

american murder ballads and their stories

American Murder Ballads and Their Stories: A Journey Through Dark Folk Traditions

american murder ballads and their stories have long held a haunting grip on the imagination of listeners, weaving tales of passion, betrayal, and tragedy into the fabric of American folk music. These songs, often passed down orally through generations, serve as chilling narratives that explore the darker aspects of human nature and society. From the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi Delta, murder ballads reveal not only the grim details of crimes but also the cultural contexts and emotional landscapes surrounding them.

In this article, we'll delve into the origins of American murder ballads, explore some of the most famous examples, and uncover the stories behind these compelling songs. Whether you're a folk music lover, a history buff, or simply curious about these eerie tales, there's something fascinating in understanding how murder ballads function as both storytelling devices and historical records.

The Origins of American Murder Ballads

Murder ballads have their roots in European folk traditions, particularly from the British Isles. When immigrants settled in America, they brought with them a rich repertoire of ballads—including those recounting crimes and punishments. Over time, these songs evolved, absorbing influences from Native American, African American, and other cultural traditions unique to America.

What Defines a Murder Ballad?

At their core, murder ballads are narrative songs that focus on a crime, usually a murder, and its aftermath. They often include:

- A clear storyline with characters
- Dialogue or direct speech within the lyrics
- Descriptions of the crime, motives, and consequences
- Moral or cautionary elements, warning listeners about the dangers of jealousy, greed, or violence

These ballads function as cautionary tales, moral lessons, or even social commentary, preserving stories that might otherwise be forgotten.

The Role of Oral Tradition

Before the advent of recorded music, murder ballads spread through oral tradition. Traveling musicians, storytellers, and local communities would sing these songs, adapting lyrics to fit regional details or personal touches. This fluidity means many versions of a single ballad exist, each offering unique insights into the time and place it was sung.

Famous American Murder Ballads and Their Stories

Some murder ballads have become iconic in American culture, inspiring countless covers, adaptations, and reinterpretations. Let's explore a few notable examples and the true stories or legends behind them.

"Banks of the Ohio"

One of the most haunting and widely known murder ballads, "Banks of the Ohio" tells the story of a man who, out of jealousy or despair, kills his lover by the river. Typically sung from the perspective of the murderer, the song captures the chilling moment of the crime and the remorse that follows. Though its exact origins are murky, the ballad likely emerged in the 19th century and shares roots with similar British songs.

This ballad highlights themes of love turned deadly and the consequences of uncontrolled emotions. Its simple melody belies the emotional depth and tragedy contained within the lyrics.

"Pretty Polly"

"Pretty Polly" is a classic Appalachian murder ballad that tells the grim story of a man who lures a woman into the woods and murders her. The song is notable for its stark narrative style and the way it reflects the harsh realities of frontier life. As with many murder ballads, the story is told with little embellishment, making it all the more chilling.

The ballad serves as a reminder of the dangers women faced and the dark undercurrents beneath seemingly peaceful rural communities. It has been covered by numerous folk and country artists, preserving its place in American musical history.

"Tom Dooley"

Perhaps one of the most famous American murder ballads, "Tom Dooley" recounts the true story of Tom Dula, a Confederate soldier convicted and executed for the murder of Laura Foster in North Carolina in the late 1860s. The song gained widespread popularity in the 1950s through the Kingston Trio's folk revival version.

What makes "Tom Dooley" particularly compelling is its basis in a real, documented crime, blending historical fact with folk storytelling. The ballad explores themes of love, jealousy, and justice, and its enduring popularity shows how murder ballads can immortalize real-life events.

The Cultural Significance of American Murder Ballads

Murder ballads are more than just morbid tales; they offer valuable insights into the social and cultural dynamics of the times in which they were created and sung.

Reflecting Social Issues

Many murder ballads touch on issues such as domestic violence, justice, and gender roles. By giving voice to victims and perpetrators, these songs reveal attitudes toward crime and punishment. For example, some ballads portray the murderer sympathetically, while others emphasize the victim's tragedy, reflecting societal perspectives on morality and culpability.

Preserving History Through Song

Before widespread literacy and mass media, ballads functioned as informal news reports, preserving the memory of crimes and events in communities. They helped keep stories alive in a way that was accessible and emotionally resonant, turning history into shared experience.

The Influence on Modern Music

American murder ballads have influenced countless artists across genres—from folk and country to rock and alternative music. Musicians like Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash, and Nick Cave have drawn inspiration from these traditional narratives, highlighting the timeless appeal of storytelling through song.

Exploring Murder Ballads Today: Tips for Listeners and Enthusiasts

If you're intrigued by American murder ballads and their stories, here are a few tips to deepen your appreciation:

- **Listen to multiple versions:** Because these ballads often have many variants, exploring different renditions can reveal new details and interpretations.
- **Research the backstories:** Understanding the historical or cultural context behind a ballad enriches the listening experience.
- **Explore related genres:** Blues, country, and folk music all share connections to murder ballads, offering broader perspectives on storytelling traditions.
- **Attend live performances:** Folk festivals and concerts often feature murder ballads, where the emotive power of live singing brings these stories to life.

Delving into the world of murder ballads is not just about the macabre; it's a journey into the heart of American storytelling, where music preserves memory, morality, and mystery.

Whether sung around campfires, recorded in studios, or passed down through generations, American murder ballads and their stories continue to captivate listeners with their blend of history, emotion, and suspense. These songs remind us of the power of narrative and the enduring human fascination with the darker side of life.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are American murder ballads?

American murder ballads are traditional folk songs that narrate stories of crimes, particularly murders, often reflecting historical events, local legends, or cautionary tales.

What is the origin of American murder ballads?

American murder ballads originated from European folk traditions brought by

settlers and evolved in the United States, particularly in the Appalachian region, blending with American culture and history.

Why are murder ballads significant in American folklore?

Murder ballads serve as oral histories that preserve local stories, moral lessons, and societal fears, providing insight into the cultural and social dynamics of the periods they depict.

Can you name a famous American murder ballad?

One famous American murder ballad is "Pretty Polly," which tells the story of a man who murders his lover and is often associated with Appalachian folk music.

How do murder ballads typically portray the killers?

Killers in murder ballads are often portrayed as either remorseful or cold-hearted, with the narrative sometimes offering motives or warnings about consequences, reflecting complex human emotions.

Are American murder ballads still relevant today?

Yes, American murder ballads remain relevant as they continue to influence modern music genres like country, folk, and Americana, and they offer cultural insights and storytelling techniques.

How have American murder ballads influenced modern music?

They have influenced modern music by inspiring artists to explore storytelling, dark themes, and traditional melodies, evident in works by musicians such as Johnny Cash and Nick Cave.

What themes are commonly explored in American murder ballads?

Common themes include betrayal, jealousy, revenge, justice, and morality, often highlighting the consequences of crime and the human condition.

Do murder ballads always have tragic endings?

Most murder ballads end tragically, emphasizing the fatal consequences of violence, though some may include elements of justice or supernatural retribution.

How can one learn more about the stories behind American murder ballads?

To learn more, one can explore folk music archives, listen to recordings by traditional and contemporary artists, read scholarly articles on American folklore, and study collections of ballads documented by ethnomusicologists.

Additional Resources

American Murder Ballads and Their Stories: A Deep Dive into Dark Americana

american murder ballads and their stories represent a unique and haunting genre within the broader tapestry of American folk music. These narrative songs, often recounting tragic, violent, or mysterious events, have roots that stretch back centuries, blending elements of history, legend, and cultural reflection. Exploring these ballads reveals more than just tales of crime and punishment; it offers insights into societal values, regional identities, and the evolving nature of storytelling in American culture.

The Origins and Evolution of American Murder Ballads

Murder ballads in America trace their lineage primarily to the British and Irish folk traditions, where storytelling through song was a prevalent form of oral history. As settlers arrived and established new communities, these ballads adapted to reflect the American landscape, social dynamics, and historical context. The 19th century, in particular, saw a proliferation of such songs as they captured the anxieties and realities of frontier life, lawlessness, and changing moral attitudes.

Unlike mere crime reports, American murder ballads often blend fact and fiction, dramatizing events to convey moral lessons or evoke emotional responses. Their narratives range from infamous outlaw tales to domestic tragedies, frequently underscoring themes of betrayal, justice, and retribution. The oral transmission of these songs ensured variations over time, making them living documents of cultural memory.

Stylistic Features and Narrative Techniques

American murder ballads typically employ a simple melodic structure paired with vivid, direct storytelling. The lyrics focus on key characters and pivotal moments, often using repetition and refrains to emphasize the gravity of the events. This style facilitates memorability and communal singing, crucial in an era before widespread literacy.

Narratives commonly follow a chronological sequence, detailing the circumstances leading up to the murder, the act itself, and sometimes the aftermath, including trials or supernatural retribution. The ballads' perspective may be that of a narrator, witness, victim, or perpetrator, offering varied angles on the same story.

Iconic Examples and Their Cultural Impact

Certain American murder ballads have transcended their folkloric origins to become cultural touchstones. Songs like "Pretty Polly," "Omie Wise," and "Banks of the Ohio" have been recorded and reinterpreted by countless artists across genres, from folk and country to rock and blues. Their enduring popularity underscores the compelling nature of the stories and their adaptability to contemporary contexts.

"Pretty Polly": A Tale of Jealousy and Betrayal

One of the most widely recognized murder ballads, "Pretty Polly," narrates the chilling story of a young woman lured into the woods by her lover and subsequently murdered. The song's stark depiction of betrayal and violence captures the harsh realities faced by women in rural settings historically, while also exploring themes of trust and innocence lost. Variations of this ballad appear throughout the Appalachian region, illustrating its deep roots in American folk tradition.

"Omie Wise": The True Crime Ballad

"Omie Wise" recounts the real-life murder of Naomi Wise in North Carolina in the early 19th century. Unlike more fictionalized ballads, this song closely follows documented events, highlighting the ballad's role as a form of communal justice and remembrance. Its continued performance testifies to the ballad's power in preserving local history and shaping collective memory.

"Banks of the Ohio": Love Turned Deadly

In "Banks of the Ohio," the narrator confesses to killing his lover to avoid scandal or rejection. This ballad delves into psychological complexity and societal pressures, illustrating how murder ballads can serve as moral cautionary tales while also humanizing perpetrators. Its haunting melody and narrative have inspired numerous modern adaptations, reflecting ongoing fascination with tragic romance and crime.

The Role of American Murder Ballads in Contemporary Music and Culture

In modern times, the influence of American murder ballads and their stories persists across diverse musical landscapes. Artists such as Johnny Cash, Nick Cave, and Gillian Welch have drawn from this rich tradition, blending historical themes with contemporary sensibilities. This continuity highlights the genre's adaptability and its capacity to address timeless human experiences—fear, love, justice, and mortality.

Moreover, murder ballads have found new life in academic and cultural discourse, where they are examined for their storytelling techniques, gender dynamics, and reflections of societal fears. The resurgence of interest in Americana and roots music has further propelled these songs into public consciousness, fostering appreciation for their artistic and historical significance.

Pros and Cons of Preserving Murder Ballads Today

- **Pros:** Preserving murder ballads maintains a vital connection to American cultural heritage, promotes understanding of historical social contexts, and enriches the folk music canon.
- **Cons:** Some ballads contain graphic content or perpetuate stereotypes, raising concerns about sensitivity and appropriateness in modern performances.

Balancing respect for tradition with contemporary values remains a challenge for performers, educators, and audiences engaging with these narratives.

Regional Variations and Their Significance

American murder ballads often reflect the unique cultural and historical backgrounds of different regions. For example, Appalachian ballads emphasize rural isolation and frontier justice, while Southern ballads may incorporate elements of plantation history and racial tension. Western murder ballads frequently recount outlaw exploits and vigilante justice, mirroring the mythology of the Wild West.

Understanding these regional distinctions enhances appreciation of how murder ballads function not only as entertainment but as expressions of local identity and collective memory.

Comparative Analysis: American vs. British Murder Ballads

While American murder ballads derive from British antecedents, notable differences have emerged due to cultural and environmental factors. British ballads often contain more supernatural elements and formalized poetic structures, whereas American versions tend toward straightforward narratives and themes rooted in frontier experiences. This divergence illustrates how migration and adaptation shape folk traditions over time.

Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of American Murder Ballads

The study of american murder ballads and their stories reveals a complex interplay between history, culture, and art. These ballads serve as windows into the darker aspects of human nature and society, yet they also foster empathy and understanding through storytelling. As both musical forms and cultural artifacts, they continue to captivate audiences and inspire artists, ensuring their place within the annals of American folklore and music history.

American Murder Ballads And Their Stories

american murder ballads and their stories: *American Murder Ballads and Their Stories* Olive Woolley Burt, 1958 The author tells how she found the songs and gives details of the actual murders, and in some instances supplies the music.

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american murder ballads and their stories: *Savage Pastimes* Harold Schechter, 2005-03 In this cogent and well-researched book, Harold Schechter argues that, unlike the popular conception of the media inciting violence through displaying it, without these outlets of violence in the media a basic human need would not be met and would have to be acted out in much more destructive ways. Schechter demonstrates how violent images saturated the earliest newspaper, how art and disturbing images are not incompatible and how the demonisation of comic books in the 1950s set up a pattern of equating testosterone fuelled entertainment with aggression.

american murder ballads and their stories: *Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds' Murder Ballads* Santi Elijah Holley, 2020-11-12 In a bar called The Bucket of Blood, a man shoots the bartender four times in the head. In the small town of Millhaven, a teenage girl secretly and gleefully murders her neighbors. A serial killer travels from home to home, quoting John Milton in his victims' blood. *Murder Ballads*, the ninth studio album from Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, is a

gruesome, blood-splattered reimagining of English ballads, American folk and blues music, and classic literature. Most of the stories told on *Murder Ballads* have been interpreted many times, but never before had they been so graphic or profane. Though earning the band their first Parental Advisory warning label, *Murder Ballads*, released in 1996, brought Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds their biggest critical and commercial success, thanks in part to the award-winning single, "Where the Wild Roses Grow," an unlikely duet with Australian pop singer, Kylie Minogue. Closely examining each of the ten songs on the album, Santi Elijah Holley investigates the stories behind the songs, and the numerous ways these ballads have been interpreted through the years. *Murder Ballads* is a tour through the evolution of folk music, and a journey into the dark secrets of American history.

american murder ballads and their stories: *Collected Works* Stephen Jenks, 1995-01-01

american murder ballads and their stories: *American Folk Songs* Norman Cohen, 2008-09-30 This state-by-state collection of folksongs describes the history, society, culture, and events characteristic of all fifty states. Unlike all other state folksong collections, this one does not focus on songs collected in the particular states, but rather on songs concerning the life and times of the people of that state. The topics range from the major historical events, such as the Boston Tea Party, the attack on Fort Sumter, and the California Gold Rush, to regionally important events such as disasters and murders, labor problems, occupational songs, ethnic conflicts. Some of the songs will be widely recognized, such as Casey Jones, Marching Through Georgia, or Sweet Betsy from Pike. Others, less familiar, have not been reprinted since their original publication, but deserve to be studied because of what they tell about the people of these United States, their loves, labors, and losses, and their responses to events. The collection is organized by regions, starting with New England and ending with the states bordering the Pacific Ocean, and by states within each region. For each state there are from four to fifteen songs presented, with an average of 10 songs per state. For each song, a full text is reprinted, followed by discussion of the song in its historical context. References to available recordings and other versions are given. Folksongs, such as those discussed here, are an important tool for historians and cultural historians because they sample experiences of the past at a different level from that of contemporary newspaper accounts and academic histories. These songs, in a sense, are history writ small. Includes: Away Down East, The Old Granite State, Connecticut, The Virginian Maid's Lament, Carry Me Back to Old Virginny, I'm Going Back to North Carolina, Shut up in Cold Creek Mine, Ain't God Good to Iowa?, Dakota Land, Dear Prairie Home, Cheyenne Boys, I'm off for California, and others.

american murder ballads and their stories: *The Gunning of America* Pamela Haag, 2016-04-19 An acclaimed historian explodes the myth about the 'special relationship' between Americans and their guns, revealing that savvy 19th century businessmen--not gun lovers--created American gun culture--

american murder ballads and their stories: *Prophet Singer* Mark Allan Jackson, 2009-09-18 *Prophet Singer: The Voice and Vision of Woody Guthrie* examines the cultural and political significance of lyrics by beloved songwriter and activist Woodrow Wilson "Woody" Guthrie. The text traces how Guthrie documented the history of America's poor and disadvantaged through lyrics about topics as diverse as the Dust Bowl and the poll tax. Divided into chapters covering specific historical topics such as race relations and lynchings, famous outlaws, the Great Depression, and unions, the book takes an in-depth look at how Guthrie manipulated his lyrics to explore pressing issues and to bring greater political and economic awareness to the common people. Incorporating the best of both historical and literary perspectives, Mark Allan Jackson references primary sources including interviews, recordings, drawings, and writings. He includes a variety of materials from the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, and the Woody Guthrie Archives. Many of these have never before been widely available. The result provides new insights into one of America's most intriguing icons. *Prophet Singer* offers an analysis of the creative impulse behind and ideals expressed in Guthrie's song lyrics. Details from the artist's personal life as well as his interactions with political and artistic movements from the first half of the twentieth century afford readers the

opportunity to understand how Guthrie's deepest beliefs influenced and found voice in the lyrics that are now known and loved by millions.

american murder ballads and their stories: The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Music and Culture Janet Sturman, 2019-02-26 The SAGE Encyclopedia of Music and Culture presents key concepts in the study of music in its cultural context and provides an introduction to the discipline of ethnomusicology, its methods, concerns, and its contributions to knowledge and understanding of the world's musical cultures, styles, and practices. The diverse voices of contributors to this encyclopedia confirm ethnomusicology's fundamental ethos of inclusion and respect for diversity. Combined, the multiplicity of topics and approaches are presented in an easy-to-search A-Z format and offer a fresh perspective on the field and the subject of music in culture. Key features include: Approximately 730 signed articles, authored by prominent scholars, are arranged A-to-Z and published in a choice of print or electronic editions Pedagogical elements include Further Readings and Cross References to conclude each article and a Reader's Guide in the front matter organizing entries by broad topical or thematic areas Back matter includes an annotated Resource Guide to further research (journals, books, and associations), an appendix listing notable archives, libraries, and museums, and a detailed Index The Index, Reader's Guide themes, and Cross References combine for thorough search-and-browse capabilities in the electronic edition

american murder ballads and their stories: Arts & Entertainment Fads Frank W. Hoffmann, William G. Bailey, 1990 The first book in a multi-volume set on American fads. Gives data on the entertainers, art, movies, literature, television programs, and music that have captured national attention and followers in the past 200 years. Each of the 120 entries examines the nature of the fad and its importance to the American scene, influencing our vocabularies, fashions, leisure time pursuits, expectations about life, marketing strategies, and spending habits. Annotation copyrighted by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR

american murder ballads and their stories: *Lynching and Vigilantism in the United States* Norton Moses, 1997-02-25 Beginning with the 1760s, when lynching and vigilantism came into existence in what is now the United States, this bibliography fills a void in the history of American collective violence. It covers over 4,200 works dealing with vigilante movements and lynchings, including books, articles, government documents, and unpublished theses and dissertations. Following a chapter listing general works, the book is arranged into four chronological chapters, a chapter on the frontier West, a chapter on anti-lynching, and chapters on literature and art. The book opens with a chapter devoted to general works. It then includes chapters on the period from the Colonial era to the Civil War, the Civil War through 1881, and the periods from 1882 to 1916 and 1917 to 1996. The work then turns to the frontier West and to anti-lynching bills, laws, organizations, and leaders. Finally, the book includes chapters on vigilantism in literature and art.

american murder ballads and their stories: *The Spectacle of Death* Kristin Boudreau, 2006-04-04 In 1787, Benjamin Rush cautioned that public punishments were dangerous to the social and legal authority of the new nation. For Rush, irrepressible human sentiments all but guaranteed that public punishments would turn spectators against the institutions responsible for the punishments. Although public executions of criminals ended early in the 19th century, debate over the morality of capital punishment has continued to this day. In this unique and fascinating glimpse into public reactions to prominent executions, from colonial times to the 1990s, Kristin Boudreau focuses on the central role of populist, often ephemeral literary forms in shaping attitudes toward capital punishment. Surveying popular poems, ballads, plays, and novels, she shows that, at key times of social unrest in American history, many Americans have felt excluded by the political and legal processes, and have turned instead to inexpensive literary forms of expression in an attempt to change the course of history. Among the significant capital cases that the author discusses are: the Haymarket anarchist trial of 1886; the lynching of Leo Frank in 1914; the murder of Emmett Till in 1955 and its effects on the Civil Rights movement; Norman Mailer's treatment of the Gary Gilmore case in the 1979 novel, *The Executioner's Song*; and the 1998 execution of Karla Faye Tucker, a

convicted murderer who became a born-again Christian on death row. In the concluding chapter, Boudreau examines contemporary writers, musicians, actors, and other artists who are using their artistic media to influence official policies of states that permit capital punishment. By examining these neglected texts, Boudreau brings to light a compelling story about ordinary Americans fighting an entrenched legal system at times of great national crisis.

american murder ballads and their stories: Psycho USA Harold Schechter, 2012-08-07
AMERICA'S MOST COLD-BLOODED! In the horrifying annals of American crime, the infamous names of brutal killers such as Bundy, Dahmer, Gacy, and Berkowitz are writ large in the imaginations of a public both horrified and hypnotized by their monstrous, murderous acts. But for every celebrity psychopath who's gotten ink for spilling blood, there's a bevy of all-but-forgotten homicidal fiends studding the bloody margins of U.S. history. The law gave them their just desserts, but now the hugely acclaimed author of *The Serial Killer Files* and *The Whole Death Catalog* gives them their dark due in this absolutely riveting true-crime treasury. Among America's most cold-blooded you'll meet • Robert Irwin, "The Mad Sculptor": He longed to use his carving skills on the woman he loved—but had to settle for making short work of her mother and sister instead. • Peter Robinson, "The Tell-Tale Heart Killer": It took two days and four tries for him to finish off his victim, but no time at all for keen-eyed cops to spot the fatal flaw in his floor plan. • Anton Probst, "The Monster in the Shape of a Man": The ax-murdering immigrant's systematic slaughter of all eight members of a Pennsylvania farm family matched the savagery of the Manson murders a century later. • Edward H. Ruloff, "The Man of Two Lives": A genuine Jekyll and Hyde, his brilliant scholarship disguised his bloodthirsty brutality, and his oversized brain gave new meaning to "mastermind." Spurred by profit, passion, paranoia, or perverse pleasure, these killers—the Witch of Staten Island, the Smutty Nose Butcher, the Bluebeard of Quiet Dell, and many others—span three centuries and a host of harrowing murder methods. Dramatized in the pages of penny dreadfuls, sensationalized in tabloid headlines, and immortalized in "murder ballads" and classic fiction by Edgar Allan Poe and Theodore Dreiser, the demonic denizens of Psycho USA may be long gone to the gallows—but this insidiously irresistible slice of gothic Americana will ensure that they'll no longer be forgotten.

american murder ballads and their stories: Poor Pearl, Poor Girl! Anne B. Cohen, 2014-07-03
The year was 1896, and nineteenth-century journalists called the murder of Pearl Bryan the Crime of the Century. From the day Pearl's headless body was found to the execution of her murderers on the gallows, the details of the murder fascinated newspaper reporters and ballad composers alike. Often glossing over the facts of the case, newspaper accounts presented the events according to stereotypes that were remarkably similar to those found in well-known murdered-girl ballads, such as *Pretty Polly*, *Omie Wise*, and *The Jealous Lover*. Events, characters, motivations, and plot were presented through this framework: the simple country girl led astray by a clever degenerate. Nearly all variants of the Pearl Bryan ballad point the same moral: Young ladies now take warning Young men are so unjust, It may be your best lover But you know not whom to trust. Representations of this formula appear in such diverse genres as the ballad *Poor Ellen Smith* and the novel *An American Tragedy*. As Anne Cohen demonstrates, both newspaper accounts and ballads tell the Pearl Bryan story from the same moral stance, express the same interpretation of character, and are interested in the same details. Both distort facts to accommodate a shared pattern of storytelling. This pattern consists of a plot formula—the murdered-girl formula—that is accompanied by stereotyped scenes, actors, and phrases. The headless body—surely the most striking element in the Pearl Bryan case—is absent from those ballads that have survived. Anne Cohen contends that a decapitated heroine does not belong to the formula—a murdered heroine, yes, but not a decapitated one. Similarly, newspapers made much of Pearl's innocence and tended to downplay the second murderer. Only one murderer, the lover, belongs to the stereotype. *Poor Pearl, Poor Girl!* is a ballad study conducted on historic- geographic lines; that is, it seeks to trace the history and interrelations of a series of ballad texts and to relate the ballads directly to their ideological and historical context in the American scene. It also compares the narrative techniques of ballad composition with the

techniques of other forms of popular narrative, especially newspaper journalism.

american murder ballads and their stories: *Long Steel Rail* Norm Cohen, 2000 Impeccable scholarship and lavish illustration mark this landmark study of American railroad folksong. Norm Cohen provides a sweeping discussion of the human aspects of railroad history, railroad folklore, and the evolution of the American folksong. The heart of the book is a detailed analysis of eighty-five songs, from John Henry and The Wabash Cannonball to Hell-Bound Train and Casey Jones, with their music, sources, history, variations, and discographies. A substantial new introduction updates this edition.

american murder ballads and their stories: *Voices from the Canefields* Franklin Odo, 2013-10 Holehole bushi, folk songs of Japanese workers in Hawaii's plantations, describe the experiences of this particular group caught in the global movements of capital, empire, and labor during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this book author Franklin Odo situates over two hundred of these songs, in translation, in a hitherto largely unexplored historical context.

american murder ballads and their stories: *Always Been a Rambler* Josh Beckworth, 2018-04-03 G.B. Grayson and Henry Whitter were two of the most influential artists in the early days of country music. Songs they popularized--Tom Dooley, Little Maggie, Handsome Molly, and Nine Pound Hammer--are still staples of traditional music. Although the duo sold tens of thousands of records during the 1920s, the details of their lives remain largely unknown. Featuring never before published photographs and interviews with friends and relatives, this book chronicles for the first time the romantic intrigues and tragic deaths that marked their lives and explores the Southern Appalachian culture that shaped their music.

american murder ballads and their stories: *Poem Unlimited* David Kerler, Timo Müller, 2019-09-23 Questions of genres as well as their possible definitions, taxonomies, and functions have been discussed since antiquity. Even though categories of genre today are far from being fixed, they have for decades been upheld without question. The goal of this volume is to problematize traditional definitions of poetic genres and to situate them in a broader socio-cultural, historical, and theoretical context. The contributions encompass numerous methodological approaches (including hermeneutics, poststructuralism, reception theory, cultural studies, gender studies), periods (Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism), genres (elegy, sonnet, visual poetry, performance poetry, hip hop) as well as languages and national literatures. From this interdisciplinary and multi-methodological perspective, genres, periods, languages, and literatures are put into fruitful dialogue, new perspectives are discovered, and suggestions for further research are provided.

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Myles Graham and Aaron Chiles make a statement at Under Under Armour All-American practice has officially ended with four Gators signees preparing for the nationally televised game on Wednesday evening. After a good week from all
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