

YANKEE DOODLE

A SONG OF THE REVOLUTION



Origins

British troops were the first ones to sing these words, in order to mock the colonists. The lyrics call the Patriots a lot of unpleasant things. But the Patriots started singing it every time they won a battle, and the British soon grew to hate the song.

Eventually, it became a war song for the Patriots, and even now Americans learn and sing it.

Original Text

Yankee Doodle went to town

Riding on a pony

Stuck a feather in his cap

And called it macaroni

Notes

Yankee – the word origin is unknown. It may have started as the nickname “little Jan” from the Dutch. It may be an Indian mispronunciation of “English” as “Yengees”

Doodle – a country hick

Macaroni – dressing in the fanciest and most exclusive fashions

Original Text

Yankee Doodle, keep it up

Yankee Doodle dandy

Mind the music and the step

And with the girls be handy

Notes

Dandy – a person who is all about appearance, and not very manly

The meaning of the last two lines is a little unclear. Making fun of colonists' dancing skills? Telling them they aren't very good with women? Or maybe the words were changed with the colonists started singing it back...