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Gone to the Country: The New Lost City Ramblers and the Folk Music Revival (Music in American Life (Cloth Only))

Ray Allen

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Gone to the Country chronicles the life and music of the New Lost City Ramblers, a trio of city-bred musicians who helped pioneer the resurgence of southern roots music during the folk revival of the late 1950s and 1960s. Formed in 1958 by Mike Seeger, John Cohen, and Tom Paley, the Ramblers introduced the regional styles of southern ballads, blues, string bands, and bluegrass to northerners yearning for a sound and an experience not found in mainstream music.

Ray Allen interweaves biography, history, and music criticism to follow the band from its New York roots to their involvement with the commercial folk music boom. Allen details their struggle to establish themselves amid critical debates about traditionalism brought on by their brand of folk revivalism. He explores how the Ramblers ascribed notions of cultural authenticity to certain musical practices and performers and how the trio served as a link between southern folk music and northern urban audiences who had little previous exposure to rural roots styles. Highlighting the role of tradition in the social upheaval of mid-century America, *Gone to the Country* draws on extensive interviews and personal correspondence with band members and digs deep into the Ramblers' rich trove of recordings.

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