

A-mouldering in the Grave



March is Music in Our Schools Month! Have you considered using historical tunes in your classroom? Here's one possibility—the 19th-century popular song “John Brown’s Body.” Answer these questions about the song’s history.

1. When was the music for “John Brown’s Body” first printed?

- 1789
- 1830
- 1858
- 1861

2. Which of the following lines was not in the early versions of “John Brown’s Body?”

- Now, three rousing cheers for the Union!
- John Brown’s body lies a-mouldering in the grave
- They will hang Jeff Davis to a sour apple tree
- But tho’ he lost his life in struggling for the slave

3. In 1861, William Weston Patton published a version of the song in which John Brown was which one of the following?

- A Confederate general
- A Union soldier in the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia
- An escaped slave and memoirist
- A radical abolitionist executed in 1859

4. Julia Ward Howe wrote the lyrics to the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” (which shares a tune with “John Brown’s Body”) after hearing “John Brown’s Body” sung by whom?

- William Lloyd Garrison
- A crowd of abolitionists in Boston
- A battalion of soldiers in Washington, DC
- William Weston Patton

Sources:

Lossing-Barrett, “Lorenzo Dow and the Jerking Exercise,” 1856, Library of Congress, *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic*, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel07.html> (accessed January 29, 2010).

Heather Coffey, “John Brown’s Raid on Harper’s Ferry and John Brown’s Body (Song),” 2006, Center for History and New Media, *Foundations of U.S. History: Virginia History as U.S. History*, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/loudountah/lesson-plans/civil-war-reconstruction/?planid=5> (accessed January 27, 2010).

<http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/quiz>