

Polly Put the Kettle On

The musical score for "Polly Put the Kettle On" is written in D major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first two staves form the main melody, and the last three staves form a variation. Chord diagrams are provided above the notes, and fingering instructions (like '3' for triplets) are included. The score is divided into sections A, B, and C.

Staff 1: Starts with a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F#4). Chords: D (A), G, A7, D, A7, D, A7. Ends with a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F#4).

Staff 2: Chords: D, G, A7, D, D, A7, D. Ends with a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F#4).

Staff 3 (Section B): Starts with a double bar line. Chords: D, G, A7, D, A7, D. Ends with a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F#4).

Staff 4 (Section C): Starts with a double bar line. Chords: D, G, A7, D, G, D, A7. Ends with a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F#4).

Staff 5: Starts with a double bar line. Chord: D. Ends with a double bar line.

"Polly Put the Kettle On", also known as "Molly Put the Kettle On", "Barney Leave the Girls Alone" and "Jenny's Bawbee" is an Irish, English and American reel and Country Dance Tune in 2/4 time. It shows up in A Dorian, D Major or in some four-part versions in both. The collector John Glen (1891) finds an early printing of the tune in **Dale's Variations for the Pianoforte** (1794) and remarked it became at that time "very popular with young ladies". It appears in a number of early 19th century musicians' manuscript collections in England and in America.

It is a popular nursery rhyme and has a **Roud Folk Song Index** number of 7899.

One of the oddest appearances of the tune is on the barrel organ from the polar expedition of Admiral Parry of 1819. In place of a ship's fiddler (common in those days), Parry introduced a barrel organ on board ship to provide entertainment and a vehicle to which the men could exercise (i.e. by dancing). "Polly Put the Kettle On" was one of eight tunes on barrel no. 1. The tune is well known among players around the Round Peak area of western North Carolina.

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher. His comment about Round Peak style banjo playing:
my approach to Round Peak ... would be to play a fretted banjo like you play on a fretless banjo. To me that means alternate string pull-offs, rolls, brushes and any other technique to keep your left hand below the fifth fret and avoid long slides or reaches that can do bad things to intonation. Also there's a tendency to use the fifth string to give rhythm and accentuate a single note melody.

It was printed in Joseph Carr's **Carr's Pocket Companion** (1800), Hardings' **All-Round Collection** (1905), Kennedy's **Fiddlers Tune Book, vol. 1** (1951), Raven's **English Country Dance Tunes** (1984), Leftwich's **Round Peak Style Clawhammer Banjo** (1999), Kennedy's **Fiddlers Tune Book, vol. 1** (1951), Krassen's **Masters of Old Time Fiddling** (1983), Raven's **English Country Dance Tunes** (1984), Silberberg's **The Complete Fiddle Tunes I Either Did or Did Not Learn at the Tractor Tavern** (2007), A.S. Bowman's **J.W. Pepper Collection of Five Hundred Reels, Jigs, etc.** (1908), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Christeson's **Old Time Fiddlers Repertory, vol. 2** (1984) (as "Jenny Put the Kettle On"), Milliner & Koken's **Milliner-Koken Collection of American Fiddle Tunes** (2011) and Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994).

It was recorded by Tommy Jarrell, Leake County Revelers (1928), Gid Tanner and His Skillet Lickers (1932), The Skillet Lickers on **Old Time Tunes** (reissue), Leake County Revelers on **Traditional Fiddle Music of Mississippi, vol. 2** (reissue), New Lost City Ramblers on **Vol. 4** (1962), Joe and Odell Thompson on **Old Time Music From the North Carolina Piedmont**, Glen Smith on **Say Old Man** (1990), Dan Gellert & Brad Leftwich on **A Moment in Time** (1993) (Primarily Tommy Jarrell's version), Allan Block & Ralph Lee Smith on **Allan Block & Ralph Lee Smith** (1971), John Hartford on **Wild Hog in the Red Brush** (1996), Red Clay Ramblers on **Merchants Lunch** (1977), Calvin Cole (et al) on **Far on the Mountain, Vols. 1&2** (2002), Haywood Blevins on **Old Originals, Vol. II** (1978), Wade Ward and Ernest Stoneman on **Serenade in the Mountains**.