

# Eugene Stratton

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a boxed letter 'A' above the first measure. The second staff ends with a repeat sign. The third staff begins with a boxed letter 'B' above the first measure. The fourth staff contains a first ending bracket labeled '1' above it, spanning the last two measures. The fifth staff contains a second ending bracket labeled '2' above it, also spanning the last two measures. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: Bb, F7, Eb, and Bb.

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"Eugene Stratton" is a Scottish hornpipe in B-Flat Major. The parts are played AABB.

It was composed by Scots composer and fiddler J. Scott Skinner (1843–1927), recorded by him on a 78 RPM disc in the 1920's, at the end of his career, as part of "The Celebrated Hornpipes" medley. Skinner had also earlier recorded "Eugene Stratton" in 1910 in London with pianist Ethel Stuart. This tune demonstrates clearly that Skinner was an accomplished violinist.

New York-born Eugene Stratton (1861–1918) came to England with a minstrel troupe and established himself as a solo music hall performer, whose act included blackface routines at which times he was styled as "The Dandy Coon," or "The Whistling Coon". His most famous song was "Lily of Laguna".

He was the President of the Grand Order of the Water Rats in 1896. This charitable group began in 1887 with several music hall performers who owned a trotting pony called Magpie that was winning many races around London. The proceeds from such victories were used to help troubled and distressed music hall stars and to help sustain soup kitchens in London's east end. The name of the group came about when, during a torrential downpour, the pony was being returned to stable. A horse drawn taxi driver, seeing the sodden beast shouted: "Blimey, wot you got 'ere?" The trainers replied they had a trotting pony. The cabbie replied "Trotting pony! Looks more like a bleedin' water rat".

The tune was printed in Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Cranford's **Winston Fitzgerald: A Collection of Fiddle Tunes** (1997), Henderson's **Flowers of Scottish Melody** (1935), Phillips' **Natalie MacMaster's Cape Breton Island Fiddle** (2010) and Phillips' **Fiddle Case Tunebook: British Isles** (1989).

It was recorded by Frank Ferrel on **Yankee Dreams: Wicked Good Fiddling from New England** (1991), Jean Carignan on **Old Time Fiddle Tunes** (1960), Rodney Miller & David Surette on **New Leaf** (2000), J. Scott Skinner (78RPM), Natalie MacMaster on **No Boundaries** (1996), J. Scott Skinner on **The Strathspey King** (remastered - 1975) and Patty Furlong on **Traditional Irish Music on the Button Accordion** (1999).