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Suggested Citation:

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Editor's Note: The author of the anti-slavery poem below is unknown, though it is likely a white acquaintance of Samuel Marshall. Marshall, ancestor of the donors, was born ca. 1750 in North Carolina. He moved from Warren County ca. 1806 to Anderson County, Tennessee, where he died in 1832.

The Genius of Universal Emancipation, the first abolitionist newspaper in the United States, was first published in Tennessee in 1822. It published a number of poems like this "ballet" (ballad), though not this one. The first upsurge of interest in abolitionism came around the 1790s from Quakers, Methodists, and Baptists. Warren County, North Carolina, had the largest slave to free person ratio of any county in North Carolina in the 1790s.

--Steve Cotham

Lord if thou dost with Equil Eyes
See all the sons of adam Rise
Why dost thou hide thy face from Slaves
Confined by fate to serve such Naves

Stolen and sold in africa
Transported to America
Like hogs and sheep in market sold
To stand the heat and bear the Cold

To work all day and half the night
And rise before the morning Light
Sustain the Lash and Bear the pain
Exposd to storms of Snow and Rain

Pinchd both with honger and with Cold
If we Complain we meet a Scold
And after all the tedious roud
At night like Beasts lie on the Ground

Hath heaven decreed that Negroes Must
"BALLET FOR SAM MARSHALL, 26 MAY 1799"

By cruel men be ever Oprist
Forever drag the Galling Chain
And near enjoy themselves again

When will Jehovah hear Our cries
When will the sons of freedom rise
When will a Moses for us stand
Afree us all from pharaohs hand

What tho our skin be Black as jet
Our hair be curld Our noses be flat
Must we for this no freedom have
Untill we find it in the grave

Yet while I thus my fate Condole
Jesus my Lord proses my soul
That when my Slavery here shall End
I may ascend to the my my friend

Tho here is none to Plead my Cause
My Soul apeal to thy just Laws
Who will bring all things to the Light
I know thy judgments Lord air right

Tis all the Comfort that I have
While I am here Confind a slave
Is that strong hope that Im made free
By thy Rich Blood once shed for me

My soul is free it Cant be sold
For all the Gold that Can be told
And when my body drops in dust
My spirit in thy hand I trust

And tho no Coffin I shall have
Nor yet be laid into a grave
The Lord shall watch it from the skies
Till the great trumpet bids it rise

Contentment Lord on me bestow
While I remain a slave below
And while I suffer Grief and wrong
May thy Salvation be my Song

Finis
Ballet for Sam Marshall 26 May 1799
And if they cast with equal eye
In all the sons of Adam life.
Why dost thou hide thy face from slaves
Confined by fate to serve such slaves

Held and sold in Africa
Transported to America
Like dogs and sheep in market sold
To stand the heat and bear the Cold

To work all day and half the night
And rise before the morning light
Sustain the lash and bear the pain
Exposed to storms of snow and rain

Parch'd both with hunger and with Cold
If we complain we meet a death
And after all this tedious need
At night like beasts lie on the ground

Both heaven decreed that Egrians Must
By cruel men be ever Opeat
Forever drag the Gallows Chain
And ne'er enjoy themselves again

When will Jehovah hear our Cries
When will the God of freedom rise
When will a Voice to us Stand
Arose us all from this dark hand

What the our chafed to black as jet
Our hair be curled our nose be flat
Must we for this misfortune have
Untill we find it in the grave

TENNESSEE ANCESTORS December 2000
"BALLET FOR SAM MARSHALL, 26 MAY 1799"

Yet while I thus my fate endure,
Jesus my Lord proves my soul
That when my slavery here shall end
May ascend to thee, my friend.

Thee here is none to hear my case
My soul appeal to thy just laws
Who will bring all things to the light
Shew thy judgments Lord our right.

For all the comfort that I have
While I am here confined a slave.
Is that strong hope that I am made free
By thy dear Blood once shed for me.

My soul is free it can't be sold
For all the gold that can be told
And when my body drops in dust
My spirit in thy hand I trust.

And this no order I shall have
Nor yet be laid into a grave
The Lord shall call it from the skies
Till the great trumpet bids it rise.

Contentment lies in me here now
While I remain a slave below
And while I dwell in sin and wrong
May thy salvation be my song.

TENNESSEE ANCESTORS December 2000