

# WORLD MUSIC

## UNITED STATES

### AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC

## Introduction

The American folk music has been placed here separately from Native American music because the two genres differ completely.

There are many fine entries in this section, but it must be said that four of these are outstanding, even stunning, truly carrying on the powerful tradition of the finest in American folk song. These four are: *The Leatherman* by Bob Beers, *Little Brown Bat* by Mike Craver, *Paw Walked Behind Us with a Carbide Lamp* by Merle Travis, and *Underground Music* by Dolan Ellis.

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**WD-US1** United States 2004

### **B-A-T**

WD – Folk – Jazz – Children’s – Vocal & Instrumental

**Comp:** Foster BROWN

**Rts:** Foster Brown

**Perf:** Foster **BROWN** (vocal & guitar)

**Prod. Co:** Songs for Teaching; Bloomfield Hills, MI

**Time:** (?)

**CD:** NATURALLY – CHILDREN’S NATURE SONGS

Songs for Teaching (Cat. No. Unknown) (Tk 2)

**Notes:** A charming, instructive children’s song of seven stanzas about all sorts of bats. He sings about the big bats and the small bats, the one that eat insects around his house, and the ones that disperse seeds in the tropics. The chorus goes –

B-A-T, that spells bat  
B-A-T, that spells bat  
Much to learn about them, that’s a fact!  
B-A-T, that spells bat

And stanzas 4 and 5 give a good idea –

- IV. There’s one more thing I’d like to say:  
Bats aren’t blind, well, they see okay.  
They use echolocation to find their way,  
Using sound waves to catch their prey.
- V. There’s Little Brown, Big Brown, Yellow and White,  
Long-Nose, Leaf-Nose and Hog-Nose type,  
Silver-Haired, Hairy-Legged, Hoary and Red...  
Don’t go away, there’s more to be said.

This CD was the winner of a 2004 Parents' Choice 'Recommended' Award

**Ref:** B A T, Song lyrics, Songs for Teaching, [songsforteaching](http://songsforteaching)  
Foster Brown, Naturally, [fosterbrown](http://fosterbrown)



**WD-US2** United States 2003

## **CAVE OF THE SWIMMERS \***

WD – Folk – Vocal & Instrumental

**Comp:** Maggie McKAIG ([WD-LY5](#))

**Perf:** Maggie **McKAIG** (vocal & keyboards)

Luke Wilson (guitar)

**Prod. Co:** Maggie McKaig Records

**Time:** 4:07

**CD:** GRAND PROMENADE

Maggie McKaig (?) (Tk 2)

**Notes:** Maggie McKaig is a singer/songwriter/instrumentalist living outside of Nevada City, California. She began her career as a folk singer in Calgary, Alberta, and spent nine years playing at many folk music festivals and clubs in Canada...Maggie has also performed with two-time Grammy winner Mary Youngblood as guitarist and backup singer. (McKaig 2008) Mary Youngblood composed and recorded the Native American flute piece, "Moaning Cavern" (see under World Music – United States – Native American Music – [Darkest Cave WD-US-NAM4](#) & [Moaning Cavern WD-US-NAM5](#)).

She writes – "I wrote this song after seeing the film 'The English Patient.' The film is partially based on the true story of the 1930's discovery of the 'Cave of Swimmers' in the middle of the Sahara desert. The images and the concept of swimmers in the Sahara intrigued me. The cave in the film was a studio set, but the real cave does exist. And humans swam where the Sahara desert now is 10,000 years ago." (McKaig 2003)

Thus this is an unusual case of a cave-inspired music thrice removed from its original source of inspiration. The scene in the novel by Michael Ondaatje, *The English Patient*, takes place during World War II, when the hero and his lover crash land in a bi-plane in the Egyptian desert. She is injured and he carries her to a cave. There he leaves her while he walks out across the desert for help. When he is finally able to return he finds her dead. Several schematic paintings on the walls of this cave show swimmers, so the cave is called Cave of Swimmers.



The actual Cave of Swimmers is located in the southwestern Egypt close to the border of Libya at Wadi Sora along the western edge of the Gifl Kebir plateau in the Sahara Desert. The Hungarian explorer László Almásy discovered the main painted caves in October 1933 during the Frobenius expedition. (See photo) They contain the little 'swimmer' like figures, estimated to date to 10,000BP. (Anon. n.d.) This cave inspired the fictitious Cave of Swimmers in the novel by Michael Ondaatje. So this is an unusual case of a real cave inspiring a fictional cave in a novel, which in turn is adapted in a film script (1996)

and for which a musical cue is written by Gabriel Yared that is also inspired by the same cave and then this song also inspired by the same material. The photo shows László Almásy in the Wadi Sora in 1933.

The audio sample of this song had a sad lament accompanied by keyboards and guitar. The chorus sets the scene –

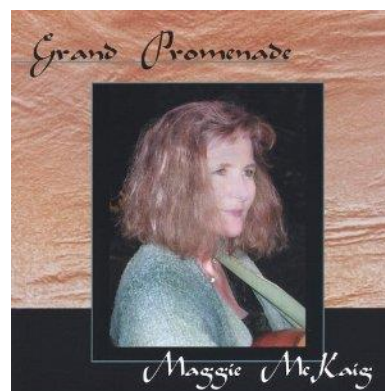
Somewhere deep in Africa, where desert sands drift far and wide,  
There is a cave, dark and cold, wherein strange paintings do abide,  
A thousand miles from any kind, of river, lake, or ocean,  
And yet these paintings on the wall, are all in swimming motion,

(For full lyrics see [WD-LY5](#))

For information about the film shoot see under Film Music – *The English Patient*. A spoken word CD was released of the novel that same year (see under Marginal Spoken Word – *The English Patient*).

**Ref:** Almásy, László 1934, *Az Ismeretlen Szahara (The Unknown Sahara)*, [Translated from the Hungarian by Andras Zboray, 2002]

Anon. n.d., The Libyan Desert Rock Art, [fjexpeditions](#)  
Cave of Swimmers, [Wikipedia](#)



Ducheck, Jochen 2011, The Cave of Swimmers, [ShowCaves](#)  
Maggie McKaig, Biography, [maggiemckaig](#)  
Maggie McKaig, Grand Performance, Stanza 1, [CDBaby](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)  
Maggie McKaig, Grand Performance, [fearofablankplanet](#)  
McKaig, Maggie 2003, Cave of the Swimmers, Lyrics, [maggiemckaig](#)  
McKaig, Maggie 2008, Autobiography, [maggiemckaig](#)  
Ondaatje, Michael 1992, *The English Patient*, Vintage International, New York, p. 168-174, 247-249, 260

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**WD-US3** United States 1995

## **CAVES OF MISSOURI \***

WD – Folk – Blues – Vocal & Instrumental

**Comp:** Brooks WILLIAMS ([WD-LY6](#))

**Rts:** Red Guitar Blues Music (BMI)

**Perf:** Brooks **WILLIAMS** (vocal, bottleneck slide guitar,  
& acoustic guitar)

**Prod:** (1) Colin Linden & (2) Brooks Williams

**Prod. Co:** Green Linnet Records; Danbury, CT

**Rec. Co:** Grand Avenue Studio; Hamilton, Ontario

**Rec. Date:** Jan. 1995

**Liner Notes:** (5-page Foldout)

**Time:** 3:53

Photo by Diane Little

1. **CD:** KNIFE EDGE

Green Linnet GLCD 2121 (Tk 9)

2. Reissue on Compilation **CD:** DEAD SEA CAFE (2001)

Silent Planet 1301 (Tk 5)

**Notes:** At one time Brooks Williams lived in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, but he is now based in western Massachusetts. Over the years he heard a lot of gospel and roadhouse blues. (Lankford 2005) The liner notes inform us that this song was “written in transit from St. Louis, Missouri to Omaha, Nebraska. Francis Thompson’s poem *Hounds (sic) of Heaven (sic – The Hound of Heaven)* meets the legend of Frank & Jesse James hiding out in Missouri’s caves.”

For this folk-blues song Williams sings three stanzas and a chorus (see [LY-WD6](#)). He whispers the chorus the second time and for the coda he repeats – “Hiding in the caves of Missouri.” As added clues to which Jesse James cave is being referred to here the lyrics mention stumbling over a “creature left by some ancient sea” (suggesting fossil bones) and an “underground river.”

Speaking of Missouri caves in general, the Missouri Speleological Survey announced in 2005 that it had documented 6,037 caves throughout the state. “Although Missouri is known as “The Cave State,” its roots are due to our numerous commercially operated caves, not because we have the most recorded caves – a title held by Tennessee.” (Lamping & Laws 2005)

Now if you are traveling west on Interstate 70 on your way to Omaha there are two caves reputed to have associations with the James brothers that you might visit before reaching Kansas City. Jackman Cave is on the left bank of the Missouri River at Rocheport, Howard County. “Only one of these shelter-like holes is large enough to allow a horse to enter, and its floor would afford bedding-down space for not more than half a dozen horses.” (Bretz 1956) Not far southeast of Rocheport, again on the left bank of the river, nine miles from Columbia, is Boone Cave, a cave stream resurgence with a huge entrance. During the Civil War the Quantrill Irregulars of the Confederate Army, which included Frank and Jesse James, utilized this cave as a shelter for men and horses. (Weaver & Johnson 1980)

There are several other caves in the state that claim to have been used by Jesse James: Meramec Caverns, Franklin County; Cave Spring Onyx Caverns, Carter Co.; Doling City Park Cave, Greene Co.; and Monegaw Cave, Osage River Area, St. Clair Co. (Weaver & Johnson 1980) However, all four caves are way south of the Missouri River and definitely not on the road to Omaha. Perhaps Williams visited Meramec Caverns before heading out of St. Louis, for this show cave lays claim to a legend that Jesse James used that cave in the 1870s. According to this story, which originated in the 1940s and has no earlier documented historical sources, Jesse James and his gang galloped into Saltpeter Cave (as Meramec was known then) to escape government pursuers. He divided his loot there and one time was



forced to escape by a secret cave exit “by following the course of the cave’s underground stream [Mirror River] to its resurgence just north of the cave’s large entrance.” (Weaver & Johnson 1977)

**Ref:** Bretz, J. Harlin 1956, *Caves of Missouri*, State of Missouri, Geological Sur. & Water Resources, Rolla, MO, p. 320

Brooks Williams, Biography, [Allmusic](#)

Brooks Williams, Biography, [Wikipedia](#)

Brooks Williams, Knife Edge, Chorus & Stanza 2, Verse 1, [Allmusic](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Brooks Williams, Knife Edge, [Discogs](#)

Lamping, Dan & Laws, Joel, Missouri Announces 6,000 Caves, *NSS News*, v. 63, n. 6, Aug. 2005, p. 20

Lankford, Ronnie Jr. 2005 – All Music Guide Web site

Thompson, Francis 1893, *Hound of Heaven*, [poetry.elcore](#)

Weaver, H. Dwight & Johnson, Paul A. 1977, *Meramec Caverns: Legendary Hideout of Jesse James*, Discovery Enterprises, Jefferson City, MO, p. 33-35

Weaver, H. Dwight & Johnson, Paul A. 1980, *Missouri: The Cave State*, Discovery Enterprises, Jefferson City, MO, p. 50, 130, 133, 168-169, 216, 266-268

**WD-US4** United States 1960

## THE LEATHERMAN

WD – Folk – Ballad – Vocal & Instrumental

**Comp:** (Old American folk song) (LY-WD21)

**Perf:** Fiddler (Bob) BEERS

(vocal, whistling, & psaltery)

**Prod. Co:** Folkways Records; New York, NY

**Liner Notes:** (5-page lyric sheet)

**Time:** 2:35

1. Original **LP:** WALKIE IN THE PARLOR

Folkways FS 3814

2. Second Release **LP:** WALKIE IN THE PARLOR

Folkways FA 2376

**Spec:** (Nos. 1 & 2) 12" 33rpm (Sd 1 – Bd 1)

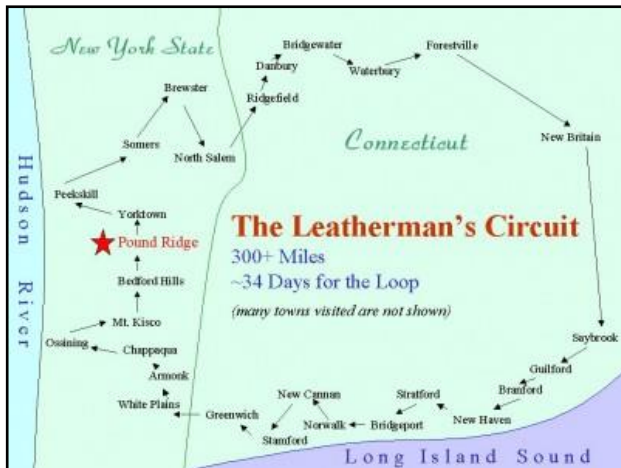


Sketch from photo, *NSS Bulletin*

**Notes:** Bob Beers begins and ends whistling the melancholic tune and backing himself on the psaltery, an ancient, plucked instrument (the size of a small piano) that was the ancestor of the harpsichord.

The song was originally sung to Evelyne Beers, Bob's wife, in 1945. It tells of the wandering Leatherman who in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1858-1889) made a regular, always clockwise, 34-day circuit tour of eastern Connecticut and New York's Westchester and Putnam Counties, camping over night in over 25 different non-calcareous shelter caves and boulder caves along the way. The postcard photo here shows the Leather Man's Cave at Totoket, Connecticut.

The lyrics here do not mention his cave shelters, but



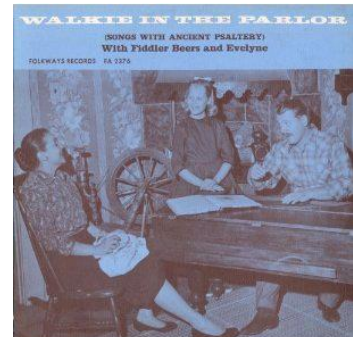
tell (stanza 3) of his wanderings "from Essex to Maine." According to one reference consulted, he is said to have gone as far north as the Berkshires in Massachusetts and even up into Quebec, but Maine is never mentioned. (Deluca 2008) He died in one of his shelter caves in Mount Pleasant, NY on March 20, 1889 (see stanza 2, verses 4 & 5).

(See also under Rock Music – Folk-Rock – Leatherman.)

There is a similar case from the 17<sup>th</sup> century of a cave hermit in England, John Bigg, who also dressed all in leather and lived for 35 years in a cave in Hall Gardens, at Dinton, Buckinghamshire.

**Ref:** Anon. 1840, L'Ermite de Dinton, *Magasin Pittoresque*, 8<sup>e</sup> Année, Tome VIII, Août 1840, p. 248

Anon. 1889, *Life of the Mysterious Leather Man: The Wandering Hermit of*



Connecticut and New York, Globe Museum, New York, NY (Not seen)  
Anon. 1944, Story of Fabulous Leather Man, *Waterbury Republican*, Oct. 14, 1944, p. 4 [our-oxford-info](#)  
McKeon, Edward Jr. & O'Neill, John 1984, *The Road between Heaven and Hell*



(28:55), Video documentary on the Leatherman with Stanzas 1, 2, 4, 5, & 6 of this ballad performed by Jim Douglas, [YouTube](#)  
Albee, Allison 1937, The Leather Man, *The Quarterly Bulletin of the Westchester County Historical Society*, April, 1937, p. 29-38; July 1937, p. 68-77; & Oct. 1937, 90-110 (Copies at the Mount Vernon, NY Public Library)  
Bob & Evelyne Beers, Walkie in the Parlor, Smithsonian Folkways, Stanza 1, [folkways](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)  
Bloom, Lary 2009, The Story of an Old Man & the Road, New York Times, Mar. 27, 2009, [nytimes](#)  
Clyne, Patricia Edwards 1980, *Caves For Kids*, Library Research Associates, Monroe, NY, p. 17-33  
Deluca, Dan W. 2008, *The Old Leather Man*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, CT, p. xi & [139]  
Fiddler Beers & Evelyne, Walkie in the Parlor, Track 16, Stanzas 1, Verses 4-6, Stz. 2, & Stz. 3, Verse 1-2, [Amazon](#)  
Foote, Leroy W., The Leather Man, in Mohr, Charles E. & Sloane, Howard N. 1955, *Celebrated American Caves*, Rutgers Univ. Press, New Brunswick, NJ, p. 290-303  
Foote, Leroy W., The Leather Man and His Caves, *NSS Bulletin*, n. 18, Dec. 1956, p. 13-15  
Hotchkiss, Chauncey L., *Hartford Globe*, Jul. 12, 1885, (Article on Leatherman's route & timetable – not seen)  
Leatherman (Vagabond), Several Links to Websites, [Wikipedia](#)

WD-US5 United States 2000

## THE LEATHERMAN

WD – Folk – Vocal & Instrumental

Comp: Mike KACHUBA (LY-WD22)

Perf: Mike KACHUBA (vocal, guitar, & harmonica)

Prod. Co: Mike Kachuba or The Orchard Records

Time: 4:45

1. CD: IT HAPPENED IN CONNECTICUT  
[No label or Cat. No.] (Tk 7)
2. CD: IT HAPPENED IN CONNECTICUT  
The Orchard 4306 (Tk 7)

**Notes:** This sad lament honoring the Leatherman is the third known ballad about the Leatherman to be recorded (The second was by Pearl Jam in 1970). Accompanying himself on guitar Mike Kachuba sings six stanzas with a chorus, which he wrote in 1996 (see LY-WD22). He plays harmonica for the intro and again for the bridge and coda.

The first three stanzas give various details of the Leatherman's story, most of which are based on hearsay or sheer invention. But the last three stanzas give facts based on contemporary eyewitness accounts between 1856 and 1889. (Deluca 2008) The Leatherman's circuit tour through western Connecticut and southern New York (Westchester & Putnam Counties) was always in a clockwise direction and, depending on the weather, would take anywhere from 34 to 38 days. Stanza IV, verse 3 says – "He'd rise up over the hills to the east of town." Mike Kachuba lives in Stratford, Connecticut next to Bridgeport. The Leatherman would have skirted the city and passed to the north, but he indeed would have come from the east along the coast. Stanza V mentions that after his meal the Leatherman would "head for the woods for the shelter of a cave," making this the only Leatherman song to mention one of his caves. The Leatherman boulder cave shown here is located near Hamden, Connecticut, which puts it just 18 miles northeast of Stratford.



(See also under Rock Music – Hard Rock – Leatherman)

Ref: Deluca, Dan W. 2008, *The Old Leather Man*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, CT, p. [139]



Mike Kachuba, Biography, [web.mac](#)  
Mike Kachuba, It Happened in Connecticut, [Amazon](#)

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**WD-US6** United States 1999

## LITTLE BROWN BAT

WD – Folk – Ballad – Vocal & Instrumental

**Comp:** Phillip Michael CRAVER ([LY-WD23](#))

**Rts:** Sapsucker Music (BMI)

**Perf:** Mike **CRAVER** (vocal & piano)

**Prod. Co:** Sapsucker Records; Lexington, NC

**Liner Notes:** (12-page lyric sheet) Mike Craver

**Time:** 5:33

1. **CD:** WAGONER'S LAD

Sapsucker 2323 (Tk 4)

2. Reissue on **CD:** WAGONER'S LAD

The Orchard 2427 (Tk 4)

Mike CRAVER

Photo by John Rosenthal



**Notes:** A giant of a folk ballad, full of emotion, with such power in the piano accompaniment that you'll want it to never end.

About the album Craver writes in the liner notes – “This is a collection of original songs, a core of which was inspired by the stories and sagas of my grandparents’ generation, at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the farmlands and country crossroads of Piedmont North Carolina.” The ten stanzas of this ballad tell of the deflowering of pretty Alice by handsome Willie while the farm folk go to church and the little brown bat flies about. (See [LY-WD23](#)) Craver sings in tenor and falsetto and his piano comes in with forceful low chords at the start of stanzas 3, 5, 8, and again at the end; these chords, surging and fading, as if the bat were approaching and then flying away.

- I. Little brown bat in the amethyst light  
Zigzags all the August night  
Boys are beating on the old bass drum,  
Ghost of the past, and the ghost to come.

The bat weaves its way in and out of the different stanzas as the people pray in the church –

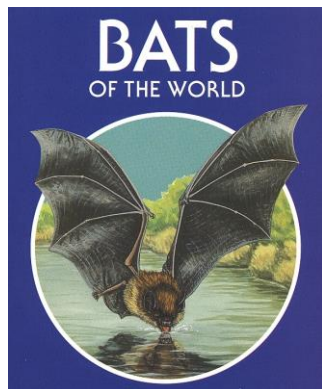
- VI. Fire and brimstone, bosom and cod,  
Sinners in the hand of an Angry God  
Flour and sugar and Aaron's rod  
Little brown bat is laughing

Later while the Alice and Willie make love –

- VIII. The old folk's windows' shuddered tight  
Blind to the lovers' roaming  
Little brown bat, the eye of night  
Ricochets in the gloaming.

And in the morning –

- X. Up at the store the boys all meet as the rooster's crowing  
Farmers hitch their wagons up, off to town they're going  
Little brown bat flies by the moon, folds his wings in the morning  
Pretty Miss Alice, flower of hope, she didn't hear Mama's warning.



A long piano solo finishes on the melody with such mighty force and with such driving rhythm that it leaves you breathless. This one'll send shivers down your spine and you aren't likely to be forgetting it for a while. In the field of American folk song, new ballads this good don't come along every day. But just listening to a 30-second audio sample of this masterpiece is no way to go. Buy the CD and this song, it'll rock ya. It'll send you so far out that you'll have a hard time getting back to earth.

Sapsucker Records is Mike Craver's own label.

The little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) is “one of the most abundant species within its range, which extends from Alaska and Canada south to Mexico and the southwestern United States.” They are very beneficial – “a single bat can catch and consume more than 500 mosquitoes in an hour.” (Graham 1994) The illustration of the little brown bat drinking in flight is by Fiona Reid.

Regarding this album, Gene Hyde wrote – “Former Red Clay Rambler Mike Craver is a walking anachronism, a songwriter of extraordinary talent who distills elements of traditional British and American folk song and Tin Pan Alley into a mesmerizing original blend. Based on turn-of-the-century stories from Craver’s Piedmont North Carolina heritage, “Wagoner’s Lad” is a breathtaking song cycle, filled with vividly detailed characters relating their bittersweet first-person ballads, accompanied by Craver’s keyboards and guitar, and sung in his warm, engaging, and intimate style.” (Hyde n.d.)

**Ref:** Craver, Mike, Little Brown Bat, Lyrics, [mikecraver](#)  
Graham, Gary L. 1994, *Bats of the World*, Golden Press, New York, p. 112-113  
Hyde, Gene n.d., Review, Wagoner’s Lad CD, *Dirty Linen*,, [mikecraver](#)  
Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), [Wikipedia](#)  
Mike Craver, Wagoner’s Lad CD, Review, [rootsworld](#)  
Mike Craver, Wagoner’s Lad, Sample by Spotify or MOG only, [Allmusic](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLES)  
Mike Craver, Wagoner’s Lad, Stanza 2 & 3, [Amazon](#) & [rhapsody](#), (◀AUDIO SAMPLES)

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**WD-US7** United States 2005

## **LOST RIVER RAG \***

WD – Rag – Celtic – Instrumental – Recorded in Cave – Cave Pic Cover

**Comp:** Cliff COLE

**Rts:** (BMI)

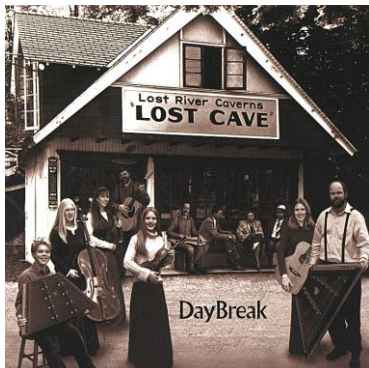
**Perf:** **DAYBREAK**

Cliff **COLE** (hammered dulcimer)  
Anna Lisa Yoder (mandolin)  
Rob Yoder (guitar)  
Trudy Yoder (cello)

**Prod. Co:** Daybreak Records

**Time:** 3:39

**CD:** LOST RIVER CAVERNS – “LOST CAVE”  
Daybreak 1345 (Tk 4)



**Notes:** A three-part ragtime piece inspired by the Pennsylvania show cave, Lost River Caverns, in Hellertown where the group Daybreak recorded 21 pieces in 2005 (see Recorded in Caves – United States – Lost River Caverns). On the CD Baby Web site Daybreak talks about the cave and its river – “we don’t know from whence the river comes and to whence it goes, but we hear its laughter.”

A merry rag that rollicks along in a happy-go-lucky spirit on hammered dulcimer, like a laughing underground river, backed by a joyous ensemble of mandolin, guitar, and cello.

The cover photo of this CD used a photo of the musicians, dressed in period outfits, and laid it over an old photo of the main office building taken in 1948. That’s Cliff Cole with suspenders on the right. The other photo shows him playing the hammered dulcimer in the cave.

For further information about this album which was entirely recorded in Lost River Caverns see under Recordings in Caves – United States – Lost Cave – [RIC-US10](#) .

**Ref:** Anon. n.d., Daybreak, Lost Cave CD, Album Notes, [CDBaby](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Anon. 2012, Daybreak, The Lost River Sessions & Photos, [daybreakfolk](#)

Daybreak (Folk), Biography, [Wikipedia](#)

Daybreak, Lost River CD, [Allmusic](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Duckeck, Jochen 2011, Lost River Caverns, [ShowCaves](#)

Lost River Caverns, Home Site, [lostcave](#)

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**WD-US8** United States 1963

## **PAW WALKED BEHIND US WITH A CARBIDE LAMP**

WD – Folk – Ballad – Vocal & Instrumental

**Comp:** Merle TRAVIS ([LY-WD28](#))

**Perf:** Merle **TRAVIS** (vocal & guitar)

**Prod:** Ken Nelson

**Prod. Co:** Capitol Records

**Rec. Co:** Capitol Studio; Hollywood, CA

**Rec. Date:** Mar. 6, 1963

**Matrix:** 39305

**Liner Notes:** John Travis

(CD) (28-page Booklet)

**Time:** 2:58

1. Original **LP:** SONGS OF THE COAL MINES

Capitol T 1956 (mono)

Capitol ST 1956 (stereo)

12" 33rpm (Sd 2 – Bd 4)

2. Reissue on Compilation **CD:** FOLK SONGS OF THE HILLS-

BACKHOME/ SONGS OF THE COAL MINES (1994)

Bear Family BCD 15636 AH (Tk 22)

**Notes:** Part of a collection of Kentucky coal mining songs specially composed by Merle Travis (the author of "Dark As a Dungeon"), this is not really a cave song but its theme revolves closely around the carbide lamp, an old familiar friend to all cavers the world over. Travis introduces the song –

The old story of Romeo and Juliet was quite a bit different from the young man who courted the daughter of a coal miner. Being alone with her was just about out of the question. She was always chaperoned by her father who saw to it that he was always right behind her with his flickering carbide light. It was pretty hard for a young man to ever express his amorous intentions 'cause he just might be heard. But even with this handicap he made his wishes known and as down through all the ages love will find a way. Now the boy in this song used the art of whispering to woo his ladylove. The last verse tells of his accomplishments regardless of her paw right behind him with his carbide lamp.

Glancing quickly at the lyrics (see [LY-WD28](#)), one will see that a few minor changes are all that's needed to turn this into a fine caver's courtship song. The first stanza could stay as it is, because "comin' home from the meetin' " can also mean coming home from the cave club or grotto meeting. The chorus is fine as it stands. Only a few words in stanzas 2 and 3 would need changing –

Stz. 2, Vrs. 1 – Once it poured down rain at a ice cream supper

Could become – *Once it poured down rain outside the big wet cave*

Stz. 2, Vrs. 3 – So all the way home, right behind me an' Sally

Could become – *So all the way out, right behind me an' Sally*

The only other change needed is in stanza 3, verse 1 – One night comin' home from a popcorn poppin'

Could become – *One night comin' out of Popcorn Passage)*

On the business of writing folk songs for the album, "Folk Songs of the Hills," Merle told this story –

"People got folk song happy for a while – The Weavers and other groups were pretty popular. Cliffie Stone said, 'We [Capitol] need you to make an album of folk songs.' In those days albums didn't mean anything, it was singles that sold. I said, 'Cliffie, Bradley Kincaid and Burl Ives have sung every folk song that I ever heard of.' He said, 'Write some.' I said, 'You don't write folk songs.' He said, 'Well, write some that sound like folk songs.'" (Travis & Humphrey 1982)

"The producers [at Capitol] knew that Travis had grown up the son of a coal miner in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, and they told him to be sure to include some mining songs in his session. Travis didn't know any, but eager to oblige, he sat down and wrote two pieces that have since become classics: 'Dark as a Dungeon' and 'Sixteen Tons.'" (Hanchett 1995)

This entire song was included with slides illustrating the lyrics in the NSS (National Speleological Society) Audio-Visual Aids program, "Caves on Phonograph Records" which I first presented at the 1967 NSS



Convention held in Huntsville and Birmingham, Alabama and later put into national distribution through the NSS Audio-Visual Aids Department. Two of the slides from that program are shown here: one of Phil Gettel dressed as Paw with white beard and cornucopia pipe holding a Justrite carbide lamp and the other shows Dale Ibberson whispering into the ear of his girl friend Pat as Paw slishes along behind in the flooded portions of Conodoquinit Cave near Carlisle,





Pennsylvania. All were members of York Grotto of the NSS.

In 1970, Merle Travis was one of the performers invited to participate in a television program on coal mining songs, part of a special folksong series "American Odyssey" produced by WITF-TV (Hershey, PA) for the Public Broadcasting System. At the request of this author (who was one of the cameramen), Merle did this song for the live audience at Eckley, PA and it turned out to be one of the biggest successes of the concert. He made a few changes in the original wording because by his own admission he "didn't quite remember" all the verses.

Due to limited distribution, this LP is considered "very rare" today and very much in demand according to Dave Freeman of County Records, Floyd, Virginia (now Charlottesville, VA). Hanchett writes about the reissue – "To modern ears, these performances are delightful. The guitar playing is wonderfully nimble and swinging. Travis's (sic) singing voice is warm and easygoing. His carefully crafted but seemingly casual comments preceding each tune are obviously the model for Doc Watson's today."

**Ref:** Carbide Lamps, [Wikipedia](#) and [cave.org](#)

Hanchett, Tom 1995, Reviews, *The Old Time Herald*, v. 4, n. 8, Summer 1995, Durham, NC, p. 56-57

Merle Travis, Biography, [Wikipedia](#)

Merle Travis, Folk Songs of the Hills CD, [CDUniverse](#)

Merle Travis, Songs of the Coal Mines, [Allmusic](#)

Merle Travis, Songs of the Coal Mines LP, Paw Walked Behind Us with a Carbide Lamp (2:59), [jukebox.au.nu](#)

(◀ **COMPLETE AUDIO SAMPLE**)

Travis, Merle & Humphrey, Mark 1982, Interview: Merle Travis, Part 3 – Songwriting, Movies, Designing Guitars, *Old Time Music*, n. 38, Summer/ Autumn 1982, p. 15

**WD-US9** United States ca.1981

## **SINKHOLE CITY USA \***

WD – Folk – Ballad – Comedy – Vocal & Instrumental

**Comp:** Tom BUCCI ([LY-WD34](#))

**Rts:** Blasco Music Inc. (ASCASP)

**Perf:** **THE RIVERBOATERS**

Tom Bucci (vocal & bass)

Ed Erickson (guitar, banjo, & backing vocal)

Dave Tobiason (keyboards)

Suzanna Francia (backing vocal)

Pat Terry, Jr. (percussion-bell)

Dave Uhrig (drums)

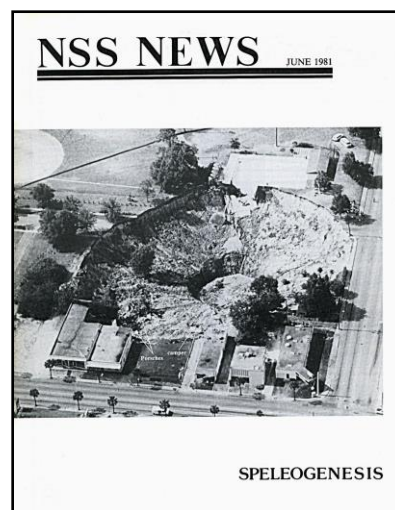
**Prod. Co:** Riverboat Records; Windermere, FL

**Time:** 2:25

**Label:** Riverboat RR 51981 (stereo)

**Flip Sd:** Stars and Stripes

**Spec:** 7" 45rpm



**Notes:** On May 8, 1981 a huge, 98-meter-wide (320 feet) and 27-meter (90 ft.) deep sinkhole opened up in Winter Park, Florida near the corner of South Denning Drive and Fairbanks Avenue. It swallowed a three-bedroom house, a pickup truck, six Porsches, part of a road, and the deep end of the municipal swimming pool. Mrs. Owens, who lost her home, recalled, "It sounded like giant beavers down there, chewing." (Bearak 1984)

"The deepest part of the limestone cavern must have been directly under the house as not even the peak of the roof of the house could be seen after the sinkhole stabilized. Fortunately, no one was in the house at the time the cavern roof collapsed. City engineers managed to stabilize the sinkhole, which drew national attention and became a popular tourist attraction during the summer of 1981. A carnival-like atmosphere sprung up around the area,

with vendors selling food, balloons, and t-shirts to visitors. Eventually the novelty wore off as the city repaired the damage and turned the sinkhole into man-made Lake Rose." (Anon, n.d.)

So someone decided to write a corny, humorous song about this spectacular karst event (see [LY-WD34](#)).

At the end of the record there is a rude splutter sound and "blah."

**Ref:** Anon. 2011, Sinkholes in Florida, [dep.state.fl.us](#)

Anon. n.d., The Winter Park Sinkhole, Winter Park, Florida, [Wikipedia](#)  
Bearak, Barry, Humans Worsen an Abysmal Work of Nature – Sinkholes, *International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 21, 1984  
Decker, Kery 2008, Winter Park Sinkhole, 1981-2008 (9:46), [YouTube](#)  
The Great Winter Park, Fla. Sinkhole, *NSS News*, v. 39, n. 6, June 1981, p. 125-126  
Jammal, S.E. & Beck, Barry F. 1985, *A Self-Guided Field Trip to Winter Park Sinkhole*, Report No. 85-86-3, The Florida Sinkhole Research Institute at the University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL (1985 National Meeting of the Geological Society of America), 9p. (Not seen) [searchworks](#)  
Jammal, S.E. & Casper, Hay W. 2009, Winter Park Sinkhole Then and Now, *Journal*, Florida Engineering Society, May 2009, p. 10-21, [nodarse](#)  
Owen, David 2013, Notes from Underground, *The New Yorker*, Mar. 18, 2013, p. 36-41  
The Riverboaters, Sinkhole City USA (2:24), [nme.com](#) and [YouTube](#) (◀COMPLETE AUDIO SAMPLES)  
Schiemer, Paul, Winter Park Sinkhole, May 1981, Arial & ground shots (6:20), [YouTube](#)  
Sinkhole, Winter Park, Florida, National Geophysical Data Center, [ngdc.noaa.gov](#)

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**WD-US10** United States 1996

## STELLALUNA'S THEME

WD – Folk – Instrumental

**Scr:** Don FREEMAN

**Mus. Comp:** Steven HELLER

**Rts:** Butterside Music

**Perf:** Steven HELLER (guitar)

Bill MIZE (guitar)

**Prod:** David Holt, Virginia Callaway, & Steven Heller

**Prod. Co:** High Windy Audio; Fairview, NC

**Rec. Co:** Upstream Studios; Asheville, NC

**Liner Notes:** Virginia Callaway

**Time:** 1:14

**CD:** STELLALUNA

High Windy HW 1211 (Tk 5)

**Notes:** An entire album devoted to bats with a reading of two children's fiction books, *Stellaluna* and *Hattie, the Backstage Bat*, plus short pieces: one fictional on *Why the Bat Flies at Night* and another informative entitled *Amazing Bat Facts*.

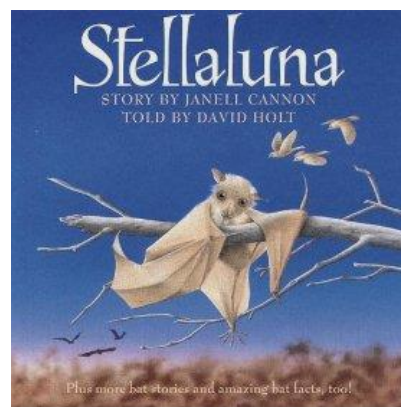
This is a gentle, melodic theme performed on acoustic guitar in the folk tradition; it is the theme that introduces the reading of the children's story, *Stellaluna*.

(See these titles under Spoken Word – Children's Fiction – United States and under Spoken Word – Documentary – United States – *Amazing Bat Facts*)

**Ref:** Steven Heller, *Stellaluna's Theme*, [Amazon](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Steven Heller/ David Holt, *Stellaluna* CD, [CDUniverse](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

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**WD-US11** United States 1975

## UNDERGROUND MUSIC

WD – Folk – Ballad – Country Rock – Vocal & Instrumental

**Comp. & Arr:** Dolan ELLIS (LY-WD40)

**Perf:** Dolan ELLIS (vocal & guitar)

Jeff Haskell (piano)

Bill Poutinen (bass or steel string)

**Prod:** Dolan Ellis

**Prod. Co:** Capo Records; Phoenix, AZ

**Rec. Loc:** Lee Furr's Recording Studio; Tucson, AZ

**Time:** 4:58

**LP:** TOUCH THE EARTH

Capo CJ 51075

12" 33rpm (Sd 1 – Bd 6)



**Notes:** Dolan Ellis, one of the founding members of The New Christy Minstrels, was appointed Arizona's Official State Balladeer in 1966.

On his Web site this song is described as – “about spelunking or cave exploration... and is illustrated on stage with some great photography.”

Following a long spoken introduction the song is divided into two distinct parts: 2 stanzas in the folk tradition and 5 stanzas in a distinct country rock mode.

(Spoken) “This song is the result of fallin’ on my hands an’ knees, an’ bumpin’ my head, an’ shinin’ my shins in the unexplored caves of Arizona. To me the spell of Satan seems to live in these caverns an’ I know he anxiously awaits today that I should make a mistake.”

(Silent pause – water drops – spoken verse)

Laugh, Satan, laugh, for you have led me down this path  
Into the darkness of the hallways to your office  
In the dungeon dark an’ scary I can sense your secretary  
Looking at us with a malice of stalactites.  
I feel your evil close to me, surrounded by your mystery  
I know I’m in the Devil’s Den an’ I feel excitement deep within.

Then he strums a few chords and sings 2 folk stanzas –

How strange it is your underworld  
Museum of natural arts unfurled  
I marvel at the colored murals  
That stain along your stairways.

The beauties of your basement rooms  
Like sculptured statues in the gloom  
Encase me like an ancient tomb  
Down your darken doorways  
The [.....] called us all around  
There’s nothing holy in this hole in the ground.

The rhythm picks up and he follows this with 5 rapid, upbeat stanzas with a country music feeling (see [LY-WD40](#)) and a chorus – Underground, underground

Unfortunately, it was not possible to understand 3 or 4 words in the lyrics here and these spots are indicated by brackets around dotted lines.

In a sense the song is a poetic trip report about an unknown cave somewhere in Arizona. The first spoken part followed by the two folk stanzas tells of the strange and beautiful sights there. Then in the upbeat section, the first stanza talks about the underground music –

Ain’t never heard of underground music  
Like you’re hearin’ in my underground song

In the next four stanzas, he speaks of sliding through holes and climbing down a rope, listening to the water drops and to the sound of his carbide lamp, and the emotions instilled by the underground environment. The last stanza congers up Satan and blames him for leading the way down these dark hallways and expresses hope that this time he is “out to lunch.”

**Ref:** Dolan Ellis, Biography, [DolanEllis](#)

Dolan Ellis, Original Songs, Sample is under the title, Stanzas 3 & 4 + Chorus, [DolanEllis](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Recordings, Touch the Earth, (0:40), Stanzas 3 & 4 + Chorus, [DolanEllis](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

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