

Supplement to “Footprints in the Snow: The Intercontinental Journey of a Song,” by Julay Brooks. Old-Time Herald Vol. 13, No. 4 (December 2012). www.oldtimeherald.org.

Appendix, Acknowledgements, and Footnotes

Appendix: Songs that Aren't "Footprints in the Snow"

This paper was inspired by conflicting attributions about the song's original author and date of composition. Initially I followed leads to different songs with similar titles, including these:

1) “Little Footsteps in the Snow,” (As Sung with Immense Success by James Norrie of Thatcher, Primrose & West's Minstrels), by Gussie L. Davis (1863-1899), published by George Prophet, Jr. in 1886 or 1887 (it says both in various places on the sheet music). It is about a traveler who sees a woman's "tender little footstep" in the snow. He finds the poor dejected woman and takes her home to her friends. Other Davis songs did become country classics, including:

“We Sat Beneath the Maple On the Hill” (1880), recorded by Vernon Dalhart, Posey Rorer & the North Carolina Ramblers, J.E. Mainer's Mountaineers, the Callahan Brothers, the Stanley Brothers, and others.

“When the Snowflakes Fall Again” (1887), recorded by Ernest V. Stoneman, Wilmer Watts & His Lonely Eagles, Bill Cox, the Prairie Ramblers, and others.

“Make Up and Be Lovers Again” (1893), recorded by Roy Harvey & Posey Rorer, Darby & Tarlton, the Carter Family, the Dixon Brothers, the Monroe Brothers, the Stanley Brothers, and others.

“In The Baggage Coach Ahead” (1896), recorded by George Reneau (The Blind Singer of the Smoky Mountains), Vernon Dalhart, Fiddlin' John Carson, Andrew Jenkins & Carson Robison, and others.

“He's Coming To Us Dead” (1899), recorded by Grayson & Whitter, Stuart Hamblen, Ted Hawkins' Mountaineers, and others.

“One Little Word” (1899), recorded by the Carter Family and the Morris Brothers.

2) “I Traced Her Little Footsteps in the Snow,” with words by Geo. Russell Jackson and music by C.W. Bennet, © 1886 by Hill, Jordan, & Co. It appeared in *Wehman's Collection of Songs, No. 31* in July 1891. This is cited as an alternate composer claim to Harry Wright in *Country Music Sources* (2002), by Meade, Spottswood and Meade. It is the most similar of all non-Footprints songs I've encountered, though it is clearly a different, separate song. Only the words survive and they don't scan with Harry Wright's music, but they could have been inspired by his lyrics, especially given the use of the word "traced." The one lost in the snow is a child, another child narrates, and the father finds her.

Three other songs use the concept of footprints in the snow as a metaphor for the transitory nature of love and life. Two are about love that didn't last and a third mourns the death of a child.

3) “Footsteps in the Snow“ (Song and Chorus), by Fred. Kenyon Jones, © 1887 by Ditson & Co, and inscribed "To his friend Edgar W. Foster." The chorus ends with “and our love it quickly faded like the footsteps in the snow.”

4) “Footsteps Parting in the Snow“ (Song and Chorus), music by J.E. Rohrbough with uncredited words, © 1879 by Wm. A. Pond & Co. This song contrasts summer with winter, and the painful change from new, blossoming love to love lost.

5) “Little Footprints in the Snow,” by James W. Morse, © 1899 by Adams Music Co., is sung by a dead child's parent, who recalls her little footprints in the snow.

6) “Footprints on the Snow,” words by J.B. Murphy, Esq., composed & published by J. Henry Whittemore, as sung by Lew Benedict of Duprez & Benedict's Minstrels. This is the earliest song in the list, from 1866. The singer develops romantic feelings for a woman he's never seen, proclaiming that, "I think of her with fond delight everywhere I go, the darling pretty one who left her footprints in the snow." The lyrics were reprinted in *Jule Keen's 'Love Among Der Sweitzer' Songster*, © 1870 by Frank Starr & Co., 41 Platt St., New York City.

Discography

Note: Some labels give erroneous composer or arranger credits. Monroe's recording for Columbia in 1945 credits Boyd Lane as arranger (there is no composer credit). *The Music of Bill Monroe* (Rosenberg and Wolfe, 2007) quotes Monroe as saying “I don't know why Boyd Lane's name is on there as arranger – I think he had a radio show in Chicago.” Monroe's later recording for Decca in 1952 credits the song to a “Rupert Jones”, which Wolfe says is “certainly a pseudonym for Bill Monroe.” Jack Guthrie, in his 1947 recording, also credits Rupert Jones. Buckley and Skidmore credit “Carter.”

ERNEST BRANCH, ACC. WEST VIRGINIA RAMBLERS

(This credit appears only in the Gennett recording ledger.)

Ernest Branch - vocal & banjo, Jess Johnston and Bernice Coleman – fiddles, Roy Harvey – guitar
Richmond, IN, June 4, 1931

N 17795-A Little Foot Prints Superior 2688 (released July 1931), County CD-3519

Superior 2688 as DAVE WALKER, County CD-3519 as WEST VIRGINIA RAMBLERS

RAMBLIN' RED FOLEY

Vocal with Cumberland Ridge Runners: Homer "Slim" Miller – fiddle, Karl Davis – mandolin, Hartford Taylor – guitar.
Chicago, March 21, 1934

CP 1008- I Traced Her Little Footsteps In The Snow Conqueror 8304, Bear Family BCD 16759

BIG SLIM ALIFF

Harry C. McAuliffe--vocal & guitar New York City, December 17, 1936

61489-A Footprints in the Snow Decca 5316 (released January 11, 1937)

McAuliffe's performing name was normally Big Slim, the Lone Cowboy.

RAMBLIN' RED FOLEY

Vocal with Cumberland Ridge Runners: Homer "Slim" Miller – fiddle, Karl Davis – mandolin, Hartford Taylor – guitar,
unknown – fiddle, Whitey Ford – emcee.
Cincinnati, c. 1937-38.

Pinex Merry-makers transcription for WLW Cincinnati, and other stations.

CLIFF CARLISLE & HIS BUCKLE BUSTERS

Cliff Carlisle – vocal, steel guitar, Shannon Grayson – mandolin, Bill Carlisle – guitar.
Charlotte, NC, July 26, 1939.

66016-A Footprints in the Snow Decca 5720 (released August 10, 1939), Decca 46105, JSP 7732D

BOGUE FORD

Vocal, unaccompanied Boomtown, Shasta County, CA, September 3, 1939

AFS 4209 B1 Footprints in the Snow Library of Congress

DENVER DARLING & HIS TEXAS COWHANDS

Denver Darling – vocal, rhythm guitar, probably: Mac Ceppos – fiddle, Eddie Smith – accordion, Tony Mottola – guitar,
Vaughn Horton – steel guitar, unknown bass

New York City, 1944

Little Footprints in the Snow World Transcription W-28 (41512)

Made for the syndicated *Sagebrush Serenade* radio show.

BILL MONROE & HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS

Bill Monroe – vocal & mandolin, Tex Willis – guitar, Chubby Wise – fiddle, Sally Ann Forrester – accordion, Cedric
Rainwater – bass, Stringbean – banjo. Art Satherley –producer Chicago,
February 13, 1945

C4359 Footprints in the Snow (arr. Boyd Lane) Columbia 37151 (released October 28, 1946), Columbia
20080, Bear Family BCD 16399

This release cracked the *Billboard* country chart in December 1946 and ultimately reached #5, but you wouldn't have guessed it from this *Billboard* record review in November 1946:

*It's old-time singing and string band playing by Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys for these sides. Singing in backwoods style, Monroe spins it in spirited fashion for the traditional "Footprints in the Snow," shouting out how he followed the snow markings to find his lost Nellie. And in nasal duet, a heavy outdoor flavor in the voices, sings of lost love for the leader's own "True Life Blues." **These will mean more for the old folks at home rather than the phono trade.*** (Reviewer's emphasis).

BRADLEY KINCAID

Vocal & guitar, with fiddle & mandolin February 1947.

T 1014 Foot Prints in the Snow Majestic 6011, Royale 8038, Mercury 6169 (2339)

Billboard's jukebox record reviewer looked more favorably on Kincaid than he had on Monroe. From the April 19, 1947 issue:

*A new folk singer for the label, Bradley Kincaid impresses no end with his sincerity in song. Supported by fiddles, mandolins, and guitars, Kincaid sings it softly and sympathetically for the cowboy torch lullaby, Those Precious Letters, taking a waltz tempo to tell the story of letters that are now souvenirs of a lost love. Coupling is his own Footprints in the Snow, in a happier frame of song as he tells how he found his girl friend by tracing her footprints in the snow. **Love Letters and Footprints in the Snow stack up for phono play.*** (Reviewer's emphasis).

JACK GUTHRIE

ET 2164 Footprints In the Snow (Rupert Jones) Capitol Transcription G 91-1, Bear Family
BCD 16400

Jack Guthrie – guitar and vocal, Billy Hughes - fiddle, Porky Freeman - electric guitar, Red Murrell - guitar, Cliffie Stone - bass
Radio Recorders, Hollywood, CA March 21, 1947

BUCKLEY AND SKIDMORE WITH THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY BOYS

New York City, 1947

Footprints in the Snow (Carter) Continental C-8030 (released September-October 1947)

Listed in *Billboard's* Advance Record Releases list for the week ending Sept. 13, 1947, in the September 20 issue.

BILL MONROE & HIS BLUE GRASS BOYS

Bill Monroe – mandolin and vocal, Jimmy Martin – guitar, Charlie Cline – fiddle, Sonny Osborne – banjo, Ernie Newton – bass.

Nashville, TN, July 18, 1952

83131 Footprints in the Snow (Rupert Jones)
Decca 28416, Bear Family BCD 15423
Release date October 13, 1952

Acknowledgments

So many people helped with this project over the two years it took to complete. I am extremely grateful to all of them.

Special thanks must go to Dick Spottswood and Tom Diamant for their constant support and assistance during the researching and writing of this article.

Thanks also to John Shepard and the staff of the Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library at UC Berkeley, Dave Sax, Ivan Tribe, Cary Ginell, Harry Rice, David Davis, Dave Freeman, Christopher King, Chris Strachwitz, Steve Weiss and the staff of the Wilson Library at UNC, Malcolm Rockwell, Joe Hickerson, Catherine Kerst, Jennifer Cutting, Jim Leary, Peter J. Knapp, Kinney Rorrer, Steve Roud, Malcolm Taylor, Mike Yates, Jim Carroll, Pat Mackenzie, Sally Chestnutt, Max Tyler, Michael Kilgariff, Matthew Diamant, Elliott Hancock, Jeanette L. Casey, Robert B. Waltz, Steve Hathaway, Larry Cohea, Neil Rosenberg, Bill Dean Myatt, John Cowley, Matthew Barton, Alan Clark, and Kenneth Baughmann, Beth Weil, Mary Tilson, and Carl Fleischhauer.

And finally, thank you to the archivists and digitizers. Were it not for the British Library's digital 19th Century

Newspaper archive, and the digitized images online from many special collections in libraries throughout the world, this article could not have been completed.

Footnotes

p. 2:

Cleo Davis, "Man, are you crazy...." 1981 interview by Wayne Erbsen, via the Digital Library of the Archive of Appalachia.

Bill Monroe, "a guy with the Cumberland Ridge Runners:" *The Music of Bill Monroe*, by Neil Rosenberg & Charles Wolfe. They attribute it to liner notes by Douglas B. Green to *Bill Monroe & His Blue Grass Boys: The Classic Bluegrass Recordings, Volume 2*. These notes come from an interview or interviews Green did with Monroe.

"New songs every week by Harry Wright:" *The Era, Classifieds*, from April 4, 1875. Another ad dated July 12, 1874 mentions a list of songs written and composed by Harry Wright. This is the earliest mention I have found of Wright and Gannon working together.

p. 4:

"Beware of a party trading on her name:" *The Era, Classifieds*, Oct 28, 1877.

All Jolly Little Lewis and Wright/Gannon ads: *The Era, Classifieds*, 1876.

p. 5:

"copyright troll:" *The Birth of the Performing Right in Britain*, p. 106, an essay from the book *Privilege and Property: Essays on the History of Copyright*. Isabella Alexander (author) credits Lloyd Bently (editor) with the description in a footnote.

"without fee or license:" *The Era*, Dec. 16, 1877.

p. 9:

"Do you see this thing?" From the Musical Copyright Agitation column appearing in *The Era* on March 25, 1877.

Etymology column about spooning: *The Word Detective*, issue of Sept. 6, 2002. <http://www.word-detective.com/090602.html>

p. 12:

"A good many of these old songs:" *Villages of the White Horse*, by Alfred Williams.

p. 14:

"weakened by having parted with their songs:" From an excerpt of *Villages of the White Horse* published in the *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard*. For this quote and the one above I am indebted to Mike Yates, since his essay on Alfred Williams, *The Folk Hero*, gave me access to them. The essay can be found at <http://www.alfredwilliams.org.uk/folkhero.html>.

"very protective of their own songs:" *A Simple Countryman?*, essay by Jim Carroll and Pat Mackenzie, from *Dear Far-Voiced Veteran: Essays in honor of Tom Munnelly*.

"pronounced East London accent:" Liner notes by Richard K. Spottswood to the CD *Old-Country Music in a New Land: Folk Music of Immigrants from Europe and the Near East*. (New World Records, NW 264)

p. 16:

"H.M.S. Opal, 14, corvette:" *Naval News* column, *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle*, Nov. 4, 1876.

"There were several similar songs:" Newspaper article, *Salvation Army Meetings at the Town Hall*. I have no name or date for the newspaper this comes from. The Town Hall referred to is that of Birmingham, England.

p. 17

"challenged by the loggers' conviction:" Liner notes by Sidney Robertson Cowell to the album *Wolf River Songs*.

"rewrite them, one verse at a time:" Gene Autry, from interview of Autry and Pat Buttram by Kenneth Baughman, on July 5, 1990.

p. 22:

"Friends of Harry Wright:" Obituary, *The Stage*, Feb. 4, 1926. This obituary goes on to mention that Nellie Gannon passed away at Brixton and was buried in Streatham Park cemetery. It may be that the whole family is buried there.

p. 29:

"I don't know why Boyd Lane's name is on there:" Liner notes to *Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys, Vol. 2*. (County CSS 105, 1980.), from interview of Monroe by Douglas B. Green.

"certainly a pseudonym for Bill Monroe:" *The Music of Bill Monroe*, p. 91, by Charles Wolfe.

p. 30/31:

"It's old-time singing:" *Record Reviews* column, *Billboard Magazine*, Nov. 23, 1946.

p. 31:

"A new folk singer:" *Record Reviews* column, *Billboard Magazine*, April 19, 1947.