

The Story Behind Merry Masquerade

The song, Merry Masquerade, was developed by the fifth-grade students of Martin Luther King Elementary School during the 2015 spring semester as part of the America's Civil War through Music sessions developed by Scott Schwartz and Marten Stromberg. This is the fourth year the students have helped write a new song building on the knowledge they have acquired through weekly history lessons and music performances by Scott and Marten, and copies of primary source documents pulled from the University's Illinois History and Lincoln Collections. The students' song this year builds on some of the more unusual stories about the mad-capped adventures of Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, Confederate General Stonewall Jackson, Union General George McClellan, and the many soldiers who fought during America's Civil War.

When President-elect Lincoln was making his way through Baltimore, Maryland to Washington, DC for his inauguration as President on February 22, 1861, Allen Pinkerton, who headed a private detective agency, uncovered a plot to assassinate Lincoln. By late February seven southern states had already seceded from the Union, and the country was beginning to face the grim prospect that war was imminent. Following Pinkerton's advice, Lincoln slipped out of his hotel that evening wearing a soft felt hat instead of his customary stovepipe hat and a large overcoat draped over his shoulders, and he boarded a train car as a hunched passenger to disguise his height. He safely arrived in Washington the following morning, but a story quickly began to circulate in the national newspapers that he had dressed as a woman to avoid detection and Lincoln later regretted his surreptitious arrival.

As the Civil War was coming to a close in 1865 the government of the Confederate States was becoming disorganized, and with General Lee's surrender at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, Jefferson Davis' trusted advisers urged him to flee the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia to avoid capture. After Lincoln's murder by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, the Union placed a \$100,000 reward for his capture because it believed Davis originated the plans for Lincoln's assassination. On May 9th Davis set up camp near a creek bed in the farming community of Irwinville, Georgia, and the following morning awoke to gun fire from the First Wisconsin and Fourth Michigan cavalry units who had surrounded his camp. In the confusion of the early morning attempt to capture him, Davis put on his wife's raglan, a woman's overcoat, and tried to escape. However, he was quickly caught by the Union cavalry and eventually taken to Fort Monroe, Virginia where he remained a prisoner for over two years. As a result, newspapers around the country quickly portrayed him in comic cartoons as the fallen Confederate President who tried to hide himself as a woman.

Other mad-capped adventures of the Civil War that were included in this song describe the stories of the canon called "Long Tom," General Stonewall Jackson's accidental death at the hands of his own Confederate troops, Belle Boyd's work as a woman Confederate spy, and the unsavory food both the Union and Confederate soldiers had to endure (and made fun of) throughout the war. We hope that you will enjoy the humor of this new song as we playfully imagine our Civil War characters as willing participants of our merry masquerade.

MERRY

MASQUERADE



Story developed by the 5th grade class of
King Elementary School, 2015



Merry Masquerade

1). Old Abe he snuck to Wash - ing - ton dressed like old Tom Thumb, a

3 seven foot broot in a min - a - ture suit, what a sight Old Abe's be - come. 2). Oh

5 Jeff looked sharp in his mil - i - ta - ry coat when he joined the south, but he

7 was' nt at his best in his wife's silk dress when they caught him sneak - ing out. Wrap the

9 Union flag a - round me and you can wear Bon - ny Blue, Old Abe is sing - ing Dix - ie while Jeff sings out of tune... our

13 loy - al co - lor we shall trade at the mer - ry mas - quer - rade. 3). If Jack - son dressed as Belle Boyd, he'd

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2 still be here to - day but he dressed as a ga - tor and they caught him and put him in the stew that day. 4). Mc -

19 Clel - lan was a lit - tle Na - pol - e - on who did' - nt take or - ders from Abe, Old

21 George was to slow to cap - ture Rob Lee, so they sent him on his way. Wrap the Union flag a round me and

24 you can wear Bon - ny Blue, Old Abe is sing - ing Dix - ie while Jeff sings out of tune... our

27 loy - al co - lor we shall trade at the mer - ry mas - quer - rade.

5. The soldiers came from Georgia
hungry and lean,
Though they dined fine every night,
A little salt pork, a little salt horse,
And goober peas cooked just right.

6. Long Tom was King of the mountain top,
He could shoot both far and wide,
But they toppled him once and they
toppled him twice,
Now he's buried down the mountain side.

CHORUS

7. When first we marched down to Bull Run,
We thought it would be quick,
But the fighting grew fierce to Gettysburg,
Where our casualties ran thick.

8. (slow) And now the war has grown so old,
We all wish it would fade,
(a tempo) Then our witty verses we
could trade,
At the merry masquerade

CHORUS