Charlie W. Steele

A significant part of America's musical heritage originating in the nineteenth century is the popular shape-note tunebooks that were an outgrowth of the "singing schools." These collections, which, in their musical notation, used different shapes of note-heads for each syllable of a solfège system, are anthologies of the styles and genres of American music of the time, both sacred and secular. Nineteenth-century American shape-note tunebooks serve as sources for an important body of music—shape-note hymn tunes—which has been, and continues to be, assimilated into the late twentieth-century editions of the hymnals of mainline Protestant denominations.

of mainline Protestant denominations. The availability and popularity of the shape-note tunes in current hymnals has inspired organ composers to use them as *cantus firmi* for organ chorale preludes and variation settings. As a result, a wealth of organ chorale settings using shape-note hymn melodies has been published in the twenty-five years spanning 1980–2005. Many of these organ works were composed for use as voluntaries in the worship services of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century Christian church; moreover, some of the compositions are important contributions to the organ concert literature.

Origins

20

The shape-note phenomenon traces its origins to the psalm singing of New England. Congregational singing in the churches of the early eighteenth century had, in the opinion of the clergy and musicians of the day, fallen into a deplorable state. One person, eloquently describing the state of congregational singing in 1724, said, "The Singing appears to be rather a confused Noise, made up of Reading, Squeaking, and Grumbling, than a decent and orderly part of God's worship." In order to improve the state of congregational singing, a form of musical education, the "singing school," was developed. Its purpose was to teach congregations the elements of music so the people could sing "by note, instead of rote"

One of the earliest books developed for use in singing schools was John Tufts's An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes, which appeared in the 1720s. Tufts's book utilized the four-note



Figure 1. Notation system of Tufts. John Tufts, An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm-Tunes, 1723



Figure 3. Four-shape major scale. George Pullen Jackson, White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands, 14

system of solfège (fa, sol, la, mi) that had been imported to America from England. Tufts used abbreviations of the syllables on the musical staff rather than traditional music notation. Tufts's system, as it appeared in his book, is shown in Figure 1.

In 1801, William Little and William Small compiled what is considered the first shape-note collection, *The Easy Instructor*. Rather than using conventional notation, the two men devised a system in which the four syllables—fa, sol, la, mi—were each notated with a different

note-head shape. The collection became so popular that, according to Marion Hatchett, thirty-four editions or printings of *The Easy Instructor* were published between 1802 and 1832.³ The shapes, as developed and notated in Little and Small's collection, are shown in Figure 2. Using these four shapes, a major scale notated in shape-notes consists of the sequence demonstrated in Figure 3.

For the many Americans who had little or no formal musical background or education, this new approach to notation made music reading much simpler. The singers needed to know only the shapes of the notes; they did not have to deal with a music reading system in which locating the tonic note depended upon the ability to distinguish key signatures. The shape-note system did have one major disadvantage—no means was devised to indicate accidentals by using shapes. As many of the tunes used in the collections were diatonic in nature, this disadvantage evidently was not a major concern to either the compilers or the singers.

Collections

The invention of the shape-notes led to a proliferation of published music col-

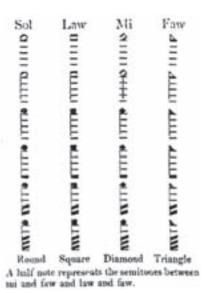


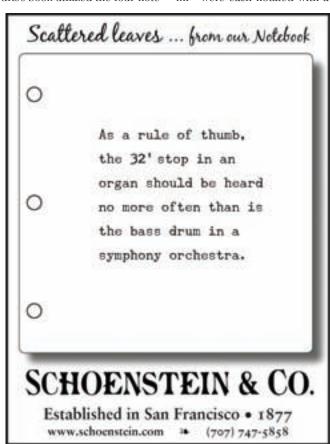
Figure 2. Shapes of Little and Small. William Little and William Small, *The Easy Instructor*, 9

lections using the new notation system. During the first half of the eighteenth century, numerous compilers published editions of the shape-note tunebooks. George Pullen Jackson, one of the twentieth-century pioneers in the research of the shape-note tradition, lists thirtyeight collections published in the fourshape system between 1798 and 1855. Twenty-one of the books Jackson designated as works by compilers who lived in the South. Richard J. Stanislaw's more recent research provides evidence of an even larger number of four-shape collections. Stanislaw lists some ninety-five tunebooks published in the four-shape system in the United States between 1798 and 1859.

A significant contribution of the shape-note collections was their function as a repository of American tunes from the oral tradition. Though these types of tunes had appeared in hymnals or collections, such as the *United States Sacred Harmony* (1799) and *The Christian Harmony* (1805), the first shape-note hymnal to incorporate a large number of oral tradition tunes was John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music: Part Second* (1813). Irving Lowens observes that forty-four of the tunes in this collection were "folk hymns." The *Repository of Sacred Music: Part Second* played an important role in the dissemination of these tunes. According to information provided by Lowens, Ananias Davisson, the compiler of the influential *Kentucky Harmony* and the *Supplement to Kentucky Harmony*, used fifteen tunes from Wyeth's *Part Second* collection. William Walker, in his *Southern Harmony*, "borrowed" twenty of these tunes.

Walker's Southern Harmony

A significant source of the shapenote tunes found in today's hymnals is Walker's The Southern Harmony &





THE DIAPASON

Musical Companion (hereafter referred to as Southern Harmony). One of the most popular and successful of the ninemost popular and successful of the nine-teenth-century shape-note tunebooks, Southern Harmony stands as an impor-tant "anthology" of the musical styles and genres of its day. As Harry Eskew notes, it is probably the first shape-note collection to be compiled in the "Deep South." The legacy and tradition of this popular collection continues even today at the "Big Singing Day" held annually in Benton, Kentucky.

Walker was born on May 6, 1809, in South Carolina, near a small village known as Cross Keys. 10 Around the time he was eighteen years of age, Walker's family moved to a small community colled Coder Springs, near Springs called Cedar Springs, near Spartanburg, South Carolina.¹¹ In 1835, Walker mar-ried Amy S. Golighty, the sister of Thurza Golighty, the wife of Benjamin Franklin White, who would become the compiler of *The Sacred Harp*. Not only is 1835 the year Walker married Amy, it is the same year he published his first and most popular shape-note collection, Southern Harmony. 13 In addition to Southern Harmony, Walker compiled three other collections during his lifetime, including the Southern and Western Pocket Harmonist, The Christian Harmony, and Fruits and Flowers. 14 Although Walker is considered the compiler of Southern Harmony and his name graces the cover, the work was initially a joint project of Walker and his brother-in-law, B. F. White.

After its introduction in 1835, Southern Harmony underwent several revisions, with the final one being the 1854 edition. 15 During the years of its publication, the collection was obviously popular, as Walker later claimed that 600,000 copies of it had been sold. 16

Harry Eskew cites several reasons why *Southern Harmony* is a significant shape-note collection: 1) its use as textbook to learn to read music, 2) its role in continuing early American psalmody, and 3) its function as a "musical comand 3) its function as a musical companion for numerous word-only hymnals." Eskew also notes that *Southern Harmony* is "significant as a repository of melodies from oral tradition" and that Walker and other rural-oriented singing school teachers/compilers drew from the rich oral tradition of the Anglo-American folksong to provide melodies for many hymn texts." Walker, in the preface to the first edition of Southern Harmony in 1835, states that he had "composed the parts to a great many good airs (which I could not find in any publication, nor in manuscript), and assigned my name as author."19 It may be surmised that many of these "airs" were popular melodies or folk tunes of the day that were passed on by oral tradition. Hymnologist Austin C. Lovelace recounts that, "When Walker was going around doing singing schools, he always asked if anyone had some good tunes. He would then write them down and claim them as his own.

Sources of texts and tunes are indicated for some of the hymns, though often no source is documented for either. Glen Wilcox relates that approximately one-fourth of the hymn texts were by Isaac Watts.²¹ Of the 341 tune names in the index, Wilcox maintains that about 250 of them can be attributed to 110 composers with the remaining tunes he composers, with the remaining tunes being anonymous. 22 For the 1854 edition, Walker added 73 tunes to his collection. It is interesting to note that, according to Eskew, approximately half of the tunes Walker added in 1854 were "in the style of the folk hymn."²³

Southern Harmony incorporated some important "firsts" regarding several hymn tunes. The 1835 edition marked the first time the text "Amazing Grace" and the tune New Britain were joined together in a shape-note collection; the edition of 1840 contained the first appearance of the tune Wondrous Love with the text "What wondrous love is this;" and the 1854 edition has one of the early appearances of Dove of Peace.

The inclusion of the American tunes in this remarkable shape-note collection has helped to preserve them for future generations. Unlike its popular counterpart, *The Sacred Harp*, which has undergone a number of revisions over the years of

its existence (even as recently as 1991), Southern Harmony has had no additions or corrections to its music since the final version of 1854. As it stands, *South*ern Harmony is a repository of musical styles and tastes of nineteenth-century America, particularly of southern and rural America. Eskew remarks that, "No wonder Southern Harmony was so popular: the hymns . . . were united with tunes which had circulated among the people for years in oral tradition, and they were furthermore printed in easy-to-read shape-notation!"24

New England "reforms"

As the shape-note tradition moved into the southern and western states, a midto-late nineteenth-century movement emerged in New England to eliminate American tunes, as found in shape-note tunebooks, from church hymnals and music collections. New England reformers, among whom were Lowell Mason and Thomas Hastings, considered music and hymns of European background and influence to be superior to America's "folk-style" music. Hymn tunes and music composed in the European style were "based on 'scientific' principles produc-ing 'correct' harmonies."²⁵ It is ironic that the New England area, whose musicians gave America its singing schools and shape-notes, is the same geographic area that led reforms contributing to the demise of shape-note singing and the use of these tunes in hymnals.

Jackson, in White Spirituals of the Southern Uplands, devotes a chapter to the subject of the disappearance of folk-hymns as denominational hymnals began to emerge in the nineteenth cenbegan to emerge in the nineteenth century. Though the 1889 edition of the Methodist Hymnal contained a number of the tunes, the 1905 edition included only four of what Jackson calls "fasola popular tunes"—LENOX, NETTLETON, MEAR, and GREENVILLE. ²⁶ Jackson's preserved projects out that the Carming of research points out that the Service of Song (1871), a hymnal used by southern Baptists in more urban areas, embodied only nine tunes from the "fasola" tradition.²⁷ Another hymnal used by Baptists in the early twentieth century, *Modern Hymnal* (1926), incorporated only seventeen of what Jackson refers to as hymns of "specific southern fasola making or adoption."²⁸
Jackson ascertains that the Philadel-

phia publishers, suppliers of hymnals to southern Presbyterian churches, "avoided all indigenous songs of the southern and western revival."²⁹ An examination of Presbyterian hymnals of the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century certainly underpins Jackson's observation. The Presbyterian hymnals of 1874, 1895 (revised in 1911), and 1933 all contain some hymn tunes—just as to-day's hymnals do—common to Southern Harmony and other similar collections. These tunes, however, are primarily ones with an identified composer—tunes such as AZMON, CORONATION, and DUKE STREET. Based on this author's examination of the index of tune names in each of these three editions of hymnals, NETTLETON seems to be the only anonymous shape-note tune included in Pres-byterian hymnals until the appearance of

the 1955 edition of the hymnal.3 As late in the twentieth century as 1940, American shape-note tunes held little respect among some scholars who were interested in serious hymnody. Henry Wilder Foote, in Three Centuries of American Hymnody, spends little time focusing on the history or importance of the tunes. His writing contains remarks such as, "While in general their effect on American hymnody has been neither permanent or valuable . . . the folk hymn was suited to revivals and social gatherings like out-of-door camp meetings . . and in any case they fall outside the main current of American hymnody."³¹ As one can surmise from Foote's statements, Raymond Glover's supposition that the efforts of musicians like Mason created a standard whose "effects may still be seen in today's mainline hymnals" is certainly supported.³² Fortunately, these effects initiated by the "scientific" musicians of the nineteenth century experienced a reversal in the late twentieth century.

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Table 1. Shape-note Tunes in Hymnals

Hymnat	Number of Shape Note Tunes	Percentage of Total Tunes	
Baptist, 1956	12		
Baptist, 1991	16	300	
Episcopal, 1940	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	1°°	
Episcopal, 1982	20	3.5%	
Lutheras, 1988	<u>`</u>	300	
Lutheran, 1978	24	500	
Presbyterian, 1955	9	2"#	
Presbyterian, 1990	50		
Methodist, 1966	50	4 S ⁰ o	
United Methodist, 1989	. 22	4 3° ₆	

Twentieth-century acceptance

Five Protestant denominational hymnals—Southern Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), Presbyterian (USA), and United Methodist—were selected to be surveyed as to their inclusion of shapesurveyed as to their inclusion of shape-note tunes. These particular hymnals were chosen because of the importance each denomination places on hymnals and hymn singing and because of the reputation each denomination enjoys regarding the quality of their hymnals. The survey included an inspection of ten hymnals to discern the number of tunes that appear to be of shape-note origin. African-American spirituals, frequently designated as American folk tunes or

melodies in older hymnals, were not within the parameters of the research. The numerical results of the American tune survey, shown in Table 1, verify the thesis that there is a definite increase in the number of shape-note tunes in the current editions of mainline denominational hymnals compared to the previous editions. In the Episcopal, Lutheran, and Presbyterian hymnals, the growth in the number of tunes is significant. Though there is an increase in the number of shape-note tunes in the most recent hymnal of the Methodist Church, the percentage does not indicate an increase because the hymnal contains a larger number of total hymn tunes. The

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Table 2. Walker or Southern Harmony as a Tune Source

Hymnal	Number of Tunes with Soll- or Walker as the Source	Percentage of Total Tunes Total Tunes	
Baptist 1956	0		
Baptist [199]		(9 ⁰ a	
Episcopal 1940	ı	2"4	
Episcopal 1982		١۴٥	
Latherar, 1958	0	:10	
Lotheron, 1978	•	[sion	
Presbytersan, 1955	O	J°ø	
Presbyteman, 1990	2	500	
Method st. 1966	2	5º o	
United Methodist (1986)	. 4	800	

1966 edition contains only $417\ hymn$ tunes, whereas the 1989 edition includes $504\ tunes.$

Because denominational hymnals use various sources for their tunes, some of the shape-note tunes included in hymnals have indications of possible composers. An example is the tune NETTLETON, identified in two hymnals as being composed by John Wyeth.³³ The tune did appear in the 1813 edition of Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, but it originated from the "campmeeting repertory of Methodists and Baptists." Given that the tunes were sometimes part of an oral tradition before they were notated in hymnals, it is difficult for musicologists and historians to trace their exact origin.

Among the various shape-note collections of the nineteenth century, William Walker's Southern Harmony serves as an important source of American shape-note tunes, especially in the more recent editions of the selected hymnals. In each denomination, the number of hymn tunes attributed to either William Walker or Walker's Southern Harmony shows a significant increase. The frequency of their attribution as a source may be observed in Table 2.

Factors in 20th-century acceptance

Based on the information and statistics indicated above, it is clear that there is a significant increase in the number of shape-note tunes included in recent hymnals. This phenomenon prompts one to reflect on what factors may have led to the increased presence of these tunes in the hymnals of the late twentieth century. Communications by this author with several persons who served on editorial boards of different hymnals help provide some possible answers to this question.

some possible answers to this question.

David W. Music, a member of the editorial board of *The Baptist Hymnal* (1991), suggests three main factors he believes are responsible for the growth in the number of shape-note hymn tunes incorporated into recent hymnals. Outlining these factors, Music states:

The increase in the number of shapenote tunes is due to a number of factors including: 1) the bicentennial of the USA in 1976 with church musicians seeking to honor their country by searching out some of its native expressions. I think this parallels the English folk song recovery that occurred with the 1906 English Hymnal; 2) the broadening of the base of congregational song to include a wider diversity of styles and types than before (including black spirituals, world hymnody, American Indian pieces, Taizé, Iona Community, plainsong, newly-written hymns, etc.); 3) in a few cases these melodies have become familiar outside the church (or at least outside the hymnal) and have subsequently been incorporated into them; a good example is RESIGNATION ("My shepherd

will supply my need"), which everybody learned from the Virgil Thomson choral arrangement, later realizing what a great congregational text and tune combination this is. Perhaps related to this was the increased respectability gained by these often very simple tunes through their use by significant American composers such as Thomson and Aaron Copland.³⁵

The factors that Music considers significant are echoed by others who have been involved in the editorial process of recent hymnals. Carlton Young, editor of the 1966 and 1989 Methodist hymnals, refers to the 1906 English Hymnal and the increase in diversity in hymnals as significant factors in the selection of tunes. Young asserts that "most mid-20th-century mainline USA Protestant hymnals followed the lead of R.V. Williams" and "reflected the work of folklorists such as Cecil Sharp." Young also observes that "The increased number of USA folk melodies in TUMH '89 [The United Methodist Hymnal] continues this trend in mainline hymnals, but is also related to the increased number of Native American, Latino, African-American, Asian, and gospel songs." He is the solution of the control of the c

rean, Asian, and gospel songs."³⁷
Ray Glover, editor of *The Hymnal* 1982, affirms that "The inclusion of a goodly number of American folk tunes in *The Hymnal* 1982 was, I believe, our response to the growing awareness of the great, rich repository we have in, largely though not exclusively, Southern folk hymnody from the shape-note tradition."³⁸ Likewise, Carl Schalk, who initially served on the editorial board of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, feels that the inclusion of American folk hymn tunes was a way to become more American, much in the same way Vaughan Williams used the English folk song. ³⁹ Schalk considers the American folk tunes a source that "had not been tapped before" and a "looking back to some kind of heritage." ⁴⁰ The editor of *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990), LindaJo H. McKim, echoes a similar sentiment, observing that "The tunes really are a part of who we are and for that reason need to be included in any collection coming out of the Americas today." ⁴¹ Marion Hatchett mentions the influence of Vaughan Williams and comments that the inclusion of three American folk tunes in the 1906 *English Hymnal* made it "respectable" for Americans to use these type of tunes in their own hymnals. ⁴²

The organ chorale prelude

The genre of the organ chorale prelude is helping to perpetuate the unique body of tunes stored in the nineteenth-century shape-note tunebooks. The term "chorale" originally referred to the tune used with a hymn text in the sixteenth-century German Protestant Church.⁴³ Over time, the distinction between "chorale" and "hymn" ("a song in praise of

Table 3. Five Southern Harmony Tunes in Hymnals

Hyannal	Christian's Egrewell	Dove of Peace	Holy Manna	New Britain	Wandrans Love
Bapasa,					
(uso	X		X	X	
Baptist. (SN)	X		X	, v	X
Episcopul, pujo					
hpiscapsi 1982	X		x	x	X
Untheran, 1938					
Lufseran, (908)	X		X	X	X
Prediction and (815)	X			X	
Predictions (Star)	λ	x	N	N	Χ
Method of, (900)	X			X	X
Meth 8! 8! 1880	x	X	X	X	×

God") has blurred to the point that the two terms are now used interchangeably.⁴⁴ Today, "organ chorale" and "chorale prelude" are generic terms referring to pieces composed in the tradition of the chorale prelude, whether they are based on a chorale, a Protestant hymn tune, or even a religious ethnic folk song. They may still serve as introductions to the singing of hymns or chorales. More often than not, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first-century liturgical setting, a chorale prelude functions as service music. It may be performed as a prelude, a postlude, as a selection during the collection of the offering or the serving of communion, or as music covering movement in other parts of the liturgy. The performance of chorale preludes

The performance of chorale preludes is not limited to liturgical use. Chorale preludes occupy an important role as part of the literature performed on organ recitals and concerts. A scanning of the recital programs listed each month in The Diapason reveals that various works of this genre are included in many recitals. The works may range from the large settings of J. S. Bach to the jazz-influenced pieces of Johann Michel. For example, of the 20 recital programs listed in the February 2010 issue of The Diapason, at least 24 of the total selections performed appear to be some form of a chorale prelude. 45 Because the hymnals of the early-to-

Because the hymnals of the early-tomid twentieth century contained very
few, if any, American shape-note tunes,
it was not until their inclusion into mainline hymnals that they became familiar
to many organists and to the general concert or church audience. Even though
the tunes were neglected by hymnal
committees during the first half of the
twentieth century, some significant organ
settings of American shape-note tunes
did appear around the middle of the
century. These settings, however, were
not inspired by the composer's familiarity with tunes found in a denominational
hymnal; instead, they seem to be the result of the composer's acquaintance with
a shape-note collection, primarily The

Sacred Harp.

Twentieth-century American composer Gardner Read composed a number of organ works, among which are two collections of shape-note hymn tune settings. Read relied on a copy of The Sacred Harp as the source of the tunes used in his collections. In the scores of both collections, Read notes that the "preludes are based on authentic old hymn-tunes found in the 1902 edition of "The Sacred Harp," a collection of white spirituals and Southern hymns, first published around 1850." Eight Preludes on Old Southern Tunes, opus 90, was published in 1952, and the publication of Six Preludes on Old Southern Hymns, opus 112, followed in 1963. Of the fourteen tunes Read employed in these two notable collections, seven of them are found in Southern Harmony.

in Southern Harmony.
Samuel Barber's Wondrous Love:
Variations on a Shape-note Hymn, written in 1958 for the inaugural recital of the

new Holtkamp organ at Christ Episcopal Church, Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, is primarily a concert piece. ⁴⁷ As the publication of the work predates any inclusion of the tune into a mid-to-late twentieth-century denomination hymnal, one could posit that Barber's piece helped contribute to the popularity of the WONDROUS LOVE tune. In his reference to the tune's source for the composition, Barber notes in the score that the tune was "published in the 'Original Sacred Harp,' Atlanta, Ga., 1869." The score also contains a reproduction of a four-part harmonization of WONDROUS LOVE, probably taken from the 1911 edition of *The Sacred Harp*, as the copy credits the alto part to "S. M. Denson, 1911."

Growth since 1980

In late twentieth to early twenty-first century America, the publication of chorale preludes based on shape-note tunes has increased significantly. This trend, during the period from 1980 to 2005, can be confirmed by consulting reference books that list published organ works and chorale settings. In a repertoire list compiled by this author, a total of 238 organ pieces, based on 46 different tunes found in Southern Harmony, were documented. Of the works in the repertoire list, only 46 (19%) were composed prior to 1980. The significant number of organ chorale preludes based on these tunes is a direct result of the growth in the number of shape-note tunes appearing in recent hymnals.

Five shape-note tunes found in Walker's Southern Harmony (1854)—FOUNDATION (THE CHRISTIAN'S FAREWELL in Southern Harmony), HOLY MANNA, NEW BRITAIN, WONDROUS LOVE, and DOVE OF PEACE—are popular tunes found in hymnals of the late twentieth century or, as in the case of DOVE OF PEACE, have recently become popular. The information shown in Table 3 compares the inclusion of these hymn tunes between the previous and present editions of the five selected denominational hymnals.

A look at the occurrence of these five popular shape-note tunes as *cantus firmi* for organ chorales helps illustrate the growing use of the tunes by composers of organ literature. For example, Jean Slater Edson's book, *Organ Preludes: An Index to Compositions on Hymn Tunes, Chorales, Plainsong Melodies, Gregorian Tunes and Carols*, published in 1970, contains a meager listing of published organ works based on shape-note tunes. For the five tunes considered, Edson's index identifies the following number of chorale preludes: FOUNDATION – 5; HOLY MANNA – 1; NEW BRITAIN – 4; WONDROUS LOVE – 5; and DOVE OF PEACE – 0.50

index identifies the following number of chorale preludes: FOUNDATION – 5; HOLY MANNA – 1; NEW BRITAIN – 4; WONDROUS LOVE – 5; and DOVE OF PEACE – 0.50

In 1987, Dennis Schmidt published the first volume of An Organist's Cuide to Resources for "The Hymnal 1982." Compared to Edson's book of 1970, Schmidt's number of listings indicates a slight increase in the quantity of published organ settings using the five tunes. In Schmidt's

first volume, the number of works cataloged for each of the selected tunes in-

oged for each of the selected tunes includes: FOUNDATION – 4; HOLY MANNA – 4; NEW BRITAIN – 7; WONDROUS LOVE – 6; and DOVE OF PEACE – 0.⁵¹

A second volume of Schmidt's An Organist's Guide to Resources for "The Hymnal 1982" appeared in 1991. Compared to the first volume, the second volume confirms a continued in process in volume confirms a continued increase in the number of organ settings of American tunes. For the five tunes, volume two lists the following number of organ settings: Foundation – 23; Holy Manna – 7; New Britain – 30; Wondrous Love – 15; and Dove of Peace – 0.52

The repertoire list of organ compositions based on shape-note tunes from the Southern Harmony, compiled by the author, substantiates the growth of these published works between 1980 and 2005. The number of organ works in the reperties list using the five selected transcent toire list using the five selected tunes as cantus firmi is summarized below:

FOUNDATION (THE CHRISTIAN'S FAREWELL) – 22, 3 published prior to 1980

DOVE OF PEACE - 7, all published since 1996

HOLY MANNA – 15, 1 published prior to 1980

NEW BRITAIN - 33, 5 published prior to 1980

Wondrous Love - 30, 4 published prior to 1980
The phenomenon of many new shape-

note based organ works is, no doubt, a result of composers discovering shapenote tunes as they began to appear in new editions of hymnals. Robert J. Powell, retired organist/choirmaster of Christ Church, Greenville, South Caroli-na, and a well-known composer of organ and choral music, is the contributor of a number of individual pieces and collections based on shape-note tunes. These tunes are an important source for Powell in his work as a composer. Powell states:

Because many American folk hymns appear in present-day hymnals, I have found they have been influential in my compositions, not only because there are so many from which I have created anthems and organ pieces, but also for their use of modal melodies and uncompromising harmonies.

Michael Burkhardt, formerly a member of the music faculty at Carthage College and currently on the staff of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Livonia, Michigan, is the composer of a significant number of chorale preludes for the organ. Included in his output are several settings of shape-note tunes. In a personal correspondence with this author, Burkhardt supports the thesis that the growth in the use and appearance of the American tunes in hymnals is a contributing factor to the increasing number of organ compositions utilizing the tunes. Burkhardt comments that:

An increase in the number of early American tunes in hymnals has certainly been an impetus for my settings in the American Folk Hymn Suite and in vari-American Folk Hymn Suite and in various other organ publications. But an even greater motivation for me is that these hymns are truly hymns of the people and, more specifically, hymns birthed by the people of this country. I love the ruggedness of the tunes as well as their unique qualities, individualities and the texts with which they are associated. . . . I hope that perhaps in some small way an organ setting or two of mine might excite someone reor two of mine might excite someone re garding this great genre of hymnody.⁵⁴

Samuel Adler, professor of composition at the Juilliard School of Music, has composed a set of organ chorale pre-ludes based on early American tunes, one of which is FOUNDATION. Entitled Hymnset: Four Chorale Preludes on Old American Hymns, the work was premiered in 1984 and published in 1987.55 In correspondence with this author in reference to *Hymnset*, Adler states that "I have always felt that we do not have enough Chorale Preludes on these beautiful hymn tunes and so while I was in residence at the Atlantic Center for the Arts I wrote one of these Preludes a week."⁵⁶ Clearly, Adler's sentiment that there is a need for more chorale preludes using American tunes is one that echoes

in the minds of other American composers and organists. The result has been a profusion of chorale preludes representing various levels of difficulty, length, quality, and effectiveness. This particular body of organ literature deserves to be both performed and recognized for the continuing role it plays in exposing both church and concert attendees to the music of Southern Harmony and similar nineteenth-century collections.

Summary

The heritage of American tunes contained within the shape-note tunebooks of the nineteenth century, whether they are called shape-note, folk-hymn, or American folk tunes, represents an investment had of music, which is the important body of music, which, in the past thirty years, has been reclaiming its rightful place in American hymnody. In the last quarter of the twentieth century the rediscovery of this music prompted mainline Protestant denominational hymnal editors and committees to include many of these tunes into their new editions of hymnals.

The current availability of shape-note tunes in the hymnals of mainline Protestant denominations has, since 1980, significantly affected organ literature. A number of tunes once unknown are now common in many hymnals; as a result, organists and composers have been, and continue to be, drawn to them as fresh sources of *cantus firmi*. This growing body of organ literature represents music of a wide range of difficulty, effectiveness,

compositional creativity, and usefulness.

The shape-note collections of the nineteenth century, including the popular and significant Southern Harmony, helped preserve the tunes and harmonizations that are part of our American history and hymnody. The hymnals of the late twentieth century, with their inclusion of a representative body of American shape-note tunes, have assisted composers, organists, and concert and church attendees in rediscovering this music. The organ literature result-ing from this rediscovery will assist in the preservation of these tunes for new audiences and generations to come.

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7. Irving Lowens, Introduction to John Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, 2d ed. (Harrisburg, PA: John Wyeth; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1964), x.

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10. Harry Lee Eskew, "The Life and Work of William Walker" (M.S.M. thesis, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1960) 21. Orleans Bap 1960), 21. 11. Ibid, 23.

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39. Carl Schalk, telephone interview with author 25 August 2005.
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42. Marion Hatchett, telephone interview with author 5 June 2006.
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