

# The Song of America

“Founding of the New World through the Death of Abraham Lincoln”

1492 - 1865

by

(1951) Roy Ringwald – (Items in Black) original creator - Ringwald wrote music to classic poems

(2021) George Jarden – (Items in Red) added additional songs & quotations, speeches, poems, and new original music; wrote narration, and the descriptive historical notes and explanatory notes on song items.

## P r o g r a m

--There is narration explaining people and events regarding each song--

(Dates given are dates of the writing of the poem, speech, or song)

**“Opening Theme and Fanfare” & Excerpt: “The Royal Titulo” 1492**

At the Spanish Royal Court, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella grant a solemn commission 15 years later—1507: the first map of the newly “discovered” continent named it “America” - because of Amerigo Vespucci’s 1501 voyage. Nevertheless, the later British colonies and U.S. people called themselves “Columbians.”

**“Columbus” written 1892**

**Joaquin Miller**

Miller, “The Byron of the Sierras,” writing at the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ voyage, invokes an allegory/extended metaphor: Columbus gives the world “Its Grandest Lesson: ‘Sail On!’”

**“To The Virginian Voyage” 1606**

**Michael Drayton (English)**

Sir Walter Raleigh had named it “Virginia” in 1585, after Queen Elizabeth, the “Virgin Queen”

This poem is a “commercial” to raise funds for the Virginia Company of London voyage of 1606 — the poet is impatient! - get going ! - get on with it - the voyage! which established “Jamestown,” named after King James I.

**“Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child”**

August 20, 1619, African slaves from Angola were traded to Jamestown for food, by a British privateer ship which had stolen them from a Portuguese slave ship near Veracruz. These were the first slaves recorded to arrive in what is now United States territory.

**“The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England” 1825 Felicia D. Hemens (English)**

December 16, 1620 - They really were “Separatists” - not “Pilgrims” - “Separating” from the Church of England, which they found too liturgically ritualistic. They weren’t called “Pilgrims” until the 1800s!

**“Peter Stuyvesant's New Year's Call” 1860**

**Edmond Clarence Stedman**

1661 - the Dutch settlement at the tip of Manhattan Island



7 months later - with tensions between Americans and England rising...  
Massachusetts Minute Men had stockpiled arms at Concord; The British wanted to get the arms, and arrest Sam Adams and John Hancock who were in Lexington, MA.  
April 18, 1775 - 800 British Redcoats crossed the Charles River to Lexington.  
The "two if by sea" signal alerted Paul Revere and others, and they rode, and alerted !

**"Concord Hymn" 1837**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

**The next morning - with fighting between American militiamen and Redcoats**

**6 miles West, at Concord, MA — April 19, 1775**

**—The 8-year American Revolutionary War began—**

62 years later a monument was erected commemorating the beginning of the fighting at Concord. Emerson wrote of **"the shot heard round the world"**

**"Paul Revere" 1991**

**Glenn Douglas Tubb**

— 3 weeks later, May 10, 1775, in response to war, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, and became the American government for 6 years until March 1, 1781, when the new Articles of Confederation they worked on for 4 years finally went into effect.

—5 weeks later, June 17, 1775, Americans and Redcoats fought again at Bunker Hill.

—2 days later, June 19, 1775, the Continental Congress commissioned George Washington as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.

—6 months later, January, 1778, Thomas Paine published "Common Sense," which explained in plain language why America should be free of England. It is the highest-selling book, per capita, ever in America. It galvanized Americans to fight the war.

**"Without The Pen..." (re Thomas Paine) John Adams (attributed)**

**tune Jarden**

? true or not ? - Adams said this about Paine?

**"Betsy Ross"**

**traditional – anonymous**

? true or not ? - she made the first flag? May, 1776, Washington visited her in Philadelphia and requested that she make the first American flag.

**"The Declaration of Independence" July 4, 1776**

**The Second Continental Convention**

The 56 signers committed treason against England - the penalty: death

**"The American Crisis" "These Are The Times..." Dec. 1776**

**text Thomas Paine; tune - Jarden**

Washington had this read to the troops on Christmas Eve, 1776, the night before they crossed the Delaware River near Trenton, NJ

**"Yankee Doodle" revisited**

**traditional - anonymous**

Now, during the war, it is the Americans' favorite song... taunting the British !

**October 18, 1781, British General Cornwallis surrendered to Washington at Yorktown, VA,  
—ending the American Revolutionary War!—**

**“The Federal Constitution” 1798**

**William Milns**

*Now, the Articles of Confederation became clearly inadequate for the new country. So, in 1787 - May 14 - September 17 - the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia drafted the U.S. Constitution*

**“We, The People of the United States...” -**

**The U.S. Constitution; The Constitutional Convention. 1787**

**“The President’s March” Philip Phile 1789 - music written for Washington’s Inauguration**

**“Hail Columbia” Joseph Hopkinson 1798 - words intended to be the U.S. National Anthem**

*April 30, 1789, George Washington was inaugurated first American President at the new United States Capital, Federal Hall, New York City.*

**“The Federal Constitution” 1798**

**William Milns**

**“Firstfruits in 1812” 1812**

**Wallace Rice**

*Just 23 years later, The **War of 1812**; again between the U.S and England. The U.S.S. Constitution, “Old Ironsides,” won battles and captured merchant ships.*

**“The Star Spangled Banner” 1814**

**from “Defence of Fort M’Henry” Francis Scott Key  
tune 1773 “The Anacreontic Song” John Stafford Smith**

*September 14, 1814, Francis Scott Key was watching the bombardment by the British of American Fort McHenry in Baltimore, MD, from a British ship, and wrote the verses.*

— **The War of 1812 lasted 2 years until the Treaty of Ghent, December 24, 1814** —

**“The Battle of New Orleans” 1815**

**Jimmy Driftwood**

*January 8, 1815 - the war was over, but England’s General Pakenham, and Andrew Jackson of the U.S. did not know it was over. Jackson’s forces defeated Pakenham’s.*

**“Pioneers! O Pioneers!” 1848**

**Walt Whitman**

*Whitman wrote of “Manifest Destiny” - “The Westward Movement.” - God and “all the world” know that it is “destiny” that the West be settled by Americans !*

— *But powerful adversarial ideas, doctrines, and forces were at work, festering a divide !! - between factions urging expansion of slavery or abolishing slavery! The new states of the “Western Movement”: to be slave states?...or free states?? Climactic happenings, decisions: a half century earlier, The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793; 1807 Act prohibiting international slave trade; 1820 - the Missouri Compromise; 1836 - controversy, slave-holding Texas Republic to become a state? — and ongoing actions and confrontations —*

**Quakers, The Religious Society of Friends** - *They have been called the first organization to oppose slavery, actively aiding slaves to escape – 1831.*

**“Good News, The Chariots Are Coming” anonymous slave song**

*Quakers, not singers themselves, related to the slaves’ longing: for the “chariot” -*

from the Bible's Book of Ezekiel - which would carry them to heaven - or (metaphorically, across the Ohio River - the River Jordan in the Bible) - to earthly freedom.

**Nat Turner - Turner's Rebellion** - 1831 - he was an enslaved, educated preacher. He led a rebellion of slaves in Virginia, who killed over 50 White people. Its repercussions were world-wide! Aftermath, 200 Blacks - slaves or free - lynched, or tried and hung; new laws forbidding slaves to be taught to read; no slave religious services without a white preacher present; and greatly increased fierce tension between antislavery and slavery factions throughout the country.

**"All God's Chillun' Got Wings" anonymous slave song**

A facetious and thinly veiled rebellious song! Turner's audience - "God's chillun'" - had **nothing** - certainly not shoes! - echoing the Bible's dozens of references to God's gifting of **shoes, crowns** and **wings** to the deserving. And the song **taunts**: "Everybody [the White church-goers] talkin' 'bout heaven **not** goin' there!"

**William Garrison** - A White man. In 1831 - Founded his antislavery newspaper, The Liberator; a \$4000 bounty was on his head by pro-slavers, after The Liberator had allegedly encouraged Nat Turner's Rebellion.

He was a Founder, 1833, of the AASS, The American Anti-Slavery Society, and had to be smuggled aboard ship to England to save his life from pro-slavers.

With The Liberator, he was called "The Strongest Man in America" in fighting slavery.

**"Deep River" anonymous slave song**

The song is saying, as per The Liberator - escape to freedom across "Jordan" - meaning: the Ohio River, to "the gospel feast" - freedom.

**Theodore Dwight Weld and his wife, Angelina Grimke** - 1839 - they published "American Slavery As It Is - Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses" - a compendium of slavery practices and abuses which galvanized worldwide opinion against slavery - and was so graphic as to be used 12 years later by Harriet Beecher Stowe as a format for her 1851 novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin"

**"Darlin' Nellie Gray" 1856 Benjamin Russell Handy**

Dramatizing the cruelties documented in "American Slavery As It Is."

**Frederick Douglass** - escaped slavery from MD in 1838 - by train! dressed in a sailor's clothes! —to New York City. Became a famous orator, preacher, and writer against slavery. Attacked by a mob while giving a lecture for the AASS. In Ireland, abolitionists bought his freedom.

He helped, via the Underground Railroad, to hide and lodge over 400 escaping slaves.

**"Run To Jesus" anonymous slave song**

Douglass said this song inspired his escape from slavery.

(...to Jesus," i.e., to Freedom!), ("Lions in the way..." - from "Proverbs" - the slothful man protests there might be "lions in the way" of him performing his duty.)

**"The Drinkin' Gourd" anonymous slave song**

1847 - Douglas published his abolitionist newspaper, The North Star. The North Star was said to point to freedom for the slaves. The 2 stars of the front the bucket of the "Big Dipper" (called "the drinking gourd") form a line that points to the North Star, to "freedom."

*In the song, the slave is plotting escape, instructing others on the sly. “When the sun comes back...” means, in Springtime.*

**William Still** - 18th child of an ex-slave father and run-away slave mother, with siblings still enslaved in the South, and rescue trips still being made to attempt to free them.

**“Wade In The Water”**

**anonymous slave song**

*Still’s childhood was filled with accounts of his mother’s escape attempts, and attempts to free her children.*

*From the Bible’s book of John: God will “trouble the waters” – meaning - to escaping slaves - cover up the wake - the trail - of the slaves fleeing across the river.*

**Harriet Tubman** - Escaped from slavery in Maryland in 1849. She made 13 trips back to save slaves via the Underground Railroad. She became a spy for the Union Army. Her code name was “Moses” because of her leading so many enslaved people to freedom.

**“Go Down Moses”**

**anonymous slave song**

**— signal happenings —**

**“The Kidnapping of Sims” 1851**

**John Pierpont**

*Because of the Fugitive Slave Acts, anti-slave Northerners were required to hold escaped slaves for return to the South; a situation which caused much controversy. In Boston, a notorious trial was held about the “kidnapped” enslaved black man – Thomas Sims.*

**“Stanzas on Freedom” 1843**

**James Russell Lowell**

*The poet invokes the souls of Concord’s heroes – who “bled” for Freedom – in a rebuke of slavery*

**“The Kansas Emigrants” 1854**

**John Greenleaf Whittier**

*“Bleeding Kansas” – 1854 - 1859. Terrible fighting occurred between those wanting Kansas to be a new slave state, or a free state. To try to swell the numbers to vote for free state, anti-slavery people left their homes in the Northeast U.S. and emigrated to Kansas – to vote “free”!*

**“Dred Scott Ruling” 1857**

**U.S. Supreme Court**

**Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney; tune Jarden**

*Dred Scott, an enslaved man, claimed he should be free, because he had been taken to a free state. The Supreme Court ruled that he had not even a right for a trial, because he was not a citizen.*

**“I submit; let it be done” 1859**

**John Brown; tune Jarden**

*Abolitionist John Brown, with 22 men, raided a U.S. arsenal at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia, October 16, 1859, to try to start a slave rebellion in the South. It failed, and 2 of his sons were killed. He was a hero to the North, but was hung for treason.*

**“Paul Revere’s Ride” (recalled) 1860**

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

*Longfellow hoped the poem’s spirit of the Revolution would temper the war-spirit of the nation.*

**—November 8, 1860, Abraham Lincoln elected President—**

**—6 weeks later, December 20, 1861, South Carolina seceded from the Union—**

**—2/18/1861, Jefferson Davis elected President, Confederacy—**

**—South calls for volunteers to fight, captures Fort Sumpter 4/12/1861—**

**and**

**—The Civil War Begins—**

**“We Are Coming, Father Abra’am” 1862 James Sloan Gibbons**



*Plaintive love song sung by both North and South  
—later, tune for “Army Blue,” and “Love Me Tender”—*

**“When Johnny Comes Marching Home” 1863**  
**Words, 1863 - Patrick Sarsfield Golmore**  
**Music, various old origins**  
*Poignant song of hope, sung by North and South*

*—It Is Done ! —*

*— Lee Surrenders to Grant, April 9, 1865 —*

**“Laus Deo” 1865** **John Greenleaf Whittier**

*— 5 days later - April 14, 1865 - Abraham Lincoln was assassinated —*

**“When Lilacs Last In The Dooryard Bloomed” 1865**  
**Walt Whitman; tune Jarden**

**“O Captain! My Captain!” 1865** **Walt Whitman**  
***expanded text & tune Jarden***

**“The Death of Abraham Lincoln” 1865** **William Cullen Bryant**

**“Columbus” written 1892** **Joaquin Miller**

**“The Building of the Ship” 1850** **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

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