

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Good Old Days of Adam and Eve

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When I was young and very little,
We used to make sugar in a pot-ash kettle.
Now you must have an evaporating pan,
And if you don't make white suger, 'tain't worth a damn!

Oh, dear me, I can't help but grieve
For the good old days of Adam and of Eve.
Oh, dear me, I can't help but grieve
For the good old days of Adam and of Eve.

When we used to go to a ball,
We went with an ox team or no team at all.
Now you must have a horse and a sleigh,
Buffalo robes and everything gay.

The boys used to be both happy and gay,
And able to work both night and day.
Now they look like an eel that is skinned,
They tremble like a cornstalk shaking in the wind.

The girls in my day didn't gad about;
If they had one dress they were well turned out.
Now they must have lots of clothes on the rack;
They look like a pumpkin, tied in a sack.

When I was young and very little,
We used to have a meeting house without any steeple.
Now you must have a steeple and a bell,
And if you don't go to meeting, you'll surely go to...

Oh, dear me, I can't help but grieve
For the good old days of Adam and of Eve.
Oh, dear me, I can't help but grieve
For the good old days of Adam and of Eve.

Here's a song Caroline and I collected from our nearest neighbor when we were living in Vermont. Arkley Horner gave us the first two verses and the chorus. Then we asked Helen Flanders if she had the song in her collection. She said "no," but her husband, former Senator Ralph Flanders (famed for making the motion to censure Joe McCarthy!) came up with the verse about the boys. When we were singing at the Trapp Family Lodge in

Stowe one evening, one of the Trapp family daughters remembered the song being in a small Flanders manuscript collection that she had (Mrs. Flanders had apparently forgotten the song), and she gave us the verse about the girls. Later, when we sang for the State Legislature one afternoon, the head of the Vermont Highway Department sang the last verse for us, the one about the meeting house. Thus, we finally assembled a more or less complete song from the fragments.

Collected in Vermont by Sandy and Caroline Paton
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