

Sentimental Journey

The song “Sentimental Journey” was written in 1943 by Bud Green, Les Brown and Ben Homer, and first performed by Doris Day with Les Brown’s band. The Choral Version was arranged by Hawley Ades, and published by Shawnee Press.

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Lyrics¹

Gonna take a Sentimental Journey,
Gonna set my heart at ease.
Gonna make a Sentimental Journey,
to renew old memories.

Seven...that's the time we leave at seven.
I'll be waitin' up at heaven,
Countin' every mile of railroad
track, that takes me back.

Got my bags, got my reservations,
Spent each dime I could afford.
Like a child in wild anticipation,
I Long to hear that, "All aboard!"

Never thought my heart could be so yearny.
Why did I decide to roam?
Gotta take that Sentimental Journey,
Sentimental Journey home.
Sentimental Journey.

I. Sentimental Journey^{2,3}

In 1940, a song plugger told bandleader Les Brown about Doris Day, the girl singer with Bob Crosby and the Bobcats. “I went and saw the show,” Brown said, “went backstage and hired her The band started cooking, you might say.” Before long, though, Day left to get married. The marriage soon soured when her husband began to abuse her. At the same time, Brown had his first hit recording, a novelty by Ben Homer and Alan Courtney called “Joltin’ Joe DiMaggio,” based on DiMaggio’s record fifty-six game hitting streak in 1941. In 1943, Day had finally had enough; she divorced her husband and rejoined the band.

A year later, Homer took Brown another song on which he was working. Within a half hour, the band leader changed the rhythm of the verse and added a bridge to complete the song. He gave the melody to his publisher, Buddy Morris, who had three different lyricists try their hands. Brown described what happened next: “Buddy was reading a travel book written by an Englishman and it was called “Sentimental Journey,” about this guy going all over Europe. He mentioned the inns he was staying in.” Morris thought it would make a good title for a song and mentioned it to Bud Green, who had added the nonsense words to the jive classic, “Flat Foot Floogie with the Floy Floy.” Brown said, “But Green wrote a nice lyric. He even had to make up a word to rhyme with “journey:” “Never thought my heart would be so *yearny* . . .”

This nostalgic tune evokes memories of the 40s, in a way few others can do. The vocal was sensitively done by Doris Day, despite unfounded fears of the extreme vocal ranges required. Some in the band first thought that the song was not going to connect with the kids, but at its debut in the Hotel Pennsylvania's Cafe Rouge the kids went crazy! It was finally recorded at the Les Brown Band's first session after the infamous recording ban. Even now, nearly 60 years later, the song still pleases... and still calls to mind the names of Les Brown and Doris Day.

The recording was released by Columbia Records, with the flip side "Twilight Time". The record first reached the *Billboard* charts on March 29, 1945 and lasted 23 weeks on the chart, peaking at #1.

Doris Day's recording of “Sentimental Journey” became one of the defining anthems of return for soldiers taking a “sentimental journey home.” Like other train songs from the Swing era, the 2/4 rhythm and strong beat fit the clickety-clack of a train, here punctuated by a line that echoes the whistle's wail: “Seven ... that's the time we leave at seven.”

II. Bud Green^{4, 5, 6}

Bud Green was born in Austria on November 19, 1897 and as an infant he and his family immigrated to the US where they settled in New York City.

As a young adult, Green began writing special material for vaudeville shows. Working as a staff writer for music publishers from 1920 through 1927, he also wrote Broadway stage scores and songs for musicals for such renowned singers as Sophie Tucker, Cleo Mayfield, Winnie Lightner and Cecil Lean.

With collaborators such as Les Brown, Buddy De Sylva, Al Dubin, Ella Fitzgerald, Slim Gaillard, Ray Henderson, Ben Homer, Raymond Scott, Sam Stept and Harry Warren, Bud Green is the writer behind such popular standards as “Alabamy Bound,” and “**Sentimental Journey.**” His biggest hit remains "**Sentimental Journey,**" the 1944 standard authored with Ben Homer and bandleader Les Brown.

He was commissioned by Hollywood during the 30's and 40's and Green songs can be heard in the Hollywood musicals *Syncopation*, *Mother's Boy*, *Lucky in Love*, *Big Boy*, *Show in Hollywood* and *Baby Take a Bow*. Bud Green died in Yonkers, New York on January 2, 1981.

III. Les Brown^{7,8}

Les Brown, Sr. (March 14, 1912 – January 4, 2001) and the Band of Renown are a big band that began in the big band era of the late 1930s and now performs under the direction of his son Les Brown, Jr.

Brown made his first recordings as a member of the Duke Blue Devils in 1936 for *Decca*, but by the following year they'd split up, as the members who were still undergraduates returned to school. Brown went to New York and spent a year working for Jimmy Dorsey, Isham Jones, and Larry Clinton as an arranger. His chance at forming a new band came in 1938 when an executive at *RCA* arranged a booking for him at the Hotel Edison in Manhattan, if he could put a group together. Brown secured a loan from his father to get the band off the ground and he soon had a 12-piece outfit playing at the hotel. A series of regular live radio broadcasts of the band soon had their reputation spreading far beyond the ranks of the hotel's dance patrons, and *RCA Victor* quickly signed them to its *Bluebird* imprint.

The group was doing well as the 1930s closed out, drawing a healthy dance audience and a substantial listenership. Their records weren't the most ambitious in the world -- mostly covers of standards and other bands' hits, interspersed with an occasional Les Brown original -- but they sold well enough to keep the recording industry interested in them. In the late '30s, most of their sound was built on ensemble playing, and they displayed a rich, full tone that came off well, both in person and over the air as well as on record. Brown insisted on a polished, precise sound and audiences seemed to devour it.

But starting in 1940, he began altering their sound by allowing room for his soloists to go to work doing that they did best, and audiences liked it even better. Then he hired his first vocalist, a teenager named Doris Day, who sang with a depth and level of sophistication far beyond her 17 years, and their popularity soared. Day's first stay with the group wasn't long -- less than a year -- before she left to get married. Her replacement, Betty Bonney, was aboard when the band cut a song devoted to the then-current phenomenon of Joe DiMaggio's hitting streak -- "Joltin' Joe DiMaggio" became their first chart hit. When the smoke cleared, the band found itself ranked among the top ten most popular performing outfits in the country.

The next pivotal moment came in 1943 when Brown persuaded Doris Day, now divorced and raising a son (actually, future producer Terry Melcher), to return to the band. The result, in 1944, was one of the most enduring hits of World War II, "**Sentimental Journey**." It not only became one of the defining hits of the big-band era, but also Brown's signature tune (and, to a lesser degree, Day's signature tune) for the next 50 years, and even in the 21st century is totally identified with both of them. The song was written by Ben Homer, a composer and arranger who

was also responsible for the various dance adaptations of classical works that Brown's band recorded. Brown spent most of the 1940s signed to *Columbia Records*, which was also the home of Doris Day as a solo act.

"Les Brown and the Band of Renown" brought Doris Day into prominence with their recording of "**Sentimental Journey**" in 1945. The release of "**Sentimental Journey**" coincided with the end of WWII in Europe and was the homecoming theme for many veterans. They had nine other number-one hit songs, including "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm."

Les Brown and the Band of Renown performed with virtually every major performer of their time, including Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Nat "King" Cole. Brown occasionally toured throughout the last decades of his life, even performing within a year of his death on January 4, 2001, at the age of 88.

IV. Ben Homer⁹

Probably very few of the Jehovah's Witness cult members knocking on people's doors realize that the composer of "**Sentimental Journey**" became one of their own ministers in the early '50s, breaking away from quite a successful career in the music business.

Ben Homer went to New York City in 1938 following studies at the New England Conservatory. In the thriving Big Apple music scene of that era he found many bandleaders hungry for appealing material, among them trombonist and singer Jack Teagarden, clarinetists Artie Shaw and Benny Goodman, and the unique bandleader and inventor Raymond Scott. Homer became a staff composer for dance band maestro Les Brown in 1940. Homer, his frequent co-writer Bud Green, and Brown comprise the colorful songwriting triumvirate credited with "**Sentimental Journey**," a hit for Doris Day and one of the most frequently covered songs in American history. Other titles by Homer before he became a minister hardly deserve to be as forgotten as they are, such as "Shoot the Sherbet to Me Herbert," "Joltin' Joe Di Maggio," and "Bizet Has His Day."

V. Hawley Ades^{10,11}

Editor's Note: This is an excerpt from a longer biography sent to me by Mr. Moreland, and is also found in the reference "Mississippi Rag" references below

Hawley Ades: Some Musical Memories From The 1920s – 1930s, By Tom Moreland:

My uncle Hawley Ades died on March 26 of this year at the age of 99, three months shy of his 100th birthday. His name will mean something to *Rag* readers familiar with Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians. Hawley was one of Waring's principal arrangers from 1937 until his retirement in 1975. Waring's Shawnee Press published so many of Hawley's choral arrangements,

particularly popular with high school and community groups, that Waring would introduce Hawley on concert tours by saying, quite accurately, that “more people play and sing his arrangements than those of any other arranger in history.”

Hawley was born in Wichita, Kansas in 1908. Both of his parents were professional musicians. Hawley had demonstrated considerable talent on the piano from an early age, and believed that one reason his mother moved east was to provide him with greater opportunities to develop a career in music. No doubt she thought he would be a classical pianist, but soon his interest drifted toward popular music and jazz.

Hawley joined the Irving Berlin company in 1932 as a staff arranger to replace the departing Paul Weirick. Hawley was more than pleased to land this job, paying \$75 a week, at the depth of the depression, especially having just lost \$500 when his bank failed. With his new found financial security Hawley was able to marry his sweetheart from Albany, Olga Beauman, in 1933. Hawley and Olga had two daughters, Audrey and Barbara. Their progeny, by 2008, had yielded Hawley seven grandsons, and 16 great-grandchildren.

The Irving Berlin Company published not only Berlin’s songs but those of many other composers. Hawley made hundreds of stock arrangements for dance bands during the four years he worked for Berlin. Another of Hawley’s main jobs with Berlin was to make “give-away” arrangements in the style of a particular orchestra with whom the Berlin office hoped to place a song. Thus Hawley made arrangements in the style of George Olsen, Ozzie Nelson, Phil Spitalny, Vincent Lopez, Paul Whiteman and so on. Kresa actively encouraged Hawley’s more original arranging efforts as well. Berlin published a portfolio of six of his jazz-oriented arrangements under the billing of “Hawley Ades, New Genius Hot Arranger.” This marketing effort was not so hot, and the portfolio is still missing in action.

Through George Terry, Hawley had met one of Fred Waring’s arrangers, Frank Perkins. In 1937 Perkins was planning to leave Waring and he recommended Hawley as his replacement. Hawley flew out to Kansas City for an interview with Waring. Waring, impressed by Hawley’s arrangement of *The Toy Trumpet*, hired him on the spot for \$150 a week (double his salary -- which had never been increased -- from the notoriously tight-fisted Irving Berlin).

Perkins had been doing dance band arrangements, and that was the spot Hawley was hired to fill. In 1938 Waring began to stress choral performances with his Glee Club. The precipitating event was a well-received performance at the Roxy Theater in New York which had been overseen by a young Robert Shaw (later of the Robert Shaw Chorale fame). As Waring moved in the vocal direction, so, of necessity, did Hawley. He became one of the three key Waring arrangers, the other two being Roy Ringwald and Henry Simeone. Ringwald and Simeone did the more elaborate arrangements, with Hawley’s assistance, as he explained:

Roy Ringwald was in my mind the finest choral arranger who ever put pencil to paper. However, he would never bother to take the time to learn to transpose the various instruments into their proper keys, so that until I joined the band he had only used piano for his accompaniments. Me being the “new boy” and hired as an

instrumental arranger, he had no hesitation in asking me to help in the following way. He lived in California and mailed us his arrangements. Each would contain a full sketch of every note he wanted played by every instrument, but all in piano key. It was my pleasure to transpose the instrumental parts into the proper keys, and to produce a score from which the copylists could extract the separate parts. This went on for many years...

With Simeone it was a little different. On a number of occasions when we had to meet a deadline Harry would start making a much less complete sketch, and as he finished the first page I would start scoring it and pass it on to the copyists – by which time Harry would be ready with the 2nd page of the sketch, etc. also very instructive for a young arranger!

The remainder of Hawley's career, through his retirement in 1975, was spent comfortably in the Waring organization. If Ringwald and Simeone were the showhorses in the Waring stable of arrangers, Hawley was the workhorse, turning out arrangements of all descriptions over his 38 years with Waring. It was a busy job. In the 1940s each week Waring did five radio shows plus a one-hour television show. The orchestra and Glee Club toured two times a year. Summers, starting in 1947, were focused on the Waring music encampment at Shawnee-on-the-Delaware. All of the work with Waring, and some studies in composition with Hungarian composer Tibor Serly, climaxed with the publication in 1966 of Hawley's *Choral Arranging* textbook, which is still one of the standard books in the field.

Hawley continued to be vitally interested in music to his dying day. Well into his 90s he was privately publishing studies of American popular songs and composers. His last gig was playing *Happy Birthday* for fellow residents at his assisted living facility in Schenectady, New York. And one other thing: he was one of the world's nicest people.

VI. Shawnee Press¹²

In late 1930s, Fred Waring and some of his friends formed a music publishing company called Words and Music, Inc. As he and his famous singing group, "The Pennsylvanians" grew in stature and popularity, school choral and church choir directors began requesting copies of his unique arrangements. In 1947 Mr. Waring changed the name of the company to Shawnee Press and moved the headquarters to Pennsylvania-an obvious site and name since his home was located in Shawnee-on-Delaware, PA.

Shawnee Press grew to become the publisher of a universal catalog of sacred and secular music, ranging from delightful children's songs to serious symphonic works. In 1989 Music Sales Corporation purchased Shawnee Press and in 2005 the administrative offices relocated to Nashville, TN.

Audio Links and Discography

Select YouTubes

Doris Day Audio

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDFH8jzuHMw>

Doris Day and Perry Como Video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjxOfk92I6I>

Eugenie Baird and Skip Nelson

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFV8n4WOZjo>

Ringo Starr

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoRnuSV6vHU>

Bette Midler

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsTy-dFjiak>

Vikki Carr

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSuEneZA498&feature=related>

Select MP3 Downloads:

If you subscribe to iTunes, BuyMusic, Rhapsody or a similar service, keyword in “Sentimental Journey” where you can listen to a sample from each artist, and then purchase/download the song for 99 cents. Or, you can listen to a sample from *Select MP3 Downloads* below, which are cuts from CD Albums - then purchase/download the song for 99 cents.

Doris Day and Les Brown

<http://www.amazon.com/Sentimental-Journey/dp/B001R91V4W/>

Ella Fitzgerald

<http://www.amazon.com/A-Sentimental-Journey/dp/B001QL5EYO/>

Rosemary Clooney

<http://www.amazon.com/Sentimental-Journey/dp/B000U8MP5A/>

References:

The above article about the song “Sentimental Journey” was extracted from these websites. For more information, please read the articles:

- ¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sentimental_Journey_\(song\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sentimental_Journey_(song))
- ² *Book: America’s Songs, Furia and Lasser:* <http://tinyurl.com/cdktae>
- ³ <http://www.thesjo.com/pages/dorisday.html>
- ⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bud_Green
- ⁵ <http://songwritershalloffame.org/exhibits/C88?exhibitId=88>
- ⁶ <http://www.answers.com/topic/bud-green>
- ⁷ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Brown_\(bandleader\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Brown_(bandleader))
- ⁸ <http://www.answers.com/topic/les-brown-bandleader>
- ⁹ <http://www.answers.com/topic/ben-homer>
- ¹⁰ http://www.mississippirag.com/ragonline_august08/features_aug_hawley.html
- ¹¹ http://www.mississippirag.com/ragonline_sept08/features_sept_hawley.html
- ¹² <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/waring/musiclibrary/musiclibrarycat.html>