

Campaign Songs

1840-1922



**An Exhibition of Covers from Campaign Songs
used by presidential candidates to communicate
their message to voters.**

**On Display in the Gallery at the Ford Center
through November 9, 2016**

Need a project or field trip for your class? Bring them to visit the exhibit.

An interactive display is also available with recordings of some of the songs.

The exhibition is open M-F, 8am-5pm.

For more information, and to listen to audio recordings of some of the songs, go to bit.ly/campaignsongs.

Vote for the Right Man

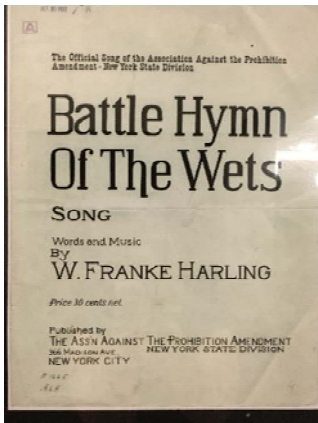


Emma A. Parker, 1920.

Women's suffrage was finally granted in 1920, the year the song "Vote for the Right Man" was published. The race that year was between Republican Warren G. Harding and Democrat James Cox. Rather than urging Americans to vote for one of the candidates, though, this song's lyrics were directed at the nation's new women voters, urging them not to "stay at home" but to get out and get involved in campaigning for "the right man." The cover art features one lone woman in the background as males, in the majority, presumably talk about politics.

Harry Jay, music, and Emma A. Parker, lyrics. "Vote for the Right Man." Staten Island, N.Y.:

Battle Hymn of the Wets



Although it would take another decade before the Twenty-first Amendment overturned prohibition, voters continued to bring the issue before the nation. Many simply wanted the right to drink, claiming that it was a basic freedom. Other concerns reflected fears about the corruption and organized crime that stemmed from bootlegging and speakeasies. In 1922, the New York State Division of the national Association Against the Prohibition Amendment campaigned with this "Battle Hymn." Its lyrics urged, "Pull together for our right./Leave the 'near beer' for the killjoys." The Twenty-first Amendment was officially ratified on December 5, 1933. Mississippi was not among the voting states.

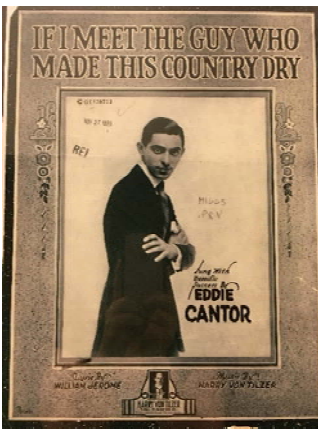
W. Franke Harling, music and lyrics. "Battle Hymn of the Wets." New York: The Association Against the prohibition Amendment, 1922.

Give The Devil His Dues



Once World War I ended, politicians considered how to craft peace. Democrats favored the League of Nations and diplomacy. This cartoon cover attacked the opposing stance, Warren G. Harding's "Peace by Resolution," an independent declaration terminating U.S. participation in hostilities. The devil is send encouraging Harding to opt for this solution, "Tho' one hundred thousand of our boys/Are laid away in France." A similarly diabolical surgeon pronounces that a blind G.O.P. has lost its nerve. After winning, Harding did sign both a resolution for peace as well as a unilateral treaty separate and distinct from the disputed Treaty of Versailles.

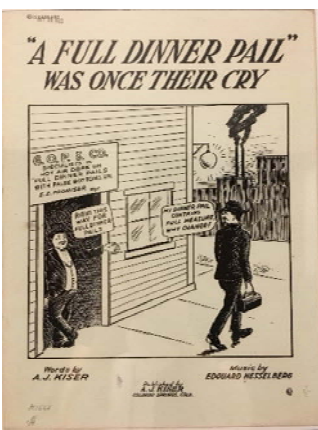
Edouard Hesselberg, music, and A.J. Kiser, lyrics. "Give The Devil His Dues." Colorado Springs, CO: A.J. Kiser, 1920.



If I Meet The Guy Who Made This Country Dry

Not all Americans were pleased about the ban on “the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors.” Just one year after the ratification of Prohibition - and neatly coinciding with the 1920 election - this novelty song took the part of those anti-temperance citizens known as “Wets.” The photo of comic performer Eddie Cantor, who the cover proclaims sang this number “with terrific success,” was more a tool to sell the sheet music than a true political statement. Reading the lyrics today, one line was particularly prophetic: “What will you do when they won’t let you smoke?”

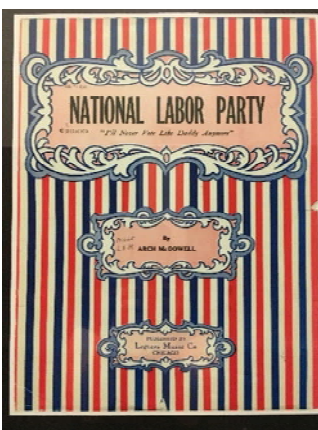
Harry Von Tilzer, music, and William Jerome, lyrics. “If I Meet The Guy Who Made This Country Dry.” New York: Harry Von Tilzer Music Publishing Co., 1920.



A Full Dinner Pail Was Once Their Cry

Democrats turned the G.O.P.’s 1900 slogan, “A full dinner pail,” against them in this song supporting James Cox in 1920. After two terms with Woodrow Wilson, why change back to a party that offered “hot air” and promises with “false bottoms?” the cartoon cover art asks. Besides promoting economic status quo, the song’s lyrics laud America’s role in the recent war victory: “The war was won when just begun/The Allies licked the German Hun.” They also attack candidate Warren G. Harding’s dismissal of negotiating with European nations, favoring instead a separate “Peace by Resolution.” (See item 8).

Edouard Hesselberg, music, and A.J. Kiser, lyrics, “A Full Dinner Pail Was Once Their Cry.” Colorado Springs, CO: A.J. Kiser, 1920.

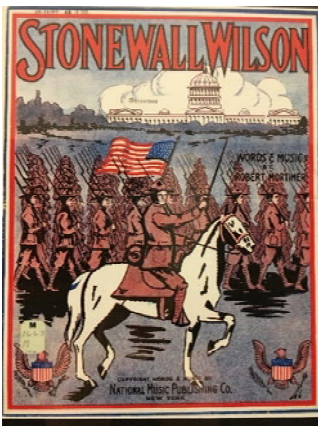


National Labor Party: I'll Never Vote Like Daddy Anymore

After World War I, some Americans lost faith in the two major parties; Democrats had taken the nation into the conflict and Republicans disagreed about how to settle a peace. In 1919, disgruntled voters created the National Labor Party. The “speaker” in this campaign song is representative of the new party’s members. Urging that this option is for “Women and for Men” (1920 was the year women gained the vote), he vows to break with tradition: “I’ll never vote like Daddy anymore.” The party, running in the election as the Farm-Labor Party, selected Utah lawyer Parley Parker Christensen as its first candidate.

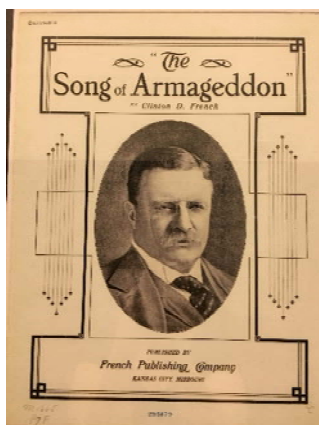
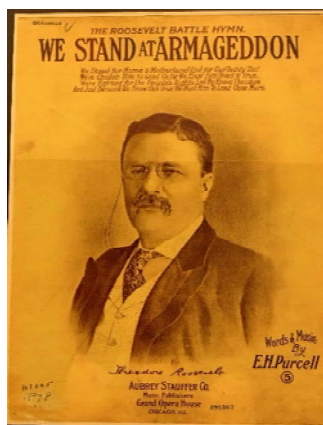
Arch McDowell, music and lyrics. “National Labor Party: I’ll Never Vote Like Daddy Anymore.” Chicago: Legters Music Co., 1920.

Stonewall Wilson



Although World War I was ravaging Europe in 1916, Woodrow Wilson campaigned for a second term in office on a peace platform. Yet this election song implied that his policy of restraint did not signify cowardice. Linked to Civil War hero Thomas Jackson, “Stonewall” Wilson rides with sword drawn against all foes as smiling, confident troops march behind him. “He can bite as well as bark/ But he wastes no ammunition,” the lyrics explained. Even though predictions favored Republican Charles Hughes, Wilson’s last-minute victory in California won him re-election. One year later, Wilson was forced to take the country into the conflict.

Robert Mortimer, music and lyrics. “Stonewall Wilson.” New York: National Music Publishing Co., 1916.



The Song of Armageddon/ We Stand at Armageddon

In 1908, Theodore Roosevelt willingly left the White House, indicating William Howard Taft as his successor. Roosevelt quickly became disillusioned with Taft’s conservatism, though, so in 1912, he sought his party’s nomination again. When the Republicans chose Taft, Roosevelt formed the breakaway Progressive Party. In a speech delivered in Chicago, Roosevelt pronounced that neither the Republicans nor Democrats understood “the great problems of today”; the government was run by the

rich and was “a class government of a peculiarly unwholesome kind.” Entitling his speech “A Confession of Faith,” he employed religious imagery throughout, thus setting the stage for its historic last line: “We stand at Armageddon, and we battle for the Lord.” Progressive campaign songs quickly exploited this metaphor. These pieces of sheet music feature similar portraits, no longer portraying Roosevelt as the eager young Rough Rider but as the mature, aggressive “Bull Moose” willing take on the old party bosses.

Left, Clinton D. French, music and lyrics. “The Song of Armageddon.” Kansas City, MO: French Publishing Company, 1912.

Right, E.H. Purcell, music and lyrics. “We Stand at Armageddon.” Chicago, IL.: Aubrey Stauffer Co., 1912.

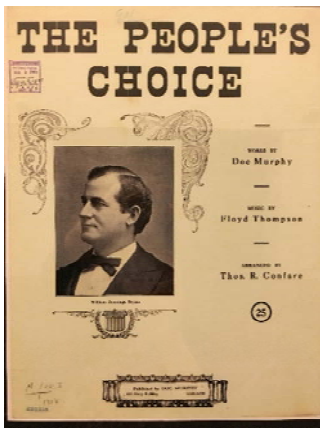


Triplicity, or the Donkey, MOOSE or Elephant

Theodore Roosevelt’s pronouncement that he was as “fit as a Bull Moose” gave his Progressive Party a symbol akin to the Republican elephant and the Democratic donkey. This 1912 song depicts all three but the “moose” is highlighted with capital letters and a bright red frame. While the moose looks at the voters, the other animals’ eyes are closed. The lyrics bring up another rivalry: “The Harvard, Yale and Princeton, or Teddy, Wilson, Taft/ The last two ... will surely finish last.” Roosevelt’s Ivy League alma mater was Harvard. The order is then reversed, however, Wilson went to Princeton and Taft to Yale.

L. Mae Felker, music, and H.S. Gilbert, lyrics. “Triplicity, or the Donkey, MOOSE or Elephant.” New York: Maxwell Sales Company, 1912.

The People's Choice



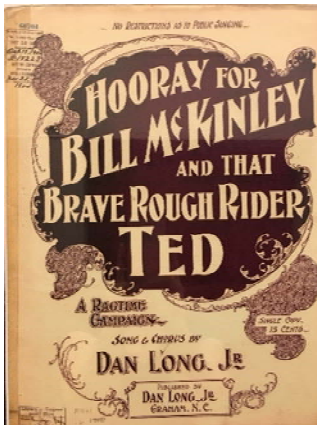
Having actively campaigned for president twice, William Jennings Bryan's face would have been familiar to American voters. The covers of three pieces of sheet music, all published for his final campaign in 1908, help to show how the issue of image has changed over the past 100 years. The photograph on the sheet music to the left, taken before the turn of the century, shows an almost youthful Bryan. Surrounded by depictions of important issues of his platform (a strong fleet, the railroads, agriculture and mining for "Free Silver"), the "Billie" in the middle photograph is clearly a more mature man. Although "Billy," as he was called in the title of the song on the right as well, hints at youth, the accompanying photograph shows Bryan, then 48, as he *really* looked at the time of the campaign. Were a series of photos such as these to be used for a candidate in today's age-conscious society, one can only imagine the reaction. Voters in 1908, however, probably did not even notice the differences.

Left, Floyd Thompson, music, and Doc Murphy, lyrics. "The People's Choice." Chicago: Doc Murphy, 1908.

Center, S.P. White, music and lyrics. "Billie Bryan is the Man for Me." Wichita, KS: White & Donham, 1908.

Right, Florence E. Smick and Mabelle Clare Smick, music and lyrics. "Billy Bryan is the Boy." Decatur, IL.: F.E. Smick, 1908.

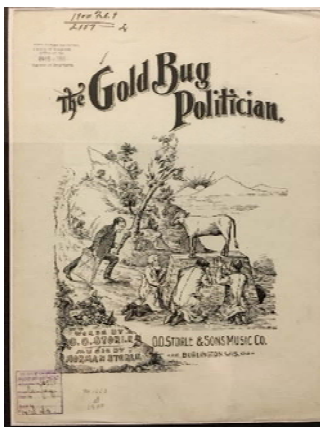
Hooray for Bill McKinley and That Brave Rough Rider Ted



One way to make a campaign more approachable was to compose an election song in a popular musical style. This one promoting William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt is a perfect example, its syncopated rhythms affirming its subtitle, "A Ragtime Campaign." In addition, the lyrics mirror the minstrel show tradition: "Mack and Teddy are goin' to win dis political fight,/ An' dat is right." To complete the song's informal appeal, candidates are called by nicknames. Nevertheless, the permission on the cover encouraging public performance of the song points to another reality: music publishers marketed their wares right along with the candidates.

Dan Long, Jr., music and lyrics. "Hooray for Bill McKinley and That Brave Rough Rider Ted." Graham, NC: Dan Long, Jr., 1900.

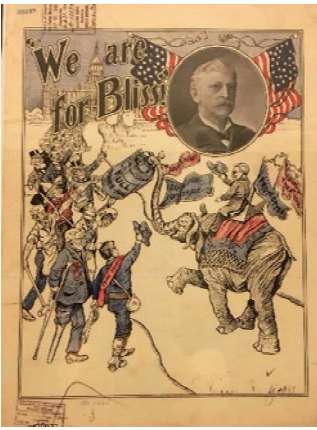
The Gold Bug Politician



Even though the depression of the late 1800s had ended, William Jennings Bryan still campaigned for bimetallism when he faced William McKinley again in the 1900. This song's cover art uses a biblical image that voters would recognize: "gold-bug politicians" worshipping at the base of a golden calf. Like Moses, Bryan runs down to the mountain to "pulverize their golden calf/It was their God, so dear." Linking the gold standard with well-to-do industrialists who controlled the economy for their own interests, the lyrics continued that "In heaven there's no millionaires/So the good book doth tell/They may be down with satan/ monopolizing hell."

Norman Storle, music, and O.O. Storle, lyrics. "The Gold Bug Politician." Burlington, WI: O.O. Storle & Sons Music Co., 1900.

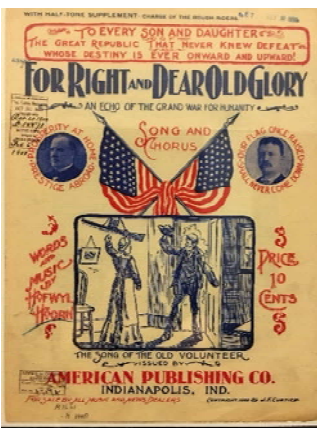
We Are for Bliss



Party platforms extended to all campaigns, and songs celebrated every candidacy. In 1900, Aaron T. Bliss ran for governor of Michigan. All the current symbols and catch phrases appear on the cover of this song supporting his run for office. Astride the G.O.P. elephant, Bliss promises equal taxation, economic protection, expansion of trade, and sound money. The elephant holds the most important pledge: that full dinner-pail, signifying jobs and financial security. His eager supporters include businessmen, farmers, and blue collar workers. At the front of the crowd are a decorated veteran (Bliss had fought in the Civil War) and a young soldier fresh from the Spanish-American conflict.

Harry Zickel, music, and Frank Wesbrook, lyrics. "We Are for Bliss." Detroit, MI: Zickel Bros. Music Publishers, 1900.

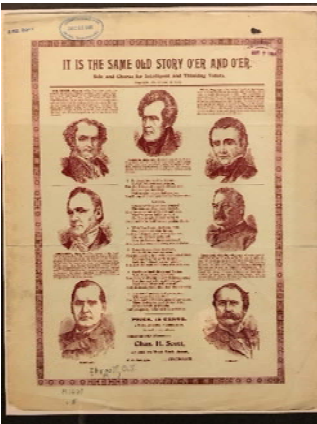
For Right and Dear Old Glory (The Song of the Old Volunteer)



Since the average age of a soldier during the Civil War was 26, many who had fought in that conflict were still casting ballots at the end of the century. Rife with images and messages, this cover art centers on the "old volunteer" who asks his wife to take down his rifle which he now would need to fight in the Spanish-American War: "Oh, it takes me back to the sixties!" This song heralded the 1900 candidacy of William McKinley, the last Civil War veteran to win the presidency, and Theodore Roosevelt, whose "Rough Rider" reputation gave him credence with veterans.

Horwyl Hoom, music and lyrics. "For Right and Dear Old Glory (The Song of the Old Volunteer)." Indianapolis, IN: American Publishing Co., 1900.

It Is the Same Old Story O'er and O'er



Some campaign cover art used images of former presidents to link candidates to an illustrious tradition of worthy men. This cover, however, does the exact opposite. Issued for the 1896 campaign of Republican William McKinley, the cover depicts Democrats Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, James Polk, James Buchanan, and Grover Cleveland. A paragraph below each picture summarizes the economic sins of their administrations. This song, written for "intelligent and Thinking Voters," promises sound money, trade protection, and prosperity if the McKinley-Hobart team were elected. Their opponent, William Jennings Bryan, is only hinted at with a reference to "Free Silver."

O.J. Ehr Gott, music, and Charles H. Scott, lyrics. "It Is The Same Old Story O'er and O'er." Cincinnati, OH: Charles H. Scott, 1897

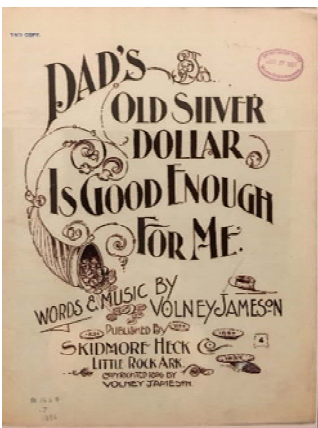
The Farmer's Dream: A Campaign Song



The cover art for this campaign song for McKinley is wittier than its lyrics. The song tells of a farmer who heard Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech at the Chicago Convention and became a silver standard convert. Thanks to a dream, however, he realized that silver "would paralyze creation." The cover has its own message, depicting Bryan at the fishing hole, conversing with a parrot. "Why don't the fish bite?" Bryan asks. "Why," Polly replies, "you are angling with a silver bait and as there are only Gold-fish in this stream, you will find them to [sic] blamed smart to bite on nothing."

Leander Fisher, music, and Rena N. Sangster, lyrics. "The Farmer's Dream: A Campaign Song." Buffalo, NY: Leander Fisher, 1896.

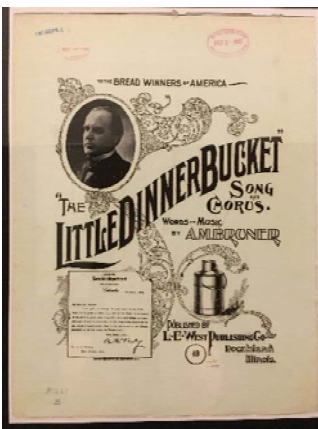
Dad's Old Silver Dollar Is Good Enough for Me



Not all Americans feared that silver money would ruin the nation's economy. This song, written in support of William Jennings Bryan's 1896 run, recalls that silver coins were in fact no novelty. Although the wealthy favor gold, the lyrics state, "idle, hungry lab'ers ev'r'y where we see" would have their problems solved with silver. Using nostalgia as a weapon, this song reminds voters that their own fathers had used silver dollars (such as the so-called Seated Liberty, minted from the 1840s to the 1870s): "Dad's old silver dollar is good enough for me!"

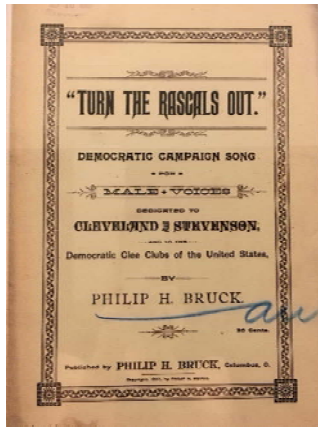
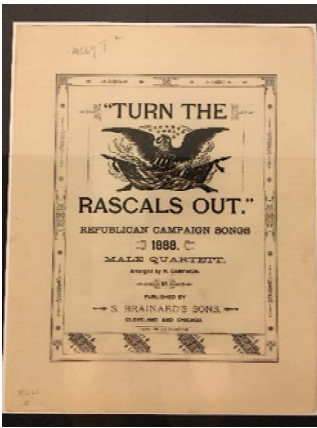
Volney Jameson, music and lyrics. "Dad's Old Silver Dollar Is Good Enough for Me." Little Rock, AR: Skidmore Heck Co., 1896.

The Little Dinner Bucket



In the 1896 election when William McKinley ran against William Jennings Bryan, bimetallism was the prominent campaign issue. Favoring a silver standard, Bryan delivered the now-iconic speech in which he exhorted, "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." Instead of issuing silver coinage, McKinley and fellow Republicans felt that the way to a better economy was to strengthen industry. In this campaign song, the image of the little dinner bucket symbolizes the unemployed laborers who could not support their families. McKinley, the song promised, would help the little bucket, carried by the newly-employed breadwinner, "go swinging through the open fac'tory door."

A.M. Bruner, music and lyrics. "The Little Dinner Bucket." Rock Island, IL: L.E. West Publishing Co., 1896.



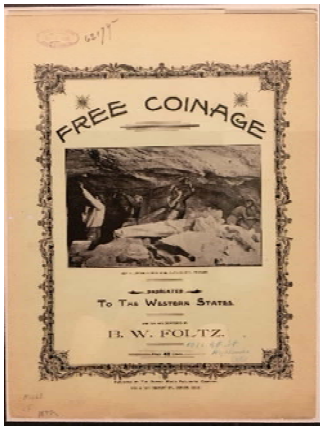
Turn the Rascals Out

Sometimes slogans were so powerful that they were reused or borrowed by the opposing party. Republicans employed the popular phrase “Turn the Rascals Out” [on the left] for the 1888 contest between their candidate Benjamin Harrison and Grover Cleveland. For the following contest in 1892, the Democrats claimed the same phrase [on the right] to urge voters to oust Harrison and return Cleveland. Aside from their titles, the songs are completely different compositions, even though both are

arranged for four-part male harmony. It is just coincidence, of course, that each party using the phrase won. [N.B.: The vice-presidential candidate listed on the 1892 song with Cleveland was Aldai Stevenson, Sr., father of the man who faced Dwight Eisenhower in 1952.]

Left, “R. Campaign,” arr. “Turn The Rascals Out.” Cleveland and Chicago: S. Brainard’s Sons, 1888

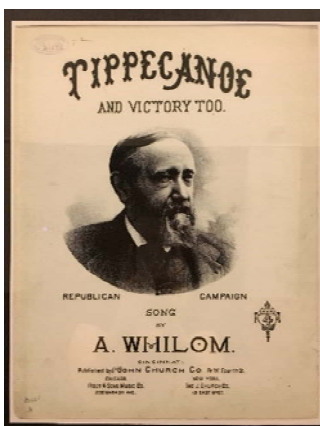
Right, Philip H. Bruck, music and lyrics. “Turn The Rascals Out.” Columbus, OH: Philip H. Bruck, 1892.



Free Coinage

One economic issue that dominated elections at the end of the nineteenth century was bimetallism, the principle favoring a monetary standard based on both gold and silver. Citizens of the Western states, where silver mining was prevalent, favored this idea of “free coinage.” More money minted in silver, they claimed, would mean more money in circulation - hence, more in voters’ pockets. “The farmers in the East,” the lyrics of this 1892 campaign song stressed, “Don’t realize in the least/That products of the West/should bring par value.” Since America was blessed with abundant silver, the song concluded, “God intends that silver shall be money” too.

B.W. Foltz, music and lyrics. “Free Coinage.” Denver, CO: The Denver Music Publishing Company, 1892.

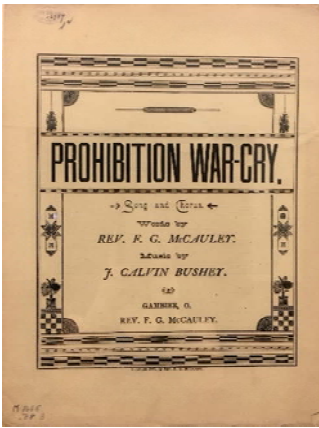


Tippecanoe and Victory Too

It seems that a desire for the presidency often ran in families. John Adams, the second president, and John Quincy Adams, the sixth, were father and son. Some 49 years after the election of William Henry Harrison in 1840, his grandson Benjamin Harrison was nominated. Republicans gladly used the elder Harrison’s image to assist in their attempts to wrest the White House from Grover Cleveland. Since some remembered “Old” Tippecanoe, the younger Harrison was presented as the “New” one. Although this campaign song briefly notes the younger Harrison’s Union Army service, the lyrics reflect back to the deeds of “Benny’s Grandpa.”

A. Whilom, music and lyrics. “Tippecanoe and Victory Too.” Cincinnati, OH: John Church Co., 1888

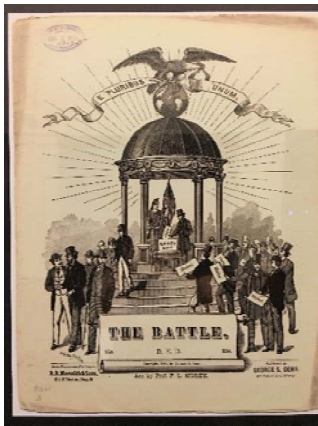
Prohibition War-Cry



Issues such as trade and tariffs dominated the platforms of the Republicans and Democrats in the 1880 and 1884 elections. Undaunted, temperance leagues continued to lobby for prohibition. This song, published just before the 1888 race that pitted Grover Cleveland against Benjamin Harrison, again pled the case for a national ban against drink. More bold than the song which mourned the loss of a son, this song called for “the temp’rance men to vote the nation dry.” It would take some 30 more years for the nation to respond with the Eighteenth Amendment, which Mississippi was the first state to ratify.

J. Calvin Bushey, music, and Rev. F. G. McCauley, lyrics. “Prohibition War-Cry.” Gambier, OH: Rev. F. G. McCauley, 1887.

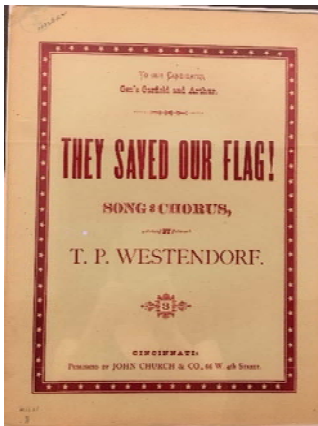
The Battle



George Washington won two presidential terms simply by garnering the most votes. In 1796, the first real race pitted Federalist John Adams against Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson. From then on, partisan politics controlled U.S. elections. This song cover for Republican James Blaine’s run against Grover Cleveland offers a carefully crafted view of election day in 1884. Stern voters openly display their ballots before casting them (only for Blaine!) as Freedom and the American eagle watch over the proceedings. Even though men of all races were guaranteed the right to vote in 1870, only well-to-do white males are pictured.

R.E.D., music and lyrics. “The Battle.” Chicago: George S. Derr, 1884.

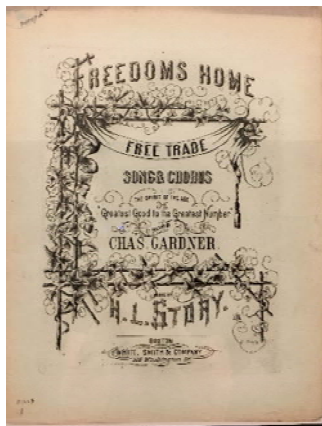
They Saved Our Flag! (To Our Candidates Gen’s [sic] Garfield and Arthur)



Even 15 years after its end, the Civil War still aroused feelings among veterans and, as such, was a powerful campaign tool. While some songs questioned the loyalty of former Union hero Winfield Hancock, others boasted about the roles his opponents had played in the conflict. Even though they were identified correctly on this cover as former generals, James Garfield and Chester A. Arthur had less illustrious careers than Hancock did. Appealing to the vast number of veterans, these lyrics described the 1880 Republican team as “honest men, they wore the blue,/They saved our flag when falling.”

Thomas O. Westendorf, music and lyrics. “They Saved Our Flag! (To Our Candidates Gen’s [sic] Garfield and Arthur).” Cincinnati, OH: John Church & Co., 1880.

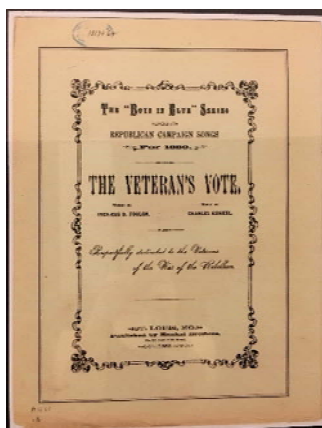
Freedom's Home



One of the tenets of utilitarianism was “the greatest good for the greatest number,” so it might have seemed that Ulysses S. Grant was proposing that philosophy when he used that quotation while stumping for James Garfield in 1880. In reality, he borrowed these words from a talk Abraham Lincoln gave in 1861. Grant stressed that this concept was a Republican priority, so the song “Freedom’s Home,” with this quotation on its cover, could be interrupted as pro-Garfield. Although the lyrics mention no particular party, the banner on the cover heralding “Free Trade” points instead to the Democrats, who campaigned for less government intervention. Garfield’s economic policy stressed higher tariffs.

H.L. Story, music, and Charles Gardner, lyrics. “Freedom’s Home.” Boston: White, Smith & Company, 1880.

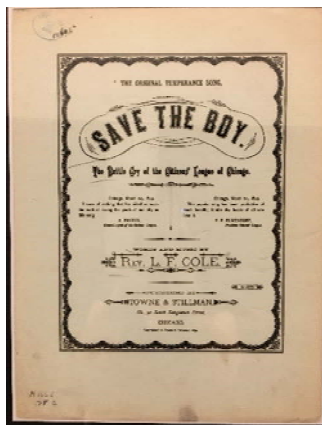
The Veteran's Vote



Although Winfield Scott Hancock had distinguished himself as a Union general during the war, his subsequent transfer to New Orleans and perceived sympathies with the post-war South did not sit well with his former comrades-in-arms. “The Veteran’s Vote,” dedicated to “Boys in Blue,” suggested that the 1880 Democratic nominee had changed sides: “Then he wore the Union blue/Now he’s donned the Rebel Gray.” In the end, Hancock’s military experience proved no match for James Garfield’s political savvy. This sheet music is of special interest; with lyrics translated into German (“Die Stimme des Veteranen”), it reflects the growing political activity of newly-arrived American citizens.

Charles Kunkel, music, and Irenaeus D. Foulon, lyrics. “The Veteran’s Voter,” from “The ‘Boys in Blue’ Series/ Republican Campaign Songs for 1880.” St. Louis, MO: Kunkel Brothers, 1880. German translation by M. Niedner.

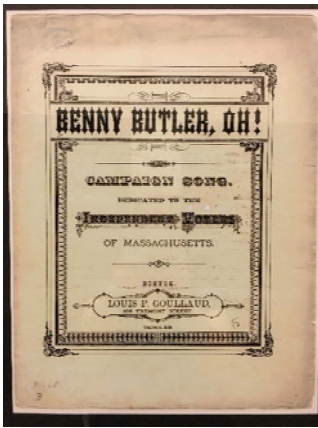
Save the Boy



In addition to issues such as war and economy, voters throughout U.S. election history have been concerned with morality. Just in time for the 1880 election, Chicago’s Citizens’ League sent this musical message to candidates nationwide. High on these voters’ mind was the bane of liquor. The lyrics of this “original temperance song” bemoaned the “curse of rum,” which took the life of that little lad who once “sat upon my knee/Looked from sweet eyes into mine.” Telling, of course, is the title “Save the Boy,” which clearly suggests that alcoholism was a plague that affected only men.

Rev. L.F. Cole, music and lyrics. “Save The Boy.” Chicago: Towne & Stillman, 1879.

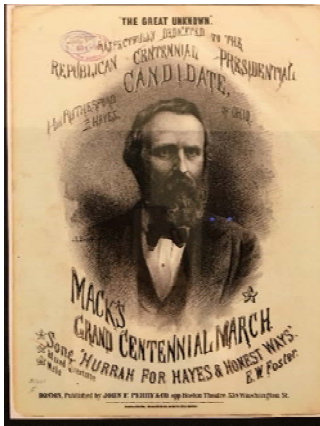
Benny Butler, Oh!



Politicians who realized that they had little chance for a party nomination often opted to run for a third party or even independently. One such candidate was former Civil War general Benjamin Butler, who, in various elections aligned himself with the Republicans, the Democrats, the Greenbacks and the Anti-Monopoly parties. However, this song attempts to distance the candidate from any political party, presenting him to “independent voters” of Massachusetts. Butler, the lyrics stated, was willing and able to represent anyone wanting “food to eat ... cheap rent, and taxes low ... a fair-day’s labor ... and fair pay.”

Anonymous. “Benny Butler, Oh!” Boston: Louis P. Goullaud, 1878.

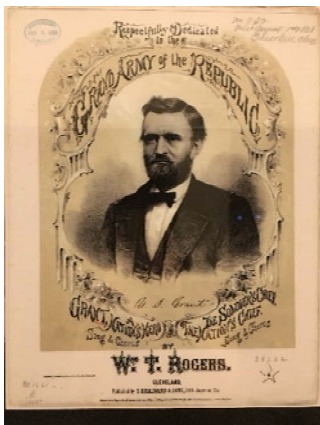
Hurrah for Hayes and Honest Ways



This campaign song dedicated to Rutherford B. Hayes celebrates more than his candidacy. Of note, the song suggests, is that if Hayes were elected, he would become the “Centennial President,” for 1876 was the nation’s 100th birthday. The lyrics also offer a unique prospective; while many campaign songs reached out only to Union veterans, these lyrics struck out for unity: “Come on ye jolly boys in gray,/ And you my boys in blue.” Even more historically significant, the song depicted Hayes as a man with “honest ways,” distancing him from Grant’s two terms full of scandal and corruption.

E.W. Foster, music and lyrics. “Hurrah for Hayes and Honest Ways.” Boston: John F. Perry & Co., 1876.

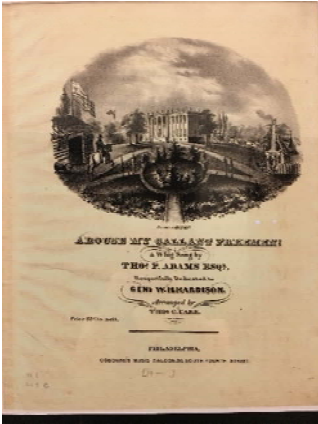
Grant, A Nation’s Hero



To save his political career after near impeachment, Andrew Johnson switched party allegiance to the Democrats; for the 1868 election, however, they picked Horatio Seymour. Republicans chose Ulysses S. Grant, whose reputation as a hero served them well. This song’s cover art exploits Grant’s image, showing him in uniform as the “Nation’s Hero.” The song also bears a dedication to the Grand Army of the Republic since a good portion of voters were veterans. In the end, Grant’s heroic persona and the memory of Seymour’s past criticism of Lincoln’s war policies gave Republicans the edge. With 33 states casting ballots, Seymour took only 8.

William T. Rogers, music and lyrics. “Grant, A Nation’s Hero.” Cleveland: S. Brainard & Sons, 1868.

Arouse My Gallant Freemen!



“Spin-doctoring” goes back to 1840 when the Whig Party exploited the use of election slogans and songs. This sheet music cover features two of the Whig symbols: the log cabin and cider barrel. Old Tippecanoe himself, William Henry Harrison, is seen leaving them behind as he rides a sturdy steed the the White House; the American eagle flies overhead to guide him. Meanwhile incumbent Martin Van Buren rides in a stately coach-and-four back to his home in Kinderhook, N.Y. In this heavily-slanted Whig depiction, it is clear which candidate was meant to appear closer to the people.

Thomas F. Adams, Esq., music and lyrics. “Arouse My Gallant Freemen!” Philadelphia, PA: Osbourn’s Music Saloon, 1840.