

# Little Donald in the Pigpen

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Little Donald in the Pigpen". It consists of four staves of music, all written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is characterized by eighth-note patterns, often grouped in threes (trios). The first two staves feature a sequence of chords: A major, E minor 7, A major, and E minor 7. The third and fourth staves introduce a D major chord into the sequence, alternating with the A major and E minor 7 chords. The score concludes with a double bar line.

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"Little Donald in the Pigpen", also known as "Little Donald in the Pig Sty" and "Little Donald of the Pigpen" is a Canadian reel from Prince Edward Island in A Mixolydian. The parts are played AB (Dunlay), AAB (Perlman) or AABB (Songer).

Dunlay & Greenberg note that the second turn of the tune sounds like some settings of "Pigeon on the Gate".

P.E.I. fiddler Hector MacDonald believed the tune was originally a pipe march that came to be played "too fast" as a reel. There are some similarities to the Irish reel "The Jolly Tinker" (the second part of "Little Donald" and the third part of "Jolly Tinker" are very similar). MacDonald's version is distanced from other versions and the parts are reversed from other versions.

Ken Perlman, in **The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island** (1996), writes that fiddler Hector MacDonald of Bangor, Kings County, Prince Edward Island came up with the name in the 1930's while performing it on the radio. This is not quite what MacDonald recalled when he was interviewed for the newsletter *The Island Fiddler* in 1982.

MacDonald played for radio station broadcasts from CHCK in Charlottetown in the late 1920's and was surprised at the public reaction to his playing the tune. On the air he was asked how it came by its name:

"Well," I said, "as far as I know, Little Donald was a piper from over here and he had this tune but he had no name on it. He was a short little fella himself, you know. So he was coming home from a dance one night and got awful drunk. So, god, he got sleepy, so he jumped over the fence and lay down and he fell asleep. So when he woke up in the morning he looked all around and he was in a pigpen. So he clapped the pipes on his back and he played this tune and he christened it 'Little Donald in the Pigpen' ...Well, my god, I went in the next week, we were playing every week for him, and he called me into the office. 'C'mere' he said. There was a stack of letters honest to god that high [several feet] from everywhere: 'Play it again'. I had to play that tune every night I was in there.

It was printed in Dunlay & Greenberg's **Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton** (1996), Dunlay and Reich's **Traditional Celtic Fiddle Music of Cape Breton** (1986), Perlman's **The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island** (1996) and Songer's **Portland Collection** (1997). It was recorded by Winnie Chafe on **Echoes** (1988), John Morris Rankin on **Fare Thee Well Love**, John Morris Rankin et al. on **Traditional Music from Cape Breton Island** (1993), Peter Chaisson Jr. on **Fiddlers of Eastern Prince Edward Island** (1997) and Joseph & J.P. Cormier on **Velvet Arm, Golden Hand** (2002).