

Dave Van Ronk (1936–2002) was the Grand Old Man of the Greenwich Village folk-world. He was an influence to many, including Bob Dylan and others. A wonderful folk, blues, and jazz guitarist, Van Ronk recorded albums for many labels, and was a guitar teacher and mentor to many.

During the revival, “Duncan and Brady” was performed by many others, including Tom Rush and Paul Clayton.

### 13. RAILROAD BILL

Hobart Smith, vocal and guitar  
(from *The Asch Recordings Folkways AA4*, 1967)

Hobart Smith (1897–1965) was a multi-instrumentalist from Saltville, Virginia. A lifetime musician, he played locally in south-west Virginia, including the well-known White Top Festival during the 1930s. He and his sister, Texas Gladden, were invited to perform at the Roosevelt White House. Alan Lomax recorded both Smith and Gladden for the Library of Congress in 1942. There is no evidence that Smith and Gladden went to New York to record for Moses Asch in the early 1940s, and it is likely that Asch got the recordings of the

pair from Alan Lomax. Although not an urban performer like the majority of the others on this set, Smith is included because Moses Asch’s release of *Blue Ridge Ballads* on Disc Records was one of the significant “folk” releases of his career. Smith lived long enough to be rediscovered by the folk revival of the 1960s, when he appeared at festivals and coffeehouses.

According to Alan Lomax, “Railroad Bill” was an African-American turpentine worker from Alabama, whose real name was Morris Slater. The terrible conditions in which turpentine workers lived drove him to a life of crime; typically, he would break into railroad cars and steal the goods (Lomax, *Sing Out!*, vol. 6, no. 1, Oct.–Nov. 1961). Slater’s life has become legend in this song.

### 14. WAYFARING STRANGER Burl Ives

Burl Ives, vocal and guitar  
(from *The Asch Recordings Folkways AA3*, 1967)

Burl Ives (1909–1995) was one of the first major performers to record for Moses Asch, recording an album of folksongs in 1941, produced by Alan Lomax. Ives was a

well-known actor and singer, who appeared in film, radio, theater, and television. His 1940–1942 radio program was entitled “The Wayfaring Stranger,” and the song was known as his theme and the title of his biography. Ives had tremendous crossover appeal, and became one of the best-known folksingers to those who normally did not listen to the genre. He is also known for his recordings of songs for children.

“Wayfaring Stranger” (“Wayfaring Pilgrim”) is a well-known older American hymn.

### 15. BIG ROCK CANDY MOUNTAIN Haywire McClintock

Harry “Haywire Mac” McClintock, vocal and guitar  
(From *Haywire Mac Folkways 5272*, 1972)

Harry K. McClintock (1882–1957), known throughout his career as “Haywire Mac,” spent his life as a hobo, singer, and composer. He performed for meetings of the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World) union, and on the radio. He is best known for his compositions “The Big Rock Candy Mountain” and “Hallelujah, I’m a Bum.”

Haywire Mac had a brief moment of

exposure to modern audiences when his voice was heard singing during the opening scene of the acclaimed film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

### 16. BORN 100,000 YEARS AGO

Cisco Houston, vocal and guitar  
(Also known as “I’m a Highly Educated Man,” “I Was Born 10,000 Years Ago”; from *The Folkways Years SFW CD 40059*, 1994)

Cisco Houston (1918–1961) was another character in the cast who recorded for Moses Asch in his early years. Houston spent his youth working various jobs in the West, including that of a ranch-hand, picking up songs along the way. During World War II, he served in the Merchant Marine, along with his frequent musical partner, Woody Guthrie. Houston and Guthrie recorded many duets for Asch, and it was Houston whose keener sense of musical time would keep Woody in rhythm. Unfortunately, Houston lost his battle with cancer at the age of 42, too early to enjoy the fame he would likely have had during the folk revival of the 1960s.