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George Jarden

The Song of America

by

Roy Ringwald & George Jarden

2026

Friday, May 15 – 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 16 – 2:30p.m.

Saturday, May 16 – 7:00p.m.

Sunday, May 17 – 3:00 p.m.

And

Saturday, July 4th – 2:00 p.m.

Jarden performing stage
3100 Karen Drive
Las Cruces, NM

Alex Sainz, IT (Information Technology) expert, created George's slides, and the power point presentation and
GeorgeJardenShows.com website

"Part One"

"Founding of the New World – up to before The Civil War"

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

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

MUSIC - for the historical poems is by ROY RINGWALD; all others, music as credited

P r o g r a m

"How Did We Get Here??"

Bering Land Bridge - Connects Eastern Asia/Siberia to Alaska/North American Continent.

The indigenous people, later called "Indians" by Columbus, crossed it 20,000 years ago

Eric the Red & son Lief Erickson – Vikings – from Scandinavia about 2,000 years ago

Made it to Greenland / Iceland

Age of Discovery, Exploration – 1400 – 1600

--- *"In fourteen hundred ninety two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue"* ---

"The Royal Titulo" 1492

At the Spanish Royal Court, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella grant a solemn commission to Christopher Columbus

"Columbus" written 1892

Joaquin Miller

Miller, so famous he was called "The Byron of the Sierras," writing at the 400th anniversary of Columbus' voyage, invoked an allegory/extended metaphor: saying that Columbus gave the world (the eventual United States!) "Its Grandest Lesson: '...On! Sail On!'"

15 years later—1507: *the first map of the newly "discovered" continent named it "America" because of Amerigo Vespucci's 1501 voyage.*

Nevertheless, Americans called themselves "Columbians" for centuries!

The first English settlement was at Jamestown, Virginia.

*Founded by the Virginia Company of London, a pioneering joint-stock company
English Capitalism in pursuit of profit!*

"To the Virginian Voyage" (1606)

It's a promo!! - - "Let's get going! Let's find the gold in Virginia!"

*--- A World accustomed to Slavery – Indigenous peoples
of this "New World" enslaved members of other tribes that they conquered.*

And, the Portuguese, and the English kings had had African slave trade for centuries.

Jamestown & 1619 slaves: Jamestown, 1607 was the first English colony in the New World.

August, 1619, the English privateer ship The White Lion landed at Point Comfort, Hampden, VA and traded, for food and supplies, about 20 African slaves they had stolen from a Portuguese slaver ship on the Gulf Coast of New Spain (now Mexico), to the English leaders of Old Point Comfort, Hampton, Virginia. Some of the slaves were then traded to Jamestown. The slaves were Angolans, among thousands enslaved and traded for years already by the Portuguese and the English; and indigenous peoples had for centuries enslaved each other. However, this 1619 event is regarded as the beginning of slavery in what became North America.

"Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child" enslaved African-American song

The song expresses the anguish of being stolen from home.

"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!

"The Mayflower Compact" – signed by 41 men: 36 "freemen," 3 hired men, and 2 indentured servants, anticipated by 300 years the unique U.S. democratic government.

They Came!! The Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedes

The French and Indian War 1754 - 1763

---- The British and British Americans fight the French and Indians --

"Yankee Doodle"

anonymous British

The British and the Americans fought the French & Indians - 1754 - 1763

The British Redcoats taunted their American allies in the French & Indian war as "doodles" (fools, simpletons).

"Macaroni" was the decoration on fancy British hats

“Fort Duquesne” 1855

Florus Beardsley Plimpton

*The Americans, proud of helping the British to victory over the French & Indians, **boast** of the victories, in this paean – (a song of praise).*

“Daniel Boone” 1924

Arthur Guiterman

1755: The beginning of an American folk hero's exploits and adventures.

---- seeds of the American Revolution against England ----

“The Origin of ‘Yankee Doodle’” 1850

George Pope Morris

“No trials in America! I’ll tax your tea!”

England - the King - was called “John Bull” - Americans: called “Brother Jonathan”

1764 - 1773 - tensions! England passed the Sugar Tax, Stamp Act, the Quartering Act!

The Americans decried this “Taxation without representation!” Unpopular Redcoats remaining in America were unwelcome.

March 3, 1770, the “Boston Massacre” - An unruly crowd harassed some Redcoats. 5 Americans were shot and killed.

Paul Revere and Samuel Adams, of The Sons of Liberty, dubbed it “The Boston Massacre” to inflame Americans’ resentment of England

“A Ballad of the Boston Tea Party” 1874 Oliver Wendell Holmes

and, finally...the Tea Tax - 1773 - (to bail out England’s failing East India Tea Company!)

December 16, 1773 - (It was not called “Tea Party” until 1820 !)

The Mohawk “disguise” was a statement! Saying “We are Americans! - not Englishmen!”

(The Sons of Liberty admired the Mohawks for their free-spirited independence!)

“The Testament of Freedom”

text 1774 Thomas Jefferson music 1943 Randall Thompson

1774, the British retaliated! — for the The Boston Tea Party — with the Coercive Acts and the Intolerable Acts: American trials would be held in England! England will now appoint American officials - Americans were not allowed to elect them!

The Americans responded:

September/October, 1774: The First Continental Congress, Philadelphia, to deal with

these new grievances. Jefferson wrote “A Summary View of the Rights of British America” as ammunition for the Virginia delegates to use at the Convention.

-----The American Revolution begins-----

Lexington and Concord, MA – April 17, 18, 1775 ----

“Paul Revere's Ride” 1860

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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

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.

----**Thomas Paine** – “Common Sense” – January, 1776 ----

—6 months later, January, 1776, **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** (*attrib.*) *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

Note: 2 important changes from Jefferson’s original draft:

*** about slavery *** about property

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

“We Must Hang Together...” 1776 Benjamin Franklin

tune Jarden

“Yankee Doodle” – *redux* anonymous - British

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!—

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...” 1787

The U.S. Constitution; The Constitutional Convention

“The President’s March” 1789 – *written for* President Washington’s

Inauguration – Philip Phile

“Hail Columbia” 1789 – *words* Joseph Hopkinson, 1798, *set to music later*

“The President’s March was 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

*Just 23 years later; The War of 1812; again between the U.S and England – **again.**
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 Battle of New Orleans” 1959 Jimmy Driftwood

January 8, 1815 - the war of 1812 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 British.

---- “Manifest Destiny” ----

“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 —

----- end Part One -----

INTERMISSION

“Part Two”

“Incipient Civil War; Civil War; Death of Abraham Lincoln; Reconstruction”

reprise

“Pioneers! O Pioneers! 1848 Walt Whitman

*----- Abolition !! --- Increasing Antislavery Momentum !! -----
Prominent Escaped Slaves, Abolitionists, Signal Happenings*

Quakers, the Religious Society of Friends – noted as

the first organization to oppose slavery, actively aiding slaves to escape.

1831 – the Quakers, not singers themselves, related to the slaves’ singing & longing for “the chariot” of Elijah (the Bible 2 Kings 2:11)

The African American slaves we’re exposed to the Christian Church through their masters and other leaders. From biblical references, they gained important symbols usable as codes for their escape from slavery, and used in songs they created about hopes for their redemption as well as physical benefits they might receive, either in freedom or in the afterlife. Examples are: Chariots getting to heaven (freedom), golden slippers, many mansions, wings, heavenly crowns, shoes, white robes, the River Jordan, troubled waters.

Nat Turner – Turner’s Rebellion – 1831 *He was an enslaved man, but educated, and a 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 Chilun’ Got Wings”

anonymous slave song

a facetious and thinly-veiled rebellious song! Turner’s audience –

“God’s Chillun” – had nothing; certainly not “wings” or even shoes! Echoing the Bible’s dozens of references to God’s gifting of shoes, crowns, and wings to the deserving; and, the song taunts(the white slave-master church-goers):

“Everybody talkin’ ‘bout Heaven NOT goin’ t 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 was accused of encouraging 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. Because of The Liberator, he was called “The Strongest Man in America” in fighting slavery.

“Deep River” – the song says, as per “The Liberator,” escape to freedom across “Jordan,” meaning: the Ohio River; to the “Gospel Feast” – freedom!

“Old Man River” Paul Robeson - 20th century African American heroic figure

Theodore Dwight Weld – and his wife, **Angelina Grimke** – in **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 1852 novel, “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”

“Darlin’ Nellie Gray” 1856

Benjamin Russell Handy

echoing “American Slavery As It is” – cruelty of tragic slave separation.

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

Douglas 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” – i.e., of him performing his duty.

“The Drinkin’ Gourd”

anonymous slave song

*The two stars forming the front of the bucket of the “big dipper” (called “The Drinking Gourd”) form a line that points to the North Star – which was said to point the slaves toward freedom. Thus, Frederick Douglass in **1847** published his newspaper, “**The North Star**.” In the song, the slave is telling others, on the sly, when and how to escape: “When the sun comes back...” means, “in the Spring.”*

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.

He became a member of “The Vigilante Committee” of The Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, helping escaping slaves; and, a Conductor of the Underground Railroad, helping hundreds.

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

“Wade In The Water”

anonymous slave song

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 – “Moses”

- Escaped from slavery in Maryland in 1849. She made 13 trips back to save slaves via the Underground Railroad. Freed 800 people! She became a spy for the Union Army. Her code name was “Moses” – as in The Bible, Moses leads the Jews to freedom. And she helped destroy millions of dollars of Confederate armaments.

“Go Down Moses”

anonymous slave song

Slave Kidnappings – “Runaway Slave” laws

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 Sim

“The Kidnapping of Sims” 1851

John Pierpont

“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

“Uncle Tom’s Cabin” 1852

Harriet Beecher Stowe

“Scenes of blood and cruelty...”

tune Jarden

Bleeding Kansas

“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.

John Brown – fervent Abolitionist

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.

“I submit; let it be done” 1859

John Brown; *tune Jarden*

reprise - Lexington & Concord – spirit of 1775 invoked in vain

“Paul Revere’s Ride” 1860

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Longfellow wrote it as an 11th-hour attempt to rally the sides to unity: 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 – the South calls for volunteers to fight, captures Fort Sumpter 4/12/1861—

and —The Civil War Begins—

THE CIVIL WAR – APRIL 12, 1861 – APRIL 9, 1865

July 1, 1862, Lincoln called for 300,000 Union volunteers.

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

“The Blue and the Gray” 1866 Francis Miles Finch

The Battle of Shiloh, April 6-7, 1862, SW Tennessee.

Nearby Columbus, Mississippi, received thousands of dead and wounded. After the war, it became one of the original Decoration Day towns, for decorating both Blue (North) and Grey (South) graves.

“The Gettysburg Address” 1863 Abraham Lincoln

July 1-3, 1863, The Battle of Gettysburg, won by the North. 200,000 men fought; 3,000 killed each, of the North and the South.

4 1/2 months later, November 19, 1863, Lincoln’s dedication address.

--- Songs Of The Civil War ---

de facto National Anthem of The Union the North)

“Columbia, The Gem of the Ocean” 1843 (uncertain) traditional

de facto National Anthem of The Confederacy (the South)

“Dixie” 1860 Daniel Decatur Emmett

-----Songs of the Union (the North)

“Dixie (parody)” anonymous - traditional

*---4 songs, all **one tune**!! -- origin unknown ---*

“John Brown's Body” post-1859 author unknown, trad.

“Hang Jeff Davis” 1861 author unknown, trad. l

“We Are The Colored Soldiers” 1854 Capt. Lindsey Miller

song of the Arkansas Colored Regiment which was authorized, 1864

by the Bureau of Colored Troops. 179,000 fought – ten percent of the Union Army!

19,000, in the US Navy. 40,000 African Americans died fighting for the Union.

“Battle Hymn of The Republic” 1862 poem Julia Ward Howe

now, a NEW de facto National Anthem

---- Songs of the Confederates (the South)

“The Bonnie Blue Flag” 1861 Harry McCarthy

“Goober Peas” anonymous - traditional

---- Songs of both the North and the South ----

“Battle Cry of Freedom” 1862 George Root

“Tramp, Tramp, Tramp” (The Prisoner's Hope)” 1864

George Frederick Root

“Aura Lee” 1863 words William W. Fosdick

music George Rodway Poulton

“When Johnny Comes Marching Home” 1863

Words, 1863 - Patrick Sarsfield Golmore

Music various origins

----IT IS DONE !!! ----THE CIVIL WAR IS OVER !!! ----

— Lee Surrenders to Grant, April 9, 1865 —

“Laus Deo” [Praise Be To God] 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
Tune Ringwald/Jarden**

“The Death of Abraham Lincoln” 1865 William Cullen Bryant

“Columbus” – *continued - written* 1892

Joaquin Miller

“Brave Captain, say but one good word...”

“The Building of the Ship” 1850 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“In spite of rock and tempest’s roar...”

E n d

“The Song of America” was created in 1951 by Roy Ringwald, the famous composer, and arranger for the widely popular TV, Radio, and performing band and chorus Fred Waring and The Pennsylvanians during the 1920s–1980s. Ringwald set to music 30 of the most famous poems of American history, along with a narrative history. It was recorded and performed with full orchestra. Beginning in 2020, George Jarden added some 40 songs, speeches, and more narration, tripling the size of the work. He performs “The Song of America” without accompaniment, giving his narration, and singing the music vocally. All the music performed in the show was written by Ringwald unless noted “tune by Jarden” or otherwise credited.