

Flat River Girl

As sung by
Dan Grant
08-30-1940 Bryant, WI

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Flat River Girl'. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'I'm a heart-brok-en rafts-man from Grans-ville I came. All'. The second staff continues: 'joys are de+part-ed, all vir-tues the same.. Since the'. The third staff continues: 'clear @kies of Cu-pid have caused me my grief, My'. The fourth staff concludes: 'Heart's well neigh bro-ken, I can ne'er find re-lief.'

Verse 1.

I'm a heart-broken raftsmen from Gransville I
came.
All joys are departed, all virtues the same.
Since the clear skies of Cupid have caused me
my grief,
My heart's well-neigh broken, I can ne'er find
relief.

Verse 2.

My occupation, I'm a raftsmen where the Flat
River flows.
I've printed my name on both rocks and the
shore.
In shops, farms and households I'm very well
known,
They call me Jack Haggarty, the pride of my
town.

Verse 3.

My story I'll tell you without much delay.
A neat little lassie my heart stole away.
She was a miller's daughter, close by riverside,
And I always intended to make her my bride.

Verse 4.

Her form, like a lily, was slender and neat.
Her hair hung in ringlets to her tiny white feet.
Her voice was as sweet as the wind on a leaf.
Her skin like the breast of the white smiling sea.

Verse 5.

I took her to supper, to parties and balls.
Sunday morning went riding from the first time I
call.
I called her my "darling," what a gem for a wife.
When I think of her treachery, I could forfeit my
life.

Verse 6.

I dressed her in the finest of muslins and lace
And the finest of jewels that I could encase.
I gave her my wages, the same to keep safe.
I begrudged her of nothing I had on the place.

Verse 7.

I worked on the river and saved a lot of stake.
I was steadfast and steady and ne'er played the
rake.
I was buoyant and smiling on the stiff boiling
stream
Her face was before me, it haunted my dream.

Verse 8.

One day on the river a note I received,
She said from her promise herself she released.
She'd wedded a lover she long since delayed
And the next time I'd see her she'd not be a
maid.

Verse 9.

Now getting this note sure caused some surprise.
When I think of her now it brings tears to my
eyes.
For it filled me with anger and made me half
mad,
I'm weary with heartsick and wish myself dead.

Verse 10.

But it were on her mother I lay the blame,
She'd wrecked both our lives and blackened my
name.
She'd thrown off the rigging that God would
soon tie
And made me a loner 'til the day that I die.

Verse 11.

On the banks of Flat River I no more can rest
So I told them my feeling and pulled for the
west.
I will go to Muskegon, a new job to find.
I'm leaving Flat River and a false love behind.

Verse 12.

Come all jolly raftsmen, so brave and so true,
Don't love a young girl, you'll be beat if you do.
When you see a sweet lassie with bright golden
hair
Then remember Jack Haggarty and his Flat River
Girl.

Transcription and lyrics from the Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection.

Critical Commentary

Transcription by Peters, p. 140.

Editor's notes:

Linscott writes of her informant: "True to the traditions of the song, the singer himself did not know Haggerty but insisted that he knew some one who did. ... The singer knew that Haggerty's name is chiseled on a rock along the Flat River;" which "is near Greenville, Maine, at the foot of Moosehead Lake" (Linscott 214). Linscott suggests that the line "I'll go back to West Hegan/Some pleasures to find" in her version "may be a corruption of Miss Hegan's, which was a famous rendezvous in Bangor for the blow-in of the lumberjack" (Linscott 214). In Mr. Grant's version, those lines are "I will go to Muskegon, a new job to find;" Muskegon is a town in Michigan.

Alternate titles/related songs: "Jack Haggerty."

Sources:

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- Rickaby, Franz, collector and editor. *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-boy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926. "The Flat River Girl" (or "Jack Haggerty").

K.G.