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.

Transcribed by Nora Rodes

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