In An Arizona Town, Van Holyoak, Bunk Pettyjohn, Lois "Granny" Thomas, Tim Kizzar, Ralph Rogers, Don Goodman.
26 selections, vocal and instrumental, stereo; booklet edited by Keith Cunningham, 40 pp.
Arizona Friends of Folklore 33-3

Bunk and Becky Pettyjohn. Bunk Pettyjohn with Irene Jones, Becky Pettyjohn.
24 selections, vocal and instrumental, stereo; booklet edited by Keith Cunningham, 29 pp.
Arizona Friends of Folklore 33-4.

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Reviewed by Simon J. Bronner

In the introduction to the booklet accompanying In An Arizona Town, Keith Cunningham states that, "... the chief reason we have for producing records is to record segments of Arizona folk music exactly as we find it." Remarking on the recordings, he states, "... they are deliberately 'hard core,' guaranteed authentic records which can be used not only for enjoyment, but also for teaching and study with some assurance that what they contain is real, unvarnished folk music." By underlining the authenticity of the product, Cunningham is expanding the notion of folk music as aural, since a sizeable portion of the selections is derived from commercial recordings. He is not to be faulted for stressing the commercial influence in Arizona because he is careful to point out the traditional process in the assimilation of recorded music into the folk song repertoire, in addition to the traditional nature of the singers. If there is a fault, it lies in the documentation of discographical sources in the booklet accompanying In An Arizona Town. This work is credited to Jim Griffith, who seems ignorant of the nonhill-billy legacies of various songs in the album. For example, he states that "I do not happen to know this particular number" in reference to "Mind Your Own Business," which is clearly a reworking of a song of the same title written and recorded by Hank Williams (MGM 10461) and which borrows from black tradition on the theme of "Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do." The latter is credited to Jimmy Witherspoon (Turtlehead Publishing Co.) but acknowledged to be in oral circulation prior to his popular rendition. Another example is the inability to identify "Sun's a Gonna Shine in My Back Door Someday." Perhaps if Mr. Griffith had gone beyond recordings made "fairly recently by bluegrass musicians," which he cites, he would have noted the text in "Maggie Campbell Blues" by Tommy Johnson (Victor 21409, 2/4/28) and "Sun Will Shine in My Back Door Some Day" by Lonnie Johnson (Okeh unissued, 4/25/27). Noting other minor oversights may be considered cavilling, but they might be mentioned for the record—specifically, the failure to mention "Get a Long Home, Cindy" as a variant of Tim Kizzar's "Rubber Dolly," found in Byron Arnold's Folksongs of Alabama and in Norman Cazden's Book of Nonsense Songs, to mention two diverse sources. The inclusion of the song in Cazden's collection may indicate the humorous nature of the piece as opposed to the "humor involved in his playing ... " suggested by Cunningham. Further, Cunningham asserts that Bunk Pettyjohn's performance of "Way Back in the Hills," which utilizes a picked melody on the five-string banjo, is unique to him. Such phrasings are also indicative of the playing of Dock Boggs (Asch Recordings AM 3903, 1966) from West Norton, Virginia.

To the producer's credit, the booklet accompanying In An Arizona Town includes musical and textual transcriptions of the songs, plus photographs and biographies of the performers. The recording itself offers an abundance of selections offering a cross-section of Arizona music emphasizing the cowboy and hillbilly traditions. Thus, the record fulfills Cunningham's original statement of purpose. However, the quality of the recording is rather uneven, and on at least one recording, "Walkin' John," distortion is obviously audible. Other pieces suffer from the roughness of the performances themselves. Despite these faults, many of the performances serve as important documents, such as the olkotypal "Clay Town Springs" (a localized version of "Chisholm Trail") and several native American ballads found in the collections of Laws and Fife, such as "Billy Venero" and
"Little Mo-hee." A most interesting recording is the one of Don Goodman "humming and whistling at the same time and using the mouth cavity of his hat as a resonator" in a version of "Turkey in the Straw," which would be greatly enhanced by visual documentation.

If *In an Arizona Town* appears to have production problems, they seemed to be resolved in the release of Bunk and Becky Pettyjohn. Once again Keith Cunningham is the producer and editor, Don Wolf is the recordist, and Kathryn Cunningha is the photographer. The substitution of Judith McCulloh as bibliodiscographer may be responsible for the superior job of documentation and annotation. Most notably, she includes a comprehensive list of printed and recorded sources for each selection. As a whole, the accompanying booklet is better organized and explicated. If there are lacunae, they are in the absence of information on the artists and musical transcriptions.

The recording of Bunk and Becky Pettyjohn holds together better than the previous anthology and provides a glimpse of a repertoire divided between cowboy, religious, Anglo-American, and hillbilly pieces of commercial and traditional origins. The distinction between "songs" and "instrumentals," as Judith McCulloh insightfully points out, are confused in the recordings, raising the question of the arbitrarily assigned roles of those types in folk tradition. Bunk Pettyjohn is presented as a proficient performer on guitar, banjo, and mandolin, although he is prone to error. He occasionally sings but the main vocal selections are provided by the late Becky Pettyjohn in stirring renditions of "Lightning Express" and "Put My Little Shoes Away" (probably originating in popular tradition) and "Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Foot," which has more traditional roots. Interpersed in the predominantly instrumental performances of Bunk Pettyjohn, Becky's renditions offer a continuity of Arizona tradition in an album totally devoted to the artistry of two folk performers.

The Arizona Friends of Folklore are to be commended for producing recordings of value to students and scholars of folk tradition. Despite their roughness, the recordings provide important documentation of southwest musical traditions not available on commercial folk labels. Certainly, other projects in this area are called for, such as the black, Mexican, Mormon, and narrative traditions, but the products available up to now are good additions to the journal format of most folklore societies. Hopefully this trend towards alternatives available to the regional society will fill a current gap in commercially available folk music and narration.