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**"I LOVE TO HEAR THOSE OLD HYMNS PLAYED ON THE VIOLIN": A
DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SECULAR INSTRUMENTAL
MUSIC AND OLD BAPTIST HYMN SINGING OF JACK MCGINNIS.**

A Thesis

by

EDDIE L. HUFFMAN

Submitted to the Graduate School

Appalachian State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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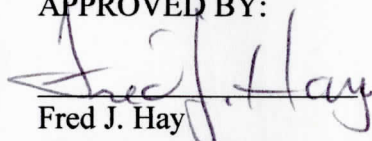
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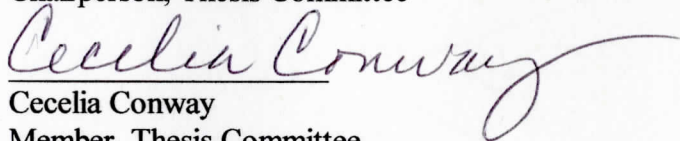
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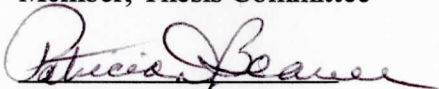
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ABSTRACT

**“I LOVE TO HEAR THOSE OLD HYMNS PLAYED ON THE VIOLIN”: A
DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SECULAR INSTRUMENTAL
MUSIC AND OLD BAPTIST HYMN SINGING OF JACK MCGINNIS. (August 2004)**

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Jack McGinnis, born and reared in southeastern Ashe County, North Carolina, fervently carries the music traditions of his family and community into the twenty-first century. This thesis, built around two years of interviewing and recording sessions, presents a documentation and analysis of his secular and sacred music.

Jack McGinnis learned square dance tunes on banjo, fiddle, and guitar from neighbors and Old Baptist hymns from family and other singers at Primitive Baptist church services. All of his mentors learned these traditions prior to the dawn of the twentieth century, and Jack's development into a fine musician and singer in his adolescent years and beyond coincided with the increased dissemination of popular music forms, through radio and records, into all areas of the country, including his home community. He did not conform his community's traditional music and singing styles to the newer, popular forms that began to flood the airwaves in the 1930s. Like many traditional musicians Jack absorbed tunes and songs, particularly into his repertoire of secular music, from new sources, but he situated them within the traditional styles he learned to play as a child.

As Jack McGinnis' favorite hymn, "Guide Me, O' Thou Great Jehovah," states, he is a pilgrim in this world seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. Jack's spiritual quest for the true church of God's people has been such a powerful force in his life that what may be deemed secular is inextricably tied to the sacred. His music and life reveal that seemingly separate secular and sacred music genres are involved in a complex network of exchanges, blurring distinctions between the two. The result of these exchanges is a musical form, comprised of vocal sacred singing meshed with an instrumental secular music tradition, which operates within both the sacred and secular realms. Additionally, music serves as a representation of Jack's spiritual development in negotiating between the sacred world of scripture and a life in the spiritually barren world of man. Through his music, Jack reveals how these two realms, while never in agreement, can coexist and often overlap.

This thesis is dedicated to *Jack and Ora Lee McGinnis*, who taught me volumes and were such gracious and patient hosts. Additionally, I dedicate this work to my grandmother, *Charlotte Huffman*, whose life and stories guided me to this research.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Hartzog family reunion takes place every July on the banks of the South Fork of the New River in southeastern Ashe County, North Carolina. Family and friends gather in this small river valley, located in the community of Idlewild, amongst the hills and lush greenery of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the pristine waters of the New River for an afternoon of reconnecting to people and place and celebrating a familial heritage of over 200 years in the area. The event begins with a morning worship service at the family cemetery which overlooks the farm house built by William Hartzog around 1895 and the valley below. The service is a time for remembering those who have passed, singing hymns, and giving thanks for yet another gathering of Hartzogs. After the smail service, tables are set up by the river and piled with fried chicken, ham, potato salad, fresh vegetables, and every incarnation of a casserole imaginable. Then there is the dessert table loaded with pies, cakes, cobblers, banana pudding and numerous other treats. The warm July sun is complimented by a cool mountain breeze as family members remember together and share their experiences at the homeplace. Kids swim in the crisp water of the New while others fish from the bank or pitch horseshoes in the nearby pit.

The Hartzog family reunion was where I met Jack McGinnis in July, 2001. Jack grew up less than a mile up river from the reunion site and consequently spent a lot of his childhood with his Hartzog cousins, including my grandmother, Charlotte (Hartzog)

Huffman. Our encounter was rather brief—he and his wife Ora Lee were on their way back to their present home in Wilkes County. However, we did have time to exchange sentiments for old-time folk music. Subsequent inquiry into Jack's life and music revealed that he is a great old-time musician. With the help of my grandmother, I was able to set up a meeting with Jack which led to several interviews and recording sessions over a period of two years in which I documented the rich musical heritage he possesses. Only after my field research was well underway did I realize the import and significance of religion and hymn singing to his life and music. Throughout our work together, Jack graciously shared his ideas on life, religion, secular dance music, and hymn singing. His music and life reveal that seemingly separate secular and sacred music genres are involved in a complex network of exchanges, blurring distinctions between the two.

Jack McGinnis fervently carries the music traditions of his family and community into the twenty-first century. He learned square dance tunes on banjo, fiddle, and guitar from neighbors and Old Baptist hymns from family and other singers at Primitive Baptist church services. All of his mentors learned these traditions prior to the dawn of the twentieth century. Jack's earliest exposure to these traditional music forms and his development into a fine musician and singer coincided with the spread of popular music forms into all areas of the country, including his home community of Idlewild. Jack did not conform his community's traditional styles of music and singing to the newer, popular forms that began to flood the airwaves in the late 1920s and 1930s. Like many traditional musicians Jack absorbed tunes and songs, particularly into his repertoire of secular music, from new sources, but he situated them within the traditional styles he learned to play as a

child.

Jack McGinnis' favorite hymn begins, "Guide me, O' thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this barren land." He is a pilgrim in this world seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. Jack's spiritual quest for the true church of God's people has been such a powerful force in his life that what may be deemed secular is inextricably tied to the sacred. Jack's music represents this bond and serves as a map, detailing his spiritual development through his negotiation between the sacred world of scripture and a life in the spiritually barren world of man. Through his music, Jack reveals how these two realms, while never in agreement, can coexist and often overlap.

Chapter two is a review of published materials regarding the music and religious traditions which Jack bears. In the discussion of secular dance music, emphasis is placed on the banjo because it is the primary instrument that Jack plays. In the religion and sacred music portion of the chapter, I focus on information pertaining to Primitive Baptists and their singing tradition. Even though Jack no longer holds membership with the denomination, his family's history among the group and his nearly forty-year membership require a thorough understanding of Primitive Baptist belief. A final section of the chapter consists of research on the relationship between secular and sacred music genres to lay a foundation for understanding how the boundaries between these genres, although seeming to exist as separate, compartmentalized groupings, operate in a fluid manner in Jack's music.

In chapter three I discuss the primary methods employed in this research, including the fundamental theories that shaped my approach to the topic, the means and equipment

used for documenting Jack's stories and music, and the processes through which the raw information was developed into the written thesis along with the accompanying collection of music on compact disc.

Before embarking on an analysis of Jack McGinnis' music, a brief biographical sketch and an overview of Jack's beliefs in relation to the Primitive Baptist denomination are presented in chapters four and five, respectively. In the biographical sketch I detail some important events from Jack's early life which were influential in shaping his approach to music and life in general. Early on, Jack developed a real sense of importance for retaining traditional values, not for the sake of posterity but for their functionality and life lessons. A sizable portion of this chapter discusses significant religious events in Jack's life, which leads to chapter three, a transition from the event-oriented biographical sketch to a concept-oriented analysis of Jack's position within the context of Primitive Baptist faith and the denominational construct. Although a number of Jack's older relatives were Primitive Baptist and he was an elder and member for nearly forty years, he does not trace his religious lineage to any denomination. In a sense Jack is very much a Primitive Baptist in terms of shared beliefs and religious principle, but because of these beliefs, he cannot align himself with any group developed by man after the creation of the world. These two chapters provide the life history within which Jack's music functions.

A documentation and analysis of Jack's secular and sacred music is presented in the final three chapters, first as separate genres in chapters six and seven, then as they naturally operate in conjunction with one another in chapter eight. In chapter six I detail Jack's secular dance music repertoire and playing styles as this music form was most

prominent in his early life. The chapter is focused on dance and other contexts in which Jack learned and played his music, his repertoire and playing styles, the mentors he learned from, and the function of the music in his life. Chapter seven is centered on his vast repertoire of Old Baptist hymns and tunes, which became his principle outlet for musical expression after his experience of salvation. The function of hymn singing as a form of worship is the overlying theme in this seventh chapter and is discussed in relation to the absence of musical accompaniment to the singing, how hymn texts are selected under strict scriptural and experiential criteria to optimize the worship experience, and the creative freedom allowed in pairing tunes with texts. However, to fully understand the importance and function of these music traditions in Jack's life, they must be considered in relation to one another. In chapter eight I present the merging of secular instrumental music with sacred unaccompanied singing. These two seemingly separate genres have blended throughout Jack's life and help provide an understanding of how he negotiates between the opposing spiritual and human natures of man. Additionally, the interplay between the vocal tradition and the instrumental is discussed. Four audio compact discs culled from my field recordings with Jack are included as appendices at the end of this text. Disc one contains a set of his secular dance tunes, discs two and three contain several hymns, and disc four is collection of hymn tunes played on musical instruments, with some functioning as forms of worship and others as simply musical enjoyment.

This research began as a documentation of Jack McGinnis' music. However, due to the important role religion plays in his life, including music, ignoring the connections between the sacred and secular realms misses the larger picture of why Jack plays and

sings any music at all. Therefore, this thesis must go beyond recording tunes and discussing playing and singing styles to present an analysis of how the secular and sacred genres function in his life, revealing much about the fluid borders between the genres and reflecting how Jack has developed spiritually over his lifetime.

CHAPTER TWO

Banjos and Baptists: Review of Literature

This thesis is concerned primarily with understanding how the music of Jack McGinnis fits within two major traditions, one secular and one sacred, and how he mediates them. Regarding the secular, old-time string music, an enormous mass of research has been published in written form and through audio and video media. The literature available concerning the sacred tradition, Old Baptist belief and practice, is also impressive. Within these two areas of research are found links between the traditions, which address my primary focus on the exchanges between secular and sacred genres.

Since the banjo has always been Jack's primary instrument, the secular music portion of this review of literature covers a brief introduction to the arrival of the banjo and its transmission to white musicians, followed by a discussion of traditional playing techniques. While no explicit correlations in terms of influence can be made between Jack's music and that of surrounding areas, the banjo traditions of nearby communities offer a source of comparison. A brief discussion of the formation of the string band follows because Jack's early musical experience was in the context of ensemble playing at dances.

Jack McGinnis' religious beliefs and sacred singing require more thorough contextualization within the broader scope of Primitive Baptist theology because he was

deeply involved with this tradition outside his home community throughout his life.

Indeed, Jack was a Primitive Baptist for nearly forty years, pastoring and visiting churches throughout northwestern North Carolina and southwestern Virginia, and he also has ties to the denomination in other areas of Appalachia through his family. The body of literature considered here pertains mainly to the North Carolina and Virginia portions of the Blue Ridge. I intend to first lay a foundation of Primitive Baptist belief, then build an understanding of the denomination's hymn tradition.

This literature review is concluded with an examination of the merging of secular and sacred music genres. The available body of scholarly research on this topic is limited, but within the area of African-American blues, I have found information that begins to look at the overlapping nature of secular and sacred genres. Under the wider scope of folk music scholarship there is substantial documentation regarding opinions on secular music from a religious perspective. An initial separation of secular and sacred genres is apparent and provides a starting point from which to approach Jack's merging of instrumental music with an unaccompanied vocal hymn tradition.

The Banjo

An early form of the present day five-string banjo entered North America by way of West Africans who, against their will, accompanied early European settlers of the continent and the West Indies (Conway 1995). William Tallmadge describes this early form as "a variant of a long-necked, skin-head lute," with two of the more well known prototypes being the *molo*, a gourd instrument with three strings, and the *halam*, of gourd

and skin-head construction but with five strings of which three served as drones (1983: 169). Cecelia Conway notes that the first recorded North American appearance of an early version of the banjo was in Maryland at least by the 1740s, and the five-string, wooden-rim sound chamber form of the present day banjo became standard prior to the Civil War (1995).

Before embarking on a discussion of playing styles, a note on the manner in which the instrument was initially transmitted from African-American slaves to rural white southerners is in order. This is a much-debated topic based on two primary theories: (1) rural white southerners received the banjo and techniques for playing it directly from African-Americans and (2) popular white minstrel entertainers (both southern- and northern-born) of the nineteenth century acted as the conduit of cultural exchange between rural blacks and whites. Robert Winans argues that transmission occurred through contact with minstrels based on his observation that the southern mountain style of playing is extremely similar to that of the minstrels (cited in Conway 1995). However, according to Conway, this similarity in playing styles can no more suggest a link between rural whites and minstrels than it can between rural whites and rural African Americans. She shows that direct cross-cultural interaction among rural African-Americans and rural whites resulted in the initial transmission of the banjo (Conway 1995). The style that developed in the southern Appalachians after the initial transmission was likely influenced in some way by both African Americans and minstrel entertainers.

The traditional styles in which the banjo is played are often categorized under one of two basic styles, down-stroking or up-picking (Conway 1995, Cohen and Seeger

1964). The down-stroking style is described as striking the lower four strings (as opposed to the short drone string) with the back of the finger nail (usually the index finger) to obtain melody notes while the thumb plucks the drone string, maintaining rhythm. Occasionally, the thumb is used to pluck one of the lower four strings to accomplish “sounds otherwise unobtainable with the fingers” (Cohen and Seeger 1964: 14).

Conway’s description of this style is more detailed in respect to the motions of the right hand in executing this technique. The hand takes the shape of a claw and remains fairly rigid while the striking motion originates in the wrist. As the index finger strikes a string the pad of the thumb rests on one of the other strings (either the drone string or one of the lower four as Cohen and Seeger suggest). The thumb plucks whichever string it has come to rest upon as the hand moves away from the strings to its original position (Conway 1995). This technique is said to have been the earliest style used by African-Americans, a point used to help support Conway’s theory of transmission noted above (Conway 1995).

The up-picking style is characterized by both a different use of the index finger and the thumb. The pad of the index finger is used in an upward motion and is only used on the first string, serving as another drone. The thumb plays both the drone, as described in the down-stroking style, and the melody on the lower four strings. Another form of this style employs the index finger and thumb in reverse fashion where the index finger plays the melody and the thumb is relegated to playing the drone string only (Cohen and Seeger 1964). The key difference in this style with the down-stroking described above is the upward motion of the index finger, which if employed on strings other than the first, allows for more melodic intricacies. The up-picking style is sometimes used to acquire the

more rhythmic sound (as opposed to melodic) achieved by down-stroking (Conway 1995).

These descriptions only serve as a basis by which to characterize banjo styles. As is noted by Mark Wilson, there is wide variety in the manner in which the sounds resultant of the techniques discussed above are achieved, particularly within the down-stroking style. For example, Buell Kazee employed the technique of “pulling off” with the left hand to attain the secondary (to melody) notes achieved by his father’s practice of bringing the thumb down to the lower strings (Wilson 1999). Kazee’s thumb was only employed on the drone string. While many banjo players similarly drop the thumb down to the lower four strings, many do not. Banjo player Hobart Smith remarked to Alan Lomax that his father kept his thumb on the drone string (Cohen 2001). Winans reports that of the thirteen African-American banjo players he interviewed in Virginia and West Virginia, most did not drop the thumb down. John Jackson, a banjo player and blues guitarist from Virginia, used his thumb only on the drone string (Winans 1979, Conway and Odell 1998). Another banjo player is described as picking melody notes upward with the index finger, combining the down-stroking style with the up-picking (Wilson 1999). John Jackson, referred to above, had a style where he raked the index finger upward and downward across the strings within his down-stroking style (Winans 1979, Conway and Odell 1998).

Sources for comparison nearby Jack’s home community are found in the areas of Ashe and Watauga Counties along with northern Avery County in North Carolina and eastern Johnson County, Tennessee. The up-picking banjo style is favored more recently by players around Beech Mountain such as Stanley Hicks, Clifford and Leonard Glenn, and Tedra Harmon (*It Still Lives* 1980: 10). However, the down-stroking style was

preferred by the “older” players in the area. Leonard Glenn notes, “They played it a little different from the way they do now... When they’d get to a dance and wanted to play a fast tune, you know, maybe they would knock it the clawhammer way,” and Stanley Hicks adds, “Everybody [the older players] played the clawhammer way” (*It Still Lives* 1980: 5, 9).

Ralph Rinzler documented the music of Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley in 1961 on *Old-Time Music at Clarence Ashley’s*, which was released on compact disc in 1994 as *The Original Folkways Recordings of Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley: 1960 Through 1962*. These recordings include the banjo playing of Doc Watson, Gaither Carlton, and Arnold Watson from Deep Gap, Watauga County, North Carolina along with Clarence Ashley from around Mountain City, Johnson County, Tennessee. The older players, Ashley and Carlton, utilize downstroking techniques while the younger Watsons up-pick (Rinzler 1994). Variance beyond the use of different techniques can also be heard among all of these musicians.

Another variation in technique commented on by Rinzler, directly related to Jack’s playing, involves a different use of the thumb on the drone string. Ashley’s aunt Ary picked upward with the thumb, instead of down on the drone string (Rinzler 1961). Leonard Glenn of Beech Mountain says that his father also used this technique (*It Still Lives* 1980: 7). This information, along with Conway and Odell’s description of John Jackson’s technique noted above, are discussed in more detail in chapter six to show that Jack’s banjo style, while seemingly innovative, is similar, if only partially, to that of other musicians nearby his community and those further removed.

Traditions are constantly changing and being reinterpreted, not so much by mainstream popular culture, but through the individual creativity and aesthetic values of the community in which they exist (Carter 1990). Cultural exchange between African Americans and whites is one of the primary means through which this evolution of tradition occurs. These cultural exchanges eventually led to the formation of the string band ensemble, a development which affected both traditional playing styles and tune repertoire. Gerald Milnes, along with others, noted the considerable influence of African-American musicians on traditional fiddling exhibited through strong rhythmic syncopations that have become a hallmark of the southern tradition (Milnes 1999; Conway 1995; Carter 1990). Conversely, European melodies were transposed on the banjo, an instrument of African origin (Conway 1995; Milnes 1999). Because the banjo is inherently limited in its melodic capabilities, more melodically complex fiddle tunes of earlier generations did not make the transition over to ensemble playing (Carter 1990). In a like manner, older banjo tunes, described by Conway as lyrical, rhythmically complex, and improvisational compositions of African-Americans (Conway 1995), were omitted because the instrument adapted to better fit the melodic nature of the fiddle. This is not to suggest that these tunes, from both the solo fiddle and banjo traditions, entirely dropped from currency, but that they were not incorporated into the ensemble repertory in the New River Valley (Carter 1990).

The secular music traditions of southeastern Ashe County where Jack McGinnis grew up are not well documented by the vast amount of research on traditional secular music of the broader Appalachian region. Indeed, I have found no information regarding

secular music in this small area, which is one of the initial motivations for undertaking this research. Thomas Carter, in his thesis written for his Master of Arts in Folklore, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, encountered a similar situation in his study of fiddle traditions in nearby Alleghany County, North Carolina. He posited a theory that the American fiddling tradition is comprised of a patchwork of small “sub-traditions” confined to specific localities defined by whatever boundaries, whether social (community) or natural (i.e. mountains, rivers) (Carter 1973). While this thesis is not concerned so much with the fiddling tradition, the same theory is applicable to the banjo tradition as well as other music forms. The guiding principle is that as information is gained about the individual musician, additional directions for research within the community will be illuminated, and as the understanding of the music of the “sub-tradition” becomes more comprehensive, a more complete picture of national traditions is possible (Carter 1973).

The Primitive Baptists and Their Singing

Primitive Baptists trace their history back to the theology of John Calvin and the first group of Baptists, organized by English refugees in Amsterdam in 1608, but they do not fully identify with Calvinism, viewing their church as representative of the apostolic (or true) church described in scripture (Peacock and Tyson 1989; Drummond 1989). Loyal Jones also notes that they would more likely identify with scriptural evidence rather than Calvin’s teaching (Jones 1999). From the first Baptist Church, one noted as General Baptist based in Arminian theology, the history involves a multitude of splits, the first being the Calvinistic Particular Baptists’ separation from the General Baptists in the

seventeenth century (Peacock and Tyson 1989, B. Patterson 1995). This separation was due to the Particulars' doctrine of election versus the Generals' Arminian belief of general atonement (B. Patterson 1995). The first Particular Baptist church was organized September 16, 1633 in London, and by the end of the century, sixteen Baptist churches (some were General Baptists) existed in the American colonies (Peacock and Tyson 1989).

The Particular and General Baptists differed greatly in their views toward congregational singing in the church throughout the seventeenth century. Through a metaphorical interpretation of scripture, Benjamin Keach, an influential Particular Baptist Minister, first introduced congregational singing in 1673, insisting that it was mandated by Christ. Fourteen years later the Particular Baptist Church approved congregational singing as suitable for inclusion in regular church services (B. Patterson 1995). Drummond reports a direct influence of Keach's position on congregational singing among Baptists in the American Colonies. In 1716 the Welsh Tract Church, founded in 1701 in Delaware and to which is attributed the origin of American Old Baptists, added an article on singing written by Keach to their adoption of the London Confession of Faith, which the Philadelphia Association adopted in 1742 (Drummond 1989). However, according to folklorist, Beverly Patterson, the fourteen years during which Keach carefully worked to institute congregational singing were not without divisions over the issue. The main argument faced by Keach was headed by Isaac Marlow, a member of Keach's congregation. Marlow objected to the idea of the entire congregation participating. Much like the General Baptists of the time, he felt that singing, just as preaching, should be

reserved for those who receive the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and should therefore be completely extemporaneous in text as well as form (e.g. rhyme and meter). This literal interpretation of scripture brought with it the exclusion of women from singing as well. The ultimate result was that Keach's congregation voted to include singing as part of the regular church service but only after preaching so that those who did not wish to participate could leave. Marlow split and formed another church where the only difference is noted as being the exclusion of singing (B. Patterson 1995).

The eighteenth century is seen as a period of relative calm for the Particular Baptists, but is also viewed as a low point due to the spread of Arminian theology and other more "antichristian" forces (Hassell and Hassell 1886, Peacock and Tyson 1989). The nineteenth century, however, brings about the most instrumental split among Baptists in America, a split to which Primitive Baptists trace their root as a distinct denomination (Dorgan 1987). This division resulted from the rise of missionary activities, both at home and abroad, designed to win souls for Christ, and culminated with the Black Rock Address of 1818 in Maryland and the Kehukee Declaration of 1827 in Halifax County, North Carolina, both of which banished organizations of the church such as missionary societies, seminaries, and resources for their support, making clear that efforts of man were deemed useless in affecting human salvation (Sovine 1982, Dorgan 1999). While this was the primary objection of those who were to become known as Primitive Baptists, Howard Dorgan noted that there were other issues involved before and after the split (Dorgan 1987). Intertwined in these disputes was the issue of musical instruments being welcomed in the worship services of some Baptists and most of the Arminian denominations. The

Elders Cushing Biggs Hassell and Sylvester Hassell, father and son, wrote with extreme dissatisfaction of the use of musical instruments in revivals turning the worship of God into entertainment for a fee, which was related to missionary efforts through the procurement of funding (Hassell and Hassell 1886). Beverly Patterson observed a correlation between those who emphasize a personal role in salvation and the expanded role, including the introduction of musical instruments, of music in worship (B. Patterson 1995). Drummond stated that the strongest attempts to introduce musical instruments into Primitive Baptist churches occurred with the revivalism of the late nineteenth century, an era from which later Primitive Baptists drew some of their hymns, although the proscription of musical instruments remained. Issues over the use of instruments in worship continued as did the rejection of them by the majority of Primitive Baptists (Drummond 1989). At this point the discussion turns to the beliefs of Primitive Baptists before exploring their singing practices in more detail.

Jones states the basis from which Primitive Baptist belief extends as the five points of Calvinism: “election, limited atonement, the total depravity of human kind, irresistibility of grace, and the perseverance of saints” (1999: 92). Two interrelated doctrines, that of eternal and particular election, predestined before the creation of the world, and that of the human condition being dead in sin and therefore, the inability of man to play any part in his conversion, are seen as the manifestation of those five points. That is, salvation for a select group of individuals, the elect, was decided upon by God, and an individual can do nothing to gain entry into this group or know for certain if he or she is included (Peacock and Tyson 1989). The group is characterized by an interpretation of the Bible as the

infallible word of God; a feeling or experience of salvation (not a sign of assured salvation) sent from God as necessary for baptism; an insistence on baptism by immersion in living water (e.g. river, creek, or lake); an unpaid ministry in which those individuals (men only) are called by the Holy Spirit to the pulpit; extemporaneous preaching; distinct gender-based roles for men and women; the absence of musical instruments in church service; an autonomous nature; simplicity in church buildings; absence of mission boards, Sunday schools, or any other organization related to or sponsored by the Church; and a complete separation of church and state (Peacock and Tyson 1989, Drummond 1989, B. Patterson 1995, Sovine 1978, Dorgan 1999).

The singing in Primitive Baptist Churches is a major part of their worship service. Church members typically arrive well before the start of the church service to begin singing, sometimes forty-five minutes early, which then extends about a half hour into the service before the preaching (B. Patterson 1995). An elder will usually start a hymn with others joining in, then others will request hymns for the congregation to sing (B. Patterson 1995). The singing style of Primitive Baptists is described as distinctive from other denominations, employing a slow tempo and minimal ornamentation, sung in unison without musical accompaniment, an insistence on sound doctrine in hymn texts and reliance on traditional tunes gleaned from the collective memory of the congregation (Sutton 1990, B. Patterson 1995, Sovine 1978). The singing is described as reticent in outward expressions of emotion, where the expression is more inward and evident in “the tears running down their cheeks” (Peacock and Tyson 1989: 116). This conservation of outward expression results because the singing is not intended to create an emotive effect

in the congregation, such as perhaps a revival attempts to strike a chord with attendees in hopes of encouraging the acceptance of salvation; rather, it serves as a means for believers, through the merits of free grace, to affirm their beliefs (Sovine 1978). The style of singing varies from association to association and to some extent from congregation to congregation in respect to all of these characteristics (B. Patterson 1995).

In his work on Primitive Baptist singing history, Drummond includes Particular Baptist John Rippon's paraphrased description of Isaac Watts' "the Old Way of Singing," which is characteristic of many Appalachian Primitive Baptist congregations (1989). While the account is not favorable to that slow metered singing style, it is apparent that nonetheless it has survived to some extent. Folklorist, Bret Sutton asserts that a slower singing style allows for greater ornamentation and that two versions of a hymn he recorded are sung so slow that in transcribing the tunes, "bar lines seem inappropriate, so I have omitted them altogether" (1990: 209). The tempo of Primitive Baptist singing is described elsewhere as variant, mainly between associations, and determines the number of hymns that can be sung in a worship service (B. Patterson 1995).

The total participation of the congregation is an important aspect of Primitive Baptist singing. Beverly Patterson relates that a member from North Carolina was strongly drawn to the singing when she heard it as a little girl. What attracted her was that "everybody in the church was singing, and the church was full." While typically hymns are sung in unison, occasionally members will add harmony parts (B. Patterson 1995).

The continued insistence against the use of musical instruments in worship is based on scriptural interpretation. As seen above, the Particular Baptists' acceptance of

congregational singing was based on a metaphorical interpretation of scriptures (B. Patterson 1995). However, in the case of musical instruments the interpretation seems to be more literal. Sovine notes that because the Bible mentions no use of musical instruments in the Apostolic Church (to which Primitive Baptists trace their actual lineage), there is no justification for their introduction (Sovine 1978). Patterson points out that this omission not only prevents accompanied singing, but also “preludes, offertories, postludes, or any other forms of incidental instrumental music common in many other churches” (B. Patterson 1995: 11). These omissions are not merely coincidental to, but rather tied with, the absence of musical instruments in that singing is viewed as an opportunity for church members to equally participate in the worship of God (B. Patterson 1995). This participation can be seen through the control which members have over their singing. In other denominations hymns to be sung on a given Sunday are preselected by the minister or choir director. Conversely, during the Primitive Baptist service congregation members are able to request which hymns they would like to sing (B. Patterson 1995; Sovine 1978).

Through scriptural justification of their stance against musical instruments in worship, Primitive Baptists have gained an added aesthetic value in relation to their singing. Sovine quotes a church member from Bell County, Kentucky stating, “I feel scripturally it’s [the introduction of musical instruments] wrong... I wouldn’t want to see that change for that reason... [But also,] these songs were just not meant for music” (1982: 8).

Scriptural soundness is perhaps the most important aspect of singing in the view of Primitive Baptists. Singing is seen as an integral part of the worship service, holding equal weight with praying and preaching, all of which express a humility that is closely tied with spirituality (Sovine 1978). The preface to the hymn book compiled by D.H. Goble states, “We are fully persuaded that we had as well preach unsound doctrine as to sing it with an attempt at devotion” (Goble 1887: iv). For a hymn to be scripturally sound it must be in accordance with the doctrines outlined above. For example, an elder stated that many in his congregations will not sing “What a friend we have in Jesus” because the line, “What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer,” contradicts the doctrine of total depravity. The elder clarified, “If man is a totally depraved creature, he’ll carry what God wants” (B. Patterson 1995: 46). Relating to the preface of Goble’s hymn book, one elder likened hymns to sermons (Peacock and Tyson 1989).

Decisions on hymn texts sometimes extend beyond the omission of a verse or an individual hymn to play an important role in the selection of entire hymn books. Most churches in the Blue Ridge region use either Goble’s *Primitive Baptist Hymn Book* (1887) or Benjamin Lloyd’s *The Primitive Hymns* (1858), although Lloyd’s seems to be more prevalent among African-American congregations (Sutton 1990, Drummond 1989). One elder felt that Lloyd’s book was far too Arminian for use among the Primitive Baptists, even though Lloyd himself was an elder (B. Patterson 1995). Other books noted are the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth editions of the *Old School Hymnal* (the ninth edition was published in 1963 by J.A. Monsees), John R. Daily’s *The Primitive Baptist Hymn and Tune Book* (1918), C.H. Cayce’s *The Good Old Songs* (1913), and Silas H. Durand and

P.G. Lester's *Hymn and Tunes Book* (1886) (B. Patterson 1995; Drummond 1989).

Another very important consideration with which Primitive Baptists choose hymn texts and books is of the experiential nature. According to Patterson, when asked which hymns they like best, Primitive Baptists tend to mention those which relate to their experiences (1995). An example is "Joy and sorrow I daily do pass through" which a Bell County, Kentucky member identifies with her experience of the total depravity of the human condition. This hymn reiterates that the gift of grace is a gift of hope and that doubt is always present (Sovine 1982). Some hymns may be quoted to make a doctrinal point, but not sung because they do not reflect one's spiritual experiences (B. Patterson 1995). Sutton notes that the large repertory from which hymns are chosen offers many texts that are consoling during hard times (1982). The identification with one's experience is not always literal; sometimes the interpretation, much like scriptural interpretations, is more metaphorical—"a bed of pain" has been interpreted as reflective of the suffering endured throughout life (B. Patterson 1995; 49-50).

Drummond offers that the selection of a hymn book was largely due to the influence compilers had in particular regions, but as the list above indicates, there is a wide diversity within the Blue Ridge area (B. Patterson 1995). The selections seem to be more influenced by doctrinal soundness and reflection of experience, referred to above, and, to a lesser extent, opinions on the inclusion of printed music (B. Patterson 1995). Of the six hymn books listed above, three include musical notation. Drummond notes that the introduction of musical notation did not cause as much a controversy as might be expected, and Patterson suggests that some Primitive Baptists wanted notation for

aesthetic reasons, such as ease in singing harmony parts (Drummond 1989; B. Patterson 1995).

For both tuneless books and those with notation, the issue of tune sources has been debated. Sutton suggests that tune origins are a combination of both oral and written traditions (Sutton 1990). Drummond agrees with Sutton as does Patterson. These tunes, whether they originated in written or oral form, were passed through oral tradition as the predecessors to contemporary Primitive Baptists continued to sing from tuneless hymn books, and this process continues with Primitive Baptists in those churches that use tuneless hymn books such as Goble's (Drummond 1989; Sutton 1990). Patterson identifies several sources from which Primitive Baptists drew their tunes: (1) early tune books such as the *Southern Harmony*, *Christian Harmony*, and *Sacred Harp*, which are compilations, themselves, of tunes from both written and oral sources, (2) compositions of professionally trained musicians such as William Bradbury and Lowell Mason, (3) those tunes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries composed in the style of early European psalm tunes, (4) those originating independently in the secular oral tradition, (5) and camp meeting songs of the nineteenth century. Though these sources are diverse and many come from written traditions, Primitive Baptists incorporated them into their largely oral singing tradition, molding and shaping them to fit their spiritual, social, and aesthetic values (B. Patterson 1995).

One of the most obvious aesthetic choices Primitive Baptists make concerning their singing is tune selection, especially, but not solely, when using tuneless hymn books (B. Patterson 1995). Typically the hymns are identified with the meter to which they are

sung. For example, Common Meter (C.M.) means that the hymn will fit any tune that conforms to a structure of four lines where line one and three consist of eight syllables and lines two and four have six (8,6,8,6). Other meters are Short (S.M. - 6,6,8,6), Long (L.M. - 8,8,8,8), 8s, 7s (8,7,8,7), and 11s (11,11,11,11). Each meter has a set of texts and tunes which fit that pattern from which singers can create different combinations. Some of these combinations are fixed by custom, but not according to those formalized in print by hymn book compilers. Occasionally, tune meters are slightly altered so that the same tune can be sung to different texts with slightly different meters. Aesthetic values are manifest in decisions regarding which tunes are paired with which texts. Some tunes are simply preferred over others, and certain tunes are seen as more fitting to particular texts. Other times the decision is made according to with which tunes a congregation is most familiar (B. Patterson 1995).

The diversity in singing created by all of these characteristics forms an aesthetic (and reflects a theology) in which Primitive Baptists take pride. One member remarked that she appreciated and enjoyed singing she heard elsewhere, but that she prefers the singing of her own congregation (Sovine 1982). This preference is attributed largely to a firm belief in local church autonomy. The distinct sound created, either by individual congregations or by whole associations, is tied closely with a conception of the “individual’s spiritual home” (B. Patterson 1995).

Exchanges Between Genres

Music traditions are typically categorized by the scholar into separate genres, although often they are not distinctly independent. Dorothea Joan Moser indicates in her study of Appalachian fiddling that distinguishing between instrumental and vocal traditions is mainly for ease of analysis by the folklorist, musicologist, or ethnographer; the two forms are tied to the same “tradition and cultural pattern” (1963: 59). Delimiters parsing out traditions by instrument or style of delivery hold little meaning for many traditional musicians; rather, the importance lies in the idea that “old-time fiddle music [as well as other music forms] isn’t fiction. It represents real emotions long held by the people and culture from which it originated” (Milnes 1999: 6). Where the musicologist might be drawn to the technical aspects of music (i.e. scales, meter, and tempo), this study is concerned with the personal.

Similar to the cultural exchanges between African Americans and whites that led to the formation of the string band, influence of differing musical ideas is seen in the interaction between genres. For example, fiddle and ballad tunes have been appropriated by the realm of sacred music in the form of hymns (Drummond 1989; B. Patterson 1995). Brett Sutton notes that hymns have been sung to secular folk tunes from the days of the Reformation in Europe and later in early America and that this has helped preserve features of early American singing traditions (Sutton 1982). Most of the secular influence has been attributed to either ballad or fiddle tunes. Conversely, sacred music has undoubtedly made the transfer over to the repertoires of traditional string musicians, both in worship services and in secular settings. However, the interaction between these realms

is not entirely amicable.

Within the body of literature on African-American blues, I found information regarding the interaction of secular and sacred music genres. Theologian, James Cone refers to the blues as “Secular Spirituals” which are “...secular in the same sense that they confine their attention solely to the immediate and affirm the bodily expression of black soul... They are spirituals because they are impelled by the same search for the truth of the black experience” (cited in Hay 1987: 319 and Davis 1998: 8). Elijah Wald notes “how closely secular and sanctified music overlap” in his book, *Josh White: Society Blues* (Wald 2000: 9). These comments suggest a duality in the function of blues music that is also seen in Jack McGinnis’ instrumental versions of Old Baptist hymn tunes. Still, many of the writers juxtapose the blues and religion as opponents in affecting consciousness. For example, historian, Angela Davis states that Ma Rainey’s “Countin’ the Blues” “...countered the Christian monopolization of black spirituality” (Davis 1998: 129). Davis cites historian, Lawrence Levine’s comment that “The blues was threatening because its spokesmen and its ritual too frequently provided the expressive communal channels of relief that had been largely the province of religion in the past” (Davis 1998: 9). These are important points which highlight the power of secular music to provide powerful spiritual functions, but contention is apparent. A factious relationship between secular and sacred music is also evident in the broader sphere of folk music research, although many musicians did not subscribe to the dichotomy.

There are numerous accounts of the bad reputation gained by square dances and the secular music played there. Typically, the fiddle, tagged as “the devil’s box,” bore the

burden of this reputation, but that is because the fiddle has a much longer history of association with dance music in Appalachia than other instruments. Thus, as other instruments entered into the dance environment, first through the fiddle-banjo ensemble described above and later with the addition of the guitar, this image was cast upon them as well. Therefore, a look at how the fiddle has been regarded in this context seems fitting. Joyce Cauthen, in her book on Alabama fiddling, writes that the fiddle is commonly associated with rough behavior, alcohol consumption, violence, and other unsavory activities (Cauthen 1989). George Pullen Jackson also notes that the fiddle was not admirably viewed, but that the tunes “were too good to remain in the exclusive employ of the devil” (Jackson 1965: 164). Conway includes an 1839 quote from Abigail Mott associating the fiddle with an ignorant upbringing (Conway 1995). Emmet Lundy, a fine fiddler from Grayson County, Virginia related in an interview that when he and his cousin played their fiddles for a classroom of students, the teacher, also a Methodist preacher, became agitated with the foot-tapping which ensued, stating, “There’s no harm in the fiddle, but it puts the devil in the foot” (Carter 1977). Milnes attributes the same attitude toward the fiddle to Methodists as well (1999). Drew Beisswenger brings reports of a bad reputation of the fiddle into more recent times, around the Great Depression and World War II, citing it as one of the reasons Melvin Wine, a renowned fiddler from Braxton County, West Virginia, quit playing after he joined the Copen United Methodist Church (2002). Moser writes of a similar relationship between the sacred realm and fiddling, stating that the attitude toward dance music changed as population increased. Larger crowds and “sparse law enforcement,” coupled with alcohol consumption led to the

music's reputation (Moser 1963). Whether or not this reputation was, or is, widely accepted by Primitive Baptists is of primary interest to this thesis.

Most of the accounts discussed above do not specify the religious denomination of those in opposition to the fiddle. None of them name Primitive Baptists. Sources consulted regarding Primitive Baptists do not contain much in the way of attitudes toward behavior outside the church, but there are a few mentions of music. Sutton writes that although Primitive Baptists do not permit musical instruments in church, they don't officially forbid them for use elsewhere. He also notes that now and then hymn tunes were adapted by string bands and that African-American congregations sometimes used hymns for work songs (Sutton 1990). Drummond points out that Primitive Baptist objections to instrumental music relate only to the worship service and cites Elder W.S. Craig who states that instruments are welcome outside the church. Further, Drummond writes that early Primitive Baptist periodicals advertised organs and sheet music (1989). Emmett Lundy, also Primitive Baptist, stated that he felt the fiddle to be of no more harm than any other object (Carter 1977). Conversely, Sutton relates a story of a Primitive Baptist who, upon singing "Blue Moon of Kentucky" on a late night walk home, was instructed by God to sing a hymn instead (1982). In an interview with Daniel Patterson, Elder Walter Evans tells that he quit playing the fiddle for years after he joined the church (initially a Regular Baptist). However, by the time of this interview, by which time he had long been a Primitive Baptist, he had resumed playing stating that he later discovered that what he disapproved of was not the fiddle or music, but the ills that were associated with it (Evans 1982). Another interview by Patterson reveals that Elder Cecil Darrity had a string band

for years while active as a pastor (Darrity 1983). It is foolish, however, to assume that all Primitive Baptists openly approve of instrumental music just as it is foolish to portray members of other denominations, such as Methodists, as strictly disapproving of it, but it is apparent that the majority of opposition, for Primitive Baptists and other denominations, derives from the activities taking place around the music.

Within the music of Jack McGinnis is found a balance between secular and sacred genres. The research reviewed above only provides a starting point from which to understand his music. The true knowledge to be gained comes from the tunes he shared and his conceptualization of music in his own words, which this thesis presents.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This thesis is the culmination of two years of field research with Jack McGinnis. We met in July, 2001 at the Hartzog family reunion in Ashe County. Our meeting coincided with my self-deliberations about returning to graduate school to study music traditions of the Appalachian South. Meeting Jack and learning more about him from my grandmother, Charlotte (Hartzog) Huffman, served as a primary impetus, propelling me from the job market to the classroom. Jack and I didn't meet again until March, 2002. From then on, we began to discuss traditional music and record his tunes. Jack was extremely generous and open from the beginning, sharing tunes and stories. My interest in learning about his life and music did not seem odd to him, for he understands why the traditional music he plays is so important. The music speaks his values and offers an expressive outlet for him. That is why he continues to play. I initially set out to document Jack's traditional banjo playing; I had no idea of the rich sacred musical heritage he possessed. Only after my field research had begun did I realize the significant role of religion in Jack's life, and thus understood that to present only his banjo music as standard traditional secular music, overlooking the impact of the sacred tradition, was to miss the true importance of Jack as a musician.

The primary methodology utilized in completion of this thesis stems from the fields of folklore and other ethnographic disciplines. I was drawn to the discipline of religious

studies, in addition to folklore, in search of theories that helped me understand and explain the complex theological points that Jack shared. The principle strategy employed in my research is described by folklorist Jan Brunvand as “the functional or anthropological approach to American folklore... [where] ‘folklore’ exists not just as a fixed set of abstract genres, verbal or otherwise, but as traditional patterns of thought and behavior manifested in various ways during acts of communication between people” (Brunvand 1998: 37).

My field research consists of several informal interviews and music recording sessions in which Jack revealed tunes and important information I hadn’t previously recorded. Some sessions were primarily dedicated to recording his music, others were interviews, and some involved both. I consulted several primary and secondary sources to assist with formulating questions for interviews, but I kept the sessions as open-ended as possible, allowing Jack to guide our discussions into areas of importance to him. Sessions began with a focus on either secular music or sacred music and religion, but Jack often segued back and forth between. The interviews addressed such topics as his musical mentors and learning, performance experiences, theology, the complex connections of music to theology, and life history. For the most part I tried to record Jack playing and singing solo. However, he enjoys playing with others, and many times his banjo playing seemed more energized when he had guitar accompaniment. Typically, I did not request tunes of him; rather I preferred for the music to surface more naturally without my interference. My collection of field recordings includes eight Hi-8 8 mm video cassettes, nine MiniDV digital video cassettes, and one audio cassette, or approximately twenty-one hours of tape. Additionally, I consulted interviews with Jack and others conducted during

the late 1970s and early 1980s by Daniel W. Patterson, James Peacock, and Ruel Tyson at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. These materials are housed in the Southern Folklife Collection in Wilson Library as part of the World and Identity Project. Jack provided further supplementary materials were. He offered several tapes, some he recorded, of Primitive Baptist hymn singing and two of his sermons for me to refer to.

While incorporating my field research and other materials into the written thesis, I let Jack tell his story in his own words as much as possible. Because I am presenting his story, I must allow his comments to guide the structure of the text. My notions of the end product of this research changed several times throughout my field work as Jack shared important new information during each of our visits. For example, ideas on the exchanges between secular and sacred music genres, a key tenet of this thesis, did not surface until well after a year of field research had been completed. Prior to this point I focused the research on his secular music, and it was only after we began to discuss his hymn singing tradition in detail that connections between the musical genres began to surface.

The information Jack provided in our visits together was then situated within the body of literature already available regarding traditional secular and sacred music, as well as Primitive Baptist belief. Initially, I expected much of the information that Jack offered to correspond with what I was reading in texts and hearing on recordings. However, this was not always the case. These contradictions highlighted the uniqueness of Jack's position within traditional music and religion and emphasized the importance of the case study model to illuminating the great variety within traditional culture. Published sources were not consulted in any attempt to validate or refute my research, but to situate Jack

within the context of traditional secular and sacred music according to our current understanding of them.

In addition to the written portion of this thesis I have compiled and edited four compact discs of Jack's music, included as Appendices A-D. The majority of the selections included were taken from three sessions recorded on miniDV video tape which provided fairly good audio quality. Others were recorded on miniDV or Hi-8 video. While these recordings are adequate, higher grade audio equipment, such as a DAT (Digital Audio Tape) recorder, would have been preferred. The video tapes were digitized and edited with a free trial version of Goldwave® audio editing software on a personal computer. My main objective in editing was to remove background hiss generated by the video camera and other general interferences. Some noise could not be edited out such as, passing traffic from the highway that runs by Jack's house and the opening and closing of a door, but these were only momentary and do not affect the overall integrity of the recordings.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Short Biography of Jack McGinnis

The music Jack McGinnis plays and sings is heavily influenced by the events of his life. Thus, to initiate an exploration of how his music functions across the boundaries of secular and sacred genres and to begin to see the representation of Jack's life through music, I begin with a brief biographical sketch highlighting significant events in the development of his music and religious life. Traditional lifeways Jack experienced in his early years formed the root, in respect to both music and religion, from which his life developed.

Jack McGinnis was born April 24, 1921 near the Idlewild community in southeastern Ashe County, North Carolina. Idlewild, located along the South Fork of the New River, is an area which mainly consisted of small farms during Jack's early life. While some of the small farms still exist, many residents now work wage jobs in the towns of Jefferson and West Jefferson, as well as elsewhere in and outside the county. The tourism and second home industries have made inroads into the area, with new developments such as Idlewild Estates and a few ridge top homes. These changes are in sharp contrast to the more agrarian lifestyle during Jack's formative years as a young man and a musician.

Though Jack spent most of his early life on his family's farm, when he was about two years old, his father moved the family north to Switchback, West Virginia to take a

job in the coal mines. The family stayed for about four years and lived in a company house in the coal camp. Jack does not recall any early musical influences from this time, but he remembers a flatfoot dancer by the name of Howard Swacker:

[I can] remember one old fella that used to come around and flatfoot dance a lot with an old Victrola we had. Name was Howard Swacker. He drank so much, he spent a lot of time in jail. And he carried eating utensils in his pocket, so he'd have something to eat out of when he was in jail [laughs]. He was quite a character (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Jack makes a connection between dancing and drinking in his early memories, although he was not directly involved in either. Jack also witnessed his first baptism in the coal camps. He says, "It was a colored baptizing. We didn't have a car; we'd take walks on Sundays. And this black preacher, black people, they were having a baptizing. He said something about everybody ought to be baptized, and I remember hauling around behind my mother, saying, 'Mama, don't let him babertise me' " (McGinnis 5/4/2002)! Jack does not acknowledge any direct influence from these early events. Rather, Jack's development was most heavily influenced by his experiences back in Ashe County, particularly through time spent with his grandfather.

Jack's comments on returning to Ashe County express his joy in his Blue Ridge home. "When we come back to North Carolina, I'd get down playing in a little old branch that run through my grandfather's farm. It was clay, you know. They'd fuss at me for getting dirty. I'd say, 'yeah, but this is clean dirt.' It wasn't black. Everything in the coal fields, you know, was black. Even the streams ran black then, polluted with coal dust" (McGinnis 5/4/2002). For a boy his age the distinction between "clean" and "black" dirt was a keen observation of the impacts the coal industry had on the environment.

Of his childhood in Ashe County, Jack says, "I'd spend about half my time on our little place up the creek, the other time over at my grandad's" (McGinnis 5/4/2002). His grandfather, John Craft, was a small-scale farmer, producing nearly all his necessities. He would only make two or three trips a year for purchasing supplies and selling surplus produce. John Craft was instrumental in instilling the importance of tradition in Jack, not simply for the preservation of custom, but more importantly as a functional set of principles from which to live. In the following narrative, Jack expresses the profound impact his grandfather had on his life, in respect to both his personal development and on establishing a foundation upon which his religious life later flourished.

Jack: We came back here [Ashe County] then, and I'd spend about half my time on our little place up the creek, the other time over at my Grandad's. He lived very much like they did in Bible times. He'd go to town maybe three times a year. Usually though, he'd haul produce down here to North Wilkesboro. Had the little team of black horses, old covered nissan wagon. And, he'd make three or four trips hauling produce down here for the year, peddling. That's the way he got a hold of all the money he had is peddling produce. I can remember when I was along from six to eight years old, he'd take me with him a lot of times.

Eddie: I bet that was fun.

J: Oh boy! I'd come down to, with him. We'd get in town, he'd let me drive the horses and the wagon, and he'd take a sample, you know, to go to the stores, show what he had to sell. George Bush's overcoat wouldn't made me a vest when I was driving that team of horses through town like that. Most everyone else had, ah, old trucks, so he's about the last one that drove a horse and wagon down there. We would sleep under the wagon until we sold out, then we'd sleep in it.

E: How long would you stay down?

J: Oh, we'd usually spend one or two nights, and sell out, and go back.

E: He'd grow all sorts of...

J: Just truck farming, what we'd call it. Grow vegetables and ah, chestnuts were plentiful then. We'd bring big sacks full of chestnuts down some[times]. That's about the time the blight started hitting and killing all the chestnut trees. But they were huge chestnut trees, and go on a frosty morning and just pick up bushels of them. Have cabbage and beans, and just all kinds of farm produce. Had a box, a box for a seat on the old wagon to sit on. We called it the provision box, and have it... have our food stuff in it. And, the only thing he would buy on the whole trip. . .one morning he'd go to Beech Blankenship's café and buy a pan full of fish. He loved fish. But that's the only thing he would buy to eat. And take water, milk to make coffee. Everything we ate, we brought with us with the exception of one meal of fish.

Had a campground, had about three campgrounds. One was ah... where the old library building is down here, and the other one was out behind where the Wilkes hardware is now. We didn't stay in hotels. Of course, the motels hadn't started up yet. I tell you, camping in those campgrounds was an education in itself. We would sleep under the wagon or in it. And ah, all the campground had several little fireplaces built up, you know. Just a little rock circle to build a fire in is really all they was. And we'd build a fire there and cook over it. And, that was really something for a boy my age, especially sitting around listening. My Grandad, he was always arguing religion if he could find somebody to argue with. If he couldn't, it was politics. They'd be a group somewhere, telling jokes, another group playing cards, and just everything going on. Boy, I got an education down there!

And ah, [life for him], like I say he just made buying trips two or three times a year. About everything he ate, he produced. Lived very much like they did in Bible

times, and I appreciate it because I understand a lot of the scriptural terms that it'd be impossible for someone growing up today to understand, because of having been there. Like I say, we lived back where we used home remedies mostly for medicine. And my grandmother was. . . my granddad would shear the sheep, but then she would card the wool, spin it into thread, and knit it. And they had an old loom. And I got to help do a little of all of that, so I understand a whole lot of the scriptural terms from living that way. And I still have some of his old tools out here. I have the old cradle he used to cradle grain with and the old broad axe he used to hew out sills and [sleepers] for the building; and the foot-adz they used to dress down the [puncheon floors.] And I have the little fro with which he used to rive boards for roofing. then the old reap hooks very much like the sickles they used in Bible times. You know, you've seen the pictures of them with handles and the curved blade? I have one or two of those out here. Have his old sheep shearers he used to shear sheep with (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Jack describes the way his grandfather lived as "very much like they did in Bible times," and Jack lived it with him. As a result of his upbringing, traditional culture was imbedded within him as a foundation for his world view. Jack's analogy of his grandfather's life to "Bible times" has two important implications. First, Jack casts his grandfather's life in opposition to the more modernizing trends of the late 1920s, such as the use of automobiles for transporting surplus farm produce to market centers. Jack did not simply "hear tell" of the older ways of farming and life from his grandfather. Rather, he lived them. Jack directly experienced and participated in the arduous work necessary to sustain a living on a small farm, where emphasis is not placed on the acquisition of wealth or material goods. However, the interaction between self-sufficiency gained through what may be questionably termed subsistence farming and the market-oriented

means for “peddling” excess produce reveals that the procurement of funds was in some part necessary to maintain the agrarian lifestyle. Jack did not experience a dogmatic adherence to tradition as a means for maintaining custom. His experience was more functional, incorporating the necessary means for living.

The second implication of Jack’s “Bible times” analogy is a connection of these early life experiences to his adherence to the sacred scriptures contained in the King James Version of the Holy Bible as the pillar of his religious ethos. Jack maintains an ardent belief in scripture as the foundation for his beliefs rather than any creed to which he was exposed, whether Primitive Baptist, Missionary Baptist, or any other. He demonstrates that the key to his effective interpretation of scripture comes not from simply memorizing passages, but from patterns of life that he experienced and lived which have enabled him to better understand these passages. His assertion, “I appreciate it because I understand a lot of the scriptural terms that it’d be impossible for someone growing up today to understand, because of having been there,” reveals that what might be described as secular aspects of his life are so closely tied with his religious faith that distinctions between the two do not exist. Again, functionality of tradition is emphasized. Tradition is couched in the relationship of experience to scriptural understanding, not a relationship of experience to the maintenance of custom (e.g. Jack does not imply that he was indoctrinated into the Primitive Baptist belief system through the influence of his grandfather).

Jack’s early experiences with his grandfather form a foundation in tradition from which his music and hymn singing developed. He was exposed to music early through the Old Baptist hymn singing of his grandfather, his parents, and others. He states, “[I] cut

my teeth on those old minor hymns” (McGinnis 5/4/2002). Jack has a long legacy of Primitive Baptists on his mother’s side of his family, the Crafts. His great grandfather, William Reece Craft, originally of Kentucky, was a Primitive Baptist elder. He was in North Carolina by 1886 at the ordination of Richard Fender at the Little River Primitive Baptist Church near Sparta, North Carolina (Notes, Interview With Elder Walter Evans 7/27/1982). William Reece was an influential elder. Jack says, “He traveled and established churches all over the country” (McGinnis 2/28/2004). Craft pastored several churches, including Antioch and Little River in Alleghany County, North Carolina, and Reddies River in Wilkes County (Minutes 1896, Minutes 1905, Minutes 1923). He was moderator of the Mountain District Primitive Baptist Association in 1905 (Minutes 1905). Two of Craft’s sons were Primitive Baptists. Joe was an elder, and John (Jack’s grandfather) was a “strong Primitive Baptist” and was most influential to Jack early on. Through this lineage was passed a cultural foundation for Jack’s beliefs and the singing tradition he continues.

Naturally, Jack’s hymn singing was also influenced through “singing with the old singers” outside the home in the congregational settings of Primitive Baptist worship services (McGinnis 10/25/2003). Though the Riverview Primitive Baptist church formed in 1898 near Jack’s home, he did not initially attend services there because the congregation split. On one occasion the church building was burned. Consequently, his grandfather built a small church house on his farm which Jack and his family attended until he was about twelve years old. Jack felt a “burden” while attending services at this church house that he believes foreshadowed his experience of salvation. He says,

When I was five or six years old, they used to take me to preaching. And I'd get—the preacher we had then was quite acrobatic—and I'd laugh at him. They'd take me out, give me a spanking, and bring me back in. I'd laugh and get tickled again and get another spanking. But when they went to break up, shaking hands, most of them had tears in their eyes because they wouldn't meet again for a month. And I'd be around shaking hands with them, tears rolling down my cheeks just as clean as anybody's. I was about six years old. That sort of started what I would call finding peace. I found that on the battlefields of Germany (McGinnis 5/31/2003).

Later, Jack attended services at the rebuilt Riverview Primitive Baptist church, as well as churches of other denominations such as Bethel Missionary Baptist. Thus, Jack's early exposure to organized religion, while heavily laden with Primitive Baptist theology, was nonetheless varied. Along with his early experience with religion and hymn singing, he also developed an interest in secular string music. In the years prior to Jack's experience of salvation during World War II, his musical efforts were primarily within the realm of traditional dance tunes.

Jack's mother, Pearl was an early musical influence, singing ballads around the house. Jack recalls in an interview with Daniel Patterson that his mother knew a lot of the old ballads such as "Barbara Allen" and "Sweet William," and he learned many of the tunes from her (McGinnis 7/14/1983). However, he was more interested in instrumental music, and by the age of ten he began experimenting with the construction of musical instruments, crafting his own banjos.

J: When I was ten years old, if I could find a old round cookie box or something, I'd make a neck and put in it and make me a banjo. And I'd, I could get a tune or two out of it, someway or another. . . . And sometimes get a hold of a cigar box and make me an instrument

out of it.

A: What did you usually use for the neck?

J: Just any kind of piece of wood get a hold of. Carve out some old wooden pegs. . . . I wouldn't have a fretted fingerboard. I'd just have a flat neck. It's what they say, I couldn't make any music on it. Just get a few tunes you could sort of recognize what they were.

Shortly thereafter he bought a banjo-mandolin from his cousin, Charlotte (Hartzog) Huffman, and modified it with a five-string neck. In learning to play his new instrument, Jack turned to two older neighbors, Hiram Baker and Lester Pharr. Jack learned his initial playing style and most of his "old ones [tunes]" from Baker, listening and watching. Describing Baker's banjo style, Jack says, "He played the old, he'd pick with his thumb and brought his fingers this way [up]," the two finger up-picking style (McGinnis 5/4/2002). Jack subsequently learned his "clawhammer-frail" style from Pharr. Baker, born around 1870, was the older of Jack's banjo influences and is described as "sort of a funny kind of fellow."

Old Hiram had a by-word, "gracious." We called him "Gracious" because of it.

Everything he'd say, he'd say "gracious." His nickname was "Gracious." Remember one time we picked him up, there's two of us in the old pick-up truck, and he got in and he had on an overcoat and two or three sweaters and a top coat under his overcoat and two or three pairs of pants, and he got in. He couldn't hardly get the door shut. [Says,]

"Gracious, you fellows seems rather big" (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Lester Pharr was born around 1889 possibly around Iredell County, North Carolina. Jack does not specifically remember where Pharr was from but notes Pharr's commenting on Iredell County. He primarily worked as a carpenter and also served in the Army during

World War I.

Jack had already begun to play for small square dances before he started playing the banjo. He and his cousin Bernard Hartzog, who was one of his primary musical companions for several years, played for dances using only guitars. As Jack began to pick up the banjo, he and Bernard met an older fiddler, Ned Dillard. The three first got together to play at Ned's house, a meeting which also introduced Jack to his future wife, Ned's daughter Faye. The trio played together frequently, although not as an organized string band, for dances along with Hiram Baker and others in the community.¹

Jack left school after the eleventh grade to work in a local sawmill. Subsequently, he signed on with the U.S. Army, serving in an infantry division during World War II. Before shipping off to Europe he was stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama for "training," where he played banjo in a band that also included a fiddle, guitar, and accordion. He remarked on the band's popularity, saying, "The post band was jealous of us. We played what people liked" (McGinnis 5/4/2002). Their repertory consisted primarily of the popular songs of the 1940s, one of which, "Beer Barrel Polka," he continues to play. The majority of Jack's development as a musician occurred up to this point. Interestingly, this period of Jack's life straddles the first major influx of commercial country music into rural areas. While popular music recordings were available prior to Jack's birth, his early exposure to traditional life ways and music occurred before Jimmy Rodgers and the Carter Family's 1927 Bristol recordings, claimed by some to be the birth of "country music," and his development into a fine traditional banjo player preceded the advent of bluegrass,

¹Lester Pharr did not play for square dances.

which became widely influential in Ashe County and other areas of the Blue Ridge later in the 1940s. However, Jack's music was influenced to some extent by commercial forms, but not in a way that supplanted his traditional material or playing styles.

Jack completed his training and was sent to Europe to fight on the front lines where he experienced salvation through the grace gifted by the Holy Spirit. He also experienced the horrors of the war first hand, but he received a "peace" unfathomable to the human mind.

[We'd] been through the Battle of the Bulge and saw corpses ricked up like cord wood—thousands upon thousands of them, Allies and Germans. And the fear hadn't hit me until then. And then it hit me. And we were in the battle, and I began to pray for the Lord just to destroy that German nation. And He told me that He had people there. So I tried to horse trade with Him a little, and I asked to destroy the German Army. And He impressed upon my mind, as strong as if He had said so in words, that "I have people there too." So I was brought down to the point that I could ask Him to send peace, and the victory would be His. And I knew a peace then; it didn't affect the war one bit.

[Bullets were flying], shells were falling just as heavy as ever. I had a peace. A peace that you can't understand in nature. You can't understand naturally how you could have peace in those circumstances, but I had it (McGinnis 5/31/2003).

Jack's left leg was badly injured, almost amputated, by shrapnel during a barrage of heavy machine gun fire and shelling from German forces a few days later. During his recovery in Bonnedeaux, France, he began studying the scriptures. He was transferred to England, where he sought out a chaplain to baptize him. The chaplain advised against it, suggesting that Jack wait until he returned home. Upon arriving home, Jack searched for a church in which he felt comfortable. He says, "I went to every church around. We had Methodists,

Baptists, [and] Primitive Baptists then. I couldn't find what I felt there anywhere, and the closest I could find was up at Bethel, a [Missionary] Baptist church" (McGinnis 5/31/2003). He joined Bethel after a revival and remained there for several years, eventually being ordained to preach around 1954. Jack's experience of salvation marks the beginning of his spiritual quest for what he calls the "true church."

Jack's war injury prevented him from returning to work at the sawmill. Instead, he received training through the G.I. Bill during the mid forties as a typesetter at a local newspaper, *The Skyland Post*. As he says, this was less training for him than it was cheap labor for the *Post*. Jack also returned to playing the banjo at the local dances. He subsequently made a few musical appearances at a local theater and on WSKS radio in West Jefferson along with his cousin Bernard. These were brief forays into semi-professional music upon which Jack comments, "I had at one time considered making music my career, and just, saw the way most of the fellows ended up. In other words, if you want a family, you want a different career than that" (McGinnis 5/4/2002). Jack continued to play at dances for several years, but he became disenchanted by some of the unsavory activities associated with the dances, such as drinking and fighting. He stopped participating in the dances sometime around 1950. His hiatus from secular music was at least partially due to the increasing role religion had in his life. His spiritual nature created through the Holy Spirit stood in stark contrast to the dance environment. As a result he became more interested in sacred music. For about three or four years, Jack regularly sang as part of a gospel quartet on a show which aired on Ashe County radio station WSKS. However, Jack's primary musical focus for the next twenty years became the

congregation hymn singing of the Primitive Baptists, and later he became interested in Sacred Harp singing.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, Jack worked briefly as a typesetter at newspapers outside Ashe County—*The Mount Airy Times* in Surry County, North Carolina and another in Charlotte, North Carolina. He then began a twenty year career with the *Journal-Patriot* in Wilkes County, North Carolina, moving back and forth between Ashe and Wilkes counties.

After his ordination at Bethel around 1954, Jack preached for six years, at which point his search for the “true church” took a turn in theological directions. He decided he was in the “wrong place” after being told at a pastor’s conference that his views on some doctrinal points he raised, mainly his belief in God’s predestination of an elect group of individuals for salvation and the total depravity of the human condition, were correct, but that he should “be careful where you preach it” (McGinnis 7/14/1983). After leaving Bethel, Jack went to Pine Swamp Baptist, a Missionary Baptist church which he says was quite similar to the Primitive Baptist churches in the area. However, he still “stirred up a hornet’s nest” with his doctrinal views. Jack’s ongoing disagreements with the Missionary Baptists led him to reexamine his religious experiences, and an incident which occurred years earlier on the night he asked for membership into the Bethel Church became clear to him.

My wife was heavily burdened, and we walked up in the garden. And I know I, I remember I never had tried to pray for anything after that one experience in [the war].

And I remember that my prayer was not that He would forgive her sins, but that He’d

take her burden away. And my wife can vouch for this. We started back from the garden and looked over, and there was a huge light... It would go completely out of sight on one side of the valley and stop in the center and go out of sight on the other side. We both went on, we joined up there [Bethel]. And years later [we had] been to a service in a home. And I was going home just meditating over all the experiences I'd had. I came to that one, and it was just as clear as day. I went to that Missionary Baptist church [Bethel] on this side and couldn't get along because of my belief on the sovereignty of God. So, from there I went directly across the hill, just where that light went out of sight to another one [Pine Swamp]. And I saw I was going to cause a disturbance there. So I came back, and right over where that light stopped [in the center] was where old Riverview [Primitive Baptist], which is my home church. It's where I wound up (McGinnis 7/14/1983).

Through this experience Jack feels that he was guided by God to the next stage of his quest for the true church. He states, "...It was revealed to me where I believe I really should go" (McGinnis 7/14/1983). Jack became a member and elder at Riverview Primitive Baptist church around 1960 and would remain a Primitive Baptist for almost forty years. He later pastored many other churches, including Reddies River in Wilkes County and one near Troutdale, Virginia (McGinnis 7/14/1983).

Around 1970, Jack decided to make a temporary move to Winston-Salem to work until he could retire because he "got tired of working for nothing" at the *Journal-Patriot*. He resigned from most of his churches in the mountains, but he remained at Riverview and Reddies River. He also began pastoring at Bethel church in Hiawasi, Virginia (not Bethel Missionary Baptist referred to above). This church was experiencing a deep divide over the replacement of a deacon. The former deacon was "a powerful man in the community,"

and local elders who attempted to preach at Bethel were ostracized. Therefore, members of the church were concerned about their upcoming communion service. They held a meeting the night before the service, and one member suggested they prepare for the communion and a preacher would attend. After initially passing on an invitation to attend the communion, not knowing the situation the church was in, Jack felt “a heavy burden” to attend. He found that he was the only preacher there and subsequently served this church for several years (McGinnis 7/14/1983). Although Jack was also serving as pastor of the Montview Church in Winston-Salem, it is clear that he did not lose his connection with his mountain churches.

While in Winston-Salem, Jack participated in Sacred Harp sings. A group met at Baptist Hospital, which included Cleave Callison, Gene Anderson, and some medical students from Wake Forest University. As Jack says, “We used to go around a lot.” One singing held at First Presbyterian Church included about three hundred participants from Texas to Canada.² Jack also participated in Sacred Harp sings in other locations, such as Chapel Hill and Elon College in the North Carolina piedmont.

Jack began to play secular music again sometime in the 1970s after purchasing a banjo from Lowe’s Hardware and later a fiddle and guitar. However, he played primarily in his home, rather than at dances as in his youth. By the early 1980s he began to play the Old Baptist hymns on fiddle and banjo, combining his secular string music with his vocal

²Jack provided me with a copy of a video recording of this singing and requested a copy be deposited in the W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection of Belk Library at Appalachian State University. The tape is located in the closed collection and available for researchers by appointment.

hymn tradition. After he retired around 1985, Jack moved back to Wilkes County. He intended to move back to Ashe County, but due to heart complications, chose Wilkes instead for its proximity to medical care facilities. He remained at Reddies River Church for a time, then went on to Hollow Springs, located along Highway 18 between Wilkesboro and Lenoir. He also began preaching at Crossroads Church³ beside his current residence. Jack remained with the Primitive Baptists until around 1997, when the ordination of divorced and remarried men,⁴ an issue in which he finds blatant disregard for scriptural mandate, became so prevalent that he “couldn’t go anywhere among the Primitive Baptists without running into it” (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Jack currently holds membership at Zion Old Regular Baptist Church in Wilkes County, but he does not necessarily subscribe to any denomination. He chose Zion because they are “about as close to the Primitive Church as you can get.” Although Jack feels they are too Arminian in some respects, they do not allow divorced and remarried men to pastor their church. Jack also devotes much of his time to holding non-denominational services at the seniors’ center, as well as various retirement homes, in Wilkes County, where he has served people of many different faiths ranging from Primitive Baptists to Mormons.

Jack also continues to play the old dance tunes from his early life. He attends a jam session every Tuesday and a gospel sing on Thursdays at the seniors’ center down the street from his home. He also plays violin and sings hymns with a chorus, varying in size

³Not to be confused with Crossroads Church in Baywood, Virginia

⁴This issue is discussed in further detail in the following chapter.

from just a few participants to over ten, which visits various retirement homes around the county. He occasionally plays music with his son who lives in Ashe County, and he is always eager to play music with anyone who enjoys traditional secular or sacred music.

Jack has remained interested in traditional music forms throughout his life. The early experiences with his grandfather cemented an understanding of the importance of function in tradition and formed a base from which his music and life developed. Additionally these early experiences aided his search for the true church of God's people by enriching his ability to effectively interpret sacred scripture. The brief sketch of Jack's life presented above seems to set up a dichotomy between the secular and sacred realms, particularly in regard to music, but also more generally as a reflection of the struggle between his human nature and the spiritual nature born in him at the time of his salvation experience. Jack's quest for the true church thus far has been presented as a search for a spiritual home in which he can worship in accordance with the patterns of the Apostolic church recounted in scripture. Jack believes he finally found that home and that it exists beyond any human confines, such as denominations, anywhere "two or three are gathered together in his [God's] name." Because religion has been such a powerful guiding force in Jack's life, not only with respect to hymn singing but in all aspects of his life, a more detailed discussion of his beliefs in relation to Primitive Baptist faith and the denominational construct follows in the next chapter. Subsequent chapters explore his music in further detail and reconsider the merit of a dichotomous view of both his music and life.

CHAPTER FIVE

“If a fence is put up, it will be the other fellow’s fence”: Religion

Jack McGinnis’ belief system has played a significant role throughout his life, especially after his experience of salvation during World War II. Notably, influence on the formation of his world view came through the Primitive Baptist church. He was exposed to Old Baptist philosophy through his grandfather and other relatives, as well as through participation in Primitive Baptist worship services. However, as exemplified by his initial church membership among Missionary Baptists, Jack’s early experiences with the spiritual realm did not coalesce into a default allegiance to the Primitive Baptist denomination. Rather, Jack embarked on a continual spiritual quest for a home among God’s people, a search for what he describes as the “true church.” His early experience with Primitive Baptist ideals instilled within him a respect for biblical scripture as the only authoritative source for understanding the sacred world, which precludes any loyalty to cultural constructs, such as denominational entities, on grounds of group identity.

Peacock and Tyson put forth a useful axiom in their study of the Primitive Baptist faith in the Blue Ridge regions of North Carolina and Virginia which divides the world of man from the sacred and elucidates a foundation for exploring Jack’s position within and outside the Primitive Baptist denomination. They write,

The most decisive event of all was God’s before the creation of the world, nature, and time. That is the purest meaning of primitive. This view implicates a view of history

that does not impute to any historical event constitutive meanings or purposes of salvation. Human history is the history of human will, intention, action, mistakes, sin, and carnality. A great divide is set between the world of history and the sacred world of divine action (Peacock and Tyson 1989: 88-89).

A major implication of this separation is that Primitive Baptists cannot cling to their denominational identity as a reflection of their salvation.

Jack's belief system is similar in many ways to that of Primitive Baptists.

However, these congruencies are not contiguous, but are parallel extensions of Baptist belief before the major split over the institution of mission boards around 1830. In much the same way the Primitive Baptist denomination is comprised of various sub-groups that exhibit similarities of belief. Jack states, "If anybody would sit down to tell you what the Primitive Baptists believe, it just depends on which one's writing because none of them believe the same all the way through" (McGinnis 5/31/2003). The two main groups, the absoluters and conditionalists, from which most of the others pared off, comprise the notion of *Primitive Baptist* for this discussion because Jack was primarily affiliated with them, rather than others such as the more Arminian and modern Progressives.

Comparing some of Jack's beliefs with those of absoluters and conditionalists begins to unwrap his relationship within the context of the Primitive Baptist denomination. Further elaborations by Jack on the issues of divorced and remarried pastors and baptism illuminate his view of the divergence of his spiritual quest from the bounds of the Primitive Baptist construct. Jack maintains that his belief system, for all intents and purposes, remains unchanged from the time of his experience with the divine on the battlefields of

Germany. What he views as doctrinal and practical inconsistencies gained wide enough acceptance among Primitive Baptists to prevent the manner of worshiping God as prescribed in holy scripture. An exploration of Jack's beliefs in relation to the Primitive Baptist construct not only explains why he cannot align himself with the denomination, but also precludes substantive spiritual meaning from association with any other.

Dividing the context of *Primitive Baptist* into absoluters and conditionalists for this discussion complicates the picture of Jack's position in relation to the denomination, but such a divergence in belief is necessary to show consistency in Jack's unwillingness to limit his religious identity to any particular group between his time as an elder among Primitive Baptists and the present. The primary point of contention between absoluters and conditionalists is their respective understanding of predestination: absoluters believe that everything is predestinated, which many conditionalists believe implicate God in the creation of sin, and conditionalists maintain that only salvation was foreordained, not the events of one's life, thus opening the way for a possible interpretation that man's will factors into his conformation to the image of Christ. (B. Patterson 1995; Hassell 1888; McGinnis 6/21/2003).

While absoluters and conditionalists do not fellowship with one another, Jack states, "I was in a peculiar situation. . . . I was in fellowship with both the absoluters and the conditionalists. . . . I didn't agree with either group whole-heartedly, and I agreed with them whole-heartedly" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). For example, Jack's belief on predestination falls between that of both groups. Like most Primitive Baptists, he believes in the predestination of an elect before the formation of the world, and he adds, "I also

believe that there's no such thing as an accident with God. Nothing's ever happened that he hasn't had a remedy for before it happened" (McGinnis 5/31/2003). However, Jack stops short of stating or implying that God created sin in man, quoting the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans chapter 8, verse 20,

The creature was made *subject* to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.⁵ [emphasis added]

Emphasizing the use of the word "subject," this verse does not impute any action of God to the creation of sin. In defiance of the "fatalist" label often associated with the absolutist belief (Peacock and Tyson 1989) that man is caused to sin, Jack's belief, accompanied by this scriptural verse, maintains that the propensity for evil is of the human nature and that God simply did not protect man from himself. This seems to leave open a door for the conditionalist view that man, through his own actions or good works, can begin to remove himself from his sinful nature. However, Jack believes redemption from sin comes only through the saving grace of the Holy Spirit, and good works spring forth from that predestinated blessing. He opposes the conditionalist view by denying man any credit in these good works. He states, "It's not reforming. If we're reformed we can just go right back. But, if it's regeneration, or being born again, by... being made a new creature in Christ, then your whole appetite is changed" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Jack cites the following scriptural evidence for his statements,

⁵Actual rendering in the King James Version of the Holy Bible: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope."

By grace ye is saved through faith, but not of yourselves. . . . Not works, lest any man should boast, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2: 8-10).⁶

According to this scripture, God did set forth the condition of good works in relation to salvation, but that condition is fulfilled by salvation “through faith. . . created in Christ.” Man’s will is denied any credit. Jack states, “Conditionalists believe that. . . He [God] just predestinated a people to be saved, and they will be regardless [of whether they receive an experience of salvation.] Most of the absoluters believe that. . . He predestinated a people to be conformed to the image of his son and that that begins here—that they are brought to at least an experienced salvation in this life” (McGinnis 5/31/2003). In an Easter sermon at a Missionary Baptist church 1997, Jack states clearly his belief on the predestination of man’s actions and the origination of sin.

We were predestinated to be conformed to His image. That’s the plan, and as we are conformed to His image, when we’re born of the Holy Spirit, and we’re made to hate sin and to love good and to seek after Jesus, to seek the company of the family of God, that’s the beginning of being conformed to His image. . . . But we won’t know the full thanks, yet with the more we grow and the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus, the more we’re conformed to His image. And the more we conform to His image, the more we can see our own sin! . . . The most saintly person that I’ve ever seen, the most saintly persons, are those who recognize their own sin even though apparently to me, they’re [walking almost a perfect line]!... And yet they can see their own sin, their own

⁶Actual rendering: “(8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast. (10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

weakness, their own evil. Because we still, evil sin still dwells within the flesh (Sermon 1997).

Jack's belief seems to be in accordance with that of absoluters in that conforming to the image of Christ begins in this world and that "we are made to hate sin and to love good." However, he stresses in the end of this excerpt that sin is of man, of his human nature separate from the spiritual nature gifted by God, even as he conforms more and more to the image of Christ.

The conditionalists' separation of man's actions in this life from God's act of predestination implicate an additional, and completely separate, salvation "in time" dependent on conditions to be met for receiving divine blessings in this life. While in agreement that the conditions of faith and belief are essential for these divine blessings "in time," Jack believes that the fulfillment of these conditions is part of the eternal salvation and was also predestinated before time.

In an article to *The Gospel Messenger*, Sylvester Hassell compiled an encyclopedic stock of scriptural quotations which support each side of the absolutist and conditionalist dispute, but he stresses,

The perception of only *half truths* is a fruitful source of darkness and controversy. If one class of scripture passages bears upon one aspect of the subject of predestination, and another class of scripture passages bears upon another aspect of that subject, we have no right to receive the one class and reject the other, but are bound to receive *both* as equally divine and eternally true. . . (Hassell 1888).

Jack's statements on predestination and his scriptural evidence supporting such exhibit the consideration of "both as equally divine and eternally true." Hassell's article stresses,

without naming either side of the conflict, that truth is evident in both perspectives on predestination. However, these truths reflect only opposing halves of the full scriptural truth when the entire corpus of biblical references to predestination is considered, which Hassell presents. He concludes his discussion with these remarks coupled with an applicable scriptural passage, “Divine predestination is a mystery which no finite mind can explore, and upon which, therefore, brethren should not disagree, at least to the extent of non-fellowshipping each other. ‘For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.’ 1 Cor. xiv. 13” (Hassell 1888). Hassell’s comments imply a error in speculation where the scripture is not explicit. Jack holds a similar view of the lack of specifics in scripture. In regard to the manner in which God predestinated an assemblage of people for election, he states, “The scriptures don’t tell what he made his choice on or why. Leaves us in the dark. And I feel that those things, which are left in the dark, I’d rather leave them there” (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Referring to why God made man “subject to vanity,” he states, “. . . we don’t know what that reason was. So I have no idea, but I won’t speculate on it” (McGinnis 5/31/2003). The primary danger with speculation is that it breeds theories that affect man’s understanding of salvation. As noted above, Peacock and Tyson state that events or theories in world history hold no “constitutive meanings or purposes of salvation.” Therefore, mysteries in scripture must remain, and human speculation convolutes spiritual understanding and undermines the wisdom of God.

Even when Jack was serving as an elder among Primitive Baptists, he refrained from any alliance with either absoluters or conditionalists. This position is evident in his

1983 interview with Daniel Patterson when he states, “If we can just throw away the terms ‘absolute predestination of all things’ and ‘conditional time salvation’ and talk about what we believe, I can get along with most all absoluters or conditionalists. . . . When we stop and reason together, we find that we believe the same thing—just couched in different terminology” (McGinnis 7/14/1983). Additionally, Daniel Patterson notes Jack’s efforts for harmony among Primitive Baptists in his field notes from the interview, writing of Jack’s fellowship amongst diverse groups within the denomination. “Elder McGinnis has three Primitive Baptist Churches—one at Pulaski, Va. [sic], one at North Wilkesboro, and one at West Jefferson—in three different associations! He makes a strong point of not breaking fellowship with anyone on the basis of practice and doctrine, whether Absoluters or any other Primitive Baptist or non-Primitive Baptist” (D. Patterson 1983).

Nearly fifteen years before Jack broke official association with the Primitive Baptist denomination around 1997, he struggled with infighting among the various splinter groups and sought to preach the word of God beyond group boundaries he views to be constructed around terminology, rather than scriptural truths. He makes clear the strife caused to him and a majority of Primitive Baptists.

Kind of a funny thing, I was vacationing one year down in the Jacksonville, North Carolina area. And I saw a meeting house, and I said, “That has to be a Primitive Baptist church.” So I asked the lady at the store. “Why, yes. My brother-in-law is pastor.” So she called him, and he was on the absolute side. We met in her store and talked for two hours or more, and we found we were in complete agreement. And he said, “I’d love for you to come preach in my home. I couldn’t ask you to come to our church.” That’s the way the thing goes. They [Primitive Baptists] want to tell

everybody where to go and who to preach with, and I've about decided that nobody's going to tell me where to go. A lot of them can tell me not to come, but they can't tell me where to go. And if a fence is put up, it will be the other fellow's fence. That's the feeling I have about it (McGinnis 7/14/1983).

This narrative implies that Jack felt out of step with the Primitive Baptist denomination due to infighting and division more than fifteen years before his departure. An additional comment in 1983 regarding his decision to join the denomination confirms the trouble the contentious environment caused. "However, there's so much strife and dissension among the Primitive Baptists now [1983], I'm not sure I would [join] again" (McGinnis 7/14/1983).

In sum, the controversy between absoluters and conditionalists derives from speculation stemming from a lack of specificity found in sacred scripture. Jack feels that he and Primitive Baptists, whether of absolutist or conditionalist belief, share the same foundational beliefs, that God predestinated a people, the elect, to be conformed to the image of his son, that birth in the Holy Spirit through the gift of grace is the only means for eternal salvation, and that an experience of grace is a hope, or a "lively hope," for salvation although not an assurance. Howard Dorgan surmises that generally Primitive Baptists shift focus away from debates on predestination. He notes a vagueness in statements on the issue in the articles of faith of many associations as an attempt to focus on the doctrine of the elect, upon which all agree (Dorgan 1987). Jack also downplays disputes over definitions of predestination beyond that which is revealed through scripture. However, any issue which explicitly defies scripture causes more problems than confusion among interpretations. One in particular led Jack to break official association with the

Primitive Baptist denomination.

According to Jack, the practice of ordaining divorced and remarried men as pastors, termed by Peacock and Tyson as the “two wives controversy,” casts the dark shadow of man’s carnal will upon the face of scriptural truth. At one time this issue caused much disturbance among Primitive Baptists in the Blue Ridge area of North Carolina. Peacock and Tyson note that it was a “key issue” behind the tensions within the Mountain Association at the time of their research in the late 1970s and 1980s (1989). The issue seems to have abated by the late 1990s, less than ten years after the 1989 publication of Peacock and Tyson’s research. Perhaps increased acceptance of divorced and remarried pastors is due to increasing divorce rates and changing social responses. However, if sacred authority is denied to events of history, as Peacock and Tyson assert, changing social attitudes with respect to divorce and remarriage constitute no justification or explanation. While Jack does not speculate on justifications of the controversial practice, he implies the change in attitude toward divorced and remarried pastors in comments on his experiences with Crossroads Primitive Baptist church, which is next to his home in Wilkes County.

Eddie: I just noticed today, that you have the little Primitive Baptist church right next door.

Jack: Yes, ah. . .

E: You ever been over there?

J: I used to go over there quite a bit. When I first came down here, they would, wouldn’t have anything at all to do with me. And, ah... Oh I was fine. It’s because of the churches I was affiliated with. They didn’t have anything to do with them. I’d go over,

and I was fine until they'd go into the service, and then I's just a stranger until it was over. Then everything was fine again. And, ah, they were apologizing that they couldn't use me in the pulpit. "[Lord have mercy], that doesn't hurt me. If you got anything, I need it." I says, "If I got something you left out." So it wasn't long until they started using me in their pulpit. And I kept going ah, until, well their pastor now is a divorced and a remarried man. I don't think that's scripture. So, they got so many that I couldn't go anywhere among the Primitive Baptists without running into it, so I just quit going (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Jack later specified, ". . . for some reason when I joined the Primitive Baptist church, they wouldn't even accept a divorced and remarried person as a member. I felt that was a bit strong. . . . [However,] my last association with the Primitive Baptists, the association I went to, I heard six preachers one day, and three of them were divorced and remarried again" (McGinnis 5/31/2003). Jack views this shift in attitude toward a common acceptance of divorced and remarried pastors as a neglect of explicit scriptural guidelines, at least widespread to the extent of inhibiting his worship of God.

The issue is not a recent thorn in Jack's side. In the 1983 interview with Daniel Patterson, he discusses the "two wives controversy" and a sign he believes came from God. His account reveals why he no longer permits issues of doctrinal inconsistency to, as he says, "blow over."

Jack: I was serving Roan's Creek Church as Pastor, and there was a young brother that had been divorced and remarried was to be ordained at Beaver Creek church. A distance, ah, possibly twelve to fifteen miles apart. And I had reservations about sitting at his ordination. Brother Roten was pushing for it, so I thought, "Well, I'll just go against my reservations and sit in it." So at the meeting time at Roan's Creek, I had left

Antioch, and got out there at ten o'clock, and gone to Roan's Creek at two. So the service was over there [at] 3:30, four o'clock. And I was going home with brother Burgess. Oscar Burgess lived near Beaver Creek church, which again I say ten or twelve miles. There wasn't a thing in the world wrong with me. And about halfway to brother Burgess' home my jaw felt peculiar. I rubbed it and it was all puffed up. Looked in the mirror and it was so swollen that I could not see that ear. So I went by brother Burgess' and he looked and [said], "What in the world happened to you?" I told him I didn't know, but I couldn't, I just came by to tell him that I couldn't stay for supper with him. I had to go to the doctor. So, I went to the doctor. Finally found one that would see me after that time of the day. [He] says, "You got the mumps!" "Well, now that's impossible. I just had them in both sides about four or five years ago." "You've got them again." I got up the next morning; my face was just as smooth—smoother than it is now because it didn't have the wrinkles it has now. So, how do you explain those things?

Daniel Patterson: And because of that you went to the doctor rather than the . . .

J: To the ordination. I felt that I was providentially kept out of that. And that boy caused an awful lot of trouble in that church. (McGinnis 7/14/1983)

The surprise of brother Burgess when he sees Jack's swollen face supplements his statement that "there wasn't a thing in the world wrong with me" in describing how abruptly his condition developed. Jack's interjection that Roan's Creek was only about ten to fifteen miles from Beaver Creek church further strengthens this point because the time period in which his face swelled was quite short. Jack provides additional evidence that his affliction was not a natural occurrence, stating "I got up the next morning; my face was just as smooth—smoother than it is now because it didn't have the wrinkles it has now." In his final two statements, "I felt that I was providentially kept out of that. And

that boy caused an awful lot of trouble in that church,” is found the direct connection between this story and his comments on Crossroads Church above. Jack’s self-revelation and validation of his initial “reservations,” attributed to enlightenment handed down from God and developed throughout his life, emerges in the narrative presented above and helped Jack take a firm stand against the scripturally unsanctioned practice.

The “two wives controversy” stems from The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Titus where the only scriptural guidelines regarding pastors are given: “If any be blameless, the husband of one wife. . .” (Titus 1:6). Primitive Baptist belief as explained by scholars is that once a man and woman marry, scripturally they are bound until death, regardless of divorce. Therefore, if a man divorces and remarries before his first wife passes, he is considered to have two wives as long as both women live (Peacock and Tyson 1989). According to the passage from Titus, this man does not qualify as a pastor. Jack maintains this doctrinal stance, as do the Old Regular Baptist church he currently attends and the Old Regular Baptists of Kentucky.⁷

The scriptural implications of pastors with two wives runs deeper than being contrary to a scriptural rule. According to Elder Walter Evans, longtime pastor of Little River Primitive Baptist Church in Sparta, North Carolina, women represent a type in the Bible. They represent the bride of Christ, which is the church itself (Peacock and Tyson 1989: 196). Jack makes the connection between the “two wives controversy” and Evans’

⁷The Old Regular Baptist church which Jack attends falls under a group in western North Carolina that Dorgan classifies separately from those of eastern Kentucky based on some doctrinal and practice differences. (See Dorgan. *The Old Regular Baptists of Central Appalachia: Brothers and Sisters in Hope.*)

comment, stating,

Marriage, all through the Bible from Genesis to Revelations, is portrayed as a type in the relationship of Christ and His Church⁸. . . . We preach the doctrine of eternal security. In other words, if you are born in the Spirit and a child of God, nothing will change. . . . Then, if I marry a wife, and I put her away, what does that do to the doctrine of eternal security? If we are married to Christ through birth in the Holy Spirit and through baptism and profess to follow Him, can we say that it's alright for me to put my wife away? Then, it's alright for Him to put me away (McGinnis 5/31/2003).

If man is allowed to recant the matrimonial bond and maintain the status of having one wife, Christ can disavow his relationship with his church, substituting the predestinated elect with another group of individuals, thus negating the doctrine of eternal security.

Jack only applies the criteria set forth in Titus to ordained pastors. He says,

Now those qualifications. . . . I can't see, though, they exclude anyone from membership in the church. . . . I can't see where it excludes anyone from exhorting or doing the work of an evangelist. But when you ordain a man as an elder, he's supposed to be pastor of the flock. Not all of them are. A lot of them just go and preach from place to place and never pastor. Well, they shouldn't have to be ordained to do that. But in order to officiate over the [different rites] of the church, I think he should fit the qualifications. That excludes a single man just as much as it does one with two living wives (McGinnis 5/31/2003).

No scriptural criteria are set forth regarding eligibility to preach. The only requirement is the call of the Spirit.

⁸While marriage represents Christ's bond to his Church, an ordained pastor (or men in general) cannot be a type representative of Christ, for it is considered blasphemous for man to equate himself with Christ.

Jack broke his affiliation with the Primitive Baptist denomination not because his beliefs changed, but because he believes the denomination's doctrinal position changed. Unlike the confusion among absolutists and conditionalists from which Jack can decipher scriptural truth, the overwhelming current ambivalence towards the "two wives controversy" is in direct violation of the scriptural qualifications for pastors.

The practice of baptism provides another example of how Jack feels the beliefs and practices of Primitive Baptists are diverging from his own. Baptism is not involved in an explicit interpretation of scripture. Rather, a metaphorical interpretation of scripture informs Jack's and Primitive Baptist notions of the proper procedure for baptism. Jack reveals the different shades of meaning that can be obtained from the relevant scriptural passages, while maintaining his belief.

I don't think you can get anything other than "immersion" out of the scriptural definition of baptism. And I don't think that sprinkling an infant is Baptism at all. And we have some that, they call them Dunkards; it's the Church of the Brethren. They baptize three times [by immersion]. They have the candidate to kneel in the water, and they baptize three times, face foremost. And I asked one of the elders if he would mind explaining why they did that. He said they were trying to follow the manner of Christ's death, so when he gave up the [ghost,] he bowed his head and gave up the [ghost], the reason for baptizing face foremost. And the three times was one in the name of the Father, one in the name of the Son, and one in the name of the Holy Spirit. He was a very good friend of mine, and I said, "Brother Rex, I've made light of your baptism." Said, "I'll never do that again." I said, "I won't adopt it either, but I'll never make light of it again." And I haven't. But ah, the Scriptural definition of baptism is being buried with Him in baptism and rising to walk in the newness of life. Of course, I don't know

how they buried then, but I have no doubt that it was pretty much the way we do today.

They bury on their back with the face up. And to me, that would be the proper way—to lay them down, buried with Him in His death, and then raised up to walk in the newness of life. So to me, to get the true picture, that would be it (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Jack offers a pragmatic example of how the issues of differences in practice and doctrine are interconnected. He disagrees with the manner in which Dunkards perform baptisms but concedes that there is scriptural basis for their ritual. The absence of an overt doctrinal fallacy as in the “two wives controversy” requires a metaphorical interpretation of scripture, which is open to different shades of meaning.

The Dunkards’ baptismal practice, while it has a scriptural basis, does not conform to Jack’s interpretation of the “scriptural definition.” Therefore he accepts his error in prejudging the Dunkards’ practice, but also maintains that it still does not represent the true picture of baptism. Jack points to Romans, chapter 6, verse 4,⁹ “buried with Him in His death, and then raised up to walk in the newness of life.” The difference in scriptural interpretation as it affects the procedure for baptism, rather than the denominations under which it is performed, underlies Jack’s stance on the ritual.

Primitive Baptist baptisms conform to Jack’s scriptural understanding, but he states, “The majority of Primitive Baptists will. . .say, ‘We are *the* Church,’ . . .and they won’t accept baptism by someone else [other denominations]. And that I never did agree with” (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Elder Evans recounted to Daniel Patterson, James Peacock,

⁹Actual rendering: “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

and Ruel Tyson that he refused to baptize his uncle because the uncle would not join as a member of any church. Evans stated that his uncle had a “responsibility to become a church member if he was baptized” (Evans 7/10/83). Jack’s comment on any scriptural backing for Evans’ stance is, “I cannot find one” (McGinnis, 6/21/03). Again, Jack offers scriptural evidence to justify his assertion. He offers Acts, chapter 8, verses 26-38.

I find where Philip was sent to the eunuch, who was reading Isaiah. Then, he couldn’t understand what he was reading. He was on his chariot, or buggy or whatever you want to call it. Philip joined him, and he asked him if he understood what he was reading. He says, “Well, How can I except somebody tell me?” So, Philip took what he was reading out of Isaiah and preached Christ to him... Eunuch says, “Well, here’s water. Why can’t I be baptized?” And [Philip] says, “Well, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you can.” He did, so Philip took him out in the water and baptized him. But, there was no church other than the true church, which is not an organization. . . . I wouldn’t hesitate to baptize someone that requested baptism [if] I felt they were a true candidate for baptism. Walt was one of those that believe that the Primitive Baptist is *the* Church. They don’t—they’re not like the Catholics. They don’t say there’s no salvation out of it. . . . Now they, all the Primitive Baptists that I know of, say that God has a people in every organization. And I believe that, but to say that we are *the* church that Christ set up on earth, I can’t say that because of being in that true church too many times not to realize that it has no boundaries as far as denominationalism’s concerned (McGinnis, 6/21/03).

Jack breaks the connection of baptism to church membership. Being born in the Holy Spirit, not baptism, is “what constitutes being in the true church. Baptism is just something we’ve been commanded to do. It’s not the door to the church or the door to

heaven, but it's the way of obedience we need to walk in" (McGinnis 5/4/2002). Jack's own baptism came under scrutiny when he joined Riverview Primitive Baptist church around 1960.

Eddie: You were baptized in a Missionary Baptist Church?

Jack: Yes, I was baptized by a Missionary Baptist, then I was dipped by a Primitive Baptist.

E: Were you re-baptized?

J: No, I wasn't re-baptized. I was just dipped in the water. They called it one. To me, I left a burden in that water the first time (McGinnis 6/21/2003).

Jack's baptism came shortly after experiencing "peace" during the Battle of the Bulge and returning home. The denomination of the elder who baptized him had nothing to do with his experience of grace in Europe or the "burden" he left "in that water." His experience and desire for baptism did not originate from a denominational influence as he sees it; it originated with God. Primitive Baptists did not always disregard baptisms from other orders as long as the procedure was in harmony with theirs. The 1852 minutes of the Mountain District Association Annual Meeting include the following question and answer,¹⁰

Question:—If a member who has belonged to a missionary church and was baptized by them, and should ask admittance into our church, what shall we do with him?

Answer:—We say, as an advisory council, that we hold Missionary Baptism valid, except there be a defect in the administrator, the subject, or the mode (Minutes 1852).

¹⁰Jack provided me with this document moments after previewing an initial draft of this chapter. He said, "I came across this the other day. It will show you who has changed."

Elder Evans served as moderator of this association in the 1980s. Peacock and Tyson imply that the practice of re-baptizing was fairly standard at the time of their research in the 1970s and 1980s, stating that prospective Primitive Baptist members coming from other orders “must be” baptized again (1989: 101). In the *Minutes of the Seventy-Fourth Annual Session of the Mountain District Baptist Association* (1872), a somewhat cryptic question and answer, implying a disapproval of baptisms by other denominations, is printed. “Question from Jordan Church: Is it right to fellowship with those persons baptized by Methodists and Missionary Baptists in our churches? Answer: We advise our churches to go to other churches and ask them to remove such grievances” (Minutes 1872). Naturally, the Methodist practice of infant baptism would not be accepted, but the Missionary Baptist practice in terms of “mode” fit Primitive Baptist criteria. An additional item in the 1872 minutes seems to connect the change in attitude of the association to emerging conflicts with Missionary Baptists. The minutes state, “Relating to the correspondence with the Three Forks Association [a Missionary association with whom the Mountain District had previously been in fellowship], we say that we drop correspondence with the Three Forks Association” (Minutes 1872). Jack says, “My idea of a Primitive Baptist is what Baptists were three or four hundred years ago before they started splintering up” (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Jack concedes that he is not alone in his disapproval of re-baptism, stating, “I know a few [Primitive Baptists] that don’t agree with it, but they’re afraid to take a stand. I’m not afraid to take a stand, so sometimes I stand by myself as far as humans are concerned” (McGinnis 6/21/2003).

Jack McGinnis' views on the "two wives controversy," on baptism, and on the changing attitudes of Primitive Baptists toward these issues exemplify the divergence in belief which forced him to continue searching for the "true church" elsewhere. Primitive Baptists, although interested in their history as a denomination, do not necessarily "trace descent. . . on the grounds of contact persons or the suggestion of influence, but rather on the principle of like doctrine" and refer to reports of Primitive Baptists identifying with historical figures such as Patrick Henry and George Washington because of "like mindedness" (Peacock and Tyson 1989: 46). Jack's identification with Primitive Baptists was based on the "like-mindedness" he shared with them. He clearly casts his relationship to Primitive Baptists in terms of common theological ideals, stating, "I've never said the Primitive Baptists were right in everything. They just promote some doctrines that others deny altogether" (McGinnis 6/21/03).

Jack views his faith as a quest. For nearly forty years he found a home among Primitive Baptists. When changes occurred within the denomination which Jack viewed as contrary to sound doctrine, his search continued. He currently holds membership at an Old Regular Baptist church, but states, "I've searched and searched, and the only true church I've found is just where two or three are gathered in his name. . . . He's there, and he's the head of the Church. If you meet in the name of the Primitive Baptists, Conditionalist Baptists,¹¹ Union Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, or whatnot, that's an organization. [They build their names on an] earthly book. The names of the true church are written in heaven" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). This concept of the "true church," like

¹¹The Conditionalist Primitive Baptists.

other facets of Jack's faith, derives from scripture. Jack quotes two passages when referring to the church: "Wheresoever as many as two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. . ." (Matthew 18:20)¹² and "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).¹³ Peacock and Tyson's discussion of the separation of authority from the events of world history mentioned above helps explain why the "true church" cannot be associated with any denomination. According to Jack, the "true church" was created by God before the creation of the world, thus ruling out any significance of the denominational construct to God's church—those individuals predestinated for election.

Jack believes that he has now found the true church in one form through nondenominational services he holds at local retirement homes and hospitals. He says, "In all my searches for the true church, I finally found it, sitting around a table with a handful of sick people. And that's it. That's where it's at. And that's the church that the gates of hell shall not prevail against" (McGinnis 5/31/2003). However, this is not the only incarnation of the "true church," which is a fluid entity. As Jack states, "the true church cannot be found within the bounds of any denomination [or any other grouping]. It supercedes all of them and includes some of all of them" (McGinnis 5/31/2003). Jack views the church as an entity unquantifiable, devoid of the rules, boundaries, or compartmentalization instituted by humans.

¹²Actual rendering: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

¹³Actual rendering: "...and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Jack does not necessarily disagree with Primitive Baptists in his nondenominational leaning. Peacock and Tyson write, “Primitives cannot align themselves with any historical group [including the denominational construct] that has come into existence after the events recounted in sacred scripture,” which is one implication of the separation of the events of history and scripture (1989: 90). Both Jack and Primitive Baptists as a denomination claim to worship in the manner of the apostolic church described in scripture, at which time no denominations existed. Jack says, “Some say John the Baptist was a Baptist. Well, he might have been [he may have believed similarly], but it wasn’t a denomination” (McGinnis 6/21/2003). The denominational construct came later and has no meaning to an understanding of belief in Biblical times. The same is true of Jack’s belief system, which derives from scriptural understanding and experiences with traditional life ways that enhance that understanding. Although his grandfather was Primitive Baptist and heavily influential, Jack did not learn to be a Primitive Baptist. He says, “What I believe comes not so much from what I’ve been taught—because I’ve been taught everything, I’ve heard everything—but it comes from sincere and prayerful study of the scriptures” (McGinnis 5/31/2003).

CHAPTER SIX

“They were written about real people and real events”: Secular Music

Jack McGinnis developed an interest in music at a young age, being introduced to Old Baptist hymns through the singing of his family. However, this chapter focuses on his secular banjo music which was predominant in his early years. Jack also plays the fiddle¹⁴ and the guitar, but the banjo is his principle instrument. Music was played within the context of the “square dances” he frequently attended, but there were also other capacities in which music was played outside that setting. Consideration of these contexts provides an understanding of how secular music functioned in his early life. Jack was first exposed to secular music by his mother, Pearl. She often sang ballads such as “Barbara Allen” and “Sweet William” and others around the house. Jack’s focus was on instrumental music, particularly the banjo. His neighbor Hiram Baker, who played in the two finger up-picking style, was the first person he ever saw play the banjo. Jack learned most of his early tunes from Baker and currently plays several of them. As Jack developed his musicianship, he became enthralled by the clawhammer picking style of another neighbor, Lester Pharr. Baker and Pharr are the only two musicians Jack identifies as influences on his banjo playing; Baker influenced his repertoire and Pharr influenced his picking style. The contexts in which Jack played his early music and the tunes and styles he learned from

¹⁴Jack currently plays more hymns on the fiddle. This material and his fiddling technique are discussed in the final chapter.

his mentors are tied closely with the function of this music in the secular realm. Unlike his hymn singing, which is discussed in the next chapter, secular music, functioning purely as musical enjoyment, is not under the scrutiny against which sacred music is tested because there is no association of this music with any spiritual meaning reliant on the sacred scriptures. Thus, music operating in the secular realm is more open to a variety of influences and material sources. This chapter begins to set up an apparent dichotomy between the secular and sacred genres which will be completed in the next chapter, and then reconsidered in the final chapter. Jack's secular music serves as a representation of his human nature, vying against his spiritual nature represented by hymn singing.

Music has been with Jack in some form for most of his life.¹⁵ The early context for his banjo playing was mainly local square dances. Jack played his first dances with his cousin Bernard Hartzog with only guitars. Next, he picked up the fiddle and played it at dances as well. Although the guitar and fiddle were Jack's first instruments, the banjo became his principle instrument as he learned to play. He says, "I played the banjo more because there wasn't many banjo players back then. There's quite a few old time fiddlers" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). The dances were typically held in someone's home in the community, where they would "take an hour to clear out a room and have a dance" (McGinnis 5/4/2002). The dances were not usually held around holidays or other special dates as was the case elsewhere. For example, in the Round Peak, North Carolina and Galax, Virginia areas, dances were often held around Christmas, as the fiddle tune

¹⁵ Even when Jack quit playing his banjo and other instruments, the old Baptist hymns were an integral part of his life. He never lost a connection to music. More will be discussed regarding sacred music in the next chapter.

“Breaking Up Christmas,” popular in those communities, attests. In Jack’s community, “whenever we’d take a notion to have a dance on a weekend, we’d have one” (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Jack played with a number of musicians at the dances, but his main musical companions were his cousin Bernard and fiddler Ned Dillard.¹⁶ Hiram Baker also played at the dances, but Lester Pharr did not, instead playing at home with “whoever happened by his house” (McGinnis 3/8/2003). The tunes Jack and others played at the dances include “Johnson Boys,” “Turkey in the Straw,” “Arkansas Traveler,” “Cripple Creek,” “Sourwood Mountain,” “Old Joe Clark,” “Coming Around the Mountain,” “Cindy,” “Red River Valley,” “Soldier’s Joy,” “Little Brown Jug” and others more thoroughly discussed below. Commenting on the dance repertory Jack says, “Well, they [the dancers] didn’t much care what it was as long as they could stomp their feet to it. Didn’t care whether it was a tune or not just so it kept beating a rhythm” (McGinnis 5/4/2002). This statement suggests that the musicians’ role at a dance was not performance, but the provision of a necessary function (the rhythm) for the dancers. Tom Carter explores the relationship of the musician (or musicians) to the dancers to explain the reserved performance style of Joe Caudill, a fiddler from Alleghany County, North Carolina. Caudill is described as “not so much an ‘entertainer’ as he was an integral part of the dance” (Carter 1973: 27). Jack is quite reserved in his playing as well, and the comment he makes about the importance of a good dance rhythm to the dancers emphasizes Carter’s point. The dancers needed no

¹⁶Ned eventually became Jack’s father-in-law.

“entertainment;” rather, they entertained themselves, but they also relied on a good musician or band (Carter 1973).

Of course, dancing was not the sole activity taking place in these settings. Jack mentions the frequent excessive alcohol use and fights. A murder, sparked by jealousy, was an indirect result of events at a dance that Jack attended. While Jack doesn’t indicate much involvement in any of these type of activities, he offers a humorous comment on the first time he drank whiskey.

We had a whole lot of fun up there. Good folks and bad folks. It got to where the crowd I was running with, where the main measure of a man was how much whiskey he could drink. I remember the first time I ever drank any. Some of them thought they’d get me drunk, and I wound up walking around getting the whole bunch out of jail (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Stories of activities of this nature are common to many old time musicians, and raucous behavior eventually became so attached to the music in Jack’s view that he quit playing altogether.

Other contexts for Jack’s music also existed. Smaller events centered around food were also opportunities for music making. Jack tells of an evening at the home of Hiram Baker where Jack and a few others went for dinner and music.

He [Baker] told us one night to bring the chickens, and we’d have us a chicken stew. Some of the boys—said he’d fix them—some of the boys told him they’d bring them. He wanted me to bring my guitar, and we’d have some music. Them boys that promised to take the chickens stopped at his chicken house and [caught] the chickens. Old man fixed his own chickens (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

This and similar events were likely more subdued than the dances. The music also functioned differently. Whereas at a dance, music served to provide dancers with a rhythm, at these smaller events the music was more geared toward the musicians' enjoyment. In the above story Jack alludes to a third context in which his music functioned—as pranks.

Jack noticed early on how the rhythm of music affects people. He offered two similar stories of how he would have fun with music at the expense of others.

I used to take, a lot of times my mother would start churning [butter] when I'd start. I'd grab my banjo or the fiddle, one. I'd start playing pretty slow, and then I'd just gradually speed up. First thing you know, she'd be splattering milk all over the house (McGinnis 5/4/2002)!

We had a bus driver, I'd take my instrument, guitar to school sometimes. I'd get to playing, you know, just about with the motor rhythm, and I'd keep speeding up. First thing you know, he just be sailing with that bus (McGinnis 5/4/2002)!

In this context music functions in the subconscious much like the work song. While Jack's musical pranks are not intended to provide a steady rhythm for the successful coordination of tasks and may be considered as "anti-work songs," his use of rhythm to affect the timing of others' actions operates in much the same way as the work song. Additionally, music in this context offers added enjoyment simply due to the humorous nature of the pranks.

The open nature of secular music is most evident in the repertoire of Jack McGinnis. His stock of tunes draws from various sources, including those which he

learned from Hiram Baker and others at dances. Baker was by far the strongest influence on Jack's repertoire, laying the foundation upon which Jack expanded as he came into contact with other musical ideas. The tunings in which Jack plays also reflect the open nature of secular music. The pitches of the tunings have undergone the most change. Examining the tunes Jack plays and the tunings in which he plays them shows how tradition is mediated with change.

Jack began playing banjo around the age of twelve. He learned most of his "old ones" from his neighbor, Hiram Baker. Baker likely learned to play the banjo sometime around 1880, but Jack does not know when or from whom Baker learned. There is evidence of an African-American influence on Baker's playing beyond that inherent in the origin of the banjo, but this cannot be concretely proven. Baker's father, Harrison, is listed as a slave holder in the 1865 Slave Census for Ashe County. However, there is no evidence that suggests whether or not any African Americans remained long enough after emancipation to directly influence Hiram's banjo playing. Further, I have found no information regarding any banjo playing by Harrison. What is evident is that the tunes Jack learned from Baker, which still form the foundation of his repertoire, are directly connected to a time period about forty years prior to his birth. Jack makes this link to an earlier era when he distinguishes between the "old ones" he learned from Baker and other tunes he picked up later.

The tunes Jack currently plays are listed below and are organized by the tuning¹⁷ in which they are played. His repertory consists of twenty-six tunes, which I believe reflect only a portion of his earlier material. Jack's stock of secular fiddle tunes is nearly the same as his banjo material. However, he played "Down in the Willow Garden," also known as "Rose Connelly," on the fiddle but not on the banjo. He also played the tune on his twelve string banjo, which is strung and played like a twelve string guitar.

C tuning: gCGBD

Beer Barrel Polka**
 Chinese Breakdown
 Cindy*
 Coming Around the Mountain*
 Don't Let Your Deal Go Down
 Fly Around My Pretty Little Miss
 Jimmy Cracked Corn**
 Listen to the Mockingbird
 Little Brown Jug*
 Little Rosewood Casket
 Red River Valley*
 Red Wing*
 Soldier's Joy*
 Sugar Foot Rag
 Turkey in the Straw
 Wildwood Flower**
 Wreck of the Old '97*

G tuning: gDGBD

Cripple Creek*
 John Henry*
 Johnson Boys
 Lonesome Road Blues
 Old Joe Clark*
 Sally Goodin*
 Sourwood Mountain*
 Y'all Come**
 You Are My Sunshine

* Indicates tunes Jack said he learned from Hiram

** Indicates nontraditional tunes Jack learned later

Jack's early repertory undoubtedly covered a wider breadth of material than is listed above. He has made the comment several times to the effect that "a lot of them I

¹⁷While Jack currently plays his tunes in the keys listed, this was not always so. More discussion on keys and tuning follows.

don't even remember." In a number of our sessions that focused on his secular music, Jack played at least one tune that I had not recorded previously. For example, during our second session Jack played "John Henry," "Little Rosewood Casket," and "Red Wing." During the fourth session, he played "Johnson Boys," "Turkey in the Straw," and "Sugar Foot Rag." Some tunes that Jack remembers playing, such as "Arkansas Traveler," "Cluck Old Hen," and "Sally Ann," he couldn't quite call up. Considering Jack's level of musicianship, his repertory was likely much larger than it is today. He says, "Back then I could pick up just about anything" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). While this comment was in regard to learning his picking technique, nevertheless it is applicable to learning tunes as well.

The influence of Hiram Baker is obvious in Jack's current repertoire. Of the twenty-six tunes listed above, Jack explicitly attributes twelve, or nearly half, to Baker. Two of these tunes differ from the typical versions played by other traditional musicians, both older and younger than Jack. The version of "Old Joe Clark" is one such tune (see Appendix A, track 10). Jack substitutes a major fifth (a D note in the key of G) for the more common major seventh (an F note in the Key of G) in the B part of the tune. Jack identifies this as the older way of playing the tune, which he learned from Hiram. "John Henry" is also played a little differently than is common. Instead of hitting the first major fifth (a D note in the key of G), Jack's version incorporates a minor sixth (an Em note in the key of G) but retains the second major fifth in the turn around to the tonic (a G note in the key of G). Jack says that musicians, including Baker, were playing this version in his community when he was learning. A similar version, featuring Doc Watson, Gaither

Carlton, and Arnold Watson, was recorded by Ralph Rinzler in Deep Gap, North Carolina during July, 1961. Deep Gap, in Watauga County, is fairly close to Jack's community, less than ten minutes by car today. Although there is no concrete evidence to link them, these two versions of "John Henry" may represent a locally popular variant of the tune and derive from a common source.

Other tunes, such as "Fly Around My Pretty Little Miss,"¹⁸ "Johnson Boys," "Turkey in the Straw," and "Sugar Foot Rag," may also have come from Hiram, but just as likely they came from other musicians at the square dances. While Jack doesn't remember specifically from whom he learned these tunes and others such as "Chinese Breakdown," and "Lonesome Road Blues," he recalls that they were played in the context of the square dance. Playing for square dances brought Jack into contact with many different musicians, thus allowing for more tune sources. He specifically indicates the dance venue as the source for one tune. Although Baker played at the dances, "Listen to the Mockingbird" was not one that he played or taught Jack. This tune is connected with early minstrelsy and the Civil War era (Malone and Striklin 2003: 2, 26), but it did not enter Jack's community until much later, which likely the reason Baker did not pick it up. Jack probably learned it in the mid to late 1930s during the height of his involvement in the local dances.

¹⁸This is my name for the tune. Jack didn't remember the name and identified it by the entire chorus:

Fly around my pretty little miss,
Fly around my daisy,
Fly around my pretty little miss,
You almost drove me crazy.

A tune which was not played at the square dances is “Little Rosewood Casket.” I do not know where Jack learned this tune, but it was in his community by the time of his birth. After Jack played the tune during one of our sessions, his cousin Charlotte, who is less than half a year younger than Jack, commented, “That’s the one I used to cry every time Mama would sing. I remember just *begging* her not to sing it and crying like a baby” (McGinnis 3/8/2003). When Charlotte was around three or four years old, one of her younger sisters died shortly after birth. Charlotte remembers seeing a small wooden box brought into the house, which she believed to be her sister’s casket. Each time she heard her mother, Mary Hartzog, sing the song, the memory of her sister’s death resurfaced. Jack didn’t learn the tune from Charlotte’s mother, but this story establishes that the tune was part of the local repertory at least one generation before him.

Jack has more modern tunes in his repertoire also. “Beer Barrel Polka” is a tune that he learned while playing in a string band at Fort McClellan, Alabama before shipping off to Europe during World War II. This is the only tune which Jack plays that he identified with that band. While Jack says that he has not heard anyone else play “Beer Barrel Polka” on the five string banjo, I have found two. Raymond Fairchild recorded the tune, playing a melodic, three finger bluegrass style, and Tim Duffy reports that this tune was played at a jam session near Asheville, North Carolina in 1988 but does not comment on banjo styles (*Raymond Fairchild: Little Zane* 1997, Duffy 1990: 57). Jack incorporated this nontraditional tune into his traditional playing style. He notes that the tune is well suited for clawhammer banjo, which is perhaps one reason this is the only tune

from the Fort McClellan band to remain in his repertory. Jack says, "If you'll master this one, you'll have the [clawhammer] stroke" (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Jack likely learned "Jimmy Cracked Corn" from Burl Ives' 1940s recording. While this tune derives from the Civil War era, Jack attributes it to Ives. Cohen notes that tunes originating from commercial or revivalist sources are picked up by traditional musicians because "few mountain singers are interested in purity; their criteria for picking songs is based on what appeals to them" (Cohen 1995). The specific tune to which Cohen is referring is another Burl Ives song, "The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night," played by Estil Ball of Rugby, Virginia.¹⁹ I agree with Cohen that traditional musicians, including Jack, do not necessarily shun music from nontraditional sources, but they are more "interested in purity" in regard to playing style. Both Jack and Ball set their respective Burl Ives tunes within their traditional playing styles.

While I don't believe that Jack's current repertory is fully representative of his early playing, I do believe that it reflects the various sources from which he drew tunes at different stages in his life. A large portion of his early tunes, which derive from traditional sources, came from Hiram Baker; some were also likely learned from other musicians at dances. Other older tunes, such as "Listen to the Mocking Bird" and "Little Rosewood Casket," derive from nineteenth century popular sources and were not learned from Baker. "Beer Barrel Polka" and "Jimmy Cracked Corn" represent the greatest variation in Jack's tune sources. These tunes were learned later in life, after he developed into an accomplished dance musician, and were incorporated into his repertoire directly from

¹⁹Cohen indicates Estil Ball's title for the song as "The Fox."

popular sources. There are two significant points to make here. First, Jack's current repertoire retains the earlier, traditional material as its core body of tunes. Second, his incorporation of the later, popular tunes reflects the position of his life within the chronology of the nation's musical development. Jack's life straddles the time period when commercial music began to be widely distributed throughout the country. Because Jack's secular music functions primarily as a source of entertainment, lacking the deep spiritual meaning inherent in his sacred singing, new and varying song material was readily adopted.

The tunings in which Jack plays also show how he negotiates between the traditional and the modern. These tunings have not affected how tunes are played. Rather, the change is a shift from tuning in relative pitch to absolute pitch. Jack plays in only two tunings, gDGBD (known as the G tuning) and gCGBD (known as the C tuning). When Jack was actively playing the square dances, neither he nor other musicians had the modern tuning devices available today—usually not even a tuning fork. Jack says the only tuning device available to ensure absolute pitch was the piano in a nearby church house, where dance music was not welcomed.

Tunings were pitched by ear, so the intervals between strings were more important than whether or not an instrument was tuned to a particular pitch. As Conway states, "The basis of folk banjo tunings is not the absolute pitch of the strings, but the pattern of intervals between them" (1995: 223). This point is important when considering the fiddle and banjo played together as in the context of a square dance. While Jack plays several tunes in the key of C (gCGBD) on the banjo, he typically plays them in the key of D on a

standard tuned fiddle (GDAE). The tunes are played in D on the fiddle because the notes are more easily obtainable in that key, than in C. However, when playing for square dances the instruments were not tuned to an absolute pitch provided by a tuning device. They were tuned to one another, and the pitch was unimportant. Conway and Thompson classify tunings not by pitch, but by the interval patterns where the designator H1 represents the interval pattern shared by the gDGBD and aEAC#E tunings and L1 represents the pattern shared by the gCGBD and aDAC#E tunings.²⁰ Jack says the tunings didn't necessarily have names, but they were often associated with characteristic tunes played in them. For example, the H1 tuning was sometimes referred to as "Sourwood Mountain" tuning, and the L1 tuning was called "Cindy" tuning.

In the same manner in which Conway discusses banjo tunings, the fiddle needed to be tuned to the appropriate pattern of intervals to provide the fiddler with the proper noting positions on the neck. The first string on the fiddle would be tuned to the first string on the banjo, and the fiddler would continue tuning his instrument according to the known interval pattern required for the tuning. Which instrument served as the reference for the other did not matter; the banjo was sometimes tuned to the first string on the fiddle. Jack now tunes his banjo to the absolute pitches of G (H1 tuning) and C (L1 tuning) with the aid of an electronic tuner. The availability of these devices obviously

²⁰Conway and Thompson identify three High Bass tunings (H1, H2, and H3) and two Low Bass tunings (L1 and L2). "In High Bass tunings, the third string is *two* and one-half steps above the fourth... In Low Bass tunings, the third string is *three* and one-half steps above the fourth." [emphasis added] The H2, H3, and L2 tunings represent interval patterns which Jack does not use. They are different in the number of steps between the second and third strings. For example, if H1 is a gDGBD tuning, H2 would be gDGCD (Conway 1995: 224).

simplifies the tuning process and, thus, replaces the older method of tuning to another instrument. Because Jack is not typically involved in the ensemble playing required by the dances he attended earlier in life, the mismatch of a banjo tuned to gDGBD and a fiddle tuned to GDAE is less of an issue. The shift in tuning methods from relative pitch to absolute pitch clarifies the role of tradition in traditional music. The earlier tuning method was developed out of necessity and played a vital function in string band ensembles. As this method became less functional with the increased availability of tuning devices, it remained only a traditional practice with no constitutive meanings or effects on Jack's music. In contrast to Jack's repertoire and tunings, his style of clawhammer picking is more rigid in the face of various other techniques.

Jack's first style for playing banjo was a three finger style, which he identified with the bluegrass style. At first this was confusing to me because Jack started picking the banjo as an adolescent in the early 1930s, before the advent of bluegrass. After talking with him over the telephone later, he described his early style as "another clawhammer stroke." Jack says that he was playing in a style similar to Hiram's two finger up-picking. Jack's reference to bluegrass was in the context of the up-picking of the fingers as opposed to the downstroke typically associated with the clawhammer style. This means that the sound produced was rhythmically similar to that achieved by the downstroke technique, not the melodic bluegrass (or Scruggs) style. Conway notes several players, including Doc Watson, Bascom Lamar Lunsford, Tab Ward, and Leonard Glenn, who employ an up-picking style to achieve the " 'unmistakable rollicking' sound" associated with downstroke or clawhammer playing (1995: 202). Since Jack identifies his early

style, as well as Hiram's, with the rhythmic patterns of down-stroking, I believe the sounds created to be similar to clawhammer playing and better classified with this technique as Conway suggests of the players mentioned above.²¹ Jack recognizes the similarities in the mechanics of his early style and that of bluegrass players but also notes the difference in the sounds produced.

Jack learned what he calls the "clawhammer-frail stroke" after watching and hearing his neighbor Lester Pharr play this banjo style. In discussing his right hand technique, Jack explains a rather rare thumbing style. Instead of plucking the thumb string in a downward motion with the pad of his thumb, Jack hits it with the nail of his thumb in an upward motion. He also uses his index finger (and often his middle finger) in an unusual manner which he describes,

Jack: I hit them coming and going. If you want to learn that beat just ah... [begins playing.] And Old Man Pharr, I was telling you, Lester Pharr was playing, and he was playing that way. And I liked never in the world to learned it. And I liked it so good, and I found out I couldn't do both. And I like that the best, so that's what I stuck with.

There's the [begins playing]. There's the stroke

[Leads into "Wreck of the Old '97"]

That gives you sort of the noise of a train.

Eddie: Do you use any of what they call "drop thumbing" or "double thumbing?"

J: I just use the thumb string. That's all I use it for.

E: Do you use it both down and up?

²¹For a more detailed discussion of banjo techniques and their classification into "rhythmic families," see Conway 1995: 199-203.

J: No, I just hit the thumb string back. That's what gives sort of an after-beat affect

(McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Jack's style does not reflect the typical clawhammer method because of the "coming and going" approach in his right hand technique. Jack obtains the melody notes with the downstroke of the index finger. The upward motion catches the secondary notes often acquired by drop-thumbing or pull-offs in other downstroke styles. By striking the lower strings in both directions, Jack can accomplish the rolls common to these styles, but in a manner that is somewhat different rhythmically. The "coming and going" motion of the fingers adds a distinctive, rhythmic flutter to Jack's playing. His use of the back of his thumb on the drone string seems to serve the same purpose as the more common downward motion—providing the "after-beat."

Similar descriptions of this variant of the clawhammer style are few. While several banjo players are noted as employing no drop-thumbing, only two descriptions were found that describe Jack's back flicking of the thumb. Rinzler describes the technique of Clarence "Tom" Ashley's Aunt Ary as an "unorthodox style of picking up, instead of down, on the fifth string," a style Clarence "marveled at" but did not learn (Rinzler 1961). While Ary's style is characterized as "unorthodox" by Rinzler, it may not be so. Leonard Glenn states that his father, who played a downstroke clawhammer style, picked up on the fifth string and notes the difficulty of the technique, which he did not learn (*It Still Lives* 1980: 6). Jack and Pharr provide two more instances of up-picking on the fifth string.

While all four of these players were located within a relatively close proximity,²² the similarities in technique may not be useful in establishing up-picking on the drone string as a local trait. Pharr, who transmitted the technique to Jack, does not appear in Ashe County census records until 1920. He was born about 1890, so by the time he arrived in Ashe between 1910 and 1920 (or between age twenty or thirty), his style was developed. Jack says that Pharr talked a lot about Iredell County in the North Carolina Piedmont, and he believes Pharr migrated from there.

Conway notes that two African American banjo players, Dink Roberts and John Jackson, integrate an upward motion of the index finger within their downstroking styles. Roberts sometimes picks up with the index finger “in an incidental sort of way” (Conway 1995: 222). Jack’s incorporation of upward picking is more deliberate and is essential in obtaining secondary notes. Jackson’s use of up-picking seems to be more similar to Jack’s playing. Jackson’s “thumb never leaves the fifth string, and the index finger alternates between a normal clawhammer downstroke and a guitar style down-up-down-brush” (Conway and Odell 1998: 23). Winans comments on the “rippling sound” created by Jackson’s up-picking (1979: 17), which can also be heard in Jack’s playing. Like Jack, Jackson does not employ drop-thumbings, and he obtains the melody notes on the downstroke while the upstroke catches secondary notes. While their respective techniques are not identical, similarities can be heard between much of Jack’s playing and Jackson’s

²²Ary’s family settled in western Ashe County, near the Tennessee border, Leonard Glenn’s family lived northwestern Avery County, also near the Tennessee border, and Jack and Lester lived in the southeastern corner of the Ashe County

version of “Going Up North.”²³ Still, the connection between styles cannot be made beyond the similarity in up-picking with the index finger. Jackson is known more as a blues guitarist than a banjo player, and Conway and Odell associate his up-picking on the banjo with “a guitar style.” While Jack also plays the guitar and did so before he bought his first banjo, he learned his style, complete with the combination of downstroking and up-picking, intact from Pharr who is not associated with guitar playing.

References to these banjo techniques suggests that they are innovations. Rinzier and Conway refer to Ary Ashley’s style as “peculiar” and “unorthodox,” respectively (Rinzler 1961 and Conway 1995: 125). In her reference to Watauga County instrument builder Clifford Glenn’s picking technique, Conway suggests that variant banjo styles may seem anomalous because there are no “local precedents” for them (1995: 222). Jack’s style presents a local precedent in that he learned it directly from Pharr. While further connections in terms of influence or transmission cannot be made to the techniques employed by Ary Ashley, Leonard Glenn’s father, or John Jackson, which would suggest additional precedents, Jack’s style replaces the tag of “anomalous” with that of “localized traditional” because it made the transition from one player to another over two generations in a relatively unchanged form. The technique can only be established as “localized” because Jack and Pharr are the only two players known to use the style, although it shares characteristics with the style of several different players.

²³For a recording of John Jackson’s “Going Up North,” see Track #22, *Black Banjo Songsters of North Carolina and Virginia*. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1998.

Jack McGinnis's clawhammer style has for the most part resisted change, but functioning in the secular realm still affords Jack more flexibility with the form than is found in his hymn singing. Much of his current banjo playing exhibits much more complex melodic elements than what he considers the old way of playing. The difference in the old style and his own adaptation can be heard most clearly in his versions of "Little Brown Jug" (see Appendix A, tracks 8 and 9). Jack explains the difference: "most of the old timers [including Baker and Pharr] just stayed up there [within the first five to seven frets]" (McGinnis 5/4/2002), whereas he often grabs notes much further up the neck. Jack's development of a more melodic style may be the result of his learning on a fretted instrument. In a discussion of the effects of the banjo in the formation of the fiddle-banjo ensemble, Tom Carter notes that most rural banjo players were playing on fretless instruments when the ensemble began to emerge during the late nineteenth century. The fretless fingerboard on these banjos made playing notes up the neck, past the fifth string tuning peg, difficult; thus, the melodic range of most players was "limited to just over one octave" (Carter 1990: 67). Hiram Baker likely learned on a fretless instrument since fretted banjos were scarce during his early years; fretted banjos were not introduced nationally until the 1880s, possibly after Baker began to play, and likely arrived much later to rural areas (Conway 1995: 183). However, Lester Pharr, who was born around 1890, had a greater chance of learning on a fretted instrument, but Jack says that Pharr did not go past the fifth or seventh fret to acquire notes. Therefore, learning on a fretted instrument may not fully explain Jack's more melodic style. He states that his playing further up the neck is something he came up with and has always done. The reality is

probably a combination of the fretted fingerboard with several other factors, such as exposure to numerous musicians at local dances and various forms of music through radio and commercial recordings.

Jack doesn't specifically attribute any influence to radio or recordings, but he does make a connection between his style and that of Uncle Dave Macon, Stringbean, and Grandpa Jones, all popular entertainers on the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee. Macon is the only one who might have influenced Jack because Stringbean and Grandpa Jones came into prominence after Jack had been playing the banjo for several years. But Jack does not mention learning from Macon's broadcasts or recordings. Conway notes that "most black or white downstroking banjo players refer to Gandpa Jones from the Grand Ole Opry to identify this style. He had become a national emblem and a validation of their style" (1995: 318n59). I believe this "validation" to be the case for Jack's comments regarding Grandpa Jones, Stringbean and Dave Macon. If any influence came from these or other commercially recorded musicians, it probably operated more subconsciously than through actually learning their styles. Regardless of where the influence derived, either as solely Jack's innovation or the influence of fretted banjos and commercial sources, the increased melodic emphasis over that played by either Baker or Pharr exhibits how Jack expresses his creativity by incorporating new musical ideas within his traditional style, much the same way he selectively added non-traditional material to his repertoire of tunes. Again, this incorporation reveals the flexibility of his secular music, in both content and form.

Jack McGinnis' open natured approach to his traditional secular music reflects the situation of his life in relation to the emergence of increased access to commercial music. However, the freedom to selectively add tunes and stylistic features is more indicative of the absence of the strict criteria placed upon hymn singing. The absorption of tunes, such as "Beer Barrel Polka" and Burl Ives' version of "Jimmy Cracked Corn," and a shift to a more melodic playing style do not place Jack's music outside the tradition in which he learned. Rather, these changes are additions that are reformulated in harmony with the tradition, which remains relatively intact.

Additionally, Jack is fond of what he calls "cowboy songs." His repertory is much smaller than his stock of banjo tunes and includes "Dying Cowboy," "Cowboy Jack," "When the Work's All Done this Fall," and "Bill Veneri's Last Ride," among others. A cousin introduced these songs to him. Jack says, "I had a cousin, Edison Berry [or Baird], that used to be out [west], was a cowboy, and he's the first one I ever heard sing that one ['Bill Veneri's Last Ride']" (McGinnis 5/4/2002). Typically, these songs are performed on the guitar or fiddle and are sung. He sings a version of "Cowboy Jack" without musical accompaniment (see Appendix A, track 34). While this group of "cowboy songs" constitutes only a small portion of Jack's secular music repertoire, he still plays them and their inclusion emphasizes his readiness to adopt various types of material.

Jack was always open to different types of music. Jack recalls several African-American musicians who were part of a prison labor force working on the roads by his home. His father had a large barn by the road where the workers gathered during the rain. Jack often took his fiddle and guitar up to the barn for the men to play. Most of the tunes

were from the blues repertoire and were played on guitar. While Jack did not learn from these musicians, he was eager to hear the men play. Most importantly, he was appreciative of their musical ideas and tastes, having not been exposed to African-American culture heretofore because “there were very few blacks living in Ashe County then” (McGinnis 3/8/2003).

The more steadfast position on hymn singing persists because the relationship of tradition to the spiritual effectiveness of sacred music is more complex, where each aspect of the singing serves a particular function in providing for the maximum benefit in terms of worship. In this sense, secular music serves as a representation of Jack’s human nature in the world of man where no events, actions, or ideas qualify for any spiritual attributes, which are guided and ruled by scripture. Jack clearly relates this representation when he says,

The old folk music is unique. And take the old folk music, and you can just about put together a history of the world. You take that “Tom Dula.” And every train wreck they ever had, there was a song written about it. All the ballads—“Barbara Allen,” “Sweet William,” a lot of those old ones. I can’t remember a lot of them now. “Frankie and Johnny.” They were written about real people. “Jesse James.” They were written about real people and real events (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Clearly, Jack sets the older song material apart from the more modern in terms of its significance in his life. The older styles for rendering these tunes are an important aspect of this significance. Other types of music are referred to in a similar manner. Of the “cowboy songs,” Jack says,

They had meaning to them, most of them. “Bill Veneri’s Last Ride.” It tells the story... This fellow heard about the Indian raids. His girlfriend lived at the ranch, at [Crawford’s] Ranch. He knew that his girlfriend was in danger, so he was going to warn them. On the way he met up with the Indians, and they shot him. Then he took... a piece of paper [and] wrote a note with an oak twig in the blood out of his wounds to his girlfriend to warn her and pinned it to his horse, and his horse carried the message to them. And they survived. But anyhow, it’s very touching song and story (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

These secular songs and tunes represent the experiences of man in terms of his human nature as he progresses through life in the physical world. Jack identifies with these experiences, not that they mirror his own life, but because they express values and ideas that comprise the human nature side of his worldview. To further the discussion of a musical representation of Jack’s worldview, the succeeding chapter explores his hymn singing as the expression of his spiritual nature.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“ . . . Most all groups can sing together in fellowship”: Hymns

The last chapter presented an in depth discussion of Jack McGinnis' secular music and its relative accommodation to change. His hymn tradition is a form which is more resistant to modernizing influences. Preservation of the traditional form does not continue for the sake of posterity; rather, the traditional characteristics of singing are essential components which must work together to ensure the intended function, the worship and praise of God. Hymn singing provides Jack with a form for expressing his belief system. While singing, preaching, and praying are considered as equal components for worship in a church service, Jack suggests that singing is most affecting. He recounts an intended joke told by another preacher, which he finds a “whole lot of truth in,” emphasizing an elevated importance of singing to a church service, “He'd [the preacher] get up and say, ‘Good singing and poor preaching makes a good service. Good preaching and poor singing is sort of a one-sided business’ ” (McGinnis, 7/14/83). As explained in chapter five, Jack is not a Primitive Baptist, but he is a bearer of the singing tradition that is so commonly associated with the denomination.

Hymn singing is above all else a mode of worship for Jack. The significance of singing to worship is that it offers an opportunity for everyone, men and women alike, to actively participate in expressing themselves. Total participation underpins much of Jack's discussion related to the function of singing. However, the success of singing in

accomplishing the goal of worship is also dependent upon which hymn texts are sung. For Jack, the texts must be scripturally sound and reflect his experiences in his quest for enlightenment in order for them to supply any spiritual nourishment. While doctrinal soundness and reflected experience dictate which texts are sung, other characteristics of singing (e.g. style, aesthetic, and tune choice) offer freedom and creativity of expression and also have important ramifications to the success of singing as worship.

Beverly Patterson opens the third chapter (“Religious Identity and the Sound of Singing”) of her book, *The Sound of the Dove: Singing in Appalachian Primitive Baptist Churches* with the line, “People try to copy the sound of the Old Baptists, a Primitive Baptist woman told me during my first visit to her home—and, she said, she believed some of them could come pretty close” (1995: 31). Patterson then discusses the preference Primitive Baptists express for congregational singing over polished, professional recordings of the same hymns. She posits questions for what may lie beneath this preference and gathers from the comments of Primitive Baptists that they “invest the singing in their churches with meaning related to religious identity, identity not only as Primitive Baptists but even more as children of grace, members of the true church that is separate from the world and that transcends the boundaries set by denominations and nations” (B. Patterson 1995: 39). This is the only identity with which Jack associates any connection in his faith, and for this identity to be expressed through singing, the singing must function as praise for God, as a mode for worship.

Singing must also operate beyond the individual’s worship to facilitate fellowship among brethren of the true church—for Jack, brethren in the sense of those worshipping

together, whether Primitive Baptists or not. The act of fellowship (and singing) among Primitive Baptist church members is a “means for living with the stringencies of the prior doctrines of election and predestination,” scripturally sanctioned by the concept of “the visible church” derived from the Song of Solomon (Peacock and Tyson 1989: 114). Jack relates how singing is directly infused with fellowship,

They used to sing this [Amazing Grace]. . . . The old Primitive Baptists used to meet once a month, and a gang of them come out. And they didn't, the preacher just didn't go to the door and shake hands with everybody as they come out. They shook hands with each other all over the house, and they'd take a long time. So, they'd take a song with a lot of verses and a long chorus to it, and sing it during the hand shake. So, that is the reason for some of those choruses in some of those tunes I suppose (10/25/2003).

Not only are church members worshiping, but they are sharing that worship with one another through the extended hand of fellowship. Choruses were not typically printed in Primitive Baptist hymnals until the Publication of Cayce's *The Good Old Songs* and Monsees' *Old School Hymnal*, both in the twentieth century. While the “old Primitive Baptists,” of whom Jack speaks, did not have the Monsees compilation, he allows that some of the choruses they sang may derive from Cayce's publication.

Jack extends the need for fellowship beyond a particular congregation or denomination as a means for uniting followers regardless of denominational affiliation. Not only should those in doctrinal and practical agreement share their experiences together, but those of various denominations should as well in accordance with the scriptural definition of the true church, which contains no ideological grouping other than the elect. Jack states,

I find one thing I like about singing: . . .most all groups can sing together in fellowship.

The most I've learned, about twelve years now I've been going to the hospital and holding the little devotional services. And I've had every order in this whole area with the exception of the Jehovah's Witness... I've had Holiness, I've had Church of God, I've had Regular Baptist, Primitive Baptist, Missionary Baptist, Freewill Baptist, and Lutherans, had Episcopalians, Methodists, even had two Mormons one time. And I've never tried to promote any creed, and I've never had any explicit meanings. Never had any hardness of any kind. We just sing hymns of praise, trying to teach Christ (5/31/2003).

Jack's emphasis on inclusion takes precedence over denominational affiliation. Of course, that does not imply that he forsakes his own insistence on scriptural soundness of hymn texts or his standards of good singing; it simply means that he entertains a certain level of compromise as long as the singing functions as worship rather than performance.

A major factor in determining whether singing is a worship-oriented or performance-oriented act is the use of musical instruments. Jack prefers unaccompanied hymn singing, but he concedes that musical instruments can be used in a mode of worship. "My personal feeling is that they've never made an instrument that can harmonize as beautifully as the human voice. I would probably prefer just a capella singing. However, if they have musical instruments and don't try to take over everything with them so you can't hear the words, I have no objection to them" (McGinnis 5/31/2003). Jack is willing to compromise on the issue of musical instruments, on the condition that worship remains

in the forefront.²⁴ Jack sings as a mode of worship and fellowship. If the musical instruments do not interfere with the worship, Jack can abide them in order to promote fellowship among worshipers. However, his statement above also implies that musical instruments cause more harm than good, tending to cause a shift in singing from a spiritual act to entertainment.

Jack, along with a majority of Primitive Baptists,²⁵ feels that musical instruments are superfluous, human additions to the Church. Musical instruments are prohibited in most Primitive Baptist churches because there is no reference to their use in relation to the worship practices of the apostolic church as described in the new testament (B. Patterson 1995). Jack states, “I feel that He gave the church everything she needed” (5/31/2003). Therefore, if aspects of the worship service are not explicitly described as such in scripture, the effectiveness of the worship experience is impeded. One Primitive Baptist elder notes that “Fixin’s [sic] don’t add anything to religion anyway. . . . We have nothing against modern conveniences, but we don’t want any additives” (Sovine 1978: 37). Worship is not enhanced but hampered by additions (including musical instruments). Jack agrees with the Primitive Baptist position on “additives” to the church. He offers two examples, the celebration of Christmas and Mother’s Day, and their negative effects on worship,

It [Christmas] had its roots in idolatry. . . . So, if we bring something in, and that’s been brought in, and look what it’s mushroomed out to—the greatest commercial event

²⁴Jack presently sings hymns with musical accompaniment around Wilkes County. This is discussed in further detail in the following chapter.

²⁵With the exception of one group known as “progressives.”

of the year. Make merchandise out of it. . . . Then, another day I went to service on Mother's Day [at Zion Regular Baptist], and I'd never felt [more out of place] in my life. Sung songs about mother. I believe in honoring your father and your mother. I believe in it with all my heart, but when you go to the house of worship, you go to worship God. So having roses to give to every mother there and singing songs about mother, that's really idolatry if you come down to the truth of it. . . . Every time we bring something in that we're not told to do in the scriptures, you see, it leaves room for that idolatry to creep in (5/31/2003).

Incorporating Mother's Day into the worship service is considered idolatry because the focus of worship is shifted away from God. The introduction of musical instruments also hampers the church and the worship experienced through singing. In a 1935 article, Elder W.H. Crouse, a leader among the progressive group of Primitive Baptists, in retrospect laments the use of musical instruments in the many churches he pastored and visited. He states the negative effects of the addition.

I have never felt, and do not now feel, that the use of an organ in the song service is any sin within itself. But it has always been my judgment, and is now, that our brethren made a serious mistake when they introduced them and brought about a division of our forces. I urge our brethren everywhere who do not have them to leave them alone. My observation has been that they are unnecessary. Any help which they may have been in places has been more than over-balanced by the evil effects which have followed their use. Our people have become so accustomed to the instrument that it is difficult to have singing when there is no one present to play for us. In many instances, congregational singing has been destroyed and only a select few sing. Certainly spirituality has not been increased by their use. The condition of our churches prove that their use does not insure union, peace, and prosperity" (Crouse 1935).

Not only is the practice of singing impeded, thus limiting the effectiveness of worship, but the total participation through which all member express their worship for God is curtailed, leaving the singing to a “select few” (or choirs) in “many instances.”

Elders Sylvester and Cushing Biggs Hassell, father and son, discuss the introduction of musical instruments to the worship service in their book, *History of the Church of God, From Creation to A.D.* The Hassells’ comments in the nineteenth century signify a shift from a spiritually oriented function to entertainment or performance. In describing a revival service, they offer, “Again. . . along with other attractions, we have an organ-grinder, with a wealthy middle-aged citizen sustaining the dignified *role* of the monkey passing the hat for pennies. . .” and summarize the “programme [sic] of Church Entertainment” as follows: “two operatic selections on the piano; three ballads,. . . a xylophone solo,. . . an exhibition of a singing machine,. . . a semi classical duet,. . . [and a] solo and chorus, ‘Old Log Cabin in the Dell’ ” all for a charge of twenty-five cents (Hassell and Hassell 1886: 600-601). In this depiction, the Hassells imply a sense of extreme superfluity, perhaps a comical absurdity, in adding musical instruments to worship, but they emphasize that shift away from serving the spiritual needs of worshipers. How can congregations “invest the singing in their churches with meaning related to religious identity” (B. Patterson 1995: 39) if they are removed from participation through a transition to a performance-based singing environment, which seems to separate the congregation as a unit from the act of singing? Just as a Primitive Baptist sharply distinguishes between a version of “Amazing Grace” sung by her congregation in a service and one sung by Judy Collins on a commercial recording (B. Patterson 1995: 31-32), Jack

points out, “Well, we can sing ‘Amazing Grace’ as a performance and it mean nothing. And another can sing it and get a great blessing from it because they’re singing it as a mode of worship. In other words, they’re praising God while another is just singing” (McGinnis 5/31/2003). The function of singing as a mode of worship is how “religious identity” is infused with hymn singing. The intent of the singers is crucial and is reliant on the absence of musical instruments and other features of hymn singing. Therefore, a proscription of musical instruments as a traditional aspect of singing is not maintained on grounds of preservation, but on the grounds of an indispensable function gained, enhancing worship.

The fading tradition of lining out, where a song leader chants a line of the hymn text before the congregation sings it, provides a comparison which highlights the importance of function in the continuance of tradition. Historically, Primitive Baptists relied upon hymn lining because hymn books were relatively unavailable and illiteracy rates were higher. Some Primitive Baptists (even entire congregations) still enjoy and practice lining, but it is not generally employed in a church service; rather it is viewed as custom and unessential to worship (B. Patterson 1995). Jack’s comments on lining out echo this notion. He says,

It was not started for a fad, but out of necessity. Mostly, people did know a few old tunes. So in order that they might participate in a service, he [preacher or song leader] would read a line of the hymn. They would sing it. . . . It’s part of our heritage that I hope won’t be lost, but I also hope that it would be explained why we would like to hold on to it. Not as a form of worship, but just as a part of our heritage (McGinnis 7/14/1983).

The practice of lining hymns was only functional when it aided in the total participation of church congregations. With increased availability of hymn books, this function diminished. Therefore, the practice has no definitive purpose for worship. In contrast to the exclusion of musical instruments from worship services, lining out is continued primarily for preserving custom as “part of our heritage.” Beverly Patterson notes an added sense of “spiritual movement” experienced by one Primitive Baptist elder when lining a hymn. Jack too concedes the possibility for an enhanced feeling of worship, stating, “I think if you listen to the words and then sing them, it [hymn text] would definitely have more meaning. But. . .it must be a song that has deep meaning before it would help” (McGinnis 7/14/1983).

The potential of hymn singing to function as a mode of worship is dependent upon which texts are chosen to be sung. Jack notes two primary criteria for selecting hymn texts. The text must be sound in doctrine for Jack to derive concrete spiritual meaning, and it is most effective in providing for worship and spiritual meaning when it reflects his experiences throughout his search for the true church. Because singing is a form of worship which holds equal weight with preaching and praying, the texts must be scripturally correct. The analogy of hymns to small sermons is noted in scholarly writings (B. Patterson 1995; Peacock and Tyson 1989). Yet, this analogy is not made by the writers; rather, it is quoted from Primitive Baptists. In 1887 D.H. Goble wrote in the preface to his *Primitive Baptist Hymn Book*, “We are fully persuaded that we had as well preach unsound doctrine as to sing it with an attempt at devotion” (Goble 1887: iv). Jack

offers several examples of unsound hymn texts. His comments on two coincide with Goble's prefatory remark.

Well, they have one in one of the hymnals that comes to mind right now that says, "I've paid the price. I've counted the costs, I've paid the price." Well, that is blasphemy. I didn't pay the price. I had nothing to pay. Christ paid it. So, you see that's pure blasphemy. And they have another one that they sing in that same book that says, "There's nothing to do but make up your mind." Well, what's that saying? It's all in your head. I won't sing either of those. . . . If a preacher would get up there and say, "It's all in your head," say, "I've paid the price," they're going to kick him out and rightly they should. And if the choir [or congregation] sings it, they should be kicked out too" (5/31/2003).

Both of these texts appear in the *Church Hymnal* published by the Tennessee Publishing Company and are not included in hymn books compiled by Primitive Baptists. Jack's analysis of another text, also not found in Primitive Baptist hymnals, offers interesting insight into the manner in which he interprets scripture. "Lord, Build Me a Cabin in the Corner of Glory Land" is an unsound text Jack brings it up on several occasions—in the 1983 interview with Daniel W. Patterson, in a 1997 sermon, and on at least two separate occasions during my field work. Jack says,

It's a humbling thought, more than we deserve, but I don't read of any corner of glory land. Nor do I read of any cabins. So, it's not scripturally sound even though it's a humbling thought. . . . The scriptures tell us that we are all heirs and joint heirs with Christ! All of heaven is ours because it fills all the vast immensity of space! God is everywhere! He is not limited to just one little place, but He is everywhere!. . . . All of heaven belongs to Christ, and we are joint heirs with Him. Now if I had a huge farm,

and I had several children, and I divided up, each one would just have a little section.

But if they're joint heirs in it, each one can say this is mine, the whole thing. That's what heaven is" (McGinnis 5/31/2003, 7/14/1983, Sermon 1997).

Typically, unsound doctrine found in hymn texts is presented as either presumptuous in offering assurance of salvation, appealing to the flesh, implying that comforts of this world extend into the sacred, or giving credit to man (B. Patterson 1995; Peacock and Tyson 1989). While the above example is without a doubt "fleshly appealing" and Jack acknowledges that the sentiment is "humbling," he doesn't emphasize the scripturally false sense of worldly comfort. Rather, he casts the unsound doctrine as a limitation on the true fruits of salvation and the after life in heaven, emphatically rejecting mainstream religious culture's misinformed view of rural non-conformist belief systems as fatalistic. All three examples discussed thus far do not appear in Primitive Baptist publications, which tend to be more compatible with Jack's adherence to scripture, but he does not spare those texts from critique.

Jack considers Benjamin Lloyd's hymnal, *The Primitive Hymns*, to be so littered with texts leaning toward Arminianism that he told Daniel Patterson in 1983, "I don't even have one. It's very Arminian, very fleshly appealing" (McGinnis 7/14/83). Currently, Jack does have a copy of Lloyd's book in his library, but his feelings on its content have not changed. Hymn books he feels to be more doctrinally sound were compiled by Gilbert Beebe, Silas Durand and P.G. Lester, and Goble. Still, Jack finds some texts that are not completely accurate. "O Happy Time, Long Awaited For" contains the following lines in the third verse:

My heart and treasure is above

And I for heaven bound (Goble 1887: no.195).

Jack considers these lines to sound presumptuous. In keeping with the doctrine that an experience of salvation is a hope, not an assurance, one cannot know he or she is “for heaven bound.” He offers Cayce’s version of the same verse:

My heart with Jesus and his saints

In sweetest union bound (Cayce 1913).

Jack adds, “Which is much more beautiful, I think. . . . That’s the only song I know of that Cayce renders better than the Goble”²⁶ (McGinnis 7/14/83). Cayce strips the verse of the implication of assurance regarding salvation. The emphasis lies with one’s relationship to Christ and the Church.

One of Cayce’s texts which Jack does not regard as “much more beautiful” is “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood” (Cayce no. 13). Jack occasionally leads the singing at an annual hymn singing held at Hollow Springs Primitive Baptist Church in August. In a recording from the event in 1995, verses one, two, and five of this text from Cayce’s compilation are requested. Before the group begins singing, Jack says, “I wish that Cayce hadn’t messed with that second verse. Lets sing it like it ought to be sung” (Singing at Hollow Springs, 1995). Cayce renders the second verse:

The dying thief rejoiced to see

That fountain in his day;

I hope that blood was shed for me,

²⁶Earlier in the interview Jack includes Cayce’s *The Good Old Songs* in answering D. Patterson’s question, “Do some of the hymn books reflect more Arminian sentiment?”

And washed my sins away (Cayce 1913: no. 13).

Goble published the same verse as:

The dying thief rejoiced to see

That fountain in his day;

O may I there, though vile as he,

Wash all my sins away (Goble 1887: no. 12).

Jack's point of contention is with Cayce's use of the word "hope" in the third line.

I think the original [Goble's] version of that song is much better because that's saying "I hope." Hope is an action in that book [Cayce's *The Good Old Songs*], a verb. The scriptural hope is a noun. It's a possession. So that is a great error that Cayce did just trying to fix something to his belief. . . . Well, like I told you a while ago, "That we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to *the* hope set before us, which hope we have." (Hebrews 6:18-19)²⁷ And then to go back to Titus, "In hopes of eternal life, which God who cannot lie, promised before the world was" (Titus 1:2)²⁸. See, hope, we're in hope. Hope is set before us, we have it; it's a noun, a possession. It's not an action. To say, "I hope" is just a . . . wishful thought. I notice it's that way in the *Old School Hymnal*. I like that one, "O may I there, though vile as he." That's in everything I've seen with the exception of those conditionalist hymn books²⁹ (McGinnis 2/28/2004).

²⁷Actual rendering of passage in the King James Version of the Holy Bible: "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which *hope* we have..."

²⁸Actual rendering: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

²⁹*Good Old Songs* and *Old School Hymnal*

Jack's distinguishing between the usage of "hope" has surfaced in earlier discussions as well as in a sermon he delivered at Yadkin Valley Baptist Church, a Missionary Baptist Church. "Hope" used as a noun implies that one has "grounds" for believing.

Not only does this example offer insight into how Jack interprets a hymn text, it also demonstrates the manner in which he handles a request for a text (in this case a portion of a text) he feels to be scripturally unsound in context. Jack does not simply dismiss the request or refrain from singing the hymn. He carefully offers his objection to the second verse, that Cayce "messed with" it. Instead of omitting the second verse or replacing it with another, Jack suggests a modification to the verse by reciting Goble's version, which the group accepts. He does not stress that the text is unsound scripturally or make an issue of the request. He simply offers a revision and keeps the singing going.

As much as sound doctrine in hymn texts determines which will be sung, a reflection of experiences in the quest for the true church is also important to Jack when selecting hymn texts. He describes his use of the term "experimental" as referring to "a spiritual experience, like we can identify with the Lord's people back through the ages" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Deep meaning is derived from hymn texts that reflect such experiences. Jack offers an example of finding "experimental" meaning in hymn texts by analyzing the 107th Psalm,

You take the psalms; that was the hymn book of the early church. And most of them are either, some of them are filled with despair; some with hope; some with praise. And a lot of them spoke about the way the Lord's people lived during the. . . . Well, let's take the 107th psalm, I believe. Starts out, [well, "That] men would praise the Lord for his

wonderful works” (Psalm 107:8).³⁰ Something like that. And then it recounts the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. Speaks about “they wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they had no city to dwell in” (Psalm 107:4).³¹ And it speaks about “The Lord led them by the right way to the city of habitation” (Psalm 107:7).³² Plus, if you read the account of Genesis, you find where they did wonder in the wilderness for years when Moses was leading them out of Egypt. They had no place to dwell. They dwelled in tents. Even the house of worship was a tent. And he led them for forty years through the wilderness, and they crossed over Jordan into a land [where] the wells were already dug, and the beans were already planted, and the cities were already built. So, you see that tells their experience. And in that I can empathize with that because I wandered in the Spiritual wilderness for years. I was looking of something and didn’t know what, so He led me by the right way because I was taught a lot of lessons. And they [the Israelites] were taught not to defend the flesh, but to trust in their creator (6/21/2003).

A heightened sense of worship is obtained when singing a hymn which reflects one’s spiritual experiences. One hymn which “speaks” Jack’s experience is “When Sorrows Encompass Me Round.” He says, “He [the hymn writer] starts out bemoaning his condition here. Then he rises up and finally ends up in the heights of glory. Well, to me that type of song is a true hymn. That’s not so much a hymn of praise. It’s experimental, what you experience now and what you expect to experience” (McGinnis 2/28/2004).

³⁰Actual rendering: “Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”

³¹Actual rendering: “They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.”

³²Actual rendering: “And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.”

Jack is not unusual in his desire for reflected experience. Beverly Patterson offers several examples of how Primitive Baptists find more meaning in a hymn that reflects spiritual experience. One elder compared two doctrinally sound hymn texts. He often quoted the first text to make a doctrinal point, although he rarely sang it. The second text was the elder's favorite hymn to sing because it "placed belief in the context of personal spiritual experience" (B. Patterson 1995: 48). Patterson quotes a deacon as saying, "Any of them that serve my heart, I like" and another elder as preferring hymns which "speak my experience" (B. Patterson 1995: 48). Another quote included by Patterson offers perhaps the clearest statement on why reflected experience is so important. She notes that one elder stated, "These old hymns, well, the reason I love them—when you get down to the facts of them—they're based on experiences of God's people and on the Scripture" (B. Patterson 1995: 48-49). Finding one's own spiritual experience in the hymns, given that they are of sound doctrine, provides the singer with some evidence that they are "God's people," thus bringing deeper meaning to their worship.

Jack's understanding of the power of reflected experience allows him to appreciate the vitality and spiritual function of other singing traditions. For example, he states,

Some of the old Negro spirituals, when you think of the condition that they sang those songs under and that those songs were born under—when they were out slaving in the fields. And then you think about that old song, "Ain't Gonna Study the War No More." "Gonna lay down my burdens down by the riverside, ain't gonna study the war no more." They might [not be] what we would call. . .well written [scripturally sound] hymns, but if you think of the conditions they were under, they're beautiful. "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," and we know it's not a true picture of what is going to happen, but

yet when we think of the circumstances they were in, it's beautiful. Because they were looking for something better. So we owe the old Negro slaves quite a debt when we stop and think of it (6/21/2003).

Doctrinally, Jack may disagree with some of the texts of African-American spirituals, but he recognizes that they have deep meaning for African Americans because they reflect the early African-American experience. Additionally, Jack views the spirituals and their expressive power as important contributions to "our musical heritage" (Singing at Hollow Springs, 1995). Besides mentioning on several occasions the "debt" owed to African-American tradition in regard to both secular and sacred music, Jack led the singing of "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" during the annual singing held at Hollow Springs Primitive Baptist Church in August, 1995. In a recording of this event to celebrate a singing tradition, Jack states, "You know, there's one type music in our musical heritage we don't have in this one [Cayce's *The Good Old Songs*], and that's the old Negro [Spirituals]. They sang them out in the fields. They were in bondage, bodily, but their spirits were free. And they looked forward to a time when they would no longer be slaves" (Singing at Hollow Springs, 1995). While the African-American spirituals do not conform to Jack's idea of scriptural soundness, he recognizes the moving power through expressions of the enslavement experience in providing a compelling spiritual function, a hope for deliverance. He also recognizes that scriptural truth in terms of his cultural context perhaps served less importance for early African Americans.

Scriptural correctness and reflected spiritual experience dictate which texts Jack will sing, but considerable freedom is found in other aspects of singing. The style of

delivery and tune choice reveal Jack's creativity and personal aesthetic. Of course, Jack's creative expression in singing is not merely ornamental. The way he sings a song and the tune in which he sings it have important ramifications for the primary function of singing discussed above—to serve as a mode for worship.

While Jack's singing shares many characteristics with Primitive Baptists, such as a preference for singing in unison,³³ no musical accompaniment, and hymn texts with sound doctrine and reflected experience, his style of delivery differs somewhat from that commonly associated with the denomination. The singing is often described as employing a slow tempo and minimal ornamentation (B. Patterson 1995; Sovine 1978; Sutton 1990). The tempo in which Jack sings is "a whole lot faster than most of the Primitive Baptists sing them. . . . That's the way I like to sing them. And when I was leading the singing, that's the speed we sang them. They sing them a lot slower than that now, most of them" (McGinnis 10/25/2003). The quicker tempo allows for Jack to emphasize a stronger rhythm, possibly influenced by his early years as a dance musician, that is important to his singing. "I love to hear them [hymns] sung fast enough that you can feel a little rhythm to them. I don't like to hear them run away with. And, I don't like them so slow that you can't remember what the last note was when you start on another one" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Jack's preference for a strong rhythm is tied closely to tune choices.

The stock of tunes from which Primitive Baptist singers choose originates in both written and oral sources. Brett Sutton notes that tunes sung by Primitive Baptists

³³To clarify the term "unison," Jack does not mind harmony singing as long as everyone "sings the same words at the same time."

originate in both oral tradition and the nineteenth century tune books (e.g. *Southern Harmony*, *Christian Harmony*, and *Sacred Harp*), and that overlap among the Primitive Baptist repertoire and the tune book compendiums “may simply reflect that each had its origins in the same oral traditions of the early nineteenth century” (1990: 206). A tune sung by Elder Evans’ congregation at Antioch Primitive Baptist Church to the text “I Am a Stranger Here Below” is printed as “French Broad” in the *Southern Harmony* and attributed to William Walker, the book’s compiler. However, after publishing the tune, Walker stated that he learned it from his mother as a child (B. Patterson 1995: 89-90). There is a complex relationship between oral and written sources in the tune repertoire of Primitive Baptists, with some stemming from oral tradition, some from tune books, and some that can be traced to both sources.

Jack learned most of the tunes he sings from Cayce’s *The Good Old Songs* and “just singing with the old singers” (McGinnis 10/25/2003). Whether or not Cayce’s tunes originated in written or oral tradition, Jack learned some tunes from a written source. Singing from Goble’s *The Primitive Baptist Hymn Book*, Jack occasionally referred to Cayce’s publication for his tune source. An interesting example of how Jack uses written sources in his singing is “When the Storm and Its Fury on Galilee Fell” (Goble 1887: no. 288), for which he sings three different tunes on a recording we made at his home (McGinnis 10/25/2003; see Appendix B, track 17). The third tune Jack sings comes from Cayce’s publication, and he adds a chorus as written in the *Old School Hymnal*, compiled by J.A. Monsees and Roland Green. Monsees and Green render a similar tune as Cayce, but Jack does not typically use their arrangements because “he [Green] sure made a

terrible mess of some of those good old tunes” (McGinnis 7/14/1983). Green rearranged the harmonies on many tunes and shifted some of the minor tunes to a major key, for example, “Bound for the Promised Land.” Thus, Jack utilizes three different hymn books (including Goble’s text) for one hymn with only Goble’s book open and in front of him. He learned other tunes independent of published sources.

Jack’s favorite tune and hymn text is “Guide Me, O’ Thou Great Jehovah.” He traces the tune in his family back to his great grandfather, William Reece Craft from Jenkins, Kentucky. Jack believes that the tune originated in that area. The tune was passed through the family, and Jack most remembers hearing his father sing it. “When we were working out in the fields, my dad would sing ‘Guide Me, O’ Thou Great Jehovah’ all day long. Sing a verse and whistle a verse, and that just grew on me” (5/31/2003). The tune is rarely sung by most Primitive Baptists today. None of the recordings or tune transcriptions of Primitive Baptist congregations in the Blue Ridge areas of North Carolina and Virginia have duplicated Jack’s tune, but Beverly Patterson notes that “a longer version” of the commonly sung tune was recorded in North Carolina and Kentucky (1995: 207n16). Jack is likely one North Carolina source for Patterson’s note since his interview with Daniel Patterson was consulted and quoted in her book. The typical, shortened tune is identical to Jack’s except that it omits the high part, and it seems to be a later distillation. The tune structures are AAA and AABA, respectively. Jack notes the structure of his tune to be more consistent with earlier hymn tunes. He states, “Most of the old tunes have two verses or two lines just about alike, then one break, and another like the first two [an AABA structure]. A lot of the old hymns have that pattern to the

tune. Probably someone heard it and couldn't remember the rest, so they just sang it from memory as well as they could" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). The difference between the tunes causes a slight variation in the text. Compare the text that is usually sung and that which Jack sings:

<i>Common Version</i>	<i>Jack's Version</i>
Guide me, O' thou great Jehovah!	Guide me, O' thou great Jehovah!
Pilgrim through this barren land;	Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,	I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with thy pow'rful hand:	Hold me with thy pow'rful hand:
Bread of heaven, [bread of heaven]	Bread of heaven feed me till I want no more;
Feed me till I want no more.	Bread of heaven, [bread of heaven]
	Feed me till I want no more.

The textual variation, being simply a rephrased repetition of the final lines, does not seem to have much effect in altering the meaning derived from the hymn. However, the shortened tune seems incomplete to Jack. "I don't know why they cut it [the B part] out, unless it was just for times sake. When they don't put that part in it seems like there's something missing" (6/21/2003). Jack's comments on the variation in tunes suggest a connection between tune and text in providing the fullest spiritual meaning.

Jack learned "Amazing Grace" to the tune of "I Want to Live a Christian Here" as a child. This text and tune combination was favored by the congregation that met at the meeting house on his grandfather's farm in Ashe County. He says,

"Amazing Grace" to that old "I Want to Live a Christian Here" tune, that's the way they used to sing it at the little church my granddad built over there. [We'd] sing that at the breaking up, and we'd all be shedding tears because it would be another month before

we'd meet again you know. I'd get tickled at the preacher, and they'd take me out and give me a whipping. I'd get tickled again and get another whipping. But when they started to sing that song, I was in there shaking hands [and] shedding tears as big as anybody. It did something to me (McGinnis 2/28/2004).

The congregation added the chorus of "I Want to Live a Christian Here" to lengthen the singing during the hand of fellowship. The chorus is:

I want to live a Christian here,

I want to die rejoicing;

I want to feel my Savior near,

When soul and body's parting.

Through Jack's comments, this hymn and tune combination is connected with and presage his later experience of salvation.³⁴ He says the "breaking up" of the meetings is when he "started what I would call finding peace," which he eventually found "on the battlefields of Germany." This link exemplifies the moving power of hymn singing in the worship service. Jack eventually had several of his congregations singing this text and tune combination when he served as a Primitive Baptist elder (McGinnis 7/14/1983), and Beverly Patterson recorded this combination at one of Elder Evans' churches, Little River Primitive Baptist Church in Alleghany County, North Carolina.

Another tune Jack picked up in oral tradition he sings with the text, "There is a house not made with hands." Unlike his tune for "Guide Me, O' Thou Great Jehovah," which he learned through family tradition, this tune was learned much later in life,

³⁴See chapter four.

probably in the late 1980s or early 1990s, from the singing at Crossroads Primitive Baptist church beside his home. Jack tells of learning the tune,

It's a funny thing, they sung a tune, song out there that I like the tune of, and I asked them if they minded if I brought a tape recorder over and just recorded that one song. They talked and they talked and they talked, and they finally says, "Well, we never have permitted one in here. We better not start." I said, "Well, that's fine." Of course, I could have just stuck a little pocket one in my pocket and taped it without asking, you know, but I didn't want to do that. Well, during the association they sang that same song again, and I had a little old notebook in my pocket. So, I yanked it out and just sort of wrote the notes down so I could get it. The moderator there at the association saw me, come and stuck his head up, "What's that you're writing down!?" I just stuck it up to him and said, "Here, read it." I knew he couldn't (6/21/2003).

Not only did Jack learn this tune from oral tradition, he used his knowledge of shaped note music³⁵ to obtain the tune as it was sung. He incorporated this tune into his repertoire and spread it to other congregations. He says, "That tune is one that I've never heard anywhere till I heard it out here at this little church [Crossroads]. The first time I ever heard that tune. I've spread it around enough til it's pretty common now" (McGinnis 10/25/2003). Sutton explains that "these hymns, as units of oral tradition, were subject to the same forms of dispersion as other genres," and "song exchange continues today, the only concession to modernization being tunes are captured not by memory but with a portable tape recorder" (1990: 213). Similarly, Jack has transplanted the tune, as accurately as shaped musical notation can provide, from Crossroads to other

³⁵Jack did not attend singing schools, but taught himself to read shaped notes. Occasionally, he taught shaped note singing to others

congregations. While he obtained the tune by means of writing down the notes, he disseminated it through the oral tradition of singing.

Like many Primitive Baptist elders such as Walt Evans (Peacock and Tyson 1989: 116), Jack prefers the older tunes in minor keys. Beverly Patterson writes that several song leaders among the conditionalist Primitive Baptists she spoke with held an affinity for the “old lonesome tunes” (1995: 166). Any tune that fits the meter of a particular text can be sung with that text, but the content of the text affects which tune Jack sings. “If it’s kind of an uplifting type of song, or rejoicing type song, normally you’d sing it to a major tune. But if it’s meditative, or lamenting, a minor tune fits it better for the simple reason of the mood in it. The mood of the tune fits the mood of the hymn” (McGinnis 7/14/1983). Selecting a tune with the proper mood enhances the sense of worship Jack experiences when singing. To clarify, a minor tune more effectively “reflects the greatness of God or the natural sinful condition of man or . . . put’s you in a reflective mood,” ideological values expressed in many hymn texts (McGinnis 7/14/1983).

However, Jack does not necessarily reserve certain tunes for certain texts. Even tunes that are commonly associated with particular texts remain subject to pairing with others. For example, the mood expressed by the tune Jack typically sings for “Guide Me, O’ Thou Great Jehovah” fits other settings. Jack states that this tune fits “one that we sing at many funerals with either ‘Sister thou were mild and lovely’ or if it’s a brother, we’d use ‘brother’ ” (McGinnis 7/14/1983). Another example is the tune usually associated with “I Am a Poor Wayfaring Stranger.” Jack sometimes sings “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” (Goble 1887: no. 304) to a similar tune (see Appendix C, track 7).

The mood of the tune fits theme of the text, but the meter is slightly different. Thus, the tune is shortened to correspond to the shorter first and third lines of each verse. Beverly Patterson notes that this altered tune is perceived as a separate, autonomous tune (1995: 147), but Jack points out the similarity between the two.

Within the sub-categories of major and minor tunes, tempo and rhythm influence tune and text pairing and aid in conveying the mood of hymn texts. Jack generally sings faster than “most Primitive Baptists,” but his tempo varies according to the theme of the text. For example, compare his versions of “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand” (Goble 1887: no. 209; see Appendix C, track 8) and “I Heard a Great Voice from Heaven Saying unto Me” (Cayce 1913: no 715; see Appendix B, track 6), both sung to the modal tunes printed by Cayce. Jack says of “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks. . .,” “. . . I like to sing it pretty fast” (McGinnis 10/25/2003). The faster tempo and stronger rhythm are more in harmony with the triumphant mood reflected in the text, such as the first line of the chorus: “I am bound for the promised land.” Conversely, “I Heard a Great Voice. . .” is a much more solemn and mournful text, requiring a slower, more meditative tempo. Another text sung to a modal tune, “A Few More Days on Earth to Spend” (Goble 1887: no. 223; see Appendix C, track 6), is sung at a faster tempo because, “that’s a happy song” (McGinnis 2/28/2004). Like “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks. . .,” this text portrays the triumph of entering heaven. For example, the second half of the second stanza reads,

O happy day! O Joyful hour!

When freed from earth my soul shall tow’r

Beyond the reach of Satan’s pow’r

To be forever blest.

The exultation evident in this and other hymn texts requires a fast, rhythmic tempo in addition to the modal nature of the tune to fully communicate the mood.

The use of rhythm affects tune choice in another important way. Upon which words in the hymn texts the rhythmic accents of the tune fall can make a difference in the sense of worship experienced through singing. Jack selects tunes which highlight key words in the text to emboss the fundamental message of the hymn in his mind. He feels that “there’s more to the tunes than we think. If a tune fits a song, if the accents hit at the right place, it gives more meaning to it as you sing it. Another thing, if you don’t use the accents, . . . it sounds dead” (McGinnis 10/25/2003). If the tune does not accent the key words of a text, the full message is lost, thus impeding worship. Jack gives an example of the text, “Why Should We Start and Fear to Die” (Goble 1887: no. 144) paired with the tune, “Prospect” (Cayce 1913: no 581; see Appendix B, track 11). He points out that the tune “accents the ‘start’ and the ‘die.’ We start; we die. And why should we start? Why should we fear to die” (McGinnis 10/25/2003). The tune highlights the reflective nature of the hymn text. “Did Christ O’er Sinners Weep” (Goble 1887: no 255) is another example (see Appendix B, track 13). Jack sings, “*did CHRIST o’er SINners WEEP*”³⁶. . . . See, [throws the] meaning in it” (McGinnis 10/25/2003). The rhythmic accents emphasize an expression of the relationship between Christ and man.

Throughout this discussion of Jack’s hymn singing, the function of worship is the foundation for understanding the rationale behind the many aspects of singing addressed.

³⁶Words or syllables in all caps represent those that are accented in Jack’s singing.

It is clear that far more cognitive processes take place in building a sense of worship than is initially apparent from listening to the old hymns. The issue of musical instruments continues to receive careful consideration, and if the true intent of those playing them is evidenced to emphasize the hymn text and worship over the performance qualities inherent in musical instruments, Jack can abide them. Selecting appropriate hymn texts is a multi-layered process where the selection must meet the criteria of sound doctrine and reflected experience to give a deep sense of worship. Selecting tunes is a complicated process as well, reliant on the mood evoked by the tune and its rhythmic qualities as it accents important words in the text. While there are many tunes which metrically fit a particular text, certain tunes are preferred over others and some are viewed as completely contrary to message or theme of a text. The unaccompanied style of delivery, a preference for the older hymn texts, and traditional tunes are complexly interwoven in a fabric of song praising God and expressing the humility of man's sinful, depraved nature. However beautiful the singing, Jack's primary motivation for continuing in the tradition is not solely related to auditory pleasure. As Sutton writes, "Primitive Baptist song. . .resists change because it is part of the spiritual life of the church, and its beauty is a product, not a source of that life. . . . Sacred singing is no mere ornament to the service, but an essential vehicle for the spirit" (1990: 211). For Jack, "the church" that Sutton speaks of is the true church, composed of *all* of God's children and above and beyond any man-made denominational constraint.

CHAPTER EIGHT

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord”: Merging Traditions

Thus far, this thesis has explored the secular and sacred music of Jack McGinnis as distinct genres. However, there is an ebb-and-flow between the two that is not initially apparent. While Jack’s and most Primitive Baptists’ separation of instrumental music from the worship service initially seems to maintain a boundary between secular and sacred music with hymns remaining in unaccompanied vocal settings, Jack’s music provides evidence that the boundary is more fluid. The interaction between secular and sacred genres serves as a map, illustrative of Jack’s developing worldview as he grapples with the conflicts between human nature and the spiritual nature gifted by the Holy Spirit. Within this merging of traditions, certain changes take place in Jack’s music as it moves between the secular and sacred realms. Most notably, the function of the music changes; additionally, some of the stylistic features of his music are affected.

The initial assumption upon hearing Jack play “The Promised Land,” a tune commonly associated with the Old Baptist hymn text “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand,” on the banjo may be that he has simply rendered an instrumental version of a well known hymn. This may be true if Jack approached his music from a hymn tradition which incorporates musical instruments into the worship service. But Jack’s hymn tradition stems from that of the Old Baptists before the 1832 split over missions. This tradition is also held by Primitive Baptists with whom Jack shares a religious heritage through his

family and his own former affiliation with the denomination. Jack's instrumental versions of hymn tunes are more complex than simply being hymns set to music. With musical instruments being relegated to the worldly realm, hymn singing has existed as primarily a vocal tradition within the sacred world. The secular and sacred genres appear separate, but Jack offers insight to the overlapping between the two.

The interplay between sacred and secular music developed throughout Jack's life. Jack seems to have regarded the genres as separate, although not necessarily conflicting, up to the time of his experience of salvation. After first joining a Missionary Baptist church and then the Primitive Baptists, he was not always able to reconcile the secular music of his early life with his increased interest in sacred singing. His dichotomous view of secular and sacred genres intensified and persisted until he bought that banjo from Lowes Hardware in the 1970s. Shortly thereafter, he began casting the Old Baptist hymns as instrumentals, on both the banjo and fiddle.

Like other protestant groups, Primitive Baptists have never endorsed an official position on the use of musical instruments outside the church. As discussed in chapter two, opinions on secular music vary widely. Jack never viewed the music as contrary to teachings of sacred scripture. In fact, he notes that many Primitive Baptists, such as his grandfather John Craft, Elder Walt Evans, and Elder Cecil Darrity, played musical instruments. Others include Emmet Lundy and Elder Golden Harris (Sutton 1990). Beverly Patterson points out that "there are a number of skilled musicians among them [Primitive Baptists]" (1995: 12). While Jack says that some Primitive Baptists considered

dancing to be “worldly amusement” (McGinnis 7/14/1983), he never found scriptural mandate against it.

Well, with me I just enjoyed playing, and if anybody wanted to dance, let them dance.

Some of them objected to dances, saying it was the devil’s work and all that. I can’t see anything wrong with the dance itself. . . . I saw nothing wrong with the music. Ora Lee [Jack’s wife] feels that a preacher shouldn’t be out there playing music with those [?] dancing their way and playing other kinds of hymns. But again, I was brought up among dancing, and I just saw no wrong there. I see no wrong in it, and I can’t find anything in the scripture that condemns it. I find where David even danced naked (McGinnis 5/31/2003).

A boundary between secular entertainment and sacred singing, set up by the separation of musical instruments from worship, surfaces in these comments. Because musical instruments are not attached to the spiritual realm through inclusion in the worship service, they are eligible for use elsewhere. However, the worldly and sacred music genres came into conflict after Jack’s experience of salvation. Jack alludes to this incompatibility in his comments on why he quit playing instrumental music in the 1950s. “I guess the main reason was [that] I mainly played for dances for years, and they got to where they’s so many drunks and other things. And one killing was an indirect result of a dance. And that just, I got interested in singing hymns, so I just started singing” (McGinnis 5/4/2002). A dichotomous view of secular and sacred music existed because instrumental music was connected to raucous behavior at dances, which contradicted Jack’s newfound spiritual nature.

Jack's hiatus from instrumental music began as his spiritual life expanded.

However, he states that he did not simply choose to quit playing; rather, "There was a time when I looked forward to going to the dances and places where there was a lot of drinking, the more drinking, cussing, carrying on the better it suited me. But I didn't just decide that I was going to quit that. I was made to hate it" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Again, the music was tightly bound with the activities taking place at the dances, and his regeneration through the Holy Spirit compelled him to turn away from those activities, including music. Jack states,

The reason why I didn't pursue a music career was what I saw taking place. [At a] dance there would be a few of them that would have to have their drink and would drink to excess. And a lot of jealousy would flare up and occasionally a fight. And that was why I quit. Not that I felt there was anything wrong in what I was doing, in the act itself, but it was what was associated with it (McGinnis 5/31/2003)

Elder Walt Evans of Sparta, North Carolina shares,

Sometimes I, just once in a while, I get my fiddle down and saw off a tune or two, and just turn around and put it back in the case. . . . You see I quit for so long, sixteen years I never picked the fiddle up. . . . 1935, when I started preaching, I just, I couldn't separate it from the things that, you know, that went with it, such as drinking and things, you know, what have you. And for a long time I just couldn't, you know (Evans 7/2/82).

Both Jack and Evans, experienced these feelings toward instrumental music as they were beginning their spiritual quests. Like Jack, Evans refrained from playing music for an extended period. Eventually both men came to the decision that secular music can be enjoyed without the undesirable environment of a dance, but neither of them comment on

a specific event or revelation which spurred this conclusion. Secular music began gaining independence from the negative connotations and confines of worldly behavior unbecoming of God's people. Jack elaborates,

There wasn't any harm in the instrument. The harm was in the way we were using it. Sort of like somebody asked me the other day what I thought was the most important safety thing about an automobile. I told him that was easy, "That nut behind the wheel." That's the most important safety feature in a car. The car itself's not dangerous, just how it's used. And there's certainly no evil in that piece of wood and metal strings. It could be used for evil; it could be used for good. Just like our voice. And, the Apostle Paul, you know, said that "all things are lawful for Him and he knew that meat offered to idols was..." There's nothing wrong with it because the idol of God [isn't] a god. He says, "If it offends my brother and causes him to sin, then I won't eat any." . . . So, the evil is not in the machine; it's in how it's used (McGinnis 6/21/2003).

With this realization comes the ability of musical instruments to operate across secular and sacred boundaries. As Jack points out, a musical instrument is an inanimate object incapable of doing good or evil. The emphasis is now placed on the intent of the user, much like the sense of worship gained from singing hymns is dependent upon the intent of the singer, discussed in the previous chapter. Jack directly compares the musical instrument to the voice to emphasize that while the voice is used for singing hymns of praise, naturally, it is not always used for purposes of good. Jack's shift in attitude towards instrumental music, as well as Evans', reveals how the religious worldview develops from a polarized understanding to a more balanced conceptualization of life.

Polarization derives at least in part from what Peacock and Tyson describe as a separation of scriptural authority from the events of world history.³⁷ Just as scripture exists independently of history, initially the spiritual nature of man received from the Holy Spirit exists independently of the worldly or human nature. As Jack's spiritual nature began to develop, it stood in stark contrast to what he understood as his worldly nature up to that point. Instrumental music was for the time being securely fastened to the natural, sinful nature of man and therefore shunned. Jack continued to grow spiritually, and his human nature was transformed in accordance. For example, concerning good works in relation to salvation, Jack states, "Ephesians second chapter, 'By grace ye are saved through faith, but not of yourselves. No works, lest any man should boast, for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Ephesians 2:8-10).³⁸ And, if there's no change, there's not much evidence. If the fellow that's been a thief all his life keeps on stealing, you don't think there's been much of a change in him" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Good works have no bearing on salvation, but do offer evidence that one has been regenerated. Jack's statements imply that regeneration through the Holy Spirit affects the human nature as the spiritual nature is created and grows, and over time, through clarity gained from "prayerful study of the scriptures." He was able to reconcile instrumental music with his life as a child of God through the realization that any conflicts lie with the intent of the musician,

³⁷See chapter five for a discussion of this principle.

³⁸Actual rendering in the King James Version of the Holy Bible: "(8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast. (10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

not the instrument. Thus, a balance between the spiritual nature and the human nature is achieved. Of course, the spiritual nature maintains dominance over the human nature if this balance is to contribute to a Christian life worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jack's comments on the spiritual and human natures of man in relation to music exemplify a balance between the two, but also emphasize that these natures are not integrated as one. Rather, the spiritual and human natures coexist and must be mediated.

We have two natures. If we've been born of the Holy Spirit, we have the nature of Christ. And then we still have the old human nature. And. . .the two are warring against each other constantly. The songs that tickle the flesh and the toes please the human nature. And I don't think that's wrong. He made us like we are. But then these songs, the sacred songs, appeal to the spiritual nature. And that. . .takes us out of the mode of just having a good time into a mode of worship. And I don't think He meant for us to... Sort of like the old fellow that had been to church, every day had been to church. Come home and saw the old mule, and the old mule was standing there with his ears flopping down, hanging his head down. The boy looked over at the mule [and said], "You must be a Christian." I don't think He meant for us to be like that all the time—very little of the time. He made us like we are. We have to live. We're in this world. We have to live in it. We have to get along in it. And I think it's possible to have some [worldly] without doing wrong. If I thought it was wrong to play a folk hymn or a [folk] tune on this thing, I wouldn't do it (McGinnis 6/21/2003).

As seen with Jack's analogy of "that nut behind the wheel" of an automobile to the musician playing an instrument, worldly entertainment is not heretical on grounds of origination in the secular realm. The use that things of the world are put to and the intent of the user determine whether or not they are in accordance with the life of a child of God.

Jack believes that many do not share his balanced approach to music and life, through which he mediates situations “as the occasion directs.” He says, “Zeke Sexton was a Missionary Baptist preacher, good one too, hard bound. And, he was all for musical instruments in the church. But his boy brought a banjo home one time, and he broke it all to pieces. Said he wouldn’t have a banjo in his house. *So we can go to extremes on most everything*” (McGinnis 5/31/2003). The religious context out of which Jack’s worldview grew, and continues to develop, where musical instruments are not co-opted by the church, provides for the possibility of a more balanced outlook toward secular entertainment by making a sharp distinction between the world of man and the world of God in the church. However, this distinction is only mandated within the church service, and events of life outside the church undergo extensive deliberation and meditation as to the harmony of worldly practices and activities with the Christian life. That Jack returned to playing instrumental music attests to his constant examination of his spiritual and worldly natures. The fact that he then incorporated this secular music form into activities of the sacred clearly demonstrates the exchanges between sacred and secular genres. The music resulting from these exchanges is one that does not clearly fit within any particular genre.

While Primitive Baptists have never objected to the use of musical instruments outside the church, their hymn tradition has largely been a vocal one. This is not to infer that Jack is unique in merging this tradition with musical instruments. Elder Evans, mentioned above, played several hymns on the fiddle for Daniel Patterson in 1982, including “I Feel Like Traveling On,” “Unclouded Day,” and “Amazing Grace” (Evans

7/2/1982). Another Blue Ridge fiddler and Primitive Baptist, Elder Golden Harris, recorded two hymns with instrumental accompaniment, “Dunlap” and “Parting Hand,” for Columbia in 1931 (Sutton 1990). Tommy Jarrell, who was quite familiar with the Primitive Baptist hymn tradition through his mother, a church member, recorded a version of “When Sorrows Encompass Me Round” on fiddle with banjo and guitar accompaniment. However, while there is no additional information on Evans’ versions, both of the latter musicians sing on their recordings, which qualifies the songs as hymns because the text is present. Jack also occasionally sings hymns with musical accompaniment,³⁹ but his instrumental versions are considered here. His versions of hymn tunes played on banjo and fiddle are strictly instrumental, raising several questions. Particularly, in a tradition where tunes are not affixed to hymn texts, do instrumentals function as hymns or as tunes devoid of a sense of worship? How does merging a secular instrumental tradition with the sacred vocal tradition contribute to an understanding of the overall relationship between the two genres?

The Old Baptist hymn tradition in one sense represents a song tradition composed of both sacred and secular elements. The texts, of course, make up the sacred element. The tunes, in and of themselves, take on no spiritual meaning until texts are paired with them. They merely act as musical vehicles for the message of the hymn text. In fact, the largest portion of Primitive Baptist tunes originated in oral tradition, and many have secular parallels (B. Patterson 1995). Therefore a hymn tune lacking a text is no more a part of the sacred realm than any tune typically relegated to secular use.

³⁹See Appendix D, tracks 17 and 18.

Hymn tunes accompanied by a text also remain as secular pieces when Jack does not consider the text to offer a sense of worship.⁴⁰ For example, he states, “Oh, I’d play what they call gospel songs all the time. Sort of copy Bill and Charlie Monroe’s singing. I can’t recall the names of the tunes, but they sung several of what they call bluegrass gospel songs. But as far as having any sense of worship in them, I was just making music” (McGinnis 5/31/2003). While these gospel songs are considered by many to fit within the spiritual realm, Jack categorizes them alongside other secular tunes. In contrast, many of the instrumental hymn tunes that Jack plays function beyond the secular realm to provide “spiritual food.”

Jack’s instrumental versions of hymn tunes represent how the secular is transformed into the sacred and vice-versa. Jack says, “Usually when I play a hymn on the violin, the words are going over in my mind. On the banjo, usually they’re not” (McGinnis 5/31/2003). This statement confirms that the presence of the hymn text is essential and that tunes played on the fiddle function to provide him with a sense of worship while those played on the banjo do not. Listed below are the tunes which Jack plays on each instrument, respectively.

⁴⁰See previous chapter for what criteria qualifies a hymn text for worship purposes.

Fiddle

Amazing Grace
 Cleanse Me
 Funeral Anthem
 Guide Me, O' Thou Great Jehovah*
 Hicks Farewell
 Idumea
 It is Well With My Soul
 Wayfaring Pilgrim
 When Sorrows Encompass Me Round*
 Wondrous Love

Banjo

Promised Land
 Holy Manna
 Foundation
 I Will Arise and Go to Jesus
 When the Roll's Called Up Yonder
 I'll Fly Away
 Sweet By and By

*Tune has no title. Title is the text which Jack associates with the tune

Jack's different repertoires of hymn tunes on the fiddle and banjo highlight the functions of the two instruments. While the above lists of tunes do not represent all those that Jack has recast as instrumentals, they constitute a satisfactory sample for comparison. All but one of the tunes played on the fiddle are those which Jack sings with an accompanying text found in either Goble's *Primitive Baptist Hymn Book* or Cayce's *The Good Old Songs*. "Hick's Farewell" is one that I requested and is the only one he did not sing. In contrast, more than half of banjo tunes were not sung. They are "When the Roll's Called Up Yonder," "I Will Arise and Go to Jesus," and Albert Brumley's "I'll Fly Away" which do not appear in Primitive Baptist hymn publications, and "Sweet By and By," included in the eighth edition of the *Old School Hymnal*. The list nevertheless contains three hymn tunes which Jack sings in a mode of worship, but his inclusion of these other tunes, particularly the modern "I'll Fly Away," suggests that the criteria assessing a hymn's ability to function as a form of worship are not rigorously applied here as is the case with the fiddle repertoire.

Hymn tunes played on the fiddle offer insight into the transfer of spiritual qualities to instrumental music. The change taking place is a shift in mind set. Jack says, "Well, you're in a different attitude when you play a hymn because. . . . And again, it depends on what you call a hymn. Some of those presumptuous hymns, I'd just as soon play the 'Yankee Doodle,' 'Little Brown Jug,' or most anything. But, a hymn with praise or worship or a [deeply] experimental hymn makes quite a difference in your feeling" (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Within the mode of worship, instrumental hymn tunes are subject to the same scrutiny as the hymn texts and tunes sung in the unaccompanied style during a worship service. The notes of the tune become musical representations of the text as Jack sings it over in his mind. Therefore, the instrumental tune represents both the tune itself and the text. Tunes which are typically in the sacred realm when sung to a hymn text or played on the fiddle are largely stripped of the sense of worship when transposed on the banjo. Without the presence of a hymn text, these banjo versions are simply aesthetically pleasing music.

The difference in the function of hymn tunes played on the fiddle and those played on the banjo is more complex than simply the presence of the text in Jack's consciousness while he is playing. The melodic capability of each instrument is a significant factor in translating the hymn text into music. Thomas Carter notes the change in older fiddle tunes as they became paired with the banjo in the second half of the nineteenth century. The banjo was not able to reproduce the level of melodic complexity inherent in these fiddle tunes. Consequently, they were adapted with a simpler melody, remained in the solo fiddling tradition, or dropped from currency (Carter 1990: 63-69). As Jack's instrumental

hymn tunes enter the world of worship and become musical translations of a hymn text, the musical instrument must allow adequate versatility to effectively represent the melodic complexities of the sung versions. Jack notes the versatility of the fiddle, “That hair [of the fiddle bow] gives you a feel more than any other instrument gives you because, I don’t know, you can express yourself with it more so than with the other instruments” (McGinnis 5/31/2003). Conversely, he says of the banjo, “A lot of the trouble with a banjo is it’s not very versatile. It’s very limited” (McGinnis 6/21/2003). The expression of exaltation or praise of God is essential for sung hymns to function as forms of worship and is therefore necessary for instrumentals as well. Jack is able to more accurately reproduce each syllable of a hymn text as musical notes on the fiddle. For example, compare the sung and instrumental versions of “Guide Me, O’ Thou Great Jehovah” (see Appendix B, track 7 and Appendix D, track 9). Jack confirms that the fiddle is better suited to fully rendering a instrumental representation singing when he states, “I love to hear those old hymns played on the violin, or modern ones for that matter. We used to have a group of four ministers [from various denominations]. We all played the violin, and we’d take, played different parts and harmonize on those old minors. Beautiful” (McGinnis 5/31/2003).

Jack’s intent and the function of his music are not all that change with the overlapping of the sacred and secular. Stylistic features of his fiddling conform more to the intricacies of his unaccompanied singing. While he never played in a heavily rhythmic fiddling style, his bowing becomes smoother when playing hymn tunes, obtaining multiple notes per bow stroke and emphasizing slurs by sliding from one note to the next with the

left hand. Adjustments to his technique allow him to more accurately reproduce the smooth and sustained transitions between notes found in Old Baptist singing. Tunes played on the banjo are conversely adapted to the stronger rhythmic capability of the instrument, providing only a skeletal representation of the melody. Jack utilizes his typical clawhammer style without variation in rendering these tunes, and he remarks that many of the hymn tunes he plays on the fiddle are not rhythmically suited for the banjo. In this sense, the fiddle enters the sacred realm of hymn singing, and the banjo remains in the secular world, drawing hymn tunes into a context devoid of worship value where they function mainly as musical enjoyment much like other secular tunes in his repertoire.

The separation of the banjo from spiritual function, however, is not definitive. While the versatility of the fiddle allows for more complete musical reproductions of hymn texts, the banjo can render another sort of translation. Jack reveals how the banjo facilitated his scriptural understanding of a hymn text. "There's a song that I just read a verse in the other day that stayed on my mind. I even got the old banjo down and chorded it out on it several times. For three or four days it just stayed on my mind—'When peace like a river, it is well with my soul' " (McGinnis 7/14/1983). Jack was particularly concerned with one of the hymn's verses, which he previously thought to be presumptuous. Through his meditation he reinterpreted the verse to see it as "such a deep gospel truth." While Jack may not have been playing the hymn in worship, the banjo instrumental setting is connected to the sacred realm as it aided his search for a scriptural understanding of the hymn text.

Typically the inward recitation of a hymn text is a determinant in providing a sense of worship in Jack's hymn tune instrumentals, but he concedes that the tune apart from a hymn text can function in the sacred realm. He says, "But you know there is. . . it says to make a joyful noise on the temple, trumpet and all the different instruments. And I think it is very possible to play the musical instrument in the sense of worship and praising the Lord in it" (McGinnis 5/31/2003). Music can function as praise for God although it may swap the explicit spiritual meanings reflected in hymn texts for the conscious sense of worship in the musician's mind.

Other spiritual functions, while not specifically worship, can be achieved through instrumental music. Jack offers two examples of how the fiddle can serve additional spiritual functions that might have been reserved for hymns. In these two examples the fiddle functions spiritually beyond secular musical enjoyment, but outside the sacred realm of worshipping God. Attesting to the expressive power of the fiddle, Jack states, "After my first wife died, I hadn't picked up the old violin for years. And I picked it up one night, poured my blues out in it and went to sleep and kept it under my bed for I don't know how long after that. If I'd get to feeling real blue, I'd just pour my feelings out in the old violin, put it under the bed, and go to sleep" (McGinnis 5/31/2003). I asked Jack if he remembered what tune he played that night. He said, "No, I don't. Just hearing the music and pouring my feelings out [was important]. Whatever I felt, I just played the music to it." Hymns often provide a sense of support and comfort in times of emotional hardship, but in this case Jack found solace in playing his fiddle. In the second example Jack tells of a visit with a woman at a Wilkes County retirement home where he and others often hold

hymn singings. He directly demonstrates a relationship between the use of hymns and secular music as spiritually soothing in trying times. “There’s a lady that wanted me to bring the fiddle and play some tunes for her the other day. So I went up, and I presumed she would want some hymns. And [I] played her several hymns. She says, ‘I want some fast tunes.’ And she was dying of cancer. But she... That’s what she wanted. Well, that was as much a minister to her as anything. So, I think we just have to go as the occasion directs. Do what we feel is best” (McGinnis 6/21/2003). Again, the spiritual comfort often supplied by hymns is in some cases more effectively achieved with secular music.

Undoubtably, the merging of secular and sacred music traditions is complex. As Jack looks back on his life he makes a connection between sacred and secular music in regard to two very important events in his life, stating,

Odd thing about music, my first wife, I met her. . . Her father was a fiddler, Ned Dillard. Somewhere along there we got together and started playing together over at his house. And that’s how Faye and me started going together. And then, had a chorus out here at the senior citizens center singing hymns, and that’s the way Ora Lee and me met. Faye and me met through instrumental music, and Ora Lee and me met through hymn singing (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Negotiation between the secular and sacred worlds is constant and the outcomes are ever changing. This negotiation within music provides a snapshot of the larger context of Jack’s life. Only through years of experience and spiritual growth has he developed a sense of mediation between his spiritual and human natures. Just like Elder Evans who said, “Well, I found out you could just have clean music without all this other, you see. . .” (Evans 7/2/1982), Jack was able to reconcile the secular music of his early life with his

burgeoning spiritual life. Jack beautifully articulates the appeal of both secular and sacred music with these comments, "Like I say, those [secular] songs are about real events and real people. They have so much more meaning. Just like the hymns. You take the old hymns that were written years ago; they were written from suffering and experience. They were written from the heart" (McGinnis 5/4/2002).

Conclusions

The secular and sacred music traditions which Jack McGinnis actively maintains present a unique opportunity to not only explore and understand these genres in and of themselves, but to reconsider how music functions across the genres conceived by folklorists and other scholars. Jack continues playing music and singing the old hymns from which most other churches, including the Regular Baptist church where he currently holds membership, have turned away. However, Jack does not continue these traditions for the sake of preservation. While he is very aware of the importance of sustaining tradition, his primary reason for doing so is that he views these traditions as continuing to hold relevance and serve important functions in his life.

Jack was exposed to many traditional forms in his early life. The time he spent with his grandfather was especially influential. Though Jack was a young boy, he was involved in the daily operations of his grandfather's small farm, including work in the fields, carding and spinning wool into thread, and marketing of surplus produce in trade centers outside his local community. All of these early experiences instilled in Jack the

importance and functions of tradition. Jack's life experiences also influenced the direction of his musical development and reflect his personal growth.

The majority of Jack's musical early effort was centered around secular music and square dances. While he was raised in a strong Primitive Baptist family, the sacred music tradition accompanying this faith was less prominent until he experienced salvation in his early twenties. Shortly thereafter, Jack completely quit playing secular music and focused on the old hymns he learned as a child in the little Primitive Baptist church house on his grandfather's farm and elsewhere. Jack became an elder among the Primitive Baptists and for twenty years played no instrumental music. In the 1970s he began playing secular instrumental music again. By the early 1980s he combined the instrumental tradition with the sacred vocal tradition, playing old hymn tunes on the fiddle and banjo. This progression in Jack's musical development provides a guide to his spiritual growth from the lost, natural sinful condition of man to a "lively hope" of eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Jack's concepts of his human and spiritual natures were initially polarized, and as a result his views of secular and sacred music were also. For example, both during his early life and at the time his religious life began to blossom subsequent to his experience of salvation, he deemed secular and sacred music forms as incompatible. The link between secular music and the evils associated with the dance environment in which he primarily played was too strong. However, as Jack began to mature spiritually, he reached a level of clarity that revealed to him that any harm associated with instrumental dance music was born of the intent of the musician (or listener), not the instrument or the tune itself. Jack

realized that, as he states, a balance between the spiritual world and the physical world must be attained because he must live in this world. While worldly practices and objects have no spiritual authority or meaning, they are not by default evil or contradictory to a life in Christ. The musical product of Jack's spiritual growth is a form which challenges categorization into either the secular or sacred genre. Rather, boundaries between the secular and sacred are permeable, allowing frequent exchanges.

Jack sets the old hymn tunes as instrumentals with no vocalization of the words, producing a repertoire of tunes which do not clearly function as either forms of worship or simply musical enjoyment. For the most part, these tunes played on the fiddle operate in the sacred realm, offering a sense of worship just as the sung versions do, while tunes played on the banjo are usually devoid of any spiritual meaning. Much of this separation is due to the melodic capabilities of the instruments. Jack is able to more accurately represent the hymn text as notes on the fiddle than is possible with the banjo, and he emphasizes the expressive power of the fiddle. While these are my observations, Jack is also reluctant to effect any rigid divisions. He never pins hymn tunes played on either instrument into the spiritual or worldly realm. "Usually," the fiddle instrumental functions in a mode of worship. However, he also concedes that the banjo and other instruments can enter the sacred realm, making "a joyful noise unto the Lord." Jack's music highlights the complex network of exchanges connecting secular and sacred genres and opens the door to further research in this area.

Jack is not alone in fusing of secular instrumental music with the sacred vocal tradition. Primitive Baptists are known as accomplished musicians, and some, such as

Elder Walt Evans, are known to have situated hymn tunes in instrumental settings. Jack's music presents only one case, and to further this research similar studies need to be conducted to explore the range of ideas musicians have regarding how music functions across genres.

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APPENDIX A

Field Recordings of Jack McGinnis: Secular Music (CD)

TRACK LIST*Banjo*

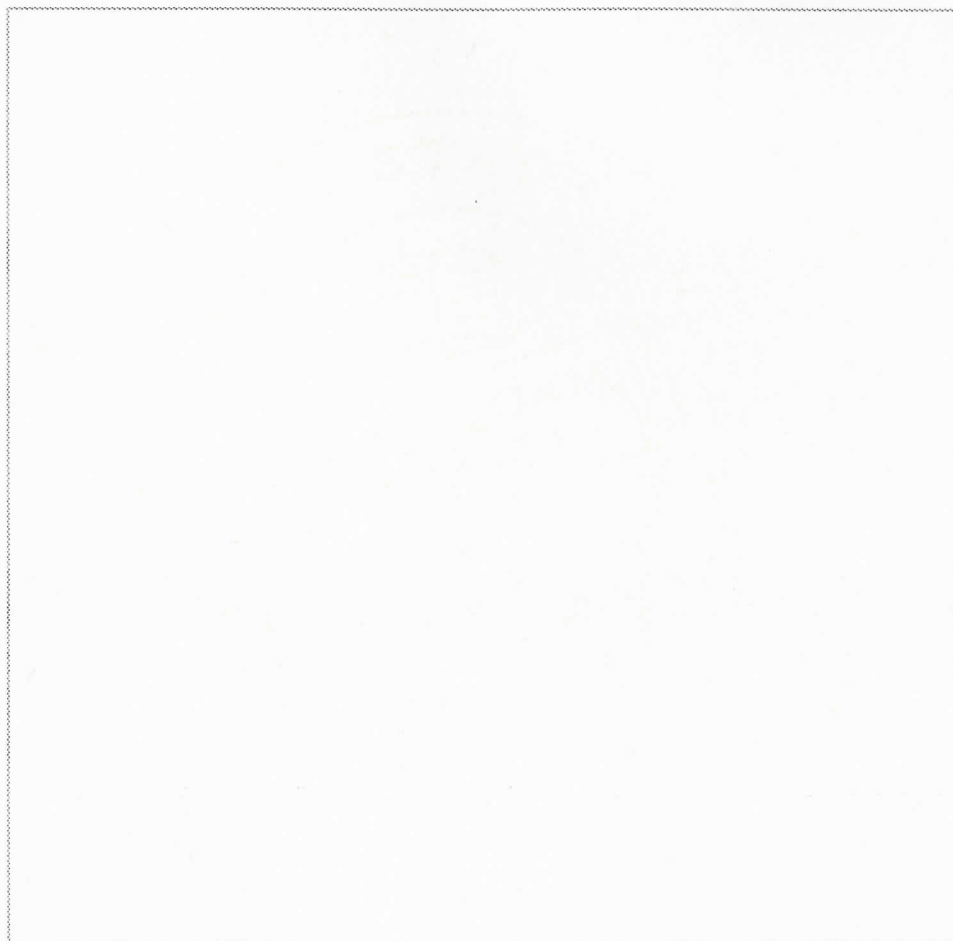
1. Cindy
2. Soldier's Joy
3. Sourwood Mountain
4. Coming Around the Mountain
5. Cripple Creek
6. John Henry
7. Johnson Boys
8. Little Brown Jug (old way)
9. Little Brown Jug (new way)
10. Old Joe Clark
11. Red Wing
12. Red River Valley
13. Sugar Foot Rag
14. Turkey in the Straw
15. Wreck of the Old '97
16. You are My Sunshine
17. Mocking Bird
18. Little Rosewood Casket
19. Chinese Breakdown
20. Lonesome Road Blues
21. Beer Barrel Polka
22. Jimmy Cracked Corn
23. Cripple Creek/Lonesome Road Blues (wooden banjo)

Fiddle

24. Cindy
25. Soldier's Joy
26. Sally Goodin
27. Sourwood Mountain
28. John Henry
29. Down in the Willow Garden
30. Down in the Willow Garden (12 string banjo)

Cowboy Songs

31. Bill Viner's Last Ride
32. When the Work's All Done
33. Dying Cowboy
34. Cowboy Jack

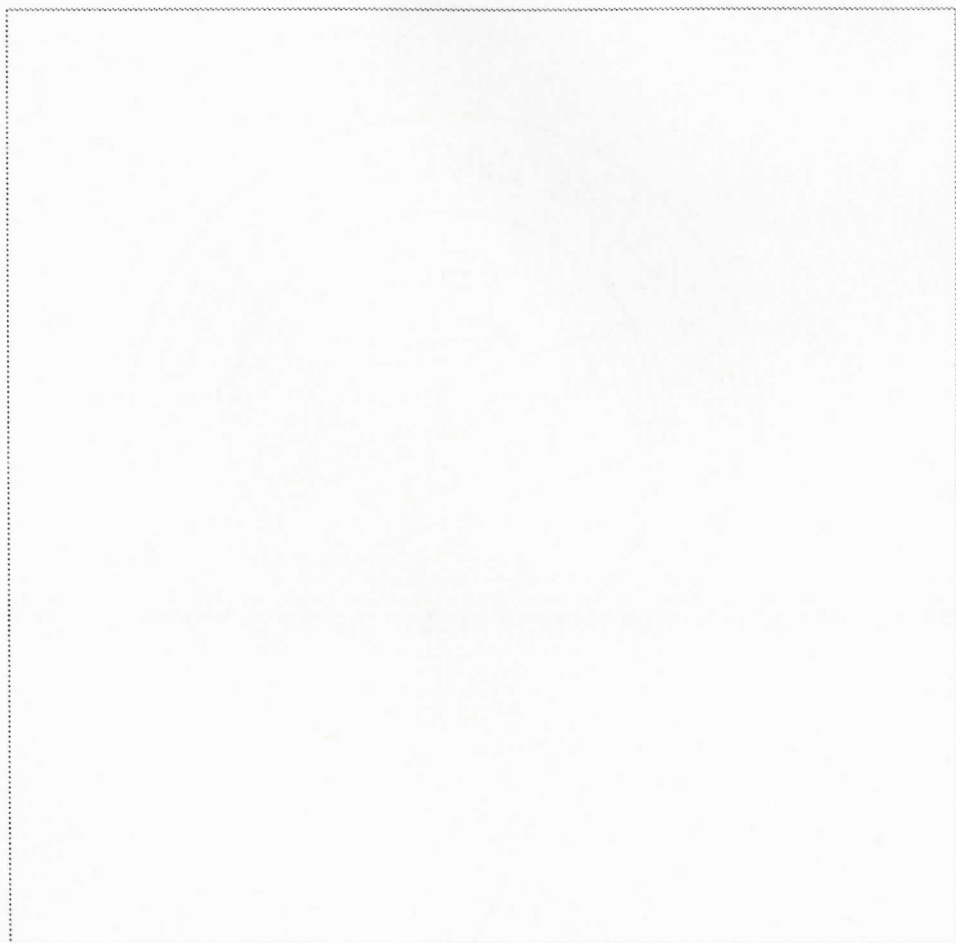


APPENDIX B

Field Recordings of Jack McGinnis: Hymns Disc One (CD)

TRACK LIST

1. There is a house not made with hands
2. O' what an entertaining sight
3. When the day of life is brightest
4. Sweet rivers of redeeming love
5. I love to steal a while away
6. I heard a great voice from heaven saying unto me
7. Guide me, O' thou great Jehovah
8. Dear redeemer keep me free
9. Gentle Shepard gently lead us
10. A child of Jehovah, a subject of grace
11. Why should we start and fear to die
12. Thou dear redeemer dying lamb
13. Did Christ o'er sinners weep
14. How lost was my condition
15. When sorrows encompass me round
16. What wondrous love is this
17. When the storm and it's fury on Galilee fell
18. Amazing grace how sweet the sound

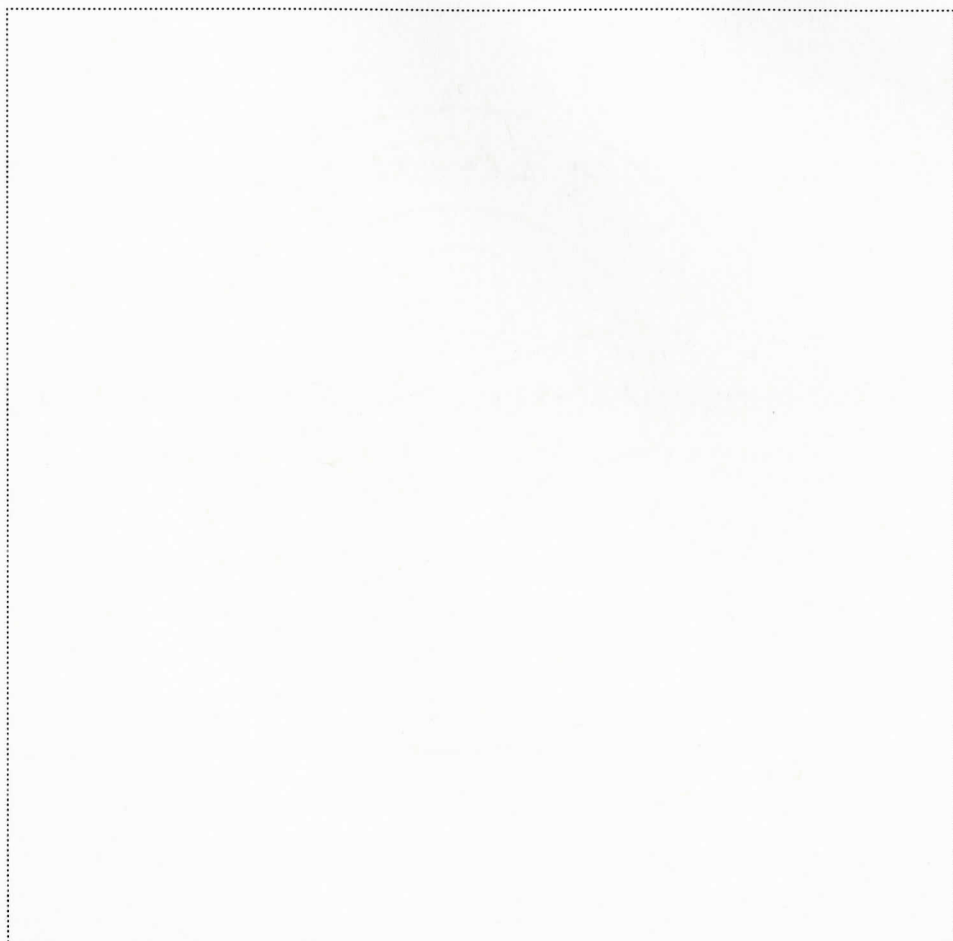


APPENDIX C

Field Recordings of Jack McGinnis: Hymns Disc Two (CD)

TRACK LIST

1. How tedious and tasteless the hour
2. O' could I find some peaceful...
3. O' beautiful hills of Galilee
4. Go preachers tell it the world
5. Hear the royal proclamation
6. A few more days on earth to spend
7. Come thou long expected Jesus
8. On Jordan's stormy banks I stand
9. What a friend we have in Jesus
10. I need thee precious Jesus
11. How sweet to reflect
12. Must Jesus bear the cross alone
13. Love divine, all love excelling
14. Jesus thou art the sinner's friend
15. In seas of confusion
16. A home in heaven what a joyful thought
17. There is a blissful home on high
18. O' sing to me of heaven



APPENDIX D

Field Recordings of Jack McGinnis: Instrumental Hymn Tunes (CD)

TRACK LIST*Banjo*

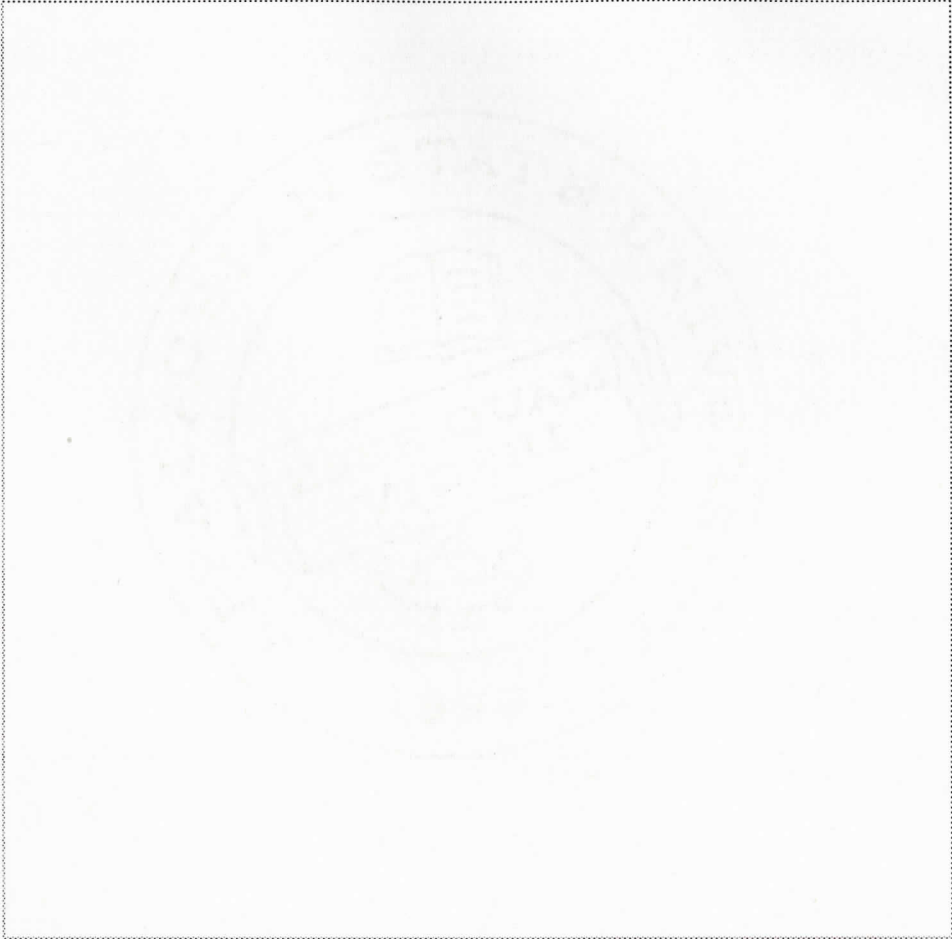
- 19. How Firm a Foundation
- 20. Holy Manna
- 21. Promised Land
- 22. I Will Arise and Go to Jesus
- 23. When the Roll is Called Up Yonder
- 24. Sweet By and By
- 25. I'll Fly Away

Fiddle

- 26. Funeral Anthem
- 27. Guide Me, O' Thou Great Jehovah
- 28. When Sorrows Encompass Me Round
- 29. Wondrous Love
- 30. Wayfaring Stranger
- 31. Idumea
- 32. Hick's Farewell
- 33. Cleanse Me
- 34. It is Well with My Soul

Guitar and Vocals

- 35. Poor Wayfaring Stranger
- 36. Unknown Title



VITA

Eddie L Huffman was born in Hickory, North Carolina, on November 30, 1974. He graduated from highschool in 1993 and began studying at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, where he was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering in May, 1998. After working in the engineering field for three and a half years, Eddie found that his interests lay elsewhere. He was drawn to the field of folklore through family stories and his affinity for the creative expression inherent in non-commercial music. His Master of Arts degree in Appalachian Studies was received from Appalachian State University in August, 2004. Future plans include continuing research in the fields of folklore and religious studies, with an emphasis on music traditions.