

## Hell Among the Yearlings

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff (measures 1-5) is marked with a boxed 'A' and chords D, A7, and D. The second staff (measures 6-11) is marked with a boxed 'B' and chords G, A7, D, A7, D, and D. The third staff (measures 12-17) is marked with chords A7, D, and A7. The fourth staff (measures 18-19) is marked with a boxed '1.' and '2.' above the notes, with a 'D' chord below each measure.

"Hell Among the Yearlings", also known as "Trouble among the Yearlings", "Hell After the Yearlings", "Devil Among the Yearlings", "Round Up the Yearlings" or "Hell Among the Indians" is an old-time breakdown. It is widely known in many states in many variations. It is played in G Major (Thede), D Major (Bayard, Brody, Christeson, Fiddler Magazine, John Hatcher, Phillips) or C Major (Christeson/1984, Songer). The parts are played AB (Christeson, 1984), AA'B (Bayard), AABB (Thede), AA'BB (Phillips), AA'BB' (Fiddler Magazine) or AABBCDD (Songer). The version given here is played AABB.

Several unrelated tunes in various parts of the United States carry the name "Hell Among(st) the Yearlings," apparently a memorable title in rural communities. The title has two interpretations. It is thought by some to represent 'trouble with the cattle' (yearlings being young cattle that are bred for the first time and quite rambunctious). Another interpretation hinges on 'hell' as a term for dense underbrush and thicketed country, with the title meaning that the yearlings are in the underbrush, thus making it quite a chore to round them up.

The 'A' part generally has nine measures instead of the usual eight. What is the 'B' part for most of the versions is usually quite a bit different than some other versions, and is very seldom similar from region to region or collection to collection. However, the title (or variations on it) is often a floater and appears for totally unrelated tunes.

The most influential version historically was recorded by Kanawha County, West Virginia, fiddler Clark Kessinger (1896-1975) who recorded it (backed with "Turkey in the Straw") in 1928 for the Brunswick label (#235), his second recording for the company. It was the first commercial recording of the tune and featured Kessinger's much imitated technique of brushing the stings of the fiddle with his forefinger, creating a pizzicato effect. Alan Jabbour says that most modern versions seem to stem from the Kessinger recording.

It was printed in Bayard's **Dance to the Fiddle** (1981)(as "Round Up the Yearlings"), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Christeson's **Old Time Fiddlers Repertory, vol. 1** (1973), Christeson's **Old Time Fiddlers Repertory, vol. 2** (1984), **Fiddler Magazine**, Spring 1994, **Fiddler Magazine**, Spring 2007, (a contest setting with numerous variations), Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994), Songer's **Portland Collection** (1997) and Thede's **The Fiddle Book** (1967) (a very different tune).

It was recorded by Ernie Carpenter, The Kessinger Brothers (1928), Eck Robertson, Laurie Lewis, Arthur Smith, Clark Kessinger, Ralph Blizard and the New Southern Ramblers, Dilly and His Dill Pickles (AKA John Dilleshaw) (1930), Charlie Walden, American Café Orchestra, Fiddlin' Van Kidwell (1930), Bill Mitchell, Howard Marshall & John Williams.