

# Mp3 Jerry Ernst - The Adventures Of Billy Barlow



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Completely authentic Civil War party songs, with some tear jerkers for good measure. The quintessential Civil War campfire collection. 16 MP3 Songs FOLK: Traditional Folk, FOLK: Political Details: The Adventures of Billy Barlow is my third collection of documented authentic Civil War era songs. There is more of a theme to Billy than with Angel Band; the focus is on songs of the war itself in a campfire motif. Billy Barlow is a character who goes back centuries, by various names. He is a ne'er-do-well with a flourish. He is a braggart bum. He appeared in 1836 in sheet music, the song that opens this CD. The cover is taken from the cover of that sheet music. In about 1863 he appeared in various broadsides (single sheets of words to fit popular melodies) as a soldier in the war. One of the more popular versions closes this collection. In between hilarity ensues and tears flow. One reenactor described this CD as "the ultimate camp fire CD." Billy is followed by a number of comic songs, basically 19th century party songs. The stretch of Drink It Down, Garryowen, Jug of Punch, and Rosin the Beau are authentic period tavern songs. The next few songs bring in more military flavored comic song, swinging to genuine period Irish song. Pvt. Maguire is from a book published in 1864 titled Songs of the Soldiers; largely collected from Union army soldiers. While no melody was offered, I found that it fit perfectly with a traditional Irish tune The Priest and His Boots. The same tune was named as the air for Bounce Upon Bess, a song about a favorite Irish poteen whiskey. Bounce and Garryowen (above) were both found in an 1838 book Popular Songs of Ireland. Pat Murphy transitions the songs from comic to sentimental. Pat Murphy itself starts out as a typical stereotypical comic Irish song, with Paddy offering opinions on the war and on the abolitionists troubling the blacks with their talk. But the song takes a turn when Pat Murphy and the Irish Brigade charge fearlessly on the foe, and Pat pays with his life. This song may be the first tribute to the contributions and sacrifices of the immigrant Irish soldiers. While many have recorded this song, or

modern variations of it, this is the only recording I am aware of that uses the proper period melody. Everyone else I know of uses the melody altered by Irwin Silber in his 1960 book Songs of the Civil War. Mr. Silber's adaptation is better musically, but for historical accuracy, one must go back to the original sheet music of Think Of Your Head, the song the original broadsides refer to. That is what was used for this recording. The final third of the CD are the sentimental songs the soldiers loved to sing. These are songs that reminded them of the loved ones at home, and that cemented their determination to see their cause through to the end. Somebody's Darling was written by Marie Ravenel dela Coste, who went to the front as a nurse after her brother had been killed in battle. Her poem recounting the death of a young man there was set to music by John Hill Hewitt, the dean of Southern composers. It is a sadly beautiful story reflecting not only her view on this effect of the war, but of a realistic style of writing that was emerging as a result of the war. We Are Coming From the Cotton Fields is a moving song about former slaves leaving the plantation to fight for the Union. The author of the words is not fully identified (J. C\_\_n) so it is not known whether this is a white interpretation of the theme, or words as expressed by a black man at the time. Just Before the Battle, Mother was one of George F. Roots Big Three Songs of the war (others were Battle Cry and Tramp Tramp Tramp). This was one of just a handful of parlor style war songs that became popular among the soldiers, in fact with slight modification, it was popular among Confederate soldiers as well. It also gave Mr. Root a chance to plug his earlier hit, Battle Cry of Freedom, in the forth verse. The Adventures of Billy Barlow is a 53 minute virtual evening around the campfire, performed on period style instruments, and sung in the four-part style of the day.

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