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American Music, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer, 1991), 209-224.

Stable URL:

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HENRIETTA YURCHENCO

Trouble in the Mines: A History in Song and Story by Women of Appalachia

Until the advent of the feminist movement, historians, when they wrote about women at all, documented the lives of the rich and noble and the women of extraordinary gifts. Few bothered to write about the accomplishments of the unglamorous poor, of the disadvantaged women with no public image, living out their lives in the seclusion of their homes.

Nevertheless, through the oral transmission of songs and stories, women have left an indelible mark on their culture, giving pleasure, spiritual sustenance, and emotional satisfaction to family and community. The store of folklore they have handed down provides us with insight into how people view their own history, traditions, and the moral codes by which they live.

I focus here on one small corner of this vast subject: the songs composed by two generations of women from the coal mining areas of Appalachia. Aunt Molly Jackson, her sister Sarah Ogan Gunning, and Florence Reece chronicled the struggle for unionization during the 1920s and 1930s. Later, in the sixties and seventies, Hazel Dickens expanded that repertoire to include feminist issues.

There is a rich lode of American industrial folklore composed by women in the Southern Appalachian mountains. It can be attributed in part to a combination of cultural, economic, historical, and psycho-

Henrietta Yurchenco is Professor Emerita of the City College of New York. She is co-founder and director of the Project for the Study of Women in Music at the CUNY Graduate Center and the author of *A Mighty Hard Road: The Woody Guthrie Story* (1970).

logical factors: a rich musical tradition, an economic disaster of mammoth proportions, a history of radical unionism, and the independent, pioneer spirit of the people.

Aunt Molly Jackson and Sarah Ogan Gunning came to New York City just before World War II, having been banished for union activity in strike-bound Harlan County, Kentucky. They became an important part of my life after the first of many appearances on my programs at radio station WNYC.

Despite the Great Depression and the ever-growing menace of World War II, New York was a lively city, full of promise and enthusiasm. The Works Progress Administration's (WPA) federally sponsored art projects converted a depressed city into a center of cultural activity. New developments in music, dance, theater, and the plastic arts were all around us. And a new "Americanism" was in the air. The interest in American folk roots, black and white, generated by the Roosevelt administration acted as a powerful stimulus for the young intellectuals and artists of that time.

The presence of Aunt Molly and Sarah in New York, along with their friends Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, and Pete Seeger, gave immediacy to this trend. Collections of their songs appeared in popular editions; they performed on radio, and recordings of their music were issued for the first time on major commercial labels. Their influence also extended to the more formal arts: music, theatrical works, and modern ballets based on folk traditions brought into sharp focus an unknown American hinterland.

Most important, however, was the crucial role the Kentuckians and their friends played in the birth of an urban folk song movement. We learned their country songs and used them as models for new songs on contemporary themes; we learned their way of singing and harmonizing, and we learned the proper instrumental style to accompany each kind of song. We also acquired from them knowledge about injustice and hardship suffered by miners, migrant workers, and Dust Bowl refugees, and about chain gangs and lynchings in the South.

Aunt Molly and Sarah did not find a paradise in New York City. Like the rest of us, they suffered poverty, went on "home relief," and were hounded by landlords during the long, hard years of the Depression. Nevertheless, they received a warm welcome from concerned New Yorkers, particularly the radical left. They sang at demonstrations, on picket lines, at school assemblies, and in union halls. They came to our parties (the famous "cause" parties before the war) and became our friends and neighbors.

This new music world was different from the formality of our concert halls and the pizzazz of Broadway and the movies. Even though their songs referred to distant places and unfamiliar circumstances, they

voiced the concerns common to the poor and underprivileged everywhere. We New Yorkers were also moved by our first brush with the vigorous, often harsh, vocal sound of rural peoples. Their language—with its rich imagery, stark realism, humor, human observations, and wealth of new (to us) cultural references—enriched our own speech. They introduced us to the old British and homegrown ballads and tender love songs they had heard and sung since childhood. Such songs we had known only from books, and now we heard them from the throats of living people—and made them our own.

The southern Appalachian mountain region has long been regarded as an isolated, backward area that retains ancient British folk customs, speech, and musical traditions. While this portrait holds a great deal of truth, it suggests a culture preserved in stone, impervious to change. But change *has* come to the mountains, as elsewhere, through advances in communication, migration, and economic and political events.

From their British ancestors of the nineteenth century, the mountain people inherited the old ballads and hymns that were sung in the Scottish “linin’ out” style. Early in this century they learned the blues from black miners and river roustabouts. Originally Methodists and Baptists, they later joined Holiness churches and adopted new, more emotional styles of gospel singing. As the record player (in the 1920s), then the radio, the movies, and TV came to the Appalachians, young people of the mountains embraced every new trend in popular music, just as their peers did across the nation.

Jean Ritchie, the well-known folk singer from Kentucky (whose family had been informants for Cecil Sharp early in the century), once said to me: “Many people think that all we sang in our family were the old ballads. Well, my family was one of the first to buy a phonograph, and we kids learned all the latest pop songs from records. My mother thought they were terrible, but we kids didn’t care. We sang them anyway.”

Although the Appalachian region was generally considered politically conservative, liberal and progressive thought also flourished in the mountains. Even in the nineteenth century, itinerant preachers and teachers brought knowledge of the “world beyond” to the mountains. During the Civil War, many mountaineers supported the Union side. Early in the twentieth century, many supported the Populist movement and joined unions such as the Knights of Labor. During World War I, many voted for Socialist Party presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs; their intellectual contributions continue to this day.

Until the early twentieth century, people lived off the land. Then came the coal boom, which lasted through World War I. Because coal was essential for the production of steel during the war and profits for coal operators were enormous, the United Mine Workers (UMW) was

able to obtain higher wages and better working conditions for the miners.

No sooner was the Armistice signed in 1918 than the situation changed. Coal was no longer needed in such quantities. Yet, ignoring economic realities, coal operators (mine owners) continued to produce at wartime levels. In 1927, the operators started down the path that led to the devastating strikes of 1931–32. They reduced the miners' wages and cut the work force by introducing labor-saving machinery. Miners who were fired not only lost their company-owned homes, but had to leave town as well—for the town, too, belonged to the company. The UMW proved helpless in this situation and abandoned the miners. Feeling betrayed, and dismayed by the sight of their families withering away on a diet "of beans and bulldog gravy" (flour, water, grease),¹ many chose to stay and fight. The mine owners struck back, blacklisting the most militant miners.

At this point, organizers for the National Miners Union (NMU), a Communist-led union, entered the scene. Disillusioned by their experience with the UMW, the most militant miners put their faith in the new militant organizers. The NMU promised to feed the unemployed and blacklisted strikers, and sent their lawyers—the International Labor Defense (ILD)—to defend imprisoned miners.

In the long, brutal strikes of 1931–32, the coal operators had most of the weapons on their side, including the state militia as well as privately hired Chicago gangsters. They controlled the courts, and had sheriffs, juries, and judges on their payroll.

What the coal operators had not counted on was the nationwide publicity the strike received. "Bloody Harlan," as that part of Kentucky came to be known, became a cause célèbre, much as the civil rights campaign did in the 1960s. Writers such as Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, and Sherwood Anderson, along with prominent churchmen, students, and radical unionists, traveled to Kentucky for hearings on the situation there. The violence and the horrendous living conditions in the company towns made the front pages of newspapers, and dozens of articles appeared over a period of months.

During the turmoil, these investigators from the North came to know the Garland family, who were among the most active unionists of Harlan County. Oliver Garland, and his children Molly and Sarah—later to become famous as Aunt Molly Jackson and Sarah Ogan Gunning—were born and bred in the southern Appalachians. The first Garlands had come from England in 1637. Landing in Boston, they gradually made their way to Virginia and from there into the mountains. Jim Garland, Molly's half-brother, wrote that his ancestors survived well with "a pack mule, a hound dog, parched corn, salt, string, and fishhooks."² Unlike the England they had left behind, the American

wilderness gave them the freedom to run their own lives and make their own decisions. An independent lot, they married whom they pleased (Jim's great-grandmother was a full-blooded Cherokee) and had no doctrinaire political attitudes (they had grandfathers on both sides of the Civil War).

Molly, born in 1880, and Sarah, born in 1910, were half-sisters, their father having married twice. The family eventually grew to fifteen children—four from the first marriage, and eleven from the second. When Molly was three years old, her father sold his farm. For generations, the tillable land in the mountains had been divided and subdivided until it was no longer possible for families to sustain life by farming their small parcels. Oliver moved to East Bernstadt, Kentucky, and became the pastor of the Missionary Baptist Church there. To support his family, he opened a general store. He gave credit to striking miners and went broke a few years later when the strike failed and the miners could not pay their bills. For the rest of his active life he worked as a sharecropper and, finally, as a miner. He mined coal six days a week, "preached one sermon on Saturdays and two on Sunday, and at night organized the miners."³

Molly, the precocious, ornery daughter from Oliver's first marriage, followed in her father's footsteps. "My dad was a strong union man and a good minister," she said, "so he taught me to be a strong union woman." By the time she was five years old, she was already accompanying him to union meetings. She led picket lines and helped "teach uniting" to the miners. At age ten she served the first of many jail sentences—not in the cause of social justice, but for committing a wild prank—dressing up in a "disguise" (blackface) to frighten a neighbor. When her father died, she promised that "if I live to be one hundred I will teach unity all of my days—one for all and all for one."⁴

Molly placed a high value on education. "My own dear mother's brother told me that I would grow up to be a fool if my stepmother kept me at home to work all the time and would not let me go to school. But I went to school for three months after my mother died and I learned to read and write." Even when new babies were born to her father's second wife, Molly "studied her books while rocking the babies to sleep."⁵

Her brother Jim describes her in vivid terms: "She was at the height of her glory, when she was giving someone she thought was no good a hard time. If she believed someone was taking advantage of his or her position in life, whether that was a coal operator, a husband who beat his wife, a man who would not work to support his family, or a bookkeeper who denied some needy family scrip to buy food with, she made her feelings known. These troublemaking instincts led her to write a fine song."⁶

During the long 1931–32 strike, women played an important role, as they had a generation before. Mother Jones, an organizer for the UMW, had set a precedent earlier in the century, when she formed a woman's auxiliary known as the "mop and broom brigade." During a Pennsylvania mining strike, nonunion men who came in to work were confronted by a group of angry women. "They beat dishpans with hammers and started a stampede of the mules, used during those days to haul coal from the mines."⁷

Following in this tradition, the southern Appalachian women of the 1930s were not only morale-builders, but were also union organizers, active on the picket lines and at rallies. They organized many of the wildcat strikes. Like their menfolk, they were often harrassed by "gun thugs," beaten, thrown in jail, even shot and killed. They were desperate women and matched violence for violence. What is more, they used very unladylike tactics in the heat of battle.

Jim Garland describes an incident that occurred in the 1920s at Ross, Kentucky, when a group of scabs and gun thugs approached a picket line set up by the local women. "These women grabbed the gun thugs and stripped them naked while the men took off through a cornfield after the strikebreakers. After four men managed to hold down one of the gun thugs, my sister Molly took his pistol and shoved the barrel right up his rectum. Never did this particular thug show his face there again."⁸

These were tough, fearless women. Aunt Molly, recalling later in life how she had reacted when caught stealing from the company store, said: "I reached under my arm and I pulled out a pistol, and I walked out backward. And I said (speaking to the manager), 'Martin, if you try to take this grub away from me, if they electrocute me, I'll shoot you six times a minute. I've got to feed some children, they're hungry and can't wait.'⁹ After I heard this story, I believed Molly when she told me, rather boastfully, that she was the original "pistol-packing mama."

Songs served a definite purpose in strike-bound Harlan County: to help form a union and to lift the spirits of the miners in their struggle. The mining families believed that by fighting together they could bring justice into the world. Their faith in the union was as powerful as their belief in God. Many songs of the period were joyful paeans in praise of the Union. "I never danced 'til the Union came in," Aunt Molly once confided to me.

The most famous union organizing song from this period is "Which Side Are You On?" by Florence Reece, who grew up in a Tennessee coal mining camp. She married Sam, a miner, when she was sixteen years old. In the 1930s they moved to Harlan County, where Sam was a union organizer. Alan Lomax recalls a visit to the Reece family in 1937: "A long drive through the Kentucky mountains brought me to

a log cabin, chinked with mud against the winter. Inside, the family huddled around the open fireplace which served them as both furnace and cook-stove."¹⁰

Like the Garlands, Reece wrote poems and composed songs about miners' lives, and campaigned tirelessly for working people all her life. This song, with its strong message of workers' unity, was used again during the Civil Rights campaign in the 1960s.

Don't scab for the bosses,
 Don't listen to their lies.
 Us poor folks haven't got a chance
 Unless we organize.
 They say in Harlan County
 There are no neutrals there.
 You'll either be a union man
 Or a thug for J. H. Blair.¹¹

Recalling the event that inspired the song, she later wrote: "Sheriff J. H. Blair and his men came to our house in search of Sam. He was one of the union leaders. I was home alone with our seven children. They ransacked the whole house and then kept watch outside, waiting to shoot Sam down when he came back. But he didn't come back that night. Afterward I tore a sheet from a calendar on the wall and wrote the words to "Which Side Are You On?" to an old Baptist hymn "Lay The Lily Low."¹²

Another popular organizing song to reach us up north was Aunt Molly Jackson's "I Am A Union Woman." I can still see her in my mind's eye, singing this song at a mass meeting for miners' relief in New York City. She wore a shapeless dress, and her body was no longer young, but she was a formidable figure.¹³

I am a union woman
 Just as brave as I can be
 I do not like the bosses
 And the bosses don't like me.
 If you want to join a union
 As strong as one can be
 Join the dear old NMU
 And come along with me.
 The bosses ride the big fine white horse
 While we walk in the mud
 Their flag's the old red, white and blue
 And ours is dipped in blood.

"I Am a Union Woman"

by Aunt Molly Jackson

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Sarah Ogan Gunning, in contrast to her ebullient sister, was a vulnerable, gentle woman. Yet some of her union songs were among the most militant ever written. Woody Guthrie wrote that "Sarah's homemade songs and speeches, made up from actual experience, are deadlier and stronger than rifle bullets, and have cut a wider swath than a machine gun could. . . ."¹⁴

In "Down On The Picket Line," Gunning describes how the miners won a confrontation with scabs during a 1932 strike at Straight Creek, Bell County:

We went out one morning before daylight
 And I was sure we'd have a fight,
 But the scabs was cowardly, ran away,
 But we went back the very next day.
 We all went out on the railroad track
 To meet them scabs and turn them back
 We win that strike I'm glad to say
 Come on, and we'll show you the way.¹⁵

In "Come All You Coal Miners," she concludes with an anticapitalist sentiment, common during the Great Depression:

I am a coal miner's wife,
 I'm sure I wish you well.
 Dear miner, they will slave you
 'Til you can't work no more,
 And what'll you get for your living
 But a dollar, in a company store.
 A tumbled-down shack to live in,
 Snow and rain pours in the top.
 You have to pay the company rent,
 Your paying never stops.
 Let's sink this capitalist system
 In the darkest pits of hell.¹⁶

Many bold, stirring songs and stories about political and social issues have been written by men. But no body of American folk song so poignantly describes the human condition as those written by women. In their songs are heard the anguished cries of the sick, of starving children, and of women grieving for their husbands dead in the mines. They describe the endless burdens of a miner's wife—carrying buckets of water from a well, washing clothes at a creek, and fighting endlessly against the coal dust that filtered through every crack and pore. Moreover, the songs cry out for justice and freedom for all human beings, regardless of color, nationality, or religious belief.

Aunt Molly's impassioned account of suffering during the long Harlan County strike is eloquent and devastating:

"After the miners was blacklisted for joining the union March 5, 1931, the company doctor refused to come to anyone of the coal miners' families unless he was paid in advance. So I had to nurse all the little children till the last breath left them. . . . Thirty-seven babies died in my arms in the last three months of 1931. Their little stomachs busted open; they were mortified inside. Oh, what an awful way for a baby to die. . . . My nerves was so stirred up for four years afterward by the memory of them babies suffering and dying in my arms, and me sitting by their little dead bodies three or four hours before daylight to keep some hungry dog or cat from eating up their little dead bodies. Then four years later, I still had such sad memories of these babies that I wrote this song."¹⁷

Dreadful memories! How they linger,
How they pain my soul!
Little children, sick and hungry,
Sick and hungry, weak and cold.

Dreadful memories! How they haunt me
As the lonely moments fly;
Oh, how them little babies suffered!
I saw them starve and die.

I can't forget them little babies
With golden hair as soft as silk,
Slowly dying from starvation,
They parents could not give them milk.¹⁸

[Note: Sarah Ogan Gunning had her own version of this song.]

The Garlands were among those Southerners who believed in racial equality and acted on their beliefs. They chased the Ku Klux Klan from the camps when they tried to spread dissension between black and white miners. On a visit to Florida, Aunt Molly Jackson saw a brutal beating of a little black boy by his white boss. She wrote: "he kicked the boy in the back and knocked him down on his face and broke his nose, and the blood poured down that child's nose and the boss kept kicking him, and I called him a low-down dog. I told him if I had a pistol I would blow his stinking brains all over the floor. He ran to the telephone and called the police. 'Come over here and arrest a white woman for taking sides with the niggers,' he said, so I ran out the back way before they caught me. That little Negro boy could not have been more than ten years old."¹⁹

Using the tune of an old eighteenth-century prisoners' song of pro-

test, and the same theme of justice sullied and denied, Aunt Molly's song "Hard Times In Coleman's Mines" speaks of the consequences of economic blight and the damage it does to the miners' health and well-being.

It's hard times in Coleman's mines,
A hard time we know.

You get up in the morning, all you get to eat
Corn bread and water gravy without any meat.

We're cold and hungry, no shoes on our feet,
Corn bread and wild greens is all we get to eat.

The best we got to live in is small one-room shacks
You can throw your dogs and cats through the cracks.²⁰

(Note: This song is also claimed by Jim Garland.)

Death and crippling injuries resulting from mine accidents run like a bloody thread through the Garland family history. In "Hello Coal Miner," written in 1979, Gunning recalls her beloved husband's words of warning to his young son. Her father and first husband had both died of lung diseases:

He called our little son to him, and said
"son, please sit down",
I want to tell you something,
while I'm still around.
"Don't ever work in the coal mines,
down in the dark cold ground;
Always listen to Mother,
she'll never let you down.
And always listen to Mother,
she'll never let you down."
We hugged our little children,
told them not to cry;
They didn't know their daddy
soon was going to die.
They didn't know their daddy
soon was going to die.²¹

In "I Hate the Company Bosses," she vividly portrays the death of her child by starvation. "I had one baby fourteen months," she recalled, "that starved to death during Hoover's Administration. I couldn't give her the milk that she needed to stay alive. I walked three miles a day and done housework for \$1.00 a day just to be able to give my children something to eat."

I had a blue-eyed baby,
 The darling of my heart,
 But from my little darling
 Her mother had to part.

These mighty company bosses,
 They dress in jewels and silk,
 But my darling blue-eyed baby
 She starved to death for milk.

Well, what killed your mother?
 Oh tell us, if you please.
 Excuse me, it was pellagra,
 That starvation disease.²²

Pellagra was the result of starvation, but Black Lung was, and still is, the miners' most dreaded disease. Songwriters continue to write about its ravages. Hazel Dickens, from West Virginia, composed this song in the 1960s, and she speaks of Black Lung as if it were a living, evil force, a devil claiming men's lives. The language of her song reminds one of the traditional song "Oh, Death," known to blacks and whites alike:

Black Lung, Black Lung,
 Oh your hand's icy cold;
 As you reach for my life
 And you torture my soul.

Coal dust, water hole,
 Down in that dark cave;
 Where I spent my life's blood,
 Digging my own grave.

But Hazel, like the songwriters of the previous generation, knows the face of the enemy and rejects the false sympathy of the mine owners:

Down at the graveyard
 The boss man came,
 With his little bunch of flowers,
 Dear God, what a shame.

Take back those flowers,
 Don't you sing no sad songs;
 The die has been cast,
 Now a good man is gone.²³

After a period of relative prosperity during the 1950s, economic hardship returned in the 1960s as new machines replaced miners. By

this time women were playing an increasingly important role in the coal industry. Of the six million poor and working-class people in the southern Appalachian mountains, more than half were women. Usually depicted as mournful creatures covered with dust and grime, these women put their lives on the line—as mountain women had done before them—when trouble erupted with the coal operators. They blocked the giant bulldozers that came to strip the land, destroy the mountains, and pollute the rivers. They organized unions and led long and determined strikes. The documentary film *Harlan County, USA*, showed women fearlessly confronting the mine owners' armed thugs and the deputies who pointed guns at them.

In 1965, a frail elderly woman known as "Widow Combs" from Knott County, Kentucky, lay down in front of a bulldozer to protect her land, and promptly was arrested and thrown in jail. She was later released, but her action inspired a movement protesting strip mining throughout the mountains. Other women took active roles in the Black Lung Movement, and fought against school closings, and for health care and social services.

In the early 1970s women began to apply for underground coal mining jobs. During World War II women had worked on the surface, sorting coal, but they had never mined underground, not only because they were legally excluded but because of superstitions. As Florence Reece recalls, "They told us that if a woman went underground, men would be killed. We didn't go underground, and plenty of men were killed anyway."²⁴ Today the female force in the mines is increasing, and some laws that discriminate against women have been successfully challenged.

Taking their cue from the feminist movement then sweeping the country, mountain women began to demand changes on the home front as well. New songwriters began to express the ideas of equality and independence. Like the pop and country music (songs of Meg Christian, Jane Voss, Helen Reddy, Loretta Lynn, and others) in the early years of the feminist movement, these new songs challenged women's traditional roles, voiced disenchantment with love relationships, and supported a woman's right to have her own life.

Hazel Dickens, the most prolific and talented of these composers, became a professional songwriter. Although a feminist by conviction, she never lost sight of her roots in Appalachia and the economic struggle that had fueled the previous generations of songmakers. Freed of a woman's traditional role, she became a professional singer.

In "Coal Mining Woman," Hazel pleads with union men not to stand in her way in her desire for equal status:

Well, we had the babies,
Kept the home fires burning bright;
Walked the picket lines
In the thickest of the fight.

Yes we helped you open doors,
And we can help you open more;
And if you can't stand by me,
Don't stand in my way.²⁵

Dickens was born in Mercer City, West Virginia, one of eleven children. Like the Garlands, she came from a coal-mining family; her father hauled timber to the mines, and all her brothers were miners (two of them died from Black Lung and other lung ailments). Hazel's father was a music-loving, hard-shell Baptist minister who preached weekends, sang, and played the banjo. Her earliest memories of music were of the unaccompanied, primitive Baptist singing she heard in her father's church. But her own singing was also formed by old-time, bluegrass, and traditional country music that she heard on records.

Hazel told me not long ago that she earns her living by making recordings and personal appearances. In recent years she provided the music for *Matewan* and the graphic documentary *Harlan County, U.S.A.*, both films about the miners' struggles. Hazel is a special kind of professional singer: one with a social conscience. For years, she traveled with a racially mixed group, singing songs protesting the Vietnam war and promoting racial and social harmony, to school children, prisoners, and churchgoers.

"When I grew up," she once wrote, "the choices open to a woman were few. Marriage was a must for a woman's respectability. Today, it is possible for women to live creative and productive lives without the confines of marriage and we do so quite happily."²⁶

Using the old country blues theme of the rambling man always on the go, she turns women's traditional role on its head in "Ramblin' Woman":

Yes, I'm a ramblin' woman,
Lord, I hope you understand
'Cause you know a ramblin' woman's
No good for a home-lovin' man.

Take all that sweet-talk
And give it to some other girl
Who'd be happy to rock your baby,
And live in your kind of world;

For I'm a different kind of woman,
 Got a different set of plans.
 You know a ramblin' woman's
 No good for a home-lovin' man.²⁷

Like the songs of Jackson, Gunning, and Reece, Dickens's finest songs are about the heart. "Fly Away, Little Pretty Bird," about the inconstancy of love, is a delicate poem wedded to an unforgettable, heady melody.

Love's own tender flames warm this meeting
 And love's tender songs you'd sing;
 But fly away, little pretty bird,
 And pretty you'll always sing.

I cannot make you no promise,
 Love is such a delicate thing;
 So fly away, little pretty bird,
 For he'd only clip your wings.

Fly far beyond the dark mountains,
 To where you'll be free evermore;
 Fly away, little pretty bird,
 Where the cold, winter wind don't blow.²⁸

The story has not ended, for there is still trouble in the mines. New songwriters document the events. The generation of the 1930s is gone. Reece, the last to survive, died in 1986. Jackson died in California in poverty and relative obscurity, Gunning lived out her life in Detroit, and their brother Jim in Seattle. But brother and sister have not been forgotten. During the folk revival of the 1960s, their songs were sung again by a new audience of young people concerned with social and political issues.

As for Dickens, she continues as poet and musician, writing new songs when her conscience is stirred by events in the world around her. As a singer, she is a great and compelling artist in a traditional style. Like the mountain women before her, she sings with compassion and tenderness—a bright and luminous light in today's beclouded world.

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13. Woody Guthrie in *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People*, comp. Alan Lomax (New York: Oak Publications, 1967), 142.
14. *Ibid.*, 154.
15. Sarah Ogan Gunning, liner notes (p. 11) to *Girl of Constant Sorrow: Sarah Ogan Gunning*, Folk-Legacy Records FSA-26. Copyright 1965 by Folk-Legacy Records. Reprinted by permission of Folk-Legacy Records.
16. Sarah Ogan Gunning, liner notes for *Come All You Coal Miners*, Rounder Records 4005, 1973. Copyright 1970 by Coal Creek Music. Copyright transferred to Happy Valley Music. Reprinted courtesy of Happy Valley Music.
17. Aunt Molly Jackson, quoted in liner notes for *Songs and Stories of Aunt Molly Jackson*, Folkways Records FH 5457, 1961.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Liner notes to *Aunt Molly Jackson*.
20. Jackson, in liner notes to *Songs and Stories*.
21. Gunning, in liner notes to *They'll Never Keep Us Down*, Rounder Records 4012. Copyright 1982 by Happy Valley Music. Reprinted courtesy of Happy Valley Music.
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24. Quoted in liner notes to *They'll Never Keep Us Down*.
25. Hazel Dickens, in liner notes to *They'll Never Keep Us Down*, Rounder Records 4012. Copyright 1982 by Hazel Dickens. Reprinted courtesy of Happy Valley Music.

26. Liner notes to *Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard*, Rounder Records 0054, 1976.
27. *Ibid.* Copyright 1976 by Hazel J. Dickens. Reprinted courtesy of Happy Valley Music.
28. Hazel Dickens, in liner notes to *Hazel and Alice*, Rounder Records 0027, 1973. Copyright 1976 by Hazel J. Dickens. Reprinted courtesy of Happy Valley Music.