

Yankee Doodle

Traditional

C G7 C G7
Yankee Doodle went to town a'riding on a pony
C F G7 C
Stuck a feather in his hat and called it macaroni.

F C
Yankee Doodle, keep it up. Yankee Doodle dandy.
F C G7 C
Mind the music and the step and with the girls be handy!

Did ever a song make less sense than Yankee Doodle? Well, here is the unofficial history of Yankee Doodle: Doodle comes from the German dödel, which is a simpleton. The Macaroni's were a male fad in London for ridiculously outlandish dress and hair (a "dandy"), including a "macaroni wig". So, the song basically says: Stupid Yankee went to town, stuck a feather in his head, and thought he was stylish.

Why on earth would that be a patriotic song? The lyrics were made up by the British and sung to the tune of a nursery rhyme to make fun of the backwards colonists during the French-Indian war. After the Battle of Lexington and Concord during the Revolutionary War, the patriots made the British soldiers dance endlessly to the song as punishment. When that was reported in Boston, the Americans adopted the formerly mocking song as their own.

I V7 I V7
Yankee Doodle went to town a'riding on a pony
I IV V7 I
Stuck a feather in his hat and called it macaroni.

IV I
Yankee Doodle, keep it up. Yankee Doodle dandy.
IV I V7 I
Mind the music and the step and with the girls be handy!

Simple songs are great for learning new things. The second version of Yankee Doodle is written using numbered chords. Learning a song with numbered instead of lettered chords makes is much easier to transpose. It also makes it much easier to recognize when songs in different keys actually have the exact same chord pattern and helps you recognize that these same patterns occur over and over again!

Father and I went down to camp,
Along with Captain Gooding;
And there we saw the men and boys,
As thick as hasty pudding.

There was Captain Washington
Upon a slapping stallion,
A-giving orders to his men,
I guess there was a million.

And then the feathers on his hat,
They looked so' tarnal fin-a,
I wanted pockily to get
To give to my Jemima.

And then we saw a swamping gun,
Large as a log of maple;
Upon a deuced little cart,
A load for father's cattle.

And every time they shoot it off,
It takes a horn of powder;
It makes a noise like father's gun,
Only a nation louder.

I went as nigh to one myself,
As' Siah's underpinning;
And father went as nigh agin,
I thought the deuce was in him.

We saw a little barrel, too,
The heads were made of leather;
They knocked upon it with little clubs,
And called the folks together.

And there they'd fife away like fun,
And play on cornstalk fiddles,
And some had ribbons red as blood,
All bound around their middles.

The troopers, too, would gallop up
And fire right in our faces;
It scared me almost to death
To see them run such races.

Uncle Sam came there to change
Some pancakes and some onions,
For' lasses cake to carry home
To give his wife and young ones.

But I can't tell half I see
They kept up such a smother;
So I took my hat off, made a bow,
And scampered home to mother.

Cousin Simon grew so bold,
I thought he would have cocked it;
It scared me so I streaked it off,
And hung by father's pocket.