

# Traditional & Folk Songs with lyrics & midi music

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## Alley Croaker [Alicia Crocker]

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There liv'd a man in Ballinocrazy,  
He wanted a wife to make him uneasy;  
Long had he sighed for his dear Alley Croaker,  
And thus the gentle youth bespoke her,  
    Will you marry me, dear Alley Croaker?  
    Will you marry me, dear Alley Croaker?

This artless young man, just come from the schoolery,  
A novice in love and all its foolery;  
Too dull for a wit, - too grave for a joker,  
And thus the gentle youth bespoke her -  
    Will you marry me, &c.

He drank with the father, he talked with the mother,  
He romp'd with the sister, he gam'd, with the brother;  
He gam'd till he pawn'd his coat to the broker,  
Which lost him the heart of his Alley Croaker.  
    Oh! the fickle &c.

To all young men who are fond of gaming.  
Who are spending their money while others are saving,  
Fortune's a jilt, the devil may choke her,  
A jilt more inconstant than Alley Croaker.  
    Oh! the inconstant &c.

Larry Grogan was an Irish piper of the first half of the 18th century, traditionally credited with composition of "Ally Croker" about 1725. The tune for this is familiar as that for William Collins' "Golden Days of Good Queen Bess," George Colman's "Unfortunate Miss Bailey," and Samuel Woodward's "The Hunters of Kentucky." T. Crofton Croker in <<Popular Songs of Ireland>>, 1839, related a traditional story about the composition of the tune for "Ally Croaker," about 1725. The song of that title was said to be written on rejection of his suit by a jilt, Alicia Croker. I had doubts about this story until I found that there is a single sheet copy of the song with music of about 1730, with Alicia Croker's last name spelled correctly. Unfortunately I have not seen a copy of this issue, which commences "There in Ballenocrazy". Other copies of the song and tune, of which

there are many, stem from 1753, when it appeared as "Ally Croaker" in S. Foote's <<The Englishman in Paris>>. The tune under the "Ally Croaker" title appeared with and without the song in several publications over the next few years. A copy of the song "Ally Croaker" in <<The Universal Magazine>>, London, 1753, was termed "A New Song". This did not fool everyone. In G. A. Stevens' <<Songs, Comic and Satirical>>, 1772, is a song with tune direction "Ally Croker", not "Croaker".

Wm. Chappell in <<Popular Music of the Olden Time>>, p. 713, unaware of the early single sheet issues of "Ally Croker" assumed the song "Ally Croaker" originated in Foote's play. He stated that the tune appeared in <<Love in a Riddle>>, 1729, as the tune for a song "No more, fair Virgins boast your power". The tune in <<Love in a Riddle>> seems to me to be only vaguely similar to "Ally Croker". Much more familiar, but still a poor version of the tune, is an untitled set in "Golden Days of Good Queen Bess". With music it is in <<The British Musical Miscellany>>, p. 42, Edinburgh, 1805. As with George Colman, Irish tunes were favorites with Collins and several, including some now unknown, are cited for songs in his <<The New Vocal Miscellany>>, 1787. [Unknown, at least to me, are "Pegeine O'Leary", "Pearl of Wicklow" and "Mortough Delany and Jenny O'Danelly"]A song, "The Irish Proker", Sung by Mr. Dignum, <<The Charms of Cheerfulness, or Merry Songster's Companion>>, p. 145, 1789. - "About 20 years ago Ally Croaker made a great noise"

tunes: ALYCRK2, Britons strike Home

ALYCRK3, Riley's Flute Melodies

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