

Artist: Earle Steve
Song: Rich Man's War
Album: Revolution Starts Now

Jimmy joined the army 'cause he had no place to go
There ain't nobody hirin'
'round here since all the jobs went
down to Mexico
Reckoned that he'd learn himself a trade maybe see the world
Move to the city someday and marry a black haired girl
Somebody somewhere had another plan
Now he's got a rifle in his hand
Rollin' into Baghdad wonderin' how he got this far
Just another poor boy off to fight a rich man's war

Bobby had an eagle and a flag tattooed on his arm
Red white and blue to the bone when he landed in Kandahar
Left behind a pretty young wife and a baby girl
A stack of overdue bills and went off to save the world
Been a year now and he's still there
Chasin' ghosts in the thin dry air
Meanwhile back at home the finance company took his car
Just another poor boy off to fight a rich man's war

When will we ever learn
When will we ever see
We stand up and take our turn
And keep tellin' ourselves we're free

Ali was the second son of a second son
Grew up in Gaza throwing bottles and rocks when the tanks would come
Ain't nothin' else to do around here just a game children play
Somethin' 'bout livin' in fear all your life makes you hard that way

He answered when he got the call
Wrapped himself in death and praised Allah
A fat man in a new Mercedes drove him to the door
Just another poor boy off to fight a rich man's war

Sarangel Music (ASCAP)

John Brown

John Brown went off to war to fight on a foreign shore
His mama sure was proud of him!
He stood straight and tall in his uniform and all
His mama's face broke out all in a grin

"Oh son, you look so fine, I'm glad you're a son of mine
You make me proud to know you hold a gun
Do what the captain says, lots of medals you will get
And we'll put them on the wall when you come home"

As that old train pulled out, John's ma began to shout
Tellin' ev'ryone in the neighborhood:
"That's my son that's about to go, he's a soldier now, you know"
She made well sure her neighbors understood

She got a letter once in a while and her face broke into a smile
As she showed them to the people from next door
And she bragged about her son with his uniform and gun
And these things you called a good old-fashioned war

Oh! Good old-fashioned war!

Then the letters ceased to come, for a long time they did not come
They ceased to come for about ten months or more
Then a letter finally came saying, "Go down and meet the train
Your son's a-coming home from the war"

She smiled and went right down, she looked everywhere around
But she could not see her soldier son in sight
But as all the people passed, she saw her son at last
When she did she could hardly believe her eyes

Oh his face was all shot up and his hand was all blown off
And he wore a metal brace around his waist
He whispered kind of slow, in a voice she did not know
While she couldn't even recognize his face!

Oh! Lord! Not even recognize his face

"Oh tell me, my darling son, pray tell me what they done
How is it you come to be this way?"
He tried his best to talk but his mouth could hardly move
And the mother had to turn her face away

"Don't you remember, Ma, when I went off to war
You thought it was the best thing I could do?
I was on the battleground, you were home . . . acting proud
You wasn't there standing in my shoes"

“Oh, and I thought when I was there, God, what am I doing here?
I’m a-tryin’ to kill somebody or die tryin’
But the thing that scared me most was when my enemy came close
And I saw that his face looked just like mine”

Oh! Lord! Just like mine!

“And I couldn’t help but think, through the thunder rolling and stink
That I was just a puppet in a play
And through the roar and smoke, this string is finally broke
And a cannonball blew my eyes away”

As he turned away to walk, his Ma was still in shock
At seein’ the metal brace that helped him stand
But as he turned to go, he called his mother close
And he dropped his medals down into her hand

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Devils & Dust Lyrics Artist(Band):**Bruce Springsteen**

I got my finger on the trigger
But I don't know who to trust
When I look into your eyes
There's just devils and dust
We're a long, long way from home, Bobbie
Home's a long, long way from us
I feel a dirty wind blowing
Devils and dust

I got God on my side
And I'm just trying to survive
What if what you do to survive
Kills the things you love
Fear's a powerful thing, baby
It can turn your heart black you can trust
It'll take your God filled soul
And fill it with devils and dust

Well I dreamed of you last night
In a field of blood and stone
The blood began to dry
The smell began to rise
Well I dreamed of you last night, Bobbie
In a field of mud and bone
Your blood began to dry
And the smell began to rise

We've got God on our side
We're just trying to survive
What if what you do to survive
Kills the things you love
Fear's a powerful thing, baby
It'll turn your heart black you can trust
It'll take your God filled soul
Fill it with devils and dust
It'll take your God filled soul
Fill it with devils and dust

[Harmonica solo]

Now every woman and every man
They wanna take a righteous stand
Find the love that God wills
And the faith that He commands
I've got my finger on the trigger
And tonight faith just ain't enough
When I look inside my heart
There's just devils and dust

Well I've got God on my side
And I'm just trying to survive
What if what you do to survive
Kills the things you love
Fear's a dangerous thing
It can turn your heart black you can trust
It'll take your God filled soul
Fill it with devils and dust
Yeah it'll take your God filled soul
Fill it with devils and dust

[Harmonica solo]

“Born in the U.S.A.” by Bruce Springsteen 1984

The version we hear is the early acoustic version that evolved into the ironically anthemic version of the third full studio take that was released and became a national hit. It was used as theme music for the 1984 Republican national convention . Springsteen now plays a Delta Blues bottle-neck guitar version.

Born down in a dead man’s town
the first kick I took was when I hit the ground
You end up like a dog that’s been beat too much
Till you spend half your life just covering up

Born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.

Got in a little hometown jam so they put a rifle in my hand
Sent me off to a foreign land to go and kill the yellow man

Born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.

Come back home to the refinery
Hiring man says “son if it was up to me”
Went down to see my V.A. man
He said “son don’t you understand”

Had a brother at Khe Sahn
fighting off the Viet Cong
They’re still there he’s all gone
He had a woman he loved in Saigon
I got a picture of him in her arms

Down in the shadow of the penitentiary
Out by the gas fires of the refinery
I’m ten years burning down the road
Nowhere to run ain’t got nowhere to go

Born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.
I’m a long gone daddy in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.
I’m a cool rocking daddy in the U.S.A.

“Jimmy’s Road” by Willie Nelson written “July 24, 1968”

On the history of Willie Nelson's peace song poem "Jimmy's Road":

<http://www.texasobserver.org/article.php?aid=2665>

This is Jimmy’s road
where Jimmy liked to play.
This is Jimmy’s grass
where Jimmy liked to lay around.

This is Jimmy’s tree
where Jimmy likes to climb.
Jimmy went to war
and something changed his mind around.

This is the battleground
where Jimmy learned to kill.
And Jimmy has a trade
and Jimmy knows it well, too well.
This is Jimmy’s grave
where Jimmy’s body lies,
and when a soldier falls
Jimmy’s body dies and dies.

But this is Jimmy’s road
where Jimmy likes to play.
This is Jimmy’s grass
where Jimmy likes to lay around.

“Korea Blues” J.B. Lenoir This blues dates from 1951. The lyrics had a strong echo in the next blues about the war in Vietnam, fourteen years later...

Lord I got my questionnaire, Uncle Sam's gonna send me away from here
Lord I got my questionnaire, Uncle Sam's gonna send me away from here
He said J. B. you know that I need you, Lord I need you in South Korea

Sweetheart please don't you worry, I just begin to fly in the air
Sweetheart please don't you worry, I just begin to fly in the air
Now the Chinese shoot me mdown, Lord I'll be in Korea somewhere

I just sittin' here wonderin', who you gonna let lay down in my bed
I just sittin' here wonderin', who you gonna let lay down in my bed
What hurt me so bad, think about some man has gone in your bed.

“Vietnam” J.B. Lenoir

Another blues about Vietnam, from 1966. This time J B Lenoir links it to the racial murders in the Southern States at the time.

Vietnam Vietnam, everybody cryin' about Vietnam
Vietnam Vietnam, everybody cryin' about Vietnam
The law all the days (?) killing me down in Mississippi, nobody seems to give a damn

Oh God if you can hear my prayer now, please help my brothers over in Vietnam
Oh God if you can hear my prayer now, please help my brothers over in Vietnam
The poor boys fightin', killin' and hidin' all in holes,
Maybe killin' their own brother, they do not know

Mister President you always cry about peace, but you must clean up your house before you leave
Oh how you cry about peace, but you must clean up your house before you leave
How can you tell the world how we need peace, and you still mistreat and killin' poor me.

“Vietnam” J.B. Lenoir This was recorded in 1965, two years before his untimely death.

Lord I got my questionnaire
Uncle Sam gonna send me away from here
Lord I got my questionnaire
Uncle Sam gonna send me away from here
He says JB you can hide but you cannot run
Now lately you have to be in Vietnam

Sweetheart please don't you worry
I'm just beginnin' to fly in the air
Sweetheart please don't you worry
I'm just beginnin' to fly in the air
Now they in Vietnam shootin' 'em down over there
Lord you'll find my body there somewhere

Oh Lord I wonder
I wonder when will all wars come to an end
Oh Lord I wonder
I wonder when will all wars come to an end
Now in Vietnam, shootin' 'em down and sayin'
My son Jebra(?) will rise up and fight again

“Masters of War” Bob Dylan

Come you masters of war
You that build all the guns
You that build the death planes
You that build the big bombs
You that hide behind walls
You that hide behind desks
I just want you to know
I can see through your masks

You that never done nothin'
But build to destroy
You play with my world
Like it's your little toy
You put a gun in my hand
And you hide from my eyes
And you turn and run farther
When the fast bullets fly

Like Judas of old
You lie and deceive
A world war can be won
You want me to believe
But I see through your eyes
And I see through your brain
Like I see through the water
That runs down my drain

You fasten the triggers
For the others to fire
Then you set back and watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
As young people's blood
Flows out of their bodies
And is buried in the mud

You've thrown the worst fear
That can ever be hurled
Fear to bring children
Into the world
For threatening my baby
Unborn and unnamed
You ain't worth the blood
That runs in your veins

How much do I know
To talk out of turn
You might say that I'm young
You might say I'm unlearned
But there's one thing I know
Though I'm younger than you
Even Jesus would never
Forgive what you do

Let me ask you one question
Is your money that good
Will it buy you forgiveness
Do you think that it could
I think you will find
When your death takes its toll
All the money you made
Will never buy back your soul

And I hope that you die
And your death'll come soon
I will follow your casket
In the pale afternoon
And I'll watch while you're lowered
Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand o'er your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead

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Johnny Cash "Drive On" 1994

I got a friend named Whiskey Sam
He was my boonierat buddy for a year in Nam
He said is my country just a little off track
Took 'em twenty-five years to welcome me back
But, it's better than not coming back at all
Many a good man
I saw fall And even now,
every time I dream I hear the men
and the monkeys in the jungle scream

Drive on, don't mean nothin'
My children love me , but they don't understand
And I got a woman who knows her man
Drive on, don't mean nothin', drive on

I remember one night,
Tex and me Rappelled in on a hot L.Z.
We had our 16's on rock and roll
But, with all that fire,
was scared and cold
We were crazy, we were wild
And I have seen the tiger smile
I spit in a bamboo viper's face
And I'd be dead , but by God's grace

Drive on, don't mean nothin'
My children love me, but they don't understand
And I got a woman who knows her man
Drive on, don't mean nothin', drive on

It was a real slow walk in a real sad rain
And nobody tried to be John Wayne
I came home, but Tex did not
And I can't talk about the hit he got
I got a little limp now when
I walk Got a little tremolo when
I talk But my letter read from Whiskey Sam
You're a walkin' talkin' miracle from Vietnam

Drive on, don't mean nothin'
My children love me, but they don't understand
And I got a woman who knows her man
Drive on, don't mean nothin', drive on

“The Ballad of Ira Hayes” Written by Peter LaFarge
Recorded by Johnny Cash on 3/5/64 Number 3 - Country Chart
here Sung by **Townes van Zandt**

Ira Hayes, Ira Hayes

CHORUS:

Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian
Nor the Marine that went to war

Gather round me people there's a story I would tell
About a brave young Indian you should remember well
From the land of the Pima Indian
A proud and noble band
Who farmed the Phoenix valley in Arizona land

Down the ditches for a thousand years
The water grew Ira's peoples' crops
'Till the white man stole the water rights
And the sparklin' water stopped

Now Ira's folks were hungry
And their land grew crops of weeds
When war came, Ira volunteered
And forgot the white man's greed

CHORUS:

Call him drunken Ira Hayes
He won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinkin' Indian
Nor the Marine that went to war

There they battled up Iwo Jima's hill,
Two hundred and fifty men
But only twenty-seven lived to walk back down again

And when the fight was over
And when Old Glory raised
Among the men who held it high
Was the Indian, Ira Hayes

CHORUS:

Call him drunken Ira Hayes

"The Ballad of Ira Hayes" was written by folk singer Peter La Farge. It tells the story of Ira Hayes, one of the five Marines and one Navy Corpsman who raised the flag on Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II. The song has been recorded many times; the most popular version is by Johnny Cash. Patrick Sky covered it on his self-titled 1965 debut album (and later for a 1985 album). Bob Dylan followed suit by covering the song during his sessions for *Self Portrait*, though his version did not see release until Columbia used it as part of the Dylan album of 1973. Townes Van Zandt also covered this song during a rare television appearance.

http://wapedia.mobi/en/The_Ballad_of_Ira_Hayes

You can read about Ira Hayes in the best-selling book by James Bradley, turned into a film, *Flags of Our Fathers*, about the Iwo Jima flag-raisers (and the battle of Iwo Jima).

“Fortunate Son” by Creedence Clearwater Revival late 60’s

Some Folks are born made to wave the flag.
Oooh, they’re red, white and blue.
And when the band plays “Hail to the Chief,”
Oooh, they point the cannon at you.

It ain’t me, it ain’t me,
I ain’t no senator’s son.
It ain’t me, it ain’t me,
I ain’t no fortunate one.

Some folks are born silver spoon in hand.
Lord, don’t they help themselves, y’all.
But when the taxman comes to the door,
Lord, their house looks like a rummage sale.

It ain’t me, it ain’t me,
I ain’t no millionaire’s son, no no.
It ain’t me, it ain’t me
I ain’t no fortunate one, y’all.

Some folks inherit star-spangled eyes
Oooh, they’ll send you down to war.
And when you ask them how
much should we give
Their only answer is more
more, more, y’all.

It ain’t me, it ain’t me,
I ain’t no military son.
It ain’t me, it ain’t me,
I ain’t no fortunate one.

It ain’t me, it ain’t me,
I ain’t no fortunate one.
It ain’t me, it ain’t me,
I ain’t no fortunate one.

For CCR “Suzie Q” in “Apocalypse Now,” see
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QA-ksOHP0bY>

Woody Guthrie “The Sinking Of The Reuben James”

Have you heard of a ship called the good Reuben James
Manned by hard fighting men both of honor and fame?
She flew the Stars and Stripes of the land of the free
But tonight she's in her grave at the bottom of the sea.

Tell me what were their names, tell me what were their names,
Did you have a friend on the good Reuben James?
What were their names, tell me, what were their names?
Did you have a friend on the good Reuben James

Well, a hundred men went down in that dark watery grave
When that good ship went down only forty-four were saved.
'Twas the last day of October we saved the forty-four
From the cold ocean waters and the cold icy shore.

It was there in the dark of that uncertain night
That we watched for the U-boats and waited for a fight.
Then a whine and a rock and a great explosion roared
And they laid the Reuben James on that cold ocean floor.

Now tonight there are lights in our country so bright
In the farms and in the cities they're telling of the fight.
And now our mighty battleships will steam the bounding main
And remember the name of that good Reuben James.

For history of the ship and its sinking, see:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Reuben_James_\(DD-245\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Reuben_James_(DD-245))

See: <http://hnn.us/articles/12841.html>

“Do People Ever Really Remember the Names of the War Dead?”

By Thomas G. Palaima

CHECK OUT THE MOVIE VERSION: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPoZeeOuY5s>

Perry Como "A Hubba-Hubba-Hubba (Dig You Later)"

It's always fair weather,
when hep cats get together!
And every time they meet,
here's the way you'll hear them greet (greet!)
A hubba-hubba-hubba Hello Dad!

Well a hubba-hubba-hubba, I just got back!
Well a hubba-hubba-hubba, let's shoot some breeze!
Say, whatever happened to the Japanese?
Hmm a hubba-hubba-hubba, haven't you heard?
A hubba-hubba-hubba, slip me the word!

I got it from a guy who was in the kno'
It was mighty smoky over Tokyo!
A friend of mine in a B-29 dropped another load for luck,
As he flew away, he was heard to say:
"A hubba-hubba-hubba yuk yuk!"

Well I gotta go fishin'
That's ok, we'll give you our
permission and we'll say,
A hubba-hubba-hubba, on your way!
And I will dig you later in the USA!
Ta dah dah dee dee dee ta dee dee, ta
dah dah hi hi hi tee dee dee!

A hubba-hubba-hubba, I just got in!
A hubba-hubba-hubba, well give me some skin!
Well you're lookin' mighty purdy Miss Curly Locks!
I'm the grand old girly of the bobby socks!
Hmm yuttata yuttata yuttaton you talk big!
Well I'm the fresh tomata you can't dig!
Let's have a heart to heart'a and you'll decide!
I'm a chick what's really on the solid side!

You knock me flat, you're the kind of a cat,
makes me wanta blow my top: "
'till the end of time . . . "
(Aaaaah!)

And if you feel that way, tell me what you say?
A hubba-hubba-hubba muk muk!

Well now you're really talkin', you're no square!
You can't be from Weehawken . . .
Hmm hmm Delaware!

You got a line of jive that's really zoo!
Well I'll dig you later, baby you're all root!

< instrumental break >

You're the kind of cat, wears a sharp cravat,
and you really know your stuff!

If you feel that way, tell me what you say?
A hubba-hubba-hubba ruff ruff!

A getta long a little mousy with the great big eyes,
well if you're lookin' for a spousey,
why you're just my size!

Mister how you love to blubber
with that knock out squawk,
Seems your lips are made of rubber
every time you talk!

Oh no, no, no, hubba-hubba!

Yes, yes, yes, hubba-hubba!

Bop, bop, bop, hubba-hubba!
A what you kno' (A what you kno')
A what you say (A what you say)
I say I'll dig you later baby in the USA!

Perry Como (May 18, 1912 - May 12, 2001) was a popular United States singer with a silky voice who became popular in the mid 1930s, and continued to have a following through the 1990s.

He was born Pierino Ronald Como to an Italian-American family at Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, the seventh son of a seventh son. He worked as a barber until 1933, when he joined the bands of Freddie Carlone and then Ted Weems Orchestra as a vocalist. He began recording with RCA Victor in 1943, and recorded exclusively with them until 1987.

Blind Willie Johnson, "When the War Was On" Lyrics were very hard to decipher. because of his gravelly voice and his phrasing. But here is a wonderful transcription, by serious music aficionados.

Accompanying themselves on guitar and tambourine, William and Versey Smith made four Chicago recordings in 1927. Their songs may derive from printed lyrics, although no source for their song "Everybody Help the Boys Come Home" has been found so far. Black gospel singer William Smith was quite cynical about the white world leaders. To him Woodrow Wilson was a king sitting on a throne and making laws. When a version of this song, called "When the War Was On ' was recorded by Blind Willie Johnson two years later, the same image was used to level harsher, though self-censored, criticism against the president:

http://weeniecampbell.com/mambo/index.php?option=com_smf&Itemid=128&topic=2254.msg45193#new

WITH SOME IMPROVEMENTS OF MY OWN.

Well, it's just about a few years, and some months ago,
United States come and voted for war.

Sammy called the men from the East and the West:
"Get ready boys, we got to do our best."

CHORUS: Everybody, well, when the war was on, (3x)
Well, they registered everybody, when the war was on.

Well, President Wilson, sittin' on his throne,
Makin' laws for everyone.
Didn't call the black man, to lay by the white,
[guitar replaces words].

CHORUS

Price on the letter, gettin' to raise,
Gettin' no better, but the same old thing.
Eight cents on the dollar, ride the train,
Freight's gettin' cheaper, take a ride again.

CHORUS

Yes, you measure your BARLEY, measure your wheat,
Half a pound of sugar for a person a week. Folks didn't like it,
they blamed Uncle Sam,
Have got to save the sugar for the boys in France.

CHORUS

Well, boys whupped the Germans, home at last,
Would have brought the kaiser, but he run too fast.
Couldn't blame the kaiser for a-leavin' the land,
Uncle Sammy had the greatest share of muscle and man.

CHORUS

Tax gettin' heavy, have to pay,
Help the boys, over across the sea.
Mud and water up to their knees,
Faced the kaiser for you and me.

CHORUS

"President Wilson, sittin' on his throne, makin' laws for everyone, didn't call the black man to lay by the white" Johnson sang, perhaps not daring to finish his phrase. One could criticize the kaiser without risking a lynching, but not the president of the United States. Black men and white men were sent to Europe, but the segregation Wilson defended in the United States was even more strictly adhered to on the battlefields of Belgium and France. In a secret memorandum General Pershing made it clear to the French army command that the Negro was regarded as an inferior human being whose vices (especially rape) were a constant menace.

Everybody help the boys come home
Everybody help the boys come home
Everybody help the boys come home
Do your best everybody when the war was on

Secretary writing just as fast as he can
Trying to get the news all over the land

Three cents on a letter we had to pay
Two cents on a pork chop come to pass
Eight cents on the dollar just to ride the train
Helpin' the gov'ment outta mighty strain

Taxes heavy but we must pay
Helpin the boys over 'cross the sea
In the muddy water up to their knee
Facin' the Kaiser for you and me

repeat 2nd verse

Kaiser seen he didn't have no friends
Come all the world just on the job
Runnin' to England's just what I mean
Went to sea in this submarine

President Wilson was on his throne
Makin' laws for everyone
Raisin' the rich and he raisin' the poor
Raisin' every tax on everybody's door

President of England, King of France
Meetin' the Kaiser now face to face
All we wanted was a ? of a chance
We got to go to Germany just to settle the game

John -- I went back with one of those slowdown programs and I agree that it is "register" in the chorus, which makes the most sense too. Still sounds like "Everybody well" to me, though. Also listening on that he's definitely saying "lay by the white." Also, as Alexei pointed out, it sounds like he's singing "measure your boiler." This would make sense if he's referring to fuel conservation.

Hope somebody can fill in that missing word in the last verse of "Everybody."
Chris

Johnm:
Hi all,

I'm kind of late getting here today. Thanks Alexei, for your suggestions. I agree, it is "gov'ment" in the first verse and "boiler" later on. I always thought it sound like "boiler" but couldn't make any sense of it. I am going to go with your hearing of "Everybody, well," for the chorus, Chris. It sounds closer to the sound Willie makes, and I think it also makes sense--three times, "Everybody, well, when the war was on" and the listener is saying "Everybody what?". The tag line pays off. Thanks so much to everyone for your help and suggestions. It's great to see the song go from a place of phonetic plausibility to something that both sounds closer to what is being sung and makes better sense. You people are just cool.

All best,
Johnm

Johnm:
Hi Chris,
I am hearing something different in verse 5 of "Everybody"
Now, Kaiser seen he didn't have no friends
Come all the way, starts over the side
Runnin' to England's just what I mean
Went to sea in this submarine

See what you think.

All best,
Johnm

banjochris:
John --

I still hear "world" instead of "way" -- it could be "the side" at the end. It would make sense if he means that all the world was on one side against the Kaiser.

My ears are tired -- I'll listen again tomorrow and go back and change it -- I'm sure "the side" is right. It would be a lot easier to understand if Versey were actually singing intelligible words as well. I wonder if there's any folksong collections with a version of this song somewhere; the two recorded versions are different enough that Johnson didn't learn it from the recording.

Chris

Bunker Hill:

Oh well, fwiw, here's my 5 cents worth which is taken from Guido Van Rijn's 1997 book Roosevelt Blues together with the his observations:

Accompanying themselves on guitar and tambourine, William and Versey Smith made four Chicago recordings in 1927. Their songs may derive from printed lyrics, although no source for their song "Everybody Help the Boys Come Home" has been found so far. Black gospel singer William Smith was quite cynical about the white world leaders. To him Woodrow Wilson was a king sitting on a throne and making laws. When a version of this song, called "When the War Was On ' was recorded by Blind Willie Johnson two years later, the same image was used to level harsher, though self-censored, criticism against the president:

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Well, they registered everybody, when the war was on.

Well, it's just about a few years, and some months ago,
United States come and voted for war.

Sammy called the men from the East and the West:
"Get ready boys, we got to do our best."

CHORUS

Well, President Wilson, sittin' on his throne,

Makin' laws for everyone.
Didn't call the black man, to lay by the white,
[guitar replaces words].

CHORUS

Price on the letter, began to raise,
Gettin' no better, but the same old thing.
Eight cents on the dollar, ride the train,
Freight's gettin' cheaper, take a ride again.

CHORUS

Yes, you measure your boiler, measure your wheat,
Half a pound of sugar per person a week. Folks didn't like it,
they blamed Uncle Sam,
Have got to save the sugar for the boys in France.

CHORUS

Well, boys whupped the Germans, home at last,
Would have brought the kaiser, but he run too fast.
Couldn't blame the kaiser for a-leavin' the land,
Uncle Sammy had the greatest share of muscle and man.

CHORUS

Tax gettin' heavy, have to pay,
Help the boys, over across the sea.
Mud and water up to their knees,
Faced the kaiser for you and me.

CHORUS

"President Wilson, sittin' on his throne, makin' laws for everyone, didn't call the black man to lay by the white" Johnson sang, perhaps not daring to finish his phrase. One could criticize the kaiser without risking a lynching, but not the president of the United States. Black men and white men were sent to Europe, but the segregation Wilson defended in the United States was even more strictly adhered to on the battlefields of Belgium and France. In a secret memorandum General Pershing made it clear to the French army command that the Negro was regarded as an inferior human being whose vices (especially rape) were a constant menace.

HERE IS FROM THE WEB SITE DISCUSSION:

A few suggestions, tpalaima, in capitals, using your version. My WOULD HELP in the chorus is a tentative try, while I think your BARLEY is wrong, even though it would make sense. I've put BOILER, but think it is something like 'measure your B??? AND measure your wheat' (that is, a one syllable word). 'Didn't call the black man, LEAVE OUT the white', I take to mean both were called.

CHORUS: Everybody, WOULD HELP, when the war was on, (3x)
Well, they registered everybody, when the war was on.

Well, it's just about a few years, and some months ago,
United States CONGRESS voted for war.
SAM, HE called the men from the East and the West:

"Get ready boys, WE'VE got to do our best."

CHORUS

Well, President Wilson, sittin' on his throne,
Makin' laws for everyone.
Didn't call the black man, LEAVE OUT the white,
[guitar replaces words].

CHORUS

Price on A letter, BEGIN to raise,
Gettin' no better, but the same old thing.
Eight cents on the dollar, JUST TO ride the train,
RATES gettin' cheaper, take a ride again.

CHORUS

FIRST, you measure your BOILER???, measure your wheat,
Half a pound of sugar for a person a week.
Folks didn't like it, they blamed Uncle Sam,
"I'VE got to save the sugar for the boys in France."

CHORUS

Well, boys whupped the Germans, home at last,
Would have brought the kaiser, but he run too fast.
Couldn't blame the kaiser for a-leavin' the land,
Uncle SAM, HE HAD TO SAVE THE SKIN OF A MOST EVIL MAN.

CHORUS

Tax gettin' heavy, have to pay,
HELPED the boys over across the sea.
Mud and water up to their knees,
Faced the kaiser for you and me.

CHORUS

The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down by J.R.Robertson. Album: The Band
© 1970 Canaan Music, Inc.

C Am C/G F F/E Dm
Virgil Caine is the name, and I served on the Danville train,

Am C/G F F/E Dm
'Til Stoneman's cavalry came and tore up the tracks again.

Am/E F C Dm
In the winter of '65, We were hungry, just barely alive.

Am/E F C Dm D
By May the tenth, Richmond had fell, it's a time I remember, oh so well,

(Chorus)

C/G Fmaj7 C/G Fmaj7
The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down, and the bells were ringing,

C/G Fmaj7 C/G Fmaj7
The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down, and the people were singin'. They went

C/G Am Gsus4 F C
La, La,

Am C F F/E Dm
Back with my wife in Tennessee, When one day she called to me,

Am C F F/E Dm
"Virgil, quick, come see, there goes Robert E. Lee!"

Am/E F C Dm
Now I don't mind choppin' wood, and I don't care if the money's no good.

Am/E F
Ya take what ya need and ya leave the rest,

C Dm D
But they should never have taken the very best.

(Chorus)

Am C F F/E Dm
Like my father before me, I will work the land,

Am C F F/E Dm
Like my brother above me, who took a rebel stand.

Am/E F C Dm
He was just eighteen, proud and brave, But a Yankee laid him in his grave,

Am/E F
I swear by the mud below my feet,

C Dm D
You can't raise a Caine back up when he's in defeat.

(Chorus and fade)