

# Chester

William Billings

TREBLE

COUNTER

TENOR  
(MELODY)

BASS

Let ty-rantsshake their i - ron rod, And Slav'-ry clank her  
 The foe comes on with haugh - ty stride; Our troops ad - vance with  
 What grate-ful Off' - ring shall we bring? What shall we ren - der

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gal - ling chains, We fear them not, we trust in  
 mar - tial noise, Their Vet' - rans flee be - fore our  
 to the Lord? Loud Hal - le - lu - iahs let us

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God, New eng-land's God for ev - er reigns.  
 Youth, And Gen' - rals yield to beard - less Boys.  
 Sing, And praise His name on ev' - ry Chord.

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## CHESTER (1778) - Billings

Let tyrants shake their iron rod,  
And Slav'ry clank her galling chains,  
We fear them not, we trust in God,  
New england's God forever reigns.

The Foe comes on with haughty Stride;  
Our troops advance with martial noise,  
Their Vet'rans flee before our Youth,  
And Gen'ral's yield to beardless Boys.

What grateful Off'ring shall we bring?  
What shall we render to the Lord?  
Loud Halleluiahs let us Sing,  
And praise his name on ev'ry Chord.

William Billings (1746-1800), a native of Boston, Massachusetts, is known as "America's First Composer". A tanner by trade, Billings was poor and uneducated. He was a self-taught composer whose prolific output was primarily choral hymns written to be sung a cappella.

As described by a contemporary, Billings "was a singular man, of moderate size, short of one leg, with one eye, without any address & with an uncommon negligence of person. Still, he spake and sung and thought as a man above the common abilities."

The American Revolutionary Hymn, "Chester", was written around the time of Laura Secord's birth in Massachusetts. It is the unofficial national anthem of the early United States.

Billings, himself, wrote the text.