

Portsmouth Airs

The musical score for "Portsmouth Airs" is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two main sections, A and B, with various guitar chords and musical notations.

Section A: This section begins with a repeat sign and a box labeled 'A'. The first line of music has a G chord above the first measure. The second line has chords G, D7, C, G, D7, G, and D7 above the measures. The third line has chords G, D7, C, G, and D7 above the measures, followed by a first ending bracket labeled '1.' with a G chord above the final measure.

Section B: This section begins with a second ending bracket labeled '2.' and a box labeled 'B'. The first line of music has a G chord above the first measure, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The second line has chords C, G, D7, G, C, and G above the measures. The third line has chords C, G, D7, G, and D7 above the measures. The fourth line has chords G, D7, and G above the measures. The fifth line has chords C, G, C, G, and C above the measures. The sixth line has a G chord above the first measure.

"Portsmouth Airs" is an old-time breakdown in cut time and G Major. The parts are played AABB (Titon), AB (Lamancusa) or AA'BB'.

The source usually given for this is Jimmy R. Wheeler (1917-1987), a fiddler and instrument repairman who lived in the Ohio River town of Portsmouth, Ohio.

Harmonica player John Lozier of Lewis County, Kentucky, said regionally influential fiddler Ed Haley used to play it in front of the Old Railroad YMCA in Portsmouth, Ohio (Hartford, 1996).

Jeff Titon (2001) calls the tune a northern-influenced type of melody that is sometimes favored by fiddlers in the northeastern part of Kentucky.

"Buffalo Gals" is a distantly related tune.

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher.

It was printed in Titon's **Old Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes** (2001) and Lamancusa's **The Gettysburg Collection of Old-Time Fiddle Tunes** (2021).

It was recorded by Roger Cooper on **Snakewinder** (1993), Jimmy Wheeler on **Jimmy Wheeler: Recordings from the collection of Jeff Goehring** (2015), Buddy Thomas (et al) on **Traditional Fiddle Music of Kentucky, vol. 1: Up the Ohio and Licking Rivers** (1997), Buddy Thomas on **Kitty Puss: Old-Time Fiddle Music From Kentucky** (1976), Roger Cooper on **Going Back to Old Kentucky** (1996) and John Hartford on **Wild Hog in the Red Brush (and a Bunch of Others You Probably Never Heard)** (1996. Learned from John Lozier).