

All tunes are traditional, arranged by the player, unless otherwise noted. Tuning is given fifth string to first string.

1. Skating on the Harbourfront – CHRIS COOLE
f-DGCD

(By Chris Coole, SOCAN)
Marcy: guitar

2. Mama Tried – BOB SMAKULA
c-FCFG
(By Merle Haggard, Sony/ATV Tree Publishing, BMI)

3. I Ain't Gonna Work Tomorrow – MIKE SEEGER
f-CFAC

Marcy: banjo ukulele & harmony vocal,
Cathy: cello banjo & harmony vocal

4. The Buffalo Girls/Puncheon Floor – CATHY FINK & MARCY MARXER
g-DGBD

(Traditional, arrangement by 2 Spoons Music, ASCAP)
Cathy: five-string, Marcy: cello banjo (CGDA)

5. My God the Spring of All My Joys – DAN GELLERT
Bb-GCFG
(Original words by Isaac Watts)

6. Sally Anne – DANIEL KOULACK
g-DGBD
(Traditional, arranged by Daniel Koulack, SOCAN)

7. Florida Blues – GORDY HINNERS
g-CGCD

8. Old Skeddadalink – KATE BRETT
g-DGDE

9. Paddy on the Railroad – LEONARD PODOLAK
a-EADE

10. Shoo Fly – PAUL BROWN
g-CGCD

11. Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon – MARK SCHATZ
g-CGCD (capo II, to key of D)
(Lyrics Robert Burns, adapted from James Millar's tune, "The Caledonian Hunt's Delight," arrangement by Mark Schatz, MLS Publishing, BMI)
Mark: banjo and bowed bass

12. Roustabout – BRUCE MOLSKY
a-DAC#E

13. Boatman – BOB CARLIN
g-DGBD
(Traditional, arrangement by Bob Carlin, Car Times Recordings)

14. Cousin Sally Brown – DAVID HOLT
a-DADE
David: banjo and hambone

15. Sail Away Ladies – LAURA BOOSINGER
g-EADE (capo II)
Marcy: guitar & harmony vocal,
Cathy: harmony vocal

16. Gourdness – ARNIE NAIMAN
d#-G#D#G#C (d-GDGB in key of D, tuned up a half-step)
(By Arnie Naiman, SOCAN)

17. Polly Put the Kettle On – PAUL BROWN
e-CGCD

18. Durang's Hornpipe – ADAM HURT
a-DADE
Cathy: guitar

19. Coal Creek March – REED MARTIN
g-DGBD

20. Hail Against the Barndoor – CHRIS COOLE
f-DGCD

21. Where the Wild, Wild Flowers Grow – CATHY FINK
g-DGBD (capo III, to key of Bb)
(By Ola Belle Reed, Happy Valley Music, BMI)

22. Train Song – DANIEL KOULACK
c-CGCD
(By Daniel Koulack, SOCAN)

23. The Old Stillhouse – REED MARTIN
g-CGCD

24. Georgia Buck – DAVID HOLT
d-ADF#A (g-DGBD tuned down a fourth to D)

25. The Snowy Morning / The Old New Year – ARNIE NAIMAN
g-DGBD
(By Arnie Naiman, SOCAN)

26. Chilly Winds – DAN GELLERT
c-CEG (g-GBD down a fifth, four-string gourd banjo)

27. Wild Horses at Stoney Point – KATE BRETT & BILL SCHMIDT
g-DGDE (Kate)/g-DGBD (Bill)

28. Goin' Back to Dixie – LAURA BOOSINGER
g-CGCD
Marcy: guitar

29. Reuben's Ridge – BOB SMAKULA
e-BEG#B (G tuning lowered to E)

30. Big Scioty – ADAM HURT
g-EADE
Cathy: guitar

31. Flowery Girls – RICK GOOD
g-DGBD



In the 1960s, Elektra Records released an album called *The Old Time Banjo Project*. On it were gathered a handful of players who had mastered traditional sounds and styles of the old time banjo. For many years while attending fiddlers' conventions and music festivals, I have dreamed of updating that project, to include many players who inspire me, and/or who were inspired by the Elektra recording. Old time music is alive and well, due to its exposure in films, and with new generations playing the music. It has always been a social music, and like other styles, it goes in and out of commercial popularity. But the music continues to evolve and flourish.

The five-string banjo is rich. It is rich with history, with tradition, with sonic possibilities, and in fostering friendships. This collection of fine old time banjo players is proof that the banjo's past is respected and its future is secure. This is by no means a scholarly or all-inclusive work. There are many more wonderful old time banjo players out there than we were able to include in this volume. This is a collection of banjo players whose music we admire and who, by chance and design, were able to stop in our Community Music studio and play some tunes. In addition, we traveled to record Dan Gellert, and we also used two cuts by Reed Martin that he had already recorded for his fine CD. Rick Good's selection was taken from a live concert recording. What started out as a simple project to record a handful of my banjo influences blossomed into a project that included twenty old time banjo players and one wonderful accompanist, Marcy Marxer. While recording, mixing, and mastering, Marcy and I enjoyed every minute of this music. We certainly hope you will, too.

Cathy Fink

THE PLAYERS AND THE TUNES

LAURA BOOSINGER — Laura has lived in southern Appalachia since the age of 18. She learned how to play the clawhammer style from David Holt and was influenced by the wealth of musicians in western North Carolina including Byard Ray, Luke Smathers, Quay Smathers, and Carroll Best. www.lauraboosinger.com

Sail Away Ladies: "This is an Uncle Dave Macon tune that I learned from the playing of Byard Ray."

Goin' Back to Dixie: "Another Uncle Dave Macon song I've known forever, but was reinspired to sing it from a John Hartford recording."

KATE BRETT — Kate began playing in Chicago and learned some banjo music from Mark Richie. She played with West Virginia fiddler Melvin Wine for many years and became adept at the role of backup banjo playing during that time. Twenty-five years later, she plays with the Hoover Uprights, whose CD *Known For Their Reputation* is on the 5-String Productions label.

Old Skeddadalink: "I learned it from Melvin Wine of Copen, West Virginia with whom I played off and on for many years. I play it, as well as most G tunes, in this tuning: g-DGDE."

Wild Horses at Stoney Point: "My main influence on playing this tune is also Melvin Wine, but he only played the first two parts. The third part is played by many other people in central West Virginia. I play clawhammer style and Bill Schmidt plays fingerpicked backup."

PAUL BROWN — Paul started playing banjo at the age of ten, more than 40 years ago, and still loves it. He's spent time with a bunch of old timers from the south and young timers from all over, including Tommy Jarrell and Benton Flippen of North Carolina. He has also produced numerous recordings of older traditional musicians as well as younger players. His latest CD is *Red Clay Country* on the 5-String Productions label.

Shoo Fly: "I've known and loved this one since I was a small child. I haven't really heard anyone play it as a banjo tune, though I remember an old recording of the Bogtrotters doing a great string band version."

Polly Put the Kettle On: "I think the coolest banjo version of this in the world is Wade Ward's. He played it in D, in clawhammer style. Even though I'm a key down, in a different tuning, and playing my own two-finger style, it's hard to escape the wonderful echoes of Uncle Wade's approach to this piece. I'm using a tuning that Wade sometimes used for other tunes."

BOB CARLIN — Bob Carlin has been recording, producing, writing about, and performing clawhammer banjo for over thirty-five years. His latest album is a collaboration with the Malian jeli musician Cheick Hamala Diabate, *From Mali to America*, on the 5-String Productions label. www.cartunesrecordings.com

Boatman: "This is based on home recordings made in the 1940s of Ed Haley. I worked on the Rounder Records reissue and the tunes became completely embedded in my musical consciousness."

CHRIS COOLE — Chris Coole lives in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, where he can be found filling his days and nights playing old time and bluegrass music. Chris has recorded two banjo CDs with Arnie Naiman — *Five Strings Attached with No Backing, Vol. 1 & 2*. www.hickoryjack.com

Skating on the Harbourfront: "In 2005 I wrote everyone in my family a tune for Christmas. This one was for my dad Murray, an old hockey player and now a daily pleasure skater."

Hail Against the Barndoor: "This is an amalgamation of two very similar West Virginia tunes — 'Rainy Day' from Melvin Wine and 'Hail Against the Barndoor' from Lum Hawkenbury — both of which I learned from my friend Erynn Marshall."

CATHY FINK — Cathy first heard and saw the banjo played live in 1972 in Montreal, Canada. She took to playing in 1974 and just won't stop. She is a Grammy® winning producer, engineer, and artist. Her 1992 CD, *Banjo Haiku* is followed by a new CD, *Banjo Talkin'*. www.cathymarcy.com

The Buffalo Girls/Puncheon Floor: "We learned the first tune in this medley from Bruce Molsky, who credits John Hatcher of Mississippi as the source. The second tune we picked up at old time jam sessions in the Washington, DC area with friends from Double Decker Stringband. A puncheon floor had split logs laid with the round side down. The puncheons were edged with the broad-axe and joined together, the floor was surfaced and smoothed off with an adz until it was as smooth as a dance floor. It was ideal for dancing in the kitchen. Marcy plays a 1918 cello banjo loaned by Mike Seeger."

Where the Wild, Wild Flowers Grow: “Ola Belle Reed is best known for her bluegrass classic, ‘High on a Mountain.’ This lesser-known song of hers is equally haunting and beautiful. Ola Belle’s song-writing and music have had a profound influence on me.”

DAN GELLERT — Dan Gellert is a legend in the field of old time American music. A native of New Jersey and resident of Indiana, he has developed a unique style of playing and singing that combines all of his influences from traditional sources with his own sensitivities. His CD, *Waitin’ on the Break of Day* was something his fans awaited for a long time. www.orphonon.utopiandesign.com

My God the Spring of All My Joys: “My source was an Elder Golden P. Harris recording, and the original words are by Isaac Watts from 1707.”

Chilly Winds: Dan’s unique way of playing this Appalachian song on a four-string gourd banjo incorporates several different rhythms and techniques that only he can perform!

RICK GOOD — A founding member of the Hotmud Family, a band that toured extensively from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s, Rick Good has co-directed the dance and music company Rhythm in Shoes with his wife and partner Sharon Leahy for the past twenty years. Rick also moonlights with the Red Clay Ramblers whenever the planets line up. His latest CD is *Intentional Music*. www.rhythmshoes.org

Flowery Girls: “I learned ‘Flowery Girls’ from a tape of Omer Forster that Charlie Wolfe sent to me.

It was later released on Davis Unlimited Records and has recently been reissued.”

GORDY HINNERS — Gordy usually plays the banjo in a band context and was most influenced by his playing with the great fiddler Ralph Blizard, whose creative playing of traditional tunes opened up interpretive possibilities. Gordy can also be heard on the Ralph Blizard and the New Southern Ramblers CD *Fox Chase* (on the Yodel-Ay-Hee label). He lives in Weaverville, NC and currently plays with his family and other musicians in western North Carolina.

Florida Blues: “My version of this fiddle tune was strongly influenced by the playing of Ralph Blizard, and the variations of the basic melody come from my memory of the many ways in which Ralph would slip and slide his way through it. I play it on fretless banjo.”

DAVID HOLT — In 1969 David came to southern Appalachia from California looking for old time banjo players. Settling in Asheville, North Carolina, he was able to meet and learn from all of his heroes from Tommy Jarrell to Doc Watson. For over 30 years he has made a living performing old time music and is a multiple Grammy® Award winner. He plays plenty of banjo on his *Reel and Rock* album, and slide guitar on his latest CD, *Let It Slide*. www.davidholt.com

Cousin Sally Brown: “Willard Watson is the source for this one. He’d play it on a little fretless mountain banjo. Doc Watson reminded me that it makes a great, toe tapping guitar-banjo duet. The hambone [body-slapping rhythm] I am doing gives the feel of

Willard’s fine flatfoot dancing.”

Georgia Buck: “This one is from Doc Watson. I am playing a homemade North Carolina mountain banjo from the 1870s, beautifully crafted from curly maple. A bluesy tune like ‘Georgia Buck’ was made for the fretless.”

ADAM HURT — Adam Hurt began playing clawhammer banjo in 1995. He first discovered it in an elementary-school classroom in Saint Paul, Minnesota. He relocated to southern Appalachia to better immerse himself in the region’s traditional music. “I take pleasure in working to unite elements from seemingly conflicting approaches to the banjo, such as North Carolina’s Round Peak music and, say, the melodic styles that are popular in New England, to create a personal style that is both new and old.” His latest CD is *Insight*. www.adamhurt.com

Durang’s Hornpipe: “I learned this less common three-part version from my friend Jarred Nutter, a terrific fiddler and a former West Virginia state fiddle champion. It comes originally from one of that state’s other fiddle icons, the late, great Clark Kessinger.”

Big Scioto: “I set this tune in g-EADE, because I liked the complex harmonic and chordal possibilities that this tuning offers. Cathy added some luscious, high-capoeed, fingerstyle guitar, effectively turning this fiddle tune into our own little tone poem, which we think isn’t necessarily a bad thing!”

Both of these tunes are on Adam’s Insight CD, though “Big Scioto” is heard here with the addition of guitar back-up.

DANIEL KOULACK — Daniel Koulack was born May 18th, 1965, and began playing banjo on March 5th, 1977, at 5:00 PM. He resides in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and makes his living by playing and teaching various stringed instruments. His first CD, *Clawhammer Your Way to the Top*, was a Juno Award finalist.

Sally Anne: “Sometimes, the most simple melodies are really fun to fool around with. This version of ‘Sally Anne’ was stylistically inspired by the wildly playful banjo picking of Cathy Fink and Reed Martin.”

Train Song: “Something about this melody brought to mind a night train traveling through the prairies. Cathy Fink recently gave me a copy of Adam Hurt’s new album. I was blown away by the way Adam brings out the beauty of the melody without sacrificing the drive. That was the quality that I was trying to get in the high part of this tune.”

REED MARTIN — Reed was born in Bloomington, Indiana in 1946. He moved to the east coast in 1960, bringing with him a love of old time music. He’s collected songs, tunes and instruments from everywhere and everyone, not to mention antique cars, farm puzzles, stories and a plethora of other amazing stuff. His CD, *Old Time Banjo* is the source of his two tunes included here.

Coal Creek March: “I visited both of the musicians who are associated with this tune, Pete Steele and Dock Boggs, several times at their homes. I saw Dock Boggs play ‘Coal Creek March’ live a couple of times. I play it much faster and with only two parts.”

The Old Stillhouse: “My first chance to hear a truly great old time banjo player was in 1965. Peter Hoover played ‘The Old Stillhouse’ for me one evening. A couple of years later I met Arlan East, Sr. in Galax, Virginia. This was also the first tune he played for me.”

MARCY MARXER — Marcy slipped in here without a five-string banjo, but she lends perfect accompaniment on cello banjo, banjo ukulele, guitar, and harmony vocals. The Grammy® winner co-produced this CD, and her many talents can be appreciated at www.cathymarcy.com.

The Buffalo Girls/Puncheon Floor: (See Cathy Fink)

Marcy also accompanies Chris Coole, Mike Seeger, and Laura Boosinger.

BRUCE MOLSKY — Fiddler, singer, guitarist, and old-time banjo player Bruce Molsky comes at southern roots and blues with great depth of spirit. Known for his collaborations with musicians of many cultures, his wide-angled approach to traditional folk music has influenced a generation of players. His latest CD is *Soon Be Time* on Compass Records. www.brucemolksky.com

Roustabout: “I learned this from Fred Cockerham of Low Gap, North Carolina. There are also beautiful recorded versions by Dan Tate, Josh Thomas – collected by Mike Seeger – and Dink Roberts.”

ARNIE NAIMAN — Arnie Naiman resides just north of Toronto, Ontario, Canada and has recorded three CDs of banjo music, which include many

fine original compositions, all on the Merriweather record label. He performs with Chris Coole and Kathy Reid-Naiman as Ragged But Right. His latest recording project is called *The Banjo Special*. www.merriweather.ca.

Gourdness: “This tune is inspired by my gourd banjo made by Teilhard Frost of Kingston, Ontario.”

The Snowy Morning/The Old New Year: “These tunes are a medley of original seasonal banjo music aimed to the feeling of a fresh new sparkling blanket of snow, and ushering in the new year.”

LEONARD PODOLAK — Leonard is the founder of and banjo player with The Duhks, from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. He grew up taking in all kinds of music at the Winnipeg Folk Festival, becoming especially enamored with traditional banjo sounds. With The Duhks, he brings the banjo to new contexts and audiences. Their latest CD is *Migrations* on the Sugar Hill Records label. www.duhks.com

Paddy on the Railroad: This old time tune entered Leonard’s repertoire from many a jam session in many a town.

MARK SCHATZ — Mark Schatz is an acclaimed upright bass player in the New Acoustic Music scene. He has toured and recorded with the likes of Béla Fleck, Tony Rice, Tim O’Brien, and Nickel Creek. Mark’s impeccable clawhammer banjo playing can be heard on recordings by Béla, Jerry Douglas, and Mark O’Connor, and his sparkling original compositions are featured on two of his

own solo projects on Rounder, *Brand New Old Tyme Way* and his most recent, *Steppin’ in the Boiler House*. www.markschatz.net

Ye Banks and Braes O’ Bonnie Doon: Robert Burns could not have predicted the numerous adaptations of his work. Mark succeeds in bringing new context to the banjo as he plays this beautiful waltz as a duet with banjo and bowed bass.

Some of Burns’ words to the tune are:

“With lightsome heart I put a rose, Full sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my false lover stole my rose, But ah! he left the thorn with me.”

BILL SCHMIDT — Bill began playing guitar and ukulele during the “folk scare” of the 1960s, and became a New Lost City Ramblers fan while in high school. He started playing banjo and fiddle in the early 1970s, and was a founding member of the Double Decker Stringband. He also plays fiddle with the Hoover Uprights. He enjoys “seconding” on a fingerpicked banjo while Kate Brett plays clawhammer style.

Wild Horses at Stoney Point: (See Kate Brett)

MIKE SEEGER — Mike Seeger has devoted his life to singing and playing southern traditional music and producing documentaries and concert presentations of traditional musicians, singers, and dancers. He sings and plays in a variety of traditional styles on banjo, guitar, fiddle, mandolin, trumpet (jew’s harp), harmonica, quills, lap dulcimer, auto-harp, and a few other supporting instruments. He has toured worldwide since 1960 both as a soloist

and with the vanguard old time music group, the New Lost City Ramblers. One of his many Grammy® nominations is for the CD *Southern Banjo Styles* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings). These many banjo styles are also demonstrated on a DVD (Homespun Tapes). www.mikeseeger.info

I Ain’t Gonna Work Tomorrow: “I learned this from Ola Belle Reed at New River Ranch about 1955. I used my favorite Richard Scott Newman ‘holophonic’ banjo made in 1976.”

BOB SMAKULA — In 1974, when Bob was 15, his family went to the West Virginia Folk Festival in Glenville, WV and the banjo fire was lit. His first influences were his father, Peter H. Smakula – who told him that the banjo should play what the fiddle plays note for note – and Peter Hoover, a man who has more spirit in his playing than anyone he had heard before or since. Thirty-two years later, Bob makes his living by buying, selling, and restoring old banjos. www.smakula.com

Mama Tried: “This came right off a Merle Haggard album.”

Reuben’s Ridge: “I learned this from Glen Smith of Elizabeth, West Virginia. Glen was a noted fiddler from the Galax, Virginia area who lived the last half of his life in Wirt County, West Virginia.”

Please visit www.oldtimebanjofestival.com for more information on all of the players, photos, song lyrics, and for performance information. The Old Time Banjo Festival may travel and perform in small and large groups from time to time!