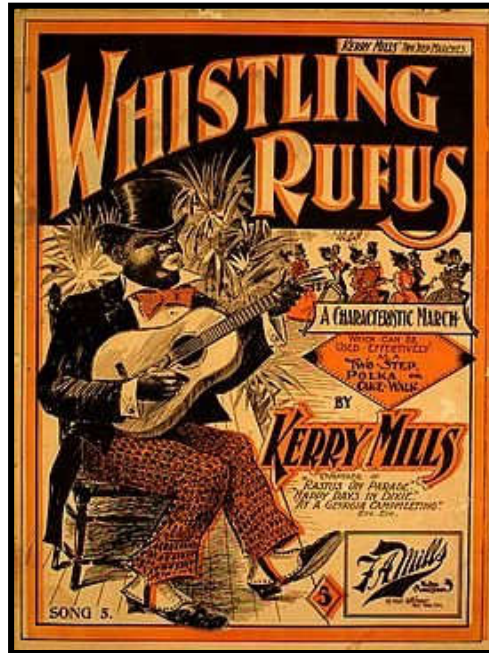


Whistling Rufus

A musical score for guitar in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of eight staves of music. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The melody is written on a single staff. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff: G, A, C, and D7. The score includes repeat signs and first/second endings. The first ending is marked with a '1' and the second ending with a '2'. The final measure of the piece is a double bar line.

"Whistling Rufus", also known as "Way Down South in Dixie" is an old-time, bluegrass two-step, march, reel or Polkain G Major {Beisswenger & McCann, Phillips}, G Major ('A' and 'B' parts) & C Major ('C' part). The parts are played AB (Beisswenger & McCann, Phillips) or AAB (Brody). The tune was composed in 1899 by Kerry Mills (1869-1948, who also composed "Georgia Camp Meeting" and "Red Wing"), at the beginning of the ragtime era, with words later supplied by Murdoch Lind. It was described at the time of its publication as a "characteristic march" but with the addition that it "can be used effectively as a two-step, polka or cakewalk". The first page of the original sheet music also records that:

No cakewalk given in the Black Belt district of Alabama was considered worth while attending unless "Whistling Rufus" was engaged to furnish the music. Unlike other musicians, Rufus always performed alone, playing an accompaniment to his whistling on an old guitar and it was with great pride that he called himself the "one-man band".



Joyce Cauthen (1990) calls it a minstrel composition that passed into fiddling tradition, perhaps referring to Mill's "coon-song" period cakewalk. Arizona fiddler Kenner C. Kartchner identified it as a "good two-step from around 1900" (Shumway). It was played by Rock Ridge, Alabama, fiddlers around 1920 and it appears in a list of traditional Ozarks Mountains fiddle tunes compiled by musicologist/folklorist Vance Randolph, published in 1954.

Early 78 RPM recordings include Gid Tanner & Riley Puckett (1924), Ernest Thompson (1924), McLaughlin's Old Time Melody Makers (1928), the Kessinger Brothers (1929) and Arkie the Arkansas Woodchopper (1941), and the tune was in the repertoire of West Virginia fiddler Edden Hammons.

The banjo tab is from John Letscher.

It was printed sources in Beisswenger & McCann's **Ozarks Fiddle Music** (2008), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 2** (1995) and Ruth's **Pioneer Western Folk Tunes** (1948).

It was recorded by Sam and Kirk McGee, The Skillet Lickers (1934), Fiddling Doc Roberts, Vess Ossman (1899) Clark Kessiger on **Live at Union Grove**, The McGee Brothers and Arthur Smith on **Milk 'Em in the Evening Blues** (1968), Vesta Johnson on **Down Home Rag**, Edden Hammons and Doc Watson (1965).