

Florida Music Educators Association

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Ain't I Rock Candy: Making Diverse Connections Using Folk Songs

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Shoo Rye - Ring Game – Collected from Mozella Longmire, Atmore, AL July 10, 1947

What is a folk song/music?

- I. Defining folk songs - Frocucci (1981, p. 18) -
 - a. Folk songs represent the musical expressions of the common people.
 - b. These songs are not composed in that they are not the works of skilled, tutored, musicians. It is more accurate to say that they have been created rather than composed.
 - c. These songs are ordinarily the product of an unknown person or group of persons. The credits read: Anonymous; American Folksong; Traditional; or Southern Mountain Song.
 - d. The words or lyrics of folk songs are usually colloquial in nature to reflect the speech patterns and expressions of a particular people or regions.
 - e. These songs are highly singable, primarily because they were first presented with the singing voice rather than having been written down in musical notation beforehand.
 - f. Folksongs are simply structured, both musically, and verbally. It is their naiveté that gives them their charm. These songs can be effectively performed, without instrumental accompaniment.
 - g. When they are accompanied, a less formal instrument is considered appropriate.
 - h. Browne (1979) – “elastic enough to include all *genuine* folk songs yet rigid enough to exclude all others.” Folk songs are not composed; they are songs sung by the folk.
- II. Issues in collecting
 - a. Transcribing
 - i. Halli (2004) – When a folk song is written down it loses its living quality.
 - ii. Words or Music
 - iii. Fragments – relies on the singer’s memory.
 - b. Authenticity
 - i. Some of the work collected for the Federal Writers Project was “composed” by the people collecting the materials.
 - c. Classification
 - i. Primary - original source.
 - ii. Secondary - first time published.
 - iii. Tertiary – most music series textbooks; may have been altered from the original source.
- III. Folk Songs in the Elementary Classroom (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008)
 - a. High Quality
 - b. Musical Appeal
 - c. Developmentally Appropriate

- d. Reflect the culture of your students
- e. Have a pedagogical reason
 - i. Listening
 - ii. Movement
 - iii. Performance
 - iv. Springboard
 - v. Prepare – Present – Practice
- f. Can you change a folk song to suit your needs?
 - i. Generally, you want the folk song to be as authentic as possible.
 - ii. However, many folk materials we know have been changed (text or rhythmically).
 - iii. Kodály (1974, p. 177) – If there is questionable text but a good melody either omit or rewrite the text.

Florida's Folk Heritage:

- I. Florida is a state of immigrants.
- II. 1930s – Collectors began to take an interest in preserving traditional culture.
- III. Federal Writers Project (1935 – 1942)
 - a. Designed to provide employment for professionals as part of the Work Progress Administration.
 - b. Collected scenic, historical, cultural, and economic information throughout the United States.
- IV. 1935 - Alan Lomax travels Florida with Zora Neale Hurston and Mary Elizabeth Barnicle.
- V. 1939 - John and Ruby Lomax's Southern States Expedition to visit and collect materials from the Southern United States.
- VI. Challenging Themes
 - a. Racial
 - b. Death
 - c. Abuse – Alcohol, Spousal, etc.
- VII. Notable People
 - a. John, Ruby, & Alan Lomax John was Head of the Folklore Division of the WPA and Ruby was his wife. Alan was a prominent folklorist and ethnomusicologist. All three collected materials from Florida.
 - b. Zora Neale Hurston Author and folklorist. Worked for the Florida FWP in 1938 & 1939 collecting materials primarily from African Americans.
 - c. Dr. Alton C. Morris Author of *Folksongs of Florida*. Professor at the University of Florida. Collected folk material in 1937 - 1939. Traveled throughout Florida.
 - d. Stetson Kennedy Directed the FWP's Folklore, Life History and Social/Ethnic Studies from 1938 – 1942. Collected many materials from the Keys.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of folklorists in Florida. This should serve as a starting off point for further research.

Selected Materials from Florida Collections

Songs will be selected from the following:

Folk Songs

Phyllis Stole the Ham +

Collected in Key West

||: Phyllis stole the ham,
and fried it in the pan. :||

Oh, if my wife dies,
I'll soon get another one,
Soon get another one,
Soon get another one.
If my wife dies,
I'll soon get another one.
Phyllis stole the ham.

Duermate mi Niña +

Duermete mi niña,
Que tengo que hacer
Lavar los panales
Y sentarme a ceser.
Palomita blanca
Pico de coral
Cuando ye me muera
Quien me va a llorar.

Go to sleep my girl,
For I have something to do
Wash out the napkins and sit down to sew.

Little white dove, bill of coral
When I die who is going to cry for me.

Bonefish +

Collected in Key West

Good morning, Father (Mr.) Fisher
Good morning, Father (Mr.) Brown
Have you any sea-crab to lend me one or two
Bonefish are biting and I have no bait to catch them
(em)
Every married man has (gat) his own bonefish.

El Raton y el Gato +

Un ratoncito hambre tenia
Y una migaja salio a buscar
Pero el gatico Que le esperaba
No lo dejaba ni un paso dar
Ol ratoncito per etre lade,
Salida meuva al fin hallo,
Y fue muy lejos nientres el gato
Corre que corre, detras quede.

A little mouse was hungry
And a crumb he went out to find
But the little cat who was awaiting
Didn't even let him take a step.
The little mouse by another side
A new exit at last he found
And he went very far,
While the cat running and running
In the back of him stayed.

These Corns of Mine

Turpentine Work Camp Song

Traditional Florida

Oh, Lord-y! These corns of mine, Just keep burn-in' me all the time. I don't try to make no ex - cuse;

7
I can't wear no sharp-toed shoes; But, oh, Lord-y, these corns of mine, Just keep on burn-in' me all the time.

Collected in Jacksonville *

Zora Neale Hurston's Field Recordings – Many recordings describing everyday life of African Americans during the early twentieth century.

Games, Play Party, etc.

Sweet Pinks and Roses

Florida Play-Party

Sweet pinks and ros - es, that grow in the vine. Go find you a part - ner, the pret - tiest you can find.

5
Hon-ey in the gum, so sweet; so sweet; Hon-ey in the gum, so sweet; so sweet; Hon-ey in the gum, so sweet; so sweet; Joy is bound to be.

Collected in Okefenokee Swap Region *

Game Directions from *Folksongs of Florida* (p. 209):

“This song is sung by the whole group as it marches around one person who chooses the partners directed in the song. The couple joins hands and dances counter clockwise to the direction the circle is moving. The girl touches the next person to go in the ring, and the game starts over again, alternating the direction of the moving circle.”

Steal Liza Jane +^

Collected in Raiford, FL

Steal Miss Liza, Steal, Liza Jane,
Steal, Miss Liza, Steal, Liza Jane.

(1) That old man ain't got no wife, Steal, Liza Jane.
Can't get a wife to save his life, Steal Liza Jane.

(2) This old man ain't got no wife, Steal Liza Jane.
Can't get a wife to save his life, Steal, Liza Jane.

Formation: Circle with partners side by side, and one child in center.
Action: As children sing 1st verse and clap, child in the center skips around the inside of the circle and 'steals' a partner from another child. Holding hands, the new couple skips around the circle, while the child without the partner skips behind the couple. The new couple returns to the empty space in the circle. The action begins again on the 2nd verse with the child in the center.

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Lyda - 5

The Little White Daisies

is her first name, first name, first name, is her first name, a - mong the lit - tle white dai - sies.
is her second name, second name, second name, is her second name, a - mong the lit - tle white dai - sies.

3. Now poor _____ is dead and gone, dead and gone, dead and gone,
Now poor _____ is dead and gone, among the little white daisies.

4. Left poor _____ a widower, a widower, a widower,
Left poor _____ a widower, among the little white daisies.

5. Twenty-four children at her feet, at her feet, at her feet,
Twenty-four children at her feet, among the little white daisies.

*The Alabama version uses - Twenty-four chilren out in a field.

Collected in Wewahitchka, FL *

Directions:

This game can be played two ways. (1) All children sit in a ring and sing the song with one child acting out the verses. (2) All children join hands and circle around one child in the middle who acts out the verses. On the third verse you use the child's name who was "it" the turn before. During the last verse, the child in the middle points and counts out twenty-four children. The twenty-fourth child is the next child in the center.

Old Doctor Collins

Florida Play Party

Old doc - tor Col - ins, he's a mer - ry man, He's a mer - ry man, he's a mer - ry man;
5 Old Doc - tor Col - ins, he's a mer - ry man, What makes you treat him so? Young Sam Swing
9 la - dies all, see that, Young la - dies all, see that, Young la - dies all, see that, Come in - to my la - dies' gar - den.
Jones is bound, see that, Sam Jones is bound, see that, Sam Jones is bound, see that, Come in - to my la - dies' gar - den.
your sweet - heart, see that, Swing your sweet - heart, see that, Swing your sweet - heart, see that, Come in - to my la - dies' gar - den.

Collected in Panama City, FL *

Game Directions:

Form a ring with one child in the center while the other children march or dance around. The child in the center chooses a partner, and couples follow the directions found in the song.

Skip to My Lou *

Collected in Tampa, FL

Steal you a partner,
Tum-tum-a-Lulu;
Steal you a partner,
Tum-tum-a-Lulu;
Steal you a partner,
Tum-tum-a-Lulu;
Tum-tum-a-Lulu, my darling.

Now she's kicked you,
Tum-tum-a-Lulu;
Now she's kicked you,
Tum-tum-a-Lulu;
Now she's kicked you,
Tum-tum-a-Lulu;
Tum-tum-a-Lulu, my darling.

I'll get another one,
Tum-tum-a-Lulu;
I'll get another one,
Tum-tum-a-Lulu;
I'll get another one,
Tum-tum-a-Lulu;
Tum-tum-a-Lulu, my darling.

Old Brass Wagon *

Collected in Tampa, FL

Bouncing up and down in the old brass wagon,
Bouncing up and down in the old brass wagon,
Bouncing up and down in the old brass wagon,
Merry goes the daisy.

Circle to the left in the old brass wagon,
Circle to the left in the old brass wagon,
Circle to the left in the old brass wagon,
Merry goes the daisy.

Swing and change in the old brass wagon,
Swing and change in the old brass wagon,
Swing and change in the old brass wagon,
Merry goes the daisy.

All promenade in the old brass wagon,
All promenade in the old brass wagon,
All promenade in the old brass wagon,
Merry goes the daisy.

Shoo-Da *

Collected in Tampa, FL

Lead up and down, shoo-da;
Along so fare thee well.
Lead up and down shoo-da;
Along so fare thee well.

Swing and change shoo-da
Along so fare thee well.
Swing and change shoo-da
Along so fare thee well.

Promenade, shoo-da;
Along so fare thee well.
Promenade, shoo-da;
Along so fare thee well.

Chants & Street Cries

Fishy, Fishy - Collected in Key West, FL
Cooking Chant - Collected in Montgomery, AL

Other Resources for Incorporating Florida Folk Materials

- 1) Florida Folklife Association - <https://www.floridamemory.com/collections/folklife>
 - Recordings, papers, and books focused on traditional music of Florida.
- 2) The Library of Congress - American Folklife Center - <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/>
 - Searchable database of materials from all over the world.
- 3) The American Folksong Collection at Holy Names University - <http://kodaly.hnu.edu>
 - Searchable database of folksongs from all over the country.
- 4) Folkstreams - <http://www.folkstreams.net>
 - Videos focused on Scared Harp, Gandy Dancers, and other folk materials around the country.
- 5) Local libraries and other folksong compilations

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- Key - * = *Folksongs of Florida*; ^ = Holy Names Kodaly Center; + = Library of Congress

Fishy, Fishy

Fishing Chant from Key West

Traditional
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A

Fi - shy fi - shy bite! Fi - shy fi - shy bite! Your fa - ther said you could. Your mot - ther said you might.

Pull! Pull! Don't break your line! Don't break your line!

Shrimp tails and conch shells but please no fish tales! Shrimp tails and conch shells but please no fish tales!

B

Spoken by all:

Students perform fish rhythms.
When finished go back to A.

Fi - shy fi - shy bite! Fi - shy fi - shy bite! *fine* Get some bait and cast your line, what-cha catch this time?

Pull! Pull! Don't break your line! Get some bait and cast your line, what-cha catch this time?

Shrimp tails and conch shells but please no fish tales! Get some bait and cast your line, what-cha catch this time?

Cooking Chant

Traditional Chant
Arr. Rob Lyda

The musical score is written for three voices: Voice 1, Voice 2, and Voice 3. It consists of three variations: V. 1, V. 2, and V. 3. The lyrics are as follows:

V. 1
greans, My ba - by loves turn - ips Wid pork and beans!
Let's Eat!

V. 2
eat this stuff! Eww Gross! How can you eat this stuff!
Let's Eat!

V. 3
Pile up my plate for good luck!
Let's Eat!

Additional lyrics for Voice 1: col - lards and my ba - by loves

Additional lyrics for Voice 2: Eww Gross! How can you

Additional lyrics for Voice 3: Pile up my plate for good luck!