Little soldiers and orphans: musical childhoods lived and constructed in World War I

Katheryn Christine Lawson
University of Iowa

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LITTLE SOLDIERS AND ORPHANS: MUSICAL CHILDHOODS
LIVED AND CONSTRUCTED IN WORLD WAR I

by

Katheryn Christine Lawson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in
Music in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

May 2013

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This is to certify that the Master’s thesis of

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The broad aim of this study is to investigate the ways in which American children came in contact with war culture during the First World War through music. The questions guiding this study are many, and touch on different sources and different methodological approaches which have been established and debated within children’s culture studies for the past fifty years. In order to gain insight into how children were used symbolically in war culture, I am filling in a small part of an incomplete picture within the scholarship with several case studies, each of which takes on a different angle and provides different information on the topic. The chapters, in short, are as follows: chapter two discusses soldier and march songs in children’s song collections produced during World War I, contextualized with other war-related text materials geared toward children. Chapter three investigates constructions of children and child-rearing in Tin Pan Alley music, and chapter four rounds out the study with a discussion of the ways that the Girl Scouts of the USA as an organization used war music in order to carve out a place for themselves in culture; similar activities of the Boy Scouts of America enter into this discussion as well.

In order to help gain at least a partial picture of the ways that adults constructed children musically in World War I, and into the ways that children might have experienced it, we must delve into scholarship in the broad categories of musicology and child culture studies. Three major groupings of scholarship will be discussed here: first, musicological scholarship dealing with World War I and Tin Pan Alley music; second, ethnomusicological studies of children; and finally, the interdisciplinary children’s culture studies that will be most valuable to this study. These are merely large-scale methodological contexts for this study; individual critical and contextual approaches unique to each chapter will be discussed later.
Music and World War I

The years 1914 to 1918 will be used for this study. Although the United States did not enter the war militarily until April of 1917, the American media covered the conflict in Europe as it progressed Americans were certainly aware of and invested in the Great War before the United States’ military involvement, and to some extent, some of the most valuable musical evidence of the war was produced before 1917, as composers and publishers responded to Americans’ anxieties about the conflict.

The most notable scholar of World War I music is Glenn Watkins.1 Two distinct sections from *Proof Through the Night* (2002) relate to the present study: Watkins’ chapters on the United States, and a chapter that details the ways that French children were used in war propaganda and French art music.2 Watkins covers a broad range of topics relating to the United States’ involvement in World War I, from popular music, to women and the war, to the treatment of German conductors in American symphonies in order to paint a broad, multivalent picture of the integrated political and musical worlds in America. The chapters that are most pertinent to this thesis discuss how popular music responded to and commented on Americans’ responses to the war. Many of the songs that Watkins mentions are discussed in this study. Such tunes as “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier,” and “Don’t Take My Darling Boy Away,” which he uses to illustrate larger ideological and political shifts in America, will be treated in this study. These tunes will be investigated in depth and contextualized with contemporary child-rearing manuals and feminist criticism.

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1 Watkins discusses a number of different war-related topics across the globe, with multiple chapters each devoted to France, Great Britain, the United States, Italy, and Germany during the war, along with a section on the war’s aftermath.

This study also intersects with studies of popular sheet music in the early twentieth century. Isaac Goldberg’s book forms an “in the moment” snapshot of the kinds of issues in Tin Pan Alley culture.  

Nicholas Tawa has also contributed to studies of popular sheet music with his monograph, *The Way to Tin Pan Alley: American Popular Song, 1866-1910*. Although his study closes before the beginning of the First World War, the discussion of Tin Pan Alley from the Civil War period forms an important context of the songs that came after and the culture in which these songs flourished.  

Newer studies include Daniel Goldmark’s “Creating Desire on Tin Pan Alley,” which focuses on publishers and their advertising techniques. Rather than investigating individual the workings of publishers’ production and advertisement, the current study pulls from a number of different publishing houses and investigates the songs themselves as evidence of wider cultural themes.  

Finally, Charles Garrett, in *Struggling to Define a Nation* includes a chapter devoted to the ways that race was represented in Tin Pan Alley music, and more specifically, “Chinatown, My Chinatown,” and the ways in which this relates to American identity. The present study might be read as an investigation into the representation of another minority culture, children, and the ways in which they were used to define claims of proper Americanism in wartime.

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Music and Children’s Culture

Children’s culture research is a broad and interdisciplinary field outside of music, and the work of those historians will be discussed later. Children’s culture research within musicology, broadly speaking, forms the second of the three major areas of study that inform this thesis. Many of the studies that have been conducted on children’s research have been ethnomusicological in nature, relying on ethnography, interviews and observation. Such approaches are not available to scholars seeking to study music of the past; thus, the present study relies on print primary materials, such as songbooks, magazines, and sheet music.

Ethnomusicological studies of children often focus on ethnography “as a privileged research method in studying children’s expressive practices.”7 Amanda Minks’s review of this scholarship is a valuable source for parsing out the different methodologies employed to date. One of these is diffusionism, in which “children’s song [is] a fruitful object of study not only because it represented a ‘culture trait’ whose migratory path could be traced from one geographical area to another, but also because of the significance of childhood in theories of sociocultural evolution.”8 Enculturation is also discussed by Minks as a framework for understanding children’s music. Within this paradigm, “there is an emphasis on the imitative, reproductive capacity of children’s play. ‘Childhood’ is not an entirely separate category, but rather part of the particular adult musical culture to which the children belong.”9 An example of this kind of research lies in Alan Lomax’s recording children’s songs in the West Indies in the 1960s, in which children’s game songs “[functioned]…as a medium of socialization into

8 Ibid., 381.
9 Ibid., 386.
Other methodologies include child-cultural autonomy, cultural cognitivism, and many others. The concept of “diffusionism” certainly applies, at least in some part, to the present study. It is my belief that adult culture does, indeed, trickle down into child culture, and that child culture might function as a lens into the desires, values, and hopes of a given culture at large. Children and adults are not mutually exclusive groups, but rather take part in each other’s lives, influencing each other’s connected cultures. The study of children’s song collections in chapter two plays into the paradigm of enculturation and learning.

Another body of work on children’s music is a collection of essays edited by Susan Boynton and Roe-Min Kok, entitled *Musical Childhoods and the Cultures of Youth*, from which the title of this thesis, “Musical Childhoods,” is borrowed. These essays range from art music topics to popular or postcolonial topics, from the medieval period to the twentieth century. I foresee the current study as situated within this larger, eclectic array of childhood topics and methodologies, which range from personal essay to psychological criticism, to archival research, for the topics for children’s culture are as multiple as the different countries, time periods, and communities as have existed in history.

**Children’s Culture Scholarship**

Children’s culture scholarship is also an important component to the present study. Scholars from a number of different fields and disciplines have provided small pieces to the puzzle of the larger childhood experience in history, and any study of children’s music

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10 Minks, “From Children’s Song to Expressive Practices”: 389.

11 Ibid., 402.

should also incorporate studies from other parts of childhood life. The present study draws
from child culture scholarship to better contextualize the musical sources on which it is
based, while also borrowing from the archival methodologies that have informed many of
these studies.

One foundational text of children’s culture studies is Philippe Ariès’s *L’Enfant et la vie
Ariès’s study focused on the social constructions of children, childhood, the family, and
education, and their evolution from the medieval period to the eighteenth century. Drawing
on a wide range of sources, such as paintings and physicians’ diaries, the main questions that
guided his study had more to do with adults than children themselves, and this theme has
continued in children’s cultural scholarship since.

*Centuries of Childhood* studies adult attitudes toward children, and then investigates
childhood as a construction. In short, did “childhood” as a construct exist, and how was that
construction articulated? Ariès’s questions, with their focus on adult constructions of
childhood, are useful for this study. Most often, materials that tell us about adult attitudes are
more prevalent and better preserved than those which could reveal the inner workings,
thoughts, ideas, and values of children themselves. In short, we can only study materials that
are extant, and children’s own creations are often ephemeral or just thrown away.

Furthermore, adults have more opportunity to convey, describe, and debate concepts—the
lives of children, while complicated, can often not be preserved. In speaking of the study of
girl guides in Europe, Kristine Alexander describes the difficulty of studying children in
archival research, noting that the sources available often tell more about the adults that

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13 Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, translated by Robert Baldick (New York:
created them, rather than about children themselves, or the ways that these materials were incorporated in practice into children’s lives:

The history of childhood is written by adults and often written about adults as well—about their hopes, their fears, and the ways in which they have sought to affect the future by educating and regulating young people. In large part, this is because archives are reflections of existing power relationships: they privilege the written word over the visual, the oral, and the material, the masculine over the feminine…and adult perspectives over youthful ones.14

In the face of archival research, children’s voices are often difficult to uncover. Their thoughts remain unheard, their lives too often unseen in the archival sources from which we conduct our studies. Thus the materials available to the researcher dictate that we indeed study children largely from the perspective of adults’ anxieties as well as the beliefs they wish to pass on to future generations.

The musical sources on which I base this study are similar to other historical studies of children’s culture. Sheet music, children’s song collections, and even children’s own magazines were written by adults, edited by adults, and produced by adults. Even materials developed expressly for children, including children’s magazines like *St. Nicholas* and *The Rally*, have been mediated by adults. Although these remnants can sometimes provide a window into how children could have spent their time (singing common nursery songs or reading children’s magazines), these materials also provide greater insight into the adults that produced them and the values they hoped to pass on to future generations. Ariès’s questions regarding adult attitudes are thus incorporated into this study. Chapters two and three, which discuss war-themed tunes in children’s song collections and children and child-rearing in propaganda Tin Pan Alley songs, respectively, both touch on the kinds of attitudes that adults held for children and their proper upbringing, and the ways in which children

functioned as objects and receptors for adult anxieties about the war, child-rearing, and modernity.

A few recent studies of children's culture provide useful frameworks for the study of children's music as well. Karin Calvert’s 1992 study *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900* conducts a study of children’s lives through the material goods by which they were surrounded. Calvert parses those three centuries into three distinct ideological eras: “the inchoate child,” “the natural child,” and finally “the innocent child.” Rather than studying texts, she investigates the clothing, the cribs, the toys of young children’s everyday lives. These materials provide two types of intertwined information regarding children’s culture: they provide insight into how parents constructed the everyday lives of children, and they also create a window into the ways that children lived, not necessarily ideally, not the images in magazines or novels, but the true ways that they lived in the material goods with which their parents, societies, and cultures surrounded them. One key idea that resonates with this thesis is Calvert’s concept of constellations of material goods: “While objects can have multiple meanings for the society that uses them, constellations of objects, in this case things intended for use in raising young children, can share common meanings and can therefore point to common concerns and perceptions of reality.”¹⁵ This concept of constellations of objects is significant for this study because music can be placed within certain constellations of material experiences and ideals for children in the early twentieth century. I intend to frame music as part of a greater constellation of print goods produced for and about children.

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Another text that informs this study is Howard P. Chudacoff’s *Children at Play: An American History* (2007). Chudacoff studies the notion of play in American history, and investigates the ways in which adults conceived of play, encouraged it, and controlled it. His concept that “as soon as childhood became a subject of serious social scientific study at the end of the nineteenth century, children’s play came under close scientific scrutiny” also applies to my chapter on children’s song collections. Chudacoff stresses the ways that adult attitudes shaped children’s free and play time, rather than their entire lives. To study the constructions and innovations of play time throughout American history impacts this study by providing a context for the many types of songs included in the song collections. These songs exist for play, for pedagogy, and for education—adult attitudes and their creations of specific types and purposes for play shed light on the ways that these concepts were often integrated with one another in the early twentieth century.

An important demand among child culture scholars is one stream of scholarship that focuses on children’s own efficacy. Cunningham describes this grouping of scholars as “advocates of the rights of the child” who “alert to the suppression of the voice of the child in the present as well as the past.” These scholars are also often “engaged both in a rescue operation and in an attempt to recast the way we look at the world; they want to make us more aware of children as agents.” One such example of this position on children is Jo Boyden’s review of historical approaches to children. Boyden considers children from a perspective of international policy-making during tragedies, both natural and man-made. She points to “an erroneous conceptualizing of children and childhood due to inadequate

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18 Ibid., 1195-1196.
empirical data and weak theory.”\textsuperscript{19} One major issue that she points out in adult approaches to children is an inherent assumption of “vulnerability and incompetence…that, unintentionally, [undermines] children’s resilience and [denigrates] their coping efforts.”\textsuperscript{20}

I adopt this approach of investigating children’s own agency, and their ability to develop their own coping mechanisms in stressful situations. Although the extant materials for this study often point to ways that adults created child culture or used children for propaganda purposes, the discussion of Girl Scout contrafacta benefits from this stance. As active participants in home front war work, girl scouts were more than “passive victims of conflict” in World War I, but were, in their own way, “competent survivors” of the conflict.\textsuperscript{21}

This thesis addresses a lacuna in musicological scholarship from multiple perspectives. It adds to a small, but growing body of knowledge of children’s music, expanding the study beyond the confines of ethnography, to which this topic has often been wedded. This study also provides another angle on World War I and popular music in the early twentieth century, contextualizing these well-known and often-studied songs in alternate contexts, histories, and critical perspectives. For example, “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” was famous in its time, and has been mentioned in World War I scholarship both within and outside of music, but the song takes on a new life when contextualized in child-rearing literature. This study also bridges a number of different fields, in addition to musicological and child culture studies. Broadly speaking, this thesis also touches on Civil War music, propaganda, studies of children’s literature, the history of children’s organizations, anxieties and tension between militarism and pacifism in the United States,


\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 7.
the domestic sphere from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century, and feminist cultural studies, to name a few.

While American children did not come in direct contact with the front lines, like many European children did during World War I, they did experience it in their own way. Their brothers, fathers, and authority figures might have left to fight in France, their mothers may have purchased war-ration cookbooks, altering the family diet in order to leave wheat and meat for the “boys” across the pond and the starving mothers and children in Belgium. Their magazines were filled with current events about the war in Europe, and novels about children’s fictional exploits to save the war were churned out for adolescent consumption. Extracurricular groups like the Girl Scouts of the USA and the Boy Scouts of America were recruited for the war effort, from providing care packages to troops, to selling Liberty Bonds, to raising money for the American Red Cross. Children’s agency, stressing the decisions that children themselves might have made, is an important component of the fourth chapter, which analyzes the contrafacta submitted to *The Rally*, the monthly organ of the Girl Scouts of the USA. Here, we might gain insight into the ways that girls negotiated their place in war culture, writing themselves into a historical trajectory from the Revolutionary War to their Great War present. Children may not have been exposed to the immediately traumatic experiences of which Boyden is certainly speaking, but they were exposed to a war culture of a sort, and certainly had to negotiate their place within it.

**The Chapters of This Study**

Each chapter of this study approaches children’s culture from different collections of sources, reveals different types of information about children and the culture that dictated
their everyday lives, and draws on different critical and contemporary contexts to reveal their layers of significance.

Chapter 2

Constructions of Children and Militarism in Children’s Song and Play Collections: Imagining a Tamer War

The second chapter of this study is divided into two sections, the first of which discusses the ways that adults approached and constructed children. Many elements come into play regarding the construction of children, among them a mixture of new and old ideas the latter inherited from the nineteenth century. Childhood also differed between classes and sexes. By the early twentieth century, adults began to think critically on the nature of child’s play and construct it as educational. Children’s materials were increasingly differentiated from those of adults—toy makers and even song producers took part in a movement that constructed a special culture for children alone.

These constructions undergird children’s song collections. The front material from many children’s song collections reveal a concern for the development of children. Vestiges of the nineteenth century can be seen in the inclusion of songs of nature, the depiction of children as part of nature, and as living separate childhoods according to their sex. The issue of work for children comes into play in song collections as well. Lower-class children were expected to contribute to the family income, as opposed to middle and upper-class children. Although we cannot know for sure, it is unlikely that these song collections would have been available to or utilized by lower-class children; thus, the materials discussed in this thesis were most likely intended for and used by children whose families belonged to the higher classes. Nonetheless, song collections often contained a pairing of songs of work and play.
The second half of the second chapter discusses print materials in which children might have come in contact with war culture, including martial and marching songs in various collections. Such print materials range from innocuous to informational to propagandistic. Using Karin Calvert’s concept of constellations of objects that surround children’s lives, I frame children’s song collections as part of a larger constellation of children’s materials. I find that soldier or militaristic-themed songs produced for children find a new context among other print materials for juvenile consumption.

I begin my discussion with soldier songs that were adapted to non-martial types of tunes, revealing that soldiering was not treated as a serious topic in children’s songs. Rather, it was a normalized, innocuous concept adapted for imaginative play (a soldier as yet another adult occupation, along with a baker or policeman) or for the opportunity for physical play (as in marches, for an organized, physical play time). Other tunes maintained the martial quality often found in patriotic or militaristic music, such as dotted rhythms, triadic melodies, and simple meters. Although these songs do not mention or engage with the current World War, they do reveal the level of acceptable violence in children’s imaginative play. While these songs do not encourage children to fight the Hun, they do reveal the extent to which militaristic adult culture filtered into children’s playtime.

Many war-themed fiction books were written for children during the World War. They created a sense of adventure and imaginative fun, like soldier songs. Another publication, St. Nicholas, takes on the war from a different perspective. War treatment in the long-running monthly magazine was more informational in purpose, providing an objective account of the newest developments throughout the world, with a healthy dose of American patriotism. This approach is echoed in child-rearing manuals of the day, encouraging an awareness among the youth population of American patriotism and history. A quite different
approach can be found in alternate materials such as battle tunes for children, in which they are invited to take part in a battle, including losing one’s limbs on the field. Wholly apart from children’s novels and magazines is propaganda literature. The example discussed in this chapter is Roy Rutherford Bailey’s *Captain Tick-Mouse* series, in which a tiny mouse in a military uniform calls on children to form a child army that saves money and prompts other family members to commit themselves to 100% Americanism. From this wide array of sources, one can see that the terrain for child culture is, as at any time and place, quite bumpy. Children were constructed according to a mix of ideas both old and new, subject to a number of factors outside their control. When faced with war, various agents within the range of child culture producers responded in different ways.

Chapter 3

Soldier Boys and Praying Girls: Constructions of Children and Child-Rearing in World War I Popular Song

The third chapter of this study looks into the ways that children and child-rearing were depicted in popular Tin Pan Alley music, often for the purposes of propaganda. These songs fall along two basic lines: being about the children of soldiers, and about either pacifist or militarist mothers raising their sons in ways that they see fit. Children are thus depicted quite widely as far as age parameters, from toddlers (songs about children) to young adults (songs about child-rearing and pacifist or militarist mothers). These sources were written by adults, produced by adults, and for an adult audience. They reveal less about children’s culture and how children lived, and more about how adults conceived of children in the midst of wartime. While these songs are propaganda, they still reflect on the lives of children, and how children were affected by the war—as siblings and children of soldiers,
and also as soldiers themselves. Certainly, mothers had to choose whether or not to talk
about the war with their children, and whether or not to raise them in a patriotic way. These
tunes, intended to spur Americans to action (or inaction, in the cast of pacifist songs), also
conveyed some truth to the issues, problems, debates, and conversations held in American
homes.

The first section of this chapter investigates depictions of young children in Tin Pan
Alley tunes. As the scholarship on gendered children’s culture reveals, children were
constructed as living in a world that was not only in miniature, but rather a microcosm of the
adult world: boys were wild, and girls were sweet and polite. I argue in this chapter that the
stock characters of boys as soldiers and girls as prayerful supporters could be framed as one
of many related stock characters. The prayerful girl construct is nearly one in the same as the
sweetheart and mother song; only the age of the woman has changed. And furthermore, the
young soldier boy is no different from the adult soldier boy, ready to serve his country at any
price. In this way, these songs about children were not so much different from those about
adults, but rather strangely, and perhaps disturbingly, quite alike.

The second part of the chapter touches on depictions of child-rearing that played out
in the propaganda tunes, whether pacifist or militaristic. Most illustrative of this debate over
pacifism and militarism is the success of the pacifist tune “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a
Soldier” in 1915, and the subsequent militarist reactionary tunes. Between the militarist and
pacifist mother tunes and the differentiated depictions of children in reaction to the war,
both motherhood and childhood become sites from larger issues of pacifism, militarism,
national identity, and the line between patriotism and propaganda. Both children and
mothers, as cohabitants of the domestic sphere, were powerful images of vulnerability, and
were often pictured in the propagandistic media of World War I.
Chapter 4

Girl Scouts of the USA: Childhood Militarism Lived and Constructed

This chapter investigates the kinds of musical articles and segments that were published in *The Rally*, the monthly organ of the Girl Scouts of the USA. The children in question here are often upper elementary to high school students. Through these sources, some of them consisting of editorials sent in by Girl Scouts themselves, we can gain insight into the ways that girls might have gained agency in war culture, their contributions, and their voices in the grander worldwide conflict. More specifically, the sources from *The Rally* consist of contrafacta of popular war tunes that were sent in by Girl Scout troops, and rewritten with Girl Scout-related lyrics, some of which maintained their war work themes. Through these contrafacta, we can gain some insight into how war culture invaded and was propagated within certain childhood populations and groups, and also look into the ways that these populations might have expressed themselves or cut out a place for themselves through music in war culture. This is still a complicated task, considering that *The Rally* was produced and edited by adults. These contrafacta, then, while being highly mediated by adults in the higher ranks of the Girl Scouts of the USA, are still a part of a larger culture of girls’ activity in home-front war work. In this way, these contrafacta might be part of a larger picture of children’s and girls’ own agency, and the ways in which they asserted themselves and the Girl Scouts new identity via war culture.

Contextual materials that help provide a picture of these materials include newspaper reports of the activities of Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, other Girl Scout publications, such as guides, and other segments from *The Rally*. This chapter provides a window into a specific population of children and the ways in which they took part in the war effort on the home front, either as agents themselves, or as participants subject to adult directives.
Chapter 5: Coda

Children encountered the war on many fronts, and even though they were often pictured in the home, in a safe, domestic environment, children were not shielded or protected from the war completely. Music was a complicit and active participant in the war, and composers often called on children for their works, either as subjects, objects, or vehicles by which to make points, arguments, and counterarguments. As has been discussed before, the types of information yielded from this study reveal less about the actual lives of children than it does about the adults who constructed, envisioned, and idealized children and their fleeting time during childhood. The materials that survive may or may not have been used by children and incorporated into their everyday lives.

Future research calls for an “on the ground” approach, as it were, to children, one that focuses more on how children lived their everyday lives, what they thought, and how they felt about these activities. Information like this requires archival research of materials in specific localities, including materials such as children’s diaries, teachers’ notes, curricula, and perhaps mothers’ diaries of the kinds of musical activities they conducted with their children during the war. These materials are often difficult to locate, and even if they do exist, it is unlikely that they will include any detailed musical discussion. Nevertheless, there is still more work to be done on music on the childhood front, and this thesis has sought to provide at least a partial picture of the elements that made up childhood in the early twentieth century, and how music was a part of it.

The Significance of This Study

Aside from providing a window into the music of an understudied population, this thesis illuminates knowledge that impacts other musicological topics. In one way, it provides
another side and context to well-known adult tunes. Tin Pan Alley tunes have long been known and studied, but placing them in the context of children and motherhood sheds new light on the problems and issues they portray. Furthermore, this thesis helps gain some insight on the activities of certain groups well known today, such as the Girl Scouts of the USA. This thesis also bridges the worlds of adult and child culture, and highlights the fact that they are not mutually exclusive, but rather call on one another, comment on one another, and influence each other. These two worlds intersect in meaningful ways that provide depth to otherwise taken-for-granted facts. Children’s culture has often existed and been approached as a niche population, an isolated culture. This thesis reveals how much children truly are a part of the adult world, and how the issues of adults trickle down into children’s culture. And finally, this study brings together a number of different fields of study, from feminist criticism to music history, to military history, and beyond. Not only do all parts of culture touch children’s culture, but children’s culture is a part of a number of different studies and disciplines.

This study investigates musical materials from different parts of American culture during the First World War. Children’s song collections were produced for domestic and educational purposes, while Tin Pan Alley tunes were squarely positioned in popular, commercial culture. The Girl Scouts of the USA occupy yet another space in society, a private organization aimed at providing a public good and effecting positive change in the nation’s young girls.

From this study, we find that responses to the war were varied depending on the creators and audience for these print materials. Children’s song collections, unlike propaganda, adventure novels, or informative magazine articles, did not approach the war directly, but they do reveal that militaristic culture was accepted and encouraged in children’s
play, at some level. As the United States came out of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, war was a seemingly constant part of American life, from the Civil War, to the Spanish-American War, and finally to World War I. This war culture may very well have trickled down into children’s lives, becoming normalized as an acceptable form of innocuous play. Tin Pan Alley tunes reveal an entirely different take on children and child culture, using children and their mothers to stake a claim in popular culture about proper action and sympathy in wartime. The Rally, on the other hand, resides somewhere between popular and domestic culture, produced for a specific, but growing audience among American girls and, most likely, their families as well. Rather than using children as objects of cultural and militaristic construction, children themselves may have rewritten the texts to popular tunes to better fit their lives. Officers within the organization might have used popular song to advance their own agenda, one that championed girls, their efforts, and their growing place in society. The study of children is a complicated and multi-layered pursuit, and the present text seeks to fill out at least a portion of this complicated web of children’s experiences and adult constructions of those experiences, in a specific window of time: the Great War.
CHAPTER 2
CONSTRUCTIONS OF CHILDREN AND MILITARISM IN CHILDREN’S SONG AND PLAY COLLECTIONS: IMAGINING A TAMER WAR

Childhood in twentieth-century America, as in any other time or place, was a social construction, subject to the beliefs and values of adult culture. In her study of material goods produced for young children from 1600 to 1900, Karin Calvert explains that “members of any society carry within themselves a working definition of childhood, its nature, limitations, and duration…. Every culture defines what it means to be a child, how children should look and act, what is expected of them, and what is considered to be their capabilities.”

As has already been noted, the materials on which this study is based tell many stories in the same period, not only the children, but also the adults that raised them and produced materials for them. Calvert’s claim that “any study devoted to children has as much to say about the adults who made the decisions, formed or accepted the cultural assumptions, purchased and used the material goods, and determined what it means to be a child…as it has to say about the children involved,” holds true here. I seek to uncover the shared moments and issues that arise with the collisions of child culture and war culture in music.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, to investigate how children were constructed by adults, from the nineteenth in the early twentieth century; and second, to collect and analyze the texts by which children came in contact with war culture. Song collections here act as a lens, as a site of child and play making.

Adult approaches to children were multivalent and complicated, a mixture, as of any time, of the old, the nineteenth century, and the new, the twentieth century. The songs produced for children and the front matter that accompanies those songs play into the many

22 Calvert, *Children in the House*, 3.
concepts that helped guide educators, parents, and government agencies with regard to children’s safety and development.

A preliminary study of children’s print materials, such as novels, propaganda stories, and periodicals, as they relate to the safety of children, reveals that children were not altogether sheltered from the war, but rather were brought in for the purpose of war work and home-front patriotic acts. Martial soldier and march songs from children’s song collections demonstrate an embracing of militarism, but in a tamer form. It would seem that playing soldier was already established in children’s play times, a naturalized, normalized form of play. What these sources together reveal is a complicated web of constructed childhood experiences that sometimes fall within “militarist” and “pacifist” paradigms, but sometimes do not.

**Constructions of Children**

Adults’ attitudes and conceptions of children were guided by a number of different influences, among them G. Stanley Hall’s *Adolescence* (1904), along with other cultural approaches to children, including romantic, naturalistic images of children from the nineteenth century; differences in children’s lives according to class; constructions of female domesticity and gendered childhoods; the invention and adult intervention of children’s play; and a corresponding concern for the value of work in older children’s lives. These elements are embedded into children’s song collections, which were written for multiple purposes, often either educational for the school; or domestic for use in the home.

G. Stanley Hall’s seminal two-volume work *Adolescence* (1904) set the stage for a new concept of childhood, one that was entrenched in psychological terms. The early years of life were now understood to be a distinct stage of life, separate from adulthood, complete with
their own unique struggles and capabilities. Previously, according to scholar Christine Griffin, the stages of life were less distinct than in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries:

pre-industrial European societies made no clear distinction between childhood and other pre-adult phases of life. There was no concept of adolescence, nor of any clear physiological boundary at puberty. The main age stages, childhood, youth and adulthood, were not strictly defined by chronological age, but in terms of dependence and separation from the family of origin.23

Rather than accepting a social definition of childhood and adulthood, Hall, the founder of the American Journal of Psychology, sought out a more scientific definition. His psychological approach defined children according to their age, essentially in the “stages” that guide parenting and child development practices even today.24 Hall described adolescence as “a turbulent” time, “marked by acute self-consciousness, an opinionated stance, the arousal of sexual instincts, and…an inherent criminality.”25

Children and child culture in the First World War were greatly influenced by Hall’s concern for the safety and psychological health. The materials and organizations produced for children’s consumption and involvement were couched in these ideals, and were produced with great purpose and intent. Adults took note of his suggestion that “youth of this age required a distinct discipline,” leading to the establishment of a transitional grade


24 Other developmental psychologists have contributed to the present-day concept of childhood as a set of “stages,” among them Freud (psychosexual development), Erikson (social development), and Piaget (cognitive development).

between junior high and high school, eighth grade, and extracurricular programs, like the YMCA, the YWCA, and the Boy and Girl Scouts.\textsuperscript{26}

Evidence of this approach can also be found in child-rearing manuals and children’s song collections. The \textit{Uplift Book of Child Culture} (1913) stresses the importance of guiding children’s early, formative years of life. The publishers break the years from birth to twenty-five years into three distinct stages:

There are three notable periods in the child’s life which should constantly guide us in considering any problem, whether physical, mental, moral, or religious….These three periods of constitute about one-third of man’s life. They are all plastic, impressionable periods, each in its own peculiar way. It seems like a long training time, but the first third of life prepares for the two-thirds to follow.\textsuperscript{27}

In 1917, Mari R. Hofer incorporated concepts of developmental stages into her song collection \textit{Old Tunes, New Rimes and Games}. In her preface, Hofer explains how her book of dances and physical play fit into a larger scheme of child development. She describes “a child’s development” as “evolutionary and orderly,” and describes the physical evolution that a child goes through, from “[wriggling]” as an “infant” to “[stretching] himself into the ability to turn over. When he can do this, he soon struggles onto his hands and knees; he then sits up….”\textsuperscript{28} Her book of dances for a classroom setting is thus framed and marketed as a “stimulus” through which “the play with which it is associated is constructive and upbuilding, as well as entertaining."\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{26} Colón, \textit{A History of Children}, 467-468.


\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
An earlier collection, gathered by Horatio Parker and others, is part of a larger music pedagogy course that frames its songs psychologically. *The Progressive Music Series* (1915), in its front matter, lays out its purposes: “first, to assemble from all available sources the best music…second, to organize this material into a plan of music instruction based upon approved principles of modern educational psychology.”30 Thanks to Hall’s assertion that children were a unique population that required adult intervention and attention, children received more attention from the state and educators than ever before. Not only producers of print materials, but also organizers in adult culture sought to enrich and guide the lives of society’s youngest participants as much as possible.

Contemporary scholars, however, have shed some doubt on Hall’s assertions, with regard to his couching his research in gendered and racial terms. In her study of childhood in the 1980s, Christine Griffin notes that “Hall’s work reflects a particular combination of discourses around ‘race’, sexuality, gender, class, nation, and age that were very much rooted in a specific historical moment.”31 Griffin reveals a connection between Hall’s new concept of childhood and adolescence, and “the coincident development of a muscular Christian form of masculinity” which “operated in a colonial context, playing a crucial role in preparing elite Anglo-European males for positions of imperial power and in racializing notions of ‘normal’ adolescence.”32 What Hall describes in his study of children and adolescents is quite distinctly the experience of a boy’s childhood, and usually one of the white upper-class. Lower-class, rural, minority, and female children were left out of his

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31 Griffin, *Representations of Youth*, 12.

32 Ibid.
findings. In her study of children in ethnomusicology, Amanda Minks frames Hall’s *Adolescence* as an example of recapitulation theory, a distinctly teleological approach to history and development:

> according to which children re-enacted Western civilization as they passed through various “stages” of development….Of course, not all children reached the pinnacle of maturity associated with Western civilization; non-western peoples and sometimes Western rural communities were believed to inhabit a state of “arrested development.”

Thus, G. Stanley Hall’s *Adolescence* is a product of not only his findings, but also the constructions of race and gender that dominated the culture in which he was embedded. Regardless of these shortcomings, Hall’s ideas affected the adults that dealt with children, especially educators and leaders of children’s organizations.

Children in this time period were regarded by psychologists, educators, and in popular culture in quite contradictory terms. In the same moment that Hall painted adolescents as troubled, tumultuous, and constantly on the verge of criminality, children were also depicted as innocent and natural—in short, the nineteenth century’s literary romanticized vision of childhood still remained well into the twentieth. Thanks to such nineteenth-century romantic poets as William Wordsworth and William Blake, children were “immortalized [as innocent]…and lauded [for their] tempering redemptive effects on adults.”

According to this construction, argues children’s culture scholar Anne Scott MacLeod, childhood was a period of naturalism. Children were close to God and nature….At the popular level, the romantic outlook was sentimental, dwelling on children’s beauty and innocence. At the aesthetic level,

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33 Minks, “From Children’s Song to Expressive Practices,” 381.

romanticism went farther, surrounding childhood with an aura of myth, seeing in children the elemental qualities of nature unspoiled.35

Evidence of a romanticized, natural construction of childhood can also be found in children’s song collections. Many songbooks were sectioned off according to the subjects of songs, including “Songs of the Home” or “Play Songs.” Songs about nature, birds, and animals, were many. Songs of the wind, of seasons, and of specific animal sounds occupied a large percentage of children’s song collections. In a study of chickadee songs from 1900 to 1930, I suggested that in bird-themed songs that quoted birdsong, composers invited children to imitate and play the part of birds, perhaps even become like them. At the same time, birds, especially the highly social and playful chickadee, were constructed and described as children, forming a “feedback loop” in which children were invited to act like chickadees, who acted like children themselves.36 Even as late as 1930, RCA Victor’s record guide and curriculum, Music Appreciation for Children, featured a picture of a cherub-like youngster peering up into a tree. Entitled “A Bird’s Nest,” the artistic rendering of childhood places the child as a natural, romanticized being (see Figure 1).37

In her 1912 collection Songs of Happiness, Carolyn S. Bailey likened children to songbirds. She encouraged parents to “Lead your children to feel the music. Help them to feel the words….They will sing, like birds, in an easy melodious way that will surprise you.”38 One year later, another publication of Milton Bradley compared children to flowers:

35 Anne Scott MacLeod, American Childhood: Essays on Children’s Literature of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 117.


Each and all [songs in the collection] have been tested and reconstructed in the light of the response of the child who turns as naturally to these poetic interpretations of his interests as the flower to the sun. In them he finds reflections of himself in thought and form, and through them he cannot but sense the goodness and beauty of life.39

Figure 1: “The Bird’s Nest,” from RCA Victor’s *Music Appreciation for Children*.

Not only were children natural and romanticized, but so was music. Children, nature, and music occupied the same romantic space in culture, and were often pictured or conceptualized together. On the title page to a collection entitled *Child-Land in Song and Rhythm*, a child is pictured in silhouette holding a book, perhaps a music book, while she sings. Two tree branches hang down, a bird singing to her as it perches on the lower

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branch. Not all of these sources originate from the World War I era; before the war and into the interwar years, children were often constructed as part of nature, as innocent, romantic creatures. From being pictured as part of nature in songbooks to being supplied with nature songs of every type, composers, pedagogues, and perhaps even parents of children tried to keep nature an important part of a child’s formative years.

Figure 2: A girl is pictured in nature, beneath a tree, as a bird sings to her.

In her book of the same title (1909), Ellen Key marked the twentieth century as “The Century of the Child.” Advances were made among “philosophers, physicians, educators,

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and social workers” toward helping children and “[promoting] parental bonding and nurturing.” In past centuries, Western children were subject to a Calvinist view in which they were constructed as sinful from birth. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a reaction against this, and children were approached more mildly, painted as little angels rather than little devils.

Yet another contradiction in child culture and adult attitudes toward children that should be noted is the distinct discrepancy of quality of childhood that existed between the classes. The concurrent concern and idealism toward children led to an emphasis on not only the importance of play, as opposed to work, for children’s development, but also the educational value of play. Dating as far back as the 1830s, Bronson Alcott proposed play as a pedagogical necessity in childhood. This assertion, however, is a classed concept. Even then, and well into the nineteenth century, children were “[integrated]…into domestic activities as quickly as possible” for working-class urban and rural farm families. Children were seen and used as essential contributors to the family income, whether that be working on a farm, or working alongside their parents in a factory.

Middle-class upper-class families were more likely to embrace the “sheltered-child model,” in which “the state and its institutions set apart children by age and status, and family ideology as well as public concern channeled young people toward a protected physical and emotional development.” It should be mentioned, however, that poor living

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45 Ibid.
and working conditions among lower-class populations prompted many safety and child welfare laws. Speaking of Anna Davin’s 1996 study of children Growing Up Poor, Hugh Cunningham notes that “the period from 1879 to 1913 is seen by many historians…as one in which the state began to take a markedly more prominent role in the regulation of family life and in which a definition of childhood as properly a period of dependence became dominant.”

By the 1920s and 30s, with the passing of child safety laws, all children were eventually cordoned off from work, as society deemed that “children belonged in school and at play rather than in the workplace.” Children were consistently valued not for their economic contribution, but rather their emotional of “affectional” place in the home. Prior to these major societal and cultural changes, however, lower-class children would be seen less affectionately than would those of parents of the higher classes. The kinds of music discussed in this thesis, and children’s song collections especially, most likely belong to the middle to upper classes. It is unlikely that children of the lower classes would have been exposed to music pedagogy courses or would have been brought up with a mother who incorporated play songs into their everyday lives.

It is important to note here as well that as children were removed from the public, working sphere, they were increasingly relegated to the home, a cultural movement that finds a parallel in the domestication of femininity. Among the middle class in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, children were sentimentalized concurrently with women. Children, like


47 Murray, American Children’s Literature, 83.

women, were seen as “dependent beings who must be controlled, cared for, and kept secure and happy.”49 Their security and happiness depended on those who housed and cared for them, the patriarchal leader of the family. Thus, in order to study children in this era, it is also important to consider aspects of domestic femininity. Children and women were almost interchangeable, wedded precisely by occupying the domestic, home sphere.

Although middle-class children were collectively placed in the home, their activities, by the late nineteenth century, were demarcated by sex.50 Materials produced for children frame boys’ play as raucous and physical, while girls are expected to be more subdued, “a division that did not predict adult roles as much as embody them in miniature. Analyzing the social imperatives present in girls’ play and attending to the social familial roles that were represented during playtime enables us to see that play activities attributed to girls a mature notion of subjectivity.”51 This gendered construct of childhood can also be located within children’s song collections. Albert E. Wier’s The Child’s Own Music Book (1918) contains sections of songs split up according to sex. Under the heading “Little Girls’ Songs,” such songs as “The Lost Doll,” “Maggie’s Pet,” and “The Little Fishermaid” are listed, while such tunes as “The Little Drummer, “The Tin Soldiers,” and “Jack” are deemed “Little Boys’ Songs.” An earlier book by Wier, however, Songs the Children Love to Sing (1916) bends these rules a bit.52 Under the heading “Songs for Little Girls,” predictable tunes like “Dolly

49 Kamp, “Where Have All the Children Gone?”: 3.


and "My Dolly" are included, along with "The Little Tin Soldier," a tune two years later marked within the realm of boys’ songs. "Songs for Little Boys" include such songs as "Comrades," "The Boy and the Cuckoo," and "Hunter’s Song." Images in Harper’s Bazaar show that in the nineteenth century appropriate or expected play is determined by sex, as boys are pictured as "rebellious [and] youthful" while girls are depicted as "compliant [and] socialized," a concept that could easily be seen within these song collections.

Although not all children’s song collections featured gendered song groups, all of these songs are often constructed within the domestic sphere. Even if the little boys and girls sing songs of sailors on the stormy seas (and there are many of these songs) or of hunting, it is understood that these games are played in the home.

In the early twentieth century, specialists within psychological and educational fields increasingly regarded play as an essential part of children’s mental, physical, and social development—and this idea persists even today. The concept finds a parallel in ancient cultures as well. Anthropologist Kathryn Kamp, speaking of the study of children in ancient cultures, suggests that "cultures structure the pastimes of children" so that "games, songs, and other play activities are learned and transmitted from generation to generation." Other kinds of play may be less structured, but play nonetheless functions as "part of the socialization process, teaching values as well as physical and social skills." This concern over children’s playtime resulted in a culture created specifically for children in which their play was materialized and commercialized. Children “began to create their own culture, to expect entertainments and activities specifically designed for them, and to participate as

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53 Dawson, "The Miniaturizing of Girlhood," 64.

54 Kamp, “Where Have All the Children Gone,” 19.

55 Ibid.
consumers of popular culture in wider and more varied venues. Baseball, nickelodeons, penny arcades, amusement parks, and finally motion pictures all catered to young adults with a little extra money and some time to enjoy it.”

Children’s song collections certainly fall into this category. Whereas children may have made up their own tunes (or sung those passed down through generations) previously, the early twentieth century and beyond is riddled with song collections made especially for them. Howard P. Chudacoff, in his study of play in America, explains that the activities of childhood,

As soon as childhood became a subject of serious social scientific study at the end of the nineteenth century, children’s play came under close scientific scrutiny. Adopting a developmental model of childhood as a rehearsal for adulthood, many observers designated play as the ‘child’s work’ and the ‘principal business of childhood.’ To these experts, play was not the opposite of work but, rather, another form of it, an activity so vital as to demand adult supervision.57

Song collections fall into this paradigm of adult supervision and intervention into children’s play time. An interest, or perhaps even an anxiety over the educational, instructive, and developmental usefulness of a text permeates the front matter and construction of song collections, as seen in The Progressive Music Series, Old Tunes, New Rimes and Games, and others.

It should be mentioned here as well that it is entirely possible that the educational framework imposed upon children’s song collections may also have been driven by marketing, more than pedagogy or ideology. In her study of the newly-discovered Schumann-Schuberth letters, musicologist Roe-Min Kok reveals that Schumann’s composition of children’s pieces, “typically…attributed to inner motivations, including Schumann’s desire for public recognition and financial stability,” etc., may also have been the

56 Murray, American Children’s Literature, 83.

57 Chudacoff, Children at Play, 2-3.
result of a strong market for children’s music in nineteenth-century Germany.\textsuperscript{58} By the same token, American composers and publishers in the early twentieth century may also have sought to cash in on a market provided by a public concerned with the development and value of play for their children.

Whether, for the sake of a concern for children’s physical, mental, and social development, or for the sake of marketing, a number of children’s song collections included introductions, prefaces, and other types of front matter that framed their songs within the greater category of constructive (and constructed) play. In pedagogical books that sought to teach children ear training and sight singing such as \textit{The Progressive Music Series}, for instance, their framing and front material is practically voluminous. These songs, however, are a means to an end, and an end that is musical. Many collections point to a construction of play outside of musical pedagogy, however.

In the front matter to \textit{Old Tunes, New Rimes and Games} (1917), Mari Hofer includes a subheading entitled “Educational Elements.” Merging education and play, she explains that “the music [that she chose for the volume] furnishes the right kind of stimulus and…the play with which it is associated is constructive and upbuilding, as well as entertaining.”\textsuperscript{59} Later, she includes a summary of constructive play, which focuses on building large motor skills. The summary includes children’s “desire to run, walk, skip, hop, jump, slide, clamp, etc.” and discusses “daily school exercises [based] upon these vital activities with which the child is concerned.”\textsuperscript{60} Hofer’s song collection sought to provide short musical pieces to be


\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
used to direct and guide children’s play. Aside from mere physical development, Hofer also points to music providing play that is “constructive and upbuilding, as well as entertaining.”61

In Nellie Brennan’s 1916 publication Gaynor’s Songs for Little Children, the preface explains the pedagogical purpose of the book, and the composer’s intentions and experience: “Miss Brennan, a teacher of experience, has sought to avoid…difficulty [of children remember words to songs] by making these songs of one stanza….Practical experience showed a need for the short song and we hope therefore that this book may have usefulness in the Kindergarten and Primary grades.”62 Play was developmentally necessary, helping children develop physically, cognitively, and emotionally on their way to adulthood.

On the flip side of play is work, and these two concepts were often grouped together in children’s song collections. Albert Wier’s The Child’s Own Music Book included a section entitled “Songs of Work and Play,” containing such tunes as “Action Song,” Boat Song,” and “Dance of the Fairies,” along with work-related tunes such as “Try, Try, Try Again” and “Mowing the Hay.” Hofer’s book, geared toward physical play, emphasizes in its front matter that “themes of work and play are shown in action as well as in name.”63 In Songs of Happiness, Carolyn S. Bailey and Mary B. Ehrmann composed a number of what they grouped as “Work and Play Songs.” These tunes revolved around topics of career, including “The Baker,” “The Blacksmith,” and “The Carpenter,” balanced by play tunes such as “The Carousel” and “The Song of the Clay.” The actions of a blacksmith and carpenter, along with riding on a carousel are physical activities. All of these tunes, naturally, would evoke physical play, an attractive construction in this time period. These songs would not

61 Hofer, Old Tunes, New Rimes and Games, 4.


63 Hofer, Old Tunes, New Rimes and Games, 4.
necessarily force children into labor (such as baking or blacksmithing), but rather function as part of an idealized, constructed playtime. These songs would prompt physical, constructive play, while also allowing children to imagine themselves in a number of different career paths, perhaps to be realized in later adult life.

These songs of work and play may have been used as part of a constructed and romanticized version of musical playtime by adults, but during World War I, older children were encouraged to contribute their time and effort to war work. While early childhood was reserved for play, nature, and structured socializing, older children were encouraged to become active members of society. Education and citizenship for boys could be developed by doing war work and by attending army camps. Here, according to physician Henry Dwight Chapin, “thru the ‘gospel of work’ children should be lead (sic) to see things as they really are in life.”64 He went on to explain, “is there any reason why at this stage in our industrial education development we should fail to utilize this war work—this demand for patriotic service—as a means to an education end that has long been recognized as lacking in our educational system.”65 Indeed, many adults saw war work as an opportunity for adolescents to grow, become more patriotic, and focus on becoming model citizens.

At the same time, however, lawmakers and child culture experts maintained anxiety over the kinds of childhoods that adolescent boys, orphans, and other troubled youth lived during the war years. Owen R. Lovejoy, in his article “Safeguarding Childhood in Peace and War,” however, revealed a level of anxiety over the war, appealing to the Civil War for support: “Many years ago when our country was in the throes of a terrible civil war conflict

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65 Ibid.
and the ranks of the Confederate armies were depleted by war and famine and it was
proposed that young children should be recruited, the President of the Confederacy
Jefferson Davis replied, ‘We must not grind the seed corn.’”66 He went on to bemoan the
fate of children in the war years: “In addition to the death from bullet and exposure and
disease at the battle front, there is the breaking down of the education and health and other
conservation standards at home. Our school rooms will be deserted, agencies protecting the
health, the morals, and the prosperity of children will suffer for lack of funds.”67 The war, it
seems, would have reversed the hard work that lawmakers had put into producing child
protection laws.

In a series for Survey magazine entitled “Making the War Safe for Children,” Lane D.
Winthrop composed installments that dealt with child safety in war work, factories, and
farms, but also one for the sanctity of childhood, which would influence later adulthood.
Guiding children into adulthood was a serious business to Winthrop: “Childhood is sensitive
also and quick to respond; a mere word may change its outlook on life. It needs, therefore,
education and wise leadership.”68 Gardening was an important part of the war effort, and
many boys went to live and work at farms to make themselves “useful in the production of
food” for the war effort.69 Winthrop described the design: “The plan comprises the
establishment of camps in which boys live under supervision and from which they go to
neighboring farms to work. On June 1, nine camps had been established’ since then nine
others have been projected to set up. Boys between sixteen and eighteen years from high

67 Ibid., 8.
69 Ibid., 387.
schools, and over sixteen from state-aided vocational schools, are eligible to join.”\textsuperscript{70} The threat of schools in wartime in Europe, however, was always looming. The cover of the August 25, 1917 \textit{Survey} issue shows “An Italian Schoolhouse Shattered by Artillery Fire.” The inside cover shows a number of photos under the heading “Keeping School Going in a War Zone,” including one of “School children singing as an enemy aeroplane passes.”

Childhood during the First World War cannot be completely quantified. The experiences are differentiated, multivalent, and influenced by a number of complicated issues, and war was certainly one of those. Adults in the early twentieth century expressed concern for the well-being and the future of their youngest community members, and the solutions to their anxieties did not always agree. Some saw war work as a terrible distraction and danger to children, while others believed it could serve as a site for important educational moments. In the end, however, it was inevitable that children would encounter the war, and some capitalized on the opportunity to help their country by involving children in the effort.

\textbf{Print Materials by which Children Came in Contact with War Culture}

Children’s song collections contained a wide variety of songs and themes. Along with songs of nature, action, and play, these collections contained tunes more militaristic in nature. Calvert’s concept of constellations of materials places these song collections not only among psychological or educational texts, but also among other militaristic texts for children.\textsuperscript{71} One finds an aggregate of military-themed songs, among them soldier songs, battle songs, and march songs. It is important to note that soldier songs in children’s song

\textsuperscript{70} Winthrop, “Making the War Safe for Children”: 387.

\textsuperscript{71} Calvert, \textit{Children in the House}, 6.
collections were present before World War I, and thus it is unlikely that they necessarily commented on or were caused by the war.\textsuperscript{72} In fact, march or soldier-related songs can be traced back to the nineteenth century. It is interesting, however, that the onset of the war did not deter publishers or editors from printing such songs. It is my belief that although these songs were not necessarily propagandistic, they do reveal an allowance of military culture into children’s playtimes. These songs do not deal specifically with the war, nor do they train children for combat or encourage children to grow up to be soldiers themselves or join the current fight, on any level. However, their presence shows that war culture was an acceptable and normalized part of their lives. The United States was involved with a number of wars from the nineteenth century onward, including the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and finally, the Great War. One some level, war culture was a normalized part of American life; filtered into child culture, it became innocuous and playful.

In their study of Charles Ives’s war songs, Alan Houtchens and Janis P. Stout explain the martial qualities that lie outside of Ives’s well-known use of quotation, and their description applies equally to the kinds of martial or march-like qualities found in many of these children’s songs as well:

Patriotic martial music traditionally incorporates highly conventionalized features such as tattoos and fanfares, triadic melodies, ordinary or quickstep march tempos, a regular, steady pulse, major mode, and incisive dotted rhythms that tend to stir strong listener responses involving aspirations toward duty, heroism, and sacrifice for a cause.\textsuperscript{73}

Such style characteristics are pervasive among the children’s soldier-themed songs. I term these common characteristics as martial, while admitting that the employment of these styles

\textsuperscript{72} While many earlier examples exist, marching and soldier songs can be found in Riley, Lloyd, and Gaynor’s \textit{Songs of the Child-World} (Cincinnati: The John Church Company, 1897).

does not necessarily mean that the authors advocated for child soldiering or for a specifically militaristic attitude toward the current war. I argue that many children’s songs were indeed martial in style, but were not propagandistic or militaristic, leading children into the battlefields of the future. Just as the inclusion of well-known patriotic tunes in Ives’s war songs does not necessarily denote an openly militaristic or propagandistic attitude toward the war (for it is unknown whether he included them wholesale or ironically), common martial conventions do not necessarily promote militarism beyond the imaginative sphere of children’s play. While children were not expected to fight in wars, it seemed to be acceptable for them to pretend and re-enact battles.

In order to contextualize and differentiate these songs within the broader constellation of war-related print goods for children, this discussion will also include examples ranging from propaganda to even-handed, informational publications aimed at child readers. This literature ranges from war-themed, fictional adventure stories for chapter-reading age children to Captain Tick-Mouse, a series of propaganda books aimed at younger children, to St. Nicholas, a children’s magazine that, while patriotic, focused more on providing objective information to its young readers.

As noted previously, war-themed songs could be either soldier, march, or battle-themed. These songs were often set in 2/4 or 4/4 time signatures, marked “Marcato” or “Martial,” and often included martial, dotted rhythms. Marches were common in children’s song collections, but did not necessarily advocate for soldiering. Although marching was associated with militaristic environments, it then became disseminated into other, non-militaristic situations, like parades or marching bands, for example. Many of the march songs for children were not necessarily coded as militaristic, but instead functioned as constructive,
physical play activities, in which case a march was a simple, convenient device for promoting physicality while also maintaining order.

The song collections from the World War I era also contain soldier songs that are not necessarily propagandistic in message. These songs are instead adapted to other types of tunes, like romantic or counting songs. In fact, soldier songs as a broad category may be said to encompass the wide range of the types of songs written for children. They comprise a variety of subcategorized songs, and it is my belief that their adaptability to other types of tunes points to an already normalized, tamed construction of war and soldiering in children’s play.

Soldiers were adapted to a range of songs outside of militaristic play. One such example is a romantic or counting tune from *The Child's Own Music Book*, entitled “Soldier, Soldier, Will You Marry Me?” (see Example 1). This quaint song is in a simple 4/4 time signature and features triadic melodies. Taking the first verse as an example, the tune alternates between a girl, who sings “Soldier, soldier, will you marry me, With your knapsack, fife and drum?” The boy, a soldier, answers, “Oh, how can I marry such a pretty maid as thee, When I’ve got no coat to put on?” The chorus, from a narrative perspective, describes the girl’s actions: “Then she ran away to the tailor’s shop, As fast as she could run, And she bought him a coat of the very best, And the soldier put it on.” In some ways, this is a romantic tune, but in others, it is one version of a counting tune. The second verse follows in the same way, but with the soldier lacking shoes, which the girl rectifies by going to a shoemaker’s shop. The verses continue, with a hat and hatter’s shop and gloves to a glove-maker’s shop. While the song is not literally counting, it is enumerating a range of clothing items and their corresponding textile shops. The final verse seals the deal, as the boy finally

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sings, “Oh, how can I marry such a pretty maid as thee, When I’ve got a good wife at home?” The description beneath the tune instructs that “The last verse, which is sung by the soldier alone, always creates great merriment.”

Example 1: “Soldier, Soldier, Will You Marry Me?” from *The Child’s Own Music Book.*

Although the tune involves a soldier, and even notes a knapsack, fife, and drum, which were used on battlefields, the song is hardly militaristic. Rather, the soldier is used as a device to “count” the different types of textiles that would adorn a soldier. The song speaks to non-militaristic activities that a soldier might engage in while at war, like wooing a pretty maiden.
from a faraway land—though the sexual themes of such a topic are understandably subdued and unmentioned. Although the tune is rather triadic, many of the earmarks of martial tunes are missing, including dotted rhythms and *marcato* or *staccato* articulations.

Another romantic soldier tune sets Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Steadfast Tin Soldier” to music. “The Little Tin Soldier,” by J.L. Molloy, composer of the famous tune “Love’s Old Sweet Song” or “Just a Song at Twilight,” appears later in *The Child’s Own Music Book*, and consists of three verses telling the story of the tin soldier and the paper dancer with whom he has fallen in love. Following the third verse is a coda that tells of their unfortunate, fiery demise. The final four measures are marked *Lento*, wordless, and are marked “Dead march of the tin soldier.” The tune revolves around two main melodies, the first of which, accompanied by a sort of Alberti bass, corresponds with the line “He was a little tin soldier, One little leg had he,” a line which returns as a sort of refrain, and “She was a little fairy dancer, Bright as bright could be” (see Example 2).

Example 2: The first theme of “The Little Tin Soldier.”

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The second theme, what could be called a “B” theme, which ventures from B-flat major to D major, takes on much of the action, with such lines as “True to his little lady, Still he shoulder’d his gun” and “Then came a hand that swept them, Into a furnace wide” (see Example 3). It is the first B-flat major melody, which corresponds to “He was a little tin soldier,” that returns during the “Dead march of the tin soldier,” this time slower, and an octave higher, in parallel octaves with the left hand (see Example 4). Again, the song is missing many militaristic style characteristics, like dotted rhythms, and even includes an Alberti bass, something more akin to eighteenth-century domestic keyboard pieces.

Outwardly, this song is hardly militaristic in nature, using soldiering as a device to tell a tragic love story.

Example 3: The second theme of “The Little Tin Soldier.”
Example 4: The Dead march of the tin soldier.

Soldierdom takes on a new meaning in *Songs of Happiness*. Here the soldier is not even human, but is adapted to nature in “The Dandelion Soldiers.”⁷⁶ Although the tune is marked “Tempo di Marcia” and does contain some dotted rhythms, the song is hardly militaristic (see Example 5).

Example 5: Martial style of “The Dandelion Soldiers.”

Rather than triadic melodies, the song features a melody that jumps a major sixth, and
descends in the following measure as a sequence. Soldiering description is adapted to the
description of dandelions (weeds to some, pleasant song topics to others) as they live
through the natural cycle of life, from growing as “small strands straight and tall” like
soldiers, to breaking apart, their warriors’ hats blowing away “thro’ the blue,” and then
regrowing the next year as “young dandelion men” (emphasis original). The cyclical life of the
seasons and nature is here adapted in martial terms, as the dandelions are described as
soldiers who stand up tall on the hill, their round seed heads described as “little [warriors’
hats].” Although they could be described as green (the color of the stem) or white (the seed
heads), they are instead described as gray. Furthermore, the act of breaking up and spreading
seeds for the next year is described in terms of a constant supply of soldiers. Each year, the
seeds are planted, “[camping] for a while,” and the next year, a new batch of “young
dandelion men” crops up. Militaristic language is adopted as a lens through which to
understand the cyclical nature of the seasons and the life cycle of perennials. While the song
is not propagandistic, not even allowing for physical movement from the children, it might
even be read as pacifistic, lamenting the yearly death of young dandelion soldiers.
Either way, the song reframes, naturalizes, and tames militarism, exemplifying the kind of
normalized militarism that was acceptable for children’s play.

One final example reveals not only the ways that soldiering was adapted to other
forms of non-militaristic play, but also the extent to which these topics were already
embedded in children’s culture decades before the Great War. This final example is a
bathtub song, and is present in at least three songbooks from the late nineteenth century into
the Great War: *Songs of Happiness, The Progressive Music Series,* and *Songs of the Child-World.* *Songs
of the Child-World* is an earlier publication (1897) by Jessie L. Gaynor, while the others were
published in the 1910s. Although the titles of the versions found in each collection differ, their melodies and text are nearly identical. The 1897 tune is entitled simply “Rub-a-dub-dub,” and is set in 6/8:

A-rub-a-dub-dub, a-rub-a-dub-dub, We’re soldiers brave and true. The band shall play and the flag shall wave, 'Tis the red, the white, and blue, A-rub-a-dub-dub, a-rub-a-dub-dub, We’re marching as we sing. The bugles blow and the banners wave, And our voices ring.77

The song, along with mention of flags, bugles, and banners, contains a number of martial musical qualities. The melody is triadic, in the key of F major, maintaining the 6/8 meter (see Example 6). The 6/8 meter, however, has less to do with simple, square martial meters, but is rather more similar to sailor tunes, yet another popular inclusion in children’s song collections. Nautical sailor tunes are often in compound meters and tend to focus more on stormy seas and the fun of putting up sails (rather than being sailors on battleships, early submarines, or ironclad warships). The rub-a-dub-dub song seems to be a combination of the two, consisting of compound meters and melodies, but still maintaining a soldier subject. The text of the song might be considered militaristic in some sense, but bugles, banners, flags, and marching, might be found in a yearly parade as well. The line between active and innocuous militarism is unclear, as bugles could be interpreted equally on the battlefield and in a street parade.


*Songs of Happiness* (1912) also includes a version of the rub-a-dub-dub soldier song entitled “Playing Soldier.” In this version, the tune is rewritten in the key of B-flat major, while still maintaining the F4 pitch for the “Rub-a-dub-dub” (see Example 7).\(^7\) The time signature is reconfigured in 4/4 time, and what were eighth notes in 6/8 are now triplets. This new reworking of what was likely a popular and commonly sung tune, is quite a bit longer than the original.

\(^7\) Ehrmann, *Songs of Happiness*, 98-99.
Example 7: “Playing Soldier,” 1912.

The phrase “Rub-a-dub-dub” is here the dominant, rather than the tonic, leading to a phrase “rub-a-dub, **boom!**” The soldiers are marching, make room, make room.” The song contains two verses, with such detailed phrases as “Tom is a Col’nel and Jack a dragoon, You may be Gen’ral or private, or aide.” “Playing Soldier” also hones in on the rhythmic aspect of the tune, inviting the children to “Pick up your drumsticks and steadily beat, Rub-a-dub-dub, rub-a-dub-dub.” In the final verse, one phrase of “rub-a-dub-dub” is changed to “Major guard in our soldier’s brigade. Left foot; now right foot, how gaily we come, Rap-a-tap-tap, rap-a-tap-tap, sounds the little red drum.” Overall, the tune focuses on the rhythm and the physical aspects of soldiering, marching, falling in line, and rap-a-tap-tapping on a drum. The melody, however, is more musically and textually adventurous than Riley and Gaynor’s 1897
version, being both longer, and including more intense language, including the “boom!” of perhaps a cannon, or a bass drum. This boom could signal an increase in militaristically descriptive language, but it may also be merely an example of imaginative onomatopoeia. Just as one might expect the phrase “quack, quack” in a song about ducks, including a “boom!” in a march song seems natural. Although the “boom!” plays into expectations, it is also yet another way that children were encouraged to take part in war culture during playtime.

One final rub-a-dub-dub song is found in *The Progressive Music Series* (1915), a songbook more pedagogical than domestic. “Soldier Boys,” by May Morgan and Osbourne McConathy, returns to 6/8 time, and is changed to the key of G major (see Example 8). The central “rub-a-dub-dub” phrases are not merely set syllabically as triplet figures, but also are written as descending and ascending lines moving between G4 and D4. As in the previous two examples of rub-a-dub-dub soldier songs, there is some incongruence between what would seem to be a bath time song and the actual actions displayed in the lyrics. Such actions as marching, stamping left and right feet, and drumming might be messy in a bathtub situation. Because of this incongruence, I would argue that the rub-a-dub-dub song is not to be taken literally, but rather encourages children to play and act more imaginatively. This final version of the rub-a-dub-dub song is quite similar to the previous versions, although it more clearly defines its militaristic qualities within the confines of a parade, and not on the battlefield: “Down the street the soldiers come… Loud and clear the bugles cry, See, their banner is floating high.” In “Soldier Boys,” the singer (understandably the child) is not positioned as the soldier, drummer, or any other manifestation of normalized militaristic

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child’s play. Rather, the child is a spectator, watching the soldiers go by, rather than being a soldier him or herself.

Example 8: “Soldier Boys,” 1915.

No matter what purpose these soldier songs might serve, this small cohort of non-militaristic soldier tunes acts as a microcosm of the larger genres available to children’s song collection composers and publishers. Soldiering had become normalized and innocuous in the pages of song collections, expressing a tamed, innocuous vision of war and the military
that was acceptable for child play. As will be discussed later with march tunes, many of these songs were sites of physical play, inspiration or planned activities for organized motor development. Either way, soldierhood served a function in the imagination, as one of many different occupations, like baking, police work, or being a fireman. Soldiering in these song collections is but an imaginative play for nursery-age children.

This imaginative play can be seen within the pages of war-themed fiction for older, chapter book-reading children. One fiction series by H. Irving Hancock, entitled “The Conquest of the United States,” tackled the possibility of Germans potentially invading the United States. In the stories, young adults were called on to save the country. 80 As per the cultural legacy of the late nineteenth century, these print materials were often geared toward either girls or boys. In her study of American children’s literature and the construction of childhood from the colonial era into the 1990s, Gail Schmunk Murray describes World War I-related novels in gendered terms. Although adventure books about the war were written for both boys and girls, their topics were constructed for the gender norms of the day:

For boys, no topic held more potential for thrills, bravery, surprised, and triumph than war, and the publishing syndicates were more than happy to reinforce contemporary notions of Anglo superiority, and illustrate American ‘guidance’ of less-developed countries, and to capitalize on actual armed conflicts. 81

War fiction, however, was produced for girls. Edna Brooks wrote a book entitled The Khaki Girls, which focused on World War I, “and other series books for girls acknowledge the war by including a volume or two with a Red Cross or war setting.” 82 In these books, the war was glorified, made exciting and new. Young adults and adolescents were put in places of power

80 Murray, American Children’s Literature, 89.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid., 90.
in the war effort and made to believe that they could make an impact in the conflict. These books also framed the war as entertainment, removing any sense of real danger. This trend can be found in children’s fiction in France as well. Says Watkins, “in juvenile literature…there were numerous injunctions for school children to assume the role of the soldier in their hearts as a reflection of their patriotism.”

Other publications were produced less for entertainment, and more for balanced, informational purposes. One such example is *St. Nicholas*, a magazine for children published between 1873 into the 1940s. Although the magazine reached its heyday of publication in the 1880s and 1890s, declining thereafter, *St. Nicholas* seemed to maintain a suitable readership through the war years. The magazine included a number of sections in each monthly issue, from science to biography, to serial fiction stories, to even shorter, larger-font stories with pictures for younger children. The magazine, which was aimed at a readership of both girls and boys, sought to attract a wide range of readership and interests, and for different ages.

*St. Nicholas* took its war treatment seriously. Although framed with an acceptable level of American patriotism, as early as May 1916, before the United States’ entrance into the war, the magazine introduced a section entitled “The Watch Tower,” written by S.E. Forman. The first installment of this segment included a column on the Hay Bill, which expanded the army for the sake of preparedness. While explaining its purpose, the story was also an opportunity to explain the ways that bills were proposed and considered in Congress. Forman further explained that a “special rule” would be applied to the bill so that it could be dealt with before others. Later on in the same section, Forman expounded on the war at

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hand, grieving that “The Great War seems to be bringing little fame and glory to those who are fighting our battles,” as opposed to the Civil War, when people would read “stirring accounts of the doings of particular men—of Grant and Lee and Sheridan, or ‘Stonewall’ Jackson and Thomas and Sherman.” A column from the June 1916 issue touched on one of the causes of the United States’ future involvement in the war. In “Germany and Her Submarines,” Forman details the ways that Americans “have been disappointed” by Germany’s inability to keep its promise of “[ceasing] to use her submarines against merchantmen unless warning was first given.” Even before the United States entered the war, *St. Nicholas* was covering, with some objectivity, matters of domestic lawmaking and international relations.

Later, once the United States entered the war, *St. Nicholas* ramped up its war coverage. Although the magazine certainly erred on the side of patriotism, the articles tended to provide even-handed information on the war. Forman continued to produce material for “The Watch Tower,” including one column entitled “The Call to Arms!” in May 1917, detailing President Wilson’s advice to Congress to declare war, “to draw the sword against the German Government on the ground that Germany had drawn her sword not only against the United States, but against the whole world.” New segments were added, among them a series of articles by Commander Orton P. Jackson, Navy, and Captain Frank E. Evans, Marine Corps, which focused on providing children information about the kinds of machines and technology used during the war. The May 1917 issue featured an article on submarines, “Our Undersea Fighters.” The article contains a number of photos to help

87 S.E. Forman, “Germany and Her Submarines,” *St. Nicholas* 43.8 (June 1916): 738.
88 S.E. Forman, “The Call to Arms!” *St. Nicholas* 44.7 (May 1917): 642.
illustrate its major points, of “A submarine running on the surface,” one that “has just
launched a torpedo,” and even a drawing of a cross-section of the inside of a submarine. The
description, while factual, also reflects the time in which it was written. Many of these
articles were written expressly for boys. The language was often technical and industrial, and
spoke directly to young male readers:

Of all the craft that make up the fleet, from the grim dreadnought and its powerful
fourteen-inch monsters to the fussy steam-launch and its one-pounder gun in the
bow, there is none that should have the same interest for the American boy as the submarine.
Among the units of the fleet it is the one distinctively American product of inventive
genius. It was an American, Robert Fulton, then living in France, in 1800, who
designed the first submarine. It was another American citizen, John P. Holland, who
built the first submarine that met its tests successfully, carrying within its steel skin
practically all of the principles of the modern submarine (emphasis mine).89

The next issue, June 1917, featured not submarines, but planes, in an article entitled
“Fighting-Ships That Fly.” Again, the article is accompanied by a number of photographs,
one even of “A submarine twenty feet under water with the shadow of the aëroplane across
it.”90 They describe the addition of aircraft to the military; World War I was in fact the first
war in which airplanes would have been used: “When the great conflict in Europe began, in
1914, the part that naval aircraft would play in war was little appreciated. That the control of
the air might be necessary before the great object of all naval battles, the command of the
sea, could be assured, was then admitted by few naval experts.”91 Not only were the readers
of St. Nicholas kept up-to-date on Congressional actions and political issues, but they were
also informed of the unique characteristics of the war, the new technologies that were
invented because of it, and the basic issues that arise when a country is trying to win a war.

91 Jackson and Evans, “Fighting-Ships That Fly”: 675.
The April 1918 issue featured another technology-themed article, by A. Russell Bond, entitled “Guns That Fire Themselves.” In it Bond explains: “Many years ago a boy tried his hand at firing a U.S. Army service rifle. It was a heavy rifle of the Civil War period, and the lad did not know just how to hold it.” These new guns, obviously, would solve the problem of the “powerful kick” that soon resulted.92 Although today’s parents would most likely object to an article about guns in a children’s magazine, such informational articles were common in *St. Nicholas*. A photo accompanying the article even pictures “Lewis Machine-Guns at the Front” (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Lewis Machine Guns in St. Nicholas.](image)

In addition to these informational segments and columns, later in the war, there were articles devoted to prompting children to help with such home-front war work as the Junior

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Red Cross, selling Liberty Loans, and growing War Gardens. These segments, however, will be discussed in Chapter 4. Aside from these articles, *St. Nicholas* seemed to approach the war from an informative angle.

*St. Nicholas’s* air of patriotism, while not promoting outright militarism, finds a parallel in child-rearing manuals of the era. Many of these manuals advocated that parents should invest their children with patriotism and an awareness of their country’s history. The stories of the nation’s heroes (not unlike Forman’s evocation of Sherman, Lee, and Grant) were considered an important part of growing up, one of many elements to be maintained in the enculturation of the nation’s youth. *The Uplift Book of Child Culture* in particular stresses this point. Just inside the front cover of the book lies a picture of a girl and her younger brother playing, she with blocks and he with toy soldiers (see Figure 4). The martial toys feature prominently on the ground before them as well as on the table on which the boy’s elbow rests. The caption below reads “Play is a Mental and Physical Necessity.” It makes no mention of the toy soldiers, and although they feature prominently in the image’s foreground, they are only one of the toys available in the children’s play space. Thus, the book does not overtly argue that childhood be a space to exercise and enforce nationalism, but rather suggests an awareness of the country’s history as part of a well-rounded education.

The book also recommends that parents take every opportunity to tell children the story of their country: “The story of our flag, the meaning of each stripe and star is of fascinating interest. The story of a coin with its inscriptions, of a postage stamp, of a letter and the post office…are all highly instructive.” The authors also recommend stories of

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94 Ibid., 115-117.
natural adventure to delight the minds of young children: “Exclude wishy-washy, sentimental stories of unnatural children. Include stories of adventure, even of war, as ‘The Boys of 76,’ stories of inventions, of travel, of discovery….”95 Among these suggestions lie the themes of nationalism and militarism.

Figure 4: Children play with soldiers in *The Uplift Book of Child Culture*.

Gruenberg’s *Sons and Daughters* (1916) also emphasizes the necessity for an open dialogue about the war. Devoting an entire chapter to “Children and the War,” Gruenberg urges parents to make an effort to discuss it with their children: “It is futile to ask whether

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children should be told about the war. Unless they are kept in solitary confinement, they are constantly getting information and misinformation in large instalments (*sic*). The important question to ask is, What shall they be told?—or, How shall they be told?” Sidonie Matzner Gruenberg presents discussions of the war as opportunities to reinforce core values: “Those who hesitate [to discuss the war]…lose a great opportunity to instil (*sic*) in them early a determination to use their powers to combat war.” War culture was an inescapable part of children’s lives, Gruenberg suggests, and an important one too.

Healthy marching and nationalism can be found in children’s song collections as well. Not all march tunes (such as those which might be likened to a marching band) were necessarily militaristic, but many borrowed martial language, for the sake of organization. One such example, of many, is “Marching Game,” from Wier’s *The Child’s Own Music Book* (see Example 9). The tune includes a set of directions at the bottom, emphasizing the physical play aspect associated with it: “A marching game in which the children imitate the actions indicated by the words.” Via the words of the song, the children are invited to “Let your feet tramp! tramp! Let your hands clap, clap, As each one makes a bow…” The words “feet tramp tramp” and “hands clap, clap” are rendered rhythmically as eighth notes followed by eighth rests, in line with the “Marcato” marking at the top of the tune.

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97 Gruenberg, *Sons and Daughters*, 141.

Example 9: “Marching Game.”

A later tune from the collection, “The Marching Song,”99 It is marked “Tempo di Marcia,” and is rather more complicated in its directions:

The children can be arranged for this song in broad rows, if the room is long enough to admit of the twenty-four paces required by one verse, to be done without turning; in this case they will simply right-about-face to begin the second verse, and jump and march back, letting the word stop, at the end of the third line, bring them back to the place from which they started.

In ordinary rooms the best way is to place one child in front of another, letting them move round and round the room in Indian File. Indeed in a large room it is a very pretty change from the row, to let the children change to Indian File, by turning half round after ‘mark time, stop!’ and beginning the song over again in this position.

The language of the directions is martial, including such actions as marking time, marching in twenty-four paces, and learning how to “right-about-face.” Children’s play time is made

militaristic in this tune, as the children sing the words “This is the way we march….This is the way we clap….This is the way we jump” and “This is the way we stop” for each of the four verses.

Some songs and print materials, however, were more explicitly war-related. In fact, some tunes invited children to act out a battle scene. One such play song can be found in a collection entitled Old English and American Games For School and Playground (1915). With its emphasis on “play-acting,” the book contains a song in two versions that are committed to soldiering, and even invites the children to act out skirmishes. The first, shown in Example 10, is “The Rovers,” a battle scene between the rovers and the guardian soldiers. It is four measures long and contains a number of strophes (they remark that only a few are included in the edition, while there are many, many more that people sing in practice).

The first strophe is from the perspective of the rovers: “We are coming to take your land, We are the Rovers; We are coming to take your land, Tho’ you’re the Guardian soldiers.” while the second takes up the guardians’ cause: “We don’t care for your men nor you, Tho’ you’re the Rovers; We don’t care for your men nor you, For we’re the Guardian soldiers.” The directions beneath the song instruct the children to “form two straight lines facing each other. One line represents the rovers; the other guardian soldiers.” After a number of directions matched up to the words, to “advance and retire,” the children are told to enact a battle:

At the end of this verse, all present arms and say, “Shoot, bang, fire!” and a general skirmish ensues in which each child tries to get his opponent over to his own side. The side that captures the most prisoners becomes the rovers next time.

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101 Ibid., 35.
Example 10: “The Rovers.”

The second version, entitled “The Roman Soldiers,” is similar to “The Rovers,” although it is eight measures long (see Example 11). The children in this song, however, “after the skirmish” are told to “fall into a circle and walking round in single file, sing the last three verses, acting them out as designated.” For the nineteen verses provided, the children are invited to “say ‘Shoot, bang, fire!’…as in The Rovers,” “all limp around as if lame,” and “[cover] one eye with his hand” from injuries sustained in battle. Although this song and its attached play-acting are associated with Old England and America, and do not contain references to the European war at hand, the institutionalized encouragement to fight in skirmishes, shoot each other, and act out battle wounds from these fights is nothing short of fascinating. Not only do children merely sing of the soldier’s life of marching, but they also

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act out skirmishes, relishing in the gory details. The march tune here is more obviously 
wedded to the battle, rather than simply suggestive of lining up as if marching in a parade.

Example 11: “The Roman Soldiers.”

These more explicitly war-related (but not necessarily to the current war) songs find 
a more extreme parallel in war propaganda produced for children. The Captain Tick-Mouse 
series (1918) by Roy Rutherford Bailey provides such an example (see Figure 5). Three 
and “The Adventure of the Cat O’Dawn” provide attractive, neatly-packaged propaganda 
that invites children to contribute to the war effort. Like the teens in fictional war adventure 
novels, Captain Tick-Mouse takes his young toddler friends on exciting patriotic adventures.
In “The Adventure of the Torch of Liberty,” the tots are given Secret Service Stars to wear, as proof of their patriotism, while Captain Tick-Mouse flies a magical Liberty airplane that runs not on gasoline, but on patriotism. Captain Tick-Mouse warns them that it “runs only on Uncle Sam’s business…if you tried to fly in it just for fun, it wouldn’t budge an inch.”

The children, called the Torch Bearers, are also invited to sing their own song, to the tune of “Keep the Home Fires Burning,” a popular war tune by Ivor Novello and Lena Ford from 1914. In “The Adventure of the Cat O’Dawn,” once the “bugle sounded…the happy little Thrifters marched down the long stairs to the Torch Bearer Song they loved to sing….And their proud hearts almost burst the buttons off their little blouses as they stepped along to

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103 Roy Rutherford Bailey, Captain Tick-Mouse and His Adventures with the Torch Bearers (Chicago: R.R. Bailey, 1918), 4.
that never-to-be-forgotten chorus.”104 The children sing of “[keeping] the Torch a-burning” and “Ours the power amazing. To keep that Torch a-blazing. Every Stamp Helps the Boys in camp, Win for Uncle Sam!”105 Although this language is rather militaristic, and perhaps off-putting to a child, the inner cover of the book contains a letter written from Captain Tick-Mouse, “Your loving little friend,” to its readers.106 This letter helps build a relationship and trust between the child readers and the cuddly, though militaristic, mouse character that will guide them through their various patriotic activities.

As would be expected, the stories contain a great deal of war rhetoric. Captain Tick-Mouse refers to his young human friends as “an army of children,” which can “do more toward winning victory for Uncle Sam and Miss Columbia than any of its little soldiers ever dreamed.”107 George Washington himself makes an appearance, calling the young Torchbearers “true patriots” who are “signing a new Declaration of Independence—the independence that Thrift alone can give.”108 A stamp, pasted onto the page most likely by a young reader, shows little boys shaking hands with George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Furthermore, taking up Teddy Roosevelt’s rhetoric of 100% Americanism, which mostly targeted immigrants from Germany and other countries, Captain Tick-Mouse tells the children that those who save at least one Thrift Stamp a week are put on the Honor Roll. He goes on to explain, “Those whose families are all Torch Bearers are allowed to write

104 Bailey, Captain Tick-Mouse, 27.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid., 2.
107 Ibid., 7, 10.
108 Ibid., 15.
Not only are children encouraged to take part in the war effort, by saving money, thrifting, and making money for bonds and loans, but they are also encouraged to pressure their families to take part as well. As is the case with all propaganda for children, the element of thrift was a part of adult culture which then trickled down into children’s culture. The July 1915 issue of the *Woman’s Home Companion* contains the fourth installment of a series entitled “Mrs. Larry’s Adventures in Thrift.” This series by Anna Steese Richardson told the true story of a housewife working to make the most of her pocketbook.

Although children’s song collections do not fall into the realm of propaganda, it is important to contextualize and differentiate them from the concurrent war-related print materials produced for children. War treatment in children’s literature and serials ranged from entertaining, to informative, to propaganda purposes. Many of these print materials were targeted at older children who could read, while song collections were mostly produced for adults to use with nursery school and early elementary children in the home or at school. Regardless of their purposes or targeted age groups, the songs contained are part of a greater constellation not only of war-related print materials, but also of the ideals and constructions that guided and framed the ways that adults approached and treated children. In many ways, these songs act as a microcosm, a site in which ideals, concerns, and values could be concentrated and played out. The variety of print materials presented, musical or not, provides insight into the complicated web of new and old ideas that guided the treatment and construction of children in the midst of war.

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110 Anna Steese Richardson, “Mrs. Larry’s Adventures in Thrift,” *Woman’s Home Companion* 42.7 (July 1915): 16.
Although song collections produced for children were not propagandistic in nature, Tin Pan Alley composers, producers, and cover artists seized upon the opportunity to picture children as part of their propaganda. Tin Pan Alley tunes that figured children prominently in their messages come in two basic forms: those that use the children of soldiers for their subject, and those that lay claim to the best way to raise children in wartime.

Songs about the children of soldiers are easily demarcated along gendered lines. This is unsurprising, given the already gendered approach to children since the nineteenth century. Like stock characters, boys are depicted as individuals who take on a great deal of responsibility when their fathers leave for war. They are constructed as either little soldiers who wish to fight the war themselves, or as new “men of the house” when their fathers leave. Girls, on the other hand, occupy a constructed, stock character space among female characters whose identities are predicated upon their men. Little girls, often toddlers, are constructed as crying, prayerful angels who must wait patiently for their soldier fathers to return home safely, if they do return at all.

The second part of this chapter discusses the ways that war culture became a topic of discussion in child-rearing manuals. Although popular sheet music was not connected or concerned with proper child-rearing, threads of the militarist-pacifist debate are visible in popular song, and often for propagandistic purposes. In the child-rearing debate, it is not children who figure most, but rather mothers and the identities formed in motherhood. That children and mothers occupied the same domestic space from the nineteenth century into the twentieth has been discussed in Chapter 1, and that imaginative relegating of women and
children to the same sphere is played out in these songs. Important, too, is the fact that the mother in World War I sheet music is yet another female stock character whose identity and actions are predicated upon the male, in this case, a soldier son. It is my belief that the praying girl song, along with the mother and sweetheart songs, both of which originated in sheet music during the Civil War, are nearly interchangeable. These three female characters are constructed similarly, as faithful, dear, sweet, and endlessly hopeful. The only difference between them is their age. For toddlers, it is appropriate to be the daughters of soldiers; young adult women, are pictured as sweethearts, while white-haired, older women are relegated to the role of mother. The mother song was then manipulated in popular sheet music for the sake of propaganda—toward either pacifism or militarism in child-rearing. Either way, both pacifist and militarist mothers were constructed within the confines of femininity. In one way, mothers were the pacifists, the peacemakers of the American family. In the other, mothers were the fierce protectors of their family. At first these appear to present an easy dichotomy between pacifism and militarism, but both render a two-dimensional construction of ideal femininity that was centered around family and the home, one predicated on raising children.

**Soldier Boys**

In popular sheet music, the sons of soldiers were tiny men of action. At times they sought to fight in the war themselves, and at others, they took on the role of mini patriarchs in their families in the place of their fathers. Just as boys were depicted as rough-and-tumble types, a foil to their more refined sisters in popular culture, in popular sheet music, they took on equally responsible male roles in opposition to supportive prayerful girls. Note again the
case study of *Harper’s Bazaar* in 1867, which depicted “rebellious, youthful boys and compliant, socialized girls.” The stock character of the soldier boy continues this trend.

The tune “Daddy, I Want to Go,” from 1915, depicts a boy who wishes to go to war. The cover features a sailor with his hand on the shoulder of a young boy, also in a small sailor suit. The boy seems to, as the title would suggest, accompany him to fight for his country (see Figure 6).

![Daddy, I Want to Go](image)

Figure 6: The cover of “Daddy, I Want to Go,” featuring a little boy in a sailor uniform.

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111 Dawson, “The Miniaturizing of Girlhood,” 64.

112 As a complication to these easy demarcations between boys and girls, M. Witmark and Sons did produce a tune entitled “I’m Going to Follow the Boys,” in 1917. The novelty song features a curly-haired girl on the cover with a U.S. Navy uniform, but in order to get a dance or a kiss from the boys. This might challenge the female stock character construct, but it also aligns with it, “I’m Going to Follow the Boys” seems more like a modified version of a sweetheart song.
It is important to point out here that composers had no control over the covers that were produced and included with their songs. Rather, this was a choice made by the publisher. Nonetheless, the covers are part of a larger construction on the part of the publisher, and certainly these pictures would have had an effect on the way the songs were marketed, received, and constructed.

In any case, little soldier boys are modeled after soldier fathers in a number of ways in the tune. The verse, like in many songs, describes the situation, while the chorus gives one character in the song a voice, an anthem, even. The language of the verses is militaristic, speaking of bugle calls, “the tramp of feet,” and “a call to arms.” Militarism is certainly the theme here.

The verses establish a passing of time and a soldiering lineage from one generation of men to the next. Leading up to the chorus, the first reads, “A Yankee lad is heard to say,” as if in the present, while the second verse suggests a passing of time: “Years have gone now Daddy’s old, cannons now have long been cold.” This passing is accompanied by a passing on of soldiering. As the son in the first verse goes off to war, “As his laddie joins the men,” yet another son and yet another generation calls out to his father, that he wants to fight too. The last phrase that leads up to the chorus, “As the Fighters march away” in the first verse and “As his laddie joins the men” in the second, sets up an expectation that will be met in the chorus. Just as the text leads into the chorus, so does the piano accompaniment.

Suddenly, a rhythmic pattern and ascending melody burst forth, hearkening to the introduction of a march (see Example 12). Two measures before the chorus, the meter changes from the verse’s 6/8 time signature to 2/4, and the piano plays militaristic, bugle-like rhythms.
Example 12: The march-like lead up to the chorus of “Daddy, I Want to Go.”

After the verse sets up the story, the chorus is sung in the voice of the little boy:

“Daddy, Daddy, I want to go, I want to fight our country’s foe.” As Example 13 shows, the melody for “I want to go” imitates a short bugle call.

Example 13: The beginning of the chorus for “Daddy, I Want to Go,” including a bugle-like motive for “I want to go.”

The boy is so serious about soldiering that he forsakes his frivolous toys in order to engage in more worthwhile activities: “I’m tired of playing soldier with the boys, Whose only pleasure is to play with toys.” Now that he wants to fight in the war, he is invested with a sense of responsibility.
“Daddy, I Want to Go” uses a number of musical devices and references to link boys with patriotism, war service, and marching. In addition to the lineage established between soldier fathers and their future soldier sons and militaristic, marching rhythms and language, the song also seems to contain a reference to an earlier patriotic hit, George Cohan’s “You’re a Grand Old Flag,” from 1906. The chorus is even in the same key, and in measures 9-14, the ascending line from G to B is similar to Cohan’s hit. The rhythm and pitches of the next measure mimic “You’re a Grand Old Flag” quite closely, to the words “Whose only pleasure” (see Examples 14 and 15).

Whether by coincidence or by choice, the similarity to “You’re a Grand Old Flag,” perhaps seen as an earlier generation of patriotic song being passed on into a new one, is part of a milieu of militaristic language and musical material that populates “Daddy, I Want to Go.” The little boy is a serious, responsible tot, a version of his soldier father in miniature.

Example 14: From the chorus of Cohan’s “You’re a Grand Old Flag.” The measures in question are 5-10 of this excerpt.
Although it might seem merely a rhetorical device, to picture a young boy as a soldier, it was a reality for some on the continent, and Americans were made aware of their activities. Although not all reports from overseas were correct in American newspapers, the presence of articles of child war heroes in Europe would surely have excited imaginations about the intermingling of child culture and war culture. As early as October 1914, a special cable to the *New York Times* reported on a twelve-year-old French boy who, in his words, hid in a troop train [after being orphaned]….There I picked up a wounded man’s rifle and fought in the trenches. Afterward [a Colonel] sent for me. He said I had done well and might stay with his regiment. He let me keep my rifle, and ordered that a uniform and a horse be given me. Since then I have been through the battles of Denain, Meaux, and the Marne, and I am going north again soon.\(^\text{113}\)

At the close of the article, the writer romanticizes the boy further, remarking that he “lit the cigarette I proffered, blew a big cloud of smoke into the air and cantered off, sitting his horse with true soldierly smartness.”

Another French boy was the topic of a January 1915 article in the *New York Times*. A sixteen-year-old apparently “killed [a] German captain and carried dispatches.” The naval surgeon accompanying the boy for his Paris interview claimed: “this is France’s youngest hero, who has been decorated for valor here and fought on the American continent.” Not only is the boy lauded for his heroic acts, but his young age is hailed as central to his success. Describing his experiences carrying a dispatch under heavy fire, the boy claims, “The Captain told me to take a message about two miles, saying, ‘You are so small they won’t hit you.’ So I opened the throttle wide and let her go down the round. Several shells burst around me, but the engine roared so that I hardly noticed them. It was all over in five minutes.”

An article in *The Washington Post* from July 1916 openly promotes using young boys for war, because they are suited best for it. “Boys Are Best Soldiers” was picked up from the Toledo News-Bee, and the author explains that boys are in fact *deal* soldiers. Taking advantage of the recklessness of youth, the article goes on to say that boys make the best soldiers. They have the resiliency, the recuperative power of youth. War to them is a romance. They do not think of consequences as older men do. It is youth that makes the reckless charges, the daring forays. Youth leads the forlorn hopes….No, they are not too young for war. We are learning here and abroad that nothing is too young or too sacred for war.

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116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

This glorification of boy soldiers was not restricted to Europe. One profile piece in *The Washington Post* in March 1914 glorified the “Littlest Soldier of Big War”—a ten-year-old accepted into an Ohio regiment in as a drummer boy in the Civil War.\(^{119}\) That little drummer boy, named Gilbert Van Zandt and sixty-two at the time of the article, relives his childhood as an enlisted soldier and looks fondly upon the memory of receiving a pony for his work, and even garnishes his discharge papers from when he was merely twelve years old.

An article in the *Chicago Tribune* from May of the same year shows a large picture of a small boy in full regalia, wrapped in an American flag. Entitled “Boy ‘Policeman’ Who Would Be a Soldier,” the article introduces Donald Mathews, a five-year-old Chicago policeman who “on pay day receives an envelope of pennies from the paymaster.”\(^{120}\) Like Gilbert before him, Donald expressed an interest in soldiering. He marched downtown and proffered a letter to Uncle Sam: “Dear Uncle Sam: I want to go to Mexico with the soldiers. I have a gun and a club, which I have learned to use on the loafers who ‘hang around’ the station. Please answer. Don Mathews.”\(^{121}\) The article notes that Donald decided against bringing his aforementioned gun with him for this trip, “fearing an arrest as a gunman.”\(^{122}\)

These articles, and many others like them, promote a batch of avidly militaristic youngsters, suggesting that patriotism and heroism can (and should!) come in small packages.

Another song, “You’re Your Mamma’s Little Daddy Now,” from 1918, deals not with young soldiering, but rather with the aftermath of losing a father in the war. Here, the young boy is expected to fulfill the patriarchal role of his father in his absence. Again, the


\(^{121}\) *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Boy ‘Policeman’ Who Would Be a Soldier”: 5.

\(^{122}\) Ibid.
young boy is invested with a sense of responsibility. The cover features a mother in a chair, holding her son, probably eight or nine years old, in the bottom left corner, while a battle scene plays out in a sort of cloud in the upper right-hand corner (see Figure 7). The colors are muted, and the little boy wears a uniform, complete with riding boots. An opened letter lies at their feet.

Again, the verses depict the scene, while the chorus is sung in the voice of one of the characters in the story. The texture and range in the accompaniment change to accommodate the speaker, in this case, the narrator or the mother (in verse two) and the little boy. The letter seen on the cover makes an appearance in the first verse, revealing that something has gone wrong: “It came in the mail this morning, His letter so long delayed. Quickly she tears it open, to read it with heart afraid.” In many ways, the song sounds quite a bit like a show tune. It opens with full, rolled seventh chords with octave doublings in the right hand and low octaves in the left that alternate with higher, thinner chords. The vocal line features syncopation, and in spite of a rather depressing topic, seems to outline either an F-major chord or a D-minor chord; it is quite ambiguous. The vocal line of the verses is built on two-bar phrases of similar, syncopated rhythmic patterns. For the description of the scene, describing the mother opening the letter, the accompaniment features octaves and doublings and the left hand in low registers. However, when the little boy asks his mother, “Is it from Daddy?” the texture changes dramatically. The range accommodates the little boy’s voice, while the accompaniment takes on the texture and tone of perhaps a lullaby, or a music box melody (see Example 16). The melody is transposed up a full step from the similar phrase four measures earlier. The texture in the accompaniment has thinned out considerably: gone are the full chords in the right hand, and the lower pitches and octave doublings in the left. The accompaniment includes an F4 in the left hand, the chord
spanning only a major sixth, a much smaller interval than the octave and a fourth, as seen four measures earlier. After the little boy cries to his mother, the phrase “Trembling she tells him; tears in her eyes” repeats the melody a minor third lower, and the octave doublings, lower pitches in the left hand, and fuller chords in the right return in the final two measures of the verse before moving on to the chorus.

Figure 7: The cover of “You’re Your Mamma’s Little Daddy Now.”
Example 16: The second and third lines of the verse.

The chorus tune is an exchange between mother and son, in which the boy is transformed from a child into an adult. The mother has just received bad news, and instead of telling her son directly about her father's fate, she establishes her son as the new man of the house. In response to the boy's innocent question about his father, the mother responds by asking for his support. She tells him “Put your loving, little arms around me.” She tells him “Today you take a hero’s place, you’re your Mamma’s little Daddy now,” calling him “My little General.” As in “Daddy, I Want to Go,” playthings and toys are no longer of any consequence, now that he is a responsible young patriarch. She tells him, “Never mind your playthings on the floor. Listen little man, Mamma’s little man, Maybe you won’t need them anymore.” In the face of war, this little boy is transformed from child to responsible adult. He is cast as the patriarch of the family, supplying support for his newly widowed mother, and expected to protect the family as a de facto general.

Yet another example of boy-centered war sheet music constructs an image of the Boy Scouts of America. Rough and tumble, these boys conquered the wilderness, and all the
while acting like little soldiers. Just as young boys were depicted as little soldiers or sailors in popular sheet music, an older population, Boy Scouts were romanticized as young soldiers, their songs containing all the trappings of the valor of war.

One popular song that fits this construct is “The Boy Scouts’ Dream,” a “March-Galop.” The tune contains no words, but is rather a piano tune, an adventure through a battle. Beneath the title on the first page of music is an explanation: “A Boy Scout, after a busy day in camp, being fatigued, dozes off to sleep for a few moments while seated, with his comrades around the camp-fire and dreams the following.” What follows is a six-page romp through a battle, complete with “Thunder of Cannons,” “Hiss of Bullets,” “Heavier Artillery Fire,” and “Approaching the Trenches,” all suggested by piano techniques such as tremolo, rhythmic marches, and crushed grace notes. The rhythms are often square eighth or sixteenth notes, march-like, and marcato.

The form is somewhat palindromic, featuring a series of key changes and then reversing them as the battle continues. As the scout falls asleep, we hear a tremolo “Thunder of Cannon,” a quick “Hiss of Bullets” notated by crushed grace notes leading to a high A (see Example 17). More tremolos follow, along with descending octaves in the left hand, expressing “Heavier Artillery Fire.” As the troops form a line and begin “[Marching] Down The Field,” a simple F-major, pastoral melody is heard, made more quaint by parallel sixths in the right hand with a simple melody beneath. As the battle progresses, the key changes from a militaristic F major to B-flat major and the arriving calvary is heralded by sixteenth-note arpeggios in the right hand. After a “Clashing Of Sabres,” the key changes again to E-flat major, and with a piano tremolo, the music is marked “The Battle Is At Its Height” (see Example 18). A series of tremolos in the right hand are accompanied by ascending and

descending octaves in the left. After a grand marcato E-flat major chord, suddenly the key
changes again, to A-flat major as, the left hand plays a march rhythm and reveille is heard:
“The Boy Scouts’ Dream Is Interrupted By The Morning Call.” When the reveille finishes,
the key returns to E-flat major: “He Hears The Band Marching To The Parade Ground.” As
“The Boys in Khaki Form In Line,” the triadic sixteenth notes return with the key of B-flat.
Soon, with the sound of bugles comes the return of F-major, along with the pastoral melody
from before. There is a “Return To Camp,” followed by an “Attention!” and “Company
Dismissed,” notated by militaristic rhythms in the right hand and octave tremolos in the left.
A stinger closes the tune for the “Salute!” (see Example 19).

Example 17: The opening measures of “The Boy Scouts’ Dream.”

“The Boy Scouts’ Dream” may not necessarily relate to the First World War, but it does
depict a certain construction of boyhood and Boy Scouts. The dream of a Boy Scout is
battle, heavy artillery, calling in the cavalry. This playful tune depicts soldiering as a dream, a fun escape for boys.

Example 18: “The Battle At Its Heighth,” in E-flat major.

Example 19: The pastoral theme of the camp returns, the troops call to attention, and are dismissed, in the home key of F major.

This is a construct that existed before the First World War, but which was certainly used to song producers’ advantage once the war hit—boys were expected to fulfill their patriotic
duties as they grew up. Fathers going off and sometimes dying in war was a reality for many children during World War I. For boys, Tin Pan Alley songs constructed them as bearers of responsibility, either wishfully, in terms of fighting in the war alongside their fathers, or in reality, by fulfilling their fathers’ patriarchal roles in the family when they failed to return home from the war.

**Prayerful Girls**

While boys were constructed as little soldiers and invested with new responsibility in the absence of soldier fathers, girls were depicted quite differently. This is not to say that prayerful girls were not responsible, but mature girls were depicted differently than mature boys. For boys of the early twentieth century, maturity meant stepping up to the plate, whether in the home, or imaginatively on the battlefield. For girls, however, maturity meant holding back tears and boldly praying and hoping every night. In prayerful girl songs, the tiny tots are relegated away from action and into a space of waiting and praying. They are described as sweet, pure, and above all, prayerful. On the covers of prayerful girls songs, they are pictured within the domestic sphere, praying in bed before going to sleep or being cradled in their mother’s laps. Again, this construct arises from a cultural relegating of women and (often female) children together into the domestic sphere.

As noted earlier, the “prayerful girl” related directly to a larger construct of female representation in popular song, in which women are often portrayed in relation to soldiers or

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124 Boy Scout songs can be located from before the war, and they often advocate for patriotic service to defend the United States and its flag. An example of this pre-war Boy Scout patriotism can be found in P.J. Jersey’s *Boy Scouts: Patriotic March Song* from 1913 (Cleveland, OH).

125 As has been seen, young boys were often constructed in the same category as their older male counterparts: brothers or fathers acting as soldiers, sailors, and patriarchs. Young boys as infants would have been relegated to the domestic sphere, but upon early elementary age, they were clearly constructed as rough-and-tumble, wholly different from young girls. Girls, on the other hand, are nearly always constructed in the domestic sphere, and they stay there into adulthood, when they become the mothers, starting the process again.
men. Toddlers relate to soldiers as their children, thus falling into the “prayerful girl” construct. Older girls, or young adults, relate to them as girlfriends or lovers, and thus are portrayed in “sweetheart songs.” Older women are often portrayed as mothers, and are thus depicted in “mother songs.” Both sweetheart songs and mother songs date back to the Civil War, and these constructs were brought forward again, recycled, and reconstituted in the Great War. Either way, these constructions of women in relation to the war are predicated on soldiers, on men.

One example of the prayerful girl is the tune “Will the Angels Guard My Daddy Over There?” from 1918. This song acts as an excellent example for showing the kinds of elements that went into the construction of the “prayerful girl” in WWI popular song. First, the girl toddler is depicted alongside her mother, as they both inhabit a domestic space. Secondly, she is pure and prayerful; the music plays into her small, innocent prayer by instructing the musicians to play and sing *Tenderly*.

The cover of this song features a picture of a mother in a chair, most likely in a parlor or living room of some sort, as Figure 8 illustrates. She and her daughter, who kneels on a pillow at her feet, resting her arms in her mother’s lap, are both dressed in nightgowns. Her mother embraces her daughter, as they seem to share their pain. Symbols of wartime are sprinkled in the background: a blue star service flag displayed in the window, and a fuzzy photo of the child’s soldier-father over the fireplace. The image they thus portray is one of patriotism and support for their soldier father-husband, but also one of domesticity and the home. They are sharing a private, domestic moment in their own home.
The tune follows verse-chorus form. As is common, the verse and chorus shift speakers. The verse describes the scene, while the chorus switches to the child’s own words. The two verses convey a passing of time, as in “Daddy, I Want to Go.” Although the soldier boy song conveys a passing of time concurrently with a passing of the soldier baton, so to say, from generation, to generation, “Will the Angels Guard My Daddy” conveys the changing of seasons during the year of the father soldier’s absence. As Example 20 illustrates, the first verse talks of a “quiet little cottage” with “flowers in bloom, And the perfume of roses fills the air.” Then, the second verse speaks of winter: “the flowers bloom no more, For the wintry winds and snowflakes fill the air.” In the first verse, the “dimpled darling” looked at her “father’s vacant chair” and “she’s asking ev’ry day Just why her dear
old daddy marched away.” By the second verse, however, with the passing of time, their toddler has reached some maturity, no longer asking questions, but rather showing a “faith that makes her say, Her daddy will come back again someday.” With age comes wisdom and maturity, and this toddler’s mature act is to hope and be patriotic.

Example 20: The verses of “Will the Angels Guard My Daddy Over There?”
The music of the verses, in C major, is rather unsettling, and uncommon for many popular tunes. The melody features a number of chromaticisms; the accompaniment, a number of secondary dominants. The three cadences in the verse resist and withhold tonic resolution, arriving instead on dominant and dominant-seventh chords. Resolution to the tonic is not reached until the chorus. The unsettled experience of waiting for a soldier to come home is rendered harmonically, as listeners are not allowed a proper resolution until the chorus.

During the chorus, which is marked “tenderly,” the daughter asks innocently, “Will the angels guard my daddy over there? Will they watch him and protect him everywhere?” The chromaticism of the verses carries over into the chorus, although the chorus does have a new melody. One interesting feature of the child’s speech is the melody that accompanies “daddy over there.” The rest of the melody is quite chromatic, until the words “daddy over there.” As Example 21 illustrates, the phrase “over there” outlines a chord in second inversion, just like George M. Cohan’s hit song “Over There.” Quotations and references to “Over There” were common among popular songs, and it is likely that F. Henri Klickman, would have been familiar with the smash hit. The relationship is clear, although Klickman alters the contour and chordal structure from the original tune. As seen in Example 22, in Cohan’s tune, the phrase “over there” features a descending sixth, followed by an ascending fourth; as Example 21 shows, Klickman’s “Will the Angels Guard My Daddy” features an ascending sixth followed by a descending third. Although they are both arpeggios, the way that the second-inversion chords are outlined differed in terms of contour. Furthermore, in “Will the Angels Guard My Daddy,” the word “over” is accompanied by a G7 chord, the dominant, which resolves to the tonic C major on “there.” In Cohan’s tune, “over there” outlines a B-flat major chord, the tonic.
In “You’re Your Mamma’s Little Daddy Now,” a reduced texture was used only for
the little boy’s voice before he was transformed into patriarch and general of the family. In
“Will the Angels Guard My Daddy Over There,” however, a reduced texture, sounding
similar to a music box or lullaby, is used for the little girl’s prayer as she fulfills her female
role as prayerful supporter. After asking her mother if the angels will guard her father, the
child “nestles down to rest on her loving mother’s breast” and “murmurs soft and low her
evening pray’r.” She prays, “How I love you, dear old daddy, how I miss you! I pray to
Heav’n each night that God will bless you.” The texture, to accommodate her tender toddler
prayer, becomes a bit simpler. Rather than both hands sounding consistent eighth notes, as
in the previous measures, the lower voices hold notes, while the right hand plays simple
parallel thirds to double the melody. The left hand plays short ascending, arpeggiated figures,
which sound pastoral, perhaps even like horn calls (see Example 23).

Example 23: Reduced texture and parallel thirds in the baby’s prayer in “Will the Angels
Guard My Daddy Over There?”

The child’s final words of prayer come from the New England Primer, a reading primer
dating back to the American colonies. She alters the prayer a bit, saying, “Now I lay me
down to sleep, I pray the Lord your soul to keep” (italics original). She thus changes “my soul
to keep” to “your soul to keep,” adding a tag at the end: “Angels, guard my daddy over
there.” After this final phrase, which lingers on “sleep” with a G7 chord (the dominant), and
with “keep” an F major chord (the subdominant), the song finally settles into the tonic, C major by the end.

A similar approach is found in “Just a Baby’s Prayer at Twilight (for Her Daddy Over There),” also from 1918 (see Figure 9). The cover pictures a young girl in a nightgown, kneeling on her bed, facing her pillow, her eyes closed as she says her prayer. Her doll lay next to her, its head on her pillow, its face rather surprised-looking. Like the boys in soldier songs, this pious little girl has forsaken her doll, her toys, and her playful child life, at least for a moment, in order to be prayerful for the sake of her father. In times like these, the cover seems to suggest, there is no time for silly playing. It is a time of prayer and service to one’s country and family.

Figure 9: The cover of “Just A Baby’s Prayer at Twilight.”
During the verses, and most of the chorus, the child and the scene are described by an outside narrator (see Example 24). As opposed to other narrators, however, who act merely as observers, this one is more involved. The verses seem to function as if the speaker is making a case for the child’s prayer. In the first verse, the speaker names “the pray’rs of mothers…the pray’rs of others…” but none can compare to the prayer of a child: “I felt the pain of each one, but this one [the child’s prayer] made me cry.” The second verse describes not the individuals praying, but rather the content of their prayers. All other prayers, the speaker seems to suggest, are frivolous compared to the baby’s prayer: “The gold that some folks pray for, Brings nothing but regrets….Some pray’rs may be neglected, Beyond the Golden Gates. But when they’re all collected, Here’s one that never waits.” Just like the rhetorical case being made for the child’s prayer, the melody is rather repetitive: every two measures, except for the ends of phrases, contain the same rhythm, an eighth rest followed by three eighth notes and two quarters, but the pitches change according to the chord progression.

The verses function, as in other songs, as a set-up for the chorus, at which point the melody changes to longer, more legato phrases, which outline a G minor pentatonic scale (see Example 25). Although the melody is wholly different, the opening lines of the chorus recall J.L. Molloy and Clinfton Bingham’s sentimental tune “Love’s Old Sweet Song,” from 1890. The popular song, which later found its way into the soundtracks of such films as “Strange Interlude”(1932) and “Cheaper By the Dozen”(1950), is well known for its chorus, which begins “Just a song at twilight, where the lights are low.” “Just a Prayer at Twilight” recalls this first line of the chorus with “Just a baby’s pray’r at twilight, when lights are low.” While boys’ tunes tend to have more to do with marches, prayerful girl tunes come out of a different tradition: the sentimental song, and this reference solidifies such a connection.
Example 24: The verses of “Just a Baby’s Prayer at Twilight.”

Example 25: The opening of the chorus of “Just a Baby’s Prayer at Twilight.”
The speaker continues, saying that “Her [mom’s] precious little tot is dad’s forget-me-not.” What is important about the baby’s prayer, the speaker seems to suggest, is that she prays of her own accord: “After saying ‘goodnight mama,’ she climbs up stairs, quite unawares, and says her pray’rs ‘Oh! Kindly tell my daddy that he must take care.’ That’s a baby’s pray’r at twilight for her daddy ‘over there.’” Again, the text of Cohan’s “Over There” makes an appearance—by then, “over there” was a common reference among popular wartime sheet music.

One final prayerful girl song plays into propaganda posters from World War I: Ben Black’s “Bring Back a Belgian Baby to Me” (see Figure 10). This song is less prayerful than thoughtful. The cover features a little girl with a soldier father, their arms outstretched to each other. The entire song is sung from the perspective of the daughter, singing to her father.

Figure 10: The cover of “Bring Back a Belgian Baby to Me.”
Again, the daughter is wedded in the domestic sphere with her mother, as she notes “Mother seems so lonely,” while “I get so tired of play.” The daughter’s real, concern, however, is for a certain kind of souvenir: “For there is something that I want, and gee! I want it bad! Please do this favor daddy dear for me, When you come back from across the sea.” She makes her intentions clear in the chorus: “Bring back a Belgian baby to me, I think they’re just as sweet as can be.” Her concerns also reveal some awareness of the collateral damage that is caused by war—she is concerned for the Belgian orphans: “One who’s lost a father or mother, A sister or brother, I’m sure we could love each other.” Even for her young age, this girl (a construction, of course) recognizes the lack of awareness that a baby would have: “They don’t know what the war’s all about, They’re just as innocent as they can be.” Although this girl is not pictured kneeling at her bed for her daddy’s safety, she is quite aware of the goings-on of war and the troubles that other individuals might face, especially Belgian babies.

A song about Belgian babies might seem out of place, except for the existence of war propaganda posters centering on Belgian women and children. One poster, produced by the U.S. Food Administration, features a gaunt-looking woman with an infant in her lap, and a boy and girl next to her, all hungry (see Figure 11).126 “HUNGER” is displayed in all capital letters. The Food Administration urges Americans to consume less wheat, meat, and sugar for the good of Belgium. As in the previous propaganda mentioned, women and children are foregrounded for more sympathy and guilt. Yet another poster foregrounds a mother and two babies, this time for the sale of liberty bonds, instead of rationing food (see Figure 8).127 A mother, whose face is hidden, seems to, as the poster says, “Plead in vain,” while a toddler

126 Henry Raleigh, Hunger (Chicago: Edwards and Deutsch Lithograph Company, 1918).

clings to her, begging, and another baby is cradled in her arm (see Figure 12). Their situation is dire, and would certainly cause an emotional response. The plight of the Belgian baby was well-known among Americans.

Figure 11: Propaganda poster featuring a Belgian mother and children.

Figure 12: Propaganda poster featuring a Belgian mother and children.
These posters, however, are not a minority among propaganda posters. Children figured often in propaganda posters, as a way to engender sympathy and spur adults to action, both in America and across the pond. Children were used symbolically in these posters for a variety of purposes, including the selling of war bonds and coaxing citizens to enlist. Savile Lumley’s famous British propaganda poster from 1915, entitled “Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?” is an excellent example (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Savile Lumley’s propaganda poster.

Here, a father is seated in his armchair, looking off as if pondering the question, while his daughter (who most likely asked the question) sits on his lap, eyeing him innocently. His son sits at his feet, playing with soldiers, which is no doubt symbolic. In this poster, children are used to guilt or prompt an otherwise uninvolved father to enlist. They implicate him in the

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responsibility of the war’s resolution. In America, children were used to engender sympathy and guilt for war work. One poster entitled “Don’t Waste Food While Others Starve,” produced in 1917 by the U.S. Food Administration, uses a mother and her gaunt-looking children to make ordinary citizens feel guilty for not properly rationing food (see Figure 14).129

An earlier poster by Fred Spear urges men to enlist with an image referencing the sinking of the Lusitania (see Figure 15).130 As if floating in the murky depths of the sea, a mother holds her infant to her bosom, the both of them deceased. The bottom right of the poster simply reads: “Enlist.”


Children made powerful images for the war effort because they were helpless. They were portrayed as innocent victims, whose plights must be aided and avenged. As was discussed in chapter one, and is evident in the study of WWI musical materials, women and children, as cohabiters of the domestic sphere, were often pictured together. Women clutching dying or dead babies proved a powerful image, showing their weakness, while the responsibility lay with fathers, brothers, and sons to save them. In his comparative study of World War I, Watkins reveals that posters featuring children were common in France and Belgium as well. Speaking of a famous poster by the Fatherless Children of France, Inc., he explains that “the
parentless child was one of the most powerful emblems of the war.”\textsuperscript{131} This is true in America, not only in propaganda posters, but also in popular songs of the day.

**Pacifist Mothers**

In her 1916 manual, *Sons and Daughters*, Sidonie Matzner Gruenberg highlights the impact of the world war on child-rearing. Devoting a chapter to “Children and the War,” she urges parents to discuss worldwide events in order to reinforce core values: “Those who hesitate [to discuss the war]…lose a great opportunity to instil (sic) in them early a determination to use their powers to combat [it].”\textsuperscript{132} The line between war and home may seem distinct and fixed, but in World War I America, propaganda blurred that line. H.R. Hopps’ famous “Destroy This Mad Brute” poster features an ape in a *Pickelhaube*, carrying a helpless woman in his arm.\textsuperscript{133} This image preys on feelings associated with domestic female life, prompting men to protect their own female family members, and enlist (see Figure 16). War propaganda that called on domestic images extended to popular sheet music, in particular, to variations on the Civil War’s mother song, pacifist and militarist (or strong) mother songs. Motherhood during World War I touches on feminist and literary criticism, as well as domesticity in war propaganda. These songs are further contextualized in contemporary sentiments and anxieties expressed in American newspapers, novels, and child-rearing manuals.

Pacifist motherhood is hardly a stretch during World War I. Many civically-minded women were staunchly pacifist. In fact, pacifism and the international women’s suffrage

\textsuperscript{131} Watkins, *Proof Through the Night*, 108.

\textsuperscript{132} Gruenberg, *Sons and Daughters*, 141.

\textsuperscript{133} H.R. Hopps, *Destroy This Mad Brute* (1917).
movement went hand-in-hand. In her article on motherhood and conscription in World War I, feminist scholar Susan Zeiger discusses two major women’s peace organizations, the Women’s Peace Party and the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace. Although they differed, the two organizations seemed to agree on one main point of ideology: “pacifist maternalism—the idea that women have an innate affinity for peace due to their capacity for giving life.”

One 1914 article from the Washington Post covers a group of British women led by “militant suffragist” Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, who refused to bear children, what she termed “cannon food,” until the war was over. And in an April, 1915 article for the New York Times, Elsie

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Clews Parsons lamented that since the war, the sale of toy soldiers and war games increased dramatically, from three million produced per year, to five million. She pleads, “To the little boy who shoots down with his popgun his row of pewter (or steel) soldiers, does not the idea of killing people become a familiarity of a kind, freed at any rate from the dismay caused by novelty?” The photo accompanying the article shows two boys playing with soldiers and cannons, decked out in war garb: one wears a German uniform, complete with pointed *Pickelhaube* helmet, while the other dons a Russian Cossack uniform (see Figure 17). The caption beneath reads “‘Soldiering is Indorsed (sic) and Made Familiar in the Nursery.’”

Figure 17: Photo from Elsie Clews Parson’s article, “War Increases Toy Soldier Sales,” April 4, 1915.

Gruenberg, too, confronts this mentality head-on, claiming that children merely act out the war in order to better understand it. A child who plays with toy soldiers is not

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137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.
necessarily militaristic, but rather is interpreting the information he or she receives on a daily basis:

In times of peace, many of us can visualize the horrors of war clearly enough to make us oppose everything that encourages militarism. But with half of the civilized world bleeding, the horrors are before the minds of all of us constantly, and we are moved to do something more effective than shut our eyes….we turn our attention to a crusade against ‘military’ toys and the playing of soldiers by the children. There is of course no use in over-stimulating children in these plays…. But neither is it wise to forbid boys playing soldier….The child, at a certain age, will not only imitate what he sees going on around him, but he will dramatize all the activities of which he learns. This instinct is there, if the child is normal.\(^{139}\)

Although Gruenberg points out that playing with war toys does not necessarily prompt a child to become violent and militaristic, war play sometimes went horribly sour. A February 1918 article in the *Chicago Tribune* tells of a fourteen-year-old boy who was accidentally shot in the head by a friend while they played soldier.\(^{140}\) And in March of 1919, the *Tribune* reported that a twelve-year-old mistakenly shot his thirteen-year-old friend in the head while they played target practice.\(^{141}\) It is no doubt that the war was an inescapable part of childhood in this period—sometimes innocuous, and sometimes fatal.

Given these anxieties and unfortunate accidents, it is not surprising that pacifist motherhood would find its way into song. The pacifism revealed in these songs, however, is more complicated than the constructed dichotomy found in American newspapers of the time. While contributors to newspaper columns aligned themselves with either side of a two-dimensional dichotomy between pacifism and militarism, within the repertoire of pacifist mothers, one finds both a silent, lamenting pacifism and more active, aggressive pacifism.

“Don’t Take My Darling Boy Away,” from 1915, by Will Dillon and Al von Tilzer, of the

\(^{139}\) Gruenberg, *Sons and Daughters*, 135.

\(^{140}\) *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “La Grange Boy Killed While Playing Soldier,” February 6, 1918: 3.

\(^{141}\) *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Playing at War, Boy Kills Chum,” March 7, 1919: 5.
famous vaudeville and songwriting family, falls along the lines of a silent, tearful pacifism that is built on mourning (see Figure 18). As in other tunes, it is in verse-chorus form, with the mother’s own words forming the chorus. In a recording from either 1916 or 1917, J. Phillips sings the verse, while Helen Clark is brought in to sing the mother’s tune for the chorus.

As in both boys’ and girls’ tunes, the verses suggest a passing of time (see Example 26). In the first verse, a mother prays with the only son left after the war. Her kneeling to pray certain recalls the praying girl songs, and further proves the female constructions produced by songwriters: mothers are merely an older version of the praying girl construct. Suddenly, a knock is heard at the door, and her son was “commanded to war.” Her pleas, “No, Captain, please” enter at the tritone. While the piece is in the key of B-flat major, the pleas “No, Captain, please,” are notated on an E-natural in a C major chord.

The second verse tells of the result of taking her boy away: “A hero is now laid to rest, A hero and one of the best. She’d fought with each son, The battle he’d won.” It is ambiguous whether the hero laid to rest is her final son, or the mother, dying from heartbreak. The verse goes on to further valorize her as the true hero: “She never went to war, She was the hero by far. They gave the guns, but who gave the sons.” Either way, her family was plagued with death (as will be seen in the chorus), and the tune holds this desperately pacifist mother up as a true hero, for giving the greatest sacrifice she could.

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As Example 27 shows, the chorus is in her voice, as she pleads, “Don’t take my darling boy away from me.” She further supports her argument, not for pacifist reasons, but for the sacrifices she has already made: “You took his father and brothers three, Now you come back for more.”
Example 26: The verses of “Don’t Take My Darling Boy Away!”
Example 27: The chorus of “Don’t Take My Darling Boy Away!”

As in the second verse, the mother goes on to honor the mothers who might be forgotten in lieu of soldiers: “Who are the heroes that fight your wars, Mothers who have no say.” The melodic and harmonic elements of the piece are rather expected, being triadic, martial, and the harmonic construction consisting of a number of secondary dominants. The song complicates the easy dichotomy of pacifism and militarism. It describes a mother who has, indeed, provided sons for war, but that sacrifice was greater than originally anticipated. This is a mother who is a pacifist because she has already provided a husband and sons. The kinds of claims made valorize mothers for their sacrifice, holding them up as the greatest heroes. The claims made in this tune and other pacifist-leaning tunes would be manipulated and refuted in later militarist tunes, for as soon as the United States entered the war, pacifist
tunes were quickly removed—there was no place for any other voice than support once the United States took part in the Great War. The sacrificing mother in militarist propaganda tunes did not lament; rather, she celebrated her sacrifice and achievement.

By far the best-known tune, then among popular culture, and now among scholars, with Alfred Bryan and Al Piantadosi, entitled “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” (see Figure 19). While “Don’t Take My Darling Boy Away!” paints the pacifist mother in mourning or lament, “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” is an example of an active, aggressive pacifist mother. The song captured Americans’ imaginations and enjoyed great success, as some identified with the pacifist theme, and others criticized, even parodied it. Musical responses were many, and these will be discussed in the next section. The tune enjoyed a number of reprintings, each with new performers printed on the cover. The first printing included “A Mother’s Plea For Peace” beneath the title, with a later reprinting reading “Ed Morton’s Sensational Anti-War Song Hit.” In each version, the front cover depicts an elderly mother in her chair, knitting needles and yarn on the side table, clasping her grown son in her arms as he kneels before her. A dream-bubble of explosions, guns, and soldiers in straight rows hovers above their heads. Above the title in the first printing reads a dedication: “Respectfully dedicated to Every Mother—Everywhere.”

The song is in 2/4, and marked “Marziale,” and suggests that there is no joy in a national victory if home is left empty, and that not all boys can be heroes; some die in vain. Despite the supposed martial quality of the meter and tempo direction, the chorus is rather soothing, and the mother sings of her reason for raising her son: to “be my pride and joy.” That the military “dares to place a musket on his shoulder, To shoot some other mother’s darling boy” is an offense not only to her son, but to the mother as well, who had no such dreams for him. Because the song sparked so many pro-war responses, it is necessary to
print the chorus here, as it will be helpful not only in piecing together their argument, but also for future reference:

I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier,
I brought him up to be my pride and joy.
Who dares to place a musket on his shoulder
To shoot some other mother’s darling boy?
Let nations arbitrate their future troubles,
It’s time to lay the sword and gun away,
There’d be now war today,
If mothers would all say,
I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier.

The song rails against the throwing away of sons to war, when nations themselves are those at war. The mother in the song is an aggressive pacifist, unwilling to put her son to death for
the sake of war. Rather than sending sons off to fight war, the mother suggests an alternate solution, one that does not involve “[placing] a musket on his shoulder to shoot some other mother’s darling boy.” What she suggests is that “nations [should] arbitrate their future troubles, It’s time to lay the sword and gun away.” Furthermore, she proposes that in mother pacifists mothers banded together, they could change the course of history, and the future: “There’d be no war today, if mothers would all way, I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier.”

Bryan and Piantadosi’s song enjoyed marvelous success, and tremendous opposition as well. An April 1915 article in The Los Angeles Times reprinted part of the chorus because the author “has issued it to render a national service, and if possible, to the end the horrors of war.”143 The article is titled “Song Aimed to Check Warfare,” with the sub-headline reading “Expressions of a Mother on Modern Conflicts,” and that is exactly the kind of genuine expression that seems to have touched this writer: “The beauty of the thought is so apparent and the music so skillfully woven that the song is achieving a wide popularity in many States of the Union.” The song was so popular that it became a part of the section of one-liners included in The Los Angeles Times. The segment, called “Pen Points: By the Staff,”144 included such zingers as “Why not organize a league of Americans who are sorry they did not vote for Taft in 1912? It might be necessary to hold a series of overflow meetings” and “Perhaps the present Democratic national administration is not worrying about the debt it is piling up, knowing that it must be paid by its Republican successors after 1917.” Included among them is a reference to Bryan and Piantadosi’s song: “Popular selection for the day to be sung at a conference of bachelor maids: ‘I Didn’t Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier.’”


144 Los Angeles Times, “Pen Points: By the Staff,” March 26, 1915: II4.
Militarist Mothers

Strong mother songs from 1915 to 1919 construct motherhood in wartime, coding the normally creative, maternal act of child-rearing militant. Susan Zeiger, studying motherhood in war culture, describes the construction of the strong mother: it “[valorized] proper, ‘patriotic’ motherhood, defined by obedience to the state and the willing sacrifice of sons to the army; [while condemning] ‘unpatriotic’ forms of mothering, which included feminist and pacifist activism and ‘selfish,’ overly emotional attachment to children.”145 This construct of the strong mother rises out of a larger category of songs dating back to the Civil War. The “mother song” depicted a soldier son on the battlefield, crying out to his mother, his inspiration, in song or letter. Fifty years later, beloved, white-haired mothers were no longer mere letter-writers, but home-front soldiers, pushing their sons into battle.

The strong mother was constructed within the confines mother and wife, and as such, she was portrayed as moral, patriotic, and self-sacrificing. These categories, while not mutually exclusive, were played out in popular song and domestic literature. This is no mistake; mothers were essential to the cultivation of domestic values. As Jennifer Haytock argues in *At Home, At War*, the model mother of sentimental novels was responsible for upholding ideals in the home.146 In *For Home and Country*, Celia Malone Kingsbury argues that the mother “assumed a pivotal role in maintaining the morale on the home front,” and certain types of pro-war propaganda both constructed and exploited that role.147 According to literary scholar Sharon Ouditt, historically, mothers were regarded as the “repository for

145 Zeiger, “She Didn’t Raise Her Boy to be a Slacker”: 8.


moral values,” and although mothers were usually the peacekeepers of the family, in wartime, they were remade as Spartans of their private domains.148

Many strong mother songs were published as rebuttals against the 1915 pacifist hit *I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier*, by Alfred Bryan and Al Piantadosi.149 This was merely one of many pacifist songs of the era, but its success sparked a fiery debate that was played out in the nation’s newspapers and sheet music.150 More than a dozen of these propagandistic mother songs are extant, but only four will be examined here, according to their connection to tropes of militant motherhood in popular fiction.151 This study will reveal that these songs, promoting mothers who were moral, patriotic, and self-sacrificing, were embedded in a culture that placed the burden of war support on mothers.

Firstly, constructions of strong motherhood endorsed a narrow definition of morality that was predicated on military service. To prove her strong moral fiber, these songs often positioned mothers between soldier husbands and sons. Such a woman is featured in cowboy poet Captain Jack Crawford’s self-published tune, “My Mother Raised Her Boy to be a Soldier.” This song features lyrical verses describing his father’s Civil War service and his mother’s willing, proud support. These are contrasted by a *spirito*, martial chorus, which refutes Bryan and Piantadosi’s pacifist song word-for-word: “My mother raised her boy to


149 According to Glenn Watkins (249), the song sold over 700,000 copies in the first eight weeks. A recording was made, and then retracted by Victor when the U.S. entered the war. It is also worth noting that the reactionary, militarist songs were written by both famous Tin Pan Alley composers and independent writer-publishers. The reaction against “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” was carried out by large publishing houses and private citizens.

150 Another example is Al von Tilzer and Will Dillon’s “Don’t Take My Darling Boy Away!” (New York: Broadway Music Company, 1915), among others.

151 The sheer variety of songs at the time is astounding. Says Watkins: “Nostalgia, patriotism, blatant propaganda, and concerns regarding disease, race, and gender flooded the songs and posters of the day, and critics seldom attempted to judge their individual merit” (264).
be a soldier….My mother placed a musket on his shoulder, the enemies of freedom to destroy” (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier”</th>
<th>“My Mother Raised Her Boy to be a Soldier”</th>
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<td>Chorus:</td>
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<td>I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier,</td>
<td>My mother raised her boy to be a soldier,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I brought him up to be my pride and joy,</td>
<td>My mother raised a patriotic boy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who dares to place a musket on his shoulder,</td>
<td>My mother placed a musket on his shoulder,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To shoot some other mother’s darling boy?</td>
<td>The enemies of freedom to destroy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let nations arbitrate their future troubles,</td>
<td>My mother raised her boy to be a soldier,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s time to lay the sword and gun away,</td>
<td>My mother raised her boy to be a man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’d be no war today,</td>
<td>And his daddy fought besides,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If mothers would all say,</td>
<td>My dear mother’s boy, and died,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier.”</td>
<td>My mother raised a true American.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The lyrics of the choruses of “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” and “My Mother Raised Her Boy to be a Soldier.”

Crawford also makes a claim for his mother’s essential role in nurturing this narrow definition of morality in his preface to the song:

In our several wars the seeds of patriotism were planted in the breast of our country’s heroic defenders at the mother’s knee in childhood….My mother, although of foreign birth, became a loyal American and taught her foreign-born son to love the flag of her adopted country and the cause of freedom it represents.

As the upholder of morality in the family, Captain Jack’s mother promoted loyalty to her country by supporting the soldiering of both husband and son.

The strong mother was also constructed as a patriot, and her patriotism was often rendered bodily in her son, from an early age; according to Haytock, Ellen Glasgow’s 1919 novel The Builders advocates patriotic mothering. One character in the novel claims that “the future of our democracy rests not in the Halls of Congress, but in the cradle.”

One song that continues this trend is Leo Friedman and J. Will Callahan’s 1916 song “I’m Going to

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152 Haytock, At Home, At War, 20.
Raise My Boy to be a Soldier (and a Credit to the USA).” The song celebrates a mother who “bravely to his father replied, ‘I’m going to raise my boy to be a soldier….I want him to be every inch a man.” This song opposes “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” in more than title. Exploiting Bryan and Piantadosi’s use of the word boy, and disparaging the song’s overly-attached mother, Friedman and Callahan’s mother raises her son for adulthood, which is coded as soldiering.

In this song, strong mother is particularly significant because she is a foil against her husband, who is portrayed as weak and pacifist, in both text and key. While the song is set in the key of C major, the father’s pleas against war are disconcertingly set to a melody in E minor and finally G major toward the end (see Example 28). His pacifist, negative concerns are set not only in a minor key, but also a rather unsettled key within the song’s tonal context. At the chorus, the mother returns the conversation to a more stable position: courage and patriotism, and her claims for militarism are set in the home key of C major, a final return to tonal stability (see Example 29). She declares that, despite the emotional pain, she will “teach him to be true to the old red, white and blue…and a credit to the U.S.A.” The key structures and rhetorical rebuttal in this piece undergird a construct that renders pacifism and uncertainty weak and disorienting, while militarist patriotism is strong and comforting.

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153 This song is treated as a response to I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier by Watkins (251).
Example 28: The father’s pleas for peace in “I’m Going to Raise My Boy to be a Soldier (and a Credit to the U.S.A.),” in E minor.

Example 29: The mother’s patriotic response, bringing the piece back home to the key of C major.
Finally, the strong mothers of domestic novels and Tin Pan Alley songs were renowned for being selfless. According to Kingsbury, “the good women are the ones who rise to the call of both family and state, who sacrifice themselves and their men to defeat the bloody Hun.”\textsuperscript{154} Temple Bailey’s sentimental novel from 1918, \textit{Tin Soldier}, follows suit; Haytock explains that according to the novel, “the definition of ‘woman’ requires self-sacrifice and a willingness to sacrifice one’s men for a noble cause.”\textsuperscript{155} A song from 1917, \textit{America, Here’s My Boy}, presents a mother who bemoans not having raised more sons for soldiering. Arthur Lange and Andrew B. Sterling’s mother is proud to have sacrificed her son for her country: “‘America, I raised a boy for you…. America, he is my only one….But if I had another, he would march beside his brother.’”\textsuperscript{156}

This tune, too, engages with “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” in its text. In reference to Bryan and Piantadosi’s line “Who dares to place a musket on his shoulder,” Lange and Sterling’s mother invites America to “place a musket on his shoulder” (see Example 30). Like Captain Jack Crawford’s mother, Lange and Sterling’s is positioned as a foil to Bryan and Piantadosi’s overly-attached mother. The song emphasizes the son’s independence and agency, because he is “ready to die or do.” This tune employs many of the same musical tools seen in other songs: martial rhythms, a marching 2/4 time signature, and a switch from verses in a minor key to a chorus in the major key. In the Peerless Quartet’s 1917 recording of the tune, portions of a few other patriotic numbers are included for good measure, including “My Country ’Tis of Thee,” “Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are

\textsuperscript{154} Kingsbury, \textit{For Home and Country}, 66.

\textsuperscript{155} Haytock, \textit{At Home, At War}, 10.

\textsuperscript{156} Watkins mentions this song as well (251).
Marching,” by Civil War composer George F. Root, and “Yankee Doodle” and “Dixie,” popular Union and Confederate songs.\(^\text{157}\)

The Civil War provided songwriters a signifier that recalled nostalgic memories of bravery, valor, and loyalty. Many World War I tunes recalled, either in music, verse, or title, Civil War songs, and some even recall the “Spirit of ’76.” Civil War imagery was a natural partner to strong mother songs for two reasons: first, both Union and Confederate women were well known for their fierce loyalty; second, as noted earlier, strong mother songs had their beginning in the Civil War, with mother songs. As the sons of the First World War inherited the glory of their fathers, so too did daughters inherit that of their mothers.\(^\text{158}\)

\(^{157}\) Peerless Quartet, “America, Here’s My Boy,” Victor B-19304, 1917, phonograph record. “Yankee Doodle,” of course, dates back to the Revolutionary war, but was appropriated as a Union tune during the Civil War.

\(^{158}\) Tin Pan Alley composers of WWII music tried to piggyback on the success of the previous war, trying to reproduce the success of Cohan’s “Over There,” but they had trouble finding it. Television and motion pictures were a big part of the culture then; social activities, like dancing, also played a part. By WWII, music was influenced by the big band era, while WWI music came more out of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century/going toward modernism. Parlor songs and ragtime were big influences in the early twentieth century.
This image of strong, patriotic motherhood was at once a construction and a reflection of American culture. Isaac Goldberg said of the relationship between consumers and music producers: “the influence between Public and Alley is strangely reciprocal; it is a living circuit in which the interchange is constant. Each has re-made the other in its image, until something like complete music has been effected.” Many mothers were, in fact, pro-war, and newspapers were only too happy to print rebuttals against Bryan and Piantadosi’s runaway success. The Roosevelts’ opposition to the sentiment is well-documented, including that of Mrs. Roosevelt, who in a Chicago Daily Tribune article from 1915, said that she “did not raise her boy to be the only soldier” (emphasis added), suggesting that a failure on any woman’s part to supply a son for battle only endangered other sons. A 1918 poem published in the Los Angeles Times, entitled “The Soldier’s Mother,” couches the glory of strong motherhood in a historical trajectory: “courage rises in her, free and strong, That Spartan spirit garnered from the past.” The women’s music club movement also contributed to the war’s cause. In her book on women’s clubs in America, Karen Blair explains that “women patriots in music clubs wholeheartedly embraced the national agenda and…initiated an ingenious array of musical programs…fostering a more powerful America.”

For an example of all the tropes of strong motherhood, one need look no further than Tally, Mayo, and Clarence Gaskill’s moral, patriotic, and self-sacrificing mother. The

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161 Sarah Williams, “The Soldier’s Mother,” Los Angeles Times, October 2, 1918.

verses of “That’s a Mother’s Liberty Loan,” set the stage for a woeful, unpatriotic tune, but the chorus reveals an ideal woman, one who does not complain, cry, or fall into selfish histrionics; rather, she lays her own feelings aside and commits herself to her country. The verses, set in the third person, tell the heart-breaking story of a soldier’s mother, from an outsider’s perspective: she is “lonely” and “sad,” with “tear-dimmed eyes.” Compared to the chorus, the melody of the verses is more aggravated, featuring chromatic half-steps and consistent eighth notes jumping triadically, as if the mother were unsettled or vacillating (see Example 31).

Example 31: The verse of “That’s a Mother’s Liberty Loan.”
The attention shifts, however, at the chorus, as the mother speaks with her own words, in the first person. The melody becomes more settled and stable, turning to stepwise quarter notes. Gone, suddenly, are the tears of the verses, for the observer was mistaken. She is not sad, but proud, proclaiming, “I gave my boy to Uncle Sam, to fight for you and me. Just like his dad at Gettysburg in Eighteen Sixty-Three” (see Example 32). Unlike the “selfish,” unpatriotic mothers that were criticized in novels, newspapers, and popular songs, she is more than happy to give her son away for the cause.

Example 32: The beginning of the chorus of “That’s a Mother’s Liberty Loan.”

Like the mother in Captain Jack Crawford’s tune, this mother is positioned between a military husband and son, and the music highlights this connection. The two high points of the chorus melody occur at E5, on the words “Eight,” of “Eighteen Sixty-Three,” and “won,” from the phrase “And when the battle’s won, I’ll then take back my son” (see Example 33). These repeated melodic climaxes connect the soldiering, chronologically, of both husband and son. The last line of the chorus reiterates the mother’s joy in such service. Her line, “And when the battle’s won, I’ll then take back my son, That’s a mother’s liberty
loan,” corresponds with a show-stopping musical conclusion, featuring ascending chromatic octaves in the piano, a bugle-inspired arpeggio, and a stinger to close (see Example 34).

Example 33: The high melodic points of the chorus of “That's a Mother's Liberty Loan,” “eight” and “won.”

Example 34: The show-stopping conclusion of “That's a Mother's Liberty Loan,” complete with a bugle call in the second ending, notes held by fermatas in the voice, and ascending chromatic octaves in the left hand.
What is important to remember here is that both pacifist and militarist mothers in this context are equally based on constructions of ideal femininity, of female behavior built on the family and motherhood. While one construction of the ideal mother is one of peacekeeping, which plays into the construction of the pacifist mother, yet another stakes a claim for an aggressive, militant construction of motherhood. Here, mothers are not peacekeepers, but fierce protectors of the family. Within this concept, which plays into the militarist songs of the period, the maternal protective trait extends beyond the family, to the entire nation. Haytock suggests that the ideologies of battle and domesticity were linked, which feminist scholar Joyce Berkman corroborates, arguing that “women’s protective responsibilities…could only be met if the nation was protected….Women must serve the community beyond the family—protect the nation from its enemies.” While the rhetoric of these songs and their rebuttals might seem to lie squarely on one side of a rigid dichotomy, further inquiry into these constructs reveals that these two mothers, pacifist and militarist, are merely two expressions of the same construct, of the same notion of ideal femininity.

Visual, verbal, and musical media of the Great War called on emotional, domestic images to spur American citizens to action. As part of this interconnected network of false dichotomies, strong mother songs called on the emotions of home to put forth a construct of American-ness that was based entirely in patriotism and selflessness. By viewing this handful of pieces and contextualizing them in contemporary print media, we gain new


164 Important to note, too, is that the edges of sheet music were used for propaganda. Even the everyday acts of buying and cooking food became militarized. One song, “Somebody’s Boy,” bears stamps at the bottom of the pages telling consumers that “Wheat Will Win War,” and that “The Food You Save in Your Kitchen Goes to the Soldiers’ Mess at the Front.”
insight not only into the kinds of constructions that were imposed on American domestic spaces during World War I, but also into the ways in which these guiding principles trickled down into the lives of children.
CHAPTER 4
GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA: CHILDHOOD MILITARISM LIVED AND CONSTRUCTED

One striking and ubiquitous image of children during the First World War is of the Boy Scout and Girl Scout, mini childhood soldiers “doing their bit” for their country. This chapter examines the ways in which Girl Scouts, both in the higher reaches of the organization, and the young scouts themselves, may have used war music as an instrument of identity making and agency. The Girl Scouts’ war work forms a context for these songs, and similarities between Boy Scout and Girl Scout war work come into play. Central, however, to this chapter is a discussion of contrafacta of popular World War I war tunes, along with those inherited from previous wars, that were sent in by scout troops or produced by editors and then published in The Rally, the monthly organ of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

Girl Scout and Boy Scout War Work

The August 1918 issue of The Rally, entitled “Home War Work Number,” contains a version of “Yankee Doodle” rarely heard, and most likely never taught in schools or sung in the home:

The stars and stripes and bugle call,
They could not be resisted—
We simply had to do our bit,
And so we all enlisted.
Yankee Doodle, keep it up,
Yankee Doodle dandy,
The Scouts will help you if they can
In any way that’s handy.

Some make bandages galore,
And cook with stove and fireless—
Others join the wig wag corps
And are doing stunts with wireless.
Yankee Doodle, bless their hearts,
Yankee Doodle dandy,
The Scouts will help you if they can
So willing and so handy.

This new version of a Revolutionary War favorite not only rewrites the tune for a new war, but also the Girl Scouts. It includes such details of home war work as making bandages, and cooking in the home, a domestic space that was in the public eye thanks to war rationing. It also positions Girl Scouts as soldiers on the home front, with the line “and so we all enlisted.” This militaristic, Girl Scout-themed contrafacta is one of many that were published in the pages of The Rally, the monthly organ of the Girl Scouts of America during wartime. This particular contrafacta was most likely written by someone higher up in the organization, especially considering that a call to service asking Scouts to be selfless in order to help the war effort immediately follows. Many other tunes, however, from American favorites to popular tunes of the day—war and non-war related—were written by and sent in by troops all across the United States. Although many of these contrafacta were published, those that were related to the war will be discussed here, in order to gain insight into the ways that Scouts may have participated in war culture through music. These contrafacta connect to issues of identity making and negotiation, and shed light on the ways that the war entered children’s lives through music.

The Rally was first published in October of 1917 with a message from the organization’s national president. The call-to-arms placed Girl Scouts in the middle of the war effort:

My first message to you in this, our first Girl Scout Magazine, is to urge you to undertake a new and special work for our soldiers. A very unique means of service has arisen, and if we do our bit we may help to shorten the war!!.... General Pershing has written to ask our government to send him carrier pigeons…. If every Girl Scout will feed and rear a pair of carrier pigeons and breed from them more little couples of pigeons to send our government she will be furnishing swift little messengers to
carry notes and maps with exact positions of the enemy’s guns from the battle lines to the general in command.\textsuperscript{165}

Woodrow Wilson, the nation’s president, weighed in as well, asking children to partake in helping end the war, and organizers of the Girl Scouts of the USA took it upon themselves to answer this call personally, in any way possible, principally by way of the Junior Red Cross:

The recent proclamation of President Wilson calling on the children of the nation to do their part in the mercy work of the war by joining the Junior Red Cross would seem to be addressed to Girl Scouts, so direct is its appeal to the best ideas of this organization.

Last February, when it was evident that the United States would soon be forced into the world war, the Girl Scouts immediately offered their services to the Red Cross for such ever work as they might do. The offer was accepted and the Girl Scouts have since co-operated definitely and effectively with the local Red Cross chapters in ways best adapted to local needs.

The newest call of the President for service means an enlargement and centralization of the efforts of the young people of the nation. There are few organizations so fitted by training and experience to answer this call as the Girl Scouts. How this may be done, whether as an organization or as individuals, has not yet been determined…\textsuperscript{166}

Although \textit{The Rally} was geared toward war work—in fact, the war makes up nearly all the issues until March 1919—calls for war work were not uncommon in other children’s magazines, such as \textit{St. Nicholas}. In addition to its mostly objective coverage of the war, the magazine did include coverage of children’s war work. A March 1918 segment entitled “For Country and For Liberty,” which was first included as part of the patriotic July 1917 issue, and then became a recurring section, included an article that discussed children’s selling of liberty bonds. Mrs. William G. McAdoo told of how “the services of young Americans have been so valuable to the Government in the past as to entitle them to some sort of special

\textsuperscript{165} “A Service for Girl Scouts: A Message from the National President,” \textit{The Rally} 1.1 (October 1917): 3.

\textsuperscript{166} “A Call from President Wilson,” \textit{The Rally} 1.1 (October 1917): 6.
recognition…. it was assumed that patriotic Young America would aid in the sale of war bonds; but that this help would become one of the leading factors in the success of the war-loan campaigns of 1917 was scarcely contemplated by the financiers who mapped out those campaigns in advance." 167 The story was even preceded by a fictional story by George Merrick Mullett, entitled “Betsy Buys a Bond,” no doubt a conscious choice of the editors. 168

The following article takes on another major player in home-front war work: the Red Cross. Speaking of the efforts of the Junior Red Cross, the article states that “the boys and girls of Los Angeles are setting the pace for the rest of the country in these early days of the Junior Red Cross, and of their activities, none is more interesting than the salvage work.” 169 Their salvage work included taking discarded items, such as tin cans and “pasteboard boxes” and used for Red Cross work. 170

Beyond organizations and magazines, children were the target of more official propaganda from the federal government. Although it might seem strange today, children were an essential part of war work on the home front, and adults from various points in culture were unafraid of appealing to them in order to help the United States along. Because children were framed as part of the domestic sphere, the propaganda aimed at their work often demanded the kinds of activities that could be done from home. Two posters from 1917 play into children’s domestic war work abilities. The first is by James Montgomery Flagg, whose most famous propaganda poster is the iconic Uncle Sam pointing its finger at the viewer, with the words “I want YOU for U.S. Army” (1917). His propaganda targeted

170 Ibid.
women and children as well, and included a poster that pictured a little girl in the arms of Uncle Sam, while a young boy stands close by (quite similar to Savile Lumley’s British poster from two years prior, mentioned in the previous chapter). The poster cries, “Boys and Girls! You can Help your Uncle Sam Win the War. Save your Quarters. Buy War Savings Stamps” (see Figure 20).

![Figure 20: James Montgomery Flagg’s propaganda poster “Boys and Girls,” 1917.](image)

The Uncle Sam in this picture is less menacing and demanding than that of Flagg’s famous poster. Rather, here is a grandfatherly figure, tenderly holding the comfortable, attentive children, either physically or by way of their attention. In fact, he truly seems like an uncle here, and a family member that these children, most likely old enough to receive an allowance, and therefore able to buy war savings stamps.

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Uncle Sam is more than just an idea or construction here; he is a character in the children’s lives. Taking such concepts as Uncle Sam and the Statue of Liberty literally, another form of propaganda geared toward children, the Captain Tick-Mouse series also incorporates well-known patriotic and even some non-patriotic characters into its plot. Propaganda might incorporate these characters into these stories for a few reasons: firstly, the idea of helping a distinct individual (in this case, Uncle Sam, Lady Liberty, and Miss Columbia) would appeal to young readers much more easily than the rather abstract idea of helping one’s country. At the very least, helping “Uncle Sam” as a character, a more concretized imaginative individual, would be quite a bit simpler than explaining to children just how their participation in home-front war work would truly help the United States. Secondly, these characters help make the stories more approachable, less like a sermon or a lesson, and more like a fun story including some of children’s most beloved characters.

As has been seen previously in my discussion of the Captain Tick-Mouse series, in the stories, children were taken on adventures specially for Uncle Sam, and Lady Liberty and Miss Columbia were among the leaders of the group for whom they did their work—these three main patriotic constructions and characters are introduced in the first story, “The Torch of Liberty.” During their meeting, even such a beloved character as Peter Rabbit is seen among the crowd of young Torch Bearers. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln’s appearance in the second installment, “The Magic Movies,” has already been discussed. And finally, in the third adventure, of the “Cat O’Dawn,” even Santa Claus makes an appearance. In both fiction and visual propaganda for children, images and symbols of American patriotism become powerful characters useful for coaxing young children to help in the war effort.
Children could help in the war effort by more than buying War Stamps—they could also help by their behavior in the home. Even before achieving school age, toddlers could be home front soldiers. Cushman Parker’s 1917 poster pictures a tot with a bib, his hair mussed, saluting a bowl of cereal (see Figure 21).

![Figure 21: Cushman Parker’s “Little Americans Do Your Bit,” 1917.](image)

He is in the center of a circle, as if wearing a halo, an angelic creature. The text reads: “Little Americans Do Your Bit. Eat Oatmeal-Corn meal mush-Hominy-other corn cereals-and Rice with milk. Save the wheat for our soldiers. Leave nothing on you plate.”172 The poster, sponsored by the United States Food Administration, goes to the heart of the American

172 Cushman Parker, Little Americans Do Your Bit (1917). Courtesy of Learn NC.org.
home and family construct—children—urging them, even in their own way, to contribute to the war effort.\textsuperscript{173}

The Department of Agriculture’s food conservation campaign carried directly into Girl Scout culture. An article from November 1917 details the work of the Girl Scouts of Washington, led by Mrs. Edna Mary Colman, in an effort of food conservation, including canning and preparing food in accordance with current food rations:

Groups of Girl Scouts are being trained in war cookery by the Department of Agriculture. They are learning the use of the most approved substitutes and the most economic methods of preparing meats, making breads, etc. When their instruction is complete they will be sent to clubs, settlement houses, and schools to demonstrate that they have learned to other girls and women…\textsuperscript{174}

Government agencies like the Department of Agriculture not only took part in children’s culture by picturing them in their propaganda, but also by providing services and training for the war effort, and the Girl Scouts were an ideal population for their education.

Given that even propaganda targeted children as contributors to the United States’ success in the Great War, it is unsurprising that the Girl Scouts organization would focus on war work, and that Girl Scouts themselves, at least in part, would have shown some enthusiasm for the work. The war dominated \textit{The Rally} from its beginnings, so much so that by March 1919, after an armistice had been reached, and all postwar articles had been sufficiently published, the magazine was labeled “Scouts’ Own Number.” Until then, however, each issue contained such war-related segments as “Girl Scout Knitting of Sammies’ Sweater Sets,” “Christmas for the Soldiers,” and “Work for the Soldiers.” The

\textsuperscript{173} In line with the construction of children and women concurrently in the domestic, home sphere, posters such as these—urging Americans to save food, learn alternate forms of cooking and recipes—were also geared toward women. For more information on the topic, Kingsbury devotes an entire chapter to domestic propaganda on the topic of food and cooking in \textit{For Home and Country}.

latter article, published in the November 1917 issue, stressed that “Together with this urgent demand to meet which every Girl Scout owes her best efforts, there is another call, singularly appealing, in responding to which Girl Scouts will find a work for which they are well equipped.” The author suggests contributing to the war effort by undertaking tasks that would “help bring cheer to convalescent soldiers in their weary way back to health.” In order to do so, the article proposes such activities as “[clipping] newspaper and magazine stories of all kinds interesting to soldiers abroad.” Liberty Loan drives were conducted throughout communities, in “workplaces, colleges, and even elementary schools.”

It must be mentioned here that Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts alike took part in the selling of Liberty Loans. Boy Scouts were markedly more forceful in their sales approach. In her study of girls’ organizations in America, Susan A. Miller describes the concerns of many adults regarding Boy Scouts’ tactics, fearing that “their boys might become vigilante-like enforcers of public behavior.” While they did not take on a vigilante approach, Girl Scouts’ selling of Liberty Loans in public soon became a controversial practice. For a girl to sell items for monetary gain, even for minimal monetary gain, “bespoke a lack of decorum…. during the war years the sight of girls engaging in public sales made Americans


176 Ibid.


179 Liberty Loans were bonds that Americans could buy to help support the allied effort. There were four loan drives between 1917 and 1918, and despite many pushes for their sales, positioning the purchasing of Liberty Loans as patriotic, these sales were rarely successful.

uneasy.” Luckily, Girl Scouts found other ways to serve their country and the soldiers, and often in acceptable, domestic ways.

War work was commonplace within the pages of *The Rally*, from the great push by national organizers in war work articles down to the lower reaches of the organization, when individual troops would write in and report on their efforts. In a column marked “A troop to be proud of,” one Poppy Troop, of Altoona, Pennsylvania, reporting having collected, from its own scouts’ pockets, “a purse of fifty dollars for the Boys’ Comfort Fund. The girls are now denying themselves sweets in order to send chocolate to our soldiers in France. All this in addition to Red Cross work, and much drill and parade work for patriotic demonstrations.” Scouts’ war efforts were recognized by publication in the magazine, and also, by January, a War Service Award for a multitude of war work, most of it domestic in nature. Such work included:

- Red Cross work, including canteen service, knitting and the making of surgical dressings and hospital garments;
- Food Conservation, including gardening, canning, and all activities advised by the Food Administration;
- Participation in patriotic financial campaigns, including the Liberty Loan and the raising of any authorized funds designed for the welfare of soldiers and sailors.

War work seemed to have become a part of normal life, at least in part, for these troops. Although their war work, including assisting with the Red Cross, learning the ropes of food conservation, and the selling of Liberty Loans, was certainly prompted by adults and propaganda, the scouts seem to have exhibited at least some zeal for their efforts.

Collecting money, including the selling of Liberty Loans, and food conservation were not the only types of work in which Girl Scouts engaged. Another propaganda poster,


183 “War Service Award is Coming,” *The Rally* (January 1918): 9.
Figure 16, from 1918 urges children to “Enlist Now” and “Join the United-States School Garden Army” (see Figure 22). In the poster, a girl in a school or scout uniform tends to a garden. Even an activity such as gardening was deemed militaristic, made even more so by the language of “enlisting” and joining a “school garden army.” Although young children could not literally join the army (reportedly like their French counterparts), American propaganda and other organizations provided different kinds of armies and outlets through which children could be soldiers on the home front.

The March 1918 issue of The Rally was dedicated to gardening, including such articles as “Plan for Troop Gardens,” “Serve Food and Serve Humanity,” “Courses in Gardening,” and “A Garden Contest.” Photos from the Library of Congress feature girls of all ages alongside their troop leaders, tending to war gardens (Figures 23 and 24).

Figure 22: “Join the United States School Garden Army” poster.

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That war gardens would become the domain of the Girl Scouts is unsurprising. Celia Malone Kingsbury, in her study of propaganda that targeted the domestic sphere, locates college textbooks by which women could learn proper substitution techniques and “pass on these
techniques to other culinary soldiers.” War propaganda often featured women either wasting precious food supply or planting war gardens for the sake of the nation.

Boy Scouts also contributed publicly to the war. In addition to aggressively selling Liberty Loans, scout troops found other ways to contribute to the war effort. One March 30, 1917 article from the Chicago Tribune details a spectacle illustrating the United States as a “melting pot.” Here, “the Austin troop of Boy Scouts and girl guards disguised in foreign dress and mannerisms demonstrated how allegiance was given to our own United States by citizens of many lands.” This “patriotic spectacle” was conducted “in the citadel of the Salvation army.” And just like the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts also participated in growing war gardens. Photos from the Library of Congress show boys harvesting and shucking corn and posing with tall cornstalks, revealing that not all war work for boys was necessarily militaristic (Figures 25 and 26).

Figure 25: Boy Scouts tending to war gardens, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

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185 Kingsbury, For Home and Country, 38.

In April of 1917, the Chicago Opera Company helped raise funds for Boy Scouts’ training camp expenses by putting on “The Mikado.” The Boy Scouts took part in the opera by drilling between acts. A column entitled “Interesting Boys,” the November 14, 1915 details “Boy Scouts in the Countries at War: No. 11—The Belgian Boy Scout.” A photo beneath shows a Boy Scout reading a book to a sick boy in a bed. The caption beneath reads: “The English Boy scout injured in the performance of his duty is explaining the British Code to a Belgian Boy Scout at his bedside. The Belgian Scout belongs to one of many Belgian Refugee families who sought safety in England.” Boy Scouts occupied an imaginative place in the public sphere, as mini-soldiers and defenders-in-training of the country’s flag.

As has been seen throughout this study, militaristic language was often used in children’s culture. Children were invited to see themselves as soldiers in their own right, to be fighting in their own way for their country. This militarism can be found in other print materials as well. An ad in the July 1915 issue of Woman’s Home Companion invites children to

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write in about their experiences: “Are you patriotic? Did you celebrate [the Fourth of July]? How did you celebrate? For the best letter telling how you spent your happiest Independence Day, an American flag will be given as a prize.”

And in the *Washington Post’s* children’s section, “The Post’s Boys and Girls,” a November 1913 article promotes “Real Little Soldier Boys” Crown Prince Alfonso of Spain and Don Jamie, his brother (see Figure 27).\(^{190}\)

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189 “A Vacation Chance: Prizes for Companion Young Folks,” *Woman’s Home Companion* 42.7 (July 1915): 24.

At the age of six, Alfonso is already a lieutenant in the Spanish army, and he is pictured in his uniform. The article poses, “All little boys like to play soldier, but how would you like to be a real little boy and a real soldier, too. Not a bit a play soldier, but a really truly one?”

While it is clear that these children would not have fought in any war, the article does promote, on some level, soldiering for a young audience.

**War Contrafacta in The Rally**

Girl Scouts were a unique population. Although the girls dressed in uniforms, participated in rugged outdoor activities, and participated in ceremonies with all the trappings of the military—in fact, Luther Gulick, founder of the Camp Fire Girls and friend to Girl Scout founder Juliette Low, called his Camp Fire girls his “splendid army of women”—they were still subject to the ideals and constriction of the domestic sphere.

They may have been helping the war effort, becoming home front soldiers, but they did so by conducting domestic work: sewing, cooking, and gardening. They were still subject to the ideals of the domestic, female sphere. In fact, part of the Girl Scout movement was in response to an anxiety surrounding girls of the early twentieth century, called the “girl problem,” a concern for the new freedom and “sexual awakening on the part of the entire youth culture.”

The Scouting movement was partially an attempt to refocus the energy of girls, in order to make them more socially acceptable and chaste.

Alternately, scouting also became, for some, a means by which to gain some political and social efficacy, and it is for this reason that I see the contrafacta in *The Rally* as an

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191 Aunt Anna, “Real Little Soldier Boys”: M7.


193 Ibid., 63.
exercise in identity-making, a way of writing themselves into war culture, into a more prominent social category. Historian Susan A. Miller explains that Girl Scouting became, for some, a means to greater political efficacy:

women had understood, and exploited the links between Girl Scouting, military training, and the duties of citizenship....The military training that qualified women for a fuller discharge of their civic duties also gave them, after those duties were successfully completed, the grounds by which they could claim a panoply of rights associated with citizenship.\(^\text{194}\)

The war was an important part of the making of the Girl Scouts. Although Juliette Low started the Girl Scouts of the USA in 1912, the war happened at precisely the right time for girls’ organizations.\(^\text{195}\) It was an opportunity for girls to flex their patriotic and civic duty muscles: “once the United States was mobilized, even adolescent girls gained access to a home front battlefield, in which they could enact their pledges [to serve their country].”\(^\text{196}\) In addition to war work, music was a part of their home front battlefield. Just as the boys at the front sang such tunes as “Smile, Smile, Smile” at the front, so too did Girl Scouts reposition tunes for their own enjoyment. They personalized the songs for their unique situation, reifying their efforts and their important place in society. The war-themed contrafacta in *The Rally* range from simply refocusing attention on scouting, to war work, to positioning scouts as soldiers in their own right. Either way, their work “clearly demonstrated Girl Scout identification with the war and their place in it.”\(^\text{197}\)

Five songs will be discussed in total, two from the Civil War, “Marching Through Georgia” and “Dixie,” and three World War I tunes: “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a

\(^{194}\) Miller, *Growing Girls*, 68.

\(^{195}\) Ibid., 48.

\(^{196}\) Ibid.

Soldier,” “America, I Raised a Boy for You,” and “Over There.” Each of these songs is changed in different ways, and for slightly different purposes. Scouts themselves may have written some of these contrafacta, while others were printed without a by-line, and may have been the work of organizers vying for Girl Scouts’ legitimacy. Regardless of the authors of these contrafacta, and their motives for rewriting their texts, each takes the attention off soldiers and refocuses it on Girl Scouts and their efforts to help win the war.

The tunes from the Civil War, from both Union and Confederate sides, act as signifiers for war and patriotism. These songs would have been well-known and recognizable; in fact, throughout children’s song collections, patriotic tunes from previous war are numerous, and often grouped under the title “Patriotic Tunes,” or similarly. Sometimes, these inherited patriotic tunes were printed in multiple forms within the same volume. *The Child’s Own Music Book*, for example, contains two different versions of “Yankee Doodle,” one a simple, homophonic 16-bar tune, and the second quite a bit longer with seven total verses. “Dixie Land” is also a common tune, found even in *The Laurel Music-Reader*. “The Star-Spangled Banner” was a common addition to children’s songbook repertoire, along with “Columbia, Gem of the Ocean” as familiar patriotic tunes. “Marching Through Georgia” was included in *The Child’s Own Music Book*, and “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” was included in *The Laurel Music-Reader*.

Because these tunes were most likely quite well known, it is not surprising that they would occupy a space in the Girl Scouts’ imaginative musical sphere, a useful site for discussing and reinforcing their work and value during wartime. The geographical distinctions of these two tunes are erased in lieu of basic nationalism, just as “Yankee Doodle” was first used to signify the United States in the Revolutionary War, later becoming
a Union tune in the Civil War, and finally later a favorite American tune. The nostalgia and backward-looking position of “Marching Through Georgia” and “Dixie” are also removed in these Girl Scout reworkings, which look more to the future, to victory.

“Marching Through Georgia” is a multi-verse Union tune recalling the victory and spoils of Sherman’s march to the sea, from Atlanta, Georgia east, a critical, though cruel tactic that helped the Union win the war. The original tune begins with a verse that invites the listener to partake in a musical celebration:

Bring the good old bugle, boys, we’ll sing another song
Sing it with a spirit that will start the world along
Sing it as we used to sing it, 50,000 strong
While we were marching through Georgia.

The chorus then follows:

Hurrah! Hurrah! We bring the jubilee!
Hurrah! Hurrah! The flag that makes you free!
So we sang the chorus from Atlanta to the sea
While we were marching through Georgia.

The tag line “While we were marching through Georgia” is sung at the end of each verse and chorus, securing the song as a celebratory tune that looks back on past victories.

In the hands of the Girl Scouts, however, the tune looks forward, stressing readiness and preparedness for a conflict yet to come. Submitted by Lois Henderson of Cambridge, Massachusetts, the first verse reads (Table 2):

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199 “Girl Scout Camp Songs,” The Rally 1.2 (November 1917): 16.
The Rally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Rally</th>
<th>“Marching Through Georgia”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scouts, we are ready to obey our country’s call,</td>
<td>Bring the good old bugle, boys, we’ll sing another song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scouts we are ready, we are waiting one and all:</td>
<td>Sing it with a spirit that will start the world along</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are true and loyal although some of us are small</td>
<td>Sing it as we used to sing it, 50,000 strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’ll do our bit for our country.</td>
<td>While we were marching through Georgia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: “Marching Through Georgia” verse.

The tag line “While We Were Marching Through Georgia,” which looks back nostalgically, is rendered forward-looking, promoting togetherness: “We’ll do our bit for our country.” The chorus continues the trend (Table 3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Rally</th>
<th>“Marching Through Georgia”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The times have made ‘Preparedness’ our goal:</td>
<td>Hurrah! Hurrah! We bring the jubilee!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurrah! Hurrah! We’re working heart and soul:</td>
<td>Hurrah! Hurrah! The flag that makes you free!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’ll stand by our leader and we’ll stand by our patrol</td>
<td>So we sang the chorus from Atlanta to the sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’ll do our bit for our country.</td>
<td>While we were marching through Georgia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: “Marching Through Georgia” chorus.

The theme of this song is work, preparedness, and sticking together. The second and final verse of the contrafactum gives a tip of the hat to the Civil War, from where the original tune came: “We’ll stand by our country, like the ‘Boys of ’61’ / We will never waver till our work for her is done; / we can sew for our soldiers though we cannot use a gun, / We’ll do our bit for our country.”

This final verse highlights yet another theme that nearly dominates the many Girl Scout contrafacta: in the act of personalizing the tune to the Girl Scouts, a certain detail is
included—the smallness of the girls and their alternate forms of war work. In the first verse, the third line reads: “We are true and loyal although some of us are small,” as if to undermine themselves, or even beat the reader to the punch. In the second verse, again the third line reads: “We can sew for our soldiers though we cannot use a gun.” These points about their occasional smallness or inability to use guns did not necessarily need to be made, which begs the question: why was it necessary to compare Girl Scouts to soldiers?

Soldiers were very much in the public eye, and they were also celebrated for their service. Doughboys became symbols during the World War, for service, patriotism, and honor. In my estimation, it would seem as if these songs, while serving as fun “camp songs” to rally the troops and help form bonds, might also function as attempts to legitimize the Girl Scouts’ efforts in the face of the World War. If scouting was used by some as a means to fuller political efficacy, then these songs might be read as an attempt to become part of the public eye, to become important and legitimate. They, in fact, might function as the site for a number of ideals and hopes—that the girls be seen as active contributors to Allied victory in Europe, rather than domestic bystanders. Although the Girl Scouts may have been “small,” and without “guns” for fighting enemies, their sewing could be reinscribed as a militaristic act—an act of soldiers on the home front.

Lillian Sunden, of Flag Troop No. 12 in Springfield, Massachusetts, sent in a reworking of the Confederate tune “Dixie” for the January 1918 issue of The Rally.200 Again, the text for “Dixie” is nostalgic and wishful. The first verse opens with “Oh, I wish I was in the land of cotton, / Old times there are not forgotten.” The chorus continues, hearkening back to a previous time and a previous place: “I wish I was in Dixie, Hooray! Hooray! / In Dixie Land I’ll take my stand / to live and die in Dixie. / Away, away, away down south in

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Dixie. / Away, away, away down south in Dixie.” And again, the Girl Scout reworking of the tune removes any sense of nostalgia, instead looking forward to future accomplishments.

As in “Marching Through Georgia” this contrafactum promotes not only war work, but Girl Scouts in general. In fact, the text seems to switch gears, so to say, in the middle.

The emphasis on war work is not so strong with the “Dixie” reworking, but is rather blandly referred to in the tag line “Work away, work away, For the old U.S.A.,” which corresponds with “Look away, look away, look away Dixie Land.” The first two verses (Table 4), which are sung before the chorus, as in “Dixie,” stress the values and fun of the Girl scouts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Rally</th>
<th>“Dixie”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All girls who live in U.S.A.</td>
<td>Oh, I wish I was in the land of cotton,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come join the Scouts and thus be gay…</td>
<td>Old times there are not forgotten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Look away, look away, look away Dixie Land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The white for purity, The blue for truth,</td>
<td>In Dixie Land, where I was born in,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The red for deeds of strength and youth…</td>
<td>Early on one frosty morning,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Look away, look away, look away Dixie Land.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: “Dixie” verses.

However, at the opening of the chorus, the language shifts, stressing protection and fighting for their country. The chorus (Table 5) reads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Rally</th>
<th>“Dixie”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And thus we stand united, Hurray, hurray,</td>
<td>I wish I was in Dixie, Hooray, hooray!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help and share, To win and dare,</td>
<td>In Dixie Land I’ll take my stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the old U.S.A., forever.</td>
<td>To live and die in Dixie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurray, hurray, the Girl Scouts’ life forever.</td>
<td>Away, away, away down north in Dixie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurray, hurray, the Girl Scouts’ life forever.</td>
<td>Away, away, away down south in Dixie.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: “Dixie” chorus.
The final verses continue to stress patriotism and loyalty to country: “Our flag shall never suffer wrong / While we remain united strong, … / For our flag so dear, No idle sorrow must be near….”

The locality of “Dixie” has been removed in this Girl Scout reworking, and has been expanded to the entire United States. The new text looks forward to fighting for the country via a general sense of staying united. Unlike “Marching Through Georgia,” specific plans for war work or defending the flag are not provided. Either way, in these two civil war tunes, partisanship and localities have been removed, instead replaced with a general state of United States-ness. All tunes, Union or Confederate, are fair game, as the United States needed to stand strong in the World War. Furthermore, by using militaristic, protective language, the Girl Scouts position themselves as soldiers in their own right, soldiers fighting in their own ways and capacities, and thus deserve some respect and legitimacy.

Popular tunes of the day were also sites for Girl Scout contrafacta, and not all were propaganda tunes. Those that were, however, were used for further war topics. Like Captain Jack Crawford and others, the contrafactum published in The Rally of “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” repositioned the tune as militaristic, but with a twist. While responses to Bryan and Piantadosi’s famous tune in sheet music revolved around raising boys for soldierdom and placing guns upon their shoulders, the October 1917 issue of The Rally included an alternative approach, one that switched the attention from boys altogether, and instead focused on girls. The reworking of “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” includes only the chorus. The new chorus is on the left, while the original is displayed on the right (Table 6). While newspapers and popular sheet music fought over motherhood and the fate of boys, The Rally (there is no troop credited) refocused attention on girls, who were

militaristic in their own right. The chorus is set up like a suggestion, and changes point of view. Bryan and Piantadosi’s song is sung from the perspective of a pacifist mother; this Girl Scout reworking, however, changes that perspective, as if sung by a Girl Scout herself, or perhaps a troop leader.

While the original reads “I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier,” the Girl Scout response reads “Why don’t you raise your girl to be a Girl Scout.” Corresponding with “I brought him up to be my pride and joy,” this reimagining follows suit, with “A pleasure and a friend to each and all.” The following two lines pair up, stressing Girl Scouts’ service, where the original reads “Who dares to put a musket on his shoulder, / To kill some other mother’s darling boy.” Where the mother in “I Didn’t” can only see death, the Girl Scouts see service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Rally</th>
<th>“I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why don’t you raise your girl to be a Girl Scout, A pleasure and a friend to each and all, Our duty is to help in time of trouble, To be of service anywhere at all, You needn’t think that we’re afraid of danger, We’ll even make fine soldiers if we may, We know there’ll be a day, When mothers will all say, “I want to raise my girl to be a Girl Scout</td>
<td>I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier, I brought him up to be my pride and joy. Who dares to place a musket on his shoulder, To kill some other mother’s darling boy. Let nations arbitrate their future troubles, It’s time to lay the sword and gun away, There’d be no war today, If mothers all would say, I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier” chorus.

For the next two lines, calling for an alternate form of global conflict resolution, the new version again positions Girl Scouts as soldiers in their own right, just as brave as their older male counterparts: “You needn’t think that we’re afraid of danger, / We’ll even make fine soldiers if we may.” Although the song is not as militaristic as some popular sheet music, the
Girl Scouts are certainly not running from conflict. The final lines, in which the mother imagines a better present if other mothers would take a stand, are repositioned toward a better future: “We know there’ll be a day, / When mothers will all say, / ‘I want to raise my girl to be a Girl Scout.’” Again, the contrafact repositions the text as forward-looking, and moves attention away from boys and onto girls and their contributions to the war effort and their ability to fight in wars, just like their male counterparts.

The rebuttal “America, I Raised a Boy For You,” the original title of which is “America, Here’s My Boy,” was printed in the following issue of The Rally, in November of 1917. Incorrectly marked to the tune of “American, I Raised My Boy For You,” this text was also printed without reference to an author. These contrafacta may have been written by writers for The Rally, or the writers may have wished for their identities to be kept anonymous. As in the contrafactum of “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier,” this rewriting of the chorus also displaces attention from soldier boys to girls, to their abilities and patriotism. The chorus reads as follows (Table 7), with the Girl Scout version on the left, and the original on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Rally</th>
<th>“America, Here’s My Boy”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America, we Scouts are all for you,</td>
<td>America, I raised a boy for you,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America, you’ll find us brave and true,</td>
<td>America, You’ll find him staunch and true,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place your burdens on our shoulders,</td>
<td>Place a gun upon his shoulder,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are ready to do or die;</td>
<td>He is ready to die or do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America, we’re not the only ones,</td>
<td>America, he is my only one,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We know the rest will try,</td>
<td>My hope, my pride and joy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So, if you want some others,</td>
<td>But if I had another,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To take the place of our brothers,</td>
<td>He would march beside his brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America, we’re prepared!</td>
<td>America, here’s my boy!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: “America, Here’s My Boy” chorus.

Taking into account the analysis of “America, Here’s My Boy” presented in the previous chapter, the Girl Scout reworking is in fact an answer to an answer, responding to and repositioning a militaristic response of “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to be a Soldier.”

Again, as in previous tunes, this contrafactum compares Girl Scouts to their male counterparts, here even referred to as “our brothers.” “America, we Scouts are all for you” not only compares Girl Scouts to soldiers, but even volunteers them for soldier service. As in previous contrafacta, the chorus is written from the perspective of girl scouts making their voices heard. The rewrite follows the original quite closely in the first few lines. “America, I raised a boy for you” is sung from the perspective of a mother volunteering her contribution to the war, her son; The Rally’s version is sung from the perspective of the Girl Scouts as a whole: “America, we Scouts are all for you.” They volunteer themselves. Yet the conversation in the newspapers and the sheet music on which these contrafacta were based was centered solely on boys; there were no mention of girls.

As discussed earlier, the only constructs available to women were in relation to men, either as children of, as sweethearts or wives of, or as mothers of soldiers. Women and girls in their own right were left out of the conversation. These tunes reposition that conversation, calling for a dialogue about women’s contribution, on par and equally as important as a soldier’s.

When the chorus opens with “America, we Scouts are all for you,” it signals that they should be allowed into that conversation as well, that they should be noted in their own right as contributors to the war effort. Just as the mother in the second line supports her claim of raising a fine soldier, claiming that “you’ll find him staunch and true,” the Girl Scout reworking points to their own qualifications, modeled closely on the original: “America, you’ll find us brave and true.” While “Marching Through Georgia” spoke of sewing and
being unable to use a gun, this contrafactum takes it a step further by positioning Girl Scouts as soldiers themselves, fully capable of the same patriotic service that their male counterparts were imparted with. Instead of placing a gun on a soldier son’s shoulders, the Girl Scouts volunteer America to “Place your burdens on our shoulders, / We are ready to do or die.”

The end of the refrain offers an even more obvious comparison to soldiers: “So, if you want some others, / To take the place of our brothers, / America, we’re prepared!” Here, the Girl Scouts solidly place themselves in the position of soldiers, as important, as brave, and as patriotic as boys. Here, they are more than just helpers who sew blankets and send magazines to entertain soldiers in the trenches. Here, Girl Scouts are soldiers in their own right, and demand to be valorized on par with their doughboy brothers and counterparts.

These contrafacta come from a number of different sources. Some are attributed to either troops or troop leaders in specific locations, while others are unattributed. It would seem that those songs which originate from girl scout troops, either troops or their leaders, are more likely to qualify their war work, by either saying that they are small, or by being specific about the kinds of work that they do, which is often sewing. However, those that are unattributed, which may have been produced by organizers higher up in the organization, or by writers for the magazine, are more likely to be militaristic. These tunes seem to strike a claim for legitimacy by comparing Girl Scouts to soldiers and by stressing the militancy of their efforts—that they are just as capable of bearing arms and participating on the front as their male counterparts. It would seem that major organizers and leaders within the Girl Scout organization were more likely to position girls as more than just home front helpers.

This is an important distinction to make. Often, in researching children’s culture, children’s own voices are left out of the historical narrative that is constructed, and solely for the reason of the available archival and historical primary sources. To repeat Kristine
Alexander’s findings while studying Girl Guides, “archives are reflections of existing power relationships,” including that of adults over children.\textsuperscript{203} While this relationship is not always patronizing or hegemonic, the materials and power relations inherent in them betray different types of information. Like Girl Guides, I would claim that the Girl Scout movement was “a product of adult anxieties and aspirations, but it also reflected ongoing and often unacknowledged negotiations among adults, adolescents, and children….\textsuperscript{204}” Thus, the question of who was writing these contrafacta relates specifically to whose claims they were, and whose expression of Girl Scouting these materials indicate. As just discussed, in many instances, the more militaristic examples of contrafacta seem to be linked to the development and construction of Girl Scouts and their place in culture and society. But some may have been written by Girl Scouts themselves, and may be understood as an expression, though encouraged by troop leaders and organizational pressure, of their own understanding of their place and activities.

Child participation in print culture would not be out of the question; in fact, \textit{St. Nicholas} had included a section for reader letters, stories, photographs, and poems for years. Printed at the end of each issue, children’s own words would be included in the section called the “St. Nicholas League.” Often, broad prompts were printed months ahead of time for reader response; the best of children’s responses, either visual or textual, would then be printed and even awarded based on their merit or originality. Often, children would send in photographs of their favorite pets, their favorite activities, or their favorite memories, but sometimes, they were war-related.

\textsuperscript{203} Alexander, “Can the Girl Guide Speak?”: 132.

\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 133.
For example, for the July 1916 issue (an appropriately patriotic issue for Independence Day), N.D. Hagan, aged nine, sent in a photo of boys and girls of different ages celebrating the Fourth of July. One girl sat in a wagon, while a boy pulled her. One little girl held a flag, while two boys stood with a snare drum and a bugle. In that same issue, children were invited to write in stories under the title “A Brave Deed.” One reader, George Gordon Mahy, thirteen years old, wrote in about George Washington at Valley Forge. Another, by Lois Meier, age sixteen, told the story of a little boy fighting in the war:

The bravest deed is not always the one requiring physical courage and daring. To be able to do the hard thing, without thought of self, is one of the bravest acts a man can do. Nowadays we hear of many courageous deeds in the battle-fields of Europe. One of the bravest, to me, is told of a French general.

She goes on to tell the story of the general stepping out before his men, cautioning them against “a very dangerous mission.” A young boy stands out from the crowd, and it is revealed to be “his own son before him.” After some internal struggle, the general “[steps] forward and [stretches] out his arms hungrily to his boy, [clasps] him close to his heart, then [thrusts] him away, not ungently, and [says] firmly, ‘Go, my son!’”

The prompt for the March 1918 issue of *St. Nicholas* was “The Story of a Soldier,” and many children submitted stories to fill the pages of “St. Nicholas League.” The Gold Badge story was submitted by Marie Mirvis, aged seventeen. For her prize-winning story, she elegantly tells the tale of a Confederate soldier during the Civil War. Her brave Southern soldier is gone for four long years, and indeed he is the brave soldier of the tale. However, as in the propaganda tunes of the day, his wife is also a heroic figure: “The young wife cared

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for her son—most of her servants had departed. She bore up bravely, the true woman that she was.”

It seems that children embraced the war rhetoric, and even volunteered their own stories. It should be qualified, however, that these stories may very easily have been told to them by parents. These stories may be less an expression of their own ideas than the passing on of their parents’. Still, these are stories and ideas written by children, and to some extent, they must have believed in their own words, or else they would not have gone to the trouble of having them published.

One final song, a rewriting of Cohan’s famous “Over There” from January, 1918, deserves some attention here. The song, written in by one Anna Nelson, from Goldenrod Troop Number 5 in Brooklyn, New York, takes this hit and not only positions Girl Scouts as domestic helpers, by knitting and saving money for Liberty Loans, but also directs the song toward Girl Scouts, instead of from their perspective. The song functions as a series of directions to help in the war effort. Here, Cohan’s “Johnny, get your gun, get your gun, get your gun. / Take it on the run…” is redirected as “Girlies, do your bit, do your bit, do your bit, / Show a little grit, little grit, little grit.” Many of the lines from the original are maintained, such as “Hear them calling you and me” and “Hurry right away, no delay, go today.” The only verses that change are those that detail the specific works that Girl Scouts engage in, such as “[sacrificing] some time, / and [trying] to save every time.” Later verses list other types of domestic Girl Scout activities: “Girlies do your bit… / Learn how to knit… / …Pack your little bag with needles and wool, / Knit a sweater, mitten, socks, and all…” At the end of the second verse, instead of comparing Girl Scouts to their soldier


brothers, the text takes on a supportive role: “Make your brothers proud of you, / While they uphold their Red, White, and Blue” in order to correspond with Cohan’s “Make our Mother proud of you.” Although the contrafactum is modeled quite closely on the original text, it is important that the text indicates Girl Scout duties in a supportive, rather than militaristic role.

The chorus continues this supportive role. Even so, this supportive role is not necessarily subordinate, but rather indicates a correspondence, a balance between the war front and the home front. Below Anna Nelson’s text is listed on the left, while Cohan’s is on the right (Table 8). In the contrafactum, their brothers’ efforts in the trenches are matched with those on the home front. To every “Over There,” the Girl Scouts provide an answer with “Over Here.” The chorus speaks of duty, of “doing our bit, / And we will so long as we’re living over here.” The text invites the listener to partake in the Girl Scout duty, to help out with the Red Cross, with knitting, and other such domestic activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>The Rally</em></th>
<th>“Over There”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over here, over here,</td>
<td>Over there, over there,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tell them all, tell them all, over here</td>
<td>Send the word, send the word over there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That a Girl Scout’s duty, a Girl Scout’s duty</td>
<td>That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is to help them all over here.</td>
<td>coming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So come in, so come in,</td>
<td>The drums rum-tumming everywhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to the Girl Scouts and help them win.</td>
<td>So prepare, say a prayer,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Red Cross we’re doing our bit,</td>
<td>Send the word, send the word to beware -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And we will so long as we’re living over here.</td>
<td>We’ll be over, we’re coming over,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
<pre><code>                                                             | And we won’t come back till it’s over, over  |
                                                             | there.                                       |
</code></pre>

Table 8: “Over There” chorus.

It is unknown whether or not Girl Scouts themselves contributed to these songs, or whether they were produced by adults in control of the organization. Girl Scouts may have
used these songs to provide a place for themselves in the war, to gain some political efficacy, and to place themselves in a conversation in which women and girls were often left out. Women and girls were often constructed and pictured as merely helpers of soldiers; some of these songs try to place women and girls back into the conversation of the war effort. Either way, Girl Scouts were active participants in the war effort, and that they must have, at least on some level, seen themselves as important participants in the war. The extent to which they were active musically is uncertain. Even without musical involvement, the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts inhabited a place in the home front war effort, and that they certainly occupied an imaginative space in popular music culture. They were encouraged to help out, to take part, and to make a place for themselves, to see themselves as little soldiers, and to take on such activities as selling Liberty Loans, knitting sweaters, and collecting magazine articles, as if the fate of the world depended on it.
CHAPTER 5
CODA

In order to better understand the ways that children lived in America during wartime, the ways that children served as symbols in adult culture, and the ways in which children exercised agency, this study investigated musical and non-musical materials from diverse sources. The study of children, as with the study of any population, is complex and multifaceted. Children’s experiences cannot be summed up into one approach, and they cannot be studied from merely one source or one type of source. For this reason, this thesis has brought together case studies from the domestic sphere, popular culture, and private organizations committed to the public good. The music of these different but connected sectors reveal the multi-layered nature of children’s lives in the face of war culture.

The study of children’s song collections from the late nineteenth century into the war years revealed the ways that the home front and war front were perhaps not as separated as one might hope. Domestic culture is often constructed as insular, as private, as a place for quiet, respectful, femininity, as a safe haven for children to play, grow, and develop into adults. The inclusion of soldier and marching tunes in domestic and educational song collections illustrates the extent to which war culture was acceptable and encouraged in children’s playtime. In the midst of war time, while fathers and brothers left for France to fight for their and the other allied countries, publishers of these collections did not rush to remove these songs from their repertoire. Soldier songs were well-established, an already acceptable, innocuous, and normalized part of children’s lives. After fifty years of nearly constant wars—from the Civil War to the Spanish-American War, and finally to the Great War, armed conflict was undoubtedly a common part of American life and of American families’ histories. No doubt the soldier marching in the parade or off to war was a common
image, and one that was exciting to many youngsters. That soldier songs were sprinkled throughout children’s song collections alongside other common playful tunes, including nature songs, bird songs, work songs, and other similarly innocuous tunes suggests that war and soldiering were not ignored or avoided, but rather embraced as a common part of an imaginative playtime in either school or at home.

This study then moved out of the home and into commercial culture. Popular sheet music reveals the ways that adult culture used the image of the child and his or her mother in propaganda—to either promote or work against the war. Preying on Americans’ anxieties and concerns, these tunes called on recognizable archetypes of femininity and masculinity, and sometimes subverted them, in order to stake a claim in the problematically polarizing rhetoric of the war as set up in American newspapers and propaganda. Images of children of soldiers fall into the categories of masculine and feminine behavior imposed on children since the late nineteenth century: boys were constructed as mini-patriarchs, as mini-soldiers and generals, while girls took on the prayerful, supportive roles of their mothers in miniature. Mothers were similarly constructed, as either a pacifist or militarist, but either way, each of these positions conforms to ideal constructions of femininity and motherhood, constructions that are predicated on the family and on motherhood. This chapter brings to light the ways that children were positioned, used, and imagined as part of adult culture. They were not invited to take part, to complicate these two-dimensional archetypes, but were rather objects upon which adult imaginings and polar claims could be imposed.

The final case study investigated yet another sector of culture and children’s lives: activity outside of school in the Girl Scouts of the USA. The Girl Scouts provide yet another example of the ways that war culture was integrated into American children’s lives on a direct and purposeful level. This private organization was aimed at the public good, and in so
doing, encouraged young girls (as did the Boy Scouts with young boys) to take an active role in supporting the troops from home—either in tending war gardens, selling Liberty Loans, cooking according to the U.S. Food Administration’s guidelines, or any number of often domestic activities. But what this study also reveals is the ways that girls might have used the songs from popular culture to carve their own niche in society. As the Girl Scouts organization vied for a legitimate space in society, writing war contrafacta was one outlet for their imaginings and establishment of potential legitimacy. Although it is unclear who the authors were of these contrafacta—especially those without bylines—these examples nevertheless provide another piece to the incomplete picture of just how children experienced World War I in America, how they negotiated the many forces around them, and how adults approached children in the face of the first global conflict.

This study is only the first step. Future research might investigate the ways that children’s song collections, for instance, were used by educators and parents in concrete situations. Materials like diaries, journals, and interviews may surface that reveal that ways that children conceived of themselves and negotiated their place in wartime; they may play into scholarly work on regional practices and organizations, complicating the concept of a monolithic nationhood of unquestioning 100% Americanism. Further investigations of mothers and their actual practices in child-rearing might complicated or support the opinions expressed in sheet music, newspapers, child-rearing manuals, or magazines. A deeper look into the Girl Scouts of the USA might uncover just who was editing and producing these war contrafacta, who was writing them, and how their place in the organization might have affected their goals and output. And finally, I look forward to further research into the ways that children played into, were constructed in, and were positioned in questions of
nationhood. How were children manipulated, either in fact or in mere constructions in popular culture, to support, embolden, or complicate certain notions of American identity?

In her article on children’s agency in international policy-making, Jo Boyden stresses the rights of the child and children’s abilities to be not only resilient in war zones, but to be successful manufacturers of their own coping efforts. It is important to remember that American children’s experiences of the war were insular and indirect. Children in European countries, like Belgium, France, and Germany, would have experienced the war directly. Their homes may have been destroyed, their towns reduced to rubble, their families torn apart before their eyes. American children’s experiences were not so immediately traumatic, but they were still affected by the global conflict. They experienced the war by way of indirect influences: perhaps by their mothers’ employment of new war-ration recipes, or by seeing posters of children sitting on Uncle Sam’s lap, or by participating in the Girl Scouts or the Boy Scouts of the USA, providing care packages for soldiers, growing war gardens, and selling Liberty Loans. They may have experienced it through the pages of *St. Nicholas* or *Captain Tick-Mouse*. They may have imagined themselves taking down the Kaiser in adventure novels. Or they may have marched around their living rooms, imagining themselves soldiers returning victorious from the war.

One pauses to remember, however, that children’s experiences may have been more direct than merely exercising their imaginations. They may have watched their fathers or brothers leave for war, and perhaps never return. In many ways, the manifestations of war culture in domestic and popular sources merely reinforce their own constructs, frameworks, and two-dimensional archetypes. But in other ways, these constructs are built on truths. During the First World War, there were many little boys who experienced the very scene

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described in “You’re Your Mamma’s Little Daddy Now.” Countless mothers received heartbreaking letters and turned to their children, their future, in the face of a devastating family death. In some ways, American children’s experiences were more imagined than real, but in others, they were quite concrete.

Questions arising from these musical and non-musical materials continue to be pertinent today. Most of the information found in archives and contemporary popular culture reveals more about adults than the children for whom these ideas and constructs are created. Just what are children’s abilities to cope? And how are they capable of creating their own healing in traumatic situations? Looking back on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in American culture, one is struck by just how many conflicts are fought off American soil: two world wars, Vietnam, Korea, the Gulf War, and now conflicts in the Middle East. One is struck by how many children have watched brothers, fathers, and sisters leave home for these conflicts. How do these children cope? How are they actors in this global conflict? And how is music a part of their struggle, their participation and action? How is music a part of children’s coping and identity creation?

The materials presented in this study point to a level of acceptable violence in not only popular culture but also children’s culture. The natural question here is: just where is that line? What constitutes acceptable violence? And what constitutes acceptable involvement in armed conflicts? Children’s experiences bring forth questions of the key differences between national and personal experience in conflict—their experiences pinpoint perhaps the ultimate question in war: just how do conflicts between the governments of countries come to invade and change families and children? Looking back on the past century, it is clear that early twentieth-century American child culture faced the global conflict more head-on than it does today. Children were essential to the war effort then,
while children today are often shielded and protected, at least to some extent, from worldwide conflicts. Children’s culture research reveals the ways that children might have lived, and it also illuminates the ways that adults coped with difficult, traumatic situations. Music offered one form of coping in the Great War, and children were an important part of adults’ coping efforts, engaging the domestic sphere alongside commercial culture, private life and publicly engaged civic organizations.
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