

Going Across the Sea

The musical score for "Going Across the Sea" is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed section labeled 'A'. The second staff ends with a first ending bracket labeled '1.'. The third staff begins with a second ending bracket labeled '2.' and a boxed section labeled 'B'. The fourth staff continues the melody. The fifth staff contains two first ending brackets, both labeled '1.', with a '3' (triple) marking under the first one.

Chords indicated above the staff are: A, Em7, D, A, Em7, D, Em7, A, Em7, D, Em7, D, A, D, Em7, D, Em7, D, A, D, Em7, A, Em7, D, A, A, A, A.

"Going Across the Sea", also known as "Across the Sea", "Going to the Army" and "Gwine Across the Sea" is an old-time breakdown and song tune in A Major/Mixolydian or D Major (Beisswenger & McCann). It is played in standard, AEad or ADae (Monday/Titon) fiddle tunings. The parts are played AA'BB'.

This piece has been popular as a banjo/vocal number and has a reputation as a driving banjo tune among musicians in eastern Kentucky and Tennessee, although both Guthrie Meade (1980) and Jeff Titon (2001) say the tune is identified with the Cumberland Plateau region of south-central Kentucky and middle Tennessee. Others have called it a fairly common tune in the upper/central South. Titon relays that Mark Wilson told him that it was frequently encountered in the Ozarks Mountains region of the Mid-West, where Tennessee populations had migrated. Various sets of lyrics are often sung to it, most being of the "floating" variety.

The piece was earliest recorded in 1924 by Tennessee's banjo-playing Uncle Dave Macon. Bascom Lamar Lunsford was recorded for the Library of Congress playing "Goin' across the Sea" in 1935. Charles Wolfe says a "sea chanty" variant was published in 1939 by Jean Thomas in the book **Ballad Makin' in the Mountains of Kentucky**, collected in northeastern Kentucky.

The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore links "Going across the Sea" to "Wish I Had a Needle and Thread".

According to Meade in **Country Music Sources** (2002), the tune is closely related to Stephen Foster's "Angelina Baker".

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher. His comment:

This is a conglomeration of versions, but lately from the Freight Hoppers.

It was printed in Beisswenger & McCann's **Ozarks Fiddle Music** (2008) and Titon's **Old-Time Kentucky Fiddle Music** (2001).

It was recorded by Crook Brother's String Band on **Nashville: the Early String Bands, vol. 2** (1976), Clarence Ferril Band on **Five Miles Out of Town: Traditional Music From the Cumberland Plateau, vol. 2** (1984), Jim Bowleson on **Railroading Through the Rocky Mountians** (1992), H.L. Bandy on **Wish I Had My Time Again** (originally recorded in 1928), Dick Burnett and Leonard Rutherford on **Ramblin' Reckless Hobo: The Songs of Dick Burnett and Leonard Rutherford** (1975), Bob Holt on **Got a Little Home to Go** to (1998), The Crook Brothers (78 RPM) (1929) and Uncle Dave Macon (78 RPM) (1926).