



Bbm

F

This tune comes to us from Fiddlin' Doc Roberts (1897-1978) of Madison County, Kentucky, who recorded it for Banner records in August, 1933. He was accompanied on guitar by Asa Martin, his long time musical partner. It has been suggested that the tune is basically Robert's interpretation of the Wabash Blues, a popular jazz tune of the period.

Cumberland Blues is highly syncopated, and I have tried to match Roberts syncopation as much as possible. The A part is a fairly normal country rag in C, with 32 beats, not counting the pick-up notes which segue into the B part. That latter part modulates to F, and also switches to a very irregular melodic and rhythmic structure. Counting the pick-up notes, it has an even 28 beats, but they are divided between measures of 2/4 and 3/4. Admittedly, the location of measure lines is somewhat subjective; I located them based upon the chord changes made by Asa Martin, whose accompaniment I have tabbed out fairly closely in the guitar track, which seems to follow the odd melodic phrasing fairly closely. This is a different approach than most of the transcriptions I have seen, which stick strictly to 2/4 (or 4/4) time, often interrupting the harmonic and melodic strains in what feels to me like mid-measure.