

# JESSE JAMES (LAWS E1)

Old-Time Ballad and Bluegrass Song; **DATE:** Circa 1882; **CATEGORY:** Early Country and Bluegrass Songs; **RECORDINGS:** Bascom Lamar Lunsford 1924; Riley Puckett; Vernon Dalhart; Fiddlin' John Carson; Uncle Dave Macon; Bogtrotters; **NOTES:** Jesse James, living in St. Joseph, Missouri under his pseudonym "Thomas Howard" was shot by Robert Ford on April 4, 1882. Robert Ford was a member of Jesse's gang whom Jesse regarded as a friend. For d shot Jesse in the back while Jesse was hanging a picture. According to Randolph the song became popular throughout the Midwest almost immediately after Jesse's death. Ford himself was shot in 1892 by another member of Jesse's gang.

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and common time. It consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are: "Jes - se James was a lad who killed ma - ny a man he robbed the Glen - dale train and the peo - ple they did say for ma - ny miles a - way it was robbed by Frank and Jes - se James Jes - se had a wife to mourn for his life three child - ren they were brave but that dirt - y lit - tle cow - ard who shot Mis - ter How - ard had laid poor Jes - se in his grave."

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**G** **C** **G** **D**  
Jesse James was a lad who killed many a man, he robbed the Glendale train  
**G** **C** **G** **D** **G**  
And the people they did say for many miles away, it was robbed by Frank and Jesse James  
**C** **G** **D**  
**Chorus:** Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life, three children they were brave  
**G** **C** **G** **D** **G**  
But that dirty little coward who shot Mr. Howard, has laid poor Jesse in his grave

It was on a Wednesday night, the moon was shining bright, they robbed the Glendale train  
And the people they did say for many miles away, it was robbed by Frank and Jesse James *Chorus*

It was on a Saturday night when Jesse was at home, talking with his family brave  
Robert Ford came along like a thief in the night and laid poor Jesse in his grave *Chorus*

Robert Ford, that dirty little coward, I wonder how he feels  
For he ate of Jesse's bread and he slept in Jesse's bed and he laid poor Jesse in his grave *Chorus*

This song was made by Billy Gashade, as soon as the news did arrive  
He said there was no man with the law in his hand, who could take Jesse James when alive. *Chorus*