

Flatt And Scruggs, Last Public Hanging In West V

Rock of ages cleft for me
Now that could be the voice of John F Morgan in the Ripley jailhouse singin' hymns
Well ol' Johnny might just be singin' hymn this mornin'
Cause this is gonna be a hangin' day for him
Now people say that Johnny was a bad man and that he had a aim for bein' mean
He took a hatchet one cold weary morning he killed two children and the widow Green
Five thousand people gathered there in Ripley invited by the sheriff Jay O Sean
Havin' fun and drinking moonshine liquor and listenin' to ol' Johnny singin' hymn
The day dawned cold in Ripley West Virginia the scaffold stood in silence in a field
Johnny kept on singin' in the jailhouse waiting there to eat his final meal
Then rumor started flying through the gathering
That John F Morgan might get his reprieve
The people started yelling toward the sheriff
Afraid they'd miss for all they come to see
But Jay O Sean the sheriff of Jackson County
Afraid that such a thing could have been done
Said I said there was gonna be a hangin' and I still mean it there's a gonna be one
They led John Morgan from the Ripley jailhouse
And he rode through the happy laughin' crowd
But when John Morgan stepped upon the scaffold
They grew quiet when he tip his hat and bowed
They listened to the preacher say the last words
They fixed the noose and tied John Morgan's hand
The signal came and someone sprang the dead's trap
And sent John Morgan to another land
The last public hanging in old West Virginia a true story written in this song
On the sixteen of December in fifteen ninety seven
John F Morgan paid the price of doing wrong