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Music of the American Revolution

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Introduction

Music of the American Revolution produced powerful effects. More than a mere backdrop to revolutionary events or a simple reflection of revolutionary spirit, music forged common cause and division, imbued political sentiments with emotional resonance, infused secular and political ideals with sacred and religious overtones, animated ideas about political allegiance, and conveyed a range of contested and evolving national identities. Music also connected Anglo-American colonists to a wider transatlantic culture, was bound up with projects of empire and settler colonialism, spoke to shifting gender ideals, and helped racialize the soundscape of the Revolution. As a topic that cuts across many disciplines, a definitive treatment of music in the American Revolution remains elusive. In fact, beyond debates occurring within specific disciplinary subfields, studies on different aspects of American Revolutionary music are not often in conversation with each other. However, evaluations of 18th-century American music demand attention not only to sound but also to literary practices, performance cultures, and transatlantic connections. Cumulatively, scholars have begun to challenge unduly nostalgic interpretations of music's contribution to the Revolution. Yet there is still significant opportunity for future studies to adopt more expansive definitions of revolutionary music to better integrate minority musical experiences and expressions into American Revolutionary history. As such, this bibliography includes citations to works that may lack either a strong musical or Revolutionary-era focus to advance research on this vital subject. For example, scholars of music of the African diaspora and Indigenous First Nations typically do not center their narratives on the American Revolution but awareness of their research is essential to build a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the role of music, songs, and singing in this conflict.

General Overviews

These studies provide an overview of music's place in American Revolutionary society from a variety of disciplinary and thematic perspectives. Sonneck 1907 is the foundational documentary account of early American concerts, performance practice, and musical activity in colonial British America. Schlesinger 1954 and Covey 1948 offer more analytically engaged arguments about patriot music as a form of propaganda or as the expression of a nascent colonial American spirit, respectively. Camus 1976 and Silverman 1976 build significantly on earlier work and give what are still two of the most authoritative overviews of music in the Revolution. Camus focuses on music in the military while Silverman emphasizes the contribution of music—alongside painting, literature, and theater—to the construction of a new national American identity. Schrader 1980 and Ogasapian 2004 expand on those insights while more recent research like Bechtold 2015 and Goodman 2017 provide new avenues for further research. Bechtold integrates insights from the history of senses, religion, and science to rethink the power of music in the Revolutionary era and Goodman explores how early Americans repurposed European melodies to reassess the significance of the Revolution to American music history. Lohman 2021, an edited collection, offers an extremely useful introduction to the sources, significance, and contemporary uses of music in the Revolutionary era.

Bechtold, Rebecca. "A Revolutionary Soundscape: Musical Reform and the Science of Sound in Early America, 1760-1840." *Journal of the Early Republic* 35.3 (2015): 419-450.

The best recent account of the power of music in Revolutionary American society. Draws on early American conceptions of sound, the

senses, religion, and science to trace the political impact of music throughout the revolutionary period.

Camus, Raoul F. *Military Music of the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976.

The authoritative study of music's contribution to martial dimensions of the American Revolutionary War. Camus thoroughly refutes claims that music was not introduced into the United States military until 1834 and places those early American military uses of music in the context of preexisting 18th-century European, British, and colonial traditions.

Covey, Cyclone. "Of Music and of America Singing." In *Seeds of Liberty: The Genesis of the American Mind*. Edited by Max Savelle, 490–552. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948.

A dated but wide-ranging and concise contextual overview of music in the American colonial and revolutionary periods.

Goodman, Glenda. "Transatlantic Contrafacta, Musical Formats, and the Creation of Political Culture in Revolutionary America." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 11.4 (2017): 392–419.

An important recent intervention. Goodman traces transatlantic uses of the tune "God Save the King" throughout the Revolutionary era to suggest that the Revolution did not signal a "turning point in American music history." Close attention is paid to the materiality of political songs and to the multiplicity of meanings produced by melodies like "God Save the King," which were consumed across many different printed formats and live performance contexts.

Lohman, Laura, ed. *Researching Secular Music and Dance in the Early United States: Extending the Legacy of Kate Van Winkle Keller*. New York: Routledge, 2021.

A useful starting point for researchers and performers of early American music. Chapters introduce readers to key bibliographical tools, to the interdisciplinary significance of early American music's social and cultural contexts, and to perspectives on what it means to perform this music today.

Ogasapian, John. *Music of the Colonial and Revolutionary Era*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004.

A textbook-style introductory overview of music in British America from European contact to 1800. Includes a chapter dedicated to music's contributions to American society during the Revolutionary War, which stresses the singing school movement, British musical influences, military bands, and popular songs as propaganda for patriots and loyalists alike.

Schlesinger, Arthur M. "A Note on Songs as Patriot Propaganda 1765-1776." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 11.1 (1954): 78–88.

A short but influential research note interpreting patriot songs as a form of "musical propaganda." Beginning in the Stamp Act crisis, Schlesinger points to the increasing output of patriot songs over time, categorizing them into three types: narrative, hortatory, and martial.

Schrader, Arthur F. "Songs to Cultivate the Sensations of Freedom." In *Music in Colonial Massachusetts, 1630–1820*. Vol. 1, *Music in Public Spaces*. Edited by Barbara Lambert, 105–156. Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1980.

A detailed survey of notable topical songs and their meanings during the Revolutionary War. Highlights the influence of melody on the reception of these songs, which are framed here as specimens of propaganda—not art or literature. Each song is accompanied by a contextual introduction, visual evidence of its publication at the time, and an adapted modern-day musical score.

Silverman, Kenneth. *A Cultural History of the American Revolution: Painting, Music, Literature, and the Theatre in the Colonies and the United States from the Treaty of Paris to the Inauguration of George Washington, 1763–1789*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976.

Silverman's book remains an important compendium for understanding cultural life during the broad era of the American Revolution. It contains three brief but indispensable summaries of "musical life" that span three chronologically separate periods from 1763 to 1789. Together with painting, literature, and theater, Silverman argues for music's role in the creation of a distinctively American national culture.

Sonneck, O. G. *Early Concert-Life in America*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1907.

The foundational account of organized British American public concert activity during the 18th-century. With a focus on four urban centers—Charleston, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston—it is still the most comprehensive single volume to document professional musical performances in early America.

Bibliographies

Research into early American music benefits from many impressive efforts to bring it under bibliographic control. Sonneck 1945 (with updates by William Treat Upton) authoritatively covers the gamut of 18th-century American secular music imprints and anchors subsequent publications. Lowens 1976 identifies extant "songsters" before 1821, Heard 1975 collates published references to music from the Evans Collection of Early American Imprints, Dichter and Shapiro 1977 notes the challenges of locating sheet music associated with the American Revolution, and Anderson 1977 combs colonial newspapers for evidence of political and patriotic lyrics published during the revolutionary conflict. Fuld and Davidson 1980 and Keller 1981 compile inventories of non-published manuscripts associated with early American music while Anderson 1987 offers a highly specialized but informative list of every musical reference found in the *New York Gazette* during the Revolutionary War. Britton, et al. 1990 complements Sonneck's earlier coverage of secular sources by adding a comprehensive bibliography of sacred musical imprints and Southern and Wright 1990 provides annotated references to African American music and Black music-making from the colonial period onward.

Anderson, Gillian B. *Music in New York During the American Revolution: An Inventory of Musical References in Rivington's New York Gazette*. Boston: Music Library Association, 1987.

This slim volume provides a detailed accounting of every music-related article or advertisement published in *Rivington's New York Gazette* from 1773 to 1783. Its entries cover music published and performed, musical instruments available for sale, notices pertaining to musicians, and musical concerts and events. The author accurately acknowledges the loyalist leanings of the *Gazette's* editor, James Rivington, as important for assessing its content.

Anderson, Gillian B., comp. and ed. *Freedom's Voice in Poetry and Song: An Inventory of Political and Patriotic Lyrics in Colonial American Newspapers, 1773–1783, and Song Book*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1977.

A substantial bibliography of song lyrics printed in Revolutionary-era American colonial newspapers. It is framed as a complement to other bibliographic projects on early American secular music, songsters, and manuscript music. And it includes an inventory of 1,455 lyrics arranged by colony, city, and newspaper. The volume's emphasis on patriot material makes the loyalist perspective in Anderson 1987 a useful corollary.

Britton, Allen Perdue, Irving Lowens, and Richard Crawford. *American Sacred Music Imprints, 1698–1810: A Bibliography*. Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1990.

A large and authoritative annotated bibliography of European-style sacred music published in North America before 1810. Richard Crawford's substantial forty-five-page introduction provides a sophisticated overview of the cultural and economic context from which these works emerged, though newer scholarship (like Bechtold 2015, cited under General Overviews and Religion) has done more to connect this religious material to Revolutionary soundscapes.

Dichter, Harry, and Elliot Shapiro. *Handbook of Early American Sheet Music, 1768–1889*. Rev. ed. New York: Dover, 1977.

A well-cited reference work with a long chronology, Ditcher and Shapiro's handbook includes a brief section dedicated to "Music of the American Revolution" that underlines the difficulties faced in locating sources for this information. Originally published in 1941.

Fuld, James J., and Mary Wallace Davidson. *18th-Century American Secular Music Manuscripts: An Inventory*. Philadelphia: Music Library Association, 1980.

A thorough account of the contents of eighty-five music manuscripts from 18th-century America. The publication does not aim to be comprehensive in its manuscript selection, but the detailed descriptions of each entry are exhaustive.

Heard, Priscilla S. *American Music, 1698–1800: An Annotated Bibliography*. Waco, TX: Markham Press Fund of Baylor University Press, 1975.

A useful checklist of music-related items in the Evans Collection of Early American Imprints (now a well-known subscription database). The bibliography is separated into three sections: entries that include musical notation, entries that "pertain to music," and entries that were missing from the original Evans microprint publication in 1955–1969. The first section boasts the most detailed annotations; the second includes many political, patriotic, and Revolutionary songs.

Keller, Kate Van Winkle. *Popular Secular Music in America Through 1800: A Preliminary Checklist of Manuscripts in North American Collections*. Philadelphia: Music Library Association, 1981.

A preliminary listing of manuscript collections containing musical notation, song texts, or dance figures held at more than seventy-five archives across the United States and Canada. It includes, for example, the location of Nathaniel Brown's commonplace book: a fifer in the Revolutionary war who wrote down eighty-six marches and dances for the fife that he likely played during the conflict.

Lowens, Irving. *A Bibliography of Songsters Printed in America before 1821*. Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1976.

A thorough checklist of early American songsters—small, pocket-sized collections of lyrical poetry intended to be sung to well-known melodies. Though weighted toward the postwar period, the bibliography lists fifty-one songsters published before 1790, including loyalist ones produced during the Revolution.

Sonneck, Oscar George Theodore. *A Bibliography of Early Secular American Music (18th Century)*. Revised and enlarged by William Treat Upton. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Music Division, 1945.

The standard bibliographic volume of 18th-century American secular musical imprints. Alongside the bibliography itself, which is organized alphabetically by title, are lists of composers, songsters, first lines, opera librettos, and an index of publishers, printers and engravers. Those interested in Revolutionary music and song will find its list of patriotic music especially useful.

Southern, Eileen, and Josephine Wright. *African-American Traditions in Song, Sermon, Tale, and Dance, 1600s–1920: An Annotated Bibliography of Literature, Collections, and Artworks*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.

An annotated bibliography that compiles references to primary sources pertaining to the use, experience, and perception of Black music in North America. Includes sixty-four entries from the pre-1800 period comprised largely of white observations of Black social and religious music activity. Commentaries offer brief but informative descriptions of each source and its engagement with musical topics.

Imperial Contexts

Patriot and loyalist songs linked British Americans to an imperial context that deeply informed the meanings, sounds, uses, content, and style of their music. The entries in this section highlight a range of scholarship about musical connections beyond the thirteen rebellious colonies. Dillon 2014 provides an influential interpretation of Atlantic performative culture and politics in the 18th century that privileges performance as a space for staging debates over popular sovereignty, representation, and the making of the “people” in an imperial world predicated on African enslavement and Indigenous dispossession. Gerona 2014 shifts our perspective westwards through an examination of revolutionary songs in Revolutionary-era Texas and the Louisiana borderlands while Harvey 2015 considers how European cultural performances propelled settler colonialism on the western frontier. By contrast, Jones 2014 and Semi 2012 focus on Euro-Atlantic elites and their perceptions of music’s rhetorical and scientific power.

Dillon, Elizabeth Maddock. *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649–1849*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.

An essential meditation on the power of performative politics in the 18th-century Atlantic world. Written from a literary perspective, the book’s chapters weave a “performative commons” out of plays and theatrical performance in London, Kingston, Charleston, and New York. It offers groundbreaking analysis of Atlantic performance cultures, the common spaces where they were experienced, and the racialization of the imperial stage.

Gerona, Carla. “With a Song in Their Hands: Incendiary Décimas from the Texas and Louisiana Borderlands during a Revolutionary Age.” *Early American Studies* 12.1 (2014): 93–142.

Revolutionary songs in 18th-century North America were not unique to British Americans on the eastern seaboard. Gerona uses evidence from legal trials in east Texas and west Louisiana to examine how populations of common farmers, traders, and ranchers used music during the Revolutionary era to resist Spanish imperial authority—and were arrested for it as a result.

Harvey, Douglas S. *The Theatre of Empire: Frontier Performances in America, 1750–1860*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Explores how Euro-American performances perpetuated settler colonial exploitation of Native peoples and the environment. Harvey also highlights how Indigenous performance challenged the “bourgeois” politeness of colonial performance and song. Chapter 2 contains material most relevant to the Revolutionary War.

Jones, Catherine. *Literature and Music in the Atlantic World, 1767–1867*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

A rich interdisciplinary study of music’s rhetorical power in a transatlantic Anglo-American context. Though its chronological scope is broad, chapter 1 explores how Revolutionary elites like Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Francis Hopkinson understood the power of music and its role in politics and society.

Semi, Maria. *Music as a Science of Mankind in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Translated by Timothy Keats. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012.

Semi’s volume brings together the most influential British theories of music that informed Enlightenment-era debates about its effects, use, and power throughout the Atlantic world. Reveals how these theories related to contemporary philosophical, scientific, and

historical debates and showcases the perceived role of music within 18th-century understandings of the “civilizing” process.

Music in Revolutionary Society

The role of music in the American Revolution was necessarily shaped by its social environment—a consideration especially pertinent to music made in an age before the invention of recorded sound. Subsequently, much of the most innovative work on Revolutionary-era American music revolves around its place in public and private life, its presence in spaces that facilitated common connection like print culture and the theater, and its relationship to race, gender, and religion.

Public and Private Culture

Debates over when, why, and for what purpose music should be used were never straightforward during the Revolutionary period. Music routinely broke down distinctions between public and private and as such the propriety of its presence in any context—from church to the home and public life—was rarely a settled question. Studies like De Jong 1985 and Broyles 1992 speak to these contests over the most appropriate roles for music in a revolutionary society. And more recent work by Butler 2007 and Cohen 2017 reveal the contributions of music to associational civic life and sporting cultures (especially with reference to the St. Cecilia Society and the theater, respectively). Goodman 2020, meanwhile, points to how the private musical lives of 18th-century American women intersected with the politics of consumerism. Keller 2007 offers an incomparably thorough survey of colonial music and dance that necessarily underlines the social components of musical activity. And, finally, Rath 2003 gives a rich account of how music, sound, and the senses shaped power relations in early American society.

Broyles, Michael. *‘Music of the Highest Class’: Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.

Although focused on the antebellum period, this book includes a chapter on “Sacred-Music Reforms in Colonial and Federal America” that places the era’s foremost musical debates in the same milieu as Revolutionary debates over democracy, individual choice, authority, and class.

Butler, Nicholas Michael. *Votaries of Apollo: The St. Cecilia Society and the Patronage of Concert Music in Charleston, South Carolina, 1766–1820.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007.

A deeply researched history of an elite musical organization in Charleston, South Carolina, from its establishment in 1766 to 1820. With respect to the Revolution, readers will find that many members of the Society were also members of the South Carolina General Assembly or officers in the Continental Army. The book considers the organization’s attempts to maintain its activities throughout the war.

Cohen, Kenneth. *They Will Have Their Game: Sporting Culture and the Making of the Early American Republic.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017.

An insightful analysis of early American sporting culture, which Cohen defines to include almost any activity deriving its appeal from risk or an unknown outcome. The work makes an important contribution to the analysis of Revolutionary-era music and theater by emphasizing their appeal as connected to masculine cultures of gambling, athletic competition, horse-racing, and tavern-going.

De Jong, Mary Gosselink. “‘Both Pleasure and Profit’: William Billings and the Uses of Music.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 42.1 (1985): 104–116.

Explores the composer William Billings’s advocacy of music as a pleasurable pursuit in the context of Revolutionary-era debates over

the religious and social propriety of its sensuous or emotional appeal. Speaks usefully to the perceptions and purpose of music in Anglo-American society.

Goodman, Glenda. “Bound Together: The Intimacies of Music-Book Collecting in the Early American Republic.” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 145.1 (2020): 1–35.

Contains numerous insights for scholars of Revolutionary-era music, especially its emphasis on the importance of manuscript music in 18th-century America and the gendered labor employed to produce it. Also provides perceptive accounts of music’s place in the period’s politics of consumerism.

Keller, Kate Van Winkle. *Dance and Its Music in America, 1528–1789*. Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2007.

A thorough narrative of dance and associated musical activity from European contact to the creation of the United States. Geographic organization of material by region and state scatters accounts pertaining to the Revolutionary era throughout different parts of the volume.

Rath, Richard Cullen. *How Early America Sounded*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003.

A key work on the history of sound and the senses in early America. Its analyses range far beyond music and songs but evoke fundamental contextual questions for researchers and expand beyond Anglo-based experiences to encompass Native American and enslaved communities. Includes a short section that examines military music in the Revolution.

Print Culture

Since it is not possible to access Revolutionary-era audio of Revolutionary-era music it is necessary for researchers come to terms with it via printed sources. Fortunately, print was also one of the most common mediums early Americans used to access and engage with their music too. The close connection between music and print has produced a number of important insights. Gray 2018 makes an astute methodological argument about the benefits of highlighting the materiality of music in early America and Goodman 2017 applies a similar approach to demonstrate how a specific song shifted meaning according to the type of material text in which it was published. Dillon 2012 emphasizes the slippery line between print and performance to reveal how musicianship enabled a Revolutionary-era community to negotiate race while Wells 2018 leverages literary analysis to argue that political poetry and songs were important vehicles for debating and contesting the meaning of the American Revolution. Tyler 1897 stands as a well-worn starting point for investigations about the literature of the American Revolution, defined broadly enough to include music. And research by Wolfe 1980, Crawford and Krummel 1983, and Keller 2007 detail American music printing and its business.

Crawford, Richard, and D. W. Krummel. “Early American Music Printing and Publishing.” In *Printing and Society in Early America*. Edited by William L. Joyce, 186–227. Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1983.

Traces the evolution of music printing practices throughout early America from the introduction of printed musical notation to the late 18th century. While not the main thrust of its argument, the chapter offers an explanation of how changes to music publishing practices helped make some of the Revolution’s most well-known native-born composers like William Billings sound dated by the turn of the century.

Dillon, Elizabeth Maddock. “John Marrant Blows the French Horn: Print, Performance, and the Making of Publics in Early African American Literature.” In *Early African American Print Culture*. Edited by Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein, 318–340. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

An innovative study foregrounding the role of race and performance in the creation of 18th-century print and public culture. Through a close reading of a 1769 conversion described in John Marrant's *Narrative* (published in 1785) Dillon analyzes how Marrant's musical skills and actions enabled a white community to make sense of his Black male presence in white space.

Goodman, Glenda. "Transatlantic Contrafacta, Musical Formats, and the Creation of Political Culture in Revolutionary America." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 11.4 (2017): 392–419.

Uses an analysis of lyrics set to the tune of "God Save the King" to show, in part, how the format of a song's publication could alter its musical meaning. Those who encountered the song in an almanac, newspaper, or manuscript were likely to perceive its political purpose in entirely different ways.

Gray, Myron. "Music." *Early American Studies* 16.4 (2018): 714–720.

A useful, theoretically informed, introduction to the concept of studying early American music as a printed or material text. Printed sources of music, Gray highlights, offer ways to "mediate sound" but also give insight into a range of other early American visual, performance, and material cultures.

Keller, Kate Van Winkle. "Nathaniel Coverley and Son, Printers, 1767–1825." *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 117, Part I (2007): 211–252.

Authored in connection with the Isaiah Thomas Broadside Ballads Project and a checklist of Coverley's publications, Keller's essay narrates the professional trajectory of two printers, Nathaniel Coverley, who published many patriotic songs during the Revolutionary War, and his son, Nathaniel Jr.

Tyler, Moses Coit. *The Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763–1783*. 2 vols. New York: G. P. Putnum's Sons, 1897.

A standard account of literature, broadly conceived, in the American Revolution. Contains numerous accounts of songs, such as John Dickinson's influential "Liberty Song," alongside poems, speeches, pamphlets, and other forms of writing.

Wells, Colin. *Poetry Wars: Verse and Politics in the American Revolution and Early Republic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.

A notable recent work that takes songs seriously as a form of literature and politics during the American Revolution and early republic. Wells argues, persuasively, that political poetry, in general, and political songs, specifically, were key mediums through which the narratives and meanings of the Revolution were discursively determined by both patriots and loyalists.

Wolfe, Richard J. *Early American Music Engraving and Printing: A History of Music Publishing in America from 1787 to 1825 with Commentary on Earlier and Later Practices*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.

Traces the evolution of music printing in early America as both a technology and a business. Its focus is on postwar developments, but early chapters center on the colonial and Revolutionary periods. An indispensable overview of the production and trajectory of early American printed music.

Theater

Early American music and theater shared close connections. Theatrical productions usually featured music, and musical productions routinely featured sections of acted drama. Music and theater also shared a larger set of transatlantic performance traditions and

cultural references. The history of American theater strove to assert its independence from those ties, notably in Dunlap 1832 and Sonneck 1915. Brown 1995 provides the most thorough foundation for work on theater in the American Revolution, a topic that has since been enriched by Nathans 2003 (with respect to political culture) and Chinn 2018 (with respect to gender). Separately, the contribution of Anglo-American theater to processes of colonialism, empire, and racialization is the subject of Dillon 2014—an essential intervention—as well as Harvey 2015 and Gibbs 2014. Mielke 2020 offers a helpfully expansive and inclusive overview of the field.

Brown, Jared. *The Theatre in America During the Revolution*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

A clear synthesis of theatrical entertainments and their controversies during the American Revolution. Suggests that British uses of the theater during the war helped to legitimize its role in American society afterward, a claim challenged in Nathans 2003. Includes an appendix of all known Revolutionary-era theatrical productions.

Chinn, Sarah E. *Spectacular Men: Race, Gender, and Nation on the Early American Stage*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Chinn highlights the male-centered nature of early American performance culture, tracing its trajectory from the colonial period into the early 19th century. Chapter 3 focuses on changing notions of Revolutionary patriotism in the theater while chapter 1 examines earlier elite debates over the power of performance to sway its consumers.

Dillon, Elizabeth Maddock. *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649–1849*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.

A field-defining book that uses an analysis of dramatic productions throughout the Atlantic world to show how a “performative commons” emerged as a critical site for creating racialized perceptions of popular sovereignty and political representation.

Dunlap, William. *A History of the American Theatre*. New York: J. J. Harper, 1832.

The first history of European-style theater and staged performances in America that remains a well-worn point of reference. The author was a producer, playwright, actor, and New York City theater manager.

Gibbs, Jenna M. *Performing the Temple of Liberty: Slavery, Theater, and Popular Culture in London and Philadelphia, 1760–1850*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014.

A nuanced account of how transatlantic theater helped transform antislavery sentiment into a political movement. Of particular interest to researchers of Revolutionary-era music is the first chapter’s treatment of Columbia—one of the most widely invoked characters in patriot ballads—as the mother of a virtuous, and white, revolutionary republic.

Harvey, Douglas S. *The Theatre of Empire: Frontier Performances in America, 1750–1860*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Places the history and significance of early American theater in a settler colonial context, illuminating connections between colonial performances and Indigenous dispossession.

Mielke, Laura L. “Performance, Theatricality, and Early American Drama.” In *A Companion to American Literature*. Vol. 1. Edited by Susan Belasco, Theresa Strouth Gaul, Linck Johnson, and Michael Soto, 438–444. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020.

An incisive overview of early American drama that takes an expansive approach to its presence on and off the stage, and that surveys

the participation of Native Americans, Blacks, and women. Music entwined with many of the performances featured here. Ends with a section dedicated to Revolutionary War dramas.

Nathans, Heather S. *Early American Theatre from the Revolution to Thomas Jefferson: Into the Hands of the People*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

A leading interpretation of the political, economic, and cultural context of early American theater to 1800. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the Revolutionary period, and while the analysis is not on music *per se* it gives a crucial account of individuals behind-the-stage and entertainment's place in the formation of US democratic national identity.

Sonneck, Oscar. *Early Opera in America*. New York: G. Schirmer, 1915.

A detailed, largely chronological, account of opera in British America before and after the Revolution—a genre more akin to a variety show than how opera would later come to be understood as an aspect of high culture.

Black Music and Revolution

Little research exists about the contribution of Black music to the American Revolution. Instead, what we know of African American music during this period derives from broad surveys of Black music and its history in North America. To date, influential surveys of Black music before the Civil War such as Southern 1997 and Epstein 1977 tend not to consider the American Revolution as a notable episode in the evaluation of Black music. More recent studies about the politics of music and dance in the lives of enslaved peoples, like Thompson 2014 and White and White 2005, similarly adopt larger temporal time frames than the Revolution itself. Floyd 2008 offers an important critique of the tendency for historians of early American music to overlook Black music's place in the origin story of American music while Gordon 2015 reveals how Anglo-American elites like Thomas Jefferson racialized the Revolutionary soundscape by defining Black and Indigenous music as noise. Dillon 2012, by contrast, highlights the power of Black performance to integrate Black experience into white dominated spaces. And Winans 2018 adds significant new data sets to the equation: tallying evidence of the number of Black musicians in 18th-century America, where they lived, and their range of musical skills. King-Dorset 2008 provides an analysis of African music in London that gives US-focused researchers a generative point of comparison and Reagon 1996 provides the most scholarly orientated audio compilation of historical African American sacred music. The evidence and methodological foundation is in place for future researchers to better connect Black music to the revolutionary politics of the American Revolution in support of patriot and loyalist commitments as well as spiritual ones that transcended worldly political allegiances.

Dillon, Elizabeth Maddock. "John Marrant Blows the French Horn: Print, Performance, and the Making of Publics in Early African American Literature." In *Early African American Print Culture*. Edited by Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein, 318–340. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Dillon, a literary scholar, uses a passage from John Marrant's *Narrative* (1785) to link performance to print in the politics of early African American print culture. The analysis focuses on Marrant's musical and noise-making contributions to a 1769 conversion scene that, in Dillon's reading, underscore how, Marrant, as a free Black man, used performance and spectacle to create the community of audience members needed for the publication of his experience to occur.

Gordon, Bonnie. "What Mr. Jefferson Didn't Hear." In *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*. Edited by Olivia Bloechl, Melanie Lowe, and Jeffrey Kallberg, 108–132. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

An important essay that uses an account of "music and noise in Thomas Jefferson's world" to illustrate the racialization of musical sound in early America and to elucidate music's contribution to settler colonial nation-making. Perhaps most noteworthy for its successful explanation of music's complexity as both a tool of social control and as a vehicle to facilitate contestation and resistance.

Epstein, Dena J. *Sinful Tunes: Black Folk Music to the Civil War*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977.

A touchstone analysis of Black American music, its meanings, and purposes to the end of the American Civil War. Little attention is paid to the American Revolution, but Part 1 provides an indispensable overview of early Black music culture in mainland North America as well as in the British and French Caribbean. The text includes lengthy primary source quotations and additional source discussions follow each chapter.

Floyd, Samuel A., Jr. "Black Music and Writing Black Music History: American Music and Narrative Strategies." *Black Music Research Journal* 28.1 (2008): 111–121.

A critique of American music history narratives that fail to acknowledge any meaningful place for Black music. Floyd argues that evidence of Black sounds and Black music in British America throughout the 18th century need to be better reflected in the origin story of American music and stresses vital Caribbean musical connections.

King-Dorset, Rodreguez. *Black Dance in London, 1730–1850: Innovation, Tradition, Resistance*. London: McFarland, 2008.

Considers the survival and transformation of African dance, music, and song traditions among Black communities in 18th-century London. Its scope includes the use of music and dance in Africa, its role during enslavement and transportation, its "creolization" in the Caribbean, and its capacity to forge Black identities and resist oppression.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson, comp. *Wade in the Water: African American Sacred Music Traditions*. Vols. 1–4. Washington, DC: Folkways Recordings, 1996.

Various artists. A companion to the twenty-six-part radio documentary series of the same name produced by National Public Radio (NPR) and the Smithsonian Institution. Compiler and project leader Bernice Johnson Reagon brings to life African American sacred music spanning spirituals, congregational singing, and gospel in a four-disc collection that illustrates the significance of Black sacred music and the stories of those who made it. Comes with detailed linear notes authored by Reagon.

Southern, Eileen. *The Music of Black Americans: A History*. 2d ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997.

A groundbreaking survey of Black American music, musicians, and musical practices from its African origins to the late 20th century. It includes a short section on the Revolutionary War wherein Southern contends that Black musicians did not forge a unique musical tradition during this conflict but did likely bring into camp the improvised—often satirical—singing that enslaved people had long used to make sense of their experience. Originally published in 1971.

Thompson, Katrina Dyonne. *Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014.

An expansive and analytically astute interpretation of the politics of music in North American slave societies. Thompson delineates between enslaved performances of music "onstage," as a coerced form of white entertainment, and "backstage" as a form of deception, self-defense, resistance, and rebellion. The view backstage reveals music's capacity to assert autonomy and create community notwithstanding white control.

White, Shane, and Graham White. *The Sounds of Slavery: Discovering African American History through Songs, Sermons, and Speech*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005.

An influential investigation into how the sounds of slave culture shaped the experience of those who lived within it. Broad in scope, both in periodization and its attention to auditory practices beyond music. White and White pinpoint how sounds informed the development of

a distinct Black American culture, one that resisted the dehumanizing conditions (and perceptions) championed by white enslavers. Includes an eighteen-track companion CD.

Winans, Robert B. "Black Musicians in Eighteenth-Century America: Evidence From Runaway Slave Advertisements." In *Banjo Roots and Branches*. Edited by Robert B. Winans, 194–213. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018.

A rare data-driven study of Black musicianship in 18th-century America. Winans analyzes over twelve thousand runaway slave advertisements and presents information about 761 Black musicians, the instruments they played, their geographic spread, and their non-musical skills. It offers the most comprehensive numbers-based picture of Black music and its place in the lives of enslaved people available to date.

Gender

Following Tick 1979, the first study to seriously address early American women as musical composers, research into the gendered overtones of Revolutionary-era music has produced some of the field's most exciting recent scholarship. Thus far, while Ritchie 2008 reveals important connections between female composers, patriotism, and national identity in England, directly comparable studies focusing on British American women and music before the early republic are yet to be written. Instead, Woronzoff-Dashkoff 2014 showcases how 18th-century Virginian women used music to earn money and negotiate gender norms while Goodman 2020 emphasizes the contribution of wealthier amateur musicians to the construction of gender, race, class, and nation. Crist 2003, Chinn 2018, and Zelnik 2018 each offer superlative accounts of music, masculinity, and manhood through their respective case studies of William Billings, the theater, and the origins of "Yankee Doodle."

Chinn, Sarah E. *Spectacular Men: Race, Gender, and Nation on the Early American Stage*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Complementary to Crist 2003, Chinn—a literary scholar—shows how the notoriously male-centric world of the early American theater helped produce a masculine definition of patriotism that spoke to the fears and desires of white working-class homosocial audiences during the early republic. Significant attention is paid to the performance of gender and race in theatrical interpretations of the Revolution.

Crist, Elizabeth B. "'Ye Sons of Harmony': Politics, Masculinity, and the Music of William Billings in Revolutionary Boston." *William and Mary Quarterly* 60.2 (2003): 333–354.

A pathbreaking interpretation of William Billings, one of the best-known American-born composers of the Revolutionary generation, that links his music to his patriot politics through the prism of gender and masculinity. Crist examines Billings' music—as well as the masculinist rhetoric he used to promote it—to unpack his contribution to the creation of a gendered American musical identity based on "self-sufficiency, individual agency, and fame."

Goodman, Glenda. *Cultivated by Hand: Amateur Musicians in the Early American Republic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Though focused on the post-Revolutionary period, Goodman's book remains an important addition to the field of early American music, women, and gender more broadly. Using an interdisciplinary combination of musicology, material history, and gender studies, it reveals how amateur musicians—mostly, though not exclusively, middle-to-upper-class white women—used their musical labor to facilitate interconnected processes of self-fashioning and nation making.

Ritchie, Leslie. *Women Writing Music in Late Eighteenth-Century England: Social Harmony in Literature and Performance*.

Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008.

A sophisticated interdisciplinary examination of women and music-making in 18th-century England. Richie rejects the assumption that female composers avoided public notoriety in favor of the private sphere by exploring how they engaged the nation, politics, and patriotic sentiment. Explains a critical transatlantic cultural milieu that fundamentally shaped British American ideas about music and gender.

Tick, Judith. *American Women Composers before 1870*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1979.

A foundational work in feminist musicology; the first to center early American women composers and to give their lives sustained and serious attention. Tick emphasizes the mid-19th century and estimates that as few as seventy of some 6,800 pieces of secular music published before 1825 in early America had female authors. Nonetheless, the book provides a rich Anglo-American overview of music's gendered function in American society between 1770 and 1830.

Woronzoff-Dashkoff, Elisabeth. "Playing for Their Share: A History of Creative Tradeswomen in Eighteenth Century Virginia." PhD diss., Bowling Green State University, 2014.

This work reveals how women in 18th-century Virginia used musical ability to earn both wages and esteem. It closely follows a remarkable cast of female musical duos, dancing managers, music teachers, and singing actresses—which Woronzoff-Dashkoff originally categorizes as "creative tradeswomen"—to highlight the "fluidity" of social life and gendered space in 18th-century America.

Zelnik, Eran. "Yankees, Doodles, Fops, and Cuckolds: Compromised Manhood and Provincialism in the Revolutionary Period, 1740–1781." *Early American Studies* 16.3 (2018): 514–544.

This article reassesses the origins of "Yankee Doodle" and importantly reveals how the evolution of this famous tune spoke to shifting notions of class and manhood in the colonial and Revolutionary-era British Atlantic.

Religion

Alongside print and the home, religious spaces were crucial venues for Revolutionary-era music. As Bechtold 2015 emphasizes, experiencing music in religious contexts informed the meaning of its presence throughout early American life. Although Crawford 1985 may provide the best starting point for research into early Euro-American sacred music, the most promising aspects of this subfield involve efforts to frame Christian music as one of many forms of early American sacred and religious music. Cooke 1998 surveys the sacred music of Native peoples and Black Americans alongside different denominations of Euro-American Christianity and Goodman 2019 supplies a fresh way forward—positing that in some circumstances sacred music may have worked as a cross-racial mediator of sorts.

Bechtold, Rebeccah. "A Revolutionary Soundscape: Musical Reform and the Science of Sound in Early America, 1760–1840." *Journal of the Early Republic* 35.3 (2015): 419–450.

Among other insights, Bechtold highlights that the resonance of music's sacred connections in early American life colored its presence in secular contexts as well.

Cooke, Nym. "Sacred Music to 1800." In *The Cambridge History of American Music*. Edited by David Nicholls, 78–102. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

A wide-ranging introductory survey of sacred music in early America that considers the opportunities and pitfalls of the concept as applied to Native American music and Black spiritual practices as well as different forms of Euro-American Christianity.

Crawford, Richard. "Massachusetts Musicians and the Core Repertory of Early American Psalmody." In *Music in Colonial Massachusetts, 1630–1820. Vol. 2, Music in Homes and Churches*. Edited by Barbara Lambert, 583–629. Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1985.

Overview of Euro-American sacred music-making from 1698 to 1810 that places Massachusetts musicians in comparative perspective. Also compiles a list of the "core repertory" of the period—the 101 sacred tunes most often published in British America and the United States. A close reading reveals the influence of political and patriotic themes in religious compositions.

Goodman, Glenda. "Joseph Johnston's Lost Gamuts: Native Hymnody, Materials of Exchange, and the Colonist Archive." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 13.4 (2019): 482–507.

A significant and theoretically sophisticated intervention that explores the role of sacred music and material exchange in at least partially alleviating conflicts between settler populations and Native peoples in the lead up to the American Revolution.

Loyalist Songs and Literary Expression

Research on Revolutionary American music tends to focus on patriot productions. However, loyalist songs and literature have not entirely escaped scholarly attention. Beginning in the mid-19th century, popular compilers of Revolutionary songs like Moore 1855 included examples of loyalist material in otherwise patriot-heavy collections. And soon after, loyalist-specific compendiums of poetry and song like Sargent 1857 and Sargent 1860 capitalized on renewed interest in loyalist thought spurred by the threat of civil war. Anderson 1987, which catalogues every music-related reference in the *New York Gazette*—a well-known loyalist newspaper—is the most significant music-based bibliographic project to center loyalist material and Edelberg 1987 is the standard literary biography of Jonathan Odell, arguably the most noted loyalist poet and songwriter. More recently, Gould 2013 has used evidence of loyalist literary endeavors, including songs, to deepen the complexity of loyalist identity and allegiance while Wells 2018 stresses the interdependence of loyalist and patriot songs and poems. Finally, Bannister and Riordan 2012 offers an incisive survey of Revolutionary loyalism throughout the British Atlantic that is sensitive to its popular culture connections.

Anderson, Gillian B. *Music in New York During the American Revolution: An Inventory of Musical References in Rivington's New York Gazette*. Boston: Music Library Association, 1987.

A close accounting of all music-related material published in *Rivington's New York Gazette*, a fiercely loyalist newspaper, between 1773 and 1783. Entries span notices of musical performances, music or musical instruments for sale, and information about musicians and their activities.

Bannister, Jerry, and Liam Riordan. "Loyalism and the British Atlantic, 1660–1840." In *The Loyal Atlantic: Remarking the British Atlantic in the Revolutionary Era*. Edited by Jerry Bannister and Liam Riordan, 3–38. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012.

A perceptive general assessment of loyalism and its historiographical presence that is attentive to its place in Revolutionary popular culture. Refers to material from the song collection *Loyal and Humorous Songs*, published anonymously in 1779 by "a Briton in New York," to show that loyalist ideals held popular appeal beyond elite circles.

Edelberg, Cynthia Dubin. *Jonathan Odell: Loyalist Poet of the American Revolution*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987.

The only full-length treatment of Jonathan Odell, one of the most well-known loyalist poets and satirists of the American Revolution. Edelberg places Odell's verses (many of which were presented as songs) in historical context and offers a concise blend of biography and literary analysis.

Gould, Philip. *Writing the Rebellion: Loyalists and the Literature of Politics in British America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Uses a wide-ranging analysis of loyalist literary expression—including close attention to loyalist verse, song, and satire—to argue that loyalism was more fraught and complex than a simple desire to maintain British allegiance. The loyalties of loyalists were divided between Britain and America, and Gould submits that their literature spoke to a desire to reconcile the "dislocation and alienation" of being neither British nor American.

Moore, Frank. *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution*. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1855.

Still one of the most referenced collections of source material for Revolutionary songs. Despite a clear patriot bias, Moore includes a number of loyalist songs like "Loyal York" as well as several parodies (and parodies of parodies) of patriot tunes.

Sargent, Winthrop. *Loyalist Poetry of the Revolution*. Philadelphia: [Collins], 1857.

An important collection of loyalist literature and expression, much of which takes the form of songs. Its forty-five entries were not intended to be comprehensive: those seeking further examples of loyalist musical material should also consult Sargent 1860 and Anderson 1987.

Sargent, Winthrop. *The Loyalist Verses of Joseph Stansbury and Doctor Jonathan Odell relating to the American Revolution*. Albany: J. Munsell, 1860.

An essential extension of Sargent 1857 that presents forty-eight selections of poems and songs by two luminaries of loyalist literature: Joseph Stanbury and Jonathan Odell. Published on the eve of civil war, the compilation is at once an important repository of creative loyalist compositions and a testament to the shifting legacies of loyalism in 19th-century America.

Wells, Colin. *Poetry Wars: Verse and Politics in the American Revolution and Early Republic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.

A perceptive interpretation of Revolutionary-era literature that underscores the connections, debates, and narratives that took shape through the interchange of patriot and loyalist literature as opposed to highlighting the contributions of one group or another.

National Identity and Song

Themes of national identity infuse almost any assessment of Revolutionary music. The entries here focus more narrowly on songs as assertions of an emerging US national identity. The best starting point, ironically, is Gelbart 2007, which does not focus on North America, but explains the European origins of “national music” that informed Anglo-American perceptions of music. Waldstreicher 1997 also provides critical context (interspersed with frequent musical examples) for the performative nature of Revolutionary nationalism. With this background in place the larger significance of the rest of the entries in this list—each of which revolves around a single song—comes more clearly into focus. Lemay 1976 reveals that “Yankee Doodle” was an American tune, Schrader 1998 explains the continuing appeal of the apocryphal tale of “The World Turned Upside Down” being played after the Battle of Yorktown, Branham 1999 traces evolving permutations of “God Save the King,” and Goodman 2013 shows how “Derry Down” conveyed notions of early American national identity.

Branham, Robert James. “God Save the _____!” *American National Songs and National Identities, 1760–1798.* *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 85.1 (1999): 17–37.

Branham, writing as a rhetorician, analyzes the meanings of “God Save the King!” over the course of the Revolutionary period. To explain the process through which national songs help to produce national identities, the piece breaks down the trajectory of the song’s use into three different stages: institutionalization, contestation, and appropriation.

Gelbart, Matthew. *The Invention of “Folk Music” and “Art Music”: Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

While not focused on North America, Gelbart provides essential context for how conceptions of so-called “national music” emerged in Europe over the long 18th century. British American elites were familiar with these ideas and connected to these conversations.

Goodman, Glenda. “Musical Sleuthing in Early America.” *Common-Place: The Journal of Early American Life* 13.2 (2013).

Despite focusing on musical developments on either side of the Revolution (rather than during it), this essay’s analysis of “Derry Down” remains an accessible explanation of how music and melody expressed meaning and national identity in early America.

Lemay, J. A. Leo. “The American Origins of ‘Yankee Doodle.’” *William and Mary Quarterly* 33.3 (1976): 435–464.

A deeply researched piece that upended a longstanding claim that “Yankee Doodle” was a British-authored tune. Instead, Lemay shows the song was as American as any tune could have been in a British colonial context and that it was illustrative of a popular tradition of Anglo-American musical humor. Zelnik 2018 (cited under Gender) challenges Lemay’s contention that the tune was initially self-deprecating and places it within a wider set of cultural conflicts.

Schrader, Arthur. “‘The World Turned Upside Down’: A Yorktown March, or Music to Surrender By.” *American Music* 16.2 (1998): 180–216.

A strongly argued challenge to the myth that a British military band struck up the tune “The World Turned Upside Down” following their surrender at the Battle of Yorktown (1781). Explains the continuing appeal of this erroneous anecdote for historians and popular audiences alike.

Waldstreicher, David. *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of Modern American Nationalism, 1776–1820.* Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute and the University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

A leading interpretation of early American celebratory culture as a means to debate the substance of American nationalism. Songs

feature at regular intervals throughout the book and Waldstreicher gives them a sensitive and insightful reading.

Music and the Founders

Longstanding public and academic interest in the so-called “Founding Fathers” of the United States has inspired substantial scholarship into the music of their worlds. Work on music in the life of George Washington and his family emerged first with Howard 1932 and continued through Britt 1984 and Keller and Hendrickson 1998. These publications are marked by deep and careful research but are overly deferential about their subject. Cripe 2009 and Salgo 2000 present similar takes on music in the life of Thomas Jefferson, who has also been the focus of more theoretically sophisticated and analytically driven studies. Fliegelman 1993 incorporates music into a field-defining account of early American oratorical and performance culture and Gordon-Reed and Onuf 2016 includes an incisive and judicious chapter dedicated to music’s meanings for Jefferson. The most promising new approach is Gordon 2015, on Jefferson and music in the making of race and nation in a settler society.

Britt, Judith S. *Nothing More Agreeable: Music in George Washington’s Family*. Mount Vernon, VA: Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association of the Union, 1984.

A short but richly illustrated overview of music in the life of George Washington and his family. Describes its use as a mode of high-taste recreation and speaks briefly to Washington’s ideas about its military role in the Revolutionary War.

Cripe, Helen. *Thomas Jefferson and Music*. 2d ed. Charlottesville, VA: Thomas Jefferson Foundation and University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

The most comprehensive account of music in Thomas Jefferson’s world. Features an engaging, if brief, overview of secular music in the Revolutionary era before focusing on Jefferson’s use of music in private life, especially its role in the education of female family members. Subsequent chapters cover Jefferson’s musical instruments, his interests in the science and mechanics of music, and his family’s music collection. Originally published in 1974.

Fliegelman, Jay. *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language & the Culture of Performance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993.

Fliegelman incorporates music into this broad interpretation of Revolutionary performance culture, which uses Thomas Jefferson as a lens for unpacking the relationship between elocution, persuasion, and political authority.

Gordon, Bonnie. “What Mr. Jefferson Didn’t Hear.” In *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*. Edited by Olivia Bloechl, Melanie Lowe, and Jeffrey Kallberg, 108–132. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015. .

Currently the most perceptive treatment of Thomas Jefferson and music. Gordon focuses on the racial significance and contested meanings of music, noise, and silence, and integrates these insights into larger themes of race- and nation-making in a settler society. Gordon’s forthcoming project on this topic, *Jefferson’s Ear*, is eagerly awaited.

Gordon-Reed, Annette, and Peter S. Onuf. *“Most Blessed of the Patriarchs”:* *Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of Imagination*. New York: Liveright, 2016.

A wide-ranging intellectual biography of Thomas Jefferson featuring a full chapter on his relationship to music and his ideas about its place in the life of his family and the nation. An authoritative and accessible summation of the literature and primary sources available on this topic.

Howard, John Tasker. *The Music of George Washington's Time*. Washington, DC: George Washington Bicentennial Commission, 1932.

A slim volume surveying key features of Anglo-American music culture throughout George Washington's lifetime. Its descriptions focus on concert life and the conditions that made it possible, military music, and music connected to patriotic themes and events.

Keller, Kate Van Winkle, and Charles Cyril Hendrickson. *George Washington: A Biography in Social Dance*. Sandy Hook, CT: Hendrickson Group, 1998.

A closely annotated collection of music, presented with dancing instructions, that guides readers through the life and times of George Washington and his social circle. The text is carefully crafted and far more authoritative than scholars may assume of a coffee table style publication.

Salgo, Sandor. *Thomas Jefferson: Musician and Violinist*. Charlottesville, VA: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2000.

An essay-length musical biography of Thomas Jefferson that emphasizes music's private sphere influences in Jefferson's domestic life, and that surveys a wide range of his musical activities and interests. The research is closely documented, especially for a highly illustrated book aimed at a non-scholarly audience.

Literature Perspectives

Eighteenth-century Americans did not readily distinguish between poetry and song, which makes coming to grips with early American literary studies an essential part of coming to terms with Revolutionary music. The following list illuminates a small taste of the insights available. Tyler 1897 remains the landmark early study. But a key question posed by more recent scholars like the authors of Spengemann 1994 and Tennenhouse 2007 is how to define what made early American literature distinctively American. Another generative approach is exemplified by Shields 1997, whose author uses a history of British American belles lettres to show how British literary practices informed early American elite civic society. Dowling 1990 proposes a direct link between Revolutionary poetry and Revolutionary ideology while Gustafson 2000 shifts focus from the written word to oratory, highlighting the role of performance and elocution in early American literary experience and underlining the stakes involved in debates over the relative value of print and performance.

Dowling, William C. *Poetry and Ideology in Revolutionary Connecticut*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1990.

Dowling centers the poetic output of the "Connecticut Wits"—a group of young satirical poets and songwriters also known as the "Hartford Wits"—within a transatlantic milieu animated by the same classical republican ideals that intellectual historians (like Bernard Bailyn and Gordon Wood) placed at the heart of American Revolutionary ideology.

Gustafson, Sandra M. *Eloquence Is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America*. Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2000.

A temporally expansive study from a literary scholar that challenges the primacy of print in early American society, politics, and culture. Gustafson shows that contests over the power of the written word were rooted in hierarchal assertions of authority over diverse peoples in a rapidly changing and democratizing society—insights that have important connotations for interpreting the power of music and performance.

Shields, David. *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the

Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1997.

A field-defining work exploring how elite men and women in urban locales used letters, newspapers, private manuscripts, and conversations to fashion civility and civic society in British America. Building on Jürgen Habermas's concept of the "public sphere," Shields shows the influence of private society over public life, emphasizes the British influence over American culture, and compiles an early American literary history from social discourse and polite letters rather than classic texts.

Spengemann, William C. *A New World of Words: Refining Early American Literature*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994.

A generating intervention examining how and why early American literature from the colonial period is defined as "American." Spengemann's insight that linguistic conceptions of "America" shaped the meaning of British literature—thus making it American, too—continues to influence scholarly perceptions of the relationship between the colonial center and its peripheries.

Tennenhouse, Leonard. *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature in the British Diaspora, 1750–1850*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Building on Spengemann 1994, Tennenhouse resists perceiving of early American literature as a budding nationalist project and instead frames it within a larger interconnected British diaspora. The American-ness of early American literature, Tennenhouse argues, lay in its capacity to reproduce Englishness in a settler society.

Tyler, Moses Coit. *The Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763–1783*. 2 vols. New York: G. P. Putnum's Sons, 1897.

A standard starting point for research into the literary dimensions of the American Revolution, including its songs.

Postwar Musical Legacies

The conclusion of the Revolutionary War did little to end debate over the meaning of the conflict or the nature of the political union the patriots had fought to produce. Following the war, music related to American Revolutionary themes evoked the specter of unity but also hardened emerging partisan divisions. The two earliest examples in this list, Spicer 2001 and Gibbons 2008, integrate music into larger discussions of postwar nationalism and its trajectory into the 19th century. Ostendorf 2011 places postwar music and nationalism within the context of race and perceptions of difference in the lower Mississippi River Valley. Roberts 2017 explicitly connects Revolutionary musical cultures to an even longer history of race, reform, and national identity stretching into the 20th century. Meanwhile, Riordan 2011, Wood 2014, Lohman 2020, and Coleman 2020 leverage Revolutionary musical legacies to highlight the cultural dimensions of early American democracy, partisanship, and politics. Romano and Potter 2018 offer perspectives on the 21st-century musical inheritances of the Revolution through the lens of Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway production of *Hamilton: An American Musical*.

Coleman, Billy. *Harnessing Harmony: Music, Power, and Politics in the United States, 1788–1865*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020.

Follows the trajectory of Revolutionary-era music and politics from the creation of the United States to the Civil War, revealing the conservative goals that animated its political use and presence in national political culture.

Gibbons, William. "'Yankee Doodle' and Nationalism, 1780–1920." *American Music* 26.2 (2008): 246–274.

Overviews the nationalistic connotations of "Yankee Doodle" from the Revolutionary War to the 20th century through an analysis of how instrumental composers went about quoting its melody. Gibbons suggests that the song transitioned from a "naïve, if integrating, patriotic sentiment" following the war to embodying a more militaristic American nationalism in the 19th century before ultimately

becoming a “patriotic relic” in the 20th century.

Lohman, Laura. *Hail Columbia!: American Music and Politics in the Early Nation.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

A close and discerning examination of music’s political power in the new republic, beginning in the immediate aftermath of the Revolutionary War and ending in the War of 1812. Lohman, a musicologist, explores the variety of ways musical expression impacted—and adapted to—an ever-changing political and partisan landscape.

Ostendorf, Ann. *Sounds American: National Identity and Music Cultures of the Lower Mississippi River Valley, 1800–1860.* Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011.

A theoretically engaged historical study of how Americans perceived diversity and difference through musical experience in the early national period. While anchored in the lower Mississippi River Valley, its insights bear on the intersection of music, culture, and national identity in the postwar United States more broadly.

Riordan, Liam. “‘O Dear What Can the Matter Be?’: The Urban Early Republic and the Politics of Popular Song in Benjamin Carr’s *Federal Overture*.” *Journal of the Early Republic* 31.2 (2011): 179–227.

A key account of how Benjamin Carr’s *Federal Overture* (1794)—a medley of popular, partisan, and Anglo-American and French political tunes—sought to resolve postwar divisions in the early republic. The article also uses Carr’s work to trace a shift from a predominately oral music culture in early America to an increasingly professional and commercialized music business.

Roberts, Brian. *Blackface Nation: Race, Reform, and Identity in American Popular Music, 1812–1925.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017.

Roberts builds on a Revolutionary-era transatlantic milieu of popular culture expression to contend with music’s subsequent relationship to the rise of dominant forms of American patriotism, race, and identity. Of particular relevance here is the work’s exploration of how Revolutionary ballads perpetuated popular memories of the conflict as an orderly and respectable tax revolt.

Romano, Renee C., and Claire Bond Potter, eds. *Historians on Hamilton: How a Blockbuster Musical Is Restaging America’s Past.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018.

An accessible collection of scholarly essays responding to the success of Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton: An American Musical*. Chapters offer positive and negative assessments of Miranda’s work and consider the intersection of politics, music, and Revolutionary history from a variety of angles.

Spicer, Richard C. “Popular Song for Public Celebration in Federal Portsmouth, New Hampshire.” *Popular Music & Society* 25.1–2 (2001): 1–99.

An account of music and songs used at public celebrations in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, from the ratification of the Constitution to the War of 1812. The article highlights music’s contribution to a wide range of patriotic activities and stresses the continued use of British tunes, which Americans transformed through new lyrics into patriotic songs of their own.

Wood, Kirsten E. “‘Join with Heart and Soul and Voice’: Music, Harmony, and Politics in the Early American Republic.” *The American Historical Review* 119.4 (2014): 1083–1116.

A prominent and persuasive interpretation of music and partisanship in the new nation. Wood draws from histories of the senses, print,

and celebratory culture as well as music itself to show how harmony, and harmonious ideals, were wielded to try to unite a fractious political union.

Song Collections

Published song collections are an essential resource for American Revolutionary music. The research that went into these collections was initially motivated by the desire to commemorate patriotic songs and the spirit of the Revolution, and much of this early work—especially Moore 1855 but also Sargent 1857 and Sargent 1860—continue to serve as core sources of basic knowledge. Typically, these song collections present readers with printed versions of a curated selection of Revolutionary poems and songs deemed notable, interesting, or relevant enough to support popular consumption. While they generally lack critical analysis—and often indulge in celebratory patriotism—many songs are accompanied by valuable contextual annotations that explain the circumstances of their use or creation. The United States Bicentennial marked a breakout moment for popular commemoration and many entries here reflect this demand. Some collections, like Silber 1973 and Vinson 1974, contribute to a larger effort produce a canon of American folk song. Others—like Rabson 1974, Dannett 1973, and Lawrence 1975—constitute well-researched coffee table books. Anderson 1977 is the most scholarly selection and occupies an informative intersection between song collecting and bibliography. Keller 1992 adds a personal twist, presenting an annotated collection of songs from the personal notebook of a Continental Army officer.

Anderson, Gillian B., comp. and ed. *Freedom's Voice in Poetry and Song: An Inventory of Political and Patriotic Lyrics in Colonial American Newspapers, 1773–1783, and Song Book*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1977.

Part 2 features a “Song Book” of ninety-two songs and eight poems printed in American colonial newspapers during the Revolutionary War period. The songs are organized chronologically and reproduced with lyrics, introductory editorial notes that originally accompanied their publication, and translations of the tunes into modern musical notation. Its selection of songs aim to present a “representative sampling of sentiments and music” from the decade.

Dannett, Sylvia G. L. *The Yankee Doodler: Music, Theater and Fun in the American Revolution*. South Brunswick, NJ: A. S. Barnes, 1973.

Produced in anticipation of the nation’s bicentennial celebrations, Dannett’s collection of Revolutionary-era humor and art reproduces over fifty broadside ballads and includes a chapter dedicated to songs and marches of the Revolution, illustrated with sheet music. The volume commemorates patriot productions over loyalist pieces and features brief contextual vignettes for each example.

Keller, Kate Van Winkle. *Songs from the American Revolution*. Sandy Hook, CT: Hendrickson Group, 1992.

A pamphlet style publication of just thirty-two pages that contains songs from the personal notebook Captain George Bush while serving as an officer in George Washington’s Continental Army. Lyrics, music, and historical annotations are included for each song.

Lawrence, Vera Brodsky. *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents: Harmonies and Discords of the First Hundred Years*. New York: Macmillan, 1975.

A lush, detailed, and highly illustrated publication that presents a narrative of early American history through its political and patriotic music. Three deeply researched chapters cover music connected to the coming, conduct, and aftermath of the Revolution. The book is especially notable for the visual introduction it offers readers to the remarkable range and materiality of Revolutionary music as a primary source.

Moore, Frank. *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution*. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1855.

The foundational collection of American Revolutionary songs on which most subsequent collections continue to be based. Its introductory material articulates the oft-repeated claim that although the quality of Revolutionary music was objectively poor, the authentic spirit and devotion to the cause it captured is worth preserving. In total, the collection provides lyrics and contextual information for ninety-two tunes. Although heavily favoring patriot songs, it includes some key loyalist examples.

Rabson, Carolyn. *Songbook of the American Revolution*. Peaks Island, ME: NEO Press, 1974.

A slim illustrated collection of American Revolutionary songs that lacks critical engagement but benefits from clear sourcing and close attention to detail. Includes coverage of loyalist songs, hymns, and national songs as well as patriot ballads. Illustrated by Nancy Hansen.

Sargent, Winthrop. *Loyalist Poetry of the Revolution*. Philadelphia: [Collins], 1857.

A valuable collection of loyalist poems many of which are labeled as songs or hymns.

Sargent, Winthrop. *The Loyalist Verses of Joseph Stansbury and Doctor Jonathan Odell relating to the American Revolution*. Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1860.

By 1860, the specter of civil war had reinvigorated the recovery and distribution of Revolutionary-era loyalist ideals as well as the interpretation of the American Revolution as a civil war. This collection reflects that trend by extending on the material in Sargent 1857 and presenting readers with forty-eight poems and songs authored by two of the most prolific loyalist “versifiers.”

Silber, Irwin, comp. and ed. *Songs of Independence*. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1973.

An engaging collection of songs from the American Revolution matched to a narrative of the conflict compiled by Silber’s historical notes and annotations. While acknowledging the impact of racism, slavery, and Native dispossession, Silber’s selection of tunes presents the conflict as driven primarily by democratic ideals and the diversity of its people.

Vinson, Lee, comp. and ed. *The Early American Songbook*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

A well-appointed coffee table collection of the most well-known Revolutionary-era patriotic songs and popular ballads that also includes a selection of psalm-tunes, hymns, and singing-school pieces. Short editorial annotations introduce each of the sixty-three songs, which together with Irving Lowens’s brief foreword, presents this Anglo-focused collection of tunes as evidence of the rough-hewn, folk spirit of the early American settlers.

Recordings

A number of commercial recordings seek to recreate Revolutionary American music even if the particular sounds and sensations from the time are irretrievable. The first wave of the recordings listed here—Halsam and Millar 1975, The Committee of Correspondence 1975, and Schrader 1976—coincided with the United States Bicentennial and were produced under the auspices of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. These records feature a mixture of folk revival influences with attempts at historical accuracy that also characterize Horton 2007. Continental Harmony Singers 1996 and Reagon 1996 err in a more cultivated direction, offering collections of Revolutionary era music and African American sacred music in refined classical and concert styles. The performances on Hildebrand and Hildebrand 1999 split the difference, though focus on the elite context of music from the life of George Washington.

The Committee of Correspondence. "The American Revolution in Song and Ballad." Washington, DC: Folkways Records, 1975.

An accessible recording of patriot songs translated into a folk revival style that seeks, with some success, to sound authentic and musically listenable at the same time. In 1976, The Committee of Correspondence subsequently released a second volume of Revolutionary-era songs, also through Folkways Recordings. Also available online.

Continental Harmony Singers. *The Birth of Liberty: Music of the American Revolution*. New York: New World Records, 1996.

An elaborate recreation of American Revolutionary songs produced in a cultivated classical and choral tradition. Includes a detailed and scholarly booklet of liner notes. Also available online.

Halsam, Cliff, and John Millar. "Colonial and Revolutionary War Sea Songs and Shanties." Washington, DC: Folkways Records, 1975.

An album that recreates Revolutionary-era sea songs and shanties in an authentic, if cleaned-up and nostalgic, style. Songs are delivered *a cappella* with occasional pennywhistle accompaniment. Also available online.

Hildebrand, David, and Ginger Hildebrand. *George Washington: Music for the First President*. [Independent], 1999.

This eighteen-track album offers historically informed recreations of music written for George Washington alongside other pieces he was likely to have been familiar with. It is accompanied by a thirty-two-page music book authored by Kate Van Winkle Keller that includes sheet music, illustrations, and an introductory essay. Also available online.

Horton, Bobby. *Homespun Songs of the Patriots in the American Revolution*. [Independent], 2007.

An album of twenty patriot songs performed in a refined folksy style. It forms part of Bobby Horton's "Homespun Songs" series that similarly interprets historical American music from various other times and places, especially the Civil War era. Also available online.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson, comp. *Wade in the Water: African American Sacred Music Traditions*. Vols. 1–4. Washington, DC: Folkways Recordings, 1996.

Various artists. Compiled by Bernice Johnson Reagon, a key musical figure and activist in the civil rights movement, this four-disc collection includes a volume of concert-style spirituals followed by 19th-century congregational singing and 20th-century gospel music. Extensive liner notes and historical essays accompany the music. Produced in connection with National Public Radio's similarly titled *Wade in the Water* radio documentary series.

Schrader, Arthur F. *American Revolutionary War Songs to Cultivate the Sensations of Freedom*. Washington, DC: Folkways Records, 1976.

Produced in association with a conference on colonial music sponsored by the Colonial Society of Massachusetts in 1973 and recorded for the Smithsonian Institution's Folkways Recordings, Schrader's album sets a high standard for combining a sense of historical accuracy with a sense of fun. Also available online.

Databases

Many scholars involved in large-scale bibliographic research projects that centered on early American music were also early adopters of digital database technologies. Some of the projects in this list, for example, began as standalone CD-ROM resources before transitioning into their current online formats. Unfortunately, online databases created up to twenty years ago tend to show their age in terms of usability and ease of navigation. Yet the content of these databases remains indispensable. Together they give researchers comprehensive coverage of early American songsters (Keller 2008), secular and ceremonial songs (Keller, et al. 2002), sacred hymn tunes (Temperley 2000), references to music in early American newspapers (Corry, et al. 2010), and even provide free access to digitized copies of handwritten music manuscripts (American Antiquarian Society and the Center for Popular Music 2015). Revolutionary-era evidence often comprises a relatively small proportion of the material in these databases, a fact that echoes the historical expansion of printed sources during the 19th century. However, they provide an authoritative, searchable, and free archive of primary sources capable of jump-starting any research project in the field.

American Antiquarian Society and the Center for Popular Music. *American Vernacular Music Manuscripts, ca. 1730–1910: Digital Collections from the American Antiquarian Society and the Center for Popular Music*. American Antiquarian Society and the Center for Popular Music, 2015–.

A searchable database with links to digitized copies of more than 350 handwritten vernacular music manuscripts sourced from holdings of the American Antiquarian Society and the Center for Popular Music. Despite its title, most material dates from between 1805 and 1850.

Corry, Mary Jane, Kate Van Winkle Keller, and Robert M. Keller. *The Performing Arts in Colonial American Newspapers, 1690–1783: Text Database and Index*. Re-compiled by Robert M. Keller. The Colonial Music Institute, 2010.

Originally published as a CD-ROM, this resource brings together every music-related reference (including lyrical poetry, dance, and theater) published in early American newspapers from 1690–1783. Each entry includes a relevant transcription from the primary source it describes and searches can be conducted across a variety of different indexes.

Keller, Robert. *Early American Songsters, 1734–1800: An Index*. The Colonial Music Institute, 2008.

Based on Lowens 1976 (cited under Bibliographies) this database indexes all known American “songsters”—compilations of lyrics without musical notation—published before 1800.

Keller, Robert M., Raoul F. Camus, Kate Van Winkle Keller, and Susan Cifaldi. *Early American Secular Music and Its European Sources, 1589–1839: An Index*. The Colonial Music Institute, 2002.

A digital expansion of Kate Van Winkle Keller and Carolyn Rabson’s *National Tune Index: 18th-C. Secular Music* and Raoul F. Camus’s *National Tune Index: Early American Wind and Ceremonial Music* (both otherwise previously only available on microfiche). It includes more than 75,000 entries covering vernacular and semi-classical music organized into eight major searchable indexes.

Temperley, Nicholas. *The Hymn Tune Index*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000–.

A comprehensive searchable database of English-language hymn tunes printed before 1820. Essential for investigations into the uses and publication of British and American psalm and hymn tunes in the Revolutionary period. Expanded from an earlier printed version published in 1997 under the title: *Hymn Tune Index: A Census of English-Language Hymn Tunes in Printed Sources from 1535 to 1820*.

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