

Wolves a-Howling

AEae tuning

A

A E7 D A E7 A D E7

B

A E7 D A E7 A D E7

A E7 D A E7 1. A D E7

2. A D A

"Wolves a-Howling", also known as "Poor Little Darlin'" is an American reel in cut time and A Major (Beisswenger & McCann) or G Major (John Brown/Bruce Molsky, Phillips).

It is played in AEae (most versions) or GDgd (John Brown) fiddle tunings. The parts are played AAB (Phillips), ABB' (Beisswenger & McCann) or AABB.

The tune has wide dissemination among deep South and Midwest fiddlers. Tom Rankin and Gary Stanton indicate it was popular in the "Old Southwest" or the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Richard "Dink" Goforth, a Missouri fiddler and father of Gene Goforth (1921-2002) played "Wolves a Howlin'" and another tune called "The Howlin' Wolves," that was nearly the same. "His Dad swore up and down (that it) was different," writes John Hartford (2001), "but Gene never could separate the two."

The Stripling Brothers, featuring the fiddling of Charlie Stripling (1896-1966) originally from Pickens Co., northeast Alabama, recorded it commercially in 1929, traveling with his guitar-playing brother Ira (b. 1898) to studios in Chicago. Charlie learned to fiddle as a teenager, mentored by a neighbor, "Uncle Plez" Pleasant C. Carroll (1850-1930), from whom it is thought he learned "Wolves a-Howling".

Lyrics are sometimes improvised by the players:

O don't you hear them wolves a howlin,
All around my poor little darlin';
Four on the hillside, six in the holler,
They're gonna get 'er, betcha a dollar. ... [Thede]

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher. His comments:

Originally from Jody Stecher and Kate Brislin with recent listening to Rayna Gellert and John Herrmann.

It was printed in Beisswenger & McCann's **Ozarks Fiddle Music** (2008), Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes vol. 1** (1994) and Thede's **The Fiddle Book** (1967).

It was recorded by Earl Collins on **That's Earl**, The Stripling Brothers on **The Stripling Brothers vol. 1: 1928-1934** (1997), Dan Gellert & Shoofly on **Forked Deer** (1986), W.E. Claunch & John Brown on **Great Big Yam Potatoes: Anglo American Fiddle Music From Mississippi** (1985), Bruce Molsky on **Lost Boy** (1996), Gene Goforth on **Eminence Breakdown** (1997), John Hartford on **Hamilton Ironworks** (2001), Bob Holt on **Got a Little Home to Go to** (1998) and **Traditional Fiddle Music of the Ozarks, vol. 1** (2000. Various artists) and Stripling Brothers (78 RPM) {1929}.