G.)  
Turner of Swift Current and it was impossible to  
find any one mentioned in the song who was still  
available to record it.

The song was composed in the fall of 1912, during  
the delays of threshing, by the young homesteaders  
who made up the threshing crew. E.P. Walker's  
threshing machine was the first to be brought into  
the newly settled district of Malvern Link, north  
east of the town of Vanguard. All the names are  
authentic and so are the incidents which happened  
to those mentioned. The song was very popular and  
is still remembered. Garscott and Advance were  
makes of threshing machines.

The Mr. William Turner mentioned was Mrs. Turner's  
husband.

E.P. Walker homesteaded north east of Vanguard in  
1910 and the "little engineer" was his son.

The tune is the well-known American song, "Casey  
Jones".

E.P. WALKER (Tune - Casey Jones)

Come all ye farmers, come all that can,  
If you want to hear the story of a thresherman.  
E.P. Walker was the thresher's name -  
On a 36-60, boys, he lost his claim.  
Chester called Walker at half-past four,  
"Come on, old man, let us thresh some more"  
The old man cried, "Where shall it be?"  
"Oh, let us pull east, and thresh Minifie".

CHORUS:

E.P. Walker mounted to the separator,  
E.P. Walker, with his oilcan in his hand,  
E.P. Walker mounted to the separator,  
Took his farewell trip to the threshers' land.

The belt caught Walker and it gave him quite a scare -  
Held him by the arm with his feet in the air!  
He yelled and he waved with all his might.  
But the little engineer was out of sight.  
He threshed for the farmers from far and near  
But the big drive-belt E.P. Walker did fear!  
So he hired a horse from a farmer near,  
And off to Vanguard he did steer.

When the threshers left Hudson's Clifford was sore,  
He said, "I hope to Gosh I see Walker No more,"  
Ernie said it sure was a shame  
For the work that they did on that piece of grain.  
When Walker got ready to leave home again  
He said to his men, "Let us get a-going,  
For dear knows when we'll get back here again  
If the darn old separator acts the same".

Walker pulled to Jones' to thresh his wheat  
Before he got started it was time to eat  
So after dinner they went out to run,  
But Jerry said to Walker "She's on the bum",  
Wilford Scott took off his team,  
Said it was the worst outfit he'd ever seen.  
Wilford said the threshing he would miss  
As long as E.P. Walker was on the threshers' list.

E.P. Walker said the strain was tense -  
Then Jerry dropped in the big monkey-wrench!  
Jerry said, "It's gone out the blower" -  
Walker said, "Don't drop any more".  
The carriers slipped and broke a little trip,  
As it went through the cylinder, rip, rip, rip!  
She tore and she ground - Walker yelled, "shut her  
down!"  
But the little engineer couldn't be found.

He yelled for grain and said it was a shame  
That you couldn't thresh flax in the gol-darn rain,  
He told the boys to put on their coats,  
For he was going out to thresh some oats.  
The farmers said that he'd go broke.  
Walker said, "It's no darn joke".  
He rubbed his arm, said it still was sore,  
As a brand-new sieve went rattling out the blower.

Walker said that he couldn't thresh Boyd,  
When Frank heard that he looked annoyed,  
He went to Walker and said "What do you mean!"  
Walker said "It's the darn old machine",  
As Chester rode the disc he often thought  
"How can I ever learn to run the old Garscott?"  
The old man said, "Lookahere, my boy,  
I can't let you play with that expensive toy!"

CHORUS:

E.P. Walker mounted to the separator,  
E.P. Walker, with his oilcan in his hand,  
E.P. Walker mounted to the separator,  
Took his farewell trip to the thresher's land.

When Leon Jones started to thresh,  
He said sure as fate something would smash.  
While they were there, it started to rain,  
They tried to thresh flax, but they tried it in vain.  
Turner's wheat was still on the ground,  
He feared very much Walker'd never get around.  
A.W. Annis said he wouldn't take a chance,  
So he went to Regina and bought an Advance.

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 6: THE CIVIL WAR  
Sung by William Bock

William Bock, better known as Bill, was born in Bruce County, Ontario, in 1884. In 1902 he came west and got a homestead in the Stoney Beach County, Saskatchewan. He worked as a lumberjack in the Rockies, the building trade in Vancouver, and went to the Yukon gold prospecting. In 1908, when the Palliser Triangle was thrown open for homesteading, he bought 480 acres near Eastend, which has been his home ever since. He was elected to the House of Commons as a Liberal in 1927 and came out in 1930. Since then he has worked with the P.F.R.A. (Prairie Farm Administration). In addition to making up songs for all occasions, he makes up poetry and writes humorous articles. His Book of Humbug is well-known in Saskatchewan.

THE CIVIL WAR

Eastend was once a happy town where harmony and  
love  
Was busting out at all the seams and in the trees  
above.  
The doves of peace were nesting, there were no  
signs of strife  
For each man loved his neighbour (and sometimes  
his neighbour's wife!)

But a sudden change has come about, storm clouds  
are in the sky.  
Nobody stops to kiss a body coming through the rye.  
And each man eyes his neighbour with malice and  
with hate,  
Housewives no longer spill the beans across the  
garden gate.

CHORUS:

We had a war, a civil war,  
Folks asked us what we all were fighting for.  
Most of us wanted water mains, and sewers and  
bath tubs, too,  
While the rest of them decided they would make  
the slop pails do.

This tension in the atmosphere in nineteen fifty-  
six  
Was not caused by religion or party politics.  
The real cause of the civil war was civic growing  
pains,  
And issuing debentures for sewer and water mains.

With sewer pipes versus slop pails, the town was  
split in two.  
With profane propaganda the air was often blue.  
The sewer-and-water faction had a sanitary plank.  
They said shallow wells and slop pails and toilets  
simply stank.

(CHORUS)

But those slop pailers were stubborn, they fought  
with tooth and nail.  
They said our nitwit council should be languishing  
in jail.  
They told how high taxation and installation fees,  
Would land us in the poorhouse, and they'd throw  
away the keys.

But when the vote was counted, slop-pailers met  
defeat.  
And drag-lines started tearing up our quiet village  
street.

Now, once more peace and harmony replaced the grapes of wrath.  
So when next you visit Eastend, just stop in and have a bath.

(CHORUS)

SIDE II, Band 6: THE BACKWOODSMAN

Sung by Robert C. Paul. Recorded by Edith Fowke in Toronto, 1958.

Mr. Paul, who had lived in Macdowell, a small Saskatchewan town near Prince Albert, learned this song from a Scottish half-breed named Billy Smith. He sings it in an approximation of the dialect Billy used, in which the "s" and "sh" sounds are interchanged.

This song has been collected all over the north-eastern States and in Ontario, but the Saskatchewan version may be the farthest it has travelled west. It always follows a constant pattern--about hauling wood and going to a dance--and it always uses local place names. For further information see the Ontario version included in "Lumbering Songs from the Ontario Shanties" (Folkways FM 4052).

Twas in the spring of eighteen hundred and ninety-three

As I was hauling cordwood to Macdowell,  
Oh I jumped upon my old gray mare  
And I didn't draw breath till I reached Prince Albert.

(Boy, that must have been a long breath, eh?)

Oh the bars they being open, the whiskey flowing free,  
As soon as I had one glassful, another was filled for me.  
Oh I got so drunk in Prince Alberts I couldn't hold no more.

Oh I met some old acquaintance, their names I dare not tell,  
They gave me an invitation that night to a swell,  
They gave me an invitation, as you can plainly see,  
To the dance at Prince Albert where the fiddler was to be.

Oh my old father followed me, so the people say,  
He musta had a pilot or he'd never have found the way,  
He looked in every howling corner wherever he found a light  
Till his grey old locks were wet by the dew of the night.

SIDE II, Band 7: SAULTEAUX LULLABY  
Sung by Mrs. Dorothy Francis.

This song was sung by Dorothy's mother who had learn it from her mother. However, the melody has a European flavor and may have been influenced by the music of the missionaries.

It is sung in Sauteaux and means: "Go to sleep my little one, my little baby, do not stay awake".

Dorothy Francis, a Metis, was born on the Way-way Sapapsee Reservation in Manitoba. She married Joe Francis in 1930 and lived on the Cowenon Reservation, later moving to Regina where they were enfranchised in 1953.

Here is a rough outline of the Indian lullaby, written phonetically and without the repetitions:

Wah we ah shee, na go zit  
Dask ka a peeche ke sha  
Wane e muk - nee nee  
Chan e aiz

SIDE II, Band 8: VICTORY SONG  
Cree.

Sung by Mrs. Roderick Thomas. This is a song which has been remembered from her grandparents' time. They were Cree Indians, living on one of the Saskatchewan Reserves, and originally coming from Naitoba. Mr. Thomas, a Metis, now lives in Regina and is enfranchised.

SIDE II, Bands 9, 10, 11:

Recorded by Gertrude Murray and Rj Staples amongst the Cree, Sioux and Assiniboine Indians during a performance at a Pow-wow in the Quappelle Valley.

SIDE II, Band 9: THE WHIPPING SONG

SIDE II, Band 10: THE GRASS DANCE

SIDE II, Band 11: THE SONG OF WORSHIP



Ann Halderman, Bill Bock and Barbara Cass-Beggs at the piano with others.



Grace Carr

Thanks are due to:

Dr. Richard Johnston Faculty of Music, Toronto University, who was the first person to record folk songs in Saskatchewan. Three songs - "A Hungry Fox", "Flunky Jim" and "The Dying Cowboy" were first collected by him.

Mrs. Edith Fowke, well known as a folk song collector and writer, (who although she works in Toronto now, was a native of Saskatchewan) and gave invaluable help on some of the folk song notes.

Alan Turner, Saskatchewan Archivist, who has contributed historical data and photographs.

Rj. Staples, Supervisor of Music for the Province of Saskatchewan, who has contributed three Indian songs. "Whipping Song", "Grass Dance" and "Song of Worship".

Jean Hinds, C.B.C. Commentator, who has contributed the Indian "Victory Song" and, through her programs, has drawn attention to the collecting of folk songs.

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