

# Cacklin' Hen

The musical score for "Cacklin' Hen" is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff (measures 1-6) features a continuous eighth-note accompaniment with chords G, A, D, C, G, G, D, C, G, G, D, C, G. The second staff (measures 7-12) includes chords G, D, G, G, B, C, G, C. The third staff (measures 13-18) includes chords G, C, G, C, C, G, G, C. The fourth staff (measures 19-24) includes chords G, C, G, C, G, C, G, C, G. The fifth staff (measures 25-30) includes chords G, D, C, G, C, C, G, C. The score includes first and second endings in measures 14-15 and 29-30.

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"Cacklin' Hen", also known as "The Old Hen Cackled", "Old Hen She Cackled", "Hen Cackled", "Cluck Old Hen", "Cackling Pullet", "Chicken in the Barnyard" or "Old Man Depression Get on Your Way" is an old-time breakdown in G Major. There are many melodically disparate variations of the tune. The one given here is was collected by Marion Thede in Oklahoma. The parts are played AABB (Brody, Ruth, Shumway), AA'BB (Phillips) or ABBCDD (Thede). Many variants of this widely known tune appear under titles which include the adjective "cluck" or "cackling," often with the word "old" also appended. It has been a fiddle contest standard and is often still heard at fiddler's gatherings; for example, it is mentioned in a 1931 account of LaFollette, northeast Tennessee fiddlers' contest, and, in 1899 in a contest in Gallatin, Tennessee "Cackling Hen" was one of the 'category' tunes (where each fiddler would play the same tune with the winning version winning a prize). The piece was reworked by the early 20th century Georgia group, The Skillet Lickers, recorded in 1934 as "Old Man Depression Get on Your Way" in praise of Roosevelt's New Deal. The title appears in a list of traditional Ozark Mountain fiddle tunes compiled by musicologist/folklorist Vance Randolph, published in 1954 and it was in the repertoire of Pocahontas County, West Virginia, fiddler Edden Hammons.

It was printed in Ford's **Traditional Music in America** (1940), Ruth's **Pioneer Western Folk Tunes** (1948), Thede's **The Fiddle Book** (1967), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Shumway's **Frontier Fiddler** (1990) and Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes vol. 1** (1994).

It was recorded by Brad Leftwich, Bruce Molsky, Al Hopkins and His Buckle Busters, the New Lost City Ramblers and others.

Fiddlers seem to like chicken tunes. It's easy to make chicken sounds with a scrape of the bow. Most serious fiddlers consider this cheap theatrics. This tune has no sound effects; it's just a straight-up pretty easy tune.

Other poultry tunes in this collection are:

Cluck Old Hen

Chicken Reel

Turkey in the Straw.