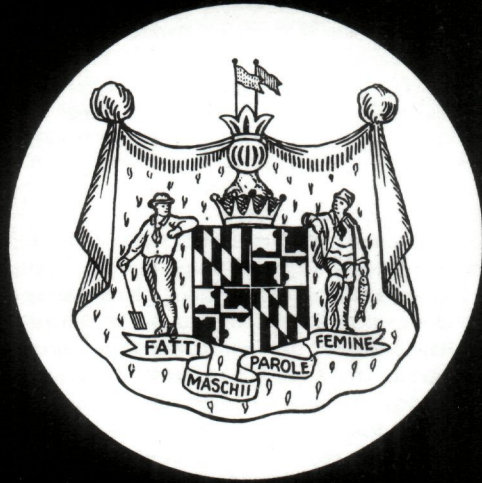


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THE STORY OF
MARYLAND'S
STATE SONG



An Official Publication of the State of Maryland

J. MILLARD TAWES, *Governor*

MY MARYLAND

The State Song of Maryland is one of the few state songs known throughout the world. Written in April, 1861, as a protest against the Union, its words were an exhortation to Maryland to secede and join the Confederacy.

THE AUTHOR

The author was a twenty-two year old Baltimorean named James Ryder Randall. He was an ardent Confederate sympathizer, but was prevented from enlisting because he was of frail physique. He was of interesting ancestry. On the maternal side, he counted as forebears the French Acadian, Rene LeBlanc, whom Longfellow celebrated as the Notary, in the poem "Evangeline"; and William Hooper, a signer of the Declaration of Independence from Massachusetts. His father's family included Archbishop Killen of Dublin and Christopher Randall, the founder of Randallstown. He had been tutored by Professor Joseph H. Clarke, who also taught Edgar Allan Poe. Randall graduated from Georgetown University and had travelled in South America and the West Indies.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On April 19, 1861, the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment, marching through Baltimore from the old President Street Station to Camden Station, enroute to Washington, was attacked by Confederate sympathizers hurling cobblestones and bricks. The troops opened fire and casualties resulted on both sides. Southern newspapers played up the episode as the "Baltimore Massacre". Reading the reports in a New Orleans newspaper, Randall responded by writing his poem "My Maryland."

Twenty-three years later, in a letter to the critic Brander Matthews, Randall gave this account of his response to the news item and of his composition of the poem destined to become one of the world's best known songs:

"I received the Delta newspaper of New Orleans containing an account of the attack on the Massachusetts Regiment . . . This account excited me greatly. I had long been absent from my native city, and the startling event there inflamed my mind. That night I could not sleep . . . About midnight I rose, lit a candle and went to my desk. Some powerful spirit appeared to possess me, and, almost involuntarily, I proceeded to write the song of 'My Maryland.' I remember that the idea appeared to first take shape as music in the brain—some wild air that I cannot recall. The whole poem was dashed off rapidly when once begun. It was not

composed in cold blood, but under what may be called a conflagration of the senses, if not an inspiration of the intellect."

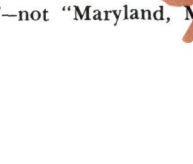
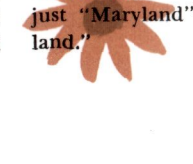
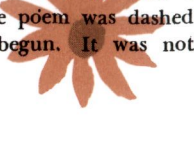
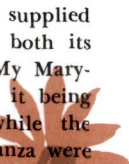
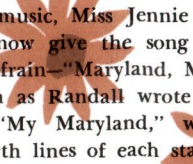
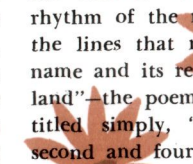
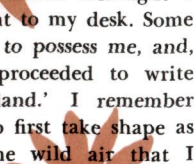
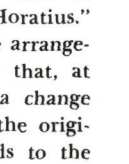
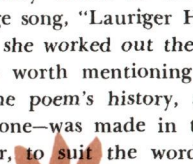
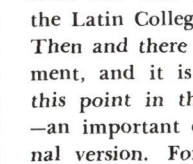
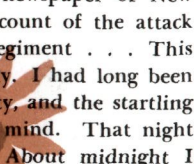
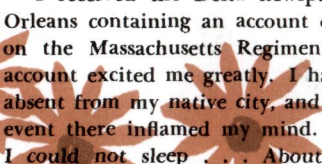
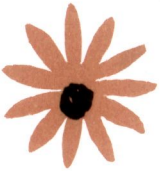
It is hard to imagine a more solitary performance, or one less self-interested—the frail young man, consumed by emotion, alone at his desk at midnight, writing by a candle—but the poem produced in this solitude promptly swept the South. It became popular overnight, so that Randall himself later commented, ". . . there was borne to me . . . a consciousness that I had made a great hit and that, whatever might be the fate of the Confederacy, the song would survive it."

IMMEDIATE POPULARITY

He made no effort to publicize the poem himself. He merely read it to his pupils the day after its composition. They, however, were enthusiastic and begged him to get it in print. He thereupon sent it to the Delta, of New Orleans. Soon it was being locally sung to a French folk tune, "My Normandy". Its spread from then on was phenomenal.

The poem reached Baltimore the next month—May—and there, in the poet's native town, it got the musical setting it has today. It was published in a journal called South and it came into the hands of two young ladies, the Misses Hetty and Jennie Cary, who providentially combined Confederate sympathies with a love of music. They discerned the potentialities.

Miss Hetty, who later became Mrs. Newell Martin, wife of a professor of biology at Johns Hopkins University, "declaimed" the verses to her sister. Miss Jennie promptly cried out that they would fit the tune of the Latin College song, "Lauriger Horatius." Then and there she worked out the arrangement, and it is worth mentioning that, at this point in the poem's history, a change—an important one—was made in the original version. For, to suit the words to the rhythm of the music, Miss Jennie supplied the lines that now give the song both its name and its refrain—"Maryland, My Maryland"—the poem as Randall wrote it being titled simply, "My Maryland," while the second and fourth lines of each stanza were just "Maryland"—not "Maryland, My Maryland."



Miss Jennie introduced the new song that same evening, singing it herself before her glee club. All the members of this organization were young. All were intense Confederates. They seized on the song with delight. As Mrs. Martin described it, years later, "when her (Miss Jennie's) contralto voice rang out the stanzas, the refrain rolled forth from every throat present, without pause for preparation and the enthusiasm communicated itself with such effect to a crowd assembled under our open windows as to seriously endanger the liberties of the party . . ." In spite of the popularity of this tune, Randall himself said he preferred the French one, which has never become generally known.

ADOPTION BY CONFEDERACY

Shortly after that the song featured in another episode of youthful idealism which, for its charm, gayety and courage remains touching, even after a hundred years. That happened when the Misses Hetty and Jennie, together with their brother, carried some "contraband" into Virginia.

The girls had been making clothing for soldiers in the Confederate Army, young Baltimoreans, who had slipped away to enlist in too great haste to take any possessions with them. For a while, the garments were sent through other sympathizers. Then the line was disrupted, several trunksful accumulated, and the brave young women decided to deliver their contributions themselves. With only their brother accompanying them, they set out, and, on this mission, they carried a Maryland State Flag, concealed on Miss Hetty's "person", as the lady herself subsequently described it.

They crossed the Virginia line safely, at an obscure rural spot, but then they had difficulty in finding transportation. Eventually they got possession of a dray drawn by a mule and an ox. They loaded the trunks on this absurd affair, but, before they did anything else, they broke out the Maryland Flag and mounted it on a rough pole. Then, waving the banner as they sat on the wagon seat, they drove off along the country road, singing "Maryland, My Maryland" at the top of their young voices—a touching tableau in any period.

So far the song had been sung only by the civilian population. Shortly afterward, it was introduced to the troops, and it was the fated Cary sisters who also made this introduction.

They were returning from their stay in Virginia and, on reaching Fairfax Court

House, they stopped to visit their cousin, a Captain Sterrett, who was an officer in the Confederate forces stationed there. The soldiers serenaded the young ladies, after which, in the words of Miss Hetty, "Captain Sterrett expressed our thanks and asked if there were any service we might render in return. 'Let us hear a woman's voice!' was the cry that arose in response. And, standing in the tent door, under cover of the darkness, my sister sang, 'My Maryland.' This, I believe, was the birth of the song in the army. The refrain was speedily caught up and tossed back to us by hundreds of rebel throats."

From that romantic beginning, the song spread widely, and, throughout the Civil War, it was sung by Confederate troops from every state. It became synonymous with the Confederate cause.

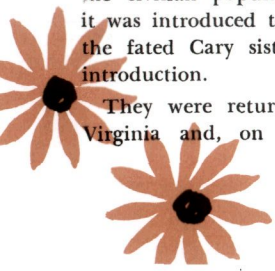
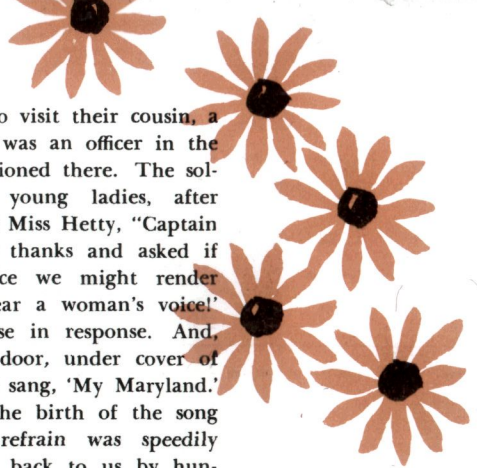
The author, however, never received any payment, in any form. He wrote about fifty poems in all and was quite frank in saying that he did not consider "My Maryland" one of the best, though it was the only one that attained popularity. He spent his life as a newspaper man, working on the Chronicle and Constitutionalist of Augusta, Georgia, and the New Orleans Star. He died in Augusta in 1908 and is buried there. In 1938, thirty years after his death, the Book Club of Pointe Coupee Parish placed a bronze tablet on a live oak tree that stands near the site of the building in which the candle-lit composition of the poem took place. The inscription on the tablet reads:

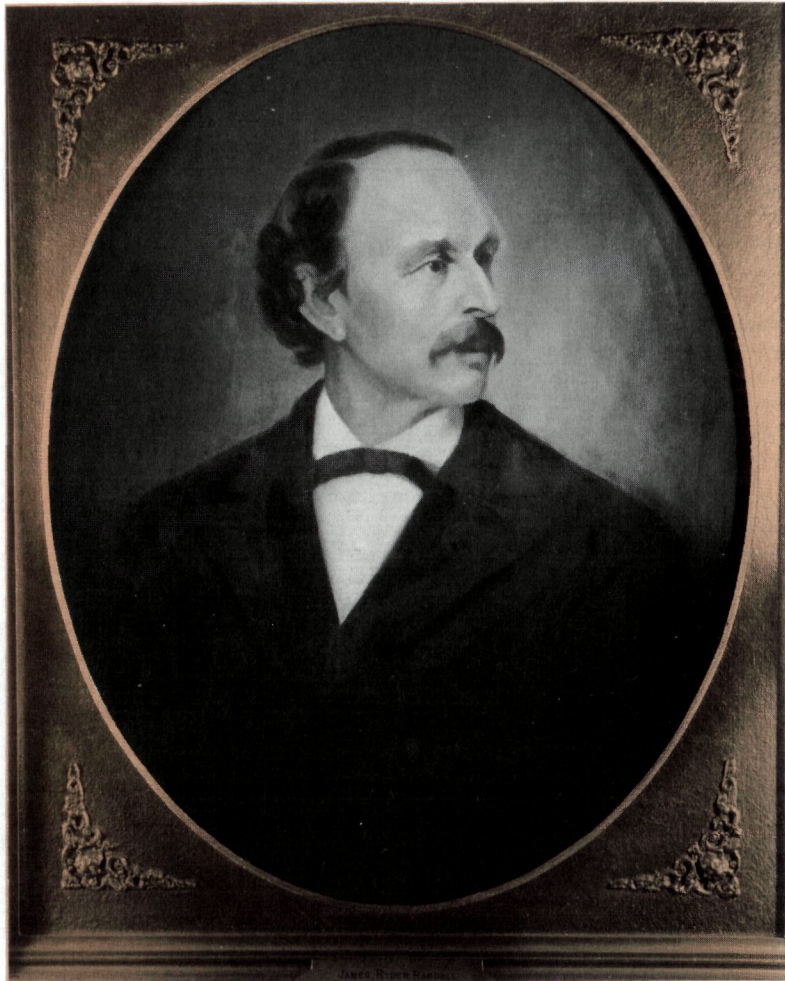
"Near this tree, within the walls of Poydras College, were written the immortal lines of Maryland, My Maryland, by James Ryder Randall. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, January 1, 1839. Died in Augusta, Georgia, January 14, 1908. Poem written at midnight April 26, 1861. This tablet is erected to his memory by the Book Club of Pointe Coupee Parish, April 26, 1938."

ADOPTED AS STATE SONG

Chapter 451, of Article 41 of the Laws of Maryland, Acts of 1939, recognize and legalize James Ryder Randall's poem "My Maryland" as the official State Song of Maryland. The law reads as follows:

"The poem composed by James Ryder Randall, in the year 1861, entitled "Maryland, My Maryland!" heretofore and now sung to the tune of 'Lauriger Horatius' and known as the Maryland State Song, is hereby adopted and legalized by the State of Maryland as its State Song, the said song being in words as follows:





James Ryder Randall, from an oil painting by Katherine Walton, displayed in the Historical and Flag Room of the Maryland State House.



Copy of "My Maryland" in the handwriting of the author, done in 1901 for his sister, Margaret Hardey Randall, and on display in the Historical and Flag Room of the Maryland State House.

My Maryland!

The Despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!

Among the patriotic glee
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And he the battle-queen of yore,
Maryland! My Maryland!

~ o ~

Hark to an opined son's appeal,
Maryland!
My mother-Mate, to thee I kneel,
Maryland!
For life and death for weal and woe,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beamy limbs with steel,
Maryland! My Maryland!

3/ Dear Mother! hark! the tyrant's chain
Maryland!
Virginia shoud not call in vain,
Maryland!
She meets her sisters on the plain —
"Eic Sempet!" 'tis the proud refrain
That baffles minions back again —
Maryland!

Arise, in majesty again,
Maryland! My Maryland!

~ o ~

Come! for thy shield is bright, and strong,
Maryland!
Come! for thy Galliance does thy army,
Maryland!
Come to these ever heroic throng,
Stacking with Liberty along,
And chaunt thy Dauntless Slogan-song,
Maryland! My Maryland!

2/ Then wilt not cover in the dust,
Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
Maryland!
Remember Carroll's sacred trust,
Remember Howard's warlike thrust,
And all thy slumberers, with the just,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Come, 'tis the red Dawn of the Day,
Maryland!
Come, with thy paupers' away,
Maryland!
With Ringgold's spirit for the fray,
With Watson's blood, at Monterey,
With fearless Lee's and dashing May,
Maryland! My Maryland!

4/ I see the blush upon thy cheek,
Maryland!
For thou wast ever bravely meek,
Maryland!
But lo! there surges forth a shriek,
From hill to hill, from creek to creek —
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Then wilt not yield the Vandal's toll,
Maryland!
Then wilt not crook to his cruel goal,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon the pole,
Better the shot the beak, the bowe
Than crucifixion of the soul,
Maryland! My Maryland!

5/ I hear the distant thunder - hum,
Maryland!
The Old Line bugle, fife, and drum,
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb —
Huzza! She spurs the Northern dumb!
She heathes, she huns, shee come shee come!
Maryland! My Maryland!

Written originally in the Prison of Pointe Coupée,
La, Capue 1861. Copied, March 29, 1901, at
Augusta, Ga. for my sister Margaret Harney
Randall with the affectionate regards,
of the Author James R. Randall



“MARYLAND, MY MARYLAND!

‘The despot’s heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!

His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!

Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle queen of yore,
Maryland! My Maryland!

‘Hark to an exiled son’s appeal,
Maryland!

My mother State! to thee I kneel,
Maryland!

For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
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‘Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
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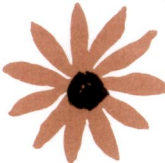
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Maryland!

Come with thy panoplied array,
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With Ringgold’s spirit for the fray,
With Watson’s blood at Monterey,
With fearless Loew and dashing May,
Maryland! My Maryland!

‘Come! for thy shield is bright and strong,
Maryland!

Come! for thy dalliance does thee wrong,
Maryland!



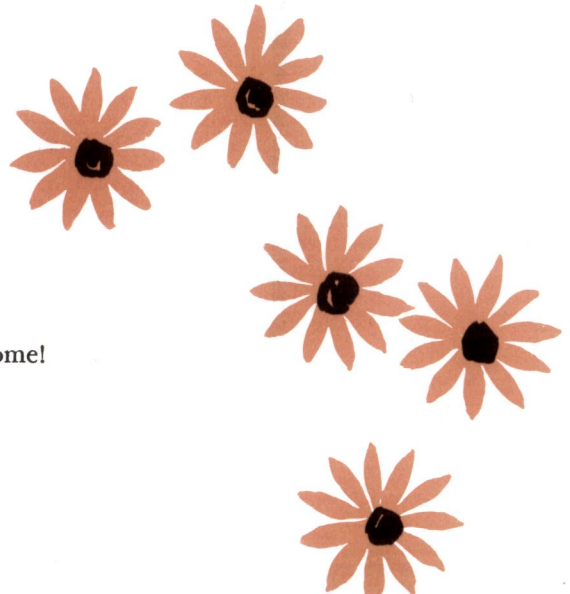
Come to thy own heroic throng,
Stalking with Liberty along,
And chaunt thy deathless slogan song,
Maryland! My Maryland!

'Dear Mother! burst the tyrant's chain,
Maryland!
Virginia should not call in vain,
Maryland!
She meets her sisters on the plain—
'Sic semper!' 'tis the proud refrain
That baffles minions back again,
Maryland! My Maryland!

'I see the blush upon thy cheek,
Maryland!
For thou wast ever bravely meek,
Maryland!
But lo! there surges forth a shriek
From hill to hill, from creek to creek—
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
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'Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll,
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Thou wilt not crook to his control,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon thee roll,
Better the blade, the shot, the bowl,
Than crucifixion of the soul,
Maryland! My Maryland!

'I hear the distant thunder-hum,
Maryland!
The Old Line bugle, fife and drum,
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb—
Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!
She breaths! she burns! she'll come! she'll come!
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