

HILL COUNTRY TUNES

*Instrumental Folk Music of
Southwestern Pennsylvania*

COLLECTED AND EDITED

By

SAMUEL PRESTON BAYARD

EXCERPT: FINE TIMES AT OUR HOUSE



AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Philadelphia

1944

76. FINE TIMES AT OUR HOUSE

Played by Irvin Yaughner Jr., Mt. Independence, Pennsylvania, October 19, 1943. Learned from his great-uncle.



The title of this tune has the appearance of being an importation from the British Isles; and no doubt the melody is too. Another set, with a variant form of the title, and a different second part, is in Bayard Coll., No. 227, from Center County. It is cast in a different mode from this, which disguises it greatly.

"Bub" Yaughner knew the following rhyme associated with this tune:

Possum up a gum stump,
Coonie in the holler,
Devil's on the other side —
Don't you hear him holler?

Dance to the Fiddle, March to the Fife

Instrumental Folk Tunes in Pennsylvania

*"Then the drums did beat and rattle,
And the fife did sweetly play;
She marched up to the enemy
And bravely fought away.*

*The fiddler being willing,
And his arm a-being strong,
He played "The Drowned Irishman"
For four hours along.*

(From Pennsylvania Folksong Versions)

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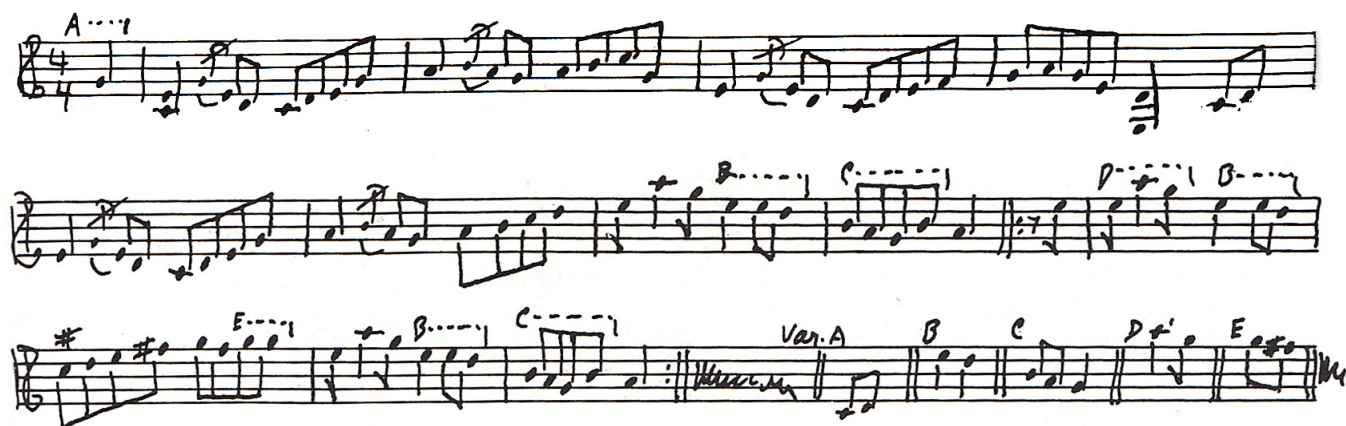
1982

301. FINE TIMES AT OUR HOUSE (V)

A

J. Smalley, V, 1944, B.

From his father.



B

Ireland, V, 1944, B.



C

Yeager, V, 1930s, B.





Local titles: as above, A; *Fine Fun at Our House*, C; no title, B. The title of A seems the prevailing one for this tune in the region. The “shading-off,” as it were, from one mode to another that characterizes these versions is a genuine, and once common, feature of our fiddling tradition. A vague resemblance to our tune is seen in Scot CD, Bk. 10, No. 5a, *Crieff Fair*, labeled “from Bremner, 1760.” The second part of Adam, No. 54, equals the second strain of our No. 301. Clear sets of our tune are found in SFQ, VI, p. 10 (usual title), from Albemarle County, Virginia, being a Mixolydian set something like our B-version; and in Bayard HCT No. 76 (usual title). But I cannot satisfactorily trace the tune in any older British collection.

From Jock Woodmancy, Ohiopyle, Fayette County, I got this little rhyme to go along with the piece:

Fine times at our house, Sally's got a little one:
A great big yellow devil just like the other one.

The second part of our C-version seems to be made out of the closing cadential formula of the first strain, and replaces what is apparently the usual second part of the tune, as it appears in Versions A and B and in the other Virginia and Pennsylvania sets referred to above.

