

"Like a Lone Bawling Calf": Some Musical Style Traits of Recent Cowboy Songs

Patrick O'Neill

Volume 7, Number 1-2, 1985

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1081328ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1081328ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Association Canadienne d'Ethnologie et de Folklore

ISSN

1481-5974 (print)

1708-0401 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

O'Neill, P. (1985). "Like a Lone Bawling Calf": Some Musical Style Traits of Recent Cowboy Songs. *Ethnologies*, 7(1-2), 149–167.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1081328ar>

“Like a Lone Bawling Calf”¹: Some Musical Style Traits of Recent Cowboy Songs²

Patrick O'NEILL

Since the early part of this century, the cowboy song has been identified with the continuance of the Anglo-American ballad and folk-song traditions, from which it evolved into a major category of popular musical style from roughly 1930 through the 1950s. This article examines the musical style traits of four fairly recently written songs about cowboy life and compares the results with the traits of representative selections from two earlier periods of cowboy song musical style. The four songs considered here are products of the ‘folk revival’ period, 1960- 1975. These songs reflect the restricted pitch sets, harmonic gesture and rhythm, formal constraints, and melodic tendencies which identify the traditional cowboy-song repertoire. They retain these features of the early musical style while employing very few aspects of the intervening popular cowboy song formulae, and suggest that it may be possible to view the survival of this musical style as a living example of the oral process in music.

Bill Malone, in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, defines *cowboy song* as: “A type of song describing cowboys

-
1. Bruce Phillips, “Goodnight Loving Trail”, 1973.
On the Goodnight trail, on the Loving trail,
Our old woman’s lonesome tonight.
Your French harp blows like a lone bawling calf,
It’s a wonder the wind don’t tear off your skin,
Get in there and blow out the light.
 2. This is the revised version of a paper presented in the 1986 Annual Meeting of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada (at the University of Manitoba) in Winnipeg. I wish to thank Professors Carole Carpenter and Bob Witmer of York University, and Professor Neil Rosenberg of Memorial University for their encouragement and critical comment, and Dominique O’Neill for her editing and support.

and their life."³ Malone outlines the beginnings and borrowings of this turn-of-the-century phenomenon, its conjuncture with hillbilly and other rural musical genres, its role as a vehicle for Hollywood and musical stage stars and productions, and its contribution to what later became known as "Country and Western" music. His only criterion for classification, however, remains the subject matter expressed in the text, rather than any specific musical characteristics beyond "a simple sentimental style. . . normally accompanied by guitar or accordion."⁴ This inclusion by subject matter alone begs the question; does text then transcend music as an identifying characteristic, at least in the matter of folk and popular song? And, more specifically, is there a musical 'tradition' in subject oriented categories such as cowboy song which might be recognized in some recent songs which attempt to mimic, at least, aspects of the original repertory?⁵

The Traditional Repertoire

In recent years, a number of scholars have shed light on the fascinating question of the origin of the cowboy songs and related brethren which appeared during the fifty years from roughly 1875 to 1925. Three contemporary collections/histories of cowboy songs, all assembled by practitioners, detail the background, sources and lore surrounding the cowboy song 'standards'. Glenn Ohrlin's *Hell Bound Train*⁶ explores his very personal experience of these songs as a part of his life as a rodeo rider and ranch hand, and includes an extensive discography compiled by Harlan Daniel along with transcriptions of Ohrlin's performance practice. *Git Along Little Doggies*⁷ is a compi-

3. Bill Malone in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, V.S. Stanley Sadie, ed., London, Macmillan, 1980, p. 8.

4. *Ibid.*

5. For the purposes of this article, the unifying and categorical aspects of text and performance practice will largely be ignored. Considerable scholarly attention has been paid to text in the Anglo-American tradition as a whole, often with little reference to musical characteristics whatsoever; this examination will err in the opposite direction. For a somewhat parallel view of the continuation of aspects of traditional cowboy song throughout this century based largely on examination of text see:

Sam D. Ratcliffe, "The American Cowboy: A Note on the Development of a Musical Image", *JEMF Quarterly* 20 (Spring/Summer 1984), 2-7.

6. Glenn Ohrlin, *Hell-Bound Train: A Cowboy Songbook*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1974.

7. John I. White, *Git Along Little Doggies: Songs and Songmakers of the American West*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1975.

lation of John I. White's extensive writings, transcriptions, and research into authorship and dissemination of cowboy songs from his vantage point as one of the early "radio cowboys". Most recently, *He Was Singing This Song*⁸ by Jim Bob Tinsley, a former member of Gene Autrey's band, provides social, geographic, and historical background about each song included, together with a summary of claims and theories of origin and authorship.

To what extent the average cowboy of the late 1800s made songs a part of everyday life remains uncertain and the evidence varies dramatically depending on whether or not the witness was himself a singer (or collector) of cowboy songs. There is, however, considerable evidence presented in the three books mentioned above regarding the origins of the majority of 'traditional' cowboy songs, illustrating that this genre has a more convoluted, though less mystical past than many have imagined. These songs have been the product of the armchair cowboy as well as of the horseback puncher, and only rarely can claim to be a communal creation of participants in the famous 1500 mile long cattle drives of the mid-1800s. Of special interest in this context are accounts by White and Tinsley of several writers of cowboy songs and poetry active in the 1890s. These included men such as D.J. "Kid" O'Malley, an authentic cowboy, though the son of an eastern lawyer, and author of several classic cowboy texts, including "When The Work's All Done This Fall", "The 'D2' Horse Wrangler" (also known as "The Tenderfoot"), "Charlie Rutledge", and "The Cowboy's Soliloquy". O'Malley was not a commercial composer crafting whatever the market would bear; neither was he an illiterate plunker, isolated from civilization and the influence of the popular music of his day. In fact, his lyrics were often intended to be sung to current popular tunes such as "After The Ball" ("When the Work's All Done"), and even, "The Day I Played Baseball" ("The 'D2' Horse Wrangler").

Although Jack Thorp and John Lomax, working in the first decade of this century, collected many of their classic cowboy songs from working cowboys, there is little doubt that many items were also in circulation in Western towns, on homesteads and ranches, and were often reproduced in local newspapers and cattlemen's journals. These popular publications 'broad-sided' poems and songs throughout the West, and Lomax, whose collection had the most widespread and profound influence of the early songbooks, apparently advertised in

8. Jim Bob Tinsley, *He Was Singin' This Song*, Orlando, University of Florida Presses, 1981.

newspapers throughout the West for cowboy song material. It is, as D.K. Wilgus⁹ suggests, difficult to determine what proportion of Lomax's collecting involved oral sources, and what proportion printed sources. Both Wilgus and John West¹⁰ outline the use by Lomax of Thorp's earlier publication without clear acknowledgment, and the weight of recent research indicates that many of the songs in Lomax's collection had some previous publication.

Four Recent Songs

The four recent additions to this category of songs about cowboys presented here cannot, therefore, be disqualified on the basis of their known authorship, or the potential influence of popular musical style and form—these ingredients abound in the traditional repertoire. All of these songs satisfy Malone's textual definition, and seem to have much in common musically with both each other and the style of 'traditional' cowboy songs as they first appear on recordings in the late 1920s and early 1930s. While all four songs have enjoyed modest circulation through recordings, all originally came to my attention through personal, oral sources. A closer look at these recent additions to the genre may reveal those musical markers which these authors, at least, identified as belonging to cowboy song.¹¹

"Goodnight Loving Trail"

Written about 1970 by Bruce Phillips, and common in the repertoires of a number of West Coast folk and country singers in the early 1970s, this song is available in a printed version in Phillips's songbook, *Starlight on the Rails*.¹² It is a sentimental tribute to the ex-puncher, the 'old woman,' who cooked and ran the chuckwagon on many a cattle drive and round-up.

In triple meter, the song incorporates a verse alternated with a repeated chorus and the two sections have the rather unusual lengths of 13 and 22 measures respectively. Pitch materials (see below) vary between these two sections; the verse uses only scale tones 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 (plus the lower octave 5) of an Ionian, or major scale,

-
9. D.K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1959, 157-65.
 10. John O. West, "Jack Thorp and John Lomax: Oral or Written Transmission?," *Western Folklore* 26:2, (1967), 113-18.
 11. Appendix 2 contains transcriptions of each of the four recent songs.
 12. Bruce Phillips. *Starlight on the Rails and Other Songs by U. Utah Phillips*, Sonoma, CA., Wooden Shoe, 1974, 16-18.

while the chorus also includes the 6th degree and one occurrence of the lower leading tone. The overall range is an octave running from the 5th below the tonic to the 5th above the tonic.

Metric values include dotted note figures and eighth note pick-ups; however, the phrasing is relatively unsyncopated and regular. Phrase lengths are: 4/4/5(4+1) bars in the verse, and 5/4/5/4/4 bars in the chorus. The phrase finals are notable in that the tonic is avoided in the verse, and only occurs at the chorus' final phrase. The harmonic pattern is rather regular, in spite of the unusual section lengths: I V I IV (repeated) in the verse and much of the chorus which then finishes with an extended plagal cadence; vi ii V IV I.

"The Night Rider's Lament"

Written by Alaskan Mike Burton, and recorded by Jerry Jeff Walker in 1975,¹³ the song concerns the inability of a present-day cowboy's friends and loved ones back in the city to understand how he can prefer his life "out there."

In triple metre and exhibiting verse and chorus format, the song also contains an incomplete Ionian scale (see below)—degrees 1 through 6, plus the lower octave 5, in the verse—while the chorus contains a single occurrence of the leading tone; the overall range is a thirteenth.

Metric values are generally quarter note and longer, with a few dotted rhythms, and no syncopation over the barline. The verse is 16 measures with 4/4/8/4 bar phrases. The harmonic scheme is regular during the verse, I IV V I, while the chorus contains an interpolated extension, I IV vi ii V I.

"My Sweet Wyoming Home"

The life of a modern rodeo rider is the theme of this song written by Bill Staines of New Hampshire, which I first learned from the singing of Pop Wagner of Minneapolis, and have since encountered in *Reprints from Sing Out!*¹⁴

In duple time, and verse and chorus format, this song also makes use of an incomplete Ionian scale, degrees 1 through 5 in the verse, expanding to include a complete octave during the chorus. It also contains a short 'bridge' section which occurs once or twice between the

13. Jerry Jeff Walker, *Ridin' High*, MCA Records, MCA 2156, 1975.

14. *Reprints from Sing Out!*, Vol. 8, 1974.

chorus and verse, and extends the overall melodic range to a ninth (1 to 9).

Metric values include some dotted rhythms and the phrasing is slightly syncopated, though quite regular: 4/4/4/4 bars long during the 16 measure verse, and 2/4/2/4/4/4 bars long during the 16 measure chorus. Two four-measure phrases make up the 8 measure bridge and phrase finals emphasize scale degrees, 4, 5, 2, and 1. The harmonic scheme resembles that of the two previous items: I IV V IV i V vi ii V I during the verse, with the pattern presented more or less in reverse during the chorus.

“Me and My Uncle”

This ballad was written by John Phillips¹⁵ and I first heard it in about 1971 from the singing of Jon Adams, then a resident of Brightwood, Oregon. The song’s story describes a card game involving cowboys in town after a roundup, told in the first person by the nephew of a professional gambler with a decided quality of ‘brag-talk’ or tall-tale storytelling throughout.

This melody is the only one of the four tunes set in a minor mode, revealing a Dorian-type pentatonic scale: I b3 4 5 b7, its range restricted to a minor-seventh (see below). Meter is duple, metric values generally restricted to quarter-note and longer, phrasing often syncopated across barlines.

It is also unique among the four songs in having only a single section, 20 bars long, made up of two similar 8 bar subsections followed by a 4 bar ‘tag’; A A’ B. The melodic phrases are 2/2/4 measures long, never begin on the downbeat, and phrase finals stress the 1, 4, and 5 scale tones rather equally. The harmonic scheme revolves around the tonic minor triad and the major triad on b3 scale degree, i III leading to V⁷ i at bar 8, and an extended perfect cadence III II vi VII V⁷ i in bars 15 to 20.

Musical Styles Compared

The enormous number of repertoires and sources which are labelled ‘cowboy song’ can be viewed as comprising three historical groups: (1) the recent songs described above, (2) the early ‘authentic’ songs, and (3) the mid-20th Century commercial adaptations often writ-

15. John El Phillips, “Me and My Uncle”, *Honest John Music*, ca. 1970. I have been unable to locate either a recording or score, and have, therefore, used a transcription of my own performance of this song.

ten for motion pictures and performed therein by popular 'singing cowboys.' These three groups will be compared on the basis of several musical characteristics including: form, phrasing, classification of pitch materials, harmonic gesture, and rhythmic characteristics. The analysis of the early 'authentic' group is based on harmonic transcriptions and analytical data resulting from a recent project of mine involving some seventy songs from the repertoires of several traditional cowboy singers, including Jules Allen, Glenn Ohrlin, Slim Critchlow and Peter La Farge. The data were combined with melodic transcriptions of cowboy songs contained in the three recent publications cited earlier and in John Lomax's original book of cowboy songs.¹⁶ Similar data were also generated from sheet music examples of a selection of 'popular' cowboy songs from the heyday of the 'Singing Cowboy' movie.

Form - As noted above, the newer songs display a tendency to verse/chorus form: **A B**, where **B** is a repeated text. This format is much less prominent in the traditional repertoire, which favours **A A**, **A A B A**, and **A B** rather equally, and where **B** does not often serve a chorus function. The popular songs often feature introductory refrains which are absent in the other two groups, and tend toward an **A A' B** format where **B** is chorus-like. The most unusual feature of three of the newer songs is the departure from the eight bar section format which occurs almost without exception in the traditional repertoire as well as in most popular song of the last one hundred and fifty years. Only "My Sweet Wyoming Home", closely resembles a typical 32 bar pop song format.

Pitch Materials - **Chart 1** graphs pitch occurrence and duration of the four recent songs for comparison with samples of both traditional and popular cowboy songs diagrammed in **Charts 2, 3, and 4** (found in **Appendix 1**)¹⁷. The three newer songs which display verse/chorus format also contain remarkably similar handling of pitches, using a narrow range, a fifth or sixth, during the verse, and expanding, during the chorus, upward in two cases to a full octave, and downward to the lower fifth in the other. The older songs exa-

16. John A. Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, New York, Sturgis & Walton, 1910.

17. The "pitch profile" diagrams represent in percentage terms both frequency of occurrence and duration of pitch materials. The vertical axis lists scale degrees from the 5th below the tonic to the octave above. Asterisks(*) indicate scale degrees which are employed as phrase finals.

CHART 1 - Pitch Profiles, Recent Repertoire

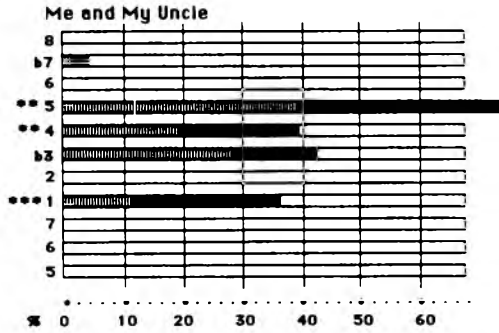
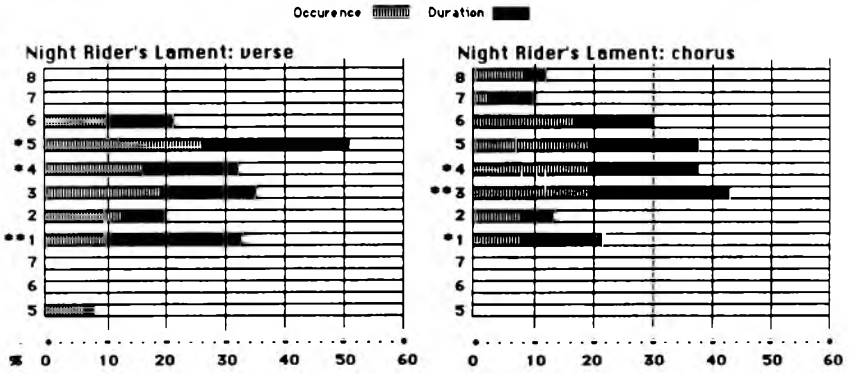
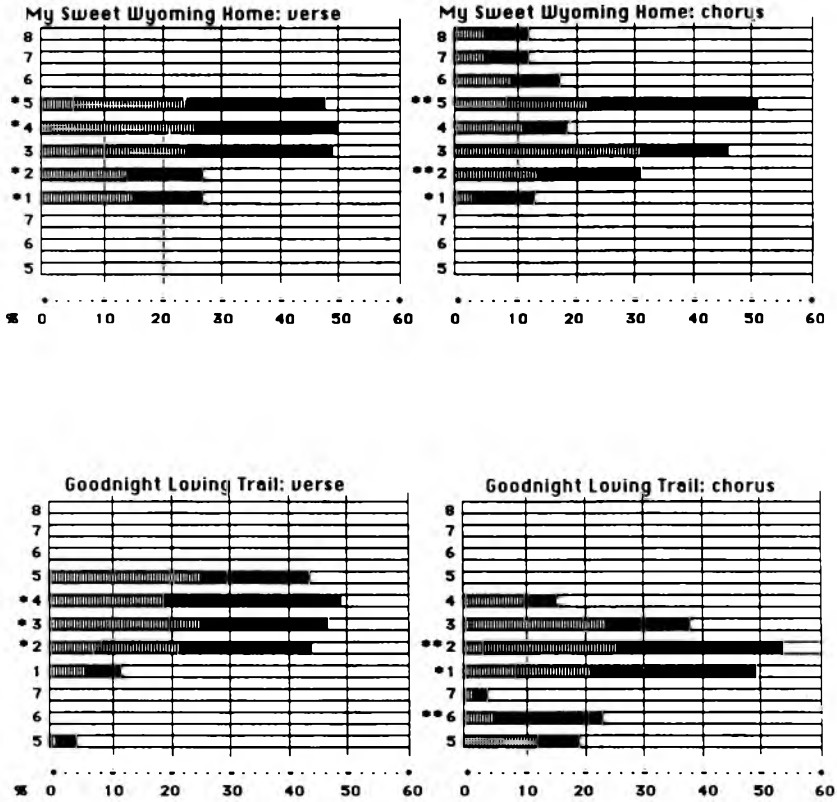


CHART 1a - Pitch Profiles, Recent Repertoire

Occurrence  Duration 



mined displayed similar limiting of range in about half the cases, and though the verse/chorus form is less evident, "Git Along Little Dogies" closely resembles the pitch profile of "The Goodnight Loving Trail." Concurrent with these limited pitch materials, especially in some of the older songs, is the appearance of one or two especially high profile pitches, often the tonic and/or fifth or third, even the fourth on occasion ("My Love is a Rider"). The tendency is present, though slightly subdued, in the four newer songs, while the 'movie' songs reveal rather different pitch profiles marked by inclusion of considerable chromaticism, somewhat wider ranges, and a more even distribution of both occurrence and duration among the pitches. Nevertheless, Mercer's "I'm an Old Cowhand" contains no non-diatonic pitches and Porter's "Don't Fence Me In" shows a close resemblance to the two other groups in its differentiation between sections.

Phrasing and Phrase Finals - All three groups of cowboy songs exhibit rather conservative phrasing style, the popular songs perhaps most regular of all. Similarly, the stressed tones at the termination of phrases display a fairly consistent emphasis on the 4, 5, 2, and 1 pitches. (An exception is "Tumbling Tumbleweeds", which is a rather unusual song from most perspectives.)

Harmonic Materials - The chord progressions in each of the recent songs is, allowing for the unusual section lengths, consistent with traditional cowboy song practice. In my recent study noted above, three tendencies of "harmonic gesture" were found to account for more than 90% of the traditional repertoire examined, and the verses of the four newer songs fit into these three categories rather neatly and in similar proportion. The extended pre-cadential progressions noted in the chorus sections of the newer songs are less common in traditional repertoire, but not unknown, and remain fully diatonic.¹⁸ The popular songs, conversely, contain much more sophisticated harmonic practice, including use of secondary dominants, more complex chord forms, and temporary modulations, along with a generally faster harmonic rhythm than either of the other two groups.

Metre and Rhythmic Characteristics - Two of the recent items are in triple metre and two in duple, commonly used in all types of

18. This type of harmonic practice was quite common in the 19th century parlour song models to which the traditional texts were often originally composed.

popular and traditional musics. One can detect suggestions of horn-pipe and even jig rhythms in the occasional dotted figures which occur in these, and to an even lesser extent, in the older traditional songs. Here the 'popular' songs seem to diverge in a most intriguing fashion: they often employ smaller rhythmic subdivisions, often overt triplet and dotted figures implying, perhaps, the rhythmic aspects of a horse's gait. While a pronounced factor in the popular style, and often mentioned as a style trait of cowboy songs, there is little evidence that this is a major element of traditional cowboy song performance, and is largely missing from the recent songs as well.

This analysis suggests that the more recent songs share a number of musical traits with each other and with traditional cowboy song performance, but less with the intervening popular material. An exception may be the latter's tendency to chorus and verse format, although this arrangement is not unknown in the traditional group. Of the three groups it is the traditional repertoire which is the most standardized; the newer pieces tend toward a kind of managed anarchy of form, while maintaining the harmonic and melodic rhythms, melodic ranges and pitch sets, and overall aural character of the older songs. The popular songs demonstrate an often surprisingly accurate imitation of the melodic tendencies of the traditional repertoire; however, the use of non-diatonic pitch and harmonic resources together with much more active rhythmic markers sets these songs apart from the style of the other two groups. The recent compositions fit snugly within the musical parameters of the earliest material and show little reflection of the later commercial product. If they fit the musical pattern and satisfy the topical definition, are there other ways in which they resemble the 'authentic' songs?

Despite the massive popularity of the commercial material during a thirty to forty year interval, it was the earlier character of cowboy song style which prompted the later songwriters, and their songs came about in a manner and style little different from those of O'Malley and his contemporaries in the 1890s. Their authors all had considerable contact with the so-called folksong revival of the 1960s, and were certainly familiar with both earlier recordings and contemporary cowboy singers such as Glenn Ohrlin and Slim Critchlow. Their songs do reflect the traditional repertoire musically, continuing a style of cowboy song that has been preserved and passed on to these contemporary writers as an aesthetic, a musical sense of "cowboysongness". Certainly not unique, but rather perhaps simply appropriate, this style of "cowboysongness" has survived along with and through

the traditional repertoire, leapfrogging many musical notions pervasive during the intervening years of 'singing cowboy' popularity. Should some of these new additions continue to survive in the repertoire of singers of cowboy songs, they will perhaps teach us as much about the oral process as all of the speculation we can muster about that material most often considered "authentic".

York University
North York, Ontario

Night Rider's Lament* - Mike Burton

Verse



While I was a-rid-in'....., the grave-yard shift mid-night to dawn....; the moon was bright as a read-in' light, for a let-ter from an old friend back home.....

Chorus



He asked me, "Why do you ride for your money?.....; tell me, why do you rope for short pay?....; you ain't get-tin' no - where, and you're los-in' your sh - a - re....



....; it sure must get lone-some out there.....

* © 1975 Groper Music, BMI.
Transcribed from the singing of Jerry Jeff Walker.

1. While I was a-ridin',
The graveyard shift, midnight till dawn
The moon was bright as a readin' light,
For a letter from an old friend back home,

Chorus 1. He asked me,
"Why do you ride for your money?
Why do you rope for short pay?
You ain't gettin' nowhere and you're losin' your share,
It sure must get lonesome out there.

2 He said, "Last night I ran into Jenny,
She's married and has a good life,
You sure missed the track when you never came back,
She's the perfect professional's wife,

Chorus 1a. She asked me,
"Why does he ride for his money?" (etc.)

Chorus 2. But they've never seen the Northern Lights,
They've never seen a hawk on the wing,
They've never seen the spring hit the Great Divide,
And they've never heard old camp-cookie sting.

3. I read up the last of my letter,
And I tore off the stamp for Black J'm.
Billy rode up to relieve me,
He just looked at my letter and grinned,

Chorus 1b. He said now,
"Why do they ride for their money?" (etc.)

My Sweet Wyoming Home* - Bill Staines

Verse

There's a si - lence on the prair-ie, that a man can't help but feel. There's a sha - dow grow - ing long - er now, a - nip - ping at my heels. I know that soon the old four-lane that runs be-neath my wheels will take me home, to my sweet Wy - o - ming home.

Chorus

Watch the moon, smil - ing in the sky, and hum a tune, a prair-ie lul - a - bye, peace-ful winds, an old coy - o - te's cry; a song of home, my

Bridge

sweet Wy - o - ming . . . home The round-ers they all wish you luck when they know you're in a . . . jam. But the mo-ney's ri - din' on the bull, and he don't give a damn.

© Folk Legacy Music

1. There's a silence on the prairie that a man can't help but feel,
There's a shadow growing longer now, a-nipping at my heels'
And I know that soon the old four lane
that runs beneath my wheels,
Will take me home, to my sweet Wyoming home.
- 2 I headed out a year ago with a few old friends of mine,
They all hit the money, Lord, I didn't make a dime.
The entrance fees, they took all my dough,
the traveling took my time,
And I'm headed home to my sweet Wyoming home.

Cho: Watch the moon smiling in the sky,
And hum a tune, a prairie lullabye,
Peaceful winds, an old coyote's cry,
A song of home, my sweet Wyoming home.

Bridge: The rounders, they all wish you luck
When they know you're in a jam,
But the money's riding on the bull
And he don't give a damn.

3. There's the shows in all the cities, but cities
turn your heart to clay,
It takes all a man can muster just to try and get away.
The songs I'm used to hearing ain't the kind
the jukebox plays,
And I'm heading home to my sweet Wyoming home.
4. Now, I've always loved the riding, there's nothing
quite the same,
And another year might bring the luck, the winning
of the game
But there's a magpie on the fence rail, and he's
calling out my name,
And he calls me home to my sweet Wyoming home.

Me and My Uncle* - John Phillips

Me and my un - cle came ri - d - in down, from Co - lor - a - do
, west Tex - as bound. We stepped off, in Sa - n - ta Fe, it
 be - in' just ab - out half - way be - sides it was the hot - test part of the day.

* © Honest John Music. - transcribed from singing of
 J. P. O'Neill.

1. Me and My uncle came ridin' down,
 From Colorado, west Texas bound.
 We stepped off in Santa Fe;
 It bein' just about halfway,
 And besides it was the hottest part of the day
2. We led our ponies into a stall,
 Went to the bar, boys, and bought drinks for all.
 Six days in the saddle, Lord, my body hurt,
 It being summer, I took off my shirt,
 And tried to wash off some of that dusty dirt.
3. West Texas cowboys were all over town,
 With gold and silver, they were loaded down.
 Just in from a roundup, and it seemed a shame,
 So my uncle pulls out his friendly game;
 High-low, Jack, and the dealer calls the game
4. From the beginning my uncle starts to win,
 Them Texas cowboys grew mad as sin.
 One says, "He's cheating", but that can't be,
 "I knew my uncle, boys, and he's as honest as me,
 (and I'm as honest as a Denver man can be.)"
5. One of these cowpokes, he starts to draw,
 So I grabbed a bottle, and slapped him 'cross the jaw.
 I shot another, Lord, he won't grow old,
 And in the confusion, my uncle grabbed the gold,
 And we high-tailed it south to Mexico.
6. Now God Bless cowboys, God Bless their gold,
 God Bless my uncle, and rest his soul!
 He taught me well, boys, taught me all I know
 He taught me so well, you know I grabbed that gold,
 And I left him lying there by the side of the road.

Goodnight Loving Trail* - Bruce Phillips

Verse

Too old to wrangle or ride on the swing, you beat the tri - an - gle and curse ev - ry
 thing, if dirt was a king - dom then you'd be the king On the Good - night Trail, on the
 Lov - ing Trail, our old wom - an's lone - some to - night Your French harp blows like a
 lone bawling calf it's a won - der the wind don't tear off your skin, get in there and
 turn out the light

* © 1973 Bruce Phillips

1. Too old to wrangle or ride in the swing,
 You beat the tri-angle and curse ev'rything,
 If dirt was a kingdom then you'd be the king

Chc: On the Goodnight trail, on the Loving trail,
 Our old woman's lonesome tonight.
 Your French harp blows like a lone bawling calf
 It's a wonder the wind don't tear off your skin,
 Get in there and blow out the light.

2. With your snake oil and herbs and your tincture too,
 You can do anything that a doctor can do,
 Except find a cure for your own goddamn stew.

3. The cook-fire's out and the coffee's all gone,
 The boys are up and we're raising the dawn,
 You're still sitting there all lost in a song

4. I know that someday I'll be just the same,
 Wearing an apron instead of a name,
 But no one can change it and no one's to blame

5. 'Cause the desert's a book wrote in lizards and sage,
 It's easy to look like an old torn out page,
 All faded and cracked with the colours of age.

CHART 2 - Pitch Profiles, Traditional Repertoire

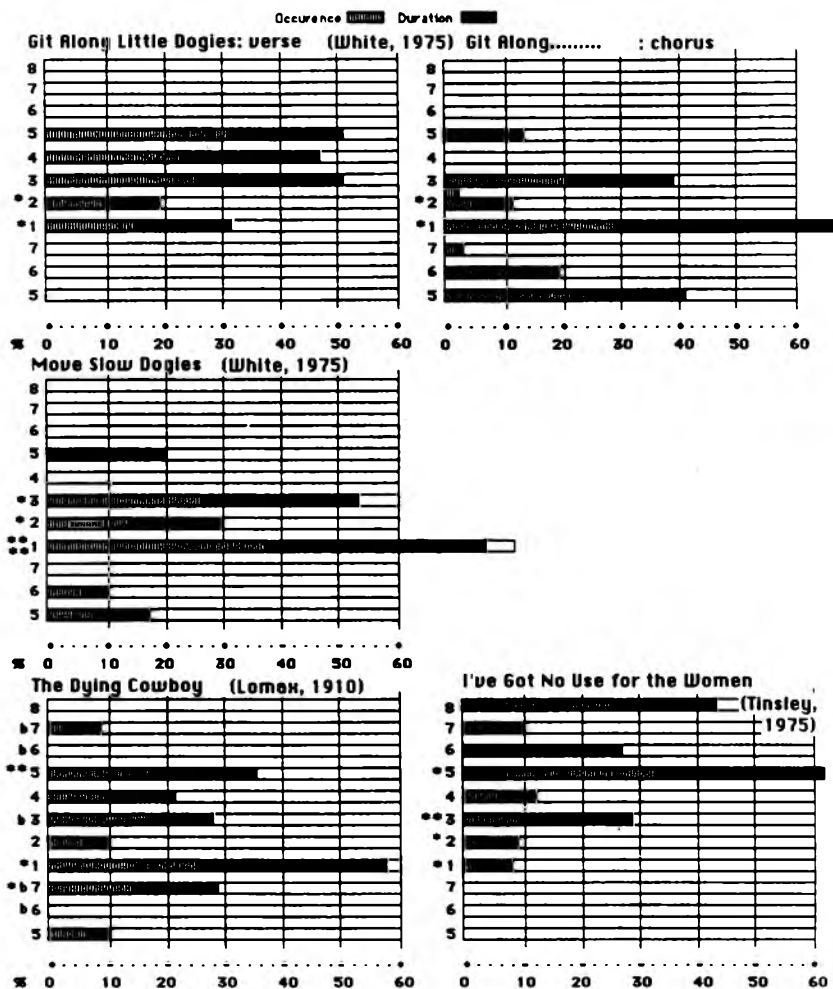


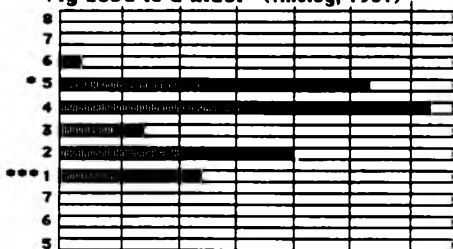
CHART 2a - Traditional Repertoire, cont.

Occurrence  Duration 

The Old Chisholm Trail (Lomax, 1910)



My Love is a Rider (Tinsley, 1981)



The Cowboy (Tinsley, 1981)

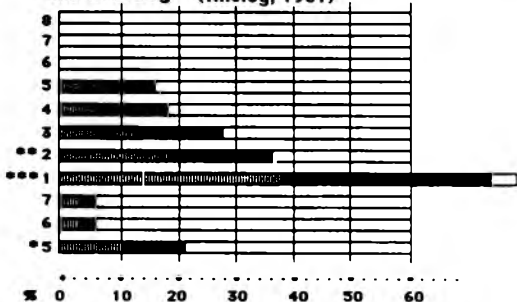


CHART 3 - Pitch Profiles, 'Popular' Repertoire

