

Smithsonian Folklife Festival Interview

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Interviewer: Jill Evans

[This tape consists exclusively of Patrick Michael Karnahan performing with his band. Only Mr. Karnahan's non-singing remarks between numbers have been transcribed.]

Patrick Michael Karnahan (PMK): My name is Patrick and I used to be the interpretive ranger up here, many years ago when you rode dinosaurs and all that, looking for Cro-Magnon men and all. But let's start out the evening. Now the whole idea behind a campfire program... You know, it dates back to the very beginning, when human beings were going into the forest looking for different things; to recreate, maybe hunt. But they all gather round; they tell their stories before a campfire, usually. And let's start out the evening by introducing ourselves to each other. Why don't you look around, see a person next to you, or family, just tell them your first name and where you're from. I always like that. My name is Patrick and I'm from Jamestown, California. So why don't you take a few minutes out and say hi to your neighbor. Pretend like we're sittin' around in a big circle here out in the woods. Well, we're in the woods.

[Sounds of audience members talking to each other.]

Say hi. Tell them where you're from. All right. Somebody's from Los Gatos over there. All right.

[Addresses another band member] Dave, where are you from?

Dave: I'm from Jamestown.

PMK: Well Dave's from Jamestown, California. Rick, where are you from?

Rick: I'm from Sonora.

PMK: He's from the thriving metropolis of Sonora, California. Well we're all excited to be up here. I'm glad you introduced to each other to everybody here. We're right in the middle of the

Stanislaus National Forest. Now the program that I got prepared for you tonight is called California Story. Now we're going to talk about some facts and some figures, but it's going to be real simple. And it's going to be a lot of fun. And the main part of this program is, we're going to do lots of singing. Lot of sing-along songs that you probably know. And I'll tell you a little bit about California history. And how it all relates back to the national forest, of all things. But before we get into all that storytelling and songs, we're going to do a song from Rick's heritage. Rick here is Sicilian, and he wanted to open up a song with a real fun Italian song.

Rick: So how do you like that? The Black Irish Band is gonna start out with an Italian song. This song is called Cela Luna. You might have heard it if you remember the Louis Prima Band from years ago. But it's also been used in a lot of movies, too. And it's about a young lass who wants to get married. Her mother thinks no one's good enough for her. And those of you that live in the Gold Rush country, down in the mother lode, all the way up Highway 49 and Highway 4, you might have noticed all the Italian names of streets. That's because many Italians came, first from northern Italy, then from southern, and of course going all the way back to Columbus, Christopher Columbus opening up the Americas. And so we thought we would throw this in for you. And here is Cela Luna.

[Group performs song.]

PMK: All right now, we're all warmed up now, having a good time. We exercised clapping motion, we got to sing a little bit. How many of you heard that song out there? A few of you. We got a few Italians out there. All right. Well as I mentioned, our latest program's called 'California Story'. And briefly I said I would connect this whole programs tonight the national forest. You're going to have to pay attention, there's going to be a few facts and figures here, but it's going to be a lot of fun.

Now California is called the Golden State. Now California's the Golden State because, well, 1849 or so they discovered gold, right? But I like to think that California's more than just gold. I mean, look at oranges. Oranges from Valencia, down in Southern California. Beautiful ripe oranges, are nice and gold in the summertime. What about the California state flower, the California poppy? Golden. What color is that famous bridge over in the Bay Area? You know they painted it orange, but when the light hits it right, it looks just like gold. And what about the very symbol, the California state flag? The California grizzly bear, golden fur. So California's gold in many ways, and we're going to explore some of those ways tonight. Talk a little bit about the people who made California history through music.

Now California is a large state. Believe it or not, California is the third largest state in the Union. Alaska is the largest, Texas is second, California is third. California's about eight hundred miles in length. You take all the way from the Mexican border all the way up to Oregon. Then you got Nevada and Arizona down there. It's a beautiful state. And you've got a beautiful rocky coastline. You go from Del Norte County down to Mendocino to the Bay Area, down to Santa Barbara. And as you work your way further on down you've got those warm, sandy beaches. Actually you find the best surfing in the continental United States right here in California. Of course it's famous for the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean and the surf sound of the '60s. And then you get inland. You've got beautiful valleys. You have the San Joaquin Valley below us here.

The Sacramento Valley to the north. You've got the Imperial Valley, the Cella Valley, Salinas Valley. And what is California? It's considered the breadbasket of the world, because you can grow everything in California because of the great climate. What about the deserts? Mojave Desert. You got Joshua Tree. Death Valley. And what about the mountains? Well right now you're sitting, sitting right in the center of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Right here on the Southern Ranger District you're right in the middle. And you know, today I actually was at the northern tip of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. They end right up there, a little north of Greenville, California, and just a little south of Mount Lassen. Now Mount Lassen and Mount Shasta are beautiful mountains, but you know what? They're not part of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. They're volcanic mountains. In most of the Sierra Nevada region here this is all uplifted during a fault. And you go all the way down almost to Southern California, to Kern County, and that's where the Sierra Nevada Mountains end. And then you've got a series of ranges down there called the Transverse Ranges. You actually have mountains in Southern California that are over eleven thousand foot tall. California has beautiful mountains. And when you spend time in Europe and other places in the country, and you tell them all this about California, they don't believe you. They think California's Hollywood. Hollywood, coconut trees, you know, palms and all that. But no, California has a lot more to offer.

And did you know in California there are fifteen national forests? And right now you're on the Stanislaus National Forest. Now who were the first people who were in California? Who were they? They were the Native American people. And they were all different tribes. Now in this particular area, the Sierra Nevada Mountains, we had the Miwok people. And they were hunters and gatherers. And they lived peacefully in this environment. And they traded with the Paiute Indians, over in Nevada. In fact, I used to be an archaeologist for the Forest Service, and many of these higher mountain passes, you would see signs, archaeological leavings, where many tribes from different nations actually traded. I mean the Miwoks, you had the Maidus, the Modocs, and then of course the Shoshone and Paiutes. And they got along pretty well, these Native American tribes.

Of course, in American history in California, things would changed drastically, 'cause it was during the 1700s that we had our first explorers. Where did they come from? Well, these were Europeans. They came from Spain; some navigators came from Portugal. And they founded small little communities along the ocean and set up a series of missions. How many of you have visited a California mission out there? All right. And you people that don't know anything about the missions, well, they start in Sonoma County and you can work all the way down to San Diego, almost to Mexico. A series of adobe missions, and they were basically put together by the Spaniards. Now what they wanted to do was round up all the Native Americans, give them a language, give them religion, kind of change their ways quite a bit. Unfortunately too they also gave them European diseases, which actually wiped out many of the native people that lived here. Now there were the Spaniards, there were the Native American people, there were people from Mexico here. And then around 1820 things changed in California. Mexico actually took possession of California from the Spanish. It was during the... they won their independence from Spain. And then in 1820 or so you saw an influx of a lot of people coming from all over. So first the Native Americans; then the Spaniards, Portuguese, a little Russian; then you had people from Mexico, 1820 California becomes a part of Mexico. It's known then as Alta California. Then you have Europeans; they're coming by sailing ships. Some of them are taking horses across the

Great Basin. And with those people came music, which leads us to our first song on the program tonight. This song was called “Devil’s Dream”. Now this is an old song, way back from 1800. And back in those earlier days a lot of people played the fiddle. Dave [Obey?] here is going to demonstrate on this old song from the early 1800s. And it’s called “Devil’s Dream” A lot of those early pioneers played this number.

[The group plays.]

PMK: Now we carried you all the way up to around 1820. California first. The Native Americans lived here. The Spanish explorers came. Set up missions. They tried to teach the Native Americans their ways in Europe. Unfortunately brought a lot of disease and devastated the Native American population. And then around 1820 Mexico won its independence from Spain and took this on as Alta California. And then you had explorers coming in here. Now the time around 1800 things were changing on the East Coast, right? Now you would have heard that fiddle being played quite a bit back there, because actually the Lewis and Clark expedition, they had a fiddle player playing in their group. So that means it was very common right around that time period. And of course by the times on the covered wagons a lot of people were playing the fiddle, you’d hear more and more of that. And of course there was the Louisiana Purchase, which moved many of the easterners in the United States further out west. By the 1830s and ‘40s people were thinking California’s the place to be. So they loaded up their covered wagons and moved to Beverly... [Laughter] But anyways they came by covered wagons. You had all these people coming to California. Now there was the two sea routes. You could go all the way down to Cape Horn, was the bottom of South America down there, and deal with the treacherous waters and come up to the Los Angeles area or around San Francisco. Or you could come by covered wagon. Boy. And that was a long journey. You’d have to basically hitch those oxen up and the mules, and go across the Great Basin. And you know, let’s face it, there was a lot of Native Americans that lived in those areas, and they weren’t too keen with seeing all these American Yankees coming out westward. Many of the wagon trains of course were attacked, and those that were lucky to make it all the way to the California border, they still had to face the mighty Sierra Nevada Mountains. Did you know that one of the earliest parties actually came over Sonora Pass? It was the [Bartels and Bigwell] party.

Dave: I believe that was the first party.

PMK: One of the first parties. It was around 1843 or so? I may be a little off there. But they actually made it over long before the Donner Party made their attempt. And they came into California. And with them they brought their music to the people from, Mexico that lived here, the Spaniards, and the Native Americans. And this is one of their popular songs, and you all know it. It’s called “She’ll Be Comin’ Around the Mountain”. And this is about hitching up the mule team and getting the wagon going. So how many of you know this song out there? We want you to sing extra loud. Here’s what we’re going to do. This is what we call a round. And we sing every verse three times. We’re going to start out, “she’ll be comin’ around the mountain”, the second one will go “she’ll be riding six white horses”. The third one, “we’ll all go down and meet her”. And then we’re going to kill the red rooster and we’re going to have chicken and dumplings, because we’re a little hungry. So that is how we’re going to sing this. So let’s start out with “she’ll be coming around the mountain”. All right.

[Group sings song.]

PMK: See, California history isn't boring. It's a lot of fun, isn't it? And you know, you little kids out there, you're not going to get this 'til high school. They don't teach California history 'til high school. But you're going to be a jump on everybody 'cause you're learning it here tonight. And we're going to learn it in fifteen minutes. Let's start out with California. Big state. Third largest state in the Union, right? Third largest state. About eight hundred miles in length. Beautiful state. We know we can grow many things here. We're in the national forest. We're right in the middle of the Sierra Nevada mountains right here, right? Summit Ranger district. Well, the first people who lived here were the Native Americans, In this region they were called The Miwoks. They were native. They knew how the Spanish explorers set up the mission systems. Then around 1820 California, or Alta California, became a possession of Mexico.

Now we're in the 1830s and '40s. We have covered wagons coming to California. Well you can imagine, with all these people coming here and mixing it up—you had the Spaniards, you had the people in Mexico, you had Europeans, and then you had the Americans, because back in 1776 they became a country, our country, the United States of America. And they were here too. And there was a lot of grumblings. A lot of the Europeans and the Americans said, you know, California really needs to be part of the United States. That's really what we need to do. So a small group of men got together and said, let's overthrow Mexico. 'Cause you got to remember, this time in history, remember the Alamo? Okay, and then there was the war with Mexico. The American army marched all the way down to Mexico City. Well out here in California, tempers were flying here also. So a bunch of rag-tag men got together led by a lot of frontiersmen like Fremont and the rest of them, and they made a flag. And they said, this is going to be the symbol of this new territory of California. No longer Alta California. And do you know what they chose for the symbol for the California flag? The grizzly bear. Arrgh! The big grizzly, yes. Can you believe, at one time the grizzly bear, you could find anywhere in California? You could be down in Malibu down there, sunning yourself on the beach, there could be a grizzly bear there. You could be all the way at Mount Shasta, see a grizzly bear. Right here, grizzly bears. They were everywhere. But by the time the 1820s, '30s, '40s came along, a lot of the settlers out here really didn't like the grizzly bears, 'cause they were scary. And you know what made the California grizzly bear really unusual? Zoologists say it was probably the largest grizzly bear species on the planet. You know why? Because in California the climate is so warm that these grizzly bears never had to take a siesta; never had to hibernate very much. So they ate berries, they ate fish, they got really large. Big bears. It's sad though that the last grizzly bear was killed in California in 1929 in Tulare County. It was a big old grizzly sow bear. It was going in for some wonderful honey out of this beautiful honey box, and the farmer came out and shot that poor bear. That was in 1929. The very last grizzly bear. Of course there be a lot of legends about grizzly bears in California. How many remember a story of a gentleman who had two pet grizzly bears? His name was James Capen Adams. And did you know, he lived just a little north of here. He explored all through Calaveras County. And he had two pet grizzly bears. One was named Lady Washington, the other one was named Ben Franklin. And he used to take his grizzly bears to the forest. In fact, it says, according to his legend, that one day he was attacked by another bear, and Lady Washington, his pet bear, actually protected his life and saved his life. So at one time California grizzly was everywhere.

Now back to our story. So these men got together and decided that the bear would be the symbol, because the grizzly bear was powerful and showed strength. And so they made this early flag with the grizzly bear. And then later they would add a red stripe, similar to that of Texas. The California Republic they called it. The Bear Flag Revolt in the 1847 time period. Well, there were a couple pitched battles between these rag-tag Americans and Europeans against people from Mexico, and with what happened in Texas, California was actually purchased from Mexico in 1848, in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. California, along with Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, became property of the United States. Now that was 1848. California would not become a state 'til 1850. Now you look at some states in the Union, especially like Utah. Did you know Utah wasn't admitted to the Union until after the 1900s? It took a long time. But California only took two years to become a state. Why do you suppose California was aggressively made a state in the United States? Why do you suppose? What single thing would force that issue?

[Some audience members call out "Gold".]

PMK: Gold! There's gold in them thar hills! Yeah. They found gold all right. In 1849 the word carried out. It started with James Marshall. Did you know he was looking out there in the American River one day. He had a mill there. He was looking around in the water, saw something shiny. It was a little piece of gold. Well that word traveled all around the world. But what's interesting to note; there were people living in California that knew about the gold long before James Marshall discovered it. In fact, right down here in our county seat of Tuolumne County, Sonora, California, the miners knew about the gold. And they were from the province of Sonora, Mexico. They knew about it, but they didn't go blabbing off to everybody. It took James Marshall to let everybody know. And overnight people came here. And they brought more music and more diversity to the state of California. Rick, let's do a Gold Rush song.

Rick: Okay. Here's a real popular one. You know, this is by Stephen Foster. And my friend Dave here, he used to research Stephen for a while. And David, can you say something?

Dave: I can say a lot about Stephen, actually. Stephen Foster was the greatest song writer, arguably, in the nineteenth century. And you know his music if you don't know his name. You'll remember all the songs he made. "Beautiful Dreamer." "Camptown Races." "I Dream of Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair." And many, many others. But then the greatest song that he was known by was this one he wrote and debuted for the first time in Pittsburgh, in a concert in 1847. And of course the Gold Rush shortly after that, it became an anthem for the Gold Rush, and I believe that you sing some of the early Gold Rush lines that they wrote to this song.

PMK: What's this song called, David?

David: "Oh Susanna".

PMK: "Oh Susanna." How many of you guys know "Oh Susanna?"

[Responses from the audience]

PMK: Okay. And this came from the California Gold Rush, right? Gold was discovered, 1849 the word carried out. It forced California into statehood. September 9th, 1850, California was no longer a territory, republic. It was part of the United States. Thirty-first state of the Union; September 9th is our admissions day. And this is for all of those fine people of California, way back then.

[Group plays "Oh Sussana."]

David: You guys are good singers.

PMK: Good singers. You all knew that song. You learned that at school, I bet. You cheated. You already knew that song. Well, people came from all over. They came over these mountain passes. [Names unclear] Party came right over Sonora Pass. There were the Donners that tried to make it over in winter time; that was a mistake. And of course there were the sea voyages; you could come around Cape Horn or you could cross the Isthmus of Panama. Long before the Panama Canal there was a strip of land there, only about sixty miles or so. But you know, it was laden with mosquitoes and malaria ran rampant. Lot of those Gold Rush seekers that came to California had malaria and a lot of them didn't make it back home. Well the whole idea to come to California was to strike it rich. But California was hard to get to. But on September 9th California became the thirty-first state in the Union. Things changed a lot in the 1850s. San Francisco became a thriving metropolis. There used to be manufacturing there; a lot o things were going on there. Los Angeles County starting to build up down there. And all these little mining communities spread. Jamestown, Angel's Cap, Jackson, Grass Valley, Sierraville, Downeyville, Mariposa. Overnight little towns became big cities because of the Gold Rush. And then there people starting to do some farming, planting here and there.

But the big problem of California was it was hard to get to. So in the mid-1850s they were already talking about building a railroad. Now the idea of [the concept of a] railroad actually started in England in the early 1800s. Around 1825 or so they were experimenting on the East Coast—the B&O Railroad—and railroads they thought, hey, could someday unite a country. Well there was a young surveyor named Theodore Judah. He was out on the Pacific, and he was assured there would be a way to build across these mighty Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Now I work for the railroad; that's my day job. And one thing you've got to know about railroads, they're not like going out in your four-wheel drive Jeep Wrangler; you've got those bi rubber knobby tires and you go up, you know, twenty, thirty percent grades and stuff. Well railroads relied on iron wheels with iron rails. Well you get iron on iron and you go up a steep grade, what are you going to have happen? They're going to slip, right. There's no rubber there, there's no tractive effort. So it was real difficult. So they had to fid a mountain pass that they could cross over through the Sierra, where the locomotives could do it. Three percent was about all that those engines could do in the olden days. So they surveyed many passes. Now on the Stanislaus National Forest, just north of here on the Calaveras Ranger District, they actually surveyed what we call today Ebbetts' Pass. And they found out it was way too steep; it would not do for the transcontinental railroad. So what they chose was Donner Pass. Now Donner Pass was named after the Donner-Reed that attempted a winter crossing and failed. They found out there they could make about a three percent grade, make it over the top and the other side. Now

these passes in the Sierra Nevada all had interesting names. To the south of us we have Tioga Pass. Here we have the Sonora Pass, and this is named, I said, after the miners from the province of Sonora, Mexico that founded our fair town of Sonora. Then you had Ebbetts' Pass, which was named after Major Ebbetts. He was in the army, and he was surveying for the transcontinental railroad. Then you have Carson Pass on 88; that's named after Kit Carson. Then you have Donner, you have Yuma, you have [Caiverts]. And you go way far north where I was today, there is actually Beckworth Pass. And Beckworth was named after an African American who actually founded a lot of pioneer trails in California way back when.

So back to our story. We needed to build the railroad. They talked about it in Congress. It wouldn't be until the Abraham Lincoln administration that it was passed in Congress. They had the money and the funds, but the Civil War kind of derailed the whole idea of the transcontinental railroad. It wouldn't be 'til after the Civil War that they were actually able to start. So all the goods in the early days had to be shipped all the way around Cape Horn to San Francisco. There they'd be unloaded on barges, shipped up the Sacramento River. You had locomotives, you had iron rails, ties. And then you needed a large workforce. Well in California most of my ancestors, who were Irish, they were busy working in the mines. And then you also had Italians, they were doing farming and merchandising and stuff. And they needed a reliable workforce. And it was a young financier named Charles Crocker. How many of you have heard the name Charles Crocker out there? How many of you have heard of Crocker Bank of California? Well Charles Crocker was one of the big financiers during the Gold Rush. He sold picks and shovels to any gold miner that wanted one. And he made a fortune overnight. Well he had a hard time getting in, working on the railroad. He had a brilliant idea. He saw that the Chinese Americans that came here during the Gold Rush were really skilled at dynamite, and they were very good about showing up to work on time, and they were very healthy. They actually took baths. They were into health food. They boiled their water. They were very healthy. And guess what? They invented gunpowder. What better group of people to build the transcontinental railroad in California? So he hired a bunch of Chinese Americans, San Francisco mostly, to work on the railroad. And you know what? They did a great job. They laid all the way over the top of the Sierra Donner Pass, all the way to the Great Basin, and they met with the Union Pacific Railroad on May 10th, 1869; a place called Promontory Summit, Utah. Let's do a railroad song and dedicate it to the Chinese who helped build the Central Pacific Railroad through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. How many of you guys know that song, "I've Been Workin' on the Railroad"? All right.

So let's sing this song to our railroad workers out there.

{Group sings "I've Been Workin' on the Railroad"}

PMK: So there we go. We took you all the way from the Gold Rush, California becomes a state in 1850 because of the Gold Rush of course. But then they had to get a way to ship gold and silver and all the great merchandise that was taking place in the state. And they had the Transcontinental Railroad built. 1869, by the Chinese and many other European workforces. And then California was populated. You could take a train now Ohio, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Georgia, come all the way West. No longer did you have to take the sailing ship, and no longer did you have to come across in a covered wagon, across the Plains. Made life a lot

easier. So you had more homestead. All the valleys down below people spread out in; little cities formed everywhere. There was a lot of farming in those days out on the open prairies and ranchlands, which brings us to our next song. This was a very popular ballad during the 1870s and '80s in California; and you guys all know it. It's called "Home on the Range". How many have heard "Home on the Range?" Okay. We're going to start with the chorus. And this was popular among all those early homesteaders in California, 1870s and 1880s.

Boy, you never realized you were going to have to do so much singing tonight, huh? Now this is what a campfire program is all about. If you thought you were going to get here and do bunch of Nintendo or see a bunch of movies like Harry Potter... [Responding to audience member's comment] Very good! This man's going to get a free CD. Okay. Let's start with the chorus.

[Group and audience sing 'Home on the Range'.]

You guys sing really good out there. You guys should all be forest interpreters, yes you should.

Well, I told you I'd take you all the way back to the Forest Service. We followed a lot of history. Now normally, if you were taking this in high school, you'd have a whole semester of this. So you learned a little bit about California history in about fifteen minutes or so, but now I'm going to bring you back to the Forest Service here.

By the time of the new century, the 1900s, there was a great movement within California and the western United States. And it was called the conservation movement. Now what's unique about California... It would be, of course a lot later that it developed than, let's say, you know, you take a look at Philadelphia, or New York, or Maine, or North Carolina, South Carolina. Those areas were founded back in the 15' 1600s. People were already doing logging back there; they were doing a lot of over-grazing, they were doing a lot of mining, digging ditches. Well California really didn't get a lot of population until really the turn of the last century or so. People started inhabiting smaller towns and they became big cities. And a lot of these areas you see today are very pristine, still today. The reason is because of the conservation movement. Well about 1890s or so there was a gentleman that showed up on the scene, and his name was John Muir. Now John Muir was an immigrant from Scotland; he came here very young. He saw the devastation of Europe; how Germany and France and England had basically cut down all their trees. They'd farmed, over-grazed, they'd burned. And there really wasn't a lot of the beauty, the virgin forests that we can sometimes find in California, old growth. And so he decided that California needed to be protected along with many other western treasures. So he fought to protect the forests, the Perk Service areas now like Yosemite, Kings Canyon, the redwood, the coastal areas. He's actually the father of what we call the National Park Service. Now earlier you had Phyllis come up here and she's telling you all about the National Park Service. Well the idea there is to protect it, protect it for generation after generation. And it's a little bit different than the Forest Service, which we're going to lead to. So I wrote a song about John Muir, many years ago. Our eighth album was called "California Story." And this song is about the life of John Muir. And I want you to sing the chorus with me. This is an original song. It goes, "Across the rivers, far and wild, to the forest like a mother to a child. How the canyons and the mountains sing, John Muir's out there, if only we believe." Now that's the chorus to my song. Now John Muir was a great inspiration. When I was twelve years old I went to our school

library and I picked up a book. It was called *The Mountains of California*. And after reading that book I wanted to be a naturalist like John Muir. I wanted to live like Grizzly Adams, have a couple pet grizzly bears, and be a mountain man. Have a big old beard and live in a cabin and all that. Of course I never ended up that way. But he inspired me, and that's probably why I spent fifteen years working for the Forest Service. So again, the chorus goes, "Across the rivers, far and wild, to the forest like a mother to a child. How the canyons and the mountains sing, John Muir's out there, if only we believe." And I can actually say, this is on the official John Muir web site. They wanted it and I gave it to them.

[Group sings]

John Muir lived a great life. He came here from Scotland. And he ended up in Snelling, just outside of Tuolumne County here. And he came up to the beautiful Yosemite Valley one day, and he devoted his entire life to saving wild places. Now that's the story really of the National Park Service. National forest is a little bit different.

Now when you come to the national forest, one thing you'll realize, as Phyllis said, it's called the land of many uses. And that's true. Now the father of the Forest Service was Gifford Pinchot. Now Gifford, he was from the East Coast. He had a whole different philosophy from John Muir. They shared similar ideas. One: we've got to preserve the forest land. If not they'll log it or they'll mine it. There'll be nothing left. But let's face it folks. You're sitting on a wooden bench right now. How many of you guys live in a home made out of wood? Raise your hand. Raise your hand if wood touches your life at all. Have you ever bought plywood to build your [words unclear]? Or your desk or your computer table? Well it's all made out of wood. It comes from trees. Well, Gifford's idea was, to protect the forest but yet use some of it. Do it effectively. Now what's interesting about the national forest system, it comes under the Department of Agriculture. Park Service is Department of Interior. Their job is to preserve and protect that pristine beauty. The Forest Service under the Department of Agriculture's purpose is to preserve, but at the same time, the land of many uses. What they call multiple yield or multiple use. Right now we're participating in one of those ideas. We're enjoying a campfire program. When you walk across the street, you're camping. In the winter time, do you go cross country skiing, do you go downhill skiing? Right? Well we all live in wooden houses. And let's say, we love jewelry, we like gold and silver, many other things. Well they mine those in certain places. We all like a Big Mac, don't we? Well, they graze cattle on national forest land, and sheep. That hasn't changed much. The whole idea is to protect the area, but yet allow some of these other practices to take place. And that was his idea.

So now we've led you all in a circle about California history, all the way back to the national forest system. Now California is in what they call Region Five, and in California there are fifteen national forests. As I said earlier, you're right smack dab in the middle of the forest system here. Now do I have a song about Gifford, the father of the Forest Service? No, I don't. But you know what's kind of exciting? We're going to be celebrating our hundredth anniversary coming up here very shortly. The hundredth anniversary of the national forest system. Gifford, yeah, he's the father of it. But there is one song I'll do for you about a very famous Forest Service employee. Now, you got to go all the way back to 1950. There was a forest fire in New Mexico. It raged for many, many days. It destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres. And these Forest

Service fire fighters were walking through a burned out area. And they heard this cry. And there was this little black bear, badly burned, and he was clinging to life in this tree. So the Forest Service fire fighters went up there and they rescued this little black bear, and they nursed him back to health. He became the symbol of the United States Forest Service and all fire prevention. What do you suppose his name was?

[Audience calls out “Smokey”]

Smokey Bear. Of course. I have Smokey right here. [Holds up a Smokey doll] You know when I was just a little kid my dad and mom bought me a Smokey Bear and he’s still on the shelf. Now if you folks bought one of those early ones in the 1950s, it’s worth a lot of money so don’t sell it. Now Smokey Bear is the symbol of the United States Forest Service. He was rescued in New Mexico and he went all around the country. And he was telling kids and adults alike, “we’ve got to prevent forest fires, and only you can prevent forest fires, and you’ve got to protect this beautiful national forest land. Now it’s very important, when we come camping up here at Pine Crest, we’re in a beautiful campground setting, and one thing that you need to have? Well you need to have a shovel, and you need some water. And you need to make sure that after you’ve had that wonderful campfire, that you put that thing dead out. Now just leaving it with a little bit of water and dirt, that’s not enough. Go down there and stir it with your shovel, and take your hand; don’t put it in the ashes, but feel to make sure that there’s no heat. Because in the hot summer Sierra weather we get a lot of winds that blow up. The winds will blow, and they’ll blow those ashes that are in there if you’ve left them, and they’ll blow on into the forest and before you know it you’ll have a raging forest fire. Smokey Bear says, prevent forest fires. And only you. And guess what? I do have a song about Smokey.

[Sings chorus of “Smokey the Bear”]

Now Pine Crest is a developed campground. You can have a camp fire here. But once you venture out of the developed area, you need to pay attention. When you come into the national forest, you’ll see these big signs. It’ll tell you about the fire hazard. And you always want to stop at your ranger station and ask, is it okay if I have a campfire outside that campground? And they’ll say, yes you can, or maybe not depending on the weather. But one thing you’ll have to have is a campfire permit, because we want to make sure you know how to start a fire safely, and we want to make sure you put it out. Let’s sing the chorus again. Ready?

[Sings chorus of “Smokey the Bear” again]

Got that?

[Sings full song.]

Good job over there. Good singing.

Well you guys, thanks for being a good audience tonight. And we’d like to thank Phyllis for giving up her amphitheater to us to come perform. And again, the band members we have here...

We don't have the full band here, there's just the three of us. We have Dave Rainwater one fiddle. Let's give it up for Dave Rainwater. All the way from Jamestown, California.

[Applause]

All the way from Sonora. His day job is, he's the music teacher at Sonora Elementary School; Rick [Ristivo].

[Applause]

My name is Patrick Karnahan, and I'm from, well, Twain Harte now, I used to be from Angel's Camp and Jamestown. And we're, together we're called the Black Irish Band. And by the way, if you'd like to see the full band, we're going to be in Murphy's on Wednesday night, aren't we?

[Other band members say, "Yeah"]

Six o'clock. For concerts in the Park. Calaveras County. So if you'd like to know more about the Black Irish Band, we're simple, we're BlackIrish dot com. And we do have CDs available if you're interested; we have some all about California history tonight. But we're going to do one more song to see you guys off. This was written by the late Woody Guthrie. And all you children and adults out there probably know it. And we'd like to dedicate it to the Forest Service on their hundredth birthday, coming up shortly. And this is called, "This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land". How many of you guys know it out there? All right, sing extra loud. We'll start with the chorus.

[Group sings]

Happy birthday to the one hundredth year of the United States Forest Service.

END