

Saturday Night Breakdown

The Leake County Revelers

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a boxed 'A' above the second measure. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff features a first ending bracket over the first two measures, a boxed 'B' above the third measure, and a second ending bracket over the last two measures. The fourth and fifth staves complete the piece with various melodic lines and repeat signs.

"Saturday Night Breakdown" is an American and Canadian reel in 2/4 or cut time and C Major. The parts are played AB (Silberberg) or AABB (Messer, Phillips, Songer). This rag-time influenced reel was originally recorded in 1929 by fiddler Wil Gilmer with his group The Leake County Revelers, all of whom resided in and around Sebastopol, Mississippi. The quartet (which also included Dallas Jones on guitar, R.O. Mosley on mandolin and banjo-mandolin, and Jim Wolverton on banjo) formed in 1926 and made some forty recordings from 1927 to 1930. They were already regionally popular when they recorded in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1929, and had accompanied Louisiana politician Huey Long on his campaign for governor in 1928. Their record sales, propelled by live broadcasts from the 1000-watt WJDX (Jackson, Mississippi) in a coveted 6PM-7PM Saturday night spot, made them sought after performers across the southeast. The group members still kept their 'day jobs' however. In the 1980s their descendants, appearing as the Leake County String Band, provided music for the 1976 movie **Ode to Billie Joe**.

"Saturday Night Breakdown" was equally popular in Canada, where it was given a "down east"-style treatment in the mid-20th century by radio and TV fiddlers Don Messer and Ned Landry. Don Messer recorded the tune in the early 1950's followed, in 1956, by New Brunswick fiddler Ned Landry (1921-2018), a three-time Canadian Open Fiddle Champion who received the Order of Canada and who was inducted into the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia halls of fame. A CBC program schedule for Friday, December 21st, 1945, records that it was played by Messer and his band The Islanders on his 5 P.M. broadcast.

It was printed in Messer's **Way Down East** (1948), Messer's **Anthology of Favorite Fiddle Tunes** (1980), Phillips's **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994), Silberberg's **Tunes I Learned at Tractor Tavern** (2002) and Songer's **Portland Collection** (1997).

It was recorded by The Leake County Revelers (1929) on **The Leake County Revelers: Saturday Night Breakdown, 1927-1930 Recordings** (1975), Ned Landry and His New Brunswick Lumberjacks on **Saturday Night Breakdown/The Plough Boy's Reel** (1956) and Ned Landry on **Saturday Night Breakdown** (1963).