THE SINKING OF THE TITANIC on the night of 14th-15th April 1912 was to its time what the destruction of the space shuttle Challenger was to the 1980s: in each case, a complex and expensive transportation machine, vaunted as representing the state of the design and construction arts of its day, was tested against reality, and found to be fatally flawed. In each case, too, the collective self-confidence that had backed the projects was severely shaken. The sinking of the Titanic was the first characteristically 20th century transport disaster, the first of the age of mass intercontinental travel; its 1503 deaths dwarfed the losses from the train wrecks that were the typical large-scale accident of its time, and the figure still exceeds the largest toll from an air crash. What Thomas Hardy called 'the convergence of the twain', the encounter between ship and iceberg, continues to have the flavour of nemesis punishing the hubris that had declared the Titanic to be unsinkable even by God, which folk memory recalls as the boast of the ship's builders. It appears in fact to have been the passing comment of a deckhand to a passenger(1). The disaster continues to exercise its fascination to this day; when the oceanographer Bob Ballard wanted to obtain additional funding for his submersible in the 1980s, he knew that there could be no better way to grip the imagination, alike of funding bodies and the general public, than to find the wreck of the Titanic.

It is a measure of the impression that was made by the sinking of the Titanic that it found its way into African American music. There are plenty of African American songs from the first half of the 20th Century dealing with public events that affected black people directly, such as the Mississippi flood of 1927, the Depression of the '30s, or the two World Wars, but black song in this period scarcely ever considered events remote from the experience and concerns of the singers. Not only did the Titanic become a topic for African American song, it also became a topic for both religious and secular singers, who naturally brought different perspectives to their treatments of it. Accordingly, the songs that resulted, and the world views that they express or imply, form a fruitful subject for consideration.

The intensive commercial recording of blues and gospel began in 1920, and by late 1925 Ma Rainey had recorded a 'Titanic Man Blues'. This song uses the sinking of the ship as a metaphor for the sinking of her lover's chances (2), and such a casual metaphorical use indicates that the event had become firmly embedded in popular culture. Even before recording began, folk song collectors in Alabama, the Carolinas, Georgia and Mississippi were noting down songs about the Titanic from black informants as early as 1915(3). Rather than considering the songs that have been collected and recorded in strictly chronological order, I intend to discuss first religious, and then secular songs, and to compare and contrast their content and world views. (By "religious songs", and "religious
world views” I mean, save where context implies otherwise, Christian religious songs and
world views.)

There are, to my knowledge, two African American religious songs about the Titanic (4). The one sometimes called 'When That Great Ship Went Down' was heard 'sung by Negro on streets of Hackleburg in Northwest Ala(bama)’ in 1915 or 1916, and it was noted that 'the North Carolina Folk-Lore Society ha(d) the same song as sung by a Durham (North Carolina) Negro about 1920 (5). Indeed, the Frank C. Brown collection at Duke University in Durham holds two versions collected in 1920, one of them from William O. Smith, who sold printed broadsides of 'Destruction Of The Titanic' and claimed to have composed it with his wife Irma (6). It is tempting to think that these two may have been the William and Versey Smith who made the first recording of 'When That Great Ship Went Down' in 1927(7). That version, though musically vigorous, is hard to understand, and garbled towards the end, so in the interests of clarity, I give a version (called 'The Ship Titanic') which was recorded in 1950 by Pink Anderson, from Spartanburg, South Carolina (8). ('Jakewood Ascott', incidentally, is a garbling of 'John Jacob Astor'):

It was in the month of April, nineteen hundred and twelve,  
Listen to the story that I'm going to tell;  
On one Sunday night, when that ship went out of sight,  
Wasn't it sad when the great ship went down ?

CHORUS Wasn't it sad when the great ship went down (x2),  
Husbands and their wives, children lost their lives,  
Wasn't it sad when the great ship went down ?

When that ship first left England, New York it tried to come,  
Iceberg struck the vessel, could not make the run;  
Jakewood Ascott he went down, sixteen hundred of them was drowned,  
Wasn't it sad when the great ship went down?

When Paul was out a-sailing, with mens all around,  
God spoke and told him, not a one should be drowned;  
'Trust and obey, I will save you all the way,'  
Wasn't it sad when the great ship went down ?

When that ship first left England, it was makin' for the shore;  
The rich had declared they wouldn't ride with the poor.  
So they put the poor below, they was first had to go,  
Wasn't it sad when the great ship went down ?

When they was a buildin', they said what they would do:  
They would build a ship water couldn't break through.  
God with power in His hand showed the world it could not stand,  
Wasn't it sad when the great ship went down ?
Religious African Americans expressed their sympathy with the dead; but they also drew theological and moral conclusions from the disaster, seeing it as divine punishment for the supposed boast of the ship's builders that God could not sink it. (It may be thought is proportionate to have drowned 1500 people in order to chastise Thomas Andrews, managing director of the Harland & Wolff shipyard, he was indeed among those lost (9); evidently the God of this song was an Old Testament deity, concerned with judgement rather than mercy.)

Less expected is the explicit social criticism in the verse about the rich fusing to ride with the poor. That the poor were 'the first to go' is an accurate reflection of the events of the sinking: 37% of First Class, 58% of Second Class, and 75% of Third Class passengers were drowned, as were 77% of the crew. 97% of the women in First Class were saved, against 55% of those Third Class. No children were lost from First or Second Class; 70% of the children in steerage died. Initially, very little was made of this by the press and the official inquiries, but public opinion soon pilloried those who were perceived to have taken unfair advantage of wealth and privilege(10); black America, too, took note of the pecking order of death, and the fact that injustice was not confined to relations between blacks and whites in America.

The other religious song about the Titanic of which I am aware is 'God Moves On The Water', collected by Dorothy Scarborough and published in 1919(11), but first issued on record in a 1929 version by the gravel-voiced Texan singer Blind Willie Johnson(12). Johnson's text is largely narrative, the burden of commentary being in the final verse, and the chorus. (He never actually sings the title in full, using his slide guitar to 'sing' the words 'on the water'):

A.G. Smith, mighty man,
Built a boat that he couldn't understand;
Named it a name-uh, God didn't intend,
Middle of the sea, lord, the boat did end.

CHORUS
God moves on the water (x3),
And the people had to run and pray.

The chorus notes that prayer came too late to save the passengers; compare Pink Anderson's implied contrast between St. Paul's trust in God when shipwrecked on Malta (Acts XXVII) and the presumed lack of faith of the passengers. The verse about 'A. G. Smith' (by whom Johnson meant the vessel's captain, E.J. Smith) is another comment on the limitations of man and his technology in the face of natural forces and divine omnipotence. A later version of the song, recorded in 1964 by Mance Lipscomb(13), who learned it from Johnson (14), includes a verse reflecting on the inability of the rich to buy safety:

Jacob Astor was a millionaire,
Had plenty money to spare;
But when the Titanic was sinking,
Lord, he could not pay his fare.

Actually, as Pink Anderson pointed out, the rich were more likely to survive than the poor; but in a sense, Anderson and Lipscomb, and Johnson too, are in agreement on the lesson to be drawn from the sinking of the Titanic. It told African American Christians that God's purpose operates in history, and that human power (whether manifested in money or in technology) cannot withstand it. Alan Lomax has written that 'for the poor of the rural South... especially for blacks, the tragic end of the great ship symbolized the essential vulnerability of the world that gave them so little' (15). The religious Titanic songs contrast the fate of rich and poor on one night in mid-Atlantic, but there can be little doubt that they also comment by implication on the daily lot of most African Americans.

Despite their social criticism, however, the songs' response to injustice is a quietist one. God's interventions in history are noted, but are not taken to imply that Christians should seek to subvert existing power structures; rather the believer is assured that there is a better life in the hereafter, whatever the inequities and iniquities of this world. This is not a social theology that finds much favour nowadays; most black religious leaders teach resistance to oppression and injustice, whether in terms of the integrationist non-violence of Dr. Martin Luther King or of the militant separatism of the Nation of Islam. It is pointless, however, to castigate people for not being ahead of their time; the religious songs about the Titanic suggested that, in a world where power resided with whites, the powerless would receive their recompense after death. It was the fare to salvation, as much as the fare to safety, that Jacob Astor was unable to raise, and which 'God Moves On The Water' assures the believer that he or she possesses.

The purposes of secular song are more varied, and more ambiguous, than those of gospel song. Both secular and gospel songs can entertain an audience, bring about personal catharsis, tell a story, or provide a rhythm for dancing; but in the case of gospel, these are incidental to its fundamental purpose, which is to point the way to salvation. There is, however, no single purpose underlying secular song; entertainment, catharsis, story telling and accompanying the dance are just some of its possible purposes. Irrespective of purpose, however, most song lyrics also have a socializing effect: they contain information, implied or explicit, about how the society in which the musician and his audience live works; how the musician and his audience fit into society and their own subculture; and what behaviours are permitted and forbidden within both society and subculture.

We have seen that the religious songs about the Titanic convey the message that this world is unjust, and that the injustice will be compensated in the next world. Underlying that is the proposition that, in this world, injustice is to be endured. What message, then, do secular songs on the subject convey?
In 1915 or 1916, J. L. Pitts heard a verse 'sung by working Negroes' in central Alabama (16)

O, what were you singing, when the Titanic went down? (x2)
Sitting on a mule's back, singing 'Alabama Bound'.

This little stanza of worksong may seem trivial, but its statement that the African Americans singing it were not present at the disaster is actually fundamental to most secular comments on the sinking, and conceals, as will be seen, a considerable body of implied meaning.

The first recorded song, Richard 'Rabbit' Brown's 'Sinking Of The Titanic', cut in 1927, belongs in the category of story telling; he begins:

'Twas on the ten of April, on a sunny afternoon,
The Titanic left South Hamilton (sic), each one as happy as bride and groom;

and his final line is the conclusive:

Just then the Titanic went down.

In between, he narrates the story, noting, in accordance with the conventions of disaster narratives, that the male passengers behaved heroically. The only other general lesson Brown draws is the uninspiring one that:

Accidents may happen 'most any time, and we know not when and where.

For all its lack of poetry, however, this is a very different view from that of the religious singers, that:

God with power in His hand showed the world it could not stand.

Brown's analysis of the reasons for the accident is nihilistic, seeing it as random encounter between moving bodies, rather than the result of divine intervention.

In 1932, the St. Louis guitarist 'Hi' Henry Brown recorded a 'Titanic Blues'. This song is notable for having been, until recently, the only 12 bar blues on the subject; the Titanic as a secular concern was overwhelmingly a topic for songsters, who cast their accounts in ballad near-pop formats. William & Versey Smith began 'When That Great Ship Went Down':

On a Monday morning, just about nine o'clock,
Great Titanic began to reel and rock;

and 'Hi' Henry Brown starts with a 12-bar version of that, but soon takes rather different approach:
It was early one mornin', just about four o'clock (x2),
When the old Titanic 'gan to reel and rock.

Captain Smith took his glasses, and walked out to the front (x2),
And he spied the iceberg a-comin', good lord, had to bump.

Some was drinkin', some was plavin' cards (x2),
Some was in the corner, prayin' to their God.

Little children cried, "Mama, Mama, what shall we do ?" (x2)
Captain Smith said, "Children, I'll take care of you."

Titanic sinkin', in the deep blue sea (x2),
And the band all playin' Nearer My God To Thee'.

This is a strange lyric, given a strange, sour delivery; as noted, it arts with a verse from one of the gospel treatments, and the third and fourth verses seem, on paper, to have moralistic connotations. (The second and fifth seem purely narrative, despite the reference to the famous incident of the band playing a hymn as the ship sank; the best evidence, incidentally, is that it wasn't 'Nearer My God To Thee', but an Episcopal tune called 'Autumn' (19). Brown's delivery, however, subverts the verbal content of the lyrics; praying seems as futile an activity as drinking and playing cards, and Captain Smith's promise to the children vainglorious. The next song Brown recorded was an attack on the hypocrisy of preachers (20), and it is not implausible to view 'Titanic Blues' as a sort of 'anti-gospel' song, conveying the message that 'life is hard; then you die.'

So far, the secular conclusion appears to be straightforward, if depressing: that terrible things can happen to you when you least expect them. For a people threatened by natural disaster in the shape of floods and fire, and manmade disaster in the shape of lynching and race riots, living in high crime urban areas or rural squalor, and liable to be laid off first in an economic downturn(21), this was not an unreasonable conclusion.

There is, however, a body of secular song about the Titanic which uses the sinking as a starting point from which to consider the racist social structure in which African Americans found themselves, and to suggest responses to it. In a sense, these songs are not really about the Titanic at all; in disguising their discussion of survival in an oppressive society as commentary on the shipwreck, they recall Zora Neale Hurston's comments on the black response to white folklorists (22):

_The white man is always trying to know into somebody else's business. All right, I'll put something outside the door of my mind for him to play with and handle. He can read my writing but he sho' can't read my mind. I'll put this play toy in his hand, and he will seize it and go away. Then I'll say my say and sing my song._
The celebrated songster Leadbelly recorded his Titanic song on more than one occasion; the version quoted here is from 1948. His lyric is mainly narrative, and incidentally it uses the same structure as Ma Rainey's 'Titanic Man Blues'. Towards the end, Leadbelly sings:

Jack Johnson wanted to get on board,
Captain he says, 'I ain't haulin' no coal,'
Fare thee, Titanic, fare thee well.
(Repeat whole verse.)

SPOKEN Talk about it now. Jack Johnson so glad he didn't get on there.

When he heard about that mighty shock,
Might've seen the man done the eagle rock,
Fare thee, Titanic, fare thee well.
(Repeat whole verse.)

Leadbelly was recording for liberal folklorists, and so felt no qualms about the song's discussion of Jim Crow. Indeed, by 1948, he said that he would leave out the reference to Jack Johnson when singing for 'the colored people', presumably feeling that they would misunderstand it (24). Leadbelly said that he learned the song in 1912. In 1910, Johnson had beaten Jack Jeffries, 'the Great White Hope' to retain the world heavyweight championship (26); the race riots which this provoked (27) are an index of the outrage that Johnson's victories (and his two marriages to white women) provoked among whites. It is no wonder that the reports (apocryphal, so far as I know) of his being refused passage on the ship, and of his being saved as a result, were the subject of black humour, in both senses.

What might be called 'the fictional Jack Johnson' parallels, and was quite possibly inspired by, a folk figure known as the 'Traveling Coon' or (though still evidently black) the 'Traveling Man'. This character performs various humorous feats of high speed mobility, including evading the police, escapes hanging by his contortionist abilities and, significantly, 'wouldn't give up, till the police shot him down.' He also invariably, but briefly, takes a trip aboard the Titanic. The earliest collected version I know of is from North Carolina in 1919, but it was widespread; Jim Jackson, from Mississippi, sang it in 1928, with a significant emphasis - what Sam Charters calls 'a little mincing lilt' - on the word 'white', an emphasis which carries over to the next word, 'ladies', seeming to place it in ironic quotation marks:

He run and jumped on this Titanic ship,
And started up that ocean blue;
He looked out and spied that big iceberg,
And right overboard he flew:
All the white ladies on the deck of the ship
Said that man certainly was a fool,
But when that Titanic ship went down...
He's shootin' craps in Liverpool.

Charters rightly points out that this song was designed to be understood on more than one level; to whites, 'it would sound like the usual 'darkey' songs' (31), but blacks would understand it very differently. The song was popular among white country singers (32), who would have found its image of black people a reassuring stereotype, rather than a celebration of the powers of the trickster, and of the motherwit that enables him to escape drowning. It's not insignificant, I think, that the Traveling Man returns to dry land to shoot craps, one of the stereotypical activities of the black man in white eyes; the unspoken question is, 'Who is the fool? He who gambles with dice, or he who dices with an iceberg?'

For an unambiguous Titanic-based song about relations between the races, we must turn to another alter ego of the Traveling Man, Shine. 'Shine & The Titanic' is by and for blacks; usually, it is a 'toast', or narrative poem, relentlessly obscene like almost all toasts, and in that form has been discussed at length by Bruce Jackson (33). Fortunately for this paper's chosen title, a musical setting exists: 'Hey Shine' was recorded by Delmar Evans circa 1970, with accompaniment by Johnny Otis and his son, Shuggie, under the collective pseudonym 'Snatch And The Poontangs' (34):

The eighth of May (sic) was a hell of a day,  
The day the Titanic sunk;  
They looked to Shine to save the ship,  
But he was in the shithouse drunk.  
He came up to the first deck,  
And says, 'There's water on the boiler room floor';  
The captain said, 'Back, you dirty black,  
'We're gonna let the water flow.'  
He came up to the second deck,  
And then he started to think;  
Said, 'I don't know what y'all gonna do,  
'But this motherfucker gonn' sink.'

CHORUS 'Hey, Shine (x3), 'Save this ass of mine.'

The captain's daughter said, '  
Save poor me, 'I'll give you more pussy than your eyes can see.'  
'Pussy is good, while it last;  
'You can't swim? Huh! That's your ass'  
The captain's wife said, 'Save poor me;  
'I'll give you more money than your eyes can see.'  
'Money is good, and that I know;  
'There's better bullshit on yonder shore.'

He told a shark out in the sea,  
'You gotta be a swimmin' ass (sic for 'ace'?) to outswim me.'
He couldn't swim and he couldn't float,
He hit more licks than a motorboat.
He came upon a whale and he started to smile,
He say, 'I think I'll thumb a ride 'bout a thousand mile.
'Him and the whale, they begin to talk;
It wasn't too long before they reached New York.

The song continues with Shine in New York, and describes him refusing women's pleas for sex, even when they offer him money for it. Misogynistic expressions of sexual power over women are central to toasts: comparing them with music, which is consumed by both men and women, Jackson writes (35) that 'toasts are for men only, and the rage can be far more explicit and unambiguous.' That the women in this sung toast are unable to resist Shine's sexual attraction is wholly typical, but that Shine's power over women is expressed by rejection of their advances is unusual.

It is, however, consistent with Shine's actions when confronted with the danger of drowning. Shine - a derogatory white form of address to blacks, and surely not a name chosen at random (36) - is the first to warn the captain, and it is to him that the passengers turn for rescue. The passengers are here typified by the captain's daughter and wife, who offer Shine sex and money respectively; the desperate offer of sex from a white woman, the daughter of an authority figure, what's more, is a mocking comment on the supremacist fantasy of black men as ever poised to ravish white women. Shine rejects the women's offers, recognising that the sensible thing to do is to leave the ship and head for dry land at once; there will be time for pleasure later (37). In so doing, he denies the racist proposition that blacks are slaves to instant gratification. He also affirms his own freedom of movement, contrasted with the illusory freedom of movement that the passengers on the ship believe they have purchased. (It is worth noting that the freedom to travel, without being tied to farm work, was an important aspect of the life led by many blues singers) (38.)

Shine also denies that those who wield power and authority, and have the wealth and skill to build technological marvels like the Titanic, are thereby destined to be top dog. The whites aboard Shine's Titanic have the knowledge to build and run the ship, but not the sense to see the danger; they have the wealth to buy passage, but not the ability to save themselves. They have the supposed authority of rank and skin colour, but can neither command nor bribe Shine to rescue them.

Religious African Americans saw the Titanic as an example of God's intervention in human affairs, and of His overriding the advantages conferred by wealth and technological prowess. The secular songs about the Titanic deny that there is any theological lesson to be learned from the disaster; but they agree with the religious songs that worldly power confers no protection against the forces of nature. The nihilistic message of Richard 'Rabbit' Brown and 'Hi' Henry Brown, that 'accidents may happen 'most any time, and we know not when and where', is, however, elaborated upon by what might be called 'Titanic trickster' songs, which feature the Traveling Man, Jack Johnson and Shine as different incarnations of the trickster.
What the 'Titanic trickster' songs say is that black people can survive in a white man's world, despite their apparent powerlessness. Wealth, advanced technology and a white skin do not guarantee immunity from disaster; when trouble strikes, they do not even confer power. When 'this motherfucker gonn' sink', you have to be able to make it to dry land. When the Titanic goes down with the rich whites, the poor black will be alive and 'sitting on a mule's back, singing 'Alabama Bound' or 'shooting craps in Liverpool.' For all the forthright language of 'Hey Shine', and for all its mocking of white foolishness, however, the trickster songs ultimately propose a quietist response to injustice, like that of the religious singers, and one without even the promise of justice in the afterlife; they do, however, hold out a strategy for survival in this life, which is no small thing to possess, as the passengers who cried 'Hey, Shine, save this ass of mine,' discovered.

In 1985, the New Orleans singer and pianist Cousin Joe recorded his last album. On it, no doubt in response to Bob Ballard's location of the wreck, he included what will probably be the last black song about the Titanic, 'What A Tragedy' (39). Fittingly, as the last of the line, it sums up the Shine and Traveling Man songs in a rewrite that - even in its title - has all the wit, irony, and multiple meanings of its predecessors. The Traveling Man takes his last bow:

Oh what a tragedy, when the Titanic ship went down (x2),
I used strategy during the tragedy, that's why I wasn't nowhere around.

Yeah, the women and the children, they was havin' fun (x2),
But when the ship started sinkin' that's when the trouble begun.

It was an awful thing, when that ship hit that big iceberg (x2),
Well I wasn't worried, I was the best swimmer in the world.

Now a rich man asked me to save his life,
He would give me half his wealth;
I said, 'I'm very sorry, mister,
But I've really got to save myself'

When I jumped in the water,
Everybody said, 'Look at that fool ;'
But when that Titanic ship hit the bottom,
I was in Harlem shootin' pool.

Oh what a tragedy, when the Titanic ship went down (x2),
I used strategy during the tragedy; that's why I was nowhere around.
NOTES

A small part of the material included in this paper appeared, in different form, in my article 'When That Great Ship Went Down - Black Songs About The Titanic' (Talking Blues 9/10, ed. Chris Smith, 1979). In connection with the present paper, I wish to thank Alan Balfour for conducting a literature search, photocopying relevant written material, taping examples, and discussing the topic with me. I also thank Sheilagh Smith for discussion, and for checking transcriptions. All the opinions and errors included are, of course, my own.

Except as noted, discographical information below is drawn from: Robert M.W. Dixon & John Godrich, Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1943 (Storyville, 1982); Mike Leadbitter & Neil Slaven, Blues Records 1943-1966 (Hanover, 1968) and Blues Records 1943-1970 Volume One (Record Information Services, 1987); and the sleeves and inserts of the LPs and CDs cited.

1 Walter LORD, A Night To Remember (Penguin, 1978), p. 73.
4 Unissued titles such as Rev. Edward W Clayborn 'Sinking Of The Titanic' (Vocalion, 1927) or The Jubilee Gospel Team's two-part 'Sinking Of The Titanic' (Perfect, 1930) may be additional songs, but information about their content is unlikely to be recoverable at this date.
5 WHITE, OP cit., p. 347-8.
7 Recording on Paramount 12505, reissued on Document DOCD-5045, 'The Songster Tradition'.
8 Recording on Riverside RLP 148, 'Gospel, Blues And Street Songs'. Anderson recorded the song again as 'The Titanic' (1961) on Bluesville BVLP 1071. Other recorded version: 'The Titanic' by Flora Molton (1980) on L+R 42.030.
9 LORD, Op Cit., p. 209.
10 LORD, op cit. Statistics based on p. 128; reactions p. 130-1.
12 Recording on Columbia 14520-D and Vocalion 03051, reissued on Yazoo CD 1058, 'Praise God I'm Satisfied'.
13 Recording on Arhoolie F1023, 'Texas Songster Volume 2'. Other recorded versions: Washington ('Lightnin"'), 'God Moves On The Water' (1934) for the Library of
Congress (lyrics quoted in Harold COURLANDER, 'Negro Folk Music' Jazz Book Club, 1966), p. 76-7; Bessie Jones with the Georgia Sea Island Singers, 'The Titanic' (1961) on New World NW 278, 'Georgia Sea Island Songs'; Bessie Jones, 'Titanic' (1973) on Rounder Records 2015, 'So Glad I'm Here'.


15 Alan LOMAX, notes to New World NW 278, 'Georgia Sea Island Songs', 1977.

16 WHITE, op cit., p. 349. (I have rearranged the layout of these lines to make their blues structure explicit.)

17 Recording on Victor 35840, reissued on Document DOCD-5003, 'The Greatest Songsters'.


20 'Preacher Blues': recording on Vocalion 1728, reissued on Document DLP 518, 'Charley Jordan'.

21 Paul OLIVER, Blues Fell This Morning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), passim.


23 Recording on Folkways FA 2941, 'Leadbelly's Last Sessions Vol. 1'; song also recorded in 1935 for the Library of Congress, and issued on Document DLP 605, 'Leadbelly Vol. S'.

24 Discussion before performance on Folkways FA 2941.


28 WHITE, OP cit., p. 349.


31 Ibidem.

32 Oliver, Songsters & Saints, p. 95-6.

33 Bruce JACKSON, Get Your Ass In The Water And Swim Like Me: Narrative Poetry From Black Oral Tradition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 35-
38, p. 180-196. Two versions of the toast (collected 1964 and 1966) are on a soundsheet accompanying Jackson, op. cit.; another (collected 1959) is on 'The Unexpurgated Folksongs Of Men', Raglan R51. The 1966 soundsheet version is also on Rounder Records 2014, 'Get Your Ass In The Water And Swim Like Me'.
34 Recording on Kent KST-657X, 'Snatch And The Poontangs'.
35 JACKSON, op cit., p. 27.
36 JACKSON, op cit., p. 37
37 JACKSON, op cit., p. 37-38.
39 Recording on Great Southern Records GS 11011, 'Relaxin' In New Orleans'.