

Joseph was an old man,
An old man was he,
When he and his wife Mary
Came to the land of Galilee.

And as they were going
Along by the wood,
They saw a red cherry-tree,
As red as any blood.

Out bespoke Mary
With words that was kind,
Saying "Give me cherries, Joseph,
For I am with child."

Then out bespoke Joseph
With words that was unkind:
"I won't give you cherries
If you are with child."

Then out bespoke our Saviour
Out of his mother's womb,
Saying: "Bow down, gentle cherry-tree,
Till my mother get some."

The tree it bowed down,
Down low to the ground,
And Mary picked up cherries
What her apron would hold.

Then as they were going
Along by the road,
They heard an angel saying:
"Our Saviour's to be born.

"Not in a kitchen,
Not in a hall,
Oh no, nor in a parlour,
But in an ox's stall."

This babe was not dressed
In silk nor in twine,
But a piece of fine linen
Was his mother's design.

This babe was not christened
With milk nor with wine,
But a drop of clear water,
And his name was divine.

Treasures from Our Archives

Twenty Years Ago

Bulletin 23.2 (June 1989). This issue featured two articles, slightly allied: Edith Fowke's "Filk-songs as Modern Folksongs" and James Prescott's "Music of the SCA". (Filk songs are songs from science fiction fandom, while the "SCA" is the medieval re-creating Society for Creative Anachronism.) A song written by James, "Lady Hartley's Lament", accompanied the latter article, as did "The Brave and Bonny Host" by Roger Shell. Two traditional songs, "Départ pour les îles", from the singing of Allan and Léontine Kelly of New Brunswick, and "I'll be the Good Boy", collected in Newfoundland by Jim Payne, completed the issue.

Fifteen Years Ago

Bulletin 28.2 (June 1994). This issue consisted mostly of the Festival Directory, but there was still room for some other material, including "The Jealous Lover" (a traditional song from Edith Fowke's collection), Bill Sarjeant's photo montage of the 1993 Annual General Meeting, an EthnoFolk Letters column, written by George W. Lyon this time, and reviews of a Cal Caven-dish concert in Calgary, the 1993 Winnipeg Folk Festival, Richard Chapman's book *The Complete Guitarist*, and recordings *Chansons judéo-*

espagnoles vols. I-III (Gerineldo), *Worth All the Telling* (Larry Kaplan), *Bluesology* (The White-ley Brothers) and five "Celtic" recordings.

Ten Years Ago

Bulletin 33.2 (June 1999). The showpiece of this issue was an interview with Paddy Tutty, accompanied by "Burr Oak" (an instrumental written by her) and her recorded version of the traditional song "The Cuckoo". Several columns appeared: an EthnoFolk Letter from Paddy Tutty, a radio column, "Islands in the Sand" by Steve Fruitman, and a short Centrefold (magazine column). Lots of letters and other housekeeping were included, as well as many reviews and the Folk Festival Directory.

Five Years Ago

CFM 38.2 (Spring 2004). This was a special issue on pioneering collector Helen Creighton (former Honorary President of CFMS, as it then was). Co-editor David Gregory contributed two articles, "Helen Creighton and the Traditional Songs of Nova Scotia" and "The Creighton-Senior Collaboration, 1932-51", the latter outlining Creighton's collaboration with Doreen Senior, a little-documented chapter in her collecting history. Clary Croft penned "Looking Back on

Helen” and “The Helen Creighton Fonds at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia”. Seven songs collected by Creighton accompanied the article, as well as reviews of *Songs of the Sea*, a CD of songs and stories collected by her, Clary Croft’s biography *Helen Creighton: Canada’s First Lady of Folklore*, the National Film Board video *A Sigh and a Wish: Helen Creighton’s Maritimes* and Clary Croft’s CD *Still the Song Lives On*.

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Reviews

Books

Stephen Calt. *Barrelhouse Words: A Blues Dialect Dictionary*. 2009. 308pp. ISBN: 978-0-252-03347-6 (hard cover), 978-0-252-07660-2 (soft cover). Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1325 South Oak Street, Champaign, IL 61820 – 6903, USA.; uipress@uillinois.edu; www.press.uillinois.edu

I had great hopes for this book and, at first glance, Calt’s contribution to dictionaries in general and to blues books in particular is an invaluable work. Even with its faults, no doubt some blues singers will want to include it in their libraries. But the reader should be wary of a number of errors that the author has made, particularly in his transcriptions, errors that have led him to some mistaken conclusions and false assumptions.

As might have been expected, this reviewer first looked at some problem words that had surfaced during his own researches into the songs in his repertoire, many of which have been cited in *Barrelhouse Words*. It is often exceedingly difficult to understand some of the words in early blues, a problem commonly caused either by one not being familiar with the idioms or by not understanding the singer’s enunciation. One can therefore appreciate that major transcription reference sources for blues words are invaluable.

Two of the best of these are Bob Macleod’s thirteen volumes of blues transcriptions (PAT Publications, Edinburgh, 1988–2004), and Michael Taft’s *Talkin’ to Myself* (Routledge, 1983 & 2005). Both Macleod’s and Taft’s transcriptions include some errors, as might be expected, and should be used only as guidelines, but they give complete songs with their essential structure, and the conscientious singer, listening carefully to the

original recordings, can correct words here and there. Neither Macleod nor Taft, whom I consider to form the backbone of research into blues words, is cited in Calt’s bibliography.

The book’s title “barrelhouse” is cited in a number of places throughout the book, one of them in the song “Mr. Crump Don’t Like It,” which can be found under “Crump, Mister”. The entry gives the first verse condensed into three lines, which is fine, but the transcription is incorrect in a couple of places: the first word Frank Stokes sings at the beginning of each of the first three lines is “A” (“A-Mister Crump...”), not “Now,” and the word “God” should be “cards”: “No barrelhouse women, cards n’ drinkin’ no beer.” The song is about Crump’s election promise to clean up the illegal activities in Memphis, and, quite apart from anything else, “God” makes no sense here. A further indignity to the song occurs under the entry “Creeper,” where the author is ostensibly quoting verse four: “I saw the creepers and sisters turn around an’ begin to grin.” He very carefully explains what creeper refers to, but the words being sung are, “I told the Presb’terian sisters, turned round an’ begin to grin.”

For the expression “dead cat on the line” Calt refers the reader to the Blind Boy Fuller song “I’m a Good Stem Winder” from 1935, but it would have been far more appropriate, and Calt could have saved himself quite a bit of explaining, if he had cited Tampa Red’s 1932 recording of his own song, “Dead Cat On the Line,” where each of the seven verses gives an example of what the term means.

Calt’s explanation for “bamalong,” found in the title and first line of Andrew and Jim Baxter’s “Bamalong Blues,” reads: