

Walk Along John

The musical score for "Walk Along John" is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff is marked with a boxed letter 'A' and contains a single measure with a G chord. The second staff contains a single measure with a G chord, followed by a first ending bracketed over the last two measures with chords D and G. The third staff is marked with a boxed letter 'B' and contains a double bar line with a first ending bracketed over the first two measures with chords D and G, followed by a second ending bracketed over the last two measures with chords G, C, and D. The fourth staff contains a single measure with a G chord, followed by a double bar line with a first ending bracketed over the first two measures with chords D and G, followed by a second ending bracketed over the last two measures with chords G, C, and D. The fifth staff contains a first ending bracketed over the first two measures with chords G, D, and G, followed by a second ending bracketed over the last two measures with chords G, D, and G.

"Walk Along John", also known as "Come Along John" or is an American reel or song in cut time and G Major. The parts are played AAB (Theede), AABB (Christeson, Phillips) or AA'BB' (Beisswenger & McCann).

The regionally very popular "Walk along John" was recorded for the Library of Congress by musicologist/folklorist Vance Randolph from the playing of Ozarks Mountains fiddlers in the early 1940's and it was commercially recorded in the 78 RPM era by Luke Highnight and His Ozark Strutters (1928) and Bob Miller and his Hinky Dinkers (1929).

"Walk Along John" is one of the '100 essential Missouri fiddle tunes' according to Missouri fiddler Charlie Walden, although each fiddler seems to have his own variant.

A minstrel song called "Walk Along John" or "Come Along, John" was published in 1844 (music and words attributed to J.P. Carter of the Virginia Serenaders in their published songbook, although it also states it is "an Old Southern Refrain"), perhaps based on an African-American 'corn shucking song' called "Shuck Along John".

It was popular enough to be employed in the 1844 Presidential race between Henry Clay (Kentucky) and James K. Polk (Tennessee), with each side adapting the lyric:

Walk along John, you can't stay,
The people's choice is Harry Clay ... [Whig]

or

Walk along John, you can't stay,
The people's choice is Jimmy K ... [Democrat]

According to Beisswenger & McCann (2008) this song was absorbed into play-party tradition (collected in Indiana [Wolford, 1919]) and in the Ozarks in 1942 (where it had been learned in the 1880's).

It is not the same tune as "Walk along John to Kansas".

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher.

It was printed in Beisswenger & McCann's **Ozarks Fiddle Music** (2008), Thomas Briggs' **Instructions for the Banjo** (1855), R.P. Christeson's **Old Time Fiddler's Repertory, vol. 1** (1973), Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994) (two versions), Theede's **The Fiddle Book** (1967) and Williams' **Evergreen Fiddler vol. 2** (2006).

It was recorded by Lee Stoneking on **Missouri Old Time Fiddlin'** (c. 1970's), Bud Hunt on **Music of the Ozarks** (1984), Lon Jordan (78 RPM) (1941), Art Galbraith on **Simple Pleasures: Old Time Fiddling From The Ozarks** and Bob Carlin on **Banging and Sawing** (1985).