

Traditional & Folk Songs with lyrics & midi music

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The Cumberland and the Merrimac

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Come all my jolly seamen, likewise you landsmen too.
It is a dreadful story I will unfold to you.
It's all about the Cumberland, the ship so true and brave
And it's many the loyal seamen that met a wat'ry grave.

It was early in the morning, just at the break of day,
When our good ship the Cumberland lay anchored in the bay,
When the man from on the lookout down to the rest did say:
"There is something like a housetop, to the larboard she does lay."

Then our captain took his telescope, and he gazed far o'er the blue.
Turning 'round he said as follows to his brave and loyal crew:
"That thing you see over yonder just like a turtle's back,
Is that cursed Rebel steamer they call the Merrimac!"

Then our decks were cleared for action, each gun was pointed true,
But still that Rebel steamer came steaming o'er the blue;
And on she kept a-coming till no distance did us part,
When she sent a ball a-humming that stilled the beat of many's the heart.

In vain we poured our broadsides into her ribs of steel,
But still no breach was in her, no damage did she feel.
Up stepped the Rebel commander, in a voice of thunder spoke,
"Pull down your flying colors, or I'll sink your Yankee boat!"

Then our captain's eyes did glisten, his face grew pale with rage,
And in a voice of thunder to the Rebel commander said,
"My crew is brave and loyal, and by me they will stand,
And before I'll strike my colors you can sink me an be damned!"

Then this ironclad she left us a hundred yards or more,
The screeching and screaming of her balls our wooden sides she tore.
She struck us right amidships, her ram went crashing through,
And the waters they came pouring in on the brave and loyal crew.

Then our captain turned unto his men and unto them did say,
"I'll not leave the Cumberland while she does ride the wave,
It's you, my loyal comrades, may seek your lives to save,
But I'll go down with my gallant ship for to meet a watery grave.

They swore that they'd not leave her, and manned the guns afresh,

And broadside after broadside poured, till the waters reached their breasts.
And as they down went sinking, down in the briny deep,
The Stars and Stripes still floated from the maintop's highest peak!

From Frank Warner, Collected from John Galusha, NY 1941

Recorded by Warner, Stekert

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