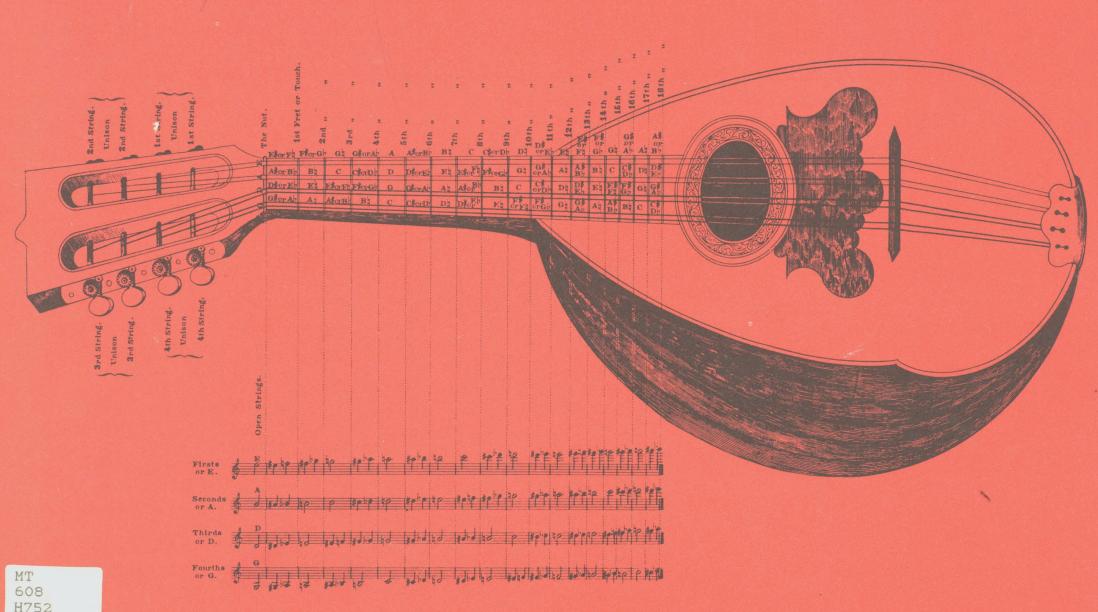
## Pandolin Instruction

Old Time, Country & Fiddle Junes Michael I. Polmes



H752 1977

MT 608 H752 1977 HOLMES MICHAEL I MANDOLIN INSTRUCTION SOUND RECORDING A1 40184748 MUSIC LP



#### FOLKWAYS RECORDS CRB 16

#### SIDE 1

#### Mandolin Solo

- 1. Tune to a "G"
- Soldier's Joy, slow
- 3. Soldier's Joy, fast 4. Saint Anne's Reel, slow
- 5. Saint Anne's Reel, fast
- 6. Cripple Creek, slow
- Cripple Creek, fast
- 8. Old Joe Clark, slow
- 9. Old Joe Clark, fast
- 10. Turkey In The Straw, slow
- 11. Turkey In The Straw, fast
- 12. Colored Aristocracy, slow
- 13. Colored Aristocracy, fast
- 14. East Virginia
- 21. Devil's Dream, fast 22. Fisher's Hornpipe, slow 23. Fisher's Hornpipe, fast

16. Arkansas Traveler, slow

17. Arkansas Traveler, fast18. The Girl I Left Behind Me, slo

19. The Girl I Left Behind Me, fas

- 24. Flop Eared Mule, slow
- 25. Flop Eared Mule, fast

20. Devil's Dream, slow

- 26. Lost Indian, slow
- 27. Lost Indian, fast
- 28. Ragtime Annie, slow
- 15. Will The Circle Be Unbroken 29. Ragtime Annie, fast

#### SIDE 2

Mike Holmes—mandolin, Reed Martin—banjo, Mike Rivers-guitar.

- Soldier's Joy (1:37)
- Saint Anne's Reel (1:49)
- 3. Cripple Creek (0:54)
- 4. Old Joe Clark (1:38)
- Colored Aristocracy (1:41)
- 6. East Virginia (0:42)
- Will The Circle Be Unbroken (0:42)
- Arkansas Traveler (1:40)
- The Girl I Left Behind Me (1:47)
- 10. Devil's Dream (1:16)
- 11. Fisher's Hornpipe (1:10)
- 12. Flop Eared Mule (1:45)
- 13. Lost Indian (1:36)
- 14. Ragtime Annie (2:21)
- 15. Turkey In The Straw-D (1:40)

Engineer, Michael J. Rivers Produced by Michael I. Holmes

Remix by Mike Rivers and Mike Holmes

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Old Sime, Country & Fiddle Sunes

ichael 1. Polmes

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS CRB 16

## Mandolin Instruction

Old Time, Country and Fiddle Tunes

Michael I. Holmes

MT 608 H752 1977

MUSIC LP

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. CRB 16 ©1977 by Folkways Records & Service Corp., 43 W. 61st St., NYC, USA



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## Mandolin Instruction

Old Time, Country and Fiddle Tunes

Michael I. Holmes

About the author:

Mike Holmes is publisher and editor of Mandolin Notebook, a magazine for all mandolin enthusiasts. Published bi-monthly, the magazine features interviews, tunes, ads, articles and instructions about the mandolin and mandolin players. He also publishes Mugwumps' Magazine, a bi-monthly specializing in folk instruments.

Mike plays mandolin, guitar, old time banjo, autoharp, and is working very hard on the fiddle. He has perfomed traditional American folk music since 1959, playing at coffee houses, festivals and concerts throughout the US; in 1974 he was invited to tour Belgium, Switzerland and England.

This book and record set are dedicated to:

Pete Seeger, whose version of Woody's Rag was the first tune I ever heard played on the mandolin;

My wife, Rebecca, who typed, proofread and listened to all the songs more often than anybody should have to;

Special thanks to Mike Rivers and Reed Martin for their fine backup work on Sides C and D; to Joe Wilson for the nudge that finally got the record done; and to Stacy and Seth for being quiet when it was very hard to be.

#### Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Gus Meade for lending me the pictures on pages
8 and 23; to Sandy Sheehan for the sheet music on page 12;
to Rich Nevins for the pictures on pages 24 and 43; and to
Jim Scancarelli for the picture on page 23. All other ads,
photos and drawings are property of the author.

About the old advertisements:

The mandolin played an important part in the social history of the US and that role is reflected in the advertisements, both for the instruments themselves and for the products they were used to promote. The date in the lower left hand corner is when these ads appeared. All the ads are old except the one on the last page.

Text by Michael I. Holmes Copyright © 1977

#### Preface

There is probably no definitive "country" style of mandolin playing. Included in this general category would be the country music of the Blue Sky Boys, the Lily Brothers, and others, and mountain fiddle tunes played on the mandolin as found on the Tommy Jackson DOT recordings.

In bluegrass music, mandolin has been used more often than in country or in folk music. This book will be about styles of mandolin playing other than bluegrass.

The information in Chapter I is the result of more than eighteen years experience trading in old musical instruments. The instruction section and the tunes are gleaned from fourteen years of mandolin playing, most of which have been in folk music and old timey music.

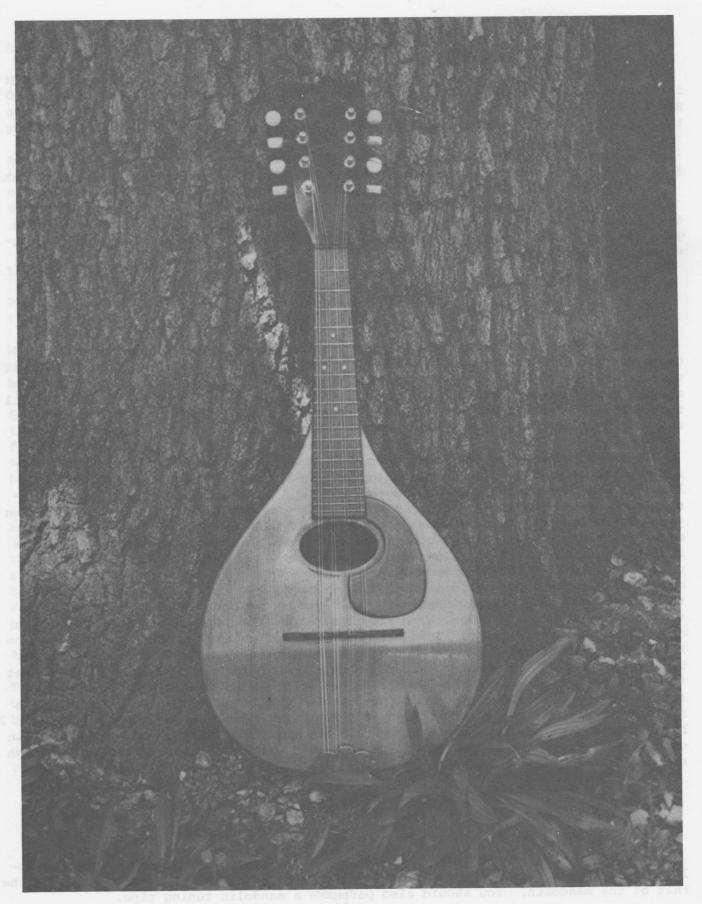
#### Introduction

I have used the text and the songs in this book to teach mandolin to my students for the last several years. The book is intended to act as your instructor if there is no one to show you how to play. However, nothing can substitute for actually hearing the way the tunes are played, and one entire record is provided to fill that need. You should use sides A and B to practice with. You should also get out and hear as many kinds of mandolin playing as possible.

It's an interesting fact that when a song is played very slowly it sounds different than it does when it is played up to speed. It's not just that it sounds like the same song slowly, it just doesn't sound like the same song. For that reason, each one of the tunes is played very slowly -- as you would probably play it when you first encounter it. Use this slow version to help you identify such things as emphasis, timing, and the many other subtle changes that distinguish mandolin playing. Immediately after the slow version is a fast one--up to tempo. Use this to practice with after you have developed a little speed and confidence. The first couple of songs are presented in skeletal versions. They are very plain. This is to help you get into playing the mandolin. A more involved version is given of these in the songbook section. The simple versions are legitimate tunes themselves and should be learned first. This will help you get going. My emphasis has been on teaching fiddle tunes; and most of the book is about playing fiddle tunes. Chapter Six, which is old time country ballads, should come quite easily by the time you get to it. When you can master the fiddle tunes, which are generally faster and more intricate than the ballads, you will not have much difficulty in playing the sample ballads and then going on to work up versions of your own. Sides C and D of record 2 have banjo and guitar accompaniment for all the tunes on Sides A and B--the mandolin on one channel and the banjo and guitar accompaniment are on another so that you can shut off the mandolin part and play along.

#### **Tuning To The Record**

The first band of Side A is a "G", the same as the fourth string on your mandolin. Tune the 4th string to the record and then turn to page 10 to help you tune the rest of the mandolin. You should also purchase a mandolin tuning pipe.



1940's Martin A Model

#### **Buying A Mandolin**

There are people in all parts of the country who make a substantial portion of their yearly income buying and selling old instruments. Their activity perpetuates the myth that anyone can buy a \$500 mandolin (or guitar or banjo) for \$10, if he will only be in the right place at the right time. As a result, beginners waste much time looking for an instrument; and when they finally find one, its condition is bad or its price is too high. If it has to be repaired, the total cost frequently exceeds what a reputable dealer would charge to begin with. I recommend buying a quality instrument from a reputable dealer, or at least buy one that has been in continual use. Unless you know a lot about mandolins, it is easy to lose a lot of money.

You should plan to spend as much as you can afford in purchasing a mandolin. The reasons for this are two-fold: One, the better the instrument, the easier it is to play and the better it sounds; and two, if you decide at a later date that you no longer want to play or that you want a better one, there is little trouble reselling the instrument; whereas with a poor quality mandolin, you may lose your entire purchase price.

There are many mandolins on the market. Among country and folk musicians, the most popular mandolins are made by the Gibson Company. They come in a number of models beginning with the A-O and going all the way through the F-5. Prices vary depending upon availability and location.

Gibson was not the only manufacturer of quality instruments, however. The Martin Company, Lyon and Healy, Weymann, and many others produced good serviceable instruments; the Harmony and Kay companies both made inexpensive mandolins. There are hundreds of Neopolitan (or round-back) mandolins available. Their construction makes them somewhat more difficult to hold in a standing position, but their price is usually one-fourth to one-third that of other mandolins. Another point to consider is that

many classical mandolinists and members of mandolin orchestras prefer the round-back instruments.

In addition to the mandolins, there are other related instruments which, although less satisfactory, would do for a beginner. It is necessary to point out however that they are somewhat harder to resell and the price paid for them should take this into consideration. Instruments included in this category are banjo-mandolin, which is a banjo head with a mandolin neck, mandolas, and mando-cellos. (If the mandolin is compared to the violin, the mandola and mando-cellos are similar to the viola and cello.)

#### BUYING A MANDOLIN - CAUTIONS

When buying an instrument, whether from a dealer or not, here are some things to watch for. Very little neck warp can be tolerated in a mandolin. A neck that is warped at all will create some noting inaccuracy; and warp that would be acceptable in a banjo or guitar, would make a mandolin unplayable. Cracks in the body, separations from the side, and cracks in the neck are all repairable, but affect the value and playability of the instrument.

Other things to be concerned about are the accuracy of the fret placement, the height of the nut and bridge, and the condition of the tuners. There is very little one can do about inaccurately placed frets; but the nut can be lowered and the bridge can be reworked or replaced, and the tuners can be removed and soaked in penetrating oil. If this does not work, replacements are available. It is a good idea to maintain the integrity of an old instrument, and some effort should be expended in restoring the old bridge and the old pegs before they are discarded for replacement.

Refinishing is seldom advisable. Good varnish finishes tend to improve with time, be-

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SOUTH'S GREATEST "OLD-TIME STRING BAND" from "Old Virginny"

coming tougher and lighter encouraging a brighter and more responsive tone. Even the best of refinishing jobs can only set back the tone development of a fine instrument. For this reason, there is seldom any justification for refinishing an old instrument, no matter how shabby the finish may appear to the eye.

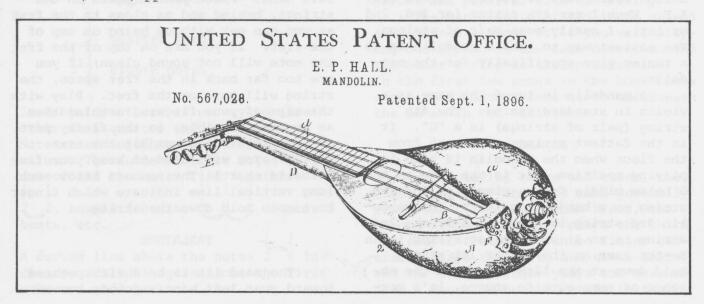
#### STRINGS AND PICKS

Considerations such as strings, pick size and stiffness, etc. are all matters of personal preference. Most string sets are medium weight. There are differences in sound among the various sets, so a little experimentation is called for. There are two sets which are not medium and have a noticeably different tension; they are Black Diamond strings (very light) and Gibson Mono-steel (very heavy). The old flat back and Neopolitan mandolins are generally too light to stand the tension of modern strings; I recommend Black Diamond for these instruments. Strings lose a lot of their tone due to moisture and constant stretching. They should be changed at least every two months--sooner if they become hard to tune or the windings show signs of wear. I like a very stiff pick, which allows for reasonable volume without digging too deeply into the strings. A pick that is too thin will cause "pick noise"--a sort of flapping, clicking sound.

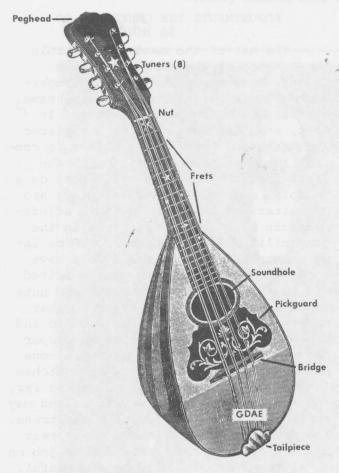
#### ADJUSTMENTS THE OWNER CAN DO

The nut of the mandolin controls the spacing of the strings and the height the strings are off the fingerboard. This height should be the same as the height of the first fret. In fact, some manufacturers have replaced the nut with a spacer and a fret to control the height of the string in the first fret. All of the tolerances on a mandolin are much closer than they are on guitar and banjo and a small adjustment can make a big difference in the playability of an instrument. Some instruments built after the 1920's have adjustable bridges which can be raised and lowered by means of screws and nuts inset into the bridge. Prior to that date most of the bridges were solid and cannot be adjusted except by sandpaper and needle files. Work carefully--one string at a time--deepening the notches in the bridge; it is easy to go too far, and the wood is hard and brittle and may shatter if subjected to too much stress. The pressures on a bridge are so great that it is unlikely that a repair job on a shattered bridge would be successful. If the bridge is broken, replace it.

1. "Finishing" by Sam Rizzetta in Mugwumps' Instrument Herald, Volume 1, No. 6 November, 1972, pp. 16 and 17.



#### Tuning, Picking & Fingering



TUNING

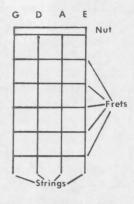
There are eight strings on the mandolin--four pairs of strings--tuned G,D, A,E. When I say 4th string (or 3rd, 2nd or lst), I really mean pair of strings. The easiest way to tune a mandolin is to a tuning pipe specifically for the mandolin.

A mandolin is tuned the same as a violin in standard tuning. The 4th string (pair of strings) is a "G". It is the fattest strings, farthest from the floor when the mandolin is held in playing position. It is the same as the G below middle C on a piano, or the 3rd string on a banjo or guitar. The mandolin 3rd string is tuned to a D; the 2nd string is an A; and the lst string is an E--the same as the guitar lst string held down at the 12th fret. In the absence of some outside source, it's pos-

sible to tune the mandolin to itself. Assume the 4th string is in tune. Hold the 4th string down at the 7th fret and tune the 3rd string to it. When the 3rd string is right, hold it down at the 7th fret and tune the 2nd string. Repeat for the 1st string. This will put the mandolin into relative tune. You will be able to practice, even though you may not be in tune with other instruments.

#### CHORD CHARTS

The chords you will need for the songs in this book are written at the beginning of each chapter. Here is how to read the chord charts.



On the chord charts, the circles indicate where to place the fingers of the left hand. Place your fingers on the strings, behind and as close to the fret as you can get without being on top of the fret. If you are on top of the fret the note will not sound clean; if you are too far back in the fret space, the string will buzz on the fret. Play with the tips of your fingers, arching them as much as possible, so the fleshy part of the finger does not hit the next string. You will need to keep your fingernails short! The numbers below each long vertical line indicate which finger to use to hold down the string.

#### TABLATURE

The mandolin is held with peghead toward your left hand and body toward

your right hand. Two confusing terms stem from the fact that the higher strings (higher in tone) are really lower on the mandolin (closer to the floor). When you hear the term "up the neck" it means away from the peghead toward the body; and when you hear the term "up" in terms of higher notes, it really means closer to the floor. That looks more confusing in writing than it is in real life. Because many traditional musicians do not know how to read conventional music notation, a system of tablature has been developed. It is read as follows: The long horizontal lines represent the strings on the mandolin (although there are two strings for each note, for simplicity there is only one line shown). The numbers written on the line indicate at which fret the left hand stops the string. The top line on the tablature represents the first string (musically highest-the thinnest string). The bottom line on the tablature therefore is the fourth (fattest) string on the mandolin. The letters above the tablature indicate the chords that would be used when accompanying the song. There are arrows to indicate pick direction for the first few songs. After that it should come naturally. The other marks, borrowed from conventional music notation, are as follows:

whole rest
half rest
quarter rest
reighth rest
quarter note
quarter note
eighth notes

A curved line above the notes 2 4 indicates a slide beginning at the first note and ending at the last.

#### THE FLATPICK

To hold the flatpick, grasp its point between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand. Lay the long portion of the top against the first joint of the first finger of the right hand so that the point of the pick extends out past the fingernail. Rotate the fingers of the right hand until they form a loose fist. Bring the pad of the first joint of the thumb over the top of the flat pick. There are other ways to hold the pick and if you prefer another, feel free to use it.

The center line of the pick should be perpendicular to the string and the pick should hit the string with its flat surface. Be careful not to rotate the pick from this position.

The wrist of the right hand should be loose; it is a mistake to lock the wrist as it will cause cramping in the forearm if you try to play with your wrist stiff. In picking the string you should use only the tip of the flatpick. By "digging too deep" you will hamper your playing, and create a lot of pick noise. For this reason I prefer a rather stiff pick which will allow you to play reasonably loud without having to strike the string too hard or dig too deep. I recommend that you experiment with different styles and stiffnesses of flatpick. To repeat, the center line of the pick is perpendicular to the string while the face of the pick is flat against and parallel with the string.

The mandolin is played in an up and down manner (almost as if you were playing one string in the down direction and the other string in the up direction). In the first few songs in the book there are pick direction indicators underneath the notes in the tablature.

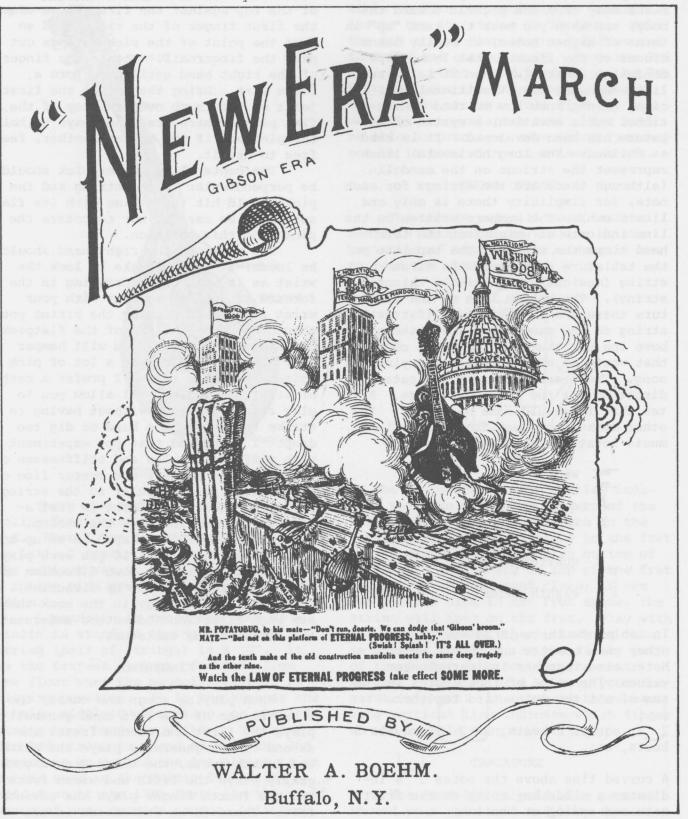
#### FINGERING

When playing songs and tunes, the first finger of the left hand generally plays the first and second frets, the second finger generally plays the third and fourth frets, the third finger generally plays the fifth and sixth frets, and the fourth finger plays the seventh fret. There is no indication in the

tablature which finger to use; you should get familiar with the finger-board of the mandolin generally playing the frets as indicated above.

The chord charts do show you which

fingers to use because some fingerings allow more natural changes from one chord to another. Feel free to adapt as necessary within your own physical limits.

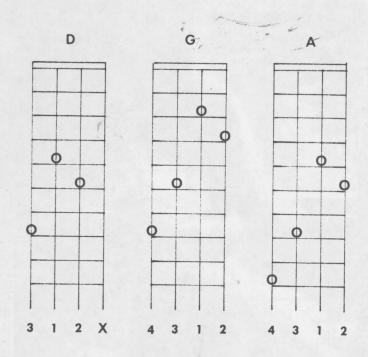


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#### CHAPTER III

KEY OF D

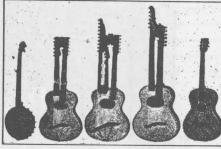
The key of D is a good one to start with. Finding the notes is fairly simple, and many fiddle tunes are in the key of D. The chords for this key are D, G, and A, and look like this:





#### DO NOT BUY

Mandolins, Guitars, Banjos or Harp-Guitars until you have investigated the merits of the TRUAX INSTRUMENTS.



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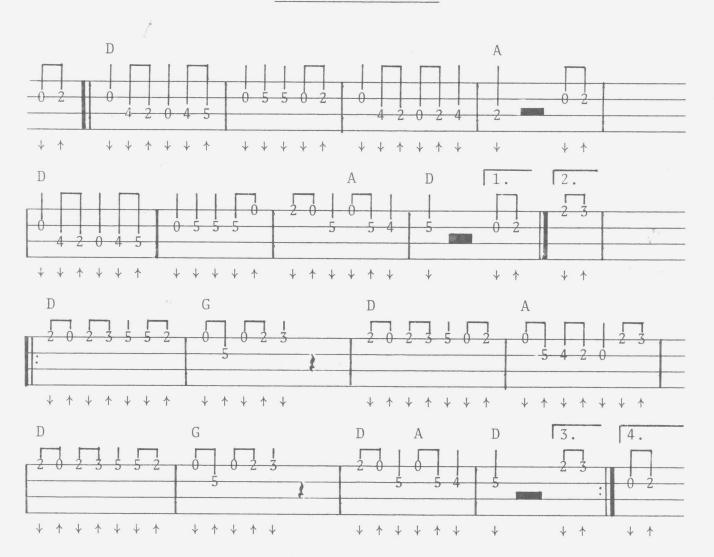
Send for Catalogue.

1904



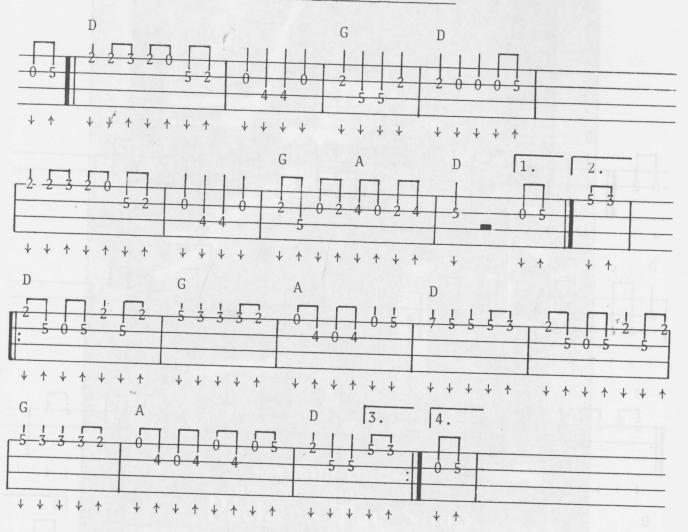
The first lesson for the key of D is a fiddle tune called "Soldier's Joy". As with some other tunes in this book, here is a simplified version to help you get the tune in your head. Practice this until you can play it well before going on to the more complicated version, to be found in the Songbook section. The secret to success in mandolin or any other instrument, is frequent practice, for relatively short periods of time. Fifteen minutes practice 3 or 4 times a day will be best. In addition, it won't hurt your fingers quite so much. "Soldier's Joy" is a good tune to use to begin to learn the mandolin; it provides practice in two important areas—syncopation and getting important notes on the upstroke. Remember to give slight additional emphasis to the upstroke, the inherently weaker direction.

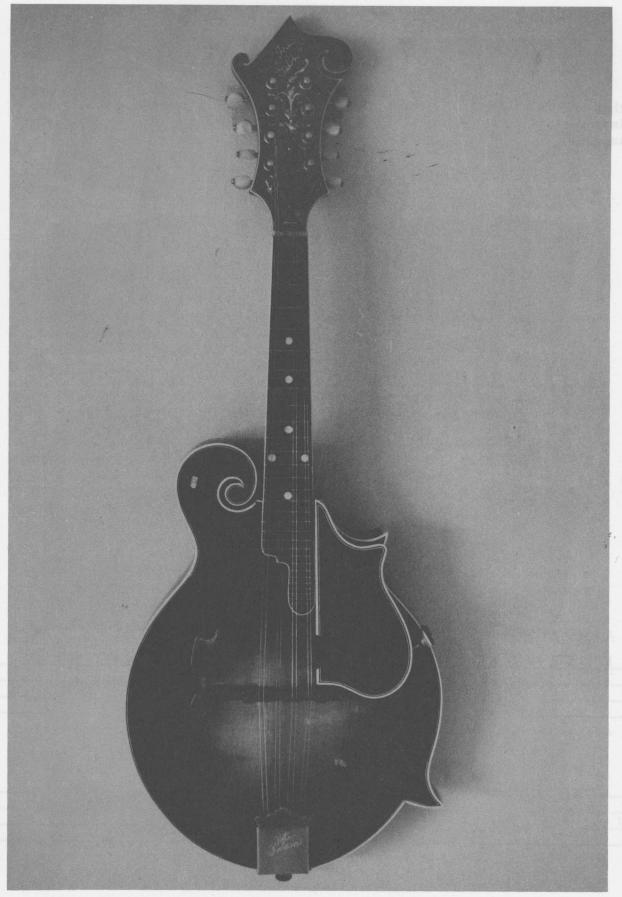
#### SOLDIER'S JOY - I



The next tume, "St. Anne's Reel", is somewhat more difficult than "Soldier's Joy". In addition to syncopation, the new difficulty is the use of the little finger of the left hand. Invariably, the little finger is the weak link and practice cannot begin too early. Remember in doing all these fiddle tumes, that people had to dance to them. The purpose, therefore, is not to get the most notes in the least time, but to play them steadily, rhythmically, and cleanly. Once again, LEARN the simpler version before trying the one in the Songbook.







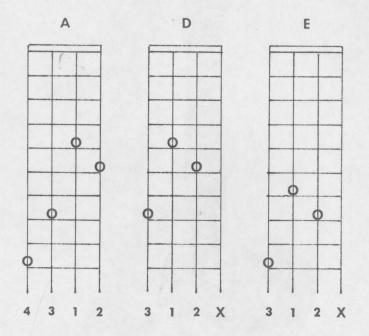
1925 Gibson F-5

#### CHAPTER IV

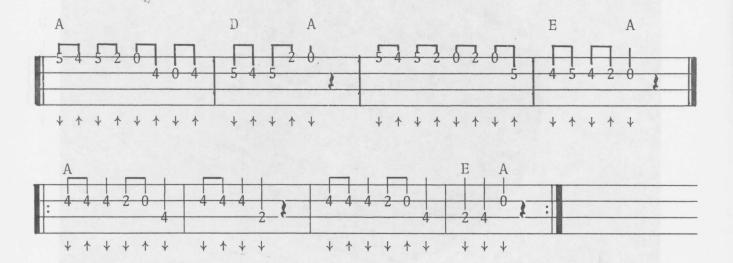
#### KEY OF A

Playing in the key of A is similar to playing in the key of D, except that you are "over one string". Many fiddle tunes are played in this key. Improvising in "A" is quite easy--it is probably the easiest key in which to improvise.

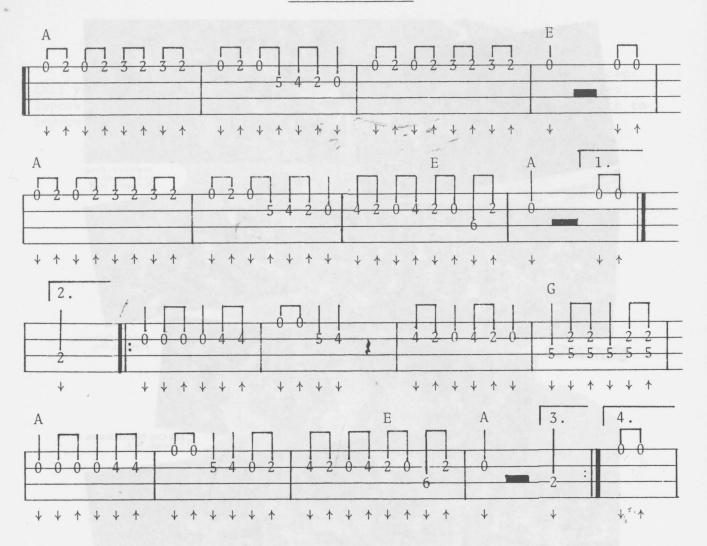
The chords for this key are A, D, and E and look like this:



#### CRIPPLE CREEK







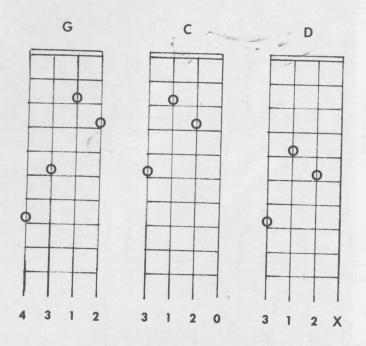
#### WM. C. STAHL'S SPECIAL High Grade Mandolins and Guitars



#### CHAPTER V

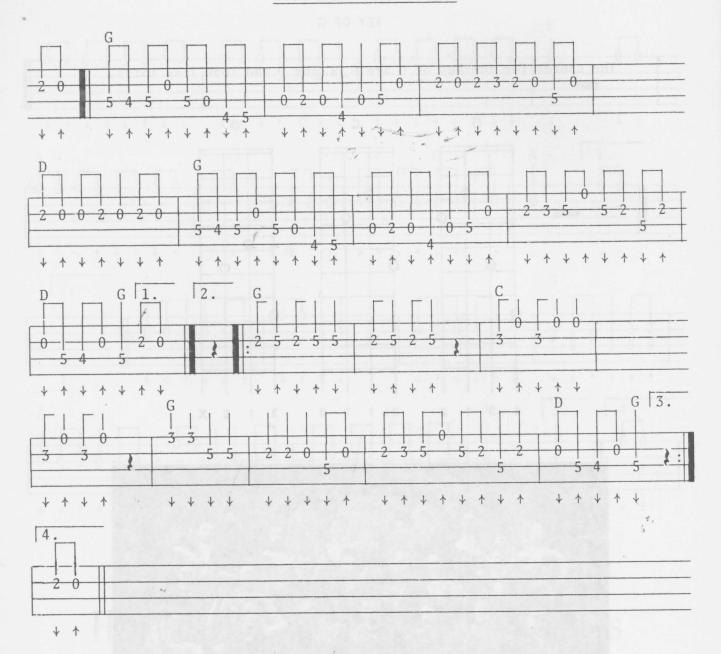
#### KEY OF G

The chords for the key of G are G, C and D and look like this:



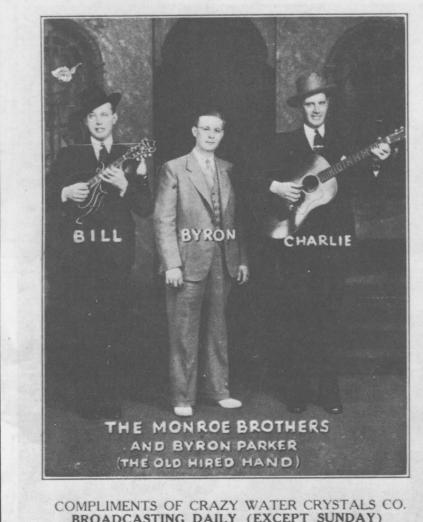


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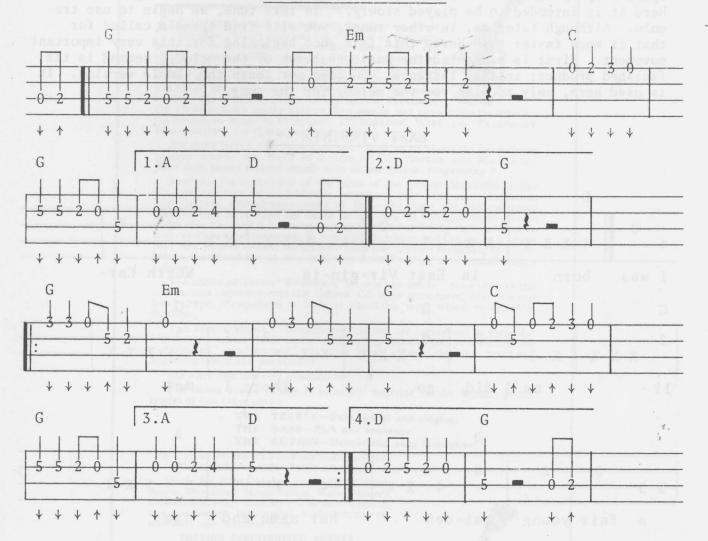
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Hoyt Ming & The Pepsteppers

The second tune, "Colored Aristocracy", has different syncopation from what you have seen earlier. Whole notes and rests must be watched carefully. Also take care with the pick direction indicators.

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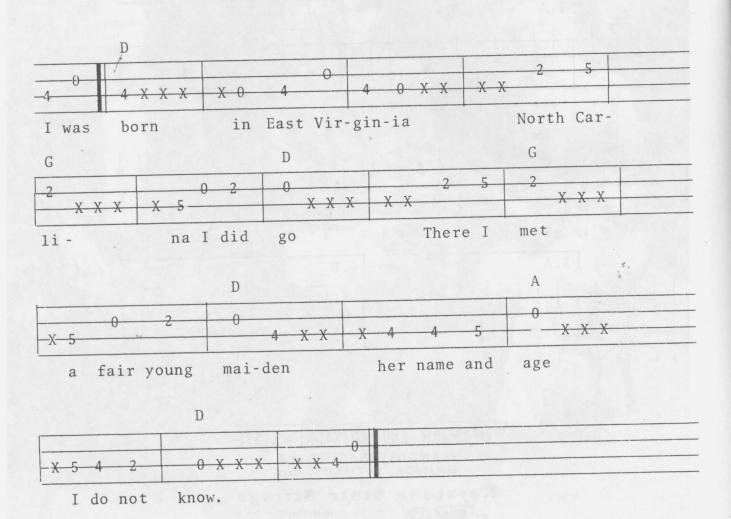
H. A. Weymann & Son, 923 Market St., Philadelphia, Pa.

1904

#### CHAPTER VI

The key of D lends itself nicely to ballad accompaniments. The harmonies allow for interesting background playing as well as melody. "East Virginia", the tune used as demonstration is a slow, pretty tune. (It has been speeded up by bluegrass musicians, who then call it the "East Virginia Blues". Here it is intended to be played slowly.) In this tune, we begin to use tremolo. Although later on, in other tunes, you will find tremolo called for that is much faster than here, this is a good beginning for this very important movement. First is presented the basic skeleton of the melody, second is the finished product; in this instance, you need not learn the simple version. It is used here, only to give you the melody for the song.

#### EAST VIRGINIA - I



I was born in East Virginia, North Carolina I did go. There I met a fair young maiden. Her name and age I do not know.

#### **EVOLUTION.**

ACCORDING to Darwin, from the Monkey—evolved the Man. While opinions are divided on this subject, we nevertheless do positively know, that the once-only-available Rushilight is now superseded by the brilliant Electric Lamp,—slow Horse Traction by the speedy Motor,—Wooden Fighting Ships by the STEEL DREADNOUGHTS,—the BALLOON by the AERO-

PLANE,—the Magic Lantern by the Moving Pictures, the Harpsichord by the Grand Pianoforte, not to mention the wonderful advances made in Wireless Telegraphy, Wireless Telephony, PHOTOGRAPHY, the GRAMOPHONE, etc., etc.,

Are these facts? Of course they are. Well, what about the instruments around which this work is written,—"The Guitar and Mandolin." Have these passed through decade after decade without progressing.?

LISTEN.—Up to the time of the birth of the Gibson Mandolin-Guitar Listen.—Up to the time of the birth of the Gibson Mandolin-Guitar Co., manufacturers the world over, turned out year after year, Mandolins and Guitars, embodying—more or less—the same old unsatisfactory features that have been the cause of the lack of recognition in certain musical circles, and it has remained for the Gibson Co. by their exhaustive and ceaseless experimenting, to raise the Mandolin and Guitar to a plane that now secures instant recognition from the cultured musician, to whom before the Mandolin at any rate, was considered a "toy"—musically a before, the Mandolin at any rate, was considered a "toy"-musically, a failure.

The above points on "Evolution" no one can refute. Now observe the tremendous improvements the Gibson Co. have introduced over the old bowl shape, (Neapolitan or Italian) Mandolin, with which everyone is

THE VIOLIN-MODEL Gibson Mandolins, etc. are carved out of the solid block, by the most clever violin workers America can produce. They are "graduated" not "pressed"—as with other makes, showing "curved" sounding board and backboard.

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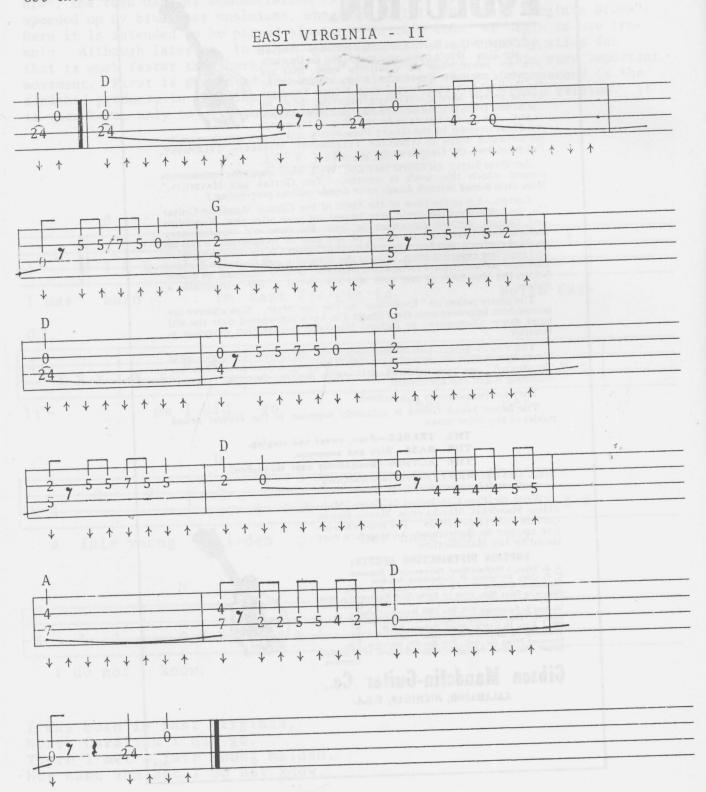
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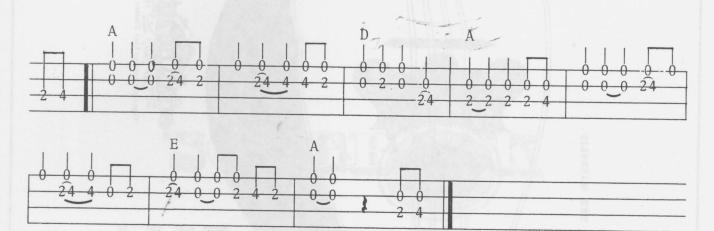


Before beginning this second version of "East Virginia", there are two things to practice: tremolo (indicated by 4 4 joining notes), and slides (indicated by 2 4 joining the notes). In this instance, the tremolo is only twice as fast as ordinary picking, i.e. 2 strokes to each beat (see ch. II). Get the notes at the 7th fret with the little finger of the left hand.



Most songs use a continuous, unbroken tremolo. Place slightly greater emphasis on the actual notes of the song, with slightly less emphasis between the notes (or beats). Stop the tremolo only where there are rests.

#### WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN

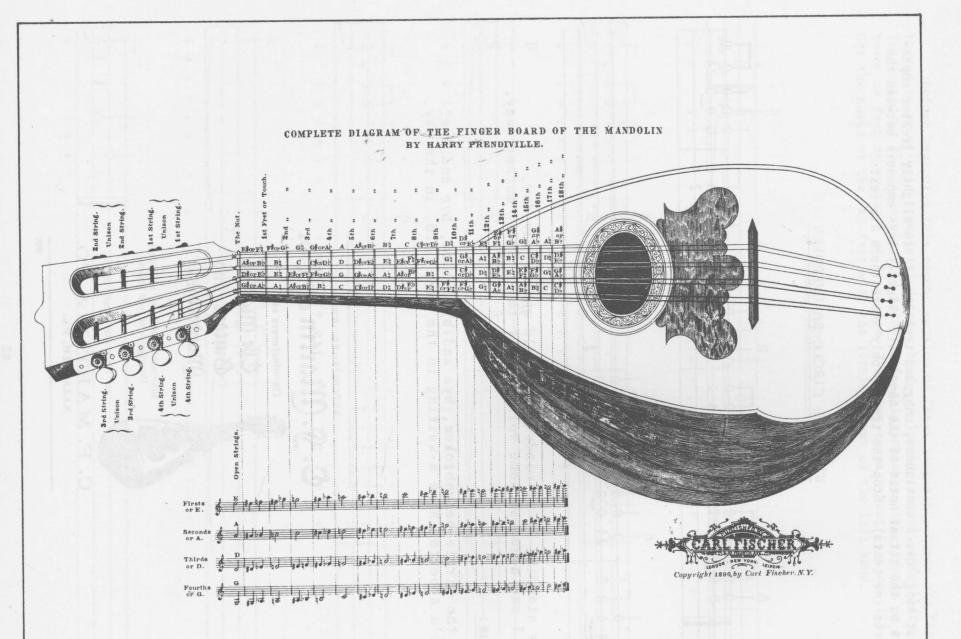


I was standing by my window on a cold and cloudy day, When I saw a hearse come rolling, for to carry my mother away.

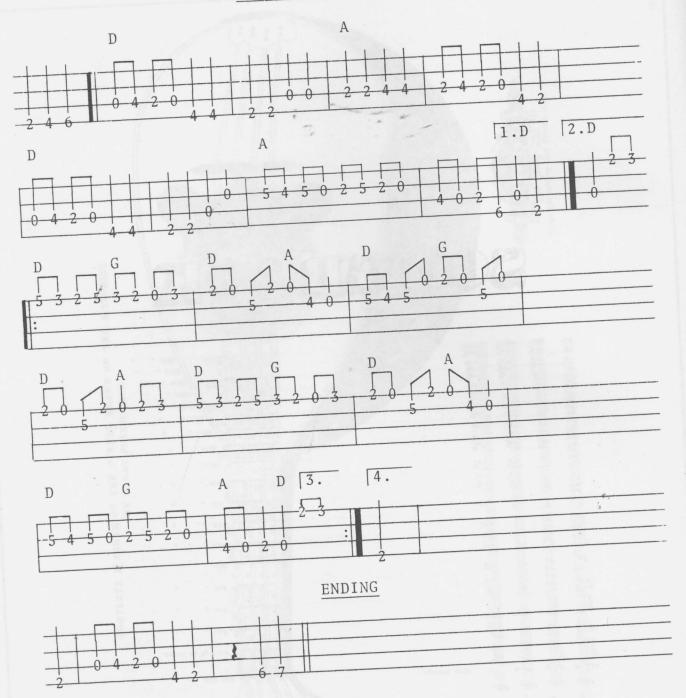
#### Chorus:

Will the circle be unbroken, bye and bye, Lord, bye and bye? There's a better home a-waiting in the sky, Lord, in the sky. etc.

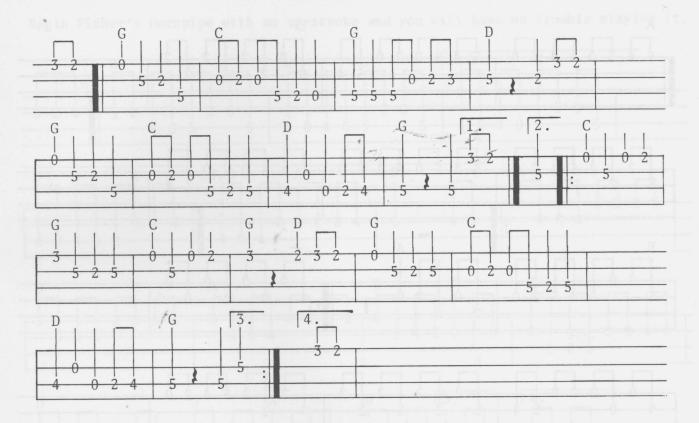




## SONGBOOK

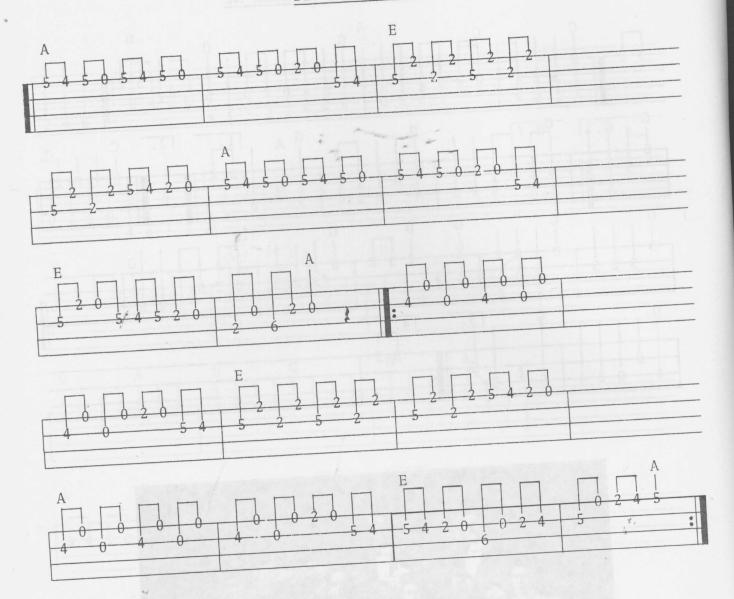


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The Briggs Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club, Utica, NY - 1907



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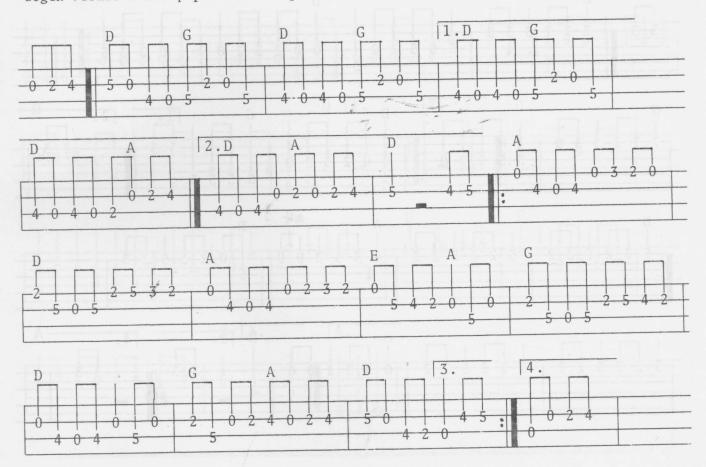
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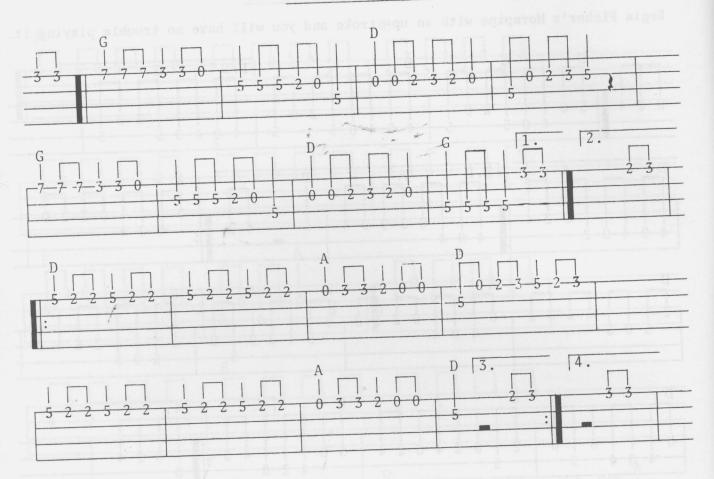
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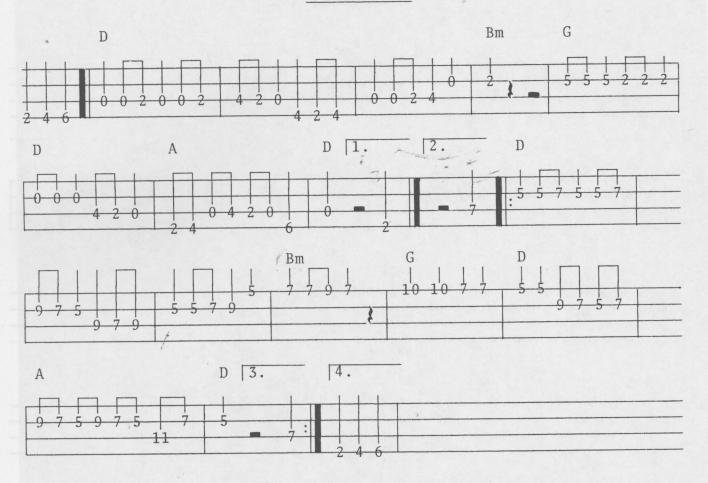


The Tharp Mandolin Orchestra, Cincinnati, OH - 1905



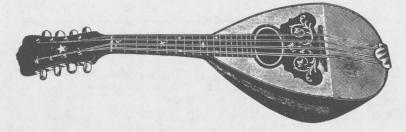


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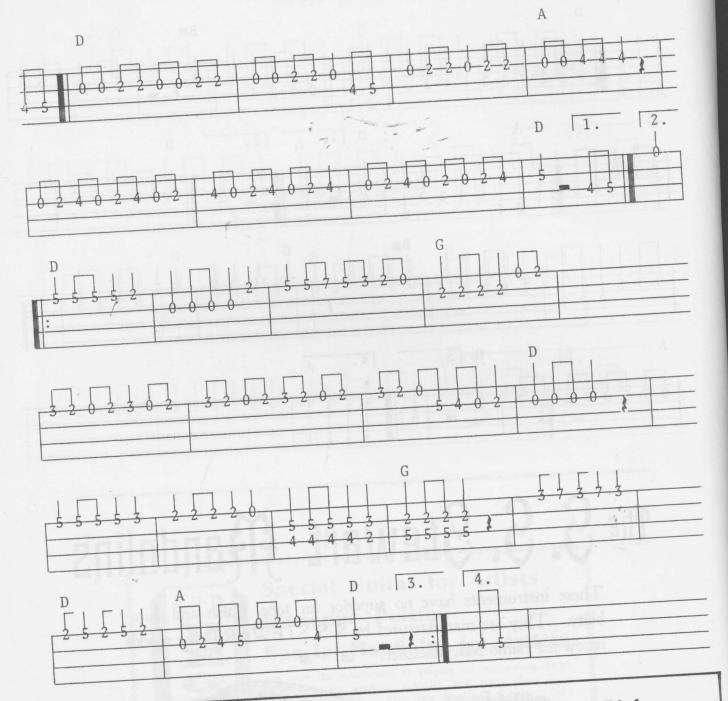
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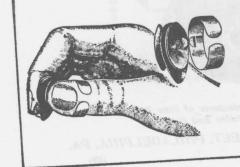


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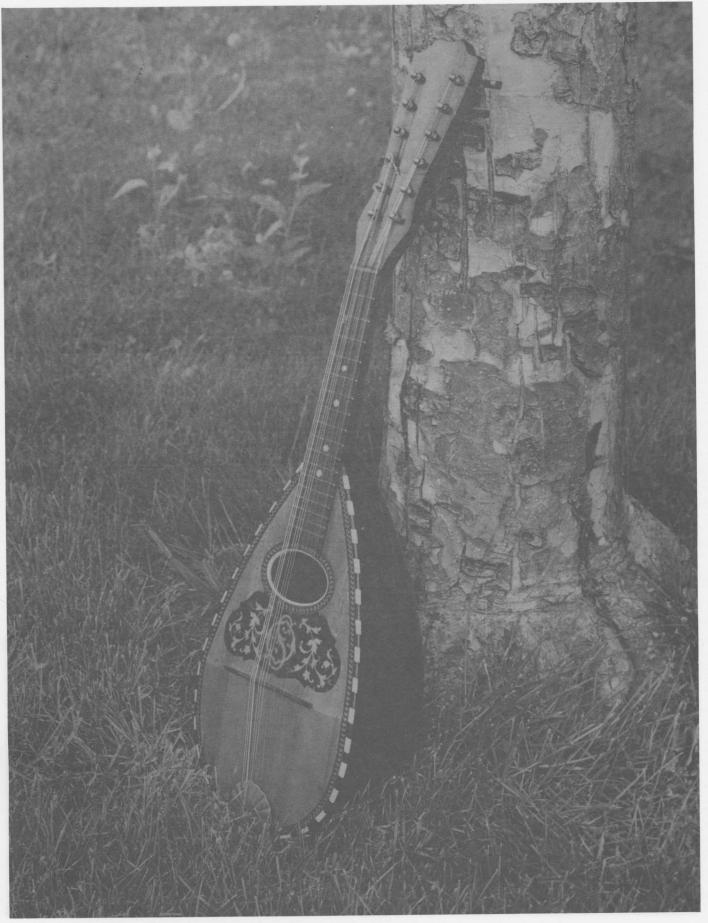
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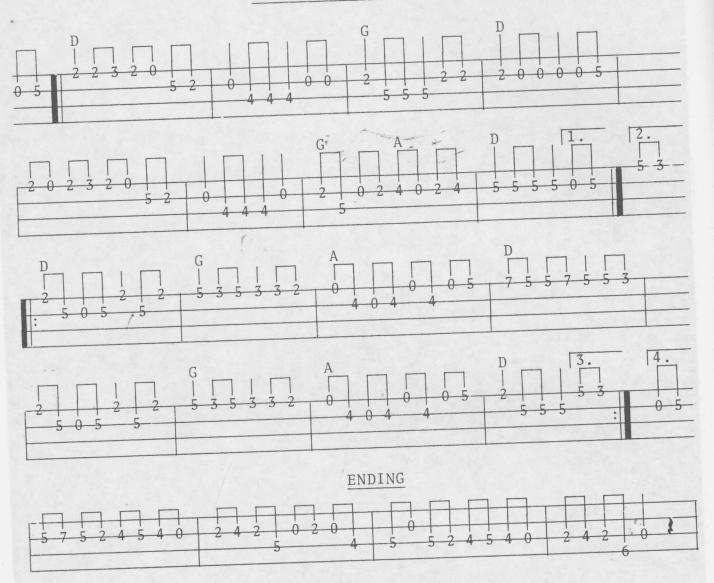
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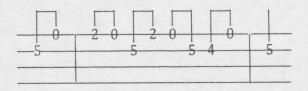
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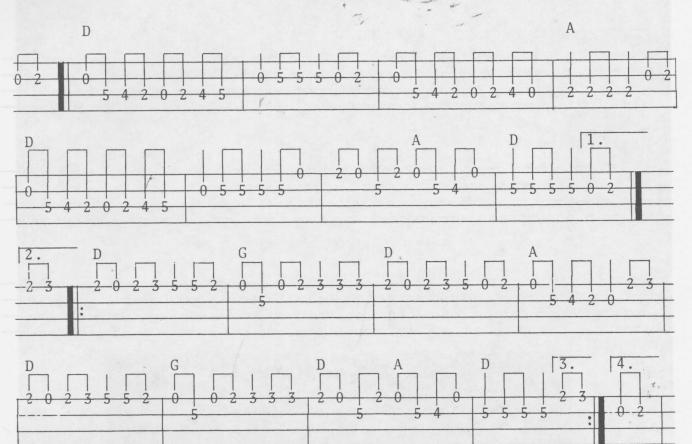


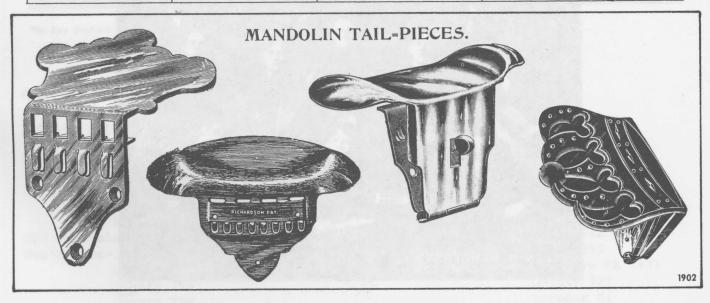
The Ideal Mandolin and Guitar Club, Hackensack, NJ - 1906

(Practice for Soldier's Joy - II)

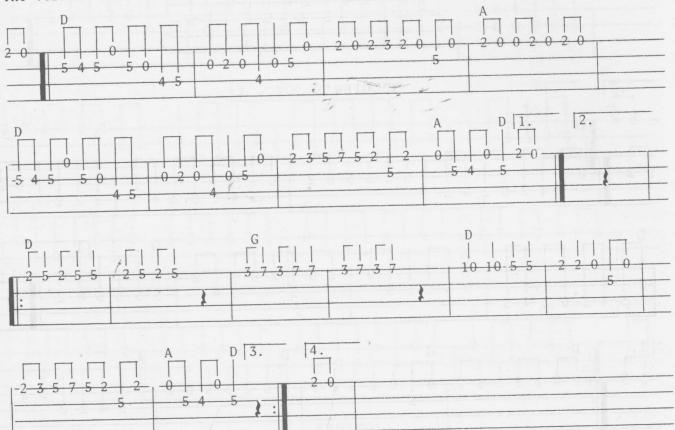


SOLDIER'S JOY - II





Old time fiddlers usually play Turkey in the Straw in D. Bluegrass players use G. The version in G will be found on page 22, in Chapter 5---it is easier to play.







The Ray Brothers: Will on fiddle, Vardeman on banjo-mandolin

#### Mandolin Discography:

#### Fiddle Tunes

Deseret String Band-Okehdokee 01 Okehdokee 02

Kenny Hall-Bay TPH 727 Bay 103

Philo 1008

Old Reliable String Band-Folkways FA 2475

Red Rector-County 721

County 755 County 758

#### Old Time Ballads

The Bailey Brothers-Rounder 0030 The Blue Sky Boys-Camden ADL2-0726

Capital-T2483 Rounder-0052

Rounder-1006

County-742 County-752

Old Homestead 90023 The Lilly Brothers-Folkways FA 2433

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