

## *The Easy Instructor* (1798-1831)

# A History and Bibliography of the First Shape Note Tune Book

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A CRUCIAL problem faced by our earliest music educators — and one whose difficulties puzzle us still — was how to teach successfully the core skill of reading music at sight. The approach through notational reform, now considered hopelessly quixotic, came in for a good deal of attention in eighteenth and early nineteenth century America. Indeed, the first music textbook published on this side of the Atlantic, John Tufts' *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes* (Boston, 1721, perhaps earlier), presented an innovation which was no doubt of some value in a situation where the art of reading orthodox notation had virtually disappeared. The nub of the problem was to devise a system in which pitch, time, and solmization were combined into a single, easily assimilated notation. The Tufts solution, apparently not wholly original,<sup>1</sup> was to abandon ordinary notes entirely and to substitute upon the staff the initial letters of the four solmization syllables (fa, sol, la, mi) then in universal use in Great Britain. Time values were indicated with punctuation marks. This was quite adequate for the traditional psalm tunes Tufts included in his clearly written and unpretentious little pamphlet, but the system was unwieldy and ill-adapted to music of greater

complexity. It failed to win adherents, although the *Introduction* itself proved to be something of a best-seller, going through eleven editions.

Among the ingenious notations which followed in the wake of the Tufts experiment, none was more remarkable than the "shape note" system which made its first public appearance in the pages of a quite extraordinary tune book, *The Easy Instructor*, "by" William Little and William Smith. The shape note idea was the kind of inspired solution to a knotty problem which seems perfectly obvious once it has been suggested. It consisted merely of using a differently shaped note head to represent each of the four syllables. Thus, a triangular note head represented fa, a round note head sol, a square note head la, and a diamond note head mi. In all other respects, the notation was completely orthodox. (See illustration on opposite page.)

The clear advantages of the shape note system are almost immediately apparent. Providing an individual shape for each syllable enables anyone, after a modicum of attention to the matter, to name the proper syllables of any piece of music instantaneously. One of the genuine difficulties in ordinary solmization lies in the fact that keys change and hence do (or fa in the fasula system) does not remain in the same place. The student must make continual mental computations.

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<sup>1</sup>See Sirvart Poladian, "Rev. John Tufts and Three-Part Psalmody in America," *Jour. of the Amer. Musicol. Soc.*, IV (Fall 1951), 276-277.

## NEW-JERUSALEM. C. M. Sharp Key on G.

From the third heav'n where God resides, That holy happy place, The New-Jerusalem comes down, Adorn'd with shining grace.

The first system of musical notation consists of four staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The bottom three staves are piano accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are written below the vocal staff. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings.

The New-Jerusalem comes down, Adorn'd with shining grace,

The second system of musical notation also consists of four staves. It continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment from the first system. The lyrics are written below the vocal staff. The music includes first and second endings, indicated by the numbers '1' and '2' above the notes. The notation includes various rhythmic values and articulation marks.

*Illustration 1.* A page from *The Easy Instructor*. Courtesy of the Clements Library, University of Michigan. (See "Edition F" in check list, page 45, also Illustration 4, page 44.)

With shape notes, this is completely avoided. A somewhat subtler advantage is that the shapes are continually before the singer whether he happens to be singing words or syllables. Thus, the true function of any solmization system—that of aiding in the automatic identification of scale degrees—is emphasized and capitalized upon through shape notes in a fashion impossible in any system which permits abandonment of the process of syllabification when words are sung. Comparison of the shape note system with that of Tonic Sol-Fa, so successful in the British Isles, highlights the superiority of the *Easy Instructor* idea. The symbols of Tonic Sol-Fa are not posited upon a staff, and hence the pictorial suggestion of tonal direction provided by staff notation is lost. Failure to use the staff demands a complicated method of octave identification, and failure to use regular notes demands a similarly complicated method of representing time values. Furthermore, Tonic Sol-Fa is quite independent of orthodox notation, whereas the shape notes utilize the standard notation and add to it a graphic, quickly comprehended key to relative scale degrees.

No one who has witnessed the astonishing sight-singing virtuosity exhibited by the shape note singers of the rural South today, trained with what is basically the *Easy Instructor* method, can possibly doubt the effectiveness of the device. Had this pedagogical tool been accepted by "the father of singing among the children," Lowell Mason, and others who shaped the patterns of American music education, we might have been more successful in developing skilled music readers and enthusiastic amateur choral singers in the public schools. The reasons for the rejection of shape notes—Thomas Hastings, one of their most vociferous early detractors, called them "dunce

notes"<sup>2</sup>—had nothing to do with the system's merits or demerits. The shape notes from their very inception were closely associated with a remarkable indigenous music which began its development in Connecticut in the 1780's and shortly afterward blanketed New England and the Middle Atlantic states.<sup>3</sup> The "reformers" who quickly arose in earnest protest against this first flowering of American musical expression, all too conscious of the European musical tradition and possessed of an inferiority complex regarding peculiarly American cultural manifestations, eventually saw to the elimination of this music from American life, at least in the North. In the meantime, the shape note system and the music itself became completely identified. Shape notes came to be regarded in urban centers as the musical notation of the country people, the naive, simple people who sang for their own enjoyment songs in a strange, almost primitive native idiom. Leaders of fine city choirs, busy with Pucitta and Neukomm as well as Handel and Haydn, would have nothing to do with such music nor with such notation. Inevitably, the city choir leaders became the first music teachers in the public schools. Shape notes were never admitted to the classroom. As a result, the child who learns music in our schools today must do so without the aid that they might give.<sup>4</sup>

The earliest reference to *The Easy Instructor* and to the shape note system is to be found in a "title-page"

<sup>2</sup>*Musical Magazine*, I (July 1835), 87.

<sup>3</sup>For a brief analysis of this music, see Allen P. Britton, "The Musical Idiom in Early American Tune Books," *Jour. of the Amer. Musicol. Soc.*, III (Fall 1950), 186.

<sup>4</sup>This entire subject is dealt with in the unpubl. diss. (University of Michigan, 1949) by Allen P. Britton, "Theoretical Introductions in American Tune Books to 1800" (University Microfilms, No. 1505), pp. 313-332.

# The Easy Instructor, or

A New method of teaching Music, Harmony &c

Containing the Rudiments of Music on an improved plan wherein the naming and timing the notes are familiarized to the weakest capacity. — With a choice collection of Psalm-Tunes and Anthems from the most celebrated Authors, with a number composed in Europe and America, entirely new, suited to all the measures being in the different Churches in the United States.

Published for the use of Singing Societies in general, but more particularly for those who have not the advantage of an Instructor.

By William Little & William Smith

Copy right secure according to Act of Congress

Illustration 2. Edition Aa. Title page of the 1802 edition of *The Easy Instructor*. Reproduced from a photograph of the original by courtesy of the Case Memorial Library, Hartford Seminary Foundation. (See check list, page 47.)



which was deposited for copyright in the Southern District of Pennsylvania on August 15, 1798:

*THE Easy Instructor, or a New Method* of teaching *Sacred Harmony*, containing the Rudiments of *Music* on an improved Plan, wherein the Naming and Timing the notes, are familiarized to the weakest capacity.

Likewise, an Essay on Composition, with directions to enable any person with a tolerable voice, to take the air of any piece of Music at sight, and perform it by word, without singing it by note. Also, the Transposition of Mi, rendering all the keys in music as easy as the natural key, whereby the errors in Composition and the press may be known. Together with a choice collection of Psalm Tunes, and Anthems, from the most celebrated Authors in Europe, with a number composed in Europe and America, entirely new; suited to all the metres sung in the different Churches in the United States.

Published for the use of Singing Societies in general, but more particularly for those who have not the advantage of an Instructor.

By EDWARD STAMMERS,  
WILLIAM LITTLE.

*Copy right secured according to  
Act of Congress.*<sup>5</sup>

Surprisingly, the name of Edward Stammers appears where one might expect to find that of William Smith. Who was Stammers? His name appears in every known edition of *The Easy Instructor*, together with that of Richard T. Leech, in connection with a report of a committee of the Uranian Society of Philadelphia printed therein.

<sup>5</sup>From the original at the Library of Congress (M2116 L77). The authors here wish to express their thanks to the staff members of the Music Division, the Descriptive Cataloging Division, and the Rare Book Room for unstinted assistance and cooperation. Grateful acknowledgment is also made to the staffs of the New York Public Library, the Newberry Library, the Case Memorial Library of the Hartford Seminary Foundation, the Brown University Library, the Clements Library of the University of Michigan, and many others for their cooperation over a period of years without which this study would have been impossible.

The report reads as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, August 15, 1798.

The Committee appointed by the URANIAN SOCIETY of PHILADELPHIA, to examine a Singing Book, entitled, "THE EASY INSTRUCTOR," BY WILLIAM LITTLE,

REPORT. . . . That having carefully examined the same, they find it contains a well digested system of principles and rules, and a judicious collection of tunes: And from the improvement of having only four significant characters, indicating, at sight, the names of the notes, and a sliding rule for timing the same, this book is considered easier to be learned than any we have seen.

Were it possible to acquire the sound of the eight notes but by imitation, they verily believe they might be obtained by the help of this book, even without an instructor.

The Committee are of opinion the Author merits the patronage and encouragement of all friends to Church Music:

*Which is submitted to,*

EDWARD STAMMERS,  
RICHARD T. LEECH.<sup>6</sup>

Three aspects of this report present special difficulties when considered together: (1) the date coincides with that of the Pennsylvania copyright entry; (2) Little is given as sole author in the body of the report; (3) the names of Stammers and Leech are preceded by the phrase "which is submitted to."<sup>7</sup> A number of questions

<sup>6</sup>Ed. A, pp. [3]-4. What the "sliding rule" might have been remains a matter of conjecture. No further reference to it occurs in the introductory musical instructions. The title of Benjamin Dearborn's *The Vocal Instructor*, copyrighted in Massachusetts in 1797 but apparently never published, mentions "a sliding music scale, never before publish'd in which a moveable index points out the names and distances of the notes in all their variations." See Evans' *American Bibliography*, No. 32021.

<sup>7</sup>The complete phrase appears before the names of Stammers and Leech only in Eds. A-Da. In Eds. Db-I, the phrase reads, "which is submitted," thus making it appear that the two men *submitted* the report. In Eds. J-BB, the whole phrase is omitted, and Stammers and Leech seem to be the *signers* of the recommendation.

arise. Since report and copyright entry were submitted on the same day, why is not Stammers credited as co-author in both? Did Stammers actually assist Little in compiling the book, or was he engaging in some way to sponsor its publication in return for credit as co-author? What is the meaning of the strange closing phrase, i.e., did Stammers and Leech *submit* or *receive* the report? Since Little is given as sole author in the report, how is it that the name of William Smith is given as co-author on the title-page of all known printed editions? (A further difficulty arises in connection with the 1802 New York copyright to be discussed below, which, like the report, gives Little as sole author.) None of these questions can now be answered with certainty although some general conclusions regarding the Stammers-Little-Smith relationship will presently be deduced.

The "choice collection of Psalm Tunes, and Anthems, from the most celebrated Authors *in Europe* [italics supplied], with a number composed in Europe and America, entirely new" of the 1798 copyright entry clearly does not pertain to any of the known early editions of the tune book, all of which contain almost exclusively American music in the distinctive native idiom. This description of an *Easy Instructor* unknown in print presupposes a compiler familiar with the European tradition, which Stammers certainly must have been. As a member of a prominent singing society and the compiler

of a posthumously published tune book, the *Philadelphia Chorister* (Philadelphia: J. McCulloch, 1803),<sup>8</sup> Stammers was obviously quite capable of having edited *The Easy Instructor* and devised the shape note system. Whether he actually did so must remain an unanswered question; what little evidence is now available points to the probability that he was responsible only for instructions and music in the 1798 manuscript, which, so far as is known, never achieved publication under the title *Easy Instructor*. The invention of the shape note system itself, however, is even more difficult to establish, although here probability favors Little as its originator.

William Little's very obscurity as a practicing musician lends some credence to this theory. The phrase in the 1798 copyright deposit, "whereby errors in . . . the press may be known," and the typographical nature of the shape note concept give rise to the suspicion that someone engaged in the printing trades was in some way associated with the venture. If this supposition is correct, the William Little who was an obscure printer in Philadelphia during 1802 and 1803<sup>9</sup> may well have been Stammers' associate. The assumption that Little was a printer interested in music (he was interested

<sup>8</sup>Stammers is listed as a baker in the Philadelphia directories of 1798 through 1802. In 1803 appears, "Stammers, widow of Edward, baker." As the directories were invariably published in the October preceding the dated year, Stammers apparently died prior to October, 1802. It is possible that his *Philadelphia Chorister* is actually the original manuscript of *The Easy Instructor* in print, since it corresponds fairly well with the description of content in the 1798 copyright of the latter work. The only *Philadelphia*

*Chorister* located to date is at the New-York Historical Society. The authors would like here to express their indebtedness to Miss Geraldine Beard of the Society's staff for considerable help in establishing the chronology of the early Albany printing firms sketched in this study.

<sup>9</sup>H. Glenn Brown and Maude O. Brown, *A Directory of the Book-Arts and Book Trade in Philadelphia to 1820* (New York, 1950), p. 76. A William Little—perhaps the same individual—was also active in New York as a printer during 1808 and 1809; see George L. McKay, *A Register of Artists, Engravers, Booksellers, Bookbinders, Printers & Publishers in New York City, 1633-1820* (New York, 1942), p. 44.

enough to do a little composing, for four of his tunes appear in the earliest known edition, see Ed. A below) rather than a professional musician helps to explain why another collaborator, William Smith, became necessary when Stammers died before *The Easy Instructor* appeared in print, and also the peculiarly distant relationship between Little and the tune book of which he was supposedly one of the compilers.

Although it is clear from the Uranian Society committee report that a manuscript utilizing shape notes must have been in existence in 1798 before William Smith entered the picture, it is extremely doubtful that the work was published in that year or that it was ever published at all in the form in which it received the recommendation. The existence of a copyright entry is by no means proof that a title actually achieved publication. As it was only necessary at that time to file the *name* of a book to receive copyright protection, not an actual copy of the book itself, early copyright records are filled with ghost titles of books which were never printed. This appears to have been the case with the original manuscript of *The Easy Instructor* seen by the committee of the Uranian Society. The unique 1798 "title-page" preserved at the Library of Congress was apparently imprinted for the specific purpose of entering the title in the copyright records, and examination proves that it bears no possible physical relationship to any printed copy of the book known today.

The only record of a 1798 edition of *The Easy Instructor* appears in a thoroughly self-contradictory entry in Evans' *American Bibliography*, No. 34004:

LITTLE, WILLIAM. *The Easy Instructor*; or, a new method of teaching sacred harmony. Containing, I. The rudiments of music on an

improved plan, wherein the naming and timing of the notes are familiarized to the weakest capacity. II. A choice collection of psalm tunes and anthems, from the most celebrated authors, with a number composed in Europe and America, entirely new; suited to all the metres sung in the different churches in the United States. Published for the use of singing societies in general, but more particularly for those who have not the advantage of an instructor. By William Little and William Smith. [Philadelphia. 1798. Pp. 74. Obl. 12mo.]

Evans evidently transcribed the title page from one of the undated Albany editions published between 1808 and 1816 (Eds. F-0b; see Illustration 4). The imprint appears to have been supplied on the basis of the known 1798 Pennsylvania copyright and the dated report of the Uranian Society committee—which Evans erroneously associates with the advertisement signed by Little and Smith to be found in all known editions (see fn. 12). The 74-page collation seems inexplicable, but the nature of the entry strongly suggests that it is an attempted reconstruction of a book not actually examined.<sup>10</sup> This supposition is strengthened by the fact that Evans locates no copy of this purported edition. Why he failed to use the title as given in the 1798 Pennsylvania copyright, with which he was familiar, remains a mystery. Thus, it must be assumed that no 1798 edition was actually published until more convincing evidence of its existence is uncovered.

Because very little factual information is available, any account of *The*

<sup>10</sup>The Massachusetts Historical Society copy of Ed. R. may perhaps be the source of the Evans entry. The following, written in a nineteenth century hand, appears on the fly-leaf: "This Book is probably the 4<sup>d</sup> Ed. of the *Easy Instructor* has 127 pages & index makes 128 pages—& issued abt 1818. The First Ed. had 74 pages, 2<sup>d</sup> Ed. 104 pages & 3<sup>d</sup> Ed. has 112 pages. The Preface by Little & Smith dated 'Phil. Aug. 15, 1798' is the Same in Each Ed. But the Music & Tunes are quite different in Each Ed. W. Latham."



*Easy Instructor* between 1798 and 1802, when the genuine first edition (see Ed. A below) seems to have appeared, must be largely speculative. The gap of four years between manuscript and book may be accounted for by the typographical novelty of the project and the not inconsiderable difficulty of preparing suitable plates. During this period Stammers died, and Little entered into collaboration with one of the most tantalizingly mysterious figures in the history of American music, William Smith. Certainly, he is not to be confused with the comparatively prominent Rev. William Smith who published *The Churchman's Choral Companion* (New York, 1809). While the authors have not as yet managed to destroy Smith's anonymity, they have been able to uncover one very faint and perhaps fruitless clue to his identity. In the manuscript letter books of Daniel Read, one of the most distinguished practitioners of the American idiom, are five letters written between 1794 and 1802 addressed to an otherwise unknown New York singing master called William H. Smith.<sup>11</sup> The content of the letters does not preclude the possibility that this was Little's associate. Unfortunately, New York directories and other contemporary sources such as newspapers disclose no William Smith or William H. Smith engaged in musical activities during this period. In 1803 and 1806 our Smith was evidently a resident of Hopewell, New Jersey, as this is the place given in the dated prefaces of a tune book published unilaterally by him, *The Easy Instructor, Part II* (discussed in detail below).

Whoever Smith might have been, he apparently differed sharply from Stam-

mers in musical taste. The 1798 copyright describes a tune book with a European orientation, whereas the music in the earliest known edition, presumably compiled by Smith, is almost entirely American. Since both Smith and Little were composers in the American idiom (Smith is represented by one number in Ed. A and Little by four), the change in orientation seems understandable enough. Both men must have originally worked well together, for by 1802 they had gathered "upwards" of 3000 subscriptions for *The Easy Instructor*, a number presaging its future success.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps because of Stammers' death and Smith's *locus vivendi*, the scene of *Easy Instructor* activity shifted from Philadelphia to New York some time between 1798 and 1802. There, at last, the firm of G. & R. Waite (which was apparently more interested in selling patent medicines and lottery tickets than book publishing, to judge from their advertisements) announced on November 25, 1802, in the New York *Chronicle Express*, "This day is published . . . THE EASY INSTRUCTOR; or A New Method of Teaching Sacred Harmony by William Little & William Smith. . . ."<sup>13</sup> A few weeks after publication, on December 10, 1802, Little deposited the title of the book in the District of New York for copyright. Apparently for the specific purpose of befuddling later generations of scholars, Little signed himself sole author.<sup>14</sup> The peculiarity of the copy-

<sup>12</sup>Ed. A, "Advertisement," p. [3]. In later editions the August 15, 1798, date is typographically set so that it appears to pertain to the advertisement rather than to the recommendation printed immediately below it. That the date pertains to the recommendation is clear in Ed. A.

<sup>13</sup>The complete advertisement is quoted in Frank J. Metcalf, "The Easy Instructor; a Bibliographical Study," *Mus. Quar.* XXIII (January 1937), 91.

<sup>14</sup>The 1802 copyright entry is also quoted in its entirety in Metcalf, p. 90.

<sup>11</sup>See Irving Lowens, "Daniel Read's World: the Letters of an Early American Composer," *Music Library Association Notes*, IX (March 1952), 233-248.

right situation makes it evident that Smith was a junior partner in the venture, and that Little's was the controlling interest. The 1802 copyright also makes it amply clear that Little wished to retain undivided control of *The Easy Instructor* and that he had perhaps become somewhat suspicious of Smith's intentions.

No copy bearing an 1802 date or a G. & R. Waite imprint has been located, but Edition A (see the check list below) conforms to all the particulars of the 1802 advertisement and copyright entry and is presumed, on circumstantial evidence, to be the genuine first edition. Edition A, four copies of which have now been located, is the *only* known edition which could possibly be that advertised. Furthermore, one bit of evidence turns the possibility into probability. The preface to Smith's *Easy Instructor, Part II* (see below), dated 1803, begins as follows: "The Publisher of this work meeting with great encouragement in the first edition of the '*Easy Instructor*,' is induced to publish a second edition, and having added the flats and sharps, so that the singer may take his choice, either to sing by characters or by line and space, he hopes to meet the approbation and patronage of the friends to Vocal Music." The music in Edition A is *without* "flats and sharps" (i.e. key signatures) excepting for three numbers only. Unless Smith had published an earlier edition of *Part II*, an extremely unlikely event, it must be presumed that Edition A is the "first edition" he refers to.

The sole identifiable remnant of the 1798 manuscript appearing in Edition A would appear to be the preface, which consists basically of the first six paragraphs and a portion of the seventh of the preface to Ralph Harrison's *Sacred Harmony* (London, 1784). This same preface had been utilized at

least twice before by American tune book compilers, by John Poor in his *Collection of Psalms and Hymns* (Philadelphia: J. McCulloch, 1794), and, more significantly, by Andrew Adgate in his *Select Psalms and Hymns* (Philadelphia: Young and McCulloch, 1787). As Adgate was one of the founders of the Uranian Academy of Philadelphia, of which the Uranian Society was a direct outgrowth,<sup>15</sup> the possible connection between the preface and Stammers, an official of the Uranian Society, is obvious.

Of the 105 compositions included in Edition A, only five are of European origin; even these were old American favorites which had appeared in almost every New England tune book from the time that Daniel Bayley of Newburyport commenced to reprint the works of the English singing masters William Tans'ur and Aaron Williams in the 1760's. The American compositions, among them forty-one claimed as "never before published," are excellent examples of the characteristic native idiom of the time. Thus, between 1798 and 1802, the European musical bias of Stammers had been transformed into the thoroughly American one of Smith, with Little serving as a bridge between the two musicians. From a strictly musical point of view, the interest of *The Easy Instructor* is considerably enhanced because of this change in orientation; from the point of view of the future acceptance of the shape note idea by the eventual arbiters of musical progress in America, the change was disastrous. In this manner, the individual tastes of a single obscure musician, William Smith, may have changed the whole future course of American music history.

In the year after *The Easy Instruc-*

<sup>15</sup>See O. G. Sonneck, *Early Concert-Life in America, 1731-1800* (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 103-120.

tor appeared in print, Smith, apparently without help from Little, brought out another tune book making use of the shape note system:

*THE Easy Instructor OR A New method of teaching Sacred Harmony. PART II. Containing the Rudiments of Music on an improved plan.—With a choice collection of Psalm Tunes, a number of which are entirely new. By William Smith & Co.*

The omission of any reference to "European music" on the title-page and the absence of any in the collection itself bear out the idea that Smith's preference was for American music in the native idiom. Where the book was published is not known, but a physical resemblance between the title pages of *Part II* and Edition A arouses the suspicion that the Waite firm was also responsible for this imprint. No copyright record has been located, and the strong probability is that no application was made, as *Part II* does not appear to have been authorized by Little. Little was the sole owner of the 1802 copyright, and Smith may have overstepped the bounds of propriety, if not of legality, with the curious author ascription on the title-page of *Part II* where the senior partner is reduced to the unenviable status of an "& Co." There seems to be little doubt that the appearance of *Part II*, with its nonchalant disregard of Little, did not help build amicable relations between the two. Indeed, indications are that it caused a complete break, for when a second edition of *Part II* was published in 1806, "& Co." was no longer on the title-page, and Smith appears as sole author.

A disagreement about *Part II* may well have precipitated the next phase in the history of *The Easy Instructor*. If Little was in fact a printer by trade, the book must have been at best a peripheral interest, and the rupture of

his partnership with Smith deprived him of a collaborator. Perhaps annoyance decided him to sell out on the best possible terms. Perhaps he considered the copyright, already violated by Smith, no longer of any particular value. At any rate, some time between 1803 and 1805—no record of the transaction has been found—he apparently sold or reassigned the copyright to a trio of Albany, New York, printers, possibly suggested to him by G. & R. Waite, who maintained a branch of their firm in that city. Thereafter, neither of the co-authors of Edition A seems to have been in any way connected with the book, and another person assumed the responsibility for its ever-changing musical content. All the introductory material remained unaltered throughout all editions.

In Albany *The Easy Instructor* really hit its stride, thanks to the astuteness of an editor who successfully followed the musical fashions of the moment. A veritable flood of editions, the first in 1805 and the last in 1831, poured from the presses. Tens of thousands of copies were sold, and the tune book became celebrated throughout the country, extending its influence far beyond its Albany base. If Little was then still alive, he must have regretted his decision to dispose of the copyright, which suddenly had become an extremely lucrative property.

One of the most intriguing of the many historical riddles in connection with *The Easy Instructor* is the identity of its Albany editor, who certainly deserves a small niche in the musical hall of fame. Who chose the music and decided what changes should be made from edition to edition? The little evidence available points to Daniel Steele (1772-1828), one of the three figures who obtained the 1802 copyright from Little. There is no reason to believe that either of the other two, Charles

R. Webster (1762-1832) or his twin brother George Webster (1762-1821), was sufficiently interested or skilled in music to undertake the difficult editorial task. Both were prominent printers in the community, and there is no indication in their well documented life histories that they participated in any musical activities; their only connection with music seems to have been their publishing activities, which are known to have commenced as early as 1800. On the other hand, Steele, although a lesser figure in Albany local history and consequently a more obscure one, may have been the singing master who advertised as follows in the Albany *Argus* of December 16, 1817:

#### SINGING SCHOOL

Mr. Steele will commence school this evening for the purpose of instructing youth in the Rudiments of vocal Music, at the Session Room of the Presbyterian Church in Beaver Street. Those who are desirous of attending, can become members by applying at the room.

Although no definite evidence that Steele functioned as a practicing musician earlier than 1817 has been found, there are indications that this may have been a part-time career engaged in over a long period of time, simultaneously with his book-selling and printing activities. The tune books he advertised for sale as early as 1801 strengthen the impression that he was more than casually interested in music. The fact that creative revision of *The Easy Instructor* virtually ceased at the close of his life is suggestive; until more information comes to light, it should probably be assumed that the Albany editions published prior to 1828 are the product of Steele's imagination and labor.

Apparently, the transaction between Little and the Albany group did not

include the transfer of the original plates, as a new set engraved by Henry W. Snyder, an Albany craftsman, was used for the earliest group of Albany editions (Eds. B, C, *Da*, *Db*, and E), the first of which was issued in 1805 and the last in 1808. Snyder's work was more skillful than that of the anonymous original engraver, who may perhaps have been Little himself, but it is still quite crude compared to the productions of other engravers active during the same period. Although the music editor radically revised the contents, omitting twenty-five tunes from the first edition and adding twenty-two others, he did not change its emphasis upon music in the native idiom.

Beginning with the first undated Albany *Easy Instructor* (Ed. F), the engraved music plates characteristic of prior editions were abandoned. This and subsequent editions were printed from a type-font designed specifically for the shape note system.<sup>16</sup> The origi-

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<sup>16</sup>One might naturally assume that this was the first such type-font in existence, but the facts are otherwise. About a year after the appearance of Ed. A, Andrew Law, one of the most prominent singing masters of the day, brought out the fourth edition of his *Art of Singing* (Cambridge: W. Hilliard, 1803) "printed upon a new plan." This particular edition and later publications of Law's were printed typographically with shape notes identical to those in *The Easy Instructor*. However, Law interchanged the characters for fa and la and entirely abandoned the use of staff lines. Significantly, he made no claim that the shapes were his own invention but stressed the fact that the staff was eliminated, strongly implying that this was the essence of his "new plan." Yet, in a book published six years later, *The Art of Playing the Organ and Piano Forte* (Philadelphia: Jane Aitken, c. 1809), he did insist that he had a shape note system ready for publication as early as 1786, but could not print it because it was then impossible to obtain type. But if Law's system was ready in 1786, why could not the shapes have been engraved? At that time almost all tune books, including Law's own, were printed from engraved plates. Law cannot be credited with the invention of the shape note system, but he no doubt was first to make typographical use of the characters.

nator of this font was undoubtedly either William Wood or Obadiah R. Van Benthuyzen, whose names are found in the colophon of Edition F. The probability is that Van Benthuyzen deserves the major share of the credit, as Wood disappears from the history of *The Easy Instructor* after the appearance of this single edition, while Van Benthuyzen continued his association with the book throughout its existence, first as its typographer and later as its printer. In 1809 Van Benthuyzen formed a brief partnership with George Newton (see Eds. G and H). Thereafter he continued in business independently (see Eds. I and J) until 1812, when he joined forces with Robert Packard (see Eds. K and all following Albany editions). The firm of Packard and Van Benthuyzen was to become illustrious in the annals of the Albany printing trade, continuing in existence throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, finally closing its books in 1922.<sup>17</sup>

Typographical editions of *The Easy Instructor* were brought out at the rate of one or two each year from 1808 to 1822. Thereafter, as the demand for the book tapered off, they were issued at bi-yearly intervals with one exception. The printing record of *The Easy Instructor* demonstrates that it probably reached the peak of its popularity between 1814 and 1817. Editorial changes, presumably made by Steele to keep the collection up to the moment, followed a clear-cut pattern. In each new edition, a greater or lesser number of old American favorites was deleted and new and fashionable European

tunes were added (see Table VIII). At irregular intervals, extra eight-page signatures containing almost exclusively European music were also added, thus progressively enlarging the number of pages from 104 in the first typographical edition to 136 in the last. At the same time, the uniquely native flavor of the early editions was gradually watered down to the point where the character of its music was practically indistinguishable from that of the "reform" collections. Indeed, except for title, instructions, and notation, there is but little resemblance between the early and late editions of *The Easy Instructor*.

Before the last of the engraved editions came out in 1808, other publishers, particularly in Pennsylvania, had become aware of the phenomenal success of *The Easy Instructor* and imitations began to appear in print. Ironically, one of the first of these brings the story back to Philadelphia, where the history of *The Easy Instructor* had its inception in 1798. The John Jenkins Husband<sup>18</sup> edition of Andrew Adgate's *Philadelphia Harmony* (Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1807; also 1811)<sup>19</sup> appeared in a shape note guise derived in conception from *The Easy Instructor*, although its editor used considerably different shapes. During the same year the Philadelphia musician-book-seller Charles Woodward brought out his *Ecclesia Harmonia* (Philadelphia, 1807; another ed. publ. by W. W.

<sup>18</sup>An English musician who apparently arrived in the United States in 1806 or 1807. He has a stronger claim to immortality if the tune "Revive Us Again" (better known in secular circles as "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum"), attributed to him in Lester Hostetler, *Handbook to the Mennonite Hymnary* (Newton, Kansas, 1949), pp. 253-254, is actually his composition.

<sup>19</sup>Although Adgate died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, the publication of this popular collection was continued, the last edition appearing in 1811.

<sup>17</sup>See John Clyde Oswald, *Printing in the Americas* (New York, 1937), p. 226, and Clarence T. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820* (Worcester, 1947), I, 587. The authors are deeply indebted to Dr. Brigham and the American Antiquarian Society for supplying them with much helpful information.

Woodward, 1809), in which the shape note idea was borrowed intact, although he also used differently shaped note heads, while a year later Nathan Chapin and Joseph L. Dickerson's *The Musical Instructor* (Philadelphia: W. McCulloch, 1808; also 1810) appeared in a seven shape system of which the Little and Smith shape notes formed the basis.

With the publication of the first of the typographical editions, a more important series of imitations, also printed typographically, was brought out by John Wyeth, a Harrisburg publisher. The first to be issued, Joseph Doll's *Leichter Unterrichts* (Harrisburg, 1810; also 1814, 1821; Vol. II, 1815) was not only a direct plagiarism in translation of the Little and Smith title, but a direct appropriation of the distinctive shapes as well. As the *Leichter Unterrichts* was designed to appeal to the German-speaking Pennsylvania population which would not ordinarily be reached by such a book as *The Easy Instructor*, its compiler chose primarily music from the continental European tradition, although he did include some of the favorite native American tunes set to German texts. Wyeth's comprehensive *Repository of Sacred Music* (Harrisburg, 1810; also 1811, 1812, 1814, 1816, 1818, 1823, 1826, 1834), on the other hand, duplicated the character of *The Easy Instructor* almost exactly, but masqueraded its indebtedness to the earlier tune book under a totally different title. There appears to be strong evidence that nearly half its 156 tunes were taken directly from various editions of *The Easy Instructor*, as in many cases Wyeth reprinted without change distinctive typographical errors and mistakes in composer ascription found only in the Little and Smith work. One of the most significant music publications of the early nineteenth century was Wyeth's *Repository*

of *Sacred Music, Part Second* (Harrisburg, 1813; also 1820). This proved to be the first really influential anthology of what George Pullen Jackson has termed spiritual folk song, and *Part Second* was a major source drawn upon for materials by later compilers such as Ananias Davisson, James M. Boyd, Joseph Funk, Allen D. Carden, William Walker, and many others.<sup>20</sup> It undoubtedly set the pattern for the distinctive combination of Yankee psalm and fusing tunes and secular folk melodies which constitutes the Southern folk hymnody tradition out of which such magnificent tune books as Walker's *Southern Harmony* and White and King's *Sacred Harp* grew. *Part Second* was perhaps more important than *The Easy Instructor* itself in the eventual dissemination of the shape note idea to the South. Still another of Wyeth's shape note publications was Johannes Rothbaust's bilingual *Die Franklin Harmonie, und leichter Unterrichts* (Harrisburg, 1821; Vol. II, 1821), reprinted by a different publisher as a second, revised edition under the English title *The Franklin Harmony and Easy Instructor* (Chambersburg: H. Ruby, c. 1830). This curious tune book, with its frank indebtedness to *The Easy Instructor* flaunted on its title-page, exhibits a most interesting crossblend of German and Anglo-Saxon music traditions in its contents.

The firm name Websters & Skinner, found in the second engraved Albany edition of *The Easy Instructor* (Ed. C), came into existence on May 19, 1806, when Elisha W. Skinner, the brothers Webster's nephew, joined them in their

<sup>20</sup>For a study of the important role played by this tune book in the development of the Southern tradition, see Irving Lowens, "John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second*; a Northern Precursor of Southern Folk Hymnody," *Jour. of the Amer. Musicol. Soc.*, V (Summer 1952), 114-131.

# THE EASY INSTRUCTOR,

OR, A NEW METHOD OF TEACHING

## SACRED HARMONY.

CONTAINING,

The Rudiments of Music on an improved Plan, wherein the Naming and Timing of the Notes are familiarized to the weakest Capacity.

With a choice Collection of Psalm Tunes and Anthems from the most celebrated Authors, with a Number composed in Europe and America, entirely new ; suited to all the Metres sung in the different Churches in the United States.

Published for the use of Singing Societies in general, but more particularly for those who have not the advantage of an Instructor.

.....4.....6.....8.....10.....12.....14.....16.....18.....20.....22.....24.....26.....28.....30.....32.....34.....36.....38.....40.....42.....44.....46.....48.....50.....52.....54.....56.....58.....60.....62.....64.....66.....68.....70.....72.....74.....76.....78.....80.....82.....84.....86.....88.....90.....92.....94.....96.....98.....100.....

By WILLIAM LITTLE AND WILLIAM SMITH.

A L B A N Y :

Printed by CHARLES R. and GEORGE WEBSTER, and DANIEL STEELE, Proprietors of the Copy-right ; and sold at WEBSTER'S Bookstore, corner of State and Pearl Streets, and at STEELE'S Bookstore, near the Court House, in Court Street.

1805.

*Illustration 3.* Edition B. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.  
(See check list, page 47.)

business. In the fall of 1811, Elisha's two brothers, Hezekiah and Daniel, were taken into partnership and the firm then became known as Websters & Skinners. Despite mutations in the firm's name, the *Easy Instructor* copyright seems to have remained the sole property of the two Websters and Daniel Steele. Understandably enough, the three men were not anxious to surrender their lucrative property to the public domain when the copyright on the work was due to expire on December 10, 1816. One of the three, apparently George Webster, hit upon a clever idea to prolong their control of the shape note idea regardless of the expiration of the copyright, which could only be renewed, according to the law, by the original owner. On February 28, 1816, a patent covering the casting and use of the shape note types was granted to George Webster, obviously as agent for the Albany trio. Most unfortunately, the original patent application, which ordinarily would have been preserved, was destroyed in one of the many fires which ravaged the United States Patent Office early in its career, and only a bare notice of the patent grant is extant. Were the details of the application itself available, considerable information about the early history of *The Easy Instructor* might have been gathered from it. Notice of the patent grant is found on the title-page of the 120-page Edition P, published shortly after the expiration of the copyright, where the familiar phrase "Proprietors of the Copy-Right" is omitted and in its place appears the legend: "The Music Types used in printing this Book are secured to the Proprietors by Patent Right." This notice is unquestionably the genesis of the term "patent notes," frequently used in later years as a synonym for shape notes.

With the expiration of the copyright,

the proprietors apparently decided to license other publishers to cast and use their patented shape notes and to reprint *The Easy Instructor* itself. The first to obtain a license seems to have been William Williams of Utica, New York, whose name is found in the list of authorized agents printed on the title-page of Edition P. Williams, who was also the publisher of Thomas Hastings and Solomon Warriner's influential *Musica Sacra* (Utica, 1816; many later editions),<sup>21</sup> brought out editions of *The Easy Instructor* in 1818 and 1820 (Eds. S and W), using the 120-page Edition P as prototype. His only editorial change was to delete a single long American tune and to substitute for it three shorter European ones, thus giving his editions, both of which are identical in content, a total of 127 compositions as compared with the 125 of his model. Working with the unfamiliar shape notes apparently proved somewhat troublesome to him, as his editions are poorly executed and are replete with typographical errors in both music and text. Only one other printer, J. Pace of Cincinnati, is known to have brought out an authorized *Easy Instructor*. The Pace imprint, published in 1819 (Ed. U), used the first of the Williams editions as the source of its music rather than the 120-page Albany edition, in some instances duplicating textual errors found there only. The Cincinnati edition omits the last thirteen tunes in the Utica edition.

That the Albany group failed to sell additional licenses is not surprising. Part of their plan, possibly conceived at the same time application for a patent was made, may well have been to cut the ground out from under the feet of their self-manufactured competitors by issuing revised editions

<sup>21</sup>See John C. Williams, *An Oneida County Printer, William Williams, Printer, Publisher, Editor* (New York, 1906).



# THE EASY INSTRUCTOR;

OR,  
A NEW METHOD OF TEACHING

## Sacred Harmony.

CONTAINING

- I. THE RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC on an improved Plan, wherein the Naming and Timing of the Notes are familiarized to the weakest Capacity.
- II. A choice Collection of PSALM TUNES and ANTHEMS, from the most celebrated Authors, with a number composed in Europe and America, entirely new; suited to all the Metres sung in the different Churches in the United States.

---

Published for the Use of SINGING SOCIETIES in general, but more particularly for those who have not the Advantage of an INSTRUCTOR.

---

By WILLIAM LITTLE AND WILLIAM SMITH.

PRINTED, *Typographically*, at ALBANY,

By WEBSTERS & SKINNER AND DANIEL STEELE, (Proprietors of the Copy-Right,)  
And sold at their respective Bookstores, at the corner of State and Pearl-Streets, and a few doors south of the Old City-Hall, in Court-Street; by T. & J. SWORDS,  
EVERT DUYCKINCK and WILLIAM FALCONER, *New-York*; MATHEW CAREY, JOHNSON & WARNER, WILLIAM W. WOODWARD and HOPKINS & EARL,  
*Philadelphia*; and INCREASE COOK, *New-Haven*.

*Illustration 4.* Edition F. Courtesy of the Clements Library, University of Michigan.  
(See check list, page 47.)

while selling licenses to reprint the old. Thus, on the one hand, they hoped to reap a profit from the sale of permissions, while on the other, they maintained command of the market by continuing to adjust the content of their own editions to conform to the changing musical tastes of the moment. On the latter account, all Albany editions published after Edition P are designated "revised and enlarged." These, the last of which appeared in 1831, bring to a close the history of *The Easy Instructor*.

The check list which follows is an attempted solution to one of the most complex bibliographical problems in the entire range of American printing history. The authors cannot presume to have untangled all the snarls and to have evaded all the booby-traps hidden in the jungle of *Easy Instructor* editions and issues, but they believe they have been successful in establishing the chronology of those editions they have examined, and have ascertained exact dates of publication within one year. The solution of this problem is of more than bibliographical interest. With each printing accurately dated and placed in proper chronological order, *The Easy Instructor* becomes an extremely accurate barometer of American musical tastes over a period of nearly three decades. The tale told by the addition of one tune and the deletion of another is invaluable, highly detailed documentation of a significant, though much neglected aspect of our cultural development. Two bibliographical studies of *The Easy Instructor* have previously appeared in print, one by Frank J. Metcalf<sup>22</sup> and another by Lester Condit.<sup>23</sup> The Metcalf study, although fragmentary and based on incomplete

data, is quite valuable; those interested in comparing his results with those of the authors should consult Table VIII, where the numbers assigned to the editions seen by Metcalf are listed in conjunction with letters assigned in this study.

#### *A Check List of Editions and Issues*

In the following list, each edition is assigned a letter in accordance with the chronology of its publication. Separate printings which embody no changes of title, imprint, or content have been defined as issues of a given edition and are indicated by combining a lower case italic letter with that assigned the edition (e.g. Aa, Ab). Unless otherwise indicated, omitted titles and imprints or various sections thereof may be presumed similar to those of the edition or issue next above. Location symbols are those used by the *Union List of Serials*. Except for capitalization of initial letters, which has been followed exactly, no attempt has been made to indicate original typography; however, reference is made to the method of printing (i.e. whether from engraved plates or from type). Title-pages of key editions have been reproduced photographically. Although dozens of points of distinction among editions and issues were ascertained and tabulated in preparing the chronology given below, only those unique points are given which may serve easily to identify a particular edition or issue. Special attention is called to the eight tables, which are designed to give comparative data succinctly. Table I distinguishes all undated typographically printed editions, and Table VIII is a conspectus of all editions and issues. Since William Smith's *The Easy Instructor, Part II* is a completely separate work, its two editions are not included in this list.

<sup>22</sup>See fn. 13 for reference.

<sup>23</sup>"Editions of Little & Smith's *Easy Instructor*," *Papers of the Bibl. Soc. of Amer.*, XL (Third Quarter 1946), 233-236.

TABLE I. A CONDENSED IDENTIFICATION CHART FOR UNDATED ALBANY EDITIONS

		<i>104-page editions</i>	
<i>Edition</i>	<i>Title-page points</i>		<i>Other points</i>
	<i>Typographer</i>	<i>Last dealer's name</i>	
F [1808]	none	Increase Cook	<i>112-page editions</i>
G [1809]	Van Benthuyssen & Newton	Increase Cook	
H [1809]	Van Benthuyssen & Newton	M. Cary [sic]	
I [1810]	O. R. Van Benthuyssen	D. Allenson & Co.	
J [1811]	O. R. Van Benthuyssen	E. Lewis	<i>120-page edition</i>
K [1812]	Packard & Van Benthuyssen	E. Lewis	
L [1813]	Packard & Van Benthuyssen	William Norman	
Ma [1814]	Packard & Van Benthuyssen	E. Lewis	
Mb [1814]	Packard & Van Benthuyssen	E. Lewis	
Mc [1815]	Packard & Van Benthuyssen	E. Lewis	
N [1815]	Packard & Van Benthuyssen	E. Lewis	
Oa [1816]	Packard & Van Benthuyssen	E. Lewis	
Ob [1816]	Packard & Van Benthuyssen	E. Lewis	
P [1817]	There is only one edition of 120 pages		
Q [1817]	Daniel Steele	472 S. Market St.	<i>127, [11]-page editions: "Revised and Enlarged"</i>
R [1818]	Daniel Steele	472 S. Market St.	
T [1819]	Daniel Steele	472 S. Market St.	
V [1820]	Daniel Steele	472 S. Market St.	
X [1822]	Daniel Steele	435 S. Market St.	
Ya [1824]	D. Steele & Son	437 S. Market St.	
Yb [1826]	D. Steele & Son	437 S. Market St.	
AA [1830]	Oliver Steele	437 S. Market St.	

\*On page 61 of Eds. L-Ob the continuation of the tune "Denmark" appears; the point listed under "Page 61" indicates where the first letter of the word "soft" is printed in relationship to the various letters in "Denmark."

†The phrase "Philadelphia, August 15, 1798," appears in the middle of page [3] of the 127, [11]-page editions; the point listed under "Page [3]" refers to the typeface in which this phrase is printed.

EDITION *Aa*: [see illustration] The Easy Instructor, or A New method of teaching Sacred Harmony. Containing the Rudiments of Music on an improved plan, wherein the naming and timing the notes are familiarized to the weakest capacity.—With a choice collection of Psalm Tunes and Anthems from the most celebrated Authors, with a number composed in Europe and America, entirely new; suited to all the metres sung in the different Churches in the United States. Published for the use of singing Societies in general, but more particularly for those who have not the advantage of an Instructor. By William Little & William Smith Copy right secured according to Act of Congress. [New York: G. & R. Waite, 1802]

[2], 105 (i.e. 106) pp. No. 12 is repeated in the paging. T.-p. and pp. 12*b*-105 engraved; pp. [1]-12*a* typeset. 14 x 23.5 cm. CtHC.

This issue may readily be distinguished by the presence of a printed key signature of A major on p. 87, at the beginning of Daniel Read's tune "Stafford." It was advertised as just published on November 25, 1802, in the New York *Chronicle Express*, by the firm of G. & R. Waite.

EDITION *Ab*: [same]

CtHWatk, DLC, MWA.

This issue, otherwise identical to *Aa*, lacks the key signature on p. 87 referred to above. Apparently, the signature was originally engraved as an oversight and later expunged from the plate. It shows through faintly in the DLC copy. Other key signatures appear in both issues only with Morgan's "Judgment Anthem," pp. 99-105, and Babcock's "Admonition," pp. 63-64. A facsimile of the DLC title-page appears in Metcalf (see note 13 above), opposite p. 92.

EDITION *B*: [see illustration] . . . By William Little and William Smith. Albany: Printed by Charles R. and George Webster, and Daniel Steele,

Proprietors of the Copy-right; and sold at Webster's Bookstore, corner of State and Pearl-Streets, and at Steele's Bookstore, near the Court-House, in Court-Street. 1805.

108 pp. T.-p. and pp. [2]-12 typeset; pp. 13-108 engraved. 13.5 x 23 cm. NN.

The engraver's signature, "Snyder Sculp," appears at the foot of p. 108.

EDITION *C*: . . . Smith. Albany: Printed by Websters & Skinner, and Daniel Steele, Proprietors of the Copy-Right; and sold at their respective Bookstores at the corner of State and Pearl-Streets, and near the Court-House, in Court-Street. 1806.

108 pp. T.-p and pp. [2]-12 typeset; pp. 13-108 engraved. MWA.

EDITION *Da*: . . . Albany: . . . Pearl-Streets, and a few Doors South of the Court-House, in Court-Street. 1807.

108 (i.e. 104) pp. Nos. 9-12 are omitted in the paging because smaller type was used to print the introductory matter. T.-p. and pp. 13-108 engraved; pp. [2]-8 typeset. NjR.

This is the last edition in which the full phrase, "which is submitted to," appears immediately preceding the names of Edward Stammers and Richard T. Leech at the foot of p. [3].

EDITION *Db*: [same]

ICN, MWA, NjR, NN.

This issue, otherwise identical with *Da*, has a new type set-up for the introductory matter which may quickly be identified by the absence of the word "to" from the phrase on p. [3] referred to above and by the presence of a misprint "INSTUCTOR" in the caption on p. 7.

EDITION *E*: . . . Albany: . . . 1808.

108 (i.e. 104) pp., as *Da-b*. CtHWatk, IU, MWA, NNUT.

EDITION *F*: [see illustration] . . . Containing I. The Rudiments of Music . . . II. A choice Collection of Psalm

Tunes . . . . Printed, Typographically, at Albany, By Websters & Skinner and Daniel Steele, (Proprietors of the Copy-Right,) And sold at their respective Bookstores, at the corner of State and Pearl-Streets, and a few doors south of the Old City-Hall, in Court-Street; by T. & J. Swords, Evert Duyckinck and William Falconer, New-York; Mathew Carey, Johnson & Warner, William W. Woodward and Hopkins & Earl, Philadelphia; and Increase Cook, New-Haven. [1808]

104 pp.; typeset. 13.5 x 23 cm. See Tables I and II. DLC, MiU-C, NN.

At foot of p. 104: "Van Benthuisen & Wood, Typographers." In this and all succeeding editions the music is printed from type. Obadiah R. Van Benthuisen and William Wood apparently established their typographical firm in November 1807. It was in existence through November 1808, only. This edition, which clearly must have appeared some time after the last dated edition and some time before the dissolution of the partnership, thus was unquestionably published in 1808, probably during the latter part of the year.

EDITION G: . . . Albany, . . . by T. & J. Swords, Everet [sic] Duyckinck and William Falconer, New-York; Wm. J. M'Cartee, Schenectady; A. Seward, Utica; Tracy & Bliss, Lansingburgh; Parker & Bliss, Troy; and Increase

Cook, New-Haven. Van Benthuisen & Newton, Typographers. [1809]

104 pp.; typeset. See Tables I and II. CtHC, DLC, ICN, MWA, N, NjR (2), NNUT, RPB.

A facsimile of this title-page is in Metcalf (see note 13 above), opposite p. 93.

EDITION H: . . . Albany, . . . Troy; Increase Cook, New-Haven; and M. Cary [sic], Philadelphia. Van Benthuisen & Newton, Typographers. [1809]

104 pp.; typeset. See Tables I and II. ICN(2), MiU-C.

Obadiah R. Van Benthuisen and George Newton apparently established their firm in November, 1808. It was in existence only through December, 1809. Eds. G and H were thus in all probability both published in 1809, and could not have appeared after that date. Because Eds. E and F both appeared in 1808, it is extremely doubtful that Ed. G was actually printed before 1809, although this is theoretically possible.

EDITION I: . . . Albany, . . . New-Haven; [sic] M. Cary [sic], Philadelphia; J. Bogert, Geneva; J. D. Bemis, Canandaigua; P. Potter, Poughkeepsie; E. Lewis, Newburgh, [sic, comma] and D. Allenson & Co. [sic, no comma] Burlington, N.J. O. R. Van Benthuisen, Typographer. [1810]

104 pp.; typeset. See Tables I and II. ICN, N.

This edition was advertised as "just published" in the [Albany] *Balance & New-York*

TABLE II. CONTENT CHANGES IN 104-PAGE EDITIONS

Page	F	G and H	I
34	Southwell	Mount Zion	.....
35	Sherburne	Williamstown	.....
38	Caldwell, Williamstown	Sherburne	.....
70	Babel, Plymouth	.....	Concord
93	23rd Psalm, 29th Psalm	.....	Arnheim, *Arlington
100	Crucifixion	.....	*Newark
101	(cont.), *Newmark	*.....	*Columbia *.....

\*Of European origin.

TABLE III. CONTENT CHANGES IN 112-PAGE EDITIONS

Page	J	K	L	Mabc	N	Oab
16	Whitestown				*Dalston	*
					*Martyrs	*
24	Calvary,		*Mear,	*	*	*
	*Mear	*	*Evening Hymn	*	*	*
34	Mt. Sion		*Tunbridge	*	*	*
35	(cont.),		Williamstown,			
	Williamstown		*Pleyel's	*	*	*
39	Sharon		*St. Asaph's	*	*	*
42	Grafton	*Bethesda	*	*	*	*
43	(cont.),	Coronation				
	Coronation	Sutton				
53	Stratfield				*Portugal,	*
					*Hymn	*
57	Ballstown				*Pelham	*
61	Salisbury		*Denmark	*	*	*
62	Lena		*(cont.)	*	*	*
64	Rome				*Sunday,	*
					*Bedford	*
65	Judgment			*Pleyel's 2d	*	*
68	Berne		Lena			
69	Providence		Salisbury		New Jordan	
71	Brentwood,			*Bangor,	*	*
	*Bangor	*	*	*Salem	*	*
77	Heavenly					
	Vision (cont.)					
			*Portugal	*	*Irish	*
81-	Judgment					
84	Anthem					*New York
85	(cont.)					*(cont.),
						*Munich
86	(cont.)					*Musick
87	(cont.)					*German
88	(cont.)					*Green's 100,
						*Dunchurch
92	*Piermont	*	*	*Portsmouth	*	*
95	Westminster		*Rutland	*	*	*
96	Exhortation			*Portuguese		
				Hymn	*	*
97	Milton			*Plympton	*	*
98	Christian Song		*Ashley	*	*	*
99	(cont.),		China,			
	China		*Bethel	*	*	*
101	Columbia,			*Newmark,	*	*
	*Newmark	*	*	*St. Thomas	*	*
105	*Pleyel's,	*	*Silver St.	*	*	*
	*Silver St.	*				
110	Winter,			*St. Mich-		
	Funeral			ael's	*	*
	Thought					

\*Of European origin.

# THE EASY INSTRUCTOR;

OR,

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- I. The RUDIMENTS of MUSIC on an improved Plan, wherein the Naming and Timing of the Notes are familiarized to the weakest Capacity.
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Published for the Use of SINGING SOCIETIES in general, but more particularly for those who have not the advantage of an INSTRUCTOR.

By WILLIAM LITTLE AND WILLIAM SMITH.

The Music Types used in printing this Book are secured to the Proprietors by Patent Right.

ALBANY:

PRINTED FOR WEBSTERS & SKINNERS AND DANIEL STEELE, (PROPRIETORS,)

And sold at their respective Book-Stores, at the corner of State and Pearl-streets, and at No. 472 South Market-street; by T. & J. SWOODS, E. DUYCKINCK, COLLINS & Co. and D. SMITH, *New-York*; M. CAREY, B. WARREN, W. W. WOODWARD and A. SMALL, *Philadelphia*; J. CUSHING, *Baltimore*; H. HOWE, *New-Haven*; WELLS & LILLY, *Boston*; G. GOODWIN & Sons, *Hartford*; P. POTTER, *Poughkeepsie*; B. F. LEWIS, *Newburgh*; E. NORMAN, *Hudson*; PARKER & BLISS, *Troy*; TRACY & BLISS, *Lansingburgh*; DODD & STEVENS, *Salem*; H. STEVENS, *Schenectady*; W. WILLIAMS, *Utica*; J. BOGERT, *Ceneca*; J. D. BURNS; *Canandaigua*; SKINNER & CROSBY, *Auburn*; S. H. & H. A. SALISBURY, *Buffalo*.

PICKARD & VAN BENTHUYSEN, PRINTERS.

Illustration 5. Edition P. Courtesy of the General Library,  
University of Michigan. (See check list, page 53.)

*State Journal* on February 6, 1810. Condit (see note 23 above) reports an edition identical with Ed. I except that the name of M. Carey [Cary] is missing from the list of booksellers. The authors have been unable to locate such an edition. As the title-page is incorrectly transcribed in other respects, the omission of the bookseller's name may perhaps have been an oversight or a typographical error.

EDITION J: . . . Albany, By Websters & Skinners and Daniel Steele, . . . Duyckinck [sic, no comma] New-York; Wm. J. M'Cartee, . . . E. Lewis, Newburgh. O. R. Van Benthuisen, Typographer. [1811]

112 pp.; typeset. See Tables I and III. RPB.

Van Benthuisen was in business alone between December, 1809, and the fall of 1812; therefore, Eds. I and J, which bear his name as sole typographer, must have been published between these dates. Ed. J. however, must have appeared between the fall of 1811 and that of 1812, as its title-page gives the printers as Websters & Skinners, a change in title which took place in the fall of the former year.

EDITION K: . . . Albany, . . . Evert Duyckinck, New-York; . . . Packard & Van Benthuisen, Typographers. [1812]

112 pp.; typeset. See Tables I and III. DLC, ICN, OCHP.

EDITION L: . . . Albany, . . . New-York; A. Seward, Utica; Tracy & Bliss, Lansingburgh; Parker & Bliss and Solomon Wilber, Jun. [sic, no comma] Troy;

Increase Cook, New-Haven; Matthew Cary [sic], Philadelphia; J. Bogert, Geneva; J. D. Bemis, Canandaigua; P. Potter, Poughkeepsie; William E. Norman, Hudson. Packard & Van Benthuisen, Typographers. [1813]

112 pp.; typeset. See Tables I and III. MWA, MiU-C, NN.

EDITION Ma: . . . Albany, . . . New-York; Riggs & Stevens, Schenectady; A. Seward, Utica; Tracy & Bliss, Lansingburgh; Parker & Bliss, Troy; M. Carey, Philadelphia; . . . Poughkeepsie; E. Lewis, Newburgh. Packard & Van Benthuisen, Typographers. [1814]

112 pp.; typeset. See Tables I, III, and IV. CBB (2), ICN (2), MWA (2), NN, NNUT.

EDITION Mb: [same, except comma omitted after "T. & J. Swords"] [1814]

See Tables I, III, and IV. CtHWatk. MBC, N.

EDITION Mc: [same] [1815]

See Tables I, III, and IV. CtHC, MWA.

EDITION N: [same] [1815]

112 pp.; typeset. See Tables I, III, and IV. N, NN, NNS, RPB.

EDITION Oa: [same] [1816]

112 pp.; typeset. See Tables I, III, and V. MB, N, NNUT.

EDITION Ob: [same] [1816]

See Tables I, III, and V. MWA (2).

TABLE IV. COMPARISON OF ISSUES, EDITION M

Page	Points	Ma	Mb	Mc
17	Last two words, upper line of text, "Sutton"	Surprize, And	Surprize, And	Suprise [sic], and
61	First letter of word "soft" in relation to letters in "Denmark"	under "m"	under "e"	before "D"



**REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION.**

**THE EASY INSTRUCTOR;**  
OR,  
**A NEW METHOD OF TEACHING**  
**Sacred Harmony.**

*Notes*

*CONTAINING,*

- I. The Rudiments of Music on an improved Plan, wherein the Naming and Timing of the Notes are familiarized to the weakest Capacity.
- II. A choice Collection of PSALM TUNES and ANTHEMS, from the most celebrated Authors, with a number composed in Europe and America, entirely new; suited to all the Metres sung in the different Churches in the United States.

Published for the Use of SINGING SOCIETIES in general, but more particularly for those who have not the advantage of an INSTRUCTOR.

BY **WILLIAM LITTLE, AND WILLIAM SMITH.**

The Music Types of this Book, as to casting and using, are secured by Patent Right to **GEORGE WEBSTER**, of the city of Albany. Rights to make or use them may be obtained of him.

**ALBANY:**

PRINTED FOR **WEBSTERS & SKINNERS** AND **DANIEL STEELE**,  
And sold at their respective Book-Stores, at the corner of State and Pearl-streets, and at No. 472 South Market-street.

**PACKARD & VAN BENTHUYSEN, PRINTERS.**

EDITION P: [see illustration] . . . The Music Types used in printing this Book are secured to the Proprietors by Patent Right. Albany: Printed for Websters & Skinners and Daniel Steele, (Proprietors,) And sold at their respective Book-Stores, at the corner of State and Pearl-streets, and at No. 472 South Market-street; by T. & J. Swords, E. Duyckinck, Collins & Co. and D. Smith, New-York; M. Carey, B. Warner, W. W. Woodward and A. Small, Philadelphia; J. Cushing, Baltimore; H. Howe, New-Haven; Wells & Lilly, Boston; G. Goodwin & Sons, Hartford; P. Potter, Poughkeepsie; B. F. Lewis, Newburgh; E. Norman, Hudson; Parker & Bliss, Troy; Tracy & Bliss, Lansingburgh; Dodd & Stevens, Salem; H. Stevens, Schenectady; W. Williams, Utica; J. Bogert, Geneva; J. D. Bemis, Canandaigua; Skinner & Crosby, Auburn; S. H. & H. A. Salisbury, Buffalo. Packard & Van Benthuyzen, Printers. [1817]

120 pp.; typeset. CtHWatk, DLC (2), MWA, MiU, PPeSchw, RPB, SCU.

This is evidently the earliest edition printed after the lapse, on December 10, 1816, of the original New York copyright, which ran for fourteen years; a patent notice is substituted for the copyright notice appearing on the title-pages of previous editions. A patent on the casting and use of the shape note types was issued to George Webster, of the firm of Websters & Skinners, on February 28, 1816. The original notice of the patent was apparently destroyed in one of the fires which ravaged the U.S. Patent Office

early in its history, and so no details as to the exact nature of the patent are available. See also Eds. S, U, and W, which are derivatives of this edition, apparently printed by license of the holders of the patent.

EDITION Q: [see illustration] Revised and Enlarged Edition. The Easy Instructor; . . . The Music Types of this Book, as to casting and using, are secured by Patent Right to George Webster, of the city of Albany. Rights to make or use them may be obtained of him. Albany: Printed for Websters & Skinners and Daniel Steele, And sold at their respective Book-Stores, at the corner of State and Pearl-streets, and at No. 472 South Market-street. Packard & Van Benthuyzen, Printers. [1817]

127, [1] pp.; typeset. See Table VI. CLU, DLC, MdBJ.

This edition was advertised as "just published" in the *Albany Gazette & Daily Advertiser* on November 6, 1817.

EDITION R: [same] [1818]

127, [1] pp.; typeset. See Table VI. CSU, MHi, N, NHi, NN.

EDITION S: [text of title-page same as Ed. P through "Patent Right," then:] Utica: Printed by William Williams, No. 60, Genesee Street. 1818.

126, [1] pp.; typeset. CtY, DLC, ICN (2), MH, MWA, OCIWHI.

EDITION T: [same as Ed. Q] [1819]

127, [1] pp.; typeset. See Table VI. ICN.

TABLE V. COMPARISON OF ISSUES, EDITION O

Page	Points	Oa	Ob
[3]	In line beginning, "The Committee . . ."	URANIAN SOCIETY	URANIAN SNCIETY [sic]
[4]	First word, second line	ample	the
5	Last word on page	of	ensue
61	First letter of word "soft" in relation to letters in "Denmark"	between "n" and "m"	under "D"

TABLE VI. CONTENT CHANGES IN 127, [1]-PAGE EDITIONS

Page	Q	R	T, V, X-AA
20	New Durham,	*Gilboa	*.....
21	Invitation	*Wells,	*.....
	Mortality,	*Brightelmstone	*.....
22	*Wells	*Blendon,	*.....
	Ocean	*Messiah	*.....
38	Sherburne	*Christmas,	*Dundee,
		*Chelmsford	*.....
45	Delight	*Pensance	*.....
102	Exhortation	*Arundel,	*.....
		*St. Ann's	*.....

\*Of European origin.

EDITION U: [text of title-page same as Ed. P through "the advantage of an instructor," then:] By Little and Smith. Cincinnati: Printed by J. Pace, No. 106, Main-Street. 1819.

112 pp.; typeset. OC.

EDITION V: [same as Eds. Q and T, except that "Sacred Harmony" is printed in shadowed rather than plain black letter] [1820]

127, [1] pp.; typeset. See Table VI. ICU, MiU-C.

EDITION W: [same as Ed. S, except that the date has been changed to:] 1820.

126, [1] pp.; typeset. CtY, MWA, NN.

EDITION X: [same as Ed. V, except that Daniel Steele's address is given as 435 South Market-street] [1822]

127, [1] pp.; typeset. See Table VI. ICN, MWA.

Daniel Steele was at the street address given in this edition only between April and September, 1822.

EDITION Ya: [same as Ed. X, except that the imprint reads:] . . . and D. Steele & Son, . . . and at No. 437 South Market-street. . . . [1824]

127, [1] pp.; typeset. See Tables VI and VII. MnU, MWA.

EDITION Yb: [same] [1826]

See Tables VI and VII. CthWatK, OCIWHI.

EDITION Z: [same, except that the imprint reads:] . . . and Oliver Steele . . . 1828.

127, [1].; typeset. See Table VI. DLC, MWA, N, NNUT.

EDITION AA: [same, except that the imprint is without date] [1830]

127, [1] pp.; typeset. See Table VI. DLC.

EDITION BB: [same, except that the imprint is dated:] 1831.

135, [1] pp.; typeset. MWA, N.

An extra signature of music has been added to this, the last edition of *The Easy Instructor*.

TABLE VII. COMPARISON OF ISSUES, EDITION Y

Page	Points	Ya	Yb
4	First word, second line	ample	example
5	Last word on page	of	persons
61	First letter of word "soft" in relation to letters in "Denmark"	under "D"	before "D"

TABLE VIII. CONSPECTUS OF EDITIONS AND ISSUES

<i>Edition</i>	<i>Place if other than Albany</i>	<i>Metcalf number</i>	<i>Pages</i>	<i>Number of musical compositions</i>			
				<i>Indexed</i>	<i>Actually printed</i>	<i>Of Amer. origin</i>	<i>Of Eur. origin</i>
Aa [1802]	[New York]		[2], 105 (i.e. 106)	105	105	100	5
Ab [1802]	[New York]	A	[2], 105 (i.e. 106)	105	105	100	5
B 1805			108	102	102	88	14
C 1806		3	108	102	102	88	14
Da 1807			108 (i.e. 104)	102	102	88	14
Db 1807		4	108 (i.e. 104)	102	102	88	14
E 1808		5	108 (i.e. 104)	102	102	88	14
F [1808]		6	104	95	95	76	19
G [1810]		7	104	94	94	75	19
H [1809]			104	94	94	75	19
I [1809]		8	104	95	95	73	22
J [1811]		10	112	106	105	75	30
K [1812]		11	112	107	106	75	31
L [1813]		12	112	107	106	68	38
Ma [1814]		13	112	104	105	61	44
Mb [1814]			112	104	105	61	44
Mc [1815]			112	104	105	61	44
N [1815]		15	112	107	108	57	51
Oa [1816]			112	111	113	56	57
Ob [1816]		14	112	111	113	56	57
P [1817]		16	120	124	125	50	75
Q [1817]		17	127, [1]	139	139	34	105
R [1818]			127, [1]	141	141	27	114
S 1818	Utica	22	126, [1]	127	127	49	78
T [1819]			127, [1]	141	141	27	114
U 1819	Cincinnati		112	111	112	49	63
V [1820]			127, [1]	141	141	27	114
W 1820	Utica	23	126, [1]	127	127	49	78
X [1822]		18	127, [1]	141	141	27	114
Ya [1824]		19	127, [1]	141	141	27	114
Yb [1826]			127, [1]	141	141	27	114
Z 1828		20	127, [1]	142	141	27	114
AA [1830]			127, [1]	142	141	27	114
BB 1831		21	135, [1]	142	153	27	126