

Red Rocking Chair

Traditional

Arrangement (c) Copyright 2008 by Donald J. Borchelt
All rights reserved.

2/4

Am (Gm) G (F) Am (Gm)

6 G (F) Am (Gm)

10 G (F) Am (Gm)

15 G (F) Am (Gm)

19 G (F) Am (Gm)

23 G (F) Am (Gm) 1.

27 Up the neck break G (F) Am (Gm)

The tablature consists of seven systems of six-line guitar staves. The first system includes a 2/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (Bb). Chord changes are indicated by Am (Gm), G (F), and Am (Gm) above the staff. Measure numbers 6, 10, 15, 19, 23, and 27 are placed at the beginning of their respective systems. The 'Up the neck break' section at measure 27 features high fret bends (10, 12) and a grace note. The piece concludes with a first ending bracket over measures 23-26.

31 G (F) Am (Gm)

35 G (F) Am (Gm)

40 G (F) Am (Gm)

44 G (F) Am (Gm)

48 G (F) Am (Gm) 2. Am (Gm)

This is more of a banjo song than it is a fiddle tune, coming out of the mountains of West Virginia. It was in the Hammons family repertoire, and is pretty much the same song as Sugar Babe, recorded by Dock Boggs, the old-time three-finger picker, known for his recordings of Oh Death and Country Blues. I owe this version to the fine MP3 recording posted by Banjo Hangout member Hamp Henning, from Leawood, Kansas. What sounds like a B part, starting in measures 14 and 38, is really just a variation of the tune melody, I suspect.

This tune is basically pentatonic, in Dorian mode, a minor sounding scale with a flatted third and flatted seventh tone. Unlike all of the other Dorian tunes I do, which I now pick out of gDGAD, I have set this one in regular sawmill tuning, gDGC, where a clawhammer picker would do it. There is no A note in this pentatonic, or five note scale, and so there is not use for the open A note. On the other hand, the melody relies heavily on the C, or 4th interval, which is the pitch of the open 2nd string in Sawmill. Note the harmonic notes in the up the enck break, in measures 36 and 48.

Who'll rock the cradle
 Who'll sing this song
 Who'll rock the cradle when I'm gone
 Who'll rock the cradle when I'm gone

Well I'll rock the cradle

I'll sing the song
I'll rock the cradle when you're gone
I'll rock the cradle when you're gone

It's all I can do
It's all I can sing
Sing it to your mama next payday
I'll sing it to your mama next payday

I ain't got no use
For your red rocking chair
I ain't got no sugar baby, no
I ain't got no sugar baby, no

I done all I can do
I sung all I can sing
I'll sing it to your mama next payday
I'll sing it to your mama next payday

I ain't got no use
For your red rocking chair
I ain't got no honey baby, no
I ain't got no sugar baby, no