

NEW
BOOK

Gospel



SHAPE
NOTE

SINGING



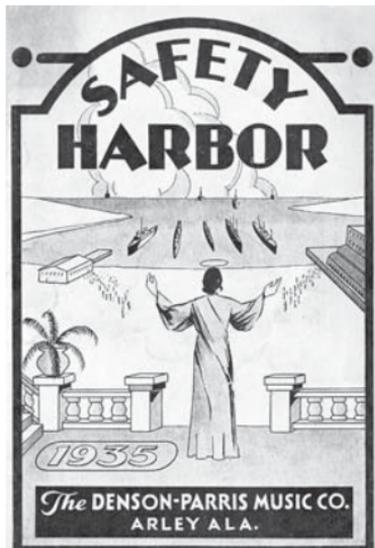
Preface

This CD project attempts to highlight the importance, in Alabama, of the enduring Southern Gospel "New-Book" or seven shapenote singing tradition, represented here by regional organizations that make up the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention. Well known to this field of singers are home-grown gospel songwriters such as G.T. "Dad" Speer ("Heaven's Jubilee"), Curtis Stewart ("Lord Build Me a Cabin in Glory Land"), Alton Delmore ("I've Got to Cross this Lonely River"), publisher/songwriter J. R. "Pap" Baxter ("I Have Peace in My Soul"), Vernie O. Fossett, John L. Shrader, Eugene Wright and many other prolific songwriters and singing-school teachers. Through the years thousands of songs have been written and sung for this vital and important folk gospel tradition.

The music on the CD primarily features contemporary Alabama songwriters who continuously write new songs for publication each year.

Early History of Shapenote Music in America

The beginnings of “shapenote” singing in Alabama are essentially rooted in early British singing-school practices that were transferred to New England colonies in the 1700s during the era of the Great Awakening in England that first embraced congregational hymn singing in church services. Singing schools and singing societies became an important element of America’s emerging musical education. In a singing school the student is taught to read and sing music from the printed page. He is also taught to sing each particular sound in a musical scale using syllables, called solfege, solfeggio, or solemization. Early English practices adopted the syllables *fa, so, la, fa, so, la, mi, fa* to complete an octave of a major scale. Note that only four syllables are used. Later, the



ABOVE: *Safety Harbor* cover from Denson-Parris Music Company

Fa Sol La Fa Sol La Mi Fa

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

F major scale

LEFT: Example of fa-so-la four-shape method notation

more recognizable seven syllable, *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti* soleimization became the norm. This is what is used in the gospel shapenote singing conventions today in the genre often termed *Southern Gospel*.

Shapenote methodology began in America, first commercially published in 1801 by William Little and William Smith with the *Easy Instructor*. It used the four-syllable solfege system that was standard for the time. Four geometrically shaped note heads were developed to symbolize each of the four syllables used: a triangle for *fa*, a circle for *so*, a rectangle for *la* and a diamond for *mi*. These new shaped note heads were used on the familiar five-lined music staff in conjunction with other notation elements, such as clefs, measures, time and key signatures. This shaped note-head method makes it much easier for a student to learn to read and understand simple music theory from the start.

Described in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the application of shapenote singing coincided with the Second Great Awakening. Beginning around 1800 singing schools using shapenote methodology had by 1813 spread to three areas, Virginia, Cincinnati to St. Louis, and further south to South Carolina and Georgia. Singing-school masters who taught the four-shapenote system, came into a community for a week or even months to teach a school and sell tune books to their students for additional remuneration. Ideally, at the end of singing-school there would be an all-day singing in the community. This type of dissemination allowed for expansion of the musical art by embedding a system of grass roots singing conventions into the fabric of Southern culture. In rural agricultural areas, schools and conventions often took place at the end of summer or in the fall after the crops were harvested, when there was time to relax.

Movement to the Seven Shape System

James R. Goff, Jr. in his book *Close Harmony: A History of Southern Gospel* writes that, in the North, devotees of the “better music” movement supplanted the four syllable “fasola” system for *do-re-mi* solemnization and roundhead music notation, in essence ending shapenote practice there, that method considered crude by those in the movement. Promoting a switch to using the *do-re-mi* solemnization there was a saying, “Would any parents having seven children, ever think of calling them by only four names?” (Goff p. 22)

Although abandoned in the North, there were still many staunch supporters of shapenote methodology in the South. Because of its popularity and the importance of shapenotes as a learning tool, a conversion to seven-shape notation gained momentum, promoted by some music educators and certain book compilers and publishers in the nineteenth century, especially the Joseph Funk family of Singer’s Glen, Virginia.

	SEVEN-SHAPE NOTATIONS						
	Do	Re	Mi	Fa	Sol.	La	Si
ADKIN, 1846 (See p. 330)	△	∩	◇	▷	⊙	◻	∇
AULD, 1847 (See p. 322)	▷	▷	◇	▷	⊙	◻	▷
SWAN, 1848 (See p. 324)	⊗	∩	◇	▷	⊙	◻	△
FUNK, 1851 (See p. 330)	▷	▷	◇	▷	⊙	◻	▷
GILLHAM, 1854 (See p. 331)	△	◻	◇	▷	⊙	◻	◇
JOHNSON, 1853 (See p. 331)	▷	▷	◇	▷	⊙	◻	⊗
WALKER, 1866 (See p. 331)	△	∩	◇	▷	⊙	◻	▷

¹⁰ Kieffer's songs are on pp. 192, 222, 239, 260 and 368; Dennington's, p. 314; Gabriel's, p. 317.

Seven shape notation methods (Jackson)

To make seven separate note-heads, more shapes were needed to attach to the three additional syllables. The four shapes used with the original *fa-so-la-mi* 3

solfege were kept intact. However, the “mi” syllable, the 7th of the scale in the fasola system, became the 3rd in the *do-re-mi* system (same name, same shape).

At least seven different types of shape-head alternatives competed. (see chart, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, G. P. Jackson p.337) The first seven-syllable shape-note book published was the *Christian Minstrel* by Jesse Aiken in 1846 (Hampshire County, West Virginia) His “patent” seven note-head system eventually became the

172
O.A.P.

THE GRAND HIGHWAY.
Am. Copyright, 1864, by Christian Harmony Publishing Co.

G.A.PARRIS



1. The grand highway is free from ev'ry sin, God's ho - ly light makes fair as the bright noon day; If No unclean thing shall ever enter in, His light

2. It shall be called the way of holiness, Way-faring souls in it are ever blest, It is so plain so plain, that none should be led astray, No

3. The ransomed of Jehovah shall return, Joy will be found, be found, when they to His will o - bey; All If they for Zion's lasting pleasures yearn,

you have started on this blessed route, Keep straight ahead, ahead. The Don't let old satan turn your face about, don't turn from the grand highway. The rav'nous beast or lion shall be there, Redeemed ones walk in paths forever fair, The lame shall walk, the sorrow and all sighing then will flee. Keep straight ahead, This grand highway a holy way shall be, don't turn from the grand highway. The lame shall walk, the

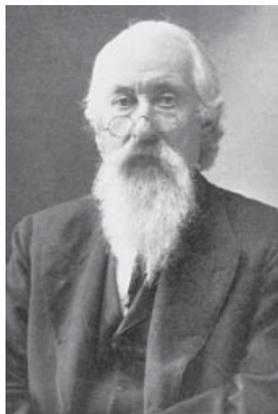
standard, but not until the late 19th century did this really take effect. The Aiken system ultimately owes much of its popularity to the Ruebush & Kieffer Publishing Company (relatives of Joseph Funk) that adopted Aiken's system around 1876 after changing from a similar system devised by Joseph Funk.

In addition, William Walker's *Christian Harmony*, which originally used a similar but unique seven-shape system to Aiken's, was a popular tunebook published in Philadelphia in 1866. However, this written music was still formatted with a similar layout (one staff for each vocal part) as older tune books like Ananias Davisson's *The Kentucky Harmony* (published 1816 in Harrisonburg, Virginia) and Benjamin Franklin White's *Sacred Harp* (published in Georgia 1844), with the tenor (sometimes called soprano) line the primary melody. Originally *The Sacred Harp* had very few alto parts and mainly consisted of only three staves, thus the tenor (melody) was then the 2nd staff. In contemporary editions, the tenor is the 3rd staff and the alto part the 2nd. The Alabama revision of *Christian Harmony*, first edited in 1958 by John Deason from Bibb County and Oren A. Parris from Walker County, uses the Aiken system in four parts, still with separate staves in a single brace. This revision is an important part of the state's musical heritage and is still in use today. O.A. Parris' song "The Grand Highway," found on page 172 of the book (*shown left*), is included on our CD and was recorded at a Christian Harmony singing school in 2009.

Importance of Commercial Publishing to the Advent of New Book Gospel Popularization and Creation of a Mass Singing Community

Popularization of the seven-shape system was vigorously promoted by Aldine Kieffer of the Ruebusch-Kieffer Company in Dayton, Virginia when they began printing newly composed books of music based on the Aiken system in 1874. According to music scholar Charles Wolfe:

The newer songbooks were designed not so much for formal church service, but for special singings and for “singing conventions” in which many of the singers in a county-wide area might gather to try their hand at sight reading the songs in the new books. In some areas, competitions were held to see who could sight sing or direct songs they had never seen before.



In addition to learning the skills of sight singing and conducting, devotees of this music have been important in the authorship of songs written for these publications since the beginning. This particular aspect is a focus for this project CD as most of the songwriters on the recorded tracks are conventions singers from Alabama.

Another relative of Joseph Funk was originally associated with the Reubusch-Kieffer Company. Anthony Johnson Showalter, publisher and composer of “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” founded a gospel music publishing house that by 1904 had sold more than two million gospel songs and hymn collections. In Dalton Georgia he established the Southern Normal

Conservatory in 1885 to “educate more teachers and composers of gospel songs than all other Southern schools of this nature combined.” (Groves p311)

In 1883, James D. Vaughan, was a student at the Ruebush Kieffer Normal School in Virginia where he learned to sing and arrange seven shapenote music. He eventually moved to Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, and opened the James D. Vaughan Publishing Company in 1902. The Vaughan School of Music was formed in 1911. Nearly all of the publishers of note, past and present, developed singing schools, such as Showalter, Vaughan, Stamps-Baxter, and now with Jeffress-Phillips Music Company, Cumberland Valley Music, Leoma Music, and Ben Speer Music. Seven-shapenote singing most likely arrived into many African American and white communities at about the same time due to the same media driven popularization of the genre by Ruebusch-Kieffer, A. J. Showalter, James Vaughan, R. E. Winsett (established in 1903) and later with others like V. O. and Frank Stamps, and J. R. Baxter. Volume 2 of this *Traditional Musics of Alabama* series deals with African American seven shapenote singing in Alabama. (For liner notes go online to arts.alabama.gov/actc/0575_text.pdf)



Trumpets of Jubilee, published by James D. Vaughan

William Heaps, past president of the Alabama State Gospel Convention, songwriter and songbook editor from Clanton, Alabama, believes that the first classes in new book seven-shapenote singing probably started around 1905 in Alabama, if not earlier. This is not long after the first Vaughan and Showalter books were published.

From a reference found in a correspondence printed in 1921 from Showalter's *The Music Teacher and Home Magazine*, J. H. Holcomb mentions his teaching experience 16 years past:

My next school was at this place, Vernon, AL, where Prof. Showalter taught among his first normals in the south, and also where the writer taught three summers in succession 14, 15 and 16 years ago.

The book companies that produced shapenote music publications for sale knew that there needed to be a structure to teach music theory, song writing, conducting and sight singing to new teachers so that they could impart their education to a wider audience. This is why the "normal" music schools associated with individual publishers were so important. Music publishers' "normals" were the primary way singing-school teachers gained their education and credentials, thus allowing them to promote and teach their own singing-schools and distribute new books by associated publishing houses to their students. This was the case throughout Alabama and much of the South. Teachers made at least part of their livelihood from selling books. In some instances, singing-school teachers and song writers developed their own music publishing firms such as Vaughan and Showalter, and later, from Alabama, G. T. Speer with C.A. Brock, O. A. Parris, Whitt Denson, J. R. Baxter and others. Singing-school teachers went into many rural areas of the South developing singing-school classes and in some instances initiated annual singings.

Both Goff and Paula Becker in her book *Let the Song Go On* relate an oft-told story about G. T. "Dad" Speer. After breaking a plow part working the fields one scorching day, "Tom slumped down on a rock and thought about the four mile walk to the store where they just might have a part for the plow and then might not. 'God,' he said finally, 'if you'll help me sell this farm and if you'll help me make a living for my family in the gospel music business, I'll never walk behind a plow again.'"

He and his wife Lena, then living near Arley, Alabama, began teaching singing-schools, selling books and singing in a newly formed Speer Family Quartet.

In addition to those publishing house singing-school teachers who were active in rural communities, regular newsletter/magazines were also an important element in spreading this type of music and related information to the general public.

Continuing the idea from a singers' magazine subscription model of Joseph Funk's *Southern Musical Advocate and Singer's Friend* in 1859 to 1861 in Singers Glen, Virginia, Aldine and



G.T. Speer business card



1919 title page from *The Music Teacher and Home Magazine*

Roland Kieffer with uncles Solomon and Timothy Funk (founders of the Patent Note Publishing Company) in 1870 produced the *Musical Million and Singer's Advocate* magazine in Singers Glen, Virginia. (Goff pp. 25, 46)

This promotional model kept singing-school teachers and the singing communities in touch with current endeavors of the shapenote singing events, schools and new musical publications. Issues allowed people to contact a variety of singing-school teachers listed in these publications so they could create singing-schools in their communities.

Similar publications followed the *Musical Million* with newsletter and magazine publications such as Showalter's *Music Teacher and Home Magazine* and later the Vaughan's *The Musical Visitor* that started in 1911 and was renamed in 1913 to the *Family Visitor*. By 1923 Vaughan's magazine was said to have the largest circulation of any Southern music journal. The Stamps-Baxter *Gospel Music News* monthly publication from Dallas, Texas, begun in 1934, was also a popular publication. (Goff pp. 71, 90)

Early copies of *The Music Teacher and Home Magazine* produced by the A. J. Showalter and J. D. Patton Company lists professional singing-school teachers endorsed by the company. In 1919, 68 out of 136 teachers were from Alabama with similar numbers shown in a 1921 publication.

The quotation below illustrates the importance of this magazine to the business of the teachers:

The teachers whose names and addresses are given below offer their services to the public at reasonable rates. All use exclusively or principally the

publication of the A. J. Showalter Co. The Showalter-Patton Co. and Perry Bros. Music Co. Some of them have engagements far ahead and some are in position to accept immediate engagements. Write them for dates and terms.

Subscribed singing-school teachers provided selected correspondences giving accounts of successful students, singing classes and book sales. Here is an example of a correspondence from the 1921 *Music Teacher and Home Magazine*:

FROM BEXAR, ALA.

On July 26, 1921, I began one of the most interesting schools I have ever taught. This was at our Baptist church at Liberty Grove. I had taught a school at the same place several years ago, but all of my old students have married or gone into other lines of service and so nearly all of those in this school were children of the "teen age." But it was a very interesting school with an enrollment of 68, three of whom studied harmony. We used the Showalter publications throughout. I would use no other, for a teacher of music is usually judged by the "material found in his saddle packs."

The interest was so great that a contract was made for a school of fifteen days to begin in July, 1922.

Special thanks are due Mr. U. G. Sumerford who worked faithfully from the beginning to the end, helping very much in the practice work.



Joe Campbell Singing School, 1908, courtesy of Lillian Campbell Dalton.

Much success goes to the editor of our magazine. But how could “a live wire” like him be any thing else than a success?

I like to read the reports from all the co-workers, but especially those from my old teacher, Prof. J. D. Patton.

Yours for better song service.

D. A. Camp.

Through this network of book publishers, singing-schools and class conventions many fine singers, songwriters and teachers were, and still are produced.

Regional seven-shape singing conventions, often called “classes,” employ a formal structure corresponding to an older organizational concept based upon earlier four-shapenote gospel singing classes and conventions like those of *The Sacred Harp*. Conventions still rely upon a strong democratic base where members that sing, or feel in someway connected, vote on every aspect of the class’s business. They are also represented through committees, or in the case of the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention, the Supreme Council.

Paula Becker’s book, *Let the Song Go On: Fifty Years of Gospel Singing with the Speer Family* gives a very good summary of how local singing classes and all-day-singings organized, leading to the state singing convention that developed in Alabama in 1931. The first National Gospel Singing Convention also convened in Birmingham, Alabama in 1936:

When all-day singings first started in the south they were purely a form of entertainment and socializing for the local community. Churches would have homecomings once a year, and people who had lived in the neighborhood



Singers at the Cullman County Convention

years ago might come back to get together with old friends and enjoy the good music and the good food. Or sometimes a community would make singing a regular monthly thing all summer long, moving from one church to another each Sunday, and choosing a different leader for every singing. The singings began to grow and become more and more organized. Sometimes two or three counties would get together for regular singings. They would elect officers, a president, secretary, and treasurer to handle the details... the county meetings grew into statewide conventions which attracted thousands to Birmingham and Nashville.

Gospel Quartets – Promoting New Book Publications to Regional Conventions

One important way Southern gospel music was popularized included the use of professional quartets. Vaughan first established a traveling quartet to perform new songs and promote his annual convention songbooks. In 1910 his all-male Southern gospel quartet helped to double sales of his songbooks to 60,000. By 1912, approximately 85,000 books were sold. Books could be ordered directly by mail from the publisher. From an article, “The Case of the Athens Music Company” in the Alabama Folklife Society’s publication *In the Spirit*, Charles Wolfe writes:

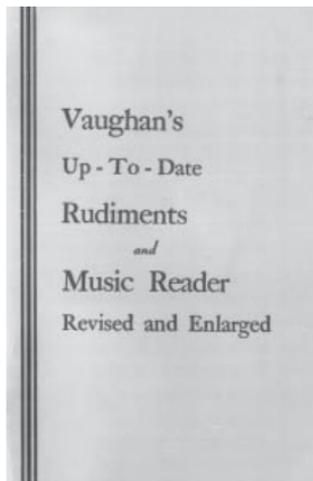
The first gospel quartets were hired not as an end in themselves, but to popularize new songs from new songbooks, and to sell these songbooks to rural singers and churches throughout the South.... The center for performance remained the local church or county singing convention, not the urban media center: the gospel songwriters often remained in their own small communities and mailed in to the publishing company their compositions for editing and eventual publication. Thus the music remained largely decentralized with much closer ties to the community and local culture. And while some of the publishing giants like Stamps-Baxter eventually located in Dallas, many smaller publishing companies remained in relatively small towns like Lawrenceburg, Tennessee (Vaughan), Hartford, Arkansas (Hartford), Hudson, North Carolina (Teachers), and Dayton, Tennessee (R.E. Winsett).

Early on, the basic makeup of a “new book” was basically, 75 percent new music and 25 percent songs from older repertoires with well-known favorites. Contemporary songbooks use mostly new songs with a few older ones mixed in. For instance,

nearly every book includes the song “Amazing Grace.” In addition, Ruebush-Kieffer, Showalter, Vaughan, Stamps-Baxter, and other publishers in their continued efforts to educate new singers issued additional “new book” publications, usually called “Rudiments of Music.” Broadcast technology was another way to reach a wide audience of listeners and advocates. Vaughan founded WOAN, the first radio station in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee that broadcast Southern gospel music, starting in 1922.

In addition to the larger, better-known publishing companies there were other small publishing endeavors in Alabama and in other states that produced gospel music books for seven-shapenote singers. B.F. McLemore in his self-published *Tracing the Roots of Southern Gospel Singers* gives a “partial” list of book companies from various Southern states. From Alabama he lists these: Convention Music Company, Gallant; Gainus Bros., Attalla; Gospel Song Publishing Association of America, Cullman; National School of Music, Roanoke; Rainbow Music Company, Cullman; Speer and Brock, Athens; Watson Music Company Heflin; and M. H. Woodard Music Publisher, Cullman. (TRSG pp. 37-8)

Other publications once found in Alabama include: Southern Progressive Music Co, Birmingham (branch houses Columbia and Phil Campbell); Edwards Music Company, Bessemer; The Marion Davis Co., Fayette; W. P. Ganus, Music Publisher, Birmingham; The Denson-Parris Music Co., Arley; C.C.Willcutt’s Sunrise Devotional, Tarrant City; and the Denson Music Publishing Co., Birmingham.



Rudiments and Music Reader

Importance of Piano as Instrumental Accompaniment

One will notice the elaborate piano accompaniments to this style of gospel singing. The style of playing has developed over the years into a unique performance type found in gospel convention singing. Many credit Alabama native Dwight Moody Brock, brother of Lena Brock Speer (wife of G. T. "Dad" Speer), as a primary innovator of piano accompaniment in Southern gospel convention and quartet singing. James Goff describes this:

Brock quickly revolutionized the piano accompaniment with his trademark improvisation between verses of a song, a short piano solo that became known as a "turnaround." The turnaround became second nature to gospel piano players of the next generation. Brock's rhythmic style places the instrumentation of gospel music in the forefront and did much to encourage other groups to improve their own accompaniment. (Goff p.121)



Dwight M. Brock

Charles Wolfe, again from his article "The Case of the Athens Music Company" writes:

Among Charles Albert Brock's five children was Dwight, who was a spectacular piano player. He would, in fact, emerge as one of the great innovators of gospel piano accompaniment, recording extensively for Victor and merging jazz-like rhythms with the new up-tempo quartet songs. "As far as I know, I was the first rhythm piano player on gospel songs," he recalled. "I learned a

lot of my piano from my father, and took lessons from Anita Crider. I finished high school in Athens, AL, and learned all I knew about the piano at that time. I practiced about eight hours a day.” In 1927, he joined the new Stamps Quartet.

Shapenote convention piano players read the same four-part, two-staff score configuration that the singers use, there is no special piano arrangement written. The skill to improvise and develop introductions and between verse “turn-arounds” is quite an amazing skill but is basic to a good standard accompaniment. An important element of most contemporary singing-schools today includes piano training in addition to music theory, sight singing, and conducting classes. Another interesting aspect of reading shapenotes as a piano player is that shapenote music is ultimately a relative pitch method of music comprehension whereby

136 **The Roll Call Day**
 Phillip Dale Garrison Dr. Sidney Ryan Hicks

1. There's a roll call day not far a way that the
 2. Now a sin-ner man up there will stand, there'll be

saints will all at-tend, Ev-ry blood - bo't soul is
 some-where else, you know, They have had their say and

on the roll, they have all been born a - gain; They have
 gone their way to a place of bit-ter woe; All the

found sweet rest and hap-pi-ness, nev-er-more shall they know pain... At the
 Fi-ther gave the Lord did save for He bo't them with His blood... What a

roll call there up in the air in the land of God's do-main
 song we'll sing with all re-deemed, it will tell of Cal-v'ry's flood.

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“The Roll Call Day”

the actual first pitch or tonic of the music performed is, in essence, arbitrary. Many piano players who learned to read by the shapes can choose to ignore any key signature and thus modulate to any key they wish, or to a key a singer may request. Of course, one must know his scales extremely well. A few piano players who learned to play using shapenotes are sometimes at a loss when the music is written in standard notation, known in the vernacular as round notes.

Many gospel quartets sing convention style four-part arrangements of songs. And, while they may add additional accompaniment of instruments like guitar, mandolin, accordion, saxophone, or electric bass, it is the piano that is the mainstay of Southern gospel singing accompaniment. During the annual state convention one might see an electric bass player and, most often, an electric organ, but it is the piano that takes precedence. There may be as many as three or more pianos playing (with an organ) at the same time. Usually a lead piano player is delegated as

the primary at the request of a particular song leader while the other pianists supplement that accompaniment. During a large state convention twenty or more piano players fill the front one to two rows reserved for them as they wait their turn to play. Selected pianists are always called upon intermittently for a solo during collections or other breaks in an all-day singing event. For instance, at the 2008 convention in Springville, Alabama, Rosa Nell Speer Powell daughter of G.T. "Dad" Speer and niece of Dwight Brock, gave one of her solos for which she is widely acclaimed. For many years she was the primary piano accompanist performing with the Singing Speer Family on radio and television.



Respected piano players are teaching mentors to many inside the community of shapenote gospel singers. Those such as Rosa Nell Speer, James D. Walbert, the Reverend Sidney Hicks, Leonette Walls and many others fill the ranks of outstanding pianists.

History from the 1989, 59th session Alabama State Gospel Convention Program Book

Thanks goes to Dr. Bobbie Glassco and the late L. C. Littlejohn (former original member of the John Daniel Quartet) who put together a history of the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention from 1931 to 1989. The history was included in the 1989, 59th annual convention program booklet. Parts of the summary and quotations found in the next few pages are taken directly from that narrative:

According to *Vaughan's Family Visitor*, the original purpose of the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention was to try to get good singers of Alabama and adjoining states to fellowship more closely with each other and to provide the greatly needed "common spirit" under which the "work" would progress with a greater speed.... At the Winston County Convention that met at Double Springs, Alabama the first Sunday in August 1931, there was a great movement launched and unanimously approved by the convention to organize a "State-Wide Singing Convention."

At this time a state-wide singing committee was formed. It was composed of the following members; Whit Denson from Arley; John M. Dye from Birmingham; G. T. Speer from Double Springs; Mr. Higgins from Belle Mina; Oliver Cooper from Crane Hill; Solon Hulsey from Delmar; Dr. Freeman from Cordova; and Mr. Blackwood from Gadsden.

Quoted again from the 1931 issue of *Family Visitor*:

The arrangements committee decided that the first session of the convention would be held at the Birmingham Electric Power Company's auditorium, located at 12th Street and 6th Avenue.... The first session of the Alabama State Singing Convention was held in Birmingham the second weekend in November 1931. John M. Dye presided as temporary chairman. At that time a committee was appointed to draw up convention by-laws which were submitted and, with minor changes, approved by the convention.

John M. Dye was elected to serve as president for the 1932 session and was elected again in 1932 to serve in 1933.



The close relationship between new book publishers and singing conventions cannot be overstated, and of the singing-school teachers and songwriters who were often liaisons between the two entities. Quite a few Alabama State Gospel Convention officers were singing-school teachers, excellent gospel songwriters and quartet singers.

2010 the 80th year of the Convention's Inception.

The Alabama State Convention usually starts on Friday night and reconvenes all day Saturday with a break before an evening session. It ends the next day about noon. (Although, in 2009 the event lasted only two days.) It takes place annually usually ending on the second Sunday in November.

The incoming convention president, elected during a current state convention, will usually take the following year's convention to his or her home territory. Thus the State convention typically moves locations from year to year. However, in the first three years, 1931 to 1934, the convention was held in Birmingham and the majority of the early years after it alternated between Montgomery and Birmingham. Other cities hosting the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention are: Gadsden, Cullman, Russellville, Hartselle, Tuscaloosa, Ft. Payne, Pell City, Mobile, Dothan, Hamilton, Albertville, Boaz, Guntersville, Sheffield, Oneonta, Jasper, Anniston, Arab, Clanton, Talladega, Rainbow City, and, in recent years, Prattville, Wetumpka, Decatur, and Springville. It is up to the newly elected officers to make arrangements for the venue and help with hotel and motel accommodations and food served during the event. Since the convention is usually scheduled annually for the Friday and Saturday before the second Sunday of November, all that a singer really has to know is where it will take place. (Starting no earlier than the 7th and ending no later than the 14th in November).

State conventions tend to bring many in reciprocal attendance from, mainly, Southern states such as Florida, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Out-of-state attendance is welcome and important to the continuance of the tradition.

Alabama School of Gospel Music



Truman Glassco

In the summer of 1986, Truman Glassco of Horton spearheaded a committee to provide instruction in gospel music to students of Sand Mountain and surrounding areas. As a result, the Alabama School of Gospel Music was born. Articles of incorporation were formulated, a constitution and by-laws were developed, and the school was designated legally as a non-profit organization.

The first session of the Alabama School of Gospel Music was held in June of 1987 at Snead State Community College in Boaz. At the first school 120 students from five different states attended. All ages of students were taught a comprehensive course of music theory and song writing, sight singing, conducting and piano accompaniment, if applicable.



In 2009 the Alabama School of Gospel Music, held at Snead State, had 115 students of which 38 were 11-15 years of age. The others ranged from 16-90.

National School of Gospel Music

Mr. Dorsey C. Yarbrough from Randolph County, a renowned gospel singer, prolific songwriter, and long-time faculty member of the Stamps-Baxter School of Music, founded the National School of Music in Roanoke, Alabama, in 1967. Yarbrough bought an old hospital and converted it to a school with dorm rooms on top. He operated it there through 1978. Mr. Yarbrough had the help of Alabama songwriter C. C. Stafford as one of his teachers. Yarbrough passed the National School of Music leadership to Phillip G. Prince who runs a singing-school under that name in Jacksonville, Florida. Yarbrough is represented on this CD with his song, "Gonna Shout All Over God's Heaven."

Other schools of gospel music outside of Alabama include: Jeffress-Phillips School of Gospel Music, Crossett, AR; Ben Speer's Stamps-Baxter School of Music, Nashville, TN; Cumberland Valley School of Gospel Music, Inc., Pulaski, TN; North Georgia School of Gospel Music, Cleveland, TN; Brockwell Gospel Music School, Brockwell AR; Leoma Music Company School of Gospel Music, Lawrenceburg, TN; Gospel Singers of America, Pass Christian, MS; West Virginia School Of Gospel Music, Kenna; Southern Gospel Music School of America, Chattanooga, TN; and The Do Re Mi Gospel Music Academy, Lebanon, TN.

New book music publishers have come and gone, even the large original publishers like Vaughan and Stamps-Baxter don't have a presence at contemporary gospel conventions due to the waning popularity of convention singing in general rendering shapenote publishing unprofitable. The few annual new books available now are published wholly from the love of the music and to preserve the tradition of singing conventions and gospel songwriting.



The older boy in the front is Joseph Norris from near Florala, Alabama The man is Royce Crews from Samson.

The books now used in the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention (and most other Southern states and the National conventions) are from: Cumberland Valley Music Company (Eugene McCammon), Leoma Music Company, Texas Legendary Music Company, Gospel Heritage Music (Charles Towler), and Jeffress-Phillips Music (Marty Phillips). In the last few years a compilation songbook of Speer Family songs from the Ben Speer Music Company was used as well.

Mind boggling numbers of songs have been composed over the past 100-plus years and are still being written for this important and historical genre of American music. Unfortunately only a small sample from a limited number of years is available on this recording.

Each year new books are introduced and the previous year's books are put to rest. New books come out after the end of each year's annual state conventions thus allowing local classes to practice and become familiar with newly composed songs before the next annual comes along. One marvels at the singers' abilities to sight-read new songs upon seeing them for the first time.

It should be noted that not all people who sing seven shapenote music necessarily sing from new books or belong to the state convention system. Local singings

in communities may take place at regular intervals at churches, homes or community centers. Singing events such as these often use compilation music books such as the *Mull's Singing Convention* series, Stamps-Baxter's *Heavenly Highways Hymns*, Tennessee Music's *Church Hymnal*, and others that are full of "classic" favorite songs, such as "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," "I'll Fly Away," "Turn Your Radio On," "Build Me a Cabin in Glory Land," "Amazing Grace," and so many others. (See Alabama Folklife Society *Traditional Musics of Alabama Series*, Vol. 2 for more information.)

Songwriters

A number of Alabamians have made great contributions in the pursuit of shape-note gospel songwriting. Most writers of Southern gospel songs are not well known outside their own community of convention singers and rarely receive any remuneration, as many give up ownership of the songs, and, there is often little or no profit for the publishers as well. However, this songwriting tradition is venerated and its continuance is important for those who participate, as its primary purpose is for the love of gospel music and their Christian faith.

Collaboration between songwriters is also a common element in the creation of this song genre. For instance, Adger Pace was a well-known lyric writer for the Vaughan Company and wrote the words for many songs with G.T. Speer and many others. The popular song "Heaven's Jubilee" is such a partnership. We see that this is still a common practice with contemporary composers. In this CD we have songs written together by Francis Graves and K. Wayne Guffey, Stanley Smith and Marty Phillips, Sidney Hicks and Dale Garrison, Sidney Hicks and Robert Stephenson, Ben Speer and J.R. Baxter, Darrell Maddox and his wife Ann, and Amanda Sexton with Alan Mahaffey.

At least two individuals, T. L. Gilley and K. Wayne Guffey have written so many gospel songs that each has self-published his own collection, *God's Love* by Tilley and *Songs From the Heart* by Guffey. Both of these songwriters' talents are included in this recording project.

Conclusion

Throughout its history Southern gospel music repertory has influenced a variety of American musical sub-genres. Intersecting first with the new book Southern gospel singing convention tradition were commercial gospel quartets that originally promoted this printed music repertory but later found a path into the commercial venues of records, radio, and later, television. Other folk-oriented and commercial music genres, like old-time country-hillbilly, contemporary country, bluegrass and bluegrass gospel added an assortment of instrumentations and took ownership of this Southern gospel repertory. In the end, many of the songs originally from new book gospel singing convention repertory cannot, in the minds of many, be separated from those musical genres that appropriated it. Those who learned gospel songs orally as traditional melodies often believe that they are derived from a more distant past, and sometimes of an anonymous origin. For instance, songs like Albert Brumley's "I'll Fly Away" or Cleavant Derricks' "Just A Little Talk With Jesus" are so embedded in American musical life that they have become standards for bluegrass, black and white gospel, country and even jazz music, each with a varied musical arrangement. Songs published by Stamps-Baxter like "Precious Memories," "Farther Along," "If We Never Meet Again," "Victory in Jesus," and "I Won't Have to Cross Jordan Alone" are often sung during church services as hymns and are to many as familiar as the doxology.

When the monetary value was lost for the large music publishing firms, they abandoned their productions of Southern gospel shapenote music. Due to efforts of gospel songwriters, regional gospel singing convention communities and the few professional music editors who have stepped up to continue to publish new composition music this tradition continues, more from the love for the music and the community than for any remuneration. Each year new music is composed and songs from the previous year are, for the most part, left behind. For this vital form of musical composition, conducting, sight singing and innovative instrumental accompaniment to continue anew each year is quite a feat considering the relatively small community of singers and musicians who keep it alive.

Notes about the CD:

The majority of the material for this CD was recorded during various Alabama State Gospel Singing Conventions and a few regional county conventions over the past few years. The selections for this CD are basically dependent upon available recordings and the particular focus upon contemporary Alabama songwriters. The tradition itself depends largely upon the community of songwriters and its singers for its continuance, thus the importance of featuring active songwriters. Apologies are made for those worthy Alabama songwriters who were not included in this project.

If possible, the recordings here feature the real dynamic of how conventions are conducted. The listener will at times hear the announcements of the class, the particular book, page number of the song, and piano player requested before each song.

SONGS AND SONGWRITERS FEATURED ON THIS CD

1. **“Amazing Grace”** public domain, lyrics by John Newton. *Recorded by Steve Grauberger at the 2002 Cullman County Gospel Singing Convention at Vinemont Alabama.* This song is included in virtually every new book publication and is added to this CD to show the historical continuity of the tradition. It is a song nearly every one knows and that newcomers are able to lead.



2. **“Heaven’s Jubilee”** by George Thomas “Dad” Speer and Adger Pace 1939. Sung by the Daniel Family Quartet on Daniel Records, Nashville, TN. *Recorded by Steve Grauberger at the 2009 Clay County Convention, Cragford.* This song is in the public domain

By the early 1920s, Sand Mountain’s John T. Daniel and his brothers and sisters had formed a family group, performing locally as the Daniel Family Quartet. In the mid-1930s, John and his brother, Troy, reorganized the quartet into an all-male group that eventually became well known nationally over the radio. They produced their own record and published convention songbooks as well. G. T. Speer wrote more than 600 gospel songs. “Heaven’s Jubilee,” with lyrics by Vaughan Music Company’s Adger Pace is one of their best.



3. **“Gonna Shout All Over God’s Heaven”** by Dorsey Yarbrough, 1990, p.54 in *Awakening Sounds*, Jeffress Music Company, Crossett, AR. *Recorded by Ernest Phillips at the 1990 Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention.*

Mr. Dorsey C. Yarbrough, a renowned gospel singer, prolific songwriter, and long-time faculty member of the Stamps-Baxter School of Music, founded the National School of Music in Roanoke, Alabama, in the late 1960s and operated it there through the late 1970s. He represented the Frank Stamps Quartet Music Company while living in Roanoke.

4. **“Glory Glory, I’m So Glad”** by G. T. Speer and Adger Pace, 2003, in *Convention Classics*. Ben Speer Music, Nashville, TN. *Recorded by Steve Grauberger at the 2009 Clay County Convention, Cragford.*

G.T. “Dad” Speer was the founder of the Singing Speer Family. Born in Fayette County, Georgia in 1891, he was raised near the town of Double Springs, Alabama. He with his wife Lena taught singing schools and later wrote songs for on a salary for the Vaughan and Stamps-Baxter music companies. In 1921, G. T. and Lena, organized The Speer Quartet along with G. T.’s sister and brother-in-law, Pearl and Logan Claborn. The Claborns left the group in 1925. As G. T. and Lena’s children Brock, Mary Tom, Rosa Nell, and Ben matured, they were trained and developed into the Singing Speer Family, a group that continued traveling into the 1990s. Speer had a reputation for being strict and exacting when it came to proper singing.



5. **“The Grand Highway”** Oren Adolphus Parris, 1953, p. 172 in *The Christian Harmony* by William Walker published by Alabama Christian Harmony Singing Association, Centreville, AL. Recorded in 2009 at Old County Line Church, Corner by Steve Grauberger.

A native of Jefferson County, Oren A. Parris devoted his entire life to gospel music. He was inducted into the Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame (SGMA) in 1997. A key figure in the publishing business, he studied music under the direction of James D. Vaughan and Adger M. Pace. In 1932, Parris founded the Parris Music Company in Jasper. He was the primary editor and contributed songs to Alabama editions of B. F. White’s *The Sacred Harp* and William Walker’s *Christian Harmony* tunebooks. He composed hundreds of gospel songs. In 1947, Parris joined the (Frank) Stamps Quartet Music Company as the organization’s southeastern office manager and served in that capacity for 15 years. Late in life, he helped organize the Convention Music Company and served as that organization’s president for three years.



6. **“It’s Gonna Be Wonderful”** by T. L. Gilley, 1978, p. 80 in *God’s Love*, copyright 1978 Tennessee Printing and Music Company in *Hallelujah Songs*. Recorded in 1990 by Ernest Phillips at the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention, Ft. Payne.

The late T. L. Gilley was born in 1913, in Randolph County. He lived in Fyffe (DeKalb County)

since 1918. From an early age he sang second tenor and alto parts with the Gilley Quartet, a family group consisting of Gilley, two sisters and a brother. He remembers the Gilley Quartet performing on Friday nights to packed high school auditorium audiences in Randolph County. Mr. Gilley has written the words and music to more than 500 gospel songs with over 400 published by various music houses. In the late 1970s he had 21 songs published by nine separate publishers. In the late 1980s he published his own anthology of 102 songs previously published in other books.



7. "Come, Lean On Me" by William Heaps, 2002, p. 33 in *Redeemed: Gospel Song Collection Gospel Heritage*, Cleveland, TN. Compiled by Charles L. Towler and Alan Mahaffey. Recorded 2002 at the Jefferson County Singing Convention Birmingham, by Steve Grauberger.

William Heaps is a great favorite among convention singers and has published over 100 songs in various books. He is an avid supporter of the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention. Heaps, with the help Truman Glassco and others founded the Alabama State School of Gospel Music as well as a Gospel Music Museum at Snead State near Boaz (now closed). With the excess proceeds from the Alabama State Convention, a fund was created to help students with their tuition in the singing school in hopes that the great tradition of southern gospel convention singing will continue into the future.

Mr. Heaps remembers that between spring planting and fall harvest in rural Franklin County, Alabama, where he grew up, he attended ten-day singing schools taught by Vaughan Music Company representatives. Sometimes at night they would hold theory classes. In 1965 he began writing songs and since then has published 1 to 4 songs a year in various publications. Heaps was President of the Alabama State Gospel Convention in 1974 and has supported convention singing since the 1950s. Mr Heaps feels that the tradition of gospel singing helps to strengthen faith and belief in a Christian life. Songwriter Dale Garrison, also featured on this CD, is his nephew.



8. "They Sang a Song in the Night" by Curtis Stewart and Marty Phillips, 2002, p.22 in *Very Soon* Jeffress-Phillips Music Crossett, AR. Compiled and edited by Marty and Ann Phillips. *Recorded 2002 at the Jefferson County Singing Convention, Birmingham, by Steve Grauberger.*

At the time of this recording Curtis Stewart was 96. He is best known for his song "Lord, Build Me a Cabin in Glory Land". Author of hundreds of gospel songs he was looking forward to writing songs at 100 yrs old. He was 99 when he died May 31, 2005 in Jasper, AL.



Ben Speer (*above*) and J. R. Baxter Jr. (*below*)

9. “Some Morning Fair” by Ben Speer and J. R. Baxter Jr. 2003. p.98 in *Convention Classics*. Ben Speer Music, Nashville, TN (originally Stamps Baxter Music) Speer, Ben and J. R. Baxter copyright by The Benson Company Inc., Nashville, TN. Recorded by Steve Grauberger at the 2009 Clay County Convention, Cragford.

A member of one of the most visible groups in Southern Gospel Music, Ben Speer traveled and sang with the Speer Family for 62 years. Ben served the family well as a vocalist, musical arranger, and sometimes as pianist. In 1992, Ben retired from regular road performances, but continued his work in Southern gospel music as a record producer and as a music director for the Gaither Homecoming video series.

Jesse Randall “Pap” Baxter from Lebanon, was a pioneering figure in the development of Southern Gospel Music. This native of Sand Mountain enjoys legendary status in gospel music circles. After an early career with the A. J. Showalter Company, he joined forces with fellow entrepreneur V. O. Stamps in 1926 and the pair created one of the most successful companies in the gospel music field, The Stamps-Baxter Music and Printing Company. He was a prolific song composer. He published thousands of songs and marketed hundreds of thousands of songbooks and trained many singers and directors.



10. "What A Morning!" by Ezra Knight, 2002 p. 106 in *Redeemed*, Gospel Heritage Music, Cleveland, TN. Compiled by Charles L. Towler and Alan Mahaffey. Recorded at the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention 2002 Jasper, by Steve Grauberger.

Originally from Roanoke, now from Wadley in Randolph County, Ezra "Buddy" Knight worked for the Stamps-Baxter. He attended regional singing schools in Alabama when he was young and eventually traveled to the Stamps-Baxter School in Dallas to obtain his teaching certificate. Knight has taught singing and piano in many states for over 60 years. He worked for the Stamps-Baxter Company in Chattanooga until it was sold to Zondervan in the 1970s. He remembers attending and teaching singing schools with more than 300 students.



11. "The Voice in the Wilderness" by Francis Wambles, 2002, pp. 104-5 in *Redeemed, Gospel Song Collection*, Gospel Heritage Music, Cleveland, TN. Compiled by Charles L. Towler and Alan Mahaffey. Recorded 2002 at the Jefferson County Singing Convention Birmingham, by Steve Grauberger.

Francis Wambles has been singing since she was five years old. Her father was a church music director and her mother was an organist. At an early age she participated in a quartet called the Powers Children Quartet in Dale County, Alabama. She still sings

in quartet “specials” during singing conventions. She started writing songs only about nine years ago at the age of 75.



William Doss (left) and Phillip Dale Garrison (right)

12. “Ready Just Any Day” by Phillip Dale Garrison and Sidney Hicks, 2004 p. 24 in *Celebrate*, Leoma Music Company, Leoma, TN. Recorded at the 2004 Alabama State Convention in Decatur, by Steve Grauberger.

Phillip Dale Garrison is from Franklin County. At 15 he started attending singing schools locally and later attended Dorsey Yarbrough’s National School of Gospel Music in Roanoke under the musical leadership of Yarbrough and another Alabama songwriter, C. C. Stafford. In 1969 he started writing songs for the

Convention Book Company. His first songs were “Happy to See My Lord” and “The Greatest Day of All.” By 2003, at the age of 51, he had 90 songs published to his credit and since has averaged five to six songs a year. He enjoys writing lyrics for other people and likes to use syncopation and counter-point in his musical compositions. He loves writing songs with Sidney Hicks as he did with this song. He is a firm believer in the Bible and tries to reflect that in his lyrics.

13. “America on Her Knees” by Darrell Ray and Ann Maddox, 2001. Copyright by Ann & Darrell Ray Maddox. Recorded Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention 2002 Jasper, by Steve Grauberger.



Darrell Ray Maddox is a native of Cullman County. He plays piano and also has a business tuning pianos. He started attending community singing schools in the Cullman area and then studied harmony with L. E. Stevens. His first song published was for the Convention Music Company in 1966. In 1967 he started submitting songs to Stamps-Baxter. His most popular song "Heaven Is Waiting For Me" was co-written with his late mother Hettie Maddox. His wife Ann, also a piano player, helps him to write songs and is a co-author of "America, On Her Knees."



14. "The Walls Came Down" by Dennis Beavers, 2009, p. 84 in *Shout Hallelujah*, Jeffress-Phillips Music, Crossett, AR. *Recorded by Steve Grauberger at the 2009 Clay County Convention, Craigford.*

Dennis H. Beavers is a Blountsville resident who writes new songs annually for Gospel singing convention publications. He has had an estimated 50 songs published since 1997. Growing up in the tradition of all-day singings, Dennis has worked and supported many conventions since 1991. He is one of the many excellent piano players who accompany singers at the convention. He attended many singing

schools as a teenager and has studied music with Joe Roper, Eloise Phillips, Charles Towler, Marty Phillips, Frankie Harder and Kathy Duren. Beavers wrote "The Walls Came Down" especially for the Clay County Convention.



15. "My Jesus Knows" by Frances Ott Graves and K. Wayne Guffey, 2008, p. 92 in *Journey*, Gospel Heritage Music, Cleveland, TN. Compiled by Charles L. Towler and Alan Mahaffey. Recorded 2008 at the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention, Springville, by Steve Grauberger.

Frances Graves is an advocate of gospel singing schools and has attended the Alabama State Gospel Singing School in Boaz Alabama for more than 16 years. This has helped her develop skills as a gospel songwriter. Songwriter Stanley Smith notes that you can

always tell her songs. She is known for putting "a little swing to it." Charles Towler, editor of Gospel Heritage Music calls her the blues lady from Sand Mountain. She usually writes only the music to the songs but has published a few songs in which she wrote both music and words. Most of her compositions are co-authored with K. Wayne Guffey who supplies the lyrics, as is the case for her song on this CD.

Discussing songwriting techniques, she told a story about a man who asked her how many notes you have to change in a song to make it yours. She said, "Well you just don't do that. Now there are so many notes that you can use but it's how you use them and the time you use them in. You can hear a song you like and hear a little run or a chord and think 'I'd like to figure out a way to use that in my song.'" Graves often uses phrases or snippets of music that catch her ear when authoring a new song.



16. "Praying, Hoping, Trusting, Clinging" by Stanley Smith and Marty Phillips, 2004, p.150 in *Forgiven*, Jeffress-Phillips Music, Crossett, AR. Compiled and edited by Marty and Ann Phillips. *Recorded at the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention, 2004, Decatur, by Steve Grauberger*

Stanley Smith from Ozark in Dale County is a past president in the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention and has held other offices. In addition to his interest in seven-shape gospel singing, he is deeply rooted in the four-shape tradition of Sacred Harp in southeast Alabama. Besides being published in seven shape-note publications, he has contributed songs to the Cooper Edition of *The Sacred Harp* and has served on the book's 1994 and 2006 revision committees. He leads a busy life, traveling nearly every weekend all over Alabama and to other states attending singing conventions. He has attended the Cumberland Valley and Phillips-Jeffress Singing Schools to strengthen his song-writing skills.

17. "What A Glorious Morn" by Amanda Sexton and Alan Mahaffey, 2004, p.42 in *Grace*, Gospel Heritage Music, Cleveland, TN. Compiled by Charles L. Towler and Alan Mahaffey. *Recorded 2004 at the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention, Decatur, by Steve Grauberger*

Amanda began playing the piano at the age of three. Her father said she simply walked to the piano and began playing "Amazing Grace." A few weeks later she started playing "Victory in Jesus." Amanda has studied piano and voice for more than 25 years with Iva Gardner. She participated in the American Federated



Music Clubs music festivals and was the first student in Alabama to be awarded the Fifth Gold Cup which requires a minimum of 15 years of perfect scoring. She has attended numerous singing schools throughout the Southeast. They include the Ben Speer-Stamps Baxter School, the Phillips-Jeffress School, and the Alabama School of Gospel Music. Amanda wrote her first song in 1999 at the age of 18. Currently, she has had 24 songs published. Although schooled in classical, popular and religious music, Amanda's first love is Southern gospel music.



18. "There Is A Part For Me" by K. Wayne Guffey, 2004, p. 120 in *Praise, Texas Legendary Music*, Fort Worth, TX. Recorded at the 2004 Alabama State Convention in Decatur, by Steve Grauberger.

K. Wayne Guffey is originally from Jackson County, AL, near Grant. He wrote his first song "Joy Up There" in 1963 for the M. H. Woodard Company that was located in Cullman County. Eugene McCammon, now of the Cumberland Valley Music Company, was an editor for him at that time. He has written and co-authored so many songs that he self-published his own book of songs and favorites. Guffey has always been interested in gospel music and first started writing songs at 20 years of age. After his first attempts failed to get published he took music theory and harmony lessons until he was published by the Stamps-Baxter Music Company. Now he tries to submit songs each year to all five

of the books used by convention singers today. As mentioned previously he self-published a collection of his compositions in *Songs From the Heart*.



19. "The Roll Call Day" by Sidney Hicks and Phillip (Dale), Garrison, 2008, p. 136 in *Open the Windows*. Cumberland Music Company, Knoxville, TN. Recorded in 2008 at the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention Springville, by Steve Grauberger.

Dr. William Stewart in his forward for Dr. Hicks' publication, *Southern Gospel Keyboards: Favorite Piano Arrangements* writes:

Sidney Hicks began studying music at age six, working with such masters as O. A. Parris, Eugene Wright, Rupert Cravens, Adger M. Pace, Videt Polk, and many others. A prodigy

of the greatest promise, Sidney began studying the instrument he would ultimately master the piano at age seven. Again he worked with several private teachers, among them the incomparable James D. Walbert. In addition to the instruction he received in the homes of his teachers, Sidney also studied at the Williamson School of Music and the Cheatham Conservatory of Music. During his college years he excelled in classes related to music appreciation, harmony, classical piano, and voice. After finishing his own formal music education, Dr. Hicks has been continually in demand to teach in singing schools, beginning with the Vaughan schools and continuing on to the Ben Speer/Stamps-Baxter School of the present day.

20. “Sing Hallelujah” by Ezra Knight, 2009, p. 30 in *Shout Hallelujah*. Jeffress-Phillips Music, Crossett, AR. Recorded at the 2009 Clay County Convention, Cragford by Steve Grauberger. See track #10 for photo notes on Ezra Knight.



21. “Here I Am, Oh, Lord, Send Me” by Dr. Leonette A. Walls, 2009, p. 22 in *Shout Hallelujah*. Jeffress-Phillips Music, Crossett, AR. Recorded by Steve Grauberger at the 2009 Clay County Convention, Cragford.

Leonette Allen Walls, published composer of varied styles of music since 1959, holds three degrees in music: Bachelor of Music Education, Master of Music and Doctor of Education. Growing up with a strong heritage in shapenote music, she followed this related interest in Tonic Sol-fa research in England, Scotland and Wales in the summers of

1986 and 1987, as a basis of her doctoral dissertation. She notes that shapenote music is really “music of the people”.

Dr. Walls is a private voice and keyboard instructor (stressing improvisational skills), and a church music consultant. Leonette and her husband, Carl, are residents of Gardendale, Alabama.

22. “He’s in Control” by William Heaps, 2002, p. 60 in *Redeemed: Gospel Song Collection*, Gospel Heritage Music, Cleveland, TN. Compiled by Charles L. Towler and Alan Mahaffey. Recorded in 2002 at the Jefferson County Singing Convention, Birmingham, by Steve Grauberger. See track #7 for photo and notes information.



23. "Ole Jordan" by David Berry, 2002, p. 130 in *Very Soon*, Jeffress-Phillips Music, Crossett, AR. Recorded in 2002 at the Jefferson County Singing Convention, Birmingham, by Steve Grauberger.

Born 1951 in Vernon (Lamar County), AL, David Berry started attending singing schools and gospel singing conventions at the age of 12. When he was 15 his mother bought a used piano and he was then able to take a music correspondence course from the US School of Music. In 1999 he wrote his first published song for Jeffress-Phillips Music Company. A goal of his is for his songs to

mean something to others and live to on after he is gone. "Ole Jordan" was a great favorite of many singers in 2002.



24. "Come and Go With Me" by Robert Stephenson and Dr. Sidney R. Hicks, 2002. pp. 76-77 in *Redeemed: Gospel Song Collection*. Singing Time Music (a division of Gospel Heritage Music) Recorded at the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention in 2002, Jasper, by Steve Grauberger.

Robert Stephens from Decatur was twice the president of the Alabama State Convention in 1975 and 2004. He is presently the vice-president of the new Southern Gospel Music School in Chattanooga, TN. He started

writing songs about 10 to 12 years ago and has attended singing schools since he was a youngster.



25. “What a Meeting in the Air” by Marty and Ann Phillips, 2002, p. 28 in *Very Soon*, Jeffress-Phillips Music, Crossett, AL. *Recorded at the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention, 2002, Jasper, by Steve Grauberger.*

While not from Alabama, Marty Phillips, president of Jeffress-Phillips Music, is a prolific songwriter as well as an excellent piano player. Since it was introduced, his song “What a Meeting” has been a great favorite at conventions. It was added to this CD because of its popularity and the enthusiastic singing of it at the 2002 convention in Jasper.

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**Traditional Musics of Alabama Series Volume 5
Alabama Traditions 205**

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201 Monroe Street, Montgomery, AL 36104

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1. **Amazing Grace** 2:33
2. **Heaven's Jubilee** 2:01
3. **Gonna Shout All Over God's Heaven** 1:51
4. **Glory Glory, I'm So Glad** 2:43
5. **The Grand Highway** 4:49
6. **It's Gonna Be Wonderful** 1:33
7. **Come, Lean On Me** 4:15
8. **They Sang a Song in the Night** 3:14
9. **Some Morning Fair** 3:08
10. **What A Morning!** 1:48
11. **The Voice in the Wilderness** 2:36
12. **Ready Just Any Day** 1:12
13. **America on Her Knees** 3:22
14. **The Walls Came Down** 2:52
15. **My Jesus Knows** 3:02
16. **Praying, Hoping, Trusting, Clinging** 3:00
17. **What A Glorious Morn** 3:18
18. **There Is A Part For Me** 1:52
19. **The Roll Call Day** 2:23
20. **Sing Hallelujah** 3:28
21. **Here I Am, Oh, Lord, Send Me** 4:00
22. **He's in Control** 1:42
23. **Ole Jordan** 3:55
24. **Come and Go With Me** 1:44
25. **What a Meeting in the Air** 3:44

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