

# MAN OF CONSTANT SORROW

Traditional Song and White "Blues;" **DATE:** 1913 Burnett; 1917 Sharp. Earlier through the "Drowsy Sleeper" branch (1812). **CATEGORY:** Early Country and Bluegrass Songs; **RECORDING INFO:** The best-known period version of "I Am A Man Of Constant Sorrow" was Emory Arthur's 1928 recording (Vo 5208). The Stanley Brothers; Roscoe Holcomb; Frank Proffitt; **OTHER NAMES:** "Farewell Song;" "I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow;" **NOTES:** The first published versions of "Man Of Constant Sorrow" are the "Farewell Song" from a 1913 songbook printed by Richard Burnett of Monticello, Ky. and "In Old Virginy" from Sharp's English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians. Both "The Farewell Song" and Sharp's "In Old Virginy" Version C are early versions of "The Man of Constant Sorrow," which is a branch of "East Virginia Blues." Richard Burnett was born in 1883, married in 1905, and blinded in 1907. The second stanza of "Farewell Song" mentions the singer has been blind six years, which would date it at 1913. In later years, Richard Burnett was asked about the song. He himself could not remember, at that time, if he had composed it, or copied it, or — perhaps most likely — adapted it from something traditional. With the "O Brother Where Art Thou?" phenomena "The Man of Constant Sorrow" has become a crossover pop hit.

In con - stant sor - row through all his days  
 I am a man of con - stant sor - row  
 I've seen trou - ble all my days  
 I bid fare - well to old Ken - tuck - y  
 The place where I was borned and raised.

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**A7** (In constant sorrow through all his days)  
**D** I am a man of constant sorrow  
**A** I've seen trouble all my days  
**G** I bid farewell to old Kentucky  
**A** The place where I was borned and raised  
 (The place where he was borned and raised)

For six long years I've been in trouble  
 No pleasure here on earth I find  
 For in this world I'm bound to ramble  
 I have no friends to help me now  
 (He has no friends to help him now)

It's fare thee well my own true lover  
 I never expect to see you again  
 For I'm bound to ride that northern railroad  
 Perhaps I'll die upon this train  
 (Perhaps he'll die upon this train)

You can bury me in some deep valley  
 For many years where I may lay  
 Then you may learn to love another  
 While I am sleeping in my grave  
 (While he is sleeping in his grave)

Maybe your friends think I'm just a stranger  
 My face you'll never see no more  
 But there is one promise that is given  
 I'll meet you on God's golden shore  
 (He 'll meet you on God's golden shore)