

MISS MCLEOD'S REEL

MacLeod's Reel/Hop High Ladies (the Cake's All Dough)/Did You Ever See the Devil Uncle Joe



It is believed that Miss McLeod's Reel/MacLeod's Reel is originally from Scotland and was first printed in Nathaniel Gow's **Fifth Collection of Strathspey Reels** (1809).¹ By 1826, the tune was printed in America in the **New and Compleat Preceptor for the Fife** by William Williams (Utica, NY).² Miss McLeod's Reel also appears in Elias Howe's **Musician's Omnibus No.1** (Boston, 1862, p 44) with contradance steps:³

First couple down the centre
turn half round back (lady on gent's side, gent on lady's side)
cast off
ladies chain
promenade 4
forward and back
cross over to place

It is not clear when Did You Ever See the Devil Uncle Joe/Hop High Ladies (the Cake's All Dough)⁴ started to become popular. The lyrics that I learned from my southern parents in the 1990s and from my southern fellow fiddlers in the 2000s are below but there are many (many) other lyrics as would be expected from such a ubiquitous tune:

Verse: *Did you ever see the devil, Uncle Joe, Uncle Joe* (3x)
Don't mind the weather when the wind don't blow

Chorus: *Hop high ladies, three in a row* (x3) or *Hop high ladies for the cake's all dough* (x3)
Don't mind the weather when the wind don't blow

Did you ever go to meetin',⁵ Uncle Joe, Uncle Joe (3x)
Don't mind the weather when the wind don't blow

How'd ya like the weather, Uncle Joe, Uncle Joe (3x)
Don't mind the weather when the wind don't blow

—Kitty Steetle

¹[https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Miss_McLeod's_Reel_\(1\)](https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Miss_McLeod's_Reel_(1)) Nathaniel Gow (1763–1831) was a musician, composer, music publisher, and son of the (arguably more famous) Niel Gow. I could not find the **Fifth Collection of Strathspey Reels**, but many other Gow collections are located here: https://imslp.org/wiki/Category:Gow,_Nathaniel/Collections

²*Loc. cit.* I found this publication mentioned numerous times on various websites but could not find a facsimile online.

³All 7 volumes can be found here: [https://imslp.org/wiki/Musician's_Omnibus_\(Howe,_Elias\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Musician's_Omnibus_(Howe,_Elias))

⁴Or the many other titles: Billy Boy, Enterprise and Boxer, Enterprising Boxer, Gigue américaine, The Girl with the Handsome Face, Green Mountain, Knickerbocker Reel, etc.

⁵*Meetin'* is short for camp meeting, which is a Protestant Christian service dating from the Second Great Awakening in the early 19th century. These were originally held outside in campgrounds because of the large turnouts and lack of large buildings on the American Frontier. You can still attend camp meetings in the southeast (and other US regions) but now they are held in large, air-conditioned buildings.