

Civil War Music: Tramp, Tramp, Tramp

(Source: The Civil War Trust)

Composed by George Root in 1863, this piece struck a chord in the heart of every prisoner of war. In Andersonville, rumors that Union troops were on their way to liberate the prisoners circulated constantly. Hope of liberation, of escape, release, or prisoner exchange was often the only thing that stood between prisoners and total despair.

The lyrics are:

In the prison cell I sit, thinking mother, dear, of you and our bright and happy home so far away. And the tears they fill my eyes, in spite of all that I can do, though I try to cheer my comrades and be gay.

CHORUS:

Tramp, tramp, tramp. The boys are marching. Cheer up, comrades, they will come. And beneath the starry flag, we shall breathe the air again, of the free land in our own beloved homes.

In the battle front we stood, when their fiercest charge they made, and they swept us off, a hundred men or more. But before they reached our lines, they were beaten back, dismayed. And we heard the cry of victory o'er and o'er.

CHORUS

So within the prison cell, we are waiting for the day, that you'll come to open wide the iron door. And the hollow eye grow bright and the poor heart almost gay, when we think of seeing home and friends once more.

CHORUS

Courtesy of Jerry Vaughn and Greg Starbuck, from the series "Songs of the Civil War and Before," Virginia Beach, Virginia