

Dance to the Fiddle, March to the Fife

Instrumental Folk Tunes in Pennsylvania

SWEET ELLEN EXCERPT

*"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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243. SWEET ELLEN or ELLUM (V)

A

J. Bryner, V, 1946, B, 1960, JB.

From Frank Lowry.



B

Walter Neal, V, 1952, JB.



C

Nicholson, V, 1949, B.



D

Ireland, V, 1944, B.



E

J. Morris, V, 1930s, B.



F

Losch, V, 1930s, B.

From old player Christ Hopple.



Local titles: as above, A, C; *Billy Howard's Tune*, or *Billy in the Low Land*, E; *Hopple's Hornpipe*, F; no title, B, D. Our chosen identification-title seems the prevailing one in southwest Pennsylvania; but over the rest of the country quite a number of other names for this tune are to be found. Though the piece is widespread in this country, I cannot trace it satisfactorily in British tradition.

Tunes which are either clear versions of No. 243, or else seem to be derivatives, bearing a considerable resemblance, are Howe DSV, p. 52 (*Village Hornpipe*); Adam, No. 69; Ford, pp. 81, 101; Christeson, No. 91; No. 103 (with a first part resembling the second of our No. 243); Thede, p. 49; One Thousand, p. 40, 2nd.; p. 115, 1st.; JR, II, p. 24; Harding Orig, No. 27; White Ex, p. 48, 3rd.; White Un, No. 108; Bayard HCT, Nos. 2, 3. In Breathnach 1963 is a tune akin to this one: No. 157 has a resemblance throughout, with its second half especially close. However, in these days of easy international communication between players, and rapid interchange of tunes, it would be hazardous to assert either that we learned the piece from Irish fiddlers, or that they got it from us.