

Arkansas Traveler

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Oh once upon a time in Arkansas
An old man sat in his little cabin door,
And fiddled at a tune that he liked to hear,
A jolly old tune that he played by ear.

It was raining hard but the fiddler didn't care
He sawed away at the popular air,
Though his roof tree leaked like a water fall
That didn't seem to bother than man at all

A traveler was riding by that day,
And stopped to hear him a-practicing away
The cabin was afloat and his feet were wet,
But still the old man didn't seem to fret.

So the stranger said: "Now the way it seems to me,
You'd better mend your roof," said he.
But the old man said, as he played away:
"I couldn't mend it now, it's a rainy day."

The traveler replied: "That's all quite true,
But this, I think, is the thing for you to do;
Get busy on a day that is fair and bright,
Then pitch the old roof till it's good and tight."

But the old man kept on a-playing at his reel,
And tapped the ground with his leathery heel:
"Get along," said he, "for you give me a pain;
My cabin never leaks when it doesn't rain."

The play "The Arkansas Traveler" was a favorite attraction in Salem, Ohio, in the 1850's. It tells of a travel's experience with an Arkansas squatter whom he finds sitting in his cabin playing away at a tune which he has heard for the first time on a trip to New Orleans. The entire play revolves around this tune

and the squatter's effort to remember the ending of it.

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