

# OLD HARP

200 YEARS OF OLD HARP IN EAST TENNESSEE  
150 YEARS USING THE SWANS' 7-SHAPE SHAPED-NOTE SINGING SCHOOL MANUALS



Number 22  
Fall 1998

*The  
New Harp of  
Columbia  
Newsletter*

**THE NEW HARP OF COLUMBIA CALENDAR - 1998 SINGINGS**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>DINNER?</u>	<u>INFORMATION (CONTACT PEOPLE)</u>
September 13	Sunday (2)	2 PM	No	Wears Valley Methodist Church Singing, Hwy. 321 (Wears Valley Rd.), Sevier County (J) (R)
September 27	Sunday (4)	11 AM	Yes	Headrick Chapel Singing, Hwy. 321 (Wears Valley Rd.), Sevier County (B) (O)
October 4	Sunday (1)	2:00 PM	No	Valley View Baptist Church Singing, Valley View Rd. off Hwy. 321 (Wears Valley Rd.), Sevier County (J) (L) (F)
October 10	Saturday	10:30 AM & 12 NOON	No	Museum of Appalachia Homecoming Singing, Norris, TN (B) (O)
October 11	Sunday (2)	2 PM	No	Dollywood Singing (E)
October 25	Sunday (4)	2 PM	No	Maryville College Singing, Blount County (K)
November 25	Wednesday	6:30 PM	Yes	Thanksgiving Eve Pot Luck & Old Harp Singing, Laurel Theatre, 16th & Laurel Ave., Knoxville (D) (H) (S)
December 12	Saturday	10 AM	No	Sugarlands Singing, Sugarlands Visitor Center, Great Smoky Mtns. Natl. Park (E) (L)
December 20	Sunday	TBA	Yes	Epworth Christmas Singing, Location TBA

**VARIOUS**

MONTHLY	SUNDAYS	7 PM	No	Old Harp, 2nd Sunday of each month, usually at Laurel Theatre (downstairs), 16th and Laurel Ave. (S) (O)
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**CONTACT PEOPLE**

★★★ Unless otherwise noted, area code for phone #s on this list is 423. ★★★

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PHONE</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>ZIP</u>
(A) Sharee Rich	429-5877	829 Gnatty Branch Rd.	Sevierville, TN	37876
(B) Lois Luebke	693-9292	311 Triplett Lane	Knoxville, TN	37919
(C) John Wright Dunn	448-6445	7937 Old Hwy. #73	Townsend, TN	37882
(D) Gideon Fryer	524-3136	509 11th St. #2006	Knoxville, TN	37916
(E) Martha Graham	453-3276	210 Conner Hts. Rd.	Pigeon Forge, TN	37863
(F) Luke Headrick	453-2407	3007 Headrick Dr.	Sevierville, TN	37862
(G) Shirley Henry	453-5983	1850 Little Cove Rd.	Sevierville, TN	37862
(H) Terry Faulkner	584-3659	4178 Ridgeway Rd.	Knoxville, TN	37919
(J) Henry Lawson	453-7638	3538 Wears Valley Rd.	Sevierville, TN	37862
(K) Tom & Nan Taylor	984-8585	603 Court St.	Maryville, TN	37803
(L) Bruce Wheeler (weekdays)	974-5421	P.O. Box 1049	Pigeon Forge, TN	37863
(N) David J. Wilson	453-0241	2453 Middle Creek Rd.	Pigeon Forge, TN	37863
(O) Larry Olszewski	584-6633	1232 Forest Brook Rd.	Knoxville, TN	37919
(P) Veta King	428-1375	313 Wickcliffe Court	Sevierville, TN	37862
(Q) Joel Kasserman	(901) 756-6184	1608 Stable Park Court	Cordova, TN	38018
(R) Warren Massey	453-8286	3032 Ogle View Rd.	Sevierville, TN	37862
(S) Kathy Jones	691-8678	9121 Garrison Rd.	Knoxville, TN	37931
(T) Bill Gooch, Meg Mabbs	522-0515	4401 Alta Vista Way	Knoxville, TN	37919
(U) Carroll L. Ross	745-4505	P. O. Box 1356	Athens, TN	37371
(V) Sara Hamilton (weekdays)	745-7504	TN Wesleyan College	Athens, TN	37371

## UPCOMING SINGINGS — 1998

### WEARS VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SINGING — September 13, 2:00 P.M.

This church is located on the north side of Wears Valley Road, about 2/3 of the way from Pigeon Forge to Townsend. Henry Lawson will host. For more information, call Henry at (423) 453-7638 or Warren at (423) 453-8286.

### HEADRICK CHAPEL SINGING — September 27, 11:00 A.M.

Located just across the Blount County line in Sevier County on Hwy. 321. Morning singing starts at 11:00 A.M., potluck dinner at 12 NOON, with singing afterwards until about 4:00 P.M. Please note: A Port-a-Lette will be provided.

For more information, call Lois at (423) 693-9292 or Larry at (423) 584-6633.

### VALLEY VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH SINGING — October 4, 2:00 P.M.

This church is located about 10 minutes east of Wearwood Schoolhouse. There is a large sign on Hwy. 321, indicating the turn for the church. Turn south at the sign; the church is at the fork in the road. Bruce Wheeler, Henry Lawson and Luke Headrick are the hosts. For more information, call Luke at (423) 453-2407 or Henry at (423) 453-7638 or Bruce (weekdays) at (423) 974-5421.

### MUSEUM OF APPALACHIA HOMECOMING SINGING — October 10, 10:30 A.M. & 12 NOON

The first singing usually starts sometime around 10:30 A.M., the second a little after 12 NOON. We sing at the old log church, sharing time with the do-re-me singers from Kentucky. For more information and tickets, call Larry at (423) 584-6633 or Lois at (423) 693-9292. (We usually have the tickets available at the Headrick Chapel Singing.)

### DOLLYWOOD SINGING — October 11, 2:00 P.M.

This Singing is held at the Chapel in Dollywood. Martha Graham is the host. Please bring your harp book as it is your free pass into Dollywood. Allow extra time to take the tram from the parking area to the

front gate and to walk to the Chapel. For more information, call Martha at (423) 453-3276. We thank Bill Cody for this yearly invitation.

### MARYVILLE COLLEGE SINGING — October 25, 2:00 P.M.

This singing is hosted by Tom Taylor. We sing in the Old Post Office located in the center of the Maryville College campus. This singing will be hosted by Tom and Nan Taylor. For more information, call Tom at (423) 984-8585.

### EPWORTH THANKSGIVING EVE SINGING — November 25, 6:30 P.M.

This annual event is held Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving at the Laurel Theatre, located at 16th and Laurel in Knoxville. Turkey is provided. Gideon Fryer is the host for this singing. For more information, call Gideon at (423) 524-3136; Terry at (423) 584-3659; or Kathy at (423) 691-8678.

### SUGARLANDS VISITORS CENTER SINGING — December 12, 10 A.M.

Sugarlands Visitors Center is in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on Hwy. 441, just outside of Gatlinburg. Bruce Wheeler will host with Carl Whaley bringing out the shaped-noted hymnals for Christmas carols in the last half hour. We will sing till noon. For more information, call Martha at (423) 453-3276 or Bruce at (423) 974-5421 (weekdays only).

## THANK YOU'S

Thanks to Sharon and Allan Hjerpe for layout, formatting, editing and final proofreading. They will be departing for California at the end of September (see page 5). Thanks also to Karan Dotson of JCA for maintaining our mailing list and for redirecting inquiries on Old Harp.

And once again, many thanks to Debbie Billings and Graphic Creations for the discounts in the printing of the *Old Harp Newsletter*.

## OLD HARP – THE YANKEE DOODLE OF HYMNODY

"Yankee Doodle went to town a-riding on a pony..." You know the tune. At one time in our history the tune itself was also used as a political ditty to put down a presidential opponent in the 1800s. Also educators used the tune for youngsters learning their multiplication tables. It is an interesting find in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

*Yankee* seems to be a derivation of the early Dutch *janke* (ne'er-do-well) or the early Cherokee term *eankke* (slave or coward). On an NPR program one woman explained that *Yankee* was used in the sense of an Englishman looking at a New Englander as a "country lout." In any case, it was a derogatory term for the early Americans. *Doodle*, also at that same time period, is defined as something worthless or useless.

To the Americans "Yankee Doodle," under whatever title it was called, was a lively jig for happy times. The tune went back overseas to Great Britain and reappeared many years after in the British army. It is also said in the *Oxford English Dictionary* that the British soldiers, after one of their defeats, no longer danced to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." The Americans, being the type of people that they were and are, took up the tune and the words and played it gracefully at their defeats. To be defeated by a ne'er-do-well... Now-a-days we might say, "in your face."

But getting back to the original story that I want to tell... In early America, people had their versions of crossword puzzlers or computer nerds. These people, to exercise their minds, were taking old folk tunes, sea chanteys, and dirges, and putting new words to them for all sorts of uses. You could put down the neighbor who couldn't keep his boar out of your pig pen or rewrite the capture and hanging of Captain Kidd. Everything and anything was game; nothing was sacred.

Along came the preachers and women folk of the towns. Hearing their menfolk off in the inns and taverns carrying out their business and saluting their efforts and associates with tankards of ale, the women immediately went about to right this indignity. "You come to our singing schools and we will teach you how to sing those great old tunes in three and four part harmony." And so they did.

After the two week singing school which the preachers or the singing masters held in the churches, schools or private homes, everyone was singing. A dinner on the grounds was held for the "publik" at large to keep everyone around. But between the time when they left the Taverns and the time they were making the presentation to the public, the prose was changed to religious prose. Cotton Mather, an early New England preacher, was philosophical about it all. "There is no sense in the devil having all the good tunes."

But maybe in the American minds there is a sense of worthlessness in ourselves. Soon after, many churches were unloading the music in churches to paid choruses and musicians, making the services more a controlled performance than a potentially free-wheeling participatory service.

Fuging tunes, though not necessarily folk tunes, but high rousing pieces where many verses could be installed by just singing the start of the second verse (everyone always had the words memorized), were the first to be "banned in Boston." Americans as they moved into the Ohio Valley, Kentucky, Tennessee and the deep South continued singing these old tunes. Who wants to tote a piano over those mountains, down those rapids? A singing school manual or a hymnal doesn't weigh half as much as a piano. It would be a "no-brainer."

Also the preachers from those high churches weren't the first to pierce the frontier. It was usually the Methodist and Baptist circuit riders that charged out after those untamed souls, with a Bible in one hand, and maybe a tune book in the other. A community was lucky to have a preacher once a month, the other times might be filled in with "the sacred songs and hymns" of the tune books and maybe a dinner with family, friends and neighbors. As much as possible, the early settlers tried to keep the Sabbath as holy as survival would let them.

As preachers were finally being groomed from the outlying populace, they kept their folk tune hymns as part of their services. It was not till the great revivals in the 1830s and the gospel tunes were brought on that the Old Harp tunes started to fade.

As Gospel songs put one closer to God by being "a friend of Jesus," people needed to feel more

## YANKEE DOODLE... (CONT'D)

important. Especially after they had killed their brothers in the Civil War. Cain and Abel. We relive the sins of our fathers. Who wanted to sing those Old Harp tunes with their poetry of death, pestilence and war? We had had enough! Gospel was in, hymns were in, Old Harp tunes needed to be kicked under the rug.

It was the families who kept the Old Harp alive, especially if they were a part of the inner workings of the local churches and the communities. They would not only sing those tunes at church, they would also teach singing schools, get books reprinted, encourage reunions or Old Harp Sings, as they were called. But the music was best carried out in the homes and in people's minds.

It is my belief that the people coped with loneliness, illness, stress and death by singing the Harp tunes. The tunes had existed for centuries before they got to America. They had withstood the test of time, and the prose would be remembered as well. Harp singing can do the same for us now if we so choose.

A well-worn book would last ten, maybe twenty, years. You could grow a hefty tree to make forty of them in that time. You were going to eat anyway, but you only had to make one dish, as others would bring their best plates. Driving twenty or thirty miles to a church to sing is not like driving to the mountains and getting lost in them. That takes hiking boots, back packs, and an able body. At a Harp Sing you just need a bucket to carry your tune in.

There is nothing refined about Old Harp Singing. Anyone can just go out there and sing, get up and lead a song of their choice, or ask another to lead one for them. It will not get you elected to politics, put the bacon on the table, or get your kids through college. The only thing it will do is uplift your spirit with those around you, letting you and your maker know where you are in preparation for the next world. That is why we are here, isn't it?

— Larry Olszewski

I would like to thank Bethany Dumas (a professor and wordsmith at UT), as well as the UT Library reference desk, for helping me research this article.

## OLD HARP IN SOUTHERN LIVING

An article on Old Harp written by Karen Harp, as well as pictures from last year's Headrick Chapel Sing, should be in the September issue of the Tennessee edition of *Southern Living*.

## ORGAN MASTERS GUILD

We have been asked to give a presentation to the Organ Masters Guild on a Wednesday during the summer of next year. This was approved by a quorum of singers at a singing at New Prospect Presbyterian Church last month. Time and dates will be in the next newsletter.

## EPWORTH OLD HARP PRESENTATION

The Epworth Old Harp Singers will give a presentation to Sean McCollough's UT evening class on East Tennessee Music, on Thursday, the 17th of September, at 6 PM. Bring a covered dish; we will eat first. For info, phone Larry at (423) 584-6633.

## FAREWELL, EAST TENNESSEE

Dear Harp Singing Friends,

Much as we regret leaving East Tennessee, we are finally moving back to California in order to be closer to our families. At long last, we have found a buyer for our house in Sevierville, and if escrow closes on schedule, we will be leaving at the end of September. We will stay just long enough to attend our beloved harp singing at Headrick Chapel on September 27th.

We don't have words to express how much Old Harp singing and Old Harp singers have meant to us during our 10 years here in East Tennessee. We look forward to seeing everyone one more time at Headrick Chapel.

With love and thanks to you all,  
Allan & Sharon Hjerpe



**Reford Lamons...** passed away last month. He will be sorely missed in the community. Reford always was encouraging us to sing more of the old songs at the singings. Almost every time one would stop over at his house, he would break out books before leaving and sing a couple of the ones he didn't want us "young people" to forget.

We managed to get fifty singers at the funeral home in Pigeon Forge, TN, on one day's notice. The preacher and the funeral director thought that two, maybe three, songs would be appropriate. Number 35, a song that Reford requested, would be the most appropriate. Number 15 was also a family request.

Elder Zenith Whaley and Reverend W. W. Cope spoke the word. The reverend Cope mentioned that he and Reford had sung, "Oh when shall we see Jesus and reign with him above?" So we sang #99 as well.

Could the choir sing a tune as the people were leaving? Sure — #16, "How tedious and tasteless the hours." People paying their last respects were still not ready to leave. Maybe closure in their minds for Reford was not complete. So we sang another tune,

and another, and another. It was another Old Harp Sing as the family came up and sang with us. I believe at that time we were all of one family.

... Good-bye, Reford Lamons.

**Old Harp...** was made for funerals, as a means of closure of someone close. Talking it over after the funeral with the other singers that were there, we would now make it known to the community that we will sing for them when the time comes. (Just don't expect for us to stop very soon.)

#### Phone List

In that same vein, the Sevier County phone tree got into gear to get this singing event going in one night, and the Epworth Singers were also notified by their phone tree. If there are any other singers that were missed I need to apologize — it was a busy time for some of us. No one should feel left out. Please write in care of this newsletter if you want to be made available for any such event with your phone number and/or e-mail address.

**Dear Harp Singers,**

**Uncle Reford and Aunt Velma were like another set of parents to me. Until I was grown I don't remember my Parents ever going anywhere with out them being with us. We always sang OLD HARP as we rode along. He loved singing Old Harp as all the family did.**

**Uncle Reford's funeral could not have been a more perfect expression of his life and "the Spirit That Binds Us All".**

**We like to thank you all.**

**Sincerely,**

**Bobbie Lovell & Conard Lamons**