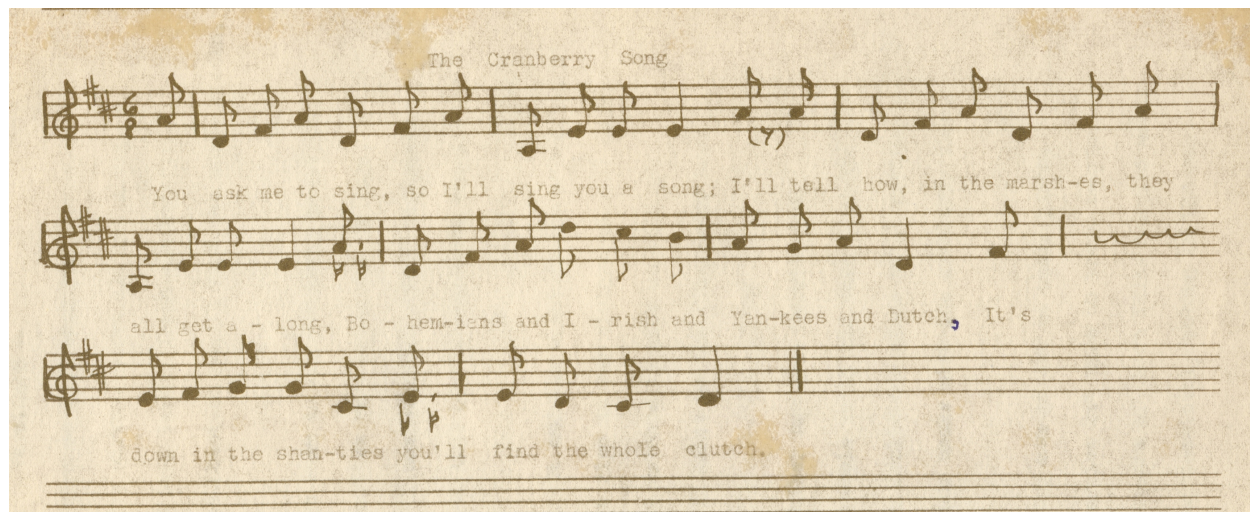


Cranberry Song

As sung by
Frances Perry
08-14-1946 Black River Falls, WI



Verse 1.

You ask me to sing, so I'll sing you a song;
I'll tell how, in the marshes, they all get along,
Bohemians and Irish and Yankees and Dutch,
It's down in the shanties you'll find the whole
clutch.

Verse 2.

Did you ever go to the cranberry bogs?
Some of the houses are hewed out of logs.
The walls are of boards, they are sawed out of
pine,
That grow in this county, called Cranberry
Mine.

Verse 3.

It's now then to Mather their tickets they'll
buy,
And to all their people they'll bid them
goodbye.
For fun and for frolic, their plans they'll resign,
For three or four weeks in the cranberry clime.

Verse 4.

The hay is all cut and the wheat is all stacked;
Cranberries all ripe, so their clothes they will
pack,
And away to the marshes to rake they will go,
And dance to the music of the fiddle and bow.

Verse 5.

All day in the marshes their rakes they will
pull,
And feel the most gayest when boxes are full.
In the evening they'll dance till they're all tired
out,
And wish the cranberries would never play out.

Transcription and lyrics from the Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection.

Critical Commentary

Transcription by Peters, p. 45, and HST.

HST notes:

In the Professional Papers series:

Cranberries are an important crop of Jackson County. Mrs. Perry attributed The Cranberry Song to Barney Reynolds, and explained, "At each marsh every year, new verses are composed about the workers present at that season. Romances, accidents, humorous incidents are incorporated so that each year the song changes. I have sung, I believe, the Barney Reynold's original song. I think you could place The Cranberry Song at about fifty years ago."

Version A sung by Mrs. Frances Perry, Black River Falls, 1946.

Version B sung by A.P. Jones, age 79, Black River Falls, 1946.

Later verses

*The Bohemians drink soup will they nearly do bust
The Irish eat taters till they can't no more trust
The Yankees eat dainties and never grow stout,
But the Dutch they will eat of the best sauer-kraut*

*One evening a young maiden was selling some pies
Two boys a-suffling soon caught her eyes
To start off with her pies, they all did propose
So they stole one of them from under her nose*

*When she looked down, she sure was surprised
To find that someone had stole all her pies.
She struck on the counter with a terrible thounce
And said if she found them they'd get a grand bounce.*

*Hundreds of maidens in those parts do roam,
To catch some young fellow they leave their dear home;
Their hair they will curl, tie ribbons, you know
And all sorts of tie-ups (?) for catching a beau.*

*Hundreds of young men do go to these parts,
Some to rake cranberries, more to break hearts.
Young maidens beware of these false-hearted men,
For they're more deceitful than the father of sin.*

*Once down by the shanties I chanced for to go;
It was there that I saw a girl kissing by beau,
The mouth that girl carries is a shame and disgrace,
But it corresponds well with the nose on her face.*

On

*When whiskey is plenty, and candles to throw
And dancing costs nothing, the young men like to go.
On Sunday they dress in their best apparel
And go out riding with some other girl.*

*A plug of tobacco and a five-cent cigar,
A dime in his pocket will shine like a star;
He'll kiss and he'll coo all the girls that he can
For he is a gay, bold, undaunted Wisconsin man.*

[Handwritten note, attributed to Frances Perry]: *This is a later addition, as I remember the song. The tune is one I have never found in any collections. It is evidently of Irish derivation, don't you think? Decidedly like the old jigs, I think.*

Composed by Barney Reynolds at Mather (heart of cranberry country)

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.

K.G.