

Additional Research Material for AMB Part Six

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Ralph Rinzler July 20, 1934 – July 2, 1994. Born in Passaic, New Jersey

This short biography taken from *International Bluegrass* Vol. 27, No. 9. September 2012



Ralph Rinzler records street musician Cortelia Clark in Nashville on a fieldwork trip. Photo by Robert Yellin. www.folklife.si.edu



Woody Guthrie and Ralph Rinzler.

http://bigmikeydread.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/img_5450.jpg?w=497&h=330



This photograph, from the Ralph Rinzler Papers, was taken around 1960 while on a trip to record Clarence Ashley and Doc Watson. Hazel Dickens is seen here on the porch of Sophronie Miller Greer, a neighbor of Watson's. Rinzler is near Hazel with the mandolin. Hazel accompanied both Ralph Rinzler and Mike Seeger on road trips throughout Appalachia to collect and record traditional music.

The late Ralph Rinzler was a scholar, musician, writer, producer and social activist whose vision and life's work inspired the passion, and launched the careers, of generations of musicians and artists. Born in Passaic, NJ, Rinzler learned to play mandolin and banjo at Swarthmore College. He was a member of the legendary **Greenbriar Boys** guest-starred on recordings with Clarence Ashley and Joan Baez, and later won a Grammy award for his production work on *Folkways: A Vision Shared*.

His generous relationships with the brightest lights in American music were fluid and adapted themselves to the artist and the adventure. He accompanied Mike Seeger on his travels through Appalachia; produced events with Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Mary Travers; was David Grisman's first teacher, and managed Bill Monroe. On a trip to western North Carolina in 1960 to make field recordings of rural folk musicians for Folkways Records, he visited Doc Watson and arranged bookings for him all over the country, thus helping gain national recognition for the guitarist. "Ralph was a single-minded individual who once he became passionate about anything—bluegrass music, or Appalachian pottery, or old cars—he just totally became overwhelmed by it," commented Jeff Place, who worked with Rinzler on various projects for the Smithsonian. "He and his friend Mike Seeger spent a lot of time going down South to try to hear and record a lot of bluegrass and old-time musicians. Ralph was so passionate about the music! Once he found musicians that interested him, he never was one to

leave them behind. Everybody needed to hear these people. It wasn't for money, or anything besides a passion for the music to be known."

After he helped co-found the Festival of American Folklife, now the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, on the Mall in 1967, an annual event featuring musicians and craftspeople from across a broad spectrum of international cultures, Rinzler became curator of American folk art, Music, and folk culture at the Smithsonian. Within about a decade, the Festival's profound success prompted the creation of the office that ultimately became the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, with Rinzler at its helm. In 1987 he received IBMA's Distinguished Achievement Award. The Smithsonian Institution named the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections in his honor in 1998. His priceless field recordings have been used to create a number of releases on the Smithsonian Folkways label.

Place, who now heads the Rinzler Archives, actually lived with Rinzler for several years and remembers his friend as a missionary for traditional music. "He was a good person to have as a manager for Monroe and Watson, except Ralph decided he didn't want to spend his life managing and being a businessman and all that stuff. He'd rather be out there finding the next Doc Watson! That's what he was about.

Rinzler was entered into the IBMA's Bluegrass Hall of Fame in September 2012 in Nashville, TN.

Hazel Dickens

This found at <http://si-siris.blogspot.com/2011/05/in-her-own-words.html>



On the morning of April 22, bluegrass singer Hazel Dickens passed away from complications from pneumonia. Her clear and powerful voice challenged the then male-dominated world of bluegrass music, and unflinchingly drew attention to the struggles of the working class.

Born in West Virginia in 1935 to a coal mining family, her upbringing would influence her music for the rest of her life. Hazel grew up singing with her family (she was the eighth child of eleven). With her father, she and her siblings would sing hymns. When she and her brothers and sisters sang on their own, it was the country songs that played on the radio. Beating on bucket lids and playing a comb with a piece of paper wrapped around it, she and her siblings would sing different parts. Sometimes they would sneak out to dances at other people's houses.

It was difficult to find work in her hometown after many of the mines closed down. Options were especially few for women. When she was 16, she followed one of her sisters north to Baltimore to work in a factory. More members of her family would eventually join them. It was in the Baltimore area that Hazel began playing music outside the home with her family and Mike Seeger, whom her brother had met while receiving treatment for tuberculosis at the Veterans Administration hospital. They would travel around the region to country music parks and contests, and played at a few bars. Once Seeger left to form

the New Lost City Ramblers, Hazel played bass with a few bands, but found the harassment on the part of the male-dominated scene difficult to deal with (at one point, she was chased around the room by a drunken fiddle player). She later wrote "Don't Put Her Down, You Helped Put Her There" as a result of these experiences.

Hazel accompanied both Ralph Rinzler and Mike Seeger on road trips throughout Appalachia to collect and record traditional music. The photographs featured here (from the Ralph Rinzler Papers) were taken around 1960 while on a trip to record Clarence Ashley and Doc Watson. They are pictured on the porch of Sophronie Miller Greer, a neighbor of Watson's. Greer and her grandchildren surround Ralph and Hazel as they play. Earlier that day, they had recorded Greer singing "The Triplett Tragedy," a ballad written about the murder of her own husband. Hazel admitted that she was amused by Rinzler and Seeger's enthusiasm for collecting old songs ("Why would anybody want this old stuff?" she remembered thinking at the time), but years later she came to understand the music was more than just a bunch of old songs, it had historical and cultural importance. She tried to learn more of the old songs from her own father before they were lost with him, but at that point his voice had deteriorated, and she was only able to collect fragments.

She eventually made friends and moved in with a group of people involved in the burgeoning folk music community that was blooming around the Baltimore-Washington area. They often hosted house parties where every floor had a cluster of guests playing old-time, bluegrass, and folk music. Hazel became a familiar voice at these gatherings. Reflecting on this time of her life, she said: "I remember singing and playing all night long with anyone who wanted to sing with me. One city guy said, 'One thing I like about Hazel, she will sing with you no matter how bad you sing.' He didn't realize it was giving me a life. [In the men's bands] I was generally shunted aside. In this situation, I could be the star of the show."

It was at one of these house parties that she was introduced to Alice Gerrard, with whom she would form a historical musical partnership. In the liner notes to the Smithsonian Folkways reissue of Hazel and Alice's early recordings for Folkways (SFW 40065, *Pioneering Women of Bluegrass*), Gerrard remembers her husband, Jeremy Foster, saying to her, "There is this little girl with an incredibly big voice that you've got to meet."

The two women began performing together in 1962. Though they couldn't take too many jobs, Hazel had to work and Alice had children, Hazel found freedom in playing with Alice. "It was not easy, having to practice over kids hollering... [but] I think that finally I found something that I could do [with the music]. And there weren't threatening people around...we could make our own decisions, making up our own arrangements as we went along, picking out our own songs and it was real exciting."

They were encouraged by Peter Siegel and Dave Grisman to record their music, and it became apparent that the only place where they would have total creative freedom was with Moses Asch at Folkways, whose only request was not to spend all of his money. In the reissue's liner notes, Hazel said of the recording, "I think this is one of the all-time historic records. To my knowledge, it was the first time that two women sat down and picked out a bunch of songs and had guts enough to stand behind what they picked out and say, 'We're not changing anything. You have to do it or else.'"

After cutting the record, they performed for the first time at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival, where Asch watched from the front row.

Hazel went on to record and perform by herself and with others. She wrote many songs with powerful messages that drew attention to the hardships of working men and women. "Black Lung" was the first of these she wrote and performed, and she was nervous about how such a politically charged song would be received: "And I looked up and there was Merle Travis and Mother Maybelle [Carter] and I was scared to death...It was from the gut. It was watching my oldest brother and two brothers-in-law die, it hadn't been too long. And after that I had two other brothers that died with lung disease that worked in the mines."

Dickens was also heavily involved with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. She performed often at the Festival (about 15 times) and participated in the Working Americans program workshops and panels during its run in the 1970s. Her last Festival performance was with Alice Gerrard at the Ralph Rinzler Memorial Concert on a beautiful summer evening in July 2010. I sat near the front and would periodically turn around and look at the hundreds of faces sitting enthralled by their harmonies.

All of us here at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage will remember Hazel for her warmth and tenacity, her ringing voice and her humor, her deep love for playing music. Many of the quotes and stories from this post were pulled from Kate Rinzler's 1996 interview with Hazel located in the [Ralph Rinzler Papers](#). In the interview, she speaks candidly about her life and journey. I will remember Hazel Dickens in her own words.

"I tried singing popular style along with the hit parade, but I never could get any satisfaction out of singing that way. My heart was not in it...we were [playing music] for love...and also as a means of expression to alleviate some of the loneliness that we felt by being taken out of our culture, and the only thing of substance we had to bring was the music. And that's what we knew and that's what we loved and that's what we got together in these clusters of people to do." -Cecilia Peterson, [Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections](#)



Alice Gerrard. Photo by Irene Young. www.folkmusic.about.com

Lowe Stokes. From an article by Eugene Chadbourne found on the internet.

This classic old-time fiddler is a bit of a mystery man, showing up as the senior member of a band formed in 1918 by fellow fiddle genius Clayton McMichen, one of the regular sidekicks of Lowe Stokes over the years.

*At first called the Lick the Skillet Band, then the Old Hometown Band, this double-fiddle group eventually morphed into **Gid Tanner & the Skillet Lickers**, one of the most famous and well-loved of old-time groups from this era that managed to be recorded. But if the saga of Stokes is to be believed, life on the road with this band was more about licking one's wounds than licking skillets. On one tour, the trouble-bound Stokes was stabbed perilously near the heart as the nasty consequence of a love triangle, then was shot in the hand in a drunken altercation a few days later while still healing from the earlier wound. This was something of a gory preliminary to the next Skillet Lickers tour, where the poor Stokes would have his hand shot off completely. Luckily, a fellow fiddler in the outfit was a skilled engineer and was able to design a special hook that allowed Stokes to hold his bow despite the injury. This was something of a distinction obviously, with old-time music fans decades later still commenting on the wonders of seeing "a photograph of Lowe Stokes, playing one-handed" on fiddle chat rooms in cyberspace. Stokes was mostly known as a sideman. In the **Skillet Lickers**, he played alongside guitarist and singer Riley Puckett and mandolinist Ted Hawkins, fiddlers Bert Layne and Gid Tanner, as well as the aforementioned McMichen. He also worked in the group **Seven Foot Dilly & His Dill Pickles**, led by fellow North Georgia fiddler John Dilleshaw. There was a series of recordings Stokes did as front man for his band, the **North Georgians**, including titles such as "I Wish I Had Stayed in the Wagon Yard," "Home Brew Rag," "Wave That Frame," and "Take Me to the Land of Jazz." Many of these recordings were collected for a series of reissues on the Document label. He also recorded with cowboy singer Hugh Cross.*

In 1925, poet Stephan Vincent Benet wrote a poem, entitled "The Mountain Whippoorwill," which was based on seeing Stokes win a fiddle contest in Atlanta the year before. Not quite as timeless as a piece of poetry, Stokes nonetheless was feeling fit enough to fiddle at the 1982 Brandywine festival, leaving ecstatic fans still guessing about his exact age. He remains one of the classic icons of old-time fiddling, an important influence to all new generations of players taking on this genre.



This photo found on the internet. November 2012. *Bluegrass Music and Artwork*. Photo and story posted by Richard L. Matteson Jr. His website is www.BluegrassMessengers.com.

July 7, 1925. Clayton McMichen's **Home Town Boys**. Mac (fiddle), Lowe Stokes (guitar), Bob "Punk" Stevens (banjo), Bob Stevens Jr (clarinet). This was the studio photo at Columbia's studio in Atlanta. A month later, Stevens was killed in an auto wreck, causing the end of the band.

Lowe Stokes was not a regular performer in Mac's Home Town Boys. Lowe was playing guitar for Mac because they were friends and at one time roommates for a year. In fact, Stokes was one of the best fiddlers—period. No one portrayed the tune "Hell Broke Loose in Georgia" better than Stokes. The wild and wooly Stokes was crazy as hell and loose in Georgia. According to Bert Layne, Lowe had more "nerve" than any man he knew.

Lowe Stokes born May 28, 1898, was the sixth of seven children born to Jacob Stokes, who was a fiddler and farm laborer, born in 1848. The Georgia Old-Time Fiddlers' conventions has been credited with launching his career when he defeated Fiddlin John Carson to win the coveted 1924 fiddle competition. To prove that was no fluke, Lowe won the next year.

When Stokes beat Carson in 1924 he won playing Carson's tune "Hell Broke Loose in Georgia." Many credit Lowe with inspiring the Charlie Daniels' song "The Devil Went Down To Georgia" which is reportedly loosely based on the famous competition.

After poet Stephen Vincent Benet read a 1924 article in the Literary Digest describing Stokes victory, he penned his 1925 poem, "The Mountain Whippoorwill" (Or, How Hill-Billy Jim Won the Great Fiddlers' Prize) which begins:

*Up in the mountains, it's lonesome all the time,
Sof' win' slewin' thru' the sweet-potato vine.
Up in the mountains, it's lonesome for a child,
Whippoorwills a-callin' when the sap runs wild.*

Stokes learned the long bow style from Joe Lee then moved from Cartersville to Atlanta. He met T.M. "Bully" Brewer who invited Lowe to stay with him. Brewer, an accomplished guitarist and singer, wanted to learn the fiddle. "You can come on home with me," said Brewer, "and teach me to play the fiddle and you can stay with me forever."

Although Stokes lived with Brewer for three years, he began his recording career with fellow fiddle genius Clayton McMichen, who quickly became Lowe's regular sidekick, his roommate for one year and protégé. Lowe, who also hung around Mays Badgett's fiddle repair shop, probably met Mac there. Mac began visiting the shop in 1916.

In 1928 he replaced McMichen's cousin Bert Layne and became the third fiddle in the Skillet Licker band. Frank Walker, Columbia's A & R man, started a Skillet Licker session with two fiddles instead of three. Walker knew something was missing so he sent Mac to find Stokes. With the talented Stokes in the line-up, Stokes played lead and Mac the high harmony.

Charles Wolfe wrote that "Often Stokes used a mute on his bridge to better match McMichen's sound; [Stokes] also said that this idea of [McMichen playing a close harmony to the individual notes of the melody] came from his listening to jazz fiddler Joe Venuti, who was then in his heyday." [Charles Wolfe: The Reluctant Hillbilly]

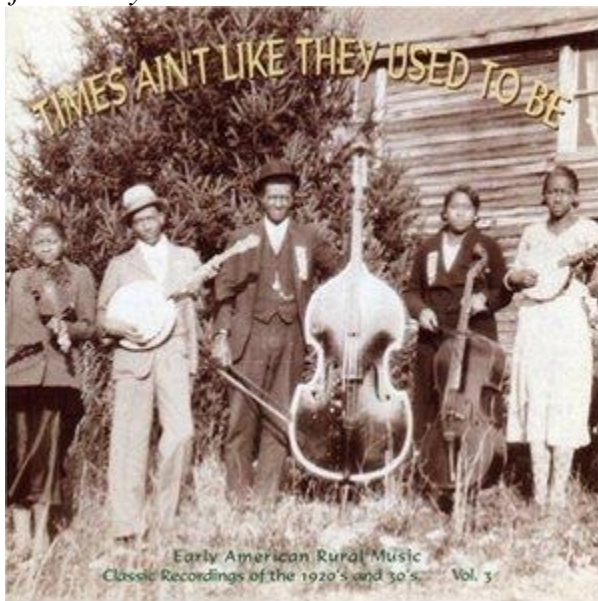
By 1930 Stokes was married and lived in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was offered a retainer by Brunswick to back up any singer or group that need a little punch. [Charles Wolfe: Classic Country]

On one tour around 1930, the trouble-bound Stokes was stabbed perilously near the heart as the nasty consequence of a love triangle, then in a drunken altercation at a bootlegging joint a few days later was shot in the upper arm while still healing from the earlier wound. "Lowe knocked him clear out of the place and onto the ground out there," said Layne, "and he'd shot Lowe. It hit him about here in the arm so Lowe he liked to beat him to death with his own gun."

The Skillet Licker session of December 7, 1930 was Stokes last as a leader, and it was almost his last, period. On Christmas Day that year he was involved in a shooting incident near Cartersville, Georgia. Stokes never cared to talk about it afterwards.

According to Juanita, "Lowe was a ladies man. He was always getting into a scuffle over some woman. He was with some woman when her husband come home and pulled out his pistol. Lowe tried to grab the gun but the gun went off and blew off most of his hand. When Daddy heard about it he went to Lowe's house in Cartersville to find Lowe sitting in chair in his front yard drinking whiskey—while the doctor was taking the rest of his hand off!"

According to Bert Lane, after hearing the news, Bert hurried to Cartersville and found Stokes "sittin' up in a barber chair getting a shave! I never saw a man with such a nerve in all my life." Within a year or so he was playing again, using a prosthetic metal attachment devised for him by McMichen.



Album cover of "Times Ain't Like They Used to Be, Vol 3: Early American Rural Music" by various artists such as Blind Willie Johnson, Ashley's Melody Men, Frank Hutchinson, Jelly Jaw Short, East Texas Serenaders, Carlisle Brothers, Sleepy John Estes, Luke Highnight and His Ozark Strutters, Wilmer Watts & Kibekt Eagles, Son House, Allison's Sacred Harp Singers, Lowe Stokes, Fiddlin' John Carson and His Virginia Reel..., Uncle Dave Macon & His Fruit Jar Drinkers and more.



“Times Ain’t Like They Used to Be, Vol 1: Early American Rural Music” Yazoo Records. Photo and information found on Yazoo website: www.yazoorecords.com. Various artists include:



G.B. Grayson and Henry Whitter

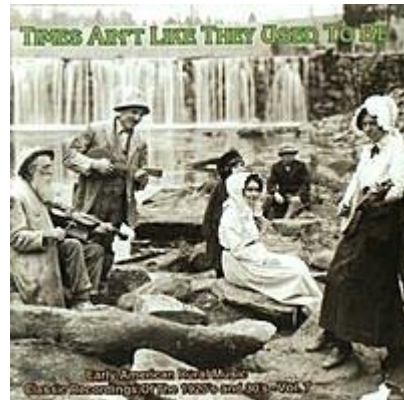


Winston Holmes



Prince Albert Hunt

“Times Ain’t Like They Used to Be: Early American Rural Music – Classic Recordings of the & 30s, Vol 7. Shenachie Entertainment label.

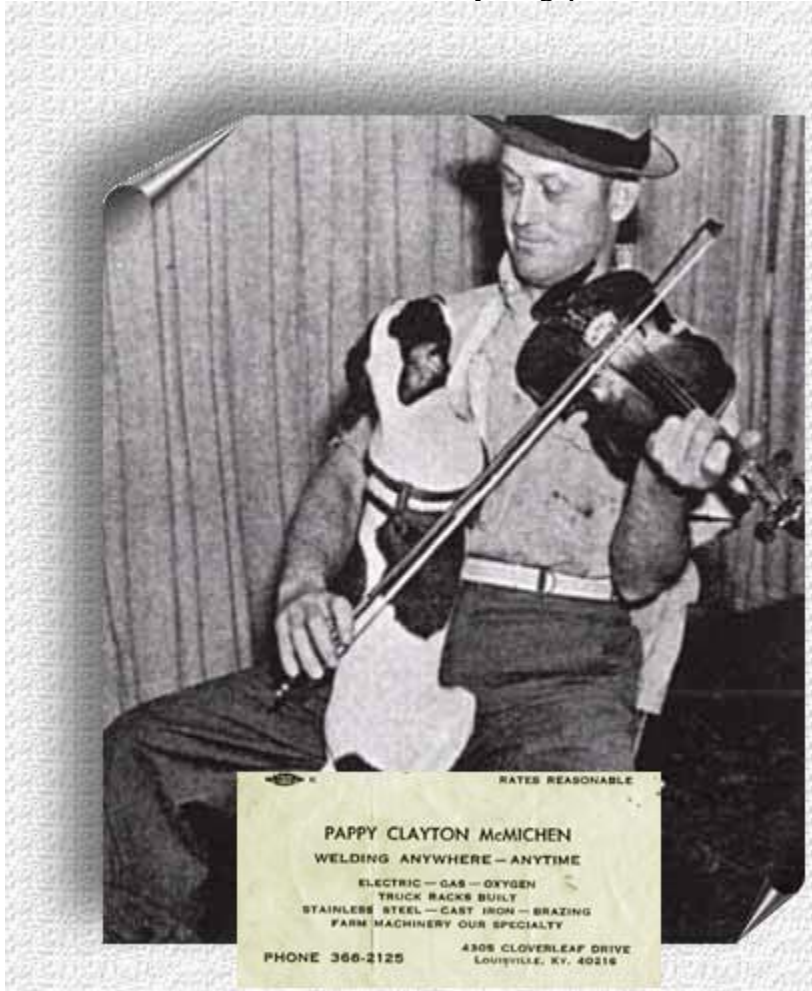


1920s

Clayton McMichen. Photos found on the internet.



www.hillcountry.blogspot



<http://www.1001tunes.com/fiddlers/photoarchiveNEW1.html>



http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clayton_McMichen



http://www.digplanet.com/wiki/Clayton_McMichen

Images of Cleo Davis. Photos found on the internet



Images of Clark Kessinger. Found on the internet.

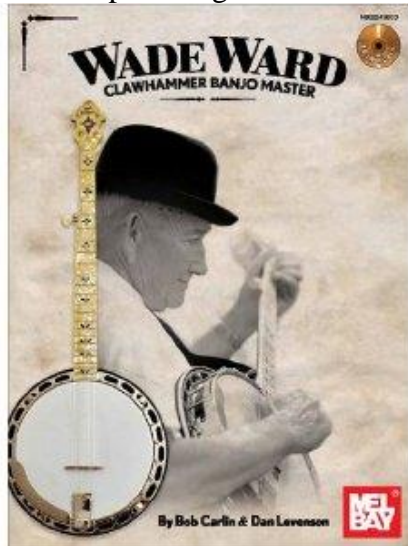


<http://www.last.fm/music/Clark+Kessinger>

Images of Wade Ward. Found on internet.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wade_Ward. 1937 photo.



“Wade Ward – Clawhammer Banjo Master” Book/CD set. By Bob Carlin and Dan Levenson

Images of Alan Lomax. Found on internet.



<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/worldfolkandjazz/9051860/Alan-Lomax-collection-goes-online.html>



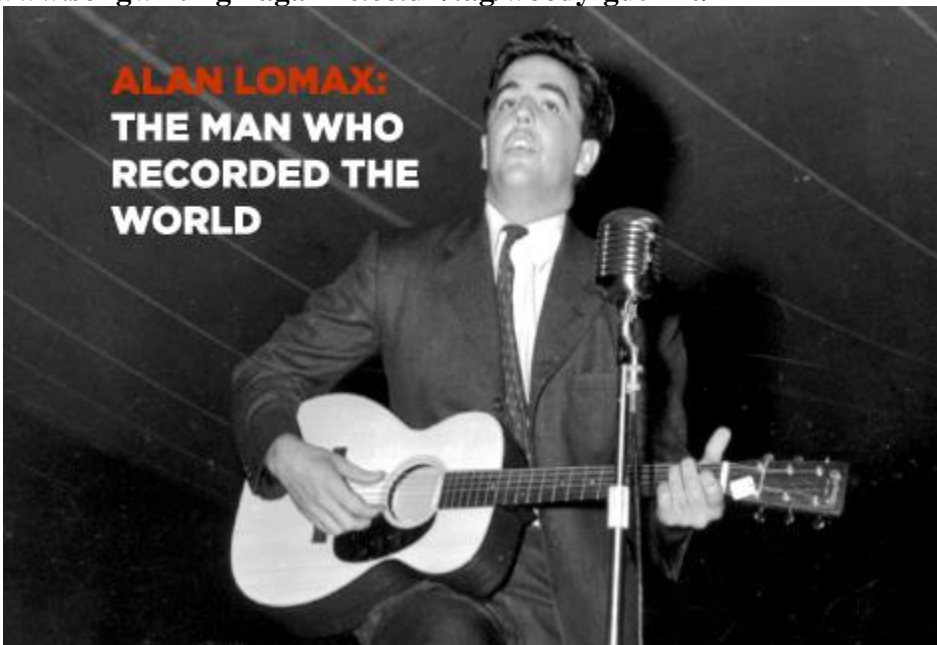
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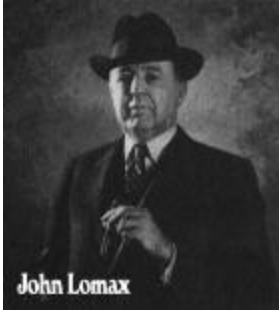
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Images of Pete Seeger. Found on the internet.



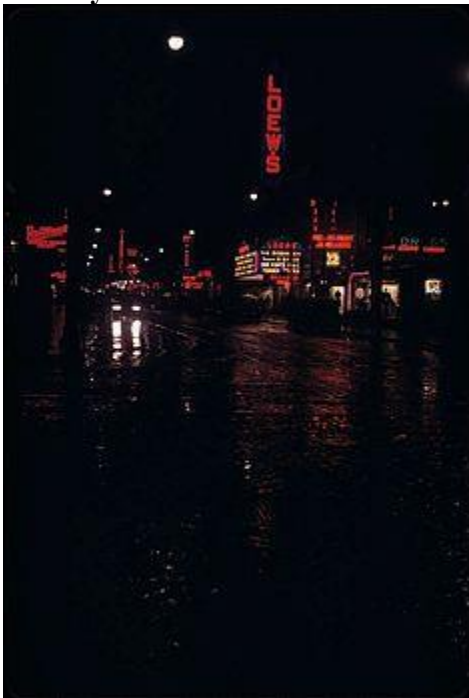
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2009/feb/12/pete-seeger-school-board-apology>



<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/artists/pete-seeger>



History of Loew's Theaters. Found on the internet: Wkikipedia.org.



Loew's Theatre, Toronto, Ontario, 1945

Loews Theatres, aka Loews Incorporated (originally Loew's), founded in 1904 by Marcus Loew and Brantford Schwartz, was the oldest theater chain operating in North America until it merged with AMC Theatres on January 26, 2006. From 1924 until 1959, it was also the parent company of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. The Loews name is still used by AMC in many markets. Its slogan was "Thank you for coming to Loews, sit back and relax, enjoy the show!!!" which was used in the chain's theater policy ads from the 1980s through the 1990s, when Sony rebranded the chain.

The company was originally called "Loew's" after the founder, Marcus Loew. In 1969, when the Tisch brothers acquired the company, it became known as "Loews".

Loew's Theatres Incorporated was founded in 1904 in Cincinnati, Ohio, by entrepreneur Marcus Loew. Loew founded a chain of nickelodeon theaters which showed short silent films in storefront locations. Soon the successful enterprise grew to include deluxe vaudeville houses and finally lavish movie palaces. Loew's theaters were found in cities from coast-to-coast, but primarily in East Coast and Midwest states.

To provide quality films for his theaters, Loew founded Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures (MGM) in 1924, by merging the earlier firms Metro Pictures, Goldwyn Pictures and Louis B. Mayer Productions. Loew's Incorporated served as distribution arm and parent company for the studio until the two were forced to separate by the 1948 U.S. Supreme Court ruling "United States v. Paramount Pictures, Inc.". The two companies officially split in 1959.

In 1985, when federal regulations had been relaxed, Tri-Star Pictures (then a joint venture co-owned by Coca-Cola, also owners of Columbia Pictures at the time, CBS, and Time Inc.) acquired the Loews theater chain from Loews Corporation, the successor company to the original firm founded by Marcus Loew. Loews Corporation by this time was a holding company owned by brothers Robert and Laurence Tisch highly diversified in non-entertainment business interests ranging from hotels to insurance. CBS left Tri-Star in 1985, and HBO left the venture and Tri-Star merged with Columbia Pictures in 1987, resulting in the formation of Columbia Pictures Entertainment.

Upon the full acquisition of Tri-Star to Columbia Pictures, and when Columbia was bought from Coca-Cola by Sony in 1989, Sony inherited the theaters as well. For a while, Loews operated under the Sony Theaters banner. Coincidentally, a Sony-led partnership would later acquire MGM in 2005.

In 1994, Sony partnered with Magic Johnson to form Magic Johnson Theaters, a mini-chain of theaters specifically geared toward the inner cities, particularly in Los Angeles. A year before, Sony Dynamic Digital Sound was installed in several theaters since the parent company used it as a marketing ploy to promote Sony's cinema sound division, which shut down in 2002.

In 1998, Cineplex Odeon Corporation merged with Loews Theaters to form Loews Cineplex Entertainment. The combined company was one of the largest movie exhibitors in the world, with theaters in the United States, Canada, Mexico, South Korea, and Spain. In 2001, though, the company declared Chapter 11 as a result of absorbing Cineplex's financial woes.

In 2002, Onex Corporation and Oaktree Capital Management acquired Loews Cineplex. In 2004, they sold it, minus its Canadian assets, to a private group of investors which included the Carlyle Group.

In 2005, AMC Theatres announced that it would merge with Loews Cineplex Entertainment and that the merged company would adopt the AMC name. The Loews name would remain a brand under the new company. At the time of the merger, Loews operated 198 theaters with 2,235 screens. It is not affiliated with its former parent, the Loews Corporation.
