

# YOU HEARD IT HERE

February 2024



By Terry Gross

Board Director - A/V Entertainment/Social Media & ZOOM Coordinator/Food Committee

Ahh, February. The month of Valentines Day. A loaf of bread, a jug of wine and thee! How romantic. This month's song is "Kisses, Sweeter Than Wine". Most of us probably remember it as a Jimmy Rogers hit in 1957, but it was previously done by the Weavers in 1951. One of the Weavers was none other than **Pete Seger**.

What is bizarre is the roots and evolution of this song. It was based on an old Irish tune, "Drimindown". It was a song of a farmer lamenting the death of his cow. American Blues singer Lead Belly heard it performed by Sam Kennedy, an Irishman in Greenwich Village. He renamed it "If It Wasn't for Dicky" with the same tune and theme but changed the rhythm and recorded it in 1937. In 1950 Seger came across the Lead Belly recording and the Weavers wrote new lyrics and chorus and turned it into a love song. *How they turned an Irish lament about a dead cow to a love song baffles me, but, hey, who am I to judge.* They released the song in 1951 and it reached #19 on the Billboard chart. The details of who really rewrote this song though seems to be in dispute as shared below:

The music was credited to Joel Newman and the lyrics to Paul Campbell, both names being pseudonyms for [Howie Richmond](#), The Weavers' publisher.<sup>[8]</sup> The Weavers' music publisher was Folkways Publishing, one of the many subsidiaries (aliases) of TRO/The Richmond Organization, founded by Howard Richmond. Others are Ludlow Music, Folkways Music, Essex, Hollis, Hampstead House, Worldwide Music, Melody Trails, and Cromwell.<sup>[9]</sup>

In his 1993 book, Seeger wrote: "Now, who should one credit on this song? The Irish, certainly. Sam Kennedy, who taught it to us. Lead Belly, for adding rhythm and blues chords. Me, for two new words for the refrain. Lee, who wrote seven verses. Fred and Ronnie, for paring them down to five. I know the song publisher, The Richmond Organization, cares. I guess folks whom TRO allows to reprint the song, (like [Sing Out!](#), the publisher of this book) care about this too."

I have chosen to use a version by Jackson Brown and Bonnie Raitt from a tribute album to Pete Seger. I have also included a link to the Weavers version, Jimmy Rogers version as well as a link to an oratory and performance of the original Irish tune just for fun.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A89vJs7VYjc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9MpNwduAA>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6FA6H-bctU>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwIRHe\\_vXZk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwIRHe_vXZk)

Jackson Brown / Bonnie Raitt  
 The Weavers  
 Jimmie Rogers  
 Drimindown, Ed McCurdy



## LYRICS

<p>Well, when I was a young man and never been kissed          I got to thinkin' it over how much I had missed          So I got me a girl and I kissed her and then, and then          Oh, Lord, well I kissed her again          Because she had kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i>          She had, mm-mm, kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i>          Well I asked her to marry and be my sweet wife          I told her we'd be so happy for the rest of our life          I begged her and I pleaded like a natural man          And then, whoops! Oh Lord, well she gave me her hand</p>	<p>Because she had kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i>          She had, mm-mm, kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i>          Well we worked very hard, both me and my wife          Workin' hand-in-hand to have a good life          We had corn in the field and wheat in the bin          And then, whoops! Oh Lord, I was the father of          twins          Because she had kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i>          She had, mm-mm, kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i>          Well our children they numbered just about four          And they all had a sweetheart a' knockin' at the          door</p>	<p>They all got married and they wouldn't hesitate          I was, whoops! Oh Lord, the grandfather of eight          Because she had kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i>          She had, mm-mm, kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i>          Well now that I'm old, and I'm ready to go          I get to thinkin' what happened a long time ago          Had a lot of kids, a lot of trouble and pain          But then, whoops! Oh Lord, well, I'd do it all again          Because she had kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i>          She had, mm-mm, kisses <i>sweeter than wine</i></p>
--	---	---