



KelticDead Music

Stories, Tunes and Songs in the Traditions of our Celtic Dead

To the Four Ayrtys to Guide Us, and
For the Four Winds to Get Us There!

The mission of the **KelticDead Music** initiative is to find tunes and songs from around the world that have Celtic, Folk, World, Americana, and Seafaring origins, and arrange them into simple sheet music formats for folk musicians to use and share. In addition, the KDM initiative provides the in-depth stories with possible lyrics for a more complete music-education experience.

*All the selections and sheet music content provided in the **KelticDead Music** initiative are from traditional, made-public, made-public with credits, or cited credits where applicable. This material content is from various internet sources and the personal interpretations of the subject is provided by **Patrick O-Shaun Young, KelticDead Music**. All graphics are either public domain or cited where applicable. Validation and verification are left up to the reader.*

Gypsy Davey

Variant of Wrangle Taggle Gypsies Oh!

The musical tale of the young lady who gave up her house, title and baby to run off with a Gypsy is believed to have been from an actual event in Scotland during the days when roving bands of Egyptians (collectively called “Gypsies”) were being outlawed by King James and others. The tale was collected by Francis J. Child in his books, known as “Child Ballads.”



Francis J. Child [1825 – 1896] (Child Ballads) collected a wide variety of folktales and stories from the Celtic cultures.

“Gypsie Laddie” [Child. Versions 200A-200L] came out of Scotland (out of the Ayrshire area), and these versions recounted a tale about a lady of a wealthy lord who abandoned her husband and her rights (... and in some versions, her life) to run away with a Johnny Faa {“fay”} or a Jockie Fay of a band of Gypsies. It is a very lively tune, though the conclusion for this lady’s wild foray with the gypsies did not end well, and provides us with a healthy reminder to keep one’s emotions in check.

The Gypsie Laddie ballad was adapted into a folk song called “Wrangle Taggle Gypsies, Oh!” and was very popular in the Celtic communities in the early 20th Century. There were many versions of the ballad and song, and the late Doc Watson arranged the ballad as “Gypsy Davey,” which became very popular in the 1970s in the bluegrass genre.

Gypsies in the 16th and 17th Century Scotland

Gypsies were expelled from Scotland in 1541 and then in 1609. If one was found to be an “Egyptian” (Gypsy) in Scotland in those times, the “offense” was considered to be far worse than being convicted as a “freebooter” (highwayman or thief), and usually meant a quick execution. Not all gypsies left Scotland however, and some returned during those years using other titles and names to disguise their identities.

Gypsy Davey

“Jockie Faa and Johnny Faa” were names associated with gypsies. This title came from a gypsy named Jolinne Faw [“faa”], just before the proclamation of expulsion. Jolinne Faw was supported in a dispute by James V of Scotland, and the Privy Seal of the letter addressed to this Gypsy was titled “Jolinne Faw, Lord and Erle of Little Egypt,” dated February 15, 1540. From that time, the term, “Johnny Faa” becomes a name that denoted one as being a leader of a group of gypsies (travelers or migrant workers) in those times.

The broader picture of the problem with “Gypsies” related to the influence of the Ottoman-Moroccan “Slavers” of which Scotland and other European countries still had to suppress going into the 19th Century. The Muslim slave traders and intrusions captured many Christians to be sold in the Morocco Slave markets before and after the 16th Century. There is some confusion and contention between Ireland’s “Travelers” and the “Gypsies.” The two are very separate entities.

Why was there such hatred of the “Gypsies” In Great Britain?

The Barbary corsairs (or pirates) were Muslim privateers operating from the Barbary States of North Africa—modern-day Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya—from the 16th century until the 19th century. Unlike independent Caribbean pirates, these corsairs were largely state-sanctioned, acting as the naval arm of the Barbary States to seize merchant ships, plunder cargo, and capture people for ransom or slavery.



President Thomas Jefferson of the United States first refused to pay the tribute to the Barbary Pirates which started **The First Barbary War** (1801–1805). The Battle Hymn of the United States Marine Corps has a reference to this war as “... to the shores of Tripoli.” When France secured control of Algeria in 1830, it began to dismantle the control that the Barbary Pirates had in Morocco. The same Muslim-Islamic ideology concerning slavery of Christians and Jews continues today.



The Barbary Pirates were based out of Morocco in northern Africa and terrorized most of the Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, and even raided coastal towns as far north as Iceland, Ireland, and England.

Captured Europeans were sold into the Arab slave markets or held for ransom. Nations often paid tribute (protection money) to prevent attacks. Even the United States initially followed the practice under Washington and Adams.



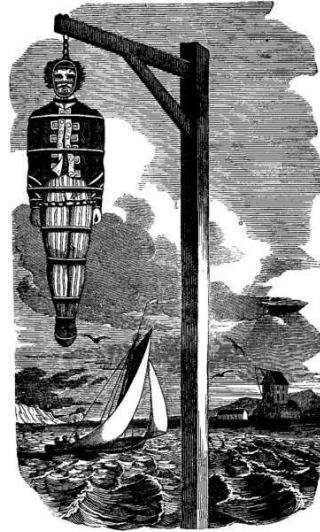
Heimaey, Iceland. Slaves rounded up by the Barbary Corsairs on July 16th 1627.

Gypsy Davey

As the Folk Music Tale was Told Over Time.

It wasn't until 1788 that this ballad became associated with John, the sixth Earl of Cassilis and his first wife, Lady Jean Hamilton. It is now generally accepted that the attachment of the folk ballad with the Earl of Cassilis and his first wife was, in fact, pure fiction and non-malicious slander. The association of this ballad with a real figure in history was probably brought about by a corruption of one part of the ballad, where certain folk singers swapped out the expression "... our lord castle's yett" with "... Lord Cassilis."

As folk tale historians believe, when the husband caught up with the gypsies, he promptly executed all fifteen of them. The condemned men were hung from "dule (dooley) trees or gallows, and then tied up in a "gibbet" to be left hanging for show to all who passed.



Dule Tree and a Gibbet were frequently used to hang criminals, such as in the Hanging of William the Kid in the etching shown.

Women were executed differently. A hole was dug into the ground, filled with water, and the condemned female was held in the water pit, until she drowned. In some versions of the tale, the lord's lady was convicted, but she was pardoned, and spent her remaining days in a prison.

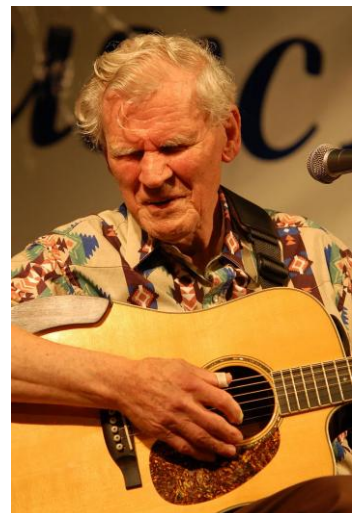
However. A prison term in the 16th century was probably a more gruesome fate than a quick death.



Old Post Card Picture of the Maybole Caste in Aryshire, Scotland which was a prison.

Doc Watson (born Arthel Lane Watson, 1923–2012) was a revered American bluegrass and folk musician from North Carolina, celebrated for transforming the acoustic guitar from a rhythm instrument into a lead solo instrument. Blind since infancy, Watson pioneered a virtuosic flat-picking style that allowed him to play rapid-fire fiddle tunes, influencing generations of guitarists in bluegrass, country, and rock.

Doc Watson blended traditional Appalachian string music with bluegrass, country, blues, and gospel, featuring a smooth baritone voice and masterful technique on guitar, banjo, and harmonica.



Gypsy Davey



“Doc’s” milestones included gaining national prominence during the 1960s folk revival, notably at the 1963 Newport Folk Festival, and released over 50 albums throughout his career. In addition, he won seven Grammy Awards and received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004, as well as the National Medal of the Arts in 1997.

His innovative approach established the guitar as a primary melodic voice in American roots music, with artists like Clarence White and Tony Rice citing him as a major influence.

As mentioned, Doc Watson adapted the “Gypsy Laddie” ballad into a variant with characteristic guitar picking style that became very popular in the bluegrass genre. The differences in the retelling is that “the Lord of the House” did NOT kill Gypsy Davey, nor did he convict his wife for her decision to stay with Gypsey Davey.

Neither the Child ballad or the version made by Doc Watson made mention of the wife being placed in a prison. However, her decision of hooking up with an “Egyptian,” proved to have dire consequences.

Gypsy Davey

Adapted from Doc Watson's variant of "Wraggle Taggle Gypsies, Oh!" ...

The Gypsy Davey came a-ridin' along, singin' so loud and gaily.
An old guitar and a lusty song, he charmed the heart of a lady,
' charmed the heart of a lady.

How old are you my pretty little miss? How old are you lady?
Come next week, I'll be sixteen with a husband and a baby.
' husband and a baby.

Would you leave your house and land, your husband and your baby?
Would you leave them all behind to go with Gypsy Davey?
" go with Gypsy Davey.

She dressed in silks and rings of gold: her shoes were Spanish leather.
Then she got on a pony fine, and they rode off to-gether.
' they rode off to-gether.

When the man of the house came home, he asked to see his lady.
The only answer that he got: "She's gone with Gypsy Davey.
' gone with Gypsy Davey."

Instrumental

He called for his boots, called for his hat: his pistol, and his saddle.
Then he sprang on his very best horse, and after them he did travel.
After them he did travel.

When he saw the Gypsy men his wrath was hotly kindled.
But, he thought of his lady's love; his anger slowly dwindled.
' anger slowly dwindled.

"Would you leave your house and land, your love and your baby?
Would you leave us all behind and go with Gypsy Davey?
' ride with Gypsy Davey?"

"I care not for your house and land, and you can have my baby.
Yes, I'll leave you all behind and go with Gypsy Davey.
I love the Gypsy Davey."

When the silks and the gold were gone Davey would not tarry.
He said you're not a Gypsy girl. To you I cannot marry.
You I cannot marry.

A beggar now she's dressed in rags; her heart is still a lady.
At night she cries herself to sleep and thinks of her little baby.
True love and her baby.

Gypsy Davey

Arrangement by KelticDead Music

Traditional - Based upon "Wraggle Taggle Gypsies, Oh"
Derived from a Doc Watson's Lyric Adaptation



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apX86-tr8Pw>

In most versions, the sheet music is written in D Major, but to add the quality of depth with a “lively-somber” sound I arranged the sheet music in Bb Major. I play the simple tune with a low-octave bouzouki, keyed in FCGC. For this reason, I use a Bb tuned, six-hole whistle. The stringed instrument can be played with C whistle as well.



Shaun Young

Shaun Young arranged the sheet music, and adjusted the lyrics of the song to play with it. He uses an Irish-Tuned, Low Octave Bouzouki to set the rhythm and beat, a Generation (Tweaked) Bb whistle, a bodhran, as well as voice parts.



Earnie Taft

Earnie Taft featured 2 Fiddle tracks

Alan Beck provided an accordion background sound which provides great drone chord sounds that really enhances the mood of the selection.

For this and other “KDM Story Broadside” visit
<https://kelticdeadmusic.org/story-broadside/>

For Bios of the KDM Volunteers visit
<https://kelticdeadmusic.org/Friends/>



Alan Beck

KelticDead Music Initiative

is a private, on-line music-education initiative. All the music projects are recorded with live, acoustic instruments and performed in accordance with simplified sheet music arranged in eight bar formats (whenever possible) in accordance with the guidelines that are within the Celtic music traditions. For more music videos and stories visit ...

<https://KelticDeadMusic.org>