



Lost Newport Treasures

Never Before Released
Performances from the
1968, 1969, and 1970
Newport Folk Festivals

- Muddy Waters
 - Son House
- Sleepy John Estes
- Yank Rachell
 - Sonny Terry
- Brownie McGhee
 - Jesse Fuller
 - Ike Everly
- Mwenda Jean Bosco
 - Cook County Singers
- Doc Watson, Fred Price, Clint Howard
- Norman Kennedy
 - New Lost City Ramblers
- Mac Wiseman
 - Don Reno, Bill Harrell & the Tennessees Cut-Ups
- Sam Hinton
- Pete Seeger


Lost Newport Treasures

It's hard to believe, but the Newport Folk Festival is 50 years old.. First held in 1959, Newport was hardly the country's first folk festival. That honor is claimed by the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival founded in 1920 in Ashville, N.C. by banjo and fiddle playing lawyer Bascomb Lamar Lunsford. But the Ashville event, like later rural festivals and musical "conventions," was devoted to perpetuating local traditional music and dance. Similarly, the more ethnically and geographically diverse National Folk Festival, begun in 1938, also presented performers who had little to do with mainstream popular entertainment.

Founded by impresarios George Wein, producer of the Newport Jazz Festival, and Albert Grossman, the Newport Folk Festival began as a showcase for the mostly young, urban musicians who were spearheading the emerging commercial Folk Revival. At the top of the list was the collegiate Kingston Trio, whose hearty version of the traditional N. Carolina ballad, "Tom Dooley," had scaled the pop charts the year before.

Joining them were more established "folk singers," including Pete Seeger. As a member of the Weavers, Seeger had also experienced pop success when that group's adaptation of Lead Belly's "Irene Good Night" became the hottest song on the 1950 Hit Parade. But the Weavers had been derailed by the blacklist, and the folk music revival that they were on the verge of spearheading had sputtered. Now, in the late 1950s it seemed that folk music, as a commercial product, was back.

Yet, despite the burgeoning revival, the first Newport Folk Festival lost money. So did the 2nd, despite the return of newcomer Joan Baez, whose guest appearance the previous year had ignited the crowd. The financial failure, coupled with the riots that erupted at the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival, led Wein and Grossman to pack it in. In 1963, however, with the Revival in full swing, Wein was prevailed upon to try again, this time with the non-profit Newport Folk Foundation as sponsor and with a program committee that included musicians Pete Seeger, Theodore Bikel,



Jean Ritchie, and others who were concerned about the original festival's favoring of revivalist and commercial performers over "authentic" folk musicians. The result was a festival that juxtaposed the old and the young, the mainstream and the esoteric, the commercial and the home-style. It was a festival that sought to educate as well as to entertain.

It worked. With its combination of large, main stage evening concerts, and intimate daytime workshops, the Newport Folk Festivals of the 1960s became perhaps the best way to experience the breadth of American (and some other) folk music in a single, intense weekend. Certainly the most fabled and controversial Newport event was Bob Dylan's 1965 performance backed by the electrified Paul Butterfield Blues Band. But there were many memorable moments, among them performances by newly "rediscovered" musicians who had recorded in the 1920s and '30s including songster Mississippi John Hurt, bluesmen Skip James and Son House, and Virginia coal miner and banjo player Dock Boggs. There was also the stirring conclusion to the 1963 Festival with Pete Seeger joining hands and voices with his

co-performers to lead the audience in the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement, "We Shall Overcome."

Fortunately, the organizers had the foresight to record the festivals, and many of the Newport performances from the first half of the 1960s are available on several labels (and in the Murray Lerner film, *Festival*). The late '60s have been less well-documented, however. This collection is an attempt to fill that gap. In doing so, we've favored tradition-based artists, many of whom had never faced audiences as large as Newport's. Recording quality was also a factor; sadly, many fine performances by all sorts of musicians were too poorly recorded for even modern digital wizardry to salvage.

Still, we have wonderful music – a testimonial not only to Newport's importance but to the timelessness of music that continues to inspire and delight and to traditions rooted in America's past but at home even in a musical present that would be unrecognizable to many of these Newport performers.

— Mark Greenberg
Montpelier, VT 2009

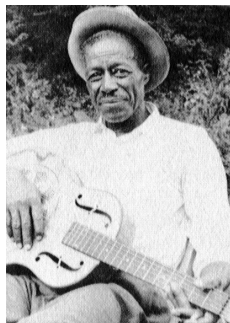
The Performers & Tracks:

1. Muddy Waters, "Blues & Trouble" [1969] – Muddy Waters, a hero to the Rolling Stones and other '60s rock bands, pays tribute to one of his major influences, Eddie "Son" House (track 2). House's lateness to the workshop provided an opportunity for Waters to step outside of the electrified Chicago blues band context that he'd pioneered in the late 1940s and to return to the spare, solo, acoustic music that he'd first recorded for folklorists John W. Work and Alan Lomax in the Mississippi Delta in 1941 and 2.



Muddy Waters

2. Son House, "Empire State Blues" [1969] – Perhaps the most intense of the original Mississippi Delta blues masters, House first appeared at Newport in 1965, alongside his other recently "rediscovered" contemporaries



Son House

Mississippi John Hurt and Skip James. After switching from preaching to blues playing in the 1920s, House recorded for Paramount Records in 1930 and for Alan Lomax from the Library of Congress in 1941 and 1942. Known for his pained singing and rhythmic, minimalist slide playing, Son returned to Newport in 1969, bringing the same percussive style he'd played in 1930s Mississippi juke joints to an afternoon workshop stage.

3. Sleepy John Estes & Yank Rachell: "Diving Duck Blues" [1969] – Sleepy John Estes was 19 and working as a field hand when he began to perform at parties and picnics around Brownsville, TN, often

accompanied by harmonica player Hammie Nixon and guitarist and mandolin player James “Yank” Rachell. In 1929 he made his first recording for Victor in Memphis. Estes is best known for his crying vocal style and striking lyrics. He was “rediscovered” by blues researchers Bob Koester and Samuel Charters in 1962 and reunited with Nixon and Rachell for recording sessions and college and festival gigs. They first appeared at Newport in 1964.

James “Yank” Rachell, the “Blues Mandolin Man,” introduces “Diving Duck Blues,” now a blues standard. His career lasted almost 80 years and helped to preserve the mandolin as a blues instrument. According to Rachell, he traded a pig for his first mandolin after hearing a neighbor play one. In 1985 Yank appeared in the film *Louie Blui*e and performed in the 1990s with John (Lovin’ Spoonful) Sebastian and the J-Band. He was one of the last active blues performers from the 1920s.

4. Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee: *“I’m a Burnt Child”* [1969]

5. Brownie McGhee: *“I Couldn’t Believe My Eyes”* [1970] – Born Saunders Terrell, in Greensboro, N. Carolina, Sonny Terry’s first harmonica lessons came from his father.

His career’s first success was in backing guitarist Blind Boy Fuller. He also appeared in the landmark 1938 Spirituals to Swing concert at Carnegie Hall. When Fuller died, Sonny was paired with “Blind Boy Fuller II,” Brownie McGhee. His exuberant country harmonica style, featuring vocal whoops and hollers, became instantly recognizable. He also sang, as he does here on “I’m a Burnt Child.”

Walter “Brownie” McGhee’s father played in a local Kingsport, TN string band, and Brownie, who suffered from polio as a child, focused much of his boyhood on music, teaching himself guitar and singing with a local gospel quartet. He joined the Rabbit Foot Minstrels at age 22 and met Blind Boy Fuller, who became a major influence, as heard in the raggy “I Couldn’t Believe My Eyes.” Arriving in New York in 1942, Brownie joined Sonny Terry in a sometimes stormy partnership that lasted until the late 1970s. Individually and together, Brownie and Sonny performed and recorded with the Almanac Singers, Woody Guthrie, Lead Belly and other members of the city’s folk music community. They also worked at times with small R&B groups, were among the first blues artists to tour Europe, and appeared on Broadway and in films.

6. Jesse Fuller: “Midnight Cold” [1969]
Best known for his song “San Francisco Bay Blues,” Jesse Fuller exemplified the energy and eclectic approach of an old-time songster. Born in Georgia in 1896, he developed his one-man band style after migrating to Oakland, CA in 1929. There, in clubs and on the street, the “Lone Cat” accompanied his ragtime-infused repertoire with 12-string guitar, harmonica, kazoo, high-hat cymbal, and his signature invention, the fottella, a foot-operated, 6-pedal bass. He first appeared at Newport in 1964. In 1966 he toured England, where he played with The Rolling Stones and the Animals.

7. Ike Everly: “Step It Up & Go” [1969] – The father of rock legends Don & Phil, Ike was one of the major influences on fellow Muhlenberg County, KY guitar picker Merle



*Ike Everly,
Merle Travis,
& Mose Rager
(l to r)*

Travis. Ike’s own “thumb style” built upon the playing of local musicians including itinerant, black guitarist/fiddler Arnold Schultz, who also influenced Bill Monroe. The oft-recorded, variously-titled “Step It Up & Go” traveled back and forth among black and white musicians and reflects the eclectic repertoire Ike later brought to his radio performances in Iowa and that he passed on to his sons.

8. Mwenda Jean Bosco: “Pole Pole Ya Kuina” [1969] – Born in 1930 in the Congo, Bosco became popular in East Africa for his fingerstyle guitar playing. Influenced by Zambian and Eastern Congolese traditional music, Cuban music, and cowboy movies, he is perhaps best known for his song “Masanga.” Pete Seeger heard some of Bosco’s many recordings and helped bring him to Newport. Bosco’s guitar playing on “Pole Pole” resembles American Piedmont blues styles, which, like Ike Everly’s picking, feature syncopated treble melodies played over a steady thumb beat on the bass strings.

9. Cook County Singers: “Take Me Home” [1969] – The late Bruce Kaplan, founder of Flying Fish Records, first heard the Cook County Singers in an African American Chicago church and brought them to the

University of Chicago Folk Festival. Later, at Newport, they again demonstrated the shape note style that had originated in late 18th century New England as a way of teaching harmony singing to non-music readers and that was still alive in some white and black congregations in both the North and South.

10. Doc Watson, Fred Price, Clint Howard: “Daniel Prayer” [1968] – In the course of “rediscovering” old-time banjo player Clarence Ashley, folklorist-musician Ralph Rinzler discovered Arthel “Doc” Watson (see *Doc Watson & Clarence Ashley: The Original Folkways Recordings* on Smithsonian Folkways for the whole story). Today, Doc is an American musical treasure and legend, a humble virtuoso whose flatpicking skills helped to revolutionize bluegrass guitar playing. Doc’s first ventures into the world of the Folk Revival were in the company of Ashley and some of their N. Carolina neighbors, including Fred Price (lead vocal) and Clint Howard (tenor vocal). Doc supplies the bass vocal on “Daniel



Doc Watson

Prayed,” sung *a cappella* in the traditional style of many Southern Baptist churches.

11. Norman Kennedy: “The Greenland Whalers” [1968] – Born and raised among the shipbuilders of Aberdeen, Scotland, Kennedy began singing at age three. Most of his songs were learned from “the old folk,” who sang in the traditional unaccompanied manner. Norman was working as a tax collector in Aberdeen and singing occasionally in the pubs when he was invited to perform at Newport by Ralph Rinzler. He stayed in the U.S. to demonstrate weaving in Williamsburg, Virginia and eventually moved to Vermont, where he operated a weaving school for many years. His songs represent, both in content and performance style, the Anglo-Celtic roots of much American folk and traditional music.



Both photos: Mark Greenberg

Norman
Kennedy

12. New Lost City Ramblers: *"In the Pines"* [1969] – Formed in 1958, the

Ramblers eschewed the commercial path of the Kingston Trio in favor of reviving the repertoire and styles of a wide variety of Southern string bands that had recorded in the 1920s. Their dedication to this mission, their multiple instrumental talents, and their irrepressible performances sparked a new awareness of, and interest in, old-time music and, eventually, other vernacular, roots styles as well. By 1968, the Ramblers' own repertoire had expanded to include Cajun music and early bluegrass. On "In the Pines" Mike Seeger sings and plays mandolin, Tracy Schwarz sings and fiddles, and John Cohen plays guitar.

Mark Greenberg



New Lost City Ramblers

13. Mac Wiseman: *"Four Walls Around Me"* [1968]

14. Mac Wiseman: *"Put My Little Shoes Away"* [1968] – Known as "The Voice with

a Heart," Mac has been one of the most distinctive bluegrass lead singers since replacing Lester Flatt in Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys in 1949. His tenure with Monroe was brief but resulted in two classic recordings, "Travelin' this Lonesome Road" and "Can't You Hear Me Calling." As a boy, Mac had attended the Conservatory of music in Dayton, Virginia, making him perhaps the only first-generation bluegrass musician with a classical music education. But country music called him, and in 1946 he joined the band of singer-banjo player Molly O'Day before moving on to a brief stint with Flatt & Scruggs' Foggy Mountain Boys and then Monroe. The two songs here are from a Newport "Story of Bluegrass" concert that united Monroe with some of his former musicians.

15. Don Reno, Bill Harrell & the Tennessee Cutups:

"Love, Please Come Home" [1968]

16. Don Reno, Bill Harrell & the

Tennessee Cutups: *"Cacklin' Hen"* [1968] –

One of the pioneers of 3-finger banjo playing, Don had started playing banjo at

age 5. In 1943 he passed up the opportunity to join Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys and joined the Marines instead. The banjo spot went to Earl Scruggs, whose name, and not Reno's, then became synonymous with 3-finger playing. In 1950, Reno began a 14-year partnership with guitarist-singer Red Smiley in the Tennessee Cutups. He joined forces with Bill Harrell in 1964. Reno's 1955 recording of the 2-banjo "Feuding Banjos" with Arthur "Guitar Boogie" Smith was transformed into "Dueling Banjos" for the 1972 film, *Deliverance*. Reno's banjo style is marked by his adaptations of jazz tunes and his use of fast, single-string runs. He was also a fine guitar player, a flat-picking predecessor of Doc Watson.

Virginian Bill Harrell began playing guitar and taking piano lessons as a child. In college he discovered bluegrass and began playing mandolin. Soon he was part of the Washington, D.C.-area's bluegrass scene. Bill replaced the retiring Red Smiley in the Tennessee Cutups in 1964 and remained in the group with Reno for over a decade, bringing fiddler Buck Ryan, heard here, with him. He later re-formed his old group, the Virginians and continued playing bluegrass into the 1990s. On "Love, Please Come Home," he sings lead while Reno provides the tenor harmony.

from Newport program book



Sam Hinton

17. Sam Hinton: "I Had a Bird" [1968] – A scientist, educator, and artist, Sam began his music career as a boy in multi-cultural East Texas, playing harmonica, button accordion, and pennywhistle. He also showed an early interest in natural history and, especially, animals. Sam got his first guitar in 1934 and soon began performing with his two teenage sisters in local bars as "The Texas Trio." Later, he appeared on the leading radio talent show, "Major

Bowes Original Amateur Hour" and in Bowes' traveling vaudeville Transcontinental Revue, following in the footsteps of his great-grandfather, a successful magician, puppeteer, and ventriloquist. Sam's repertoire of over 1,000 songs included many for children.

18. Pete Seeger: "From Way Up Here" [1969] – What more can be said about Pete Seeger? His early recordings of traditional folksongs, his tenures with the Almanac Singers and the Weavers, his own songwriting, and his unparalleled skill as a song leader have, indeed, made Pete

America's musical "Johnny Appleseed, Jr." Pete co-wrote "From Way Up Here" with Malvina Reynolds, anticipating the environmental movement, in which he would also play a significant role by spearheading the clean-up of the Hudson River. He was also instrumental in bringing more traditional musicians to Newport. For an excellent survey of Pete's career, see Jim Brown's *Pete Seeger: the Power of Song*.



Pete Seeger

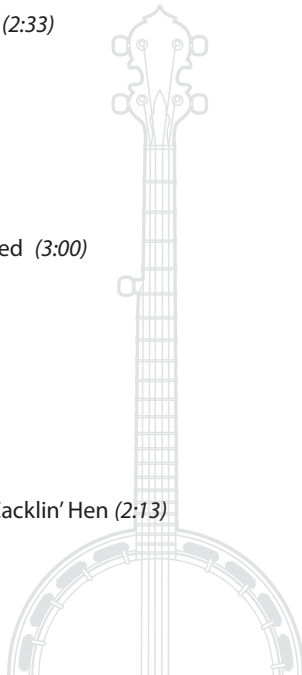
The Tapes:

Sometime around 1990 Bob Jones, opened a closet. Jones was showing Lafe Dutton, manager of Alcazar Records, a small Vermont folk music label, around the New York offices of Festival Productions, producers of the Newport Folk Festival. Jones, a Festival producer, was astounded by what he saw: a closet packed with boxes of tapes from late 1960s Newports. At Lafe's suggestion, Bob asked me to log and evaluate the tapes, and we were soon making plans to release some of the material on Alcazar. But, alas, Alcazar went the way of too many independent labels and closed up shop before we could complete the project. Over a decade later, I played some of the selections for Stephen McArthur, of Multicultural Media, another independent, Vermont company. Stephen immediately saw the historic as well as musical value of the material and decided to issue this collection. Festival Productions agreed, and now, forty years after they were recorded, these performances are finally returning to life.

— Mark Greenberg

Lost Newport Treasures

1. **Muddy Waters:** Blues & Trouble (4:54)
2. **Son House:** Empire State Blues (1:57)
3. **Sleepy John Estes & Yank Rachell:** Diving Duck Blues (4:07)
4. **Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee:** I'm a Burnt Child (2:33)
5. **Brownie McGhee:** I Couldn't Believe My Eyes (3:27)
6. **Jesse Fuller:** Midnight Cold (3:16)
7. **Ike Everly:** Step It Up & Go (1:45)
8. **Mwenda Jean Bosco:** Pole Pole Ya Kuina (2:30)
9. **Cook County Singers:** Take Me Home (3:36)
10. **Doc Watson, Fred Price, Clint Howard:** Daniel Prayed (3:00)
11. **Norman Kennedy:** The Greenland Whalers (3:16)
12. **New Lost City Ramblers:** In the Pines (3:33)
13. **Mac Wiseman:** Four Walls Around Me (2:25)
14. **Mac Wiseman:** Put My Little Shoes Away (3:38)
15. **Don Reno, Bill Harrell & the Tennessee Cut-Ups:**
Love, Please Come Home (2:29)
16. **Don Reno, Bill Harrell & the Tennessee Cut-Ups:** Cacklin' Hen (2:13)
17. **Sam Hinton:** I Had a Bird (1:27)
18. **Pete Seeger:** From Way Up Here (2:18)



Credits:

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Executive Producer: Stephen McArthur

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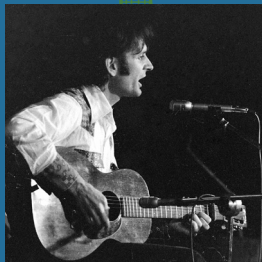
Geoff Brumbaugh/
Common Ground Audio

Liner Notes: Mark Greenberg

Design: Tim Newcomb/Newcomb Studios

Special Thanks: Bob Jones, Lafe Dutton

Note: Every effort has been made to obtain permission to use these tracks from the artists, their representatives, and/or their estates.



This CD is dedicated with love and thanks to master musician Mike Seeger, friend and mentor to many.