


Shenandoah

Source:
Alan Lomax
Folk Songs of North America
Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1960

$\text{♩} = 72$




O Shen - an - doah, _____ I love your daugh - ter,

Refrain:




A - way _____ you roll - ing riv - er,



For her I've crossed the roll - ing wa - ter,

Refrain:



A - way _____ we're bound a- way, _____ A - cross the wide _____ Mis - sou - ri. _____

2. The trader loved this Indian maiden,
Away, you rolling river,
Away we're bound away,
Across the wide Missouri.

3. O Shenandoah, I'm bound to leave you,
Away, you rolling river,
O Shenandoah, I'll not deceive you.
Across the wide Missouri.

4. O Shenandoah, I long to hear you,
Away, you rolling river.
O Shenandoah, I long to hear you.
Across the wide Missouri.

Background Information

The primitive work chant, which some historians of music believe was the primordial ancestor of all song, comes to life wherever men have to do hard labour with nothing but their bare hands and their co-operative spirit to help them. Francisco Fabri, a fifteenth-century Venetian Friar, was the first person to write about chanteying... 'There are others who sing when work is going on, because work at sea is very heavy, and is only carried on by a concert between one who sings out orders and the laborers who sing in response...' Chanteying was again described in the sixteenth-century poem 'Complaynt of Scotland'; and there is evidence that two chanteys, popular in the nineteenth century (*Bowline* and *Amsterdam Maid*), livened up the work on Queen Elizabeth's carracks. Yet chanteying almost certainly antedates the Renaissance; the work songs of the Sicilian tuna fishers are said to go back to pre-Christian times...

Background Information contd.

I think it should be a matter of some pride to Americans that we have contributed to such an ancient and honourable practice. *Sally Brown*, *A Long Time Ago*, *Santy Anno*, *Let the Bullgine Run*, *Away Rio*, and other fine chanteys either originated among American seamen or assumed their present shape on board American ships. *Shenandoah*, the most beautiful of all sea songs in English, probably began as a voyageur song on the rivers west of the Mississippi, taking its title from the Indians for whom the great valley of Virginia was named. It became, somehow, a capstan chantey and then a favourite song of the regular cavalry who sometimes fought the Indians out west, but also fell in love with and married Indian women.