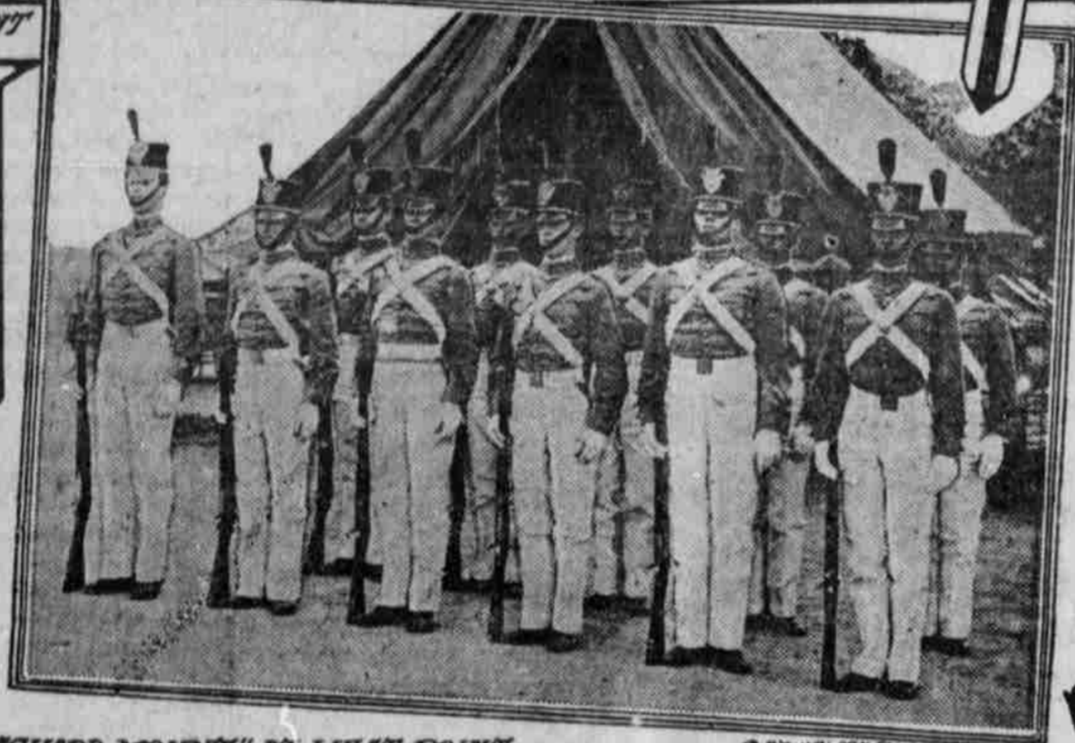


Why West Point Cadets Sing "Benny Havens, Oh!"



LOOKING UP THE RIVER FROM WEST POINT

The famous old ballad has been sung for nearly a century by the cadets of the United States Military Academy. Its history makes good reading



"GUARD MOUNTAIN" AT WEST POINT

We'll never fail to drink to her and Benny Havens, Oh!

WHO was Benny Havens? Ask the next West Pointer you meet to tell you something about Benny Havens. He knows and you'll find that his eyes will kindle at the mention of the name, says the New York Sun.

West Pointers for half a century have told the story of Benny Havens—they have bled and died with it on their lips. Wherever duty called they went, their steps were never slow—

With Alma Mater on their lips, and "Benny Havens, Oh!"

"Benny Havens, Oh!" is the epic of West Point. It is a story in song, the story of West Pointers and their sacrifices for duty, honor, West Point and country.

This old academy of West Point, laid out on a rugged shelf overlooking the majestic sweep of the Hudson, has many prized traditions, unsullied, inalienable, but none more sacred to her sons than that of Benny Havens. Go to Cullum Memorial hall at West Point and read in imperishable letters of bronze the story of her sons. She has seen them march out of her sallyports singing "Benny Havens, Oh!" and seen them brought back while minute guns were echoing among the granite hills that surround her. The history of West Point is closely interwoven with that of our country; West Pointers have written bright pages in the annals of the land.

Their blood has watered Western plains and Northern wilds of snow; Has stained Sierra's highest peaks, where piercing wind o'er blows; Has dyed deep red the Everglades, and deeper still, you know, The sacred Montezuma shades and walls of Mexico. Wherever duty has summoned them West Pointers have carried "Benny Havens, Oh!"

The story of Benny Havens is almost as old as that of the academy itself. Many, many years ago, in 1824 to be precise, Benny Havens took up his residence on the southern border of what then constituted the post of West Point. Almost immediately he and the cadets became friends.

He was a genial soul, generous, and of good company and an inimitable spinner of yarns, and he invariably plied his visitors with buckwheat cakes and maple sirup. Soon his refreshments acquired such fame that cadets often slipped away from their duties and made their way to Benny's retreat, where they found oblivion for their disciplinary woes. Almost every night after taps saw half a dozen daring cadets, who should have been in bed, gathered around Benny's bountiful table.

Only for a short time did Benny's fare confine itself to buckwheat cakes and maple sirup. Grog and wine were added to the menu, an addition whereby Benny's popularity increased tenfold. About this time the West Point authorities, who had previously shut their eyes to Benny's liberality, decided that the time had come to declare a blockade on Benny in so far as cadets were concerned, and consequently Benny's haven of delight became "off limits" for the future generals and punishment was meted out to those caught running the blockade. Jefferson Davis, afterward president of the Confederate states, had the distinction of being among the first batch of cadets court-martialed for midnight revels at Benny Havens'.

Benny was warned that his generosity to cadets was demoralizing to discipline and that unless he called a halt summary proceedings would result. He was unable to refuse those few cadets who "ran it out" to his home and finally he was expelled from the post shortly after 1829, taking up his abode at the base of a high cliff near the river's edge about a mile below West Point. Here he lived in a small frame house until his death in 1877 at the age of ninety. He was buried in Union cemetery, about midway between Highland Falls and Fort Montgomery on the West Point road.

Many men who rose to fame after leaving West

Point—Grant, Fitzhugh Lee, Sherman, Custer and others—spent happy hours in Benny's retreat.

In 1838 Lieut. Lucius O'Brien of the Eighth United States Infantry paid a visit to Cadet Ripley A. Arnold, who was then a first classman.

Arnold introduced O'Brien to Benny Havens, a warm friendship at once springing up between the two. In the academy at this time were John Thomas Metcalfe, who after graduation studied medicine and became one of the foremost surgeons in the country, and Irvin McDowell, who commanded the Union forces at the first battle of Bull Run. Both Metcalfe and McDowell were great friends of Benny.

Benny Havens, Lieutenant O'Brien, Metcalfe and Arnold together composed the original five verses of the song "Benny Havens, Oh!" and set it to the tune of "The Wearing of the Green." An obituary notice of Doctor Metcalfe says: "He had an early taste for versifying, and with skill at the guitar and a good tenor voice, composed many a ditty to pass away the idle time. It was thus that he wrote the celebrated song 'Benny Havens, Oh!'"

It is not what would be called good poetry. Some of it is crude. Today there are about 50 verses, almost all of which were composed before Benny's death in 1877. Class after class added a verse. In the waning years of Benny's life almost every night the cadets sang them through, crowding round Benny, with glasses full, while their host led them with his fiddle and his low clear barytone. This fiddle, by the way, is still in possession of an old citizen of Highland Falls.

Come, fill your glasses, fellows, and stand up in a row. To sing sentimental we're going for to go. In the army there's sobriety, promotion's very slow, So we'll sing our reminiscences of Benny Havens, Oh!

Soon came along the Mexican war to furnish inspiration to the cadet poets. Several verses were added to the poem in commemoration of the deeds of those whose gallantry carried the American flag from Vera Cruz to the heights of Chapultepec, overlooking Montezuma's ancient capital. Two of these are:

Here's a health to General Taylor, whose rough and ready blow Struck terror to the rancheros of Draggart Mexico May his country ne'er forget his deeds and ne'er forget to show She holds him worthy of a place at Benny Havens, Oh!

To the "veni, vidi, vici!" man to Scott, the greatest hero, Fill the goblet to the brim, let no one shrink in gloom, May life's cares on his honored head fall light as flakes of snow And his fair fame be ever great at Benny Havens, Oh!

The civil war saw stressful times at the Point and the cadets turned their attention to sterner things than poetry. The ranks of the corps were thinned by the loss of the Southerners, who went home to take up the cause of their respective states. Many of those from the North and South, who had been friends of Benny, fell on the field of glory—Manassas, Antietam, Gettysburg, the Wilderness and a hundred other places were stained with the blood of West Pointers.

There was little gaiety at Benny's during the stern four years, for Benny was getting old and the almost daily news of the loss of his former friends on the battlefield robbed him of his old-time lightheartedness.

Some of the verses of the poem which were written just after the war are lost. There seems to be only the following intact:

To the army's brave commanders let now our glasses flow,

We'll drink to Grant and Sherman and to the subs also, To Thomas, Meade and Sheridan (these come in retrospect), We'll toast them all with goblets full at Benny Havens, Oh!

Early in 1866 Gen. Winfield Scott died. For him this verse appeared:

Another star has faded, we miss its brilliant glow, For the veteran Scott has ceased to be a soldier here below, And the country which he honored now feels a heart-felt woe, As we toast his name in reverence at Benny Havens, Oh!

During the last year of Benny's life came the stunning news that Custer and his men had fought their last fight. James E. Porter, Harrington and others, lieutenants and West Pointers all, perished with that gallant band. Not until Benny had died did these verses appear in memory of Custer and his command:

In silence lift your glasses; a meteor flashes out, So swift to death brave Custer; amid the battle's whirl, Death called—and, crowned, he went to join the friends of long ago, To the land of Peace, where now he dwells with Benny Havens, Oh!

We'll drop a tear for Harrington and his comrades, Custer's brave, Who fell with none to see the deeds that glorified their graves, May their memory live forever with their glories present glow, They've nobly earned the right to dwell with Benny Havens, Oh!

Some of the other verses are fraught with the magic spirit of West Point—that spirit that is best summed up in the words, "Duty, Honor, Country, West Point," which are part of the motto of the academy.

Nowadays at West Point every cadet memorizes the first three verses of "Benny Havens, Oh!" The first has already been given; the other two are as follows:

To our kind old Alma Mater, our rock-bound Highland home, May we cast back many a fond regret as o'er life's sea we roam; Until on our last battlefield the lights of heaven shall glow We'll never fail to drink to her and Benny Havens, Oh!

May the army be augmented, promotion be less slow, May our country in the hour of need be ready for the foe, May we find a soldier's resting place beneath a soldier's blow, With room enough beside our graves for Benny Havens, Oh!

Wherever duty has led them West Pointers have sung "Benny Havens, Oh!" Since Benny's death these verses have appeared in commemoration of the deeds of West Pointers in all parts of this country:

Their blood has watered Western plains and Northern wilds of snow; Has stained Sierra's highest peaks, where piercing winds o'er blows; Has dyed deep red the Everglades, and deeper still, you know, The sacred Montezuma shades and walls of Mexico, From Nevada's heavy ridges, from stormy coast of Maine, From lava beds and Yellowstone—the story never waned; Wherever duty called they went—their steps were never slow— With Alma Mater on their lips and "Benny Havens, Oh!"

It is the old, old story of West Point and they who know it well love best to tell it. It will never die; it is as firmly fixed in the highlands of the Hudson as the academy itself.

IN THE LIMELIGHT

FORESAW VALUE OF SUBMARINE



"The facts recorded in this report prove, beyond shadow of doubt, that submarine vessels are a distinct practicality and that, therefore, submarine warfare is capable and worthy of development."

This sentence is from a report to the navy department written in 1898 by Captain and Chief Engineer John Lowe, U. S. N., on the submarine Holland.

It was the deliberate judgment of an experienced veteran of three naval wars, then sixty years old, who, when he wrote the report knew well that he was calling down upon his head the contemptuous assertion of many so-called authorities that "Lowe is a senile old fool who has been carried away by this toy."

And now the writer of the report, Rear Admiral John Lowe, U. S. N. (retired), vigorous, good natured, keen and active, from his summer home at Fortunes Rock, Biddeford, Me., looks out upon a nation and a world that holds the submarine in the highest respect and refrains from saying, "I told you so."

He was the first officer of the navy to make a report on the submarine as a warcraft following actual service in one beneath the surface. In many respects he may be termed the father of the submarine. And yet he declines to boast.

Rear Admiral Lowe was born in Liverpool, England, and migrated with his family to Columbus, O. He enlisted in the Union army, was wounded at Bull Run and on recovery entered the naval service as an engineer officer. He was a member of the Greeley relief expedition, and did valiant service in the Spanish-American war.

WHEN PERSHING WAS A BOY

In Linn county, Missouri, where he was born, John Joseph Pershing is revered clear up to the limit. He is the apple of the eye of the countryside.

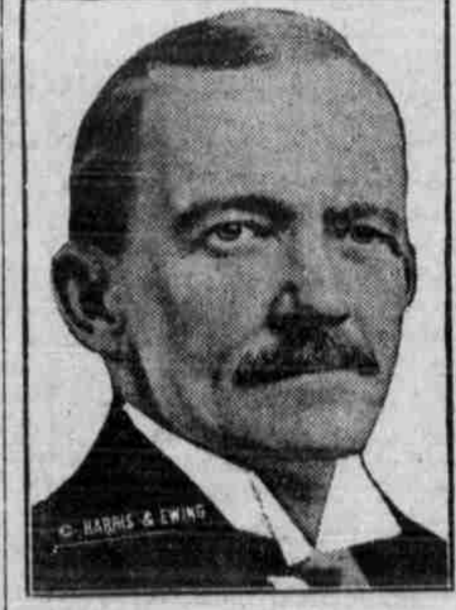
Residents of Laclede, Pershing's home town, tingle and glow at the mention of his name. Those who knew him as a boy bask in the reflection of his distinction. To have known Pershing—to have gone to school with him—is enough.

Pershing's seatmate in school, C. C. Bigger, a lawyer, says John—they all call him John—had almost white hair until he was nearly grown, and that he was nicknamed "tow head."

"His complexion was almost as fair as a girl's," Mr. Bigger contributes. "I've had many a fight with him and I always could whip him because I was bigger, but he was always ready to keep right on fighting. Whip him one day and he would be right back to tackle you the next. When he took his examination for West Point with others who were trying for the appointment to be given by Congressman Burrough my brother was on the examining board. The United States came near losing a great soldier right there because John was only one point ahead of the next man, a fellow named Higginbotham. The wrong answer to one question would have sent the other man to West Point, and Pershing would have been a lawyer, because he always inclined that way."



DUVAL WEST



President Wilson's later policy in dealing with Mexico is attributed, by those who know, to the information supplied to him by Duval West of San Antonio, Tex. Mr. West is one of the leading lawyers of Texas. He knows Mexico and the Mexicans intimately, closely. He is learned in international law. He has no axes to grind. He is not a politician. But he is an intensely practical, hard-headed lawyer who knows how to get at the root of anything he undertakes to investigate.

He investigated Mexico and its factional leaders and he reported to the president his findings, his estimates of the men who are to the front there, and his conclusions. His report is a confidential document in the hands of the president. But that it is to have a tremendous bearing on the future of Mexico is admitted by all who have knowledge of the facts.

A slender, erect, small-boned figure he has; not tall, neither short, but the figure of the cavalryman. A fearless erectness of the head, a cool, steady glance out of clear, clear blue eyes that are set in a maze of tiny wrinkles; a square, stern jaw, a close-clipped light brown mustache over an Irish mouth—these are things that impress the observer.

There is a deliberateness of manner and speech about him that betoken the man of poise, strength, determination and bravery. He looks like one who is afraid of nothing on earth.

QUEEN OF PITCAIRN ISLAND

Queen Emily McCoy of Pitcairn island recently started back from the United States to her tropical kingdom of the South Pacific, where sin is unknown and the simple life is led. She is the daughter of John R. McCoy, the present ruler of the island.

Queen Emily, who has been in this country for the last eight years studying economics, nursing, medicine, dentistry, music and the other arts of modern civilization in order to perfect herself as ruler of her 175 subjects, returns to her home unmarried. She says that everything is "up to" the ruler. In view of this statement Queen Emily was asked if she didn't need a strong man to share her royal burdens. "Aren't you looking for a prince consort?" was the question put directly to her.

"Well, I haven't made such an announcement yet," she replied, "for that is to be." Then as an arch smile lighted up her features, which give a hint of her Polynesian ancestry, Queen Emily continued: "If the right prince consort should come along I might be very glad to have his advice. He must be a teetotaler, however, as alcohol is unknown among my people and I am not going to tolerate its introduction."

