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Jesse P. Karlsberg Date

Folklore's Filter: Race, Place, and Sacred Harp Singing

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Folklore's Filter: Race, Place, and Sacred Harp Singing

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An abstract of
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James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts
2015

Abstract

Folklore's Filter: Race, Place, and Sacred Harp Singing

By Jesse P. Karlsberg

This dissertation examines the impact of folklorization on Sacred Harp's associations with race and place. Although *The Sacred Harp* tunebook features music with racially diverse origins whose composers span a vast geography, scholars in the twentieth century came to associate the tunebook with Anglo-Celtic whiteness and the southern upcountry of the United States, regarding its black singers as exceptional.

I trace this perception of Sacred Harp's race and place to George Pullen Jackson's German Romanticism–inspired desire to identify a Scotch-Irish American folk music and to racial and institutional pressures limiting John W. Work III's research on Sacred Harp. The racing and placing of Sacred Harp thanks to what I call "folklore's filter" influenced white folk festival promoters who rediscovered Work's depiction of black Sacred Harp singing in the 1960s and 1970s and attempted to stage racially mixed groups of Sacred Harp singers as evidence of progress toward racial unity.

Sacred Harp singers negotiated these narratives and popular conceptions of the style in revising *The Sacred Harp* tunebook during the twentieth century. For the tunebook's editors in the 1910s and 1980s, reimagining the music, design, and bibliographic form of *The Sacred Harp* offered an opportunity to hash out anxieties about social change by trying to present this old music as relevant to contemporaneous practitioners. The ramifications of Sacred Harp's whitewashing persist today, informing a narrative of Sacred Harp singing in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries that emphasizes the growth of a predominantly white "revival" of Sacred Harp singing in the wake of the folk music movement. This genealogy excludes vital networks of black shape-note gospel singings unrecognizable as Sacred Harp through folklore's filter.

This account of Sacred Harp's print history and passage through folklore's filter illuminates connections between music's print culture and the networks and social movements in which it is embedded. *The Sacred Harp* and its singings and singers offer an opportunity to explore links between music's dynamic vernacular print culture and its circulation and reception and to analyze the interactions between the civil rights movement, the folk music movement, and the diverse populations they engaged.

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I am grateful to the many individuals who helped me think through the ideas in this dissertation and to the institutions that supported my research and granted me access to Sacred Harp singing's dispersed archival traces. Thanks, first and foremost, to my advisor and dissertation committee chair Allen Tullos for teaching me how to be critical of something I love, for developing with me many of the disparate themes that coalesced into this dissertation, and for reading and commenting on multiple drafts of this study. Thanks as well to Michael Moon whose useful comments on this dissertation drew my attention back to the disciplinary and theoretical contexts we identified together during a directed reading and during my comprehensive examination and prospectus processes. Thanks to Kiri Miller, an interlocutor in thinking about Sacred Harp singing even before I began my doctoral studies, for carefully reading through my dissertation and sharing many useful comments during a marathon session in Providence this Spring. Thanks to David Warren Steel for equally thorough readings of my dissertation and for the detailed comments that resulted. And thanks to Walter Reed for generous comments and useful insights on this document. I am grateful for such a knowledgeable and engaged dissertation committee.

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Introduction

In his 1933 *White Spirituals of the Southern Uplands*, George Pullen Jackson identified Sacred Harp music with white Anglo-Celtic residents of the southern upcountry.[1] Despite John W. Work III's 1941 account, which portrayed Sacred Harp singing as a black cultural practice of the Alabama Wiregrass,[2] Jackson's characterization, reinforced over twenty years of publications and presentations, proved enduring. How did Jackson come to associate this collection of songs with racially diverse origins and contents whose composers span a geography extending from Europe to the northern, western, mid-Atlantic, and southern United States with this particular race and place?

I argue that Jackson's German Romanticism–inspired desire to identify a Scotch-Irish American folk music to form the basis of a new national folk-rooted culture coincided with pressures on Work from behind the veil to turn from fieldwork on Sacred Harp and other black musics to promoting arrangements of black spirituals to obscure shape-note music's miscegenated roots and portray the style as white with exceptional black practitioners. This characterization thanks to what I call "folklore's filter" set in motion a whitewashing of Sacred Harp that persisted to the present yet was transformed in the context of the civil rights and folk music movements. White folk festival promoters rediscovered Work's depiction of black Sacred Harp singing and attempted to stage black and white groups of Sacred Harp singers together as evidence of the "beloved

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[1] George Pullen Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands: The Story of the Fasola Folk, Their Songs, Singings, and "Buckwheat Notes"* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933).
[2] John W. Work, "Plantation Meistersinger," *The Musical Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (January 1, 1941): 97–106.

community" bolstered by civil rights victories in the 1960s and 1970s.[3] The ramifications of the "white spirituals" label continue to the present, informing a narrative of Sacred Harp singing in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries that emphasizes the growth of a predominantly white "revival" of Sacred Harp singing in the wake of the folk music movement while excluding vital networks of black shape-note gospel singings unrecognizable as Sacred Harp through folklore's filter.

Sacred Harp singers negotiated these narratives and sometimes-related popular conceptions of the style in revising *The Sacred Harp* tunebook during the twentieth century. For the tunebook's editors, the music, design, and bibliographic form of *The Sacred Harp* offered opportunities to address the challenge of promoting singing from a tunebook the contents of which were increasingly at a distance from popular culture. The tunebook's revisers hashed out anxieties about social change in trying to present this old music as relevant to contemporaneous practitioners. Editors navigated changing print-technological landscapes to completely retypeset two twentieth century editions of the most widely used *Sacred Harp* revision-chain, the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp* and *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*. Revisers took advantage of this need to recreate every aspect of the book's form and contents to work out concerns in 1911 about the modernizing New South and its apparent distance from the strict social, racial, and gender hierarchies of the antebellum era. In 1991 editors combated the perception of the increasing archaic rurality and social marginality of Sacred Harp singing after post–World War II southern rural depopulation.

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[3] On the "beloved community" see discussion in chapter 4 and John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 87, 204.

The way that *The Sacred Harp*'s revisers and the folklorists who have interpreted the practices of singing from the tunebook represent this music culture affect its social context including its associations with race and its geographical reach. These representations profoundly affect who sings the music, where, how, and what it means to them. This account of Sacred Harp's print history and passage through folklore's filter illuminates connections between music's print culture, associated practices, and the networks and social movements in which it is embedded and with which its practices collide. *The Sacred Harp* and its singings and singers offer an opportunity to explore links between music's dynamic vernacular print culture and its circulation and reception and to analyze the interactions between the civil rights movement, the folk music movement, and the diverse populations they engaged.

Sacred Harp Singing

The Sacred Harp is a shape-note tunebook compiled by Georgians Benjamin Franklin White and Elisha James King and published in 1844 by Philadelphia-based T. K. and P. G. Collins. The tunebook was one of a number of entrants in a competitive marketplace for music books for "singing schools, and private societies."[4] These books featured a consistent bibliographic form: hardback, oblong, with two braces of

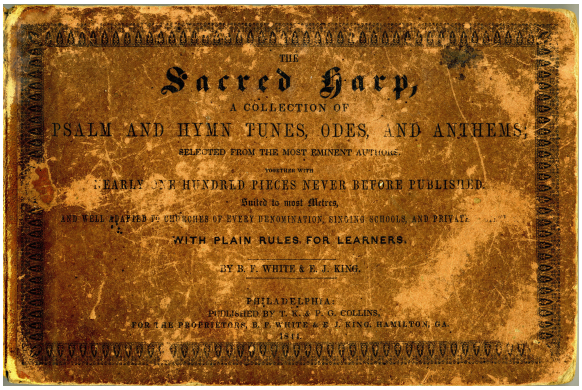
THE
Sacred Harp,
A COLLECTION OF
PSALM AND HYMN TUNES, ODES, AND ANTHEMS,
SELECTED FROM THE MOST EMINENT AUTHORS,
TOGETHER WITH
EARLY FIVE HUNDRED PIECES NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.
Suited to most Metres,
AND WELL ADAPTED TO THE USE OF EVERY DENOMINATION, SINGING SCHOOLS AND PRIVATE
WITH PLAIN RULES FOR LEARNERS.
BY B. F. WHITE & E. J. KING.
PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY T. K. & P. G. COLLINS,
FOR THE PROPRIETORS, B. F. WHITE & E. J. KING, HAMILTON, GA.
1844.

Figure 0.1: Front cover of *The Sacred Harp*, 1844. Courtesy of Wade Kotter.

[4] B. F. White and E. J. King, eds., *The Sacred Harp* (Philadelphia: T. K. & P. G. Collins, 1844), title page. While published in Philadelphia, the book was first sold and promoted in the west Georgia counties where its compilers lived.

music per page in three or four parts, each on a separate staff. The music was notated using a four-shape-note notation system first employed by Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, compilers William Little and William Smith for their *Easy Instructor*, which paired shaped note-heads (triangle, circle, square, and diamond) with the four syllables ("fa," "sol," "la," and "mi") typically used in former English colonies in the United States to name the seven notes in the musical scale ("fa," "sol," and "la" are repeated).[5] By working with Collins, an elite printing firm at the center of the developing national book trade, rather than a local firm, White and King ensured that *The Sacred Harp* was an impeccably typeset and soundly constructed volume.

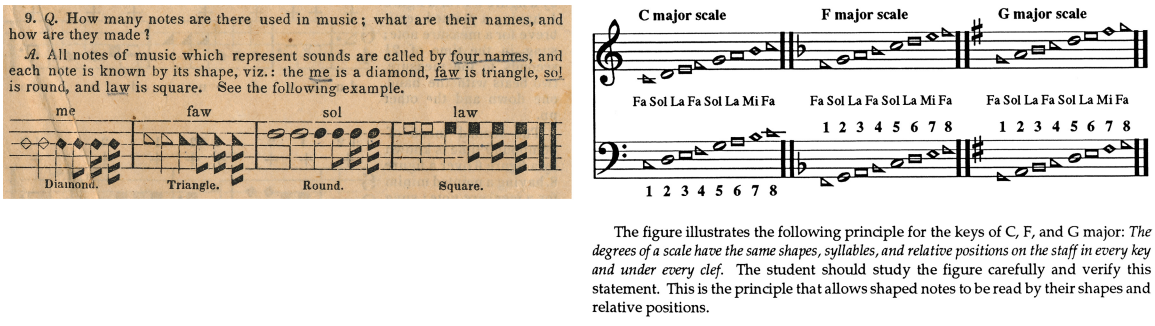

Figure 0.2: Shape-notes and the major scale from the rudiments of music of *The Sacred Harp*, Fourth Edition, 1870 (left) and *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* (right).

The co-compilers also infused the book's contents with unique musical representations of the Lower Chattahoochee Valley and Flint Valley in West Georgia where the co-compilers resided, including a number of new or newly arranged songs in the revival chorus style alongside the fuging tunes, plain tunes, folk hymns, odes, and anthems that *The Sacred Harp* reprinted from earlier sources. Although revival choruses

[5] This notation system has its roots in an eighteenth-century New England music pedagogy movement. While shape notes fell out of favor in the northeastern United States in the early decades of the nineteenth century, they remained popular in the South and West—in four note and various seven note forms—into the twentieth century. *The Sacred Harp* is the most popular of several shape note tunebooks used at contemporary singings; shape notes are also in use in the gospel music world and by a number of Christian denominational hymnbooks.

adopted a form popular since the camp meeting revivals of the early nineteenth century, *The Sacred Harp* marked the first incorporation of a number of such songs into a shape-note tunebook.

Continuously in print and in active use at singing conventions since its publication, *The Sacred Harp* was enlarged twice and revised once during White's lifetime by committees of singers led by White and authorized by the Southern Musical Convention, a body of singers that met annually to sing from *The Sacred Harp*.[6] This relationship between a tunebook and a committee authorized by a nominally democratic convention was novel. White retained considerable control over *The Sacred Harp*;[7] he had founded and often served as president of the convention, and he headed each committee the convention appointed. Yet, the convention's supervision of the tunebook broadened its array of stakeholders and led to a new forum and market for its use, the singing convention. Beginning in the early 1850s, singers established new singing conventions featuring multiple days of singing from *The Sacred Harp* and other tunebooks in Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Florida.

After the Civil War, and especially after White's death in 1879 threw the future of *The Sacred Harp* into question, contributors to the tunebook navigated a musical environment in which questions about appropriate musical style and notation were fraught with social and political attachments. Conventions and singing schools in many areas had adopted books that followed the lead of Jesse B. Aikin's 1846 *Christian Minstrel*

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[6] Editors added appendices containing additional songs in 1850 and 1859 and both added and removed songs in 1870.

[7] King, his co-compiler, had died in 1844, shortly before the first edition of *The Sacred Harp* returned from the printer.

in employing seven shape notes to match the European-derived names for the notes of the scale "do," "re," "mi," "fa," "sol," "la," and "si." These books often embraced close harmony music genres that emerged in the Sabbath School movement. Singers' new intended revisions of and replacements for *The Sacred Harp* attempted to balance an embrace of features associated with these new modern styles with retentions aimed at projecting continuity with White's editions. Two of White's children published a largely unsuccessful successor to the tunebook titled *The New Sacred Harp* in 1884, and different groups of singers produced three competing revisions of *The Sacred Harp* between 1902 and 1911, each of which found a following among Sacred Harp singers. Groups of singers associated with the two most popular of these revisions, colloquially known as the "Denson book" and "Cooper book" after leading editors, established organizations in 1933 and 1949, respectively, modeled on gospel publishing companies, to coordinate the task of periodically revising the books and keeping them in print. These organizations have continued to enlarge or revise their respective editions into the twenty-first century.

Sacred Harp singing conventions have always featured class singing, where leaders take turns standing in the middle of the assembled singers to lead all those present in a selection of songs from the tunebook. Often held in churches or courthouses, at a convention singers are arranged seated in an inward facing hollow square of chairs, benches, or church pews around the leader, with each side of the square corresponding to a voice part: tenor (the melody, sung by men and women), treble (a higher part, also sung by men and women), alto (only added to many songs in the early twentieth century and sung by women with lower voices and occasionally men with the highest voices), and bass (sung by men with low voices). Participants in nineteenth-century Sacred Harp singings

included men and women, European and African Americans, people of different Christian denominations, and those with different class and status positions. Yet while leaders and convention officers included Baptists and Methodists, planters and small farmers alike, social inequality along lines of gender and race affected the form participation took for many.



Figure 0.3: Lloyd Ivey leads at a Sacred Harp singing at Antioch Baptist Church, Ider, Alabama, April 8, 2012. Photograph by Jonathon Smith. Used with permission.

Before the Civil War enslaved African Americans sometimes attended singing conventions run by whites, but were restricted to the back of the church or courthouse and were not permitted to lead music. After emancipation, many newly established black churches held Sacred Harp singings—some of which continued to be held into the twenty-first century. The rise of racial segregation dramatically reduced cross-participation across racial lines by the late nineteenth century at these singings and those

held at courthouses and white churches, even as blacks and whites in some areas continued to sing together informally in public spaces such as town squares and in occupational contexts.[8]

Both women and men have always participated in Sacred Harp singing, with women leaders recorded in newspaper reports on some nineteenth-century singings.[9] Women leaders were exceptional from the start, however, and remained rare from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.[10] Only after World War II did women gain equal access to leading time at singings. Gender roles continue to impact participation: women are more likely to do the cooking at Sacred Harp singings, and less likely in some

[8] On contexts where interracial singing occurred in the Jim Crow–era Alabama Wiregrass, see Joe Dan Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp* (Montgomery, AL: Alabama Folklife Association, 2002).
[9] According to its minutes, published in the *Organ*, February 14, 1855, three women led at the Union Singing, held December 22–25, 1854 in Crawford County, Georgia, quoted in John Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith: Sacred Harp and American Folksong* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 245–46. J. A. Roberson reported on the occasion of married schoolteacher Sidney Burdette Denson leading at the 1880 session of the Chattahoochee Musical Convention as a "remarkable thing, calculated to excite the curious," in "About the Musical Convention," *Carroll County Times*, August 13, 1880, reprinted in Kiri Miller, ed., *The Chattahoochee Musical Convention, 1852–2002: A Sacred Harp Historical Sourcebook* (Carrollton, GA: Sacred Harp Museum, 2002), 165–66. Evidence from other conventions such as the East Texas Musical Convention, where the first woman leader was recorded in the minutes of the 1913 session, suggest that acceptance of women leaders varied from convention to convention, see Robert L. Vaughn, ed., *Approaching 150: A Brief History of the East Texas Musical Convention and Sacred Harp in East Texas* (Mount Enterprise, TX: Waymark Publications, 2005), 70.
[10] Sacred Harp composition is another activity in which women participated in the nineteenth century, but in considerably smaller numbers than men. Both composition and leading may have been limited to or more widely accepted when practiced by unmarried younger women, as indicated by the "Miss" prefacing leaders such as Miss Martha Sharp (Union Singing, 1854) and Miss Monnie Jimmerson (East Texas Convention, 1913), and composers such as Miss Cynthia Bass, who contributed ROLL ON to B. F. White, Joel King, et al., eds., *The Sacred Harp* (Philadelphia: T. K. Collins Jr. and T. K. & P. G. Collins, 1850), 275, and who also "was a fine leader [who] often led the music before the [Southern Musical] Convention," according to J. M. Shell. See J. S. James et al., eds., *Original Sacred Harp* (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 275. On unmarried women as contributors to nineteenth-century *Sacred Harp* editions, see also Sarah E. Kahre, "Schism and Sacred Harp: The Formation of the Twentieth-Century Tunebook Lines" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 2015), 89–90.

areas to offer prayers, serve as officers aside from secretary, or sit in the front row of the mixed-gender tenor or treble sections.[11]

The Sacred Harp contains settings of largely sacred metrical Christian hymns and psalms, and most singers have considered Sacred Harp singing to be a worshipful activity. The texts to most songs (even those of recent composition) were written by eighteenth century English dissenters such as Isaac Watts or Charles Wesley or nineteenth-century American revivalists such as John Leland or John Adam Granade. Sacred Harp singings have always been interdenominational. The title page of the 1844 first edition advertised that the book's contents were "well adapted to churches of every denomination"[12] and early conventions' constitutions in some cases explicitly disavowed any particular religious doctrinal commitments. Singers' religious affiliations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included the full range of Protestant denominations present in the rural cotton-cultivating South.[13] Though singings today—as in the nineteenth century—are opened and closed with prayer, present day singers include considerable numbers of Catholic, Jewish, and non-religious singers, as well as smaller numbers of Pagan, Buddhist, and Muslim participants.

During the twentieth century changes in the southern political economy and cultural landscape marginalized what had been a culturally omnipresent singing movement. Participation in Sacred Harp singings decreased dramatically. At the same

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[11] Indeed, the alto section, the only section where women reliably occupy the entire front bench, is afforded the least space at many singings, its members relegated to chairs in front of, beside, and sometimes behind a church's pulpit. Leaders also typically have their back to the altos because of the section's position across from the tenors, who sing the melody and assist leaders in directing the songs of their choice.

[12] White and King, *The Sacred Harp*, 1844, title page.

[13] Sacred Harp singers thus included members of various Baptist and Methodist associations as well as smaller numbers of Presbyterians and occasional Lutherans. Few Episcopalians sang Sacred Harp.

time folklorists and popular writers began to document and publicize Sacred Harp singing as one among a number of southern music traditions that stood for the United States' imagined noble, white Anglo-Celtic, rural past.[14] This folklorization of Sacred Harp selectively rendered certain groups of singers and the practices they had adopted as "traditional," and made these practices accessible to new audiences. By the mid-twentieth century, after rural outmigration had reduced attendance at Sacred Harp singings to a fraction of its pre-Depression-era levels, folk festival promoters were bringing white groups of singers previously featured in folklore scholarship to folk festivals and cultural expositions across North America. In the wake of the civil rights movement's mid-1960s legislative victories, folk festival promoters began to invite black Sacred Harp singers to perform at festivals as well, sometimes alongside white singers in a staging of the "beloved community" such festival promoters imagined the civil rights movement was helping to bring about.

Beginning in the late 1960s, southern white Sacred Harp singers, led by Georgian Hugh W. McGraw, adopted and adapted the language of folklore scholars to draw their folk festival audience into participation in Sacred Harp singing according to what the singers themselves identified as important practices and beliefs. Through this

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[14] This movement in the mid-twentieth century sought to present the Sacred Harp (a white and black practice since the mid-1800s) as a white folk tradition that might serve as the basis for a new American national culture rooted in folk expression explicitly and hailed Sacred Harp singing as a white counterpart to and source of black spirituals. See, especially Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*; George Pullen Jackson, *White and Negro Spirituals: Their Life Span and Kinship, Tracing 200 Years of Untrammeled Song Making and Singing among Our Country Folk, with 116 Songs As Sung by Both Races* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1943). As recounted in chapter 3, John W. Work III adopted a contrasting frame, casting Sacred Harp singing as a cultural practice of South Alabama black folk. See Work, "Plantation Meistersinger." Work's account canonized the population of black singers he documented as traditional, but scholars continued to regard this group as exceptional amidst a Sacred Harp population still conceived of as overwhelmingly white.

collaboration made possible by the negotiation of folklore rhetoric white singers from Georgia and Alabama in particular formed lasting bonds with new largely white singers across the country, founding a number of new regional and state conventions across the United States beginning in 1976. An ensemble of black singers from South Alabama led by Dewey President Williams also continued to travel the country, gaining recognition that assisted in obtaining resources to support Sacred Harp singing back home. Meanwhile, a broader network of black shape-note gospel singings with historical ties to Sacred Harp remained largely outside folklore's filter. Popular accounts of Sacred Harp elided the continuing presence of a robust network of black shape-note singings in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, instead covering the national and later international growth of largely white Sacred Harp singings in the wake of the folk revival while depicting archaic southern black and white Sacred Harp singings in decline.

Studying Sacred Harp and Related Shape-note Singing

This study makes two principal interventions in scholarship on Sacred Harp singing. I critically connect twentieth-century editions of the tunebook to their print-technological, social, and spatial contexts, demonstrating how editors tailored the tunebook's visual and musical style in concert with their anxieties and ambitions. This study also places early scholarship on Sacred Harp singing in the context of racially bifurcated folklore genealogies to articulate how this music culture came to be distortingly represented as white with exceptional black practitioners. I detail how the resultant scholarship enduringly demarcated shape-note genres in a manner that persistently excluded networks of black shape-note gospel singings. In constructing this analysis I conducted

new oral history interviews with Sacred Harp singers involved in the folk revival and in editing the tunebook, and drew on audio, visual, and textual material in archives not previously drawn upon by scholars of Sacred Harp singing and its cultural context. I pair these archival and ethnographic methods with methods of critical bibliography that have been incorporated in scholarship on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tunebooks but have rarely been applied to the twentieth-century works at the center of this study.

The music bibliography of sacred singing in the United States has largely focused on the earliest American tunebooks—those published between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries—neglecting more recent publications in part because of their historically lower cultural capital. This study builds on recent scholarship that articulates nineteenth-century shape-note hymnody as musically significant and makes such a case for twentieth-century shape-note hymnody in a variety of genres. I also contend that the study of locally printed objects such as the twentieth century editions of *The Sacred Harp* contributes to our understanding of book publishing by shifting the focus away from the more widely studied national book trade and toward the vernacular print culture, much of it ephemeral, that remained a substantial component of the print world in the twentieth century.[15] Scholarship on the earliest American tunebooks has included descriptive bibliographies of tunes and tunebooks published before 1810,[16] critical

[15] I discuss the term *vernacularity* in relation to printing and publishing in chapter 1.

[16] This temporal orientation excludes most shape-note tunebooks. Such bibliographies instead feature English psalmody, early psalmody and hymnody in the northeastern United States, and the music of the "first New England school," a network of singing masters, composers, and tunebook compilers whose most popular plain tunes, fuging tunes, odes, anthems, and set pieces were later included in *The Sacred Harp*. For examples of such work, see Allen Perdue Britton, "Theoretical Introductions in American Tune-Books to 1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1950); Charles Edward Lindsley, "Early Nineteenth-Century American Collections of Sacred Choral Music, 1800–1810: Part I, a Historical Survey of Tune-Book Production to 1810; Part II, an Annotated Bibliography of Tune-Books, 1800–1810" (Ph.D.

performance editions and a smaller number of facsimile editions of early nineteenth- and late eighteenth-century composers of singing school music,[17] and facsimile editions of early- and mid-nineteenth-century shape-note tunebooks.[18] This division, which mirrors the division between "psalmody" and "shape note songsters" in descriptive bibliography, may indicate a scholarly bias toward regarding early American tunebook compilers as composers worthy of serious study while seeing their nineteenth-century compatriots as folk musicians whose productions are best studied as artifacts of an imagined folk culture,

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dissertation, The University of Iowa, 1968); Irving Lowens, *A Bibliography of Songsters Printed in America before 1821* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1976); Nicholas Temperley and Charles G. Manns, *Fuging Tunes in the Eighteenth Century*, Detroit Studies in Music Bibliography (Detroit, MI: Information Coordinators, 1983); Richard A. Crawford, Irving Lowens, and Allen P. Britton, *American Sacred Music Imprints, 1698–1810: A Bibliography* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1990); Nicholas Temperley, Charles G. Manns, and Joseph Herl, *The Hymn Tune Index: A Census of English-Language Hymn Tunes in Printed Sources from 1535 to 1820* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1998). A smaller number of bibliographies have focused on southern shape note tunebooks published between around 1810 and the start of the Civil War. Phil D. Perrin, "Theoretical Introductions in American Tune-Books from 1801 to 1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968); Richard J. Stanislaw, *A Checklist of Four-Shape Shape-Note Tunebooks* (New York: Institute for Studies in American Music, 1978); David W. Music, *A Selection of Shape-Note Folk Hymns: From Southern United States Tune Books, 1816–61* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc., 2005).

[17] Performance editions include William Billings, *Complete Works of William Billings*, ed. Hans Nathan and Karl Kroeger, 4 vols. (Boston: American Musicological Society and The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1977); Daniel Read, *Daniel Read: Collected Works*, ed. Karl Kroeger (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc., 1995); Stephen Jenks, *Stephen Jenks: Collected Works*, ed. David Warren Steel (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc., 1995); Timothy Swan, *Timothy Swan: Psalmody and Secular Songs*, ed. Nym Cooke (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc., 1997). In addition to a number of volumes in A-R Editions' Music of the United States of America series fifteen performance editions of the work of early American psalmodists have been published by Taylor & Francis in the series Music of the New American Nation: Sacred Music from 1780 to 1820. Facsimile editions include William Billings, *The Continental Harmony*, ed. Hans Nathan (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961); James Lyon, *Urania: A Choice Collection of Psalm-Tunes, Anthems, and Hymns*, ed. Richard Crawford (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1974).

[18] See, for example, John Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1964); John Gordon McCurry, *The Social Harp*, ed. Daniel W. Patterson and John F. Garst (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1973); John Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, ed. Irving Lowens (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1974); Ananias Davisson, *Kentucky Harmony*, ed. Irving Lowens (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976); William Walker, *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*, ed. Glenn C. Wilcox (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993). This work has been complemented by bibliographic essays on specific tunebooks such as Karl Kroeger, "A Yankee Tunebook from the Old South: Amos Pilsbury's *The United States Sacred Harmony*," *The Hymn* 32, no. 3 (1981): 154–62; Marion J. Hatchett, "Early East Tennessee Shape-Note Tunebooks," *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song* 46, no. 3 (July 1, 1995): 28–46; David W. Music, "Seven 'New' Tunes in Amos Pilsbury's *United States' Sacred Harmony* (1799) and Their Use in Four-Shape Shape-Note Tunebooks of the Southern United States before 1860," *American Music* 13, no. 4 (December 1, 1995): 403–47, doi:10.2307/3052402.

rather than as works of music produced by actors making musical and editorial decisions rooted in their cultural context.[19] Journal articles, while still representing nineteenth-century shape-note compositions as objects of folk fascination and ignoring twentieth-century and later productions, have brought a more critical perspective to this body of work, enumerating the editions of given tunebooks or differentiating between manuscript copies and placing them in the context of related publications and reception by the singing public.[20] This study applies methods of critical bibliography to twentieth-century shape-note music largely excluded from this literature.[21] I also tie changes between printings of *The Sacred Harp* to the desires and anxieties of the editors who revised the book in the twentieth century and the singers who used it.

Popular and scholarly depictions of Appalachia and the upland South beginning in the late nineteenth century characterized these regions as isolated and archaic provinces populated by rural whites marked by both purity and archaism.[22] For such

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[19] An exception to this is the literature on "tune families": Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*; Dorothy D. Horn, *Sing to Me of Heaven: A Study of Folk and Early American Materials in Three Old Harp Books* (Gainsville: University of Florida Press, 1970). Even these works, and the recent edited performance edition of shape-note tunes issued by A-R Editions, however, focus on works with often anonymous "folk" origins: Music, *A Selection of Shape-Note Folk Hymns*. It is indeed a characteristic of shape note publishing culture that songs—whether those with "folk" origins or those originally written by members of the "first New England School"—were republished in tunebook after tunebook, often with musical or textual variations, and with different attributions. It may be that a reformulated approach to authorship derived from the scholarship on nineteenth-century shape-note tunes may be usefully applied to the critical bibliography of early American psalmody.

[20] See the essays collected in Irving Lowens, *Music and Musicians in Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964); Karl Kroeger, "William Billings's Music in Manuscript Copy and Some Notes on Variant Versions of His Pieces," *Notes: Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* 39, no. 2 (December 1, 1982): 316–45; Harry Eskew, "William Walker's *Southern Harmony*: Its Basic Editions," *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana* 7, no. 2 (October 1, 1986): 137–48, doi:10.2307/780212.

[21] An exception that treats a recent shape-note tunebook is John Bealle, "New Strings on the 'Old Harp': The 1991 Revision of *The Sacred Harp*," *Tributaries: Journal of the Alabama Folklife Association* 1 (1994): 5–23.

[22] Early popular representations of Appalachia that articulate the region's purported strangeness, archaism, and Anglo-Celtic purity include Will Wallace Harney, "A Strange Land and a Peculiar People," *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science*, October 1873; William Goodell Frost, "Our Contemporary

writers, the term *white* excluded urban European immigrant populations and instead referred to urban western and northern European–descended elites atop the country's social hierarchy and the rural mountaineers imagined as their "contemporary ancestors."[23] This understanding of Appalachian and upland southern whites as genealogically descended and culturally connected to the British Isles pervaded early twentieth-century scholarship on shape-note singing and related musical styles, contributing to the geographically bifurcated representations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American sacred music in bibliography scholarship, and associating Sacred Harp singing with Anglo-Celtic whiteness. I offer new insights into the folklore genealogies that informed this understanding, building on John Bealle's research on George Pullen Jackson's scholarly trajectory[24] and considering John W. Work III's relationship to black folk scholarship. Jackson depicted Sacred Harp singing as "white spirituals" sung by the "fa-sol-la folk" in a bid to position the style at the roots of a new national American culture built on folksong with Anglo-Celtic origins.[25] Jackson sought

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Ancestors in the Southern Mountains," *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1899. On the "invention" of this "idea of Appalachia" through widespread "cultural intervention," see Henry D. Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); Allen Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990); David E. Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[23] Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia*; Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*; Karl Hagstrom Miller, *Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). On the contested and shifting boundaries of the category *white* and its inclusion of eastern and central European immigrant and Jewish populations, see David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991); David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[24] Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, chap. 2.

[25] George Pullen Jackson, "The Fa-Sol-La Folk," *Musical Courier* 93, no. 11 (September 9, 1926): 6–7, 10; Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*; George Pullen Jackson, "Some Enemies of Folk-Music in America," in *Papers Read at the International Congress of Musicology Held at New York, September 11th to 16th, 1939* (New York: American Musicological Society, 1939), 77–83; George Pullen Jackson, *The Story of*

to capture the popular attention afforded to black spirituals while intervening in a debate over their origins[26] by positing that songs in *The Sacred Harp* and related shape-note tunebooks he associated with the white "southern uplands" were their sources,[27] a contention since discredited.[28] His work built on Joseph Stephen James's early historical writing on the contributors to and institutions around *The Sacred Harp* in the nineteenth century, which portrayed the tunebook as centered around the Georgia and Alabama upcountry,[29] eliding the key role that contributors residing in the Lower Chattahoochee and Flint Valleys of West Georgia played in the book's first three editions, as David Warren Steel has recently noted.[30] Despite John W. Work III's early study of black singers from the Alabama Wiregrass,[31] subsequent scholarship on Sacred Harp singing has largely hewn to white Sacred Harp singing populations and has joined with Jackson in privileging retentions of the dispersed harmony styles associated with *The Sacred Harp* over other shape-note genres. I examine how constraints Work faced as a black academic limited his ability to research and publish on Sacred Harp singing, and articulate how Jackson's ideological orientation led him to filter positive and nuanced readings of black Sacred Harp singing out of his publications.

The Sacred Harp, 1844–1944: A Book of Religious Folk Song as an American Institution (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1944).

[26] For a concise overview of the historiography of this debate, see James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), chap. 1.

[27] George Pullen Jackson, "The Genesis of the Negro Spiritual," *American Mercury* 26 (June 1932): 243–55; Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*; Jackson, *White and Negro Spirituals*.

[28] William H. Tallmadge, "The Black in Jackson's White Spirituals," *The Black Perspective in Music* 9, no. 2 (October 1, 1981): 139–60, doi:10.2307/1214194; Dena J. Epstein, "A White Origin for the Black Spiritual? An Invalid Theory and How It Grew," *American Music* 1, no. 2 (July 1, 1983): 53–59, doi:10.2307/3051499; Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 118–122.

[29] J. S. James, *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp and Its Author, B. F. White, Sr., and Contributors* (Douglasville, GA: New South Book and Job Print, 1904); J. S. James, ed., *Union Harp and History of Songs* (Douglasville, GA, 1909); James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911.

[30] David Warren Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 16.

[31] Work, "Plantation Meistersinger."

Folklorists and music historians have filled in gaps in Jackson's account of Sacred Harp's history, providing accounts of singers in areas such as Mississippi excluded from his study.[32] These inclusions push against Jackson's bifurcation of Sacred Harp genres and association of the style with whiteness. In large measure, however, these studies have reinforced both the positioning of specific populations and geographies as exemplars of Sacred Harp tradition and the treatment of Sacred Harp singing as white with exceptional black practitioners, as exemplified in the title of Joe Dan Boyd's 1970 article on black Sacred Harp singer and tunebook compiler "Judge Jackson: Black Giant of White Spirituals."[33] Buell Cobb's 1978 *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music* drew extensively on Jackson's construction of Sacred Harp's history, but made a great contribution by centrally incorporating the stories of black as well as white Sacred Harp singers.[34] Subsequent work, in focusing on explaining the most widely publicized shifts in Sacred Harp's demographics and geography since the 1960s (the establishment of predominantly white Sacred Harp singings across the United States and beyond in the wake of the style's popularization through the folk music movement), has again centered

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[32] John Quincy Wolf, "The Sacred Harp in Mississippi," *The Journal of American Folklore* 81, no. 322 (October 1, 1968): 337–41, doi:10.2307/538755; Charles Linwood Ellington, "The Sacred Harp Tradition of the South: Its Origin and Evolution" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Florida State University, 1969); John Quincy Wolf, "The Sacred Harp in Northeast Mississippi," *Mississippi Folklore Register* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1970), http://web.lyon.edu/wolfcollection/harpinmiss.htm; Joe Dan Boyd, "Negro Sacred Harp Songsters in Mississippi," *Mississippi Folklore Register* 5, no. 3 (Fall 1971): 60–81; Lisa Carol Hardaway, "Sacred Harp Traditions in Texas" (M.M. thesis, Rice University, 1989), http://hdl.handle.net/1911/17025; Vaughn, *Approaching 150*.

[33] Joe Dan Boyd, "Judge Jackson: Black Giant of White Spirituals," *The Journal of American Folklore* 83, no. 330 (October 1, 1970): 446–51, doi:10.2307/539666. Even Sarah Kahre's recent study which acknowledges that "Sacred Harp singing is almost always associated with white singers" promotes a view of the Alabama Wiregrass as "unusually fertile ground for musical and cultural exchange between the races" leading to black participation in Sacred Harp singing. Kahre contends that "relatively amicable race relations for the time" made such exchange possible. I argue that the degree of musical exchange in the Alabama Wiregrass was typical, rather than exceptional. See Kahre, "Schism and Sacred Harp," 65–66.

[34] Reissued in a Brown Thrasher edition as Buell E. Cobb, *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989).

on white Sacred Harp singing.[35] In examining the folklorists, folk festival promoters, and singers who collaborated to stage sometimes-integrated performances by singers from the folk festival stages that helped precipitate this "revival," I shed new light on the understandings of civil rights and folk music that contributed to these shifts. For the most part, however, this study refrains from recounting the well-documented spread of Sacred Harp singing in the wake of the style's folklorization.

I do analyze the burst of fieldwork in the Alabama Wiregrass in the 1960s and 1970s that centered on the black Sacred Harp singing community Work documented, motivated by its presence in the literature and a social imaginary informed by the civil rights movement that emboldened liberal white academics to conduct fieldwork among blacks in the South.[36] Doris Dyen's "The Role of Shape-Note Singing in the Musical

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[35] Susan L. Garber, "The Sacred Harp Revival in New England: Its Singers and Singings" (M.A. thesis, Wesleyan University, 1987); Mark David Johnson, "*The Sacred Harp* in the Urban North: 1970–1995" (D.M.A. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1996); Janet Lyn Herman, "Sacred Harp Singing in California: Genre, Performance, Feeling" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1997); Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*; Brigita Sebald, "The Performance of History: Motivations for Revivalist Participation in Sacred Harp of the Chesapeake Bay Area" (M.A. thesis, 2005), http://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/2576; Kiri Miller, *Traveling Home: Sacred Harp Singing and American Pluralism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Kiri Miller, "'Like Cords Around My Heart': Sacred Harp Memorial Lessons and the Transmission of Tradition," *Oral Tradition* 25, no. 2 (2010), http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/oral_tradition/v025/25.2.miller.html; Laura Clawson, *I Belong to This Band, Hallelujah!: Community, Spirituality, and Tradition Among Sacred Harp Singers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Julie Aalders, "'I've Learn'd to Sing a Glad New Song': Singing Sacred Harp with the Ottawa Shape Note Chorus" (M.A. thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2011); Robert Wedgbury, "Exploring Voice, Fellowship, and Tradition: The Institutionalised Development of American Sacred Harp Singing in Cork, Ireland and the Emergence of a Grassroots Singing Community" (M.A. thesis, University College Cork, 2011); Jesse P. Karlsberg, "Ireland's First Sacred Harp Convention: 'To Meet To Part No More,'" *Southern Spaces*, November 30, 2011, http://southernspaces.org/2011/irelands-first-sacred-harp-convention-meet-part-no-more; Stephanie L. Fida, "Different Sides of the Square: Pluralism and Sacred Harp Singing in Bloomington, Indiana" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 2011); Ellen Lueck, "The Old World Seeks the Old Paths: Observing Our Transnationally Expanding Singing Community," *Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter* 3, no. 2 (November 12, 2014), http://originalsacredharp.com/2014/11/12/the-old-world-seeks-the-old-paths-observing-our-transnationally-expanding-singing-community/.

[36] Cobb drew on fieldwork among black Sacred Harp singers in the Alabama Wiregrass beginning in the mid-1960s in Cobb, *The Sacred Harp*; Buell E. Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart: A Sacred Harp Memoir* (Parker, CO: Outskirts Press, 2013). Ralph Rinzler first visited the area in 1964 and William H. Tallmadge

Culture of Black Communities in Southeast Alabama" sensitively illustrated the relationship between Sacred Harp singing and enduring racial discrimination in the Alabama Wiregrass,[37] but the scholarship of which her study formed a central part was delimited geographically and failed to alter the broader rendering of Sacred Harp's geography which continued to position black singers in the Wiregrass as exceptional. Scholars published relatively little acknowledging black Sacred Harp singing outside the Alabama Wiregrass[38] and have hardly considered including additional populations[39] in Sacred Harp singing's narrative. Doing so might have prompted a reconsideration of a conception still largely following the outlines Jackson introduced. I contribute to the understanding of this geographical delimitation by assessing the folklore genealogies and social imaginaries that informed these white folklorists' fieldwork.

A scholarly privileging of dispersed harmony associated with *The Sacred Harp* over close harmony styles connected to gospel music contributed to this selective

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conducted fieldwork there in 1968 but neither published on their findings. Tallmadge ultimately turned over his materials to Doris Dyen, who incorporated them into her dissertation research. Rinzler and John Quincy Wolf encouraged Joe Dan Boyd to conduct fieldwork in the area and shared a copy of Walter Edward Byrd, "The Shape-Note Singing Convention as a Musical Institution in Alabama" (M.A. thesis, North Carolina College at Durham, 1962), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (LCCN, 2009655404; AFC 1972/027). Boyd's publications drawing on his fieldwork in the Alabama Wiregrass include Boyd, "Judge Jackson"; Joe Dan Boyd, "The Sacred Harpers and Their Singing Schools," in *1970 Festival of American Folklife: Program Book* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1970), 38–39; Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*.

[37] Doris Jane Dyen, "The Role of Shape-Note Singing in the Musical Culture of Black Communities in Southeast Alabama" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977).

[38] Boyd, "Negro Sacred Harp Songsters in Mississippi"; Donald R. Ross, "Black Sacred Harp Singing in East Texas," *Away Here in Texas*, June 1995, http://historical.texasfasola.org/blacksacredharp.html; Chiquita G. Walls, *The African American Shape Note & Vocal Music Singing Convention Directory: Mississippi and Areas of Northwest Alabama*, vol. 27, Mississippi Folklife (Oxford, MS: Mississippi Folklore Society and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, 1994). Cobb describes a network of black shape-note singers in East Central Alabama separate from the network in the Alabama Wiregrass in Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart*.

[39] For example, the black shape-note singers whose singing is featured in United Note Singers and Associated Note Singers, *God Was in Us Cause We Sung: African American Shape Note Singing*, Compact disc (Carrollton, GA: Center for Public History, University of West Georgia, 2011).

mapping of the shape-note singing landscape. Jackson inaugurated the scholarly study of relations among shape-note tunes by identifying tune families drawing on the model of ballad collecting pioneered by folklorists such as Cecil Sharp.[40] Scholars such as Charles Seeger and Dorothy Horn built on Jackson's work valorizing and describing aspects of the dispersed harmony of shape-note tunes.[41] Jackson cast modernization as undermining the musical integrity of the songs in mid-nineteenth-century shape-note tunebooks, a perception that impacted scholarship on the reception of different twentieth-century revisions of *The Sacred Harp* by singers[42] and also effected an exclusion of gospel from serious musical inquiry that largely remains intact.[43] Wallace McKenzie challenged conventional wisdom that the alto parts added to *Sacred Harp* editions in 1902 and 1911 undermined the book's dispersed harmony arguing that such parts retained the stylistic conservativism Seeger described.[44] Yet in an analysis of anthems in *The Sacred Harp* McKenzie applied an older frame, viewing the harmonic styles native to the Sacred Harp

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[40] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*; George Pullen Jackson, *Down-East Spirituals and Others: Three Hundred Songs Supplementary to the Author's Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1939); Jackson, *White and Negro Spirituals*; George Pullen Jackson, *Another Sheaf of White Spirituals* (Gainsville: University of Florida Press, 1952).

[41] Charles Seeger, "Contrapuntal Style in the Three-Voice Shape-Note Hymns," *The Musical Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (October 1, 1940): 483–93; Horn, *Sing to Me of Heaven*.

[42] Cobb, for example, positions James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911 as authentic because of its relative musical conservatism, implicitly valorizing its commitment to dispersed harmony and avoidance of gospel strains. See Cobb, *The Sacred Harp*, chap. 4.

[43] Scholarship on gospel music persists in analyzing subjects other than the music itself, such as the genre's history, leading practitioners, cultural context, and performance style. See, for example, Anthony Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound: Good News and Bad Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971); David H. Stanley, "The Gospel-Singing Convention in South Georgia," *The Journal of American Folklore* 95, no. 375 (January 1, 1982): 1–32, doi:10.2307/540020; William Lynwood Montell, *Singing The Glory Down: Amateur Gospel Music in South Central Kentucky, 1900–1990* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991); James R. Goff, *Close Harmony: A History of Southern Gospel* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Douglas Harrison, *Then Sings My Soul: The Culture of Southern Gospel Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012). An exception is William H. Tallmadge, "The Responsorial and Antiphonal Practice in Gospel Song," *Ethnomusicology* 12, no. 2 (May 1, 1968): 219–38, doi:10.2307/849931.

[44] Wallace McKenzie, "The Alto Parts in the 'True Dispersed Harmony' of *The Sacred Harp* Revisions," *The Musical Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (January 1, 1989): 153–71.

dismissively and elevating the priorities of functional harmony.[45] This study historicizes these views of *Sacred Harp*'s harmony and, in particular, elevations of its style's independence and antiquity while connecting analysis of music in the twentieth-century editions of the tunebook to the study of the cultural context and aims of contributors and editors. I analyze singers' navigation of the social context of shape-note music genres in their activities revising *The Sacred Harp* in the early and late twentieth century and show how in the wake of the folk revival, scholarly valorizations of dispersed harmony styles influenced tunebook editors to exclude gospel music from their revisions.

Vernacular Publishing and Folklore's Filter: A Look Ahead

This study assesses the social context of Sacred Harp revision and then turns to the folklorization of Sacred Harp. The first two chapters examine how revising *The Sacred Harp* at the bookends of the twentieth century provided a venue where editors expressed their anxieties about their own and the style's place in society and negotiated the challenge of presenting as new and relevant a music culture with a history that spoke powerfully to their needs and desires. In chapter 1 I examine these issues at the turn of the twentieth century. My analysis centers on the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*, edited by a committee headed by Atlanta lawyer, politician, and businessman Joseph Stephen James. I argue *The Sacred Harp* was an object of nostalgia for the antebellum period for James when he and fellow white male New South boosters imagined their status atop the South's

[45] Wallace McKenzie, "Anthems of the Sacred Harp Tunesmiths," *American Music* 6, no. 3 (October 1, 1988): 247–63, doi:10.2307/3051882.

social hierarchy as secure.[46] James's commitment to promoting Sacred Harp singing and embrace of the book's musical conservatism expressed his antebellum attachments and differentiated *Original Sacred Harp* from its competitors. Yet James sought to renovate the book's appearance to portray it as a "materially modern" object worthy of continued use amid debate over the modernity of music genres and notation systems in the industrializing New South.

In chapter 2 I survey the music and design of *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, regarded as a successor to *Original Sacred Harp* and the first edition since 1911 to have been, like *Original Sacred Harp*, completely retypeset.[47] I argue that the *1991 Edition*'s revisers resisted the archaizing depictions of folklorists while ambivalently appropriating southern cultural imaginings of Sacred Harp singing as "old fogy" music and embracing the cosmopolitanism and democratic values associated with old New England tunesmiths such as William Billings. The book's revisers, led by West Georgia businessman Hugh W. McGraw, distanced themselves from archaic rurality by digitally retypesetting the tunebook and standardizing its appearance. At the same time, the book's editors furthered the tunebook's association with the old they favored by adding new fuging tunes and plain tunes from the "first New England school" and largely excluding music

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[46] This account builds on Gavin James Campbell, "'Old Can Be Used Instead of New': Shape-Note Singing and the Crisis of Modernity in the New South, 1880–1920," *Journal of American Folklore* 110, no. 436 (April 1, 1997): 169–88; Gavin James Campbell, *Music and the Making of a New South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Duncan Vinson, "'As Far from Secular, Operatic, Rag-Time, and Jig Melodies as Is Possible': Religion and the Resurgence of Interest in the Sacred Harp, 1895–1911," *Journal of American Folklore* 119, no. 474 (October 1, 2006): 413–43; Jesse P. Karlsberg, "Joseph Stephen James's *Original Sacred Harp*: Introduction to the *Centennial Edition*," in *Original Sacred Harp: Centennial Edition*, ed. Joseph Stephen James and Jesse P. Karlsberg, Emory Texts and Studies in Ecclesial Life 8 (Atlanta, GA: Pitts Theology Library, 2015), v–xvi.

[47] Scholarship on the editing of the *1991 Edition* includes Bealle, "New Strings on the 'Old Harp'"; Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 221–36.

featuring hallmarks of gospel. I contrast the *1991 Edition*'s revision process with the circumstances faced by editors of the competing Sacred Harp revision chain commonly known as the Cooper book, whose editors staked out a different market position in the early twentieth century by including songs in early gospel and hybrid styles. The Cooper book's revisers in the early 1990s lacked connections to digital typesetters, limiting their capacity to realize their aesthetic goals in revising the tunebook. I conclude by examining how singers interpreted the forms these two books took.

The second half of this study unpacks the different folklore genealogies that informed early scholarship on Sacred Harp singing and traces their impact on later fieldwork during the civil rights and folk music movements. These field visits spurred the staging of black and white groups of singers at folk festivals in the 1960s and 1970s, a process that both displaced Sacred Harp singing, contesting singers' priorities, and opened up the style to reimaginings by new audiences. In chapter 3 I delve into the scholarly genealogies that informed the work of white scholar of German George Pullen Jackson and black musicologist John W. Work III, two Nashville scholars whose positionality and disciplinary locations informed their framing of Sacred Harp singing as a white product of the rural southern upcountry and a music culture of the Alabama Wiregrass black folk, respectively. Jackson's indebtedness to German Romantic nationalism motivated his search for a white folksong tradition that might serve as the basis for a newly revitalized national American culture. Work's negotiation of black scholarship that positioned spirituals as an expression of the "souls of black folk"[48] influenced his fieldwork in the Alabama Wiregrass, while the constraints he faced as a

[48] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1903).

black academic limited his ability to fund and extend research on the style. Jackson's ideological orientation motivated his near exclusion of black Sacred Harp singing from his publications, but his collection of tunebooks reveals he engaged with black shape-note music to a greater extent than is commonly understood.

In chapters 4 and 5 I examine how white folklorists and white and black Sacred Harp singers negotiated this scholarly genealogy amidst a changed social landscape in the aftermath of the civil rights movement's mid-1960s legislative victories. I examine how the social imaginaries singers, scholars, and audiences brought to their interactions in the field sites and festival stages where they met shifted and fractured in the wake of their collisions. I then turn to singers' and scholars' activities after these early encounters. Rather than examine the well-documented spread of Sacred Harp singing beyond the South along networks white southern singers built with folk festival audiences, I analyze how South Alabama black Sacred Harp singers capitalized on the interest of folklorists and local connections forged over decades to obtain new state support for their singing network. I conclude by arguing that scholarship and folk festival programming in the 1960s and 1970s followed channels dug in the 1930s and 1940s by the research and publishing of Jackson and Work. I show how this accumulation of scholarship centered on particular singing populations and geographies, along with the persistent "white spirituals" frame, has led to a conception of Sacred Harp singing that excludes extensive networks of black shape-note singers whose inclusion might rupture folklore's filter and its enduring consequences for Sacred Harp singing and scholarship.

Chapter 1.

Musically Conservative and "Materially Modern": Social Politics of Shape-note Genres and Book Production Technology in the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*[1]

Introduction

In the spring and summer of 1911, Atlanta lawyer, businessman, and politician Joseph Stephen James led a committee racing to produce a new revision of the 1844 shape-note tunebook *The Sacred Harp* in time for the city's United Sacred Harp Musical Association, which would convene on September 8 at the city's auditorium-armory. James's effort, which resulted in the publication of *Original Sacred Harp*, was one of three competing attempts in the early twentieth century to modernize the venerable tunebook used at annual gatherings featuring group harmony singing held across the South. In their prefaces, James and his competitors, Wilson Marion Cooper and James Landrum White, expressed some version of Cooper's sentiment that although *The Sacred Harp* "ha[d] come to seem almost like a sacred thing … certain changes were necessary to make the book conform to the requirements of the present day."[2] These three compilers chose different paths in navigating the changed musical and social climate of the early twentieth century, yet all sought to balance these twin imperatives. Then over fifty years old, *The Sacred Harp*'s musical, hymn-textual, and bibliographic characteristics symbolized values contemporary singers associated with the time of the tunebook's initial publication. *The Sacred Harp* was a "sacred thing" because of its ability to connote the values and social

[1] This chapter draws on language that appeared in an earlier form in Karlsberg, "Joseph Stephen James's *Original Sacred Harp*," v–xvi.
[2] W. M. Cooper, ed., *The Sacred Harp* (Cincinnati, OH: W. M. Cooper, 1902), i.

structures white singers associated with the antebellum past amidst the rapid changes associated with the modernizing "New South." Yet the New South's sense of musical and cultural momentum also led these singers to feel that *The Sacred Harp* was imperiled if it couldn't be made new again.

In this chapter I focus on the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*, colloquially known as the "James book," the edition that inaugurated the most widely adopted revision-chain of the tunebook in the early twentieth century. Like *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, discussed in chapter 2, *Original Sacred Harp* was entirely retypeset, in addition to featuring other changes such as the addition of new songs. I focus on these two revision processes because of their coincidence with dramatic changes in the geography and demography of Sacred Harp singing and the southern United States in general, because of their connection to significant cultural changes such as those of the New South and the legacy of the folk music movement, and because the editions achieved widespread use and had the greatest cultural impact. The decision to wholly retypeset these two editions of *The Sacred Harp* emerged from a combination of necessity and a set of circumstances that seemed to revisers to call for remaking, rather than incrementally changing, the tunebook simply by adding an appendix of new songs, or replacing songs in the body of the book with new songs while leaving many others unchanged. The decision to retypeset the book in turn created an opportunity to consider a wider range of choices about the design and function of the tunebook than editors of less ambitious editions faced. As folklore researcher John Bealle notes, such wholesale revisions "provided the opportunity for a resolute and enduring stance regarding competing styles, the inclusion of groups of participating singers, the character of previous revisions, and other books of sacred

music."[3] Achieving this remaking required a larger than usual financial investment and access to a wider array of book production technologies and networks. Such an overhaul also enabled the revision committees tasked with producing these editions to reconceive the book's page dimensions, layout, and typography. Because of these factors, these two revision processes and the editions they produced are positioned at the intersection of musical, bibliographic, and social concerns, making them well-suited to the exploration of the relationship between book editing and production and music's social politics.

The editors of each *Sacred Harp* revision positioned their tunebook as successor to a previous tunebook, staking out a dialogic position in what Mikhail Bakhtin described as a "chain of speech communion," both responsive to past editions and anticipating future revisions.[4] Such revisions' editors also staked out positions within their temporal contexts by striving to distinguish their tunebooks both from rival *Sacred Harp* editions and from other books and cultural practices, ranging from gospel songbooks in the early twentieth-century South to folk music song circles in 1960s and 1970s urban America. *Sacred Harp* editors' decisions were guided by this culturally local context, but were also responsive to their positioning in a larger world in which individuals' tastes are expressions of their self worth.[5] In seeking to produce a modern, usable, consistently designed, and aesthetically pleasing tunebook, *Sacred Harp* editors aimed to offer a

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[3] Bealle, "New Strings on the 'Old Harp,'" 26.
[4] See the essay "The Problem of Speech Genres" in Mikhail Mikhaïlovich Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 74–96.
[5] Pierre Bourdieu describes the oppositional and class-based nature of choices in matters of taste in Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984). On the *Sacred Harp*'s compilers negotiation of similar issues in the mid-nineteenth century, see Jesse P. Karlsberg, "Utility, Distinction, and Cross-Sectional Collaboration in the Materiality of *The Sacred Harp* (1844)" (Conference paper, Nineteenth Century Studies Association, Boston, March 27, 2015).

product that would appeal to potential singers seeking to express their sophistication through their participation in cultural activities.

Analysis of James's 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*, published after revisions by Cooper and White, shows how one set of tunebook editors shaped the book's music, design, and bibliographic form to express their ambivalent stances toward modernity and the antebellum past. Others have discussed the production of Cooper's, White's, and James's revisions of *The Sacred Harp* in detail.[6] I focus on James's edition here because the book inaugurated the revision-chain that includes the *1991 Edition* discussed in the next chapter and because it, and the revisions of the book that followed, achieved the widest circulation among the twentieth-century revisions of *The Sacred Harp*. Some prior scholarship on *Sacred Harp* editions offers an additional implicit justification, valorizing *Original Sacred Harp*'s perceived conservatism, and contrasting it with other editions' perceived concessions to modernization.[7] In the next two chapters, I analyze technologies of book production and their social context and connect these to the book's music-stylistic orientation. I suggest that *Original Sacred Harp*'s editors, and competing revisers, sought a balance between modernization and retentions, offering a corrective to the

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[6] James offered his own highly polemical take on the early twentieth-century editions in J. S. James, *An Explanation of the Sacred Harp Printed and Published by B. F. White and E. J. King in 1844* (Atlanta, GA: Gordon W. Donaldson, 1920). Scholarly analyses of these editions include Cobb, *The Sacred Harp*, 84–127; Campbell, "Old Can Be Used Instead of New"; Vinson, "As Far from Secular, Operatic, Rag-Time, and Jig Melodies as Is Possible"; Karlsberg, "Joseph Stephen James's *Original Sacred Harp*," v–viii; Kahre, "Schism and Sacred Harp," 53–74, 95–118.

[7] John Bealle describes the early twentieth-century editions of *The Sacred Harp* in these stark terms and excludes the Cooper editions from a chronology of the "revisions of *The Sacred Harp*" in Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 249–50, 265–66. See also Cobb, *The Sacred Harp*, 84–127. This distinction has even crept into the terms Sacred Harp singers use to refer to editions of the tunebook. Singers often refer to the James/Denson edition as "the *Sacred Harp*" while referring to the Cooper edition as "the Cooper book."

value-laden description of editions as modern or conservative that has led to accusations of a "strong Denson line bias" in scholarship on *The Sacred Harp*'s editions.[8]

In what follows I discuss James and his committee's prefatory material and historical notes, and analyze their book's design and typography to assess how these features of the book express its revisers' deeper anxieties about Sacred Harp singing's racial politics and social standing as well as its geographic spread and sustainability in an urbanizing, globalizing South at the beginning of the twentieth century. I also assess how the book's contributors and editors expressed their social and political commitments through the tunebook's musical conservatism.

My analysis focuses on Sacred Harp editions' material existence to a greater extent than earlier studies. Music is fundamentally material in the sense that our participation along with nonhuman forms in vibration renders our perception of sound possible but music's materiality also includes "the objects with which music is made or performed" as well as the physical scores, such as *Original Sacred Harp* and *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, that enable music's performance. Will Straw contends that "It is through its material extensions that music is encountered in cultural life,"[9] yet engagement with music's material extensions has often been implicit, in contrast with the pronounced material turn in disciplines such as anthropology and literary studies.[10] Those studies that have focused on music's materiality have largely examined the engagement of artists,

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[8] Kahre, "Schism and Sacred Harp," 8, 119.
[9] Will Straw, "Music and Material Culture," in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2013), 229–31, 236.
[10] For surveys of the material turn in anthropology and in interdisciplinary scholarship, see Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Chris Tilley et al., eds., *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: Sage, 2006).

collectors, and museums with instruments and objects such as vinyl records that carry recorded sound.[11] I argue that *Sacred Harp* editors focused on the materiality of their respective revisions of the tunebook as a primary arena in which to achieve their goals for the book's reception. My analysis of the material traces of their goals reveals how an explicit focus on the materiality of scores might be productive for research in music bibliography and other fields within the discipline of music studies.

This discussion also demonstrates how the term *vernacular*, a key word increasingly harnessed in scholarship across a range of humanistic disciplines, can aid in the description and analysis of publishing and other cultural activities that take place outside of centralized networks of "communication, competition, cooperation, and distribution" that scholars argue have dominated the book trade in the United States since its industrialization in the mid-1800s.[12] My use of this term is something of a departure from the bibliography literature, where "vernacular publishing" has tended to refer to publishing in a local or "native" language.[13] In employing the term *vernacular* to describe the publishing process, I draw on senses of the word including "local," "native,"

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[11] Will Straw offers a concise overview of extant scholarship excavating these veins of music's materiality in Straw, "Music and Material Culture."

[12] Scott E. Casper, "Introduction," in *The Industrial Book, 1840–1880*, ed. Scott E. Casper et al., vol. 3, A History of the Book in America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 4.

[13] Mary Kelley uses the term *vernacular* in ways that gesture at my use of the term here in Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley, eds., *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790–1840*, vol. 2, A History of the Book in America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 175, 468. For examples of uses of "vernacular publishing" to mean publishing in a local or "native" language, see Farina Mir, *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Manzurul Islam, "Academic Publishing and the University Presses: The Case in a Developing Region (Saudi Arabia)," *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 32, no. 1 (October 1, 2000): 24–32, doi:10.3138/jsp.32.1.24; D. N. Griffiths, "Prayer-Book Translations in the Nineteenth Century," *The Library*, Sixth Series, 6, no. 1 (1984): 1–24, doi:10.1093/library/s6-VI.1.1; Ellen E. McDonald, "The Modernizing of Communication: Vernacular Publishing in Nineteenth Century Maharashtra," *Asian Survey* 8, no. 7 (July 1, 1968): 589–606.

"ordinary," "domestic," or "functional"[14] to suggest an emphasis on expediency and usability over decoration, as well as a local or regional marginal market position. Vernacularly published books may be a part of the book trade, yet they are likely to operate at its periphery, outside of or barely linked with established national networks of book production and marketing. Many ephemeral printed texts emanating from mainstream publishers differ from what I designate as vernacularly published objects. For reasons of expediency or affordability, texts such as mass-produced sheet music may adopt advanced or deliberately selected print technologies that lead to low quality results. In contrast, vernacularly published texts are more often produced through contracts with the "small shops [that] continued to exist across the United States, printing the ephemera of everyday life" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[15] Such books often adopt some, but not all, of the markers of mainstream published works from their period, but may trail mainstream books in adopting new design features, technologies, and marketing strategies. These factors have the potential to limit such books' influence and status.

My discussion here, and my account of Sacred Harp singers' conflicted embrace of aspects of the style's vernacularity in chapters 4 and 5, also draws on Houston A. Baker Jr.'s recovery of the etymological meaning of *vernacular*, "in relation to human beings, as a 'slave born on his master's estate,'" in his articulation of the significance of vernacular

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[14] "Vernacular," *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, March 2012), http://www.oed.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/view/Entry/222608.
[15] Casper, "Introduction," 5.

culture to understandings of African American literature.[16] Baker's use of the term, which draws on its root, the latin *verna*, or home born slave, expresses two connotations of *vernacular* critical to this study: the asymmetrical relations of power embedded in the reception of vernacular culture and the conflicted stance of those engaged in vernacular expression to spaces regarded as homes, which range in the case of Sacred Harp singing from the plantation to the whole of the southern United States. Vernacularly published works often take certain forms because of the economic and social marginality of their makers, and in the following analysis I connect the degree of vernacularity of certain books to the economic and social constraints surrounding their production, and to the social class of their makers. How such factors intersect can shed light on the circumstances of a book's production, and help complicate the bibliography literature's link between the "national book trade system [and] a set of values that was centered on, though by no means limited to, the middling classes."[17]

The study of vernacularly published texts is important because these books, pamphlets, posters, fliers, tickets, badges, and other printed ephemera make up a much wider portion of the printed output of society than the limited scholarly attention such works receive would suggest. The ephemerality of many vernacularly published texts inhibits their study. So too does the lower cultural capital that is a consequence of such books' conditions of production and use, as well as the narrower circulation of such books in comparison with those emanating from the large publishing firms of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago. I argue that the analysis of vernacularly published

[16] Houston A. Baker Jr., *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 2.
[17] Casper, "Introduction," 4.

books, copies of which—such as *The Sacred Harp*—are more likely to survive than printed ephemera because of their intended permanence and corresponding durability, offer an opportunity to examine some of the features of vernacularity in publishing that may apply to a wider range of printed texts and recorded media, and to correct an imbalance that conflates access to marketing channels and book production technologies with significance.

Musical Hybridity and Bibliographical Modernization in the *Sacred Harp* Revisions of Wilson Marion Cooper and James Landrum White

One element of the early twentieth-century revisers' attempts to make *The Sacred Harp* relevant to their contemporaries was embracing four-part harmony and gospel sonorities in the book's music. Cooper's revision appeared first, in early 1903. His edition set the bar by pairing a number of retained and newly composed songs in the styles common to nineteenth-century editions of the *Sacred Harp* with songs in hybrid forms drawing on gospel as well as the genres already contained in the tunebook.[18] J. L. White's three revisions, published in 1909, 1910, and 1911, went further in embracing recent developments in American Protestant hymnody. Both compilers made adjustments to their books' layout and typography to emulate the gospel songbooks they associated with modernity.

Cooper was born in Haw Ridge, near the border between Coffee and Dale counties, Alabama, in the southeastern corner of the state, on December 17, 1850, and

[18] On the 1903 publication of Cooper's *Sacred Harp* see Karlsberg, "Joseph Stephen James's *Original Sacred Harp*," vi; "Mr. W. M. Cooper Returned Sunday Night from Cincinnati," *Dothan Home Journal*, February 3, 1903. Cooper published revised editions in 1907 and 1909. Thanks to Sarah Kahre and Robert L. Vaughn for sharing their research on the publication history of the book.

lived in four counties in the region. Cooper moved with family to Florida in 1910 and died on July 17, 1916, of a cerebral hemorrhage. Cooper worked as a farmer, schoolteacher, and insurance agent, and was a relatively prominent member of southeastern Alabama white society, running for local political office and editing a monthly music magazine, titled the *Zion Songster*.[19] White was the youngest son of *Sacred Harp* co-compiler Benjamin Franklin White, born in Harris County, in West Georgia, on January 22, 1847. White spent most of his life in or near Atlanta, where he farmed and taught singing. One of several children of B. F. White active in singing and teaching from their father's book, J. L. White spent decades pursuing the book's modernization. J. L. White collaborated with his brother B. F. White Jr. in 1884 on a distinct tunebook in seven-shape notation titled *The New Sacred Harp*, intended as a successor to *The Sacred Harp*. He co-founded the United Sacred Harp Musical Association in Atlanta in 1905 with Joseph Stephen James. J. L. White also made three attempts to revise his father's tunebook between 1909 and 1911 in the wake of the United Sacred Harp Musical Association's appointment of a committee to revise the book. White died in Decatur, Georgia, on March 8, 1925.[20]

As Duncan Vinson has described, White was more assertive in rearranging songs in *The Sacred Harp* than his competitors, striving to bring them into conformation with what he saw as modern rules of harmony, and adding songs with harmonic features such

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[19] On Wilson Marion Cooper's biography, see Kahre, "Schism and Sacred Harp," 54–55, 73; "Wilson Marion Cooper," *Wikipedia* (St. Petersburg, FL: Wikimedia Foundation, June 25, 2014), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilson_Marion_Cooper, largely written by Texas researcher and Sacred Harp singer Robert L. Vaughn. Vaughn has shared additional research with me through personal communication. His forthcoming companion to the 2012 Revised Cooper Edition of *The Sacred Harp* will include further biographical information about Cooper.

[20] On James Landrum White, see James, *A Brief History of the Sacred Harp*, 41–44; Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 167.

as successions of dominant seventh chords common among 1880s and 1890s gospel hymns but absent from earlier hymn tunes and from Cooper's revision.[21] White's first two revisions of *The Sacred Harp* were rejected by rural Alabama and Georgia singing conventions and ultimately by the committee—headed by James—that authorized their publication. James, after mediating White's failure, sought success by limiting musical modernization to the addition of alto parts, and by limiting changes to harmony parts to reintroduced songs removed from *The Sacred Harp* in 1870.

Both Cooper's and White's modifications of *The Sacred Harp*'s design and page layout in their revisions reinforced the perception of newness intimated by the books' incorporation of gospel musical markers. Cooper signaled an affiliation with gospel songbooks by adopting new titles drawing on songs' hymn texts. His revision also adopted a contemporary typeface in place of the Scotch Roman face used in nineteenth-century editions of the book. The appendices of White's 1909, 1910, and 1911 editions adopted a design that emulated recently published gospel songbooks, centering the title, placing a song's text attribution on top left, and its music attribution on top right. In making these changes, the books' revisers adapted features of gospel songbooks to give their *Sacred Harp* editions a veneer of modernity.

Yet the new editions' designs and bibliographic form also suggested continuity with the nineteenth-century editions of *The Sacred Harp*. In contrast with the redesigned pages of his new music, White's printer reused the plates from which previous editions of *The Sacred Harp* were printed for pages retained unchanged from the previous edition.

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[21] Vinson, "As Far from Secular, Operatic, Rag-Time, and Jig Melodies as Is Possible," 424–26. Vinson notes, drawing on the work of Charles Hamm and Gage Averill, that successions of dominant seventh chords were also common progressions in ragtime music and late nineteenth-century popular songs.

New plates aside from those in the appendices approximated the look of these old plates, with minor differences likely resulting from the availability of slightly different type faces. Perhaps motivated by the relative ease and affordability of reproducing existent plates rather than typesetting new ones, and enabled because of White's inheritance of the copyright of the 1870 *Sacred Harp* from his father and siblings, this design choice creates visual continuity that masks the considerable harmonic changes White made to some songs in the body of the book. This typographical approach particularly aligns with the goals of White's 1911 *Sacred Harp: Fourth Edition with Supplement*, which he articulated as an unadulterated reprint with a new appendix. Cooper, without access to or rights to use the book's original plates, and having made the decision to change songs' titles and add alto parts, was compelled to retypeset all of the book's pages.[22] Yet Cooper retained the page layout of *The Sacred Harp*'s nineteenth-century editions, creating an appearance of visual continuity.

"Material Modern Improvement": Aesthetics of Contemporaneity in Joseph Stephen James's 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*

J. S. James adopted a relatively conservative approach to the musical content of his revision of *The Sacred Harp*, perhaps in response to some singers' negative reaction to the musical changes made by his former collaborator J. L. White, or to differentiate his own book from those of his competitors. James instead settled on the book's materiality—focusing on its bibliographic form, typography, and layout—as the arena in which to claim relevance in the modernizing New South.

[22] On the form and contents of White's 1909, 1910, and 1911 *Sacred Harp* editions, see Kahre, "Schism and Sacred Harp," 108–11.

James was born in rural West Georgia's Campbell County in 1849. As a boy, he attended singing schools taught by his father, Stephen James, and *Sacred Harp* contributor James R. Turner. After moving to Douglasville, founded as the seat of the newly established Douglas County, he embarked on a successful business and political career. At twenty-six, James was elected the first mayor of Douglasville, moving on to the Georgia state legislature five years later, and then to the state senate. During the 1880s and 1890s, James edited a weekly Douglas County newspaper, the *New South*, and served on a variety of committees to promote industry, railroad construction, and various business ventures in the region. James was an anti-Populist, an opponent of a political movement galvanizing poor farmers and labor advocates to combat perceived capitalistic abuses of banks, railroads, and other representatives of the economic elite.[23] James campaigned for Democratic presidential candidate Grover Cleveland and was rewarded with a patronage appointment as United

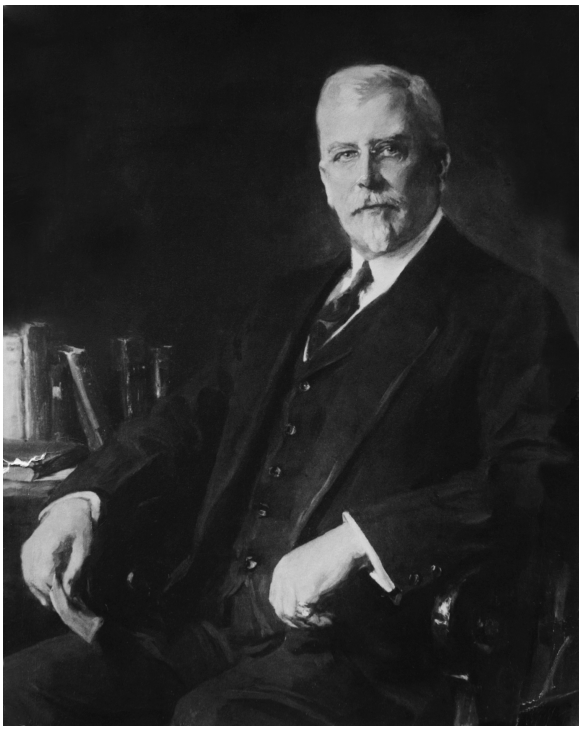

Figure 1.1: Joseph Stephen James in an undated portrait. Courtesy of the Douglas County Public Library.

[23] On the history of the populist movement, see Comer Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850–1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Robert C. McMath, *American Populism: A Social History, 1877–1898* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

States District Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, leading him to move to Atlanta. James returned to singing after his retirement from political life in 1897 and, though he lacked formal education in law, maintained a law office in Atlanta through 1923.[24]

James boasts that the new "rudiments of music"[25] he contributed to *Original Sacred Harp* "embrace all the old features, and at the same time … get at all material modern improvements."[26] A desire to "get at all material modern improvements" could equally well describe James's approach to the design of the body of the book. Like Cooper, James lacked access to the plates used to print nineteenth-century editions of *The Sacred Harp* or the right to use them. Using the original plates would also have interfered with the *Original Sacred Harp* editors' plan to add alto parts to most songs. *Original Sacred Harp*'s cover highlights the book's new plates, exclaiming "ALL PLATES AND EVERYTHING NEW," adding that the book is "Just Out : : : August 1911."[27] In his "Introductory … statement of the work performed" in preparing the new edition, James again pointed to the creation of new plates to print the book as an aspect of *Original Sacred Harp*'s embrace of contemporaneity through renovated materiality, writing that "All the plates from which the book is printed are brand new and will give the best

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[24] On James's biography, see *Memoirs of Georgia: Containing Historical Accounts of the State's Civil, Military, Industrial and Professional Interests, and Personal Sketches of Many of Its People* (Atlanta, GA: Southern Historical Association, 1895), 617–618; Fannie Mae Davis, *Douglas County, Georgia: From Indian Trail to Interstate 20*, ed. Virginia Voss Pope (Roswell, GA: W. H. Wolfe Associates, 1987); Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 126–127.

[25] "Rudiments of music" is the name often given to a pedagogical text that forms an important bibliographic convention of oblong tunebooks, generally appearing at the front of the book after its prefatory material but before its music. For analysis of the contents of rudiments in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tunebooks, see Britton, "Theoretical Introductions in American Tune-Books to 1800"; Perrin, "Theoretical Introductions in American Tune-Books from 1801 to 1860."

[26] J. S. James et al., eds., *Original Sacred Harp* (Atlanta, GA, 1911), vi. James adapted these rudiments from a version he authored for James, *Union Harp and History of Songs*.

[27] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, front cover.

results."[28] A remarkable strategy for the musically conservative *Sacred Harp*, this emphasis on novelty may also represent an effort to coopt the marketing strategy of competitors such as gospel publishers, who frequently issued a songbook with largely new repertoire each year. James also added a statistical table in the front of the book citing, among other things, the total number of scriptural citations for songs, the number of "words used in the book," and "number of repeats in the book."[29] The inclusion of these sometimes-quirky statistics (of dubious reliability) aligned with the modernizing New South's emphasis on industrial accounting and factbooks.

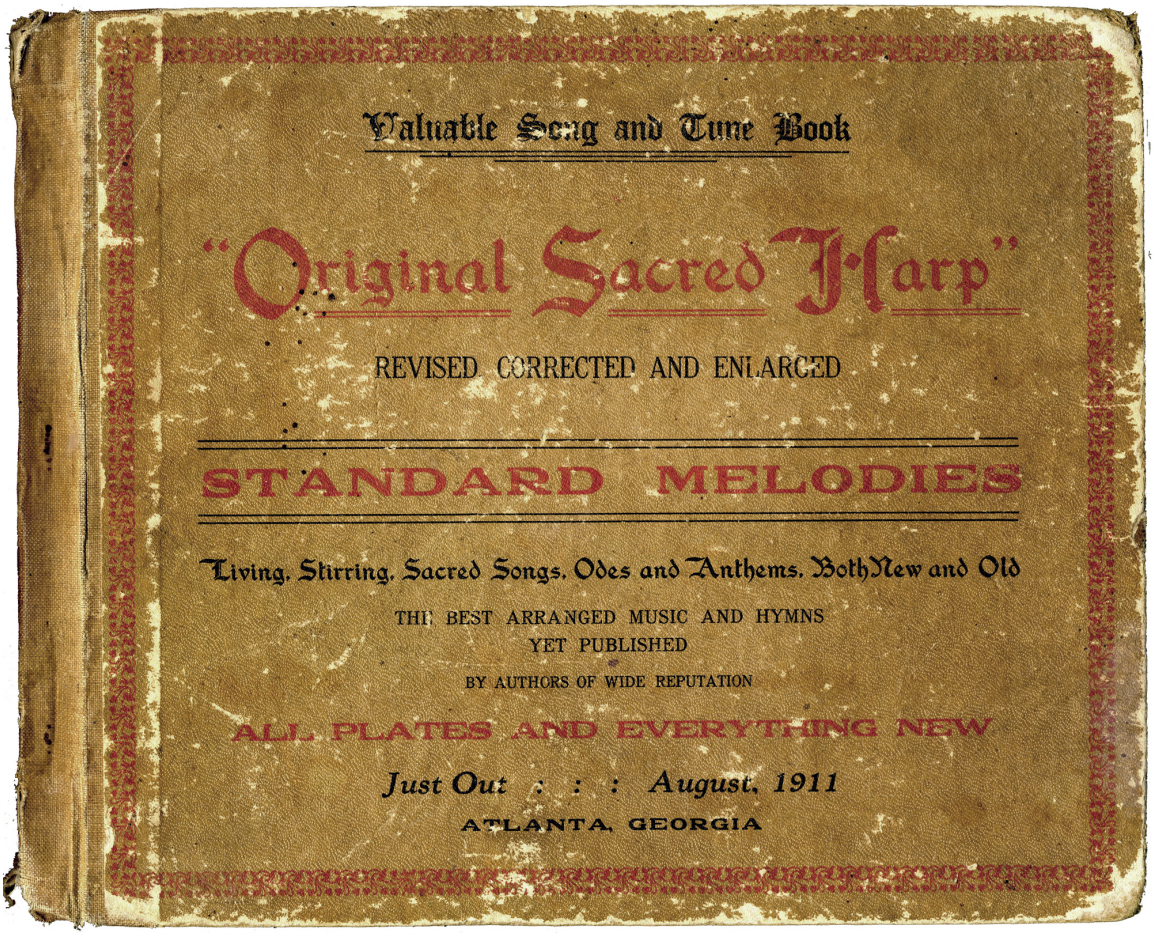
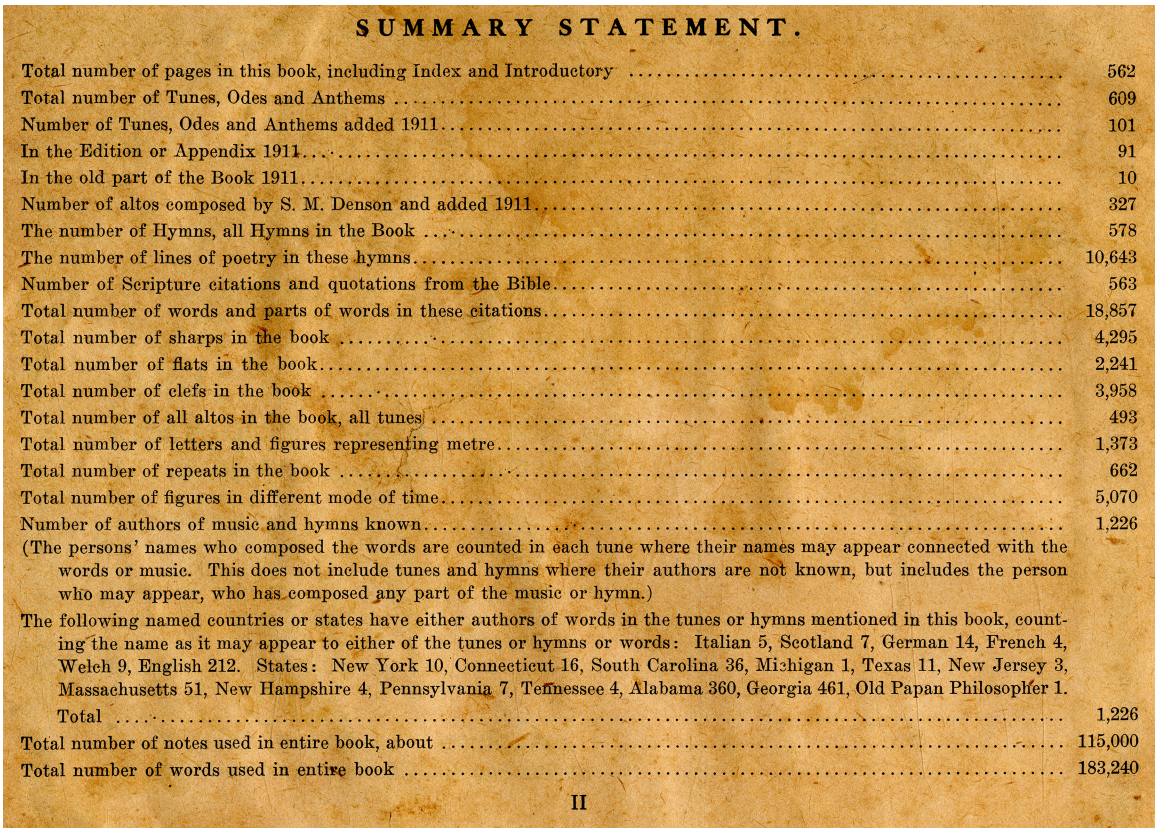


Figure 1.2: Front cover of *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911 (second printing). Courtesy of Wade Kotter.

[28] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, v–vi.
[29] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, ii.



SUMMARY STATEMENT.

Total number of pages in this book, including Index and Introductory	562
Total number of Tunes, Odes and Anthems	609
Number of Tunes, Odes and Anthems added 1911	101
In the Edition or Appendix 1911	91
In the old part of the Book 1911	10
Number of altos composed by S. M. Denson and added 1911	327
The number of Hymns, all Hymns in the Book	578
The number of lines of poetry in these hymns	10,643
Number of Scripture citations and quotations from the Bible	563
Total number of words and parts of words in these citations	18,857
Total number of sharps in the book	4,295
Total number of flats in the book	2,241
Total number of clefs in the book	3,958
Total number of all altos in the book, all tunes	493
Total number of letters and figures representing metre	1,373
Total number of repeats in the book	662
Total number of figures in different mode of time	5,070
Number of authors of music and hymns known	1,226
(The persons' names who composed the words are counted in each tune where their names may appear connected with the words or music. This does not include tunes and hymns where their authors are not known, but includes the person who may appear, who has composed any part of the music or hymn.)	
The following named countries or states have either authors of words in the tunes or hymns mentioned in this book, counting the name as it may appear to either of the tunes or hymns or words: Italian 5, Scotland 7, German 14, French 4, Welch 9, English 212. States: New York 10, Connecticut 16, South Carolina 36, Michigan 1, Texas 11, New Jersey 3, Massachusetts 51, New Hampshire 4, Pennsylvania 7, Tennessee 4, Alabama 360, Georgia 461, Old Papan Philosopher 1.	
Total	1,226
Total number of notes used in entire book, about	115,000
Total number of words used in entire book	183,240

II

Figure 1.3: *Original Sacred Harp*'s "summary statement," a statistical table in the front of the book. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

The new design of *Original Sacred Harp* also emulated other songbooks, particularly gospel music books. In describing the book's new regularized appearance in language typical of the New South's emphasis on order and procedure, James explains the new gospel songbook–influenced standardized arrangement of the elements of a song in the book's redesigned plates. Titles of songs appear centered in the book, rather than positioned toward the left side of the song, as they appear in nineteenth-century editions. Beneath the title, James "placed the scripture text upon which the words of the tune are founded." An echo of a practice of some gospel and Sabbath School songbooks, the inclusion of scriptural citations also contributed to James's effort to present the book as a biblically rooted sacred text founded in an imagined legacy of American Protestantism.

James regularized the position of attribution information, placing "the name of the composer of the words or poetry, where known, and the date when composed," on the "left hand corner of the page," and the "name of the composer of the music ... where possible to find" on the "right hand corner." James also added a statement of the key "in addition to the sharps and flats" already present in the song's key signature, again echoing a convention of some Sabbath School songbooks.[30] James intended these changes to the book's page layout to present a thorough and well-researched accounting of the sources for the tunebook's music and its scriptural basis. He also hoped that the implementation of a regularized design and emulation of features associated with *The Sacred Harp*'s new competitors, Sabbath School and gospel songbooks, would underscore the book's continued relevance in a modernizing world.

The typefaces used for the James book's layout represent a kind of "material modern improvement" while also hinting at the typicality of the book's production and its position as a vernacularly produced work occupying a middle rung on the hierarchy of printing at the turn of the twentieth century. The book uses modern fonts as both titling and body faces.[31] The titling face, De Vinne, cut in 1893 by "Mr. Werner" of the Central Type Foundry, represented the beginning of a turn away from "the profusely ornamented types in fashion" in the late nineteenth century. Instead, De Vinne's makers sought to

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[30] Ibid., v.

[31] The pages of music in *Original Sacred Harp* use three different pairings of titling, text, and music faces, a likely consequence of the rush to typeset and print the tunebook in time for the 1911 United Sacred Harp Musical Association, and perhaps also a measure of the financial constraints facing the book's editors. This description focuses on the pairing most prevalent in the early sections of the book, though the analysis presented here applies equally well to the other faces used elsewhere in *Original Sacred Harp*.

"return to the simplicity of the true old-style character."[32] The font was widely imitated in the early twentieth century. *Original Sacred Harp*'s text face, Ronaldson Old Style, was designed by Philadelphia type foundry MacKellar, Smith, and Jordan in 1884. Also regarded in the early twentieth century as "a remarkably clean-cut letter," the font was "very popular … with job printers," the low-end typesetters and printers who often produced printed ephemera such as posters and pamphlets for local consumption.[33] About twenty years old at the time of their use to set *Original Sacred Harp*, these two faces were popular and were typical of middle-range typesetting work by local firms, neither cutting edge nor out of style. The resultant aesthetic of *Original Sacred Harp* was typical of a work printed by a firm such as the unknown job printer in Atlanta who printed the book.[34] The use of a type face like Ronaldson often used for job printing tasks differentiated the work visually from that of an elite press at the center of the book trade.

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[32] Despite the inclusion of "grotesques to some capital letters in the belief that they would meet a general desire for more quaintness," a feature that gives the contemporary impression of art nouveau style, the font represented a turn away from ornamental design toward a more straightforward presentation. Theodore Low De Vinne, *Types of the De Vinne Press: Specimens for the Use of Compositors, Proofreaders and Publishers* (New York: De Vinne Press, 1907), 273.

[33] Theodore Low De Vinne, *The Practice of Typography: A Treatise on the Processes of Type-Making, the Point System, the Names, Sizes, Styles and Prices of Plain Printing Types* (New York: Century Company, 1900), 202.

[34] No printer's name appears anywhere in the first edition of *Original Sacred Harp*. The printer of the James book may have been one of the firms who printed the fourth and fifth printings of the edition, though the fact that James contracted with different printers to produce these two editions makes it equally likely that a different area printer typeset the book. Foote & Davies, printer of the fourth edition, by 1911 operated a large printing plant south of Grant Park and focused on publishing texts like yearbooks and biographies of Atlanta-area figures for a local market. Ruralist Press, located on 116 Hunter Street, likewise largely served local clients, surviving the Great Depression due to steady contracts with Atlanta-area businesses such as the Coca-Cola Company. See "Foote & Davies," *Wikipedia* (St. Petersburg, FL: Wikimedia Foundation, December 11, 2014), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foote_%26_Davies_Company; Nash Engineering Company, "Ruralist Press Building," *Atlanta History Center Album*, accessed January 8, 2015, http://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/store/Products/88678-ruralist-press-building.aspx; Rachel Tobin Ramos, "Printer in Atlanta for Nearly 130 Years to Close by Year's End," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 10, 2009, http://www.ajc.com/news/business/printer-in-atlanta-for-nearly-130-years-to-close-b/nQY7x/.

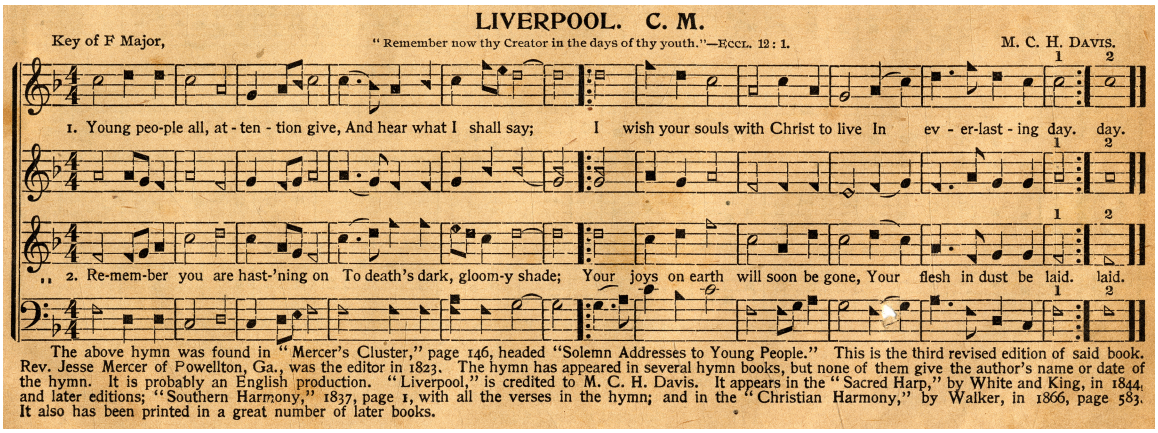

Figure 1.4: *Original Sacred Harp*'s new regularized appearance and modern, restrained type faces, De Vinne and Ronaldson Old Style. For examples of the two other pairings of titling, text, and music faces in the book, see Figures 1.8 and 1.15. M. C. H. Davis, LIVERPOOL, in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 37. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

Just such a press, T. K. and P. G. Collins in Philadelphia, had printed the four nineteenth-century editions of *The Sacred Harp*, ensuring that these earlier editions had clean design and careful execution that granted the books cultural capital and perhaps a competitive edge in the mid-nineteenth century southern market for shape note tunebooks.[35] By the time James sought a printer for *Original Sacred Harp*, its original compilers' ties with the Philadelphia printing establishment had eroded; access to the networks at the center of the national book trade in which such printers operated, and the capital required to employ them, were out of his reach. Although *Original Sacred Harp*'s incorporation of faces representing a turn from the ornamental style of the late nineteenth century to a more clean and modern aesthetic aligns with its revisers' attempt to bring the tunebook up to date, renovating its then sixty-seven year-old typography instead cemented the book's transition from an object with high cultural capital to a

[35] Karlsberg, "Utility, Distinction, and Cross-Sectional Collaboration"; Jesse P. Karlsberg and Christopher Sawula, "Cross-Sectional Collaboration in the Music of Elphrey Heritage: Northern Contributor to Southern Shape-Note Tunebooks" (Conference paper, Auburn University Montgomery Southern Studies Conference, Montgomery, AL, February 6, 2015).

middling product of a local job printer. The book's typography reveals the editor's concern for expediency and economy, as well as the technological limitations of the regional job printers to whom he had access.

Original Sacred Harp's technologies of production likewise exemplify the vernacularly produced work's transition from a product of a fine press at the center of the national book trade to a product reliant on old technology and produced by a regional job printer. The 1844 first edition of *The Sacred Harp* was hand composed with metal text and musical type and then stereotyped—type metal was melted and cast into a plaster mold of the composed type—using a technology that had recently gained wide adoption. Stereotyping made it more economical to print multiple small runs of a book but discouraged revision as doing so incurred the cost of modifying or retypesetting plates. Hand composition was time consuming, but stereotyping ensured that a work could be reprinted even after the original type had been distributed and used for other material. Two subsequent nineteenth-century editions of *The Sacred Harp* left the original plates alone, its printers casting new stereotyped plates for title pages, indices, and songs added to new appendices. A fourth edition published in 1870 replaced some songs but made minimal changes to retained music.

By the early twentieth century, mechanization had dramatically increased the efficiency of typesetting. Linotype machines rapidly assembled letters into rows of type controlled by a keyboard that were then cast and stacked. The competing Monotype machine cast and assembled individual letters into a matrix. Both systems made possible the speedy assembly of whole pages of text without reliance on hand composition. Initially adopted by periodicals and then speedily by book presses, the technology could

not accommodate music typesetting. Music typesetting in America had always straddled the line between letterpress and engraving.[36] Simpler music, such as that included in shape-note tunebooks, could be reduced to a relatively small collection of component visual parts and was thus readily represented by metal type that could be arranged in a type case. More complicated music, however, would have required impractically large numbers of different sorts, making engraving more efficient.[37] The transition of text printing from hand composing to mechanized processes relying on Linotype and Monotype machines thus had little effect on most nationally circulating music printing such as the aesthetically complicated sheet music published by leading firms in Boston, Chicago, and New York. Concurrently, electrotyping—using electrolysis to produce a copper coating on a beeswax mold taken from hand composed type and then backing the copper with molten type metal—competed for popularity with stereotyping but did not make letterpress music printing more efficient.

Shape-note tunebook production, which operated at the margins of these national networks and had little of the cultural capital of G. Schirmer's or Oliver Ditson's scores for parlor music, was further marginalized by these technological shifts. Linotype and Monotype machines could not accommodate music typesetting, let alone the unusual music notational features of shape-note music. The hand-composition processes Linotype and Monotype machines displaced became increasingly uncommon, relegating tunebook revisers to an increasingly limited pool of typesetters. Although the *Original Sacred*

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[36] D. W. Krummel and Stanley Sadie, eds., *Music Printing and Publishing* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 113.

[37] On the history, benefits, and drawbacks of music engraving and printing from type, see Ibid., chap. 3–4. Sorts are pieces of metal type representing particular characters such as letters or parts of musical notes.

Harp's makers found a local firm with at least two different shape-note music typefaces in sufficient quantities to produce enough standing type to electrotype and produce a lengthy and complicated work on short notice, their project couldn't benefit from the efficiencies introduced by recent technological shifts in book production.[38] As Linotype and Monotype machines became ever more omnipresent in the twentieth century, publishing options for James's successors and their competitors became even more limited, stretching finances and requiring aesthetic compromises.

Because of the technological and temporal limitations its production faced, *Original Sacred Harp* emerged in a form that undercut its revisers' aspirations of distinctively clean, regularized modernity. James's haste to edit and print the 562-page book in the short time between his committee's rejection of J. L. White's 1910 *Sacred Harp: Fifth Edition* and the book's planned debut at the September 8, 1911, opening of the annual convention of Atlanta's United Sacred Harp Musical Association imposed severe limitations on the book's printer. The James edition's August 16, 1911, preface and pages near the end of the book featuring songs composed as late as June 14, 1911 suggest that the book's typesetting and perhaps its printing overlapped with its editing and limit the window during which the book could have been bound to a mere three weeks.[39]

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[38] Surviving plates from *Original Sacred Harp* in the collections of the Sacred Harp Museum, the author, and David Warren Steel, feature a copper veneer, backed with lead, consistent with electrotyping, rather than the type metal consistent with stereotyping.

[39] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, iii, 528, 550. That PRAISE GOD (the song on page 528 of *Original Sacred Harp*, composed on April 26, 1911) was typeset in the style found on the book's earliest pages, featuring the combination of De Vinne and Ronaldson Old Style, suggests either that the book's first pages had been typeset, electrotyped, distributed, and perhaps printed by April of 1911, leaving the corresponding sorts available for typesetting this late addition to the book. Alternatively, the page and those earlier in the book could have been typeset together, late in the process of typesetting the text. WEEP NO MORE (the song on page 550 of *Original Sacred Harp*, composed on June 14, 1911), features a different combination of type faces interspersed with yet another pairing across the book's final two thirds.

Without the luxury of considerable time for advance planning, the book's producers omitted key steps in the printing process associated with hand composition and committed to decisions about the book's bibliographic form that had consequences at odds with the revisers' aesthetic goals for the collection. The book's printer introduced a variety of typographical inconsistencies likely because of the need to accommodate so many pages in standing type while waiting for electrotyping that the firm's sorts were partially exhausted. The printer relied on two different title faces, two musical type faces, and three text faces; employed letters of uneven sizes for such features as attributions; and substituted similar characters for those missing, such as a zero for the letter "o," in some cases. The printer also rushed pages to be electrotyped. Many pages feature common typographical errors, such as upside down characters, incorrect letters, and letters from out of place type faces. All of these classes of errors are difficult for a typesetter to spot during compositing or when examining the metal type itself, necessitating taking and carefully checking a proof. James's printers may have skipped proofing, or perhaps only quickly checked proofs in a desire to speed the printing process.

Original Sacred Harp's bibliographic form likewise impeded the realization of its revisers' plans and may have resulted from the rush to print. The printer designed *Original Sacred Harp*'s book block to accommodate an oblong page size comparable with earlier editions of *The Sacred Harp*. These earlier editions mostly feature songs with three staves per brace of music with relatively little text aside from each song's hymn-text, enabling a clean, minimal layout on the book's eight and a half by five and a half inch pages. James's *Original Sacred Harp* added a fourth musical stave featuring an alto part to most songs, and each song included a newly added scriptural citation, more complete

attributions, as well as a sometimes-lengthy historical note. Evidently concerned that the same amount of space couldn't accommodate this additional material, *Original Sacred Harp*'s printers enlarged the book's text block, while preserving its oblong ratio. The additional material nonetheless resulted in a cramped design, which, in combination with the book's errors and typographical irregularity, produces a crowded and chaotic text block.

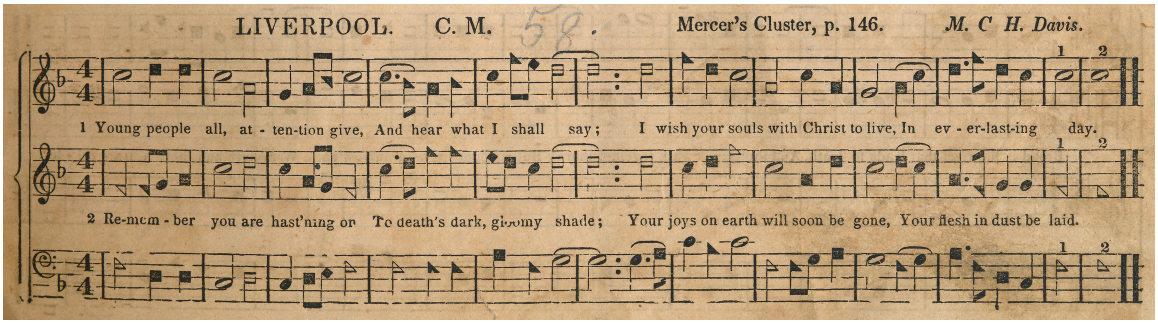

Figure 1.5: The page layout of nineteenth-century editions of *The Sacred Harp* was relatively minimal in comparison with the more crowed appearance of *Original Sacred Harp*'s pages. M. C. H. Davis, LIVERPOOL, in *The Sacred Harp*, ed. B. F. White et al. (Philadelphia: S. C. Collins, 1870), 37. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

Despite a design adopting a comparable height-to-width ratio as previous editions of *The Sacred Harp*, *Original Sacred Harp*'s crowded text block sits on pages with large top and bottom margins. The book's ten by eight inch page dimensions, though still oblong, more closely approximate a square than the rectangular nineteenth-century revisions of the book. At odds with the book's layout, *Original Sacred Harp*'s bibliographic form may have resulted from its printer's limited capacity to accommodate custom page sizes, perhaps especially on short notice. Had the book's pages been designed with its eventual page dimensions in mind, the pages' various elements might have been granted additional space, leading to an aesthetic that more closely matched its revisers' goal of modernity through regularity and simplicity. When a committee headed

by Paine Denson revised *Original Sacred Harp* in 1936, the book's electrotyped plates were printed on oblong ten by seven inch pages, reducing the book's height by a full inch. The actions of the 1936 revision committee suggest that had the producers of *Original Sacred Harp* had the time to better coordinate typesetting with printing they might have settled on a different pairing of book block design with bibliographic form.

"All the Old Features": History and Religiosity in *Original Sacred Harp*

Although James and his coeditors sought to modernize *Original Sacred Harp* through "all material modern improvement," they also intended the tunebook to evince grounding in the past. Emphasizing the history of the book's songs and their composers and hymn writers and connecting the songs to a constructed history of English and American Protestantism enabled its revisers to assert the book's religiosity and tie its sacredness to its status as a product of white southern postbellum identity.

The editors argue that the book "continue[s] in a simple form a great body and class of sacred tunes which are as far from secular, operatic, rag-time and jig melodies as is possible." The revisers contrasted such music of the "the last decade" which they argued "retards the great work of the Gospel and of the churches" with the "standard" music they included in *Original Sacred Harp*, which "reaches the mind, heart, conscience and religious feeling of the people."[40]

Placing the terms, "secular," "operatic," "rag-time," and "jig," in their contemporaneous contexts shows how by distinguishing *Original Sacred Harp* from such musics, the book's editors asserted the music's religiosity, venerability, masculinity, and

[40] Ibid., iii.

distance from blackness and urban immigrant populations.[41] In doing so, the editors participated in the rendering of a musical color line advanced by commercial record producers and early folklore scholars in the early twentieth-century South.[42] In rejecting "secular" music, *Original Sacred Harp*'s editors emphasized the tunebook's religiosity and venerability, perhaps seeking to contrast its older songs (in some cases based on secular melodies) with contemporaneous secular music. In dismissing "operatic" sounds, the editors distanced the tunebook from the refined and overcivilized activity of attending the annual Atlanta performances of the New York Metropolitan Opera and the adoption of operatic singing styles in elite urban churches, implicitly associating Sacred Harp singing with manliness and common people. By disassociating the book's music with "rag-time," a term connoting syncopated dance music associated with African Americans, as well as the ostensibly similar rhythms of contemporaneous gospel music, the editors both emphasized the sacredness and venerability of *Original Sacred Harp*'s songs and distanced them from music associated with blackness.[43] Likewise, "jig" may have connoted frivolity and lack of religious feeling while also carrying associations with blackness or urban Irish immigrants not yet understood as fully white by urban elites such as *Original Sacred Harp*'s editors.[44]

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[41] Duncan Vinson discusses the context of "secular," "operatic," and "rag-time" in Vinson, "As Far from Secular, Operatic, Rag-Time, and Jig Melodies as Is Possible," 426–29. I draw on his analysis here and contribute my own interpretation of the term "jig."
[42] Miller, *Segregating Sound*.
[43] Vinson, "As Far from Secular, Operatic, Rag-Time, and Jig Melodies as Is Possible," 426–429; "Snaking the Voice," *Fasola Discussions*, May 21, 2011, https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/fasola-discussions/CrLMmXITsx0. On the Metropolitan Opera's visits to Atlanta see also Campbell, *Music and the Making of a New South*, 14–65.
[44] On Irish Americans' distance from and subsequent absorption into the category of whiteness in the early twentieth-century United States, see Matthew Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900–1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). Authors and publishers occasionally described nineteenth- and early twentieth-century popular sheet music tunes, especially those for solo banjo, as "jigs."

In claiming that *Original Sacred Harp*'s contents are "as far from secular, operatic, rag-time[,] and jig melodies as is possible," the book's editors point to its music style, southern location, bibliographic form, and venerability as evidence. "To this end," the editors note in their preface, "the music composed and compiled [in *Original Sacred Harp*] is in four shaped notes, and written on four staffs in dispersed harmony—some call it old harmony." The book's editors credited "the music writers of the South" with keeping "before the singing public, more of the standard living hymns and melodies than in any other part of America, in proportion to the number published relating to sacred music, or that class which reaches the mind, heart, conscience[,] and religious feeling of the people."[45] *Original Sacred Harp*'s association with the past, four staff-per-brace format, and harmonic style signified for its revisers the tunebook's affiliation with Anglo-Celtic whiteness, sectional pride, the past, and religious feeling and its opposition to all that "secular," "operatic," "rag-time," and "jig" implied.

The front and back covers of *Original Sacred Harp* and the book's historical notes amplify James's assertions of the book's historicism and ability to reach "the mind, heart, conscience[,] and religious feeling of the people," authorizing the book by tying its contents to an imagined history of English and American Protestantism. The tunebook's

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These tunes' titles suggest the word carried associations with Irish music ("Rocky Road to Dublin; Jig," "Irish Jig No. 1"), black music ("Hottentot jig," "Plantation Jig"), as well as with genres such as rag-time ("Rig-a-Jig Rag"). Other contemporaneous publications such as "The Sick Indian jig medley" and numerous jigs simply named for their composer suggest caution in ascribing any of these associations to the James book's editors with certainty. See *Rocky Road to Dublin; Jig* (New York: S. T. Gordon, 1885), http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/sm1885.03882; Frank B. Converse, "Banjo Music: Original Compositions and Arrangements" (Frank B. Converse, 1884), http://www.loc.gov/item/sm1884.23369/; J. H. Parker, "Hottentot Jig," in *Brilliant Solos for the Banjo*, by J. H. Parker and E. W. Robey (Boston: Fairbanks and Cole, 1883), http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/sm1883.07017; S. S. Stewart, "Plantation Jig," *S. S. Stewart's Banjo and Guitar Journal*, 1885, M2.3.U6A44, American Sheet Music, Library of Congress, Music Division, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/sm1885.06817; Nat D. Ayer, *Rig-A-Jig Rag* (New York: Jerome H. Remick, 1912), http://digital.library.msstate.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SheetMusic/id/25079.

[45] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, iii.

front cover encapsulates *Original Sacred Harp*'s ambivalent embrace of modernity and venerability, pairing references to "standard hymns" with exclamations of newness. Aside from the book's title, the most striking text on *Original Sacred Harp*'s front cover is the phrase "STANDARD MELODIES," printed in large, bold, slab serif capitals, set off from the rest of the page by heavy double rules. Echoing the editors' description of "standard living hymns" in the book's preface, common references to "standard hymns" in the titles of gospel songbooks and compilations of popular hymn texts, and numerous allusions in the book's historical notes to popular, well-used melodies featuring common hymn-texts as "standard tunes," this feature of the book's cover displays the weight the editors placed on the capacity of *Original Sacred Harp*'s timeworn melodies to evoke religious feeling. The cover's next line of text affirmed this hope, characterizing the tunebook's "standard melodies" as "Living, Stirring, Sacred Songs, Odes and Anthems, Both New and Old."[46]

A testimonial on the back cover of the tunebook exemplifies its editors' attempts to authorize *Original Sacred Harp* by tracing its genealogy to the Bible, foreshadowing the emergent practice of evangelical biblical literalism.[47] In large, uppercase text, the back cover asserts that

The Music and Hymns
IN THE
"Original Sacred Harp"
THIS VOLUME ARE IN ACCORD
AND KEEPING WITH THE
"SACRED MUSIC IN THE BIBLE"
FROM JUBAL 160 A.M., 1500 YEARS BEFORE THE DELUGE

[46] Ibid., front cover.
[47] George M. Marsden, "Preachers of Paradox: The Religious New Right in Historical Perspective," in *Religion and America: Spiritual Life in a Secular Age*, ed. Mary Douglas and Steven M. Tipton (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 150–68.

FROM ABRAHAM, MOSES, THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL
THE PROPHETS, LEVITES, DAVID, SOLOMON
DOWN TO
JESUS CHRIST
HIS DISCIPLES AND THE FOUNDING OF HIS CHURCH
AND TO THE PRESENT.[48]

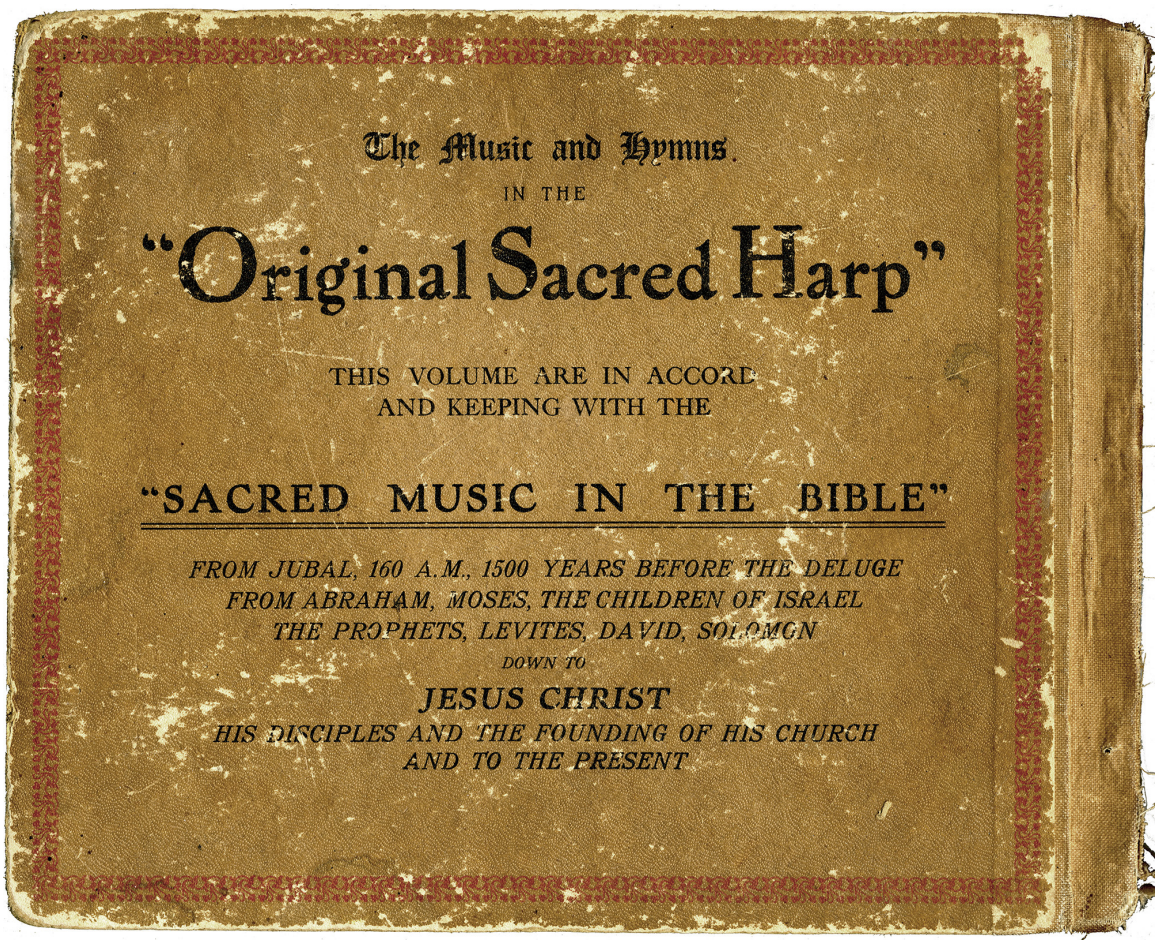

Figure 1.6: Back cover of *Original Sacred Harp*. 1911 (second printing). Courtesy of Wade Kotter.

The editors' twin historical aims of associating *Original Sacred Harp*'s music with antebellum culture and sacred music "from Jubal … and to the present" appear throughout the volume in historical notes James added to every song. Some of James's notes were carried over from *Union Harp and History of Songs*, a shape-note tunebook

[48] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, back cover.

edited by James and published in 1909.[49] These notes provide information on the publication history of a song's text and tune, as well as biographical information about their authors. That he made this effort to recover and make accessible to singers the history of the early contributors to this and other tunebooks suggests James considered the book's history an important part of its appeal and significance.

James's historical notes also reinforce *Original Sacred Harp*'s position as inheritor of a venerable sacred music tradition. In the note accompanying OLD HUNDRED, James describes the tune as "one of the oldest … in the books," having "been used throughout Christendom for over 300 years."[50] In describing the history of the song HAPPY MATCHES, James provides a biography of "Lady Huntington," referring to Selina Hastings (1707–91), the Countess of Huntingdon, whom he credited with writing the song's hymn text in 1764.[51] James describes Hastings as "one of the most pious, noble, and benevolent women whose name adorns the Christian Church," as a financial supporter of John and Charles Wesley, and as closely connected to prominent eighteenth-century preacher George Whitfield.[52] The historical notes in *Original Sacred Harp* contributed to James's effort to sacralize the book and its contents through demonstrating that its standard melodies were written by celebrated figures in the history of English and American Protestantism, in contrast with what James regarded as the book's frivolous and irreligious

[49] In some cases James copied portions of his notes without attribution from earlier sources such as Wilbur Fisk Tillett, *Our Hymns and Their Authors: An Annotated Edition of the Hymn Book of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1889). See Vinson, "As Far from Secular, Operatic, Rag-Time, and Jig Melodies as Is Possible," 419.
[50] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 49.
[51] On Hastings's complicated history with leaders of English Protestantism, see Edwin Welch, *Spiritual Pilgrim: A Reassessment of the Life of the Countess of Huntingdon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[52] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 96.

contemporaneous competition. By arguing that the tunebook's roots stretched back to the antebellum South and incorporated the work of Protestant hymn writers from spatially and temporally distant American and European settings, James portrayed *Original Sacred Harp* not only as an emblem of antebellum culture but also as an important historical and cultural artifact.[53]

Contemporaneity and Conservatism in *Original Sacred Harp*'s "Standard Melodies"

In keeping with this articulation of historical fidelity, James's committee projected a musically conservative posture. The committee members retained "standard melodies" associated with the antebellum past and added songs old and new they saw as in keeping with the music already contained in the tunebook, yet made some changes aimed at asserting the book's contemporaneous relevance. Rather than remove songs (something suggested by a 1902 resolution calling for the revision of *The Sacred Harp* co-authored by James),[54] the committee headed by James retained all of the songs included in the 1870 Fourth Edition of *The Sacred Harp*, and even restored two thirds of the songs removed from the book in the nineteenth century.[55] The tunebook's title, *Original Sacred Harp*, referenced the restoration of music "original" to the book, and perhaps sought to sharpen the contrast with James's competitors, who had removed and reharmonized songs. The book's title also signified its revisers' association of their twentieth-century *Original Sacred Harp* with its antebellum predecessor.

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[53] James notably passes up opportunities to emphasize the book's connection to American history. His comments on songs with patriotic texts such as MOUNT VERNON and THE AMERICAN STAR center on the tunes' publication histories and the biographies of their composers, making no mention of their connection to the American Revolution. Ibid., 110, 346.

[54] Miller, *The Chattahoochee Musical Convention, 1852–2002*, 173–176.

[55] Aldo Thomas Ceresa, "The 1911 James Revision of the *Sacred Harp*: A Centenary Celebration" (Camp Fasola, 2011); Aldo Thomas Ceresa, "1859 *Sacred Harp* Songs Not Restored in 1911," 2011.

The *Original Sacred Harp*'s revisers largely refrained from "correcting" the harmonies of songs carried over from the 1870 *Sacred Harp*, perhaps moved by the condemnation J. L. White faced that making such changes had the effect of "destroying the identity of … the songs."[56] Yet James's committee freely reharmonized songs that had appeared in early editions of *The Sacred Harp* but were removed in 1870. James may have felt empowered to apply his musical standards more freely when working with previously eliminated songs due to his contemporaries' lack of familiarity with them. He also may have regarded describing previously removed tunes as "corrected" as a means of justifying their reintroduction to the tunebook. In the historical note accompanying RUSSIA, James writes "The tune has been corrected and finds its way back among its former songs in 1911. After being removed for Fifty years it will prove to be a satisfactory old minor melody when properly rendered." Yet despite James's note, the song is musically identical to the version removed from *The Sacred Harp* in 1870.[57] Rather than a documentation of an actual musical change, James's note might instead be part of an effort to motivate singers to take up the tune after its fifty-year absence.

[56] Mulberry River Convention ledger, quoted in Cobb, *The Sacred Harp*, 107.
[57] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 491; B. F. White, E. T. Pound, et al., eds., *The Sacred Harp* (Philadelphia: S. C. Collins, 1860), 274. James did leave the song's second through sixth verses out of his reintroduced version. Other songs with notes boasting "corrections" feature changes to just a few notes. See, for example, INVITATION or THE SAINT'S DELIGHT, James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 498, 504; White and King, *The Sacred Harp*, 1844, 154; Marcus Lafayette Swan and William H. Swan, *The New Harp of Columbia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 178–179.

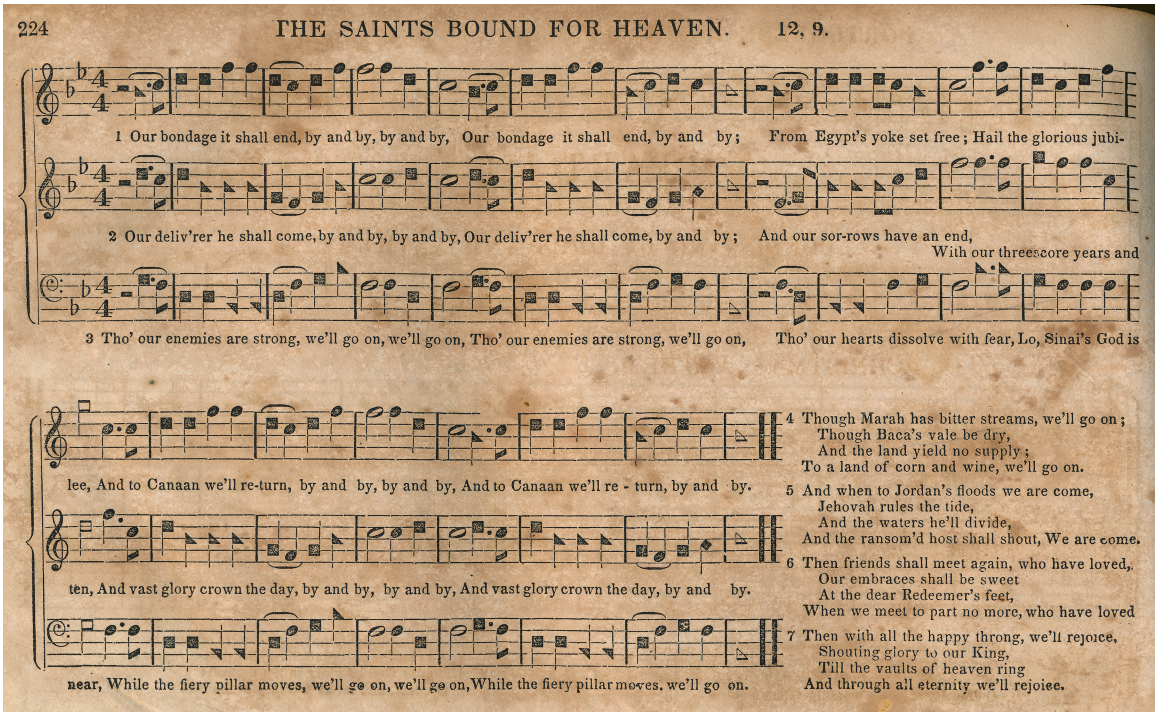


Figure 1.7: J. King and William Walker, THE SAINTS BOUND FOR HEAVEN, in *The Sacred Harp*, ed. B. F. White et al. (Philadelphia: T. K. Collins Jr. and T. K. & P. G. Collins, 1857), 224. Courtesy of Mary Brownlee.

For songs with a number of musical changes, edits seem aimed at increasing melodic interest rather than achieving musical modernization. James boasted that THE SAINTS BOUND FOR HEAVEN, a song unattributed in the 1844 *Sacred Harp* drawn from *The Southern Harmony* where it was credited to J. King and William Walker,[58] "has been greatly improved and will be welcomed back into the Sacred Songs to the great delight of many of its former admirers."[59] Credited to S. M. Denson, the song's new alto part is melodic but sits high in the alto range and introduces thirds to dyadic harmonies in a number of places. The song's modifications aside from the addition of the alto part are

[58] White and King, *The Sacred Harp*, 1844, 224; Walker, *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*, 258.
[59] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 489.

un-credited and primarily restricted to three phrase endings in the treble part.[60] At the song's end and midpoint, these alterations raise the part from the lower middle to the uppermost reaches of the treble part's range. A third change lowers the treble from its highest note to a tonic note lower in the part's range at the end of the song's third phrase.[61] Together, these changes add dynamism and energy at the midpoint and end of the song, while drawing back the song's intensity at its three-quarter point.

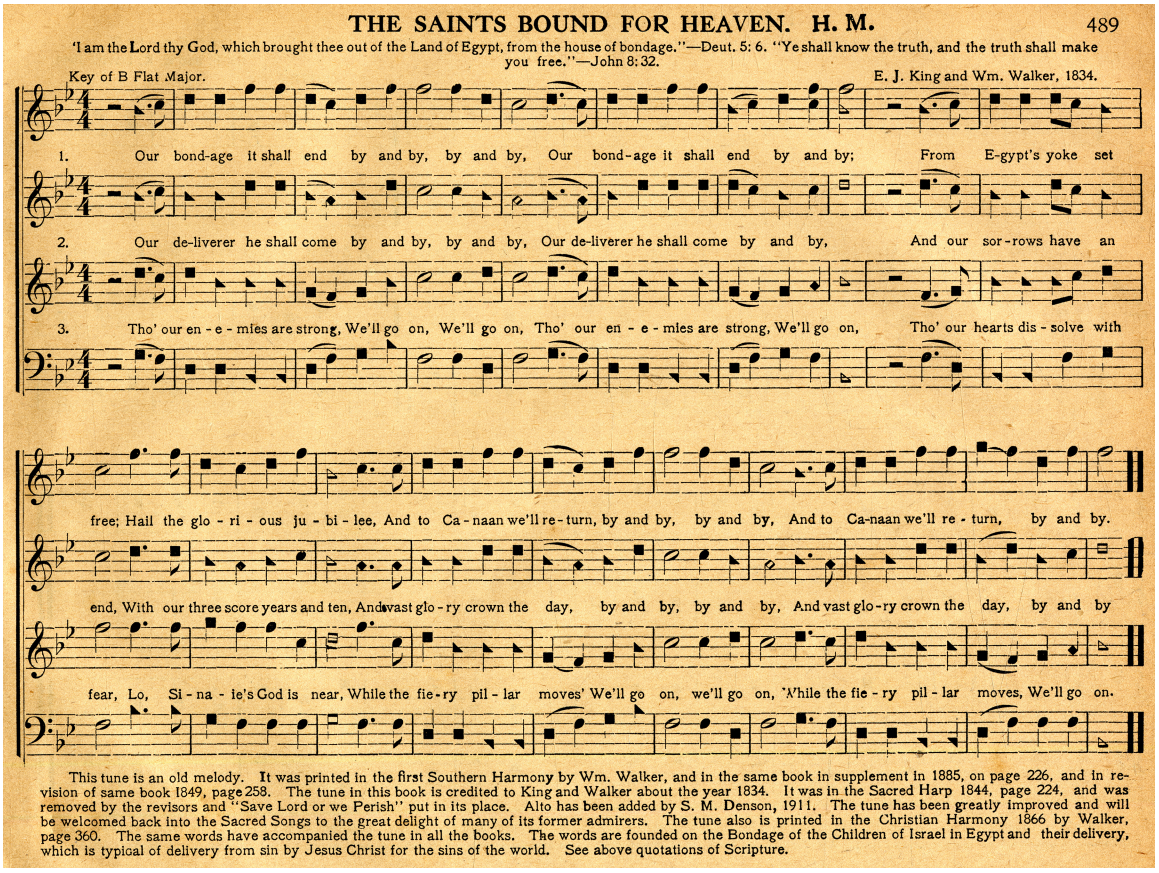
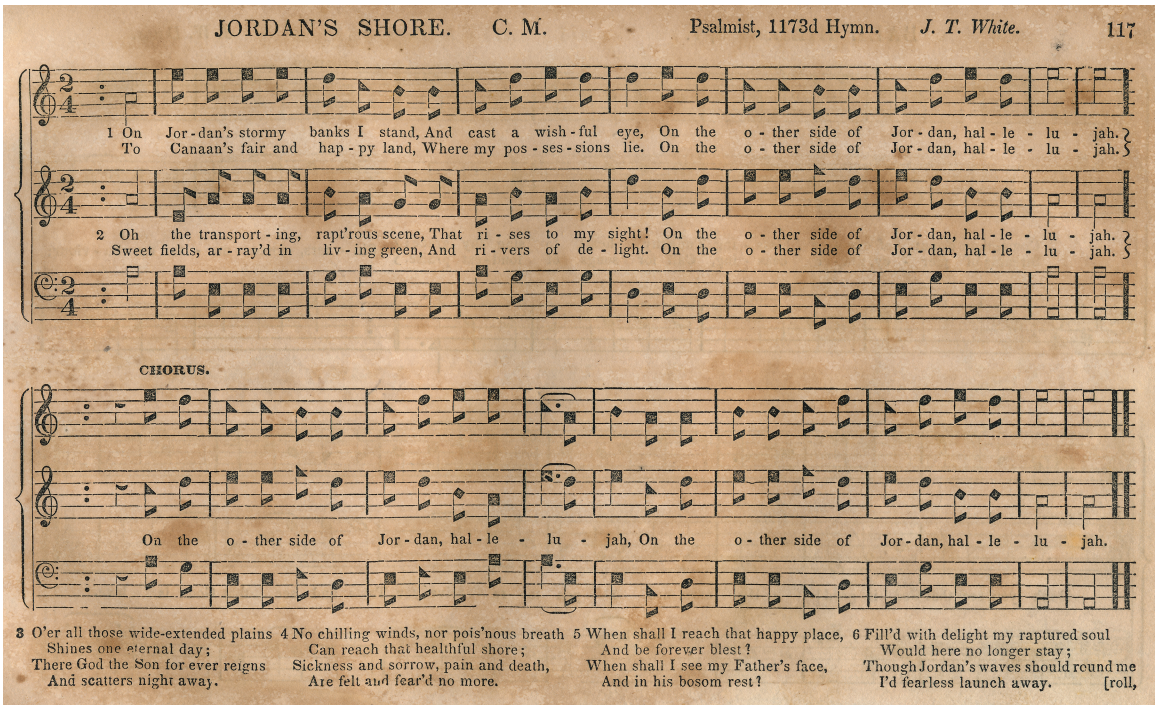
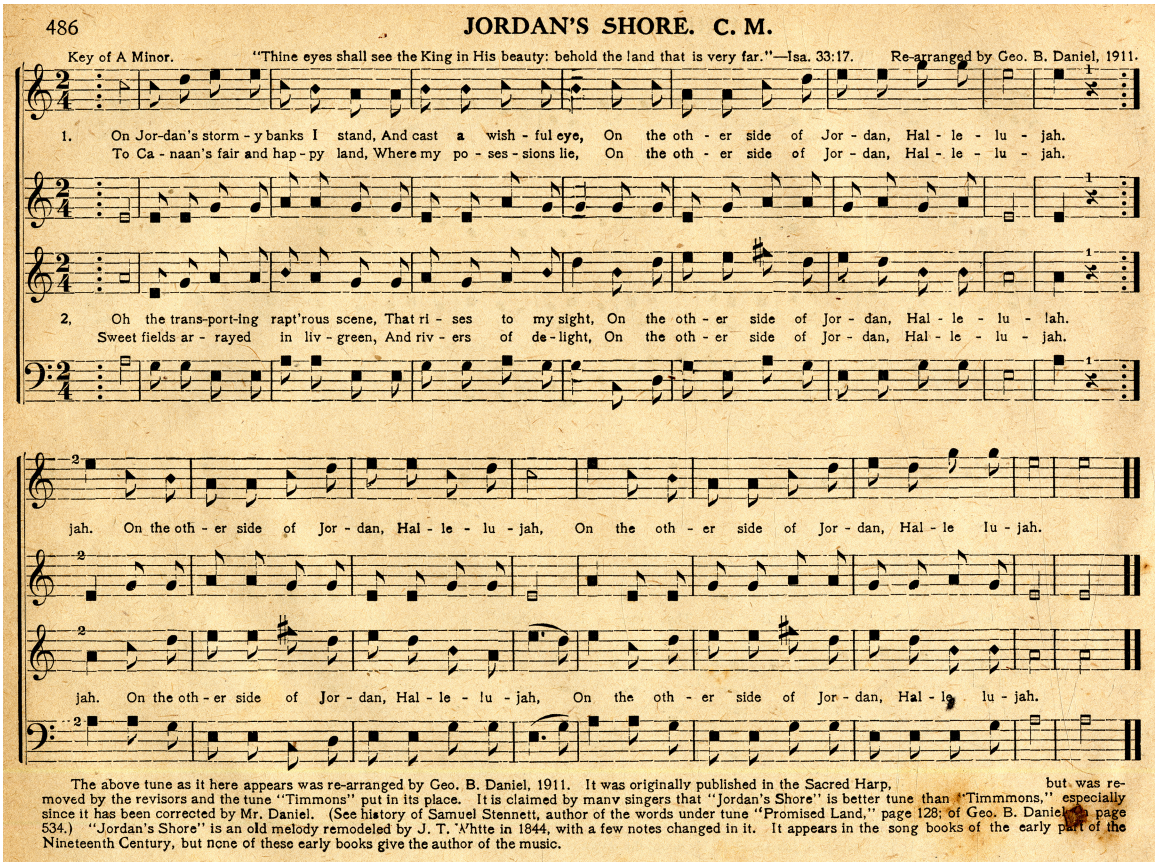


Figure 1.8: J. King and William Walker, THE SAINTS BOUND FOR HEAVEN, in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 489. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

[60] One change to the bass part, a quarter note lowered from a sixth-scale degree la to a fifth-scale degree sol creating a discord with the sixth-scale degree la in the tenor without adding melodic interest, may be a typo.
[61] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 489; White and King, *The Sacred Harp*, 1844, 224.





Figures 1.9 and 1.10: J. T. White, JORDAN'S SHORE, in *The Sacred Harp*, ed. B. F. White et al. (Philadelphia: T. K. Collins Jr. and T. K. & P. G. Collins, 1857), 117; and arranged by George B. Daniell, in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 486. Courtesy of Mary Brownlee and the Sacred Harp Museum.

In JORDAN'S SHORE, a song attributed in the 1844 *Sacred Harp* to J. T. White, removed from the tunebook in 1870, and restored and rearranged in 1911 by *Original Sacred Harp* revision committee member George B. Daniell, the changes made reflect a desire to retain the song's original dispersed harmony style while compensating for perceived deficiencies. Daniell made extensive modifications. He rewrote the song's bass and treble parts, added an alto, and made some slight alterations to the tenor melody, including the addition of accidentals notating the raising of the sixth scale degree. These modifications added to the melodic interest of the song's harmony parts but introduced dissonance to some chords, evincing a focus on horizontal, rather than vertical, compositional writing often associated with dispersed harmony. The introduction of sharps to the melody part's sixth scale degree notates the informal practice of raising the sixth scale degree, later a focus of folklorists, suggesting that Daniell may have noticed singers' habit of making this un-notated alteration. James justifies the song's reintroduction to *Original Sacred Harp* in his note, writing "It is claimed by many singers that 'Jordan's Shore' is a better tune than 'Timmmons,' [meaning TIMMONS, the song that replaced it,] especially since it has been corrected by Mr. Daniel[l]."[62] Unlike J. L. White, who introduced features of gospel music and functional harmony when rearranging Sacred Harp melodies, the changes made to reintroduced songs are notable for their avoidance of features of modern musical styles. The changes to reintroduced songs such as JORDAN'S SHORE and THE SAINTS BOUND FOR HEAVEN instead demonstrate the books' revisers' focus on making alterations they imagined would increase the songs' popularity.

[62] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 486.

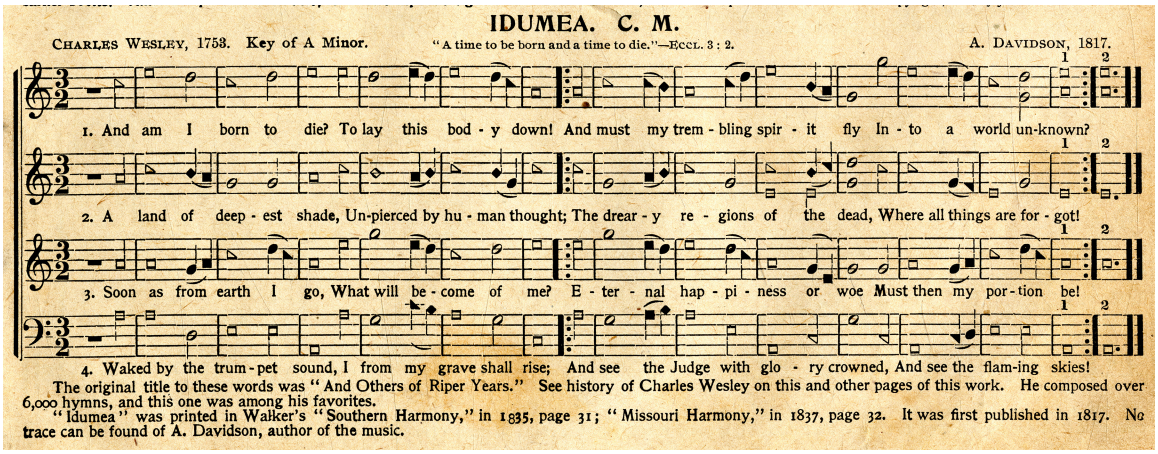


Figure 1.11: Ananias Davisson, IDUMEA, in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 47. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

As Cooper and White had done, James also added alto parts to most songs, even those that he brought over from the old Fourth Edition. James credits "musical editor" Seaborn McDaniel Denson with 327 new alto parts in *Original Sacred Harp* in the book's "Summary Statement,"[63] and some of the added parts do appear to be original to the book. Many others draw on alto parts published in Cooper's 1903 revision of *The Sacred Harp*, or as in the case of IDUMEA, in William Walker's 1867 *Christian Harmony*.[64] The soaring alto part for IDUMEA crosses above the tenor and treble, and is strongly melodic, including a climb to a high D late in the song that is among the four-part version's most memorable moments. The addition increases the proportion of filled in triadic chords in the song, but does not do so at a rate that suggests a purposeful attempt to eliminate dyads. The alto part in IDUMEA is in keeping with Sacred Harp's dispersed harmony style and yet dramatically changes the song's musical effect. As musicologist Wallace McKenzie has shown, the addition of alto parts to the Cooper and James books did not

[63] Ibid., ii.
[64] Ibid., 47; William Walker, ed., *The Christian Harmony* (Philadelphia: E. W. Miller and William Walker, 1867), 55. David Warren Steel documented this instance of borrowing without attribution in Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 183.

generally alter the overall harmonic style of *The Sacred Harp*.[65] Adding alto parts may have been an attempt to bring the book up to date by embracing the four-part musical texture then widespread, but the form of the alto parts themselves stopped short of considerable musical modernization.

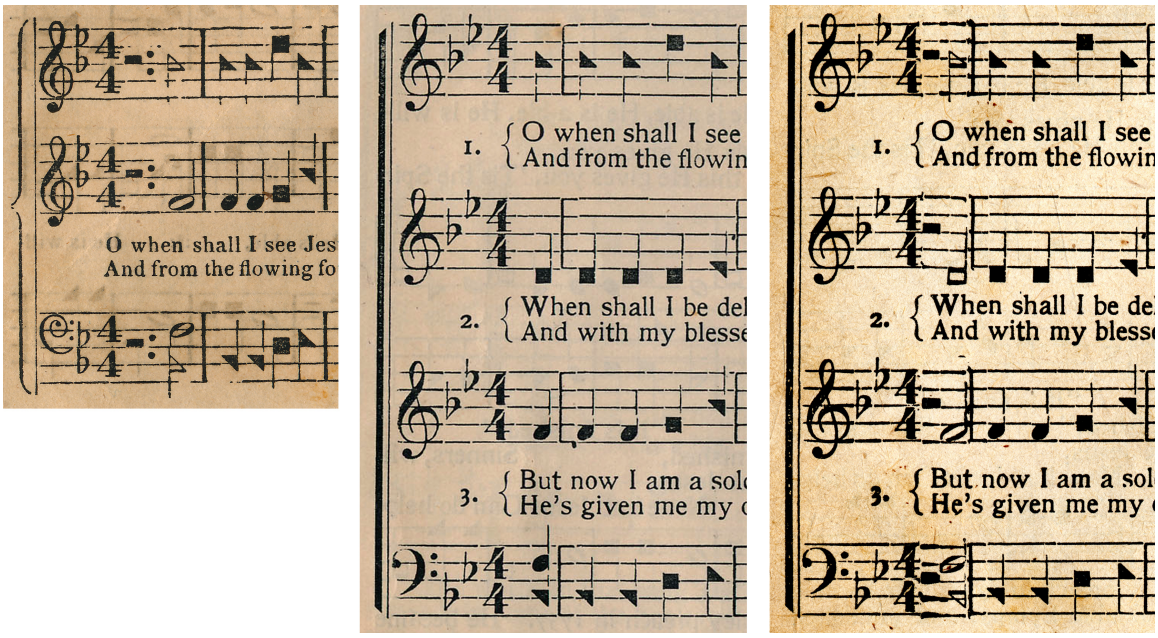


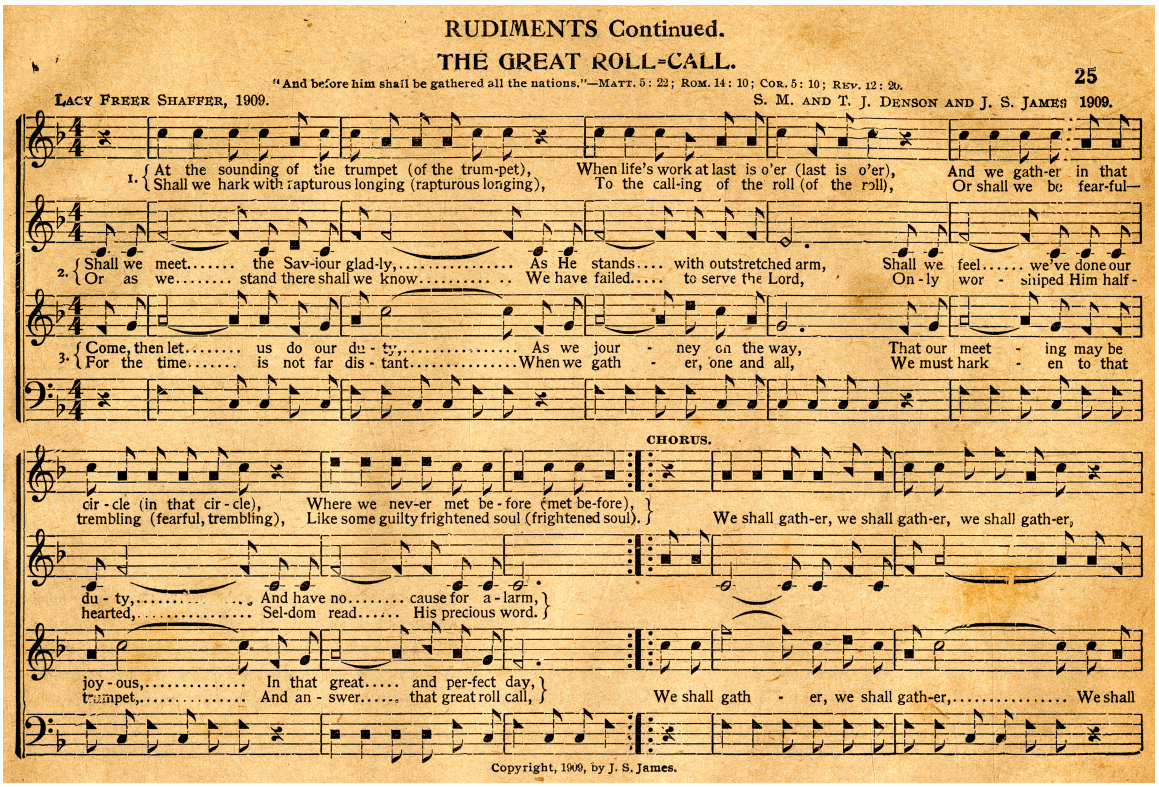
Figure 1.12: The opening measures of E. J. King's BOUND FOR CANAAN in *The Sacred Harp*, Fourth Edition, 1870 (left); *Original Sacred Harp*, first printing (center); and *Original Sacred Harp*, second printing (right). Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

In some songs whose harmonies remained unaltered, other changes reveal the editors' willingness to embrace symbols of modern music. BOUND FOR CANAAN, a revival chorus composed by Elisha James King in 1844, appeared in James's first printing of *Original Sacred Harp* with the song's first note shortened from a half note to a quarter note, and the half note rest which had preceded the first note removed entirely.[66] This subtle change brought the song into closer alignment with gospel songs, which often began with quarter or eighth note pickups. In contrast, many songs in *The Sacred Harp*

[65] McKenzie, "The Alto Parts in the 'True Dispersed Harmony' of *The Sacred Harp* Revisions."
[66] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 82.

begin with half or whole notes, providing singers with a valuable opportunity to sound a strong starting chord before launching into a succession of shorter notes as the song continues given the lack of piano or other instrumental accompaniment. James made similar alterations to several other songs in the first edition of *Original Sacred Harp* but restored the original half note entrances to all of these songs in a second (undated) printing of the book. Although James's musical modernizations were less drastic than J. L. White's, the resistance of singers to such changes likely caused both to moderate their reforms.

James added a number of songs to *Original Sacred Harp* that had first seen publication in *Union Harp and History of Songs*. James edited *Union Harp* in response to a 1906 resolution of Atlanta's United Sacred Harp Musical Association—a large annual Sacred Harp convention James had co-founded with J. L. White—that had inaugurated the revision process that eventually led to *Original Sacred Harp*'s publication. Intended to complement White's 1909 revision of *The Sacred Harp*, *Union Harp* included a variety of music styles, pairing songs drawn from the previous edition of *The Sacred Harp* with popular hymn-tunes in early gospel styles. The *Union Harp* editors reharmonized a handful of these Sacred Harp songs, imbuing them with stylistic elements of gospel music. The book also included a selection of newly composed songs written by active Sacred Harp singing school teachers such as brothers Thomas Jackson Denson and Seaborn McDaniel Denson. Like the new songs found in the Cooper book, many of these selections featured hallmarks of early gospel styles.



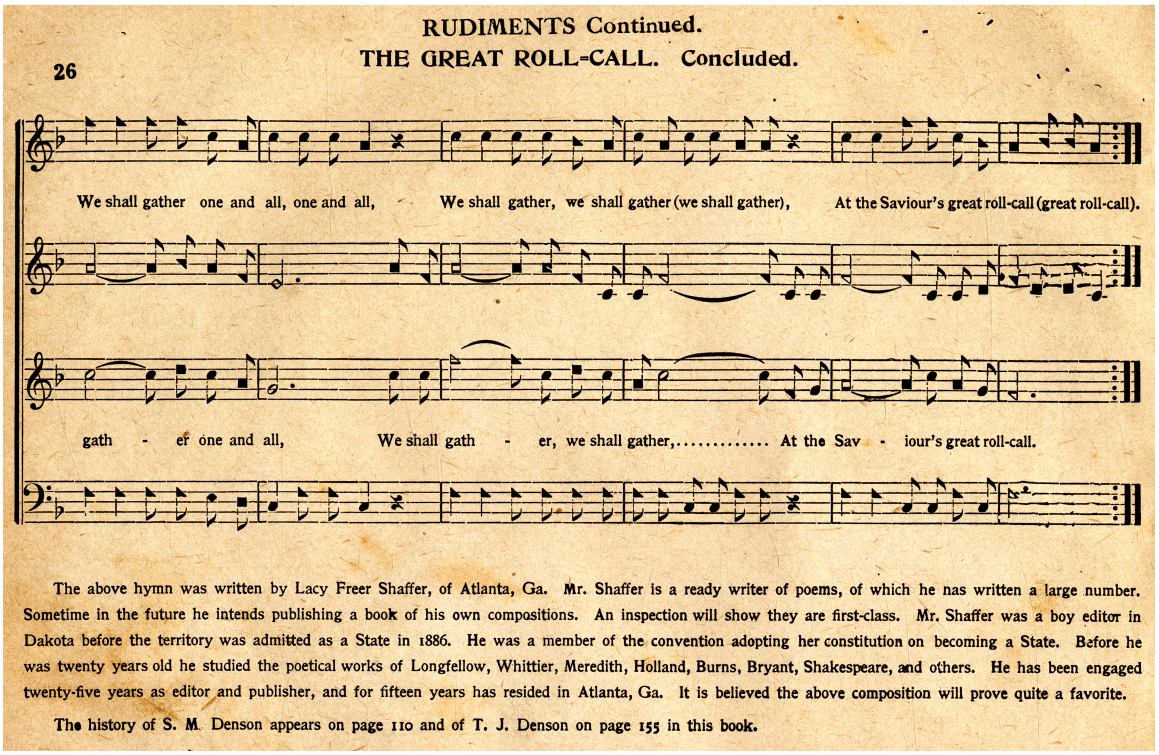


Figure 1.13: S. M. Denson, T. J. Denson, and J. S. James, THE GREAT ROLL-CALL, in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 25–26. Courtesy of the Sacred harp Museum.

In selecting songs from *Union Harp* to include in *Original Sacred Harp*, the tunebook's editors excluded the many newly written songs in early gospel and hybrid styles similar to those found in the Cooper book as well as the Sabbath School songs that James's 1902 resolution had called for including. Just two gospel songs found their way from *Union Harp* to *Original Sacred Harp*: THE GREAT ROLL-CALL coauthored by James and the Denson brothers, and THE MARRIAGE IN THE SKIES, by Seaborn McDaniel Denson's wife Sidney Burdette Denson.[67] THE GREAT ROLL-CALL features numerous hallmarks of the gospel style including a newly composed text, relatively non-melodic harmony parts, call-and-response effects, and extensive use of the tonic and dominant chords. Emphasizing its uniqueness, James placed the song in the "rudiments of music" section at the front of *Original Sacred Harp*, effectively separating it from the more conservative body of music beginning on page 27.

Instead of gospel songs, James and his committee added songs by prominent Sacred Harp singers that emulated the music styles in the nineteenth-century editions of *The Sacred Harp* in their selections from *Union Harp*: fuging tunes, revival choruses, plain tunes, and anthems. One such fuging tune is PRESENT JOYS, the first composition by prolific Sacred Harp composer Alfred Marcus Cagle.[68] Although scholars have come to view fuging tunes as those with "at least one section in which the voices sing different words simultaneously,"[69] the most widely reprinted fuging tunes in late eighteenth-century New England, when the style reached its zenith of popularity, were those in

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[67] Ibid., 25–26, 523.
[68] Ibid., 519.
[69] Karl Kroeger, *American Fuging-Tunes, 1770–1820: A Descriptive Catalog* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), vii–viii.

which the parts enter in turn beginning with the bass in rhythmic or melodically imitative phrases creating textual overlap, usually after an opening plain section.[70] The most popular fuging tune from this period was PSALM 34, composed in 1760 by English composer John Stephenson, which featured a fuging form in which the basses enter first with a quarter note pickup on the second scale degree followed by a sequence of quarter notes on the fifth scale degree, with the other parts mirroring this contour elsewhere in the scale. The song influenced eighteenth-century Connecticut prolific fugists such as Daniel Read and Stephen Jenks, whose works were widely reprinted in nineteenth-century shape-note tunebooks like *The Sacred Harp*.[71] Although Mid-Atlantic, southern, and western compilers reprinted popular New England fuging tunes in the nineteenth century, far fewer new fuging tunes were contributed to these tunebooks. Fuging tunes following this conventional form also went out of fashion in nineteenth-century New England, yet the style experienced a compositional revival in twentieth-century Sacred Harp singing circles, evident in *Union Harp* and *Original Sacred Harp*. Cagle's PRESENT JOYS adopts a fuging form mirroring that employed by Stephenson, Read, and Jenks, with similar imitative entrances. Cagle's adoption of this style signifies his affinity with the eighteenth-century fuging tunes included in *Original Sacred Harp*, and with nineteenth-century tunes directly contributed to *The Sacred Harp* that likewise looked to the New

[70] Kroeger, *American Fuging-Tunes, 1770–1820*; Temperley and Manns, *Fuging Tunes in the Eighteenth Century*.
[71] Maxine Ann Fawcett-Yeske, "The Fuging Tune in America, 1770–1820: An Analytical Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1997); Richard Crawford, ed., *The Core Repertory of Early American Psalmody* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc., 1984), l–li.

England fuging tunes for models, such as Oliver Bradfield's 1857 CHEVES and W. W. Parks's 1869 ADORATION.[72]

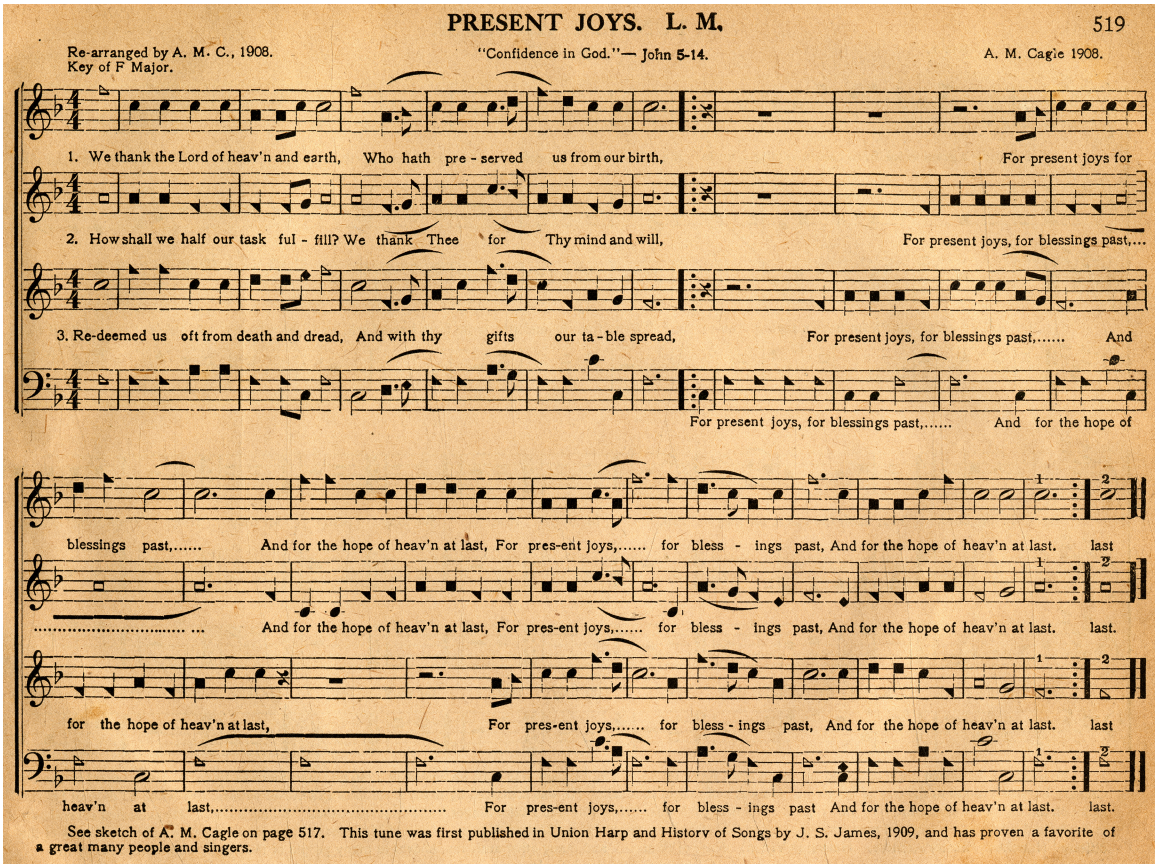
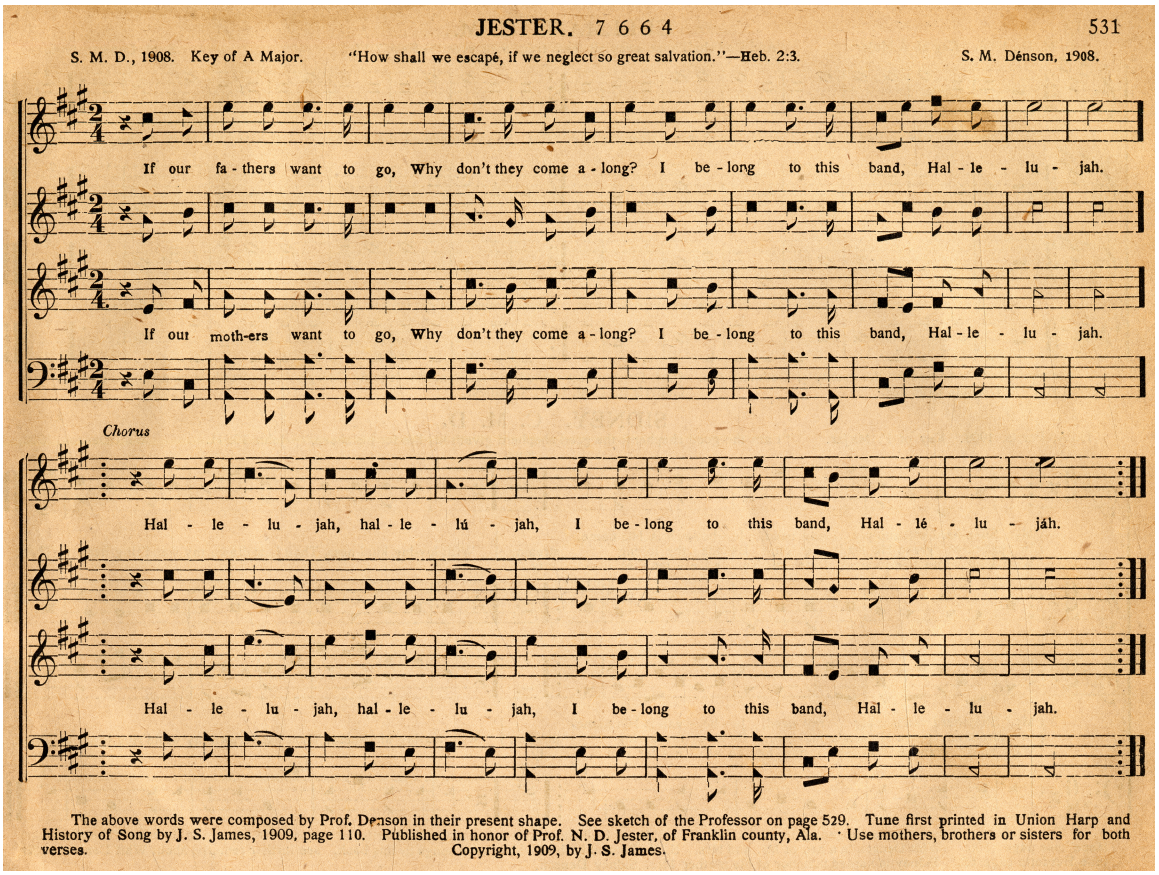


Figure 1.14: A. M. Cagle, PRESENT JOYS, in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 519. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

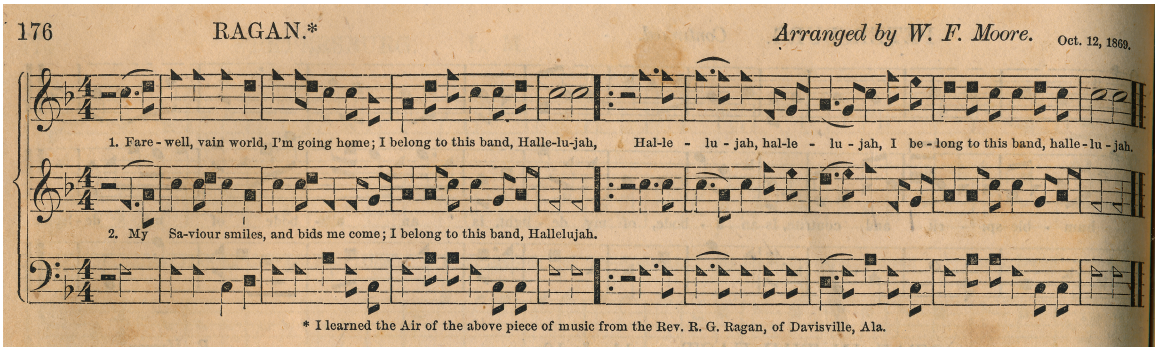
Contributors to *Union Harp* also wrote new songs in the revival chorus style popular in the mid-nineteenth-century South. Seaborn McDaniel Denson's JESTER is an early twentieth-century imitation of the style, which emerged in the context of large camp meeting revivals and is characterized by additive verses such as the one found here and

[72] B. F. White, Edmund Dumas, et al., eds., *The Sacred Harp*, Fourth Edition, Entirely Remodelled (Philadelphia: S. C. Collins, 1870), 432, 439. ADORATION lacks the textual conflict that writers on fuging tunes such as Kroeger and Temperley have regarded as integral to the form. Yet its incorporation of the imitative entrance pattern employed by Stephenson and Read is an obvious attempt to signify the fuging tune genre. The song's exclusion from the category according to such scholars' definitions marks the limited utility of binary genre classifications and point to a need to understand shape-note genres as featuring a number of characteristic musical tendencies composers can include.

easy-to-learn choruses and refrains.[73] After a single couplet of text the song features an interrupting refrain on the phrase "I belong to this band, Hallelujah," the same refrain included in the 1869 *Sacred Harp* revival chorus RAGAN. This section of the song repeats, followed by a chorus, again textually mirroring RAGAN: "Hallelujah, Hallelujah, I belong to this band, Hallelujah."[74] James's historical note indicates how to extend the song in a manner common at early nineteenth-century camp meeting revivals, noting that singers could "[u]se mothers, brothers[,] or sisters for both verses."[75] The inclusion of JESTER and related new tunes signaled *Original Sacred Harp*'s revisers' commitment to adding songs resembling nineteenth-century Sacred Harp revival choruses to the book.



[73] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 531.
[74] White, Dumas, et al., *The Sacred Harp*, 176.
[75] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, 531.



Figures 1.15 and 1.16: S. M. Denson, JESTER (top), in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 531. W. F. Moore, RAGAN (bottom), in *The Sacred Harp*, ed. B. F. White et al. (Philadelphia: S. C. Collins, 1870), 176. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

The songs directly contributed to *Original Sacred Harp* likewise show a strong affinity with the music contained in previous editions of the tunebook and demonstrate the limited degree to which musical ideas outside the idiom could find their way into the collection. Songs like Seaborn McDaniel Denson's minor fuging tune PRAISE GOD[76] draw on nineteenth- and eighteenth-century musical models in *The Sacred Harp*. The melody of Denson's PRAISE GOD echoes the popular fiddle tune "Shady Grove," perhaps a conscious nod by the composer toward the nineteenth-century practice of adapting and arranging popular tunes represented by a number of songs in *The Sacred Harp*.[77] Like the 1835 song ALABAMA, included in *The Sacred Harp*,[78] PRAISE GOD recasts a formally straightforward melody in the more complicated fuging tune form where after a short statement of the tune's melodic contour in homophony, the song's parts enter in turn,

[76] Ibid., 528.
[77] It is possible that Denson saw his adaptation of "Shady Grove" as connected to the contemporaneous rising popularity of fiddling contests in New South cities such as Atlanta. As Gavin James Campbell has recounted, fiddling conventions were an arena where New South boosters who fretted about the feminizing potential of opera could express enthusiasm while reassuring themselves and their peers of their masculinity, an effect aligned with the perspective James and his coeditors express in *Original Sacred Harp*'s preface. See Campbell, *Music and the Making of a New South*, 100–142.
[78] ALABAMA is an anonymous 1835 arrangement of the 1818 tune PRODIGAL, featuring a second treble part by William Walker, editor of *Southern Harmony*, the collection in which ALABAMA first appeared. See Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 205.

elaborating on the musical figure before returning to homophony for the song's conclusion. As a minor fuging tune, PRAISE GOD, like ALABAMA, looks backwards to a musical form represented in *The Sacred Harp* by a collection of songs written in late eighteenth-century New England. A twentieth-century fusion of nineteenth- and eighteenth-century styles, PRAISE GOD adopted a hybrid form that nonetheless eschewed musical markers of modernity such as those common to gospel music. Typical of the music contributed to *Original Sacred Harp*, PRAISE GOD shows how the book's editors saw the inclusion of new music as aligned with their larger interest in projecting a musically conservative focus on "standard melodies."

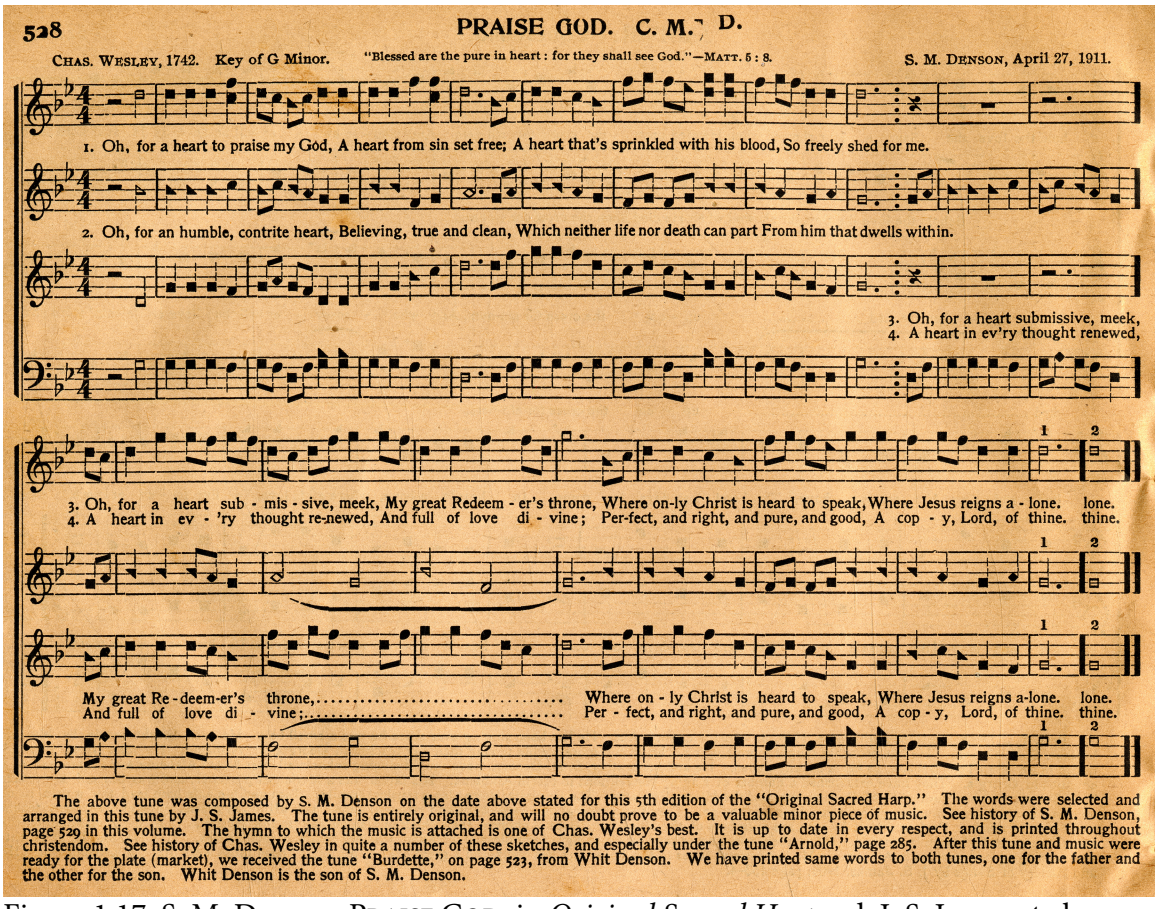


Figure 1.17: S. M. Denson, PRAISE GOD, in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 528. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

Sacred Harp Singing and the Anxieties of New South Boosterism

Presenting *Original Sacred Harp* as materially modern, musically conservative, and spiritually venerable aligned with the anxieties and aspirations attached to music and culture in the social world of the New South boosters who sought to modernize and urbanize the South after Reconstruction. The members of this white "middle-class, industrial, capitalistic" group with little connection to the "old planter regime" emerged at the forefront of a political and economic campaign to reintegrate the South into the nation through industrialization, empowered by the political disfranchisement of black and poor white southerners starting in the 1870s.[79] The New South was a time and place of extreme demographic transition as white and black populations "moved restlessly through the South and often beyond its borders," "[v]illages and towns appeared," and cities stood at the center of exchange in ideas, trade, and migration in which "[i]nfluence, fashion, and capital moved down [toward towns and villages] while crops, migrants, and profits worked their way up."[80]

James's career aligns with this flow of migration and commerce and prepared the future tunebook editor well to furnish a socially and economically diverse white southern public with an acceptable revision of *The Sacred Harp*.[81] His movement from rural Campbell County through Douglasville to Atlanta and his involvement in Democratic Party politics and promotion of industry render him typical of the New South boosters who sought to modernize and urbanize the South after Reconstruction. The white

[79] Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913*, 20.
[80] Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, ix, 20.
[81] Although *The Sacred Harp*'s singers included black and white southerners in 1911, James's affiliations, writing, and actions offer no evidence he was catering to the tunebook's black singing populations.

professional class of James's generation in Atlanta aggressively looked forward, seeking to develop and expand business in the city. Yet this group of white men also looked back to the antebellum period with nostalgia for what they saw as a time when their social standing atop the South's social hierarchy was unchallenged. Historian Gavin James Campbell argues that such New South boosters' musical activities sometimes expressed this ambivalence toward modernity, or assuaged anxieties about their standing in a modernizing urban context.[82]

James's embrace of Sacred Harp singing fits this picture of New South booster ambivalence. Participating in a musical practice he associated with his rural West Georgia youth, James attempted to modernize *The Sacred Harp* tunebook while emphasizing its associations with the antebellum past and imagined noble histories of music and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English and American Protestantism. James's business and political success imbued him with certainty that *The Sacred Harp* had to be regularized and modernized in order to survive. His nostalgia for the time and setting of his youth may have helped him sympathize with the legions of largely rural singers who had rejected J. L. White's first two revisions. James's interest in presenting *The Sacred Harp* as a noble and significant repository of American Protestant music and establishing the book's position at the apex of a grand historical narrative served his own desire to associate himself with a venerable, muscular, Christian historical tradition.[83]

Original Sacred Harp could assuage its revisers' anxieties about the instability of the industrializing New South by projecting the style's status and significance as a sacred

[82] Campbell, *Music and the Making of a New South*; Campbell, "Old Can Be Used Instead of New."
[83] Vinson, "As Far from Secular, Operatic, Rag-Time, and Jig Melodies as Is Possible."

and historical object. The book's rushed and vernacular editing and production, the technological limitations that constrained its typesetting, and the relative marginality faced even by successful New South boosters such as James combined to undercut the book's effectiveness at projecting the high-status contemporaneity its revisers sought. The New South's booming economy relied on massive injections of northern capital, essentially subjecting southern businesses to the control of urban northern elites, leaving the section in a relationship that scholars have long described as akin to a colonial dependency of the North.[84] In an echo of this larger system, the novels Atlantans purchased were largely published by northeastern firms at the center of the book trade in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, including high status works by white southern authors. Southern printers, such as those who produced editions of *Original Sacred Harp*, operated at the margins of this field, issuing biographies of prominent area figures, and producing periodicals and other ephemeral texts. James's push in revising *The Sacred Harp* to adopt musical conservatism to distinguish it from its competitors while attempting to incorporate "all material modern improvement" in order to inoculate the book from charges of obsolescence, was ultimately constrained by the limited reach of the vernacular print culture in which the tunebook and its contributors and editors were enmeshed.

Conclusion

Constrained by finances and limited access to technologies of book production the editors of *Original Sacred Harp* struggled to produce a book that matched their New

[84] Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913.*

South booster aspirations. In the mid-twentieth century, revisers of *Original Sacred Harp* faced even more challenging financial circumstances thanks to the economic collapse of the Great Depression and the decline in participation in Sacred Harp singing after World War II. These revisers also experienced increasing difficulty in typesetting additions to their tunebook as mainstream printing technologies and the layout requirements of shape-note tunebooks became ever more out of step. The next chapter examines how the Sacred Harp's editors again approached remaking the tunebook to achieve "material modern improvement" in the late-twentieth century, just as new desktop publishing software made digital book design reliable and widely affordable. The book's editors in the 1980s, like those who produced *Original Sacred Harp* in 1911, sought to appeal to populations with divergent views on the tunebook's associations with the past: many southerners associated Sacred Harp singing with archaic rurality, while for an expanding group of folk music enthusiasts, the style's rusticity rendered it appealingly authentic. Like the committee that produced the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*, the revisers of this new book sought to present the *Sacred Harp* in a form they hoped would appeal to contemporaneous audiences as an alternative to embracing abrupt shifts in the book's musical content.

Chapter 2.

Embracing the "Old" in "Old-Fogy": Musical Conservatism and Digital Retypesetting in the Revision of *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*

Introduction

At the early stages of planning a revision of the *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*[1] in the mid-1980s, members of the book's Georgia- and Alabama-based music committee decided that completely retypesetting the book would be a critical component of the effort. For the committee members, simplifying the look of the pages of the shape-note tunebook and rendering them consistent through digital retypesetting would give the nineteenth-century shape-note tunebook a contemporary veneer and improve its appearance and usability. Alongside this goal of clear and modern design, the revisers who produced the resulting *Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* sought to cement the book's musical conservatism. According to committee member Raymond C. Hamrick, the "first thing we all did was erect a sign: 'No Gospel Music.'"[2] To the members of the committee, gospel music was a polluting and modernizing influence on what they regarded as the purer, older style of shape-note hymnody in *The Sacred Harp*.

In pairing an embrace of musical conservatism with modern design, the revisers of the *1991 Edition* adopted a similarly reactionary stance as the revisers who produced the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*, who sought "all material modern improvement"[3] while

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[1] Hugh McGraw, Ruth Denson Edwards, Palmer Godsey, et al., eds., *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, 1971 Edition (Cullman, AL: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1971).
[2] Raymond C. Hamrick, interview with the author, Macon, GA, April 3, 2014.
[3] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1911, ii.

refraining from including many songs in gospel styles. Both committees' actions were responses to ambivalence about Sacred Harp singing's association with the past. Examining the *1991 Edition* committee's revision process can shed light on how shifts in and contestation over musical style, design, bibliographic form, and technologies of book production, express revisers' deeper anxieties about Sacred Harp singing's racial politics and social standing as well as its geographic spread and sustainability in an urbanizing, globalizing South in the closing decades of the twentieth century. *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* was the first edition of the most widely used revision-chain of *The Sacred Harp* after *Original Sacred Harp*, examined in the previous chapter, for which revisers decided to retypeset the entire book in addition to adding and removing songs and making other changes. In order to provide context for my analysis of this edition, I also discuss intermediate editions in this revision-chain as well as late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century editions of the competing revision-chain of *The Sacred Harp* inaugurated by Wilson Marion Cooper.[4]

Like *Original Sacred Harp*, the production of the *1991 Edition* coincided with a dramatic change in the demographics of Sacred Harp singers as the edition's use spread across the United States and into Canada and the United Kingdom.[5] The edition acknowledged this expansion by including the compositions of singers in some of these new areas. Other changes represented a considered response to the impact of the folk

[4] Sacred Harp singers edited revisions of the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp* in 1936, 1960, 1966, 1971, and 1987. Wilson Marion Cooper supervised a revision of *The Sacred Harp* that involved retypesetting the book in 1903. As I discuss below, the Cooper book was next retypeset in 2012. James Landrum White published revisions of *The Sacred Harp* in 1909, 191, and 1911. His 1911 *Sacred Harp: Fourth Edition with Supplement* was retypeset in 2007.

[5] My analysis furthers John Bealle's argument that the ensuing dialog between new northern and experienced southern singers "is the territory mapped by the 1991 revision" of the tunebook. See Bealle, "New Strings on the 'Old Harp,'" 37.

music movement on Sacred Harp. As in the case of *Original Sacred Harp*, *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, was a wholesale remaking of the tunebook motivated by a conviction that such changes were necessary to ensure the book's future success. Achieving this remaking required access to networks with experience in new book publishing techniques, and a special fundraising effort.

This chapter sustains the discussion of vernacularity in editing, printing, and publishing initiated in chapter 1. In studying the social context of tunebook editing and publishing I also draw on a methodology I call ethnobibliography, building on the work of bibliographer Hugh Amory,[6] that combines contemporary ethnographic research into the uses to which books are put with collation and archival research. In the oral history interviews and participant observation that generated much of the material analyzed in the first, second, fourth, and fifth sections of this chapter, singers' copies of *The Sacred Harp* and related tunebooks became a focal point of discussion. Singers' stories about these books, their production, and their users provided insights into the books' reception and social meaning. The presence of particular editions in different areas, and the varied degrees of use such books evinced, complicated received notions of the relative spread and popularity of these editions.

Ethnobibliography sounds dry, but my contention is that this methodology mixing ethnographic research with classical bibliographic methods has the potential to transform our understandings of critical and highly charged issues, such as the relationship of race to folklorization. Amory coined the term to describe research pairing the methods of

[6] Hugh Amory, "The Trout and The Milk: An Ethnobibliographical Talk," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, New Series, 7, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 50–65.

historical anthropology with conventional historical research. Amory's analysis of Pequot use of a fragment of a Bible in a burial amulet stands as an example of what ethnobibliographic research might look like, drawing on the discipline of ethnohistory and Donald Francis McKenzie's articulation of the "sociology of texts." Yet Amory does not extrapolate on the meaning of the term, and subsequent scholars have not yet taken it up.[7] I believe that ethnographic or historical anthropological research into the use of printed texts can provide a fuller understanding of the format, composition, and uses of books, contributing a social context often inaccessible from the dimly lit, windowless reading rooms of university and historical society archives where scholars often access copies of such texts. Features of books' design and production and paratextual elements like marginalia accessible from the archive may reveal important social context,[8] but my contention is that an ethnobibliographical approach has the potential, here and elsewhere, to contribute to a far richer picture of the meaning of a book's bibliographic details, connecting a text's materiality to race, place, and other cultural currents.

Erasure, Uniformity, and Modernity in *Original Sacred Harp*'s Digital Retypesetting

In the mid-1980s, after seventy-five years of additions and substitutions since *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*'s previous retypesetting, the board of directors of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company decided to revise the tunebook. Having weathered enormous change to both the technologies of book production and increased economic

[7] Ibid.; Donald Francis McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[8] Historical musicologist Glenda Goodman's recent work demonstrates how "interpretive lenses from ethnomusicology" can complement bibliographic methods in drawing insights about music making and its social context even when working with materials too old to engage in relevant oral history interviews and participant observation. See Glenda Goodman, "American Identities in an Atlantic Musical World: Transhistorical Case Studies" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2012), iii.

and social pressures on the book's revision, the book was a visually chaotic catalog of different page layouts and typographic styles. Many of the book's pages crammed historical notes written by its 1911 reviser Joseph Stephen James between and beneath two braces of music and two songs worth of music and hymn-text attributions, song titles, and scriptural citations. For the music committee tasked by the Sacred Harp Publishing Company in 1985 with revising the book by retypesestting it, updating attributions, correcting musical errors, and substituting songs both new and old for those in the book that were little used, the process was an opportunity to create a Sacred Harp that represented the growing national imagined textual community that sang from the book in the wake of its promotion through the folk revival.[9] The process provided a venue for negotiating the committee members' ambivalent feelings about Sacred Harp singing's association with the past by shucking off unwelcome associations with antiquated "old-fogy" rural southern culture. At the same time, the process granted revisers an opportunity to assert the value of other aspects of the style's venerability.

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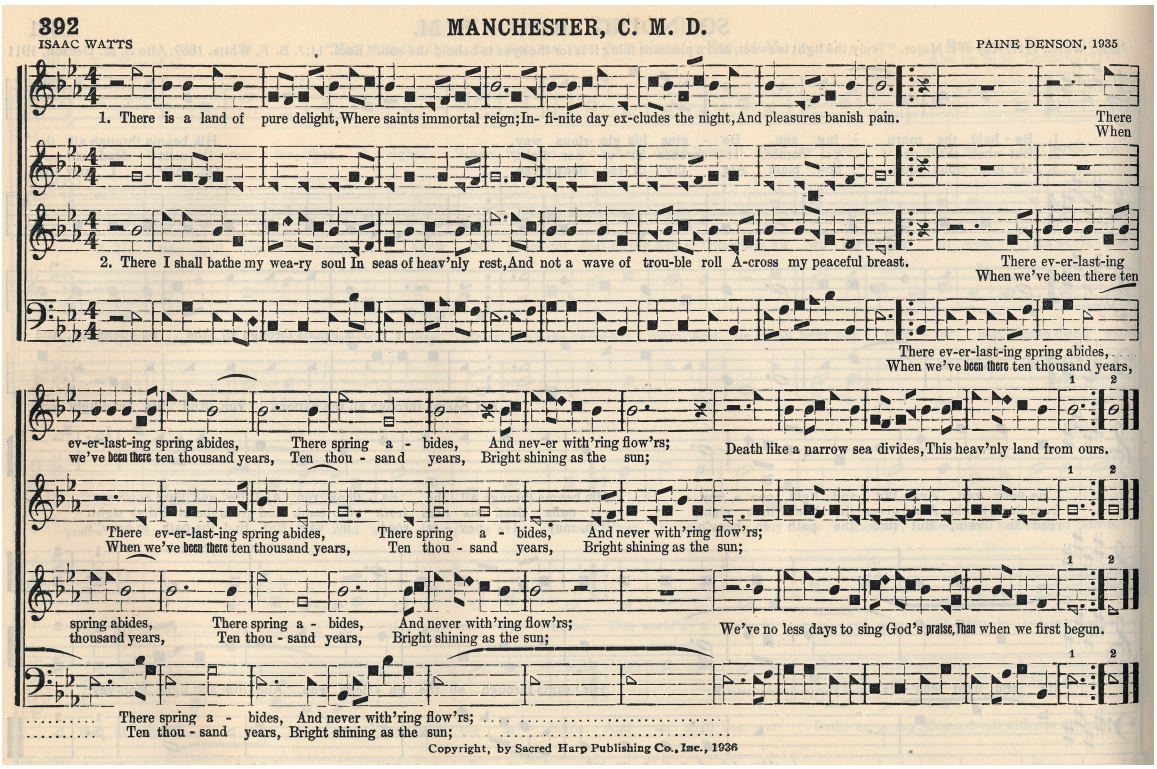
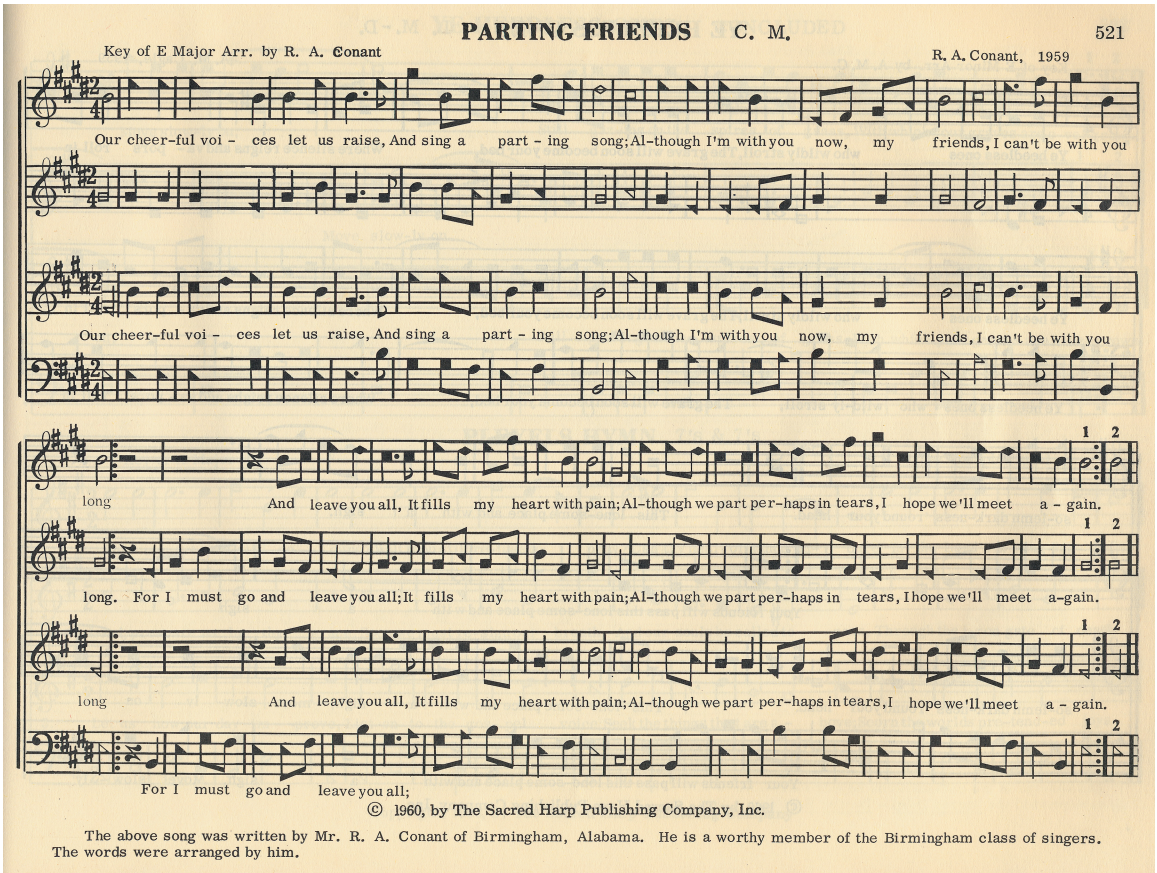
[9] In casting the network of Sacred Harp singers as an imagined textual community, I draw on Brian Stock's articulation of "textual communities" as "groups of people whose social activities are centered around texts." See Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 522. Candy Gunther Brown transposes Stock's articulation of such groups in the largely pre-literate eleventh and twelfth centuries as oriented around "a literate interpreter" to the industrialized nineteenth century, when "geographically separated readers" may have found "in a textual community … an alternative to local relationships" where "In the face of wrenching cultural and political transitions, textual practices have offered some measure of stability—even if the textual communities themselves were always fluid." See Candy Gunther Brown, "Religious Periodicals and Their Textual Communities," in *The Industrial Book, 1840–1880*, ed. Scott E. Casper et al., vol. 3, A History of the Book in America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 270, 278. Brown and Stock both acknowledge the constructedness of communities formed around the reception of a text. I add the word "imagined" to affirm this, drawing on the articulation of texts' "imagined communities" as contributing to the political consciousness that gives rise to nationalism in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin & Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Random House, 1983).





Figures 2.1 and 2.2: Two of the different page layouts and typographic styles that contributed to *Original Sacred Harp*'s visual chaos. Paine Denson, MANCHESTER, in

Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision, ed. Thomas J. Denson et al. (Haleyville, AL: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1936), 392 (top). R. A. C[a]nant, PARTING FRIENDS, in *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, ed. Hugh McGraw et al. (Cullman, AL: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1966), 521 (bottom). See also Figure 2.5. Collection of the author. Used with permission of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company.

The music committee appointed by the Sacred Harp Publishing Company, the organization that had controlled revision of *Original Sacred Harp* since 1933, included seven singers, all men active in Sacred Harp singing from Alabama and Georgia with family connections to the style. Hugh W. McGraw, of Bremen, Georgia, served as the committee's "general chairman." McGraw had served as Executive Secretary of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company since 1958 and had overseen revisions of *Original Sacred Harp* in 1966 and 1971 (serving as a member of the 1960 revision committee). Born in rural Centralhatchee, in West Georgia's Carroll County on February 20, 1931, McGraw attended high school locally and worked briefly in Atlanta before moving to Bremen, in Haralson County, where he served as plant manager for the Bremen facility of clothing manufacturer Sewell. McGraw's business acumen and boundless enthusiasm, and the support of senior executives at Sewell, made McGraw a powerful advocate for Sacred Harp singing in the second half of the twentieth century. He became interested in the style after attending a 1953 singing school taught by a first cousin once removed, Henry Newton "Uncle Bud" McGraw (1883–1969), who remarked that Hugh probably had "just about enough of McGraw in [him to] learn to sing."[10] Bud McGraw assisted Hugh McGraw in composing his first songs, which were included in the 1960 Supplement to *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*. Beginning in the 1960s McGraw traveled frequently on weekends to promote Sacred Harp singing, speaking at folk festivals,

[10] Hugh McGraw, interview with the author, Bremen, GA, April 25, 2014.

church association meetings, and academic conferences. As discussed in chapter 5, McGraw actively cultivated the participation of folk music enthusiasts who identified with the style, later helping to found new Sacred Harp conventions across the United States. McGraw brought this energy, marketing savvy, and access to a national network of singers and scholars to the task of revising *The Sacred Harp*.[11]





Figures 2.3 and 2.4: *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* music committee member Raymond C. Hamrick (left) and music committee chairman Hugh McGraw (right). Photograph of Hamrick courtesy of Patti Hamrick Dancy and Susan Hamrick Hatfield. Photograph of McGraw courtesy of Hugh McGraw.

Another committee member, Raymond C. Hamrick, hailed from a middle class background and contributed a passion for Sacred Harp history and the music of early

[11] On Hugh McGraw's biography, see Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 136–137; "Hugh McGraw," *NEA National Heritage Fellowships*, accessed December 30, 2014, http://arts.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/hugh-mcgraw. I have learned additional biographical information from personal communication with Hugh McGraw.

New England to the revision effort. Born on June 14, 1915, in Macon, Georgia, to middle class parents, Hamrick attended high school and technical school, served in the US Army Air Corps during World War II, and apprenticed as a jeweler and watchmaker, becoming owner of Macon's Andersen's Jewelers in 1963. Like McGraw, Hamrick encountered Sacred Harp singing as a child but only became interested as an adult. With his brother Horace Hamrick, he attended a 1946 singing school in rural Bibb County taught by Primitive Baptist Elder J. Monroe Denton, searching for a social outlet after returning from the war. Hamrick, a lifelong lover of classical music, was not immediately taken by the sound of Sacred Harp, but was intrigued by the eighteenth-century attribution dates on many of the tunebook's songs. He began collecting tunebooks, amassing hundreds of volumes, many rare, and conducted studies on aspects of Sacred Harp's history, music, and practices. Hamrick contributed two early compositional efforts to the 1971 *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, and was appointed president of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company in 1986 as the revision process began, serving in that capacity through 2002. Hamrick died on November 24, 2014.[12]

The music committee's design priorities as articulated in interviews and in their public statements about the project were to achieve consistency, simplicity, accuracy, and contemporaneity in the tunebook's presentation. The committee members believed that

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[12] On Hamrick's biography, see Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 119–120; Jesse P. Karlsberg, "Raymond Cooper Hamrick: Sacred Harp Craftsman," *Georgia Music News* 72, no. 2 (Winter 2011): 74–76. Hamrick's published studies include Raymond C. Hamrick, "The Curious History of Shape-Notes," *Harpeth Valley Sacred Harp News* 2, no. 4 (September 20, 1965): 1–4; Raymond C. Hamrick, "The Twentieth Century Looks at William Billings," *Harpeth Valley Sacred Harp News* 1, no. 10 (May 7, 1965): 1–3; Raymond C. Hamrick, "Sojourn in the South: Billings among the Shape-Noters," *The Quarterly Journal of Music Teaching and Learning* 7, no. 1 (1996): 10–11. A 1985 article for the *National Sacred Harp Newsletter* was reprinted with a new introduction as Raymond C. Hamrick and Ian Quinn, "The Pitcher's Role in Sacred Harp Music," *Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter* 2, no. 2 (June 29, 2013), http://originalsacredharp.com/2013/07/29/the-pitchers-role-in-sacred-harp-music/.

the varied appearance of the book's pages and the presence of James's often-inaccurate and outdated historical notes created distractions from participating in singing and undermined the book's status as a sacred object.[13] Hugh W. McGraw, general chairman of the edition's music committee and executive secretary of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company that oversaw the process, hired Charles Towler, a music editor at Kingsport Press, a gospel publisher aligned with the Church of God of Cleveland, Tennessee, with longstanding connections to Sacred Harp singing, to digitally typeset the book.[14] The Sacred Harp Publishing Company's arrangement with Towler was possible because both Towler and members of the music committee were connected through regional gospel songbook publishing and singing networks. The Sacred Harp Publishing Company appreciated Towler's and Kingsport's familiarity and experience with shape-note music typesetting, which included work on previous editions of *The Sacred Harp*.[15] The company hired Towler on a contract basis as a sole proprietor, and also contracted with Kingsport for the printing and binding of the tunebook. The company relied on connections through the tunebook's own imagined textual community to form other relationships contributing to the book's production. The committee invited two singers from California to design the book's cover. An informally assembled group of music committee members and Sacred Harp singing volunteers copyedited the book.

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[13] David Ivey, personal communication, April 29, 2015.
[14] Formerly named the Tennessee Music and Printing Company, the company had typeset and printed editions of *Original Sacred Harp* in 1936, 1966, and 1971 and was connected through kinship to members of the 1911, 1936, 1960, 1966, and 1971 *Original Sacred Harp* revision committees. Otis L. McCoy, longtime head of the Tennessee Music and Printing Company was a grandson of Seaborn McDaniel Denson, who, along with his brother Thomas Jackson "Tom" Denson, and Tom's sons Howard Denson and Paine Denson, established the Sacred Harp Publishing Company in 1933. Seaborn's son Sidney Whitfield Denson and Thomas's daughter Ruth Denson Edwards also served as revisers of editions of the tunebook.
[15] David Ivey, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

The constellation of temporary and kinship- or network-based relationships that enabled the production of *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* was a consequence of the local and functional nature of the publishing project. The company formed this assemblage of informal business arrangements and review processes for the specific activity of editing, publishing, and securing adoption of a new Sacred Harp edition, unlike publishers more embedded in the book trade with established processes in place. Although the company had harnessed the family and local networks that linked Sacred Harp singing to gospel music to form business relationships in the past, the infrequency with which the book was revised, and the turnover of personnel across decades meant that the music committee members needed to remake these connections when tasked with revising the book again in the mid-1980s. Like other vernacularly published texts, *The Sacred Harp*'s editing and publishing apparatus was cobbled together from available parts for a specific purpose.

Previous editions of *Original Sacred Harp* edited and produced with this vernacular assembly of agents and business entities had met with uneven results thanks to financial constraints, communication challenges between revisers and book producers, and shifting technologies of book production that rendered the methods required to create books that looked like those published by mainstream presses either inaccessible or prohibitively expensive. Anger over the varied page stock, fragile binding, uneven printing, rudimentary typography, and unsealed dyed cover of the *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, 1960 Supplement, led to conflict between revision committee members and Owel W. Denson, the gospel publisher whose Denson Music and Printing Company produced the book. After a frustrating meeting McGraw loaded 1,500 copies of the book

into his truck and dumped them in the Coosa River.[16] Eager to avoid disappointment, revisers of the *1991 Edition* strove to capitalize on recent growth in the book's imagined textual community to afford digital typesetting. In this effort, the company was buoyed by the business sense of Hugh McGraw, with his well-honed talent for salesmanship and business management, and by the increasing accessibility of digital typesetting during the rise of desktop computing. McGraw raised funds to pay Towler for retypesetting the book, and Kingsport for printing and binding it, in part by selling interested singers the stereotyped plates created in 1911, the last time the book had been fully retypeset. In trading the plates that had enabled the book's production three quarters of a century ago for the means to do so again, McGraw scattered artifacts of the history of the tunebook's imagined textual community across its newly national territory.

The revisers imagined that redesigning and digitally retypesetting *Original Sacred Harp*'s pages would improve the book's usability through achieving a cleaner design and greater consistency across pages. McGraw emphasizes the need to adopt a more minimal and consistent page layout when describing the motivations for retypesetting *The Sacred Harp*'s pages.[17] David Ivey, another member of the committee, emphasizes the committee's orientation "toward pragmatic, practical goals of making the new book more usable" and "easier to read" in discussions about the new book's design.[18] The music committee saw the book's usability as important because of their analysis of the book's changing audience. As Sacred Harp's geography expanded in the late twentieth century, the tunebook's users included increasing numbers of new singers learning songs by sight

[16] Hugh McGraw at Hugh McGraw et al., panel discussion (Camp Fasola, Anniston, AL, June 28, 2008).
[17] Hugh W. McGraw, personal communication, February 1, 2015.
[18] David Ivey, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

reading. Improving the book's consistency and readability was an important component of catering to this new audience. Revisers believed that new sight-reading singers, many of whom had experience singing in choral groups or church choirs, desired and even expected a clean and easier to read page.

In a shifting technological landscape that had opened up new possibilities for typesetting, the committee believed computers and desktop publishing would them help achieve their goals for the book's usability and aesthetics. In the run up to the revision of *The Sacred Harp* McGraw purchased a desktop computer to aid young singer Bill Denney in the design of the monthly *National Sacred Harp Newsletter* and the annual *Minutes and Directory of Sacred Harp Singings* then published by the Sacred Harp Publishing Company.[19] Ivey, who worked as a program manager at the Alabama Supercomputer Center,[20] was likewise an experienced computer user in the 1980s who viewed computing power as a positive, modernizing force. Although the Publishing Company's early in-house digital publishing efforts produced pixilated art with a purposefully homespun visual style, the experience provided McGraw and his colleagues with evidence that computers provided a new means of obtaining precise control over a publication's appearance, making the goal of an easier to read tunebook accessible.

Original Sacred Harp's revisers in the early decades of the twentieth century sought such precision,[21] but this goal slipped further out of reach as technologies of book production shifted during the century, marginalizing the processes necessary to typeset

[19] Hugh W. McGraw, interview with the author; Hugh W. McGraw, personal communication, February 1, 2015.
[20] David Ivey, Rodney Ivey, Toney Ivey, Deborah Morton, Jackie Tanner, Sandy Ivey, Richard Ivey, Scott Ivey, and Cheyenne Ivey Burton, interview with the author, Henagar, AL, June 1, 2014.
[21] As described in chapter 1, *Original Sacred Harp*'s revisers' aspirations were undercut by the rush to print and, perhaps, by financial limitations.

pages of the shape-note tunebook. The complicated layout of music in *The Sacred Harp* and related tunebooks was hand composed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As discussed in chapter 1, the Linotype and Monotype machines that overtook hand composition and became ubiquitous at job printers in the early twentieth century couldn't accommodate music typography, and Sacred Harp editors had no contact with music engravers, who produced plates for much of the music published by dedicated commercial sheet music publishers in the urban North. Bound to hand composition in a mechanized world, Sacred Harp singing conventions or other organizations couldn't financially justify owning their own apparatus for producing their tunebook because of the infrequency of its publication. Sacred Harp and related shape-note book publishers increasingly relied on gospel publishing companies to produce new tunebook editions. Gospel music publishers issued multiple books each year making it financially feasible to maintain their own typesetting, printing, and binding operations, though these configurations shifted and consolidated throughout the twentieth century. Gospel publishing companies even owned the specialized shape-note musical type needed to set Sacred Harp songs because their own songbooks used a related shape-note music notation system.[22]

[22] Major gospel publishers' songbooks have typically used the seven-shape-note system pioneered by Jesse B. Aikin in his 1846 *Christian Minstrel* and dominant in gospel publishing after the Ruebush and Kieffer publishing company reached an agreement with Aikin to use his system in 1876. Aikin's system pairs the right triangle, circle, square, and diamond shapes used in the four-shape-note scale with an equilateral triangle, semicircle, and half-diamond with a rounded top. Because the Aikin system incorporates all of the shape-notes used by *The Sacred Harp*, adapting Aikin musical type to set the four-shape-note tunebook was a trivial matter. On Aikin, *The Christian Minstrel*, and the agreement with Ruebush and Kieffer, see Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, 352–353; Paul G. Hammond, "Jesse B. Aikin and the Christian Minstrel," *American Music* 3, no. 4 (December 1, 1985): 442–51, doi:10.2307/3051830; Goff, *Close Harmony*, 48.

By the mid-twentieth century, precise layout became an elusive goal as technologies of analog typesetting and book production shifted further and as consolidation in the gospel publishing industry introduced new financial pressures. The gospel publishing field increasingly focused on radio broadcasting, performances featuring traveling quartets, and sales of recordings, treating songbooks primarily as promotional items with names sometimes referencing radio shows or favorite quartets.[23] Meanwhile the increasing use of photostatic reproduction in printing opened up a more affordable alternative to hand composing, but one that was again geared toward working with Linotype or Monotype machines and could not easily accommodate music. With limited financing, and operating in a context where techniques used to print music were at the margins of the book production industry, editors of the *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, 1960 Supplement, the 1954 and 1958 *Christian Harmony* editions, and numerous gospel books produced new pages by photostatically reproducing music set through a combination of stencils, hand-drawing, and typewriting. Layout artists, often the books' editors, carefully stenciled each shape-note onto a large brace of two staves for gospel songbooks or four staves for oblong tunebooks, then hand drew note stems and flags as well as titles and page numbers, next photographed and reduced the size of the images for printing, and finally used a typewriter to add text. This method made less efficient use of the printed page than typeset shape-note music, and was more challenging to read than typeset work even when executed with great care. The introduction of numerous inconsistencies thanks to the hand drawn and stenciled nature of such books' production gives tunebooks such as *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, 1960

[23] Goff, *Close Harmony*.

Supplement, a homemade appearance.[24] The vernacularity of the book's publishing arrangement dovetailed with the marginality of its methods of production and the project's limited financial backing during a period when Sacred Harp singing contracted thanks to competition from other musical forms and cultural entertainments in combination with post–World War II rural outmigration.

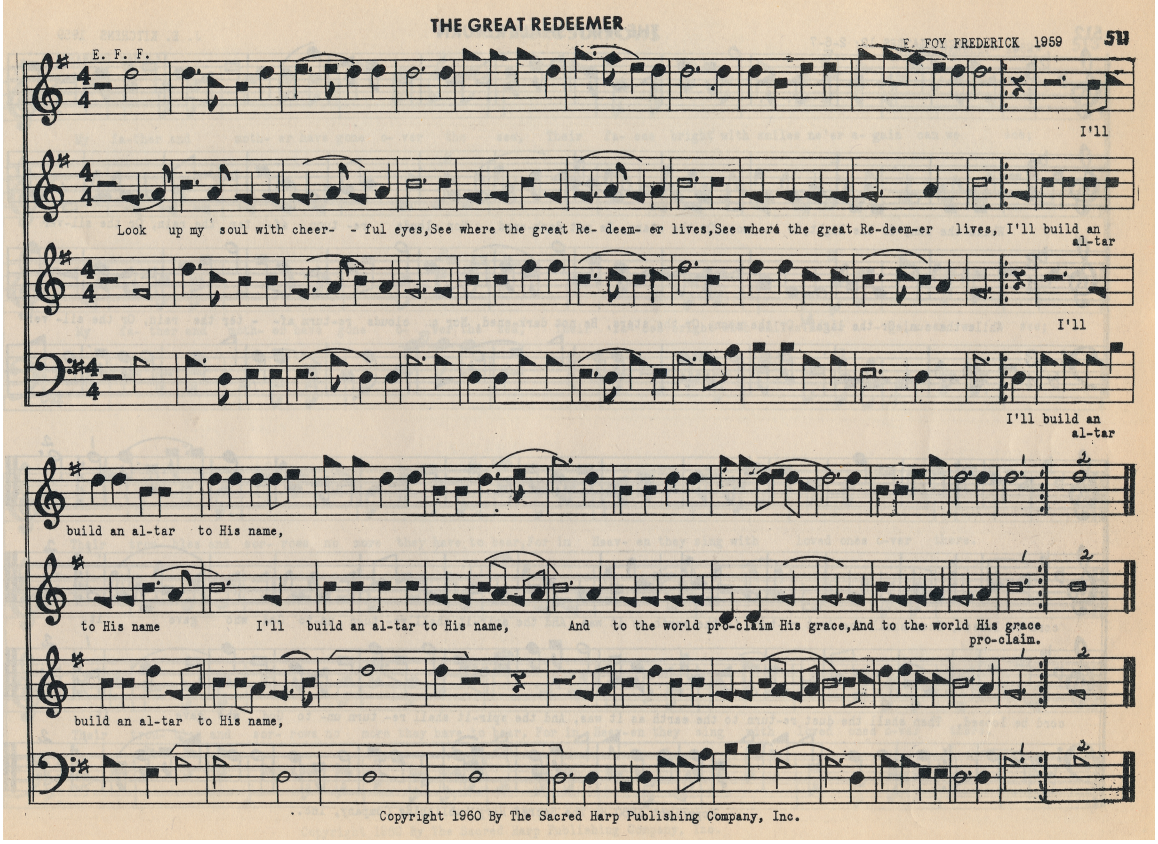

Figure 2.5: E. Foy Frederick, THE GREAT REDEEMER, in *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, 1960 Supplement, ed. A. M. Cagle et al. (Cullman, AL: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1960), 511. THE GREAT REDEEMER shows evidence of hand drawn slurs, text, and numbers; stenciled notes; and typewritten text. Collection of the author. Used with permission of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company.

[24] These methods are in evidence in O. A. Parris, ed., *Music Waves No. 2* (Jasper, AL: O. A. Parris, Gospel Song Publisher, 1946); O. A. Parris, ed., *Christian Harmony: Book One* (Birmingham, AL: Christian Harmony Publishing Company, 1954); John Deason, O. A. Parris, and William Walker, eds., *The Christian Harmony* ([Birmingham, AL]: Christian Harmony Publishing Company, 1958); J. E. Kitchens, ed., *Songs of Zion* ([Jasper, AL]: J. E. Kitchens, 1959); A. M. Cagle et al., eds., *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, 1960 Supplement (Cullman, AL: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1960); Stanley Smith et al., eds., *The B. F. White Sacred Harp* (Samson, AL: Sacred Harp Book Company, 1992).

In investing the digital with the promise of clear and modern design, the book's revisers imagined that the erasure of historical notes and typographical inconsistencies would likewise contribute to the erasure of unwelcome associations with rusticity and backwardness that the hand-drawn typography of the tunebook's *1960 Supplement* expressed. After World War II many young adults who had grown up singing from *The Sacred Harp* with family and community members left their rural home towns and settled in southern cities or moved to the metropolitan Midwest or West. As the rural South depopulated, so too did Sacred Harp singings. Meanwhile, the postwar rise of mass mediated entertainment provided ever more enticing and accessible alternatives to attending singing schools and singing conventions. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries singing conventions were central events in the social life of southern towns and rural areas, attended by singers and non-singers alike, and frequented by vendors and stumping area politicians. In the 1950s and 1960s, singings became much smaller and more marginal in these locales' social and political networks. As the rural and small-town South became more sparsely populated, activities that had evoked powerful memories of the antebellum period fifty years earlier now became associated with poverty, rurality, and a past perhaps not worth reliving.[25] Young people living in southern towns and small cities soon regarded Sacred Harp singing as a part of a crude archaic culture that they associated with poverty and their rural southern surroundings. Contemporary Sacred Harp singers who grew up in the 1930s–1960s remember and bristle at the derogatory label "old-fogy," a characterization of Sacred Harp singing and its imagined rural culture

[25] On southern rural outmigration and shifting perceptions of antebellum culture, see Pete Daniel, *Standing at the Crossroads: Southern Life in the Twentieth Century* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

that still plainly stings participants.[26] Compounding this association, new singers across the country who had discovered Sacred Harp singing through the folk revival were often drawn to those features of the style refracted through the secularizing lens of folklorization, including the style 's orally transmitted ornaments as well as its imagined status as an authentic carryover of the singing of early America. Longtime Sacred Harp singers welcomed these new singers, yet resented and often explicitly rejected the folk music label, instead describing Sacred Harp singing as a form of worship. This turn evinced singers' anxiety that even veneration of the style's rural southern antiquity could run counter to religious singers' priorities, deprioritizating Sacred Harp's role in Christian singers' faith practice.[27]

McGraw and his colleagues on the *1991 Edition*'s revision committee negotiated this ambivalent stance toward the book's association with antique southern rurality through their approach to the tunebook's design and its contents. The result of the committee's work was a newly simplified page design that incorporated some features introduced by the James book committee, in other respects embraced the book's original 1844 design, and in yet further senses was entirely new. The new book removed all of James's historical notes, and like the 1844 *Sacred Harp* imposed a consistent and clean layout featuring a modern font. Designed without any visual flair, the focus of the book's typography was clarity and functionality. The book featured updated attributions drawing

[26] Singers remarked on the negativity of the "old-fogy" label in numerous conversations at Sacred Harp singings and conventions across Georgia, Alabama, and Texas. East Central Alabama Sacred Harp singer and music committee member Jeff Sheppard, for example, frequently told of being teased for his participation in Sacred Harp singing, which schoolmates associated with rurality and shoelessness, when growing up in the 1940s and 1950s. Gavin James Campbell documents the use of this term as a descriptor of Sacred Harp singing as early as 1884. See Campbell, "Old Can Be Used Instead of New," 174.

[27] For an extended examination of how longtime and folk-music oriented singers view the style's religiosity and characterization as "folk music," see Miller, *Traveling Home*.

on the input of a group of musicologists and hymnologists. The book retained the scriptural citations James had introduced, and paired new citations with new songs. Among the songs added were tunes from the turn of the nineteenth century and new songs written by singers from areas where Sacred Harp had only recently spread such as Chicago, Boston, Connecticut, and upstate New York as well as contributions from Georgia and Alabama composers from families with long histories of participation in Sacred Harp singing.

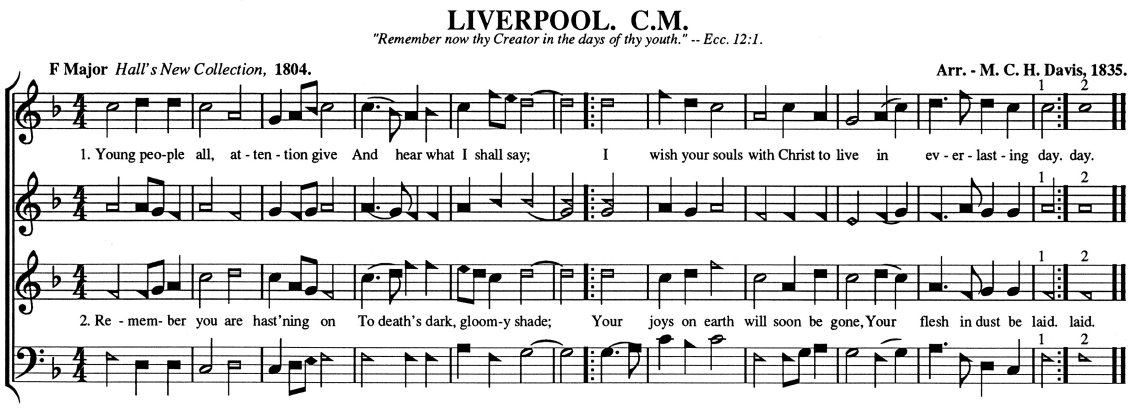

Figure 2.6: M. C. H. Davis, LIVERPOOL, in *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, ed. Hugh McGraw et al. (Bremen, GA: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1991), 37. The edition's music committee embraced a simplified page design that incorporated some features introduced by the James book committee, in other respects embraced the book's original 1844 design, and in yet further senses was entirely new. Used with permission of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company.

In updating and simplifying songs' attributions, the committee removed text that often credited S. M. Denson for the 1911 composition of songs' alto parts and specific if arcane indications that a particular song was "original"[28] or composed "for the *Organ*."[29] In place of this detailed yet difficult to interpret and sometimes inaccurate information,

[28] The word "Original" perhaps signaled that the tune's melody and harmony parts were newly composed, or that the song had not been previously published.
[29] This annotation indicated that a song first appeared in print in a newspaper titled the *Organ* which *Sacred Harp* senior compiler Benjamin Franklin White published in Hamilton, Georgia, between 1852 and 1862.

the committee simply identified the song's primary author(s) or arranger(s) and the year of composition for both its music and words. Both changes ostensibly advanced the goal of a simpler, more consistent, and accurate design for the pages of the tunebook, yet the question of whether to remove alto attributions brought the committee's desire for simplicity into conflict with its interest in presenting accurate information on the songs' composition. The committee members may also have been aware that the alto attributions were considerably more complicated than their presentation in *Original Sacred Harp* indicated. Though attributed to S. M. Denson, scholars assisting the committee in updating attributions were beginning to document that a number of the alto parts matched or were derived from those appearing in Wilson Marion Cooper's 1903 revision of *The Sacred Harp* and William Walker's 1867 *Christian Harmony*, among other books, suggesting that Denson had liberally drawn on these sources when producing alto parts for *Original Sacred Harp* in 1910–11.[30] Concealing, or at least minimizing access to this information by locating it in a companion volume, limited the embarrassment of acknowledging the book's liberal borrowing of alto lines from competitors, a contention which had actually led to an unsuccessful 1914 lawsuit.[31]

The committee made other changes aimed at increasing the book's usability, especially by new singers. The committee replaced instances where the text "etc." stood in for missing words or phrases of a song's hymn-text, addressing a common complaint of

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[30] Cooper, *The Sacred Harp*; Walker, *The Christian Harmony*. For updated attributions for alto parts in *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* see Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 179–245. On Denson's practice of stitching together alto parts from multiple sources and his other methods for arriving at alto parts for *Original Sacred Harp*, see Jesse P. Karlsberg, "Stitched Together: S. M. Denson's Alto Part for 'The Last Words of Copernicus,'" *JPKarlsberg.com*, January 24, 2014, http://jpkarlsberg.com/2014/01/24/stitched-together-s-m-densons-alto-part-for-the-last-words-of-copernicus/.

[31] "Cooper v. James 213 F. 871 (D.C. N.D. Ga., 1914)," *Music Copyright Infringement Resource*, accessed December 27, 2014, http://mcir.usc.edu/cases/1910-1919/Pages/cooperjames.html.

new singers at singing schools unfamiliar with the omitted words. In some cases, the committee added second or third verses to songs that had previously only featured the first verse of a given hymn. Like replacing "etc.," this change addressed a common request of new singers who often wished for additional verses of songs. The committee members also hoped that a second verse would give singers a reason to try leading some little-used songs in the book.[32] Both changes represented a shift in the social context of the tunebook. Editors of past editions of the book had taken for granted that the tunebook's singers would be familiar with the texts included in sacrificing usability to minimize the time and cost involved in typesetting pages. Yet such decisions no longer made sense to revisers confronted with an increasingly heterogeneous singing population.

The decision to renovate the book's page design and discard James's historical notes upset some singers. Singers in Boston's Norumbega Harmony ensemble, for example, lamented that the new *Sacred Harp* lacked the charm and rusticity they associated with the previous edition. Hoping not to lose easy access to historical information about the songs included, the Publishing Company planned to publish a companion book modeled on Baptist hymnologist William J. Reynolds's *Companion to Baptist Hymnal*[33] to coincide with the publication of the *1991 Edition*, and invited Reynolds and musicologist David Warren Steel to assist with updating the information

[32] Revision committee members compiled and consulted song use statistics, drawing on recent minutes of Sacred Harp singings, in determining which songs to retain in the new edition. Thanks to this work, committee members had ready access to information about which songs were little used. See Bealle, "New Strings on the 'Old Harp,'" 28.

[33] William J. Reynolds, *Companion to Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1976). Reynolds had assisted with updating attributions in *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision* as early as 1966, and two years later edited a facsimile reprint of the Fourth Edition of the tunebook: B. F. White and E. J. King, *The Sacred Harp*, ed. William J. Reynolds (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1968). Drawn into Sacred Harp singing by Irving Wolfe while his student at Peabody College in Nashville, Reynolds viewed its music as preserving the history of Baptist hymnody in the United States.

on songs, composers, and hymn writers. The committee hoped that by publishing the companion as a separate volume they could grant singers access to more accurate information about the tunebook's authors without the potential to distract from what revision committee members viewed as "the worship aspect of Sacred Harp singing."[34] This process ultimately took twenty years, but the resulting *Makers of the Sacred Harp* by Steel with Richard H. Hulan represents a Herculean research effort. While adoption of the new *1991 Edition* was nearly universal among populations that had previously sung from the *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, most of whom were grateful for the book's clean and easy-to-read pages, the Norumbega group instituted an annual Monday evening "Cheese Notes singing" (named for a particularly humorous historical note) out of the previous 1971 and 1987 editions at which singers would read and comment on amusing historical notes prior to singing songs from the tunebook.



Figure 2.7: Cover of David Warren Steel with Richard L. Hulan's *Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 2010. Illustration by Bethanne Hill. Used with permission of the University of Illinois

Including Billings, Excluding Gospel, Embracing a National Imagined Textual Community: The *1991 Edition*'s Musical Conservatism

Alongside this goal of clear and modern design, the revisers who produced *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* sought to cement the book's musical conservatism through the exclusion of songs featuring musical markers of gospel influence. George Pullen Jackson

[34] David Ivey, personal communication, April 29, 2015.

first described this older style of "dispersed harmony" as "white spirituals" in 1933, valorizing what he imagined to be the wellspring of an American national culture with a white Scotch-Irish source.[35] To Jackson and the folklorists, folk music enthusiasts, and Sacred Harp singers who adopted and adapted the rhetoric he introduced, gospel music threatened to sweeten Sacred Harp's astringent sound with its "close harmonies," water down its lyrical and theological heft with its premillennial dispensationalist lyrics, and diminish its imagined democratic equality with its commercial ethos. For folklorists and revivalist Sacred Harp singers alike, these dilutions were associated with gospel music and imagined as modernizing influences.

The committee's commitment to excluding gospel music was sincerely felt, represented a response to the style's folklorization, and staked out a market position distinct from the competing Cooper revision of *The Sacred Harp*. This exclusion of gospel music was also striking given the Publishing Company's reliance on the gospel music industry typesetter and publisher Charles Towler to typeset the book. The decision to exclude gospel music from *The Sacred Harp* was a departure from the 1936, 1960, and 1966 editions of the *Denson Revision*, whose contributors freely drew on gospel styles in fashioning new songs for *The Sacred Harp*.[36] Revision committee members' commitment

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[35] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*. Jackson took the presence of tunes in mid-nineteenth-century shape-note books compiled by whites later transcribed in collections of "negro spirituals" as evidence that such songs had white origins. As Dena Epstein has noted, "[t]o Jackson, priority in publication was certain proof of origin." Later scholarship has demonstrated that these songs originated in the racially mixed large outdoor revivals of the early nineteenth century, and has described how "Jackson's theories played easily into the hands of [white] racial nativists." See, for example, Tallmadge, "The Black in Jackson's White Spirituals"; Epstein, "A White Origin for the Black Spiritual?"; Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 116–22.

[36] For close analysis of Sacred Harp songs that crossed shape-note genres in the mid-twentieth century, see Jesse P. Karlsberg, "Genre Spanning in the 'Close' and 'Dispersed Harmony' Shape-Note Songs of Sidney Whitfield Denson and Orin Adolphus Parris" (Unpublished essay, Atlanta, GA, August 2014).

to exclude gospel signaled resistance to the modernizing influences new singers saw gospel as representing. The decision also distinguished the *1991 Edition* from the competing Cooper book, which included songs in a hybrid form signaling affinity with gospel in its early editions and continued to add both new songs owing stylistic traits to gospel and old gospel classics to new editions throughout the twentieth century. In avoiding gospel, the *1991 Edition* revisers implicitly positioned their edition as more traditional than the Cooper book, capitalizing on an association already trumpeted by scholars of the style,[37] and picked up by new singers attracted to the style in part because of its characterization as a traditional folk culture.[38]

The exclusion of gospel from the *1991 Edition* was both emphatically expressed and relatively strictly enforced. Many songs contributed to earlier twentieth-century *Sacred Harp* editions draw on aspects of close and dispersed harmony, metrical and free-verse texts, and fuging and responsorial song forms. Yet just one of the new songs the committee members accepted for the *1991 Edition* adopts this hybrid form. WOOTTEN,[39] composed by Hugh W. McGraw, features a gospel music–inspired free-verse text authored by McGraw expressly for the song. The song's harmonic palette also favors features common to gospel music and uncommon in *The Sacred Harp*. WOOTTEN

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[37] See, for example, Cobb, *The Sacred Harp*, chap. 4; Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 249–50. In the first scholarly account of the *1991 Edition*, Bealle repeats this association, describing the "Denson/James lineage" of which the *1991 Edition* is a part as having "extended its popularity by protecting the traditional character of the work" and praising the *1991 Edition* editors for taking "another walk within those hallowed 'old paths.'" See Bealle, "New Strings on the 'Old Harp,'" 27, 43.

[38] Robert L. Vaughn lists "My book is better than your book" as a common myth held by contemporary Sacred Harp singers. Vaughn rebuts a bias in John Bealle's description of *The Sacred Harp*'s early twentieth-century revisions toward regarding the James-Denson revision-chain as featuring greater fidelity to tradition in Robert L. Vaughn, *Rethinkin' Our Thinkin': Thoughts on Sacred Harp Myths* (Mount Enterprise, TX: Waymark Publications, 2013), 16, 23–25.

[39] Hugh McGraw et al., eds., *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* (Carrollton, GA: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1991), 548–549.

includes numerous triadic chords and makes extensive use of the supertonic chord (ii) often in first or second inversion. The submediant chord (vi) is uncommon in the song. The song also adopts distinctive features of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Sacred Harp compositions, including melodic harmony parts that cross frequently and effects resembling chord progressions achieved through the juxtaposition of different voicings of the tonic chord (I).

The song form of WOOTTEN encapsulates its hybrid style, drawing on gospel and Sacred Harp–style shape-note music conventions. After a homophonic introduction the song moves to a repeated chorus which begins when the bass and alto in turn introduce the text "I want to live" and then join with the tenor and treble to reiterate the phrase with a return to homophony that persists through the end of the song. This texture recalls both the fuging tune form common to *The Sacred Harp* in which the parts enter at regular intervals creating textual counterpoint until they rejoin in textual unison and homophony near or at the end[40] and the antiphonal practice common to gospel music since the late nineteenth century in which a single voice "makes a melodic statement; as it arrives at a long tone the other three voices respond in rhythmic imitation."[41] Though best known for his activities promoting Sacred Harp music, McGraw was also an active participant in gospel music during much of his life and he sang regularly with a lunchtime gospel ensemble at Sewell.[42] Like mid-twentieth-century Sacred Harp contributors whose compositions spanned shape-note genres, McGraw was embedded in a mid-twentieth-

[40] I describe and reference scholarship on fuging tune form in chapter 1. On the development and shifting style of fuging tunes the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the editions of *The Sacred Harp*, see Jesse P. Karlsberg, "The History and Anatomy of the Fuging Tune" (Anniston, AL, Camp Fasola, July 2, 2014).
[41] Tallmadge, "The Responsorial and Antiphonal Practice in Gospel Song," 220–21.
[42] McGraw, interview with the author.

century "musical culture in which a variety of shape-note genres coexisted, influenced one another, and attracted overlapping followings."[43]

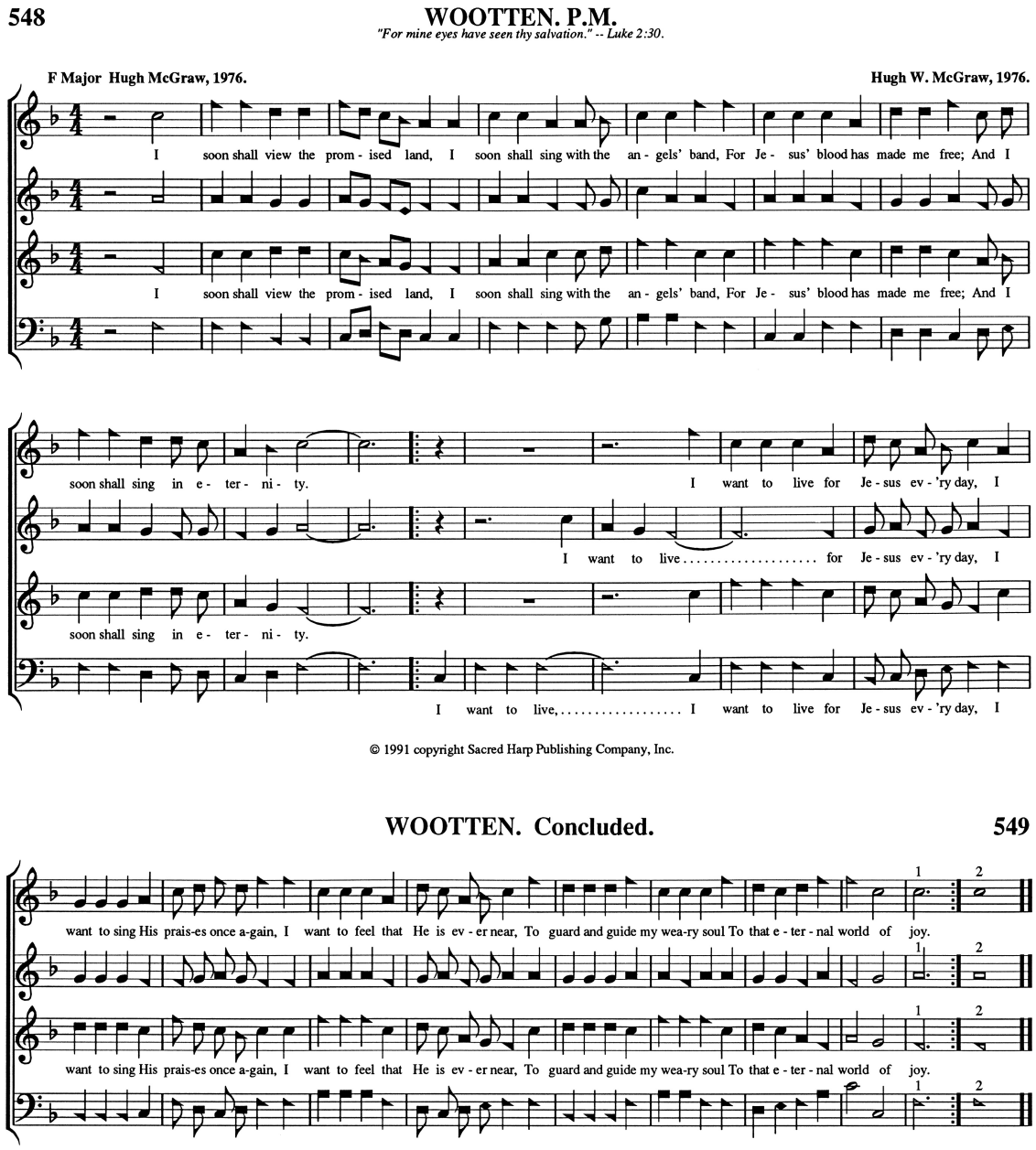

Figure 2.8: Hugh McGraw, WOOTTEN, in *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, ed. Hugh McGraw et al. (Bremen, GA: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1991), 548–49. Used with permission of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company.

[43] Karlsberg, "Genre Spanning."

Yet WOOTTEN was the exception. Most songs added to *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* drew deeply on the genres included in *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision* and avoided hallmarks of gospel music. Raymond C. Hamrick's INVOCATION[44] includes features common to a variety of Sacred Harp genres such as part crossing, melodic harmony parts, and a metrical text altered from the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English psalmodist Isaac Watts. INVOCATION features a vaster chordal palette than that based on the tonic (I), submediant (vi), and to a lesser degree dominant (V) chords common to a number of songs in the book, making greater use of the dominant (V), supertonic (ii), and subdominant (IV) than typical. Yet in conversations about this and other songs of Hamrick's with the composer and other Sacred Harp singers, all identified the style with the compositions of early New England composer William Billings, rather than with twentieth-century gospel composers.[45] INVOCATION adopts a form similar to that of BENEFICENCE,[46] a Billings song included in *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* at Hamrick's urging, in which after a homophonic section, the basses—Billings's favorite section, and the part Hamrick himself sang—enter solo on a new line of text after which all four parts answer while resuming homophony on the subsequent phrase of the song's hymn text.[47]

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[44] McGraw et al., *The Sacred Harp*, 492–493.
[45] For Hamrick's comments, see Hamrick, interview with the author; the theme of the resemblance of Hamrick's music to that of Billings came up too many times to mention during my fieldwork, at singings both when Hamrick was present and absent at a wide range of locations in the United States and Europe.
[46] Cagle et al., *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, 486–87.
[47] NIDRAH, another song by Hamrick in *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, adopts a similar form. See McGraw et al., *The Sacred Harp*, 540. Billings wrote that "the Bass is the Foundation, and if it be well laid, you may build upon it at Pleasure. Therefore in order to have good Music, there must be Three Bass to one of the upper Parts. So that for Instance, suppose a Company of Forty People, Twenty of them should sing the Bass." See William Billings, *The New-England Psalm-Singer; or, American Chorister* (Boston: Printed by Edes and Gill, 1770), quoted in Judith Tick and Paul Beaudoin, eds., *Music in the USA: A Documentary Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 69.

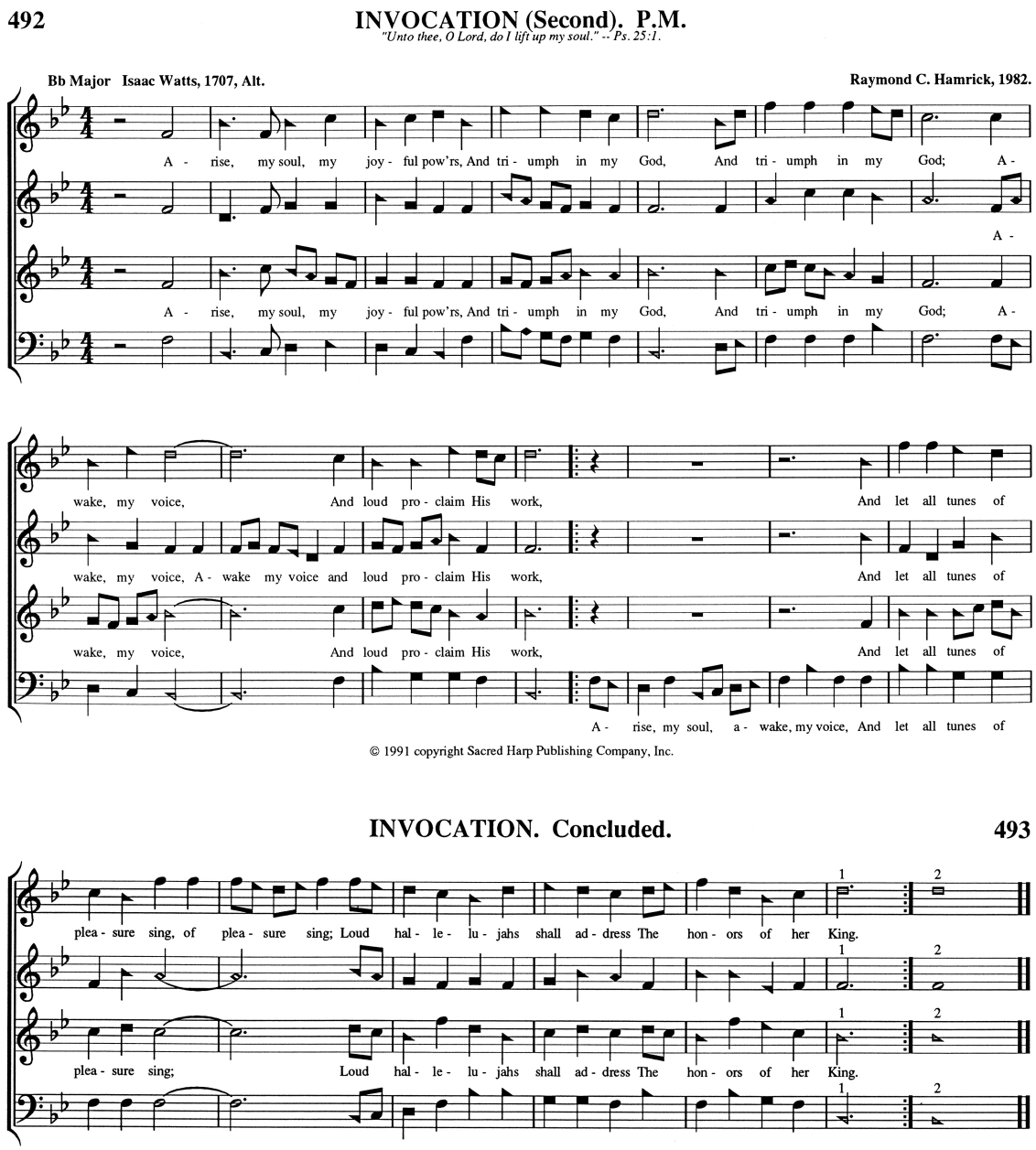

Figure 2.9: Raymond C. Hamrick, INVOCATION, in *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, ed. Hugh McGraw et al. (Bremen, GA: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1991), 492–93. Used with permission of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company.

Hamrick and other contributors to the *1991 Edition* such as P. Dan Brittain and Neely Bruce followed in the steps of composers who contributed to the tunebook across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in synthesizing a variety of styles to generate new songs in hybrid genres they envisioned as suitable for the tunebook. The songs added to

the *1991 Edition* share two aspects of this composing and editing process with the other *Sacred Harp* editions. First, composers in all periods engaged in a wide variety of genre-spanning compositional activity. Individuals from nineteenth-century composers such as twin brothers John Palmer Rees and Henry Smith Rees to mid-twentieth-century contributors to the tunebook such as J. Elmer Kitchens, Orin Adolphus Parris, and brothers Thomas Jackson Denson and Seaborn McDaniel Denson composed music with this synthetic quality both for *The Sacred Harp* and for other sources and contexts. Twentieth-century Sacred Harp songs feature hybrid forms such as the fuging tune style pioneered by the Denson brothers and Alfred Marcus Cagle, drawing on the music of the Rees brothers, among others, or the related gospel fuging tune style exemplified by Parris and Sidney Whitfield Denson pairing aspects of this twentieth-century hybrid style with a chordal palette and aspects of antiphonal and responsorial technique borrowed from gospel music. These examples evince a belief that features of various shape-note genres could be successfully mined to create new music for *The Sacred Harp*.

Second, composers across these periods associated *The Sacred Harp* with a particular array of musical features and imagined that the music they contributed to the book was better suited to this particular source than the songs they contributed to other sources, shape-note or otherwise. Compounding this association, *Sacred Harp* editors policed their tunebook's genre boundaries, including music they viewed as consistent with the book's stylistic range while excluding music that veered from what they viewed as acceptable. The music Parris contributed to *Sacred Harp* editions made more frequent use of eighteenth-century metrical hymnody and less frequent use of gospel-associated responsorial effects than his contributions to gospel songbooks. His contributions to *The*

Christian Harmony adopted a wider range of varied shape-note genre conventions than his *Sacred Harp* compositions. Similarly, Henry Smith Rees embraced features of Sabbath School music in his later compositions, yet contributed these to a book including music in four- and seven-note shape note systems as well as "round notes."[48] Rees reserved music in the more conservative style in which he'd previously composed for *The Sacred Harp*.

The *1991 Edition*, like the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*, varies from numerous other *Sacred Harp* editions, however, in the narrow range of genre contexts for music features included in the edition, and in the less permeable boundary editors inscribed around its contents. These editors imagined Sacred Harp, gospel, and other styles as distinct and strictly separate. Contributors to these two editions drew on a range of genres encountered through their networks in writing music for sources other than *The Sacred Harp*, including genres well represented in editions of *The Sacred Harp* and those more distant. The editors of the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp* included only songs by composers nearly exclusively echoing or drawing on features of music already included in the tunebook. Although we can only speculate about the intentions of these early twentieth century editors, conversations with editors of the *1991 Edition* confirm that delimiting the tunebook's genre boundaries was an intentional and important part of the revision process.

[48] E. T. Pound, ed., *The Vocal Triad* (Barnesville, GA: E. T. Pound, 1870).

Old or "Old Fogy": Negotiating Sacred Harp's Associations with the Past

By limiting additions to *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* to songs that singers could mistake for music written for the tunebook long ago, its editors and contributors conducted boundary work remaking and reinforcing the tunebook's association with America's early musical history. Historian and philosopher Geoffrey C. Bowker and sociologist Susan Leigh Star describe the role of objects in boundary work, arguing that "the creation and management of boundary objects is a key process in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting communities."[49] Sociologists Jennifer C. Lena and Richard A. Peterson connect such negotiation of boundaries to how "genres emerge, evolve, and disappear."[50] Although the tunebook's revisers sought to distance *The Sacred Harp* from what they viewed as the negative baggage of southern rural rusticity by policing the book's genre boundaries, they positively identified with and saw an opportunity for promotion in *The Sacred Harp*'s image as a repository of the music of early America, an association with deep roots and conflicting implications.

A speech Hugh McGraw gave before a Nashville audience including music scholars, church music authorities, and ministers in 1964 demonstrates how the later head of the *1991 Edition*'s music committee articulated this embrace of Sacred Harp singing as noble and old, transvaluing negative associations of Sacred Harp singing with the term *old-fogy* as conservative values. In a section of his talk devoted to countering criticisms of Sacred Harp music, McGraw noted,

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[49] Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 297.
[50] Jennifer C. Lena and Richard A. Peterson, "Classification as Culture: Types and Trajectories of Music Genres," *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 5 (October 1, 2008): 698.

> You hear people say, "It's 'OLD-FOGY.'" Now what does Old Fogy mean? The word "fogy" means a steward or caretaker, and the word "old" was a tried and trusted one who took care of such things as were worth preserving, and certainly what we are doing to *The Sacred Harp* is preserving it. When we speak of Old Fogy things we might as well include, for instance, the language we speak, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the houses we live in, the laws we obey, and last but not least, the God we worship. Now what could be more old fogy than these things I have just named? But brother, I don't want to do without any of them, and I guess I will just die "old fogy."[51]

In his speech McGraw redefines "old-fogy" as taking care of old things worth preserving, and shifts focus from the specific set of cultural practices then imagined as rustic and out of date to a list of basic yet contested elements of culture. In tying Sacred Harp singing's "old-fogy" quality to conventional tastes in language, clothes, food, houses, laws, and God, McGraw aligns the term with conservative American values he contends must be defended. McGraw assumes the "we" that encompasses him and his audience remain attached to these things during a period of dramatic social upheaval, seeks to identify this attachment with "old fogy," and presents a commitment to preserving Sacred Harp as the logical extension of the conservative outlook he expresses.

McGraw retained and reused the overarching architecture of this defense decades later, but aligned it with Sacred Harp's transvaluation as national heritage thanks to the style's folklorization, rather than with conservative values. In an interview for his biographical entry on a website for the National Endowment of the Arts's National Heritage Fellowship recipients, McGraw remarked that "a lot of people don't sing this old

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[51] Hugh W. McGraw, "There Isn't Anything I Had Rather Talk about than Sacred Harp Music" (Manuscript of a speech for the Harpeth Valley Singers, Nashville, TN, 1964), Sacred Harp Museum, Carrollton, Georgia. For an excerpt from McGraw's speech, see Hugh W. McGraw, "'There Are More Singings Now Than Ever Before': Hugh McGraw Addresses the Harpeth Valley Singers," *Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter* 2, no. 3 (December 31, 2013), http://originalsacredharp.com/2013/12/31/there-are-more-singings-now-than-ever-before-hugh-mcgraw-addresses-the-harpeth-valley-singers/.

music because it's 'old fogey.' You know 'old fogey' means a caretaker. A caretaker preserving something that's worth preserving. And that's what we're trying to do in preserving this music, our national heritage."[52] McGraw saw Sacred Harp's characterization as "old-fogy" as both liability and opportunity. As folklorization's "process of archaizing [through which] the repudiated is transvalued as heritage"[53] took hold during the second half of the twentieth century, he recognized that *The Sacred Harp*'s antiquity was a capacious feature that could be celebrated and proclaimed in different ways for different audiences.[54]

Others involved with the making of the *1991 Edition* similarly identified Sacred Harp singing's history as a value associated with America's national heritage, yet resisted its contemporary associations with archaism. *The Sacred Harp* initially intrigued Hamrick because of the eighteenth-century composition dates he spotted associated with some songs in the tunebook when he accompanied his brother Horace Hamrick to a singing school in 1946. Hamrick later researched the history of early American composers who contributed to the tunebook, becoming particularly interested in the music of William Billings. Echoing an understanding of Sacred Harp's history first narrated by George Pullen Jackson,[55] Hamrick described southern Sacred Harp singing as important for

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[52] "Hugh McGraw."
[53] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Folklore's Crisis," *The Journal of American Folklore* 111, no. 441 (July 1, 1998): 298, doi:10.2307/541312.
[54] As described in detail in chapter 4, McGraw emphasized the music's early history in presenting the style at folk festivals and other gatherings. At the 1970 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife he presented songs that provided him with openings to remark on the style's history, including William Billings's EASTER ANTHEM (a song by "the first composer of sacred music in the United States") and James Christopher's WONDROUS LOVE ("a ballad that was sang during the pirate Captain Kidd's day"). From *Festival Recordings, 1970: Wade and Fields Ward with Kahle Brewer; Sacred Harp Singers*, CD transfer, 1970, fp-1970-rr-0039, tracks 105, 106, and 108, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.
[55] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*.

"welcom[ing] and nurtur[ing]" "the music of [Billings,] America's first religious composer" even after it had "become extinct in its native habitat" of New England. In an article on shape-note singers' use of Billings's music Hamrick concluded by asserting, "We in the Southern shape-note tradition take great pride in having served as the preservers of this uniquely American Musical tradition."[56] For Hamrick, Sacred Harp's association with the music of colonial New England was valuable and worth emphasizing because of its association with the nation's history. William Reynolds likewise saw Sacred Harp's association with early American religious music as an important part of the style's value, emphasizing in particular the "strength and fervor … reflect[ing] the stalwart faith of the singers" when rendering "The fuguing tunes of Yankee tunesmiths William Billings and Daniel Read."[57] The Publishing Company published a recording of the "Yankee tunes of WILLIAM BILLINGS, DANIEL READ, BARTHOLOMEW BROWN, JEREMIAH INGALLS, STEPHEN JENKS, and others" in conjunction with the United States Bicentennial, the only album



Figure 2.10: Album cover for the Sacred Harp Publishing Company's *Sacred Harp Bicentennial Celebration*, 1976, promoting the inclusion of "Yankee tunes." Collection of the author. Used with permission of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company.

[56] Hamrick, "Sojourn in the South," 11. See also Hamrick, "The Twentieth Century Looks at William Billings."
[57] White and King, *The Sacred Harp*, 1968, xxv.

of the six published by the company focused on a particular genre or set of composers represented in *The Sacred Harp*.[58]

This rhetorical strategy echoed valorizations of Sacred Harp singing in music scholarship extending from George Pullen Jackson's writing about the style in the 1920s and 1930s, to later descriptions of early congregational singing in surveys of American music. Drawing on late nineteenth-century characterizations of Appalachians as America's strange yet noble "contemporary ancestors,"[59] and early twentieth-century folklore scholarship that expanded such characterizations of "mountain isolation … to an account for a more generalized isolated South,"[60] Jackson identified the "Fa-sol-la" folk as these figures' musical kin in a 1926 essay, describing them as "Our 'Contemporary Musical Ancestors'" who "Preserve America's Oldest Choral Art Intact" through a reliance on "Strange Musical Notation."[61] Gilbert Chase relied on Jackson's framework in describing the "fasola folk" as "the (mostly) rural singers, tunebook compilers, and singing-school teachers of the South and Midwest, who carried on the tradition of music for the people established by the native pioneers in New England."[62] Chase sought to cast the "fasola folk" as one ethnic population of American music makers among many, a purpose distinct from Jackson's. Yet, like the characterization of Sacred Harp singing as "old-fogy," both Chase's and Jackson's accounts of the "fasola folk" painted singers as

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[58] *Sacred Harp Bicentennial Celebration*, 33 1/3 rpm record (Bremen, GA: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1976), front cover.
[59] Harney, "A Strange Land and a Peculiar People"; Frost, "Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains." Kiri Miller articulates how the "our" in "our contemporary musical ancestors" specifically imagines Sacred Harp singers as "living ancestors" of "white middle-class American Protestants" in Miller, *Traveling Home*, 14.
[60] Miller, *Segregating Sound*, 104.
[61] Jackson, "The Fa-Sol-La Folk," 6.
[62] Gilbert Chase, *America's Music, from the Pilgrims to the Present* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 170–71.

rural unsophisticates. In contrast, roughly contemporaneous scholarly writing on William Billings favorably positions the composer as the father of the music of colonial New England and early America.[63] McGraw and his colleagues' redirection of critiques of "old-fogy" to celebrations of the "old" effectively embraces Sacred Harp's association with Chase's Billings-led "native pioneers" while disavowing the "fasola folk" label.

Portrayals of Sacred Harp singing as a contemporary folk culture preserving America's earliest music appealed to participants in the folk revival of the 1960s and 1970s, leading the book's songs to become ubiquitous at folk festivals. Descriptions of the style as a repository of ancient southern culture likewise connected with urban and educated southerners seeking closer contact with their own imagined roots. McGraw and others presenting Sacred Harp leveraged this rhetorical strategy to engage potentially interested audiences while redirecting their interest to aspects of the music that aligned with their own goals.

The *1991 Edition* revision committee similarly expressed this strategy in their remaking of *The Sacred Harp*. The committee's song selection criteria disavowed gospel music and embraced songs written in the musical styles that populated previous editions' pages, an outlook that mirrored McGraw and Hamrick's rhetorical embrace of Billings. Their removal of the quirky and often-inaccurate historical notes and simplification and regularization of the tunebook's varied page designs echoed the singers' disavowal of the style's folklorization as an uncomfortable marker of rusticity and unsophistication.

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[63] David P. McKay and Richard Crawford, *William Billings of Boston: Eighteenth Century Composer* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975). On the historical origins of this genealogy of Billings and American music in the "Old Folks Concerts" that "mushroomed" across the northeastern United States in the mid-1850s, see Timothy Eriksen, "Old Folks' Concerts: The Meaning and Mushrooming of an Antiquarian Music Craze, 1853–1856" (Ph.D. dissertation, Wesleyan University, 2015).

The music committee also sought to accelerate the growth of *The Sacred Harp*'s imagined textual community by including songs by composers in the tunebook from outside the style's historical singing areas. The range of states represented by the contributors contrasts so dramatically with the largely Alabama and Georgia locations of composers included in previous editions that Bealle described this new geography as "[t]he most striking change in the book."[64] The songs added included fourteen by composers from Illinois, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, comprising 40 percent of the newly composed tunes included. McGraw described putting new songs by composers from these areas in the book as "a way to get them more involved" in singing from *The Sacred Harp*, sustaining interest in the style in these far-flung areas.[65] The committee also added a number of songs from earlier periods, in particular selecting tunes written by New England composers including Billings and Read.[66] The inclusion of these songs aligned with music committee members' emphasis of the style's early American roots. Their inclusion also acknowledged the popularity of early New England tunes in the Midwest and Northeast, areas where the spread of Sacred Harp singing was strongest. Several of the songs included had previously been published in the *Northern Harmony* (1980) and *The Midwest Supplement* (1987), new four-shape shape-note tunebooks in use in New England and Chicago, respectively.[67] The selection of popular songs from these sources acknowledged the capacity of tunebook editors from new areas

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[64] Bealle, "New Strings on the 'Old Harp,'" 30.
[65] McGraw, interview with the author.
[66] On embrace of new singing areas and old New England music in the songs added to *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition*, see Bealle, "New Strings on the 'Old Harp,'" 28–31; Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 229.
[67] Anthony G. Barrand and Carole Moody, eds., *Northern Harmony: A Collection of Tunes by Early New England Composers* (Marlboro, VT: A. G. Barrand and C. Moody, 1980); Judy Hauff, Ted Mercer, and Kathleen Kuiper, eds., *A Midwest Supplement: Or, a Choice Collection of Tunes, with Footnotes, Selected for and Compiled by Those of the Meanest Capacities* (Chicago: Chicago Sacred Harp Singers, 1987).

to identify songs compatible with *The Sacred Harp*, ensured an audience of new singers would be familiar with and positively predisposed towards this selection of added songs, and undercut the popularity of these upstart tunebooks by incorporating some of their most popular songs not previously included in *The Sacred Harp*.

Gospel Publishers, Hand-Stenciling, and Digital Retypesetting in the Late Twentieth- and Early Twenty-first-century Revisions of the Cooper Book

Contrasting the *1991 Edition* with late twentieth-century editions of the rival *Sacred Harp* revision-chain initiated by Wilson Marion Cooper in 1903, known as the Cooper book, illustrates the degree to which tunebook editors' financing and connections with those involved in book publishing affected the capacity to produce new editions and control their aesthetics when published. Sacred Harp singers associated with the Cooper book in southeastern Alabama were left without a path forward in the 1960s, lacking access to sufficient capital or the longstanding ties of kinship and cross-participation with gospel singing and publishing that editors of the *Original Sacred Harp* enjoyed.

The Sacred Harp Book Company was formed to supervise the publication of the revision-chain in 1949. The company's officers initially experienced challenges finding a job printer capable of typesetting new shape-note music at an affordable price, noting in a 1949 edition of the tunebook "that due to the high cost of engraving the plates that new songs will not be included in this issue." Yet new funding or a new lead contributed to the inclusion of twelve new songs in an edition published one year later typeset by Paragron Press of Montgomery, Alabama, in a style that differed dramatically from earlier songs in the book. Changes to an edition published in 1960 were limited to minor changes to the

book's frontmatter and just a single added song.[68] Constrained by finances and limited access to printers capable of setting shape-note type, the book company's officers attempted no new revision in the ensuing decades.

Only when the publishing company came in closer contact with gospel publishers in the late 1980s did members of its board of directors encounter techniques for typesetting music that convinced them to embark on a new revision process. Stanley Smith, a singer from Ozark, Alabama, learned about hand drawn techniques for setting music used by gospel publishers prior to the transition to digital typesetting from Marty Phillips of the Arkansas-based Jeffress Music Company at the company's Jeffress School of Gospel Music in Crossett, Arkansas.[69] The method Jeffress described involves stenciling individual note heads in large format, pairing these with typeset words, then photographing and dramatically reducing the pages in size. As noted above, songbook editors in North Alabama involved in both Sacred Harp and gospel singing including Owel Denson, Orin Adolphus Parris, and J. Elmer Kitchens had employed a related stencil-based method for publishing projects in the 1950s and 1960s. Buoyed by the ability to lay out new songs in house, Smith and the book company began revising the book and employed these techniques to lay out new songs. Smith made edits to other pages by using a defective book as scrap to scavenge corrections to notes from other pages

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[68] Seven songs and an oddly placed index were removed in 1950 to make way for additions without affecting pagination. Two were removed in 1960. Thanks to Robert L. Vaughn for sharing a spreadsheet documenting changes between the 1927, 1949, 1950, and 1960 editions of the Cooper book. I relied on my own copy of the 1960 edition to compare the typographical style of songs introduced in 1950 to those added to previous editions.

[69] Stanley Smith and Tommie Spurlock, interview with the author, Ozark, AL, May 4, 2014. On the Jeffress Music Company, see Meredith Doster, "Jeffress/Phillips Music Company," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture* (Little Rock: Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, September 4, 2013), http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=6429.

with the desired note pairs and then paste them on top of faulty pages in question, a process related to the pastiche approach employed in gospel book compilation. The resulting revision of the Cooper book was published in 1992.

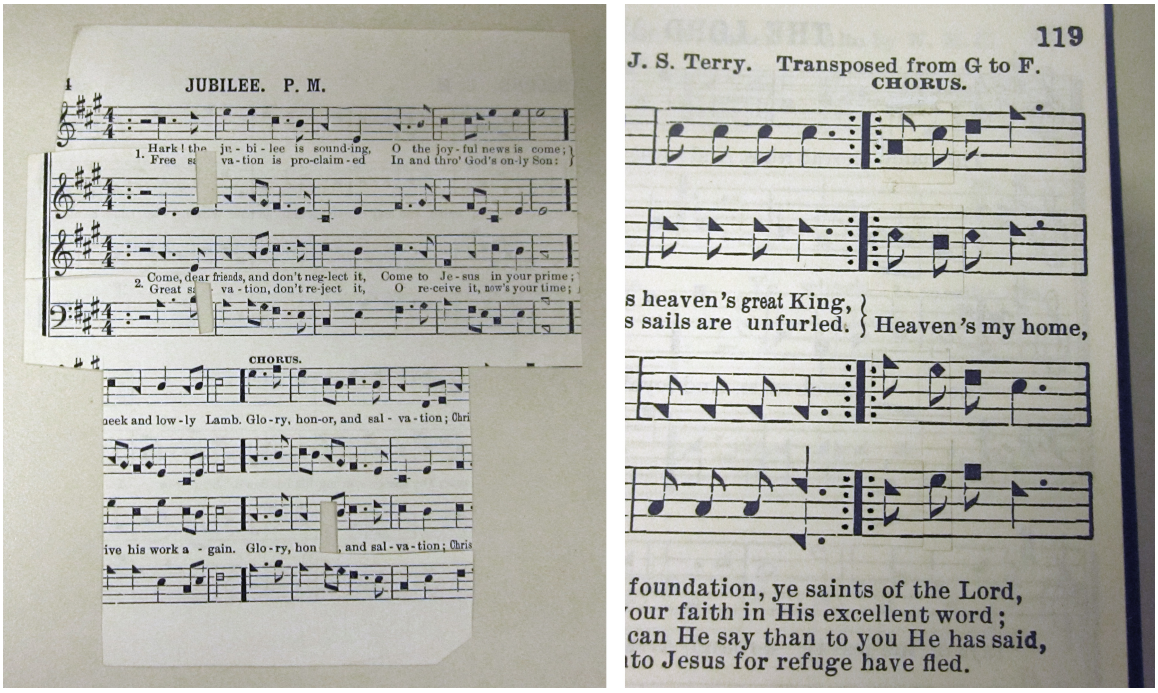

Figure 2.11: Page from a copy of Cooper book in the collection of Stanley Smith with notes he cut out (left) to paste over notes in another song (right) in order to correct printing errors in a previous edition. Photographs by Jesse P. Karlsberg.

The arduous processes Smith employed made a new revision of the tunebook possible, but allowed only limited control over the book's aesthetics. The new songs contributed to the variety in the appearance of pages in the book that the editors of the *1991 Edition* had focused on erasing in their revision, a prospect then beyond the reach of the Cooper book's editors. Inspired by the *1991 Edition*, Smith and other members of the Sacred Harp Book Company's board of directors began the process of digitally retypesetting the pages of the Cooper book shortly after the publication of the 1992

edition in collaboration with Washington Sacred Harp singer Karen Willard, a process that culminated in the publication of a completely retypeset edition in 2012.[70]

Like the *1991 Edition*, the 2012 *Sacred Harp: Revised Cooper Edition* demonstrated a commitment to musical conservatism and clean typesetting. Digitally typeset by its lead reviser, Karen Willard, the book's layout privileges consistency, functionality, and visual clarity. The book's aesthetics also emphasize continuity, adopting digital music and text faces mimicking the look of early Cooper book editions.

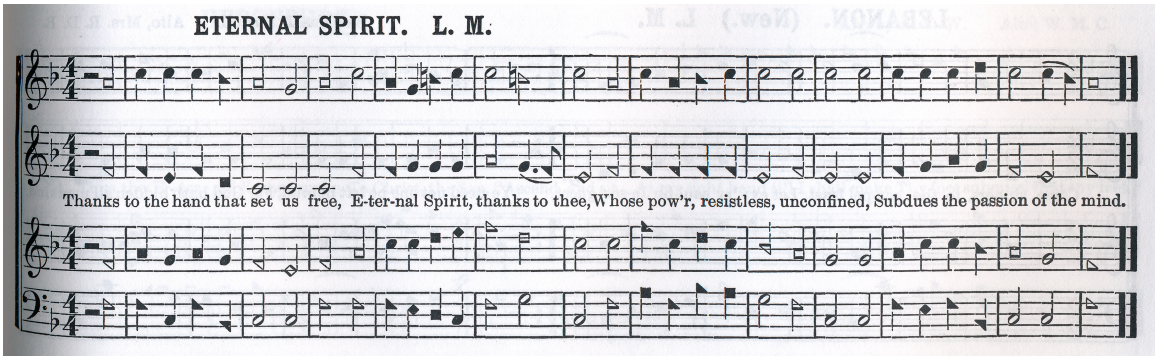

Figure 2.12: Lowell Mason, ETERNAL SPIRIT, in *The B. F. White Sacred Harp: Revised Cooper Edition*, ed. John Etheridge et al. (Samson, AL: Sacred Harp Book Company, 2006), 265. Used with permission of the Sacred Harp Book Company.

Willard adopted a musically conservative posture that mirrored the "no gospel music" prohibition of the *1991 Edition* music committee. The book added thirteen new fuging and plain tunes by living composers and a single plain tune by Billings.[71] No new tunes were added, however, in the early gospel and hybrid forms which for many singers represent the Cooper book's distinctiveness. Although the editors of the 2012 edition did

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[70] Johnny Lee and Karen Willard, eds., *The Sacred Harp: Revised Cooper Edition* (Samson, AL: Sacred Harp Book Company, 2012).

[71] Six of the thirteen recently composed songs added to *The Sacred Harp: Revised Cooper Revision* were written by composers from areas where Sacred Harp singing has spread relatively recently, including one of my own compositions. See Gaylon L. Powell, "2012 Cooper Book Revision: Revision Changes from the 2006 to the 2012 Revision," *Sacred Harp Singing in Texas*, January 14, 2013, http://resources.texasfasola.org/revisionchanges.html; Jesse P. Karlsberg, "'A Glimpse of Thee' in *The Sacred Harp: Revised Cooper Edition*," *JPKarlsberg.com*, February 4, 2013, http://jpkarlsberg.com/2013/02/04/a-glimpse-of-thee-in-the-sacred-harp-revised-cooper-edition/.

not remove any songs from the previous edition, the book debuted rearranged versions of a number of songs retained from previous editions featuring changes that in some cases evince an interest in eliminating musical markers of gospel and the reformed hymn style popular in the urban Northeast in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Willard rearranged ETERNAL SPIRIT, a version of UXBRIDGE, a tune composed by Lowell Mason in 1830, and an exemplar of the reformed style that was added to *The Sacred Harp* in 1850. The non-rearranged version of the song published in the 2006 edition of the Cooper book features a secondary dominant to dominant cadence (I, V/V, V) at the song's midpoint with a complete secondary dominant chord with a sharped fourth scale degree note.[72] For the 2012 edition Willard replaced this chord with a 2-6 dyad, a chord more at home in the mid-nineteenth-century revival choruses and folk hymns of the *Sacred Harp* by rural southern composers.[73] Willard's rearrangements signal a desire to disassociate the Cooper book with the early gospel and hybrid styles included in the tunebook, an aim aligned with a post to the Fasola discussions listserv in which Willard argued that a number of the Cooper book's most popular gospel songs were added to the book in the 1920s and 1940s, implying that the proportion of gospel music in the book's earliest editions is smaller than generally imagined.[74]

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[72] John Etheridge et al., eds., *The B. F. White Sacred Harp: Revised Cooper Edition* (Samson, AL: Sacred Harp Book Company, 2006), 265.

[73] Lee and Willard, *The Sacred Harp: Revised Cooper Edition*, 265.

[74] Karen Willard, "CooperSH & 'Gospel Songs,'" *Fasola Discussions*, March 22, 2014, https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/fasola-discussions/_GCL8K_fXv8. In a reply, Robert L. Vaughn concurs "Writers often seem to be looking at the 1927 or 1950 or 1960 book and writing as if they were describing the 1902 book." Vaughn acknowledges the influence of gospel music on the contributors to the first Cooper edition but cites characteristics common to these contributors' music and the additions to *The Sacred Harp*'s nineteenth-century editions. In my analysis a large number of these contributions adopt hybrid forms that combine stylistic features of music in the nineteenth-century *Sacred Harp* with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century gospel styles. Sarah Kahre likewise concludes that many of the first Cooper edition's new songs "exhibit some stylistic fluidity [adopting a] 'gospel hybrid' style." Kahre,

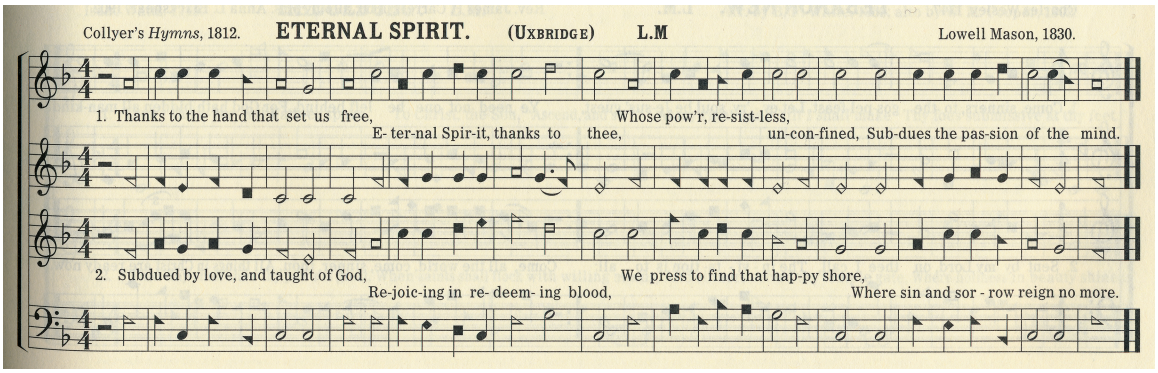

Figure 2.12: Lowell Mason, ETERNAL SPIRIT, in *The Sacred Harp: Revised Cooper Edition*, ed. Johnny Lee and Karen Willard (Samson, AL: Sacred Harp Book Company, 2012), 265. Used with permission of the Sacred Harp Book Company.

In contrast with the removal of James's historical notes from the *1991 Edition*, Willard added critical commentary to some pages in the 2012 Cooper book documenting a dedication or the specific date of composition of a given song when known, and identifying certain songs as variants of other songs, either transpositions of songs from major to minor or vice versa, or adaptations of popular copyrighted songs from rival *Sacred Harp* editions. This set of additions newly acknowledged a history of borrowing and repurposing songs from earlier *Sacred Harp* editions to create new musical material and, at times, circumvent copyright law. The additions also coincided with the objective of achieving a consistent design without losing the extra information sometimes embedded in attributions which had remained in the Cooper book until 2012, though summarily removed from the Denson revision-chain's *1991 Edition*. Yet the uniform manner in which the new notes describe a relationship between a pair of related songs also obscures the specific history and nature of a given relationship, collapsing the

"Schism and Sacred Harp," 61. As Vaughn notes, "Lots of study remains to be done" to paint a sufficiently nuanced picture of the musical influences of contributors to Cooper book editions.

distinction between a rearrangement aimed at circumventing copyright restrictions on the one hand, and a creatively motivated repurposing of old material.

Old-Fogy Vernacularity and "User Friendly" Digital Typesetting: Promoting Sacred Harp Singing in Texas, 1991–2012

The experience of singers promoting Sacred Harp in Texas during the period between the publication of these two digital retypeset editions of the Cooper and Denson revision-chains sheds light on how the relative vernacularity of contemporaneous editions of the tunebook has affected singers' use of particular editions, activities promoting Sacred Harp singing, and views of the tunebooks' connection to archaic southern rurality. Texas has featured active Sacred Harp singings since the mid-1850s, yet no editions have been published in the state and few singers have actively participated in revision processes. Perhaps because of the state's relative distance from Sacred Harp publishing activity, singings in Texas have adopted a wider range of the competing revisions of *The Sacred Harp*, and have shifted their allegiance to *Sacred Harp* editions more frequently than singings in other areas with comparably lengthy histories of participation.



Figure 2.14: Diane Ross and Donald Ross, San Antonio, Texas, February 22, 2014. Photograph by Jesse P. Karlsberg.

Diane Ross and Donald Ross, singers in Dallas, Texas, with family histories of participation in Sacred Harp singing rooted in the central Texas area between Austin and San Antonio, and the

East Texas counties around Henderson, respectively, have been engaged in promoting Sacred Harp singing across the state since the 1960s. Diane Ross invokes Sacred Harp's association with past generations in describing the challenge of promoting the style to people familiar with the aesthetic of small singings affected by rural depopulation,

> **Diane Ross:** Well I tell people that Sacred Harp can be the most beautiful music you've ever heard or the most gosh awful. And—you know—it depends. I think that it's hurt us in the past in these rural areas because, [people think] "that's the music granddaddy sang or daddy sang. I just don't want any part of it." Well I understand if that was their exposure to it and they've never been to a quality singing and see what the music really can sound like, so I think that has hurt us [as] we [have] taught schools … in East Texas.[75]

Diane Ross contrasts this experience of Sacred Harp singing with that "in these new areas in Chicago and Massachusetts" arguing that such singers "don't have the baggage that we have in Alabama and Texas … because it's so new and fresh." Invoking the *old-fogy* label that McGraw sought to contest and ultimately reclaim, Diane Ross elaborates that the "baggage" some in Texas associate with Sacred Harp "is having attended little group singings that sounded absolutely terrible" such that potential singers "associate [Sacred Harp] with old people and some old-fogy stuff and you know it's not relevant to them."[76] Donald Ross explains how he and Diane imagine this association lies behind the unwillingness of members of their Methodist church choir in Henderson to attend a singing.

> **Donald Ross:** We have good friends with whom we sing in church choir, very good musicians, love to sing, but for whatever reason they have never ever darkened the door of a Sacred Harp singing. They've never been. These people like music, love music, but tell me why, why don't they go? And we conclude it's this prejudice that they have about it from someone

[75] Diane Ross and Donald Ross, interview with the author, San Antonio, TX, February 22, 2014.
[76] Ibid.

> else, you know, who said "yeah that's old-fogy stuff" or "you don't want to go to that, it'll be just terrible sounding."[77]

In a Texas Sacred Harp singing context where commitment to a particular edition of *The Sacred Harp* is relatively flexible, the Rosses associate the layout of the non-retypeset Cooper edition with the challenge of attracting new singers to a tradition burdened with the *old-fogy* label.

> **Diane Ross:** … a lot of us really like the Denson book and wanted to start using it more …
> **Jesse P. Karlsberg:** Why use the Denson book?
> **Donald Ross:** Well compared to the older editions of the Cooper book it's just so much better because you have all those etceteras and didn't have very many verses to a lot of the songs so it was just more user friendly.
> **Diane:** Well in all of our teaching classes and trying to start new groups it was very difficult to do that with, especially professional musicians or people who knew music, … and see "etc." [or wonder] "what word do I sing," and then you had to try to explain and it was really, really embarrassing to try to use the old Cooper book in promoting Sacred Harp.
> **Donald:** Yes, we were interested in promoting it and getting new singers and bringing in people and it was just a big frustration. It's so much easier with the "Denson book."[78]

The Rosses highlight two features of the layout of the Cooper book as affecting its value as a tool for introducing new singers to Sacred Harp: the large number of songs featuring the text "etc." in place of additional words of a song's hymn text, and the limited selection of verses. Both these features of nineteenth- and early-twentieth century editions of *The Sacred Harp* result from the challenge of fitting full verses in limited space on the tunebooks' pages and from pressures favoring expediency in typesetting the books' pages. The complicated design of pages of the Cooper and Denson books forced typesetters to hand compose the lines of hymn texts accompanying songs, rather than

[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

employ more efficient Linotype or Monotype machines. Setting a single stanza of text, or just a portion of a stanza with the text "etc." was both more affordable and more expedient than setting multiple verses in full, and didn't dramatically affect the quality of singing from the book for a population of singers familiar with most of the songs' texts from exposure to them over years of participation or through encountering them in hymnbooks printing multiple verses used in church services. Yet as the Rosses recount, when removed from the social context of the editions' early-twentieth-century revisers, these features of the book's vernacular production have more damaging consequences, causing "embarrassment" and exacerbating the "baggage" of association with "old-fogy" rural southern culture.[79] The Rosses focus not on the vernacular pastiche of different font faces and page designs in the Cooper book, but on the challenges the book's layout posed for "user friendl[iness]," a term that recalls computing, invoking the presumed advantages of digital typesetting.

For the Rosses, both the sound of a thinning and aging group of singers and the impractical and out of step layout of the pre-retypeset Cooper book's pages undermined Sacred Harp's potential appeal to urban and urbane musical populations the couple otherwise imagined might take a liking to the music culture. The Rosses favored the digitally retypeset *1991 Edition* of the Denson revision-chain over the 1992 revision of the Cooper book that made use of Stanley Smith's gospel industry–inspired layout techniques. The Rosses cited the practical benefits that resulted from the committee's

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[79] As Kiri Miller notes, other features of *The Sacred Harp* can cause promoters embarrassment in different contexts, such as words derogatory toward Jews, women, and Native Americans accompanying a small number of songs in the tunebook. See Miller, *Traveling Home*, 189–197. In my fieldwork, I have encountered incidents where even the religiosity of the book's texts causes consternation among secular participants seeking to promote Sacred Harp singing to likeminded populations.

efforts to remove instances of "etc." and to add additional verses to a number of songs as well as the book's music which the Rosses contend has "more melodic" harmony parts in places—an oblique reference to gospel music's characteristically static alto and bass lines—and features fewer "Gospel songs [than] the Cooper book."[80] Digitally retypesetting *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* helped the tunebook shed visual components of the "baggage" of Sacred Harp heritage Diane Ross evoked. The committee's "no gospel music" rule accentuated the book's distinctiveness.

The design and contents of the *1991 Edition* led to a surge in the revision-chain's use in Texas. Although Texas singers continued to use the Cooper book at singings with a long history of singing from the edition, singers in the state adopted the *1991 Edition* for singings established after the book's publication, including the reorganized Texas State Sacred Harp Convention (established in 1993) and an all-day singing at Baylor University (established in 2002), and converted to the new book shortly after its publication at the Dallas County Convention (established as a Cooper book singing in 1984).[81] By the time of the publication of the retypeset Cooper book in 2012, most monthly Sacred Harp

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[80] Ibid. Here the Rosses disagree. Diane Ross grew up singing gospel music and enjoys the style. Donald Ross has less appreciation for songs in the gospel idiom.

[81] Prior to 1991, two Texas singings had adopted the *Denson Revision*. Both were founded by individuals who had moved to the state from regions where singers primarily sang from the revision. A *Denson Revision* singing established by a singer from Alabama was briefly held at South Main Baptist Church in Houston during the 1960s. William J. Reynolds, who began singing in 1960s Nashville, established a singing from the *Denson Revision* at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary around 1985; it adopted the *1991 Edition* in 1992 and was renamed in Reynolds's honor in 2004. The Dallas County Convention originated as a "learner's singing" at First Primitive Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, and was later reorganized with this new name, perhaps when the singing adopted the *1991 Edition* at its 1992 session. Robert L. Vaughn, personal communication, February 23, 2015; Beverly Coates, personal communication, February 23, 2015; Donald Ross and Diane Ross, personal communication, April 19, 2015; David W. Music, *William J. Reynolds: Church Musician* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2013), 147; Gaylon L. Powell, "Annual Sacred Harp Singings in Texas," *Sacred Harp Singing in Texas*, accessed January 2, 2015, http://singings.texasfasola.org/annualsingings.html.

singings in Texas featured both revisions.[82] Donald Ross's tunebooks bear evidence that his use of the Denson revision-chain increased after the publication of the *1991 Edition*. Ross has family copies of the Cooper book dating back to 1902. His 1902 copy, as well as a 1960 Cooper book which is the oldest book Ross himself used, show wear evincing considerable use. Ross's earliest Denson book, a copy of the 1971 edition published prior to the book's digital retypesetting, is barely used. His *1991 Edition*, however, shows more wear, suggesting that Ross began singing more out of the Denson revision-chain after the publication of the *1991 Edition*, corresponding with the increase in singings from the edition in Texas.[83]

Diane Ross's criticism of the challenging sound of small, aging Texas singings and of the impractical vernacularity of the 1992 Cooper edition and her elevation of the "new and fresh" exuberant musicality of Chicago singings contrasts with the reverence some Midwestern or Northeastern singers express for mid-twentieth century vernacular Sacred Harp editions and small rural southern singings. Kiri Miller recounts a conversation with one New England singer who describes her "goal in life" as being "either the only foreigner … or one of so few foreigners [at a southern singing] that it doesn't muck up the sound," remarking that she "dread[s] the kind of influence northern singers and music readers are having and continue to have on Sacred Harp singing."[84] In contrast, several singers from Texas, Alabama, and Georgia whom I asked about changes to Sacred

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[82] Of the nine monthly singings held in Texas in 2014, seven used both the Cooper book and the *1991 Edition*. The Kennard singing used only the Cooper book while the Fort Worth singing used only the *1991 Edition*. See Gaylon L. Powell, "Monthly Sacred Harp Singings in Texas," *Sacred Harp Singing in Texas*, accessed January 2, 2015, http://singings.texasfasola.org/monthlysingings.html.

[83] I examined Donald Ross's collection of tunebooks and Sacred Harp material culture during our February 22, 2014 interview.

[84] Miller, *Traveling Home*, 30.

Harp singings in their area over the course of their involvement appreciatively cited the influx of new musically talented singers and the effect of their presence on the sound of southern singings. Ross and these other southern singers contest the nostalgic view of small rural southern singings as authentic preserves of valuable yet precarious oral tradition, instead regarding the sound and "old-foginess" of such singings, and the impracticality of expediently produced *Sacred Harp* editions, as "baggage" impeding promoting Sacred Harp in their areas.

The publication and reception of *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* and the late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century editions of the Cooper book demonstrate Sacred Harp singers' conflicted and conflicting feelings about modernization and vernacular rusticity. The revisers' desire to adopt clean, consistent, digitally typeset designs corresponds with a wish to erase what for some was the embarrassing baggage of a challenging association with "old-foginess." The late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century musical conservatism and digital typography of the 2012 Cooper and 1991 Denson revisions represents a departure from the approach adopted by the editors of the Cooper book across the twentieth century and the Denson book in the mid-twentieth century.[85]

Conclusion

As Sacred Harp singers navigated the social and demographic transformations of the twentieth century, they expressed their anxieties and ambivalences as well as their tastes

[85] Mid-twentieth-century revisions of *The Christian Harmony* and contemporaneous gospel songbooks are examples of other vernacularly published books in the southern hymnody corpus that could benefit from similar comparative analysis.

in decisions about the form and contents of *The Sacred Harp* tunebook. Successive editors of the tunebook renegotiated the location and permeability of its music stylistic borders and strove to modernize the book's bibliographic form, page layout, and typography while constrained by changing technologies of book production. In the period between the publication of *Original Sacred Harp* in 1911 and *The Sacred Harp: 1991 Edition* eighty years later, the slapdash typography and idiosyncratic historical notes in *Original Sacred Harp* appeared quaint to some observers, and marked the tunebook as rural and unsophisticated to others. At the same time, a rising chorus of American music scholars, folklorists, and folk music enthusiasts saw these same features as markers of Sacred Harp singing's authenticity. Some folksong-oriented singers regretted the loss in 1991 of access to James's amusing and informative historical notes, or lamented the retiring of an aesthetic whose vernacularity and rusticity aligned with what Kiri Miller has described as affiliation with Sacred Harp singing fueled by nostalgia for an imagined shared American past.[86] In the next two chapters, I examine the origins of this imaginary past, and the construction and legacy of scholarship that tied it to Sacred Harp singing.

[86] See, especially, Miller, *Traveling Home*, chap. 5.

Chapter 3.

"For What Purpose We Do Not Know": Race, Folklore Genealogies, and the Study of Sacred Harp Singing in the Jim Crow Era

Introduction

In the 1920s and 1930s two scholars from Nashville—George Pullen Jackson, a white professor of German at Vanderbilt, and John Wesley Work III, a black music professor at Fisk—began researching and writing on Sacred Harp singing, spreading awareness of the style to new people and places. Jackson and Work both regarded Sacred Harp as a form of folksong, yet they identified the music with different races and regions. Their divergent backgrounds and disciplinary locations led Jackson and Work to apply different scholarly frames to the study of this musical culture.

For Jackson, Sacred Harp signaled the white admixture of "Scotch-Irish and German, with a small ingredient of English" who had settled Virginia, the Carolinas, and the "far southern fasola belt" of upcountry Georgia and Alabama, where the Scotch-Irish in particular predominated.[1] He regarded Sacred Harp as a type of spiritual folk singing that, along with the singers he called "regular fasola-American[s],"[2] deserved recognition as a wellspring of the culture of the American nation. Jackson sought to elevate this population sometimes "dubbed 'poor whites' [as] those people who have not yet turned from their ancient attitudes toward life values and adopted the current commercially

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[1] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, 158–159. Jackson drew both population data about and support for his veneration of the group he identified as whites of the southern uplands from John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (1921: New York, Russell Sage Foundation).
[2] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, 159.

standardized ones."[3] Jackson viewed the white southern upcountry residents he identified with Sacred Harp as intransigent preservers of the past worthy of veneration.

For Work, Sacred Harp represented the music making of a localized group of rural black folk of the plantation South. Work learned about singers in the racially mixed southeastern Alabama Wiregrass from a student from Dale County who attended Fisk's summer program for teachers. Although Work's only publication on Sacred Harp, a 1941 study in the *Journal of American Folklore*, is frustratingly brief, it illuminates race relations at an early twentieth-century black singing, and is notable for its avoidance of Jackson's term "white spirituals." Work's article also offers a nuanced rendering of its author's class and status position and how this affected his interactions with black shape-note singers.[4]

Jackson's 1926 essay in *Musical Courier* marks the beginning of a sustained commitment to documenting and promoting white Sacred Harp singing both among the regular fasola-Americans of the southern upcountry and beyond.[5] Jackson undertook these activities fueled increasingly by a desire to locate the group he saw as Anglo-Celtic folk progenitors of spirituals at the root of a new national American culture drawing on what he viewed as the country's folk heritage. Jackson sought to emulate the characterization of black spirituals as America's folk music. He named Sacred Harp "white spirituals" and drew on similarities between songs in black spiritual collections and tunebooks such as *The Sacred Harp* to argue that black spirituals were derivatives of tunes and texts from shape-note tunebooks. In doing so, Jackson conflated prior

[3] Ibid., 114.
[4] Work, "Plantation Meistersinger."
[5] Jackson, "The Fa-Sol-La Folk."

publication with first authorship and assumed that white creativity animated the early nineteenth-century camp meetings where, drawing on hymnologist and historian Louis F. Benson, he contended the germs of such spirituals first formed.[6]

Jackson's advocacy for an American national culture rooted in Anglo-Celtic folksong dovetailed with a personal investment in white Sacred Harp's future. He hoped that Sacred Harp singers would embrace a refined, modern style and by doing so enable the melodies he saw as its most important legacy to survive modernization, gain wide renown, and come into regular use. He pursued this goal in Nashville, cultivating an unusually class- and status-privileged group of white Sacred Harp singers and enthusiasts that included academics, ministers, and members of the church music elite, and forged enduring, if at times strained, connections with the Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama Sacred Harp singers whom he also visited. Although supportive of black gospel or spiritual singers and interested in black vernacular religious practices, Jackson largely ignored black Sacred Harp singing in his publications on the style, and came to resent the attention that black spirituals attracted from the liberal northern philanthropists who donated to black southern universities in the wake of tours of ensembles performing black spirituals and scholars and popular commenters who viewed the style as America's folk music.

The two scholars' publications on Sacred Harp singing helped to dig deep channels through which future scholarship filtered. Their work on Sacred Harp singing joined with scholarship and commercial recording projects tying races and places to other genres classed as "folk." Jackson's construction of Sacred Harp as a white practice with a

[6] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, chap. 19–20.

single exceptional group of black practitioners conditioned the experiences of new singers who encountered the style through the folk music movement into which Jackson and Work placed *The Sacred Harp*. These scholars' writing also identified the particular groups of singers Jackson and Work visited with the narrative they helped construct. The terrain charted in the combined scholarship of Jackson and Work located the white Alabama and Georgia James/Denson book singers Jackson described at its center and the black Alabama Wiregrass singers Work documented at its periphery while identifying both groups as carriers of Sacred Harp tradition.

Jackson and Work approached Sacred Harp singing through disparate and racially bifurcated folklore scholarship genealogies. These different genealogies affected how the scholars understood Sacred Harp singing and their depth of engagement with the style.

George Pullen Jackson and Folklore's German Romantic Filter

Early in his scholarly career, Jackson received training as a scholar of German and spent time studying and teaching in three German cities—Dresden, Munich, and Bonn—interspersed with teaching appointments and studies at a number of universities in the United States. Jackson's scholarly work during this period engaged the German Romantic nationalism of Johann Gottfried Herder, who championed folksong collection and argued that the expression of a national *Volk* was rooted in Germany's land and constitutive of its natural character.[7] Jackson encountered through Herder a conception of folk culture rooted in a particular environment and, as folklore researcher John Bealle argues, as

[7] On the emergence in Europe of the concept of "folk music" in the connection between natural and national culture, see Matthew Benjamin Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Matthew Benjamin Gelbart, "'The Language of Nature': Music as Historical Crucible for the Methodology of Folkloristics," *Ethnomusicology* 53, no. 3 (October 1, 2009): 363–95.

constitutive of national identity necessary to cultural strength and patriotism. Perhaps motivated by rising popular and scholarly antipathy toward German studies as World War I loomed in the 1910s, Jackson turned this German Romanticism–inspired scholarly orientation toward the American cultural landscape, where he was disturbed by a lack of interest in and documentation of folksong.[8] In a 1939 talk, Jackson described how this continental orientation led him to an interest in American vernacular music.

> Through a chain of circumstances my interest centered eventually on the poetry and art-music, and then the folk-song, of some European nations; I learned of the European recognition of the importance of folk-song both for its own sake and as the proper basis of poetic and musical art-developments in their lands. Such observations led me subsequently to cast about in my own land, to see if perhaps similar folk-song conditions and intelligent recognition of them obtained here; for I was culturally quite patriotic, with a touch of the missionary. But I soon found the American scene rather dark. No one seemed to know or care whether we had any folk music or not. This, in the first decade of the present century.[9]

Jackson's incredulity at the lack of interest in or knowledge about American folk traditions hints at the missionary zeal that would later characterize his promotion of Sacred Harp singing. Jackson's interest in "the European recognition of the importance of folk-song … as the proper basis of poetic and musical development in their lands" furnished him with a framework in which he placed Sacred Harp singing as a tradition of the American *Volk* around which to fashion a more robust national culture. In furnishing an understanding of folk music as rooted in a national environment, Herder equipped Jackson to interpret the American folk music he hoped to identify as both rooted in the British Isles but also adapted to the "conditions" of the United States, having been transplanted to and currently flourishing in American soil.

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[8] Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 104–07.
[9] Jackson, "Some Enemies of Folk-Music in America," 87.

When he encountered Sacred Harp singing in 1926 Jackson immediately recognized the practice as the American folk music he had been seeking. He conceived of the style as threatened by modernity from the same moment. Jackson first attended a July 4th singing in Helicon, Alabama, located in rural Winston County north of Birmingham. Jackson's journey to the singing amplified his perception of its rurality, involving a train ride to the nearest station followed by "two hours of driving over sandy roads" to a crossroads with "simply a little aged, unpainted school-house-church" where "deeper into the woods [there were] mules, scores of them hitched to trees." In this remote location, "no town, … not even what is locally termed a 'place'" in the rural Alabama upcountry,[10] Jackson was free to imagine the style as a survival of a rugged pre-modern culture of the Appalachian mountains, and to conceive of what he encountered as its collision with the modern present. Jackson returned two weeks later to attend a singing in bustling Birmingham, a city that had grown dramatically since he himself had lived there as a child in the 1880s. As a former resident involved in classical music and other high status activities during his time in the city, Jackson likely associated musical differences with class-cultural differences between the Sacred Harp singers and the socially elite strata of Birmingham society of which he had been a part. These distinctions led Jackson to see Sacred Harp singing not as a viable system of music making and pedagogy, but as an archaic cultural practice.[11]

[10] Jackson, "The Fa-Sol-La Folk," 6.
[11] For similarly archaizing coverage of Sacred Harp singing in early twentieth-century Birmingham newspapers, see Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 92–93.



Figure 3.1: A Fourth of July Singing, Helicon, Alabama, July 4, 1926. Photographs by George Pullen Jackson. Jackson captioned this matrix of photographs from the first Sacred Harp singing he attended, "Upper left: Leaders. Upper right: 'Dinner on the Grounds.' Lower left: Mule wagons were the singers' sole means of travel. Lower right: The crowd at noon under the trees. At the right is the little school-church where they sang all day." Courtesy of the family of George Pullen Jackson.

Jackson immediately identified a role for himself negotiating what he understood as the pending collision between Sacred Harp singing practiced by isolated rural singers and the modernizing tendencies of the urban school system. In his first article on Sacred Harp singing, in which he recounted these early trips to Helicon and Birmingham, Jackson singled out the public school as the harbinger of this potentially destructive collision.

> One of those in-coming institutions is the public school. When urban "education" comes into the "Sacred Harp" country what will be the result? When a set of modern teachers takes charge of the remote Helicons, will the old "leaders" and their art be laughed out? Will there then be presented just one more picture of an uprooted and withering "folk" culture? ... Will

> this "new learning" be the death or merely the transfiguration of the Fa-sol-la singing?[12]

Jackson's Herderian understanding of Sacred Harp as a rural cultural retention led him to imagine the incursion of modern urban education boosted by New South ideology as inevitable and damaging. Yet Jackson also understood the potential to affect the form of change resulting from this incursion, envisioning an alternative model that might transform folk culture through valuing and seeking to rehabilitate it.[13] In asking whether "this 'new learning'" will "be the death or merely the transfiguration of the Fa-sol-la singing," Jackson positioned both himself and the urbane readers of the *Musical Quarterly* as arbitrators of this impending change, privileging "transfiguration" as a more favorable outcome than "death."

Jackson's scholarly genealogy, in particular his exposure to German romanticism and his transposition of that framework onto the American cultural landscape, furnished him with a perspective to understand Sacred Harp singing as an important part of fashioning a Herderian American national culture modeled on the creative expression of the *Volk*. From the 1930s to his death in 1953, Jackson enlisted an expanding cast of both white Sacred Harp singers in Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, and Texas, and a cadre of Nashville-based scholars in promoting Sacred Harp and related musics as the foundation for a national American musical culture.

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[12] Jackson, "The Fa-Sol-La Folk," 10.

[13] Jackson's hope to affect the form of Sacred Harp's transfiguration resembles the motivations of the founders of settlement schools then being established across Appalachia. See Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*.

Jackson's categorization of Sacred Harp singing as folk culture affected his observations when attending Sacred Harp singing conventions. Jackson's annotations on his copy of *Original Sacred Harp* while sitting in the class at the September 1936 session of the United Sacred Harp Musical Association in Atlanta, Georgia, document a preoccupation with the musical mode in which participants sang minor songs, a central concern of folksong scholarship. At the singing he heard several songs in minor sung with the sixth scale degree raised such that they seemed to him to be in the Dorian mode, rather than the notated Aeolian mode. He recorded as "Dorian, at Atlanta, Sep 1936," several songs sung that day in his book.[14] Jackson shared this preoccupation with modal melodies with contemporaneous folk music promoters, such as White Top Folk Festival founders Annabel Morris Buchanan and John Powell. Buchanan and Powell saw the use of modal scales such as Dorian and Mixolydian as characteristic of a premodern stage in folk music's historical development and like Jackson, feared that popular music was driving out modal archaisms in the modern world. Powell and Buchanan gleefully reported survivals of Dorian melodies in the repertoire of Virginia fiddle and banjo players, and encouraged musicians to retain the sound, showing one player whose renditions veered between modes "how to keep it dorian."[15]

Jackson's Herderian understanding of Sacred Harp as a rural cultural retention led him to imagine the incursion of modern urban education boosted by New South ideology as inevitable and damaging. Jackson's public presentations of Sacred Harp singing

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[14] See, for example, in Jackson's copy of J. S. James et al., eds., *Original Sacred Harp* (Atlanta, GA, 1929), 211, 278, 498. George Pullen Jackson Collection of Southern Hymnody, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California Los Angeles.
[15] Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*, 231–32.

sometimes expressed his ambivalence about the relationship between folk music and art music. His presentations evinced his belief that the vernacular style could serve as the basis of a high status national culture rooted in folksong as well as his sense, as articulated in his note to Stith Thompson, that Sacred Harp singing was appealing in its then-present form. Jackson and Irving Wolfe, a music professor at Nashville's George Peabody College for Teachers whom Jackson introduced to Sacred Harp singing, presented a program in 1948 at the Music Educators' National Conference in Detroit, Michigan, that positioned Sacred Harp mid-way along the evolution of the folksong, between Appalachian folk singing and contemporary concert performance. After a talk by Jackson, the presentation featured

> Tennessee folksinger/composer Charlie Bryan singing three or four secular folk songs to his own accompaniment on Appalachian dulcimer, each folk song followed by a group of around fifty Sacred Harp singers led by Paine Denson singing the Sacred Harp tune based on the folk song. This was followed by the Peabody Madrigalians, a small vocal ensemble led by [Wolfe], singing a concert arrangement of the Sacred Harp tune. The session concluded with a general singing by the Sacred Harp singers presented to an enthusiastic audience of some 2,000 people.[16]

This session presented Sacred Harp singing as an authentic, white folk practice located in the past that required refinement in order to reach the present occupied by the

[16] Charles Faulkner Bryan (1911–55) was a composer, folksong collector, and professor at Peabody along with Wolfe. Bryan composed *Singin' Billy*, an opera based on the life of South Carolina shape-note music composer-teacher-compiler William Walker. In "Irving Wolfe, a Daughter's Perspective," her introduction to an essay by Irving Wolfe on George Pullen Jackson's contributions to Sacred Harp singing, Wolfe's daughter Charlotte Wolfe provided the fullest presently available account of Wolfe, Bryan, and Jackson's 1948 Detroit program. See Irving Wolfe, Charlotte Wolfe, and Jesse P. Karlsberg, "Our Debt to George Pullen Jackson," *Sacred Harp Publishing Company Newsletter* 3, no. 1 (May 12, 2014), http://originalsacredharp.com/2014/05/12/our-debt-to-george-pullen-jackson/. See also "Convention Notes," *Music Educators Journal* 34, no. 5 (April 1, 1948): 69; "Music Education Marks Another Advance: 1948 Convention Report," *Music Educators Journal* 34, no. 5 (April 1, 1948): 20–21, doi:10.2307/3387222. A photograph in the 1948 convention report depicts the Peabody Madrigalians seated on stage facing the audience above the group of Sacred Harp singers seated in front of the stage beneath them in a hollow square formation.

Peabody Madrigalians and the audience of music educators at the national conference. Yet by concluding the program with unfettered singing, Jackson and Wolfe destabilized the teleology the bulk of the program set up, demonstrating that Sacred Harp singing, by itself, could be enthusiastically received in the present.



Figure 3.2: Paine Denson leads a group of Sacred Harp singers seated in a hollow square in front of the stage at the Music Educators National Conference, Detroit, Michigan, 1948. Used with permission of *Music Educators Journal*, SAGE Publications.

Jackson's Herderian impulse to channel the course of Sacred Harp's collision with modernity also emerged in his and his Nashville colleagues' remarks to Sacred Harp singers at large singing conventions.[17] In a speech Wolfe delivered at the 1965 session of the United Sacred Harp Musical Association, held that year in Nashville, Jackson's acolyte recounted his mentor's recommendations on how to "bring all Sacred Harp singing up to the best that he had heard." While staying with Cullman, Alabama, singer Ruth Denson

[17] The minutes taken at Sacred Harp singings typically do not record the texts of remarks, focusing instead on the names of song leaders and the page numbers of songs led, but the secretary of the Chattahoochee Musical Convention preserved Jackson's remarks delivered at the convention's 100th annual session in 1952. A special booklet documenting a weeklong Sacred Harp centennial celebration held in Winston County, Alabama, in 1944 describes, but does not reprint the text of, a talk Jackson gave during the presentation of a memorial to the Sacred Harp singing Denson family. See Miller, *The Chattahoochee Musical Convention, 1852–2002*; *Minutes of the Sacred Harp Centennial Celebration: Held at Double Springs, Winston County, Alabama, September 18–24, 1944*, 1944.

Edwards the night before "a special 'school' to consider ways of singing more effectively" Jackson had organized for Sacred Harp singers in the area, Jackson urged that

1. Singers should not try to sing higher than they can sing easily.
2. We tend to sing all songs in a rapid tempo, whereas tempo should be according to the nature of the song.
3. In some classes the singing is always loud, no matter what the words are about.
4. We need to watch the leaders and stay with him exactly. Too often singers around the square try to set the speed, making for a ragged pulse.
5. We should allow time for the rests, not come in ahead of them.[18]

In commending Jackson's recommendations, Wolfe articulated the ambivalence with which Jackson approached his promotion of Sacred Harp singing, noting that "[h]e lauded its virtues and strengths to the whole world; at the same time he worked for greater effectiveness."[19] some of Jackson's recommendations, such as following the leader and observing rests, resonate with teachings at today's singing schools and may have been popular suggestions with the class of singers that listened to Wolfe's speech. Other recommendations, such as adapting volume to a song's content, were then, as now, uncommon at singings, but speak to Jackson and Wolfe's desire to preserve certain characteristics of what they regarded as a folk music while in other ways adapting the style so that it might emerge transfigured by modernity farther along the spectrum the pair programmed at their Music Educators' National Conference presentation.

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[18] Loyd Redding and Joyce Smith, "The United Sacred Harp Musical Association: Nashville, Tennessee September 11–12, 1965," in *Minutes of Carroll, Cobb, Coweta, Douglas, Fulton, Haralson, Heard, Paulding, and Polk Counties, Georgia: Sacred Harp Singings, 1965* (Georgia State Sacred Harp Singing Convention, 1965), 53, http://originalsacredharp.com/museum/minutes-1965-united/.
[19] Ibid., 53–54.

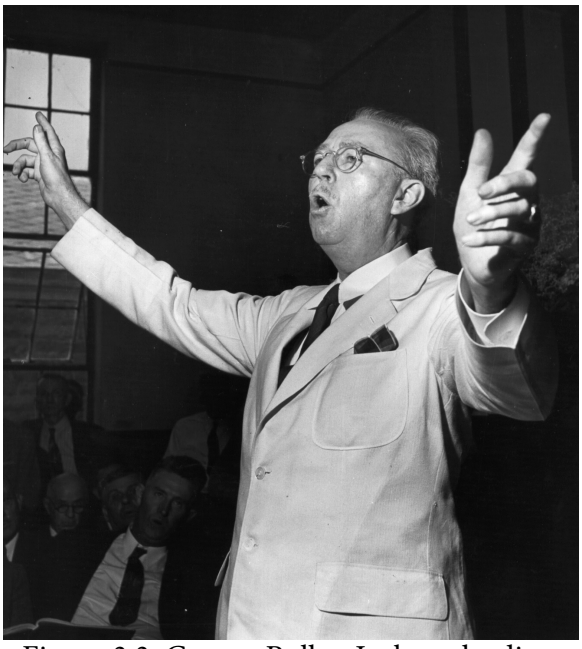

Figure 3.3: George Pullen Jackson leading at Liberty Church, Lawrence, Tennessee, 1942. Courtesy of the family of George Pullen Jackson.

The performance style and appearance of Jackson's Old Harp Singers, an ensemble of Nashville musicians who performed music from *The Sacred Harp* and related sources, demonstrate an approach to cultivating appreciation for "white spirituals" by diverging from Sacred Harp singers' own practices. Jackson established the group in 1934, shortly after the publication of *White Spirituals*. He arranged for the group to tour folk festivals and make radio appearances; an early booking took the group to Powell and Buchanan's 1935 White Top Folk Festival.[20] Though the ensemble never achieved widespread cultural acclaim, Jackson was able to book performances at venues across the country over a nearly twenty-year period of activity. Rather than model the group after the singing associations and conventions he attended, Jackson maintained a fixed membership and directed the group like a chorus. The Old Harp Singers paired what Jackson regarded as folk melodies with refined arrangements and performance styles drawing on European art music models. Songs in Jackson's copy of *Original Sacred Harp* include performance annotations at odds with typical Sacred Harp performance practice,

[20] Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*, 199.

such as dynamics markings he added to the song HOLY MANNA.[21] Other songs have difficult notes marked, extra verses written in, and occasional tone directions,[22] indicating that Jackson sought a level of cultivation in performance when directing the group. The singers' vocal timbres as represented in recordings adopt the vibrato and cultivated restraint of classical technique, rather than the plain full voiced character Jackson had encountered at Sacred Harp singings.

The Old Harp Singers may have adopted this style in order to present themselves and the music they performed as worthy of high cultural status. In naming his group the "Old Harp Singers," Jackson adopted the informal moniker of an East Tennessee singing tradition oriented around singing from a seven-note tunebook called *The New Harp of Columbia*,[23] conspicuously avoiding the name Sacred Harp Singers, which would have more clearly associated his group with the tunebook at the center of the musical culture he promoted. Jackson's embrace of a name specifically signaling the antiquity of Sacred Harp singing aligned with the group's practice of performing in archaic clothing typical not of the contemporary or antebellum South, but with early New England.[24]

The dress and name of the Old Harp Singers represented Sacred Harp as survival of early New England culture later cultivated in the upland South. Jackson's Old Harp Singers bridged the gap between folk and art music. They sought to associate "white spirituals" with the high status crucible of American democracy as a way of elevating the

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[21] James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1929, 59. George Pullen Jackson Collection of Southern Hymnody, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California Los Angeles.
[22] See, for example, Ibid., 159, 218, 222, 426–427.
[23] On the publication history of and practice of singing from *The New Harp of Columbia*, see Marion J. Hatchett, *A Companion to The New Harp of Columbia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003).
[24] On Jackson's Old Harp Singers, see Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 113–114; Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*, 199–200.

style and with it the country singers sometimes "dubbed 'poor whites.'"[25] By doing so Jackson sought to establish that through cultivating Sacred Harp music the "fasola-Americans" of the upland South had rendered it indigenously American, ready to seed a new national art music.

Jackson also sought to directly encourage the incorporation of tunes from *The Sacred Harp* and related shape-note books into art music by leading American composers. Jackson responded to a request from Virgil Thomson for "books used by harp singers today," providing the composer with copies of *The Sacred Harp* and *The New Harp of Columbia* along with information about the relative popularity among "the country singers."[26] Thomson drew on these collections and the information Jackson provided in writing his score for *The River*, a 1937 film about the abuse of waterways in the United States, writing to Jackson that "the best material in the score is all there because you made it available."[27] After the film's publication, Jackson sought to capitalize on Thomson's incorporation of shape-note melodies by suggesting publicity for the film's southern screenings include "a little article about the spirituals [included] and their source."[28] Thomson remained interested in shape-note tunes and Sacred Harp performance style after *The River*, seeking copies of Sacred Harp recordings and corresponding with Jackson into the mid-1940s, and even arranging to travel with

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[25] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, 114.
[26] Virgil Thomson to George Pullen Jackson, telegram, (May 7, 1937), George Pullen Jackson Papers, Collection of Pam Helms, Atlanta, GA; George Pullen Jackson to Virgil Thomson, letter, (May 8, 1937), George Pullen Jackson Papers, Collection of Pam Helms, Atlanta, GA.
[27] Virgil Thomson to George Pullen Jackson, letter, (March 16, 1938), George Pullen Jackson Papers, Collection of Pam Helms, Atlanta, GA.
[28] George Pullen Jackson to Virgil Thomson, letter, (December 29, 1937), George Pullen Jackson Papers, Collection of Pam Helms, Atlanta, GA.

Jackson to the "Big Singing," an annual *Southern Harmony* singing in Benton, Kentucky, during a trip to Nashville in 1941.[29]

As his promotional activities demonstrate, Jackson sought to promote Sacred Harp as folk music organic to American soil and urge its incorporation as the basis of national art music, hoping to negotiate a transfiguration of Sacred Harp singing that would render it compatible with, rather than opposed to, the musics he associated with modernity. Applying Herder's German Romantic view of folksong to America, Jackson argued that the deliberate nineteenth-century imitation of European high culture by Americans, exemplified by the hymnody reforms of Lowell Mason, had produced an unnatural separation between America's art and folk musics. Jackson needed a vehicle to facilitate the cultivation of a new American culture out of Sacred Harp's folksong roots. He settled on Sacred Harp singing. The Fisk Jubilee Singers' performances of black spirituals offer another model in Nashville of how music characterized as folksong might gain widespread cultural acceptance.

John W. Work III, Black Spirituals, and the Veil

Musicologist and Sacred Harp scholar John W. Work III spent most of his career in the orbit of Fisk University in Nashville, a university founded in 1866 in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War for the education of freed black men. From its founding, the university's success was tied to its embrace of spirituals. George L. White founded the university's Fisk Jubilee Singers in 1871. The group toured the United States and Europe until disbanding in 1878, gaining increasing attention for their performance of black

[29] Virgil Thomson to George Pullen Jackson, letter, (May 29, 1941), George Pullen Jackson Papers, Collection of Pam Helms, Atlanta, GA.

spirituals and securing consequential white northern funding and support for the university, then facing decaying facilities and rising enrollment.[30] The Jubilee Singers' successes also fostered popular awareness of spirituals and understanding of the style as musically accomplished black cultural productions in a context where most Americans encountered black music on the minstrel stage. The tours contributed to recognition of black spirituals and as America's first and only native form of folksong. John W. Work II, father of John W. Work III, reorganized the Jubilee Singers in 1898 and led the group until his death in 1925.[31]



Figure 3.4: Jubilee Singers, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, 1870s. Carte de visite from the Gladstone Collection of African American Photographs, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

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[30] Andrew Ward, *Dark Midnight When I Rise: The Story of the Jubilee Singers, Who Introduced the World to the Music of Black America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000).

[31] For more on John W. Work II's leadership of the Jubilee Singers, see Doug Seroff's liner notes to Fisk University Jubilee Quartet, *There Breathes a Hope: The Legacy of John Work II and His Fisk Jubilee Quartet, 1909–1916*, Compact disc (Champaign, IL: Archeophone Records, 2010).

In his study of Sacred Harp singing and other black musics, Work III negotiated a scholarly genealogy rooted in writing on black spirituals. In the early twentieth century, W. E. B. Du Bois, Henry E. Krehbiel, Work II, and James Weldon Johnson argued for the uniqueness, African origins, and American cultural significance of spirituals.[32] Du Bois depicted "sorrow songs" as constitutive of "the souls of black folk," declaring them "the articulate message of the slave to the world. ... They are the music of an unhappy people, of the children of disappointment; they tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways."[33] Later writers echoed Du Bois's articulation of the spirituals' centrality to black experience as well as his depiction of "the Negro folk-song" as "the rhythmic cry of the slave," "the sole American music [and] the most beautiful expression of human experience born this side the seas."[34] Krehbiel described spirituals as "the only considerable body of song which has come into existence" in the United States,[35] a characterization that mirrored Johnson's account of spirituals as "America's only folk music, and … the finest distinctive contribution she has to offer."[36] Together these scholars cemented the position of spirituals as a critical component of national American identity.

For this cohort of largely African American scholars, asserting the black authorship of and influence of the Middle Passage on the spirituals was an attempt to advance acceptance of the musicality, intellectual worth, and humanity of African Americans. Their portrayals contested the thesis of German musicologist Richard

[32] On the scholarly genealogy of spirituals see Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues*, chap. 1.
[33] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 253.
[34] Ibid., 251.
[35] Henry E. Krehbiel, *Afro-America Folksongs* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1914), 22.
[36] James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, *The Books of American Negro Spirituals*, vol. 1 (New York: Viking Press, 1925), 7.

Wallascheck, who relied on an analysis of spirituals as derivative of white European music in arguing for black people's cultural and intellectual inferiority. For Du Bois, and for Fisk Jubilee Singers director Work II, the high status of the Jubilee Singers, represented by their formal dress, art music–inspired arrangements and performance style, and eponymous Jubilee Hall (the first permanent building housing a black institution of higher learning in the United States), made the worth and achievements of African Americans legible to white elites through their respectability and alignment with the values of what Du Bois named "the talented tenth."[37] A notion that this form of spiritual singing, rooted in the trauma of the middle passage and slavery, continued to signal African American experiences, humanity, and as interpreted by the Jubilee Singers, respectability, led Work II, and later Work III, to mobilize the spiritual as a vehicle with which to champion the need for black colleges and universities like Fisk.

Work III and the largely African American folklorists and collectors of spirituals on whose work he built faced manifestations of the "vast veil" that shut out African Americans from the world of white America. Du Bois articulated the veil as a metaphor for persistent and degrading oppression but also as a gift of "second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him

[37] W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative American Negroes of Today*, ed. Booker T. Washington (New York: J. Pott & Company, 1903), 33–75, http://archive.org/details/negroproblemseri00washrich. Du Bois poetically articulated the symbolic power of Jubilee Hall and connected its construction to the legacy of the middle passage represented by spirituals, writing that "in after years when I came to Nashville I saw the great temple builded of these songs [the spirituals] towering over the pale city. To me Jubilee Hall seemed ever made of the songs themselves, and its bricks were red with the blood and dust of toil. Out of them rose for me morning, noon, and night, bursts of wonderful melody, full of the voices of my brothers and sisters, full of the voices of the past." See Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 150–151.

see himself through the revelation of the other world."[38] Just as Herderian folklore filtered Jackson's recognition, collection, and promotion of what he termed "white spirituals," Work III conducted his research on Sacred Harp singing, spirituals, and secular black vernacular music from behind the veil, informed by a scholarly genealogy and set of life experiences that provided him with a "double-consciousness, … always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity."[39]

Work III's career illustrates how the musicologist's scholarly background informed his research methods and subjects and demonstrates the challenges of financing research and advancing professionally as a black academic in segregated twentieth-century Nashville. Work grew up in Nashville, where his father was a professor at Fisk. After studying music in New York at the Institute of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School of Music), Work succeeded his father and mother at Fisk where he was hired as an instructor in the music department in 1927. Work's scholarly interests mirrored those of his father and uncle, Frederick Jerome Work (also a Fisk professor) in spanning black



Figure 3.5: John W. Work III, March 1934. Courtesy of the John Work Collection of Negro Folk Music from the Southeast (AFC 1941/035), American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

[38] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 2, 3.
[39] Ibid., 3.

folksong collecting, composition in European-oriented art music styles, and a blending of the two in arranging spirituals. Motivated in part by study with Yale University music professor George Herzog during a 1932 Rosenwald Fellowship, Work's folksong collecting interests also extended beyond the spirituals on which his predecessors focused to embrace a variety of black secular genres.[40] Work also innovated methodologically, adopting a comparative musicological approach when planning fieldwork early in his career. Thanks in part to the encouragement of Herzog, Work moved past his father's and uncle's orientation toward collection and transcription to additionally interrogate the social context of the cultural practices he documented, which as musicologist Bruce Nemerov and writer and filmmaker Robert Gordon note, effectively anticipated "what would come to be called ethnomusicology decades later."[41]

Work's ability to carry out his methodologically and topically innovative research program was impeded by racial politics at Fisk University in the 1930s and 1940s. Thomas Elsa Jones, a liberal white Quaker who served as president of Fisk from 1926–46, had relaxed many of the divisive paternalistic policies of his predecessor, Fayette Avery McKenzie, and had increased black faculty appointments at the university. Yet Jones and Work were never personally close, and despite Jones's recruitment of prominent black academics to join Fisk's faculty, the university president passed over Work for promotions and three times appointed white colleagues as chair of Work's music department. In addition to denying Work career advancement, Jones and music

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[40] John W. Work, Lewis Wade Jones, and Samuel C. Adams, *Lost Delta Found: Rediscovering the Fisk University–Library of Congress Coahoma County Study, 1941–1942*, ed. Robert Gordon and Bruce Nemerov (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), 3–4; Gordon Nemerov's liner notes to Nathan Frazier et al., *John Work III: Recording Black Culture*, Compact disc (Woodbury, TN: Spring Fed Records, 2008), 2–3.
[41] Work, Jones, and Adams, *Lost Delta Found*, 4.

department chair Harold Schmidt limited Work's ability to carry out research. Struggling to support a large extended family, Work conducted his early fieldwork without research funding from Fisk. When Work, who was familiar with George Pullen Jackson's *White Spirituals of the Southern Uplands*,[42] learned of black participation in Sacred Harp singing from a student at Fisk's summer Educator's Sessions, which served as opportunities for black schoolteachers from Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia to obtain professional training, he financed three trips to conduct fieldwork starting with a visit from September 24–25, 1938, and a subsequent trip on November 28, 1938, to make field recordings.[43]

Work's mentor Herzog encouraged him to undertake research on Sacred Harp singing and to intervene in Jackson's scholarship in *White Spirituals*, specifically naming Jackson's text in a letter to Work. Herzog framed the need for Work's intervention around the debate on the origin of spirituals, urging the young musicologist to emphasize the original contributions of African Americans to folksong as a corrective to "men of great scholarship like Guy B. Johnson and George Pullen Jackson" who he argued "may not see the problem in full perspective."[44] Herzog encouraged Work that "you who have so much more access to the material and a more intimate acquaintance with the background" would be well positioned to articulate the fuller perspective that he believed

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[42] Letter from Herzog to Work in John Work III Collection, Special Collections, Franklin Library, Fisk University, quoted in Ibid., 3–4.

[43] Work notes "I have already made three trips at my own expense" in a letter asking for funds for a fourth trip dated November 1, 1938 in John Work III Collection, Special Collections, Franklin Library, Fisk University, quoted in Ibid., 5–6.

[44] Letter from Herzog to Work in John Work III Collection, Special Collections, Franklin Library, Fisk University, quoted in Ibid., 3–4. Jackson positions his analysis of black spirituals as adaptations of the revival choruses published in shape-note tunebooks he described as "white spirituals" as furthering Guy B. Johnson's analysis of the "musical side of the camp-meeting songs" in Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930). See Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, 244–46.

escaped Jackson.[45] Yet finances limited the depth of Work's engagement. Work could only afford dime-store blanks with limited fidelity and recording time for his Sacred Harp recordings. Around the time Work's article on black Sacred Harp singers was published, he scrapped a plan to bring the black shape-note singers he had profiled to Fisk for a May 2, 1941, concert celebrating Fisk's seventy-fifth anniversary due to a lack of funds supporting the program.[46]

Work's fieldwork documenting Sacred Harp singing in Ozark and Samson in the South Alabama Wiregrass led him to conceive of a larger project in 1940, combining sociological and comparative musicological methods, centered in the area around Natchez, Mississippi. The strength of Work's proposal, and subsequent interest of Alan Lomax at the Library of Congress, moved Fisk's administration to commit some funding for the project, but despite the support of Fisk social sciences division head Charles S. Johnson, Lomax and Jones steadily minimized Work's role in conducting fieldwork and influencing the organization of the study during its planning and execution from 1940–1943. Largely relegated to a makeshift transcription studio in Johnson's sociology department building at Fisk, rather than the project's field site in Mississippi's Coahoma County (or his own music department, which declined to provide studio space), Work increasingly conceived of his contribution as focused on transcription and scholarly analysis, rather than collection. Gordon and Nemerov argue that Work may have "regarded his scholarship, and the published work that was to come out of it, as pre-

[45] Letter from Herzog to Work in John Work III Collection, Special Collections, Franklin Library, Fisk University, quoted in Work, Jones, and Adams, *Lost Delta Found*, 3–4.
[46] Frazier et al., *John Work III*, 6, 8.

eminent and far more important than Lomax's collection of the material,"[47] a reorientation that characterized his later career away from fieldwork.

Work's writing on the Coahoma County research documented an early and remarkable turn away from the emphasis on spirituals advanced by his father's generation to a more nuanced portrayal of music and its social context in Coahoma County that acknowledges a generically diverse musical culture in flux. In his Coahoma County fieldwork, Lomax displayed his indebtedness to folklore's filter, persistently asking interview subjects about their knowledge of older song forms such as spirituals. Work, in interpreting Lomax's findings, noted "in the Delta church of today, with the exception of the Holiness Church, the spirituals are fast disappearing from the service. In many of the churches they are not sung at all." Displaying an awareness of change, rather than an affiliation with the past, Work found that the spirituals' "highly rhythmic character … has become offensive to" the members of the church, who preferred "more conventional hymns and gospel-songs" that were "easier" to perform thanks to the possibility of accompaniment on recently introduced pianos and organs.[48]

Work articulated a position at odds with the prioritization of "sorrow songs" that characterized the work of Du Bois, Krehbiel, Johnson, and Work II. His consideration of the full range of black worship and music making in Coahoma County also differs from the perspective of Zora Neale Hurston, who elevated the "jagged harmony" and "dissonances" of "genuine Negro spirituals" over the music "being sung by the concert artists and glee clubs," negatively classing such "works of Negro composers or adaptors"

[47] Work, Jones, and Adams, *Lost Delta Found*, 21.
[48] Ibid., 52.

as "*based* on the spirituals."[49] Hurston targeted Work's father and his colleagues at other black colleges and universities in this discussion of "spirituals and neo-spirituals," articulating the economic and social class–based elitism of the Fisk Jubilee Singers' quest for funding and respectability. She articulated black charismatic Christianity as an important retention of African beliefs and practices and representative of class-based resistance to black elites, arguing that "[t]he Sanctified Church is a protest against the high-brow tendency in Negro Protestant congregations as the Negroes gain more education and wealth."[50] Like Work, Hurston articulated black folksong as in flux. Yet Hurston embraced the contemporary "new era of spiritual-making" for its contrast to the adoption of "white concepts" by proponents of arranged spirituals such as the Jubilee Singers.[51] The new songs of the "Sanctified Church," Hurston contended, were "putting back into Negro religion those elements which were brought over from Africa and grafted onto Christianity as soon as the Negro came in contact with it,"[52] a view aligned with Melville Herskovits's identification of "Africanisms" in African American culture and in contrast with Du Bois's relegation of spirituals to the past as "sorrow songs" from the antebellum period.[53] Where Hurston sought to emphasize the authenticity and liberatory capacity of the music making of rural and lower class congregations across the South where she conducted fieldwork, Work minimized spirituals and instead emphasized the

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[49] Zora Neale Hurston, *The Sanctified Church* (Turtle Island, 1981), 80.
[50] Ibid., 103.
[51] Ibid., 104, 106.
[52] Ibid., 104.
[53] Melville Jean Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941); Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, chap. 14. For a later articulation of black music in the United States as in flux but indebted to the music of the African continent, see Richard Alan Waterman, "African Influence on the Music of the Americas," in *Acculturation in the Americas*, ed. Sol Tax (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 207–18.

diverse class backgrounds and musical orientations of Coahoma County's black population.[54]

Despite his recognition of the dynamism and social context of black vernacular music making, Work was excluded from the field during the Coahoma County study and denied the opportunity to publish his manuscript analyzing the project's field recordings thanks to political maneuvering by Lomax. Frustration with the way the project unfolded prompted Work to reconsider his scholarly program, ultimately leading him back to the arrangement and promotion of refined spirituals that his father had followed Du Bois in championing. After the conclusion of the study's fieldwork, Work pushed mightily to bring his manuscript to publication and earn credit for his analysis, writing to Fisk administrators, and to Lomax and his colleagues at the Library of Congress. Yet Lomax's lack of organization and paternalistic jockeying for recognition led to delays and frequent changes of course in plans for the project, even as recordings and writings by the various project members accumulated in Washington. Work's manuscript was lost, found, and finally misplaced again at the Library of Congress in the mid-1940s. A photograph of Work's from the initial field work trip and some fragments of a master's thesis on the study by Work's Fisk colleague Samuel C. Adams surfaced long after Work's 1967 death without attribution in Lomax's 1993 book on the project, *The Land Where the Blues Began*.[55] Work's draft manuscript only achieved publication after its discovery by writer and filmmaker Robert Gordon in the archives of Lomax's Association for Cultural Equity

[54] Work, Jones, and Adams, *Lost Delta Found*.
[55] Alan Lomax, *The Land Where the Blues Began* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993). For a detailed account of correspondence between Work and Lomax in the wake of the Coahoma County and the inclusion of research by Fisk participants in the study in Lomax's 1993 book, see Work, Jones, and Adams, *Lost Delta Found*, 23–25.

in early 2000s.[56] In 1946, while Work was negotiating with Library of Congress staff as his manuscript slipped into obscurity, his supporter Johnson succeeded Jones as president of Fisk and speedily appointed Work chair of the music department and director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers. With this platform, Work found more interest in his scholarship and capacity to advance his professional and scholarly goals as a promoter of the neo-spirituals Hurston decried than as a promoter of the sacred and secular vernacular music making of rural blacks. From his position behind the veil, Work may have recognized the political prudency of this scholarly reorientation, or he may simply have adapted to the professional realities he faced. Work achieved newfound recognition as a composer, arranger, and as promoter of the Jubilee Singers. He never returned to the study of Sacred Harp singing or to fieldwork.

Located at elite institutions of higher learning in the same city from 1930s–1950s, Work and Jackson studied race and folksong informed by parallel scholarly genealogies, and only periodically came into contact in their writing and professional activities. The two scholars advanced different ideological goals, both motivated by a desire to ground American national culture in folksong. Work looked through the veil at a world where his professional achievement was imperiled by his racial identity and sought to adapt his scholarly pursuits to the opportunities he encountered, ultimately advancing the respectable arrangements of spirituals his father had helped center in American culture and tie to the advancement of perceptions of black humanity. Jackson sided with Wallaschek, Newman I. White, and Guy B. Johnson in the debate over the origins of spirituals, arguing for their development in early nineteenth-century camp meetings, and

[56] Work, Jones, and Adams, *Lost Delta Found*, xvi.

basis in the "melodic idiom" of the British Isles as justification for regarding them as the musical root of American national identity. Jackson piggybacked on the successful centering of black spirituals in discussions of American folk culture in describing the object of his own scholarly activity as white spirituals.

Jackson's Vision of Black Sacred Harp Singing

In contrast with Jackson's wide variety of strategies in promoting "white spirituals," Jackson's publications on Sacred Harp singing rendered black practitioners of the style nearly invisible. The whiteness of Sacred Harp singing in Jackson's portrayals is not a natural reflection of Jackson's focus on white Sacred Harp singers, but a consequence of the limited geographical reach of his fieldwork, which centered on overwhelmingly white areas, and the irrelevance of black singers to his commitment to representing Sacred Harp singing as a white potential wellspring of a new American culture as an alternative to and precursor of black spirituals. Jackson's fieldwork prior to the publication of his 1933 *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* took him to southern counties with predominantly white populations. He made several return trips to the North Alabama area where he first attended white singings and traveled to white singings in his home state of Tennessee. Jackson made two trips to large white conventions in Atlanta, Georgia, and Mineral Wells, Texas. No evidence suggests a purposeful avoidance of areas with high black populations, but Jackson's approach to fieldwork nonetheless minimized the possibility of encountering black singing populations. Jim Crow limited black singers' ability to attend white singings and rendered travel across county lines dangerous for black southerners, potentially limiting the range of black singing networks, and

decreasing the likelihood Jackson would encounter their representatives during his travels. Even when Jackson ventured to areas with large black populations, such as Atlanta, his plan to attend a specific meeting of a white convention made it unlikely he would encounter black singers. Jackson corresponded with singers across the wider swath of the southern United States where singings were held, learning about a thriving network of white singings on the Texas–Arkansas border, for example. Yet geographical selectivity in Jackson's correspondence again minimized his likelihood of encountering thriving networks of black Sacred Harp singings. After minimal investigation, Jackson concluded that Mississippi was largely devoid of Sacred Harp singings, white and black, primarily basing this assumption on "the rarity of singers from that state attending the big conventions in other states as delegates."[57] Although Jackson was aware of a "distinct organization" of white Sacred Harp singers in South Alabama, another area where black singings thrived in the 1930s, his letters to the publishers of the area's Cooper revision of *The Sacred Harp* "ha[d] not been answered."[58] White Sacred Harp networks in South Alabama and Mississippi were concentrated in areas with higher black populations, but Jackson's limited contact again rendered it unlikely he would encounter the black Sacred Harp singing networks also in the state. Jackson's positionality and interest in establishing Sacred Harp's status as an Anglo-Celtic wellspring of American folk culture influenced his travel and correspondence, skewing his data collection and sampling to minimize the presence of black Sacred Harp singing.

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[57] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, 109–110.
[58] Ibid., 106.

Jackson adopted a broader focus in his writing on the gospel singing traditions he depicted as derivative of Sacred Harp in *White Spirituals*, researching and commenting on singers across the South and West, including black seven-note gospel singing across the South and urban North, and Native American shape-note gospel singing in Oklahoma. *White Spirituals* represents an unprecedented conglomeration of networks of singers Jackson regarded as connected thanks to their incorporation of shape-note music notation and which he tied to a history dating to the New England singing schools of the eighteenth century. While his narrative devotes two chapters to comparison of black spiritual melodies and texts to repertoire from white shape-note tunebooks to portray the black songs as derivative, and two pages to an account of black gospel singing as an imitation of white gospel singing, the 433-page book makes no mention of black participation in Sacred Harp singing. Jackson's inclusion of black practices he portrayed as derivative of white Sacred Harp singing, and his exclusion of black Sacred Harp singing from the narrative, illustrate his interest in characterizing white Sacred Harp singing as an overlooked resource for American national culture. Even as Jackson credited black singers of spirituals with musical ability and creativity, his articulation of Sacred Harp singing as "white spirituals" appropriated the positioning of black spirituals as America's only folk music by Du Bois, Krehbiel, and James Weldon Johnson, among others.[59]

[59] Jackson suggested that black changes to "white spirituals" "were, as a whole, brought about by the Negro's traditional (African, if you please) feeling as to what song should be and by his unconscious approach, with the given material, to his own manner in song. Such an examination" of these changes, Jackson predicted, "would probably show that the Negro has simplified the tunes in matters of pitch compass, loosened up the exactions of their scale intervals, and complicated their simple rhythmic trend." Jackson's assumption that the black spirituals he compares with revival choruses from *The Sacred Harp* and related tunebooks are black adaptations of white originals distorts his analysis, yet he acknowledges black creativity. Although Jackson quotes Wallascheck's characterization of black spirituals as "mere imitations of European compositions" without challenging its dismissive tone, he avoids this negative valence in his own writing

Jackson evinces limited awareness of black Sacred Harp singing in his first book published after John W. Work III's fieldwork and scholarship on black Sacred Harp singing in the Alabama Wiregrass. In *White and Negro Spirituals* Jackson contrasts black Sacred Harp singers with white Sacred Harp singers who, he claims, resisted musical "miscegenation," a term ordinarily implying racial mixing and here used to describe adulterating Sacred Harp music with gospel styles. In contrast, Jackson argues that white singers held steadfast to the "old tradition," effectively casting their lot with the past, leading to ever decreasing numbers. Jackson valorizes this "intransigen[ce]," saying that these white singers "are being defeated by time; but they are taking their defeat standing up."[60]

In three paragraphs, Jackson depicted black singing in different terms, highlighting a "lighter cultural ballast" signifying a presumed erasure of culture due to the trauma of slavery rendering blacks more open to adopting new cultural practices as one reason that black singers had adopted gospel more readily than whites. Jackson portrayed the contents of Judge Jackson's *Colored Sacred Harp*, a 1934 shape-note tunebook containing the compositions of black South Alabama composers and arrangers,[61] as a repository of music derivative of, and in some cases, directly imitative of "practically every song style in the American white man's repertory." Jackson continued,

> Each song is given an author … and an exact date of composition. But despite these definite source assertions, the pages of the book reveal versions of (a) three old revival spiritual songs (pp. 19, 54 and 91) (b) one

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and ascribes to black adapters "various and quite radical changes," in contrast with Wallascheck's description of "slight variations." See Ibid., 243, 273.

[60] Jackson, *White and Negro Spirituals*, 274.

[61] Judge Jackson, ed., *The Colored Sacred Harp* (Ozark, AL: Judge Jackson, 1934).

> old folk hymn of praise (p. 16), (c) the ancient psalm tune "Windham" (p. 39), and (d) three well known gospel hymns (pp. 31, 62, and 68).
>
> In taking over the whole equipment of the white fa-sol-la folk (four-shape notation, dispersed harmony, melody in the tenor, shape and title of book) the black composers and singers also adopted the hoary "fuguing" technic, or rather, a derivative form of it, for dozens of their songs. And it should be said to the credit of the makers of such songs that their product seems to be about as "original" as is that of the more recent "fuguists" whose productions have found their way into the white *Sacred Harp*.[62]

Motivated by ideology, Jackson based his characterization of *The Colored Sacred Harp* as imitative on his readings, some erroneous, of just eight songs in the ninety-six–page book. Jackson's rendering reads as dismissive today, but it may in fact have been intended as a tentative endorsement. In crediting black Sacred Harp composers with "taking over the whole equipment of the white fa-sol-la folk," including "practically every song style in the American white man's repertory," Jackson implies that contributors to *The Colored Sacred Harp* have skills, agency, and literacy equal to twentieth-century white "fuguists." Jackson groups black and white twentieth-century composers together as authors of "derivative" music, a stance in keeping with his articulation of Sacred Harp singing as significant primarily because of its retention of the music of early America.

Retelling this narrative a year later in his *The Story of the Sacred Harp*, Jackson eliminated his comparison to contemporaneous white singers, emphasizing what he regarded as the derivative quality of black contributions to *The Colored Sacred Harp* without as clearly articulating this quality as a black accomplishment.

> If imitation is the sincerest flattery, the Sacred Harp folk should be pleased with *The Colored Sacred Harp*. For this book, edited by J. Jackson for the negro Dale County (Ala.) Musical Institute and the Alabama and Florida Union State Convention, and published in 1934 in Ozark, Alabama—is

[62] Jackson, *White and Negro Spirituals*, 274.

> clearly inspired by the white man's Sacred Harp and its song tradition. It has the same oblong shape and dimensions, the same fa-sol-la solmization, four-shape notation and four-part harmonization, and the same sorts of song—Old Baptist, revival spirituals, and fuguing tunes. And despite the fact that each tune is signed by a "composer," I find many of them merely variants of the white Sacred Harp melodies. The white singers greet the singers of *The Colored Sacred Harp* and wish them success in their undertaking.[63]

The abbreviated nature of these accounts contributed to folklorist Joe Dan Boyd's perception of Jackson's limited awareness of and "curious deficiency of … interest in Judge Jackson and *The Colored Sacred Harp*,"[64] what Boyd described as "on hindsight [his] unfathomable and unconscionable" failing to conduct an "in-depth interview or exchange of correspondence with this giant of the black Sacred Harpers." "It appears," Boyd concluded in 1969, that "George Pullen Jackson never obtained additional information on the tradition."[65]

George Pullen Jackson's papers, however, reveal that the folklorist briefly corresponded with Judge Jackson, attempting to obtain a copy of *The Colored Sacred Harp*, and expressing a deeper interest in black Sacred Harp practitioners than evinced in his scholarly writing. In a December 1, 1939, letter Judge Jackson notes he is sending George Pullen Jackson a copy of the tunebook and offers the folklorist a volume discount on the book noting he would "be glad to get you to sell some of the books over there,"[66] suggesting that the folklorist expressed an interest in buying multiple copies so that he

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[63] Jackson, *The Story of The Sacred Harp*, 25.
[64] Boyd likewise criticizes John W. Work III and Walter Edward Byrd, noting that "Work did not even bother to mention [Judge Jackson's] name at all, and both Byrd and Jackson did so very casually." Drawing on bibliographical evidence, Boyd continues "Nor did they seem to know his full name, each using only the 'J. Jackson' that identifies the compiler in *The Colored Sacred Harp*." Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 21.
[65] Ibid., 58.
[66] J. Jackson to George Pullen Jackson, letter, (December 1, 1939), George Pullen Jackson Papers, Collection of Pam Helms, Atlanta, GA.

could resell the book to interested singers and scholars as he did copies of white-complied shape-note tunebooks *Original Sacred Harp* and *The New Harp of Columbia*. Although George Pullen Jackson evidently did not stock copies of Judge Jackson's book, a May 16, 1943, letter from the folklorist expresses a sustained interest in helping "to publicize your book and thus help you to sell more copies of it if you have them on hand." Written after George Pullen Jackson finished writing *White and Negro Spirituals* but before the publication of *The Story of the Sacred Harp*, in the letter the folklorist evinces a growing interest in Judge Jackson's tunebook and the network of black singers of which he was a part. "I have become so deeply interested in [*The Colored Sacred Harp*] that I want very much to attend your annual singing convention this summer. Will you therefore kindly let me know when and where it is to take place?"[67] The folklorist's desire to attend a black singing convention in the South Alabama Wiregrass is striking, given the limited attention *The Colored Sacred Harp* receives in Jackson's published writing, and the absence of any account of a black singing. No response from Judge Jackson survives.

Boyd was aware that George Pullen Jackson had acquired a copy of Judge Jackson's tunebook. Citing Paul J. Revitt's bibliography of the collection of books George Pullen Jackson sold to the University of California Los Angeles library,[68] Boyd notes that the collection included Jackson's copy of *The Colored Sacred Harp*.[69] Close examination of Jackson's copy of the book, now at UCLA's Charles E. Young Research Library, confirms the deepening engagement with the book's contents that the folklorist expressed in his

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[67] George Pullen Jackson to J. Jackson, letter, (May 16, 1943), George Pullen Jackson Papers, Collection of Pam Helms, Atlanta, GA.
[68] Paul J. Revitt, *The George Pullen Jackson Collection of Southern Hymnody: A Bibliography*, UCLA Library Occasional Papers 13 (Los Angeles: University of California Library, 1964).
[69] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 59.

1943 letter, dramatically contrasting with his one-dimensional portrayal of the book's contents in *White and Negro Spirituals* and *The Story of the Sacred Harp*. Jackson's *Colored Sacred Harp* includes numerous annotations that show the scholar engaged critically with the work, adopting a similar mode of inquiry as when annotating other, white-compiled shape-note tunebooks.

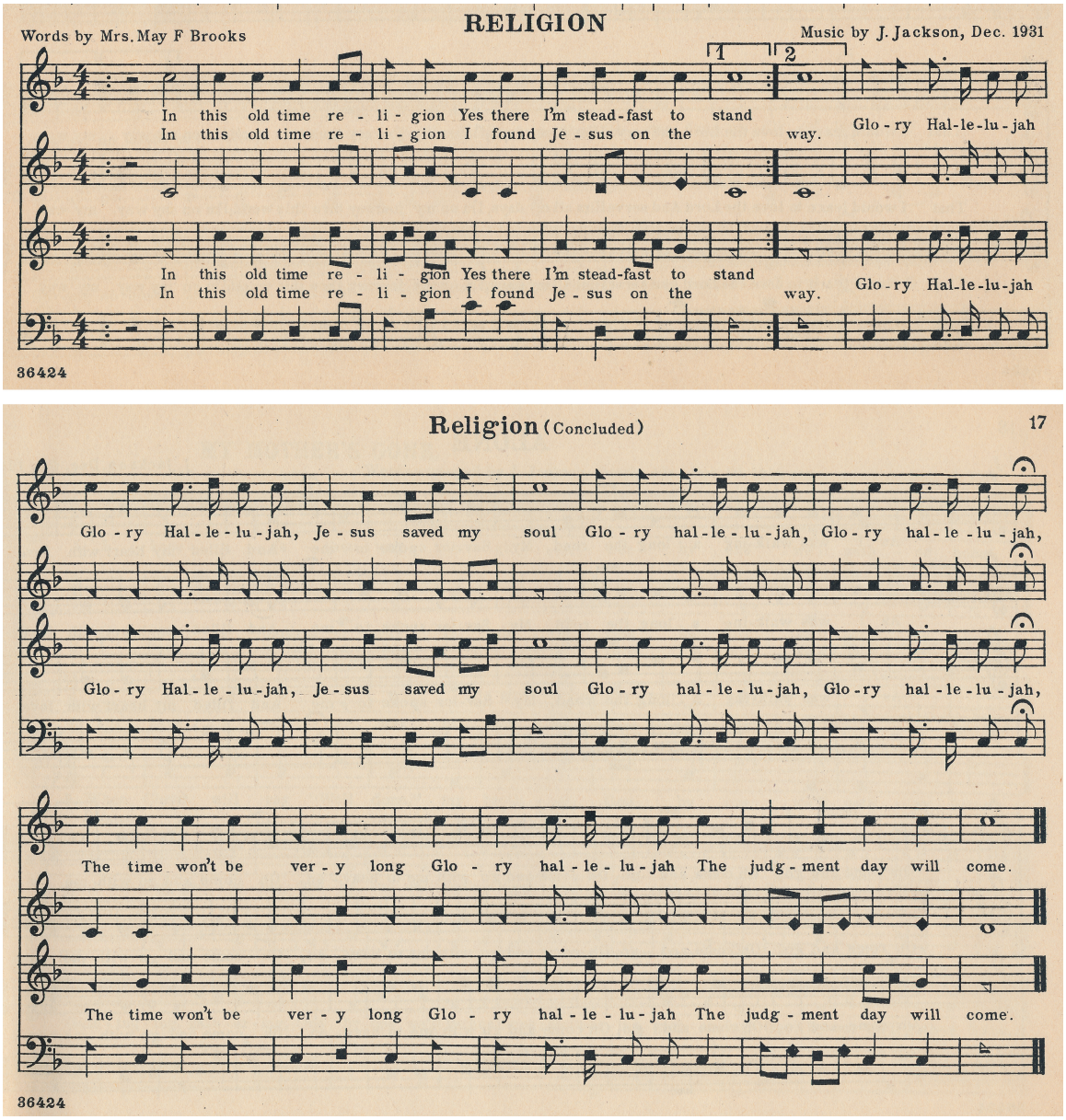

Figure 3.6: Judge Jackson, RELIGION, in *The Colored Sacred Harp*, ed. Judge Jackson (Ozark, AL: J. Jackson, 1934), 16–17. Collection of the author.

Jackson marked songs he imagined might be variants of other songs, a manifestation of his scholarly preoccupation with identifying tune families, which for Jackson connected shape-note tunebooks to the circulation of Scotch-Irish tunes in oral tradition. For RELIGION, Jackson noted a clear relationship between the song's repeated verse section and FLORENCE in the *Sacred Harp*, annotating the page "'Florence' / (not many years re) SH 121, SFS, no. 82."[70] In pointing out the similarity between the two songs, Jackson lays the groundwork for the characterization of the songs of *The Colored Sacred Harp* as derivative in later scholarship, but also paves the way for an alternative interpretation of the song as part of one of the tune families central to Jackson's claim for the status of shape-note music as folksong. In referencing the entry for a tune family in his book *Spiritual Folk Songs of Early America* with the annotation "SFS, no. 82," Jackson groups RELIGION with FLORENCE as well as other presumed printed variants of the song. Jackson groups the tune with ROLL JORDAN ROLL, which begins with a similar melodic figure but then deviates. Three close variants of FLORENCE appear in *The Sacred Harp* itself. Two are contemporaneous with the original composition by Thomas W. Carter, while others such as S. Whitt Denson's SIDNEY are, like RELIGION, twentieth century reimaginings. Jackson's entry for the tune family in *Spiritual Folk Songs* includes THE WEARY SOUL, a nineteenth-century variant by Jesse Thomas White in *The Sacred Harp*, but excludes both RELIGION and SIDNEY.[71] Jackson's grouping of RELIGION and the rest of *The Colored Sacred Harp* with "the more recent 'fuguists' whose productions have found

[70] This song is the "old folk hymn of praise" to which Jackson alluded in *White and Negro Spirituals*. See, Jackson, *The Colored Sacred Harp*, 16. George Pullen Jackson Collection of Southern Hymnody, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California Los Angeles.

[71] George Pullen Jackson, *Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1937), 110–11; James et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 1929, 72. Jackson makes no mention of I WOULD SEE JESUS, an 1867 variant by Leonard P. Breedlove, also in the edition of *Original Sacred Harp* Jackson consulted. See Ibid., 75.

their way into the white *Sacred Harp*" resonates with his exclusion of both black and white twentieth-century Sacred Harp variants of FLORENCE from his description of the tune family in *Spiritual Folk Songs*. Jackson advanced an interpretation of Sacred Harp as contemporary expression of a folk culture located in the past, motivating his interpretation of *The Colored Sacred Harp* as derivative, rather than a part of the folk creative process.

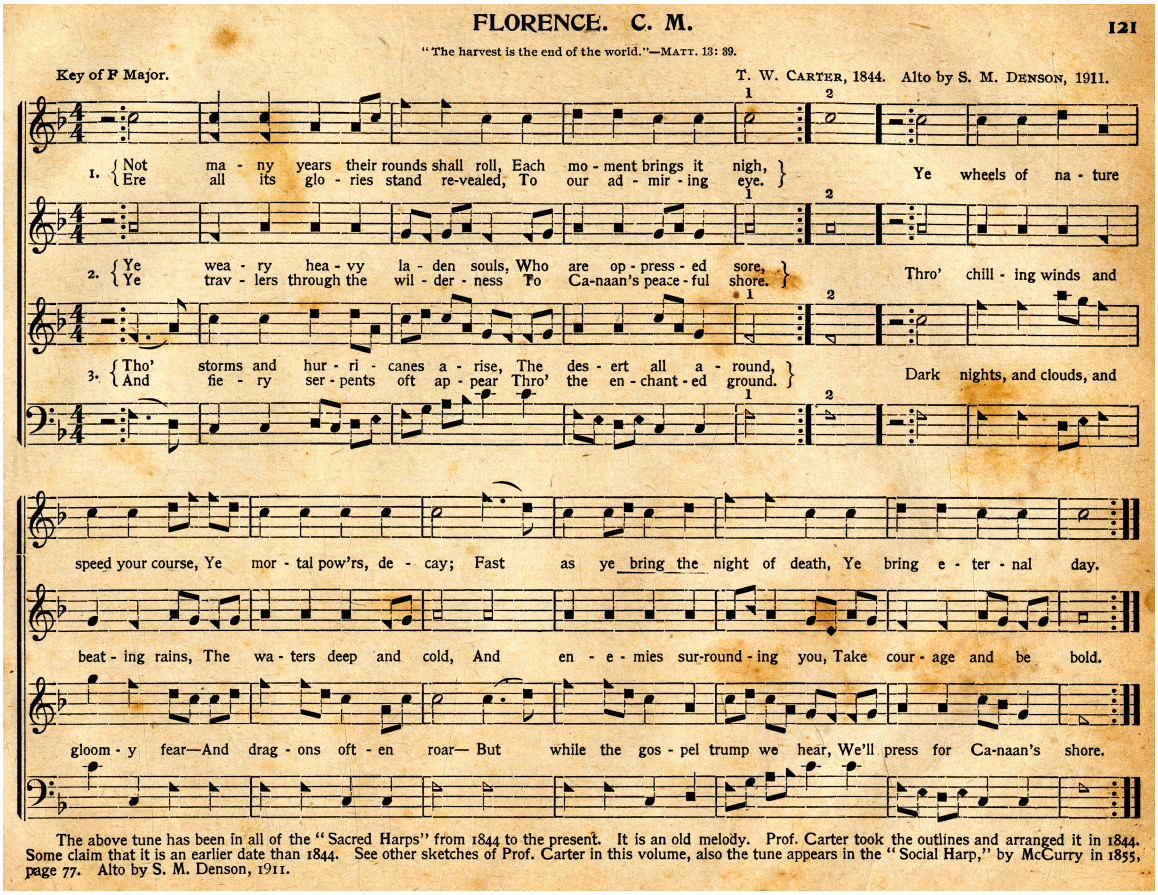

Figure 3.7: T. W. Carter, FLORENCE, in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 121. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

While some of Jackson's comparisons in his notes on *The Colored Sacred Harp* seem reliable, in other cases he marks songs as variants that seem to be remarkably original. Jackson annotates a song titled BROAD ROAD AND NARROW PATH, as a "Version

of white 'Windham' mode aeolian," referring to Daniel Read's song WINDHAM, in the *Sacred Harp*.[72] Though the song shares its minor key and Isaac Watts's hymn-text "Broad is the road that leads to death" with WINDHAM, the contour of its melody and harmony parts bear little relation to the popular eighteenth-century plain tune. Even as Jackson erroneously marks the African American–composed song as derivative of an earlier tune he explicitly marks as white, Jackson's annotation reveals that he approached analysis of *The Colored Sacred Harp* with a concern that he brought with him to his analysis of other shape-note tunebooks: an interest in the modal characteristics of minor shape-note music. Jackson noticed that white singers often rendered the sixth scale degree in minor higher than its position according to the notation, and characterized this sound as "Dorian." In response to hearing songs sung with this feature (and at times just drawing on his impression of a song's notation), Jackson would annotate a given song as "Dorian" or "Aeolian," referring to musical modes featuring sharp and flat sixth scale degrees, respectively. For Jackson, an affiliation with modes such as Dorian signaled a potential connection to folksongs of the premodern British Isles. Modality in a new tune was marker of its legitimacy as folk culture cultivated on American soil. Jackson's annotation of BROAD ROAD AND NARROW PATH as Aeolian indicates that he brought the same interest in affiliation with folk music to his examination of the book, again outlining an alternative to his erroneous interpretation of the song as derivative of a white composer's music.[73]

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[72] Jackson, *The Colored Sacred Harp*, 39.

[73] In this case Jackson's characterization of the song as Aeolian is also musically confusing. Each instance of the sixth scale degree the note is harmonized with the second scale degree, a characteristic Jackson often associated with the Dorian mode, as the raised sixth in this case creates an interval of a perfect fifth while a

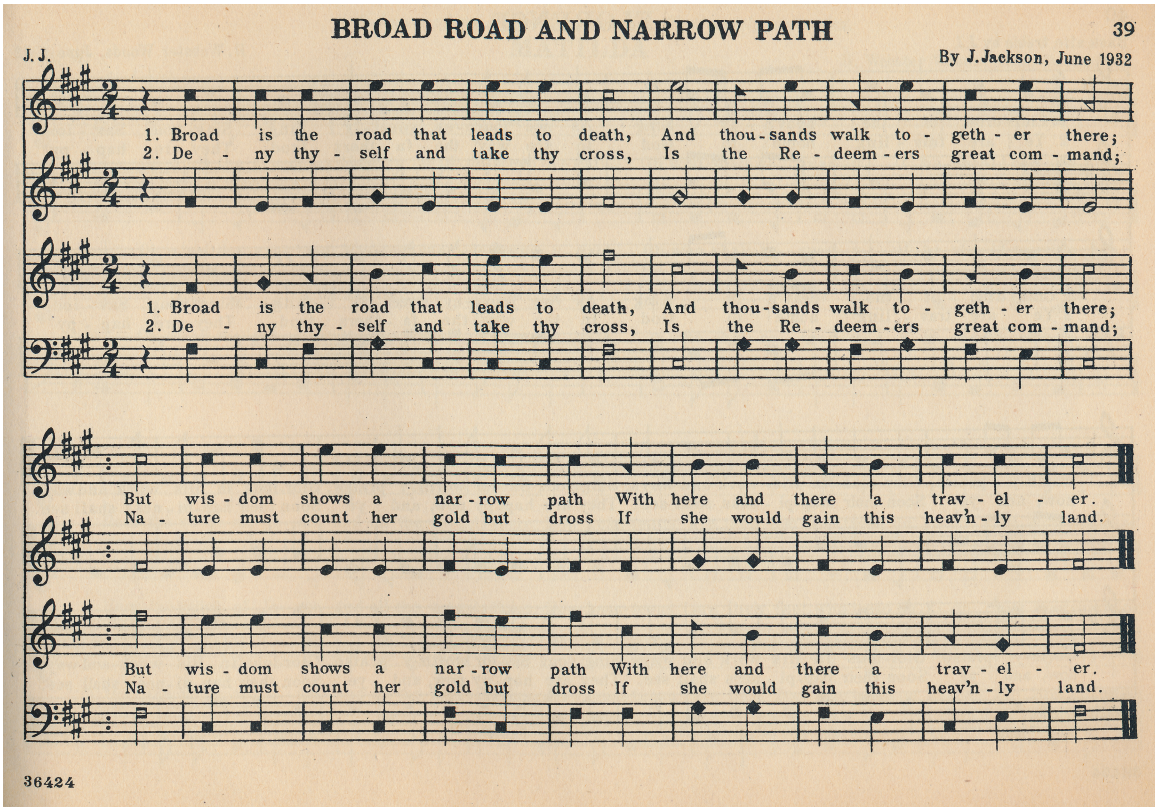

Figure 3.8: Judge Jackson, BROAD ROAD AND NARROW PATH, in *The Colored Sacred Harp*, ed. Judge Jackson (Ozark, AL: J. Jackson, 1934), 39. Collection of the author.

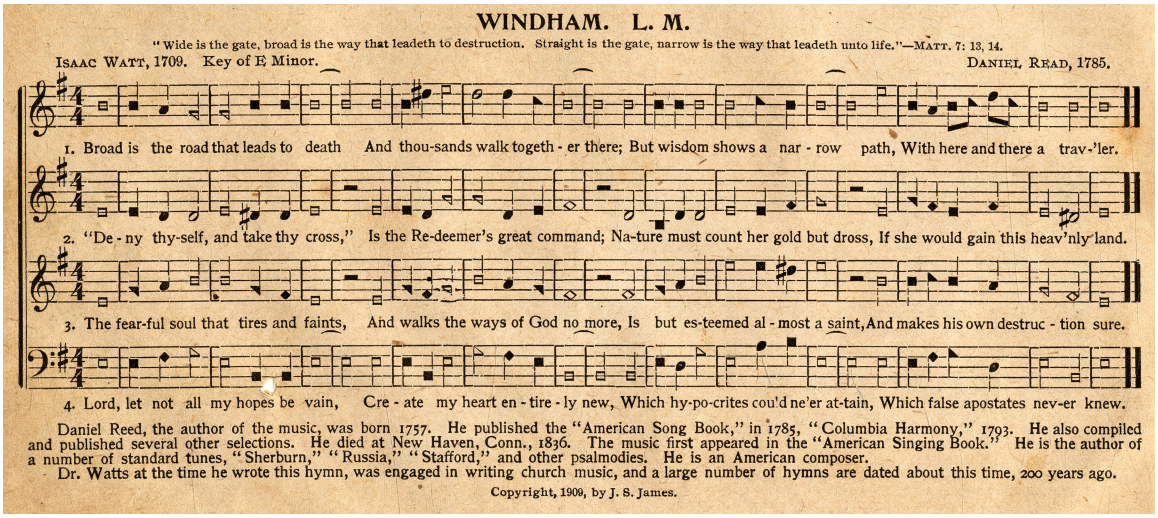

Figure 3.9: Daniel Read, WINDHAM, in *Original Sacred Harp*, ed. J. S. James et al. (Atlanta, GA, 1911), 38. Courtesy of the Sacred Harp Museum.

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lowered sixth creates the discordant interval of a tritone. This raises the possibility that Jackson had a source other than the music of BROAD ROAD AND NARROW PATH that led to his description of the song as Aeolian. Might Jackson have heard a rendition of the song, live or on a recording, by southeastern Alabama black singers, that sounded Aeolian to his ear?

Jackson's depictions of black Sacred Harp singing as derivative draw directly on his annotations of his copy of *The Colored Sacred Harp*. Yet in *White and Negro Spirituals* and *The Story of the Sacred Harp* Jackson drew selectively on his annotations, which also contain a positive evaluation of a song as an original composition in addition to the characterizations of songs as imitative variants discussed above. Jackson marked REMEMBER ME, a plain tune with music and words by T. Y. Lawrence with a plaintive melody featuring a great deal of stepwise motion and a relatively expansive chordal palette "good."[74] This one-word annotation indicates that Jackson spent enough time with the songs in *Colored Sacred Harp* to find qualities that he appreciated and that he was capable of approaching the book with receptivity to its contents. Yet this positive characterization of a black Sacred Harp composition was irrelevant to Jackson's purpose in describing of *The Colored Sacred Harp* in *White and Negro Spirituals* and *The Story of the Sacred Harp*. Jackson's appreciation of the song as a composition associated it with individual creativity and removed it from consideration as a product of folk culture. Because Jackson's argument centered on recovering a historical music form and valorizing contemporary white southerners as carriers of that history, contemporary black Sacred Harp compositional originality was irrelevant to and incompatible with his representation of the style.

[74] Jackson, *The Colored Sacred Harp*, 64. George Pullen Jackson Collection of Southern Hymnody, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California Los Angeles.

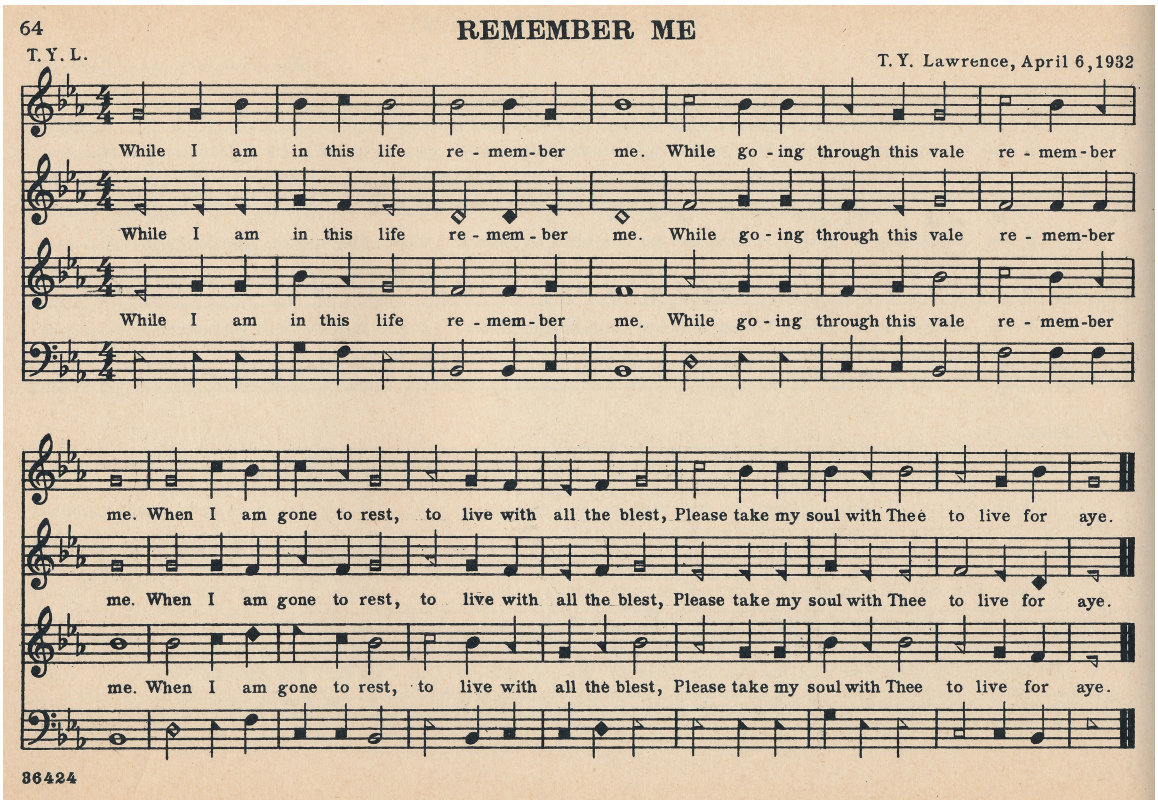
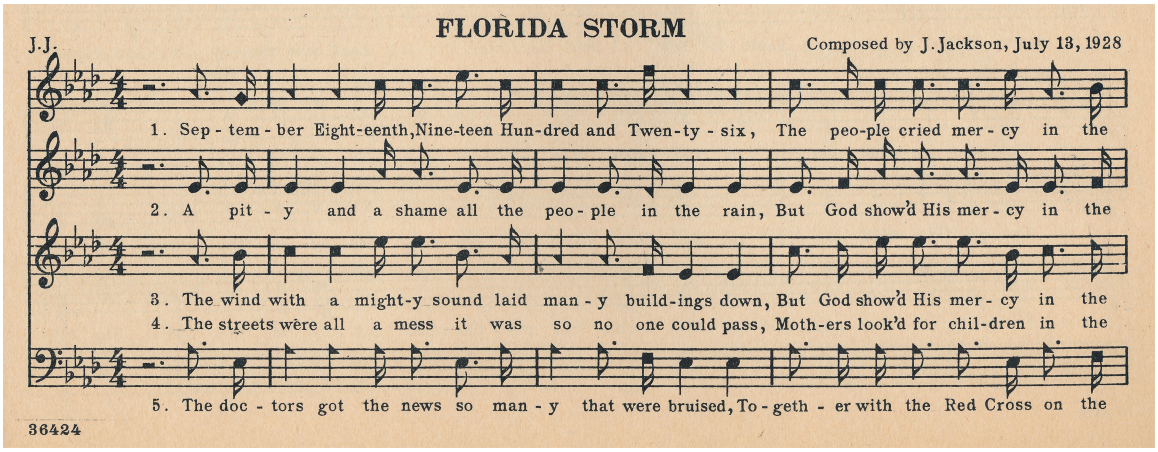


Figure 3.10: T. Y. Lawrence, REMEMBER ME, in *The Colored Sacred Harp*, ed. Judge Jackson (Ozark, AL: J. Jackson, 1934), 64. Collection of the author.

One final annotation in *Colored Sacred Harp* suggests that Jackson engaged with its contents to a greater extent than his writing on black Sacred Harp singing suggests and than previous scholars have recognized. Jackson made several annotations on FLORIDA STORM,[75] a song later identified with the Wiregrass Sacred Harp singers in the national folklore scene. In two places, Jackson seems to make corrections to the song's printed lyrics, replacing an instance of the term "on the storm" in the song's fourth verse with the lyric "in the storm" that fits better with the preceding words and matches the three previous verses. Later he indicates that a phrase, "I know," printed to occur at the end of a line of text, should instead begin the line, enabling a more natural flow of words and a rhymed couplet. Although these annotations could simply be intended to mark assumed

[75] Ibid., 87–89.

errors in the book's printing, an additional annotation, the word "all" written in front of each of the song's four voices at the start of the chorus, suggests that the annotations might be geared toward preparing the song for possible performance by Jackson's Old Harp Singers, or perhaps marking features of a recorded rendition of the songs by black singers from southeastern Alabama to which Jackson had access. Jackson elaborately annotated some songs in *Original Sacred Harp* for use in Old Harp Singers performances, but there is no evidence that his group performed FLORIDA STORM. Jackson also made annotations in *Original Sacred Harp* of performance practices he observed in attendance at singings. It's possible he also made annotations based on what he audited listening to a rendition of the song. If Jackson either sought out and took notes on a recording of black Sacred Harp singers, heard the song sung live, or considered bringing it to his ensemble, it would represent a far greater level of engagement with the music than previously understood, consistent with his "deeply interested" letter to Judge Jackson, and at odds with the limited and one-dimensional engagement his writing suggests.



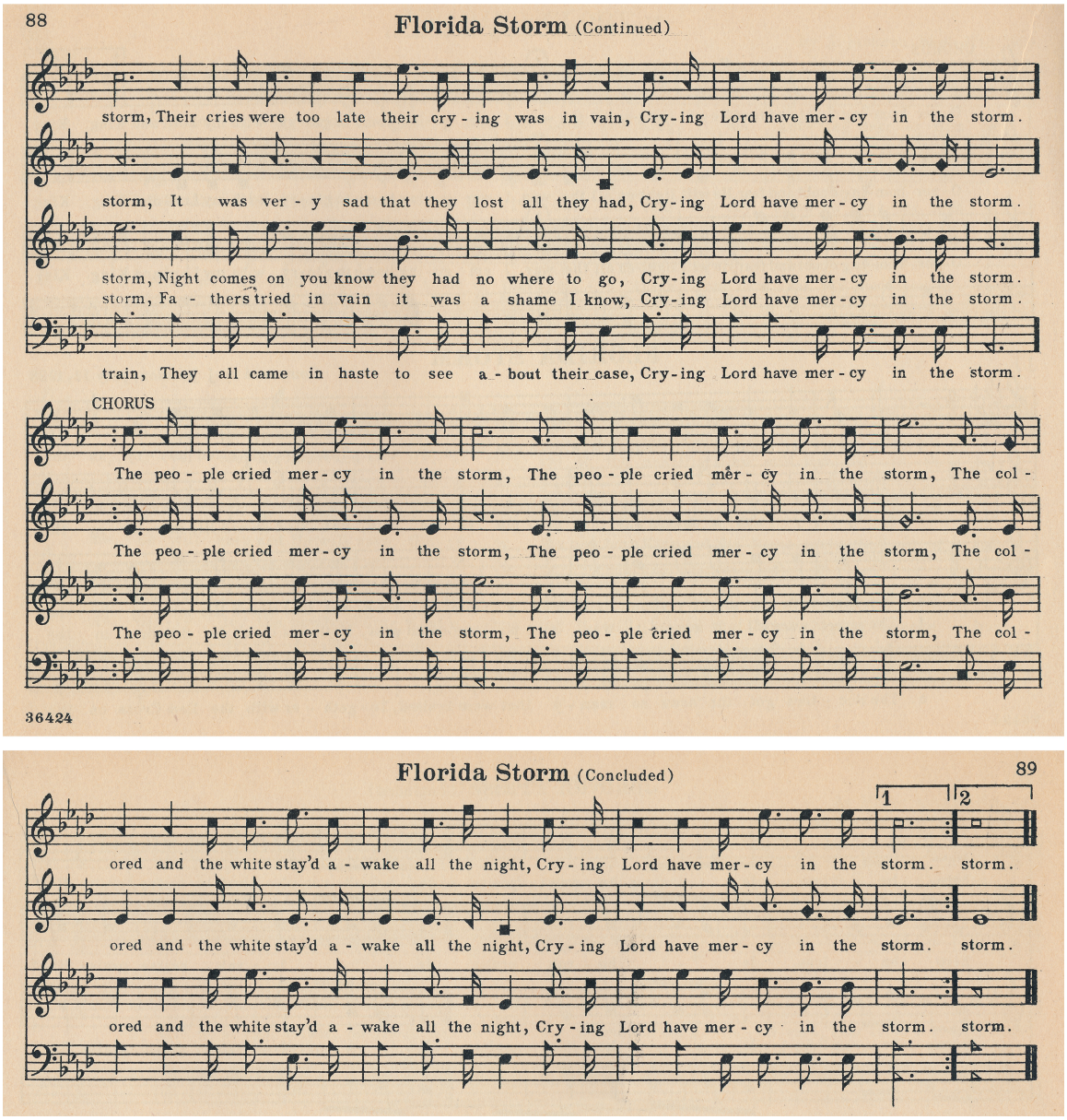


Figure 3.11: Judge Jackson, FLORIDA STORM, in *The Colored Sacred Harp*, ed. Judge Jackson (Ozark, AL: J. Jackson, 1934), 87–89. Collection of the author.

Jackson's potentially capacious encounter with black Sacred Harp singing, and *The Colored Sacred Harp* in particular, contrasts dramatically with his pithy writing on the style's black practitioners. Jackson's folklore genealogy likely motivated him to filter the nuance expressed in his annotations and correspondence out of his publications. Analyzing black Sacred Harp singing didn't coincide with Jackson's scholarly aims or

personal motivations for studying this musical practice. Jackson instead oriented his writing and research around supporting his thesis that "white spirituals" were legitimate folk culture and the origins of black spirituals in oral tradition. This thesis gave Jackson a scholarly platform from which to engage in his research on Sacred Harp singing and evinced his Herderian scholarly heritage. Folklore's filter ensured that Jackson's multifaceted engagement with black shape-note music came through as one-dimensional in his scholarship.

"Deeply Rooted": Work on Black Sacred Harp Singing in the Alabama Wiregrass

Work's 1941 essay on Sacred Harp singing characterizes the style as a deeply ingrained form of rural black folk culture tied to the plantation South he associates with the Alabama Wiregrass.[76] Like Jackson, who remarks on the "strange musical notation" of *The Sacred Harp* as a means of drawing reader interest,[77] Work introduces Sacred Harp singing as an "unusual musical activity." In the third paragraph of his essay, Work introduces Jackson's "authoritative book" *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* as a reference for the history of the style. Invoking Jackson's study, which excludes black Sacred Harp singing, Work describes the group of black singers he profiles as unusual, but ignores Jackson's claim of the style's whiteness. Instead, Work notes that this black group of "Alabama music-makers" is exceptional in that "it is very doubtful if in any

[76] Large plantations were more prominent in the Alabama Black Belt than in the Wiregrass counties further south and southeast that Work visited, which due to poorer quality soil featured smaller landholdings and less productive farms. Yet by titling his article "Plantation Meistersinger," Work prominently associates the cultural practice he describes with the plantation economy. See Jerrilyn McGregory, *Wiregrass Country* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997); Wayne Flynt, "Regions of Alabama," *Southern Spaces*, October 3, 2005, http://southernspaces.org/2005/regions-alabama. On the geography and changing meaning of the designation "Black Belt," see Allen Tullos, "The Black Belt," *Southern Spaces*, April 19, 2004, http://southernspaces.org/2004/black-belt.

[77] Jackson, "The Fa-Sol-La Folk," 6.

community or section this type of music has become so deeply rooted," because of the degree to which Sacred Harp singing has become "a permanent feature of the community life."[78]

The title of Work's essay, "Plantation Meistersinger," performs a relocation of the geography and demographics of Sacred Harp singing as well. By invoking plantations, Work shifts the geography of Sacred Harp singing from the predominantly white "uplands" named in Jackson's book to the counties of the southern Black Belt, where the legacy of slaveholding cotton plantations resulted in majority black populations in the mid-twentieth century. The Ozark and Samson, Alabama, singings Work observed were held not in the Black Belt, but further south and southeast in the Wiregrass, a region at the margins of the wealthy cotton plantation economy with a smaller but substantial black population that burgeoned after Reconstruction.[79] Yet despite this, just as Jackson was able to naturalize an account of Sacred Harp singing as a form of "white spirituals" by locating the practice in the white upcountry, Work foregrounds a racially mixed singing population by associating his account with the social organization of the plantation.

Work places himself into his narrative, and describes how, although black, his class status may have marked him as an outsider in the group. As a university professor, Work occupied a different class and status position than the members of the shape-note singing classes he observed in Ozark and Samson, Alabama. While evidently moved by the experience of attending the singing from his evocative account of the event, Work holds himself apart from the group. His writing adopts a blasé, elitist posture,

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[78] Work, "Plantation Meistersinger," 97.
[79] McGregory, *Wiregrass Country*.

characteristic of his membership in the "talented tenth."[80] Work compliments the singers for their "enthusiasm and skill," highlighting their literacy by noting that "[t]he accuracy with which the singers read their parts was little short of phenomenal." At a time when education was critical social currency, Work's characterization served to elevate and represent the humanity of the black Wiregrass singers. At the same time Work placed himself on a higher cultural plain, at a remove from singers he cast as relatively unsophisticated. Jackson found the singers' failings humorous, noting that

> it was genuinely amusing to watch the leader's disgust as expressed by exaggerated grimace when some over-eager singer spoiled his song … It was no less amusing to observe the bewilderment and dismay that overtook the inexperienced or unskilled leader who, failing to notice a faulty entry, gradually realized that the song was in a hopeless snarl.[81]

Work spoke with many singers during his first visit to Ozark. He interviewed fifty convention attendees at random to determine whether they had been born in the area, perhaps attempting to ascertain their social status through an investigation of their mobility. He spoke for half an hour with Judge Jackson, compiler of *The Colored Sacred Harp*. He interviewed several additional singers after the Saturday session of the convention in Ozark. There is no knowing how Work's relatively high social status impacted his conversations, but Work remembered his "reception at Ozark [as] warm and pleasant." When Work returned a month later to Samson to attend a state convention of seven-shape gospel music he found his reception "tinged with suspicion." The convention's president announced Work's presence, declaring "Brothers and Sisters, last month this brother drove four hundred and twenty miles to Ozark to listen to the

[80] Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth."
[81] Work, "Plantation Meistersinger," 99.

Sacred Harp singers. Now he has come fifty miles further to hear us—*for what purpose we do not know*. Maybe he'll tell us. Meet Brother Work."[82] Work ascribes the difference in reception to differences between four-note and seven-note singings, but it is equally likely that Work's educational background and outsider status set up this cool reception on his return. Work may have thus been grouped in with other outsiders who might come to a congregation of black people and ask questions, which these singers may very well have had reason to imagine as dangerous.

Work also reveals tense interactions among black and white singers at the conventions he attended. Work describes a song, LOVING JESUS, led by a black singer, "Sister Rosa Bowerick," "[a]t the request of a group of White listeners" in attendance at Ozark. Previously, Work had described a lack of "consciousness of tone-quality" at the singing, noting that the music was "generally shrill, hard, and frequently raspy and strained," but as the class prepared to sing LOVING JESUS, Work recounts, the convention's black president cautioned: "Now, folks, don't go and overdo this song! Don't go adding notes that ain't there. Sing it jus' like it's written. Now let's sing it nice and sweet!" The result was memorable for Work, who lauded its "great roll of tone, the dynamic delineation of the motives, and the surge of the piece as the singers responded to Sister Rosa's colorful but graceful conducting." Yet Work notes that, "during this and a subsequent rendition of the song two or three women who had sung lustily in all other songs remained quiet. Whether this was due to envy of the leader's popularity or to resentment at catering to the audience could not be ascertained."[83]

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[82] Ibid., 105. Emphasis original.
[83] Ibid., 101.



Figures 3.12 and 3.13: Rosa Bowerick (left) and Judge Jackson (right), Ozark, Alabama, September 1938. Photographs by John W. Work III. Courtesy of the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Popular Music.

Work specifies that white listeners requested the first performance of LOVING JESUS, but leaves unstated what prompted the second rendition of the song, a highly unusual occurrence at Sacred Harp singings where songs are typically sung no more than once during a day of singing. It is probable that Work himself made the second request. In 1968 Henry Japheth Jackson, a son of Judge Jackson who had never read Work's article, recalled that during the Fisk musicologist's visit to Ozark "he asked Sister Bowerick to lead 'Loving Jesus' twice, and we hardly ever allow that in a convention, but the president let her do it for Mr. Work."[84] It is possible that Work requested the song both times it was sung and invented the story of the white listeners' request. It is perhaps

[84] Quoted in Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 45.

more likely that white listeners requested its first rendition, and that Work called for its encore performance, leaving Japheth Jackson, after a thirty-year gap, with an imperfect memory of the event. It is clear that Work was particularly taken with Rosa Bowerick's rendition. His papers at the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Popular Music contain just two individual photographs from the September 1938 trip, of Bowerick and Judge Jackson.[85]

Work's account of this event is remarkable for its acknowledgment of the tension that accompanied both renditions of LOVING JESUS. At Sacred Harp singings today, the class will typically indulge any request from a member of the audience, though such requests are frequently for songs the majority of singers find tiresome. Whether this was the case for the group assembled in Ozark in 1938 or not, the power dynamics invoked by white observers requesting a song—and having their request fulfilled—at a black singing in the Jim Crow era South, were clearly evident to Work. Though unacknowledged in Work's narrative, tension also accompanied his own request, perhaps because he was also observing the proceedings across a gulf, but one defined by class, status, and geography, rather than race.

The presence of white visitors on the periphery of black singings also emerges in Work's account of the gospel singing he attended on his return trip to Samson in November 1938.[86] Work recounts a dispute over the amount the seven-shape-note

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[85] Ibid., 46.

[86] White presence on the fringes of a variety of black activities in the Jim Crow South was not unusual, where such presence often served as an implicit expression of power and as a form of social control. On everyday interactions across the color line in Jim Crow Mississippi, see Stephen A. Berrey, *The Jim Crow Routine: Everyday Performances of Race, Civil Rights, and Segregation in Mississippi* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015). White and black singers in Ozark interacted in contexts where black singers worked for white singers, in public meeting spaces such as the town square, where interracial singing

convention should donate to the host church, with the chairman proposing a one-dollar contribution and another convention member clamoring for two. Work's narrative implies that even this larger donation would be insufficient, comparing it to the twelve-dollar contribution made by the Sacred Harp convention the previous month. To resolve the dispute, "[a] White visitor in the rear" of the church, Work says, "donated three more dollars to make the total five."[87] In Work's retelling of the dispute, the scholar, a proponent of black respectability, adopts a bemused tone in describing the squabbling among the lower status black convention attendees, implicitly positioning himself above the fray. His narrative suggests that both he and the white visitor understood the social norms at play, and recognized the insufficiency of the black singers' planned donation. Though presented in Work's account as largely uninvolved in the proceedings, both Work and the white visitor function as interested outside observers. The white visitor's position above the black singers in the area's racial hierarchy emerges even in this act of charity, as he inserts himself in the proceedings, immediately resolving a contentious issue, through leveraging his access to financial and social capital. In his retelling of the event in the pages of the *Musical Quarterly*, Work places himself at the higher status level of the white visitor.

In contrast to Jackson's "white spirituals" frame, Work describes Sacred Harp singing as a black activity. Work compares Sacred Harp with other forms of "Negro folk-

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occasionally broke out at market days, and in private spaces such as white singers' houses, where leading black singers such as Dewey Williams later recounted having been invited for informal instruction. As Doris Dyen reports, during the period beginning with the 1870s rise of Jim Crow laws, "certain persons (both white and black) act[ed] as liaisons … providing limited contact between the groups; but there was no large-scale cross-participation in each other's activities." See Dyen, "The Role of Shape-Note Singing in the Musical Culture of Black Communities in Southeast Alabama," 45–46.

[87] Work, "Plantation Meistersinger," 105.

songs," contending that given the intensity of participation in "shape-note singing in southeast Alabama," the style "has stifled all other folk expressions." Positing that "[n]o spirituals or other social folk-songs are sung," Work argues "[t]here is no opportunity afforded for their development. Time which might be given to camp-meetings and church associations, the birthplace of the spirituals, is consumed in shape-note conventions."[88] Work's account of the monopolistic role of shape-note singing in the musical culture of southeastern Alabama African Americans is striking for its naturalization of the blackness of this group and its placement of the style in a range of folk practices owing to an academic genealogy rooted in folklore studies that differs significantly from Jackson's. Work omits Jackson's "White Spirituals" frame, mentioning the book briefly to fulfill his scholarly obligation but not engaging Jackson's arguments for his own account of black musics. Nor does Work point out the contrast between the blackness of the group at the center of his study and the whiteness invoked by the title of Jackson's text. Work instead identifies the race and geography of his subjects and centers his largely descriptive account on their music making, portraying the project as adjacent to a larger career centered on "interest in Negro folk-songs" more broadly conceived.[89] Work's *Musical Quarterly* article registered his research on Sacred Harp singing, but its short length and lack of analysis, combined with his erroneous claim that Sacred Harp "ha[d] stifled all other folk expressions" among African Americans in the area,[90] position the inquiry as a marginal aside in a career focused first on broadening the range of African American vernacular musics worthy of study and later on promoting the

[88] Ibid., 106.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.

cultivated performance of arrangements of spirituals. Limited in his ability to conduct in-depth research in South Alabama due to a lack of administrative financial support at Fisk, Work's conclusions were necessarily tenuous; his analysis necessarily abbreviated. Yet Work made a substantive contribution regardless. His article was the first to document black Sacred Harp singing in any detail, and the only such publication prior to the 1960s. On a November 1938 return visit to South Alabama, Work recorded the first field recordings of Sacred Harp singing, black or white, documenting an energetic class singing at brisk tempos, a sound quite different from that recorded at black singings in the area a few decades later.[91]

Work's fieldwork studying black Sacred Harp helped him formulate a methodology for emphasizing black humanity through the broad study of music making in its social context that he emphasized in proposing the project that ultimately became the Coahoma County study. Yet although the design of the study emerged from his own methodological innovations, resistance to Work's coequal participation in the study led him to withdraw from fieldwork.

Coda: "The Reception and Program of Jubilee Music … in Honor of President Franklin D. Roosevelt"

A section in Jackson's card catalog system labeled "The Negro" contains a rather atypical item for a collection consisting mostly of the melodies of tunes classified by their starting interval. Alongside a reference on the "Psychological Analysis or Exposition of Negro

[91] These recordings are online, though largely obscured from view, as "Search Results," *American Memory, Library of Congress*, accessed March 5, 2015, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/ftvbib:@field%28NUMBER%28@range%285151a1+5153b2%29%29%29.

Race in America" Jackson filed a typed note from Thomas E. Jones, the white Quaker president of Fisk, noting that

> As a patron of Fisk University, we wish to invite you to the reception and program of Jubilee Music which is being given in honor of President Franklin D Roosevelt and party in front of Jubilee Hall on the University campus, Saturday morning, November 17th, at 10:30 o'clock.[92]

Jackson accepted the invitation to attend the concert, but recorded his dismay at Roosevelt's response to the music presented during the program. In text overwritten at a diagonal in Jackson's hand on top of Jones's typescript, Jackson complained,

> The "lost sheep" (Fisk, the Negroes) get their hands shook. The ninety-and-nine (Ward–B, Peabody, Vanderbilt) get a wave of the hand.
> So it is with the negro folk music. It is lauded, while the folk music of the people from whom they got it is poo-poohed.[93]

Jackson resented the attention the Fisk Jubilee singers received from dignitaries such as Roosevelt and compared their positive reception with Roosevelt's more tepid engagement with groups associated with Nashville's white colleges. Jackson saw these white ensembles as representatives of the folk music practices like Sacred Harp he hoped to help authorize as the wellspring of a new American national culture. The recognition that enabled Fisk University to continue to operate thanks to the donations of a paternalistic white liberal elite galled Jackson, who saw the support not from behind the veil through which Work operated, but through a Herderian filter that emphasized imagined origins as the basis for new national identity.

Jackson's and Work's scholarship reached print during segregation, when the disfranchisement of and racial violence against African Americans in the South led liberal

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[92] Letter from Thomas E. Jones to George Pullen Jackson, George Pullen Jackson Collection of Southern Hymnody, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California Los Angeles.
[93] Ibid.

whites to imagine, like Lomax, that they needed black collaborators to successfully interview black southern subjects. As explored in the next chapter, when the civil rights movement intensified in the 1960s, white folklore scholars' imaginaries of the terrain of permissible intergroup interaction shifted along with the South's legal landscape. These scholars followed the channels that Jackson's and Work's scholarship helped carve.

Chapter 4.

Staging Equality: Sacred Harp and Racial Disparity at Civil Rights Era Festivals and Field Sites

Introduction

In 1964 Ralph Rinzler brought a group of white West Alabama Sacred Harp singers to Rhode Island, to perform at that summer's Newport Folk Festival, a year before Bob Dylan's electrified performance inscribed the festival in the popular imagination as representing a turn in popular tastes from folk to rock.[1] For Rinzler, the 1964 festival marked a different turn, one from popular performers of "folk songs" to what Rinzler conceived of as "source musicians." In addition to programming musicians like Dylan and Joan Baez, Rinzler and his associates embarked on long trips across the United States—particularly the South—conducting fieldwork and seeking out those whose performances and recordings were the "sources" of the folk revival repertoire.

Although white singers had appeared at a few festivals and conferences outside the southern United States in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Newport in 1964 was the first in a sequence of performances at major folk festivals by Sacred Harp singers in the 1960s and 1970s. These later appearances differed in that they attracted larger crowds, sometimes included groups of both black and white singers, and increasingly featured interaction between singers and predominantly white audience members interested in

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[1] "The History," *Newport Folk Festival*, accessed January 15, 2015, http://www.newportfolk.org/history; Murray Lerner, *The Other Side of the Mirror: Bob Dylan Live at the Newport Folk Festival 1963–1965* (New York: Sony BMG Music Entertainment, 2007); Murray Lerner, *Festival!* (New York: Eagle Rock Entertainment, 2005).

singing along with the performers thanks to their participation in smaller gatherings at workshop-oriented folk festivals like the Fox Hollow festival in New York's Capital District. Newport and subsequent festivals brought together singers, promoters, and audiences; groups with different histories, identities, and motivations. Sacred Harp singers harnessed this new platform to articulate ideas about their music and its meaning. White festival promoters idealistically regarded these events as opportunities to model visions of the "beloved community" motivated by the civil rights movement and protests against the War in Vietnam.[2] For promoters and audiences alike, folk festivals functioned as microcosms of society as well as settings apart where ordinary rules did not apply.

Sacred Harp singers also came into contact with folklorists in the field in the 1960s and 1970s. A new generation of white folk music enthusiasts entered graduate school and embarked on fieldwork with southern Sacred Harp singers in service of research projects or to scout potential festival acts as employees of public folklorists such as Rinzler. Fieldworkers documented their encounters in field notes, photographs, and audio recordings which provide a subjective portal through which to reenter the contact

[2] Beginning in 1956, Martin Luther King Jr. articulated the "beloved community" as the goal of the civil rights movement in speeches and training workshops, drawing on the theological philosophy of Josiah Royce. John Lewis describes this vision of the "beloved community" taught by King in workshops he attended as "nothing less than the Christian concept of the kingdom of God on earth." King and Lewis's concept of the "beloved community" embraced a teleological understanding of "all human existence throughout history," as having "strived toward community, toward coming together." Although "as inexorable, as irresistible, as the flow of a river toward the sea," this movement could be "interrupted or delayed … by evil or hatred, by greed, by the lust for power, by the need for revenge," compelling "men and women with soul force, people of goodwill, to respond and to struggle nonviolently against the forces that stand between a society and the harmony it naturally seeks." For Lewis and other leaders and foot soldiers in the civil rights movement, the "beloved community" was synonymous with the "goal of an integrated society, an interracial democracy." See Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, 87, 204. For King's 1958 articulation of the "beloved community" and its roots in the philosophy of nonviolence and reconciliation, see Martin Luther King Jr., *Stride toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (New York: Harper, 1958). For "the beloved community" in Josiah Royce's philosophy, see Kelly A. Parker, "Josiah Royce," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2014, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/royce/.

zone between singer and scholar and assess the preconceptions and motivations framing their interactions.

In this chapter and the next I examine Sacred Harp singers' encounters with fieldworkers and festival organizers and audiences. This chapter follows a group of white Sacred Harp singers from West Alabama on their trip to Newport in 1964 at the behest of Ralph Rinzler. The chapter then analyzes music scholar William Tallmadge's two-week fieldwork trip to the southeastern Alabama Wiregrass, where he interviewed members of the community of black Sacred Harp singers John W. Work III had visited in 1938. These encounters demonstrate the impact of civil rights legislation then advancing through the United States Congress in shifting and fracturing ideas about race, geography, and intergroup interaction that scholars, presenters, and singers embodied and enacted. Buoyed by the prospect of segregation's legal dismantling, politically liberal folk festival promoters like George Wein, Pete Seeger, and Rinzler sought to implement their dreams for racial equality through the activity of recruiting racially diverse source musicians across the still-segregated South. In presenting integrated assemblies of black and white performers on stage together singing the songs of the freedom struggle, these folklorists sought to present their activities as part of the civil rights movement, even as participation by festival acts varied across racial and sectional lines. Fieldworkers imagined the civil rights movement had facilitated the emergence of a new framework for cross-racial and cross-sectional interaction. These culture brokers were sometimes surprised by the endurance of racism and racial inequality. They found that despite a new legal framework, old imaginaries mediating interaction across lines of race, class, and geography persisted. In the late 1960s and 1970s black singers faced continuing

discrimination, relatively unchanged despite the then-recent passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but these African American singers' models for cross-racial interaction increasingly fractured across generational lines.

Folklore's Filter and the Social Imaginary

Folklore does not naturally occur. An intervener must designate a cultural practice as folklore. To do so, in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's words, "is to position it within a cultural hierarchy"[3] with consequences for the practice's geography, demographics, and associations. The folkorization process is a romancing (and romanticizing) of a culture's practitioners by culture brokers—the folklorists, fieldworkers, festival staff, recording engineers, publicists, and others who participate in designating a cultural practice as folklore.[4] Such brokers' perceptions of a practice are necessarily distorted. As David Whisnant remarks, they are "a selection, an arrangement, an accommodation to preconceptions" that tends to favor retentions of imagined traditional culture over other creative expression.[5] This designation as folklore casts a contemporary practice into the past, "isolated from modern American culture by race, time, evolution, or exposure to media"[6] as a "survival, archaism, antiquity, [or] tradition" with what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett styles folklorization's "peculiar temporality."[7]

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[3] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Folklore's Crisis," 283.
[4] Benjamin Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 5. Others variously describe the network of agents I name "culture brokers" as "cultural middlemen," "cultural intervenors," or the "heritage music infrastructure." See Ibid.; Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*, 260; Mark Slobin, *Fiddler on the Move: Exploring the Klezmer World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 32. Karl Hagstrom Miller importantly demonstrates that such agents included commercial record producers as well as academic folklorists in Miller, *Segregating Sound*.
[5] Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*, 260.
[6] Miller, *Segregating Sound*, 19.
[7] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Folklore's Crisis," 283.

Folklorization is spatially, as well as temporally, dislocating. The process transports a form of cultural expression from a field site, through "authenticating and legitimizing networks," to a university archive or festival stage.[8] This removal process is inexact and potentially damaging, drawing sacred music making activities, for example, out of their religious contexts, elevating historical aspects of their musicality and orality in transmission over the devotion music makers might prioritize. Yet in presenting a cultural practice in a context that favors different priorities, folklorization may also open up the music to new audiences and opportunities. Folk festival attendees unlikely to venture to the field themselves might nonetheless "identify with folk figures" and their music making,[9] even though they would be as unaccustomed to the social context in which they would encounter folklorized cultural practices as the practitioners may have initially been when presenting from the festival stage. Yet as Benjamin Filene argues, "that identification is premised on difference. Roots musicians are expected to be premodern, unrestrainedly emotive, and noncommercial. Singers who too closely resemble the revival's middle-class audiences are rejected by those audiences as 'inauthentic.'"[10] In the case of Sacred Harp singing, even white middle-class singers were marked as premodern by their southern accents, an "audible otherness" that, as Kiri Miller demonstrates, signifies rural isolation and thus an attractive "authenticity and authority."[11] Singers' southern voices may also have sounded like those of white conservatives broadcast across

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[8] David E. Whisnant, "Turning Inward and Outward: Retrospective and Prospective Considerations in the Recording of Vernacular Music in the South," in *Sounds of the South*, ed. Daniel W. Patterson (Chapel Hill: Southern Folklife Collection, Manuscripts Department, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, 1991), 173.
[9] Filene, *Romancing the Folk*, 63.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Miller, *Traveling Home*, 38–43.

the nation expressing resistance to integration prompting revulsion among audiences supportive of the civil rights movement.

I rely on the term "social imaginaries" to account for these individually held and collectively shared beliefs about identity and intergroup interaction that led both a cohort of scholars to conduct fieldwork with South Alabama black Sacred Harp singers and motivated singers, promoters, and audiences to meet at Sacred Harp singing performances at folk festivals in Newport and on the National Mall. In doing so, I draw on the work of philosopher Charles Taylor, who defines "our social imaginary" as "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations."[12] Here, Taylor locates imaginaries within individuals, but suggests that they encompass the expectations and values that underlie social interaction. His framework positions the "social imaginary" as the "common understanding which enables us to carry out the collective practices which make up our social life," outlining a relationship in which practices rely on an underlying "background understanding" that outlines what forms of intergroup interaction are permissible in what circumstances.[13]

For Taylor the availability of these practices is temporally, culturally, and spatially bounded. A "'repertory' of collective actions," he argues, lies "at the disposal of a given group of society" "at any given time." Taylor's identification of a "given group of society" indicates that while imaginaries lie in the minds of individuals and are widely shared

[12] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 23.
[13] Ibid., 24.

"common understandings," they may fracture across lines of difference. Taylor spatializes this fracturing, writing that "[t]he discriminations we have to make to carry [such actions] off, knowing whom to speak to and when and how, carry an implicit map of social space, of what kinds of people we can associate with in what ways and in what circumstances."[14] If imaginaries concern a group's repertories of actions, as Taylor suggests, they may also encode group members' individual implicit understandings of what repertories of action are available to them at a given time and across a given terrain of social interaction.

Taylor suggests that imaginaries are "carried in images, stories, and legends."[15] His argument that individuals' practices bear evidence of the "implicit map" behind group interaction[16] intimates that the expectations encoded in individuals' imaginaries could undergird conversation, inform demeanor in performance contexts, or mediate impressions of how individuals with different identities and social positions with respect to race, class, geography, and gender might interact. These interactions take place in settings Mary Louise Pratt names "contact zones," places like field sites and festival stages, are "contact zones," boundaries that Mary Louise Pratt describes as "spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths."[17] I understand contact zones as fault lines in the geographical and ideational terrains that social imaginaries map. Analyzing Sacred Harp's twentieth century contact zones—field

[14] Ibid., 25–26.
[15] Ibid., 23.
[16] Ibid., 25.
[17] Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession*, January 1, 1991, 34.

sites and festival stages in the shadow of slavery's aftermath—shines a light on the heterogeneity of the social imaginaries that singers, folklorists, and audiences embodied in their interactions. This particular scope can illuminate the shifts and mishearings in interactions between singers, folklorists, and festival audiences, and the imbalances of power that informed them. For Sacred Harp singing in the twentieth century, folklore's filter and the social contexts of the music industry and Jim Crow–era segregation provided "background understandings" that informed folklorists and black Sacred Harp singers' intergroup interactions in the contact zones where they met. In what follows, I interpret the imaginaries individuals exhibited in these field sites and festival stages through their practices. I do so from the archive by analyzing records of encounters in these contact zones such as recorded oral history interviews and folk festival concert footage created in the 1960s and 1970s. In analyzing this documentary record, I report on the "background understandings" encoded in assumptions undergirding these asymmetrical interactions.

Selectively Staging the "Beloved Community" at the Newport Folk Festival

Sacred Harp singers performed at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival, held between Thursday, July 23, and Sunday, July 26, as part of a push to include more "source musicians" alongside the popular folk revival performers who regularly headlined the festival. Alan Lomax joined the festival's board after the 1963 festival and argued for the inclusion of more singers and musicians associated with local and regional genres around the country. In response, the festival hired Ralph Rinzler, who "traveled twelve thousand miles" across the United States and Canada conducting fieldwork to identify potential

festival acts,[18] including trips to West and South Alabama in 1964 and again to South Alabama in 1965.[19]

In seeking out source musicians and planning fieldwork, Rinzler accessed and built on the work of two generations of folklorists who had identified exemplar performers of different musics classed as "folk" in scholarly articles, books, and field recordings. Lomax and Rinzler's selection of Sacred Harp singers as one of these local genres is unsurprising. Rinzler was familiar with white and black Sacred Harp singing in Alabama through the scholarship of George Pullen Jackson, John W. Work III, and Walter Edward Byrd among others, which led him to visit the South Alabama region where Work and Byrd had researched.[20] Discursive encounters with folklore scholarship and direct contact with folklorists influenced Rinzler's plans when he sought out Sacred Harp singers during his fieldwork trips. Mississippi folklorist John Quincy Wolf encouraged him to visit singers in West and South Alabama, where Jackson, Work, and Byrd had focused their fieldwork, rather than where Lomax had most recently recorded.[21]

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[18] John Szwed, *Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World* (New York: Penguin, 2010), 349.
[19] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 20.
[20] Rinzler shared an article and obscure thesis on black Sacred Harp singing in South Alabama with then folklore masters student Joe Dan Boyd in the late 1960s, Work, "Plantation Meistersinger"; Byrd, "The Shape-Note Singing Convention as a Musical Institution in Alabama." Boyd also reports that Rinzler interviewed John W. Work "in an effort to supplement the data contained in his 1941 article." See Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 20. Rinzler was also familiar with work on white Sacred Harp singing that depicted West Alabama as a particularly strong hotbed of the style, including Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*; Jackson, *The Story of The Sacred Harp*.
[21] Festival attendee Linda Fannin credited Wolf with "ma[king] this wonderful trip possible." See Linda Fannin, "A Dream Come True," *Harpeth Valley Sacred Harp News* 1, no. 5 (December 1964): 4. Lomax arranged to meet Jackson to record a Sacred Harp convention in Birmingham while on his way back to Washington, DC, from conducting fieldwork with a team in Coahoma County, Mississippi, in August 1942. He later released the recording, edited by Jackson, as part of the Folk Music of the United States series published by the Library of Congress. Lomax returned to Alabama in 1959 to record another Sacred Harp Convention in Fyffe, Alabama, on Sand Mountain in the northeastern corner of the state, for commercial release as part of Atlantic Records's Southern Journey series. See George Pullen Jackson to Alan Lomax, letter, (n.d.), George Pullen Jackson Papers, Collection of Pam Helms, Atlanta, GA; George Pullen Jackson and Alan Lomax, *Sacred Harp Singing*, 5 78 rpm records, Archive of American Folk Song (Washington,

The group of singers Rinzler brought to Newport had not participated in previous trips outside the South. However, because of their geographical proximity to the Denson family members and others who corresponded with Jackson in planning trips to festivals and scholarly conferences a dozen years earlier, they effectively inherited the family's associations with folklore scholars. Although the individual members of the group were different, their geographical proximity to the places most frequently represented in Sacred Harp folklore scholarship drove Rinzler to select them as the "source" of Sacred Harp singing, even though Sacred Harp singing was equally pervasive in the 1960s in other parts of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas, as well as pockets of Florida and Tennessee.

Pete Seeger, a regular participant in and organizer of the festival implicitly echoed Lomax and Rinzer's call for the inclusion of source musicians in the festival. Referring to folk as the music of average people, Seeger extended Lomax and Rinzler's idea of the festival's purpose to evoke a democratic, grassroots orientation.

> Why have we done this? Because we believe in the idea that the average man and woman can make his own music in this machine age. Doesn't all have to come out of a loudspeaker. You can make it yourself. Whether you want to shout or croon. Sing sweet or rough. And it can be your own music and when I say your own, the music of your own kind, whether its your family, or town, region. Your race or your place. Your religion or wherever it is.[22]

Murray Lerner's 1967 film *Festival!*, which documents the Newport Folk Festival between 1963 and 1967, juxtaposes voiceover of Seeger's monologue with footage of the

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DC: Library of Congress, Music Division, 1943); Alan Lomax and Alabama Sacred Harp Singers, *All Day Singing from "The Sacred Harp,"* 33 1/3 rpm record, Southern Journey (Bergenfield, NJ: Prestige, 1961); Szwed, *Alan Lomax*, 192, 317, 320–321. On the Coahoma County study, which Lomax conducted in collaboration with Work, among others, see Work, Jones, and Adams, *Lost Delta Found*.

[22] Pete Seeger, quoted in Lerner, *Festival!*.

Sacred Harp group performing the song ROCKY ROAD.[23] After the singers conclude, Lerner cuts to performance footage of the Georgia Sea Island Singers, an all-black group.[24] Echoing Seeger's description of "the music of your own kind … your race or place," Lerner's editing both associates folk music with southern source musicians and suggests the festival's capacity to bring black and white performers together during a time of political unrest in the South and across the country.

A month after the disappearance of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner in Mississippi, and just three weeks after US president Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, the festival's performers and organizers were preoccupied by political events. Festival participants interviewed by Lerner wondered whether Newport was a part of ongoing struggles oriented toward achieving an interconnected set of political goals including racial equality and an end to the war in Vietnam.[25] In addition to advocating for greater inclusion of source musicians, Lomax and Rinzler championed shared music making at the festival as a vehicle for democratic political change. Festival founder George Wein was "sensitive[e] to the ongoing battle for civil rights"[26] and leading performers and presenters such as Pete Seeger, Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul, and Mary), Joan Baez, and Donovan Leitch shared this hope that integrated

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[23] Then a popular number at singings, ROCKY ROAD is a variant of a song first published in an arrangement by Thomas P. Fenner in a collection of "Fifty Cabin and Plantation Songs" by the Hampton Institute. Credited to J. C. Brown in J. S. James, ed., *Sacred Tunes and Hymns* (Atlanta, GA, 1913), the song appeared arranged by Paine Denson in Thomas J. Denson et al., eds., *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision* (Haleyville, AL: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1936). A black "plantation song" adapted by white Sacred Harp singers for the tunebook, ROCKY ROAD's publication history counters George Pullen Jackson's white spirituals thesis. On the words and music of ROCKY ROAD, see Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 214.

[24] Lerner, *Festival!*.

[25] Ibid.

[26] George Wein and Nate Chinen, *Myself Among Others: A Life in Music* (Da Capo Press, 2009), 327.

music-making could help bring about the "beloved community." In *Festival!*, Lerner juxtaposes Donovan singing songs protesting the Vietnam War with comments from festival attendees calling for action to address the risk of nuclear war. Festival attendees interviewed by Lerner disagreed about the extent to which folk music functioned as a form of protest. One young attendee expressed enjoyment of folk music as an apolitical preference akin to liking "strawberry shortcake," while another argued that topical lyrics rendered folk songs powerful political acts. Joan Baez likewise expressed uncertainty about the young festival attendees' allegiance with and involvement in political action, and questioned their lifestyle choices, suggesting they should bathe more frequently. Yet Baez apparently took solace from the attendees' habit of requesting the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome," remarking that they "know what it's about" and associating the long hair sported by some young men and women at the festival with an embrace of "freedom."[27]

On-stage performances featuring civil rights activists and integrated assemblies of festival acts singing songs associated with the civil rights movement tied the festival's embrace of ambiguously defined "freedom" to the freedom struggle. For the 1964 festival, Guy Carawan assembled a choir, called the Freedom Group, featuring members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Freedom Singers, including Cordell Reagon, Bernice Johnson Reagon, and James Peacock, the Birmingham Movement Choir, as well as Fannie Lou Hamer. Organizers such as Wein saw the inclusion of the Freedom Group as an expression of the festival organizers' commitment to the civil rights

[27] Lerner, *Festival!*.

movement.[28] Lerner's *Festival!* concludes with footage of a large integrated group including Pete Seeger, Odetta, members of the Freedom Group, and others on stage singing the spiritual "Down by the Riverside." Earlier in the documentary, Lerner follows a performance by the Freedom Singers with footage of a similarly integrated group on stage, holding hands, swaying together while singing "We Shall Overcome."[29] These black-led integrated performances of songs strongly associated with the civil rights movement during the Mississippi Freedom Summer demonstrated festival organizers' commitment to staging the utopic "beloved community" that organizers and performers alike hoped the civil rights movement would bring about.

This staging of racial equality was performed for a predominantly white, predominantly young audience. Although the festival included black and white acts from the southern United States, African performers such as Spokes Mashiyane, and European performers such as Theodore Bikel, its organizers and headlining acts were predominantly white Americans. The demographics of the audience matched that of its organizers—the festival attracted scarcely as many black audience members as performers. An expression of pro–civil rights and anti–Vietnam War politics for some white audience members yet merely a chance to relax after a week of office work for others interviewed by Lerner,[30] the festival's invocation of racial harmony had limited reach due to the whiteness of the Newport audience.

The tableau on the festival stage of a world of harmony made possible by the civil rights movement's victories crossed racial but not sectional lines. White southern festival

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[28] Wein and Chinen, *Myself Among Others*, 327.
[29] Lerner, *Festival!*.
[30] Ibid.

acts were notably absent among the integrated groups of performers singing civil rights anthems at Newport. Lerner's documentary depicts some white southern source musicians in interviews, yet the performers speak exclusively about their families' long histories of music making, and are not called upon by Lerner to express political sentiments. The sectional divide evident in the absence of white southern festival performers in integrated displays on stage complements a generational divide among black festival acts. Although Odetta and members of the youthful Freedom Singers join Seeger, Yarrow, and other white folk revivalists for "We Shall Overcome," older black festival performers drawn into the folk revival such as Son House and Mississippi John Hurt sit the song out.[31] It may be the case that these southern white and older black "source musicians" did not share the utopic imaginary of cross-racial harmony favored by the festival's organizers and its northern white and younger black performers. Reflecting on the 1964 festival in 2009, festival founder George Wein evinces just such a belief, speculating that organizers' "strong political views must have seemed strange to some of the performers who hailed from the rural South."[32]

For the thirty-three white Sacred Harp singers, mostly from West Alabama, who performed at Newport in 1964, singing from the festival stage was just one part of a novel seven-day bus trip that included crossing the Appalachian and Blue Ridge Mountains, passing through Washington, DC, and New York City, touring Newport mansions, and enjoying their time together. An account from the diary of West Alabama Sacred Harp singer Artie Ballinger barely mentions the festival itself. Instead, in an account written

[31] Ibid.
[32] Wein and Chinen, *Myself Among Others*, 327.

"mostly for the enjoyment of her immediate family,"[33] Ballinger describes "36 degree" weather with "the wind … blowing cold" and warmer days with the sun shining; landmarks from "spruce pine trees along the road" to "all the big mansions" in Newport featuring "something interesting on every wall"; four-lane and sixteen-lane highways and "roads every which way"; each new bus driver who "wanted us to sing some for him" and "seem[ed] to enjoy it"; even the restaurants where the group ate breakfast, dinner, and supper.[34] For Artie Ballinger, like Grethel Fields, who wrote a similar account of her participation in a presentation of Old Regular Baptist lined-out hymnody at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, "feelings about the people and places they encountered" were foremost on her mind.[35]

Ballinger's account of each bus driver's ostensibly positive reaction to Sacred Harp singing is striking because her narrative omits any discussion of the festival audience's response to the singers' three performances at Newport. For their first performance on the night of the opening day, Ballinger notes that the singers sang three songs from the festival's large outdoor stage.[36] The singers performed while looking out over a vast

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[33] Linton Ballinger to Jesse P. Karlsberg, letter, (May 9, 2015). Artie Ballinger's report is thus an "account from a participant's point of view without academic solicitation," like that written by a member of the group of Old Regular Baptists Jeff Todd Titon presented at the 1997 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife. As such it has particular potential to "define [festival participants'] own areas of concern and interest." See Jeff Todd Titon, "'The Real Thing': Tourism, Authenticity, and Pilgrimage among the Old Regular Baptists at the 1997 Smithsonian Folklife Festival," *The World of Music* 41, no. 3 (January 1, 1999): 130. Linton Ballinger, a son of Artie Ballinger (now deceased), read and commented on my analysis of his mother's trip report.

[34] Excerpt from the diary of Artie Ballinger of Fayette, Alabama, reprinted in Artie Ballinger, "Highlights of Trip to Newport, Rhode Island," *Huntsville Sacred Harp Newsletter*, no. 29 (September 1998), http://www.mcsr.olemiss.edu/~mudws/huntsville/sep98.html.

[35] Titon, "The Real Thing," 116.

[36] Ballinger, "Highlights of Trip to Newport, Rhode Island." Artie Ballinger's son Linton Ballinger suggests that the novelty and adventure of what was for "most all of the 33 singers" a first trip "to this Northeast section of our country," is one reason the account is "limited to a travel report," rather than an account of the festival singing itself, Linton Ballinger to Jesse P. Karlsberg.

audience that singer Linda Fannin, in a short article on the trip, estimated at "twelve to fourteen thousand." Fannin, whose article devotes one of its four paragraphs to the singing itself, notes that "[t]he crowd really seemed to enjoy it and their response was wonderful."[37] This spatial configuration differed dramatically from the modest inward facing hollow-square seating arrangement the singers occupied on weekends at West Alabama churches and county courthouses. Video footage of West Alabama singer Tom Harper (one of three singers Ballinger identifies as leading the group on Thursday night) leading ROCKY ROAD displays a group of singers remarkably unfazed by the two-day journey across two time zones from hollow square to festival stage. As Ballinger who "never changed [her] watch," notes, one "couldn't tell much difference when the sun shined." The footage documents the singers' expressions as stoic and postures stiff. They seem perhaps nervous, unmoved by the experience, or simply contained within the activity of singing. The singers stand two deep in a semicircle with Harper standing in front of them, characteristically walking around the open space as he leads the song.[38]

The Sacred Harp singers next sang in the festival's outdoor park, where "[e]veryone just sat on the ground" in one of the "two or three different places set up for entertainment." Finally, on Sunday morning, the last day of the festival, the singers "sat on the stage [for] about 2 hours" as part of a lineup of sacred musical acts.[39] This final performance was the only event at the festival that drew comment in Ballinger's diary.

> It is Sunday morning. We are back at Park singing for the last time. Sat on the stage about 2 hours. The sun is shining and warmer today. The Cumberland Mountain Boys sang this morning and the Stanley Brothers.

[37] Fannin, "A Dream Come True."
[38] Ballinger, "Highlights of Trip to Newport, Rhode Island"; Lerner, *Festival!*.
[39] Ballinger, "Highlights of Trip to Newport, Rhode Island."

> It has all been sacred songs and we sure enjoyed it all. It is about 11:30 and we are getting a sandwich, ready to start home. We have enjoyed it all so much—but getting started back South will be O.K.[40]

Ballinger and her fellow Sacred Harp singers' "involvement in other Festival activities was very limited," aside from their own performances and Sunday morning's sacred music lineup.[41] When they were on the festival grounds, the singers may have spent their time singing, "jammed into one sitting room shaking the walls with their voices" as Rinzler found the group "about ten minutes after" their arrival in Newport.[42] Perhaps because they were on a trip organized by West Alabama singer Lloyd Wood, who obtained funding for their transportation, lodging, and dining, the singers had a busy itinerary when not performing at the festival. Highlights included two tours of Newport mansions led by "a french teacher … Mr. John E Menka." In the only entry in her overwhelmingly positive account of the trip in which she characterizes the festival events, Ballinger praises the "sacred[ness]" of the songs performed by the white southern performers she names, perhaps proud to locate her own group's performance within Sunday's sacred lineup. Ballinger reserves most of her diary's ample approval for sightseeing, accommodations, and her fellow singers, reporting after a day of touring Newport, "Back at the cabins—they are so nice. We are all like one big family visiting each other, singing together."[43] Mirroring Seeger, Lomax, and Rinzler's vision of music's

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[40] Ibid. Fannin recalled that "[o]ther performers were: Johnny Cash, Dewey Shepard, The Doc Watson Family, The Cajun Group, and Jimmy Driftwood." See Fannin, "A Dream Come True."
[41] Linton Ballinger to Jesse P. Karlsberg.
[42] Ralph Rinzler, quoted in Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart*, 47.
[43] Ballinger, "Highlights of Trip to Newport, Rhode Island." Linton Ballinger underscores the mix of religious feeling and a desire to travel as factors motivating Artie Ballinger to join the Newport group, writing that "this was basically a free trip to see a new section of the country, and to spread the Word of God by singing the Sacred Harp songs to many who had not heard them before at this Folk Festival," Linton Ballinger to Jesse P. Karlsberg. Jeff Todd Titon, describing a similar focus on visits to historic sites

power to bring people together across lines of difference, Ballinger too remarks on the unifying effect of the trip to Newport. The "big family" she invokes encompasses those around West Alabama's inward-facing hollow square, but does not necessarily extend to include the cross-sectional and interracial assembly on the Newport Folk Festival stage or the festival's audience.

For festival founder George Wein, the consequences of convening this "collision of worlds" could contribute to achieving "beloved community" imperfectly represented on the festival stage. Wein casts an anecdote about an encounter between members of the white Sacred Harp singers and black Georgia Sea Island Singers—the two groups juxtaposed in *Festival!* under Pete Seeger's narration—as evidence of the festival's capacity to break down the barriers the freedom struggle challenged.

> On the first night of the festival, we sent a shuttle bus around Newport, taking performers to Festival Field. By the time the Georgia Sea Island Singers were picked up at their temporary residence, this shuttle was completely full. As it turned out, the front of the bus was occupied by a group of Sacred Harp Singers from a small town in Alabama—all of whom were white.
>
> As Bessie Jones and the rest of the Georgia Sea Islanders boarded, they saw that there were no available seats. There was an awkward silence; both of these groups came from places where blacks and whites had no interaction whatsoever. The Sacred Harp contingent was a fundamentalist Christian group; they were accustomed to segregation as a way of life.
>
> The tension on the bus was palpable. Then, without anyone saying a word, one of the men from the Sacred Harp singers stood and offered his seat to a woman from the Georgia Sea Island Singers. After a moment's hesitation, she gratefully took it. Soon another Sacred Harp gentleman

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in Grethel Fields's account of her trip to Washington to perform at the Festival of American Folklife, notes the "considerable planning" that enabled the singers "to fit in their trips to the tourist sites" and remarks that the singers, like Artie Ballinger and the members of her group for whom the trip to Newport was an unprecedented opportunity, "were anxious to make the most of this opportunity to see some of the nation's most sacred places." See Titon, "The Real Thing," 134.

> offered his seat, then another—until all of the Georgia Sea Island women were seated.[44]

Wein offers this parable of gender norms overtaking racial difference as evidence of a familial "atmosphere [that] pervaded the festival behind the scenes."[45] The neatness of his account depends on broad generalizations about the white southern singers' racial ideologies and life experiences. Detailing or even acknowledging his ignorance of singers' varied political stances would have disrupted Wein's careful reiteration of civil rights movement narratives. Yet even in Wein's account, the bus's palpable tension and the lack of words spoken between white men and black women even in relieving this tension point to the limited nature of the rapprochement the festival's commitment to desegregation effected. Artie Ballinger's son Linton recalls "in after trip conversations with our parents, uncle/aunt, and cousin [who attended], never were there any discussions about the Folk Festival organizers' objectives to encourage racial harmony or War protest either before or during their participation in the event."[46] Wein's connection of the Sacred Harp group's "fundamentalist Christian[ity]" and their "small town in Alabama" with "segregation as a way of life" underscores the gulf that separated the festival's northern white organizers from the southern "source musicians" they included in the festival lineup. Just as the organizers' "strong political views must have seemed strange to" these southern performers, the southern performers surely "seemed strange" to Wein and his "army of staff and volunteers,"[47] who substituted overarching

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[44] Wein and Chinen, *Myself Among Others*, 327–28.
[45] Ibid., 328.
[46] Linton Ballinger to Jesse P. Karlsberg.
[47] Wein and Chinen, *Myself Among Others*, 327–28.

generalizations in keeping with civil rights movement narratives for intimate knowledge of the performers' life experiences.

The Newport festival grounds facilitated contact across sectional, racial, class, and generational boundaries, but the imaginaries these different groups embodied during their encounters affected their participation in and reception of the "beloved community" staged at the festival. Young black performers from across the country joined white festival organizers and leading white folk revivalists in singing the songs of the civil rights movement. Yet members of the festival's white audience varied in their interpretation of the festival's politics and political efficacy, and white southern performers and older black performers "rediscovered" as "source musicians" during the folk revival sat out the festival's staging of the civil rights movement's utopic "goal of an integrated society, an interracial democracy"[48] through music making.

Shifting Racial Imaginaries in the Field: Negotiating Race and Recording in the Alabama Wiregrass

SUNY Buffalo music professor William Tallmadge was just one of a cohort of young white folklorists and music scholars who traveled to the Wiregrass region of South Alabama to conduct fieldwork with black Sacred Harp singers between 1964 and 1973. Auburn English master's student and Sacred Harp singer Buell Cobb first visited in 1967, three years after Rinzler first conducted fieldwork in the area, attending singings and forming bonds that later featured prominently in his book *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition*

[48] Lewis, *Walking with the Wind*, 204.

and Its Music.[49] Joe Dan Boyd, a Texan master's student in folklore at the University of Pennsylvania, initially decided to investigate black Sacred Harp singing after learning about the Rusk County Convention, one of a number of black Sacred Harp singings in East Texas, from white area singer A. M. Maines, in 1967. Yet after Rinzler and folklorist John Quincy Wolf shared folklore scholarship on black South Alabama singers with Boyd he refocused from Texas to South Alabama, making the first of several field trips to speak with singers there in 1968.[50] Doris Dyen first made the trip in 1972 while in the musicology doctoral program at the University of Illinois. After conducting extensive fieldwork between 1972 and 1973 she published her dissertation in 1977, featuring the most thorough ethnographic account of how Sacred Harp singing fit into the lives of black southeastern Alabamians.[51] After a twenty-five-year period, from the start of World War II until the peak of the civil rights movement, when no new writing on black Sacred Harp singing appeared, this burst of fieldwork from 1964–1973 marks a dramatic increase in scholarly attention. Perhaps motivated by the United States's shifting racial politics, this new generation's interest was contingent on Work's prior publication on black singers in the area. That each of these aspiring folklorists and academics chose to focus on black singers in South Alabama, rather than on other populations of black Sacred Harp singers about which these young white academics had recently learned,[52] speaks to the

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[49] Cobb, *The Sacred Harp*; Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart*, 107.
[50] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 19–21.
[51] Dyen, "The Role of Shape-Note Singing in the Musical Culture of Black Communities in Southeast Alabama."
[52] In addition to Boyd's awareness of black Sacred Harp singers in East Texas, William R. Ferris had documented black Sacred Harp singers in North Mississippi in 1969, sending two students to conduct oral history interviews in 1970. These materials are collected in William R. Ferris et al., *William Ferris Recording Project, 1970*, 7 vols. (Bellefontaine, MS, 1972), William Ferris Recording Project, 1970 (AFC 1971/012;

powerful precedent publication sets in channeling the paths of subsequent work, rendering perhaps comparable practices and populations invisible to scholars and public folklorists.

As civil rights activism crested across the Jim Crow South in the mid-1960s, both white scholars and black singers were wary about their encounters in singers' living rooms and in public places around town, at area churches, and in radio and television stations. Cobb recalls a tentative reply from two black men in Dothan, Alabama, he consulted for directions when trying to find the Adams Street Baptist Church on his first visit to an area black singing in September 1967: "Now, that's a *black* church. …" they responded,[53] voicing concern informed by the fraught history of cross-racial interaction in the area. After Boyd had cemented a "fruitful" relationship with Henry Japheth Jackson, a leading South Alabama black singer and son of Judge Jackson, compiler of the four-shape-note tunebook that became the center of Boyd's study, Japheth Jackson confided that his wife Gussie "had expressed early reservations about his decision to welcome me [Boyd], a white stranger from the North (Pennsylvania), into their home because of then-current dangers surrounding civil rights activism in the South." As Boyd later wrote, "Japheth assured me that her fears were not frivolous and should be heeded."[54]

William Tallmadge, who drove to South Alabama for a two-week research trip midway through conducting fieldwork in Kentucky during the summer of 1968, was a

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LCCN, 2010655222), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

[53] Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart*, 107.

[54] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 21.

relatively minor figure in the procession of white researchers that black Ozark and Dothan singers encountered in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although Tallmadge conducted interviews, recorded singings, and attended other events with black and white singers in the region, he never found time to return for further research. He eventually decided not to publish on the topic and turned his interviews over to Dyen.[55]

I analyze Tallmadge's 1968 trip here, rather than Dyen's extensive visits from 1972–1973, because as a scholar whose major interests lay elsewhere, Tallmadge held beliefs about black and white Sacred Harp singing and cross-racial and cross-sectional interaction informed by exposure to predominantly white folklore scholarship and general awareness of the news of the day. He had not come to new opinions after extensive research into the practice and its history. I also analyze Tallmadge's trip, rather than Rinzler's 1964 visit (the first by a member of this cohort), because by 1968 African Americans had already secured significant legislative victories in the struggle for civil rights. I argue that white northerners such as Tallmadge imagined that the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 had rendered honest cross-racial and cross-sectional communication about topics like music newly possible. Tallmadge and his colleagues believed that such dialog had been impossible given the asymmetries of power that characterized Jim Crow. The legislative victories, white scholars hoped, had dismantled ideational barriers tracing the color-line and the Mason-

[55] Boyd, whose manuscript on Judge Jackson and *The Colored Sacred Harp* remained unpublished for thirty years, also lent his field notes and recordings to Dyen. See Dyen, "The Role of Shape-Note Singing in the Musical Culture of Black Communities in Southeast Alabama," iii.

Dixon line along with legal divisions.[56] Simultaneously, tensions over student activism as the civil rights movement continued and the Vietnam War intensified contributed to growing generational gulfs relating to perceptions of appropriate conduct in political expression among black southerners. Jim Crow–era modes of cross-racial interaction continued to inform the practices of older black South Alabama Sacred Harp singers who spoke to Tallmadge, a white man, irrespective of the formal dismantling of the legal regime of segregation.

The encounters between black southeastern Alabama Sacred Harp singers and visiting white scholars were consequential, opening up new opportunities for members of both groups. The visits also illuminated the persistence of racial inequality in the region and generational fracturing of approaches to political action and cross-racial interaction. The scholarly wave Tallmadge rode would continue to inform constructions of black Sacred Harp singing as limited to discrete isolated pockets of the rural South, with South Alabama as its epicenter. The generational divide that Tallmadge encountered among black South Alabamians over practices of contesting white power likewise would group Sacred Harp singing in with other activities associated with segregation in black regional culture. Like Sacred Harp's folklorization, the style's connection to generational differences inhibited the participation of younger African Americans from the region put off its associations with their parents' regional culture.

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[56] On the "color-line" as a focus of black thought and analyses of racial inequality, see Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 19. On the relationship of folklore scholarship to enacting color-lines in commercial music in the twentieth century see Miller, *Segregating Sound*; Erich Nunn, *Sounding the Color Line: Music and Race in the Southern Imagination* (University of Georgia Press, 2015).

In the 1960s and 1970s, as the swell of interest among white academics in studying black southeastern Alabama Sacred Harp singers peaked in an echo of the civil rights movement, the white researchers' social imaginary washed over the physical terrain of the southern United States, its contours shifting in concert with contemporaneous political transformation. These scholars were informed not only by the broader civil rights movement, but by its campus component, as universities established black studies departments in response to protests.[57] As the slow dismantling of *de jure* segregation recalibrated relations among racial groups within the South, white academics associated the terrain of the Alabama Wiregrass with the potential for more liberal intergroup association and the insights they might generate. Academics like Tallmadge imagined that this shift would make conducting research more practical and enable more open conversations with black Alabamians. Yet the shift also left scholars sensitive to evidence of persistent racial inequality. At the same time, the folk revival furnished those same academics with a new space in which to imagine black Sacred Harp singing, that of the large northern folk festival gatherings to which many of these young scholars were connected.

The Alabama Wiregrass region in which Tallmadge and other white scholars encountered black Sacred Harp singers had a substantial minority black population, lower than that in the Black Belt region to the north and northwest, but considerably higher than the upcountry counties where George Pullen Jackson conducted fieldwork in

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[57] Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007). At SUNY Buffalo, where Tallmadge taught, Hollis R. Lynch established a program in black studies in the fall of 1969. See "About," *African and African American Studies, University at Buffalo*, accessed June 4, 2015, http://africanandafricanamericanstudies.buffalo.edu/home/about/.

the 1930s and 1940s. In the eighteenth century the region was dominated by Muskogees who eventually united with affiliated groups to form the Creek Confederacy and resisted the incursion of English settlers until most were forced west or killed in the wake of the Creek War and the 1814 Treaty of Fort Jackson, which ceded a territory including the Wiregrass region. In the wake of removal, whites, mostly from Georgia and the Carolinas, relocated to the region.[58] Population density remained low, however. The Wiregrass's sandy soil was unsuitable for cotton farming but the underbrush beneath the area's characteristic longleaf pines was productive foraging terrain for hogs and cattle, leading to a political economy dominated by herders and subsistence farmers with only occasional large plantations in river valleys.[59] A minority of antebellum white residents enslaved relatively low but rising numbers of African Americans compared with the large slaveholding plantations in the nearby Black Belt.[60] After the Civil War and Reconstruction African Americans moved to the region in increasing numbers in search of land ownership given low population density and land prices, and economic opportunity in the wake of northern investment in timber and naval stores industries.[61] Yet African Americans experienced political and economic oppression as the regime of segregation intensified.[62] In the twentieth century towns in the region grew, particularly

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[58] McGregory, *Wiregrass Country*, 12–19. On the Creek War, see Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), chap. 11; Richard D. Blackmon, *The Creek War of 1813–1814* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2014), http://www.history.army.mil//html/books/074/74-4/CMH_Pub_74-4.pdf.

[59] Flynt, "Regions of Alabama."

[60] In adjacent Georgia Wiregrass counties average slaveholdings rose from 2.3 in 1850 to 7.2 in 1860. See McGregory, *Wiregrass Country*, 4.

[61] Ibid., 4–5.

[62] On racial, gender, and other hierarchies affecting social status in the Alabama Wiregrass, see Dyen, "The Role of Shape-Note Singing in the Musical Culture of Black Communities in Southeast Alabama," chap. 1.

Dothan, which reached a population of 31,440 in 1960, and Fort Rucker introduced new opportunities for career advancement after its founding outside Ozark in 1942. The black Wiregrass Sacred Harp singers who spoke with Tallmadge had been born in the region and represented the range of class and status positions for blacks in the region, with professional histories ranging from sharecropping and working odd jobs, to careers as college-educated schoolteachers and ministers.

I analyze the interviews William Tallmadge recorded with black Sacred Harp singers Thomas Y. Lawrence, Dewey President Williams, and Shem Jackson during his May 29–June 10, 1968, trip[63] as potentially carrying signs of these three individuals' assumptions about race, place, and music in the Alabama Wiregrass—expressions of broadly held social imaginaries. Tallmadge's questions and comments, Lawrence's, Williams's, and Jackson's responses, and the negotiation between interviewer and subject in this "contact zone" all bear traces of the power dynamics at play and their political contexts.

Tallmadge drew on midcentury scholarly and popular understandings of African American music in contextualizing South Alabama black Sacred Harp singing, leading him to associate black Sacred Harp singing with a range of disparate black music genres. Tallmadge's own research focused on lined-out hymn singing (he also pioneered the teaching of jazz). He conducted extensive fieldwork both among white United Baptists in Kentucky and black Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches in Buffalo, New York. Drawing on the scholarly genealogy he traced in the field, Tallmadge asked

[63] For Tallmadge's field notes indicating the timing of his trip, see Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, Accession no. 33, Box no. 4, Folder 4-1, Field Notes: May–July, 1968; Accession No. 33, Box no. 5, Folder 5-3, Calendar/Notebook: December '77–January '69.

interview subjects about their knowledge of musics ranging from lined-out "Dr. Watts Singing" to "spirituals," to gospel quartets such as the Blind Boys of Alabama and the Dixie Hummingbirds.

The impact of folklore scholarship on Tallmadge's knowledge of black music making also emerges in his attempt to steer his interview subjects toward the role of improvisation or deviation from written music in black shape-note singing. Folklore scholarship on African American music in the mid-twentieth century centered on debates about whether black music was derivative of African or European cultures. Scholars such as sociologist Melville J. Herskovitz emphasized what he described as African retentions as evidence of African American cultural distinctiveness.[64] Folklorists pointed to the role of oral transmission in preserving folk practices associated with Africa, and identified characteristics of performance, such as ornamentation and improvisation, as "Africanisms" that could persist even in the context of singing notated music, such as that found in *The Sacred Harp*.[65] In an interview with Tallmadge on May 30, 1968, elderly black Sacred Harp singer Thomas Y. Lawrence and his wife Bertha Harper Lawrence resisted Tallmadge's implicit valorization of ornamentation and improvisation. Tallmadge commented that he had "noticed [black Sacred Harp singer] brother [Dewey]

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[64] Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*; Robert Baron, "Africa in the Americas: Melville J. Herskovits' Folkloristic and Anthropological Scholarship, 1923–1941" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1994); Jerry Gershenhorn, *Melville J. Herskovits and the Racial Politics of Knowledge* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

[65] Beginning with Charles Seeger, scholars of white Sacred Harp singing have likewise questioned the balance of oral and written transmission in Sacred Harp singing. Kiri Miller took up the topic in a 2004 essay in *American Music*. Seeger, "Contrapuntal Style in the Three-Voice Shape-Note Hymns"; Kiri Miller, "'First Sing the Notes': Oral and Written Traditions in Sacred Harp Transmission," *American Music* 22, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 475–501. As in the case of scholarship on black Sacred Harp singing, inquiries into the presence of ornamentation or other deviations from written notation as evidence of oral transmission often serve positions in debates on origins, such as the contention that white Sacred Harp music performances feature traces of Celtic roots.

Williams wasn't singing exactly like it's written in there." In response, T. Y. Lawrence insisted that "Correct singing is much better." The Lawrences, drawing on Williams's remark from the previous night, cast this distinction in racial terms.

> **Thomas Y. Lawrence (TYL):** He [Dewey Williams] made an expression last night, that I thought he shouldn't have made, and I don't think it still was worth anything but he made it. He, you know, he said colored folk can beat white folks singing. But they can't do it. That's what I say. They can't do it. The white people sing more correctly, they don't have so much of that stuff in there.
> **William Tallmadge (WT):** Oh I see what you mean.
> **TYL:** But the colored folk being "ra ra ra" rhythm and messing a whole lot of it. I don't like it like that, I just ain't like that. Others, other people do, I don't.
> **Bertha Harper Lawrence (BHL):** You know correct singing is much better …
> **TYL:** To me.
> **BHL:** … than putting in a whole lot of words that's not even in songs.[66]

T. Y. and Bertha Lawrence implicitly affirm Tallmadge's conviction that orality played a greater role in black Sacred Harp singing, but, critically, disagree with Tallmadge's approval of the deviation from written music. In doing so the Lawrences push back against Tallmadge's interest in an aspect of the style associated with claims of African origins, instead tying their own preferences to whiteness, associated with power and access in 1960s South Alabama, and a musical feature—"correct singing"—long associated with education and elite culture.[67] In an era when literacy tests were used to deny blacks voting rights, the Lawrences may have had powerful underlying reasons to resist valorization of aspects of oral tradition.

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[66] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, WT OR 155-001, JPK transcript, 15.
[67] Tallmadge may have associated his conversation with the Lawrences with George Pullen Jackson's characterization of the conflict between singing school teachers using the four-shape-note system and associates of Lowell Mason who promoted music education based on European models, a group Jackson styled the "Better Music Boys." Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, 16–19.

Key to Tallmadge's musicological goals in analyzing the music making of black Sacred Harp singers was encouraging black interviewees to sing for him on tape. Ostensibly a consequence of Tallmadge's research aims, in black singers' living rooms research subjects soon became a potential touring act—a readymade ensemble that could rise from obscurity to a successful career touring the folk circuit. Tallmadge was no doubt aware of black musicians such as Lead Belly and Son House who, thanks to the intervention of white folklorists, had found late career success performing for white folklore enthusiasts.[68] Like the white fieldworkers who encountered, recorded, and then promoted black music making, Tallmadge elicited a range of reactions from his subjects. T. Y. Lawrence resisted Tallmadge's request that he sing for the scholar, citing his age as an excuse: "I'm kind of old to where I can't produce it like I'd like to. I can't get them up. …"[69]

Dewey President Williams, a charismatic leader of the Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers, a group of black southeastern Alabama shape-note singers who performed regularly on local television and radio stations, had no qualms about singing for Tallmadge. During a May 31, 1968, interview Williams even encouraged his young foster child Leon Holmes, other children, and his wife Alice Williams to sing along. During their interview, the Williams family's energetic and ornamented renditions of songs from *The Sacred Harp* excited Tallmadge, who, despite the ostensible scholarly purposes undergirding his visit, soon fantasizes of promoting the group as a touring family act.

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[68] Charles K. Wolfe and Kip Lornell, *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); Daniel Beaumont, *Preachin' the Blues: The Life and Times of Son House* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[69] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, WT OR 155-001, transcript, 13.

> **WT:** You should think of a family group singing, really learn lots of them and practice I think and get good and let me, let me, getcha coming around, because I think you've got a famous group here, one that could really go far.
> **Dewey Williams (DW):** Yeah, that's what they—
> **WT:** If you feel like doing that. I mean it sounds good. I'd sure like to have you at the university for instance, on a program. … Nothing like this in the United States.
> **DW:** I know it.
> **WT:** … I really think that you'd be a hit. I swear. I've never heard anything so pretty in my life. I love that sound. … Call it the Williams Family shape-note singers from Ozark, Alabama and I'd go all around the country. I'll—, you know, I know a lot of people I can write to. Who've got more influence than I have.[70]

Embedded in a white-dominated political system, Williams was accustomed to soliciting local white elites to fund his radio and television programs and was well connected in regional and state Democratic Party politics.[71] By 1968 he had also encountered northern white folklorists interested in learning about his family's practice of shape-note singing and his community's familiarity with the little-used *Colored Sacred Harp*, a shape-note book edited by the father of Williams's colleague Henry Japheth Jackson. As Tallmadge was not the first of these white fieldworkers to imagine touring success for Williams's ensemble outside of South Alabama, Williams immediately grasped the opportunity to cultivate Tallmadge's interest, encouraging his children to continue singing songs, then suggesting an improved lineup and confidently forwarding the possibility of a tour to the urban northeast.

> **DW:** I'll tell you what. Why don't we, why don't you come back in the morning?
> **WT:** I'll do that.

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[70] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, WT OR 155-003 track 5, transcript, 29–30.
[71] Tallmadge's field notes attest to Williams's regional connections, as do Dyen, "The Role of Shape-Note Singing in the Musical Culture of Black Communities in Southeast Alabama"; Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*.

DW: I'll get Japheth out here. …
WT: Alright … fine. Let's do that.
DW: … and I, and get Japheth here.
WT: Oh this is going to be very fine.
DW: And uh, I'll get him here to sing bass,
WT: Yes, alright.
DW: And I'll get my daughter here to sing alto. And we'll just have a little interview.
WT: Alright, let's do that.
DW: And you might tell us to come to New York or New Jersey.
WT: That's it.[72]

Tallmadge's attention to racial discrimination and social change signals the shifting racial imaginaries underpinning the wave of interest the scholar rode in visiting black Sacred Harp singers in South Alabama. Perhaps prompted by his awareness of racial inequality in the Jim Crow–era South and curious about the consequences of the recent passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Tallmadge asked his interviewees about interracial cross attendance at singings and documented signs of racial and economic disparities and continuing discrimination in his travel around the county.

T. Y. Lawrence, in response to a question about whether the white Sacred Harp singer R. A. Charles "join[ed] in in singing with you ever" replied, "Yeah he comes sometimes" but "not so many others." In response to Tallmadge's follow-up question about black attendees at white singings Lawrence evinces knowledge of a range of approaches to cross-racial attendance among black singers in his area.

WT: None of them do, none of the colored convention attends any of the white, right?
TYL: Oh, Dewey goes around sometimes.
WT: Oh he does?
TYL: Yeah. But I don't ever go.

[72] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, WT OR 155-003, track 8, transcript, 30–31.

> **WT:** Never hear them?
> **TYL:** No sir I don't …
> **WT:** Never did hear the white ones.
> **TYL:** No. Now just go sit in and hear them. … I've heard them you know, but I've never just went and sit in.
> **WT:** How do they sing? I've never heard them.
> **TYL:** They sing pretty good.
> **WT:** Do they?
> **TYL:** Yes sir.[73]

Williams, in later interviews, mentions a regular job "water[ing] the white folks' singing" that enabled him to linger around, listen in, and even "sing with them" when finished.[74] Williams also tells of close relationships with prominent area white singers, remarking that he had "sung in every room of [white singer Robert M.] Davis's house."[75] In speaking with Tallmadge, Williams alluded to a capacity for drawing funds and other sorts of support out of whites by appealing to their needs and catering his performance to their expectations. Williams had honed this ability, a legacy of slavery, during segregation and found it enhanced by his participation in the venerable practice of Sacred Harp singing. On funding his radio and television programs, Williams noted,

> **DW:** I got more sponsors among the white, of the Sacred Harp, than I have in all the programs I render. Sermons, or whatnot. They're— some of them will come up and tell me, say, "now I'll sponsor it if you're gonna sing Sacred Harp." …
> **WT:** … You've got support for, for four-shape.
> **DW:** Yes sir. I've got more, more sponsors for the Sacred Harp. I was talking with, um—
> **WT:** That's good.
> **DW:** Colonel Johnson. And, you know, this, TV program and well, I was sort of seeing which would be the best, taken among the people. And he said, "I'll vote for Sacred all the time."

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[73] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, WT OR 155-001, transcript, 8.
[74] Dewey Williams, interview by Ted Mercer, 1987, quoted in Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart*, 115.
[75] In a 1968 photograph by folklorist Joe Dan Boyd, Dewey and his wife Alice Williams posed with a copy of the Cooper revision of *The Sacred Harp* given to the singer by Davis. Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 50.

WT: Good, good.
DW: He's an outstanding man of this country.[76]



Figure 4.1: The Wiregrass Singers perform on a live television broadcast, Ozark, Alabama, September 1968. Photograph by William H. Tallmadge. Courtesy of the Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives.

Tallmadge's interjections indicate his approval of white donors' preference for four-shape black Sacred Harp singing in South Alabama over seven-note gospel singing or other potential material to be "taken among the people." Through his affirmations the scholar is drawn into Williams's social imaginary, in which cross-racial interaction around Sacred Harp singing is enmeshed in a racially inequitable, yet profitably navigable, power structure.[77] As Williams makes his case for the value of broadcasting black Sacred Harp singing, Tallmadge aligns his own view with the county's white elite, in

[76] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, WT OR 155-003, Track 1, transcript, 26.
[77] I am grateful to Hank Willett, former director of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, for insight into Williams's adeptness at navigating Alabama's white power structure in the mid–late twentieth century.

agreeing that the performance of "the Sacred Harp" is most worthy of support among "all the programs [Williams] render[s]." In Williams's living room, a contact zone far from Tallmadge's home in Buffalo, New York, the scholar finds himself agreeing with the paternalistic whites Williams regularly succeeded at manipulating to achieve his goals.



Figure 4.2: Dewey Williams, Alice Williams, and family in their Ozark, Alabama, home, September 1968. Photograph by William H. Tallmadge. Courtesy of the Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives.

Despite Williams's considerable agency and political savvy navigating white dominated South Alabama, Tallmadge observed and noted his unequal treatment. At a "White service st[ation]" in Dale County, Tallmage reported that the attendant "takes Dewey's $ but Dewey must get his own gas."[78] Tallmadge's attention to racial discrimination and economic inequality suggests he understood white commitment to

[78] Annotation in Tallmadge's handwriting on a slide depicting Williams pumping gas at the service station. Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, Accession no. 33, Box no. 15, Folder 15-1, Ozark, Alabama, 1968; Sacred Harp Church, Radio, and TV Broadcast of Black Gospel Singing.

segregation as continuing to inform practices in South Alabama in 1968. Tallmadge took photographs of large white-owned mansions, and of a racially mixed group standing in line to receive food assistance. He may have documented this subject matter because he understood racial inequality in Dade County as associated with economic subjugation. Engaged in fieldwork documenting black Sacred Harp singing, Tallmadge saw himself as an outsider in an area where entrenched imbalances of power along racial lines affected black singers' participation in and understanding of Sacred Harp. Yet Tallmadge became enmeshed in this power structure through his interactions with black and white Sacred Harp singers in the area.



Figure 4.3: Dewey Williams at a white-owned service station, Ozark, Alabama, September, 1968. Photograph by William H. Tallmadge. Tallmadge recorded that the attendant "takes Dewey's $ but Dewey must get his own gas." Courtesy of the Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives.



Figure 4.4: A white-owned mansion, Ozark, Alabama, September 1968. Photograph by William H. Tallmadge. Courtesy of the Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives.

Tallmadge's conception of black Sacred Harp singing as aligned along a spectrum of black music-making styles enshrined in folklore scholarship differs from George Pullen Jackson's notion of black Sacred Harp as an "imitation" of "white spirituals." Indeed, Tallmadge's connection of black Sacred Harp singing with other forms of black music-making may have set him on the path toward refuting Jackson's thesis that posited tunes in *The Sacred Harp* and related tunebooks as the sources of black spirituals, as he did eleven years after his fieldwork in South Alabama.[79] Yet as a white scholar preoccupied with taxonomic concerns about the relationships among black music genres, Tallmadge, like Jackson, conducted his fieldwork in the service of an agenda disconnected from black singers' understandings of how Sacred Harp singing fit into their own experiences. One

[79] Tallmadge, "The Black in Jackson's White Spirituals."

of several folklorists and music scholars who traveled to Ozark in the years around 1968, Tallmadge exemplifies a contemporaneous shift in the social imaginary that furnished new underlying "background understandings." These new understandings broadened scholars' notions of "what kinds of people we can associate with in what ways and in what circumstances"[80] across the color-line and other lines of power, yet also represent the enduring fractures in these scholars' and their subjects' social imaginaries along racial, sectional, and generational lines.

Williams's conscription of Tallmadge into the project of facilitating a tour that could grant his family and Sacred Harp singing friends exposure and access to new audiences held to a strategy of communication across lines of race and class he had honed to achieve personal goals and promote Sacred Harp in segregation-era South Alabama. Williams avoided conflict with white contacts and sought advantage by accommodating their desires and expectations. He cultivated relationships with local white political elites, obtaining access and support for activities promoting Sacred Harp singing as politicians like George Wallace and Henry Steagall II achieved statewide prominence.[81] This approach conflicted with the strategy of many among younger generations of South Alabama African Americans who had engaged in civil disobedience during the peak of the civil rights movement and in the spring of 1968 had engaged in political protests on the campus of the nearby Tuskegee Institute. In an interview with Shem Jackson, a Baptist minister and son of *Colored Sacred Harp* compiler Judge Jackson, Tallmadge's sensitivity to the state's racial politics may have prompted him to ask abruptly, twenty minutes into

[80] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 25–26.
[81] Hank Willett, personal communication, January 22, 2015.

his conversation on singing and services at Jackson's church, about the reverend's wife's characterization of the couple's daughter, Mary Jackson, as "flighty."

> **WT:** Your oldest daughter is in Tuskegee now, a junior?
> **Shem Jackson (SJ):** That's right, she's a junior.
> **WT:** Your wife says that she is kinda flighty. What does she mean by that? [**SJ:** Well, Mary—] Whereas the nurse one [Jackson's other daughter] that goes right after it and gets it, is [Mary] not quite certain what she's doing or what course she's taking.
> **SJ:** Seems that she doesn't make up her mind. Oh. She not as straight a follower as the other one. That's the way she sees it. But she, otherwise, she's a pretty well balanced girl—[82]

Tallmadge pressed further, probing whether the characterization as "flighty" relates to student protests at Tuskegee, part of a nationwide movement as the civil rights movement expanded into a call for changes in campus politics and merged with protests against the Vietnam War.

> **WT:** Does she write home about these things going on in Tuskegee. [**SJ:** Well yes, you know.] Something's going on there, I don't know what. The students are—
> **SJ:** Well I have gone up twice and had conferences with those girls because I don't want them to get tied up in nothing, I have to keep them checked out. And, Mary, well she has— you know when I stood— [**WT:** Mary's the oldest?] Yeah Mary, she has a tendency to want to go with that reactionary group, you know what I mean— [**WT:** I was just thinking that before I asked you] uhuh because she's a junior— [**WT:** She's older she knows what happens—] and she's concerned about her fellow students on the campus. [**WT:** Certainly] And if one get in trouble now she has a tendency to want to go for them, [**WT:** good] and so I had to tell her well, "Now Mary you have to watch it. You don't want to get in no trouble."
> **WT:** That's a good father you are.[83]

Tallmadge offers cautious praise to Jackson, but then tentatively forwards an alternative analysis. Noting that "Tuskegee in the past has been … very conservative," Jackson frames this orientation as stuck in the past, noting that "the students now today,

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[82] Berea Appalachian Sound Archives, WT OR 155-004, transcript, 39.
[83] Ibid.

everywhere, are beginning to question things. In our school [SUNY Buffalo]."

Tallmadge's argument partakes in a social imaginary regarding political change as favorable and inevitable in the wake of the civil rights movement's legislative victories. Tallmadge articulates a political liberalism amplified by personal experience of student protests at SUNY Buffalo and the accumulation of media coverage of similar occurrences across the nation. Shem Jackson articulated an alternative reading, drawing on an intellectual genealogy promoting black respectability. Jackson praised the school's historical approach to education by explaining Booker T. Washington's approach to race relations, which Jackson credited with "our move as a colored race."

> **SJ:** Well Alabama's coming to the well. Now you take most of the col— Now we got our move as a colored race, mostly from the standpoint of education. It, well, that's true everywhere. The Negroes got an idea about learning from Booker T. Washington. Long time ago, even before I was born. He went cross— around the state of Alabama, giving lectures. And he sold this thing not only to the Negro but to the white too that it's better to have a person working for you that understand than one, to have one that couldn't read and write. Have a person that's pretty well educated. He can do you a better job and he understands what you tell him. And that made him more. And so they, they went for that. That's the reason that Tuskegee Institute growed so much. [**WT:** Oh.] A lot of money came in that place. They had a lot of help. Some of the leading white people. You take Bill O'Connor, from New York. He's on the Board of Directors at Tuskegee. And several other fellows. [**WT:** Yes that's right.] They— Tuskegee is a strong school. And so I had to talk with my daughter and "now you don't mean to think that you, just, go up there for two or three years and go change an institution of learning that's been going on for almost a hundred years and you gonna go there and change around and all like that and set up new policy." I said, "you can't do that, it can't be done." I mean it just sort of, even though the students they uprising, they have these uprisings, may do something, but so far as changing the school all at once, they can't do that. They not going to be given that much power. And it's not right for them to have it, it's not right. They don't understand.[84]

[84] Ibid., 40.

Tallmadge concedes "That's true" to Jackson, but reveals his own sympathies toward the protests at Tuskegee, at Tallmadge's own institution SUNY Buffalo, and on college campuses across the country by remarking that he thinks the events will lead to implicitly positive changes.

> **WT:** That's true. Though, I think some changes are going to be made up in our school, where students have more say in the policy there. … things are happening all over the United States. The colleges are gonna change. Ours is. And what'll happen I do not know. [**SJ:** I don't either] I know in general it's an interesting period to live in.
> **SJ:** That's right.[85]

Having encountered each other's divergent views the two essentially agree to disagree, and return back to the safer topic of church services and Sacred Harp singing. Tallmadge offers one final reiteration of his belief that political change at Tuskegee, as at SUNY Buffalo, is inevitable, before implicitly contrasting the relations of power represented by student protest with the shape-note music he had traveled to Ozark to study.

> **WT:** 'Cause I—I still don't know what's going to happen one year to the next now. [Pause.] One of the things that stays the same is this four-shape-note singing and I like that. Something you can hold on to.
> **SJ:** It doesn't [inaudible]— It doesn't change.
> **WT:** It seems to stay the same.[86]

Jackson's affirmation cements his political conservatism and connects it to his and Tallmadge's shared appreciation for Sacred Harp singing. For Jackson, the venerability and immutability of the singing style—present in the region since the 1850s—are positive factors. He implicitly connects Sacred Harp singing's conservatism with Booker T. Washington's embrace of the politics of respectability, and with the Tuskegee

[85] Ibid., 40–41.
[86] Ibid., 41.

administration's resistance to student demands.[87] His endorsement of four-shape-note singing as something which "doesn't change" suggests his appreciation for Sacred Harp is rooted in a commitment to an approach to achieving black political power through social uplift.

Tallmadge, in contrast, connected his liberal embrace of civil rights protest to his scholarly interest in what he saw as one genre along a spectrum of black folk musics. Folk music promoters like Ralph Rinzler and Pete Seeger brought black sacred singing acts to festivals such as Newport at the height of the civil rights movement and staged integrated performances to project the "beloved community" they hoped the civil rights movement would bring about.[88] Like these promoters Tallmadge brought a belief that Sacred Harp singing had a capacity for political liberation to his conversation with Jackson, and connected this belief to the music's venerability as something that "seems to stay the same" and identification as folksong.

The continued participation of Shem Jackson's daughter, Mary Jackson, in political protest at Tuskegee illuminates divisions along generational lines in southern black families over approaches to achieving political change.[89] Mary Jackson adopted a pose informed by black radicalism promoting active dissent, rather than patience, as an effective strategy to bring about change.

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[87] On Washington's proscription for African American political power through seeking respectability and avoiding direct conflict with whites, see, for example, Booker T. Washington, *The Future of the American Negro* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1902).
[88] Lerner, *Festival!*.
[89] On manifestations of these generational differences in perspectives on the role of the black church in advocating for political change, see Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1972).

Tallmadge may have approached his trip believing that the success of political protest in prompting civil rights legislation had remapped social relations in the South. Amidst upheaval on college campuses and in the wake of the formal dismantling of Jim Crow-era segregation, Tallmadge may have hoped to encounter liberated interview subjects when he traveled to Alabama in June 1968. Speaking with Jeff Todd Titon and Stephen Green years later in 1992, Tallmadge recalled feeling uneasy during the trip, citing the left-wing politics of his photographer, Milton Rogivin, also from Buffalo.[90] Yet Tallmadge's tentative liberal embrace of the potential for change as a result of student protests met with resistance from his conservative black interview subjects. In fieldwork's contact zone he encountered a persistent generational divide over how churches and institutions of higher learning should engage in the quest for civil rights instead of newfound political unity.

Conclusion

Jackson and Tallmadge's encounter demonstrates the positionality and contingency of the social imaginaries that the two brought to their conversation. The West Alabama Sacred Harp singers' negotiation of the 1964 Newport Folk Festival illustrates the racial and geographical boundaries of festival organizers' staging of the "beloved community." The civil rights movement prompted folklorists' displays of support even as views about appropriate intergroup interaction across the color-line, the Mason-Dixon line, and within families splintered in its wake. In contact zones where these conflicting imaginaries collided—ranging from the Newport festival stage to Jackson's living room—

[90] Berea Appalachian Sound Archives, AC-CT-328-001 and 002, transcript of interview.

continued asymmetries of power structured these views and their expression. The next chapter explores how race relations continued to animate public presentations and popular understandings of Sacred Harp in the 1970s and beyond.

Chapter 5.

Negotiating Race: Sacred Harp Singing and Folklore's Filter

Introduction

For the 1970 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife held on the National Mall in Washington, DC, from July 1–5, folklorists Ralph Rinzler and Joe Dan Boyd decided to organize "something that neither … believed had ever been attempted before: a combination of the black and white Sacred Harp traditions on one stage."[1] Rinzler had recently been appointed festival director after a stint at Newport. He hired Boyd as a program director in the wake of Boyd's fieldwork among black Sacred Harp singers in South Alabama.

In selecting singers to invite to the festival Rinzler and Boyd relied on the accumulation of folklore scholarship built on Jackson's and Work's foundations that positioned networks of singers from particular races and places as exemplars of tradition,[2] and their own recent fieldwork with these populations in Alabama and Georgia. The folklorists invited two groups of singers to the festival: one black and working class, from South Alabama, led by Dewey President Williams, the farmer, song-leader, and singing school master Tallmadge had interviewed in 1968; the other comprised of middle and working class white West Georgia and North Alabama residents, led by Hugh W. McGraw, a shirt-making plant manager, composer, and lead editor of the most widely

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[1] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 92.
[2] Work's and Jackson's scholarship on Sacred Harp singing and its scholarly genealogies are the subject of chapter 3.

used edition of *The Sacred Harp*.[3] In the wake of segregation's legal dismantling, Rinzler and Boyd sought to enact the equality they believed was now possible by presenting black and white performers on stage together. Yet continued racial inequality affected singers' participation and audience members' reception of their performances.

This chapter analyzes the 1970 Festival of American Folklife performance, a 1979 performance featuring some of the same black singers at a conference on "rural hymnody" William H. Tallmadge helped organize at Berea College in Kentucky, and these black singers' interactions with state and federal officials in the wake of the civil rights movement and singers' concurrent passage through folklore's filter. The programming and staging of these events and their impact on recognition of and support for shape-note singing as the style spread across the United States and beyond in the late twentieth century illustrate how folklore's disciplinary history imposed a filter through which only certain groups of singers and styles of musical expression could pass. The result is a documentary record of Sacred Harp singing in the twentieth century that dramatically underrepresents black singers, reinforcing an otherness introduced in service of the early-twentieth-century debate over the origin of spirituals, and facilitates both identification with and alienation from southern white singers by members of the growing population of white Sacred Harp singers who first glimpsed Sacred Harp through folklore's filter. This filter and its attendant documentary record persist, delimiting popular and scholarly understandings of Sacred Harp style and its practitioners.

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[3] See chapter 2 for McGraw's biography and involvement in revising *The Sacred Harp* and chapter 4 for Williams's biography and interactions with fieldworkers in southeastern Alabama.

These encounters also show how race, power, and religion animated singers' negotiations of and passages through folklore's filter. As singers journeyed from the hollow square to the festival stage they participated in folklorization as a secularizing transformation that threatened the key values Sacred Harp represented to these practitioners. Yet singers also pursued the opportunities for funding, fame, and expansion that folklorization provided.

Performing Desegregation and Equality on the National Mall

At the Festival of American Folklife in 1970 Rinzler and Boyd presented the two groups as carriers of separate but equal and complementary sets of white and black Sacred Harp "traditions." The folklorists associated race with musical difference yet imagined white and black Sacred Harp singers as two musically homogeneous populations, canonizing the practices of the groups with which they were most familiar as traditional. Buoyed by the passage of civil rights legislation formally desegregating public accommodations in the Jim Crow South, Rinzler and Boyd enacted a parallel desegregation of Sacred Harp singing in Washington. The folklorists scheduled the two groups to perform both separately and together, rendering their continued existence as separate groups visible and dramatizing the festival's intervention of joining them. The singers appeared at daily morning workshops and afternoon performances from a small stage set up on the National Mall, and in an evening performance at a nearby theater on the festival's second night.[4]

[4] William O. Craig, ed., *1970 Festival of American Folklife: Festival Program* (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution, 1970). Though the program indicates "All [evening] programs [were held] at



Figure 5.1: Hugh McGraw and Dewey Williams (center right, in white shirts and ties) in discussion as white and black Sacred Harp singers perform for an audience at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, National Mall, Washington, DC, 1970. Photograph by Joe Dan Boyd. Courtesy of Joe Dan Boyd.

Boyd and Rinzler's positions as representatives of a federal institution gave them the power to bring the white and black groups of singers together and compel them to interact. Aside from Georgia singer and English scholar Buell Cobb, who had met Williams and other black singers in attendance when he first visited a black singing in 1967, the black and white singers first met each other in Washington. Boyd and Rinzler organized arrangements that would musically and socially integrate the groups, housing them together at "their Trinity College dormitory quarters," and shuttling them together

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Sylvan Theater," an outdoor theater on the mall, the audio recording of the Sacred Harp singers' performance strongly suggests an indoor venue.

between their dormitory and the festival grounds.[5] Boyd recognized the tension that attended the singers' interactions and places it against the backdrop of continuing race-related tension and inequality that characterized the Vietnam War era. In recounting singers' experience living, traveling, and singing together during the festival, Boyd describes a fourth of July speech by Billy Graham at the nearby Lincoln Memorial at which the evangelist "preached unity to a divided nation." Boyd contrasts the unity Graham called for with the "groups of singers [who] struggled to keep more than their voices in harmony" with "tension … in the air, surely echoing the racial tension everywhere at the time."[6]

Boyd invested "traditional music" with the power to surmount segregation and build unity, regarding it as "situated at arm's length from established social institutions" and asserting that it "has always provided for the most ambitious interaction between diverse cultural groups." Boyd disassociated Sacred Harp from the "racial tension" producing uneasiness among the integrated group of singers and invested it with curative capacity. "So here we all were," he reported, "drawn together from our separate worlds by our unassailable love for this music."[7] Relying on the passive voice to minimize his and Rinzler's role in bringing these separate groups together Boyd imagined that placing McGraw and Williams on stage to sing in harmony with one another could evoke racial

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[5] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 96.
[6] Ibid. Buell Cobb, a member of the white group at the festival, recalled considerable tension attending Graham's speech: "Protesters against the Vietnam War were there in numbers to demonstrate. Police were skittish. Skirmishes broke out, and suddenly tear gas was flooding everywhere." In the resulting panic, Cobb and Toney Smith, another member of the white Sacred Harp group, were briefly trapped in a crowd rushing to the Smithsonian Institution to escape the gas. See Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart*, 56.
[7] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 96.

equality at the festival, and perhaps catalyze the dissolution of barriers between the white and black singers.



Figure 5.2: Dewey Williams and Hugh McGraw lead at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, National Mall, Washington, DC, 1970. Photograph by Joe Dan Boyd. Courtesy of Joe Dan Boyd.

Rinzler and Boyd also hoped that the presentation of Sacred Harp singing at the festival would encourage audience members to become participants at a time when local folk music societies had begun including shape-note tunes at song sharing events. Boyd concluded his essay in the festival's program with the hope that "festival visitors … [might] begin a journey toward becoming proficient four-shape singers and composers. The tradition beckons!" he proclaimed, before providing information on ordering a

tunebook and joining a new local Sacred Harp singing group sponsored by the Folklore Society of Greater Washington.[8] Rinzler echoed Boyd's comments in a short speech after the conclusion of the final afternoon singing at the festival, noting that "turn[ing] some people on" to the practices presented was a goal of the festival and suggesting that "some people may just join a Sacred Harp group like there is here in Washington." Rinzler next announced an address to contact for "a listing of all the Sacred Harp singings throughout the South, … [so that] any Sunday that you happen to be down in the South and wanna go hear Sacred Harp singing you can hear one."[9] Although Rinzler and Boyd imagined the predominantly white festival audience as potential members of Washington's nascent Sacred Harp group, Rinzler promoted touristic attendance, rather than participation, across the sectional divide that separated festival visitors from source musicians.[10] The listing Rinzler mentioned, the annual *Directory and Minutes of Annual Sacred Harp Singings*, for 1970–1971 included 230 singings held in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and Mississippi, all of which were white.[11] Rinzler may or may not have known that in inviting festival visitors to hear a singing on a trip "down in the South" he was not providing them with the means of crossing the color-line he had hoped the festival would help bridge. Although Rinzler and Boyd regarded the festival setting as a

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[8] Boyd, "The Sacred Harpers and Their Singing Schools," 39.
[9] Sacred Harp Singers, *Festival Recordings, 1970: Sacred Harp; Arlie and Ora Watson; Almeda Riddle; John Jackson; Loving Sisters*, CD transfer, 1970, fp-1970-rr-0074a, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.
[10] On one group's experience singing for tourists and touring Washington sites as performers at the Festival of American Folklife, see Titon, "The Real Thing."
[11] Walter A. Parker and Nora Parker, eds., *Directory and Minutes of Annual Sacred Harp Singings, 1970–1971* (Birmingham, AL, 1970), 2. In an appendix to his 1978 book, Buell Cobb consulted "[t]wenty-three separate pamphlets of minutes of Sacred Harp singing" in compiling a directory uniting for the first and only time "the five overall groups" of black and white singers using the various competing editions of *The Sacred Harp*. See Cobb, *The Sacred Harp*, 163–85.

utopic setting where white and black singers could safely encounter each other and folk music fans, the festival promoters' remarks evince social imaginaries where geographical and racial boundaries continue to delimit possible intergroup interaction.

The Sacred Harp singers' performance during the evening program on Thursday, July 2, exemplifies how both groups of singers and their audience responded to the festival promoters' juxtaposition of white and black Sacred Harp. The marquee event of the singers' festival schedule, the evening concert presented McGraw and Williams with a forum to articulate their priorities before a large and attentive audience. Folklorist and ethnomusicologist Jeff Todd Titon notes that because Festival of American Folklife artists "talk to the audience, and because they have their own ideas about what they are doing, multiple authorities are in operation" at the encounters staged by festival programmers.[12] The Sacred Harp evening program illustrates the potential for harmony as well as conflict among these authorities and demonstrates that multiple authorities can exist even within one festival act. The event required the two singers and their respective groups to negotiate microphone time and to balance performing both their particular, distinctive practices and integration. McGraw and Williams made different choices about how to portray Sacred Harp singing in service of their respective priorities. In addition to demonstrating important stylistic differences, the arc of the evening illuminates the idealized equality Rinzler and Boyd championed, as well as the limits of performing unity on the festival stage amid persistent racial inequality.

[12] Titon, "The Real Thing," 128.

After Rinzler introduced the Sacred Harp singers McGraw, leader of the white group, spoke first. McGraw addressed the audience on behalf of both his group and the black group led by Williams.

> **Hugh W. McGraw:** On behalf of the Sacred Harp singers, both white and colored, we're delightful [delighted to] be here. We're from Middle Georgia and North Alabama, and our good colored friends are from South Alabama. We're gon[na] give you a little demonstration of both kind[s of Sacred Harp singing], and then we're gonna give you a little demonstration of us together. For our number we wanna sing a song, EASTER ANTHEM, composed by William Billings in 1785. William Billings was the first composer of sacred music in the United States, and we hope you enjoy.[13]

By speaking for both black and white singers, and by arranging the performance so that his group of singers performed first, McGraw centered whiteness in his narrative of Sacred Harp singing, emphasizing the relative otherness of the "colored" singers. McGraw's strong North Georgia accent in its pronunciations of "Alabama" as "Alabammer" and "Georgia" as "Georgie,"[14] marked him as a rural southerner, accentuating his group's otherness. This particular form of difference played on national associations of southernness with the past, affirming his group's authenticity as source musicians for an audience that regularly encountered older white performers with southern accents positioned as carriers of folk traditions. McGraw's accented speech may also have called up images of Bull Connor and other racist white southern politicians seared into the national imaginary thanks to their omnipresence on the national television news during the previous decade. The church dress–style attire of both

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[13] Sacred Harp Singers, *Festival Recordings, 1970: Wade and Fields Ward with Kahle Brewer; Sacred Harp Singers*, CD transfer, 1970, fp-1970-rr-0039, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.
[14] Lee Pederson, Susan Leas McDaniel, and Borden D. Dent, *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States*, 7 vols. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

McGraw's and Williams's groups could likewise have signaled an affiliation with conservatism to the more casually dressed folk music enthusiasts in the audience. McGraw's self-representation doesn't indicate an awareness of how his speech patterns affected his group's reception. The audience's sustained but not thunderous applause likewise makes it challenging to assess their reaction to the white group's performance.

McGraw was familiar with folklore scholarship on Sacred Harp singing that positioned its practitioners as living carriers of the past: religious, ruggedly individual, racially pure, and musically authentic. McGraw identified with the upland South that George Pullen Jackson centered in his narrative of Sacred Harp singing in *White Spirituals of the Southern Uplands*.[15] McGraw understood from Jackson's *The Story of the Sacred Harp*, a summary of his research intended for a popular and Sacred Harp singing audience,[16] how the Vanderbilt scholar valorized white upland southern carriers of Sacred Harp singing as representatives of the population described, at least since William Goodell Frost's 1899 article "Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains," as keepers of a musical heritage at the roots of America's national culture.[17] McGraw's presentation tacitly encouraged his audience to make an "identification … premised on difference," imagining him as primitive and archaic.[18] It also facilitated their conception of him as a carrier of white America's—and the audience's—cultural past. Yet in dressing and speaking like white southerners, McGraw also risked carrying an association with white resistance to civil rights, impeding connection with his audience.

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[15] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*.
[16] Jackson, *The Story of The Sacred Harp*.
[17] Frost, "Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains." Jackson described Sacred Harp along these lines in his first article on the style, Jackson, "The Fa-Sol-La Folk."
[18] Filene, *Romancing the Folk*, 63.

Having read folklorists' depictions of Sacred Harp singing, McGraw was well aware that invocations of the upland South would appeal to folk music audiences. Yet his own ambivalence about the "old-fogy" label often applied to pejoratively connect Sacred Harp with southern culture in Georgia and Alabama led him to follow the lead of church music scholars and hymnologists such as William J. Reynolds and Emory Bucke in connecting Sacred Harp singing to early New England, rather than the rural South.[19] In his stage banter throughout the concert McGraw emphasized Sacred Harp's antiquity. He noted that his group's song of choice, EASTER ANTHEM, was written by "the first composer of sacred music in the United States."[20] In claiming the song's ancient New England "composer," McGraw invoked a different status than that associated with folk melodies of uncertain origins. In selecting EASTER ANTHEM, a challenging through-composed anthem, McGraw may have also intended to demonstrate his group's musical competence. Drawing on Reynolds and Bucke, McGraw may also have sought to associate his group of singers with the higher status this particular song and its eighteenth-century Boston composer William Billings carried, relative to most other tunes and authors represented in *The Sacred Harp*. With McGraw's introduction, EASTER ANTHEM carried the cultural validation of the American Revolution's patriotic spirit. It also carried relative prestige as one of the more popular and culturally elevated tunes to which McGraw had access. In 1970 EASTER ANTHEM was available not just in *The Sacred Harp*, but in performance editions from major sheet music publishers intended for use by

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[19] Reynolds and Bucke articulate this understanding of Sacred Harp singing in White and King, *The Sacred Harp*, 1968; Emory Stevens Bucke, "It's the Beat," *Harpeth Valley Sacred Harp News* 1, no. 8 (February 15, 1965): 1–2.

[20] Sacred Harp Singers, *Festival Recordings, 1970: Wade and Fields Ward with Kahle Brewer; Sacred Harp Singers*.

concert choirs,[21] an early manifestation of Billings's inclusion at the margins, but still within, the canon of American classical composers.[22] Later in his presentation, McGraw later referred to *The Sacred Harp* as "our ancient book," and described another song as "a ballad that was sang during the pirate Captain Kidd's day."[23] In contemporaneous speeches promoting Sacred Harp McGraw regularly invoked Billings to emphasize Sacred Harp's antiquity, artistry, and reliance on considerable skill as a means of transvaluing its association with "old foginess."[24] His asides during the festival concert positioned him and the white singers as representatives of America's imagined collective cultural history, focusing that history on Boston during the era of the American Revolution, rather than on the rural South. The festival audience drew on competing images of southern folk music and racial politics, transforming the white singers into objects of fascination and perhaps revulsion due to still-powerful associations with white opposition to desegregation. Marked by his accent as a southerner, McGraw leveraged the positive

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[21] The 1974 volume *Sacred Choral Music in Print* lists seven performance editions of EASTER ANTHEM, from G. Schirmer, C. F. Peters, Bourne Company, Harold Flammer, Frank Distributing Corporation, Walton Music Corporation, and Southern Music Company. Musicologist Karl Kroeger has also found late-nineteenth century editions of EASTER ANTHEM cited in a German early twentieth-century guide to music literature and unearthed a 1929 edition, published by J. Fisher and Bro., in the collection of the Boston Public Library. EASTER ANTHEM was represented in more editions than all but two other compositions by Billings. The combined number of performance editions of Billings's music available around the time of McGraw's presentation dwarfs the quantity available for compositions by other prominent tunesmiths of the first New England school. The volume lists editions of over thirty compositions by Billings, but just two each by Oliver Holden and Daniel Read. Meanwhile, southern shape-note composers were decisively outside the canon in 1974. No listings featured even prominent and prolific composers like William Walker and B. F. White. See Thomas R. Nardone, James H. Nye, and Mark Resnick, eds., *Choral Music in Print*, vol. 1: Sacred Choral Music (Philadelphia: Musicdata, 1974), 70, 264, 480; Karl Kroeger, "William Billings's 'Anthem for Easter': The Persistence of an Early American 'Hit,'" *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 97, no. 1 (1987): 119.

[22] Just a few years after McGraw's presentation, as the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence approached, Kroeger began editing performance editions of Billings's complete works, making the Revolutionary War–era composer the first associated with *The Sacred Harp* to receive such treatment. See Billings, *Complete Works of William Billings*.

[23] Sacred Harp Singers, *Festival Recordings, 1970: Wade and Fields Ward with Kahle Brewer; Sacred Harp Singers*.

[24] See, for example, McGraw, "There Isn't Anything I Had Rather Talk about than Sacred Harp Music."

associations contained within these imaginaries to appear as an authentic yet accessible broker of cultural resources, available to the audience for consumption and potential participation.

While McGraw underscored the antiquity of Sacred Harp singing, Dewey Williams's introduction to his group's first song emphasized the significance of white and black singers performing together, and the song's religious message about God's mercy.

> **DW:** We're gonna sing a song for you. Written from [for] *The Colored Sacred Harp*. Many you don't know about what's happened at this time, but in nineteen hundred and twenty-eight [six], in Florida, Miami, everything got blowed away down there. It was a sad time down there, Miami's a big town, and everything was in uproar. But God showed mercy in the storm. We're gonna read one verse of this song. And I want you all to listen to every one we say. "September, … nineteen-hundred and twenty-six, the people cried mercy in the storm, the crying was too late, the crying was in vain, crying Lord have mercy in the storm. The people crying mercy in the storm, the people crying mercy in the storm. The colored and the white," just like we here tonight, "stayed wake all night, crying, Lord, have mercy in the storm." May I say, we're gonna sing, but when you hurt, when you feel bad, you will say mercy.[25]

Williams's preaching cadence, exemplified by extemporaneous interjections, such as "just like we here tonight," emphasized the racially mixed group of singers, as well as Sacred Harp's religious setting. The festival audience may also have associated his performance of black preaching styles with the speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders. In introducing FLORIDA STORM, Williams first pointed to its source, *The Colored Sacred Harp*, a then-out-of-print book in use among black singers in South Alabama. The book was edited and published in 1934 by Judge Jackson, the African American father of some of the singers in Williams's group. Rarely sung at singings in the

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[25] Sacred Harp Singers, *Festival Recordings, 1970: Wade and Fields Ward with Kahle Brewer; Sacred Harp Singers*.

network of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida black Sacred Harp singers, songs from *The Colored Sacred Harp*, and FLORIDA STORM in particular, became a focal point of the group's performances. Invoking the book from the festival stage gave the black singers opportunity to claim authorship of the music they were singing, placing them on parity with the white singers.

Like the performance's set list, which placed white singers before black singers, the book's title, which explicitly characterizes the book as "colored," emphasized the alterity of the black group, undercutting Williams's assertion of equality. *The Colored Sacred Harp*'s publication history likewise speaks to the economic and social marginalization of South Alabama's black Sacred Harp singing population. The book emerged in part because its editor was denied the opportunity to contribute songs to a 1927 edition of the Cooper book, the edition of *The Sacred Harp* used by white and black singers in the region.[26] Economically disadvantaged and mired in the Great Depression of the 1930s, Jackson and his supporters contracted with a Chicago printer to produce 1,000 softbound copies of *The Colored Sacred Harp*, but lacked the resources to reprint the book after these copies sold.[27]

Williams's presentation made no mention of the precarious state of singing from *The Colored Sacred Harp*. He furthered his assertion of parity between the white and black groups by emphasizing the integrated lineup of the Sacred Harp singers standing with him on the festival stage. Noting that FLORIDA STORM tells the story of the

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[26] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 48–49. The Georgia and Alabama singers represented in the white group used the competing edition of the tunebook commonly known as the Denson book.
[27] In contrast, the West Georgia and North Alabama white singers' *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision* was a hardback book, printed in the South, that remained in print throughout the twentieth century, revised every couple of decades.

devastating 1926 "Great Miami Hurricane," Williams placed special emphasis on the words "the *colored* and the white," interjecting "just like we here tonight." In connecting the vulnerability of both races to natural disasters to the integrated presentation of Sacred Harp singing at the festival, Williams nodded to the potential of the festival to stage a vision of racial equality. By invoking a sort of divinely imposed racial equality in the 1926 hurricane Williams further asserted the equality presented on the festival stage. While Williams's rhetoric matched the priorities of the festival's organizers, it contrasted with the lasting impact of the man-made disaster of slavery at home.

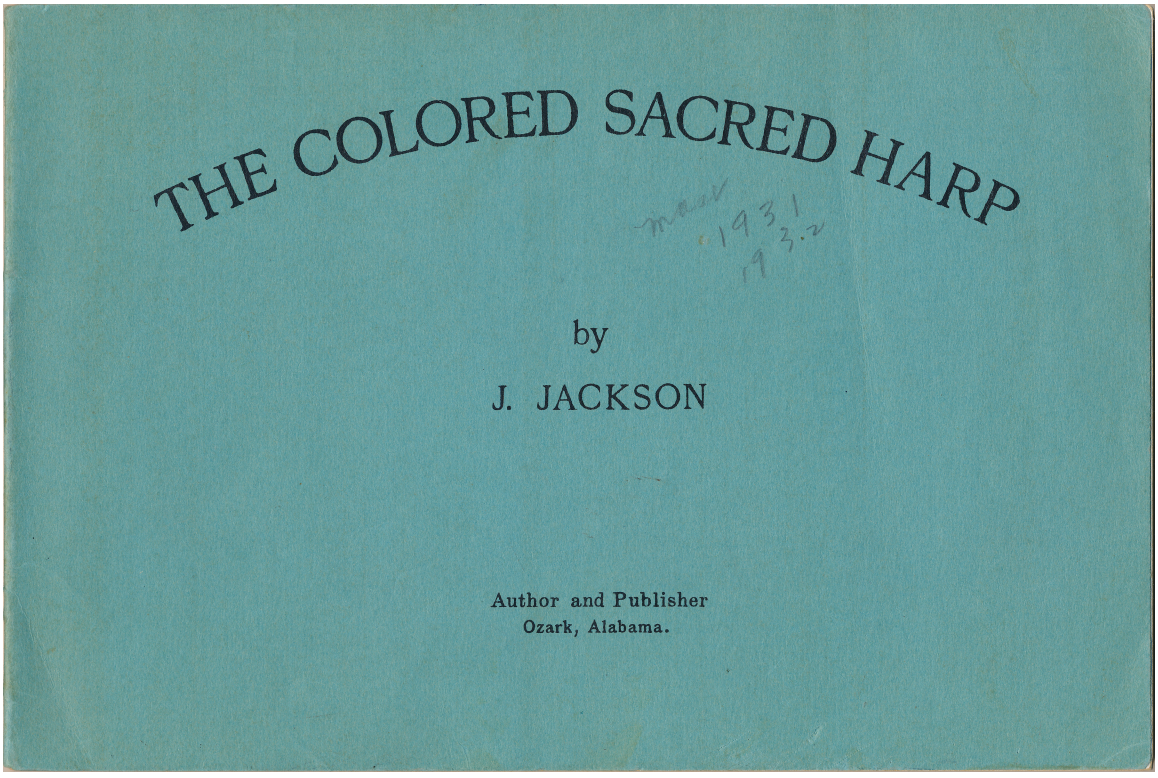

Figure 5.3: Front cover of Judge Jackson's *The Colored Sacred Harp*, 1934. Collection of the author.

Williams's rhetoric also served to communicate a message of faith to the festival audience. Unlike McGraw, who did not position Sacred Harp as religious music but instead subtly sought to elevate his group's status and facilitate identification with the

audience, Williams explicitly resisted the secularization affected by folklore's filter and the attendant passage from country church to municipal auditorium. In putting off singing for another few seconds to testify that "when you hurt, when you feel bad, you will say mercy," Williams prioritized the religious import of the words to the Sacred Harp songs he sang, aligning his presentation with the black church that served as a source of power and resiliency for the members of his group.

The audience responded more enthusiastically to the black singers' performance than to the white singers' song, a fact the white performers tied to the enthusiasm of Williams's group and their direct engagement with the audience.[28] Elmer Kitchens, a Primitive Baptist preacher and member of the white group, remarked to Joe Dan Boyd during the festival "It's the negroes who are making this go, not us. We sing it so straight it nearly breaks, but you've got to mix a little of the rock and roll, and give the people what they like." Kitchens credited Williams's stagecraft with softening the white singers' initial wariness toward the black singers, noting "When we first came up here we kinda turned up our noses at Dewey, but now we're kinda taking off our hats to him. We talk about having the Spirit with Sacred Harp: well he has it."[29] Other white singers likewise noted the black singers' enthusiasm, particularly that of Williams. At one point during the festival McGraw remarked to Boyd, "That Dewey is a showman, isn't he." Boyd reveals the mixed reaction white singers may have had to Williams's exuberance,

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[28] In asserting this I draw on my own visualizations of audience response to these two songs in Sacred Harp Singers, *Festival Recordings, 1970: Wade and Fields Ward with Kahle Brewer; Sacred Harp Singers*. Boyd reports that "It was when the black singers came on stage that Festival crowds started clapping their hands in rhythm, especially to Dewey's masterful call and response technique, coupled with his graceful movements." See Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 98.

[29] Kitchens, quoted in Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 97.

reporting that "one of the white women singers said flatly, 'Dewey has really stolen the show!'"[30]

Writing on the politics of presenting black cultures at later iterations of the Festival of American Folklife, Krista A. Thompson suggests that African American and other African diaspora festival acts' "spectacular verbal performances" had the greatest appeal to most visitors, who "consume the programs as entertaining spectacles" and in doing so "draw on preconceived stereotypes."[31] Indeed, the enthusiastic reaction of the evening concert audience to the FLORIDA STORM rendition suggests another sort of imaginary at work in which white folk festival audiences imagine black performers as exotic, mysterious, and authentic carriers of emotion—particularly of emotive renderings of pain and suffering.[32] Yet unlike the southern rural image McGraw negotiated, this conception of the black Sacred Harp singers emphasizes historical, cultural, and musical difference, not identification.

Separated by geography, culture, and the regime of segregation, the two groups' performance styles were dramatically different. The South Alabama black group preferred slower tempos than the relatively brisk speeds favored by the North Alabama and West Georgia white singers. The groups also sang from different editions of *The Sacred Harp*. The white singers used *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, published by the Sacred Harp Publishing Company, an organization then headed by McGraw and located in his

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[30] Ibid., 98.
[31] Krista A. Thompson, "Beyond Tarzan and National Geographic: The Politics and Poetics of Presenting African Diasporic Cultures on the Mall," *Journal of American Folklore* 121 (Winter 2008): 98, doi:10.1353/jaf.2008.0000. By the time of Thompson's writing the festival had been renamed the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.
[32] On black folk musics as vessels of pain and suffering see, for example, Alan Lomax and John Avery Lomax, *Folk Song USA: The 111 Best American Ballads* (New York, NY: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1947).

hometown of Bremen, Georgia. The black singers principally sang from the *B. F. White Sacred Harp*, colloquially known as the Cooper book, a revision published by the Samson, Alabama, Sacred Harp Book Company, located in the singers' home area.[33] In order to sing together, these two groups of singers had to both bridge a stylistic gulf and resolve differences in tunebook selection. The joint performance of WONDROUS LOVE, the song McGraw associated with Captain Kidd, which by 1970 was as well known in folk music circles as any tune in *The Sacred Harp*, evinces the compromises singing together required.

McGraw cautioned the racially mixed group "not too fast," before keying and preparing to sing WONDROUS LOVE. Despite this, the two groups' tendencies to sing at different tempos still tugged against each other in places, as did their stylistic differences. A phrase in the first verse of WONDROUS LOVE indicates that the singers agreed to sing the song from the Cooper book, the *Sacred Harp* edition in use in South Alabama.[34] Although singing the version from the book the black singers regularly used could be read as an accommodation by the white group to the black group's norms, Williams identified it with white singers. As the two groups prepared to sing together, Williams noted, speaking about the Cooper book, that "[t]his is a different book. This is the whites' *Sacred*

[33] Hugh McGraw, Ruth Denson Edwards, Elmer Kitchens, et al., eds., *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*, 1966 Edition (Cullman, AL: Sacred Harp Publishing Company, 1967); G. L. Beck et al., eds., *The B. F. White Sacred Harp* (Samson, AL: Sacred Harp Book Company, 1960).

[34] In the verse "What wondrous love is this! / Oh, my soul, oh my soul! / That caused the Lord of bliss / To bear the dreadful curse / For my soul?" the editors of the Cooper book in 1902 replaced the fourth phrase and altered the fifth to read "To send this precious peace / To my soul?" The Denson book retained the original wording. See White and King, *The Sacred Harp*, 1968, 159; Cooper, *The Sacred Harp*, 159. For their joint performance, the Sacred Harp singers sang the Cooper book lyric. See Sacred Harp Singers, *Festival Recordings, 1970: Wade and Fields Ward with Kahle Brewer; Sacred Harp Singers*.

Harp book. And we sing from both [it and *The Colored Sacred Harp*] in Alabama."[35] Even as he asserted black singers' claim to the Cooper book through his group's practice of singing from the edition, Williams characterized the book as white. In doing so he highlighted the political, economic, and social inequality that governed both groups of singers off-stage and its inescapability even in the contrived demonstration of imagined equality on the folk festival stage.

Facing Folklore's Filter: State Support of the Wiregrass Singers and Representing Black Sacred Harp Singing at the 1979 Rural Hymnody Symposium

Both Williams and McGraw traded on their participation in the 1970 Festival of American Folklife to obtain recognition and funding for the traditions they had come to represent to folklorists and their audiences. McGraw took advantage of the audience members' identification with the white Sacred Harp group by conscripting festival visitors as new Sacred Harp singers, staking a future for his network of Sacred Harp singings on geographic expansion among new audiences. Williams conveyed his particular message of faith by presenting Sacred Harp singing to new audiences, seeking support to sustain the black South Alabama Sacred Harp singing network back home. His group of singers achieved previously unavailable financial support from state and federal institutions that brought the Jackson family's tunebook back into print and led to a measure of fame for Williams and his Wiregrass Sacred Harp singers. Folklorists continued to treat these two groups as representative of racially bifurcated Sacred Harp traditions, contrasting the growth of white singings, as use of *The Sacred Harp: 1991*

[35] Sacred Harp Singers, *Festival Recordings, 1970: Wade and Fields Ward with Kahle Brewer; Sacred Harp Singers*.

Edition spread across the United States and beyond, with the decline of black singings as Williams and his cohort aged and died, resulting in the cancellation of Sacred Harp singings in their area. Yet folklore's filter obscured a thriving, widespread network of black singings invisible to folklorists focusing on specific and limited definitions of Sacred Harp singing. In this section I chart Williams's post-1970 collaborations with folklorists—focusing on a 1979 appearance at a symposium on Rural Hymnody at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, co-organized by William Tallmadge. In the next and final section of this chapter I sketch the outlines of the wider network of black shape-note singings the literature on Sacred Harp singing has largely excluded.

Black Sacred Harp singers from South Alabama, previously denied all but local support by paternalistic white leaders, forged new relationships with federal and statewide officials after attaining national recognition through their appearance at the 1970 Festival of American Folklife. They capitalized on longstanding connections with local white political contacts like George Wallace and Henry Steagall II as these officials achieved statewide political power. The relationships black singers forged with state agencies in the early 1970s persisted into the twenty-first century. Federal agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), state agencies such as the Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA) and state-supported non-profits such as the Alabama Folklife Association (AFA) regularly supported singing schools, recording projects, and other initiatives led by black singers to promote Sacred Harp singing in their area. Their support compensated for a decrease in funds volunteered by black singers, whose

numbers were falling, or by local white elites as individuals who had supported the black singers' activities died.[36]

The republication of *The Colored Sacred Harp* demonstrates the effect of state support for black Sacred Harp singing in Alabama after the 1970 Festival of American Folklife. Encouraged by attention from federal funding sources and the election of George Wallace to a second non-consecutive term as governor in 1970, Williams traded on his longtime friendships with the South Alabama politician to convince the governor's office to encourage ASCA director M. J. Zakrewski to support republishing the long-out of print book.[37] A year later, the state agency partnered with the NEA to fund a new hardcover edition of *The Colored Sacred Harp*, reprinting the book's original contents with the addition of a new two-page history of Judge Jackson and the tunebook. Back in print, copies of *The Colored Sacred Harp* sold well enough to justify new editions in 1983 (sponsored by the NEA and the ASCA) and 1992 (funded by the ASCA and the AFA). According to Joe Dan Boyd, who remained in contact with South Alabama black singers after facilitating their trip to Washington, Jackson and Williams "hoped the new hardback status … would position it more firmly into the mainstream" and planned to

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[36] In 1983 the National Endowment for the Arts sponsored a weeklong singing school with black and white instructors at Calhoun County Courthouse in Pittsboro, Mississippi, a rare example of government support for black Sacred Harp singing outside the Alabama Wiregrass. The school's four teachers were Hugh Bill McGuire, a white singer, Bernice Embry, a white singer and librarian, David Warren Steel, a white academic, and Aubrey Enochs, a black singer and school principal. Five weeknight sessions lasted two to two-and-a-half hours each, and all four teachers were allotted time for their lessons. The singing school attracted black and white pupils of all ages, though most of the group's members were white. A similar school had been held in a public school a few years before, also involving Enochs and white teachers. Thanks to Steel for providing an account of this event.

[37] Hank Willett, personal communication, January 22, 2015; Joey Brackner, personal communication, January 20 and 22, 2015. Williams had worked for longtime Wallace associate Henry Steagall II, long a local supporter of Williams's family Sacred Harp singing, and had worked as a paid campaigner for Wallace's 1970 gubernatorial campaign, visiting the homes of black voters on election day to encourage them to turn out for the former governor. His relationship with Wallace may have extended back to the politician's role as a circuit judge whose territory included Williams's Dade County.

distribute it to "children enrolled in Sacred Harp singing schools."[38] To facilitate its adoption, the 1983 edition added a pedagogical "rudiments of music" section that Japheth Jackson edited, incorporating notes written by the book's original compiler, his father, Judge Jackson. The 1992 edition added portions of a short autobiographical essay written by Judge Jackson, and edited by two grandchildren, Judge M. Jackson III, and Janice Jackson Johnson.

The Colored Sacred Harp remained in use at singings honoring the Jackson and Williams families, but was not widely adopted by the network of South Alabama black singings. Joey Brackner, white director of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture division of the ASCA and an official with longstanding ties to Sacred Harp groups around the state, supported white Montgomery singer Jim Carnes in the establishment of a third singing featuring the book in 1998.[39] The integrated singing, held in Alabama's Capitol Rotunda, included four different shape-note books, identified by the singing's organizers as the four different oblong shape-note books then in use in Alabama.[40] The singing, which drew representatives of a variety of shape-note singing populations from across the state, amounted to state recognition of these practices. The structure of the event in its earliest years also cemented identification of black Sacred Harp singers with *The Colored Sacred Harp*. Although the black singers predominantly used the Cooper book (one of the four books used at the Rotunda Singing) at their home singings, the capitol singing's arranging committees (which sometimes included Henry Japheth Jackson as a member)

[38] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 112–114.
[39] Joey Brackner, personal communication, January 22, 2015.
[40] The singing adopted the latest edition of the mid-twentieth-century Alabama revision of *The Christian Harmony* in addition to *The Colored Sacred Harp* and the two *Sacred Harp* editions in use in the state.

recognized black leaders only during the thirty-minute blocks of time allocated to singing from *The Colored Sacred Harp*.[41] A remarkable effort to recognize and bring together shape-note populations separated by geography, tunebook edition, musical style, and the state's racial politics, the Rotunda Singing nonetheless reproduced a representation of the black singers as a separate but equal cohort among a predominantly white population of Alabama shape-note singers. The state's responsiveness to Williams's and Jackson's requests for support for the tunebook's publication likewise perpetuated the identification of the state's black singers with *The Colored Sacred Harp*, furthering the association between black shape-note singing and the subset of the contracting network of South Alabama singings that favored the book initially inscribed in the scholarly record by John W. Work III and George Pullen Jackson.

Williams also capitalized on his contacts with folklorists, folk festival promoters, and state officials to obtain bookings for the Wiregrass Singers, the performing group he led. Having honed its presentation through monthly radio and television programs in Ozark for decades, the group was ready to amaze and delight audiences across the United States and beyond when invitations came beginning in the 1970s. In 1971 Smithsonian folklorist Mack McCormick invited Williams to bring a quartet of black singers to perform alongside a quartet of white singers led by McGraw at the Man and his World exhibition in Montreal, held on the grounds built for Expo 67 from August 2–8. The two quartets traded sets—performing separately and together—with Roy Acuff, all in a

[41] Shelbie Sheppard, "State Capitol Rotunda Singing," *Minutes of Sacred Harp Singings*, January 31, 1998, http://fasola.org/minutes/search/?n=572; Shelbie Sheppard, "Rotunda Singing," *Minutes of Sacred Harp Singings*, February 6, 1999, http://fasola.org/minutes/search/?n=769; Linda Thomas, "Rotunda Singing," *Minutes of Sacred Harp Singings*, February 5, 2000, http://fasola.org/minutes/search/?n=967.

geodesic dome designed by R. Buckminster Fuller.[42] For McCormick, as for Rinzler and Boyd the previous year, the festival appearance signified music's power to bring together groups long separated by segregation. "The unique styles of the two groups have caused the music to develop in different directions," McCormick wrote in a press release for the event. "[T]he Folklife Festival," he wrote "gives the two groups a chance to come together and share their common songs."[43] For Williams, the 1971 Montreal appearance signified increased publicity for his region's shape-note singing practice and himself as its leader.



Figure 5.4: From left to right, Buell Cobb, Dovie Jackson Reese, Charlene Wallace, Bernice Harvey, Dewey Williams, Hugh McGraw, P. Dan Brittain, and Henry Japheth Jackson at the Man in His World Expo, Montreal, Canada, 1971. Photograph courtesy of the Alabama Folklife Association.

[42] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 100–02; Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart*, 56–58.
[43] Mack McCormick press release quoted in Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 100–01.

Williams's performing group, the Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers, continued to receive invitations to perform in the years that followed. The group returned to Washington for the bicentennial Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in 1976 and performed at schools and auditoriums across the state of Alabama. In 1979 William H. Tallmadge invited the singers to perform at a conference on rural hymnody he had co-organized to be held at Berea College. Drawing on a decade of touring success, in addition to years honing their act on local television and radio broadcasts, the Wiregrass Sacred Harp singers appeared as a polished performing ensemble.

On stage at Berea, the Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers negotiated their audience members' expectations while privileging their own members' priorities. To open the concert Williams announced that Henry Japheth Jackson "will start an old fashioned hymn, then I'm gonna ask you all to bow heads and we'll have prayer." Jackson then led the singers in a lined-out rendition of "When I can read my title clear," performing in a style that Tallmadge had long studied, and which the symposium had convened to examine. At the conclusion of the song Williams prayed extemporaneously, marking the performance as an act of worship while acknowledging the great geographical and cultural gulf between the singers and the symposium audience he marks as a "congregation."

> **DW:** Our father in heaven, the maker and creator of all mankind, the God that got us up this morning and come up with us this morning and come with us all way up this dangerous highway and brought us up to a city where we never been before, brought us over here in a praying country in a gospel community—we're glad this evening our father that we're still on this side of Jordan. We're glad that we know your name. And we're glad you let us call it anywhere we go. Father, look on this congregation and these what's standing around me and bless them with such a blessing.

> Bless us to sing song suitable to [these] occasions. Give us love for all mankind. Bless the man [Tallmadge] that brought us to come that he be made able to go somewhere else or on his credit. Bless Dyen in a special way. Go with her and her entire family. Keep us when we start back home, go with us. We'll give your name all the credit.[44]

The group featured Williams as director, and Bernice Harvey, his daughter, as its announcer. Harvey and Williams were witty and effective on stage in front of an audience of largely white musicologists, folklorists, and Berea-area residents. After a few selections from the Cooper revision of *The Sacred Harp*, Harvey introduced the group's members with a polished delivery that drew laughter from the audience while demonstrating the group's professionalism and performing experience.

> **Bernice Harvey:** With honor to Mr. Tallmadge and all the fine people that make up this audience we can't help but be thankful for this evening. We've had many toils, but grace brought us through, and we're sure grace will continue to do so. We're happy to be here and sing Sacred Harp. We're happy to see so many of you join in. It make us feel more freer to open up and sing to you. We bring greetings from the Wiregrass region of Alabama where we left this morning about four o' clock. [Laughter.] …[45]

Williams and Harvey adopted a casual mode of exchange with their audience, inviting audience members to sing along, request songs, and comment on the performance. After introducing the group's members; describing their radio and television programs; and reporting on their trips to Washington, Montreal, and across Alabama, Harvey recognized her father who announced the next song and invited the audience to request songs for the group to sing. "If you have any choice song you want us

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[44] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, AC OR 066-003. In blessing Doris Dyen in addition to Tallmadge, Williams recognized another scholar present at the Berea symposium who had conducted research among black singers in the Alabama Wiregrass. In addition to her then recently submitted dissertation, Dyen was at work in 1979 on a recording project documenting black singers from the Alabama Wiregrass. See Dyen, "The Role of Shape-Note Singing in the Musical Culture of Black Communities in Southeast Alabama"; *Wiregrass Notes: Black Sacred Harp Singing from Southeast Alabama*, 33 1/3 rpm record (Montgomery, AL: Alabama Traditions, 1982).

[45] Ibid.

to sing don't wait till we give out 'cause I sing pretty hard. If you got one we'll try to get it then."[46]

The audience's response indicated a degree of familiarity with Sacred Harp singing grounded in the practices and favored tunebook edition of McGraw's white group with little overlap with the Wiregrass group's repertoire. The Wiregrass singers performed selections from the two four-note books in use at the black singings they supported back home: the Cooper revision of *The Sacred Harp* (what Williams had called the "white folks' book" from the 1970 Washington, DC, festival stage) and *The Colored Sacred Harp*. Shortly after the group had performed LORD, REVIVE US, a rousing song from the Cooper book, an audience member requested the song HOLY MANNA. HOLY MANNA pairs the music the group had just sung from the Cooper book with a different text in the *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision*,[47] the edition used by the singers in McGraw's network and the version of the tunebook that had circulated most widely among folk festival audiences and academic circles.

> **DW:** Ma'am?
> **Audience Member 1 (AM1):** Y'all have HOLY MANNA? HOLY MANNA?
> **Audience Member 2:** They've already sung it.
> **AM1:** I know—but—
> **DW:** Might have it, but I'll have to look for it. …[48]

After some confusion, Jackson realizes that the version of the song in the Cooper book had already been sung.[49] The Wiregrass singers' connection with their white

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[46] Ibid.
[47] Beck et al., *The B. F. White Sacred Harp*, 59; McGraw, Edwards, Godsey, et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 59.
[48] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, AC OR 066-004.
[49] Audience members requested songs from *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision* on three other occasions. Jackson, more familiar with the contents of the *Denson Revision* than Williams, was often immediately aware that the song in question is "in the Denson book," making it unfamiliar to the group and a challenge to sing. As Jackson and Williams noted in response to an audience member's request for

academic audience was inhibited by the audience members' familiarity with the tunebook edition associated with the white Sacred Harp singers and their relative lack of familiarity with the Cooper book the black singers favored.

In another instance an audience member requested that the group perform a "spiritual," invoking a genre historically associated with southern African Americans but generally outside of the Wiregrass singers' repertoire.

> **William Tallmadge:** FLORIDA STORM!
> **Audience Member 3 (AM3):** Sing a spiritual. A spiritual!
> **DW:** Ma'am?
> **AM3:** Sing a spiritual.
> **DW:** Humph.[50]

The audience member's request illustrates the propensity of white academics familiar with the scholarly genealogy Tallmadge drew on in 1968 to associate black Sacred Harp singing with other largely unrelated black sacred singing forms, such as spirituals. Yet despite Williams's evident displeasure with the request, he and Harvey's Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers, familiar with audience expectations, encouraged the association. In her introduction, Harvey described the group's radio and television programs, noting that "one Sunday each month we have Sacred Harp … and on another Sunday we sing seven[-note music]. Every once in a while we throw in a spiritual." Williams also assented to the audience member's request, saying "We gonna sing forty [BLOW YE THE TRUMPET, the song on the corresponding page in the Cooper book]; then we'll sing a spiritual." Later in the concert, while introducing FLORIDA STORM from *The Colored Sacred Harp*, Williams

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"273, is that Milton?"—a reference to the song MILFORD, in McGraw, Edwards, Godsey, et al., *Original Sacred Harp*, 273—**Henry Japheth Jackson:** We don't have it. **DW:** Well I got that other book but it's at home. Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, AC OR 066-004.

[50] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, AC OR 066-004.

remarked "We gonna sing this song, probably, we might do a little more. We'll try to get your hymn spiritual over quick."[51] For Williams and his group traveling and performing were financially and personally rewarding. Yet the tendency of audience members to associate black Sacred Harp singing with spirituals, and the Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers' accommodation of this association, expose the musical constraints imposed by folklore's filter.

Williams accepted these folklore-inflected associations because they helped ensure that his group retained a platform to emphasize their own priorities. For Williams, opportunities to present Sacred Harp singing were chances to bring his local performing ensemble on the road and share their message of faith. As he brought the 1979 Rural Hymnody Symposium performance to a close with a spirited rendition of AMAZING GRACE, Williams interpolated testimony about a conversion experience with the performance of verses of the song.

> **DW:** Now we know, I'm gon[na] say this before we sing 'cause we're fixing to quit. You know there's some Christians here, and I see it all over. These old songs we sing in here create love. … They knock out hatred and God knows I see it kills [it] here. We here 'cause we love you.
> [Keys. Group sings AMAZING GRACE tune on the shape-note syllables.]
> I feel better don't you all. Think about how God made grace.
> [Group sings the first verse: "Amazing grace how sweet the sound …"]
> Way down yonder in Dale County one morning, … something come into my life, and I say:
> [Group sings second verse: "'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear …"]
> I thought about something else, I said:
> [Group sings third verse: "Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares …"
> Dewey continues to testify over the music and launches, solo, into the fourth and final verse: "The Lord has promised good to me …" The group joins in, repeating the verse's second half.]
> Thank you, thank you! [Applause.][52]

[51] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, AC OR 066-004; AC OR 066-005.
[52] Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, AC OR 066-005.



Figure 5.5: Dewey Williams leads the Wiregrass Singers in a performance of AMAZING GRACE at the Rural Hymnody Symposium, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, 1979. Courtesy of the Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives.

In performing the religious testimony typically embedded in his group's performances, Williams implicitly challenged the folklorists' secular frame for Sacred Harp singing. Yet the folklorists, whom he describes as a "congregation" as well as an audience, may simply have taken the religiosity of Williams's presentation as a given, peering at it through a folkloric paradigm in which black bodies were regarded as inherently religious.[53]

[53] For more on black innate religiosity see Curtis J. Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

"Other Harpers May Look with Disdain on this … 'Heresy'": Black Shape-note Singing outside Folklore's Filter

As the Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers toured and McGraw helped facilitate a "revival" of Sacred Harp singing among largely white populations in the Northeast and Midwest in the 1970s and 1980s, new accounts accumulated of Sacred Harp singing in popular media. The national picture of Sacred Harp singing that emerged remained stuck in the ruts first cut by Jackson's scholarship, depicting the style as largely white with idiosyncratic exceptional black practitioners. This image all but ensured that the positive glow that made white grandchildren of shape-note singers, and even those who had sung in their childhood, return to the style in the 1980s and 1990s did not extend across the color-line. As dozens of largely white groups were established, the children and grandchildren of black singers in Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Georgia, associated Sacred Harp singing with the white power structure and largely found musical expression in newer genres invested with capacity for liberation such as gospel, soul, funk, and hip-hop.[54]

The persistent national narrative of a revival of predominantly white Sacred Harp singing also obscured and inhibited federal and state support of other black Sacred Harp singing populations. White scholars, led by Joe Dan Boyd, and white Sacred Harp singers encountered and occasionally wrote about networks of black Sacred Harp singings in Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama in the second half of the twentieth century. But folklore's

[54] This narrative, in which white enthusiasts discover and become invested in a black music genre as fans and performers as black practitioners abandon the style for something new, applies to numerous other genres. For an exemplary telling of a similar story about blues music in Chicago, see David Grazian, *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

filter impeded recognition of a much larger and more robustly interconnected network of black shape-note singings historically tied to singing from *The Sacred Harp* that increasingly featured gospel music and in many respects resembled the robust network of white Sacred Harp singings that spanned and exceeded the South. As geographically discrete networks of visible and documented black singings contracted while their members aged, national popular and scholarly accounts of black Sacred Harp singing articulated decline,[55] even as participants in a network of black shape-note gospel singers stretching from Georgia to Louisiana and from Mississippi to Michigan remained vital largely outside the attention of scholars or the popular press.

A thriving network of black Sacred Harp singings persisted in East Texas from the nineteenth century into the late 1970s. The network of conventions were first described in print in the mid-1990s—nearly twenty years after the network's dissolution—in a magazine article written by Donald Ross, a white East Texas Sacred Harp singer and district court judge who first attended black Sacred Harp singings in the region in the 1950s.[56] This lack of a scholarly genealogy helped inhibit the involvement of white folklorists in documenting the style in the 1970s. Joe Dan Boyd initially became interested in black Sacred Harp singing after learning about the network of black East Texas singings, but decided to conduct fieldwork in South Alabama after encountering scholarship on black singings there.[57]

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[55] For representations of the decline of black Sacred Harp singings in East Texas and South Alabama, respectively, see Ross, "Black Sacred Harp Singing in East Texas"; Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart*.
[56] Ross, "Black Sacred Harp Singing in East Texas."
[57] Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 19–20, 84–85. For Boyd and other scholars the prospect of studying *The Colored Sacred Harp* has also served as an irresistible draw toward South Alabama. When he encountered black singers in other states a key concern for Boyd was whether they were aware of or had adopted the book. As he quickly learned, without exception they were not and had not. As Doris Dyen has

Shortly after his early field visits to South Alabama, Boyd was living in Memphis as a reporter for *Farm Journal*. He encountered a large network of black singers in North Mississippi through contact with white Sacred Harp singers in the area. Boyd authored a short essay describing the network of black singings as a companion to an essay on white Sacred Harp singers in the state by his friend and folklore colleague John Quincy Wolf. Wolf's essay, published in the *Journal of American Folklore*, received considerable attention from subsequent scholarship on Sacred Harp and related practices for discounting George Pullen Jackson's contention that Sacred Harp singing was largely absent in Mississippi.[58] Yet neither Boyd's article, published in the much newer and less widely distributed *Mississippi Folklore Register*, nor the black singers it described, received much outside attention.[59] The continued representation of black singing as an exception to white participation in Sacred Harp and the marginality of the publications documenting populations of black Sacred Harp singers limited public awareness of the geographical spread and diversity of practices associated with black Sacred Harp singing even after accounts of the style became available.

In 1994, then-University of Mississippi instructor and lifelong North Mississippi black Sacred Harp singer Chiquita Walls published a directory of the network of black shape-note singings in North Mississippi as a special issue of *Mississippi Folklife*. Alongside the schedules, locations, lists of officers, and names of singings in the region,

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noted, the book was originally and remained marginal even in the Alabama Wiregrass where it was compiled and published. See Dyen, "The Role of Shape-Note Singing in the Musical Culture of Black Communities in Southeast Alabama"; David Warren Steel, "*The Colored Sacred Harp*: A Review," *American Music* 14 (Spring 1996): 127–28.

[58] Wolf, "The Sacred Harp in Mississippi." Wolf also authored a short article on the northeastern Mississippi network of white Sacred Harp singers that Jackson had mentioned. See Wolf, "The Sacred Harp in Northeast Mississippi."

[59] Boyd, "Negro Sacred Harp Songsters in Mississippi."

the directory listed the books used at recent sessions of each event, which ranged from the *Denson Revision* of *The Sacred Harp* to a wide selection of annual gospel songbooks.[60]

Walls's directory, like Boyd's and Wolf's essays, articulated shape-note genre crossing as a key feature of Sacred Harp singing in the state. The often rigid divide constructed between Sacred Harp music (particularly from the *Denson Revision*), and gospel singing did not apply. Indeed, of the twenty-four singings in the network Walls documented, only five featured singing from *The Sacred Harp*. All five paired *The Sacred Harp* with seven-note gospel songbooks, although at the Union Grove Singing Convention, use of gospel songbooks was restricted to "[s]ome afternoon singing."[61] Walls's directory was prompted by a 1991 recommendation of the business committee of the Black Sacred Harp State Singing Convention that "steps be taken to write a history of the State Convention using interviews with convention members, old minutes and other sources." This led to a meeting at the University of Mississippi a year later to inaugurate an oral history project. Conceived as the first of a biennially published series of singing directories, Walls considered the volume a part of this historical project, but saw its "most important goal [as] to foster and support a network of African American shape notes singers and supporters" by "facilitat[ing] interaction among the conventions."[62] The relative obscurity of the publication limited the directory's impact and exposure. Walls's efforts to support black North Mississippi shape-note singing continued haltingly,[63] but the directory's publication failed to register in broader conversations about Sacred Harp

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[60] Walls, *The African American Shape Note & Vocal Music Singing Convention Directory*.
[61] Ibid., 27.
[62] Ibid., 3.
[63] See, for example, Chiquita G. Walls, "Mississippi's African American Shape Note Tradition," *La-Miss-Ala Shape Note Newsletter*, December 1999, http://home.olemiss.edu/~mudws/articles/walls.html.

singing which instead highlighted the work of predominantly white singers establishing new singings across the United States and in the United Kingdom in the 1990s, testifying to the endurance of the narrative George Pullen Jackson established.

The genre-crossing range of songbooks used across the North Mississippi black shape-note singing network may have contributed to the lack of recognition of the singers in scholarly and public accounts. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has described, folklore's "peculiar temporality" favors cultural practices cast as "survival, archaism, antiquity, [or] tradition."[64] The perceived modernity and commercialism of gospel in particular has led to distaste among folklorists for the style, manifested in scholarship on the white West Georgia and black South Alabama singers.[65] Given these prejudices, a network such as the one in North Mississippi, in which gospel singing was the majority, registered as impure and non-traditional. Boyd, writing about a practice evincing both four- and seven-note shape-note influence among white and black Mississippi singers, remarked that "other Harpers may look with disdain on this Mississippi 'heresy.'"[66] Despite its relative strength in the 1990s, the black North Mississippi network was unrecognizable as Sacred Harp singing to many scholars and members of the population of new singers.

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[64] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Folklore's Crisis," 283.

[65] In an early example of this aversion, Jackson concluded, after minimal investigation, that Sacred Harp singing was largely absent in Mississippi. See Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, 109–10. Accounts of Sacred Harp singing in areas like West Georgia, North Alabama, and South Alabama long represented as wellsprings of tradition tend to focus on singing from *The Sacred Harp* while eliding similarly active networks of convention gospel singing. See, for example, Cobb, *The Sacred Harp*; Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*. For a brief but incisive reminder that Sacred Harp singing, like other folklorized musics, is a commercial enterprise, see Steel, *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*, 10–11.

[66] The "heresy" Boyd had in mind was the widespread practice in Mississippi of employing the syllables associated with seven-note shape-note singing when singing from the four-note *Sacred Harp*. See Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*, 105.

An examination of black Sacred Harp singing networks that were documented by white folklorists shows shape-note genre crossing to be widespread. John W. Work III recorded considerable cross participation among black four-note and seven-note singers in the 1930s.[67] As evidenced by the Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers' monthly seven-note gospel and four-note *Sacred Harp* and *Colored Sacred Harp* radio broadcasts, participation across shape-note genres persisted across the twentieth century. Buell Cobb attended black Sacred Harp singings held in the East Alabama area between Auburn, Montgomery, and Sylacauga in the 1990s that paired singing from mid-twentieth century editions of *Original Sacred Harp: Denson Revision* with "[s]everal … gospel tunes." Singers reported having ridden "with parents or older folks to sing both Sacred Harp and seven-shape music at African American churches in Atlanta, Cedartown, G[eorgia], and Chattanooga, Tenn[essee]," hinting at the historical embeddedness of the network—then consisting of fourteen "classes"—within a world of black singings extending across state lines.[68]

The continued strength of large networks of black gospel singings, perhaps constellations of the network that had encompassed the East Alabama singings, illustrate the extent to which folklore's aversion to white gospel singing has contributed to popular perceptions of the decline of black Sacred Harp singing.[69] Black shape-note gospel

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[67] Work, "Plantation Meistersinger."
[68] Cobb, *Like Cords Around My Heart*, 170, 172. Cobb estimates based on the age of the singers he met that such trips were common for members of this node in the larger network of black singings in the 1920s and 1930s, perhaps extending into the 1940s. Buell Cobb, personal communication, June 6, 2015.
[69] The status as folksong of genres such as bluegrass and white gospel has historically been contested because of perceptions of these genres' commercialism. Yet even commercially successful black gospel singers have appeared often at folk festivals. The lack of recognition as folk of the networks of local black shape-note gospel singings historically connected to Sacred Harp discussed here may thus seem surprising. I argue this exclusion stems from the association of Sacred Harp singing with whiteness and attendant

singings are held today across territories stretching from Georgia west to Louisiana and north to the industrial cities of the upper Midwest. Some of these singings adopt practices historically associated with Sacred Harp singing, rather than convention gospel, including a hollow square seating arrangement, keying according to relative pitch, a rotation of song leaders, and *a cappella* harmony singing. One gospel convention in this network, the All State Shape Note and Sacred Harp Singing Convention, illustrates historical ties to Sacred Harp singing through the inclusion of "Sacred Harp" in its name. Held in locations ranging from Whistler, Alabama, to St. Louis, Missouri, since 2000, the convention's travels demonstrate the breadth of contemporary black shape-note singing.[70] The contemporary strength of three Georgia "note singing" associations in this gospel singing network hints at the potential historical breadth of black Sacred Harp singings that went undocumented. The United Note Singers of the triangle enclosed by Carrollton, Rome, and Marietta; the Associated Note Singers centered around Atlanta; and the Middle Georgia Note Singers of Macon each sponsor dozens of annual singings[71] held on Sunday afternoons and evenings. Association members report having attended singings

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exclusion of white gospel singings from consideration as folklore. As argued above, this in turn has limited the extension of recognition black Sacred Harp singers in the Alabama Wiregrass received because such groups failed to meet folklorists' limited definition of Sacred Harp singing.

[70] Copies of Helen McCollum's "Lamar County News" column in the *Lamar County Democrat and Sulligent News* available through the Small Town Papers database (http://www.smalltownpapers.com/) represent the only online accounts of the All State Shape Note and Sacred Harp Singing Convention. One session featured "Singers from Lamar County, Prichard, AL, State Line, MS, Ala. & Miss. Mobile, AL, Detroit, MI, Fayette, AL, New Orleans, LA, St. Louis Vocal Union, The Ohio, Indiana Michigan Convention." During this meeting of the convention, "special guest the associated Note Singers, Atlanta, Georgia presented a spectacular Convention Program." See Helen McCollum, "Lamar County News," *Lamar Democrat and Sulligent News*, October 25, 2000; Helen McCollum, "Lamar County News," *Lamar Democrat and Sulligent News*, October 17, 2001; Helen McCollum, "Lamar County News," *Lamar Democrat and Sulligent News*, October 13, 2004; Helen McCollum, "Lamar County News," *Lamar Democrat and Sulligent News*, October 26, 2005; Helen McCollum, "Lamar County News," *Lamar Democrat and Sulligent News*, May 17, 2006; Helen McCollum, "Lamar County News," *Lamar Democrat and Sulligent News*, October 9, 2013.

[71] The United Note Singers' 2012 schedule, for example, lists thirty-five annual singings. See Joyce Hammock, ed., "The United Note Singing Schedule, 2012," January 2012.

sponsored by associations in the Midwest and other southern states, attesting to the Georgia associations' embeddedness in a larger network of singings.[72] The quantity and strength of these singings attest to the robust presence of black shape-note singing today,[73] despite a pervasive narrative of decline and disappearance.



Figure 5.6: The United Note Singers singing in a hollow square at Antioch Baptist Church, Carrollton, Georgia, 2012. Photograph by Ann McCleary. Courtesy of the Center for Public History, University of West Georgia.

Including this large and geographically dispersed network in conversations about Sacred Harp singing could drastically shift understanding of the trajectory of black shape-note singing in the twentieth century and even more firmly undermine Jackson's depiction of the style as "white spirituals." White shape-note gospel singings, which also

[72] For example, Chris Robinson, 2015 president of the Middle Georgia Note Singers, reports having attended black shape-note singings sponsored by associations in North and South Alabama, Mississippi, Indiana, and Michigan. Chris Robinson, interview with the author, Roberta, GA, June 13, 2015.

[73] Singings held by these three networks I attended in 2012 and 2013 drew between twenty and fifty singers, comparable to white Sacred Harp singings in Middle Georgia, West Georgia, and metropolitan Atlanta. The singers were joined by audiences of up to one hundred, largely comprised of members of the host church, suggesting stronger ongoing ties to church congregations than most area white Sacred Harp singings which, excepting family reunions and church decoration days, typically attract a smaller and older group of "listeners."

share historical ties to white Sacred Harp singings and have a number of contemporary participants in common, could also profitably be included. Yet these networks of black singings remain as yet largely undocumented in scholarship and popular media, and likewise largely off the radar of state and federal agencies, even as white shape-note gospel accumulates a small but growing literature,[74] and receives a modicum of state support.[75] Folklore's privileging of near exclusive use of *The Sacred Harp* as a litmus test for recognition as Sacred Harp singing has contributed to these groups' persistent exclusion from the historical record, despite their strength and evident historical connection to singing from *The Sacred Harp*. Recent collaborations between West Georgia's United Note Singers with the Center for Public History at the University of West Georgia have led to some state recognition but have only begun to rewrite the story of Sacred Harp and shape-note singing with black networks at its center.[76] A focus on place and cultural heritage tourism, rather than on genres favored by folk music genealogies, contributed to

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[74] Montell, *Singing The Glory Down*; *Blue Ridge Shape Notes: Singing a New Song in an Old Way* (Boone, NC: Watauga County Arts Council, 2004), https://vimeo.com/22864830; Stephen Shearon, *I'll Keep On Singing: The Southern Gospel Convention Tradition* (Murfreesboro: Middle Tennessee State University, 2009), http://folkstreams.net/film/282; Meredith Doster, "The Evolution of Sacred Music and Its Rituals in Watauga County, North Carolina: A Comparison of Congregational Song in Two Independent Missionary Baptist Chruches" (M.A. thesis, Appalachian State University, 2010), http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/asu/f/Doster,%20Meredith_2010_Thesis.pdf.

[75] The Alabama Center for Traditional Culture and the Alabama Folklife Association have supported a number of programs featuring white participants in shape-note gospel conventions in the state and published a compact disc featuring field recordings of the style. See *New Book Gospel Shape Note Singing*, Compact disc, vol. 5, Traditional Musics of Alabama (Montgomery, AL: Alabama Folklife Association and Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, 2010). The Public History Center at the University of West Georgia has similarly programmed events featuring Georgia practitioners of the style.

[76] In addition to conducting oral history interviews and holding public events at the University of West Georgia, the Center for Public History produced United Note Singers and Associated Note Singers, *God Was in Us Cause We Sung: African American Shape Note Singing*. The center also published three video recordings of the United Note Singers. See Center for Public History, "Shape Note Recordings," *YouTube*, December 10, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL01567D04BE3C3CA4. On recent recognition of black note singing by initiatives of the Georgia state government, see "Governor's Awards 2013," *Georgia Humanities Council*, October 2, 2013, http://www.georgiahumanities.org/scholarship-and-leadership/governors-awards-in-the-humanities/governors-awards-2011.

this collaboration. Graduate students at the Center for Public History, under the guidance of director Ann McCleary, began to document and collaborate with area black shape-note singers in 2011 when planning for the local stops in the Georgia tour of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service's "New Harmonies" exhibition, focused on "roots music" in the state.[77] Adopting a geographical frame escaped folklore's filter, helping to "bring practitioners of different [Georgia shape-note] musical styles together"[78] and facilitate the documentation and recognition of black shape-note singing networks long underrepresented in accounts of Georgia traditional culture. The exhibition brought white Sacred Harp singers and black shape-note gospel singers into contact, leading to limited cross-participation and promotion. In June 2015, "for the first time," Atlanta-area Sacred Harp singers "included a special section at the end [of a monthly email newsletter] with information about the United & Associated Note Singing … tradition and a list of those singings."[79] Limited distribution and institutional constraints on establishing a web presence have thus far hampered broader awareness of the black shape-note singing networks in Georgia with which the Center for Public History has collaborated, but their work illustrates that folklore's filter is permeable, and may yet be ruptured, leading to a more inclusive account of shape-note singing in the twenty-first century.

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[77] Ann McCleary, personal communication, September 11, 2014. On the "New Harmonies" exhibit, see "New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music," *Museum on Main Street, Smithsonian Institution*, 2012, http://www.museumonmainstreet.org/newharmonies/. One event held in conjunction with the exhibition brought together Sacred Harp singers and white and black gospel singers for an evening concert.
[78] Jesse P. Karlsberg, "Place and Pluralism: The 'Georgia Harmonies' Traveling Exhibition," *Southern Spaces Blog*, June 5, 2012, http://www.southernspaces.org/blog/place-and-pluralism-georgia-harmonies-traveling-exhibition.
[79] The message described black shape-note singings as "[s]omething different from the Sacred Harp and Christian Harmony traditions, but with its own power and community." See Laura Akerman, "[AtlantaSinging] June 2015 Singing Reminder," June 2, 2015.

Conclusion

This study of *The Sacred Harp* tunebook and the folklorization of Sacred Harp singing in the twentieth century contributes to broader conversations on race and music, folk scholarship, music and social movements, book publishing and reception, and music genres. In this concluding section, I detail some of these contributions and outline potential areas for future study.

A central theme in this study with broader implications is the analysis of the impact of race and place on participation in a musical culture such as Sacred Harp singing. My discussion demonstrates how representations of Sacred Harp's race and place and the style's characterization as folk music affect who sings the style, where, how, and for what reasons. The example of Sacred Harp singing illustrates linkages between race, place, and music making with broader implications for the study of participatory music making and music reception. Sacred Harp's representation as a white, southern, folk culture with exceptional black participants affects who joins in by continuing to discourage black participation and exclude extensive networks of black shape-note gospel singings while providing pathways into the style for largely white populations that favorably respond to Sacred Harp's folksong-inflected associations with authenticity and tradition. These representations also impact the geography of Sacred Harp singing, encouraging participation in areas, many outside the southern United States, where ideas of folk tradition call up powerful cravings for authenticity while creating impediments to adoption for those, like the Texans discussed at the end of chapter 2, in places where

associations with southern rurality can feel like "baggage." Associating Sacred Harp with race and place also affects how singers sing and what the music means to those who do.[1]

My discussion of Sacred Harp's folklorization contributes to the study of the relationship between folk scholarship and folk festival programming, and of crosscurrents between the civil rights and folk music movements. My analysis of how George Pullen Jackson's and John W. Work III's publications on Sacred Harp singing in the 1930s–1950s participated in the excavation of channels through which future fieldwork, scholarship, and folk festival programming flowed contributes to the analysis of the relationship between folk festivals and the fieldwork and publishing that influence such festivals' composition. Jackson's construction of Sacred Harp as a white practice with a single exceptional group of black practitioners inaugurated an enduring articulation of Sacred Harp's race. These scholars' writing also identified the particular groups of singers Jackson and Work visited, and their races and places, with the narrative they helped construct.

In the 1960s and 1970s, new Sacred Harp scholarship followed the channels dug in the 1930s and 1940s. I argue that the swell of interest among white academics in studying black southeastern Alabama Sacred Harp singers peaked in an echo of the civil rights movement. Such scholars perceived recalibrated relations among racial groups within the southern United States as *de jure* segregation was slowly dismantled as creating the potential for more liberal intergroup association during fieldwork in the South and

[1] Kiri Miller has documented how the channels of folklore scholarship I've described that position specific white populations of singers from certain places as traditional become aesthetic models for some new singers. Miller has also shown how the values of authenticity and tradition that these associations carry affect what Sacred Harp means to participants, creating powerful feelings of nostalgia and loss around the experience of singing for some. Miller, *Traveling Home*.

sought the insights cross-racial interaction might generate. Academics like William H. Tallmadge believed this shift made conducting research more practical and enabled more open conversations with black Alabamians. The shift also left scholars like Tallmadge sensitive to evidence of persistent racial inequality. At the same time, the folk revival furnished those same academics with a new space in which to imagine black Sacred Harp singing, that of the large northern folk festivals to which many of these young scholars were connected. Folk festival programmers drew on the folklore scholarship of those who preceded them in bringing these same groups of singers to festivals starting in the 1960s and 1970s. These appearances, which sometimes involved black and white Sacred Harp groups performing together, staged idealistic visions of the "beloved community" festival organizers admired, and offered the singers who appeared more prosaic opportunities to obtain financial support and expand participation. My articulation of these connections between folk scholarship, fieldwork, the civil rights movement, and folk festival programming has the potential to inform research on music and social movements, offering a means of interpreting the impact of social movements on genres not typically interpreted as explicitly political. This work also demonstrates how field sites and publications not often connected to social change inform what happens on the concert stages and at the political protests usually at the focus of music and social movement scholarship.

In the field of book history, *The Sacred Harp* and its singings and singers offer an opportunity to explore links between music's dynamic vernacular print culture and its circulation and reception. I argue that the analysis of books produced, published, and disseminated locally and through informal networks help broaden the picture of

publication and reception in a field predominantly focused on the elite and mass-market productions of the national book trade. Locally produced books and printed ephemera represented a considerable proportion of the twentieth century's printed matter. I analyze the methods of editing editions of *The Sacred Harp* at the bookends of the twentieth century discussed in this study, the informal networks assembled to facilitate the books' production, the challenges printers faced as book production technology advanced in a way that left these works out, and the social circumstances that shaped the books' reception and use. This articulation of the production of *The Sacred Harp* demonstrates how vernacularity affects book making and offers insights that may apply to a wide range of printed texts and recorded media. This study of a vernacularly printed text also contributes to correcting an imbalance that conflates access to marketing channels and book production technologies with significance.

This study also articulates the relationship of dynamic genre boundaries to social transformations. I analyze how folklorists and revivalist Sacred Harp singers associated gospel music in shape-note tunebooks with the dilution of styles imagined as traditional thanks to the influence of modernity. This association demonstrates how ideas about modernity and historical purity can effect conceptions of genre. I also show that genre intersected with race and geography to delimit understandings of what constituted Sacred Harp, arguing that the genre-crossing range of songbooks used across the North Mississippi black shape-note singing network may have contributed to the lack of recognition of the singers in scholarly and public accounts. My analysis of the editions of *The Sacred Harp* also shows that genre spanning occurred to different degrees at different times, representing market pressures, audiences, and social anxieties. As Sacred Harp

singers navigated the social and demographic transformations of the twentieth century, they worked out their anxieties and ambivalences as well as their musical tastes in decisions about the form and contents of *The Sacred Harp* tunebook. Both their anxieties and tastes affected their understandings and negotiations of boundaries between music genres. As successive editors of the tunebook renegotiated the location and permeability of its music stylistic borders and strove to modernize the book's bibliographic form, page layout, and typography, they responded to social pressures. This analysis suggests that others studying the contestation of music genres and their boundaries might consider the social context of such contestation and look to musical as well as non-musical markers of genre such as the printed matter associated with music cultures.

This study intervenes in the fields discussed above by introducing new terms and methods and articulating new understandings of key issues. In the study of folk scholarship, this dissertation introduces the comparative study of folklore genealogies—the discourses that inform a given folklore scholar's work—to understand how the research individual scholars carried out were informed by their disciplinary locations and identities. This application of a term Michel Foucault adapted from Friedrich Nietzsche's *On the Genealogies of Morals* to folklore scholarship advances work only recently begun by scholars in the discipline.[2] My treatment of the term introduces a comparative dimension, articulating how race and disciplinarity shaped the contexts in which two scholars, George Pullen Jackson and John W. Work III described Sacred Harp singing as

[2] A selection of papers from two sessions at the 2008 American Folklore Society annual meeting on Americo Paredes and "Folklore's Genealogies" later appeared in 2012 in the *Journal of American Folklore* as "With His Pistol in His Hand for Fifty Years: Folklore's Genealogies and the Intellectual Legacy of Américo Paredes." See John Holmes McDowell, "Introduction," *The Journal of American Folklore* 125, no. 495 (January 15, 2012): 3–4, doi:10.5406/jamerfolk.125.495.0003. I see my use of the term "folklore genealogies" for comparative work as aligned with the adoption of this similar term in the title of the special issue.

folksong. I coin the term *folklore's filter* to describe the dominant paradigm drawing on German Romantic nationalism through which Jackson, a white American scholar of German language and literature, interpreted Sacred Harp singing as folksong rooted in the land of the American nation and as a wellspring of its national high culture. I contrast this with the "veil" behind which Work, a black musicologist, conducted his research, granting him a "double-consciousness, … always looking at one's self through the eyes of others," but shutting him out from the world of white America,[3] constraining his scholarship, and limiting his engagement with the style. In naming and describing these disparate and racially bifurcated folklore scholarship genealogies I draw on a rich scholarly discourse on folklorization and folklore paradigms,[4] as well as on the spirituals and African American life.[5] In contrasting folklore's filter with the veil I attempt to locate and contextualize the dominant paradigm through which scholars and popular writers have viewed Sacred Harp. I also hope to acknowledge how facing manifestations of the vast veil that shut out African Americans limited Work's engagement with Sacred Harp yet also afforded him an important and underrepresented perspective.

In articulating these contrasting folklore genealogies, my work also advances new interpretations of the trajectories of two scholars critical to the history of the disciplines of folklore studies, musicology, and ethnomusicology. While Jackson's writing and theories are well known, Work's have received relatively little explication. This study

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[3] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 3.
[4] On recent scholarship interrogating the dominant folklore genealogy I name "folklore's filter," see Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Folklore's Crisis"; Filene, *Romancing the Folk*; Miller, *Segregating Sound*.
[5] In addition to Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, early twentieth century scholarship, largely authored by black academics, informed Work's folklore genealogy. See Krehbiel, *Afro-America Folksongs*; Johnson and Johnson, *The Books of American Negro Spirituals*; Hurston, *The Sanctified Church*.

builds on John Bealle's and Kiri Miller's excellent treatments of Jackson's adoption of German Romantic nationalism[6] and several scholars' refutations of Jackson's white spirituals thesis.[7] I contribute to the articulation of the scholar's thought by drawing on little-examined archival collections including Jackson's index cards and collection of tunebooks (which contain his annotations) as well as his publications. I draw on these new sources to express how Jackson's need for a white Anglo-Celtic music style with a long history in the Americas to facilitate the cultivation of a new American culture out of native folksong roots motivated him to characterize Sacred Harp as white spirituals. I detail how this characterization led him to exclude and flatten what I argue was a potentially rich account of black Sacred Harp singing he was developing in his private reseach as evidenced by his annotations on his copy of *The Colored Sacred Harp*.

Building on Robert Gordon and Bruce Nemerov's account of Work's scholarly trajectory[8] I position the Fisk musicologist's research, writing, and career advances in the context of his disciplinary orientation and status as a black academic in the Jim Crow South. I offer context for Work's limited engagement with Sacred Harp singing by demonstrating how his early work contested the prioritization of "sorrow songs" that characterized the work of Du Bois, Krehbiel, Johnson, and his father, John W. Work II. I show how Work's Sacred Harp research fit into a larger early career interest in fieldwork represented by the Coahoma County study, marking his perspective as different from that of Zora Neale Hurston, who elevated the rough authenticity she ascribed to "genuine

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[6] Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*; Miller, *Traveling Home*.
[7] See, for example, Tallmadge, "The Black in Jackson's White Spirituals"; Epstein, "A White Origin for the Black Spiritual?"; Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith*, 118–22.
[8] Work, Jones, and Adams, *Lost Delta Found*; Frazier et al., *John Work III*.

Negro spirituals" over the music of the Fisk Jubilee singers she regarded as "*based* on the spirituals."[9] Work instead located spirituals as a comparatively minor part of contemporaneous black worship, and instead focused on placing the full range of sacred and secular black music making he observed in the field in social context. Yet, facing persistent discrimination, Work fell back on promoting cultivated arrangements of spirituals because doing so offered him a more direct path to career advancement. Work's scholarship and career trajectory draws attention to the groundbreaking ideas the scholar formulated and articulates the challenges black scholars faced in contesting orthodox positions on black sacred music making.

I employ this comparative analysis of folklore genealogies to articulate how Sacred Harp singing, a style of music with miscegenated origins spanning a vast geography and timespan, came to be imagined as white music of the nineteenth-century southern upcountry. In doing so I go further than previous scholars in situating and contesting scholarly accounts of the whiteness of Sacred Harp that have characterized discourses on the music culture since Jackson's 1933 *White Spirituals of the Southern Uplands*.[10] My analysis shows how folklore's filter contributed to associations between Sacred Harp's race and its place. I articulate how fieldworkers and festival promoters in the generation after Jackson carried folklore's disciplinary history and the social context of Jim Crow–era segregation with them, informing their interactions with black Sacred Harp singers in the contact zones where they met. This history also imposed a filter through which only certain groups of singers and styles of musical expression could pass, inhibiting federal

[9] Hurston, *The Sanctified Church*, 80.
[10] Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*.

and state support of black Sacred Harp singing populations outside the Alabama Wiregrass. Folklore's filter also impeded recognition of a large interconnected network of black shape-note gospel singings historically tied to singing from *The Sacred Harp* that in many respects resembled the robust network of white Sacred Harp singings that spanned and reached beyond the South. I argue that the resultant documentary record of Sacred Harp singing in the twentieth century dramatically underrepresents black singers, delimiting popular and scholarly understandings of Sacred Harp and its practitioners. This analysis of race and Sacred Harp joins a growing corpus of scholarship on folklorized music genres and music cultures associated with specific races and places.

In undertaking this work I developed a methodology I call ethnobibliography, drawing on an essay by bibliographer Hugh Amory,[11] in connecting the publication and reception of books to the social contexts at the center of this study. Ethnobibliography mixes ethnographic research into how books are used with collation and archival research. My discussion of how singers interpreted features of *The Sacred Harp*'s design and related these to perceptions of the music's southernness and archaic rurality draws on oral histories I conducted. I asked informants about their experience of adopting new revisions of *The Sacred Harp* and discussed copies of the tunebook and related texts in interviewees' personal and family collections, drawing out interpretations of material evidence of such books' degree and form of use. I believe that such ethnographic or historical anthropological research into the use of printed texts can provide a fuller understanding of the format, composition, and uses of books, and illustrate more fully how the production and reception of such books relates to their social context.

[11] Amory, "The Trout and The Milk."

This study's application of bibliographic methods, including ethnobibliographical oral history interviews, to the study of Sacred Harp singing represents another intervention into the scholarship of this music culture with implications for the study of other folklorized and popular musics. This study also inaugurates the consideration of Sacred Harp as a form of vernacular publishing, a term I suggest might usefully be applied to the study of a range of locally and informally produced texts. My analysis of the editing and publication of *The Sacred Harp* in the twentieth century centers on the technologies of book production and their social context and connects these to the book's music-stylistic orientation. This analysis demonstrates how the term *vernacular* can aid in the description and analysis of publishing activities that take place outside of or at the margins of the national book trade in the United States. I suggest that such a marginal position constrains access to book production technology in a shifting publishing landscape. For the revisers of *The Sacred Harp*, technological limitations resulting from the form's vernacularity rendered the book's producers' limited access to finances visible in the books' aesthetics, compounding unwelcome perceptions of the book as the centerpiece of an "old-fogy" cultural activity. Examining the editing and publishing process of a vernacularly printed work like *The Sacred Harp* can illustrate how shifts in and disagreements about musical style, design, and bibliographic form relate to technologies of book production and express deeper anxieties about such books' social context.

This study also advances the application of Charles Taylor's concept of social imaginaries[12] to the study of music and politics. Taylor articulates imaginaries as shared but individually held understandings about permissible and expected social interaction across difference that are both variable across intersectional identities and mapped onto imagined geographies. My analysis joins a growing literature examining how social imaginaries shift in changing political circumstances and how they fracture and reveal boundaries in the contact zones in which people from different backgrounds encounter each other amidst asymmetries of power. This study operationalizes Taylor's framework for the analysis of music in its social context, building on work like Ronald M. Radano and Philip V. Bohlman's *Music and the Racial Imagination*,[13] while offering a specific interpretation of Taylor's theories oriented toward analyzing music making and ethnographic encounters as collisions of imaginaries, articulations of their boundaries, and sites at which they shift and are unmade.

This study points toward several areas where additional research might build on my arguments and conclusions. First and foremost, this study points to the need to include the contemporary large and geographically dispersed networks of black and white shape-note gospel singings and their archival traces in conversations about Sacred Harp and shape-note singing.[14] My study suggests that including shape-note gospel networks

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[12] Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*.
[13] Ronald M. Radano and Philip V. Bohlman, eds., *Music and the Racial Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
[14] Stephen Shearon's forthcoming study of white shape-note gospel singing, which builds on decades of presentations, will join a small but robust literature, including Montell, *Singing The Glory Down*; *Blue Ridge Shape Notes*; Shearon, *I'll Keep On Singing*; Doster, "The Evolution of Sacred Music and Its Rituals in Watauga County, North Carolina." Yet scholarship on black shape-note singing networks remains scarce. The possibility that black shape-note gospel singing networks share more practices in common with Sacred

could drastically shift understandings of the trajectory of black shape-note singing in the twentieth century, further undoing Jackson's depiction of the style as "white spirituals." Despite recent documentary work conducted with West Georgia's United Note Singers—a network of black shape-note singers—by the University of West Georgia's Center for Public History[15] and a mid-1990s collaboration between black Mississippi shape-note singers and scholars at the University of Mississippi,[16] these networks remain largely undocumented in scholarship and popular media, and likewise largely off the radar of state and federal agencies. Folklore's privileging of near exclusive use of *The Sacred Harp* as a litmus test for recognition as Sacred Harp singing and the frequent elision of Sacred Harp and shape-note singing have contributed to these groups' persistent exclusion from the historical record, despite their strength and evident historical connection to singing from *The Sacred Harp*. Future scholarship on the history and social context of shape-note singing might benefit from crossing racial, spatial, and genre boundaries where previous scholarship has largely remained siloed.

One under-traveled path toward studying the social implications of genre crossing in shape-note singing might involve analyzing little studied yet widely used shape-note tunebooks featuring a wider range of genre crossing than the much-studied *Sacred Harp* editions at the center of this study. Sarah Kahre's recent dissertation on the competing early twentieth-century revisions of *The Sacred Harp* and Robert L. Vaughn's forthcoming study of the history of the Cooper revision are welcome additions to the

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Harp singing makes study of these networks and inclusion of them in discussions of Sacred Harp singing particularly critical.

[15] United Note Singers and Associated Note Singers, *God Was in Us Cause We Sung: African American Shape Note Singing*.

[16] Walls, *The African American Shape Note & Vocal Music Singing Convention Directory*.

limited scholarship on an important book.[17] The contributors to and print history and use of the Cooper book remain insufficiently documented. Analysis of the Cooper book and its social context has the potential to illustrate a great deal about the relationships between race, place, and Sacred Harp singing at the center of this study. Other tunebooks in desperate need of study include *The Christian Harmony* and many other books in the orbit of *The Sacred Harp* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including transitional and early gospel and Sabbath School songbooks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and tunebooks produced by Sacred Harp singers in the post-1960s "revival" of the style. Judge Jackson's 1934 *Colored Sacred Harp*, little used, little studied, and often mischaracterized, is a tunebook that especially merits comprehensive music analysis and treatment of its publication history, use, and interpretation by folklore scholars and musicologists.[18]

This study also foregrounds the possibilities afforded by examining the archival traces of folksong fieldwork. William H. Tallmadge's field recordings, photographs, and field notes, housed at the Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives, provided a valuable yet understudied archive in which to analyze the background understandings black Sacred Harp singers and Tallmadge brought to their encounters. Pairing archival records of encounters in the field with those documenting encounters from the folk festival stage, complemented by oral history interviews with participants, provided a rich and multifaceted array of primary source materials on which to build analysis of how folklore

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[17] Kahre, "Schism and Sacred Harp." See also Vaughn, *Rethinkin' Our Thinkin': Thoughts on Sacred Harp Myths*.

[18] There remains much to unpack beyond the limited analysis of George Pullen Jackson's annotations of his copy of this book in chapter 3 of this dissertation and the account of the book provided in Boyd, *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*.

genealogies affected Sacred Harp's association with race and place. University archives house additional material documenting folklorists' interactions with Sacred Harp singers, and numerous other musics. Analysis of archives of folksong fieldwork has the potential to complement and provide historical context for contemporary ethnographic research into a number of music cultures.[19]

Finally, the approach I take in analyzing Joseph Stephen James's *Original Sacred Harp*, analyzing the social context of book production and reception, drawing on technologies of production as well as evidence of the editing process gleaned from the book's text and paratext, might usefully be applied to other texts in the corpus of nineteenth and twentieth century American tunebooks. Scholars have studied a number of early nineteenth-century shape note tunebooks as well as the eighteenth century compositions of members of the "first New England school," yet these studies often stop short of critically engaging with editors' social contexts. Songbooks representing diverse shape-note genres and bibliographic forms from the late nineteenth century and beyond, and other understudied collections of sacred songs including compendiums of spirituals and denomination hymnals, might benefit from this sort of analysis. Their more recent publication date also increases the likelihood that ethnobibliographic inquiry and the study of archival traces of the production of the books in this corpus might usefully complement bibliographic methods.[20]

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[19] A range of music cultures commonly described as folk and frequently presented at folk festivals—including lined-out hymnody, spirituals, ring-shouts, ballad singing, old-time, and Cajun/Creole music—are especially ripe for such analysis, as are genres more peripherally or recently subjected to folklorization such as bluegrass, gospel, or the music of immigrant populations in the United States.

[20] The Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Sacred Tunebooks and Manuscripts series of digital critical editions I will begin editing at the Emory Center for Digital Scholarship in the fall of 2015 will be one effort drawing several of these approaches together.

These avenues for future research demarcate a range of concepts, collections, and methods that might usefully extend the analysis offered here of one music culture's racial and spatial dynamics. In articulating the links between folklorization and conceptions of white and black racial and southern regional identities in the context of Sacred Harp singing, this dissertation joins the larger project of demonstrating how music and print culture can serve as critical arenas for the negotiation of race, place, and politics.

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