De Boatman Dance

De Boatman Dance
(Daniel Decatur Emmett)

De boatman dance, de boatman sing, de boatman up to eb'rything.
And when de boatman get on shore, he spends his cash and works for more.

cho: Dance, de boatman dance! O dance, de boatman dance.
O dance all night till broad daylight
And go home wid de gals in de morning.
Hi ho de boatman row, Floatin' down de ribber on de Ohio!
Hi ho, de boat man row, up an' down de ribber on de Ohio!.

De boatman is athrifty man
Da is none can do as de boatman can ;
I neber see a pretty girl in all my life
But dat she be some boatman's wife.

De oyster boat should keep to de shore,
De fishin' smack should venture more.
De schooner sails before de wind,
De steamboat leaves a streak behind.

I went on board de odder day
To see what de boatman had to say;
An dar I let my passion loose
An' dey cram me in de calaboose.

I've come dis time, I'll come no more,
Let me loose, I'll go ashore;
For dey whole hoss, an' dey a bully crew
Wid a hoosier mate an' a captain too.

When you go to de boatman's ball,
Dance wid my wife or not at all;
Sky-blue jacket an' tarpaulin hat,
Look out, my boys, for de nine tail cat.

When de boatman blows his horn,
Look out, old man, your hog is gone;
He steal my sheep, he cotch my shoat,
Den put 'em in bag and tote 'em to boat.

note: the tune, as played today, has been considerably processed. This

is the original.

From Treasury of Missippi River Folklore, Botkin
apr96

Visit www.traditionalmusic.co.uk for more songs.