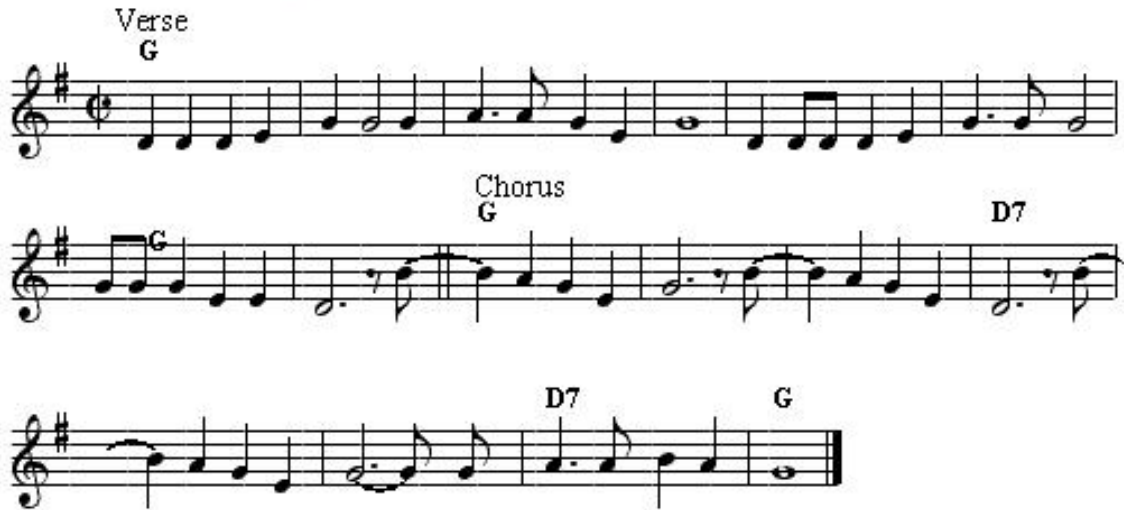


Way Down the Old Plank Road



1. Rather be in Richmond
With all the hail and rain
Than to be in Georgia, boys,
Wearin' that ball and chain.

Chorus

Won't get drunk no more,
Won't get drunk no more,
Won't get drunk no more,
Way down the old plank road.

2. I went down to Mobile
But I got on the gravel train,
Very next thing they hear of me,
Had on the ball and chain.
3. Doney, oh dear Doney,
What makes you treat me so
Caused me to wear the ball and chain,
Now my ankle's sore.

Chorus

4. Knoxville is a pretty place,
Memphis is a beauty,
Wanna see them pretty girls,
Hop to Chattanooga.

Chorus

5. I'm going to build me a scaffold
On some mountain high,
So I can see my Dora girl
As she goes riding by.

Chorus

6. My wife died Friday night,
Saturday she was buried,
Sunday was my courtin' day,
Monday I got married.

Chorus

7. Eighteen pounds of meat a week
Whiskey here to sell,
How can a young man stay at home,
Pretty girls looks so well.

Chorus

Plank roads were a feature of American transportation in the mid-19th century, the first being constructed in Michigan (1837) and New York (1844). When they were properly maintained they provided a smooth surface and should not be confused with log 'corduroy' roads that were often quite dangerous. Construction consisted of laying planks of pine or oak, eight to sixteen feet long and three to four inches thick, across 'sleepers' or 'stringers' that had been placed parallel

Personal footnote: US 220 in Altoona where I grew up was known as "Plank Road". I don't think anyone there knew this song.

This is a classic from Uncle Dave Macon who recorded it with Sam McGee. Macon sang and played banjo, sometimes with a group called the Fruitjar Drinkers. Uncle Dave's version is in the Folkways **Anthology of American Folk Music**.

The verses are borrowed from many sources. It was also recorded by the New Lost City Ramblers.