for women. These also feature vocal techniques as the shout and evidence almost-spoken lyrics rendered in exuberant fashion.

Two cuts provide counterpoint to the others. The first is the medium-paced "Blues Do Me a Favor," an instrumental/vocal which evidences some of the most expert vocal phrasing on the album, reminiscent of the style of Roosevelt Sykes, and deals with the "lost love" theme. The final one is "Too Late," a slow-paced cut featuring a more relaxed and smooth vocal quality, reminiscent of T-Bone Walker. "Too Late" is Hutto's contribution to the "leaving" theme.

The blues world is fortunate to witness the release of this second Delmark album by a talented bluesman who is, fortunately, only middle-aged and will likely be creating for a long while.

Of the two albums, this one is the most polished.

The Hammons Family: A Study of a West Virginia Family's Traditions.
Edited by Carl Fleischhauer and Alan Jabbour.
2 records, 36-page booklet.

Reviewed by Lorre Weidlich.

In accord with the recent emphasis among folklorists on the performer rather than just the item, the Library of Congress has released a very fine study, musical, historical, and ethnographic, of a West Virginia family, the Hammonses. The album set, consisting of two records and a thirty-six page booklet, is a monumental work. The record is the result of several years of collecting and documentation by Alan Jabbour of the Library of Congress, and concentrates particularly on the banjo playing of Sherman Hammons, the fiddling of his brother Burl, the singing of their widowed sister Maggie, and the spoken performances of all three. Fleischhauer's photographs illustrate the booklet.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the album is its multi-facetedness, and Jabbour could perhaps be criticized for taking on too much rather than concentrating on a few aspects. For the most part, however, his treatment of the various approaches is more than adequate. He gives a detailed history of the Hammons family, complete with genealogy, and complete musical analysis with printed and recorded variants listed.

The emphasis seems to be weighed heavily toward the diachronic, however, and listeners may prefer more emphasis on the synchronic. Several times Jabbour makes suggestions as to the significance of various items to their performers, but stops with the suggestion and never really explores the possibilities he has raised. It appears also that the performances were all done by Jabbour's request, rather than spontaneously. An examination of the occasions for spontaneous performances would have yielded some valuable psychological data about the significance to performers of particular items.
But this may merely be carping. Criticisms of what Jabbour and Fleischhauer did not do should not detract from what they did do—present a sympathetic portrait of a family of very fine folk performers.

Burl Hammons is a fiddler who plays in an early Southern style, as exemplified by his use of scordatura tunings, popular among older central West Virginia fiddlers. Several of his songs have also largely dropped out of tradition, e.g. "Fine Times at Our House." One of his songs, "Sugar Grove Blues" is his own composition, and another, "Jimmy Johnson," features Maggie on beating sticks. Both Burl and his brother Sherman play the banjo, Sherman in the characteristic Southern "frailing" style, and Burl in both frailing and picking styles.

Maggie Hammons Parker, the brothers' widowed sister, sings a capella in the style which has come to be associated with ballad singing—stately, ornamented, parlando rubato. Her voice shows the effects of age, but nonetheless her performance is stunning. Her song texts are full and detailed, and particularly interesting is "In Scotland Town," the first version of the "Hind Horn" ballad to be found in the United States outside of the Northeast coastal area. Maggie's comments on the song reflect the belief in the veracity of the story often found among traditional performers.

The stories the Hammonses tell reflect the same concern for fact. Many are personal reminiscences—the "expedition genre," according to Jabbour, is a favorite type of family narrative. Even the personal narratives rebound in supernatural motifs—with an attitude of skeptical fascination, Maggie tells of taking the hex off a calf, and Burl's account of awaking at age seven to the sound of a seven foot tall skeleton fiddling "Turkey in the Straw" is a gem, a brief but detailed mnemonic.

Maggie also tells a series of verse riddles which the collector strive vainly to guess, and her description of how she learned them provides a model which Jabbour thinks characterizes folk tradition in the South generally. All the verbal performances, as well as the conversations and comments, are highly repetitive. Things are said several times by the same and different family members, giving the effect of firm conviction.

To sum up, The Hammons Family is a beautiful collection, a balance of scholarly observations and pure entertainment, and I recommend that anyone interested in Appalachian traditions get hold of a copy. I also hope that the Library of Congress will follow it up with similar recordings.

Steel Guitar Classics.
15 selections, instrumental, stereo, notes by Chris Strachwitz.
Old Timony LP--113. Old Timony Records, Box 9195, Berkeley, California, 94709, 1973. $5.98.

Reviewed by Dennis Coelho.