

BANKS OF THE DEE

Lyrics, John Fitzgerald Tait, 1775
Tune: LANGOLEE, Traditional Irish Aire

John Fitzgerald Tait (1748-1817) was born in Edinburgh Scotland, and spent most of his adult life pursuing various business and political occupations. But he also had a life-long passion for writing poetry, modeled after his idol, Robert Burns, who was a contemporary. Tait had some modest success as a poet, but the single work for which he is remembered today is "*Banks of the Dee*".

This poem is about two lovers separated by the war the British Empire was waging against the upstart American colonists. The words were paired with the traditional Irish aire: LANGOLEE. It became hugely popular, both in England, and in the colonies. Tait wrote it in honor of a close friend who was conscripted into the British army, and tells the story of the tearful leave, which he takes from his fiancée from the woman's point of view, which takes place along the banks of the Dee.

This was originally published in 1775 in the Pennsylvania Ledger, at Philadelphia. Tait subsequently published a revised version several years later, making some changes to the lyrics based on comments he had solicited from Robert Burns.

In music and friendship,

~Tull

