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The Girl I Left Behind Me

Pa Ingalls died before a recording could be made of his fiddle playing. The closest we might be able to come to recapturing his “old-time” sound is to be heard on the recordings made by Jasper E. “Jep” Bisbee. Bisbee was born eight years after Pa (in 1843) and about fifty miles from Ingalls’ birthplace in upstate New York. Like Pa, Bisbee moved west as a boy, settling eventually in Michigan. (Pa moved to Illinois, then on to Wisconsin.) There Bisbee acquired a local reputation as a fine fiddler, again retracing Pa’s history. Unlike Pa, Bisbee at age eighty was “discovered” by Henry Ford, who sent him to Thomas Edison in 1923 to make recordings of his playing. Two of his songs are included on this recording, both accompanied on the piano by his daughter.

“The Girl I Left Behind Me” is a tune that dates back to the early 19th century. Although often performed as an instrumental piece (as in Bisbee’s performance here), words have long been set to the tune as well. One such version spoke of experiences on cattle runs out West. Since the Ingalls family settled on what was then the western frontier, it is not surprising that *On the Banks of Plum Creek* refers to this “cowboy” version of the song.

I struck the trail in 'seventy-nine, the herd strung out behind me;
As I jogged along my mind ran back to the gal I left behind me.
The wind did blow, the rain did fall, the hail did fall and blind me;
I thought of that gal, the sweet little gal, the gal I left behind me!
(chorus) That sweet little gal, that pretty little gal, the gal I left behind me!
(2X)

If ever I get off the trail and the troubles they don’t find me,
I’ll make my way straight back again to the gal I left behind me.
She wrote ahead to the place I said, I was always glad to find it.
She says, “I’m true, when you get through, ride back and you will find me.”
(chorus)

When we sold out I took the train, I knew where I would find her;
When I got back we had a smack, and that’s no gol-darned lie, sir. (chorus)

Fiddle tune version—Jasper Bisbee – fiddle; Beulah Bisbee-Schuler – piano

Recorded 23 November 1923; Edison Company Studio, West Orange, New Jersey; transcription courtesy of Edison National Historic Site, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. The performance on this recording is edited from a longer medley of tunes, also titled “The Girl I Left Behind Me.”

Song version—Pat Enright – vocal, guitar; Butch Baldassari – mandolin; Joe Caverlee – fiddle; Byron House – bass

Recorded 15 March 2005; Signal Path Studio, Nashville, Tn.; Mark Howard,
engineer

Sweet By and By

This much-loved hymn was composed by Joseph Philbrick Webster (1819-75) in 1867, set to words penned by his friend Sanford Fillmore Bennett (1836-1898). It was apparently written quickly and on the spot, inspired by an offhand remark by Webster. Published the next year, it soon gained wide favor. Although there is only one reference to the hymn in Wilder's books (in *The Long Winter*), she wrote in her unpublished memoir (titled "Pioneer Girl") that Pa "loved to play the hymns we had sung in the little church at Walnut Grove" in Minnesota (the setting for *On the Banks of Plum Creek*), "but of all, 'The Sweet By and By' was his favorite. (So much that it was sung at his funeral)."

There's a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we may see it afar;
For the Father waits over the way, to prepare us a dwelling place there.
In the sweet by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore. (2X)

We shall sing on that beautiful shore, the melodious songs of the blest;
And our spirits shall sorrow no more, not a sigh for the blessing of rest.
In the sweet by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore. (2X)

To our bountiful Father above, we will offer the tribute of praise;
For the glorious gift of His love, and the blessings that hallow our days.
In the sweet by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore. (2X)

Andrea Zonn – vocal lead; Peggy Stewart Duncan, Mark Powelson, Jane Sherberg, Jon Sherberg – harmony vocals; Butch Baldassari – mandolin; Joe Caverlee – fiddle; Pat Enright – guitar; Byron House – bass; Mark Howard – guitar, high-strung guitar

Recorded 15, 29 March 2005; Signal Path Studio, Nashville, Tn.; Mark Howard, engineer

The Blue Juniata

Marion Dix Sullivan composed the lyrics and melody to “The Blue Juniata,” which was then arranged by Edward L. White and published in 1844. The song appeared during a time when many Americans were becoming more concerned about the plight of the American Indian, as its sympathetic narrative suggests. The song’s placement in *The Little House on the Prairie* points up the moral dilemma. In a dramatic chapter, Ma and her daughters manage to hold off two Osage men who were attempting to steal the family’s cache of furs, virtually their entire capital. (In an ironic parallel, the Ingalls family was then, in 1870, living on land that was officially “Indian territory,” virtually all that still “belonged” to a whole nation of people.) As the Ingalls children prepare for bed, they hear “The Blue Juniata,” a deeply poignant song about loss. Laura, who is clearly moved by the sympathetic portrayal of the “Indian girl, bright Alfarata,” wonders, “Where did the voice of Alfarata go, Ma?” She is told that Alfarata probably went west because that is what “the government makes [the Indians do].” She asks if the Osage will have to go west. “Yes,” Pa said. “When white settlers come into a country, the Indians have to move on.” “But, Pa, I thought this was Indian Territory. Won’t it make the Indians mad to have to—” “No more questions, Laura,” Pa said, firmly. “Go to sleep.” And the chapter ends, but the question, underscored by the song, lingers.

Wild rovd an Indian girl, bright Alfarata,
Where sweep the waters of the blue Juniata.
Swift as an antelope, through the forest going,
Loose were her jetty locks in wavy tresses flowing.

Gay was the mountain song of bright Alfarata,
Where sweep the waters of the blue Juniata.
Strong and true my arrows are in my painted quiver,
Swift goes my light canoe on down the rapid river.

Bold is my warrior good, the love of Alfarata,
Proud waves his snowy plume along the Juniata.
Soft and low he speaks to me, then his war-cry sounding,
Rings his voice in thunder loud, from height to height resounding.

So sang the Indian girl, bright Alfarata,
Where sweep the waters of the blue Juniata.
Fleeting years have borne away the voice of Alfarata,
Still sweeps the river on, the blue Juniata.

Riders in the Sky: Ranger Doug – lead vocal, guitar; Too Slim – bunkhouse bass; Woody Paul – fiddle; Joey the Cowpolka King – accordion

Recorded 7 February 2005; Signal Path Studio, Nashville, Tn.; Mark Howard, engineer

Oh! Susanna

Stephen Foster (1826-64) wrote "Oh! Susanna" in 1847, the first in a string of unforgettable songs by America's greatest songwriter. Foster's gift was that he could write a melody that sounded so natural and easy that it seemed not to have been composed at all, but just revealed. Indeed, many of his best songs have become "folk songs," in the best sense of that term. "Oh! Susanna," with its upbeat, optimistic tune and zany, fun-loving lyrics, immediately swept the country and soon people were making up new verses to express their own topsy-turvy lives. The song was especially favored by those who rushed to the California goldfields in 1849. The text sung here, which has words and images in common with references to the song in *Little House in the Big Woods*, *Little House on the Prairie*, and *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, is "the company song" of the *Eliza*, a ship from Salem, Massachusetts that carried miners and supplies to California.

I came from Salem City, with my wash pan on my knee,
I'm going to California, the gold dust for to see.
It rained all night the day I left, the weather it was dry,
The sun so hot I froze to death, oh brothers, don't you cry.
(chorus) Oh Susanna, don't you cry for me,
I'm going to California with my wash pan on my knee.

I jumped aboard the 'Liza ship, and traveled on the sea,
And every time I thought of home, I wished it wasn't me.
The vessel reared like any horse, that had of oats a wealth,
I found it wouldn't throw me, so I thought I'd throw myself. (chorus)

I thought of all the pleasant times we had together, dear,
I thought I ought to cry a bit, but couldn't find a tear.
The pilot's bread was in my mouth, the gold dust in my eye,
And though I'm going far away, dear brothers, don't you cry. (chorus)

I soon shall be in Frisco, and there I'll look around,
And when I see the gold lumps there, I'll pick them off the ground.
I'll scrape the mountains clean, my boys, I'll drain the rivers dry,
A pocketful of rocks bring home, oh brothers, don't you cry! (chorus)

Keith Little – vocal, guitar; John Balch – banjo; Butch Baldassari –
mandolin; Casey Driessen – fiddle

Recorded 3 June 2002; Atlantis Recording Studio, Hendersonville, Tn.;
Voytek Kochanek, engineer

Roll the Old Chariot Along

Sailors for centuries often chanted a special sort of rhythmic song that eased them in their heavy labors, a form called the “sea shanty.” One such shanty was called “Nelson’s Blood,” with a verse consisting of three repeated lines of “Oh, a drop of Nelson’s blood wouldn’t do us any harm,” followed by “And we’ll all hang on behind”; the refrain was: “So we’ll roll the old chariot along [3x], And we’ll all hang on behind!” Many sailors in the 19th century were black, which might help explain how this shanty got dressed up as a religious spiritual (as performed here) and moved into a church setting; . . . Or it could have just as well started in the church and found double duty onboard ship! In Wilder’s *The Long Winter* the song appears in yet another guise, as a worksong (closely related to the shanty). Here Pa and his neighbors propel a railroad handcar along to the rhythms of: “We’ll ROLL the O-old CHARiot aLONG [3x], and we WON’T drag ON beHIND!”

Hallelujah, Lord, roll the ole chariot along, just roll the ole chariot along;
Just roll the ole chariot along, and you won’t be left behind.

If your mother wants to go, she can wear a starry crown; (3X)
And she won’t be left behind. (chorus)

If your sister wants to go, she can wear a starry crown; (3X)
And she won’t be left behind. (chorus)

If your father wants to go, he can wear a starry crown; (3X)
And he won’t be left behind. (chorus)

If the sinner’s in the way, we will stop and take him in;
And he won’t drag on behind. (chorus)

If the Devil’s in the way, we will run it over him; (3X)
And we won’t drag on behind. (chorus)

If your brother wants to go, he can wear a starry crown; (3X)
And he won’t be left behind. (chorus)

The Princely Players: James Brown, bass; Shirley Cody, alto; Jacqueline Elston, soprano; Gloria Ransom, soprano; Calvin Settles*, tenor and starter; Odessa Settles, tenor & alto; Nita Smith, alto; Robert Smith, baritone and caller

*appears by permission of Settles Connection

Recorded 27 February 2005; New England Sound, Nashville, Tn.; John Mock, engineer

Highland Mary

Robert Burns (1759-96), the “National Bard of Scotland,” wrote this song in 1792. “Highland” Mary was a real person to whom Burns had been briefly engaged some six years before. Mary Campbell died suddenly after their engagement though, a tragic loss whose only gain was the inspiration for this song. Burns “heard” poetry as set to music, in this case to the melody of a Scottish folksong, “Katherine Ogie.” He sent the song to London publisher George Thomson in November 1792, who published it in a piano arrangement in the *Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs*. This song and many others by Burns were enormously popular in 19th-century America, especially to those of Scottish descent. Such a person was Caroline Quiner “Ma” Ingalls, who must have instilled her love for this music in her daughters, primary among them Mary, the eldest. Given the song’s namesake, it should not surprise that this was known to the family as “Mary’s song” (*These Happen Golden Years*; the song also appears in *By the Shores of Silver Lake*).

Ye banks and braes and streams around the castle of Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flow’rs, your waters ne’er be drumlie.
There summer first unfald her robes, and there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last farewell of my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom’d the gay green birk, how rich the hawthorn’s blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade, I clasp’d her to my bosom.
The golden hours, on angel wings, flew o’er me and my dearie,
For dear to me as light and life, was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi’ many a vow and lock’d embrace, our parting was full tender,
And pledging aft to meet again, we tore ourselves asunder.
But, oh!, fell death’s untimely frost, that nipt my flower sae early,
Now green’s the sod, and cauld’s the clay, that wraps my Highland Mary.

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips, I ha’e oft kiss’d sae fondly.
And clos’d for ay, the sparkling glance that dwelt on me sae kindly.
And mouldering now in silent dust, that heart that loved me dearly.
But still within my bosom’s core, shall live my Highland Mary.

Deborah Packard – vocal; Casey Driessen – fiddle; Karen Krieger – piano;
John Mock – guitar, penny whistle

Recorded 3 June 2002; Atlantis Recording Studio, Hendersonville, Tn.;
Voytek Kochanek, engineer

The Arkansas Traveler/The Devil's Dream

These old fiddle tunes were obvious favorites of Pa Ingalls and his daughter Laura, for they show up several times in her books. Both "The Arkansas Traveler" and "The Devil's Dream" first appear in the historical record in the 19th century. These tunes, like many hundreds of others, functioned primarily for social entertainment and dancing. Like most such fiddle tunes, each tune typically has an opening strain (A) that is repeated; a second strain (B) that is also repeated; and then a repeat of the whole process (AABB) until the dancers and/or the fiddlers are happily exhausted.

John Balch – banjo; Butch Baldassari – mandolin; Casey Driessen – fiddle; Keith Little – guitar

Recorded 3 June 2002; Atlantis Recording Studio, Hendersonville, Tn.; Voytek Kochanek, engineer

Captain Jinks

This comic song, full of "high jinks," was written by Englishman William Lingard in 1868 and set to music by T. Maclagan. The song quickly made its way across the Atlantic (as did Lingard, as well!), where it became quite the rage. It even spawned other perspectives on the Captain, one of the most famous being that of his wife, "Mistress Jinks of Madison Square" (the stage performance of which was always an occasion for large, awkward, male singer-comedians to appear in delicate and extravagant ladies' dress).

Pa obviously enjoyed this toe-tapper of a song, for it appears in *Little House in the Big Woods*, *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, and *By the Shores of Silver Lake*, where "Mistress Jinks" also makes an appearance.

I'm Captain Jinks, of the Horse Marines, I feed my horse on corn and beans,
And sport young ladies in their teens, tho' a captain in the army.

I teach young ladies how to dance, for I'm the pet of the army.

(chorus) Captain Jinks, of the Horse Marines, I feed my horse on corn and beans,

And often live beyond my means, tho' a captain in the army.

I joined my corps when twenty-one, of course I thought it capital fun;

When the enemy came of course I run, for I'm not cut out for the army.

When I left home, mama, she cried, "He's not cut out for the army!" (chorus)

The first time I went out to drill, the bugle sounding made me ill;

Of the battle-field I'd had my fill, for I'm not cut out for the army.

The officers, they all did shout, "Why! kick him out of the army." (chorus)

Riders in the Sky: Too Slim – vocal, bunkhouse bass; Ranger Doug – guitar; Woody Paul – fiddle; Joey the Cowpolka King – accordion

Recorded 7 February 2005; Signal Path Studio, Nashville, Tn.; Mark Howard, engineer

Oft in the Stilly Night

Thomas Moore (1779-1852), a beloved Irish poet, published this song in 1818, with an arrangement by John Stevenson. Following after the example of Robert Burns he conceived the text to fit a folksong identified only as a "Scotch air." It gained wide popularity in 19th-century America, including the special favor of Abraham Lincoln. One source at the end of the century claimed that "Oft in the Stilly Night" was second only to "Home, Sweet Home" on the list of the century's most popular songs.

This song is among those in a songfest described in *By the Shore of Silver Lake* that also included "Billy Boy," "Camptown Races," "Three Blind Mice," "Nelly Was a Lady," "Ben Bolt," and Burns' "Bonny Doon."

Oft in the stilly night, ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond mem'ry brings the light, of other days around me.
The smiles, the tears of childhood's years, the words of love then spoken.
The eyes that shone, now dimm'd and gone, the cheerful hearts now
broken!

Thus in the stilly night, ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad mem'ry brings the light, of other days around me.

When I remember all the friends, so link'd together,
I've seen around me fall, like leaves in wintry weather.
I feel like one who treads alone some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead, and all but he departed.
Thus in the stilly night, ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad mem'ry brings the light, of other days around me.

Deborah Packard – vocal; John Mock – guitar, harmonium

Recorded 14 March 2005; Signal Path Studio, Nashville, Tn.; Mark Howard,
engineer

The Big Sunflower

The most popular form of 19th-century American music theatre was the blackface minstrel show. As hard as is to imagine today, millions of Americans flocked to the theatres and stages in cities, towns, and crossroads to see the dances and antics of white men with faces blackened by grease-and-burnt-cork and to hear their music and jokes. (Indeed, Pa Ingalls stars in an amateur minstrel show in *The Little Town on the Prairie*.) One of the biggest minstrel stars of the 1860s was Billy Emerson, and this song, written by Bobby Newcomb in 1868, became his theme song. A bouncy, happy song, it functions in *The Long Winter* both to signal despair in the face of unrelenting blizzards—Laura calls it Pa’s “trouble song”—and to project a shaft of its sunny cheer into the gloom.

There is a charm I can’t explain, about a girl I’ve seen,
My heart beats fast when she goes past, in a dark dress trim’d in green.
Her eyes are bright as evening stars, so loving and so shy,
And the folks all stop and look around, whenever she goes by.
(chorus) Oh I am as happy as a big sunflower,
That nods and bends in the breezes,
And my heart is as a light as the wind that blow,
The leaves from off the tree-zees.

As days past on and we became like friends of olden times,
I thought the question I would pop and ask her to be mine.
But the answer I received next day, how could she treat me so,
Instead of being mine for life, she simply answered, “No!” (chorus)

I went next day dressed in my best, this young girl for to see,
To ask her if she would explain why she had shaken me.
She said she really felt quite sad to cause me such distress,
And when I said won’t you be mine, of course she answered, “Yes!”
(chorus)

Doug Green – vocal; Butch Baldassari – 4-string mandolin-banjo; Casey Driessen – fiddle; Karen Krieger – piano, spoken word; John Mock – concertina, percussion

Recorded 3 June 2002; Atlantis Recording Studio, Hendersonville, Tn.;
Voytek Kochanek, engineer

Happy Land

Scottish educator and poet Andrew Young (1807-89) wrote the words to this hymn while living in India in 1838. He expected that his words would be fit to a popular song of that time by Robert Archibald Smith, titled "I Have Come from a Happy Land: The Celebrated Dancing Girls' Song." The sheet music cover of the song claims that the melody is a "Hindustani Air." By 1842 the song had been arranged, set to Young's text, and published as a hymn. In that form it quickly appeared in hymnbooks intended for use in Sunday schools; it was through this avenue that the song came to be known by the Ingalls family.

"Happy Land" appears more often in Wilder's books than any other hymn. *Little House on the Prairie*, *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, *By the Shores of Silver Lake*, and *The Long Winter* all include references. Supposedly "Ma's favorite," it stands for strength-in-family and in opposition to a unruly, outside world, most graphically illustrated in *Little House on the Prairie* when Ma Ingalls cradled Pa's pistol and sang "There is a happy land," while nearby Osage Indians powwowed and seemingly threatened the Ingalls and other settlers. The hymn was widely enough known that it developed comic parody verses, one of which is recounted in *By the Shores of Silver Lake*.

There is a happy land, far, far away,
Where saints in glory stand, bright, bright as day.
Oh, how they sweetly sing, worthy is our Saviour King,
Loud let his praises ring, praise, praise for aye.

Come to that happy land, come, come away;
Why will ye doubting stand, why still delay?
Oh, we shall happy be, when from sin and sorrow free,
Lord, we shall live with thee, blest, blest for aye.

Bright, in that happy land, beams every eye;
Kept by a Father's hand, love cannot die.
Oh, then, to glory run; be a crown and kingdom won;
And, bright above the sun, we reign for aye.

Peggy Stewart Duncan – soprano; Mark Powelson – tenor; Jane Sherberg – alto; Jon Sherberg – bass; Butch Baldassari – mandolin; Joe Caverlee – fiddle; Pat Enright – guitar; Byron House – bass

Recorded 15 March 2005; Signal Path Studio, Nashville, Tn.; Mark Howard, engineer

Barbara Allen

“Barbara Allen” likely originated in the early 17th century and has since become surely one of the best-known ballads in the English language. It was brought to the New World in the minds, hearts, and voices of immigrants from the British Isles and was soon rooted in American ballad traditions. Like other such ballads, deeply felt emotions surge throughout “Barbara Allen”; few things are more tragic than a mix of young love, misunderstanding, false pride, and death. Although we often think of this today as a “mountain ballad,” it was once sung widely, even by frontier folk like Pa Ingalls far out on the edge of the Great Plains, there “by the shores of Silver Lake.”

All in the merry month of May, when the green buds they were swelling;
Young William Green on his deathbed lay, for the love of Barbara Allen.

He sent his servant to the town, to the place where she was dwelling;
Saying, “Master’s sick and he send for you, if your name be Barbara Allen.”

So slowly, slowly, she got up, and slowly she came nigh him;
And all she said when she got there, “Young man I believe you’re dying.”

“O yes, I’m low, I’m very low, and death is on me dwelling;
No better, no better I’ll ever be, if I can’t get Barbara Allen.”

“Don’t you remember in yonders town, in yonders town a-drinking;
You passed your glass around and round, and you slighted Barbara Allen?”

He turned his pale face to the wall, for death was on him dwelling,
“Hey do, hey do, my good neighbors all, hey do sweet Barbara Allen.”

As she was going across the field, she heard the deathbells knelling;
And every stroke the deathbell give: “Hard-hearted Barbara Allen!”

“O Mother, O Mother, go make my bed, go make it both long and narrow;
Young William died for me today, and I’ll die for him tomorrow.”

They buried her near the old churchtower, and he was buried a-nigh her;
And out of his bosom grew a red, red rose; out of Barbara’s grew a green
briar.

They grew and they grew up the old churchtower, until they could grow no
higher,
They locked and they tied in a true lover’s knot, red rose wrapped around
the green briar.

Deborah Packard – vocal; Byron House – bass; John Mock – low whistle

Recorded 7, 14 March 2005; Signal Path Studio, Nashville, Tn.; Mark Howard, engineer

Nelly Was a Lady

Another song by Stephen Foster, and another song that came from the stage of the minstrel show. Minstrelsy generally was an expression of deep-seated and widespread American racism: African Americans were represented there as objects of crude humor and ridicule. Stephen Foster, to his great credit, was one of the few who tried to express a degree of sympathy for the terrible plight of slaves. "Nelly" (published in 1849) is noteworthy for being one of the first of that sort. The song is about a deep and tragic love affair, during a time when blacks were presumed by many whites not to have the capacity for such "white" feelings. And, Nelly isn't represented as some ridiculous female "wench" figure either, as, typically, female slaves (especially) were at the time. Instead: "Nelly was a LADY!" And the music convincingly underscores the sincerity of sentiment, with the melody being one of the most searingly beautiful ever penned by Foster (or anyone else, for that matter!).

This song is referenced in *By the Shores of Silver Lake*, closing out an evening of singing and music-making with the Boasts, close family friends of the Ingalls.

Down on the Mississippi floating, long time I travel on the way;
All night the cottonwood a-toting, sing for my true love all the day.
(chorus) Nelly was a lady, last night she died,
Toll the bell for lovely Nell, my dark Virginny bride.

Now I'm unhappy and I'm weeping, can't tote the cottonwood no more;
Last night, while Nelly was a-sleeping, death come a-knocking at the door.
(chorus)

When I saw Nelly in the morning smile when she open'd up her eyes;
Seem'd like the light of day a-dawning, just 'fore the sun begin to rise.
(chorus)

Close by the margin of the water, where the lone weeping willow grows;
There lived Virginny's lovely daughter, there she in death may find repose.
(chorus)

Down in the meadow 'mong the clover, walk with my Nelly by my side;
Now all them happy days are over, farewell my dark Virginny bride.
(chorus)

Dave Olney – vocal, guitar; Joe Caverlee – fiddle; Byron House – bass

Recorded 7 March 2005; Signal Path Studio, Nashville, Tn.; Mark Howard, engineer

Uncle Sam's Farm

“Dedicated to All Creation,” this song was written in 1850 by Jesse Hutchinson, Jr., a member of the famed Hutchinson Family Singers. It quickly became one of the Hutchinsons’ best-known songs, for the spirited “Go ahead!” sensibility (a motto perhaps borrowed from Davy Crockett) undoubtedly appealed to a country filled with hope and optimism for its future.

This song makes a pivotal appearance in *By the Shores of Silver Lake* as the Ingalls family heads out to the Dakota Territory to homestead their own farm. Pa, and eventually even baby Grace, sang and whistled that “Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm!”

Of all the mighty nations in the east or in the west,
O this glorious Yankee nation is the greatest and the best,
We have room for all creation, and our banner is unfurl'd,
Here's a gen'ral invitation to the people of the world.
(chorus) Oh, come away, come away, come away I say!
Oh, come away, come away, come right away!
Oh, come to this country and have no fear of harm,
Our Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.

St. Lawrence marks our northern line, as fast her waters flow;
And the Rio Grande our southern bound, 'way down to Mexico.
From the great Atlantic Ocean where the sun begins to dawn,
Leap across the Rock Mountains far away to Oregon. (chorus)

While the South shall raise the cotton, and the West, the corn and pork,
New England manufactories shall do up the finer work;
For the deep and flowing waterfalls that course along our hills,
Are just the thing for washing sheep, and driving cotton mills. (chorus)

Our father's gave us liberty, but little did they dream,
The grand results that pour along this mighty age of steam;
For our mountains, lakes, and rivers are all a blaze of fire,
And we send our news by lightning on the telegraphic wires. (chorus)

Yes! We're bound to beat the nations for our motto's "Go ahead!"
And we'll tell the foreign countries that our people are well fed;
For the nations must remember that Uncle Sam is not a fool,
For the people do the voting, and the children go to school. (chorus)

Doug Green – vocal; Butch Baldassari – mandolin; Casey Driessen – fiddle;
Karen Krieger – piano; John Mock – concertina, percussion

Recorded 3 June 2002; Atlantis Recording Studio, Hendersonville, Tn.;
Voytek Kochanek, engineer

Promised Land

The text to this hymn, which is often known by its opening line—“On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand—was written in the late 18th century by Samuel Stennett (1727-95), an English minister. Several different tunes have been sung to it in the times since. One of the most popular during the 19th century was “Promised Land,” first published in William Walker’s *Southern Harmony* (1835) and attributed there to “Miss M. Durham.” This setting was especially popular in the Southern shapenote tradition, a distinctive style of singing that is full-voiced (and loud!), “beautiful” in the full commitment and energetic participation of its amateur singers. As is generally the case in this tradition, the singers begin by singing their parts in “fasola” (as in “do-re-mi-FA-SO-LA”), which might sound confusing at times because some singers are, for example, on “fa” while others are on another note in the chord (like “la”). In a typical performance the singers would continue after practicing their parts in fasola and sing all the verses of the hymn. This recording includes a performance of only the fasola section of “Promised Land.”

The Long Winter, set during the infamously “hard winter” of 1880-81 in Dakota Territory, often features music-making as a way to express strength and perseverance in the face of unrelenting blizzards. Such is the case when “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks” is sung by the Ingalls family.

The Harpeth Valley Sacred Harp Singers: Laurens Blankers, Kerene Box, Marilyn Burchett, David Carlton, Dorothea McCowan, Heidi Nolen, Tim Reynolds, Sandie Scott, Bob Simmons

Recorded 27 February 2005; New England Sound, Nashville, Tn.; John Mock, engineer

On Jordan’s Stormy Banks

“Promised Land” was arranged in 1895 by Rigdon McCoy McIntosh (1836-99), retitled, and set as a “gospel hymn,” a spirited, accessible, almost “popular” sort of sacred music. Although the frontier Ingalls family would not have known this arrangement of the hymn, Wilder, writing in the 1930s and ‘40s, would likely have heard in her mind’s ear this well-known version when she referred to the hymn.

Our performance here collects many of the artists from the recording, singing and playing together in community of the same “promised land”—both earthly and spiritual—sought so vividly by the Ingalls family.

On Jordan's Stormy Banks

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand, and cast a wishful eye,
To Canaan's fair and happy land, where my possessions lie.
(chorus) I am bound for the promised land,
O who will come and go with me?

O'er all those wide-extended plains, shines one eternal day;
There God the Son forever reigns, and scatters night away. (chorus)

When shall I reach that happy place, and be forever blest?
When shall I see my Father's face, and in His bosom rest? (chorus)

Vocals: Laurens Blankers, Kerene Box, James Brown, Marilyn Burchett,
David Carlton, Dale Cockrell, Shirley Cody, Peggy Stewart Duncan,
Jacqueline Elston, Dorothea McCowan, Heidi Nolen, Dave Olney, Mark
Powelson, Gloria Ransom, Tim Reynolds, Sandie Scott, Calvin Settles,
Odessa Settles, Jane Sherberg, Jon Sherberg, Bob Simmons, Nita Smith,
Robert Smith; Joe Caverlee – fiddle; Byron House – bass; Jeff Lisenby – reed
accordion

Recorded 27 February 2005; New England Sound, Nashville, Tn.; John
Mock, engineer; and 7, 15 March 2005; Signal Path Studio, Nashville, Tn.;
Mark Howard, engineer

The Devil's Dream [bonus track]

Jep Bisbee, our stand-in for Pa Ingalls, gets the last word with this
fine old-time fiddle tune, accompanied, like Pa, by his daughter.

Jasper Bisbee – fiddle; Beulah Bisbee-Schuler – piano

Recorded 23 November 1923; Edison Company studio, West Orange, New
Jersey; transcription courtesy of Edison National Historic Site, National
Park Service, United States Department of the Interior