Adirondacks Had Its Own Folk Songs;  
"Cold River Line" Recalls Loggers Who  
Kept Timber Moving a Half-Century Ago

In these days when admonitory  
tenders in sheelpad haircuts are  
belting out "folk songs" on every  
other TV program, it might interes-
t our readers to know that the  
Adirondack old timers turned out  
a few such numbers in their day.  
An excellent example has been  
turned over to us by Leslie Rest  
of Newcomb, whose interest in  
Adirondack history has made him  
something of an authority on the  
subject. His memories were stirred  
by reading "Lumberjack Sty P'  
lop" by Rev. Frank Reid, who he  
recalled visiting the CCC camp at  
Blue Mountain Lake in early 1939.  
to take movies of camp life and  
work, and returning later to show  
those pictures, and other scenes  
of the Hudson River pulp drive.  
A few old timers in the Tupper  
area may recognize the names of  
old friends among the many which  
were worked into the song, "The  
Cold River Line", which was writ-
ten in March of 1932 by the late  
Albert F. "Alloy" Tripp of New-
comb. Mr. Rest writes that he  
received information on the song  
from Mrs. Marjorie L. Foster of  
Keesee Valley; John Curry, Baw-
mac Lake; Byron Andrews of Ganey  
Club, Raquette Chain Lakes; Mrs.

Leon E. Bruley and Charles Thomp-  
ton of Newcomb, and the North  
Creek News-Enterprise. Of the  
men mentioned in the song he  
writes "I have information on the  
full names of some, and will hap-

t a guess at some of the others.  
"Pudgeon" was Jutice Pidgeon;  
"Clayton" was probably Charles  
Cross, and "Dick", "Dude" or  
Dủy; Colby was Frank Colby;  
"Stanley" may have been Jess  
Stanley, and "Poppie" was A. F.  
Tripp, the author of the song, who  
died in the fall of 1966. "Louie"  
is probably Louis White, and  
"Paddy", Paddy Hefferson, "Ed",  
the foreman", may have been Ed  
Wakely, but I'm not sure of this,  
as I understand Mr. Wakely had  
two camps at Cold River that  
winter of 1932. I remember "Big  
Mike", who is interred in the  
Minerva Baptist Cemetery... After  
his death, a collection was taken  
up among his many friends for  
the purchase of a bndestone for  
his grave... I recall leaving the  
old linesmen tell of Paddy Hefferson,  
who is also mentioned in the song,  
I have been informed that Pete  
Boudreau is still living at Long  
Lake. There are probably those  
who know other verses of this  
song, and others who know the  
persons mentioned in it"...

At the time the poem was writ-
ted, Tupper Lake was very much  
involved in the Cold River coun-
try, where the Santa Clara Lumber  
Co. conducted extensive log-
ning operations for years. If any  
of the names in the song ring a  
bell, you'll like to hear from them.  
"Alloy" Tripp followed an old  
formula in writing "The Cold  
River Line", working in the names  
of every man on the job, a sure-  
fire recipe for holding his audience  
when it was sung... Logging  
methods have changed "considerable"  
since 1932, but before the  
truck and tractor era, when horse-  
drawn sleds, piled high with logs,  
moved the timber out of the woods  
or hauled it to landings where it  
was moved to await the ice break-
up and the spring river drive...  

Much of Tripp's song dealt with  
the tamers, and the "whistle-
punkts" and "road monkeys" who  
left the sled roads in shape  
through the winter hauling peri-
od... Stewart Holcomb, in  
"Yankas Logger", recalled their  
work in a brief passage: "All  
night long a lonely man sat on  
a sprueled sled and drove over  
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(Continued from Page 2) the road, spraying water to freeze the moment it hit the sled track. Come daylight and here was a sheer highway, as smooth as glass, and glittering, over which a team could move a mountain of pine or spruce. On the hills the road was kept bare, and on it was thrown hay or dirt, to act as a brake on the runners. On steep hills a snubmer, one version of which was called a "Brattigan brake, was used." Occasionally a load got away and spilled logs all over the landscape, tying up operations for awhile,—an incident referred to in some of Tripp's verses. The song follows:

THE COLD RIVER LINE

Come all yourself down, come listen for a time.
We'll review our "vacation" on the Cold River Line.
We'll talk of our skidways, of spruce and of pine.
We'll talk about the old times, on the Cold River Line.

There are Charlie Strawbridge, who keeps our times.
A mighty fine fellow when in his right mind.
He's worked hard all winter, and now he'll decline
To work any longer on the Cold River Line.

And there is our blacksmith, his name is Pugson.
He pounds around all day like an old steam engine.
He pounds out the horseshoes, and all sorts of things.
When he goes out to Nevencoumb they'll pick out his wings.
Now if you are hungry and cold you won't stay.

More is a man we introduce, and we'll call him Clint Paye.
He's a man you know well, and a man you'll esteem.
He drove the old Chicoes, that lazy, old team.

There is Pete Boureux, he's a man you all know.
Not afraid of cold weather nor a foot of new snow.
He's happy go lucky and gets along fine.
All along the Cold River Line.

There is another, from Desgoux he came.
If you will listen for a moment, I will tell you his name.
He's a teamster by trade, and drives a bay team.
The boys call him the bold Hyland Stevens.

There is young Clayton, he looks very cross.
Get up in the morning, you'd think he was lost.
Goes over the mountain as slick as you please.
And he travels just ahead of young Hyland Stevens.

There is another; he feels like a pick.
He's always behind, and thinks himself slick.
He broke over a hill, and laid on the switch.
He wound his bobbin in a fourteen-foot ditch.

There's a lot more men, and some I don't know.
Duck says he'll draw logs; if they give him some snow.
He drives a gray team, and he makes them climb.
They'll have to draw logs on the Cold River Line.

Another good teamster is young Johnson Carroll.
In descending a hill, where the road was quite narrow.
He landed his logs all there in jig time.
And boosted all the teams on the Cold River Line.

Now Teddy's the boy, that has got them all stopped.
He's up in the morning by the alarm of the clock.
Goes into the woods, and rolls on eight-dirt.
Throw us over the wire, and I'll get out of here.
He started for the landing, and was getting on fine.
Until he met a road monkey, half-froze and half blind.
He says to Teddy, "the hill it is fine".
But soon Teddy's logs, by the roadsides reclined.

Says Teddy to himself, "now don't that beat Hell?"
As he looked by the roadside, where the logs they had fell.
He thought it all over, and he looked at the time.
And wished he had never seen the Cold River Line.

Another good teamster is young Harry Flynn.
He's a little afraid, he won't get his logs in.
And when he is finished, he wants all his time.
For the work he has done on the Cold River Line.

There is Ed McGahan, who draws some big loads.
And also Dan Callahan, who sticks up the roads.
There's "Crazy" Wells, he's afraid of a thaw.
And another good teamster by the name of Wallace.

There is Colby and Ghiley and young Jay McGinn.
There's Elmer and Lei and bold Harry Flynn.
There's Stanley and Rollins and Jimmie McGinn.
And also Charlie Rogers will work his time in.

Now here's to our road gang, they are a great crew.
There's Aubrey and Trippie and Sid Merrittworth.
There's "Turkey" and Foley and old man Lafaye.
They all guarded hills, and guarded them with hay.

There's Hankie and Louise and big Tommy Hughes.
There's Ernest and Ruby to help make a crew.
There's Frenich and Polack and men from the mine.
They all worked for Wabaki on the Cold River Line.

There is an old sailor, he's worked on the harges.
He's helping Tom Hughes, his hails for to guard.
Now Paddy's a worker and works all the time.
He'd like a good stake from the Cold River Line.

Now here's to our foreman, the boys call him Ed.
If a man is disabled, he's sick in the head.
He says "Some of the boys are sick all the time."
And I'm crippled for men on the Cold River Line.

Now it's farewell to our foreman, farewell for a time.
Farewell to the teal spruce all along that long line.
Farewell do the lumberjack, farewell to the pine.
But we did not fare well on the Cold River Line.

Then farewell to our cooks, we'll not learn them behind.
For God truly knows they've served well their time.
I hope they will never, no never, in time.
To go cooking again on the Cold River Line.

Now to finish my story, to finish my song.
I am going out to Nevencoumb. I won't stay there long.
I 'll go to Glenn Falls, and have a good bite.
And spend all my money from the Cold River Line.