

QUARTER NOTES

folk music in Brookfield along the Old Plank Road Fall 85 V.3 no.4

Johnny Appleseed



JOHNNY APPLESEED: EARLIEST DRAWING

On Our Cover...

by M. Mohrhusen

As I read another installment of Pete Seeger's column "Appleseeds" in a recent issue of Sing Out! magazine, I stopped for the first time to think about where the title came from. I had never really learned much more about Johnny Appleseed than the stories my 2nd grade teacher told me about him. We've all heard the tales about how John Chapman (alias, Appleseed Johnny) travelled through Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana in the late 1700's, leaving a trail of appleseeds behind him.

He was called a nomad, a frontier nurseryman, a missionary, a pioneer, and most commonly, a folk hero. Picture, if you will, a tall, thin man with flowing hair under an inverted mush pot, bare feet, ragged trousers, and an old coffee sack over his shoulders with holes cut out for arms. It's certainly not the traditional image we have of a hero, but more like a picture of the traveller we meet on the highway.

When hardly out of his teens, John Chapman joined other pioneers on their way to western Pennsylvania. There he decided to start an apple nursery and supplied farmers with their first orchards. He would walk east to the cider mills, beg for pressed pulp, separate and dry the seeds, and work his way back west. For 50 years he travelled back and forth, planting and pruning, trading a night's sleep for seeds. In addition to being in the apple business, Appleseed befriended the Indians and passed along their lore. He was also the local mobile librarian, for he often lent books to people on

years, he became an abolitionist, helping runaway slaves escape to Canada by the Underground Railroad.

Of course, the story of Johnny Appleseed has all the great elements of a tall tale, and whether the many stories told about him are true or not probably doesn't matter. What does matter is that we choose to pass on the story of a person whose main purpose was to leave something permanent for others and whose lifestyle exemplified simplicity and kindness.

Getting back to Pete Seeger and "Appleseeds," it's not hard to figure out why Pete was drawn to the story of Johnny Appleseed. In The Incomplete Folksinger, he explains:

"This column is dedicated to Johnny Appleseed Jr. - the thousands of boys and girls who today are using their guitars and their songs to plant the seeds of a better tomorrow in the homes across our land. They are lovers of folk songs and the best of our heritage of the past, and they are creating a new folklore, a basis for a people's culture of tomorrow. For if the radio, the press, and all the large channels of mass communication are closed to their songs of freedom, friendship and peace, they must go from house to house, from school and camp to church and clambake.

This column aims to print news of and for these modern Johnny Appleseeds. I have met them in every state of the union, playing their guitars and building a new folklore out of the best of the old."



Did you ever hear about the cow that committed suicide? How about the one about a man who made a million dollars selling Cheerios as doughnut seeds? How about Red River Valley on musical saw? Art Thieme is a very special man with a special talent. He has performed throughout the midwest, as well as many parts of the U.S. and Canada, warming audiences with a collection of folklore, jokelore, puns and a repertoire of American folksongs as vast and as colorful as the land that stretches from sea to shining sea.

Thieme presents his songs, many of which he has collected himself, on the guitar, banjo and musical saw. "The trouble with saw," he explains, "is it always plays sharp...but it's something you can really get your teeth into." A gifted musician, Thieme paints pictures of America past and present, using his songs and stories as brush and pallet, bringing to life the characters, and the romances, tragedies, and humor that made them real.

A veteran of the folk circuit, Thieme was born in Chicago and attended Lakeview High School in the city, making his performing debut in 1959 at a Hyde Park coffeehouse called "The Limelight."

has remained a low key survivor in a field not exactly known for its financial rewards, performing extensively and regularly throughout Chicago and the midwest, appearing at schools, banquets, festivals, and clubs. Thieme has also been a regular performer at "The No Exit," Chicago's oldest coffeehouse, for over twenty years, and has appeared at Canada's Winnipeg Folk Festival, the largest folk festival held in North America. "It's a vague living," acknowledges Thieme, who supports wife, Carol, and son, Chris, with proceeds from his performances. "Actually, it's a pretty sparse living sometimes," he adds, "but my wife and son seem willing to go along with it, and I'm doing what I enjoy."

The thrill for Thieme is the tales the songs tell. "It's like stepping into a time machine, with all the distractions of the era gone and seeing only what the song wants you to see, talking about life in vivid, poetic terms. I see myself as a vehicle for the music." "To me getting the story out is the important thing. That was what led me into folk music, really. I got fed up with the lyrics of the pop songs I heard on the radio as a teenager in the 50's - the Chuck Berry and Bill Haley stuff - and started looking around for something else."

"Sure, there are times when I think maybe I should get a steady job and sing on the side," says Thieme, "but then the calendar starts filling up with gigs, and they get in the way of a regular job. The things I really want to do are on the calendar."

Art Thieme will appear at "The Old Quarter" coffeehouse on November 1st and 2nd at 8:45 p.m. For more information call 485-3712.

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Arranging Clawhammer Banjo Tunes

by: Paul Klonowski

Working out your own arrangements for clawhammer style banjo, as opposed to learning everything from tablatures, need not be as difficult as it may seem. Although there are as many ways to go about it as there are old-time banjo tunings, here are some ideas that may help get you started.

(1) Start with an easy, familiar tune. Songs you've known all your life are good candidates. "Skip to My Lou" and "This Land is Your Land" are excellent choices, as the melodies are simple. Don't work with a song until you know it inside out. If you can whistle the melody, you can pick it out on the strings. You can move onto more complicated melodies, such as fiddle tunes, in due time, but more complicated tunes are more frustrating to work out, even for an accomplished player.

(2) Be patient. An advanced player may be able to pick up tunes on the spot, owing to his/her familiarity with the tune and the fingerboard, but a beginning player might be easily flustered by endless "mistakes." Remember your "mistakes" (should I call them "adventures?") can often be arranged into a variation of the melody. Start with a very basic arrangement, adding embellishments as you get more familiar with the tune. Don't be too critical of your efforts. Rome wasn't built in a day, either.

(3) Copy and steal anything you can. You may never duplicate somebody's arrangement exactly, but it's a good, solid starting point. Take licks from one song, implant them in another. Don't be afraid to ask someone to show you something - they probably learned the same way.

(4) Get together with any musicians you can. Sing-a-rounds are great for swapping songs and musical ideas. Enuff of that. Here's a fairly easy arrangement of the well-known fiddle tune, "Over the Waterfall." As you learn the basic melody from the tabulature, remember that your mistakes are really variations waiting to happen.

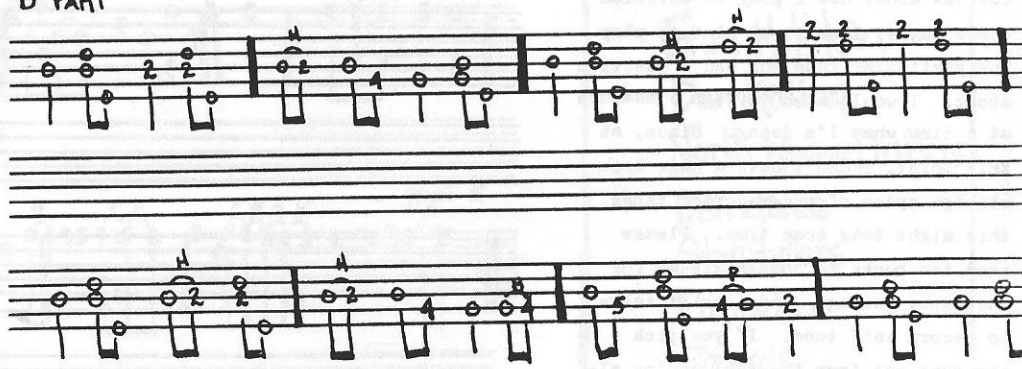
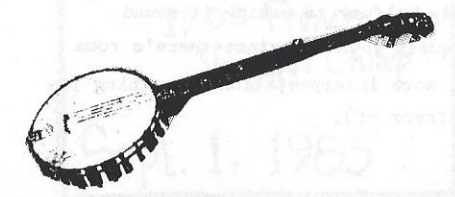
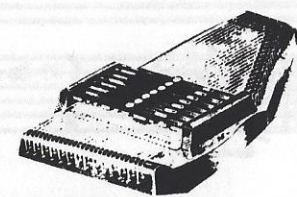

Over the Waterfall

tuning: $gCGD$ capo 2
Key: D

A PART



B PART

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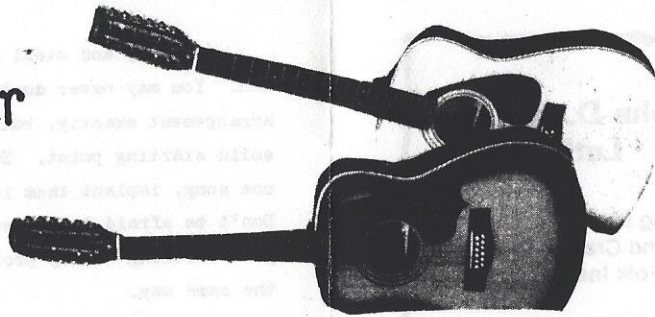
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Confessions of a Dirty Guitar Player

by: Phil Cooper



OFF TO CALIFORNIA

(STANDARD)
KEY OF G

TRAD. AR. P. COOPER
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I've tabbed out a hornpipe in in standard tuning for this column called Off to California. This is a well-known tune amongst Irish musicians. Joel Mabus has a great set of words he's written to the A part of the tune. (An aside, if you haven't heard of Joel Mabus, check out his Fairies and Fools on Flying Fish records, it's great). Since this tune is finger-picked, you need to use more hammer-ons and pull-offs to play the tune up to speed.

The B part of the tune is not a common variation. There are many ways to play the B part. When I was learning to play the tune, I had the A part pretty firmly in mind, but the same cannot be said of the B. I made up some bits of it, however, if you keep what you're playing in mind, it fits very well with what other musicians may be playing.

I should mention that if you're curious about how I play or envision these tunes, I would be glad to play the particular tune you had a question about. I would also explain a measure at a time what I'm doing. Since, at this point, I don't have a huge back storage space of pre-recorded tapes, this might take some time. Please send ten bucks to compensate me for the tape, postage, and time it takes to record said tune. If you pick the tune out from the tab, you're already halfway to making it sound uniquely your own since there's room for more interpretation (something I'm in favor of).

A PART

G

D C D G

B PART

H P H P P P P P P P

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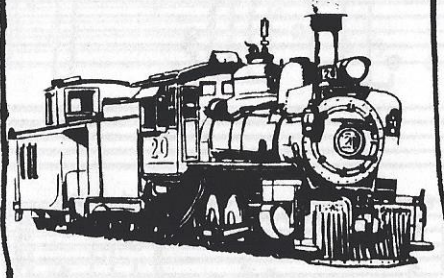
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Up and Down the Old Plank Road

by: Richard Geiger

The Blackhawk trail was the predecessor to the Southwest trail which later became the Southwest Plank Road. The trail went over a hill near Salt Creek. The hill was known as Brush hill.

The Southwest Plank Road started in Chicago and by 1850 it reached as far as Brush hill or Fullersburg as it was also known. From Fullersburg the road was also known as the Oswego Road.

The area around Fullersburg and Brush hill was important because of the Salt Creek and its ability to power a grist mill. In 1948 Fredrick Graue built his mill which stands today and is a well known museum. The stone for the mill were quarried in Lemont.

In 1862 William Robbins acquired some property along the Burlington right of way with the idea of developing the land for farming and for homes. The area bounded by Chicago Ave. Madison St., County Line Road and 55th St. was then known as Brush Hill and it was the name which appeared on a railroad shanty near the tracks.

Isacc Bush a local leather worker, railroad agent and the 2nd postmaster of Hinsdale suggested the name of Hinsdale. Robbins liked the name, and when his land was platted it bore the name of Hinsdale.

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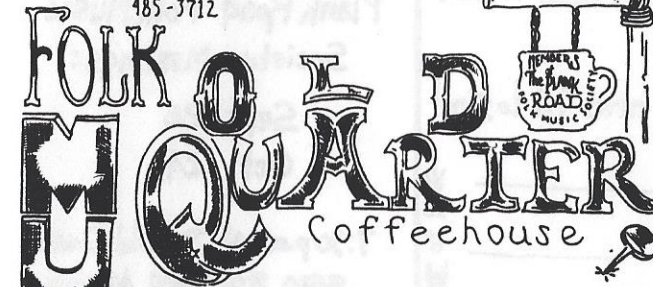
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ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

- Friday August 30 **MARGARET COUNCIL HREN** -- An encore performance by this uniquely talented pianist, guitarist and singer-songwriter. An entertaining show, and some surprises!
- Friday September 6 **TODD KELLEY** -- Todd has performed in clubs and coffee-houses from New York to San Francisco, and has collected country, bluegrass and 60's style folk songs all along the way. With 12-string guitar.
- Friday September 13 **WILSON RAMSAY** -- Excellent acoustic blues guitar and vocals bring us good luck on Friday the 13th. A disciple of Big Joe Williams, he has played many kinds of music from jazz to pop to bluegrass, but he loves to sing the blues. "It's a matter of content," he says.
- Friday September 20 **LINDA JEDRYCK** -- A new talent heard recently on our Open Mike, Linda returns for her own show of contemporary and original songs with guitar.
- Friday September 27 **LEE MURDOCK** -- After an absence of six years, Lee returns as one of the most talented folk performers in the Midwest. Outstanding guitar instrumentals and excellent vocals. Songs ranging from moving ballads and compelling blues to topical songs and ragtime. He has been compared to Woody Guthrie -- with good reason! Don't miss this one.
- Friday October 4 **PAUL KLONOWSKI** -- Paul is one of our favorite performers of traditional folk music. His songs are accompanied by guitar, banjo and mandolin.
- Friday October 11 **ROSCOE CHAMP, RON SIMPSON, RAY KUREK** -- The 3 R's return with their great blend of traditional folk songs with guitar, banjo, mandolin, autoharp and bass.
- Friday October 18 **THURSDAY'S CHILD** -- This popular up-beat trio features excellent harmonies accompanied by guitars. Their music ranges from traditional folk and bluegrass tunes to songs by John Prine and the Eagles. Great!
- Friday October 25 **DON BUEDEL** -- Some of the best old-time folk music around from this good friend who now makes his home in southern Missouri. Great down-home songs and humor with guitar, fiddle, banjo, mandolin and more. Welcome back, Don!
- Friday November 1 **MARK DVORAK** -- Mark's entertaining, easy-going style and skillful guitar and banjo playing have earned him widespread popularity. He sings and plays traditional and contemporary folksongs and singalongs.

The Two Way Street Coffee House is a not-for-profit community project of the First Congregational Church of Downers Grove, and is open to the public every Monday, Tuesday and Friday night. Live entertainment is featured each Friday. Doors open 8:00. \$1.00 Donation requested Fridays. Refreshments available.

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- Sept. 14 **RIPE FOR THE PICKIN'** Bluegrass, old time, Irish, English you name it, they play it- fiddle, guitar, banjo, mandolin, bass.
20 **NORTHERN PRAIRIE DRIFTERS** New and exciting group featuring seasoned performers Lee Murdock and Michael Offutt.
21 **ANDREW CALHOUN** Nationally acclaimed songwriter will perform material from his albums "Water Street" and "The Gates of Love".
27 **MARK DVORAK** also **WILSON RAMSAY** Discover two of the hidden treasures of the western suburbs. Folk and blues.
28 **DAVE PORTER** also **MARVIN LENSINK** Best described as conversational jazz. Extremely entertaining.
- Oct. 4 **THE MIDNIGHT JUBILEE BLUEGRASS BAND** Need we say more?
5 **DAVID WILLIAMS** also **MARIANNE MOHRHUSEN** One of the best songwriters around featuring songs of the midwest.
11 **SAMHRADH MUSIC** (pronounced sow ra) represents the best of the traditional music of Ireland. \$4 cover.
12 **RAY KAMALAY** also **MARK DVORAK** A touch of jazz and some hot licks from Lansing, Mich.. Will appear on "The Flea Market" on 13th.
18 **JETHRO BURNS** also **ROSCOE CHAMP** with **RON SIMPSON** Nominee to "The Country Music Hall of Fame" and one of the best mandolin players around. \$5 cover.
19 **JOE** and **JOAN MCGRATH** also **LISA LILLY** A great evening of Irish folk music and history.
25 **DAVE LANDRETH** also **PAUL KLONOWSKI** From Springfield. A potpourri of music. Leo Kottke to traditional old time.
26 **JIM BREWER** also **DON BUEDEL** An evening of delta and country blues with one of the best.
- Nov. 1 and 2 **ART THIEME** The king of the nine string guitar returns to "The Old Quarter" for two nights. \$5 cover.
8 **CROSTOWN BLUEGRASS**
9 **CHRIS FARRELL**
- The Old Quarter presents acoustic music in a non-alcoholic setting. Children under 12 are free. Friday cover is usually \$2 and Saturday \$3. Call 485-3712 for details.

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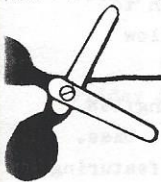
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