

GENTLE ANNIE

Lyrics, Stephen C. Foster, 1856
Traditional Irish Tune

Stephen C. Foster (1826-1864) is often referred to as the "father of popular American music". As a songwriter, he is primarily known for his parlor and minstrel music. Foster published over 200 songs in his lifetime. Many of his compositions remain popular more than 150 years after he wrote them. Some of his better known works include *Oh Susanna*, *Camptown Races*, *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Swanee River*, *Hard Times*, and *Beautiful Dreamer*.

Foster suffered from bouts of depression, and his music tended to dwell more on themes of sentimental melancholy and sad memories of the past. *Gentle Annie* is one such song, expressing the grief of missing loved ones gone on before.

There has been much speculation as to exactly who the 'Annie' in the song might refer to from Foster's personal life. Guesses have included a niece, a cousin, both his maternal and paternal grandmothers, and the daughter of his grocer in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Scholars have also noted that the song is most likely based on a traditional Irish tune with similar melody and sentiment.

Written just 5 years before the start of the Civil War, it was popular among soldiers in both the Union and Confederate armies. Gen. Robert E. Lee, whose mother's name was Anne, was said to have been especially fond of it, and often requested the "camp fiddler" to play it before retiring for the night.

This 4-part arrangement contains a melody, bass, harmony, and counter melody.

In music and friendship,

~Tull