

# The SACRED HARP PUBLISHING COMPANY Newsletter

VOL. 3, NO. 2 Stories about singers and singings, our music and traditions, and Sacred Harp's present-day growth.

NOV 2014

## Come Sound His Praise Abroad: A Report on the First Germany Sacred Harp Convention

Álvaro Witt Duarte | Peabody, Massachusetts



First Germany Convention chairman Harald Grundner welcomes the class on Saturday, May 31, 2014. Photograph by Ellen Lueck.

**Editor's Note:** *On the first Sunday in June and the Saturday before, Germany joined the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Poland as the fourth European country to hold an annual Sacred Harp convention. Sacred Harp singings have been held in Germany since late 2010, and were bolstered by a pair of all-day singing schools held in the fall of 2011. Since that time, singing communities have formed in Berlin, Bremen, Frankfurt, and Hamburg. The success of the first German convention speaks to the love these new German singers have for Sacred Harp music, the bonds they've formed with singers across Europe and North America in the past few years, and the hard work they've put into strengthening Sacred Harp singing in their communities. Massachusetts Sacred Harp singer Álvaro Witt Duarte's account paints a picture of this seminal event for those who did not have the opportunity to attend.*

THE first German Sacred Harp Convention was an unforgettable experience. The number of countries represented and the amount of energetic singing made the experience truly special. Held May 31 to June 1, 2014, the convention drew together singers from the several regions of Germany where Sacred Harp singings have been established in the last few years, along with visitors from around Europe and across the Atlantic.

I arrived in Hamburg, Germany, on Wednesday, May 28, and made my way to the home of singer Philip Jacobs. The German singers had arranged for nearly everybody who did not live in the vicinity of Hamburg to stay with a local singer, a sign of the singers' hospitality and of the effort they had put into planning for the convention.

Thursday was Ascension Day.

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## Introducing Vol. 3, No. 1 of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter

**Jesse P. Karlsberg and Nathan Rees**

The seventh issue of the *Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter* documents the continuing spread of Sacred Harp singing in Europe, sheds new light on important moments in Sacred Harp's early history, and reports on recent developments at the Sacred Harp Museum.

Our issue opens with three writers exploring transatlantic Sacred Harp connections from different angles. Álvaro Witt Duarte's account of the first Germany Sacred Harp Convention documents an important milestone for European Sacred Harp—and a moving and energetic weekend. Ellen Lueck writes from a broader viewpoint on the recent spread of Sacred Harp singing across the Atlantic. Singers who have wondered about what Sacred Harp is like in Europe will be interested to read her thoughtful observations about these dedicated communities far from the singing's homeland. Chris Brown takes a historical perspective, investigating nineteenth-century English manuscripts to document the surprising flow of New England hymn and fugal tunes across the Atlantic long before most historians assumed this ever happened. Jesse P. Karlsberg and Christopher Sawula share another tale of music traveling long distances, revealing the fascinating story of how Elphrey Heritage, a Philadelphia bookkeeper, became the sole northern contributor to the 1870 *Sacred Harp*. We turn from nineteenth-century printing to cutting-edge technology in Clarissa Fetrow's review of "FaSoLa Minutes," an iPhone app for searching Sacred Harp songs, singers, and singings. The latest installment of our series on the stories behind our singings' minutes reprints the 1880 memorial in memory of Sacred Harp co-compiler Benjamin Franklin White, with new commentary on the text's historical context. Concluding the issue, Nathan Rees reports on the recent digitization of the Sacred Harp Museum's collection of open-reel tapes, and Jesse describes a rare copy of Joseph Stephen James's *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp*, recently donated to the Sacred Harp Museum.

Please leave your comments on these articles and write to us with your feedback. We also welcome your suggestions of topics for future *Newsletter* issues.

### Editorial Information

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To comment on or suggest future subjects for the *Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter*, please contact the Editor.

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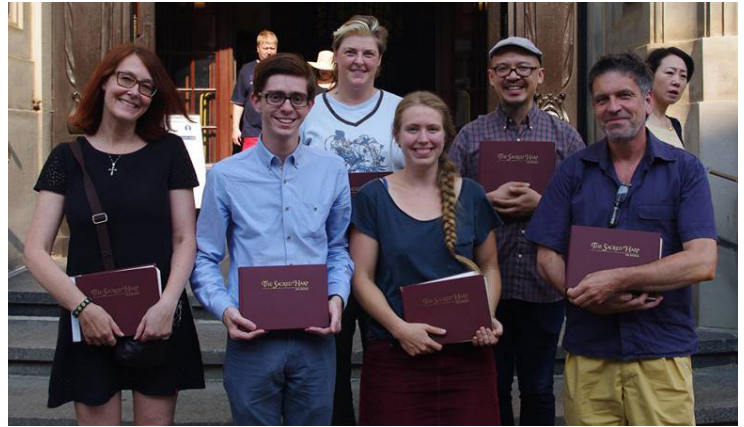
This newsletter is first published on the Sacred Harp Publishing Company website. The online edition includes videos, audio recordings, additional images and allows readers to post comments on articles. [originalsacredharp.com/newsletter](http://originalsacredharp.com/newsletter)

Yotin Tiewtrakul, a Hamburg singer and also the choir director at the Anglican Church of St. Thomas Becket in Hamburg, arranged for some Sacred Harp songs, and a few new compositions, to be presented at a morning service. A group of a dozen mostly German singers gathered at 9:30 am. Seated in a hollow square formed at the middle of the church, we sang six songs sprinkled throughout the service. It was a remarkable opportunity to sing songs from a largely Baptist and Methodist tradition in the southern United States in a German Anglican church service. I enjoyed singing the songs, but it was particularly moving to see high church and low church joining in one accord.

By Thursday afternoon, singers from all over Europe and the United States were beginning to arrive in Hamburg. The singers' exhaustion and excitement to be together was evident. In the evening, singers congregated at an atelier on Chemnitzstraße for an informal and energetic singing. The atelier, or artist's studio, was owned by a friend of Hamburg singer Philip Jacobs. The acoustics there really allowed one to focus on the sound quality of the singing. Singers' loud and enthusiastic voices attracted the attention of more than a few passers-by. They stood afar, and a couple of times a local singer went to speak to them about what they were hearing. The singing lasted until about ten. After the singing, some went out, and others traveled to their Hamburg "homes." I found it striking that even the singers who went to bed because they were tired from a long day of travel, still had energy to sing! Only in Sacred Harp!

Friday was filled with touring and singing in unexpected places. In the morning, en route to the famous St. Michaelis Lutheran Church, a group of us decided to go visit the nearby Georg Phillip Telemann House Museum, the one-room former home of an important German baroque composer. Naturally, we sang a few songs. The docent heard us then proceeded to uncover a spinet on display and allowed us to play it.





Michael Walker and Calum Woods played variations of songs in *The Sacred Harp*, including spirited renditions of “Beach Spring” (p. 8rt) and “Mear” (p. 49b).

Next, we went into the St. Michaelis Church. One of the five main Lutheran churches in Hamburg, St. Michaelis was founded in 1669. The present structure, built in 1786, is renowned for its 433-foot copper Baroque spire, visible from across the city. Somehow the docents there caught wind that there was a group of singers in the church and asked us to sing. We began with two songs, and then a request came for two more—we sang “Ninety-Third” (p. 3rt), “New Britain” (p. 45t), “Idumea” (p. 47b), and “Old Hundred” (p. 49t). This was surely the first time that *Sacred Harp* ever rang out in the nearly 350-year-old church. The first couple of songs were quiet. By the third we had begun to sing with

fuller voices that echoed through the sanctuary. The sound captivated tourists and visitors. They sat and listened while we sang. What an opportunity! As if singing in a famous church were not enough, some of us then went to the St. Petri Church, founded back in 1189, climbed over 500 steps to the steeple, then sang “The Solid Rock” from *The Christian Harmony*. We could hardly fit into the tiny space at the top. The view, however, was amazing. We were out-of-breath and sweaty from the climb, but we forgot about that the moment we caught sight of the view overlooking Hamburg. Truly great!

That night, Michael Walker held a *Christian Harmony* singing school at the Ökumenisches Forum Hafencity, the some location where the convention would take place. As it was the common language for most, the singing school was held in English, rather

**Top left:** Early arrivals sing and socialize at an artist’s studio on Chemnitzstraße, May 28, 2014. Photograph by Philip Jacobs.

**Top right:** *Sacred Harp* singers outside St. Michaelis Church, just before singing in the sanctuary, May 29, 2014. Photograph by Philip Jacobs.

**Bottom left:** Highlights from the convention’s Saturday evening social included a screening of a new documentary about *Sacred Harp* in Germany and fire twirling, May 31, 2014. Photograph by Ellen Lueck.

**Bottom right:** Zack Lindahl, of Sweden, was the convention’s chaplain, May 31, 2014. Photograph by Ellen Lueck.



Singers take the parting hand at the conclusion of the first Germany Sacred Harp Convention, June 1, 2014. Photograph by Ellen Lueck.

than German, although occasionally Michael would say a word or two in German to better convey a point. Michael introduced the book, its history, its notation system, and its musical characteristics. He did a great job of presenting the book and letting its songs introduce themselves. This was a success.

On Saturday morning, the convention itself began at 10:30. Chairman Harald Grundner, of Bremen, gave some introductory remarks, and led “St. Thomas” (p. 34b) as a first song. Zack Lindahl, a Swedish Lutheran pastor, who served as the chaplain, then gave the opening prayer. The class was energetic from the start, buoyed by large tenor and alto sections. There were no “morning songs”: leaders dove right into the book, leading challenging and energetic songs including “Consecration” (p. 448t), “Wood Street” (p. 504), and “Sing to Me of Heaven” (p. 312t). The first few hours of a brand new convention might seem overwhelming to the host community, but the German organizers handled this pressure very well.

A wonderful thing about this convention was the diversity of singers. Aside from Germans, there were singers in attendance from England, Ireland, Poland, Sweden, and the United States. I was particularly impressed with how

much the Polish leaders have learned in the few years that they have been singing—they bring a stable and calming presence in the square and command the class while leading challenging tunes like “Morning Prayer” (p. 411) and “Newburgh” (p. 182).

As for the dinner-on-the-grounds, I must say that I have never had such a delicious lunch outside of the South. From croquettes to noodles, salads to quiches, and potato dishes to meat dishes, Saturday’s lunch was incredible. After this feast, there was an energetic after-lunch session of singing. The final session of the day lasted until five in the afternoon! (Thankfully we were granted a break.) The later-than-usual finish made Saturday a singing marathon.

The social was held in the same location as the Thursday afternoon singing on Chemnitzstraße. When I arrived, a good number of singers were already congregated in the middle of the studio singing from *The Christian Harmony*. Their enthusiasm made it clear just how much they enjoyed this book! When they were finished singing, we watched a documentary made mainly by the Bremen singers that explained the history of and motivations for Sacred Harp singing in Germany. Oh yes, I can’t forget to mention the fire-twirling juggler. This was not part of the

scheduled events. One of the singers just happened to be an “I-play-with-fire-professionally” person, and he began doing a routine outside. Needless to say, it was an entertaining social.

The singing resumed on Sunday morning at 10:30. It started out a bit sluggish, but we quickly came together as one class. The second session of the day started at 11:50, and went right up to the memorial lesson. Michael Walker spoke for the sick and shut-ins. He reflected on meditation, breathing in suffering, and breathing out loving-kindness. After reading the names, we sang “Dura” (p. 531). Sixteen-year-old Calum Woods spoke for the deceased. He gave a personal testimony of how much Sacred Harp has changed his life since he started singing about a year ago. As a musician and composer, he spoke about not having the will to write or compose; of an illness that kept him from making music. He concluded by saying that music helped more than medication, that all troubles and worries were lifted, that he found solace in the words, and that this music was an expression of faith, bringing him closer to God. He closed the lesson by reading the names and singing “Heavenly Land” (p. 303). The lessons were uniquely moving.

As the end of the convention neared, the arranging committee started pairing leaders by region, country, or continent. After the last leaders were called, Harald Grundner, asked for announcements and then led “Parting Hand” (p. 62) as the closing song. What was already an emotional moment became even more poignant: the class started up strong on the shapes, but when it came time to stand on the first verse, it became clear that many of the singers were too new to know the words. Still, as everyone shook hands and embraced, the sound of humming filled the room. Although not everyone sang the words of “Parting Hand,” the song’s spirit was alive in the room. Everyone left feeling thankful to the German community for hosting this exceptional convention. I expect it only to grow and thrive in the coming years. ■



## Feature

# The Old World Seeks the Old Paths: Observing Our Transnationally Expanding Singing Community

By Ellen Lueck | Middletown, Connecticut

**FRETA** 7<sup>ths</sup>

W. Hammond, 1745 & J. Kochanowski, 1579      A. Blake Schefield 2009

1. Lord we come be-fore thee now, At thy feet we hum-bly bow, O do not our suit dis-dain! Shall we seek thee Lord in vain?  
 2. Com-fort those who weep and mourn, Let the time of joy re-turn, Those who are cast down lift up, Strong in faith and love and hope.  
 3. Grant that all may seek and find Thee a God su-preme-ly kind, Heal the sick the cap-tive free! Let us all re-joice in Thee!  
 4. Tyś jest Pan nie-zmie-rzo-ny, Nad wszy-tko wy-nie-sio-ny; Na zie-mi i na nie-bie Nie masz Bo-ga prócz Cie-bie.  
 5. My te-dy, co pra-gnie-my ła-ski Pań-skiej a chce-my U-po-do-bać się Je-mu, Prze-ci-wiaj-my się zle-mu.  
 6. Pan strze-że spra-wie-dli-wych I bro-ni od zło-śli-wych; A kto żył w po-bo-żno-ści, Pe-wien trwa-łej ra-do-ści.  
 7. Ra-duj-cie się, cno-tli-wi! A do-kąd nad Pań-ży-wi, Znać we-so-ły-mi ry-my Je-go ła-skę po-mni-my.

Allison Steel's "Freta" features a Polish language text.  
 Manuscript by Allison Steel, 2009.

IN 1982, Alan Lomax, the controversial ethnomusicologist and folklorist, predicted that thousands of Americans would be singing from The Sacred Harp across the country in the following years. He cited Sacred Harp singing's rich sound, democratic ideals, and generous community as portending its future as a national singing phenomenon. In a winded spout of inspiration on-the-fly, Lomax compared Sacred Harp singing to musical traditions of western and eastern Europe—the four-square melodies of Britain, Cornish harmonies, Ukrainian and Macedonian choral singing—as he rapidly patched together a mythical transatlantic prehistory of music in the Appalachian Mountains. Yet even Lomax couldn't reach to suggest that people in Europe would also be singing from The Sacred Harp.

Phil Summerlin—seated next to

Lomax in the 1982 video—expressed cautious support for Sacred Harp as a national phenomenon. Comparing such a spread to the marketing of bluegrass music during the folk revival, Summerlin feared that Sacred Harp “could ... be taken over somewhat, as bluegrass has been taken over.” A few years earlier, Buell Cobb had expressed similar concerns, writing of the emergence of new singings on northern college campuses,<sup>1</sup> “It could be said that the flower is being cultivated and the roots themselves neglected.”

Today, as Lomax predicted, Sacred Harp is sung across the United States. Yet the tradition's widening beyond US borders has exceeded the most imaginative predictions of the 1970s and 1980s. Sacred Harp singing has made its way to nineteen countries around the world. Our beloved fasolas resound in the United States, Canada,

England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Hong Kong. The majority of this dispersion has occurred within the past seven years. In 2007, the hollow square could only be found in the United States, Canada, and England. Today, new local singings form frequently—so frequently that I struggle to keep up with them while based in New England. Are these singings rootless bouquets of southern flowers, cut and exported to the world? Or are the roots of our music and its traditions being planted abroad, their systems radiating outward, stretching towards each other? Through my brief, but focused encounters with Sacred Harp singers in Europe<sup>2</sup>—many of whom I now count as excellent singers and dear friends—I am convinced that the roots of these new singings are growing, and will soon run deep. European singers strive for a rich, personal understanding of Sacred Harp singing as a living tradition. They respect its past. And they invest in building and nurturing local and transnational community.

## Commitment to Sacred Harp's Past, Present, and Future

Singers across the Atlantic find meaning in Sacred Harp. They care about its history, and they care about its future. They are drawn to the tradition for many of the same reasons as new American singers. They are enamored with the striking, open harmonies found in The Sacred Harp. Newcomers who lack a personal background in music delight in discovering the strength in their own voice. Weekly and monthly singings provide opportunities for regular fellowship, and are enticing



Matthew Parkinson leads at a weekly singing at the Octagon Chapel in Norwich, England, 2013. Photograph by Ellen Lueck

reasons to get out of the house, travel, and connect with friends old and new. For many European singers, the powerful combination of music, hymn text, and community facilitates meaningful and personal worship. And let's face it: we all love the food! While some of the dishes may differ, the importance of dinner-on-the-grounds has not been lost on European singers.

Old World singers care about the history of Sacred Harp. Many study the history of the tunebook and the families and traditions that surround it, and they enthusiastically share this knowledge with newcomers. They have learned from singing schools like Camp Fasola in Alabama and Poland, and from dedicated mentors, such as Michael Walker, Phil and Cath Tyler, Tim Eriksen, and Juniper Hill, to name a mere few. They also learn from online resources including Fasola.org, and uksacredharp.org. Several European singers are acquiring deep knowledge

of the various songbook editions, tunes added and removed, and individual composers. Calum Woods, from Halifax, England, produces astonishingly detailed Sacred Harp facts, even about tunes that have been removed from the book, an especially remarkable feat considering that he is just sixteen. Rebecca Over, also from England, has conducted significant historical research into one of Sacred Harp's most influential families, the McGraws. [See Rebecca's article "In the Footsteps of Lee Andrew McGraw" in vol. 3, no. 1 of the Newsletter for a taste of her research—Eds.] Singers in Europe are also aware of how The Sacred Harp fits into the broader history of shape-note tunebooks, and occasionally sing from other sources including the Cooper edition of *The Sacred Harp*, the *Christian Harmony*, and the recently compiled *Shenandoah Harmony*. And although Sacred Harp is understood as a tradition grounded in the southern United States with historical

connections to New England, some singers in the Old World find meaning in even older historical connections with Europe: the European ancestors of American shape-note composers, the many European hymn writers and composers included in *The Sacred Harp*, and the English roots of the four-shape solfege system.

Perhaps most importantly, European singers care about the future of Sacred Harp. Many feel ardently about building a singing community that will last for future generations. European singers consider themselves a part of a Sacred Harp lineage that stretches back to America. They recognize this heritage in their memorial lessons, and believe that it will continue to stretch forward, even after they are gone. Several singers also contribute to Sacred Harp's musical future by composing new songs. Shape-note tunes pour out of countries such as England and Ireland. Fynn Titford-Mock, of Norwich, England,





Sacred Harp singers from eleven countries, including a sizable contingent from the United States, attended Camp Fasola in northern Poland in September, 2014. Photograph by Olgiert Orlikowski.

has worked on over 150 original pieces since 2011. Sadhbh O'Flynn, of Cork, Ireland, has published a tune in *The Trumpet*, as have Jacek Borkowicz and Zofia Przyrowska of Poland. Some new shape-note tunes even use poetic texts in languages other than English. Allison Steel of Massachusetts set her tune "Freta," included in *The Shenandoah Harmony*, to a Polish language text. Just as *The Sacred Harp, 1991 Edition* included songs by singers from the northeastern and midwestern United States, future editions of *The Sacred Harp* may contain works by contemporary European shape-note composers, and perhaps composers from across the Pacific as well.

### Building Community Locally and Trans-nationally

European singers participate in Sacred Harp by singing, composing, and learning about its history. They are highly committed to Sacred harp

singing, and care deeply about its future. But how do our fellow singers build and maintain community? From what I have observed, European communities operate in much the same way as they do in the United States. Just as on this side of the Atlantic, ties to the Sacred Harp community are layered. Today's singers experience local, regional, national, and now transnational ties to Sacred Harp.

Local Sacred Harp communities in Europe tend to operate much like they do here in US regions outside of the South. They hold a regular weekly singing (a few meet only once per month). These gatherings attract dedicated singers who attend regularly, as well as others who attend only occasionally. Such frequent contact with the same people generates local singing styles and preferences for certain types of songs, or even specific tunes. In Bremen, Germany, for example, most singers prefer minor songs. In Cork, Ireland, singers have adopted particular vocal

flourishes and ornaments.

These regular singings are critical to community formation. Not only do they promote rapid progress in Sacred Harp singing ability and its nuanced style, but they also create personal connections amongst an immediate local group. Friendships run strong, and many local community members get together outside of their weekly singing. In Norwich, England, for example, you might find a group of Sacred Harp singers at The White Lion, a local watering hole, whether on Monday—the day of their regular singing at the Octagon Chapel down the road—or on any other day. In London, Sacred Harp friends frequently gather with just a few hours' notice in nearly any location for an impromptu singing. Singers have met in an empty warehouse, a city park, and even a tube station.

National networks form a second layer of community for European Sacred Harp singers. National singings form



**Left:** Singers from across the United Kingdom, and across the Atlantic Ocean, sing at a social after the 2013 Scotland all-day singing. Photograph by Ellen Lueck.

**Top right:** Aaron Kahn, now of Hong Kong, leads at the first Ireland Sacred Harp Convention in Cork, Ireland, March 6, 2011. Photograph by Jesse P. Karlsberg

**Bottom right:** A sumptuous dinner on the grounds at the first Poland Sacred Harp Convention, September 22, 2012. Photograph by Jesse P. Karlsberg.



similar functions as statewide singings in the United States. On this side of the Atlantic, for example, many connect with our particular local community (Atlanta, Sand Mountain, or Austin, for example), as well as our respective states. We express the importance of statewide bonds in the titles of many conventions—Georgia State Convention, All-California Sacred Harp Convention, Keystone Convention, for example. All-day singings and conventions in Europe demonstrate the same principle. The United Kingdom Sacred Harp Convention, which will hold its nineteenth annual session in September, rotates among various singing communities in England. The first Germany Sacred Harp Convention was held this May. Although hosted in Hamburg, singers from Bremen and other German cities helped plan for and support the big weekend. [*Read Álvaro Witt Duarte's report in this issue on the first Germany Convention.*—Eds.]

Intra-European ties form another layer contributing to Sacred Harp community. In terms of geography and accessibility, this European network

resembles America's national singing network. Singers have described Sacred Harp as a national community for over twenty years, linking communities from across the huge geographic and cultural spans of the United States, from Florida to Alaska. Likewise, despite cultural, historical, and even linguistic hurdles, Sacred Harp singers in Europe maintain a friendly, reciprocal, intra-European Sacred Harp network.

Proximity and accessibility help make this possible. By plane, some of the furthest journeys from one singing to another—from Warsaw to Cork, for example—take only three or four hours. Compare this to the frequent six-hour or longer journeys that Pacific Northwesterners endure to sing in Georgia or Alabama, and you begin to see how convenient attending singings across Europe can be for travelers. The cost of travel can also be less expensive in Europe than in the United States. A Sacred Harp singer can purchase a budget airline ticket from Warsaw to Cork for the cost of a casual sit-down dinner for two, a fraction of the price of a ticket from Portland to Atlanta.

Beyond the geographic and economic ease of travel within the European Union, the draw of such a fun and supportive Sacred Harp community is enough to lure scores of singers across the continent for several intra-European trips a year.

The outmost layer where Sacred Harp community forms is the transatlantic Sacred Harp network connecting Europe and the United States. Dozens of European singers have traveled to attend American singings in Alabama, Georgia, Minnesota, California, Oregon, Pennsylvania and New York, among other places. Likewise, numerous Americans have gone to Europe to sing from *The Sacred Harp*. Singers who have crossed the Atlantic in both directions in the past few years have found their expectations exceeded in many ways. Portland, Oregon, singer Thom Fahrback relayed to me his experience of singing in Cork at the first Ireland Convention in 2011—the event that catalyzed ardent intra-European support of Sacred Harp singing.<sup>3</sup> “I first came here thinking that they could really use a



lot of help.” But to Thom’s surprise, the Cork singers were well organized, had a strong local community, and could really sing! American singers continue to be astounded by the high level of musicality, rapid growth, and sincere hospitality and friendship they find when singing abroad. European singers who travel to the United States are often delighted by just how friendly and welcoming the national community is. Some are also shocked to discover that many American singers still have a thing or two to learn about Sacred Harp. After all, not every class sounds like the groups that Lomax recorded.

As more and more singers cross the oceans to sing together, our growing international Sacred Harp community becomes stronger. I am convinced that singers in the United States, Europe, Australia, and East Asia can learn a lot from each other—not just about the rich history and tradition of Sacred Harp in the US South—but about what it means to be part of a Sacred Harp community in a globally connected age. To return finally to Buell’s botanical metaphor, although the Sacred Harp roots that have been transplanted abroad are still young, they continue to grow and thrive in a wide variety of environments. Some of the flowers that sprout may vary in appearance—just as they do in Sand Mountain, Carrollton, and Chicago—but they all spring from the same plant. ■

#### Footnotes

1. Buell E. Cobb, *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), p. 160.
2. The research and social observations presented here are part of a much larger dissertation project, still in progress. I have traveled to the All-Ireland Convention twice. I toured England and Scotland in the summer of 2013, where I visited over a dozen singings. I also attended the First Germany Sacred Harp Convention in the summer of 2014, and Camp Fasola in Poland in September, 2014.
3. See Jesse P. Karlsberg, “Ireland’s First Sacred Harp Convention: ‘To Meet To Part No More,’” *Southern Spaces*, November 30, 2011, <http://southernspaces.org/2011/irelands-first-sacred-harp-convention-meet-part-no-more>.

## Read the Old Paths

# American Tunes in West Gallery Sources

Chris Brown | Elland, United Kingdom

THE conventional model of the flow of hymn tunes across the Atlantic is that music went from the United Kingdom to America in the years before the American Revolution and that American tunes came across to Britain in the 1860s and 1870s with the arrival of the Chicago evangelist Dwight Moody and the musician Ira Sankey. While there is some truth to this broad outline, America had a great impact on religious music in Britain between 1770 and 1860 as well. This influence is hardly documented in the literature on mainstream denominations, but can be detected in the presence of and references to American hymn-tunes in some popular sources in England, Scotland and Wales during this period.<sup>1</sup> In fact, almost as soon as American composers began to write music for hymns and psalms in the second half of the eighteenth century, their music was published, disseminated and sung in Britain.

The arrival of the first American tunes imported into Britain coincided with what is now known as the West Gallery period of British church music. At the time, country churches in Britain lacked organs and the music was provided by a choir and band who sat in the galleries at the west end of the church. In some places there was only a bass viol to pitch the singing while in others the band included fiddles and woodwind instruments. Often the musicians who accompanied the choir were the same people who played for the dancing on Saturday night. Isaac Watts had produced the first major collections of hymn texts suitable for singing by 1720 and this was followed by an explosion in the production of texts and tunes by ordinary people who lacked wealth and higher education. The books of music, “note books,” were expensive as

each page had to be engraved. Also, the nationally available books did not contain the work of many local composers. To get around this problem most singers and instrumentalists copied their music into manuscript books, many of them homemade. It is there that we find the music they actually played and sang, much of which was never formally published. For example we know of an anthem produced by a miner’s wife in the far South West some time before 1820, which is in other manuscripts, but was not published until the 1890s. These manuscript books contain much of the evidence for American influence on British religious music.

One of the paths of musical exchange between the United States and Britain was the succession of American evangelists who traveled to England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1766, Samson Occom, a Native American minister from Connecticut, visited England and Scotland on a preaching tour and to raise funds for what would become Dartmouth College. Another American preacher, Zadoc Priest, a New England Methodist who died young in 1796, is reputed to have visited Cornwall. The most influential of these early visitors was Lorenzo Dow, another New Englander, who came to England and Ireland in 1799, 1803, and 1818. He enthused many Methodists with his stories of camp meetings and the chorus songs for which they were famous. This led to the first British camp meeting, held at Mow Cop in Cheshire, and the founding of the Primitive Methodist Church in 1809. Their early hymnbook, *A Collection of Hymns for Camp Meetings, Revivals etc.*, contains texts for chorus songs, a form not previously found in British hymnody or psalmody. It seems likely



Manuscript books from the first half of the nineteenth century containing American tunes appear in locations across England. Map by Chris Brown and Jesse P. Karlsberg.



Lorenzo Dow (left) and Samson Occom (right) and were among the American evangelists who traveled to England around the turn of the nineteenth century. Painting of Occom courtesy of Dartmouth College Library, CC BY-NC. Engraving of Dow from the *Encyclopedia of Alabama*.



that many of the tunes sung to these texts were American chorus songs, although some would probably have been British in origin.

The first American tune that I can find in British books is William Billings's tune "Consolation" (*Hymn Tune Index* [HTI] 4008).<sup>2</sup> First published in Boston in his *Singing Master's Assistant* in 1778, a mere four years later, it appeared as "Stillman" in John Rippon's *A Selection of Hymn and Psalm Tunes*, which was published in London. By the very early 1800s the flow had become noticeable to contemporary British musicians although it is hard to trace in published books of music. About 1803, and no later than 1804, William Miller, son of the composer Edward Miller of Doncaster, published his sacred tune book, *David's Harp*, which was compiled for Methodist musicians. In his preface he has much to say about the science of music and the errors of his predecessors, and writes:

*It is to be lamented that, lately among the Methodists, a light, indecorous style of music has frequently been introduced, diametrically opposite to the Genuine tones of Sacred Harmony.*

*Many persons, destitute of scientific knowledge, and merely possessing a tolerably good ear, think themselves qualified to compose hymns, set them to music, and have them performed in their chapels; but these compositions only expose their authors to ridicule, by the meagre style of their poetry, and the frivolity and indecency of their music.*

*A number of these effusions of folly and ignorance have lately been brought over from America, which expose an important part of the worship of God to the merited censure of the judicious, and to sorrow of the truly pious, while some of the best hymns and most appropriate tunes in the English language are laid aside, and nearly forgotten.*

The sentiments of Miller's preface accord with those in his father's books, published around the same time, but the references to Methodism and American tunes are his alone. We can therefore surmise that the imported tunes he disliked were brought in and used by Methodists.

Jeremiah Ingalls's fusing tune "New Jerusalem" (HTI 7206a; *The Sacred Harp* [SH] 299) was exceptionally popular in Britain. It first appeared

in the American tunebook *Vermont Harmony* in 1796. In 1811 it was published in London by Thomas Walker and David Smith in their *Walker's Companion* to Dr. Rippon's *Tune Book* under the name "Zadock." This is the name by which it is usually found in English manuscripts, including Robert White's book of about 1820 and the Padstow Carol Manuscripts, where it is set to "While shepherds watched..." The tune appears under other names in English manuscripts; in the 1846 Longforth Manuscript from Hullavington in Wiltshire it retains its original name and in the carol manuscripts at Foolow, in Derbyshire, the tune is called "Mortals Awake," as it is set to the eponymous text by Samuel Medley.

The West Gallery researchers Paul Gailiunas, Judy Whiting, and Win Stokes have drawn attention to the presence of thirteen New England tunes in Joseph Featherston's 1811 manuscript from the lead mining area of Upper Weardale in County Durham.

All of these tunes except "Roslin Castle" can be found in every edition of *The Easy Instructor* published between 1809 and 1813. Featherston was a lead



miner and we know that some of his relatives were mining in the United States and Nova Scotia at the time so it would seem possible that a Durham exile sent one of these editions (or copies taken from it) home from New England. Paul Gailiunas has also found “Ballstown” and “Greenwich” in another later manuscript from nearby Greenside in County Durham. There are arguments about whether the origins of “Roslin Castle” lie in Scotland or America but the others are all major New England futing tunes, though some appear transcribed in non-futing form. Many of them survive to this day in the shape note tradition (eight of the thirteen are included in *The Sacred Harp*, 1991 Edition).

Richard Williams’s manuscript comes from Llanddausant on Anglesey. It is difficult to date but appears to be from the 1840s or 1850s and contains some as-yet- unidentified tunes with American names such as “America,” “New York,” and “Philadelphia.” Williams seems to have liked the work of Daniel Read and includes his “Greenwich” (HTI 4741; SH 183), “Lisbon” (HTI 4609a; SH 467), and “Sherburn” (HTI 4622a; a version of Read’s “Sherburne,” which appears on p. 186 in *The Sacred Harp*, here missing the final “e”), as well as Abner Ellis’s “Refuge” (HTI 11106).

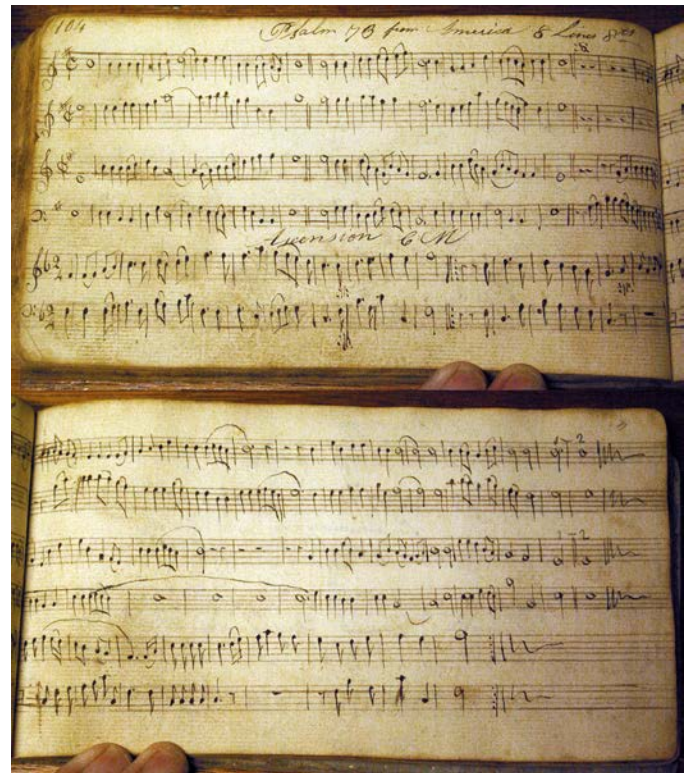
Daniel Read’s work is found in manuscript books from all corners of England and Wales. In addition to Durham and Anglesey, the Richard Edwards Manuscript, a compilation spanning 1820–1850, from Gwnnws, near Aberystwyth, contains his “Winter” (HTI 4629; SH 38t) with the title “Staughton,” under which it was published by Thomas Walker in London in 1800. His “America” (HTI 4624) and Samuel Holyoke’s “Egton” (HTI 10489) have been found in an 1830s manuscript which appears to come from the Ipswich area. “Staughton” and “America” are also included in an 1820s manuscript from Elm Street Chapel in Manchester. Paul Guppy, the leader of a West Gallery choir in Lancaster, tells me that Read’s “Russia” (HTI 4789; SH 107) appears in



“Zadock,” a version of Ingalls’s “New Jerusalem” (SH 299), from Robert White’s manuscript book, Ipswich, ca. 1820.

Tune Name	HTI No.	Words	Composer	Date
Greenfield	4278a	Psalm 46	Lewis Edson	1782
Greenwich[sic]	4741		Daniel Read	1785
Russia	4789		Daniel Read	1787
Montgomery	5375		Justin Morgan	1790
Funeral Tune	6035		Oliver Holden	1792
Newburgh	7656		Amo Munson	1798
Exhortation (Second)	8108a		Eliakim Doolittle	1800
Whitestown	8129	Psalm 78	Howd	1800
Roslin Castle	9253		Elisha West	1802
Milton	9356		Lewis Edson	1803
Schenectady	11114	Psalm 45	Nehemiah Shumway	1805
Petersfield	12533			1808
Ballstown	12947		Nehemiah Shumway	1809

The West Gallery researchers Paul Gailiunas, Judy Whiting, and Win Stokes have drawn attention to the presence of thirteen New England tunes in Joseph Featherston’s 1811 manuscript from the lead mining area of Upper Weardale in County Durham.



**Left:** Greenwich" (top two staves), a version of Read's "Greenwich" (SH 183), from Joseph Featherston's manuscript book, Upper Weardale, 1811..

**Right:** Psalm 78 from America" (top four staves), a version of Howd's "Whitestown" (SH 211), Joseph Featherston's manuscript book, Upper Wearsdale, 1811.

one of the Wyresdale Manuscripts from Lancashire.

Edwin Macadam, an Oxford Sacred Harp singer, recently pointed out the presence of "Worcester" (HTI 4077a; SH 195), Abraham Wood's 1778 fusing tune, in a hymnbook produced in Glasgow in the nineteenth century. It seems to have arrived there in 1814, when it was published in James Steven's influential *Selection of Sacred Music Vol. 4* and was later included in each of a series of cheap hymnbooks produced well into the late nineteenth century by Steven, Robertson, Brown, and Mitchison. The contents of these books are an eclectic mixture. They supplement the well-known Scottish tunes with pieces from English nonconformist sources and from America. As time went by the number of American tunes increased; by the 1840s and 1850s they included Billings's "Amherst" (HTI 3360a), Read's "America" and "Sherburne," Lewis

Edson's "Lenox" (HTI 4280; SH 40) and "Peterborough" (HTI 10186), as well as later tunes called "Summerfield" and "Washington," both of which the compiler describes as American.

One of the American pieces imported to Britain was William Billings's "David's Lamentation" (SH 268). Originally from *The Singing Master's Assistant* of 1778, it is found in several English manuscripts under the title "King David's Anthem." The song also appears in three manuscript books—one anonymous, one by Henry Whitaker and one by Moses Heap—in the collection of the Larks of Dean, "Dean Layrocks" in the local vernacular. The Larks of Dean were a choir of textile workers and farmers, based at Goodshaw Baptist Chapel in Lancashire, who collected, wrote and sang sacred music for much of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> Jean Seymour, a West Gallery choir leader from East Lancashire, informs me that the date of the first of

these is uncertain but that the others seem to be from the 1840s. "King David's Anthem" also appears in the 1850s Dinning Manuscript from Hexhamshire in Northumberland.

"Green Street" (SH 198) is another song which appears in United Kingdom manuscripts. It is labeled "From America" in Anne Dodson's 1844 manuscript. Sheila Girling Macadam, another Oxford Sacred Harp singer, has found it in a manuscript of about the same date from North Wales where it bears the same label. Its origins have been the subject of debate for some while but recent work by Fynn Titford-Mock, Warren Steel, Wade Kotter, and others has shown that it was written in America, probably in the 1830s, by George Coles, a Worcestershire Methodist who emigrated from Britain in 1818 and was based at Greene Street Methodist Church in New York.

Judging by the sources to which I have access, the major period for the



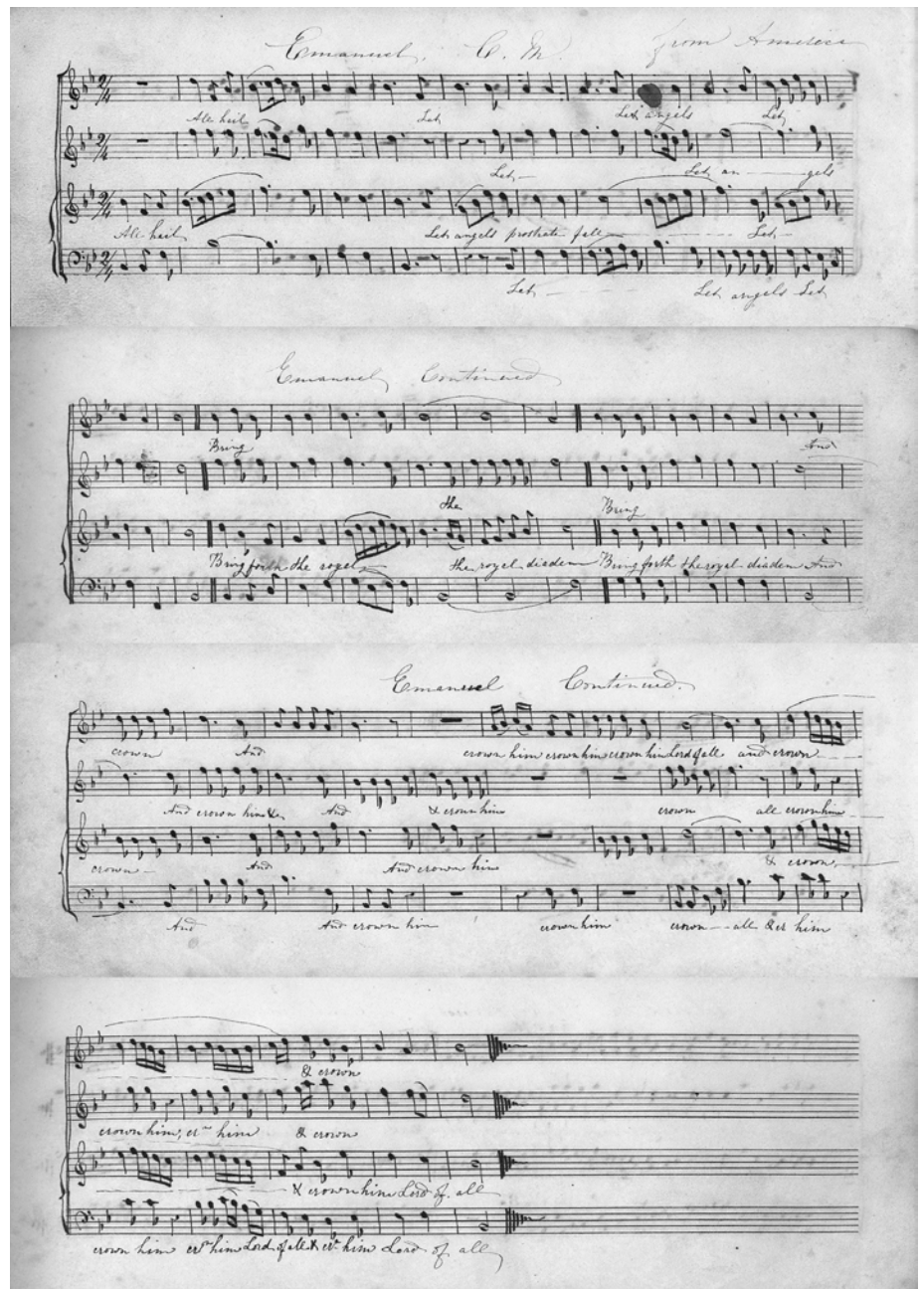
importation of American tunes for West Gallery musicians was from 1810 to 1850. Most of the tunes I have identified are fugal tunes from New England. These were strongly influenced by the style popularized in England in the late 1740s and early 1750s by James Evison, William Knapp, William East, Michael Beesly and others, so they were a good fit within the West Gallery tradition. The work of church music reformers such as Jonathan Grey, Matthew Camidge, and Edward Miller had made this style unfashionable in Britain by 1810, so the importing of American tunes may well have been an attempt to refresh and retain the old interesting style and reject the new plainer fashion. I have yet to find any American tunes from Pennsylvania and the frontier in English sources.<sup>5</sup>

Interestingly, almost all of the British books and manuscripts in which I have found these tunes have connections to Methodism or Calvinism. The absence of these tunes in Anglican sources is unsurprising given the Church's lack of enthusiasm for hymns and its desire for somber music that followed the classical rules of harmony. The link with Methodism is rather more difficult to understand. John Wesley disliked fusing tunes and wrote strongly of his disapproval. This is reflected in a passage from the minutes of the 1805 Methodist Conference:

*Let no pieces, as they are called, in which Recitatives by single men, Solos by single women, Fuging, or different words sung by different voices at the same time, are introduced, be sung in our Chapels.<sup>6</sup>*

Perhaps the appearance of fugal tunes in Methodist manuscripts is linked to the splits in Wesleyan Methodism that occurred around that time, resulting in the burgeoning of the Independent Methodists, Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, United Methodists, and other offshoots.

After the West Gallery period, the flow of American tunes into Britain shifted dramatically in character. In the 1860s and 1870s, the steady flow of early American fugal tunes was replaced



"Emanuel. C.M. from America," a version of "Green Street" (SH 198), from Anne Dodson's manuscript book, 1844.

with a flood of recent gospel hymns. Moody and Sankey sold five million copies of their *Sacred Songs and Solos*, which funded the Moody Church and Bible Institute in Chicago. It was said to be impossible to pass an English chapel without hearing the American gospel tunes of Sankey, Bliss, Black, Lowry, McGranahan and their contemporaries. Indeed Sankey said: "Our best words come from England; the music which best suits our purpose comes from America."<sup>7</sup>

This music too was received in some circles with the same disdain that William Miller had shown three generations earlier, tempered with a grudging admiration for their effectiveness. In 1885, John Spencer Curwen wrote in his *Studies in Worship Music*:

*There has been plenty of debate over these American gospel song tunes. Are they legitimate church music ... ? The taste formed on Bach ... finds these American pieces hopelessly insipid, not to say vulgar. Their structure is, indeed, extremely slight. The frequent employment of march rhythm is also distasteful to the ear. ... Without doubt these songs touch the common throng; they match the words to which they are sung, and carry them. The American Gospel Hymn is nothing if it is not emotional.*<sup>8</sup>

Despite the success of American gospel music in Britain, early American tunes still continue to cross the Atlantic. "The Indian Philosopher"/"Ganges" (HTI 8879a), first published in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1798, was included in the 1936 *Methodist Hymn Book* under the name "Hull." More recently, in the 1960s, commercial recordings of "Amazing Grace" by Judy Collins, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, and others popularized the words and the tune "New Britain" (SH 45t) in the United Kingdom. Though this hymn-text of John Newton's had disappeared from British hymnals by the 1830s, it now appears in most modern mainstream British hymnals.

Although this subject deserves more research, the very fragmentary nature

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CONTINUED.



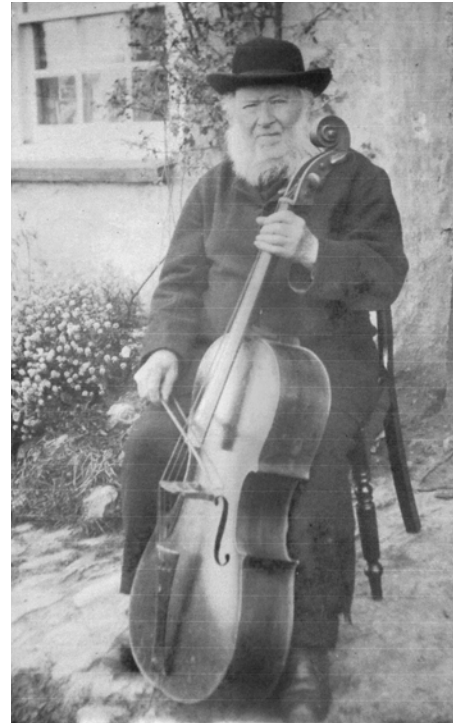
**Top:** A version of Wood's "Worcester" (SH 195), from Selection of Sacred Music, Glasgow, nineteenth century.

**Bottom:** Goodshaw Baptist Chapel in Lancashire is today the site of an annual Sacred Harp singing. Photograph courtesy of Robert Wade, July 14, 2011, CC BY-NC-SA.





Read's "America," from the tiny Manchester manuscript book, perhaps in the hand of Charles Rider, compiler of *A Selection of Hymn Tunes for the use of the Sunday School in Elm Street, Manchester, ca. 1820s*.



Thomas Thomas, a West Gallery musician from Cornwall, with his bass viol, late nineteenth century.

of the sources make such work difficult. My conclusions are based on the small sample of sixty or so manuscripts about which I have information. From this sample, however, it would appear, that most of the American tunes entered West Gallery books and manuscripts following a similar pattern. They were imported between 1810 and 1850; they came from New England rather than the South or West; they were fusing tunes or arrangements of fusing tunes; and they were used by Methodists and Non-Conformists rather than by Anglicans. Though there is much more work to be done, it is clear that early American hymns had a significant presence in Britain. ■

### Acknowledgements

*I would like to express my thanks to Tim Eriksen, Paul Gailiunas, Chris Gardner, Paul Guppy, Wade Kotter, Edwin Macadam, Sheila Girling Macadam, Jean Seymour, Warren Steel, Win Stokes, and Judy Whiting for sharing their research, which form a large part of this article.*

### Footnotes

1. An exception to the lack of documentation of American influence is the literature on Primitive Methodism.
2. Nicholas Temperley's "The Hymn Tune Index" (HTI), a database of "all hymns printed anywhere in the world with English-language texts up to 1820, and their publication history up to that date," is accessible online at <http://hymntune.library.uiuc.edu/>. Searching by HTI number yields a results page providing the melody of the given tune (represented in a form of numerical notation) along with its meter, mode, author, and number of sources for the tune through 1820. Clicking on the "Find Citations" button pulls up a list of these sources.
3. It has been suggested that the name "Zadock" derives from a Cornish visit by Zadoc Priest. This may be true but Priest died in 1796, the year the tune was first published. This does not preclude his having brought the tune to Britain, as we know that some tunes migrated before they were published, but it seems unlikely.
4. Today, Goodshaw Baptist Church is the venue for an annual Sacred Harp singing, held on the Saturday before the third Sunday in May.
5. The reasons for this are unclear. It cannot
6. be for lack of appeal as much of the music of the American frontier was a development of styles popular in Primitive Methodist and other British circles. The lack of frontier tunes in English sources may have more to do with the weakness of family ties between Britain and the non-Quaker communities in these areas which were settled largely by Scots-Irish, German, and internal American migrants.
6. Transcribed in William Myles, *A Chronological History of the People Called Methodists ... from 1729, to ... 1812* (London: [Methodist] Conference-Office, 1813), 271. The term "fusing," spelled "Fagaing" in this source, was altered to "fuguig" in Valentine Ward's *A Miniature of Methodism* (London: John Mason, 1829), 92, and to the present spelling in John Spencer Curwen, "Methodist Psalmody," *The Congregationalist* 7 (1878): 600.
7. Ira D. Sankey, quoted in John Spencer Curwen's, *The Music of the Moody-Sankey Meetings, in Studies in Worship Music, Second Series* (London: J. Curwen and Sons, 1885), 39.
8. Curwen, "The Music of the Moody-Sankey Meetings," 39-40.

## Read the Old Paths

# Elphrey Heritage: Northern Contributor to the Nineteenth-century Sacred Harp

Jesse P. Karlsberg, Atlanta, Georgia | Christopher Sawula, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

ALL of the direct contributors to the nineteenth-century editions of *The Sacred Harp* lived in Georgia or Alabama with one exception: Elphrey Heritage, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> Heritage contributed two songs to the 1870 fourth edition of *The Sacred Harp*: “Warning” (p. 213b in *The Sacred Harp, 1991 Edition*) and “The Savior’s Call” (p. 489). Who was Elphrey Heritage? How did this northerner come to have his music included in Benjamin Franklin White’s southern shape-note tunebook just five years after the Civil War?

Heritage’s connection to *The Sacred Harp* stems from his long tenure as bookkeeper with the Philadelphia printing firm of Tillinghast King Collins and Philip Gould Collins, publishers of the first four editions of the tunebook.<sup>2</sup> As Warren Steel notes, “the firm of T. K. & P. G. Collins was known for the high quality of its typography and for the lavishly illustrated works of geology and natural history that issued from its presses.”<sup>3</sup> The firm had printed editions of William Walker’s *Southern Harmony* since 1838, and in 1844, White contracted with the firm to print the first edition of *The Sacred Harp*. While none of Heritage’s songs were included in this first edition, the bookkeeper contributed songs to four other shape-note tunebooks published by Collins between 1846 and 1855.<sup>4</sup> Remarkably, these songs and the two he contributed to *The Sacred Harp* constitute Heritage’s entire known compositional output. No other press published any of his songs.

Born in New Jersey on January 25, 1812, Elphrey Heritage moved to Philadelphia with his brother Jason Heritage as a young adult. A Quaker, Elphrey was a relatively prominent Philadelphian during the peak of his compositional activity. He served for many years as secretary of Philadelphia’s



Elphrey Heritage’s Philadelphia, ca. 1842–1845. Photograph by William G. Mason, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-9390.

Star of America Lodge No. 52, a branch of the Odd Fellows fraternal and service organization.<sup>5</sup> Heritage supported temperance initiatives, and in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, he was active in Republican Party politics in Philadelphia, placing him on the opposite end of the political spectrum from many of *The Sacred Harp*’s southern contributors.<sup>6</sup> In addition

to bookkeeping for T. K. & P. G. Collins, Heritage worked in real estate, accumulating enough money to buy back a sizable lot the city had attempted to claim for a sum of \$7,600 (approximately \$131,000 in today’s money).<sup>7</sup> Given his relative social prominence and wealth, why did Heritage continue to work as a bookkeeper at the Collins printing firm? One benefit of working at Collins



THE GOOD OLD WAY. L. M. Dover Selection, p. 56 213

1 Lift up your heads, Immanuel's friends, O hal-le, hal-le - lu - jah; } Let nothing cause you to delay, O hal-le, hal-le - lu - jah;  
And taste the pleasure Jesus sends, O hal-le, hal-le - lu - jah. }

2 Our conflicts here, though great they be, Shall not prevent our victory, } And I'll sing hal-le - lu-jah, And glo-ry be to God on high;  
If we but watch, and strive, and pray, Like soldiers in the good old way. }

3 O good old way, how sweet thou art! May none of us from thee depart, } And I'll sing hal-le - lu-jah, And glo-ry be to God on high;  
But may our actions always say, We're marching on the good old way. }

4 Though Satan may his power employ Our peace and comfort to destroy, }  
Yet never fear, we'll gain the day, Our God will wipe all tears away,  
And triumph in the good old way. And I'll sing, &c.

5 And when on Pisgah's top we stand, 6 Ye valiant souls, for heaven contend;  
And view by faith the promised land, We'll meet with those who've gone before;  
Then we may sing, and shout, and pray, Our God will wipe all tears away,  
And march along the good old way. And him we'll praise in endless day,  
And I'll sing, &c. Who brought us on the good old way  
And I'll sing, &c.

THE GOOD OLD WAY L. M. Dover Selection, p. 56 213

1 Lift up your heads, Immanuel's friends, O hal-le, hal-le - lu - jah; } Let nothing cause you to delay, O hal-le, hal-le - lu - jah;  
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Then we may sing, and shout, and pray, Our God will wipe all tears away,  
And march along the good old way. And him we'll praise in endless day,  
And I'll sing, &c. Who brought us on the good old way  
And I'll sing, &c.

WARNING. 6s & 4s. (Peculiar.) E. Heritage.  
A. danger.

1. To-day the Sa-ve-our calls, Ye wan-der-ers, come! Why longer roam?  
Oh, ye be-ought souls, Omit . . . . . To Je-sus bow.

2. To-day the Sa-ve-our calls! Oh, hear him now!  
With-in the-ose-ered walls Omit . . . . . To Je-sus bow.

3. To-day the Sa-ve-our calls! For re-fuge say;  
The storm of sin-ners' falls, Omit . . . . . And death is nigh.

4. The spi-rit calls to-day! Yield to his pow-er:  
Oh, grieve him not a-way! Omit . . . . . To meet-er's house.

**Top:** Page 213 in *The Sacred Harp* before “Warning.” Second Edition, 1857 printing. Courtesy of Mary Brownlee.

**Bottom:** Page 213 in *The Sacred Harp* with “Warning” added. Fourth Edition, 1897 printing. Courtesy of Mary Brownlee.

was access to the social world of the tunebook compilers who published his compositions.

Most of Heritage's songs are in the reformed style of Lowell Mason. Plain tunes featuring sweet, filled-in chords with minimal part-crossing, these songs generally anchor a strong melodic line with relatively static harmony parts. Though some of his earlier songs break from this mold, adopting the “dispersed harmony” style common to the shape-note tunebooks in which he published his music, Heritage's two contributions to *The Sacred Harp*, Fourth Edition, fit comfortably in reformed tune territory. These two songs were Heritage's last, published just five years before his death on December 6, 1875.<sup>8</sup>

“Warning” is unique among all the songs in *The Sacred Harp* because it sets four musical parts on three staff lines, and because it notates the different endings to the song's two phrases through the strategic use of a repeat marker and the text “(omit).” These unusual notational decisions have led to considerable confusion and occasional humor. Singers are often uncertain about which of the two parts sharing the song's middle staff are which (the top one is the tenor, the bottom is the alto). Classes unfamiliar with the song have also misidentified “omit” as a lyric, singing it to the omitted phrase's melody. On another occasion, singers at the weekly singing in Cork, Ireland, interpreted the “omit” as a rest, and simply remained silent for the duration of a measure in the middle of the song!

These confusing choices, however, may have been key to the song's inclusion in *The Sacred Harp*. “Warning” takes up less space on the page than any other song in the tunebook. As Elder J. L. Hopper has it, the song was “picked green.” This small size enabled the song to fit on a portion of the bottom right corner of page 213 that had previously featured additional verses for the other song on the page, “The Good Old Way.” In comparison, “The Saviour's Call” is relatively ordinary. Notated conventionally, the song was added to *The Sacred Harp's* fourth edition

appendix, and did not displace extra verses or a previously included song. Short and tucked into unobtrusive corners of *The Sacred Harp*, the songs may have been added to the book at Collins's urging. Or Heritage may have asked to have them included and been given what limited real estate was available.

Once in *The Sacred Harp*, neither song achieved much popularity. Perhaps for this reason "The Saviour's Call" was removed from the 1936 *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, which trimmed almost ninety pages of music from the book. "Warning" has remained in *The Sacred Harp*, on the bottom right corner of page 213, since 1870, despite the fact that it has never been popular. Thanks to its small size the song is nearly immune to removal as it would be a challenge to replace.

The removal of "The Saviour's Call" caused considerable conflict. Unbeknownst to the members of the 1936 music committee, most of whom lived in North Alabama or West Georgia, the song was a favorite of Plez Hardin, patriarch of an influential South Georgia singing family and chairman of the area's South Georgia Sacred Harp Singing Convention. After discovering that the song had been omitted from the Denson Revision, Hardin declared that the area's singings would never use the new book. Indeed, Hardin's group continued to use the Denson Revision's precursor—the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*, commonly known as the "James book"—until the early 1970s. Singers from the area, including Raymond C. Hamrick, often first encountered the Denson Revision only when they traveled to sing outside of their region.

Hugh McGraw, elected as executive secretary of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company in 1958, immediately began repairing ties with the South Georgia singers. In 1960 the music committee of the *Original Sacred Harp: 1960 Supplement* added "The Saviour's Call" back to the book.<sup>9</sup> The committee, which included McGraw, restored the song as a gesture of inclusion toward the South Georgia singers. McGraw

also permitted the singers to print new copies of the James book in 1964.<sup>10</sup> The music committee of the 1991 Edition of *The Sacred Harp*, which included both McGraw and Hamrick, added new songs attributed to South Georgia Sacred Harp singers J. Monroe Denton, Joyce Harrison, David Grant, and, of course, Hamrick himself. "Nidrah" (p. 540), one of Hamrick's songs, is named for the Hardin family's Nidrah Plantation (Nidrah is Hardin spelled backwards), long the site of an annual singing and twice host to the Georgia State Sacred Harp Convention.<sup>11</sup>

While never among its most popular songs, Elphrey Heritage's two contributions to *The Sacred Harp*, Fourth Edition remain in the tunebook nearly 150 years after their initial publication. Their continued inclusion is a testament to the canny construction and typesetting of "Warning" and to the value the songbook's revisers placed on including South Georgia in our singing community. Heritage's life and music also shed light on the Sacred Harp's early publishing history. The tunebook, compiled and sung from by southerners, nonetheless owes its form and at least a tiny portion of its contents to the place where it was published: Philadelphia. Philadelphians cut the metal type that made it possible to publish a book set in shape-notes, used modern equipment with great care and precision to execute the handsome design of the book, and, thanks to Elphrey Heritage's involvement with T. K. and P. G. Collins, contributed a couple of songs to the book's quiet corners as well. ■

#### Footnotes

1. As Robert L. Vaughn points out, at least two composers had moved from Georgia to Texas by the time their contributions to the fourth edition of *The Sacred Harp* were published in 1870.
2. An obituary noted that "Mr. Elphrey Heritage, an old book-keeper for the 'Collins Printing House,' ... had been in the employ of the establishment for twenty-five years." See "Local Summary," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 7, 1875.
3. David Warren Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp* (Urbana: University of



Hugh McGraw strove to repair ties with the South Georgia singers. Photograph courtesy of Pitts Theology Library.

Illinois Press, 2010), 7. An obituary for T. K. Collins in the April 8, 1870 issue of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* claims that the printer's firm "turned out some of the finest specimens of typography ever produced in America."

4. If Heritage kept books for Collins for exactly twenty-five years he would have begun working at the firm a year after *The Sacred Harp's* publication and just a year before his first song, "Vernon," appeared in James B. Aikin's *The Christian Minstrel* (Philadelphia: T. K. & P. G. Collins, 1846), 219, "[c]omposed ... expressly for this work." Heritage contributed songs to the Collins books *The Hesperian Harp* (1848), *The Timbrel of Zion* (1853), and *The Social Harp* (1855). After Heritage's death, William Hauser, compiler of *The Hesperian Harp*, reprinted one of Heritage's songs in his *Olive Leaf* (1878).
5. "E. Heritage" posted numerous Star of America Lodge No. 52 meeting notices in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* in the 1850s. His participation in the lodge falls off in 1863.
6. Heritage participated in an 1852 meeting trying to prevent the production of liquor for drinking purposes. He was named a representative of Philadelphia's Ward 20 on the Committee of Resolutions at the 1867 Republican City Convention. See "Take Notice—A Meeting ... Prohibiting the Manufacture and Sale of All Intoxicating Liquors as a



Beverage ...," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, April 24, 1852; "The Republican City Convention," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 30, 1867.

7. Heritage ran notices advertising rental properties, including one listing "to let—several new houses, with gas, bath, hot and cold water ... rent 8.50." See "To Let," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, August 20, 1861. The City of Philadelphia had attempted to claim a plot of land adjacent to Wills's Hospital at the northwest corner of 18th and Cherry Streets. After the city began construction on a new part of the hospital there, Heritage was able to prove that James Wills, the property's namesake and former owner, had granted Heritage the land in his will. The city agreed that the property was legally his, abandoned their claim, and Heritage paid the Board of Managers of the Hospital for the property. See *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 19, 1868, and *Journal of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia for the Year 1868*, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: King & Baird, Printers, 1868), 295.
8. Although the Inquirer's December 7 notice of Heritage's death states the bookkeeper "fell dead yesterday morning of heart disease," a notice in the same paper the following day reports on a "coroner's inquest ... in the case of Elphrey Heritage, who died suddenly on Monday at No. 705 Jayne Street. Verdict, death from fatty degeneration of the liver." See "Coroner's Inquests," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 8, 1875.
9. Thanks to Aldo Ceresa for pointing out that "The Saviour's Call" was restored in 1960. An earlier version of this article stated in error that the song was added back to *The Sacred Harp* in 1991.
10. The Publishing Company had also permitted a reprint of the James book around 1949.
11. See Jesse P. Karlsberg, "List of Locations, Officers, and Committee Members of the Georgia State Sacred Harp Singing Convention," <http://jpkarlsberg.com/research/>

## Number, Measure, Weight

# There's an App for That: A Review of the 'FaSoLa Minutes' App

Clarissa Fetrow | Seattle, Washington

ONE year ago, Mark Godfrey and Lauren Bock unveiled a new smartphone app made especially for Sacred Harp singers. It's called "FaSoLa Minutes," and it is enhancing how we look up song, singer, and singing information. I started using the app as soon as it became available, and have found it enjoyable, easy to use, and frequently helpful. Here are some of the ways "FaSoLa Minutes" can help answer questions about Sacred Harp songs, singings, and singers.

## Songs

A Sacred Harp tune catches my attention. I pull out my iPhone, and launch the "FaSoLa Minutes" app. After selecting the song from the app's "Songs" tab, I can see a list of the twenty people who have led the song the most since 1995, as well as where, when, and how often it has been led each year. I can read the song's poetry. For most songs there are a few recordings to listen to as well, available from Robert Stoddard's BostonSing.org website. I can view a bar graph showing how many times the song has been led each year. Something heartening: no matter how popular a song is or isn't, for most songs in the book, the bars in the graph increase in height in more recent years, a sign that there have been more and more singings held each year since 1995.

## Singings

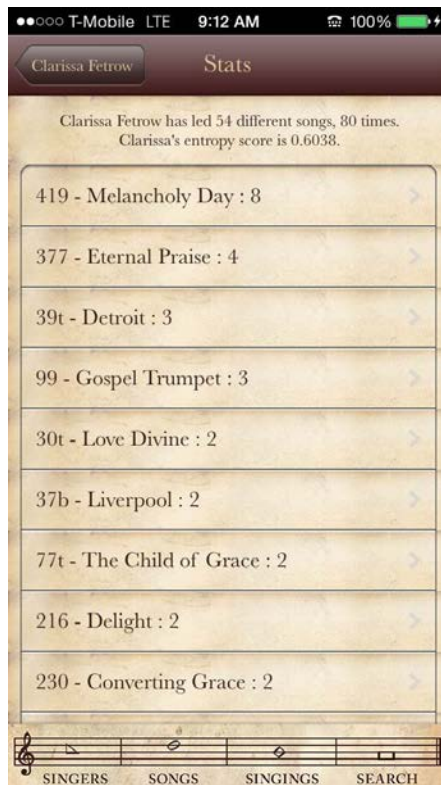
I have the opportunity to go to a singing that's new to me. Again, I open "FaSoLa Minutes." Under the "Singings" tab I can peruse the minutes of that singing from the most recent year it was held to as far back as 1995. I can see the order of the tunes led, and who led them. I can see how many leaders and how many songs there were for any given year. Unlike the annual *Minutes*

of *Sacred Harp Singings* or the minutes section of the Fasola.org website, the "FaSoLa Minutes" app displays the name of each song led, as well as its leader and page number in *The Sacred Harp*.

## Singers

I want to remember if I have led a certain song. I pull out the app again, and look myself up under the "Singers" tab. I can see the chronological list of songs I have led, and where I led them. I can also see a list of the songs I have led beginning with the song I've led the most, and continuing on down to the songs I have only led a single time. I can view a bar graph that shows how many singings I have led at each year. I can also see my entropy score, a number that varies based on the range of different songs I have led. And I can access all this information about you too, or any other person who has led at Sacred Harp singings since 1995.

I recently spent a week in Alabama, attending a few singings and a session of Camp Fasola. I found that I was not the only one during mealtime conversations who was pulling out the app to discuss songs. We would consult the list of the top twenty leaders of a given song, and lifelong singers would reminisce about those leaders, some now gone. Most Sacred Harp singers who enjoy perusing the Minutes book find they love the accessibility and organization of information about songs, singings, and singers in the "FaSoLa Minutes" app. For now, the app is only available for iOS devices, including the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch. Created by Mark Godfrey, the app is designed by Lauren Bock. The data used in the app is the information gathered from secretaries by Judy Caudle (and before her by Shelbie Sheppard), and put online by Chris Thorman



on the fasola.org website. Additional indexes on the Fasola website, listing songs by their composers, text meters, and more, aren't accessible through the "FaSoLa Minutes" app. Both the Fasola.org website and the "FaSoLa Minutes" app provide tools for looking up a song if you only remember a few of the words. In the app, you can simply type in a few words from the "Search" tab.

All the information about Sacred Harp songs, singsings, and singers is contained within the app. Because of this the content remains searchable and the app fully functional even without cell phone reception or a wifi signal. You can use the app anywhere—whether you're arranging at a remote country church or chatting with singing friends at a social. (One exception: the recordings included on song pages are only playable when connected.)

"FaSoLa Minutes" was the best \$4.99 I ever spent. A small price to pay for an incredible range of functionality, it's also nice to know that the money received is donated to the Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Association, where it supports the preservation and perpetuation of Sacred Harp singing and its traditions through programs such as Camp Fasola. ■

**Top left:** Songs: Viewing the top twenty leaders of "Invocation" (p. 492).

**Top right:** Singsings: Browsing the minutes of the 2007 United convention.

**Bottom left:** Singers: Top songs led by the author.

**Bottom right:** Full-text search: Looking up songs with the text "corn in valleys grow."



## Just a Minute; Read the Old Paths

# The Chattahoochee Convention, August 1, 1880: Memorial for Benjamin Franklin White

Jesse P. Karlsberg | Atlanta, Georgia



BENJAMIN Franklin White, co-compiler of *The Sacred Harp*, prolific composer, and the person largely responsible for building the traditions that continue to define Sacred Harp singing, died on December 5, 1879. The following year, the Chattahoochee Musical Convention, at that time a leading Sacred Harp singing institution, held a special memorial session in his honor. Cornelius W. Parker, John Palmer Reese (president of the Chattahoochee Convention), and James Martin Hamrick (the convention secretary), delivered an address remarkable for its florid language and depth of feeling.<sup>1</sup> Hamrick transcribed the committee's "report on memoirs" in the Chattahoochee Convention's record book, a copy of which is available at the Sacred Harp Museum. *The Chattahoochee Musical Convention, 1852–2002: A Sacred Harp Historical Sourcebook*, published by the museum, includes this and many other excerpts from the convention's record book.<sup>2</sup> The report appears below unmodified, but with annotations providing additional context.

—Jesse P. Karlsberg

Tintype of Benjamin Franklin White and Thurza Melvina Golightly White, 1870s. Photograph courtesy of the grandchildren of George Pullen Jackson.

## Footnotes (Introduction)

1. Rev. Dr. Cornelius W. Parker (1829–1909) graduated from Emory College and—after a brief stint in the daguerreotype business—received his license to preach in 1849. He married Tabitha Terry that year. Parker attended medical college shortly after marrying and began practicing medicine in 1851. He remained active in medicine and ministry for decades. John Palmer Reese (1828–1900) was a mason, a tax collector, and a farmer. Active as a singing school teacher for three decades, Reese was also a prolific composer, contributing songs to the third and fourth editions of *The Sacred Harp* as well as to *The Vocal Triad* and *The New Sacred Harp*. Reese married Elizabeth Mosely. Under the

pen names "Rubin" and "Ripples" he was a regular contributor to the *Newnan Herald and Advertiser* and the *Barnesville Gazette*. James Martin Hamrick (1838–1907) was a farmer and tax collector. He was married four times and thrice widowed. During the Civil War his hand was shot and he nearly died of gangrene. In a 1902 autobiography, Hamrick wrote "For the past 40 years I have been a lover of sacred music and have traveled hundreds of miles to attend our conventions, and at my present age, it fills my soul with love to sing God's praises; and if a man were to pass my house with a sacred harp under his arm, he can return, eat my ham and sweetened coffee, and slumber on my best bed. Last year I attended 20 conventions and annual

sings, ... [a]nd after my time, I hope my musical friends will hold a memorial singing in memory of me." On these singers' biographies, see "Will Celebrate Golden Wedding," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 9, 1899; David Warren Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 151; James Martin Hamrick, *A Sketch of the Life of James Martin Hamrick* (Carrollton, GA: Times Job Department, 1902), <http://www.ronsattic.com/jmhamric.htm>. Thanks to Robert L. Vaughn, David Warren Steel, and Bentley Fallis for their help identifying Parker and Hamrick.

2. Kiri Miller, ed., *The Chattahoochee Musical Convention, 1852–2002: A Sacred Harp Historical Sourcebook* (Carrollton, GA: Sacred Harp Museum, 2002), 163–165.

## Report on Memoirs.

Your committee on deceased members, after some effort to obtain information in reference to the departed, most respectfully submit the following report:

Maj. B. F. White, although not strictly a member of this convention,<sup>1</sup> was virtually connected with all societies adopting the Sacred Harp as a text book—a book of which he was the honored and worthy author. We, therefore, deem it fitting that this body hold a memorial session in honor of this veteran singer, poet, and author, whose memory we fondly cherish and who is so eminently entitled to our highest respect and esteem, and for whose labors for the cause of music we desire to express our heart-felt appreciation. The work needs no encomium. Time will not allow an extended panegyric discourse, but we feel that a short eulogium should be encouched in this report. We can not furnish as extensive biography as we wish, neither is it necessary, as all are more or less familiar with his history.

He was born in South Carolina about 1793 and died in Atlanta in December 1879, being about 86 years old at his demise.<sup>2</sup> Maj. White being naturally genial and companionable, as well as emotional, it is not marvelous that he should in early life become enamored with social music. After over twenty years deep interest in the science of music, he entered the field as a teacher and for twenty years, in the prime of his life, went about doing good,<sup>3</sup> teaching not only the harmony of music but the harmony of peace and good will among men; and although many still live to call him blessed, and in whose memories are still the enchanting strains of vocal music discoursed in his schools and social gatherings, as well as in assembly of worshipers, perhaps a large number have long since passed away, and many of whom we verily believe are today sounding aloud enrapturing anthems in company with angel choirs and singing the songs of Moses and the Lamb. After teaching twenty years, his soul became so bounding with music that he could not rest till he had the satisfaction of seeing his own productions and the many rich collections from his co-laborers in one grand compilation—the Sacred Harp, 1844. He was highly delighted with the

circulation of the work.—He was charmed with each revision and edition, with their appendices, millions of copies of which have been sold throughout the land. He informed the writer of this eulogy that there had been more of his books sold than any other music extant.<sup>4</sup> Thousands and tens of thousands<sup>5</sup> have enjoyed the music found alone in the Sacred Harp—the fruits of his pen and his musical and practical talent. Maj. White was never more at home than when surrounded with a band of sweet singers, especially when they seemed to have melody in their hearts as well as hosannas on their tongues. He was spirited and never failed to animate all whom he led, whether in church, social, school, or conventional gatherings. All were naturally drawn toward him as he discoursed upon music and its charms, and often he took advantage of these seasons of emotional enjoyment to impress the audience with the sacredness of solemn words falling from the lips of each songster, and not infrequently shouts of praises have been heard to fill the air as swelling songs of Zion made the welkin ring. The tuning fork and pen were his implements. The tuning fork has long since passed from his hand. His pen no longer plies over lines and spaces. His voice, enfeebled and shattered by use and age, is hushed—ah yes, hushed. His tongue no longer rolls out sweet chords of soul-stirring music, so harmonious to the ear, but is still in death. No more do we see the pleasant face of the venerable old man as when he stood in our centers at conventions. No longer do we hear his words of counsel. But his works follow him; his memory will still be perpetuated, and whether or not the shaped notes continue or give place to the seven syllables or any other form, Maj. White will never be forgotten for ages to come. His admonitions found on the introductory note in the Sacred Harp will be read and the sentiment imbibed by many yet unborn.

Brethren, let us endeavor to imitate every good example exemplified in this dignified and venerable character and carefully shun whatever may have sullied in the least his enviable name. Let the mantle of charity cover his faults, if any he had, and let us hope that his end was peace and that he is to-day sweetly singing in the house of God—"The house not made with

hands, eternally in the heavens."<sup>6</sup>

RESOLVED 1, That we, as a convention, adopt the above report and give hearty expression of our condolence with the family and friends of our beloved brother White and will ever cherish his memory.

RESOLVED 2, Furthermore, that as many visitors and admirers and friends of the departed are present, all be invited to take part in expressing our sympathy and commemoration, and that the whole audience give expression by a rising vote.

RESOLVED 3, That a copy of this paper and resolutions be furnished the family of the deceased and also to the CARROLL COUNTY TIMES and the Newnan Herald and that these papers be requested to publish the same.

All of which is most respectfully submitted.

—C. W. Parker, J. P. Reese, J. M. Hamrick, Com.

## Footnotes (Memorial)

1. White was most closely associated with a sister organization, the Southern Musical Convention, which he founded in 1845.
2. White was born near Cross Keys, South Carolina, on September 20, 1800 and died in Atlanta, Georgia, on December 5, 1879. See Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 164.
3. This language recalls Acts 10:38, which describes Jesus, "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil for God was with Him." White paraphrased this verse in his 1850 "Anthem on the Savior," noting of Jesus that "He was going about doing good; And teaching people righteousness" (p. 355 in *The Sacred Harp*).
4. Though signed by three committee members, David Warren Steel believes Reese is likely the "writer" mentioned here. See Steel, *Makers*, 165. Though *The Sacred Harp* was widely popular across a large swath of the South in the second half of the nineteenth century "millions of copies" may be something of an exaggeration.
5. This language recalls another line from anthem in *The Sacred Harp*, the "Thousands and thousands, and ten times thousands" who "Stood before the Lamb" in Jacob French's "Heavenly Vision" (p. 250), paraphrasing Revelation 5:11.
6. The memorial here quotes form 2 Corinthians 5:1, which reads "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."



## News

# Our Hope for Years to Come: Digitizing Recordings at the Sacred Harp Museum

Nathan Rees | Grand Forks, North Dakota



**Left:** Osiris Studio's Michael Graves with the Sacred Harp Museum's Nathan Rees, Jesse P. Karlsberg, and Jonathon Smith. Photograph by Joy Graves.



**Right:** Sacred Harp Museum open-reel tapes.

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance the security and accessibility of our collections, the Sacred Harp Museum has partnered with Osiris Studio in Atlanta to digitize all of the museum's open-reel tapes. Ranging in date from the 1960s to the early 1990s, the tapes include everything from amateur recordings of singing conventions to professional masters of studio sessions. Our small investment has ensured the survival of these invaluable documents of Sacred Harp history—what was a vulnerable stack of aging magnetic media is now backed-up on hard drive and digitally archived in the museum's secure cloud-based repository. Furthermore, researchers can safely access the recordings in a digital format that, unlike the tapes, does not degrade with use.

We are especially excited to work with Michael Graves at Osiris Studio—his Grammy Award-winning work is of the highest quality. For a sense of the expertise and passion that Michael brings to his work, read about his restoration of a newly discovered Hank Williams recording on his website. Since preservation is our first priority, we have made exact digital transcriptions of the tapes. Be on the lookout for future projects featuring fully-restored selections once we have had the opportunity to evaluate all the material. In the meantime, check out the Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter online for a selection of tracks from the 1967 Calhoun County Convention.

The Sacred Harp Museum is uniquely situated to help singers preserve the history of our tradition for future

generations. Please let us know if you have reel-to-reel tapes or other recordings that you feel deserve this same level of professional archival preservation. ■

## News

# A Brief History of A Brief History of the Sacred Harp

Jesse P. Karlsberg | Atlanta, Georgia

TRENTON, Georgia, singer David Saylor recently came across an extraordinary piece of Sacred Harp history. A friend of David's saw a thin book for sale at a used bookstore. Noting the name "Sacred Harp" in the book's title, and remembering David's involvement with the tradition, the friend bought the book for a dollar and gave it to David. The book is a copy of Joseph Stephen James's *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp*. This 1904 volume is the first historical study of Sacred Harp singing, and the first publication by James, who would go on to edit *Original Sacred Harp* (the ancestor of *The Sacred Harp*, 1991 Edition) and two other shape-note tunebooks. David generously gave the book to me, and I'll be placing it in the Sacred Harp Publishing Company's Sacred Harp Museum.

A copy of *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp* is hard to come by. Only four libraries hold copies of the book.<sup>1</sup> But the copy David Saylor happened upon is particularly special. Markings in the front of the book indicate it was at one time the Library of Congress's "B Copy" of the publication—one of two copies sent to the library by James when he registered the book for copyright protection. Printed as a softcover book, this copy was hardbound by the library. Todd Harvey, archivist of the Alan Lomax Collection at the Library of Congress's Archive of Folk Culture, notes that the library frequently sold or gave away B copies of books deemed insignificant during much of the twentieth century. How the library's B copy of this quite significant volume found its way from Washington, DC, to rural northwest Georgia remains a mystery.

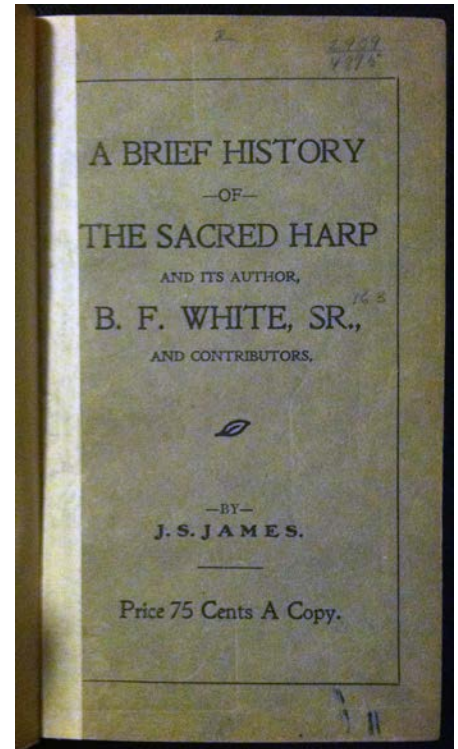
James's *Brief History* is no longer required reading for Sacred Harp singers interested in the stories behind our

music. Newer books by George Pullen Jackson, Buell Cobb, and (most recently) David Warren Steel have superseded it.<sup>2</sup> Yet James's book remains an important source of information about early Sacred Harp singers, conventions, and songbooks. *A Brief History* is the source of an infamous and widely retold story—since called into question—about the falling out between Benjamin Franklin White, the co-compiler of *The Sacred Harp*, and his brother-in-law William Walker. As James tells it:

*Major [B. F.] White and his brother-in-law, William Walker, wrote a music book known by the older people as the Southern Harmony, in four shape notes, the same as those used in the Sacred Harp.*

*Walker and White married sisters and lived not far apart in South Carolina. An arrangement was made between them for Walker to go north and have the book published, there being no publishing houses in the South with plant suitable to print the book. Walker took the manuscript, and he and the publishers changed the same without the knowledge or consent of Major White and brought it out under the name of Walker, giving Major White no credit whatsoever for its composition. Walker also entered into a combination with the publishers and in this way managed to deprive Major White of any interest in the Southern Harmony, although all of the work, or most of it, was done by Major White.*

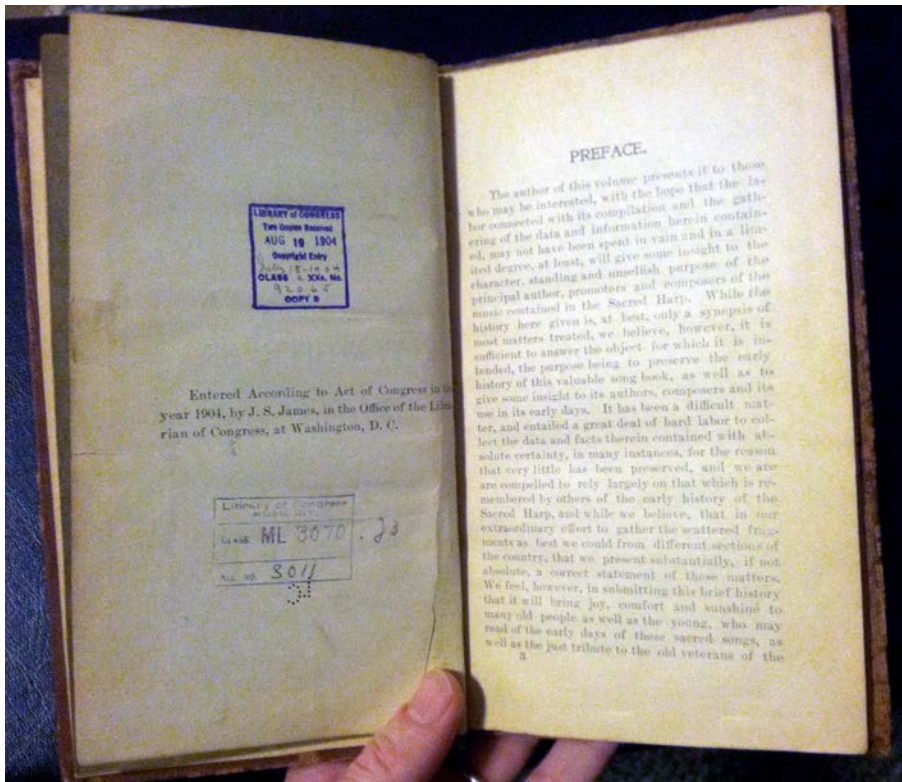
*On account of this transaction and treatment, the two men never spoke to each other again. It was such an outrage that Major White would never have anything to do with Walker and he soon after moved to Harris County, Georgia and engaged in composing and writing the songs in the Sacred Harp.<sup>3</sup>*



Front cover of *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp*. Photograph by Jesse P. Karlsberg.

The story of White and Walker's dispute is probably not as simple as James makes it out to be. White remained in Spartanburg, attending the same church as Walker, for seven years after the publication of *the Southern Harmony*. Shortly before his move, however, court records show that "the Spartanburg sheriff seized and sold a cotton gin owned by White to pay \$390 in court costs and damages; Walker, formerly a co-owner of the property, subsequently swore that he had sold his interest two years earlier," as Steel reports in *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*.<sup>4</sup> It may be that this disagreement, rather than conflict over *the Southern Harmony*, led White to move to Georgia.





Stamp on the Library of Congress's "B Copy" of *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp* showing that the library received two copies of the book on August 19, 1904. Photograph by Jesse P. Karlsberg.

But even if the details are wrong, it's clear there was resentment between the two. White included songs by various contributors to *The Southern Harmony* (apart from Walker) in *The Sacred Harp* with credit. But although he reprinted several of Walker's own *Southern Harmony* songs without changes, he left them uncredited. Walker's name never appeared in editions of *The Sacred Harp* during B. F. White's lifetime. [Read the memorial lesson delivered in memory of White at the 1880 Chattahoochee Musical Convention on page 21 of this issue—Eds.]

Not just an entertaining story, James's account of the split between White and Walker is important because it tells us how Sacred Harp singers who knew White's descendants described the falling out. In 1904, James was a friend of White's son, James Landrum White, and knew other White descendants.<sup>5</sup> James likely heard the story of White and Walker's split from White's family.

The conflict between White and

Walker is just one of many significant and humorous stories about Sacred Harp history that trace their origin in print to James's *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp*. While the details may not always be right (indeed, they are sometimes quite dramatically wrong), the book remains an important historical artifact, and a source of valuable information about Sacred Harp singing in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The Sacred Harp Museum thanks David Saylor for donating this significant copy of a rare and important book. ■

#### Footnotes

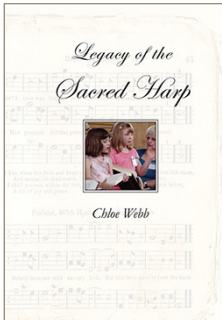
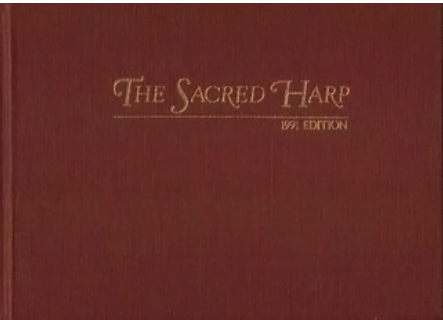
1. The UCLA Charles E. Young Research Library has George Pullen Jackson's copy. Additional copies are at the Claremont Colleges Library, Pepperdine University Libraries, and the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Library. The University of West Georgia Library holds a photocopy of the book. Microform copies are at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Davis Library and the Southwestern Baptist Theological

Seminary's Roberts Library. A few other copies are in private collections.

2. George Pullen Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands: The Story of the Fiddle Folk, Their Songs, Singings, and "Buckwheat Notes"* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933); Buell E. Cobb, *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989); and David Warren Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010).
3. J. S. James, *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp and Its Author, B. F. White, Sr., and Contributors* (Douglasville, GA: New South Book and Job Print, 1904), 29–30.
4. Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 5.
5. As a young man, James may have actually met B. F. White. He sang at sessions of the Chattahoochee Musical Convention in the 1860s, when White was also in attendance. See Kiri Miller, ed., *The Chattahoochee Musical Convention, 1852–2002: A Sacred Harp Historical Sourcebook* (Carrollton, GA: Sacred Harp Museum, 2002).

The Sacred Harp Publishing Company is a non-profit organization that promotes traditional Sacred Harp singing, community, and culture across the United States and around the world. SHPC publishes *The Sacred Harp, 1991 Edition* and other books, recordings, and resources that support Sacred Harp singing.

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Find a singing in your area and learn more about Sacred Harp singing. Annual singings are held almost every weekend of the year, and there are monthly or weekly practice singings in most US states and several other countries. All welcome beginners! Visit [fasola.org/singings](http://fasola.org/singings) for a singing directory.

Consider attending Camp Fasola, a weeklong all-ages summer camp teaching Sacred Harp singing and traditions. Visit [campfasola.org](http://campfasola.org) for more information.

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