

Number 07

Old Harp

Spring 1991

the  
New Harp Of Columbia  
Newsletter



## New Harp of Columbia Calendar - 1991

<u>Date</u>	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Place, Contact People and Related Information</u>
Mar 3	1	Gethsemane Primitive Baptist Church, 2 pm, Knoxville (M)
Mar 17	3	Epworth Sing, 11 am Sing, Potluck at noon, 1538 Laurel Ave., Knoxville (D,H)
Mar 18	Mon	Russell Whitehead's 103rd Birthday Sing, Maryville. 7 pm (K)
Apr 2	Tues	Singing School - <i>Knoxville</i> . First session. See Article this issue.
Apr 28	4	Tuckaleechee Methodist Church Sing, Townsend (Blount County), 2 pm sing (C,K)
May 4	Sat	Sevierville Sing, Blue Mountain Mist Inn, 6 pm, Potluck, Sing afterwards (I,E)
June 16	3	Beech Grove Primitive Baptist Church Sing, Caney Creek Road, 11 am, sing, potluck, sing (G)
Jul 28	4 *	Little Greenbriar Schoolhouse Sing, Great Smoky Mtns. National Park (between Metcalf Bottoms & Rte.321). Dinner on the ground noon. 1:30 pm Sing. (M)
Aug 11	2 *	Loudon County Historical Society Sing, 2:30 pm, National Campground, Greenback, TN. Potluck (D)
Aug 18	3	Cades Cove Missionary Baptist Church Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 2 pm (C)
Sep 8	2	Wears Valley United Methodist Church Sing, 2 pm, Rte. 321, Sevier County (A,J,Y)
Sep 22	4	Headricks Chapel Sing, Rte. 321, Sevier County, 11 am sing, potluck, sing (B),(X)
Oct 6	1	Wears Valley Sing, Wearwood School, Rte. 321, 11 am sing, potluck, sing. (J,L,F)
Oct 13	2	Dollywood Sing, 2 pm at the church (I,E)
Oct 27	4	Maryville College Sing (Blount County), 2 pm sing (K,D)
Dec 14	Sat	Sugarlands Sing, Visitor Center, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 10 am (I)
SUNDAYS	16th and Laurel Ave., Knoxville (please call first) (D,H)	

\* It is suggested that one bring lawn chairs.

Cordova, TN Periodic Sings out of *The New Harp of Columbia* are being held in Cordova in west Tennessee. Please call first (W)

### \* CONTACTS

Area Code (615)

(A) John O. Clabo, 2714 Clabo Road, Sevierville,	37862	453-8930
(B) Charlie Clabough, Rt. 1, Tom Henry Rd., Townsend	37882	448-2497
(C) John Wright Dunn, 7937 Old Hwy 73, Townsend	37882	448-6445
(D) Gideon Fryer, 3312 Bunker Hill Dr., Knoxville	37920	577-2272
(E) Martha Graham, 500 Conner Hgts. Rd., Pigeon Forge	37863	453-3276
(F) L. Headrick, 3007 Headrick Drive, Sevierville	37862	453-2407
(G) Shirley Henry, 1850 Little Cove Rd., Sevierville	37862	453-5983
(H) Terry Faulkner 4178 Ridgeway Rd., Knoxville	37919	584-3659
(I) Reford, Velma Lamons, 1418 Jay Ell Rd., Sevierville	37862	453-4581
(J) Henry Lawson, 3538 Wears Valley Rd., Sevierville	37862	453-7638
(K) Tom & Nan Taylor, 603 Court St., Maryville	37801	984-8585
(L) Bruce Wheeler, Box 1049, Pigeon Forge	37868	974-7875
(M) Elder Art Godfrey, 1400 Jourlman Av., Knoxville	37921	525-9640
(W) J. Kasserman, 8261 Shallow Glenn Tr., Cordova	38018	
Note: This is the only number which is not in the 615 area code	(901)	756-6184
(X) Luke Cornette, 1927 Woodland Rd., Maryville	37801	984-5337
(Y) Warren Massey, 3032 Ogle Road, Sevierville	37862	453-8286

## COMMENTS

There are some changes to this Newsletter. The first is Old Harp with bold letters on the cover, as large as the New Harp of Columbia. If I had to do over when this Newsletter was started, it would have been the *Old Harp Newsletter*, or *Old Harp Repository*, or something like that. One keeps on constantly learning, learning more if one learns to ask the right questions of the right people. According to Russell Whitehead, people were singing the Old Harp out of the four note books for a time, till the book that most people had was the Harp and or the *New Harp of Columbia*.

The second change in this, though not permanent, is the lack of an article(s) on people who sing the Old Harp in East Tennessee. People are the most important

part of the Sings, and there should be no excuse. People on my list to interview are John O. Clabo, Wiley Lamons, Paul Clabo with his Father and married children, Charlie Clabo, Joni Autrey, Ida McPherson, Richard Lawson, Cates Ogle, and Martha Graham and Kate Headrick, and Granville Pate. Being sent off to the wilderness in Northern Alabama has put a crimp on my ability to talk to people and even to make the Sings last year.

But even in the wilderness there are flowers. I had a chance to meet Gary Sides, who ran a 10 day Singing School in Five Points, Tennessee, where I attended 7 of those days. Also had a chance to meet another Singing Master, David Ivey, in Huntsville, Alabama, at a Sing. David was getting ready to teach a Singing School there in Northern Alabama. And last of all, made a

mad dash, early in the year of 1990, to attend a three day Singing School put on by Richard Delong in Cincinnati, Ohio.

And after that school in Cincinnati is when I started to do research on the music that we sing. There is an awful lot of information, and very little information. Depends if there are people around who remember the old Sings and Singers or not. It seems that most of this information is in a book form, not in easily digestible form, which is what I tried to do here.

And lastly we have gone from the color cover format, at least until color copying gets its cost down. Doug Beasley, a U. T. graphic arts student, has done this cover. It seemed that a cover was needed to match a topic contained within the Newsletter.

Larry Olszewski

The National Endowment for the Arts Expansion Grant, 1990 portion of the grant, is for the production and mailing of the *New Harp of Columbia Newsletter* for match time, donations and labor.

This newsletter and its readers are thankful to Janie Wilson, Executive Director of Jubilee Community Arts, who cheerfully included the newsletter in her grant proposals to the NEA.

We would like to thank for the funding of this newsletter Barbara Wilkins, Paul Clabo, John O. Clabo, Hugh McGraw, Zurma and Leo Caldwell, Reford and Velma Lamons, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Joel Kasserman of Cordova, Tennessee, is getting together people periodically to sing out of the *New Harp of Columbia*. Cordova is located a stones throw

due East of Memphis. Joel sang with the Epworth Old Harp Singers for a good number of years (as a treble) and moved out to the Memphis area about five years ago

with his wife Avery. We wish them luck and hope to see them soon. For more information, call (901) 756-6184.

## Shape Note Singing School

This is a singing school to teach basic music through the use of the seven-shape-notation as found in the *Old Harp Singing Manual*, the *New Harp of Columbia* by M. L. Swan. The class will be held on

Tuesday nights starting April 2nd at the Laurel Theater, located at the corner of 16th and Laurel, in the Fort Sanders area. The nine classes will run through to the end of May, with a presentation to the

community at the end as is traditional. Starting time will be 7 p.m. sharp and the class will last for an hour and a half. For the first session, please arrive a half hour early to register.

The Class will be taught by Eugene McCammon, a retired public school music teacher in the Knoxville area for 25 years and choir director for the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church. He has taught many Singing Schools using theseven-shape-notation.

History and traditions will be covered by Larry Olszewski, compiler of the *New Harp of Columbia Newsletter*, as well as representatives from various

area Old Harp Sings.

We would like to request a donation of \$20 for the Singing School to cover the cost of books, materials, gas and other expenses. There is a questionnaire included in this Newsletter for those living in Anderson, Blount, Knox, Loudon and Sevier Counties.

Those wishing to attend the Knoxville Singing School should have their questionnaires in by the Epworth Sing on the 17th of March, also at the Laurel Theater. Other Classes will be arranged and scheduled as determined by the questionnaires. If you need more information, call Larry at 584-6633.

## On Old Harp

1. I have the habit of passing on *Old Harp* tapes to my friends that sing. Many of these tapes are made by young people taking up Harp Singing for the first time, fascinated with the music and poetry that is not of the main stream today. Some of the tapes I sent went to Reford Lamons, whom I consider one of my mentors in the *Old Harp*. He said that he enjoyed the tapes and thanked me for them, but that the tapes lacked "SENTIMENT." Curiously enough, on another tape that I received there was an admonishment by a Singing Master from the south to sing one song with "FEELING." Some of us younger singers have not lived in the same house that we were born in, have not had our parents move in with us for their final days, not had three or four of our children pass away before maturity, or maintain friends, neighbors or relatives that SING and that share our trials. I admit that we have been sheltered and are handicapped in our singing of the *Old Harp*. But time is on our side. There will come a time when we are 80 years young, singing together for another 40 years or so, and will be admonishing those young people in the year 2030 to sing with FEELING, to sing with SENTIMENT. We will have had our hard times, and our trials, to be shared with those to come.

2. The inspiration for the theme of this issue comes from a question from Bobbie Goodell, who helped organize a Singing School for a young group of Harp Singers in the Cincinnati area for four-note singers. The question was: "What do I tell the public what Harp Singing is?" The common denominators

being not only the learning and the singing of the shapes, but the sharing and the fellowship of people of all ages and walks of life, coming together under one roof to sing the songs of the past and - at some Sings - to break bread with. It is a tradition that is inherited - a tradition that is passed on. It is for some a going back to the basics. For others, a way of life.

It is the place on earth where a youngster gets her first chance to lead a lesson, a place to share a song for loved ones gone by, a place to let one's spirit soar, rest, mourn - all at the same time.

It is like nothing on this Green Earth. Can't be bought, sold or traded. You won't find it (much) on TV or at video stores. (But see Dan Moyer's *Amazing Grace*.) It is of the spirit that one might seek, and the coin to pay is that of giving.

3. Many of our Elders at the Sings have been to the old Singing Schools and may have even taught those classes to the community. Old Harp Singing, it was said, was dying out, but has stabilized in recent years. But it has to work at maintaining what can be termed a "critical mass." It is my personal belief that to maintain the Old Harp the Singing Schools - one of the cornerstones of the Sings - must be reconvened in the various counties of East Tennessee.

Eugene McCammon has been engaged to set a program for these schools (see writeup elsewhere in this issue). A Singing School as we all know it will be set up. Maybe two or three a year for two years will be sufficient for the present. We ask that our Elders attend these classes to give us "first generation" Harp

Singers guidance as to the traditions that have been orally handed down. It is to be a community effort, and much needs to be organized. Much also needs to be written down.

Gene McCammon doesn't intend to be teaching the Old Harp Singing Schools for very long. Historically an instructor was called into an area to teach every 10 or 15 years. New teachers will be needed. An advanced course for those interested will

also be taught as well as a course on teaching and music writing in the Old Harp Tradition.

The community has the need to develop its young into becoming Instructors. There is nothing that inspires confidence and understanding so quickly as a well-run Singing School. So rise ye young people! It is time to take your rightful places.

Larry Olszewski

## Previous Sings

August 12, 1990

### Eblen's Cave Sing

Despite a flaw in the directions in the last Newsletter most people found the Sing well in time to make it all. Gideon Fryer managed to make it back from his seminars in upstate New York to preside again. We were also joined in song by a couple of spelunkers who might be persuaded to join in singing the *Old Harp* with us some time in the future.

As always, the cave's unique acoustics added depth and power to the singing. More and more people are showing up with the *New Harp of Columbia*, but are not quite as comfortable in coming up and singing with us yet. Rumor has it an old-fashioned Singing School was being held by the choir-director at a church a mile down the end of the road, teaching the shapes but out of the new books.

The hospitality and the audience at this Sing have always been outstanding and we would like to thank the Loudon County Historical Society for co-sponsoring this event along with the Epworth Olde Harp Singers. (Note: due to space restrictions, the next Loudon County Historical Society Sing will be at the Greenback National Campground.)

August 19, 1990

### Cades Cove Missionary Baptist Church Sing

John Wright Dunn and Charlie Clabough opened this Sing with #107, *Holy Manna*. It was a beautiful hot summer day, and a good day to be out of the city and in the mountains. Even so, we coursed through the class just once because of the rising temperatures. Martha Graham got up to lead next, claiming that she might get hoarse after a bit and wanted to lead her songs before that time should come. Other leaders for that day were Reford Lamons, David Wilson, Larry Olszewski, Steve Stone, John Clabo, Ann Strange, Richard DeLong and Lee Rogers.

Lee Rogers, a Sacred Harp Singer from Connecticut, led a rousing song called Amsterdam #169, which is also in the four-note book. Since it hasn't been heard in these parts in some time Lee was gracious enough to run through the song again with the notes.

We would also like to say hello to Richard DeLong and Hugh McGraw, Singing School teachers and organizers of the Sacred Harp. Hugh sat in the front with his family, trying to be inconspicuous, but was remembered for leading a Sing at the Worlds Fair many years ago and was given a book to sing with. Hugh has been quoted as saying "I would not walk across the street to listen to Harp Singing, but I would definitely drive 200 miles to *sing* Harp." We do thank them for stopping by all the way from Bremen, Georgia and other points south.

It seemed as if the class was not going to let Richard DeLong sit down, as he was asked to lead many a song as enthusiasm was overwhelming for his lessons.

There seems to be a potential problem in the use of the Missionary Baptist Church on the Cades Cove Loop. The parking has been halved by the Park Service and we seem to collect cars enough to block traffic. We hope that this Sing can be worked out between the Old Harp Singers and the Great Smoky Mountain Park Service. (The Park Service is understanding, and we will have more on this in the next issue - the Fall Issue.)

September 8, 1990

## Wears Valley Methodist Church Sing

John O. Clabo presiding, Warren Massey assisting. This is the second year for this Sing. The turn-out was respectable. John asked us to remember #134 as a good lesson to work on. He is the one person in the last ten years to instruct this lesson. Perhaps we can take this one to heart and be prepared by the next class that he leads. Another well-respected lesson that John shares with us is #141. He "shall not fear to own his cause..."

September 23, 1990

## Headricks Chapel Sing

Charlie Clabo presiding with Luke Cornette assisting. It was a little slow in the first part of the morning till people trickled in from their church services and those folks who had a long trek to the Sing. But by after lunch, all Heaven broke loose. The Union Church was filled to the rafters and our voices and spirit seemed to resound off the wooden walls. The shapes, poetry and cadences were strong for every song. We would like to thank the Sacred Harp singers - about 14 of them - who made their pilgrimage to this class. This group - from Georgia - sing using the 4-shape system.

October 7, 1990

## Wears Valley Sing

Or it might be called Burl and Mae Adams' Sing. They were a bullwark of the community for a long time, and we miss them both. Joni Autry led #139 and Joni and Paul Clabo led #87 in the different sessions, in memory of Mae Adams. Lena Headrick led #180 and #183 in honor of Burl. Janet Whaley did not lead #131 - Marston - again as a lesson but led #16. There were many other fine leaders on this day. Gideon Fryer #35, 43, 110. Allan Hjerpe #68. Sharon Hjerpe #14, #181. Ann Strange #56, #181. Ray Turner #178 and upon request, led it again in the afternoon along with #53. Larry Olszewski #169 in the morning and afternoon. Aida McPherson #16. Terry Faulkner #51 and #68. Henry Lawson #114 and #112. Martha Graham #14, 68, 114. Barbara Kemper led #94. Sharee Rich #99. John O. Clabo #139. John Wright Dunn #51. Paul Clabo also #104. Kathy Jones #56b. Susan Finger #146. Steve Stone #110. And Bruce Wheeler, presiding, led #59, 107, 115, 42 and 117.

October 28, 1990

## Maryville College Sing

Even Russell Whitehead broke loose to attend this Sing, presided over by Tom Taylor. It might not seem like he appreciated the introduction that Tom was giving him when Russell asked "When are

you going to start singing?" Russell, at 102 years young, still has great fun in remaking old acquaintances and meeting new singers. We hope for all to meet here again for the oldest known sing in East Tennessee.

November 21, 1990

## Bayley Hazen Singers

The presentation by this New England Group was made more exciting when they formed a square and had everyone singing out of their own book, *Northern Harmony*. We even had enough books brought of the *New Harp of Columbia* that we took turns leading in our own book. We hope that they enjoyed their stay in Knoxville and would like to say thank you to Kathleen Mavournin, Allan and Sharon Hjerpe, Ann Strange, Gideon and Bette Fryer and Donna Finger for putting these traveling troubadours up. Also, thanks to Victoria Simmons, Kathy Jones, Terry Faulkner, Linda Gass and the others who volunteered to take people in their homes for Thanksgiving Eve and Thanksgiving Day. Thank you, Larry Gordon, for organizing your group and sharing with us your songs, voices and appetites.

December 16, 1990

## Sugarlands Sing

It wasn't as cold this year, and the group was moved into the auditorium to sing. Had one of the largest crowds of singers for this Sing as we can remember. Reford Lamons presiding. He says that singing is a good way to get in the Christmas spirit. If that is true, then he is always in the Christmas spirit.

## Future Sings

March 3, 1991

### Gethsemane Primitive Baptist Church Sing

This is the second year for this new Sing. Elder Art Godfrey will call the class to order at 2 pm. Directions are: from downtown, take Western Avenue northwest to Keith Avenue, turn left, go approximately 1 mile, pass Crestview Cemetery on the right, turn right on Cemetery Hill Road, go to the top of the hill and turn left on Pansy Street (no sign). The church is 200 yards on the left. For more information, call 525-9640 - Art Godfrey.

March 17, 1991

### Epworth Sing

Gideon Fryer to preside at the 11 am class. Directions are: take the I-40 exit in the middle of Knoxville at 17th Street. From east or west, take I-40 to downtown. From North I-75, take I-275 to I-40 West. Take 17th Street exit (Univ. of Tenn. Exit), go south (towards U.T.) to top of hill, turn left on Laurel Avenue and go one block. For more directions and other matters call Gideon at (615) 577-2272 or Terry at (615) 584-3659.

March 18, 1991

### Russell Whitehead's 103rd Birthday Sing

This is at the Hill Haven Rest Home in Maryville, Tennessee. This Monday Night Sing will start at 7 pm. Directions are: take Montvale Road to Montvale Station Road and turn right (at Victory Baptist Church)

two miles to Jamestown Way. Take that to the end. All singers are urged to attend to help celebrate this occasion and please bring your extra books. For more information, call Tom and Nan Taylor at (615) 984-8585.

April 2, 1991  
**Singing School**

Knoxville on Tuesday nights and running through the end of May. Sponsored by the Epworth Old Harp Singers and taught by Eugene McCammon at the Laurel Theater (see Epworth Sing above for directions) at 16th and Laurel Avenue. This is to be the first of about six Classes to be held in East Tennessee in the next year or so. Please fill out the enclosed questionnaire form and send it back. For more forms call Larry at (615) 584-6633.

April 28, 1991  
**Tuckaleechee Methodist Church Sing**

Townsend, Tennessee. This is also the last event of the Blount County Dogwood Festival. It starts at 2 pm and is well attended. John Wright Dunn presides. Directions are: one mile from Route #321 heading towards the Tuckaleechee Caverns. Tuckaleechee Methodist Church is the stone church on the left before the cavern turnoff. For more information, call John at (615) 448-6445 or Nan and Tom Taylor at (615) 984-8585.

May 4, 1991  
**Sevierville Sing**

The Sing is held at the Blue Mountain Mist Inn. This Saturday event will start at 6 pm. Reford Lamons might be changing his ways and deciding that to "sing for his supper" is not such a good idea after all, and we are to eat at the 6 pm time and sing afterwards. Directions are: turn right off Middle Creek Road onto Jay Ell Road. Blue Mountain Mist Inn is 1-1/2 miles on the left. There is a map in issue Number 5, or call Refordr at (615) 453-7638 or Martha Graham at (615) 453-3276.

June 16, 1991  
**Beech Grove Sing**

This is Sharee Rich's stomping grounds. She will be pleased if you will come prepared to sing lesson #99 with her. In another couple of years she will be better than most at singing the shapes. Maybe then she might be 10 years old. And by then she might not need a book and will just lead the shapes and poetry by heart.

The Sing is located between Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg. Off Route 441, take Caney Creek Road about 4 miles to the church, which will be on your left. Shirley Henry will open the Sing at 11 am. A potluck at noon and then sing until the food wears off. For more information you can call (615) 453-5983. The date is always the 3rd Sunday in June.

## Tradition and History of Old Harp

### General History

In the churches of early America, many of the old psalm tunes were handed down from generation to generation by memory. Books were expensive and scarce. Many people were illiterate. The practice of 'lining out' the psalms was common, where the minister or deacon would intone a line and the congregation would repeat it.

Problems arose in due course, as populations gradually changed. There were those who might embellish the tune a little or remember a tune altogether differently when the spirit arose. (Many of us love the sound of "lining out," but not all agree. One English musician described the sound of a congregation "lining out" a hymn as reminiscent of a herd of jackasses braying in unison.)

A few progressive Boston ministers, graduates from Harvard, campaigned for musical literacy to promote "Regular singing" as opposed to "Usual singing." Two song books were soon published: John Tufts' *Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes*, and Thomas Walters' *Grounds and Rules of Musik Explained*. Tufts' book used the syllables f, s, l, and m, a four-note system used at that time and which is still used in some books. (Fa, Sol, La, Mi.)

The way to teach the average person this "musik" was through the use of Singing Schools. Churches, homes, inns and taverns were co-opted as gathering places where itinerant Singing Masters would hold their classes. These Singing Masters were "salt of the earth" people - tradesmen, teachers, carpenters, printers, farmers, tanners and deacons. Many were composers/compilers of tunes and song books.

The poetry followed the popular religious doctrines and sermons of the day, but much of the music was taken from older folk tunes, including many that were sung in the taverns. It is thought that many of those tunes were used with religious prose to wean men from the "evils of the spirits." (Martin Luther also used secular melodies for religious purposes and said, "Why should the Devil have all the good tunes?")

### Singing School Books

Hundreds of Singing School Books were written as aids for the instruction of sight reading and harmonizing with parts. The beginning usually had the Elements of Music, a brief section giving the basic rudiments of music and helpful hints for beginners. After 1800 two innovations were introduced into these books. The first was shaped notes, also called character notes or patent notes. At first only four shapes were used, fa-so-la-fa-sol-me-fa. A triangle was used for fa, a circle for sol, a square for la and a diamond shape for mi. This system was placed on a staff as in regular music. This system still exists today in *The Sacred Harp*. The second innovation was the addition of folk hymns, sometimes referred to as white spirituals, into the singing manuals.

### The Book -

The *New Harp of Columbia* was published in Knoxville in 1867, soon after the Civil War, by M. L. Swan. The predecessor was the *Harp of Columbia*, also published in Knoxville by W. H. Swan in 1848.

"A SYSTEM OF MUSICAL NOTATION WITH A NOTE FOR EACH SOUND, AND A SHAPE FOR EACH NOTE: CONTAINING A VARIETY OF MOST EXCELLENT PSALM AND HYMN TUNES, ODES AND ANTHEMS, HAPPILY ADAPTED TO CHURCH SERVICE, SINGING SCHOOLS AND SOCIETIES."

The above passage is on the front of the book - an advertisement for this Singing School book or manual. *The New Harp* taught a way to sing music using seven-shape or patent notes. It used an "improved" seven syllable solmization favored by Lowell Mason, a leading tune writer of the times. This new "Modern" Singing Manual included many standard Hymns popular in the day as well as many of the old traditional and popular Folk Hymns, and Anthems, Psalm and Hymn tunes. Also included were compositions by Swan himself along with adding of the alto, or "counter by Swan." For more about the book, see the introduction of the University of Tennessee Press edition, where there is an extended and detailed description.

### Singing Schools

The early singing schools not only provided for a formal way to teach music but also provided for a social outlet for the community, where families could meet and young people of both sexes could meet in an acceptable manner.

After the first few lessons on the basics of reading music the class would form into a square to practice what they learned and the effective use of the blending of harmonies.

The singing schools of today have a new task as well, and that is to pass on the traditions of the Old Harp.

### Poetry

Religious reformers in the sixteenth century attempted to reimpose poetry from the Book of Psalms rather than hymns of human composition as the basis for Worship. Metrical Psalms were organized into stanzas that could be sung by congregations to a simple melody without accompaniment and without harmony. Meter patterns of four lines of eight syllables each were called Long Meter (L.M.). Lines with one of eight syllables, then six, eight, then six again were called Common Meter (C.M.). Short Meter (S.M.) had six, six, eight and six syllables. These were the main patterns that were used. Therefore, when one saw C.M., the words could be interchanged with any other tune labeled C.M.

The versifications of the Psalms that gained the most in popularity was that of Isaac Watts. John Wesley wrote his hymns in a variety of meters, as did John Leland.

Death, pestilence, war - it is a harsh and gloomy theology that we hear in this poetry. We should recall that at that time perhaps a third of the children died in infancy, and another third died before reaching maturity. Life was harsh. Singing was a way to express one's feelings.

### Epilogue

I would guess there could be anywhere from 3,000 to 5,000 Harp Singers in the U.S.A. today. There might be as many as 150 in East Tennessee. It is sad that the Singing Schools have just about died out. The all-day Sings, with dinner on the grounds, are getting to be fewer each year. There is only one "folkie" song that I know that gets sung in this area every once in a while around here, and it is sung in the taverns on Cumberland Avenue when Tennessee wins the Sugar Bowl. When I hear that *Rocky Top* being sung, it has only the melody line. And also there are 90,000 people singing it. Maybe it is written in a short meter. I wonder if there is anything by Watts or Wesley that might fit it...

## Local History

Many of the early preachers who were circuit riders in the Maryville/Knoxville area also doubled as Singing Instructors. Services were usually held once a month and mobile preachers were engaged to tend to their flocks. To supplement their income and bring more people to the Sunday services, they taught Singing Schools. Since many people might walk ten miles to get to the Sunday Service, a good way to encourage people was to have a sing with a dinner on the grounds. Herbert Clabo said that on just about any Sunday there was a Sing with a dinner on the grounds after Sunday preaching within good walking distance. Early books used in this area possibly were eventually superseded by the *New Harp of Columbia* after the Civil War or by Gospel or convention style singing manuals. Many people still had copies of *The Harp of Columbia* many years after the *New Harp of Columbia* was published. Books were too valuable to throw away. Many people still enjoyed the tunes that were edited out of the *Harp of Columbia* as well as other tunes from other books that were out of print but still existed in men's minds and were sung as well. These were thus called Old Harp Singers. The term pretty much is used nowadays for those who sing out of the *New Harp of Columbia*.

Most of these Sings were common things and not much was ever written about them. Along after the First World War, people in Greene County formed a Convention which managed to fade out in the late thirties.

## Tuckaleechee Sing

According to the records available, the Easter Sing began in the mid 1890's at the Odd Fellows Lodge in Maryville. In the early 30's the Sing was moved to the East Maryville Baptist Church, then to the First Baptist and became the Second Baptist Church Sing until the church was disbanded.

In the fall of 1972 staff members at the Tremont Learning Center got together with some Old Harp Singers, and formed the Tuckaleechee Old Harp Singers, and chose Tuckaleechee Methodist Church in which to perform their class. In 1979, the date was changed from Easter to the third Sunday in April.

## Headricks Chapel Sing

Around 1910 the Rev. John Abbott started the first Sing at Headricks Chapel. It also died out in the 1930's. The present Sing held here began with the Primitive Baptist Church of Townsend in 1920 and was known as Coker Hill Old Harp Singing. That Sing migrated to Headricks Chapel in 1968, when a group split off from the Primitive church and came into Wears Valley.

## Wears Valley Sing

First started in the Wears Valley Baptist Church in 1921 and has continued ever since. It has always been one of the largest Sings in the area with people coming from many states and counties. Burl Adams, one of the founding fathers, moved the Sing to Wearwood School before he died.

## Beech Grove Primitive Baptist Church Sing

Has an unwritten history back before the Civil War. Great singing families like the Perrymans, the Adams, Franklins, Lamons, Clabos, Shields, Huskeys and Elliots have all had their start here.

## Sevierville Old Harp Singers

Many of the families mentioned in the Beech Grove Sing make up the Sevierville Old Harp Singers. Most of them are at least second or third cousins once removed. Their Sings are many and varied. They used to hold a Sing early at the Court House in the Spring. Now they have one at the Blue Mountain Mist Inn in the Spring, Dollywood in the fall, and the Sugarlands Sing in December.

## Epworth Sing/Singers

There were at least two groups in Knoxville before the 1960s. The first was the East Tennessee Old Harp Singers, and they folded in the 1940s. The other was the Knox County Old Harp Singers. They would hold traveling Classes. They would move on to existing Sings, or hold a Sing at various churches upon request. They folded in the eighties when most of their members passed away or could not travel. Bates Elliot was the last president of the Knox County Old Harp Singers. A traveling troubadour by the name of John McCutcheon went to a Sing by these Knox County Singers and started a group at the community center known as Epworth.

Sunday Singing was held at the late Mrs. Helen Hutchinson's house on Highland Avenue while the Yearly Sing is held at the Laurel Theater or the Old Fort Sanders Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, Fort Sanders area.

## Other Sings

Tom Taylor has run a traditional Sing at Maryville College for many years. John O. Clabo has a Sing running for two years straight at Wears Valley Methodist Church. Art Godfrey presides over two Sings. One is in its second year at Gethsemane Primitive Baptist Church in Knoxville and the other at Little Greenbriar school house in the National Park. And Gideon Fryer is running a Sing for the Loudon County Historical Society in Greenback this year.

We would like to thank contributors, other than those listed on Page 2 of this Newsletter. Thanks to Doug Beasley, Ann Strange, Terry and Charlie Faulkner, the Governing Board of the Wears Valley Sing, Eugene McCammon, and Sharon and Allan Hjerpe.

Note: Jubilee Community Arts has raised, as of January 15, \$21,500 towards the purchase of the Laurel Theater, where the Epworth Old Harp Singers hold their Sing. We will keep you up to date in future Newsletters..

If you have a new address, please send a postcard to: New Harp of Columbia Newsletter, c/o Jubilee Community Arts, 1538 ~~Highland~~ Av., Knoxville, TN 37916, with your new address.

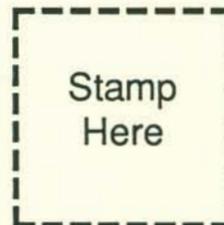
Old Harp Newsletter  
c/o Jubilee Community Arts  
1538 Laurel Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37916



- \_\_\_ 10. I would like to help with a *Singing School* with my ability to (circle all that apply):
- |                    |                    |                     |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| a. Organize        | b. Drive students  | c. Help carry bass  |
| d. Help carry alto | e. Help carry lead | f. Help carry tenor |
| g. Baby sit        | h. Other _____     |                     |
- \_\_\_ 11. I need transportation
- \_\_\_ 12. I need baby sitting services
- \_\_\_ 13. I do not own a copy of *The New Harp of Columbia* and cannot borrow one
- \_\_\_ 14. I would like to purchase a copy of *The New Harp of Columbia* (soft cover) for \$8.00
- \_\_\_ 15. I would like to contribute more than the minimal fee to help offset the cost of running a singing school. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 16. My \_\_\_\_\_ (organization) would like to sponsor a *Singing School*. Please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at (615) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 17. My organization is also interested in forming a *Harp Sing*  
Please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at (615) \_\_\_\_\_

Please fold in center of paper

Return Address



Singing School  
c/o Jubilee Community Arts  
1538 Laurel Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37916

Staple here or tape together

# SINGING SCHOOL CLASSES

We believe that there might be a need to restart the *Singing School* or schools in East Tennessee to help keep the singing of the *Old Harp* alive and healthy. We would like to survey the needs of the community of those who would be interested in having such a school. Please fill out this survey form for each person interested - a xerox or a sheet of paper with the answers will do - and send them to:

Singing School  
c/o Jubilee Community Arts  
1538 Laurel Avenue  
Knoxville, TN 37916

(This brochure can be folded in half with a first class stamp and mailed.)

(Please print)

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Address \_\_\_\_\_
3. City \_\_\_\_\_
- State: Tennessee Zipcode: 37 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Preteen \_\_\_\_\_
- Teen-ager \_\_\_\_\_
- Adult \_\_\_\_\_
5. Phone at which you can be reached: (615) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. I am interested in a three (3) day *Singing School* because I can read and understand music. This class would teach me how to read the shapes, the history of *Old Harp* and its Traditions, how to lead songs as well as practice some of the songs in *The New Harp of Columbia* that are not usually sung at the *Sings*.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. I am interested in a ten (10) day *Singing School* but have only the time available for the three day *Singing School*.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. I would like to attend a (10) day *Singing School* that would cover the basic rudiments of music using the seven-note-shape-note method with *The New Harp of Columbia* as the text book.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. I would travel as far as (below) to attend a *Singing School*. (circle those that apply):

- a. Caney Creek
- d. Wears Valley
- g. Knoxville

- b. Pigeon Forge
- e. Townsend
- h. Lenoir City

- c. Sevierville
- f. Maryville
- i. (other) \_\_\_\_\_