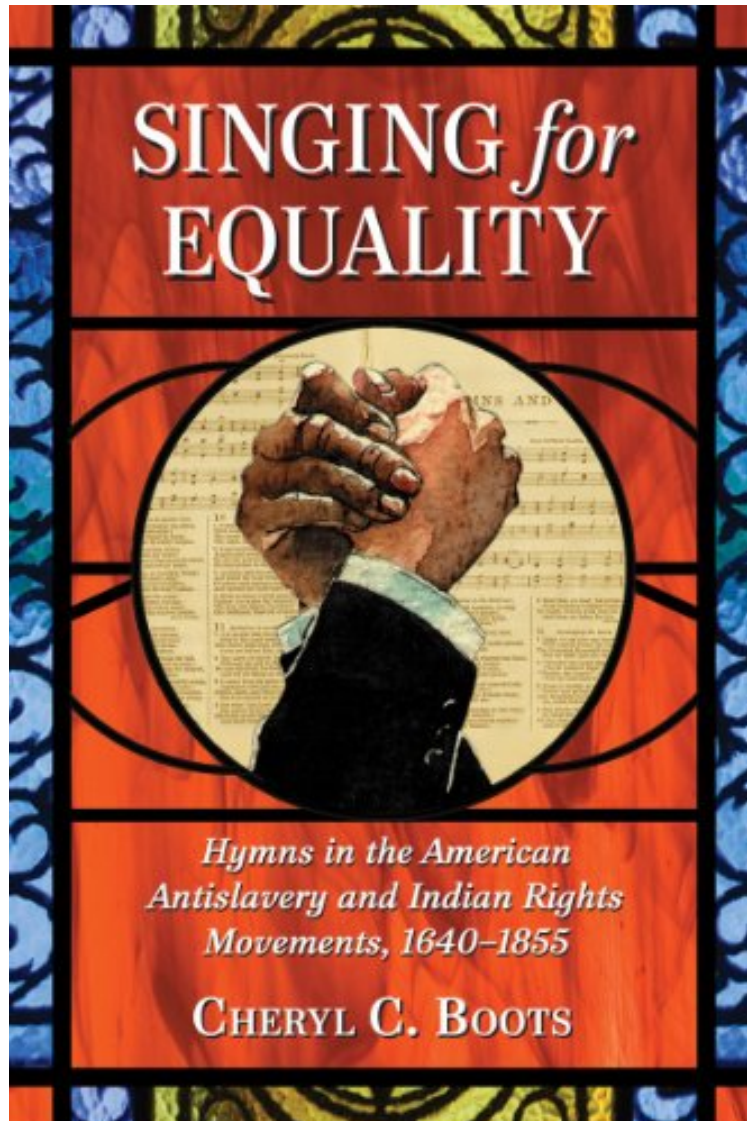


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Singing for Equality: Hymns in the American Antislavery and Indian Rights Movements, 1640-1855

Cheryl C. Boots

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Before the American Civil War, men and women who imagined a multiracial American society (social visionaries) included Protestant sacred music in their speeches and writings. Music affirmed the humanity and equality of Indians, whites and blacks and validated blacks and Indians as Americans. In contrast to dominant voices of white racial privilege, social visionaries criticized republican hypocrisy and Christian hypocrisy. Many social visionaries wrote hymns, transcending racial lines and creating a sense of equality among singers and their audience. Singing and reading Protestant sacred music encouraged community formation that led to American human rights activism in the 19th and 20th centuries.

About the Author Cheryl C. Boots is a senior lecturer who teaches humanities, American literature, and American history courses at Boston University. She is choir director and soloist at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church in Marblehead, Massachusetts.