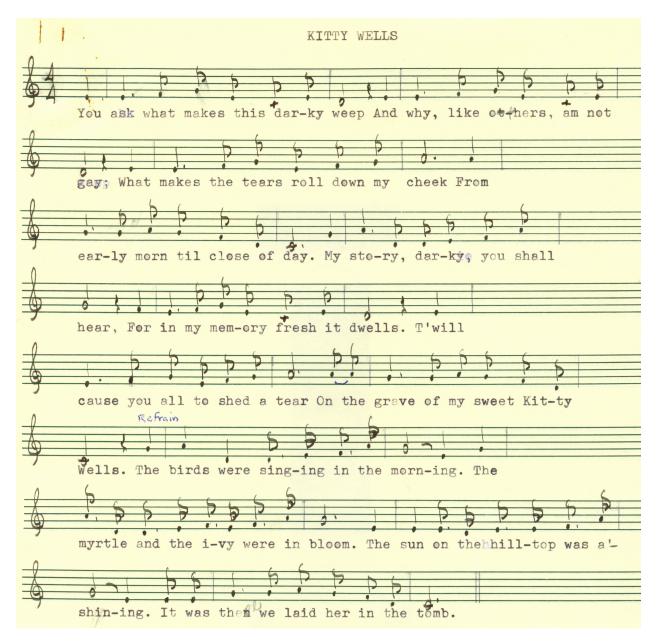
Kitty Wells

As sung by Lester Coffee 08-20-1946 Harvard, IL



Verse 1.

You ask what makes this darky weep And why, like others, am not gay, What makes the tears roll down my cheek From early morn til close of day. My story, darky, you shall hear, For in my memory fresh it dwells. 'Twill cause you all to shed a tear On the grave of my sweet Kitty Wells.

Refrain.

The birds were singing in the morning. The myrtle and the ivy were in bloom. The sun on the hill-top was a-shining. It was there we laid her in the tomb.

Verse 2.	Verse 3.
I never shall forget the day	I often wish that I were dead
When we together roamed the dells.	And laid beside her in the tomb.
I kissed her cheek and named the day	The sorrow that bows down my head
That I should marry Kitty Wells.	Is deeper than the midnight doom.
But darth came to my cabin door	Springtime has no charm for me
And took from me my joy and pride,	Though flowers are blooming in the dells,
And when I found she was no more	For that bright form I cannot see
I laid my banjo down and cried,	Is the form of my sweet Kitty Wells.

Transcription and lyrics from the Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection.

Critical Commentary

Transcription by Peters, p. 125, and HST.

HST notes:

In the Professional Papers series: *Lester A. Coffee. Very old song.*

Editor's notes:

This song was a popular minstrel song, whose authorship has been credited variously to Charles E. Atherton in 1858, T. Brigham Bishop in 1861 (billed as "the only correct and authorized edition"), and Thomas Sloan Jr. in 1860 (McNeil 167).

Sources:

- Garson, Eugenia comp. and ed. *The Laura Ingalls Wilder Songbook*. Arranged by Herbert Haufrecht. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
- McNeil, W.K., ed. *Southern Folk Ballads*, vol. 2. The American Folklore Series, ed. W.K. McNeil. Little Rock: August House Publishers, 1987.
- Morris, Alton C., ed. *Folksongs of Florida*. Transcriptions by Leonhard Deutsch. Gainseville: University of Florida Press, 1950. text only, very similar.
- Peters, Harry B., ed. Folk Songs out of Wisconsin: An Illustrated Compendium of Words and Music. Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977.

K.G.