

TAPE LOG COVER SHEET

Date Entered _____ Entered By _____ Date Rec'd _____ FAD # _____

Fieldworker Kristin Olson Date 10/21/95

Artist/Informant Henry Rutland Time of Day 3:00 PM

Recording Location First & Main Festival Courthouse-Moultrie, Georgia Project MUS 648

Recording Engineer Kristin Olson

Other People Present Jeffrey Olson

General Subjects
Fiddlin' Henry Rutland - Performance

Specific Subjects

Cultural Groups
Irish/English

Religious Groups
Baptist

Tape Recorder Used General Electric Cassette Recorder Model 3-5301B0

Microphone(s) Used Built-in

Tape Brand/Length Sony HF - 90 No. of Tapes Used Amt. of Tape Used: Side 1 Side 2

High Bias Normal/Low Bias Metal Mono Stereo Dolby

Summary description of recording context/technical assessment of tape quality:

Subject performed outdoors on a stage that had been set up on the lawn of the Moultrie, GA Courthouse. The performance was amplified using several microphones and speakers. There was an audience present, and local automobile traffic continued to use the street nearby.

Summary description of tape contents:

An approximately 20 minute performance of Fiddlin' Henry Rutland accompanied by guitar. He performed several instrumental numbers and a few vocal numbers.

1012.9

If interview was recorded indoors, please draw diagram on back showing room in which recording was done as well mic placement and recorder placement.

* *Two Fiddlers Play the World's Fair*
George Quater - Henry Rutland

Georgia Slim b. 1916
d. 1969

Transcription of Conversation with Henry Rutland
Moultrie, GA
November 21, 1995

Henry: 1941-54 - Macon
then Tifton - Kelltown, GA

Kristin: How did you learn to play the fiddle and who taught you to play...and you were talking about your ancestors.

(F) Henry been Rutland, Sr. - Lucille Gilmore (M)

Henry: OK. yeah,....I learned to play from my daddy which was a... He was a very good old time fiddle player. His daddy, my grand-daddy, played fiddle also. He had a younger brother that played professionally on a night club in Dallas, Texas.

Lawrence been Rutland, Sr.
Warren Sumners GA

And I believe I stated earlier this went all the way back to two brothers that came to this country from England around eighteen and twelve both of those men played fiddle. One stayed up in and around the New England state of Vermont, and I believe there is a town named Rutland, Vermont. And the other brother migrated on into the Carolinas and later into Georgia, and that was in fact the brother that our family came from. And one of his sons or grandsons which was my great grandfather was in the Civil War and carried his fiddle with him and played and entertained the troops. And I have this fiddle at home now; naturally it's been restored several times and that's where our side of the family got their fiddle playing from.

And I believe I stated earlier, I told you that I had one year of violin lessons when I was a small boy in Macon, GA, but I definitely didn't want to play that type of music having listened to my daddy and granddaddy play and having an uncle that would make guest appearances on the Grand Ole Opry. I definitely wanted to play country hoedown type fiddle and that's what I stayed with kinda all down through the years. You learn the basics and then you can branch off in any direction you want to from there if you play by ear which I do. It's been so long since I tried to read music. At one time I could play simple stuff by reading the notes and lines and spaces, but I learned to play by ear. And now I play completely by ear.

K: Ok. um, you spoke about how your uncle taught you 99% of...

H: OH, yes. going back to my uncle, Uncle Bob we called him. His show name was Georgia Slim Rutland. I would go; when he came back from Dallas, Texas in January of 1954 and started a taxi business in Valdosta. And after about three years he sold that out and opened up a music store. And all along I would take off a day from work or on holiday and go over and spend the day with uncle Bob. And we would play some but we'd sit and talk for hours about show business, handling music, entertaining people; just the business end of playing and the music industry. He would often tell me "Son when you standing up there playing with that big silly grin on your face, that's only about 2 or 3% of it." The rest of it is negotiating, dealing with people, trying to get contracts, putting bands together and all it's a very demanding business if you stay with it and have to do it all your self. You know if you get into the big time in Nashville or the Branson MO scene or the Austin TX scene, and all, you have people to do that for you. But on a smaller scale, just starting out, you have to do it all yourself. And we would talk for hours on the business end of it then the show business, entertainment and all that was involved in the music world.

K: You continued to play but it's not for a living...

H: That true, I saw at a very young age that for a side man or just a working musician there wasn't too much money there. And so I became involved in surveying and engineering I made a career with the Georgia highway department and retired as a field engineer. And presently I'm working here in Moultrie as the Colquitt county road engineer and play my music on the weekends and part-time as a hobby, as we like to say a profitable hobby.

During the fall and winter months I play Bluegrass music with some guys in Thomasville. We entertain the plantations and the hunting lodges. During the spring and summer and early fall I play with a modern country and western dance band. I'm working one night a week here in Moultrie at the Moose Lodge on Saturday night.

I enjoy all types of music. I won't mention any specific music but there are one or two kinds that don't take but just a little bit to get my fill of. But as far as music that can be played on the fiddle I enjoy all types of that type of music but basically I enjoy the most Bluegrass, Country & Western, and Western Swing. That's about the three main types of fiddle music I've been involved in. And I've try to learn play just a little bit of all three types but preferably the Bluegrass music is my favorite. It just seems like I enjoy that the most.

K: How much do you rehearse and practice?

H: With our Bluegrass band we practice on Tuesday nights about 2 1/2 -3 hours. Then when I'm at home by myself I try to practice 10 to 15 minutes everyday, but if I miss two or three days in a row maybe the third day I'll try to practice 45 minutes or at least an hour to make up for the lost time. Keeping the old fingers limber playing double notes and a little bit of triple notes and the bowing is a big portion of playing the fiddle or violin is the control of the bow. I heard someone say one time "if you miss practice for one day he knew it, if you miss practice for two or three days the guys in the band knew it, and if you missed practice for a week or two the whole world knew it." I'll certainly have to go along with that idea.

K: So you primarily perform at the hunting lodges and the Moose lodge.....festivals like this....

H: Right . Local places. All along we get to play a convention or a county commissioner's convention. We have played that twice in Savannah I believe it was. We entertained Georgia Power and went all the way to Athens one time. We get a lot of jobs when these people come down to these hunting lodges and hear us play and then go back home, they will go back home and we'll hear from them to entertain in their type of business. It kind of branches off of these hunting lodges.

K: What's the name of the group that you play with? the Bluegrass group?

H: Our group is called South Georgia Grass. So many people have got so many different names that we decided that since we're all from in and around the Thomasville area that South Georgia Grass would be a pretty good name. And it's stuck with us for about 10 or 15 years.

K: Who has primarily influenced your playing, if anybody? Is there anyone in particular or a group in particular?

Stopped Tape for Performance

K: Would you consider Flatt and Scruggs your favorite group?

H: yes. broke away from B.Monroe in '49 or '50
presented music just a little bit differently, phrasing just a little bit different
dobro, mandolin, fiddle, banjo featured as lead instruments
always featured all four instruments

K: acoustic only?

H: not electric in bluegrass, some acceptance of electric bass because of shortage of string bass players; he prefers acoustic

K: fiddle tuned as violin or is it re-tuned?

H: standard tuning
variation = 5 string fiddle- he uses it for Western Swing, electric

K: regional differences in Bluegrass?

H: Yes
Old Cotton Eyed Joe played in performance
Texas - had a bounce; line dance
Southeastern version- very fast paced hoedown number for square dances

K: favorite piece?

H: Sally Goodin
Gold Rush - Bill Monroe
Pan Handle Country
Raw Hide
Roanoke
Saw Creek - in Southeast; played slower in Texas called Saw River

K: How has bluegrass changed and has your own style changed along those lines?

H: Progressive Bluegrass - more jazz influence, played by some younger musicians
group - Seldom Seen
can't replace traditional
he prefers traditional

K: are bluegrass and country remaining separate or they coming together?

H: Ricky Skaggs - started with Ralph Stanley, traditional; Seldom Seen; Country;
 Vince Gill - same ; professional musicians follow country music for living; Country
 music - greater demand

K: How has the media influenced you? Have all these influences blended with what you
 learned from your Dad and Uncle Bob, or replaced it, or are you incorporating it?

H: learned traditional hoedown numbers from Dad and uncle Bob
 picked out the best and finer points from everything and learned a few notes from
 everyone
 but it hasn't replaced the basics he learned; just added to it
 can't get too far away from the melody; shouldn't overplay
 tried to learn and add a little from every fiddle player ever met

Uncle Bob's theory, he said "Son, go and listen to every man that picks up and plays a fiddle. He
 might not be a very good fiddle player, but he'll play just a few notes maybe one or two lines that
 you've never heard before. It might not be all that good but you can always add that to your
 collection."

"Learning and playing is like getting a big bag of tricks. You learn and pick out the best
 and finer points from every musician and the notes that they play. I've got a record collection of
 fiddle albums that would fill up two army foot lockers. I have 500-600 fiddle, nothing but fiddle
 albums. And if I listened to all these people I've picked out and gained and learned a few notes
 from every one I've ever heard and listened to. And if you stood and tried to play a number and
 from all the notes you had learned down from each and every fiddle player, you'd might have to
 stand there and play the same number for three or four hours. But what I've tried to do is just pick
 out some of the finer notes and passages and stuff that would be pleasing to the audience as
 well as myself. And in regards to your question that, yes, I did try to learn just a little bit and
 listen to everything every one of those fiddle players played. It hasn't replaced the basics."

After I Stopped Taping

H: when he plays a piece, he plays it: 1st time - straight
 2nd time - more improvisation, embellishment
 3rd time - most improvisation
 4th time - straight



Transcription of Telephone Conversation with Henry Rutland

Early country from his Dad
Uncle Bob played at the Opry in mid 40's
grandfather & great grandfather
fiddle from the Civil War
age 4-5
family of fiddle players
1 yr. of violin lessons

Flatt and Scruggs; Bill Monroe
1956 summer Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys
Florida TV stations
listened to radio
Tifton talent show; playing country
faster music and lots of drive
Joe Meadows - first bluegrass fiddler he met; played a different style than family; lit him on fire

when he got out of the army in 1964, he and Tom Kinney formed the Pine Valley Boys; 5 pc.
Bluegrass band; played around Tifton 150-200 mile radius; Tom Kinney wanted to go full
time and he moved to the Carolinas
Johnny Eubanks - bluegrass and mandolin; played together for 30 yrs.; had trouble finding a
banjo player, finally settled on using his son Mel
play at festivals, gigs, hunting lodges around Thomasville

1986 spring went to a festival, Boys Youth Ranch in Dade City; met with older guys; traveled with
a group he met there, 1986, 1987, 1988; recorded a gospel album and a bluegrass
album; went to Oklahoma, Arkansas, played Nashville; station N - played bluegrass; met
a lot of professional people

first Cousin George - has a masters in Music (& Math) plays in symphonies, jazz groups
1976 played as a twin fiddle team; recorded an album; played at World's Fair; invited to grand
masters fiddle contest; included on "Fire on the Mountain" Nashville Network program

worked for GA Highway Department