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Stephen Foster and Iowa

On July 4, 1826, the United States celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In almost every community, large and small, flags were raised, bands played, cannons roared, parades formed, speeches were made, and thirteen regular toasts offered to the Founding Fathers, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, the Thirteen Original Colonies, Liberty, and a half dozen others, always ending with a toast to the Fair of the Nation.

On this same Independence Day there was born at Lawrenceville, now a part of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Stephen Collins Foster, whose songs swiftly became a part of our pioneer heritage and have remained among the favorites of Iowans to this day. That same Fourth of July in 1826 marked the death of two great Americans—Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. The same year saw the first appearance of two great actors—Edwin Forrest and William Macready. It likewise witnessed the appearance of James K. Paulding’s Three Wise Men of Gotham and James Fennimore Cooper’s Last of the Mohicans.

Except for a handful of white settlers who had
been permitted to squat in the Half-breed Tract in present-day Lee County, there were no settlers in Iowa in 1826. All of northern Illinois and Indiana still lay beyond the frontier with Prairie du Chien and Galena alone being represented by small pockets of settlement. Three forts had been erected on the east bank of the Mississippi opposite present-day Iowa — Fort Edwards opposite the mouth of the Des Moines River, Fort Armstrong on Rock Island, and Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien. The Black Hawk War, with its attending Black Hawk Purchase, did not occur until 1832. Permanent settlement did not begin in Iowa until June 1, 1833.

Stephen Foster was nearing his seventh birthday when the first permanent white settlers crossed the Mississippi into the Black Hawk Purchase. The tenth of eleven children born to William Barclay Foster and Eliza Clayland Tomlinson Foster, Stephen became the youngest of the brood when his baby brother died in infancy. As the baby of the family, Stephen was sheltered and protected by loving parents and equally doting brothers and sisters.

The Foster family belonged to the pioneer aristocracy of Pittsburgh and were prominent in the political, commercial, religious, and social life of the city. Stephen’s father was of rugged Scotch-Irish ancestry and his mother of English extraction. Their children led useful, honorable lives,
and had successful careers. The eldest son, William Jr., became an outstanding railroad surveyor and a vice-president of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Morrison Foster was an able business man and a mainstay to Stephen throughout his career. Ann Eliza married an Episcopal minister whose brother, James Buchanan, became president of the United States.

Stephen Foster grew up in the same period that Iowa was passing through various Territorial stages to Statehood. From boyhood to youth, he exhibited little interest in formal education. He reluctantly attended Athens and Towanda academies for short terms and enrolled for a five-day spell at Jefferson College in July of 1841. Throughout these formative years he manifested a deep interest in the great out-of-doors, his love of Nature in all its varied aspects being clearly manifested in his songs. He likewise developed an even stronger penchant for music. It was early in 1841, at the age of fifteen, that he composed the *Tioga Waltz*, arranged for flutes, his first musical composition.

On July 4, 1838, when young Stephen was observing his twelfth birthday, the new Territory of Iowa sprang into being west of the Mississippi. The same kind of celebrations that marked the 50th Anniversary of Independence Day throughout the United States in 1826 were observed in the Territory of Iowa in 1838. A toast at Fort
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Madison rang with prophecy: “Iowa this day taking its rank as a Territory. Soon may its star shine bright on the azure of our National Banner.”

In 1840, and again in 1842, Iowans defeated proposals to call a Constitutional Convention, each of which was designed as a step in achieving Statehood. In 1844, the same year Stephen Foster copyrighted his first song — *Open Thy Lattice, Love*, the pioneers of Iowa drew up the Constitution of 1844 and forwarded it to Congress. Statehood was defeated, however, when Congress imposed boundaries that were unacceptable to the people. Two years later the Constitution of 1846 was approved by both Congress and the people and Iowa was admitted into the Union on December 28, 1846.

Stephen Foster began his brilliant career as the composer of America’s most loved songs at the same time Iowa embarked on Statehood. One of his truly great songs, so characteristic of the westward movement of which Iowa formed a part, was *Oh! Susanna*. It was one of Foster’s first compositions, copyrighted in 1848, and sung by countless numbers streaming across the Hawkeye State, bound for California or Oregon.

*Oh! Susanna* is more intimately associated with Iowa history than any other Foster melody. In the first place, the song was probably composed by Foster in 1845 or 1846 for his youthful companions of the Knights of the S. T., at the very time...
STEPHEN FOSTER AND IOWA

Iowa was striving to gain admission into the Union. Secondly, even though its first copyright was in February, 1848, *Oh! Susanna* was being sung for months prior to this date throughout the land. Thirdly, parodies adapted to different regions were being sung along the Santa Fe Trail and the Oregon Trail, and Iowa was a point of origin for, as well as a crossing point, on these famous trails. Finally, since Iowa's population more than doubled between 1846 and 1850—the number totaling 192,000, in the latter year—it would not be strange if those swarming westward toward the Hawkeye State by covered wagon would sing:

I come from Indiana
With my banjo on my knee;
I'm bound for good old I-O-WA
My true love for to see.

Since the population of Iowa increased by a quarter of a million in the three years ending in 1856, there can be little doubt that *Oh! Susanna* was heard along every trail, at every campfire, and in every log cabin in forest and prairie by 1850. Few, if any songs, composed between 1850 and 1890, could match in popularity the rollicking marching song of Stephen Foster.

*Oh! Susanna* not only parallels the story of Iowa in point of time but it also characterizes the hordes of pioneers surging to and through Iowa prior to the Civil War. It doubtless was the favor-
ite of those Iowans who, after an all too brief sojourn in Iowa, pulled up stakes and struck out for California and Oregon. Because *Oh! Susanna* was so tuneful and catching, a simple parody could easily have been composed. Thus:

I'm leaving dear old I-O-WA  
With my banjo on my knee;  
I'm going to Cal-i-for-ni-a  
My true love for to see.

Whatever the reason for its popularity, *Oh! Susanna* has by common consent become the theme song of the California Gold Rush, whether it is pictured in books, the movies, radio or television.

John Tasker Howard, whose *Stephen Foster, America's Troubadour*, has become the standard biography of this gifted composer, writes of this tune:

“*Oh! Susanna*” is a glorious bit of nonsense, and it shows a side of Stephen Foster’s nature that became less apparent as he grew more introspective in his later years. Here is a love of boisterous fun, of rollicking good humor that may contain nothing of subtlety, but nevertheless shows a wealth of jovial good spirits that will ever prove highly infectious. The very lilt of the song was catching, so contagious that almost every one in America was singing it before he realized what he was singing. The song traveled to foreign lands. The Germans sing “Ich Komm von Alabama, Mit der Banjo auf dem Knie” and many nations have their version of the song. Bayard Taylor, writing in 1853, tells how he heard a wandering Hindoo minstrel sing “*Oh! Susanna*” in Delhi.
The Minstrel Show was in its heyday when Stephen Foster began composing in the middle of the 19th Century. *Oh! Susanna*, *Old Uncle Ned*, and *Louisiana Belle*, were the first of his great songs to be introduced and sung by such minstrel artists as E. P. Christy, resulting in Foster achieving widespread fame virtually overnight. The budding young troubadour was not slow in recognizing that the Minstrel Show provided a perfect vehicle for reaching an ever-widening audience. He accordingly wrote E. P. Christy suggesting that he would allow Christy to use his songs first and grant that noted artist permission to have his name appear on the title page "As Sung by Christy's Minstrels." The offer was accepted, and the name of Christy's Minstrels appeared on the title page of fifteen of Stephen Foster's songs. Even so, other minstrels took pride in featuring Stephen Foster songs. Thus, the songs listed on the "Music of the Great Southern Original Sable Harmonists" (who modestly claimed to be "The Best Band of Singers in the United States") included: *Old Uncle Ned, Louisiana Belle*, and *Oh! Susanna*.

While one is prone to associate Minstrel Shows primarily with the Ohio and Lower Mississippi, they were immensely popular in Iowa, not only in towns located on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, but also in small inland towns. A few illustrations will suffice.
In 1858, the Dubuque *Daily Express and Herald* of February 27th declared:

We had the pleasure of a visit yesterday from Col. Clark, the Agent of the Celebrated Campbell Minstrels, who informed us that they will visit our city shortly to enliven our citizens with their melodies. The Campbells have ever held the first position in the army of vocalistic troupes, and we are well pleased to know we shall have the pleasure of listening to them again.

The following day the same editor, quoting extensively from the Cincinnati *Commercial* (doubtless through a clipping furnished by "Col. Clark," ) gave Dubuquers a pretty good idea of the fine treat in store for them. The *Commercial* declared that the eighteen performers constituting Campbell Minstrels was the "best troupe that has ever visited Cincinnati." The Cincinnati editor was particularly impressed with the rendition of Foster's *Willie, We Have Missed You* by an eight-year-old boy who sang "with a pathos and execution not to be excelled by a full-fledged biped." With such advance publicity, plus the fact that the Campbells had performed at Dubuque on a previous occasion, the *Express and Herald* was confident that all its readers who attended the People's Theater would enjoy this "star band of vocalists and instrumental performers."

Judging by the number of appearances that they made in the Key City of Iowa, the Campbells must have been extremely popular on this circuit. The
Dubuque *Times* of October 10, 1863, recorded:

**THE CAMPBELLS ARE COMING.**

The original and celebrated Campbell Minstrels will be in this city on Thursday of this week, and will give two entertainments at the Julien Theater. No other band of minstrels ever attained so extensive a reputation as this, and we presume the simple mention that they are in town will be sufficient to draw a full house. Among the attractions which their entertainments will present is the "Ghost," to be produced in their own peculiar style.

No doubt most Minstrel Shows visiting the larger Iowa towns were first class. The smaller towns and villages would of necessity have to be content with less outstanding troupes, and in some instances, with amateur performers. On January 25, 1859, the *Blackhawk* (Waterloo) *Courier* declared:

> All those wishing to enjoy a good laugh, should not fail to hear the Star Minstrels, on to-morrow (Wednesday) evening. They promise us lots of fun. From what little we can hear of their performances elsewhere, through our exchanges, we doubt not that they will give general satisfaction. They also offer to furnish music for those desiring to "trip the fantastic toe" after the performance. The doors will be open at 6 1-2 o'clock, at Capwell's Hall.

The *Boone County* (Boonesboro) *News* of October 26, 1859, reported as follows:

> The Olio Minstrels.—This band of negro minstrels visited our town and entertained the citizens on Friday evening of last week with one of their splendid performances. Of course they drew a full house, and gave entire
satisfaction to all. An evening spent in listening to their original and laughable comicalities is well invested.

Council Bluffs appears to have been proud of its amateur minstrel performers. On May 11, 1861, the Nonpareil of that city declared:

The Nightingales — a band of Ethiopean minstrels composed of citizens of this place — gave an exhibition at Babbits hall last Tuesday evening. There was a large audience in attendance, and everybody was fully convinced that our own town can furnish better performers than any that come here from abroad.

Prior to the Civil War there can be little doubt that Stephen Foster melodies — humorous, Negro, sentimental, love ballads — were featured in all Minstrel Shows. Songs were rarely listed by composer in the brief newspaper accounts, but the number of Foster songs listed on the title pages of sheet music, such as those sung by the Sable Harmonists, is ample evidence of their popularity. Furthermore, the many songbooks compiled provide an index to the most popular Minstrel Songs. Thus, Mary Louise Lawyer, at one time a very popular singer and song leader in Iowa City, has furnished the writer with a book entitled Minstrel Songs, Old and New, published by Oliver Ditson Company of Boston in 1882. The contents of the book, as described on the title page, comprised a "Collection of World Wide, Famous Minstrel and Plantation Songs, Including the Most Popular of the Celebrated Foster Melodies." The book con-
tained fourteen of the favorite Stephen Foster songs.

The most outstanding Stephen Foster songs were composed in the fifteen years following Iowa’s admission into the Union. And the bulk of these appeared in the first eight years, as witnessed by song and first copyright date:

- Oh! Susanna (1848)
- Old Uncle Ned (1848)
- Nelly Was a Lady (1849)
- Nelly Bly (1850)
- Camptown Races (1850)
- Angelina Baker (1850)
- Melinda May (1851)
- Oh! Boys, Carry Me 'Long (1851)
- Laura Lee (1851)
- Ring de Banjo (1851)
- Old Folks at Home (1851)
- Farewell My Lilly Dear (1851)
- Maggie By My Side (1852)
- Massa's in de Cold Ground (1852)
- My Old Kentucky Home (1853)
- Old Dog Tray (1853)
- Ellen Bayne (1854)
- Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair (1854)
- Willie We Have Missed You (1854)
- Hard Times Come Again No More (1855)
- Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming (1855)
- Gentle Annie (1856)
- Fairy Belle (1859)
- The Glendy Burk (1860)
- Beautiful Child of Song (1860)
- Old Black Joe (1860)
- Down Among the Cane Brakes (1860)
- Beautiful Dreamer (1864)

The stories behind many of the above-listed Foster songs provide an insight into his personality. Thus, Jeanie With The Light Brown Hair, apparently was written for Stephen’s wife, Jane McDowell Foster, who had beautiful auburn hair. Stephen called her Jennie, or Jeanie. The Fosters were separated at the time, not because they did not love each other, but because Stephen’s improvident ways made it impossible for him to support his wife and child. (Jane later took up telegraphy and became a telegraph operator.) When the song appeared, Jane returned to Stephen, but finances again separated them several years later.

The note of tenderness that permeates so many
of Stephen Foster's songs was never more meaning­ful than in his Gentle Annie, which was first published in 1856. The background, according to Stephen's brother, Morrison, was as follows:

His sympathies were . . . always with the lowly and the poor. Once on a stormy winter night a little girl, sent on an errand, was run over by a dray and killed. She had her head and face covered by a shawl to keep off the peltings of the storm, and in crossing the street she ran under the horse's feet. Stephen was dressed and about going to an evening party when he learned of the tragedy. He went immediately to the house of the little girl's father, who was a poor working man and a neighbor whom he esteemed. He gave up all thought of going to the party and remained all night with the dead child and her afflicted parents, endeavoring to afford the latter what comfort he could.

We are likewise indebted to Morrison Foster for the following recollection of Old Dog Tray:

An old friend of ours, Col. Matthew I. Stewart, gave Stephen a handsome setter dog, which for a long time was his constant companion. We lived upon East Common of Allegheny, a wide open space. Stephen often watched this dog with much pleasure, playing with the children on the Common. When he wrote Old Dog Tray, he put into verse and song the sentiments elicited by remembrances of this faithful dog.

Just as young Stephen Foster could be gay and rollicking in mood, so Iowa editors could chuckle over the humorous song titles appearing each year. Thus, in 1859 the editor of the Dubuque Herald quoted the following comment from Vanity Fair:
Old Dog Tray's ever faithful, they say, 
But the dog that is faithful can never be-tray.

The older folks in every generation chide the songs and dances of the younger generation. Those that lived in the Civil War Period were no exception. At Cedar Rapids, the Cedar Valley Times of May 2, 1867, poked fun at some of the current song titles, including Foster’s own works.

**Old Dog Tray** — May the duce take him.  
**You Naughty Man** — Breach of promise, $12,000 damages.  
**The Old Folks at Home** — There's where they belong.  
**Kiss Me Quick and Go** — I prefer to linger.  
**The Pet of the Petticoats** — Jeff Davis.  
**Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming** — Modesty forbids.

Despite such good natured raillery the average Iowan was apt to be more impressed with a writer in *Putnam’s Monthly* for 1856 who commented:

Those songs of the stage cannot have much influence amongst us, popularly, because they come in such crowds that they drive one another out of remembrance. *Lilly Dale* and *Old Dog Tray* may be forgotten in a few years.

The *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* of June, 1859, quoted the New York *Evening Post* as follows:

Ethiopian minstrelsy, as it is called, has, however, culminated, and is now in its decline, Appreciating this fact, Mr. Foster has lately somewhat changed his style, and abandoning the use of negro jargon, he now writes songs better adapted for general use. . . . We do not say that Mr. Foster's "melodies" can be compared with those that have immortalized the names of Burns, Barry Cornwall,
or Thomas Moore; but we do maintain that the composer who produced such popular and pleasing songs as "Gentle Annie," "Willie, We Have Missed You," "Maggie By My Side," "I See Her Still In My Dreams," "Old Dog Tray," etc., deserves an honorable mention, as one of those who has enlarged the pleasure of thousands.

The reason of the popularity of Mr. Foster's songs lies in their easy flowing melody, the adherence to plain chords in the accompaniments, and the avoidance of intricacies in the harmony or embarrassing accidentals in the melody. They have a family resemblance, but not greater than the simpler melodies of Bellini and Donizetti, and the composer is no more truly open to the charge of self-plagiarism than are those Italian melodists. And, as Mr. Foster is still young, he may improve and elevate his style, till he attains a musical reputation that will be more than ephemeral.

Unfortunately, Stephen Foster was not destined to have the long life of a Thomas Moore (1779-1852), a Barry Cornwall (1787-1874), or even a Donizetti (1797-1848). Foster was thirty-three years old in 1859 and had already passed the zenith of productivity although he continued to compose songs, most of which were mediocre and unremunerative.

Iowa was in the throes of the torrid political campaign of 1860 when Stephen Foster composed Old Black Joe. Samuel Jordan Kirkwood was Governor at the time and James W. Grimes and James Harlan represented Iowa in the United States Senate. All three were Republicans and the State itself had swung into the Republican
Eliza and William Barclay Foster, parents of Stephen Foster.

The White Cottage — original Foster homestead and birthplace of Stephen Foster, painted by a Mr. Miller in 1828. Reproduced from Evelyn Foster Morneweck's Chronicles of Stephen Foster's Family, holder of the copyright.
left: From a tintype. Time, place, and photographer unknown.

right: From an Ambrotype taken in Pittsburgh on June 12, 1859.

bottom: Cooper was a close friend who wrote the words to a number of songs for which Foster composed the music.
THE STEPHEN FOSTER MEMORIAL — PITTSBURGH

Foster's Portable Organ, used on serenading parties.

Stephen Foster's Pocketbook. Found in clothes at time of death. It contained 38¢ and slip of paper with words — "dear friends and gentle hearts."

Stephen Foster's Flute
TITLE PAGES OF STEPHEN FOSTER SONGS IN

COME WHERE MY LOVE LIES DREAMING

Quartette

Written and Composed by

STEPHEN C. FOSTER.

New York

Published by Firth Pond & Co. Franklin Square

Music Composed by

STEPHEN C. FOSTER.

New York

Published by S. T. Gordon, 700 Broadway.

WE ARE COMING

FATHER ABRAHAM

300,000

MORE

Music Composed by

STEPHEN C. FOSTER.

New York

Published by S. T. Gordon, 700 Broadway.

Foster's Melodies

JEANIE WITH THE LIGHT BROWN HAIR

Little Mac! Little Mac!

You're the very man

Campaign Song

BY

STEPHEN C. FOSTER.
Comrades, fill no glass for me

Words by GEORGE COOPER.
Music by STEPHEN C. FOSTER.

NEW YORK
Published by JOHN J. DALY 49 Grand St.

Don't bet your money on de Shanghai

PLANTATION SONG

Words and Music by STEPHEN C. FOSTER.

NEW YORK
Published by Wm. A. POND & Co. 54 Broadway

Beautiful Dreamer

the last song ever written

By STEPHEN C. FOSTER.

NEW YORK
Published by Wm. A. POND & Co. 54 Broadway
BOB-TAILED NAG.

Campbell ladie, sing this song.
Dea, dea, dea.
Campbell nue-brick, sing this song.
Dea, dea, dea.
Dea, dea, dea.
Come back home wet, pockets full of dea.
Dea, dea, dea.
Can you—can you—can you—
Grave to run all night.
I'll let my money in the bob-tailed bag.
Somebody left in the bay.

Wolly Moon come on the deck.
Dea, dea, dea.
Heb, he rang him clear his back.
Dea, dea, dea.

Economic like a hound.
Dea, dea, dea.
Bamboozle men and de coiled rats.
Dea, dea, dea.
Grave to run all night.

In bob-tailed bag can't let his head.
Dea, dea, dea.
Bamboozle round in her black bag.
Dea, dea, dea.

I win my money at the bank deal ope.
Dea, dea, dea.
As' every house in the old bay back.
Dea, dea, dea.
Grave to run all night.

Dare frontiers horses in the pear.
Dea, dea, dea.
I'm sing in middle as got good bone.
Dea, dea, dea.

Debail horse he's got a cough.
Dea, dea, dea.
As' his barber's drunk in the old bay back.
Dea, dea, dea.
Grave to run all night.

FAIRY BELLE.

The pride of the village and the belle for the lack.
The pride of my song, and the belle in Fairy Belle.
The pride of the negro and the belle in the old bay.

Chorus
Fairy Belle, pretty Fairy Belle.

Fairy Belle, pretty Fairy Belle.

Fairy Belle, pretty Fairy Belle.

Chorus
Fairy Belle, pretty Fairy Belle.

As long as the night, and the sky of the day.
As long as the night, and the sky of the day.
As long as the night, and the sky of the day.

Chorus
Fairy Belle, pretty Fairy Belle.

The soft voice of a lady marked me sweetly.
The soft voice of a lady marked me sweetly.
The soft voice of a lady marked me sweetly.

Chorus
Fairy Belle, pretty Fairy Belle.

Beautiful Dreamer.

BOY'S GIFT.

Being my Brother back to me.

By Nannie C. Parker. Music arranged by P. M. Saucke, No. 1 Broadway, New York.

Chorus
Bring my brother back to me.
What this way is you know.
Oh, bring my brother back to me.

Through the weary way.

Change
Bring my brother back to me.

All for to hand.

Change
Bring my brother back to me.

Being my brother back to me.

When my troubled heart was weak.

When this way is you know.

Bring my brother back to me.

Chorus
Bring my brother back to me.

Through the weary way.

Change
Bring my brother back to me.

When this way is you know.

Bring my brother back to me.

Chorus
Bring my brother back to me.

When this way is you know.
SONGS OF HUMOR. POPULAR ON THE FRONTIER

OH! SUSANNA
I come from Alabama
With my banjo on my knee;
I’m going to Lou’isiana
My true lub for to see.

It rained all night the day I left,
De weather it was dry;
The sun so hot I froze to death,
Susanna, don’t you cry.

CHORUS
Oh! Susanna,
Do not cry for me;
I come from Alabama,
With my banjo on my knee.

I had a dream the other night,
When every thing was still;
I thought I saw Susanna dear,
De buckwheat cake was in her mouth,
De tears was in her eye,
I says, I’se coming from de south,
Susanna, don’t you cry.

I soon will be in New Orleans,
And then I’ll look all round,
And when I find Susanna,
I’ll fall upon the ground.
But if I do not find her,
Dis darkey’ll surely die,
And when I’m dead and buried,
Susanna, don’t you cry.

SOME FOLKS
Some folks like to sigh,
Some folks do, some folks do;
Some folks long to die,
But that’s not me nor you.

CHORUS
Long live the merry, merry heart
That laughs by night and day,
Like the Queen of Mirth,
No matter what some folks say.

Some folks fear to smile,
Some folks do, some folks do;
Others laugh through guile,
But that’s not me nor you.

Some folks fret and scold,
Some folks do, some folks do;
They’ll soon be dead and cold,
But that’s not me nor you.

Some folks get gray hairs,
Some folks do, some folks do;
Brooding o’er their cares,
But that’s not me nor you.

Some folks toil and save,
Some folks do, some folks do;
To buy themselves a grave,
But that’s not me nor you.

CAMPTOWN RACES
De Camptown ladies sing dis song,
Doo-dah! doo-dah!
De Camptown race track five miles long,
Oh! doo-dah day!
I come down dah wid my hat caved in,
Doo-dah! doo-dah!
I go back home wid a pocket full of tin,
Oh! doo-dah day!

CHORUS
Gwine to run all night!
Gwine to run all day!
I’ll bet my money on de bobtail nag,
Somebody bet on the bay.

De long tail filly and de big black hoss,
Doo-dah! doo-dah!
Day fly de track and dey both cut across,
Oh! doo-dah day!
De blind hoss sticken in a big mud hole,
Doo-dah! doo-dah!
Can’t touch bottom wid a ten foot pole,
Oh! doo-dah day!

RING, RING DE BANJO!
De time is neber dreary
If de darkey neber groans;
De ladies neber weary
Wid de rattle ob de bones:
Den come again Susanna
By de gaslight ob de moon;
We’ll tum de old Piano
When de banjo’s out ob tune.

CHORUS
Ring, ring de banjo!
I like dat good old song,
Come again my own true lub!
Oh! wha you been so long?

Once I was so lucky,
My massa set me free,
I went to old Kentucky
To see what I could see:
I could not go no farder,
I turn to Massa’s door,
I lub him all de harder,
I’ll go away no more.

My lub, I’ll hab to leabe you
While de ribber’s running high:
But I neber can describe you
So don’t you wipe your eye.
I’s guine to make some money;
But ill come anodder day;
I’ll come again my honey,
If I hab to work my way.
SONGS OF SENTIMENT AND LOVE

JEANIE WITH THE LIGHT BROWN HAIR

I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Borne, like a vapor, on the summer air;
I see her tripping where the bright streams play,
Happy as the daisies that dance on her way.
Many were the wild notes her merry voice would pour,
Many were the blithe birds that warbled them o'er:
Oh! I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

I long for Jeanie with the day dawn smile,
Radiant in gladness, warm with winning guile;
I hear her melodies, like joys gone by,
Sighing 'round my heart o'er the fond hopes that die:
Sighing like the night wind and sobbing like the rain,
Wailing for the lost one that comes not again:
Oh! I long for Jeanie and my heart bows low,
Nevermore to find her where the bright waters flow.

I sigh for Jeanie, but her light form strayed
Far from the fond hearts 'round her native glade;
Her smiles have vanished and her sweet songs flown,
Flitting like the dreams that have cheered us and gone.
Now the nodding wild flow'rs may wither on the shore
While her gentle fingers will cull them no more:
Oh! I sigh for Jeanie with the light brown hair,
Floating, like a vapor, on the soft summer air.

COME WHERE MY LOVE LIES DREAMING

Come where my love lies dreaming,
Dreaming the happy hours away,
In visions bright redeeming
The fleeting joys of day;

CHORUS

Dreaming the happy hours,
Dreaming the happy hours away.
Come where my love lies dreaming
Is sweetly dreaming the happy hours away
Come where my love lies
My own love sweetly dreaming
Her beauty beaming
Come where my love lies dreaming
Is sweetly dreaming the happy hours away
Come with a lute, come with a lay
My own love is sweetly dreaming,
Her beauty beaming,
Come where my love lies dreaming
Is sweetly dreaming the happy hours away

Soft is her slumber,
Thoughts bright and free
Dance through her dreams
Like gushing melody;
Light is her young heart,
Light may it be;
Come where my love lies dreaming.

GENTLE ANNIE

Thou wilt come no more, gentle Annie,
Like a flow'r thy spirit did depart;
Thou art gone, alas! like the many
That have bloomed in the summer of my heart.

CHORUS

Shall we never more behold thee;
Never hear thy winning voice again
When the Springtime comes, gentle Annie,
When the wild flow'rs are scattered o'er the plain?

We have roamed and loved mid the bowers,
When thy downy cheeks were in their bloom;
Now I stand alone mid the flowers,
While they mingle their perfumes o'er thy tomb.

Ah! The hours grow sad while I ponder
Near the silent spot where thou art laid,
And my heart bows down when I wander
By the streams and the meadows where we stray'd.

BEAUTIFUL DREAMER

Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me,
Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee;
Sounds of the rude world heard in the day,
Lull'd by the moonlight have all pass'd away
Beautiful dreamer, queen of my song,
List while I woo thee with soft melody;
Gone are the cares of life's busy throng,
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!

Beautiful dreamer, out on the sea
Mermaids are chanting the wild lorelie;
Over the streamlet vapors are borne,
Waiting to fade at the bright coming morn.
Beautiful dreamer, beam on my heart,
E'en as the morn on the streamlet and sea;
Then will all clouds of sorrow depart,
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!
SONGS OF THE SOUTHLAND

OLD BLACK JOE
Gone are the days
When my heart was young and gay,
Gone are my friends
From the cotton fields away,
Gone from the earth
To a better land I know,
I hear their gentle voices calling
"Old Black Joe."

CHORUS
I'm coming, I'm coming,
For my head is bending low:
I hear those gentle voices calling
"Old Black Joe."

Why do I weep
When my heart should feel no pain,
Why do I sigh
That my friends come not again,
Grieving for forms
Now departed long ago?
I hear their gentle voices calling
"Old Black Joe."

Where are the hearts
Once so happy and so free?
The children so dear
That I held upon my knee,
Gone to the shore
Where my soul has longed to go.
I hear their gentle voices calling
"Old Black Joe."

OLD FOLKS AT HOME
'Way down upon de Swanee ribber,
Far, far away,
Dere's wha my heart is turning ebber,
Dere's wha de old folks stay.
All up and down de whole creation,
Sadly I roam,
Still longing for de old plantation,
And for de old folks at home.

CHORUS
All de world am sad and dreary,
Ebrywhere I roam,
Oh! darkies how my heart grows weary,
Far from de old folks at home.
All round de little farm I wandered
When I was young,
Den many happy days I squandered,
Many de songs I sung.
When I was playing wid my brudder
Happy was I,
Oh! take me to my-kind old mudder,
Dere let me live and die.
One little hut among de bushes,
One dat I love,
Still sadly to my mem'ry rushes,
No matter where I rove.
When will I see de bees a-humming
All round de comb?
When will I hear de banjo tumming
Down in my good old home?

MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME, GOOD NIGHT!
The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home,
'Tis summer, the darkies are gay,
The corn top's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom,
While the birds make music all the day,
The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy and bright:
By'n by Hard Times comes a-knocking at the door,
Then my old Kentucky Home, Good night!

CHORUS
Weep no more my lady,
Oh! weep no more today!
We will sing one song
For the old Kentucky Home
For the old Kentucky Home, far away.
They hunt no more for the possum and the coon,
On the meadow, the hill and the shore,
They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,
On the bench by the old cabin door.
The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,
With sorrow where all was delight.
The time has come when the darkies have to part,
Then my old Kentucky Home, Good night!

MASSA'S IN DE COLD GROUND
Round de meadows am a-ringing
De darkeys' mournful song,
While de mocking bird am singing
Happy as de day am long.
Where de ivy am a-creeping
O'er de grassy mound,
Dere old massa am a-sleeping,
Sleeping in de cold, cold ground.

CHORUS
Down in de cornfield
Hear dat mournful sound:
All de darkeys am a-weeping, Massa's in de cold, cold ground.
When de autumn leaves were falling,
When de days were cold,
'Twas hard to hear old massa calling,
Cayse he was so weak and old.
Now de orange tree am blooming
On de sandy shore,
Now de summer days am coming,
Massa neber calls no more.
SONGS OF SENTIMENT, HUMOR, AND NOSTALGIA

OLD DOG TRAY

The morn of life is past,
And evening comes at last;
It brings me a dream of a once happy day,
Of merry forms I've seen
Upon the village green,
Sporting with my old dog Tray.

CHORUS

Old dog Tray's ever faithful,
Grief cannot drive him away.
He's gentle, he is kind;
I'll never, never find
A better friend than old dog Tray.

The forms I call'd my own
Have vanished one by one,
The lov'd ones, the dear ones have all passed away.
Their happy smiles have flown,
Their gentle voices gone;
I've nothing left but old dog Tray.

When thoughts recall the past
His eyes are on me cast;
I know that he feels what my breaking heart would say:
Although he cannot speak
I'll vainly, vainly seek
A better friend than old dog Tray.

NELLY BLY

Nelly Bly! Nelly Bly! Bring de broom along,
We'll sweep de kitchen clean, my dear, and hab a little song.
Poke de wood, my lady lub, and make de fire burn,
And while I take de banjo down, just gib de mush a turn.

CHORUS

Heigh, Nelly! Ho, Nelly! listen lub, to me,
I'll sing for you, play for you, a dulcem melody.

Heigh, Nelly! Ho, Nelly! listen lub, to me,
I'll sing for you, play for you, a dulcem melody.

Nelly Bly hab a voice like de turtle dove,
I hears it in de meadow and I hears it in de grove.
Nelly Bly hab a heart warm as cup ob tea,
And bigger dan de sweet potato down in Tennessee.

Nelly Bly shuts her eye when she goes to sleep,
When she wakens up again her eye-balls gin to peep.
De way she walks she lifts her foot, and den she brings it down,
And when it lights der's music dah in dat part ob de town.

Nelly Bly! Nelly Bly! Nebber, neber sigh,
Nebber bring de tear drop to de corner ob your eye,
For de pie is made ob punkins and de mush is made ob corn,
And der's corn and punkins plenty, lub, a-lyin' in de barn.

OLD UNCLE NED

Dere was an old darkey,
dey called him Uncle Ned,
He's dead long ago, long ago!
He had no wool on de top ob his head,
De place whar de good darkeys go.

CHORUS

Den lay down de shubble and de hoe,
Hang up de fiddle and de bow;
No more hard work for poor Old Ned;
He's gon whar de good darkeys go.
No more hard work for poor Old Ned;
He's gon whar de good darkeys go.

His fingers were long like de cane in de brake,
He had no eyes for to see;
He had no teeth for to eat de corn cake
So he had to let de corn cake be.
When Old Ned die Massa take it mighty bad,
De tears run down like de rain;
Old Missus turn pale, and she gets berry sad
Cayse she nebber see Old Ned again.

NELLY WAS A LADY

Down on de Mississippi floating,
Long time I trabble on de way,
All night de cotton wood a-toting,
Sing for my true lub all de day.

CHORUS

Nelly was a lady,
Last night she died.
Toll de bell for lubly Nell,
My dark Virginny bride.

Now I'm unhappy and I'm weeping,
Can't tote de cotton wood no more;
Last night, while Nelly was a-sleeping
Death came a-knocking at de door.

When I saw my Nelly in de morning,
Smile till she opened up her eyes,
Seemed like de light ob day a-dawnin
Jist 'fore de sun begin to rise.

Close by de margin ob de water,
Whar de lone weeping willow grows,
Dar lib'd Virginny's lubly daughter;
Dar she in death may find
repose.

Down in de meadow 'among de clobej
Walk wid my Nelly by my side;
Now all dem happy days am ober,
Farewell my dark Virginny bride.
DEARER THAN LIFE!

LATEST STYLE OF SPRING WALKING-COSTUMES FOR MARCH, 1869.

Published posthumously by George Cooper under the following circumstances. "Some three weeks before his death, Mr. Foster called upon me, and, as was usual with him, commenced improvising on the Piano, during a social chat, and, dotting down this melody, presented it to me as a memento of our friendship. I have treasured it as such; but, feeling that the public had a right to any composition of their favorite songwriter, I have endeavored to express the sentiment of the melody in words . . . and present it to . . . Demorest’s Magazine.”
About 1850 Stephen Foster proposed to E. P. Christy that the Christy Minstrels be granted the right to introduce Foster songs, in return for which the title pages should bear the words: "As Sung by the Christy Minstrels." Fifteen of Foster's works published between 1848 and 1854 bore this acknowledgement. Stephen made one arrangement (which he regretted bitterly in later years) when he sold Christy the right to claim authorship and composeship of his masterpiece — *Old Folks at Home*. Foster collected the royalties on it up to his death — $1,647.46, and after the copyright was renewed in his name in 1879, his heirs received almost two thousand dollars more. It was his most profitable work.
Although Christy's Minstrels were the most famous, they were not the first of many such bands performing in the United States. The popularity of Foster's songs with Minstrel Singers is indicated by those included in the above.
The Golden Harp was a hymnal containing ten new Stephen Foster songs. Another such book, The Athenaeum Collection, also contained ten new Foster songs.

Although Stephen was unable to control his weakness for liquor, he came from a Temperance family, and wrote with feeling on the subject. The Sparkling Stream, while containing no original Foster songs, includes Temperance songs set to the melodies of well-known works by Stephen Foster.
Monument erected to memory of Stephen Foster at source of Suwanee River, Fargo, Georgia.

Bust of Stephen Foster in Foster Hall, Indianapolis, Indiana. Created by Aurturo Ivone of Cincinnati.

Foster Hall in Indianapolis with Insert of Josiah Kirby Lilly.

Mr. Lilly collected Fosteriana as a hobby, built the above to store his collection, and when it became too small, contributed the collection to the Stephen Foster Memorial on the Campus of the University of Pittsburgh. He also contributed substantially to the erection of the Memorial Building.
column and cast its vote for Lincoln. When Governor Kirkwood, in his first inaugural address on January 11, 1860, declared he felt the "great mass" of Northern people condemned John Brown while expressing "admiration and sympathy" for his motives, twenty State Senators and thirty-four State Representatives of the Loyal Opposition assailed the Governor's partisan Message and "earnestly and respectfully" opposed the resolution to print 7500 copies of a document tending to "kindle anew that blind fanaticism, North and South, which had already shaken the foundations of the Union."

It was in such an atmosphere that Stephen Foster continued to compose his music. The Foster family had been ardent Democrats and opposed the Abolitionists' crusade, even though they had always lived in the North. Once the Civil War broke out, however, Stephen composed a few war songs, such as: We are Coming, Father Abraham, We've a Million in the Field, and When This Dreadful War Is Ended.

The exact day of appearance of some of these songs is in doubt although most of them were composed in 1862 and 1863. A few appeared posthumously and one song, Little Mac, Little Mac, You're the Very Man, appeared in 1864 as a campaign song for General George B. McClellan, Democratic opponent of Abe Lincoln for the Presidency. It was set in part to the music of Nelly
THE PALIMPSEST

Bly and came out after Stephen Foster’s death. The words were not written by Stephen.

Despite his human frailties, Stephen Foster was a deeply religious man as attested by his numerous religious songs. On April 14, 1863, Horace Waters copyrighted *The Golden Harp*, a Sunday School hymnal containing ten new Foster songs:

*The Angels Are Singing Unto Me.*
*Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread.*
*He Leadeth Me Beside Still Waters.*
*Tears Bring Thoughts of Heaven.*
*We’ll Still Keep Marching On.*
*The Beautiful Shore.*
*Leave Me With My Mother.*
*Oh! ’Tis Glorious.*
*Seek and Ye Shall Find.*
*We’ll All Meet Our Saviour.*

C. A. Fullerton, a nationally known Professor of Music at Cedar Falls for many years, included four Foster songs in his *Glee Club Songs*, published in Boston in 1906. Three Foster songs were included in Fullerton’s *A One Book Course in Elementary Music and Selected Songs for Schools*, which was copyrighted in 1925. Song books used by Iowa Service Clubs usually include a half-dozen Foster favorites. *The Golden Book of Favorite Songs* and the *Gray Book of Favorite Songs* (which may also be purchased combined in a single bound volume) contain from six to ten Stephen Foster compositions. A popular present-day book, *Songs for Every Purpose and Occasion*, contains fourteen Foster melodies. Wherever Iowans gather for a songfest, Stephen Foster melodies will always prove a favorite.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN