

Tradition has it that Yankee Doodle had its origins in the French and Indian War when New England troops joined Braddock's forces at Niagara. In contrast to the spit and polish of the British army, the colonials were a motley crew, some wearing buckskins and furs. Dr. Richard Schuckburg, a British Army surgeon reportedly wrote the tune ridiculing the Americans in the early 1750s. Some scholars believe it is a variant of the nursery rhyme *Lucy Locket*.

Despite the fact it began as ridicule, the colonials took the song for their own. Countless versions and parodies evolved, many of which made fun of their officers, including George Washington. These verses are included at the end of the tune. When Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown it is said while the British played *The World Turned Upside Down*, the Americans played Yankee Doodle.

There are said to be as many as 190 verses of Yankee Doodle.

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

Chorus

*Yankee doodle, keep it up
Yankee doodle dandy
Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be handy.*

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

Chorus

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

Chorus

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

Chorus

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.

Chorus

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.

Chorus

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.

Chorus

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

Chorus

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.

Chorus

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.

Chorus

And there I saw a pumpkin shell
As big as mother's basin
And every time they touched it off
They scampered like the nation.

And there was Captain Washington,
With gentlefolks about him,
They say he's gown so 'tarnal proud
He will not ride without them.

Chorus

There came Gen'ral Washington
Upon a snow-white charger
He looked as big as all outdoors
And thought that he was larger.

Chorus

Why Did Yankee Doodle Stick a Feather In His Hat and Call it Macaroni?

Back in Pre-Revolutionary America when the song "Yankee Doodle" was first popular, the singer was not referring to the pasta "macaroni" in the line that reads "stuck a feather in his hat and called it macaroni". "Macaroni" was a fancy ("dandy") style of Italian dress widely imitated in England at the time. So by just sticking a feather in his cap and calling himself a "Macaroni" (a "dandy"), Yankee Doodle was proudly proclaiming himself to be a country bumpkin, because that was how the English regarded most colonials at that time. But times have long since changed, and it is important to reflect on the fact that despite the turbulent early relationship between England and the American colonists, our two countries are strongly united.

Yankee Doodle went to town
A-riding on a pony
Stuck a feather in his hat
And called it macaroni.

Yankee Doodle, keep it up
Yankee Doodle dandy

Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be handy.

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

Yankee Doodle, keep it up
Yankee Doodle dandy
Mind the music and the step
And with the girls be handy

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

Yankee Doodle, keep it up
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Chorus