

Sampson Pittman

"I Been Down In The Circle Before"

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Spoken: Boys, ain't no need to try and tell me nothing. You can't tell me nothing 'bout the circle because [?] the circle 'cause I worked for every contractor up and down the line. And I know just exactly what they'll do and how to [?]. That's why you hear me say: I ain't no stranger, you can't tell me nothing. I been down there lots of times.)

I worked on the levee¹, long time ago,
there ain't nothing 'bout the levee camp, boy, that I
don't know
Partner, partner, partner, don't you think I know
Son, I ain't no stranger, been down in the circle before

Now, there ain't but the one contractor that I fear, God
willing,
George Mullin they don't allow him back here
Partner, partner, partner, don't you think I know
Son, I ain't no stranger, I been down in the circle before

Now, there's Mr. Forrest Jones and he's so long and tall,
he killed a merchant man and he'd love to kill us all
Partner, partner, partner, don't you think I know
Son, I ain't no stranger, I been down in the circle before

(Spoken: Play it one time, play it)

Now, Mr. Charlie Loran, he's the mercy-man, the best
contractor,
partner, that's up and down the line
Partner, partner, partner, don't you think I know
Well, I ain't no stranger, I been down in the circle
before

Now, when you leave, I'd [take ?] by Highway 44,
the first camp you get to, it is called Rainy More
Partner, partner, partner, don't you think I know
Said, I ain't no stranger, I been down in the circle
before

I ain't gonna shed sorrow, I ain't gonna break down,

drinking while I'm wheeling, getting mean, all [?]
Partner, partner, partner, don't you think I know
Son, I ain't no stranger, I been down in the circle before

Now, our friend in Arkansas, tell him what to do,
they done told him to come to Arkansas, I told him no,
no, no
Partner, partner, partner, don't you think I know
Son, I ain't no stranger, I been down in Arkansas before

(Spoken: Goodbye)

Note 1: origin: from the old French word levée, act of raising, from lever to raise. An embankment for preventing flooding, or a river landing place, also, a continuous dike or ridge (as of earth) for confining the irrigation areas of land to be flooded. A levee camp therefore is a work camp for building or improving dikes to prevent rivers from flooding the land, primarily in the Mississippi Delta area.

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