

Gilsaw

The musical score for "Gilsaw" is written in D Major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed section labeled 'A'. The second staff includes a first ending bracketed over the final two measures. The third staff begins with a boxed section labeled 'B' and includes a second ending bracketed over the final two measures. The fourth and fifth staves continue the melody and include various chords (D, G, A) and first/second endings.

"Gilsaw", also known as "Gill Saw" is an old-time breakdown in D Major. The parts are played AABB.

"Gilsaw" was popularized by central Missouri fiddler Pete McMahan and is on Missouri fiddler Charlie Walden's list of '100 essential Missouri fiddle tunes'.

Pete McMahan maintained that 'Gilsaw' was the name of an itinerant ("tramp") fiddler who played the tune while busking for change at the Wabash Railroad depot in Montgomery City, Mo. It was overheard by a fiddling sheriff, by the name of Claude Gregory, an uncle of McMahan's, who learned it on the spot. Before he left the fiddler told Sheriff Gregory that it was "Gilsaw", but it was unclear whether he was replaying the name of the tune or his own name (people with the name appear in the 1900 Missouri census in Callaway County, Mo.). Gregory taught the tune to a young McMahan, who remembered it with the prompting of friends, in his later years.

The banjo tablature is from John Letscher.

It was printed in Milliner & Koken's **Milliner-Koken Collection of American Fiddle Tunes** (2011) Lamancusa's **The Gettysburg Collection of Old-Time Fiddle Tunes** (2021) and Silberberg's **93 Fiddle Tunes I Didn't Learn at the Tractor Tavern** (2004) (appears as "Gill Saw").

It was recorded by Lynn 'Chirps' Smith on **Midwestern Harvest** (1994), Pete McMahan on **Ozark Mountain Waltz** (1987), John Williams on **Fiddler's Dream** (2013) and Bigfoot on **I Got a Bull Dog** (2012).