

## Down in Little Egypt

The musical score for "Down in Little Egypt" is written in 2/4 time and C Major. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed 'A' and a C chord. The second staff has a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.), both with C chords, and a boxed 'B' at the end. The third staff has F, G7, and C chords. The fourth staff has F and G7 chords. The fifth staff has a C chord. The music is a fiddle tune with various rhythmic patterns and ornaments.

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"Down in Little Egypt" is an American reel in 2/4 time and C Major. The parts are played AAB. The tune was in the repertory of fiddler Noah Beavers (1897-1990), of Elkhaville, southern Illinois, collected by fiddler Lynn "Chirps" Smith. Beavers, a farmer and coalminer, played for square dances since the age of twelve and led his own square dance band for many years. Beavers had no name for the tune, but Smith christened it "Down in Little Egypt" after the old nickname for southern Illinois, "Little Egypt".

In 1799, Baptist minister John Badgley dubbed the fertile highlands and bottoms near Edwardsville Illinois the "Land of Goshen". This was a biblical reference to the part of Ancient Egypt where the children of Abraham were allowed to settle when they fled from a famine in Canaan. Geographic features such as the Mississippi and its flood plains seemed like the fertile Nile valley. The Indian mounds of the area were large at the time and seemed like the pyramids of Egypt. In the 1830s, poor harvests in the north of the state drove people to Southern Illinois to buy grain, reinforcing the parallels with the Biblical story.

The tune was printed in Lamancusa's **The Gettysburg Collection of Old Time Fiddle Tunes** (2021).

It was recorded by Lynn "Chirps" Smith on **Down in Little Egypt** (2016).