

# SING A SONG OF AMERICA

## USING MUSIC IN THE CLASSROOM

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## Goals and Objectives

Imagine waking up and not being able to hear or see. Not to hear a bird sing or see another sunset. In some ways we have allowed our classrooms to become silent and dark. As we keep concentrating on teaching for standardized tests, we have let much of the joy of learning slip away. Yet experts tell us that art and music help children learn, so in a small way “Sing a Song of America” will help bring the arts back to our students.

“Sing a Song of America” helps teach history through music and lyrics. Exposing students to music and lyrics of different eras in U.S. history gives them insight and understanding of different periods of history, i.e. American Revolution, Civil War, Labor, Suffrage, the 60’s, etc. Studying the actual lyrics is much like studying poetry - something that is included in statewide testing. Song lyrics are however often less difficult to understand than the poetry they might study in Language Arts.

“Sing a Song of America” could also be used in teaching Geography, using songs of different countries and cultures to introduce new places.

Songs and their lyrics are primary source documents that give students better understanding of what they are studying. Long after students have forgotten specific facts about historical events they will remember a song or a tune that they learned.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a song should be worth at least as much. By studying song lyrics students will develop a better comprehension of the time period they are investigating. Music will reach students who might not understand the same information when it’s given in a textbook. “Sing a Song of America” will allow students to see different sides and aspects of American History.

## Lesson Plan

Prior to introducing an era in U.S. History you should decide which pieces of music you wish to incorporate into your lesson. "Sing a Song of America" is not so much a lesson plan as it is a way to supplement your curriculum. The individual teacher should take this idea and make it their own.

Every era of history has music to complement it. The colonial period might be introduced with a song such as "When I First Came to This Land" which addresses immigration to the colonies in a playful way. "The Rich Lady Over the Sea" helped explain to students the relationship between England and her colonies. Could the American Revolution be taught without "Yankee Doodle"?

In introducing the Civil War you might choose a typical Northern and Southern song such as "Dixie" and "When Johnny Comes Marching Home". These songs would likely show the optimism both sides had at the beginning of the war. They would also show the sectionalism of the time period. All of these aspects of the songs could be discussed. The "Blue and Gray" might be a song you could use to show the sadder side of the war as it continues. There are also songs that exemplify the feelings of loss and sorrow as the war continues. Using these songs will help students to get a better perception of the Civil War.

When America was moving west there are songs that are optimistic and hopeful, as well as others that are sad, forlorn and show the difficulties of early life in the west. "Home on the Range" is a familiar song, as are "Red River Valley" and "Sweet Betsy From Pike" that might be used for the westward movement.

"The Texas Rangers" might be used for the Cowboy/Westward era. "There's A Low Green Valley/Nelly Gray" is both a love song and a song about someone moving on. "Darling Clementine" comes from the mining era. There are also whimsical songs such as "Old Dan Tucker" and "Who Threw the Overalls".

"Way Down Upon De Swanee Ribber" is an incredible example of the racism of the 1800's. Even the more modern version is rather something.

World War I could be introduced with "Over There." World War II has a huge amount of music that can be used.

"America the Beautiful" is a song that students have heard and sung, but actually reading the words gives a much deeper meaning. The history and lyrics of "The Star Spangled Banner" is also worth examining, students sing it but don't know it.

Imagine what fun you could have by highlighting some of the "bubble gum" songs of the 60's and 70's; students would be certain that an entire generation of Americans was crazy. On a more serious note the protest songs of the 60's and 70's show a country being torn apart. You can teach four decades of history with the Billy Joel song, "We didn't Start the Fire".

Remember that when examining song lyrics you are looking at primary source documents. This a skill needed for the standardized state tests as well as for Advanced Placement courses. How much or how little music is used for each historical time period is up to the teacher. One teacher might decide to create an entire unit on comparing just war songs, while another may just play period music while students are working on class work.

*HAVE SOME FUN!*

# Resources

## Where to buy music?

Historical music is available at a variety of places. I have purchased historical music at the Smithsonian, K-Mart, teacher-supply stores, and even garage sales.

The *Social Studies School Service* catalogue has a wide variety of available music programs. 800.421.4246

Most text books have musical ancillaries – ask your book representative.

## Where to find lyrics?

If your school has a music, chorus, or band teacher they might be able to help find music and lyrics. They will probably be extremely helpful as they will be pleasantly surprised to find a non-music teacher incorporating music into the curriculum.

Lyrics do not usually come with the music CD's. Students really need to see the words to understand the song; hearing it is not always enough. I have found some on the internet at the following sites:

[www.fortunecity.com/tinpan/parton/2/history](http://www.fortunecity.com/tinpan/parton/2/history)

[www.maxhuntre.missouristate.edu](http://www.maxhuntre.missouristate.edu)

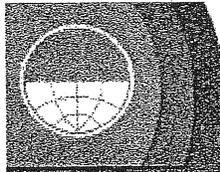
[www.songsforteaching.com](http://www.songsforteaching.com)

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sheetmusic/lyrics> focus is on Civil War and Reconstruction period.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame has wonderful resources for using more modern music.  
[www.rockhall.com](http://www.rockhall.com)

Spend some time on the internet – you will find not only lyrics but also the actual songs being sung. There is so much information out there!

One of the best assortments of American music is “Freedom: Songs from the Heart of America” from the PBS series. It is available on-line from Sony Music Story, or simply go to any place that sells on-line music like e-bay. It doesn't have much for the really early time periods, but focuses on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century.



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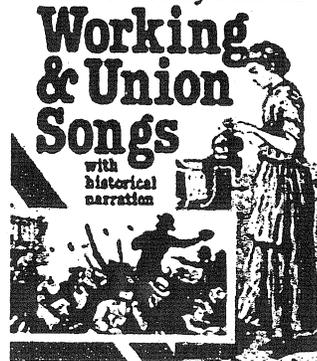
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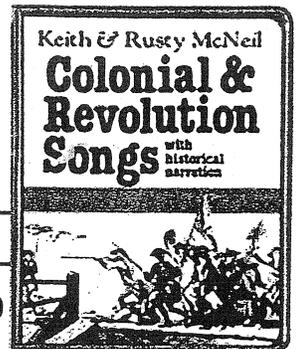
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\* Sound clips are available from these pages.

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4	Because All Men Are Brothers
5	Simple Gifts
6	The Star Spangled Banner
7	Amazing Grace
8	Erie Canal
9	New River Train
10	When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again
11	Dixie
12	Follow The Drinking Gourd
13	Oh Freedom
14	The Battle Hymn of the Republic
15	Johnny Has Gone For A Soldier
16	Shenandoah Lullabye
17	Healing Song #1
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- 9 Brother, Can You Spare A Dime? 
- 10 Dancing In The Dark 
- 11 The Gold Diggers' Song 
- 12 Gpd Bless America
- 13 On The Trail 
- 14 This Land Is Your Land
- 15 Union Maid
- 16 Strange Fruit 
- 17 Trouble 
- 18 Joe Hill 
- 19 We'll Meet Again 
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- 8 Chimes Of Freedom (Bruce Springsteen) 
- 9 People Get Ready 
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Words and music: George F. Root

1.  
Yes we'll rally round the flag, boys,  
    we'll rally once again,  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom,  
And we bear the glorious stars for the  
    Union and the right,  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom.
2.  
We will meet the rebel host, boys,  
    with fearless heart and true,  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom,  
And we'll show what Uncle Sam has for  
    loyal men to do,  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom.
3.  
If we fall amid the fray, boys,  
    we'll face them to the last,  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom,  
And our comrades brave shall hear us,  
    as they go rushing past,  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom.
4.  
Yes, for Liberty and Union we're springing  
    to the fight,  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom,  
And the vict'ry shall be ours, for we're  
    rising in our might,  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom

Refrain:  
The Union forever, Hurrah! boys, Hurrah!  
Down with the traitor, up with the star,  
For we're marching to the field boys,  
    going to the fight,  
Shouting the battle-cry of freedom!

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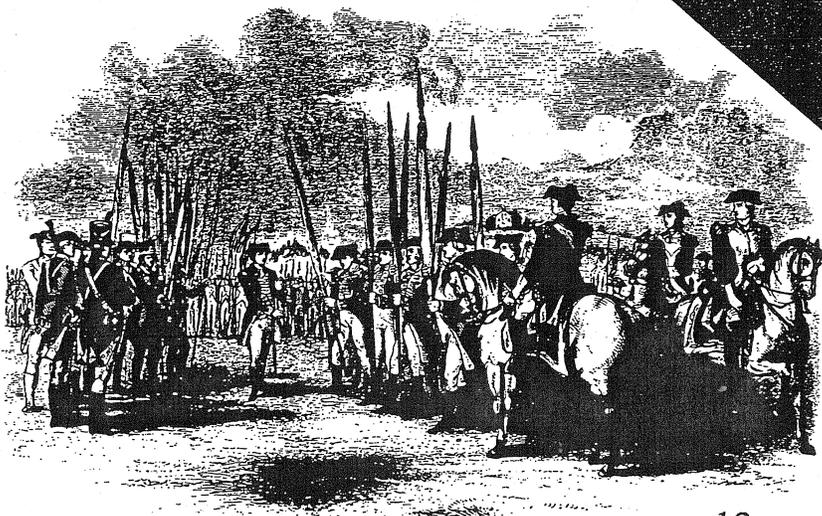
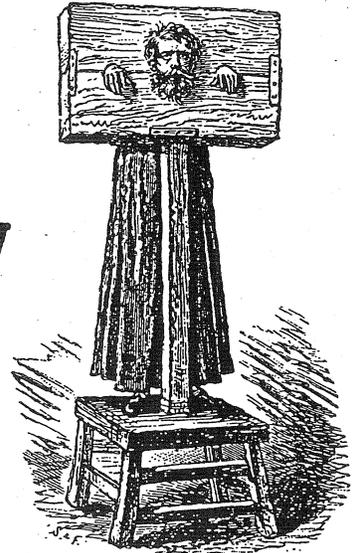
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# Keith & Rusty McNeil

# Colonial & Revolution

# Songbook

with historical commentary



# When I First Came to This Land

Pennsylvania was the most cosmopolitan of the colonies, open to all religions. Pennsylvanians assimilated religious groups rejected by the other colonies. The Germans had strong feelings about the separation of church and state, and many of them settled in Pennsylvania. German farmers, familiar with fertilization, produced high yields, exporting their surplus crops to the southern colonies and the West Indies.

Early German immigrants brought a song to Pennsylvania called "Wann Ich Mun Dem Land Rei Kumm" (When I Came to This Country). The song has many variants. This version was collected by Thomas R. Brendle and William S. Troxell.

## Wann Ich Mun Dem Land Rei Kumm

Words and music: anonymous.

*Wann ich mun dem Land rei kumm,  
No war ich en armer Mann,  
No kaf ich mire en Hinckel un fang des Hausen a.-  
Wann di Leid mich froje deede wie mei Hinckel heest,  
Gickerigie heest mei gleines Hinkelie.*

*No kaf ich mir en End un fang des Hausen a,  
Wann di Leid mich froje deede wie mei Endli heest,  
Endli Bendli heest mei Endli,  
Gickerigie heest mei gleines Hinkelie.*

*No kaf ich mire en Kuh un fang des Hausen a.  
Wann di Leid mich froje deede wie mei Kuh heest,  
Uff un Zu heest mei Kuh,  
Endli Bandli heest mei Endli,  
Gicherigie heest mei gleines Hinkelie*

*No kaf ich mire en Genzel (etc)  
Schtumm Schwenzel heest mei Genzel (etc)*

*No kaf ich mir en Gaul  
Hawwer Maul heest mei Gaul*

*No kaf ich mir en Hund  
Immer Gsund heest mei Hund*

*No kaf ich mir en Haus  
Rei un Naus heest mei Haus*

*No grie ich mir en Fra un fang des Hausen a.  
Wann di Leid mich forje deede wei mei Weiwel heest,  
Hell Deiwel heest mei Weiwel,  
Rei un Naus heest mei Haus,  
Immer Gsund heest mei Hund,  
Hawwer Maul heest mei Gaul,  
Schtumm Schwenzel heest mei Genzel,  
Uff un Zu heest mei Kuh,  
Endli Bendli heest mei Endli,  
Gicherigie heest mei gleines Hinkelie.*

### Literal translation:

When I came to this country I was a poor man,  
Then I bought a little chicken and began housekeeping.  
If people ask the name of my little chicken,  
Gickerigie is the name of my little chicken.

Then I bought a duck and began housekeeping.  
If people ask the name of my little duck,  
End-of-the-string is the name of my little duck

Then I bought a cow (etc)  
Open-and-shut is the name of my cow (etc)

Then I bought a little goose.  
Bobtail is the name of my little goose.

Then I bought a horse  
Oats-mouth is the name of my horse.

Then I bought a dog  
Always-well is the name of my dog.

Then I bought a house  
In-and-out is the name of my house.

Then I got a wife and began housekeeping.  
If people ask the name of my little wife,  
Hell-devil is the name of my wife,  
In-and-out is the name of my house,  
Always-well is the name of my dog,  
Oats-mouth is the name of my horse,  
Bobtail is the name of my little goose,  
Open-and-shut is the name of my cow,  
End-of-the-string is the name of my little duck,  
Gickerigie is the name of my little chicken.

Folksinger Oscar Brand popularized this old song in the late 1950s with his own translation. Here is his version.

## When I First Came to This Land

Words and music: Oscar Brand.

TRO - © Copyright 1957 (renewed), 1965 (renewed) Ludlow Music, Inc. New York, NY. Used by permission.

When I first came to this land,  
 I was not a wealthy man.  
 Then I built myself a shack,  
 I did what I could.  
 I called my shack, Break my  
 back. I still the land was sweet and  
 good, I did what I could.

When I first came to this land, I was not a wealthy man.  
 Then I built myself a shack, I did what I could.  
 I called my shack, Break my back.  
 Still the land was sweet and good, I did what I could.

When I first came to this land, I was not a wealthy man.  
 Then I bought myself a cow, I did what I could.  
 I called my cow, No milk now.  
 I called my shack, Break my back.  
 Still the land was sweet and good, I did what I could.

When I first (etc)  
 Then I bought myself a horse, I did what I could.  
 I called my horse, Lame of course.  
 I called my cow, No milk now.  
 I called my shack, Break my back.  
 Still the land (etc.)

Then I bought myself a duck,  
 I called my duck, Out of luck.  
 Then I got myself a wife,  
 I called my wife, Joy of my life.

When I first came to this land, I was not a wealthy man.  
 Then I got myself a son, I did what I could.  
 I told my son: "My work's done."  
 For the land was sweet and good, I did what I could.

# Soldier, Soldier Will You Marry Me

All able-bodied men in the colonies were expected to take up arms when danger threatened. Soldiers in the militia were responsible for providing their own weapons, horses and clothing. A colonial soldier was likely to pick up what he could, wherever he could. "Soldier, Soldier Will You Marry Me" is an American song with English antecedents.



## Soldier, Soldier Will You Marry Me

Words and music: anonymous.

Musical score for "Soldier, Soldier Will You Marry Me". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is accompanied by guitar chords: D, A, D, G, D, A, D, G, A, D.

Sol - dier, sol - dier will you mar - ry me, With your mus - ket, fife and  
 drum? Oh, how can I mar - ry such a pret - ty girl as you, When I  
 have no hat to put on? Off to the hab - er - dash - er  
 she did go, as fast as she could run, Bought him a hat, the  
 best that was there, And the sol - dier put it on.

Soldier, soldier will you marry me,  
 With your musket, fife and drum?  
 Oh, how can I marry such a pretty girl as you,  
 When I have no hat to put on?  
 Off to the haberdasher she did go, as fast as she could run,  
 Bought him a hat, the best that was there,  
 And the soldier put it on.

Soldier, soldier will you marry me,  
 With your musket, fife and drum?  
 Oh, how can I marry such a pretty girl as you,  
 When I have no coat to put on?  
 Off to the tailor she did go, as fast as she could run,  
 Bought him a coat, the best that was there,  
 And the soldier put it on.

Soldier, soldier will you marry me,  
 With your musket, fife and drum?  
 Oh, how can I marry such a pretty girl as you,

When I have no boots to put on?  
 Off to the cobbler she did go, as fast as she could run,  
 Bought him a pair of the best that was there,  
 And the soldier put them on.

Soldier, soldier will you marry me,  
 With your musket, fife and drum?  
 Oh, how can I marry such a pretty girl as you,  
 When I have no pants to put on?  
 Off to the tailor she did go, as fast as she could run,  
 Bought him a pair, the best that was there,  
 And the soldier put them on.

Now soldier, soldier will you marry me,  
 With your musket, fife and drum?  
 Well, how can I marry such a pretty girl as you,  
 With a wife and three kids back home?

# The Rich Lady Over the Sea

As British taxes increased, so did colonial resistance. Colonists resented the Sugar Act and the Currency Act, both passed in 1764. The Sons of Liberty rioted in the streets of Boston to protest passage of the Stamp Act in 1765. The Revenue Act of 1767 further inflamed the colonists. The Tea Act of 1773, which made it possible for the British East India Company to sell its tea in America at prices well below those of American tea merchants, inspired angry colonists to throw British East India tea into Boston Harbor. Similar "tea parties" took place up and down the coast.

## The Rich Lady Over the Sea

Words and music: anonymous.

There was a rich la - dy lived o - ver the  
 sea, And she was an is - land queen.  
 Her daugh - ter lived off in the new coun -  
 try, With an o - cean of wa - ter be - tween.  
 With an o - cean of wa - ter be - tween,  
 With an o - cean of wa - ter be - tween.

There was a rich lady lived over the sea,  
And she was an island queen.  
Her daughter lived off in the new country,  
With an ocean of water between.  
With an ocean of water between,  
With an ocean of water between.

The old lady's pockets were filled with gold,  
Yet never contented was she,  
So she ordered her daughter to pay her a tax  
Of thruppence a pound on the tea.  
Of thruppence a pound on the tea,  
Of thruppence a pound on the tea.

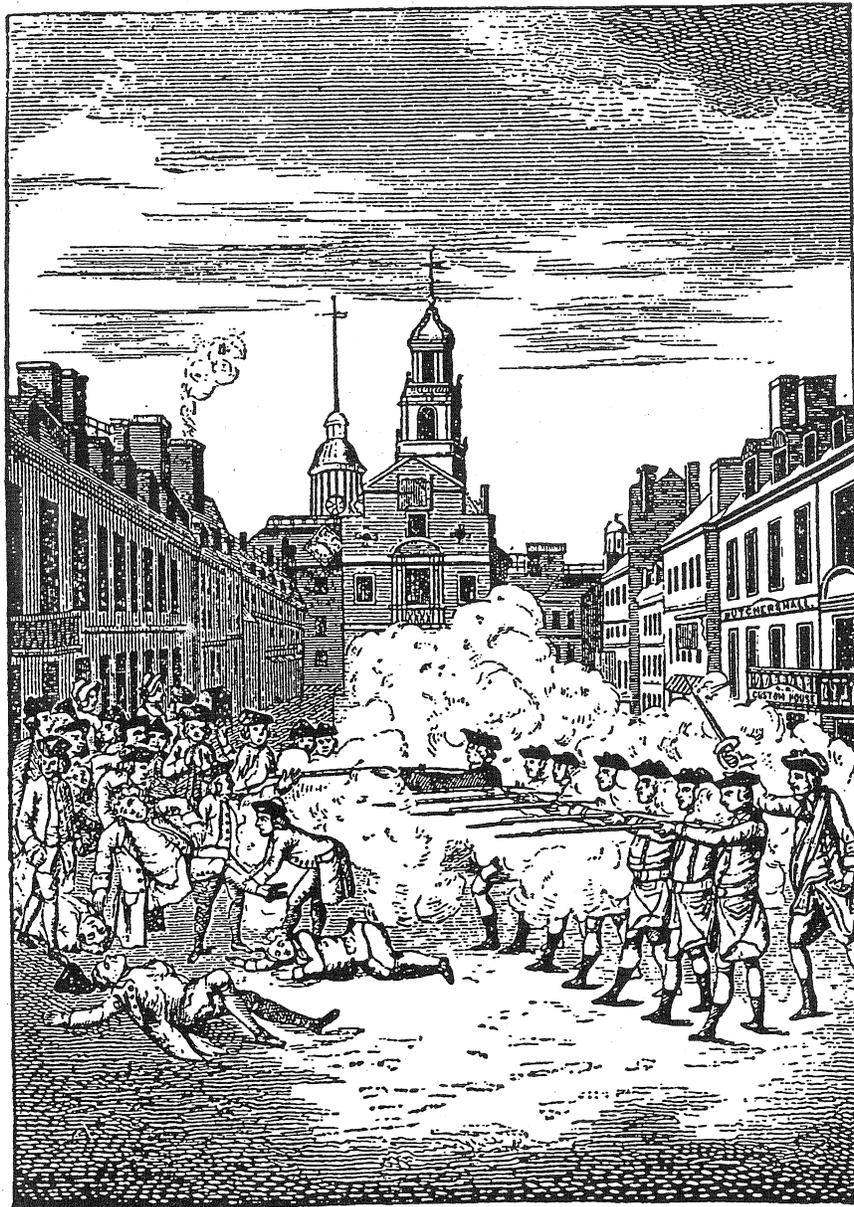
"Oh mother, dear mother," the daughter replied,  
"I'll not do the thing that you ask,  
I'm willing to pay a fair price on the tea,  
But never the thruppenney tax." (etc)

"You shall!" cried the mother, and reddened with rage,  
"For you're my own daughter, you see,  
And it's only proper that daughter should pay  
Her mother a tax on the tea." (etc)

She ordered her servant to come up to her,  
And to wrap up a package of tea,  
And eager for thruppence a pound she put in  
Enough for a large family. (etc)

The tea was conveyed to her daughter's own door,  
All down by the oceanside,  
But the bouncing girl poured out every pound  
On the dark and the boiling tide. (etc)

And then she called out to the island queen,  
"Oh mother, dear mother," called she,  
"Your tea you may have when 'tis steeped enough,  
But never a tax from me!" (etc)



*The Boston Massacre*

# Yankee Doodle

“Yankee Doodle” was one of the favorite songs of the American Revolution. Theories about the origins of the melody vary. Some say it was popular in Holland around 1500. Others say it came from Southern Europe in the Middle Ages, or from Germany, France, Hungary, Persia, Biscay, Wales, Ireland or England. It was reportedly sung by Charles I’s Cavaliers ridiculing Cromwell’s Roundheads.

Many scholars attribute the original British words to Dr. Richard S. Schuckberg, a British army surgeon. Dr. Schuckberg reportedly wrote the words in the 1740s or early 1750s, ridiculing the colonial American soldiers. It became popular among British soldiers during the French and Indian Wars. The earliest known publication of “Yankee Doodle” is believed to have been in the New York Journal on October 12, 1768.

As hostilities between British and American soldiers began, British soldiers sang:

*Yankee Doodle came to town,  
For to buy a firelock,  
We will tar and feather him,  
And so we will John Hancock.*

American soldiers adopted Yankee Doodle as their own, and sang it as the British retreated from Concord and Lexington. They also made up verses making fun of their own officers, including General Washington.



*British caricature of American militiaman*

## Yankee Doodle

*Words and music: anonymous.*

Musical score for "Yankee Doodle" in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music with lyrics underneath. Chord symbols (D, G, A7) are placed above the notes to indicate accompaniment.

There came Gen - 'ral Wash - ing - ton, Up - on a snow white  
 char - ger, He looked as big as all ' out - doors, And  
 thought that he was lar - ger. Yan - kee Dood - le  
 keep it up, Yan - kee Dood - le dan - dy, Mind the mu - sic  
 and the step, And with the girls be han - dy.

Father and I went down to camp  
Along with Captain Goodwin,  
And there we saw the men and boys  
As thick as hasty puddin'

CHORUS

Yankee Doodle keep it up,  
Yankee Doodle dandy,  
Mind the music and the step,  
And with the girls be handy.

And then the feathers on his hat  
They looked so 'tarnal finy,  
I wanted peskily to get,  
To give to my Jemimy.

CHORUS

And there we saw a thousand men,  
As rich as Squire David,  
And what they wasted every day  
I wish it could be saved.

CHORUS

And there they'd fife away like fun,  
And play on corn stalk fiddles,  
And some had ribbons red as blood  
All bound around their middles.

CHORUS

Uncle Sam came there to change  
Some pancakes and some onions,  
For molasses cakes to carry home  
To give his wife and young 'uns.

Yankee Doodle is the tune  
Americans delight in,  
'Twill do to whistle, sing or play,  
And is just the thing for fighting.

CHORUS

CHORUS

And there they had a swamping gun  
As large as a log of maple,  
Upon a deuced little cart,  
A load for father's cattle.

CHORUS

And every time they'd shoot it off  
It took a horn of powder,  
It made a noise like father's gun,  
Only a nation louder.

CHORUS

And there was Captain Washington,  
With gentlefolks about him,  
They say he's grown so 'tarnal proud  
He will not ride without them.

CHORUS

And there was Captain Washington,  
Upon a strapping stallion,  
And giving orders to his men,  
I guess there was a million.

CHORUS

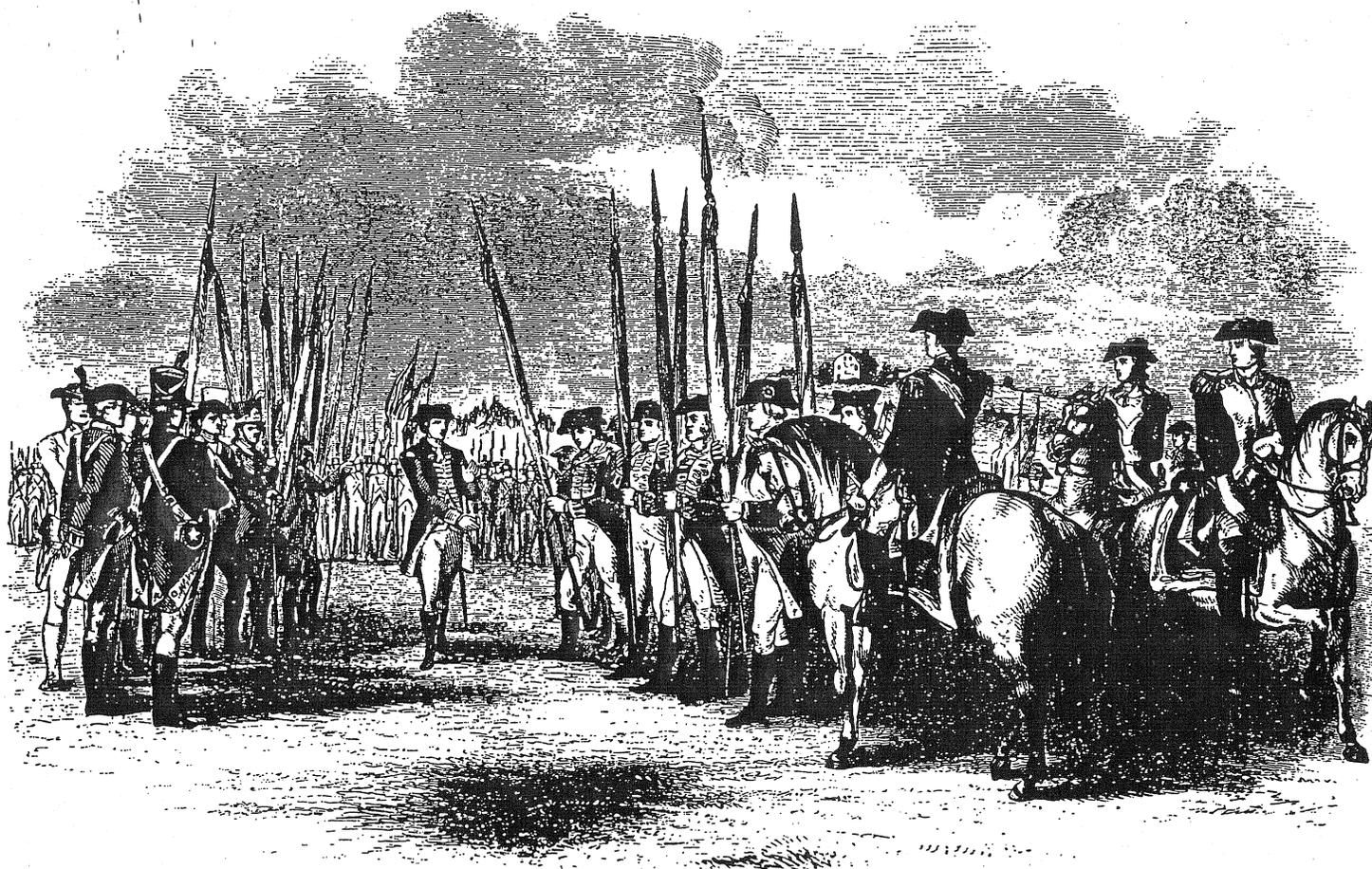
There came General Washington,  
Upon a snow white charger,  
He looked as big as all outdoors,  
And thought that he was larger.

CHORUS

# The World Turned Upside Down

In September of 1781, while the French fleet held off the British fleet, General Washington closed in on the British troops at Yorktown. With his supplies cut off, and his escape by sea impossible, Cornwallis surrendered. The afternoon of the surrender, the British band played "The World Turned

Upside Down." In the song, the mother represents England, and the daughter represents America. The would-be peace-maker farmer Pitt is William Pitt, who was head of the British ministry during the period. The tune is the old English folk melody "Down, Derry Down."



*Surrender at Yorktown*

# The World Turned Upside Down

Words and music: anonymous.

Good - y Bull and her daugh - ter - to - geth - er fell out, Both  
 squab - bled and wran - gled and made a great rout. But the cause of the quar - rel re -  
 mains to be told, Then lend both your ears and a tale I'll un - fold.  
 Der - ry down, down, hey der - ry down. Then lend both your ears and a tale I'll un - fold.

Goody Bull and her daughter together fell out,  
 Both squabbled and wrangled and made a great rout.  
 But the cause of the quarrel remains to be told,  
 Then lend both your ears and a tale I'll unfold.  
 Derry down, down, hey derry down.  
 Then lend both your ears and a tale I'll unfold.

The old lady, it seems, took a freak in her head,  
 That her daughter, grown woman, might earn her own bread,  
 Self-applauding her scheme, she was ready to dance,  
 But we're often too sanguine in what we advance.  
 Derry down, down, hey derry down.  
 But we're often too sanguine in what we advance.

For mark the event, thus for fortune we're crossed,  
 Nor should people reckon without their good host,  
 The daughter was sulky and wouldn't come to,  
 And pray what in this case could the old woman do?  
 Derry down, down, hey derry down.  
 And pray what in this case could the old woman do?

"Zounds, neighbor," quoth Pitt, "what the devil's the matter?  
 A man cannot rest in his home for your clatter."  
 "Alas," cries the daughter, "Here's dainty fine work,  
 The old woman grows harder than Jew or than Turk.  
 Derry down, down, hey derry down.  
 The old woman grows harder than Jew or than Turk."

"She be damned!" says the farmer, and to her he goes,  
 First roars in her ears, then tweaks her old nose,  
 "Hello Goody, what ails you? Wake, woman, I say,  
 I am come to make peace in this desperate fray,  
 Derry down, down, hey derry down,  
 I am come to make peace in this desperate fray."

"Alas," cries the old woman, "And must I comply?  
 But I'd rather submit than the hussy should die."  
 "Pooh, prithee, be quiet, be friends and agree,  
 You must surely be right if you're guided by me,  
 Derry down, down, hey derry down,  
 You must surely be right if you're guided by me."