

# Music at Mackinac

Music was a very important part of life at the Straits of Mackinac. During the long, lonely winters music was a good form of entertainment for residents of all eras of history there. But music was also an important form of communication. The military used music to signal the soldiers. Voyageurs used songs to keep time while paddling canoes. Others used it as a way to tell stories and history of their people. These songs are some of the different types of music from sites in the Straits of Mackinac area.

C'est l'aviron and Soldier's Joy are available on line at [kids.mackinacparks.com](http://kids.mackinacparks.com) (Online Activites, Music).

## Colonial Michilimackinac

### PULL ON THE OARS

(French C'est l'aviron, a popular voyageur song)

Ri-ding a-long the road from Rochelle ci-ty      Ri-ding a-long the

road from Rochelle ci-ty I met three girls and all of them were pre tty

By chance, I chose, the one who was a beauty

CHORUS: Pull on the oars as we glide a-long to-get-her

With ne'er a word, we rode along together

Pull on the oars as we glide a-long.

By chance, I chose, the one who was a beauty  
By chance, I chose, the one who was a beauty  
Lifted her up, so she could ride beside me  
(chorus)

With ne'er a word, we rode along together  
With ne'er a word, we rode along together  
After a while, she said "I'd like a drink, sir"  
(chorus)

Quickly I found, a spring from out the mountain  
Quickly I found, a spring from out the mountain  
But she'd not drink, the water from the fountain  
(chorus)

#### French verse

M'en revenant de la jolie Rochelle  
M'en revenant de la jolie Rochelle  
J'ai rencontré trois jolies demoiselles

#### Chorus

C'est l'aviron qui nous mène, qui nous mène  
C'est l'aviron qui nous mène en haut

## SOLDIER'S JOY

## Historic Mill Creek

### MAIRI'S WEDDING

Step we gladly      on we go      heel for heel and      toe for toe

Red her cheeks as rowns are,  
Bright hers eyes as any star,  
Finest of them all by far,  
In our darling Mairi.

arm and arm and      row on row      all for Mairi's      wedding

Plenty of herring, plenty meal,  
Plenty peat to fill her creel,  
Plenty bonnie baims as weel;  
That's the toast for Mairi.

Over hillways      up and down      myrtle green and      bracken brown

past the shieling      thru the town      all for sake of      Main



## THE MAPLE SUGAR SONG

I'll sing my pa-poo's cra-a-dle said Kit-chen-e-go's  
 Me-g wi-th kettle bowl and la-a-dle and Scout-e-wab-a  
 Ke-g. A sugaring I will go-o

Bright Keysis, design to aid us,  
 And make the sap to run.  
 Engina, who arrayed us,  
 At least shall have a turn,  
 A sugaring I will go.

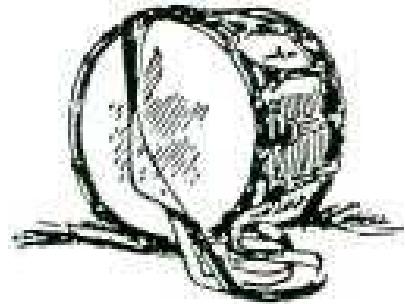
Come Nebeanquodoquoio,  
 And join the jovial crew.  
 Sheeshib and Machinoqui,  
 Shall tap a tree with you,  
 A sugaring I will go.

In kettles we will boil it,  
 On fires between the rocks.  
 And lest the snow shall spoil it,  
 There tramp it in mocoks,  
 A sugaring I will go.

## Fort Mackinac

### MILITARY CALLS

### PEAS UPON A TRENCHER



C G C F G G

G C F G C

### FIRST CALL

C G

# GOLDEN SLIPPERS (or DEM GOLDEN SLIPPERS)

The musical score consists of four staves of music in common time with a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics are represented by letters placed above specific notes. The first staff starts with a 'D'. The second staff starts with 'L' and ends with 'D'. The third staff starts with 'D', has a 'G' in the middle, and ends with '(Em)'. The fourth staff starts with 'L', has a '2.' in the middle, and ends with 'D'. The music includes various note values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Oh, my golden slippers are laid away,  
'Cause I don't 'spect to wear 'em till my wedding day.  
And my long tail coat that I love so well,  
I will wear up in the chariot in the morn.  
And my long white robe that I bought last June,  
I'm gonna get changed 'cause it fits too soon.  
And the old grey horse that I used to drive,  
I will hitch him to the chariot in the morn.  
(chorus)

Oh, my ol' banjo hangs on the wall,  
'Cause it ain't been tuned since way last fall.  
But the folks all say we'll have a good time,  
When we ride up in the chariot in the morn.  
There's old Brother Ben an' his sister, Luce,  
They will telegraph the news to Uncle Bacco Juice.  
What a great camp meetin' there will be that day,  
When we rise up in the chariot in the morn.  
(chorus)

So, it's good-bye children, I will have to go  
Where the rain don't fall and the wind don't blow.  
And your ulster coats, by, you will not need,  
When you ride up in the chariot in the morn.  
But your golden slippers must be nice and clear,  
And your age must be just sweet sixteen.  
And your white kid gloves you will have to wear,  
When you ride up in the chariot in the morn.  
(chorus)

## CHORUS

Oh, them golden slippers,  
Oh, them golden slippers,  
Golden slippers I'm a'gonna wear,  
Because they look so neat.  
Oh, them golden slippers,  
Oh, them golden slippers,  
Golden slippers I'm a'gonna wear,  
To walk the golden street.

# Lesson 6

Using "Music at the Straits"

 **Read, listen to or play "Music at the Straits".**

The Colonial Michilimackinac and Fort Mackinac songs included are available on the **Music at Mackinac** cassette or CD available by order, online or onsite at Mackinac State Historic Parks Museum Stores.

 **Discuss the backgrounds of the music.**

## COLONIAL MICHILIMACKINAC

The French Canadian voyageurs relied on songs to break the monotony and set a pace for their paddling of the canoes. **C'est l'aviron (Pull On The Oars)** was perhaps the most popular paddling song on the voyageurs at Michilimackinac.

Winters at Michilimackinac were very long and tedious. In the evening, dances were held to drive about boredom and cabin fever. The dances and music come from French-Canada, Scotland and England. **Soldier's Joy** is a dance tune that is known in France as **The French Four** and was called **The King's Head** in England as early as 1650. **Soldier's Joy** is still played today in many countries throughout the world.

## HISTORIC MILL CREEK

The making of maple sugar was a very important activity. It was done in sugaring camps by Ojibwa families each spring. Today, there is a sugaring shack at Historic Mill Creek. Throughout the country many songs have been written about "sugaring". **The Maple Sugar Makers** is from a collection belonging to Colonel Arent Schulyer DePeyster, commandant of Fort Michilimackinac from 1774-79. Besides his military career, DePeyster also wrote poems and songs. This is one of the few songs written about the Straits area by DePeyster himself. DePeyster provided translation and explanation of various words in footnotes. *Scoutawaba* is rum. *Keysis* is the sun; warm days and cold nights are required for the sap to run in the trees. *Engina* is Rebecca DePeyster who, as the commandant's wife, distributed gifts to the women each spring. *Mococks* are small birchbark containers used to store maple sugar and other dry foods in by the local tribes.

Robert Campbell, who built the sawmill at Mill Creek, was a Scotsman. Some soldiers in the British army at the Straits were from Scotland, notably the 84th Highland Regiment (1780-1784). The music of the Scottish community were probably heard not only at the forts, but also in the community that developed around the industrial complex at Mill Creek. **Mairi's Wedding** was (and still is) a very popular Scottish bagpipe and fiddle dance tune.

## FORT MACKINAC

Throughout the history of Fort Mackinac, musicians regulated garrison life with a variety of calls from Reveille in the morning to Taps at night. During the early British period, Highland bagpipes and drum performed this task. After 1796 it was American fife and drums. Toward the late 19th century the bugle and drum took over signaling order such as "Advance," "Retreat," "Mess Call" and many others. **The First Call and Peas Upon a Trencher** are examples of these signals. **The First Call** was used to begin the morning assembly. Does is sound familiar? **Peas Upon a Trencher** is the fife and drum call used in early years to call the troops to dinner.

Life for Fort Mackinac soldiers in the late 19th century was not all work. Tourists flocked to the island and entrepreneurs established curio shops, restaurants and rooming houses. Several hotels hired bands and orchestras to entertain guests. One of the tunes soldiers heard during this period was Golden Slippers, written by the African American composer James Bland in 1879.

 **Use Activity 18 to further support the ideas in "Music at the Straits".**

## GLCEs that may be reached in Lesson 6:

**3-H3.0.7** Use a variety of primary and secondary sources to construct a historical narrative about daily life in the early settlements of Michigan.

**4-H3.0.4** Draw upon stories, photos, artifacts and other primary sources to compare life of people in towns and cities in Michigan and in the Great Lakes region during a variety of time periods from 1837 to the present.



# My Music

18

Music is used in a lot of different ways. Voyageurs used music to keep their paddles in time together when on a canoe. People living here used music for entertainment during the long winters. Soldiers used music to keep a schedule and for telling them what to do next.

Think of and listen for the different places you listen to or hear music. Think of television, the computer, MP3 player, the store, movies and other places you hear music.

When you are done, fill out the chart below. Then compare how you use music today and how people at the Straits of Mackinac used music before. What is the same and what is different?

What do you use music for? What is music used for? What was music used for in the past? How is it played now compared to before?

**THEN**

**NOW**