

Hell on the Potomac

The musical score for "Hell on the Potomac" is presented in five staves. The first staff, marked with a boxed 'A', is in treble clef, G major, and 4/4 time. It begins with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Chords G and D7 are indicated above the staff. The second staff continues the melody with similar rhythmic patterns and chords G and D7. The third staff, marked with a boxed 'B', features a bass clef, with notes G3, A3, B3, and C4. Chords G and D7 are indicated. The fourth staff continues the bass line with similar rhythmic patterns and chords G and D7. The fifth staff is a short melodic phrase starting with a treble clef, key signature of one sharp, and a G chord above it.

"Hell on the Potomac", also known as "Hell on the Wabash", "Wake up Susan" on "Hell on the Rappahannock" is an American reel in G major, known in southwestern Pa. The parts are played AB.

Bayard (1981) identifies this as "one of the three or four" tunes universally known by Pennsylvania folk musicians. The melody is usually known as "Wake up Susan" or "Hell on the Wabash" and it is sometimes found with other parts; Bayard is not sure if this means the tunes with different titles are "divergently evolving cognate tunes" or the result of trading strains or "otherwise infecting one another".

In Bayard's **Dance to the Fiddle** there are three versions called "Hell on the Wabash" which are very different from the "Hell on the Wabash" in this section. There is also one version called "Wake up Susan" (in two parts instead of three) and one called "Hell on the Rappahannock". Ultimately, the first strain is derived from the tune whose most famous title is "Mason's Apron". The "Hell on the (insert place-name)" is a floating title and a popular naming convention and were attached to a variety of different melodies at the whim of a fiddler.

Other tunes using more-or-less similar melodic material are "The Night We Made the Match", "Picnic Romp", "Jack of Diamonds" (Thede), "The Cottage by the Sea" and "The Red-Headed Girl".

It was printed in Bayard's **Dance to the Fiddle** (1981) (he printed 19 versions from various players, both fiddlers and fifers).