

## Yellow Barber

The musical score for "Yellow Barber" is presented in four staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first staff is marked with a boxed 'A' and contains measures 1 through 8. The second staff contains measures 1 through 8, with triplets in measures 4 and 5. The third staff is marked with a boxed 'B' and contains measures 1 through 8. The fourth staff contains measures 1 through 8, with triplets in measures 4 and 5. The chords are D, A7, G, and D.

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"Yellow Barber", also known as "Arthur Berry" American reel in D Major. The parts are played AB (Silberberg, Titon) or AABB (Phillips).

Although the name Yellow Barber is given to a bird species, the general consensus seems to be that the title refers to a mulatto barber, a common occurrence among freemen in the South as well as other parts of the country. "Yellow" is a term applied to a light-skinned bi-racial person in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see the notes for "Yellow Rose of Texas").

It appears to have also been fairly common for fiddlers and other musicians to moonlight as barbers (or vice versa). John Heine has found a reference to a mulatto barber named William B. Taylor, a fiddler born in Kentucky in 1821, who called the figures as he played. Taylor's Band, composed of barbers, played for hundreds of balls, banquets and steamboat excursions in the Minnesota territory from 1849 until his death in 1862. Taylor called figures while he played and is was remembered as having "a voice a brigadier general might envy".

Mark Wilson remarks that fiddlers east of Portsmouth, Ohio, often called the tune "Arthur Berry".

The latter 18th century Scottish air "Over the Moor among the Heather ", also known as "Aldivalloch" may well be an ancestor of "Yellow Barber"/"Arthur Berry".

The banjo tab is by John Letscher who says that it is mostly from the playing of Gerry Milnes and Lorraine Lee-Hammond on **Hell Up Coal Holler**.

It was printed in Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes vol. 1** (1994), Lamancusa's **The Gettysburg Collection of Old-Time Fiddle Tunes** (2021), Silberberg's **Tunes I Learned at Tractor Tavern** (2002) and Titon's **Old Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes** (2001).

It was recorded by Buddy Thomas on **Buddy Thomas: Recordings from the collection of Dave Spilkie & Ray Alden** (2015), Buddy Thomas on **Kitty Puss: Old Time Fiddle Music From Kentucky** (1976), Dave Bing on **Family and Friends**, John W. Summers on **John W. Summers, Indiana Fiddler** (1984) (as "Arthur Barry"), Buddy Thomas (et al) on **The Art of Traditional Fiddle** (2001), Bruce Molsky on **Lost Boy** (1996) and Gerry Milnes & Lorraine Lee Hammond on **Hell Up Coal Holler** (1999).