

Gift
JUL 19 1919



OUR YANKEELAND



A Patriotic Song
dedicated to
Dr. John H. Finley
Commissioner of Education
of the
State of New York

WORDS AND MUSIC

BY

ROSE H. WALTON

Designed for use in
Public Schools

and for Community Singing

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THE STORY OF THE SONG

"Nature abhors a vacuum."

How can that apply to the composition of a song? The application, as I see it, is very reasonable.

At the time the armistice was signed, on November 11th, 1918, everybody's nerves were strained almost to the breaking point. "Our Boys" were fighting the biggest battle known to history. Every man, woman and child, from our own great General, John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, down to the smallest child in school, was working with one aim—to bring the war to a speedy finish.

Drives to raise money were a continuous performance. It was a hard problem for some of us to make ends meet and yet contribute to all of these demands. The women were all busy with Red Cross work, either knitting, sewing or making surgical dressings, or all three. Imagine then, the suddenness with which most of these things stopped with the signing of the armistice.

I felt as though I had run into a strong wire fence and rebounded with such force that it made me dizzy. Then I began to realize how very tired I was, and yet, at the same time, I was very restless. There was a big vacuum in my life which Nature was trying to fill.

One day in January an inspiration came to me with the following news headline: "Wants National Song With Swing." Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton was quoted as saying, in part, that the person who could compose a National Song in the shape of a good college yell, would satisfy the popular demand. Also, it must be written in good marching time, etc. This started me thinking, "Why not try?" I had composed several short poems, but had never attempted a song. Then I began humming, and strange to say, the first notes and words that came to me, became the last line of my song.

What qualities must a National Song possess?

First, it must have for its foundation, 100 per cent. Americanism. This brought before me the strong character of my father, who, of foreign birth, had sworn allegiance to the United States of America. From that moment, no other country claimed anything but his respect. He was American to the backbone. What a picture his life portrayed! How from boyhood, with no prospects, he had grasped at every opportunity for education. He was indeed a self-made man, and was generally loved and respected. Lack of space will not permit me to dwell upon his good qualities, but you may readily see how the story of his life inspired me to persevere with this song.

Like a builder, I now had the foundation and the top of the building, and I must fill in the space between. It was my wish to carry out as nearly as possible, the suggestions of Mr. Seton, with the exception of the Rah! Rah! Rah! of the college yell. Every word of the song must mean something, so I compromised by substituting the articulate spelling of certain words.

Its Slogan would be—Unity and Usefulness for Universal Good. Its object—to promote and encourage Good Fellowship among our citizens, and Good-will and Protection for our friends and neighbors to the extent of their appreciation. Liberty stands for rights to a certain degree only. "When our rights interfere with the rights of others, they cease to be our rights." Therefore, when tempted to

trespass on the rights of others, let us stop and think for a moment—"Put ourselves in their place"—in other words, live up to the Golden Rule.

With these thoughts passing through my mind, the words of the song developed very rapidly, and with them the tune, which I hummed whenever I had occasion to walk. As it must be in good marching time, this was very easy. To make sure of this, I marched back and forth in the cellar of my house, where I had no fear of an audience.

Then arose my greatest difficulty. Easy as it had been to hum, I found the writing of it meant hard work, as my knowledge of music was very limited, having taken about two-quarters lessons on the piano from two different teachers. Character of tones and expression, I had learned from the Tonic Sol-fa method of vocal music. Having a good ear, I could pick out a tune on the piano, and also detect mistakes made by others.

First of all, it must be written in a medium key to suit the majority of voices. "The Star-Spangled Banner" was hard to sing because, if started on a medium high key, it reached the screaming point on the word "free," for all except soprano and tenor voices, so I must avoid that criticism. By writing it in key of E flat, this difficulty would be overcome. Many popular songs were written in this key, and most people with a limited knowledge of music, seem to prefer three flats to one sharp.

Having decided on the key, I began the task of placing the notes on the staff. I played, then wrote, one measure at a time, counting, one—two—three—four—and filling in the correct dots and rests where they belonged. Before two measures were completed I realized how little I knew about music. Then too, it must be written in simple and attractive style so that anybody could play it. The expression marks, I arranged by looking over songs with which I was familiar. After writing about seven copies, I felt satisfied that it was ready for publication.

What title should it bear? The last two words of the song seemed to be most appropriate, "Our Yankeeland." Our American boys were called Yanks or Yankees, popular songs had been written in the same terms, so altogether, that title was strictly up-to-date. "The Star-Spangled Banner," our thrilling National Anthem, should always be sung with reverence, while "Our Yankeeland" as a National Song, could be either sung, or shouted like a college yell. They bear the same comparison as the terms American and Yankee.

By this time, I was thoroughly enthused over my composition, and determined to push it along. Having no idea of how to get it published, I wrote to Mr. Seton on March 10th, 1919, telling him that I had the song, and asking him what I should do with it. While awaiting his reply, I sought information wherever I could. One man informed me that the publishers try to discourage new composers. Then I set out to get a letter of introduction to a publisher. Just at this point, on May 10th, I received a reply from Mr. Seton. He referred me to a first-class music publisher in New York City, and wished me every success. One week later, with his letter as an introduction, I was about to start out, when two musical friends very generously offered to send me letters to another first-class publisher.

On Friday, May 23rd, I approached Mr. Publisher. He was very courteous, but without looking at my

OUR YANKEELAND

Words and Music by
ROSE H. WALTON.

With "Pep"

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Oh, Yan-kee-land! Our Yan-kee-land! Our good old U. S. A. For
Oh, Yan-kee-land! Our Yan-kee-land! Long may your Ban-ner fly. Let

f

Strength and Lib-er-ty you stand, With a Hip, Hip, Hip, Hur-ray! We'll
him be-ware! who casts a slur At Old G-L-O-R-Y; We'll

f

raise the song and sing it long, Of Freedom's Land so bright; Of your
live for You! and die for You! One Great U-ni-ted Band; For our

broaden *ff*

hills and vales with lakes a-mong, Oh, Glo-ri-ous sight!
Y-A-N-K-dou-ble E! Our Yan-kee-land!

manuscript, said that it was too late in the season for patriotic songs. I could not agree with him on this point, and told him so. When I suggested trying it out in the schools, he said they would be closed before the song could be published. Finally, seeing that I was not to be discouraged, he gave me the address of a printer and advised me how to procure the copy-right. So I came away with every intention of seeing the printer the following afternoon.

My idea was to secure the copyright, have a few hundred copies printed, and then advertise it by inducing a few talented friends to sing it at various places, such as community singing, patriotic celebrations, debarkation camps, and most especially, to introduce it to the children in our schools. The children of to-day, will be our mayors, governors and presidents of the future; and "As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined," we must bend the twig in the right direction.

We cannot force love, but we can encourage it. Patriotism, which is love of one's country, must come straight from the heart. Therefore, if we can make patriotism such an interesting subject in our schools, that the children will put their hearts into it, the future welfare of the U. S. A. will be assured. What could create more interest than singing?

Somehow, I could not decide about going to the printer. When in doubt, I usually let myself drift, and this time I drifted right away from him, to my own home.

The following Monday, I decided to consult Mr. Van Wart, Supervisor of Printed Matter for the New York Life Insurance Company, and also Editor of The Caldwell Progress, and our own publication, The Nylvic News. I thought perhaps he could direct me to a printer of music, and any advice that he might offer me, would be appreciated.

In a few moments, I had related the whole story of the song, and he became so interested, he wanted to see it. He liked the words, but admitted that he could not tell by looking at the music, whether it were good or not, and asked permission to take it home to Caldwell, New Jersey, where he would get a musical critic to look it over. I could picture my music being pulled to pieces. I knew the air was all right, and the time perfect, but I feared for the harmony, which had been written entirely from ear.

Imagine my delight on the following day when Mr. Van Wart told me that his friend pronounced it O. K.

with the exception of one measure, which he had improved by making a slight correction. And also, with my permission, it would be published in The Progress of May 30th, and sung at the Memorial Day exercises in Caldwell. They had tried it out at the public school there, and within fifteen minutes, every child was singing it heartily.

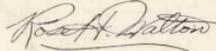
That was its first appearance in public, on May 27th, 1919, so I shall always consider Caldwell as the birthplace of my song; and I will pause right here, to thank those children for starting the song on its journey, which I trust will carry it to all parts of the U. S. A. I also hope that it will be my privilege to visit its birthplace, and to have the great pleasure of hearing it sung by those children. Strange to relate, when I was a very young child, my father was pastor of the Methodist Church in Roseland, N. J., which is only a mile from Caldwell.

Mr. Van Wart then questioned me as to whether I hoped to publish the song on a money-making basis, and finding that to be only a secondary consideration—my chief object being to promote 100 per cent. Americanism and thus quell the spirit of Bolshevism which is spreading over our land—he volunteered to become my publisher, and asked me to write the story of the song.

That was far beyond my expectations, and I was overjoyed at the prospect, because I felt that Mr. Van Wart had entered into the spirit of the song as no other publisher would. He then suggested dedicating it to Dr. John Huston Finley, Commissioner of Education of New York State and President of New York University, to which I readily agreed; and I feel complimented by his accepting the dedication and allowing his name and his photograph to travel with my song.

And now, my friends, I place this song at your disposal, with the sincere desire that you will accept it in the same spirit with which it is given, and sing it with the same degree of enthusiasm with which it was written. If you can't sing it, shout it! It will be just what you make it. Remember its Slogan: Unity and Usefulness for Universal Good.

Sincerely Yours,



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

When Miss Walton brought this song to me I was strongly impressed with her quiet but earnest statement of her case. It was evident that she had put her very soul into her task, and for that reason I believe the song will live.

Musical critics have pronounced it good. It is purposely written very simple and it is easy to learn. Much will depend upon the correct interpretation by the accompanist. It should be played with all the fire and enthusiasm of which one is capable—with "pep," as Miss Walton has indicated.

Particular attention should be paid to the staccato and crescendo marks. Remember it is a combination of a song and a yell. Every word means something. Take the second line, for instance. Play and sing it as if you were leading a troop up the

hill, as it were, where all would shout and swing their hats as they reach the summit. The same applies to the first part of the last line.

Miss Walton's chief idea in writing the song has been to foster a spirit of patriotism and a love for our country and our flag. She wisely makes her appeal to the children. Parents can do no greater nor more helpful service than to enter heartily into the spirit of the author. The widespread use of the song ought to lead to many happy hours in the homes of America, and to higher ideals of citizenship.

It is with this hope in mind that the publisher has undertaken the task of helping the author place her song before the public.

WM. H. VAN WART.