



Name _____

Date _____ Class _____



BACKGROUND: 1835 State Song "The Old North State"



Print based on Gaston's portrait, 19XX.135.63 N.C. Museum of History collection

Where did the title of North Carolina's state song come from? The first written reference to "the Old North State" was just before the creation of the state song, in Joseph Seawell "Shocco" Jones' book, *Defence of the Revolutionary History of the State of North Carolina from the Aspersions of Mr. Jefferson*, page 5, published in 1834 in Boston and Raleigh.

As the state government was reforming itself in 1835 with constitutional amendments and rebuilding a new capitol after an 1831 fire, leaders created new symbols to boost the state's identity. William Gaston, a prominent statesman attending the constitutional convention, wrote a song that would add to rituals at state events.

Elected as a state legislator in 1807 and later U.S. representative (1813-1817) Gaston became a State Supreme Court judge in 1833. Although Article 32 of the state constitution denied the right to hold state office to anyone who did not believe in "the Truth of the Protestant Religion," Gaston and other leaders had concluded that a Catholic could serve anyway.

Gaston's most famous decisions as a judge upheld rights for enslaved persons to defend themselves and defined citizenship for the emancipated with rights guaranteed by the constitution.

Elected by Craven County as its representative to the 1835 constitutional convention, Gaston spoke out in favor of continued suffrage for free Blacks. However, his most passionate cause was arguing against Article 32 of the state constitution. His effort to purge all religious qualifications from the constitution failed, but legislators agreed to replace the word "Christian" with "Protestant."

That year while in Raleigh, Gaston wrote the words for "The Old North State," with music adapted from a melody he heard at a concert by Swiss bellringers.

Quick Fact Check

1. Who invented the phrase, "Old North State?"
2. List two rights that William Gaston supported.

ACTIVITY: Melody & Lyrics

THE OLD NORTH STATE
A Patriotic Song
WRITTEN BY THE LATE
Wm. Gaston
And by him adapted to a German Melody
AND ARRANGED FOR THE
PIANO FORTE
by
R. Culver.
Philadelphia George Willig Tillmanut. S.^g

Original Key A major.

Piano.

Caro - li - na! Caro - li - na! Heaven's blessings attend her, While we live we will cherish protect and de -

fend her, Tho' the scorner may sneer at, and witlings de - fame her, Yet our hearts swell with

Entered according to Act of Congress by G. Willig in the Year 1844 at the Clerk's Office in and for the Eastern District of Penna.

Sheet music, published 1844, Library of Congress collection

Try to Sing Along!



Listen to a recording of the tune by the N.C. Symphony from the State Archives collection and try out the tune!

www.ncpedia.org/symbols/song

Having trouble? Hint: try the chorus first

First stanza:

Carolina! Carolina! Heaven's blessings attend her!

While we live we will cherish, protect and defend her;

Though the scorner may sneer at and witlings defame her,

Our hearts swell with gladness whenever we name her.

Hurrah! Hurrah! The Old North State forever!

Hurrah! Hurrah! The good Old North State!

Last stanza (of 5):

Then let all who love us, love the land that we live in

(As happy a region on this side of Heaven),

Where Plenty and Freedom, Love and Peace smile before us,

Raise aloud, raise together, the heart-thrilling chorus!"

Write Your Own Stanza

Directions: Think about what you like about North Carolina and try to write your own verse for the state song. Write four or five lines and try to stick to a rhyme scheme, like ABAB or ABBA.