

Styles & Genres



American Music: Old Time 1

What Is Old Time Music?

THAT IS *actually* a difficult question to answer. Some say it's music that originates in the southern Appalachian region of Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee but which also includes related music. Old-time music is often called "Oldtimey".

Mike Seeger of The New Lost City Ramblers puts it another way: "Old Time music was the Old-time name for real mountain-type folk music. Oldtime music is the main foundation



for bluegrass. It is the kind of music that "... most rural people prior to the mid 1920s were raised with. It's the old unaccompanied British ballads like *Barbara Allen*, new American songs like *Wild Bill Jones*, old fiddle tunes like *Devil's Dream*, and newer fiddle tunes like *Cumberland Gap*. It's a rich and varied heritage of music - as rich as the roots of any country"

The main instruments of Old -time music are fiddle, guitar and banjo; mandolin features only occasionally.

The Scottish Influence

There was significant immigration into Appalachia in the 18th and 19th centuries by Scots, and Scotch-Irish. The "Scotch-Irish" were



Scots who had migrated to Ulster from Cromwell's time onwards.

Either they or their descendants moved from there to the US. The term "hillbilly" was originally a reference to presbyterian supporters of William of Orange.

Many scholars believe that the Scots and Scotch-Irish

had perhaps the greatest influence on the development of American Old-time music. There are certainly many tunes of Scottish origin which can be found in the Old-time repertoire; some obviously so, others rather more difficult to spot. *Old Molly Hare* is an American version of that old Scottish warhorse *The Fairy Dance*, while *Hop Light Ladies* (sometimes also called *Uncle Joe*) is very recognisable as *Mrs McLeod of Raasay*.

Plenty people neither know nor care about these concordances, but it can be a fascinating and useful study.

Old Molly Hare (traditional)

Musical notation for the first system of "Old Molly Hare". It consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in the treble clef. Below the staff is a guitar/banjo tablature with fret numbers (0-5) and chord symbols (G, C, D7) above the staff.

Musical notation for the second system of "Old Molly Hare". It continues the melody and tablature from the first system, including chord symbols (G, C, D7, G, G, C, D7, G) and fret numbers.

Musical notation for the third system of "Old Molly Hare". It concludes the melody and tablature, including chord symbols (G, D7, G, D7, G, C, D7, G) and fret numbers.

Hop Light Ladies (traditional)

G G G D7

5 2 3 5 2 5 0 | 2 2 3 2 0 | 5 2 3 5 2 0 5 | 4 4 5 0 0

G G C D7 G

5 2 3 5 2 5 0 | 2 2 3 2 5 | 0 5 0 3 3 0 | 5 3 2 0 5

G G G D7

5 3 0 3 | 2 2 3 2 2 0 | 5 3 0 3 | 5 2 0 5

G G C D7 G

5 3 0 3 | 2 2 3 2 5 | 0 5 0 3 3 0 | 5 3 2 0 5

Old Joe Clark (traditional)

A A A A

0 2 3 2 | 0 2 0 5 4 | 0 2 3 2 | 0 2 0

A A A E A

0 2 3 2 | 0 2 0 5 4 | 4 2 0 4 2 0 | 6 0

A A A G

0 0 2 4 2 4 5 | 0 2 0 5 4 2 0 | 0 0 2 4 2 0 | 5

A A A E A

0 0 2 4 2 4 5 | 0 2 0 5 4 2 0 | 4 2 0 4 2 0 | 6 0

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