

01. THE LAST MONTH OF THE YEAR by Vera Hall Ward
Vocal. Tuscaloosa, Alabama, October 10, 1959.

*Spoken: And I want y'all to remember that Christmas is Jesus' birthday
Now I want y'all to remember this song too, and don't never forget it
Jesus' birthday, the month that Jesus was born in
You bigger girls should remember to sing it
Just hand it, sing it to the little ones, ya hear?*

What month was Jesus born in?
Last month in the year
What month was Jesus born in?
Last month in the year
Ooh Lord you got January, February, March, oh Lord
You got April, May and June, Lord
Got the July, August, September, October and the November
You got twenty-fifth day of December, it's the last month in the year

I'm talking 'bout Mary's baby
Last month in the year
I'm talking 'bout Mary's baby
Last month in the year
Ooh Lord you got January, February, March, oh Lord
You got April, May and June, Lord
Got the July, August, September, October and November
You got twenty-fifth day of December, it's the last month in the year

He was borned in a oxen manger
Last month in the year
He was borned in a oxen manger
Last month in the year
Ooh Lord you got January, February, March, oh Lord
You got April, May and June, Lord
Got July, August, September, October and-a November
You got twenty-fifth day of December, it's the last month in the year

Vera Hall Ward (1905-1964) of Livingston, Alabama appears on *Goodbye, Babylon* [DTD-01] performing with her cousin Dock Reed. John Lomax first recorded her for the Library of Congress in 1937, and her exceptional voice was featured in a number of folk song anthologies thereafter.

02. CHRIST WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS MORN by Cotton Top Mountain Sanctified Singers
Frankie "Half Pint" Jaxon and choir, with Ernest "Punch" Miller - cornet, piano, banjo, and
bass horn.
Chicago, August 28, 1929.

Early on one Christmas morn, Jesus Christ the Son was born
Singing carols, Christmas songs, early on one Christmas morn
Early on one Christmas morn, Jesus Christ the Son was born
Singing carols, Christmas songs, Jesus Christ the Son was born

Three Wise men saw the star at night, star that lit up the heavens so bright
Star it led where Christ was born, Early on one Christmas morn

In that city of Bethlehem, Wise men brought Him jewels and gems
Born in a manger humble and low, that is a-why we love Him so

Mary was His mother calm, who held Him gently in her arms
All hail and praise to Him, peace on Earth, a-good will to men

Frankie (Half Pint) Jaxon (1895-1940s) leads the ensemble. He was a skilled vaudeville veteran who could compose a good song for any occasion. New Orleans cornetist Ernest (Punch) Miller shares the stage with a memorable solo. This jazzy carol has been a favorite with Dick Spottswood Show listeners for twenty years.

03. CHRISTMAS IS A-COMING by Lead Belly
Vocal with twelve-string guitar.
New York City, 1940s.

Christmas is a-coming and it's a-jumping
Christmas is a-coming and it's a-jumping
Christmas is a-coming and it's a-jumping
Boy it won't be long

Chicken crows at midnight on a Christmas Day
Rooster crows at midnight on a Christmas Day
Children get so happy on a Christmas Day
Children get so happy on a Christmas Day

Santa Claus coming and he's a coming
Santa Claus coming and he's a coming
Santa Claus coming and he's a coming
Boy an' it won't be long

Santa Claus comes on Christmas on a Christmas Day
Santa Claus comes on Christmas on a Christmas Day
Children run and tell their pappy on a Christmas Day
Children run and tell their pappy on a Christmas Day
Little children get so happy on a Christmas Day
Little children get so happy on a Christmas Day

Don't forget it

Lead Belly (Huddie Ledbetter, 1889-1949) was a recovering ex-con who became a formidable presence in the Manhattan folk scene of the 1940s. His minstrelsy was often enjoyed by small children; this semi-spontaneous piece assured them that neither Santa nor their fathers would forget them at Christmas.

04. CHRISTMAS IS A JOYFUL DAY by Lord Executor
with Gerald Clark and his Caribbean Serenaders: Gerald Clark - guitar, with trumpet, violin, clarinet, piano, cuatro, and bass.
New York City, February 25, 1937.

Chorus:

Mammy, will you sing "Let's Give Him a Cantaway" on Christmas Day?
Pappy, will you do "Let's Give Him a Cantaway" on Christmas Day?
Mammy, will you sing "Let's Give Him a Cantaway" on Christmas Day?

Christmas is a happy day
Darling, here what you'll have to say
"I am looking for me deary dear
As to get me Christmas cheer"

When I meet him, what he'll say?
That he never work neither night nor day
So then I'll give him a cantaway
On Christmas Day

This is he walk 'bout round the town
With a tear-up suit and a watchikong
Entering the young girl's place
The nigger man never rouge his face
He have a way that he wink his eyes
Make him resemble a crocodile
So I'll give him a cantaway
On Christmas Day

Lord Executor (Philip Garcia, d. 1952) was a Trinidad calypsonian who was active from the 1890s to his death. He was well known for being able to improvise songs spontaneously on any topic.

A cantaway is a "knock-out" rum drink, served to Trinidad holiday visitors who are unwelcome scroungers – to give them a "happy time" and get rid of them quickly. Watchikong are canvas shoes.

05. DANCE UNDER THE WILLOWS (TANEC PID WERBAMY) by Pawlo Humeniuk
Violin solo with cymbaly (hammered dulcimer), bass, and sleigh bells.
New York City, November 1926.

Enthusiastic sleigh bells provide the seasonal accent for a virtuoso fiddle tune. Paul Humeniuk (ca. 1884-1965) was born in western Ukraine and made hundreds of records after emigrating to New York.

06. DÉCIMAS DE NACIMIENTO by Los Jibaros
Vilar and Pedro Dávila (Davilita) - vocal duet, with three guitars and güiro.
New York City, November 14, 1935.

Vilar:

En un pesebre nacio
a eso de la medianoche
un niño que sin reproche
clamaron hijo de Dios
Una estrella iluminó
el sitio donde María
tenía en brazos al Mesías
que acaba de nacer
al que empezaban a ver
al amanecer del día

He was born in a manger
about midnight
an innocent child
proclaimed the Son of God
A star shone upon
the place where Mary
held our Saviour in her arms
who had just been born
They beheld him
at daybreak

Davilita:

Los tres magos soberanos
de los reinos del Oriente
vinieron muy diligentes
a ofrendar su Dios cristiano
y todo el mundo pagano
Recuerda las profecías
Pues sabían que nacería
pronto el hijo de Israel
y que lo iban a ver

The three wise men
from the Orient
promptly came
to offer gifts to the Son of God
and all the pagan world
They remembered the prophecies
That foretold the birth
of the Son of Israel
and they came to see him

Al amanecer del día

At daybreak

Vilar:

Todas las aves cantaban
olían todas las flores
bonita luz y colores
las astros del cielo daban
Los buenos sabios oraban
Los réprobos se escondían
En las pajas ya había
Nacido el niño sonriente
Se postró un mundo creyente
Al amanecer del día

All the birds were singing
All the flowers were perfumed
Stars in the sky were shedding
Beautiful light and colors
The wise men were praying
The scoundrels were hiding
Already, in the straw
The smiling child had been born
Everyone fell to their knees
At daybreak

Davilita:

Y a través de las edades
recordando al soberano
el universo cristiano
celebra las navidades
dice así, felicidades
El humano se extasia
y aún pedimos al Mesías
hijo de María y José
que algo de su gracia nos dé
al amanecer del día

Throughout the ages
In memory of our Sovereign
The Christian universe
Celebrates His birth
With good wishes
Humanity is ecstatic
And we still pray for the Messiah
Son of Mary and Joseph
To shed His grace upon us
At daybreak

"Los Jíbaros" were better known as the Cuarteto Flores, a popular and influential Puerto Rican group in New York for many years. This aguinaldo (carol) consists of décimas, traditional ten-line verses, performed in dialogue. The three guitars play music reminiscent of Andalusian Spain.

07. TU SCENDI DALLE STELLE (PASTORALE DI NATALE) by Pasquale Feis
Vocal with zampogna (bagpipe) and ciaramella (reed pipe).
New York City, June 1917.

Tu scendi dalle stelle o Re del cielo,
E vieni in una grotta al freddo e al gelo,
E vieni in una grotta al freddo e al gelo.

O bambino mio divino io ti vedo qui tremar.
O Dio beato,
Ahi, quanto ti costò l'avermi amato!
Ah, quanto ti costò l'avermi amato!

E Tu che sei del mondo il Creatore,
Mancaron panni e fuoco o mio Signore
Mancaron panni e fuoco o mio Signore

Caro eletto pargoletto quanto questa povertà
Più m'innamora,
Giacché ti fece amor pover ancora,
Giacché ti fece amor pover ancora.

O King of Heaven! from starry throne descending,
Thou takest refuge in that wretched cave:

O God of bliss! I see Thee cold and trembling.
What pain it cost Thee fallen man to save!

Thou, of a thousand worlds the great Creator,
Dost now the pain of cold and want endure;
Thy poverty but makes Thee more endearing,
For well I know 'tis love has made Thee poor.

Words to this old shepherd's tune, or *pastorale*, were written by Pius IX while he was Pope (1846-1878). It's one of Italy's best known seasonal anthems, and it's universally associated with the *zampognari*, or bagpipers. Here it is sung in a southern Italian dialect. [DtD thanks Luigi Monge for contributing to this annotation.]

08. LADY GAY by Buell Kazee
Vocal with banjo.
New York City, January 16, 1928.

There was a lady and a lady gay
Of children she had three
She sent them away to the north country
For to learn their grammar-y

They had not been there very long
Scarcely six months and a day
'Till death, cold death, came hastening along
And stole those babes away

It was just about Old Christmas time
The nights being cold and clear
She looked and she saw her three little babes
Come running home to her

She set a table both long and wide
And on it she put bread and wine
"Come eat, come drink, my three little babes
Come eat, come drink of mine!"

"We want none of your bread, Mother
Neither do we want your wine
For yonder stands our Savior dear
And to Him we must resign

"Green grass grows over our heads, Mother
Cold clay is under our feet
And every tear you shed for us
It wets our winding sheet"

An earlier name for this ancient British ballad is "The Wife of Usher's Well." "Old Christmas" is another name for January 6, the date when the infant Christ was visited by the Three Wise Men. Buell Kazee was an educated Kentuckian with mountain roots who performed folk songs learned both from his childhood environment and literary texts.

09. SHERBURNE by Alabama Sacred Harp Singers
Eugene Dawson - leader.
Fyffe, Alabama, September 13, 1959.

While shepherds watched their flocks by night
All seated on the ground
The angel of the Lord came down
And glory shone around

The tune to "Sherburne" was written by Daniel Read in 1783. "Sherburne" is a distinctive setting of the popular English carol "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night." It's part of what's called "sacred harp" in the South, a community choral tradition that dates back to singing schools founded before the Civil War. The hymnal, called *The Sacred Harp*, displays notes on a conventional staff in varying shapes. What would normally be the first verse is actually the singing of the notes, fa so la, prior to the hymn itself.

10. HOLY BABE by Kelly Pace, Aaron Brown, Joe Green, Paul Hayes and Matthew Johnson
Vocal quintet.
Cummins State Farm, Gould, Arkansas, May 1939.

Children go and I will send thee
Where shall I send thee?

Lord, I shall send thee twelve by twelve
Well, twelve was the twelve disciples
And eleven was the eleven riders
And ten was the Ten Commandments
And nine was the nine that dressed so fine
And eight was the eight that stood at the gate
And seven was the seven that came down from heaven
And six was the six that couldn't get fixed
And five was the Gospel writers
And four was the four come a-knockin' at the door
And three was the Hebrew children
And two was the Paul and Silas
And one was the Holy Baby
Was born (by) to the Virgin Mary
Was wrapped in the hollow of a clawhorn
Was laid in the hollow manger
Was born, born, Lordy, born in Bethlehem

This popular carol is usually sung with shortcuts that avoid the lengthening countdowns, though it's the repetitions that make "Holy Babe" so engaging in the first place. John Lomax recorded this for the Library of Congress on a disc cutter, using both sides of an acetate disc to allow adequate time for a complete seven-minute performance.

11. HE WAS BORN IN A MANGER by Rev. J. M. Gates
Vocal, assisted by Deacon Leon Davis and Sisters Jordan and Norman.
Atlanta, October 4, 1927.

Children, my subject this morning: and He was born in a manger
When I'm thinking about Christmas Day
And think about the day [accept that] Christ was born
Because He was born in a manger.
Sing, I want you to open your mouth and sing one verse

If Christ, in the morning, born in, oh yes, I believe
Well, well I, I said He's born in a manger, He's born low.
A whole lot of people out there boast about where they's born.
Doesn't matter where you was born, but just who was born there

When you think about George Washington, the president of the United States
When you begin to think about Abraham Lincoln
The one who we once spoke of as freeing three, four million and a half Negro men.
Ah, it not a matter of where they's born
But it was a matter of when they's born and who was born.

So Jesus was born in a manger
And He had a poor father and that poor mother
And when I say father, I have reference to Joseph in this world
We know that God was the Father
We know that Mary was His earthly mother
We realize that He came through fourteen generations
And born by the Virgin Mary
Wrapped in swaddling clothes

But he was born in a manger
Born so low, every child of God can get on board
Doesn't matter where you borned at
May be born in the alley but you ought to be borned again
Ah, glory to God and the empire [evermore]

You talk about the time He born
The angelic host came from Zion and wrapped the wings in...
And I heard 'em singing

They sung in mid-air
They kept on singing until the shepherd boys heard
They kept on singing till the wise mens got on that beast
They kept on singing till old Herod got trouble in mind
They kept on singing the month that your Savior was born in

Born in a manger, wrapped in swaddling cloth
And then when I say He's born in a manger then jumped from the
manger to the King of Emmanuel
And come to be King of Kings and Lord of all.

Rev. J. M. Gates (1884-1945) was by far the most recorded preacher prior to World War II. For many years he pastored the Streamline Baptist Church in Atlanta, and his stature was no doubt enhanced by his very successful recording career that included more than 200 sermons. He had the biggest black funeral in Atlanta prior to that of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. [DtD thanks David Evans for this annotation.]

12. THE WRONG WAY TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS by Rev. Edward W. Clayborn (The Guitar Evangelist)

Vocal with slide guitar.
Chicago, October 18, 1928.

Some people use the wrong way, the wrong way, the wrong way
Some people use the wrong way to celebrate Christmas Day

On the twenty-fifth of December 1928 (it's a national issue...) of heaven to the world that
it's Jesus' birthday

Some people who work every day and draws good money every pay and here is what the
same people said I wanna spend my money and have my way

While the church is praying on Christmas Day other people are roaming the streets and drinking their soul away

Rev. Clayborn performs in the style of a street minstrel. Notwithstanding his limited musical skills, he scored a major hit in 1926 with "Your Enemies Cannot Harm You (But Watch Your Close Friends)."

13. SANTA CLAUS by Walter Davis
Vocal with piano, Henry Townsend - guitar.
Chicago, July 28, 1935.

Boys, here come that killer, you oughta know just how I feel

Santa Claus, won't you please hear my lonesome plea
Santa Claus, Santa Claus, won't you please hear my lonesome plea
I don't want nothin' for Christmas but my baby back to me

You know I loved you baby, that is why we could not get along
You know I loved you baby, that is why we could not get along
But someday you gon' be sorry that you ever done me wrong

Oh Lord it's near Christmas time and I want to see Santa Claus
Oh Lord it's near Christmas time and I want to see Santa Claus
If you don't bring my baby, swear I'll break all the laws

Santa Claus, Santa Claus, Santa Claus, Santa Claus, Santa Claus, Santa Claus,
I'm down on my bended knee
I don't want nothin' for Christmas but my baby back to me

Walter Davis of St. Louis sang on several hit records during the depression, at first accompanied by pianist Roosevelt Sykes. By 1935, Davis had learned to play himself, creating a personal style that was widely admired by others. This lonesome blues was first recorded by Elzadie Robinson in 1927 as "The Santa Claus Crave."

14. GEE, AIN'T I GOOD TO YOU? by McKinney's Cotton Pickers
Don Redman - leader, alto sax, arranger, vocal, Joe Smith - cornet, Sidney De Paris, Leonard Davis - trumpets, Claude Jones - trombone, Benny Carter, Coleman Hawkins, Theodore McCord - reeds, Fats Waller - piano, Dave Wilborn - banjo, Billy Taylor - bass horn, Kaiser Marshall - drums.
New York City, November 5, 1929.

Aw, love makes me treat you the way I do
Say, ain't I good to you?
You know there's nothing too good for a girl that's true
Oh baby, you know I'm good to you!

Fur coat for Christmas an' a diamond ring
Big padded coat, most everything
And it's love makes me treat you the way I do
Oh baby ain't I good to you!

Here we get right down to cases. We may claim to deplore the commercialization of Christmas, but much of it inevitably is about giving and getting gifts. The versatile Don Redman (1900-1964) performs here as a saxophonist, arranger, composer and bandleader.

His spoken songs were reminiscent of the great African American dead-pan comic Bert Williams.

15. AT THE CHRISTMAS BALL by Bessie Smith

Vocal with Joe Smith - cornet, Charlie Green - trombone, Fletcher Henderson - piano.
New York City, November 18, 1925.

Hey Bessie, Christmas here!

It's here, hurray for Christmas!

Christmas comes but once a year, and to me it brings good cheer,
And to everyone who likes wine and beer
Happy New Year is after that, happy I'll be, that is a fact
That is why I like to hear
Folks that say that Christmas is here

Christmas bells will ring real soon, even in the afternoon
There'll be no chimes shall ring at the Christmas Ball
Everyone must watch their step, or they will lose their rep
Everybody full of pep at the Christmas Ball

Grab your partner one an' all, keep on dancin' 'round the hall
And there's no one to fall, don't you dare to stall
If your partner don't act fair, don't worry, there's some more over there
Takin' a chance everywhere at the Christmas Ball

Here's Christmas in a party mode, toasted by the most celebrated of all blues singers. The pianist Fred Longshaw is credited with this song and its unusual structure with one verse and two choruses. Longshaw accompanied Bessie Smith on some records, though not this one.

16. PAPA AIN'T NO SANTA CLAUS (AND MAMA AIN'T NO CHRISTMAS TREE) by Butterbeans & Susie

Vocal duet with Eddie Heywood - piano.
New York City, August 13, 1930.

Now look here, Sue, you sure is tight
Just found that out?
You ain' never treat sweet Papa Butter right
Still you run around here asking for this and that
Why shouldn't I?
Tell me what in the devil is you drivin' at?
My cheapskatin' Papa, you got your gall
Is that so?
Why you never bring nothin' when you call?
Still you get hot because I don't pet
Yeah!
Stop your complainin', Butter, why you's all wet

Look here!
What is it?
Papa ain' no Santa Claus
And your mama sure ain' no Christmas tree
Look here Mama what's mine sure ain't yours
And what is mine belong to me

Oh, I see!
Something for nothing seem to be your plan
Yes Sir!
You need to get you a monkey 'cause you don't need no man
Well now days, Butter, when you want something that's nice
Yes?
Why, you can't get it if you haven't got the price
Now each night you keep me outta doors
Well, you sure ain' gonna get my key
Why? Why?
Well now pay me for my goods and you can get your fill
Now let me know what I'm buying and I certainly will
Why?
Because Papa ain' no Santa Claus
And your mama sure ain' no Christmas tree

Look here! What is it?
I said Papa ain' no Santa Claus
And your mama sure ain' no Christmas tree, no sir
Now, Sue, you know I don't pay no money down
Well I do business strictly COD
Oh, now from now on Mama I done put this down under my foot
That so?
You do a lot of talking but you never put
Why you just got to get along the best you can
Why?
Because I'm one gal who never talks installment plan
Now there's a lot of chops in other stores
But where can you get good chops free?
Anywhere, anywhere
Well now in my market I don't put no samples out
Look here, you know it ain' New Years and let me know what it's all about
'Cause Papa ain't no Santa Claus
And your mama sure ain't no Christmas tree

Play it boy, play it, play it, stay right with it!
Let's get low, let's get low!
Come here, come here, Sue!
All last summer you was runnin' with Brother Bill
Now this morning you come up asking for a Christmas gift
Papa ain' no Santa Claus
And your mama sure ain't no Christmas tree, no sir!

Vaudeville stars Butterbeans and Susie (Joe and Susie Edwards) entertained audiences in the south and midwest from the 1910s until Butter's death in 1967 with their brilliant comedy enactments of sexual competition.

17. CHRISTMAS MORNING BLUES by Kansas City Kitty
Vocal with piano.
Chicago, November 1, 1934.

I woke up Christmas morning, went out to get my morning's mail
I woke up Christmas morning, went out to get my morning's mail
A letter sent from Georgia, the postmark said Atlanta Jail

In a mean old jailhouse 'cause he broke them Georgia laws

In a mean old jailhouse 'cause he broke them Georgia laws
New Year he won't be here, 'cause death will be his Santa Claus

My man's so deep in trouble the white folks couldn't get him free
My man's so deep in trouble the white folks couldn't get him free
He stole a hog (horse?) the charge was murder in the first degree

Christmas bells are ringing, sounded like my funeral song
Christmas bells are ringing, sounds jus' like my funeral song
My poor man done left here, I know I ain't gonna be here long

Ain't never had a Christmas with trouble like this before
Ain't never had a Christmas with trouble like this before
Sleigh bells are my death bells, hard luck's knocking at my door

Next Christmas I won't be here to hear no bunch of bad, bad news
Next Christmas I won't be here to get no bunch of bad, bad news
Just mark on my tombstone, "Died with the Christmas Morning Blues"

"Kansas City Kitty's" true identity isn't clear nor is that of the pianist, who could be the singer herself. Christmas is always prime time for the blues--as is any mournful occasion that's cheerful for everyone else.

18. CHRISTMAS IN JAIL – AIN'T THAT A PAIN by Leroy Carr
Vocal with piano, with Francis "Scrapper" Blackwell - guitar.
Chicago, August 13, 1929.

The blues come fallin', they fall like drops of rain
The blues come fallin', they fall like drops of rain
I've got to spend my Christmas locked up in jail again
In jail on Christmas day again, ain't that a pain!
Oh baby, baby, baby, ain't that a pain!

Oh Santa, Santa, Santa, come here to me in jail
Oh Santa, Santa, Santa, come here to me in jail
Bring me a Christmas present, someone to go my bail
Jail on Christmas day, again ain't that a pain!
Oh baby, baby, baby, ain't that a pain!

This food here, Santa, it ain't fit to eat
This food here. Santa, it ain't fit to eat
Won't you come and bring me a plate of turkey meat?
In jail on Christmas day again, ain't that a pain!
Oh baby, baby, baby, ain't that a pain!

The jailhouse blues have got me, they've got the best of me
The jailhouse blues have got me, they've got the best of me
My baby doesn't love me, I got no Christmas tree
In jail on Christmas day again, ain't that a pain!
Oh baby, baby, baby, ain't that a pain!

Next to unrequited love, the jailhouse has inspired more blues than any other single topic. Adding a Christmas motif further guarantees the requisite pain and suffering. Leroy Carr of Indianapolis established his claim to immortality with "How Long, How Long Blues" in 1928, and could enjoy a bit of gentle blues satire in 1929, knowing that listeners were chuckling along with him.

19. CHRISTMAS MORNING THE RUM HAD ME YAWNING by Lord Beginner
Vocal with John "Buddy" Williams and his Blue Rhythm Orchestra: John "Buddy" Williams -
bass, with trumpet, reeds, piano, and drums.
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, January 30, 1939.

On Christmas mornin' the overnight rum had me yawnin'
On Christmas mornin' the overnight rum had me yawnin'
I met a bamboo band on the street
'Cause the rhythm was hot and sweet, they were shoutin':

John John Cobo, take a stick and you knock down your brother
Take a stick and you knock down your brother
And you take a stick and you knock down your father
John John Cobo, take a stick and you knock down your brother

I can remember that twenty-fifth of December
On the old man's birthday, everyone were merry upon gay
Women with their dresses so tight, shaking and hitting out black is white

Fellows dressed in short pants while the women showed the bamboo dance
I admired Gwendolyn, how she was waggin' she dustbin
I had to bawl, "Gwen, you're edging me teeth
Rollin' that t'ing all over the street!"

Lord Beginner (Bertie Moore, 1904-1981) established his reputation in Trinidad and London
as a writer and singer of calypsos from the 1920s through the 1950s. John John Cobo (i.e.
Cobo from the John John neighborhood) was a Port-of-Spain street character who acquired
a reputation after beating up his father.

20. CHRISTMAS TIME WILL SOON BE OVER by Fiddlin' John Carson and His Virginia Reelers
John Carson - voice and fiddle, Earl Johnson - fiddle, Moonshine Kate Carson - guitar or
banjo, T. M. "Bully" Brewer - guitar or banjo.
Atlanta, October 11, 1927.

Christmas time will soon be over
Christmas time will soon be over
Christmas time will soon be over
Then we'll join the band

Come on gals, let's go up river
Come on gals, let's go up river
Come on gals, let's go up river
Then we'll join the band

The first of two delightful old-time reels in this collection, this tune was arranged with new
words and a chorus by Tex Logan for Bill Monroe's famous "Christmas Time's A-Comin'" in
1951. Fiddlin' John Carson (1868-1949) was a lifelong resident of Georgia who made
hundreds of recordings through the years.

21. BREAKING UP CHRISTMAS by Norman Edmonds
Fiddle solo, Rufus Quesinberry - banjo, Paul Edmonds - guitar.
Hillsville, Virginia, August 28, 1959.

Norman Edmonds (1889-1976) of Carroll County, Virginia is best remembered for his
fiddling on the 1927 "Train on the Island," with banjoist J.P. Nester.

22. HAPPY NEW YEAR BLUES by Mary Harris
Vocal with Peetie Wheatstraw (William Bunch) - piano, Charlie Jordan - guitar.
Chicago, October 31, 1935.

Good mornin', people, I wish you a Happy New Year
Good mornin', people, I wish you a Happy New Year
I'm so glad, people, so glad that I'm here.

The New Year has come, I'm still feelin' the same ol' way
The New Year has come, I'm still feelin' the same ol' way
I'm changin' my way of livin', that's all I have to say

Play it for me till I get young again!

This is New Year, people, the year 1936
This is New Year, people, the year 1936
I'll tell all you people I must get my business fixed

So today I'm going to tell you just what I'm going to do
So today I'm going to tell you just what I'm going to do
Beuase this is one New Year, baby, I ain't gon' be worried with you

Accompanists William (Peetie Wheatstraw) Bunch (piano,1902-1941) and Charlie Jordan (guitar, 1898-1954) defined the sound of the blues from St. Louis in the 1930s on dozens of popular records. This is the only one Ms. Harris ever made, backed, of course, with "No Christmas Blues." No wonder she was so masterfully mournful.

23. HAPPY NEW YEAR by Lightnin' Hopkins
Vocal with electric guitar, bass, and drums.
New York City, July 29, 1953.

This is Happy New Year ain' gon' worry me to death
This is Happy New Year ain' gon' worry me to death
Don't think about Christmas 'cause Christmas just now left

Whoo, ain't it grand? Ain't it a merry day?
Oh, ain't it grand, we the peoples, ain't it a merry day?
Think about Christmas gone and New Year's on its way

Yes, get it boy. Don't stop for nothing now!
Wear it out, tear it up, it don't make no difference!

I got a number, man, I got it for myself
I got a number an' I got it for myself
New Year done come and Christmas just now left

Just gotta play it a while right here, boy
Don't forget it now, hear me good!

Whoo, New Year, that's the time I wanna see
Whoo, New Year, time I wanna see
I ain't got nobody, New Year to have with me

Sam Hopkins (1912-1982) retained an older style on many popular records in the 1950s, and turned a younger generation onto his East Texas blues in the 1960s. He could improvise

new blues to order for records, and did so for years. Like Mary Harris, he put this on the B side of a Christmas blues.

24. JINGLE BELLS by Maddox Brothers and Rose

Rose Maddox - vocal, Cal Maddox - harmony vocal and guitar, Fred Maddox - harmony vocal and bass, Henry Maddox - electric mandolin, Don Maddox - fiddle, possibly Roy Nichols - electric guitar, with harmonica and sleigh bells. Los Angeles, ca. 1951.

Dashing through the snow in a one horse open sleigh
O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way
Bells on bob tails ring, making spirits bright
What fun it is to ride and sing this joyous song tonight

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh, hey!
Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh

A day or two ago I thought I'd take a ride
And soon Miss Fanny Bright was seated by my side
The horse was lean and lank, misfortune seemed his lot
We got into a drifted bank and we, we got upsot

The Maddox sister and brothers weren't called "The Most Colorful Hillbilly Band in America" as an idle boast. Their interpretation of an old seasonal favorite is one of the liveliest you'll hear. It came from the pen of a Boston Unitarian church organist, James Pierpont, who tossed it off in 1857 for a Thanksgiving program. Children loved its chorus and the song soon took on a life of its own.