

THE JACKFISH

Old-Time, Breakdown; **DATE:** 1844; **CATEGORY:** Fiddle and Instrumental Tunes; Sung by Mr. Ebe Richards at St. Peter's School Calloway, Va., Aug. 18, 1918. From Cecil Sharp's EFSSA No. 251, pg. 361; **HOOK AND LINE SONGS:** The title for the large family of songs that have originated from the "Old Dad" minstrel song in 1844 which first appeared in printed form in a collection by Dan Emmett (composer of Dixie) called, Old Dan Emmett's Original Banjo Melodies, Second Series. The "hook and line" songs include "Shout Lula," "Shout Lou," "Shout Old Lula," "The Shad," "Banjo Sam," "Mr. Catfish," "Shout Lula," "Jackfish" "Seven and A Half" "Just From Tennessee," "Shout Oh Lulu," "Fish on a Hook," and "Buck Creek Gals." The "hook and line" songs can be split into two basic categories; the "hook and line" (Grab that catfish by its snout/ Turn that catfish wrong side out) songs that talk about fishing and the "Shout Lula" (Shout, Lula, shout, Lula, shout, shout/ What in the world you shoutin' 'bout?) songs. "Shout Lula" is a fast banjo version from the Appalachian region. **NOTES:** Jackfish is another name for a chain pickerel (common to the Appalachian region) and the song appears by that name from Sharp's English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians. It appears that the name originally was "catfish." Emmett did not claim the song as his own composition and, though the words may well be his, it is likely that the tune was already well-known, and may in fact be of British origin. A version of Hook and Line/Banjo Sam appears in the Journal of American Folklore in 1909 with the verse "the first fish bit was my old ad." Norm Cohen, who gives a transcription of Roscoe Holcomb's version of 'Hook & Line' in the marvelous booklet for 'Paramount Oldtime Tunes,' explains: Dan Emmett's composition titled 'Old Dad', published in 1844, leaves no doubt in my mind that "dad" is the original locution (of the 1909 JAF song), though whether it is indeed a fish, or a father, or some other stock minstrel figure is not clear to me. The fourth stanza of Emmett's "Old Dad" is related to one stanza of Wilmer Watts's "Banjo Sam."

That old Jack-fish swim-ming up the stream, And I asked that Jack-fish what did he mean. I
 grabbed that Jack-fish by the snout And took that Jack-fish wrong side out.
 O de lor de lor gal *sin-dy, sin-dy, Lor de lor gal sin-dy sue.

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G **D**
 That old Jackfish swimming up the stream,
G **D**
 And I asked that Jackfish what did he mean.
G **D**
 I grabbed that Jackfish by the snout,
G **D** **G**
 And took that Jackfish wrong side out.

C **G** **C** **G**
 O de lor de lor gal, *sindy, sindy,
C **G** **D** **G**
 Lor de lor gal, sindy, sue.

* Cindy, I've kept the original spelling.