The “Regulation” Melody
Variation in Halyard Shanties

Sea Music Symposium
Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic Connecticut
9 June 2007
The “Regulation” Melody
What makes a ‘hit’ Halyard Shanty?

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Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic Connecticut
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Research
Supported By:

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Come all ye faux sailors 
what’s ne’er been to sea
Come all ye faux sailors
what’s ne’er been to sea

And I’ll make up a song
just to sing unto thee...

WAY. HEY! BLOW THE MAN DOWN!
WHAT ABOUT A SEA SHANTEY, PAT?
Just wait till I find the right page, will yer.
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# Archive of Folk Culture

## Shanty Hit Parade!

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Shanty Evidence by Year

Publications:
Traveler’s Narratives, Articles, Books etc.
The Oral Tradition On Steroids!
Blow the Man Down - 12 Rendition Reduction

Way, hey...

Give me some time...
Blow the Man Down - 12 Rendition Reduction

Way, hey...

Give me some time...
Blow the Man Down - 12 Rendition Reduction

Way,____hey...

Give(me____some____time...____)
Blow the Man Down - 12 Rendition Reduction

Way, __ hey...

Give __ me some time...
Blow the Man Down - 12 Rendition Reduction

Way, Hey...

Give me some time...
Blow the Man Down - 12 Rendition Reduction

Way, hey...

Give me some time...
Blow, Boys, Blow - 12 version reduction

Blow, boys, blow

Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Blow, boys, blow

Blow, my bully boys, blow.
Blow, Boys, Blow - 12 version reduction

Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Blow, my bully boys, blow.
Blow, Boys, Blow - 12 version reduction

Blow, boys, blow

Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Blow, boys, blow

Blow, my bully boys, blow.
Blow, Boys, Blow - 12 version reduction

Blow, boys, blow

Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Blow, boys, blow

Blow, my bully boys, blow.
Blow, Boys, Blow - 12 version reduction

Blow, boys, blow

Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Blow, boys, blow

Blow, my bully boys, blow.
Blow Boys Blow - J. S. Scott, 8 verse reduction

Blow, boy's blow

Blow my bu-hy boys blow.
Blow Boys Blow - J. S. Scott, 8 verse reduction

Blow, boy's blow

Blow my bu-ly boys blow.
Whisky Johnny - 12 version reduction

Whisky Johnny

Whisky for my Johnny

Whisky Johnny

Whisky for my Johnny

Whisky Johnny

Whisky for my Johnny.
Whisky Johnny - 12 version reduction

Whisky Johnny

Whisky for my Johnny

Whisky Johnny
Whisky Johnny - 12 version reduction

Whisky Johnny

Whisky for my Johnny

Whisky Johnny

Whisky for my Johnny

Whisky Johnny

Whisky for my Johnny.
Whisky Johnny - 12 version reduction

Whisky Johnny

Whisky for my Johnny.

Whisky Johnny

Whisky for my Johnny.
Whisky Johnny - 12 version reduction

Whisky___Johnny___

Whisky for my Johnny_

Whisky___Johnny___

Whisky for my Johnny_

Whisky___Johnny___

Whisky for my Johnny.
Halyard Shanties
Hierarchy of Stability
Halyard Shanties
Hierarchy of Stability

*Essential Elements (least variation)*

- Melody of refrain
- Text of refrain
Halyard Shanties
Hierarchy of Stability

**Essential Elements (least variation)**
- Melody of refrain
- Text of refrain

**Stable Elements (little variation)**
- Melody of first solo
Halyard Shanties
Hierarchy of Stability

Essential Elements (least variation)
• Melody of refrain
• Text of refrain

Stable Elements (little variation)
• Melody of first solo
• Text of first solo (in some songs)
Halyard Shanties
Hierarchy of Stability

*Essential Elements (least variation)*
- Melody of refrain
- Text of refrain

*Stable Elements (little variation)*
- Melody of first solo
- Text of first solo (in some songs)

*Less Stable Elements (more variation)*
- Melody of second solo
- Text of subsequent verses
“How or when men learned to sing these Chanties would be a difficult question but for the fact that all heavy work of heaving of hauling or hoisting was accompanied by them and thus the melodies were unconsciously absorbed even by the least tunefully minded sailor.”

(emphasis added)
“...when I first heard ‘Mudder Dinah’ and being extremely fond of singing I became most anxious to learn it, so I asked one of our two boat-boys to teach me. Had I offered him a sovereign he could not have been more delighted. He set about his pleasant task at once but was very soon pulled up by a mate who demanded in indignant tones what he meant by teaching ‘dat buckra chile’ dem rude words. They nearly had a fight over it and then I learned that the words didn’t matter, that you varied them according to taste, but that as taste was generally low and broad the words were usually what my negro friend called, in cheerful euphemism, rude.”

PROCEEDINGS

of the First Annual Symposium on

TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF THE SEA

Mystic Seaport Museum
Mystic, Connecticut
14 June 1980.
10. Songs of the Sailor: Folklore, Field-Collecting and Gleanings.
   (William Main Doerflinger, E. P. Dutton & Company)

    (Clark Branson, University of California at Los Angeles)

    (Ellen R. Cohn, Franklin Papers, Sterling Library, Yale University)

13. The Origin of Songs Nineteenth-Century Sailors Sang:
    A Comparison of Chanties and Forecastle Songs to
    the Folk Songs of West Africa and Europe.
    (Stuart P. Gillespie, Jr., Mattatuck Community College)

14. Research and Research Opportunities in
    the G. W. Blunt White Library and the Library of Congress.
    (Robert J. Walser, Mystic Seaport Museum)

    (David M. Kleiman, South Street Seaport Museum,
    with Stuart M. Frank, Mystic Seaport Museum)

VI. Contributors to the Symposium and Proceedings

VII. List of Festival Musicians and Performers, 13-15 June 1980

VIII. Roster of Mystic Seaport Museum Chantey Interpreters, 1972-1980
Research
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