

Martha Campbell

The musical score for "Martha Campbell" 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 marker 'A' and a 'D' chord. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff features a boxed section marker 'B' and includes a double bar line with repeat dots. The fourth and fifth staves complete the piece, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots. Chords are indicated by letters above the notes: D, A7, and G.

"Martha Campbell" also known as "Marthie Campbell" is an old-time American breakdown from eastern Kentucky and Indiana in D Major. It is sometimes played AB (Silberberg), ABB (Brody), AABB (Krassen, Phillips) or AA'BB' (Phillips, Reiner & Anick). I show it here as AABB. It is known as a Kentucky tune, once regionally associated with the northeastern and central part of the state, but now wide-spread. The tune has been reworked as a bluegrass and contest standard and was popularized among Texas fiddlers by Orville Burns.

It was of the first tunes recorded by Kentucky fiddler Doc Roberts (1897–1978), in 1925. Music historian Charles Wolfe (1983) believed the tune related to Roberts' "Brickyard Joe" and stated the Kentucky fiddler probably learned the tune from African-American fiddler Owen Walker of Madison County, Ky., a mentor, around 1915. Jeff Titon (2001) is also of the opinion that "Martha Campbell" may have had an African-American provenance and the process of aural transmittal of the tune from source fiddlers appears to be from black to white. He reports that Ky. fiddler Darley Fulks spoke of hearing the melody for the first time in the 1920's from "colored fiddlers" and notes that Fulk's version, unique to him, included a bass part that Fulks maintained African-American fiddlers included in their renditions.

"Martha Campbell" was also recorded in the field by the Lomax's from the playing of white Virginia fiddler Emmett Lundy in 1941, when he was 80 years old.

It was printed in Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Krassen's **Masters of Old-Time Fiddling** (1983), Phillips's **Fiddle Case Tunebook: Old Time Southern** (1989), Phillips's **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes**, vol. 1 (1994), Reiner & Anick's **Old Time Fiddling Across America** (1989), Silberberg's **Fiddle Tunes I Learned at the Tractor Tavern** (2002), Titon's **Old Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes** (2001).

It was recorded by John M. Salyer, Walter McNew, Doc Roberts, Art Stamper, Bill Christophersen, Buddy Thomas, Blind Bill Day (a pseudonym for Jilson Setters, b. 1860), Ace Sewell. I learned it at Midwest Banjo Camp.