



Sacred Harp Singing Research Guide

Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University

What is Sacred Harp singing? [<http://fasola.org/>]

Sacred Harp singing is an a cappella tradition that began centuries ago in England, emerging as a unique singing style in America and the American South today. Sacred Harp singers follow *Shape notes*, a method consisting of four differently shaped notes representing fa, sol, la, and mi.

Sacred Harp is performed without an accompaniment, also known as a cappella. Singers sit in a square, facing each other to sing. A leader taps out a tempo and directs the *sing*.

This guide provides primary sources in the Center for Popular Music, James E. Walker Library at MTSU, and through outside, comprehensive web sources on Sacred Harp singing. These are examples of primary and secondary sources in the archives, but not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Primary sources in the Center for Popular Music archive

Primary sources related to Sacred Harp Singing:

<http://popmusic.mtsu.edu/collections/default.aspx>

Search: “sacred harp”

Alabama Black Sacred Harp collection / Nemerov, Bruce. Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, 1988.

Collection: Manuscript Collections

Accession Number: 88-020

Finding Aid: <http://popmusic.mtsu.edu/archives/inventory/alab.html>

Alabama harp singers standing outside of Bethel Baptist Church in Dozier, AL / Bryan, James.
Center for Popular Music, 1988-Sept.

Collection: Photographs

Item ID: CPM-PR-00001

Accession Number: 88-020

89-098

<http://musicman.mtsu.edu/broadsides/Photographsthumbnails/CPM-PR-00001thumbnail.jpg>

The Christian Harmony

Collection: Rare Books and Scores

Item ID: SP-050634

Accession Number: 89-017

Christian harp and Sabbath school songster -- Singer's Glen, VA: Joseph Funk's Sons, 1869.

Collection: Rare Books and Scores

Subgroup: Sacred Vocal (oblong)

Item ID: SP-050174

Evangelical Musick, The Sacred Minstrel and Sacred Harp United.

Collection: Rare Books and Scores

Item ID: SP-050622

Accession Number: 95-053

HARPETH VALLEY SACRED HARP NEWS Tim Reynolds

Collection: Periodicals - Secondary Collection

Item ID: SER-001466

Issue Dates: June 26 - Sept. 25, 1999 (v. 28 nos.2-3); March 20 - Sept.8, 2000 (v.29 nos.1-2);
Mar.21, 2001 - Mar. 19, 2002 (v.30 n.1 - v.31 n.1)

Mason's Sacred Harp

Collection: Rare Books and Scores

Item ID: SP-050645

Accession Number: 04-013

Song Titles: "Akron," "St. Paul's," "Windham," "Lynn," ...

Shape Notes / compiled and edited by Martha Ham and Herschel Joyner

Arnold, Robert S.; Baize, Novel, et al. -- Fort Worth, TX: Texas Legendary Music, 2007.

Collection: Rare Books and Scores

Item ID: SP-002415

Accession Number: 07-018

Song Titles: "Just a Rose Will Do," "Come to the Light," "Let Our Light Shine," ...

Primary sources related to shape notes:

American Vernacular Music Manuscripts (AVMM), Digital Collections from the American Antiquarian Society and the Center for Popular Music

<http://popmusic.mtsu.edu/ManuscriptMusic/default.aspx>

[*The eight items listed below are in the CPM collection. Search “shape note” in the *Quick Search* bar on AVMM for more items.]

Miss Catharine Feagley’s book: vocal music in two parts.

Collection: Music Manuscripts

Item ID: MUMSS-00065

Date: 1824

The Treble to Pilgrims Farwell

Collection: Music Manuscripts

Item ID: MUMSS-00120

Date: 1820

Uncle Sam’s farm

Collection: Music Manuscripts

Item ID: MUMSS-00129

Date: 1861

Manuscript music book belonging to Wilson Boehm

Collection: Music Manuscripts

Item ID: MUMSS-00131

Date: 1854

Hark! The Cry of Death is Ringing: quartette

Collection: Music Manuscripts

Item ID: MUMSS-00133

Date: 1863

Double Quick: Systematically patented, scientifically illustrated, dedicated and arranged expressly.

Item ID: MUMSS-00134

Date: 1862

Thanks to Our Father in Heaven: Musical Department

Collection: Music Manuscripts

Item ID: MUMSS-00135

Date: 1868

Sorrowing Hearts at Home Weeping Sad and Lonely or, When this Cruel War is Over: Song with Chorus

Collection: Music Manuscripts

Item ID: MUMSS-00136

Date: 1867

Sound recordings:

The Colored Sacred Harp and the African American Shape-Note Tradition. Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp. n.d. Label: Alabama Traditions. Issue Number: 109. RCD-6680. CD.

Denson, Howard, and William Walker, writers. *Homeward Bound/Good Old Way*. Denson Quartet. C. 1900. REC-000480. 78 rpm.

Lomax, Alan, and N.W. Pearson. *White Spirituals from the Sacred Harp: The Alabama Sacred Harp Convention*. Alabama Sacred Harp Convention. 1977. Label: New World. Issue Number: NW 205. RDE-005893. 1 disc: stereo, 33.3 rpm

Ingalls, Jeremiah, A. Marcus Cagle, and et al. *Rivers of Delight: American folk hymns from the Sacred Harp Tradition*. Word of Mouth Chorus. 1979. Label: Nonesuch. Issue Number: H-71360. RDE-005990. 1 disc: stereo, 33.3 rpm

J.T. Allison's Sacred Harp Singers. *I'm a Long Time Traveling Away from Home, I Belong to this Band- hallelujah*. 1927. Label: Gennett. Issue Number: 6255. REC-000904. 78rpm.

Music from the Sacred Harp. Wooten Family. Circa 1980s. Label: Unique Musical Services. Issue Number: UMS-101. RDE-008282. 1 sound disc: analog, 33 1/3 rpm.

Primary sources located through the MTSU James E. Walker

Library: [<http://library.mtsu.edu/>]

Video recordings:

Hinton, Matt, et al. *Awake, my soul. [Video recording]: the story of the Sacred harp*. n.p.: Atlanta, GA: Awake Productions, c2007., 2007. *MTSU Libraries' Catalog*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 9, 2016).

Secondary Sources (found in the Walker Library catalog. Located in Walker Library or the CPM Reading Room): [<http://library.mtsu.edu/>]

Boyd, Joe Dan. *Judge Jackson and the Colored Sacred Harp*. Montgomery: Alabama Folklife Association, 2002.

- Cobb, Buell E. *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989.
- Clawson, Laura. *I Belong to this Band, Hallelujah! Community, Spirituality, and Tradition Among Sacred Harp Singers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Eastburn, Kathryn. *A Sacred Feast: Reflections on Sacred Harp Singing and Dinner on the Ground*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008.
- Lornell, Kip. *Exploring American Folk Music: Ethnic, Grassroots, and Regional Traditions in the United States*. 3rd Edition. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012.
- Miller, Kiri, editor. *The Chattahoochee Musical Convention, 1852-2002: A Sacred Harp Historical Sourcebook*. Carrollton, GA: The Sacred Harp Museum, 2002.
- Miller, Kiri. *Traveling Home: Sacred Harp Singing and American Pluralism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008.
- Steel, David Warren and Richard H. Hulan. *The Makers of the Sacred Harp*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Secondary Sources (Web):

- Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Association. "Welcome." Sacred Harp Singing. 2015. Accessed September 09, 2016. <http://fasola.org/>.
- This website run by the Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Association (SHMHA) provides comprehensive information related to the Sacred Harp tradition.
- Steel, Warren. "Sacred Harp Singing FAQ." September 2015. Accessed September 9, 2016. <http://home.olemiss.edu/~mudws/faq/>
- Oklahoma Historical Society. "Shape-Note (FA-SO-LA) Singing." 2009. Oklahoma History Center. Accessed September 9, 2016. <http://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=SH007>
- Beveridge, Larry. "About Shaped-Note Singing and The Christian Harmony." 2001. The Christian Harmony. <http://www.christianharmony.org/harmony/about.html>

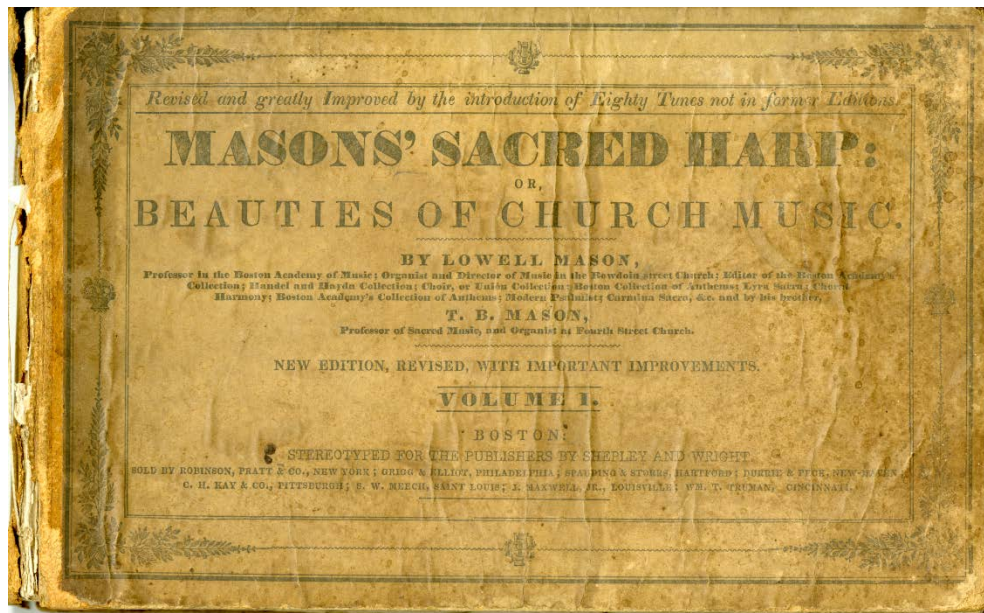
Secondary Sources on Shape Notes:

- McGregory, Jerrilyn. "On the Way to Glory." In *Downhome Gospel: African American Spiritual Activism in Wiregrass Country*, Oxford, MS: University Press of MS, 2010.

Montell, William Lynwood. "The Shape-Note Era." In *Singing the Glory Down: Amateur Gospel Music in South Central Kentucky, 1900-1990*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015. Accession Number: edspmu.9780813157313.6. Database: ProjectMUSE.

Images Appendix

(all items come from the collections of the Center for Popular Music)



Item ID: SP- 050645

178 *Alligretto.* **IRENIUS. 7's.** Arranged and Harmonized by T. B. MASON.

Angels roll the rock a-way! Death's yield up thy mighty prey! Seal his crown from the tomb, Raise with im-mor-tal bloom.

'Tis the Saviour, Scruple, raise Your tri-umphant choirs of praise; Let the earth's re-motest bound Hear the joy in-spi-rit-ed sound.

Praise him, all ye heav'nly choir, Praise and sweep your golden lyres; Praise him in the noblest song, Praise him from ten thousand tongues.

CHORAL. **MYRA. 7's.** Arranged by T. B. MASON.

Lord of hosts, how lovely, fair, Ev'n on earth, thy temples are! Here thy waiting people see, Rich of heav'n and much of thee.

From thy radiant presence flow, Bless that adores all, our woes; While thy spirit's Ho-ly fire, Warm our hearts with pure de-sire.

Here, we sup-pli-cate thy throne; Here, thy pas-sion'd grace is known; Here, we learn thy righteous ways, Taste thy love and sing thy praise.

179

every joy, Let thy praise our tongues employ.

From her rich, overflowing stores,

Thou, in that dear source we see Whence our sweetest comforts flow; There, through all my happy days, Tune my choicest songs of praise.

WATERBURY. 7s.

1. Let us, with a joyful mind, Praise the Lord, for he is kind; For his mercies shall endure. Ever faithful, ever true.

2. Let us, with a joyful mind, Praise the Lord, for he is kind; For his mercies shall endure. Ever faithful, ever true.

3. Let us, with a joyful mind, Praise the Lord, for he is kind; For his mercies shall endure. Ever faithful, ever true.

EVANGELICAL MUSICK;

OR,

THE SACRED MINSTREL AND SACRED HARP UNITED.

CONSISTING OF A GREAT VARIETY OF

PSALM AND HYMN TUNES, SET PIECES, ANTHEMS,

&c., &c., &c.

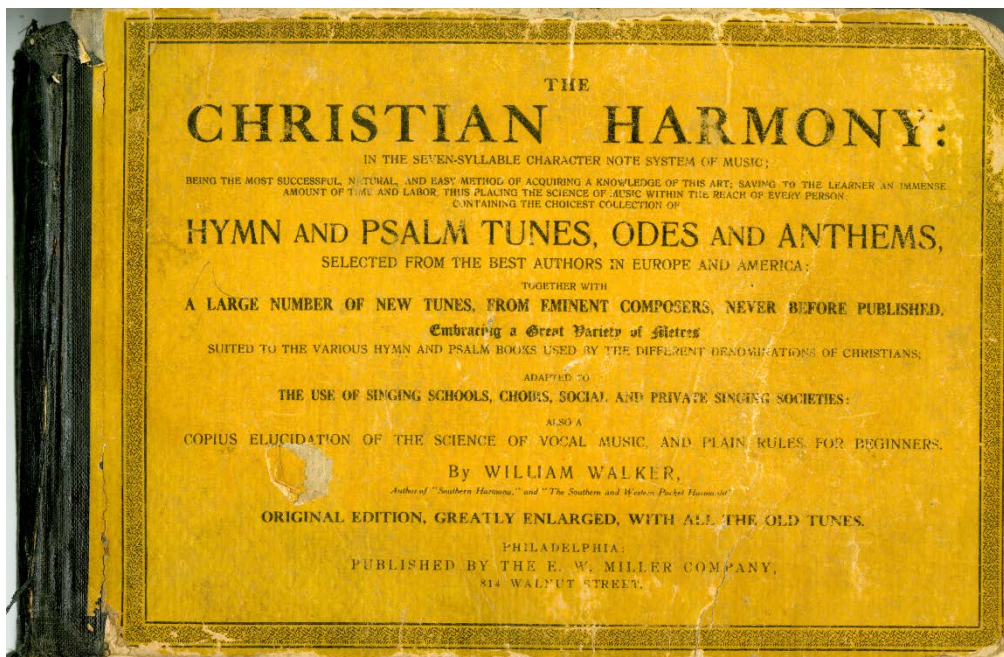
BY J. H. HICKOK AND GEO. FLEMING.

PUBLISHED AND FOR SALE BY

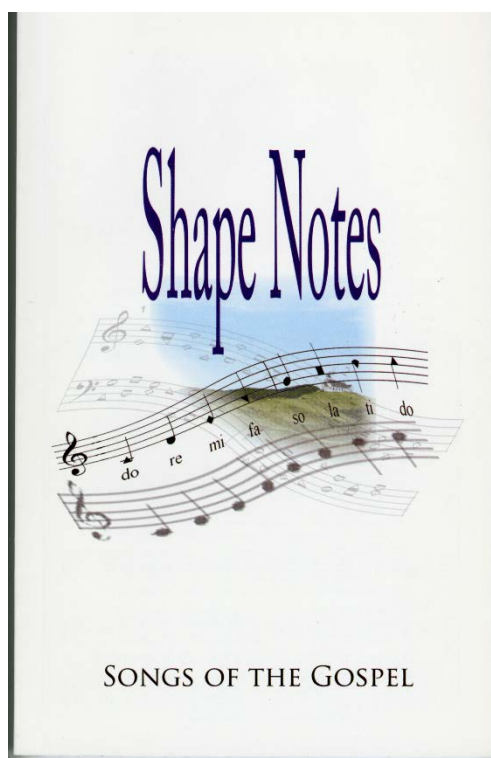
J. WHETHAM, PHILADELPHIA, Pa.; D. APPLETON & CO., NEW YORK; GEO. FLEMING, CARLISLE; HICKOK & BLOOD, CHAMBERSBURGH;
L. LOOMIS, PITTSBURGH, Pa.; YALE & WYATT, RICHMOND, Va.; AND PEARCE & BESANCON, NATCHES, Miss.

1836.

Item ID: SP-050622



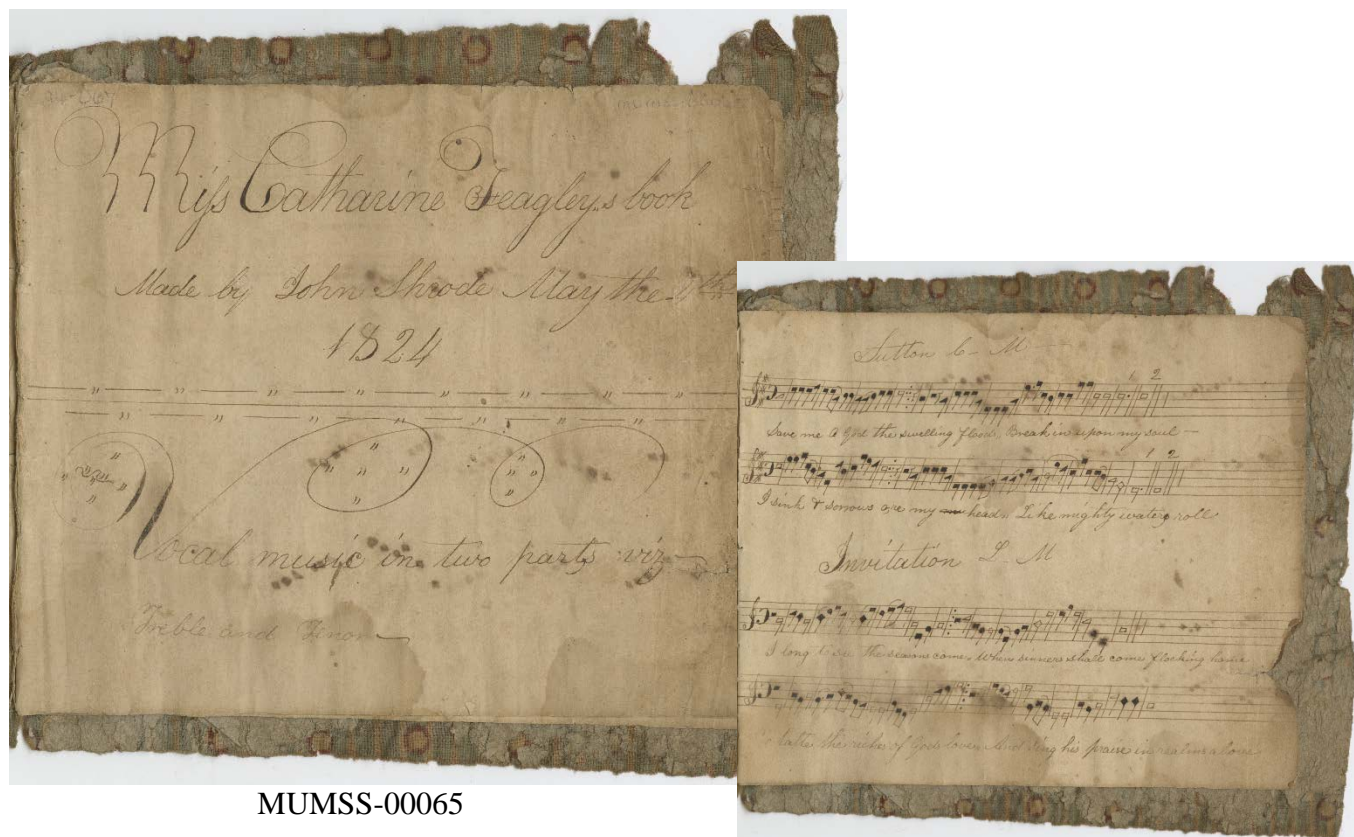
Item ID: SP-050634



Item ID: SP-002415



Alabama Black Sacred Harp Collection, Item ID: CPM-PR-00001



MUMSS-00065

F...
Sharps Key on

THE TREBLE TO PILGRIMS FARWELL

Fare you well, fare you well, fare you well my friends, I must begone, I see a better world in view, I'll take my staff & travel on till I a better
 World can view I'll march to canaan land I'll land on canaan's shore, where pleasures never end & trouble comes no more
 Fare well. Fare well. Fare well my loving friends: LULON NICHOLS: Huntington.
 January AD 1821

MUMSS-00120

Original **The Cry of Death is Ringing** Jan 1st 1863

In Charming Style *Fine* *Sheet Music*

The Cry of Death is Ringing
 In Charming Style
 Fine
 Sheet Music
 Jan 1st 1863

MUMSS-00133

Sorrowing Hearts at Home
 Weeping Sad and Lonely
 Or
 When this cruel war is over
 Song Musical department
 with Chorus

Dearest don't you remember When we last did meet
 How you told me that you loved me Smiling at my feet
 Oh how proud you stood before me In your suit of blue
 When you vowed to me and Country Ever to be true

Chorus

Weeping sad and lonely Hopes and fears how vain
 Yet praying When this cruel war is over
 Praying that we meet again

Requiescat in pace
 Saturday July 1867

MUMSS-00136