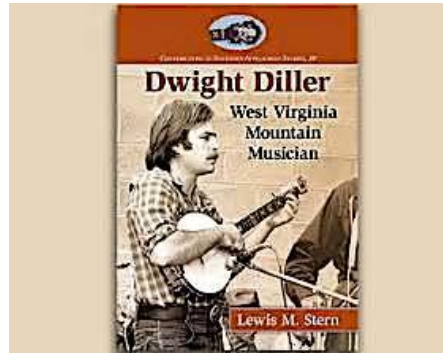


# TUNE OF THE WEEK – 9/23/16

## PRETTY LITTLE DOG

Sometimes it's a friend, a jam, a workshop, a concert, or a CD/DVD that gets you motivated to learn a new tune. In this case it was after reading Lew Stern's new book Dwight Diller, West Virginia Musician that I got inspired to further seek out this region's music. *Pretty Little Cat* had its turn as TOTW, so now here is *Pretty Little Dog*. I found it on an album called **Old Drake** featuring Dwight and Jimmy Triplett, coincidentally not related to Lee Triplett -- the tune's author.



Many West Virginia tunes are in sawmill tuning, as is *Pretty Little Dog* (gDGCD, capoed or re-tuned up two frets). I never tire of hearing them and learning a new one is a great treat. They sound good in medleys, such as with *Old Drake*, *Ducks on the Millpond*, or *Yew Pine Mountain*. The melody of *Pretty Little Dog* reminds me of the family of tunes including *Clinch Mountain Backstep*.

Lee Triplett (from: <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/print/Asset/9371> )

Lee is recognized with these words in the WV encyclopedia site: "Clay County has always been proud of its mountain music. Many of its old-time musicians have distinguished themselves at state and national festivals. [French Carpenter](#), [Doc White](#), Ira Mullins, Lee Triplett, Wilson Douglas, and [Jenes Cottrell](#) were all well known in their time as traditional mountain musicians....One of the most intensive and competitive fiddle contests in our state has always been at the Glenville festival, even though the only prize is a blue ribbon. Clay County's Lee Triplett and Ira Mullins carried on a lifetime rivalry at Glenville, to the delight of the festival audience."

It's been a bit hard to get much information about Lee Triplett and perhaps some readers here can help. You can hear him recorded on the [Digital Library of American recordings](#). From Dwight I heard a story about the tune and a bit more. It goes that as Lee was having difficulty learning a tune from another fiddler, he composed *Pretty Little Dog*. Dwight says, "Doc White, from the same Clay County community, played *Pretty Little Shoes*. Lee said, 'I could never get it right so I made up *Pretty Little Dog* and *Pretty Little Cat*'....Lee Triplett was about 70 years old back in '72/'73...He never drove a vehicle. Said, 'I can drive a blind horse (under reins) through the woods, but I never drove a car.'" Lee befriended Dwight, and was certainly one of his mentors.

In the 1973 recording below you can hear Lee state he "made two tunes in one day." From Dwight we know the other tune was *Pretty Little Cat*, and so I think Doc White had a little dog and a little cat that inspired the titles. Here are both tunes:

[Lee Triplett's Little Dog](#)

[Lee Triplett's Little Cat](#) (This was TOTW on April 11, 2014. Lee wasn't mentioned, yet now we know he indeed wrote *Pretty Little Cat*, though it was played by and credited to Wilson Douglas. Wilson's recording was done in the 1990's. Lee's was in 1971 and you can hear him say at the beginning, "Let's play *Doc White's Little Cat*.")

Here are just some of the good versions on Banjo Hangout which demonstrate the variety of styles expressed in *Pretty Little Dog*:

[Bob Blaham](#)

[Chip Arnold](#)

[SCclawman](#)

[Hobogal](#)

[Yigal Zan and Brian Duncan duet](#) (Yigal on fiddle)

[Cathy Cress](#)

[Guy Wolf](#)

Other great samples:

[Dwight Diller and David Nemec](#), track 14

[Fuzzy Mountain String Band](#), track 15

[Annie and Mac](#)

[Hilarie Burhans tutorial](#)

Here is musical notation as printed in The Session website:

<https://thesession.org/tunes/1944/1944?print=true>

[MP3 link to my site](#) and [Tabs on my site](#)

My take on *Pretty Little Dog* comes from Lee Triplett and from Hilarie Burhans' video tutorial. I play it like Lee with an AB pattern. Hope you've enjoyed these many examples and give it a try, too. If you have a pretty little dog photo I'd sure enjoy seeing it!