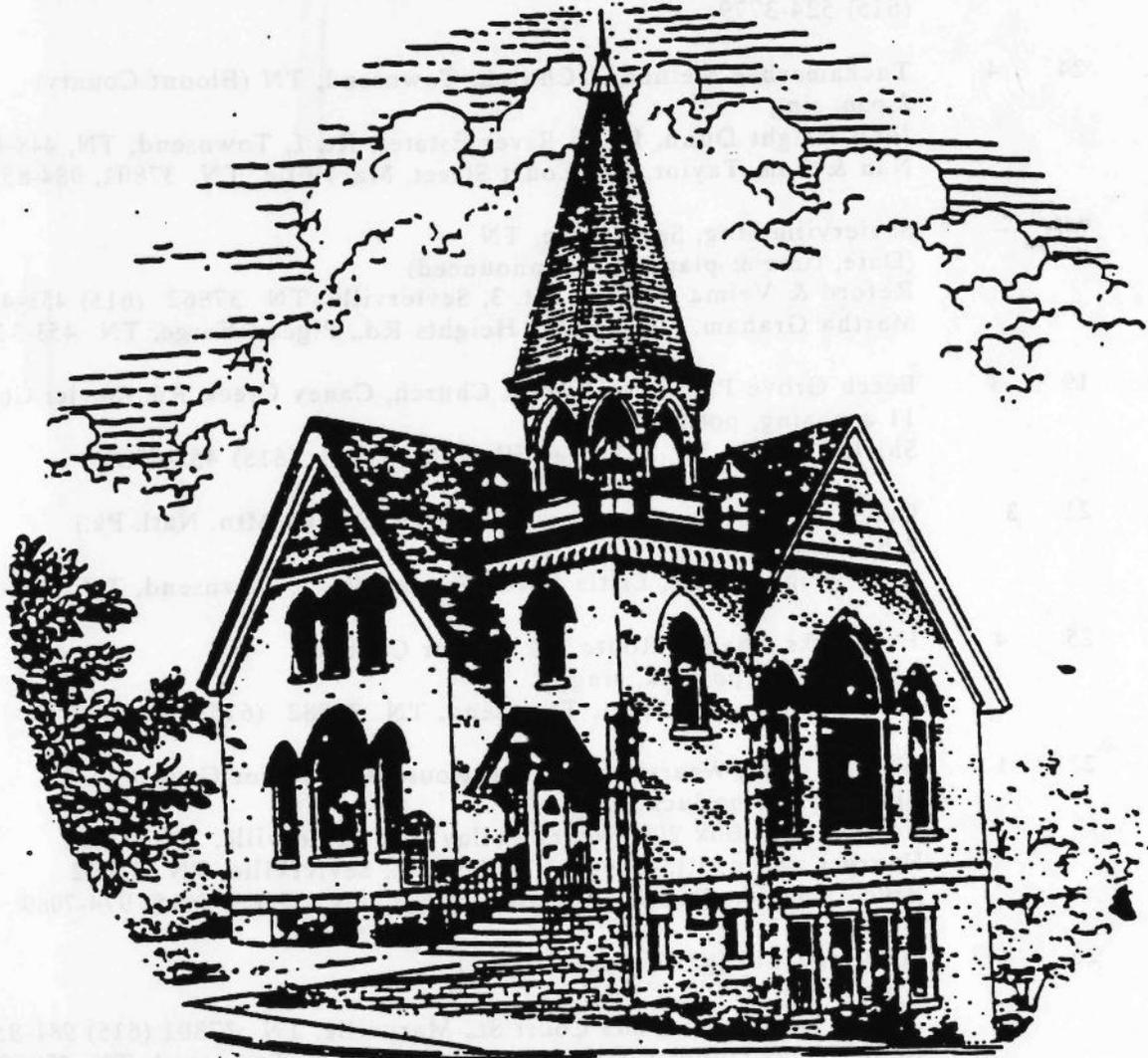


Number 01

Spring 1988

the  
New Harp of Columbia  
Newsletter



PSALM 66

C. M. #

Sing all ye nations, to the Lord:  
Sing with a joyful noise:  
With a melody of sound record.  
His honours, and your joys.

# New Harp of Columbia

by M. L. Swan

## 7 NOTE SHAPE SINGING

1988

	<u>Month</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Sun.</u>	<u>Place, Contact People and Related Information</u>
1	Mar.	27	4	Fort Sanders Ecumenical Church, 16th & Laurel Avenue, Knoxville, TN 1 p.m. sing. potluck at 12:15 Helen Hutchinson, 1638 Highland Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37916 (615) 524-3779
2	Apr.	24	4	Tuckaleechee Methodist Church, Townsend, TN (Blount County) 2 p.m. sing John Wright Dunn, Little River Estates, Rt. 1, Townsend, TN, 448-6445 Nan & Tom Taylor, 603 Court Street, Maryville, TN 37801, 984-8585
3	May	--	--	Sevierville Sing, Sevierville, TN (Date, time & place to be announced) Reford & Velma Lamons, Rt. 3, Sevierville, TN 37862 (615) 453-4581 Martha Graham, 500 Conner Heights Rd., Pigeon Forge, TN 453-3276
4	June	19	3	Beech Grove Primitive Baptist Church, Caney Creek Rd. (Sevier Cty.) 11 a.m. sing, potluck, sing Shirley Henry, Rt. 7, Sevierville, TN 37862 (615) 453-5983
5	Aug.	21	3	Cades Cove Missionary Baptist Church (Smoky Mtn. Natl. Pk.) 2 p.m. sing John Wright Dunn, Little River Estates, Rt. 1, Townsend, TN 448-6445
6	Sep.	25	4	Headricks Chapel, Route 321 (Sevier County) 11 a.m. sing, potluck, sing Charlie Clabough, Rt. 1, Townsend, TN 37882 (615) 448-2497
7	Oct.	2	1	Wears Valley, Wearwood School, Route 321 (Sevier County) 11 a.m. sing, potluck, sing Burl Adams, Box 200, Wears Valley Rd., Sevierville, TN 37862 Henry Lawson, Rt. 7, Wears Valley Rd., Sevierville, TN 37862 Bruce Wheeler, Box 1049, Pigeon Forge, TN 37863 (615) 974-7089
8	Oct.	23	4	Maryville College (Blount County) 2 p.m. sing Nan & Tom Taylor, 603 Court St., Maryville, TN 37801 (615) 984-8585 John Wright Dunn, Little River Estates, Rt. 1, Townsend, TN 37862
9	Dec.	19		Sugarlands, Smoky Mountain National Park Visitor Center Saturday 10 a.m. sing Reford & Velma Lamons, Rt. 3, Sevierville, TN 37862 (615) 453-4581
	Sundays			8 p.m. 1638 Highland Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37916 Helen Hutchinson (615) 524-3779

Books available at the University of Tennessee Bookstore (615) 974-1054 or 974-1049

## ON SINGING OLD HARP

You there in the second row, how about getting up and leading a song for us? Number 56 has been called. Would you give the pitch, Mr. Adams? Hmmn. Do mi so mi do. Let's chord on that! And the shapes! So-la do do . . . And sing the poetry! "And if you meet with troubles and trial on the way."

So you have never been to a Harp Sing? What's going on? Or, as the old tune smiths would say, "What is this that has come to pass?" The sing leader or singing master, as in the old days, is asking for one to lead a song of their choice. A number is usually called (most singers will remember each song by the number rather than its name). Someone sitting near the front of the sing will usually carry a pitch pipe to set the first note of the lead line, the third line from the top in four-part harmony, if you have not the notion to set it yourself. This pitch, as far as I can remember, is negotiable.

Do mi so mi do. Do, in this case is the first note in the lead line. The rest of the notes give you and everyone around a feel for the range (and helps to calm your nerves if you have never led many songs before). Let's chord on that, or just CHOOORRRD! Everyone will sing their first note. And the shapes with a hand firmly striking up and down to set the beat that you, the leader of this song, would like to have.

There are all sorts of reasons for the choosing of that song by the songleader. If you are new to singing, one may pick an easy one with a nice melody or cadence to lead. Maybe you are curious as to how it will resound off these walls? The poetry, some from the great psalmist and hymn writers of early America, might have some meaning to you or a loved one that has passed away. In any case this is your song for this moment and all will sing to the best of their ability as you will with their song. (Please note that all of the songs are not known by everyone and might need to be repeated.) That is what the notes are for. If you are not happy after singing the shapes with either the pitch or cadence, or with people's ability, you may wish to try again with the shapes with a little guidance of what you would like to do.

And the poetry, with another downstroke of the hand to start the "words." And that be the way of it. Please take into account many things in the singing of the "OLD HARP". This is congregational singing. If possible, we would like everyone here to take part in this oral tradition. It is of our spirit, our strength and our communion that we share here today. There are some that might not be able to read the shapes fast enough or possibly our sight is not as good as it was. Some resort to remembering the lead line and lead by memory only. Maybe we have stage fright, or are deaf in one ear, maybe we dropped the bucket to carry our tune for this song and may be in need of help.

In any case, we have chosen on this day in our lives to be here, with these, our friends (or soon to be), and not anywhere else in the world. The good Lord has started us off with a voice and a spirit to match. And it is good. For we have cherished and nurtured both. Let us return this investment ten-fold with all the strength and soul that is amongst us this day. So, let us sing. Amen.

Larry Olszewski  
Newsletter Compiler

EPWORTH HARP SING  
Helen B. Hutchinson

Away back in 1973 a young musically talented Northerner, fresh from college came south to Knoxville. His name was John McCutcheon, and he was interested in folk music. As he was hitchhiking south, he was picked up by UT professor Gordon Hunt. When he found out John was interested in folk music, he took him to our little ecumenical congregation, where he became our song leader. Soon after, he learned from some old-timey Knox County singers about harp singing. He proceeded to ask members of the congregation if they would like to learn also and to form a group to meet, learn, and sing old harp.

I was familiar with it from my youth (I'm 75) when I would attend annual sings, mostly to see friends and to eat the good food. But I hadn't learned to sing it. Gideon and Nancy Fryer, Linda Ralston, Nancy Olson, Cenda and Charlie Price, Kathleen Mavournin and Drew Foster were part of the first few years along with Ron Peterson and Candra Phillips. Candra and Ron later held a four night harp school in the spring of 1979, as well as writing an historical preface to the New Harp of Columbia so the University of Tennessee Press would reprint it. The latter was an extremely important contribution because the last edition of the New Harp of Columbia was out of print.

Since 1973 we have been meeting at my house on Sunday night at 8 p.m. We go into the kitchen, gather up a handful of cookies and a cup of coffee and retreat into the living room. We socialize until enough arrive to start singing. There may be anywhere from 4 or 5 singers to 10 or 12. If only a few show, the kitchen is reinvaded and we sing around the dining table to make for a closer square as well as closer harmony.

We live near the University of Tennessee where many of our singers are students and professors who stay awhile and eventually move away. I guess we may have taught as many as 40 or 50 people to sing the shapes. But what is really nice is that after they move away, they all come back to visit. We love to have them and they fit right in as if they had never been away.

John McCutcheon, wherever you are--thank you for what you started back in 1973. The coffee is still fresh ground, and the cookies are under the cabinet by the back door.

Ed. Note: Most new singers feel so welcome and "at home" at Helen's house that the second time they come, they don't feel the need to even knock.



Helen's house

The Epworth Harp Sing is traditionally held as the last part of Jubilee Festival weekend. The Sunday starts with a Gospel Sing at 11:30, potluck at 12:15, and Harp Sing at 1:00. This will be March 27 at Fort Sanders Ecumenical Church, 16th and Laurel Avenue, Knoxville.

For additional information, contact: Helen Hutchinson, (615) 524-3779 (address below); Gid Fryer, 577-2272; Larry Olszewski, 584-6633.

Harp Singing begins at Helen's house at 8 p.m. every Sunday night. The address is 1638 Highland Avenue--across from the fire hall.

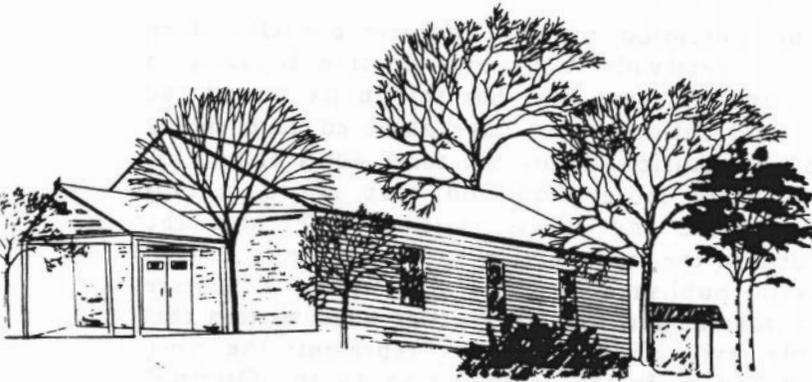
## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EASTER HARP SINGING IN BLOUNT COUNTY

Welcome to the annual Easter Harp Singing sponsored by the Tuckaleechee Old Harp Singers and the Blount County Dogwood Arts Festival! Your participation today as a singer or spectator makes you a part of an annual event that has spiritually united the more than four generations of men, women, and children who have gathered each spring to carry on the tradition of singing shaped note music. Below are some notes about this particular singing; however, if you wish to learn more about old harp music, several scholarly works are available which give accurate and concise histories. Perhaps the presentation of most local significance is found in the introduction to the facsimile edition of The New Harp of Columbia by M. L. Swan, published by the University of Tennessee Press in Knoxville. Dorothy D. Horn, Ron Peterson, and Candra Phillips have written this introduction in a very personal and readable style, and it probably represents the most recent information in print. Another good source is the introduction to the Original Sacred Harp, Denson Revision, 1971 Edition, which is published by the Sacred Harp Publishing Company, Inc. Both of these books are available at local bookstores.

According to the few records available, this Easter singing began in the mid 1890s at the Odd Fellows Lodge in Maryville. The Odd Fellows Lodge occupied the second floor of the Perry Mill feed storage warehouse on Cusick Street. This was opposite and slightly down the street from the old jail building at the corner of Harper and Cusick and directly behind the building now occupied by Williams Furniture Company and Davis Printing. This singing remains vivid in the memories of some people because the singing usually lasted several hours and the room had little ventilation which could make it uncomfortably hot when Easter fell late in the spring of the year. The singing continued to be held at the Odd Fellows Lodge until the late 1920s or early 1930s when it was moved to the East Maryville Baptist Church. The singing remained at East Maryville Baptist for such a long time that many singers still refer to the Easter singing as the "East Maryville" singing; however, after several years, it began to be held at the First Baptist Church of Maryville which was then located on Ellis (Depot) Avenue. The singing remained there even after Maryville First Baptist Church moved to its present location and the building was occupied by Maryville Second Baptist Church. When Maryville Second Baptist Church disbanded, the singing was discontinued.

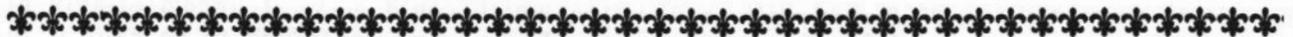
In the fall of 1972, a group of staff members at the Tremont Center attended the two annual fall singings in Wears Valley and became interested in learning the shaped note music. Several veteran singers recognized this interest, and a singing class was organized at the home of John Wright Dunn. Meeting on Friday nights throughout the winter of 1972-73, the group chose the name of the Tuckaleechee Old Harp Singers and decided to revive the Easter singing for the spring of 1973. Major planning and arrangements were made by Burl Adams, Charlie Clabough, and John Wright Dunn, and the first of these revived singings was held Easter Sunday, 1973, at the Tuckaleechee United Methodist Church in Townsend. The singing has remained at this location even though in 1979, the date was changed to the third Sunday in April to reduce conflicts with other activities on Easter Sunday. This change has since been made permanent. In 1982, the singing became an official function of the Blount County Dogwood Arts Festival.

Nan and Tom Taylor



## Beech Grove Primitive Baptist Church

Harp singing at Beech Grove Primitive Baptist Church, on Caney Creek, in Sevier County began in the early nineteen hundreds. The founders were Bob Shields, Will Perryman, Ezra Adams, Giles Adams, Bob Perryman, the Franklins, the Henrys, the Kings, the Clabos, the Huskeys, the Lamons & many others. Many of these same families are still living today and carrying on the same traditions. Beech Grove Primitive Baptist Church celebrated its 100th birthday in 1984. The annual sing is always scheduled for the third Sunday in June. The church is located between Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg on Caney Creek Road off Hwy. 441. Singing starts at 11 a.m., a break for lunch, and sing again. The contact person is Shirley Henry, Little Cove Creek Road, Sevierville, TN 37862.



## Wears Valley

On October 2, 1988, the Wears Valley Old Harp Singing will meet for the 67th time for its annual singing and dinner on the ground. Singing will begin at 11:00 a.m., followed by dinner around noon. People are invited to bring a covered dish.

Although there had been occasional Old Harp Singings at the Wears Valley Baptist Church prior to 1921, in that year the singers voted to make the singing an annual event. Bob Helton made the motion, and John Rule seconded the motion. The first singing was so crowded that many people couldn't get in the church. When it came time for dinner, J. N. Lawson, who owned the field across from the church, took his fence down and people spread their tablecloths on the ground by the hillside.

The reputation of the Wears Valley Singing soon began to spread. A tour was made in 1921 to Georgia by the invitation of a Physician. Some of those singers were Bob Helton, John Rule, Mel Helton, Uncle Joe Adams, and A. B. Shields. In 1950, seventeen singers were invited to Columbia University, New York, to sing and make a recording. (Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was the President of Columbia at that time.)

In 1987 the Wears Valley Singing was moved to Wearwood School, where it will be held again in 1988. For more information, please contact Burl Adams, Route 7, Box 200, Sevierville, TN 37862; or Henry Lawson, Route 7 Wears Valley Road, Sevierville, TN 37862; or Bruce Wheeler, Box 1049, Pigeon Forge, TN 37863.



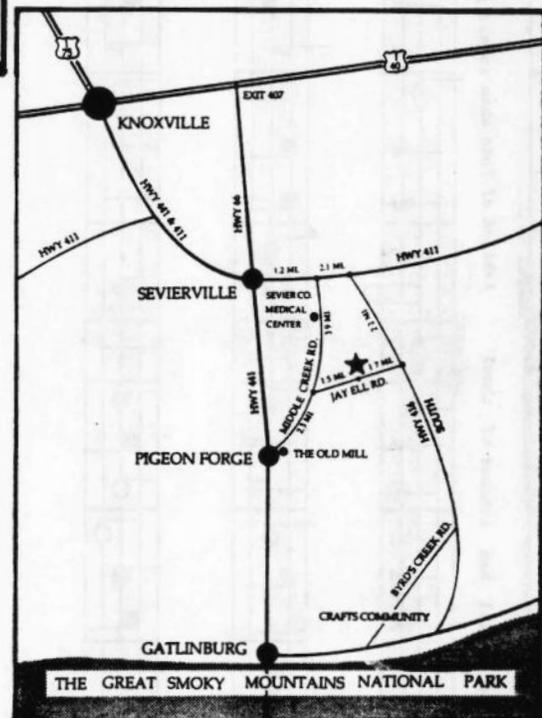
VELMA & REFORD LAMONS

Celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Sunday, March 27th. Kinfolk, friends, and/or Harp Singers are invited to wish them well. No gifts are requested, but Harp Books and a voice in fine fettle might be put to good use. Reford & Velma have known each other since they were about 12 years old when the Great Smoky Mountain National Park bought Velma's father's land in Greenbriar and they moved near the Lamons. They walked to school together since the 6th grade and through that time until they were married on March 26, 1938. The festive occasion will be between 2 and 4 p.m. at the Blue Mountain Mist Country Inn. Take 411 east from Sevierville 3.3 miles, turn right on 416. 2.2 miles and turn right on Jay Ell Road. 1.7 miles to Blue Mountain Mist.

RUSTY WHITEHEAD

Celebrates his 100th birthday on March the 28th, Monday night at 7 p.m. The place will be Hill Haven Rest Home south of Maryville. Take Montvale Road to Montvale Station Road and turn right (at Victory Baptist Church). 2 miles to Jamestown Way. Take to the end. All Harp Singers are welcome to help celebrate and are urged to come. Show up with books.

For more information, please call Tom or Nan Taylor, 984-8585.



Nan & Tom Taylor have opened a new restaurant in the woods behind Maryville College, and have been doing very well. For information, call (615) 984-8585.

A belated 50th wedding anniversary to Luke and Lena Headrick early last year.

Lynn Neeley will be in Knoxville the weekend of March 12th to see old friends and singers. She got her Ph.D. last year and is teaching at the University of Northern Illinois. Call Helen about the times and places that she will be about. 524-3779

We would like to hear more about events in people's lives, the sings and places. Please send any particulars with your phone number to: Newsletter, 1538 Highland Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37916, ATTN: Larry Olszewski. Next issue should be in the mail in July.

Jesus, and shall it ever be, a mortal man advanced of thee?      Advanced of Thee when angels praise, whose glories shine through endless days.      Days

Psalm 96 C.M.

Sing to the Lord, ye distant lands,  
 Ye tribes of every tongue:  
 His new-discovered grace demands  
 A new and nobler song.

Phil Tabor of Lookout Mountain a couple of years ago had suggested that I might like this song as well as a couple of others. According to the Denson revision of the Sacred Harp, 1971 ed., the tune is credited to John Messengale or important changes were made by him to Mark 8: 38 verse. It can be found in early editions of "Missouri Harmony", 1827 ed., and Mason's "Sacred Harp", 1841 ed.; also in "Hesperian Harp", by William Houser in about 1839. The song is transposed to seven note for your pleasure.

An arrangement of the Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs by Rev. Isaac Watts D.D. was found for \$20 in a used book store four years ago without the cover. The book is complete in every other way, and I shall cherish it as well as my Harp books.

ARRANGEMENT  
 OF THE  
**PSALMS, HYMNS**  
 AND  
*Spiritual Songs*  
 OF THE  
 REV. ISAAC WATTS, D. D.  
 TO WHICH IS ADDED,  
**A SUPPLEMENT,**  
 Being a Selection of more than three hundred Hymns from the most approved Authors, on a great Variety of Subjects, Among which are all the Hymns of Dr. Watts, adapted to public and private Worship, and published in the common Editions.  
**WITH INDEXES,**  
 VERY MUCH ENLARGED AND IMPROVED,  
 To facilitate the Use of the whole in Singing Psalms and Hymns suited to particular Subjects or Occasions.

BY JAMES M. WINCHELL, A. M.  
 Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston.

SIXTH EDITION.

BOSTON:  
 JAMES LORING, AND LEECH & CO.  
 1839.

## THE NEW HARP OF COLUMBIA

Singing the "Old Harp" out of the New Harp of Columbia on a regular basis will promote long life, new friends, spiritual uplift, emotional stability, singing ability, awareness and respect for others and a sense of the past long, long ago.

If you are not happy with the original purchase of your book, I will refund your original purchase myself, of any book in respectable condition. \$6 to \$10 for the red book, and \$10 to \$16 for the UT Press edition. Please write to me, Lawrence E. Olszewski, at the address on this page or see me at the scheduled sings inside this newsletter.

No, the offer above is not a bogus offer. My original thought was to purchase up the remaining UT Press editions and sell them at cost to those who didn't know how to obtain them and then to seek a way to have another edition printed. But if these books that I consider Holy Manna for my spirit aren't doing anybody any good, maybe I can find a good home for these destitute Harp books.

I would like to thank the following for help on this newsletter, for the articles, art work, advice, and thoughtfulness: Burl Adams, John Wright Dunn, Charlie Clabough, Bates Elliot, Terry & Charlie Faulkner, Gideon Fryer, Shirley Henry, Helen Hutchinson, Martha Graham, Mary Jendrek, Velma & Reford Lamons, Roger Luebke, Phil Tabor, Nan & Tom Taylor, Janie Wilson, and others.

NOTE: Look for a new/old sing in August at Eblins Cave, Loudon County. Please check the summer/fall, 2nd edition of this newsletter.

ATTN: Larry Olszewski  
New Harp of Columbia Newsletter  
1538 Laurel Avenue  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37916

A boisterous young man got drunk one day. He felt sad and alone and went to his church that evening where his friends and neighbors were holding a revival. He carried on about, creating a small ruckus and finally fell asleep on the front pew with loud snores bursting forth from his vitals. Coming to wits' end, the friends and neighbors proceeded to open the window and toss him out. Picking himself up and dusting himself off, he spied a stranger walking up his way. "What is going on in there?" asked the stranger. "Don't rightly know what is going on now at this here revival," replied the young man. "But less than a minute ago, you missed the part where they were a casting out the devils."

Submitted by Bates Elliot

Song 89. "Oh let not the phantom of our wishes engage,  
let us live so in youth that we blush not with age."

# New Harp of Columbia

by M. L. Swan

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Sundays			8 p.m. 1638 Highland Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37916 Helen Hutchinson (615) 524-3779
			<b>SPECIAL SINGS</b>
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