

Number 03

Spring 1989

the
New Harp of Columbia
Newsletter



In Memoriam

Noah Burl Adams
Lillian Whaley Lamons
Otha Henry

PARTING FRIENDS

*Farewell, my friends, I'm bound for Canaan,
I'm traveling through the wilderness,
Your company has been delightful,
You, who doth leave my mind distressed.*

*I go away, behind to leave you,
Perhaps never to meet again,
But if we never have the pleasure,
I hope we'll meet on Canaan's land.*

John G. McCurry
Social Harp

Noah Burl Adams

Burl Adams, a cornerstone of "Old Harp Singing" in East Tennessee passed away in January of this year. Burl was a retired carpenter and active in "Old Harp Singing" for most of his life. Married to Mae Headrick in 1919, he was choir director for his church for over 50 years. As part of a gospel quartet that was widely known, he sang on the morning Gospel hour at WNOX and rushed back to make Sunday morning church at a time when the roads weren't like today's. Burl also helped organize the Sing at Beech Grove Baptist, Tuckaleechee Methodist, and Coker Creek-Headricks Chapel, as well as participating in and running the Wears Valley Sing, for what seems like generations. We appreciate all that Burl Adams gave us and we shall all keep a place in our hearts for him.

Otha Henry

Otha Henry, Harp Singer for many years, pastor and moderator of his flock at Headricks Chapel for the last 20 years, passed away last October. One can always remember his admonishments before leading a song "to you younger people, listen to the words. They mean something." We shall miss Otha Henry.

Lillian Whaley Lamons

Wife of Wiley Lamons, passed away in January of this year. She was a cousin of Velma Lamons and Carl Whaley, also Harp Singers, and she grew up in what is now the Smoky Mountain National Park in Greenbriar Cove. Mrs. Lamons was active in Pigeon Forge First Baptist Church and had been teaching Sunday school there since the 1920s. Dr. William Cope who is pastor there had her for a Sunday School teacher as he was growing up. When the time comes, we shall sing a song for her.

SING TO ME OF HEAVEN

Sing to me of Heaven is the title of a book for those who have a deeper interest in Harp Singing. The book by Dorothy Horn, printed by the University Press of Florida, does an indepth study of the music found in the *New Harp of Columbia*, *Southern Harmony* and the *Sacred Harp* song books. The cover page is a copy of the book cover and was done by by Terry Faulkner.

New Harp of Columbia

by M. L. Swan

7 NOTE SHAPE SINGING

Spring 1989

<u>Month</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Place, Contact People and Related Information</u>
March	19	3	Fort Sanders Ecumenical Church, 16th & Laurel Avenue, Knoxville 1 p.m. sing, potluck at 12:15 Gideon Fryer, 3312 Bunker Hill Dr., Knoxville, 37920 (577-2272) Helen Hutchinson, 1638 Highland Ave., Knoxville, 37916 (524-3779)
April	23	4	Tuckaleechee Methodist Church, Townsend, TN (Blount Co.) 2 pm sing John Wright Dunn, Little River Estates, Rt. 1, Townsend, TN 448-6445 Nan & Tom Taylor, 603 Court St., Maryville, TN 37801, (615)984-8565
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 453-3276
June	18	3	Beech Grove Primitive Baptist Church, Caney Creek Rd. 11 a.m. sing, potluck, sing Shirley Henry, Rt. 7, Sevierville, TN 37862, (615) 453-5985
August	20	3	Cades Cove Missionary Baptist Church (Smoky Mtn. National Park) 2 p.m. sing John Wright Dunn, Little River Est., Rt. 1, Townsend, 37882, 448-6445
Sept.	24	4	Headricks Chapel, Route 321 (Sevier County) 11 a.m. sing, potluck, sing Charlie Clabough, Rt. 1, Townsend, 37882, (615) 448-2497
Oct.	1	1	Wears Valley, Wearwood School, Route. 321 (Sevier County) 11 a.m. sing, potluck, sing Henry Lawson, Rt. 7, Wears Valley Rd., Sevierville, TN 37862 Bruce Wheeler, Box 1049, Pigeon Forge, TN 37863, 974-7089 Luke & Lena Headrick, Rt. 7, Box 247, Sevierville, TN, 453-2407
Oct.	22	4	Maryville College (Blount County) 2 p.m. sing Nan & Tom Taylor, 603 Court St., Maryville, TN 37801 984-8585 Gideon Fryer, 3312 Bunker Hill Dr., Knoxville (615) 577-2272
Dec.	16	(Sat.)	Sugarlands, Smoky Mountain National Park Visitor Center Saturday 10 a.m. sing Reford & Velma Lamons, Rt. 3, Sevierville, TN 37862 453-4581
Sundays			8 p.m. 1638 Highland Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37916 Helen Hutchinson (615) 524-3779
			SPECIAL SINGS
March	27	(Monday)	Russell Whitehead's Birthday Sing 7 p.m. sing at Hill Haven Rest Home, Maryville Nan & Tom Taylor, 603 Court St., Maryville, 974-8585
August	13	2	Eblen's Cave, Loudon County 2:30, Supper on the grounds, BBQ provided, bring other dishes Gideon Fryer, 3312 Bunker Hill Dr., Knoxville, 577-2272

The Epworth Old Harp Sing

This will be in Knoxville, Tennessee, on March 19, with a potluck at noon and sing afterwards. The location is Laurel Avenue and 16th Street between the I-40 17th Street exit and the Student Center on the UT campus. (See the map on the last page of this newsletter)

The old Fort Sanders Presbyterian Church has just about been completely restored/renovated from a fire a few years ago and is shared with the Epworth Ecumenical Congregation, the Jubilee Community Arts, and the Folk Dancers. The building acts as a church, community center and theatre for the people of the University, Fort Sanders, and greater Knoxville area.

The building is unique for the Old Harp Sing in that the height, width and length of the

main room is about equal, so that not only does the song leader get the vibrations from leading in the middle of the square, but the singers get the same reverberations reflected off the walls.

Gideon Fryer is presiding and can be contacted at: (615) 577-2272.

NOTE: The Epworth Old Harp Singers in 1990 will hold a Homecoming/Jubilee Harp Sing for their 3rd Sunday in March Sing. Other than the regular Sing, we will make special efforts to contact singers who have sung with us in the past to hold a reunion. We will need help in contacting everyone and making arrangements, so we are starting now. Contact Larry Olszewski c/o The Old Harp Newsletter, 1538 Laurel Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37916

A Modest Proposal

Traditionally, singing schools were conducted by itinerant singing masters who provided communities with a week or more of instruction in the evenings. The classes were social as well as musical and spiritual occasions. At the conclusion of the course, a public performance often was given on a Saturday or Sunday, and regular, Old Harp Sings, complete with dinner on the grounds, sometimes developed from annual repetition of these events.

To promote the continuation of Harp Singing with its social, musical and spiritual traditions, we propose that the scattered community of singers using the NEW HARP OF COLUMBIA take thought and counsel among themselves about ways to achieve several objectives:

1. Have our book reprinted again so it will continue to be available and at a reasonable price. Supplies of the 1978 printing are dwindling and the price has risen alarmingly.
2. Identify and recognize individuals who could be contemporary versions of the traditional singing masters. It's no way to make a living nowadays, but perhaps some could devote one week of evenings every year to the teaching of the Old Harp somewhere in East Tennessee.
3. Encouraging, through singing schools and other means, the establishment of new annual sings by church or civic groups.
4. Continuation of this newsletter, so we can share the stories and history of the current events of Old Harp and create an archives of Singings in East Tennessee.

Kathleen Mavourmin
Larry Olszewski

NEW "BRIGHT SCENES OF GLORY"

RUSSELL WHITEHEAD'S SURPRISE ANNUAL CENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY HARP SING

RUSSELL WHITEHEAD celebrates his 101st birthday on March the 27th, 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. Go. 2 miles to Jamestown Way. Take it to the end. All Harp Singers are welcomed to help celebrate and urged to come. Show up with books.

For more information, please call Tom or Nan Taylor at (615) 984-8585.



Eblens Cave

The Eblens Cave Sing is being changed from an "Old Harp" presentation to a formal Harp Sing. This will be sponsored by the Loudon County Historical Society and Gideon Fryer will preside. The sing will start at 2:30 on Sunday, August 13, in the cave, and a barbecue will be provided as main course and participants are invited to bring a covered dish. A walk along a wooded trail of a couple hundred yards is required to reach the cave. Directions will be in the next newsletter or they may be gotten from Gideon Fryer at 577-2272.

Tuckaleechee Methodist Church Sing

John Wright Dunn, the ex-Postmaster of Townsend, presides over this sing about a mile off Route 321 in Townsend, Tennessee (the peaceful side of the Smokies).

The Sing begins at 2 p.m. April 23 and is usually very well attended as it is also the closing celebration of the Blount County Dogwood Arts Festival. Tom Taylor works with John Wright Dunn in getting up the publicity in the area. The Sing has been popular since the early 70s and is one of the larger ones in the area.

Beech Grove Primitive Baptist Church Sing

June 18 - Preacher Shirley Henry will be presiding. Directions: Turn right onto Caney Creek Road as you are traveling from Pigeon Forge to Gatlinburg on Route 321. Trek about 5 miles and on your left is the church. The morning service is turned over to the Harp Singers at 11 a.m. and a lunch begins at noon. The spread that the church members and Harp Singers bring will leave you nothing more to desire except to "sing it off." This is a cool place to sing during the hot summer days. Everyone is invited.

Wears Valley Sing

The Ministry of Wears Valley United Methodist Church has engaged John O. Clabo to help format a new Harp Sing at their church. The church is located between Townsend and Pigeon Forge on Route 321 about a mile east of the Sing at Wearwood School. The Sing would become an annual event and the first sing would start at 2 p.m. the first Sunday in September, Sept. 3 this year.

More on this new sing will be forthcoming in the next issue of this newsletter. Those wishing for more information or to show their support should call or write to: John O. Clabo, Box 344, Rt. #7, Sevierville, TN 37862 (615) 453-8930.



OLD "BRIGHT SCENES OF GLORY"

Cades Cove Sing

This lively afternoon sing in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park was presided by John Wright Dunn. Park visitors making stopped to listen an some stayed the length of the sing. Out-of-area singers were Nanci Trapani, from Alexandria, Va., Janine Smith and Conrad Berger from Maryland, and Tim Reynolds of Nashville. Song leaders were Charlie Clabough, John Wright Dunn, Bates Elliot, Terry Faulkner, Joe Finucane, Gideon Fryer, Martha Graham, Barbara Kemper, Henry Lawson, Henry Morton, Kathleen Mavournin, Cates Ogle, Larry Olszewski, Tim Reynolds, and Ann Strange.

Gideon Fryer (#35) must have thought that the pitch was being set a bit low for some of the songs when he quoted Mr. Elliot: "I don't know that there is any but fine people that sing the Old Harp. But if there be one who might go to hell it would be those who sing too low and too slow!"

Headricks Chapel Sing

Charlie Clabo presided in this wooden church which sits at the head of Wears Valley, forcing Route 321 to make a sharp turn to keep out of the church proper. The lead section rose to 25 members as the singers outnumbered the visitors until Bates Elliot brought in a bus load from his church in Knoxville, after the dinner on the grounds. Song leaders on this day were Burl Adams, Charlie Clabo, Paul Clabo, John Wright Dunn, Bates Elliot, Art Godfrey, Martha Graham, Lena Headrick, Calvin Johnson, Barbara Kemper, Reford Lamons, Henry Lawson, nancy Levi, Kathleen Mavournin, R. Nelson, Larry Olszewski, Tom Taylor, Ray Turner, Bruce Wheeler, and Russell Whitehead.

The Wears Valley Sing

This 67th annual OLD HARP SING was presided by Burl Adams, and his assistants were Bruce Wheeler and Henry Lawson.

This well-run sing included at least 20 tunes to whet our appetites, satisfied by a wall-to-wall dinner spread, and then 30 or more songs to help digest that. The singing square was coursed through twice by song leaders and the audience was allowed to request songs. Mr. Adams delegated the leading of these acclamations by appointing "volunteers" to handle the traditional requests.

Recognized visitors to the Sing were: Terry Cunningham from Chicago, John Kurkendall from Flat Rock, NC, Wesley D. Waycaster from Dilluryn, VA, and W.L. Green from Mobile, Ala.

The inheritors of the WEARS VALLEY SING were formed into a steering committee by Burl Adams and consists of: Alvin and Johnnie Autrey, Paul Clabo, Harris and Floy Headrick, Luke and Lena Headrick, Donny Henry, Henry and Ruth Lawson, Ada McPherson, Aureta Whaley and chairman Bruce Wheeler.

Maryville College Sing

Presided by Tom Taylor, the oldest sing in the area is located in the heart of the Maryville College campus in what used to be the Post Office. A couple more strong voices in one section of the square would have made it just right. Gideon Fryer has volunteered his services to Tom Taylor for next year to help restore this sing to its former popularity. Also, as I check through the "Newsletter" mailing list, I see the city of Maryville is listed more than any other place we mail to. WE URGE YOU TO SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SING!

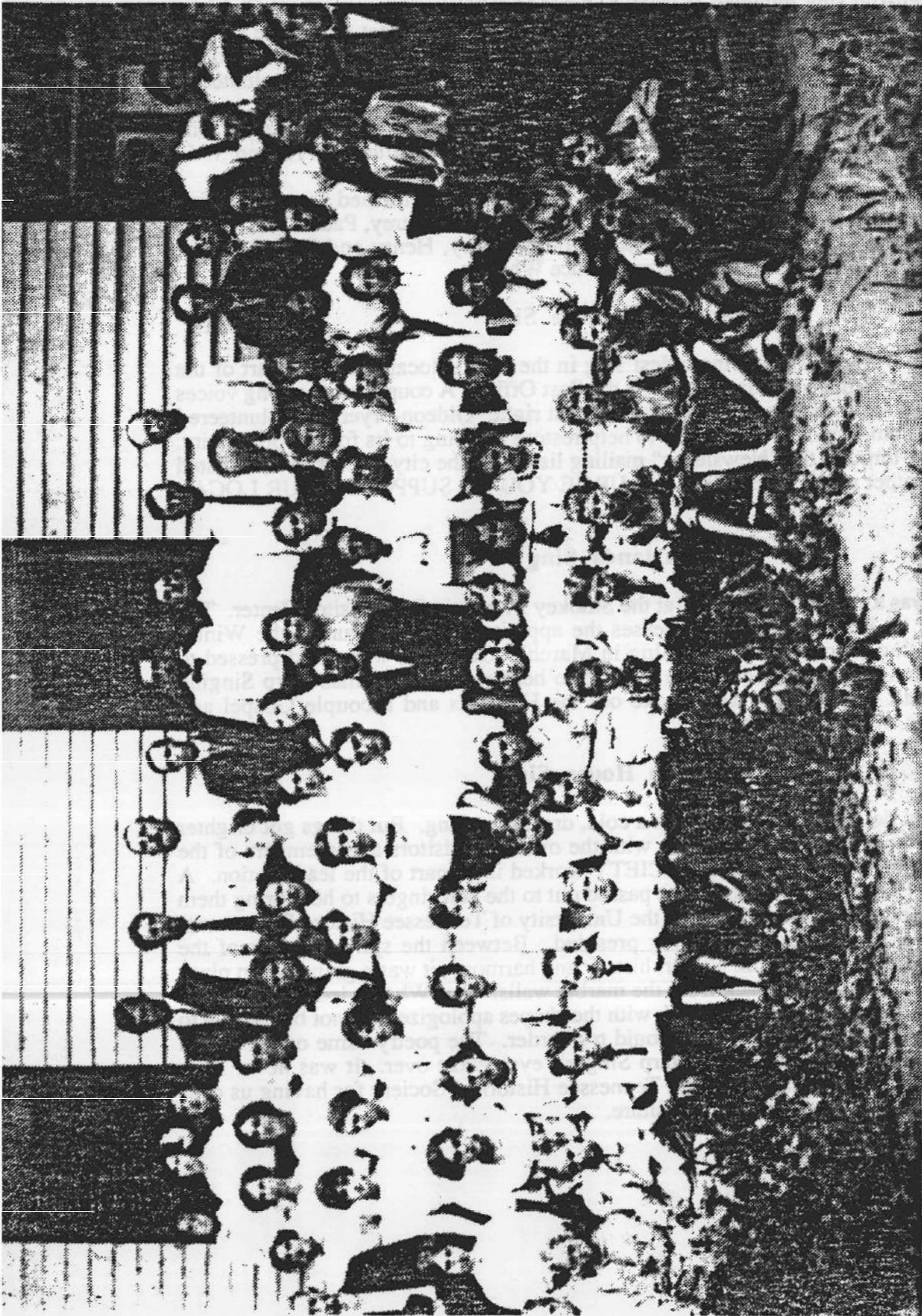
Sugarlands Sing

There was a surprising turnout at the Smokey Mountain Park Visitor Center. The Sing, presided by Reford Lamons, appeases the appetite of singers during the Winter drought of singing (until the Epworth Sing in March). Our hosts were hard pressed to keep the singers in chairs as there were over 35 to help spread Christmas Harp Singing cheer. As usual, Carl Whaley also broke out the Hymnals and a couple Gospel and Christmas songs were sung as a finale.

Customs House Sing

This was held in downtown Knoxville on a cold, dreary evening. But things got brighter from there. We were set up in a square with the over 200 visitors and members of the EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY worked in as part of the lead section. A brochure and a Harp Sing Workbook was passed out to the non singers to help bring them into the fold. Bruce Wheeler, a Ph.D. in the University of Tennessee History Department and Chairman of the Wears Valley Sing presided. Between the spirited songs of the leaders, and Bruce's ability to mix humor, history and harmony, it was a grand warm place to be, with the notes glancing back from the marble walls. Carl Whaley led song #51 at a whirlwind pace and when he was through with the shapes apologized for not being able to wave his arm in fast enough time, but would try harder. The poetry came out at such a goodly-defined pace as to make any Harp Singer's eyes glaze over. It was never sung better. We would like to thank the East Tennessee Historical Society for having us over and to offer to sing for them again in the future.

Singing School



The above photograph was of an East Tennessee Harp Singing School which was taken at Gravestown in Northeast Knox County around 1900. The singing master was Arlie Atkins, father of Chet Atkins of Grand Ole Opry fame. Arlie was also a piano tuner, taught piano and voice, and was an accomplished fiddle, guitar, and banjo player. This photograph was obtained for the newsletter by Terry Faulkner from the collection of Joe Longmire of Corryton in North Knox County.

In Between the Notes

THE KNOXVILLE HARMONY

OF

MUSIC MADE EASY,

WHICH IS AN INTERESTING SELECTION OF

HYMNS AND PSALMS.

USUALLY SUNG IN CHURCHES

SELECTED FROM THE BEST AUTHORS IN GENERAL USE.

ALSO,

A VARIETY OF ANTHEMS;

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A NUMBER OF ORIGINAL TUNES;

BEING ENTIRELY NEW, AND WELL ADAPTED FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES.

COMPOSED BY JOHN K. JACKSON.

TOGETHER WITH A COMPLETE INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPER GROUNDS OF VOCAL MUSIC,
AND RULES WELL EXPLAINED TO BEGINNERS.D. & M. SHIELDS & CO., AND JOHN B. JACKSON, PROPRIETORS
MADISONVILLE, TEN.

PRINTED BY A. W. GLOSS.

1836.

Other than the *Harp of Columbia* and the *New Harp of Columbia* by the Swanns, there were two other popular tune books that were printed and used in East Tennessee, Jackson's *Knoxville Harmony*, printed in Madisonville, TN, and Caldwell's *Union Harmony*, published in Maryville, TN. The book prevalent in the area of East Tennessee right before the Civil War was B.F. White's *Sacred Harp* and a four note FA-SO-LA book.

The first Singing Master in Knoxville is believed to be an R. Monday who held the first Singing School in 1818. Two fuguing pieces are attributed to him: "Knoxville" and "Washington."

Sing to Me of Heaven
by Dorothy Horn

Many thanks to Ann Strange for her hours typing, editing and formatting this "Newsletter" and to Terry Faulkner who helped with interviews, shared her ideas and did most of the art work on these pages. Thanks also to Gideon Fryer, Kathleen Mavourmin and Helen Hutchinson of the EPWORTH OLD HARP SINGERS, Reford and Velma Lamons, Martha Graham of the SEVIERVILLE SINGERS, Luke and Lena Headrick and Bruce Wheeler of the WEARS VALLEY SINGERS, John Wright Dunn and Charlie Clabo from TOWNSEND, and Shirley Henry and Nan and Tom Taylor.

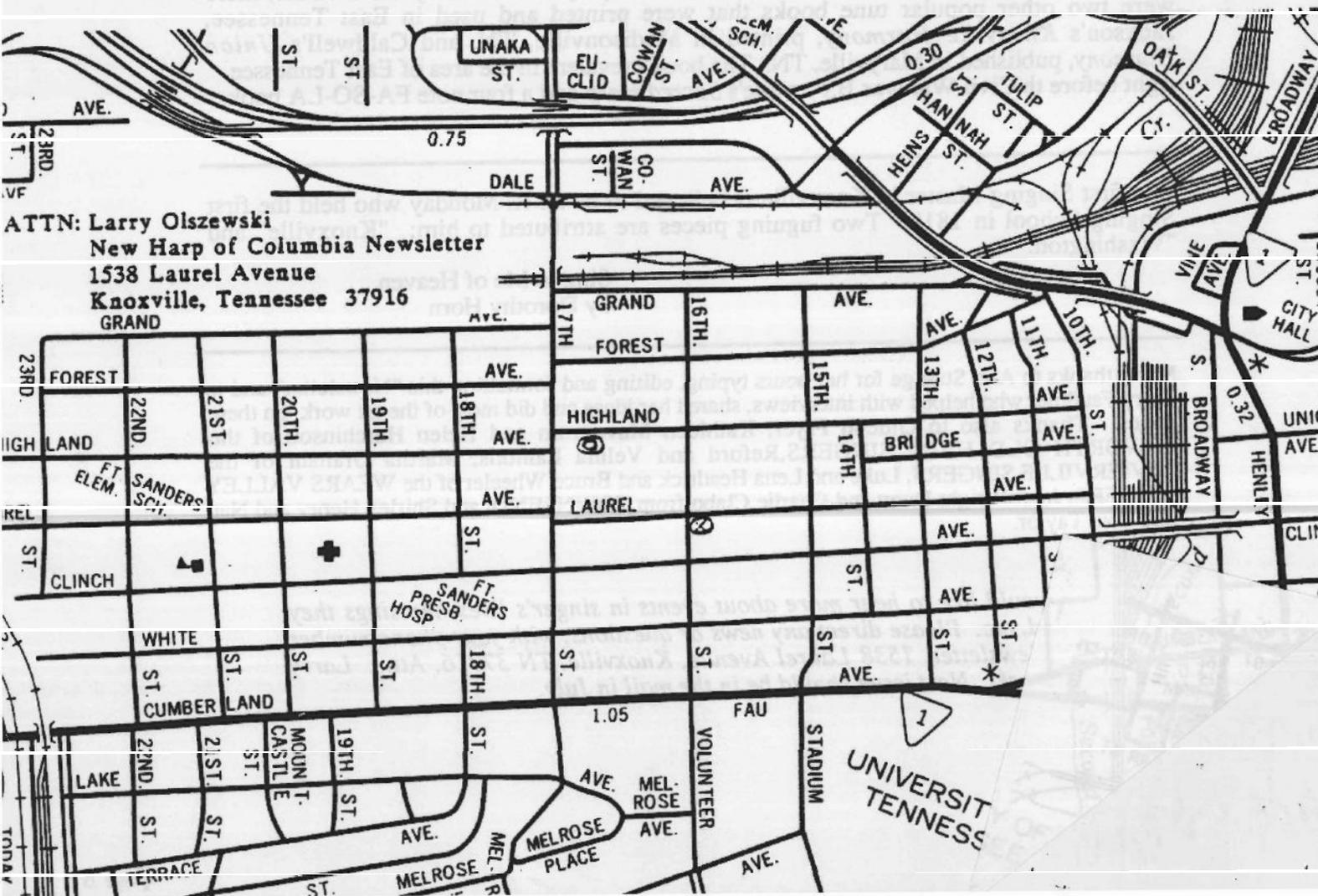
We would like to hear more about events in singer's lives, the sings they attend, etc. Please direct any news or questions, with your phone number to: Newsletter, 1538 Laurel Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37916, Attn: Larry Olszewski. Next issue should be in the mail in July.

QUARTER REST

Many thanks to Bill Landry of *The Heartland Series* and WBIR-TV, the WEARS VALLEY SING steering committee and the EPWORTH OLDE HARP SINGERS, for their contributions to this newsletter. Jubilee community arts, through Janie Wilson, has applied for grants to cover the printing and mailing in 1990.

People from all over the U.S.A. have stopped in at our OLD HARP SINGS or presentations, and the question usually pops up "are there any Harp Sings near where we live?" If it is out of the book "THE NEW HARP OF COLUMBIA" a seven note form of singing, probably not unless there are some folks still out in California that still use the book. To my knowledge, there are about 5,000 people singing some form of these traditional tunes and the way to find them is to send a letter of inquiry to the man in Georgia who publishes THE NATIONAL SACRED HARP NEWSLETTER. Every 3 or 4 months, a listing of all the people and places that have ongoing singing and scheduled "HARP SINGS," are listed in this newsletter. If you have an interest in this, please send your requests to: Hugh McGraw, c/o National Sacred Harp Newsletter, P.O. Box 551, Temple, GA 30179. His response has always been very prompt and enthusiastic. A full year's subscription to the Sacred Harp Newsletter is \$8.00 per year for 12 issues.

Below is a map of KNOXVILLE showing where the EPWORTH OLDE HARP SINGERS annual sing is to be held March 19, (at the church on the corner of 16th and Laurel) and also the home of Helen Hutchinson where we meet every Sunday night at 8 p.m. (under the I in Highland Ave.)



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