

“LIBERTY’S GREAT AUXILIARY”:
MUSIC AND THE AMERICAN
CIVIL WAR

by
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A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Music was almost omnipresent during the American Civil War. Soldiers, civilians, and slaves listened to and performed popular songs almost constantly. The heightened political and emotional climate of the war created a need for Americans to express themselves in a variety of ways, and music was one of the best. It did not require a high level of literacy and it could be performed in groups to ensure that the ideas embedded in each song immediately reached a large audience.

Previous studies of Civil War music have focused on the music itself. Historians and musicologists have examined the types of songs published during the war and considered how they reflected the popular mood of northerners and southerners. This study utilizes the letters, diaries, memoirs, and newspapers of the 1860s to delve deeper and determine what roles music played in Civil War America.

This study begins by examining the explosion of professional and amateur music that accompanied the onset of the Civil War. Of the songs produced by this explosion, the most popular and resonant were those that addressed the political causes of the war and were adopted as the rallying cries of northerners and southerners. All classes of Americans used songs in a variety of ways, and this study specifically examines the role of music on the home-front, in the armies, and among African Americans.

Music was a quintessential part of how many Americans experienced their Civil War. With music occupying such a prominent place, conflict naturally arose over what different songs meant and how they should be used: Northerners and southerners fought over what the correct

content of their music should be; soldiers used songs as weapons during lulls between battles; southerners used music to show their loyalty to the Confederacy and resist northern authority; African Americans defied slavery and defined their new roles in American society through their songs. By exploring these and other uses of music during the Civil War, this study presents a more complete picture of the importance of music in the conflict and the various roles that it played.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
1. “PART OF EVERYONE’S MEAT AND DRINK”: THE POWER AND POPULARITY OF CIVIL WAR MUSIC	1
2. JOHN BROWNS AND BATTLE CRIES: THE PATRIOTIC SONGS OF THE UNION	40
3. GAY DECEIBERS AND BONNIE BLUE FLAGS: THE ANTHEMS OF THE CONFEDERACY	83
4. “WORDS WERE AS WEAPONS”: MUSIC ON THE HOME-FRONT	121
5. “A WONDERFUL AND INSPIRING INFLUENCE”: MUSIC IN THE ARMIES	163
6. “THE CHOKED VOICE OF A RACE, AT LAST UNLOOSED”: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND CIVIL WAR MUSIC	206
7. CONCLUSION: “ALL QUIET ALONG THE POTOMAC, TONIGHT”: MUSIC AND THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR	248
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	266

CHAPTER 1

“PART OF EVERYONE’S MEAT AND DRINK”: THE POWER AND POPULARITY OF CIVIL WAR MUSIC

As you’ve walked through the town on a fine summer’s day,
The subject I’ve got, you have seen, I dare say;
Upon fences and railings, where ever you go,
You’ll see the penny ballads sticking up, in a row;
The titles to read you may stand for awhile,
And some are so odd, they will cause you to smile;
I noted them down as I read them along,
And I’ve put them together to make up my song.

Chorus

Old songs! New songs! Every kind of song.
I noted them down as I read them along.

There was “Abraham’s Daughter” “Going out upon a spree,”
With “Old Uncle Snow” “In the Cottage by the sea;”
“If your foot is pretty, show it” “At Lanigan’s Ball;”
And “Why did she leave him” “On the raging Canawl?”
There was “Bonnie Annie” with “A jockey hat and feather;”
“I don’t think much of you” “We were boys and girls together;”
“Do they think of me at home?” “I’ll be free and easy still”
“Give us now a good commander” with “The Sword of Bunker Hill.”

Chorus

“When this Cruel war is over,” “No Irish need apply;”
“For, every little thing is lovely, and the Goose hangs high;”
“The Young Gal from New-Jersey,” “Oh! wilt thou be my bride?”
And “Oft in the Still Night” “We’ll all take a ride.”
“Let me kiss him for his Mother,” “He’s a Gay Young Gambolier;”
“I’m going to fight mit Sigel” and “De bully Lager-bier.”
“Hunkey Boy is Yankee Doodle” “When the cannons loudly roar;”
“We are coming, Father Abraham, six hundred thousand more!”

Chorus

“In the days when I was hard up” with “My Mary Ann;”
“My Johnny was a shoemaker,” “Or Any other Man!”
“The Captain with his whiskers,” and “Annie of the Vale,”
Along with “Old Bob Ridley” “A riding on a Rail!”

“Rock me to sleep, Mother,” “Going round the Horn;”
“I’m not myself at all,” “I’m a Bachelor forlorn.”
“Mother, is the Battle over?” “What are the men about?”
“How are you, Horace Greeley” “Does your Mother know you’re out?”
Chorus

“We won’t go home till morning,” with “The Bold Privateer”
“Annie Lisle” and “Zouave Johnny” “Riding in a Rail road Kerr.”
“We are coming, Sister Mary,” with “The Folks that put on airs!”
“We are marching along” with “The Four-and-Thirty Stars.”
“On the other side of Jordan” “Don’t fly your kite too high!”
“Jenny’s coming o’er the Green,” to “Root Hog or die!”
“Our Union’s Starry Banner,” “The Flag of Washington,”
Shall float victorious over the land from Maine to Oregon!
Chorus

Stephen C. Foster, 1863
“The Song of All Songs.”¹

On January 17, 1862, the Hutchinson Family Singers performed for a large crowd of soldiers at Fairfax Courthouse, Virginia. The concert was originally intended for the First New Jersey Regiment, but members of other outfits squeezed into the local seminary to see the show. The Hutchinsons had been performing since the 1840s and often used their music to promote evangelical reform movements, such as temperance, women’s rights, and abolitionism. John W. Hutchinson and his family now planned to use their music in a similar fashion in the army. By singing to the soldiers, they hoped to not only deter them from sinful behavior but also influence their political ideology.²

¹ Stephen C. Foster, “The Song of All Songs” (Brooklyn, NY: D. S. Holmes, 1863).

² Gerald R. McMurtry, “Lincoln and the Hutchinson Family Singers,” *Lincoln Herald* 46 (December 1944): 18; John W. Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers: A History of the Adventures of John W. Hutchinson and His Family in the Camps of the Army of the Potomac* (Boston, MA: S. Chism, 1864), 10-11, 18; Richard Crawford, *America’s Musical Life: A History* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2001), 253-255; Philip D. Jordan, *Singin’ Yankees* (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 1946), 231. The group was originally comprised of John, his three brothers, and one sister. By the 1860s, they had split up and started their own families,

John recalled that the beginning of the concert “went off splendidly” and the crowd was “enthusiastic and largely sympathetic.” The family’s political activism, however, soon became apparent, when they sang their musical rendition of John Greenleaf Whittier’s abolitionist poem, “We Wait Beneath the Furnace Blast.” Members of the crowd turned on the singers during the following two verses:

What gives the wheat-field blades of steel?
What points the rebel cannon?
What sets the roaring rabble’s heel
On the old star-spangled pennon?
What breaks the oath
Of the men o’ the South?
What whets the knife
For the Union’s life? –
Hark to the answer: SLAVERY!

Then waste no blows on lesser foes
In strife unworthy freemen.
God lifts to-day the veil and shows
The features of the demon!
O North and South,
Its victims both,
Can ye not cry,
‘Let slavery die!’
And union find in freedom?³

Whittier had written these lines in response to Army of the Potomac commander George B. McClellan’s conciliatory policies toward the Confederates, especially his refusal to interfere with slavery. The Hutchinsons understood the significance of singing them in this setting, as

some of which continued to tour as the Hutchinson Family Singers. It was John’s family who traveled to the Army of the Potomac. For a good analysis of the Hutchinsons’ participation in antebellum reform movements see: Scott Gac, *Singing for Freedom: The Hutchinson Family Singers and the Nineteenth-Century Culture of Reform* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

³ John W. Hutchinson and Charles Edward Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons (Tribe of Jesse)* (Boston, MA: Lee and Shepard, 1896), 382; Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers*, 12-13. “We Wait Beneath the Furnace Blast” was a recasting of a Lutheran hymn sometimes referred to as, “Ein Feste Burg Ist Unser Gott.”

John acknowledged in his 1896 autobiography. “Of course, we were aware that the army of the Union did not entirely consist of Abolitionists,” he recalled, they “had yet to learn . . . that the backbone of secession must be broken by the system it was inaugurated to sustain.” John added, “it might have saved us trouble to omit [the song], but it was not a characteristic of the Hutchinsons to forbear when a message was put to their lips.”⁴

Thus, it probably did not surprise the family when a clearly audible hiss emerged from the crowd at the end of the piece. The culprit was Second New Jersey Regiment surgeon Lewis W. Oakley, who, having learned that the Hutchinsons were abolitionists, attended the concert to heckle them. In response, Major David Hatfield rose from his seat and threatened to eject anyone who further disturbed the performance. Outraged by Hatfield’s support for the Hutchinsons, Oakley shouted back, “if there is to be any putting out, you may as well begin with me.” The Major stood his ground and responded, “I can put you out – and if I cannot, I have a regiment that will!” At that point, several members of the crowd stood in support of the Hutchinsons, many shouting “put him out!” Lieutenant Colonel Robert McAllister then ordered everyone to sit down. The Hutchinsons eased the tension by singing, “No Tear in Heaven” while the Chaplain-at-large, James B. Merwin, sought to pacify the crowd.⁵

The entire division continued to discuss and argue about the Hutchinsons’ performance. John heard heated debate throughout the camp the night of the concert. General William Birney

⁴ McMurtry, “Lincoln and the Hutchinson Family,” 19; Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 382, 384.

⁵ Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers*, 14, 17; Mark A. Snell, *From First to Last: The Life of Major General William B. Franklin* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2002), 82; Robert McAllister, *The Civil War Letters of General Robert McAllister*, edited by James I. Robertson (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 115-116; Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 385, 395; McMurtry, “Lincoln and the Hutchinson Family,” 19. Some soldiers punished Merwin for siding with the Hutchinsons by refusing to mess with him. Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 385.

narrowly escaped fighting a duel because he sided with the Hutchinsons and later visited them with a group of soldiers to show his support. Oakley took matters into his own hands by meeting with the commander of the brigade, General Philip Kearny. The general responded by placing both Oakley and Hatfield under arrest and ordered the chaplain responsible for bringing the Hutchinsons into the army, Robert B. Yard, to meet with him the next morning.⁶

Kearny sided with Oakley and punished Yard by taking his keys to the local church. The general then requested a second meeting but this time the Hutchinsons were asked to attend. He informed them that a program should have been submitted before the performance and forbade the family from holding further concerts. John pleaded that he had been given a pass by Secretary of War Simon Cameron and added that, however the officers felt about the performance, most of the soldiers enjoyed it. His patience taxed, Kearny proclaimed, “I reign supreme here, - you are abolitionists, - I think as much of a rebel as I do of an abolitionist” and dismissed them. Shortly, the Hutchinsons received official notification from Kearny forbidding them to perform for the army.⁷

That same day, the divisional commander, General William B. Franklin, ordered Hatfield to have the Hutchinsons transcribe all of their lyrics for him. When Yard arrived at Franklin’s office with the transcriptions, he was asked to indicate the objectionable song. Yard showed him the words to “We Wait Beneath the Furnace Blast” and Franklin declared, “I pronounce them

⁶ Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 386, 395; Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers*, 17. McAllister met with Kearny separately and was reprimanded for not arresting Hatfield and Oakley immediately after the incident. McAllister, *Civil War Letters*, 116.

⁷ Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers*, 10, 17; *Liberator*, February 14, 1862. McAllister believed that nine-tenths of the officers in the division sympathized with the Hutchinsons. McAllister, *Civil War Letters*, 116. The actual wording of Cameron’s pass was: “Permit ‘The Hutchinson Family’ to pass over bridges and ferries, and within the Army of the Potomac. They will be allowed to sing to the soldiers, and this permit shall continue good until 1st February, 1862.” Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers*, 10.

incendiary. . . . If these people are allowed to go on, they will demoralize the army.” After consulting with McClellan, Franklin endorsed Kearny’s order forbidding the Hutchinsons from performing and revoked their pass. Franklin ordered the family to leave the camp as soon as possible but they received permission to stay one more day because of bad weather “if they behave themselves properly.”⁸

Instead, the Hutchinsons secretly gave two other performances during religious services the next day – finally leaving Fairfax Courthouse on January 19. John rushed back to Washington and met with Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase, a long-time friend and family supporter. Chase asked John to transcribe the lyrics of “We Wait Beneath the Furnace Blast” and read them at a cabinet meeting later that day. In response, the Cabinet unanimously endorsed Cameron’s pass and Chase informed John that President Abraham Lincoln “expressed himself very warmly in his favor.”⁹

This encouragement from the President and the Cabinet helped publicize the Fairfax incident. In effect, it transformed the Hutchinson Family into the standard-bearers of abolitionism and opponents of McClellan. As John recalled, the “expulsion caused a great commotion among the people of the North. All the Washington correspondents referred to it [and] a great deal of good resulted from the discussions which it provoked.” His daughter Viola added, “After it became noised about that we had been expelled from the camps . . . we were simply idolized, and so much adoration was expressed towards us that it was embarrassing.” She

⁸ Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers*, 18-19; Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 389; William Franklin to S. Williams, January 18, 1862, George B. McClellan, Sr. Papers, Reel 15, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC; Snell, *From First to Last*, 82; McAllister, *Civil War Letters*, 116.

⁹ Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers*, 10, 19-20; Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 389-391; McMurtry, “Lincoln and the Hutchinson Family,” 17. Cameron was not present at the Cabinet Meeting since he had been replaced as Secretary of War by Edwin M. Stanton.

further reflected that many of the family's admirers "seemed to look upon us as martyrs to the cause of freedom."¹⁰

In subsequent performances, soldiers and civilians applauded or even requested "We Wait Beneath the Furnace Blast" and the family was happy to oblige. Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison noted that, while they were singing the song at a Washington concert in February, "a few hisses were heard from some one . . . but in an instant such an overwhelming outburst of applause arose as to completely drown all manners of disapprobation." For Garrison, such behavior demonstrated nothing less than "the conflict in this city between freedom and slavery." Increasing demand for "We Wait Beneath the Furnace Blast" led to its publication as sheet music. The impact of the incident was so great that one Union soldier later argued – with obvious exaggeration – that the Hutchinsons' expulsion from the army began the public discussion over whether or not emancipation would be one of the North's war aims.¹¹

McClellan's treatment of the Hutchinsons and disregard for Cameron's authority also raised doubts about the general. A congressional committee had already been formed in December to investigate McClellan and John Hutchinson believed the Fairfax incident marked "the beginning of the end for that officer." Indiana congressman and committee-member, George Washington Julian, agreed, recalling that McClellan's "order expelling the Hutchinson Family from the army . . . was conclusive evidence against him." In February, Frederick

¹⁰ Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 394; Snell, *From First to Last*, 83; Viola Hutchinson Campbell, *Memories of a Busy Life* (Plymouth, MA: The Rogers Print, 1926), 38.

¹¹ Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers*, 21-22; Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 393, 398, 405, 411; Carol Ryrie Brink, *Harps in the Wind: The Story of the Singing Hutchinsons* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1947), 211; *New York Times*, February 14, 1862; *Liberator*, February 28, March 28, 1862; John G. Whittier and W. O. Perkins, "We Wait Beneath the Furnace Blast" (Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1862); Charles Carleton Coffin, *The Boys of '61, or, Four Years of Fighting: Personal Observation with the Army and Navy, From the First Battle of Bull Run to the Fall of Richmond* (Boston, MA: Estes and Lauriet, 1884), 40-43.

Douglass's periodical cited the incident as evidence of McClellan's favoritism toward the Confederates. The next month, another abolitionist paper, *The National Principia*, speculated that McClellan's actions exposed a government conspiracy to protect slaveholders. Later, Whittier joked about the incident's effect on McClellan's reputation. "Whatever General McClellan may do with my rhymes," he told the Hutchinsons, "I am thankful that Congress is putting it out of his power to 'send back' fugitive slaves as well as singers." After McClellan's failed Peninsula campaign, one congressman joked that although McClellan could drive the Hutchinsons out of Virginia, he could not drive out the Confederates.¹²

If there had been any doubt about the power of music before the Hutchinsons' performance at Fairfax Courthouse, by the time it was finished everyone in the chain of command, from the soldiers in the audience to Lincoln in the White House, appreciated its potential. This was a remarkable achievement. *The Liberator* suggested that an abolitionist giving a speech to the same men would have been "rejected and mobbed" but the same opinions, "when warbled in the songs of the Hutchinsons, melts down old prejudices, finds its way to the heart, and corrects the head." Indeed, two months after the Fairfax incident, an abolitionist minister visited the division and gave a speech expressing ideas that McAllister deemed, "more objectionable" than anything suggested by the Hutchinsons. Even Oakley attended the lecture and sat through it without protest. From this, McAllister concluded, "There is no disguising the fact that our army is becoming more and more opposed to slavery every day . . . rank proslavery men who came here are now the other way." Private Edward Livingston Welling underwent

¹² Margaret Leech, *Reveille in Washington: 1860-1866* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1941), 126; Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 391, 397; George W. Julian, *Political Recollections, 1840-1872* (New York, NY: Jansen McClurg, 1884), 209-210; "The State of the War," *Douglass' Monthly* (February 1862): 593; "Significant Facts to be Pondered," *Douglass' Monthly* (March 1862): 623; Brink, *Harps in the Wind*, 211.

such a transformation after hearing the Hutchinsons' performance. The "thrilling and grand old times" he experienced not only convinced him that slavery was wrong, but made him into a committed abolitionist. With a single song, the Hutchinsons won a kind of ideological victory that had eluded newspapers and orators for decades.¹³

Music was one of the most effective ways of expressing opinions and emotions during the Civil War. Setting a message to music made it more memorable and often more convincing. This was especially so during the 1860s because, even for Americans who were illiterate or barely literate, hearing or memorizing a song was much easier than reading a newspaper or understanding an eloquent speech. Music was available to all classes, both social and professional, and each American's ability to use it was limited only by his or her imagination and skill. One northern music critic argued that all other forms of artistic expression "require a certain cultivation of the mind, which comparatively few possess," but music, "how different! All are influenced by it – the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the educated and the uneducated." John W. Hutchinson's brother Joshua expressed the same sentiment more succinctly: "Ah! The 'inspiration of song!' It is Liberty's great auxiliary."¹⁴

Music not only made potentially controversial ideas more acceptable to listeners, it also made them easier for performers to express. A contemporary northern critic observed how "men

¹³ *Liberator*, March 20, 1862; McAllister, *Civil War Letters*, 116, 122; Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 396-397.

¹⁴ Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 18; D., "Music," *Nassau Literary Magazine* 24 (February 1864): 196; Joshua Hutchinson, *A Brief Narrative of the Hutchinson Family: Sixteen Sons and Daughters of the "Tribe of Jesse."* (Boston, MA: Lee and Shepard, 1874), 39. For a thorough examination of the role of music in American society before the Civil War see: Nicholas E. Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down: Music in the Lives of Americans, 1800-1861* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2000).

will sing what they would be shamefaced to say” and a postwar southern music collector recalled, “It is a well-known fact that during the War many people spoke and sang more bravely than they fought.” Civil War-era Americans often preferred music to other forms of expression because it was not overt enough to invite punishment but was effective enough to convey its message to those who opposed it and those who were sympathetic. For instance, civilians under Union occupation publicly sang Confederate songs to show their defiance to northern soldiers and their patriotism to other southerners. Black soldiers used music in a similar fashion, conveying their intelligence and masculinity to northerners while demonstrating their newfound freedom to southerners.¹⁵

Music had been widely used as a cultural tool before the war but the arrival of armed conflict gave it an even more prominent role in American society. With ideology figuring prominently in the rhetoric of both sides, music became a powerful way to express one’s views and influence others. Furthermore, the heightened emotional climate of the war created a need for songs that helped Americans understand their personal relationships with the conflict and express their reactions to it – both euphoric and depressing. In a more practical sense, the war increased the amount of group singing. Choral singing was already popular in the antebellum period and now it could help bring people together in war rallies, in the home, or in large armies.¹⁶

¹⁵ Richard Grant White, *National Hymns: How They Are Written and How They Are Not Written: A Lyric and National Study for the Times* (New York, NY: Rudd & Carleton, 1861), 14; H. M. Wharton, ed., *War Songs and Poems of the Southern Confederacy, 1861-1865: A Collection of the Most Popular and Impressive Songs and Poems of War Times, Dear to Every Southern Heart* (Philadelphia, PA: 1904), 68.

¹⁶ Willard A. and Porter W. Heaps, *The Singing Sixties: The Spirit of Civil War Days Drawn from the Music of the Times* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 13.

Outdoor public meetings were common occurrences during the war and were one of the primary ways that civilians were exposed to new music. Although speeches by local politicians were usually the centerpieces of these rallies, they almost always featured stirring music for which many Americans had a seemingly insatiable appetite. As one Chicagoan recalled, “there was in the war time an outburst of patriotic song on the slightest provocation, shared in by everybody, anywhere and everywhere.” These songs were important because in singing them together, the crowd became momentarily unified not just in expression but also in ideology. This reinforced the meanings of already established patriotic anthems, such as “The Star Spangled Banner,” and gave contemporary pieces greater power. Some songs attained new layers of meaning through their performance *during* and subsequent association *with* important events. In other cases, the inclusion of a new song at a mass meeting could significantly increase the song’s popularity, as when George Frederick Root’s “The Battle Cry of Freedom” debuted at a mass meeting in Chicago on July 26, 1862. The group setting of the song’s first public performance created such a powerful effect that the crowd, despite having never heard it before, began singing along and the piece soon became one of the North’s most popular numbers.¹⁷

Although mass meetings helped, singing in the home was more common. During the 1850s American piano production increased dramatically and, by the outbreak of the Civil War, prices had dropped enough to make the instruments affordable to most middle class families. In

¹⁷ Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York, NY: Norton, 1979), 231; Frederick Francis Cook, *Bygone Days in Chicago: Recollections of the “Garden City” of the Sixties* (Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg, 1910), 123; Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 55; John Prosy, “John Prosy’s Talks By the Fireside, Number 3,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (June 1863): 34; James Stone, “War Music and War Psychology in the Civil War,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 36 (October 1941): 548; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 50; Chicago *Tribune*, July 28, 1862; George F. Root, *The Story of a Musical Life; An Autobiography* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1970), 133.

1860, 21,000 pianos were manufactured and one in every 1,500 people owned one. In 1863, the Chickering sons of Boston – the most successful of America’s 110 piano manufacturers – were producing forty-two pianos every week, employed five hundred workmen, and rivaled the best of their European competitors. A quality piano could be purchased for about \$250 but advertisements from the first two years of the war offered cheaper models for as low as \$125 or used pianos for under \$100. One ad from Boardman, Gray, & Co. of Albany, New York, stated that their low prices amounted to “a public benefit” as they sought to “advance and economize the study of music in schools and families.” Even schools, with some help from local benefactors, were able to buy one. In addition, musical instruction proliferated as the number of pianos increased, with one instructor for every 2,560 people in rural areas and one for every 850 in cities. If a family could not afford a piano, manufacturers offered much cheaper instruments, such as guitars or small keyed instruments called melodeons.¹⁸

The wide availability of pianos made evening parlor performances a regular feature in many homes. These usually involved the mother or daughter playing while the rest of the family sang or listened. Such performances were cherished not only as entertainment but also as a means of familial bonding. One children’s periodical asked, “What stronger proof of happiness

¹⁸ David B. Thompson, “Confederates at the Keyboard: Southern Piano Music during the Civil War,” *Bugle Resounding: Music and Musicians of the Civil War Era*, edited by Bruce C. Kelley and Mark A. Snell (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004): 107-108; Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos: A Social History* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1990), 511, 518-519; Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (London, UK: Dent, 1976), 129; Louis Moreau Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1979), 134; M. E. B. “Musical Instruments,” *Arthur’s Home Magazine* 23 (June 1864): 305; Lawrence E. Abel, *Singing the New Nation: How Music Shaped the Confederacy, 1861-1865* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2000), 139-140; *Arthur’s Home Magazine*, 17 (April 1861): 252; *New York Illustrated News*, June 28, 1862; *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin*, April 30, 1862; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 71, 74, 100. The demand for and production of pianos remained strong throughout the war. In fact the Steinway Brothers established themselves during the conflict. They built a new factory that rivaled Chickering’s in 1863 and produced more than 2,000 pianos by 1865. Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos*, 496.

all around can there be than the evening social concert, when old and young, male and female, make melody with their voices as in their hearts?" In another article, a minister celebrated affordable pianos as "the great, the universal boon and comforter" of his generation. One Midwesterner suggested that every family should procure a piano, regardless of price, because "when rightly used, its effects, physical, intellectual and moral, are good, very good, and only good." The *Richmond Dispatch* added that frequent piano playing and singing in families reduced conflict by decreasing "sourness and gloom." Indeed, the frequency and skill of American piano playing may have surpassed that of Europeans, as noted by one northern woman in England who complained that few homes had pianos and even fewer women could play.¹⁹

With so many Americans owning musical instruments or participating in musical performances, a new generation of songwriters appeared that was eager to fulfill the demands of this new market. The first to take advantage was Lowell Mason, an evangelical reformer, who used music to shape public opinions on religion and various social issues. He understood how the production and distribution of music could make money and, therefore, began publishing vast amounts of church music in the 1830s and 1840s. His hymn books were especially successful and helped lay the foundations of the parlor tradition, as families gathered around pianos to sing songs that Mason compiled. The other highly successful songwriter of the antebellum period was Stephen Foster. Working primarily in the minstrel genre, Foster published a number of

¹⁹ Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 236; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 158; "Home Music," *Youth's Companion* 37 (September 17 1863): 151; J. F. W. Ware, "Music at Home," *Ballou's Dollar Monthly Magazine* 15 (May 1862): 448; "Music at Home," *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (September 1864): 89; *Richmond Dispatch*, May 6, 1862; Ruth Bradford Crowell, ed., *Maskee! The Journal and Letters of Ruth Bradford, 1861-1872* (Hartford, CT: Prospect Press, 1938), 82.

incredibly popular songs, such as “Camptown Races” and “Oh Susanna!” Eventually, he became so renowned that he could support himself from songwriting alone.²⁰

By 1860 a number of songwriters had modeled themselves after Mason and Foster and several new music publishers were producing and distributing their work. In the North the most noteworthy were Oliver Ditson and Company of Boston, Firth, Pond and Company of New York, and Lee and Walker of Philadelphia. In the South, John C. Schreiner and Sons of Macon and Savannah, and A. E. Blackmar and Brother of New Orleans were dominant. With the availability of pianos, the growth of music publishing, and an ever-increasing number of songwriters, many antebellum Americans were primed for the country’s first music boom.²¹

The onset of the Civil War proved to be the spark that was needed. The war’s emotional, economic, and social impact on the nation encouraged the writing, production, and distribution of music. An unprecedented number of Americans wrote songs, many about the war. Music presses and performers exposed eager audiences to their newest productions and public rallies or large armies spread music throughout the nation. Only a year after the attack on Fort Sumter, the *Saturday Evening Post* observed that “the National Music has aroused herself to meet the exigencies of the times” producing no less than “a flood” of new songs. The publishing firm of Root and Cady experienced this massive outpouring of songs first hand, receiving between fifty to seventy new submissions every day.²²

²⁰ Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 149-151; Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos*, 466; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 167; Ken Emerson, *Doo Dah!: Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 12, 127.

²¹ Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 7-8.

²² “Songs for the Million,” *Saturday Evening Post* (April 12 1862): 4; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (May 1863): 19.

Established songwriters and amateurs alike received inspiration from the conflict that raged around them, especially during the first two years of fighting. However, most of their songs found homes in newspapers and periodicals. Although many were original pieces, several offered little more than new lyrics for existing popular tunes. In fact, some of the war's most popular songs used traditional melodies, including two of the South's most popular anthems: "The Bonnie Blue Flag," which was set to the Irish folk ballad "The Irish Jaunting Car"; and "Maryland, My Maryland," which was set to the popular college tune "Lauriger Horatius" (better-known today as "Oh, Christmas Tree"). Nor was this practice limited to songs written before the Civil War. Civilians and soldiers frequently rewrote songs created during the conflict and shared their new lyrics with each other. Professional songwriters revised lyrics for particular occasions or to improve their quality, as in the case of Julia Ward Howe's rewriting of "John Brown's Body" as "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." This was especially prevalent during the Civil War because neither section recognized each other's copyright laws.²³

Publishers eagerly collected songs and printed them as sheet music, in songbooks, and in small pocketbooks called songsters. Exact numbers are difficult to determine but between nine and ten thousand songs were published as sheet music during the Civil War, with about two thousand of these from the first year. With fewer established presses, a lower population, and the problems arising from the Union blockade and occupation of cities, Confederates lagged behind the North and were able to publish only between six and seven hundred songs. But even

²³ Brander Matthews, "The Songs of the War," *Century Illustrated Magazine* 34 (August 1887): 621-622, 625; Kristen M. Schultz, "The Production and Consumption of Confederate Songsters," *Bugle Resounding: Music and Musicians of the Civil War Era*, edited by Bruce C. Kelley and Mark A. Snell (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004): 152-155. While the output of Civil War songwriters was higher at the beginning of the war, it remained steady throughout the conflict, especially in the North where economic conditions were not as austere.

these relatively low numbers are impressive when placed in context, as southern music dramatically out-produced all other forms of literature, with the sole exception of newspapers.²⁴

Public demand for sheet music only partially accounted for these staggering numbers. By the 1860s, sheet music publishing in America had become the most profitable printed medium. Producing a piece of sheet music cost about fifteen cents and it usually sold for anywhere from a quarter to fifty cents. Most published pieces did not sell many copies but almost any song could find a market somewhere. Even a mildly popular tune generated some profits while a highly successful one sometimes earned enough to keep an entire press in the black. Reduced production costs also made music more available. As one periodical noted in 1861, “cheapness in music has even surpassed cheapness in general literature” and, until recently, “none except the wealthy could possess a musical library.” By 1864, some music critics were speculating that more sheet music was being published and used in America than anywhere else in the world and every press had published at least one popular song since secession. As a result, music publishers became fairly wealthy. An 1865 list of the highest incomes in Chicago included three

²⁴ Dena J. Epstein, “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” *Civil War History* 4 (September 1958): 307; Fahs, *Imagined Civil War*, 55; Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents: Harmonies and Discords of the First Hundred Years* (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1975), 341; Charles Godfrey Leland, “War-Songs and their Influence in History,” *United States Service Magazine* 1 (January 1864): 48; William J. Mahar, “March to the Music: Twenty Top Hits of the Sixties,” *Civil War Times Illustrated* 23 (September 1984): 13; Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and its Business: The First Four Hundred Years* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), II, 225; Irwin Silber, ed., *Songs of the Civil War* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995), 2; Steven H. Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 17; Richard B. Harwell, “Confederate Carousal: Southern Songs of the Sixties,” *Emory University Quarterly* 6 (1950): 84; Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 18; Richard B. Harwell, *Confederate Music*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1950), 4.

publishers, with C. M. Cady and H. M. Higgins both earning over six thousand dollars and Root earning over seven thousand.²⁵

In fact, the Civil War helped make Root and Cady's publishing house one of the most successful in the country. The firm had specialized in instruments and instructional booklets before the war but with the onset of hostilities, it began publishing its own sheet music – offering songs in response to almost every major event or development of the conflict. The first of these was Root's own, "The First Gun is Fired!" which was published only three days after the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter. Although several songwriters wrote for the firm, the two most popular were Root himself and Henry Clay Work. Between 1861 and 1866, Root and Cady published 109 songs, including several popular ones: "Kingdom Coming" sold 20,000 copies in 1862; "Just Before the Battle, Mother" sold 60,000 copies in 1864; "Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!" sold 100,000 copies in 1865; and the firm's two biggest hits, "The Battle Cry of Freedom" and "Marching Through Georgia," each sold over 500,000 copies by the end of the century. In 1863, Root and Cady were able to expand their Chicago publishing house and even launched their own magazine, *The Song Messenger of the Northwest*, which attracted one hundred new subscribers a week during its first year. The firm printed over 258,000 pieces of sheet music and 100,000 music books in 1863 alone and in the fall of that year proudly announced that its songs could even be heard in Oregon. By the summer of 1864, high demand for their music made it impossible to fill customer orders and the firm had to purchase a second steam press.²⁶

²⁵ Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 231-233; Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos*, 506; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 11; "Cheap Music," *Musical Review and Musical World* 7 (January 6 1861): 7; B., "Musical Instruments," 305; "Our War Songs," *Musical Review and Musical World* 15 (October 19 1864): 374; *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1865.

²⁶ P. H. Carder, *George F. Root, Civil War Songwriter: A Biography* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2008), 86, 101, 103; I. D. Guyer, *History of Chicago: Its Commercial and Manufacturing Interests and Industry* (Chicago, IL: Church, Goodman & Cushing, 1862), 180;

Part of the reason many Civil War songwriters and publishers, such as Root and Cady, succeeded, was their ability to produce songs that became popular over a wide geographical area. This had been difficult before 1861 but wartime conditions ironically made it easier for a song to cross class, community, and sectional barriers. Although the impact of public rallies was significant, it was soldiers, not civilians, who were chiefly responsible for spreading music during the Civil War. Large armies on the march served a function similar to a modern concert tour. As they passed through different communities, soldiers sang and played their favorite songs and spread them throughout the country. As one northern woman noted during the first year of the war, “nothing on earth has such effect on the popular heart as songs, which the soldiers would take up with enthusiasm, and . . . thereby become the fashion to whistle and sing at the street corners.”²⁷ In the South, “Dixie,” “The Bonnie Blue Flag,” “Maryland, My Maryland,” “Lorena,” and several others were favorites in the armies first. The North saw a

Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 139-141; George F. Root, “The First Gun is Fired!” (Chicago, IL: Root & Cady, 1861); Lydia Avery Coonley, “George F. Root and His Songs,” *New England Magazine* 19 (January 1896): 563-564; “Complimentary,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (August 1863): 73; “Needs of the Northwest,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (April 1864): 8; “The Spirit of Our Correspondence,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (September 1863): 89; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (January 1864): 159; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (September 1864): 89. For Root and Cady sales statistics see: Epstein, “Battle Cry of Freedom,” 308; *Chicago Tribune*, November 18, 1862; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (November 1864): 120; Dena Epstein, *Music Publishing in Chicago Before 1871: The Firm of Root & Cady, 1858-1871* (Detroit, MI: Information Coordinations, 1969), 52; “Music Publishing,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (December 1864): 143; *Our War Songs, North and South* (Cleveland, OH: S. Brainard’s Sons, 1887), 6; Mahar, “March to the Music,” 14. Root and Cady was initially owned by C. M. Cady and George’s brother Ebenezer Towner Root. George became a partner on December 1, 1860. Carder, *George F. Root*, 96. Of the 109 songs published by the firm, 28 were by Root and 19 were by Work. Epstein, “Battle Cry of Freedom,” 308. Subscriptions to the *Song Messenger* continued to grow throughout the war, as evidenced by the 1,100 new subscribers it attracted from January through February in 1865. “Another Year,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (March 1865): 184.

²⁷ Lydia Maria Francis Child, *Letters of Lydia Maria Child with a Biographical Introduction by John G. Whittier and Appendix by Wendell Phillips* (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1883), 157.

similar pattern with “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” “Just Before the Battle, Mother” and “When Johnny Comes Marching Home.” In fact, soldiers created one of the North’s main anthems, “John Brown’s Body.”

What musical elements made a song popular during the Civil War is more difficult to determine. A catchy tune was vital and, because it was often the soldiers who promoted the music, a good marching rhythm helped as well. However, melody and rhythm were seldom enough. Lyrics were highly important to Civil War-era Americans and the nineteenth-century emphasis on verse over chorus made lyrical content essential to a song’s success. In addition, emotional resonance mattered a great deal. “When This Cruel War is Over” achieved tremendous popularity in both sections because it expressed a shared desire for the end of hostilities and a return of the soldiers to their homes. A song’s association with an important event also spurred demand. Some songs were intentionally so, such as “We Are Coming, Father Abraham, 300,000 More,” which was written in response to Lincoln’s second call for troops, or “Stonewall Jackson’s Way,” which idolized General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson after his death. In other instances, the association of a song with the war was unplanned, as in the case of “Dixie,” which, despite being written by a northerner a year before the secession crisis, became forever connected to the Confederacy because southerners embraced it precisely as the secession crisis was erupting. Some songs remained popular because they were easy to modify, both lyrically and musically. “John Brown’s Body” exemplified this tendency as only its first few verses were well known and new ones were often added and dropped depending on the singer’s situation or sentiments.²⁸

²⁸ Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 12-13, 46, 133; *Our War Songs, North and South*, 7; “Our War Songs,” *Musical Review and Musical World*, 374; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 625, 628; John Esten Cooke, *Wearing of the Gray: Being Personal Portraits, Scenes and Adventures of the War*

However, popularity was not the only measure of a song's power. A tune's usefulness to songwriters, politicians, military officers, or musicians largely depended on the context in which it was performed. Different circumstance allowed songs to function in a variety of ways, as people of the time were well aware. Music moved listeners intellectually, emotionally, and even physically. Intellectually, a song could reinforce or modify ideas, such as a Confederate soldier reaffirming his belief that he was fighting for his home because he heard someone sing "In Dixie Land, I'll take my stand / To lib and die in Dixie." Similarly, repeatedly hearing and singing "John Brown's Body" might influence a northerner to gradually embrace emancipation. On a more basic level, a song could act as a means of conveying information, such as describing the events of a battle or a prominent personality.²⁹

Numerous magazines and newspapers commented on the emotional power of songs. Many noted how music motivated soldiers to acts of bravery but also reduced them to tears. One article even suggested that if the government would encourage the singing of good music "soon shall the national ear be saluted with the gladdening peans of victory." Another argued that music produced an intoxicating effect similar to alcohol and if used properly could make soldiers more courageous and civilians more patriotic. Some took the idea even further, as in one article that examined how different pitches affected behavior. It even included a chart, presenting data to show how a high pitch played in an "explosive" way produced "terror" and "anger" but a low "softened" pitch produced "sublimity" and "pathos."³⁰

(New York, NY: E. B. Treat & Co., 1867), 384-386; Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Lecture – 1865* (1865).

²⁹ Daniel Decatur Emmett, "I Wish I Was In Dixie's Land" (New York, NY: Firth, Pond, & Co., 1860).

³⁰ *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (September 1864): 94-95; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, January 18, 1864; Augusta Browne Garrett, "Trumpets and Drums," *Knickerbocker Monthly* 62

Music even appeared to physically affect its listeners. In an article published at the end of the war, renowned pianist Louis Moreau Gottschalk argued that, because music caused visible effects in nature, such as water rippling or leaves moving, it must have similar effects on the human body. If professionals could explain how music “agitates the whole physical economy,” songs could become scientific or medical tools. In this, Gottschalk joined a discussion of music’s healing power that had occasionally arisen during the antebellum period and continued during the war. In October 1861, *Littell’s Living Age* published Florence Nightingale’s observations on the uses of music in hospitals. She argued that, although its effects were limited, sounds from a woodwind, string instrument, or voice “generally have a beneficial effect” while sentimental songs played on an organ will “sensibly soothe” patients. However, she also warned that bold tones, such as those of a trumpet or a loudly played piano, could also make a patient’s condition worse. Hospital workers expressed similar opinions over the course of the war with varying degrees of conviction.³¹

These more extreme claims for the power of music aside, Civil War songwriters understood that their words and lyrics could potentially modify the beliefs and behavior of their audience. At the very least, large armies provided new possibilities for spreading and marketing music, as southern songwriter and performer, Harry Macarthy, soon realized. Macarthy’s “The Bonnie Blue Flag” became highly popular, in part, because of his tireless efforts to promote the

(December 1863): 521-525; Prosy, “John Prosy’s Talks by the Fireside, Number 3,” 33-34; “Sound and Effect,” *Christian Advocate and Journal* 38 (September 10 1863): 292.

³¹ Louis Moreau Gottschalk, “Music as a Physical and Moral Agent,” *Zion’s Herald and Wesleyan Journal* 36 (May 3 1865): 1; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 57-58; *Littell’s Living Age* (October 19, 1861): 135; Fannie A. Beers, *Memories: A Record of Personal Experience and Adventure during Four Years of War* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1888), 114; Catherine Ann Devereux Edmonston, *Journal of a Secesh Lady: The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmonston 1860-1866* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1979), 489; *Boston Investigator*, January 7, 1863.

song to Confederate soldiers. All through 1861, Macarthy toured the South and performed for the troops. As a result, soldiers embraced “The Bonnie Blue Flag” and spread it throughout the South. The song eventually became so popular that it rivaled “Dixie” as the Confederacy’s unofficial anthem.³²

While Macarthy used the armies to sell his music, Charles Carroll Sawyer built his career around songs that transcended sectional divisions. Born in Connecticut, Sawyer started his own publishing company in Brooklyn, New York, during the Civil War and his “Who Will Care For Mother, Now” and “Weeping, Sad, and Lonely, or, When This Cruel War is Over,” became favorites in both sections. Learning from this success, Sawyer spent the rest of the war writing pieces with sentimental themes of love, separation, and family that lacked any sectional bias and could therefore become popular anywhere in America. This made Sawyer the most successful songwriter of the Civil War and he eventually sold as many as one million pieces of sheet music. Other authors achieved similar success but only Sawyer’s real name appeared on sheet music in both the North and South.³³

Like Macarthy and Sawyer, George Frederick Root recognized the potential market for war-related music but also understood that it could be used for more than just making money.

³² Wharton, *War Songs*, 23; Valerius Cincinnatus Giles and Mary Lasswell, *Rags and Hope: The Recollections of Val C. Giles, Four Year’s With Hood’s Brigade, Fourth Texas Infantry, 1861-1865* (New York, NY: Coward-McCann, 1961), 91; E. W. Preston, “Facts About ‘The Cleburne Flag,’” *Confederate Veteran* 17 (July 1909): 348; William Osborn Stoddard, *Inside the White House in War Times: Memoirs and Reports of Lincoln’s Secretary*, edited by Michael Burlingame (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 18. Sources sometimes spell Macarthy’s last name as “McCarthy” but since all of his own publications spell it as “Macarthy,” I will use that spelling here. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of his performances and the popularity of “The Bonnie Blue Flag.”

³³ Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 185; *Our War Songs, North and South*, 14; *Godey’s Lady’s Book* (August 1863): 191. A quick perusal of southern printings of Sawyer’s songs and those of other major songwriter, such as George Frederick Root, shows that Root’s name is never given while Sawyer’s was almost always given in full.

Born in Massachusetts, Root had been raised an evangelical Christian and, like the Hutchinsons, endorsed various reform movements. Many of his songs reflected these beliefs and during the war he promoted emancipation. Root spent his early career working with Lowell Mason, learning to make music both profitable and influential. Root also spent a large portion of his career teaching music and witnessed how simple melodies more effectively provoked emotional and intellectual responses from his students. As a result, Root's Civil War music was both accessible to most Americans and often designed to influence their opinions and feelings. In his own words, "I am simply one, who, from such resources as he finds within himself, makes music for the people, having always a particular need in view."³⁴

Too old to serve in the army, Root believed that "if I could not shoulder a musket in defense of my country I could serve her in this way" and wrote numerous patriotic songs over the course of the war. Many of these pieces, such as his most successful, "The Battle Cry of Freedom," strongly endorsed the Union. In some cases, Root expressed more radical opinions but usually under the alias, "Wurzel." Root published and promoted songwriters with similar political views, most notably Henry Clay Work. Work's music resembled Root's, though instead of writing in the patriotic and sentimental genres, Work used minstrelsy to endorse emancipation and, later, black enlistment. Through these endeavors, Root himself became the most successful songwriter in the North and left a lasting impression on the soldiers and civilians who enjoyed his songs. One enlisted man informed Root that his "songs go away down into the soldier's

³⁴ George P. Upton, *Musical Memories: My Recollections of Celebrities of the Half Century 1850-1900* (Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1908), 300; Coonley, "George F. Root," 555; P. H. Carder, "George Frederick Root, Pioneer Music Educator: His Contributions to Mass Instruction in Music" (Ph. D. diss., University of Maryland, 1971): 42-50, 58; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (May 1863): 19; Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 149, 155, 251; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 290; Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 98. In the fall of 1862 Root and Cady signed a petition stating that the Civil War was a punishment from God for the sin of slavery and therefore emancipation had to be a war aim. *Chicago Tribune*, September 4, 1862.

heart. They are *his thoughts* – only *you publish them*” and another recalled how Root’s “songs became the ruling sentiment of the American people, they were eloquent appeals for enlistment, and their power made millions rally around the flag.”³⁵

Not all songwriters were as successful as Macarthy, Sawyer, Root, and Work. In response to the secession crisis, Kentuckian William Shakespeare Hays wrote “The Union Forever For Me.” After it was performed at a local rally, he wrote in his diary that he “felt very proud over it. Oh! what a change in my situation in life!” Another Kentuckian, H. George Whipple, drafted “Union, God and Liberty,” in July 1861, and, like Hays, had it published and performed at a public rally. He remarked, “My Union song is pronounced very good by all who have heard it” and speculated, “I don’t know but I think it will sell tolerably well.” However, Whipple’s song remained relatively unknown outside of Louisville and Hays’s offering achieved only limited success.³⁶

Few songwriters enjoyed a reputation as great as that of Stephen Foster but he too failed to adapt his music to the war and suffered a loss of northern support because of his strong Democratic leanings. By the time Foster reversed his position and began composing more unionist numbers, it was too late and his songs only appeared to mimic those that were already popular. The only widely successful song Foster produced during the war was “Beautiful

³⁵ Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 83, 133; Sam Dennison, *Scandalize My Name: Black Imagery in American Popular Music* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1982), 203-207; “Popular Music,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (June 1864): 41; Coonley, “George F. Root,” 566-567; James R. Murray “A Soldier’s Thoughts,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (October 1863): 105; Nicholas Smith, “The Battle Hymns of Nations,” Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the US – Wisconsin Commandery, *War Papers* (Milwaukee, WS: Burdick & Allen, 1903): III, 486. “Wurzel” is German for “root.”

³⁶ William Shakespeare Hays, “The Union Forever For Me,” (Louisville, KY: Tripp & Cragg, 1861); Entry for February 21, 1861, William Shakespeare Hays Diary and Scrapbook, Filson Historical Society; H. George Whipple to Molly, July 24, 30, 1861, H. George Whipple Papers, Folder 1, Filson Historical Society. Hays’ song was included in a series of concerts given in Ohio in the winter of 1861. *Daily Cleveland Herald*, October 21, 1861.

Dreamer,” which had no relation to the war and was published after his alcohol-induced death in 1864.³⁷

As with the modern music market, Civil War-era Americans could choose from several genres. The most prominent during the first year of the war, and the one that produced the war’s most successful songs, was patriotic or martial music. The initial rush of patriotism and the early absence of war’s harsher elements led many Americans to seek out and embrace songs that expressed their desire for victory, love of country, and military spirit. Other genres may have produced a larger number of successful songs but patriotic numbers were performed more frequently and had a much greater longevity. As one Union soldier recalled, “never had there been such sales of war music.” Furthermore, the relative inactivity that pervaded the first few months of the war meant that armies set up large camps near cities and towns which allowed music to pass more easily from soldiers to civilians.³⁸

In cities, the sound of military and patriotic music was constantly heard. During the first year of the war, newspapers and civilians often compared urban areas to “armed camps” and described music as omnipresent. A southern reporter in Harrisonburg, Virginia, remarked, “The notes of martial music greet our ears all day long” and by the winter of 1861 a northern reporter in Annapolis, Maryland, still heard “the continued sound of distant martial music coming from the regimental bands.” Military music was especially pervasive in Richmond, Virginia, where Mary Chesnut heard the “noise of drums . . . [and] bands of music . . . from every quarter.”

³⁷ Emerson, *Doo Dah!*, 276, 279-280, 298.

³⁸ Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 73; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 8. Alfred S. Roe, *The Fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in its Three Tours of Duty 1861, 1862-’63, 1864* (Boston, MA: Fifth Regiment Veteran Association, 1911), 18. A quick scan of music advertisements in any newspaper from the first year of the war will often reveal at least one patriotic song.

Northern cities were similarly immersed in patriotic strains. One civilian recalled that “the war songs were part of everyone’s meat and drink” and, as late as 1862, a British observer in Washington noted how he was “ever and anon . . . called to the window by some military band.”³⁹

Although much of the military music heard by civilians would have been bugle calls and drum rolls, the patriotic songs adopted by the armies would also have been prominent. This initial period of close contact between the military and civilian populations left a lasting impact on American society and produced some of the most popular and enduring songs of the war. In fact, soldiers introduced all three of the South’s major anthems to civilians during this period. Although publishers and songwriters moved away from patriotic pieces after 1862, soldiers and civilians remained invested in the patriotic anthems of the war’s early days and performed them frequently.

The other major musical genre of the Civil War was sentimental music. The war occupied a period dominated by romanticism and Victorian sentimentalism. As a result, a large number of songs emphasized the human feeling and emotion of the Romantics but also shared

³⁹ John Beauchamp Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk’s Diary at the Confederate States Capital* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1866), I, 27; C. L. “The Gospel in Camp,” *New York Observer and Chronicle* 30 (June 27 1861): 202; Francis Richard Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas: or Memoirs of Francis Richard Lubbock, Governor of Texas in War Time, 1861-1863* (Austin, TX: B. C. Jones, 1900), 326; *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, April 23, 1861; Sallie Brock Putnam, *Richmond During the War: Four Years of Personal Observation* (New York, NY: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1867), 41; *Richmond Dispatch*, January 6, April 26, 1861; *Washington National Intelligencer*, April 24, 1861; Augustus Woodbury, *A Narrative of the Campaign of the First Rhode Island Regiment, in the Spring and Summer of 1861* (Providence, RI: Sidney S. Rider, 1862), 51; *New York Herald*, December 11, 1861; Mary Boykin Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War*, edited by C. Vann Woodward (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 90; Horace M. Brown, “A Small Boy’s Recollections of the War Time,” *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the U. S. – Wisconsin Commandery, War Papers* (Milwaukee, WI: Burdick & Allen, 1903): III, 200; “Washington During the War,” *Macmillan’s Magazine* 6 (May/October 1862): 17.

the Victorian focus on family, especially mothers. These sentimental songs tended to have slower, often meandering melodies and sometimes contained only a limited chorus or none at all. They were often within the ballad tradition – telling stories, usually tragic, that frequently dealt with love, separation, death, or all three. In this, they were perfectly suited to the parlor tradition, with a piano player and a singer not only providing music for their family and friends but also an entertaining tale that would engage listeners intellectually and emotionally.⁴⁰

To a modern ear, the heightened emotionalism of these songs may seem overbearing or saccharine and their lyrics simplistic or trite but Civil War-era Americans considered them as powerful expressions of feeling. In fact, many songwriters specifically attempted to provoke extreme emotional reactions from their audiences. The *Song Messenger of the Northwest* claimed that only ten of their readers could keep from crying after reading Work's "Come Home, Father," and songwriter Walter Kittredge considered his performances a failure if the audience did not laugh and cry in close succession. Consumers shared these sentiments, strongly preferring music that touched an emotional chord.⁴¹

Wartime sentimental music can be divided into four categories: home songs, sweetheart songs, mother songs, and death songs – all reflecting a common theme of separation. The first

⁴⁰ Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 135-137; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 219. The preponderance of published sentimental songs, especially during the last two years of the war, has caused many historians to see the genre as gradually supplanting patriotic music in national popularity. While publishers may have produced more sentimental songs, popular tastes do not reflect one genre eclipsing the other, but rather both styles enjoying similar degrees of success. Soldiers and civilians embraced many of the sentimental songs that were published later in the war, but continued to sing the patriotic songs they had enjoyed earlier in the conflict. The Heaps brothers were the most influential in establishing the theory of the decline of patriotic music and the rise of sentimental music during the Civil War in their comprehensive study of wartime sheet music, *The Singing Sixties*. Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 11, 133.

⁴¹ Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 12, 219; Gordon Hall Gerould, "'Tenting On the Old Camp Ground,' and its Composer," *New England Magazine* 20 (August 1899): 725; "Ten Pairs of Dry Eyes," *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (July 1864): 57; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 49, 54.

two were more rooted in the genre's antebellum traditions and many of the more prominent ones were written before 1861. However the war brought more focus on mothers and death and the two themes became increasingly dominant through the next four years. If the patriotic songs of the war helped Americans justify and describe the war, sentimental songs helped them cope with the emotions stirred by the conflict. Sweethearts balanced their responsibilities to each other with patriotic duties, homes became idealized as fondly recalled points of departure and deeply longed for points of return, and mothers and soldiers became idealized in death and life as noble, selfless, and patriotic.⁴²

Home songs were especially rooted in the decades preceding the Civil War, partially because any wartime offering would have to compete with the subject's undisputed masterpiece, "Home, Sweet Home." Written in 1823, the piece was a great favorite before the war and became the nation's most popular song during the conflict. As one veteran recalled, "Home, Sweet Home" "always went most directly to the soldier's heart," and the men frequently sang it to express their strong desire to escape the hardships of war and return to their families. The song's ability to make soldiers cry was frequently noted by observers, including a Confederate artillerist who recorded how whenever it was sung, "many a rough soldier, who weeps not for wounds or blood, dashes a tear from the eye." The other two popular home songs of the war, the similarly titled "Do They Miss Me at Home" and "Do They Think of Me at Home," dealt with similar themes but never came close to approaching the success of "Home, Sweet Home."⁴³

⁴² Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 244; Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos*, 475, 499.

⁴³ Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 178-180; Henry Harrison Eby, *Observations of an Illinois Boy in Battle, Camp and Prisons, 1861 to 1865* (Mendota, IL: Eby, 1910), 25; Benjamin Washington Jones, *Under the Stars and Bars: A History of the Surry Light Artillery* (Richmond, VA: E. Waddey, 1909), 163; Buckley's *Melodist: A Repertoire of Choice Songs and Ballads, with Choruses, as Sung at the Concerts of Buckley's Serenaders* (Boston, MA: Henry Tolman & Co., 1864), 6; C. W. Glover, "Do They Think of Me at Home" (New Orleans, LA: Blackmar &

Of the three most popular sweetheart songs of the Civil War, two were written before secession. “The Girl I Left Behind Me” enjoyed the most widespread appeal and had been associated with soldiers for at least two hundred years. Its melody was more suitable for marching than other sentimental pieces and its description of a soldier hoping for a quick end of the war so he could return to his sweetheart had universal appeal among fighting men. The other popular prewar sentimental song, “Lorena,” was published in 1857 and primarily appealed to southerners. The song’s theme of unrequited love was common to the genre but its plaintive melody found resonance with Confederate soldiers and became one of their favorite songs. Of the sweetheart songs written during the war, none compared in popularity or resonance to Charles Carroll Sawyer’s “When This Cruel War is Over.” Slightly modifying the theme of “The Girl I Left Behind Me,” Sawyer portrayed two lovers promising to reunite after the war and acknowledging each other’s wartime duty as citizens. Originally released in the North, a Confederate version soon appeared. The song sold 75,000 copies during the summer of 1863, 300,000 by the end of the war, and close to one million over the course of the century.⁴⁴

Co., 1864); H. E. Grannis, “Do They Miss Me at Home?” (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., n. d.); *The Army Songster: Dedicated to the Army of Northern Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Geo. L. Bidgood, 1864), 5; *The Heart and Home Songster: Containing a Choice Collection of Songs of the Affections, and Embracing the Most Popular...Comic, Convivial, Moral, Sentimental, and Patriotic Songs* (New York, NY: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862), 6.

⁴⁴ Harwell, “Confederate Carousal,” 89; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 308, 327; Ernest K. Emurian, *The Sweet Heart of the Civil War: The True Story of the Song “Lorena”* (Natick, MA: W. A. Wilde Co., 1962), 9-13, 21, 25; Chester Goolrick, “He Didn’t Like ‘Dixie!’” *Virginia Cavalcade* 9 (1960): 5; Ben Le Bree, *Camp Fires of the Confederacy: A Volume of Humorous Anecdotes, Reminiscences, Deeds of Heroism, Thrilling Narratives, Campaigns, Hand-to-hand Fights, Bold Dashes, Terrible Hardships Endured, Imprisonments...: Confederate Poems and Selected Songs* (Louisville, KY: Courier-Journal Job Print. Co., 1898), 528; Harwell, *Confederate Music*, 86; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 625; “When this Cruel War is Over,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (September 1863): 89; Charles Carroll Sawyer and Henry Tucker, “Weeping, Sad and Lonely, or, ‘When This Cruel War is Over’” (Brooklyn, NY: Sawyer & Thompson, 1863); Charles Carroll Sawyer and Henry Tucker, “When This Cruel War is Over” (Richmond, VA: Geo. Dunn & Co., 1864); *Godey’s Lady’s Book* (August 1863): 191; Lawrence,

Although mother songs enjoyed some popularity among soldiers, their primary audience was women. The two most popular, “Rock Me to Sleep, Mother” and Root’s “Just Before the Battle, Mother,” exemplified this trend by portraying soldiers – overtly in the former and ostensibly in the latter – coping with the hardships and brutality of war by thinking of their mothers. Root’s self-described attempt to convey “the condition and thoughts of a soldier on the eve of an engagement” idealized its subject as thinking only of his devotion to his mother and his country before battle. “Rock Me to Sleep, Mother” takes the concept even further by having its speaker wish he could “be a child again” and thereby return to a state of innocence. In so doing, these songs comforted civilians by portraying soldiers as idealized figures whose love of family and country took precedence over baser concerns, including survival. Such was the opinion of New York’s *Musical Review and Musical World* when it commented, “where motherhood, the source of all that is pure and good in this world, is constantly appealed to, there must be strength and moral fortitude in a nation.”⁴⁵

Songs about mothers complemented a large group of Civil War pieces about death. These songs typically described supposedly true scenes of soldiers dying on battlefields. A large portion centered on the subject’s last words of devotion to his family or country. Taking their cue from the English poem and Hutchinson standard, “Bingen on the Rhine,” songs such as

Music for Patriots, 402; “Popular Songs,” *National Tribune* (October 29 1881): 6. Americans sang “The Girl I Left Behind Me” in both the Revolution and the Mexican War but its roots go back to the British Isles. Ironically, “Lorena” was written by a northerner and first published in the North but wartime southern audiences were the first to fully embrace it.

⁴⁵ “Popular Music,” 41; Thomas Smith to Col. Christopher Quarles Tompkins, July 23, 1863, Tompkins Family Papers, Section 24, Folder 2, Virginia Historical Society; January 23, 1864, Diary, Sarah Lois Wadley Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 136; Florence Percy and J. H. Hewitt, “Rock Me to Sleep, Mother” (Columbia, SC: Julian A. Shelby, n. d.); “Our War Songs,” *Musical Review and Musical World*, 374. “Rock Me to Sleep, Mother” was actually an antebellum poem and was set to music by several authors during the Civil War.

Sawyer's often revised "Who Will Care for Mother, Now," Foster's "Give This to Mother," and Root's "Lay Me Down and Save the Flag" continued the trend of portraying soldiers as selfless and patriotic even when facing death. The ideal of soldier innocence appeared in a series of songs portraying the courage and subsequent demise of drummer boys. The most popular of these was William Shakespeare Hays' "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh," but there was also a "Drummer Boy of Vicksburg" and a "Drummer Boy of Antietam" along with several others such as "The Dying Drummer" and "For the Dear Old Flag I Die."⁴⁶

However, the two most popular death songs of the war, "All Quiet Along the Potomac, Tonight" and Root's "The Vacant Chair," presented a more negative image of death than in similar pieces. Based on a poem by Henry Washburn Stevenson, of Boston, "The Vacant Chair" described a family mourning the absence of a loved one at the dinner table. Rather than affirming the patriotic responsibilities of the fallen soldier, as in so many other songs, "The Vacant Chair's" final verse only offered the ambiguous lines:

True, they tell us wreaths of glory
Ever more will deck his brow,
But this soothes the anguish only,
Sweeping o'er our heartstrings now

⁴⁶ *Godey's Lady's Book* (August 1863): 191; Goolrick, "He Didn't Like 'Dixie!'" 5; Judson I. Hutchinson, "'Bingen on the Rhine': A Soldier of the Legion" (Macon, GA: J. C. Schreiner & Son, n. d.); *Our War Songs, North and South*, 14; Henry F. Randolph, ed., *Fifty Years of English Song: Selections of the Poets from the Reign of Victoria* (New York, NY: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1887), 137-140; Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 137; C. C. Sawyer and C. F. Thompson, "Who Will Care For Mother Now" (Brooklyn, NY: Sawyer & Thompson, 1863); Will Shakespeare Hays, "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh" (Louisville, KY: D. P. Faulds, 1862); Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 174; *Musical Review and Musical World* 15 (May 7 1864): 152; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 12, 27, 120. The "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh" went through at least twenty northern editions plus several southern editions. For a thorough examination of the Civil War preoccupation with death see: Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008). She briefly discusses death music on page 13.

“All Quiet Along the Potomac, Tonight” presented an even bleaker portrayal of war by describing the unseen death of a picket guard from a random bullet. Like many other dying soldiers in music, his last thoughts are of his sweetheart but the author, northern poet Ethel Lynn Beers, joined Stevenson in offering no patriotic words of comfort for the listener. John Hill Hewitt’s 1863 musical setting became the most popular of the war and Root’s rendition of “The Vacant Chair” appeared later that same year. The popularity and late publication of both these songs approximated the peace songs produced by later American wars and represented the country’s growing war-weariness during the conflict’s last two years.⁴⁷

Despite the immense popularity of patriotic and sentimental music, other genres were able to thrive during the conflict. Throughout the antebellum period, minstrel songs were extremely popular, especially in northern cities. Stephen Foster made his reputation writing such pieces and, by 1861, several other minstrel songwriters had firmly established their reputations. The central role of African Americans in the Civil War affected the genre significantly but minstrel songwriters and performers adapted so well that they remained successful and were able to make their songs widely popular in the South for the first time.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Herbert L. Jilson, “An Unwritten Chapter in Massachusetts Geography: ‘The Vacant Chair’ The Hero and Author of the Song,” *New England Magazine* 22 (April 1897): 131, 133; George Frederick Root, “The Vacant Chair” (Chicago, IL: Root & Cady, 1864); Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 128-130; Lawrence, *Music for Patriots*, 400; N. Lee Orr, “John Hill Hewitt: Bard of the Confederacy,” *American Musical Research Center Journal* 4 (1994): 64; “The Vacant Chair,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (October 1863): 106-107. Washburn visited Root in Chicago shortly after “The Vacant Chair’s” publication to ask for royalties but Root refused to give him any because his name had not appeared in the newspaper that had originally published the poem, the *Worcester Spy*. Subsequent editions of the song acknowledged Washburn by putting his initials on the cover but the absence of his full name allowed Root to continue denying royalties. Jilson, “Unwritten Chapter,” 143. There has been considerable debate since the Civil War over Beers’s authorship of “All Quiet Along the Potomac, Tonight,” with southerners claiming that a Confederate soldier named Lamar Fontaine wrote it.

⁴⁸ Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 218; Robert Toll, *Blackening Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1974), 105; Faust,

Religious music was long dominant before the Civil War and only became more so as the conflict progressed, especially in the armies. Many soldiers collected small hymn books with as much enthusiasm as they did songsters containing secular melodies. Traditional hymns, especially “Old Hundred” and “Nearer My God to Thee,” were the most popular during the war but some songwriters attempted to create more topical lyrics for traditional hymns, with varying degrees of success. For instance, the chaplain of the First Rhode Island Cavalry rewrote several religious songs, such as this revision of “Pleyel’s Hymn:”

Break each false Confederate league;
Breathe success round Freedom’s flag;
Law and love on earth enthrone, -
All the praise shall be thine own.

Or this adaptation of “Greenville,”

Mighty Ruler, all commanding,
Reigning on thy heavenly throne,
Forth to earth Thy spirit sending,
Winning conquests for Thy Son,
Lead our armies
Till rebellion be cast down.⁴⁹

However, these pairings of nationalism and religious fervor were usually limited to the author’s immediate circle, while the nation’s traditional hymns retained their preeminent place.

These four genres of popular music were so dominant during the Civil War that other more respected forms declined. In particular, Americans almost completely lost interest in “art” or “operatic” music – commonly called classical music today. Although it is difficult to gauge if parlor performances of classical music declined, it is clear that public performances suffered

Creation of Confederate Nationalism, 65. A more thorough discussion of minstrelsy during the Civil War can be found in Chapter 6.

⁴⁹ Frederic Denison, *Sabers and Spurs: The First Regiment Rhode Island Cavalry in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Central Falls, RI: E. L. Freeman, 1876), 470, 472.

greatly, especially during the first year of the war.⁵⁰ The effects of this decline were not as widely felt in the South, where theater had not exactly flourished, at least outside of New Orleans, but in the North, especially New York, the war created such a sharp decline in attendance that some venues were forced to close.

Immediately after the attack on Fort Sumter, performers, both popular and classical, began canceling concerts. Even the Hutchinsons removed several shows from their schedule for fear that the excitement caused by the outbreak of war would keep audiences at home and by early May the New York *Herald* complained that “in these days of war’s alarms people do not care to patronize theatres. There is too much real living excitement surrounding us . . . to render it desirable to seek factitious excitement in opera, theater, or concert ball.” Although more popular performers eventually recovered, classical musicians and venues continued to suffer. Several theaters and music academies were forced to close over the spring and summer of 1861 and by the end of August only four of New York’s venues remained in partial operation. By October, even the Academy of Music was facing the possibility of closure and managed to remain open only by staging several well-publicized benefits. However, at the end of the year, attendance again plummeted and the Academy of Music was temporarily closed, causing newspaper editor Frank Leslie to report that “astonishment is often expressed at the general inability of our first class theatres and opera-houses to support themselves” and worried that European observers would view this as evidence of America’s cultural inferiority.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Vera Brodsky Lawrence, ed., *Strong on Music: Repercussions, 1857-1862* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 435.

⁵¹ Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 376; New York *Herald*, May 13, October 7, 11, 18, 28, November 18, 1861; Richmond *Dispatch*, July 15, August 16, 1861; Frank Leslie’s *Illustrated Newspaper*, December 14, 1861.

Reporters reasoned that this was not just because of war excitement. Declining tourism, women's preoccupation with the conflict, men's departure to the front, and even an increased sense of egalitarianism were blamed. Closer to the point was the New York *Herald's* observation that "the music of the orchestra" had given way to "the spirit-stirring drum and ear piercing fife." Renowned opera singer Clara Louise Kellogg agreed, recalling, "Martial songs of all kinds were the order of the day and all more classic music was relegated to the background for the time being." Americans were worried about, interested in, and excited by the war and they wanted their entertainment to reflect these feelings. The highly emotional, patriotic, and accessible music of authors such as Root and Sawyer filled the public demand for music better than Ludwig Van Beethoven or Giuseppe Verdi ever could.⁵²

Classical music performers understood this, even if some critics never did. After a performance in St. Louis in April 1862, Louis Moreau Gottschalk grew angry when the wife of a judge told him that "I was deficient in charm, that my music was too learned . . . that I ought to play more national airs," and began to consider changing his repertoire. Kellogg was more receptive, understanding that the public had little interest in opera but "went to the opera house to hear popular singers and familiar airs," her troupe began performing Gaetano Donizetti's opera, "The Daughter of the Regiment," and emphasized its already martial tone by including "all sorts of military business and bugle calls, and altogether contrived to create a warlike atmosphere." She recalled how "we were barbarous enough to put in sundry American national airs" but, despite these uncivilized elements, the opera was successful and "audiences cheered

⁵² New York *Herald*, May 13, July 15, October 19, 1861; Clara Louise Kellogg, *Memoirs of an American Prima Donna* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 61.

and cried and let themselves go in the hysterical manner of people wrought up by great national excitements.” She later learned that her performances had even motivated some men to enlist.⁵³

By 1863, Gottschalk, too, came around. In a less direct appeal to public tastes, he composed a new piece called “The Union,” which incorporated elements of Root’s “The Battle Cry of Freedom” and usually received tremendous applause from audience members, including Lincoln during an 1864 concert in Washington. The piece became so popular that Root and Cady published Gottschalk’s variations on “The Battle Cry of Freedom” and had three hundred orders for the song before it even went to print. Nevertheless, Gottschalk continued to have problems with audiences craving music that better related to their wartime experiences. He noted that, during one performance, an audience member complained constantly that “I have not heard one tune” and, during another, two women in the front row had only remained for the performance because “Home, Sweet Home” was on the program.⁵⁴

As with Kellogg and Gottschalk, most classical music performers realized that to entertain and draw crowds they would have to incorporate popular war music into their repertoires. An advertisement for a concert by the Musical Society of Rockport, Ohio, promised that the program was “of a character that cannot fail to give delight to all who appreciate ‘artistic’ as well as what is called ‘popular music.’” Similarly, an examination of the repertoires of brass bands attached to regiments and brigades in the army shows a broad mix of genres. One soldier happily informed *The Liberator* that the band of the Thirty-Third Massachusetts, one of the best in the Union Army, “are playing operatic and national airs” and a Union chaplain recalled that the bands would play pieces by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Verdi

⁵³ Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, 60; Kellogg, *Memoirs*, 56-58, 80.

⁵⁴ Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, 66-67, 128, 170-171, 210-211; Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 345; Carder, *George F. Root*, 119. “The Union” also included elements of “The Star Spangled Banner,” “Hail Columbia,” and “Yankee Doodle.”

“interblended . . . with the universal favorites of the soldier” like “Home, Sweet Home” and “The Girl I Left Behind Me.”⁵⁵

In 1861, the most famous and respected military band in the country, the Marine Band, reluctantly incorporated traditional airs such as “Yankee Doodle” and “The Star Spangled Banner” into their Wednesday and Sunday evening concerts. However, this was not enough for many civilian observers, who began complaining to newspapers and politicians that the band needed to play more patriotic music. These complaints became so pronounced that, on July 11, 1863, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles ordered the Marine Band “to give us more martial and national music.” When John Nicolay, Lincoln’s secretary, told Welles that this was a mistake because he “wanted more finished music to cultivate and refine the popular taste,” Welles “told him I was not proficient, but his refined music . . . was insipid to most of our fighting men.” Welles concluded by arguing, “Marital music and not operatic airs are best adapted to all.” Despite Nicolay’s objections, the new repertoire was a huge success, causing

⁵⁵ Boston *Daily Advertiser*, July 3, 1861; *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, August 8, 1863; Lawrence W. Levine, “The Musical Odyssey of an American Historian,” *Music and History: Bridging the Disciplines*, edited by Jeffrey H. Jackson and Stanley C. Palkey (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2005): 16; Milwaukee *Morning Sentinel*, June 11, 1861; Philadelphia *North American and United States Gazette*, September 17, 1861; Stoddard, *Inside the White House*, 73; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, November 2, 1861; Francis Henry Buffum, *A Memorial of the Great Rebellion: Being a History of the Fourteenth Regiment New-Hampshire Volunteers, Covering its Three Years of Service, with Original Sketches of Army Life, 1862-1865* (Boston, MA: Rand, Avery, & Company, 1882), 307; William Alfred Bufkin, “Union Bands of the Civil War: (1862-1865): Instrumentation and Score Analysis” (Ph. D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1973), 292-293, 298-300, 321, 336-337; J. A. Leinbach and Donald McCorkle, *Regiment Band of the Twenty-Sixth North Carolina* (Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Music Foundation, 1958), 234-236; Music Books 33rd Indiana Infantry. Manuscript Department, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; *Port Royal Band Books* (1864); Elias Nason, *A Monogram On Our National Song* (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1869), 61; *Liberator*, April 7, 1865.

Lincoln to remark during one performance that he could not hear the band over the constant cheering.⁵⁶

However, Nicolay was not alone in his opposition to the wartime dominance of popular music. The Boston-based, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, frequently lamented that America's musical taste was deteriorating. As early as February 1861, the magazine complained that audiences too often demanded popular music be played along with classical pieces, arguing that this indicated "the mass of people remain children, intellectually and morally." As the population's appetite for popular music increased, so too did the magazine's campaign against it. A September 1862, article warned that the war was not encouraging classical music but was only producing a "steady flow of clap-trap pieces . . . in obedience to the demand of an enthusiastic and capricious public." A review of the "Jubilee Concert" held in Boston on January 1, 1863, lauded the program for containing only music that was "in the highest sense of Art" and observed, "those, who thought there could not be a patriotic utterance or celebration without 'National Airs' . . . forgot their wish as the grand music carried them along."⁵⁷

Others echoed these sentiments. The Charleston *Mercury* praised the regimental band of the Eighth Louisiana for playing primarily classical music while holding Manassas Junction. A Union soldier lamented how, in the army, "the pure and elevating influence of music is lost . . . the music of . . . the brass band, and the songs sung in camp are not at all remarkable for beauty

⁵⁶ *Daily Cleveland Herald*, October 15, 1861; *New York Herald*, April 30, 1861; George J. Svejda, *History of the Star Spangled Banner from 1814 to the Present* (Washington, DC: Division of History: Office of Archaeology and Historical Preservation, 1969), 191; *Washington National Intelligencer*, April 30, 1861; Kenneth A. Bernard, *Lincoln and the Music of the Civil War* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1966), 235, 241; *New York Times*, June 8, 1862; Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy Under Lincoln and Johnson*, edited by Howard K. Beale (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1960), I, 368.

⁵⁷ "Popular Concerts," *Dwight's Journal of Music* 18 (February 9 1861): 367; "The Relation of the War to Music," *Dwight's Journal of Music* 21 (September 20 1862): 196; "The Jubilee Concert," *Dwight's Journal of Music* 22 (January 10 1863): 327.

and purity.” Even in February 1865, with the Union army at their doorstep, the Richmond *Dispatch* took the time to praise local sheet music publisher Davies & Sons for offering “publications well worthy a place in a lady’s music book” instead of “that vulgar, many-colored and highly-ornamented” music sold by their competitors.⁵⁸

Regardless of the ferocity of such complaints, they only reflected the opinions of a small circle of critics and patricians. Most northerners and southerners continued to be swept away by the war’s flood of patriotic, sentimental, minstrel, and religious songs. With songwriters busily writing new pieces to suit a variety of wartime moods and ideas, great armies moving across the nation to spread them, and a population eager to consume them, Civil War music entered nearly every facet of American life. Even though most were not great successes, each composition likely served some function in American society or culture. As Root said of his own productions, “only a few had an extended use and popularity, but none was entirely useless.”⁵⁹ However, of the most popular offerings of the war, none provided more resonance and meaning than the patriotic anthems adopted by each side.

⁵⁸ Charleston *Mercury*, September 19, 1861; Oliver Wilcox Norton, *Army Letters, 1861-1865* (Chicago, IL: 1903), 43; Richmond *Dispatch*, February 14, 1865.

⁵⁹ Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 137.

CHAPTER 2

JOHN BROWNS AND BATTLE CRIES: THE PATRIOTIC SONGS OF THE UNION

A Hint to Poets.

Showing How to Make a War Song

The air is glad with bannered life
And gay with pomp of stripes and stars!
(Here, for the rhyme, you'll mention "strife,"
And happily allude to "Mars.")
A nation musters to the field,
Truth to maintain and wrong to right!
(Here promise that the foe shall yield,
And promise it with all your might.)

Rebellion rears its rampant head,
And Hate lets loose the dogs of war,
(Here speak about the "gory bed"
Where heroes are provided for.)
But while the hearts of freemen beat,
And while their hands can wield the sword –
(Describe them pouring "leaden sleet,"
And falling on the "traitor horde.")

God's lightning rifts the battle's gloom!
The souls of heroes lead us on!
(Here touch on Vernon's sacred tomb,
And bones of glorious Washington.)
The listening nations hold their breath,
And guardian angels throng the sky –
(Here talk of "Liberty or Death,"
And say "we conquer or we die.")

The destinies of all the race
Hang on the issue of the hour;
(Here give considerable space
To sneers at royal pomp and power.)
For in the West is Freedom's star,
And in the West is Freedom's crown;

(Here say that sceptres near and far,
As also thrones, must tumble down.)

For, face to face and hand to hand,
We'll beat the dastard traitors back;
(Allude here to "our native land,"
And, by the way, to "glory's track.")
Till once again from sea to sea
Our starry Flag shall proudly fly!
(Here well "the anthem of the free,"
And don't forget to swell it high.)

And when at last the foot of Truth
Has crushed Rebellion's serpent head,
(Here somehow you must speak of "youth,"
Though any rhyme will do instead.)
She'll hurl her lightning from the sun
And break the chains of all the world!
(And that will do – for all is done
When once the lightning's safely hurled.)

Vanity Fair
March 8, 1862.⁶⁰

Despite the abundance of sentimental songs produced during the war, patriotic pieces enjoyed greater popularity. Although few were successful, those that became favorites remained so throughout the conflict. Of course, there were already several popular American anthems in 1861 and neither northerners nor southerners forgot them – although some tried. In fact, the war's new patriotic songs largely reflected each region's devotion to the nation's traditional numbers. Southerners rejected the old anthems and songwriters were encouraged to create new ones that better represented the character and ideology of the Confederacy but the North had no such need for musical independence. As a result, northern patriotic songs were more grounded in the events and issues of the war itself.

⁶⁰ "A Hint to Poets: Showing How to Make a War Song," *Vanity Fair* 5 (March 8 1862): 123.

These new patriotic songs served two purposes. On the surface, they reflected the nation's emotional and ideological responses to the war. However, they also helped shape those responses. Patriotic songs crystallized the performer's and listener's feelings and opinions about the war. In some cases, repeated exposure to a song could even reshape opinions. Songwriters were aware of this, and some, such as George Frederick Root, would purposefully imbue their songs with political content. Non-professionals also understood the persuasive power of music and chose which songs to perform or purchase according to their beliefs as well as their tastes. In the North, these trends were especially apparent, as northern patriotic music largely reflected the ongoing conflict over the war's meaning and course.

In 1860, the United States of America had five nationally recognized unofficial anthems: "Yankee Doodle;" "Hail Columbia;" "The Star Spangled Banner;" "America" (popularly known as "My Country 'Tis of Thee"); and "Columbia, Gem of the Ocean" (commonly referred to as "Red, White, and Blue"). Although these songs were sometimes played together, Americans tended to relegate each of them to different contexts and purposes. "Hail Columbia" was preferred at government functions or military events and was more often played by a band than sung. "The Star Spangled Banner" was always included in flag ceremonies and usually performed instrumentally. "America" was reserved for solemn religious or patriotic events. "Yankee Doodle" was the colloquial selection because of its cheerful melody and largely nonsensical lyrics, making it more of a popular favorite. "Red, White, and Blue" also found

more favor with the public than at official ceremonies but lacked “Yankee Doodle’s” colonial and revolutionary associations.⁶¹

Confederate rejection of these anthems only increased northern reverence for them and all five were frequently performed during the war. As early as January 1861, a Philadelphia audience “spontaneously burst forth with deafening cheers” following a performance of “Hail Columbia” and “The Star Spangled Banner.” As one reporter remarked, “It is evident that our national music is as much loved in this latitude now as at any former period of our history, however unpopular it may have become in some other quarters of the Republic.” A Kansas reporter added that America’s anthems were vital for motivating soldiers. “We hope the lesson they will get will teach them that the Star Spangled Banner had not lost all its power to nerve and

⁶¹ For examples of “Hail Columbia” being played by bands at formal events see: A. M. Keiley, *In Vinculis: or, The Prisoner of War, Being the Experience of a Rebel in Two Federal Pens, Interspersed with Reminiscences of the Great War, Anecdotes of Southern Generals, etc.* (Petersburg, VA: “Daily Index” Office, 1866), 160; Richmond *Dispatch*, September 24, 1864; George Templeton Strong, *Diary* (New York, NY: MacMillan, 1952), III, 121. For a reference to it as the national anthem see: Jane Grey Cannon Swisshelm and Arthur J. Larsen, *Crusader and Feminist: Letters of Jane Grey Swisshelm, 1858-1865* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1934), 204. For contemporary defenses of “Yankee Doodle” as a viable anthem see: New Hampshire *Statesman*, January 26, 1861; New York *Herald*, July 29, 1861. “Yankee Doodle’s” origins are uncertain but its tune was definitely of European origin and was likely brought to America during the Seven Years’ War. “Hail Columbia” was written by Joseph Hopkinson in 1798, although the melody was already widely known as “The President’s March.” “The Star Spangled Banner” was written by Francis Scott Key in 1814. “America” was first published in 1832 by Lowell Mason and “Red, White, and Blue” was published in 1843. Louis Albert Banks, ed., *Immortal Songs of Camp and Field: The Story of Their Inspiration Together with Striking Anecdotes Connected with Their History* (Cleveland, OH: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1898), 44-47, 70; Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 231. “Yankee Doodle,” “Hail Columbia,” and “The Star Spangled Banner” were all played at Lincoln’s inauguration and on military celebrations of Washington’s Birthday. Boston *Daily Advertiser*, March 7, 1862; Leander Winslow Cogswell, *A History of the Eleventh New Hampshire Regiment, Volunteer Infantry in the Rebellion War, 1861-1865* (Concord, NH: Republican Press Association, 1891), 164; Svejda, *History of the Star Spangled Banner*, 166.

inspire” he wrote, adding that “Yankee Doodle” was just as powerful in 1861 “as it was when Cornwallis marched forth from Yorktown to its inspiring music.”⁶²

The traditional anthem that benefited most from these repeated performances was “The Star Spangled Banner” because the war fostered so many public displays of devotion to the flag. Early in the war, *Dwight’s Journal of Music* reflected, “It would be difficult to say how many times we have heard [“The Star Spangled Banner”], the best of our national airs, within the last two weeks; at concerts, declaimed with fiery energy by accomplished singers, in the streets and in the public meetings by the sonorous tones of brass bands, often sung in spontaneous chorus by all who had heart to feel or a voice to sing.” The article continued, “It has met us everywhere, and everywhere it is heard with a loyal enthusiasm and earnest excitement that proves that there is something in it, something that had, perhaps, been overlooked and not sufficiently appreciated.” Other magazines and newspapers agreed.⁶³

Although the title and chorus of “The Star Spangled Banner” focused on the flag, the lyrics described the British assault on Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. This portrayal of a fort under siege with the flag flying over it would have struck a chord with northerners in 1861, because of the attack on Fort Sumter. In fact, “The Star Spangled Banner” had been the first song played by Major Robert Anderson’s men when they moved into the fort. On the home-front, news of the war’s first engagement frequently resulted in spontaneous performances of the anthem. In some instances plays were even interrupted so the actors could sing it with the audience. After Fort Sumter’s surrender, a music publisher in Rochester, New York, began offering free copies of “The Star Spangled Banner” and two weeks later a four-page color

⁶² Philadelphia *Press*, January 17, 1861; *Freedom’s Champion*, June 15, 1861.

⁶³ “The Star-Spangled Banner,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music* 19 (May 4 1861): 39; “Influence of the War on Music,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (September 1864): 88; *Albion* 39 (June 1 1861): 259.

version was sold at cost for use in New York schools. Various other editions were published during the first year of fighting, including a translation for German soldiers in the army.⁶⁴

With “The Star-Spangled Banner” waving its way even into church services, some observers began to wonder if its lyrics adequately expressed the North’s wartime sentiments. Most noteworthy, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., decided to add a verse. These new lyrics first appeared in the *Boston Evening Transcript* shortly after the fall of Fort Sumter and later in *Dwight’s Journal of Music*. Holmes’ new verse surfaced in print occasionally over the course of the war and featured typical rhetoric about preserving America’s heritage and protecting its flag against traitors:

When our land is illumined with liberty’s smile,
If a foe from within strike a blow at her glory,
Down, down with the traitor who dares to defile
The flag of her stars and the page of her story!
By the millions unchained who their birthright have gained
We will keep her bright blazon forever unstained;
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
While the land of the free is the home of the brave.

Similar rewrites were attempted over the course of the war but none attained even the modest success of Holmes’ new verse.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Abner Doubleday, *Reminiscences of Forts Sumter and Moultrie in 1860-’61* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1876), 71; *New York Herald*, February 5, 23, April 14, 24 1861; Svejda, *History of the Star Spangled Banner*, 170, 174; *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, April 29, 1861; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, May 28, 1861; *Godey’s Lady’s Book* (February 1862): 202; *Musical Review and Musical World* 7 (March 30 1861): 77; *Musical Review and Musical World* 7 (May 25 1861): 125; *New Englander* 19 (October 1861): 952; *Christian Advocate and Journal* 36 (May 9 1861): 5.

⁶⁵ *Boston Investigator*, May 29, 1861; *Richmond Dispatch*, May 22, 1861; Louis C. Elson, ed., *The National Music of America and its Sources* (Boston, MA: The Page Company, 1899), 241; Banks, *Immortal Songs*, 59-60; Svejda, *History of the Star Spangled Banner*, 174; *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, 19 (May 4 1861): 37. *Dwight’s* misprinted Holmes’ lyrics and had to include the corrected version in its next issue. “The Star Spangled Banner,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music* 19 (May 11 1861): 46. The only other version that was occasionally reprinted was that of abolitionist Edna Dean Proctor and musician J. P. Webster, although it also altered the melody of

Other northerners shared Holmes' concerns that America's traditional anthems were not adequate for the travails of the war. Like their Confederate counterparts, some favored a new anthem modeled after France's "Marseillaise" or Britain's "God Save the King." Of these critics, the most significant was the Committee for a New National Hymn, formed in New York in May 1861. The Committee's thirteen members asserted that the patriotic fervor unleashed by the war should produce an anthem superior to anything yet written. To this end, they offered a reward of \$500 (or \$250 for lyrics alone) for a "national hymn" that expressed the principles of American nationalism clearly and elegantly. Although the Committee's benefactor remained obscure, its membership was surprisingly illustrious – including prominent politicians, literary figures, and businessmen.⁶⁶

The Committee explained its purpose in the *New York Times*: "A National Hymn seems almost as indispensable an appendage of nationality, as a national flag." Such a song "both expresses national sentiment and excites it." The Committee dismissed America's traditional anthems: "Yankee Doodle" lacked any of "the qualifications of a national air" and its lyrics were "ludicrous;" "Hail Columbia" was too serious; and "The Star-Spangled Banner . . . though a

the original. Beadle and Adams, *Beadle's Dime Union Songbook: Comprising New and Popular Patriotic Songs for the Times* (New York, NY: Beadle and Company, 1861), 14; *Godey's Lady's Book* 64 (March 1862): 302.

⁶⁶ The Committee imposed other restrictions: the song could not reference current events; it had to have a chorus; it could not be shorter than 16 lines or longer than 40, etc. In addition, the committee originally offered \$250 for just music without lyrics but later withdrew the offer after being attacked by music critics for considering the possibility of an anthem without words. The members of the committee were: Luther Bradish, John R. Brodhead, J. J. Cisco, George William Curtis, John A. Dix, Hamilton Fish, M. H. Grinnell, Charles King, Arthur Leary, Maunsell B. Field, George Templeton Strong, Gulian C. Verplanck, and Richard Grant White. White appears to have known the identity of the committee's patron but would only state that "the notion of thus calling for a national hymn, I know did not even originate with any member of the committee, but with an intelligent gentleman whose warm patriotic feeling led him to be active in the matter." Strong had no idea who appointed him to the Committee. "\$500 for a National Hymn," *Musical Review and Musical World* 12 (May 25 1861): 122; White, *National Hymns*, 61-62, 66; *New York Herald*, June 23, 1861; Strong, *Diary*, III, 142.

noble and spirited air,” suffered from a melody that was difficult to sing and lyrics that were hard to remember. They acknowledged the “The Star Spangled Banner’s” recent boost in popularity but lamented that, when it was performed at public rallies, the audience could only “stand mute while [it] was sung as a solo or played by a band.” Any new anthem needed to be easily sung with lyrics that inspired patriotism. The Committee admitted that “under ordinary circumstances such a call would be almost ridiculous . . . but the circumstances of the present time are very extraordinary.”⁶⁷

Few northerners, however, shared these sentiments. After all, a national anthem could not simply be “written to order.” As the *New York Times* pointed out, “The deep, earnest, exalted, passionate patriotism of a poet that will give expression to the soul of our people . . . is not born of money, nor called forth by advertising in the columns of the newspapers.” *The Albion* dismissed the Committee as “insane” and complained, “The better class of composers will not think of competing for so paltry a prize.” Several critics defended America’s existing anthems, especially “The Star Spangled Banner,” arguing that it was not nearly as difficult to perform as the Committee claimed.⁶⁸

Other critics questioned the Committee’s ability to objectively evaluate potential anthems. The *New York Herald* pondered, “What judgment upon poetry and music the members of the [Committee] are capable of pronouncing we are unable to say, and what induced them ever to assume the position they did is equally unknown, and, to us, inexplicable.” The *New York Times* facetiously suggested that along with advertising for patriotic songs, the Committee should also have sought “a fast reader, who could peruse in a week all the pieces

⁶⁷ *New York Times*, May 18, 1861.

⁶⁸ “\$500 for a National Hymn,” 123; *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 23 (October 1861): 706; *New York Times* July 6, 1861; *Albion* 39 (June 1 1861): 259; *New York Herald*, June 23, 1861.

offered in competition . . . and select infallibly what the nation would approve and adopt.” Even Confederates were dismissive. The Richmond *Dispatch* snidely observed that when northerners needed a new anthem “true to their instincts, they offer a sum of money for it. . . . The ‘Almighty Dollar’ is everything with them. If that is left out, there is nothing to make a song about.”⁶⁹

Remarkably, the Committee’s own members apparently had little hope for success. George Templeton Strong clearly viewed his involvement as absurd. After reading the Committee’s announcement in the *Times*, Strong paraphrased it: “Wanted, by the American Nation, a Marseillaise. Any poet having one to dispose of will please apply to, etc.” With his usual hauteur, he decided that since the other committee members were so noteworthy, at least “I shall be ridiculous in decent company.” Even Richard Grant White, the Committee’s staunchest defender, later recalled that, although the other members “heartily consented to serve . . . not one of them expressed any confidence in the success of the undertaking.”⁷⁰

Despite doubts shared by committee members and critics, there was a surprising number of submissions – some from abroad. By the end of June, the Committee had received 1,275 potential anthems and refused to accept any more. Of the many songwriters participating, some apparently possessed absolute confidence in their success. One remarked that he “cannot conceive of anything more suitable” than his potential anthem and another unabashedly asserted, “The tune . . . will swell out like majestic thunder through the keys of an organ and move the heart of devotion by its melody.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ New York *Herald*, July 29, 1861; New York *Times*, July 6, 1861; Richmond *Dispatch*, September 5, 1861.

⁷⁰ Strong, *Diary*, III, 161; White, *National Hymns*, 62.

⁷¹ Elson, *National Music of America*, 249; White, *National Hymns*, 67, 148-149; Strong, *Diary*, III, 163; *Dwight’s Journal of Music* (June 29 1861): 101.

Despite the large number of entries, the Committee was able to disregard most of them quickly. On June 22 alone, they went through a full third of the songs. Only the first three lines of many entries were read before, as Strong described it, they “were consigned to the great rubbish bin.” In fact, as the rest of the entries were reviewed, this bin was filled no less than five times and its contents used for oven fuel. Strong remarked that because “this committee is responsible for an enormous bulk of commonplace, watery versification” it was a good thing that so much “of the trash is already consumed with fire.” White, too, was horrified by the poor quality of the entries, recalling “the sins against good taste in a literary point of view were numberless; many of the songs being . . . only one monstrous crime in four acts, being four stanzas.” In fact, many of the submissions were so unbelievably poor that committee members began saving the worst for a published compilation.⁷²

Disappointment over the quality of the submissions sapped the Committee’s already limited enthusiasm and little progress was made through the rest of June and July. In August, a widely reprinted New York *Times* article complained that the Committee was taking too much time and observed how “impatience is manifesting itself in many quarters for the announcement of the expected award.” By this time, however, the selection process was almost complete. The Committee had narrowed the field to thirty songs, and a second reading reduced it to twenty.⁷³

Unable to choose a winner, the members decided to hold a concert featuring each of the twenty remaining songs and let the public make the selection. But after numerous complaints from the press that such an effort would create more problems than it would solve, the Committee abandoned the idea and, on August 9, announced that none of the submissions were

⁷² Strong, *Diary*, III, 161-162; White, *National Hymns*, 67, 113; New York *Times*, July 28, 1861.

⁷³ New York *Times*, July 28, 1861; White, *National Hymns*, 68.

worthy of the \$500 prize. This outraged several participants and some threatened lawsuits. One went so far as to hold a concert in October to showcase his song but this generated little interest. The press adopted a more bemused attitude toward the Committee's failure. One *Vanity Fair* article sarcastically lamented that "among the army of poets and poetasters in this 'land of the free' . . . not one could be found capable of meeting the expectations and critical judgment of so admirable a constituted Committee." The magazine then offered its own cliché-ridden submission. The first verse of which read:

Of all the broad lands on this beautiful Earth,
And all the fair islands that smile in the Sea,
No spot is so dear as the land of our birth,
No country so noble, no people so free!
We are freemen, and mighty through Freedom alone,
United by ties that no tyrant can sever;
The State may be shaken, but never o'erthrown,
It shall stand in its grandeur forever!⁷⁴

Most of the final twenty submissions contained similar images and sentiments. Almost all displayed reverence for the nation's natural beauty, as in this example, which related America's landscape to its ideology:

Our Native Land – our Native Land –
Land dear to every heart!
They breath free air, they proudly stand,
Who but of thee have part!
'Tis not broad plains, or skies so clear,
Or mountains high and grand:
'Tis liberty that makes so dear,
Our own blest Native Land!

Of course, the flag also received its share of praise, as in the following, which raised it to a religious level:

Wave, wave forever,

⁷⁴ White, *National Hymns*, 66, 80; *New York Times*, July 28, 1861; *New York Herald*, July 29, October 28, 1861 "Our National Song," *Vanity Fair* 4 (August 24 1861): 89.

Flag of our might!
God for our banner,
Freedom and Right!
Amen! Amen!

Others disobeyed the committee's rule against mentioning current events, such as the following piece, which anticipated President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address by placing northern victory in a global historical context:

We are brothers; and we know
That our Union is a tower,
When the fiercest whirlwinds blow,
And the darkest tempests lower!
We shall sweep the land and sea,
While we march, in Union, great,
Thirty millions of the free
With the steady step of fate!
Brothers then, in Union, strong,
Let us ever lead the van,
As the nation's sweep along,
To fulfill the hopes of man!

These lines also reflected a common complaint by committee members that although many submissions were lyrically excellent, they were impossible to set to music.⁷⁵

The compilation of comically bad submissions never appeared but White included several of them in his published account of the committee's efforts, *National Hymns: How They Are Written and How They are Not Written*. Most were noteworthy for their poor use of language, absurd metaphors, or lack of effort, as in one song that merely set the Declaration of Independence to music. However, even if these examples lacked the lyrical proficiency of their more eloquent counterparts, they used much of the same imagery, such as the following, which praised the flag and the Constitution:

Then all hail Constitution – thy Sperit we'll keep
For thy starspangled banner – it never will sleep.

⁷⁵ White, *National Hymns*, 81, 88, 91-92, 98-100.

Even more ignored the committee's ban on discussing current events. Several attacked the Confederacy, such as in the following, which used the melody of the Hutchinson Family's "The Old Granite State:"

What had caused this great commotion
Through our land and through our Ocean,
Tis Jeff. Davis and his boasting
Band of secession men;
We would like to give him powder,
We would like to give him powder,
We would like to give him powder,
And blow him out the land.

Or this more succinct declaration:

All hail our country great,
May she never falter;
But every darn Secessionist
Be hung up by a halter.⁷⁶

The Committee's critics repeatedly pointed out that an anthem could not be purchased but instead had to be the product of spontaneous inspiration, preferably from an obscure author. The *New York World* worried that the Committee placed too high a value on lyrical excellence, noting that some of the best anthems from other countries possessed lyrics "rarely above mediocrity, sometimes far below it. But they will be almost invariably found to express or suggest some strong sentiment common to the people by whom they are sung." The article concluded, "The public mind is in a condition now to accept with enthusiasm" a new anthem that expressed their principles and love of country, adding, "much imagination they will not insist upon; on the contrary, it would be rather an objection in words, intended for all lips." Even White later reflected that "the most gifted poet or rapt musician might fail to arrest the popular attention when he essayed to sing . . . while some chance-uttered strain, expressing only the

⁷⁶ White, *National Hymns*, 114-118, 129.

emotions of a simple, untaught nature, might be caught up, spontaneously adopted, and become the rallying note of a whole nation.” Unknown to White and his critics, such a song was gaining popularity right outside their windows.⁷⁷

In April 1862, *The Liberator* declared that a new “rousing song” may well be the “National Hymn which the thirteen wise men of Gotham went a-fishing for last May, baiting their hooks with golden eagles, and getting many nibbles, but no fish.” A month earlier, the *National Anti-slavery Standard* paraphrased an English lecturer who observed that at the beginning of the war, the North, “wanted a national song” and offered “a premium . . . for a poetical and musical expression of the feeling of the aroused nation” but failed. However, he declared that, “where deep sentiment existed it would find expression” and among the soldiers of Massachusetts, such “an utterance was found, and passed from regiment to regiment.” After the war, one of those Massachusetts soldiers observed that the Committee had really been looking for “another Marseillaise, something all could readily grasp and hold, something that no man or woman could help singing, no matter whether they had ever sung it before or not.” Although the French anthem possessed these qualities, it “had been approached by only one other, that of ‘John Brown’s Body.’”⁷⁸

During the Civil War, “John Brown’s Body” was the Union’s national hymn. It enjoyed incredible popularity, especially among soldiers. It was unquestionably the most beloved song in the Army of the Potomac and in the west its only competitor was George Frederick Root’s “The Battle Cry of Freedom.” In June 1862, *The Continental Monthly* remarked that the song was

⁷⁷ “The National Hymn: What it Ought to Be,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music* (July 28 1861): 132-133; White, *National Hymns*, 71.

⁷⁸ *Liberator*, April 4, 1862; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, May 31, 1862; Alfred S. Roe, *John Brown: A Retrospective* (Worcester, MA: Private Press of Franklin P. Rice, 1885), 21.

“among the most striking” of those produced by the war and was “extensively sung in the army.” One Union veteran recalled how “it seized upon every blue-coated organization throughout the land with fascinating power. . . . In the Army of the Potomac it was heard almost constantly.”⁷⁹

“John Brown’s Body” seemingly came out of nowhere. Many northerners would have agreed with critic Brander Matthews’ assessment that it was “a spontaneous generation of the uprising of the North – a self-made song, which sang itself into being of its own accord.”

Although Matthews accurately described the piece’s meteoric rise to prominence, its origin can be traced to a specific time and place. On April 29, 1861, the Second Massachusetts Infantry Battalion was assigned to Fort Warren in Boston harbor. A few days after arriving, four of its members formed a quartette – a “glee club” in the parlance of the day. One of the singers was a Scottish Sergeant named John Brown, who was a favorite of the men because of his strongly-accented rendering of the sentimental ballad “Annie Laurie.” Designated as the regiment’s “honorary Scotchman,” Sergeant Brown’s sharing his name with the famous abolitionist martyr was often fodder for jokes. As one member recalled, if Sergeant Brown was ever late for roll, the other men would make wisecracks such as “Come, old fellow, you ought to be at it if you are going to help us free the slaves,” or “This can’t be John Brown – why John Brown is dead.” A

⁷⁹ Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 308; Lloyd D. Harris, “Army Music,” *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the U. S. – Missouri Commandery, War Papers and Personal Reminiscences* (St. Louis, MO: 1892): I, 291; Holmes, *Lecture – 1865*; George Kimball, “Origin of the John Brown Song,” *New England Magazine* 7 (December 1889): 376; Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 159; “The Kansas John Brown Song,” *Continental Monthly* 1 (June 1862): 735; “In Front of Yorktown: A Reminiscence,” *National Tribune* (August 20 1881): 3.

statement confirming that the abolitionist Brown was, in fact, deceased, usually followed these comments, along with the remark, “his body lies mouldering in the grave.”⁸⁰

Before long, two members of the battalion, Henry Halgreen and James E. Greenleaf, transformed the popular revival song, “Say Brothers Will You Meet Us On Canaan’s Happy Shore” into a new version teasing Sergeant Brown about his name. Brown’s glee club was given the song and performed it to great applause from the rest of the men. “John Brown’s Body” quickly became a favorite because its steady rhythm was well-suited to marching and the words were easy to remember and highly malleable. Every verse featured one phrase repeated three times, followed by the line “His soul is marching on.” The chorus matched this structure by repeating “Glory, Glory Hallelujah!” three times before the same fourth line as the verse.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Matthews, “The Songs of the War,” 622; James Howard Jenkins, “The Origin of the Famous War Song of John Brown,” *War Papers: Being Papers Read Before the Commandery of the State of Wisconsin, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States* (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1993): IV, 208-209; Kimball, “Origin of the John Brown Song,” 372; Elson, *National Music*, 252-253; John Tasker Howard, *Our American Music: A Comprehensive History from 1620 to the Present*, 4th edition (New York, NY: T. Y. Crowell Co., 1965), 268; Boyd B. Stutler, “John Brown’s Body,” *Civil War History* 4 (September 1958): 252-253, 256. The members of the glee club were: C. E. B. Edgerly, N. J. Purnette, John Brown, and J. H. Jenkins. Jenkins, “Origin of the Famous War Song,” 209. Sergeant Brown was later killed either at the battle of Front Royal or in an accident while crossing the Rappahannock on June 6, 1861. Kimball, “Origin of the John Brown Song,” 372.

⁸¹ Elson, *National Music of America*, 253; *Our War Songs, North and South*, 9; Stutler, “John Brown’s Body,” 253; Jenkins, “Origin of the Famous War Song,” IV, 209-210; Howard, *Our American Music*, 268-269. The origin of “Say Brothers Will You Meet Us” has long been debated. Mormons, Methodists, Millerites, and slaves all claimed the song as did southern songwriter William Steffe. Clara Louise Kellogg even maintained that it was based on a song by Felix Mendelssohn. Although its origin is unclear, the high number of claimants to the song and multiple versions in use by 1860 are a testament to its popularity. Banks, *Immortal Songs*, 103; Child, *Letters of Lydia Maria Child*, 157; Henry Steele Commager, ed., *The Blue and the Gray: The Story of the Civil War as Told by Participants* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950), I, 564; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 46, 50; Howard, *Our American Music*, 268-269; “Interview with Lorenza Ezell,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Texas Narratives, Volume XVI*, 26-27, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; Kellogg, *Memoirs*, 61; Kimball, “Origin of the John Brown Song,” 371; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 622-623.

The version originally adopted by the Second Battalion had three verses, each of which became standard. The first was always the reference to Brown's death, "John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave," and the second was usually "He's gone to be a soldier in the army of the Lord." According to one member of the battalion, these two verses were immediately recognized "as having a germ of inspiration. They were sung over and over again with a great deal of gusto." The third verse best reflected the song's original purpose of mocking Sergeant Brown. According to a member of the glee club, Sergeant Brown "was short, and [his] knapsack very large, and the boys began to chaff him. 'Say knapsack, where are you going with that man?'" Brown's response to such taunts was to shout back "John Brown's knapsack is strapped upon his back and his soul will march on as far as any of you." Thus, Brown's statement not only inspired the song's third verse: "John Brown's knapsack is strapped upon his back;" but also provided the inspiration for the song's repeated fourth line.⁸²

"John Brown's Body" became quite popular in Fort Warren. It was given proper notation, ironically enough, because the battalion lacked a band. During dress parades, a professional band from Boston, led by Irish bandleader Patrick S. Gilmore, came to the fort to play. After hearing the battalion's new song Gilmore transcribed it for the band. On May 12, 1861, the Twelfth Massachusetts Regiment absorbed most of the Second Battalion. The old glee club, including Sergeant Brown, reformed in the new unit and performed the song while Gilmore's transcription was taught to the new regimental band. "John Brown's Body" soon

⁸² Stutler, "John Brown's Body," 256; Jenkins, "Origin of the Famous War Song," IV, 212-213; Kimball, "Origin of the John Brown Song," 372. There was also a fourth verse, "It is filled with leaden bullets and moldy hardtack," that fell out of use early in the war. Stutler, "John Brown's Body," 256.

became the regiment's unofficial anthem, earning the unit its nickname: "The Psalm singing regiment from Boston."⁸³

The Twelfth Massachusetts sang "John Brown's Body" whenever they marched through Boston and Gilmore's band played it at dress parades. When the regiment left for the front, they stopped in New York. On July 24, 1861, they sang the song as they marched down Broadway and left a lasting impression on several observers. As one member of the regiment described the scene, "at the order 'route-step,' the band struck up 'John Brown:' the men joined in singing, and the citizens of New York were electrified by the weird chorus." Another soldier echoed these sentiments, recalling "it is no exaggeration to say that the thousands of people who lined Broadway were fairly electrified by its stirring strains, heard by them then for the first time."⁸⁴

From Broadway and Boston, "John Brown's Body" quickly spread throughout the North. It was first published as sheet music in August, with the heading, "sung by the Federal Volunteers." By the end of the year, soldiers and civilians frequently commented on the song's growing popularity. In one instance, when a group of soldiers began singing the song, hundreds of spectators gathered to hear them. The crowd began to sing along and according to one

⁸³ Jenkins, "Origin of the Famous War Song," IV, 210-211; Kimball, "Origin of the John Brown Song," 374; Elson, *National Music of America*, 255; Benjamin F. Cook, *History of the Twelfth Massachusetts Volunteers (Webster's Regiment)* (Boston, MA: Twelfth (Webster) Regiment Association, 1882), 21-22.

⁸⁴ Cook, *History of the Twelfth*, 21-23; Charles E. Davis, *Three Years in the Army: The Story of the Thirteenth Massachusetts Volunteers from July 16, 1861, to August 1, 1864* (Boston, MA: Estes and Lauriat, 1894), xxix; Jenkins, "Origin of the Famous War Song," IV, 211; Kimball, "Origin of the John Brown Song," 374-376; Roe, *John Brown*, 20-21; Warren Lee Goss, "Going to the Front," *Battle and Leaders of the Civil War: Being For the Most Part Contributions by Union and Confederate Officers* (New York, NY: The Century Co., 1884-1888): I, 157; Matthews, "Songs of the War," 623; New York *Tribune*, July 28, 1861; Stutler, "John Brown's Body," 256. "John Brown's Body" remained the regimental anthem of the Twelfth Massachusetts until the Second Battle of Bull Run, when the unit's commander, Colonel Fletcher Webster, was killed. From then on, the men refused to perform the song. Smith, "Battle Hymns of Nations," III, 471.

observer, “the emotions became contagious, some voices were choked with feeling, and the eyes that did not glisten were few.” As one member of the crowd walked away, he remarked, “That is to be the American Marseillaise in this war before it is over.”⁸⁵

Although this statement would eventually be proven correct, by the beginning of 1862, the song was not yet the most popular song among soldiers. One veteran recalled that it was the siege of Yorktown that cemented its status. On April 5, 1862, several regiments were facing the Confederate entrenchments – exhausted after marching in the rain and under heavy artillery fire. A veteran recalled that the men soon found their spirits lifted when the Thirteenth New York “stuck up ‘John Brown’s Body’” and the song spread through the whole army. By singing, “the wearied forms grew erect . . . and beneath the bursting shells and to the accompaniment of the deep double bass of cannon, the ranks cadencing their steps to the inspiring melody, debouched upon the plain, deployed, and were arrayed to face the foe.” Inspired to battle by “John Brown’s Body,” “it became the marching song of the Army almost from that day,” and, now wedded to the Army of the Potomac, it remained the leading soldier anthem until the end of the war. As one veteran recalled, it was “popular, and of absolute universality wherever the Union flag was unfurled.”⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Kimball, “Origin of the John Brown Song,” 376; Bangor *Daily Whig & Courier*, October 5, 1861; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *The Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters of Thomas Wentworth Higginson*, edited by Christopher Looby, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 224; Henry Warren Howe, *Passages from the Life of Henry Warren Howe, Consisted of Diary and Letters Written During the Civil War, 1861-1865. A Condensed History of the Thirtieth Massachusetts Regiment and its Flags, Together with the Genealogies of the Different Branches of the Family* (Lowell, MA: Courier-Citizen Co., 1899), 101; *Musical Review and Musical World* 7 (August 3 1861): 190; New York *Herald*, November 25, 1861; *The Martyrdom of John Brown: The Proceedings of a Public Meeting Held in London on the 2nd December, 1863, to Commemorate the Fourth Anniversary of John Brown’s Death* (London, UK: Emancipation Society, 1864), 4-5.

⁸⁶ “In Front of Yorktown,” 3; Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 308.

Yet the version of “John Brown’s Body” sung before the ramparts of Yorktown was not same one that was rendered by the Second Battalion glee club. Almost immediately after the song was performed by the Twelfth Massachusetts on Broadway, two major transformations occurred. First was the addition of a fourth verse that synthesized several popular lines mocking Confederate President Jefferson Davis. The two most popular of these lyrics were one threatening to “hang Jeff Davis to a tree” and another crudely offering to “feed him sour apples till he has the di-ar-rhee!” At some point, these two lines were combined into, “We’ll hang Jeff Davis to a sour apple tree,” which subsequently became the song’s most popular verse. “The verve of an army never shone out in such a grand emphasis and amusing absurdity of expression as when it swelled the chorus of the above lyrical anathema upon the petticoated leader of the slaveholder’s Rebellion,” recalled one New Hampshire soldier. A Pennsylvania colonel joked, the “sour apple” line “was sung with peculiar zest, though I never quite understood what the poet had against the sour apple-tree.” This new verse also demonstrated one of the song’s most appealing qualities, its malleability. Over the course of the war, soldiers and civilians created several new verses, often spontaneously, to suit their specific situations or sentiments and this further enhanced its popularity.⁸⁷

The second transformation was more significant but less obvious. With ownership of “John Brown’s Body” shifting from the Twelfth Massachusetts to the public at large, the song lost its original context and subject. In the hands of soldiers and civilians, Sergeant John Brown was replaced by the radical abolitionist and the song took on an anti-slavery tone. This was

⁸⁷ Howard, *Our American Music*, 269; Stutler, “John Brown’s Body,” 254; Wiley, *Life of Billy Yank*, 159; Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion* 308; Frederick L. Hitchcock, *War from the Inside: The Story of the 132nd Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry in the War for the Suppression of the Rebellion, 1862-1863* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1904), 82; Dr. Coates, “How Minnie Ford was Cured of a Bad Habit,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (June 1863): 35; Holmes, *Lecture – 1865*; Richmond *Dispatch*, October 31, 1861.

immediately evident to some, including one New York reporter who, after observing another Massachusetts regiment sing it on Broadway, remarked, “Who would have dreamed,” only a year and a half after the raid on Harper’s Ferry, “that a thousand men in the streets of New York would be heard singing reverently and enthusiastically in praise of John Brown!”⁸⁸

Not surprisingly, abolitionists quickly recognized the song’s political implications. After hearing a newly formed regiment sing “John Brown’s Body” in Worcester, Massachusetts, the future colonel of the all-black First South Carolina, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, wrote, “I never heard anything more impressive & it seemed a wonderful piece of popular justice to make his name the war song.” Similarly, missionary Lydia Maria Child believed that “John Brown’s Body” “is performing a wonderful mission now” and anticipated that as the soldiers continued to sing it, “How rapidly it would educate them!”⁸⁹

Soon, abolitionists incorporated “John Brown’s Body” into their movement. The Hutchinsons were some of the first to do so, making it a part of their repertoire after repeated requests. Missionaries sent south to work with contrabands and freed slaves also embraced the song and even taught it to their new students. Indeed, one group of northerners, including black abolitionist Charlotte Forten, “sang ‘John Brown’ with a will as we drove through the pines and palmettos” of South Carolina. However, what was most remarkable was that even after the song’s abolitionist message became widely acknowledged, it continued to be the anthem of the soldiers.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ “John Brown, Dead Yet Speaketh,” *Independent* 13 (August 29 1861): 1.

⁸⁹ Higginson, *Complete Civil War Journal*, 224; Child, *Letters of Lydia Maria Child*, 157.

⁹⁰ Hutchinson, *Book of Brothers*, 21; Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 393; Jordan, *Singin’ Yankees*, 230; *Liberator*, March 20, 1863; Charlotte L. Forten, *Journal* (New York, NY: Dryden Press, 1953), 128; *New York Times*, January 26, 1862; Laura Matilda Towne, *Letters and Diaries of Laura M. Towne: Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1912), 72.

Although they rarely commented directly on the song's meaning, evidence shows that soldiers understood the abolitionist implications of "John Brown's Body." This was most often demonstrated by where it was sung. Harper's Ferry, the site of Brown's raid, and Charlestown, the site of his execution, were especially popular venues. The Twelfth Massachusetts likely performed its regimental anthem as it passed through both towns during its first year of service and other units followed this example. A member of the 132nd Pennsylvania understood the significance of performing "John Brown's Body" as the regiment passed through Harper's Ferry, remarking that they sang with "peculiar zest" because of the "poetic justice" fostered by the scene.⁹¹

Civilian observers had similar reactions. *The Liberator* asked in 1862, "Who looked forward through these two memorable years, and beheld the bristling hosts of Freedom pressing down on Virginian soil, and ringing out the 'Glory! Hallelujah!' as they passed the site of Brown's execution?" Similarly, after a *New York Evening Post* correspondent heard an entire division sing the song in both Harper's Ferry and Charlestown, he asked "what citizen of Virginia would ever have imagined this two years ago; and who shall say that this is not a righteous retribution upon the rebels for their treatment of John Brown?"⁹²

⁹¹ Cook, *History of the Twelfth Massachusetts*, 24, 39; Entry for August 28, 1864, Memoir, Russell Hastings Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center; Entry for February 25, 1865, typescript copy of Civil War diary, Walter H. Jackson Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; "Notes of a Tour Through the Border States," *Macmillan's Magazine* 6 (May/October 1862): 142; Charles D. Page, *History of the Fourteenth Regiment, Connecticut Vol. Infantry* (Meriden, CT: The Horton Printing Co., 1906), 61; Frank Rauscher, *Music on the March, 1862-'65 with the Army of the Potomac: 114th Regt. P. V., Collis' Zouaves* (Philadelphia, PA: W. F. Fell, 1892), 107; Jesse Bowman Young, *What A Boy Saw in the Army*, (New York, NY: Hunt & Eaton, 1894), 368; Cogswell, *History of the Eleventh New Hampshire Regiment*, 19; Edward Michael Watson to Lil, March 2, 1862, Edward Michael Watson Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Hitchcock, *War From the Inside*, 81-82.

⁹² *Liberator*, April 4, 1862; "Remember John Brown," *Circular* 11 (March 13 1862): 19.

Over the course of the war, Union soldiers found other meaningful contexts for “John Brown’s Body.” Sherman’s March inspired several performances. Of these, none had more resonance than when the regimental band of the Thirty-Third Massachusetts played the tune while the army burned and left Atlanta. As one soldier described the scene: “the men took up the words wedded to the music, and, high above the roaring flames, above the crash of falling walls, above the fierce cracking of thousands of small arms cartridges” could be heard the song’s “triumphant refrain.” He observed that, “for picturesqueness and suggestiveness, the scene was one never to be forgotten.” One officer similarly remarked, “I never heard that noble anthem when it was so grand, so solemn, and so inspiring” and General William Tecumseh Sherman himself recalled that the song was never “done with more spirit, or in better harmony of time and place.” “John Brown’s Body” remained a sort of anthem for Sherman’s Army, most spectacularly performed again by twenty thousand men as they marched into Columbia, South Carolina.⁹³

The popularity of “John Brown’s Body” in the armies requires some explanation, given that most soldiers were not abolitionists, especially early in the war when the song took root

⁹³ William Bircher, *A Drummer-boy’s Diary: Comprising Four Years of Service with the Second Regiment Minnesota Veteran Volunteers, 1861 to 1865* (St. Paul, MN: St. Paul Book and Stationary Co., 1889), 141; John M. Gibson, *Those 163 Days: A Southern Account of Sherman’s March from Atlanta to Raleigh* (New York, NY: Bramhall House, 1961), 64; Adin B. Underwood, *The Three Years’ Service of the Thirty-Third Mass. Infantry Regiment, 1862-1865. And the Campaigns and Battles of Chancellorsville, Beverley’s Ford, Gettysburg, Wauhatchie, Chattanooga, Atlanta, the March to the Sea Through the Carolinas, in which it Took Part* (Boston, MA: A. Williams & Co., 1880), 254; Fenwick Hedley, *Marching through Georgia: Pen-pictures of Everyday Life in General Sherman’s Army, From the Beginning of the Atlanta Campaign until the Close of the War* (Chicago, IL: M. A. Donohue & Co., 1884), 257; George Ward Nichols, *The Story of the Great March: From the Diary of a Staff Officer* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1865), 41; William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman* (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1990), 655; Theodore Frelinghuysen Upson, *With Sherman to the Sea: The Civil War Letters, Diaries, and Reminiscences of Theodore F. Upson* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 150.

among the men. Many embraced it simply because its subject matter annoyed the rebels.

Brander Matthews recalled how “there was a special taunt to the South in the use of the name of the martyr of abolition” and a correspondent with the Army of the Potomac observed that whenever the song was played “the wild, mournful music would be caught up by all” and they would eagerly sing “the name of the grim old Moloch, whom – more than any one . . . Virginia hates.” One former slave even recalled Union soldiers singing it as they shelled a southern town.⁹⁴

However, others understood the transformative effect that “John’s Brown’s Body” was having on soldiers. Joshua Hutchinson saw its popularity as evidence that the North was “more abolitionized than they were aware” and George Templeton Strong observed in 1864 that the song reflected the North’s increasing support for emancipation, noting that his son sang it as though it were “The Star Spangled Banner.” Nurse Sarah Edmonds grasped the song’s power after witnessing a group of soldiers singing it in Harper’s Ferry, remarking that it “does not seem so senseless after all, for the spirit of John Brown does seem to march along wonderfully fast, and our troops are becoming imbued with it to a greater extent than is generally supposed.” As Oliver Wendell Holmes observed at the end of the war, Brown’s “true raid was not when he

⁹⁴ Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 623; George Alfred Townsend, *Campaigns of a Non Combatant* (New York, NY: Arno, 1970), 249; “Interview with John White,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Oklahoma Narratives, Volume XIII*, 327, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>. For a good description of soldiers’ evolving ideas on slavery see: Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007).

frightened Virginia with his handful of followers, but when his soul marched at the head of half a million men, shaking the continent and the world with the chorus of Glory Hallelujah!”⁹⁵

The transformation these commentators observed is noticeable in the diary of Second Massachusetts chaplain Alonzo H. Quint. In the winter of 1861, he observed, “It seems strange that a Northern regiment should march through New York, with a thousand voices singing [John Brown’s Body] . . . nor am I now ready to approve of it; nor will many.” However, the song caused him to reflect how “his enemies have made themselves our enemies; that the system whose outrages tasked, perhaps overpowered, the strength of his reason, has insanely raised its sacrilegious hand against our country; and that if John Brown deserved death, infinitely more does every rebel now in arms.” The following March, Quint was in Charlestown and observed, “John Brown’s memory is still the centre of attraction” and “John Brown’s Body” presented “a marvelous fascination to our army.” Through repeated performances of the song, “the daring and manliness of that old man eclipses his fault, and he has become a hero.” Thus, Quint, like others in the army, came to sympathize with Brown through the new patriotic hymn.⁹⁶

The song’s simplicity and abolitionist sentiments were not universally embraced. Many critics and musicians simply considered the song technically deficient. Louis Moreau Gottschalk deemed it “hideous” and a British observer considered it “half-grotesque.” A larger group of northerners resented the song’s abolitionism. These tended to be Democrats but even some Republicans worried about its politics. The *Chicago Tribune* dismissed the song as “negro doggerel” and feared that “the Virginians will think John Brown is worshipped as the Northern

⁹⁵ Hutchinson, *Brief Narrative*, 38-39; Strong, *Diary*, III, 408; Sarah Emma Edmonds, *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army* (Hartford, CT: W. S. Williams & Co., 1865), 289; Holmes, *Lecture – 1865*.

⁹⁶ Alonzo H. Quint, *The Potomac and the Rapidan: Army Notes, From the Failure at Winchester to the Reenforcement of Rosecrans, 1861-3* (Boston, MA: Crosby and Nichols, 1864), 28, 101.

hero.” The New York *Knickerbocker* was more direct, calling the song “ridiculous and vulgar doggerel” and speculated that it only remained popular because soldiers liked to parody it. Democrats roundly opposed “John Brown’s Body” and even used it against Lincoln and the Republicans. As an observer at a New York Loyal League meeting sarcastically remarked, the song “informed the audience in melodious strains that John Brown’s peripatetic soul had not yet completed its extraordinary march, and that his body as yet was in no hurry to effect a union with it.” The sentiments of another Democrat mirrored those of observers who realized the song’s influence on soldiers. Considering the Twelfth Massachusetts’ performance of “John Brown’s Body” on Broadway, he wrote, “Alas, it was too true that John Brown’s soul was marching on. . . . John Brown’s own *raid* was one which appeared to be pretty much of his own hook; but now we were to witness something of a similar kind on a grander scale.”⁹⁷

Others merely sought to rewrite the lyrics. In fact, the first performance of “John Brown’s Body” provoked Second Battalion commander, Ralph W. Newton, to recommend that the glee club replace Brown’s name with that of recently killed colonel, Ephraim Elmer Ellsworth. Subsequent rewrites went in one of two directions. Several followed Newton’s example by trying to remove any reference to Brown or abolitionism. Others were written by abolitionists who thought the original lyrics were not anti-slavery enough. While most of these variants had little impact and were largely forgettable, one revision enjoyed remarkable longevity.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, 211; “Washington During the War,” 17; Chicago *Tribune*, August 9, 1861; Garret, “Trumpets and Drums,” 524; *The Washington Despotism Dissected in Articles from the Metropolitan Record* (New York, NY: Office of the Metropolitan Record, 1863), 42; R. G. Horton, *A Youth’s History of the Great Civil War in the United States, from 1861 to 1865* (New York, NY: 1867), 120-121.

⁹⁸ Jenkins, “Origin of the Famous War Song,” 210; Kimball, “Origin of the John Brown Song,” 374. For examples of revisions that removed the song’s abolitionism see: *Daily*

Julia Ward Howe was a poet who, like George Frederick Root, felt a strong need to use her pen to sustain the war effort. She later recalled, “Something seemed to say to me, ‘You would be glad to serve, but you cannot help any one; you have nothing to give, and there is nothing for you to do.’” However, “a word was given me to say, which did strengthen the hearts of those who fought in the field and of those who languished in the prison.” That word came to Howe in December 1861, when she, her husband, and several friends, including Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew, traveled to Bailey’s Cross Roads, Virginia, for a grand review of the Army of the Potomac. However, as one Wisconsin soldier noted, “the troops were dismissed in the midst of the review, owing to some reported movement of the enemy” and Howe’s carriage became tangled up with General Irwin McDowell’s Division as it headed back to Arlington.⁹⁹

During the march, the soldiers and their civilian observers joined together in singing “John Brown’s Body,” and one of Howe’s friends asked, “Mrs. Howe, why do you not write

Cleveland *Herald*, March 25, 1862; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 52; *Independent* 14 (February 27, 1862): 3; John Brown, and “The Union Right or Wrong” Songster: *Containing All the Celebrated “John Brown” and “Union Songs” Which Have Become so Immensely Popular Throughout the Union* (San Francisco, CA: D. E. Appleton & Co., 1863), 10-12, 18-20, 30, 40; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 623; Frank Moore, ed., *Songs of the Soldiers* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam, 1864), 168-169; *The Little Mac Songster: Containing a Splendid Collection of Entirely New and Original Patriotic, Convivial, Comic, Gay and Rollicking Camp Songs* (New York, NY: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862, 52-53; Wiley, *Life of Billy Yank*, 160. For examples of pro-abolitionist revisions see: Vicki Lynn Eaklor, ed. *American Antislavery Songs: A Collection and Analysis* (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1988), 90-91, 500-501, 504-505; Moore, *Songs of the Soldiers*, 125-127; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, November 22, 1864; L. A. Scruggs, *Women of Distinction: Remarkable in Works and Invincible in Character* (Raleigh, NC: L. A. Scruggs, 1893), 54-55; “Kansas John Brown Song,” 735-736. The glee club actually agreed with Newton and drafted two new verses about Ellsworth but the original lyrics continued to spread nevertheless. One published version even appeared that gave the reader a choice between Brown and Ellsworth. Jenkins, “The Origin of the Famous War Song,” 210; Stutler, “John Brown’s Body,” 255.

⁹⁹ Julia Ward Howe and Carrie Chapman Catt, *Reminiscences, 1819-1899* (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1900), 273-274; Bernard, *Lincoln*, 50; Rufus Robinson Dawes, *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers* (Marietta, OH: E. R. Alderman & Sons, 1890), 28-29; Julia Ward Howe, “Note on the ‘Battle Hymn of the Republic,’” *Century Illustrated Magazine* 34 (August 1887): 629.

some good words for that stirring tune?” Howe responded, “That I had often wished to do this, but had not as yet found in my mind any leading toward it.” The next morning as she lay in bed, Howe “soon found myself trying to weave together certain lines which, though not entirely suited to the John Brown music, were yet capable of being sung to it.” With the poem completed in her mind, “I sprang out of bed, and . . . scrawled the verses almost without looking at the paper.” Satisfied, she went back to sleep, thinking that she “liked this better than most things that I have written.”¹⁰⁰

Howe sold her new lyrics to *The Atlantic Monthly* for five dollars. They appeared in February 1862 under the title: “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” The new work was printed as sheet music the next month with an inscription avoiding direct reference to John Brown by instead calling it an adaptation of “the favorite Melody of ‘Glory, Hallelujah.’” However, despite the rapid transit of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” from inspiration to publication, it made little impact on the public for most of the war. Howe herself remarked that “we were all too much absorbed in watching the progress of the war to give much heed to a copy of verses,” although she did note that it was occasionally “heard from time to time . . . sung in chorus by the soldiers.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Dawes, *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin*, 29; Howe and Catt, *Reminiscences*, 274-275; Smith, “Battle Hymns of Nations,” III, 472; Howe, “Note on the ‘Battle Hymn of the Republic,’” 629-630. Sources disagree over who began singing “John Brown’s Body” first. Howe claimed it was the members of her carriage and Dawes claimed it was Sgt. John Ticknor of the 6th Wisconsin. Dawes, *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin*, 29; Howe and Catt, *Reminiscences*, 274-275. In her frequent retellings of how she wrote “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” Howe suggested that the writing of the song may have been an act of divine inspiration and later asserted: “I realize that it is not the thing we write that carries weight, but that which writes itself through us.” LaSalle Corbell Pickett, *Across My Path: Memories of People I Have Known* (New York, NY: Ayer Publishing, 1970), 4.

¹⁰¹ Howe, “Note on the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” 630; Julia Ward Howe, “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” *Atlantic Monthly* 9 (February 1862): 145; Smith, “Battle Hymns of

The man who championed “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” was a minister named C. C. McCabe. He first read Howe’s lyrics in *The Atlantic Monthly* while living in Ohio and committed them to memory. He eventually offered his services to the army and was appointed chaplain of the 122nd Ohio. McCabe frequently used music in his services and encouraged singing among the troops, earning himself the nickname, “The Singing Chaplain.” Shortly after enlisting, McCabe and several other members of the regiment were captured – coincidentally – at Harper’s Ferry and sent to Libby Prison in Richmond. McCabe soon became a celebrity among his fellow inmates, who were, according to their unofficial newspaper, *The Libby Chronicle*, “often attracted and entertained by Chaplain McCabe’s excellent singing.” He formed a glee club that gave regular performances at the prison, some of which attracted audiences from the city. In the summer of 1863, McCabe decided to add “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” to their repertoire and, when they heard of the victory at Gettysburg, all the inmates “made the welkin ring” with the song’s lyrics.¹⁰²

Although this performance of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” surely left a lasting impression on those who heard it, the song did not begin its rise to prominence until after McCabe was exchanged sometime before the end of the year. Following his release, McCabe toured the North for Christian Commission fundraisers giving a lecture called “The Bright Side of Life at Libby Prison.” These speeches usually included a dramatic retelling of the post-

Nations,” III, 473; Julia Ward Howe, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” (Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1862); *Liberator*, March 28, 1862; Howe and Catt, *Reminiscences*, 276.

¹⁰² Katherine Little Bakeless, *Glory Hallelujah! The Story of the Battle Hymn of the Republic* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1944), 66, 68, 70-72, 77, 79; Frank Milton Bristol, *The Life of Chaplain McCabe: Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati, OH: Jennings and Graham, 1908), 135-136, 188; *Libby Chronicle*, August 28, 1863, available at: http://www.mdgorman.com/Prisons/Libby/libby_chronicle_8281863.htm; Howe and Catt, *Reminiscences*, 276. At the time McCabe was unfamiliar with the melody of “John Brown’s Body” and heard it shortly thereafter at a rally in Zanesville, Ohio. Bristol, *Life of Chaplain McCabe*, 194-195.

Gettysburg performance of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” and McCabe ended every presentation by singing the song. His rendition of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” became so well-known that spectators began attending these lectures just to hear him sing it. According to Howe, because of McCabe’s lectures, “people now began to ask who had written the hymn” and it slowly began its spread across the nation.¹⁰³

Despite McCabe’s efforts, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” never came close to supplanting “John Brown’s Body” during the Civil War. It appeared in some wartime publications – mainly Republican ones – and was performed occasionally at rallies, especially in Howe’s hometown of Boston. Abolitionists, including the Hutchinsons, adopted it, as they had other revisions of “John Brown’s Body.” However, there is little evidence that any soldiers, other than McCabe’s fellow inmates, embraced the song. For them, Howe’s lyrics were too complex, robbing the original of its repeated simplicity, malleability, and even its more overt anti-slavery message. The soldiers accepted “John Brown’s Body” as their primary patriotic song for the rest of the war – only adopting Howe’s revision after Appomattox.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Bakeless, *Glory Hallelujah!*, 90; Banks, *Immortal Songs*, 167; Bristol, *Life of Chaplain McCabe*, 190-191, 196; Howe, “Note on “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” 630. McCabe usually paired “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” with Henry Clay Work’s abolitionist minstrel tune, “The Song of a Thousand Years.” Bristol, *Life of Chaplain McCabe*, 191.

¹⁰⁴ Bangor *Daily Whig & Courier*, February 24, 1862; Bernard, *Lincoln*, 145; Howe and Catt, *Reminiscences*, 278-279; John Brown, and ‘The Union Right or Wrong’ Songster; George Palmer Putnam and Frank Moore, eds., *Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Patriotic Songs* (New York, NY: Loyal Publication Society, 1864), 19-20; *The Republican Songster, For the Campaign of 1864* (Cincinnati, OH: J. R. Hawley & Co., 1864), 60-61; *Army and Navy Melodies: A Collection of Hymns and Tunes, Religious and Patriotic* (Boston, MA: J. P. Magee, 1862); Brink, *Harps in the Wind*, 203; *Liberator*, January 23, 1863, February 5, 1864. The Hutchinsons further revised “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” replacing Howe’s original “die to make men free” with “live to make men free.” Brink, *Harps in the Wind*, 203. A member of the Fourteenth New Hampshire recalled soldiers singing “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” during especially emotional times but his regiment may have been exceptional because Howe had visited them and personally performed the song. Three other references are extant: a soldier remembering it being played at Petersburg; a woman remembering soldiers singing it during the Peninsula Campaign; and a

The other exceptionally popular northern patriotic song was George Frederick Root's "The Battle Cry of Freedom." Like most of his war songs, it was inspired by a specific event: Lincoln's call for 300,000 volunteers on July 2, 1862. According to Root, "Immediately a song started in my mind, words and music together. . . . I thought it out that afternoon, and wrote it the next morning." Its lyrics echoed from several recent Root and Cady publications designed to encourage recruitment but most of these were only mildly successful. "The Battle Cry of Freedom" avoided the same fate in part because of its adoption by a local family singing group.¹⁰⁵

The Lumbard Brothers were essentially Chicago's version of the Hutchinsons, in that they were four brothers who excelled at choral singing and endorsed evangelical causes. They frequently performed at public rallies and had used pieces by Root before, including his inaugural war song, "The First Gun is Fired." Root recalled that "the ink was hardly dry" on "The Battle Cry of Freedom" when the Lumbards "came in for something to sing at a war meeting that was to be holden immediately in the court-house square just opposite" Root and Cady's store. Root was stretching the truth a bit, as the rally was held on July 26 and the song had probably gone to press by that time, but he surely recognized the benefits of having his song

British observer citing soldier performances of the song as evidence of their abolitionism. Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 307-308; George August Sala, *My Diary in America in the Midst of War* (London, UK: Tinsley Brothers, 1865), 32-33; Ralph Abner Small, *The Road to Richmond: The Civil War Memoirs of Major Abner R. Small of the Sixteenth Maine Volunteers. Together with the Diary that he Kept when he was a Prisoner of War* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2000), 153; Edmonds, *Nurse and Spy*, 143; James A. Davis, "Hearing History: 'Dixie,' 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic,' and Civil War Music in the History Classroom," *Music and History: Bridging the Disciplines*, edited by Jeffrey H. Jackson and Stanley C. Pelkey (Jackson, MO: University Press of Missouri, 2005), 208.

¹⁰⁵ Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 132; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1988), 491; Epstein, *Music Publishing in Chicago*, 44.

performed in such a high-profile setting. Jules G. Lombard sang most of the song, with his brother Frank joining in the chorus:

The Union forever, hurrah, boys, hurrah!
Down with the traitor, up with the star;
While we rally round the flag boys, rally once again,
Shouting the Battle Cry of Freedom.

The Chicago *Tribune* reported the song being “received with the utmost enthusiasm and applause” and Root recalled that by “the fourth verse a thousand voices were joining in the chorus.”¹⁰⁶

Everyone at the rally, including the audience, Root, and the Lombards, immediately set about popularizing “The Battle Cry of Freedom.” In Chicago, it became a staple and was included in all of the city’s patriotic events until the end of the war. The song spread quickly because its lyrics were easy to remember, its rhythmic melody appealed to soldiers, and it could be sung in parlors. Root understood the importance of armies for musical success and actively sought ways to endear his song to soldiers. His wife reportedly did her part by sending a copy to Private James R. Murray in Virginia “which he introduced to that section of the army.” This may explain why, despite Chicago’s geographical proximity to the western theater, the song enjoyed greater initial popularity in the east. Root even wrote a new version of the song two

¹⁰⁶ Cook, *Bygone Days*, 2, 119-120, 124; Epstein, *Music Publishing in Chicago*, 43; Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 132-133; Chicago *Tribune*, July 28, 1862; Epstein, “Battle Cry of Freedom,” 310; George Frederick Root, “The Battle Cry of Freedom” (Chicago, IL: Root & Cady, 1862); Smith, “Battle Hymns of Nations,” III, 484-485; “War Songs and Singing,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 4 (August 1866): 78. The Chicago *Tribune* also gave the complete song lyrics and identified “The Battle Cry of Freedom” as a Root and Cady product. C. M. Cady was likely responsible for this, as he had previously used the *Tribune* to promote the firm’s songs. Chicago *Tribune*, July 28, 1862.

months after publishing the original, subtitled “Battle Song,” with lyrics more specifically suited to soldiers.¹⁰⁷

“The Battle Cry of Freedom” received another boost in 1863, when the Lumbards gave a series of concerts for General Ulysses S. Grant’s army during the siege of Vicksburg. At the time morale was especially low. According to veteran Henry Stone, “there was a good deal of gloomy feeling. . . . The losses of the army had been terrible” and opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation had led many officers to at least threaten to resign. The Lumbards’ performances, however, lifted the men’s spirits. As a correspondent with the army recalled, “The lines and Camps were made vocal at night for several weeks, and the uproarious encoring and applauding . . . proved how heartily and deeply the soldiers appreciated the entertainment.” Although the Lumbards performed a number of other songs, including “John Brown’s Body,” Stone recalled that it was “The Battle Cry of Freedom” that “ran through the camp like wildfire.” The song’s effect appeared, “little short of miraculous. It put as much spirit and cheer into the army as a victory.” Like “John Brown’s Body” at Yorktown, “The Battle Cry of Freedom” became associated with the struggle at Vicksburg. When the Union flag was raised over the city on July 4, 1863, a Cincinnati reporter claimed the song “floated out over the conquered city” and became forever “blended with the history and progress of our armies.” Although there is evidence that “The Battle Cry of Freedom” may have already been known in the army before the

¹⁰⁷ Cook, *Bygone Days*, 121; Epstein, “Battle Cry of Freedom,” 311-313; Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 141-142; Murray, “A Soldier’s Thoughts,” 105; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 70; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 18-19. Murray later became a songwriter for Root & Cady and a frequent contributor to the *Song Messenger of the Northwest*. Carder, *George F. Root*, 118. Later editions of “The Battle Cry of Freedom” included both sets of words. The original lyrics, or “Rallying Song,” are the most commonly referenced today. George Frederick Root, “The Battle Cry of Freedom” (Chicago, IL: Root & Cady, 1864).

Lumbards arrived, their concerts elevated it to a higher status – potentially rivaling the popularity of “John Brown’s Body” among western soldiers.¹⁰⁸

“The Battle Cry of Freedom,” however, was already widely popular in other sections of the country long before the Lumbards performed for Grant’s men. Almost immediately after Root published the song in July 1862, it began to sell very well. By September, Root and Cady had printed seven thousand copies; by November they had sold twelve thousand copies; and by the end of the war, several hundred thousand. Demand ran so high that occasionally every press operated by Root and Cady would be filling orders for as many as twenty thousand copies. Murray wrote to Root in August 1864, that the song “has become truly national” and that soldiers and civilians “sing it with true feeling and earnestness.”¹⁰⁹

“The Battle Cry of Freedom” even persuaded Gottschalk to put aside his usual distaste for popular music. He called it the “obscure flower I have discovered on the heap of dirt that the poetasters and the *musicasters* have raised at the foot of their country’s altar since the war began” and went so far as to argue that it “ought to become our national air; it has animation, its harmonies are distinguished, it has tune, rhythm and . . . something sadly heroic, which a battle song should have.” When an Englishman dismissed American songwriters as inferior,

¹⁰⁸ Henry Stone, “A Song in Camp,” *Century Illustrated Magazine* 35 (December 1887): 320; Sylvanus Cadwallader, *Three Years with Grant: As Recalled by War Correspondent Sylvanus Cadwallader* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1961), 97; “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (September 1863): 83; Harris, “Army Music,” I, 291; “Our War Songs,” *Musical Review and Musical World*, 374. A member of the 55th Illinois recalled the men singing “The Battle Cry of Freedom” as they marched into the battle of Chickasaw Bayou, which would have predated the Lumbards’ performance by about six months. Lucien B. Crooker, “Episodes and Characters in an Illinois Regiment,” *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the U. S. – Illinois Commandery, Military Essays and Recollections* (Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1891): I, 48-49.

¹⁰⁹ *Chicago Tribune*, November 18, 1862; Coonley, “George F. Root,” 564; Epstein, *Music Publishing in Chicago*, 47-48; Epstein, “Battle Cry of Freedom,” 313; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (September 1864): 94.

Gottschalk reportedly told him “of a melody being sung by regiment after regiment, marching down Broadway . . . of a melody they learned at home in the far West, and that they would carry with them, and sing it on the battle-field; of a melody that would sustain them in the thickest fight” and then played the song so well that it was “beyond description.”¹¹⁰

Civilian fondness for “The Battle Cry of Freedom” surpassed that of “John Brown’s Body” and Root’s masterpiece became their favorite patriotic song. The Marine Band added it to their repertoire in 1863. It was even included in an 1864 play called “The Seven Sisters,” in which actors dressed as Uncle Sam, Columbia, Liberty, Union, Massachusetts, and even South Carolina sang the chorus. In fact, during one evening’s performance at Grover’s Theater in Washington, Tad Lincoln snuck onstage in an oversized Federal uniform and sang with the cast, resulting in three cheers from the audience for “Father Abraham and his boy.” Democrats and Republicans alike made use of “The Battle Cry of Freedom” during the 1864 presidential election, occasionally revising its lyrics to better suit their platforms. Abolitionists embraced the song, often teaching it to freed slaves, and, in one particularly poignant example, placing a placard over the entrance of Jefferson Davis’s Mississippi home with the inscription “Down with the Traitor, And up with the Star.”¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, 181-182; Mary Alice Seymour, ed., *Life and Letters of Louis Moreau Gottschalk* (Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1870), 209.

¹¹¹ Robert K. Kincaid, “Julia Susan Wheelock: The Florence Nightingale of Michigan during the Civil War,” *Lincoln Herald* 46 (October 1944): 44-45; F. Lauriston Bullard, *Tad and his Father* (Boston, MA: Little Brown & Co., 1915), 54-64; Svejda, *History of the Star Spangled Banner*, 191, 195; Leonard Grover, “Lincoln’s Interest in the Theater,” *Century Illustrated Magazine* 77 (April 1909): 945; Bernard, *Lincoln*, 245-247, 252; *Campaign Document*, No. 19. *Campaign Songs* (New York, NY: 1864), 8-9; *Christian Advocate and Journal* 39 51 (December 22 1864): 404; *Democratic Presidential Campaign Songster No. 1 McClellan v. Pendleton: Original Campaign Songs, Choruses, &c.* (New York, NY: J. F. Feeks, 1864), 5-6; Sidney Herbert, ed., *McClellan Campaign Melodist: A Collection of Patriotic Campaign Songs in Favor of the Constitution and the Union, the Election of General McClellan, the Restoration of Federal Authority, and the Speedy Extermination of Treason* (Boston, MA: 1864), 29; *Lincoln Campaign*

Part of the reason for the song's success with civilians was its vague ideology. Despite Root's abolitionism the song's lyrics essentially reflected the call for volunteers that inspired it, as in the first verse:

Oh, we'll rally 'round the flag, boys, we'll rally once again
Shouting the battle cry of freedom;
We will rally from the hillside, we'll gather from the plain,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom

And the second verse:

We are springing to the call of our brothers gone before,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom,
And we'll fill the vacant ranks with a million freemen more,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

The last two stanzas presented similar images of general enlistment but the song's popularity throughout the war indicated that many northerners saw it as more than a mere recruitment slogan.¹¹²

"The Battle Cry of Freedom's" repeated use of the words "freedom" and "union" gave it an ideological malleability that made it applicable to a variety of political sentiments. Abolitionist listeners heard their dual support for union and emancipation reaffirmed in "the Union forever" while shouting "the battle cry of freedom." A woman listening to a group of soldiers sing it at Vicksburg demonstrated this interpretation by calling it "the song of freedom to the captive, of hope to the oppressed of all nations." Similarly after a member of the 107th New York heard a regimental band play it in Savannah, he "went to sleep thinking 'of it' and all that it

Songster: For the Use of Clubs: Containing All of the Most Popular Songs (Philadelphia, PA: Mason & Co., 1864), 9-10, 14-15; *Republican Songster*, 14-15, 58; *Richmond Dispatch*, October 6, 1864; *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin*, November 11, 1864; William Wells Brown, *The Negro in the American Rebellion, His Heroism and His Fidelity* (Boston, MA: A. G. Brown & Co., 1880), 301; *Freedmen's Record* (March 1865): 39; *Freedmen's Record* (February 1866): 24-25; *Liberator*, September 25, 1863.

¹¹² Root, "Battle Cry of Freedom," (1862).

implied.” However, Root’s refusal to define freedom allowed listeners to ignore the song’s latent abolitionism. Furthermore, the chorus’ rejection of treason and endorsement of an eternal union made it appealing to all but the most pacifist or secessionist northerners. Thus, “The Battle Cry of Freedom” could express several levels of commitment to the northern war effort.¹¹³

Enlisted men embraced the song for similar reasons and in many cases imbued it with even more resonance. Soldier performances of “The Battle Cry of Freedom” were common and often provoked deep emotion. The song’s repeated appeals to “rally ‘round the flag” made it particularly useful for men in combat trying to regroup. One oft-repeated story tells of an Iowa regiment at Vicksburg that “went into the fight eight hundred strong, and came out with a terrible loss of more than half their number; but the brave fellows who remained were waving their torn and powder-stained banner, and singing [‘The Battle Cry of Freedom’].” A similar account tells of the song helping a whole brigade rally during the battle of the Wilderness.¹¹⁴

Some soldiers described performances of “The Battle Cry of Freedom” inspiring even more dramatic demonstrations of patriotism. Several of these incidents reflected contemporary

¹¹³ L. P. Brockett and Mary C. Vaughan, *Women’s Work in the Civil War: A Record of Heroism, Patriotism and Patience* (Philadelphia, PA: Zeigler, McCurdy & Co., 1867), 573; Russell M. Tuttle, *The Civil War Journal of Lt. Russell M. Tuttle, New York Volunteer Infantry*, edited by George H. Tappan (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006), 180.

¹¹⁴ Delavan S. Miller, *Drum Taps in Dixie: Memories of a Drummer Boy, 1861-1865* (Watertown, NY: Hungerford-Holbrook Co., 1905), 70; Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 133; Bell Irvin Wiley, *They Who Fought Here* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1959), 146. For examples of soldier performances of “John Brown’s Body” see: Henry A. Allen and John H. Renick, *Sergeant Allen and Private Renick*, edited by Martin Litvin (Galesburg, IL: Mother Bickerdyke Historical Collection, 1907), 247; Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 312; Bufkin, “Union Bands of the Civil War,” 321; Thomas Morris Chester, *Thomas Morris Chester, Black Civil War Correspondent: His Dispatches from the Virginia Front*, edited by R. J. M. Blackett (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 195; Crooker, “Episodes and Characters,” I, 48-49; John Griffith Jones to Richard and Mary Jones, October 30, 1862, People at War Microfilm Collection, reel 57, collection 152, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 625; Seymour, *Life and Letters*, 209; Amanda Akin Stearns, *The Lady Nurse of Ward E* (New York, NY: Baker & Taylor Co., 1909), 156.

theories about music's ability to influence its listeners both emotionally and physically, and typically involved wounded soldiers. One correspondent recalled that while the fighting at Spotsylvania Courthouse "was at its height, a stalwart soldier who had just risen from the amputating-table . . . leaning against a tent-pole, sang" "The Battle Cry of Freedom," and soon found that other wounded men "had joined in the chorus, raising their arms, swinging their caps, and cheering the flag they loved." In another instance, an article described a soldier whose "earthly march was nearly ended" asking the other men to sing "The Battle Cry of Freedom." "As that vast soldier choir ceased singing," the chaplain at the man's bedside looked at him "just in time to catch the last faint smile that flickered across" his face "as the soul was wafted on the strains of that Union music to the throne of liberty." Another story that appeared in multiple sources, recounted how an observer was startled by the strong tones of "The Battle Cry of Freedom" coming from a hospital. He assumed that the singer was a healthy soldier but later learned that the man was singing it as he died.¹¹⁵

Like civilians, soldiers appreciated "The Battle Cry of Freedom's" flexible ideology but its relation to the events of the war was equally important. Among western troops, the song's connections with Chicago and the Vicksburg siege probably heightened its popularity. In the east, its repeated calls to rally may have resonated with soldiers who, in the fall of 1862, likely viewed themselves as constantly regrouping after losses at Bull Run, The Shenandoah, The Seven Days, and Bull Run again. Root's "Battle Song" revision partially built on this interpretation, such as in the third and fourth verses:

If we fall amid the fray, boys, we'll face them to the last,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom,
And our comrades brave shall hear us as they go rushing past,

¹¹⁵ Coffin, *Boys of '61*, 324; "How a Soldier Died," *Youth's Companion* 37 (December 1864): 192; Edmonds, *Nurse and Spy*, 327; *Freedom's Champion*, August 4, 1864.

Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

And

Yes, for Liberty and Union we're springing to the fight,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom,
And the vict'ry shall be ours for we're rising in our might,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.

In these lines the song transformed from a commitment to join the fight into one of seeing it through to the end.¹¹⁶

Although many soldiers surely identified with these sentiments, those in the eastern theater may have felt them more keenly, especially during extremely emotional times or at the moment of death. One soldier even described the third verse playing itself out before his eyes. As his regiment was marching toward the fighting at The Wilderness, "a wounded soldier, as he is borne to the rear on a stretcher . . . begun the song 'Rally Round the Flag, Boys.' Every man took up the words and went in with renewed vigor." With soldiers and civilians finding emotional and ideological resonance in "The Battle Cry of Freedom" the song's prominent place in the northern canon was assured.¹¹⁷

By the beginning of 1863, "John Brown's Body" and "The Battle Cry of Freedom" had established themselves as the North's two leading patriotic songs. However, a host of lesser ones also enjoyed some popularity. One of these songs might briefly rise to prominence but lacked staying power. Critics and songwriters challenged the status of "John Brown's Body" as the primary northern patriotic song but no piece ever came close to dislodging it. However, "The

¹¹⁶ Root, "Battle Cry of Freedom" (1864).

¹¹⁷ Daniel G. Crotty, *Four Years Campaigning in the Army of the Potomac* (Grand Rapids, MI: Dygert Bros. & Co., 1874), 129.

Battle Cry of Freedom” first faced competition from the North’s third most popular patriotic number, “We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More.”

As one veteran recalled, Lincoln’s July 1862 call for troops caused many northerners to realize that “the time had come when the Union army needed a rousing battle cry of freedom” but it was not predetermined that Root’s opus would fill that role. James Sloan Gibbons’ “We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More” enjoyed more immediate success. Gibbons was a Quaker and, like Root, an abolitionist, who also found inspiration in Lincoln’s call to arms.¹¹⁸

Gibbons’ poem mirrored “The Battle Cry of Freedom” by primarily describing men rallying to Lincoln’s call from various locations throughout the country, including the South, as in the first verse:

We are coming, Father Abr’am, three hundred thousand more,
From Mississippi’s winding stream and from New England’s shore;
We leave our plows and workshops, our wives and children dear,
With hearts too full for utterance, with but a silent tear;
We dare not look behind us, but steadfastly before.
We are coming, Father Abr’am, three hundred thousand more!

Gibbons later recalled that as he wrote these lyrics, “directly would come along a company of soldiers” outside his window “with fife and drum and that helped the matter amazingly.” As more regiments passed by, Gibbons was inspired to write more descriptions of mass enlistment which would eventually constitute three of the poem’s four stanzas. The last stated the song’s purpose:

You have called us and we’re coming by Richmond’s bloody tide,
To lay us down for Freedom’s sake, out brothers’ bones beside;

¹¹⁸ Smith, “Battle Hymns of Nations,” III, 483; Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War*, 51; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 628. Gibbons was briefly the editor of *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*. His abolitionist sentiments later caused his home to be targeted by rioters during the July, 1863, New York draft riots. Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), 25-26.

Or from foul treason's savage grip, to wrench the murderous blade;
And in the face of foreign foes its fragments to parade;
Six hundred thousand loyal men and true have gone before.
We are coming, Father Abr'am, three hundred thousand more!¹¹⁹

The poem first appeared in the New York *Evening Post* on July 16, 1862, and quickly spread across the country, reaching California the following month. Several songwriters recognized the poem's musical potential and at least six set it to music, including Patrick Gilmore, John Hutchinson, and Stephen Foster. However, Luther O. Emerson's version became the most famous and gradually became linked to Gibbons' lyrics.¹²⁰

"We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More" became the theme song of northern enlistment. A Connecticut girl heard newly mustered men sing the song and sometimes add new lyrics. Another observer recalled how new regiments sang it as they passed the White House and Lincoln occasionally came out to review them. Once enlistment was completed, soldiers continued to sing the piece as they marched into the Confederacy. One member of the 77th Illinois recalled, "when the regiments were all full, that grand army of stalwart men took up the line of march southward . . . they sang 'We are coming father Abraham, Three hundred thousand more.'" Another soldier, after hearing about southern conscription, argued that such a measure

¹¹⁹ Matthews, "Songs of the War," 628; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 105-107.

¹²⁰ Matthews, "Songs of the War," 628-629; San Francisco *Daily Evening Bulletin*, August 23, 1862; Ernest K. Emurian, *Stories of Civil War Songs* (Natick, MA: W. A. Wilde Co., 1960), 47; Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War*, 51; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 69l. Gibbons's name did not appear with the original poem, so authorship was often mistakenly attributed to *Evening Post* editor, William Cullen Bryant. Bryant eventually issued a sworn statement crediting Gibbons. Nevertheless, his name continued to appear on copies of the song throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ernest K. Emurian, *Stories of Civil War Songs*, 47; Howard, *Our American Music*, 271. Emerson's success was likely due to Boston publisher Oliver Ditson who, two days after the poem's first appearance, ordered Emerson to "set these words instanter." Hamm, *Yesterdays*, 239.

was unnecessary in the North because, “the old song ‘We Are Coming, Father Abraham, Three Hundred Thousand More,’ is being sung there yet, with good will.”¹²¹

Because the song was more directly associated with recruitment than “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” its popularity waned as the war progressed. “We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More” primarily survived due to an increased association with Lincoln. Civilians frequently included it when serenading the President, as did professional singers when performing for him. Gibbons himself sang it at the White House in 1863. Other songwriters attempted to extend the song’s lifespan, such as one who, after another call for troops, raised the song’s commitment to “600,000 More,” or Root who attempted a sequel with “Father Abraham’s Reply,” but these had only minimal success.¹²²

Aside from “We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More” a few other patriotic songs attained some degree of success in the North, such as Oliver Wendell Holmes’ “Army Hymn” and William B. Bradbury’s “Marching Along,” but none rivaled “John Brown’s Body” or “The Battle Cry of Freedom” as the North’s patriotic staples.¹²³ These two patriotic songs

¹²¹ Jane Eliza Newton Woolsey, *Letters of a Family during the War for the Union 1861-1865*, edited by Georgeanna Woolsey Bacon and Eliza Woolsey Howland (Privately published, 1899), II, 484-485; Benjamin Perley Poore, *Perley’s Reminiscences of Sixty Years in the National Metropolis* (Philadelphia, PA: Hubbard Brothers, 1886), II, 130; W. H. Bentley, *History of the 77th Illinois Infantry, Sept. 2, 1862-July 10, 1865* (Peoria, IL: E. Hine, 1883), 16; Osborn Hamiline Oldroyd, *A Soldier’s Story of the Siege of Vicksburg: From the Diary of Osborn H. Oldroyd* (H. W. Rokker, 1885), 69.

¹²² F. B. Carpenter, “Abraham Lincoln,” *Independent* 19 (December 12 1867): 1; Benjamin B. French, *Witness to the Young Republic: A Yankee’s Journal, 1828-1870* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1989), 432; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 629; B. F. Baker, “We Are Coming Father Abraham 600,000 More” (Boston, MA: Henry Tolman & Co., 1862); Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 91. At the same performance at Grover’s theater in which Tad appeared onstage, the performers combined “We Are Coming” with “The Battle Cry of Freedom.” Bullard, *Tad and His Father*, 57. When Gibbons visited Lincoln he sang Foster’s musical setting. Stoddard, *Inside the White House*, 172.

¹²³ For Holmes “Army Hymn” see: Oliver Wendell Holmes, “Army Hymn,” *Atlantic Monthly* 7 (June 1861): 757; New York *Herald*, July 4, 186; “The Singing of the Army Hymn,”

captured the tension between unionism and emancipationism in the North's war aims and the way that tension played out between soldiers and civilians. "The Battle Cry of Freedom" became instantly popular with both groups, as its message was one they could all identify with or shape to suit their sentiments. However, because some soldiers recognized the central role of slavery early in the war, they embraced "John Brown's Body" more quickly and enthusiastically. Although civilians never relinquished "The Battle Cry of Freedom" as their favorite patriotic song, their fondness for "John Brown's Body" grew with their commitment to emancipation. By the end of the war, these two songs had achieved such a high status that they were often sung alongside anthems such as "The Star Spangled Banner."¹²⁴ They fulfilled the Federals' need for patriotic and ideological expression in music, just as "Dixie" and "The Bonnie Blue Flag" would for the Confederates.

Dwight's Journal of Music 19 (June 22, 1861): 95. For "Marching Along" see: William B. Bradbury, "Marching Along" (New York, NY: Firth, Pond & Co., 1862); *New York Times*, November 10, 1861.

¹²⁴ For more detail on song performances at the end of the war, see Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 3

GAY DECEIBERS AND BONNIE BLUE FLAGS: THE ANTHEMS OF THE CONFEDERACY

We are a band of brothers, and native to the soil,
Fighting for our Liberty, with treasure, blood and toil;
And when our rights were threatened, the cry rose near and far,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a Single Star!

Chorus

Hurrah! Hurrah! for Southern Rights Hurrah!
Hurrah! for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a Single Star!

As long as the Union was faithful to her trust,
Like friends and like brethren kind we were and just;
But now when Northern treachery attempts our rights to mar,
We hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a Single Star.

Chorus

First, gallant South Carolina nobly made the stand;
Then came Alabama, who took her by the hand;
Next, quickly Mississippi, Georgia and Florida,
All raised on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a Single Star.

Chorus

Ye men of valor, gather round the Banner of the Right,
Texas and fair Louisiana, join us in the fight;
Davis, our loved President, and Stephens, Statesman rare,
Now rally round the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a Single Star.

Chorus

And here's to brave Virginia! the Old Dominion State
With the young Confederacy at length has link'd her fate;
Impell'd by her example, now other States prepare
To hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a Single Star.

Chorus

Then cheer, boys, raise the joyous shout,
For Arkansas and North Carolina have both gone out;
And let another rousing cheer for Tennessee be given

The Single Star of the Bonnie Blue Flag has grown to be Eleven.
Chorus

Then here's to our Confederacy, strong we are and brave,
Like patriots of old, we'll fight our heritage to save;
And rather than submit to shame, to die we would prefer,
So cheer for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a Single Star.

Harry Macarthy, 1861
"The Bonnie Blue Flag."¹²⁵

Although northerners were content with patriotic songs, Confederates wanted anthems. The patriotic songs of the 1860s were expressions of loyalty and dedication, placed firmly within the context of the Civil War. An anthem was a broad nationalistic statement, defining a nation's goals and beliefs. Confederates sought such songs as they cast aside the traditional odes of the Union. They wanted resounding numbers that embodied their new nation, both ideologically and emotionally.

However, these anthems had to be written under difficult wartime conditions that greatly affected their content and distribution. With northern ships blockading southern ports and northern armies occupying southern towns, Confederate song production was severely inhibited. As a result, the anthems adopted by Confederates early in the war remained the most popular throughout the conflict. Furthermore, because such a high percentage of Confederate men were in the army, soldiers exerted even more influence on a song's popularity. The anthems they chose failed to meet the high standards envisioned by many southern nationalists but Confederates, nevertheless, embraced them as powerful symbols of their new republic.

¹²⁵ Harry Macarthy, "The Bonnie Blue Flag" (New Orleans, LA: A. E. Blackmar & Bro., 1861).

When the South seceded it not only forfeited America's flag and constitution, it also discarded its anthems. Almost immediately after South Carolina left the Union, people in the state removed America's traditional anthems from songbooks. In fact, several northern observers reported that the state legislature outlawed "Hail Columbia," "The Star Spangled Banner," and "Yankee Doodle." A year later, the *Richmond Dispatch* spoke for the whole Confederacy in bidding "Hail and Farewell" to "Hail Columbia" because "'Columbia' is no longer a happy land" and "we want to have a new country in its songs as well as in its laws."¹²⁶

Indeed, open rejection of America's traditional anthems became a primary element of Confederate nationalism. Early in the war, a Confederate officer at Leesburg, Virginia, was disgusted by the constant playing of "Hail Columbia" and "Yankee Doodle" from a nearby Union band. He wrote, "To the patriotic heart those airs may be inspiring, but it cannot be said with truth that they possess a high degree of sweetness or melody." In Philadelphia, a group of southern sympathizers were thrown out of the Academy of Music for hissing while the same two songs were being played. Over time, the original sentiments of America's anthems became inverted for many Confederates. Instead of expressing patriotism and bravery, these songs came to represent cowardice and dishonor. For instance, instead of playing the traditional "Rogue's March" when punishing deserters, several Confederate regiments chose "Yankee Doodle."¹²⁷

¹²⁶ George H. Preble, "The Flag of the Confederate States of America," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 38 (1910): 246; *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin*, August 12, 1861; B. J. L., "The Origin of Yankee Doodle," *Dwight's Journal of Music* (July 6 1861): 107; *Richmond Dispatch*, January 16, 1862. There is little evidence that South Carolina actually banned America's three major anthems but the fact that it was even being discussed demonstrated how fervently Confederates rejected these anthems.

¹²⁷ Cooke, *Wearing of the Gray*, 380; Washington Lafayette Gammage, *The Camp, The Bivouac, and The Battlefield: Being the History of the Fourth Arkansas Regiment, from its First Organization Down to the Present Date, its Campaigns and its Battles* (Selma, AL: Cooper & Kimball, 1864), 18; *Richmond Dispatch*, January 16, 1862; Edwin Porter Thompson, *History of the First Kentucky Brigade* (Cincinnati, OH: Caxton Publishing House, 1868), 287.

Some Confederates, however, argued against abandoning America's traditional anthems. They believed that these songs were their birthright and the vile Yankees did not deserve to keep them. The New Orleans *Daily Crescent* made this point forcefully: "These tunes and anthems of right belong to the South; and as they are glorious . . . we should cherish and perpetuate them, instead of throwing them back into the possession of those who have carelessly and wantonly become our enemies." Confederates were especially reluctant to surrender "The Star Spangled Banner" since its author, Francis Scott Key, was from Maryland. The *Daily Richmond Examiner* demanded that its readers "never surrender to the north the noble song. . . . It is Southern in its origin, in sentiments, poetry, and song; in its associations with chivalrous deeds, it is ours." Similarly, the introduction to a Confederate version of "Hail Columbia" declared that "we shall never give up 'Hail Columbia' to the Abolitionists. It is *ours*; and we mean to hold, as one of our dearest rights, this, the grandest march ever composed by mortal man."¹²⁸

More Confederates followed the advice of one secessionist who, after hearing a northern woman perform "Yankee Doodle," recommended that she "leave out the Yankee while she played the Doodle." They struck a balance between banning and embracing America's anthems by composing pro-Confederate lyrics for them. The most popular of these were the ironically titled "Farewell to the Star Spangled Banner" and "Farewell to Yankee Doodle." The latter listed several rationales for secession, as in the following verse:

Yankee Doodle, fare you well,
Rice and cotton flout you;
Once they liked you very well,
But now they'll do without you.

¹²⁸ Svejda, *History of the Star Spangled Banner*, 166; "The National Airs and Songs," *Dwight's Journal of Music* 18 (January 12 1861): 335; Elson, *National Music of America*, 242; Richard Harwell, "The Confederate Search for a National Song," *Lincoln Herald* 52 (February 1950): 35.

It also analyzed northern racial politics:

Doodle's morbid conscience strains,
With Puritanic vigor
To loose the only friendly chains
That ever bound the nigger.

Yet, Doodle knows as well as I,
That when he's come and freed 'em.
He'd see a million niggers die,
Before he's helped to feed 'em.

However, none of the Confederacy's rewritten anthems achieved much success. Instead, Confederates found that the easiest way to replace their old anthems was to borrow someone else's.¹²⁹

Northerners and southerners had revered the "Marseillaise" for decades as the ultimate national anthem. All of the war's patriotic songs were measured against it and both sides used its themes of resisting tyranny and injustice to strengthen their own causes. Northerners performed the "Marseillaise" repeatedly and wrote their own versions but Confederates showed even more

¹²⁹ Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, 25; Curtis R. Burke Journal, Folder 5, Indiana Historical Society, 433-434; Harwell, "Confederate Search," 35; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 264; Carlton McCarthy, *Detailed Minutiae of Soldier Life in the Army of Northern Virginia, 1861-1865* (Richmond, VA: Carleton, McCarthy and Co., 1882), 199; *The Cavalier Songster: Containing a Splendid Collection of Original and Selected Songs: Compiled and Arranged Specifically for the Southern Public* (Staunton, VA: 1865), 25; Anne Sarah Rubin, *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 19; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (Boston, MA: T. O. H. P. Burham, 1863), 369; M. Jeff. Thompson and Theod. Von La Hache, "The New Red, White & Blue" (New Orleans, LA: A. E. Blackmar & Bro., 1861); L., "Origin of Yankee Doodle," 107; Richmond *Dispatch*, June 25, 1861, November 1, 1864, March 13, 1865; San Francisco *Daily Evening Bulletin*, August 12, 1861. In objection to "Farewell to Yankee Doodle," *Dwight's Journal of Music* offered its own version of what it believed the Confederates ought to sing to the melody of "Yankee Doodle." Its final verse read:

Is growing weak in every limb,
And trembles like a noodle,
And we had better make our peace
With angry Yankee Doodle."

L., "Origin of Yankee Doodle," 107.

enthusiasm. For them, it met both of their major criteria for a national anthem: it inspired loyalty and strong emotion from its listeners and was not of northern origin. As a result, the “Marseillaise” served as a sort of interim Confederate national anthem – filling that role until southerners could create a better one themselves.¹³⁰

Confederate soldiers and civilians often performed the “Marseillaise,” especially during the first few months of the war. Not surprisingly, Louisiana soldiers were some of the first to do so. They sang the French anthem as they marched to the front and soon spread it throughout the Confederate ranks. After South Carolinians struck the old American anthems from songbooks, they replaced them with the “Marseillaise” and other French revolutionary songs. Newspapers reported that the tune was played in Charleston as forces surrounded Fort Sumter and, later, when the Confederate flag was first flown over Richmond. Dan Rice, one of the first blackface performers and a northerner, began incorporating it into his southern stage shows immediately after secession. One soldier found a performance of the song by a group of civilians so inspiring that he declared, “If you could sing that to us as we go into battle,” each man “would not only cut his way-through the Yankees, but would eat them, too!” Indeed, the anthem became so strongly associated with the Confederacy that a foreign singing troupe was arrested in New York for

¹³⁰ “A Volunteer Song,” *Independent* 13 (April 25 1861): 8; Bangor, *Daily Whig & Courier*, July 10, 1861; Beadle, *Beadle’s Dime Union Song Book*, 12; John Molter, ed., *The Patriotic Glee Book* (Chicago, IL: H. M. Higgins, 1863), 107; *Port Royal Band Books*; *The Camp-Fire Songster: A Collection of Popular, Patriotic, National, Pathetic and Jolly Songs, Suited for the Camp or March: Containing a Number of Songs Never Before Printed* (New York, NY: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862), 32-33, 41-42; *Liberator*, January 24, 1862; *Little Mac Songster*, 67-68; *Twelve Military and Patriotic Illustrated Songs: Elaborately Colored: In a Novel Form: Series No. 1* (New York, NY: Charles Magnus, 1863); Minard W. Wilson and Samuel Francis Smith, eds, *Songs of the Nation for 1861* (New York, NY: Minard W. Wilson, 1861), 12-13; Stone, “War Music and War Psychology,” 545.

performing it. Even after other Confederate anthems were established, the “Marseillaise” was still heard.¹³¹

Like their northern counterparts, Confederates began fashioning their own lyrics for the French anthem. A. E. Blackmar’s “The Southern Marseillaise” enjoyed a wide circulation and several publishers released versions under the same name. Even two years into the war, Confederates were still offering revisions, such as the mildly popular “Virginia Marseillaise.” Civilians also crafted their own lyrics and sent them to newspapers. More than just poetic effusions, these rewrites enabled Confederates to justify and promote their cause by relating it to such a powerful symbol of freedom and revolution. One version was even played in Montgomery to celebrate Alabama’s secession.¹³²

¹³¹ Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 45; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 625; Elliot H. Fletcher, *The Civil War Letters of Captain Elliot H. Fletcher of Mill Bayou, Mississippi County, Arkansas, July to December, 1861* (Pulaski County Historical Society, 1963), 31; Harwell, *Confederate Music*, 62; Robert Emory Park, “The Twelfth Alabama Infantry, Confederate States Army,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 33 (1905): 291; Preble, “Flag of the Confederate States,” 246; *Charleston Mercury*, April 1, 1861, March 20, 1862; William C. Davis, *A Government of Our Own: The Making of the Confederacy* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1994), 243; David James Carlyon, “Dan Rice’s Aspirational Project: The Nineteenth-Century Circus Clown and Middle-Class Formation” (Ph. D. diss., Northwestern University, 1993), 254; *Richmond Dispatch*, July 1, 1861; Scrapbook., 386, John Hill Hewitt Papers, Box 1, Folder 12, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University; Thomas A. Branson, ed., *The Jack Morgan Songster* (Raleigh, NC: Branson & Farrar, 1864), 22-23; Marshall Moore Brice, *The Stonewall Brigade Band* (Verona, VA: McClure Print. Co., 1967), 34; Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War*, 415; Francis Adams Donaldson, *Inside the Army of the Potomac: The Civil War Experience of Captain Francis Adams Donaldson* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1998), 67; *Illustrated London News*, October 5, 1861; Leinbach and McCorkle, *Regiment Band of the Twenty-sixth*, 235; *Weekly Raleigh Register*, December 11, 1861. Creoles from Mobile, Alabama, also embraced “The Marseillaise.” One artillery unit from the city sang it during every battle. “The Gallant Pelham: How John Pelham, By his Skill and Courage, Wrote His Name High on the Temple of Fame,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 30 (1902): 342.

¹³² Atlanta Amateurs, *Original Songs of the Atlanta Amateurs, Containing More Truth than Poetry: Published by Request of Our Numerous Patrons, Price 25 cts.* (Atlanta, GA: Intelligencer Print., 1861), 4; A. E. Blackmar, “La Marseillaise” (New Orleans, LA: A. E. Blackmar & Bro., 1861); L. P. Cannonge “La Louisianaise” (New Orleans, LA: Sourdes Chassagnac, 1861); M. A. Doyle and Rouget de Lisle, “The Southern Marseillaise Hymn”

However, Confederates soon realized that adopting the “Marseillaise” as their national anthem would not quite work. They needed to do more than simply revise another nation’s anthem, as many northerners were more than happy to point out. The *Musical Review and Musical World* belittled the Confederacy and the National Hymn Committee by suggesting that because “the Southerners appear to be destitute of a National Hymn, perhaps [the Committee] . . . will give the South one of the rejected ones. It might have the merit of being original, at least.” Furthermore, the Confederacy not only had to share the “Marseillaise” with the French but with the Union as well. Northerners continued to perform it throughout the war and published new editions and articles on the anthem as late as 1864.¹³³

Many Confederates also worried about the historical associations of the “Marseillaise.” The New Orleans *Delta* happily reported that it was greeted with “a prolonged hiss from the crowd” when played at The Varieties Theater. The newspaper argued that the “Marseillaise” had long been associated with “anarchy, crime, [and] fraternal bloodshed” adding, “it is a grand liberty ode, but it has been prostituted to all sorts of anarchical purposes, and does not add

(Nashville, TN: Ja. A. McClure, 1861); Scrapbook, 386, John Hill Hewitt Papers, Box 1, Folder 12, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 625; Preble, “Flag of the Confederate States,” 246, 248; Richmond *Dispatch*, October 23, 1861, June 27, 1863; William G. Shepperson, ed., *War Songs of the South* (Richmond, VA: West & Johnston, 1862), 40-42; 48-50; *Songs of the South* (Richmond, VA: J. W. Randolph, 1862), 34-35; Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 78; A. E. Blackmar, “The Southern Marseillaise” (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1862); Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 43; F. W. Rosier, “Virginia Marseillaise” (Richmond, VA: Geo. Dunn & Co., 1863); James Fleming Commonplace Books, Virginia Historical Society, II 50-51; New York *Herald*, January 20, 1861. Ironically, one Confederate version of the “Marseillaise” had exactly the same chorus as one of its northern counterparts.

¹³³ *Musical Review and Musical World* 7 (June 8 1861), 136; *Buckley’s Melodist*, 58; *Musical Review and Musical World* 15 (January 29 1864): 39; “Origin of the ‘Marseillaise,’” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (November 1864): 126-127.

dignity . . . to the American character.” The article was reprinted in northern newspapers, further exposing the Confederacy’s inability to produce its own anthem.¹³⁴

Gradually, Confederates started calling for an indigenous southern literature. Patriotic songs were considered an important part of this movement, and many Confederates recognized them as symbols of their political and intellectual independence. Near the end of 1861, the *Richmond Dispatch* rejoiced that “the South is not only making her own laws and law-books, but her own songs and song-books.” The following year, the preface for a popular music compilation similarly announced that “southern independence has struck the lyre as well as unsheathed the sword.” The songs of the Confederacy represented “the spontaneous outburst of popular feeling” of soldiers and civilians and “give the lie to the assertion of our enemy that this revolution is the work of politicians and party leaders alone.”¹³⁵

Southerners took such statements seriously and performances of Confederate songs became important demonstrations of allegiance. When Virginia announced its secession, several new patriotic songs were included in the celebration. General Basil W. Duke recalled that over time, these songs “were to a certain extent *indicia*, if not exactly tests, of loyalty to the South. They were parts of the profession of faith.” For this reason, southerners learned new songs themselves and taught them to their children. One Union soldier experienced this first-hand, as he heard “at most every house” in Suffolk, Virginia, “the little ones singing disunion songs.”¹³⁶

¹³⁴ *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, January 16, 1861.

¹³⁵ *Southern Literary Messenger* 33 (October 1 1861): 317; Samuel D. Davis, “The Fine Arts at the South,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 34 (November 10 1862):657-659; *Richmond Dispatch*, November 11, 1861; Shepperson, *War Songs*, 2-6.

¹³⁶ Putnam, *Richmond during the War*, 20; Basil Wilson Duke, *Reminiscences of General Basil W. Duke, C. S. A.* (New York, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1911), 293; Charles B. Darling to his father, October 8, 1862, Charles B. Darling Correspondence, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University.

However, it was not the critics or intellectuals but rather the soldiers who chose the Confederacy's anthems. In the North, this trend had provoked some complaints but overall created few problems because patriotic songs, such as "John Brown's Body," merely addressed issues of the war and encouraged perseverance. In the South, finding suitable patriotic songs was more critical because they would become the Confederacy's anthems and would echo through succeeding generations – whether the war was won or lost. Unfortunately for the Confederates, the origins, content, and style of the anthems they chose posed significant problems. Yet, despite their weaknesses they became symbols of Confederate nationalism and were embraced by civilians and soldiers alike.

The first anthem widely adopted by Confederates was, in some ways, the most problematic. "Dixie" was not only written by a northerner but was merely a minstrel ditty – hardly a symbol of southern nationalism. Its author, Daniel Decatur Emmett, was born in Mount Vernon, Ohio, on October 29, 1815, and spent most of his early life there. He was always interested in music, served in the Blackhawk War as a fifer, and wrote his most popular antebellum song, "Old Dan Tucker," in 1830. He created the first minstrel troupe, The Virginia Minstrels, in 1843, and became one of the seminal figures of the genre. In 1857, he was hired to write songs for Bryant's Minstrels, in New York.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ H. A. Smith, "The Author of 'Dixie,'" *Confederate Veteran* 40 (January 1932): 17-18; "How 'Dixie' Came to be Written," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 36 (1908): 369; Robert Sheerin, "'Dixie' and its Author," *Century Illustrated Magazine* 50 (October 1895): 958; "'Uncle Dan' Emmett – 'Dixie's Land,'" *Confederate Veteran* 3 (September 1895): 266; Daniel Decatur Emmett, "Away Down South in Dixie," *New York Clipper* 6 (April 6 1872): 5. For a description of Daniel Decatur Emmett's impact on minstrelsy see: Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and their World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 140-157.

Sometime in March, 1859, the troupe asked him to write a song for a large dance number called a walk-around. Emmett had only two days to write the piece with no other motivation than, in his own words, “It had to be done.” He recalled that on the day he wrote it, “it rained and I stayed indoors. . . . I couldn’t get anything. But a line. ‘I Wish I Was in Dixie’ kept repeating itself in my mind, and I finally took it for my start. The rest wasn’t long in coming.” Emmett first realized that “Dixie” was more than a throwaway piece when he performed it for his wife. She reportedly declared that if Bryant’s Minstrels did not like it, then they would not like anything.¹³⁸

Emmett recalled that “Dixie,” “made a hit at once, and before the end of the week everybody in New York was whistling it.” It became one of Bryant’s Minstrels’ signature pieces and quickly spread throughout the North. By the end of the year, “Dixie” was one of the nation’s most popular songs. It was played at the last White House party held by President James Buchanan and John Hutchinson wrote a new version for Abraham Lincoln’s 1860 presidential campaign. The New Orleans *Delta* described the song’s incredible popularity in a widely reprinted article: “We take it for granted that everybody recognizes the existence of a peculiar song . . . known as ‘Dixie,’ since it is sung, whistled, and played by brass bands without limit, and at all times and places. . . . The air seems to infatuate the ear, and is now practiced from one end of the Union to the other, with various variations, and always with enthusiastic effort.”¹³⁹

¹³⁸ “Dixie,” *National Tribune* (November 26 1881): 3; Emmett, “Away Down South,” 5; C. B. Galbreath, *Daniel Decatur Emmett: Author of “Dixie”* (Columbus, OH: Press of Fred. J. Heer, 1904), 12-13; “How ‘Dixie’ Came to be Written,” 369-370; Hans Nathan, *Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 245; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 46.

¹³⁹ “How ‘Dixie’ Came to be Written,” 370; “Dixie,” *National Tribune*, 3; Galbreath, *Daniel Decatur Emmett*, 19; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 623; Sheerin, “‘Dixie’ and its Author,” 958; *New York Clipper* (August 10 1861): 134; *New York Herald*, March 16, 1861; E. F. Ellet and R. E. Mack, *The Court Circles of the Republic, or, The Beauties and Celebrities of*

However, the South's fondness for "Dixie" developed slowly. Minstrelsy was not as popular there as it was in the North, so traveling minstrel troupes could not spread the song as quickly. Instead, the South's love affair with "Dixie" began when the song was included in a New Orleans "burlesque" called "Pocahontas" in 1860. A little later, the city was treated to a genuine minstrel performance of "Dixie" when J. Newcomb began including it in his act. He went to Charleston, just after South Carolina seceded, where newly enlisted Confederate soldiers crowded into theaters to hear him perform. The military bandsmen present were eager for new pieces, since they had recently abandoned their old Union anthems, and found a suitable alternative in "Dixie." Moving its way east from New Orleans and north into Virginia from Charleston, "Dixie" became the most popular song in the South, just as the region was severing its ties with the North.¹⁴⁰

Undeterred by "Dixie's" origin – or unaware of it – Confederates eagerly made it a striking patriotic symbol of their fledgling nation. As many northerners did with "John Brown's

the Nation: Illustrating Life and Society Under Eighteen Presidents, Describing the Social Features of the Successive Administrations from Washington to Grant (Hartford, CT: Hartford Pub. Co., 1869), 515; John W. Hutchinson, *Hutchinson's Republican Songster: For the Campaign of 1860* (New York, NY: O. Hutchinson, 1860), 66-67; "Our War Songs," *Musical Review and Musical World*, 374; "'Dixie' at the Theatre – A Funny Scene," *Dwight's Journal of Music* 18 (December 8 1860): 291-292. The *Musical Review and Musical World* reported that "Dixie" had a "wonderful effect" when used on the Republican campaign trail. "Our War Songs," *Musical Review and Musical World*, 374.

¹⁴⁰ Harwell, *Confederate Music*, 42; G. A. Kane, "Music and Words of Dixie," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 21 (1893): 213-214; Matthews, "Songs of the War," 623; New Orleans *Daily Picayune* April 11, 19, 1860; Emmett, *Away Down South*, 5; W. J. McMurray, *History of the Twentieth Tennessee Volunteer Infantry, C. S. A.* (Nashville, TN: The Publication Committee, 1904), 490. Some sources argue that Newcomb's performances came first but coverage from the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* indicates that "Pocahontas" preceded him. A few early editions actually credited Newcomb with writing "Dixie." New Orleans *Daily Picayune* April 11, 19, 1860. This eventually led to a copyright dispute between Emmett and Newcomb, which Emmett won. Galbreath, *Daniel Decatur Emmett*, 19-20; L. Newcomb, W. H. Peters, J. C. Viereck, "I Wish I Was In Dixies Land" (New Orleans, LA: P. P. Werlein & Halsey, 1861).

Body,” many southerners thought “Dixie” appeared out of thin air. Brander Matthews apparently forgot the song’s antebellum origin when he recalled how “‘Dixie’ started with the first mutter of war thunder.” John Hill Hewitt demonstrated similar ignorance when he wrote that, although “Dixie” “became spontaneously the *national* tune,” it was “of extremely doubtful origin, though pretty generally believed to have sprung from a *noble* stock of Southern stevedore melodies.” A year later, a British correspondent with the Army of Northern Virginia observed, “It is marvelous with what wild-fire rapidity this tune of ‘Dixie’ has spread over the whole South.” With great perception, he added, “It now bids fair to become the musical symbol of a new nationality, and we shall be fortunate if it does not impose its very name on our country.”¹⁴¹

“Dixie’s” association with southern nationalism developed immediately after secession but it became the Confederacy’s *de facto* anthem when it was played during Jefferson Davis’ inauguration in Montgomery on February 18, 1861. Davis did not choose the song nor did any other government official. Instead, the fateful selection was made by a Prussian bandleader named Herman F. Arnold. Arnold’s band was highly popular and respected in Montgomery and was offered forty dollars to participate in the inauguration. He reportedly asked a young girl what song he should play and she recommended “Dixie,” having recently heard it at a local theater. Arnold followed her advice and played it as Davis made his way towards the capitol and again as the Confederate flag was raised.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 625; Harwell, “Confederate Search,” 30; “Three Months in the Confederate Army,” *Index* 1 (June 26 1862): 140.

¹⁴² Davis, *Government of Our Own*, 159; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 46; Herman F. Arnold Biography, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, 2, 6-7; Various undated newspaper clippings, Herman Frank Arnold Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History; Smith, “Author of ‘Dixie,’” 17; “The Rival ‘Dixies,’” *Literary Digest* 47 (July 26 1913): 134; *Birmingham News*, November 2, 1924.

Arnold recalled that after the ceremony, Davis told him “that he wanted to make Dixie the national air of the South.” If so, this is the closest the Confederate president ever came to officially endorsing the song. Nevertheless, “Dixie’s” inclusion in such an important political event completed its transformation into the Confederate national anthem. Furthermore, in choosing the song, Arnold converted it to notation for a brass band. Thus, like Patrick Gilmore with “John Brown’s Body,” Arnold created a version of “Dixie” that could be adopted by all military bands and played whenever and wherever Confederates soldiers marched.¹⁴³

“Dixie’s” role as the Confederacy’s new anthem became apparent in the months following Davis’ inauguration. It was played in Charleston after Fort Sumter surrendered and as the first Confederate flag was raised over Richmond. Secessionists in contested areas also performed the song. Confederate sympathizers in Baltimore sang it to Union troops as they marched through the city and it was frequently heard in Washington. When serenading Davis, southerners always included “Dixie” and the Confederate president even had his own music box that played the song. Confederates also bought several sheet music editions. One publisher remarked that sales of “Dixie” were “altogether unprecedented” and General Robert E. Lee informed his wife that, by the summer of 1861, there were no copies left for sale in all of Virginia.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Herman F. Arnold Biography, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, 7; Birmingham News, November 2, 1924.

¹⁴⁴ Richmond Dispatch, April 3, 16, June 13, 1861; Davis, *Government of Our Own*, 243; Robert Knox Sneden, *Eye of the Storm: A Civil War Odyssey* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2000), 179; “Conflict of the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment with Citizens,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 29 (1901): 252; Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, April 28, 1865; Petersburg Daily Express, May 4, 1865; Harriett Riddle Davis, “Civil War Recollection of a Little Yankee,” *Columbia Historical Society (Washington D. C.) Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington D. C.* 44-45 (1944): 61; Stoddard, *Inside the White House*, 17-18; Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, 79; Robert E. Lee, Jr., *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York, NY: Konecky

Soon civilians and members of the press, both Federal and Confederate, began acknowledging “Dixie” as the Confederacy’s anthem. A Confederate girl recalled that when General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard triumphantly arrived in Richmond after taking Fort Sumter, “the popular and now national air, Dixie . . . was loudly called for.” The Richmond *Dispatch* crowned it the “National Anthem of Secession” a month before Virginia seceded. The song was “called for in Southern Theatres, and received with cheers and applause, while Hail Columbia and the Star Spangled Banner are hissed down.” Disregarding the song’s northern authorship, the *Dispatch* claimed it “belongs to the South by right of seizure, as do the forts, the arsenals, the mints.” Following the state’s secession, the *Dispatch* reported that the audience at a recent concert demanded the song be played, noting that “Dixie has become the national air of the South already.” A few months later, the New York *Times* acknowledged that “the Southern people, by general consent, have adopted [‘Dixie’] as their national air” and, in 1863, a San Francisco paper lamented that the Confederacy had found an anthem while the Union was still looking for one.¹⁴⁵

Confederate soldiers had a strong preference for “Dixie.” As Confederate surgeon Junius Bragg informed his wife, “‘Dixie’ is a favorite with me. I never grow wearied of it.” It was frequently heard at Manassas and several civilians witnessed soldiers singing it as they marched off to war. When some Union bands celebrated Independence Day in 1861 by playing Union songs, a Confederate band responded with “Dixie.” As the war continued, the song remained popular. Lee’s men played it as they left and returned to Virginia during their invasion of Pennsylvania, soldiers holding their lines at Knoxville and Missionary Ridge were emboldened

& Konecky, 1904), 36. The flag-raising in Richmond was the same one cited above in which “The Marseillaise” was played. Davis, *Government of Our Own*, 243.

¹⁴⁵ Putnam, *Richmond During the War*, 46; Richmond *Dispatch*, March 25, April 24, 1861; New York *Times*, June 16, 1861; San Francisco *Daily Evening Bulletin*, August 24, 1863.

by it, and General George Pickett's men sang it while digging trenches at Five Forks. "Dixie" even became a mess call in the Confederate Navy.¹⁴⁶

Perhaps the most incredible aspect of "Dixie's" popularity was the way it affected language. Before the Civil War, Dixie was not a commonly used nickname for the South but the success of Emmett's song forever linked the name to the region. Union soldiers frequently called the South "Dixie's Land" and the word was even included in Confederate textbooks. As the new nickname became common, a debate over its origin and precise meaning emerged, resulting in three theories. The strangest was that Dixie was synonymous with Paradise or Heaven. Proponents of this notion stated that there was a plantation on Manhattan Island owned by a benevolent master named Dix. For reasons that varied, depending on the storyteller, his slaves were sent to the South, where they sang about their desire to return to "Dixie's Land." Another theory held that Dixie was originally a nickname for Louisiana because the state's French residents commonly referred to ten dollar notes as "Dix notes." The most popular explanation, and the one supported by Emmett himself, was that the word was a corruption of

¹⁴⁶ Junius Newport Bragg and Helen Bragg Gaughan, *Letters of a Confederate Surgeon, 1861-1865* (Camden, AK: The Hurley Company, 1960), 100; Cooke, *Wearing of the Grey*, 379-380; J. K. M'Whorter, "Caring for the Soldiers in the Sixties," *Confederate Veteran* 29 (November-December 1921): 409; G. Moxley Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer* (New York, NY: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905), 57; Alice West Allen, "Recollections of War in Virginia," *Confederate Veteran* 23 (June 1915): 268; "Interview with Lucinda Davis," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938, Oklahoma Narratives, Volume XIII*, 62, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; Margaret B. S. Robertson, "My Childhood Recollections of the War," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 44 (June 1923): 217; Smith, "Author of 'Dixie,'" 19; John Bell Hood, *Advance and Retreat: Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate States Armies* (New Orleans, LA: G. T. Beauregard, 1880), 54; Giles and Lasswell, *Rags and Hope*, 191; Allen and Renick, *Sergeant Allen and Private Renick*, 252; McMurray, *History of the Twentieth*, 137; George E. Pickett, *The Heart of a Soldier: As Revealed in the Letters of Genl. George E. Pickett CSA* (New York, NY: Seth Moyle, 1913), 171; Harwell, "Confederate Carousal," 84. The gulf between soldier and civilian popularity for "Dixie" was not as great as that of "John Brown's Body."

“Mason and Dixon’s Line” which separated Maryland from Pennsylvania. Regardless of its specific origin, minstrel performers had been using the word since 1850 or earlier. Emmett’s song merely made it part of the colloquial vocabulary.¹⁴⁷

There were several reasons for “Dixie’s” incredible hold on the Confederates. The song’s melodic charm was unquestionable and its rhythm was well-suited to marching. However, these elements alone do not make a song a national anthem. Patriotic lyrics are usually essential for such pieces, but Emmett’s were, for the most part, highly inappropriate. They told a typical minstrel story about the “Misses” marrying “Will de Weaber,” whom Emmett condemned as “a gay deceiber” for planning to outlive her and inherit her plantation. Only the first verse and chorus contained any semblance of southern nationalism:

I Wish I was in de land ob cotton,
Old times dar am not forgotten
Look away! look away! look away! Dixie Land.
In Dixie Land whar I was born in,
Early on one frosty mornin’,
Look away! look away! look away! Dixie Land.

Den I wish I was in Dixie,
Hooray! hooray!
In Dixie Land I’ll take my stand,
To lib and die in Dixie,
Away, away, away down south in Dixie,
Away, away, away down south in Dixie.

¹⁴⁷ Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 265; “Three Months in the Confederate Army,” 140; John Robert Dow to his sister, February 2, 1862, Dow Family Papers, Folder 2, Filson Historical Society; M. B. Moore, *Dixie Primer For the Little Folks, Second Edition* (Raleigh, NC: Branson, Farrar & Co., 1863); T. C. De Leon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the 60’s* (New York, NY: G. W. Dillingham Company, 1909), 358; W. H. Russell, “Mr. Russell’s Letters,” *New York Evangelist* 32 (August 1 1861): 1; Emmett, “Away Down South,” 5; Nathan, *Dan Emmett*, 263-264; Mildred Lewis Rutherford, “Origin of the Word ‘Dixie,’” *Miss Rutherford’s Scrap Book* 6 (June 1923): 10; “Dixie,” *National Tribune*, 3; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 623; Kane, “Music and Words,” 213; Hans Nathan, “Dixie,” *Musical Quarterly* 35 (January 1949): 61, 76; Smith, “Author of ‘Dixie,’” 17.

The chorus was especially resonant for Confederates who saw themselves as defending their homes and standing firm against northern aggression. Of its third and fourth lines, General John B. Gordon wrote, “these are the words . . . and the only words, which are inseparably associated with the great song and the great struggle.” Similarly, the Richmond *Enquirer*’s analysis of “Dixie” focused only on the first verse and chorus. It argued that the song was “so full of inspiration to the Southern soldier” because it “answered very well to remind him of his home and the many wrongs that he believed were heaped upon him by a powerful foe.”¹⁴⁸

Confederates went to considerable lengths to justify the rest of the song as a national anthem. The Richmond *Dispatch* laboriously examined “Dixie” for any signs of Confederate partisanship. It argued that “Will de Weaber” was, in fact, Lincoln, who was seducing the American public, or the “Misses,” into symbolically marrying him. According to this line of reasoning, Emmett considered the act so heinous that he repeatedly urged southerners to “look away!” The “Misses” died in the third verse and Emmett began the fourth with the line: “Now, here’s a health to the next old Misses.” The *Dispatch* interpreted this as the South’s death under Republican rule and rebirth as the Confederacy. The article triumphantly asked: “Can any one now fail to see that, in the verses of this deservedly popular song, an epitome is given of the events which, since last November, have shaken this land?” Emmett, himself, never endorsed such a reading. Instead, he reportedly declared that if he had known the Confederates would make “Dixie” their anthem, “I will be damned if I’d have written it!”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Emmett, “I Wish I was in Dixie’s Land;” A. L. Dowdell, *Joint Committee Appointed to Consider and Report on a Selection of New Words for ‘Dixie’* (Opelika, AL: United Daughters of the Confederacy, Alabama Division, 1904), 4; Scrapbook, 386, Hewitt Papers, Box 1, Folder 12, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University.

¹⁴⁹ Richmond *Dispatch*, March 25, 1861; Emmett, “I Wish I was in Dixie’s Land;” De Leon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 359.

Another potential explanation for “Dixie’s” popularity was its racial elements. “Dixie” was a minstrel song and, like all such pieces, was written in a dialect designed to comically approximate that of southern blacks. Thus, Emmett’s implied speaker was an African American, albeit one portrayed by a white performer in blackface. Confederates were surely aware of this but nevertheless adopted “Dixie” as their anthem. This was even more remarkable because minstrelsy was not as popular in the South, although the genre increasingly appealed to Confederates as the war progressed. This newfound appreciation was likely rooted in Confederate apprehension over slave loyalty. It soothed Confederates to see stage portrayals of happy slaves who loved the South. “Dixie” perfectly suited this mood, by describing a slave who was not only born in the South but loved his mistress enough to show concern over her choice of mate. Indeed, the slave in “Dixie” was even willing to “take my stand” to live in the slaveholding South until he died.¹⁵⁰

As a result, Confederates were comforted by accounts of slaves singing “Dixie.” A Charleston *Mercury* correspondent in Richmond was pleased to report that the “everlasting ‘Dixie’ . . . swells with patriotic ardor from the thick lips of a genuine unburnt cork negro.” Similarly, a lesson in a children’s reader designed to teach the words “negro” and “Dixie” included the lines:

Did you ev-er hear the ne-gro men sing Dix-ie?
Oh yes, and I have seen them pick cot-ton too.

¹⁵⁰ Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 65-69.

By putting “Dixie” in the mouths of their slaves, Confederates removed the song from the minstrel genre and portrayed it as a genuine statement of black sentiment. It assured them that African Americans were happy as slaves and loyal to the new republic.¹⁵¹

With time, “Dixie’s” status as the Confederate national anthem became self-perpetuating. The longer the song enjoyed its elevated status, the more associations it developed and the more Confederates became emotionally attached to it. The song remained particularly resonant for soldiers because it became a symbol of their sacrifice and commitment to the Confederate cause. For Junius Bragg, “Dixie” “brings to mind the memory of friends who loved it – friends, the light of whose lives were extinguished in blood, whose spirit were quenched in violence.”¹⁵² This association with the war made the lyrics almost inconsequential and continued to fuel “Dixie’s” popularity in the South for generations.

Many southerners, however, acknowledged “Dixie’s” lyrical problems and sought more appropriate lyrics. As with “John Brown’s Body,” “Dixie” encountered such criticism immediately. After first showing it to Bryant’s Minstrels, Emmett was told that his first verse was blasphemous and it was dropped in subsequent versions. However, many Confederates were more concerned about the song’s racial implications and apparent lack of patriotism. As a result, multiple revisions of Emmett’s lyrics appeared during the war. Most of these were fairly predictable appeals to southern nationalism, with titles such as “North Carolina Dixie,” “Awake!

¹⁵¹ Charleston *Mercury*, June 24, 1861; A. De V. Chaudron, *The First Reader, Second Edition* (Mobile, AL: W. G. Clark & Co., 1864), 49.

¹⁵² Bragg and Gaughan, *Letters of the Confederate Surgeon*, 100.

To arms in Dixie,” and the more obviously titled, “Dixie with Southern Words,” and all removed its minstrel dialect. However, few enjoyed a wide circulation.¹⁵³

The one exception was written by General Albert Pike. Born in Massachusetts, Pike had spent his career as a newspaper editor before becoming a Confederate officer. His version of “Dixie” first appeared in the *Natchez Courier* on April 30, 1861, and was widely reprinted. The spirit of recruitment that dominated the war’s early days was reflected in the song’s lyrics, especially the first verse:

Southrons, hear your county call you
Up! less worse than death befall you!
To arms! to arms! to arms! in Dixie!
Lo! all the beacon fires alighted,
Let all hearts be now united!
To arms! to arms! to arms! in Dixie!

Sometimes referred to as a “War Song,” the piece’s martial spirit was best reflected in the chorus, which encouraged Confederates to achieve independence through an aggressive strategy:

Advance the flag of Dixie!
Hurrah! hurrah!
For Dixie’s Land we’ll take our stand,
And live and die for Dixie!
To arms! to arms! and conquer peace for Dixie!

Building on Confederate interpretations of Emmett’s original, the second verse called on readers to defend their homes against the northern “alliance” of Republicans and abolitionists:

¹⁵³ Galbreath, *Daniel Decatur Emmett*, 13; *Weekly Raleigh Register*, December 11, 1861; Shepperson, *War Songs*, 44-46; *Richmond Dispatch*, October 23, 1861. The original first verse of “Dixie” read:

Dis worl’ was made in jiss six days,
An’ finish’s up in various ways;
Look away! look away! look away! Dixie Land!
Dey den made Dixie trim an’ nice,
But Adam call’d it ‘Paradise.’
Look away! look away! look away! Dixie Land!

Galbreath, *Daniel Decatur Emmett*, 13.

Hear the Northern thunders mutter!
Northern flags in South winds flutter!
To arms! to arms! to arms! in Dixie!
Send them back your fierce defiance!
Stamp upon the cursed alliance
To arms! to arms! to arms! in Dixie!¹⁵⁴

Although Pike's revision was widely circulated, it never came close to achieving the success of Emmett's original version. It was occasionally performed but, like "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," its poetic language made it difficult to sing. As long as soldiers remained the primary consumers and promoters of music, the most popular tunes would always have words that were easy to memorize and perform. Emmett's lyrics had that advantage. For fighting men, these aspects, along with its catchy melody, superceded any thematic or political shortcomings and "Dixie" remained their favorite anthem for the entire war and the same was true for civilians.¹⁵⁵

Another reason some Confederates sought to discard or rewrite "Dixie" was that it remained popular in the North. As with the "Marseillaise" many northerners had strong attachments to "Dixie" and never fully relinquished it. After secession, Union military bands even played it alongside traditional anthems during celebrations of George Washington's Birthday and the anniversary of Bunker Hill. Northern soldiers found "Dixie" a particularly

¹⁵⁴ Charles W. Hubner, ed., *War Poets of the South and Confederate Camp-Fire Songs* (Atlanta, GA: U. P. Boyd, 1896), 84; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 48; Smith, "Author of 'Dixie,'" 19; Harwell, "Confederate Search," 29; Albert Pike, J. C. Vierick, "The War Song of Dixie" (New Orleans, LA: P. P. Werlein & Halsey, 1861); *Cavalier Songster*, 44-46; *The Dixie Land Songster* (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1863), 14-15; *Washington Daily Morning Chronicle*, February 2, 1865.

¹⁵⁵ Entry for October 20, 1862, Curtis R. Burke Journal, Folder 1, Indiana Historical Society; T. A. Hamilton, "Words for 'Dixie,'" *Confederate Veteran* 11 (November 1903): 487; Matthews, "Songs of the War," 623.

appropriate marching tune when first entering the South and, like southerners, often wrote their own versions.¹⁵⁶

However, as time passed, Confederate ownership of “Dixie” became more apparent and it lost popularity with northerners. Louis Moreau Gottschalk played the song during his concerts early in the war but removed it from his act in 1864 because of its Confederate associations. A Union soldier recalled that the song “had been in vogue for a couple of years” but when the hardships of war increased, “we shot at any man who sang ‘Dixie.’” The Grand Army of the Republic periodical, *The National Tribune*, reflected that “after the South appropriated the air . . . for a time it was not heard at the North.” Northern performances of “Dixie” never entirely ceased but it was clear during the second half of the war that the song’s connection to the Confederacy had become its most prominent characteristic.¹⁵⁷

This link held throughout the Civil War despite “Dixie’s” history, dialect, and lyrical content. Emmett’s creation was barely applicable to the Confederate revolt but through powerful

¹⁵⁶ Bangor *Daily Whig & Courier*, July 10, 1861; George A. Bruce, *The Twentieth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1865* (New York, NY: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1906), 79; Bufkin, “Union Bands,” 298; Entry for January 13, 1862, William E. Limbarker Diary, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; New York *Herald*, February 23, July 3, 1861; Ripley *Bee*, April 17, 1862; San Francisco *Daily Evening Bulletin*, June 17, 1861, May 2, 1862; Leander Stillwell, *The Story of a Common Soldier of Army Life in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Erie, KS: Press of the Erie Record, 1917), 52; Bentley, *History of the 77th Illinois*, 93; Cogswell, *History of the Eleventh*, 286; Chauncey Herbert Cooke, *Soldier Boy’s Letters to His Father and Mother, 1861-5* (News-Office, 1915), 16; New York *Times*, August 27, 1861; Quint, *Potomac and the Rapidan*, 121; Eugene Fitch Ware, *The Lyon Campaign in Missouri, Bring a History of the First Iowa Infantry, 1861* (Topeka, KS: Crane & Company, 1907), 81; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Govt. Print. Off., 1880-1901) Series 1, Volume X/1, 60; Beadle, *Beadle’s Dime Union Song Book*, 35; Frank Leslie’s *Illustrated Newspaper*, May 4, 1861; John Brown, and “The Union Right or Wrong” Songster, 53-54; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 623; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 52; *The Yankee Doodle Songster: A Collection of National Songs: Comic and Patriotic* (Philadelphia, PA: A. Winch, 1861), 10-11, 39-40; Wiley, *Life of Billy Yank*, 162; Wisconsin *State Register*, July 6, 1861.

¹⁵⁷ Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, 229; Ware, *Lyon Campaign*, 96; “Dixie,” *National Tribune*, 3.

and repeated attempts to associate it with the Confederacy, it became the nation's new anthem. Indeed, "Dixie" was so central to many southerners' sense of loyalty that even attempts to repair its obvious flaws failed. However, "Dixie" was not the Confederacy's sole anthem. Confederates enthusiastically embraced other songs to express their feelings about the Civil War and their new nation. As in the North, several secondary anthems came and went but only one enjoyed the same continuous popularity as "Dixie:" "The Bonnie Blue Flag."

Of the four major Union and Confederate patriotic songs, Harry Macarthy's "The Bonnie Blue Flag" was the only one specifically designed and marketed as an anthem. Macarthy was born in England in 1834 and immigrated to the United States in 1849. In the 1850s, he began staging "Personation concerts," in which he comically impersonated different ethnic groups, especially African Americans and the Irish. By 1860, he had a good reputation in the South and had earned himself the nickname, "The Arkansas Comedian."¹⁵⁸

Macarthy was in Jackson, Mississippi, on January 9, 1861, and witnessed the state's secession convention. After Mississippi declared its independence, the president of the convention was given a blue flag with a white star and several witnesses cheered, "Hurrah for the bonnie blue flag!" Inspired by the scene, Macarthy wrote a new song that celebrated the Confederate states and gave their reasons for seceding. Setting his lyrics to the traditional tune, "The Irish Jaunting Car," he performed "The Bonnie Blue Flag" in Jackson, where it was well received. The government of Mississippi immediately recognized its potential as a propaganda

¹⁵⁸ Harwell, *Confederate Music*, 57; Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 60; Richard Harwell, "The Star of the Bonnie Blue Flag," *Civil War History* 4 (September 1958): 285-286; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 10, 1861. Why Arkansas was chosen for Macarthy's nickname is unclear but it was probably due to his strong following in that state.

tool and printed a thousand copies. During the next few months, A. E. Blackmar published the song in New Orleans, where it became extremely popular.¹⁵⁹

Macarthy traveled all over the Confederacy successfully promoting “The Bonnie Blue Flag.” During these performances, he emphasized the song’s final verses, which listed the states of the Confederacy. When he sang the name of each state, members of the audience from that state would cheer. When the crowd had reached a fever-pitch, Macarthy’s wife, Lottie Estelle, would come onstage and wave a blue flag with a white star. Such showmanship was highly successful and the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* reported that the song “brings down the house in shouts of applause” and was “encored wherever sung.”¹⁶⁰

Soldiers were Macarthy’s primary audience and his stage performances of “The Bonnie Blue Flag” were designed to inspire them. During a show at the New Orleans Academy of Music, one soldier recalled, “Before the first verse was ended, the audience had gone wild, and hats by the hundreds were going into the air.” During the second verse, “the boys rose to their feet, and yelled and yelled” until Macarthy could no longer be heard. By the time he sang the third verse, “the audience had caught on to the chorus, and it was wafted into the streets, and the whole crowd turned into a Hallelujah meeting.” One Texas soldier was so moved that he reportedly shouted “a series of Texas yells” and continued to do so after the rest of the crowd had

¹⁵⁹ “About the Bonnie Blue Flag,” *Confederate Veteran* 9 (June 1901): 273; De Leon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 355; Henry Winter Harper, “The Bonnie Blue Flag,” *Confederate Veteran* 36 (June 1928): 209; A. J. Thomas, “About ‘Bonnie Blue Flag,’” *Confederate Veteran* 3 (October 1895): 301; Harwell, “The Star,” 286; Macarthy, “Bonnie Blue Flag.” Macarthy’s original editions of “The Bonnie Blue Flag” were dedicated to Albert Pike.

¹⁶⁰ Wharton, *War Songs*, 23; Harwell, “Confederate Search,” 32; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, August 15, 1861.

stopped cheering. A police officer in the theater asked him to be quiet and the soldier hit him, provoking a small riot.¹⁶¹

Although Macarthy's subsequent performances of "The Bonnie Blue Flag" were not quite so tumultuous, soldiers continued to respond passionately. Sometimes he traveled to the armies for his shows, such as when he performed for General Braxton Bragg's men at Pensacola or the Texas Brigade at Richmond. One Alabama soldier recalled that when Macarthy performed for his regiment, he "electrified the great assembly. Every man at once seemed to lose his reason. They sprang to their feet, rushed forward frantically waving their caps and wildly gesticulating, some out of joy beating comrades with fists, others embracing and kissing, still others shouting and yelling like mad men."¹⁶²

In 1862, Macarthy had several engagements in Richmond that were frequently attended by soldiers. In reviews of these shows, the *Dispatch* echoed the *Daily Picayune*: "His patriotic ballads . . . bring down the house in shouts of applause" and "are rendered in a spirit which excites his audience to the highest pitch of enthusiasm." This was partially the result of a slight change in the act. Macarthy now appeared on stage in a full Confederate uniform and played the part of a soldier leaving for war. When he sang "The Bonnie Blue Flag," his wife still came onstage with a flag but now also embraced her departing sweetheart. One soldier wrote after such a performance that he "had never seen anything equal to the scene." Before long, Macarthy became one of the most well-known and beloved performers in the South, earning himself a new

¹⁶¹ McMurray, *History of the Twentieth*, 492-493; William Fort Smith, "Presentation of Bonnie Blue Flag," *Confederate Veteran* 3 (July 1895): 216.

¹⁶² Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 59; Giles and Lasswell, *Rags and Hope*, 53, 91; Edward Young McMorries, *History of the First Regiment, Alabama Volunteer Infantry, C. S. A.* (Montgomery, AL: Brown Print. Co., 1904), 21-22.

nickname: “The Rebel Minstrel.” With the soldiers behind “The Bonnie Blue Flag,” it spread quickly through the South and soon rivaled “Dixie” as the Confederacy’s unofficial anthem.¹⁶³

Civilians responded with equal enthusiasm. By the summer of 1861, women and local bands were already performing “The Bonnie Blue Flag” for soldiers. Over the course of the war, Blackmar issued at least eleven editions of the song and even published a *Bonnie Blue Flag Song Book* that went through at least three editions. Some Confederates even preferred it to “Dixie.” When General James Longstreet passed through Texas early in the war, he observed that the women there enjoyed “Dixie” but “the Texas girl did not ascend to a state of incandescent charm until the sound of [“The Bonnie Blue Flag”] reached her ear. Then her feet rose in gleeful springs, her limbs danced, her hands patted, her eyes glowed . . . she seemed lifted in the air, thrilled and afloat.” Similarly, a Union prisoner at Andersonville recalled that the song was the Confederate favorite “by long odds. Women sang, men whistled, and the so-called musicians played it wherever we went.” At Richmond, “it rang upon us constantly from some source or another.”¹⁶⁴

Although “Dixie” was widely regarded as the Confederacy’s national anthem, “The Bonnie Blue Flag” was just as popular, especially on the home-front. Confederate women, in particular, claimed the song as their personal anthem and frequently performed it to demonstrate their loyalty because it did a far better job of expressing the tenets of Confederate nationalism

¹⁶³ Richmond *Dispatch* February 18, March 8, 1862; *Southern Illustrated News*, December 13, 1862.

¹⁶⁴ Elizabeth Lindsay Lomax, *Leaves from an Old Washington Diary* (New York, NY: Books, Inc., 1943), 158-159; Daniel E. Sutherland, *Seasons of War: The Ordeal of a Confederate Community, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 58; Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 264; Harwell, “The Star,” 287; *Bonnie Blue Flag Song Book* (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1863); James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs of the Civil War in America* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott & Co., 1896), 30-31; John McElroy, *Andersonville: A Story of Rebel Military Prisons, Fifteen Months as a Guest of the So-called Southern Confederacy* (Toledo, MI: D. R. Locke, 1879), 333-334.

than Emmett's minstrel ditty. "The Bonnie Blue Flag" declared that the Confederates were fighting for freedom because the North had betrayed them and celebrated the states that joined the movement. Indeed, Macarthy, like George Frederick Root, understood that leaving space for his readers to impose their own political ideology was important. Some editions of the song began the second line with "Fighting for our property" which suggested a defense of slavery but also conveyed the same sense of fighting for home that many soldiers heard in "Dixie." Eventually, Macarthy replaced "property" with the oldest of American catch-words "liberty." In so doing, Macarthy widened the ideological possibilities of the song even further.¹⁶⁵

"The Bonnie Blue Flag" also succeeded because it served a basic need for Confederates that "Dixie" did not: it was a flag song. Songs praising the flag were vital for patriotic expression in the nineteenth century and Confederates needed one because they had disowned "The Star Spangled Banner." However, it was also in this regard that "The Bonnie Blue Flag" showed its greatest weakness. Of the several flags adopted by the Confederacy, none resembled the one celebrated in the song. Macarthy was not opposed to updating "The Bonnie Blue Flag" – he added verses when new states joined the Confederacy – but he could not change his description of the flag because it was central to his chorus and title. This problem likely prevented "The Bonnie Blue Flag" from usurping "Dixie" as the Confederacy's primary anthem.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 57. Uses of "The Bonnie Blue Flag" and its variants by Confederate women will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 4.

¹⁶⁶ Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War*, 38; Harper, "Bonnie Blue Flag," 209; Harwell, "The Star," 286; Harry Macarthy. Macarthy's list of seceded states was also problematic because it gave their order of secession incorrectly. Because "The Bonnie Blue Flag" described the wrong flag, Macarthy tried to write a more appropriate piece with, "Origin of the Stars and Bars" but it had little success. Harry Macarthy, "Origin of the Stars and Bars" (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1862).

In addition, Macarthy's wartime activities did not help his anthem's popularity. Although his subsequent songs were successful, such as the recruitment song, "The Volunteer," and his number about Missouri secession, "Missouri," Macarthy made fewer and fewer public performances as the war progressed. This was partially due to the Confederate draft, which he avoided by having the British government issue him citizenship papers. A further shadow fell on Macarthy's loyalty to the Confederacy when he fled the South for Philadelphia sometime in 1864. John Hill Hewitt was so disgusted with this act, that he wrote his own parody of "The Bonnie Blue Flag," beginning:

I've just come out from Dixie Land, where rebels flocked to hear
The humbug sound I used to sing about the 'Volunteer,'
The 'Bonnie Blue Flag' – 'Missouri,' too, 'Our Flag' and "Pretty Jane";
But now – I think, I'll change my tune, and not go back again.
Huzza! Huzza! – I've dodged the shells of war,
And Harry McCarthy has come off without a single scar!

From the North, Macarthy briefly toured the West Indies before returning to Britain. He continued to perform to great acclaim, even receiving praise from Charles Dickens, and returned to America in 1867. Nevertheless, "The Bonnie Blue Flag" remained popular, but draft-dodging and defection did not endear Macarthy to those Confederates who were aware of his actions.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Harry Macarthy, "The Volunteer, or, It's My Country's Call" (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1861); Harry Macarthy, "Missouri: or, A Voice from the South" (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1861); *Bonnie Blue Flag Song Book*, 6-7; Wirt Armistead Cate, *Two Soldiers: The Campaign Diaries of Thomas J. Key, CSA and Robert J. Campbell, USA* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1938), 54; James Fleming Commonplace Books, Virginia Historical Society, Vol. 4; Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 264; Scrapbook, 386, John Hill Hewitt Papers, Box 1, Folder 12, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University; Harwell, "The Star," 287, 289. "The Volunteer" enjoyed a limited circulation and "Missouri" went through nine editions. Macarthy's performances in the British Empire can be traced in his postwar song book: Harry Macarthy, *Harry Macarthy, The Arkansas Comedian; His Book of Original Songs, Ballads and Anecdotes, as Presented by the Author in His Well Known Personation Concerts* (Indianapolis, IN: State Sentinel Steam Printing Establishment, 1870). Dickens' review appears on page 37.

Although neither the contents nor the authors of “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag” were ideally suited to southern nationalism, the two songs remained the Confederacy’s most popular anthems throughout the war. They were often performed together, sometimes as a medley. General John B. Gordon recalled that his men sang both songs after enlisting and a woman heard Confederate soldiers sing them as they marched to Manassas. “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag” were played to rally Confederate soldiers at Vicksburg, by calliopes on steamers heading down the Mississippi, and by women traveling with the army in 1865. As one soldier wrote, “At night when the bands strike up ‘Dixie’ or the ‘Bonnie Blue Flag’ the boys make these . . . groves ring with their . . . yells.”¹⁶⁸ Both songs expressed the Confederates’ desire to defend their homes, both subtly addressed slavery, and, most importantly, both had likeable and memorable melodies with strong choruses that lent themselves to group singing.

However, many Confederates remained unhappy with “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag.” A Chattanooga newspaper complained that contemporary songwriters “have lamentably fallen short of their brothers of former revolutionary days” and an Irish soldier cursed “the many metrical villainies which have been palmed off on the long-suffering Southern people, under the name of National Anthems.” “Dixie’s” minstrel dialect provoked complaints from several sources. One Confederate rejected the Richmond *Dispatch*’s claim that “Dixie” was the national

¹⁶⁸ Leinbach and McCorkle, *Regiment Band of the Twenty-Sixth*, 234; Gordon, *Reminiscences*, 10; Cornelia McDonald, *A Diary with Reminiscences of the War and Refugee Life in the Shenandoah Valley, 1860-1865* (Nashville, TN: Cullom & Ghertner, 1935), 51; Benny Pryor Ferguson, “The Bands of the Confederacy: An Examination of the Musical and Military Contributions of the Bands and Musicians of the Confederate States of America” (Ph. D. Thesis, North Texas State University, 1987), 149; *Daily Mississippian*, January 31, 1864; Mary Darby De Treville, *South Carolina Women in the Confederacy*, edited by Mrs. James Conner (Columbia, SC: State Company, 1907), II, 187; William Williston Heartsill, *Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days in the Confederate Army: A Journal Kept by W. W. Heartsill, For Four Years, One Month, and One Day, or, Camp Life: Day-by-Day of the W. P. Lane Rangers, from April 19th, 1861, to May 20th 1865*, edited by Bell Irvin Wiley (W. W. Heartsill, 1876), 132.

anthem because it was not written by a northerner but by slaves. “I make no objections to the tune,” he wrote, “it is bold and even pleasing; yet it smells too strongly of the ‘nigger’ to assume a dignified rank of a National song.” The *Mobile Mercury* agreed, arguing it was “absurd to imagine that Dixie, a dancing, capering, rowdyish, bacchanalian negro air” could ever be sung by “a nation of *free* men . . . with any respect for themselves.” The *Southern Punch* showed similar contempt for “The Bonnie Blue Flag.” It argued that Macarthy’s rhymes were forced, the music was “stolen outright,” and its inferiority was so pronounced that Europeans would laugh at it.¹⁶⁹

A publisher in Mobile inexplicably sought to solve this problem by promoting a Confederate version of the “National Hymn” contest held in the North. However, instead of offering a prize for a new anthem, the organizers sought to compile a songster from the best submissions and offered fifty dollars for the strongest one. The editors complained that although “many Song Books have been issued to supply the great demand for that species of literature in our Army” they were almost all “ilily suited, if not adverse, to the spirit and purposes of our people.” The winning piece was only two verses long and did not lend itself to singing. However, it did contain typical rhetoric about southern victory against superior numbers, as in the second verse:

Her sons are aye brave,
And no chains can enslave,
Though countless the hordes of their foemen may be;
Ah! see, even now,
As with battle-stained brow,
They vanquish the Northmen on land and on sea!

¹⁶⁹ *Southern Illustrated News*, November 29, 1862; Keiley, *In Vinculis*, 103; Richmond *Dispatch*, May 11, 1861; New York *Times*, June 16, 1861; “Short Chapter from a Popular History of the Campaign of 1863,” *Southern Punch* (August 15 1863): 6-7.

There is no record of these lyrics or the other original pieces in *The Southern Soldiers' Prize Songster* being reprinted or performed anywhere during the war.¹⁷⁰

Occasionally debates over the proper Confederate anthem were more lighthearted. While encamped at Centreville, Virginia, Generals Earl Van Dorn, G. W. Smith, Joseph Johnston, James Longstreet, and Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard engaged in a drunken argument over what song ought to be the Confederacy's national anthem. Longstreet's aide, G. Moxley Sorrel, witnessed the exchange, noting that all agreed that "Dixie" lacked "sufficient dignity." Van Dorn "thought the noble strain from [Vincenzo Bellini's] 'I Puritani' was the thing for the Confederates" and began to sing it. At this, Longstreet bellowed "up on the table and show yourself; we can't see you" and Van Dorn responded, "Not unless you stand by me!" Before long, Van Dorn, Longstreet, and Smith "were clinging to each other on a narrow table and roaring out the noble bars." Despite this demonstration, Sorrel noted that "the soldiers declined the impressive air and stuck to their Dixie." And so did most Confederates.¹⁷¹

The only real challenger to "Dixie" and "The Bonnie Blue Flag" was "Maryland, My Maryland." On April 19, 1861, the Sixth Massachusetts was attacked by a secessionist mob in Baltimore, resulting in fatalities on both sides. At that time, Baltimore poet and Confederate-sympathizer, James Ryder Randall, was teaching English at a Louisiana college. He recalled that reading about the incident "inflamed my mind" and he could not sleep. Sounding like Julia Ward Howe, he recounted how "some powerful spirit appeared to possess me," near midnight, "and almost involuntarily I proceeded to write that song of 'My Maryland.'" Despite this divine

¹⁷⁰ *The Southern Soldiers' Prize Songster: Containing Martial and Patriotic Pieces (Chiefly Original), Applicable to the Present War* (Mobile, AL: W. F. Wisely, 1864), 3-4, 7.

¹⁷¹ Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*, 57-58.

inspiration, “No one was more surprised than I was at the widespread and instantaneous popularity of the lyric I had been so strangely stimulated to write.”¹⁷²

The poem reflected Confederate anxiety over Maryland’s possible secession. Addressing his home state personally, Randall warned, “The despot’s heel is on thy shore . . . His torch is at thy temple door” and urged retribution for the deaths inflicted by the Sixth Massachusetts:

Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore.

The rest of the poem continued to beg a female-personified Maryland to ally herself with the Confederacy and prepare for war. There was a sense of desperation all through the piece, as if Randall was aware that Maryland may not answer his call. He reassured himself and his readers with his final verse:

I hear the distant thunder-hum,
Maryland, my Maryland!
The ‘Old Line’s’ bugle, fife, and drum,
Maryland, my Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb;
Huzza! she spurns the northern scum –
She breathes! She burns! She’ll come! She’ll come!
Maryland, my Maryland!¹⁷³

Randall read the poem to his students and they encouraged him to have it published in the New Orleans *Delta*. Like James Sloan Gibbons’ “We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More,” “Maryland, My Maryland” enjoyed a wide circulation in newspaper poetry corners, especially in Baltimore. It was there that a women’s glee club, including sisters Hetty and Jenny Cary, regularly sang Confederate songs at local secessionist meetings. When Hetty read “Maryland, My Maryland” aloud, Jenny recognized that the meter was adaptable to the popular

¹⁷² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 285; Holmes, *Lecture – 1865*; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 620-621.

¹⁷³ James R. Randall, “Maryland, My Maryland” (Baltimore, MD: Miller & Beacham, 1861).

college song “Lauriger Horatius.” Hetty recalled that when they performed the song that night, “the refrain rolled forth from every throat present without pause or preparation; and the enthusiasm communicated itself with such effect to a crowd assembled beneath our open windows as to endanger seriously the liberties of the party.”¹⁷⁴

Eventually, Federal authorities discovered efforts by the Carys to funnel supplies and manpower to the Confederacy and they were exiled from Baltimore. The Carys then served as nurses in the Confederate Army. Sometime in September 1861, Beauregard invited them to his headquarters at Fairfax Courthouse. They stopped in Manassas on the way and, after having dinner with some officers, were asked to sing. Hetty recalled that Jenny sang “Maryland, My Maryland,” and “the refrain was speedily caught up and tossed back to us from hundreds of rebel throats” encamped around them. “As the last notes died away, there surged forth from the gathering throng a wild shout – ‘We will break her chains! She *shall* be free!’” Thus, the song’s first performance in the army not only had a musical impact on the soldiers but calmed their anxieties about Maryland’s future. Jenny’s cousin, Constance, recalled that on the following day, “Maryland, My Maryland” “was hummed far and near through the camps” and became one of the men’s favorite songs.¹⁷⁵

When Beauregard heard “Maryland, My Maryland” shortly thereafter, he was so taken with it that he had his staff print copies for his men. Among the recipients, were the members of the First Maryland, who serenaded the general with the song. In return, Beauregard presented

¹⁷⁴ Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 621; Constance Cary Harrison, *Recollections Grave and Gay* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911), 57. Jenny’s cousin, Constance, also argued that Randall’s poem was originally titled “Maryland” and Jenny developed the full title, “Maryland, My Maryland.” Harrison, *Recollections Grave and Gay*, 57.

¹⁷⁵ Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 622; Constance Cary Harrison, “Virginia Scenes in ’61,” *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: Being for the Most Part Contributions by Union and Confederate Officers* (New York, NY: The Century Co., 1884-1888), I, 165; Harrison, *Recollections Grave and Gay*, 57.

them with a Confederate flag sewn by the Cary sisters. In early 1862, the *Charleston Mercury* reported that “Maryland, My Maryland” “has of late attained a wonderful popularity throughout the South, but especially in Virginia, where it disputes with ‘Dixie’ the first place in the favor of the army and the people” and stated that this may be because it “is known to be the favorite air of Gen. BEAUREGARD.”¹⁷⁶

Several presses released “Maryland, My Maryland” as sheet music between the summers of 1861 and 1862 and it was possibly more popular than either “Dixie” or “The Bonnie Blue Flag” during that period. Randall himself contracted with A. E. Blackmar for an edition that included a preface ensuring that it was the definitive version. Although the Confederacy’s other two major anthems primarily depended on their melodies for success, the popularity of “Maryland, My Maryland” was rooted in its lyrics. Confederate veteran John S. Robson recalled that the soldiers “had sung it with a good deal of hope and vim,” and the *Charleston Mercury* recorded how the song assured Confederates “that, sooner or later, Maryland shall be free.” It became the personal anthem of Maryland secessionists and many sang it as they headed south to enlist in the Confederate Army. A Union soldier in Frederick noted as much, commenting that the song “enjoys a surreptitious parlor popularity here” and joked that if the despot’s heel was, in fact, on the state, “all I have got to say is, that, just now, the heel has the worst of it.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Edward Porter Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander*, edited by Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 62; Randolph H. McKim, *A Soldier’s Recollections: Leaves from the Diary of a Young Confederate* (New York, NY: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911), 53; *Richmond Dispatch*, January 10, 1862; *Charleston Mercury*, February 28, 1862.

¹⁷⁷ Randall, “Maryland, My Maryland” (Baltimore); James Ryder Randall, “Maryland, My Maryland” (New Orleans, LA: P. P. Werlein & Halsey, 1862); *Richmond Dispatch*, February 13, 1862; *Charleston Mercury*, February 28, 1862; James Ryder Randall, “Maryland, My Maryland” (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1862); John S. Robson, *How a One-Legged Rebel Lives: Reminiscences of the Civil War* (Durham, NC: The Educator, Co. Printers and Binders, 1898), 118; Luther W. Hopkins, *From Bull Run to Appomattox: A Boy’s View* (Baltimore, MD: Fleet-

“Maryland, My Maryland” reached the peak of its popularity in September 1862, as the Army of Northern Virginia invaded the state. The *Charleston Mercury* reported that, as Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s men crossed the Potomac, he stopped them “and the splendid bands of music struck up the inspiring air . . . which was responded to and sung with spirit and with understanding by all who could sing it. . . . It sounded in the ears of the tyrants on the other side like mighty thunder.” Cavalry officer Heros Von Borcke called it his most intense and exhilarating experience of the war. Several bands played the song as soon as they set foot on Maryland soil and some performed it as they marched through towns. However, some bandsmen were not as enthusiastic. When Julius A. Leinbach was asked to play “Maryland, My Maryland,” he “declined to do so, as I did not consider that the state merited the sentiment of the song.”¹⁷⁸

A few weeks later, after the Confederate defeat at Antietam and subsequent withdrawal from Maryland, most of the men agreed with Leinbach. Even during the campaign, soldiers were discouraged by the Marylander’s apparent lack of enthusiasm for secession. One soldier

McGinley, 1908), 28; Wilder Dwight, *Life and Letters of Wilder Dwight: Lieut. Col. Second Mass. Inf. Vols.* (Boston, MA: Ticknor & Co., 1891), 194-195. Jenny Cary’s name did not appear on any of these publications because she preferred to remain anonymous. *Charleston Mercury*, February 28, 1862.

¹⁷⁸ *Charleston Mercury*, September 23, 1862; William Wyndham Malet, *An Errand to the South in the Summer of 1862* (London, UK: Bentley, 1863), 239; Heros Von Borcke, *Memoirs of the Confederate War for Independence* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1867), 127; Entry for September 7, 1862, Gilmer H. Crutchfield Commonplace Book, Virginia Historical Society; Entry for September 5, 1862, George Lovick Pierce Wren Diaries, Folder 3, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University; Lewis Henry Steiner, *Report of Lewis H. Steiner: Inspector of the Sanitary Commission, Containing a Diary Kept during the Rebel Occupation of Frederick, Md., and an Account of the Operations of the U. S. Sanitary Commission during the Campaign in Maryland, September, 1862* (New York, NY: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1862), 8; “The 26th Regimental Band,” 109, Julius A. Lineback Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Leinbach was eventually forced to play “Maryland, My Maryland” by his Brigade commander. “The 26th Regimental Band,” 109, Julius A. Lineback Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

recalled that, after entering the state, the men “were in their jolliest mood, and, although numbers were ragged and barefooted, they sang ‘Maryland, My Maryland,’ as they marched . . . but a majority of the people we saw were unaffected by the demonstration.” Similarly, Robson recorded how, despite their initial enthusiasm for the song, “it didn’t take ‘us generals’ of the ranks very long to see that there was a mistake about it somewhere . . . *she didn’t ‘come’* worth a cent.”¹⁷⁹

Although “Maryland, My Maryland” remained popular among Maryland soldiers, parodies soon appeared. Early in 1862, as the Confederate Congress debated extending the Conscription Act to Marylanders, Representative George Vest argued that many of those who came to Richmond as refugees were “always ready to break out into the strain of ‘Maryland, my Maryland’ but unwilling to strike a blow for the Confederacy.” These comments inspired a parody, with the first verse:

Conscribers’ heels are at thy door,
Maryland! my Maryland!
So off to Baltimore we’ll go,
Maryland! my Maryland!
We can’t stay here to meet the foe,
We might get shot and killed, you know;
But when we’re safe, we’ll brag and blow,
Maryland! my Maryland!

These lines enjoyed limited popularity before the Confederate invasion of the state but grew in favor afterward. The same soldiers who sang the original as they crossed the Potomac into Maryland sang the parody as they returned. Because the popularity of “Maryland, My Maryland” was so rooted in Randall’s lyrics and sentiments, it could not endure the state’s

¹⁷⁹ James Dinkins, “Griffith-Barksdale-Humphrey Mississippi Brigade and its Campaigns,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 32 (1904): 256; Robson, *How a One-Legged Rebel Lives*, 118; scrapbook, 387, John Hill Hewitt Papers, Box 1, Folder 12, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University.

apparent lack of enthusiasm for secession. “Maryland, My Maryland” remained a symbol of the enthusiasm that pervaded the war’s early months but it never again reached levels of popularity similar to that of “Dixie” or “The Bonnie Blue Flag.”¹⁸⁰

Aside from “Maryland, My Maryland” a host of lesser patriotic songs vied for a fraction of the popularity enjoyed by the Confederacy’s two major anthems. Of these “God Save the South!” and James Pierpont’s “We Conquer or Die” were probably the most popular but neither acquired much resonance for Confederates.¹⁸¹ This was due, in part, to the fact that resonance was not solely dependent on lyrics. “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag” both became highly meaningful Confederate symbols because of their associations, more than what they actually said. “Dixie” was especially so, as its lyrics had little to do with Confederate nationalism but “The Bonnie Blue Flag” also benefited from Macarthy’s attempts to foster emotional attachment to the song from soldiers and civilians. Thus, a minstrel ditty by a northerner and an Irish song by a foreigner became the national anthems of the Confederacy. Regardless of their problems, these anthems became powerful patriotic symbols for Confederates and remained so for generations.

¹⁸⁰ “1st Confederate Congress – (Third Session) – Wednesday, January 14, 1863,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 46 (1930): 120; Putnam, *Richmond During the War*, 185-186; *Richmond Dispatch*, March 14, 1862; Alfred Hoyt Bill, *The Beleaguered City: Richmond, 1861-1865* (New York, NY: A. A. Knopf, 1946), 150.

¹⁸¹ Both songs went through several editions and are occasionally mentioned by contemporaries. Pierpont is most famous for writing “Jingle Bells.” Harwell, “The Confederate Search,” 35; James Pierpont, “We Conquer or Die” (Macon, GA: John C. Schreiner & Son, 1861); Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 92.

CHAPTER 4

“WORDS WERE AS WEAPONS”: MUSIC ON THE HOME-FRONT

Oh! yes, I am a Southern girl, and glory in the name,
And boast it with far greater pride than glittering wealth or fame.
We envy not the Northern girl, her robes of beauties rare,
Though diamonds grace her snowy neck, and pearls bedeck her hair.

Chorus

Hurrah! hurrah! for the sunny south so dear,
Three cheers for the homespun dress the Southern ladies wear.

The homespun dress is plain, I know, my hat's palmetto too;
But then it shows what Southern girls for Southern rights will do.
We have sent the bravest of our land to battle with the foe,
And we will lend a helping hand; we love the South, you know.

Chorus

Now, Northern goods are out of date; and since Old Abe's blockade,
We Southern girls can be content with goods that's Southern made.
We sent our sweethearts to the war, but dear girls, never mind,
Your soldier love will ne'er forget the girl he left behind.

Chorus

The soldier is the lad for me – a brave heart I adore;
And when the sunny South is free, and when fighting is no more,
I'll choose me then a lover brave from out the gallant band,
The soldier lad I love the best shall have my heart and hand.

Chorus

The Southern land's a glorious land, and has a glorious cause;
Then cheer, three cheers for Southern rights, and for the Southern boys.
We scorn to wear a bit of silk, a bit of Northern lace;
But make our homespun dresses up, and wear them with such grace.

Chorus

And now, young man, a word to you; if you would win the fair,
Go to the field where honor calls, and win your lady there,
Remember that our brightest smiles are for the true and brave,

And that our tears are all for those who fill a soldiers grave.
Chorus

Carrie Bell Sinclair, 1862
“The Homespun Dress.”¹⁸²

During the Civil War, civilians wrote, purchased, learned, and performed a wide variety of music that connected them with the conflict raging outside their communities. These songs provided information about the war and helped people express their thoughts and feelings. There were songs that promoted ethnic groups, protested government policies, and endorsed presidential candidates, among other purposes. Although few pieces had the widespread appeal of “Dixie” or “Home, Sweet Home,” they nevertheless had some effect – even if it was limited to a single community or a single family.

But civilians did more than simply learn and listen to songs. Many Americans, especially women, took music outside of their parlors. Rallies were the most common places for such performances but there were various other opportunities for public singing. These musical expressions usually showed support for one cause or another but they could provoke confrontations. In some cases, music became a weapon for the weaponless and allowed politically and militarily helpless civilians to express themselves in a powerful way without inviting harsh punishment. Music proved to be a valuable cultural tool for civilians and they used it effectively and often.

One of music’s fundamental purposes was to inform listeners about the war. Many songs described important events and persons, educating listeners while shaping their perceptions.

¹⁸² Branson, *Jack Morgan Songster*, 5-6.

Near the end of the war, the *Musical Review and Musical World* accurately reported that “there is not an event, whether political or on the battle field, which does not find its echo in [song]; there is not an incident, not a scene, which has not been illustrated by the poet as well as the composer, thus producing a historical painting, in which the smallest details are brought to light with the most vivid coloring.”¹⁸³

A large number of songs described events. The attack on Fort Sumter inspired the first outpouring, including George Frederick Root’s “The First Gun is Fired.” Like Root, songwriters tended to pepper their lyrics with details about the attack and paid special attention to the people involved. Subsequent events, ranging from large battles to minor incidents, inspired similar offerings. Other songs provided details about different aspects of the war. For instance, one early war song described the strategic importance of Cairo, Illinois, in stanzas such as:

There’s a place out West where the Union troops
Take toll from the rebel ships and sloops,
And if down the river a craft would go,
She must recognize the custom house at Cairo.

Another piece informed listeners about the superiority of northern Enfield Rifles:

Let the rebels grind their teeth,
While cowards crouch beneath,
And let Davis for money still dun;
But soon they’ll fly the track,
When they hear a little crack
From a rifle-barreled Enfield gun! gun! gun!
From a rifle-barreled Enfield gun.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ “Our War Songs,” *Musical Review and Musical World*, 373.

¹⁸⁴ Root, “First Gun is Fired!,” Elizabeth Sloman, “Sumter” (Charleston, SC: H. Siegling); *The Flag of Our Union Songster: A Collection of Patriotic, Union and Naval Songs* (New York, NY: T. W. Strong, 1861), 29-31; *The Punch Songster: A Collection of Familiar Songs and Ballads* (Richmond, VA: Punch Office, 1864), 61; Beadle, *Beadle’s Dime Union Song Book*, 37,62; Wilson, *Songs of the Nation*, 36.

Of the songs celebrating battles, one of the more famous and enduring was “Hold the Fort.” During the battle of Altoona, General William Tecumseh Sherman sent a note to General John M. Corse, instructing him to “hold the fort . . . for I am coming.” When songwriter P. O. Bliss heard about the incident, he used a gospel song to celebrate the victory. The first verse and chorus were:

Ho! my comrades see the signal
Waving in the sky,
Re-inforcements now appearing
Victory is nigh.

Hold the fort, for I am coming
Jesus signals still!
Wave the answer back to heaven
By thy grace we will.¹⁸⁵

Other songwriters fashioned numbers about recent events to mock their opponents. *Southern Literary Messenger* editor, Richard Thompson, wrote a Confederate favorite, “Richmond is a Hard Road to Travel.” Sarcastically dedicated to Union General Ambrose Burnside, the song transformed Daniel Decatur Emmett’s, “Jordan is a Hard Road to Travel,” into a long list of Federal defeats. The following description of General George B. McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign was typical:

Then McClellan followed soon, both with spade and balloon,
To try the Peninsular approaches,
But one and all agreed that his best rate of speed
Was no faster than the slowest of ‘slow coaches.’
Instead of easy ground, at Williamsburg he found
A *Longstreet* indeed, and nothing shorter,
And it put him in the dumps, that spades wasn’t trumps,
And the *Hills* he couldn’t level ‘as he orter.’¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Samuel Gibbs French, *Two Wars: An Autobiography of General Samuel G. French...Mexican War: War Between the States, a Diary: Reconstruction Period, his Experience: Incidents, Reminiscences, etc.* (Nashville, TN: Confederate Veteran, 1901), 268; Bromfield Lewis Ridley, *Battles and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee* (Mexico, MO: Missouri Printing & Publishing Co., 1906), 407.

Naval incidents received due attention. In the North, the *Trent* affair provoked a number of musical attacks on the British, such as following lines from “Jonathan to John:”

It don't seem hardly fair, John,
When both my hands was full,
To stump me to a fight, John,
Your cousin, tu, John Bull!

In the Confederacy, most of the naval songs focused on the exploits of the C. S. S. *Alabama*. Pieces such as “Roll, Alabama, Roll” celebrated its victories, while others encouraged perseverance, as in the final stanza of “The Alabama:”

Boys! if perchance it may befall, when storm of battle raves,
By shot or shell our noble hull shall sink beneath the waves,
Yet while a plank to us is left to death we will defend her;
Facing the foe, down, down we'll go, but still cry ‘No Surrender!’¹⁸⁷

There was even a subset of instrumental music devoted to describing battle scenes. These “descriptive pieces” were highly popular in the early days of American sheet music and some appeared during the Civil War. The most prolific wartime writer of such songs was German composer Charles Grobe. His battle pieces required a high level of skill, as they used the piano to simulate the sounds of artillery, rifles, and marching troops. Grobe also included snippets of popular songs to heighten the drama. Although “descriptive pieces” from early in the war enjoyed some success, their difficulty limited their popularity and few were produced after 1862. Critics also disliked them. As one reviewer wrote about a concert, “The music selected was appropriate to the occasion . . . except the ‘descriptive piece’ which, like most musical

¹⁸⁶ Harwell, *Confederate Music*, 83; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 331; “Interview with Josh Miles,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Texas Narratives, Volume XVI, Part 3*, 80-81, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; “The War Songs of the South,” *Index 3* (May 21 1863): 63; “Richmond is a Hard Road to Travel” (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1863).

¹⁸⁷ F. Boott, “Jonathan to John” (Boston, MA: Henry Tolman & Co., 1862); Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 236, 252; E. King, “The Alabama” (Richmond, VA: Geo. Dunn & Co., 1864).

compositions which are designed to represent things rather than to give expression to ideas, might as well have been called by any other name.”¹⁸⁸

Many songs were devoted to prominent personalities. These typically praised heroic or noble figures to boost morale and foster support for the war. The most successful was “Stonewall Jackson’s Way,” which not only celebrated General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s piety and nobility but elevated him to near sainthood. Written by New York *Tribune* reporter and southern sympathizer John Williamson Palmer, the song even acquired its own creation myth. To increase its emotional impact, the piece was promoted as the work of a soldier under Jackson’s command and several printings claimed that the song had been found on a battlefield, near the author’s dead body.¹⁸⁹

“Stonewall Jackson’s Way” effectively portrayed Jackson as a ferocious yet pious warrior, as in the second and third verses:

We see him now – the old slouched hat
Cock’d o’er his eyes askew –
The shrewd dry smile – the speech so pat,
So calm, so blunt, so true.
The ‘Blue Light Elder’ knows ‘em well;
Says he, ‘that’s Banks – he’s fond of shell,
Lord save his soul! – we’ll give him’ – well,

¹⁸⁸ Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos*, 448-450, 508; *Godey’s Lady Book* 65 (September 1862): 304; Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War*, 21; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, April 28, 1862.

¹⁸⁹ Alexander Robinson Boteler Scrapbook, Volume I, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University; Lizzie Cary Daniel, *Confederate Scrap-Book: Copied from a Scrap-Book Kept By a Young Girl During and Immediately After the War, With Additions from War Copies of the ‘Southern Literary Messenger and Illustrated News’ Loaned by Friends and Other Selections as Accredited* (Richmond, VA: J. H. Hill Printing Co., 1893), 53; *Richmond Dispatch*, May 20, 1863; Commager, *Blue and the Gray*, I, 570; Francis Trevelyan Miller, *The Photographic History of the Civil War* (New York, NY: Castle Books, 1957), IX, 86; John Williamson Palmer, “Stonewall Jackson’s Way,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 11 (February-March 1883): 136; Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *The South in History and Literature: A Hand-Book of Southern Authors, From the Settlement of Jamestown, 1607, to Living Writers* (Atlanta, GA: The Franklin-Turner Company, 1907), 267. Sources disagree over whether or not Palmer also wrote the music.

That's 'Stonewall Jackson's way.'

Silence! ground arms! kneel all! caps off!
Old Blue Light's going to pray;
Strangle the fool that dares to scoff!
Attention! it's his way!
Appealing from his native sod
In *forma pauperis* to God –
'Lay bare thine arm, stretch forth thy rod,
Amen!' That's 'Stonewall's way!'

The song became highly popular in the South and even Oliver Wendell Holmes considered it to be one of the best Confederate songs.¹⁹⁰

The most song-inspiring northern leader was McClellan. William B. Bradbury's "Marching Along" was the leading number honoring the Young Napoleon. Although it was not specifically about the general, the lines "McClellan's our leader, he's gallant and strong," appeared in the chorus and in two verses. The rest of the song expressed the mood of soldiers in early 1862, as McClellan was organizing the Union army into an effective fighting force and soldiers enthusiastically awaited their chance to redeem themselves after the defeat at Bull Run. However, by repeatedly praising McClellan, the song heightened the general's reputation just as "John Brown's Body" had for the radical abolitionist. In fact, one Massachusetts soldier recalled that after singing the song, "our imaginations took such flight that we thought him the greatest of all generals and the only man who could lead us to victory."¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ *Army Songster*, 42-43; Harrison, *Recollections Grave and Gay*, 138-139; Volume, IV, James Fleming Commonplace Books, Virginia Historical Society; Jones, *Under the Stars and Bars*, 162; Keiley, *In Vinculis*, 201; Georgiana Freeman Gholson Walker, *Private Journal of Georgiana Gholson Walker, 1862-1865: With Selections from the Post-War Years, 1865-1876*, edited by Dwight F. Henderson (Tuscaloosa, AL: Confederate Publishing, 1963), 55; *Southern Literary Messenger* 37 (February 1 1863): 119; Holmes, *Lecture – 1865*.

¹⁹¹ Bradbury, "Marching Along;" Davis, *Three Years in the Army*, 156; Commager, *Blue and the Gray*, I, 566.

Despite the popularity of these pieces, few songs referring to individuals or events had lyrics. Nor, with the exception of the “descriptive pieces,” did they bear much relation to their subjects but publishers hoped that naming a song after a popular personality or event would entice consumers. As a result, there came a flood of event songs such as the “Alabama Secession Galop,” the “Battery Wagner Polka and Mazurka,” and the “Sanitary Fair Grand March.” Many of these celebrated military leaders. No one was more heavily represented than General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard. His name appeared on various pieces, including “Beauregard’s Charleston Quickstep,” “The Beauregard Manassas Quickstep,” and two versions of “Beauregard’s Grand March.” However, other generals received their due in pieces such as “Genl. Hooker’s March and Quick Step,” “Rosecrans’ Battle March,” and “The Lee Schottisch.” Some of these wordless offerings showed little understanding of their subjects, with titles that were either erroneous (“W. F. Sherman’s Grand March), incomprehensible (“Birgfeld’s Cavalry Sheridan, Grand Military Galop”), or inappropriate (the Confederate “Shiloh Victory Polka” and “Picket’s Charge March”).¹⁹²

¹⁹² H. Berge, “Alabama Secession Galop” (Mobile, AL: J. H. Snow, 1861); Edmund Newman, “Battery Wagner” (Columbia, SC: B. Duncan & Co., n. d.); P. J. Schneider, “Sanitary Fair Grand March” (Cleveland, OH: Brainard & Co., 1864); L. Schreiner, “Beauregard’s Charleston Quickstep” (Macon, GA: J. C. Schreiner & Son, 1863); A. E. Blackmar, “The Beauregard Manassas Quickstep” (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1861); V. G. Cowdin, “GI. Beauregard’s Grand March” (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1861); E. Heinemen, “Genl. Beauregard’s Grand March” (New Orleans, LA: P. P. Werlein & Halsey, 1861); E. Jackson, “Genl. Hooker’s March and Quick Step” (Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1863); William Cumming, “Rosecrans’ Battle March” (Cincinnati, OH: A. C. Peters & Bro., 1863); J. W. Evans, “The Lee Schottisch” (Richmond, VA: J. W. Davies & Sons, n. d.); J. Val. Hamm, “Maj. Gen. W. F. Sherman’s Grand March” (Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1864); Adolph Birgfeld, “Birgfeld’s Cavalry Sheridan, Grand Military Galop” (Philadelphia, PA: Chas. W. A. Trumpler, 1865); E. C. E. Vile, “Shiloh Victory Polka” (Nashville, TN: Jas. A. McClure, n. d.); John Prossinger, “Picket’s Charge March” (Columbia, SC: B. Duncan & Co., n. d.). Birgfeld’s titles were especially problematic, as he was also responsible for “General Siegel’s Grand March.” Adolph Birgfeld, “General Siegel’s March” (Philadelphia, PA: Lee & Walker, 1861).

Whatever the shortcomings of these instrumental compositions, songs describing events and personalities had a strong and lasting impact on Civil War Americans. This was especially so on the home-front, where the music did much to shape popular perceptions. Through performances of these songs Jackson was immortalized, McClellan became the American Napoleon, and battlefield victories were transformed into signs of divine approval. In many ways, these songs acted as supplements or even replacements for newspapers and political speeches by conveying information in both an effective and entertaining manner.

A much larger group of civilian songs carried strong political messages. Although many of these pieces supported or endorsed certain aspects of the war, an equal number were songs of protest. Some songwriters expected their creations to be used against both external and internal foes. Songs written by amateurs and professionals could alter public perceptions of the war and its character. Although most Civil War songs reached only a small audience, some had a wider impact.

Most political songs rallied people to the war in a general way, including the more popular offerings such as “The Battle Cry of Freedom” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag.” However, many pieces were written to address specific issues – sometimes even specific listeners. A group of women in Catahoula, Louisiana, wrote and performed their own song for soldiers leaving to fight in the Confederate Army. Similarly, a Unionist girl in North Carolina created and sang songs for northern soldiers encamped near her home. Ministers wrote songs about the Emancipation Proclamation and an Iowa teacher even sent one to Abraham Lincoln.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ Kate Elony Baker Staton, ed., *Old Southern Songs of the Period of the Confederacy: The Dixie Trophy Collection* (New York, NY: Samuel French, 1926), 26; David L. Day, *My Diary of Rambles with the 25th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry* (Milford, MA: King & Billings

Confederate women were especially apt to write and adopt songs that reflected their opinions about the war. The most popular was an 1862 revision of “The Bonnie Blue Flag” called “The Homespun Dress.” Written in Savannah by southern poet, Carrie Bell Sinclair, the song dismissed the hardships caused by the blockade by celebrating home-made Confederate clothes. As it spread orally throughout the South, the song not only highlighted the contributions of Confederate women but defined their wartime roles. It reassured them to stand by their sweethearts in the army and encouraged those who were still single to bestow their affections only on soldiers. The song sent a clear message to southern men by informing them that if they wanted to win a southern girl, they had to do it on the battlefield. Confederate women emphasized this message by sending copies to enlisted men, sometimes with swaths of homespun cloth. This clearly had the desired effect, as Confederate soldiers often sang “The Homespun Dress” to southern girls they met.¹⁹⁴

The war inspired a host of similar songs defining the roles of women. Primarily southern, they usually described women pining for their menfolk in the army. These men could either be absent sweethearts, such as “The Southern Soldier Boy,” or passing figures, like “The Captain with His Whiskers.” One of the more popular songs had a southern girl declare, “I Would Like to Change My Name,” so she could have the surname of an enlisted man. Pieces like these encouraged women to fall in love with soldiers and discretely warned of falling in love

Printers, 1884), 98-100; Moncure Daniel Conway, *Autobiography, Memories and Experiences of Moncure Daniel Conway* (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), 370-371; Bernard, *Lincoln*, 99.

¹⁹⁴ Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 126; McMurray, *History of the Twentieth*, 418-419, 497; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 54; Branson, *Jack Morgan Songster*, 5-6; Frank Moore, ed., *The Civil War in Song and Story, 1860-1865* (New York, NY: P. F. Collier, 1889), 174; T. W. Wilson, “Old Southern Songs,” *Confederate Veteran* 26 (April 1918): 153; George Dallas Mosgrove, *Kentucky Cavaliers in Dixie: Reminiscences of a Confederate Cavalryman* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 188-189.

with a man who had not served his country. Such songs were also popular in the North. A girl sang “I am Bound to be a Soldier’s Wife or Die an Old Maid” at a rally in Lima, Indiana, and the comic song “Shoulder Straps” encouraged northern women to not only marry a soldier but one with as high a rank as possible.¹⁹⁵

While music helped define the wartime roles of women, it also shaped public opinions of Irish and German immigrants. Songwriters, mostly outside of these groups, crafted pieces that both mocked and showed respect for their foreign-born compatriots. These songs made fun of the accents and customs of these ethnic groups but also praised their loyalty and bravery. In so doing, they encouraged listeners, especially soldiers, to welcome immigrants into their ranks and to support their military endeavors. The most popular song about Germans was “I Goes to Fight Mit Sigel.” Set to “The Girl I Left Behind Me,” the song ridiculed German dialect and culture in lines such as:

I vont get not no lager beer,
Ven I goes to fight mit Sigel,

and

For rations dey gives salty pork
I dinks dat vas a great sell;
I petter liked de sauerkraut,
Der Schvitzer-kase und bretzel.

However, the lyrics also commended German loyalty by portraying the soldiers as eager “To save der Yankee Eagle.” This dichotomy was also present in Henry Clay Work’s “Corporal Schnapps,” which used ethnic jokes to praise German patriotism. Harry Macarthy, who began

¹⁹⁵ McMurray, *History of the Twentieth*, 498-499; W. J. Florence and T. Comer, “The Captain with his Whiskers” (Macon, GA: John C. Schreiner & Son, n. d.); Theodore von La Hache, “I Would Like to Change My Name” (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1862); Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1996), 17; Upson, *With Sherman to the Sea*, 19; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 238-239.

his career impersonating foreigners, similarly heralded German bravery with his number, “The Dutch Volunteer.”¹⁹⁶

Songs about the Irish were more plentiful. They typically praised Irish loyalty but also focused on stock Irish characters in pieces such as “Corporal Kelly,” “Paddy the Loyal,” and “Pat’s Adventures in the Army.” In addition, several songs described famous Irish units, such as the Sixty-Ninth New York in “Corcoran to his Regiment.” Some even refrained from using dialect, such as this verse from one of several songs about the Irish Brigade:

To the Banner of Freedom, to the red, white and blue,
The brave Irish soldier must ever prove true;
The Stars and the Stripes no stain can defile,
While defended by sons of the Emerald Isle.

Of course, other numbers took a more lighthearted tone, such as the following revision of Charles Carroll Sawyer’s “Who Will Care For Mother, Now” in which a recently drafted Irishman asked:

Soon ‘gainst the Rebels I’ll be marching,
Wid the swate upon me brow –
Och, blud an’ nons, I’m kilt entirely,
Who will care for Micky now?¹⁹⁷

There were several prominent Irish songwriters during the war, including Harry Macarthy and Daniel Decatur Emmett. One of the most politically influential was Charles Halpine.

¹⁹⁶ Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 307-308, 325-326. Like “Marching Along,” “I Goes to Fight Mit Sigel” contained a reference to McClellan that was revised when different commanders were appointed to lead the Army of the Potomac.

¹⁹⁷ *Camp-Fire Songster*, 59-60; *The Continental Songster: A Collection of New, Spirited Patriotic Songs for the Times* (Philadelphia, PA: A. Winch, 1863), 36-37, 58-59; John F. Poole and J. C. Stewart, *Fattie Stewart’s Comic Songster: Containing a Valuable Collection of Comic and Patriotic Songs, Never Before Published* (New York, NY: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1863), 21-23, 58-60; “Corcoran to His Regiment, or, I Would Not Take Parole: As Such at Jones’ Wood, 29 August 1861, for the Benefit of the Widows and Orphans of those of the 69th Regiment Who Fell at Bull-Run” (New York, NY: H. DeMarsan, 1861); Beadle, *Beadle’s Dime Union Songbook*, 71; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 160, 177; *Little Mac Songster*, 57-58.

Despite his Democratic loyalties, Halpine used his writing skills to support the northern war effort. He was an aide to General David Hunter and supported the general's efforts to enlist black soldiers. After the New York Draft Riots in July 1863, General John A. Dix – a former member of the National Hymn Committee – was charged with pacifying the city. Because the majority of the rioters were Irish, Dix appointed Halpine as his assistant adjutant general and asked him to bolster Irish support for the war. Halpine responded by creating an alter-ego: a rowdy Irish songwriting soldier named Miles O'Reilly. Halpine later claimed that, as O'Reilly, he “aspired . . . to little more than a voicing forth of one strong current of opinion which he seems to have observed throughout the army” but his songs were also intended to shape both the image of the Irish and northern political views. Through these efforts, Halpine became one of the most successful and influential Irish songwriters of the war.¹⁹⁸

Halpine first introduced O'Reilly in the September 8, 1863, issue of the *New York Herald*. To gauge the effectiveness of his new creation, he decided to write a defense of his friend, Admiral Samuel Du Pont. The article consisted of a fictional soldier letter based on the premise that O'Reilly had been imprisoned for writing a song criticizing Du Pont's rival, Admiral John Dahlgren. The letter claimed that this song became popular in the army and, in a second article, O'Reilly begged Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles for a pardon. Because these stories were presented as factual, Halpine used them not only to influence public opinion towards Dahlgren but also made himself a mouthpiece for the common soldier. As a result, many civilians viewed Halpine's writings as genuine expressions of soldier opinion. He later

¹⁹⁸ William Hanchett, *Irish: Charles G. Halpine in Civil War America* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1970), xiii, 77; Charles Graham Halpine, *The Life and Adventures, Songs, Services and Speeches of Private Miles O'Reilly* (New York, NY: Carleton, 1864), ix. Despite Halpine's support of Hunter, it should also be noted that he helped draft documents that led to the removal of abolitionist general John C. Fremont from command in Missouri. Hanchett, *Irish*, xiii.

bragged that the second article even left Lincoln “completely gulled,” and subsequently claimed that the president had pardoned O’Reilly and asked him for his support.¹⁹⁹

Halpine exerted his greatest influence at the end of 1863. Leaving the feud between Du Pont and Dahlgren behind, he focused on the arming of African Americans. In the *Herald*, Halpine presented another letter by an officer who supposedly helped train the first all-black regiment, the First South Carolina. Addressing the president directly, the author quoted a song by O’Reilly that “had been of the utmost value in reconciling the minds of the soldiery . . . to the experiment.” The piece, entitled “Sambo’s Right to be Kilt,” began with the following verse:

Some tell us ‘tis a burnin’ shame
To make the naygers fight;
And that the thrade of bein’ kilt
Belongs but to the white:
But as for me, upon my sowl!
So liberal are we here,
I’ll let Sambo be murdered instead of myself,
On every day in the year.

Again, Halpine claimed that the song was popular with soldiers and his fictional officer reported that it made the men “regard the enlistment of the despised sons of Ham as rather a good joke at first; and next, as a joke containing some advantages to themselves.”²⁰⁰

In “Sambo’s Right to be Kilt,” Halpine used several techniques and accomplished several goals. Because he claimed the song was popular and authentic, it became both. Furthermore, Halpine’s message of supporting United States Colored Troops (USCTs) for practical reasons, instead of humanitarian ones, appealed to northerners who had no great moral objection to slavery. His use of Irish dialect further increased the song’s persuasive power by making it appear more legitimate to those who did not recognize it as a caricature – and those who did

¹⁹⁹ Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 25-30, 52-53; Hanchett, *Irish*, 78-84.

²⁰⁰ Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 53-56.

merely took it as a joke. “Sambo’s Right to be Kilt” enjoyed a wide circulation and made Halpine – or O’Reilly, at least – a minor celebrity. Halpine wrote several more songs as O’Reilly on a variety of topics, although his readers increasingly realized that the Irish soldier was fictional. Nevertheless, Halpine achieved his goal of improving public perceptions of the Irish and exerted a considerable amount of political influence in the process. A group of northern veterans demonstrated their understanding of Halpine’s mission by dedicating a monument to him in 1882 with a poem that included the lines:

Words were as weapons then,
Arming the souls of men;
Sword-blows of stalwart pen,
Battles deciding!²⁰¹

Although songwriters such as Halpine used music to support government and military policies, others were more interested in protest. Their two favorite subjects were conscription and the use of paper money, or “greenbacks.” The “greenbacks” were issued in February 1862, and many northerners believed that they were being manipulated by unscrupulous investors. Emmett’s “How Are You Greenbacks” was written for Bryant’s Minstrels, who performed it throughout the North, as they had “Dixie,” and made it fairly popular. Emmett also wrote a second version that parodied “We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More:”

We’re coming, Father Abram, One hundred thousand more,
And cash was ne’er so easily evok’d from rags before;
To line the fat contractors purse, or purchase transport craft
Whose rotten hulks shall sink before the wind begin to waft.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Hanchett, *Irish*, 83-87; “Miles O’Reilly Memorial,” *National Tribune* (March 11 1882): 5; “Miles O’Reilly Memorial,” *National Tribune* (April 22 1882): 3; “Miles O’Reilly’s Word,” *National Tribune* (June 3 1882): 7. Ironically, the GAR post that erected the monument to Halpine was named for Admiral Dahlgren.

²⁰² Hans Nathan, “Two Inflation Songs of the Civil War,” *Musical Quarterly* (April 1943): 243-253; E. Bowers and Charles Glover, “How Are You Greenbacks!” (New York, NY: Pond & Co., 1863).

A larger group of protest songs reflected public opposition to conscription. These pieces not only rejected the practice in general but also complained about the exemptions offered by the Federal and Confederate governments. Union songs, such as “When This Cruel Draft is Over” and “How Are You Exempt,” concerned and enraged northerners, while Confederates rued in the incompetence of drafted men in pieces, such as “The Valiant Conscript” and “The Conscript’s Lament.” The most popular anti-conscription song was Henry Clay Work’s “Grafted into the Army,” which combined all of these elements. Speaking as the soldier’s mother, Work began:

Our Jimmy has gone for to live in a tent,
They have grafted him into the army;
He finally puckered up courage and went,
When they grafted him into the army.

The rest of the piece balanced comic and sentimental themes, as Jimmy bumbled through his service while his mother worried because his “brothers fell way down in Alabamy.” The song ended by describing Jimmy on picket duty, sick and crying. “Grafted into the Army” was widely successful in the north. It was sung by Chaplain C. C. McCabe at Libby Prison and Democrats used it to protest Republican war policies.²⁰³

The most controversial protest song of the war was Septimus Winner’s “Give Us Back Our Old Commander.” Previously known for the sentimental favorite, “Listen to the Mocking Bird,” Winner wrote this new song to protest McClellan’s removal from command of the Army of the Potomac. Speaking as one of the soldiers, Winner’s first verse read:

²⁰³ *Songs and Ballads of Freedom: A Choice Collection, Inspired by the Incidents and Scenes of the Present War* (New York, NY: J. F. Feeks, 1864); Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 104-105; *Southern Soldier’s Prize Songster*, 92-94; *Punch Songster*, 5; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 304-305; Henry Clay Work, “Grafted Into the Army” (Chicago, IL: Root & Cady, 1862); “The Libby Prison Minstrels,” Lord Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy; *Copperhead Minstrel: Choice Collection of Democratic Poems and Songs, for the Use of Political Clubs and the Social Circle* (New York, NY: Feeks & Bancker, 1863). Another songwriter eventually wrote a sequel for “Grafted into the Army,” called “He’s Got a Discharge from the Army.” Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 305.

Give us back our old Commander, Little Mac, the peoples pride,
Let the army and the nation, in their choice be satisfied.
With McClellan as our leader, let us strike the blow anew,
Give us back our old Commander, he will see the battle through.

Subsequent stanzas criticized General John Pope for failing to capture Richmond and accused Congress of mishandling its resources and allowing the Confederacy to humiliate the Union.²⁰⁴

“Give Us Back Our Old Commander” was an instant success. It sold several thousand copies in just a few days and was especially popular with Union soldiers stalled around Fredericksburg at the end of 1862. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton became concerned that the song was fostering mutiny and charged Winner with treason. Winner pleaded that he was not expressing disloyalty and received only minimal punishment but, because his own printing company had issued the song, he was ordered to destroy all unsold copies. Furthermore, music stores were forbidden to sell “Give Us Back Our Old Commander” and it became illegal to perform it. Soldiers were also punished by their superiors for singing the song. Although these measures were effective, “Give Us Back Our Old Commander” vividly demonstrated the potential political impact of music. The Federal government would impose more drastic measures on southern presses but no other song published in the North was as severely censored.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *The Mocking Bird: The Life and Diary of its Author, Sep. Winner* (Philadelphia, PA: The Magee Press, 1937), 28-30, 34; Giles and Lasswell, *Rags and Hope*, 148; Septimus Winner, “Give Us Back Our Old Commander” (Philadelphia, PA: Winner & Co., 1862).

²⁰⁵ Claghorn, *Mocking Bird*, 35; Giles and Lasswell, *Rags and Hope*, 148; Murat Halstead, “Sacrifice of Federals at Fredericksburg,” *Confederate Veteran* 1 (December 1893): 370-371. Some historians claim that “Give Us Back Our Old Commander” sold anywhere from 80,000-100,000 copies in the period immediately following its publication but these numbers seem extraordinarily high, if not impossible. Claghorn, *Mocking Bird*, 35; Mahar, “March to the Music,” 16. Winner obeyed the restrictions placed on him by Stanton and did not write any other anti-government songs for the rest of the war. Instead he wrote the popular children’s song, “Ten Little Injuns,” in 1864. Claghorn, *Mocking Bird*, 38. Some veterans revived “Give Us Back

Along with protesting government policies, songwriters also crafted pieces that attacked wartime enemies. One of the most effective ways to write such a piece was to steal a melody from the opposition and give it new lyrics. This provided the added sting of turning someone's own weapon against them and required little effort from performers who already knew the tune. Northerners were fond of crafting anti-Confederate revisions of "Dixie." Different versions praised Michigan troops, celebrated the victory at Antietam, and accused secessionists of treason. "The Bonnie Blue Flag," too, was often rewritten. The most successful parody – reportedly written by Iowa soldier, J. L. Geddes – reversed the sentiments of the original by accusing the Confederates of breaking the bond of friendship between North and South:

We treated you as brothers untill you drew the sword,
With impious hands at Sumpter you cut the silver cord,
So now you heard our bugles we come the sons of Mars
We rally round the brave old flag, that bears the Stripes and Stars.

Southerners responded by creating their own version of "The Battle Cry of Freedom," with a chorus that played on both of the Confederacy's major anthems:

Our Dixie forever, she's never at a loss
Down with the eagle and up with the cross
We'll rally 'round the bonny flag, we'll rally once again
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.²⁰⁶

Our Old Commander" in 1876 with new lyrics encouraging Ulysses S. Grant to run for a third presidential term. David Ewen, *Popular American Composers from Revolutionary Times to the Present: A Biographical and Critical Guide* (New York, NY: H. W. Wilson Co., 1962), 186.

²⁰⁶ Frances J. Crosby and Daniel Decatur Emmett, "Dixie for the Union" (New York, NY: Firth, Pond & Co., 1861); *Camp-Fire Songster*, 52-53; Moore, *Songs of the Soldiers*, 193-195; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 64; *Wisconsin State Register*, July 6, 1861; J. L. Geddes, "The Bonnie Flag with the Stripes and Stars" (St. Louis, MO: Balmer & Weber, 1863); William B. Barnes and Hermann Schreiner, "The Battle Cry of Freedom" (Macon, GA: J. C. Schreiner & Son, 1864).

Although these parodies were effective, they were not the only songs used by northerners and southerners to attack each other. One of the more popular Union responses was “The South Carolina Gentlemen” which mocked the southern planter class. Beginning,

Down in a small Palmetto State, the curious ones may find
A ripping, tearing gentleman if an uncommon kind;

The song derided him for miscegenation,

You trace his genealogy, and not far back you’ll see
A most undoubted octoroon, or, mayhap, a mustee;

And financial irresponsibility,

Of course he’s all the time in debt to those who credit give,
Yet manages upon the best the market yields to live.

Similarly visceral was “Nigger on the Brain,” which accused Confederates of being obsessed with their slaves and offered an antidote:

‘Tis labeled on the outer side
‘Grant’s anti-nigger pills.’
He gives them as preventatives
On every battle plain.

The Confederates composed several attack songs. One of their more popular was “Run, Yank, or Die,” which similarly warned the Union,

The little Northern Yankees are getting very sick,
They don’t like medicine because it is so thick;
And when they go to take it, it’s sure to hurt their eye –
They don’t like the Southern pills – Run, Yank, or die!²⁰⁷

Prominent personalities received their share of musical abuse. Confederate General Braxton Bragg was compared to a cowardly girl in “Bragg A Boo” and Lincoln was ridiculed for

²⁰⁷ John Brown, and ‘The Union Right or Wrong’ Songster, 21-22; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 333-334; Henry Baines to his sister, October 5, 1861, Reel 1, Henry Baines Papers, Joseph T. Glatthaar, ed., *Confederate Military Manuscripts, Series B, Holdings of the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection*, Louisiana State University Libraries.

repeatedly appointing incompetent generals in “Where Are You Going, Abe Lincoln!” However, no public figure was musically derided as repeatedly or brutally as Jefferson Davis. The Confederate President was featured in numerous songs that focused on everything from southern unionism to Confederate desertion. However, the majority of Davis songs portrayed him as weak and arrogant. The most commonly reprinted was “Jeff Davis’s Dream,” in which he sold his soul to Satan to be the Confederate president. Davis then handed out government positions before,

The Devil he came and asked for his claim,
Davis could scarcely tell what to do,
Said the Devil, make haste, I’ve no time to waste,
For old ‘Nick’ he is waiting for you.

This trend was exacerbated at the end of the war by reports that Davis was captured wearing women’s clothing – resulting in several songs about the incident.²⁰⁸

No wartime event inspired a greater number of political songs than the northern presidential election of 1864. Campaign music had become less effective in the 1850s but it returned to center stage in 1864 because of the intense opinions and emotions generated by the

²⁰⁸ Wiley, *Life of Billy Yank*, 166; Francis D. Allan, ed., *Allan’s Lone Star Ballads: A Collection of Southern Patriotic Songs, Made during Confederate Times* (Galveston, TX: J. D. Sawyer, 1874), 31-32; P. P. Bliss, “Good Bye Jeff,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (February 1865): 165-165; *Camp-Fire Songster*, 15-16; *Continental Songster*, 9-10; *Little Mac Songster*, 42-43; *Yankee Doodle Songster*, 47-49; Bob Hart, *Bob Hart’s Plantation Songster: Being a Collection of All the New, Fashionable, Patriotic, Ethiopian, Comic and Humorous Songs, Together with the Celebrated Stump-Speech, ‘Dat’s What’s the Matter’ and Numerous Comic Recitations* (New York, NY: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862), 14-15; Thomas P. Lowry, *The Story the Soldiers Wouldn’t Tell: Sex in the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1994), 49-50; Frank Spear, “Jeff Davis’s Dream” (New York, NY: J. Wrigley, 1862); Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 358; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 343-345.

war. Although many of these songs seem trite or even laughable, they helped cement the public persona of each candidate and explored the issues of the election in an accessible way.²⁰⁹

If the election had been decided by the quantity of music produced by each party, the Democrats would have won by a landslide. As one partisan magazine argued, “The Democratic campaign poetry . . . is far in advance of the Republican in point of spirit and literary merit.” By 1863 there were already several anti-Republican and anti-war songs. One of the most popular was “I am Fighting for the Nigger.” The piece protested the Emancipation Proclamation and was distributed in military camps to breed dissent. The chorus sarcastically encouraged soldiers to,

Fight for the nigger, the sweet scented nigger,
The woolly-headed nigger, and the Abolition Bill.

Other verses protested inflation and conscription. One played on fears that enlisted men would be killed in battle or not receive pay:

If ordered into battle, go on without delay,
Though slaughtered up like cattle, ‘tis your duty to obey.
And when old Jeff is captured, perhaps paid up you’ll be,
If you ain’t don’t mind the money, the nigger will be free.²¹⁰

Later that year, the Democrats released their own songster, the *Copperhead Minstrel*. Beginning with “All Quiet Along the Potomac, Tonight,” it included “I am Fighting for the Nigger,” “Grafted Into the Army,” and “How Are You Greenbacks,” along with several brutal attacks on Republican war policy. Especially vicious was a parody of “We Are Coming Father

²⁰⁹ Donald K. Pickens, “Historical Images in Republican Campaign Songs, 1860-1900,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 15 (winter 1981): 166; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 198-202.

²¹⁰ George Hovey Cadman to his wife, May 3, 1863, George Hovey Cadman Papers, Folder 2, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; John Carver Civil War Poem, Manuscripts Department, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; William Kiernan, “I am Fighting for the Nigger” (New York, NY: De Marsan, n. d.). The published lyrics to “I Am Fighting for the Nigger” were slightly different than the ones given here. These are the ones that were distributed around Union camps.

Abraham, 300,000 More” that described ghosts of dead soldiers threatening to haunt Lincoln, as in the following verse:

There’s blood upon your garments, there’s guilt upon your soul;
For the lust of ruthless soldiers you let loose without control:
Your dark and wicked doings a God of mercy sees;
And the wail of homeless children is heard on every breeze.

In another song, “The Negro the Rising Man,” Democrats stoked fears of black equality and miscegenation:

Among the belles, the niggers new styles and airs assume;
They’ll gain the heart of Beauty, *for Beauty loves perfume*.
This, sad experience taught me; to ask my love I went,
Said she, ‘I prefer a man of ‘African descent.’²¹¹

In 1864, Democrats published several songsters and songbooks that expressed the same sentiments, albeit less bluntly. The three most prominent were the *Democratic Presidential Campaign Songster*, *The Little Mac Campaign Songster*, and the *McClellan Campaign Melodist*. The songs they contained pledged allegiance to the Democratic presidential candidate (“McClellan is Our Man”), bragged of his intelligence (“McClellan the Master Genius”), and predicted victory (“McClellan will be President”). Two songsters contained versions of “The Battle Cry of Freedom” and one even included a revision of “The Bonnie Blue Flag.” The editor of the *McClellan Campaign Melodist*, Sidney Herbert, claimed objectivity and declared that “the Songs in this Collection are *patriotic* and not *partisan*” but added, “They may be adopted for use by political organizations of a partisan character.” To Herbert’s credit, his songster lacked the kinds of brutal assaults found in the *Copperhead Minstrel* but the other two compilations had several. Along with the titles, “Abe the Dictator” and “Abraham’s the Nigger King,” they also

²¹¹ Despite the publication of other Democrat songsters, *Copperhead Minstrel* was still being sold as late as 1866. *Old Guard*, 2 (November 1864): 261; *Copperhead Minstrel*, 3-4, 13-15, 33-36, 54-55; *Old Guard* 4 (December 1866): 774.

included several pieces complaining of emancipation (“All For the Nigger”), black equality (“Nigger Doodle Dandy”), and even one (“The Negro’s’ Lament”) portraying a freedman longing to return to his supposedly comfortable life as a slave.²¹²

In addition to writing songs, Democrats used an incident involving Lincoln and music to attack the president. After the Federal victory at Antietam, Lincoln visited McClellan and was given a tour of the battlefield. According to several Democratic sources, as Lincoln walked the field, he callously requested that a member of his entourage sing a minstrel song. Depending on the storyteller, Lincoln did so either as blood was still on the ground, as he walked across Burnside Bridge, as soldiers around him were burying the dead, or as he stood in front of a mass grave. As one propagandist suggested, “never before . . . did one whose heart ought to have wept tears of blood, indulge in such unfeeling, such unholy jests.”²¹³

Although Democrats kept repeating the story and even circulated a poem about it, there is little evidence that the incident actually took place. Those close to Lincoln denied it but the account was suspect even without these refutations. That it did not surface until more than a year after the incident was said to have taken place made the story especially dubious. It nevertheless represented a fairly skillful use of music as a political tool. By having Lincoln request a song at Antietam, Democrats voiced their common criticism that he was low class and addicted to base

²¹² *Democratic Presidential Campaign Songster*, 3-6, 41-43, 58-61; *The Little Mac Campaign Songster* (New York, NY: T. R. Dawley, 1864), 27-29, 52-53, 56; Herbert, *McClellan Campaign Melodist*, 2, 11, 21, 29.

²¹³ Horton, *Youth’s History*, 241-242; *Illinois State Register*, November 24, 1863; Henry M. Naglee and Edwin M. Stanton, *A Chapter from the Secret History of the War* (Philadelphia, PA: 1864), 4; *New York World*, June 20, September 8, 1864; *Washington Despotism Dissected*, 73. The song Lincoln requested was usually identified as either “Picayune Butler” or “Jim Along Jonsey.” The former was likely selected by Democrats because it was also a common nickname for General Benjamin Butler – a prominent Republican and symbol of wartime abuse of power. One newspaper suggested that Lincoln had a similar reaction to the carnage at Gettysburg, although it claimed that he only told jokes and mentioned no music. *Illinois State Register*, November 24, 1863.

humor. Furthermore, because the song was a minstrel tune, it reinforced Lincoln's working class status – since minstrelsy was popular among the lower classes – and his obsession with blacks – a common complaint among Democrats.²¹⁴

Despite these musical attacks, Republicans carried the election. Their slow response to the outpouring of Democratic songs perhaps grew out of the fact that most of the North's popular patriotic music was, in essence, Republican. "John Brown's Body" and the songs of Root and Cady supported the war effort and, to some degree, endorsed emancipation. In 1863, George Frederick Root published a compilation called *The Bugle Call* which he intended for use "in all gatherings of loyal people" and suggested that there should be a copy "in every loyal home." Republicans, themselves, began using music more actively in 1864. A newspaper offered ten dollars for the best song making fun of McClellan and John W. Hutchinson gave concerts in support of Lincoln. Soon Republicans released two of their own songsters, the *Lincoln Campaign Songster* and *The Republican Songster*. Less focused on attacking the opposing party, these books encouraged perseverance and commitment to broad concepts like "liberty" and "freedom." However, despite these efforts, the major patriotic songs of the Union remained the primary Republican anthems. On the night of Lincoln's re-election, his supporters took to the streets, singing "John Brown's Body" and "The Battle Cry of Freedom," rather than the songs featured in their party's songsters.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Detroit *Free Press*, October 24, 1864; *Old Guard* 2 (October 1864): 238; *Old Guard* 2 (November 1864): 262; Carpenter, "Abraham Lincoln," 1; Gustavus Vasa Fox, *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox: Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1861-1865*, edited by Robert Means Thompson and Richard Wainwright (New York, NY: De Vinne Press, 1920), II, 485.

²¹⁵ George Frederick Root, ed., *The Bugle Call* (Chicago, IL: Root & Cady, 1863), i; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (June 1863): 48; Jordan, *Singin' Yankees*, 241; Bernard, *Lincoln*, 243-247, 252; San Francisco *Daily Evening Bulletin*, November 11, 1864.

However, these Republican celebrators demonstrated another common trend on the Civil War home-front. They were not just performing songs that reflected their political opinions; they were doing so in public. By removing these songs from parlors, these civilians spread their messages to a much wider audience. During the Civil War, public performances were common and could effectively show support for or resistance to those with political and military power.

Almost immediately after secession, civilians began using music to show their support for one side or the other. They often performed for newly enlisted troops marching to the front. Union soldiers in cities such as Detroit and Milwaukee heard “Yankee Doodle” and “The Star Spangled Banner” while the strains of “Dixie” sent Confederates off to war. In Cleveland, performing for soldiers was considered such an honor that bands competed for the privilege. Soldiers often responded in kind, such as one departing New Hampshire regiment that answered a civilian performance of “Auld Lang Syne” with “Home, Sweet Home.” A former slave recalled a similar scene in Charleston, where Confederate soldiers played instruments and sang farewell songs.²¹⁶

Southern girls frequently performed secessionist songs in their parlors and civilians on both sides rushed out into the streets to sing patriotic songs for passing soldiers. Wounded soldiers were likely to hear women’s voices singing them back to health. One northern woman

²¹⁶ Entry for April 29, 1861, Charles M. Cleveland 1861-1862 Diary, Cleveland Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Milwaukee *Daily Sentinel*, April 23, 1861; Robertson, “Childhood Recollections,” 217; Kathleen Boone Samuels, *A Civil War Marriage in Virginia: Reminiscences and Letters*, compiled by Carrie Esther Spencer, Bernard Samuels, and Walter Berry (Boyce, VA: Carr Publishing Co., 1965), 96; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, April 18, May 28, 1861; Henry S. Hamilton, *Reminiscences of a Veteran* (Concord, NH: Republican Press Association, 1897), 131; “Interview with William Rose,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, South Carolina Narratives, Volume XIV, Part 4*, 49, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhhome.html>.

complained to a friend, “I wish I could do something for my country” and was told, “Go to one of the hospitals and sing for the soldiers.” She did and, after performing “The Star Spangled Banner,” was gratified to see that a Union soldier “who had been given up by the physician as an almost hopeless case . . . drank in every note like so much nectar. The effect was electrical.”²¹⁷

Civilians performed patriotic songs for each other to express their loyalty and resolve. Benefit concerts were especially common, as civilians used music to collect funds for soldiers and hospitals.²¹⁸ Although some benefits only raised between \$100 to \$600, others raised over a thousand. One concert in Shreveport, Louisiana, for Missouri Confederates netted over \$5000. Even musical celebrities became involved. Harry Macarthy donated some of the profits from his New Orleans performances to the Confederate army, the Marine Band raised funds for wounded soldiers, and John Hill Hewitt held a massive benefit concert in Augusta. Such performances received wide praise. One Cleveland resident claimed that even though he was “one of those

²¹⁷ Entry for April 2, 1865, Curtis R. Burke Journal, Indiana Historical Society; Cate, *Two Soldiers*, 54; Henry Kyd Douglas, *I Rode with Stonewall, Being Chiefly the War Experiences of the Youngest Member of Jackson’s Staff from the John Brown Raid to the Hanging of Mrs. Surratt* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 120-121; G. Ward Hubbs, ed., *Voices from Company D: Diaries by the Greensboro Guards, Fifth Alabama Infantry Regiment, Army of Northern Virginia* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2003), 227, 286; Julia Demoville Morgan, *How it Was: Four Years Among the Rebels* (Nashville, TN: Privately published, 1892), 26-27, 85-86; Alex S. Paxton, “Sheridan’s Bummers,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 32 (1904): 90; Sutherland, *Seasons of War*, 217; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 2, Vol. VII, 265; Crotty, *Four Years Campaigning*, 88; Richard Ramsey Hancock, *Hancock’s Diary, or, A History of the Second Tennessee Confederate Cavalry: With Sketches of the First and Seventh Battalions* (Nashville, TN: Brandon Print. Co., 1887), 214; McDonald, *A Diary*, 174-175; W. C. Ward, “Incidents and Personal Experiences on the Battlefield at Gettysburg,” *Confederate Veteran* 8 (August 1900): 245; Eliza Frances Andrews, *The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl, 1864-1865* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1908), 139-141; Horatio B. Hackett, ed., *Christian Memorials of the War: or, Scenes and Incidents Illustrative of Religious Faith and Principle, Patriotism and Bravery in Our Army, with Historical Notes* (Boston, MA: Gould and Lincoln, 1864), 197; Annie Wittenmyer, *Under the Guns: A Woman’s Reminiscences of the Civil War* (Boston, MA: E. B. Stallings and Co., 1865), 218-220. Another woman found that her performances for wounded soldiers were so effective that she began touring northern hospitals. Wittenmyer, *Under the Guns*, 222.

²¹⁸ Examples of benefit concerts are too numerous to list here.

who have no music in their souls,” he nevertheless thought the organizers of one benefit had “done an act for which God will smile upon them. They have used their talents which He had given them for the good of their suffering fellow-creatures.” Even during the theater recession in New York, one critic was confident that a concert held for “The Patriotic Fund” “cannot fail to ensure an overflowing house.”²¹⁹

Patriotic songs proved equally popular in schools. Southern textbooks contained a pro-Confederate version of “America” and northern school-children were taught “Just Before the Battle, Mother” and Henry Clay Work’s “Washington and Lincoln.” Student performances were often staged in dramatic fashion. In an Ohio school, children were drilled as a regiment and marched while singing patriotic songs. A St. Louis teacher had his students perform “The Battle Cry of Freedom” loud enough that “I hope the rebels heard us.” Similarly, a Maryland teacher had her class sing this same song to passing Union troops. Other children hardly needed encouragement to play patriotic songs and behave like soldiers. One Michigan boy recalled that his friends frequently paraded around pretending to be military bandsmen and newspapers reported high sales of fifes and drums designed for children.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 60; Harwell, *Confederate Music*, 38; T. Lenoir Norwood to Grandma, October 1861, Lenoir Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Michigan Civil War Centennial Observance Commission, *The Effect of the Civil War on Music in Michigan* (Lansing, MI: 1965), 5-6; New York *Herald*, May 1, 19, 1861; Richmond *Dispatch*, October 26, 1861, January 8, 1862; Entry for July 7, 1864, Frances Woolfolk Wallace Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; *Weekly Raleigh Register*, September 25, 1861; W. H. Tunnard, *A Southern Record: The History of the Third Regiment Louisiana Infantry* (Baton Rouge, LA: 1866), 329; Washington *National Intelligencer*, June 30, 1862; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, September 28, 1861. The New York *Herald* later reported that the attendance at “The Patriotic Fund” benefit was disappointing but the concert nevertheless raised over \$1000. New York *Herald*, May 19, 1861.

²²⁰ Brown, “A Small Boy’s Recollections,” III, 206; Washington Baird, *The Confederate Spelling Book* (Macon, GA: Burke, Boykin & Company, 1864), 144; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (June 1864): 47; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, June 10, 1861; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (July 1864): 62; Young, *What A Boy Saw*, 275-276; H. E. Gerry, *Camp Fire*

Political tensions sometimes affected the teaching of patriotic songs, however. In February 1863, a member of the Detroit Board of Education offered a resolution forbidding “party songs” in city schools. He argued “that such songs as ‘John Brown’s Body,’ etc. were totally unfitting for use in any school and should not be tolerated,” but they “had been sung, and were sung everyday.” He preferred “letting ‘John Brown’s Body’ rest in its grave.” The resolution was adopted but the following month another Board member reported that, although “John Brown’s Body” was being performed in classrooms, “if there were any songs sung to which any over sensitive minds could possibly take exception to, it was one entitled, ‘McClellan is our leader, boys.’” With the issue fully exposed as a conflict over whether Republican or Democratic songs would be taught in school, the Board dismissed any further discussion.²²¹

A more common way for civilians to musically support the war was through serenades. Nineteenth-century Americans frequently sang or played music outside of each other’s homes as part of courting rituals or to compliment the recipient. During the war, serenades took on a more political character. Typically, a group of civilians would perform for a public official, who would respond by giving a speech. Civilians sang for General Joseph E. Johnston in Richmond, Frederick Douglass in Chicago, and McClellan after he became a presidential candidate. Lincoln was repeatedly serenaded: supporters performed as he travelled from Springfield to Washington in 1861; a large crowd sang during his 1862 visit to New York; and, in 1865, soldiers sang “The Battle Cry of Freedom” when he arrived in Petersburg after its capture. Jefferson Davis also

Entertainment and True History of Robert Henry Hendershot, the Drummer Boy in the Rappahannock (Chicago, IL: Hack & Anderson, 1898), 7.

²²¹ *Detroit Advertiser*, February 12, March 3, 1863; *Detroit Free Press*, February 12, March 3, 1863.

received his share of serenades, including a rendition of “Dixie” by three thousand Richmonders.²²²

One of the more spectacular serenades occurred in Gettysburg the night before the consecration of the National Cemetery. That evening a large crowd of locals, college students, professional bandmen, and visitors serenaded Lincoln and other dignitaries. It was fairly late when they sang “We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More” outside of Lincoln’s hotel and the president made only a few remarks but Secretary of State William H. Seward gave a much longer address. Several other members of Lincoln’s staff and cabinet were even more receptive. They joined the serenaders for a time, before converging on Senate Secretary John Weiss Forney’s hotel room, where they drank heavily and sang “John Brown’s Body.” When the serenaders sang outside Forney’s room, he responded by castigating the crowd for not supporting Lincoln more fervently.²²³

The president occasionally complained that, although he appreciated these demonstrations of public affection, he was tired of responding to them. Colonel James Chesnut reacted more dramatically when serenaders gathered around his home in Columbia, South Carolina. According to his wife, he “put out the light, locked the door. And sat still as a mouse” until they went away. Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner was more diplomatic when he received an unwanted serenade. Instead of hiding, he asked that the money spent on the music be donated to the Massachusetts Soldiers’ Relief Association. In light of actions like these, the

²²² Richmond *Dispatch*, March 4, June 3, 1861, July 29, September 8, 1864; New York *Herald*, February 21, 1861; *Douglass’ Monthly* (February 1863); G. W. Richards, *The Lives of Gens. Halleck and Pope* (Philadelphia, PA: J. Magee, 1862), 27; Bernard, *Lincoln*, 83.

²²³ Orton H. Carmichael, *Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address* (New York, NY: The Abingdon Press, 1917), 44-45; Tyler Dennett, ed., *Lincoln and the Civil War in the Diaries of John Hay* (New York, NY: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1939), 120-121; French, *Witness to the Young Republic*, 432; Milwaukee *Daily Sentinel*, November 28, 1863; Helen Nicolay, *Lincoln’s Secretary, a Biography of John G. Nicolay* (New York, NY: Longmans, Green, 1949), 175.

Richmond *Dispatch* declared that serenading was “played out.” Yet despite such opposition, serenading remained the most common way for civilians to musically express their support for the war. The numerous and easily performed songs available to Civil War Americans clearly encouraged such performances.²²⁴

Although singing could obviously bring people together, it could just as easily drive them apart. Between 1861 and 1865, a musical war raged between Confederate civilians and Union soldiers. Confederates on the home-front, especially women, used music to resist Federal authority. As both sides tried to offend each other with music, songs became weapons in a persistent and occasionally intense cultural war. Initially, these exchanges were harmless but they escalated over time and Union commanders eventually took measures to directly suppress Confederate music. Few events better illustrated how civilians used music as resistance than this proxy war fought throughout the South.

Many of the initial exchanges between Confederate civilians and Union soldiers occurred in southern parlors. During the antebellum period, parlor pianos were not just used for family bonding but also to entertain company. Guests would usually be escorted into the parlor where women performed while the rest of the party observed or sang along. The parlor was also central to courting rituals and young couples would often sit at the piano and sing romantic songs together. As a result of these customs, women were expected to happily allow guests into their parlors as long as they behaved properly. However, parlor performances became increasingly political during the Civil War, as patriotic music began supplanting sentimental pieces. In fact, publishers released version of patriotic songs specifically designed for parlor pianos, such as

²²⁴ Bernard, *Lincoln*, 231; Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War*, 293; Philadelphia *North American and United States Gazette*, January 16, 1863; Richmond *Dispatch*, October 18, 1861.

“Harry Macarthy’s Bonnie Blue Flag with Brilliant Variations” and the “We Are Coming Father, Abraham, 300,000 More Quickstep.”²²⁵

As Union soldiers occupied southern communities, they frequently visited southern homes and expected women to entertain them in their parlors. However, the songs they heard often expressed loyalty to the Confederacy. “The Bonnie Blue Flag” was especially popular but other songs were played as well. Soldiers tolerated these token demonstrations, considering them a small price to pay for female companionship. Considering one such performer, an Illinois soldier wrote, “Oh! the language, the sentiment; rebellion deep, defiant, loud, echoes from her soul . . . but the gallant Union soldiers blame her not. . . . She has been made to believe that the land of her birth is engaged in a righteous cause.” Others were more dismissive. One soldier remarked that during a parlor performance, some Confederate girls “were quite rebellious,” but decided it was all flirtation and they were “quite delighted with the attention they received from so many of us.” Some acknowledged the hostility behind these acts but disregarded it. For instance, when a northern officer played “The Star Spangled Banner” in one southern home, the elderly homeowner expressed some disapproval. In response, the ladies of the house sang a song comparing Union General Benjamin Butler to the Devil. After these polite but tense performances, the soldier noted that “we left them . . . they, no doubt, hoping we might be shot before night.”²²⁶

²²⁵ Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 236-237; Loesser, *Men, Women, and Pianos*, 475, 499; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 555, 161; S. Schlesinger, “Harry Macarthy’s Bonnie Blue Flag with Brilliant Variations” (New Orleans, LA: A. E. Blackmar, 1864); J. A. Getze, “We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More Quickstep” (Philadelphia, PA: Lee & Walker, 1862).

²²⁶ William J. K. Beaudot and Lance J. Herdegen, *An Irishman in the Iron Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs of James P Sullivan, Sergt., Company K, 6th Wisconsin Volunteers* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1993), 85-86; Lucy Rebecca Buck, *Shadows on My Heart: The Civil War Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck of Virginia* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia

However, musical exchanges between Confederate women and their Union occupiers were usually less cordial. Southern women attacked Federal troops with one of the only weapons available to them, secessionist songs. These women consciously moved their music out of their parlors by opening windows or by performing in public places but, by inserting themselves into the public sphere, they also became targets. It was through this process that musical battles erupted with varying degrees of intensity.

This conflict began almost immediately. After Fort Sumter, Lincoln's secretary, William O. Stoddard, observed how "the tone of the piano-playing part of Washington society . . . is in romantic sympathy with 'the sunny South,' and there is a perpetual tinkle of the favorite secession airs pouring through the windows, which [women] leave open for the benefit of any Northern vandal who may happen to pass within hearing." Stoddard was relieved when "the blockade of Washington is broken through" because the band of the Seventh New York had arrived and was playing "commonplace national music, and the like." As more Union bands marched into the capitol, they continued to assail rebel ears and laid claim to one of the Confederacy's most effective weapons, "Dixie." Stoddard recalled that soldiers played it "as if for a wager, and the cheering along the thronged sidewalks answered uproariously. Suddenly, as if a counter spell had been uttered, the weird and mocking power had passed away from the

Press, 1997), 107-108; Judith White Brockenbrough McGuire, *Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War* (Richmond, VA: J. W. Randolph and English, 1889), 219; Charles Wright Wills, *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier: Including a Day by Day Record of Sherman's March to the Sea: Letters and Diaries of the Late Charles W. Wills, Private and Sergeant 8th Illinois Infantry, Lieutenant and Battalion Adjutant 7th Illinois Cavalry, Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel 103rd Illinois Infantry*, edited by Mary E. Kellogg (Globe Print. Co., 1906), 101; Coffin, *The Boys of '61*, 37; D. Leib Ambrose, *From Shiloh to Savannah: The Seventh Illinois Infantry in the Civil War* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University, 2003), 163-164; Josiah Marshall Favill, *The Diary of a Young Officer Serving with the Armies of the United States During the War of the Rebellion* (Chicago, IL: R. R. Donnelly & Sons Co., 1909), 72; James Austin Connolly, *Three Years in the Army of the Cumberland: The Letters and Diary of Major James A. Connolly* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1959), 308-309.

bonding melody.” Thoroughly routed, “The young women of Washington . . . shut their windows and mournfully declare that the Yankees have stolen even the national music of the South.”²²⁷ Thus was the Confederate musical revolt in Washington suppressed but such scenes would be repeated many times throughout the war.

“The Bonnie Blue Flag” became the preferred weapon of Confederate civilians. Women, children, and even slaves performed the song for northerners, sometimes with different lyrics. One of the more common renditions attacked Lincoln and praised Davis:

Jeff Davis rides a white horse; Abe Lincoln rides a mule.
Jeff Davis is a gentleman; Abe Lincoln is a fool.

However, the most popular version was “The Homespun Dress.” Its rejection of northern finery and endorsement of women’s roles as protectors of the home-front made it a highly effective weapon against the Federals. In addition, the song retained all of the Confederate nationalism associated with “The Bonnie Blue Flag” while also being more applicable to the female experience.²²⁸

Union soldiers grew increasingly annoyed by such demonstrations. When some Winchester women attended a dinner for a Union brigade early in the war, Lieutenant Russell M. Tuttle and his friends actually requested “*The Bonnie Blue Flag*, and other Rebel songs.”

²²⁷ Stoddard, *Inside the White House*, 17-19.

²²⁸ Sala, *Diary in America*, 260; Staton, *Old Southern Songs*, 96; Luman Harris Tenney, *War Diary, 1861-1865*, edited by Frances Andrews Tenney (Cleveland, OH: Eveangelical Pub. House, 1914), 89; “Interview with Sam Word,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Arkansas Narratives, Vol. II, Part 7*, 235, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; Robertson, “Childhood Recollections,” 218; Underwood, *Three Years’ Service*, 152; “Interview with Caroline Smith,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Arkansas Narratives, Volume II, Part 6*, 178-179, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; McElroy, *Andersonville*, 68. Northerners also adopted the “white horse” and “mule” parody by simply revering Lincoln and Davis’ names.

However, by the war's end, Tuttle's attitude had changed. As he lay in a hospital in Goldsboro, North Carolina, some local women "passed the porch which runs by my door, singing . . . rebel airs . . . for my special benefit." Tuttle now considered such acts "pitiful and contemptible. . . . I have no respect whatever for those who consider it their duty to their cause to insult and displease those in whose power they are placed by the fortunes of war." Louis Moreau Gottschalk accurately observed that through these "incessant hostile acts," Confederate women brought "on themselves the prosecution of the government or of rendering plausible their reproaches that" Union soldiers attacked "women and children."²²⁹

Sometimes Union soldiers retaliated in kind. One Indiana bandsman recounted how, when a group of southern women performed Confederate songs, "we sang and played some northern airs." Another group of Union soldiers began singing their own song for Confederate women about how they were tired of hearing about "The Homespun Dress." In some cases these musical retaliations were unsolicited. After overhearing a parlor performance of "The Bonnie Blue Flag" and "Maryland, My Maryland" through an open window, some Minnesotans "stopped and listened for a few moments, and when they got through, we commenced and sung that grand old anthem, the 'Star-Spangled Banner.'" Similarly, at Grant's Hill, Mississippi, a Union soldier heard a local family "singing 'patriotic' southern airs." He and his friends then performed several Union songs, each more offensive than the last. They began with "The Star Spangled Banner," then performed "The Battle Cry of Freedom," before, "at the suggestion of the division commander," singing "John Brown's Body." "What a volume of sound we put into

²²⁹ Tuttle, *Civil War Journal*, 118, 202-203; Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, 131.

that chorus!” he recalled, “We felt every word of it, and could sing ‘Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!’ with a right good will.”²³⁰

More often, Union soldiers performed songs as they passed through or occupied southern towns. Early in the war, they had tried to pacify southerners by performing Confederate music but they soon began playing Union anthems. As one Rhode Island unit entered Leesburg, Virginia, “all the bands poured forth to the disloyal ears of the city the purest of our national airs” and when a New York regiment entered Pensacola, Florida, with the band playing “Yankee Doodle,” “our elation formed a striking contrast to the sour looks and downcast faces of the white people.” Occasionally, these demonstrations provoked short musical battles, as when Union soldiers in Greenville, Alabama, performed “Yankee Doodle,” “The Star Spangled Banner,” and “Hail Columbia” and the Confederates responded by loudly playing “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag.” More often, Confederates simply retreated into their homes or greeted the soldiers with scowls and other expressions of disgust. One soldier recalled that after a performance of “Red, White, and Blue,” a Culpeper woman “shook her head and fists at us, talking and crying at the same time.”²³¹

²³⁰ Entry for August 6, 1863, Diary, George Washington Lambert Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Indiana Historical Society; “Interview with Hannah Crasson,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Volume XI, Part 1*, 193, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; Bircher, *Drummer-Boy’s Diary*, 161; William B. Todd, *The Seventy-Ninth Highlanders: New York Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865* (Albany, NY: Press of Bandow, Barton, 1886), 318-319.

²³¹ Ira Seymour Dodd, *The Song of the Rappahannock* (New York, NY: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1898), 64; George W. Nason, *History and Complete Roster of the Massachusetts Regiments, Minute Men of ’61 who Responded to the First Call of President Abraham Lincoln, April 16, 1861, to Defend the Flag and Constitution of the United States...and Biographical Sketches of Minute Men of Massachusetts* (Boston, MA: Smith & McCance, 1910), 194; Crotty, *Four Years Campaigning*, 15; Daniel R. Gilbert, ed., *Freddy’s War: The Civil War Letters of John Frederick Frueauff* (Bethlehem, PA: Moravian College, 2006), 35; *New York Times*, May 25, 1861; Cook, *History of the Twelfth Massachusetts*, 24; Denison, *Sabers and Spurs*, 168;

As the Union occupation of southern towns continued, the musical war between soldiers and civilians escalated. In fact, northern soldiers looked for ways to annoy Confederates. One of the most popular means was to serenade Confederate women with northern airs. These efforts were effective because women were expected to tolerate serenades as long as the performance was adequate. As a result, Confederate women found themselves trapped between social custom and political loyalty and Union soldiers reveled in the irony. For instance, bugler George Sargent and his fellow bandsmen decided to give the citizens of Winchester a serenade of traditional Union anthems for Christmas. He recorded that “we knew they felt very bitter towards us” but nevertheless “made the night perfectly hideous with our noises.” Another band serenaded a Confederate woman in the middle of the night after she refused to let them hear music from her parlor piano.²³²

A series of serenades given to the family of Lucy Rebecca Buck, in Front Royal, Virginia, demonstrated the combative tone of these performances. After her mother hosted a

Willoughby Babcock, *Selections from the Letters and Diaries of Brevet-Brigadier General Willoughby Babcock of the Seventy-Fifth New York Volunteers*, edited by Willoughby Maynard Babcock (Albany, NY: University of the State of New York, 1922), 58; “A Bit of True Romance,” *Confederate Veteran* 12 (April 1904): 179; James H. Clark, *The Iron Hearted Regiment* (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1865), 6; Entry for August 28, 1864, Russell Hastings Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center; Entry for February 25, 1865, typescript copy of Civil War Diary, Walter H. Jackson Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; E. O. Kimberley to his parents, March 1, 1862, Kimberley Family Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society; Speer Morgan and Greg Michalson, eds., *For Our Beloved Country: American War Diaries from the Revolution to the Persian Gulf* (New York, NY: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994), 178; New York *Herald*, December 22, 1864; Thomas D. Phillip Diary, 26, Filson Historical Society; Quint, *Potomac and the Rapidan*, 45; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 24-25; Tenney, *War Diary*, 43; Underwood, *Three Years’ Service*, 143-144; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 1, Volume XXIX/1, 393; Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, August 12, 1862; Entry for September 16, 1863, George Washington Lambert Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Indiana Historical Society.

²³² *Daily Cleveland Herald*, November 9, 1864; “Serenades,” *Round Table* 1 (February 27 1864): 163-164; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 246-247; Morgan, *For Our Beloved Country*, 189; W. D. Chadick, “Diary of Mrs. W. D. Chadick,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly* (Summer 1947): 311-312.

Union general for dinner, a regimental band played for the family. Lucy “liked it until they struck up ‘Yankee Doodle’ and ‘Dixie’ – *that* would not do *any way*,” and she turned her back to the band. Lucy understood that “they just played their own ‘Yankee Doodle’ with so much gusto because they knew how obnoxious it had become to good southerners. And as for ‘Dixie’ this is the height of impudence in them to appropriate one of *our* national airs.” Later, she was serenaded again with some sentimental pieces but eventually a local unionist came over and shouted, “Boys! you’re no true Yankee soldiers if you could think of omitting to play ‘Yankee Doodle,’” and the band again gave Lucy the “odious” anthem. Now, instead of merely turning her back, she responded to this repeated affront by closing the blinds. She “suffered all evening from a severe headache in consequence of ‘Yankee Doodle’” and could only cure it by playing “‘Johnston’s March to Manassas’ as a restorative.” However, she found herself even more dismayed two days later when a Union band came to her home and played the same Confederate song. “Thieves!” she told her diary, “they come to steal our liberty, steal our property, our slaves, and, not satisfied with this robbery, actually steal our *National music*.”²³³

Whatever emotional distress resulted from these musical exchanges, they were, for the most part, harmless. However, Federal authorities understood that civilian performances helped sustain Confederate morale and began seeking effective ways to suppress them. As a result, the North began restricting the production and performance of Confederate music. All told, such actions marked a war against Confederate music that effectively limited its power.

The blockade was one of the primary, if unintentional, weapons against Confederate music. Paper shortages dramatically reduced the quality and amount of sheet music in the South. Furthermore, with coastal ports and rivers increasingly inaccessible to Confederate shipping,

²³³ Buck, *Shadows on My Heart*, 73-77.

distribution of sheet music became difficult. This was especially so in Texas, where music published outside the state was almost impossible to obtain after New Orleans and Galveston fell. Sheet music prices also increased dramatically, ranging from twenty-five to fifty cents in 1861 and reaching \$2.50 or three dollars by 1864. The blockade also limited Confederate manufacturing and importation of musical instruments. Prices began soaring in 1861 and by the end of the year this inflation, along with high demand from military bands, exhausted the supply in the Confederacy.²³⁴

One of the more overt ways that Federal authorities waged war on Confederate music was by targeting publishers, especially in Baltimore and New Orleans. In July 1862, two Baltimore music publishers were imprisoned for printing “The Stonewall Quickstep.” The following year, a special order was issued declaring, “The publication and sale of secession music is considered . . . evil, incendiary, and not for the public good.” It demanded that all publishers “discontinue such sales” and “send to this office any such music you may have on hand at present.” The city’s publishers were then made to swear an oath that they would not print any further Confederate music, help others do so, or trade with any rebel states. Eventually, they were even forced to surrender the plates used to publish disloyal songs. Despite the

²³⁴ Mary Ann Harris Gay, *Life in Dixie during the War* (Atlanta, GA: Foote & Davies, 1901), 51; Lota M. Spell, “Music in Texas,” *Civil War History* 4 (September 1958): 304; Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 262; Edwin H. Fay, *This Infernal War: The Confederate Letters of Edwin H. Fay*, edited by Bell Irvin Wiley and Lucy E. Fay (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1958), 382; Entry for April 27, 1862, Frances Woolfolk Wallace Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 158; *Illustrated London News*, October 5, 1861. An examination of Confederate sheet music reveals that most of it is printed on very thin paper and the ink is difficult to read.

occasional printing of pieces like “Stonewall Jackson’s Way,” these restrictions resulted in a sharp decline in the amount of Confederate music published in the city.²³⁵

However, the primary front in the war on Confederate music was in New Orleans. Shortly after the city was captured, Federal authorities targeted the Confederacy’s most prominent publisher, A. E. Blackmar, who was fined \$500 and imprisoned. While incarcerated, his store and its entire inventory were destroyed. When he was released shortly thereafter, he fled the city and relocated his business to Augusta, Georgia. In addition, an order was issued, fining anyone twenty-five dollars who sang, whistled, or played Blackmar’s most successful publication, “The Bonnie Blue Flag.” P. P. Werlein, the first southerner to publish “Dixie,” also had his entire stock seized and sold by Union soldiers.²³⁶

These measures were part of a broader conflict in New Orleans over the control of music. Even during the attack on the city, Confederate soldiers and civilians had sung secessionist songs at Union sailors, who in turn fired at them. The conflict continued as General Butler entered the city. He stationed a regimental band in front of his hotel “and they played with fiery energy all the national airs from Yankee Doodle to the Star Spangled Banner.” Since this resulted in few demonstrations from his Confederate subjects, he considered “Federal power . . . established,” but civilian performances of Confederate songs, especially “The Bonnie Blue Flag,” became a

²³⁵ Raphael Semmes, “Civil War Song Sheets: One of the Collections of the Maryland Historical Society,” *Maryland Historical Society* 38 (1943): 205-229; *Baltimore American*, July 24, 1862; *Baltimore Sun*, July 15, 1862; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 2, Volume IV, 271; *Richmond Dispatch*, March 19, April 7, 1863; Thomas John Scharf, *History of Maryland: From the Earliest Period to the Present Day* (Baltimore, MD: John B. Piet, 1879), III 527; Boteler Scrapbook, Volume I, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University; *Richmond Dispatch*, February 6, 1864.

²³⁶ Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 625; Daniel, *Confederate Scrap-Book*, 190; Harwell, *Confederate Music*, 10, 19; Harwell, “The Star,” 287. Harry Macarthy also claimed he was in New Orleans when it was captured and forced to flee but this story may have merely been a marketing tool. John W. Overall, “Running the Blockade,” *Confederate Veteran* 2 (November 1894): 334-335.

major problem. Besides the twenty-five dollar fine, many civilians were severely punished or arrested for publishing or performing the Confederate anthem. In fact, one family was charged for merely hanging a blue flag with a single star outside their window because it inspired passers to sing the song. Even children were punished for performing the anthem after their mothers and teachers taught it to them. Indeed, one Union soldier worried that if he was reassigned to New Orleans, his primary duty would be arresting “the little boys who will sing ‘The Bonnie Blue Flag’ in the streets.”²³⁷

New Orleans theaters became battlegrounds over control of music in the city. On the first anniversary of the Union occupation, Federal soldiers crowded into The Varieties Theatre for a play and demanded to hear “Hail Columbia.” The owner came onstage and said that he was not allowed to play any national airs but the commanding officer present ordered the band to play it anyway. This temporarily satisfied the soldiers but during the third act they began clamoring for “Yankee Doodle.” Again denied, they attacked the stage and incited a riot that the provost guard had to break up. The event garnered enough attention from Federal authorities that a general order was passed banning audiences from requesting songs during stage performances. However, another order was issued stating that national music was not forbidden and, in the

²³⁷ *Charleston Courier Tri-Weekly*, May 6, 1862; Benjamin Butler, *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, During the Period of the Civil War* (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1917), I, 439; *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, April 30, 1864; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 16, 1862, April 7, May 3, 1863; *New York Times*, June 23, 1862; *Richmond Dispatch*, April 1, 21, May 11, June 11, 1863; James Parton, *General Butler in New Orleans* (New York, NY: Mason Brothers 1864), 325; Julia Ellen LeGrand Waitz, *The Journal of Julia LeGrand, New Orleans, 1862-1863* (Richmond, VA: Everett Waddey Co., 1911), 141, 233; James K. Hosmer, *Color-Guard: Being a Corporals Notes of Military Service in the Nineteenth Army Corps* (Boston, MA: Walker, Wise, and Company, 1864), 74.

future, the Varieties orchestra had to play “Hail Columbia,” “Yankee Doodle,” and “The Star Spangled Banner.”²³⁸

As the war progressed, soldiers turned to more forceful measures. Because parlor pianos were central to home music-making and southern women so often used them to play Confederate songs, Union soldiers targeted them for destruction. This began as early as April 1862, when a Union soldier complained that although pianos in Beaufort “are as plenty here as milking stools in a . . . barn yard” they were “kicked about with as little care and ceremony.” Later that year, as Federals sacked Fredericksburg, one soldier sat down and played a parlor piano. When he was finished, another asked, “Did you ever see me play?” and proceeded to smash the instrument with his rifle. By 1864, such actions were commonplace, especially during Sherman’s March. Soldiers not only smashed and burned pianos but sought the instruments when Confederate women tried to hide them.²³⁹

The conflict between Confederate civilians and Union soldiers demonstrated the power of music on the home-front. Along with using songs to learn about the conflict or support their government, civilians could also use them to resist authority. Singing became an act of defiance against enemies far and near. Because music was not generally considered to be dangerous,

²³⁸ Richmond *Dispatch*, May 11, June 1, 1863; New York *Herald*, May 23, 1863. The military measure forbidding song requests was successful, however a month after the first incident, a similar one occurred. The orchestra complied this time and played “Hail Columbia” but the audience demanded more. The mayor was present and announced that they had received their song and should stop, thereby averting another riot. Richmond *Dispatch*, June 24, 1863.

²³⁹ Daily Cleveland *Herald*, April 10, 1862, December 28, 1864; George H. Allen, *Forty-Six Months with the Fourth R. I. Volunteers in the War of 1861 to 1865: Comprising a History of the Marches, Battles, and Camp Life, Compiled from Journals Kept While on Duty in the Field and Camp* (J. A. & R. A. Reid Printers, 1887), 175; New York *Herald*, December 28, 1864; Underwood, *Three Years’ Service*, 264-265; Thompson, “Confederates at the Keyboard,” 109; Boteler Scrapbook, Volume I, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University; Chadick, “Diary of Mrs. W. D. Chadick,” 234; Mrs. Thomas Taylor and Sallie Enders Conner, *South Carolina Women in the Confederacy* (Columbia, SC: State Co., 1903), I 202, 358.

these acts were at first tolerated. Although Union actions against Confederate women or the suppression of Winner's "Give Us Back Our Old Commander" were extreme examples, they nevertheless indicated music's power during the Civil War. Nor was this power limited to the home front. Soldiers, too, used music for a variety of purposes and sometimes imbued it with even more importance.

CHAPTER 5

“A WONDERFUL AND INSPIRING INFLUENCE”: MUSIC IN THE ARMIES

Reveille:

I can't wake 'em up, I can't wake 'em up,
I can't wake 'em up in the morning,
I can't wake 'em up, I can't wake 'em up,
I can't wake 'em up at all.
The corporal's worse than the private,
The sergeant's worse than the corporal,
The lieutenant's worse than the sergeant
And the captain's worst of all.
I can't wake 'em up, I can't wake 'em up,
I can't wake 'em up in the morning,
I can't wake 'em up, I can't wake 'em up,
I can't wake 'em up at all.

Meal Call:

Soupy, soupy, soupy, without any bean,
Porky, porky, porky, without any lean,
Coffee, coffee, coffee, without any cream.

Stable Call:

Oh, get up, you drivers, and go to the stables,
And water your horses, and give 'em some corn;
For if you don't do it, the Colonel will know it,
And then he'll punish you as sure as you're born.

Sick Call:

Are you all dead? are you all dead?
No, thank the Lord, there's a few left yet
There's a few – left – yet.

Soldier lyrics for bugle calls.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ Norton, *Army Letters*, 324; Alfred S. Roe, *The Ninth New York Heavy Artillery: A History of its Organization, Services in the Defenses of Washington, Marches, Camps, Battles, and Muster-Out...and a Complete Roster of the Regiment* (Worcester, MA: Published by the

Music was a quintessential part of soldier life. Like civilians, enlisted men wrote, learned, and performed songs to entertain themselves and influence those around them. However, music was even more important in the armies: Bugles and snare drums were used to issue orders; soldiers sang on almost any occasion; the sounds of banjos or fiddles wafted out from every bivouac. Civil War armies also had an unprecedented number of brass bands. Embracing the romanticism of war, many regiments hired professional bands or formed amateur ones to accompany them to the front. With so many sources of music, it became omnipresent. As General Robert E. Lee famously told the band of the Twenty-Sixth North Carolina, “I don’t believe we can have an army without music.”²⁴¹

Music was a major rallying point for the soldiers. The songs they heard and performed did everything from boosting morale to shaping political opinions. Music became intrinsically linked to the soldiers’ Civil War experiences – and even combat performance – and is mentioned in almost every wartime diary, letter collection, or reminiscence. This was especially apparent during the conflict in the North over the efficacy of military bands, which revealed the importance of music to soldiers and Americans in general.

Every company was equipped with at least two field musicians. This would amount to a minimum of one drummer and one bugler or fifer. They earned seventeen dollars-per month, (slightly more than a private) and a higher ranking musician could earn over \$100 (close to that

author, 1899), 68-69; Royall W. Figg, *Where Men Only Dare to Go!: or, The Story of a Boy Company* (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1885), 64.

²⁴¹ Walter Clark, *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina, in the Great War 1861-’65: Written by Members of the Respective Commands* (Raleigh, NC: E. M. Uzzell, 1901), II, 399.

of a second lieutenant). Field musicians played calls, such as “Reveille” or “Mess Call,” to direct the men to certain activities. They would also sound commands in battle, such as “Advance” or “Retreat.” These musicians were vital for issuing orders to large groups of men. They had been a part of military life for centuries before the Civil War and would remain so until World War Two. In fact, they were considered so essential that, if no field musicians were readily available, units would go to great lengths to acquire them. One Union soldier recalled that, in the absence of actual musicians, his sergeant was forced to perform the service. When a Confederate regiment was unable to find a fifer and drummer, its members hired slaves to fill the role. Many officers appointed young boys as field musicians, to keep men of fighting age in the ranks.²⁴²

Field duty proved difficult for musicians. Their schedule was demanding and they needed to be fairly proficient with their instruments. One boy recalled how a drummer “would not ‘pass muster’ in those days unless he could do the double and single drag with variations, execute the ‘long roll,’ imitate the rattle of musketry, besides various other accomplishments

²⁴² T. M. Guerin, *General Orders Affecting the Volunteer Force* (Washington, DC: Govt. Printing Office, 1862-1865), 63-79; Bufkin, “Union Bands,” 27; Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War*, 176-177; Andrew Norton Buck to his sisters, December 31, 1861, Buck Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; John Robert Dow to his sister, December 30, 1861, Dow Family Papers, Folder 1, Filson Historical Society; Ferguson, “Bands of the Confederacy,” 430. For detailed contemporary descriptions of field musician duties and calls see: George B. Bruce and Daniel Decatur Emmett, *The Drummer’s and Fifer’s Guide, or Self-Instructor* (New York, NY: William A. Pond & Co., 1865); Lydia Post, ed., *Soldiers’ Letters, from Camp, Battle-Field and Prison* (New York, NY: Bunce & Huntington, 1865), 197-199; Henry K. White Diary, Volume 1, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. As the war progressed, the line between field musicians and band members blurred significantly in both the Union and the Confederacy. The organization of field musicians also changed. As fifers and buglers became scarce in the Confederacy, the number of drummers increased. In the Union Army, buglers became more common as commanders considered them more effective than fifers. Bufkin, “Union Bands,” 27; Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 153; Edwin C. Bennett, *Musket and Sword: or, The Camp, March and Firing Line in the Army of the Potomac* (Boston, MA: Coburn Pub. Co., 1900), 304.

with the sticks.” He also noted, “It is hardly to be wondered at that the drummer boys . . . got to be very proficient” because “in camp they were having practice from early morn until late at night.” Another soldier remarked that a good drummer needed to play so furiously that his sticks became “almost invisible.” Field musicians were the first up in the morning, the last to bed at night, and had numerous duties throughout the day. One musician became so tired of bugling that he transferred into a brigade band. His family was pleased, commenting that not only would this make his service easier but he “will not be in so much danger.”²⁴³

Because these field bands set the tempo of military life, their music made a lasting impression on their comrades. As one New Hampshire sergeant remarked, “much of the genuine romance of camp-life was associated with the routine ‘calls.’” For him there was no greater thrill “than the first burst, crash, and roll of reveille when a crack drum-corps with melodious shrill fife rallies upon the color-line, and rouses an entire regiment as by an electrical shock.” Another soldier recalled that, as the various drum corps played “tattoo” at the end of the day, “We almost forgot that we were soldiers, in our admiration of the music.” Other veterans told similar stories, such as one who recorded how “tattoo and reveille mingle in every soldier’s recollections of the war.” As another listened to tattoo in 1865, he commented, “Ah! this is not the blood, the carnage, or the suffering of war; it is its delightful romance.”²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Miller, *Drum Taps*, 19-22; Hosmer, *Color-Guard*, 73; John Robert Dow to his parents, February 2, 1865, Dow Family Papers, Folder 7, Filson Historical Society; Ann Dow to John Robert Dow, February 26, 1865, Dow Family Papers, Folder 7, Filson Historical Society.

²⁴⁴ Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 300-301; Woodbury, *Narrative of the Campaign*, 76-77; John Davis Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee; or, The Unwritten Story of Army Life, Including Chapters on Enlisting, Life in Tents and Log Huts, Jonahs and Beats, Offences and Punishments, Raw Recruits, Foraging, Corps and Corps Badges, the Wagon Trains, the Army Mule, the Engineering Corps, the Signal Corps, etc.* (Boston, MA: G. M. Smith & Co., 1887), 195; Cogswell, *History of the Eleventh*, 546; John Griffith Jones to his family, July 27, 1863, John Griffith Jones Letters, *People at War Series*, reel 57, collection 152, Manuscript

However, field musicians only produced a small part of the music heard by soldiers. Civil War armies contained an exceptionally large number of military bands. American military units had included bands since the Revolution but the members were simply listed as privates until 1821, when it became legal to have separate regimental musicians. These bands served some official functions, such as playing at dress parades, but they also entertained soldiers and officers. The practice of attaching bands to military units gained an unexpected boost from the Crimean War, as American regiments began modeling themselves after French Zouaves. Music was intrinsic to Zouave drill, making bands not just a luxury but a necessity. This renewed emphasis on military bands continued to grow through the 1850s, planting seeds that would bear fruit in 1861.²⁴⁵

The resulting explosion of regimental bands mirrored that of sheet music. Tens of thousands of bandmen played in Union regiments and the Confederate Army likely contained over a hundred bands with more than two thousand members. Almost every Union regiment formed at the beginning of the war included a brass or silver band. In fact, there were so many in both armies that several soldiers claimed that every regiment had one. By the end of 1861, the Sanitary Commission reported that it was pleased by the proliferation of these bands and encouraged their continued “formation and improvement.”²⁴⁶

Division, Library of Congress; Tuttle, *Civil War Journal*, 161; Nichols, *Story of the Great March*, 221.

²⁴⁵ Kenneth E. Olson, *Music and Musket: Bands and Bandsmen of the American Civil War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), xviii, 13-14, 18-19; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 87; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 37-38.

²⁴⁶ Olson, *Music and Musket*, 72; Ferguson, “Bands of the Confederacy,” i; Harris, “Army Music,” I, 287; H. P. Moyer, *History of the Seventeenth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry, or One Hundred and Sixty-Second in the Line of Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiments* (Lebanon, PA: Sowers Print. Co., 1911), 303; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 14; An English Officer, “A Month’s Visit to the Confederate Headquarters,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 93 (January 1863): 23; Edwin O. Kimberley to his parents, August 1, 1861, Kimberley Family

With the proliferation of military bands, instrument manufacturers and suppliers experienced a sharp increase in sales. Before the war, most manufacturers had worked on a made-to-order basis, in which a customer would wait as long as six months for an instrument. During the Civil War, suppliers who had switched to a factory model dominated the market. One particularly successful manufacturer produced about 60,000 bugles and trumpets during the war and sometimes a hundred instruments a day. Even with such high production, demand continued strong and prices sharply increased. Depending on the supplier and quality of the instruments, outfitting an entire band could cost anywhere from \$450 to \$1,250. Field musicians faced comparable costs. One supplier “chuckled” to a former field musician as he recalled how he “soaked the boys” for their drums. This amounted to big business for everyone involved, including Root and Cady, who made most of their initial capital selling instruments to bandsmen. At one point, sales were so high that their Chicago store received \$1000 worth of instruments every day. Despite these costs, soldiers remained fascinated by bands and their instruments. After a Massachusetts regiment purchased a set of silver instruments, one member observed that “the curiosity” to see them was so “intense” that the lieutenant-colonel had to issue a general order forbidding the men to gather around the band’s tent.²⁴⁷

Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society; Alfred S. Roe, *The Tenth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry 1861-1864* (Springfield, MA: Tenth Regiment Veteran Association, 1909), 343; United States Sanitary Commission, *A Report to the Secretary of War of the Operations of the Sanitary Commission: And upon the Sanitary Condition of the Volunteer Army, its Medical Staff, Hospitals, and Hospital Supplies* (Washington, DC: McGill & Witherow, 1861), 41-42. The Sanitary Commission reported that of the 200 Union bands they inspected, 143 had bands. U. S. Sanitary Commission, *Report to the Secretary of War*, 41.

²⁴⁷ Margaret Hindle Hazen, *The Music Men: An Illustrated History of Brass Bands in America, 1800 to 1920* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 135; Entry for October 13, 1863, David Millspaugh Diary, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Alonzo L. Brown, *History of the Fourth Regiment of Minnesota Infantry Volunteers during the Great Rebellion 1861-1865* (St. Paul, MN: The Pioneer Press Company, 1892), 432; Henry Albert Potter from Camp Park, Murfreesboro, May 26, 1863, Henry Albert Potter Papers,

Union regimental bands could have as many as twenty-four members, and some had more. Confederate bands were occasionally as large but many had only three or four members who tended to favor strings and woodwinds over brass instruments. Band members were paid roughly equivalent salaries to field musicians with the leaders earning as much as officers. Although most Union bands were “not generally of the first order, by any means,” the Sanitary Commission reported that they were “sufficiently good to please and interest the great majority of the soldiers.” Most of them were “supported in considerable part by a self-imposed tax on the pay of both officers and men, which sometimes is as high as five per cent.” Much of this would have been equally true for Confederates.²⁴⁸

The quality of the bands ranged from excellent to abysmal, with most having a passable amount of skill. Some were led by accomplished bandleaders, such as Patrick S. Gilmore in the Twenty-Fourth Massachusetts and Claudio Grafulla in the Seventh New York. One member of the Third New Hampshire decided that the band not only made the boys proud but also “had not a little to do with making them the good soldiers they were on the field.” Several men attested to the exceptional skill of the Thirty-Third Massachusetts regimental band, which won contests held in both eastern and western theaters. Several Confederate bands also acquired reputations for excellence. The band of the Fifth Virginia was so well regarded that General Thomas

Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; W. A. Kimberley to his parents, July 11, 1861, Kimberley Family Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society; Entry for October 1, 1864, George F. Miller Diary, Folder 2, Indiana Historical Society; C. W. Bardeen, *A Little Fifer's War Diary, with 17 Maps, 60 Portraits, and 246 Other Illustrations* (Syracuse, NY: C. W. Bardeen, 1910), 74; Epstein, *Music Publishing in Chicago*, 44; James Brown Gardner, *Record of the Service of the Forty-Fourth Massachusetts Volunteer Militia* (Boston, MA: 1887), 93.

²⁴⁸ Olson, *Music and Musket*, 71; Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War*, 176-177; Cate, *Two Soldiers*, 30; W. W. Parker, “How the Southern Soldiers Kept House during the War,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 23 (1895): 327; Fitzgerald Ross, *A Visit to the Cities and Camps of the Confederate States* (Edinburgh, Scotland: William Blackwell and Sons, 1865), 40; U. S. Sanitary Commission, *Report to the Secretary of War*, 41.

“Stonewall” Jackson made it the official band of the “Stonewall” Brigade” and the Fourth Kentucky’s band was considered the best in the Army of Tennessee.²⁴⁹

Other soldiers expressed much less elevated opinions of their bands. One member of the Sixth Wisconsin recalled that, although every soldier “believed and was ready to take an oath that their band was the best in the army, our men were just as ready to wager anything . . . that our band . . . was without exception the worst of all.” A member of the same regiment speculated that his band kept such poor time because its members were seeking a discharge. Other bands received equally low marks. One officer recommended that his band stop playing near the rationing tent “because their music sours the meat every morning.” A naval crew even offered to trade away their band because they feared that their noisome music was causing dysentery. Adopting a more serious tone, one North Carolina soldier feared that if his band did not improve, “all sentiment will die out of the Regiment.” Most soldiers, however, seemed happy enough with their bands, almost regardless of their skill.²⁵⁰

As indicated by the Sanitary Commission, most bands were supported by a regimental tax. Although bandsmen were paid well, their income was not enough to procure and maintain instruments, so many soldiers were asked to pay anywhere from one dollar to ten percent of their

²⁴⁹ Frank J. Cipolla, “Patrick S. Gilmore: The Boston Years and Beyond,” *Kongressbericht Abony/Ungarn 1994*, edited by Wolfgang Suppan Tutzing (Germany: Hans Schneider, 1996): 185; Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War*, 190; D. Eldredge, *The Third New Hampshire and All About It* (Boston, MA: E. B. Stillings & Co., 1893), 993; Milwaukee *Daily Sentinel*, October 2, 1863; *Liberator*, April 7, 1864; Tuttle, *Civil War Journal*, 136; Bufkin, “Union Bands,” 121-122; John O. Casler, *Four Years in the Stonewall Brigade* (Girard, KS: Appeal Publishing Company, 1906), 48; Lot. D. Young, *Reminiscences of a Soldier in the Orphan Brigade* (Louisville, KY: Courier-Journal Job Printing Company, 1918), 77.

²⁵⁰ Harris, “Army Music,” I, 287; Dawes, *Service with the Sixth*, 20; Michael H. Fitch, *Echoes of the Civil War as I Hear Them* (New York, NY: R. F. Fenno & Company, 1905), 332; Hosmer, *Color-Guard*, 37, 72; John Gilchrist Barrett, *The Civil War in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 24; English Officer, “A Month’s Visit,” 23; Beaudot and Herdegen, *Irishman in the Iron Brigade*, 24-25.

pay. Some could provide more, such as the wealthy Seventh New York, who gave Grafulla a sixty-person band that cost \$1,500. Although most soldiers would have agreed with a Connecticut volunteer that “the burden was heavy, but the music was sweet,” others resented parting with their hard-earned cash. The members of one Massachusetts regiment considered it “a little ‘rough’” that they were not consulted when the officers installed a band tax and suggested “that a few of our rich friends in Boston unite to defray the expense.” In addition to these regimental taxes, officers contributed money and time to keep bands in the field. The officers of the Twenty-Fourth Massachusetts provided extra funds to hold onto Gilmore’s band and those of the Twenty-Sixth North Carolina entirely supported their band. In addition, regimental officers provided instruments, supplies, and even sheet music. In return, they expected obedience and imposed vigorous practice schedules. One Confederate officer even required that his band play religious music during every roll call.²⁵¹

Many officers supported regimental bands because they thought the music was good for morale. When an officer under General Philip Henry Sheridan watched some musicians calm a

²⁵¹ John C. Myers, *A Daily Journal of the 192d Reg’t, Penn’a Volunteers, Commanded by Col. William B. Thomas: In the Service of the United States for One Hundred Days* (Philadelphia, PA: Crissy & Markley, 1864), 64; Richard C. Spicer, “‘An Inspiration to All:’ New Hampshire’s Third Regiment and Hilton Head Post Bands in Civil War South Carolina,” *Bugle Resounding: Music and Musicians of the Civil War Era*, edited Bruce C. Kelley and Mark A. Snell (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 76; Boston *Daily Advertiser*, July 11, 1861; Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, 76; Homer B. Sprague, *History of the 13th Infantry Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers during the Great Rebellion* (Hartford, CT: Case, Lockwood, & Co., 1867), 100; Gardner, *Record of the Service*, 31; Alfred S. Roe, *The Twenty-Fourth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers 1861-1866* (Worcester, MA: Twenty-Fourth Veteran Association, 1907), 412; “The 26th Regimental Band,” 6, 41, Julius A. Lineback Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; McMorries, *History of the First*, 52; Brown, *History of the Fourth*, 408; Moyer, *History of the Seventeenth*, 303; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 13-14; Diary Entries for October 18, 1862, and January 21, 1863, Walter H. Jackson Papers, Typescript Copy of Civil War Diary, 1862-1865, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Entry for January 8, 1862, Thomas D. Phillip Diary, Filson Historical Society; J. William Jones, ed., *Christ in Camp; or, Religion in Lee’s Army* (Richmond, VA: B. F. Johnson & Co., 1887), 500.

group of soldiers after a march, he commented, “None know better than commanders the silent potent influence of the ‘bands.’” Similarly, Colonel and future President Rutherford B. Hayes declared that music from a regimental band “is better than food and clothing to give spirit to the men.” Even officers without a band in their regiment understood this. Admiral Samuel Du Pont requested instruments from Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles because “the moral, and, indeed, physical effect upon a large crew by music . . . is most salutary.” Musicians appreciated this attention. As Union bandsman Frank Rauscher recalled, “The officers” were “closely attached to the band and in various ways made known their personal good will, which, added to their appreciation of our music, helped in no small degree to mitigate our hardships and make us content.”²⁵²

Soldiers, too, appreciated the bands. One bandsman recalled that “we were always ready to perform” because music put the men “in good spirits and left a good feeling behind.” According to one Massachusetts recruit, the bands were “one great pleasure we had with us.” A Michigan soldier agreed, “they make good musics it is almost enough to make a mans hair stand.” One Confederate recruit noted, “My most splendid hours are spent listening to” the regimental band, and a Union soldier likely spoke for many when he estimated that “the closing complimentary remark in many a story of camp” was “and then the band played.”²⁵³

²⁵² Henry Edwin Tremain, *Last Hours of Sheridan’s Cavalry: A Reprint of War Memoranda* (New York, NY: Bonnell, Silver & Bowers, 1904), 198-199; Rutherford B. Hayes, *The Diary and Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes, Nineteenth President of the United States*, edited by Charles Richard Williams (Columbus, OH: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1922), II, 168; Samuel Francis DuPont, *Official Dispatches and Letters of Rear Admiral Du Pont, U. S. Navy, 1846-48, 1861-63* (Wilmington, DE: Press of Ferris Bros. Printers, 1883), 82; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 27.

²⁵³ Morgan and Michalson, *For Our Beloved Country*, 140; Davis, *Three Years*, 14; John Travis to his brothers and sisters, December 10, 1862, Travis Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Richmond *Dispatch*, December 6, 1861; S. Millett Thompson,

Aside from organized performances, soldiers played their own instruments. According to one Union private, “There was probably not a regiment in the service that did not boast at least one violinist, one banjoist, and a bone player in its ranks – not to mention other instruments generally found associated with these.” Several soldiers and newspaper correspondents noted how many officers and enlisted men had instruments. In one Indiana regiment, there was such a “perfect mania” for music that “every man who has a bugle, flute, music book – banjo or other instrument at home is seeking every opportunity to have it sent forward to him.” Those who did not own instruments often made do with what they could find lying around camp, such as when one soldier used a jackknife to make a violin. The Charleston *Mercury* reported that occasionally in Confederate camps “the stillness of night is suddenly broken by the rattling of bells, blowing of horns, beating of pans, and whatever other extemporized instruments can be made to sweet *music*.”²⁵⁴

Some soldiers became renowned for their musical skill. One Georgian had such a large repertoire that men from other units would gather round him “and laugh and applaud and clap their hands, and joyously express their pleasure and appreciation.” Another Confederate fiddler held regular concerts at which, according to one of his admirers, “the first stroke of his bow never failed to be cheered enthusiastically.” The Federals too had their share of fiddlers, including one Wisconsin private who played at dances every evening. Some musicians were

Thirteenth Regiment of New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865 (New York, NY: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1888), 370.

²⁵⁴ Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee*, 69; Jenkin Lloyd Jones, *An Artilleryman’s Diary* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin History Commission, 1914), 248; Richmond *Dispatch*, December 30, 1861; Lawrence Sangston, *The Bastiles of the North* (Baltimore, MD: Kelly, Hedian & Piet, 1863), 84, 98; Henry J. H. Thompson to his friend, September 14, 1862, Henry J. H. Thompson Papers, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University; Samuel T. Wells to Lizzie, February 18, 1863, Samuel T. Wells Papers, Folder 3, Filson Historical Society; *Zion’s Herald and Wesleyan Journal* 34 (April 8 1863): 1; Charleston *Mercury*, April 26, 1864.

even good enough to transcend sectional divisions. One cornet player from Georgia was reportedly so adept that Union soldiers at Kennesaw Mountain agreed to stop shooting if the Confederates allowed him to play.²⁵⁵

Most soldiers, of course, had only their voices. By all accounts, individual and group singing were extremely popular in Civil War armies. One Union soldier observed, “Vocal music in the army was well-nigh universal, and in quality it ranged from the veriest crudities of expression to the productions of skill and taste.” An Indiana soldier explained that, although the men enjoyed band music, “our voices we had with us all the time; and when in camp or on the march, it was no uncommon thing for one to start a song, and then for the whole regiment to join in the chorus.” One even argued that bands were only necessary because after singing all day, the men were tired at night and needed music from some source. He noted that little skill was required or demanded: “Each one was a master; and the less melody or mellowness a voice possessed, the greater reason it seemed for cultivating it.”²⁵⁶

Such performances were not always spontaneous. Many regiments formed glee clubs that performed regularly. Because there were fewer regimental bands in the Confederate Army, there were more glee clubs, including one led by the author of the popular antebellum sentimental tune, “Kathleen Mavourneen.” The Orphan Brigade Glee Club was so well regarded that one member recalled that when they made camp, “the soldiers vied with each other in pointing out fine-looking houses in our vicinity” for the group’s quarters. The Union Army also

²⁵⁵ Park, “Twelfth Alabama,” 291; McMorries, *History of the First*, 52; Edwin O. Kimberley to his parents, January 12, 1862, Kimberley Family Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society; James Cooper Nisbet, *Four Years on the Firing Line* (Chattanooga, TN: Imperial Press, 1914), 204.

²⁵⁶ Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 306; Davis, *Three Years in the Army*, 93; William R. Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First Indiana Volunteer Infantry* (Harrison, OH: Hartpence, 1894), 247-248. Incidents of soldier singing are so plentiful in diaries, letters and memoirs that even citing a fraction of them would be exhaustive.

had its share. Besides the club at Fort Warren that created “John Brown’s Body,” there were glee clubs in regiments from almost every state. In fact, the Forty-Fourth Massachusetts had a glee club in each of its companies.²⁵⁷

Music was much more than the background noise of army life. Enlisted men wrote and performed songs to express themselves and influence those around them. Even members of opposing armies became potential audiences for musicians. Soldiers could march faster, endure hardships longer, or fight better if the right song was performed at the right time. Although many officers never understood the power music had over their men, others did and it became a valuable tool or even a weapon for shrewd commanders and soldiers.

Civil War soldiers repeatedly attested to the centrality of music in their lives. One Confederate recalled that, “soldiers, as a class, are passionately fond of music.” A New York lieutenant remarked that, “all soldiers love music . . . and manage to carry it with them wherever they go.” Private James R. Murray told George Frederick Root, “I don’t know what we could do without music. It seems to be the only home privilege . . . that we were allowed to bring with us to the war.” One Kentucky soldier delved a little deeper: “Music exercises a wonderful and inspiring influence over the soldier, making him forget the hardships, trials and dangers to which he is almost constantly exposed, and troops are never happier than when being entertained in this way, unless it be at a full mess table.”²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Robert Stiles, *Four Years Under Marse Robert* (New York, NY: Neale Publishing Co., 1903), 49; Fred Joyce, “Orphan Brigade Glee Club,” *Southern Bivouac* 2 (May 1884): 414; Zenas T. Haines, *Letters from the Forty-Fourth Regiment M. V. M.: A Record of the Experiences of a Nine Month’s Regiment in the Department of North Carolina in 1862-3* (Boston, MA: Herald Job Officer, 1863), 7.

²⁵⁸ Tunnard, *Southern Record*, 43; Tuttle, *Civil War Journal*, 161; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (October 1863): 126; Young, *Reminiscences of a Soldier*, 77.

Because of this voracious appetite for music, soldiers constantly sought new music to perform. Although oral transmission was by far the most common way for soldiers to learn new songs, they also used printed sources. Songsters and songbooks were especially popular. A reviewer in *Southern Literary Messenger* termed such publications “numberless,” and noted how they “embrace sprinklings from the lyric music of almost every age and clime.” Although the editor supposed “that the ‘Army Songster’ is quite as good as the rest,” he added “we are not sure that this is extravagant praise.”²⁵⁹

Nevertheless, soldiers treasured their songbooks and whatever other sources of music they could procure. One Union soldier included “a patriotic song-book” in a list of items commonly found in army knapsacks. A Confederate recalled, “We kept song books with us and passed much of our leisure time singing. I carried my book even through prison and brought it home with me.” An officer in General William Tecumseh Sherman’s Army observed that during a break in the march across Georgia, several men “crowded around an old song-book” and “[made] very fair music.” When unable to find or purchase songbooks, soldiers sometimes made their own. For instance, several Confederate prisoners at Johnson’s Island, Ohio, compiled songbooks containing a remarkably large number of popular and original pieces.²⁶⁰

Collecting music became a way for soldiers to stay connected to family and friends. They sent their favorite pieces home as sheet music or in letters. Soldiers were especially fond of sharing songs about their commands or campaigns but a surprising number of sentimental and even anti-war songs were also sent home. One Confederate soldier presented an especially grim

²⁵⁹ *Southern Literary Messenger* 38 (June 1864): 379-380.

²⁶⁰ Hedley, *Marching Through Georgia*, 28; James Huffman and Oscar Caperton Huffman, *Ups and Downs of a Confederate Soldier* (New York, NY: W. E. Rudge’s Sons, 1940), 68; Nichols, *Story of the Great March*, 52. For the Johnson’s Islands songbooks see: Prisoner of War Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy.

combination of “The Vacant Chair” and “All Quiet Along the Potomac, Tonight.” Another sent home “When This Cruel War is Over.” Even General Robert E. Lee sent music to his family and friends. By connecting with their loved ones this way, soldiers reminded themselves of their lives outside of the army and shared some of their doubts and anxieties.²⁶¹

Soldiers also requested music from home. Union private Charles Wellington Reed asked his wife for his “Colledge Song Book” because “that book has the four parts in it” and would be easy for his new glee club “to learn from.” A Union musician requested that his father send “my Jubilee” songbook and after receiving it informed him that “we have a regular old sing every night.” Others made similar requests, including one officer who needed the complete lyrics to “Oh, Forget Thee” because he and a girl had been serenading each other with it but they forgot

²⁶¹ Undated handwritten sheet music and note, William Anderson Allen Papers, Manuscripts Department, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; Hugh W. Caffey to his sister, April 7, 1863, Caffey Family Papers, Folder 5, Alabama Department of Archives and History; Fay, *Infernal War*, 305, 334, 354, 369, 382; Ferguson, “Bands of the Confederacy,” 313; Maria Louisa Wacker Fleet, *Green Mount After the War: The Correspondence of Maria Louisa Wacker Fleet and Her Family 1865-1900*, edited by Betsy Fleet (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 184; Harman A. Hiner to Victoria Jane Wilson, March 29, 1863, Civil War Collection, Box 2, Folder 1, Swem Library, Manuscripts and Rare Books Department, College of William and Mary; Hubbs, *Voices from Company D*, 230, 324; John A. Kearns to Sarah, February 1, 1865, Tina May Doud Papers, Jackson County Historical Society, courtesy of Chandra Manning; George Washington Lambert to his brother and sister, February 21, 1862, George Washington Lambert Papers, Box 2, Folder 3, Indiana Historical Society; Alonzo Miller, *Diaries and Letters, 1864-1865* (Prescott, WI: Privately Published, 1958), 62, 64, 121; Henry A. Robinson to his family, August 17, 1863, Henry A. Robinson Papers, Folder 3, Indiana Historical Society; “The Peel Confederate Letters,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly* (Summer 1947): 83; Rodney Webster Torrey, *War Diary of Rodney W. Torrey, 1862-1863* (Privately Published, n. d.), 79; Charles A. Wills to his wife, April 30, 1863, Wills Family Papers, Folder 1, Swem Library, Manuscripts and Rare Books Department, College of William and Mary; John Robert Dow to his sister, February 8, 1863, Dow Family Papers, Folder 3, Filson Historical Society; Bryan Grimes, *Extracts of Letters of Major-General Bryan Grimes, to his Wife: Written While in Active Service in the Army of Northern Virginia, Together with some Personal Recollections of the War*, edited by Cowper Pulaski (Raleigh, NC: A. Williams & Co., 1884), 44; Robert Emory Park, “War Diary of Capt. Robert Emory Park,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 26 (1898): 5; J. William Jones, *Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, Soldier and Man* (Washington, DC: Neale Publishing Company, 1906), 318.

the words. Some soldiers wrote directly to publishers. Root and Cady received several requests for sheet music, songbooks, and copies of the *Song Messenger of the Northwest* because, according to one private, “it gives us pleasure to sing the good Union songs you publish.”²⁶²

As enlisted men collected the music they heard around them, they also wrote their own pieces. Often soldiers merely added new lyrics to popular melodies, like civilian songwriters. Every bugle call had its own lyrics, including some that, according to one Massachusetts soldier, “would hardly bear rendering to ears polite.” These appeared early in the war and became fairly well-known due to a widely reprinted *Saturday Evening Post* article. As with many songs by enlisted men, their humorous lyrics masked complaints. Although, every version of “Reveille” complained that no one responded to the bugler’s call, many versions described the problem worsening as he moved up the chain of command, thereby accusing the officers of laziness. Lyrics for a call created by General Dan Butterfield, provided a similar example. His men were usually described as improvising the words, “Dan, Dan, Dan, Butterfield, Butterfield” but one soldier remembered that they also sang “Damn, damn, damn, Butterfield, Butterfield.”²⁶³

Food was the most popular subject in songs written by soldiers. The Union favorite was “Hardtack Come Again No More,” which parodied the Stephen Foster song, “Hard Times Come

²⁶² Charles Wellington Reed, “A Grand Terrible Drama”: *From Gettysburg to Petersburg: The Civil War Letters of Charles Wellington Reed*, edited by Eric A. Campbell (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2000), 67; John Robert Dow to his sister, June 20, 1862, Dow Family Papers, Folder 2, Filson Historical Society; John Robert Dow to his sister, March 8, 1863, Dow Family Papers, Folder 3, Filson Historical Society; Josiah Herrick to Cate, December 24, 1862, Josiah Herrick Letters, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Thomas Smith to Christopher Quarles Tompkins, July 23, 1863, Tompkins Family Papers, Section 24, Folder 2, Virginia Historical Society; Donaldson, *Inside the Army*, 148-149; James R. Murray, “The Song Messenger in Camp,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (June 1863): 46; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (January 1864): 158; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (June 1863): 62.

²⁶³ Roe, *Ninth New York*, 67-68; “Sojer Music,” *Saturday Evening Post* (June 1 1861): 4; Hitchcock, *War from the Inside*, 86; Norton, *Army Letters*, 324-325; Wiley, *They Who Fought Here*, 146; John S. Wise, *The End of an Era* (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899), 254.

Again No More.” Like “John Brown’s Body,” its lyrics took many forms but all complained of poor rations, as in the following verse:

It’s the song and sigh of the weary
Hard tack, hard tack, come again no more;
Long time have you lingered around the cook-tent door,
O Hard Tack come again no more.

The Confederacy had two popular songs about rations, both of which were eventually published. The favorite was the ode to peanuts, “Goober Peas.” Although the precise origins of the song are unknown – A. E. Blackmar listed the authors as “A. Pindar” and “P. Nutt” – the song was widely sung in the ranks. Soldiers were especially fond of the chorus because they could shout:

Peas! Peas! Peas! Peas! Eating goober peas!
Goodness how delicious, eating goober peas!

However, the song also had a layer of discontent. It complained of lazy soldiers, especially Georgians:

Just before the battle the Gen’ral hears a row,
He says, ‘The Yanks are coming, I hear their rifles now.’
He turns around in wonder, and what do you think he sees?
The Georgia Militia – eating goober peas!

The other popular Confederate selection was “Short Rations,” written by a member of the Army of Tennessee during the Atlanta Campaign. It began by snidely attacking all classes outside of the army:

Fair ladies and maids of all ages,
Little girls and cadets however youthful,
Home guards, quartermasters and sages,
Who write for the newspapers so truthful!
Clerks, Surgeons and Supes. Legislators,
Staff Officers (fops of the nation)
And even you dear speculators,
Come list to my song of starvation!

The song then described how the miseries of camp life were made worse by the imposition of half rations. The author suggested that even the ancient Spartans may have eaten better than the Confederates.²⁶⁴

Another widely popular Confederate soldier song was the nonsensical “Here’s Your Mule.” According to bandsman Julius A. Leinbach, “Once upon a time . . . a distressed citizen came into camp hunting his mule. . . . As he passed from one group to another . . . a wag from some distance off called out ‘here’s your mule!’” This was then repeated many times, giving rise to one of the Confederate Army’s most popular catch-phrases and, eventually, a song. Published in 1862, the lyrics described the soldiers making various sorts of mischief at the farmer’s expense, with the chorus:

Come on, come on, old man,
And don’t be made a fool,
By ev’ryone you meet in camp
With “Mister, here’s your mule.

The song was popular in the army and had some success on the home-front. P. P. Werlein even published a “Here’s Your Mule Schottisch.” However, as with many soldier songs, the melody and lyrics were often modified. One Georgian applied it to “Maryland, My Maryland” to entice some staff officers into combat:

Dear fellows break your office chains,
Here’s your mule,
The ‘Web-feet’ should not call in vain,
Here’s your mule,
But if it goes against the grain,
‘Sick furlough’ is the proud refrain,
By which you may get off again,

²⁶⁴ Donaldson, *Inside the Army of the Potomac*, 161; Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee*, 118-119; Ware, *Lyon Campaign*, 218; Le Bree, *Camp Fires of the Confederacy*, 554; McMurray, *History of the Twentieth Tennessee*, 500; A. Pindar and P. Nutt, “Goober Peas” (New Orleans, LA: A. E. Blackmar, 1866); Harwell, “Confederate Carousal,” 94; Ye Tragic and Ye Comic, “Short Rations” (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1864).

Here's your mule, Oh! Here's your mule.²⁶⁵

The Union equivalent was "Johnny, Fill Up the Bowl." Possessing slightly more comprehensible lyrics, the song was set to the same melody as "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," although it is unclear which piece came first. Its lyrics were highly malleable, although verses usually ended with the same couplet,

And we'll all drink stone-blind:
Johnny, fill up the bowl!

The most popular version gave a history of the war, as in the following lines for 1863:

In eighteen hundred and sixty-three,
Abe Lincoln set the niggers free.

1865 was described thusly:

In eighteen hundred and sixty-five,
We'll all be glad to get home alive.

One group of soldiers created lyrics for as far into the future as 1867:

In eighteen hundred and sixty-seven
We'll have the Rebels dead and at the devil.

The Army of the Potomac also had its own version, listing their various commanders and emphasizing their repeated failures. Other versions described more specific events, such as a Union defeat at Port Hudson or the promotion of a favorite private.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ "The 26th Regimental Band," 279, Julius A. Lineback Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Harman A. Hiner to Victoria Jane Wilson, March 29, 1863, Civil War Collection, Box 2, Folder 1, Swem Library, Manuscripts and Rare Books Department, College of William and Mary; C. D. Benson, "Here's Your Mule" (Nashville, TN: C. D. Benson, 1862); E. Heineman, "Here's Your Mule Schottisch" (New Orleans, LA: P. P. Werlein & Halsey, 1862); Walter Augustus Clark, *Under the Stars and Bars, or, Memories of Four Years Service with the Oglethorpes, of Augusta, Georgia* (Augusta, GA: Chronicle Printing Co., 1900), 94-96.

²⁶⁶ Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First*, 251-252; Donaldson, *Inside the Army of the Potomac*, 338; "Interview with Sally Neely," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938, Arkansas Narratives*,

Such songs shared the same lighthearted tone mixed with subtle criticism. Confederates complained about their rations and resented civilians who avoided the deprivations of army life while Union soldiers railed against inept commanders and the seemingly never-ending war. There were other songs that made these complaints more openly, such as a Union version of “Dixie” that anticipated the end of the singer’s term of service or a Confederate revision of “Do They Miss Me at Home” called “Do They Miss Me in the Trenches.” Following the disastrous Confederate defeat at Franklin, General John Bell Hood’s men created a new version of “The Yellow Rose of Texas,” that complained of the loss and asked for the return of their old commander, Joseph Johnston. The disgruntled Confederates made sure Hood was in hearing distance before they sang:

And now I’m going Southward, for my heart is full of woe,
I’m going back to Georgia to find my ‘Uncle Joe.’
You may talk about your dearest maid, and sing of Rosalie,
But the gallant Hood of Texas played hell in Tennessee.

According to one member of Hood’s Army, “the vigor which marked the singing of this was an index of the indignation felt by the army at the failure of the gallant but unfortunate Hood.”²⁶⁷

Like Hood’s men, many soldiers spontaneously made up songs to fit certain situations. Often these pieces taunted battlefield opponents. For instance, after the C. S. S. *Nashville* snuck through the Union blockade, its crew sang to nearby Union sailors, accusing them of sleeping on the job. Similarly, northern soldiers musically warned Richmonders to save their turkeys because the Army of the Potomac would be in the city by Christmas. Sometimes songs expressed a peculiar brand of soldier humor, such as one that made fun of two preachers caught

Volume II, 186-187, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee*, 69-72, 193; Bentley, *History of the 77th*, 277; Sprague, *History of the 13th*, 193.

²⁶⁷ Roe, *Ninth New York*, 39; Tunnard, *Southern Record*, 295; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 439; McMurray, *History of the Twentieth*, 352; *Southern Bivouac* 1 (August 1885): 192.

in artillery fire during the Seven Days. Occasionally, these spontaneous soldier songs articulated nobler sentiments. Near the end of the war, a group of Union soldiers serenaded some slaves, “You may die poor but you won’t die a slave.”²⁶⁸

Many units had their own songs. Most of these pieces had some connection with an event from the history of the regiment. The Texas Brigade frequently sang “The Old Gray Mare Came Out of the Wilderness,” which described a horse that ran out of the woods during the Second Battle of Bull Run. Similarly, the Union Twentieth Corps had a song that detailed their entire history. Other songs merely bragged about an outfit’s skill. For instance, a Wisconsin Regiment rebuilt their pride after the defeat at Bull Run by writing “Hamilton’s Badger Boys” and a group of South Carolina cavalrymen sang “Hurrah for the Broke Back Boys.” The Seventh New York’s theme song not only touted their fighting skill but their sexual prowess:

For we’re the boys that hearts desthroys,
Wid making love and fighting,
We take a fort, the girls we court,
But most the last delight in.

Occasionally, such songs had no lyrics. Frank Rauscher’s band frequently played a marching song that his Pennsylvania regiment embraced and nicknamed “Hell on the Rappahannock.”²⁶⁹

Some soldiers wrote songs for a civilian audience. Editor Frank Moore introduced an 1864 compilation of war songs by noting that most had been submitted by fighting men.

²⁶⁸ Richmond *Dispatch*, March 6, 1862; Giles and Lasswell, *Rags and Hope*, 149; J. W. Jones, “Seven Days Around Richmond,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 9 (1881): 567; “Interview with Lewis Bonner,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Oklahoma Narratives, Volume VIII*, 18, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>.

²⁶⁹ Hood, *Advance and Retreat*, 32-33; Wiley, *Life of Billy Yank*, 165; “Hamilton’s Badger Boys,” printed copy, Kimberley Family Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, “Interview with Rivana Boynton,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Florida Narratives, Volume III*, 44, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; New York *Times*, May 2, 1861; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 265.

Moore's collection was representative: several songs proclaimed devotion to the cause while others detailed specific battles and events that the soldiers wished to share with a wider audience. If they lacked access to a publisher, enlisted men turned to their families and friends. One Massachusetts soldier wrote an opera and performed it several times before having members of his regiment send it home. Similarly, a Confederate mailed a "war song" to his family, who assured him that they would distribute copies to friends and newspapers. Occasionally, these songs criticized civilians, such as one written by an Alabama soldier that attacked drafted men who complained of shirkers back home.²⁷⁰

Despite all the songs written by soldiers, most enlisted men enjoyed the same patriotic and sentimental pieces as civilians – after all they had made these songs successful in the first place. These songs served a number of ideological and emotional functions. As noted earlier, "John Brown's Body" helped to shape Union soldiers' opinions of abolitionism. Similarly, "Dixie" comforted Confederate soldiers by assuring them that they were fighting for their homes and that slavery was a benign institution. While music served these roles on the home-front, soldiers endured the hardships of war more directly. As a result, music did more than entertain or convey information; it was as a means of escaping the boredom and suffering of army life.

When describing music's influence, soldiers frequently claimed that it relieved the "monotony" of war. Although descriptions of army life by historians and soldiers focused on battlefield experiences, most of the time was spent in camp waiting for something to happen. It was at these times that music was most appreciated. However, songs did more than simply alleviate boredom, they reminded soldiers of their homes and offered a brief escape from army

²⁷⁰ Moore, *Songs of the Soldiers*, iii; Haines, *Letters of the Forty-Fourth Regiment*, 83-84; J. C. Norwood to Walter, April 2, 1865, Lenoir Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; "John Brick," Alexander K. Hall Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 25, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

life. As one enlisted man informed the New York *Herald*, music is “not suggestive of war, of early reveille, of march to battle, of thousands to be slain.” Instead, in the words of a USCT, “it seems to link us with home, recalling to the mind its pleasant associations.” An Ohio soldier similarly recorded that, when listening to music, “we are carried away into utter forgetfulness.”²⁷¹

Many soldiers and officers commented on how music could lift and sustain morale. More than simply providing, as one soldier put it, the “sunny side of a wild life,” music gave, in Raucher’s words, “moral and elevating influences” which were “beyond estimation.” As a bandsman, Rauscher was keenly aware that, by hearing music, the men’s “despondent spirits awakened to a new life.” He even saw it “binding” officers and soldiers “in closer ties of fellowship.” A northern chaplain expressed similar sentiments when he recalled how “our excellent regimental band did much towards reviving, and keeping up the spirits of the men. The power of martial music is wonderful and we all felt indebted to the musicians.” A Union officer considered music vital to soldier life: “What would an army be without music? Music puts us in good humor, braces our nerves, and makes us cheerful and contented. . . . It would be dreary service indeed without music, and I don’t believe the men could be kept together without it.”²⁷²

²⁷¹ Lemuel Abijah Abbott, *Personal Recollections and Civil War Diary, 1864* (Burlington, VT: Free Press, 1908), 145; F. R. C., “Letter from the Seventy-First Regiment,” *Knickerbocker Monthly* 58 (August 1861): 177; Fayetteville *Observer*, November 2, 1863; Ferguson, “Bands of the Confederacy,” 122; P. S. Hagy, “The Laurel Hill Retreat in 1861,” *Confederate Veteran* 24 (April 1916): 169; McAllister, *Civil War Letters*, 265; Moyer, *History of the Seventeenth*, 303; New York *Herald*, October 14, 1861, February 6, July 18, 1863; John W. Nichoson to Mary Nichoson, April 26, 1865, John William Nichoson Correspondence, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Vermont *Watchman and State Journal*, April 17, May 22, 1863; Young, *Reminiscences of a Soldier*, 77; *Christian Recorder*, November 12, 1864; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, November 26, 1861.

²⁷² Harris, “Army Music,” I, 293; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 264-265; Chandler J. Gregg, *Life in the Army, In the Departments of Virginia, and the Gulf, Including Observations in*

Besides supporting regimental bands, many officers took measures to ensure that music was plentiful. One Pennsylvania colonel always kept extra musicians around so that killed or discharged bandmen could be easily replaced. Another Union officer required his men to sing “John Brown’s Body” every day, which, according to *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, gave them “a Cromwellian earnestness.” Officers also used music in key situations. Bands were ordered to rally Union shirkers at Shiloh and to steady soldiers withdrawing from White House, Virginia. Occasionally, commanders tried to ban supposedly demoralizing songs, such as “Home, Sweet Home” and “Auld Lang Syne.”²⁷³

Cavalry officers were especially eager to use music because of the romanticism and dash associated with their brand of service. The most adept at doing so was Confederate General J. E. B. Stuart. One soldier recalled that “there were songs in the air wherever Stuart went” and an Austrian observer noted how “Stuart’s camp is always one of the jolliest; as the general is very fond of music and singing.” This cheerfulness was no accident. As a cavalry commander, Stuart needed many couriers and would seek out the best musicians in the army to fill these positions. Eventually, he was able to gather enough talent to form a first-rate band, including Bob Sweeny, whose brother had popularized the banjo in America. The band often held concerts. As one of Stuart’s staff recalled, the general “did not like it at all if any one of his staff officers withdrew himself from these innocent merry-makings . . . and would always rouse him from his slumbers to take part in the revelry.” Stuart even sang in battle. Although most of the men appreciated

New Orleans, with an Account of the Author’s Life and Experiences in the Ministry (Philadelphia, PA: Perkinpine & Higgins, 1868), 83; Favill, *Diary of a Young Officer*, 96.

²⁷³ J. W. Muffly, *The Story of Our Regiment: A History of the 148th Pennsylvania Vols.* (Des Moines, IA: Kenyon Printing & Mfg. Co., 1904), 518; *Dwight’s Journal of Music* 20 (January 18 1862): 335; *Milwaukee Morning Sentinel*, July 12, 1862; *New York Herald*, July 2, 1862; Thompson, *Thirteenth Regiment*, 104. “When This Cruel War is Over” may also have been censored because of its anti-war theme. Elson, *National Music of America*, 259-260.

these efforts, there were a few complaints. After one of Stuart's staff was dismissed, he complained that it was because he was not musical enough and fellow general, Lafayette McLaws, remarked of Stuart's band: "This claptrap is noticed and lauded as a peculiarity of genius when, in fact, it is nothing else but the act of a buffoon to attract attention."²⁷⁴

Officers like Stuart, who appreciated and supported their musicians, were repaid with serenades. These performances were heard nightly – sometimes several at the same time. Recipients would usually reward performers with luxurious food and generous amounts of alcohol. One bandsman recalled that after serenading General George Armstrong Custer, they were treated to "hot oysters, cold meats, fruits, sardines, hot coffee, etc." In another instance, a band received so much drink that a soldier noted how "the demon of the bowl prevailed, the leader of the band soon became unable to go farther, and a scene befitting a groggery ensued." Sometimes these efforts were exhausting, as some bands engaged in several serenades in a single evening. However, these opportunities often reaped rewards. One Confederate band seeking a furlough serenaded every general in the Army of Northern Virginia, starting with Robert E. Lee, until they found an officer willing to give them what they wanted.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Giles and Lasswell, *Rags and Hope*, 83; Ross, *Visit to the Cities and Camps*, 204-206; W. W. Blackford, *War Years with Jeb Stuart* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1945), 50-51, 161-162; George Cary Eggleston, *A Rebel's Recollections* (New York, NY: Hurd & Houghton, 1875), 127-128; Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder*, 148; Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 205; Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 573; Von Borcke, *Memoirs of the Confederate War*, 187-188, 201-202; Emory Thomas, *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J. E. B. Stuart* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 273; Keiley, *In Vinculis*, 162; Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 209; Gordon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 99; Fitzhugh Lee, *General Lee* (D. Appleton and Company, 1894), 253; Percy Gatling Hamlin, "Old Bald Head" (*General R. S. Ewell*), *the Portrait of a Soldier and the Making of a Soldier: Letters of General R. S. Ewell* (Gaithersburg, MD: Ron R. Van Sickle Military Books, 1988), 133. Unfortunately for Stuart, Sweeny died of small pox before the general himself was killed in battle. Von Borcke, *Memoirs of the Confederate War*, 187.

²⁷⁵ Entry for May 19, 1863, Diary, William Boston Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Alfred Lewis Castleman, *The Army of the Potomac, Behind the Scenes:*

Other soldiers used music to achieve less tangible objectives. Foreign-born soldiers bridged cultural and lingual gaps with their music. This was especially true of Germans, who filled most of the regimental bands in both the Union and the Confederacy. German bandsmen were not only plentiful but were considered musically superior to their English and Irish counterparts because of the preponderance of brass bands in their homeland. They were equally enthusiastic singers. One Massachusetts soldier recalled that when a group of German recruits arrived in camp, they immediately began singing and the rest of the men gathered around to hear the music. Similarly, German and Irish soldiers inspired each other by singing traditional songs

A Diary of Unwritten History: From the Organization of the Army...To the Close of the Campaign in Virginia, About the First Day of January, 1863 (Milwaukee, WI: Strickland & Co., 1863), 71-72; *Charleston Mercury*, May 14, 1862; Cogswell, *History of the Eleventh New Hampshire*, 17; Thomas Jefferson Conely to Lottie, July 17, 1864, Thomas Jefferson Conely Papers, Bentley Historical Society, University of Michigan; *Fayetteville Observer*, November 30, 1863; Gilbert, *Freddy's War*, 113; Ebenezer Nelson Gilpin, *The Last Campaign: A Cavalryman's Journal* (Leavenworth, KS: Press of Ketcheson Print. Co., 1908), 621; Entry for October 15, 1861, Diary, Griswold Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Cornelia Oatis Hancock, *Letters of a Civil War Nurse: Cornelia Hancock 1863-1865* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 124; Hayes, *Diary and Letters*, II, 168; Asbury L. Kerwood, *Annals of the Fifty-Seventh Regiment Indiana Volunteers, By a Member of the Regiment* (Dayton, OH: W. J. Shuey, 1868), 216; Adelia Caroline Duncotabe Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War* (San Jose, CA: Press of Murison and Wright, 1907), 74; McAllister, *Civil War Letters*, 339, 479, 504, 520-521, 537; Morgan and Michalson, *For Our Beloved Country*, 137, 183, 190; Page, *History of the Fourteenth*, 214; *Richmond Dispatch*, October 9, 1861; Roe, *Twenty-Fourth Regiment*, 443; Sneden, *Eye of the Storm*, 22, 106, 109; Entry for December 15, 1861, Volume I, Horatio Nelson Taft Diary, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Townsend, *Campaigns of a Non Combatant*, 235; Tuttle, *Civil War Journal*, 167; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. LI/1, 72, 75; Stephen Minot Weld, *War Diary and Letters of Stephen Minot Weld, 1861-1865* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1912), 60; Entry for January 10, 1865, typescript diary, Walter H. Jackson Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Cate, *Two Soldiers*, 30; Entry for May 15, 1862, short list of daily activities, George Washington Lambert Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, Indiana Historical Society; Jones, *Artilleryman's Diary*, 79; Charles Lewis Rundlett to his parents, February 25, 1863, folder b, Charles Lewis Rundlett Papers, Library of Virginia; Edwin O. Kimberley to his parents, January 10, 1865, Kimberley Family Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society; Ferguson, "Bands of the Confederacy," 128.

while marching to Gettysburg. Indeed, a variety of ethnic groups performed their traditional music for largely appreciative comrades.²⁷⁶

Yet, despite the prominence of German musicians, the most popular bandsman of the war was Irish: Patrick S. Gilmore. Already well-respected in Massachusetts, Gilmore's war-time career made him a national celebrity. He served as the bandleader of the Twenty-Fourth Massachusetts for a year and then staged several highly lucrative benefit concerts in Boston before becoming head of all bands in the Department of the Gulf. While in New Orleans, Gilmore celebrated the inauguration of Governor Michael Hahn with the first of his highly publicized "Monster Concerts." The performance involved five hundred band members, fifty pieces of artillery, forty soldiers striking anvils, and a chorus of six thousand, including children from local schools. Gilmore also found time to publish one of the war's most enduring songs, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," under the name, Louis Lambert.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ Gottschalk, *Notes of a Pianist*, 127; Jones, *Christ in Camp*, 476; "The 26th Regimental Band," 242, Julius A. Lineback Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; John G. Pressley, "The Wee Nee Volunteers of Williamsburg District, South Carolina, in the First (Hagood's) Regiment," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 16 (1888): 128; Parker, "How the Southern Soldiers Kept House," 327; Snap Shot, "Tent Life – No. IV," *Wilkes' Spirit of the Times* (March 8 1862): 10; "Washington During the War," 17; Bruce, *Twentieth Regiment*, 330; Beaudot and Herdegen, *Irishman in the Iron Brigade*, 92-93; Heartsill, *Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days*, 52; "Battle Hymn of the German Volunteers," Heinrich Hohn Papers, Section 3, Virginia Historical Society; scrapbook, 9, Julius A. Lineback Papers, Folder 3, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; John McGrath, "In a Louisiana Regiment," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 31 (1903): 109; Milwaukee *Morning Sentinel*, June 25, 1861; Richmond *Dispatch*, October 21, 1861.

²⁷⁷ Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 287-289; Cipolla, "Patrick S. Gilmore," 185; Marwood Darlington, *Irish Orpheus: The Life of Patrick S. Gilmore, Bandmaster Extraordinary* (Philadelphia, PA: Olivier-Maney-Klein, 1950), 23, 30-31, 34-35; Stephen P. Gilmore, "Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore: America's Prototypical Impresario," *Journal of Band Research* 34 (fall 1998): 74-75; Roe, *Twenty-Fourth Regiment*, 413-415, 441; Dwight's *Journal of Music* 23 (April 4 1863): 7; Gardner, *Record of the Service*, 213; "Gilmore's Patriotic Concerts," *Dwight's Journal of Music* 22 (February 7 1863): 359; Upton, *Musical Memories*, 195; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, March 23, 1864; G. R. Leighton, "Bandmaster Gilmore," *American Mercury* 30 (1933): 173;

Foreign-born and American soldiers applied music to other aspects of their military lives. Performances by bands and group singing were vital aspects of religious functions. In fact, one Confederate soldier recalled that he went to his first service because of the band's music. Unfortunately, this did not always work the way chaplains intended, as with one band who unwittingly concluded a service by playing "Johnny Fill Up the Bowl." Soldiers also collected and sang hymns. Several even claimed that hymns were more popular than patriotic or sentimental songs. Chaplains and religious organizations reported high sales for hymnals and songsters. Soldiers were happy to receive them and frequently wrote home asking for more. According to one Confederate, "every evening . . . for miles around you might hear thousands of voices singing hymns; many singing for their own gratification, but many others through a sort of religious feeling of their own, thinking that this is the most convenient way of manifesting it."²⁷⁸

Milwaukee *Daily Sentinel*, March 23, 1864; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, March 4, 1864; New York *Times*, March 20, 1864.

²⁷⁸ Cogswell, *History of the Eleventh*, 506; Gregg, *Life in the Army*, 83; Jones, *Christ in Camp*, 161, 169, 180, 476; Pressley, "Wee Nee Volunteers," 173; William Wheeler, *Letters of William Wheeler of the Class of 1855*, Y. C. (Privately Published, 1875), 288; David Holt, *A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia: The Civil War Memoirs of Private David Holt*, edited by Thomas D. Cockrell and Michael B. Ballard (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 231; Cornelius Cadle, "An Adjutant's Recollections," *Sketches of War History, 1861-1865: Papers Prepared for the Commandery of the State of Ohio, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States* 5 (1893): 396; Jasper Ellis James to his parents, May 15, 1864, Jasper Ellis James Papers, Folder 4, Alabama Department of Archives and History; Jones, *Under the Stars and Bars*, 20, 162-163; J. William Jones, "Reminiscences of the Army of Northern Virginia: Paper No. 5 – How Fremont and Shields 'Caught' Stonewall Jackson," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 9 (June 1881): 277-278; Kimball, "Origin of the John Brown Song," 371; David Jackson Logan, "A Rising Star of Promise": *The Civil War Odyssey of David Jackson Logan, 17th South Carolina Volunteers, 1861-1864*, edited by Samuel N. Thomas, Jr. and Jason H. Silverman (Campbell, CA: Savas Publishing, 1998), 76; Miller, *Drum Taps*, 71; Washburn, "From the Rappahannock," *Zion's Herald and Wesleyan Journal* 34 (March 18 1863): 1; Baptist Church, South Carolina, State Convention, *Minutes of the Forty-Second Anniversary of the State Convention of the Baptist Denomination in S. C., Held at Greenville, July 25th-28th, 1862* (Columbia, SC: E. R. Stokes, 1862), 155; Hackett, *Christian Memorials*,

Occasionally, musicians projected songs outside of their ranks. Union and Confederate soldiers sometimes confronted each other with music. There were several instances of bands or singers engaging in musical duels, each side trying to top the other by performing patriotic songs. These exchanges were often described as cheerful events that reflected the shared humanity and cultural heritage of both sides. The most famous took place at Fredericksburg, where regimental bands played national airs, such as “Dixie” and “The Star Spangled Banner,” but afterward one Union band played “Home, Sweet Home,” provoking tears and loud cheers for home from both sides. The incident’s reconciliationist connotations made it a particular favorite of veterans and it even inspired several poems. Similar stories involving “Home, Sweet Home” appeared during and after the war. As one Virginia private explained, during performances by “rival bands . . . ‘Home, Sweet Home’ was common property.”²⁷⁹

168; Quint, *Potomac and the Rapidan*, 269; Richmond *Dispatch*, October 9, 1861; Cephas Brainerd, *The Work of the Army Committee of the New York Young Men’s Christian Association, Which Led to the Organization of the United States Christian Commission: A Paper Read Before the Association at the Monthly Meeting, 18th December 1865* (New York, NY: J. Medole, 1866), 13; Allen and Renick, *Sergeant Allen and Private Renick*, 114, 290; Richard Eddy, *History of the Sixtieth Regiment New York State Volunteers, From the Commencement of its Organization in July, 1861, to its Public Reception at Ogdensburgh as a Veteran Command, January 7th, 1864* (Philadelphia, PA: Eddy, 1864), 79-80; John Griffith Jones to his parents, September 22, 1863, John Griffith Jones Letters, *People at War Series*, reel 57, collection 152, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; McCarthy, *Detailed Minutiae*, 82; Edward P. Smith, *Incidents of the United States Christian Commission* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott, 1869), 58-59; William Grafton Stevenson, “Diary of William Grafton Stevenson, Captain, C. S. A.” edited by Carl Rush Stevenson, *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 23 (spring 1961): 59-60; Lemual Moss, *Annals of the United States Christian Commission* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott, 1868), 93; Joseph T. Durkin, *John Dooley, Confederate Soldier, His War Journal* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1945), 54.

²⁷⁹ John Coxe, “Last Struggles and Successes of Lee,” *Confederate Veteran* 22 (August 1914): 358; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, February 11, 1864; James E. Decker to his father, May 21, 1864, James E. Decker Letters, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park; J. W. Jones, “The Friendship Between Lee and Scott,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 11 (1883): 417; Member of G. A. R., *The Picket Line and Camp Fire Stories; A Collection of War Anecdotes, both Grave and Gay, Illustrative of the Trials and Triumphs of Soldier Life; With a Thousand-and-One Humorous Stories, Told of and by Abraham Lincoln, Together with a Fill*

Despite the camaraderie seen at Fredericksburg, other musical exchanges carried a more confrontational tone. Just as occupied civilians used music in lieu of weapons, so too did soldiers attack each other with songs during lulls in real fighting. At Yorktown, a northern reporter heard the Confederates “saucily play the air of ‘Dixie’ . . . while we send back the glorious strains of the ‘Star Spangled Banner.’” At Chattanooga, General Braxton Bragg’s Confederates sarcastically sang “Old Rosy is Our Man” to Union soldiers under General William S. Rosecrans and the Federals responded by singing “Bragg A Boo.” Following the battle of the Wilderness, Confederates mockingly sang “Ain’t You Glad to Get Out of the Wilderness” to Union troops who, a year later, responded to a salvo of Confederate songs with a performance by a USCT band. In addition, both sides engaged in musical sneak attacks. Bands were positioned

Collection of Northern and Southern War Songs (New York, NY: Hurst, n. d.), 21-22; Roe, *Ninth New York*, 117, 283; W. J. Worsham and C. W. Heiskell, *Old Nineteenth Tennessee Regiment, C. S. A. June, 1861-April, 1865* (Knoxville, TN: Press of Paragon Print. Co., 1902), 96; Abel, *Singing the New Nation*, 218; H. T. Childs, “Archer’s Brigade at Chancellorsville,” *Confederate Veteran* 28 (June 1920): 220; Cogswell, *History of the Eleventh*, 64; James Dinkins, *1861 to 1865: Personal Recollections and Experiences in the Confederate Army* (Cincinnati, OH: The Robert Clarke Company, 1897), 76-77; Gordon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 109-110; Frank M. Mixson, *Reminiscences of a Private* (Columbia, SC: The State Co., 1910), 37-38; Alfred S. Roe, *The Thirty-Ninth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers 1861-1865* (Worcester, MA: Regimental Veteran Association, 1914), 107; Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*, 143-144; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. XLVI/2, 317; *Washington Daily Morning Chronicle*, February 2, 1865; Spillard F. Horrall, *History of the Forty-Second Indiana Volunteer Infantry* (Horrall, 1892), 267-269; “Home, Sweet Home,” *Southern Bivouac* 1 (March 1883): 292-294; John Reuben Thompson and John Shelton Patton, *Poems of John R. Thompson* (New York, NY: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1920), 13; Brice, *Stonewall Brigade Band*, 40; Joseph Alleine Brown and Samuel Hunter Brown, *The Memoirs of a Confederate Soldier* (Abingdon, VA: Forum Press, 1940), 43-44; Ferguson, “Bands of the Confederacy,” 208; Giles and Lasswell, *Rags and Hope*, 147-148, 209-210; Park, “Twelfth Alabama Infantry,” 292-292; Henry W. Thomas, *History of the Doles-Cook Brigade: Army of Northern Virginia, C. S. A.* (Atlanta, GA: The Franklin Printing and Publishing Company, 1903), 479. Sources disagree over whether the Fredericksburg incident took place before or after the battle. Some have it occurring months later and a few do not even place the event at the battlefield.

close to enemy lines in trenches or even on ships to annoy their opponents with offensive music.²⁸⁰

The ferocity of these incidents escalated as the war progressed. Union bands increasingly included abolitionist songs like “John Brown’s Body” and Henry Clay Work’s “Kingdom Coming.” Confederates, in turn, grew less affable and sometimes responded with cannon fire. A Massachusetts soldier recalled that during one such exchange, “‘Old John Brown’ was being given with much vigor and snap” but afterward “twenty [Confederate] cannon thundered an answer to the insolent song.” USCT bands found themselves facing similar responses, including some musicians practicing in a depression along the Petersburg line, who were targeted by Confederate guns. As officers observed music’s power to infuriate, some even used it to provoke their enemies into attacking – although they were usually unsuccessful.²⁸¹

Although these musical battles did little actual harm, many officers recognized that music could produce tangible results and used it in specific circumstances. Music almost always made marches more endurable. As the New York *Knickerbocker* declared, “Music is the life and soul

²⁸⁰ Washington *Daily National Intelligencer*, April 12, 1862; John Robert Dow to his sister, October 9, 1863, Down Family Papers, Folder 4, Filson Historical Society; Hitchcock, *War from the Inside*, 303; George W. Williams, *A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion 1861-1865* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1888), 303; Muffly, *Story of Our Regiment*, 326-327; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 34; Savannah *Daily Morning News*, January 21, 1862; entry for August 29, 1863, James W. Sligh journal, Sligh Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (October 1863): 105; Svejda, *History of the Star Spangled Banner*, 190; Upton, *Musical Memories*, 302-303; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. III, 293; Edwin O. Kimberley to his parents, May 30, 1864, Kimberley Family Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society; Keith Wilson, “Black Bands and Black Culture: A Study of Black Military Bands in the Union Army during the Civil War,” *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 8 (July 1990): 31.

²⁸¹ Reed, “Grand Terrible Drama,” 214; Chester, *Thomas Morris Chester*, 194-195; Thompson, *Thirteenth Regiment*, 369; Bruce, *Twentieth Regiment*, 396; Ferdinand Davis Autobiography, 129-130, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Richmond *Dispatch*, September 10, 1861; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. XVI/1, 992, Vol. XVI/2, 496.

of the march; without it, the monotonous tramp, tramp, tramp is the most irksome drudgery in the world.” Regimental bands were especially important when armies were on the move. Confederates crossing a river in the rain were enlivened by the strains of “Dixie” and Rauscher recalled how his regiment would call for the band because their music could “make a man who was just about dead brace up, throw his chest out, and take the step as if he had received a new lease on life.” In summarizing the effect of music in such situations, one Federal wrote, “To say that the instantaneous effect was magical, would be a piece of poor description.” Singing may have been even more effective because marching soldiers become more directly involved. However, one New Hampshire soldier noted that once “the music had ceased, and the martial spirit evoked for the occasion was completely gone. The men dropped down all along the roadside.”²⁸²

²⁸² Browne, “Trumpets and Drums,” 521; John Beatty, *Memoirs of a Volunteer, 1861-1863*, edited by Harvey S. Ford (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1946), 86-87; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, March 13, 1863; Eldredge, *Third New Hampshire*, 993; Morris Stuart Hall Reminiscences, 85, Morris Stuart Hall Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Harris, “Army Music,” I, 288-289; Hayes, *Diary and Letters*, II, 301; J. W. Jones, “Reminiscences of the Army of Northern Virginia: Paper No. 4 – Capture of Winchester and Rout of Banks’s Army,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 9 (May 1881): 234; McCarthy, *Detailed Minutiae*, 52; Parker, “How the Southern Soldiers Kept House,” 327; John H. Worsham, *One of Jackson’s Foot Cavalry: His Experiences and What he Saw during the War 1861-1865* (New York, NY: The Neale Publishing Company, 1912), 206; Brice, *Stonewall Brigade Band*, 38; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 265; Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 305; Chester Barney, *Recollections of Field Service with the Twentieth Iowa Infantry Volunteers, or, What I Saw in the Army, Embracing Accounts of Marches, Battles, Sieges, and Skirmishes, in Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, Texas, and Along the Northern Border of Mexico* (Davenport, IA: Barney, 1865), 37; Davis, *Three Years in the Army*, 93; Alexander Hunter, *Johnny Reb and Billy Yank* (New York, NY: Neale Publishing Company, 1905), 79; John Griffith Jones to his parents, October 30, 1862, John Griffith Jones Letters, *People of War Series*, reel 57, collection 152, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Quint, *Potomac and the Rapidan*, 37; *Richmond Dispatch*, June 4, 1861; Edward Michael Watson to Til, July 2, 1863, Edward Michael Watson Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Cogswell, *History of the Eleventh*, 545.

After reaching their destination, many soldiers found music to be a powerful motivator before combat. One informed the Sanitary Commission, “I can fight with ten times more spirit, hearing the band play some of our national airs, than I can without the music.” Many officers understood this. Julius A. Leinbach recalled that his band was often ordered to play behind the Confederate lines to boost morale. Similarly, Union bands played “Hail Columbia” for soldiers bracing for a Confederate attack at Shiloh and “Yankee Doodle” for men waiting to make an attack at Dalton. “The Battle Cry of Freedom” was an especially popular choice for inspiring troops about to fight.²⁸³

Once in battle, music could motivate fighting men to acts of bravery or increase their resolve. One of the most widely reported occurrences was during the battle of Williamsburg. As Union General Samuel Heintzelman’s line was buckling under Confederate fire, fresh troops – including the First New Jersey – were arriving. Fearful that his men would give way before they could be reinforced, Heintzelman gathered every regimental band he could find, positioned them behind his line, and ordered them to play national airs. Heintzelman reported, “This inspired new life into all. The men collected and began to cheer. The strains were wafted through the old forest, and made themselves heard by our weary troops above the roar of battle, and inspired them with fresh vigor to perform new deeds of valor.” His men agreed, one recalling that “the effect upon the Federal battalions was equal to the presence of a division or battery.” General Joseph Hooker was present on that occasion and later attempted to duplicate the feat during the

²⁸³ U. S. Sanitary Commission, *Report to the Secretary of War*, 41-42; “The 26th Regimental Band,” 238-239, 251; Julius A. Lineback Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; John A. Cockerill, “A Boy at Shiloh,” *Sketches of War History, 1861-1865: Papers Prepared for the Commandery of the State of Ohio, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States* 6 (1908): 19-20; George Willey Chase to his mother, May 28, 1864, Civil War Letters 1864, George Willey Chase Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Coonley, “George F. Root,” 563; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 625.

battle of Chancellorsville by sending the regimental band of the Fourteenth Connecticut between the Confederate and Union lines to rally the retreating Eleventh Corps. However, despite these efforts, the Corps was too thoroughly routed by General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s surprise attack and the band was forced to withdraw after twenty minutes.²⁸⁴

Other instances of soldiers or officers using music to motivate soldiers in battle occurred throughout the war. Soldiers sang and bands played while charging entrenched positions and defending soldiers used music to harden their resolve. Patriotic songs were the most popular selections in such circumstances. General George Pickett’s men made their famous charge at Gettysburg with bands playing “The Bonnie Blue Flag” behind them and the Federals waiting for them were emboldened by “The Star Spangled Banner.” Sentimental tunes were also used, such as when a group of Confederates at Resaca withstood a Federal assault while singing “The Homespun Dress.” These songs served to motivate soldiers by reminding them of their responsibilities to their country and their family during times when fear was more than capable of overriding even the noblest of sentiments.²⁸⁵

The general who made the best use of music in combat was Philip Henry Sheridan. Together with George Armstrong Custer, Sheridan frequently inspired his men by putting

²⁸⁴ Boston *Daily Advertiser*, May 14, 1862; Boston *Journal*, June 10, 1862; Charleston *Courier Tri-Weekly*, June 3, 1862; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, May 24, 1862; Nason, *Monogram on Our National Song*, 59; Sneden, *Eye of the Storm*, 103; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. XI/1, 458-459; Henry N. Blake, *Three Years in the Army of the Potomac* (Boston, MA: Lee & Shepard, 1865), 78-79; Hitchcock, *War from the Inside*, 218-219.

²⁸⁵ Entry for February 17, 1862, Wellington White Diary, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan;; Thompson, *History of the First*, 384; Young, *Reminiscences of a Soldier*, 27-28; Basil W. Duke, *History of Morgan’s Cavalry* (Cincinnati, OH: Miami Printing and Publishing Company, 1867), 147; A. J. H. Duganne, “Bethel,” *Atlantic Monthly* 10 (September 1862): 346; New York *Herald*, March 19, 1862; “Gettysburg, Gettysburg,” *Confederate Veteran* 21 (August 1913): 383; Jacob Henry Cole, *Under Five Commanders, or, A Boy’s Experience in the Army of the Potomac* (Paterson, NJ: News Printing Company, 1906), 205-206; Glenn Tucker, *Hancock the Superb* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1906), 150; *Confederate Veteran* 2 (April 1894): 114; McMurray, *History of the Twentieth*, 418-419.

regimental bands as close to the action as possible. At Yellow Tavern, Sheridan's men were trapped but after the band played "The Star Spangled Banner," they rallied and counter-attacked. Throughout the 1864 Shenandoah Campaign, Custer repeatedly had his mounted band lead charges and play behind the men during retreats. However, the most noteworthy instance was at Dinwiddie Courthouse, Virginia, late in the war. As Sheridan's Federals and Fitzhugh Lee's Confederates poured fire into each other, Sheridan ordered his musicians to stand directly behind his men and play patriotic songs. Although the music may have been clear at first, it soon dissolved into a cacophonous roar as bullets pierced their instruments. One band merely played "Hail Columbia" over and over again as Confederates attacked the line in front of them. Noting how these efforts inspired the Yankees, Lee ordered his musicians to do the same. Soon the bands engaged in one of their musical battles, although, in this case, the musical war and the fighting war overlapped. This lasted for the entire afternoon as the battle eventually devolved into a stalemate.²⁸⁶

Nothing better illustrated the importance of music to soldiers than the ill-starred attempt by the Federal government, in July 1862, to discharge all of the regimental bands in the Union army. Although most soldiers and civilians on both sides supported their bands, complaints

²⁸⁶ Moyer, *History of the Seventeenth*, 304-305; Bufkin, "Union Bands," 94; Bruce P. Gleason, "U. S. Mounted Bands and Cavalry Field Musicians in the Union Army during the Civil War – Background, Duties, and Training," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 27 (April 2006): 112; Theophilus Francis Rodenbough and Thomas J. Grier, *History of the Eighteenth Regiment of Cavalry Pennsylvania Volunteers (163d Regiment of the Line) 1862-1865* (New York, NY: The Publication Committee of the Regimental Association, 1909), 60; Horace Porter, *Campaigning with Grant* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1961), 431; DeWitt Boyd Stone, Jr., *Wandering to Glory: Confederate Veterans Remember Evans' Brigade* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 228; Edward P. Tobie, *History of the First Maine Cavalry 1861-1865* (Boston, MA: Press of Emery & Hughes, 1887), 392, 401, 463; Tremain, *Last Hours*, 51-52.

arose from powerful sources. A primary concern was that musicians were cowards who were looking for some “bombproof” position. This was partially true, as bandsmen rarely participated in combat and many noted that their service was easier than field musicians or fighting men. During combat, musicians were usually behind the lines acting as stretcher-bearers and surgical assistants. Julius Leinbach claimed he did not join the band “to shirk any duty that called me; - at the same time, I was not anxious to become a target for bullets fired by any one.” This perception of band service raised difficult questions for Confederates who prided themselves on their individual honor and needed the manpower in the ranks more severely. When one soldier was asked about the poor quality of Confederate bands, he responded, “Those of our boys who have musical talent refuse to enter the band, from false pride, considering it dishonorable to exchange the musket for a musical instrument, as if they desired to shun the battle-field.”²⁸⁷

Others merely considered bandsmen less important than fighting men. One Confederate musician complained that when he asked General Daniel Hill for a furlough, he was told: “Shooters before tooters.” Other officers considered their bands an annoyance at best. Without the financial support given to more fortunate bands, these bands soon found that their instruments would deteriorate and morale would drop, sometimes leading to their dissolution. The Confederate government eventually gave field commanders the option of arming military bandsmen but the issue was more hotly debated in the North.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ Fayetteville *Observer*, March 21, 1864; Muffly, *Story of Our Regiment*, 518; Philadelphia *Press*, July 31, 1862; Edwin O. Kimberley to his parents, January 12, 1862, Kimberley Family Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society; Morgan and Michalson, *For Our Beloved Country*, 122-123; Hiram P. Sprague to Juliana Reynolds, February 22, 1862, Tilton C. Reynolds Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; An English Combatant, *Battle-Fields of the South, From Bull Run to Fredericksburg; With Sketches of Confederate Commanders, and Gossip of the Camps* (London, UK: Smith, Elder & Co., 1893), II, 101.

²⁸⁸ Fayetteville *Observer*, March 26, 1863; Edwin O. Kimberley to his parents, November 2, 1861, Kimberley Family Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society; Alfred A. Parmenter to his

Complaints about bands were louder in the Union because of the expense involved. Some soldiers and more civilians joined together in arguing that regimental bands – especially unskilled ones – were a waste of money. One fifer, upset that regimental bandsmen made more money, told the *Daily Cleveland Herald* that bands were “a great hindrance to progress in drill. . . Soldiers will learn more without music if they cannot pay good musicians to play for them.” Similarly, a private forced to pay a regimental band tax suggested that “the Brass bands could all be” reduced “to about one in a division” because “that would reduce the expences of the government a good deal.” By the end of 1861, several northern newspapers were debating whether bands were worth their cost – estimated at close to four million dollars a year. Paymaster General Benjamin F. Larned informed the Senate that “the bands . . . are . . . far more ornamental than useful, and should be abolished,” while Secretary of War Simon Cameron told Lincoln that the “usefulness” of the bands was “not at all commensurate with their heavy expense.”²⁸⁹

Both field commanders and politicians responded to these complaints. Congress established a committee in January to review the Army’s finances, including regimental bands. The New York *Times* was delighted by this news: “Let the Committee strike first at those brazen monstrosities, the bands.” During the spring of 1862, several officers did just that. General Don Carlos Buell discharged every band in his army. He then inspected the field musicians and discharged those that were not musically competent. Soldiers in other commands reported

family, January 26, 1862, Alfred A. Parmenter Letters, Library of Virginia; Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War*, 196; Ferguson, “Bands of the Confederacy,” 141.

²⁸⁹ *Daily Cleveland Herald*, November 8, 1861; Marion Munson to “Friend,” January 24, 1862, Joshua Van Hoosen Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; *Charleston Mercury*, October 23, 1861; *Douglass’ Monthly* (November 1 1861): 558; *Washington National Intelligencer*, September 18, December 7, 1861; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 3, Vol. I, 705, 728.

similar discharges, including the band of the Twelfth Massachusetts, which had played “John Brown’s Body” on Broadway. After watching the band being sent home, another bandsman speculated that he would soon meet the same fate.²⁹⁰

He was right. On July 17, 1862, partially in reaction to recent defeats in Virginia, Congress permanently discharged all regimental bands. Throughout August, about three hundred regimental bands were sent home, while others were transferred into newly authorized brigade bands. At the end of the year, Congress addressed another common complaint by ordering that only competent musicians be enlisted into them. While most soldiers and civilians opposed these measures, some supported them. One Union soldier was pleased that “we have done ‘playing war.’ . . . This is pretty hard, but as economy is necessary to a proper and successful prosecution of the war, we submit cheerfully.” Similarly, a colonel bid “good riddance” to the bands and a Michigan soldier was “right glad” to be “rid of the lazy grumbling loafers.”²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ New York Times, January 6, 1862; John A. Bering and Thomas Montgomery, *History of the Forty-Eighth Ohio Vet. Vol. Inf. Giving a Complete Account of the Regiment from its Organization at Camp Dennison, O., in October, 1861, to the Close of the War, and its Final Muster-Out, May 10, 1866* (Hillsboro, OH: Highland News Office, 1880), 67; Judson W. Bishop, *The Story of a Regiment: Being a Narrative of the Service of the Second Regiment, Minnesota Volunteer Infantry* (St. Paul, MN: 1890), 55, 58; Cook, *History of the Twelfth*, 50; John Robert Dow to his sister, May 7, 1862, Dow Family Papers, Folder 2, Filson Historical Society; Davis, *Three Years*, 58; Olson *Music and Musket*, 73-74

²⁹¹ Guerin, *General Orders*, 63-79; *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 3, Vol. II, 278, 336, 922-923; Bufkin, “Union Bands,” 68-70; *New South*, August 30, 1862; Castleman, *Army of the Potomac*, 184; Annie Adams McFadden Hays, ed., *Life and Letters of Alexander Hays, Brevet Colonel United States Army, Brigadier General and Brevet Major General United States Volunteers* (Pittsburgh, PA: 1919), 263; Charles B. Haydon, *For Country, Cause & Leader: The Civil War Journal of Charles B. Haydon*, edited by Stephen W. Sears (New York, NY: Ticknor & Fields, 1993), 270. The Congressional Act discharging regimental bands was the same one that supported the seizure of slaves as contrabands and created the Medal of Honor. Guerin, *General Orders*, 63-79.

The bandsmen themselves made a good show of their last days in the army. Patrick S. Gilmore's band performed for every company in his regiment, the bands under General Irvin McDowell played late into the night, and one band defiantly staged a concert after its discharge. Soldiers complained about the absence of music, some directly addressing the issue of expense. One surgeon grouched, "This . . . is mistaken economy, as the men fight much better with music" and the colonel of Gilmore's regiment argued "that the service will lose more than the treasury will gain." Another soldier wondered how the supposedly poorer Confederate Army could still afford its musicians. Several enlisted men simply noted how much they treasured their bands. One reported, "we all regretted very much to have to part with the Band, that had been with us so long, and whose music had done so much to cheer us when dispirited, and in fact, was the life of the camp" and another wrote that the bands' "departure left a vacancy nothing could fill."²⁹²

Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs formally protested, arguing that "a great mistake was made when the bands were abolished. These bands were of value to the soldier in camp, in bivouac, on the march, and they gave a trained, enlisted, disciplined, officered body of men to each regiment." Furthermore, he asserted that "a mistaken notion of economy" led to their discharge because the army would now have to hire surgical assistants. "And was their ability to make music an objection? Would they be less efficient in action that they had, when not needed to carry stretchers and bear off the wounded, regaled their comrades with sweet sounds?"²⁹³

²⁹² Roe, *Twenty-Fourth Massachusetts*, 146; Townsend, *Campaigns of a Non-Combatant*, 235; New York *Herald*, August 12, 1862; Thomas T. Ellis, *Leaves from the Diary of an Army Surgeon: or, Incidents of Field, Camp, and Hospital Life* (New York, NY: John Bradburn, 1863), 182; Davis, *Three Years*, 119, 270-271; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, November 13, 1862.

²⁹³ *War of the Rebellion: Official Records*, Series 3, Vol. II, 701.

The New York *Herald* expressed “great indignation” over the act because “music is the greatest alleviation of the soldiers’ hardships, and the inspiring notes of our bands have done more towards keeping up the spirit and ambition of the regiments than any other means that could have been employed.” Echoing the Sanitary Commission’s report, the editor argued, “Bands are worth, morally and hygienically, all they cost. Their music enlivens and inspirits the soldier.” He reasoned that Congress could only have passed the measure to make military life “as dismal as possible.” The Philadelphia *Press* reported that, although the bands had been called “‘government robbers’ . . . it is an uncalled-for epithet. They enlisted as musicians, they were mustered in and have done their duty as such. . . . No matter what may be said, the regimental bands will be missed . . . and when you have only a ‘drum corps’ for every ‘call’ . . . then a large number will heartily wish the much-abused bands in camp again.”²⁹⁴

Despite the public debate over the discharge, many soldiers and officers simply evaded the congressional edict. Some outfits revived the old system of listing bandsmen as privates while paying them extra out of pocket. One Michigan regiment solved the problem by discharging its field musicians and having its band fill the role. The *Knickerbocker* praised officers who defied the order as “more educated and far-seeing” because they were “convinced of the imperative necessity of securing to their men this stimulus to valor.” As new regiments were created, many also ignored the order and enlisted with bands. Although some of these new bandsmen were often invisible on the rosters, others were plainly listed, indicating that restrictions were not being enforced. Many of the formerly discharged regimental bands also began returning to the service by the end of 1862. Patrick Gilmore even used some of the money he raised from benefit concerts to buy a new band for his old regiment. Having experienced

²⁹⁴ New York *Herald*, July 30, 1862; Philadelphia *Press*, July 31, 1862.

army life without music, some soldiers regained their appreciation for the bands. As one wrote, “many of them have returned lately[.] We used to get tired of hearing them but they sound good again.”²⁹⁵

By the end of the war, Union authorities were turning a blind eye when they encountered a regimental band. A soldier in Sherman’s army described a typical scene during an official inspection of his regiment. After reviewing the regimental band, with their newly purchased silver instruments, the inspector “reminded the commanding officer that regimental bands had long since been abolished, and he would have to report this one to the corps commander as authorized.” The regimental commander explained that they were merely field musicians “and not a band at all, though the appearance might be to the contrary” and produced muster rolls to prove his point. Furthermore, the inspector was informed that the Corps commander, himself, “had often observed those men and mistaken them for a band, and suggested that to undeceive him they should play at corps headquarters that afternoon, which they did, and were highly complimented as [field] musicians.”²⁹⁶

No similar legislation was passed in the Confederacy – other than the order allowing commanders to arm their bandsmen. This was primarily due to the fact that the already small

²⁹⁵ George Willey Chase to “Folks at Home,” October 30, 1862, George Willey Chase Papers, Civil War Letters 1862, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Morgan and Michalson, *For Our Beloved Country*, 136; Bufkin, “Union Bands,” 77; Browne, “Trumpets and Drums,” 524; George Grenville Benedict, *Army Life in Virginia: Letters from the Twelfth Vermont Regiment and Personal Experiences of Volunteer Service in the War for the Union, 1862-63* (Burlington, VT: Free Press Association, 1895), 36-37; Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 304; Entry for October 18, 1862, typescript copy of Civil War diary, Walter H. Jackson Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Tobie, *History of the First*, 463-464; *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, September 18, October 9, 1863; Gardner, *Record of the Service*, 31; Roe, *Tenth Regiment*, 246; Roe, *Twenty-Fourth Regiment*, 441-442; John Travis to his brothers and sisters, December 10, 1862, Travis Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁹⁶ Bishop, *Story of a Regiment*, 177-178.

pool of Confederate musicians had been hampered by manpower demands, rising instrument prices, and lack of funding. Even before the end of the war's first year, Confederate bands were discarding their instruments and taking up arms. By 1863 band music had become a rarity in the Confederate army. After a Union band performed for a group of Confederate soldiers under a flag of truce, a southern officer told one bandsman that "they were very much delighted with the music for they had not heard any for a long time." General John Hunt Morgan's men actually stole instruments during their 1863 Ohio raid so they could play popular songs. The following year, several soldiers on both sides noted the absence of music in the Confederate army. By 1865, many Confederate soldiers simply listened to nearby Union bands. In fact, officers at prison camps in Florence, South Carolina, and Andersonville, Georgia, ordered Union musicians to form bands because they had no musical entertainment of their own.²⁹⁷

All in all, Confederate and Union soldiers demonstrated an extreme attachment to their bands. Music was a central part of their wartime experiences and military bands were the primary symbols of its dominant role. Music preserved a touch of humanity and perhaps of home in a dehumanizing environment but it also encouraged soldiers to persevere and push on to victory. As with civilians, a growing number of soldiers recognized music's value and it became enmeshed in the violence of the war, sometimes provoking combat or aiding in its execution.

²⁹⁷ McCarthy, *Detailed Minutiae*, 52; Worsham and Heiskell, *Old Nineteenth*, 17; William H. Jones to his mother, March 7, 1864, William H. Jones Papers, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University; George Willey Chase to his mother, September 6, 1863, George Willey Chase Papers, Civil War Letters 1863, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; George Dallas Mosgrove, "Following Morgan's Plume Through Indiana and Ohio," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 35 (1907): 118-119; Abner Ralph Small, *The Road to Richmond*, 153; Tuttle, *Civil War Journal*, 136; Edward M. Boykin, *The Falling of the Flag: Evacuation of Richmond, Retreat and Surrender at Appomattox* (New York, NY: E. J. Hale & Son, 1874), 25; Tunnard, *Southern Record*, 339; Charleston *Mercury*, April 26, 1864; Ferguson, "Bands of the Confederacy," 70-72; Ezra Hoyt Ripple, *Dancing Along the Deadline: The Andersonville Memoir of a Prisoner of the Confederacy*, edited by Mark A. Snell (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1996), 107.

Soldiers became adept at using music to sustain their morale and to annoy the enemy and many did not forget this after the war. Indeed, music became a central aspect of remembrances and celebrations of their wartime experiences.

CHAPTER 6

“THE CHOKED VOICE OF A RACE, AT LAST UNLOOSED”: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND CIVIL WAR MUSIC

Say Darkeys, hab you seen de massa, wid de muffstash on his face,
Go long de road some time dis morin', like he gwine to leab de place?
He seen a smoke way up de ribber, whar de Linkum gumboats lay;
He took his hat, an lef' berry sudden, an' I spec he's run away!

Chorus

De massa run? ha, ha!
De darkey stay? ho, ho!
It mus' be now de kingdom comin',
An' de year ob Jubilo!

He six foot one way, two foot tudder, an' he way tree hundred pound,
His coat so big, he couldn't pay de tailor, an' it won't go half way round.
He drill so much dey call him Cap'an, an' he got so drefful tann'd,
I spec he try an' fool dem Yankees for to tink he's contraband.

Chorus

De darkeys feel so lonesome libbing in de loghouse on de lawn,
Dey move dar tings to massa's parlor for to keep it while he's gone.
Dar's wine an' cider in de kitchen, an' de darkey's dey'll hab some;
I spose dey'll all be confiscated when de Linkum sojers come.

Chorus

De oberseer he make us trouble, an' he drike us round a spell;
We lock him up in de smokehouse cellar, wid de key trown in de well.
De whip is lost, de han'cuff broken, but de massa'll hab his pay;
He's ole enough, big enough, ought to known better dan to went an' run
away.

Chorus

Henry Clay Work, 1862
“Kingdom Coming”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ Henry Clay Work, “Kingdom Coming” (Chicago, IL: Root and Cady, 1862).

Although Civil War soldiers and civilians used music effectively and often, no one better understood its power than African Americans. With widespread illiteracy a fact of slave life, oral transmission of information was vital. Blacks knew that plain talk about freedom and equality would surely meet with harsh disapproval or worse from white listeners, but song lyrics, couched in religious imagery, were acceptable and even endearing to whites. With the onset of the war, African Americans shifted into life as contrabands, soldiers, and, eventually, free citizens and gradually abandoned the coded language in their songs to express themselves more directly.

The transition from slavery to freedom also affected white music about African Americans. Minstrelsy, one of the most popular genres of American music, was specifically designed to portray slave life – albeit comically. As the southern slave system collapsed, minstrel music could not help but change. In the North, some minstrel performers and songwriters supported emancipation and black enlistment while others opposed these measures. In the South, minstrel songs gained a newfound popularity, as Confederates looked for signs that their slaves were happy in their new republic. The introduction of genuine black music to white audiences also influenced minstrelsy. As many northerners encountered slaves for the first time, they were astonished to find that slave songs were quite unlike minstrel tunes. By introducing this music, slaves, contrabands, and USCTs attempted to replace black-faced performers as the primary representatives of their culture and reshape white conceptions of black culture and society.

Minstrelsy had played a prominent part in American culture since Daniel Decatur Emmett formed the Virginia Minstrels in 1842. Several popular groups and songwriters, such as

Christy's Minstrels and Stephen Foster, soon emerged. These performers would paint their faces black and depict African-American life and culture for working-class, and sometimes middle-class, whites with varying degrees of sympathy or derision. In these performances, African Americans were almost always portrayed as comically stupid and unable to successfully function in white society. Minstrel shows were highly improvisational and focused on skits and dance numbers. Music was an important part of these performances and songs, such as "Jim Crow" and "Old Dan Tucker," were standards. As minstrelsy developed, music became even more important as Foster and other songwriters began crafting pieces that were suitable for parlors as well as minstrel stages.²⁹⁹

The onset of the Civil War created significant problems for the mostly northern minstrel performers. E. P. Christy was in Charleston when South Carolina seceded and, despite his show's tacit approval of slavery, was only able to perform after assuring the audience that he did not support the Union – and even then, he headed north the next day. Dan Rice found himself in a more complicated situation. He placated southern audiences by adding pro-Confederate music to his shows along with a parade of costumed girls representing each southern state. However, when he returned to the North, audiences booed and threw rotten eggs. In response, Rice adopted an increasingly unionist position and, to prove his loyalty, donated \$5000 for a monument to northern soldiers.³⁰⁰

Emmett faced the even more difficult task of appealing to his southern admirers while living in the North. After "Dixie" became the Confederacy's unofficial anthem, Emmett further burnished his southern credentials by writing a "sequel" called "I'm Going Home to Dixie." The

²⁹⁹ For detailed analyses on the history and meanings of minstrelsy see: Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder*; Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993); Toll, *Blackening Up*.

³⁰⁰ Toll, *Blackening Up*, 104; Carlyon, "Dan Rice's Aspirational Project," 254, 271, 294-297.

song featured a blackface speaker who declared his love for the South before making several pro-slavery statements, such as, “Freedom to me will never pay,” “I love old Dixie right or wrong” and

In Dixie land the fields do bloom
And colored men have welcome room.

With these lines Emmett tried to capitalize on the success of “Dixie” by moving its subtle pro-slavery message to the forefront. Emmett either underestimated the seriousness of the secession crisis or the commitment of many northerners to unionism because he was soon under attack for writing disloyal music. Newspapers accused him of secessionism and northerners wrote letters berating him for his southern sympathies. As a result, Emmett followed his fellow minstrels by adopting a more unionist tone in his songwriting. He also demonstrated his patriotism by coauthoring a manual for Union field musicians that was adopted by the army in 1862.³⁰¹

Northern minstrels not only had to prove their loyalty, they had to work the war into their songs. During the antebellum period, minstrels had used figures such as Jim Crow and Zip Coon to comment on the issues of the day. Most northerners were aware that these minstrel characters did not accurately represent black life in the South but “blacking up” allowed performers and songwriters to say things that were otherwise taboo. During the war, minstrels adopted new disguises as blackface contrabands, USCTs, and slaves to comment on the war and its relationship to African Americans.

³⁰¹ Daniel Decatur Emmett and C. S. Grafulla, “I’m Going Home to Dixie” (New Orleans, LA: P. P. Werlein, 1861); Daniel Decatur Emmett and C. S. Grafulla, “I’m Going Home to Dixie” (New York, NY: Firth, Pond & Co., 1861); *New York Times*, June 16, 1861; Kane, “Music and Words,” 213; Galbreath, *Daniel Decatur Emmett*, 20-21; De Leon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 359; Bruce and Emmett, *Drummer’s and Fifer’s Guide*; Olson, *Music and Musket*, 85.

Several songs, including some performed by Christy's Minstrels, depicted black singers who disapproved of the war and the public debate over slavery. "Uncle Sam's Cooks" used metaphor to criticize secessionists and abolitionists:

Oh, I'll tell you what it is, my boys, we can't get o'er the matter,
De cooks dat stew fur Uncle Sam, am kicking up a clatter.
Some want de nigger roasted rare, and oders oberdone,
While all declare dere bound to go de whole hog or none.

Subsequent verses described both sides in the slavery debate arguing over how best to "cook" African Americans, ending with the following declaration:

Now boys, I'll tell you what I think, if you want good Union Chowder,
Don't let yer cooks fire up too strong, nor put in any powder;
But season well wid Compromise, and when yer dinner's done,
You'll all be glad you didn't get the whole hog or none.

Another minstrel troupe presented a similar image in "I Can't Help Dat. The minstrel singer of this song declared:

De white folks say dis mity fuss am gittin' wuss and bigger,
And sum folks, dey am mad enuff, to say it am de Nigger.
And if it am, I can't help dat, de white folks sot de trigger,
An' now because dare han's am full, dey's down on all de Niggers.³⁰²

Northern songs about contrabands conveyed much different sentiments. Several inverted the movement and sentiment of "Dixie" by having blackface singers leave the South and declare their love for the Union. "The Happy Contraband" introduced himself thus:

Good evening, white folks, here I am, from old Virginny shore,
A regular living specimen of a contraband of war;
My massa he turned traitor, so I thought I'd better come
Up where they go for Union, our good old Union strong.

³⁰² E. Byron and William E. Christy, *Christy's New Songster and Black Joker: Containing all the Most Popular and Original Songs, Choruses, Stump Speeches, Witticisms, Jokes, Conundrums, etc., etc., as Sung and Delivered by the World-Renowned Christy's Minstrels and their Opera House* (New York, NY: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1863), 6-7; "I Cant Help Dat, Taint My Fault" (Louisville, KY: D. P. Faulds, 1862). For more discussion of minstrelsy's unease with black freedom see: Dennison, *Scandalize My Name*, 208-222.

“The Song of the Contraband” from *The Yankee Volunteer’s Songster* contained similar elements:

I cum from old Virginny, an’ dey call me contraband,
To hot for dis yer nigger in Old Dixie land.

This song challenged “Dixie’s” love for the South and tacit approval of slavery more thoroughly. Although the speaker was initially a loyal slave,

Now I’s down upon de South, but I didn’t use to be,
‘Kase dey want to bust de Union: dat’ll nebber suit me.

These contraband songs were similar to those about German and Irish Americans. Both made use of comic stereotypes but in some ways complimented their subjects.³⁰³

As Union policy shifted from confiscating slaves to arming them, minstrel songs offered less positive images of African Americans. Songs about USCTs conveyed white anxiety over black freedom and enlistment by portraying African Americans as incompetent and inferior. “A Soldier in de Colored Brigade,” written by Foster protégé George Cooper, praised black bravery while expressing reservations about emancipation. Beginning with an allusion to “We Are Coming Father Abraham, 300,000 More,” Cooper depicted his black speaker as highly confident:

Wid musket on my shoulder and wid banjo in my hand,
For Union, and de Constitution as it was I stand.
Now some folks tink de darkey for dis fighting wasn’t made,
We’ll show dem what’s de matter in de darkey brigade.

However, Cooper’s USCT was only willing to support the Union “as it was,” and rejected emancipation:

Some say dey lub de darkey and dey want him to be free,
I spec dey only fooling and dey better let him be.

³⁰³ Hart, *Bob Hart’s Plantation Songster*, 1; *The Yankee Volunteer’s Songster* (Philadelphia, PA: A. Winch, 1862), 13-14.

For him dey'd brake dis Union which de're forefadders hab made,
Worth more dan twenty millions ob de Colored Brigade.³⁰⁴

In these lines, Cooper echoed the sentiments of Charles Halpine's "Sambo's Right to be Kilt," by supporting black enlistment as a matter of military necessity rather than moral justice.

Other minstrel songwriters simply depicted black soldiers comically. Minstrel characters were often humorously overconfident, so little invention was needed to apply these same traits to USCTs. "Jine de Army" questioned the whole idea of African-American bravery and masculinity. In the first verse, a former slave's sweetheart urged him to "Jine de Army, make yourself a man." After receiving his "sojer's clothes / wid a mufstick on my shoulder" the new USCT sang:

Oh! we went down to Richmond town,
To give the reb-u-els a whack;
They recon-oystered in our rear,
And consequently we advanced boldly
From de enemies-es-es (back)!

In these lines, the black soldier showed his overconfidence by immediately succumbing to Confederate military skill and demonstrated his lack of intelligence by mispronouncing military terms. Mistaking a musket for a "muffstick" and finding the word "oyster" in reconnoitered went beyond typical minstrel dialect by indicating that not only could he not say the words properly but he lacked any notion of their meaning.³⁰⁵

William Shakespeare Hays' "Nigger Will Be Nigger" similarly portrayed USCTs as incompetent. Hays' subject bumbled his way into the army after running away from his master.

³⁰⁴ George Cooper and Stephen Collins Foster, "A Soldier in de Colored Brigade" (New York, NY: Firth, Son & Co., 1863).

³⁰⁵ Toll, *Blacking Up*, 124; Frank Converse, *Frank Converse's 'Old Cremona' Songster; Containing a Choice and Popular Collection of Banjo Songs, Stump Speeches, Sentimental Ballads, Comic Songs, Comic Quartettes, Walk Arounds, Songs and Dances, &c., &c.* (New York, NY: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1863), 11-12.

He had tried to find a place in society but failed because of his race. Like the speaker in “Jine de Army,” Hays’ minstrel found himself overmatched in battle:

Dey sent us out upon a Scout – an’ we each had a gun,
De Rebels made a dashin’ raid, you ought to see us run,
An’ I’m satisfied de Nigga’s would rather run dan fight,
Kase a Nigga will be Nigga, you kin neber make him white.

After this experience, the singer accepted his inferior status:

De Nigga good fo’ throwin’ dirt – an’ purty good at bitin’,
Dey’d better let de ‘Western boys,’ go in an’ do de fightin’.

By addressing white concerns over black equality, these songs became fairly popular. In fact, “Nigger Will Be Nigger” went through at least ten editions.³⁰⁶

With these adjustments, minstrelsy maintained its popularity in the North throughout the war. In late 1861, the New York *Herald* reported that minstrel shows “are crowded every night” and songwriters continued to sell sheet music. Abraham Lincoln was fond of minstrel songs, which were sometimes included in his serenades, and the genre had appreciative audiences in the army. Soldiers attended minstrel shows held near their camps and staged amateur performances. In fact, one soldier complained that whenever the men sang a “‘sweetly sentimental’ song they improvise a ridiculous negro chorus.”³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ Will Shakespeare Hays, “Nigger will be Nigger” (Louisville, KY: Tripp & Cragg, 1864).

³⁰⁷ New York *Herald*, November 18, 1861; Grover, “Lincoln’s Interest in the Theater,” 944; Richards, *Lives of Gens. Halleck and Pope*, 27; Henry Clay Whitney and Paul M. Angle, *Life on the Circuit with Lincoln* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1940), 156-157; Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee*, 69-70; Clark, *Under the Stars and Bars*, 24; W. A. Croffut and John M. Morris, *The Military and Civil History of Connecticut during the War of 1861-1865: Comprising a Detailed Account of the Various Regiments and Batteries, Through March, Encampment, Bivouac, and Battle: Also Instances of Distinguished Personal Gallantry, and Biographical Sketches of Many Heroic Soldiers: Together with a Record of the Patriotic Actions of Citizens at Home, and of the Liberal Support Furnished by the State in its Executive and Legislative Departments* (New York, NY: L. Bill, 1868), 501; Haines, *Letters from the Forty-Fourth*, 62; Samuel T. Wells to Lizzie, February 18, 1863, Samuel T. Wells Papers, Folder 3,

While minstrelsy enjoyed continued success in the North, it gained new ground in the South. Stephen Foster's songs, in particular, became Confederate favorites. One soldier gave a female cousin some of Foster's work, telling her, "When you see them you will turn up your pretty, aristocratic nose . . . but you wait, when you have tried them out, I'll wager you will be singing them the rest of your life." After performing the pieces, the girl "was fascinated with the songs – the young composer, although a Northern man, has caught and produced an intangible beauty of the South." Other southerners had similar reactions. One woman noted that Foster's "The Old Cabin Home" was the most popular song in Camden, Arkansas, and his works appeared in several Confederate songbooks and songsters. His "Massa in de Cold, Cold Ground" was even played during a flag-raising ceremony in Montgomery. Indeed, the most popular and beloved minstrel song in the Confederacy, "Dixie," was, in a large part, Emmett's attempt to copy Foster's style.³⁰⁸

The Confederacy's attachment to Foster reflected a newfound appreciation for minstrel songs. Unlike the bawdier tunes of early minstrelsy, Foster's pieces combined sentimental and minstrel elements to present a pastoral image of the South and a romanticized version of slavery. There was a subtle anti-slavery message to some of his songs because they described slaves separated by sale but this was not explicit and Confederates could usually ignore it. In addition, some Confederates thought that minstrel songs were genuine expressions of black feeling, not

Filson Historical Society; Entries for April 18, August 30, September 19, 1864, Henry K. White Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Chalmers Ingersoll, *The Unknown Friends, A Civil War Romance: Letters of My Father and My Mother* (Chicago, IL: A Kroch & Son, 1948), 72.

³⁰⁸ Lomax, *Leaves from an Old Washington Diary*, 158-159; Bragg and Gaughan, *Letters of a Confederate Surgeon*, 3; Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, 16. For examples of Confederate songbooks containing Foster songs see: Branson, *Jack Morgan Songster; The Cotton Field Melodies* (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1863); *The Southern Flag Song Book* (Vicksburg, MS: H. C. Clarke, 1863).

those of a white performer in blackface. Such sentiments comforted them in the face of increasing slave disloyalty and northern military success.³⁰⁹

Several Confederate minstrel songs modeled after “Dixie” and Foster’s works more explicitly upheld slavery. Many were reminiscent of Emmett’s “I’m Going Back to Dixie,” with titles such as “My Heart’s in Mississippi” and “I’m Going to My Dixie Home.” The latter portrayed a contraband who regretted running off to the Yankees. After realizing that he had lived better as a slave, the contraband vowed to pick cotton after the war. A Confederate version of “Dixie” called “De Cotton Down in Dixie” similarly described a slave returning to the Confederacy because “dere I’m safe from Uncle Sam, / And he can’t make me contraban.” The slave then promised to tell his fellow bondsmen that the Federals only used runaways to shine shoes and dig trenches.³¹⁰

Confederate soldiers embraced minstrelsy as a symbol of their new nation. General “Stonewall” Jackson’s men sang “corn-shucking” songs as they marched to Fredericksburg and a regimental band from Alabama included minstrel numbers in its repertoire. Confederate soldiers passing through Harper’s Ferry, instead of singing “John Brown’s Body” like the Federals, burst into minstrel tunes. Confederate glee clubs also became amateur minstrel troupes. General J. E. B. Stuart’s minstrel band was the best-known but others gained impressive reputations. One soldier considered the Mississippi Minstrel Club’s renditions of Emmett’s “I’m Going Back to Dixie” and Foster’s “Old Folks at Home” to be on par with Christy’s Minstrels. Hood’s Minstrels, in the Texas Brigade, had several professional musicians and became so popular that

³⁰⁹ Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism*, 67; *Washington Daily Morning Chronicle*, February 2, 1862.

³¹⁰ Branson, *Jack Morgan Songster*, 10-11; Charlie L. Ward, “I’m Coming to My Dixie Home” (Columbia, SC: B. Duncan & Co., n. d.); W. L. Fagan, ed., *Southern War Songs: Camp-Fire, Patriotic, and Sentimental* (New York, NY: M. T. Richardson & Co., 1890), 145-148.

they built their own theater during winter quarters. General George Pickett's Division also had its own minstrel troupe, as did several Confederate regiments.³¹¹

Like minstrel songwriters, many abolitionists also tried to convey the thoughts and feelings of African Americans through music. The black characters in these songs lamented their slave status and supported the Union. Although abolitionist songwriters used dialect and other elements of minstrelsy, they intended their pieces to generate support for emancipation in the North. Most of these songs fell flat but some became highly popular and had a significant impact on white, and even black, listeners.

One of the most prominent abolitionist writers before and during the war was the poet, John Greenleaf Whittier. Performers and publishers often set his pieces to music, including the Hutchinsons who were punished after performing his "We Wait Beneath the Furnace Blast" for Union soldiers. After learning about the work being done by northern missionaries with the contrabands of Port Royal, South Carolina, Whittier remarked, "I wish somebody would write a song worthy of the people and the cause." Early in 1862, he did so himself with a dialect poem called "The Song of the Negro Boatmen." Soon, a British newspaper noted that the piece "strikes us as possessing more of the elements of poetry, pathos, and music of rhythm in its verses than almost any song which we remember. . . . With an appropriate melody, it would

³¹¹ Nisbet, *Four Years*, 118; Program of Concert of Band, 9th Station, March 27, 1865, CSA Collection: 56th Alabama Infantry, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy; Dinkins, *1861 to 1865*, 56; LeGrand James Wilson, *The Confederate Soldier* (Memphis, TN: The Memphis State University Press, 1973), 149; Giles and Lasswell, *Rags and Hope*, 53; *Confederate Minstrels* (Richmond, VA: Dispatch Steam Presses, 1863); Entry for December 8, 1864, Curtis R. Burke Journal, Folder 5, Indiana Historical Society; Ellison Capers to his wife, January 30, 1863, Ellison Capers Correspondence, 1863-1906 Folder, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University; Letter from members of Brigade drum corps to George H. Stewart, February 26, 1864, Confederate Military Leaders Collection, Box 5, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy.

fasten itself upon the popular heart as few songs have ever done.” Consequently, several musical versions of Whittier’s poem appeared in newspapers, songbooks, and as sheet music.³¹²

With “The Song of the Negro Boatmen,” Whittier attempted to recreate the lyrics of a genuine slave spiritual. Slaves working on rivers made ready subjects because they were reportedly quite musical. Southern blacks often compared themselves to the Israelites and Whittier echoed this in his first stanza:

Oh praise and tanks de Lord he come
To set de people free;
And massa tink it day ob doom,
And we ob jubilee.
De Lord day heap de Red Sea waves
He jus as trong as dem;
He say de words: we las night slaves;
To-day de Lord’s freemen.

Abolitionists were especially fond of the piece. Lydia Maria Child wrote to Whittier from Port Royal that she had been repeating the song “morning, noon, and night. . . . It is a complete embodiment of African humor.” Lucy McKim, a visitor to Port Royal, agreed, informing *Dwight’s Journal of Music* that, after hearing genuine slave music, she determined that Whittier “builded better than he knew.”³¹³

³¹² Dena Epstein, *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 257; *Liberator*, January 31, February 14, March 21, 1862; John Greenleaf Whittier, “Song of the Negro Boatman,” *Atlantic Monthly* 9 (February 1862): 245-246; *Buckley’s Melodist*, 23; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, February 15, 1862; *Musical Review and Musical World* 8 (April 12 1862): 88; John G. Whittier and J. W. Dadman, “Song of the Negro Boatmen” (Boston, MA: Russell & Patee, 1862); J. G. Whittier and L. O. Emerson, “The Negro Boatmen’s Song” (Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson & Co., 1862); J. G. Whittier and Goldbeck, “The Freedman’s Song, or, The Song of the Negro Boatmen” (New York, NY: Firth, Pond & Co., 1862).

³¹³ Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal, 1862-1868* (Boston, MA: W. B. Clarke Co., 1906), 134; Russell, *My Diary*, 140; “Songs of the Slave,” *Lippincott’s Magazine of Literature* 2 (December 1868): 620; “The Freedmen’s Songs,” *Littell’s Living Age* (October 1 1864): 47; Susan Walker, *The Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3rd to June 6th, 1862*, edited by Henry Noble Sherwood (Cincinnati, OH: Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1912),

Other abolitionists followed in Whittier's footsteps and, in 1862, a collection entitled *Harp of Freedom* was printed. An introduction declared that "patriotic songs have done a vast deal toward changing public sentiment" on slavery, and cited the twelfth Massachusetts' singing of "John Brown's Body" on Broadway. Like that song, this book would "drive away the evil spirit from the soul of secession and place Freedom on the throne, notwithstanding the efforts to impale it on the wall of technicalities by the javelin of disloyalty and dishonor." Along with Whittier's "We Wait Beneath the Furnace Blast" and pieces by the Hutchinsons, *Harp of Freedom* contained several songs portraying slaves yearning for freedom, expressing their masculinity, and asserting their willingness to help defeat the Confederacy.³¹⁴

Such fare, however, mostly appealed to other abolitionists. To communicate these same ideas of black intelligence and loyalty to a wider audience, songwriters would need to adopt a less somber tone. Although many of them borrowed minstrelsy's dialect, they did not adopt its humor, upbeat rhythm, and memorable melodies. "John Brown's Body" was altering perceptions of blacks and abolitionism in the armies but there was no popular vehicle for anti-slavery sentiment on the home-front. Henry Clay Work would soon fill that void.

Work's father, Alanson, had been a staunch abolitionist and when his family moved from Middletown, Connecticut, to Illinois, the elder Work became involved in the Underground Railroad. Henry imbibed his father's hatred of slavery but also came into contact with African Americans and their music. Furthermore, Henry grew up in relative poverty, which likely exposed him to working class minstrelsy. As a result, Henry's early songwriting efforts were

19; Child, *Letters of Lydia Maria Child*, 159; Lucy McKim, "Songs of the Port Royal 'Contrabands,'" *Dwight's Journal of Music* 21 (November 8 1862): 255.

³¹⁴ Horace Waters, ed., *Harp of Freedom: A New and Superior Collection of Anti-Slavery Patriotic and 'Contraband' Songs, Solos, Duets and Choruses* (New York, NY: H. Waters, 1862).

heavily influenced by blackface performers. Indeed, after writing his first song, a ditty called “Lilly-Willy-Woken,” he submitted it to Christy’s Minstrels, who published it.³¹⁵

Sometime in the mid-1850s, Henry Clay Work moved to Chicago and began working with George Frederick Root shortly after the attack on Fort Sumter. His first wartime piece was a patriotic song called “Brave Boys Are They,” which earned Work a songwriting contract and a position as editor of the *Song Messenger of the Northwest*. By this time, Work had written a minstrel song called, “Kingdom Coming,” which he submitted to Root, who decided it was “exactly suited to the times.” Expecting large sales, Root and Cady embarked on a large advertising campaign. One Chicago *Tribune* squib began: “Kingdom Coming! These mysterious words have for a week past stared everybody in the face from our daily papers, and from street posters. Everybody has asked his neighbor what it meant – what Kingdom was coming?” It turned out to be “a new serio-comic song by Henry C. Work” and promised that it would be “another Dixie.” Similar statements followed until the song was published on May 7, 1862.³¹⁶

“Kingdom Coming,” like Root’s “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” had the advantage of meaning different things to different listeners. Its description of slaves taking over a plantation after their master fled could be viewed as a comic scene by minstrel audiences but also carried a

³¹⁵ Banks, *Immortal Songs*, 138-139; *Our War Songs, North and South*, 13; Henry Clay Work and Bertram G. Work, *Songs of Henry Clay Work* (New York, NY: J. J. Little & Ives Co., 1920), 5; Richard S. Hill, “The Mysterious Chord of Henry Clay Work, Part 1,” *Notes* 10 (March 1953): 216. For an account of Alanson Work’s anti-slavery activities and imprisonment see: George Thompson, *Prison Life and Reflections; or, A Narrative of the Arrest, Trials, Conviction, Imprisonment, Treatment, Observations, Reflections, and Deliverance of Work, Burr, and Thompson, Who Suffered an Unjust and Cruel Imprisonment in Missouri Penitentiary, for Attempting to Aid some Slaves to Liberty* (Hartford, CT: A. Work, 1857).

³¹⁶ *Our War Songs, North and South*, 13; Henry Clay Work, “Brave Boys are They!” (Chicago, IL: H. M. Higgins, 1861); Work, *Songs of Henry Clay Work*, 5; Hill, “Mysterious Chord,” 216; Root, *Story of a Musical Life*, 137; Chicago *Tribune*, April 19, May 2, 1862; Epstein, *Music Publishing*, 45.

clear abolitionist message for those who wanted to hear it. Unlike Foster's minstrel characters, the slaves in "Kingdom Coming" clearly despised their master and wanted to be free. Foster's singers lamented their separation from loved ones but rarely complained of their slave status. In "Kingdom Coming," it was not the slave who was absent from the plantation but the master. This resulted in a complete physical and racial inversion of authority, as the slaves took over the Big House and the master's skin actually turned black. In the last verse, the slaves even locked up their overseer and threw away the key. Although many northerners would have found these sentiments offensive if they had appeared in a Whittier poem, by pairing them with minstrel themes and a catchy melody, Work made them subtler and potentially more convincing.

"Kingdom Coming" was highly popular inside and outside of the army. By July, it had sold 8,000 copies without reaching the east coast and appeared in as many as twenty editions by the end of the year. Several soldiers heard it performed in the army, including one who recalled that whenever someone sang the first verse, "Instantly, he would be joined by a hundred jolly fellows in the chorus." Oddly enough, abolitionists did not adopt it as readily as "John Brown's Body" or "The Song of the Negro Boatmen." As members of the middle class, they likely considered themselves above its minstrel elements. The Hutchinsons, however, proved to be the exception. Never ones to shy away from a song just because it was of minstrel origin – they had performed a version of "Old Dan Tucker" for years – they added "Kingdom Coming" to their repertoire alongside "John Brown's Body."³¹⁷

³¹⁷ Chicago Tribune, July 10, 1862; "Freedmen's Songs," 47; Beatty, *Memoirs of a Volunteer*, 171; Reed, "Great Terrible Drama," 214; "Handwritten copy of 'Kingdom Coming,'" Henry A. Robinson Papers, Folder 3, Indiana Historical Society; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (August 1863): 78; Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First*, 249; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 272; *Liberator*, March 20, 1863. A version of "Kingdom Coming" published in 1862 states it was the twentieth edition.

A version called “Kingdom’s Coming” even enjoyed some success in the Confederacy. Despite its abolitionist origins, the song was printed as sheet music by A. E. Blackmar in 1864 and appeared in several songsters. Most Confederate publishers avoided any abolitionist overtones by removing the final verse in which the slaves revolted against their overseer. Thus bowdlerized, the song appeared to Confederates as a typical minstrel piece, in which Work’s characters were merely trying to behave like whites rather than revolting against slavery. Confederate soldiers also enjoyed the song, likely because of the image of a slaveholder fleeing his plantation. In this sense, the song was similar to several soldier pieces depicting southern planters avoiding military service.³¹⁸

In the North, several songwriters imitated Work’s balancing of minstrel stereotypes and abolitionism. Chicago publisher H. M. Higgins did so most directly with his “The Kingdom Has Come” but there were others. “Rebel Kingdom Falling” made its inspiration explicit when its publisher claimed that it “bids fair to outrun the famous ‘Kingdom Coming.’” Even Root offered his own take on Work’s theme with his, “De Day ob Liberty’s Comin’.” However, none of these pieces were very popular and Work remained the master of the form throughout the war.³¹⁹

³¹⁸ E. E. Osgood, “Kingdom’s Coming” (Augusta, GA: Blackmar & Bro., 1864); William D. Moore, ed., *The New Confederate Flag Songbook, No. 1* (Mobile, AL: H. C. Clarke, 1864), 34-35; Hermann L. Schreiner, ed., *The Gen. Lee Songster: Being a Collection of the Most Popular Sentimental, Patriotic and Comic Songs* (Macon, GA: J. C. Schreiner & Sons, 1865), 26; *Cavalier Songster*, 7-9; JoAnne Thomas, “‘Permit Me Then Good Friends to Sing’: Reflections, Reactions, and Manipulations in Civil War Songs” (M. A. Thesis, Western Michigan University, 1996), 94. A Confederate soldier recalled singing “Kingdom Coming” in early 1863 but he likely learned it from his Union captors. Entry for January 24, 1863, Curtis R. Burke Journal, Folder 1, Indiana Historical Society.

³¹⁹ Molter, *Patriotic Glee Book*, 21, 45; Dennison, *Scandalize My Name*, 202; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 270-271; Epstein, *Music Publishing*, 45; *Musical Review and Musical World* 15 (March 26 1864): 107; G. F. Wurzel, “De Day ob Liberty’s Comin’” (Chicago, IL: Root and Cady, 1862).

After offering a series of similar pieces portraying black characters voicing their desire for freedom, Work scored another major success in 1863 with “Babylon is Fallen.” Labeled as the “Sequel to Kingdom Coming,” it described the speaker from the earlier song returning to his plantation in a new capacity:

Don’t you see de black clouds risin’ ober yonder,
Whar de Massa’s ole plantation am?
Never you be frightened – dem is only darkeys,
Come to jine an’ fight for Uncle Sam.
Chorus
Look out dar now! We’s a gwine to shoot!
Look out dar – don’t you understand?
Babylon is fallen! Babylon is fallen!
And we’s a gwine to occupy de land.

If the image of slaves returning to a sinful South as conquerors was not menacing enough, the final two verses described them not only capturing their old master but asserting their authority over him:

Massa was de Kernel in de rebel army,
Ebber since he went an’ run away;
But his lubly darkeys, dey has been a watchin’,
And dey take him pris’ner tudder day.
Chorus

We will be de massa, he will be de servant –
Try him how he like it for a spell.³²⁰

The cover presented an image of vengeful slaves by showing a group of USCTs aiming their guns at a fleeing Confederate officer [Figure 1].

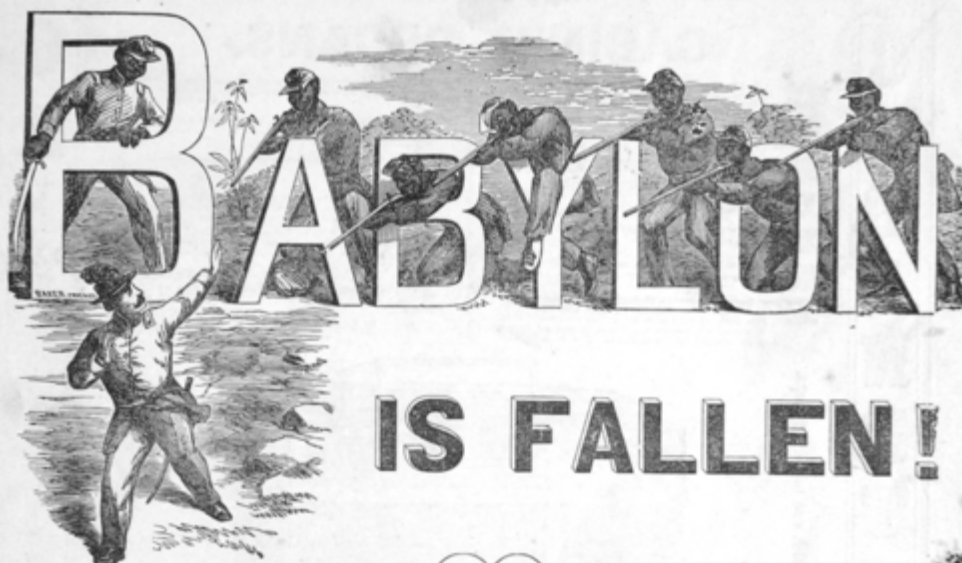
“Babylon is Fallen” struck a chord with civilians, selling more copies in its first month than “Kingdom Coming.” Soldiers sang the song and minstrels incorporated it into their

³²⁰ Henry Clay Work, “Babylon is Fallen” (Chicago, IL: Root and Cady, 1863). For other pieces by Work anticipating or celebrating emancipation see: Henry Clay Work, “Song of a Thousand Years” (Chicago, IL: Root and Cady, 1863); Henry Clay Work, “Uncle Joe’s ‘Hail Columbia!’” (Chicago, IL: Root and Cady, 1862); Henry Clay Work, “Wake Nicodemus” (Chicago, IL: Root and Cady, 1864).

performances. The same abolitionists who placed the placard over Jefferson Davis' plantation door with the chorus from "The Battle Cry of Freedom," also sang "Babylon is Fallen" in his home on Independence Day. With these two songs, Work did more to advance the cause of emancipation and improve northern perceptions of southern blacks than any other songwriter. Charles Halpine's, "Sambo's Right to be Kilt" convinced northern whites of the practicality of arming blacks but Work's pieces showed them that blacks were willing to fight and wanted freedom.³²¹

³²¹ *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (September 1863): 95; Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First*, 249; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (October 1862): 111; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 1 (November 1863): 126; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (April 1864): 14; Toll, *Blackening Up*, 118; Brown, *Negro in the American Rebellion*, 307.

SEQUEL TO
"KINGDOM COMING."



IS FALLEN!

SONG AND CHORUS.

WORDS AND MUSIC BY
HENRY C. WORK.



CHICAGO:
PUBLISHED BY ROOT & CADY, 95 CLARK STREET.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, A. D. 1863, by Root & Cady, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Figure 1 - Cover: Babylon is Fallen.

African Americans themselves used music to alter white perceptions of black intelligence, political ideology, and culture. During the war, slaves and free blacks not only sang for whites but did so in ways that reached a wide audience. In addition, blacks used white music to convey their patriotism, humanity, and desire for freedom. With these efforts, African Americans forced themselves into America's broader culture and helped convince many northerners that they not only wanted freedom but deserved it.

Music had long been an important element of slave culture. "Spirituals" and "shouts" could be heard as slaves sang to pass the time and set the pace of their work. Although many whites perceived this singing as evidence of contentment, many black songs described the hardships of slave life and a longing for freedom. These sentiments were often expressed in Biblical metaphors, usually drawn from Exodus and Revelation. As an elder female slave explained to a group of younger slaves, "Oh, chillens, dat's what the hymns mean dat we sing:

'Keep a-inchin' along, Keep a-inchin' along,
Jesus will come bimeby.'"

"He's comin' to make you all free. We's all got to stay a long time down in Egypt's lan', an' den de Lord'll lead us out froo de Red Sea."³²²

Examples of African Americans using religious metaphors in their music to depict slave life abound. Some songs simply asked for divine assistance to bear the hardships of slavery, such as "Hail Mary:"

I want some valiant soldier here, I want some valiant solider here,
I want some valiant soldier here, to help me bear de cross.

³²² Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1972), 249-250; Kenneth M. Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-bellum South* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1956), 369; Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York, NY: Orton & Mulligan, 1855), 99; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1997), 156; Young, *What a Boy Saw*, 87-88.

Another song, usually identified as “I Can’t Stay Behind,” implied an escape from bondage:

I can’t stay behind, my Lord, I can’t stay behind!
Dere’s room enough, Room enough, Room enough, in de Heaven, my Lord.

Many other spirituals used movement to suggest running away from the plantation. One of the best-known examples is “Michael Row the Boat Ashore” which conveyed not only movement but the promise of bliss and reunion with family once the destination was reached. The first two lines were usually transcribed as:

Michael row de boat ashore, Hallelujah!
Michael boat a gospel boat, Hallelujah!

However, the succeeding lyrics were more suggestive, such as “I wonder where my mudder deh” or “My fader gone to unknown land.” Some spirituals, such as “Steal Away to Jesus,” were even more explicit. Lines such as “green trees are bending,” and “tombstones are bursting” described landmarks along secret paths from the plantation to northern states or Canada.³²³

With the coming of the Civil War, the underlying message of freedom in these songs became more overt. As liberation “drew nearer, there was more singing in the slave quarters than usual,” Booker T. Washington recalled. Before the war, “they had been careful to explain that the ‘freedom’ in these songs referred to the next world. . . . Now, they gradually threw off the mask, and were not afraid to let it be known that the ‘freedom’ in their songs meant freedom of the body in this world.” Thus the spiritual “Hail Mary” became a complete rejection of slavery:

Done wid driber’s dribin’, done wid driber’s dribin’,
Done wid driber’s dribin’, roll, Jordan, roll.
Done wid massa’s hollerin’, done wid massa’s hollerin’,
Done wid massa’s hollerin’, roll, Jordan, roll.

³²³ William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison, eds., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995), 6, 23, 45; Tawa, *High-Minded and Low-Down*, 275; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 271, 281-282.

Done wid missus' scoldin', done wid missus' scoldin',
Done wid missus' scoldin', roll, Jordan, roll.

Similarly, in a new version of "Michael Row the Boat Ashore," Michael completed his journey and was told to "haul the boat ashore," after which he would "hear the trumpet sound" that would "sound the world around." The song concluded by declaring, the "trumpet sound the jubilee" and "trumpet sound for you and me." Thus, Michael arrived at his ultimate destination: emancipation.³²⁴

Not only did the war inspire revisions of old songs, it also fostered the creation of new ones. One piece, characterized by a white observer as the slave "Marseillaise," read like a call to arms:

We must fight for liberty
In that new Jerusalem.

Another likened the arrival of William Tecumseh Sherman's Army to the Second Coming:

Oh where shall we go when de great day comes
An' de blowing of de trumpets and de bangins of de drums
When General Sherman comes
No more rice and cotton fields
We will hear no more crying
Old master will be sighing.

But of all the new slave songs, the most popular was "Many Thousands Go." Echoing the antebellum spirituals, this piece reflected the ever-growing numbers of slaves fleeing their plantations to Union camps:

³²⁴ Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days among the Contrabands* (Boston, MA: Lee and Shepard, 1893), 8-9; Louis Hughes, *Thirty Years a Slave: From Bondage to Freedom: The Institution of Slavery as seen on the Plantation and in the Home of the Planter* (Milwaukee, WI: South Side Printing Company, 1897), 146-147; "Interview with Henry Andrew Williams," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938, Arkansas Narratives, Volume II, Part 3*, 167, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1901), 19-20; "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 2 (August 1863): 199; Allen et al., *Slave Songs*, 24, 45.

No more peck o' corn for me,
 No more, no more, -
 No more peck o' corn for me,
 Many thousands go.
 No more driver's lash for me,
 No more, no more, -
 No more driver's lash for me,
 Many thousands go.
 No more pint o' salt for me
 No more, no more, -
 No more pint o' salt for me
 Many thousands go.
 No more hundred lash for me,
 No more, no more, -
 No more hundred lash for me,
 Many thousands go.
 No more mistress' call for me
 No more, no more, -
 No more mistress' call for me
 Many thousands go.³²⁵

These new songs initially informed fellow slaves of the liberating potential of the Civil War but African Americans also performed them for northern whites. Missionary teachers were often surprised to find that the first thing their black students did for them was sing. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the white colonel of the all-black First South Carolina, noted that when his men sang, "it always excites them to have us looking on." But he also understood that southern blacks controlled what lyrics were heard, often stopping certain songs when they realized that whites were listening. In this way, African Americans used their music to reshape white perceptions and foster a new image of black culture as thriving and ready for freedom.³²⁶

³²⁵ Botume, *First Days*, 9; "Interview with James Calhart James," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938, Maryland Narratives, Volume VIII*, 35-36, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhhome.html>; Allen et al., *Slave Songs*, 48; Higginson, *Army Life*, 169-170; J. McKim, "Negro Songs," *Dwight's Journal of Music* 21 (August 9 1862): 149.

³²⁶ Dena J. Epstein, "Black Spirituals: Their Emergence into Public Knowledge," *Black Music Research Journal* 10 1 (Spring 1990): 58; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands: Part

When whites first encountered slave songs, many were shocked to find that they sounded nothing like minstrel tunes. A northerner living in Louisiana early in the war wrote that the “negro music” on the plantation was “none of your concert-root Ethiopian melody-operatic airs with burlesque words, extravagantly shrieked out by peripatetic white gentlemen with mammoth shirt-collars, and faces blackened with burnt cork.” Similarly, British observer William Howard Russell wrote that the music of South Carolina boatmen, “was as unlike the works of the [minstrels] as anything in song could be unlike another.” *The Continental Monthly* noted, in 1863, that not only did minstrel songs like “Oh Susanna,” misrepresent African-American music, southern blacks considered them “highly improper.”³²⁷

Soldiers made similar discoveries. One informed his mother that “I have found out a strange thing lately, the darkies don’t know anything about the song, of Old Kentucky Home, except as they have picked it up from hearing the whites sing it.” He had always believed this popular minstrel tune “came out of some negroes heart” and was so alarmed by their ignorance of it, that he asked every African American he met if they knew the song. The “curious feeling,” he experienced likely grew out of this challenge to his racial and cultural assumptions. Other soldiers noted how clearly the message freedom was expressed in slave songs. As one regiment marched through Guilford, Virginia, a group of slaves rushed out and sang the following lyrics that compared Lincoln to God and Jesus:

Jordan’s stream is runnin’, runnin’, runnin’ –
Milyuns sojers passin’ o’;
Linkum comin’ wid his chariot.
Bress de Lawd fo’ ebermo’!
Don’ yer hear him comin’, comin’?

I,” *Atlantic Monthly* 13 79 (May 1864): 589; Botume, *First Days*, 101; Higginson, *Army Life*, 17, 172.

³²⁷ William H. Holcombe, “Sketches of Plantation-life,” *Knickerbocker Monthly* 57 6 (June 1861): 629; Russell, *My Diary*, 140; “Under the Palmetto,” 200.

Yes, Ah do!
Wid his robe an' mighty army?³²⁸

Some northerners became so fond of black music that they actively sought it out. A Union soldier at Winchester, Virginia, noted how his regiment often asked local African Americans “to sing for us, and they sit down at the piano and delight us with the sweetest music.” Another group of Union soldiers paid nine dollars for a local “colored band” to play at their dance. A prisoner at Andersonville recalled that whenever the slaves worked the fields near the camp, the men would gather to listen to them, remarking that “they never seemed to weary of singing, and we certainly did not of listening to them.” These performances made such a deep impression that he concluded, “the negroes displayed all of the musical creativeness of [the South],” and described their music as “one of the salient characteristics of that down-trodden race.”³²⁹

While Union soldiers gained new appreciation for black music, many Confederates felt threatened by its new elements. The pro-Confederate magazine, *The Index*, reported that slaves were “secretly” singing,

My people must be free;
It is the year of jubilee,

and dismissed it as “doggerel” sung to “the popular melody of ‘Bow, wow, wow.’” The South’s newfound fascination with minstrelsy was one way to negate these demonstrations but Confederates also imposed more drastic measures. One master forbade the singing of freedom songs by his slaves and forced them to perform Confederate music. Another simply banned all

³²⁸ Cooke, *Soldier Boy’s Letters*, 36; Small, *Road to Richmond*, 96.

³²⁹ Mason Whiting Tyler, *Recollections of the Civil War: With Many Original Diary Entries and Letters Written from the Seat of War, and with Annotated References* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1912), 311; Entry for February 22, 1863, George W. Barbour Diary, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; McElroy, *Andersonville*, 135, 333.

singing on his plantation, although his slaves responded by going to their cabins and singing with wash bins over their heads so he could not hear them. Some slaves were even imprisoned for singing songs that suggested emancipation or support for the North.³³⁰

Other Confederates desperately sought musical signs of slave loyalty. Confederate officers, including J. E. B. Stuart, brought slaves into the army as musicians. Several regimental bands included slaves, sometimes to the chagrin of white musicians. Similarly, Russell recorded that “an enthusiast” on a Confederate steamship arranged a “dance of negroes . . . to show how ‘happy they were.’ That is the favorite theme of Southerners.” An Arkansas slave recalled that her master forced slaves to sing “Dixie” “half a day . . . have mercy! He make us sing it. Seem like all the white folks like Dixie.” Benefit concerts featured slave musicians. A Georgia newspaper explicitly declared the intent of these shows by titling its coverage of one such performance, “For the Abolitionists,” and ended by asking, “What do the invaders of our soil think of this?”³³¹

³³⁰ *Index 1* (August 14 1862): 253; James Wilson Davidson to his wife, June 14, 1862, James Wilson Davidson Papers, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University; “Interview with Callie Williams,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Alabama Narratives, Volume I*, 427, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; Higginson, *Army Life*, 169; Higginson, *Complete Civil War Journal*, 73; *Liberator*, January 16, 1863; Moore, *Civil War in Song and Story*, 117.

³³¹ Bell Irvin Wiley, *Southern Negroes, 1861-1865* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1938), 136-137; Blackford, *War Years*, 50; Von Borcke, *Memoirs of the Confederate War*, 187; 4th Battalion Headquarters to John A. Weddell, April 28, 1861, Margaret Stanley Beckwith Reminiscences, Volume 1, Virginia Historical Society; Ferguson, “Bands of the Confederacy,” 430-440; Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History, 3rd Edition* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 212; Steiner, *Report of Lewis H. Steiner*, 21; “Petition from Brigade Drum Corps to Brig. Gen. Geo. H. Stewart,” April 23, 1864, Confederate Military Leaders Collection, Box 5, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy; Russell, *My Diary*, 189; “Interview with Ede Harper,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Arkansas Narratives, Volume II, Part 3*, 164, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html> ; Geneva H. Southall, *Blind Tom: The Post-*

The wartime career of Thomas Greene Bethune, popularly known as Blind Tom, was the most persistent and well-publicized attempt to demonstrate slave loyalty through music. This nearly blind and likely autistic slave was a child during the war but nevertheless showed exceptional skill as a pianist. He was particularly adept at playing back melodies or even random series of notes played by others. During his shows, Tom mimicked other performers, played his piano backwards, and performed two, or even three, songs at once. The onset of the war limited his performances to the South and gave his shows a new pro-Confederate flavor. “Maryland, My Maryland” and “Dixie” became regular parts of his repertoire, replacing an old standard, “Yankee Doodle.” Tom also wrote a descriptive piece about Bull Run that incorporated “Dixie,” the “Marseillaise,” and “The Girl I Left Behind Me.” Along with providing an entertaining spectacle, Tom represented southerners’ most idealized vision of slavery. His disability made him appear less than human to nineteenth-century observers and

Civil War Enslavement of a Black Musical Genius (Minneapolis, MN: Challenge, Productions, 1979), 31; *Southern Watchman*, January 8, 1862. There is some evidence of slaves singing pro-Confederate songs apparently on their own or refusing to sing freedom songs because they liked their masters but most accounts have them singing the kinds of songs indicated by Booker T. Washington. For examples of slaves refusing to sing freedom songs or performing pro-Confederate pieces see: Botume, *First Days*, 185; “Interview with Maria Sutton Clements,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Arkansas Narratives, Volume II, Part 2*, 27, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; “Interview with Prince Johnson,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Mississippi Narratives, Volume IX*, 82-83, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; “Interview with James Lucas,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Mississippi Narratives, Volume IX*, 94, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; “Interview with George Woods,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, South Carolina Narratives, Volume XIV, Part 4*, 250, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; “Interview with Clara C. Young,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Mississippi Narratives, Volume IX*, 173, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>.

confirmed their belief in black inequality. The constant presence of Tom's master onstage also reinforced paternalism by making Tom appear loyal and dependent. In effect, Tom embodied the idea of the black slave civilized by his exposure to white culture. This presented a much more comforting image to white southerners than slaves singing freedom songs outside their windows.³³²

Some northerners were equally reluctant to hear the embedded messages in slave music. Many were so attached to minstrel stereotypes that they applied them to the slaves they met, regardless of their actual behavior. One soldier watched a group of USCTs with their sweethearts and imagined them as characters in a Fosteresque minstrel scene: "It was very amusing to watch the dashing colored girls flock to the camp to see their lovers . . . drilling 'for sojers.' Of course, 'Liza' blubbered a little . . . as 'Clim' chuckled her under the chin and sang,-

'Oh! I's gwine away fur to leab you,
Oh, good-bye, good-bye!'"

Descriptions of black dancing were especially laden with allusions to minstrelsy. Observing a group of contrabands playing music and dancing, one soldier informed a Cleveland newspaper,

³³² "Blind Tom," *American Phrenological Journal* 33 (June 1861): 92; Charleston *Mercury*, May 30, 1863; March Compton to Nora Compton, March 12, 1860, Compton Family Papers, section 2, Virginia Historical Society; Rebecca Blaise Harding Davis, "Blind Tom," *Atlantic Monthly* 10 (November 1861): 580-586; *Dwight's Journal of Music* 19 (May 18 1861): 55; Susan Bradford Eppes, *Through Some Eventful Years* (Macon, GA: Press of the J. W. Burke Co., 1926), 233; Fayetteville *Observer*, May 15, 1862; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, March 2, 1860; Richmond *Dispatch*, February 7, 10, 11, March 15, 1862; Southall, *Blind Tom*, 25-44; *Southern Watchman*, April 27, 1864; "The Blind Black Boy Pianist," *Dwight's Journal of Music* 17 (September 22 1860): 208; *The Marvelous Musical Prodigy, Blind Tom, the Negro Boy Pianist, whose Performances at the Great St. James and Egyptian Halls, London, and Salle Hertz, Paris, have Created such a Profound Sensation: Anecdotes, Songs, Sketches of the Life, Testimonials of Musicians and Savants, and Opinions of the American and English Press of 'Blind Tom.'* (New York, NY: French & Wheat, 1868), 3-4; *Tom: The Inspired Little Negro Boy* (1860); *Virginia Opera House: Friday and Saturday, Jan. 21 and 22...Blind Tom Concerts: The Great Musical Prodigy of the Age* (Richmond, VA: n. d.); Entry for May 18, 1864, Frances Woolfolk Wallace Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; H. J. Wiesel, "Blind Tom," *Dwight's Journal of Music* 22 (January 24 1863): 340-341.

“Many at the North think the Minstrels exaggerate the peculiarities of Old Virginny, but that is simply impossible.” Another soldier wrote, “It is laughable to see the negroes. They look exactly like our minstrels on the stage.” Many simply dismissed black music as uncultured. One officer remarked, “these Africans have a way of getting around the fire and singing real ‘nigger melodies,’ which are somewhat monotonous as regards the music, and totally idiotic as regards the words.”³³³

Other soldiers and missionaries understood the messages behind slave songs and shared them with northern audiences. Many of these transcribers reported that music was one of the most prominent and enjoyable parts of slave culture. Higginson showed real enthusiasm: “I take great delight in writing down at leisure moments the songs & hymns of these people. . . . When I hear a new one in the evening, I run out of my tent.” Eventually, some whites began sending these songs home. They did this to share these pieces with friends and family but they also feared that slave music would die with emancipation. One Port Royal educator hoped that “the teachers will gather up and preserve not only the words but the melodies which are thus sung” because “they will quickly disappear; and some of them are eminently worth preserving.”³³⁴

³³³ Caroline Moseley, “‘When Will Dis Cruel War Be Ober?’ Attitudes Towards Blacks in Popular Songs of the Civil War,” *American Music* 2 (fall 1984): 16; Cogswell, *History of the Eleventh*, 268-269; Babcock, *Selections from the Letters*, 63; Newell Ransom Dunn to his father, October 2, 1862, Newell Ransom Dunn Papers, Box 2, Correspondence 1862 September-October, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Ripple, *Dancing Along the Deadline*, 112-113; *Daily Cleveland Herald*, December 30, 1863; Howe, *Passages from the Life*, 91; William Thompson Lusk, *War Letters of William Thompson Lusk: Captain, Assistant Adjutant-General, United States Volunteers, 1861-1863, afterward M. D., LL. D.* (New York, NY: W. C. Lusk, 1911), 88-89. Several descriptions of African-American dancing by soldiers also borrowed from Harriet Beecher Stowe’s description of Jim Crow dancing from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin, or, Life Among the Lowly* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 2001), 6-7.

³³⁴ Higginson, *Complete Civil War Journal*, 78; Henry Lee Swint, *Dear Ones at Home: Letters from Contraband Camps* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1966), 24; Towne, *Letters and Diary*, 79; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, May 2, 1863.

Several attempts were made to publish slave songs during the war. The first was by Reverend L. C. Lockwood. He encountered slave music in the place where northern whites first interacted with large numbers of runaway slaves, Fort Monroe, Virginia. Lockwood arrived on September 1, 1861, and immediately recognized the allusions to Exodus in the songs he heard. Southern blacks seemed to have “a deep impression that they were the second children of Israel. And many of their songs were inspired by the spirit of liberty.” One piece, characterized by Lockwood as the slaves’ “prime deliverance melody,” caught his attention and he transcribed it for abolitionist newspapers. Calling the song, “Go Down Moses,” Lockwood reported that it “seems every hour to ring like a warning note in the ear of despotism.” The first verse was usually recorded as:

Oh go down Moses,
Way down into Egypt’s land;
Tell king Pharaoh
To let my people go.³³⁵

“Go Down Moses” explicitly compared southern blacks to the Israelites and was, therefore, the perfect vehicle for exposing white audiences to the style and content of slave spirituals. This was probably why the Fort Monroe contrabands sang it so often, as it showed their culture, piety, and unhappiness in slavery. Lockwood had the song published as sheet music in December 1861 and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* expressly declared his political motivations, stating that he “has done well to send it North, where it cannot fail to awaken fresh sympathy for the bondman.” *The Liberator* added that, because northerners had heard plenty of

³³⁵ *Christian Recorder*, November 22, 1862; “The Contrabands in Virginia,” *Independent* 13 (September 19 1861): 5; L. C. Lockwood, “Capacity of Slaves for Freedom and Soldierly,” *Independent* 15 (February 5 1863): 2; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, October 12, 1861; *National Principia*, October 12, 1861.

the “more trivial” minstrel music, “let us look into this expression of their religious feeling, combined with their aspiration for freedom.”³³⁶

However, there is little evidence that “Go Down Moses” enjoyed much popularity outside of abolitionist circles. Subsequent efforts by other northern missionaries, especially Lucy McKim of Port Royal, met with similar failure. If northern civilians had any contact with transcribed slave songs, it probably came through reading an 1863 *Continental Monthly* article, “Under the Palmetto” which gave a sampling of spirituals from South Carolina. The Lumbard Brothers’ “Ole Shady” also enjoyed some popularity. They claimed that this emancipation ode originated from an old slave at Vicksburg but there is evidence to the contrary. If whites were to accept music sympathetic to blacks, it more likely came from Henry Clay Work than abolitionist missionaries.³³⁷

Despite the relatively low popularity of these transcribed pieces, they nevertheless made some mark on northern culture. By the winter of 1864, *Littell’s Living Age* reported: “The war has brought into publicity a new and quaint species of literature, heretofore, almost wholly unknown . . . genuine negro songs.” However, what little success slaves achieved was largely the product of their own efforts. Having seen how transcribers like Lockwood exported their

³³⁶ L. C. Lockwood, “The Song of the Contrabands, ‘O Let My People Go’” (New York, NY: Horace Waters, 1861); Brown, *Negro in the American Rebellion*, 111; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, December 14, 1861; *Liberator*, January 3, 1862.

³³⁷ Epstein, *Sinful Tunes*, 248-249, 260-262, 270; McKim, “Songs of the Port Royal ‘Contrabands,’” 254-255; “Under the Palmetto,” 188-203; Cook, *Bygone Days*, 124-125; Dennison, *Scandalize My Name*, 201. For a discussion of Lucy McKim Garrison, American Musician,” *New York Public Library Bulletin* 67 (October 1963): 529-546. A common criticism of Lockwood’s version of “Go Down Moses” was that he gave it a western melody, preserving only the original lyrics. Although this demonstrated that his political motivations took precedence over his responsibilities as a transcriber, the revised melody likely did not hamper the song’s popularity. Indeed, subsequent wartime attempts to release slave songs with their melodies preserved were even less successful.

songs to the North, African Americans sought the same exposure by performing in settings that would garner white attention. Since no wartime event received more coverage by the northern press than emancipation, its arrival saw the most dramatic musical demonstrations.³³⁸

The emancipation celebrations at Washington and Port Royal were the most widely covered. On December 31, 1862, a large group of African Americans gathered at the Washington contraband camp. There they sang a variety of songs with lyrics designed to influence the numerous politicians, prominent abolitionists, and newspaper reporters observing them. The contrabands began by expressing their religious conviction and desire for freedom by singing “Go Down Moses.” Then, a black woman declared her loyalty to the Union and opposition to the Confederacy:

If de Debble do not ketch
Jeff. Davis, dat infernal retch,
An roast and frigazee dat rebbles,
Wat is de use ob any Debble?

In another song, the contrabands declared that they deserved freedom because they would be good citizens:

We will strive to learn our duty,
That thus the world may see,
Though so long oppressed in bondage,
We were worthy to be free.³³⁹

When midnight and emancipation arrived, the contrabands heralded it with a new version of “Go Down Moses” beginning with the refrain,

Go down, Abraham, way down in Dixie’s land
Tell Jeff Davis to let my people go.

Other verses described their time as slaves:

³³⁸ “Freedmen’s Songs,” 47.

³³⁹ *Liberator*, January 16, 1863; Brown, *Negro in the American Rebellion*, 111, 113; “Rejoicing Over the Proclamation,” *Independent* 15 (January 8 1863): 1.

Down in the house of bondage we have watched and waited long;
The oppressor's heel was heavy, the oppressor's arm was strong;

Another couplet revealed their knowledge of current events:

Now God is with Grant, and he'll surely whip Lee;
For the Proclamation says that the niggers must be free.

With this new version, the Washington contrabands stripped away what was left of Booker T. Washington's proverbial mask, removing the religious metaphors of the original and replacing them with a direct call to eliminate slavery and destroy the Confederacy.³⁴⁰

The following day, another emancipation celebration was held at Camp Saxton, near Port Royal. However, this was unlike the Washington celebration in two important ways. First, it included the presentation of the battle flag for Higginson's recently organized First South Carolina. Second, rather than the Washington contrabands' seemingly spontaneous outpouring of music, this event was organized and run by white military officers and teachers. The centerpiece was to be a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation, followed by an "Emancipation Ode," the presentation of a battle flag, and another ode sung by the camp superintendents. During all of this, the organizers expected one thousand contrabands and members of Higginson's regiment to remain silent. Instead, the Port Royal contrabands and USCTs seized this opportunity to use their recently acquired knowledge of white music to express their own feelings on freedom and their ability to fight for the Union.³⁴¹

As planned, the Proclamation was read, followed by the singing of the "Emancipation Ode." One of the camp chaplains then gave a speech on a raised platform, and moved to present Higginson with the battle flag. However, once Higginson appeared on the platform he heard "a

³⁴⁰ Brown, *Negro in the American Rebellion*, 118-119.

³⁴¹ Forten, *Journal*, 154; T. D. H. "Emancipation Day in South Carolina," *Christian Inquirer* 17 (January 17, 1863): 2-3; *Circular* 11 (January 22, 1863): 199; Higginson, *Army Life*, 30; New York *Herald*, January 7, 1863.

strong male voice” from one of the black observers “into which two women’s voices instantly blended, singing, as if by an impulse that could no more be repressed than the morning note of the song-sparrow. —

‘My country, ‘tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing!’

Soon, all the contrabands and USCTs joined in singing “America.” In fact, when some of the white missionaries began to sing along, Higginson ordered them to stop, saying only, “leave it to them.” The gesture carried added significance because neither Higginson, nor any of the other whites, had heard the contrabands sing it before. Like the new version of “Go Down Moses” performed in Washington, the Port Royal contrabands had mastered this new song in secret, waiting to perform it until they would have the greatest impact. The choice of “America” was also significant, because its strong religious overtones expressed devotion to both Christian and American principles.³⁴²

White observers were awed by the performance. If Higginson had prepared a speech he refused to give it, saying only that the singing was “more eloquent than the poor words any man could utter.” One reporter wrote that “tears rolled down the cheeks of men as well as women” and another observer called it “a touching and beautiful incident.” Higginson best understood the significance of the event. “Just think of it!” he wrote, “the first day they ever had a country, the first flag they had ever seen which promised anything to their people, and here, while mere spectators stood in silence . . . these simple souls burst out in their lay, as if they were by their

³⁴² Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, 130; *New York Herald*, January 7, 1863; Higginson, *Army Life*, 31; T. D. H. “Emancipation Day,” 2.

own hearths at home!” Higginson “never saw anything so electric; it made all other words cheap; it seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed.”³⁴³

After Higginson was presented with the flag, the newly enlisted USCTs sang “Marching Along.” With this song, the members of the regiment announced their new status as fighting men and associated themselves with white soldiers already in the field. At the conclusion of the event, the contrabands again took control of the proceedings by singing “John Brown’s Body.” This selection encapsulated the motivations of southern blacks by not only identifying them with the Union, but a Union without slavery.³⁴⁴

Like the Port Royal contrabands, many African Americans understood that learning and using white songs to express their political and religious views could be even more effective than coded spirituals. While many southern blacks had learned these songs from white teachers, others had picked them up by listening to soldiers. Bandsmen Frank Rauscher recalled that “when the band struck up,” nearby slaves “became wild with excitement and love of the music; and for miles they would keep along with us, dancing, jumping, and yelling with delight. It seemed impossible for many of them to leave us.” Similarly, one of Sherman’s men noted, “our band and martial music, elicited much admiration and surprise among the negroes, numbers of whom could be seen keeping time to the tunes and airs that were played.” When a Rhode Island

³⁴³ T. D. H., “Emancipation Day,” 2; *Circular* 11 50 (January 22, 1863): 199; Forten, *Journal*, 154; Higginson, *Army Life*, 31.

³⁴⁴ Higginson, *Army Life*, 31; *Circular* 11 50 (January 22, 1863): 199; Forten, *Journal*, 155; T. D. H., “Emancipation Day,” 2. Higginson later commented that he had taught “Marching Along” to the men during training but they had created their own lyrics. Sources do not indicate if the original or the adapted words were sung during this ceremony. Higginson, *Army Life*, 172.

cavalryman marched into Virginia as part of General John Pope's army and saw slaves along the roadside, he believed them "enamored with our loyal music."³⁴⁵

Not surprisingly, the two most abolitionist white songs were the favorites among slaves: "John Brown's Body" and "Kingdom Coming." The latter came to them through white soldiers even before emancipation. A month after "Kingdom Coming" was published, a copy was sent to a white Union regiment near Athens, Alabama. The soldiers in the regiment learned it quickly, and one recalled that when they sang it, "a crowd of black faces grinning with delight surrounded them, taking in the spirit of the words and music, so appropriate to the situation at the time." A year later, a newspaper correspondent in southern Louisiana reported that it had become a favorite among southern blacks. A former South Carolina slave also remembered singing "Kingdom Coming" but noted that "I wouldn't be so fool as to let [the master] hear me."³⁴⁶

"John Brown's Body" may have been even more popular. A teacher in Gallatin, Tennessee, reported that it was "by far the most popular piece" among his black students and a soldier observed that it was the "Marseillaise" of the contrabands at Baltimore. Like Union

³⁴⁵ Babcock, *Selections from the Letters*, 63; Beatty, *Memoirs of a Volunteer*, 93, 102; Day, *My Diary*, 64; Gibson, *Those 163 Days*, 151-152; Hamilton, *Reminiscences of a Veteran*, 149-150; Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First*, 11; Entry for August 28, 1864, memoir, Russell Hastings Papers, Box 1, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center; "Interview with Patsy Hyde," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938, Tennessee Narratives, Volume XV*, 34, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; Page, *History of the Fourteenth*, 179-180; Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 79; George Sharland, *Knapsack Notes of Gen. Sherman's Grand Campaign through the Empire State of the South* (Springfield, IL: Jackson & Bradford, 1865), 14; Denison, *Sabers and Spurs*, 115.

³⁴⁶ Bishop, *Story of a Regiment*, 61-62; Chicago Tribune, June 10, 1863; "Interview with Elijah Green," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938, South Carolina Narratives, Volume XIV, Part 2*, 197, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>. "Kingdom Coming became so ingrained in slave culture, that one former slave even claimed that her father wrote it. "Interview with Lorenza Ezell," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938, Texas Narratives, Volume XVI, Part 2*, 28-29, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>.

troops, African Americans were especially fond of the line about hanging Davis from a “sour apple tree.” A teacher in South Carolina reported that when his class performed “John Brown’s Body,” it “awakens all their enthusiasm, and they burst forth in their loudest, clearest, and liveliest voices;” but when they sang the “Jeff Davis” line, “they quicken the time, and keep it so exact one can almost hear the march of the armies hastening to carry out the earnest resolve.”³⁴⁷

As African Americans entered the Union army, they continued to perform white songs but they also sang their own pieces. In either case, they openly celebrated their newfound freedom and announced their desire to end slavery. USCTs formed numerous regimental bands – despite their 1862 discharge – and sang frequently. Several white observers recorded that black soldiers sang almost every night, leaving one enlisted man to ponder “how they get along with so little sleep, or rest.” The songs USCTs chose were those that best expressed their deliverance from slavery, their masculinity, and their courage. As slaves, they had constantly revised the lyrics to the songs they knew and continued to do so as soldiers.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Western Freedmen’s Aid Commission, *The Second Annual Report of the Western Freedmen’s Aid Commission* (Cincinnati, OH: Methodist Book Concern, 1865), 33; Coffin, *Boys of ’61*, 260; Botume, *First Days*, 185; *New York Times*, November 13, 1862; *American Missionary* 1 (September 1864): 34.

³⁴⁸ Chester, *Thomas Morris Chester*, 121-122; *Christian Recorder*, May 7, November 12, 1864; Charles Barnard Fox, *Record of the Service of the Fifty-Fifth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry* (Cambridge, MA: Press of J. Wilson & Son, 1868), 65; Michigan, *Effect of the Civil War*, 14; *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (October 1864): 110; Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 208; “Interview with Tom Windham,” Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer’s Project, 1936-1938, Arkansas Narratives, Volume II, Part 7*, 211, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; James Henry Gooding, *On the Altar of Freedom: A Black Soldier’s Civil War Letters from the Front* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 7-8; Higginson, *Army Life*, 16; Lawrence Van Alstyne, *Diary of an Enlisted Man* (New Haven, CT: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Co., 1910), 214. Keith P. Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom: The Camp Life of Black Soldiers during the Civil War* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2002), 148. For an analysis of black regimental bands see: Wilson, “Black Bands.” The Diary of black musician George W. Bowen shows that black field musicians were also plentiful and had the same duties as white bands. George W. Bowen Diary,

USCT spirituals defined their new roles as soldiers and citizens. Members of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts depicted themselves as the fruition of John Brown's mission:

Oh John Brown, dey hung him
We're gwine to jine de Union Army
Oh John Brown dey hung him
We're gwine to Dixie's land.
Way down by Jeeme's River
Old massa's grave is made
And he or me is sure to fill it
When he meets de black Brigade.
We're gwine to trabbel to de souf
To smack de rebels in de mouf.

USCTs preparing to attack a Confederate fort at Honey Hill, South Carolina, stressed their masculinity:

For now as men we stand
Defending Fatherland:
With willing heart and hand,
In this great cause we band.

However, USCT songs were not always about such high ideals. Like white soldiers, they used music to complain about army life, such as when Higginson's men protested their low pay:

Ten dollars a month!
Tree ob dat for clotting!
'Gwine to Washington
To fight for Linkum's darter!³⁴⁹

One of the most effective and dramatic uses of music by USCTs was before the Battle of the Crater. After learning that they would lead General Ambrose Burnside's ill-fated attack, a

Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Higginson recorded a large number of spirituals sung by his regiment and later published them in *The Atlantic Monthly*. Higginson, *Army Life*, 149-173; T. W. Higginson, "Negro Spirituals," *Atlantic Monthly* 10 (June 1867): 685-694.

³⁴⁹ Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 154; Dennett, *Lincoln and the Civil War*, 154; Brown, *Negro in the American Rebellion*, 257; Higginson, *Complete Civil War Journal*, 173.

large group of USCTs made a circle in their camp. According to a white observer, they sat silently until “at last a heavy voice began to sing,

‘We-e looks li-ike me-en a-a-marchin’ on,
We looks li-ke men-er-war.’”

The lone singer repeated these lines, slightly modifying the melody, until “all at once, when his refrain had stuck the right response in their hearts, his group took it up, and shortly half a thousand voices were upraised extemporizing a half dissonant middle part and bass.” They continued to sing this affirmation of their masculinity every night until the battle, impressing white listeners with their resolve.³⁵⁰

Numerous white songs were also modified by USCTs. In a version of “John Brown’s Body” they declared their freedom and new status as soldiers, and threatened their former masters:

We are done with hoeing cotton,
We are done with hoeing corn.
We are colored Yankee soldiers,
As sure as you are born.
When Massa hears us shouting,
He will think ‘tis Gabriel’s horn,
As we go marching on.

The Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts was especially skilled at creating new versions of white songs.

While imprisoned in Charleston after their attack on Fort Wagner, members of the regiment

³⁵⁰ Henry Goddard Thomas, “The Colored Troops at Petersburg,” *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: Being for the Most Part Contributions by Union and Confederate Officers* (New York, NY: The Century Co., 1884-1888): IV, 563-564; Charles H. Wesley, *Negro Americans in the Civil War, From Slavery to Citizenship* (New York, NY: Publishers Co., 1970), 158. Not all white listeners were impressed by the USCTs singing at Petersburg. As General Fitzhugh Lee listened from the Confederate trenches, he described the scene as “humorous.” Lee, *General Lee*, 356.

entertained their fellow prisoners by singing a variety of songs, including a revision of “When This Cruel War is Over” that lamented, among other things, the poor food.³⁵¹

One of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts’ more political songs was their version of Septimus Winner’s “Hoist Up the Flag.” Winner’s number celebrated the battlefield victories of the Union Army but it ended with the following lines:

We’ll fight for the Union, but just as it was,
Nor care what secesh, or Abe-o-lition does,
We’ll stand by the flag, the sword and the gun,
To save from dishonor the land of Washington.

In the hands of the Fifty-Fourth, this song became a refutation of the conciliatory policies supported by Winner and General George B. McClellan:

McClellan went to Richmond with two hundred thousand brave;
He said ‘keep back the niggers,’ and the Union he would save.
Little Mac he had his way, still the Union is in tears,
Now they call for the help of the colored volunteers.

The song ended by invoking the support of God and declaring the regiment’s intention to save the Union:

So rally boys, rally, let us never mind the past.
We had a hard road to travel, but our day is coming fast;
For God is for the Right, and we have no need to fear;
The Union must be saved by the colored volunteer.³⁵²

These statements contained none of the vagueness or coded language from earlier slave songs. No longer threatened by their white masters, freed blacks could now express themselves

³⁵¹ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 157; Luis F. Emilio, *History of the Fifty-Fourth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, 1863-1865* (Boston, MA: The Boston Books Company, 1894), 415; Willard Glazier, *The Capture, The Prison Pen, and the Escape; Giving a Complete History of Prison Life in the South* (New York, NY: R. H. Ferguson & Co., 1870), 151-153.

³⁵² Septimus Winner and Billy Holmes, “Hoist Up the Flag” (Philadelphia, PA: William R. Smith, 1863); Moore, *Songs of the Soldiers*, 234-235. Historian Keith Wilson argues that the Twenty-Ninth Connecticut also created their own version of “Hoist Up the Flag.” Wilson, *Campfires of Freedom*, 165.

openly. In so doing, they defined their new roles as soldiers and citizens to each other and asserted their intelligence and humanity to whites. One white soldier listening to the imprisoned USCTs in Charleston decided that “no race so delicately sensitive to the emotional can be essentially coarse and barbarous.” Such moments of racial transcendence were not limited to soldiers. A group of black schoolchildren in Port Royal mirrored the actions of the First South Carolina by singing “John Brown’s Body” for their teachers without having been taught the song. Their instructor wept, whites all around the camp, including southerners, gathered around to observe the scene, and the incident was later reported by the *New York Times*. Lincoln, himself, had a similar experience at the Washington contraband camp. When he visited, the former slaves sang “America” and he joined in. They followed this with several slave spirituals and “John Brown’s Body,” bringing the president to tears.³⁵³

As African Americans took control of how they were musically represented in America, they helped dispel the minstrel stereotypes that had dominated white perceptions for decades. Gauging how successful they were in these efforts is difficult but reports from Washington, Port Royal, and Petersburg surely affected northern readers. However, even those who were unaffected had their notions of black inferiority challenged by the music of the day. A new kind of sympathetic minstrelsy, exemplified in the songs of Henry Clay Work, presented its black subjects as comical but also desiring of freedom and willing to fight for it. Indeed, the fictional black soldiers seeking vengeance on their master in “Babylon is Fallen” mirrored the actual members of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts who sang that they would “smack de rebels in de mouf.” Although Civil War music played significant roles in the lives of white soldiers and

³⁵³ Glazier, *The Capture*, 151; *New York Times*, September 15, 1862; John E. Washington, ed., *They Knew Lincoln* (New York, NY: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1942), 85-87.

civilians, it had a more fundamental impact on African Americans. The war not only altered popular perceptions of blacks but irrevocably changed their music and culture.

CONCLUSION

“ALL QUIET ALONG THE POTOMAC, TONIGHT”: MUSIC AND THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR

Bring the good old bugle, boys! we'll sing another song –
Sing it with a spirit that will start the world along –
Sing it as we used to sing it, fifty thousand strong,
While we were marching through Georgia.

Chorus

“Hurrah! Hurrah! we bring the Jubilee!
Hurrah! Hurrah! the flag that makes you free!”
So we sang the chorus from Atlanta to the sea,
While we were marching through Georgia.

How the darkeys shouted when they heard the joyful sound!
How the turkeys gobbled which our commissary found!
How the sweet potatoes even started from the ground,
While we were marching through Georgia.

Chorus

Yes, and there were Union men who wept with joyful tears,
When they saw the honor'd flag, they had not seen for years;
Hardly could they be restrained from breaking forth in cheers,
While we were marching through Georgia.

Chorus

“Sherman's dashing Yankee boys will never reach the coast!”
So the saucy rebels said, and 'twas a handsome boast,
Had they not forgot, alas! to reckon with the host,
While we were marching through Georgia.

Chorus

So we made a thoroughfare for Freedom and her train,
Sixty miles in latitude – three hundred to the main;
Treason fled before us, for resistance was in vain,

While we were marching through Georgia.
Chorus

Henry Clay Work, 1865
“Marching Through Georgia”³⁵⁴

The final months of the Civil War dramatically altered the uses and character of its music. Depending on one’s situation and allegiance, music’s power waxed or waned. On the Confederate home-front, northern soldiers used music to assert their dominance and southerners found that their songs no longer carried the same emotional and political power. African Americans used music to celebrate their emancipation and affirm their freedom and humanity. Indeed, Americans on both sides determined that while the North asserted its industrial and military superiority, it also established its musical authority. Some even speculated that the strength of northern music and the relative weakness of southern music had influenced the war’s outcome.

Yet, many of these musical conflicts went unresolved. For a century after the war and beyond, northerners and southerners continued to use music to define and understand their civil war. While the end of the conflict may have altered the power and meaning of many songs, they continued to resonate with Americans for decades afterwards – even to the present day. Music was extremely powerful and influential during the Civil War and the mark it made on soldiers and civilians was deep and not easily erased.

As Union soldiers made their way across the Confederacy, they performed songs that celebrated their victories over secession and slavery. The patriotic songs they had performed for southern civilians throughout the conflict became symbols of Union triumph and authority.

³⁵⁴ Henry Clay Work, “Marching Through Georgia” (Chicago, IL: Root and Cady, 1865).

More than this, as Union soldiers realized that the war was coming to an end, they again felt the enthusiasm of 1861, including a passion for music. Bandsman Frank Rauscher recalled that in the days preceding Appomattox, “our band was wanted everywhere, and the national airs were never before in such constant demand.”³⁵⁵

One of the most powerful signs of Union dominance was the physical occupation of a Confederate city. Throughout the war, Union soldiers had used these moments to perform songs that expressed their loyalty to the United States and disdain for the Confederacy. In the final months of the war, these occasions became even more poignant. As Union troops marched into Charleston, they played “Hail Columbia” and one soldier observed how “the strains floated through the desolate city, awakening wild enthusiasm in the hearts of the colored people, who came rushing down the . . . streets to welcome us.” When marching into Columbia, Union bands played a series of patriotic songs. One officer bragged that “John Brown’s Body” and “The Battle Cry of Freedom” “are now the familiar airs” in South Carolina, because Union troops performed them so often. The emancipationist elements of Union victory were explicitly displayed as soldiers performed “John Brown’s Body” and “Kingdom Coming” in Petersburg and Richmond. The New York *Tribune* reported how the sound of bands playing “The Star Spangled Banner” while the Confederate capital burned mingled with “the shouts of welcome and the excitement of the people,” resulting in “a scene of such grandeur and magnificence never to be effaced from memory.”³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ Rauscher, *Music on the March*, 241.

³⁵⁶ Coffin, *Boys of '61*, 426; Nichols, *Story of the Great March*, 176; Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant, from April, 1861, to April, 1865* (New York, NY: D. Appleton, 1881), III, 543; Sacramento *Daily Union*, May 8, 1865; New York *Tribune*, April 6, 1865.

Similar performances by black soldiers carried an equally powerful message. “John Brown’s Body” and “Kingdom Coming” remained their favorite selections and were heard by Confederate civilians in Charleston, Petersburg, and Richmond. When the Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts passed through Charleston, it added “The Battle Cry of Freedom” and “Babylon is Fallen.” In response, local African Americans rushed out and sang along with their USCT liberators. Black soldiers marching through Richmond also sang “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” along with “Yankee Doodle.” These combinations of songs by George Frederick Root or Henry Clay Work and America’s traditional anthems showed that black soldiers not only saw themselves as destroying slavery but as loyal Americans who embraced the Union.³⁵⁷

When the war finally ended, Union soldiers, both black and white, used music to express their elation and to give meaning to their victory. When the Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts heard of General Robert E. Lee’s surrender, they played all three major American anthems along with “John Brown’s Body” and “Babylon is Fallen.” White soldiers too performed these anthems but their celebrations showed an eagerness to return home. Members of the Twenty-Third Corps performed “The Star Spangled Banner” and “Yankee Doodle” but followed them with “Home, Sweet Home,” which, according to one observer, provoked “many a quivering lip and glistening eye.” After some of General William Tecumseh Sherman’s men heard that Confederate General Joseph Johnston was willing to surrender, they paired “Hail Columbia” with “The Girl I Left Behind Me.” These dual themes of victory and homecoming continued through the end of the

³⁵⁷ Badeau, *Military History*, III, 543; Coffin, *Boys of ’61*, 481, 507; Green Mountain Freeman (Vermont), April 18, 1865; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, March 11, April 15, 1865; “The Flag Replaced on Sumter: Read before the Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors,” 33, William Arnold Spicer Papers, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University; Allen Thorndike Rice, ed., *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of his Time* (New York, NY: North American Review, 1888), 178; Fox, *Record of the Service*, 57-58; Chester, *Thomas Morris Chester*, 290.

war. One Rhode Island cavalryman recorded that as his regiment marched back to Providence, “our happy band enlivened our march and moved the cheers of citizens by the choicest strains – the music of loyalty – the music of freedom – the music of victory – the music of home.”³⁵⁸

On the northern home-front, Confederate defeat was heralded with musical celebrations of union, emancipation, and victory. Traditional anthems were the most popular selections but “The Battle Cry of Freedom” was frequently heard. Religious sentiments were also apparent in civilian performances of “Old Hundred” and other popular hymns. However, the most remarkable feature of these civilian celebrations was the ascendance of “John Brown’s Body.” Never as popular at home as it was in the army, the success of Federal arms, the reality of emancipation, and the contributions of contrabands and USCTs overcame civilian disdain for the abolitionist song. It rang out from almost every northern city and town. After witnessing one performance on Wall Street, George Templeton Strong abandoned his usual aloofness and remarked, “I think I shall never lose the impression of this rude, many-voiced chorale. It seemed a revelation of profound national feeling, underlying all our vulgarisms and corruptions, and vouchsafed to us in their very focus and centre.”³⁵⁹

Black non-combatants reacted to the war’s end by continuing to pair their own songs with those learned from whites. After the fall of Richmond, African Americans gathered in a local church and sang several spirituals thanking God and rejoicing over their newfound freedom.

³⁵⁸ Fox, *Record of the Service*, 74; Barrett, *Civil War in North Carolina*, 371; Tuttle, *Civil War Journal*, 209; Denison, *Sabers and Spurs*, 464.

³⁵⁹ Horatio King, “My First and Last Sight of Abraham Lincoln,” *Magazine of American History* 16 (September 1886): 255-256; various newspaper clippings, Scrapbook re: Lincoln’s Death and Funeral, Manuscripts Department, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; Strong, *Diary*, III, 574-575, 578; Svejda, *History of the Star Spangled Banner*, 196; *Washington Evening Star*, April 4, 1865; Ella Lyman Cabot, ed., *Arthur Theodore Lyman and Ella Lyman: Letters and Journals* (Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Co., 1932), II, 168; *Chicago Tribune*, April 10, 1865; Clarke, *Village Life*, 183.

Upon hearing of Lee's surrender, a group of Virginia slaves sang lyrics that imagined the effects of emancipation spreading to every facet of nature:

Mamy don't yo' cook no mo',
Yo' ar' free, yo' ar' free.
Rooster don't yo' crow no mo',
Yo' ar' free, yo' ar' free.
Ol' hen, don't yo' ley no mo' eggs,
Yo' free, yo' free.

"Kingdom Coming" and "John Brown's Body" remained favorites. In fact, a group of contrabands at Hilton Head, South Carolina enthusiastically sang the "sour apple" verse of "John Brown's Body" after hearing of Jefferson Davis' capture. However, in some ways these celebrations marked the beginning of the end for slave spirituals. After the war, African Americans gradually abandoned the style and content of antebellum slave music, as many abolitionists had predicted. Despite a brief revival by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, traditional black music was replaced by new styles that were influenced by white genres, eventually resulting in the creation of Blues and Jazz.³⁶⁰

An especially noteworthy northern victory celebration occurred in Charleston to mark the re-raising of the American flag over Fort Sumter. Among those who attended were prominent

³⁶⁰ *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, April 15, 1865; *New York Tribune*, April 11, 1865; "Interview with Fannie Berry," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938, Virginia Narratives, Volume XVII*, 6, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; "Interview with Minnie Davis," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938, Georgia Narratives, Volume IV, Part 1*, 262, available: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour, May 1, 1865, to May 1, 1866* (Cincinnati, OH: Moore, Wiltach & Baldwin, 1866), 158; Ronald Radano, "Denoting Difference: The Writing of the Slave Spirituals," *Critical Inquiry* 22 (Spring 1996): 506-544; Linda Warfel Slaughter, ed., *The Freedmen of the South* (Cincinnati, OH: Elm Street Printing Co., 1869), 134; "Songs of the Slave," 617-618. For a detailed history of the Fisk Jubilee Singers see: Andrew Ward, *Dark Midnight when I Rise: The Story of the Jubilee Singers, Who Introduced the World to the Music of Black America* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2000).

abolitionists Henry Ward Beecher and William Lloyd Garrison. Also there was William B. Bradbury, who had written a song for the occasion called “Victory at Last.” The ceremony included renditions of Bradbury’s new song, “The Star Spangled Banner” and the hymn “Praise God, From Whom All Blessing Flow.” These performances effectively defined northern victory as not just one for Union and emancipation, but also as one approved by God. After the ceremony, the local black population used music to express what northern victory meant to them. A thousand contrabands and USCTs gathered together in the city, with the group from the Sumter ceremony as an audience, and sang several spirituals announcing their newfound freedom and the fall of the Confederacy. A USCT regimental band then struck up “John Brown’s Body.” As in previous performances, whites responded to this song with great emotion. Garrison declared, “Only listen to that in Charleston streets!” and began crying.³⁶¹

Amidst these musical celebrations of northern victory, Henry Clay Work’s last major wartime song, “Marching Through Georgia,” came to occupy a prominent place. First appearing in February 1865, the piece not only celebrated Sherman’s campaign from Atlanta to Savannah but told listeners what Union victory meant for America. Speaking as a white soldier, Work turned a military action that targeted Confederate civilians into a celebration of unionism and emancipation. Instead of destroyers, Union soldiers became deliverers for slaves and southern unionists. Georgia was not left in ruins but was converted into “a thoroughfare for freedom.” The chorus presented the war as a primarily emancipationist exercise. Advancing the flag that

³⁶¹ J. Clement French and Edward Cary, *The Trip of the Steamer Oceanus to Fort Sumter and Charleston, S. C.* (Brooklyn, NY: “The Union” Steam Printing House, 1865), 15-16, 52, 119; “The Flag Replaced on Sumter: Read before the Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors,” 13-52, 61, William Arnold Spicer Papers, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University; New York *Times*, April 18, 1865; article from *American*, Scrapbook re: Lincoln’s Death and Funeral, Manuscripts Department, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; “Restoration of Fort Sumter,” *Littell’s Living Age* 29 (May 6 1865): 1-9.

both “brings the jubilee” and “makes you free” became the North’s primary purpose. Although it is often asserted that the song was popular during the war, it became most successful as the war ended and later as a favorite among veterans. Sherman, however, considered the piece too crude and insulting to southerners and eventually refused to appear at memorial functions if it was played.³⁶²

Defeat deprived Confederates of victory songs and celebrations but the end of the war influenced their music nonetheless. Some soldiers sang “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag” to remind themselves of the brighter days of 1861 but other southerners associated these songs with the suffering caused by the war and the bitterness of defeat. Even by the end of 1862, one Charlottesville, Virginia, girl asked her brother to stop singing “Dixie” because “when the war first began & our soldiers were all happy, then we sung Dixie, but now so many are sick & we are in such a sad case, that we don’t sing it anymore.” By 1865, these sentiments had become widespread. When diarist Mary Chesnut heard music as Confederate soldiers marched by her window to surrender, she quoted German Romanticist Jean Paul Friedrich Richter: “Music: ‘Away – away. Thou speakest to me of things which in all my long life I have not found – and I shall not find.’” Similarly, a Georgia woman wrote that after she and her friends fled their homes in Milledgeville, “we tried to sing some of our old rebel songs, but the words stuck in our throats. Nobody could sing.” One of them tried to play “Dixie” “but it sounded like a dirge.”³⁶³

³⁶² Henry Clay Work, “Marching Through Georgia,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 2 (February 1865): 161; Buffum, *Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 311; Cook, *Bygone Days*, 356-357; Mahar, “March to the Music,” 14; Matthews, “Songs of the War,” 626; Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First*, 250-251; Kellogg, *Memoirs*, 116. After Sherman’s moratorium on the song it was not performed for him again, although it was played at his funeral. Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First*, 251.

³⁶³ Keiley, *In Vinculis*, 214; B. L. Ridley, “Coming Home from Greensboro, N. C.” *Confederate Veteran* 3 (August 1895): 235; Sarah Watson Johnston to Eliza Lewis Holladay,

Those southerners who continued to sing Confederate songs found that the pieces no longer upset northerners. When a group of Georgia women sang secessionist numbers to Sherman's Army, the men had no reason to consider them threatening. Instead the soldiers laughed and deemed the performance a sign that southerners were "uneasy" about the presence of Union troops. After another group of Union soldiers had enjoyed some music in the parlor of an Augusta family, one woman sang "Maryland, My Maryland" "with extraordinary gusto" and remarked "I spose that makes ye *mad*; don't it?" Instead of responding as they had earlier in the war by singing a Union song or leaving, one soldier responded "with provoking coolness, 'O no. We don't care what ye sing, as long as we can lick ye!'" When she retorted with the soon-to-be standard Lost Cause defense, "we're not whipped. We're only overpowered," he told her, "that's what we call *licked* in the North."³⁶⁴

Other Confederates acknowledged their defeat by embracing Union music. One southern woman wrote to her brother in the army that local girls who used to sing "Maryland, My Maryland" and "The Bonnie Blue Flag" were now romancing Union officers and singing "The Battle Cry of Freedom." Some Confederate soldiers claimed that Union music was superior and partially credited it for the North's success. Shortly after Lee's surrender, men from both sides regaled each other with war songs in a Richmond home. After the northern soldiers finished, a Confederate officer remarked, "If we'd had your songs we'd have licked you out of your boots! Who couldn't have marched or fought with such songs?" He then lamented that, "We had nothing, absolutely nothing, except a bastard 'Marseillaise,' the 'Bonny Blue Flag,' and 'Dixie,' which were nothing but jigs" but "every one of these Yankee songs is full of marching and

December 25, 1862, Holladay Family Papers, section 7, Virginia Historical Society; Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, 768; Andrews, *War-Time Journal*, 169.

³⁶⁴ Wills, *Army Life*, 314-315; Sprague, *History of the 13th Infantry*, 249.

fighting spirit.” Similarly, a captured Confederate officer told his captors, “It is no wonder that the Federal army was victorious, it had so many patriotic songs to inspire it. The Confederates had hardly one they could call their own. . . . Why, I would have given all the world for a few such songs.” Even one especially partisan Confederate wrote, “To be perfectly candid, our poetic literature was inferior throughout the struggle.”³⁶⁵

Northerners readily agreed with such sentiments. Former prisoner John McElroy recalled that, although “as a rule Southerners are fond of music,” the only noteworthy performer from the region was Blind Tom. He continued, “It was a disappointment to me” that Confederate valor and passion “could not stimulate . . . the production of a single lyric worthy of the remotest degree of the magnitude of the struggle, and the depths of the popular feeling.” Unable to find any other reason for this deficiency, McElroy reasoned, “It must be ascribed to the incubus of Slavery upon the intellect, which had repressed this as it had all other healthy growths in the South.” Although these statements were clearly exaggerations and disregarded the powerful emotions elicited by “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag” early in the war, they attested to how far these songs had fallen out of favor by 1865. Just as “Maryland, My Maryland” was dependent on the possibility of Maryland’s secession for its Confederate popularity, so too did “Dixie” and “The Bonnie Blue Flag” rely on the potential for Confederate independence. When that goal fell out of reach, the songs lost their meaning, at least in the short run.³⁶⁶

In the closing days and immediate aftermath of the war, most soldiers preferred to find common ground through music, instead of continuing to use songs as weapons. Opposing

³⁶⁵ Marie, “A Rebel Girl on Union,” *Song Messenger of the Northwest* 3 (May 1865): 17; Richard Wentworth Browne, “Union War Songs and Confederate Officers,” *Century Illustrated Magazine* 35 (January 1888): 478; Cogswell, *History of the Eleventh*, 267; Keiley, *In Vinculis*, 201-202.

³⁶⁶ McElroy, *Andersonville*, 331-332.

armies showed their respect and their renewed brotherhood by performing both Union and Confederate songs. During the last surrender of Confederate forces near Mobile, Alabama, a Union band began playing “Hail Columbia” but their commander stopped them and called for “Dixie” instead. The Confederate General then returned the favor by asking the band to resume “Hail Columbia” “and proposed we should unite in the hope that our Columbia would soon be, once more, a happy land.” General George Armstrong Custer made a similar gesture by ordering his bands to play “The Bonnie Blue Flag” for a group of captured Confederates. After surrendering, members of a Confederate band decided to travel to Washington to take their loyalty oath and perform a concert. They did not play any Union songs but “Dixie” was featured. Through this performance, they not only showed their renewed loyalty by performing for their former opponents but removed “Dixie” from its sectional context.³⁶⁷

Indeed, the reclaiming of “Dixie” as a national song was highly significant for northerners. Abraham Lincoln had heard the piece before the war and liked it, so when he was serenaded at the White House after Appomattox, he told the crowd, “I have always thought ‘Dixie’ one of the best tunes I have ever heard. Our adversaries over the way attempted to appropriate it, but I insisted yesterday that we fairly captured it.” The crowd responded with cheers, after which he continued, “I presented the question to the Attorney General, and he gave it as his legal opinion that it is our lawful prize.” Lincoln had made similar comments as he left Richmond for Washington a few days earlier, adding “it is good to show the rebels that, with us in power, they will be free to hear it again.” He understood that “Dixie” had become the primary

³⁶⁷ Richard Taylor, “The Last Confederate Surrender,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 31 (1903): 157; Morris Scaff, *The Sunset of the Confederacy* (Boston, MA: John W. Luce and Company, 1912), 125; *Springfield Daily Republican*, April 8, 1865.

musical symbol of the Confederacy and, through these statements, fostered reconciliation by making it, and by extension the South, part of the broader American culture.³⁶⁸

Several prominent songwriters also worked to bridge the gap between North and South. George Frederick Root began his postwar career with a blatantly abolitionist piece, called “The Little Octoroon,” but he later presented a more conciliatory message in “Columbia’s Call” and “Southland, Southland, Rise Again to Life.” Likewise, Charles Halpine had Miles O’Reilly urge northerners to “Be Merciful to the South.” The most direct attempt by a songwriter to reverse his sectional character after the war was Harry Macarthy’s “sequel” to “The Bonnie Blue Flag,” “Our Country’s Flag.” After urging Confederates to honor their service but embrace the Union flag, Macarthy declared:

Now give one cheer for General Grant, and a hearty one for Lee;
The President – the people’s choice – whoever he may be;
Now Washington and Jefferson, Calhoun, Clay, Webster –
The glory of our country’s flag, yes, each and every star.³⁶⁹

Not all songwriters were so eager to discard wartime animosities. Henry Clay Work wrote a piece protesting President Andrew Johnson’s opposition to the Freedmen’s Bureau, while both George Frederick Root and Charles Carroll Sawyer wrote songs about Andersonville. The most prominent northern lyric resisting reconciliation was John Greenleaf Whittier’s “Barbara Frietchie.” Whittier originally wrote the piece in 1863 but it resurfaced several times in the late nineteenth century and was set to music by several songwriters. The poem’s title

³⁶⁸ Whitney and Angle, *Life on the Circuit*, 157; Abraham Lincoln and Roy Prentice Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953-1955), VIII, 393; Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes, or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House* (New York, NY: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1868), 172; Adolphe de Pineton, marquis de Chambrun, *Impressions of Lincoln and the Civil War, a Foreigners Account* (New York, NY: Random House, 1965), 82.

³⁶⁹ George Frederick Root, “Glory! Glory!, or, The Little Octoroon” (Chicago, IL: Root and Cady, 1866); Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 349; Carder, “George Frederick Root,” 59; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 390; Macarthy, *Harry Macarthy*, 5-6.

character reportedly waved an American flag as General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s men marched through Frederick. Jackson responded by ordering his men to fire at her but they missed and instead shredded the flag. Undeterred, Frietchie continued to wave the torn banner. Ashamed of his actions, Jackson ordered his men to leave her alone and continued to march. This piece proved popular and was often set to music. A monument was even erected to Whittier’s fictional heroine.³⁷⁰

Several Confederate songwriters made careers of opposing reconciliation and Reconstruction through music. The most prolific was former chaplain Father Ryan. His most popular song, “The Conquered Banner,” encouraged southerners to keep their Confederate flags and remain loyal to their failed republic. He conveyed the same message in “The Sword of Robert E. Lee” which described Lee’s saber being sheathed but not forgotten. More visceral was “Oh, I’m a Good Old Rebel.” Although often mistaken for a folk song, the piece was written by a Confederate officer, Major Innes Randolph. Adopting the voice of a common southerner, Randolph rejected every part of the American union: he refused to be pardoned; claimed to hate the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Freedmen’s Bureau; and rejected Reconstruction. In one verse he even wished that he could have killed more northerners:

Three hundred thousand Yankees is stiff in Southern dust;
We got three hundred thousand before they conquered us;
They died of Southern fever and Southern steel and shot,

³⁷⁰ Hill, “Mysterious Chord,” 212; Heaps, *Singing Sixties*, 208-209; John Greenleaf Whittier, “Barbara Frietchie,” *Atlantic Monthly* 12 (September 1863): 495-497; John G. Whittier, “Barbara Frietchie” (New York, NY: Wm. A. Pond & Co., 1874); Robert F. Roden and Max S. Witt, “Barbara Frietchie, or Spare Your Country’s Flag” (New York, NY: Joseph W. Stern & Co., 1899); Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York, NY: Vintage Press, 1993), 46; Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *Monthly Programs for the United Daughters of the Confederacy: Prepared by the Historian General, U. D. C.*, Mildred Lewis Rutherford, Athens, Ga.: *Questions on ‘Wrongs of History Righted,’ an Address Delivered in Savannah, Georgia, at the Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy*, Nov. 13, 1914 (1915).

I wish they was three million instead of what we got.

“Oh, I’m a Good Old Rebel” was never officially adopted by veterans’ or memorial organizations but it remained a part of southern folk culture and became the South’s most popular resistance song.³⁷¹

Some postwar favorites became popular because they ignored the political causes of the war. The most prominent such song was actually written in 1863: Walter Kittredge’s “Tenting On the Old Camp Ground.” After being drafted, Kittredge crafted this depiction of soldiers in camp thinking about their loved ones at home and wishing the war was over. In fact, “Tenting On the Old Camp Ground” was one of the conflict’s strongest anti-war songs. In the chorus, the soldiers declared that they were “looking for the right to see the dawn of peace” and the third verse began with the lament:

We are tired of war on the old camp ground,
Many are dead and gone.

The song ended by describing men dying around the camp and the grief felt by all. Although “Tenting On the Old Camp Ground” became a Hutchinson standard, it enjoyed little popularity during the war. The milder anti-war sentiments of “When this Cruel War is Over” and “All Quiet Along the Potomac, Tonight” went as far as most soldiers and civilians were willing to go. However, Kittredge’s description of soldiers camped together but slowly dying was perfectly suited to postwar veterans’ functions, making it a Grand Army of the Republic favorite.

³⁷¹ Moina and Theodore von la Hache, “The Conquered Banner” (New Orleans, LA: A. E. Blackmar, 1866); Eppes, *Through some Eventful Years*, 332; Daniel, *Confederate Scrap-Book*, 50; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 350, 356-357.

“Tenting On the Old Camp Ground” became the primary reconciliationist song and was even embraced by southerners.³⁷²

However, the other Grand Army of the Republic anthem was more explicitly political. When veterans sentimentalized their time in the army by singing “Tenting On the Old Camp Ground” they usually added a rendition of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” Julia Ward Howe’s revision of “John Brown’s Body” became the most popular Union war song shortly after the end of the war. This was partially because it has become a favorite of Lincoln’s just before his death and was performed by Chaplain McCabe at the President’s funeral in Springfield, Illinois. The song also had the advantage of providing more dignified lyrics for the veterans’ favorite wartime melody. As a result, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” became a standard number at all Grand Army of the Republic functions and replaced “John Brown’s Body” in the national canon of Civil War tunes. Indeed, by the end of the century, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” was one of America’s primary patriotic odes and came close to becoming the national anthem.³⁷³

³⁷² Boston *Herald*, April 4, 1897; Hutchinson and Mann, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 417-418; George Calvin Carter, *Walter Kittredge, Minstrel of the Merrimack* (Manchester, NH: 1953), 12-13; Gerould, “Tenting on the Old Camp Ground,” 724-726. Kittredge was rejected by the army when he reported for duty because he had recently recovered from rheumatic fever. Carter, *Walter Kittredge*, 12. He recalled that the piece sold 10,000 copies during its first two months but evidence of its popularity is limited. Boston *Herald*, April 4, 1897. For evidence of “Tenting On the Old Camp Ground’s” postwar popularity see: Boston *Herald*, April 4, 1897; Gerould, “Tenting on the Old Camp Ground,” 727; “Popular Songs,” *National Tribune*, 6; Silber, *Songs of the Civil War*, 167. Programs from almost any function for northern veterans also frequently include the song. It began to appear in southern programs after the turn of the twentieth century.

³⁷³ As with “Tenting On the Old Camp Ground” numerous programs from and newspaper article covering northern veterans’ events include “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” For Lincoln’s fondness for the song see: Bristol, *Life of Chaplain McCabe*, 196-202; J. G. Holland, *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, MA: G. Bill, 1866), 437-438; Moss, *Annals of the United States Christian Commission*, 216-217. For McCabe performing at Lincoln’s funeral see: Bristol, *Life of Chaplain McCabe*, 213; Debbie Williams Ream, “Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory,”

Southerners preserved their wartime music more carefully. Almost immediately after Appomattox, ex-Confederates began compiling the songs of the war and continued to do so through the next four decades. By the turn of the twentieth century, Lost Cause enthusiasts had made Confederate music, especially “Dixie,” a major part of their movement. By that time, the song had achieved international fame and became a valuable tool for fostering a pro-Confederate history of the Civil War. Confederate memorial organizations – the United Daughters of Confederacy, in particular – encouraged southerners to teach “Dixie” to their children and pressured local schools to play it alongside “The Star Spangled Banner” and other patriotic numbers. These organizations even attempted to alter the histories or content of prominent Confederate songs to make them more appropriate to the Lost Cause. Harry Macarthy underwent the most dramatic transformation. In the hands of these organizations, he changed from a stage performer who fled to the North into a slain Confederate soldier. In 1903, the Alabama UDC even tried to officially change the words of “Dixie.”³⁷⁴

American History Illustrated 27 (January/February 1993): 60-65. The *New York Times* endorsed it as the national anthem during the First World War. *New York Times*, June 3, 1917.

³⁷⁴ For nineteenth-century Confederate music compilations and endorsements of preservation efforts see: Daniel Bond, “Songs of the Confederacy,” *Confederate Veteran* 4 (January 1896): 2-5; Confederate Songbook 1861-1862, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University; *Confederate Veteran* 3 (September 1895): 6; Daniel, *Confederate Scrap-Book*, 190; Basil Wilson Duke, “Salmagundi,” *Southern Bivouac* 1 (July 1885): 126-127; Fagan, *Southern War Songs*; Hubner, *War Poets*; L. E. C. Rohrabacher, *Prose, Poetry and Song of the Southern Confederacy, Comprising the Traditions, Manners, and Customs of the South: Biographical Sketches of its Statesmen, Generals, and Authors: The Battles of the Civil War, with Thrilling Incidents, its Daring Adventures, and its Romantic Reminiscences; its Flag, its Music, and its Minstrelsy* (Galveston, TX: Rohrabacher & James, 1884); William Gilmore Simms, ed., *War Poetry of the South* (New York, NY: Richardson & Company, 1867); *Songs of Dixie: A Collection of Camp Songs, Home Songs, Marching Songs, Plantation Songs* (New York, NY: S. Brainard’s Sons Co., 1890); *War Lyrics: and Songs of the South* (London, UK: Spottiswoode & Co., 1866). For Harry Macarthy as a soldier see: *Confederate Veteran* 23 (February 1915): 63; Hubner, *War Poets*, 207; McMurray, *History of the Twentieth*, 493. For southern claimants to “Dixie” see: picture of Herman Arnold, his wife, Jefferson Davis and original score of “Dixie” sent to Marie Bankhead Owens, Herman Frank Arnold Papers,

The centrality of music in the immediate aftermath and memory of the Civil War was a testament to its prominent role during the conflict. After the attack on Fort Sumter, Americans eagerly looked for songs that expressed their thoughts and feelings about the war. In so doing, they fostered a massive outpouring of music that dramatically accelerated the development of the industry. Songs on almost any topic were available during the Civil War but none had more resonance than those addressing its politics. Northerners and southerners defined their causes through their music and the songs they embraced became powerful symbols, accruing meanings and associations beyond the author's intent.

As the war progressed, songwriters, performers, soldiers, civilians, and slaves found new and inventive ways to use this music. Americans produced and performed songs on countless aspects of the war. However, these songs did not just serve as statements about one issue or another; their performances occasionally had real consequences. Some pieces genuinely affected the opinions of their listeners: Union soldiers grew increasingly devoted to General George B. McClellan by singing "Marching Along," while "John Brown's Body" gradually reconciled them to emancipation. Other songs became weapons for those who could not fight any other way: Confederate women sang secessionist songs at their northern occupiers and southern slaves created pieces that anticipated freedom. Songs also served to motivate and inspire Americans during the war: Soldiers were emboldened by pieces performed before or during combat and Confederate music proved so heartening to southern civilians that the North actively suppressed their ability to write and perform songs. Indeed, it would be difficult to find another period in

Alabama Department of Archives and History; Birmingham News, November 2, 1924; De Leon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains*, 356-361; Smith, "Author of 'Dixie,'" 19. For the Alabama UDC trying to change the words of "Dixie" see: Dowdell, *Joint Committee*; A. L. Dowdell, "Shall the Words of 'Dixie' be Changed?" *Confederate Veteran* 12 (May 1904): 215-216; John A. Simpson, "Shall We Change the Words of Dixie?" *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 45 (1981): 19-40.

American history where music served such varied and meaningful roles. Music was used by everyone everywhere and was one of the most effective cultural tools available during the Civil War.

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