

Free America!

Early Songs of Resistance and Rebellion

Texts & Commentaries

LIKE A BEAUTIFUL MORNING

O Zion Arise

Source: South Union manuscript, Kentucky (ca. 1840)

This Shaker hymn shows the value their movement attaches to American democracy. Zion is not a distant paradise, but rather this ideal new country: regardless of skin color, race, or tribe, everyone will be welcomed, and all will be united under the banner of Freedom; on America's pleasant soil, no one will be rejected. It's worth noting that it must have taken some courage to sing this song in the slave-holding state of Kentucky of 1850.

O Zion arise like a beautiful morning,
And let thy fair brightness attend thee abroad.
For all shall confess it in earth and in heaven
That thou has descended from no one but God.
Though many in rage may remonstrate against thee,
Thy holy foundation for ever shall stand,
Unsullied by slander, reproach or by envy,
Upon this fair soil of America's land.

Here Liberty reigns as the standard of union
And all are invited to gather around
And share in the blessings prepared by heaven
For no other good like to it can be found.
All kindreds, all colors, all nations, all people,
No nation or sect are rejected at all.
But all who are willing to give up their idols
Upon this fair Zion of God they may call.

Yankee Doodle, or The Lexington March

Source: Broadside (18th c.).

The saucy words to this version of "Yankee Doodle" are rather different from the ones taught to children. And they offer a healthy reminder of how much sheer irreverence was a part of the real American Revolution. Students of that ever-fascinating subject, American sexual mores, will note that the Boston gay subculture seems already to have been flourishing in the eighteenth century.

Sheep's head and vinegar
Buttermilk and tansy

Boston is a Yankee Town
Sing Yankee Doodle Dandy!
Refrain: *Yankee Doodle Doodle doo,*
Yankee Doodle Dandy
Mind the music and the step
With the girls be handy.

Christmas is a-coming boys,
We'll go to Mother Chases,
And there we'll get a sugar plum,
Sweeten'd with molasses.
Refrain

Heigh ho for our Cape Cod,
Heigh ho for Nantasket
Do not let the Boston wags
Feel your oyster basket.
Refrain

Dolly Bushel let a fart,
Jenny Jones she found it;
Ambrose carried it to the mill,
Where Doctor Warren ground it.
Refrain

Two and two may go to bed,
Two and two together,
And if there is not room enough,
Lie one on top o' to' other.
Refrain

Liberty Tree

Source: *The American Patriotic Songbook* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1813).

Text: Thomas Paine (1737-1809), published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, 1775.

In 1775, Thomas Paine wrote this song text to an existing English tune, *Once the Gods of the Greeks*, together text and melody became enormously popular in the colonies.

In a chariot of light from the regions of day,
The Goddess of Liberty came;
Ten thousand celestials directed the way
And hither conducted the dame.
This tall budding branch from the gardens above,
Where millions with millions agree,
She brought in her hand as a pledge of her love,
The plant she call'd *Liberty Tree*.
The celestial exotic struck deep in the ground,
Like a native it flourished and bore;
The fame of its fruit drew the nations around,
To seek out its peaceable shore.

Unmindful of names or distinction they came,
For freemen like brothers agree;
With one spirit endow'd, they one friendship pursued,
And their temple was *Liberty Tree*.

Beneath this fair branch, like the patriarchs of old,
Their bread in contentment they ate,
Unwearied with trouble, of silver or gold,
Or the cares of the grand and the great.
With timber and tar they old England supplied,
Supported her power on the seas;
Her battles they fought, without getting a groat,
For the honor of *Liberty Tree*.

But hear, o ye swains, ('tis a tale most profane),
How all the tyrannical powers,
Kings, Commons, and Lords, are united amain
To cut down this guardian of ours;
From the east to the west blow the trumpet to arms
Through the land let the sound of it flee,
Let the far and the near, all unite with a cheer,
In defence of our *Liberty Tree*.

Free Americay!

Source: *The American Patriotic Song Book* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1842).

The text, adapted from Joseph Warren (1741-1875), is sung to the march tune *The British Grenadiers*, which is very often played on both sides of the Atlantic and is of British origin. The right to object, highlighted in this song, is one of the constant concerns of the American Republic.

That seat of science, Athens,
And earth's proud mistress, Rome,
Where now are all their glories,
We scarce can find their tomb;
Then guard your rights, Americans!
Nor stoop to lawless sway,
Refrain (sing along): *Oppose, oppose, oppose, oppose,*
For [free] Americay. (bis) [...]

Torn from a world of tyrants,
Beneath this western sky,
We formed a new Dominion,
A Land of liberty;
The World shall know we're masters here,
Then hasten on the day,
Refrain: *Oppose, oppose, oppose, oppose,*
For [free] Americay. (bis) [...]

Lift up your hands, good people,
And swear with proud disdain,

The wretch that would enslave you,
Shall [lay] his snares in vain;
Should [he summon] all [his] force,
We'll meet them in array,
Refrain: *Oppose, oppose, oppose, oppose,*
For [free] Americay. (bis) [...]

So guard your rights, Americans,
Nor bend to lawless sway,
Refrain: *Oppose, oppose, oppose, oppose,*
For [free] Americay. (bis) [...]

Chester

Source: William Billings, *The Singing Master's Assistant* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1778).

Originally a setting of a sacred text, *Chester* became the unofficial anthem of the American Revolution once it was fitted out by the composer with these new and fiery words. Our performance keeps Billings' original harmonies, adding fifes, flute, fiddle, and drum for instrumental color.

Let tyrants shake their iron rod,
And slav'ry clank her galling chains,
We fear them not, we trust in God,
New England's God forever reigns. [...]

When God inspir'd us for the fight,
Their ranks were broke, their lines were forc'd,
Their ships were shatter'd in our sight,
Or swiftly driven from our Coast.

The Foe comes on with haughty Stride;
Our troops advance with martial noise,
Their Vet'rans flee before our Youth,
And Gen'rals yeild to beardless Boys.

What grateful off'ring shall we bring?
What shall we render to the Lord?
Loud Halleluiahs let us sing.
And praise his name on ev'ry chord.

GONE FOR A SOLDIER

Johnny has Gone for a Soldier

Source: Traditional ballad from the Wallace House, Alan Lomax, and Cecil Sharp's collections; and ubiquitous in various sources.

O Johnny dear has gone away,
He's gone afar across the bay,
O my heart is sad and weary today
Johnny has gone for a soldier.

Refrain: *Shule, shule, shule agra*
Time can only heal my woe,
Since the lad of my heart from me did go
O Johnny has gone for a soldier.

I'll dye my dress, I'll dye it red
And through the streets I'll beg my bread
And through the streets I'll beg my bread
Johnny has gone for a soldier.

Refrain

I'll sell my clock, I'll sell my reel
I'll sell my flax and spinning wheel
To buy my true love a sword of steel
Johnny has gone for a soldier.

Refrain

Me, oh my, I love him so
Broke my heart to see him go
Only time can heal my woe
Johnny has gone for a soldier.

Refrain

The Cuba March with The New Union (Instrumental)

Sources: Anglo American March (18th c.); *The Christian Harmony* (Exeter, New Hampshire, 1805).

This march, probably meant to be played on fifes, was reworked by Jeremiah Ingalls who set it in three-part harmony.

Jolly Soldier

Source: *The Social Harp* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1855).

The words found in the source are derived from an orally preserved traditional ballad, *The Rambling Sailor* – “I am a sailor stout and bold, long time I've ploughed the ocean.” We present this song first as a political-themed “sea shanty” for voice alone, then in its harmonized version, starting with sol-fa syllables according to the music-notation method devised by Andrew Law (1749-1821), then finally in a texted version.

I once was a seaman stout and bold
Ofttimes I've ploughed the ocean;
I've ploughed it all o'er and o'er again,
For honor and promotion.

Aboard a man-of-war and merchantman,
Many be the battles that I've been in;
It was all for the honor of George Washington,
And I'll still be the jolly, jolly, soldier. (bis)

Saw you my Hero

Source: Moses Kimball's manuscript (Newburyport, Massachusetts, ca. 1790).

This celebrated Negro spiritual (popularized by the great American contralto Marian Anderson, who sang it with the text *Saw ye my Saviour*) is actually a secular Scottish tune *Where are the joys*, which was adapted into a political elegy about George Washington.

Saw you my hero, saw you my hero George.
I have travelled o'er the plain
And enquir'd of every swain,
But no tidings can hear of my George.

Boston March (Instrumental)

Source: Moses Kimball's manuscript (Newburyport, Massachusetts, ca. 1790).

This lively march, with a modally inflected intermediary cadence, appears in a number of eighteenth-century American instrumental sources. Young Moses Kimball had an amateur band and musical club in late eighteenth-century Newburyport, Massachusetts. We have drawn on Moses' unpublished musical manuscript for several pieces on this program.

David's Lamentation

Source: William Billings, *The Singing Master's Assistant* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1778), as well as in many Shape Note sources from the 19th and 20th centuries.

This song is a political statement: the biblical text is also a metaphor for the state of affairs in America at the time of the War of Independence. *David's Lamentation*, along with other works by William Billings, has never lost favor with today's practitioners of the Sacred Harp tradition.

David, the King, was grieved and moved,
He went to his chamber and wept;
And as he went, he wept, and said:
"O my son! O my son!
Would to God I had died for thee,
O Absalom, my son, my son!"

REPENTANCE

Prince William's March (Instrumental)

Source: Moses Kimball's manuscript (Newburyport, Massachusetts, ca. 1790).

This jaunty march was notated around 1790 by Kimball for his little band in Newburyport. A variant of this tune was used for a ballad, *The Siege of Plattsburgh*, by Micah Hawkins, in which an episode from the War of 1812 is described in dialectical verse by a patriotic African-American observer. The version we perform is the instrumental, as recorded in the Kimball manuscript.

My Body Rock 'Long Fever

Source: *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York, New York, 1867).

According to its source, this song was probably collected in the Sea Islands of South Carolina.

Wai', my brudder, better true believe,
Better true be long time get over crosses;
Wai', my sister, better true believe,
An' 'e get up to heaven at last.
Refrain: *O my body rock 'long fever,
O! wid a pain in 'e head
I wish I been to de kingdom,
to sit along side o' my Lord!*

By de help ob de Lord we rise up again
O de Lord he comfort de sinner;
By de help ob de Lord we rise up again
An' we'll get to heaven at last.
Refrain

Thirst for Gold

Source: text and original music from *The American Musical Miscellany*, (Northampton, Massachusetts, 1798).
Music adapted by Joel Cohen from *Russia* by Daniel Read. Also ubiquitous in early American Songbooks.

This widely circulated song was first heard in London in 1787, later travelling to New York in 1789 and Philadelphia, published there in 1790.

When thirst of Gold enslaves the mind
and selfish views alone bear sway
Man turns a savage to his kind
and blood and rapine mark his way.
Alas for this poor simple toy
I sold a guiltless Negro boy.

In isles that deck the Western main
Th'unhappy youth was doomed to dwell.
A poor forlorn insulted slave,
A beast that Christians buy and sell.
To fiends that Affric's coast annoy

I sold a guiltless Negro boy.

May he who walks upon the wind
Whose voice in thunder heard on high
Who doth the raging tempest bind
And wings the lightning thro the sky
Forgive the wretch that for a toy
Could sell a helpless Negro boy.

Didn't my Lord Deliver Daniel

Source: various spiritual song books, including *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York, New York, 1867).

The biblical figure of Daniel is a powerful symbol and emblem of liberation – from the lions, from the fiery furnace, and from tyrannical oppression.

My God deliver Daniel
Deliver Daniel, deliver Daniel
My God deliver Daniel
Then why not deliver me?
He delivered Daniel from de lion's den
Jonah from de belly of de whale
An' de Hebrew children from de fiery furnace
Then why not deliver me?

Hebrew Children

Source: *The Sacred Harp* (Atlanta, Georgia, 1911).

The melody, mostly pentatonic, is similar to that of the English miners' song *Collier Lads*. The text is symbolic of the freedom sought by immigrants to America, poor and white, who find a refuge in the New World from the control of the official church of England and the Papacy.

Where are the Hebrew children? (ter)
Safe in the promised land:
Though the furnace flamed around them,
God while in their troubles found them;
He with love and mercy bound them,
Safe in the promised land.

Where are the twelve apostles? (ter)
Safe in the promised land:
They went up through pain and sighing,
Scoffing, scourging, crucifying,
Nobly for their Master dying,
Safe in the promised land.

Repentance

Source: Shaker, notated by Otis Sawyer (1815-1884) a Sabbathday Lake manuscript (Maine, 1840).

This powerfully reflective song is described in the source as “Father William’s Repentance song, given at Wisdom’s Valley.” Transcribed from the original manuscript.

Flow repentance, flow, roll on
Roll on, thou blessed power (bis).
I want to feel a Godly sorrow,
To wash my soul and make me pure (bis).
Lodle lo...
Flow repentance, flow, roll on
Roll on thou blessed power.

INTERMISSION

RICH AND POOR

The Pilgrims

Source: Rev. B.W. Gorham (?), *The Revivalist* (Troy, New York, 1868).

Many spirituals develop the notion of a difficult spiritual journey or pilgrimage. Our setting comes from a key source or early American camp-meeting songs. This evocative text was also sung by early 19th-century Black congregations, perhaps to this tune, perhaps to another one now lost.

What poor, despised company
Of travelers are these,
That walk in yonder narrow way,
Along the rugged maze?
Refrain: *O, I'd rather be the least of them
That are the Lord's alone
Than wear a royal diadem
And sit upon a throne.*

Ah, they are of a royal line,
All children of a King;
Heirs of immortal crowns divine,
And lo, for joy they sing.
Refrain

Why do they, then, appear so mean,
And why so much despised?
Because of their rich robes, unseen,
The world is not apprised.
Refrain

But some of them seem poor, distressed,
And lacking daily bread;
Oh! They are of boundless wealth possessed
With hidden manna fed!
Refrain

The Rich Man

Source: Jeremiah Ingalls, *The Christian Harmony* (Exeter, New Hampshire, 1805).

Ingalls's spiritual song settings in three-part harmony often have their basis in the secular repertoire of the British Isles. Here, the text is a paraphrase of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16). These songs were intended for modest communities whose members would have recognized themselves in such texts.

Come all ye poor sinners that from Adam came,
Ye poor and ye needy, and ye halt and ye lame,
Submit to the gospel, upon its own terms,
Or you'll burn for ever, like poor mortal worms.

We read of a rich man, a beggar likewise:
The beggar he died and attained to the prize:
The rich man he died, and to his sad surprise,
In hell he awaked, and lift up his eyes.

Seeing Abra'm afar off in mansions above,
And Lazarus in his bosom in raptures of love,
He cried, father Abra'm, send to my relief,
For I am tormented in pains and in grief.

He said, son remember when you lived so bold,
Dressed in your fine linen, and boasted of gold,
The beggar lay at your door, wounded and poor,
The dogs had compassion and licked his sore.

Besides, there's a gulf fixed between us, you see,
That those who would cannot pass from thence to me;
Therefore you must lie, and lament your sad state,
For now you are sending your cries up too late. [...]

Now therefore, dear sinners, take warning by this:
Since death will soon fix your unchangeable state;
Prepare to meet Jesus, and give him your love,
So when he appears, he'll receive you above.

The Jolly Sailor

Source: The American Musical Miscellany (Northampton, Massachusetts, 1798).

This drinking song is likely of British origin. The American harmonization which we use in this program does not conform to academic rules and already anticipates the shape-note tradition.
When my fortune does frown,

I'll not be cast down,
Repining won't alter my store:
But a good state of health,
Is better than wealth;
Refrain: *I 'll be merry although I am poor (bis).*

When the sailors drink wine,
Their lovers repine:
The miser is fond of his store,
Give me but one quart,
Just to comfort my heart,
Refrain

Ye benevolent souls,
With full flowing bowls,
Who cheerfully add to the store:
Give the glutton his dish,
And me what I wish.
Refrain

And ye drunken sots,
Who call for your pots,
And ever are calling for more:
Only just let me drink,
And I'll make you all think,
Refrain

The Jolly Beggar (Instrumental)

Source: Scotland, 17th c., ubiquitous in England, Ireland, as well as in this country.

False are the Men of High Degree

Source: *Wabash, Indian Melodies* (New York, New York, 1845).

The words, a paraphrase of Psalm 62:9, are by Isaac Watts (1674-1748), a British poet and theologian known for his many hymns and verse translations of psalm texts. The tune *Wabash* comes from a rare collection of melodies by Thomas Commuck (1805-1855), a Narragansett Indian who converted to Christianity.

False are the men of high degree,
The baser sort are vanity.
Laid in the balance both appear
Light as a puff of empty air.

Make not increasing gold your trust,
Nor set your heart on glitt'ring dust.
Why will you grasp the fleeting smoke,
And not believe what God has spoke (bis).

Greenwich

Source: Daniel Read (1757– 1837), *The American Musical Magazine* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1785).

Text: Isaac Watts (1674–1748), based on Psalm 73.

Greenwich is a good example of the “fuguing tunes,” which utilizes each voice imitatively in the second part of the composition. The homophony of the first part of the song, reminiscent of a Calvinist psalm, is then surpassed, and the vocal energy is amplified tenfold.

Lord, what a thoughtless wretch was I,
To mourn, and murmur, and repine
To see the wicked placed on high,
In pride and robes of honor shine!

But, oh, their end, their dreadful end!
Thy sanctuary taught me so;
On slipp'ry rocks I see them stand,
And fiery billows roll below. [...]

COLUMBIA: AN ANGEL

The Appletree (Instrumental)

Source: Jeremiah Ingalls, *The Christian Harmony* (Exeter, New Hampshire, 1805).

The instrumental character of the writing led to our decision to omit the text which had been added to this tune by Ingalls.

Trumpet of Peace

Source: *A Sacred Repository of Anthems and Hymns* (Canterbury, New Hampshire, 1852).

This Shaker song recounts an episode during the journey undertaken by Mother Ann Lee (founder of the Shaker Order) and a group of her followers, on their migration from Manchester to the New World: “Learned by inspiration, of Sister Olive Spencer, who said – ‘This song was sung by the Angel of Light, which Mother Ann saw at the mast head, when the ship sprung a leak.’ Learned in 1839. New Lebanon, NY.”

[Lo!] [Lo!]

Know ye not that I am your guardian angel?
And by the hand of the Lord ye shall be brought unto a land of freedom.
Yea, with outstretched arm and a mighty hand,
I will bring my chosen people to a land of liberty.
Wars and tumults shall cease,
P-e-a-c-e shall be restored
P-e-a-c-e shall be restored unto that happy land
And I will sound my trumpet loudly,
Many people shall come from afar to receive this gospel.

O happy day, happy, happy day,
the angels in heaven shall rejoice and be glad
For Columbia shall gain the victory. (bis)

Unnamed Dance Tune

Source: Shaker (Sabbathday Lake, Maine, ca. 1840).

Reminiscent of the Anglo-Irish tune *The Girl I Left Behind*, this powerful untexted dance song is emblematic of the energetic power of the voice presence in the Shaker spirituality.

Rise Columbia!

Source: *The American Musical Miscellany* (Northampton, Massachusetts, 1798).

Text: Robert Treat Paine (1731-1778).

This tune is adapted from *Rule Britannia* by Thomas Augustine Arne (1710-1778).

When first the sun o'er ocean glow'd,
And earth unveil'd her virgin breast,
Supreme mid nature's vast abode,
Was heard the Almighty's dread behest,
Refrain: *Rise, Columbia, Columbia, brave and free,
Poise the globe and bound the sea. [...]*

In vain shall thrones, in arms combined,
The sacred rights I gave, oppose;
In thee, th'asylum of mankind,
Shall welcome nations find repose.
Refrain

When bolts the flame or whelms the wave
Be thine to rule the wayward hour,
Bid Death unbar the wat'ry grave,
And Vulcan yield to Neptune's power.
Refrain

Rever'd in arms, in peace humane:
No shore nor realm shall bound thy sway,
While all the virtues warm thy reign,
And all the elements obey!
Refrain

Friendly Union

Sources: The Cuba March (Anglo American, 18th c.); text by John L. Peasey, *Hymn and Spiritual Songs* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1823).

This universalist text takes its name from *The Heavenly Union*, a revival hymn itself based on *The New Union* by Jeremiah Ingalls (Exeter, New Hampshire, 1805).

Come, citizens and friends so dear,
Who can assist to sing, draw near;
And you that cannot, lend an ear,
And let us banish hate and fear,
And live in friendly union.
Why should the Turk the Jew condemn

The Jew the Christian reprehend,
And Christians every sect condemn
But those who think alike with them,
And thus destroy this union?

Why quarrel thus about a name,
Are not saints everywhere the same?
And all are more or less to blame;
But those are most deserving fame
Who best support this union. [...]

No parents can delight to see
Their children plunged in misery,
But rather they should happy be,
And live in love and harmony
And thus cement this union. [...]

Soon may this be our happy case,
Hatred and discord thus will cease,
And love and everlasting peace
Reign unenforced in every place,
And form an endless union. [...]

Yankee Doodle (reprise)

Yankee Doodle long ago
They played it to deride us
But now we march to victory
And that's the tune to guide us.
Refrain (sing along): *Yankee Doodle, Ha, Ha, Ha*
Yankee Doodle Dandy,
Freedom's voice is in the song
Of 'Yankee Doodle Dandy.'

Yankee Doodle, how it brings
The good old days before us,
Two or three began the song,
And millions join the chorus.
Refrain: *Yankee Doodle, Ha, Ha, Ha*
Yankee Doodle Dandy,
Freedom's voice is in the song
Of 'Yankee Doodle Dandy.'

Yankee Doodle, not alone,
The continent shall bear it,
But all the world shall catch the tone
And every tyrant fear it.

Refrain: *Yankee Doodle, Ha, Ha, Ha*
Yankee Doodle Dandy,
Freedom's voice is in the song
Of 'Yankee Doodle Dandy.'

Transcriptions and editions of the music and texts by: Anne Azéma, Joel Cohen, Daniel Patterson (*The Shaker Spiritual*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1979).

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