

# Hickman's Rag

Traditional  
Banjo Tuning: gCGCD

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The sheet music is written for a five-string banjo in gCGCD tuning. It is in 2/4 time. The score is organized into seven systems, each consisting of a treble and bass staff. The first two systems include chord diagrams for D, G, C, and A. The notation includes various fret numbers (0-10), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and articulation marks such as slurs, accents, and breath marks (Po). First and second endings are clearly marked. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

The tablature consists of three systems of music. The first system has two lines of music. The first line has notes 9, 9, 11, 9, 9, 9, 5, 6, 6, 9, 6, 9, 6, 6, 7, 6, 6, 9, 0, 3, 4, 5, 7, 7. The second line has notes 0, 0. Chords D and G are indicated above the first and second lines respectively. A circled cross symbol is below the first line. The second system has two lines of music. The first line has notes 9, 10, 9, 9, 11, 10, 9, 9, 9, 8, 9, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 5, 7. The second line has notes 0, 0. Chords C and H are indicated above the first and second lines respectively. A circled cross symbol is below the first line. A double bar line is after the 15th measure, with '1.' and '2.' below it. The third system has one line of music. The first line has notes 0, 0, 7, 10, 10, 9, 9, 9, 8, 9, 9, 8, 0, 0, 0, 0. The second line has notes 9, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0. Chord SI is indicated above the first line. A circled cross symbol is below the first line. The final chord diagram shows a cross on the 1st string, 0 on the 2nd, 0 on the 3rd, 0 on the 4th, and an X on the 5th string.

Hickman Rag was the first tune recorded by East Tennessee fiddler Charlie Bowman, for Vocalion Records in May, 1926. Bowman was accompanied by the Hopkins brothers, Al, Joe, and John, who were the core members of a group called the Hill Billies, and later the Bucklebusters, one of the pioneer bands of old-time country music. All three parts of Hickman's rag follow a classic circle of fourths chord progression, starting on A, moving through D and G, and ending in C, two measures for each chord. This is a basic and standard ragtime progression. It is highly syncopated; I have highlighted some of the specific off-the-beat notes in this setting that should be emphasized.