

# Hull's Victory

Musical score for "Hull's Victory" in 2/2 time, featuring five staves of music with various chords and section markers.

Staff 1: Measure 1 (C7), Measure 2 (F), Measure 3 (A), Measure 4 (C7), Measure 5 (F), Measure 6 (C).

Staff 2: Measure 7 (C7), Measure 8 (F), Measure 9 (C7), Measure 10 (G7).

Staff 3: Measure 11 (C), Measure 12 (F), Measure 13 (B $\flat$ ), Measure 14 (G7).

Staff 4: Measure 15 (C7), Measure 16 (F), Measure 17 (C7), Measure 18 (F), Measure 19 (C7).

Staff 5: Measure 20 (1. F), Measure 21 (2. F).

---

"Hull's victory", (in Gaelic *Buaid Mic Uill*) is a New England hornpipe or reel known in Maine, New Hampshire and New York in F Major (Brody, Burchenal, Cole, Ford, Linscott, Miller & Perron, Phillips, Sweet, White) or D Major (O'Neill, Shaw, Sweet). The parts are played one part (Burchenal), AAB (most versions) or AA'BB (Phillips). The beginning of the B part is similar to "Sailor's Hornpipe". While the tune is American in origin, it became popular with Irish musicians (probably because it involved a British defeat) and it appears in O'Neill's **Music of Ireland: 1850 Melodies**.

This title commemorates Captain Isaac Hull's victory off the coast of Nova Scotia in the War of 1812. An American hero, Hull was commander of the frigate USS Constitution ('Old Ironsides') which engaged the British frigate HMS Guerriere under Captain Richard Dacre in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, about 750 miles out of Boston. The battle lasted 55 minutes and left 101 dead. With the Guerriere dismasted and smashed beyond salvage, Captain Dacre struck his colors and surrendered to Hull's boarding party. The Constitution, heavier and more solidly built, suffered little damage and only 14 casualties. "Hull's Victory" must have been composed soon after the battle.

The melody is similar to an old English drinking song and a Scottish dance tune, according to Simon Bronner (**Old Time Music Makers of New York State**, 1987) and started life as a ballad, though it soon entered enduring popular tradition as a dance tune, possibly one of the earliest contra dance melodies composed in America.

"Hull's Victory", both tune and contra dance, can be traced through the years in print. Dance instructions were recorded in the **Essex Manuscript** of c. 1830, and in Elias Howe's American Dancing Master (Boston, 1862), while the melody was printed in Howe's **Musician's Companion, Part 1** (Boston, 1842).

Elizabeth Burchenal printed the dance and tune in her **American Country Dances** (1918) and Eloise Hubbard Linscott (**Folk Songs of Old New England**, 1939) confirms the popularity of both. New England contra dance expert Ralph Page reported it was a favorite dance in New Hampshire until the early 1900's and was still being danced in Washington Country, Vermont, in the mid-20th century. Page himself led its revival among new generations of New England contra dancers. Henry Ford's champion fiddler, Mellie Dunham, of Norway, Maine, had a different, but very danceable, tune he called "Hull's Victory", which he recorded in 1926. It differs from this tune. There is a totally different tune titled "Hull's Victory" in Lovett's **Good Morning** (1943).

It was printed in Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983;), Bronner's **Old Time Music Makers of New York State** (1987), Burchenal's **American Country Dances, vol. 1** (1918), Cole's **1000 Fiddle Tunes** (1940), Oliver Ditson's **The Boston Collection of Instrumental Music** (c. 1850), Ford's **Traditional Music of America** (1940), Howe's **Musician's Companion** (1842), Howe's **Musician's Omnibus No. 1** (1862), Linscott's **Folk Songs of Old New England** (1939), Miller & Perron's **New England Fiddler's Repertoire** (1983), O'Neill's **Music of Ireland: 1850 Melodies** (1903), O'Neill (Krassen) (1976), Phillips's **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994), Ryan's **Mammoth Collection** (1883), Saunders' **New and Complete Instructor for the Violin** (1847), Shaw's **Cowboy Dances** (1943), Sweet's **Fifer's Delight** (1964/1981) and White's **Unique Collection** (1896).

It was recorded by Rodney and Randy Miller on **New England Chestnuts, Vol. I** (1980), Mellie Dunham's **Orchestra on New England Traditional Fiddling** (1978) and Strathspey on **New England Contra Dance Music**.