

## Barlow Knife

Musical score for "Barlow Knife" in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music. The first staff is marked with a boxed 'A' and contains the first four bars of the main melody. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff is marked with a boxed 'B' and contains the next four bars. The fourth staff is marked with a boxed 'C' and contains the final four bars. The fifth staff is a single line of music. Chord symbols G, D7, and C are placed above the notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4.

1. I've been a poor boy all my life,  
And all I got was a Barlow knife.
2. A Barlow handle and a Barlow blade,  
Best dang knife that ever was made.
3. Take my wife, take my life,  
Just don't take my Barlow knife.

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This is the type of dance tune with a few words that get thrown in once in a while to give the band a little variety. The words are sung only to the A part.

Glen Lyn, Virginia, fiddler Henry Reed called the tune "Cabin Creek," and fiddle players have tended to use that title (banjo players more frequently refer to it as "Barlow Knife").

Most players play only the first four bars repeated as the A part. I don't remember how I came up with the descending phrase in bars 7 & 8 and I repeat this extended A part just because I like it. The words are used randomly to keep the band going while they are waiting for the dancers to finish their figures. They can be sung to the A part (if you use the four bar version) or the B part.

It was printed in Brody's *Fiddler's Fakebook* (1983), S. Johnson's *The Kitchen Musician No. 4: Collection of Fine Tunes* (1983), Krassen's *Appalachian Fiddle* (1973), Kuntz's *Ragged but Right* (1987), Phillips' *Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1* (1994), Silberberg's *Tunes I Learned at Tractor Tavern* (2002), Spadaro's *10 Cents a Dance* (1980) and Titon's *Old-Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes* (2001).

It was recorded by Ernie Carpenter on *Old Time Fiddling of Braxton County* (1992), Ebenezer on *Tell It to Me*, Norman Edmonds on *Train on the Island*, Alan Jabbour (appears as "Cabin Creek"), Franklin George on *Reflections of the Past* (1995), The Fuzzy Mountain String Band on *Summer Oaks and Porch* (1973) and Juggernaut String Band on *Greasy Coat*.