

WESTPHALIA WALTZ
From Fiddlers Companion

WESTPHALIA WALTZ. American, Canadian; Waltz. USA; widely known in New England, Southern and Mid-West repertoire. Canada, Prince Edward Island. G Major. Standard tuning. AB (Beisswenger & McCann): AA'B (Johnson): AA'BB' (Brody, Matthiesen, Perlman, Phillips). Widely held to be composed by one Cotton Collins, a Texas fiddler and member of the Lone Star Playboys, but popularized by Hank Thompson in 1955 on a Capitol Records recording. Paul Wells (1978) finds evidence the waltz was composed by Vince Icadona, a member in the 1930's of the Crystal Springs Ramblers, out of Dallas Texas. Johnson and others report, however, that it is the vehicle for a ribald drinking song called "Pytala Sie Pani" (What the Woman Said), an old and well-known (and somewhat bawdy) Polish song, sometimes played at weddings by Polish-American bands. Documentary film producer Joe Weed has traced the vicissitudes of "Westphalia" from its Polish folk origins in the 1920's (where it was known also by the names "Wszystkie Rybki," and later "Dreamy Fish Waltz") to its circulation in the 1930's in the northern United States (see his well-researched DVD "Westphalia Waltz Story"). It was Collins, however, who transformed the tune (which Weed says he learned in Germany during World War II) into an American country waltz, naming it after a small village about 35 miles south of Waco, where his group was from. "Westphalia Waltz" is one of the '100 essential Missouri fiddle tunes' according to Missouri fiddler Charlie Walden, and, according to Beisswenger & McCann, "likely gained much of its popularity in the Ozarks through fiddle contests." Indeed, note the authors, some Ozark fiddlers believe it to be an indigenous regional tune. Around the Philadelphia, Pa., area it is known as the "West Philly Waltz" perhaps through folk-processing, but more likely from humor. Melodic material from this tune appears in "Shadow of the Mountain."