

Teacher's Guide to Student Worksheet 2-Foster's Songwriting

Name: _____ Date: _____

Stephen Foster drew inspiration for his songwriting from both his personal life as well as events happening around him. For instance, Stephen and his wife Jane separated in 1853. When they were reunited the next year, he published "Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair." It is thought Stephen was inspired by Jane, since his first drafts of the song use her name instead of "Jeanie."

Use facts from the biography and timeline to answer the following questions.

1. In which year do you think Stephen wrote the song "Hard Times Come Again No More"?
 - a. 1846
 - b. 1848
 - c. 1850
 - d. 1855 ***

Explain your thinking.

*Possible answer: **Stephen's parents died that year, and the country was going through an economic downturn. He was going through hard times, and Americans could relate.***

2. In which year do you think Stephen wrote the song "I'll Be a Soldier"?
 - a. 1846
 - b. 1851
 - c. 1856
 - d. 1861 ***

Explain your thinking.

*Possible answer: **In 1861 the Civil War began, so Stephen, like all Americans, thought about war preparations.***

3. In which year do you think Stephen wrote the song "The White House Chair"?
 - a. 1853
 - b. 1856 ***
 - c. 1861
 - d. 1864

Explain your thinking.

*Possible answer: **The presidential election was held that year, and Stephen wanted James Buchanan to win the election.***