

Ella Rae

As sung by
Mrs. Leslie Burton
08-23-1946 Lancaster, WI

8431 Ella Rae 370A

Oh Ella dear so kind and true to the little church-yard
lies. Bright drops of dew up-on her grave, and
bright-er were her eyes. Then carry me back to
old Tennessee There let me live and die a-
mong the fields of yellow corn in the land where Ella
lies.

2 Her mild blue eyes and gentle form
Methinks I yet can see
white

Verse 1.

Oh Ella dear, so kind and true
In the little church yard lies.
Bright drops of dew upon her grave,
And brighter were her eyes.
Then carry me back to old Tennessee
There let me live and die
Among the fields of yellow corn
In the land where Ella lies.

Verse 2.

Her mild blue eyes and gentle form
Methinks I yet can see
White ---

Verse 3.

While the possum and the coon may softly tread
Around the grave of Ella Rea.
The sun and moon may softly wend
And the night bird trill her lay
I live the spot where she was born
Way down in Tennessee.

Transcription and lyrics from the Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection.

Critical Commentary

Transcription by Peters, p. 119.

Editor's notes:

Song collector Vance Randolph offers this background: the song was “credited to Sep. Winner in several old songbooks, and was copyrighted by Sep. Winner in 1865.” This was probably Septimus Winner, who wrote at least one other song (“Listen to the Mockingbird”) under the pseudonym Alice Hawthorn (Randolph 388).

Alternate titles/related songs: “Ellie Rhee,” “Ella Ree,” “Ella Rhee.”

Sources:

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.

Randolph, Vance, collector and editor. *Ozark Folksongs*. Vol. IV. Columbia, Mo.: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1946-50. “Ella Rhee,” text only – chorus same.

Scottish Students' Song Book. Bayley and Ferguson. n.d. “Ellie Rhee” text rather different, tune and chorus nearly identical.

Wier, Albert E. *The Book of a Thousand Songs: The World's Largest Collection of the Songs of the People, Containing More than a Thousand Old and New Favorites*. New York: Mumil Publishing Co.: 1918. “Ellie Rhee.”

Wier, Albert E. *Songs of the Sunny South: Containing More Than Two Hundred Songs Redolent of Plantation and Minstrel Days, Including Plantation and Minstrel Ditties, Negro Spirituals, Stephen Foster's Ballads and Songs, Arranged for Singing and Playing*. New York: Appleton and Co., 1929. “Ella Ree,” text very similar, tune rather different.

K.G.