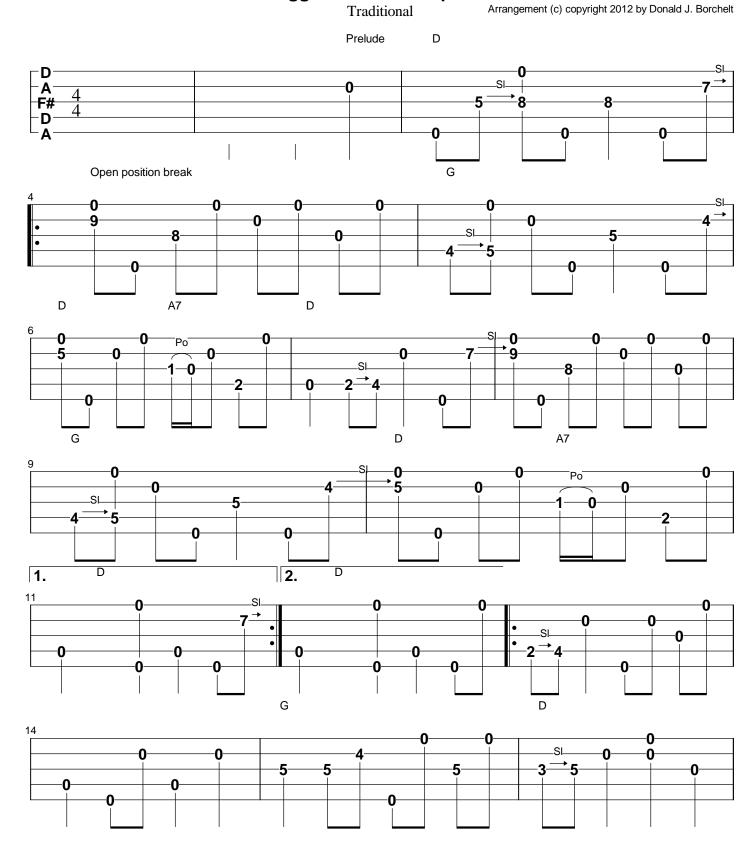
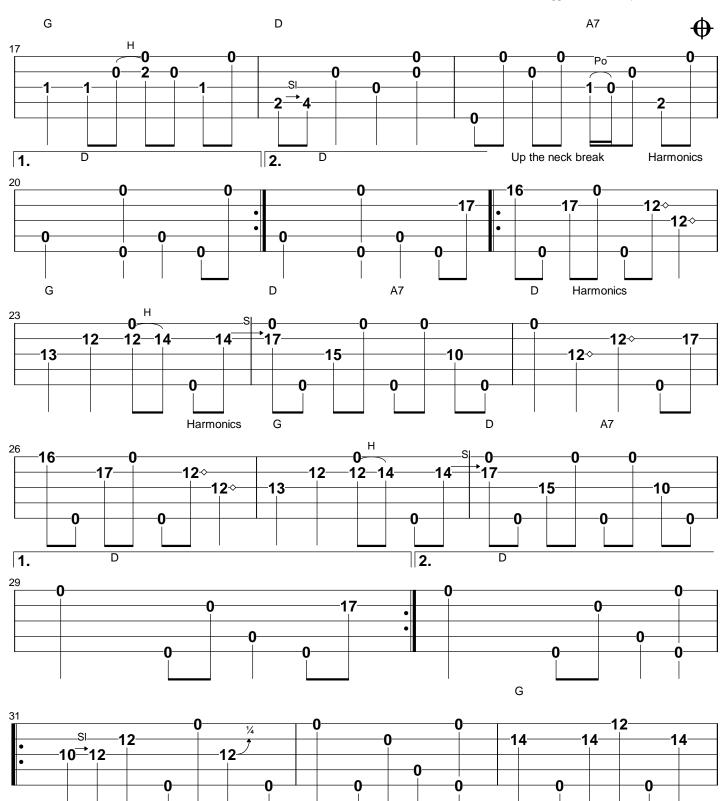
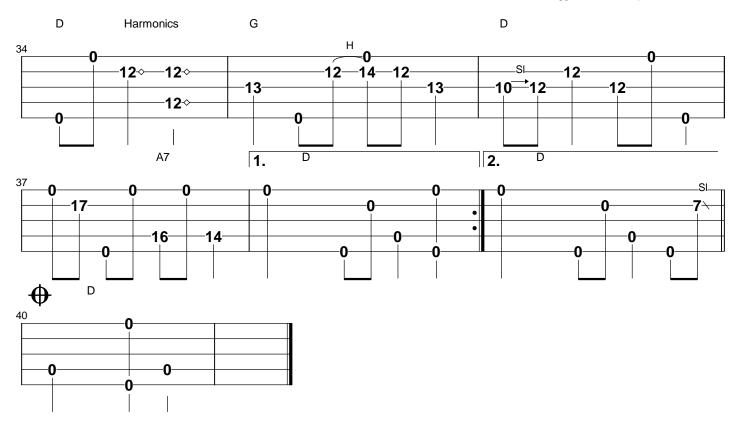
Maggots in the Sheep Hide







This is a tune from western Pennsylvania fiddler Sarah Armstrong, as transcribed by musicologist Samuel Bayard in his Hill Country Tunes collection, published in 1944. I first heard this tune a few yeas ago when Linda Henry and Jerry Dallal played it at the weekly Sunday night old time music jam at the Skellig, in Waltham, Massachusetts. Bayard states that "a notable feature of this dance air is its short three-note prelude, which is never played except at the very start, and is left out of all subsequent repetitions."

If you are wondering about the odd title, apparently infestation of living sheep by blowfly (lucilia cuprina) maggots is a common agricultural problem. The desease is called fly strike, and if not immediately treated can cause the animal an agonizing death. Doesn't seem to fit with the happy tune, but go figure.