

# Peter Francisco

The musical score for "Peter Francisco" is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a first ending bracket labeled "1." and a section labeled "A" with a boxed letter "A". Chords D, C, and D are indicated above the staff. The second staff contains a second ending bracket labeled "2." and a section labeled "B" with a boxed letter "B". Chords D, A7, and D are indicated above the staff. The third staff continues the melody with chords A7 and D. The fourth staff contains two first and second ending brackets labeled "1." and "2." respectively. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

---

"Peter Francisco" is an American reel in 2/4 time and D Mixolydian ('A' part) & D Major ('B' part). The parts are played AB (Silberberg) or AABB (Brody, Knauff, Spadaro).

The tune appears in George P. Knauff's *Virginia Reels*, volume II (1839) in the key of F Major.

It is known as a North Carolina tune, perhaps in part because Peter Francisco, who was from either North Carolina or Virginia, was a Revolutionary War legend whose deeds were widely celebrated.

Francisco's history is remarkable. It is probable that he began life as Pedro Francisco on July 9, 1760, born at Porto Judeu, on Terceira Island in the Portuguese-held Azores. He was either kidnapped as a boy, or was spirited away to the New World but he eventually came to the attention of Anthony Winston, a local Virginia judge and uncle to firebrand Patrick Henry. Winston put the boy to work at chores around his 3,600 acre plantation of Hunting Tower in Buckingham County, Virginia, taught him English and guided his growth to manhood. It is said he grew to six feet, six inches, nearly a foot over the man of average height in his day, and he weighed 260 lbs. He was as strong as he was large, performing legendary feats of strength throughout his life; yet he was also known for being good-tempered, temperate and charitable.

After hostilities broke out with England, Francisco at the age of 16 received Winston's consent to enlist in the 10th Virginia Regiment as a private. He subsequently fought at Brandywine (where he was wounded), Germantown, Fort Mifflin, Monmouth (where he was again wounded), and Stony Point (wounded a third time). His three year enlistment being up in 1779, Francisco returned to Virginia. Soon, however, the active portion of the war shifted South and Francisco joined Continental forces in the Carolinas, fighting in the disastrous defeat of the Battle of Camden under Gates and the more successful action at Guilford Courthouse with Greene. He became the most famous enlisted man of the war. Francisco was wounded a total of five times, but survived to attend the British defeat at Yorktown. After the war he worked as a blacksmith and continued his education, marrying several times after the death of each wife and fathering several children. In 1825 he was made Sergeant-at-Arms for the Virginia Legislature. He passed away on January 16, 1831.

His shoes are preserved to this day at the Guilford Courthouse Battlefield, near Greensboro, N.C.. Chris Goertzen, in his book **George P. Knauff's Virginia Reels and the History of American Fiddling** (2017), points out that after the war Francisco lived in Buckingham County, Virginia and ran a tavern in New Store, about fifteen miles from Virginia Reels editor George P. Knauff's home in Farmdale, Virginia and only six or seven miles from where Knauff taught for a time at a women's preparatory school.

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher. His notes:

From the Fuzzy Mountain String Band.

It was printed in Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983) and **Banjo Picker's Fakebook** (1985), Silberberg's **Complete Fiddle Tunes I Either Did or Did Not Learn at Tractor Tavern** (2005) and Spadaro's **10 Cents a Dance** (1980).

It was recorded by Fuzzy Mountain String Band on **Fuzzy Mountain String Band** (1972) and **Summer Oaks and Porch** (1973).