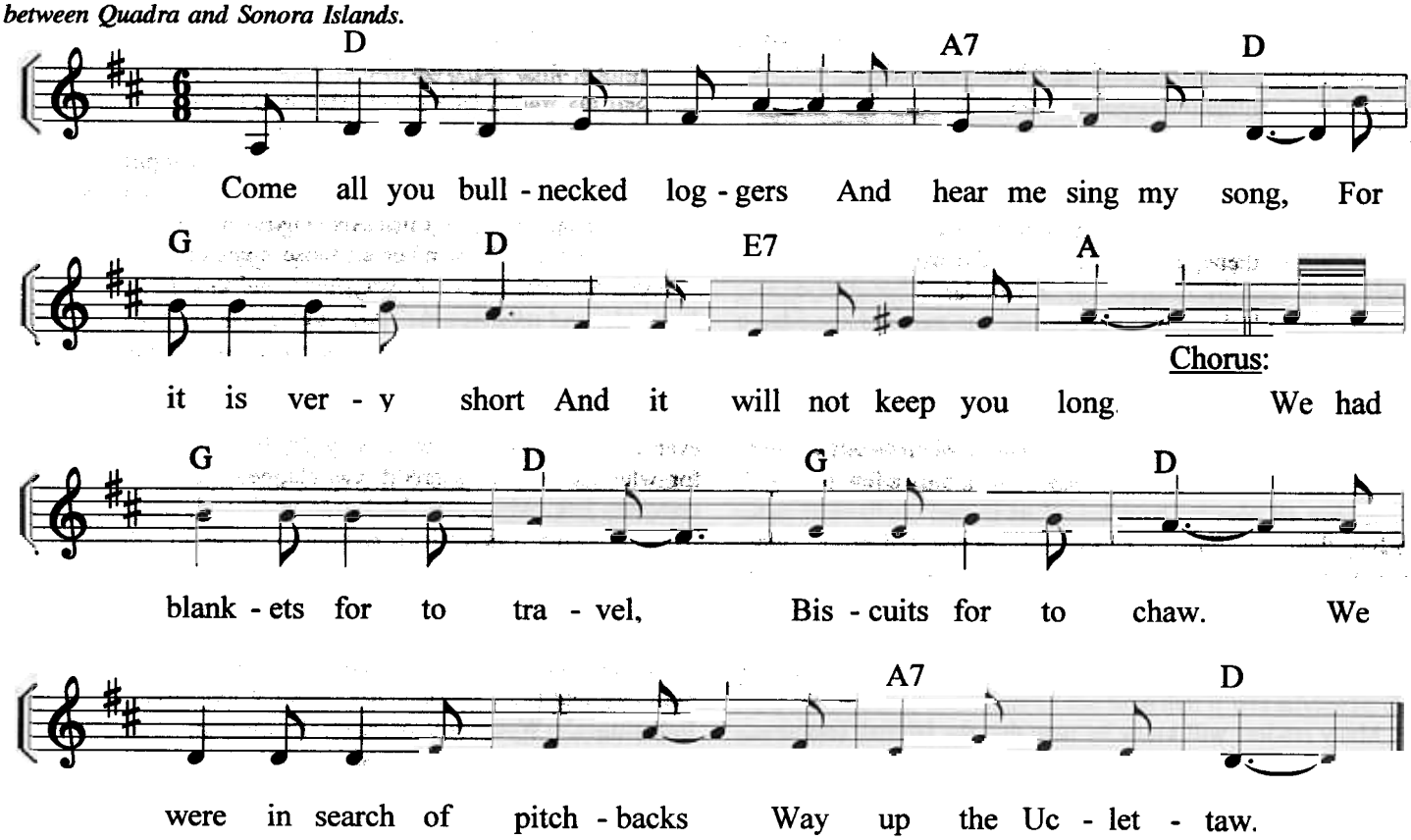
Way Up The Ucletaw

collected by Philip J. Thomas

Phil Thomas collected this from Ed Dalby, at Campbell River, BC, in 1959. He added the first verse himself to what was a very short song and published it in his ***Songs of the Pacific Northwest****, Saanichton, BC: Hancock House, 1979. In that book, he explains that "Ucletaw" is a phonetic spelling of a Native word which describes a place usually found on maps by the name "Yuculta Rapids," a portion of the Seymour Narrows between Quadra and Sonora Islands.*

Interviewed for ***Bulletin*** *32.2, Thomas commented that he no longer sings "Chinee cook," a diminutive which is, of course, racist. "I sing 'We had a greenhorn cook.' Because the reason he run the hotcakes raw was that he did not know how to cook, and all kinds of people have done that. Some people can't boil an egg." In this fascinating self-portrait, Phils also explains the meaning of the term "pitchbacks."*



Come all you bullnecked loggers
And hear me sing my song,
For it is very short
And it will not keep you long.

Chorus
We had blankets for to travel,
Biscuits for to chaw.
We were in search of pitchbacks
Way up the Ucletaw.

We're leaving Vancouver
With sorrow, grief and woe,
Heading up the country
A hundred miles or so.

We hired fourteen loggers,
And we hired a man to saw.
We had a Chinee cook,
And he run the hotcakes raw.

Jon Bartlett sings
while Murray Shoolbraid twinkles in response
CSTM AGM, Shawnigan Lake, BC, 1997
photo by David Randall Querido