

Coleman's March

The musical score for "Coleman's March" is written in D major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed section labeled 'A'. The second staff contains a first ending marked '1.' and a second ending marked '2.'. The third staff contains a boxed section labeled 'B'. The fourth and fifth staves continue the melody with various chords and first/second endings. The chords used are D, A, G, D, Em, A7, and D.

"Coleman's March", also known as "Joe Coleman's March" is an American march in cut time and D Major. It is played in either standard or D D A d fiddle tuning. The parts are played AA'BB or AA'BB'.

D. K. Wilgus, in his article "The Hanged Fiddler Legend in Anglo-American Tradition" has extensively researched this tune and legend, a variant of the hanged-fiddler legend of "MacPherson's Farewell" or "Last of Callahan".

Joe Coleman, a shoemaker, was accused of stabbing his wife to death near the town of Slate Fork, Adair County, Kentucky, as recorded in the *Burkesville Herald Almanac* for 1899.

Convicted on circumstantial evidence and the testimony of his sister-in-law who was living with them at the time, Coleman was tried in nearby Cumberland County and sentenced to death. While being driven to the place of execution in a two-wheeled ox cart, Coleman sat on his coffin and played this tune that has come down as "Coleman's March". Coleman protested his innocence to the last and there several stories exist of a man confessing, or of "an old lady confessing on her death-bed she had killed Coleman's wife".

"Coal Creek March" is a related melody.

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher. John says "Coleman's March is one of the few tunes that actually sounds good played at march tempo (120). It's one of the 'he played it and they hung him' tunes."

It was printed in **Fiddler Magazine**, vol. 8, No. 3, Summer, 2001, Lamancusa's **The Gettysburg Collection of Old-Time Fiddle Tunes** (2021) and Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 2** (1995).

It was recorded by Don Pedi on **Mountain Magic: Fiddle Favorites for (Mountain) Dulcimer** (1990), Falderal String Band on **Step Right Up... Free Show Tonight!** (1996), Gingerthistle on **Grandad's Porch** (1998), Ken Kolodner on **Journey to the Heartland** (2005), Mary Custy & Eoin O'Neill on **With a lot of help from their friends** (1991) and Pete Sutherland on **Eight Miles from Town** (1982).and **Poor Man's Dream** (1984).