

American Banjo

Three-Finger and Scruggs Style



*Featuring: Smiley Hobbs, J.C. Sutphin,
Junie Scruggs, Stuffy Jenkins,
Oran Jenkins, Joe Stuart,
Lucy Richardson, Don Bryant,
Pete Kuykendall, Eugene Cox,
Vernonia Stoneman Cox, Mike Seeger,
Dick Rittler, Kenny Miller,
Eric Weissberg*



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**AMERICAN BANJO THREE FINGER AND
SCRUGGS STYLE****SMILEY HOBBS**

1. Shortening Bread 0:44
2. Pig in a Pen 1:10
3. Train 45 2:18
4. Rosewood Casket 1:25
5. Cotton Eye Joe 1:39

J.C. SUTPHIN

6. Don't Let Your Deal Go Down
0:58
7. Under the Double Eagle 1:52
8. I Don't Love Nobody 1:30

JUNIE SCRUGGS

9. Sally Goodin/Sally Ann 1:40
10. Cripple Creek 1:46

SNUFFY JENKINS

11. Cumberland Gap 1:30
12. John Henry 1:30
13. Chicken Reel 1:12
14. Shortening Bread 1:21
15. John Henry 1:06
16. Lonesome Road Blues 1:12
17. Kansas City Kitty/Big Eared
Mule 0:56/1:07
18. Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star 1:20
19. Careless Love 1:16
20. Sally Ann/Sally Goodin 1:08/0:45

OREN JENKINS

21. Home, Sweet Home 1:02
22. Spanish Fandango 1:22
23. Cripple Creek 1:15
24. Down the Road 1:04
25. Liza Jane 1:28
26. Hey, Mr Banjo 0:47
27. Bugle Call Rag 1:03

JOE STUART

28. Cackling Hen/Cumberland Gap
1:02/1:00

LARRY RICHARDSON

29. Dear Old Dixie 1:15
30. Little Maggie 1:12
31. Take Me Back to the Sweet
Sunny South 1:16
32. Bucking Mule 1:19
33. Lonesome Road Blues 1:57

DON BRYANT

34. Turkey in the Straw 0:56
35. Jenny Lynn 0:45

PETE KUYKENDALL

36. Irish Washerwoman 0:58

EUGENE COX

37. Wildwood Flower 1:32

VERONICA STONEMAN COX

38. Lonesome Road Blues 1:10

MIKE SEEGER

39. Ground Hog (Bob Baker, vocal)
1:33

DICK RITTLER

40. Cindy 1:42

KENNY MILLER

41. Little Pal :57
42. Ruben's Train 1:30

ERIC WEISSBERG

43. Jesse James/Hard Ain't it Hard
2:29



These 48 tunes played by 15 banjo players were recorded in 1956 by Mike Seeger and originally released in 1957 as Folkways 2314. It was the first bluegrass album ever released and this historic reissue contains 16 previously unissued tracks.

Explanatory notes enclosed.

Recorded on location in 1956 by Mike Seeger

Edited in 1990 by Mike Seeger
Mastered by Doug Sax, The Mastering Lab
Notes by Ralph Rinzler & Mike Seeger
Updated notes by Mike Seeger
Cover Design, Daphne Shuttleworth
Cover Photo, Carl Fleischhauer
Joe Stuart
Reissue production by Matt Walters.



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AMERICAN BANJO THREE FINGER & SCRUGGS STYLE

Smithsonian/Folkways SF 40037

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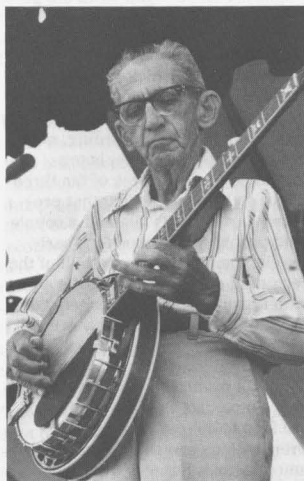
Parts of this album were originally issued in 1956 on Folkways 2314 © Smithsonian/Folkways 1990

New selections, updated and revised notes by Mike Seeger and Ralph Rinzler.

Cover art: Daphne Shuttleworth
Photo: Snuffy Jenkins at the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife, 1981. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.

Recorded on location in 1956 by Mike Seeger.

Edited in 1990 by Mike Seeger.
Mastered by Doug Sax at The Mastering Lab, Hollywood, CA.
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INTRODUCTION

During the fifteen year period from about 1930 to 1945, the 5-string banjo was not much used in commercial country music, and its use in general was at low ebb. In 1945, the hard-driving country mandolin player and singer, Bill Monroe and his band, the Bluegrass Boys, were joined by Earl Scruggs who was developing an exciting new three finger banjo picking style. His playing gave an extra spark to the group and created a sensation on their Grand Ole Opry performances and road shows. Scruggs worked for about three years with Monroe until he and Lester Flatt, then Monroe's lead singer and guitar player, organized their own group. In the late forties and early fifties these two groups inspired others to take up this style of music, characterized in large part by inclusion of this style of banjo picking. This style of music became somewhat of a rallying point for musicians and fans of the older forms of acoustic southern country music, and in the mid-fifties it acquired the name "bluegrass" since it was initially the music played by Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys. Monroe was from Kentucky, the Blue Grass State. The term "bluegrass" basically refers to an acoustic southern string band consisting of a guitar and string bass, used primarily for rhythm, and a mandolin, banjo and one or two fiddles for backup and melody "breaks" or instrumentals. The musicians are also singers, solo or in combinations as large as a

quartet. Instrumentals and vocals are performed in specific new styles evolved in Monroe's band that are built on the foundation of oldtime southern string and vocal music. The songs and melodies, if not actually folk or "old-time" songs, are generally related to them or to the more down-to-earth kinds of professional country music of the same era.

The banjo and its music had come over from Africa with the slaves, and as far as we know was played almost exclusively by African Americans until the early 1800s. During the mid 1800s, European and English American people became intrigued with the instrument. The quiet, home-made gourd "banjer" evolved during the next 100 years and became a louder, European-style frame drum instrument, usually manufactured with hard wood and lots of metal. The music of the banjo changed a great deal too, as it became Americanized and spread throughout the country and to the cities in the late 1800s. In the rural South, the old African-based style of "rapping" (or "frailing") the banjo, and possibly some picking styles, were learned from both Black southerners and white minstrel-style musicians. As a result of this informal transmission, a great variety of styles evolved in the South in the last half of the 19th century and the early 1900s. In the cities and especially in the North, banjo music was often written and styles seemed to have become more formalized. In the late 1800s, banjo-playing virtuosos played European style concert music on the banjo as well as ragtime, novelty and black face minstrel songs. Most of this was a finger-picking style of music that then fed back into rural southern tradition in the early 1900s and created a variety of folk styles of either chording or playing melodies within the framework of a two or three finger "roll," or "arpeggio" (an arpeggio is the playing of the notes of a chord in rapid succession). It was the development of this technique in a unique way in Earl Scruggs' area of southwestern North Carolina that was the basis for his creation of a new banjo picking style.

The stylistic element shared by the 15 banjo pickers on this recording is that they play an arpeggiated three finger style using their thumb, index and middle fingers. The second, third and fourth players on the

album are from the old-time or pre-Scruggs era and are presented here in more or less a progression from older home-style to a more modern professional style. They represent a time before the advent of radio and recording when there was a much greater variety of styles, when people had only the music of nearby players to learn from and were more stylistically self sufficient. Before 1920 there was virtually no possibility of professionalism with this kind of music.

J.C. Sutphin's style is a very good example of the old-time, pre-Scruggs type of three finger picking which he said he learned from North Carolinian, Charlie Poole, one of the influential banjo picking recording artists of the 1920s. Sutphin's style, however, is very different from Poole's, as it is more assertive and driving. In his playing of his third tune, "I Don't Love Nobody," it is clear that the working in of the melody is minimal.

Though there is are noticeable differences in their styles, Junie Scruggs (Earl's older brother), Snuffy Jenkins, and Earl Scruggs himself patterned much of their playing after that of Smith Hammett and Rex Brooks, two locally famous banjo pickers who played in music contests and other gatherings. In Junie Scruggs' style the melody and rhythm are unmistakable, sometimes at the expense of the smooth flow of notes. Part of the choppy feeling is no doubt due to his not having played for many years. As a contrast, Snuffy Jenkins' style is more flowing. Jess rhythmic and possesses great attention to melody. This is due to his personal sense of style, his development through being a professional musician for many years and also a certain amount to being able to depend on a band to provide rhythm.

Earl Scruggs (who is not on this recording, by the way) has in a sense combined the best elements of these two styles as he projects his melody clearly within a variety of rolls and fills over a rock-solid rhythmic foundation. And to those elements he has added flawless musicianship and certain melodic and phrase patterns which altogether form a cohesive style. He has created a style, an instantly identifiable language of banjo playing, characterized by certain right and left hand patterns, which have been the basis for the playing of thousands of banjo pickers around the world.

The remaining 12 banjo pickers on this recording play in a style based on the playing of Earl Scruggs. You will be able to hear his influence on these twelve players as well as the extent to which they evolve their own touch, rolls, melodic licks, choice of repertoire, etc., which give them their own musical identity.

The first half of the recording, after Smiley Hobbs' prologue, is programmed to show some of the three finger style banjo picking that predated Earl Scruggs' life and a couple who probably influenced his early development. The second half of the recording consists entirely of players who learned their three finger style from him and basically moves north from Rutherford County, North Carolina, to New York City. Style and technical proficiency vary considerably. Some, like Hobbs and Stuart, are fleet and creative; some, like Oren Jenkins and Don Bryant, lean more towards Scruggs' rock-solid sound; and others, like Cox, Stoneman Cox and Rittler, have their own individual interpretations of the style. I have rewritten the performer & song notes from a 1990 perspective but assuming 1956 chronological knowledge.

Earl Scruggs recorded first with Bill Monroe on the Columbia label. His first recordings with Lester Flatt and the Foggy Mountain Boys were on Mercury, now beautifully re-released on Rounder. Since the early fifties he has recorded for Columbia. His first 15 years of recordings were his most influential and are with only a few exceptions still available through the companies listed below.

For more information on this style of banjo picking there are two good books: *Masters of the Five String Banjo* by Peter Wernick and Tony Trischka and *Bluegrass, A History* by Neil V Rosenberg University of Illinois Press. Two good magazines are: *Banjo Newsletter*, PO Box 364, Greensboro MD 21639 and *Bluegrass Unlimited*, PO Box 111, Broad Run VA 22014. The records and books mentioned above are available from: County Sales, PO Box 191, Floyd VA 24091; Elderly Instruments, PO Box 14210, Lansing MI 48901; Roundup Records, PO Box 154, North Cambridge MA 02140

Unless otherwise noted Mike Seeger plays backup, recording session is performer's home in October 1956 and banjos are tuned in "G", not always A440. Since this was just before the age of plastic, all banjo heads were skin.

Ralph Rinzler, 1957
Mike Seeger, 1990

A look back on this recording Mike Seeger, April 1990

In the summer of 1956 Moses ("Moe") Asch of Folkways Records wrote and asked me to produce an LP of Scruggs-style banjo picking. This style was fairly well known at that time amongst country people familiar with the bluegrass style of music but was new to those of us raised in the city who were learning to play the banjo. During the early fifties, players such as Mike Vidor, Roger Sprung and of course my brother Pete had known and played various interpretations of Earl Scruggs' instrumentals and this brought more interest amongst urban people to this new style of banjo playing. I'm sure that Pete, who was recording at that time for Folkways, was the reason that Moe wrote me.

In 1955 I had bought my first tape recorder, a 40-pound "portable" Magnecord semi-professional reel-to-reel machine. It was one of the first such machines to appear and would compare unfavorably to a present day Pro-Walkman cassette recorder. But this did mean that on-location recording was becoming relatively easy for the first time. I began recording a lot of shows by the bluegrass style performers that traveled to the northern Maryland area where I lived at that time. I was also playing with a Baltimore area bluegrass style group consisting of Bob Baker, Hazel Dickens and a few other friends from southern Virginia and talking a fair amount about the music with collector/musician, Pete Kuykendall, now editor of *Bluegrass Unlimited*, and record collector, Dick Spottswood. I had been listening to recordings of oldtime country music for a long time. And so, for the times, I had some idea of the background and present status of this new style of banjo picking.

The first thing I did after getting Moe's request was to have a long talk with Pete Kuykendall, who had already told me of the important role of Snuffy Jenkins. During our recording session, Snuffy steered me to his nephew and to Junie Scruggs. I knew most of the rest of the players through recordings, shows and friends like Pete Kuykendall and Tom Morgan, who helped in setting up the dates with Smiley Hobbs and Don Bryant.

I wanted as much as possible to first represent a type of banjo picking that predated Earl's playing, as well as his immediate closest influences, and then a broad selection of the players that he influenced. I wanted to record mostly tunes that had not been recorded in this style by that time and it actually turned out that way. This was the first time for most of these tunes to be recorded in the style created by Earl Scruggs. I don't recall asking for old tunes particularly, but that was certainly my bias. Most bluegrass players were establishing new songs and sounds at this time and so didn't record some of the oldtime tunes that they played on shows. I wanted to record these tunes for their intrinsic value as well as to show the connection of the new style to the older music. I did record a fair number of playings of Earl's tunes, but I have included only a few arrangements of traditional tunes originated by him, because they differ significantly from his version, and are also very good. I wanted to record much of the banjo picking solo, but many of the pickers wanted backup bad enough to ask me to play. (I wish now that I had declined more often.) Use of backup was also limited due to lack of money and to the off-the-cuff, impromptu nature of the whole project.

Due to the very tight production budget (\$100.00 total) I had to limit my travels to one southern swing and to the Baltimore/Washington area. I had quit my job to do this project and was using a high mileage Chevy Carryall (a truck type station wagon) with barely enough money for tape, food, fuel, and an occasional \$5 motel. I barely knew how to use the recorder and was too economical with tape to even let the sounds die down at the end of a cut. How times have changed in the days of good cheap cassette tape! This was the first record I had produced and it was recorded mostly in people's homes using one omnidirectional electrovoice 635 microphone.

This album turned out to be the best selling record that I either produced or played on and it sold well to both rural and urban people. Although the musicians were not paid at the outset, they have been paid royalties over the following 30 years, albeit irregularly. Now, completely remastered from the original tapes, available in CD and with new cover and notes, this recording remains a good document of some of the banjo pickers who influenced Earl Scruggs and some of the first of many to be influenced by him.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:

Note: I have rewritten the performer & song notes from a 1990 perspective but assuming 1956 chronological knowledge (the performer's biographies have not been updated to 1990) [Mike Seeger].

1. **Smiley Hobbs** is originally from Johnston County, North Carolina, and during this time he was living in Manassas, Virginia. He is an exceptional player on fiddle, mandolin, guitar, and banjo, having played the latter for only two years. He originated the tune, "Banjo Signal," which makes considerable use of a fretted fifth string and recorded recently with Don Reno & Red Smiley. He performs with many northern Virginia area "bluegrass" bands. He opens the LP with his fast, nimble, and creative picking. Smiley used Don Bryant's arch top banjo and sat down on the session while others stood or bent down to get to the microphone. ■

Of the tunes Smiley Hobbs plays here, "Train 45," is certainly the most unusual in its arrangement, his own I assume. On "Rosewood Casket" he uses a "D" tuning (ADF#AD) and the "Scruggs tuners," at that time a new development. His retuning of the banjo in time to play the "G" chimes before Tom sings is typical of his imaginative attention to detail. He was clearly not struggling with technique, just having fun thinking up tricky, good sounding things to do.

Personnel: Smiley Hobbs, banjo and vocals; Tom Morgan, guitar and vocal on "Rosewood Casket;" Pete Kuykendall, mandolin; Mike Seeger, string bass. Recorded in Manassas, Virginia, probably at a friend's house.

2. **J.C. Sutphin** was born 1885 in Patrick Cy, Virginia. He plays both fiddle and banjo left handed. He also plays a style similar to the oldtime "rapping style" and uses picks for both. He learned the first and last tunes he plays here from "Charlie Poole of Spray, North Carolina" who was one of the region's most influential three finger banjo pickers and entertainers in the late '20s and '30s. He is included here as an example of early three finger picking. His first tune demonstrates straight chording, a popular accompaniment style. The second tune shows this technique backing his son Vernon's mouth harp playing. The third is an example of early three finger melody playing with a few varieties of rolls. The latter is very similar to Junie Scruggs' playing of this same tune. He used an inexpensive recent resonator banjo, tuned GCGBD. Recorded in 1956, month unknown.

3. **Junie Scruggs** is Earl Scruggs' older brother. Both his father and sister played the banjo in the old time "rapping style". Junie learned to play before Earl and, like Snuffy Jenkins, was influenced in his playing by Smith Hammett and Rex Brooks. He told me that they picked the "two Sallies" about the way that he performs them here. He spoke of Earl at a young age going into a room with the banjo and staying all day playing. When he came out "he had it," and he said something to the effect that "it" was different from anyone else and special. Junie played quite a bit in the 1930s, sometimes for fiddle contests, but hasn't played much since then. He was kind enough to record these two tunes and about four others during our visit. He used my old flathead Gibson for this recording. These recordings were made shortly after the session with Snuffy Jenkins.

4. **Snuffy Jenkins** was born 1908 in Harris, a small town in southwestern North Carolina. He picked up much of his first banjo picking from two influential three finger pickers in the area, Smith Hammett and Rex Brooks. In the mid 'thirties he began playing his style of banjo professionally on shows and various radio stations, especially WIS in Columbia, SC where these tunes were recorded. His contributions to the style were using picks (which Hammett & Brooks didn't use, at least at first), playing a wide variety of tunes, taking breaks on country songs, the choice of a flat head Gibson Mastertone banjo, and having a good

individual style. He was, as far as I know, the first to record, broadcast and play performances regularly using the three finger style. Through his shows and broadcasts he influenced Earl Scruggs and especially Don Reno in the development of their own styles.

The songs are used here in the same order as recorded, though not all have been included. On a couple, ("Kansas City Kitty"/ Big Eared Mule," and the "two Sallies") we didn't even stop to turn off the recorder. I have left them that way here, just as recorded. There were no retakes, and after he returned the banjo to "D" and played "John Henry" he remarked "that's not what I meant to play". He was getting used to the new tuning, I think. We recorded until the machine began to malfunction. I find that his playing bears a lot of careful listening, for both right and left hand licks as well as his control of tone. As far as I can tell, Snuffy doesn't use his thumb on the inside strings as much as Earl Scruggs and perhaps plays more melody on the first string. His touch by comparison is lighter. He also plays the banjo in the oldtime "rapping" style.

Snuffy starts out here in "G" tuning although he is tuned a tone and a half high, in B flat. "Chicken Reel" is unusual in that it is usually a fiddle tune done at about this pace, which is generally considered slow for the banjo. "Shortening Bread" is also played very much slower than most banjo players do it and in two keys. For his second playing of "John Henry" he shifts to "D" tuning (F#DF#AD), actually in the key of F, where he also plays "Lonesome Road Blues". For "Kansas City Kitty" he returns to the good old G tuning. This tune and "Careless Love" seem to me to be much influenced by jazz, as if he were playing a trumpet or jazz guitar. And it all winds up with the two Sallies in which he plays the melody in detail and uses some unusual devices, notably some fretting of the fifth string and the "raking" across the strings on "Sally Ann".

Snuffy remarked during our session that he was out of practice. He was not playing a great number of shows at this time due to the impact of television and the beginning of the rock 'n' roll age. (If you wish to have more information on Snuffy, read Bluegrass Unlimited June, 1987 or

Banjo Newsletter June, 1989. He also appears on recordings on Rounder and Old Homestead labels). Recorded 26/Sept, 1956. Guitar accompaniment by Ira Dimmery.

5. **Oren Jenkins** was born 1932, also in Harris, North Carolina. He first learned banjo from his uncle Snuffy and then developed his own style. He recently recorded with Jim and Jesse McReynolds. His style here is strongly influenced by Earl Scruggs. He is also an excellent guitar picker and singer. He uses a gold plated flat head Mastertone. Another uncle, Snuffy's brother Verl, plays oldtime fiddle with him on two songs here.

"Home Sweet Home" is in "D" tuning (ADF#AD, but tuned up to E) without the use of tuners. "Spanish Fandango" is a traditionally played tune but this is the first time I've heard it played in this style. Verl played it similarly but without picks. For "Cripple Creek," Oren takes off his picks and plays the banjo first in three finger style and then briefly in the "rapping" style. The ability to play both styles well was not common and has become even more rare amongst the younger players. "Down the Road" seems a little like "Ida Red," a tune not often heard in this style. "Liza Jane" is unusual both for being played in "D" tuning and for use of harmonics. "Hey, Mr. Banjo" was a contemporary pop tune. "Bugle Call Rag" is essentially like Earl Scruggs' arrangement of the old jazz tune.

6. **Joe Stuart** is from Knoxville, Tennessee, born 1927. He has been playing music since age seven and plays banjo, fiddle, guitar, and bass, all of which he has played with Bill Monroe at one time or another. This recording was made at New River Ranch near Rising Sun, Maryland, at about 10 p.m. Sunday, September 23rd, 1956. Joe had just finished playing a show with Bill Monroe and while Bill was getting ready to go we stood in the small breezeway between the two makeshift dressing rooms and he played us about a dozen tunes as a thunderstorm came across. On the second tune you can hear the rain on the tin roof. Joe was playing Pete Kuykendall's arch top Gibson as Pete 'r, Alice Gerrard (as I recall) and I stood around listening and recording. This was the first recording session for this project. I've included some of Joe's after-tune licks here even though they might seem a little anti-climactic. He intro-

duced "Cackling Hen" as a tune others don't play on the banjo. It's usually an oldtime fiddle tune.

7. **Larry Richardson** was born in Galax, West Virginia, in 1925. His father "rapped" the banjo, but Larry started by using a flat pick, as I recall he said, on a tenor banjo. He has been picking 5-string banjo for nine years now and has played with Bill Monroe, the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers and bands of his own. He is also a songwriter and plays the guitar and mandolin.

"Dear Old Dixie" is a banjo tune that Snuffy Jenkins learned from the Barnett Brothers of Polk County, North Carolina, and played quite a bit. I assume (but don't know for sure) that Earl learned it from Snuffy. I include it here because Larry does such a good job with it, puts in a couple of his own licks and plays it in the lower octave which is rare. "Little Maggie" and "Sweet Sunny South" were well known area tunes not often played by 3 finger players. "Bucking Mule" is a great tune for playing in contests; the playing behind the bridge is probably derived from the fiddle version of the tune, which sounds more like a mule. "Lonesome Road Blues" appears here especially for Larry's singing.

8. **Don Bryant** is in his early twenties and was raised in northern Virginia. He has worked with Mac Wiseman and filled in with the Foggy Mountain Boys while Earl Scruggs was recovering from a serious automobile accident in 1955. He has worked with other bluegrass bands and he won the Warrenton Banjo Contest in 1955. I have not heard anyone else play these two fiddle tunes in this style on the banjo. Pete Kuykendall backs him on guitar.

9. **Pete Kuykendall** is eighteen years old and was born and raised in Arlington, Virginia. He has been picking the banjo for two and a half years and won the Warrenton, Virginia, banjo contest in September, 1956. He also plays fiddle, guitar, mandolin and bass, is a collector of oldtime and bluegrass records and is a country music radio announcer. This is a highly original idea, to play a jig time irish fiddle tune in waltz time, Scruggs style.

10. **Eugene Cox** was born in Winchester, Virginia, 24 years ago and now lives in Carmody Hills, Maryland. In 1956 he won the banjo award at the Gambrills (Maryland) Banjo Contest. Veronica Stoneman Cox backs him on guitar. This tune, made popular by the Carter Family is played in "D" tuning (ADF#AD), an original idea at this time.

11. **Veronica Stoneman Cox** is about twenty years old. She is one of the thirteen children of Ernest and Hattie Stoneman of the Galax, Virginia area, who were well known oldtime country music recording artists of the nineteen twenties and early 'thirties. Just as it is rare for women to play "bluegrass" style music it is even more rare for them to play this banjo style. This was not true of oldtime music, as her mother picked and "rapped" the banjo. Veronica took second place at the Gambrills, Maryland, Banjo Contest in 1956. Eugene Cox backs her on this recording.

12. **Mike Seeger** was born in New York City, in 1933, and raised in Maryland. He has been picking the banjo for four years and three finger style for about two and a half years. He also plays fiddle, mandolin, guitar and harmonica. The lead singer here is Bob Baker who is originally from Pike County, Kentucky and first learned his music playing from his parents, who were both musicians and singers.

13. **Dick Rittler** was born in Baltimore 1939. He has been picking the banjo two and a half years and also plays the mandolin and guitar. Vocally and instrumentally, the playing of this traditional tune is oldtime as much as "bluegrass". Other personnel: Bob Baker, lead vocal and guitar; Bob Shanklin, mandolin; Hazel Dickens, chorus vocal and string bass; Mike Seeger, oldtime style banjo and chorus vocal.

14. **Kenny Miller** was born near Rising Sun, Maryland, in 1940. He has been picking the banjo for two years and also plays fiddle. During the past year he has picked banjo with both Bill and Charlie Monroe and also plays regularly with Alec Campbell and Olabelle Reed at New River Ranch. "Please Come Back, Little Pal" is a double recording with Kenny playing both parts. Mike

Seeger plays a harmony banjo part on "Ruben's Train" and Kenny's mother plays guitar.

15. **Eric Weissberg**, born in New York City in 1939, has been picking the banjo since the age of ten, and three finger style for the past two years. He also plays the mandolin, guitar, fiddle and bass. Here, Ralph Rinzler backs him on guitar with Mike Seeger playing mandolin.

Mike Seeger
Rockbridge County, Virginia,
April, 1990

Smithsonian Folkways Records

Folkways Records was one of the largest independent record companies of the mid-twentieth century. Founded by Moses Asch in 1947 and run as an independent company until its sale in 1987, Folkways was dedicated to making the world of sound available to the public. Nearly 2,200 titles were issued, including a great variety of American folk and traditional music, children's songs, world music, literature, poetry, stories, documentaries, language instruction and science and nature sounds.

The Smithsonian acquired Folkways in order to ensure that the sounds and the genius of the artists would continue to be available to future generations. Every title is being kept in print and new recordings are being issued. Administered by the Smithsonian's Office of Folklife Programs, Folkways Records is one of the ways the Office supports cultural conservation and continuity, integrity, and equity for traditional artists and cultures.

Several hundred Folkways recordings are distributed by Rounder Records. The rest are available on cassette by mail order from the Smithsonian Institution. For information and catalogs telephone 202/287-3262 or write Folkways, Office of Folklife Programs, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, U.S.A.