

San Juan Pig

words & music by John Dwyer

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In June of 1859, an American settler by the name of Lyman Cutler shot a pig belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. Complicating this incident was the fact that it occurred on San Juan Island, disputed territory claimed by both Britain and the U.S. Hotheads on both sides called for war, but diplomacy and common sense fortunately prevailed. The boundary was finally settled in 1872.

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and folk-like. Chords G, C, and D7 are indicated above the notes. The lyrics are written in a cursive script below the notes.

Let me tell you of a sto-ry of a San Juan pig. It
was-n't worth much 'cause it was-n't ver-y big, But it
roo-ted in a gar-den and it near-ly caused a fray, Be-
tween the King of Eng-land and the U. S. A.

Now the pig it was Canadian, the settler was a Yank.
What the pig did to his garden was more than just a prank.
For it dug up his potatoes and it tore down his fence,
Since it wasn't just the first time Cutler's anger was immense.

When he saw the pig a-rootin', Lyman Cutler, he got sore.
He grabbed up his musket, for the pig he tore.
The pig saw him comin' and headed for the woods,
But he stopped at the edge, and Cutler shot him good.

Then Cutler felt regretful and went down to Hudson's Bay,
And told the clerk in charge for the porker he would pay.
Griffin said, "One hundred dollars, he's a prize breeding boar."
Cutler told him, "I'll pay three, and not a penny more."

Then up stepped A.G. Dallas, and said, "See here, my man,
You're already trespassing upon Canadian land.
You know it's British country from Rosario to the West,"
"Not so", said Lyman Cutler, "East of Haro is U.S."

Well, the settlers they backed Cutler with their muskets in their hands.
The British thought it wiser not to make a stand.
The stars and stripes were hoisted to celebrate the day,
And were seen by General Harney a-sailin' on the bay.

The general came ashore and he listened to their tale.
He was a man of action and to help he did not fail.
To Fort Bellingham he sent ere he sailed away again,
And down came Captain Pickett with a company of men.

Then up sailed the British with war ships one, two, three,
Which made a few too many for Pickett's company.
They had to find a way to even up the score,
So he sent to Fort Steilacoom and got five hundred more.

Well, they argued in the Senate, and in the House of Lords,
And they didn't make much progress but they used a lot of words.
So they asked the German Emperor the boundary to define,
And tell those treaty makers where to draw the line.

Now the Kaiser gave his answer in 1872,
And said that Haro Strait was where the line went through,
And they called it a war, but it wasn't very big -
And the only one got killed was a little British pig.

