

# CDSS Sings: MacArthur's *Single Again*

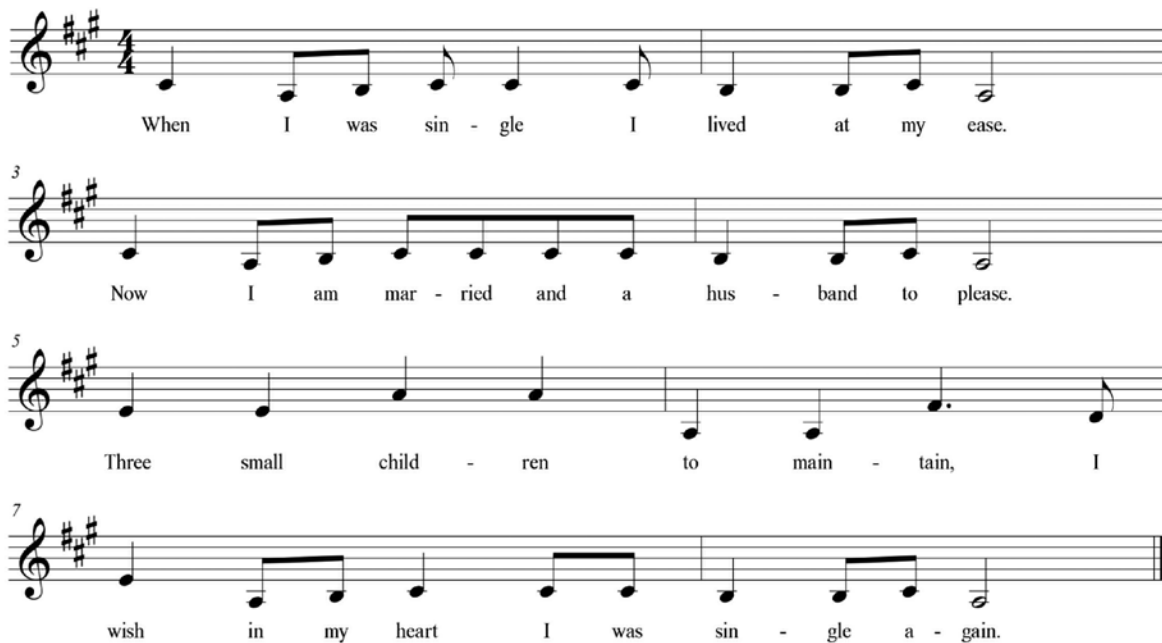
May Nichols gave this song to Margaret MacArthur in Guilford, Vermont, in October 1961 and said she had it from her husband's mother, Nellie Nichols. Although a few Southern folksong collections have different versions of a related song (most with drunken husbands), none contain these final two stanzas. Thanks to Bob Coltman, it seems that Mrs. Nichols' "Single Girl" is most like "I

Wish I Were Single Again"—a song popular in the late 1800s and printed in a Wehman's Songster. Margaret's recording of May Nichols appears to be its only collection in the folk tradition. Now both Margaret and her granddaughter, Robin, have recorded "Single Girl," or "Single Again" as they title it, for their own CDs, although this song remains a little-known treasure.

## Single Again

Traditional

From the Singing of May Nichols and Margaret MacArthur



When I was sin - gle I lived at my ease.

Now I am mar - ried and a hus - band to please.

Three small child - ren to main - tain, I

wish in my heart I was sin - gle a - gain.

When I was single I lived at my ease.  
Now I am married and a husband to please.  
Three small children to maintain  
I wish in my heart I was single again,

One cries "Mama, I want a piece of bread"  
Another cries "Mama, I want to go to bed"  
Wash them, undress them, put them all to bed  
In comes husband, I'm wishing them all dead,

All young men when they first fall in love  
It's "oh my little honey" and "my little turtle dove"  
When they get married it's no such thing  
"Get up and get the breakfast you cross ugly thing,"

All young men when they strut about the town  
One would think they are worth a thousand pound  
Look into their pockets not a penny would you find  
Oh how fickle is a young man's mind.

*Transcribed by Nora Rodes*

Read more inside this issue!

Turn to pages 18–19 and learn additional details about the life of Margaret MacArthur and her dedication to the preservation of American folk song.