Carroll County Blues

William T. Narmour

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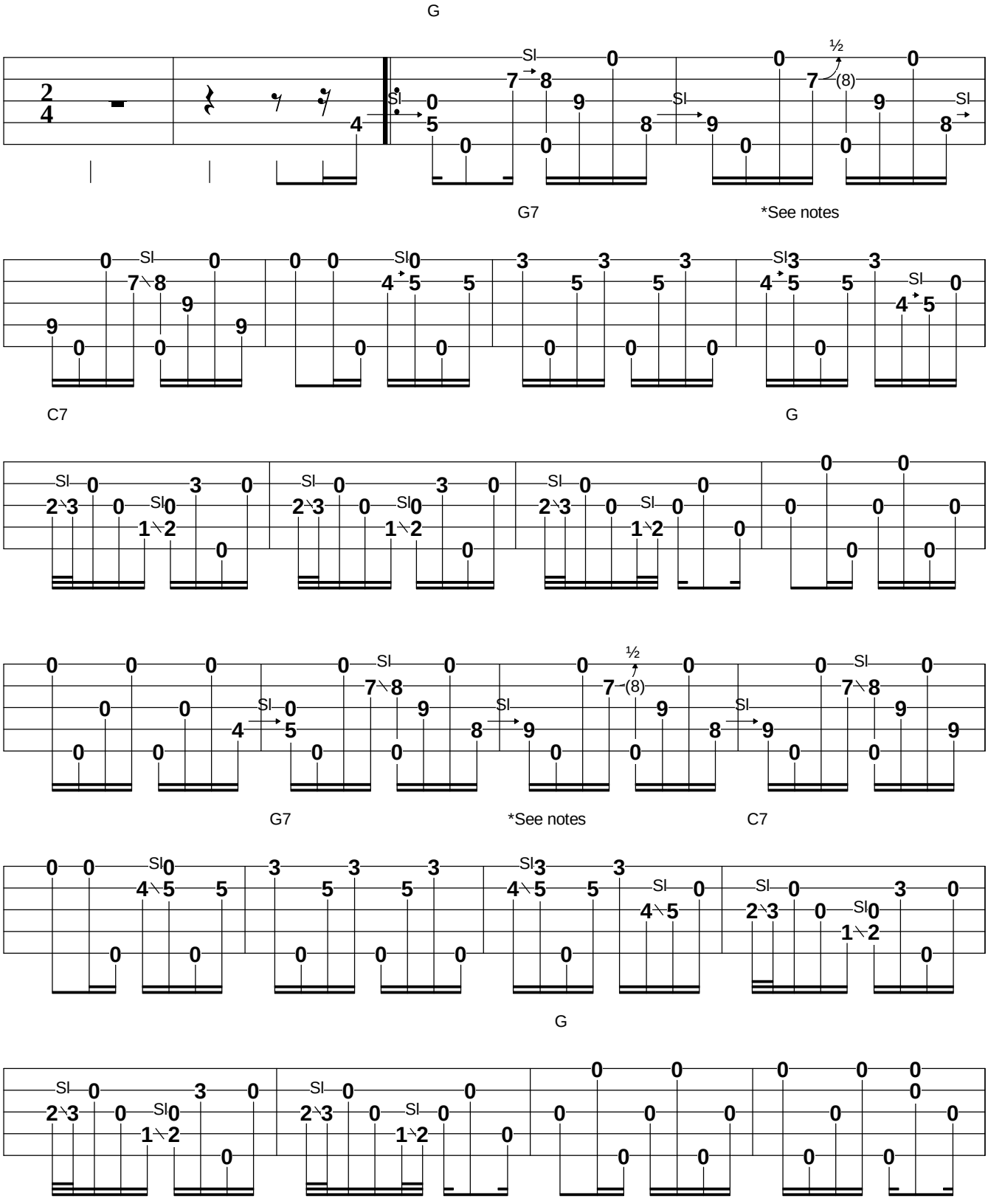
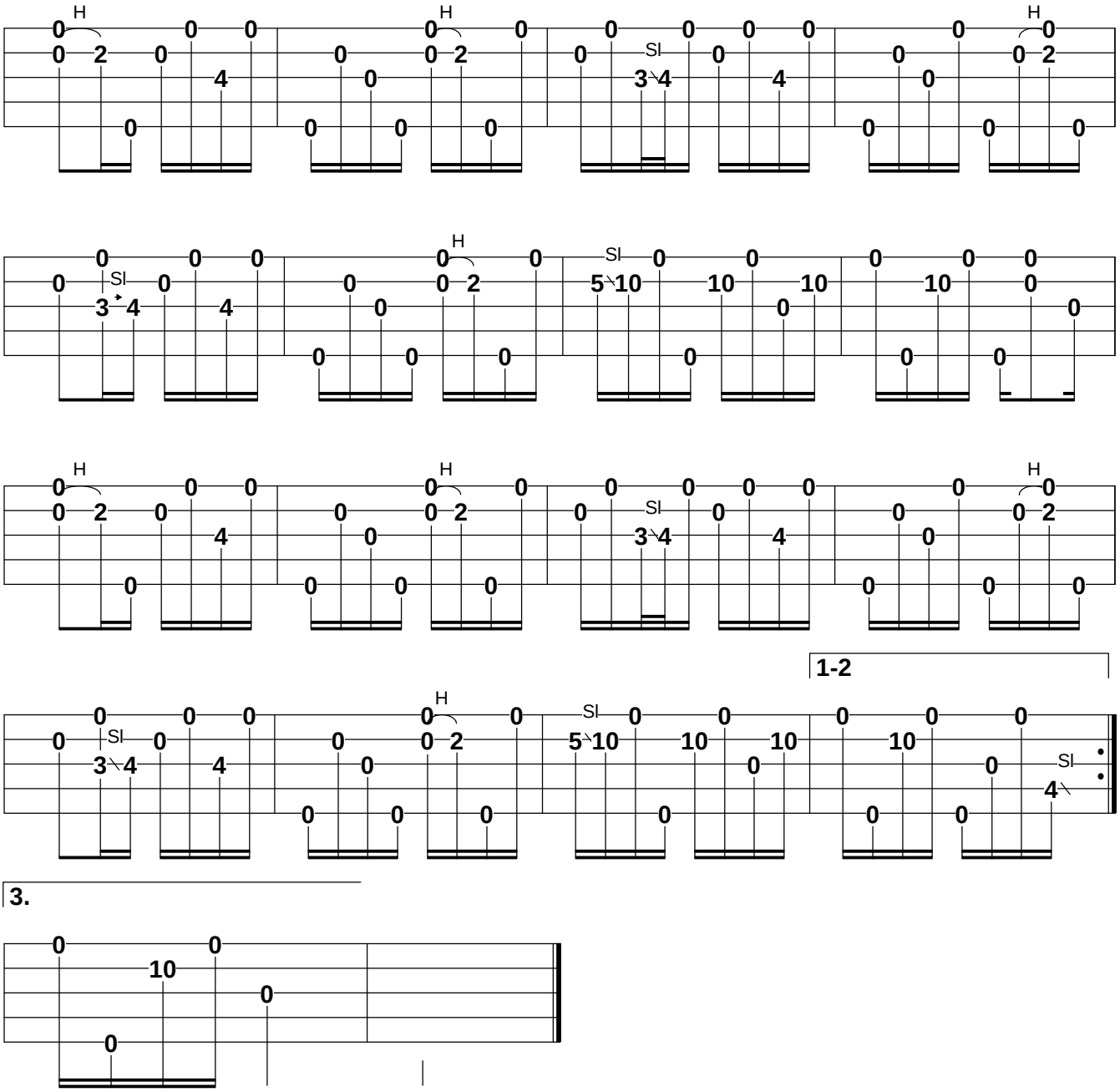
Banjo Tuning: gDGAD



*See notes



This was the signature tune of the Mississippi old time duo of fiddler William T. Narmour and guitarist Shell W. Smith, composed by Narmour in honor of their home county. It was recorded for Okeh Records in March,1929. Just about everyone who has recorded this since has their own timing for it, and this version is also different from the original, based instead on the playing of Alan Kaufman, the fiddler who leads the Sunday night jam at the Burren in Somerville, Masschusetts, which I attend regularly. Alan holds the long D note phrase for six beats before going into the C7 phrase, where Narmour holds it for 5, making iot a little more rational, if still a bit crooked. Doc Watson, in contrast, holds if for only 4 beats. If you want to play it like Doc, just leave at measure 8.

The shuffling B part that starts in measure 25 is actually played an octave lower on the fiddle, but if the notes aren't on the fingerboard, you just have to make do.