

The Bonnie Blue Flag

Harry MaCarthy

The musical score is written for guitar in treble clef, key of D major (two sharps), and 6/8 time. It consists of four staves. The first staff is the 'Verse' and contains measures 1-4 with chords A, D, A, and E7. The second staff contains measures 5-8 with chords A, D, A, E7, A, and A, followed by the start of the 'Chorus' in measure 9. The third staff contains measures 10-13 with chords E7, D, E7, A, and E7. The fourth staff contains measures 14-15 with chords A and E7, and a first ending bracket over measures 14 and 15.

1. We are a band of brothers
And native to the soil,
Fighting for the property
We gained by honest toil;
And when our rights were threatened,
The cry rose near and far:
"Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star!"

Chorus:

Hurrah! Hurrah!
For Southern rights, hurrah!
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star.

2. As long as the Union
Was faithful to her trust,
Like friends and like brothers
Both kind were we and just;
But now, when Northern treachery
Attempts our rights to mar,
We hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star.

Chorus

3. First gallant South Carolina
Nobly made the stand,
Then came Alabama,
Who took her by the hand.
Next quickly Mississippi,
Georgia and Florida
All raised on high the Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star.

Chorus

4. Ye men of valor, gather round
The banner of the right;
Texas and fair Louisiana
Join us in the fight.
Davis, our loved president,
And Stephens statesmen are;
Now rally round the Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star.

Chorus

5. And here's to old Virginia,
The Old Dominion State,
Who with the young Confederacy
At length has linked her fate;
Impelled by her example,
Now other states prepare
To hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star.

Chorus

6. Then cheer, boys, cheer;
Raise the joyous shout,
For Arkansas and North Carolina
Now have both gone out;
And let another rousing cheer
For Tennessee be given,
The single star of the Bonnie Blue Flag
Has grown to be eleven.

Chorus

7. Then here's to our Confederacy,
Strong are we and brave;
Like patriots of old we'll fight
Our heritage to save.
And rather than submit to shame,
To die we would prefer;
So cheer for the Bonnie Blue Flag
That bears a single star.

Chorus

"The Bonnie Blue Flag" was written by Harry McCarthy (1834-1888) and sung to the old Irish tune "The Irish Jaunting Car". The song lays out the order of secession of the States that went on to form the Confederacy. The first flag of the Confederacy was a single white star on a blue background. This song, especially popular in the South during the early years of the war, counts out the eleven seceding states one by one.

McCarthy was an English-born vaudeville entertainer who immigrated to the United States in 1849 and settled in Arkansas. He billed himself the "Arkansas Comedian" and traveled widely throughout the South in company with his wife, Lottie, putting on "personation concerts." These performances featured McCarthy singing in the dialect of other cultures, dancing to ethnic-sounding music, and dressing in flamboyant costumes. Stephen Currie, in **Music in the Civil War**, reports that one of McCarthy's traveling companions during the war years was a cockatoo who had been trained to squawk "Three cheers for Jeff Davis!" on stage.

It was recorded by Tennessee Ernie Ford on his album **Tennessee Ernie Ford Sings Civil War Songs of the South** which is where I learned it.

Other Civil War era songs in this collection are:

"Dixie"

"The Faded Coat Of Blue"

"Goober Peas"

"Just Before the Battle, Mother"

"Lorena"

"Marching Through Georgia"

"'Union' Dixie"

"The Vacant Chair"

"The Year of Jubilo"