

## A CHECKLIST OF CHILD BALLAD VARIANTS FOUND IN SOUTHERN APPALACHIA

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The following checklist—drawn from a considerable number of major published and unpublished sources, as well as selected minor ones—is a representative inventory of variants of Child ballads found in Southern Appalachia. It does not propose to be a definitive list. Nor does it overcome all the inherent limitations and problems confronting such an inventory; for example the difficulty in delineating “Southern Appalachia” (considered here as basically, but not exclusively, that area prescribed by the Appalachian Regional Commission) and the inability to consult the almost inexhaustible number of sources.

We also had to accept such realities as the following: some sources include only one variant of a ballad, whereas other sources include representative variants of all the ones collected; collections sometimes designate, sometimes not, the specific place where a variant was recorded or from whom, but not necessarily where it was learned originally or other critical details of dissemination; some informants are included in multiple collections, and their songs are easily tallied, mistakenly, more than once; duplications can occur through the circumstance of multiple collectors recording from different members of the same family or from different persons who learned the same specific matrix; a collector may include the same variants in multiple collections without specifying whether they have been previously published; the credibility of variants can be dubious relative to a number of factors, including editorial policy; and fragments, summaries, written copies, oral traditional status, authenticity of sources, as well as other matters pose questions that are sometimes unfathomable and ultimately subjective. Consequently, in any given collection we might for any number of reasons include all or some of the variants of one ballad and none of another.

We have attempted to use sound, consistent judgment in the inventory. We are aware, however, that if we were to begin anew, we might modify the criteria for inclusions. Nevertheless, even with the limitations and inherent problems of the compilation, we feel that the checklist is a reliable guide to the number of Child ballad variants found in Southern Appalachia.

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