

Essequibo River

This South American river is in Guyana (which was a British colony) and the work song originated for stowing and moving in the West Indies. It is one of the earliest examples of African rhythms entering sailors songs. Later it was adopted as a halyard shanty on board yankee and British vessels. The structure is typical of a work song, with the call: 'Essequibo River is the queen of rivers all', and then the response: 'Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh'.

For use as a halyard (long drag) haul there would be two pulls in the response one on 'Bud' and the other on "some'.

Oh the Essequibo river is the king of rivers all
Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh
Oh the Essequibo river is the king of rivers all
Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh

Chorus

Somebody oh, Johnny, somebody oh

Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh

The Essequibo bosun is the king of bosuns all
Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh
The Essequibo bosun is the king of bosuns all
Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh

The Essequibo sailor is the king of sailors all
Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh
The Essequibo sailor is the king of sailors all
Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh

The Essequibo captain is the king of captains all
Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh
The Essequibo captain is the king of captains all.
Buddy ta na na we are somebody oh

<Repeat first verse>