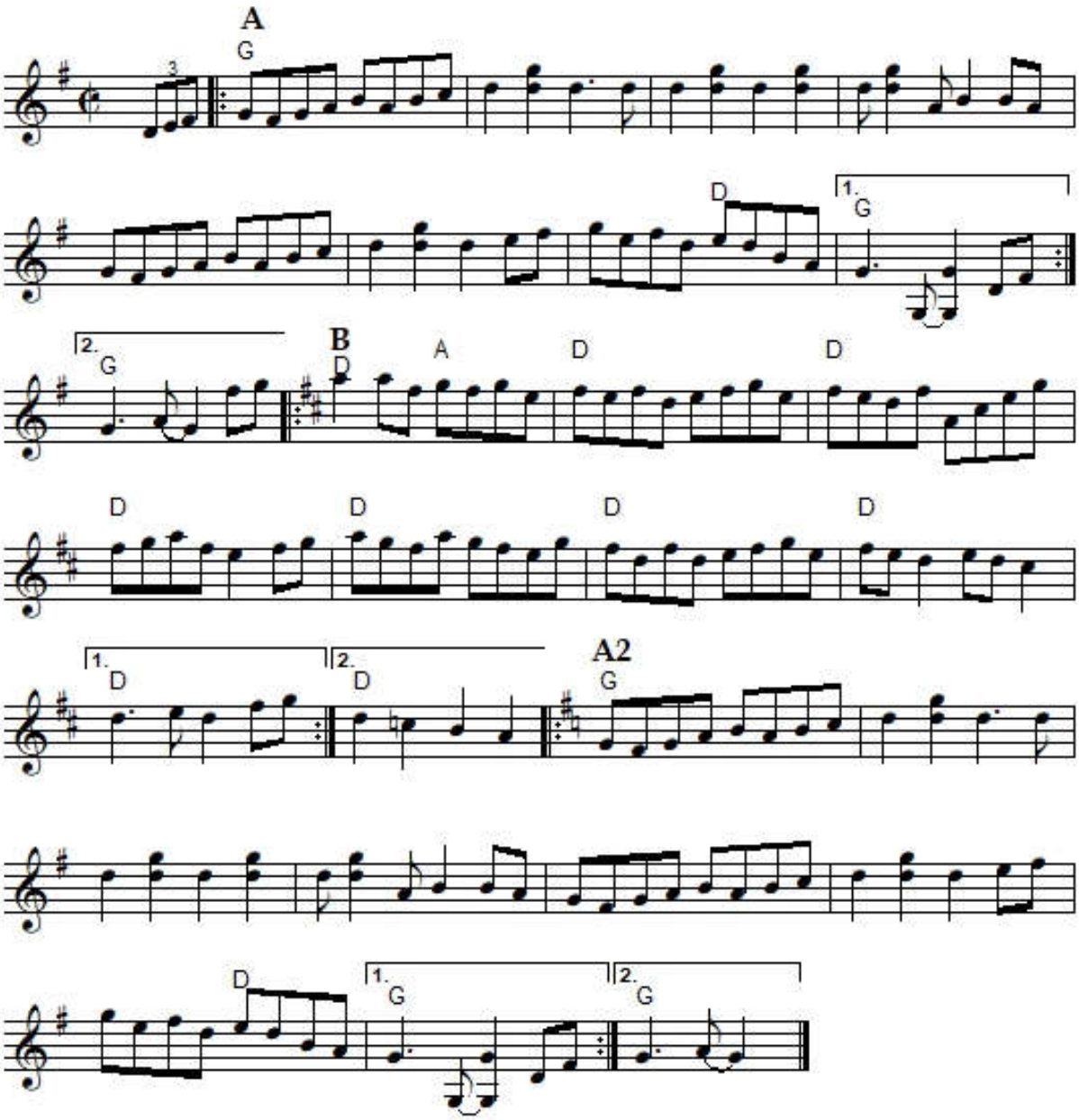
Puncheon Floor



"Puncheon Floor" is an old-time breakdown known in Arkansas and Tennessee in G Major or G Major / D Major.

The parts are played AA'BB or AABBAA. Several melodies called “Puncheon Floor”, some related and some quite distinct from one-another, exist in American traditional music.

> Ira Ford (1940), who collected at least some of his material in the Ozarks region, remarked: "'Puncheon Floor' has been handed down as one of the favorite old dance tunes of America. More than any other of the traditional tunes of the olden days it seems to carry the spirit of sociability of the folks 'back yonder', where the people of a community were then closely banded together in a social order based upon the greatest good of the greatest number. The homes were built of logs and shingled with clap-boards. The floors were made of puncheons, split logs laid with the round side down. After the puncheons were edged with the broadaxe and joined together, the floor was surfaced and smoothed off with an adz until it was as smooth as a modern dance floor. It was thus that this old tune had its genesis.”

"Puncheon Floor" is mentioned as having been played in a newspaper account of a 1931 LaFollette, northeast Tenn., fiddlers' contest. The title also appears in a list of traditional Ozarks Mountain fiddle tunes compiled by musicologist/folklorist Vance Randolph, published in 1954; which "Puncheon Floor" melody he listed is unknown.

The banjo tablature by John Letscher follows the version that we heard played at Midwest Banjo Camp by Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer. They said the chain of tradition was Crawley Hamlin to Esker Hutchins of Dobson N.C. to Oscar Jenkins and Benton Flippen.

The fiddle version follows John Lamancusa's web site "www.mne.psu.edu/lamancusa/tunes/PuncheonFloor.pdf".

It was printed in Ford's **Traditional Music in America** (1940).