

## Turkey in the Straw

Part A

Part B

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An overwhelmingly popular tune in American fiddle tradition. Bayard (1981) suggests that a Scottish tune called "The (Bonny) Black Eagle" (also called "The Way to Edinburgh" by Oswald) resembles "Turkey in the Straw" in both parts. Besides Samuel Bayard, Alan Jabbour, Winston Wilkinson, George Pullen Jackson and others think that a tune with an even stronger resemblance in the first part to the first part of Turkey is "The Rose Tree". Their apparent conclusion is that the Turkey tune is a composite of two older Scottish tunes, the 'A' part of "The Rose Tree" and the 'B' part of "The (Bonny) Black Eagle."

Whatever its origins, it was probably in American folk tradition before the 19<sup>th</sup> century and popular theater and minstrel groups during the 19<sup>th</sup> century helped consolidate and spread its popularity (it was often called "Old Zip Coon" in minstrel tradition) and one version was copyrighted by Dan Bryant, the melody labelled only an "old melody," presumably referring to "Old Zip Coon."

Michael Cooney sings some silly verses to this tune that amuse kids.

Like everyone else, I learned it in grade school when minstrel songs were a large part of music classes.

Fiddlers seem to like chicken tunes. It's easy to make chicken sounds with a scrape of the bow. Most serious fiddlers consider this cheap theatrics. This tune has no sound effects; it's just a straight-up pretty easy tune.

Other poultry tunes in this collection are:

- Cluck Old Hen
- Chicken Reel
- Cacklin' Hen.