

## ARTICLE



### COLLECTING SONGS - PART 2

By Stewart Hendrickson

In [Part 1](#) I talked about how I began collecting songs and later organized them in my [song page](#). Here I give some examples of songs I have collected from different and sometimes obscure sources. For each song I give a link to it on my [song page](#), a recording (mp3) of my singing the song, and something about how I found the song.

#### [The Master of the](#)

#### [Sheepfold.](#)

This song came from a poem, [De Massa ob de Sheepfol'](#), by [Sarah Pratt McLean Greene](#) (1856-1935) - from a genre of pseudo-black dialect "spirituals" in vogue around the turn of the century. [Sheet music](#) was published in 1895. [Charley Ipcar](#) wrote, "Bill and Gene Bonyun are the ones who disseminated this song to many folk singers in New England in the 1950's and 1960's. They got the song from my mother Dahlov Ipcar, who in turn got the song from a friends of hers, Wendy Holt, who was said to have collected it in Texas." [Art Thieme](#) got the song from Jerry Epstein at Pinewoods Camp in Massachusetts and was the first to record it. Anne Hills and Cindy Mangsen learned the song from Art Thieme, and I learned it from their recording [Never Grow Up](#) (1998).

#### [My Flower, My Companion, and](#)

#### [Me.](#)

This song comes from the singing of [Helen Schneyer](#). Helen learned it from Craig Johnson (of the Double Decker String Band), who learned it from an old recording of Asa Martin, who lived near Covington in northern Kentucky. The original song (words by J.H. Brown, music by James Power) was "[Faded Flowers](#)," published in "[The Jack Morgan Songster](#)" compiled by a Captain in Gen. Lee's Army (Raleigh, N.C.: Branson & Farrar, 1864). The Carter Family sang a [version of Faded Flowers](#). I learned the song from a recording by my favorite singer of traditional English songs, Norma Waterson, who learned it from Helen Schneyer.

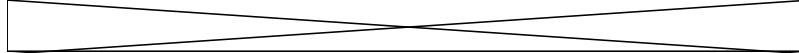
#### [The Cliffs of Moher](#) by [Dermot](#)

#### [Kelly.](#)

I first heard this song sung by [Curtis and Loretta](#). Loretta told me she got the

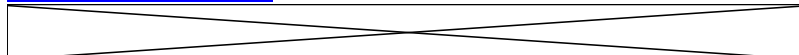
song off a cassette from someone who purchased it from a woman playing harp on the [Cliffs of Moher](#). I posted a question on the [Mudcat Forum](#) to find more information about the author. No one knew anything about him, but a year later a reply was posted by someone who knew [Dermot Kelly](#). He lives near the Cliffs, and is a retired bank manager and a prolific song writer. He wrote this song for [Tina Mulrooney](#), who regularly [plays harp at the Cliffs](#). I remember my first trip to Ireland several years earlier when I saw a woman playing harp at the Cliffs – that must have been Tina. [Hear Tina sing this song](#).

### [Papirosn](#) (Cigarettes).



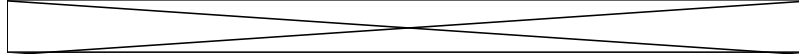
I first heard this [song in Yiddish](#), but could not understand the words. I was attracted by the melody – it sounded very sad. In a [translation](#) I found it tells the tale of an orphaned cigarette peddler freezing in the rain on a street corner. Papirosn (words by Herman Yablokoff, traditional tune) long ago entered the folk tradition with several variants. One is the doina or lament in [Rumanian style](#); another is a rollicking dance-band version in [Klezmer style](#). It is the saddest song I know.

### [A Stór Mo Chroi](#).



"*A Stór Mo Chroi*" is Irish and means "treasure of my heart." The words are by Brian O'Higgins, an Irish patriot who took part in the 1916 Rising and was an active Republican for the rest of his life. He wrote a large number of patriotic songs and poems, many under the pen name of Brian na Banban. I first heard the tune as [an Irish slow air](#), and then learned that it had words. I later heard it sung unaccompanied when playing in a session at [Matt Molloy's Pub](#) in Westport, Ireland.

### [The Dying Californian](#).



I first heard this song on [Youtube sung by Tim Eriksen](#) ([discussed on Mudcat](#)). The words are by Kate Harris of Pascoag, R.I. in the New England Diadem and Rhode Island Temperance Pledge, 9 Feb. 1850, "Suggested on hearing read an extract of a letter from Captain Chase, containing the dying words of Brown Owen, who recently died on his passage to California." The music is by Ball and Drinkard (1859). [From #410 in the Sacred Harp](#) (1859).

### [Liverpool Bay](#).



This was a poem I found [here](#) on the internet. The author was John E. M. Sumner, but I could not find any information about him other than he was probably from Liverpool, England. I put the words to a melody and put it on my [song page](#). Several years later I received an email from Alan E. Sumner: "*It was written by my father under the title 'Requiescat in Pace' and published locally in*

*the 1950s - the content being self-evident. Liverpool Bay gives it wider appeal and good to see that it has made its way to the US. Yes, apart from my father and myself, previous generations were nearly all 'merchantmen' sailing out of Liverpool. I have for thirty years sailed recreationally."*

### **The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry.**



Joan Baez popularized this song in the 1960s. However, [her version](#) was a newer version of both words and melody. I found the traditional version in John Runge's Collection - Early English Lute Songs and Folk Songs; Vol. IV (Hargail Music Press, N.Y., 1966). This song comes from the [Orkney Islands](#). It was first noted down in 1938 by Dr. Otto Andersson, who heard it sung by Mr. John Sinclair on the island of Flotta, Orkney. In an article in 1947 he said "I had no idea at the time that I was the first person to write down the tune. The pure pentatonic form of it and the beautiful melodic line showed me that it was a very ancient melody that I had set on paper." [see [Orkneyjar](#), and [The People of the Sea by David Thomson](#)]. I much prefer this version. [Silkies](#) were mythological beings, half-human half-seal. When they ventured onto land, they shed their seal skins and became human; their magical skins gave them the power to change back into seals.

### **Song of the Sockeye**



The verses to this song were found c. 1960 by Nick Guthrie under a glass-covered notice board at the deserted Wadhams Cannery on Rivers Inlet in British Columbia. They were put to music by Phil Thomas. I learned this song from Phil about fifteen years ago. It is published in "[Songs of the Pacific Northwest](#)" by [Philip J. Thomas, Hancock House](#), 2006, p.184.

[Stewart Hendrickson](#)