

Texas
Traditional

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Guitar tablature for the song "Texas". The score is written for a guitar in standard tuning (D-A-G-D-G) and 4/4 time. The piece is in the key of G minor, with a key signature of one flat. The tempo is marked as 4/4. The score consists of 20 measures, divided into two systems of ten measures each. The first system (measures 1-10) features a Gm chord in measures 1-3, a C chord in measure 4, and Gm and D7 chords in measures 5-10. The second system (measures 11-20) features D7 and Gm chords in measures 11-16, a 2/4 time signature change in measure 17, and Gm and D7 chords in measures 18-20. The tablature includes various techniques such as slides (SI), bends (B), and grace notes (Po). The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots in measure 20.

23 **Gm** **C** **Gm**

26 **Gm** **D7**

29 **Gm** **Gm**

32 **C** **Gm**

35 **D7** **Gm**

38 **Gm** **Gm**

This is another modal tune I learned from clawhammer picker and banjo historian Ed Britt. After I learned the tune from Ed one night, I went back and listened to the original Henry Reed field recording, on the Library of Congress web site, and worked things together. This is a very archaic sounding tune, and like a number of such tunes, it has what a modern ear hears as an extra half measure of music thrown in at the turn-around for each part. This is often called "crooked time," or sometimes "poor time." I have heard it proposed that this represents an undisciplined practice which somehow creeps into the playing of musicians, particularly fiddlers, who live in relative isolation in mountain communities and rarely play with other musicians.

I don't agree. Instead, I think that tunes like this were most often found in such isolated communities because the music was still

relatively unadulterated by modern influences- not an example of slovenly playing, but rather a transitional practice which reflects an earlier time when music was essentially unmeasured. Ancient plainsong was completely unmeasured; the rhythm of the music followed the natural rhythm of the words. This practice is still found in traditional vocal music. Ballad collectors often become stymied trying to prepare transcriptions of rural singers, and write out the notation with two and often three or more different time signatures scattered throughout. It would be more accurate to transcribe the tunes with no time signature- and indeed with no measure lines- at all. Unlike the vocal tunes, the fiddle tunes such as this one do clearly have a dominant meter, but when the melody as the musician hears it demands a deviation, the musician rooted in ancient practice feels no compulsion to ignore it.

The first version of this tune follows the fiddle more than the banjo, while the up the neck (well, higher up the neck) version follows more closely the clawhammer renditions. In Measure 16 there is a second string choke at the seventh fret; in practice, I choke the string, hold it in place, pick the string again, and relax the choke. This technique cannot be transcribed in this software, so I have written it as a normal choke. It works either way.