

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Chicken

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In a little country school house where the children used to go,
There went a little red-haired boy by the name of Ragtime Joe.
One day the teacher called on the class to spell a certain kind of bird,
The kind of bird it was a chicken, and they could not spell that word.

So the teacher called on Ragtime Joe to spell that word for them,
He did not hesitate a bit, this is the way he began:

C - that's the way to begin
H - that's the next letter in
I - that is the third
C - time to season up the bird
K - I'm fitting in
E - getting near the end
C-H-I-C-K-E-N
That is the way to spell chicken.

Parson Johnson gave a concert in the old school house one night,
He hired a lot of fellers that could sing and could recite;
When they pulled the curtain, everything went wrong
Until - the children loudly called, "Let's hear from Ragtime Joe."

He sang a ragtime jukin' tune, but it did not go so well,
He said, "I went 'cross on that, so I guess I'll have to spell,"
Then he told the audience he had composed this chicken song
And when he sang these words to them, he took the house by storm.

[Chorus]

Jeff Davis heard the song from his brother Hardin, who learned it from the "early 20th-century" country music performer "Uncle Dave" Macon. Kathy Kallick combined versions learned from the McGee Brothers, Red Clay Ramblers, and Jody Stecher.

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OCT99