

= Good Old Mountain Dew =

" Good Old Mountain Dew " ( ROUD 18669 ) , sometimes called simply " Mountain Dew " or " Real Old Mountain Dew " , is an Appalachian folk song composed by Bascom Lamar Lunsford and Scotty Wiseman . There are two versions of the lyrics , a 1928 version written by Lunsford and a 1935 adaptation by Wiseman . Both versions of the song are about moonshine . The 1935 version has been widely covered and has entered into the folk tradition becoming a standard .

= = Creation = =

Along with being an amateur folklorist and musician , Bascom Lamar Lunsford was a lawyer practicing in rural North Carolina during the 1920s . At the time , the manufacturing of alcohol was illegal in the United States due to prohibition , but North Carolina residents nevertheless continued their longstanding tradition of making a form of illegal whiskey called moonshine . Lunsford frequently defended local clients that were accused of the practice , and the original lyrics and banjo accompaniment to " Good Old Mountain Dew " were written during the course of one of these cases . In 1928 , Lunsford recorded the song for Brunswick Records .

Scotty Wiseman , of the duo Lulu Belle and Scotty , was a friend of Lunsford 's . When Lulu Belle and Scotty needed one more song to finish a 1935 record for Vocalion Records , Wiseman suggested using the song his friend had written . To make the piece appeal to more people , Wiseman added the modern chorus and replaced verses about a man appearing in court with verses about making moonshine . Two years later , at the National Folk Festival in Chicago , Wiseman showed his version to Lunsford . Lunsford was impressed with it ; later the same night , he sold the song to Wiseman for \$ 25 ( \$ 339 in 2013 ) so he could buy a train ticket back to North Carolina . Wiseman copyrighted the song and made sure that 50 % of the royalties it earned were given to Lunsford until Lunsford 's death .

= = Lyrics and themes = =

The 1928 version of " Good Old Mountain Dew " is close to the style of a ballad . The lyrics tell the story of a man 's first day in court to answer charges of making illegal alcohol . In the first verse , the prosecutor closes his case . In the next three verses , several respected members of the community ? the deacon , the doctor , and the conductor ? visit the charged man , trying to buy his whiskey . In the final verse , the judge offers the young man clemency if he is willing to pay court costs for the trial .

The 1935 lyrics are not ballad @-@ like and do not tell a story . This version tells of an " old hollow tree " that is used as a dead drop . A person who is looking to buy moonshine places money in the tree and leaves . When that person returns , there is a jug where the money was . The song goes on to extoll the drink and tell of its great properties .

= = Relationship with " The Rare Old Mountain Dew " = =

There is some controversy over the possible connection between " Good Old Mountain Dew " and the Irish folk song " The Rare Old Mountain Dew " , which dates to 1916 or earlier ( at least a decade before " Good Old Mountain Dew " was written ) . The terms " mountain dew " and " moonshine " are thought to have come to the United States from Ireland . Lunsford wrote several parodies and adaptations of other Irish folk songs ; based on this , some folklorists claim that the song " Good Old Mountain Dew " was based on " The Rare Old Mountain Dew " . Other folklorists disagree , pointing out that the only commonality the songs share is the use of the phrase " mountain dew " .

= = Recordings and adaption = =

Since 1935 , " Good Old Mountain Dew " has been rerecorded and covered by a wide variety of folk , old time , and country musicians including Grandpa Jones and Willie Nelson . Nelson 's cover reached number twenty @-@ three on Billboard 's Hot Country Songs and stayed there for six weeks . Over time , artists have added new verses , but the tune has remained the same since it was first written in the 1920s . The gospel song " Traveling the Highway Home " is based on " Good Old Mountain Dew " and uses the same tune but has lyrics about moving closer to eternal life after death instead of about moonshine .

After PepsiCo bought the soft drink Mountain Dew in 1964 , they commissioned a set of advertisements featuring a " Good Old Mountain Dew " -based jingle and the drink 's mascot : a barefooted back @-@ country man called " Willie the Hillbilly " .