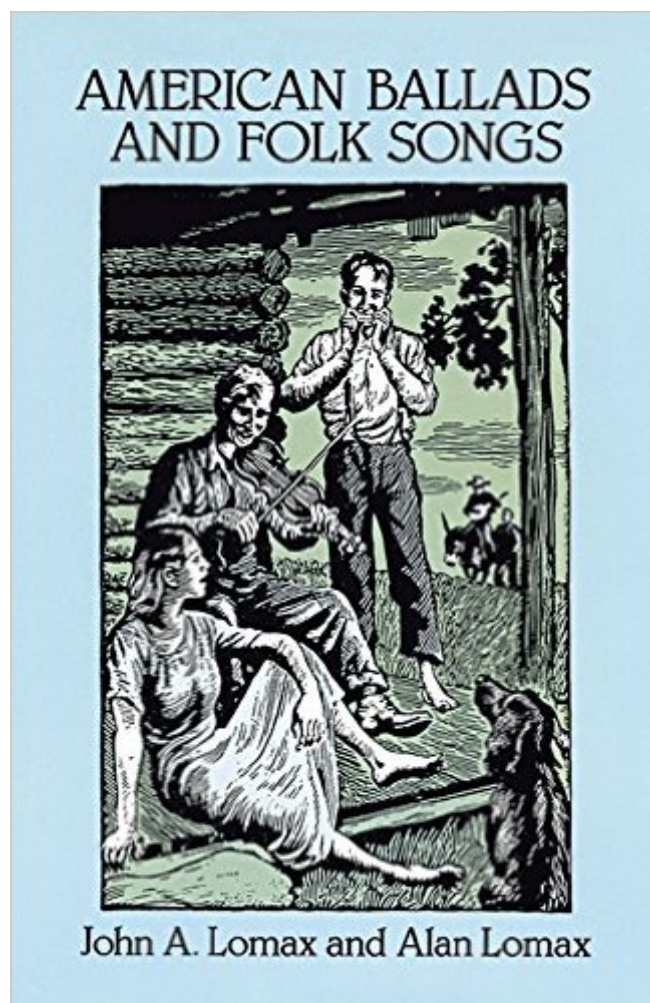


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# American Ballads And Folk Songs (Dover Books On Music)



## Synopsis

"A book to cherish permanently." — The New York Times. With this ample collection of authentic ballads and songs, you can immerse yourself in the rich tradition and heritage of American folk music. Discover the diversity, spontaneity, free-flowing melody, and sheer invention of scores of songs sung by cowboys and convicts, lumberjacks, hobos, miners, plantation slaves, mountaineers, soldiers, and many others. One of the remarkable features of this collection is its authenticity. Many of the songs were recorded "on location" by noted folklorist John A. Lomax and his even more famous son, Alan, as they traveled around the United States. The results are firsthand versions of music and lyrics for over 200 railroad songs, chain-gang songs, mountain songs, Creole songs, cocaine and whisky songs, "reels," minstrel songs, songs of childhood, and a host of others. Among them are such time-honored favorites as "John Henry," "Goin' Home," "Frankie and Albert," "Down in the Valley," "Little Brown Jug," "Alabama-Bound," "Shortenin' Bread," "Skip to My Lou," "Frog Went a-Courtin'," and a host of others. An excellent introduction, notes on each song, a bibliography, and an index round out this extensive and valuable collection. Musician, musicologists, folklorists, singers — anyone interested in American folk music — will welcome this treasury of timeless song gathered in one handy, inexpensive volume.

## Book Information

Series: Dover Books on Music

Paperback: 672 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (October 21, 1994)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486282767

ISBN-13: 978-0486282763

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 1.3 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #589,243 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #57 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Music > Theory, Composition & Performance > Lyrics #120 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Music > Songbooks > Choral #131 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet

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## Customer Reviews

This is not an exhaustive catalogue of ballads nor does it always contain the same version of a

ballad that are published elsewhere under the Lomax name. The ballads are arranged by subject matter: Working on the Railroad; The Levee Camp; Southern Chain Gangs; Negro Bad Men; White Desperadoes; Mountain Songs; Cocaine and Whiskey; Blues; Creole Negroes; Reels; Minstrel Types; Breakdowns and Play Parties; Songs of Childhood; Vaqueros of the Southwest; Cowboy Songs; Songs of the Overlanders; Miner; Shanty-Boy; Erie Canal; Great Lake; Sailors and Sea Fights; Wars and Soldiers; White Spirituals and Negro Spirituals. Often there is a short story of the song in addition to the collection notes. A decent introduction to the ballad form and its music precedes the collection. This is an essential reference to anyone interested in ballads in America.

My father has an original copy of this book that I grew up reading. I was so very glad to see it back in print. The way that the book is arranged (railroad songs, chain gangs, blues, reels, cowboy songs, etc.) makes it easy to navigate. The bulk of the songs cataloged are not the familiar ones that one is used to seeing in other collections.

An inclusive collection of different American ballads and folksongs- a classic indeed. Lovely that it includes sheet music as well! Rather than just being a collection of the lyrics to different ballads, for special study (like the Child ballads collection, however admirable), it also operates as a songbook

As everyone knowledgeable about folk music knows, John A. Lomax and his son Alan were instrumental from the 1930s on in field recording American and other traditional musicians. This excellent quality Dover reprint of their 1934 book *American Ballads and Folk Songs* gives lyrics and music in the form of simple melodic scores of virtually every American folk song you've heard of, and a lot you probably haven't. If you are at all seriously interested in American folk music, whether as student, performer, or listener, give this book five stars: you really ought to have it. But even those whose interest in this music is more casual will find this a fascinating and valuable book.

Although it is a good read/interesting enough, this was not what I was expecting. I suppose I should've done more research, but I was expecting a catalog of songs in lyrics and music, be it sheet music or chord charts. This is more of a textbook in reading. Lyrics a'plenty (although edited, the more graphic and colorful parts taken out, additionally disappointing) and stories/descriptions a couple paragraphs in length, but the only music is snippets of a few bars here and there to demonstrate single-line melody. Even then, almost always incomplete and brief. Granted, the nature of most of these songs is that there IS no concrete, accepted musicality (or lyrics/arrangement for

that matter), but surely the Lomaxes had more knowledge to impart than this when it comes to actually playing them.

Lomax's collection is an essential addition to the folk lover's library. Dense and informative, easy to read, from beginner to expert, with interesting anecdotal information about the songs. For anyone that wants to know more about American music, this is a great place to start. Lomax dedicated his life to documenting this land, its people, and its songs. He should be viewed as an authority on the subject, and a go-to, for everyone interested in roots music.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE RECEIVED THIS BOOK AS A PRESENT. IT IS A FASCINATING MIX OF HISTORY, MUSIC AND PERFECT FOR AN ENGLISH, HISTORY AND OF COURSE MUSIC CLASSROOM. I WILL NOT ONLY READ IT BUT USE IT AS A TEACHING TOOL.

Don't expect to find everything for one reason it is a recent reprint of an older book. But it is very comprehensive and extensive. The classification is multifarious. It can be one subject (cocaine and whisky) or genre (the blues) that is concerned in one chapter, or something quite different like a social situation, the participants of this social situation (Southern Chain Gangs) that are the authors or the subjects of another chapter. The circumstances of the songs are explained, the music is fully given and the lyrics are of course quoted. An Index of titles is included at the end and a bibliography will help you go further. But it is essentially a collection of songs so you cannot expect long presentations, long dissertations on the genres and the social problems behind. The book provides all kinds of songs, including racist songs, though probably not the most extreme like coon songs, and the book seems to miss Indian songs, including the famous Love Call that is both Indian and non-Indian. That's probably because it does not include songs from musicals or films, at least not as a priority. I am sure we can find all those on the virtual spider web. You must also understand the songs are given in one version which is neither the official nor the only version available. There are many variants and you better check them if you want to be thorough. So You will not find the Ballad of Ira Hayes by Peter LaFarge made famous by Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash, though you might prefer another version still. Call him drunken Ira Hayes He won't answer anymore Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian Nor the Marine that went to war Gather round me people there's a story I would tell About a brave young Indian you should remember well From the land of the Pima Indian A proud and noble band Who farmed the Phoenix valley in Arizona land Down the ditches for a thousand years The water grew Ira's peoples' crops 'Till the white man stole the water

rights  
And the sparklin' water stopped  
Now Ira's folks were hungry  
And their land grew crops of  
weeds  
When war came, Ira volunteered  
And forgot the white man's greed  
But we can't have  
all we want between a front and a back covers.  
Dr Jacques COULARDEAU

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