

Julia Wolfe's Steel Hammer

SOME SAY

Some say he's from
some say he
some say he's from
some say
some say he
say he
he

THE STATES

Georgia
Tennessee
Columbus, Ohio
Kentucky
Alabama
New Jersey
Yew Pine Mountains
Mississippi
Mountain
West Virginia
South Carolina

DESTINY

John Henry
was a little boy
sitting on his papa's knee
John Henry
was a little man
sitting on his mama's knee
a baby boy
sitting on his daddy's knee
John Henry
he said, "I'm gonna be a steel drivin' man."
He picked up his hammer and a little piece of steel
He said, "This hammer's gonna be the death of me."

MOUNTAIN

The mountain was so tall
John Henry was so small

CHARACTERISTICS

He was small
He was tall
He was black
He was white
He was true
He was false
He was two hundred pounds
He was two twenty-five
He's a worker
Convict
Singer
Thirty-five years
Twenty-two
Fifty
Cotton picker
Steel Driver (hammer, hammer, steel, steel)
He was true
He was false
He was six feet tall
He was five foot one
He was tall
He was small
He was small
He was tall

POLLY ANN

John Henry had a little woman
And her name was
Polly Ann, Mary Ann, Julie Ann, Sary Ann, Sally Ann,
Martha Ann, Liza Ann, Lucy Ann,
Mary Magdalena, Magdalena
John Henry had a little woman
and she was all dressed in blue,
dressed in red,
red, blue, black
John Henry's woman said to him,
"My darling Johnny, I've been true."
true to you, true to you
John Henry had a little woman
and her name was Ida Red,
and her name was Liza Jane,
and her name was Maggadee,
Polly Ann, Mary Ann, Julie Ann, Sary Ann, Sally Ann,
Martha Ann, Liza Ann, Lucy Ann,
Mary Magdalena, Magdalena
Ida Red, Maggadee, Liza Jane,
Polly

When John Henry he took sick to bed,
then Polly drove steel just like a man.

THE RACE

The captain told John Henry
“gonna bring that steam drill ‘round”
John Henry told the captain
“a man ain’t nothin’ but a man”
nothin’, nothin’, nothin’
but a man, but a man
John Henry on the right side
the steam drill’s on the left
right, left, right, left
“Before I let your steam drill beat me down,
I’ll hammer my fool self to death.”
nine pound hammer
ten pound hammer
twelve pound hammer
twenty pound hammer
two nine pound hammers
two twenty pound hammers
sixteen pound hammer
hammer, hammer, hammer, hammer

WINNER

The man who invented the steam drill,
he thought he was mighty fine.
John Henry sunk the steel fourteen feet,
while the steam drill only made nine,
Lord Lord

LORD LORD

Lord Lord
This old hammer rings like silver
This old hammer shines like gold