



Buckingham Fountain

A new old song from Arlo Leach

I left my home when jobs fell through
And hitched a train from Little Sioux
Chicago, too, was soon dried up
But lights and water cheered me up

Oh, Buckingham Fountain, I send my love to you
My favorite place to find some grace in the spring of '32
Oh, the park in the summer, aristocrats and tramps
I send my thanks to all the banks, and to Mrs. Buckingham

The stores that year weren't filled with goods
Their owners did the best they could
All they'd take was C.O.D.
But still the park was always free

Oh, Buckingham Fountain, I send my love to you
My favorite place to find some grace in the spring of '32
Oh, the park in the summer, aristocrats and tramps
I send my thanks to all the banks, and to Mrs. Buckingham

Each evening you would find me there
Dreaming I'm a millionaire
For every letter home that year
I'd send one now to there from here

Oh, Buckingham Fountain, I send my love to you
My favorite place to find some grace in the spring of '32
Oh, the park in the summer, aristocrats and tramps
I send my thanks to all the banks, and to Mrs. Buckingham

As the Great Depression grew in severity, luckless young men from the rural Midwest flooded into Chicago looking for work. One of these fellows, Olin Peterson, made it through hard times, served in World War II, and, while building a second career as a country music artist, wrote and recorded a song honoring his best memories of the period.

What, you've never heard of the 1946 recording of "Buckingham Fountain"? That's because it wasn't actually written until January 2000, for a unique work of musical fiction by Arlo Leach. Awestruck by his first exposure to the Smithsonian re-release of the *American Anthology of Folk Music*, he set about writing a collection of songs that could have come from the pre-Depression years, then recorded them using techniques that would give the sound of scratchy, old records. The finishing touch to the resultant pseudo-compilation, entitled *Music of my Ancestors*, was a set of liner notes describing the fanciful characters to whom Leach attributed each of the songs. Thus, Olin Peterson, with his bittersweet tribute to Chicago, was born.

But just because the song has a "virtual" history doesn't mean it can't do some good for the Chicago of today. Leach invites government agencies, non-profit organizations, event planners, and media producers to use this song in promoting and celebrating the charms of this city. The enclosed CD contains a broadcast-quality,

About the Author

Like the fictional composer of his song, Arlo Leach moved from rural Iowa to Chicago seeking career opportunities, but found cultural treasures instead. The singer/songwriter keeps busy with performances in and around the city, but Saturday mornings invariably find him exploring the Art Institute or taking architectural tours. *Music of my Ancestors* is his third full-length album, and is available along with his other releases online at <http://arlotone.com>.

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