The Music of the Cumberland Trail
An Interview with Bob Fulcher

By Steve Goldfield

Bob Fulcher is a Tennessee State Park ranger and a folklorist. The park Bob runs is the Cumberland Trail, and he has produced a CD of music from and about the region surrounding the trail. I interviewed him for Fiddler Magazine in July 2002 at the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes in Port Townsend, Washington.

What are the origins of your interest in traditional music; how did you get involved in playing and documenting it?

My father played some old time fiddle tunes on the French harp as well as other kinds of stuff, but I was never really taken up with the sounds of old time music until I went off to college and heard other people playing, people close to my age. That was the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Jon Sundell was the first person I heard playing clawhammer banjo. He made an album for JuneAppal at one point. John McCutcheon moved to town; he was learning to play banjo already. In the process of him learning and some other guys close to my age — David Burns of the Corklikkers, Dan Gammon, who is still an active fiddler in the area — I started having people to play that music with. A great variety of old time players would come and perform at the Jubilee Center, which is now the Jubilee Community. This was in 1971. By 1972, McCutcheon moved to town. A scene started to develop, which I participated in.

Ann Romaine was organizing tours, which would include great old time players. I met a guy — he and I rented a house one semester — named Nat Kuykendall, who worked for the National Park Service. He started a festival there which is still going on called Old-Timer’s Day at Cade’s Cove. He played old time banjo. He was interviewing old people who had lived in Cade’s Cove, which is a very significant piece of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I went with him to meet an old time banjo player, a guy named Commodore Tipton, who lived in an old bus and drove a dune buggy around as transportation. The dune buggy was fixed up for these corny, tourist-trap places. He was a character. I had never done that until that evening when we went to Commodore Tipton’s bus. This guy was friendly and interesting and playing tunes. I was real impressed with that experience.

So when I got a job on the Cumberland Plateau for the first time in 1976, that’s what I wanted to do. I started asking around who played banjo and who played the fiddle. I was playing the music at park programs. This was a summer job with Tennessee State Parks at that point. Then I put on a festival. Just like my friend Nat had done in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, I did essentially the same thing at Tipton’s, and that one is still going on and called Old-Timer’s Day. I copied that. We invited the old-timers out to play their music.

That was a magic kind of summer for me. I met first the John Sharp family and a few other old time players. They led me to Cotton Tipton. He led me to Dee Hicks. Then another fellow told me about Dick Burnett, and I went to see him. I asked questions around Monticello and found out there was a man named Clyde Davenport who had a little repair shop in town. I met him.

I’ve heard that story.

Clyde tells it every chance he can, but it’s true.

I heard it from you. You visited Clyde, who told you that he didn’t play and sent you off to visit other people who didn’t play very well who asked why you weren’t visiting Clyde. He finally played for you on your third visit.

Then I met the Troxells and Virgil Anderson. I went to work at an environmental education center after I graduated. I was making $30 a month and food and a place to stay. I wrote a letter to the Library of Congress and sent them a list of fiddle tunes and ballads that I had collected from Clyde Davenport and Dee Hicks.

Had other people visited Dee Hicks before you?

No. Clyde Davenport had been visited by, talked to, and worked with a couple of the most eminent people in old time music. They did not learn of his fiddle abilities. This was when he recorded on
banjo with W. L. Gregory. Clyde’s fiddling is represented by a spliced-together “Turkey in the Straw” and “Sally Goodin.” It says in the liner notes that it “shows off Clyde’s fiddling, a more recent style than Gregory’s but exciting in its own right” and that the listener should note Gregory’s backup banjo style. Clyde is so eccentric and strange; he treated them sort of like he treated me, just continued to throw them off. But since I was circulating in the community, I heard enough testimony that “Clyde is just pulling your leg. That man can fiddle.”

When I first met you and Clyde in 1992, I asked, “How long have the two of you been playing together?” Clyde said “We hardly ever play together,” and you said “sixteen years.” Then you told me the story that you had to visit him three times before he would play for you.

And then this amazing repertoire of tunes opened up. I got to record it all on this Nagra recorder from the Library of Congress. I recorded most of Clyde’s repertoire at that time. Dee’s repertoire took several more years to document because it was so extensive. It took a lot of time for him to pull out. That’s how I got started.

After hearing Dee Hicks sing ballads and Clyde Davenport play the fiddle and banjo, that summer changed my life. I was listening to three people whom I thought were magnificent. I had not encountered other people like them; Ann Romaine hadn’t brought anybody quite like those guys. Maybe Nimrod Workman. That was in 1976. In 1977 I was able to borrow the recorder and lived in my little Fairlane for several weeks before my summer job started again at the same park. About a month before I went back to work for the park, I left my work at the environment center and picked up this tape recorder at the American Folklore Center at the Library of Congress. Carl Fleischauer very kindly took me in and showed me how to use it.

Were you an intern or a volunteer? The Library does that quite a bit.

This was very early. Joe Hickerson told me my number in the program. I think it was one of the first five loans that they made. A friend of mine had notified me that this loan program had been announced in the Library of Congress newsletter. They said I had to have a sponsor. A little college agreed to sponsor me in name, Union College. I also had to send the college a letter that I was fully responsible for every piece of equipment.

A Nagra cost thousands of dollars, and you were making nothing.

Thirty dollars a month. I couldn’t have borrowed this without the college giving me their name. That was the extent of their sponsorship. The Library of Congress gave me a little supply of tape, not at all enough for the volume of material that I already knew I needed to record. I wrote to Charles Wolfe and sent him some tapes, and he got some more tape for me from the Tennessee Folklore Society budget. That’s how I got to know Charles. I started sending tapes of Dee Hicks and Virgil to Charles and Joe Wilson. By 1977, Joe invited them to the National Folk Festival. I became a folklorist and a presenter of these people, and I’ve more or less done that ever since.

What was your degree in?

In forestry.

How did you work your way into your present job?

After that second summer that I worked at Pickett State Park, which is on the Cumberland Plateau, I had worked two seasonal jobs as a naturalist. I had applied for an opening that had come up as a regional naturalist, a full-time job in about fifteen parks as a resource person to organize special events, publications, exhibits, and educational functions — the interpretive function of the parks in the Middle Tennessee region, including Pickett State Park, which I was really glad about. I applied for that job and got it, and I kept that position until I was transferred to the Cumberland Trail position a year and a half ago. From Middle Tennessee, I got the East Tennessee region. But, while I was still in Middle Tennessee, by 1978 I had met these folklorists at the National Folk Festival and learned about grants. Some people were out there starving doing this work and living in their cars. Getting paid to do it was a new thing. The NEA Folk Arts program was brand new. The Library of Congress’ program was brand new. That was the beginning of the new age of Washington, D.C. folklore.

I went to a workshop about writing grants to the National Endowment for the Arts and learned enough there to write one to initiate the Tennessee State Parks Folklife Project. I got a grant from them which allowed me to hire three folklorists, equip them, and put them out in the field. We started to survey traditional culture in Tennessee. We continued under various types of projects to do that until this time. The work has been conducted, through our efforts, in close to eighty counties. We have put people, for a little while anyway, in most of the state. I have two working right now on the trail, and I had two last summer.

Are these professional folklorists?

It’s been both but mostly I’ve hired people from graduate programs. Some wonderful folklorists have worked for us: Tom Rankin at Duke, the Center for Documentary Studies, Betty Bolanus who

Bob with Clyde Davenport, Old Timer’s Day at Pickett State Park, c. 1986.
has been at the Smithsonian for many years, Ray Allen from Brooklyn College. They recorded music and other material. I gained a lot of insight into the discipline and the methodologies and began to have even more discourse with academically-trained, professional folklorists and attended some of the academic meetings. That is how I have tangentially intersected the world of folklore.

How did you meet people like Bob Douglas and Charlie Acuff?

I met Charlie very early in Tennessee at the event that my friend started in the Great Smoky Mountains in 1973. Charlie was one of the first fiddlers I met in Tennessee in Blount County, which adjoins the National Park. By golly, he came down with a great old time stringband. They had a two-finger banjo picker, a guy that worked at the Alcoa Aluminum plant like he did. We were just all knocked out because we were trying to play clawhammer. This guy had this sharp two-finger style. It cut through and charged Charlie’s fiddling. I can’t even remember his name now.

I think I first heard Bob Douglas at a fiddle contest in Alabama, probably the highest regarded contest by fiddlers because they were most conscientious about the judging. I heard him there in 1977. The World’s Fair was held in Knoxville in 1982, and for six months, there was a folklife festival. I was involved in the planning of it, on the advisory committee. I spent quite a lot of time there because it was great. They drew from everywhere in the Appalachian region and a little bit beyond. They had people like Sam Chapman from Mississippi. Bob Douglas came up with another of my former housemates, Ron Williams, who did all the Pine Breeze stuff later on. Very soon after I started doing my recordings, he started working with kids at the Pine Breeze Institute, which was for kids with emotional or family problems who need a therapeutic setting. He had recorded Bob Douglas. At the World’s Fair, these little institutions were allowed to bring up people and have a week of showcasing people that they worked with. I had the Rockytoppers, Cordell Kemp, Lennie Johnson, some people a little bit different. Clyde Davenport wouldn’t come because he couldn’t leave his job; he was a school janitor. He was kind of tied down in those early years.

Years later I had a folklorist, Drew Beisswenger, who was really fired up about Bob. He was more excited about him than I was. He introduced me to how important Bob was, and I got serious about him.

How wide is it?

36 inches. It’s a linear state park.

Not even as wide as the Blue Ridge Highway.

It’s a footpath. It’s not really correct to say that. There are many places on the trail where it will only be 36 inches wide, but we have just acquired 5,000 acres, for instance, that the trail runs through. All in all, the park’s acreage may total 12,000 acres, which is a significant size, when all the properties are acquired for the trail. At this point, the trail is only half built. We are building the rest of it now and will be for several years.

Does it start at the Cumberland Gap?

Yes. The southern terminus is Signal Point, which is another National Park Service area that was significant during the battle of Lookout Mountain near Chattanooga, which overlooks the Tennessee River gorge. The trail actually extends south into Marion County. Bob Townsend’s territory, but nobody knows Marion County so we typically speak of the trail as going from Cumberland Gap to Signal Point.

Who was the driving force behind this project? Was that you?

It was not me. The driving force has been a man named Ron Weber. He was a pharmacist in Nashville. He decided to talk some of the governor’s staff into believing in this idea, although the trail was originally conceived in 1970 or 1971. At one point a governor abandoned the idea during an eight-year administration. Then the current governor supported the redevelopment of the idea. It has worked primarily because Ron Weber has been so effective. He developed a private, nonprofit organization to acquire and develop the trail. When the state attempted to do that, they ran into all the obstacles that state government has to face to have any sort of
fundraising or land buying. A private nonprofit is not as constrained and can be much more effective.

Is music a theme of the park?

It is. I have a position as an interpretative specialist, and old habits are hard to break. In rural Tennessee, I have always related to my neighbors and friends and people I meet through music. I feel that I need to establish credibility in these communities. It’s a way to relate to people. That was one of the skills that I could use, from my own experience, to say we, the Cumberland Trail, respect your community. We are coming here respectfully and not recklessly. We’re your new neighbor. We appreciate your history. To show that respect, we put on a series of community concerts in five communities along the whole route of the trail. We mixed musicians from communities up and down the trail in each concert. This CD is a calling card that says we know that you have told your own history, you know your own history. The twenty-three tracks of music on this CD are the proof of that. The landscape has been appreciated and celebrated by musicians. Here’s the proof.

Let’s talk about the CD and who’s on it.

That is part of the concept, to make the statement that musicians have taken interest in history, not just the history of music but the history of landscape and politics and life and industry and everything. It’s a thematic album in that respect. We wanted these tracks to be the pieces of music that tell us about this landscape and history. “Cumberland Gap” is certainly one of the first pieces that shows up on the CD. It’s sort of like traveling from Cumberland Gap down to the south in terms of presenting history, geography, and also players, where they’re from. It follows the trail from north to south. The other aspect of the CD, which is a little bit different, is that it is enhanced and is also meant to be a guide to the Cumberland Trail. All maps will be on the CD. Other files will include text about the ecology and the geology of the Plateau, the wildlife along the Cumberland Trail. Someone who may want to visit the trail can prepare themselves pretty well for appreciating what they see by reading general history files. I’ll have an essay about the economic history of the region with old photographs, the history of the mining, logging, and coke production, settlement and colonization, immigrant communities — that will be included in the historical essay. It will also have several files with fuller information about the musical heritage. There will be files with artist biographies and histories with an event and venue listing so that if people are coming to the trail, they can see where along the Cumberland Trail music is being played in community centers on a weekly or monthly basis or at annual events.

There will also be history about the recording studios because one of the ideas that we had was to record this in some of the smaller studios in the corridor. We weren’t entirely successful in getting it done like that, but we can represent quite a few and will write about others that were there. We’ll give some sort of credit to what the small or hometown studios have done to preserve the region’s music. And we’ll have a great opportunity to have a lot of photos.

Can you tell me about the musicians and what they played?

Yes. The first tune on the CD is Norman Blake singing “The Cumberland Land.” I recorded that ballad from Dee Hicks and then discovered that his deceased brother’s family, Bessford Hicks, had a tape recording of him singing the song. It tells an immigrant’s tale of traveling into the Cumberland land. This Cumberland land is the Nashville area. It is a ballad that is full of vibrant detail of that passage, more than any early ballad that I have familiarity with, though there may be some that I don’t know about. I tried to find its history and noted in Frank C. Brown’s collection a reference to a ballad called “Cumberland Traveler.” They had a very partial, uncharacteristically fragmentary entry from an old 1820s manuscript. But enough was in there that I knew that was the same as this beautiful ballad. I followed up, and the manuscript was held in Boone at Appalachian State University. Sure enough they sent me the full manuscript, and the last line of it is “If you want to know the time, these lines were wrote in ’89,” 1789, because the manuscript was dated in 1820.

So this is a very early ballad of settlement on the western frontier, a very beautiful thing. I thought of Norman Blake as somebody to present it because his voice is so unpretentious and honest. There are no contrivances in his singing. I thought that he would enjoy a song of that sort with that kind of history, and he did, very much. He responded quite positively to the notion of participating — and this is post-“O Brother” — he sure didn’t have to, but he very graciously did. He plays the guitar. He arranged a very nice guitar part and sings it really beautifully.

“Cumberland Gap” is on there fiddled by Russ Wilson. Russ Wilson is a relative of Bob Rogers, the fiddler from Los Angeles that Dave Leddell, Tom Sauber, and Mel Durham played with. Russ Wilson learned his fiddling directly and purely from Bob Rogers and nobody else. He stopped fiddling out when he was about fourteen after he won at Fiddler’s Grove. He says he has lost interest in fiddling. But he is a very gracious, kind, friendly guy. In his home, he’ll fiddle up a storm. He doesn’t like to go out and fiddle. But he fiddles this beautiful version of “Cumberland Gap.” His mother sings it; she lived in Cumberland Gap for some time. Her father had a hotel there in the town of Cumberland Gap, and they lived just a few miles from Cumberland Gap. So I thought they’d be most appropriate to do that number, and he fiddles it in good Bob Rogers style. It’s the style that he has.

I asked Clyde Davenport to play “Coal Creek March” for us. Clyde added some of the extra parts that are not on the Clydeoscope recording [on County Records]. He brought out some old stuff. He never heard Dick Burnett play it; Burnett was one purveyor of the tune. Clyde heard another old player. Clyde’s got a fine presentation of it.

Another was an existing recording of Howard Armstrong. I picked something that he did for Rounder. Howard’s Tennessee time was mostly spent in two places right on the trail. He was born in Dayton, Tennessee, which is right on the trail — that’s where Bob Douglas wound up. Then his father, who was an ironworker or ironmaster, moved to Lafollette. If you’ve ever seen the movie “Louie Bluie,” it opens with Howard running around Lafollette, Tennessee. The Cumberland Trail goes right past it; it’s one of the major gateway communities. We knew we had to have some Howard on there. We used “Yes, Pappy, Yes.” Howard didn’t perform any historical tunes, but I felt that “Yes, Pappy, Yes” gave a
“We wanted these tracks to be the pieces of music that tell us about this landscape and history... It’s sort of like traveling from Cumberland Gap down to the south in terms of presenting history, geography, and also players, where they’re from.”

pretty good perspective of a farm boy. It’s Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong. Armstrong sings the part of the father: “Did you milk the cow? Yes, pappy, yes. You boys haven’t done a daggedon thing.” Rounder reissued that recently, and they were very kind to allow us to use it.

Other pieces include Luke Brandon recording a piece that his father learned in a coal camp from a blind guitarist, fingerpicking style, called “Sand.” There’s a Jimmy McCarroll tune, “Southern III,” on the CD. Luke Brandon plays on that just like his father played with Jimmy McCarroll in the Roane County Ramblers. The fiddler who fiddles on that has a long history of fiddling with great bands in Knoxville from the fifties on. He did a super job, much slower than Jimmy McCarroll did it, but he really brings out a wonderful touch, a lot of Jimmy’s style and the way that Jimmy evoked the sense of that train. He really did a nice job of that.

Jean Horner, a fiddler and fiddlemaker from Tennessee — his stuff is circulating around in the Smithsonian, a very fine instrument maker — he plays with a bunch of guys who used to be in the New River Boys. They had an album on JuneAppal. They were a bluegrass band in the early ’60s when there weren’t that many bluegrass bands that were really together in Tennessee. They were living in Nashville. It was a strange period for bluegrass then. The New River Boys were a bunch of real country boys, and they played this hardcore bluegrass. People still talk about them. Jean Horner must be up in his seventies and was with them. They played the “New River Train,” which was one of their themes. They thought it was about their New River, which is extremely doubtful [chuckles]. It has some early beginnings, that tune, Stoneman played the earliest recorded version.

_He lived around Galax, and that New River starts near there._

Yes, it’s pretty clear it’s that one. On the other hand, the “Black Mountain Rag,” everybody everywhere else believes it is written about North Carolina or the highest mountain in Kentucky, which is Black Mountain. But “Black Mountain Rag” was written about Cumberland County. Charles Wolfe has a whole chapter about it in _The Devil’s Box_.

*It was originally written as the “Black Mountain Blues.”*

Yes, I’ve written about it, too. Leslie Keith was playing on the courthouse steps in Crossville in the 1930s and put together “Black Mountain Blues.” He played it in a contest attended by Curly Fox, and when Curly put out his 1947 recording, everybody went crazy for it. Some of the great Nashville fiddlers were fiddling it. Doc Watson made it a standard for flatpicking guitarists. The Crook Brothers, before Watson, had made it a standard for every harp player. They played it on the Opry all the time. It became a kind of national anthem of acoustic musicians, certainly one of the great American pieces. Our cover photo of the album was made at Black Mountain, the real Black Mountain on the Cumberland Trail, and we own 400 acres of Black Mountain. It’s spectacular. The trail literally goes up and over there; there’s a little hump. Mike DeFosche fiddles “Black Mountain Rag” on the CD with Edwin Wilson, Edwin’s wife, and with a bowed cello, played by a woman from Nashville named Brooke Allen.

We have “The Hills of Roane County,” another standard piece of American folk music. The Blue Sky Boys, the Louvins, the Monroe Brothers all played it. It’s just part of the common vocabulary of people who know country music. It’s about a murder committed between two black railroad workers in Oakdale, Tennessee, just a few miles from the Cumberland Trail. The trial of Willis Mayberry, the court transcript is there, all the details are there. A folklorist from Cumberland County did an amazing investigative job in the ’60s to discover all this, and I found her manuscript files. Some of the stuff she did publish, but she left so much additional information that I might be able to include a few more details that haven’t been published about the amazing history of that song. A band called Avery Trace performs it on the CD. Avery Trace is the name of the first official road that crosses from East Tennessee over the Cumberland Plateau into the Nashville basin. It was the Avery Trace that the Cumberland traveler was on. The band members live in Roane and Cumberland counties. They are a bluegrass band. They made a unique arrangement of the tune. They were
most familiar with Tony Rice’s version; they should have been listening to the Blue Sky Boys.

Georgia Boy Brown, the great, great accompanist of Bob Douglas, his son is an amazing banjo player. His name is Ed Brown. Ed recorded a piece on Magnum Banjos that he wrote called “The Essence of Sequatchie County,” a stunning banjo instrumental. It’s just lifting with a very strange time signature. We used an early ‘60s recording that Bob Douglas made of “Sequatchie Valley.”

Little Red Best is still a great harp player. He’s from Greysville, home of the great fiddler Curly Fox. We have Little Red playing Curly Fox’s “Race between the Locomotive and the Model T,” a famous novelty piece that Curly said was about when he was young seeing an engineer who would race against the mailman on the railroad line that parallels the Cumberland Trail. As you walk along the trail, you hear the old Southern railway cars on the right-hand side. All day, you are out in the middle of the woods, you hear “Whoa.” It’s the old Southern line that Curly Fox was riding. We’ve got a bunch of railroad music on the CD.

I wanted the Lantana Drifters on there very much, and Charlie Acuff’s piece falls right there in the middle of the CD. The group is from the middle of the trail in Cumberland County. Charlie, of course, is not from the Plateau, but he is playing with probably the most important old time stringband ever on the Plateau. They played as a group for about twenty years, which is more than any other old time stringband I know of. They don’t play historical pieces, except for “Cumberland Gap” or “Black Mountain Rag.” I asked them to play “Fire on the Mountain.” It’s an interesting historical aspect to the area, fire ecology. That sounds like a weird stretch but it’s not. The burning was intentional for decades. Everyone burned the mountains every year because you had to have free range for pastures. In the East we would never have the conflagrations that you have in the West. You’d have thickets, and people would burn the woods and kill out the ticks. Pasture was the main thing so that animals could go through the range and eat the acorns and nuts. I thought that would be a good piece for them to play. I could have had Charlie play “Going to Chattanooga,” but that piece is on here fiddled by Fletcher Bright, who learned it from Charlie. I wanted Fletcher on it because he has been such a cog in the music scene, and his bluegrass band, the Dismembered Tennesseans, have also been together for about twenty years. Fletcher couldn’t think of other pieces that he thought would fit our theme, and I knew he played Charlie’s “Going to Chattanooga” so Charlie had to play something else. But they do such a wonderful job on “Fire on the Mountain.”

Another different kind of piece on the CD comes from a woman named Emma Miles, who died in 1919 in Signal Mountain. She was one of the most remarkable figures in Tennessee history. She was a painter, a poet, a novelist, a folklorist, a historian, a philosopher. When she was a fairly young woman, she married a hillbilly and lived her life in abject poverty. She had moments of incredible joy in her situation at being out on the Cumberland Mountain unencumbered by material things, but much of her life she suffered from tuberculosis, miscarriages, poverty, lack of clothes and food, the stress of that, seeing her child die in her arms. She was a diarist. She wrote entries almost every day. There isn’t anyone else like that in the whole of the southern mountains. She wrote the first article — an incredible article — about Tennessee music, published in Harper’s called “Some Real American Music.” That chapter was put into her book, Spirit of the Mountains. It was printed in five hundred copies and put out nowhere. It was reprinted by UT Press. Among people interested in Appalachia, women, artists, philosophers, many of them have discovered her. I helped the state museum acquire her dulcimer from her daughter’s estate. I put some money in and they put some money in so we could get it. That dulcimer was used to play “Weevly Wheat,” a tune that she wrote about in some detail in her article in 1904. It was played by David Schnauer, who does studio work in Nashville. Among dulcimer players, he’s huge.

Those are some of the pieces, not all of them. There are some commemorative pieces. Bob Townsend in the Fiery Gizzard configuration plays “Buddy, Won’t You Roll Down the Line.” Bob is from Grundy County. The trail doesn’t go through Grundy County, but the coke ovens, the convict labor leasing that gave rise to that tune were all up and down the trail. The trail goes through the heart of the territory where the Coal Creek March rebellion occurs. Do you know what that was about? The convict leasing system.

I know about the Coal Creek mining disaster.

We have the “Cross Mountain Explosion,” a recently-composed original song about that. It ranks as one of the most tragic mining accidents. That county had two of them. The strike occurred first over convict labor. The state of Tennessee allowed the companies to lease their prisoners, who were almost entirely black people, into servitude for the coal companies. Miners were losing their jobs. The strike occurred over a labor dispute over who was going to sit at the scales, whether he was going to be elected by the miners or whether the company was going to choose him. This was in 1891-92. While the miners were on strike, the companies were bringing in convicts to replace them, building stockades to hold convicts. The miners started organizing and went down and released the convicts forcibly. The National Guard came back with more troops. More miners filtered in out of Kentucky. They started burning stockades. Then the National Guard came back again by trainloads. Shooting broke out. The miners were subdued, but within a year, the convict leasing system was abolished. Several songs came out of that. Ed Kahn and Archie Green documented them. Charles Wolfe wrote an incredible article about the history of the Coal Creek miner’s tune. “Buddy, Won’t You Roll Down the Line” appears to be from the perspective of a black convict mineworker, kind of making fun of the bossman. Ours was arranged a little bit differently by the Fiery Gizzard String Band, but they give a really dynamic presentation. That’s about the last tune on the CD; I believe it is.

[The Cumberland Trail CD should be complete in November 2002. I hope it will be available through the larger mail order houses, but I know folks can find it through our Cumberland Trail web site at www.cumberlandtrail.org. If anyone wants to write us about it, the address is Cumberland Trail Conference, 19 East Fourth Street, Crossville, Tennessee 38555. — Bob Fitcher]