

The Riflemen's Song At Bennington

Words & Music:
Traditional American (1770s)

At Bennington, Vt., one of General Burgoyne's foraging detachments was attacked by 800 villagers who rallied in a driving rain to kill or capture the entire British force.

Burl Ives, Song Book, New York, NY, 1966, p. 92.

G D7 G D7 G
Why come ye hither, Redcoats, your mind what madness fills?
D7 G D7 G D7 G D7 G
In our valleys there is danger, and there's danger in our hills.
C G
Oh, hear ye not the singing of the bugle wild and free?
G D7 G
Full soon you'll know the ringing of the rifle from each tree.

CHORUS:

C G
For the rifle, oh, the rifle,
G D7 G
In our hands will prove no trifle.

Ye ride a goodly steed, ye may know another master;
Ye forward came with speed, but you'll learn to back much faster.
Then you'll meet our Mountain Boys and their leader Johnny Stark,
Lads who make but little noise, but who always hit the mark.

CHORUS:

Have ye no graves at home, across the briny waters,
That hither ye must come like bullocks to the slaughter?
If we the work must do, why, the sooner 'tis begun,
If flint and powder hold but true, the sooner 'twill be done.

CHORUS: