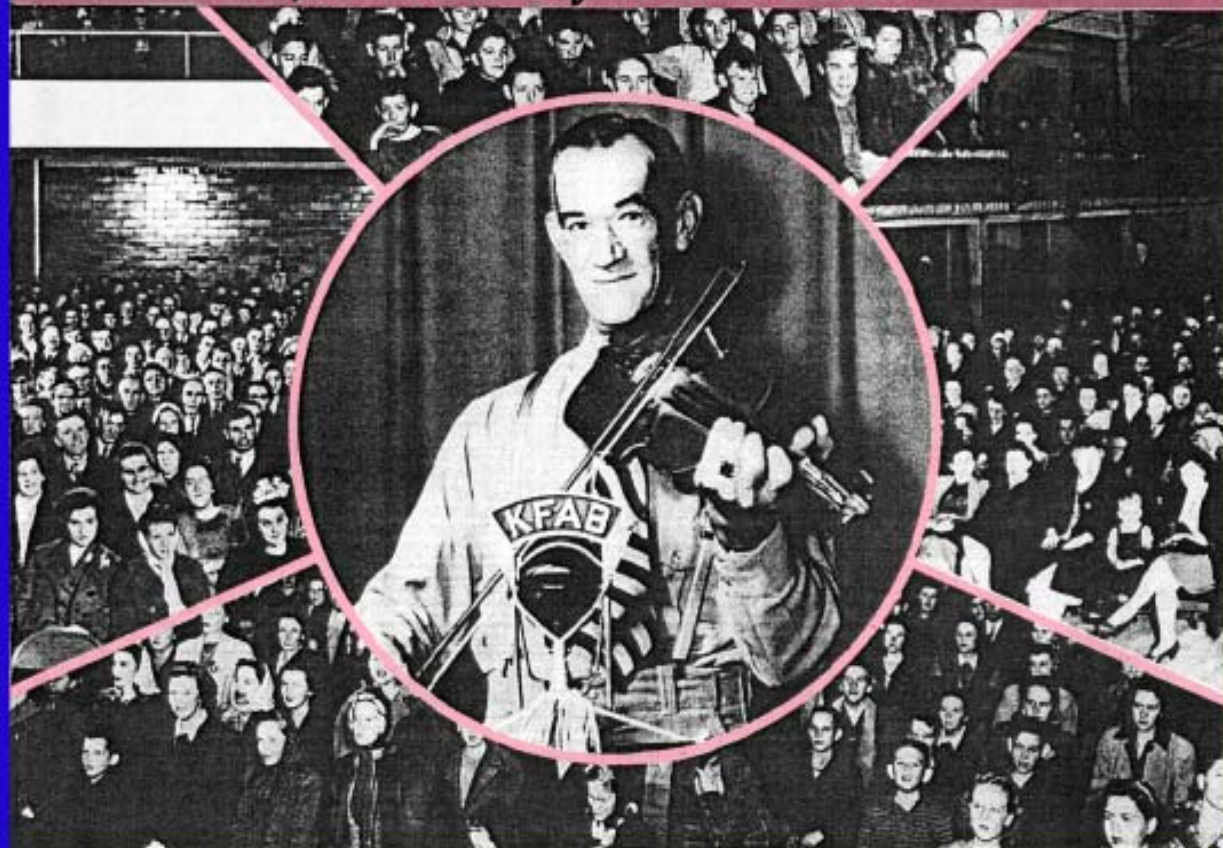


*"The **BIG** Farmer of the Central States"*



Bob Walters - "The Champion"

Classic Missouri Valley Fiddling from Dwight Lamb's Collection



North American Traditions Series

Rounder 0620-1

Disc 1:

1. *Adrian's Hornpipe*
2. *Art Wooten's Hornpipe*
3. *The Beaux of Albany*
4. *The Bell Cow*
5. *Bill Cheatem*
6. *A Bob Walters Tune in G*
7. *Boys Around the World*
8. *The Bucking Mule*
9. *Casey's Irish Reel*
10. *Champion Hornpipe*
11. *Clyde Durst Tune*
12. *Coming Down from Denver*
13. *Countryman's Reel*
14. *Cowboy Waltz*
15. *Cuckoo's Nest*
16. *Dick Sand's Hornpipe*
17. *Durang's Hornpipe*
18. *The Dusty Miller*
19. *The Drunken Wagoner*
20. *Duncan's Reel*
21. *Eli Green's Cakewalk*
22. *Five Miles Out of Town*
23. *Flanagan's Polka*
24. *Friendship Waltz*
25. *Give the Fiddler a Dram*
26. *Good for the Tongue*
27. *Guilderoy*
28. *Gypsy Hornpipe*
29. *The Inimitable Reel*
30. *Irish Hornpipe*
31. *Jake's Best Reel*
32. *Jefferson and Liberty*
33. *Johnny, Don't Come Home Drunk*
34. *Jump Fingers*
35. *Katon's Reel*
36. *Lady on the Green*
37. *Lazy Kate*
38. *Leddy's Hornpipe*
39. *Long John*
40. *Lost Indian*

Disc 2:

1. *Mahoney's Reel*
2. *Missouri Mud*
3. *Money Musk*
4. *Mother's Reel*
5. *Natchez Under the Hill*
6. *Old Dubuque*
7. *Opera Reel*
8. *Padgett*
9. *Pretty Lies*
10. *The Prodigal Son*
11. *Purcell's Reel*
12. *Quadrille in A, E and D*
13. *Rocky Road to Jordan*
14. *Rose Waltz*
15. *Sally Johnson*
16. *Salty River Reel*
17. *Shaw's Reel*
18. *Shoal Creek Breakdown*
19. *Silver Lake Quadrille*
20. *Sleepy Joe*
21. *Smith's Reel*
22. *Steamboat Around the Bend*
23. *Tennessee Wagoner*
24. *Tobacco Hills*
25. *Topeka Polka*
26. *Trombone Rag*
27. *Trouble Among the Yearlings*
28. *Turkey in the Straw in A*
29. *Two Bits*
30. *Unnamed Hornpipe*
31. *Unknown Tune in C*
32. *Unknown Tune in D*
33. *Unknown Tune in F*
34. *Unknown Tune in G and C*
35. *Unknown Tune in A and D*
36. *Unnamed Tune in C*
37. *Unknown Tune in D #2*
38. *Unnamed Tune in G and D*
39. *Wart on the Pumphandle*
40. *Woodchopper's Breakdown*

Biographical notes by Dwight Lamb:

The Walters family originated down in Kentucky someplace, but ended up in Turin, Iowa, about seven miles from where I live. The original family name was "Walter," but some announcer on the radio started calling Uncle Bob "Walters" and that name stuck. Bob's grandfather's name was Ike and his father's name was Wilse. Wilse's mother died early and an aunt and uncle took him to Illinois to raise him. Eventually, they all moved to Nebraska outside of Decatur which was where Bob was raised. Wilse was a great player and Bob often said that his dad had the best bow arm he had ever seen--he could put the little decorations in anywhere he wanted. Three other brothers were fiddlers as well: Sanford (they called him "Sant"), Clayton, and Hiram, while a fourth brother, Harold, played guitar. I never heard Hiram play, but I'm told he was an fiddler and played a lot of note stuff, which is, I imagine, where Bob learned a lot of those rags and such. When he was very small, Bob would sneak out his father's

fiddle and play it over the bed for fear of dropping it. One evening, his father surprised him by asking, "Would you like to hold the fiddle, just to see what it feels like?" Well, Bob could already play quite a bit by then and so his father made sure that he always had his own fiddle after

that. Bob first played

second fiddle with his father at a dance when he was eleven years old and I believe that in those early days the whole family would sometimes play together as a band.

At some point Wilse hired Goldie to keep house for the family and that's how Bob met his wife. They kept a little farm somewhere outside of Decatur and tried to make a go of it. But fiddling was really Bob's life. He hadn't been that good a farmer when he worked at that in the 'Twenties and 'Thirties and he was trying it during the dry years of the Depression and that certainly didn't help matters. I re-



*Sant, Bob, and Hiram Walters; Ed Mahoney; Floyd Davis,
Casey Jones; Frame Davis--mid 1930s*

member Goldie telling about his farming—she'd get a charge out of telling it, too. He'd go out in the morning with his team and then he'd come home in the middle of the morning. She'd ask, "What's the matter, Dad?" "Oh, I just thought of a tune" and he'd go in and play until noon. Then they'd have lunch and he'd go out in the field again. But about three o'clock in the afternoon or so, here he'd come in again and she'd want to know what's wrong—"Oh, just thought of a tune." But Goldie stuck with him and looked after him.

Bob and his family belonged to the Latter Day Saints, but he never talked about it much. He'd smoked his whole life but he never drank. I remember he was once playing somewhere and somebody offered him a beer. Now a lot of places he'd be playing, they'd set up beers for the band and he said, "I'd just kinda manage to hide mine, because I didn't want to knock them out of a sale." He never objected to them setting up the beer because that helped the bar but he said, "Oh, I had too much of that once and I vowed that would never happen again." I don't think he ever touched it after that. But he must not have been that good a Mormon because he sure smoked.

Bob had always played for a lot of dances and had won a lot of fiddle contests. In one of the interviews he did with Bob Christeson, he remarked that he had played in thirty-eight contests and had won thirty-four. Sant, I think, only played in the local contests around

YOUNGEST OLD FIDDLER WINS

The youngest of the prize winners of the three classes of the Diamond Jubilee old fiddlers' contest was selected Thursday as state champion old fiddler.

Robert E. Walters, 40, Decatur, was sweepstakes winner and was awarded a gold medal. He represented Class C, the youngest group, as first prize winner.

His competitors were Reed Judson of Lincoln and D. D. Bowman of Walthill, Neb.

Of the 15 contests in which Walters has played, he has won 13. He was recently named old fiddler champion of Nebraska and Kansas at a contest sponsored by Henry Fields of Shenandoah through his radio station.

The tunes with which he won the championship were "Gray Eagle," "Marmaduke Hornpipe," "Smith Hornpipe" and "Rye Straw."

Mr. and Mrs. Lester Smith of Shenandoah, playing the banjo and piano, respectively, furnished the accompaniment.

Walters was warmly applauded by the crowd which thronged the Auditorium during the morning.

Judges were Frank Fields of Shenandoah and Col. F. M. Henderson, Homer Stephenson and W. R. Patrick of Omaha.

A gold medal bearing the Nebraska Diamond Jubilee symbol—a bas relief of the state capitol—was the prize for state champion.

World Engineers' Meet in Tokio Ends

TOKIO, Nov. 7, (AP)—The world engineering congress closed its sessions here Thursday.

Bob Scrapes Mean Tune to Take Contest



ROBERT WALTERS

Decatur but Bob ventured out a bit further and played in some of the bigger contests around here. That silver cup championship he won represented a region of six states. It had a north and south division to it and Bob had won the southern division, consisting of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and places like that. The northern division comprised Minnesota and the Dakotas and the fellow who won it could only play a few tunes with lots of tricks in them, sort of like what you see today in the contests. He wanted to have a runoff with Bob and Bob said, "Sure, with one stipulation. That stipulation is that we'll each play for an hour and then the judges will decide." Well, the other fellow pulled out after that.



Those contests got him some air time on the radio and he started playing on the radio sometime in the late 'Thirties or early 'Forties and pretty much gave up farming after that. Casey Jones had had a fiddle show long before Bob that my dad used to listen to and perhaps that's where Bob got the idea of broadcasting. But there wasn't much money in it. To make a living, Bob worked as the janitor at the station over in Grand Island as well as having a fiddle show. And the only place they could afford over there was a basement apartment. I'm told it was really moldy down there and Goldie always wondered if that might have started Bob's emphysema. She'd said he'd never had lung problems before that, but, boy, he sure had them by the time we knew him.

Bob got to know a lot of other musicians playing on the radio. That's how he got to know Lonnie Robertson, when they were both playing over in Shenandoah, Iowa (Bob had a morning fiddle program while Lonnie mainly sang duets with an occasional fiddle tune thrown in). And that's also where Bob met the banjo player Homer Davenport. In later years, Bob would always say that Earl Scruggs reminded him of Homer Davenport from his Shenandoah days.

I first heard Bob when he played on Radio Station KMAJ over in Grand Island, Nebraska. That was just after World War II, but he'd played at KFAB over in Lincoln before that and he played at Shenandoah some, although I never heard him on those. I first heard Bob on the radio in 1946 and he went off the air in 1949 or 1950, so I think he was probably on the radio over at Grand Island for a total of five years or so after the war. I used to send in requests and he'd usually play them. And, at first, I learned a lot on them on the accordion. Radio was really worth listening to then and it wasn't hard to buy a nice old songbook with a lot of these old cowboy songs in it, for a lot of those radio stations sold them. After Bob went off the air, all you get was country music—they called it "hillbilly music" back then—and not much of

THE CHAMP

(A friendly tribute to Bob Walters
by William M. Larson)

When Bob was a babe so the folks
round say,

He wanted a fiddle so he could
play.

But his pop said no, can't buy one
yet,

Got the family to keep and 'twould
make me a debt.

When his dad done chores or gave
the cows a chase,

Bob sneaked that thing right out of
the case,

But it hurt ma's nerve and pa would
not teach,

So they put it on the cupboard out
of little Bob's reach.

His little hands itched and he planned
in the night,

to fashion a box with a saw and a
knife.

He flipped penny to the crack to buy
his four strings,

Rosin, end piece and a few other
things.

He pulled Dolly's tail to get his bow
hair,

The job was complete and it played
pretty fair.

So he rosined and scraped across the
strings four,

The frail thing creaked and couldn't
stand much more.

But he coaxed out the tunes he heard
his pa play,

When he got a little older he was
well on his way.

When the elder one saw that his son
could play,

He bought him the works for his next
birthday.

Just a gangling kid with two big
ears,

He sure could fiddle for a lad his
years.

There was Old Dan Tucker and the
Devil's Dream,

The Virginia Reel and it did just
seem,

All the tunes that we ever heard
about,

Bob just bowed and they leaped
right out.

His pop said Gee, there's some talent
there,

So now we'll organize for fair.

There were three boys and he made
four,

So they played in the barn till they
wore the floor.

Dad played the lead and Swan sawed
the bass.

While Hiram on his horn was no dis-
grace.

Bob played second and to this day,
Couldn't see why his dad got that
way.

When the caller barked then every-
body stirred,

'Twas the liveliest music that I ever
heard.

With all men left and swing your
pard,

The bows flew fast and they bore
down hard.

Now when all this playing got much
the same,

Bob set out for bigger game.

He entered the contests, even played
o'er the air,

And a pretty sure winner if 'twas on
the square.

All the contestants be they devil or
saint,

When the magic box rang they fell
in a faint.

He was the champ and we all had a
hunch,

When Bob played his fiddle he'd beat
the whole bunch.

that, because it was kind of frowned upon. You'd mainly have to get that from Nashville, which you could only do in the winter unless you had a real good radio. So after he went off the air, it became kind of a dead spot for fiddling up around here.

So that made me really hungry for fiddle music. After I got out of high school, I got a car in 1953 and that's when I looked up Bob Walters. I first located his brother Sant over in Decatur and he gave me directions to Bob's house down in Tekama. When I first started going over there, I had to drive around because the bridge across to Decatur wasn't opened yet, but by the time Lyn started coming along with me, it was only about a forty mile drive. From the very first, Bob was always tickled to death to see us: "Well, come on in, boys," he'd greet us at the door. And we'd haul the tape recorder and Lyn's amp up the big hill to their house. I don't think that he and Goldie had a lot—just that little old house with an outside toilet. They had a gas space heater in the living room that they heated with. In the summers, it was hot and humid over there and they didn't even own a fan. Sometimes he'd just about pass out because of the heat and his emphysema, so Goldie would fan him and get him back to breathing again.

He mainly played an old Hopf until he got himself a Strad copy. Some old fellow in town had brought in a fiddle for repairs and when it was done, he said to Bob, "I've got another old fiddle here. Would you be willing to take it in on the bill?" Well, Bob could see that it was a really good fiddle: "Oh, I guess I could probably do that." Bob Christeson had that fiddle appraised later and was told it was an



Unknown, Bob Walters, Bob Christeson, Fred Beard late '40s

old Holland fiddle from the 1700's. And that same fellow would sometimes ask Bob, "Do still have that old fiddle around that I gave you?" and Bob would reply, "Oh, yes, I think I've still got it around somewhere." But Bob really loved that Holland fiddle and nearly cried when he had to sell it to Bob Christeson later on when he was short on money. Later on Bob Christeson sold it back to me for nearly nothing, as he had put a lot of money into it. He said, "I've got fiddles around here that are worth the price of a new home and I've got to get rid of some of them, so Joan won't have to worry about them after I'm gone." But I think he just mainly wanted me to have Bob's old fiddle and I've used it on all of my own recordings.

Uncle Bob used one particular bow so much that he'd worn away the frog and you could see that screw in there. He said it was just balanced to suit him. Boy, it must have taken a lot of tunes to wear down the bow like that! Bob worked on fiddles a lot and he rehired bows better than anybody I've ever seen, with nice wide and even hairs. He did one for me and I used it for forty-five years until I finally had to have it redone.

Bob almost never said anything critical about any other fiddlers. I bought some records--I think they were by Buddy Durham--and he played awfully fast. I took them over to Bob's and said, "I don't think they are very good" but he said, "Oh, Dwight, he's a good fiddler." But, you know when you get used to Bob's playing and the other guys around here, you get kind of spoiled. He mentioned Casey and Lonnie a lot and Ed Mahoney some. Bob liked Big Howdy, Georgia Slim--he had a couple of 78s of Georgia Slim. But Bob never criticized anybody that I can remember.

When Bob Christeson came up from Lincoln to do an interview, he'd put it all on wire and when he got back home, he knew a fellow in Lincoln that could make the

33 1/3 albums. That was the agreement: if Uncle Bob would do the interviewing, then Bob Christeson would make him a copy for his own record player. I didn't even know Uncle Bob had them until after he died, but he had them in big stacks. He had a few other records as well. One time he played me a couple of those Georgia Slim



records, but usually we were always playing when we went over there and we didn't listen to any recorded music. Normally Bob would play right after another, without hardly stopping. Sometimes towards the end, when he'd be done playing, he'd just be wheezing and you'd think he was done for. But in just a little bit, he'd pull himself back together again and would be playing another tune.

In fact, Bob really wasn't that old when he died—he was just seventy. He had been born on June 16, 1889 and he died on the day after Christmas in 1960. Late that fall, he told me, "Dwight, if there are any of those tunes you'd still like to get, you'd better get them now, because I'm just about done." So I went over and that's when I got him to record "The Beaux of Albany" and his dad's version of "The Cuckoo's Nest." Just about two weeks after that, it was his and Goldie's golden anniversary and the family hired a hall in Tekamah and carried him in there on a chair—he was very weak. I think he just hung on long enough for his kids so that they could celebrate that golden wedding anniversary. Finally, in the middle of the afternoon on Christmas day, he called in all of his family into his room. They said he'd been pretty bad up to that time, but he rallied and set up in the bed and talked to them pretty good for about an hour. He told them that he wanted to keep his kind of music alive and that if they had any recordings that I wanted, to be sure to let me copy them, for Bob knew that I was still working on a lot of his tunes. Then after he had done talking, he just leaned back and kind of went to sleep. And he lived just a few hours after that.

--Dwight Lamb

Dwight Lamb's Recordings of Bob Walters by Mark Wilson:

These CDs were compiled almost exclusively from tape recordings that Dwight Lamb made between 1953 and 1960, a few months before Bob died. Bob had also been extensively recorded on wire recordings from 1949 on by Bob Christeson, a Department of Agriculture agent then living in Omaha. Christeson later compiled two classic fiddle tune books, *The Old-time Fiddler's Repertory* Vols 1 and 2, that heavily depended upon his recordings of Bob Walters. In conjunction with the first volume, Christeson also issued a 2 LP set of his field recordings including many of his recordings of Uncle Bob. These LPs were later reissued on cassette tape by the Missouri Old-Time Fiddlers Association, along with two additional cassettes of Uncle Bob, drawn from both Dwight's tapes and Bob Christeson's recordings. At present, all of these seem to be out of print. Many of Christeson's original wire recordings were destroyed when teenagers broke into the barn where they were stored and threw them into a lake. Fortunately, Christeson arranged to have 33 copies (presumably on some kind of radio transcription disc) made for Uncle Bob's benefit and it is hoped that the bulk of Christeson's materials were preserved in this way (Christeson's recordings now sit in unsorted and closed access boxes at the Western Historical Archives in Columbia, Missouri, so it is impossible to resolve this question at this time). Within the Walters family, their own copies of the discs were distributed amongst the family and, after Uncle Bob's death, Dwight made copies of all that he could locate. We have employed just a few of these here, mainly to illustrate

Bob's tuning which he never did in Dwight's presence (these tunes are not discussed in Christeson's books, but they seem to represent the oldest aspects of his originally Kentucky heritage).

A number of selections begin with salutation to Dwight. These derive from tapes that the Lamb family recorded and mailed to Dwight when he was stationed overseas in France in 1957. These were recorded by Dwight's father Clarence who often speaks along with Uncle Bob.

Unless otherwise noted, the accompanying guitar is played by Lyn Holsclaw and the reed organ is played by either Dwight's mother Mary or Dwight himself. The accordion is played by Dwight. The piano is played by Bob Christeson and appears only on recordings drawn from the Christeson LPs. There is a larger ensemble consisting of Uncle Bob Walters and his brother Sant on fiddles, Bob's son Steve on the plectrum banjo, Clarence Freeman on bones, Bob Christeson on harmonium and possibly Roscoe Anderson on guitar. These unique selections were recorded in 1954 at a Walters Family reunion picnic in the town park of Tekamah. There are several selections where Bob plays second fiddle to either Clarence Lamb or Casey Jones of Ottumwa, Iowa. These are marked in the tune notes below.



Dwight Lamb 1951

Dwight's recordings are very extensive and we hope to release more in the future, along with some of the other fine Missouri Valley musicians he recorded. We've compiled the tunes in alphabetical order so that specific items can be easily located. Unfortunately, we lack names for nine of the tunes.

Interested listeners should seek out Dwight's own recordings on Rounder (CD 0429 and CD 0529) as well as the out-of-print items mentioned above. Dwight's CDs include further reminiscences of Uncle Bob in the liner notes as well. Some of Charlie Faurot's recordings of Casey Jones and Cyril Stinnett can be found on County CD 2739. Both men were intimates of Uncle Bob, as was Lonnie Robertson (Rounder CD 0375).

We are very fortunate that Bob Christeson and Dwight took such a devoted interest in Bob Walters' music, for, largely through their efforts, this specific strain of Midwestern fiddle music has become better documented than virtually any other comparable form of American vernacular music. And so I particularly wish to thank

Dwight for the great enthusiasm he has shown in finally getting this release to press. Not only is the level of performance astonishing high throughout (the equal, in my opinion, of any fiddle music ever recorded) and the quality of tunes high, but Dwight's tapes also capture some of the fraternal warmth that once bonded like-minded musicians together in the little farm communities throughout our country.

In the notes below, Dwight's comment are in quotations and my own in direct discourse.

---Mark Wilson



Tekama, Ne

Notes on the Tunes by Dwight Lamb and Mark Wilson.

CD 1:

1. *Adrian's Hornpipe*. "Bob learned this from a left-handed fiddler named Fred Adrian who was from up around Fort Dodge, Iowa somewhere. He'd passed away before I met Bob but Fred was said to have been a pretty good fiddler and would get together with Bob, Casey, and Ed Mahoney (he had to have been pretty good to hang out with that crowd). I imagine that Bob didn't have a name for this, so he just named it after Fred."

Apparently entirely through Uncle Bob's influence, this tune has become widely performed throughout the Midwest today. The title is sometimes misspelled as "Adrain's." The guitar accompaniment, here and elsewhere, is provided by Lyn

Holsclaw who was a childhood friend of Dwight's who often accompanied Dwight on his recording trips and helped out on the family sessions when Dwight was overseas. Although Lyn has now moved to Jefferson, Iowa, he and Dwight still get together frequently and he has accompanied Dwight on both of his Rounder albums. Lyn has also provided several charming anecdotes about Uncle Bob that we have utilized in these notes.



Earl Rickabaugh, Dwight Lamb, Lyn Holsclaw, Bob Walters, Hiram Allen 1956

2. *Art Wooten's Hornpipe*. "Art was from somewhere in the sand hills of western Nebraska. He was older than Bob who picked up quite a few tunes from Art, including 'Art Wooten's Quadrille,' which is a really fine piece. I don't imagine that Art wrote either of these tunes; it was simply that Bob didn't know their names and named them after Art. Bob had a fiddle of Art's and their agreement was, if Art died first, Bob could keep the fiddle but, if Bob died first, they'd need to send the fiddle

back. Art lived longer than Bob, so they carefully packed it off and mailed it back to him. But then Art died pretty soon after."

This "Art Wooten" was no relation to the well-known bluegrass fiddler.

3. *The Beaux of Albany*. "I recorded this from Bob shortly before he died. He'd said, 'Dwight, I don't think my time is very long, so if there's anything you'd like, you'd better get it now.' So I asked for this tune and for "Cuckoo's Nest." I had heard him play it on the radio a few times back in the late 'forties and had remembered it. But Uncle Bob had half forgotten about it. In fact, when I first went over to Bob's in 1956 and asked for some of those tunes I had heard on the radio, he told me, 'I ought to have you over here more often, for you're asking for tunes that I haven't played for years.' Even Bob Christeson didn't know about this one, so I sent it to him, although that was after the books had been published. This tune has some awful nice bowing in it; those bow shakes, 32d notes or whatever you want to call them really make this tune. I imagine that he

learned this technique from his dad. Bob used to say that his dad had the best bow arm he had ever heard and could put those effects in there anywhere he wanted. Bob used those 32d notes in a lot of tunes--he had a fancy version of "Dixie" with a third part and a lot of those fast notes. The only local fiddlers that I've ever heard putting those shakes in there are Bob and Cyril Stinnett; Casey didn't do it nor did Ed Mahoney. Cyril once told me 'My dad would hum them

32d notes in there.' He called them '32d notes,' too: I believe that he picked up the term from Bob Christeson. I never heard Bob call them anything or make any remark about them; it was just the way he played. Of course, the Cape Bretoners do a lot of bowing like that in their playing."

Based upon the recordings of other fiddlers whose repertoires date to the nineteenth century, it is fairly clear that the liberal application of bow triplets or "cuts" was the standard performance norm of the class of American dance fiddlers whose compositions or recompositions have framed the core of our modern American fiddle

Nebraskan 'Fiddles' Best Of 12 in Contest Here

Bad weather cut the crowd down to 200 and the fiddlers to 12, but the IOOF-sponsored eighth annual Old Fiddlers Contest came off as scheduled last night.

First prize of \$50 and a blue ribbon went to Bob Walters of Tekamah, Neb. Walters, 68, is the uncle of Mrs. Tom Rankin, Centralia.

"I've won so many contests in Nebraska," Walters said, "that they made me quit fiddling there and be a judge."

Walters was accompanied on the piano by R. P. Christeson, of Lincoln, Neb., a 1933 graduate of the University College of Agriculture.

Cleo Persinger, Route 3, took

second prize money of \$25. Persinger now has a record of 114 prizes in 120 contests.

The \$15 third prize went to Claude Stearns, Slater, who won first in the contest last year. Dewey Welles of Fayette was runner-up.

Boone County contestants in the contest were: Jim Skiles, Bill Anthony, Otto Griggs, Bill Bone and Wayne Crane, Columbia; and James Kennedy, Brown's Station. Other contestants were Leroy Canaday of Moberly and Olen Wells of Fayette.

Mayor Howard B. Lang, Jr., was master of ceremonies. Ruey McMinn was in charge of the contest for the Odd Fellows, assisted by Maurice Dysart.

tune repertory: "Wagoner," "Billy in the Lowground," "Gray Eagle," and so forth. As Dwight notes, bow triplets remain common within contemporary Scottish and Irish music. However, the older generation of Cape Bretoners (Angus Allan Gillis, say) introduced far more "cuts" into a tune and attacked them more vigorously than can be heard in any extant recordings from the Old Country. This clue may suggest that the historical playing techniques from which Uncle Bob's style descends might have once employed more pronounced forms of cutting as well (in America, however, the bow triplet techniques may have remained confined to relatively cultivated dance traditions and might not have been typically carried into the mountains or across the frontier with the fiddle, except insofar as more highly trained violinists emigrated to such areas of the country and reintroduced the style to technically able local musicians). Because the effect is rather subtle, it often does not record well and the bow shakes are completely inaudible on J.W. Day's Library of Congress recordings, whereas they can be clearly heard on his superior Victor recordings. Likewise, the cuts are often rather hard to make out on Bob Christeson's wire recordings of Uncle Bob and, in the manner of the standard Scottish tune collections, Christeson only marked the most blatant applications of the technique in his books. As the reader can easily discern from these recordings and from Dwight's performances, Bob applied triplets and allied bow decorations liberally throughout many of his numbers, in a fashion that, as Dwight often remarks, "really makes the tune." One of the many reasons we should be grateful for Dwight's extensive taping of Bob is that the clarity of his recordings allow us to properly appreciate the astonishing skill and depth of Bob's bow technique. It is all the more amazing that this particular selection was recorded shortly before Bob's death, when he could barely breathe and was providing last requests from Dwight.

A "Beaux of Albany" appears in various nineteenth century tune collections (e.g., Howe's *1,000 Jigs and Reels*), but in the form of a "Braes of Auchentyre" variant, rather than the wonderfully clotted melody heard here ("Beaux of Albany" is also the name of a popular dance set, a fact that may explain the transmutations of names). Both tunes are set in C, however, which links them both to "Wagoner" and the older settings of "Gray Eagle," which are fairly commonly encountered in tradition with their "cuts" intact. Despite the traceable Scots origin of some of these tunes, Bob's performance suggests that, by the 1830's or so, the American bowing technique had diverged rather widely from Old Country norms, for no Scotsman or Cape Bretoner would insert the cuts in the same way that Bob does here.

4. *The Bell Cow*. "I never heard Bob play this one in person, although he'd talk about it. He said that he used to play it in contests a lot, along with 'Stoney Point.' His dad had told him, 'If you play "Stoney Point" last in a contest, you'll win'. That "Bell Cow" has some beautiful bow licks in there if you can get them in. If the

judges knew fiddling, they'd recognize that and, back in Bob's time, the judges generally were good fiddlers themselves. I remember that one time Bob said they'd crossed the river on the ice to a contest over here in Turin. His hands were so cold,

MON., JUNE 20, 1949.

DES MOINES REGISTER

2

Old-Time Fiddlers at Party in West Des Moines



Showing how it should be done at "Fiddler's Birthday Party and Jubilee" Sunday at West Des Moines are Oscar Doty, 78, of Missouri Valley; Frame Davis, 59, of 417 Third st., West Des Moines, and Cyril S. Tennett, 37, of Graham, Mo. Party was held at home of Davis to celebrate consecutive June birthdays of Davis, Robert Walters, 59, of Grand Island, Neb., and Doty. Sixty persons attended the party which has been held each year since 1930.

he asked the people if they could wait until he could warm them up. 'No,' they said, 'the schedule's fixed and you'll need to go on now.' So Bob went in the back room and stuck his hands in hot water and did the best he could. And he said that he won that contest anyway."

A range of southern fiddle tunes and play party tunes go by the title "The Bell Cow" (for two of them, see Rounder 0376), but Bob's strain is quite different from any that I've heard--as Dwight observes, it is distinguished by its exceptionally difficult bowing. Often these tunes are associated with the nursery rhyme:

*Oh, the bell cow, catch her by the
tail*

*Oh, the bell cow, milk her in the
pail.*

Bob's great-grandfather Ike emigrated from Kentucky to Iowa in the 1860's and it is conceivable that the more southern sounding of Bob's tunes may trace to this geographical origin.

Dwight comments, "Bob would talk a lot about how good a fiddler his dad was, but he never said too much about his grandfather except to say, when he played that old tune 'The Prodigal Son,' 'my granddad used to play and sing that to us.'" Bob's family name was originally "Walter" and it is conceivable that Bob's family is somehow related to the Draper Walter who recorded for Gennett and whose extended family was widely noted for their musical abilities around Nicholasville, Kentucky.

This selection with Bob Christeson piano derives from one of the Christeson LPs retained by Goldie Walters. Generally, Bob plays at a slightly brisker pace on these, either because of some shift in recording speed along the chain from wire to LP to tape or (more likely) the piano accompaniment accelerated Bob's performances somewhat.

5. *Bill Cheatem*. "Although Bob also played this in the usual key of A, he sometimes also played it for me in G--in fact, that was how he played it the first time I heard him. Some distant relative of mine actually shot Bill Cheatem and the old newspaper account of the case mentioned the fiddle tune in it." Dwight's mention of an actual historical referent for "Bill Cheatem" is arresting and he's still looking for the document where it is written

WALTERS CELEBRATES HIS 46th ANNIVERSARY

About 40 friends and relatives gathered at the Bob Walters home at Decatur, Sunday, June 16, to help him celebrate his 46th birthday anniversary.

Since Walters is known as Nebraska's champion "old time fiddler," a number of his fiddler friends were invited to the birthday party and it was not long before music started and the gathering sounded like a fiddlers' convention. W. H. Owens of Tekamah, who has lived in Burt county longer than any other person, was present to demonstrate how some of the old time tunes used to be played, and although he is 79 years old, he still pulls a mean bow.

A basket dinner was served on the lawn to the following guests: Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Owens, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Gilbert, and two daughters, Phyllis and Sibyl Ann; Mr. and Mrs. Fred Lubcke and two daughters, Mary and Freda; Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Davis and sons, Duane and Floyd; Miss Vincan Westlund of Valley Junction, Ia.; Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Smithwick of Morris, Minn., Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Walters and sons Mylon and Wayne, Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Walters and daughter, Ida; Mrs. James Brockway, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Beard and family, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Bribley, and Mary Ann; Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Moore.

The guests departed about six o'clock, following the birthday song, which was sung by Mary Ann Brinley, 3-year-old granddaughter. Mr. Walters received the best wishes of his friends for many more happy birthdays and gatherings.

down.

6. *A Bob Walters Tune in G*. "Bob played that one night when he was visiting with my folks. 'I never heard that one before,' I remarked. 'Well, I've been playing it for forty years now,' he replied. And Cyril Stinnett once told me that he had heard it from Bob long ago." This is a splendid example of another side of Bob's repertory, apparently representing a popular dance composition of the Gilded Age. The double stopped harmonies are unusual and very deftly executed. We have not attempted to determine whether it is Dwight or Mary Lamb playing on the parlor organ selections. Dwight usually preferred having his mother play, so that he could study Bob's playing more carefully (Dwight having recently taken up the fiddle himself). All recordings with organ were made at the Lamb house in Onawa, Iowa.

7. *Boys Around the World*. "I never heard anybody play this one except Bob and his associates, although a lot of younger players seem to have learned it from Bob Christeson's books. My granddad said that there was an old Danish tune that had one part of that in it."

8. *The Bucking Mule*. "This is a really cute tune. Bob said that he used to use it in quite a few fiddle contests. I don't think that too many fiddlers could do that tune with all those quick bow licks in it. Back in those days the judges tended to be fiddlers themselves and could really tell how good Bob was." Bob's virtuoso piece appears to be completely unrelated to any of the animal imitations that usually go by this title. Again, this is one of the last tunes that he taped for Dwight, when he warned, "If there are any more tunes that you'd like to get from me, you'd better get them now." That story, and the great skill that a very sick Bob Walters here demonstrates, make this selection a particular poignant cut for me.

9. *Casey's Irish Reel*. "Bob picked this one up from Casey and it quite possibly came from Casey's dad, whose name was John Jones. Bob once remarked that he never heard two fiddlers that sounded more alike than Casey and his dad."

10. *Champion Hornpipe*. "Bob might have learned this from a book. He had a copy of Cole's *Thousand Fiddle Tunes* around the house. He'd read the tunes out slowly and would often forget what they were called after he learned them." In Cole's (a reprinting of Ryan's *Mammoth Collection* of 1883), the tune is attributed to the Boston bandleader J. Hand (James Hill, the Northumbrian "king of hornpipe composers," composed a distinct "Champion Hornpipe"). But the second turn Bob plays here is different from the printed versions and also from the Walters version transcribed in Christeson's *Old-Time Fiddler's Repertory II*. Perhaps Bob simply

confused two allied hornpipes in Bb when he recorded for Dwight.

Although this theory could be disproved under more careful investigation, it is my impression that *Ryan's* collection (in contrast to *Howe's* and other collections) was fairly hard to obtain for many years after its publication and that, if a book tune recovered from a traditional player can be located solely in *Ryan's*, that datum supplies a likely indication that the tune entered the local repertory only after 1940, through the medium of *Ryan's* inexpensive republication in the guise of *Cole's One Thousand Fiddle Tunes* (certainly, this is the hypothesis that my interviews with careful observers like Donald MacLellan have suggested). Indeed, it is worth remembering that, until the *Cole's* reprinting, there simply weren't many twentieth century sources where a musical literate fiddler could extract new tunes in a manner expressly designated for the instrument. The manner in which *Cole's* swiftly amplified and recast local repertories across the US and Canada is quite astounding.

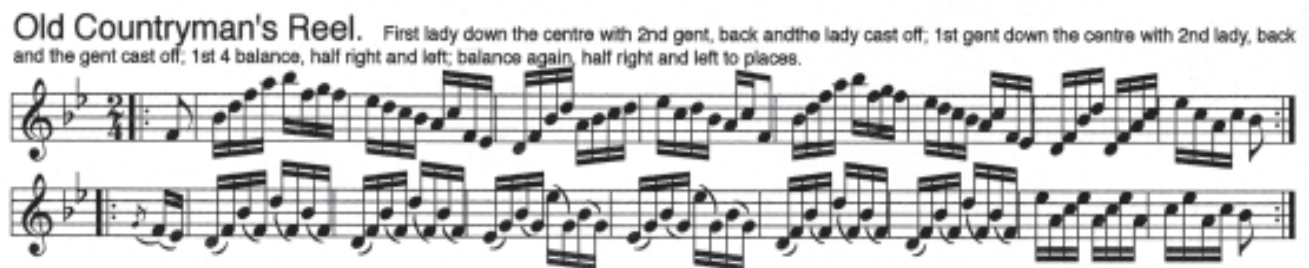
11. *Clyde Durst Tune*. "Bob's version came from Casey, who had named it after Clyde but it is really just an old Missouri tune whose name has been forgotten. I knew Clyde pretty well, because he used to keep the grounds at the town hall up in Ticonic, Iowa. But he was originally from around Filmore, Missouri, not too far from where Cyril lived. I once took Clyde down there and Cyril said, 'Oh, he's been dead for years' and then they had a nice reunion. Clyde had been a pitcher out in the Western baseball league somewhere, but became a little too fond of the booze and got fired. His manager told him, 'Clyde, you've got a million dollar arm and a ten cent head.' But when I knew Clyde, he barely drank at all and was quiet and very nice. He was in his late seventies when I knew him. Lyn Holsclaw lived next door to Clyde Durst for awhile and he showed Lyn his first chords on the guitar."

12. *Coming Down from Denver*. "All of the old fiddlers played this one and I think it is just about as good a tune as there ever was. In fact, it was the tune that made me want to learn the fiddle and it was the first tune I learned to play. Essentially, it is 'Lardner's Reel,' but somebody tacked that bass part on it and it really makes the tune. Some of the Missouri fiddlers used to put a third high part on it. I've heard Pete McMahan play that sometimes and my dad heard from Casey on the air and always used to play that third part until everyone else started leaving it out. I asked Bob about it and he said, 'You mean this?' and played it. 'Yeah, some of them used to do that,' he said.

On this recording, Bob accompanies Clarence Lamb on second fiddle, utilizing a bass and chord accompaniment system that was probably once widely employed by nineteenth century dance fiddlers but has been only rarely recorded (the technique resembles some of accompaniments provided in the early Scottish tune collections). "I watched Bob closely when he did that, but I never quite figured out how he did it;

somehow he rocked the fiddle as he did and I've never heard anyone else to do that. Bob said that he played second fiddle to his dad at the first dance he ever played, at eleven years old back in 1900 with his dad. Most of the boys were musical and they must have formed a mighty good orchestra."

Another book tune besides "Lardner's Reel" with same first strain is "Galway Reel." Tommy Jackson recorded an influential version of our tune as "Here and There." A nice reissue of Pete McMahan's LPs can be found on Voyager 366.



13. *Countryman's Reel*. "Bob learned this out of a book and it's note for note to the way he played it. His dad taught himself how to read music and Bob had learned from him." This piece generally appears in tune books such as *Howe's Thousand Jigs and Reels* (illustrated) as "Old Countryman's Reel" and seems to have been popular as a contradance tune. Shuffling arpeggios like those heard in the second strain have become so popular amongst modern Canadian fiddlers of the Don Messer school that many of us originally presumed that Bob, Cyril, and the others must have been greatly influenced by Canadian radio broadcasts. However, this influence, insofar as it obtained, only occurred in the 1950's, partially spurred by an initiative of Dwight's--see the notes to "Mother's Reel" below--and was magnified by the fact that Cyril Stinnett performed a large number of these imports as "new tunes" upon his privately issued LPs of the 1960's. However, Bob and his circle's performance style was fixed in place long before these influences took effect and simply reflect a "common cause" reliance upon the nineteenth century virtuoso repertory preserved in collections like *Howe's*.

14. *Cowboy Waltz*. "This was a common Missouri tune and my dad had learned it from Casey's radio show long before we heard Bob."

15. *Cuckoo's Nest*. "This was his dad's version and it was one of the last tunes that he recorded for me. It has a nice old-time flavor. Bob also played a 'Cuckoo Horn-pipe' which is played in G." This tune is widely encountered in both the Old and New Worlds, across a wide range of melodic variation that bear little in common except a characteristic ending tag. The published collections usually set the piece in D, but along the Ohio River it was more commonly played in A (*cf.* Bayard's Penn-

sylvania collections and Rounder 1134).

16. *Dick Sand's Hornpipe*. "This started out as a schottische and Casey used to play it that way. The bass part makes it a little bit different." Along with Fred Wilson (who also has a well-remembered clog named in his honor), Sands played an important role in popularizing clog dancing as an ingredient within the standard minstrel show. In *Monarchs of Minstrelsy*, Edward Le Roy Rice writes:

Dick Sands (George R. Sands), famous for many years as P.T. Barnum's "Old Woman in the Shoe," was one of the world's greatest clog dancers. His first appearance was made at Pierce's Varieties in Providence, R.I., in 1857. Late that same year he joined Bryant's Minstrels in New York, and in February, 1859, reappeared there. In 1866 he was associated with Jack Haverly in a minstrel company bearing their name. Mr. Sands played important engagements with the Morris Brothers, Pell and Trowbridge Minstrels in Boston, and many other high-class minstrel and circus companies. Dick Sands was born at Mill Bridge, England, May 2, 1840; he died in New York, March 28, 1900.



Dick Sands

Several songsters appeared under Sands' name and a J.L. Gilbert published *Dick Sands' Clog Dances* in 1850, although this seems to have honored an earlier "Dick Sands." The present tune also appears in the O'Neill's *Dance Music of Ireland*.

17. *Durang's Hornpipe*. "This was recorded at a Walters family picnic down in Tekamah. His brother Sant had come down and played second fiddle with Bob and Bob's son Steve is playing on the four string banjo--I understand that the two of them used by play a lot by themselves in earlier years. The fellow playing bones was named Clarence Freeman who was from Des Moines. Lyn is playing the guitar.

"Sant was down to Bob's house a couple of times when I was there but he didn't live around here too long after that, for the family moved out to Beaverton, Oregon. I guess Sant was really lonesome out there because of the lack of fiddling but his family never wanted to come back. As you can hear, Sant was no slouch of a fiddler himself--he was a way better than an average fiddler and he probably had a big repertory too. One time another brother, Clayton, was there at Bob's and he was a good fiddler, too." This extremely widespread tune has been traced by Samuel Bayard and others to a 1785 composition by "Mr. Hoffmaster" in honor of the well-known stage dancer, John Durang. It became a staple of the nineteenth century dance repertory.

18. *The Dusty Miller*. "This one was pretty common in the Midwest. I was also intrigued by the way it starts in A minor and switches to major." This is undoubtedly a nineteenth century tune, although it remains popular amongst bluegrass fiddlers.

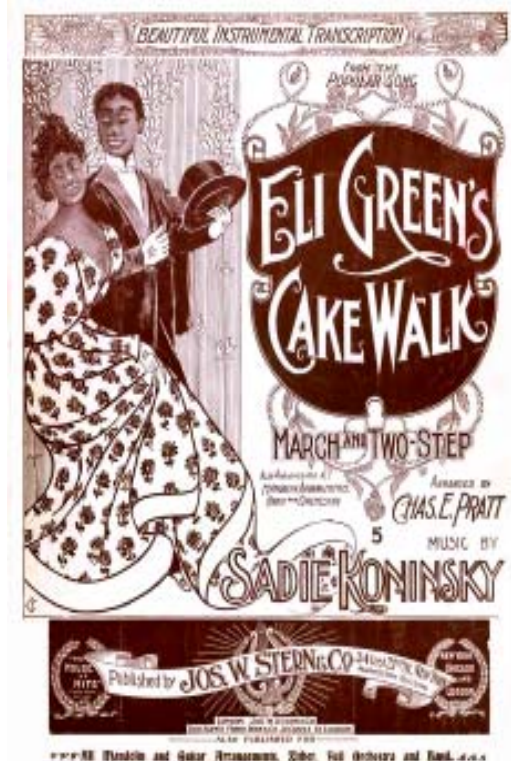
19. *The Drunken Wagoner*. "I don't know where this one came from. It's got some relationship to 'Say, Old Man' but it's the only one that I heard Bob play like that. Boy, it's got some good bow licks in it." As Dwight observes, this is a particularly choice member of a broad tune family that includes "Ladies' Fancy" and "Crippled Turkey." Howdy Forrester played a significant role in popularizing the modern "Say, Old Man" setting, which he probably learned from the Texas fiddlers who had converted a first class square dance tune into a contest piece. A good impression of the variation to which this tune family is subject, compare P. T. Bell's archaic version on FRC 410 with Benny Thomasson's contest arrangement on Voyager 345. Sometimes the lowest string is dropped to E, but Bob plays his version in standard tuning.

20. *Duncan's Reel*. "This one is different from the 'Duncan's' you find in the books. Bob once mentioned his dad came home with this about 1909."

21. *Eli Green's Cakewalk*. "I don't know much about this one. Bob Bovee and Gail Heil play a somewhat different version with a different part that they got from Frank Reed." This classic early ragtime piece was published by Dave Reed Jr. and Sadie Koninsky in 1896. It was widely recorded, often with lyrics, in 78 days, by Uncle Dave Macon and others.

22. *Five Miles Out of Town*. "I don't know where Bob got this except that the tune has some resemblance to 'Old Dubuque'."

23. *Flanagan's Polka*. "Bob once said that he had gotten this one off of a record, but had forgotten to get the name of it. I don't know why he called it 'Flanagan's Polka' but he once remarked that it worked real good for some dance or other. "



24. *Friendship Waltz*. "Bob always played perfectly in the flat keys. He knew a nice one in E called "The Stevens Waltz Number 1" and another one in E and B that was mainly played on the bass."

25. *Give the Fiddler a Dram*. "I assume that Bob got this from his dad. He told me, 'Now don't confuse this one with "Dance all Night with a Bottle in your Hand."' It's got some really good licks in it." In tradition, "Dance All Night" appears to represent

[85]
JAKE'S BEST REEL
From Bob Walters.



The Old-Time Fiddler's Repertory

a modern cross between "Buffalo Girls" and an older "Give the Fiddler a Dram" that can be heard on Rounder 0129 (played by Gaither Carlton) or on SF 40077 (played by James Crase). But Bob's tune is only distantly related to these and features difficult bow cuts that suggest a nineteenth century origin. Oddly enough, in Depression era Cape Breton Sam and Joe Cormier heard a rough approximate of the lower strain of Bob's tune from their mother, with the words:

Give the fiddler a dram (3)
Because I dry am.

She had learned it phonetically (for she spoke no English) from an Irish fisherman.

26. *Good for the Tongue*. "I believe this came out of a book. Bob got about the best sound out of a fiddle in B that I've heard. The tune rang just like it had been played upon open strings." In my experience, this classic hornpipe is beloved everywhere by the instrumentalists able to handle its complexities. I have sterling versions played by George Hawkins of Kentucky, Gerry Robichaud of New Brunswick, and Donald MacLellan of Nova Scotia, amongst others.

27. *Guilderoy*. "This is the way his dad played it. I guess this tune's as old as the hills." Indeed, Samuel Bayard comments that the title derives from *giolla ruadh*,

which means "red-haired boy" in Gaelic. The tune is often encountered in America as either "The Redheaded Boy" or (with lyrics) as "The Old Soldier who Had a Wooden Leg." For another specular version under the latter title, consult John "Dick" Summers on FRC 310.

28. *Gypsy Hornpipe*. "Bob, Casey, Cyril, and Ed Mahoney all played this tune." Close facsimiles (set in A) can be found in Ira Ford's collection (as "Old Towser") and on Rounder 0544 (as "Kenny Roth Tune #1"). Ford includes a second related strain, "Possum Up a Gum Stump," although Bob played a different tune under that title (cf. Dwight's rendition on Rounder 0529). The popular minstrel piece "Hi, Jenny! Ho, Jenny Johnson!" claimed by Peter Gale and Edwin French employs this tune as well. Melodically, all of these are closely related to the familiar Irish hornpipe, "Off to California."



Ryan's Mammoth Collection

29. *The Inimitable Reel*. "This one came out of the books. Quite a few of the old-timers played it at one time." *Inter alia*, the tune appears in Cole's collection, where it is annotated "played by E. Christie." Edwin Christie founded the celebrated minstrel troupe Christie's Minstrels which had also popularized many of Stephen Foster's songs.

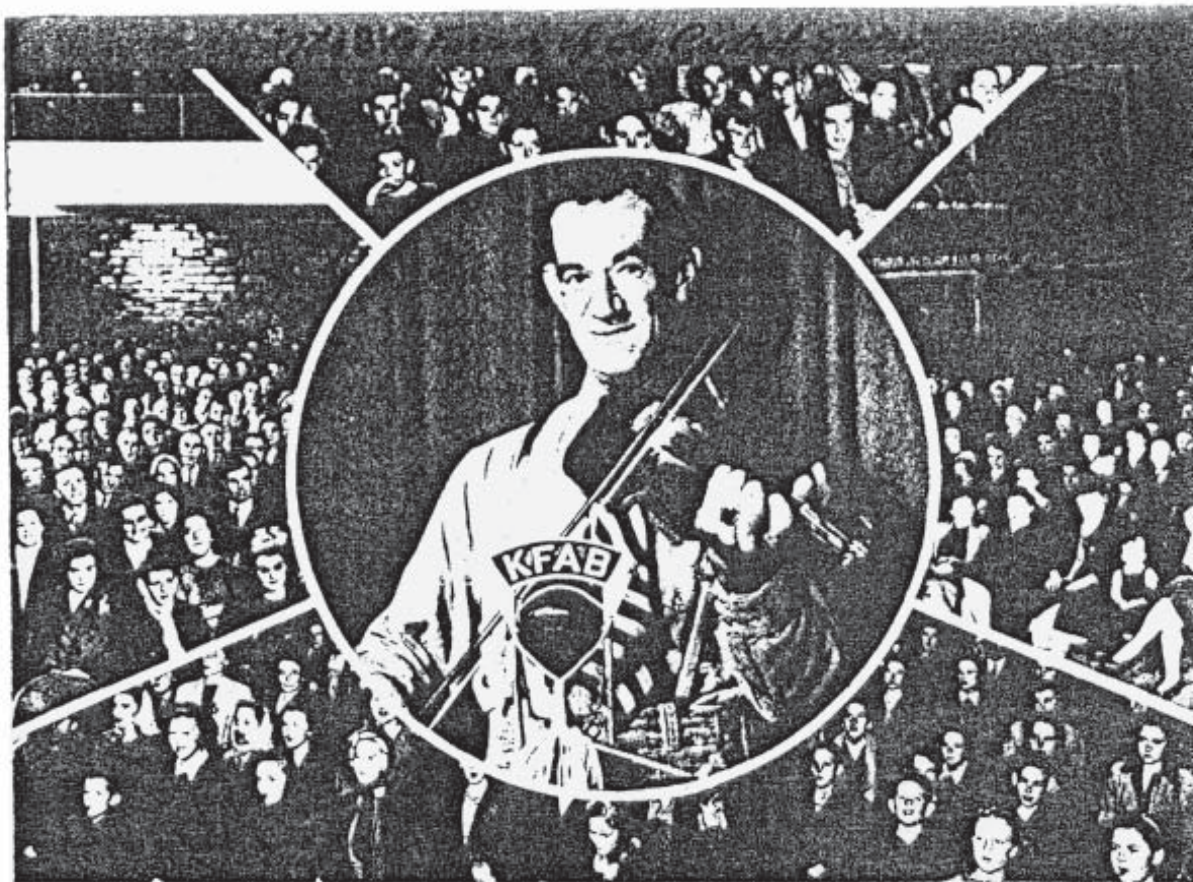


E.P. Christy

30. *Irish Hornpipe*. "This was one they all played. I think it came from Casey Jones originally."

31. *Jake's Best Reel*. "I have never heard anyone else play this and I don't know who Jake was either. On the tape, Bob calls this 'Lonnie's A & E Rag' but he had just gotten mixed up with another tune he played."

32. *Jefferson and Liberty*. "I believe that this tune goes way, way back with the Walters. Sant mentioned that it was one of his dad's." In fact, "Jefferson and Liberty" is one of the better remembered campaign songs of the nineteenth century, having been published in the Aurora newspaper on January 24, 1801. It begins thus:



BOB WALTERS—*"The Winn-ah!"*

20TH ANNIVERSARY "TALENT SEARCH" HUGE SUCCESS!

December 4, KFAB was 20 years old! All during that week, "Talent search" broadcasts in which hundreds participated, were made from communities in KFAB's 200 county area. Bob Walters, old time fiddler emerged the winner. . . . Many "old timers" sent transcriptions . . . dozens of advertisers took time out to wish us "happy birthday." To all we say—"thank you!"

"The BIG Farmers of the Central States"



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SCHEDULE BEGINNING . . .
JANUARY FIRST

The gloomy night before us lies,
The reign of terror now is o'er;
Its gags, inquisitors and spies,
Its hordes of harpies are no more

Rejoice, Columbia's sons, rejoice
To tyrants never bend the knee
But join with heart, and soul and voice
For Jefferson and Liberty.

It is usually set to the well-known jig "The Gobby-O," but Sant and Bob instead play another popular and quite venerable Scots jig, "The Mucking of Geordie's Byre." Nice versions of the accompanying song (concerning mishaps occurred whilst cleaning a cow shed) have been recorded by Jimmie MacBeath and others.

33. *Johnny, Don't Come Home Drunk*. "Bob said that he had learned this from Lonnie Robertson. When I met Lonnie years later, I once played it for him and he said, 'That's a pretty good tune' --he hadn't remembering playing it himself at all. He said, 'Well, over the years you'll play so many tunes that some of them are bound to slip away from you.' Lonnie and Bob became friends when they had both had radio shows in Lincoln, Nebraska in the 1930's and they would still get together in the years afterward."

Snake Chapman said that he had learned his rather similar version from one of the string bands on the Grand Ole Opry in the 'Thirties and I suspect that these broadcasts were responsible to the rather wide dissemination of this beautiful tune (the late John Ashby of Virginia, for example, performed both "Johnny" and a brace of other tunes that Snake traced to the same middle Tennessee origin). Of Bob's circle, Lonnie seems to have been most responsible for importing southern tunes into their shared repertory, including a number of tunes from Clark Kessinger and, possibly, Doc Roberts.

Dwight had learned to play many of Bob's tunes on the accordion through listening to his early morning radio show before he took up the fiddle himself. Scattered through the tapes are a number of first class duets such as this.

34. *Jump Fingers*. "Bob got this from Jeffie Pounds who was a farmer over around Decatur. I met Jeffie just once at a fiddler contest and it was clear that at one time he'd been quite the fiddler player. Bob Christeson had a story that Jeffie had composed this piece and played it for Bob who promptly reproduced it better than Jeffie had played it, which made old Jeffie rather mad. But I never heard that story from Bob himself, who just said that he had learned it from Jeffie." Lonnie Robertson told Gordon McCann the same story about this tune (Lonnie plays it himself on his Rounder CD).

35. *Katon's Hornpipe*. "Bob got this one from Bob Christeson, who had heard Bill Katon as a boy down in Missouri and spent a lot of time trying to track down his music. Bill was African-American and quite the fiddle player, I'm told. The title was originally 'Katon's Reel' but Bob always called it 'Katon's Hornpipe' because of its timing." This melody is also known as "Jeff City" or "Jefferson City," which apparently represents Bill Katon's own title for the piece. Alton Jones recorded a rather different version of the tune for us on Rounder 0437.

36. *Lady on the Green*. "This was one that Bob always liked to play and I think he said it was one of his dad's."

37. *Lazy Kate*. "This one goes way back. Bob Christeson said that the way Bob played it was about like it was written back in 1800's and he may have mentioned it being in a book." The earliest printing of which I am aware is in E.T. Adams' Missouri collection of the 1920's, where he apocryphally dated it to the 1840's. The Adams' setting is rather different than Bob's although clearly the same tune.



Frame Davis, Bob Walters, unknown 1948

38. *Leddy's Hornpipe*. "Originally, there must have been another name for this tune, but all of the local fiddlers called it that. I have no idea who 'Leddy' was." Casey Jones joins Bob on this selection.

39. *Long John*. "Bob learned this from an old neighbor of his whose name I've forgotten. I've never heard it elsewhere. This same gentleman played another tune and Bob asked, 'What do you call that?' He answered, 'I call it "The Best Tune in the World"!'"

40. *Lost Indian*. "I believe that Bob has his fiddle tuned in AEAC# here. This selection comes from one of the LPs that Goldie possessed that had originally come from Bob Christeson, for I never heard Bob play in cross key myself. Even on tunes like 'Black Mountain Rag' that normally use this tuning, Bob would play them in stan-

dard tuning. It was only just once on the radio when Bob got a request for 'Black Hawk Waltz,' that I heard him remark, "Oh, I'll have to bring in another fiddle to play that one," presumably because of the retuning. But I never actually heard him play that tune that way." As one ranges across the south, from Alabama to Texas, one finds a considerable range of melodic variation within this specific fiddle tuning collected under this title (or some close variation like "The Lost Child"). Unfortunately, competition from a similarly titled modern strain (Tommy Magness' "Lonesome Indian") and an increasing reluctance to retuning the fiddle by modern fiddlers have driven this once iconic family of American tunes into comparative oblivion. Bob Wills' father John frequently played a stirring version of this tune on the radio in the 1940's which Bob Holt reproduces on Rounder 0432.



CD 2:

1. *Mahoney's Reel*. "Ed Mahoney made this one up, along with a few other good tunes. He was the sheriff over in Falls City, Nebraska and one of Bob's best friends. He was real good fiddle player himself."
2. *Missouri Mud*. "The original name for this was "Hell in the Mud" but Bob had to change its name when he played it on the radio. I think it was originally one of Casey's dad's tunes."
3. *Money Musk*. "This used to be pretty popular around here and all of the old Walters played it and Hiram Allen used to play it as well." In strathspey form (in G), this is generally attributed to a 1780 publication by the Scots composer Daniel Dow; it is named in honor of a Scottish hamlet. It became a popular dance and military band piece in America. Most fiddlers now play it as a reel in A and I have encountered the piece widely across the south (contrary to some reports that it is "rare" there).

4. *Mother's Reel*. "That's a Canadian tune that came off a record that Bob Christeson had. When I was at a contest up in Cotton, Minnesota, lots of the Canadians played it. But you could only rarely get any Canadian music on the radio. Just one time I managed to get Don Messer on the radio and grabbed my tape recorder and recorded it. I took it over to Bob and he really liked it. I think that the main way that some of these Canadian tunes came into this region was through me and my grandfather. He would always ride into town with us and spend the day at the social club, playing checkers and so on. They had a juke box there in the bar and Grandfather asked the manager, 'Why don't you put some fiddle tunes on there?' When he came back a few weeks later, there was 'Joie du Soldat' in there by Ned Landry. I really liked that and learned it myself. Eventually I went up to Sioux City and ordered me a copy of my own. I took it over to Bob's and he said, 'Man, that's a splinter-kicker.' And then gradually through the 'Fifties we picked a few more of Canadian tunes. Cyril really liked them and recorded quite a few on the LPs that he put out." Most likely, the record that Bob Christeson brought along was by Don Messer himself, although his extremely popular recording was widely imitated by other musicians in the 1950s. Messer claimed its composition as his own, but it appears on a 1942 listing of tune slips he had maintained in his early radio days, suggesting that it had been passed to him by some Maritime source. Messer's organization commonly "souped up" these old tunes in a characteristically boisterous fashion, but Bob approaches the melody in a sweet and graceful manner that admirably suits its intended contours.

5. *Natchez Under the Hill*. "I had heard Bob play this several times on the radio and so I asked for it the first time I brought my tape recorder over, on my second visit. In fact, it was my asking for this tune that prompted Bob to say, 'Say, I ought have you come around here more, because I had practically forgotten about that tune.' I think it is a really nice tune that I've never heard anyone else play." Normally, "Natchez Under the Hill" designates the oldest American versions of the tune family that later stabilizes as "Turkey in the Straw." "Natchez" is normally set in A and rather resembles the "Turkey in the Straw in A" that Bob plays later on this CD, whereas "Turkey" is usually set in the key of G. Bob also played yet a third, temporally intermediate, member of this family as "Old Zip Coon" (see Dwight's version on Rounder 0529). But the present tune is wholly different and unique, insofar as I am aware, to Uncle Bob. Its strains are truly distinctive and stirring.

Natchez under the Hill is a little community on the Mississippi below the bluff at Natchez proper. In the 1820's it was a popular site for gambling and prostitution amongst the flatboat men. In Kentucky (where I recovered the standard "Natchez" several times), the title often loses its geographical significance and becomes rationalized as "Matches Under the Hill" or even "Striking Matches under the Cliff"!

660

DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI:



NATCHEZ UNDER-THE-HILL, MISSISSIPPI.

6. *Old Dubuque*. "This tune has been around here forever. It's sometimes called 'Dubuque's Hornpipe.' It has some similarities to 'Five Miles Out of Town' and even, in spots, to 'Durang's Hornpipe.'" In a few early twentieth century collections, this appears as "Phiddling Phil," a title under which it was also recorded by Don Messer. As Dwight observes, there is a wide class of (probably nineteenth century) hornpipes in D that swap parts in very confusing patterns and, played essentially as reels, commonly appear along a band that follows the Ohio River from Missouri over into West Virginia.

7. *Opera Reel*. "This is a real old one and somewhere Sant mentions that their dad

CELEBRATED OPERA REEL.

OPERA REEL. Six couples in a set. First couple balance, down the centre to the foot of set, 3d couple balance, down the centre to foot of set, 4 right and left at the foot, both couples up the centre, first couple down the centre and remain at the foot.

BEAUX OF OAK HILL.

BEAUX OF OAK HILL. First lady down the centre with 3d gentleman, back, and the lady cast off, 1st gent. down the centre with 3d lady, back, and the gent. cast off, 1st four balance, half right and left, balance again, half right and left to places.

played this." This classic four part tune commonly appears in the tune books as "The Celebrated Opera Reel," although the exact context in which it was originally "celebrated" remains unclear.

8. *Padgett*. "This comes from one of the tapes that my folks sent me when I was overseas. Bob made a mistake when he named it, because 'Knocking on the Door' is actually another tune from Missouri that Bob also played. I don't know have any idea what 'Padgett' means. I learned my version from Cyril but I believe Bob got his from Casey." For a rendition of "Knocking on the Door" proper, see Rounder 0388.

9. *Pretty Lies*. "I'm pretty sure that this came from Casey who usually called it 'Pretty White Lies.'"

10. *The Prodigal Son*. "One of the few things that Bob ever said about his grandfather was that he used to play and sing this to the family." There are a number of sacred songs in tradition based upon Luke 15:11-32 but I can't match Bob's tune to any of them.

11. *Purcell's Reel*. "Cyril told me that Bob had used to call this 'Trouble on the Wabash' on the radio, but, in person, he'd call it 'Hell on the Wabash.' But by the time I came along, Bob was calling it 'Purcell's,' although I don't know why. Nor do I know who 'Purcell' was." "Hell on the Wabash" is a common floater title, but I've never found the name attached to this rare tune (most commonly, it designates a relative of "Wake Up Susan"). Missourian Pete McMahan recorded a "Hell" that is a variant upon "Rocky Mountain Goat." Once again Bob demonstrates his remarkable second violin technique behind Dwight Lamb, who was just learning the tune at the time.

12. *Quadrille in A, E and D*. "I bet Bob picked this one up from his dad. It probably came out of a book. Bob played quite a number of quadrilles that switch key like this. Usually, his quadrilles were in 6/8 time but he once played me a 4/4 quadrille in A and E." In its American forms, a quadrille generally comprised of several figures, several of which were invariably set in 6/8 time. In the Midwest, the term has come to generally (although not invariably, as Dwight observes) designate a single tune in that meter, just as "jig" commonly serves that function elsewhere although this term was not originally a metrical categorization either).

13. *Rocky Road to Jordan*. "I'm pretty sure that this was one of Casey's tunes." The number of tunes designated "Rocky Road to" is staggering, but this fine tune seems unique to Bob's circle.

14. *Rose Waltz*. "This is a nice old tune that everybody used to play. Bob normally played it in C but this recording he played in D to the match the accordion I had then. He didn't seem to have any trouble shifting keys like that flawlessly." The number of waltzes named for roses of one kind or another are innumerable and I've not managed to equate this with any other "Rose Waltz" I know.



Bob Walters, Dwight and Clarence Lamb 1954

15. *Sally Johnson*. "This is the old style 'Sally Johnson' before the newer fiddlers started changing it around and mixing it up with 'Katy Hill.' Howdy Forrester used to do that with tunes a lot and I remember Bob Christeson complaining about Big Howdy on the day of Bob's funeral: 'I admire his ability, but the way he changes these old tunes around it is a crime.'" As a number of fiddlers have told me (and Dwight's own recordings directly demonstrate), "Sally Johnson" and "Katy Hill" originally represented quite distinct tunes sharing only a vaguely related single strain), but have somehow melded closely together in the modern fiddler's repertory. I have also been told that Arthur Smith's radio broadcasts of "Katy Hill" contributed both to its heightened popularity as well as the disposition to attack it at breakneck speed.

16. *Salty River Reel*. "Bob used to play this on the radio quite a bit and all of the other fiddlers in his circle played it as well." Cyril Stinnett was very fond of this evocative tune as well.

17. *Shaw's Reel*. "One time Bob pointed to Cole's Thousand Fiddle Tunes and told me, 'I just picked up two tunes out of that book.' I think that one of those was 'Shaw's Reel' and the other was 'Here and There Hornpipe.' A lot of times Bob didn't remember what the names of the tunes were after learning them from a book. This tape was made by my folks one time when I was overseas and Bob Christeson was up from Lincoln on a visit. So on the tape you can hear Bob Christeson call out 'That's "Shaw's Reel"' to Bob when he recognized what Bob was playing." It conforms to my own experiences amongst the fiddlers of Cape Breton that musicians are less likely to remember a tune title if it is learned either from a books or as a part of a longer medley. I have no idea of what psychological quirk might make this so.



Howe's 1000 Jigs and Reels

18. *Shoal Creek Breakdown*. "That's a Canadian piece that Bob learned it off a record."

19. *Silver Lake Quadrille*. "I know this one came from Bob's dad. He said that he used to play quadrilles for square dances quite a lot. And the dancers used to ask for them."

20. *Sleepy Joe*. "As you can tell, this was one of those tunes that Bob recorded and sent me when I was overseas. Cyril used to play it a lot as well." Essentially this same melody has been also recorded as "Sleepy-eyed Joe" by Missouri's Lyman Enloe and Virginia's John Ashby (a geographical range that suggests that it might have been a staple of the string bands on the Grand Old Opry of the 1930's). There is another fiddle and play party tune called "Sleepy-Eyed John" in tradition (see Titon's Old Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes) that seems to have been the basis of Tex Atchison's popular recomposition for Johnny Horton, but I don't discern any ascertainable overlap between these two.

21. *Smith's Reel*. "Bob does some pretty tricky bowing on this one." Two versions of

this appear in *One Thousand Fiddle Tunes*, as "Smith's Reel" and "Smith's Delight," with different bowings indicated. The tune is popularly known amongst Irish musician's as "Kitty's Wedding." However, American settings such as Uncle Bob's are sleeker with a considerably altered musical content (the second strain is essentially new). Bob Wills made a superlative recording of this, as have Arthur Smith and many others (indeed, Snake Chapman had presumed it was Smith's composition, due to the name).

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SMITH'S REEL

A comparison with "Smith's Reel" published in *Musicians' Omnibus* by Howe (1864) shows the evolution that occurred in this tune as it was passed from fiddler to fiddler. Recorded by Bob Walters, September, 1955.



Old-Time Fiddler's Repertory

22. *Steamboat Around the Bend*. "Bob learned this from his dad and said that his dad, his grandpa, and the all the old Walters clan had played the piece. Bob had several other tunes that also imitated a boat whistle: 'Ladies on the Steamboat' was one and 'Tugboat' was another."

23. *Tennessee Wagoner*. "Bob picked up this version from Georgia Slim; I have another recording of him doing it the old-fashioned way. Bob was still picking up tunes until the day when he finally couldn't play any more, because he didn't have enough wind." Bob does manage to sneak some old-fashioned bow cuts, which are traditional for this tune but usually get dropped within swift, modern versions such as this. As I have documented elsewhere, considerable mystery attached to this widely spread tune, because the famous race horse for which it was named did not come from Tennessee at all. Nor is the traditional tune close to its printed original, which seems to have been a dance favorite in the early 1840's. Perhaps the present melody may represent a Tennessee-fostered "answer tune" to the printed original. Dwight was aware that the fiddle tune "Gray Eagle" was named for a race horse, but didn't realize that "Wagner" designated the horse she ran against. Oddly enough, the Georgia Slim record Bob owned (Mercury 6146) was entitled "Texas Wag'ner"--which

horse that was, I have no idea! The Tri-Agle-Far label has recently released several excellent home recordings by Slim (real name: Robert Rutland).

24. *Tobacco Hills*. "I'm not sure where Bob got this, but I bet it was from his dad. As I said before, I never heard Bob play in dischord myself but Bob Christeson recorded a few of them such as this. I believe he's got the fiddle tuned to AEAE." On the Berea College website, Wilse Reynolds plays a Kentucky tune that may be distantly related. Snake Chapman knew a jingle (which he associated with a different melody altogether) that suggests that "Tobacco Hill" was once the name of some kind of dance.

25. *Topeka Polka*. "That's a more modern tune, of course. I once heard Billy Mitchell perform it at Weiser." Insofar as I can establish, the melody traces to Spade Cooley's 1947 recording, with composer's credits to Cooley, Del Porter, and Carl Hoefle (the original includes lyrics as well). Howdy Forrester was fond of performing the piece as an instrumental and he was perhaps Bob's direct source. It is astonishing how deftly Bob executes the "swing feel" required in this tune, so far from his customary metier.

26. *Trombone Rag*. This novelty piece pops up occasionally in the repertory of fiddlers across the country (Dwight remembers hearing it at a fiddle contest in the 1960's and Clark Kessinger recorded it a few years later). It probably traces to some turn of the century composition I have not been able to locate, although rags featuring "trombone smears" were very popular at the time (the composer Henry Fillmore specialized in them).

27. *Trouble Among the Yearlings*. Dwight correctly comments that "Hell Among the Yearlings" is an "old, old piece," although many modern versions have been influenced, directly or not, by Clark Kessinger's well known 78 recording. But Bob's rendition does not include the pizzicato passages that are usually symptomatic of a Kessinger influence. Of Bob's circle, Lonnie Robertson seems to have listened to 78 recordings most intently and seems to have introduced a fair number of Clark's tunes into the Mid-western repertory.



28. *Turkey in the Straw in A.* "A lot of fiddlers around here did this in both A and G. I had requested this to Lyn when I was overseas." As remarked above, Bob may have heard a standard "Natchez Under the Hill" and simply presumed that it was a new recasting of "Turkey in the Straw," rather than the reverse.

29. *Two Bits.* "Bob learned this from some fiddler down in Missouri Valley, Iowa whose name I don't recall. He had learned it from another fiddler over the telephone and when Bob complimented him on the piece, he replied, 'Yeah, it's a pretty good tune, but it cost me two bits,' referring, I guess, to the telephone charges. And so that's how it got its name."

30. *Unnamed Hornpipe in B.* Casey Jones plays the second violin here. "Casey had preceded Bob on the radio, broadcasting for the Henry Fields Seed Company in the early 'Thirties. He was only seventeen or eighteen at the time and my dad remembered the announcer saying, 'This is Casey Jones who we brought out of the hills of Missouri and bought him his first pair of shoes. He spend the first week looking at his tracks because he had never seen anything like that before!' Casey would come up and visit Bob a lot. I remember the first time I met Casey. My grandfather and I were visiting Bob one time in 1954 and he said, 'It's too bad you fellows can't be here tomorrow night as Casey Jones is coming for a visit.' Well, my grandfather and I were sure to come back over the next day and my dad did, too, as he was a big Casey Jones fan. On later visits, Casey would load up Bob and Goldie in the car and come over to our place."

31. *Unknown Tune in D.* If we knew anything about these tunes, we would have supplied them with titles!

32. *Unknown Tune in D.*

33. *Unknown Tune in F.*

VOL. XXXII.

DEATH OF W. W. WALTER

William Wilson Walter was born eight miles east of Onawa and two miles north of Turin in Monona Co. Iowa, Dec. 26, 1863. His mother having died when he was 18 days old, he was taken by his father to Adams Co. Ia. to live with his grand-parents. At the age of two years he moved with his grandparents to Burt Co. Neb in 1865, near the place where Oakland now stands. From there they came to Decatur and took up a homestead. He was married to Ida C Shoemaker of Maxberg Ia. Aug. 18 1886, and made their home at Decatur. To this union were born eight children, six boys and two girls. They were Sanford, Robert, Hiram, Clayton, Harold, Winifred all of Decatur and Wilma of South Pasadena Calif. A son Mylon died in infancy. His wife died Sept. 4, 1914. In 1922 he went to live with his son Clayton where he remained until this summer, when he visited among his other children, until the last two months and has been with his son Hiram where he answered the final call of his master Sept 9, 1933 at the age of 69 yrs. 9 mo. 15 days.

He has been a member of the Latter Day Saint Church since a boy, and a member of Star Lodge No. 88, A F & A M for 41 years.

He has been in failing health for eight years but was not bed-fast until the Wednesday before his death, which came as a shock to the community.

Those left to mourn his loss are his sons; Sanford, Robert Hiram, Clayton, Harold and two daughters, Winifred of Decatur, and Wilma St Pierre of Calif. his step-mother, Mrs Amanda Blake and four sisters, Myrtle, Rose, Rena, Leona and two brothers, Marion and Wiley of Seattle Washington, twenty grand-children, two great grand-children, besides a host of other relatives and friends.

The services were conducted from the L D S Church on Monday afternoon, with Amos Lamson officiating. The church was filled to capacity with sorrowing friends. The A F & A M had charge of the services at the Cemetery, where he was laid to rest by other loved ones, on a beautiful spot overlooking the place that had been his home so long.



Casey Jones on right

34. *Unknown Tune in G and C.*

35. *Unknown Tune in C and G.*

36. *Unnamed Tune in D.*

37. *Unknown Tune in G.*

38. *Unnamed Tune in G and C.*

39. *Wart on the Pumphandle.* "My dad had learned a nice version of this from a friend. When Bob heard Dad's version, he said, 'Well, I play it a little different from that but I never knew a name for it.' So Bob always called it 'Wart on the Pumphandle' after that." Melodically, this is clearly related to "Wake Up Susan," although with enough distinctive features that Bob included it in his repertory as a different tune.



Cyril Stinnett with Lena Hughes early '70s

40. *Woodchopper's Breakdown.* Bob learned this from one of the Ned Landry Canadian RCA 78's that Dwight had ordered in Sioux City and its popularity soon spread quickly through the Midwest, aided by Cyril Stinnett's own recording on one his

privately issued LPs (although the tune undoubtedly became popular in the US through other connections as well). Its composition is often credited to Landry but it was also played by Don Messer as "Pea Soup Reel" and may simply represent a New Brunswick traditional tune.

--Dwight Lamb and Mark Wilson

Wins Prize with Fiddle

R. E. Walters, Decatur, Declared Champion;
Contest Ends in Quadrille.

Robert E. Walters, 40, of Decatur, is Nebraska's champion fiddler. He won the title and a gold medal given by the Diamond Jubilee committee this morning in the finals of the old fiddler's contest. His opponents in the final round were D. D. Bowman, 59, of Walhill, and Reed Judson, 62, of Lincoln.

Walters last summer won the championship of Nebraska and Kansas in a contest held at Shenandoah, Ia. He has won 13 of 15 contests in which he has competed during the last few years. His selections in the contest this morning were "Grey Eagle," "Sally Goodwin," "Rye Straw," and "Old Belle Cow."

Judges Ask Encores.

So close was the contest, that the judges had each of the competing fiddlers play a waltz, a schottische and a melody at the end of the regular contest program.

Judges were Frank Field of Shenandoah, Ia., F. M. Henderson of South Omaha, Homer A. Stevenson of Omaha, and W. R. Patrick of Omaha. Mr. and Mrs. Lester Smith of Shenandoah played piano and banjo accompaniment for the contestants.

At the conclusion of the contest, Mr. Smith entertained the crowd with a jig, following which the audience shouted a demand for a quadrille. Four couples swung into the old-time dance on the platform.

Couple, 72 and 74, Dance.

Mrs. Molly Wilson, 72, 1434 Ames avenue, and E. Morrison, 74, of Neola, Ia., were the oldest couple in the dance.

Other couples in the quadrille were Mrs. W. F. Canarsky, 2515 North Eighty-fifth street, and Dr. E. E. Brown of Grand Island;



Robert E. Walters.

Mrs. May Powell, 219 Park avenue, and Frank Field of Shenandoah; Jane E. Harphan, 6755 North Twenty-fourth street, and F. M. Henderson, 3015 South Seventeenth street.

Lester Smith called the dances, and his wife and the three finalists in the fiddlers' contest furnished the music.



Dwight Lamb and Lyn Holsclaw

Credits:

Produced and annotated by Dwight Lamb and Mark Wilson
Recorded 1953-60 by Dwight and Clarence Lamb and Bob Christeson

Photography courtesy of Dwight Lamb and by Mark Wilson
Special thanks to Lyn Holsclaw, Gordon McCann, Scott Prouty, Kerry Blech, and the Walters family

This CD belongs to the North American Traditions Series
Mark Wilson, general editor

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Burlington, Ma 01803 USA

