



2023

32 MARCHES. 4 WEEKS. 1 CHAMPION.

MUSIC NOTES

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA BIOGRAPHY

John Philip Sousa was born in 1854 in southeast Washington, D.C., near the Marine Barracks where his father Antonio played trombone in the Marine Band. Sousa studied piano and most orchestral instruments, excelling on the violin. When at age 13 young Sousa was almost persuaded to join a circus band, his father intervened, enlisting him as an apprentice musician in the Marine Band. Sousa remained in the band until he was 20, only to return five years later as the 17th Director. Sousa led “The President’s Own” from 1880 to 1892. Perhaps more than anyone else, Sousa is responsible for bringing the United States Marine Band to the level of excellence upheld today.



“SEMPER FIDELIS”

John Philip Sousa

It is unfortunate that President Chester A. Arthur, the man responsible for this march, did not live to hear it. In a conversation with Sousa, then leader of the U.S. Marine Band, he expressed his displeasure at the official use of the song “Hail to the Chief.” When Sousa stated that it was actually an old Scottish boating song, the President suggested that he compose more appropriate music. Sousa responded with two pieces, not one. First he composed “Presidential Polonaise” (1886). Then, two years after Arthur’s death, he wrote “Semper Fidelis.”

The march takes its title from the motto of the U.S. Marine Corps: “Semper Fidelis” — “Always Faithful.” The trio is an extension of an earlier Sousa composition, “With Steady Step,” one of eight brief trumpet and drum pieces he wrote for *The Trumpet and Drum* (1886). It was dedicated to those who inspired it—the officers and men of the U.S. Marine Corps. In Sousa’s own words: “I wrote ‘Semper Fidelis’ one night while in tears, after my comrades of the Marine Corps had sung their famous hymn at Quantico.”

For the first performance, Sousa demonstrated his flair for theatrics:

We were marching down Pennsylvania Avenue, and had turned the corner at the Treasury Building. On the reviewing stand were President Harrison, many members of the diplomatic corps, a large part of the House and Senate, and an immense number of invited guests besides. I had so timed our playing of the march that the “trumpet” theme would be heard for the first time, just as we got to the front of the reviewing stand. Suddenly ten extra trumpets were shot in the air, and the “theme” was pealed out in unison. Nothing like it had ever been heard there before—when the great throng on the stand had recovered its surprise, it rose in a body and led by the President himself, showed its pleasure in a mighty swell of applause. It was a proud moment for us all.

“Semper Fidelis” subsequently gained recognition as the official march of the U.S. Marine Corps. Sousa regarded it as his best march, musically speaking. It became one of his most popular marches, and he once stated that it was the favorite march of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany—before World War I, of course. It was played by the Sousa Band in many foreign countries and always received acclaim as a well-known composition. Few knew that it had been sold outright to the publisher for the unbelievably low sum of \$35.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 83. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Semper Fidelis” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 2](#)



“ESPRIT DE CORPS”

John Philip Sousa

Inspiration for this composition would be obvious had Sousa composed it while he was in service, but he was not. The march was not published for band until the year after he resigned from the U. S. Marine Corps. The dedication reads, “To my old friend Wilson J. Vance of Ohio.” In addition to being Sousa’s friend, Vance (1845-1911) was a Medal of Honor recipient who served with the 21st Ohio Infantry during the American Civil War. He was cited for voluntarily rescuing a wounded and helpless comrade while his command was falling back under heavy fire during the Battle of Stones River in Tennessee on December 31, 1862. Vance later became Captain, 14th U. S. Colored Troops, was the author of several books, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. The “Esprit de Corps” Sousa references in this march is the camaraderie, the bond of friendship that forms between those who serve together. The dedication’s timing is not coincidental; the two were beginning to work together in 1878 on the operetta *The Smugglers*, for which Vance was the librettist.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 50.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Esprit de Corps” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 1](#)



“THE GALLANT SEVENTH”

John Philip Sousa

It is amazing that this march, regarded as one of Sousa’s finest and certainly one of his most vigorous, was composed while he was recuperating from a broken neck. The march takes its title from the 7th Regiment, 107th Infantry, of the New York National Guard, whose history may be traced back to the Civil War. The conductor of the famous 7th Regiment Band was Major Francis Sutherland, a former Sousa Band cornetist.

Upon America’s entry into World War I, Sutherland left his position with Sousa to enlist in the army; he was made a bandmaster in the U.S. Field Artillery. Several other Sousa men then secured their release to enlist, some for service with Sutherland’s band.

Sutherland did not return to the Sousa Band at the war’s end; he accepted the position of bandmaster of the 7th Regiment. The regiment’s commanding officer, Colonel Wade H. Hayes, made a formal request of Sousa for a march. Sousa obliged, paying tribute to the organizational ability and professional standing of one of his band’s alumni. For the official send-off of the new march at the New York Hippodrome on November 5, 1922, Sutherland’s 7th Regiment Band augmented the Sousa Band on stage.

Although no less than seven other composers had also written marches for this regiment, Sousa’s was the only one to gain wide acceptance, and Sousa was named honorary bandmaster of the regiment. Many years later, Sutherland repaid his debt to Sousa in an appropriate way. He was one of eight founders of the living Sousa memorial known as the Sousa Band Fraternal Society.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 54. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Gallant Seventh” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 5](#)



“SABRE AND SPURS”

John Philip Sousa

According to the inscription on the sheet music and on both of Sousa’s known manuscripts, this was to be the “March of the American Cavalry.” It was dedicated to the officers and men of the 311th Cavalry, commanded by Colonel George W. K. Kirkpatrick. It is another of Sousa’s World War I efforts which retained its popularity after the war.

Today it may seem amusing that a scroll of appreciation designated Sousa “honorary life member of the Officers’ Mess of the 311th Cavalry.” But in Army terminology of the day this meant that he was made an honorary life member of the regiment, the highest honor they could bestow.

Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 82. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Sabre and Spurs” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 5](#)



“KING COTTON”

John Philip Sousa

It is a curious fact of the music world that marches written for fairs and expositions almost always fade into oblivion. Two notable exceptions are Sousa’s “King Cotton” and “The Fairest of the Fair.” The former was written for the Cotton States and International Exposition of 1895, and the latter for the Boston Food Fair of 1908.

Sousa and his band had great drawing power at fairs and expositions and were much sought after. But officials of the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta attempted to cancel their three-week contract with the Sousa Band because of serious financial difficulties. At Sousa’s insistence they honored their contract, and at the first concert they became aware of their shortsightedness. Atlanta newspapers carried rave reviews of the band’s performances. For example:

...The band is a mascot. It has pulled many expositions out of financial ruts. It actually saved the Midwinter Fair in San Francisco. Recently at the St. Louis and Dallas expositions Sousa’s Band proved an extraordinary musical attraction, and played before enormous audiences. It is safe to predict that history will repeat itself in Atlanta, and that the band will do the Exposition immense good. A great many people in South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia have postponed their visit to the Exposition so as to be here during Sousa’s engagement, and these people will now begin to pour in.

Sousa’s latest march, “King Cotton,” has proved a winner. It has been heard from one end of Dixie to the other and has aroused great enthusiasm and proved a fine advertisement for the Exposition.

The Sousa Band did indeed bring the exposition “out of the red,” and the same officials who had tried to cancel Sousa’s engagement pleaded with him to extend it. “King Cotton” was named the official march of the exposition, and it has since become one of the perennial Sousa favorites.

Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“King Cotton” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)



“THE QUILTING PARTY”

John Philip Sousa

“The Quilting Party,” or “Aunt Dinah’s Quilting Party,” was a popular song in the United States in the late 1880s. Sousa capitalized on its popularity by using it as the trio of this march. The first section includes a musical quote of “When a Wooer Goes a-Wooing” from Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Yeomen of the Guard*.

Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

Jonathan Elkus, a scholarly Sousa researcher, further notes that “The Quilting Party,” like so much of Sousa’s concert music, but unlike most of his marches, tells a story. A young man goes to Aunt Dinah’s quilting party to woo Nellie, his lady friend. He dances with her there and afterward sees her home.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Quilting Party” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)



“REVIEW”

John Philip Sousa

This was Sousa’s first published march, and it was sold outright to the publisher for one hundred copies of the sheet music. It was called Opus 5 and was dedicated to Colonel William G. Moore of the Washington Light Infantry. In later years, Sousa did not have a very high opinion of the march. To wit: “...Happily for me and for the general public it never became at all popular, and the echoes of the strains have long ago died away. I suppose it is now so deeply buried in oblivion that a 1,000 foot pole could not reach it. It is such a long time since I wrote it that I have no recollection whatever of the air. I did not preserve the manuscript...”

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 80. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Review” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 1](#)



UNTITLED MARCH

John Philip Sousa

All but the title page of Sousa’s band score of this unpublished march has been on file at the Library of Congress for many years. Sousa’s daughter Priscilla had placed it in a folder with the first page of “The Wildcats,” thinking the manuscripts belonged together and that they were the march called “Kansas Wildcats.” Such was not the case, however. Later, a complete piano score of the untitled march turned up, but this manuscript, too, bore no title. Thus the intended recipient of the march may never be known.

The colossal mix-up involving this untitled march and various marches called “The Wildcats,” “Kansas Wildcats,” “The Sword of San Jacinto,” “Universal Peace,” and “The Gridiron Club” is evidence of the fact that the titles of Sousa’s marches were sometimes changed before the marches were published.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 98. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[The Untitled March is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 7](#)



“THE HONORED DEAD”

John Philip Sousa

The date of this march, as inscribed on the manuscript of a piano arrangement by C. H. Hattersley, is 1876. The occasion for the march’s composition is not known. When President U. S. Grant died in 1885, Sousa arranged the piece for band, apparently at the publisher’s request. It has rarely been performed but was fittingly used by the U. S. Marine Band in Sousa’s funeral procession.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 62. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Honored Dead” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 1](#)



“REVIVAL MARCH”

John Philip Sousa

This march incorporated the hymn “[In the] Sweet Bye and Bye” and was probably written at the suggestion of Simon Hassler, the Philadelphia composer and orchestra leader. It was one of Sousa’s earliest marches and was written for orchestra, not band. His former music teacher, John Esputa Jr., made note of the march and correctly predicted Sousa’s future in music. He wrote in the September 30, 1876, issue of his weekly newspaper, the Musical Monitor: “We have now on hand the ‘Grand Revival March’ composed by J. P. Sousa of this city, and which was played with immense success by Hassler’s orchestra at the Chestnut St. Theatre, Phila. The march is deserving of credit. We are glad to see such proficiency in one so young, and predict for him a brilliant future.”

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 80. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Revival March” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 1](#)



MARCH OF THE MITTEN MEN

John Philip Sousa

Thomas E. Mitten was top executive of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company, whose trolleys transported throngs of visitors to and from Willow Grove Park. This march was dedicated to both Mitten and his employees; hence the title. Mitten’s favorite hymn, “Onward Christian Soldiers,” is the basis of the march’s trio.

The title was changed from “March of the Mitten Men” to “Power and Glory” for a second edition, and the heading “A fraternal march” was added. This came by direction of James Francis Cooke, president of the publishing company, and he reported that sales then rose significantly.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 70. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[March of the Mitten Men is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



“THE VOLUNTEERS”

John Philip Sousa

The man who asked Sousa to compose this march (Robert D. Heinl, chief of the Department of Patriotic Service) also requested that he include sounds characteristic of a shipyard. Sousa thought this unusual for a march, but he complied. Sections of the march were named “The Call to March,” “Getting Busy,” and “Laying the Keel Blocks,” and the score called for sirens, anvils, and a riveting machine.

The march was given a stirring première at the New York Hippodrome on March 3, 1918, by the combined bands of the navy’s Atlantic fleet, Sousa conducting. It was dedicated to Edward N. Hurley, chairman of the U.S. Shipping Board, and to the ship-builders who were constructing America’s emergency fleet. Sousa was dissatisfied with a riveting machine made to his specifications by a Chicago instrument manufacturer and called upon the Hippodrome sound effects man. A huge noise-maker was devised and used with ear-shattering effectiveness. Many people were puzzled at the departure from Sousa’s usual march style, but he was merely fulfilling a request.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 94. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Volunteers” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 5](#)



MOTHER HUBBARD MARCH

John Philip Sousa

A companion piece to “Mother Goose,” this medley march was also based on nursery rhymes. Included are “Three Blind Mice,” “Thus the Farmer Sows His Seed,” “Old Mother Hubbard,” “Hey Diddle Diddle,” “Little Redbird in the Tree,” “London Bridge Is Falling Down,” and “The Minstrel Boy.”

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 72. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[Mother Hubbard March is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 2](#)



“PRINCE CHARMING”

John Philip Sousa

Given the opportunity, Sousa would willingly conduct youth bands or orchestras, because youthful musicians were always close to his heart. In January, 1926, he directed a select orchestra of Los Angeles elementary school children. This so inspired him that he composed this march and dedicated it to the orchestra and its organizer, Jennie L. Jones. Two years later the orchestra had grown to 425 members, and they came on stage at a Sousa Band concert to serenade Sousa with their new march.

The identity of Prince Charming was never made public. Also, one Los Angeles newspaper referred to the composition as “March of the Sun,” another title yet to be explained.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 79. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Prince Charming” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



“SOUND OFF”

John Philip Sousa

As leader of the U.S. Marine Band, Sousa came under the command of Major George Porter Houston. In Sousa’s eyes, Houston was a stern but fair officer, and this march was dedicated to him. As in the case of “Guide Right,” “Right Forward,” and “Right-Left,” the title was derived from a marching command.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 84. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Sound Off” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 2](#)



”THE THUNDERER”

John Philip Sousa

Other than the fact that Sousa’s “thunderer” was undoubtedly a Mason, his identity may never be revealed. “The Thunderer” march was dedicated to Columbia Commandery No. 2, Knights Templar, of Washington, D.C., and it was composed on the occasion of the Twenty-fourth Triennial Conclave of the Grand Encampment. The conclave was held in October 1889 and was sponsored by Columbia Commandery No. 2. Sousa had been “knighted” in that organization three years earlier. “The Thunderer” was Mrs. John Philip Sousa’s favorite march. This was revealed by their daughter Helen, who also surmised that the “thunderer” might have been her father’s salute to the London Times, which was known as “the thunderer.” It has since been determined that Sousa probably had no association with the newspaper at that time, however. The “thunderer” might

have been one of the men in charge of making arrangements for the 1889 conclave—in particular, Myron M. Parker, who worked tirelessly to make the event the spectacular success that it was.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Thunderer” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)



“HAIL TO THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY”

John Philip Sousa

It was with great pride that Sousa and his band represented the United States at the Paris Exposition of 1900. This was the first overseas tour of the band, and it was received throughout Europe with enthusiasm. The band displayed the finest American musicianship Europe had seen and helped dispel the notion that the United States was an artistic void. A statue of George Washington was unveiled on July 2, but the highlight of the Paris engagement was the unveiling of the Lafayette Monument on July 4. It was presented on behalf of the children of the United States by Ferdinand W. Peck, commissioner general of the Paris Exposition, as President Loubet of France looked on. The monument portrayed Lafayette on horseback offering his sword to the American cause in the Revolutionary War and was draped with a huge American flag. At the unveiling the Sousa Band gave the first performance of the march composed specifically for that moment: “Hail to the Spirit of Liberty.” Immediately after the ceremony, the band made one of its rare appearances in a parade as it marched through the main streets of Paris.

Certain sections of the march evidently were taken from an unidentified earlier operetta and revised, because in 1964 fragments which were probably meant to be discarded were found in a stack of manuscripts at the Sands Point estate. The march was so successful that it is difficult to reconcile a story often told by Sousa’s daughter Priscilla; she said that her father had entered the march in a contest shortly before it was published, and that the contest had been won by an “unknown” composer whose march was promptly forgotten.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Hail to the Spirit of Liberty” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



“THE LIBERTY BELL”

John Philip Sousa

For \$500 more, this march probably would have been named “The Devil’s Deputy.” Sousa was composing music for an operetta of that name at the request of the celebrated comedian Francis Wilson. Sousa asked \$1,500 for the work, but Wilson offered \$1,000. When they could not come to an agreement, Sousa withdrew with his partially completed manuscript, which included a lively march.

Sousa and George Frederick Hinton, one of the band’s managers, were in Chicago witnessing a spectacle called America when a backdrop, with a huge painting of the Liberty Bell, was lowered. Hinton suggested that “The Liberty Bell” would be a good title for Sousa’s new march. By coincidence, the next morning Sousa received a letter from his wife in which she told how their son had marched in his first parade in Philadelphia—a parade honoring the return of the Liberty Bell, which had been on tour. The new march was then christened “The Liberty Bell.” It was one of the first marches Sousa sold to the John Church Company and was the first composition to bring Sousa a substantial financial reward.

According to a story told by the Sousa Band’s first soprano, Marcella Lindh, she contributed one of the themes of the march. Sousa had heard her whistling a catchy tune of her own and had asked her permission to incorporate it into one of his marches. Several years later she heard “The Liberty Bell” march being performed by a band in Europe and recognized her own melody in the march.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Liberty Bell” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)



“FLAGS OF FREEDOM”

John Philip Sousa

Sousa composed this march at the request of Joseph W. Gannon, Division of Associated Flags chairman of the Fourth Liberty Loan drive of World War I. Gannon asked Sousa to incorporate national airs of the twenty-one nations at war with Germany, but Sousa thought this impractical and decided upon five. The countries represented were Belgium, Italy, France, Great Britain, and America, in that order. In a letter to Gannon dated August 25, 1918, Sousa suggested that the march be royalty free. This would have made little difference, because it was written just at the war's end and consequently sold very few copies.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 52. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Flags of Freedom” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 5](#)



“THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR”

John Philip Sousa

“The Fairest of the Fair” is generally regarded as one of Sousa's finest and most melodic marches, and its inspirations came from the sight of a pretty girl with whom he was not even acquainted. It was an immediate success and has remained one of his most popular compositions. It stands out as one of the finest examples of the application of pleasing melodies to the restrictive framework of a military march.

The Boston Food Fair was an annual exposition and music jubilee held by the Boston Retail Grocers' Association. The Sousa Band was the main musical attraction for several seasons, so the creation of a new march honoring the sponsors of the 1908 Boston Food Fair was the natural outgrowth of a pleasant business relationship.

In fairs before 1908, Sousa had been impressed by the beauty and charm of one particular young lady who was the center of attention of the displays in which she was employed. He made a mental note that he would someday transfer his impressions of her into music. When the invitation came for the Sousa Band to play a twenty-day engagement in 1908, he wrote this march. Remembering the comely girl, he entitled the new march “The Fairest of the Fair.”

Because of an oversight, the march almost missed its première. Nearly three months before the fair, Sousa had completed a sketch of the march for the publisher. He also wrote out a full conductor's score from which the individual band parts were to have been extracted. The band had just finished an engagement the night before the fair's opening and had boarded a sleeper train for Boston. Louis Morris, the band's copyist, was helping the librarian sort music for the first concert, and he discovered that the most important piece on the program—“The Fairest of the Fair”—had not been prepared.

According to Morris's own story, the librarian, whose job it had been to prepare the parts, went into a panic. There was good reason; considerable advance publicity had been given to the new march, and the fair patrons would be expecting to hear it. In addition, the piano sheet music had already been published, and copies were to be distributed free to the first five hundred ladies entering the gates of the fair.

Morris rose to the occasion. He asked the porter of the train to bring a portable desk, which he placed on a pillow across his lap. He worked the entire night, and the parts were nearly finished when dawn broke. Both were greatly surprised by the appearance of Sousa, who had arisen to take his usual early morning walk. When asked about the frenzied activity, they had no choice but to tell exactly what had happened.

There were many times in the life of John Philip Sousa when he demonstrated his benevolence and magnanimity, and this was surely one of them. After recognizing Morris's extraordinary effort and remarking that it was saving the band from considerable embarrassment, he instructed him to complete his work and to take a well-deserved rest, even if it meant sleeping through the first concert.

With no one the wiser, Louis Morris—hero of the day—was asleep in his hotel as Sousa's Band played “The Fairest of the Fair” for the first time on September 28, 1908. Sousa did not mention the subject again, but Morris found an extra fifty dollars in his next pay envelope—the equivalent of two weeks salary.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Fairest of the Fair” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



“THE NORTHERN PINES”

John Philip Sousa

“So much is said from the negative side about the youth that it indeed restores one’s faith to find here, year after year, hundreds of boys and girls with such ideals, such marked ability and evident industry.” Many times in the 1920’s Sousa expressed optimism about the future of music in America. The country’s potential was in the hands of youthful musicians whose capabilities inspired him on countless occasions. Perhaps his greatest inspiration in this vein came in July, 1930, when he was guest conductor at the National Music Camp at Interlochen. After this memorable occasion, he was invited to return the following year.

The camp at Interlochen was founded by Dr. Joseph E. Maddy among beautiful pines of Northern Michigan in Indian country. Just prior to Sousa’s second visit, he composed “The Northern Pines” and dedicated it to Dr. Maddy and the camp. He conducted the National High School Band in the first performance at a Sousa Day program on Sunday afternoon, July 26, 1931, at which time the faculty and students presented him with a medal. Sousa signed over royalties of the new march, which had not yet been printed, to the camp. A Sousa scholarship was founded, and one or more outstanding music students were brought to Interlochen each year for several seasons. Today the walkway which circumnavigates the principal stage and audience area is known as the John Philip Sousa Walk.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 75. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Northern Pines” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 7](#)



“DAUGHTERS OF TEXAS”

John Philip Sousa

A curious fact about “Daughters of Texas,” which was dedicated to a Texas college, is that two completely different marches were written. The college never knew of the first version, which was conscripted for another use. This fact has not heretofore been made public.

After an evening concert in Denton, Texas, on October 19, 1928, Sousa was approached by Marion Benson and Margaret Marable and other representatives of an all-girls school; they presented him with a petition signed by seventeen hundred students asking him to compose a march for them. The school was the College of Industrial Arts, now known as the Texas Woman’s University. Flattered, Sousa beamed one of his seldom-seen smiles and replied: “It is impossible to resist the request of seventeen hundred charming Texas girls, and if you will send me some of your college songs I will incorporate them into a march.”

Either the college songs were not sent or else Sousa decided against using them, because he proceeded to compose the first version of the march without them. At the head of the first band score was the inscription “Daughters of Denton.” “Denton” was scratched out and replaced by “Texas” in another person’s handwriting. A piano manuscript of the same march apparently made later, was titled “Daughters of Texas.”

This version of the march was never published, becoming Sousa’s “mystery” march. Just at this time, a Sousa Band tour for the 1929 season was hurriedly scheduled. There were no plans for a tour that year, but an attractive offer to appear in Minneapolis was made by utilities magnate Wilbur B. Foshay of that city, and a tour was built around that engagement. A skyscraper fashioned after the Washington Monument was being completed, the building now known as the Foshay Tower. A fabulous four-day celebration was to be held, one of the main attractions being Sousa and his band. Realizing the importance of this engagement, Sousa decided to dedicate a march to Foshay and his impressive building. Apparently thinking there was insufficient time to compose a new one, he took the school march and used it in Minneapolis as the “Foshay Tower Washington Memorial” march.

As it turned out, there was sufficient time to compose a second march, because the second version was completed before the tour began, and both marches were featured on tour programs. The second march was published as “Daughters of Texas,” but the “Foshay Tower Washington Memorial” march was never published, for reasons given in the discussion of that march.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 48. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Daughters of Texas” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 7](#)



“THE ROYAL WELCH FUSILIERS”

John Philip Sousa

These two marches were composed to commemorate the association of U.S. Marines with the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion in China. The occasion was the thirtieth anniversary of the battle of Tientsin.

A march to honor the Fusiliers had actually been requested five years earlier by General George Richards of the Marine Corps in a letter dated December 11, 1924. In this letter, he suggested the exact title which Sousa eventually used. Sousa replied that he had numerous other commissions at the moment but that he was enthusiastic about the idea. A march was not written until General Wendelle G. Neville made a second request in 1929.

The fact that two separate marches were composed was revealed in an exchange of letters between Sousa and Neville. Late in 1929, Sousa composed a medley-march which included “World Turned Upside Down,” “Hymn of the Marines,” “Men of Harlech,” and “God Bless the Prince of Wales.” When he asked Neville’s opinion, Neville replied that he would prefer an original Sousa composition. So Sousa composed a second march, and this is the one known today.

“The Royal Welch Fusiliers” (No. 2) was given its premiere in the presence of President Hoover. This took place at the annual Gridiron Club dinner in Washington at the Willard Hotel on April 26, 1930. Sousa conducted members of the Marine Band in the new march, and President Hoover spoke, giving his own personal account of the Boxer Rebellion. He had been a mining engineer in China at the time and was besieged at Tientsin, where he was in charge of civil defense. The march was given a public premiere on the White House lawn on May 12 for the benefit of newsreel companies. These newsreels provided one of the few motion pictures of Sousa which have survived, and they show Sousa conducting the Marine Band with President Hoover, the British ambassador, and other dignitaries looking on.

Sousa was asked to travel to Wales with Marine Corps officers so that he could personally present his manuscript to the Fusiliers. He obliged, and on June 25 at Tidworth he conducted the band of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers, in the march’s first performance in Britain. He presented his original manuscript, handsomely bound, to General Charles M. Dobelle, commandant of the Fusiliers. Today this manuscript is preserved at Caernarvon Castle.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 81. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Royal Welch Fusiliers” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 7](#)



“THE PATHFINDER OF PANAMA”

John Philip Sousa

One of twelve marches Sousa composed for various expositions or fairs, “The Pathfinder of Panama” was dedicated to the Panama Canal and the Panama-Pacific Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915. Sousa’s Band played a nine-week engagement at the exposition. The march was composed at the request of Walter Anthony, a reporter for the San Francisco Call. The Panama Canal was the pathfinder of Sousa’s title; it shortened the ocean voyage between San Francisco and New York by 8,000 miles.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Pathfinder of Panama” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



“THE GLADIATOR”

John Philip Sousa

Nothing among John Philip Sousa’s memoirs reveals the identity of the “gladiator,” but the first printing of the sheet music carried a dedication to Charles F. Towle of Boston. Towle was a journalist who was editor of the Boston Traveler at the time this march was written, but the nature of his association with Sousa is not known. Sousa’s daughter Helen conjectured that her father might have been inspired by a literary account of some particular gladiator. It is unlikely that he would have dedicated a march to gladiators in general because of their ferocity and deeds of inhumanity, but perhaps one noble gladiator who had been a victim of circumstances might have been his inspiration. There has also been speculation that the march had some Masonic significance, inasmuch as it was written at the time he was “knighted” in Columbia Commandery No. 2, Knights

Templar, but this lacks substantiation.

For Sousa, “The Gladiator” brought back both happy and unhappy memories. In 1885 he had written the dirge “The Honored Dead” for Stopper and Fisk, a music publisher in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. They were so pleased that they asked him to write a quickstep march. He responded with “The Gladiator,” but they rejected it. Their shortsightedness cost them dearly; Sousa then sold it to Harry Coleman of Philadelphia, and the march eventually sold more than a million copies.

“The Gladiator” was the first Sousa composition to reach such wide circulation. He himself was unaware of its popularity until its strains startled him one day while in Philadelphia on business. Many years later he gave this dramatic account:

I was taking a stroll along Broad Street. At a corner a hand-organ man was grinding out a melody which, somehow, seemed strangely familiar. As I listened more intently, I was surprised to recognize it as my own “Gladiator” march. I believe that was one of the proudest moments of my life, as I stood there on the street.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 56. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Gladiator” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 2](#)



“THE NATIONAL GAME”

John Philip Sousa

Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, baseball’s high commissioner, asked Sousa to compose this march on the occasion of the National League’s fiftieth anniversary. Earlier the two had met in Havana. No doubt Sousa told him of his enthusiasm for the game and of the Sousa Band’s own team.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 73. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The National Game” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



“GEORGE WASHINGTON BICENTENNIAL”

John Philip Sousa

To commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Washington, a Bicentennial Commission in Washington, D.C., was formed. A gala celebration was held, the climax being an impressive ceremony at the Capitol Plaza on February 22, 1932. The commission had asked Sousa to take part in the final ceremony, and he composed this march for the occasion. In this affair, one of two final appearances before his death, Sousa conducted the combined bands of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps in the new march.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 55. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“George Washington Bicentennial” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 7](#)



“THE INVINCIBLE EAGLE”

John Philip Sousa

Blanche Duffield, soprano of the Sousa Band in 1901, witnessed the creation of this march, and she provided this rare description of Sousa composing:

It was [on] a train between Buffalo and New York. Outside the coach the lights of towns along the route flashed by like ghosts fluttering at the window panes. The night was dark and the few stars above twinkled fitfully. Mr. Sousa sat in his chair in the dimly lit Pullman. At the further end of the car a porter diligently brushed cushions. At intervals the engine whistled as if in pain.

Suddenly and without previous warning Mr. Sousa began to describe circles in the air with a pencil, jerking back and forth in

his seat meanwhile. Gradually the circumference of his pencil's arcs diminished and Mr. Sousa drew a notebook from his pocket, still humming to himself. Notebook and pencil met. Breves and semi-breves appeared on the page's virgin surface. Quarter notes and sixteenth notes followed in orderly array. Meanwhile Mr. Sousa furrowed his brow and from his pursed lips came a stirring air—rather a martial blare, as if hidden trombones, tubas, and saxophones were striving to gain utterance. Now Mr. Sousa's pencil traveled faster and faster, and page after page of the notebook were turned back, each filled with martial bars. [I] looked on from over the top of a magazine and listened with enthusiasm as Mr. Sousa's famous march, "The Invincible Eagle," took form.

I tried to attract Mr. Sousa's attention while he was supplying the accompaniment of flutes, oboes, bassoons and piccolos, but it was not until he had picked out the march on a violin on his fingers, put his notebook in his pocket, his [imaginary] violin in his case and his cigar back in his mouth that he finally turned toward me and casually remarked that it was a very dark night outside."

The march was dedicated to the Pan-American Exposition, held in Buffalo in the summer of 1901. It outlived a march entitled "The Electric Century" by Sousa's rival, Francesco Fanciulli, whose band also played at the Exposition. At first Sousa thought "The Invincible Eagle" would surpass "The Stars and Stripes Forever" as a patriotic march, although he nearly entitled it "Spirit of Niagara."

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["The Invincible Eagle" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



THE CHANTYMAN'S MARCH

John Philip Sousa

After enlisting in the U.S. Navy in 1917, Sousa made a study of sea chanteys and then wrote an article for The Great Lakes Recruit entitled "Songs of the Sea." He made further use of the study while on a brief leave from the navy the following spring by composing one of his medley-type marches and calling it The Chantyman's March. The march incorporates eight chanteys, in this order: "Knock a Man Down," "Away for Rio," "Haul the Bowline," "The Ballad of Billy Taylor," "It's Time for Us to Leave Her," "Put up Clearing Gear," "Hoodah Day," and "A-Roving."

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 45. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[The Chantyman's March is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 5](#)



"JACK TAR"

John Philip Sousa

When composing this march, which was originally to be called "British Tars," Sousa had hoped that it would be to naval men what "The Stars and Stripes Forever" was to army men. This ambition was not realized, however. The format of the march is slightly different from the usual Sousa march and contains traces of "Sailor's Hornpipe." The introduction and first two strains were taken from his operetta Chris and the Wonderful Lamp (1899).

Royalties from the sale of sheet music in Britain were turned over to the Union Jack Club, a newly formed service club organized for the benefit of servicemen in London. With everyone waving miniature Union Jacks, the march was given a rousing première in London's Albert Hall on June 25, 1903. The King, Queen, and the Prince and Princess of Wales were present as the new march was played by the combined bands of the Coldstream Guards, Scots Guards, Irish Guards, Himenoia Band of New Zealand, Sousa's Band, and the Queen's Hall Orchestra.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["Jack Tar" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



“NOBLES OF THE MYSTIC SHRINE”

John Philip Sousa

Sousa became a member of the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine in Washington in April, 1922, and was promptly named the first honorary director of the Almas Temple Shrine Band. His nephew, A. R. Varela, who sponsored him, asked him to compose this march. The new march saluted Shriners in general but was dedicated specifically to the Almas Temple and Imperial Council, A. A. O. N. M. S.

The Shriners’ national convention was held in Washington in June, 1923, and Sousa was called upon to lead a huge band of 6,200 Shriners in Griffith Stadium. This, incidentally, was the largest band Sousa ever conducted, and a new association with Shriners had just begun. Several Shrine bands accompanied the Sousa Band in performances of the new march as it toured the United States, and many additional appearances of the Sousa Band were arranged by Shriners. It is also noteworthy that in the last years of the Sousa Band approximately half the members were Shriners.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 74. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Nobles of the Mystic Shrine” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



MIKADO MARCH

John Philip Sousa

The popularity of Sousa’s medley marches, which were based on themes of other composers, never approached that of his original compositions. Such was the case with the “Mikado March,” which utilized themes from the celebrated Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 71. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[Mikado March is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 2](#)

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