

# Rye Straw

A **A** D A D A D A

5 A D A D A D A

9 A **B** D A D

13 A D A G A

17 A **C** G D G A

Detailed description: This image shows the musical score for the piece 'Rye Straw'. It consists of five staves of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff (measures 1-4) has a boxed 'A' above the second measure and chord letters A, D, A, D, A, D, A above the notes. The second staff (measures 5-8) has chord letters A, D, A, D, A, D, A above the notes. The third staff (measures 9-12) has a boxed 'B' above the second measure and chord letters A, D, A, D above the notes. The fourth staff (measures 13-16) has chord letters A, D, A, G, A above the notes, with a fermata over the G chord. The fifth staff (measures 17-20) has a boxed 'C' above the second measure and chord letters A, G, D, G, A above the notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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"Rye Straw", also known as "Alabama Waltz" (Mississippi title), "Big Fish", "Black My Boots and Go See the Widow", "Dog Shit a Rye Straw", "Dog in the Rye Straw", "The Dog in Difficulty", "The Joke on the Puppy", "Lady's Fancy", "Ladies Fancy", "Preacher's Favorite", "The Unfortunate Pup", "The Unfortunate Dog" or "A Whoop from Arkansas" is an old-time breakdown known in North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, Indiana, Arkansas in D Major (most versions), A Major (Frank Kittrell, Silberberg) or G Major (Doc Roberts). The parts are played AA'B (Titon), AABB (Brody, Kittrell, Spadaro), ABC (Silberberg), AA'BBCC (Phillips), AABBBCC (Ford), ABCCB' (Krassen), AABCCCCDD (Reiner & Anick).

"Rye Straw" is a reel characterized by a shifting tonal center from D major to A mixolydian, with some versions emphasizing one or another of the centers. The melody was known throughout the South and Midwest under a variety of (mostly related) titles, but appears to have first been published in the 1880's by George Coe Co. of Boston, Mass., as "A Whoop from Arkansas" and later by Missouri physician W.H. Morris (**Old Time Violin Melodies**, 1927, as "Acrobat"). Marion Thede published Ozarks region versions as "Preacher's Favorite" and "Ladies Fancy" in **The Fiddle Book** (1960).

This was one of the tunes collected from Henry Reed (Monroe County, W. Va.) by Alan Jabbour.

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher who says that it was "Learned as a Round Peak standard mostly from Burt Feintuch then Brad Leftwich".

It was printed in Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Ford's **Traditional Music in America** (1940), Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes vol. 1** (1994), Reiner & Anick's **Old Time Fiddling Across America** (1989), Silberberg's **Tunes I Learned at Tractor Tavern** (2002), Lamancusa's **The Gettysburg Collection of Old-Time Fiddle Tunes** (2021), Spadaro's **10 Cents a Dance** (1980) and Titon's **Old Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes** (2001).

It was recorded by Earl Collins on **That's Earl**, Ace Weems and the Fat Meat Boys on **It's All Gone Now** (1891), Wilson Douglas on **Fiddle Tunes From Central West Virginia** (1998), Doc Roberts (1930) (78 RPM), Clayton McMichen & Riley Puckett (1930) (78 RPM), Bill and Libby Hicks on **South of Nowhere** (Appears as "Dog Passed a Ryestraw"), Doc Roberts on **Fiddling Doc Roberts** (1983) and **Old Time Fiddle Classics, vol. 2**, Clyde Davenport (Monticello, Ky.) on **Clydeoscope: Rare & Beautiful Tunes from the Cumberland Plateau** (1986), John Summers on **Fine Times at our House**, Mississippi Department of Archives and History AH-002, Frank Kittrell (Lauderdale County, Miss.) on **Great Big Yam Potatoes: Anglo-American Fiddle Music from Mississippi** (1985). The Backwoods Band on **Jes' Fine** (1980), Bob Carlin on **Fiddle Tunes for the Clawhammer Banjo** (1980), Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers on **Hear These New Fiddle and Guitar Records**, Bob Douglas on **Old Time Dance Tunes from Sequatchie Valley**, Uncle Am Stuart (Morristown, Tenn.) (1925) and The Hoover Uprights on **Known for their Reputation** (2006).