

# The SACRED HARP PUBLISHING COMPANY Newsletter

VOL. 6, NO. 2

*Stories about singers and singings, our music and traditions, and Sacred Harp's present-day growth.*

DEC. 2017

## Read the Old Paths

# Shape-Note Singing in Mississippi: A Preliminary History

David Warren Steel | Oxford, Mississippi



Hugh Bill McGuire leading at Spring Creek Church in Calhoun County, 1986. Note the basses seated opposite the tenors, with the altos seated behind the trebles to the right of the tenors. The space to the left of the tenors is used by overflow tenor or bass. *Photograph by David Warren Steel.*

WHILE studies of Sacred Harp singing have concentrated on Georgia, Alabama, and Texas, the shape-note traditions of Mississippi have remained comparatively obscure. In 1933, George Pullen Jackson wrote, "I have not learned that there is in Mississippi any comprehensive state Sacred Harp organization." He also suggested that "the rarity of singers from that state attending the big conventions in other states as delegates indicates the low estate of Sacred Harp singing in that commonwealth." At that time, there was indeed a state Sacred Harp convention and many county conventions, as well as vigorous traditions of singing in

*The Christian Harmony* and in shape-note gospel songbooks. In May 1939, Mississippi native Abbott Ferriss (1915–2014), with Herbert Halpert and other New Deal writers, recorded a Sacred Harp singing in Lauderdale County, and interviewed participants representing four counties where singings have not been held in years. Only with the 1968–70 writings of John Quincy Wolf (1901–72), English professor at Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College), do we begin to understand the distinctive geography of shape-note singing in the state, and the reasons for the relative lack of communication with singers in neighboring states. These

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## Introducing Vol. 6, No. 2 of the *Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter*

Jesse P. Karlsberg and Nathan Rees

THE thirteenth issue of the *Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter* shares Sacred Harp's long history in Mississippi as well as the story of its more recent arrival in Illinois. It features tributes to departed friends and offers new insights on Sacred Harp harmony and how songs' music and texts work together.

Our issue begins with David Warren Steel's "preliminary history" of shape-note singing in Mississippi. Marginalized in accounts of Sacred Harp's story that have frequently centered on Alabama, Georgia, and Texas, shape-note singing's rich history in Mississippi spans notation systems, genres, regions, and races. Next, Janet Fraembs details how she and others in downstate Illinois discovered Sacred Harp singing around 1980 and, with a generous assist from Hugh McGraw, established the Illinois State Convention, now in its thirty-third year. Three tributes memorialize recently departed singers who received the Sacred Harp Publishing Company's posthumous citation. David Ivey's remembrance of Toney Smith, with whom he served on the music committee that revised *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, reveals a devoted "singer, leader, teacher, organizer, reviser, and encourager." Karen Rollins honors B. M. Smith, whose "loving, caring spirit was evident to all he met." Finally, Rebecca Over offers a tribute to Earlis McGraw, a behind-the-scenes worker for Sacred Harp, stalwart treble singer, and warm and welcoming friend to many. Kathy Williams follows these tributes recounting lessons she learned from her "Sacred Harp elders," friends who influenced her singing and her life. Next, two writers share new analyses of Sacred Harp harmony and part-writing. Robert T. Kelley illuminates the harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic factors that make an "effective pairing of text and tune" in Sacred Harp songs. David Wright focuses on one particular discord that appears in multiple Sacred Harp tunes to illustrate how composers incorporate this distinctive feature of Sacred Harp music into their songwriting. Finally, Alison Brown draws on her experience as a conservator and leader of popular workshops at Camp Doremi to share advice and step-by-step instructions for repairing common forms of damage to songbooks.

With this issue, Elaena Gardner, an Australian Sacred Harp singer who joined the *Newsletter* team in 2015, is stepping away to pursue a master's degree in information management. Elaena designed the printable PDF version of the *Newsletter* and supervised our print layout and design for our first twelve issues. Elaena's service has helped make the *Newsletter* accessible to singers who find the print version easier to use than the online version, helping connect these singers to our growing international community of which she is a part. It has been a delight working with Elaena over the past three years. If you are interested in helping with the print and web layout of the *Newsletter*, please get in touch. We also continue to welcome your comments and suggestions of future article topics. ■

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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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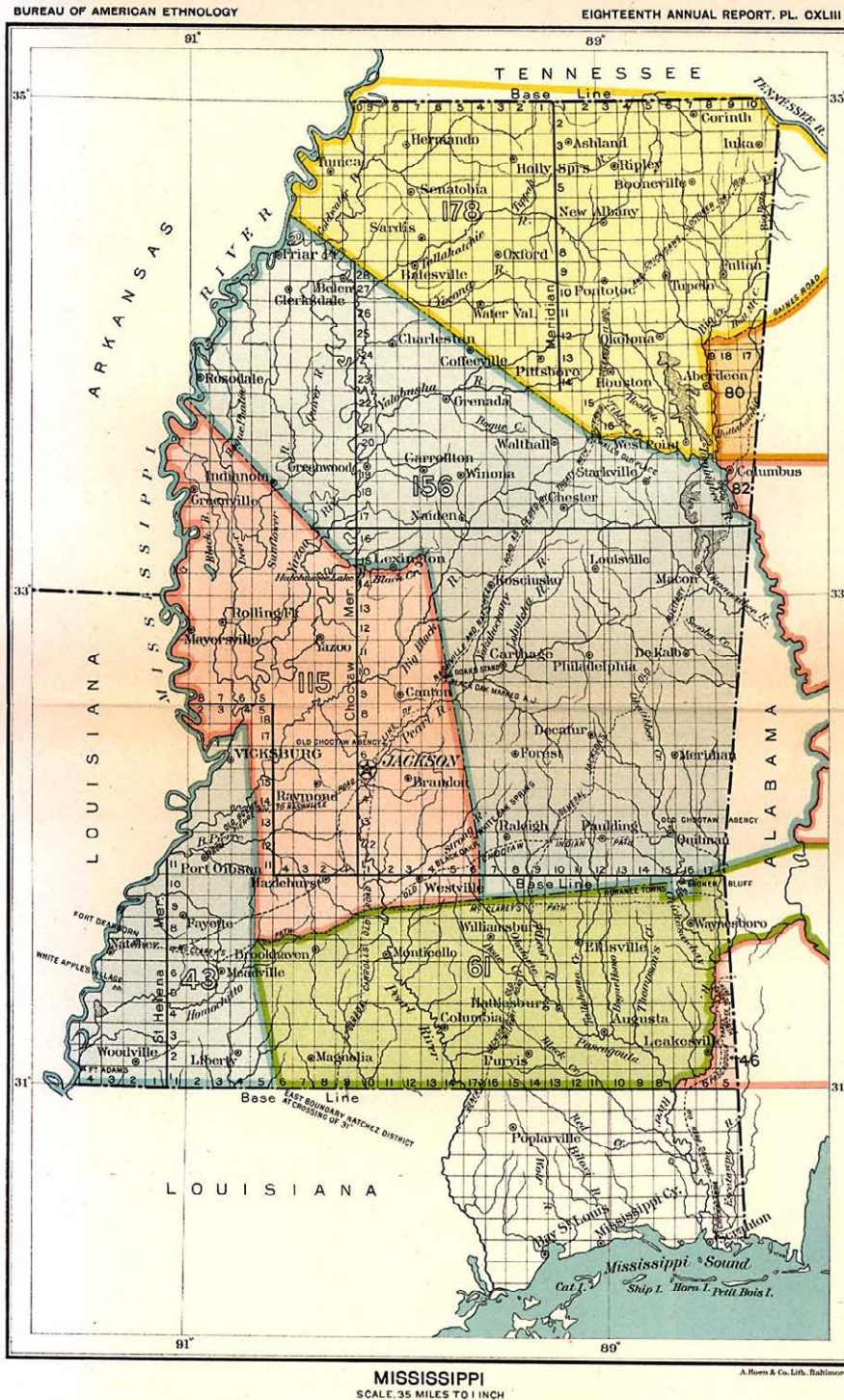
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The online edition includes videos, audio recordings, additional images and allows readers to post comments on articles. [originalsacredharp.com/newsletter](http://originalsacredharp.com/newsletter)

ISSN 2573-1343 (print)

ISSN 2573-1351 (online)





Indian Land Cessions in Mississippi. Choctaw cessions of 1830 and Chickasaw cessions of 1832 are shown at 156 and 178 respectively.

eight annual and five monthly singings in Mississippi.

This article offers a preliminary history of the shape-note traditions of the state, showing the diversity of local customs, and recognizing that it is difficult to separate the Sacred Harp, Christian Harmony, and gospel traditions.

WHEN Mississippi became a state in 1817, white settlement was confined to the Gulf Coast and the lower Mississippi Valley. There is little information on singing in this early period, but in 1831, singers at Natchez churches sang urban music printed in round notes. It was only with the Choctaw and Chickasaw cessions of the 1830s that settlers from other states brought singing schools and shape-note tunebooks, including *Missouri Harmony* and *Southern Harmony*, into the area.

In 1849, Lazarus J. Jones (1816–97) of Jasper County published *The Southern Minstrel*. Printed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, this tunebook contained, in addition to standard tunes from other southern sources, several new compositions and arrangements by Jones and other east central Mississippians. The book went through a second printing in 1855, but subsequently faded from view, although five of its tunes appeared in a block (pages 324–27) in the 1854 edition of William Walker's *Southern Harmony*. Jesse T. White (1821–94), a nephew of *Sacred Harp* compiler B. F. White and composer of ten songs in that book, was clerk of Winston County in the 1850s before moving on to Texas. He may have introduced *The Sacred Harp* to the hill country of central Mississippi.

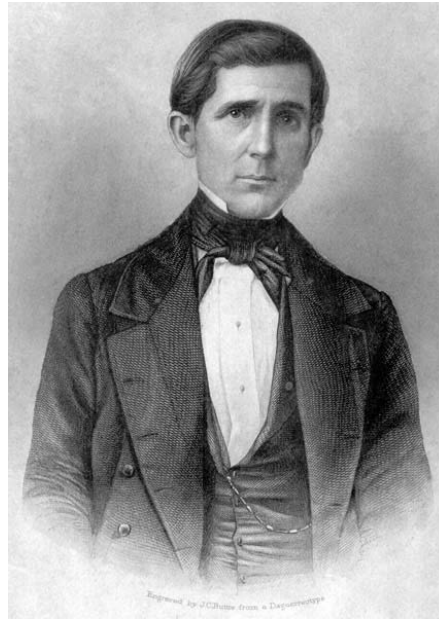
At the close of the Civil War, there is evidence of all-day singings from *The Sacred Harp* in several locations around the state, at least one (1866 in Calhoun County) described as a reunion of soldiers with their families. Soon these singings became annual community homecomings and memorials, attracting

included differences in solmization syllables, tempos, and other issues. In 1971, journalist Joe Dan Boyd wrote about a thriving African American tradition combining singings from *The Sacred Harp* with “new work” gospel music. In 1978, state folklorist Paula Tadlock published an article on all

three shape-note traditions in the state, including diagrams showing varied seating arrangements. In the same year Buell E. Cobb, in *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music*, summarized earlier findings and provided an exhaustive “union list” of annual singings from the *Sacred Harp*, including thirty-

thousands of attendees. W. A. Beasley (1830–1903) of Houston and H. J. “Hal” Hawkins (1824–1904) of Ellzey were among the leading singers of that period, and were involved in the formation of Sacred Harp conventions in Calhoun (1878), Chickasaw (1882), and Webster (1883) counties. In East Central Mississippi, singers founded a Newton County Convention around 1875, using William Walker’s *Christian Harmony* and chaired by E. G. Everett (1843–1927). These and other conventions provided a forum where established teachers met to sing together, to examine and certify new teachers, and to demonstrate the accomplishments of their classes. J. P. Wright (1892–1988) of Webster County recalled that his county convention established an examining committee consisting of three singing teachers, including the president and secretary, to test knowledge of the rudiments, including moods of time and meters of psalmody; he was examined once at age sixteen to become a song leader, and again at age twenty-three to become an accredited teacher.

Sacred Harp singing in Mississippi, especially in Calhoun, Chickasaw, Webster and adjoining counties, has long been identified by a unique practice not found elsewhere: the use of seven syllables (doremi) to name the four shaped notes, in effect, disregarding the shapes that help other singers in learning the notes. This practice appears to date back to the immediate post-Civil War period. It may derive from the transitional 1854 edition of William Walker’s *Southern Harmony* (p. xxxi), which offers precisely this alternative to the fasola system for singers who wish to sing the more modern seven syllables with the more conservative repertory of the four-shape books. Walker also gives examples of a seven-numeral system, a practice occasionally encountered in Mississippi among *Christian Harmony* singers. It was reported of Hal Hawkins that he could sing and teach “by four notes, by seven notes, or by number,” according to his pupils’ desire. At singings in this area, basses commonly sat facing the tenors, as in



Lazarus J. Jones.

the well-known stitchery depiction by Wright’s niece, Ethel Wright Mohamed (1906–92).

As African American literacy increased, black singers established their own singing schools and conventions. The Alabama-Mississippi Singing Convention (1887), which uses gospel music today, may have originally sung from *The Sacred Harp* or William Walker’s *Christian Harmony*. Certainly the Pleasant Ridge Colored Musical Convention of Calhoun County (1898) sang from *The Sacred Harp*, as did its sister conventions in Chickasaw and Webster counties.

After the Civil War, singing schools and shape notes became increasingly identified with the South, while declining in popularity in other regions. Many teachers switched from the four-shape system to a seven-shape system to keep pace with new teaching methods. Leading teachers and publishers established “music normal schools” for the training of teachers. Southern firms such as Ruebush-Kieffer and A. J. Showalter began to publish small, inexpensive collections of music every year or two. These upright songbooks gradually began to supplant the large oblong tunebooks with their fixed repertoire. Showalter’s *Class, Choir*

and *Congregation* (1888), a transitional book, remained in print well into the twentieth century: a “Class Choir” state convention, chaired by William E. Lane (1891–1989), was organized in Neshoba County in 1956. After 1900, mass-market publishers like James D. Vaughan (from 1902), V. O. Stamps (1924) and J. R. “Pap” Baxter (Stamps-Baxter Music from 1926) served the market by printing one or more books a year in a style known today as convention gospel music. In Mississippi, this style is often known as “new work” music, as opposed to “old Harp”; in earlier times, it was derided as “almanac music.” While traditional gospel singings, sometimes even unaccompanied, persisted in many areas among black and white singers, other local conventions came to resemble quartet concerts. A state singing convention held its first regular session in 1934 in Newton County, with W. D. Rayner presiding. The Blackwood Brothers of Choctaw County emerged from this convention to achieve fame as gospel performers. Quartet members James Blackwood (1919–2002) and J. D. Sumner (1924–1998) established the National Gospel Quartet Convention in 1956, based solely on quartet performances. In 1957 Videt Polk and Bobby Burnett established Gospel Singers of America, a group sponsoring an annual residential singing school at their campus in Pass Christian. Another residential singing school, emphasizing congregational singing, was Harmony Valley, founded in Natchez in 1970 by Elder E. D. McCutcheon (1912–2005), but later located near Ecru in north Mississippi.

During the early twentieth century, the Sacred Harp held its ground, and continued to spread into new territory. As copies of the 1870 *Sacred Harp* wore out and new ones became unavailable, singers had to choose among the varied revisions and editions that appeared after 1900. In the north central area covered by the three oldest conventions, Calhoun, Chickasaw, and New Harmony (Webster) and surrounding areas, where the doremi system held sway, and where African American singings and



## ON THE DIFFERENT PLANS OF NOTATION.

There are seven plans of notation used now in various parts of the world, which are to some extent national. The *English*, faw, sole, law, faw, sole, law, me. *Italian*, doe, rae, me, faw, sole, law, see. *French*, ut, rae, me, faw, sole, law, see. *Swedes and Danes*, Dae, rae, nae, faw, sole, law, tee. In Germany, (among the peasantry,) and in some parts of the United States, the numerical 1, 2, 3, 4,

5, 6, 7. *Spanish*, perhaps, faw, sole, law, bae, doe, naw, me.—All repeating the first name, to make the eighth or octave sound. A very respectable number of my patrons being rather partial to the *Italian*, and also to the *numerical* system of seven syllables, I introduce a few examples, to make them plain to those who may wish to use them in learning to sing.

## EXAMPLES.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 1 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 1 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Doe, rae, me, faw, sole, law, see, doe, doe, see, law, sole, faw, me, rae, doe. Doe, rae, me, faw, sole, law, see, doe.

C D E F G A B C C B A G F E D C F G A B C D E F

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 1 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 1 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Doe, rae, me, faw, sole, law, see, doe, doe, see, law, sole, faw, me, rae, doe. Doe, rae, me, faw, sole, law, see, doe.

C D E F G A B C C B A G F E D C G A B C D E F G G F E D C B A G

I suppose the above will be sufficient, always observing the same order in other transpositions, remembering that the major or sharp key-note faw, is called doe; sing the scale thus, doe, rae, me, &c., ascending; and doe, see, law, &c. descending: *numerical* sing 1, 2, 3, &c. ascending; and 1, 7, 6, &c. descending. For singing seven syllables *Italian* and the *numerical*, the transposition tables are generally written thus:

The natural place for doe or 1 is on.....C  
 But if B be flat, the place for doe or 1 is on.....F  
 If B and E be flat, the place for doe or 1 is on.....B  
 If B, E, and A be flat, the place for doe or 1 is on.....E  
 If B, E, A, and D be flat, the place for doe or 1 is on.....A  
 If F be sharp, the place for doe or 1 is on.....G  
 If F and C be sharp, the place for doe or 1 is on.....D

If F, C, and G be sharp, the place for doe or 1 is on.....A  
 If F, C, G, and D be sharp, the place for doe or 1 is on.....E

In singing the seven syllables in our patent-note books, no regard is had to the shape of the notes, but name them as laid down in the rule and examples; and in singing numerals, call the major key doe, or faw, 1, and the other notes by the numerical distance they are from the major key; and if you wish to use the other plans, sing as herein directed.

Some contend that no one can learn to sing correctly without using the seven syllables. Although I have no objections to the seven syllable plan, I differ a little with such in opinion, for I have taught the four syllables patent notes, the Italian seven syllables, and the numerals also, and in twenty-five years' experience, have always found my patent note pupils to learn as fast, and sing as correct as any. Consequently I think that the main thing is to get good teachers, who understand the science of music well, and teach it faithfully, and who always keep good order in their schools; and that the various plans of notation or solmization may be considered more a matter of taste than necessity.

THE AUTHOR.

July, 1854.

xxxi

William Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1854 edition, offering seven syllables or seven numerals with four shapes.

conventions also were active, the J. L. White Fourth Edition, with Supplement (1911) predominated, and came to be known as the "B. F. White book." By the 1950s, both black and white singers were again faced with the unavailability of new books; they were unaware of the 1958 Atlanta-area reprint of the White book. By the 1970s, both groups had adopted the *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, although many White book songs remained popular, and it was a rare singing where "Don't grieve your mother" was not heard at least once.

To the north and east of this area were two distinct groups of singers who sang the fasola syllables. Prentiss and Tishomingo Counties were influenced by the Denson family, a branch of whom had settled the area in 1875. According to George Pullen Jackson, Thomas Cicero Denson (1857–1935) reported to a Texas convention in 1930 about local activities. Although John Quincy Wolf suggested that these activities likely consisted of

mainly gospel music and little Sacred Harp, I have met Denson descendants from this area who were quite competent "fasola" singers; they probably adopted the James book early on. The eastern group (Itawamba, Monroe, and Lowndes Counties) was closely connected with western Alabama: they knew both the White and James books, but eventually settled on the James book, and later the Denson.

In the southeast "Piney Woods" area, centered on Jones and Jasper Counties, singers, possibly influenced by singers in the Mobile area, adopted the W. M. Cooper revision at an unknown date. They had minimal contact with the other groups until the 1930s. There were also singings in the Meridian area. It is unknown, for example, what book was used at the 1939 singing described above: it could have been White, James or Cooper, but not Denson, judging from the page numbers. West of Meridian, the *Christian Harmony* prevailed, as it had

done ever since the 1870s.

The Mississippi State Sacred Harp Singing Convention was founded in 1929 at Houston with William Thomas Gwin (1853–1934) as its first president. [Read about W. T. Gwin and the Sacred Harp trophy presented to him in 1924 in vol. 4, no. 2 of the Newsletter—Eds.] Despite its name, it included Christian Harmony singers from the beginning, and allowed songs from both books. Gradually this body began to attract singers from the Delta area, where immigrant hill-folk from Webster and Calhoun counties were holding singings before 1930, and from southeast Mississippi, where the South Mississippi Convention was organized in 1947 using the Cooper revision of *The Sacred Harp*. Black singers established the West Harmony Convention (Grenada County) in 1922, and the Negro Mississippi State Sacred Harp Musical Convention in 1934, organized by W. A. Wandwick, Frank Payne, and Elmer A.



Mississippi State Gospel Music Convention, Booneville, 2016. Photograph by David Warren Steel.

Enochs (1888–1994).

In northeast Mississippi, where Sacred Harp singers used the “fasola” system popular in Alabama and elsewhere; the area was a fertile field for Alabama singing-teachers such as S. M. Denson (1854–1936), R. A. Canant (1883–1984), and F. M. Frederick (1893–1960). Outside this area, however, Mississippi singers had little contact with their counterparts in Alabama and other states. In 1959 R. A. Stewart (1897–1977) of Houston began a weekly half-hour radio program of Sacred Harp singing and announcements that continues to this day. He also attended Alabama singings, promoted the Denson book, and established an annual singing in Houston, re-established in Oxford after his death, where singers from both states were encouraged to meet.

During the 1960s, the Mississippi State Convention reported as many as seventy annual singings, not counting black singings and northeast Mississippi “fasola” singings unaffiliated

with the state convention. Since 1970, singings from the *Sacred Harp* and *Christian Harmony* have declined over most of the state; some conventions have been discontinued, while other three-day conventions have been reduced to two or even one day. Shape-note gospel singings and conventions have declined as well, though the Gospel Singers of America celebrated their fiftieth anniversary in 2007 by hosting the National Gospel Singing Convention in Pass Christian. Sacred Harp singing has entirely died out among the African American groups, although some gospel singings and conventions remain. The remaining singers, however, travel more widely and stay in touch more effectively with the aid of online forums. Calhoun County native Mark Davis has chaired the National Sacred Harp Convention since 2008; it can no longer be said that Mississippi singers are unknown and unrecognized at out-of-state gatherings. ■

### Author's Note

This is an expansion of an article appearing in the *Mississippi Encyclopedia* (2017), with permission of the editors. Among those who shared information in personal interviews are George W. Boswell, Everette Driskell, Cleo Hawkins, Hugh Bill McGuire, Stephen Shearon, and J. P. Wright.

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**Top:** Elmer A. Enochs (1888–1994) was still leading music at the age of 103.

**Bottom:** J. P. Wright (1892–1988) was a founding member of the Mississippi State Sacred Harp Convention in 1929; he also wrote and published gospel songs.

Photographs by David Warren Steel.

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## Read the Old Paths

# Thirty-Three Years of Illinois State Sacred Harp Conventions

Janet Fraembs | Charleston, Illinois



Sign welcoming singers to the second Illinois State Sacred Harp Convention, September 1986.

*I am going to bring nine people to Paxton, Illinois, to organize a state convention. Saturday, May 25 is the date. St. Louis will be next.*

THAT'S what Hugh McGraw, executive secretary of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company, wrote on a note tucked in a shipment of books to St. Louis singers in 1984. Meanwhile, those of us in Charleston, Illinois, thought we were gathering at Paxton on that date to meet and sing with the Chicago singers we had recently met. We didn't reckon with the power of Hugh McGraw! This was to be our first real introduction to the tradition of Sacred Harp singing and, I like to think, an important part of the story of its expansion across the country.

## Early Days: Charleston and Chicago

BACK in 1980, Lee Steinmetz and Dave Miller, English professors at Eastern Illinois University, concocted

the idea of getting a group from our church choir together to try singing from the 1971 *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*. Dave had been introduced to Sacred Harp while a graduate student in Iowa. I don't recall how we grew to a group of singers with regularly scheduled meetings, but I do know that we thought we had found some lovely, different choral music, even though it had some obvious "errors" in the harmony, which we fixed. We also added dynamics (we probably hadn't found the few tunes which had them written in) and arranged the songs to suit our pleasure. I should mention that our efforts didn't please Dave, who obviously had some idea of what Sacred Harp singing should sound like. We didn't sit in a hollow square, but all sat together, seated around someone's living room or in rows in the church choir room, with our choir director leading by nodding with her head.

I visited the library at Eastern, wanting to know more about Sacred Harp, and there discovered Buell Cobb's book, *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music*. I still love that book and was so thrilled when I met Buell for the first time at the National Convention.

Meantime, our group began singing at churches and clubs to give programs wherever we could get people to invite us or invited ourselves. Although these would probably be considered performances, our intent really was to spread the word and gather more members, which we did. This led to our "performance" at a talent show at Eastern. We had styled outfits for ourselves: the women wore gathered calico skirts with a ruffle on the bottom and the men wore dark pants, white shirts, and narrow string ties.

During this time we were invited to sing at Eastern's Celebration, a "smorgasbord of the arts," held every spring on the campus. It was there in about 1984 that a talent scout from the Libertyville (Illinois) School of Folk Music came to Celebration, looking for groups to sing for their programs and were invited to Libertyville to perform.

The summer before that performance, five of our group—Lee and Doris Steinmetz, Hal Malehorn, Don Bardsley, and Ruth White—decided to attend the National Convention in Birmingham. We all were excited to hear their report when they returned, and they had lots to tell us! Everyone sang really loud and fast! And the ladies wore their finest dresses and jewelry. They reported about dinner on the grounds, the social gatherings, and some of the great people they met, including Hugh McGraw. So we decided to incorporate some of that into our presentation at Libertyville. We worked up a program, including coming with baskets and pretending to spread out "dinner on the grounds." Another





**Top left:** Hugh McGraw at the fourth Illinois State Convention, September 1988. McGraw brought a group of Georgia singers to the first Illinois State Convention and “encouraged” the growing group to adopt Sacred Harp’s practices.

**Top right:** Singers from Chicago and Downstate Illinois singing at a social at the Steinmetz home, during the second Illinois State Convention, September 1986. Members of the two groups met at a Sacred Harp presentation by the downstate group at the Libertyville School of Folk Music.

**Bottom:** The class at the third Illinois State Convention, September 1987.



thing they brought back that we used was the comment “that was a good ‘un’ after singing a tune.

We had a great adventure that weekend. Several carloads of us made the trip—we must have had twenty singers or more. We were to sing at 8 pm, I believe, but were told on arrival that they had booked an Irish harp player and singer at the last minute and we would follow her. So it was 11 P.M. before we performed our “gig.” But here’s the amazing thing: when we got up to sing, we saw several folks out in the audience with Sacred Harp songbooks, following along. So for our last number, we invited them to come up and sing with us. And that was our introduction to the fledgling Chicago singers.

The Chicago singers arrived more or less at the same point we did prior to Paxton but by a very different route—one might say by way of folk music rather than choir music, and that made quite a difference. It was a time when singers from all over the “north” were finding and falling in love with this music through these and other pathways.

### The First Illinois Convention

**T**HE Charleston and the Chicago singers were so amazed to find one another that we decided we should get together to sing. Lee and Doris Steinmetz had a good friend who was a United Methodist pastor at Paxton, on 1-57, about halfway between Chicago and Charleston, and agreed to let us use their church; so a date was set, May 25, for the gathering.

Chicago singer Ted Johnson remembers that it was his wife Marcia and fellow Chicago singer Judy Hauff who were in contact with Hugh and who received the phone call from him enquiring, “Y’all are going to have a convention?” So Hugh sent them the bylaws, the minutes and promised to bring a group of singers from Georgia. Oh, and he said, “do y’all sing the shapes?” and, after a significant pause, “Well, you’ll learn.”

Most of us in Charleston had no idea what a convention was or what was in store for us as we entered approached



**Top:** Ted Johnson, Karen Isbell, and Janet Fraembs anchoring the treble at the sixth Illinois State Convention, September 1990.



**Bottom:** Front bench tenors from near and far at the fourth Illinois State Convention, September 1988. From left: Ted Mercer and Stephen O'Leary (Chicago), Jeff Sheppard (Alabama), Lee Steinmetz (S. IL), and B. M. Smith (Georgia).

our encounter with traditional Sacred Harp practices. Each of our groups worked up some songs to perform for one another. We in Charleston couldn't believe it when we heard these folks were coming from the South. We had planned to sing in the church basement and had a music stand in the center of the square to hold the book for whoever was leading. Next thing we knew we were upstairs in the sanctuary and people were pouring in from all over: Georgia, Alabama, Missouri, Wisconsin,

Indiana, Minnesota. I will always remember how supportive the southern singers were. They didn't tell us we were doing everything wrong (though they must have shared that among themselves!), just gently drew us into the tradition. And Hugh came prepared with copies of the constitution for the first Illinois Convention, which is what we became on that momentous occasion.

Ted Mercer recalls that there was a great deal of preparation in Chicago, attempting to learn the shapes, and choosing a





**Top:** D. J. Hatfield leads the class at the twenty-second Illinois State Convention, September 2005.

**Bottom left:** Joyce Walton at the sixth Illinois State Convention, September 23, 1990.

**Bottom right:** Coy Ivey and Ted Mercer at the sixth Illinois State Convention, September 22, 1990.

repertoire of songs to present. He recalls that nearly the entire group made the trip. We Charleston singers worked hard at preparing a number of tunes (not the shapes, though); and we had practiced some anthems that we would sing with the newly-found Chicago group. We caravanned down from Charleston Saturday morning, but the Chicago singers arrived on Friday and encountered the Georgia contingent at the motel. Ted remembers Hugh McGraw, Delores McGraw, Richard DeLong, and Matt

DeLong. They gathered in one of the motel rooms for a warm-up. As Ted writes, "A new, deafening sound filled the small space; I almost felt like the room was about to explode. As he leaned past me to get a beverage from the cooler during the singing, [then-Chicago singer] Jim Carnes whispered to me, eyes wide and pointing to Richard DeLong, 'he's yelping!'"

Georgia singer Geneva Prichard, sitting behind Ted, invited him to Holly Springs the next weekend. He and Judy Hauff did attend and were deeply

affected by that experience. He wrote, "After we returned to Chicago, our director Phil Trier expressed the opinion that the Illinois State had 'mixed' results. I think he was uneasy about the southern influence. Indeed, scarcely a month later after the contingent from Chicago went to the National Convention, singers were insisting on leading themselves rather than being directed and when director Trier said 'Do you want to sound like a group of backwoodsmen?' we responded with a spontaneous 'yes!'"

### From Then to Now

THERE were singers in our Charleston group who still wanted to sing choir music and perform. As many of us traveled south and adopted longstanding Sacred Harp practices, those people were either absorbed into the group or gradually fell by the wayside. Ted Johnson points out that one of the great things about this music is that it will accommodate and absorb all sorts of sounds into itself without harm. The Chicago singers were immediately hooked as they traveled to singings and learned all they could about Sacred Harp and its traditions. For us in Charleston, it was a combination of things: the influence of Hugh McGraw, southern singers coming to us on Ruth Brown's bus, and some of us venturing south to sing.

And even before the bus came, bringing singers from Alabama and Georgia, Joan Aldridge ventured our way. I was singing alto back in 1987 and happened to sit next to Joan at the National Convention that year. She decided to make the long trip from Anniston, Alabama, to Charleston, Illinois, that fall and has hardly missed a convention since. We have been delighted to host many other singers from Alabama and Georgia, from Canada, and from the United Kingdom. It's not just about singing or about food—it's fellowship that keeps us going! And traveling. We learned from Bob Meek, stalwart Kentucky singer, sadly no longer with us, that if you want people to come to your singing you have to go to theirs.

The original intent was to alternate the Illinois State Convention between Chicago and Charleston but when the Midwest Convention was established the next year we inherited running the Illinois.

As I write this, we have just held the thirty-third Illinois State Convention (and I have attended all of them!). It now meets on the Saturday before the third Sunday in September and we sing from *The Missouri Harmony* as well as *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Revision*. We



Singers, including many who traveled on a Alabama singer Ruth Brown's bus, at a social at the home of Ruth White during the fourth Illinois State Convention.

attract a small but loyal core group from Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, Indiana, and other states, including many who came to that first tentative attempt to hold a convention; and we add an occasional new singer from here in Illinois. We haven't been very successful in attracting musicians from Eastern Illinois University or church choir members. Those interested in history or folk music have been more likely to gravitate to us. I think that's been true of much of the "northern" expansion of Sacred Harp singing; it's not through churches as much as folk venues that we have grown.

The Holy Grail of the perfect singing site still eludes us. As we travel around I have been known to spot a small country church and wonder aloud if that would be a good place to sing. We have moved the convention around some as needs changed. Currently it's at the Texas Christian Church, in the countryside between Clinton and Decatur, which is fairly convenient to both our major cooks.

Providing enough food for dinner on the grounds was a problem at first as we didn't yet have the concept of cooking a dozen different dishes in preparation. After Terry Hogg and Lori Graber joined our group that was no longer a problem. Each of them individually could cook enough to feed the entire class!

Finally, I think it's worth sharing these words sent to the singings list in 1999

by the late Larry Olzewski, Old Harp singer from Tennessee:

*They do have a responsibility, those that join Harp singing. They must put away all their pains and groans and griefs and fears, to give the Harp community a priority in their lives. Their agenda must be as contributors to the community, for its wellness and awareness of the next person who walks in the door. If they dwell on what they get out of the Old Harp then they are not givers and don't, it seems, last long. If the individuals who focus on giving and sharing to build the community harmony then they will stay.*

That's what we've tried to do over the thirty-three years of the Illinois Convention—find those who will stay. Age and death have taken some of our core group of loyal singers. I believe it takes young people to attract young people and we're not very successful at that, though we have established a monthly singing at Urbana which attracts some students from the University of Illinois.

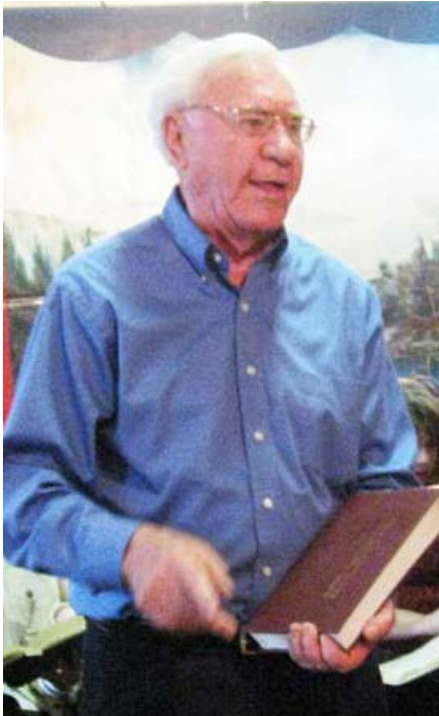
And there will always be some who respond to the pull from that rectangular book with so many old tunes and new, sharing our unaccompanied voices in praise, sadness, pleading, longing, and joy. ■



## Friends Who've Gone Before

# Remembering Toney Smith: Singer, Leader, Teacher, Organizer, Reviser, and Encourager

David Ivey | Huntsville, Alabama



Toney Smith leading at Zion School, Gordo, March 13, 2010.  
*Photograph by Martha Beverly.*



Toney Smith (second row, second from left), was among the singers featured on the first studio recording of Sacred Harp singing published by the Sacred Harp Publishing Company in 1965. *Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.*

**T**ONEY Smith was a stalwart Sacred Harp singer and teacher in Alabama throughout his lifetime. And what an excellent singer he was! Toney sang the bass, tenor, and treble parts with ease, but I will mostly remember him as a strong bass singer. He could carry the bass section with his voice and skill. Toney could sing every song in the book and sing them well.

Toney Smith was born into a singing family and was raised in Fayette County, Alabama, in the Mt. Lebanon

community. He and his family regularly attended Sacred Harp singings in that part of west Alabama. Later as an adult he resided and worked and sang in Tuscaloosa.

Toney could lead every song in the book. He regularly led ALL SAINTS NEW (p. 444 in *The Sacred Harp*) with ease, a challenging minor tune that intimidates even the most experienced singer and leader. He masterfully and humbly led his songs

in a way that the class could readily follow. As we sometimes say, “he got a

**Toney led masterfully and humbly. He got a lot out of the class.**

lot out of the class.”

There was a wonderful class of singers for Toney’s funeral in Tuscaloosa in July 2016. It was striking how many of the singers in attendance that day went to their first singing school under Toney when they were young. His pupils—Larry Ballinger, Lisa Geist, Elene Stovall, Amber Davis, Cassie Allen, and more—spoke of wonderful memories of Toney as an encouraging teacher.

Toney Smith supported Hugh McGraw’s work to promote the spread of Sacred Harp singing. He helped Hugh start the National Convention at Samford University in Birmingham in 1980. Toney was the First Vice Chair of the first several National Convention sessions. As a young singer, Toney was a member of the groups we hear on the



Toney Smith leading at the first National Sacred Harp Convention, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama, June 1980. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

albums the Sacred Harp Publishing Company recorded in the 1960s and 1970s.

Toney was selected for and served with distinction on the Sacred Harp Publishing Company's Music Committee for the 1991 Revision of *The Sacred Harp*. His wide ranging singing experience and knowledge of dispersed harmony was invaluable in the five year work of this committee. Toney's love of Sacred Harp was never more evident.

Toney was married for sixty-eight years to Lavoy. Toney and Lavoy were always

totally committed to one another, and they were almost always together. They even worked together in Tuscaloosa, Toney as a barber and Lavoy as a hairdresser. Lavoy faithfully attended singings across Alabama and Georgia with Toney, even though she did not lead. It was always "Toney and Lavoy," together, and it was not unexpected that Lavoy only survived Toney by three months.

I will always remember Toney as an encourager. He complimented young singers on their leading, their voice

quality, or their choice of songs. His singing school pupils remembered this clearly. He was content to sit on the second row, to be the vice chairman, and to ask a young aspiring "keyer" to pitch his song—all to help promote Sacred Harp singing in his own way by preparing a new generation of singers.

We miss Toney's voice, his spirit, his encouragement, his talent, and his love for us all. I can still hear him singing, and I hope to sing with him again over Jordan. ■



## Friends Who've Gone Before

**B. M. Smith: A Loving, Caring Spirit and Front Bench Stalwart**

Karen Rollins | Bowdon, Georgia



B. M. Smith at Liberty Hill Primitive Baptist Church near Barnesville, Georgia.  
 Photograph by Johnathon Kelso.

Micah 6:8

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
 And what does the Lord require of you?  
 To act justly and to love mercy  
 And to walk humbly with your God.*

**B.** M. SMITH of Silver Creek, Georgia, personified this Bible verse. He

was a man who willingly accepted the responsibilities life brought him, and who gave his best to his family, to his job, and to his Lord. He did so with a smile on his face and love in his heart.

Benjamin Marion "B. M." Smith was born on March 4, 1940, the only child of Nolan and Myrtle Abney Smith. Nolan's

family were Sacred Harp singers, and B. M. learned to sing with them. His father passed away, however, when B. M. was thirteen. At that time, he stopped going to singings and took on more responsibility at home. He married Margie Allen on June 20, 1959. His mother Myrtle began to live with them that day. She remained with them until her death forty-nine years later. Margie's sister also lived with them for a time.

B. M. and Margie had four children: Debra (husband Ken Ward), Wanda (husband Wyatt Bramlette), Gary (wife Connie), and Steve (wife Melissa). They have sixteen grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. B. M. loved his family, and he enjoyed their frequent gatherings. He worked hard to take care of them. He spent thirty-five years as a valued employee of Georgia Kraft (which later became Inland Container). When he retired in 2002, he stayed busy driving cars for the local Chevrolet dealership, making deliveries for his son-in-law in the metal fabricating business, stocking shelves at Ace Hardware, and working at a family Christmas tree farm.

When he was not at work, B. M. loved keeping his yard in beautiful condition. He also enjoyed working at his place at Weiss Lake. He was a good fisherman. He loved to eat breakfast once a week with friends who formed a group called ROMEO: Retired Old Men Eating Out.

But B. M.'s real love was Sacred Harp. He loved it to the point of obsession; it was the only music on his playlist. He played it in his house, in his truck, and in his garage. In 1980, B. M. resumed attending Sacred Harp singings. Margie soon joined him. The singers there became his friends, the siblings he never had. He loved to sing, and he loved the singers. He often carried other singers to a singing, especially older singers who needed a ride. His aunts from the Blue



B. M. Smith, with his ever-present warm smile, at Holly Springs Primitive Baptist Church in Bremen, Georgia.  
Photograph by Johnathon Kelso.

Mountain/Anniston area—Druscilla Hines, Eula Johnson, Beulah Reese—and his cousin, Evelyn Harris, frequently rode with them. He and Margie also sang at many funerals and often visited elderly and sick singers. They joined eight or ten bus trips to far-off singings and enjoyed every one, especially the trips to New Mexico and Colorado. B. M. also served on the board of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company. The current board voted unanimously to award him a posthumous citation based upon his service to the company and to the Sacred Harp community.

B. M. was a front bench stalwart at local singings. He often chaired singings and he started the one at Rome Midway Primitive Baptist Church (now the B. M. Smith Memorial Singing). He had started an earlier singing at Antioch Baptist Church, but it died after the church withdrew its support. He gladly served as chair or vice-chair of a singing; he was always willing to

help in any way he could. He learned to key music so he could help out at small singings. Pam Nunn tells the story of his learning to key:

*My family had always gone to Lower Cane Creek for a singing in May, but for some reason mom and dad [Jeff and Shelbie Sheppard] were out of town one year and could not be there. This singing is rather small to begin with, but it was even smaller that year. There was no one there who could or would key. So B. M. and I did our best to fill the need. One of us would try to give the key and then look for approval at the other, then adjust from there. There were a lot of adjustments. Needless to say, it was a very long day and we were glad when it was over. I have never attempted keying again. B. M., however, took it upon himself to learn how to key a song. He did a great job, as long as it was a song in a major key; he never was comfortable enough to key minor songs.*

No one could say that B. M. did not follow the command to love mercy. His loving, caring spirit was evident to all he met, and he never met a stranger. He could carry on a conversation with anybody and everybody. While he was from that generation of men who were mostly silent about their feelings, his smile said it all. After he passed away, his daughter Debra noted that many co-workers and local people expressed their love for him. They remarked that he always had a smile and friendly conversation for everyone he encountered. The ladies from the credit union where he did business for thirty-five years talked about how they enjoyed his visits. He always took them peanut brittle for Christmas (made by Margie, of course). Together, he and Margie were a great team of encouragers.

We all loved B. M. It has not been an easy year without him. He will continue to be missed, especially in the Sacred Harp community, for a long, long time. ■



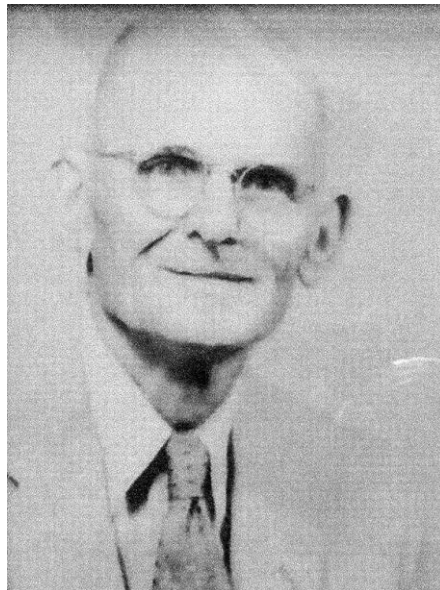
## Friends Who've Gone Before

# In Memory of Earlis McGraw, July 27, 1935–June 8, 2016

Rebecca Over | Ash Vale, United Kingdom



Earlis's great-grandparents, Roland and Gussie McGraw, August 21, 1908.



H. N. "Bud" McGraw and Lydia, grandparents of Earlis McGraw, in later years. Photograph courtesy of Spencer McGraw.



**Editor's Note:** *United Kingdom-based singer Rebecca Over fell in love with the songs of the McGraw family soon after she began singing Sacred Harp in 2009. An avid researcher, Rebecca got to know living McGraws such as Earlis during trips to the United States following the footsteps of singers and composers from past generations such as Lee Andrew McGraw and Silas Mercer Brown. She quickly became a beloved adopted family member. Thanks to Rebecca for contributing this essay in honor of Earlis McGraw, who received the Sacred Harp Publishing Company's posthumous citation in 2017 for his "untiring support of and dedicated service to the cause of Sacred Harp music."*

**W**HEN Earlis McGraw of Carrollton, Georgia passed away on June 8, 2016, at the age of eighty, the Sacred Harp singing communities of West Georgia and East Alabama lost a faithful supporter, a stalwart treble singer, a warm and welcoming friend,

and a kind and generous man.

Earlis came from a long line of singers. His great grandmother, Augusta "Gussie" Entrekin McGraw (1864–1940), was well known for her clear and beautiful treble voice. She could carry the treble part on her own if necessary and seldom if ever looked at her book even while leading. Though her husband Roland Jackson McGraw (1859–1910) "couldn't carry a tune in a water bucket," according to Gussie as quoted by their grandson Albert Jackson McGraw (1921–2006), he joined the Chattahoochee Convention with her in 1889 at Standing Rock Church in Coweta County, Georgia. One of their children with them that that day would have been six-year-old Henry Newton McGraw (1883–1969).

H. N. "Bud" McGraw, Earlis' grandfather, grew up to become a highly respected singer and teacher of singing schools. Like his elder brother Lee (1882–1957) and younger brother

Tom (1890–1970) he could sing any part of any song in the book. All three composed music, and four songs by Bud remain in *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, SABBATH MORNING, HOLLY SPRINGS, ETERNAL LIGHT, and PRAISE HIM (pp. 283, 453, 483 and 544).

Bud married Lydia Young (1888–1969) in 1905 and their fourth child Thomas Buford McGraw became a dedicated and enthusiastic singer, attending his father's singing schools and regularly traveling to singings throughout Georgia and Alabama. He inherited the family talent for treble singing and his strong, clear treble voice inspired younger singers to take up that part. He also composed one song in our current book, *THE THRONE OF GRACE* (p. 476).

When Buford married Florence Gladys Wallace (1911–2007) in 1929, it was a union of two singing families. Gladys was a singer and one of the daughters of singers Walter Wallace (1881–1969) and Maude Holcombe





**Above:** Earlis's father, Buford McGraw.  
*Photograph courtesy of Charlene Wallace.*



**Left:** Gladys McGraw, Earlis's mother,  
on the occasion of her 89th birthday.  
*Photograph courtesy of Jason Stanford.*

(1888–1975). Many of her siblings sang. These include youngest sister Charlene Wallace, who continues to be a stalwart supporter of Sacred Harp singing in West Georgia. Buford and Gladys made their home in Mount Zion, Carroll County, Georgia.

On July 27, 1935, the second child and first son of Buford and Gladys was born. They named him Thomas Earlis McGraw. It was the Saturday of the Mount Zion Memorial Singing, at

which McGraws had served as officers since the mid 1920s. Buford was heard to remark that despite being thrilled by the birth of his son it was bad timing because it meant he had to miss the singing. For Earlis, the timing was good. In later life he loved the fact that in some years he could celebrate his birthday on the Saturday or Sunday of the singing, surrounded by family, singers, and friends. More recently he was especially delighted to share his birthday with young Eli Hinton, son of singers Matt and Erica Hinton of Atlanta.

Buford and Gladys encouraged all their children to sing and to attend their grandfather Bud's singing schools. Often three generations of McGraws traveled to singings together. Earlis remembered riding in the back of Bud's car to the Coweta County Courthouse Singing in Newnan, Georgia, with Buford in the passenger seat.

Earlis began singing at around five years old. He first appears in the minutes leading music at Mount Zion in 1948 at the age of twelve when he conducted lessons on both days. Song numbers were not recorded but he remembered that *TO DIE NO MORE* (p. 111b) was one of the first songs he learned. He followed in Buford's footsteps to sing treble and loved nothing better than singing next to his father. Both particularly enjoyed the soaring treble line of *THE CHILD OF GRACE* (p. 77t). He said he thought he never could sing as well as his father but Buford clearly considered him to be an excellent and powerful singer. One time they were driving to Birmingham, Alabama, to sing on a recording produced by the Sacred Harp Publishing Company. Buford told Earlis that he "might get moved" to another part because the two of them singing treble together would "blast the class out."

From 1955 to 1960, Earlis served in the US Air Force, working on instrumentation in aircraft as diverse as transporters and fighters. This included tours of duty in Okinawa, Japan and in California. When he came home, he returned to Sacred Harp singing and sang for the rest of his life. He attended every session of the Mount Zion Memorial except one from 1963 up to and including 2015, serving as vice chairman in 1982 and 1983 and chairman from 2000 until he died in office in June 2016. He attended many other Georgia singings, served as chairman of the Coweta Courthouse singing at least once, and supported singings in Cleburne County, Alabama.

From 2005 through 2015, he chose to begin Saturday singing at Mount Zion with *LOVE DIVINE* (p. 30t). Other favorites included his grandfather Bud's *SABBATH MORNING*, Hugh McGraw's *REYNOLDS*, and *GARDEN HYMN* (pp. 283, 225t, and 284). He never stopped adding to his extensive repertoire and I was especially pleased when it turned out that we had both been practicing *WHERE CEASELESS AGES ROLL* (p. 505), during the same year.

Earlis served with the Carroll County





Fire Service for thirty years. By the time he and I first met in June 2012, he was working at the Home Depot in Carrollton, where he tried to get as many weekend days off as he could to sing. He served on the Mount Zion City Council and carried out grass mowing, maintenance, and other work at the Sacred Harp Museum. In addition to Mount Zion, one of the places that he most loved to sing was Holly Springs. There he was the expert at operating the air conditioning or heating and he regularly attended the relatively recent "Third Thursday" evening practice singings. He was a kind, generous, and modest man and much of his work in support of Sacred Harp was unknown to most singers.

Earlis had a warm smile and a great sense of humor. Wawena Entrekin Miles, daughter of Ples Entrekin and grand-daughter of Mount Zion Charter Member Jones B. Entrekin, taught Earlis in primary school and still attends

the Mount Zion Memorial. When asked if she wanted to lead at the 2015 session she said that instead of singing she wanted to say that Earlis, who would be eighty the next day, would not have turned out the good person he was if she had not "paddled" him when he misbehaved in school. With a twinkle in his eye he replied that he never had a "paddling" that he did not deserve.

He looked forward to the written instalments of family history that I brought over each year for him and other members of the family and he was very kind to me. By the summer of 2014 he was teasing me about the state of my songbook, which was just about falling apart. At Holly Springs that November, he presented me with a new book, signed by all the singers in the family including Charlene. In this he had written "To Rebecca P. Over (McGraw)"—a very great honor indeed. He told me I should now "retire" my old book and it has remained at home ever since.



**Top:** Earlis with the singers at Holly Springs on Saturday June 4, 2016. Photograph courtesy of Isaac Green.

**Above:** Earlis with the author at the Kerr Memorial on January 10, 2016. Photograph courtesy of Robert Chambless.

Before the first day of singing at Holly Springs in June 2015, Earlis took me to see the plot in the cemetery where he would be buried. "I'll be at the feet of Walter Wallace, just as I was in life" he joked with a smile. Little did either of us know then as we stood side by side in the sun just how soon he would be resting there.

In 2016 I planned an exceptional winter visit instead of the more usual June. Earlis came late to the Kerr Memorial in early January. He was not well and told me that he was waiting for the results of medical tests. He said he would feel better once the doctors knew what they were dealing with. For me his choice of PARTING FRIEND (p. 414) with its plaintive alto line was particularly poignant. The other song he led that day was REYNOLDS. Later that month he was diagnosed with cancer.

Sacred Harp friendships can span continents and oceans. Cards were sent to Earlis from many UK singings that spring and also from the Ireland Convention, with signatures and messages from singers from all over the world. I brought forward work on a short history of the Mount Zion Memorial so that I could send him a copy. Unable to change travel plans, I was still hoping that he might be able to come to Mount Zion in July, but that was not to be.

His last singing was Holly Springs that June. It took supreme effort and will on his part but photographs clearly show how very happy he was to be there. I am deeply and profoundly moved by the fact that the last song he asked the class to sing was MCGRAW (p. 353) for me.

On Sunday July 23, 2017 at the 125th session of the Mount Zion Memorial Singing, Earlis became the latest in a long line of McGraws to posthumously receive a citation from the Sacred Harp Publishing Company to "honor and express appreciation" for his "outstanding work in the company and untiring support of and dedicated service to the cause of Sacred Harp music." He was the 92nd person to receive a citation. Previous recipients include Lee A. McGraw (the 13th recipient), H. N.



From left to right: Tommy's wife Sue, Tommy McGraw, half-sister Carol and Earlis McGraw at Mount Zion on Sunday July 26, 2015. Photograph by Rebecca P. Over.

"Bud" McGraw (15th), Tom B. McGraw (38th), Buford McGraw (49th) and Earlis's sister Carlene Griffin (88th). John Plunkett presented a plaque to his sister Judy Henry and brother Ricky McGraw.

Earlis is now surely singing with his father once again in that hollow square in heaven. With the passing of Hugh McGraw on May 28, 2017, there are so many McGraws in that class that the singing must be wonderful indeed. Here on earth his line of singing McGraws continues. His son Thomas "Tommy" Earlis McGraw Jr. not only carries forward the family name but also sings. When asked how long he had been singing he joked that he went to his first singing with his mother Peggy "Teenie" McGraw (1940–2013, later Moody)

when she was pregnant with him. Both Tommy and his wife Sue attend the Mount Zion Memorial, though were unable to come in 2017 due to illness. They both continue the family tradition of treble singing that began with Gussie McGraw all those years ago.

The many contributions that Earlis made to Sacred Harp, both at singings and behind the scenes, are greatly missed. Every time I go to the Mount Zion Memorial Singing I remember his friendship and kindness, and whenever I bring in the trebles while leading I see his smiling face. Other singers have willingly stepped up to take on the many duties that were once performed by this very special man and the singings that he loved continue. In this way, his memory lives on. ■



## Read the Old Paths

## What I've Learned from My Sacred Harp Elders

Kathy Williams | Bowdon, Georgia



**Left:** James T. "Jim" Fields and Dessie Brown Fields, 1921. Dessie Brown Fields' brother, Lemman Brown, served on the Sacred Harp Publishing Company board of directors and was married to Ruth Burnham Brown.

**Above:** Jim and Dessie Fields with their daughter Ruth Fields Ayers, ca. 1948.

*Photographs courtesy of Louise Holland.*

My love of Sacred Harp began with my grandfather, Jim Fields, who took me to a singing school in 1958, when I was ten years old. H. N. "Bud" McGraw was the teacher. I was immediately in love with the music, the warmth, and the welcoming hugs for a little newcomer. Some of the other attendees of that singing school were Hugh McGraw, Jeff Sheppard, Buford McGraw (and lots of McGraw children), Charlene Wallace, and Jack Hicks, my grandmother's cousin, who was in his eighties and had never learned to sing Sacred Harp. I remember being able to show him which line to sing on for the tenor part. Years later, when he was more than 100 years old, Jack had fun telling the story of how I helped him learn to

sing "when he was a young boy."

On the way home that first night, Papa, my grandfather, seemed a bit nervous for some reason. We chatted, and he asked me some roundabout questions about the night. Finally, he said, "You'll like it better when you get used to it." I responded, "I already like it!" My grandfather told me years later that he was worried that I wouldn't want to go back the next night. That singing school was the beginning of my love affair with Sacred Harp music and the Sacred Harp family.

We attended the singing school every night for two weeks, two hours each night. The first hour was spent on instruction and the second on singing with everyone sitting in parts. We

newcomers stayed on the tenor part to learn the lead before we tried to sing another part. Each of us had to jump in and learn to lead as well; the first song I led was *WEeping SINNERS* (p. 108t in *The Sacred Harp*). Papa taught me never to lead without my book. To this day, I can't lead without at least holding my book. It's the prop holding me up. We had a theme song that we practiced each night with the goal of singing it well on the last night of school when the community would be invited to come sing with us. That song was *LAWRENCEBURG* (p. 380). That was a real challenge, but we did it! After the singing school ended, I didn't realize it was only the beginning—I cried and hid my face in the book. What a happy



A scene from the 1960 United Sacred Harp Musical Association in Bowdon, Georgia, captured by a reporter for the *Bowdon Bulletin*. From left to right: Hugh McGraw (convention vice chairman), Will Laminack ("oldest in attendance"), Kathy Holland ("youngest in attendance"), and Jim Ayers (chairman). At twelve, I wasn't really the youngest—I was just the one that Jim chose!

surprise it was to learn that we could sing somewhere almost every weekend!

My Papa died late in 1959, so we didn't get to sing together very long. Still, when I sing the songs that have been sung by so many generations before me, I feel a sense of place, of belonging, on the timeline of Sacred Harp history. I feel the ones who came before me, and I feel those who will come after me. I'll always be thankful to him for that wonderful, loving gift.

Another strong influence in my singing life came from Jim and Lillie Belle Ayers. They became my surrogate grandparents, friends, and means of

getting to singings. As I grew up, I learned from them how much it means to others to encourage, teach, love, and transport those who wouldn't otherwise have a way to go to singings. I would call them as often as my mother would allow it—she didn't want me to be a nuisance! It's probably a good thing there was no caller ID: "Oh, no, it's that Holland girl again!" They were unselfish with their time and their love. When the 1960 Edition of the Denson book was published, we had local evening practice sessions to learn the new songs. Each time we would go, Jim would have a new song picked out for us to practice. We

would pull off the side of the country road, learn the song right there in the car, and be ready to sing it with the group when we arrived.

Jim was a prankster. He loved to get a gentle chuckle with his tricks. His car was a 1959 Cadillac, the one with the tall fins in the back and the taillights about halfway up the fins. I had never seen such a fancy car, with its electric window controls. I had no idea that Jim could control all four windows from the driver's seat. One time, he lowered my window in the back seat, then told me not to be playing with the windows, all the time watching for my reaction in the



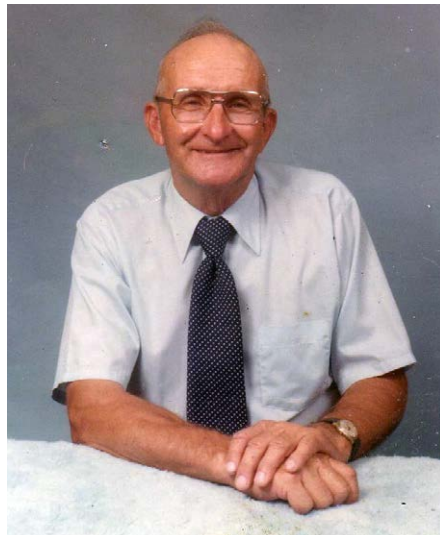
rearview mirror!

I learned to sing alto from Charlene Wallace and Joyce Walton. When I arrived at a singing, I would rush to put my book on the chair next to Charlene's. She would sing toward me and point to my page when I got lost or made a mistake. She was so patient. She has helped countless youngsters and not-so-youngsters learn to sing. Just sitting beside her was a learning experience. I still love to sing beside Charlene.

Around this time, I learned another important lesson: when there is a book on a chair, that chair is spoken for! I don't remember specific instances, so I'm sure I was gently reprimanded, probably when someone's book was already on the chair next to Charlene's. That lesson has stuck so well that I still remember, with shame, the two times in sixty years that I moved someone's book after reaching a reasonable age of accountability! I remember where each of the two singings was, and I remember whose books I moved.

I attended singing schools taught by H. N. "Bud" McGraw, Jeff Sheppard, George Phillips, Loyd Redding, Buford McGraw, Euclid McGuire, and others I'm sure I'll remember later. Most of these names will be unfamiliar to many of you. I name them to say that I learned from them, collectively, and that there is always something new to learn, someone new who needs help, someone new to love and encourage. I can't tell you how many times I saw Jeff Sheppard reach forward from his front row seat to take the hand of a child or an adult who was learning to lead. In one of the last pictures I saw of him, he was doing just that.

Jeff was also a prankster and an entertainer, his green eyes always dancing with mischief. At the end of the 2007 Camp Fasola at Camp Lee in Anniston, Alabama, everyone was visiting, saying goodbye, and hating to leave. I was chatting with Jeff at one point and he kept glancing at my pickup truck. Finally, he said, "Would you like to come by my house today?" Well, I was flattered, and said, "Yes, I'd love to come visit with you and Shelby this afternoon!" He ducked his head,



**Top left:** Fellow altos (left to right) Joyce Walton, Charlene Wallace, and Carlene Griffin, at the first National Sacred Harp Convention, Birmingham, Alabama, 1980.

**Top right:** Jeff Sheppard, always an entertainer, often in a borrowed hat, aboard one of the many bus trips to far-off singings organized by Ruth and Leman Brown.

**Bottom right:** Ruth Brown with Jasper "Jap" Walton, at the first National Sacred Harp Convention, 1980. *Photographs courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.*

**Bottom left:** Lonnie Rogers, 1990s. *Photograph courtesy of Karen Rollins.*

chuckled out loud, and I realized I'd been had. He had a stepladder he wanted to load in the back of my truck so I could bring it to his house. From pranksters and mischief makers like Jeff I've learned how much fun it is to get to know my fellow singers on a different level. I think that's one reason so many singers return to Camp Fasola year after year—to learn, of course, and to sing, but

also to spend time with each other in a more intimate setting than usual. We come to know each other in a broader and deeper sense.

My great aunt and uncle, Leman and Ruth Brown, were the wise owls in our family, the ones whose counsel we sought. You may have heard stories of Aunt Ruth's bus trips to Sacred Harp singings. If you were at the youth session



Hugh McGraw, at the first National Sacred Harp Convention, 1980. *Photograph courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.*

of Camp Fasola in 2015, you heard some of those stories first hand from those who had traveled with the “Bus Lady.” From the perspective of a family member, her niece, I learned how important it is to be patient with your fellow travelers. Luggage doesn’t arrive immediately at a hotel door. Someone is given the wrong key. Another’s room isn’t satisfactory. Still another doesn’t like what is being served at a group dinner. One such participant, on a trip to Hawaii, refused to come to the bus at our scheduled time because she had been chatting and hadn’t finished her lunch. People get tired and irritable traveling on a tight schedule. Through it all, Aunt Ruth maintained her grace, dignity, and patience, and vented privately, not to her bus people. That’s not to say that she didn’t have the ability to quietly but firmly put one in one’s place when the occasion demanded it.

From Lonnie Rogers, I learned how important it is to recognize and welcome someone you haven’t seen at a singing in a while. During my college years, in the late 1960s, I stopped regularly going to singings. About

1971, I went to Lonnie’s singing at the elementary school across from his house in Ephesus, Heard County, Georgia, after having missed it for several years. It was cold that first Sunday in March, and as I stopped at the back of the room to take off my coat, Lonnie came to welcome me. He took my hand in both of his, and said, “Kathy, it just looks natural to see you coming in here.” He leaned in toward me as he spoke to me and looked directly into my eyes; he was so sincere and loving. He told me stories over the years about connections between our families. We lived in adjacent counties, and he wanted me to know these family stories that I wouldn’t have known otherwise.

From Hugh McGraw, in addition to many Sacred Harp lessons, I learned the importance of flexibility. In 1985 a singing friend told me she was going with Hugh and a group of singers to the New England Convention in Middletown, Connecticut. I wanted to go so badly, and to take my daughter. My friend told me to call Hugh and ask him about it. It didn’t occur to me at the time what a huge favor I was asking. Nevertheless, Hugh said of course we could go. He made all our reservations, had to change his car rental arrangements, and never mentioned any inconvenience. When we arrived at our destination airport and went to retrieve said rental car, what we saw was about the size of my Toyota Prius! Hugh walked all around that car twice trying to figure out how to fit us in. It just wouldn’t work. When he returned from his trip back to the rental office, he had the keys to a seven-passenger van for the nine of us. We had luggage stashed in every available space inside the van and more tied to the luggage rack on top! We had to stop a few times to retie pieces that fell off the edge of the rack. Three of us took turns sitting on a piece of luggage by the sliding door. We had a blast, attended a wonderful convention, and returned home without serious incident.

I know each of us has stories of people who have had great influence on our lives. These are just a few of mine. I’d love to hear some of yours sometime. And I’d like to leave you with some bits

of advice I’ve learned through the years.

1. Don’t forget that a book on the chair is a sacred covenant! Also, if you intend to change seats after a break, take your book with you.
2. If you need to get up during a song, find a way to go around the perimeter of the group.
3. Responsible front bench tenor singers always beat time with the leader and look up at the leader. Some leaders need your help, and some don’t. Watch them for cues. Also, there are times when singers on other parts can’t see the leader, and your help is needed.
4. Have your song ready when it’s your turn to lead, and call it out from your seat when you stand. Have a backup song chosen in case your first choice has already been called.
5. If you are called to lead immediately before or after the Memorial Lesson, choose a song that fits that mood.
6. Let the person keying have some “space” to find their note. Help only if the pitcher asks you to. You can also pitch your own tune; just let the keyer know.
7. Be aware of how the singing is flowing, with highs and lows throughout the day, when choosing a song to lead.
8. Singers have a wide range of belief systems. What each individual makes of the music and lyrics is up to that person. Respect that right. I think that’s something we do pretty well, actually.
9. Even long-time singers make mistakes or sing something incorrectly out of ingrained habit. It’s okay to give it a go and not do well—or just listen and try to follow along.
10. Find your elders, those who have helped you in some way that you remember, and let them know over and over, how important they’ve been.
11. Finally, when you know a friend who won’t be with us much longer, find a way to say goodbye. I learned this lesson from my mother, who taught me how important it is to acknowledge an impending death; to let that person know how much they have meant to me, and to say good bye. ■



## Of Harmony and Composition

# Bound Together: What Makes an Effective Pairing of Text and Tune

Robert T. Kelley | Greenwood, South Carolina

*In a skillfully composed [nineteenth-century American] composition, the whole acquired a larger significance not foreseeable by merely reading the words or examining the air.*

—Nicholas E. Tawa<sup>1</sup>

WHY do the text and tune of certain *Sacred Harp* songs go so well together? How do I look for poetry to go with a particular air or melody? How do I set a beautiful hymn that I found to music? While there is definitely some magic to how a powerful song brings out the meaning of the words, we can also learn some text-setting techniques that many great *Sacred Harp* songs have in common.

First of all, shape-note hymnody usually does not use certain ways of depicting text that other types of music do use. For example, a *Sacred Harp* song's melody does not try to reflect moment-to-moment emotional changes in the text, even in longer set pieces like odes and anthems. Instead, the tune usually matches the subject matter of the poetry in a more general way. If the music is actually crafted around

the details of the poetry in any way, it need only fit the first verse.<sup>2</sup> Instead of painting the emotions in the text, I have found that a *Sacred Harp* tune more often uses melodic shape, rhythm, and even harmony to accentuate important words in the poetry.

Let us begin to explore this through an extreme example. IDUMEA (p. 47b in *The Sacred Harp*, see below) is most certainly a sublime combination of tune and text, which explains its popularity as reported in statistical studies of the *Minutes of Sacred Harp Singings*, even before its “Cold Mountain bump.” *The New Harp of Columbia*, however, substitutes a different text (see next page, top), which does not go well with the music. First, and most obviously, the upbeat text (Isaac Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, Book II, Hymn 30) does not match the mournful character of the music.<sup>3</sup>

We can also examine the tenor melody and see how well it fits with the words. Where are the most important moments in this tune? The two most obvious tenor notes that stand out are the two high sols, the first in measure

five, and the other in measure eight. In *The Sacred Harp*, these notes carry the words “lay” and “must,” both important words in the poetry. In *The New Harp of Columbia*, however, these notes carry the words “let” and “in,” neither of which are important words in the text. In the *Kentucky Harmony* where this tune was first published (see next page, bottom), these notes carry the words “thee” and “cannot,” which also works better than the *New Harp* words.

Melody is not the only way that the music can bring out parts of the poetry. Let us now explore two songs that successfully use different musical elements to enhance the same hymn text. S. Whitt Denson's BURDETTE (1909) (p. 422) and his father Seaborn McDaniel Denson's PRAISE GOD (1911) (p. 328) were both written for the 1911 James revision of *The Sacred Harp*, but they set slightly different versions of Charles Wesley's (1742) hymn illumination of Psalm 51, verse 10.<sup>4</sup>

First, BURDETTE enhances certain words in the poetry with pauses in the text delivery on either longer notes or vocal flourishes. This kind of emphasis

## IDUMEA. S.M.

*“A time to be born and a time to die.” --Ecc. 3:2.*

A Minor. Charles Wesley, 1763.

Ananias Davisson, 1816



1. And am I born to die? To lay this bod-y down! And must my trem-bling spir-it fly In-to a world un-known?

2. A land of deepest shade, Un-pierced by hu-man thought; The dreary re-gions of the dead, Where all things are for-got!

3. Soon as from earth I go, What will be-come of me? E-ter-nal hap-pi-ness or woe Must then my por-tion be!

4. Waked by the trumpet sound, I from my grave shall rise; And see the Judge with glo-ry crowned, And see the flam-ing skies!

IDUMEA, as published in *The Sacred Harp* (p. 47b).

## 44

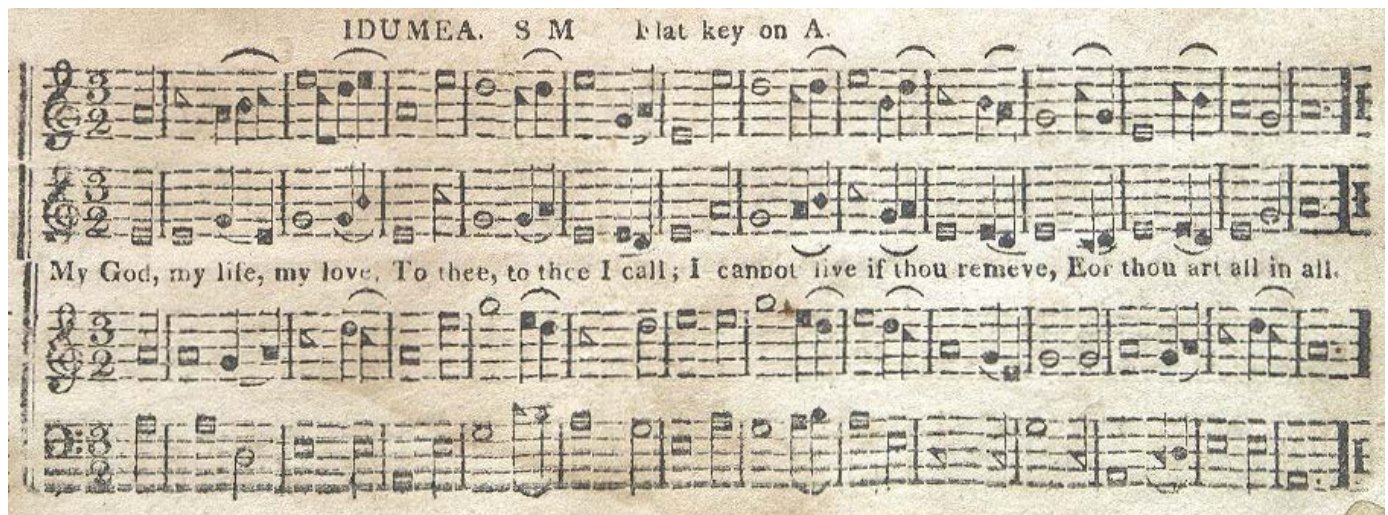
## IDUMEA. S. M.

DAVISSON.



2. Let those refuse to sing  
Who never knew our God;  
But servants of the heavenly King  
May speak their joys abroad.
3. The God that rules on high,  
That all the earth surveys,  
That rides upon the stormy sky,  
And calms the roaring seas;
4. This awful God is ours,  
Our Father and our Love;  
He will send down his heavenly powers  
To carry us above.
5. There we shall see his face  
And never, never sin,

- There, from the rivers of his grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in:
6. Yea, and before we rise  
To that immortal state,  
The thoughts of such amazing bliss  
Should constant joys create.
7. The men of grace have found  
Glory begun below:  
Celestial fruit on earthly ground,  
From faith and hope may grow;
8. Then let our songs abound,  
And every tear be dry:  
We're marching through Immanuel's ground,  
To fairer worlds on high.



Top: IDUMEA, as published in *The New Harp of Columbia* (p. 44). Above: IDUMEA, as published in *Kentucky Harmony* (p. 33).

created through lengthening is called an agogic accent. In the above illustration of BURDETTE the color blue highlights all of the agogically accented words (i.e. "God," "sin," "heart," "blood," "freely," "me," "heart" (in the tenor and bass), "thy" (in the treble and alto), "blood," and the last four words "freely shed for me"). Adding the tenor part's local

high points (marked green on the next page) fills in two missing "heart"s at the beginning, adds emphasis to the word "free" in measure five, and also accents the word "shed" in the fugal section. The only important word in the text that never receives emphasis through either melodic shape or rhythmic lengthening is the word "clean."

The song PRAISE GOD, on the other hand, is more selective in its emphasis of certain words, and uses chord changes to accomplish this. I have added chord analysis symbols below the first section of the song in the figure on page 27.<sup>5</sup> Understanding the nuances of chord analysis is not required for our purposes here, though. We shall only look at the



**BURDETTE. C.M.***"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." --Eph. 1:7.*

F Major: Charles Wesley, 1742.

S. Whitt Denson, 1909.

**Above:** Analysis of text highlighted in BURDETTE, (p. 422).

**Right:** Harmony analysis symbols.

Concords in Shape-Note Music

Major	Minor
-------	-------

Chord Label Suffixes

53 = Complete triad, root is lowest note	5 = Root lowest, missing 3rd
0 = All parts sing the root, no 3rd or 5th	3 = Root lowest, missing 5th
63 = Complete triad, 3rd is lowest note	6 = 3rd lowest, missing 5th
64 = Complete triad, 5th is lowest note	4 = 5th lowest, missing 3rd

Scale-Degree Number Suffixes for Discords

+1, +2, +3, +4, etc.

Roman numerals that begin each of the chord symbols to see when they stay the same or when they change.

The first section of PRAISE GOD presents the text entirely in even quarter notes, with pauses only at the ends of lines two and four of the hymn. When singers accent this song well, all of the words that S. Whitt Denson emphasized in BURDETTE stand out more or less equally in this song, plus the word “clean”

and a few less important words. Some of the music’s strong beats also use a different chord, which places special emphasis on some of these accented words. All of the strong beats at the beginning of this song through the word “heart” are harmonized with “i” chord and marked in blue in the illustration of PRAISE GOD on page 27. (The “VII” chords are all on weak beats.) The first accented syllable with a different chord

is “sin” (marked in green). Instead of returning immediately to a “i” chord, the next two syllables (“set” and “free”) both also have different chords that have not yet been used in the song. This sudden harmonic wrenching away from “i” captures my attention when I listen to this song, and the phrase “sin set free” really does seem to jump out.

The next strong-beat diversion from a “i” chord is a “VII” chord that coincides

## PRAISE GOD. C.M.D.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." --Matt. 5:8.

G minor. Charles Wesley, 1742.

S. M. Denson, 1911.

1. Oh, for a heart to praise my God, A heart from sin set free; A heart that's sprinkled with His blood, So free-ly shed for me.  
2. Oh, for an humble, con - trite heart, Be - liev - ing, true, and clean, Which nei - ther life nor death can part From Him that dwells with - in.

1. Oh, for a heart to praise my God, A heart from sin set free; A heart that's sprinkled with His blood, So free-ly shed for me. Oh, for a heart sub -  
2. Oh, for an humble, con - trite heart, Be - liev - ing, true, and clean, Which nei - ther life nor death can part From Him that dwells with - in. A heart in ev - 'ry

1. Oh, for a heart to praise my God, A heart from sin set free; A heart that's sprinkled with His blood, So free-ly shed for me.  
2. Oh, for an humble, con - trite heart, Be - liev - ing, true, and clean, Which nei - ther life nor death can part From Him that dwells with - in.

gm: i53 i53 i53 i53 VII5 i53 VII5 i64 VII5 i64 i64 i53 i53 III i64 iv4+7 v5 i64 VII5 i53 i53 VII5 i53 VII5 i5 VII5 i64+6 i53 i53 III i64 iv4+2 III i64+2 i4 v53 i5

Oh, for a heart sub - mis - sive, meek, My great Redeem - er's throne, Where on - ly Christ is heard to speak, Where Je - sus reigns a - lone.  
A heart in ev - 'ry thought re - newed, And full of love di - vine; Per - fect, and right, and pure, and good, A cop - y, Lord, of Thine.

mis - sive, meek, My great Re - deem - er's throne, Where on - ly Christ is heard to speak, Where Je - sus reigns a - lone.  
thought re - newed, And full of love di - vine; Per - fect, and right, and pure, and good, A cop - y, Lord, of Thine.

Oh, for a heart sub - mis - sive, meek, My great Re - deem - er's throne, Where on - ly Christ is heard to speak, Where Je - sus reigns a - lone.  
A heart in ev - 'ry thought re - newed, And full of love di - vine; Per - fect, and right, and pure, and good, A cop - y, Lord, of Thine.

mis - sive, meek, My great Re - deem - er's throne, Where on - ly Christ is heard to speak, Where Je - sus reigns a - lone.  
thought re - newed, And full of love di - vine; Per - fect, and right, and pure, and good, A cop - y, Lord, of Thine.

**Above:** Analysis of text highlighted in PRAISE GOD (p. 328).

with the word “sprinkled.” Because the following accented syllable (“with”) also has a “VII” chord, the return to “i” on the word “blood” becomes the surprising chord change. This begins an alternation between “i” chords and “other” chords, where the chord changes themselves signal the highlighted words “blood,” “free(ly),” “shed,” “for,” and “me.” The next time you sing or listen to this song, see if the chord changes make these words (“sin set free,” “sprinkled,” “blood,” “freely shed for me”) stick out to you.

Here are the aspects of the music and poetry to explore when trying to judge how tune and text interact in a Sacred Harp song.

### Elements to Examine

- General emotional character of the words and music
- Agreement of text stress and musical accent
- Interaction of the melody and the important words of the text
- Interaction of rhythm and the important words of the text
- Interaction of harmony and the important words of the text
- Text painting effects

And I looked for the following four types of attention-getting events when analyzing how these songs can make certain words stand out.<sup>6</sup>

### How to Emphasize a Word

- New – Something not heard before, or not heard recently
- High – The highest note sung so far
- Long – A long note value, or a melisma (one syllable stretched over many notes)
- Different – A sudden change from the norm, or a denial of expectations<sup>7</sup>

If you are trying to find or write a tune for a preexisting text, however, I can offer you a few other tips and tricks. First, consider how to make the mood of the music match the tone of the text through your choice of a major or minor key, the mode of time, and tessitura (whether the music spends most of its time in the voice ranges’ upper or



lower ends). After making these general decisions, your main focus should be planning out melodic shape and rhythm so that they enhance the text.

As mentioned before, the easiest way to highlight the most important words is to use relatively long and/or high notes. Both rhythm and melodic shape can also be powerful ways to create direction and energy in a song. If a melody goes up, it can reflect a sense of striving, aspiration, or increasing tension in the text. If a melody goes down, it can sound like a relaxation if presented in even note values or increasing length, or it can sound like it is gaining momentum if the rhythm gets faster.

When I am composing a song around a text, I work first on the general melodic shape and basic rhythm that I want. I begin by writing the song's words on a piece of paper, leaving plenty of space between each line of text. Above each syllable I use round notes to write out the rhythm that I want, and I draw a curvy line across the page showing where I want the melody to go up or down. Only then do I begin to think about how to fit this melodic shape onto the musical scale. Drawing the melody and rhythm without shapes or a staff allows me to think first about the musical gestures that I want to associate with various parts of the text. Writing a good tune is a task deserving separate attention and should happen after worrying about how the tune will illuminate the text.

I hope that many of you find this guide useful. If you would like some practice analyzing the way that Sacred Harp composers set text, take a look at these two beautiful settings of the same text, BAPTISMAL ANTHEM (p. 232) and THE LAMB OF GOD (p. 572). See if you can describe the text setting of each, along with any instances where one composer seems to be more attentive to text-music interaction than the other. While it is not essential for a great Sacred Harp song to have extensive tailoring of the music to every word in the text, I hope that I have shown you the ways in which text-music relationships can make a song more than

the sum of its music and poetry. I believe that the moments where the text and the tune seem to become inseparably unified are at the heart of what we enjoy about a song when we sing it. ■

## Notes

1. Nicholas E. Tawa, "Serious Songs of the Early Nineteenth Century. Part 2: The Meaning of the Early Song Melodies." *American Music* 13, no. 3 (Autumn 1995), 263–294, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3052617>.
2. *Songs from nineteenth-century America often work well for the first verse, and audiences of the era were expected to forgive any dissonance between the music and the text of the subsequent verses. For a more complete explanation of this practice, see Tawa, "Serious Songs."*
3. *An emotional character mismatch between tune and text is more likely to succeed when the music is happy, as in MORNING SUN (p. 436). Although I am not sure why this is true, it may be partly due to the prevalence of major over minor. Also, it is easier to find a convincing narrative that explains singing dark poetry with a major tune (something like "smiling through the pain") than singing a cheerful text with somber minor music.*
4. *The 1911 James revision's "Cheese Notes" to PRAISE GOD indicate that James selected the song's text after S. M. Denson composed the tune and submitted it for publication. This explains why, as we shall see, PRAISE GOD is a much more straightforward Common Meter tune than BURDETTE.*
5. *Table 1 briefly summarizes how these symbols work, and my academic paper, "A Corpus-Based Model of Harmonic Function in Shape-Note Hymnody," <http://robertkelleyphd.com/ShapeNoteMusic/ACorpusBasedModelOfHarmonicFunctionInShapeNoteHymnody-Paper.pdf>, describes how I came up with this analysis system.*
6. *For those who are interested, I have analyzed a few more songs using these principles in "A Corpus-Based Model."*
7. *A fifth way to emphasize certain words or phrases in a text is by repeating them. Even though text repetition is fairly common in The Sacred Harp, especially in anthems—for a particularly effective example, see EASTER ANTHEM (p. 236)—I've omitted it from this list to encourage focus on the more subtle ways of enhancing text. When I'm composing, I try to avoid repeating text for emphasis because it can distort the text's own artful proportions and rhythm.*

## New Grant Supports Sacred Harp Museum

THE Sacred Harp Publishing Company is excited to announce that the Community Foundation of West Georgia has awarded the Sacred Harp Museum a Community Impact Grant of \$6,000 to enhance public access to the Museum's collections. The grant will support a redesigned website that will offer an improved platform for online exhibitions and allow for greater access to digitized audio, video, photographs, and documents from the collection.

As museum curator Nathan Rees explains, "This grant will help the Sacred Harp Museum make important progress toward our goal of preserving the history of Sacred Harp and making that history accessible to the public." Over the next year, Rees and the SHPC's Museum Committee will work with professional web designers to develop a user-friendly, content-rich online portal to the museum's unique collection. Support from the Community Foundation of West Georgia is especially meaningful, as Jesse P. Karlsberg, research director at the museum, describes: "We are honored to have local support to preserve and promote a tradition that has been enmeshed in West Georgia's community fabric for over a hundred and fifty years. This support enables us to enhance the visibility of Sacred Harp in the West Georgia community and share this important cultural history with the world."

The Community Impact Grant builds on work conducted by interns at the Sacred Harp Museum over the past two summers who have made great strides in cataloging, archiving, and digitizing items in the Museum's collection. Watch the Sacred Harp Publishing Company website for information about the 2018 internship.

## Of Harmony and Composition

# The “Stacked Fourths” Chord: A Canonical Discord in *The Sacred Harp*

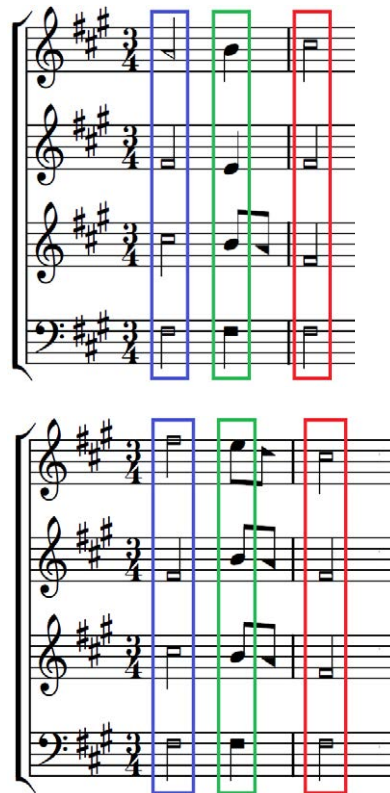
David Wright | Seattle, Washington

THE rudiments of *The Sacred Harp* and other shape-note tunebooks have traditionally categorized the intervals between any two degrees of the scale, or dyads, as either *concord*s, “which produce harmony when sounded together,” or *discord*s, “which, when sounded together, produce a disagreeable sound to the ear.”<sup>1</sup> The concords were fifths and octaves (or unisons), which were termed “perfect” concords, and thirds and sixths, termed “imperfect” concords, while seconds, fourths,<sup>2</sup> and sevenths were considered discords.

Most commenters have agreed that discords are not categorically barred from Sacred Harp music, but that they can, by alternation with or resolution into “perfect” chords, make the latter all the more sweet by contrast. Or, by allowing for more attractive or convincing melodic motion in an individual part, discords can be used “in such a manner and place as to show more fully the power and beauty of music.”<sup>3</sup> The proper use of discords was regarded as an advanced and subjective element of composition, however, and little has been written regarding when and how a discord could be “justified.”

One striking discord occurs a number of times in *The Sacred Harp*, in works of major composers from all periods of the book’s history. Perhaps they all simply liked the way it sounded, but it may also suggest something more general regarding the stylistic treatment of discords in Sacred Harp part-writing. This “canonical discord” is a chord consisting of the first, fourth, and

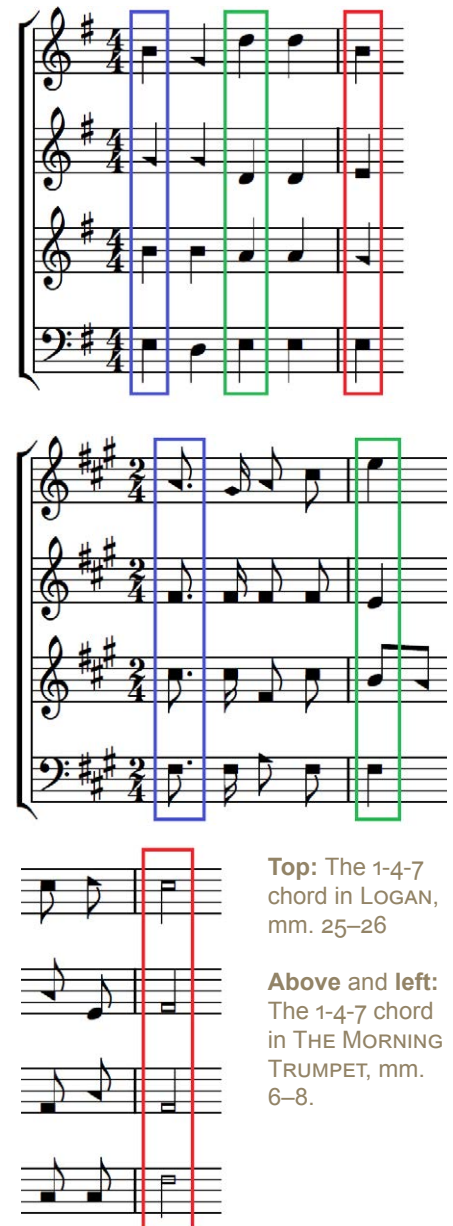
seventh degrees (1-4-7) of the minor scale—a “stacked fourths” chord creating a dissonant seventh between the outer notes. It usually occurs as the parts pass from one voicing of the tonic minor chord to another. Perhaps its most straightforward appearance is in D. P. White’s *SONG TO THE LAMB*<sup>4</sup> (p. 138t in *The Sacred Harp*, Fourth Edition, 1870), where it is used twice:



The 1-4-7 chord in *SONG TO THE LAMB*, mm. 4–5 (**top**) and mm. 11–12 (**above**).

In this progression, the dissonant notes serve a passing or neighboring function between consonant intervals, comparable to the use of non-chordal accessory tones in unaccented positions (for example, on the second of a pair of eighth notes). However, composers clearly felt that the logic of the progression was so strong that the 1-4-7

chord could be used even in accented (on-beat) positions, as in *LOGAN* (p. 302 in *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*) and *THE MORNING TRUMPET* (p. 85):



**Top:** The 1-4-7 chord in *LOGAN*, mm. 25–26

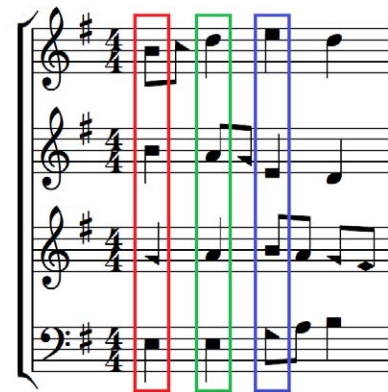
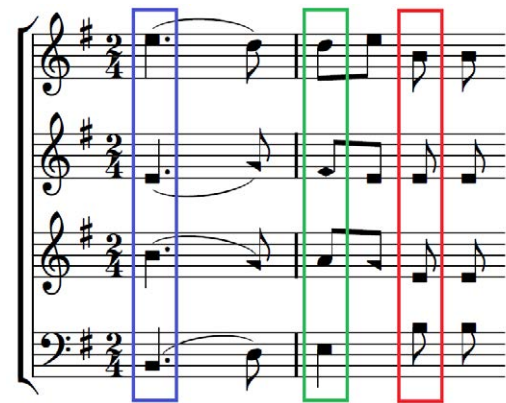
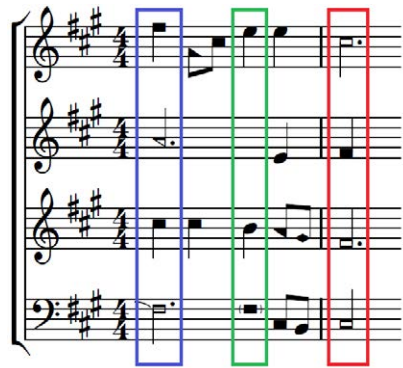
**Above and left:** The 1-4-7 chord in *THE MORNING TRUMPET*, mm. 6–8.

Further examples of the 1-4-7 chord show how variations—such as elaboration of the melodic lines or

The 1-4-7 chord.



displacement of one of the bass notes—may be introduced while the underlying progression remains the same:



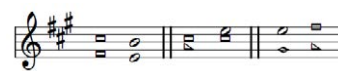
**Top:** The progression emerges out of the swirl of independent parts in the fugal section of MORNING PRAYER (p. 411, mm. 16–17).

**Middle:** In SWEET MORNING (p. 421, mm. 13–14), the alto (added in 1911) introduces a further discord, adding the 2-mi to form a triad with the 4-sol and 7-sol.

**Above:** At the end of SWEET MAJESTY (p. 536, m. 28), the progression appears in reverse, harmonizing a recurring melodic fragment.<sup>5</sup>

What is happening in this progression? Can this discord's recurrence be explained in terms of some kind of underlying logic or intuitive procedure?

My interpretation of the “justification” for this discord is that the composers felt that if two voices (parts) were bound together in a sufficiently strong relationship, one of the voices could be brought into dissonance with a third part. To understand how this “binding together” can occur, it may help to use terminology from classical counterpoint or voice leading theory, describing the possible relationships between two voices in two successive dyads: parallel motion, similar motion, contrary motion, and oblique motion.<sup>6</sup>



*Parallel motion*, where the voices move the same distance (interval) in the same direction.



*Similar motion*, where the voices move in the same direction but different intervals.



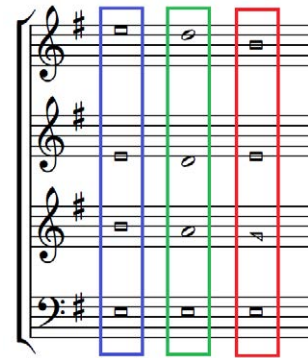
*Contrary motion*, where the voices move in opposite directions.



*Oblique motion*, where one voice remains on the same note while the other moves.

In a three- or four-voice polyphonic texture like that of Sacred Harp music, combinations or compounds of two or more of these types of motion may occur in the succession of any two chords. Varying and contrasting different types or combinations of motion is an important element of Sacred Harp composition. Parallel motion has long been noted in Sacred

Harp music (especially its free use of “forbidden” parallel fifths and octaves), but all four types are used in distinctive and characteristic ways; for example, the voice-crossing which characterizes dispersed harmony implies the use of contrary motion.



The harmonic progression from the above tunes, reduced to its basic form.

If we reduce the harmonic progression from the above tunes to a sort of basic form as a passing sonority between two different voicings of the tonic minor chord, we can see how the tenor and treble/alto are bound together strongly through parallel motion in perfect fourths, while oblique motion is used between the tenor and bass. When these treatments—both, in themselves, common and straightforward—are combined, a 1-4-7 chord arises:



Parallel motion in perfect fourths (**left**) and oblique motion between tenor and bass (**middle**) results in movement from a tonic chord to a 1-4-7 chord (**right**).

Another 1-4-7 chord occurs in PRAISE GOD (p. 328), in the context of a different underlying harmonic progression (towards the dominant), but through the same procedure. In this case the lower voices, moving upwards, are bound together with strong parallel motion, while oblique motion occurs against the upper voice (treble) (see next page).

This analysis, whatever its merit or relevance as a theoretical explanation, describes why in practice this discord,

unlike some, can generally be rendered by a class with relatively little difficulty.<sup>7</sup> The fact that one of the voices in the discord has a strong harmonic relationship with the tenor, while the other (the bass) usually has merely to repeat its note from the previous chord, facilitates its accurate execution.

What is its musical effect? In itself, a “stacked fourths” chord has, to my mind, a stark, open, dark-hued sound.<sup>8</sup> As a passing chord between two tonic minor chords, in a larger context of at least temporary harmonic stasis, it has the effect of a sudden (however brief) change of color, a certain wildness, straining against the bounds of the tonic chord. In the language of the 1991 *Edition* rudiments, it can very much be heard as creating a “tension” that is “resolved” with the return to the tonic.

I hope that this study of a “canonical discord,” besides attempting to shed light on a little-discussed topic, and providing a point of introduction to the types of contrapuntal motion and their application in Sacred Harp music, may serve as a humble plea on behalf of this useful and expressive sonority, which has been subjected to well-meaning emendation in recent *Sacred Harps*. THE MORNING TRUMPET has been edited in later printings of the 1991 *Edition*, and both instances of the chord in SONG TO THE LAMB were altered in the 2012 Cooper book.<sup>9</sup> I believe that surveying the range and variety of occurrences of this chord will make clear that it is not an error in need of correction, but a characteristic manifestation of the richness, the capacity for complexity and subtlety, of Sacred Harp harmony, showing more fully indeed the power and beauty of music. ■

## Notes

1. B. F. White, “Rudiments of Music,” in *The Sacred Harp*, ed. B. F. White and E. J. King (Philadelphia: T. K. and P. G. Collins, 1844), 13. These rudiments were substantially adapted from William Walker’s *Southern Harmony* (1835); the sections on concords and discords, “Of Harmony and Composition” and “Of Intervals,” are repeated almost verbatim (including a parenthetical aside at one point from “the writer of these extracts”). The *Southern Harmony* rudiments, in turn, contain a certain amount of borrowing from William Moore’s *Columbian Harmony* (1829).
2. The rudiments were often rather ambiguous about the fourth, traditionally classifying it as a discord, yet acknowledging that it was nonetheless used extensively. William Moore summed up the general attitude in his *Columbian Harmony*, classifying the interval as a discord but adding, “For my part, I cannot see why composers call the flat [perfect] fourths discords, when they all make use of them, and I consider the flat fourth one of the most agreeable sounds in nature.” The 1991 *Edition* rudiments reclassified the perfect fourth as a concord, with considerable justification in musical practice if not historical theory.
3. White, “Rudiments of Music,” 14.
4. The 1-4-7 chord occurs between two relative minor (submediant) chords in this major-key tune. The piece was removed in the 1911 Original Sacred Harp, the James edition, but retained in the Cooper revisions. White’s arrangement was in four parts—the alto, which creates the discord in m. 4, is not a later addition.
5. Compare m. 8 of *THE FOUNTAIN* (p. 397), m. 9 of *MORNING PRAYER*, and m. 9 of *PHOEBUS* (p. 173).
6. The rudiments do not use this terminology, except for some references to parallel motion. However, Paine Denson’s description of “mutual tones” (“a tone belonging to both chords used in making a progression”) in his rudiments to the 1936 edition, where he advises that “the part that has the mutual tone in the beginning of a progression retain in into the next chord, thus binding the two chords together,” represents a clear formulation of the principle of oblique motion.
7. As can be heard, for example, in Alan Lomax’s 1959 recordings of *LOGAN* and *THE MORNING TRUMPET*.

8. “Stacked fourths” (not necessarily 1-4-7) chords can occasionally be heard in other contexts, notably in m. 5 of R. B. Helms’ haunting *My NATIVE LAND* (p. 416t in *The Sacred Harp: Revised Cooper Edition*).

9. In all three cases the bass note was changed from the 1-la to the 7-sol, substituting simple parallel motion for the original parallel-oblique compound.



The 1-4-7 chord in PRAISE GOD (p. 328, m. 4).



## Help Me to Sing

# Notes on Repairing Songbooks

Alison Brown | Huelva, Spain

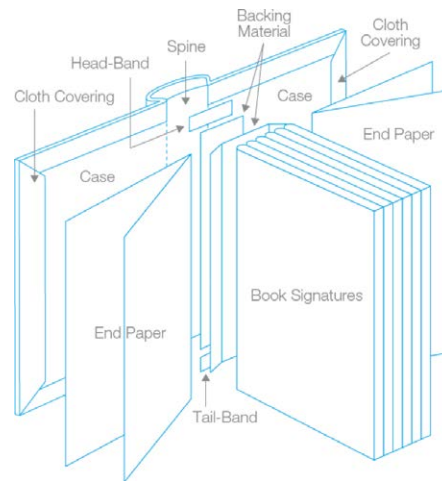
THE connection between a shape note singer and their songbook is always significant. Our songbooks are charged with love and memories and they are our constant companions; as with dogs their condition tells us a lot about their owner. I am lucky to have worked for a decade in the conservation studio of the London Library, repairing battered Victorian and Edwardian volumes. When I started singing in London, and then traveled through Europe and the United States to sing, I couldn't help but notice the heavy handling and usage these songbooks get, sometimes falling apart in the hollow square right in the hands of a particularly energetic leader. Something had to be done! I started repairing the books, and teaching others how to repair them. Singers have come up with all sorts of inventive ways to repair their books, out of necessity, with varying results... I've repaired more than a few "repairs"!

As these books are both beloved and heavily used I teach conservation methods: aiming to preserve the songbooks for generations to come, whilst still getting daily use out of them. I advocate *early intervention* in order to prevent worse damage from occurring. So, in this essay, I will focus on the repair for the common problem of the text block coming away from the cover. It is quite possible to patch up your songbook at home; all you'll need is an arts or crafts shop, the right materials, and a little patience. I hope this collection of tips is useful and inspires you to give your songbook the care it deserves.

## Anatomy of a Book

### Hollow Backs

OUR songbooks have the same design as you see above, except they have an oblong shape. This shape causes problems because the weight of the text block pulls on the spine,



**Above:** Anatomy of a book.  
*Illustration courtesy of Lit Reactor.*

**Right:** Book hospital, Camp Doremi, 2015.



hence the importance of supporting the spine with care when leading. Recent printings of *The Sacred Harp* have nineteen signatures, or folded collections of pages. If you open your book to page 17 and look in the gutter (the gap) you will see the stitches of the binding. These signatures can be repaired if they are coming loose by sewing them, but this often involves opening the casing, or cover boards. The most important thing to bear in mind is that our songbooks are *hollow backs*, not tight backs. This means that there is a space in the spine that allows the book to breathe. Compare this to paperbacks, which are *tight backs*, and will not stay open unless the spine is broken, whereas ours lie flat. So in repairing a songbook *we always want to keep the hollow back open*. It's worth bearing in mind that our books were never designed to be doubled back on themselves; this will very quickly destroy the binding.

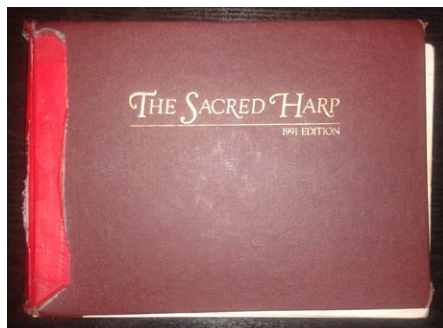
## Materials

CONSERVATION repairs are always reversible. This makes it easier undo or modify your work in case the repair

goes wrong, or in case you need another repair in the future. This is where most ad hoc repairs go wrong, as people reach for the super glue thinking "that'll hold it good." The general rule is *less is more*. You'd be surprised how strong a bit of white glue and tissue can be. All of these materials are available at art and craft stores, bookbinders, and online.

## NO to Tape

Sticky tape, Scotch tape, packing tape, and duct tape are not designed for book repair. At first they'll seem to offer a neat quick fix but over the years the various chemicals in the adhesive will leach into the paper and damage it. Once the acid in the tape has migrated completely into the paper, the tape itself will lose its sticking power and fall off, leaving a permanent stain behind. Tape stiffens as it ages, so the straight edges create a sharp hinge that causes the paper to break away in shards. There is very little that can be done to reverse the effects of sticky tape damage. For paper tears see below. To patch the spine a little linen or cotton painted to match the book and glued on with white glue will look nicer and last longer.



Top: Tape—not great.

Middle: EVA glue at Camp Doremi 2016.

Above: Ed Johnson-Williams gets to work at Camp Doremi 2016.

## Yes to Elmer's Glue

**EVA or PVA glue** is known as Elmer's glue or "white glue" by most. It's great because it retains its flexibility. It can last as long as three hundred years! It contains no nasty chemicals and it can be reversed with the application of water. I like using Elmer's for spine repairs.

**Starch paste** is just flour (or rice) and water and can even be made at home in a Bain-Marie double boiler. Starch paste is great for repairing any paper tears or to add tissue to hinges. Strong glues such as superglue, wood, shoe, or Gorilla Glue will break down in a similar way to the tape, leaving acid in the book and becoming brittle over time. They're also permanent and irreversible.

## Paper

**Japanese tissue or washi** is really great because it is lightweight and strong and made of thousands of long strands that bind with the paper you're attaching it to. It's also free of chemicals and colors. If you can't find this locally (or don't want to pay \$10 a sheet) look for acid free, uncolored, lightweight tissue or paper. Take your songbook to a craft store and compare the weight and color of the paper they sell there to the page you want to repair to find a perfect match. Remember less is more: the lighter the paper the less the book has to expand to accommodate it.

## Useful Materials List

- Japanese tissue or acid free paper (lightweight 12, 20 or 30 gsm/8–20 lbs)
- Starch/rice paste
- EVA/PVA/White glue
- A bone folder (can buy at a craft supplier)
- Acid free linen or cotton
- A pencil and eraser
- A cutting mat,
- A metal ruler
- A scalpel or scissors
- Blotting paper (heavy weight absorbent paper) and parchment paper

Also useful is scrap paper or a magazine for pasting on and a kitchen towel to dab any excess glue.

## How to Repair a Loose or Split Casing

**B**ECAUSE our books are heavy they tend to fall out of the covers easily, especially when we lead from them. The most common songbook problems are when the casing (or cover boards) start to come away from the body of the book, causing a loose casing. When the covers break apart completely from the book it's called a split casing. It's a really good idea to repair this problem quickly, as the signatures (or pages) risk wobbling loose if you continue to sing from the book.

## Loose Casing

A loose casing is a small amount of damage to a book that can turn into a big problem later. Most singers will find this problem in their books, that the body of the book is coming loose from the covers, and the book block wobbles like wobbly tooth. If it continues like this you'll end up with a split casing, requiring a more involved repair. However, a bit of glue will easily fix this problem. You just want to work on the inside of the covers, where the end paper has begun to pull away.

Don't glue the spine! Remember that the book has a *hollow back*: that means it wants to open flat, and the hollow or gap is there to enable that. It is tempting to glue the spine onto the book to stop everything from moving around, but this will eventually ruin the book. The only thing that should be glued to the signatures (or body of the book) is the backing material (brown paper), which helps to hold the signatures together.

Prop your book upright, with the boards out, so that you're looking down the spine of the book and the boards are at right angles to the text block. You should see a gap where the endpapers are coming away.

1. Use a long thin paintbrush, loaded with EVA, PVA or Elmer's glue and coat glue onto the grey board where the endpaper has come away. Leave the brown papers on the spine alone.
2. Turn the book upside down and repeat. Be very careful that the glue does not run out or touch the text block!



3. Do both sides if needed. Place blotting paper in the hinges, close the book, and let it dry.

Tip: make sure the text block is sitting happily in the covers, with a bit of overlap all the way around.

### Split Casing

If the covers have come away completely from the text block but the outside of the book cloth is still intact here's what to do.

First, check that the spine and backing material are in place. These are the two pieces of brown card—the backing material is the piece adhered to the signatures opposite the spine. If they are loose, stick them gently back into place with a dab of EVA or PVA glue (Elmer's/white glue). If they are missing, replace them with acid free paper of similar weight. If there are loose signatures sew them back into place (see below) or dab glue along the folded part and coax them back into line under the backing material. When it all looks tidy put some scrap paper under the loose flapping part of end paper and coat thinly in EVA or PVA glue, *leaving the spine free from glue*.

Second, remove the scrap paper and replace it with blotting paper wrapped in greaseproof paper so the glue won't stick to it. This will prevent the glue from seeping into other parts of the book. Moisture is really damaging so this step is essential.

Third, *close the book*, joining the exposed grey board on the left with the gluey end paper on the right, and let it dry for at least half an hour to an hour. Make sure that the cover lines up with the text block!

Finally, to reinforce the repair and make the join look almost invisible, add a strip of Japanese tissue or very light weight acid free paper, cut to size. Coat the piece that is going into your book with starch glue, rather than the book itself, and place carefully, smoothing any crinkles with a bone folder or clean fingers. Don't forget to place the blotting/greaseproof paper absorber into the join and *dry with the book closed*.



**Top:** A common problem, split casing.

**Middle:** First, glue the signatures back into place.

**Above:** Next, prevent the glue from seeping into other parts of the book with greaseproof paper.

## Torn Book Cloth

The next level of damage after the split casing the book endures is a torn book cloth, visible on the outside of the book as the spine flaps open. There is a method to repair this really effectively, but for the sake of space I will save this repair for another time. I am happy to talk anyone who contacts me directly through the steps.

## Other Problems

### Signatures Loose or Falling Apart

**S**IGNATURES are sections of doubled-over pages of which *The Sacred Harp* has nineteen. If your songbook's signatures are falling apart and pages are dropping out left right and center, then this is the point at which you might want to send your book to be rebound. If the signatures are just a bit loose then they can be patched back into the spine whilst repairing a broken casing (see above). Warning: this requires patience, good light, and sharp eyes.

1. Remove the backing material, exposing the clear glue backing on the spine.
2. Take a bookbinding needle, preferably a curved needle, and thread it with bookbinding thread or waxed thread.
3. Follow the holes and threads that are already there, and push the needle through the signature until it has passed out of the glue backing on the other side of the spine.
4. Secure the thread when you've finished by pasting it down with EVA, PVA, or Elmer's glue on the spine, outside the text.
5. Replace the backing material.

### Loose Pages

If a single page has simply come loose and has quite straight clean edges then you can take a clean paintbrush, dab a *tiny* amount of EVA or PVA glue along the edge, and slip the page back into the gutter (the gap), making sure that the pages line up. Then close the book and let it dry. If there has been more of a tear to the edge you can paste a thin strip of Japanese tissue to the edge and let it



Finally, to repair a split casing, reinforce the repair with Japanese tissue paper.

dry, gluing it in later. Only glue pages in if the rest of the signature is intact. If all the pages are loose you will need to re-sew them into place or send the book to a bookbinder.

### Ripped Pages

For ripped pages I recommend Japanese tissue and starch paste. Good Japanese tissue will almost disappear into the page, leaving the repair invisible, important when you need to read the shapes! The best thing about this method is that it's completely reversible with a little water. Try to find a tissue that matches the weight and color of the paper. It is possible to trace an outline of the rip using a soft pencil on the tissue. You can rip or cut the tissue; just remember that a straight line creates another hinge where the paper could further tear. If your paper is aged or delicate then you're better off cutting a wavy line or leaving the edges soft.

1. Cut a piece of tissue large enough to cover the tear.
2. Place some blotting paper under the page to protect the other pages.
3. On scrap paper use a broad clean brush to coat the Japanese tissue in starch paste.
4. Place the tissue on the tear and remove any excess paste.
5. Place another blotter wrapped in greaseproof paper on top and either weight it or close the book.

6. Leave for half an hour to an hour.
7. If you've gone to the edge of the page with a repair you can trim it once it's completely dry.

### Scruffy Corners

If your songbook has beat up corners on the boards (the cardboard is peeking through and peeling a bit) you can fill them in with some starch paste. It'll bind the cardboard together and give it a bit of strength and also protect the text block. First trim off loose threads, then take a small brush loaded with starch paste and use a flat tool like a knife to separate each layer of card and dab a little glue in place like you're filling sandwiches with jam! When you're done, shape the corner how you want it and wipe off excess paste. Let it dry completely.

### Wet Book

This is a common hazard at an all day singing with dinner on the grounds! If your book gets wet then wipe it down with a clean cloth or paper. Sugary drinks might leave a residue. If the spill was on the book cloth you could take a damp cloth and just wipe enough so that nothing sugary remains to attract mold or insects. On paper the best you can do is wipe dry, then pick off what's left. Sometimes light rubbing alcohol or a rubber cement eraser can help in really difficult cases.



## Really Wet Book (!)

If your songbook is really wet you'll need to act fast to prevent the pages from crinkling permanently. The first step is to take a ton of paper towels and blot away as much water as possible from the covers and pages. Then insert paper towels in between each wet page and place something heavy on top of the book to help squeeze the water out. Keep changing the paper towels as soon as you see they're wet, as you want to be removing the water as swiftly as you can from the book. Once the pages are only dampish, stand the book upright, fanning the pages and place near a source of *cool air* such as the air conditioning, a fan, or an open window. *Do not add heat to books!* Irons and hairdryers will weaken the paper and cause even worse crinkling of the pages. If you don't have time to treat a wet book on the spot you can put it in a zip lock bag and stick it in the freezer. This will stop the damage. When you're ready to treat it, thaw and dry in the recommended way.

## Mold

Given the use these songbooks get, they're unlikely to get moldy! However, it's common sense to store your books in a clean dry place away

from direct sunlight. Like people, books need to breathe, so somewhere where the air circulates is ideal. Store songbooks upright or flat, but never at an angle. Mold can be cleaned off books by wiping with a soft dry cloth or paintbrush. Do not add water or breathe it in.

## Last Words

**T**HIS is a plea to consider what you stick in your book to mark the pages. If you use any adhesive stickers such as Post-It Notes, just be aware that they also break down over time and become impossible to remove. Paperclips rust and cause paper tears. Personally, I use paper bookmarks. If my book were old or valuable I wouldn't put anything in it. Newsprint is especially damaging to the pages because of the poor quality of the paper. Memorabilia can be stored in acid free envelopes glued into the front covers of the book. I also strongly recommend using a book bag such as a tote when traveling; it can do wonders to protect the book from spills and knocks.

I hope this guide has been encouraging. Many singers who have taken the step of repairing their own books have told me how much they enjoyed the experience, and through

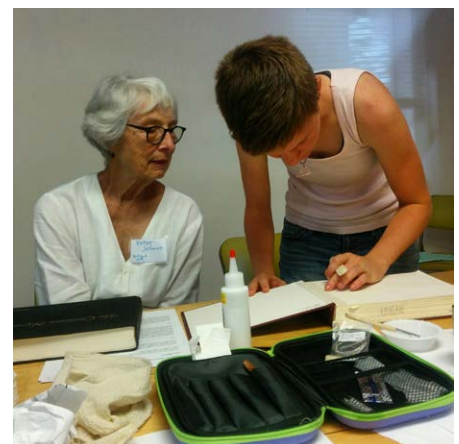
doing so, how they have begun to be as respectful of their physical songbook as they are of the wider Sacred Harp tradition. ■

## Materials and Assistance

Talas is a very professional mail order supplier specializing in bookbinding, archival, and conservation materials. They stock everything! Visit them at [talasonline.com](http://talasonline.com).

Lauren Bock, of Decatur, Georgia, is my deputy. She has various materials for use in repairing songbooks in the southeastern United States. Please contact her at [fasolauren@gmail.com](mailto:fasolauren@gmail.com).

For assistance in Europe please contact me, Alison Brown, at [lalifell@gmail.com](mailto:lalifell@gmail.com). I'm also happy to talk through repairs on Skype.

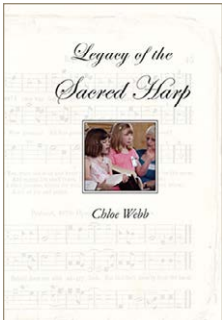
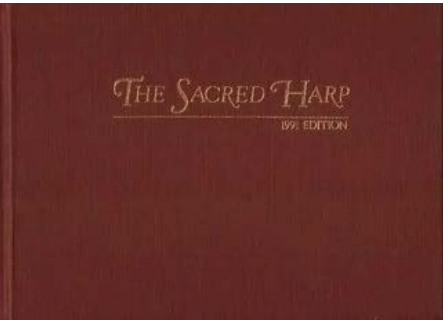


**Left:** Fruit pudding disaster! This one'll never be the same again.

**Above:** Betsy Jeronen and Abigail Beavin participate in a book repair workshop at Camp Doremi 2016.

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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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