

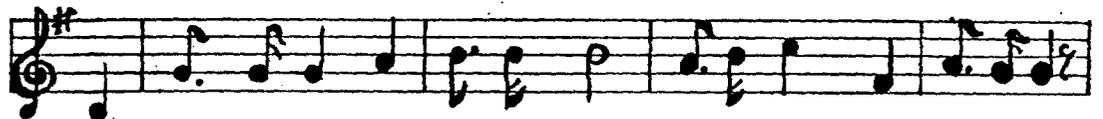
# A Sour Note For Sweet Maryland

*Civil War Ditty Provokes Outrage; Legislator Seeks New State Song*

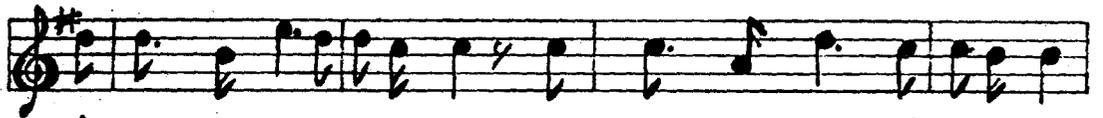
## Maryland, My Maryland



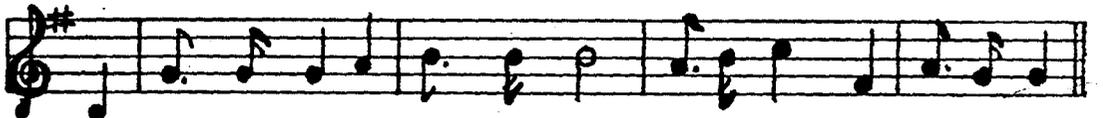
1. The des-pot's heel is on thy shore, Ma-ry-land, my Ma-ryland!



His torch is at thy tem-ple door, Ma-ry-land, my Ma-ryland!



A-venge the pa-tri-ot-ic gore, That flecked the streets of Baltimore,



And be the bat-tle-queen of yore, Ma-ry-land my Ma-ry-land!

6 Dear Mother! burst the tyrant's chain,  
Maryland!  
Virginia should not call in vain, Maryland!  
She meets her sisters on the plain —

9 I hear the distant thunder-hum,  
Maryland!  
The Old Line's bugle, fife, and drum,  
Maryland!

# New State Song

By Debbie Prager

Washington Post Staff Writer

**M**aryland! My Maryland! O official state song, sung by school choirs, chimed hourly by the University of Maryland chapel bells, imprinted in the state code of law.

Is this honored paean to patriotic deeds of yore no more than a rabble-rousing rebel yell set to music?

Yes, according to State Sen. Howard Denis (R-Montgomery), who has filed a bill to delete this 1861 ditty from the books as Maryland's state song.

"It's very offensive," Denis said during a telephone interview. "I don't see how any self-respecting citizen of the state can sing the lyrics."

Denis said he'd often heard the song sung at state functions but, like most Marylanders, never paid close attention to the words. Then recently he happened to come across the song while thumbing through the Maryland annotated code.

As he read the verses, Denis said he was stunned to realize that the song, sung to the tune of the German Christmas carol, "O Tannenbaum," was a blatant appeal for Maryland to join the Confederacy during the Civil War.

"I was appalled," Denis said.

Down on Maryland's eastern shore, veteran State Sen. Fred Malkus (D-Cambridge) chuckled. "He must have read the ninth stanza," Malkus said with a laugh. "I've never read all nine myself."

"Sic semper!" 'tis the proudest refrain  
That baffles minions back again, Mary-  
land! My Maryland!

The ninth stanza refers to the Union as "northern scum."

Denis admits he was puzzled by that line. "Huzza! She spurns the Northern scum"? Is that the spirit we want the state song to reflect?"

Denis also objects to the verse that entreats Maryland to help "burst the tyrant's chain"



Poet Randall and Senator Denis.

so "Virginia should not call in vain." The tyrant, Denis claims, is Abraham Lincoln. Neighboring Virginia was the Confederate capital as well as the home of Southern leaders such as Gen. Robert E. Lee.

Denis is right, state historians agree. Hovering on the Mason-Dixon line, Maryland loyalties back then were torn between Honest Abe and Dixie. Southern sympathizer James Ryder Randall penned the militant words after Union troops marched through Baltimore in April 1861. Convinced that the city was being occupied, confirmed Confed-

Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!  
She Breathes! she burns! she'll come! she'll  
come! Maryland! My Maryland!

erates in Baltimore rioted, resulting in the first fatalities of the War Between the States.

The first verse in fact commemorates this incident by calling for Maryland to "avenge the patriotic gore that flecked the streets of Baltimore."

Patriotic gore could also fleck the streets of Annapolis this spring, Denis acknowledges, if staunch traditionalists in the legislature are horrified by the idea of abolishing the state song.

Although Randall's song has long been accepted as the state song, according to former Anne Arundel senator Louis N. Phipps, it did not receive official status until 1939.

Phipps, now 84, was a member of the state senate at the time. "The words criticize the North. But that's history. That's a fact. I supported the song then. And if I was there now, I'd oppose changing it," he said.

Fred Malkus noted, "Maryland almost did join the Confederacy—would have too if they hadn't locked up the mayor of Baltimore and half the legislators. But I don't guess the song's done anybody any harm."

State Comptroller Louis L. Goldstein, a long-time pillar of Maryland tradition, declined to give his opinion of the bill but said, "Songs are written in the spirit of the time. When you start talking about the 'Star Spangled Banner' a lot of people say we ought to change that. This song is in the law of the State of Maryland. People sing it and a lot of them enjoy it."

# A Sour Note in Maryland

## SONGS, From Page 1

Among those who sing it is the Prince George's County honors chorus. The group, made up of the county's top student singers, performed the tune at the Kennedy Center last year and ironically has been invited by Del. Kay Bienen (D-Prince George's) to sing "Maryland! My Maryland!" at the opening of this year's legislative session.

Mary Heywood, coordinating supervisor of music for the Prince George's school system, claims she has never analyzed the meaning of the song's words.

"I know we've had difficulty explaining the words to elementary school children. But I've always accepted it as the state song. No problem," she said.

Other state officials agree that the song is gory but maintain that a gory state song is better than no state song at all. However, Denis has a solution to that. His idea is to have Maryland's poet laureate, Lucille Clifton, sponsor a contest for a new state song.

"I think it would be a great opportunity for an outpouring of sentiment on how people feel about the state of Maryland," Denis said enthusiastically. "Some student might win a prize and we would have a new state song."

Then there was an audible pause on the phone. "My only hesitation is that people will consider this a frivolous bill. Granted, it's not like the state budget or Metro, but it's a very serious matter."

The other verses of the state song are:

2. Hark to an exiled son's appeal,  
Maryland!

My mother State! to thee I kneel,  
Maryland!

For life and death, for woe and weal,  
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,

And gird thy beauteous limbs with  
steel, Maryland! My Maryland!

3. Thou wilt not cower in the dust,  
Maryland!

Thy beaming sword shall never rust,  
Maryland!

Remember Carroll's sacred trust,  
Remember Howard's warlike thrust,

—  
And all thy slumbers with the just,  
Maryland! My Maryland!

4. Come! 'tis the red dawn of the day,  
Maryland!

Come with thy panoplied array,  
Maryland!

With Ringgold's spirit for the fray,  
With Watson's blood at Monterey,  
With fearless Lowe and dashing  
May, Maryland! My Maryland!

5. Come! for thy shield is bright and  
strong, Maryland!

Come! for thy dalliance does thee  
wrong, Maryland!

Come to thine own heroic throng,  
Stalking with Liberty along,  
And chaunt they dauntless slogan  
song, Maryland! My Maryland!

7. I see the blush upon thy cheek,  
Maryland!

For thou wast ever bravely meek,  
Maryland!

But lo! there surges forth a shriek  
From hill to hill, from creek to creek

—  
Potomac calls to Chesapeake, Mary-  
land! My Maryland!

8. Thou wilt not yield the Vandal  
toll, Maryland!

Thou wilt not crook to his control,  
Maryland!

Better to fire upon thee roll,  
Better the blade, the shot, the bowl,  
Than the crucifixion of the soul,  
Maryland! My Maryland!