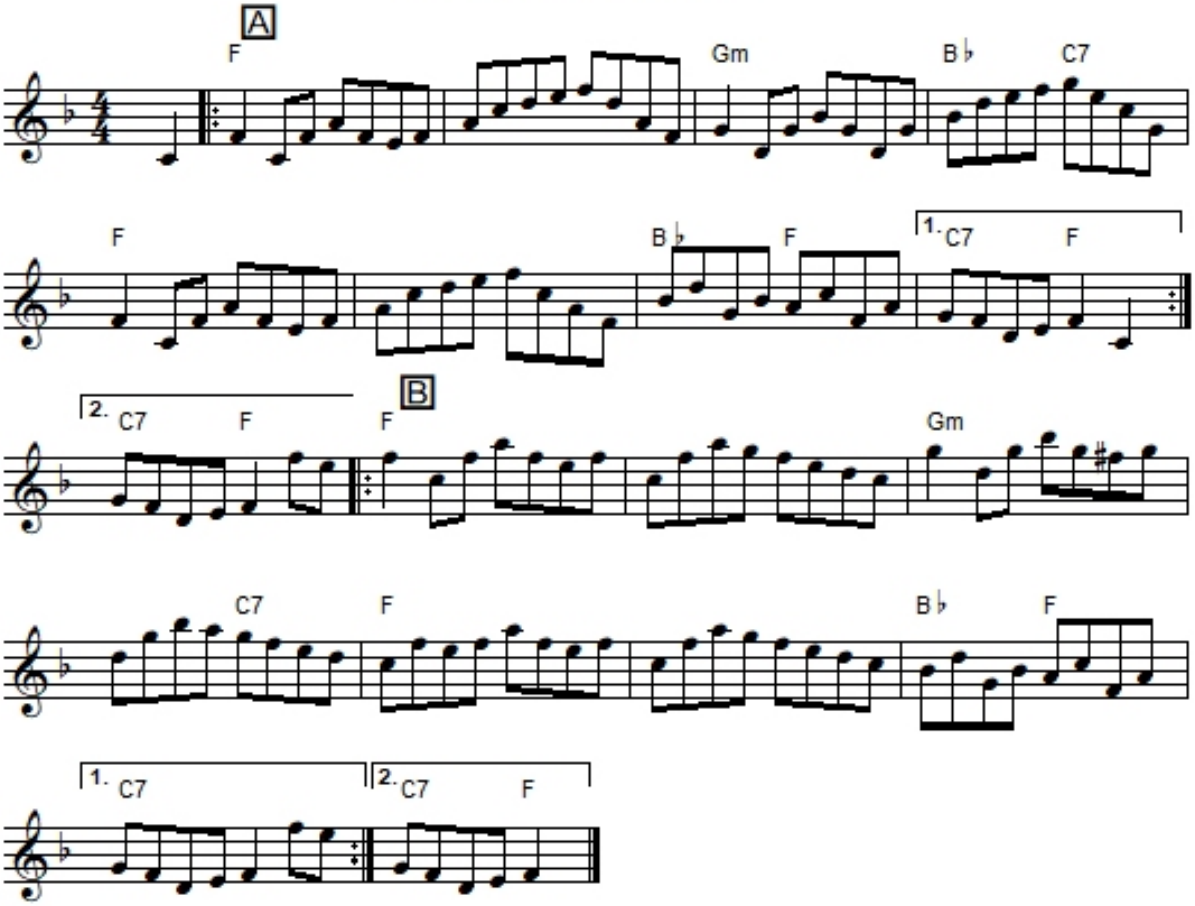
Archie Menzies Reel



"Archie Menzies Reel", also known as "The Bells of St. Louis" is a Scottish, Canadian and New England reel in F Major (most versions) or D Major (Bégin, Bohrer/Kibler). The parts are played AB (Hunter, Lowe) or AABB (most versions).
In Canada it is known in Ontario, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island.
It was composed by Scottish musician and dancing master John Lowe, father of the Joseph Lowe who published a collection in 1840.
Menzies was originally a Norman name, introduced into Scotland in the half-century after the conquest of England by William the Conqueror; in Scotland it was pronounced 'Minghees'.
Lowe may have composed his tune in honor of Archibald Menzies (1754–1842), a Perthshire doctor/surgeon who gained fame as the naturalist attached to a Royal Navy expedition to explore the west coast of America. More likely, the title honors Archibald Menzies, born in Dull, Perthshire, about 1806. Menzies earned a reputation as one of the best strathspey and reel players of his day, taking many prizes at competitions. He played at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, for several years until his death 1856.
The reel is a very popular tune among Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, fiddlers and has been frequently recorded. Perlman (1996) notes that Prince Edward Island fiddlers often play the 'b' flat notes almost natural at several points in the tune.
It was printed in Bégin's **Fiddle Music in the Ottawa Valley: Dawson Girdwood** (1985), (appears as "Archie Menzies Hornpipe"), Bohrer's **Vic Kibler: Adirondack Fiddler** (1992), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Cranford's **Jerry Holland's Collection of Fiddle Tunes** (1995), Hunter's **Fiddle Music of Scotland** (1988), Joseph Lowe's **Lowe's Collection of Reels, Strathspeys and Jigs, book 1** (1844-45) and **Royal Collection of Reels, Strathspeys and Jigs, book 1** (1860), Perlman's **The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island** (1996), Phillips' **Fiddle Case Tunebook: British Isles** (1989) and Welling's **Welling's Hartford Tune Book** (1976).
It was recorded by Sean Maguire on **Music of Ireland**, Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald on **Classic Cuts**, Natalie MacMaster on **Fit as a Fiddle** (1993), Brenda Stubbert on **In Jig Time!** (1995), Graham Townsend on **Le Violin/ The Fiddle** and Joseph Cormier on **The Dances Down Home** (1977).