

## Music From Revolutionary Period

The music remains the same, but the words are apt to be unrecognizable with the passage of time, that is assuming the song is not completely forgotten. Here are two taken from a volume entitled "Father Kemp's Old Folks' Concert Tunes", printed in 1889.

### Yankee Doodle

1. Father and I went down to camp along with Captain Gooding, and  
There we see the men and boys as thick as hasty pudding.  
*Chorus.* Yankee doodle keep it up, Yankee doodle dandy, beneath  
The fig tree and the vine, sing Yankee doodle dandy.
2. And there we see a swamping gun, large as a log of maple,  
Up on a deuced little cart, - a load for father's cattle.  
*Chorus.*
3. And every time they shoot it off, it takes a horn of powder, it makes  
A noise like father's gun, except a nation louder.  
*Chorus.*
4. I went as nigh to one myself as Siah's underpinning, and  
Father went as nigh again, I thought the deuce was in him.  
*Chorus.*
5. Cousin Simon grew so bold, I thought he would have cocked it,  
It scared me so I streaked it off, and hung to father's pocket.  
*Chorus.*
6. Captain Davis had a gun, he kind of clapped his hand on't,  
And stuck a crooked stabbing iron upon the little end on't.  
*Chorus.*
7. And there I see a pumpkin shell as big as mother's basin.  
And every time they touched it off, they scampered like the nation.  
*Chorus.*
8. I see a little barrel too, the heads were made of leather; they  
Knock'd upon't with little clubs, and called the folks together.  
*Chorus.*
9. And there was Captain Washington, and gentle folks about him;  
They say he's grown so tarnal proud, he will not ride without 'em.  
*Chorus.*
10. He got him on his meeting clothes, upon a slapping stallion, he  
Set the world along in rows, in hundreds and in millions.  
*Chorus.*
11. I see another snarl of men, a digging graves, they told me, so  
Tarnal long, so tarnal deep, they 'tended they should hold me.  
*Chorus.*
12. Nor stopped, as I remember, it scared me so I scampered off, nor  
Turned about till I got home, locked up in mother's chamber.  
*Chorus.*

In 1978, when the Connecticut General Assembly decided upon “Yankee Doodle” as the official state song, they specified “the form in which this song shall be sung as the state song shall be as follows:

**WORDS**

Yankee Doodle went to town.  
Riding on a pony,  
Stuck a feather in his hat,  
And called it macaroni.

**CHORUS**

Yankee Doodle keep it up.  
Yankee Doodle dandy,  
Mind the music and the step.  
And with the folks be handy.”

There are countless versions of this song. The tune had been around in England for a long time, and according to legend, a British surgeon named Richard Schuckton created the words ridiculing the American colonials. The British thought the song was hilarious – particularly the libelous references to George Washington and the waste in his enormous army of doodles who thought that they could be macaronis (fashionable dandies) by sticking feathers in their caps.

It came as a shock to the British when the Americans thought the song was cool and adopted it as their own, adding stanzas as they went along. The original British version had the first line of what is now our state song as “Yankee Doodle went to London”, and the last line of the chorus as “And with the girls behandy” (to dance). The Connecticut legislators saw fit to change “girls” to “folks”, which muddies the meaning and forced them to change “behandy” to “be handy”, which doesn’t make sense. When Lord Cornwallis surrendered to Washington at Yorktown, the British band played “The World Turned Upside Down”; the Americans played “Yankee Doodle”.

**The Battle of Stonington**

A gallant ship from England came, freighted deep with fire and flame, and other things we need not name, to have a dash at Stonington; now safe arrived they work begun, they tho’t to make the Yankee run, and have a mighty deal of fun, in stealing sheep at Stonington.

A Yankee then popped up his head, Parson Jones a sermon read, to which our Rev’rend Doctor said, that they must fight for Stonington; their ships advancing several ways, the Britons soon began to blaze, which put old Williams in amaze, who fear’d the boys of Stonington.

The Ramilies first began th’ attack, Nimrod made a mighty crack, and none can tell what kept them back from setting fire to Stonington; their bombs were thrown, and rockets flew, and not a man of all their crew, tho’ every man stood full in view, could kill a man of Stonington.

Their old razee, with red-hot ball, made a farmer’s barrack fall, and a cow house sadly maul; that stood a mile from Stonington; we Yankees to our fort repair’d and made as how we little cared about their shot, tho’ very hard they blazed away at Stonington.

To have a turn we tho't but fair, so we brought two guns to bear, and, sir, it would have made you stare, to see the smoke at Stonington; we bored the nimrod thro' and thro', and killed and mangled half her crew, when riddled, crippled, she withdrew, and cussed the boys of Stonington.

The Ramilies gave up the affray, with her comrades sneaked away, such was the valor on that day, of British tars at Stonington; now some assert on sartain grounds, beside their damage and their wounds, it cost the king ten thousand pounds, to have a dash at Stonington.

## **Music From the Revolutionary War, Part II**

Here are three more songs that were popular during and shortly after the American War of Independence. I think you will find the words to "When George the Third Was King" of particular interest, as the laments expressed in the early 1840s sound strangely similar to those complained of today; truly, the more things change, the more they remain the same!

### **Revolutionary Tea**

There was an old lady lived over the sea, and she was an Island Queen,  
Her daughter lived off in a new countrie, with an ocean of water between;  
The old lady's pockets were full of gold, but never content was she, so she  
Called on her daughter to pay her a tax. Of three pence a pound on her tea,  
On three pence a pound on her tea.

"Now mother, dear mother," the daughter replied, "I sha'n't do the thing you ax,  
I'm willing to pay a fair price for the tea, but never the three penny tax;"  
"You shall," quoth the mother, and redden'd with rage, "For you're my own  
daughter, you see, and sure, 'tis quite proper the daughter should pay her mother  
a tax on her tea, her mother a tax on the tea."

And so the old lady her servant called up, and packed off a budget of tea;  
And eager for three pence a pound, she put in enough for a large familie,  
She order'd her servants to bring home the tax, declaring her child should obey,  
Or old as she was, and almost a woman grown, she'd half whip her life away,  
She'd half whip her life away.

The tea was conveyed to the daughter's door, all down by the ocean's side;  
And the bouncing girl pour'd out every pound in the dark and boiling tide;  
And then she called out to the Island Queen, "O mother, dear mother," quoth she,  
"Your tea you may have when 'tis steep'd enough, but never a tax from me,  
But never a tax from me."

### **Cousin Jedediah**

O Jacob, get the cows home and put them in the pen, for the cousins are

A-coming to see us all again; the dowdy's in the pan, and the  
Turkey's on the fire, and we all must get ready for cousin Jedediah.

**Chorus**

There's Hezekiah, all coming here to tea, oh! won't we have a jolly time,  
Oh! won't we have a jolly time, Jerusha, put the kettle on, we'll all take tea.

Now Obed, wash your face, boy, and tallow up your shoes, while I go to see Aunt  
Betty and tell her all the news; and Kitty, slick your hair, and put  
On your Sunday gown, for cousin Jedediah comes right from Boston town.

**Chorus**

And Job you peel the onions, and wash and fix the taters, we'll have them on the  
Table in those shiny painted waiters, put on your bran new boots, and those trousers with  
The straps, Aunt Sophia'll take a shine to you, if you look real slick, perhaps.

**Chorus**

Tell Josh to put the colt in the double seated chaise, let him just card down the  
Cattle, give them a little hay, I'll wear my nice, new bell crown I  
Bought of old Uriah, and I guess we'll astonish our Cousin Jedediah.

**Chorus**

**When George The Third Was King**

Times indeed do greatly change, in a lapse of three-score years;  
Ev'ry thing seems new and strange, e'en the language that one hears;  
Dress and costumes lately learn'd, sheer dismay to all must bring,  
Upside down the world has turn'd, since when George the Third was King!

Wives are now so very *dear*, husbands are becoming rare;  
Twice a thousand pounds a year will scarce suffice a married pair!  
Even then connubial loves, judging what *divorce courts* bring,  
Ain't so much like turtle doves, as when George the Third was King!

Fain we'd watch with joy serene, sportive childhood's gay delight;  
Nowhere can a child be seen, they've gone out of fashion, quite!  
Girls are women now at ten! Airs and graces, ev'ry-thing!  
Little boys are all young men, what a change since George the Third was King!

Ladie's dress in this fast age sober reason quite appalls;  
Maid and mistress both alike; sport their hoops and water falls.  
Taxes, too, were once so rare, now we feel their daily sting.  
We scarcely knew what taxes meant in those days when George the Third was King!