



Songs & Ballads



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This is [Marybird McAllister's](#) version of this song from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. She lived in [Brown's Cove](#), which is just east of Charlottesville.



Marybird McAllister,
photo by George Foss

"Across the Blue Mountain"

Sunday, March 9, 2008

*"One morning, one morning, one morning in May,
I heard a married man to a young girl did say,
"Oh rise you up pretty Katy, and go along with me,
Across the Blue Mountain to the Allegheny."*

Marybird McAllister lived in Brown's Cove on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge in Central Virginia. She was recorded by [Paul Clayton](#), who had a cabin in Brown's Cove, and later by [George Foss](#), in 1957. Click [HERE](#) for a wonderful online book by George Foss about his time with the people of this region.

Marybird claimed this song as her own and was known for her singing of it. Click [HERE](#) to see and play her original

version. Three other versions of this song were collected in the area nearby, and two of these have two additional verses as follows:

She traveled, she traveled till she became lame
She turned back home and she thought it was a shame
Living with a Dutchman he thought me to maintain
And if I were back with my kin I would never come here again

He left me, he left me, he left me alone
He left me no house nor no money nor no home
He left me no friend nor no relation a'nigh
And when I think of my Mother I sit down and cry

The reference to "living with a Dutchman" refers to the "Pennsylvania Dutch" or German people who had settled in the Shenandoah Valley just on the other side of the Blue Ridge from where Marybird lived. These versions, along with some discussion can be found in **Anglo-American Folksong Style**, by Roger D. Abrahams and George Foss, published in 1968, pages 14-17, and 179.

Foss mentions that one other version was found in the University of Virginia archives that had been collected down in Buena Vista, Virginia, to the south of where Marybird lived. Vance Randolph's wife, [Mary Celestia Parler](#), also found a version in Arkansas.

I first heard this song on a recording by [Guy Carawan](#) called "**Jubilee**". It is also on his family album "[Home Brew](#)".

2 Comments 

Stu Farnham

John,

THough I have yet to listen to all of the entires, I must say that this is a wonderful blog! It combines the place you love with history and heritage, and perhaps will help some who are unaware of the folk music of the Appalachians and it slinks both back and forward in our musical history.

Thanks also for your scholarship regarding the songs. I know many of them, mostly in variant form, but knew little of them beyond the songs themselves.

Finally -- you are a brave man! I would not dare to put my voice out there for all to hear. On the other hand, you sing much better than I...

Stu

Sunday, March 9, 2008 - 10:20 PM

povi

These are such fun songs to hear you sing! and to see their histories and geography and 'feel' how the words tie real people and their dramas to the world around them. This song has always been a curious one to me...it's a short story or made-for-music movie for back when there were no tvs and movies, nor many books.

Maybe it's partly because I have a daughter named 'Katy (Katie)', but my heart goes out to her and to the mother who worries for her future and who may never see her again. Not an unusual outcome in those days. Music can erase years and theories and present the emotions purely and simply...and make the hearers 'awake' again.

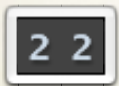
It's a genuine soap opera but with what surely seems like real feelings and real choices and real consequences for good or ill. It doesn't resolve them, either...alot like life.

Monday, March 10, 2008 - 09:03 PM

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