Rocky Banks of the Buffalo

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There were three maids lived under a bluff,
    Shickel-i-shoe and a shuffle-o
In the Ozark mountains wild and rough
    On the rocky banks of the Buffalo.

One day a wild man came along,
And he was mighty fierce and strong.

He courted them the whole day long,
And on his pipes he played this song.

He said to the youngest, "Won't you be my wife?
Or I'll take your hide and I'll take your life."

"Before I'd be a wild man's wife,
I'd lose my hide and I'd lose my life!"

He took her hide and he let her go,
And she danced all night on the heel and toe.

He said to the second, "Won't you be my bride
Or I'll take your hair and I'll take your hide!"

"Before I'd be a wild man's bride
I'd lose my hair and I'd lose my hide!"

He took her hair and turned her loose
And she looked just like a new plucked goose.

He said to the oldest, "Won't you be my squaw?
Or I'll take your pelt to my mother in law."

She said, "Now wild man, that cannot be,
I'm a tough old gal and you can't fool me!"

He throwed at her his hunting knife,
But it bounced right back and took his life.

She put the hide back on her kin;
They were twice as pretty and young again.

Child #14

note: Recorded by Lisa Null and Bill Shute on "The Feathered Maiden and other ballads." Collected in Wisconsin, but this text derives from the Ozarks.

RW

apr96

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