

The Minnesota Heritage Songbook



compiled and edited by Robert B. Waltz

in cooperation with the Fort Snelling State Park Association.
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www.MNHeritageSongbook.net

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Introduction

MINNESOTA BECAME A STATE IN 1858. THIS BOOK CAME into being in 2008. Those dates are not coincidence — the purpose of this book is to celebrate Minnesota’s sesquicentennial, and to help us remember the lives and times of the people who made the state what it is.

To do this, we’re using folk music — here defined as songs which people preserved by *singing* them, not just by listening. These are songs that people passed on to other people, and which still exist because people sang them to their children, their friends — eventually, to total strangers.

Most states have had folk song collectors travel them looking for these songs. Relatively little of this has been done in Minnesota, and what has been done was mostly done after the best singers were gone. To a large extent, this book relies on printed sources and occasional manuscript collections, though we’ve tried to find singers who still remember their family songs. The most important of the printed sources is certainly Michael Cassius Dean’s *The Flying Cloud*. Dean was a sailor on the Great Lakes, and in 1922, he gathered together the songs he had learned on the Lakes and had them published. The great folk song scholar D. K. Wilgus said of Dean, “The book certainly seems to be a slice of the repertoire of the Northern folksingers... the editors of random-text collections have consciously and unconsciously followed the organization and texts of *The Flying Cloud*” (D. K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship since 1898*, Rutgers University Press, 1959, p. 210). Dean’s book is long out of print, and it contains words only, with no tunes and no source information (not even composer information); this book tries to follow its best traits of selection while adding organization, background information, additional songs from other sources — and, of course, *tunes*.

This is a key element of the songs in this book: They are meant to be *sung*. A song only becomes a folk song by singing. So any song in this book is one that has a solid tune, worthy of people’s voices. Sometimes this means leaving out a song with much historical value if it doesn’t sing well. And we have included a few very singable songs whose Minnesota connections are questionable, as long as they illustrate Minnesota’s heritage.

One noteworthy omission in this book is the music of the Dakota, Ojibwe, and other native peoples. This is not because I’m unaware of its significance — rather, it is because it is so great a subject that it needs specialist treatment. The first great work in this area was done by Minnesota native Frances Densmore, and other publications have appeared since; I urge you to consult those volumes. For the same reason, the native-language songs of the immigrants to Minnesota are under-represented, though I’ve included a few well-known examples to give a feel for these songs.

Folk songs have more influence than most of us realize. The legend of Robin Hood began in songs and ballads; though none are known in Minnesota, there was a version of “Robin Hood and Little John” collected in Ohio; other Robin Hood songs have been found in Virginia, the Appalachians, New England, and eastern Canada. There would have been no “Beggar’s Opera” (and hence no “Threepenny Opera”) had John Gay not used folk tunes. In more recent times, Wallace Stegner wrote a novel inspired by the hobo song “The Big Rock Candy Mountain,” and the Finnish epic *The Kalevala* inspired J. R. R. Tolkien — indeed, I think one of his Entish songs was influenced by “Eikä ne haaven lehdet lakkaa,” which Marjorie Edgar heard sung on the Iron Range.

One of the interesting things about folk song is how the songs often stay relevant long after they were composed. No one will ever vote for Thomas Jefferson or Abraham Lincoln, of course, but a song like “When This Cruel War Is Over” is just as meaningful in 2008 as when it was written during the Civil War. We hope you will find these songs as beautiful, and as meaningful, as we do.

This project isn’t finished! We had only a limited time to put this book together, meaning that I had to rely primarily on my personal library. There was little time to look over the Edgar papers at the Minnesota Historical Society, and none to look over the Morris Collection at the Minneapolis Public Library. And we managed only two “collecting sessions.”

We couldn’t even include all we found, because this book had to be limited to 80 pages due to budget constraints. But we intend to do more. Work is already underway on a CD-ROM which will include more songs, MIDI files of every song in this book, MP3 recordings of many of them, a database of all folk songs found in Minnesota (whether they’re in this book or not), an annotated copy of Dean in PDF format, and whatever else we can think of.

We hope to make this CD available as a supplement to this book. Watch the Minnesota Heritage Songbook web site (www.MNHeritageSongbook.net) for details. This site also includes the MIDI files and other resources for use with the songbook.

And don’t forget that you can be part of this! If your family has a tradition of folk songs (songs handed down from generation to generation), we want them — both for the Heritage Songbook project and for the Traditional Ballad Index, the author’s bibliographic project of traditional song. If you have something, please contact me!

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How to Use This Book

If you have just picked up this book, and want to go out and start singing — great. That’s how you keep songs alive. But we’ve tried to put the songs in context. Each of the several chapters in this book consists of three parts: A short introductory essay describing some aspect of Minnesota’s life or history, historical background on the songs, and the songs themselves. The essays are keyed to the songs by sidebars in the text showing which songs illustrate which general themes. The notes on the individual songs describe how the song came to be — e.g., if it is a work song, it describes what *sort of* work it was used for, and the source or sources used to compile this version.

The chapters, although loosely based on Minnesota history, are not intended to be chronological, and are not intended as a history of the state — rather, they are a “sidebar” to the history. The first few chapters are in historical order (and include most of the songs we can’t prove were sung in Minnesota), because they are intended to illustrate how Minnesota became a state. After all, this is a celebration of Minnesota statehood! But the later sections are organized more by theme — immigration, or work, or home life. The songs themselves are often preceded by a quotation intended to give some sort of feel for what they are about.

If you want to find songs about a particular topic (say, the Civil War), or of a particular type (e.g. Swedish songs, or

logging songs), the Topical Index, found inside the back cover, is for you. You can look up a particular subject, such as “Civil War,” and then find the songs in the collection which are related to that subject.

A person reading the song notes with care will observe that I have “fiddled” with a lot of the songs. This is something folk song scholars quite properly disapprove of. But this is a songbook, not a dissertation. If a Minnesota text of a song has no tune, one must be supplied — from another version of that song if possible; from some other source if not. If a text is damaged beyond use, the missing material must be replaced. The source notes document all such changes, so the reader can find the original versions if needed.

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None of them, of course, bear any responsibility for any errors remaining in the book.

Robert B. Waltz, September 2008

The Beginnings

MUCH OF MINNESOTA'S EARLY HISTORY IS LOST.

This is not because anyone set out to hide it. But the early residents, the Dakota, were a semi-nomadic people. They have songs and legends, but songs and legends can only tell so much. And when the first Europeans came to the area, they often kept what they learned deliberately secret — many could not read or write, and in any case they were out for profit of one sort or another. Mostly, they wanted furs — which meant trading posts and trade routes. Initially the French did most of the exploring, working their way up the Great Lakes from Quebec. René Robert Cavalier de la Salle was the first to really explore the upper Lakes. He built a ship, the *Griffin*, in 1675, and sailed up the largely uncharted waters of Lakes Erie, Huron, and Ontario. The boat was eventually lost, but de la Salle and his men — including Father Louis Hennepin — had by then gone on to explore the Mississippi River. Even before that, a French explorer, Etienne Brûlé, described a body of water west of Lake Huron which some think was Lake Superior.

As the years passed, a new kind of French fur trader came to the area. These were the *voyageurs*, who regularly came to the area to collect furs from the natives. They were mostly poor, uneducated men, but they learned about the rivers and woods of Minnesota and Canada. Consider how many places in Minnesota still bear French names: The St. Croix River. Grand Marais. Mille Lacs (lake). Lac Qui Parle. In Wisconsin, there were places such as Prairie du Chien and the Big and Little Eau Pleine (which we shall meet later).

And as the *voyageurs* worked and explored, they sang. Singing helped pass the time, and it also helped with the rhythm of paddling. Theirs were the first European songs ever sung in Minnesota. Mostly they sang simple tunes about women and home (not too surprisingly for men a thousand miles from the nearest woman who spoke their language and perhaps four thousand miles from home).

As the British established more of a foothold in North America, they set out to explore in more detail. *Voyageurs* were often part of these explorations. Alexander Mackenzie was accompanied by *voyageurs* when he became the first European to see the Arctic Ocean north of Canada. When it came time to map the Arctic coast, *voyageurs* accompanied expeditions by John Franklin, Simpson and Dease, and George Back to map the region from the Coppermine River to Bathurst Inlet, plus the region of Chantry Inlet.

Those explorers were searching the Arctic for something they had wanted to find in Minnesota: the Northwest Passage — that is, a sea route from the Atlantic to the Pacific north of Canada. At one time, it was hoped that the Great Lakes or the Minnesota River would lead there. Obviously, they didn't.

Explorers eventually realized that the Passage was far north of Minnesota, too far north to use; the ice blocked the passage. John Franklin in fact died in the 1840s when the ships of his expedition were trapped in the ice, as is told in "Lord Franklin":

*With a hundred seamen he sailed away
To the frozen ocean in the month of May.
To seek the passage around the pole,
Where we poor sailors must oftentimes go.
Through cruel hardships they mainly strove;
On mountains of ice their ships were drove.
Only the Huskimaw (Eskimo) in his skin canoe
Was the only one who ever came through.*

Disasters like that didn't do much for British control of North America. If you had been gambling, around 1700, on which nation would end up controlling the area that is now Minnesota, you probably would have bet on France. The British had colonies on the Atlantic seaboard of North America, of course, and fishermen based in Newfoundland, and the Hudson's Bay Company had been founded in 1670 to exploit trade in the far north. But the French, through the *voyageurs* and the Saint Lawrence river and their settlement in Quebec, controlled the best route to the Atlantic from what is now the Midwest, and were the ones with "boots on the ground" in Minnesota. Had things been allowed to take their course in the New World, the French would probably have eventually settled Minnesota.

Events in Europe changed that. France and England were in almost constant conflict in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The most important of those wars, at least for North America, was the Seven Years' War, known on this side of the Atlantic as the French and Indian War. In the course of that war, the British captured Quebec and Montreal (Borneman, pp. 204-279), and the portion of Minnesota east of the Mississippi river became British territory.

It is unlikely that anyone in either nation really cared about that part of the continent; even the American Revolution went almost unnoticed in what would later be Minnesota. No battles were fought in Minnesota; there were, as far as we know, no Colonials in the entire area in the 1770s. But the peace following the Revolutionary War was significant: The British, rather than trying to maintain their hold on land they could hardly reach, freely granted the United States all their lands south of the Great Lakes and east of the Mississippi. Although the region was poorly mapped, the territory the British gave up contained a significant portion of Minnesota, including most of what is now the city of Saint Paul, part of Minneapolis, Duluth, and the areas in between.

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Song Notes

A la claire fontaine

A typical *voyageur* song, originally from France and first published in 1704. Fowke/Mills/Blume declares it to have been popular in Quebec “since the days of Champlain.”

Note that the French version of this song and the next repeat the last line of the previous verse to start the next verse. This makes the song much longer, but it’s easier to remember.

Source: I learned this mostly from the singing of Lillian Labbé. The French text (identical as far as I can tell at a casual glance) can be found either in Fowke/Mills/Blume (who had it from Gagnon) or Nute (who had it from Gibbon).

Note that this is *voyageur* French, which is not the same as the language of modern France; I’ve followed Fowke’s and Nute’s texts even where it looks funny to a French speaker.

C’est l’aviron

This song originated in France, although the chorus is from the *voyageurs*. It’s the kind of song they liked, given that they lived far away from women: The guy got the girl, she was pretty, and he didn’t really have to do much to deserve her. La Rochelle is a city on the Bay of Biscay in southern France.

Source: The words are from Edith Fulton Fowke and Richard Johnston, *Folk Songs of Quebec*, pp. 72-73. The French version was collected by E. Z. Massicote. The music is as I learned from the singing of Lillian Labbé, compared against Fowke/Johnston.

Brave Wolfe

James Wolfe led the attack on Quebec in 1759, while still in his early thirties and unmarried. There is a story, probably apocryphal, that courtiers said before his appointment that he was mad. King George II, irritated at the ineffectiveness of most of his other senior officers, supposedly declared, “Mad, is he? Then I wish he would bite my other generals.”

Part of this song is true: Shortly before the Quebec campaign began, Wolfe hurried back to England to propose to Katherine Lowther. Then he returned to Canada. Not all historians are impressed with his performance there; it was quite some time before he dreamed up the campaign that led his troops up to the Plains of Abraham. Never very healthy, he seemed on the brink of death before the final campaign. It was a high-stakes gamble which paid off: He put eight or nine thousand troops on the Plains of Abraham without the French stopping him. The defenders had many more troops in the area, but the French commander, Montcalm, hurried to confront Wolfe with the troops he had immediately at hand. These were relatively few, and not very well-trained; Wolfe’s regulars beat them easily, though Wolfe was killed in the battle and Montcalm mortally wounded. Contrary to the song, they did not meet before the battle.

Source: The text is a composite based on versions I’ve heard; I started from the text in Fowke/Mills/Blume, *Canada’s Story in Song*, pp. 48-49. Music: There are several tunes for

this song. This is probably the best-known, originally sung as “The Blacksmith.” The song has not been found in Minnesota, but versions were known from Michigan and Ontario, so there is a high likelihood that it was heard here.

Old Granny Wales

This is one of the curiosities of Minnesota folk song: It’s a song of Irish origin about the American Revolutionary War which somehow made its way to Minnesota.

Granny Wales, or Granny O’Whale, is a distortion of the Irish name “Granuaile.” Granuaile was a real person, Grace O’Malley, who lived in the time of Elizabeth I, but her Irish name came to be used as a symbol for Ireland. Around her grew up a whole genre of poetry called the “aisling”; they are poems about visions — usually a vision in which Granuaile meets the poet by the river and talks about Ireland’s wrongs.

Obviously this version has undergone a lot of changes; it refers to American grievances against Britain in the 1770s. The song mentions several high officials of the period. Lord North was Prime Minister under George III from 1770-1782, and passed the Tea Act which resulted in the Boston Tea Party (though, contrary to what most Americans think, the Tea Act in fact reduced most taxes on the Americans!). Granville is clearly George Grenville, the Prime Minister 1763-1765. It was he who imposed the much-hated Stamp Act. “Infamous Bute” was the Third Earl of Bute, a former tutor of George III, who was Prime Minister 1762-1763 and continued to have power behind the scenes after that. Collectively, the three of them were largely responsible for implementing the policies of George III which caused so much trouble with the colonies.

Source: This is a rare song, although a few printed copies are known. It appears that only one tune was ever found. Bessie Mae Stanchfield collected the song from Elma Snyder McDowell of Saint Cloud, who learned it from her father in the nineteenth century. Stanchfield published the text in the October 1945 edition of *California Folklore Quarterly*, along with some rather misleading annotations (none of the people she asked about the song had ever heard of Granuaile, so she conjectured that the song was about Benjamin Franklin!). The text is as she published it, except as noted. But she did not print the tune with the text. As best I can tell, it has never been published; Stanchfield left several manuscript copies of it in her papers in the Minnesota Historical Society archives.

Unfortunately, it seems very likely that the transcription is wrong. Oh, it’s probably what McDowell sang, literally transcribed. But I’m sure it’s not what she learned. It’s two measures too long for the text! I’m guessing that Stanchfield was fooled by the tendency of some folksingers to play fast and loose with the timing — especially since Stanchfield didn’t realize the Irish roots of the song. Once it is regularized, the Irishness is especially clear. I have cut two verses from the (very long) text, and used the melody I think McDowell meant; if you want to see the original tune and the full McDowell text, it is in the online appendix.

A la claire fontaine

“Oh! were she but as true as fair, ’twould put an end to my despair, Instead of that she is unkind, and wavers like the winter wind.”
 Jockey was a piper’s son, he fell in love when he was young, But all the springs that he could play was, o’er the hills, and far away.
 “O’er the Hills and Far Away,” first found in Pills to Purge Melancholy, 1706

A la clai - re fon - tai - ne M'en al - lant pro - me - ner,
 By the clear flow - ing foun - tain, I chanced one sum - mer day,
 J'ai trou - vé l'eau si bel - le Que je m'y suis bai - gné.
 The wat - er looked so love - ly, I bathed with - out de - lay.
 Lui ya long - temps que je t'ai - me, Ja - mais je ne t'ou - blei - rai.
 For so long now I have loved you, Al - ways in my heart you'll stay.

French:

*A la claire fontaine, M'en allant promener,
 J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle, Que je m'y suis baigné.*

Refrain:

Lui ya longtemps que je t'aime, Jamais je ne t'oublierai.

*J'ai trouvé l'eau si belle, Que je m'y suis baigné.
 Sous les feuilles d'un chêne, Je me suis fait sécher.*

*Sous les feuilles d'un chêne, Je me suis fait sécher.
 Sur la plus haute branche, Le rossignol chantait.*

*Sur la plus haute branche, Le rossignol chantait.
 Chante, rossignol, chante, Toi qui as le coeur gai.*

*Chante, rossignol, chante, Toi qui as le coeur gai.
 Tu as le coeur à rire, Moi je l'ai-t-à-pleurer.*

*Tu as le coeur à rire, Moi je l'ai-t-à-pleurer.
 J'ai perdu ma maîtresse Sans l'avoir mérité.*

*J'ai perdu ma maîtresse Sans l'avoir mérité.
 Pour un bouquet de roses Que je lui refusai.*

*Pour un bouquet de roses Que je lui refusai.
 Je voudrais que la rose Fût encore au rosier.*

*Je voudrais que la rose Fût encore au rosier.
 Et moi et ma maîtresse Dans les mêmes amitiés.*

English:

*By the clear flowing fountain, I chanced one summer day,
 The water looked so lovely, I bathed without delay.*

Refrain:

For so long now I have loved you, Always in my heart you'll stay.

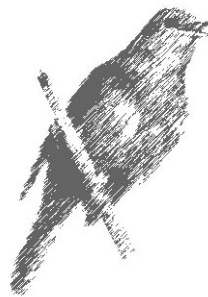
*Up in an oak tree shady, Birds flitted on the wing;
 As I dried off by its branches I heard a nightingale sing.*

*Its song was clear and lovely; Its music sweet and gay;
 I said, "O bird, keep singing, Though I must weep all day."*

*"Your heart is full of music, My heart is full of pain;
 I lost my own true lover In such a foolish way."*

*"She wanted the red roses I'd picked one summer day,
 I gave her not the roses; Now I must pine away."*

*"I wish those lovely flowers Bloomed on the bush today,
 While I and my beloved Walked hand in hand always."*



The nightingale is a European bird not found in Minnesota or any part of North America.

C'est l'aviron (It's the Oars)

Blow, northerne wind, send thou me my sweting [sweetheart].

Blow, northerne wind, Blow, blow, blow!

British Library MS. Harley 2253, folio 72b. Thought to be from circa 1320.

1 C C C F C

Rid - ing a - long the road to Ro - chelle ci - ty,
M'en re - ven - ant de la jo - lie Ro - chel - le,

5 C C C F C

Rid - ing a - long the road to Ro - chelle ci - ty,
M'en re - ven - ant de la jo - lie Ro - chel - le,

9 C F C G

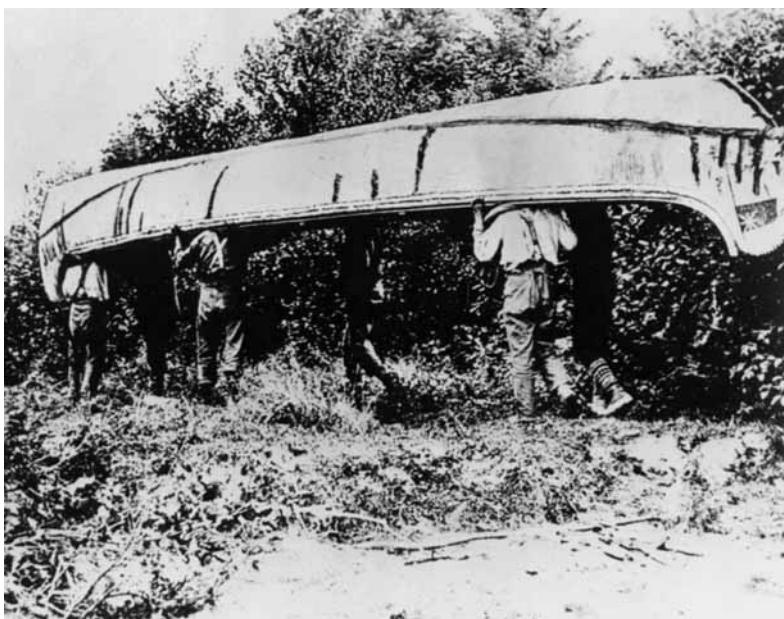
I met three girls, and all of them were pret - ty.
J'ai ren - con - tré trois jo - lies de - moi - sel - les.

13 C G C

Pull on the oars as we glide a - long to - ge - ther,
C'est l'a - vi - ron qui nous mè - ne qui nous mè - ne,

17 C G C

Pull on the oars as we glide a - long.
C'est l'a - vi - ron qui nous mè - ne en haut.



Portaging a canoe, c. 1880. *Minnesota Historical Society.*

French Lyrics

*M'en revenant de la jolie Rochelle,
M'en revenant de la jolie Rochelle,
J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles.
C'est l'aviron qui nous mène, qui nous mène,
C'est l'aviron qui nous mène en haut.*

*J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles
J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles
J'ai point choisi, mais j'ai pris la plus belle.*

*J'ai point choisi, mais j'ai pris la plus belle
J'ai point choisi, mais j'ai pris la plus belle
J'y fis monter derrière' moi, sur ma selle.*

*J'y fis monter derrière' moi, sur ma selle
J'y fis monter derrière' moi, sur ma selle
J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle.*

*J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle
J'y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle
Au bout d'cent lieues, ell' me d'mandit à boire.*

*Au bout d'cent lieues, ell' me d'mandit à boire
Au bout d'cent lieues, ell' me d'mandit à boire
Je l'ai menée auprès d'une fontaine.*

*Je l'ai menée auprès d'une fontaine
Je l'ai menée auprès d'une fontaine
Quand ell' fut là, ell' ne voulut point boire.*

*Quand ell' fut là, ell' ne voulut point boire
Quand ell' fut là, ell' ne voulut point boire
Je l'ai menée au logis de son père.*

*Je l'ai menée au logis de son père
Je l'ai menée au logis de son père
Quand ell' fut là, ell' buvait à pleins verres.*

*Quand ell' fut là, ell' buvait à pleins verres
Quand ell' fut là, ell' buvait à pleins verres
A la santé de son père et sa mère.*

*A la santé de son père et sa mère
A la santé de son père et sa mère
A la santé de ses soeurs et ses frères.*

*A la santé de ses soeurs et ses frères
A la santé de ses soeurs et ses frères
A la santé d'celui que son coeur aime.*

English Lyrics

*Riding along the road to Rochelle City,
Riding along the road to Rochelle City,
I met three girls, and all of them were pretty
Pull on the oars as we glide along together,
Pull on the oars as we glide along.*

*By chance I chose the one who was the beauty,
By chance I chose the one who was the beauty,
Lifted her up so she could ride beside me.*

*With never a word we rode along together,
With never a word we rode along together,
After a while, she said, "I'd like a drink, sir."*

*Quickly I found a spring from out the mountain,
Quickly I found a spring from out the mountain,
But she'd not drink the water from the fountain.*

*On then we went to find her home and father,
On then we went to find her home and father,
When we got there, she drank... but not of water.*

*Many a toast she drank to her dear mother,
Many a toast she drank to her dear mother,
Toasted again her sister and her brother.*

*When she had drunk to sister and to brother,
When she had drunk to sister and to brother,
Turning to me, she toasted her own lover.*



Engraving of a Voyageur by C. S. Reinhart.
From Harper's Magazine. Minnesota Historical Society.

Brave Wolfe

*And ye that love fighting shall soon have enough,
Wolfe commands us, my boys, we shall give them Hot Stuff.*

“Hot Stuff,” reportedly by Ned Botwood, printed in Rivington’s New York Gazetteer, 1774

Now God be praised, I will die in peace.

Last words of James Wolfe, according to a contemporary (but perhaps fictional) account

1 Em Em D D Em Em
 Love — here’s a dia - mond ring, Long time I’ve kept it,
 5 Em Em D D Em Em
 ’Tis for your sake a - lone, If you’ll ac - cept it.
 9 Em G C Em D C D
 When — you the to - ken view, Think on the giv - er.
 13 Em A Em D Em
 Ma - dam, re - mem - ber — me, I’m yours for - ev - er.

*Love, here’s a diamond ring, long time I’ve kept it.
’Tis for your sake alone, if you’ll accept it.
When you the token view, think on the giver.
Madam, remember me; I’m yours forever.*

*Brave Wolfe raised up his head as the guns did rattle,
And to his aide he said, “How goes the battle?”
“Quebec is all our own; none can prevent it.”
Then answered that brave youth, “I die contented.”*

*Then forth went this brave youth across the ocean.
To free Amerikay was his intention.
He landed in Quebec with all his party,
The city to attack, being brave and hearty.*

*Brave Wolfe drew up his men in a line so pretty,
On the Plains of Abraham before the city.
The French came marching down, resolved to meet them.
In double numbers round, resolved to beat them.*

*Montcalm and that brave youth together walkéd.
Between two armies they like brothers talkéd.
Then each one took his post, and did retire.
’Twas then these numerous hosts commenced their fire.*

*The drums did loudly play, and the balls were flying,
The purple gore did flow, and men lay dying,
Then shot from off his horse was our brave hero.
We’ll long lament his loss, that day in sorrow.*



James Wolfe

Old Granny Wales

The tears of grief fell from her eyes full as large as hail. None could express the deep distress of poor old Granuaile. On her harp she leaned and thus exclaimed, "My royal Brien is gone Who in his day he drove away the tyrants every one." "A New Song Called Granuaile." "Brien" is Brian Boru, who beat the Norse at Clontarf in 1014 but died in the battle.

1 Old Grann - ny she rose in the morn - ing so soon, She slipped on her
 7 pet - ti - coat, a - pron and gown, Saying, "Ve - ry bad news last night came to
 13 me, They're wrong - ing my child - ren that's o'er the sea.

Old Granny she rose in the morning so soon
 She slipped on her petticoat, apron, and gown
 Saying, "Very bad news last night came to me,
 They're wronging my children that's o'er the sea."
 Old Granny then mounted her gelding in haste,
 And to fair London city — it was her first place,
 As she was prancing up fair London street
 'Twas there with Lord Cornwall she chanced for to meet.
 "Noble Granny," says Cornwall, "Come tell me in haste
 Have you any good news from the east or the west?"
 "Oh, bad news," says Granny, "that [makes?] me complain
 They're wronging my children that's o'er the main."
 "That news is too true," Lord Cornwall says,
 "They're enslaving your children too soon I'm afraid.
 There's Lord North, Granville, and Infamous Bute
 That brought on this Tea Act that's now in dispute."
 Old Granny remounted her gelding in rage
 And to fair Dublin city it was her next stage
 As she was prancing on fair Dublin street
 'Twas there with Lord North, Granville, and Bute she did meet.
 "You're the three villains that I understand
 That's wronging my children in yon foreign land;
 And it's reported and told for a fact,
 That you're the three villains that made this Tea Act."
 "You're wrongly informed," says these gentlemen,
 "To enslave your children we n'er did intend,
 But the land is our king's we solemnly say
 We make our laws and your sons must obey."
 They say, "Noble Granny don't make such an event
 We will cool your sons' courage and make them repent.

With our ships of war and our men in the field
 We'll cool your son's courage and make them to yield."
 "Oh I'd not have you think to frighten my sons
 For at Lexington Battle they made your men run.
 They are men of experience in every respect
 And never will yield to your bloody Tea Act."
 "Besides them," says Granny, "give me leave to tell
 Of a Battle once fought and it was on Bunker Hill
 Where twelve hundred Britains lay dead on the ground
 And five hundred more have since died with their wounds."
 "You need not tell us about Bunker Hill
 Our troops were few and you gained the field
 But then you had Warren, but now he is slain
 You have no more Warren that's over the main."
 "Well, well," says Granny, "though Warren is dead
 There's a Washington living and our enemy he'll head
 He'll handle your troops polite as you please
 And he'll pay them the trouble for crossing the sea."
 "I have millions of sons in America born
 To submit to your laws, they hold it in scorn
 They are men of experience in every degree
 And they will see your great ships of the helm [=line?] a lee."
 "Too late you'll repent of your desperate crime,
 To mourn and lament to the end of your time.
 That ever you sent your troops over the flood
 To spill my dear innocent children's blood."
 "Then sing, hubor oh, buhor," says Granny O'Whale,
 "There's a fox in the trap and he's caught by the tail
 My sons are true blue that never will fail
 Success to the sons of Granny O'Whale."

The Louisiana Purchase and the War of 1812

DESPITE ALL THE FIGHTING IN THE EAST, IT HAD BEEN PRETTY much “All Quiet on the Minnesota Front” for forty years after the French and Indian War. Even though the land east of the Mississippi was officially American, the British continued to send fur traders into the area. They might still be doing it had it not been for a man who wasn’t even an American.

Napoleon Bonaparte, widely known in English as “Boney,” would shake up nations from Russia to the American Midwest.

Boney
ON PAGE 12

Napoleon came to rule France in the aftermath of the French Revolution, just about the time the United States experienced something that was almost a second revolution of its own: The Federalist party, which had ruled the country from Washington’s time until 1800, was voted out of office and replaced by a party called the Republicans (though they weren’t the same party as today’s Republicans). The first Republican President was Thomas Jefferson, and when he replaced John Adams, it was the first real transfer of power in American history.

Jefferson and Liberty
ON PAGE 13

Soon after Jefferson took office, Napoleon made him an offer he couldn’t refuse. Napoleon had a history of Big Plans. One of those Big Plans brought France ownership of the Louisiana country — all the land west of the Mississippi which drained into the Mississippi river. But then came a slave revolt in the Caribbean. After that, Louisiana didn’t look so useful to France. And Napoleon always needed money. He sold Jefferson the Louisiana country.

Instantly, the United States doubled in size. Included in the Purchase was the larger part of Minnesota. Americans set out to survey the area. One survey was conducted by Lewis and Clark. Another exploration party, which moved up the Mississippi toward Minnesota, was headed by Lieutenant Zebulon Pike (1779-1813). At Prairie du Chien he put his men in two bateaux (low, shallow-bottomed boats) and sailed north. He camped at Pike Island where the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers meet, raised the American flag (possibly the first time it was raised in Minnesota), and “bought” the land that would later house Fort Snelling. He then headed up the Mississippi seeking its headwaters. He failed to find them (it was Henry Schoolcraft who put Lake Itasca on the map a quarter of a century later), but Pike did at least take his men far enough north to make an (unsuccessful) show of force against British posts in the Brainerd area (Blegen, pp. 87-89).

The Louisiana Purchase wasn’t the only time Napoleon influenced American history. For more than a decade, the British and French fought. Napoleon wanted desperately to conquer Britain, which was bankrolling his other enemies. As long as the British Navy could control the seas, Britain was safe from invasion. But to control the seas required ships and sailors. The British recruited sailors by a system known as “impressment” — like a modern draft, but rougher: They

sent out groups of men known as press gangs and grabbed sailors off the streets or off merchant ships. Including, sometimes, American ships, if they thought there were British deserters aboard. They also demanded that American ships trade through them, rather than to the continent. It made the Americans very angry. Finally they declared war on Britain.

For the British, the War of 1812 was a sideshow. The big fight was with Napoleon. They sent only a few soldiers, mostly to defend Canada, and a few ships to blockade the American ports. They still held the Americans to a draw for two years. Much of this was due to American impetuosity: The Americans kept trying to invade Canada, and kept digging themselves holes. (Zebulon Pike was killed on one of those expeditions.) One of the great battles of the war, for instance, was fought at Lundy’s Lane. Like the war as a whole, it was a bloody draw. The commander at Lundy’s Lane was Jacob Brown. It was Brown who, in 1819, issued the orders which sent Lt. Colonel Henry Leavenworth to found what became Fort Snelling (Folwell, p. 135).

Billie Johnson of Lundy’s Lane
ON PAGE 14

Napoleon kept the British busy for all of the two terms of President Jefferson, and through the first term of his successor James Madison. But eventually the French wars ended and Napoleon went into exile:

*Oh, Boney’s away from his wars and his fightings,
He is gone to a land where naught can delight him.
And there he may sit down and tell the scenes he’s seen-o,
While alone he does mourn on the isle of Saint Helena.*

The British then were able to turn their full might on the U. S. In 1814, they burned Washington. But Fort McHenry, outside Baltimore, held them up (incidentally inspiring “The Star Spangled Banner”), and peace commissioners started meeting. The British could surely have won the war had they been willing to pay for it — but their economy had been strained to the breaking point by the French wars. Both sides agreed to go back to the way things were in 1812.

The War of 1812 did have one important effect: It caused the British to finally leave the northern United States. That was due in part to the fact that the Americans had beaten them in the one major battle on the Great Lakes, the Battle of Lake Erie.

James Bird
ON PAGE 15

Gradually, the Americans moved into the vacated territory. In Minnesota, the single most important act was probably the building of a fort near the present site of the Twin Cities. The first soldiers were sent out in 1819, under Lt. Col. Henry Leavenworth. He was replaced soon after by Col. Josiah Snelling, who decided to build the fort at a different site, at the junction of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. The fort, completed in 1824, would eventually be renamed Fort Snelling (Blegen, pp. 99-102).

Song Notes

Boney

This song is interesting both for its form and for its content. In form, it is a sea chanty (or shanty; however you spell it, it's pronounced "shanty"). These were songs sailors used for a particular task — for example, to help them time their hauls on a rope or their shoves on a capstan. Stan Hugill, the last real expert on chantys, thought this both a halyard song and a short haul chanty. This version is a short haul chanty; the sailors would pull on *Yup!* and *Swar!* To get the feeling across, you could have kids clap on the haul syllables.

The song is a good short summary of the later career of Napoleon: His chief enemies on land were Russia, Prussia, and Austria (all of whom also allied with him at one time or another as well). In 1812, he invaded Russia, and reached Moscow, but saw his army destroyed. Two years later, having failed to defend France, he went into exile on Elba, only to return for the "Hundred Days" in 1815, ending in the Battle of Waterloo. He fled into British custody, was taken into exile on the *Bellerophon*, and died on Saint Helena.

Source: I have heard many recordings of this; I think the one I know best is by John Roberts and Tony Barrand. I have used their tune. The fullest set of lyrics is in Hugill's authoritative *Shanties from the Seven Seas*, but this text is a combination of what I remember with the version in Joanna C. Colcord's *Songs of American Sailormen*.

Jefferson and Liberty

These days, politicians have television ads and public debates. In the early days of the Republic, they had campaign songs; the candidates sat at home and wrote letters, while local people staged rallies on their behalf. John Adams had a song called "Adams and Liberty," notable for being absolutely terrible and for using the tune of the drinking song "To Anacreon in Heaven"; the "Adams and Liberty" version was the basis for "The Star-Spangled Banner." Versions of Jefferson's song also had lousy lyrics, but it was easier to sing.

The "reign of terror" reference is almost certainly to the Sedition Act of 1798, probably the strongest attack on the rights of American citizens in history — it was an overt attempt to suppress freedom of speech and the press. Jefferson was firmly against it, and it was not renewed.

Source: Known from broadsides (single-sheet printings of the words). I've selected a subset from the text on page 165 of Vera Brodsky Lawrence's *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents: Harmonies and Discords of the First Hundred Years*. The tune is said to be the Irish melody "The Gobby-O." I learned the song in my youth, from a forgotten recording. Appropriately, the form is a Virginia Reel.

Billie Johnson of Lundy's Lane

The Battle of Lundy's Lane took place on July 25, 1814, during one of several American invasions of Canada in the

War of 1812. General Jacob Brown took his forces across the Niagara River on July 3. After some minor fighting, Winfield Scott's brigade ran into a British force, and both sides brought up reinforcements. The battle was bloody, and both Brown and Scott were wounded (as were the top British generals). Both sides claimed victory, but the officer left in command of the American forces decided to retreat. It was the last time the United States seriously threatened to capture part of Canada.

Brown would be important for Minnesota history; he sent the troops that founded Fort Snelling. Scott would go on to even bigger things: He was the American commander in chief during the Mexican war, and was responsible for the campaign that captured Mexico City and won the war; he was still in charge of American forces at the start of the Civil War 47 years after Lundy's Lane. (He would retire within a year, but his strategy would largely be responsible for winning the war.) Clearly the veteran was going to visit General Scott to ask to fight for the Union again — though no sane general would have wanted him; even had he been fit, his insistence on using his old musket (which could hardly hit the wall of a barn, let alone an enemy rifleman) would have made him completely useless in Civil War-era combat.

This song, said to be by Bayard Taylor, was written in the Civil War seemingly to encourage patriotism.

Source: The words are from Dean, one of only three collections in tradition. The melody is based on the tune collected by Frank Warner from "Yankee" John Galusha, 1941 and printed in Warner, p. 69. Galusha was very old at the time he was recorded, and his timing seems to have been influenced by his need to breathe. His pitch is known to have been affected by his age. I have fiddled slightly with the tune somewhat as a result, both as to timing and pitch.

James Bird [Laws A5]

Chances are, if you've heard anything about the War of 1812, you've heard of the Battle of Lake Erie, at which Oliver Hazard Perry declared, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." This is a song about a sailor in the battle — one who fought bravely, but then deserted out of, it seems, boredom.


Source: Though it was composed as a poem, "James Bird" became a very popular song. Several tunes exist. This one, which is peculiar in its lack of modality, was sung by George M. Haskins of Gordon, Wisconsin; he told Rickaby that he learned it in Minnesota around 1874. The tune is as given by Rickaby, though I suspect that measures 7 and 8 should be combined into one. I have supplied chords, but I think this tune works best when sung *a capella*. Rickaby did not give Haskins's full lyrics, so I have used a text furnished to me by Doris Chriswell of Palmyra, New York, who found a copy written by her great-grandfather John James Johnson in 1881. He reportedly was farming near the Ohio/Indiana border at the time, making it the oldest known traditional version from the midwest. The text is written rather poorly; I have corrected errors and supplied missing lines in brackets.

Boney

To delight in war is a merit in the soldier, a dangerous quality in the captain, and a positive crime in the statesman.


George Santayana

1



Bo - ney was a war - ri - or, Way - ay YUP!_____ A
Bo - ney fought the Roosh - i - ans, Way - ay YUP!_____ The

9



war - rior and a tar - ri - er John Fran - SWAR!_____

Roosh - ians and the Proosh - i - ans, John Fran - SWAR!_____

*Boney was a warrior, Way-ay YUP!
A warrior and a tarrier, John Fran-SWAR!*

*Boney went to Waterloo
And there he got his overthrow.*

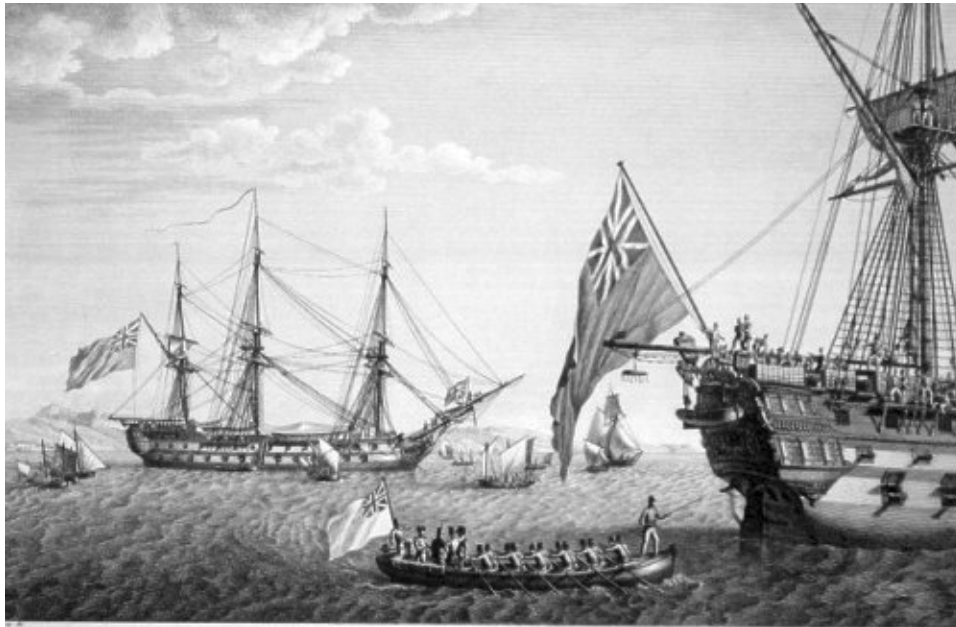
*Boney fought the Rooshians,
The Rooshians and the Prooshians.*

*Then they took him off again
Aboard the Billy Ruffian (=Bellerophon).*

*Boney went to Moscow,
And lost his army in the snow.*

*Away in Saint Elen-i-a (=Helena)
Boney broke his heart and died.*

*Boney went to Elbow (=Elba)
And Boney he came back again.*



The *Bellerophon* carrying Napoleon into exile on Saint Helena in 1815.

Jefferson and Liberty

A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation.

Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1790

The gloom - y night be - fore us flies, The reign of ter - ror now is o'er, Its
gags, in - quis - i - tors, and spies, Its herds of harp - ies are no more. Re -
joice, Co - lum - bia's sons, re - joice, To ty - rants nev - er bend the knee, But
join with heart and soul — and voice For Jef - fer - son and lib - er - ty.

*The gloomy night before us flies,
The reign of Terror now is o'er;
Its Gags, Inquisitors, and Spies,
Its herds of Harpies are no more*

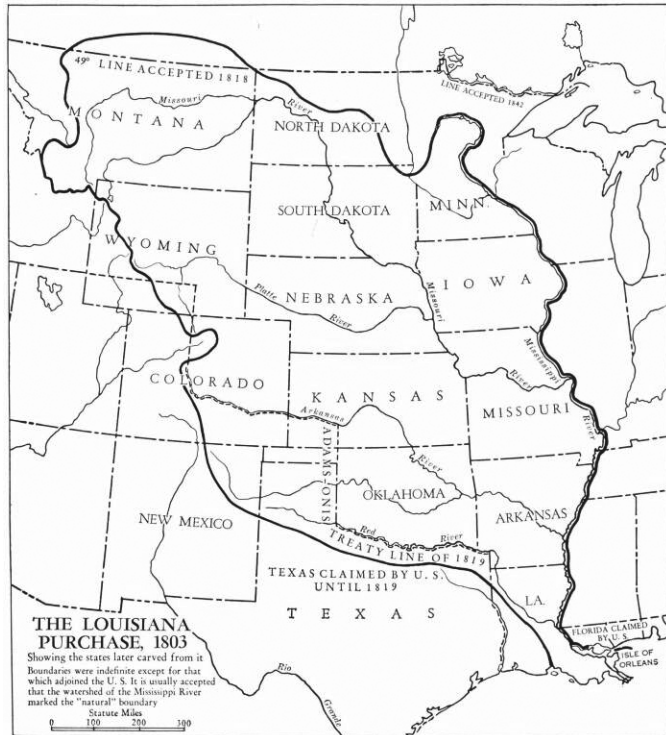
*Chorus: Rejoice! Columbia's Sons, rejoice!
To tyrants never bend the knee
But join with heart and soul and voice
For Jefferson and Liberty.*

*No Lordling here with gorging jaws.
Shall wring from Industry the food;
Nor fiery Bigot's holy Laws,
Lay waste our fields and streets in blood.*

*Here strangers from a thousand shores
Compell'd by Tyranny to roam;
Shall find, amidst abundant stores,
A nobler and a happier home.*

*Here art shall lift her laurel'd head
Wealth, Industry, and Peace divine;
And where dark pathless Forest spread.
Rich Fields and lofty Cities shine.*

*From Georgia up to Lake Champlain
From Seas to Mississippi's Shore;
Ye Sons of Freedom loud proclaim,
The Reign of Terror is no more.*



A 1912 map of the Louisiana Purchase.

Billie Johnson of Lundy's Lane

*We formed our lines for battle, the conflict soon began;
The cannons loud did rattle, while many a valiant man
Lay bleeding in his purple gore, heart-rending were their cries,
While the clouds of sulphur, tinged with blood, ascended to the skies.*

"The Battle of Bridgewater" (another name for Lundy's Lane). From J. H. Cox, Folk-Song of the South, p. 259.

1 An old and crippled veter - er - an to the War De - part - ment

8 came He sought the chief who led him through man - y a field of

15 fame, The chief who shout - ed "For - ward" when - e'er his ban - ner

22 rose, And bore the flag in tri - umph be - hind his fly - ing foes.

*An old and crippled veteran to the War Department came,
He sought the chief who led him o'er many a field of fame,
The chief who shouted "Forward!" when'er his banner rose,
And bore the flag in triumph behind his flying foes.*

*"Have you forgotten, General," the battered soldier cried,
"The days of Eighteen Hundred and Twelve when I fought by your side?
Have you forgotten Johnson who fought at Lundy's Lane?
It's true I'm old and feeble, but I'd like to fight again."*

*"Have I forgotten?" says the chief, "My brave old soldier, No!
And here's the hand I gave you then and let it tell you so;
But you have done your share, my friend, you are crippled, old and gray,
And we have need of stronger arms and fresher blood today."*

*"I'm not so weak, but I can shoot, and I've a good old gun,
To get the range of traitors' hearts and pierce them one by one;
And if a bullet should find me out and lay me on my face,
My soul will go to Washington, and not to Arnold's place.*

*"I am ready, General, so you let a post to me be given,
Where Washington can look down on me as he looks down from Heaven,
And say to Putnam at his side, or maybe General Wayne,
'There stands old Billie Johnson, he fought at Lundy's Lane.'"*



Winfield Scott, "Old Fuss and Feathers" (1786-1866), as he appeared in dress uniform around the time of the War of 1812. Based on a portrait in the Smithsonian by an unknown artist.

James Bird

The battle for the mastery of the lake began September 10, 1813. Perry's ship was flying the motto, "Don't give up the ship." The "Lawrence" for two hours bore the brunt of the battle till it was almost a total wreck.... Perry now crossed over to the "Niagara...." [H]e at once... dashed through the British line. Within ten minutes the flagship and three other British ships had surrendered.

J. Franklin Jameson's Dictionary of United States History, 1894

1 G C Dm Dm G Am Dm Dm

Sons of free-dom, list-en to me, And ye daugh-ters too give ear,

5 Am Am C C Dm Am G C Dm

You a sad and mourn-ful sto-ry As was ev-er told shall hear.

Sons of freedom, listen to me,
And ye daughters too give ear,
You a sad and mournful story
As was ever told shall hear.

Hull you know his troops surrendered
And defenseless left the west
And Captain Thomas our commander
The invader to resist.

Among the troops that marched to Erie
Were the Kingston Volunteers,
And Captain Thomas was our commander
To protect our west frontiers.

But there was one amongst that number
Tall and graceful in his mien
Firm his step, his look undaunted
Never a nobler youth was seen.

One sweet kiss he stole from Mary,
Begged his mother's prayers once more,
Pressed his father's hand and started
For Lake Erie's distant shores.

"Where is Bird? The battle rages
Is he in the strife or no?
Hear the cannons roar tremendous.
Dare he meet the dreadful foe?"

"Yes — by Perry see him standing
In the self same ship he fights
[Though] his messmates fall around him
Nothing can his [soul] affright.

But behold a ball has hit him,
See the crimson current flow
"Leave the deck," exclaimed brave Perry,
"No," cried Bird, "I will not go."

"Here on deck I have took my station/
Bird will near his colors fly.

I'll stand by you galliant Perry
Till we conquer or we die."

Thus he fought both faint and bleeding
Till out Stripes and Stars arose.
Victory having crowned our efforts
All triumphant o'er our foes.

Then did Bird receive a pension?
Was he to his friends restored?
No, nor never to his bosom
Clasped the maid his heart adored.

But there came most dismal tidings
From Lake Erie's distant shore:
"I must suffer for deserting
From the brig Niagarie.

["Dearest parents," said the letter,
"This will bring sad news to you.]
Read this letter, brother, sisters
It is the last you'll have from me."

Though he fought so brave at Erie,
Freely bled and boldly dared.
Let his courage plead for mercy,
Let his noble life be spared.

It was a dark and doleful morning,
Bird was ordered out to die.
Where is the heart not dead to pity
But for him would heave a sigh?

See him kneeling on his coffin;
Sure, his death can do no good.
Spare him. Hark — my God they have shot him!
See his bosom stream with blood!

Farewell, Bird. Farewell forever.
Friends and home you will see no more.
Now his mangled corpse lies buried
On Lake Erie's distant shore.

The First Minnesota Settlers

FORT SNELLING WAS THE FIRST PERMANENT AMERICAN settlement in Minnesota, but it didn't stay alone for long. The fur traders followed: Jean Baptiste Faribault set himself up at Mendota in 1826, and Henry Sibley, the future governor, arrived in 1834 (Blegen, pp. 132-136).

Sparkling and
Bright
ON PAGE 18

The frontier of American settlement, which had hardly reached Wisconsin at the time of Fort Snelling was founded, had reached through that state and into Minnesota by the 1840s. There aren't many songs about the fur trade itself, but we have a few from the fur trade period. One of the noteworthy things about the trade was how it had to keep moving westward, into the interior of the United States, as the lands further east were hunted out. We can't be sure, but it is thought that "The Maid of Prairie du Chien" is about a fur trader (or other resident of southern Wisconsin) who abandoned his home and headed west or northwest to the new territories; he may well have ended up in southeastern Minnesota.

The Maid of
Prairie du Chien
ON PAGE 19

The earliest songs sung in Minnesota were mostly old songs from other lands. Many originated in Britain, including the only one of the Great Ballads collected by Francis James Child to be collected in the state, "The House Carpenter." (Three other Child Ballads, "Barbara Allen," "Four Nights Drunk," and "The *Golden Vanity*," were almost certainly known here, based on collections outside Minnesota, but there are no Minnesota texts.) One of the few Minnesota songs about colonial days also originated in England under a title such as "The Three Rogues," though the most common American title is "In Good Old Colony Times"; Minnesota John Healy's version begins "In Good Old Colony Days."

The House
Carpenter
ON PAGE 20

In Good Old
Colony Days
ON PAGE 21

Most settlers to Minnesota arrived from the east and south, but some arrived from the north — though they weren't Americans by birth. The regions of Canada west of Ontario at this time were organized not as colonies, nor as provinces, but as the holdings of joint stock companies: The Hudson's Bay Company ruled the eastern regions, and the North West Company controlled the west. So independent were these companies that they actually went to war with each other on occasion. Needing people to do its work, the Hudson's Bay Company in 1812 granted land to a Scottish magnate, Lord Selkirk, who for a dozen years had been trying to found a Scottish enclave in North America. Selkirk did manage to found a settlement in the vicinity of modern

Winnipeg — but the population wasn't exactly what he expected. The area was surrounded by Hudson's Bay Company men, many of them Catholics from Quebec, and their native wives. Their children — who back then were called half-breeds — were the Métis, or mixed people, and they would end up being one of the most persecuted groups in both Canada and the United States. The North West Company used the Métis to attack the settlers, then, in 1820-1821, merged with the Hudson's Bay Company. Selkirk died about that same time (Blegen, pp. 92-93). Many of these Métis would end up in northwestern Minnesota, though their songs, such as "Falcon's Song," were in French and are rarely remembered.

*Si vous aviez vu tous ces Anglais
Et tous ces Bois-Brûlés après
De butte en butte les Anglais culbutaient,
Les Bois-Brûlés jetaient de cris de joie!*

*You should have seen those Englishmen,
And our Bois-Brûlés after them,
Till one by one we did them all destroy
While our brave comrades shouted for joy.
(Fowke/Mills/Blume, pp. 122-123).*

The later fate of the Métis was sad. Persecuted by a racist Canadian government, they tried rebellion under Louis Riel. The rebellion failed. They moved to Saskatchewan, only to find the settlers coming west on the railroad and again taking their lands. They called Riel back from exile to lead another rebellion, but it was crushed at the Battle of Batoche in 1885. Riel would later be executed.

Shortly before the failure of the Selkirk colony, the boundary between the United States and Canada west of the Mississippi was settled. In 1783, when the British and Americans had decided what lands would belong to the new country, they had not realized that the Mississippi headwaters were south of the Great Lakes. Since the boundary was supposed to be the Mississippi on the west, and the Great Lakes and Lake of the Woods on the north, this left the boundary indefinite. It was indefinite in the regions further west, too. In 1818, they decided on a boundary of the forty-ninth parallel — except for the oddity of the Northwest Angle of Minnesota, the jut into Lake of the Woods that made Minnesota the northernmost state in the Union until Alaska became a state; the Northwest Angle is a relic of the bad surveying and uncertain boundaries of the pre-1818 period. Still, the decisions of the boundary commission finally placed all of what is now Minnesota in the Union.

But the boundary remained unguarded. In the aftermath of Selkirk's death, many of the persecuted people of his colony migrated down the Red River to take up lands in what is now western Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Song Notes

Sparkling and Bright

It may come as a bit of a shock to realize that one of the very first English-language songs attested in Minnesota is a drinking song. Though we should remember that drinking songs have a long history in English and other languages — indeed, “The Star-Spangled Banner” is sung to the tune of a drinking song, “To Anacreon in Heaven.” This particular song is reliably reported to have been sung in Minnesota by future governor Henry Sibley in the 1850s. There can be no doubt that other English-language songs were sung here before that, but not by such distinguished people.

Source: The original version of “Sparkling and Bright” is by Charles Fenno Hoffman, a popular poet of the nineteenth century though now almost forgotten (this and “The Maid of Monterey” are probably his best-remembered pieces). We don’t know, but odds are that Sibley and friends sang the original lyrics:

*Sparkling and bright in liquid light
Does the wine our goblets gleam in,
With hue as red as rosy bed
Which a bee would choose to dream in.
Then fill tonight with hearts as light,
To loves as gay and fleeting
As bubbles that swim on the beaker’s brim,
And break on the lips while meeting.*

That version is perhaps not the best to be sung in schools. This seemingly-anonymous rewrite, found for us by Stephen Osman of the Minnesota Historical Society, probably comes out of one of the temperance movements of the nineteenth century, and is entirely suitable for younger singers.

The Maid of Prairie du Chien

This is a unique song, about which nothing is known with certainty. But the only known informant, who was an old man in 1903 when the song was collected, said it was popular when he was young — i.e. in 1850 or earlier. The best guess of the collectors is that it arose out of the fur trade — meaning that, very likely, the singer left Prairie du Chien to head into Minnesota. In any case, the song is probably early; Prairie du Chien had a population of about 370 in 1805 when Zebulon Pike came there, but in the two decades following it, the population fell by about half (Folwell I, p. 92).

Source: The words were submitted in 1903 by Maude Williams from the singing of “an old man in Clinton County” and printed on page 201 of H. M. Belden, *Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folk-Lore Society*. There was no tune. But several of the lyrics are reminiscent of “Green Grow the Lilacs,” which was so popular in the early nineteenth century that the legend arose that Mexicans called Americans “Gringos” because they were always singing

“Green grow....” Since the tune also fits the lyrics, I think it not too unlikely that this was the original tune.

The House Carpenter [Child 243]

This song is #243 in Francis James Child’s monumental collection *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, and it has a curious history. The earliest known copy is a broadside believed to come from the reign of Charles II (1660-1685), and it differs both in meter and in content from the American versions. Child called the song “James Harris (The Dæmon Lover)” because, in the early versions, it was a ghost, or even the Devil, who came back to lure the girl to her death. This plot element has been completely lost in the American versions, which are extremely widespread (I count at least 103 American texts in my personal library, and have citations of hundreds more) but almost all appear to go back to a single “House Carpenter” text.

Source: The song has been collected twice in Minnesota, once from Dean and once from James Merrick Drew of Saint Paul. The text here is Dean’s (he calls it “The Faithless Wife”), which is a pretty typical American product. Adding the tune was interesting; Bertrand Bronson’s *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* counts 147 melodies known from tradition, almost all of them American. Bronson’s notes indicate that he thinks all of them more or less related, though they include tunes in Ionian (major), Mixolydian, and Dorian modes. The tune I have chosen is in the Mixolydian mode, and the one I know best (I don’t know where I first learned it). I used it because, if it’s familiar to me, it’s perhaps the most familiar to users of this book, even though the handful of other Midwestern versions aren’t particularly close to this version.

In Good Old Colony Days

This is, I believe, the only English-language folksong known in Minnesota which describes the Colonial period. Like “The Pinery Boy” on page 55, it shows how much change a song can undergo. The piece is well-known in England, and probably was first sung there, with the three rogues servants of the King (possibly even King Arthur). After the Revolution, presumably, people didn’t want to talk as if the monarch of Britain were still king, so someone grafted on the prologue about “In good old colony times,” now found in almost all American versions. But the “three scamping rogues” or “three rogues of Lynn” (King’s Lynn in eastern England) are still the same, and they still steal food and cloth, and they still come to the same bad end.

Source: There are two Minnesota versions of this, both short. Belden, p. 269, prints two verses (roughly the last two) which were collected in 1915 from Mrs. W. J. Whipple. And John D. Healy Jr. of Saint Paul put together the version known in his family. I have conflated this from assorted versions to produce a coherent (if short) text which fits the tune I learned years ago, presumably from a recording in my parents’ library.

Sparkling and Bright

The evening was spent in listening to song and recital. Bourry gave us Ingoldsby's "Lord Tom Noddy" with great spirit. White, [future governor Henry] Sibley and others united in "Sparkling and bright" "Health dear woman", "Down East" "Farewell to Moore" "Star-spangled banner" "Landlord fill &c", while throughout the night the greatest variety of voyageur songs inspired the oarsmen...."

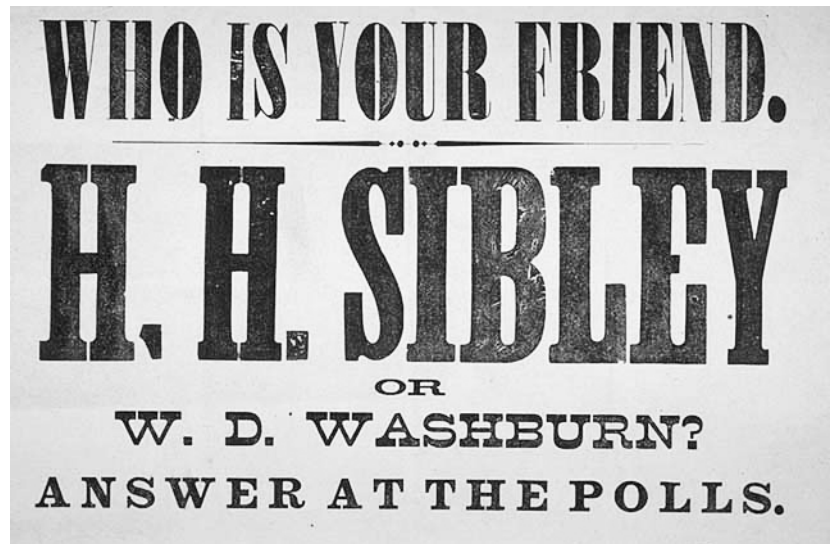
— Frank Blackwell Mayer, describing a gathering in the early territorial period, as quoted on p. 232 of *With Pen and Pencil on the Frontier in 1851: The Diary and Sketches of Frank Blackwell Mayer*, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986.

1 Spark-ling and bright, in its liq - uid light is the wat - er in our glass - es; 'Twill—
 2. Bet - ter than gold is the wat - er cold, From the crys - tal foun - tain flow - ing, A—

5 give you health, 'twill— give you wealth, Ye— lads and ro - sy— lass - es. Oh,
 calm de - light both— day and night, To— hap - py homes be - stow - ing. **CHORUS**

9 then re-sign our ru - by wine, Each smil - ing son and daugh - ter, There's

13 noth - ing so good for the youth - ful blood, Or sweet as the spark - ling wat - er. Oh, wat - er.



At left: Henry Sibley in his Civil War brigadier general's uniform (engraving by J. C. Buttre).
 At right: A poster from one of Sibley's political campaigns. *Minnesota Historical Society*

The Maid of Prairie du Chien

*O my Luvè's like a red, red rose, That's newly sprung in June,
O my Luvè's like the melodie That's sweetly play'd in tune. —
As fair art though, my bonnie lass, So deep in luvè am I;
And I will love thee still, my Dear, Till a' the seas gang dry.
Robert Burns, in The Scots Musical Museum, 1794.*

Fare - well, my friends, I will bid you a - dieu, My heart's full of
sor - row for this leav - ing you. There's no - thing doth my
foot - steps de - tain But the beautiful maid of Prari - ie du Chien.

*Farewell, my friends, I will bid you adieu,
My heart's full of sorrow for this leaving you.
There's nothing doth my footsteps detain
But the beautiful maid of Prairie du Chien.*

*I paid my addresses unto her one day.
I was merely a-jesting to see what she'd say.
She kindly received me and not with disdain,
The beautiful maid of Prairie du Chien.*

*I proffered her marriage, believing her true;
She made no denial, but sadly withdrew.
She's rejected my offer again and again,
The beautiful maid of Prairie du Chien.*

*When lovers get scarce,
which will soon be the case,
Perhaps she'll think
she's once [again?] seen my face.
She shall never have the chance
to deny me again.
This beautiful maid of Prairie du Chien.*

*I wish could wander to some distant shore,
Where wild battles conflict and the cannon doth roar.
But were I slave bound into my chain,
I'd still love the maid of Prairie du Chien.*



Prairie du Chien, late 1840s. Watercolor painting by Seth Eastman.
Minnesota Historical Society.

The House Carpenter

*When he had told her these fair tales, To love him she began,
Because he was in human shape, Much like unto a man.
And so together away they went, From off the English shore,
And since that time the woman-kind Was never seen no more.*

"A Warning for Married Woman," the earliest known version of this song, from the Pepys ballad collection and printed as the "A" text of this song in volume IV of the Dover edition of Francis James Child, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads (1880-1892).

Well met, well— met, My own true— love, Well met, well— met, said— he. For I've
just re - turned from the deep salt sea, And it's all for the sake of— thee.

*Well met, well met, my own true love,
Well met, well met, said he,
For I've just returned from the deep salt sea,
And it's all for the sake of thee.*

*Oh, I might have married a Queen's daughter,
For she would have married me,
But I forsook her [c]rown of gold,
And it was all for the sake of thee.*

*If you could have married a Queen's daughter,
I'm sure you are much to blame,
For I am married to a house carpenter,
And I think he's a nice young man.*

*If you will leave your house carpenter,
And go along with me,
I will bring you where the grass grows green,
On the banks of the sweet Dundee.*

*Were I to leave my house carpenter,
And go along with thee,
What have you got to maintain me there,
Or to keep me from slavery?*

*I have five ships on the ocean wide,
All sailing for dry land,
With a hundred and ten of their jolly seamen,
To be at your command.*

*She picked up her darling babe,
And kisses gave it three,
Saying, "Stay at home, my sweet little babe,
Keep your papa company."*

*They had not sailed two weeks, I believe,
I am sure it was not three,
Until this maid* began to weep
And she wept most bitterly.*

*Oh do you weep for my† gold? said he,
Or do you weep for my† store?
Or do you weep for your house carpenter,
That you left on yonder shore?*

*I do not weep for your gold, she said,
Or neither for your store,
But I do weep for my sweet little babe,
That I never will see more.*

*They had not sailed three weeks, I believe,
I am sure it was not four,
Until her true love's ship it struck a rock,
And it sank to rise no more.*

*Curse all, curse all, this fair maid cried,
Oh, curse a sailor's life,
For they robbed me of my sweet little babe,
And deprived me of my life.*

** Dean's text reads "pretty fair maid," but this will not scan with the form of the other verses.*

† Most versions read "your" at the marked places in this verse.

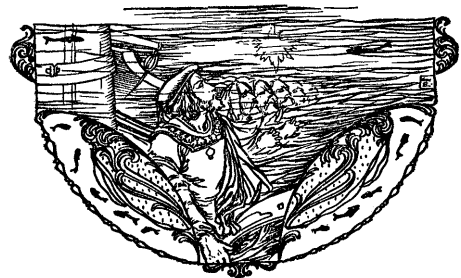


Illustration of "Sir Patrick Spens" (another ballad of a ship lost at sea) by George Wharton Edwards (1896). *Author's personal collection.*

In Good Old Colony Days

When auld King Arthur ruled this land, he was a thieving king,
 He stole twa bows o' barley meal to mak' a white pudding...
 — "Johnny Lad," a children's skipping song from Scotland

1 G D G G Am
 In good old col - o - ny days, When we lived un - der the
 5 G G D G D C D
 King, Three— rog - uish chaps fell in - to mis - haps, Be - cause they could not
 9 G G Am G G Am
 sing. Be - cause they could not sing, Be - cause they could not
 13 G G D G D C D G
 sing. Three— rog - uish chaps fell in - to mis - haps be - cause they could not sing.

*In good old colony days,
 When we lived under the King,
 Three roguish chaps fell into mishaps
 Because they could not sing.
 Because they could not sing,
 Because they could not sing,
 Three roguish chaps fell into mishaps
 Because they could not sing.*

*The first he was a miller,
 The second he was a weaver,
 And the third he was a little tailor,
 Three jolly rogues together.
 The miller he stole corn,
 The weaver he stole yarn,
 And the little tailor he stole broadcloth
 To keep the three rogues warm.
 The miller got drowned in his dam,
 And the weaver got hung in his yarn,
 And the sheriff clapped paws* on the little tailor
 With the broadcloth under his arm.*

* "Sheriff clapped paws" is an approximation of the Healy Family variant. This is most unusual. The normal reading is something like "And the devil clapped his claws on the little tailor" or "And the devil he caught the little tailor."



THE MILLER, WEAVER, & LITTLE TAILOR
 A much admired Song, Sung by Mr. John, & proper to be Sung at all Musical Clubs.
 See the Devil flying away with the Tailor with the Broad Cloth under his Arm.
 In good King Arthur's day
 He was a worthy King,
 Three Sons of Whores were turn'd out of doors,
 Because they could not sing.
 The first he was a Miller,
 The second was a Weaver,
 The third he was a little Tailor,
 These three being Rogues together.
 The Miller he stole Corn,
 The Weaver he stole Yarn,
 And the little Tailor, he stole broad Cloth,
 To keep these three Rogues warm.
 The Miller was drowned in his dam,
 The Weaver was hung in his Yarn,
 And the Devil he clapped paws with the little Tailor,
 And the Broad Cloth under his arm, was.

A broadside from the Bodleian. It is almost illegible, but is an 1804 copy of this song, beginning "In good King Arthur's day, He was a worthy king, Three sons of Whores were turn'd out of doors, Because they could not sing." It's not clear why being unable to sing was so bad, but there is an ancient English tradition that every guest at a celebration should bring a song or a story or some form of entertainment. Note the weaver on the gallows and the drowning miller in the background of the drawing.

The Territorial Period

THE AMERICAN BOUNDARY WITH CANADA WAS SETTLED shortly before Minnesota was organized as a territory — and indirectly hastened Minnesota's entry into the Union. James K. Polk, who became President in 1845, came into office promising to establish a border between the western U. S. and western Canada far to the north of the boundary in the east (symbolized by the campaign slogan "Fifty Four Forty or Fight," referring to a demand that the dividing line between the United States and Canada be at 54° 40'). But he wanted to take over California even more, and the Mexicans, who had already lost Texas, were too proud to sell California. Polk had to fight a war to capture it. Rather than fight two wars at once, Polk made a deal with the British to extend the boundary with Canada along the established 49° line.

Polk used all sorts of tricks to win the Mexican War, including unleashing the deposed Mexican president Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna to stage a coup in Mexico. Santa Anna was supposed to sell them California. He didn't; he knew he had to keep up the fight to stay in power. The main American force in the north was led by General Zachary Taylor. Santa Anna tried to attack him, and was defeated. After Winfield Scott (of Lundy's Lane fame) captured Mexico City, Mexico (which soon got rid of Santa Anna again) had to negotiate, and Polk gained what he wanted. The American people had a new hero, "Old Rough and Ready," General Taylor (Whelan, pp. 41-68).

The Mexican War produced a lot of very forgettable songs, but at least one became famous among sailors, and may have been known to Dean.

*When Zachary Taylor gained the day,
Heave away, Santy Anno [the sailor's name for Santa Anna]
He made old Santy run away,
All on the plains of Mexico. (Or: Away in Californ-i-o)
So heave her up, and away we'll go,
Heave away, Santy Anno,
Heave her up and away we'll go
All on the plains of Mexico.*

The Whig party, desperate for a winner, proceeded to draft Taylor as its presidential candidate for the 1848 election. This would prove important for Minnesota, because Taylor won (the last Whig to be elected President). If Minnesota became a territory while Taylor was President, then the Whigs would name the territorial officials. President Polk, who hoped to create a Democratic state, therefore hastily signed the law making Minnesota a territory on March 3, 1849, the day before Taylor's inauguration (Blegen, pp.162-163).

Polk's attempt to create a Democratic enclave seemed logical — after all, Wisconsin and Iowa and Illinois were reliably Democratic. Except that everything shifted during the short time that Minnesota was a territory. Minnesota was

not to vote for a Democratic presidential candidate until 1932. Between 1849 and 1858, the country's entire political climate changed — it was probably the wildest political ride in American history.

It all started not long after Minnesota became a territory. It was a period when almost everyone seemed to have an urge to head west. New lands were settled with almost breathtaking speed. Minnesota's population is said to have grown 2760% in this time (Randall/Donald, pp. 4-5).

It helped that it was easier to get to Minnesota than ever before. At first the normal route was up the Mississippi by boat, the same way that Zebulon Pike had used. That was still popular — riverboats would justifiably come to be a part of Minnesota folklore — but as Wisconsin was settled, more roads were opened and people could come to Minnesota by wagon. And there was a new route to the state via the Great Lakes, too. In 1855, the Sault-Ste. Marie Canal (informally known as "the Soo") opened, meaning that cargo ships could now move from Lake Superior to Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Erie, giving Minnesota products access to cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland, and they could go on through the Welland Canal (opened 1833) to Lake Ontario and down the St. Lawrence. Indeed, goods could even be trans-shipped via the Erie Canal to reach New York and the East Coast. This was to prove very important during the Civil War, when Minnesota iron became a key part of the Union war effort. The first ore ship to take the Sault-Ste. Marie Canal from Lake Superior to the lower Lakes was the *Columbia*, out of Marquette, Michigan. The first ship to sail up the Soo into Lake Superior was the *Illinois*, commanded by Jack Wilson (Ratigan, p. 43; esp. Havinghurst, p. 204). Wilson would later command the *Lady Elgin*, which sank in 1860 in one of the greatest disasters of the Great Lakes.

Grain ships had by then been sailing to England for a decade, but the first really big haul was taken by the *Dean Richmond*, which went from Chicago to Liverpool in 1856 (Nevins 1852, pp. 229-231). When Minnesota was ready, so were the customers. For the first time, residents of Minnesota could farm for profit rather than for subsistence.

The westward push wasn't confined to Minnesota. California had its own population explosion due to the Gold Rush, and it created a crisis in 1849 when it petitioned to be admitted to the Union.

*Oh, them was the days of the good old times, hooday, hoodah,
Back in the days of Forty-Nine, hoodah, hoodah,
Then blow, boys, blow, for California go!
There's plenty of gold, so I've been told,
On the banks of the Sacramento!
(The Banks of Sacramento. Hugill, pp. 98-99)*

*Dance,
Boatman, Dance*
ON PAGE 27
*The Glendy
Burk*
ON PAGE 28

*Billie Johnson of
Lundy's Lane*
ON PAGE 14

*Lost on the
Lady Elgin*
ON PAGE 29

The understanding, till then, had been that new states north of 36° 30' would be free states, with those south of the "Missouri Compromise Line" being slave states.

California changed that (it was south of the Missouri Compromise boundary but wanted to be a free state), and would produce an imbalance between free and slave states in Congress. If enough free states came into being, they could amend the constitution to eliminate slavery. Threats of disunion caused a political crisis. Finally, a compromise was created, the Compromise of 1850. Among its provisions, it let California into the Union as a free state, and it resulted in the passage of a strong Fugitive Slave Law, making it possible for slave owners to pursue their slaves even in free states. Like any good compromise, no one really liked it, but a majority could live with it.

The Compromise, however, needed a strong President to maintain it, and the White House was very weak in this period. President Taylor died in office in 1850. Millard Fillmore (who would later visit Minnesota during the Grand Excursion of 1854) was weakened by being un-elected. Franklin Pierce, who took office in 1853, was handsome, genial, and useless. James Buchanan, who took over in 1857, was so feeble that, on the rare occasions when he ventured to disagree with a member of his pro-southern Cabinet, people joked that the President was opposed to the administration.

During the term of President Pierce, bills were signed creating Kansas and Nebraska territories. This completely set aside the old Missouri Compromise — and started a struggle in Kansas, which eventually led to bloodshed, over whether Kansas should be a slave or a free state.

And, soon after Buchanan was elected, the Supreme Court handed down the Dred Scott decision.

The Dred Scott case was probably the first time Minnesota had influenced national politics in a large way. Dred Scott was a slave who travelled with his master through various free states and territories. Among the places he stopped was Fort Snelling; you can see his reconstructed dwelling place there today.

Dred Scott was a black slave, born in Virginia around 1795. He came to be the property of Doctor John Emerson, who was employed as an army surgeon. Dred remained with Emerson while the surgeon served at Fort Snelling in the 1830s (where slavery was barred under the Missouri Compromise, though in fact many officers there had slaves) and in Illinois (a free state, and one where slavery had been banned under the Northwest Ordinance of 1787). Scott would marry his wife while at Fort Snelling, but then went back to Missouri — a slave state — with Emerson. After Emerson died, Scott was persuaded to try to win his freedom in the courts on the argument that he had been in free territory and should have been freed as a result.

The case bounced around the courts for ten years before arriving at the Supreme Court in 1856. The court held off announcing a decision until 1857 — and then announced

one of the broadest, and one of the stupidest, court decisions of all time. They could have ruled on narrow grounds (that Scott had no basis to sue because he wasn't a citizen, or that he had forfeited that right when he left free territory). Instead, chief justice Roger B. Taney in effect wiped away every concession and compromise ever made with anti-slavery feeling: He concluded that not only did Dred Scott have no right to sue, but that not even free Blacks were citizens. Plus slaves were property, and property had to be protected, so slaves were slaves everywhere. Plus, just in case there were any doubts, the Missouri Compromise and the Northwest Ordinance were unconstitutional; the federal government could not prohibit slavery in the territories. (McPherson, pp. 170-176).



Dred Scott. From *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 27, 1857. *Minnesota Historical Society*.

It's ironic to note that Taney had freed his own slaves. Because, in practical terms, he had made it impossible for any black man to have any rights in the United States. Scott, for instance, could have been deprived of his wife if he or she were sold off to another owner. This was the main theme, for instance, of Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), as Tom is sold away from his wife Chloe. It gave us some of the most beautiful laments in English:

*Oh, my master's going to sell me, Shallo, shallo brown,
Going to sell me to a Yankee, Shallo, shallo brown.
Going to see me for a dollar, Shallo, shallo brown.
For that great big Yankee dollar, Shallo, shallo brown.
Juliana, I truly love you, Shallo, shallo brown,
But I'm bound away to leave you, Shallo, shallo brown.*

The practice of selling slaves south was also the central theme of Benjamin Russell Hanby's song "Darling Nelly Gray," a popular song of 1856 that went on to become a well-known folk song.

**Darling Nelly
Gray**
ON PAGE 30

In the years after the Dred Scott decision, the contest over slavery, already furious, suddenly had become an unbridgeable partisan divide. The Whig party had already died over it; still strong in 1852, they didn't even nominate a candidate in 1856 (a few die-hards accepted the "Know-Nothing" candidate). The new party was the Republicans, who were formed only in 1854 but were already strong by 1856.

This new partisan alignment would affect Minnesota deeply as the territory tried to become a state. Congress passed an enabling act in early 1857 granting Minnesota statehood. But the constitutional convention was so bitterly divided that members of the two parties could not even meet together to draft a constitution; they ended up with two drafts, which were imperfectly reconciled, and the members of the two parties signed separate copies (Lass, pp. 100-102.). The botch didn't help Minnesota's standing in Congress (Senator John Sherman called the constitutional convention "two mobs"; Blegen, p. 229), but the state was permitted to join the Union on May 11, 1858. Henry Sibley became the first Governor, and went on to win the first state gubernatorial election in 1859; the Congress elected that year was Republican, and the two Congressmen elected were also Republicans (after a mix-up in which the state thought it would win three Congressmen). So much for Polk's plans for a Democratic state.

The tensions came about because a whole generation of great leaders, such as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, had died in the early 1850s. With them gone, there was no question about who was the most important politician in the nation. It was Stephen A. Douglas, Senator from Illinois. Douglas had already done much to shape the history of Minnesota — he had helped arrange the founding of Superior, Wisconsin in hopes of there being a northern Transcontinental Railroad extending to the Great Lakes (Nevins 1852, p. 86), and he had helped with the maneuvers that separated Minnesota Territory from the state of Wisconsin (Lass, pp. 78-84). But while Douglas was a very strong, forceful man, he was not always a wise man.

Even as Minnesota was working on its constitution, Senator Douglas was coming up for re-election in Illinois. The Republican party, which had lost the 1856 presidential election but still managed to establish itself as the primary alternative to the Democrats, offered as his opponent a little-known former congressman by the name of Abraham Lincoln. The Dred Scott decision lingered in the air. Lincoln was making a name for himself with speeches in which he declared "a house divided against itself cannot stand" and that a government could not remain "permanently half slave and half free." Lincoln and Douglas agreed to a series of debates

which became famous. And Lincoln went for the jugular, asking Douglas how a people could exclude slavery from its territory. Douglas's official policy was "popular sovereignty" — that people should be allowed to decide for themselves. But, Lincoln pointed out, the Dred Scott decision denied them that right; slavery was there — even in free states! — and they were stuck with it. What choice did the people have? Douglas came up with an answer: Although constitutionally slavery was protected everywhere, in practice it could not survive unless the citizens passed slave codes to enforce it. This came to be known as the Freeport Doctrine. It gained Douglas another term as senator. It cost him the presidency. (McPherson, pp. 182-189).

There were other reasons why Democrats were unpopular in 1860. The Panic of 1857 caused massive financial turmoil and dislocated many people, and it had happened during a Democratic administration.

But the real problem with Douglas was that the South would not accept the Freeport Doctrine. Douglas had been a staunch friend of the South for decades, but now he was unacceptable to the slaveholding class. The Democrats held their presidential nominating convention at Charleston in 1860, with Douglas the obvious leading candidate. But the Southerners were ready. About a sixth of the delegates bolted the conference — but the body decided that the nominee must get two-thirds of the votes of all the delegates, including the bolters. It was impossible. Douglas had a clear majority of those remaining (indeed, he had almost half the total delegate including the bolters) — but he could not be nominated.

In the end, the Democrats abandoned their convention, mounted another one, and failed again to nominate Douglas. But they had no compromise alternative. In the end, they split, nominating two candidates: Douglas and John Breckinridge, the current vice president (Catton-ComingFury, pp. 24-40, etc.). In addition, a group of moderates, mostly old Whigs, tried to form a Constitutional Union party, and nominated John Bell. When Minnesota first voted for a President, in 1860, there were four major candidates: Douglas, Breckinridge, Bell — and Abraham Lincoln, who was nominated by the Republicans on the basis of his brilliant speechmaking.

One of the side effects of this confusion was a proliferation of songs about the campaign. Some were actual campaign songs — the Republican "Wide Awakes" used music to bring out the crowds and inspire them. Every party had its songs — "Breck and Lane, Breck and Lane, Tried and true are the twain," sang the southern Democrats. The Constitutional Unionists had a song with the absurd refrain, "U li, a li, a la e, Vote for Bell of Tennessee." (There had been worse. Martin Van Buren's vice president Richard Mentor Johnson was called "Rumpsey Dumpsey" Johnson because *his* song had run "Rumpsey Dumpsey, Rumpsey Dumpsey, Colonel Johnson killed Tecumseh" — Morison, p. 454.)

**Lincoln and
Liberty**
ON PAGE 31

The Republicans also had songs describing the wild political situation of the time. To the tune of “Sing a Song of Sixpence,” they gave forth with

*Sing a song of Charleston! Bottle full of Rye!
All the Douglas delegates Knocked into pi! (sic.)
For when the vote was opened, the South began to sing,
“You little Squatter Sovereign Shan’t be our King!”
Hi diddle diddle, the Dred Scott riddle!
The delegates scatter like loons!
The little Dug swears to see the sport,
And the Southerners count their spoons.*

(For texts of all these songs, see Lawrence, pp. 342-343.)

The election of 1860 was like no other in American history — almost like two elections: Lincoln versus Douglas in the north, Bell versus Breckinridge in the south. Bell won 13% of the vote, and three border states. Breckinridge won 18%, and took all the deep southern states. Douglas won 29% of the votes, but captured only the electoral votes of Missouri and some of those of New Jersey. And Lincoln made the most amazing showing of any president ever. He wasn’t even on the ballot in ten states in the South. But he won a plurality: 40% of the vote, and the electoral votes of every state north of the Ohio River. That was enough to make him president. And that was enough to make the South secede from the Union.

Song Notes

Dance, Boatman, Dance

Two names tower above American music in the mid-nineteenth century: Stephen Foster (author of “Camptown Races,” “The *Glendy Burk*,” “Jeanie With the Light Brown Hair,” “My Old Kentucky Home,” “Oh! Susanna,” “Swanee River,” and many more) and Daniel Decatur Emmett (author most especially of “Dixie,” and also “Old Dan Tucker”). Both were associated with something that could only have originated in nineteenth century America: the Minstrel Show. Emmett actually was part of a show; Foster was not, but he wrote for the Christy Minstrels, one of the most important shows.

A minstrel show was a musical performance in which white men painted their faces black and played music allegedly associated with the slaves of the period, using instruments such as banjos and bones that the slaves would play. It was a rather disgusting art form, but it gave us most of the brilliant and memorable songs listed above.

Often these songs were about riverboats. Foster’s “The *Glendy Burk*” and Emmett’s “De Boatman Dance” are both associated with the Mississippi and its tributaries, especially the Ohio River — the real *Glendy Burk* was wrecked at Cairo, Illinois, where the Ohio joins the Mississippi, in 1855. Cairo is a small town, but it is mentioned in a lot of songs, because there was so much traffic on the two rivers.

This song was almost certainly heard in Minnesota in 1855. According to George Byron Merrick’s *Old Times on the Upper Mississippi*, p. 260, the first “show boat” to reach Saint Paul was the *Banjo*, which arrived in Minnesota in 1856 with a minstrel troupe. Since “De Boatman Dance” (Emmett’s title, in the “dialect” that white musicians pretended Blacks used) was very popular at the time, chances are high that they played the song during their performances.

Source: The excellent tune of this song has caused it to remain well-known among “pop folk” musicians to this day. This version is roughly the way I learned the song, compared

against the text on pp. 566-567 of B. A. Botkin’s *Mississippi River Folklore*. The tune has wandered a little over the years, though it is still recognizably Emmett’s; I’ve eliminated the dialect from the text.

The first folk publication of the song, interestingly, is from Minnesota; it was included by Captain John Robinson in “Songs of the Chantey Man,” which was published in the Minnesota literary magazine *The Bellman*, July 14, 1917.

The Glendy Burk

Few states depended on the steamboat more than Minnesota. When Fort Snelling was founded, there was no way to reach it except by rowing. The first steamboat to reach the Fort was the *Virginia* of 1823. At last the Fort had contact with the rest of the United States — at least during the time when the water was high and the river unfrozen.

This song of a riverboat was written by Stephen C. Foster. The *Glendy Burk* was a real boat, working the Ohio and Mississippi rivers in the 1850s; she hit a snag and sank near Cairo, Illinois on May 24, 1855. I have no idea why Foster wrote about this particular boat, but this is a good sample of the sort of “River Romanticism” which attracted people such as Mark Twain. This is surely among the best songs of this type, and has been found as far away as Australia — though, ironically, I know of no versions collected anywhere along the Mississippi itself.

While this particular Foster song has not been collected in Minnesota, his songs were certainly popular in the state; Dean knew four of them, and Bessie Stanchfield thought she had collected another, though the notes in her papers are not sufficient to prove that it was actually Foster’s song as opposed to another song with the same name.

Note the interesting fact that this song seems to refer to Dan Emmett’s song!

Source: The words are taken from Foster’s 1860 sheet music in Saunders/Root, except that I have eliminated the dialect. The tune is as I learned it from (I think) Debby McClatchy; her melody is clearly derived from, but not quite identical to, Foster’s.

Lost on the Lady Elgin

The *Lady Elgin* was a Great Lakes “showboat,” with a long career before her end. In 1860, captained by Jack Wilson (who had earlier been one of the first captains through the Soo canal), she was carrying a touring load of passengers, mostly Irish militiamen on a holiday after a quarrel with Wisconsin authorities. On the night of September 8, a storm struck. In the course of the storm, the *Augusta*, which was illegally running without lights, rammed the *Lady Elgin*. With her paddlewheels ruined and her hull breached, the *Lady Elgin* was doomed. She sank within twenty minutes, taking most of her passengers (including Wilson). The number of casualties is uncertain, but at least 250 died and no more than 150 were saved. The *Lady Elgin* became a legend of the lakes, mentioned in almost all the histories.

Peculiarly, there is dispute over who wrote the song. The name most often mentioned is Henry Clay Work (author, in this collection, of “Marching Through Georgia”), but this was before his commercial songwriting career. It does sound like Work’s style.

Source: The song has been found twice in Minnesota: Dean sang it, and Bessie Stanchfield collected a version from her star informant, Elma Snyder McDowell. The McDowell version is not to be found in the Stanchfield papers, so this version is from Dean. The tune is from Vance Randolph’s *Ozark Folksongs*, collected from Katherine Ollinger of Fayetteville, Arkansas, in 1941; slightly regularized. Ollinger’s version is almost identical in text to Dean’s. Sadly, the tune is not the best; I will admit to singing this song to the tune of “After the Ball.” It is easy to learn, though.

Darling Nelly Gray

By B. R. Hanby (1833-1867). Publishing in the mid-1850s, it was surely his most popular song, and became a major hit. Mostly in the North, among those who opposed slavery, of course (though there were southern rewrites which plastered over the anti-slavery message). It is said to have been based on an actual event: a runaway slave named Joseph Shelby died at the Ohio home of Hanby’s father. Shelby was hoping to raise money to win the freedom of another slave named Nelly Gray.

Source: Known to Dean, but his version

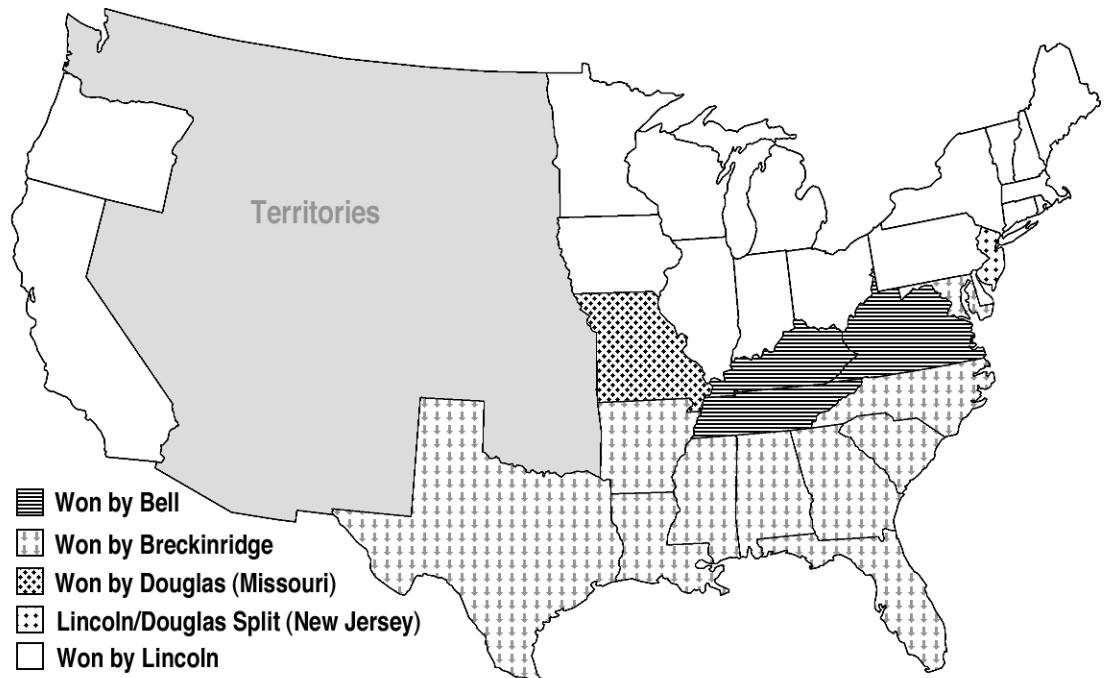
lacks the key third verse which explains the tragedy of the song, as well as the fourth verse. He may have learned one of those cleaned-up southern versions. Laura Ingalls Wilder also quotes a fragment of the song in *Little House in the Big Woods*, chapter four, but not enough to be useful (and this was one of the more fictional parts of her book anyway). I have, therefore, largely followed Dean’s version but with insertions from the original sheet music; these are marked in [brackets]. The music is as I learned the song, primarily from Bob Bovee and Gail Heil.

Lincoln and Liberty

There were several Republican campaign songs from the Election of 1860 — they published a whole songster of them (a songster being a book of words for people who didn’t read music) — but this is the only one most people remember. I’d guess it’s because of the tune, usually known as “Rosin the Beau” (or “Rosin the Bow”). This has been used for many different songs; Pacific Coast settlers sang of “Acres of Clams,” and it was used in any number of political songs — the other party sang “Straight-Out Democrat,” and Henry Clay had at least three campaign songs to this tune, and William Henry Harrison had another; during the Civil War, it would be used for a song called “Sherman’s March to the Sea.” Plus fiddle players played it as an instrumental.

The text is sometimes said to be by Jesse Hutchinson, but I can’t find any evidence for this prior to Silber. At least one source lists F. A. Simkins.

Source: The tune is “Rosin the Beau” as I know it. The words come from Irwin Silber’s *Soldier Songs and Home-Front Ballads of the Civil War*, but (since the song came from a printed source) most of the printed copies are very similar.



The amazing election of 1860, in which Minnesota voted for the first time. Note Lincoln winning the north, Breckinridge the south, and the border divided between Douglas, Bell, and Breckinridge.

Dance, Boatman, Dance

The river's earliest commerce was in great barges — keelboats, broadhorns. They floated and sailed from the upper rivers to New Orleans, changed cargoes there, and were tediously warped and poled back by hand.... In time this commerce increased until it gave employment to hordes of rough and hardy men: rude, uneducated, brave, suffering terrific hardships with sailor-like stoicism; heavy drinkers, coarse frolickers in moral sties like the Natchez-under-the-hill of the day... prodigal of their money, bankrupt at the end of the trip... yet, in the main, trustworthy, faithful to promises and duty, and often picturesquely magnanimous.

Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, chapter III

1 The boat - man dance, the boat - man sing, The boat - man do 'most an - y - thing. And

6 when the boat - man get on shore, He spends his cash and works for more.

10 Dance, boat - man, dance, Dance, boat - man, dance. Dance all night till the broad day - light, go

16 home with the gals in the morn - ing, Hi, ho, the boat - man row,

20 sail - ing down the riv - er on the O - hi - o, Hi, ho, the

23 boat - man row, sail - ing down the riv - er on the O - hi - o.

*The boatman dance, the boatman sing,
The boatman do 'most anything,
And when the boatman get on shore,
He spends his cash and works for more.*

*Chorus: Dance, boatman, dance, dance, boatman, dance,
Dance all night till the broad daylight,
Go home with the gals in the morning.
Hi, ho, the boatman row,
Sailing down the river on the Ohio,
Hi, ho, the boatman row,
Sailing down the river on the Ohio,*

*The boatman is a thrifty man,
There's none can do as the boatman can.
I never saw a pretty girl in my life
But that she was a boatman's wife.*

*I went on board the other day
To see what the boatman had to say,
And there I let my passion loose;
They crammed me in the calaboose.*

*When you go to the boatman's ball,
Dance with your wife or not at all.
Sky-blue jacket, tarpaulin hat,
Look out, boys, for the nine-tailed cat.*

*When the boatman blows his horn,
Look out, old man, your daughter's gone.*
He stole my sheep, he stole my goat,
He put 'em in a bag and took 'em to the boat.*

*Emmett's original read "your hog is gone."

The Glendy Burk

Owing to its alluvial banks, and the consequent eating away of wooded points and islands by the ever changing current of that most erratic of rivers, the bed of the stream was literally sown with snags. The wonder of it is, that a pilot was able ever to take a boat up and back a thousand miles, without hitting a snag and losing his boat. They did it, however...

George Byron Merrick, Old Times on the Upper Mississippi, Recollections of a Steamboat Pilot from 1854 to 1863, p. 232.



The Glen - dy Burk is a might-y fast boat with a might-y fast capt - ain too; He
sits up there on the hur - ri - cane deck and he keeps his eye on the crew. I
can't stay here, for they work too hard; I'm bound to leave this town; I'll
take my duds and tote 'em on my back when the Glen - dy Burk comes down. (It's)
Ho! for Lou' - si - an - a! I'm bound to leave this town; I'll
take my duds and tote 'em on my back when the Glen - dy Burk comes down.

The Glendy Burk is a mighty fast boat, with a mighty fast captain too;

He sits up there on the hurricane roof and he keeps his eye on the crew.

I can't stay here, for they work too hard; I'm bound to leave this town;

I'll take my duds and tote 'em on my back when the Glendy Burk comes down.

Chorus: (It's) ho! for Louisiana, I'm bound to leave this town;

I'll take my duds and tote 'em on my back when the Glendy Burk comes down.

The Glendy Burk has a funny old crew, and they sing the boatman's song.

They burn the pitch and the pine knot too, for to shove the boat along.

The smoke goes up and the engine roars and the wheel goes 'round and 'round,

So fare you well, I'll take a little ride when the Glendy Burk comes down.

I'll work all night in the wind and storm, I'll work all day in the rain,

Till I find myself on the levee dock in New Orleans again.

They make me mow in the hay-field here and knock my head with the flail,

I'll go where they work with the sugar and the cane and roll the cotton bale.

My lady love is as pretty as a pink, I'll meet her on the way,

I'll take her back to the sunny old south and there I'll make her stay.

So don't you fret, my honey dear, oh! don't you fret, Miss Brown, I'll take you back fore the middle of the week when the Glendy Burk comes down.

Lost on the *Lady Elgin*

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange....

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, I.ii.397-402



1 F F Dm F F C F

Up from the poor man's cott - age, Forth from the man - sion door,
Sad was the wail of child - ren, Weep - ing for par - ents gone,
Staunch was the no - ble steam - er, Prec - ious the freight she bore,

7 F F Dm F C F C F

Sweep - ing a - long the wat - er, Echo - ing a - long the shore,
Child - ren that slept at eve - ning, Or - phans — woke at morn.
Gai - ly they loosed their ca - bles A few short hours be - fore.

13 F F Dm F F C F

Caught by the morn - ing breez - es, Borne on the eve - ning gale,
Sis - ters for broth - ers weep - ing, Hus - bands for miss - ing wives,
Proud - ly she swept our har - bor, Joy - ful - ly rang the bell.

19 F Bb F C F C F

Came at the dawn of morn - ing A sad and sol - emn wail.
These were the ties that were severed By those five hund - red lives.
Lit - tle they thought that morn - ing It would peal so sad a knell.

25 F F Dm F F C F

Chorus: Lost on the *Lad - y El - gin*, Sleep - ing to wake no more,

31 F F Dm F C F C F

Numb'r - ing in death five hund - red That failed to reach the shore.

Darling Nelly Gray

No person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered upon Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

The Constitution of the United States, Article IV, Section 3, establishing the right to keep slaves (though the Founders carefully did not use the word "slave"). It was not repealed until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.

1 C F C
There's a low green val - ley by the old Ken - tuck - y shore Where I've whiled man - y

7 G C F
hap - py hours a - way, A - sit - ting and a - sing - ing by the lit - tle cot - tage door where

14 C G C G
lived my — darl - ing Nell - y Gray. Oh my darl - ing Nell - y Gray, they have

20 F C G C
tak - en you a - way, And I'll nev - er see my darl - ing an - y more. I'm a - sit - ting by the

27 F C G C
riv - er and I'm weep - ing all the day, For you've gone from the old Ken - tuck - y shore.

*There's a low green valley by the old Kentucky shore,
Where I've whiled many happy hours away,
A-sitting and a-singing by the little cottage door
Where lived my darling Nelly Gray.*

Chorus.

*Oh, my darling Nelly Gray, they have taken you away,
And I'll never see my darling any more.*

*I'm a-sitting by the river and I'm weeping all the day,
For you've gone from the old Kentucky shore.*

*When the moon had climbed the mountain and the stars were
shining too,*

*Then I'd take my darling Nelly Gray,
And we'd float down the river in my little red canoe,
While my banjo sweetly I would play.*

*[One night I went to see her, but "she's gone!" the neighbors say,
The white man has bound her with his chain.*

*They have taken her to Georgia to wear her life away,
As she toils in the cotton and the cane.]*

*[My canoe is under water and my banjo is unstrung,
I'm tired of living any more,
My eyes shall look downward and my songs shall be unsung
While I stay on the old Kentucky shore.]*

*My eyes are getting blinded and I cannot see my way,
Hark! there's somebody knocking at the door —
Oh, I hear the angels calling and I see my Nelly Gray
Farewell to the old Kentucky shore.*

Final Chorus:

*Oh! my darling Nelly Gray, up in heaven there they say,
That they'll never take you from me any more,
I'm a-coming — coming — coming, as the angels clear the way
Farewell to the old Kentucky shore.*

Lincoln and Liberty

I do not mean to say we are bound to follow implicitly in whatever our fathers did. To do so would be to discard all the lights of current experience — to reject all progress, all improvement. What I do say is that if we would supplant the opinions and policy of our fathers in any case, we should do so upon evidence so conclusive, and argument so clear, that even their great authority, fairly considered and weighted, cannot stand.

— Abraham Lincoln, Speech at Cooper Union (this speech, more than any other, made him the Republican nominee of 1860)

1 D A D G D D Bm A

Hur-rah for the choice of the na-tion,— Our chief-tain so brave and so true,— We'll

10 D A D G D A D D

go for the great re - form - a - tion,— For Linc-oln and Lib - er - ty, too!— We'll

18 D D G G D D Bm A

go for the son of Ken - tuck - y, The he - ro of Hoo - sier - dom through,— The

26 D A D G D A D

pride of the "Suck - ers" so luck - y,— For Linc-oln and Lib - er - ty too.

*Hurrah for the choice of the nation,
Our chieftain so brave and so true,
We'll go for the great reformation,
For Lincoln and Liberty, too!
We'll go for the son of Kentucky,
The hero of Hoosierdom through,
The pride of the "Suckers" so lucky,
For Lincoln and Liberty, too!*

*They'll find what by felling and mauling,
Our railmaker statesman can do;
For the people are everywhere calling
For Lincoln and Liberty too.
Then up with the banner so glorious,
The star-spangled red, white, and blue,
We'll fight till our banner's victorious,
For Lincoln and Liberty, too.*

*Our David's good sling is unerring,
The Slavocrat's giant he slew,
Then shout for the freedom preferring,
For Lincoln and Liberty, too.
We'll go for the son of Kentucky,
The hero of Hoosierdom through,
The pride of the "Suckers" so lucky,
For Lincoln and Liberty, too.*



A young "Wide Awake," or Lincoln campaign volunteer. The "Wide Awakes" often used campaign songs to gain votes for their candidates. *Minnesota Historical Society.*

The Civil War

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THE CIVIL WAR MADE MINNESOTA. Certainly it went far toward healing the wounds caused by the constitutional fight between Republicans and Democrats. As it turned out, Governor Alexander Ramsey was in Washington at the time South Carolina fired on Fort Sumter, and immediately went to the White House to offer troops to suppress the rebellion (Moe, pp. 7-8). The troops he offered would become the First Minnesota — not the only Minnesota troops to serve in the war, but the most famous.

**First
Minnesota
Song**
ON PAGE 34

It was the tragedy of the First Minnesota that it fought brilliantly but largely in vain. In the first great battle of the war, at Bull Run, it had the highest casualties of any regiment in the army, and was one of the very few bodies of troops to leave the field in good order. At Gettysburg, it was sacrificed in a suicidal charge that may well have saved the Union army but ruined the regiment.

Not every Minnesota regiment was as unlucky as the First Minnesota — though the Third Minnesota would thoroughly embarrass itself by surrendering to the Confederates in a body. But the First Minnesota Battery fought in the first great battle on the Tennessee front, at Shiloh (where an uncle of Laura Ingalls Wilder, who had joined a Wisconsin regiment, was one of the 10,000 Union casualties. Two of her other uncles would eventually join the First Minnesota Heavy Artillery, but enlisted late in the war and survived; Miller, p. 18). The Second Minnesota was one of the regiments that helped stave off complete disaster at Chickamauga. The Fourth Minnesota suffered heavily in the successful Vicksburg campaign. The Fifth Minnesota served a vital role at Corinth. The Fifth, Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth Minnesota were at Nashville, where the last Confederate attempt at an offensive was smashed. While that was going on, the Second and Fourth Minnesota were taking part in the March to the Sea — the final campaign in the west, in which William Tecumseh Sherman succeeded in his goal of “mak[ing] Georgia howl.” The march, combined with Sherman’s capture of Atlanta, allowed Lincoln to win re-election and also so damaged the Confederate “infrastructure” that they simply could not supply their armies. Sherman was on his way to link up with General Grant’s forces around Richmond when General Robert E. Lee was finally forced to give in. The troops in the east had won most of the fame. But it was the Westerners, including many Minnesotans, who had done the most to win the war.

**Marching
Through Georgia**
ON PAGE 35

The Civil War was the bloodiest conflict in American history. No one knows exact casualty figures, but it is believed that at least 600,000 men died, many of them in battle but far more of disease, in unsanitary camps at a time when medical care was primitive and food difficult to preserve. The losses would change the nation for many years to come.

**When This
Cruel War Is
Over**
ON PAGE 36

Although most of the nation’s attention in this period was spent on the battlefields of Virginia and Tennessee, Minnesota would have its own tragic “second front” in this period.

The history of Minnesota followed a common pattern during the period of westward expansion: A few white men arrived. They bought a small area (in this case, the region around Fort Snelling). More of them arrived, and overflowed their territory. They pressured the Indians to give up more land, making a forced treaty. As more people arrived, the whites again broke the treaty, and forced the Indians onto reservations — often on poor land where they were nearly assured of suffering abject poverty. “In the 1850s the government devised a reservation system whereby Native Americans could be concentrated, assimilated, Christianized and, most importantly, kept out of the way of the white settlers occupying ceded lands. Between 1853 and 1856, the government signed fifty-two treaties with Native American tribes and set up thirteen new Indian Agencies” (Beck, pp. xix-xx). The Dakota (Sioux) were among the victims of this policy. Not all were against the United States; some even fought in the Civil War. But others rose up against the white settlers. This was the Dakota Conflict of 1862 — and it inspired what seems to have been the first “popular” song written and published in Minnesota, “Minnehaha,” with music by Frank Wood and words by Richard H. Chittenden. This probably inspired a folk song, “Haunted Falls” (or “Haunted Wood”); unfortunately, it seems to have been written as a piece of anti-Indian propaganda.

Interestingly, that first Minnesota attempt at a popular song seems to have been the only one to go into tradition. “Serious” Minnesota composers produced quite a bit of sheet music, but none of it seems to have caught the imagination of the common people. Perhaps the closest thing to a “popular” Minnesota song (at least prior to Bob Dylan) was “By the Waters of Minnetonka,” by J. M. Cavanass and Thurlow Lieurance, which was a hit in 1921 (and supposedly based on an Indian melody), but which has never been collected in tradition.

Song Notes

First Minnesota Song

Of all the songs in this volume, this is the one about which the least is known. Stephen Osman, then of the Minnesota Historical Society, found a copy a few years ago, and donated it to the Historical Society archives. It is believed to be the only surviving copy of a poem printed by the members of Company G of the First Minnesota before they shipped out for the Army of the Potomac. But we don't know who printed it, who the author was (apart from the nickname "Mac"; Company G contained soldiers named McKistry and McCulloch), or what tune (if any) was used.

Of the people mentioned in the song, "Gorman" is Willis A. Gorman, the original colonel of the First Minnesota, later promoted to brigadier; "Dike" is William H. Dike, the regiment's first major, "McKune" is Lewis McKune, the first captain of Company G, killed at Bull Run, "Messick" is Nathan S. Messick, first lieutenant and later captain, killed at Gettysburg, and "Smith" is probably William E. Smith, briefly second lieutenant until he quit in July 1861.

Source: We've printed the original broadside. The tune is one of those myriad old tunes I have floating around in my head — probably Irish. It's one of two tunes I thought of when I looked at the piece (the other being "The Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee"). The chorus is to be sung to the same tune as the verse. Observe that it ends on a "hanging" note to bring you right into the next verse.

Marching Through Georgia

In late 1864, the army of William Tecumseh Sherman captured Atlanta from the Confederates. Had he not done so, it's just possible that Abraham Lincoln would not have been re-elected President, and history would have been very different. But having taken Atlanta, Sherman had to decide what to do next. He decided to "March to the Sea." He sent half his army back to Nashville under George H. Thomas, there to defend against whatever the Confederates in the region might try, and took the other half on a romp through Georgia — he "made Georgia howl," causing a lot of damage and making the people hate him. But his march, and Thomas's victory at Nashville, spelled the end of the Confederacy. And Minnesota troops were in both armies.

Henry Clay Work wrote this song afterward, and it became famous — loved in the North and hated in the South, where the people felt the sting of Sherman's wrath. Contrary to the song, there were no Union men left in Georgia after Sherman destroyed their property!

Source: Found in Dean, but his version differs from the original in only two places that I noticed, both minor, so I'm using the original (with the music moved to a more comfortable key). Laura Ingalls Wilder also quotes the song, with a change in the words, in chapter 8 of *Little Town on the Prairie*, showing how well-known it was in the Midwest.

When This Cruel War Is Over

Determining how popular a song was in the nineteenth century is almost impossible. Sales reports, if kept at all, have often been lost, and often a song would be republished covertly (the author has a songster from 1865/1866 which contains a copy of this very song, with the authors not listed because the song belonged to a competitor; clearly no royalties were paid). The famous Civil War historian Bruce Catton wrote on page 171 of *Mr. Lincoln's Army*, "[The soldier's] favorite was a song called 'When This Cruel War Is Over,' by Charles Carroll Sawyer: a song which might well have been, momentarily, the most popular song ever written in America. It sold more than a million copies during the war, which would be equivalent to a sale of seven or eight million today." The words, as Catton said, were by Charles Carroll Sawyer, and the original music by Henry Tucker.

After the Civil War, there was a tendency to ignore the more maudlin songs, and this one in particular seems to have been almost forgotten; there are only a few traditional collections. But so many people mention it in journals that we know that it was widely sung.

Source: I learned this long ago from a recording by a group that called themselves (if I remember correctly) the Union Confederacy. They sang only two verses (omitting notably the last verse, which is rather more "jingoistic" than the rest of the song). They also had the tune "wrong"; what they sang was not the melody Henry Tucker wrote in 1862. I have no idea where they found this tune, or whether it's traditional; I don't know what became of the record, but I seem to recall that it had no source notes. But it's a great melody; I've transcribed their tune and chorus as I remember it (it may have wandered a little over the years), and used the Sawyer words as I learned them (from page 63 of that 1860s songster). I've also included the Tucker melody, with a piano arrangement because it's much more a "piano" than a "guitar" song.

Appendix: Common Folk Songs about Battles involving Minnesota Regiments

Jun 21, 1861: First Bull Run (1st Minnesota) — The Battle of Bull Run [Laws A9]

Jan 19, 1862: Mill Springs (2nd Minnesota) — The Battle of Mills Springs [Laws A13]

Apr 6-7, 1862: Shiloh (1st Minnesota Battery) — The Battle of Shiloh [Laws A10], The Battle of Shiloh Hill [Laws A11], The Drummer Boy of Shiloh [Laws A15]

Jul 4, 1863: Surrender of Vicksburg (4th Minnesota, 5th Minnesota) — The Battle of Vicksburg

Oct 5, 1864 — Allatoona (4th Minnesota) — Hold the Fort (a hymn, but based on a message sent to the garrison by general W. T. Sherman)

Nov 15-Dec 21, 1864: The March to the Sea (2nd Minnesota, 4th Minnesota) — Marching Through Georgia

First Minnesota Song

We'll hang Jeff Davis from a sour apple tree...

— Verse to the common song "John Brown's Body" sung by Union soldiers during the height of the Civil War.

1 Bm

Now boys come and
Cho: So look out, bold

3 Bm D Bm

list - en, a sto - ry I'll tell 'Tis
Jeff Dav - is, and trait - ors be - ware, The

6 A A A

of a com - pa - ny which you know full
boys from the West— are bound to be

9 A Bm Bm

well, 'Tis all of a compa - ny so
there, The boys of this reg' - ment are

12 D Bm A

gall - ant and free, And the name it is
spoil - ing to see, The— South - ern

15 A A A

known by is Com - pa - ny "G."
Chiv - al - ry head - ed by thee.

SONG.
COMPANY "G."
"BY MAC."

- 1 Now boys come and listen, a story I'll tell,
'Tis of a company which you know full well,
'Tis all of company so gallant and free,
And the name it is known by is Company "G."
Chorus.—So look out, bold JEFF. DAVIS and traitors beware,
The boys from the West are bound to be there ;
The boys of this Regiment are spoiling to see,
The *Southern Chivalry* headed by thee.
- 2 To fight for our country, our homes, and our laws,
To fight like our fathers in the same glorious cause :
The President to aid and our country to free,
Is what we are after in Company "G."
Chorus.—So look out, &c.
- 3 You have robbed and you've plundered, with traitorous hands,
And thought you had sundered the *strongest* of bands—
The *Union*—that made you respected and free,
And its *flag* you've discarded for an *old snake and tree.*
Chorus.—So look out, &c.
- 4 With McKune to lead us, and Gorman command,
With DIKE too, and MESSICK and SMITH hand in hand,
The foe we'll encounter, their duty we'll show,
For "there is a North," we will soon let them know.
Chorus.—So look out, &c.
- 5 The Ladies, God bless them, they love all the boys
That, for duty, have left their dear home and its joys.
To fight and to conquer, the rebels they know,
Is what made us all, from their presence to go.
Chorus.—So look out, &c.
- 6 But when we come back with our honors and spoils,
And when we have done with this war and its toils,
The *dear little creatures* so happy will be,
I am sure they will kiss all from Company "G."

Fort Snelling, May 18, 1861.

218236

Above: Unique "Company G" broadside. *Minnesota Historical Society.*

At left: Corps badges for two famous Minnesota regiments. In the Union army, beginning in 1862, soldiers were given badges for their caps to show which division and corps they belonged to. Normally the first division of a corps used a red badge, the second division used a white badge, and the third division used a blue badge.

At Gettysburg, the First Minnesota was part of the second division of the Second Corps, so it wore the trefoil (clover-shaped) badge of the Second Corps (far left). At Chickamauga, and on through the March to the Sea, the Second Minnesota was part of the third division of the Fourteenth Corps, and so would have worn a blue version of the acorn badge (near left).

Source: Frederik Phisterer, *Statistical Record of the Armies of the United States*, 1883.



Marching Through Georgia

[A] few men of Sherman's army passed a house where they discovered some chickens under the dwelling. They immediately proceeded to capture them.... The lady of the house... made piteous appeals to have them spared, saying they were a few she had put away to save by permission of other parties who had proceeded.... The soldiers seemed moved by her appeal; but looking at the chickens again they were tempted and one of them replied: "The rebellion must be suppressed if it takes the last chicken in the Confederacy," and proceeded to appropriate the last one.

General Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs, volume II, p. 364.

Bring the good old bu-gle, boys, we'll sing an-oth-er song, Sing it with a spir-it that will
 start the world a - long, Sing it as we used to sing it, fif - ty thou - sand strong,
 While we were march - ing through Geor - gia. Hur - rah! - Hur - rah! We
 bring the ju - bi - lee, Hur - rah! Hur - rah! The flag that makes you free! So we sang the
 cho - rus from At - lan - ta to the sea, While we were march - ing through Geor - gia.

*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.*

*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.*

*"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.*

*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.*

When This Cruel War Is Over

*We shall meet, but we shall miss him, There will be one vacant chair,
We shall linger to caress him When we breathe our evening prayer.*
George F. Root, "The Vacant Chair," 1861

1 Dear - est love do you re - mem - ber When we last did meet,
Oh how proud you stood be - fore me, In your suit of blue,
5 How you told me that you lov - ed me, Kneel - ing at my feet.
There you vowed to me and count - ry, E - ver to be true.
9 Weep - ing sad and lone - ly, Hopes and fears how vain,
13 When this cru-el war is o - ver, Pray that we meet a - gain.

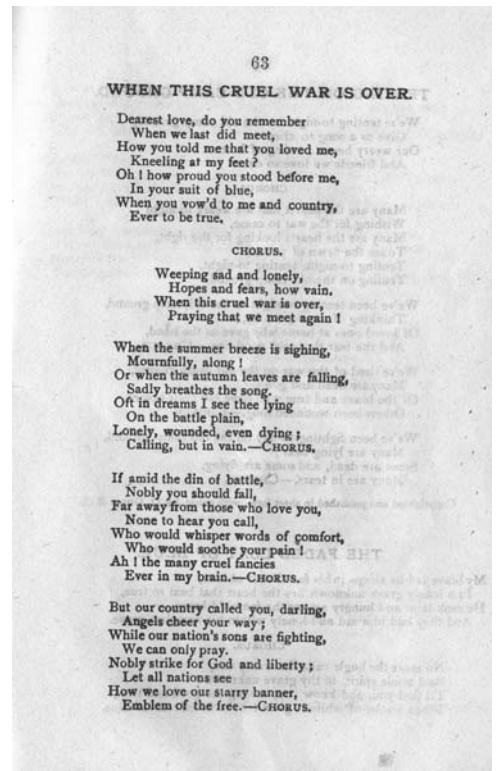
*Dearest love, do you remember
When we last did meet,
How you told me that you loved me,
Kneeling at my feet?
Oh! how proud you stood before me,
In your suit of blue,
When you vow'd to me and country,
Ever to be true.*

*Chorus:
Weeping sad and lonely,
Hopes and fears, how vain.
When this cruel war is over,
Pray that we meet again.*

*When the summer breeze is sighing
Mournfully along,
Or when autumn leaves are falling,
Sadly breathes the song,
Oft in dreams I see thee lying
On the battle plain,
Lonely, wounded, even dying,
Calling, but in vain.*

*If amid the din of battle
Nobly you should fall,
Far away from those who love you,
None to hear you call,
Who would whisper words of comfort?
Who would soothe your pain?
Ah! the many cruel fancies
Ever in my brain.*

*But our country called you, darling,
Angels cheer your way;
While our nation's sons are fighting,
We can only pray.
Nobly strike for God and liberty,
Let all nations see
How we love our starry banner,
Emblem of the free.*



An 1860s songster version of this song.
Author's personal collection.

When This Cruel War Is Over (Original Melody)

1 Dear - est love, do you re - mem - ber, When we last did meet,

5 How you told me that you loved — me, Kneel - ing at my feet.

9 Oh! how proud you stood be - fore — me, In your suit of blue, —

13 When you vowed to me and count - ry Ev - er to be true.

17 Weep - ing sad and lone - ly, Hopes and fears how vain!

21 When this cru - el war is o - ver, Pray - ing that we meet again.

The Immigrants Arrive

MINNESOTA'S GROWTH IN THE TERRITORIAL PERIOD HAD BEEN phenomenal. After the Civil War, the percentage rate of growth slowed, but the people still poured in. Much of this was a direct result of the war. For many years, northerners had wanted a "homestead act" — an easy way for people to acquire public lands. The southern states had consistently opposed it since it would create more free territories (Randall/Donald, p. 81). When they withdrew from the Union, the way was clear. The first Homestead Act passed in 1862.

Uncle Sam's Farm
ON PAGE 42

That 1862 session was significant for Minnesota in more than one way. The University of Minnesota had been chartered by the Territorial legislature, but very little had been done to actually found a school; the only functional college in Minnesota in the late 1850s was Hamline University, which was small and private. But just as the Federal government in 1862 set aside land for farmers, it also set aside land for agricultural colleges, and the land grants were instrumental in turning the University of Minnesota into a real school.

The Civil War era saw Minnesota become much more strongly linked with the rest of the nation. Until that time, the state had been difficult to reach. A state with a large land area and few people had a hard time producing a surplus for export. And, even if it had something to export, it would have been tricky to get it to market. The problem, in the years before 1860, was transport. Originally, Minnesota had been reached primarily by boat — but boat travel up the Mississippi was limited. The Upper Mississippi was often frozen by December. It did not re-open until around April. Even during the open season, there were enough rapids and shallows in the river to make it impossible for large boats to pass, and by August, the water level was too low to support anything large enough to carry real cargo. And Minnesota's main exports, agricultural products, were at their best in late fall (for corn and other grain) or early winter (for animals fed on that grain), when shipping was not available. The only way Minnesota could reach its full potential was if the railroads arrived. But as late as 1859, there were no railroad bridges over the Mississippi north of Dubuque; the lines in Wisconsin terminated at La Crosse and Prairie du Chien (Nevins 1852, pp. 220-221). Minnesota in 1860 was the only state in the Union with no railroad track at all (Randall/Donald, p. 8, though it's worth noting that Oregon had only three miles of track). It was a major event when the first train pulled into Saint Paul! Yet it took only about a decade from the day the first spike was driven in Minnesota for the railroads to cross the entire state and begin laying track in the Dakotas. Towns could be founded, grow large, and die within a decade as the train crews moved west. Even Duluth almost faded in that way; much smaller than Superior in the 1860s, it boomed when Jay Cooke brought the Northern Pacific

railroad to town; the locals even dug a canal into the harbor in 1871. Cooke called the town the "Zenith City on the unsalted sea." But the Panic of 1873 killed the Northern Pacific, and three-quarters of Duluth's inhabitants left within a year (Gilman, pp. 135-138). It wasn't until James J. Hill, the "Empire Builder," took charge that Minnesota's railroads were finally on a firm financial basis.

For many years, railroad work was dangerous. The early trains had no real brakes; they coasted into stations, and when they had to make a fast stop, brakemen had to try to manually slow each car. It was almost impossible to coordinate their activities, and they couldn't stop the cars very quickly anyway. Also, trains missed schedules, and failed to be on the sidings at the right time, or passed switches which were not set correctly. In addition, American tracks were also built "on the cheap" — British rail firms typically spent some five times as much per mile of track laid (Nevins 1862, p. 234). Tracks often shifted, increasing the odds of cars going off the rails. Train wreck songs in time became almost a part of the culture, as songs such as "The C. & O. Wreck" and "The Wreck of Old Number Nine" and, most famous of all, "The Wreck of Old 97" became immensely popular.

O'Shaughanese
ON PAGE 43

For all that, railroads were constantly growing, because they let people get places fast, and move more freight than had ever been possible before.

Skibbereen
ON PAGE 44

The problem of under-population also solved itself in this period, largely through immigration. The Germans and the Irish were among the first to arrive, fleeing poverty and, in many cases, political repression.

Oleana
ON PAGE 45

In the years after the Civil War, people from many other lands came to the United States. Scandinavian immigrants were found almost everywhere.

Hälsa dem Därhemma
ON PAGE 46

Later waves brought people from more exotic places — many Croats, for instance, settled on the Iron Range, and there is still a very large Finnish population there.

Es Klapert Die Mühle am Rauschenden Bach
ON PAGE 47

Often the last wave of immigrants resented the next one — the Irish at the time of their arrival had been greeted by the cry "No Irish Need Apply":

*I have seen employment advertised,
"It's just the thing," says I,
"But the dirty spalpeen ended with
"No Irish Need Apply."*

Den Lille Ole
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But once the Irish were settled, they too feared the new waves of immigrants who came after them. It's a story that has been repeated many times since.

Last Winter Was a Hard One
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Song Notes

Uncle Sam's Farm

The Hutchinson Family came from New Hampshire; one of their most famous songs was “The Old Granite State.” They were an unusual family, abolitionists (in 1844, Jesse Hutchinson wrote “Get off the Track,” which began “Ho, the car Emancipation Rides majestic through the nation”), prohibitionists (another song was “King alcohol is very sly, A liar from the first...”), and firm believers in universal equality (the town of Hutchinson in 1855 agreed to give women the vote; Jordan, p. 108); one verse of “The Old Granite State” runs, “Liberty is our motto, And will sing as freemen ought to, Till it rings o'er glen and grotto, From the old Granite State. 'Men should love each other, Nor let hatred smother, Every man's a brother, And our country is the world!’” There were also a lot of them: sixteen brothers and sisters — so many that they were called “The Tribe of Jesse” after father Jesse Hutchinson Sr. (Spaeth/History, p. 95).

In 1855, the Family came to Minnesota and performed in Saint Paul (Jordan, p. 107). They then selected the site of the current town of Hutchinson. It was not to be their last stopping place (the last of the Hutchinson Family Singers, John, died in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1908 at the age of 87; Spaeth, p. 97), but the settlement is associated with them.

This song was written by Jesse Hutchinson Jr. and published in 1850, and it proved prophetic. At that time, the American government was not giving away land. The proposal had been made to offer the territory of the west to settlers at minimal cost, but the South was absolutely opposed — the territory opened up in this way would surely have been “Free Soil,” as the song says, and eventually would have formed states which would have voted down slavery (Randall/Donald, p. 81). It was only after the South seceded that the first Homestead Act was passed, in 1862, but once it was passed, it proved an astonishing success. You may have read about the frenzied competition for land claims in Laura Ingalls Wilder's *By the Shores of Silver Lake*; Laura in fact quoted this song, with some alterations, in chapter seven.

The other historical primary reference, to Europe's monarchs being “in a fret,” is probably to 1848, the “Year of Revolutions,” in which almost every European country saw some sort of democratic agitation — though most of the protests failed.

Source: The use of the song by Laura Ingalls Wilder, plus the fact that this song was sung by the Hutchinsons, is our justification for including this piece; it has not been collected in tradition in Minnesota. Indeed, it barely qualifies as a folk song; the only version with guaranteed roots in tradition is from the Brown collection of North Carolina songs. I have used the version from Silber/Robinson, p. 215, which is based on the original publications. The original had eight verses; I've used the five that seem to me to best express the feeling of the time.

O'Shaughanese

Yes, that's “O'Shaughanese.” At least, that's how Dean spells it. If you like, you can call the song “Brakeman on the Train.” That's the usual title.

The fact that this song talks about brakemen implies that it is fairly old, before the invention of airbrakes, when brakemen had to run between cars on a train screwing down the brakes. It was a dangerous and uncomfortable job — often filled by Irishmen, who ended up with a lot of the dangerous and uncomfortable jobs in nineteenth century America. But they let the nation grow — and helped a lot of immigrants reach Minnesota.

Source: Text is from Dean. I have omitted two indelicate verses: the fifth (Dean censored it, but you knew what word he meant) and the seventh. The tune is from MacEdward Leach's *Folk Ballads & Songs of The Lower Labrador Coast*, #99 — one of only two tunes apparently known in tradition, and the only one printed. It can be a little hard to make the words fit sometimes; you may want to fiddle around a little.

Skibbereen

Immigrants to the United States left their homelands for many different reasons. Some were fleeing political repression; this was true of some of the Germans and many of the people from southeastern Europe. Others were younger sons, with no land to inherit. Others fled poverty and hunger. Some were squeezed off their land by the great lords who wanted the property for their own use.

The Irish suffered all of these. Ireland in the 1840s was the most overpopulated country in all of Europe — possibly in all the world. And English laws, written to keep Catholics out of power, saw to it that the farmland was all in very small holdings — too small to be “improved” to make farming more efficient. The only way the families could survive was by growing potatoes, because the potato allowed a lot of food to be grown in a small area.

Then, in 1846, came the first of three years of potato blight. The crops were ruined. Those days are still remembered as “The Great Hunger,” and they are famous in song. Of more than eight million people in Ireland, between one and two million starved, and many more emigrated; the population of Ireland fell by roughly a quarter from 1840 to 1850. To this day, social scientists use these events as an example of how mismanagement can ruin an economy — and ecologists use the blight as a warning on the dangers of overpopulation and over-reliance on one crop, the sources of what are called Malthusian catastrophe.

Not that the landlords cared that their renters were starving. Ironically, the British by 1846 were finally starting to liberalize the laws, making it harder for landlords to evict the smallholders. But even under the new laws, if the tenants could not pay their rents — which, with no food, few of them could do — they lost their lands. And Ireland had few industries for them to work in. It was emigrate or starve.

Ireland had long resisted English rule; there were revolts every few years. The greatest had been in 1798, and it was long remembered in song (so long, in fact, that Dean thought this song was about 1798 rather than 1848). In 1848 came the “Young Ireland” revolt. It was a farce. There was only one actual fight, the “Battle of Widow McCormack’s Cabbage Patch,” which resulted in only two deaths (and they may not have been rebels!). Still, the British transported several of the leaders to Australia. The singer of this song might have been transported also, but he managed to flee to America instead, sharing a grudge which lasted for many years in the Irish community (and is still not entirely gone today, as The Troubles have kept bitterness alive in Ulster).

Skibbereen is on the south coast of Ireland, in County Cork (a county which lost 26% of its population in the 1840s). Curiously, it is not particularly close to Ballingary, site of the Cabbage Patch battle. But maybe that’s why the singer was not captured.

Source: The text is Dean’s, with a few corrections noted at the foot of the page. The tune presented a particular problem. I know of three types of tunes for this song. One is Irish, and interesting, but the range is so large that few Americans will be comfortable singing it. Another is known from Australia, and appears to be a version of the Irish tune, worn down enough to be singable — but the result is monotonous, almost a chant rather than a melody. The third tune type is in triple time, and doesn’t fit Dean’s text. As a compromise, I have used something resembling the Australian tune, with some features of the Irish tune to make it more interesting to sing.

Oleana

Ole Bull (1810-1880) was an expert violinist, as well as a folk performer on the hardanger fiddle, who wanted Norway to be independent of the other Scandinavian countries. He had a funny way of showing it: He encouraged Norwegians to leave home and settle in America.

Bull was in great demand as a performer, and travelled the world giving shows. He used the money he earned to buy a large plot of land in Pennsylvania, and in 1852 he started recruiting people to live in his new colony.

It didn’t work very well. The land Bull had bought wasn’t very good, and his claims to it were weakened by some dirty deals by the sellers. The settlers themselves were not really equipped to build a settlement from scratch. Several hundred Norwegians eventually came to Oleana (or Oleanna), as the town was called — but by 1853, the whole thing was falling apart. In that year, Ditmar Meidell published “Oleana” in his journal *Krydsereen*, lampooning the wild claims made for the colony. Soon after, the whole thing was abandoned, and the Oleana settlers started looking for new homes. A very large portion of them settled in Minnesota and Wisconsin; they were among Minnesota’s first Norwegian settlers.

Although the song is satiric, its excellent tune and clever lyrics have kept it alive to this day; very many people will have

heard the translation made by Pete Seeger. Many of them don’t even realize it’s about an actual event.

This song also seems to have gone into Danish tradition; Rochelle Wright and Robert L. Wright, *Danish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1983, pp. 222-223, prints a text very close in meaning to the Norwegian but with a somewhat different tune; it begins *I Oleana der er det godt at være!*

I Norge vil jeg inte Slavelænken bære!

(Note the very close similarity between Norwegian and Danish words!)

Source: The tune and a few scraps of the words are from Odell Bjerkness, whose father came from Norway in 1905 and whose mother arrived in 1912; they were married in Granite Falls in 1915, and the song became part of their family tradition. To produce a full text, I have taken a subset of the 22 verses in Theodore C. Blegen and Martin C. Ruud’s *Norwegian Emigrant Songs and Ballads*, pp. 192-198. Blegen and Ruud’s tune is not quite the same as Bjerkness’s (which is also the one I have usually heard), so be careful about which syllables go with which notes.

In singing this, remember that “Ole” has two syllables, O-lee.

Hälsa Dem Därhemma (Greet the Folks at Home)

Although America was populated by immigrants, few left home entirely voluntarily. Most were forced away. Some pre-Revolutionary colonists were British prisoners transported across the sea. Some Germans and Irish fled persecution. But most fled poverty and hunger. Often a young man would come to America alone, hoping to earn enough money to bring the rest of his family — or even hoping against hope to earn enough to go back home. (An Irish song concludes, “If fortune it ever should favor me, and I should have money in store, I’ll go back and I’ll wed the sweet lassie I left on Paddy’s green shamrock shore.”) Sometimes he managed to find the money, sometimes he didn’t, but almost always he was very lonely when first he reached the United States. The Irish had countless songs on this theme. The Scandinavians had — *Hälsa Dem Därhemma*. So great is the beauty of this song that it has been translated into all the Scandinavian languages, and is said to be the most-requested song by Swedish audiences in America.

The notion of the singer wishing he were a bird is common in folk song: In Australia, they sing, “Oh had I the wings of a turtle dove, I’d soar on my pinions so high, Slap-bang to the arms of my Polly love....” In Ireland, it’s “I wish I had wings of a swallow, Fly out over the sea; Fly to the arms of my true love, And bring him home safely to me.” In the United States, we hear “I wish I were some little sparrow, And I had wings and I could fly, I would fly away to my false true lover.” In England, during the Napoleonic wars, they sang, “Had I the wings of an eagle, through the air I would fly, I would fly to the place where my true love doth lie.” But probably none of those songs was as popular as this.

The song is not traditional in origin. The words are listed as by Charles Bengtsson, with music by Elith Worsing. Indiana University has sheet music copyrighted 1922. There is no variation in the Swedish text. But it's very popular.

Source: Learned mostly from Ross Sutter and John Berquist, though I've heard it elsewhere. The text was checked against *Mike & Else's Swedish Songbook* (a pop Swedish songbook by Mike & Else Sevig), which was used as the basis for the hyphenation in the sheet music. The translation, as usual in these things, is not literally accurate; I have, to an extent, used imagery from English-language (especially Irish) songs about homesickness to replace the Scandinavian ones (including a line about the girl the singer left behind). There are plenty of literal translations around the Internet you can find if needed, and also some other singable translations.

Es Klappert die Mühle Am Rauschenden Bach

How could we possibly do a Minnesota songbook without a song about milling? Minneapolis is the Mill City!

Of course, this song is about a small mill, and milling in Minneapolis was done on a large scale. The first mills in Minnesota were the traditional small streams with a mill pond and a water wheel found in Europe, but when the first commercial mill was founded on Hennepin Island in 1854, it used the water power of Saint Anthony Falls (Risjord, p. 112). The falls also supplied power for the sawmills that were so important to the Minnesota lumber industry.

It may have been just as well for the young ladies of Minneapolis. Millers in British song had a reputation for lustiness; one song, "I Am A Miller Tae My Trade," began, *I am a miller tae my trade, sae wanton, sae wanton, I am a miller tae my trade, hey sae wanton he.*

Source: The words to this are said to be by Ernst Anschütz (1780-1861), who is also sometimes credited with "O Tannenbaum," though there is some doubt about that (there are hints of older versions). The music is sometimes said to be by Heinrich Carsten Reinecke (1824-1910), though others have claimed it was collected from tradition in 1770. There seems to be very little variation in the words, so for most singers it probably shouldn't be counted as a folk song — but it is extremely well known. The tune and most of the text is from Norbert Linke and Brian Bagnall, *Kein schöner Land; Das Große Buch der beliebtesten Volkslieder*. lent to us by Susan Kocher. Marcie Zachmeier-Ruh and Sharon Wilson also helped us in sorting German material.

Den Lille Ole

Danish lullaby, with original words by Peter Lemche and music by Ole Jacobsen, written in 1873. Ole Lukøie was a character in a Hans Christian Anderson story of the same name; the story tells how Ole and his umbrellas spend a week bringing good dreams to a boy Hjalmar. The English translation is based on one by S. D. Rodholm; I've made it a little less absurdly saccharine.

Source: This song is a favorite among Danish emigrant groups, though I have no record of a field collection of this song — in fact, I doubt it is a folk song in the sense that it was ever handed down from person to person. This is based on the melody. It has a very wide range, making it difficult to sing. (If you want a more singable Danish song, we will include a cumulative song, "Langt Udi Skoven," on the web site.) Second, the tunes I have seen are identical. There is no sign of the modifying effects of oral tradition. It's interesting to note that the tune bears a resemblance to Stephen Foster's "Beautiful Dreamer," but with the intervals lengthened.

If the music of the versions are invariant, the words vary. I have seen a five-verse Internet version which agrees with the text given here only in the first verse. The tune is also from the Net, with English translation from *A World of Song*, with help from Signe Betsinger and Rita Juhl, who tell us that this is the most popular song with their Danish singing group.

Last Winter Was a Hard One

Words by Jim O'Neil, music by Jack Conroy, and published in 1880 under the title "When McGuinness Gets a Job" — though the situation sounds rather more like the Panic of 1857. Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Lincoln: Douglas, Buchanan, and Party Chaos 1857-1859*, p. 194, tells of how economic activity halted — and how New York mayor Fernando Wood proposed action: "Pointing out that two hundred thousand New Yorkers depended directly or indirectly on manual labor, and that mid-winter would find fifty thousand men out of work, he suggested a resort to public works projects. Central Park needed improvement [it had not been created yet; Wood helped create it]; a new reservoir had to be built; enginehouses were needed; and streets required paving." Little came of his proposal. But financial panics were common in the nineteenth century, so this could have resulted from some other financial problem. That the song was written in the 1880s is nearly certain, since the sheet music carries a dedication "to comptroller John Kelly" — the man in charge of municipal employment for Tammany Hall's regime in the 1870s.

Although the song was popular enough to inspire the publication of *Johnny Roach's When McGuinness Gets a Job Songster*, the piece is rare in tradition — only four collections. Dean's version is the earliest. The "old three-cornered box" of the last verse is the construction worker's hod for carrying bricks and mortar; Cazden, Haufrecht, and Studer's *Folk Songs of the Catskills*, p. 364, notes that this means McGuinness is a semi-skilled construction worker who is so desperate that he is willing to do unskilled road work.

Source: I learned this long ago from John Berquist and from a long-defunct Twin Cities group called Walking on Air, then found it in Dean. I use the Walking on Air tune, with Dean's words (slightly modified in a few places where I couldn't figure out how to make them fit the tune). Dean calls it by the original title "When McGuinness Gets a Job." I have changed some spellings to make the pronunciation clearer.

Uncle Sam's Farm

On every side now the prairie stretched away empty to far, clear skyline. The wind never stopped blowing, waving the tall prairie grass that had turned brown in the sun. And all the afternoon, while Pa kept driving onward, he was merrily whistling or singing. The song he sang oftenest was.... "Don't you feel alarm, For Uncle Sam is rich enough To give us all a farm!"

Laura Ingalls Wilder, By the Shores of Silver Lake, page 57, "The West Begins."

1 G G G D
Of all the might - y na - tions in the East or in the West, O the

6 G G G D G
glo - ri - ous Yan - kee na - tion is the great - est and the best; We have

10 G G G D
room for all cre - a - tion, and our ban - ner is un-furled, With a

14 G G G D G G D
gen-er-al in - vit - a - tion to the peo - ple of the world. Then come a-long, —

20 G D G D G D
come a-long — make no de - lay, Come from ev - 'ry na - tion,

26 Am D G Bm
come from ev - 'ry way. Our — lands they are broad e-nough,

30 G Am G G G D G
don't be a-larmed, For — Un - cle Sam is rich e-nough to give us all a farm.

*Of all the mighty nations in the East or in the West,
O the glorious Yankee nation is the greatest and the best.
We have room for all creation, and our banner is unfurled,
With a generous invitation to the people of the world.*

Cho: *Then come along, come along, make no delay,
Come from ev'ry nation, come from ev'ry way.
Our lands they are broad enough, don't be alarmed,
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm.*

*Our fathers gave us liberty, but little did they dream
The grand results to follow in the mighty age of steam;
Our mountains, lakes, and rivers are now in a blaze of fire,
While we send the news by lightning on the telegraphic wire.*

*While Europe's in commotion and her monarchs in a fret,
We're teaching them a lesson which they never can forget;
And this they fast are learning, Uncle Sam is not a fool,
For the people do their voting and the children go to school.*

*The brave in every nation are joining heart and hand,
And flocking to America, the real promised land;
And Uncle Sam stands ready with a child upon each arm,
To give them all a welcome to a lot upon his farm.*

*A welcome warm and hearty do we give the sons of toil,
To come to the West and settle and labor on Free Soil;
We've room enough and land enough, they needn't feel alarm —
O! come to the land of Freedom and vote yourself a farm.*

O'Shaughanesey

*I said to the brakeman, "Can't you speed up a bit?" Said he, "You can walk, if you don't like it."
Said I, "Old man, I'd take your dare, But the folks don't expect me till the train gets there!"
"The Dummy Line"*

1 D A A A A G D
Oh, me name it is O' - Shaugh - nes - sy, the truth— I now will

8 D G D A A A D
tell to ye, I work up - on the sec - tion and I am an

15 E7 A7 D G D D
Ir - ish - man. But some brake - men came the oth - er day, and

21 D G D D G
un - to my - self— these words did say, "O' - Shaugh - a - nes -

26 A A A A G Em A D
sy you must a - way to go brak - ing on the train."

*Oh, me name it is O'Shaughanesey, the truth I now will tell to ye,
I work upon the section and I am an Irishman;
But some brakemen came the other day and unto myself these
words did say,
"O'Shaughanesey, you must away to go braking on the train."*

*They took me out into the yard, they put in me hand a big time
card,
They told me braking wasn't hard, if I was only game.
They put on me a railroad cap, they said it belonged to Oliver
Spratt,
Another dacent Irish chap that was working on the train.*

*They sent me out in Number Tin, 'twas then the troubles did
begin,
An where in the divil they all came in it nearly racked me brain;
For one would send me for a pin, the other would fire me back
again,
And they kept me running from end to end when I was braking
on the train.*

*They sent me after some red "ile," with the boys I had a terrible
trial,
The boss said he was out of it, but told me to call again;
I axed him for the flat car key, 'twas then his eye he winked at
me,
Saying, "I think your name is O'Shaughanesey that's braking on
the train."*

*They sent me out on the upper deck, I thought I'd surely break me
neck,
I hung on the running board until both me hands were sore;
'Twas then I thought upon me sins, for I could hardly stand upon
me pins,
Oh, God, forgive me if ever again I go braking on a train!*

*My Sunday pants were minus a sate, I tore them out unloading
freight,
And through a hole as big as New York my skin showed clear and
clane;
The boys were laughing all the while, saying, "O'Shaughanesey,
where did you get your style?"
My blood with madness fairly biled when I was braking on the
train.*

Skibbereen

*I have turned my face • To this road before me,
To the deed that I see • And the death I shall die.*

Padraic Pearse (1879-1916). Pearse in 1916 led the “Easter Rising,” and proclaimed an Irish Republic in defiance of the British authorities. He expected the rebellion to fail, as it did, and he expected to be executed for his part, and he was.

1 C C C C G F C C C
 (Oh,) Fath - er, dear, I of - ten hear you speak of Er - in's Isle, It seems so bright and
 7 C G F G F C C C C
 beaut - i - ful, so rich and rare the soil. You say it is a bount - eous land in
 12 C F G C C F C G F C
 which a prince might dwell, Then why did you a - ban - don it? The rea - son to me tell.

*(Oh,) Father, dear, I often hear you speak of Erin's Isle,
It seems so bright and beautiful, so rich and rare the soil.
You say it is a bounteous land in which a prince might dwell,
Then why did you abandon it? The reason to me tell.*

*My son, I loved my native land with favor and with pride,
Her peaceful groves, her mountains rude, her valleys green and
wide;
It was there I lived in manhood's prime and sported when a boy,
The shamrock and shillelegh was my constant boast and joy.*

*But lo! a blight came o'er my crops, my sheep and cattle died,
The rent ran due, the taxes too, I ne'er could have supplied.
The landlord turned me from the cot where born I had been,
And that, my boy, is the reason why I left old Skibbereen.*

*It is well do I remember that dark November day,
When the landlord and the sheriff came to drive us all away.
They set the roof a-blazing with a demon yellow spleen*
And when it fell the crash was heard all over Skibbereen.*

*Your mother too, God rest her soul, fell on the snowy ground,
And fainted in her anguish at the desolation around,
She ne'er recovered but passed away from life to mortal dream†
And found a grave of quiet rest in poor old Skibbereen.*

*Then sadly I recall the days of gloomy Forty-eight§
I rose in battle with the boys to battle again' fate;
We were hunted through the mountains as traitors to the Queen,
And that, my boy, is the reason why I left old Skibbereen.*

*You then, my boy, were scarce three years old, and feeble was your
frame,
I would not leave you with my friends; you bore my father's
name.
I wrapped you in my cotamore‡ at dead of night unseen,
I have a sigh and bade goodby to poor old Skibbereen.*

*Then, father, father! When the day for vengeance they will call,
When Irishmen o'er field and [fen] will rally one and all,
I will be the man to lead the band beneath the flag so green,
While loud on high we raise the cry, "Revenge for Skibbereen."*

* Dean reads "demon yell of spleen"; correction from Patrick Galvin, *Irish Songs of Resistance*

† Dean reads "Malchasene"; correction from (no author listed), *Soodlum's Irish Ballad Book*

§ Dean reads "Ninety-eight," but most other versions all have "Forty-eight," and this is clearly correct in context — even if you ignore the references to the potato blight of the 1840s, note that England was ruled by a king (George III) in 1798!

‡ Dean reads "kosamane"; correction from Soodlum's. A "cotamore" is from Irish "cóta mór," a "big coat" or great coat.

Oleana

“So many have applied for land that I have been obliged to look out for more in the neighborhood. I have bought 20,000 acres to the west, and in the adjoining county I have... [first] refusal of 112,000 acres.”

“Dear Edvard, when you see it yourself, you will be more than astonished. This is only a beginning.... My persecutors have themselves provoked my undisputed right to defence, and I answer with facts!”

— Ole Bull, writing to his brother Edvard about Oleana.

From Einar Haugen and Camilla Cai, Ole Bull, University of Wisconsin Press, 1993, p. 126

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-6) has chords C, C, F, C, F. The second system (measures 7-12) has chords C, Am, G, G7, C, C, C, F. The third system (measures 13-18) has chords C, F, C, G, C, Norwegian, G7, English, C. The lyrics are in Norwegian and English, with some words in italics.

Norwegian:

*I Oleana der er det godt at være,
i Norge vil jeg inte Slavelænken bærel*

*Chorus: Ole Oleana, Ole Oleana,
Ole Ole Ole Ole Ole Oleana,*

*I Oleana der faar jeg Jord for Intet,
af Jorden voxer Kornet, — og det gaar gesvint det.*

*Hej Markedsgang! Poteterne skulde Du se, Du,
der brændes mindst en Pot af hvereneste en Du.*

*Aa brunstegte Grise de løber om sa flinke
aa forespør sig høfligt om Nogen vil ha' Skinke.*

*As Kjørene dem melker aa kjærner aa yster
liksaa naturlig som Else, mi Syster.*

*Aa Maanen hver Aften er fuld — det er sikkert.
Jeg ligger just aa ser paa'n med Flaska tel Kjikkert.*

*Ja to Daler Dagen det faar Du for at svire,
aa er Du rektig doven, saa kanska Du faar fire.*

*Ja regs til Oleana, saa skal Du vel leve,
de fattigste Stymper herover er Grevel*

English:

*Oh Oleana, That's where I'd like to be,
Not bound in Norway, where they live in slavery.*

*Chorus: Oh, Oleana, Oh, Oleana,
Oh, Ole, Oh, Ole, Oh, Oleana!*

*In Oleana, life is easy, land they just give away
The grain plants and cuts itself, all you do is sit and wait.*

*The potatoes in the market are the biggest you have ever seen;
All you need is one of them to make a quart of whisky.*

*Little roasted piggies rush all about in the streets,
There they will ask you if some ham you'd like to eat.*

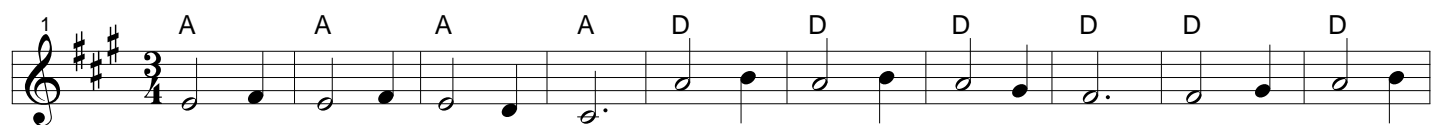
*The cows milk themselves for you, and make the cheese much better
Than anyone you ever knew, except Else my sister.*

*If you stay up very late, you'll see the full moon every night.
Use a bottle for a telescope: It is an amazing sight!*

*They give you money every day — two dollars to sit more and more
But if you're extra lazy, I bet they'll even give you four.*

*So if you really want to live, go to Oleana rare.
Every bum in Norway can be a count when over there!*

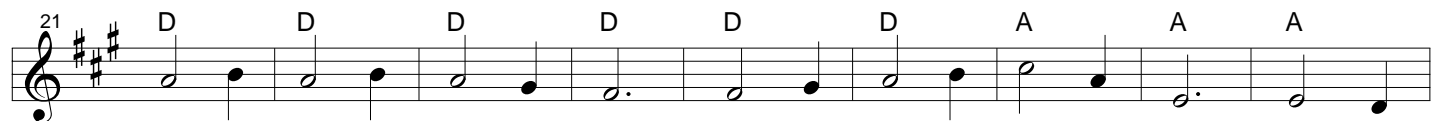
Hälsa Dem Därhemma (Greet the Folks at Home)



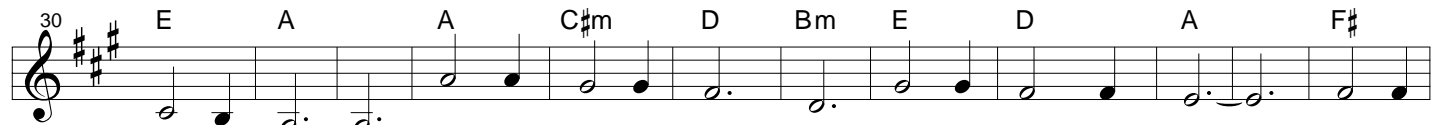
I den sto - ra ty - sta natt, Står jag här vid skep-pets ratt, Un - der him-lens
Stars a - bove are shin - ing bright, Gleam-ing on the waves to - night, While on the ship I



stjär - ne - här, Man på post mig satt. — Ef - ter läng och sträv-sam dag,
sail from home, I remember, though I roam! — High a - bove I see them fly,



Hör jag fjär - ran ving - e - slag, Svalors flock, som å - ter gar, Mot nord, mot
Swal-lows flitt - ing through the sky, Head - ing for the land I love — The land from



ljus, mot vår. — Häl - sa dem där - hem - ma, häl - sa far och mor, — Häl - sa
which I rove. — Greet my fam - ily at home; Greet my fath - er there, — And my



grö - na ha - gen, häl - sa lil - le bror, — Om jag ha - de ving - ar,
dear old moth - er, My love with gold - en hair. — If I had wings of a swal - low,



flö - ge jag med dig, — Sva - la, flyg mot hem - met, häl - sa i - från mig. —
I'd fly a-cross the sea; — Go home, littl - e swal - low, Greet them all for me. —

Swedish:

I den stora tysta natt, Står jag här vid skeppets ratt,
Under himlens stjärnehär, Man på post mig satt.
Efter läng och strävsam dag, Hör jag fjärran vingslag,
Svalors flock, som åter går, Mot nord, mot ljus, mot vår.

Chorus:

Hälsa dem därhemma, hälsa far och mor,
Hälsa gröna hagen, hälsa lille bror,
Om jag hade vingar, flöge jag med dig,
Svala, flyg mot hemmet, hälsa ifrån mig.

Lilla svala, fastän svag, Dag och natt, och natt och dag,
Förer dig til målet fram Snabba vingslag.
Svala, tänk också på mig, Gärna flöge jag med dig,
Hemma står vål ången grön, O, svala, hör min bön.

English:

Stars above are shining bright, Gleaming on the waves tonight,
While on the ship I sail from home; I remember, though I roam!
High above I see them fly, Swallows flitting through the sky,
Heading for the land I love — The land from which I rove.

Chorus:

Greet my family at home; Greet my father there,
And my dear old mother, My love with golden hair.
If I had wings of a swallow, I'd fly across the sea;
Go home, little swallow, Greet them all for me.

Hard times forced me from my land; All I own is in my hand;
The thoughts of those I've left behind Come ever to my mind.
Little swallow, fly for me, Fly back home across the sea,
Take my message back to them I had to leave at home.

Es Klapert Die Mühle am Rauschenden Bach

*I rede you right, gang n'er at night, to the weaver's gin ye go.
(I'll advise you correctly, never go at night, to the weaver's if you go.)
— Robert Burns, "To the Weaver's Gin Ye Go"*

1 F F F C F
Es klap - pert die Müh - le am rau - schen - den Bach, Klipp klapp (klipp
Oh, hear now the mill by the babb - ling brook, Click clack (click
7 F F F F C F
klapp)! Bei Tag und bei Nacht is der Mül - ler stets wach, Klipp klapp (klipp
clack)! By day and by night is the mil - ler at work, Click clack (click
13 F F F F Bb F
klapp)! Er mah - let das Korn zu dem kräf - ti - gen Brot, Und hab - en wir
clack)! He grinds up the grain to make our dai - y bread, And once we have
19 F F C F C F
die - ses, so hat's kei - ne Not, Klipp klapp, klipp klapp, klipp klapp!
it, we need noth - ing in - stead, Click clack, click clack, click clack!

German:

*Es klappert die Mühle am rauschenden Bach,
Klipp klapp (klipp klapp)!
Bei Tag und bei Nacht ist der Müller stets wach,
Klipp klapp (klipp klapp)!
Er mahlet das Korn zu dem kräftigen Brot,
Und haben wir dieses, so hat's keine Not,
Klipp klapp, klipp klapp, klipp klapp.*

*Flink laufen die Räder und drehen den Stein,
Klipp klapp (klipp klapp)!
Und mahlen den Weizen zu Mehl uns so fein,
Klipp klapp (klipp klapp)!
Der Bäcker dann Zwieback und Kuchen draus bäckt,
Der immer den Kindern besonders gut schmeckt,
Klipp klapp, klipp klapp, klipp klapp.*

*Wenn reichliche Körner das Ackerfeld trägt,
Klipp klapp (klipp klapp)!
Die Mühle dann flink ihre Räder bewegt,
Klipp klapp (klipp klapp)!
Und schenkt uns der Himmel nur immerdar Brot,
So sind wir geborgen und leiden nicht Not,
Klipp klapp, klipp klapp, klipp klapp.*

English:

*Oh, hear now the mill by the babbling brook,
Click clack (click clack)!
By day and by night is the miller at work,
Click clack (click clack)!
He grinds up the grain to make our daily bread,
And once we have it, we need nothing instead,
Click clack, click clack, click clack!*

*The grindstone is turned by the mill wheel's power
Click clack (click clack)!
It grinds all the wheat to the finest of flour,
Click clack (click clack)!
The children all love what the good baker bakes —
Crisp crackers, warm breads, and our favorite cakes.
Click clack, click clack, click clack!*

*In fall at the harvest we have lots of grain,
Click clack (click clack)!
The wheel by the mill it will turn once again,
Click clack (click clack)!
Throughout all the seasons this is what we pray,
That heaven will send us our bread day by day,
Click clack, click clack, click clack!*

Den Lille Ole

*A Róis mo chroi a shláitín óir as garra Droim an Oir
Bi ag fás go mbeidh gach cleite beg mar sgiatan iolrea mhór
Is léim ansan ar fuaid an tsail, oibrig is saothraig clú,
Seinn lóitín is lú lá lú lá ló, seinn lóitín is lú lá ló.*

Caislean Droim an Oir (The Castle of Dromore), an ancient Irish lullabye.

*Take time to thrive, my ray of hope, in the garden of Dromore.
Take heed, young eaglet, till thy wings are feathered fit to soar.
A little rest, and then the world is full of work to do.
Singing hushabye lu, lo lu, lo lan, hushabye lu, lo lu.*

Den lil - le O - le med par - a - ply - en, Ham kend - er all - e
The litt - le O - le with his um - brel - la, Child - ren all know him,
små - folk in by - en; Hver lil - le pig - e, Hver lil - le dreng,
the friend - ly fell - ow. He comes un seen mak - ing no noise,
Han gen - ner smælmsk i sin lil - le seng.
He puts to bed all the girls and boys.

Danish:

*Den lille Ole med paraplyen
Ham kender alle småfolk in byen;
Hver lille pige, hver lille dreng
Han genner skælmsk i sin lille seng.*

*Dog vil han først paraplyen brede
Og uskylds hygge om lejet sprede;
Så vil i drømme den lille fyr
Fortæller dejlige eventyr.*

*Han kan fortæller om stjerner klare,
Om himlens hellige engleskare
Og om den yndige, milde fe,
Som alle born vil så gerne se.*

*Og har om dagen de artig været,
Og kærligt fader og moder æret,
Da kan så glade til sengs' de gå
Og drømmer sødt om Gud's engle små.*

English:

*The little Ole with his umbrella,
Children all know him, the friendly fellow.
He comes unseen, making no noise;
He puts to bed all the girls and boys.*

*His strange umbrella he spreads above them,
It's full of pictures, and children love them.
And when the children to dreamland sail,
He tells them many nursery tales.*

*He tells of ships with stars to guide them,
And of the winds that help us sail them,
Of fairies dancing so merrily,
That children look for but never see.*

*And all the children who mind their mothers
And always try to be good to others
Shall under Ole's umbrella hear
Sweet spirit voices so soft and clear.*

*When night is over and day is breaking,
With rosy cheeks and smiles they awaken.
A kiss for mother and also for dad,
And thanks to Ole for the dreams they had.*

Last Winter Was a Hard One

Let us pause in life's pleasures and count its many tears, While we all sup sorrow with the poor.
It's a song that will linger forever in our ears: Oh, hard times come again no more!
Stephen C. Foster, "Hard Times"

1 Em Bm G D Em

Last wint - er was a hard one, Mis - sus Reil - ly did you say? Faith, myself it is that

7 Em Em Bm Em Bm

knows it, for man - y a long day. Your old man wasn't the on - ly one that

12 G D Em Em C D Em

sat be - hind the wall; My old man Mc - Guin - ness did - n't get a job at all. So

18 G D Em Bm Em

cheer up, Mis - sus Reil - ly, don't give way to the blues. You and I will

23 Em Em Bm Em Bm G

cut a shine, with bon - nets and new shoes. Hear the young ones cry, Neith - er sigh nor

29 D Em Em C D Em

sob, But I'll wait till times get bet - ter and Mc - Guin - ness gets a job.

*Last winter was a hard one, Missus Reilly, did you say?
Faith, myself it is that knows it for many a long day.
Your old man wasn't the only one that sat behind the wall;
My old man McGuinness didn't get a job at all.*

*Chorus:
Then cheer up, Missus Reilly, don't give way to the blues.
You and I will cut a shine, with bonnets and new shoes.
Hear the young ones cry, neither sigh nor sob,
But I'll wait till times get better and McGuinness gets a job.*

The contractors they promised him work on the boulevard,
To handle the pick and shovel and throw dirt in the car;
Six month ago they promised him that work he'd surely get,
But believe me, my good woman, they are promising it yet.*

*The Ey-talians, devil take them, why don't they stay at home?
We have enough of our own sort to eat up all our own!
They come like bees in summer and in winter they go away,
The contractors hire hundreds for sixty cents a day.*

*They work upon the railroad, they shovel dirt and slush,
There is one thing in their favor, Ey-talians never get lush.
They always bring their money home, they drink no beer or wine.
That's something I would like to say about your old man and
mine!*

*The springtime it is coming and soon we'll all get work;
McGuinness will go back to his trade, sure he's a handsome clerk.
You should see him climb the ladder, as nimble as a fox,
Faith, he's the boy can juggle the old three-cornered box.*

* The original sheet music reads "politicians."

People and Their Work

BY THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY, MINNESOTA'S THREE great industries were taking shape: Farming, logging, and mining. The Iron Range gains its name from one of the state's great exports. The Mesabi Range is named for an indigenous giant who is said to have pulled rocks from the ground with his bare hands and now lies under those hills. The first serious attempts to survey the mineral wealth of the northeast were made around 1850 (Blegen, p. 360), and a treaty with the Ojibwe in 1854 was very specific about mining. All sorts of metals were sought in the area — there was even a sort of a gold rush by Lake Vermilion in 1865-1866 (Blegen, p. 361), but it wasn't until 1882 that the Minnesota Iron Company was incorporated (Blegen, p. 363). But so much iron was available that, by 1884, there was a railroad line to Two Harbors and the ore boats were coming to take Minnesota iron to the steel plants of the east.

In the years since, the iron industry has had its ups and downs, not least when the easy ore started to peter out, but there was always taconite. The *McGraw-Hill Dictionary of Earth Science* defines taconite in part as consisting “chiefly of fine-grained silica mixed with magnetite and hematite” — which basically means the useful iron ores magnetite (Fe₃O₄) and hematite (Fe₂O₃) mixed with useless rock. But one of Minnesota's (literally) unsung heroes, Edward W. Davis, in the years leading up to World War II found techniques to make it commercially feasible to mine taconite.

Red Iron Ore
ON PAGE 53

At least mining was a steady job. Miners risked their lives every day, but could go home to their families at night. The other major industry of the northeast, logging, was much more seasonal. Cutting trees in the summer was difficult — the sap made them much harder to bring down. So logging went on in winter. Young men often worked a farm in the summer, then signed up to go to the lumber camps in the fall. (If you've read any Paul Bunyan stories, you'll know that the men were often away from women. The Paul Bunyan stories are controversial among folklorists —they've been called “fakelore” — and there are no true Paul Bunyan songs, but the stories do get that part right.) A boss would pick a spot and set up a camp, the men would cut down the trees, then in the spring they would take the logs down to a stream, tie them up into a raft, and float them down to the market. In the days before trucks, this was by far the most dangerous part of the operation — a rapids could cause the rafts to come apart, drowning or crushing the loggers. An amazing number of logging ballads involve young men drowning.

Gerry's Rocks
ON PAGE 54

The Pinery Boy
ON PAGE 55

The Banks of the Little Eau Pleine
ON PAGE 56

Sailing the Great Lakes wasn't much safer than rafting the rivers. Lakes ships differ somewhat from ocean vessels (the Lakes are fresh water, less dense than salt, meaning that a ship will float lower in the water). As early as 1851, Herman Melville wrote in *Moby Dick* that the Lakes “have drowned many a midnight ship with all its shrieking crew.” It is said that Henry Quiner, the maternal grandfather of Laura Ingalls Wilder, died in a storm on Lake Michigan in 1844 (Anderson, p. 21). Today, most people remember the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, which sank in November 1975, but this is in fact one of the last of the Great Lakes wrecks. Bruce D. Berman's *Encyclopedia of American Shipwrecks* lists no fewer than 1661 Great Lakes wrecks through 1971, and it is far from complete. Storms on all the Lakes came swift and sudden. Stan Rogers would write, the weather there could “go from calm to a hundred knots so fast they seem enchanted” — a danger particularly in the days of sail, when sailors needed to take in the sail in the event of a storm. And Lake Superior was the worst — the largest lake, and the farthest north. The *Edmund Fitzgerald* was not the only ship lost to the “gales of November.” The great Lake Superior storm of 1905 is said to have wrecked thirty vessels (Ratigan, p. 273). In Duluth harbor alone, the *Ellwood* was slammed into her berth, and the *Mataafa* was wrecked as she struggled to return to the harbor, with nine men freezing to death though surrounded by land on all sides. Fortunately, most ships survived, even if they didn't always inspire happiness in their crews.

The Bigler's Crew
ON PAGE 58

Farmers, although necessary, were not held in very high renown in the nineteenth century. The family of Laura Ingalls Wilder wasn't the only one that sang “I Wouldn't Marry a Farmer” (“I wouldn't marry a farmer, he's always in the dirt, I'd rather marry a railroad man Who wears a striped shirt”; see *By the Shores of Silver Lake*, chapter 6). Oliver H. Kelley, who according to the *Dictionary of American Biography* moved to Minnesota in 1849, set out to change that, founding the Grange to teach “scientific” farming (Gilman, p. 132). But the Grange would go on to become a more political organization devoted to farmers' needs.

The Farmer is the Man
ON PAGE 59

Political unrest wasn't confined to farmers. This was the era of the Knights of Labor, and the American Federation of Labor, and other groups which fought for an eight hour day. The most famous of these strikes was probably that of the American Railway Union (A.R.U.) in 1894. This does not seem to be commemorated in Minnesota song, but the 1875 strike of (mostly Irish) longshoremen would be remembered. In time, the laborer's troubles would lead to the formation of the Farmer-Labor Party, which eventually became part of the DFL (Democratic-Farmer-Labor) party.

Song Notes

Red Iron Ore [Laws D9]

This is one of the most famous songs of the Great Lakes, and almost certainly the most famous song of the Great Lakes ore trade. Whether this is about an actual voyage is not certain; earlier folk song scholars never managed to locate a voyage with this exact itinerary, and the author is forgotten. There were several ships named *Roberts* on the Great Lakes, but (as best I can tell) only one *E. C. Roberts*; Julius F. Wolff Jr.'s *Lake Superior Shipwrecks* says that she was trapped in port in Marquette in 1872 during a storm and had to be scuttled to prevent her from blocking the harbor. She was carrying coal rather than iron ore. There was definitely a tug *Escanaba* operating around Mackinac at this time. There is little more that we can say after this much time.

Although we rarely think of any sort of mining in Minnesota other than iron mining, mining activity in fact long predates the European exploration of the Iron Range. In 1700, Pierre Le Sueur led a small expedition up the Minnesota River accompanied by carpenter André Penicaut and others. Penicaut tells of how they stopped at the mouth of what would later be called the Blue Earth river to “mine” the brightly-colored soil, which they thought was a copper ore. They shipped a great deal home, but it turned out to be just blue clay (Jones, pp. 20-25; Blegen, pp. 52-53).

Source: The song has been collected in Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario, but the oldest version is Dean's. The Morris collection at the Minneapolis Public Library also includes at least a partial text. We are fortunate to have Dean's melody as well as his text; Rickaby collected it from Dean (and this version was reprinted at least three and perhaps four times by other scholars). So I have used the Dean/Rickaby version (even though this tune is not quite the way I learned it), transposed to a more comfortable key and written in 3/4 rather than 6/8 time. The tune is ancient, and known simply as “The Derry Down Tune.” Dean's original version is twelve verses long, so I've shortened it a little.



Postcard showing the ore boat *Thomas F. Cole* making her maiden voyage to Duluth, 1909. *Minnesota Historical Society*.

[The Jam on] Gerry's Rocks [Laws C1]

This is one of the most popular logging songs of all time; over a hundred versions are known. It has been found in every part of the United States and Canada where loggers worked, and even three times in Scotland. Around the Midwest, at least six versions have been collected in Wisconsin, ten in Michigan, one in North Dakota, and Minnesota boasts two. Also, there are seven or more versions from Ontario, and one from Manitoba. The theme of a worker killed by a logjam is very common among lumbermen; there are many songs which commemorate a man killed in a similar way. This is probably the most popular, though, especially in the United States; in Canada, the true story of Peter Amberly is perhaps slightly better known.

“Gerry's Rocks” (or Geary's, Jerry's, Garry's Rock[s]) have never been located, though various locations have been suggested; about all we can say is that very many versions mention Saginaw, presumably the town in Michigan.

Source: Collected from Mr. A. C. Hannah of Bemidji, and printed in Rickaby, pp. 11-14. There is also a version in Dean. Note the tune in the Mixolydian mode — there are several common tunes for this piece; this one is excellent.

The Pinery Boy [Laws K12]

This ballad is an amazing demonstration of the power of the people to make a particular folk song their own. It originated in Great Britain under the title “The Sailor Boy” (or something like that). The plot was the same: The girl's lover is gone, and she goes out to seek him. She learns that he has been drowned, and she herself dies of despair. Often those British versions use the very same words we find in this version: “Father, O father, build me a boat” — but the girl takes the boat to sea to search for her young man.

The ballad is very popular; there are probably close to two hundred versions known. In most, the missing young man is a soldier or a sailor, but sometimes the song will be adapted for some other occupation. That's what happened here; the sailor became a lumberman, and the ocean became the Wisconsin River, just across the border from Minnesota!

Source: I learned this from the singing of Art Thieme of Illinois, though my version has probably wandered over the years. I don't know where he learned it. As far as I know, there are no Minnesota versions, but it seems nearly certain that it was sung here; Rickaby had a version from Mrs. M. A. Olin of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, which is quite similar to this one, and there is another logging version from Pennsylvania; in addition, there are “Sailor Boy” versions from Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Nebraska, and almost every other state which has been extensively collected.

The Banks of the Little Eau Pleine [Laws C2]

Not all lumbering ballads were tragic — not while William N. Allen was around! Allen, according to Rickaby, pp. xxx-xxxvi, was born in New Brunswick in 1843, but his

family soon came to Wisconsin, and he settled in Wausau. He worked in the logging industry for most of his life, and began to write songs around 1870 under the name “Shan T. Boy” (the workers in logging camps were called “shanty boys”). His specialty was a sort of dark comedy — he would take the plot of a tragic ballad, and surround it with absurd images. “The Banks of the Little Eau Pleine” is typical — the plot is precisely that of “The Pinery Boy,” but it doesn’t take itself at all seriously. This seems to be the most popular of all Allen’s songs, having been collected in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ontario, Quebec, and several times in New Brunswick. He set it to the tune of (one of several songs called) “Erin’s Green Shore.” The Little Eau Pleine is a real river in Marathon county, Wisconsin.

Source: Dean sang a version of this, somewhat shorter, under the title “The Little Auplaine,” and Rickaby collected his tune, but since Rickaby also collected Allen’s own version, I have followed that.

The Bigler’s Crew [Laws D8]

Sailors seemed to like to put together narrative songs about their voyages. Dean — who was himself a Great Lakes sailor — had four such (“The *Bigler’s Crew*,” “The *Dreadnought*,” “Paul Jones, the Privateer,” and “Red Iron Ore”) besides songs of sailing disasters such as “The *Persian’s Crew*” and “Lost on the *Lady Elgin*.” The latter songs are much more interesting, but of course they are all sad, and we didn’t want to make every song in this collection a “weeper.”

Unfortunately, those we-took-our-ship-somewhere songs tend to be about as dull as your cousins’ slide show about their trip to Disneyland. This one at least makes a slight attempt at humor (consider the line “We might have passed the big fleet — if they’d hove to and wait”), and it seems to be about a real ship; Julius F. Wolff Jr.’s *Lake Superior Shipwrecks* says that a ship named the *Bigler* was wrecked at Marquette in 1884. Steve Gardham tells me this ship was built in 1866.

Source: Rickaby, from Dean. Even Rickaby implicitly admits that this is a pretty monotonous song. Rather than bog it down, I’ve chopped Dean’s eleven verses down to five.

The tune is almost certainly derived from a piece called “The Knickerbocker Line,” which was in existence by 1859; there are also some related British songs. It’s an unusual tune — it is transcribed here as if in the Dorian mode, which sounds “minor,” and yet the thirds are often sharpened, putting it in Mixolydian mode, which sounds “major.” This wavering modality can be seen in the guitar chords. The timing is also strange — note how many measures feature notes held for two and a half beats. In typesetting it, I wondered about the accuracy of Rickaby’s transcription, but most of the other collected tunes are similar except that some eliminate those major thirds. So I’m giving the tune as taken by Rickaby.

The Farmer Is the Man

Malcolm Douglas tells me this was written by Knowles Shaw (died 1878), who called it “The Farmer Feeds Us All..”



Minneapolis Lumber Exchange, c. 1890.
From an undated reprint from *Harper’s Magazine* around that year. *Author’s personal collection.*

A version for piano and four voices was printed in 1897. The earliest “folk” sources are Carl Sandburg’s *American Songbag*, published in 1927, and a 1923 recording by Fiddlin’ John Carson — one of the very first country recordings. Sandburg says the song was known in Illinois in the 1890s.

Internal evidence suggest that the song dates back to the Grange, an organization founded by Minnesota’s own Oliver H. Kelley. Kelley himself was mostly a “scientific farmer” who in 1867 founded the Patrons of Husbandry (which came to be called the Grange) “to promote education in agriculture and to provide social and cultural opportunities for farmers” (Blegen, p. 291). The group spread fast — within three years, there were forty Granges in Minnesota. It also started to be active in politics: “The Grangers worked for reasonable railroad rates, opposed discriminations, and favored railroad regulation through state laws” (Blegen, p. 292). Ignatius Donnelly, the former lieutenant governor of Minnesota, was largely responsible for their organization at this time (Lass, p. 169). The Panic of 1873, and later a series of Supreme Court cases, weakened the group, but they continued to exist into the twentieth century, though less as a political than an educational group. In any case, the real problem of the farmers — that they produced more food than there was demand for it — has been a problem, off and on, from that day to this; it produced things such as the Free Silver movement championed by William Jennings Bryan.

Source: The tune is as I learned it, somewhere. The text is from B. A. Botkin’s *A Treasury of American Folklore*, pp. 879-880 (he calls it “The Farmer Comes to Town”), apparently from a version compiled (and, I suspect, touched up) by Charles Seeger, the father of Pete, Mike, and Peggy Seeger. I’ve made a few changes to Botkin’s words to fit the tune.

Red Iron Ore

Gold is for the mistress — silver for the maid—
Copper for the craftsman cunning at his trade.
“Good,” said the Baron, sitting in his hall,
“But iron — Cold Iron — is the master of them all.”
Rudyard Kipling, “Cold Iron”

1 Bm Bm D A Bm A

8 F# F# Bm Bm A A

14 D Bm A Bm Bm Bm A Bm

Come all ye bold sail - ors that fol - low the Lakes On an i - ron ore ves - sel your
liv - ing to make, I shipp'd in Chi - ca - go, bid a - dieu to the shore, Bound a -
way to Es - ca - na - ba for red i - ron ore. Der - ry down, down, down der - ry down.

*Come all ye bold sailors that follow the Lakes
On an iron ore vessel your living to make,
I shipp'd in Chicago, bid adieu to the shore,
Bound away to Escanaba for red iron ore.
Derry down, down, down derry down.*

*In the month of September, the seventeenth day,
Two dollars and a quarter is all they would pay,
And on Monday morning the Bridgeport did take
The E. C. Roberts out in the Lake.*

*The wind from the south'ard sprang up a fresh breeze,
And away through Lake Michigan the Roberts did sneeze
Down through Lake Michigan the Roberts did roar,
And on Friday morning we passed through Death's Door.*

This packet she showed across the mouth of Green Bay,
And before her cutwater she dashed the white spray,
We rounded the sand point, and anchor let go,
We furl'd in our canvas and the watch went below.*

*Next morning we hove alongside the Exile
And soon was made fast to an iron ore pile,
They lowered their chutes and like thunder did roar,
They spouted into us that red iron ore.*

*Some sailors took shovels while others got spades,
And some took wheelbarrows, each man to his trade.
We looked like red devils, our fingers got sore.
We cursed Escanaba and that damned iron ore.*

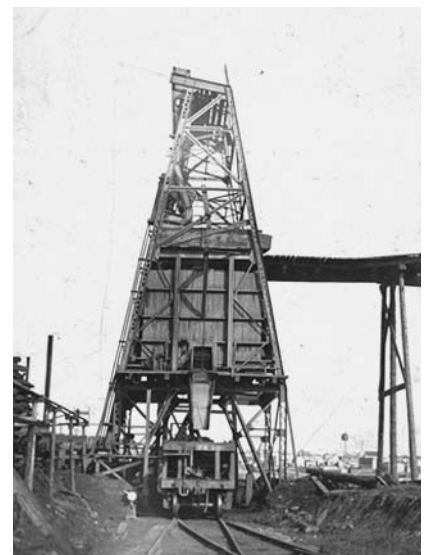
*The tug Escanaba she towed out the Minch
The Roberts she thought she had left in a pinch
And as she passed by us she bid us good-bye
Saying, “We'll meet you in Cleveland next Fourth of July!”*

*We went through North Passage — O Lord, how it blew!
And all 'round the Dummy a large fleet there came too
The night being dark, Old Nick† it would scare
We hove up next morning and for Cleveland did steer.*

*Now my song it is ended, I hope you won't laugh.
Our dunnage is packed and all hands are paid off.
Here's a health to the Roberts, she's staunch, strong and true,
Nor forgotten the bold boys that comprise her crew.*

* showed: our guess is that this means to avoid shoals
† Old Nick: traditional name for the Devil

At right: The shaft house of the Adams Mine near Eveleth. These structures were used to load ore into transport cars.
Minnesota Historical Society.



Gerry's Rocks

Now, there's danger on the ocean where the sea rolls mountain high,
And there's danger on the battlefield where the angry bullets fly.
There's danger in the lumber woods, for death lurks solemn there,
And I have fell a victim into that monstrous snare.

from "Peter Amberley," by John Calhoun, the song of a teenage boy fatally wounded while logging around the end of 1880. This version from Doerflinger, p. 226, who had it from Herbert Hinchey, Calhoun's nephew.

C F G C

1
Come all you true born shan - ty boys, who - ev - er that ye

5 C Bb C F

be, I would have you pay at - ten - tion and list - en un - to

9 G Bb C F F

me, Con - cern - ing a young shant - y - boy, so tall, gen - teel, and

13 G C F G C F C

brave, 'Twas on a jam on Ger - ry's Rocks he met a wat - 'ry grave.

*Come all ye true-born shanty-boys, whoever that ye be,
I would have you pay attention and listen unto me,
Concerning a young shanty-boy, so tall, genteel, and brave.
'Twas on a jam on Gerry's Rocks he met a wat'ry grave.*

*It happened on a Sunday morn as you shall quickly hear.
Our logs were piled up mountain high, there being no one to keep them
clear.
Our boss he cried, "Turn out, brave boys. Your hearts are void of fear.
We'll break that jam on Gerry's Rocks, and for Agonstown we'll steer."*

*Some of them were willing enough, but others they hung back,
'Twas for to work on Sabbath they did not think 'twas right.
But six of our brave Canadian boys did volunteer to go
And break the jam on Gerry's Rocks with their foreman, young Monroe.*

*They had not rolled off many logs when the boss to them did say,
I'd have you be on your guard, brave boys. That jam will soon give way.
But scarce the warning had he spoke when the jam did break and go,
And it carried away these six brave youths and their foreman, young
Monroe.*

*When the rest of the shanty-boys these sad tidings came to hear,
To search for their dead comrades to the river they did steer.
One of these a headless body found, to their sad grief and woe,
Lay cut and mangled on the beach the head of young Monroe.*

*They took him from the water and smoothed down his raven hair.
There was one fair form amongst them, her cries would rend the air.
There was one fair form amongst them, a maid from Saginaw town.
Her sighs and cries would rend the skies for her lover that was drowned.*

*They buried him quite decently, being on the seventh of May,
Come all the rest of you shanty-boys, for your dead comrade pray.
'Tis engraved on a little hemlock tree that at his head doth grow,
The name, the date, and the drowning of this hero, young Monroe.*

*Miss Clara was a noble girl, likewise this raftsmen's friend.
Her mother was the widow woman lived at the river's bend.
The wages of her own true love the boss to her did pay,
And a liberal subscription she received from the shanty-boys next day.*

*Miss Clara did not long survive her great misery and grief.
In less than three months afterwards death came to her relief.
In less than three months afterwards she was called to go,
And her last request was granted — to be laid by young Monroe.*

*Come all the rest of ye shanty-men who would like to go and see,
On a little mound by the river's bank there stands a hemlock tree.
The shanty-boys cut the woods all round. These lovers they lie low.
Here lies Miss Clara Dennison and her shanty-boy, Monroe.*

The Pinery Boy

"How should I your true love know from another one?" "By his cockle hat and staff and his sandal shoon."

"He is dead and gone, lady, He is dead and gone, At his head a grass-green turf, at his heels a stone."

William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, IV.v.23-26, 29-32 (punctuation modernized).

Musical score for "The Pinery Boy". It consists of three systems of musical notation. The first system has a treble clef, 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. The melody is accompanied by chords: Am, Am, F, Am. The lyrics are: "Oh, a timber rafts-man's life Is a wear-y life;". The second system continues the melody with chords: F, F, Em, Em, Am, Am. The lyrics are: "Robs young girls Of their hearts' de-lights, It caus-es them to weep, It". The third system continues the melody with chords: F, Am, Am, Am, Am, C, Am. The lyrics are: "caus-es them to mourn The loss of a true love, Nev-er to—re—turn."

*Oh, a timber raftsmen's life is a weary life;
Robs young girls of their hearts' delights.
It causes them to weep, it causes them to mourn
The loss of a true love, never to return.*

*"Father, oh father, build me a boat,
That down the Wisconsin I may float,
And every raft that I pass by
There I will inquire for my sweet pinery boy."*

*As she was floating on down the stream
She saw three rafts all in a string.
She hailed the pilot as they drew nigh,
And there she did inquire for her sweet pinery boy.*

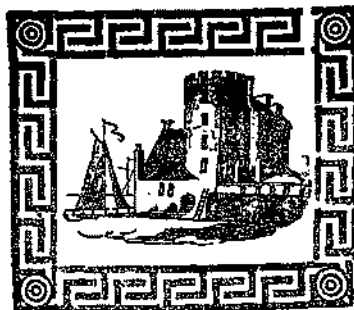
*"Pilot, O pilot, come tell me true,
Is my sweet William among your crew?
Answer me swiftly, give me great joy,
For none do I love better than my sweet pinery boy."*

*"Black is the color of my true love's hair,
His eyes are blue and his cheeks are fair.
His lips are of a ruby fine;
Ten thousand times have they met with mine."*

*"Oh honored lady, he is not here.
He's drowned in the Dells, as I do fear,
'Twas at Lone Rock as we passed by,
That is where we left him, your sweet pinery boy."*

*She wrung her hands, she tore her hair,
Acted like a maiden in greatest despair.
She flung her boat against Lone Rock;
Oh, you'd have thought this young girl's heart was broke.*

*"Oh, dig my grave both wide and deep.
Put a marble stone at my head and feet,
And on each stone, carve a snow-white dove,
To let the world know that I died for love."*



The Maid's Lament for her

SAILOR BOY.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦
J. Catnach, Printer, 2, Monmouth-court.

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦

DOWN by a chrystal river side,
Where silver streams did gently glide,
I heard a daisel making moan,
How can I live now my Jemmy's gone.

Go fetch me some little boat,
That on the ocean I may float,
Through the French ships as they pass by,
Enquiring for my sailor boy.

She had not sailed long on the deep,
Before five sail of the French ships she did meet
Come tell me ye jovial ship's crew,
If my true love sails along with you.

O no fair lady he is not here,
For he is drown'd I greatly fear,
For on yonder green island as I pass'd by,
'There did we lose your sailor boy.

She wrung her hands and tore her hair
Just like a woman in despair,
Her boat against the rock did run,
O how can I live now my Jemmy's gone.

So now you maids that dress in black,
That for a sailor you do lack,
With a black top mant and tails so wide,
That parted me and my sailor boy.

Down by the silent shady grove,
There will I mourn for my true love,
And tell the small birds all my grief,
For they alone afford me relief.

At left: A broadside version, from the Bodleian collection, of "The Sailor Boy" (the original of this song). Like many broadsides, this was very cheaply printed — the printer actually misspelled his own name! (The correct name is J. Catnach.) Catnach was in business from 1813 to 1838, so this broadside must have been in print before 1840.

Note that, although the song has changed very much, it still contains a reference to the building of the boat, and to the girl tearing her hair once she learns her love is dead. This is typical of folk songs: Many of the unimportant words change, but the plot, and often the best of the words, stay the same.

The Banks of the Little Eau Pleine

Tree, n. A tall vegetable intended by nature to serve as a penal apparatus.

Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary

1
D A D D A
One eve-ning last June as I ram-bled, The green woods and val-leys a -

8
D D A D
mong, The mos - qui - to's notes were me - lod - ious, And -

14
D A D G Em
so was the whip - poor - will's song. The frogs in the marsh-es were

20
A G A7 Em A G
croak-ing, The tree toads were whist-ling for rain, The par-tridg - es

27
A D D A D
'round me were drum-ming On the banks of the Lit - tle Eau Pleine.

*One evening last June as I rambled,
The green woods and valleys among,
The mosquito's notes were melodious,
And so was the whip-poor-will's song.
The frogs in the marshes were croaking,
The tree-toads were whistling for rain,
The partridges 'round me were drumming,
On the banks of the Little Eau Pleine.*

*The sun in the west was declining,
And tinging the treetops with red.
My wandering feet bore me onward.
Not caring whither they led.
I happened to see a young school-ma'am
She mourned in a sorrowful strain
She mourned for a jolly young raftsman
On the banks of the Little Eau Pleine.*

*Saying, "Alas, my dear Johnny has left me
I'm afraid I shall see him no more
He's down on the lower Wisconsin;
He's pulling a fifty-foot oar,
He went off on a fleet with Ross Gamble
And has left me in sorrow and pain;
And 'tis over two months since he started
From the banks of the Little Eau Pleine."*

*I stepped up beside this young school-ma'am,
And thus unto her I did say,
"Why is it you're mourning so sadly
While nature is smiling and gay?"
She said, "It is for a young raftsman
For whom I so sadly complain.
He has left me alone here to wander
On the banks of the Little Eau Pleine."*

“Will you please tell me what kind of clothing
Your jolly young raftsmen did wear?
For I also belong to the river,
And perhaps I have seen him somewhere.
If to me you will plainly describe him,
And tell me your young raftsmen’s name,
Perhaps I can tell you the reason
He’s not back to the Little Eau Pleine.”

“His pants were made out of two meal-sacks,
With a patch a foot square on each knee.
His shirt and his jacket were dyed with
The bark of a butternut tree.
He wore a large open-faced tucker
With almost a yard of steel chain,
When he went away with Ross Gamble
From the banks of the Little Eau Pleine.

“He wore a red sash round his middle,
With an end hanging down at each side.
His shoes number ten were, of cowhide,
With heels about four inches wide.
His name was Honest John Murphy,
And on it there ne’er was a stain,
And he was as jolly a raftsmen
As was e’er on the Little Eau Pleine.

“He was stout and broad-shouldered and manly,
His height was about six feet one.
His hair was inclined to be sandy,
And his whiskers as red as the sun.
His age was somewhere about thirty,
He neither was foolish nor vain.
He loved the bold Wisconsin River
Was the reason he left the Eau Pleine.”

“If John Murphy’s the name of your raftsmen
I used to know him very well.
But sad is the tale I must tell you:
Your Johnny was drowned in the Dells.
They buried him ’neath a scrub Norway,
You will never behold him again,
No stone marks the spot where your raftsmen
Sleeps far from the Little Eau Pleine.”

When the school-ma’am heard this
information,
She fainted and fell as if dead.
I scooped up a hat-full of water
And poured it on top of her head.
She opened her eyes and looked wildly,
As if she was nearly insane,
And I was afraid she would perish
On the banks of the Little Eau Pleine.

“My curses attend you, Wisconsin!
May your rapids and falls cease to roar.
May every tow-head and sand-bar
Be as dry as a log schoolhouse floor,
May the willows upon all of your islands
Lie down like a field of ripe grain,
For taking my jolly young raftsmen
From the banks of the Little Eau Pleine.

“My curses light on you, Ross Gamble,
For taking my Johnny away.
I hope that the ague will seize you,
And shake you down into the clay.
May your lumber go down to the bottom,
And never rise to the surface again.
You had no business taking John Murphy
Away from the Little Eau Pleine.

“Now I will desert my vocation,
I won’t teach district school any more.
I will go to some place where I’ll never
Hear the squeak of a fifty-foot oar.
I will go to some far foreign country,
To England, to France, or to Spain;
But I’ll never forget Johnny Murphy
Nor the banks of the Little Eau Pleine.”



Breaking a Logjam
from *Harper's*, March 1868, p. 421.
Minnesota Historical Society.

The *Bigler's* Crew

Having made fast the running gear in the black ship, they set up the mixing bowls... with wine.... All night long and into the dawn she ran on her journey.

Homer, *The Odyssey*, Book II, lines 430, 431a, 434

1 Dm Dm C C C
Come all my boys and list-en, a song I'll sing to you,— It's all a-bout the

7 C D C D D D
Big-ler and of her jol - ly crew.— In Mil-wau - kee last Oc - to-ber I

12 D C C Dm Am Dm
chanc'd to get a sight— In the schoon - er call'd the *Big-ler* be-long - ing to De-troit.

18 Dm Dm C C C
Watch her,— catch her, Jump up on her jub - er - ju. Give her the sheet and

23 C D C D D D
let her slide, The boys will push her through.— You ought to seen us howl-ing, The

28 D Am C C Dm Dm Dm
winds were blow - ing free,— On our pas - sage down to Buf - fa - lo from Mil - wau - kee.

*Come all my boys and listen, a song I'll sing to you.
It's all about the Bigler and of her jolly crew.
In Milwaukee last October I chanc'd to get a sight
In the schooner call'd the Bigler belonging to Detroit.*

*Chorus: Watch her, catch her, jump up on her jubberju.
Give her the sheet and let her slide, the boys will push her
through.
You ought to seen us howling, the winds were blowing free,
On our passage down to Buffalo from Milwaukee.*

*It was on a Sunday morning about the hour of ten,
The Robert Emmet towed us out into Lake Michigan;
We set sail where she left us in the middle of the fleet,
And the wind being from the south'ard, oh, we had to give her
sheet.*

*Through Skillagallee and Wabble Shanks, the entrance to the
Straits,
We might have passed the big fleet there if they'd hove to and wait;
But we drove them on before us, the nicest you ever saw,
Out into Lake Huron from the Straits of Mackinaw.*

*The Sweepstakes took eight in tow and all of us fore and aft,
She towed us down to Lake St. Clair and stuck us on the flats.
She parted the Hunter's tow-line in trying to give relief,
And stem and stern went the Bigler into the boat called Maple
Leaf.*

*And now we are safely landed in Buffalo Creek at last,
And under Riggs's elevator the Bigler she's made fast.
And in some lager beer saloon we'll let the bottle pass,
For we are jolly shipmates and we'll drink a social glass.*

The Farmer is the Man

"I don't want to marry a farmer...[A] farmer never has any money. He can never make any because the people in towns tell him what they will pay for what he has to sell and then they charge him what they please for what he has to buy. It is not fair."

Laura Ingalls Wilder, The First Four Years, pp. 3-4.

1
When the farm - er comes to town With his wag - on brok - en down, The
If you'll on - ly look and see, I am sure you will a - gree

4
farm - er is the man who feeds them all. The farm - er is the man, The

8
farm - er is the man, Lives on cred - it till the fall, — Then they take him by the hand and they

12
lead him from the land And the mid - dle man's the man who gets it all.

*When the farmer comes to town with his wagon broken down,
The farmer is the man who feeds them all.
If you'll only look and see, I am sure you will agree,
The farmer is the man who feeds them all.
The farmer is the man, the farmer is the man,
Lives on credit till the fall,
Then they take him by the hand
And they lead him from the land
And the middleman's the man who gets it all.*

*When the lawyer hangs around while the butcher cuts a pound,
The farmer is the man who feeds them all.
And the preacher and the cook go a-strolling by the brook,
The farmer is the man who feeds them all.
The farmer is the man, the farmer is the man,
Lives on credit till the fall;
With the interest rate so high,
It's a wonder he don't die,
For the mortgage man's the man who gets it all.*

*When the banker says he's broke, and the merchant's up in smoke,
They forget that it's the farmer feeds them all.
It would put them to the test if the farmer took a rest
They'd know that it's the farmer feeds them all.
The farmer is the man, the farmer is the man,
Lives on credit till the fall;
His pants are wearing thin,
His condition, it's a sin;
He's forgot that he's the man who feeds them all.*

At right:
Oliver H. Kelley,
founder of
The Grange.
*Minnesota Historical
Society.*



Home Life

IT WASN'T JUST THE JOBS THAT WERE DIFFERENT IN Minnesota's early history. The way people lived was different, too. If you've read the books of Laura Ingalls Wilder, you'll have noticed how much school has changed. Most schools in small towns had many grades in one room, so the teacher had to shift subjects all the time. They didn't teach science. Mathematics was different. History was mostly a matter of memorizing things — sometimes whole speeches, such as Daniel Webster's speech in favor of the Compromise of 1850.

Plus many teachers used songs to teach their children. Laura herself didn't describe using songs as a teacher, but Vance Randolph in 1930 collected nine songs from Laura's daughter Rose Wilder Lane. In that same area, he picked up several teachers' rhymes.

They had interesting songs for teaching the alphabet, too, such as "A is for apple pie, B baked it, C cut it, D divided it, E eat it...." This rhyme was in use at least as early as 1743.

When children weren't in school, they often worked — many children, especially boys, hardly ever went to school, because they had to help on the farm. But not even chores could take all day, every day. Sports were popular — boxing was a frequent subject of songs, and John L. Sullivan, a major name in the sport, fought a bout in Minneapolis in 1887. This proved controversial enough that boxing was made illegal from 1892 to 1915 (Blegen, p. 534). It didn't stop the songs, though:

*It was in merry England, all in the blooming spring,
When this burly English champion he stripped off in the ring,
He stripped to fight young Heenan, our gallant son of Troy,
And to try his English muscle on our bold Benicia Boy.*

(from "Heenan and Sayers, Dean, p. 24)

Horse racing was popular, too, and Minnesota gave birth to the famous Dan Patch, one of the most famous animals of the early twentieth century. There was also the relatively new sport of baseball, a variant of the British game of "rounders," which dated from the 1840s and which had been particularly popular with Civil War soldiers —

though Blegen, p. 204, reports that the town of Nininger had a baseball team as early as 1857. The current Minnesota Twins are descended from a team (then based in Washington, D.C.) that was a charter member of the American Association in the years leading up to the first World Series in 1903. Before the Twins, there were the Minneapolis Millers (which became part of the Western League in 1882) and their cross-town rivals the Saint Paul Saints. College football apparently came to Minnesota in 1882 (Blegen, p. 531).

There were games other than sports. With no television, no video games, and few toys that weren't homemade, children invented activities. Among these were the singing

games. "Here We Go Looby Loo," which was known around the country, looks like it inspired the "Hokey Pokey" that is sometimes still played in school. "Hunt the Squirrel" may have inspired the popular song "A Tisket, A Tasket." One of Rose Wilder Lane's songs was "King William Was King James's Son," a singing game which perhaps recalled England's Glorious Revolution of 1688 and which was sung in both Wisconsin and Iowa. Laura Ingalls Wilder herself reported playing "Uncle John is Sick Abed" in Minnesota.

Plus everyone told stories. Almost all English-speaking peoples have legends of outlaws, for instance. England had Robin Hood; later, they added the highwayman Dick Turpin and his horse Black Bess. There are hints that one of the Black Bess songs may even have been sung in Minnesota. But no outlaw has grabbed the attention of the entire United States like Jesse James. He has been the subject of several (very inaccurate) movies and countless (usually bad) books. Jesse inspired at least five songs, mostly about his death, and his colleague Cole Younger inspired a "confession" about the Northfield Robbery of 1876 and the Younger Boys' long time in prison.

A home-grown criminal inspired no such admiration; "The Harry Hayward Song" is set in Minneapolis, but roundly condemns the criminal. Could that be why the song had little vogue in tradition?

With no television or computers or iPods, young children in the nineteenth century still fell asleep the old way: with lullabies. And they might hear, or tell each other, stories and songs about ghosts. And always, always, there were lost love songs.

Plus, people heard popular songs of the day. Around 1900, everyone was singing "On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away." At least a dozen folk songs lamented the loss of the *Titanic* in 1912 (you wonder if honeymooners John and Nellie Snyder of Minneapolis, who survived the sinking, knew any of them). At least one song Laura Ingalls Wilder sang in the Midwest was sung on the boats leaving the *Titanic*:

*Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore,
Heed not the rolling wave, but bend to the oar.
Safe in the life boat, sailor, cling to self no more!
Leave the poor old stranded wreck, and pull for the shore.*

During the First World War, soldiers from every nation sang Jack Judge's "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" and "Asaf" and Powell's "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag."

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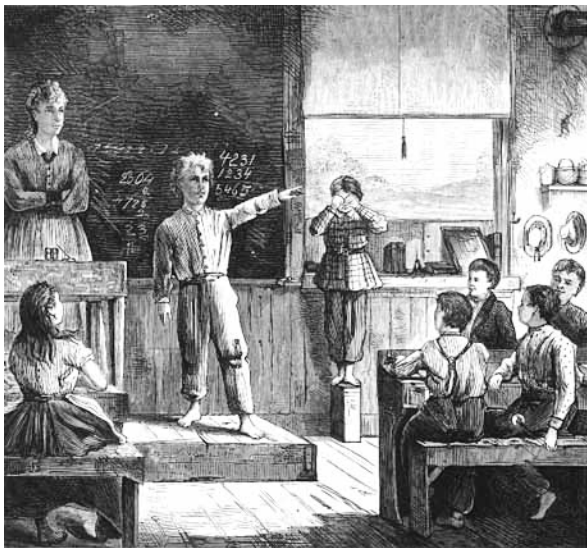
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Song Notes

The Presidents in Rhyme

A typical “teaching rhyme” — that is, a song some teacher made up to help someone remember something. You almost certainly know at least one of these: The Alphabet Song (“A-B-C-D E-F-G, H-I J-K L-M-N-O-P”). There are other alphabet songs (“A is for Apple Pie,” for instance), and multiplication songs, but the best are the history songs. This one has been popular, though this seems to be almost the only version that has been formally “collected.” Sundry versions have been documented, and I know people who have updated it as far as George H. W. Bush. Children can easily make up their own verses, though it’s probably a good idea not to say too much about the presidents of the last few decades. (As a friend told me around the time Monica Lewinsky became a household name, the verse about Bill Clinton would certainly be “interesting.”)

Source: Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs*, volume IV, p. 407. Supplied by Pearl Craig, Hartville, Missouri, 1939. The tune is listed as “Yankee Doodle.” This version, obviously, stops with Grover Cleveland, so you can add verses for McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, and so on. I have made one emendation to Randolph’s text: “Arthur” was “Another” in Randolph’s text.



One room schoolhouse, with a student (probably) presenting a declamation, or speech, to the others. *Harpers* magazine, September 19, 1884. *Minnesota Historical Society*.

The Day That I Played Baseball

Written by Pat Rooney, a stage Irish performer, and published in 1878 — though the song, and Rooney, have been so thoroughly forgotten that I found only one printed reference to the song other than the text printed here, and it said only that the tune had been used in for a more popular folk song, “The Horse Wrangler” (also known as “The Tenderfoot”). Paul Stamler found an online version of the song and discovered the attribution to Rooney, who

performed in the 1870s and 1880s and was best known for writing “Is That You, Mr. Riley?”

Source: The text is Dean’s, with a few obvious typos corrected. In the original, the singer is named “O’Halloran.” The tune is Sandburg’s version of “The Tenderfoot.”

Uncle John is Sick Abed

The singing game is an ancient tradition, usually played by children; in some areas, they were the main means by which young people courted. In others, they were the only form of music, since musical instruments were banned.

This seems to be the only English singing game attested in Minnesota (and that attestation is weak), but we know that Scandinavian immigrants sang them. The Edgar collection of Finnish songs features “Rosvo, Rosvo” (“Robber, Robber”):

<i>Rosvo, rosvo, olit sa</i>	<i>Robber, robber, over there</i>
<i>Kun varastit mun kultani</i>	<i>You stole my girl away from here</i>
<i>Rosvo, rosvo, olit sa</i>	<i>Robber, robber, over there</i>
<i>Kun varastit mun kultani</i>	<i>You stole my girl away from here</i>
<i>Luulen saavani,</i>	<i>I think I shall</i>
<i>Luulen saavani</i>	<i>I think I shall</i>
<i>Luulen saavani</i>	<i>I think I shall</i>
<i>Toisen paremman</i>	<i>Go and find a prettier girl</i>

Source: Laura Ingalls Wilder quotes about a verse and a half of this in *On the Banks of Plum Creek* (chapter 21); this seems to be the only Minnesota collection. However, it’s hard to trust her version. For starters, it is in the chapter “Nellie Oleson,” and Nellie Oleson is in fact a composite of several of Laura’s schoolmates. Plus Laura printed cleaned-up versions of many of the less delicate songs she knew. Since this may have been a kissing game, I suspect she modified the song. Given the fact that her version appears incomplete anyway, I have therefore used the words from Leah Jackson Wolford, *The Play-Party in Indiana*, Indiana Historical Commission, 1916, p. 97. The tune is given as “Yankee Doodle.”



Carl Peters Farm, c. 1912. *Minnesota Historical Society*

Jesse James [Laws E1]

Outlaws are usually cruel and violent men. Billy the Kid boasted of killing 21 men “not counting Mexicans,” though most of these murders are unverified. Dick Turpin robbed his victims at the point of a gun. And Jesse James had violent rages that make it seem likely he had post-traumatic stress problems from his experiences as a guerrilla (read: terrorist) in the Civil War.

But in a society in which the rich keep getting richer and the peasants keep getting trodden on, anyone who resists the authorities can become a hero. So the British invented Robin Hood, and then turned Dick Turpin into a trickster who could boast, “No poor man did I plunder, forever yet oppressed —no widow, no orphan.”

In America, the folk made Jesse Woodson James (1847-1882) a “friend to the poor.” This allegedly noble man (who admittedly had had a tough childhood — his father left home when he was still very young, and Union troops had half-hung his stepfather during the Civil War) joined Quantrill’s Raiders — a guerrilla band. He ended up with a bullet hole in his chest, but he survived — and, after the war, turned robber.

Jesse and his older brother Frank James, and their confederates the Younger Brothers, spent most of their careers working in Missouri (so much for being a friend to the poor and their neighbors — it was their neighbors’ bank deposits they were stealing!). For ten years they managed to avoid capture. In 1869 they robbed the Gallatin Bank (mentioned in some versions of this song); it was not until much later, in 1879, that Jesse would knock over the Glendale Train (by then the Younger Brothers were in prison and Frank James was turning away from robbery).

But the single most notorious act of Jesse James and Company took them far from Missouri; in 1876, they headed for Minnesota, where they attempted to rob the Northfield Bank. “Attempted” is the correct word; although they had been repeatedly successful in Missouri, they were foiled in Northfield; two of the robbers died there, and another was killed by the posse that chased them; the Youngers were captured and imprisoned; only Frank and Jesse James escaped. (For more details, see “Cole Younger” below.)

Frank would try to settle down (he would eventually be tried for his crimes, but was acquitted on all counts!). Jesse never did. He was a bandit until the day he died, though he did assume the name “Howard” and settle into the home where he was murdered in 1882 — by two members of his gang, Charlie and Bob Ford (though somehow only Bob Ford gets mentioned much).

At least five folk songs about Jesse James are known; this is the most common, though there is hardly a word of truth in it (and none of the known versions mention Northfield). Even the number of Jesse’s children is wrong, and the alleged author, Billy Gashade, has never been identified.

Source: I don’t know how many versions of this I’ve heard — it’s a lot. The song, ironically, has never been found

in Minnesota (though it is likely to have been sung here, since it has been repeatedly collected in Iowa and Michigan). But because Jesse James is so well remembered, and the song is so well-known, I decided I had to include a version. This is the composite that I remembered from all those recordings I’ve heard over the years.

Cole Younger [Laws E3]

Henry Washington Younger, who lived in Missouri before the Civil War, had no fewer than fourteen children, of whom Thomas Coleman (“Cole,” 1844-1916), James (“Jim,” 1848-1902), John (1851-1874), and Robert (“Bob,” 1853-1889) became outlaws. They had an unusually good excuse; their father was a Unionist in the Civil War, but Missouri was having its own war-within-a-war, and Union troops killed him and ruined his land (hence, presumably, the reference in the song to the Youngers avenging their father and fighting the anti-guerrillas). It is little surprise that Cole joined the Confederate forces (where he met Frank James); he ended the war in California, although there is no evidence that he robbed anyone there.

Little is reliably known about what the Youngers did in the decade after the war, but they were thought to be implicated in bank and train robberies in and around Missouri, and John Younger was killed in a scuffle with police.

The trip to Texas mentioned in the song may be real, though documentation is again weak; Belle Starr would claim that she met Cole in this time, and that she had a child by him. What is certain is that, in 1876, the three surviving Youngers, Frank and Jesse James, and three other outlaws (who used the names Charlie Pitts, Bill Stiles, and Clell Miller) came to Minnesota. On September 7, they tried to rob the Northfield Bank. Three of the robbers went inside, the others stayed at various points outside. The robbery failed (they picked up less than \$30 in cash), but one of the robbers (no one knows who; we don’t even know which three outlaws went into the bank) killed cashier Joseph Lee Heywood.

Meanwhile, the townsfolk were attacking. Bill Stiles (their main guide) and Clell Miller were killed outside the bank, and Cole and Bob Younger badly wounded. The six survivors tried to flee. But the Youngers were not in shape to move quickly. Eventually Frank and Jesse James split off (and succeeded in escaping); the three Youngers and Bill Stiles were spotted near Madelia and pursued. Charlie Pitts was killed in the gunfight; and all three Youngers suffered additional wounds; Jim’s jaw wound was so bad that he lived on a semi-liquid diet for the rest of his life.

Although the Youngers denied any part in the Northfield robbery, they eventually pled guilty because Minnesota law at the time was such that a prisoner who admitted a crime could not be executed. All three were sentenced to life imprisonment — and became model prisoners. This song was presumably written in this period, though assuredly not by Cole, since he denied the role of the Jameses in the Northfield

affair. Bob Younger died in prison of tuberculosis. Cole and Jim were then given parole, but Jim killed himself because he was denied the right to work or marry. Cole was the last of the Northfield robbers to die, in 1916. Jesse James, of course, had been killed more than two decades earlier; Frank James, who was never convicted of anything, died in 1915.

Source: This song has a strange history. It must have been composed after the Northfield Raid of 1876, and Vance Randolph met people who claim to have heard it in the 1880s, but the earliest verifiable text is found in John A. Lomax's 1910 book *Cowboy Songs*, with no source listed. It was collected and recorded repeatedly in the two dozen years after that. Yet the texts are diverse, and the tunes even more so — about half of them are in common time, and half in triple time! The most reasonable guess is that someone published the song as a broadside, without a tune, and several different singers fit tunes to it. But the original broadside seems to have been lost completely.

There are no known Minnesota versions of this piece, despite its Minnesota setting. My favorite version is a bluegrass setting done by the group Kane's River (which, like almost all bluegrass songs, is in 2/2 time), but I do not know their source, so I didn't think it right to use it. The best-known recording is probably that by Edward L. Crain, which is one of the versions in triple time; I have used it even though it is much more monotonous than the bluegrass version. But Crain's recording was on a 78 rpm record, so he didn't have time for a full text. On that basis I've started from the lyrics as sung by Glen Ohrlin and transcribed in his book *The Hell-Bound Train*; this does have some Minnesota ties, because many of Ohrlin's relatives lived in Winger, Minnesota, and he shared the song (which he learned from Ollie Gilbert) with the people who lived there. I've added a few lyrics from other sources to give as full a version as possible.

The Harry Hayward Song

One of the few folk songs about an actual Minnesota event: Harry Hayward arranged for the killing of his fiancée Katherine "Kitty" Ging in 1894 to collect her life insurance. The actual murder was committed by a not-too-bright fellow named Clause A. Blixt, who left Ging's body near Lake Calhoun. Hayward's alibi was feeble, and he was convicted and executed in 1895. There



Harry Hayward.
Minnesotan Historical Society.

is a fairly full account of the event in Walter B. Trenerry's *Murder in Minnesota* (Minnesota Historical Society Press).

Source: Trenerry prints a three-verse version, without a tune. Olive Woolley Burt's *American Murder Ballads and Their Stories* has a four-verse version, with a tune, but one of those verses is a partial duplicate. These appear to be the only two versions known (at least, Burt's is the only one printed in any folk song catalog). I've combined these two versions to give a coherent text. The original tune was "The Fatal Wedding," copyrighted in 1893 by Gussie L. Davis (with words by William Windom), which was very popular at the time of the murder; Burt's tune is a slightly decayed variant of Davis's original.



Claim shanty in winter. *Minnesota Historical Society.*

Pium Paum (Kehto Laulu)

A Finnish lullaby; the first verse and the melody are traditional, though the poet Kustaa Killinen (1849-1922) added the remaining verses to suggest the "circle of life." "Pium paum" is a phrase, like "bye bye" or "night-night," used to rock a child, having no particular meaning.

Source: As "Pium paum," this is #13 in the Edgar collection of Finnish songs found in the Midwest. She collected it in Ely in 1928 from Laina Haavisto, and later in Cloquet from Olga and Sue Simi. I learned it primarily from the singing of John Berquist (who calls it "Kehto Laulu"). The tune here is Berquist's; the text is a conflation. The translation is not very exact; my goal was to retain the rhyme scheme in which every line of every verse uses the same last syllable.

Vem Kan Segla Förutan Vind? *(Who Can Sail without a Wind?)*

A curiosity about this song is that every version anyone can find has the same two Swedish verses, which on their face seem to be about leaving a friend.

I'm not sure I believe this. I can't prove it — not on the basis of the surviving evidence — but this sounds very much

like what ballad scholars call a “revenant ballad.” A revenant is the spirit of someone who has died without fulfilling a promise (typically to marry). The revenant walks on earth, rather than resting in the grave, seeking someone to release him from his promise.

The typical plot of a revenant ballad has a girl weeping. A shadowy shape comes to her. She asks who it is. He tells her he is her dead lover, unable to sleep because he has promised to marry her. She begs to join him; he says that his body is decaying, or his touch would be fatal, or gives some other reason they cannot reunite. She releases him from his promise. She may then find his grave and die by it. I’ve included a broadside print of one of the best-known revenant ballads, “The Unquiet Grave” [Child #78]. There is a high likelihood (though not absolute proof) that at least one other revenant ballad, “Lost Jimmie Whalen” [Laws C8] was sung in Minnesota lumber camps.

Note how much this song resembles the middle of a revenant ballad: Someone shows up, claiming to be able to do things only a ghost can do. And he must leave behind the one who listens. If it is not a revenant ballad — some think it’s about emigration — it could easily be made into one.

Source: Learned primarily from Ross Sutter, a Twin Cities folksinger. He says that this is one of the two most popular songs among Swedes in America. Texts and translations of the song are common on the Internet. Although it is sung in Swedish, it is said to be from the island of Åland, now part of Finland. Jerome Epstein tells me that there is also a Norwegian translation.

The melody may not be — in fact, probably is not — Swedish in origin. It is nearly identical to the melody of “Im Eshkachek,” or, “If I Forget Thee, O Jerusalem,” a song of the Jews of Eastern Europe (one of several musical settings of a very sad Psalm text). Probably a Swede somewhere heard the tune, presumably from Jewish travelers, and created a set of words in his native language.

Note to guitarists: I’ve shown this in B minor. This is because it lays out very nicely in A minor, but that’s too low for most singers. You will probably want to play it in A minor and capo up, unless your voice is high enough to play it in Em (which also works well on the guitar).

Jack Haggerty [Laws C25]

Although this song is well-attested in Minnesota (Rickaby has two versions from the state), I included it for other reasons. One is its excellent tune, the other, its peculiar story, which shows just how odd the history of a folk song can be. Geraldine Chickering discovered and published the story of how a gag became a very popular rejected-lover song.

Jack Haggerty and Anna Tucker, the characters in this song, were real. Anna, who presumably was born in the 1850s, was the belle of Greenville, Michigan, on the Flat River. She was engaged to one George Mercer. Mercer worked

at a lumber camp along with Jack Haggerty and Dan McGinnis. McGinnis was jealous that Mercer had been promoted over his head — and, in one of the strangest attempts at revenge I’ve ever heard, wrote this song “as a means of hurting him.”

The curiosity is that Jack Haggerty, though he was real, had absolutely nothing to do with Anna Tucker. McGinnis threw in his name as a joke. Still, when Rickaby was collecting versions of this song in Michigan and Minnesota, he met many men who swore they had known Haggerty. Some of them may have. But they certainly didn’t learn the song from him.

Source: I learned the tune years ago from a couple of Wisconsin singers; I can’t tell you much about it, because I’ve misplaced the recording. The texts of this song have usually become somewhat damaged (e.g. a lot of traditional singers couldn’t make heads or tails out of mentions of Cupid, and tried to figure out some other reading). So this is a composite sort of text. I began with the version collected by Rickaby from W. H. Underwood of Bayport, Minnesota, but put in various corrections. These have been consistently marked in brackets.

Note: The way I sing this is in long eight-line verses. This is unusual. Most though not all versions use four-line verses. You can sing it that way by simply using the second half of the melody printed here.

On the Banks of the Wabash

You don’t often see a tearjerker become a state song. This is an exception. “On the Banks of the Wabash” is now the state song of Indiana. But it was originally a nationally-loved Tin Pan Alley song. The author was Paul Dresser, the older brother of the author Theodore Dreiser, who according to Douglas Gilbert, *Lost Chords*, p. 311, was “a decent man who dripped his weight — 300 pounds — in sentimentality.” Following a suggestion by his brother that he write a song about his native state’s rivers, Dresser produced this piece in 1899. It went on to immortality.

Dresser’s own story (like that of many great songwriters) is at least as sad as this song. Born in 1857, he ran away from home as a schoolboy. Sigmund Spaeth, *A History of Popular Music in America*, p. 276, writes that “Whatever he had he shared with others, and most of his debtors never paid him back.” He died poor in 1906, all his royalties squandered.

Source: Dean sang two Dresser songs, this one and “Just Tell Them That You Saw Me”; Dresser’s “The Letter That Never Came” and “The Pardon Came Too Late” also seem to have some part in tradition, though perhaps not in Minnesota. Dean’s version is close enough to the sheet music that I have just followed the original Dresser version as found in the Library of Congress’s American Memory sheet music collection.

The Presidents (In Rhyme)

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same term, be elected, as follows: Each state shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a number of Electors....

The Constitution of the United States, Article II, Section 1.

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of four staves of music, each with a key signature of one sharp and a time signature of 2/4. The notes are simple, mostly quarter and eighth notes. Chords are indicated by letters G, C, and D above the staff. The lyrics are: George Wash-ing - ton, first pres - i - dent, By Ad - ams was suc - ceed - ed, And Thom - as Jef - fer - son was next, For the peo - ple's cause he pleaded. Mad - i - son was then called forth To give John Bull a peel - ing, James Mon-roe had all the go, The er - a of good feel - ing.

*George Washington, first president,
By Adams was succeeded,
And Thomas Jefferson was next,
For the people's cause he pleaded.
Madison was then called forth
To give John Bull* a peeling,
James Monroe had all the go,
The era of good feeling.*

*'Twas J. Q. Adams then came in,
An' next came Andrew Jackson
Who licked John Bull at New Orleans
With such great satisfaction.
Van Buren then he took the chair,
Then Harrison and Tyler,
The latter made the Whigs so mad†
They like to bust their b'iler.*

*We then elected James K. Polk,
The issue that did vex us
Was shall we fight with Mexico
An' take in Lone Star Texas?
Taylor then got in the chair,
But soon had to forsake it,
Millard Fillmore filled it more,
Frank Pierce then says I'll take it.*

*James Buchanan next popped in,
Lincoln then was chosen,
Who found the events of his might (sic.)
Were anything but frozen.
Andrew Johnson had a time,
The Senate would impeach him,
But as it took a two-thirds vote,
They lacked one vote to reach him.*

*Now we come to U. S. Grant
Who made his name at Shiloh,
Then Hayes, an' Garfield who was shot,
They both came from Ohio.
[Arthur] then the scepter held
Till Cleveland turned it over,
Little Bennie sandwiched in,
An' now again it's Grover.*

- * John Bull: Great Britain. A reference to the War of 1812.
- † John Tyler was William Henry Harrison's Vice President, and succeeded when Harrison died in 1841. Harrison was a Whig, but Tyler aligned himself with the Democrats.
- § Little Bennie=Benjamin Harrison, who lost the popular vote to Grover Cleveland in 1888 but won the Electoral College. Cleveland won their rematch in 1892.

The Day That I Played Baseball

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff: D, G, A, E7, Em, and Bm. The lyrics are: "Oh, me name it is O' - Houlihan, I'm a man that's in - flu - en - tial, I mind my bus' - ness, stay at home, Me wants are few and small. But the oth - er day a gang did come, they were filled with whisk - y, gin, and rum, And they took me out in the broil - ing sun to play a game of ball."

*Oh, me name it is O'Houlihan, I'm a man that's influential.
I mind my business, stay at home, me wants are few and small.
But the other day a gang did come. They were filled with whisky, gin, and rum,
And they took me out in the boiling sun to play a game of ball.*

*They made me carry all the bats, I thought they'd set me crazy,
They put me out in center field, sure I paralyzed them all;
When I put up me hands to stop a fly, holy murther, it struck me in the eye,
And they laid me out by the fence to die on the day that I played baseball.*

*There was O'Shaughnessy of the second nine, he was throwing them underhanded,
He put a twirl upon them and I couldn't strike them at all;
The umpire he called strikes on me; "What's that?" says I; "You're out," says he.
Bad luck to you, O'Shaughnessy, and the way that you twirled the ball.*

*Then I went to bat and I knocked the ball I thought to San Francisco,
Around the bases three times three, by Heavens, I run them all.
When the gang set up a terrible howl, saying, "O'Houlihan, you struck a foul,"
And they rubbed me down with a Turkish towel on the day that I played baseball.*

*The catcher swore by the Jack of Trumps that he saw me stealing bases,
And fired me into a keg of beer, I loud for help did call;
I got roaring, slaving, stone-blind drunk, I fell in the gutter, I lost my spunk,
I had a head on me like an elephant's trunk on the day that I played baseball.*

*The reporters begged to know my name and presented me with a medal,
They asked me for my photograph to hang upon the wall,
Saying, "O'Houlihan, you won the game," though me head was sore and my shoulder lame,
And they sent me home on a cattle train the day that I played baseball.*

Jesse James

*Living in Missouri was a brave bold man, Known from Seattle, Washington to Birmingham,
From Boston, Massachusetts across the states, from Denver, Colorado to the Golden Gate.*

— from another Jesse James song (Laws E2)

Jes - se James was a lad who killed many a man, He robbed the Glen-dale train,— He—
stole from the rich and he gave to the poor, He'd a hand and a heart and a brain.—
Jes - se had a wife to mourn for his life, Three child - ren they were brave,— But that
dirt - y lit - tle coward who shot Mis-ter Howard Has laid poor Jesse in his grave.

*Jesse James was a lad who killed many a man,
He robbed the Glendale train,
He stole from the rich and he gave to the poor,
He'd a hand and a heart and a brain.*

Chorus:

*Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life,
Three children they were brave.
But that dirty little coward who shot Mister Howard
Has laid Jesse James in his grave.*

*It was on a Wednesday night, the moon was shining bright,
They robbed the Glendale train,
And the agent on his knees, he delivered up the keys
To those outlaws, Frank and Jesse James.*

*It was on a Saturday night, Jesse was at home,
Talking with his family brave.
Robert Ford came along like a thief in the night
And he laid Jesse James in his grave.*

*It was Robert Ford, that dirty little coward,
I wonder how he does feel,
For he ate of Jesse's bread and he slept in Jesse's bed
And he laid Jesse James in his grave.*

*This song was made by Billy Gashade
As soon as the news did arrive.
He said there was no man with the law in his hand
Who could take Jesse James when alive.*



Photo of the Northfield Bank, c. 1870. From Sumner's Gallery. Minnesota Historical Society.

Cole Younger

The smartest was Cole. He had, in war and wickedness, killed sixteen men.... Jesse James was the moodiest. When things were going well, he was genial and easy to get along with, but when things were going badly, he was cruel, demanding, and dangerous. He would stop at nothing....

Homer Croy, Cole Younger: Last of the Great Outlaws, pp. 107-108.

I am a reckless highway-man, Cole Younger is my name. My deeds of desperation have brought my name to shame.

*I am a reckless highwayman, Cole Younger is my name.
[My] deeds of desperation have brought my [name] to shame.*

*We stationed out our pickets and into town did go.
There upon the counter we struck our fatal blow.*

*The robbing of the Northfield Bank I never can deny,
For which I am a poor prisoner, now in the Stillwater jail I lie.*

*"It's hand us o'er your money, boys, and that without delay,
We are the notorious Youngers and we have no time to play."*

*Of all my bold robberies a story I will tell
Of a California miner, upon him I fell.*

*[The cashier, being brave and bold, denied our noted band.
Jesse James fired the shot that killed that noble man.]*

*I robbed him of his money, boys, and made my getaway,
For which I will be sorry of until my dying day.*

*We got [up] on our horses and we rode out of town.
The lawmen [they] pursued us and Jim [he] was shot down.*

*"It's now we've got fast horses," as brother Bob did say,
"It's now we've got fast horses to make our getaway.*

*Three of the brave companions made it home alive,
Three of the brave companions sleep 'neath Minnesota skies.*

*We'll ride to seek our father's revenge and we will win the prize.
We'll fight those anti-guerrilla boys until the day we die."*

*[And now in Stillwater jail I lie, a-wearing my life away;
Two James Boys left to tell the tale of that sad and fateful day.]*

*We started out for Texas, that good old Lone Star state,
On Nebraska's burning prairies the James Boys we did meet.*

*With knives and guns and pistols we all sat down to play,
A-drinking of good whiskey, boys, to pass the time away.*

*[A Union Pacific railroad train was the next we did surprise,
And the crimes done by our bloody hands bring tears unto my eyes.]*

*[The engineer and fireman killed, conductor escaped alive,
And now their bones lie moldering beneath Nebraska's skies.]*

*We saddled up our horses and northward we did go
To the godforsaken country called Minneso-ti-o.*

*We went to rob the Northfield bank and brother Bob did say,
"Cole, if we undertake this job we'll always rue the day."*



Cole Younger as he appeared shortly after his capture. Note the badly swollen right eye.
From a card in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.

The Harry Hayward Song

The holy passion of friendship is of so sweet and steady and loyal and enduring a nature that it will last through a whole lifetime, if not asked to lend money.

Mark Twain, Pudd'n'head Wilson, chapter eight

1 Minn - e - ap - olis was ex - cit - ed — And for ma - ny miles a - round For a

9 terri - ble crime com - mit - ted — Just a mile or so from town. It was on a

17 cold and win - ter's eve, The vil - lain did re - ply, "To - night she

24 takes that fa - tal ride, And she shall have to die." The *Chorus*

30 stars were shin - ing bright - ly — And the moon had passed a - way, The

37 road was dark and lone - ly — When — found dead where she lay. Then

44 tell the tale of a crim - in - al, Kit was his prom - ised

50 bride. Just an - oth - er sin to an - swer for Just an - o - ther fat - al ride.

*Minneapolis was excited, and for many miles around,
For a terrible crime committed, just a mile or so from town.
It was a cold and winter's eve the villain did reply
"Tonight she takes that fatal ride and she shall have to die."*

Chorus:

*The stars were shining brightly and the moon had passed away.
The road was dark and lonely when found dead where she lay.
Then tell the tale of a criminal, Kit was his promised bride.
Just another sin to answer for, just another fatal ride.*

*When for pleasure she went riding little did she know her fate
That took place on that lonely night on the road near Calhoun
Lake.*

*She was shot while in the buggy, and beaten, 'tis true to speak,
Until all life had vanished, then was cast into the street.*

*He was at heart a criminal, but a coward of a man,
And so he sought another to execute his plan.
It was a cold and bloody plot, likewise a terrible sin
To take a life so kind and true as she had been to him.*

Uncle John Is Sick Abed

Kissing games, also, were as familiar in the classic period as in later time, for Pollux quotes the Athenian comic poet Crates as saying that she "plays kissing games in rings of boys, preferring the handsome ones."

William Wells Newell, Games and Songs of American Children, 1902 (p. 31 of the Dover edition of 1963)

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of four staves of music, each with a key signature and time signature indicator. The notes are simple eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables across notes. The lyrics are: "Unc - le John is sick a - bed, — What — shall we send him? — Who — shall we send it by? — By the gov - er - nor's daught - er. Three good wish - es, Three good kiss - es, And a slice of gin - ger bread. Take her by the lily white hand and lead her 'cross the wat - er. What — shall we send it in? In a piece of pap - er. [First Name Last Name], so they say, Goes a - court - in' night and day. Pap - er is not fine e - nough, but In a gold - en sauc - er. With a sword — by his side and Takes Miss [First Name] for his bride.

The Minnesota source for this, Laura Ingalls Wilder (*On the Banks of Plum Creek*, p. 159) seems to describe it as a ring game — that is, one in which the players form a ring, and the named player goes to the center, then they repeat the game, naming a new player. But Laura’s version (ten lines) appears incomplete, and she does not list a tune. There are similar songs in Britain, such as the Scottish “Cockabendie,” but I don’t think they are the same song. Leah Jackson Wolford, *The Play Party in Indiana*, p. 97, gives a full text, to the tune of “Yankee Doodle,” and lists this as a kissing game. She says the figures of the game “have been forgotten.” It can be played as a ring game, but if played as a kissing game it could still be played in a ring, but instead of one player in the middle, a boy and a girl go to the middle, kiss, and then the game repeats (probably with the boy and the girl in the middle exiting the ring then rejoining it).

Was this originally a ring game or a kissing game? We can’t be sure — but I suspect it was a kissing game. Laura, we know, did not like kissing games (though she played them at times), and so might well have converted this to a ring game, dropping two lines in the process.



A kissing game: "Round and Round the Village." From Alice Bertha Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1898, page 132. In this game, when the two children were called, they would step outside the ring, walk around the outside, then re-enter the ring to kiss. The process would then repeat with another pair. Most games had highly rigid rules for how they were played.

Pium Paum (Kehto Laulu)

Lullay, lullay, litel child, child reste thee a throw [rest yourself a while]

Fro heye hider art thu sent with us to wone low [you are sent with us below to dwell]

From the Commonplace Book of John Grimestone, 1372 (a collection of items he met and wrote down). There is another similar lullaby in the book, making them among the oldest lullabies preserved in English.

1

Em Em Bm Em Em Bm Em

Pium paum, keh-to hei-lah-taa, Ja lap-si via-a-ton-na ui-nah-taa. Pium
Pium paum, the cra-dle starts To rock the lit-tle ba-by in the cart. Pium

6

Em C Am Em C B7 Em

paum, Äi-ti lau-lah-taa, Kun sy-dän-kä-py-än-sä tuu-dot-taa.
paum, her moth-er's art Will guard the lit-tle treas-ure of her heart.

Finnish:

Pium paum, kehto heilahtaa,

Ja lapsi viatonna uinahtaa

Pium paum, Äiti laulahtaa,

Kun sydänpäpänsä tuudittaa.

Pium paum, viulu vingahtaa,

Ja nuoret karkelohon kiiruhtaa.

Pium paum, Onni häilyää,

Se tuopi valoa ja pimeää.

Pium paum, Keran kajataa,

Tuo kylmä kirkonkello ilmoittaa,

Pois pois, henki vaelttaa,

Ja ruumis mullan alla kajan saa.

English:

Pium paum, the cradle starts

To rock the little baby in the cart

Pium paum, her mother's art

Will guard the little treasure of her heart.

Pium paum, the fiddles play;

Their music sweet tells of the passing days.

Dance, child, and take time to play,

Seek love and laughter now while you may.

Pium paum, the day will come

When death will take you to your final home.

And you will lie in the loam,

So enjoy the day and fill your heart with song.



Minnesota mother and baby, c. 1890.

Photo by A. P. Holand.

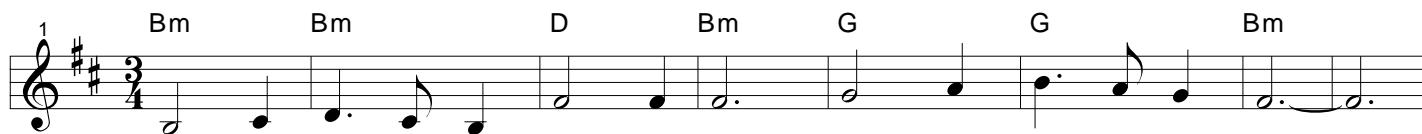
Minnesota Historical Society

Vem Kan Segla Förutan Vind? (Who Can Sail without a Wind?)

O, Jimmie, can't you tarry here with me, Not leave me alone, distracted in pain.

But since death is the dagger that has cut us asunder, And wide is the gulf, love, between you and I...

— From "The Lost Jimmie Whalen," as collected by Rickaby from Will Daugherty of Charlevoix, Michigan



Vem kan se - gla fö - ru - tan vind? Vem kan ro u - tan å - ror?
Who can sail with - out a wind? Who can row with-out oars?—



Vem kan skil - jas från vän - nen sin U - tan att fäl - la tå - rar?
Who can leave a part - ing friend With - out shed - ding tears?—

Swedish:

Vem kan segla förutan vind?

Vem kan ro utan åror?

Vem kan skiljas från vännen sin

Utan att fälla tårar?

Jag kan segla förutan vind,

Jag kan ro utan åror.

Men ej skiljas från vännen min

Utan att fälla tårar.

English:

Who can sail without a wind?

Who can row without oars?

Who can leave a parting friend

Without shedding tears?

I can sail without the wind,

I can row without oars,

But I can't leave a parting friend

Without shedding tears.

At right: A broadside from the Bodleian collection, showing a version of the best-known of all revenant ballads, "The Unquiet Grave." The earliest printed version dates from 1831 or earlier, and the song was certainly in existence before that. The image of the swan (like the art in many broadsides) is not really relevant to the song, but may have been suggested by the legend that the swan only sings when it is about to die.



The Weeping Lover.

R. HEPPEL, Printer, 113, Colleshill-st., Birmingham

COLD blows the wind over my true love,
Cold falls the drops of rain,
I never, never had but one true love,
And in Flanders he was slain!
I'll do as much for my true love,
As any young girl may,
I'll sit and weep down by his grave,
For twelve months and a day!

These twelve months and a day being gone,
This young man he arose,
Crying why do you weep by my grave,
That I can't take my repose?

One kiss, one kiss from your lilly-white lips,
One kiss is all I crave.
One kiss, one kiss from your lilly-white lips,
Then return back to your grave.

My lips are as cold as any clay,
My breath is heavy and strong,
And if you have a kiss from my white lips,
Your days will not be long.

Don't you remember the garden grove,
Where we have often walk'd,
Pluck the finest flower among them all,
It will wither to a stalk.

Go fetch me a nut from a dungeon deep,
Or water from a stone,
Or white milk from a maiden's breast,
For maidens they have none.

How can I get a nut from a dungeon deep,
Or water from a stone,
Or white milk from a maiden's breast,
If maidens have got none.

Weep not for me, my own true love,
Weep not for me, I pray,
For I must leave you in this wide world,
And return unto my grave. See 354.

Jack Haggerty

*What is this world? What asketh men to have?
Now with his lov, now in his colde grave,
Allone, withouten any compaignye.*

Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, I.2777-2779 [The Knight's Tale], Riverside edition

1. I'm a heart-bro - ken rafts-man, from Green - ville I came, I - court-ed a lass-ie, a
2. tell you my sto - ry with - out much de - lay Of a sweet litt - le lass-ie my

lass of great fame, From the strong darts of Cup - id I've suf - fered much
heart stole a - way, She's a black-smith's fair daugh - ter on the Flat Riv - er

grief, My - heart's broke with - in me, I can get no re - lief. I will
Side And I al - ways in - tend-ed to make her my bride.

*I'm a heartbroken raftsmen, from [Greenville] I came,
[I courted a lassie, a lass of great fame,
[From the] strong darts of Cupid [I've suffered] much grief;
My heart's broke within me, I can [get no] relief.
I will tell you my story without much delay,
[Of a sweet] little lassie my heart stole away,
[She's a] blacksmith's [fair] daughter on the Flat River Side,
And I always intended to make her my bride.*

*I'll bid adieu to Flat River, for me there's no rest.
I will shoulder my peavey and I will go west.
I will go to Muskegon some comfort to find,
And I'll leave my own sweetheart on Flat River behind.
So come all you bold raftsmen with hearts stout and true,
Don't depend on the women; you're beat if you do.
[And whenever] you meet one with a dark chestnut curl,
[Just remember] Jack Haggerty and the Flat River girl.*

*My occupation is raftsmen whe[re] the white water [roars].
My name is engraved on the rocks and sand shores.
[In shops, bars, and households I'm very well known],
And they call me Jack Haggerty, the pride of the town.
I dressed her in jewels and the finest of lace,
The costliest muslins her [form] to embrace.
I gave her my wages all for to keep safe,
I begrudged her of nothing I had on the earth.*

*[One day on the river a letter I received,
To say from her promise herself she'd relieved.
For to wed with another she'd no longer delay,
And the next time I'd see her she'd no more be a maid.]
[On] her mother, Jane Tucker, I [lay] all the blame,
She has caused her to leave me and go back on my name.
She has cast off the riggin' that God would soon tie,
And has left me to wander till the day that I die.*



Minnesota Historical Society

On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away

*The world is round, so travellers tell, And straight though reach the track,
Trudge on, trudge on, 'twill all be well, The way will guide one back.
But ere the circle homeward hies, Far, far it must remove:
White in the moon the long road lies That leads me from my love.*

A. E. Housman, A Shropshire Lad, XXXVI

1. 'Round my In - di - an - a home - stead wave the corn - fields, In the
2. Ma - ny years have passed since I strolled by the riv - er, Arm in

dis - tance loom the woodlands clear and cool. — Of - ten - times my thoughts re - vert to scenes of
arm, with sweet - heart Ma - ry by my side. — It was there I tried to tell her that I

child - hood, Where I first re - ceived my les - sons, Na - ture's school. — But
loved her, It was there I begged of her to be my bride. Long

one thing there is miss - ing in the pict - ure, With - out her face it seems so in - com -
years have passed since I strolled through the church - yard, She's sleep - ing there my an - gel Ma - ry

plete, — I long to see my moth - er in the door - way, As she
dear, — I loved her but she thought I did - n't mean it, Still I'd

stood there years a - go her boy to greet. Oh the moon - light's fair to - night a - long the
give my fu - ture were she on - ly here.

Wa - bash, From the fields there comes the breath of new - mown hay, Through the

syc - a - mores the can - dle lights are gleam - ing, On the

banks of the Wa - bash far a - way.

The Decline of Folk Song

THE MID- AND LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY MARKED THE zenith of Minnesota's influence around the nation, as governor Harold Stassen helped shape the United Nations, and two Minnesotans (Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale) became vice presidents. But it was a period of decline for folk songs. The reasons seem to have been two: radio and recordings. You can see their effects in some of the twentieth century folk song collections — the most popular “Hillbilly” singer of the pre-depression era was Vernon Dalhart, and he sold millions of copies of a song called “The Wreck of the Southern Old 97.” Dalhart learned the song with a very obvious error (“average” for “airbrakes”). The song has been collected many times since, and most versions found in the thirties repeated Dalhart’s “average” error.

Dalhart often would catalog events of the day in his songs — he recorded two songs soon after Minnesotan Charles A. Lindbergh made his trans-atlantic flight in 1927. The sheet music for one of these songs is shown on this page. But not even Dalhart was reliably able to put songs into tradition by then. “Lindbergh (The Eagle of the U.S.A.),” despite a fascinating tune, was recorded— and quickly forgotten. A dozen or so other Lindbergh songs vanished without a trace.

Dalhart’s successors were less concerned with events. The next generation stopped singing the “old-time” songs altogether and recorded products by professional songwriters. Then came long-playing records, and Rock and Roll, and eventually MTV. Most people still learn a few songs by tradition (think Christmas carols — and surely you learned “The Worms Crawl In” or “Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory of the Burning of the School” on a playground somewhere), but it’s mostly a very different sort of music.

Minnesota in this period saw the rise of a new genre, the fake-Scandinavian material. One of the few songs the author collected for this project was a version of “Nikolina,” about a “Svedish” boy who is trying to marry a girl whose father guards her carefully; after the boy threatens to kill himself, Nikolina counsels, “Darling Karl, don’t be so unwise. A suicide is nothing but a dumbbell; Why don’t we wait until

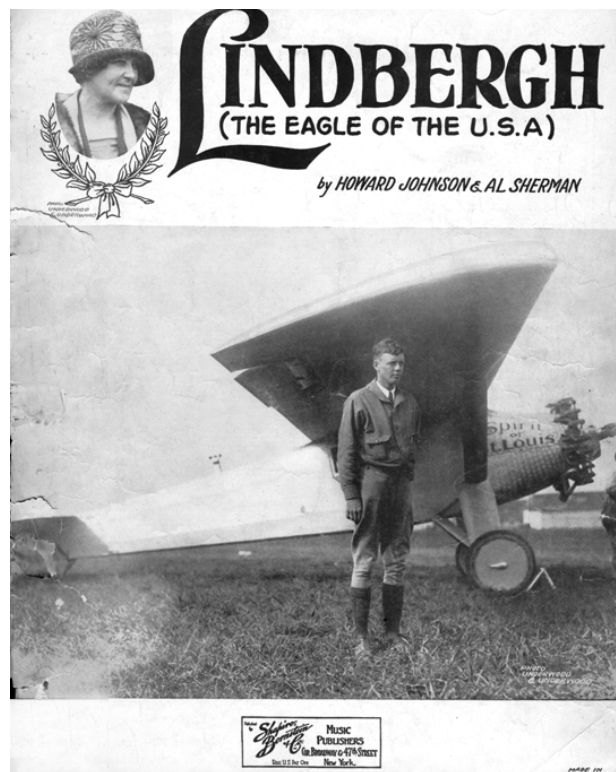
the old man dies?” This song was extraordinarily popular — but it was all due to recordings by “Olle i Skratthult.”

One of the few songs of this genre that seems to be genuinely traditional is “The Swede from North Dakota.” It also mentions several areas in Minneapolis/Saint Paul.

Minnesota would contribute one more folk song to the world’s repertoire. One of the most beautiful songs ever found in Minnesota was “The Colorado Trail,” though the singer sadly remembered only one verse. Many people have since added more.

The Swede from North Dakota
ON PAGE 76

The Colorado Trail
ON PAGE 77



Original sheet music cover. *Author's personal collection.*

Song Notes

The Swede from North Dakota

Source: I don't know where I learned this, it probably was not from a “folk” source. Glenn Ohrlin, though, did learn it from his father. The original author is unknown. I've tried to put together a version that approximates what I learned, using Ohrlin (pp. 20-21) as a crib. The tune, “Reuben and Rachel” (“Reuben, Reuben, I've been thinking What a fine world this would be If the men were all transported Far beyond the northern sea”) is very well-known; it was written by William Gooch and published in 1871, with words by Harry Birch. It has been used in a number of parodies, mostly rather silly, such as “The Winnipeg Whore” and “Caviar Comes from the

Virgin Sturgeon.” The text of this song goes back to at least the 1920s; Milburn published it in the *Hobo's Handbook* in 1930. A very similar song, “Ole from Norway,” is found in Rickaby and said to have originated around 1895.

The Colorado Trail

Source: For many years, only one version of this was known: The one given here, printed on page 462 of Carl Sandburg's *The American Songbag*. Dr. T. L. Chapman learned this single verse from “a hoss wrangler” who was injured while stunt riding in Duluth. More recently, Max Hunter found a version, and there is one from New Mexico, but it's likely both derive from recordings based on Sandburg's Minnesota version.

The Swede from North Dakota

1 C C C F C C C C F C

I'm a Svede from Nort' Da - ko - ta, Vork on farm for half a year,

9 F G F C C C F G C

I vent down to Min - ne - ap - 'lis, All to see da big State Fair.

*I'm a Svede from Nort' Dakota,
Vork on farm for half a year,
I vent down to Minneap'lis
All to see da big State Fair.*

*I vent down to Seven Corners
Vere Salvation Army play,
Dere a voman come up to me,
Dis is vat the voman say.*

*She say, "Vill you vork for Yesus?"
I say, "How much Yesus pay?"
She say, "Yesus don't pay notting."
I not vork for him today.*

*I voke up da very next morning,
In da town dey call Saint Paul;
I voke up vit' an awful headache;
Tink I got some alcohol.*

At right: Minnesota State Fair. From *Harper's*,
September 28, 1878.
Minnesota Historical Soziety



The Colorado Trail

*A cowboy's life is a weary thing, rope and brand and ride and sing,
He's up and gone at the break of day, drivin' them dogies on their lonesome way.
Rain or shine, sleet or snow, me and my doney gal are bound to go.*
"Doney Gal," from 1910 or earlier

1 C F C G C
Eyes like the morn - ing star, Cheeks like a rose,
3 C F C F G
Lau - ra was a pret - ty girl, God al - might - y knows.
5 C F C G C
Weep all ye lit - tle rains, Wail, winds, wail,
7 C Am C Dm F C
All a - long, a - long, a - long The Co - lo - ra - do Trail.

Glossary

Ballad: As used in this book, a folk song which tells a story.

There are “genres” of ballads, such as murder ballads, love ballads, emigration ballads.

Broadsheets, Broadside: A single-sided sheet printed with a song text (or news story, or anything else the printer thinks would sell). Some broadsides contained more than one song text, but almost none showed a printed tune. For many years, it was customary to sell broadsides for a penny.

Child Ballad: Refers to a song listed in Francis James Child’s *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, still widely considered the greatest work of traditional song scholarship.

(To) Collect: a verb describing how a folk song comes to be archived. A collector will listen to an informant sing a song, and will take down or record the words and music. A song need not be collected to be a folk song, but until it is collected, it will be known only in tradition, not in print.

Collector: One who gathers folk songs from informants.

Folk Song: As used in this book, a song which survives by being handed down via *Tradition*

Informant: A singer from whom a collector records a song.

Laws Ballad: Refers to a song cataloged in Malcolm Laws’s *Native American Balladry and American Balladry from British Broadsides*.

Oral Tradition: see *Tradition*

Songster: A collection of song lyrics printed in booklet form without tunes. Typical examples were the *Republican Campaign Songsters* of the 1850s and 1860s, and the *Merchant’s Gargling Oil Songsters* of the latter nineteenth century. One very famous example, the *Forget-Me-Not Songster*, ran through many editions and helped to create a “standard text” of a variety of songs.

Singing Game: A children’s game accompanied by music sung by the participants. “Ring Around the Roses” is one of the most popular, and was still played when the author was young. Other, such as courting games, have largely died out. Some singing games are *playparties*, found mostly in cultures where instrumental music and dancing were discouraged.

Tradition, Traditional: As used in this book, *traditional* has a specific meaning: a song handed down from singer to singer, sometimes changing over the years, but always preserved because people liked singing it. A folk song — a song of the people — is one which survives (or, at least, used to survive) in oral singing tradition. This is by analogy to folklore or a folk tale, which survives in oral spoken tradition.

Unaccompanied Song: Most songs from British roots were sung by voice without instruments; American songs were more often accompanied by banjo, fiddle, guitar, or dulcimer.

Bibliography of Song Sources

NOTE: This list includes only the song sources actually cited in the Heritage Songbook; I have consulted more than a hundred others to check versions or in some cases to supply emendations. The supplementary bibliography on CD lists historical works cited in the text portions of the Songbook. A * indicates a particularly important source.

Informants

Odell Bjerkness, Edina
John Healy, Saint Paul

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Edgar MSS: Papers of William Crowell Edgar, publisher of *The Bellman*, and his daughter Marjorie Edgar. Most of Marjorie Edgar's Finnish collections can be found in Joyce E. Hakala's edition of Edgar's works (see below). Edgar also gathered folk songs in English and other languages, but lack of time and the volume of the Edgar papers made it impossible to verify songs except for the Finnish material in Edgar/Hakala.

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***Stanchfield MSS:** Bessie Stanchfield Papers — Minnesota Historical Society

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Pikebone Music, 2007. Note: Much of this material can be heard in Library of Congress recordings collected by Sidney Robertson Cowell, who gathered songs in the Midwest and worked with Edgar in Minnesota.

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* Denotes a song collected in Minnesota tradition

† Denotes a song for which there is indirect evidence that it was traditionally sung in Minnesota.