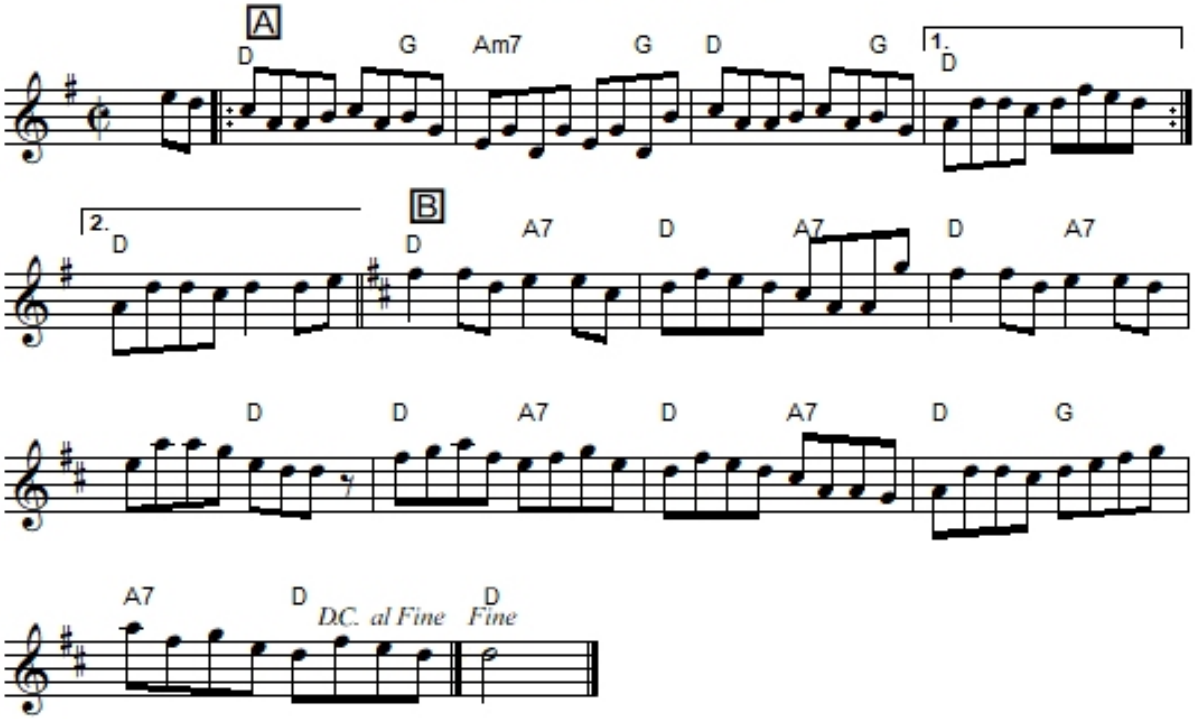
The Bank of Ireland



"The Bank of Ireland", in Gaelic "*Bannc na h-Éireann*" also known as "The First Day in Ireland", "The Last Day in Ireland" or "Follow Me Down to Carlow" is an Irish reel. A Dorian or Mixolydian ('A' part) & D Major ('B' part). The parts are played AB (Miller), AA'B (O'Neill/1850, 1001 & 1915) or AABB (Harker/Rafferty, Mallinson, O'Neill/Krassen, Taylor).
The building, built between 1729 and 1787, was originally designed as Ireland's Parliament Building. It housed both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The House of Commons portion was destroyed by fire in 1792. There are no windows in this building due to the window tax that was enforced throughout Britain and Ireland in the 1700s. It was sold to the Bank of Ireland in 1803 for £40,000 under the condition that it should not be used for political assemblies.
The tune was recorded in the 1924 by flute player Tom Morrision with fiddler Tom Higgins and melodeon player P.J. Conlon. Although the 'c' note is usually played natural in the tune, the melodeon does not have a 'c' natural note in the scale, necessitating the players to either play the note as a 'c sharp' or modulating to a relative minor key. Researcher Conor Ward found a version very close to that printed by O'Neill under the title "Follow Me Down to Carlow".
Ward also found another manuscript version as "The First Day in Ireland" in the c. 1883 copybook of Gortletteragh, Co. Leitrim, musician Stephen Grier.
It was printed in Cotter's **Traditional Irish Tin Whistle Tutor** (1989), Harker's **300 Tunes from Mike Rafferty** (2005), Mallinson's **100 Essential** (1995), Miller & Perron's **Irish Traditional Fiddle Music Vol. 1** (1977) and **Irish Traditional Fiddle Music 2nd Edition** (2006), O'Neill's **O'Neill's Irish Music** (1915), **Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems** (1907) and **Music of Ireland: 1850 Melodies** (1903), Krassen's **O'Neill's Music of Ireland** (1976) and Taylor's **Through the Half-Door** (1992).
It was recorded by Tommy Peoples (78 RPM), Johnny McGreevy and Pat McGovern (1935) (78 RPM), Michael Grogan on **From Galway to Dublin** (1992. Reissue of 1942 original) and Wild Asparagus on **Tone Roads** (1990).