

# SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN

Traditional Old-Time and Bluegrass Song; **DATE:** Late 1800's; Journal of American Folklore 1909; Wyman-Brockway 1916; **CATEGORY:** Early Country and Bluegrass Songs; **RECORDING INFO:** Uncle Am Stuart-1924; Uncle Dave Macon-1926; Bradley Kincaid-1928; Curly Ray Cline; Tommy Jarrell; Wade Mainer and the Mainers Mountaineers; Charlie Monroe and the Kentucky Pardners; Frank Proffitt; Mac Wiseman; **NOTES:** Although the banjo song has been widely collected in the South, Sourwood Mountain is located in the state of Massachusetts, and the ballad is said by some to have originated in that state. Mrs. Betty Jane Dodrill writes to say that family lore has it that the song was composed by her ancestor William Combs (1840-1924), a fiddler and farmer from Russell County, Virginia. The tune was mentioned by William Byrne who described a chance encounter with West Virginia fiddler 'Old Sol' Nelson during a fishing trip on the Elk River. The year was around 1880, and Sol, whom Byrne said was famous for his playing "throughout the Elk Valley from Clay Courthouse to Sutton as...the Fiddler of the Wilderness," had brought out his fiddle after supper to entertain (Milnes-1999). Sourwood is also the name for chestnut or other bark used in tanning leather. Version below collected by my Grandfather, Maurice Matteson, on Beech Mountain, NC.



Chick-ens a crow-in' on Sour-wood Moun-tain Hey did-dy ump did-dy - id-dy um day



Git yer dawg an we'll all go - a-hunt - in' Hey did-dy ump did-dy id-dy um day!

© 2006 by Mel Bay Publications, Inc. BMI  
All Rights Reserved.

**D** **G** **D** **A7** **D**  
Chickens a-crowin' on Sourwood Mountain, Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.

**D** **G** **D** **A7** **D**  
Git yer dawg an' we'll all go a-huntin', Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.

My true love's a blue-eyed daisy, Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.  
She won't come and I'm too lazy. Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.

Big dog bark and little one bite you, Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.  
Big girl court and little one spite you. Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.

My true love's a blue-eyed daisy, Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.  
If I don't get her, I'll go crazy. Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.

My true love lives at the head of the holler, Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.  
She won't come and I won't foller. Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.

My true love lives over the river, Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.  
A few more jumps and I'll be with her. Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.

Ducks in the pond, geese in the ocean, Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.  
Devil's in the women if they take a notion. Hey, diddy ump diddy-iddy-um day.