

# CHILDREN'S PARODIES CURRENT IN THE EDMONTON AREA



Photo: Henk Piket

The practising folksinger knows in theory about the rich folklore of childhood, if only from memory. His own children will still surprise him. This little bunch of wild parodies was collected from our own children, Jane (JMS), and Penny (PAS), and a friend, Alice Nash (AN), between May and July 1977. At that time their ages were 8, 5 and 6. Our children at that time attended school in Spruce Grove, a dormitory town outside Edmonton, and Alice a school in south Edmonton. All were born and brought up in the area. All the songs seemed to be known to each of the children, suggesting a wide currency. In one instance (Jingle Bells) two verses had been learned from a friend in Saskatoon.

All are parodies of well known songs, of different vintages. Originals include folk songs (Smoky), traditional hymns (Glory), modern child-oriented popular songs (Rudolph), and traditional fragments associated with familiar ceremonies (Birthday), as well as other sources (one from Wagner, ultimately!). None of the songs is (we hasten to add) in our repertoire, and as far as we are aware the children have learned them in the traditional way, from friends.

As far as readily available reference materials go, these have not been included, at least in this form, in the major Canadian collections of children's songs. None is apparently used in games, though a number of skipping chants have been collected too. Not collected, but in the children's repertoire, are some more familiar songs which they may well have learned from us.

**GLORY, GLORY** (tune "John Brown's Body")

**Glory, glory Hallelujah,  
My teacher hit me with a ruler,  
I met her at the door  
With a loaded .44,  
And she ain't gonna teach no more.**

**Mine eyes have seen the glory of the burning of the school,  
We have killed off all the teachers and we've broken every rule,  
We're going to hang the principal tomorrow after school,  
And we ain't gonna school no more.**

(JMS, PAS & AN 22.5.77; A different version is in Fowke, *Sally Go Round the Sun*, p. 146).

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** (tune "Happy Birthday To You")

**Happy Birthday to you,  
You live in a shoe, (zoo?)  
You look like a tiger,  
And act like one too.**

(PAS 1.7.77. Another version, from all three children on 22.5.77 has 'monkey' in the third line, and 'smell' in the last).

**HERE COMES THE BRIDE** (tune "Wedding March" from Wagner's *Lohengrin*)

<b>Here comes the bride, All fat and wide, Stepped on a turtle, Down came her girdle.</b>	<b>Here comes the bride, All fat and wide, Here comes the groom, Although there's barely room.</b>
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(JMS. Andy knows a different version of this from England).

**JINGLE BELLS** (tune "Jingle Bells")

<b>Jingle bells, Batman smells, Robin laid an egg, Batmobile lost a wheel, And Robin had to pay.</b>	<b>Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Santa Claus is dead, G.I. Joe and Mighty Mo, Stabbed him with a knife.</b>
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**Barbie Doll, Barbie Doll,  
Cried with all her might,  
But G.I. Joe and Mighty Mo  
Stabbed her with a knife.**

(JMS & PAS & AN, 22.5.77. Jane learned last two verses from Nicola Sarjeant, Saskatoon).



Photo: Henk Pikel

**ON TOP OF OLD SMOKY** (tune “On Top of Old Smoky,” American traditional).

**On top of Old Smoky, all covered with sand,  
I shot my poor teacher with a red rubber band.**

**I shot her with pleasure, I shot her with pride,  
I couldn’t have missed her, she was forty feet wide.**

**I went to her funeral, I went to her grave,  
Instead of flowers I threw a grenade.**

**The grenade exploded with a crash and a boom,  
And then my poor teacher landed on the moon.**

(JMS, PAS & AN, 22.5.77)

**ROW, ROW** (tune “Row, Row,” traditional round).

**Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream,  
Throw your teacher overboard, and listen to her scream.**

(JMS, PAS, & AN, 22.5.77. The original is in Fowke’s *Ring Around the Moon*, but there is no mention of the parody).

**RUDOLPH THE RED-GUNNED COWBOY** (tune “Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer”).

**Rudolph, the red-gunned cowboy, had a very shiny gun,  
And if you ever saw it, you would really want to run.  
All of the other cowboys used to laugh and call him names.  
They never let poor Rudolph join in any cowboy games.**

**Then one foggy summer night, the Sheriff came to say,  
“Rudolph with your gun so bright, won’t you lead the parade tonight?”  
Then all the other cowboys shouted out with glee,**

**“Rudolph the red-gunned cowboy, you’ll go down in history!”**

(JMS, PAS & AN, 22.5.77. A similar, but distinct version, in *Ring Around the Moon*, was collected in Ontario. It is further changed from the original than this one, and the central character has become ‘Maverick’).

## **CANADIAN CHILDREN'S FOLK SONGS: REFERENCES**

These publications are the principal collections of Canadian children's folk songs. They refer to much of the other literature in this interesting area. See also *Come All Ye* 3(11) and 4(9), for special children's issues.

Cass-Beggs, B. (1975) *Canadian Folk Songs for the Young*. J.J. Douglas Ltd., Vancouver. 49 pp.

Fowke, E. (1969) *Sally Go Round the Sun*. McClelland & Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 160 pp.

Fowke, E. (1977) *Ring Around the Moon*. McClelland & Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 160 pp.

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