

# RYE WHISKEY

Traditional Old-Time and Bluegrass Song; **DATE:** Late 1800's; **CATEGORY:** Early Country and Bluegrass Songs; **RECORDING INFO:** Fiddlin' John Carson-1925; Jules Allen, "Jack O' Diamonds" (Victor 21470, 1928); Frank Proffitt; Tex Ritter; **OTHER NAMES:** "Drunkard's Hiccups/Hiccoughs;" "Jack of Diamonds;" "Way Up on Clinch Mountain," **NOTES:** The tune is from an old and distinguished family originating in the British Isles, but well-known in America. The tune features pizzicato, or plucked, notes on the fiddle. Arizona fiddler Kartchner called it a "favorite from the South." Mt. Airy, North Carolina, fiddler Tommy Jarrell knew the melody as a show piece in a repertoire heavy with dance tunes, having learned it from his father, Ben Jarrell (who recorded it with Frank Jenkins in 1927). Ben Jarrell, according to Tommy, had the tune from "old man" Houston Galyen at Low Gap, North Carolina. Bayard (1981) states it was a vocal piece before it was an instrumental one.

Rye Whis - key, Rye Whis - key, Rye Whis - key, I cry - If I  
don't get Rye Whis - key I sure - ly will die.

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**E**  
Rye whiskey, Rye whiskey, Rye whiskey I cry,

**B7 E**  
If I don't get rye whiskey I surely will die.

I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink when I'm dry;  
If the hard times don't kill me I'll live till I die.

Beefsteak when I'm hungry, red liquor when I'm dry,  
Greenbacks when I'm hard up and religion when I die.

Oh Whiskey, you villian, you've been by downfall;  
You've kicked me, you've cuffed me, but I love you for all.

If the ocean was whiskey and I was a duck,  
I'd dive to the bottom and get one sweet suck.

But the ocean ain't whiskey and I ain't a duck,  
So we'll round up the cattle and then we'll get drunk.