

CHEROKEE, BLACK AND WHITE SACRED MUSIC FROM THE MOUNTAINS
TWO CASSETTES WITH FORTY-FOUR PAGE BOOKLET

Meeting in the Air:

Sacred Music of the Southern Appalachians

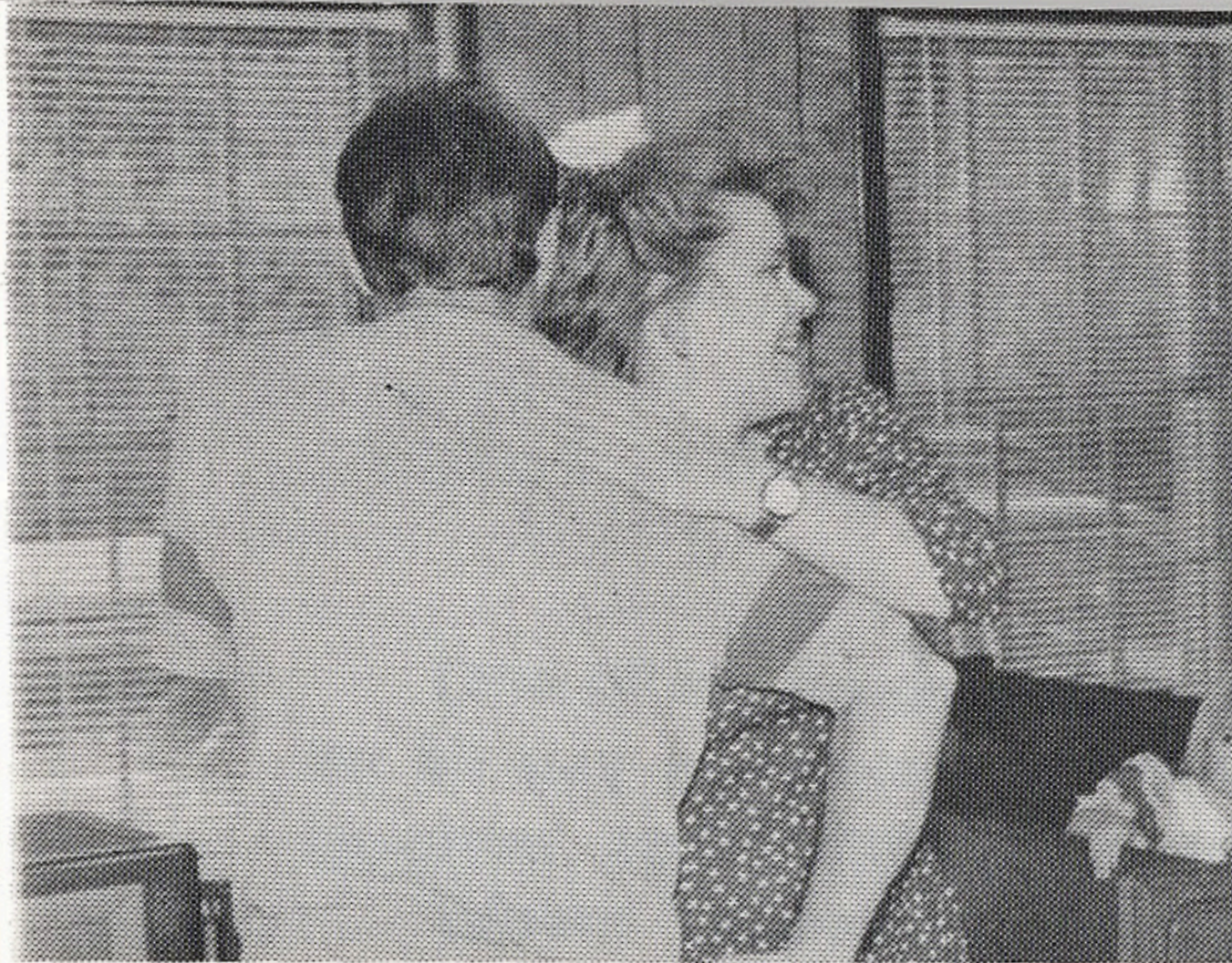


JOHN C. CAMPBELL FOLK SCHOOL

BRASSTOWN, NORTH CAROLINA

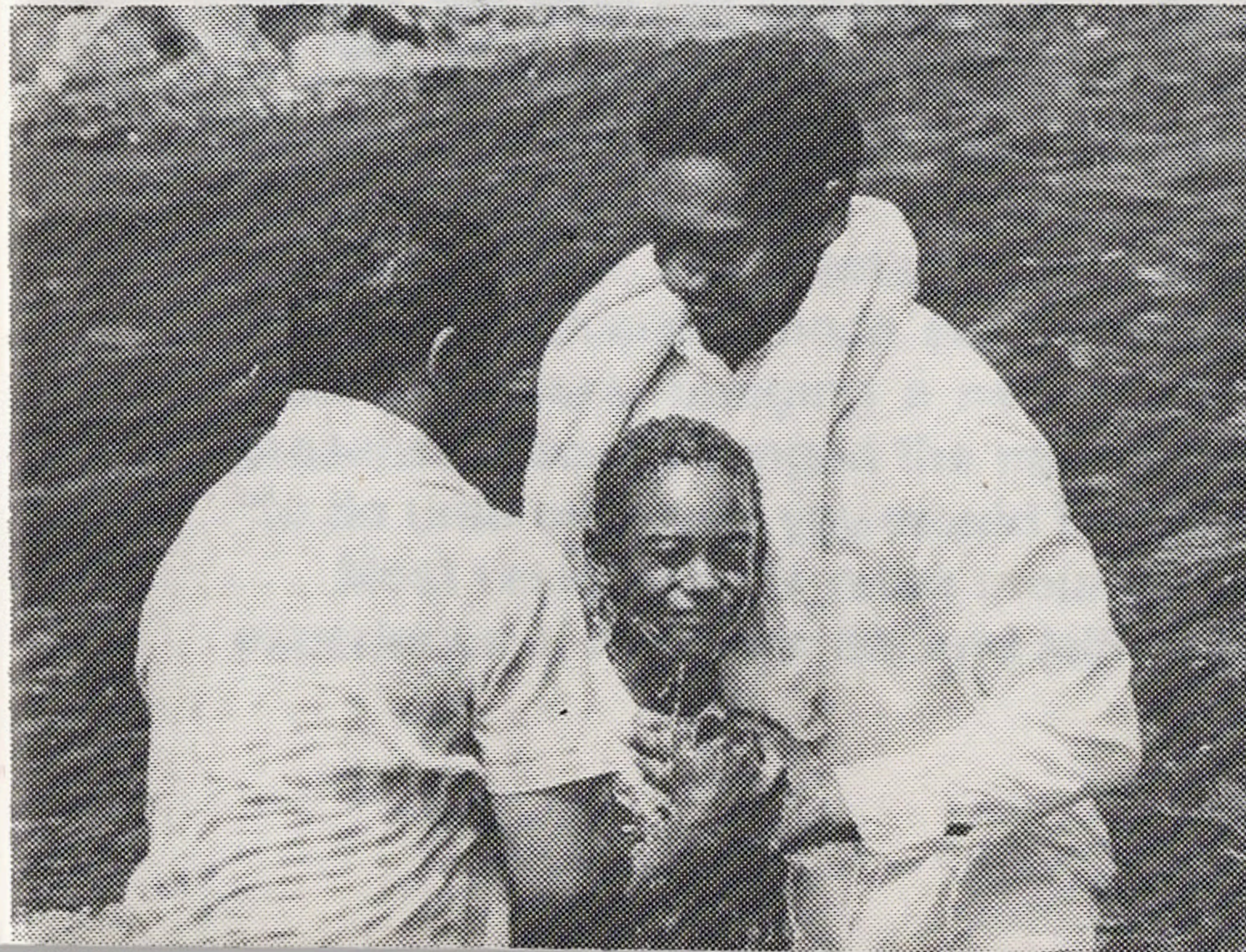


I Sing Behind the Plow



Meeting in the Air:

Sacred Music of the Southern Appalachians



**INTRODUCTION
DR. JAN DAVIDSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JOHN C. CAMPBELL FOLK SCHOOL**

One of my fondest early memories is of my grandmother taking me to an all day shape-note singing with dinner on the grounds. I remember laughter, apple stack cake and songs like "Wondrous Love."

Where Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina come together is our home. Songs of faith and hope are important here, often in the company of family, friends and food. The language of the songs is a combination of unaffected, everyday speech, and the beautiful cadences of the King James Version of *The Bible*.

Our ancestors peopled the mountain frontier, and stayed on in the mountains when the frontier moved on. Many started as Presbyterians, but followed the revival movements and became Methodists and Baptists. They founded countless independent churches and several major evangelical denominations. They developed the camp meeting and the tent revival, the altar call and decoration day.

The first on this land, the Cherokee, added their own spirituality to the music. Some of the old hymns hold special meaning to the Cherokee and their struggles.

Along side the western Europeans, from the beginning, were the African-Americans, whose sophisticated traditions enlivened the music of their neighbors, bringing a new excitement to song and worship. Their presence also challenged the majority to practice what they preached, and "to do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Most residents are more mountain people than anything else, and the experience of mountain life and faith bring our people together.

It is one of the purposes of this collection to show some of the many ways we have found to make a joyful noise. In doing so, the John C. Campbell Folk School continues to affirm creativity and to work for tolerance and understanding, as it has sought to do so for seven decades in Brasstown. The old motto for the Folk School, "I Sing Behind The Plow," reminds us that, in everyday life and labor, there can be joy and fellowship. The students and employees of the Folk School and the musicians and singers represented in this collection hope that *Meeting In The Air* is a blessing to you.

FIELD RECORDINGS AND EXPLANATORY NOTES
DAVID A. BROSE
MANAGER OF FOLKLORE PROGRAM
JOHN C. CAMPBELL FOLK SCHOOL
BRASSTOWN, NORTH CAROLINA

Meeting in the Air documents the sacred vocal and instrumental music traditions of the Southern Appalachians. This collection centers on a region surrounding Brasstown, North Carolina, the home of the John C. Campbell Folk School. Established in 1925 by Olive Dame Campbell, this unique school also serves as the cultural "hub" for the region. These recordings were made over a two year period in churches, private homes, community centers, community based festivals, and at public concerts.

THE REGION

This region surrounding Brasstown is comprised of the mountains of southwestern North Carolina, southeastern Tennessee and northeastern

Georgia. Gainful employment is historically scarce, yet the quality of life is excellent. Presently, the region is experiencing an acceleration in growth as a result of the excellent schools, low crime statistics, and the beauty of the topography.

Although loosely referred to as "the Appalachians," parts of this region are graced with links of the Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountain chains. The area boasts rivers, creeks, streams, and lakes. Thousands of persons come annually to enjoy the many recreational and cultural activities.

The community of Brasstown is located in Cherokee County. Population figures for Cherokee County compiled in 1990 list 20,170 residents. Of these, 95.8% are Anglo-American, 2% are Cherokee, 1.8% are African-American, .6% are Spanish-Speaking, .2% are Asian, and .2% are listed as "other." These figures for the county are indicative of the cultural make-up throughout the larger surrounding region. The county contains 466.96 square miles of which 97.34% is land and 2.66% is water. Forest land comprises 252,511 acres, of which 251,890 are timberland, 7 acres are woodland, and 614 are reserved timberland.¹

HUMAN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The region in which these traditions were collected is primarily comprised of American Indians from the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, Scots-Irish, Welsh, German-American, descendants of French Huguenot, and African-American people.

Some Cherokee residents live on The Qualla Boundary (The Cherokee Reservation) which rests in and around the town of Cherokee, North Carolina, while others reside in Clay, Cherokee, and Graham Counties. Some 3,500 years ago the ancestors of these Cherokee peoples broke from the northern Iroquois. Some of the songs and dances of the contemporary

Cherokee date to the Iroquois. These songs and dances were felt to be pagan by the missionaries who came to Christianize the Cherokee. The intrinsic native sacred belief was discouraged by ensuing generations of missionaries, preachers, and teachers.

In 1817, a Baptist Mission for the Cherokees was established in the Peachtree section of western North Carolina. The mission, located a few miles south of Murphy, consisted of a chapel, a school, a farm and a grist mill. Although Cherokee schools operated by Anglo-Americans did much to instruct the Cherokee in certain skills, the schools did discourage the speaking of the Cherokee language. Edna Chekelelee, a Cherokee cultural leader who resides near Robbinsville, North Carolina, recalls:

"The teachers were all White and we couldn't talk Indian. If you spoke Indian, they'd wash your mouth out with soap. Of course, (Edna laughs), it was Ivory Soap. Well, we'd walk home, we'd talk Indian then, ya' know, all the way back to the mountain."²

During the winter of 1838, hundreds of Cherokees were gathered at Fort Butler (located at Murphy, North Carolina) and later driven to Oklahoma on The Trail of Tears. Other members of the Cherokee Nation resisted removal and hid in isolated regions like the Snowbird Mountains, located some forty miles from Brasstown. The older ceremonial dances and songs came to act as symbols for the resistance to ongoing forces of Anglo-American domination. Over the generations, a number of hymns and psalms from Anglo-American tradition have become important to the Cherokee. Some of these sacred songs from the Anglo tradition remain as tunes with the words set in Cherokee. Edna Chekelelee comments on the fact that the Cherokee knew Anglo-American hymns before the Trail of Tears:

"As far as singing goes, there is songs they sang along The Trail of Tears, and one was "Guide Me Jehovah," and one was "God the Son

Paid It All," which is "Amazing Grace," and the other one is "You Take Me to Heaven and Watch After Me."³

It would be erroneous to assume that the Cherokee had no knowledge of Christ prior to contact with missionaries. Edna Chekelelee comments:

"And about singing, we already knew there was God and it was in the heart. And the old people said they already knew Jesus had died on a cross. But yet, they think about the blood, and it is the purest blood that Jesus has poured out, and the purest water that water has drained out on the side. And that is why they call the blood of purest red as success, and the color of the purest White is peace. And that is the most color that we use. And the black color ... we don't use much because that is as death and that is West. And the green earth is what we walk on. Take care of our Mother Earth. As far as we know, we come from the Earth. So that is what God created."⁴

The first known White settler in Cherokee County was Archibald R. S. Hunter who made his home near to Fort Butler. Other western Europeans soon followed. Shortly after the Civil War, a Black couple came to the area. Henry McAdams and Texas McClelland McAdams settled on a beautiful mountain top near the present site of Murphy. He named the settlement for her: Texana. Descendants of slaves from the Suddeth, Harshaw and McCombs plantations followed and settled there. The first church was a log structure. In 1881 Mt. Zion Baptist Church was constructed and is still in operation. Many Black people in this region are Baptist, with churches in Andrews, Hayesville and Texana.

The region's rich cultural heritage is the direct result of cultural trading between Whites, Blacks and Cherokees. Traditions in music are diverse. It is not unusual for Cherokees to perform Anglo-American melodies and vocals accompanied by the banjo, fiddle, or guitar and they sing hymns in both the English and Cherokee languages.

Today the region contains several distinct strains interwoven to create the larger patchwork. First, there are deep layers of tradition that passed down informally, person-to-person. These traditions include: instrumental music; dancing; singing; visual arts; functional crafts; folk tales; legends; oral histories; hunting; fishing; animal husbandry; gardening; farming; food preservation and preparation.

Secondly, the region has been affected by cultural elements which several generations of local residents have received from popular culture and "outside" influences. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) brought electricity into the area in the late 1940's. It brought the electric light, radio, television, electric heat and home appliances. With the advent of modernization came changes in the "older ways of life" as people experienced a shift from "home based" entertainment to that which came from the electronic media.

Finally, in-migration caused changes as new residents from throughout the United States came to purchase land and establish homes. Some of these residents came as a result of the John C. Campbell Folk School or other artistic opportunities such as galleries and studios. Clearly, the lives of local residents have been touched by the presence of the Folk School as much trading of cultural materials continues between students, faculty, administrators and the larger community.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF SACRED MUSIC IN THE U. S.

When White Europeans began to settle in the Puritan Colonies of New England, the established Church in Britain was The Church of England. The history of sacred music in the New World was one of congregations which broke away from the Church of England. Those who established new churches were called "dissenters." These 17th Century immigrants

were singers of psalms who used "everyday" speech as compared to the formalized language as found in various translations of the *Bible*. The tradition of psalm singing was shared by all Protestants in Western Europe except for Germany, where the Lutheran Chorale was favored. In contrast to the stereotype often cited regarding the Puritans' disdain for music, these early settlers also had secular instrumental music, ballads, and lyric songs.

The Plymouth Pilgrims used a psalm book printed especially for the Separatist Congregations in Holland by Henry Ainsworth (entitled *The Ainsworth Psalter*) and first printed in Amsterdam in 1612. Longfellow referred to these psalms in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

Musically, the tunes in *The Ainsworth Psalter* are spirited. The tunes have great diversity and freedom of rhythm and meter. A small percentage of the psalms utilize the four line quatrain of the old secular ballads like those canonized by Francis James Child in his compilation, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.

Used in sacred music, the use of poetics written in four line quatrains is referred to as "common meter." After a time, "common meter" was frequently used in psalm books. Yet, in Ainsworth we see stanzas of five, six, eight and twelve lines with a wide diversity of rhythms. Musicologist Waldo Pratt noted:

"This music represents the folk-song style, with its symmetrical and echoing lines, each with a definite unity and all fused into a total enveloping unity. It is the folk song that has retained great freedom of inner structure. It may be that these thirty-nine melodies illustrate more than one strain of folk-song tradition."⁵

As in the case with sacred or secular music, a preference for particular kinds of tunes, lyrics and rhythms was evident. When the Plymouth Colony merged with the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1691, there was a movement

from within folk culture that resisted standardization and created further interplay between that sacred and secular in music. Formally trained singers and musicians wished for standardization while the informally trained, community or family based singers strived for innovation, creativity and change. Those who were formally trained were called "reformers" and they felt that the singing from folk tradition was in contrast to refinement and good taste. This was a classic dichotomy between urban and rural, formally educated and informally trained, and the printed page versus oral tradition. The leaders of the reform movement were the Reverends Thomas Walter (1696-1725), John Tufts (1689-1750), and Thomas Symmes (1677-1725).

It was during this time that a new tradition called "lining out" developed in England, Scotland and the New World. The leader would sing or recite a line and the congregation would repeat it. Lining out was popular within oral tradition as it did not require the congregation to read music. Without the aid of the printed page, song leaders soon forgot particular melodies.

The reformers wanted to retain the "quality" of the original psalms. They instituted singing schools to educate people in psalmody. These schools were popular in both urban and rural areas. In cities singing schools developed organized choral societies with formalized concerts. In the rural areas of the South, the schools reinforced the oral tradition of communal sacred singing.

It is a fact of history that the nonconformists of one generation become the conformists of another. Psalmody, which had once stood for Protestant and Puritan dissent soon came to be regarded as staid. A new non-conformist, Dr. Isaac Watts (1674-1748), reacted against the old, strict metrical psalms. Hymns became popular, with poetry and tunes that were livelier and more interesting to many of the singers and listeners. Some of the hymn tunes were secular and from folk tradition. Dr. Watts' influence

was tremendous. By 1739 his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* was in print. His work had a profound influence on that of John and Charles Wesley.

In 1735, the Brothers Wesley were invited to travel from England to America and to speak to the colonists in Savannah, Georgia. On board ship, the Wesleys met Moravian missionaries and were drawn to the singing of their hymns. This chance meeting influenced the hymn traditions that were to follow.

The "Great Awakening" swept the English-American colonies. The people took religion into their own hands and folk hymns blossomed. This mid-18th Century mass-movement furthered activities of the dissenting groups: the Quakers; the Moravians, the Baptists, the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists. Smaller sub-sects came into being like the Shakers and the Dancing Baptists. The evangelical hymn became a more upbeat, experiential type of singing and replaced the common metered psalms.

During this time, John Newton was drawn to Christianity by the writings of John Wesley and Thomas a Kempis. Newton had gained great wealth as a slave trader. Although Newton was influenced by Wesley, his hymns were much more radical and based on emotional experience, representing the religious freedom and experiential non-restraint singing of the "Great Awakening."

At this same historical point, a new music was developing among African-Americans. By the end of the 18th Century, the slave population had reached nearly one million and 20% of the American population was of African descent. Singing and work were often performed simultaneously. This created a situation through which many folk songs and spirituals were created. Exposure to Anglo-American psalms, hymns and secular music had a direct influence on this new African-American tradition.

From 1780 through 1830, the United States experienced the "Second Awakening." This movement gained support through oral traditions. Out

of this period came the camp meeting. During July, 1880, the first camp meeting was held in Logan County, Kentucky, attended by thousands of persons from Anglo-American and African-American communities. After attending such a meeting in Georgia, the Swedish novelist Fredrika Bremer wrote:

"A magnificent choir! Most likely the sound preceded from the Black portion of the assembly, as their number was three times that of Whites, and their voices are naturally beautiful and pure ... On the Black side (of the camp) the tents were still full of religious exaltation, each separate tent presenting some new phrases. In one tent a song of the spiritual "Canaan" was being sung excellently ... at half past five the next morn the hymns of the Negroes were still to be heard on all sides."⁶

Just as the "Great Awakening" had stimulated a revolt against the staid psalms, the "Second Awakening" functioned to replace antiquated hymns. The camp meeting participants had created new "spiritual songs" based on tunes from the secular tradition.

New collections of hymns published early in the 19th century, continue to impact contemporary sacred music. Jeremiah Ingalls (1764-1828) published *The Christian Harmony or The Songster's Companion*, and included within it many secular tunes with sacred texts. Ingalls was also the first to include camp meeting songs, and certain of his own fuguing compositions like "Northfield" passed from *The Christian Harmony* to the 1854 edition of *The Southern Harmony* and the 1936 edition of *The Original Sacred Harp*.

In 1801 two American singing school masters, William Smith and William Little, invented a system for reading notes for the psalms and hymns. Their publication, *The Easy Instructor or A New Method of Teaching Sacred Harmony*, was released. The system consisted of four

musical tones with corresponding geometrical shape-notes. In 1803, Andrew Law introduced his "new plan" of printed music. His system also utilized the shape-notes. The four tone system stayed in us until Lowell Mason developed a seven shape-note system based on a seven tone scale with Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti, and Do. Both the four and the seven shape-note systems are in use currently.

Shape-note singing was quickly adopted by singing schools. Many of the singers and musicians featured in this collection were trained in shape-note singing schools. In this region of Appalachia, at least three shape-note books are in use: *The Christian Harmony* (North Carolina), *The Sacred Harp* (Georgia), and *The New Harp of Columbia* (Tennessee). Large shape-note conventions are still being held in the South. Shape-note singings continue to be called "all day singing's with dinner on the grounds."

Books which featured the "newer" types of folk hymns and gospel music began to be published during the later 19th and throughout the 20th centuries. Although purchased by large groups of individuals for singing schools, camp meetings and church congregations, many of these books were also purchased by individuals for use in the home. The Stamps-Baxter Company issues new books with shape-notes each year with harmonies that are contemporary and modern hymns based more loosely on secular traditions. In a footnote within the text to the introduction of the 1987 edition of *The New Harp of Columbia*, Dorothy D. Horn states:

"I have heard that singing schools using the Stamps-Baxter books are still occasionally held. Since these books are largely devoted to gospel music of the foot-stamping variety, such singing schools can be considered an off-shoot of the older tradition."⁷

The aforementioned quote reflects the tension between those who hold to the older systems and those who favor the new and modern in sacred music.

Singing schools and camp meetings are filled with sacred meaning, yet they are social events which give people the chance to meet in large numbers. Many of the persons who attend these singings have grown up within the tradition of shape-note singing from their community and family. In addition, the traditional singers welcome and embrace younger persons who did not have shape-note singing as a direct part of their life experience, as they view new converts to this type of singing as important to the vitality and continuity of the tradition.

As the 19th century progressed, several schools of thought seemed to prevail in sacred music. There were those who stuck fervently to the shape-note singings (although there were divisions between those who favored four shape-note and those who favored seven shape-note traditions). In addition, there was yet another generation who strived for the "modern and scientific" and instituted choral societies and formalized performances in urban environments. The camp meetings and revivals in rural areas continued to spread the folk hymns and "newer forms" of compositions which were based on rural, folk oriented music and which drew upon oral tradition. Many folk hymns contained easily learned choruses and were suited for improvisation.

Prior to the development of the spiritual during the 19th century, there was a tradition of Black singers' involvement with hymns and psalms of at least a century. The spread of religious instruction among Blacks coincided with the rise of the camp meeting movement. Spirituals are sacred songs with themes of faith, redemption and a life hereafter while also containing double meanings about escape from enslavement and domination. Spirituals like "Follow The Drinkin' Gourd" gave instruction

regarding escape. If the listener followed the big dipper ("the drinkin' gourd") he or she would be traveling North and would eventually reach freedom. In terms of "form," the spiritual has been well documented from accounts which came after the close of the Civil War. In *America's Music*, Gilbert Chase formulated a listing of characteristics for the spirituals. The following briefly summarizes his listing, with a few of my own observations:

- A.) The spirituals were sung with a great melodic and rhythmic freedom;
- B.) There was generally a leader who improvised verses, with singers answering back in a "call and response" type pattern;
- C.) Spirituals were used as work songs, for labor in the fields, the rowing of boats, etc., as well as having a function in religious/sacred contexts for worship. Some of the spirituals entered the tradition of secular work songs. Certain of the melodies utilized for spirituals entered the tradition of secular work songs. Certain of the melodies utilized for spirituals were European in origin, while others are closer to the African tradition, showing elements of polyphony and duple rhythms.

If the above seems confusing, it is because of the spirituals' complexity. In his study, *Negro Folk Music*, folklorist Harold Courlander stated:

"So broad, indeed, is the realm of Negro religious music that the customary title 'spiritual' is patently inadequate to describe it."⁸

The first publication of Black spirituals, *Slave Songs of the United States*, was by William Allen, Charles Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. Published in 1867, the songs came from an era before emancipation. These were songs that were created and transmitted in an oral tradition and they had long circulated among Black slaves well before compilers and publishers made spirituals available to wider (mostly White) audiences.

Just as hymns were replaced by spirituals as a means for people to express their faith during the "Second Awakening" of the early 19th

century, so did spirituals eventually fall out of favor in Black tradition as ex-slaves moved into urban environments and needed "newer" ways to sing songs of religious praise. During the second half of the 19th century, a new song type known as "gospel-hymnody" became popular. The Black gospel song evolved in towns and cities. Although spirituals were based primarily on folksong forms, gospel music was based on folksong as well as popular music and the new sounds from "Tin Pan Alley."

African-American gospel music became the sacred counterpart to secular urban blues music. Black rural Southern country blues was urbanized to fit the needs of a people in a new living environment, as the rural Southern country spirituals became undated to fit the sacred needs of people in new urban (sometimes Northern) communities. By the 20th century, gospel music was being composed by Charles Albert Tindley, Lucie Elizabeth Campbell, and Thomas Andrew Dorsey (called the father of gospel music). By the 1920's, Dorsey was adapting blues, jazz and ragtime rhythms to sacred lyrics and it was he who used the term "gospel" to differentiate that new music from existent sacred music. Dorsey was steeped in secular music prior to his pioneering work in gospel music and, at one point in the early 1920's, he was pianist and leader of the band for blues innovator, "Ma" Rainey. Like the term "blues," the word "gospel" can be applied both to a performance style as well as to a song repertory.

In Appalachia, the standard "band" after the Civil War was the fiddle and banjo. Much of this fiddle music was based on dance melodies that were English, Irish, Scots-Irish, and/or western European in origin. As time passed, many more melodies were composed in the United States. In addition, the influences of African-American musicians were many. The five-string banjo has often been mistakenly called "America's only (true) folk instrument" or "American in origin." The banjo is an African instrument and was introduced to colonies of the United States after the

importation of slaves. The African-American fiddler was valued and held a special position on many Southern plantations prior to and during the Civil War. Fiddle and banjo music of the post Civil War era is often referred to as "old time" music (although many ethnic groups in various regions of the World use the term "old time" music for their own specific kinds of dance and lyric songs). The influence of African-American music and musicians manifests itself in the Southern United States' "old time" music in the syncopated "back beat" that one can hear in the melodies as performed by an Appalachian fiddler or banjo/fiddle duo. The secular ballad tradition in Appalachia also became more African-American influenced (melodically, rhythmically, and lyrically) as the result of the banjo and African-American performers.

At some point early in the 20th century, the guitar reached the Appalachian Mountains and began to be used in the "old time" stringband context. (The guitar may well have been brought to Anglo-American mountain tradition by African-American guitarists.) Certainly, mail order house such as Montgomery Ward and Sears and Roebuck made the guitar available to rural persons who might be miles from a general or "other" retail store. Southern men flocked by the hundreds to the American West to become cowboys after the Civil War. In the American West, the guitar was brought to the attention of Anglo-Americans by Spanish Speaking/Mexican *Vaqueros* (cowboys). It stands to reason that since cowboy songs and poetry were brought back to the Southern mountains by men who sallied forth into the West and then returned to Appalachia, so could have the guitar by some persons who encountered it initially in the great Southwest.

Regardless of the nature of the guitar's initial introduction into mountain culture, as the guitar entered Appalachian tradition the roles of each instrument became more defined. The fiddle often carried the

melody, the guitar would often play the rhythm and bass runs, and the banjo would normally liaison between the two, playing the role of part rhythm, part melody. Naturally, there were exceptions to the construct. "Mother Maybelle" Carter, for instance, played melodies on the guitar early in the recording career of the A.P. Carter Family in the 1920s and '30s. Also, there were sub-regions of Appalachia where the fiddle and banjo would play in unison, each carrying a melodic part in tandem.

As the 20th century progressed, there came a popular phase of "brother duet" singers who rendered secular and sacred songs in "tight", often parallel third or perfect fifth harmonies. During the 1930's, brother duos such as the Blue Sky Boys, the Lilly Brothers, the Monroe Brothers, and the Stanley Brothers gained popularity. These duos helped pave the way for the bluegrass musical traditions which followed.

Around 1946, Kentuckian Bill Monroe helped to popularize a new type of music which drew heavily on "old time" mountain music and balladry. Monroe took the concepts of harmony singing from sacred music and the church, added instruments such as the mandolin to the guitar, fiddle, banjo ensemble and further advanced a concept for "breaks" in which each instrument would take a solo. In addition, a North Carolina innovator named Earl Scruggs introduced his unique syncopated three-finger style of banjo playing which helped to define bluegrass music with a style which came to be termed bluegrass or "Scruggs" style banjo. It should be no surprise that Monroe was deeply influenced by a Black musician named Arnold Shultz (1886-1931), illustrating again the influence of African-American music on Anglo-American traditions.

The role of Appalachian "old time" and bluegrass music on the tradition of sacred music as it currently exists in Appalachia is tremendous. Bluegrass-Gospel music continues to enjoy a large and faithful audience, and many genres of folk, country, and gospel music as played on

instruments such as the banjo, fiddle, guitar and mandolin (with or without vocals) can be found in many regions of Appalachia. In essence, *Meeting in the Air* is a sampler of the genres and styles of sacred music which span two centuries of history as shared between African-Americans, Anglo-Americans, and American Indians from the Eastern Band of the Cherokee.

This collection is produced first and foremost for those persons who are residents of this region and the communities within which these traditions were collected, and secondly as an educational, entertainment, and spiritual release for persons who reside in other regions and who desire to hear the sacred music of the Southern Appalachians. As this is a "sampler" and as there are many genres of sacred music in this region, some persons who reside in these communities may be disappointed that their personal favorites are not included. As there are countless individuals, ensembles and churches in this region, they simply could not all be documented and included. Therefore, we chose to document and present within this collection performers and genres of music which most typify and characterize the full spectrum of sacred music, from the oldest of shape-note and folk hymn traditions, to modern compositions and approaches.

THE PERFORMERS AND THEIR MUSIC

VOLUME ONE

1. COMIN' UP ON THE ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

Composed by the Barnes Family, Rock Hill, South Carolina
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Performed by Catch on Fire, Murphy, North Carolina

Collected by David A. Brose, 4/27/94, at the home of Ronnie and Debbie Green, Murphy, North Carolina

The ensemble *Catch on Fire* is made up of Roscoe Hall, electric bass, six string bass, and vocals; Ronnie Green, bass guitar and vocals; and Debbie Green, electric keyboard and vocals. This ensemble has been playing together since 1993.

Roscoe Hall was born on July 7, 1949, and grew up in the mountain community of Texana. Roscoe had music in his family throughout his entire life. Although some of the first music which Roscoe Hall heard was secular, it was the sacred music that the family sang in church that laid the foundation for his current musical compositions and performances. Currently, Roscoe plays in the ensemble, *Catch on Fire*, he directs and provides the musical accompaniment for the Texana Baptist Church Youth Choir, and he supports his family mainly through wages which he receives by working at Levi-Strauss Company in Murphy, North Carolina.

The remainder of the trio *Catch on Fire* is comprised of the husband-wife team of Ronnie and Debbie Green. Debbie, an extraordinary vocalist and keyboardist, was born in Hayesville, North Carolina, March 19, 1960. Husband Ronnie, born July 7, 1958, in Brasstown, North Carolina, plays the electric bass and sings. Like the other two members of the group, Ronnie felt a calling early in life to sing and play gospel music.

2. **MORNING TRUMPET**

Lyrics by B. F. White

Tune by M.L. Swan

Public Domain

Performed by The New Harp Singers of East Tennessee

Collected by David A. Brose, 5/22/94, Athens, Tennessee

This folk hymn (as well as all the selections on *Meeting in the Air* by The New Harp Singers of East Tennessee) was recorded at an "all day singin' with dinner on the grounds" which took place at the Old Campus Building at Tennessee Wesleyan College in Athens. It is traditional at this type of singing to arrange the room such that the chairs are in a perfect square, with a space set in the middle for the song leader or singing school master to stand and guide the group of singers.

Although the most currently published book utilized by this shape-note singing group is entitled, *The New Harp of Columbia*, the older and more traditional name for these singing groups in southeast Tennessee is "old harp singers." Of all shape-

note traditions in the Southern United States, old harp singing seems to be among the longest operating with continued vitality.

During most community based shape-note singings, many people from among the singers may be called upon to lead particular songs. The song leader for this version of "Morning Trumpet" is Larry Olszewski of Knoxville, Tennessee.

3. **MAY JESUS BEAR THE CROSS ALONE**

Lyrics by Thomas Shepard

Tune by George N. Allen

Public Domain

Performed by The Swanson Boys

Collected by David A. Brose and Kathleen Hines Brose, 1/15/94, at the Payne home in Candy Mountain, North Carolina

This ensemble is comprised of Ron Jones, vocal and mandolin; Brian Jones, guitar and vocal; Don Payne, fiddle and vocal; Doug Payne, banjo and vocal; and Lee Janes, guitar and vocal. The two Jones' and the two Paynes' are sets of brothers who have sung together in church and at home since their youth. Currently, all of the members of this ensemble are in their mid-twenties to their mid-thirties. Although each of these singers plays an instrument, much of their material is rendered *a cappella*.

"May Jesus Bear The Cross Alone" is a traditional folk hymn. It is performed in a "call and response" style which makes songs of this type popular at camp meetings and tent revivals, as its structure allows for much improvisation. The insertion of one verse from John Newton's composition, "Amazing Grace," into this folk hymn is yet another testimony to "Amazing Grace" as widespread and often used in folk tradition.

On the evening that this selection was recorded, there was much snow on the ground and the temperature was nearly zero; unseasonably cold for the temperate climate of southwestern North Carolina. The Payne Brothers, Jones Brothers and Lee Janes were seated around a kitchen table in a semi-circle. The Payne's home, a large double-wide trailer, was filled with people seated on beds and couches who had come to be present for the recording session. This ensemble sang bluegrass-

gospel songs, hymns and folksongs with sacred themes for a total of four hours; a true testament to the seemingly endless repertoire of these young men.

4. **GOD MAY NOT COME WHEN YOU WANT HIM TO**

(But He'll Be Here Right on Time)

Composed by Roscoe Hall of Catch on Fire

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Performed by Catch on Fire

Collected by David A. Brose, 4/27/94, at the home of Ronnie and Debbie

Green in Murphy, North Carolina

The lyrics and tune to this wonderful selection were composed by Roscoe Hall. This song reflects Roscoe Hall's belief that one will receive the things that they need when God deems it appropriate. In this and other songs performed by Catch on Fire, the listener may notice that Roscoe will often sing the lead melody on verses, but immediately switch into a high *falsetto* for harmonies on the chorus.

5. **THE UNCLOUDED DAY**

Composed by Rev. J. K. Alwood

Public Domain

Performed by John Debty, guitar, and Roberta Voyles, banjo

Collected by David A. Brose, 4/4/94, at John Debty's home in Vengeance

Creek, North Carolina

"The Unclouded Day" is very popular in oral tradition, both as a folk hymn as sung with its lyrics and as an instrumental tune. Commercial recordings of this song span most of the century, with versions recorded as early as the 1920's by evangelist Billy Sunday's music arranger Homer Rodeheaver, and as recently as the later 1970's as recorded by Willie Nelson.

This particular instrumental version of "The Unclouded Day" is performed by the brother/sister duo of John Debty and Roberta Voyles. Their grandparents came from a rural region outside of Dublin, Ireland, traveled across the Atlantic Ocean and "jumped ship" in Charleston, South Carolina, prior to the Civil War. John and Roberta's father, Christopher Boston Debty, operated a ferry boat in Graham County, North Carolina, moving people and livestock across the river to the

community of Tapoka, North Carolina. Christopher Boston Debty and his wife Cansada Taylor Debty, of Tellico Plains, Tennessee, had a total of six children: Charley, William, John, Carl, Roberta and Christopher. Of these six children, four lived to reach adulthood and all but Christopher played on musical instruments which included the banjo, guitar and fiddle.

John Debty was born July 24, 1920. At the age of four, the Debty's moved to Vengeance Creek, between the communities of Marble and Upper Peachtree in southwestern North Carolina. A musical family, John, his father, and brothers would often play for square dances and cake walks. At a very young age, John learned to play the guitar from an extremely well-known guitarist named Riley Puckett, who for years performed with a North Georgia stringband known as "The Skillet Lickers." Like many other men from the Appalachian Mountains of the southern United States, John Debty moved further north after World War II to live apart from his family and send money home for their support.

Roberta Voyles was born May 21, 1928. Unlike some of her older siblings who were born in Graham County, North Carolina, Roberta was born in Tellico Plains, Tennessee. At the time of Roberta's birth, her father was no longer operating the ferry boat in Graham County, North Carolina, and was supporting his family by cutting timber for "cord wood." Roberta mostly grew up in the Vengeance Creek community where she and her brother John have resided for many years. The soil around Vengeance Creek is high quality bottomland, surrounded by mountains, yet nestled in a fertile valley. As the children grew, each one was given specific tasks to perform around the family farm. For many years, the family ran a mixed operation, raising livestock, grains, and vegetables. Roberta planted corn and took an active role in its care during the growing season. When Roberta reached adulthood, she married and worked as a seamstress for several local manufacturing plants, including the Lee bluejean company. During this period, Roberta was married to her first husband, Hubert Stiles. After Stiles death, Roberta eventually married James Voyles and did not return to work outside of the home.

When Roberta and her siblings were young, there was a lot of singing and music in the home. Robert's father played the five-string banjo and it was he that started Roberta on that instrument during her youth. Roberta played very little music during the years that she was married and raising her family. After her

children left home, she began playing the banjo again and formed an ensemble called The Marble Mountaineers. Currently, this wonderful brother/sister duet share music almost daily as they live in close proximity to one-another along the banks of Vengeance Creek.

6. **ZION**
Composed by Thomas Hastings, 1830
Public Domain
Performed by The New Harp Singers of East Tennessee
Collected by David A. Brose, 5/22/94, Athens, Tennessee

"Zion" was composed by Thomas Hastings (1784-1872), one of the most prolific writers of sacred lyrics and melodies of the 19th century. Certain accounts boast that Hastings wrote over six hundred hymns, composed over one-thousand hymn tunes, published fifty volumes of music and authored many articles regarding sacred music. Of this corpus of material, "Toplady," "Ortonville," "Retreat," and "Zion" are the most consistently utilized tunes in contemporary times. Hastings was the son of a country farm producer and physician who resided in Washington, Connecticut. At the age of twelve, the family moved to Clinton, New York, and Hastings became choir leader at the age of eighteen. In 1928 he moved to Utica, New York, and edited a newspaper known as *The Western Recorder*, with articles pertaining to sacred themes and Hastings' own opinions on music. Hastings acted as choir master for several churches and died in New York City, after a career that was not without influence and productivity. This version of "Zion" was lead by Martha Graham, of Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Well into her eighties at the time of this recording, Martha Graham learned to sing shape-notes while still a young child. "My momma would set me in her lap and say 'now, you're gonna sing, I don't want you runnin in and out of the building'."

7. **ON A HILL ALONE AND GRAY**
Traditional
Performed by Spring Wood and the Powell Family
Collected by David A. Brose, 4/30/93, at the John C. Campbell Folk School
in Brasstown, North Carolina

At the time of this recording, singer/guitarist Spring Wood of Young Harris, Georgia, was in her late teens. In addition, other musical accompaniment was provided by Nicky Powell (then age fifteen, guitar and mandolin) and Wayde Powell, Jr. (then age twelve, banjo), Wayde, Sr, guitar, and Debby Powell, bass, complete this ensemble. The Powells often perform together under the name The Powell Family and have recently released a cassette tape of a live performance at the John C. Campbell Folk School. "On A Hill Alone and Gray" is a sacred folksong that was recorded by A. P. Carter and the Carter Family during the early era of "country" music recording on 78rpm records.

8. **MY HEAVENLY HOME**
(Variant as sung in Cherokee)
Author William M. Golden
Performed by The Drywater Family of Oklahoma
Arranged and adapted by The Drywater Family
Collected by David A. Brose and Kathleen Hines Brose, 6/19/93, at the
annual Trail of Tears Sing in the Snowbird Mountains of southwestern
North Carolina

"My Heavenly Home" is a very distant relative to the song "A Beautiful Life," a standard amongst bluegrass and Bluegrass-Gospel ensembles. One songbook utilized by the members of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee lists sacred lyrics with tunes that are suggested for use with each set of lyrics. Often, the lyrics do not correspond to those as sung to the same (or similar) tune in the English language. This phenomenon makes identifying and crediting authorship difficult.

In Cherokee, these lyrics are translated as: "My heavenly home is a beautiful place/it's brighter than the sun/I am going there when I leave this world/it shall be much better to be in my Heavenly home/and I shall be there soon/We can begin to build our Heavenly home while we are still on this Earth by the deeds we do in his Holy name/It is a mansion not built by hands and it outshines the Sun."

The Trail of Tears Gospel Sing is an annual event held at the community center in Robbinsville, North Carolina. Annually, a small number of persons from the Western Band of the Cherokee come from Oklahoma and return to their ancestral homelands in southwestern North Carolina's "Snowbirds" (as the locals call these

and sang ballads. "Frailing," very common as a banjo performance style in certain regions of Appalachia, is implemented by playing notes with a downward motion of the players' wrist and forearm. The notes which carry the melody are struck with the back of the players index or middle finger while the downward striking motion of the wrist and forearm takes place. The fifth string on the five-string banjo is sounded by the thumb of the performers "picking hand."

Vonnie Mashburn, the brothers' mother, played banjo in a style known as "two-finger," which utilized the thumb of the "picking hand," and index finger of that hand executing notes with an upward picking motion. It is the "two-finger" style that is most characteristic of the banjo music in the mountains of North Georgia and southwestern North Carolina. It is the "two-finger" style of performance that is exhibited by Hobbie Whitener, Mary Jane Queen, and Roberta Voyles within their selections on *Meeting in the Air*.

The Mashburn Brothers sang together at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Gum Log. They were influenced by bluegrass music in the 1940's, as many of the early pioneers in bluegrass played at the Blairsville Theater in Blairsville, Georgia. Radio stations which broadcast bluegrass music such as WSM, Nashville; WLW, Cincinnati; WCKY, Cincinnati and WNOX, Knoxville helped to shape the brothers' early musical experiences.

12. **I WANT TO LIVE FOREVERMORE**

Composed by Mitch Brewer

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Performed by Mitch Brewer

Collected by David A. Brose, 6/29/94, at the Farm House on the campus of the John C. Campbell Folk School

Mitch Brewer is a member of the Lumbee Indian culture, a group that continues to go officially unrecognized by the United States Government as an independent tribe. The Lumbee's reside in the southeastern region of North Carolina.

Mitch Brewer was born in Robeson County, North Carolina, January 19, 1947. Mitch has three children, one of which (Lisa) is a singer of contemporary country music in Nashville, Tennessee. Mitch's other two children are named Dean Mitchell

("Bo") and Brandy. Andrews, North Carolina, has been Mitch's home for the past decade.

Mitch grew up on a fifty acre farm, and his family did share cropping early in his life. Most of Mitch's work revolved around the picking of cotton and the "pulling" of tobacco. Proud of his Lumbee heritage, Mitch is fast to explain that the Lumbee's are the descendants of the original Anglo settlers who married Cherokee, and that the Cherokee banished the Lumbee people because of the "intermingling" of their bloodlines. Currently, there are forty-eight to fifty-thousand Lumbee, many of whom live around the community of Pembroke, North Carolina.

Mitch started to play the guitar at the age of fourteen. He purchased his first guitar from the money that he earned over one Summer picking cotton. Currently, Mitch continues to live in Andrews, North Carolina, where he writes songs and performs at various festivals, community celebrations, and fairs.

13. **LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS**

Lyrics for verses by Rev. E.A. Hoffman

Tune and lyrics to chorus by Anthony J. Showalter

Arranged and adapted by The Wilson Brothers

Performed by The Wilson Brothers

Collected by David A. Brose, 1/10/93, at the John C. Campbell Folk School

This song was recorded at a concert given by The Wilsons Brothers at the John C. Campbell Folk School. The Wilson Brothers are comprised of: Ray Wilson, mandolin, guitar, and vocal; Jerry Wilson, guitar and vocal; Paul Wilson, guitar and vocal and Perry Stalcup, bass.

The Wilson Brothers have spent much of their lives in the Brasstown, North Carolina, community. They have sung at prayer meetings, church "singin's," community based benefits and church services for much of their lives. Their parents are Wade Wilson and Marie Elliot Wilson. Wade and Marie had four children: Jerry, 1937; Ray, 1941; Carrie, 1945 and Henry, 1949. All of the children sing or play musical instruments.

The Wilson Brothers sing in the pre-bluegrass "brother duo" style that was popular in the late 1920's, throughout the 1930's and into the '40's. This "brother duo" singing was one of the traditions which lead to the formation of bluegrass

music around World War II. Ray and Jerry have a love for the singing of duos such as the Blue Sky Boys, the Monroe Brothers, the Louvin Brothers and the Stanley Brothers.

Over the past few years, The Wilson Brothers (along with bassist Perry Stalcup and Jerry Wilson's son, Paul), have appeared at festivals in Ohio, Tennessee, and Georgia, taking their "brother duo" harmonies into communities far from their home in southwestern North Carolina.

14. **GOD GAVE NOAH THE RAINBOW SIGN**

Traditional

Arranged and adapted by Bill and Wilma Millsaps

Performed by Bill and Wilma Millsaps

Collected by David A. Brose, 8/27/94, at the Millsaps' home in the Snowbird Mountains

Bill and Wilma Millsaps sing bluegrass and Bluegrass-Gospel music at festivals, concerts, and community events throughout the United States. In addition, they have appeared as "back-up" singers and musicians for other performers' tape and album releases, including associations with Tom Ewing (of Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Boys) and singer-songwriter-banjoist John Hartford.

Bill Millsaps was born Oct. 11, 1948, on the Snowbird River near to his present home. His father was Arthur Millsaps and his mother Jean Turbeville. Wilma Millsaps was raised near Tellico Plains, Tennessee, and is the daughter of Fred Wakefield and Sibyl Butler. Both Bill and Wilma each have close ties to Cherokee culture, and they sing in both the English and the Cherokee languages.

This song features Wilma Millsaps on vocals, Darrell Chambers of Robbinsville on guitar and Bill Millsaps on acoustic bass.

A.P. Carter and the Carter Family recorded a version of "God Gave Noah The Rainbow Sign" during the early years of commercial country music recordings. This helped to reinforce the songs use in oral tradition. It continues to be very popular in oral tradition, and is heard often throughout the region.

15. **TAKE ME IN A LIFEBOAT**

Composed by Frank Southern

Public Domain

Performed by The Mashburn Brothers

Collected by David A. Brose, 3/26/94, at the John C. Campbell Folk School

"Take Me in a Lifeboat" has become a standard in Bluegrass-Gospel music. One of the first commercial recordings was by J.E. Mainer's Mountaineers in 1935. More recent recordings include a version by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. The fact that this song continues to be heard and collected from oral tradition is a testament to the songs vitality.

16. **WONDROUS LOVE**

Traditional

Performed by The New Harp Singers of East Tennessee

Collected by David A. Brose, 5/22/94, Athens, Tennessee

The authorship of "Wondrous Love" seems to be unsure. For example, *The New Harp of Columbia* and *The Southern Harmony* list the author as Christopher, while the *Hesperian Harp* credits authorship to the Rev. A. Means. The 1958 edition of *The Christian Harmony* lists no authorship. After searching through many sources, I have treated "Wondrous Love" as "anonymous" in authorship.

"Wondrous Love" is in widespread use among shape-note singers of both the four tone and the seven tone systems, and there is much discussion about this songs popularity and impact upon sacred musical tradition in George Pullen Jackson's *Spiritual Folksongs of Early America*. At this particular singing, "Wondrous Love" was lead by Mitchell Martin, of Loudon, Tennessee.

17. **AMAZING GRACE**

Composed by John Newton

Arranged and adapted by Ross Brown and Don Fox

Performed by Ross Brown, Fiddle and Don Fox, Guitar

Collected by David A. Brose, 11/19/92, at Ross Brown's home in Hiawasse, Georgia

"Amazing Grace" was written by John Newton. Accounts of Newton's early life reveal a man of rather "earthly character" who went to sea at the age of eleven, deserted from England's Royal Navy and became active in the slave trade in the

mid-later 18th century. He was converted through the writings of persons including Thomas a Kempis and John Wesley. With poet William Cowper, Newton published a three volume collection entitled *Olney Hymns* in 1779. Many of these hymns were authored by Cowper and Newton.

"Amazing Grace" is currently in such use in oral tradition, *Meeting in the Air* contains several interesting and distinct versions of the hymn. This particular version by Ross Brown and Don Fox is rendered without lyrics as an instrumental tune.

18. **WHERE THE ROSES NEVER FADE**

Arranged and adapted by Aud Brown, David Anderson and Susie Rogers
Performed by: Aud Brown, Guitar and Vocals; David Anderson, Guitar,
and Susie Rogers, Vocals

Collected by David A. Brose, 6/26/94, in the Rectory of Little Brasstown Baptist Church in Brasstown, North Carolina

Like many of the selections chosen for *Meeting in the Air*, "Where the Rose's Never Fade" is very popular among the singers of folk hymns who reside in this region. This song functions in a great many contexts and in performance styles which bridge the entire gamut from a *cappella* singing to very modernized renderings with electronic instruments in vocal and instrumental performance styles indicative of the most recent trends in "Southern Gospel."

David Anderson was born in Brasstown into a family whose roots reach back at least six generations in that community. Anderson supports his family through his real estate appraising business. David's wife, Carolyn, is a teacher at Hayesville Elementary School. Aud Brown is also a native of Brasstown. Aud is the Pastor of Little Brasstown Baptist Church and is active in many community organizations and events. The third member of this trio, Susie Rogers, is a valued congregational member and singer at the Little Brasstown Baptist Church.

19. **MY WARFARE WILL SOON BE OVER**

Traditional

Arranged and adapted by Bill and Wilma Millsaps
Performed by Bill and Wilma Millsaps

Collected by David A. Brose, 8/27/94, at the Millsaps' home in the Snowbird Mountains

This sacred folksong features: Wilma Millsaps, vocal and guitar; Bill Millsaps, mandolin; Darrell Chambers, bass; and Robert Jenkins, fiddle.

"My Warfare Will Soon be Over" deals with the metaphor of life as a battle or "warfare," the conclusion of which is eternal life as witnessed in the lyrics "My warfare will soon be over, then I'm going home." This is a folk hymn of the variety that circulated at camp meetings following the Great Awakening.

20. **MEETING IN THE AIR**

Arranged and adapted by Hobbie Whitener and David A. Brose
Performed by Hobbie Whitener, Banjo, and David A. Brose, Guitar

Collected by David A. Brose, 3/25/92, at the Whitener home in Marble, North Carolina

Hobbie Whitener was born April 1, 1916, in a two-room single story log structure without electricity near to the present site of the Hiawasse Dam in Cherokee County, North Carolina. He lived in this home until the age of two, when the Whiteners moved to the community of Ogreeta.

Hobbie had six brothers and six sisters. Hobbie's father, Joe Henry, was nicknamed "Tint," and was well known as a fiddler in the community. Hobbie's mother was Betty Coleman Whitener. She was respected as a singer of ballads and sacred songs.

Hobbie began to perform on the banjo at the age of seven. By the time Hobbie had reached the age of thirteen he was working in construction and developing the farming skills which would see him through life. Hobbie farmed, worked at construction and labored for the Tennessee Valley Authority helping to build dams until 1941. At The age of twenty-five (in 1941) Hobbie enlisted in the army and lived for many months in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where he spent the rest of his tour of duty.

After his return from the service, Hobbie farmed and played banjo music for WKRK radio in Murphy, as well as stints on television in Chattanooga. He and his wife, Louceil, had two daughters; Phyllis (1951) and Shirley (1946).

Hobbie performs banjo in a two-finger up-picking style traditional to western North Carolina. He currently continues to perform and is in great demand at community celebrations, festivals and benefits throughout southwestern North Carolina.

This particular version of "Meeting in the Air" by Hobbie is so dynamic that it was chosen as the "title selection" for this collection. In addition, the title "Meeting in the Air" is tied to sacred belief in an eternal life after death, and thus the title carries greater truths regarding the sacred beliefs of many of the performers found within these selections.

VOLUME TWO

1. **HE LOOKED BEYOND MY FAULTS**
Lyrics composed by Dottie Rambo
Tune: Traditional "The Londonderry Air"
Arranged and adapted by Catch on Fire
Performed by Catch on Fire
Collected by David A. Brose, 4/27/94, at the home of Ronnie and Debbie Green, Murphy, North Carolina

In contrast to many of the sacred selections heard within this collection, the lyrics of "He looked Beyond My Faults" are of fairly recent composition. The tune is the traditional "Londonderry Air" which also functions as the tune to the popular "Danny Boy." As with any selection by Catch on Fire, this version of "He Looked Beyond My Faults" is unique to this ensemble, bearing the unique piano virtuosity of Debbie Green, and the stunning guitar and vocal work of Roscoe Hall.

The lyrics to this song pay further homage to the impact of John Newton's "Amazing Grace," as this selection begins with the lyrics "Amazing Grace, has always been my song of praise."

2. **NEW BRITAIN**
Composed by John Newton
Public Domain
Performed by The New Harp Singers of East Tennessee

Collected by David A. Brose, 5/22/94, Athens, Tennessee

This particular version is the closest in this collection to "Amazing Grace" as it was composed by John Newton. Although The New Harp Singers of East Tennessee normally use *The New Harp of Columbia* songster, this version was performed from the 1958 edition of *The Christian Harmony*, in which it appears as hymn #78 under the title "New Britain." On this particular day, "New Britain" was lead by Carroll Ross, of Athens, Tennessee.

3. **TRY JESUS**
Words and music by Troy Ramey
Published by Seyah Music, BMI
Arranged and adapted by Catch On Fire
Performed by Roscoe Hall and Catch on Fire
Collected by David A. Brose, 4/27/94, at Ronnie and Debbie Green's home in Murphy, North Carolina

Roscoe Hall learned this selection off of the radio, and he recalls the performers as Troy Ramey and The Soul Searchers Quartet. Not unlike the folk hymns from the camp meeting tradition, this selection lends itself to much improvisation as the result of the "call and response" pattern which allows for the singing of improvised lines which repeat followed by the response "He's alright."

4. **COME ALONG CHILDREN**
Traditional
Arranged and adapted by Champ Chandler (version A) and Bill Millsaps (version B)
Champ Chandler recorded by David A. Brose and Kathleen Hines Brose, 11/6/93, at Chandler's home in Marshall, North Carolina. Bill and Wilma Millsaps recorded by David A. Brose, 8/27/94, at the Millsap's home in the Snowbird Mountains

This selection circulates in oral tradition with a great many versions and variants. Champ Chandler calls the song "Come Along My Dear Fathers." Other performers have called it "Come and Go Along with Me" or "Come Along Children," which is Bill Millsaps' preferred title. This song reinforces a belief in Christ's

second coming and the "raising up of souls": "My dear savior is gone, but he's comin' back again, to carry us home to God."

Champ Chandler is a part of one of western North Carolina's prolific ballad singing families. Champ's father, Lloyd Chandler, has been recorded by musician/collector John Cohen. Cohen featured Lloyd Chandler's *a cappella* singing on a stunning original composition entitled "A Conversation With Death," as a part of a documentary L.P. entitled *High Atmosphere* and published by Rounder Records.

Champ Chandler grew up hearing singing from his father Lloyd, his uncle Dillard, and other close kin and friends including Brazila Wallin, Doug Wallin, Cass Wallin, Jack Wallin, and Aunt Nellie Chandler Norton, all well known and respected ballad singers of Madison County, North Carolina. For this selection, Champ accompanied himself on the steel stringed resonated guitar (generically referred to as a "dobro").

Version B of "Come Along Children" was arranged and adapted by Bill Millsaps. It features Wilma Millsaps on guitar and vocals and Bill Millsaps on mandolin and vocals.

5. PARADISE

Traditional

Performed by The New Harp Singers of East Tennessee

Collected by David A. Brose, 5/22/94, Athens, Tennessee

On this particular day "Paradise" was lead by Martha Graham. This version of "Paradise" was performed from the 1978 edition of the *New Harp of Columbia* songster.

6. HOLD TO GOD'S UNCHANGING HAND

Lyrics by Jennie Wilson

Tune by F. L. Eiland. 1905.

Public Domain

Performed by Walker Calhoun (Version A) and Singers at New Harmony

Baptist Church, Blue Ridge, Georgia (Version B)

Collected by David A. Brose at: Walker Calhoun's home in Cherokee, North

Carolina, 8/10/93 and at the New Harmony Baptist Church, 5/1/94

Jennie Wilson, the author of this hymns lyrics, was born in rural Indiana in 1857, and spent much of her life confined to a wheel chair.

The first version of this song is performed by Cherokee folk artist Walker Calhoun, who is well respected for his abilities as a maker of Cherokee rivercane blow-guns and darts. In addition, Walker is a dancer who teaches younger Cherokee youth the ancient dances. Mr. Calhoun attends to the spiritual needs of his community and teaches his younger family members about healing and mountain herbs. He lives on the Qualla Boundary (Cherokee Indian Reservation) in a rural community known as Big Cove. Specifically, the Calhoun family lives at the head of Big Cove on the Raven Fork of the Oconaluftee River. As a young child, Walker would dance to the ceremonial singing of his half-uncle. Uncle Will West was respected as a tribal shaman, herbal healer, and leader of ritual dances. Walker's uncle passed away in 1947.

It was from his father that Walker Calhoun learned to play the five-string banjo. Like many others on *Meeting in the Air*, Walker learned to play the banjo with the thumb and first finger of his picking hand in the "two-finger" style. Walker reports that his father kept the family banjo hanging by a string on the wall, and Walker would take it down and play it while his father was away from the home.

Although the tune as sung by Walker on this selection is the one associated with "Hold To God's Unchanging Hand," the words in Cherokee are "Guide Me, Jehovah." Cherokee legend states that it was this song and the Cherokee version of "Amazing Grace" that the Cherokee sang when being displaced from their homelands along the Trail of Tears.

Translated from Cherokee into English, the words to "Guide Me, Jehovah" are:

Guide Me Jehovah,

As I am walking through this barren land;

I am weak, but Thou art mighty,

Forever hold us in Thy powerful hand.

Open now the crystal fountain,

Where the healing waters flow;

And let Thy fiery cloud go before us,

And lead us on their journey through

When I tread the verge of the Jordan River,
Help me still my fears;
Bear one safely over, and
I shall sing Thy praises for eternity.

Version B comes from a large "all day singin' with dinner on the grounds" that took place during the Spring of 1993 at New Harmony Baptist Church in Blue Ridge, Georgia. The books utilized during this singing were modern shape-note books as published by the Stamps-Baxter Company. During the dinner portion of the day I took the chance to speak with some of the singers. Many of these singers were raised in rural Georgia communities and trained to sing shape-notes from *The Sacred Harp*.

7. **DELIVERANCE WILL COME**

Composed by John B. Mathias and Dwight Brock
Public Domain

Performed by Mary Jane Queen

Collected by David A. Brose, 4/8/92, at Mary Jane's home in Caney Fork,
North Carolina

Mary Jane Queen was born April, 1914, at Caney Fork, North Carolina. Caney Fork is a rural district about twenty miles from Cullowhee, North Carolina, in the Smoky Mountains. River cane is important to the folklife of the southern United States, as it supplies the raw natural material for items such as baskets and Cherokee blow-guns.

Mary Jane's maiden name was Prince. The Prince family had been in the Caney Fork region for six generations at her birth. She met her husband at John's Creek High School, and they married shortly after graduation. Mary Jane's husband (now deceased) was named Claude Queen. The Queen's were from John's Creek, a small community near to Caney Fork. Since her marriage to Claude, Mary Jane has lived on the "John's Creek side" of the Caney Fork.

Mary Jane Queen has been around music her entire life. Her father, James "Jim" Prince, played banjo in the old-time frailing style. Mary Jane's mother, Clearsie (Nicholson) Prince was a singer, as was Mary Jane's brothers, sisters and

other extended family. A note in Mary Jane's Great Grandfather's (John Prince) will lists a fiddle among his belongings. John Prince was from South Carolina, and was born into a family that kept slaves. Family oral history states that John Prince learned many fiddle and banjo tunes from African-Americans on the farm. The Queen's were also a musical family and Claude Queen played five-string banjo in the two-finger up-picking style traditional in western North Carolina. Claude Queen's father, Albert Queen, also played banjo in the two-finger style. Continuing the family tradition, Mary Jane's children each sing, and her son (Henry) is a regular performer at schools throughout North Carolina.

As a young girl Mary Jane attended a singing school in Cullowhee, North Carolina, to learn shape-notes. One day the entire class "cut school" and went to Sylva; the singing school master never returned.

"Deliverance Will Come" is also known as "Palms of Victory." The song is very popular in oral tradition. It has functioned as a model for similar compositions such as "Pans of Biscuits," a protest song related to coal mining struggles, and Bob Dylan's "Paths of Victory," which borrows very liberally from the sacred song.

8. **HAVE YOU GOT GOOD RELIGION**

Traditional

Performed by The Choir of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Andrews,
North Carolina

Collected by David A. Brose and Kathleen Hines Brose, 4/18/94, at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Andrews, North Carolina

On Sunday April 18, 1994, the congregation of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Andrews, North Carolina, held a special celebration with singing, preaching and "dinner on the grounds" to commemorate the first year anniversary of Bruce Oliver as the church Pastor. Several choirs from the region were present. Shortly after this celebration, Bruce Oliver Baptized a child in the Valley River. In this particular Baptist tradition, the person being baptized is thoroughly immersed under the water as a "cleansing."

"Have You Got Good Religion" is here performed by the African-American choir from Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Andrews, North Carolina. The listener can sense how

this selection unfolds, as increased voices and musicians join in to enhance the level of energy of power.

9. **RANK STRANGERS TO ME**

Composed by Albert E. Brumley, 1942

Arranged and adapted by The Mashburn Brothers

Performed by The Mashburn Brothers

Collected by David A. Brose, 3/26/94, at the John C. Campbell Folk School

Also known as "Rank Strangers," this song has become such a standard in bluegrass music that many albums list the song as "traditional," with the artists who record it believing it to be of a much greater age than its actual date of composition.

"Rank Strangers to Me" was composed by Albert E. Brumley, the composer of other "classics" which include "I'll Fly Away" and "Turn Your Radio On." Brumley was born on October 29, 1905, into a family of tenant farmers near the present site of Spiro, Oklahoma (until 1907, Oklahoma was not a State). Born into a musical family, Albert's father was a fiddler and his mother sang ballads and sacred songs. At the age of seventeen, Albert attended his first singing school to learn shape-notes. Later, he was to study at the Hartford Music Company. This company was beginning to have a thriving business publishing "convention books" in the seven-shape system, much the same as the Stamps-Baxter and James D. Vaughan publishing companies had done. Like Stamps-Baxter and James D. Vaughan, the Hartford Music Company also sent out quartets to perform and record compositions from their books. By the time of his death in 1977, Albert had established the Hartford-Brumley Music Company in Powell, Missouri, and many of his songs were firmly entrenched within tradition.

"Rank Strangers To Me," often called "Rank Strangers," was first published in 1942 in Stamps-Baxter's *Super Special No. 5: A Book of Favorite Radio Songs*. In the later 1950's, the song was recorded by The Stanley Brothers (Ralph and Carter), on the Starday label. This recording by the Stanley's may well have ushered the song into its current status as a bluegrass standard, although an earlier recording did appear on the Rich-R-Tone label by a Kentucky ensemble known as The Crusaders Quartet.

10. **JOY IN MY SOUL**

Traditional

Performed by Hobbie and Louceil Whitener

Collected by David A. Brose, 4/26/94, at Hobbie and Louceil's home in Marble, North Carolina

Hobbie and Louceil learned this lovely sacred song at their "home" Baptist church located near to Ogreeta, North Carolina. The song has a chorus with a two-part "call and response" pattern. Hobbie, who most often plays the banjo, offers an accompaniment to this song on the guitar.

11. **WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS**

Lyrics composed by Joseph Scriven

Tune by Charles C. Converse

Arranged and adapted by Catch On Fire

Performed by Catch on Fire

Collected by David A. Brose, 4/30/94, at a Saturday night church singing held at Bealtown Baptist Church in Bealtown, North Carolina

As with other selections on this release by Catch On Fire, "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" bears the distinctive vocals of Roscoe Hall and superb piano of Debbie Green, such that new dimensions are added to this popular hymn.

12. **THE OLD COUNTRY CHURCH**

Arranged and adapted by Bill and Wilma Millsaps

Performed by Bill and Wilma Millsaps

Collected by David A. Brose, 8/27/94, at Bill and Wilma's home in the Snowbird Mountains

Like several other selections within this collection, "The Old Country Church" has become a standard in Bluegrass-Gospel music. Bill and Wilma sing part of this song in English and part in Cherokee. The personnel includes: Bill on vocals and mandolin; Wilma on vocals and guitar; Robert Jenkins on fiddle; and Darrell Chambers on acoustic bass.

13. **NOW I TWICE BELONG TO THEE**
Composed by The Wilson Brothers
All rights reserved. Used by Permission.
Performed by The Wilson Brothers
Collected by David A. Brose, 1/10/94, at the John C. Campbell Folk School
- Ray and Jerry Wilson composed this beautiful testament to their faith. The main theme of the story deals with a boy who owned a boat during his youth, let that possession get away from him in middle age, only to reclaim the item late in life. Ray and Jerry Wilson see the boat as a metaphor for the soul and wrote this song in celebration of those who experience a spiritual rebirth later in life.

14. **AMAZING GRACE**
Composed by John Newton
Arranged and adapted by Bill and Wilma Millsaps
Performed by Bill and Wilma Millsaps
Collected by David A. Brose, 8/27/94, at Bill and Wilma's home in the Snowbird Mountains

As with "The Old Country Church," Bill and Wilma sing part of this song in English and part in Cherokee. When translated from Cherokee into English, the words to "Amazing Grace" state: God the son paid it all/when all went to Heaven/paid it all right here.

Including this selection, there are versions on MEETING IN THE AIR which represent Bluegrass-Gospel (The Millsaps), shape-note (The New Harp Singers of East Tennessee) and old-time fiddle styles (Ross Brown), giving some indication as to the many genres of folk music from which this hymn can be experienced.

15. **PISGAH**
Lyrics composed by Rev. Richard Burnham
Tune by J.C. Lowry
Public Domain
Collected by David A. Brose and Kathleen Hines Brose at a *Christian Harmony* shape-note sing in Black Mountain, North Carolina, 11/7/93

"Pisgah" is a well-known shape-note hymn here performed in common meter. On this particular day there were approximately thirty singers at this shape-note singing. As with most shape-note singings in the Southern United States currently, there was a mixture of traditional singers present on this day along with persons who have come more recently to learn *Christian Harmony* singing.

16. **I'LL BE WAITING AT THE RIVER FOR YOU**
Traditional
Performed by The Wayde Powell Family
Collected by David A. Brose, 4/15/94, at the John C. Campbell Folk School
- "I'll Be Waiting at the River for You" is performed here as a mother and son duet, in a vocal style reflective of the "brother duos" of the 1930's and '40's.

17. **GOT MY ONE WAY TICKET TO THE SKY**
Traditional
Performed by Mary Jane Queen
Collected by David A. Brose, 4/8/92, at Mary Jane's home in Caney Fork, North Carolina

This wonderful folk hymn was taught to Mary Jane Queen by her mother, Clearsie. Mary Jane accompanies her voice with a two-finger up-picking style of banjo performance which she learned from family members as a young child.

18. **I'LL FLY AWAY**
Composed by Albert E. Brumley
Arranged and adapted by Catch On Fire
Performed by Catch on Fire
Collected by David A. Brose and Kathleen Hines Brose, 4/30/94, at a Saturday night singing held at Bealtown Baptist Church in Bealtown, North Carolina

As is the case with Brumley's composition "Rank Strangers to Me," many people feel this song to be traditional and have no known author. This fact is a testament to the song's widespread use and the role that the song plays in sacred music traditions.

Albert Brumley wrote "I'll Fly Away" in 1932, while he was working in an Oklahoma cotton field. Brumley derived the song from a Vernon Dalhart record, "The Prisoner's Song," which began with the opening line "If I had the wings of an angel." Early recorded versions of "I'll Fly Away" include one by evangelist Rex Humbard and family as recorded in Dallas, Texas, in 1940 and on Columbia records by the Chuck Wagon Gang in December, 1948.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1.) Statistics supplied by the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce from a publication entitled *County Development Information for Cherokee County* as compiled by the Center for Improving Mountain Living. Western Carolina University. Cullowhee, North Carolina
- 2.) Ibid

- 3.) Quotes taken from a tape recorded interview between Edna Chekelelee and folklorists David A. Brose and Barbara Lau. Snowbird Mountains, North Carolina. 8/10/93
- 4.) Ibid
- 5.) Ibid
- 6.) Pratt, Waldo *The Music of the Pilgrims.* Oliver Ditson, Co. Boston, 1921
- 7.) Bremer, Fredrika. *Homes of the New World: Impressions of America.* Translated by Mary Howitt, two vols. New York. 1853
- 8.) Swan, M.L. *New Harp of Columbia.* Tennesseana Editions. The University of Tennessee Press. 1978. Introduction by Dorothy D. Horn

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- David A. Brose -

THE PHOTOGRAPHS

Front Cover (Starting top left, clockwise): Sharing the love at Bealtown Baptist Church Revival; The Mashburn Brothers; Don Fox and Ross Brown; Mt. Olive Revival at Etowah, TN; Baptism at Valley River by Rev. Bruce Oliver; and rehearsal time at Mt. Olive Revival.

Back Cover (Starting top left, clockwise): Catch on Fire at Bealtown Baptist Church; Hobbie and Luceil Whitener; Bill and Wilma Millsaps; The Swanson Boys; The Wayde Powell Family; St. John's Baptist Church Revival at Mount Zion; St. John's Baptist Church Choir; and sign at Henn Theatre in Murphy.

Celebrating the talents of Cherokee, Black and White singers and musicians, *Meeting in the Air: Sacred Music of the Southern Appalachians* features on-location field recordings as captured in private homes, at church services, community singings and revivals in western North Carolina, southeastern Tennessee and northeastern Georgia.

This two-volume set includes "The Unclouded Day," "Amazing Grace," "Comin' Up on the Rough Side of the Mountain," "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand," "Rank Strangers to Me," "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," "Old Time Religion," "I'll Fly Away," and thirty other selections, both familiar and lesser known.

THE PERFORMERS

Catch on Fire	Bill and Wilma Millsaps
New Harp Singers of East Tennessee	Ross Brown and Don Fox
The Swanson Boys	Aud Brown, David Anderson and Susie Rogers
Roberta Voyles and John Debty	Hobbie and Louceil Whitener
The Wayde Powell Family	Champ Chandler
Spring Wood	Walker Calhoun
Trail of Tears Gospel Singers	Mary Jane Queen
The Gospel Tones	Mt. Zion Baptist Church Choir
The Mashburn Brothers	Shape-Note Sing at Black Mountain
Mitch Brewer	
The Wilson Brothers	

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