O'Neill's *Music of Ireland* is still used by traditional Irish musicians as a major source of repertoire acquisition, but its main value to the folk music scholar is as a primary reference work in the field of traditional Irish music. This reprint was brought out by Dan Collins, an American Irish fiddle player from New York, in response to a long-felt need for a new edition of a work that was becoming increasingly rare. It is taken directly from the original 1903 edition but is bound in looseleaf fashion so that pages can be conveniently detached if desired. The tunes are classified by genre and are indexed numerically. However, it is the wealth and diversity of music contained in this volume, more than any mere utilitarian considerations, that make the *Music of Ireland* an important and valuable repository of Irish folk music.

**Bossmen:** Bill Monroe and Muddy Waters. By James Rooney.

Pp. 159, photographs, selected discography.


Reviewed by William E. Lightfoot.

Bill Monroe and Muddy Waters are two southern farm boys who grew up listening to, learning, and performing rural folk music and who, in their early years, moved to the Chicago area to stay with relatives while they looked for work. They eventually formed small bands and continued to perform slightly modified forms of the "old" music for their own people. They both had strong notions as to how their music should be played, and by the mid-forties they had created "styles" of music which were basically folk in nature and which were to become major forces in American popular music. Waters played "uptown" version of Mississippi Delta folk blues, or what has become known as "Chicago blues." Monroe called his particular synthesis of Anglo-American and Afro-American folk music traditions "bluegrass" in honor of his home state of Kentucky. Both of these "styles" are sub-genres of American folk music.

Monroe and Waters are unquestionably active bearers of folk tradition, yet they have not been given proper scholarly attention. Unfortunately, most of what we know about them comes from fragmented and diverse sources such as record album liner notes, occasional newspaper articles, esoteric periodicals like *Bluegrass Unlimited* and *Living Blues*, and books like Paul Oliver's *Conversation with the Blues* and Bill C. Malone's *Country Music*, U.S.A. Although by no means a scholarly work, Rooney's book offers under one cover fairly unified and coherent insights into the art and lives of these two important folk musicians and is therefore welcomed.

According to Rooney, *Bossmen* "is intended to be a companion piece" to the music of Monroe and Waters, and as such the book's purpose is adequately served. The book consists, essentially, of transcriptions of recorded interviews between Rooney and the two musicians, with unifying comments from Rooney briefly interspersed. Rooney, although not an academic folklorist, is a knowledgeable folk music scholar and musician who wisely stays out of the way allowing the bossesmen to speak for themselves. The interviews are not printed in their entirety, however, and it is never clear whether Monroe and Waters are speaking freely or
are responding to specific questions. As for Rooney's techniques, we know only that he interviewed Monroe on the road and at home in the early months of 1970, and Waters in a hospital and at home in late 1969 and early 1970.

The material is arranged chronologically and provides basic biographical information on each of the two men. The biographies are far from complete, however, with many pertinent details, such as birth dates and other vital statistics, often omitted. More important are the numerous glimpses we are given into the artistic philosophies of the two musicians. Monroe, for example, states: "To me bluegrass is really the country music. It was meant for country people" (p. 34). He believes "in hunting for the high tones for bluegrass. And the clear, brilliant sound and good time, good drive to it" (p. 41). The element of competition is apparently as strong in bluegrass as it is in jazz:

And you can see a feller that's coming up alongside of you over there that's playing a good banjo, playing a good fiddle, or mandolin, and you know he's gonna come on up and pass you if you don't stay in the collar (p. 41).

We learn from Muddy Waters that he sings "deep, Down South blues, straight out of the bottom" (p. 114), and that he sings about "what people have been upon or what someday they might come upon" (p. 135). Competition is also present in the blues tradition. Water states:

I had it in my mind I wanted to do this particular thing. I wanted to play close 'round Son House, between Son and Robert Johnson, and I got in there with it. My particular style is based on their style, but is not exactly like them. I wanted to play between those two. I know Robert could beat me sliding on the guitar strings with a bottleneck or some similar device... and when he was young I guess Son House could beat me sliding... But they wasn't doing too much with the singing part... I don't think either one of 'em could really do too much with me singing--even Robert (p. 114).

Monroe and Waters both speak honestly about their respective "sounds," their trouble with sidemen, their recording sessions, their creation of particular songs, and their philosophies of life and music. Clearly, insights like these are extremely valuable contributions to our knowledge and understanding of these two facets of American folk music. And Rooney also includes portions of interviews with Earl Scruggs, Don Reno, Kenny Baker ("I've always said that bluegrass is nothing but a hillbilly version of jazz" (p. 69), Ralph Rinzler, Bill Keith, Willie Dixon, Buddy Guy, and Bob Messinger. The comments of these men, most of whom performed with either Monroe or Waters, are as enlightening as those of their musical mentors.

Other features of the book include over forty superb photographs (many by David Gahr) and a judiciously selected discography. There are some errors, however, in Rooney's citations. The first entry, Bluegrass Music--Camden CAL-719,
should be Early Bluegrass Music--Camden CAL-774. The second entry, The Early Bluegrass Sound--Camden CAL-774, should read The Early Bluegrass Sound (or, as it has been re-issued, The Father of Blue Grass Music)--Camden CAL-719.

Bill Monroe's Uncle Pen--MCA Records, DL7-5348, which has recently appeared, should certainly now be included in Monroe's discography. Other errors include the misspelling of Uncle Pen Vandiver's name as "Vanderver" (p. 9) and "Vanderver" (p. 24), and Rooney's statement that "to the people around Rosine, [Monroe's] 'lonesome sound' seemed to fit right with life in the mountains" (p. 23). Even if the hills around Rosine were thought of as "mountains," which they are not, the notion that Monroe and bluegrass music were products of mountain culture would be incorrect.

Those who are already acquainted with the lives and music of Monroe and Waters may find it interesting to know that Monroe had a toothache when he wrote "Roanoke," or that Waters' first musical endeavor was beating on a kerosene can while singing "I don't want no woman to cholly ham my bone"; for those who are not, Rooney's book is a good introduction. Our knowledge of American folk music will remain incomplete until similar, but hopefully more critical, studies are undertaken. We have missed our chance with Little Walter, Elmore James, Fred McDowell, Uncle Dave Macon, and Carter Stanley. But studies could and, indeed, should be done immediately on Furry Lewis, Howlin' Wolf, Mose Rager, the Coon Creek Girls and, of course, innumerable others. Despite its few shortcomings, Bossman: Bill Monroe and Muddy Waters is a step in the right direction.