Ragged Shirt

Traditional

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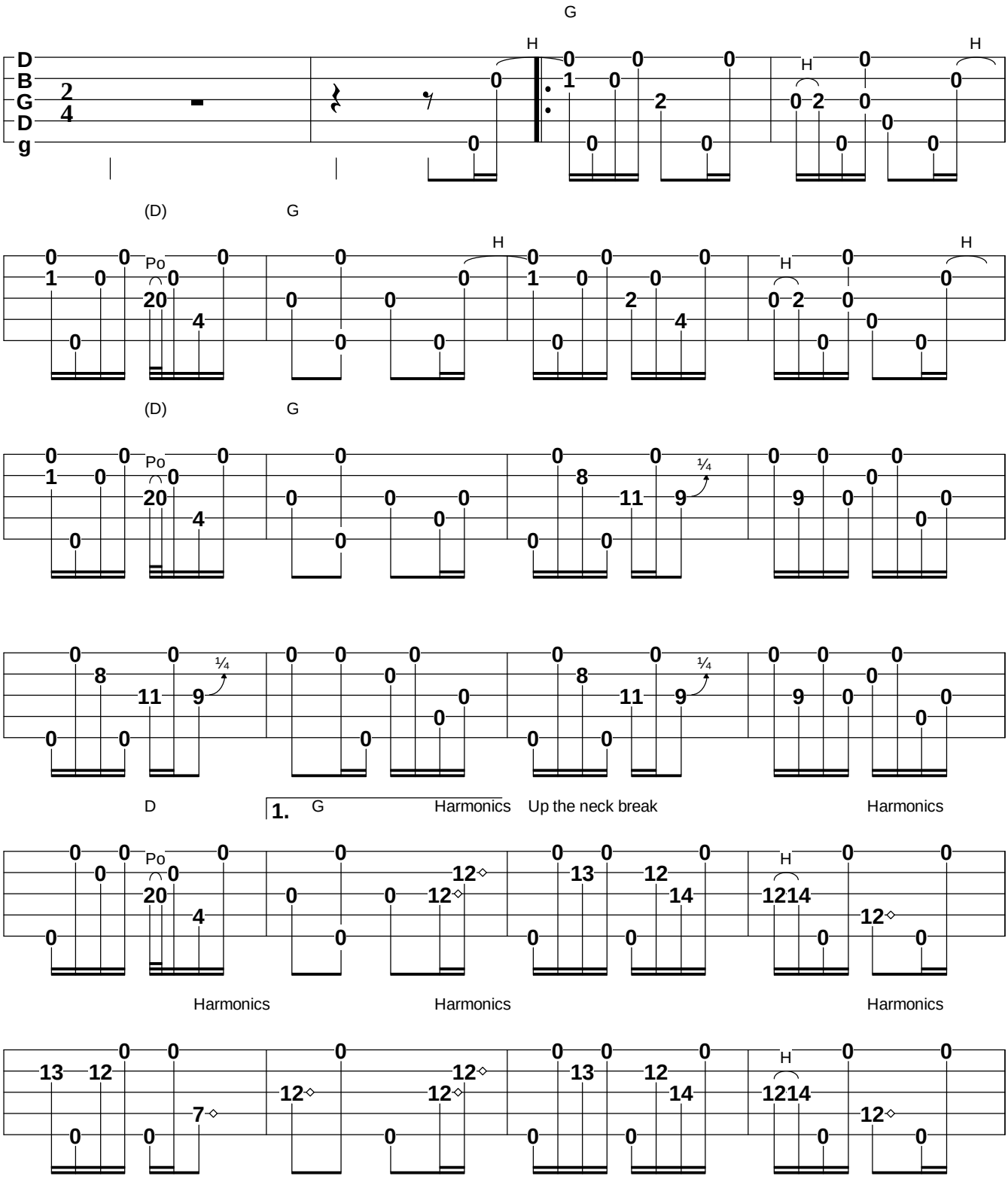

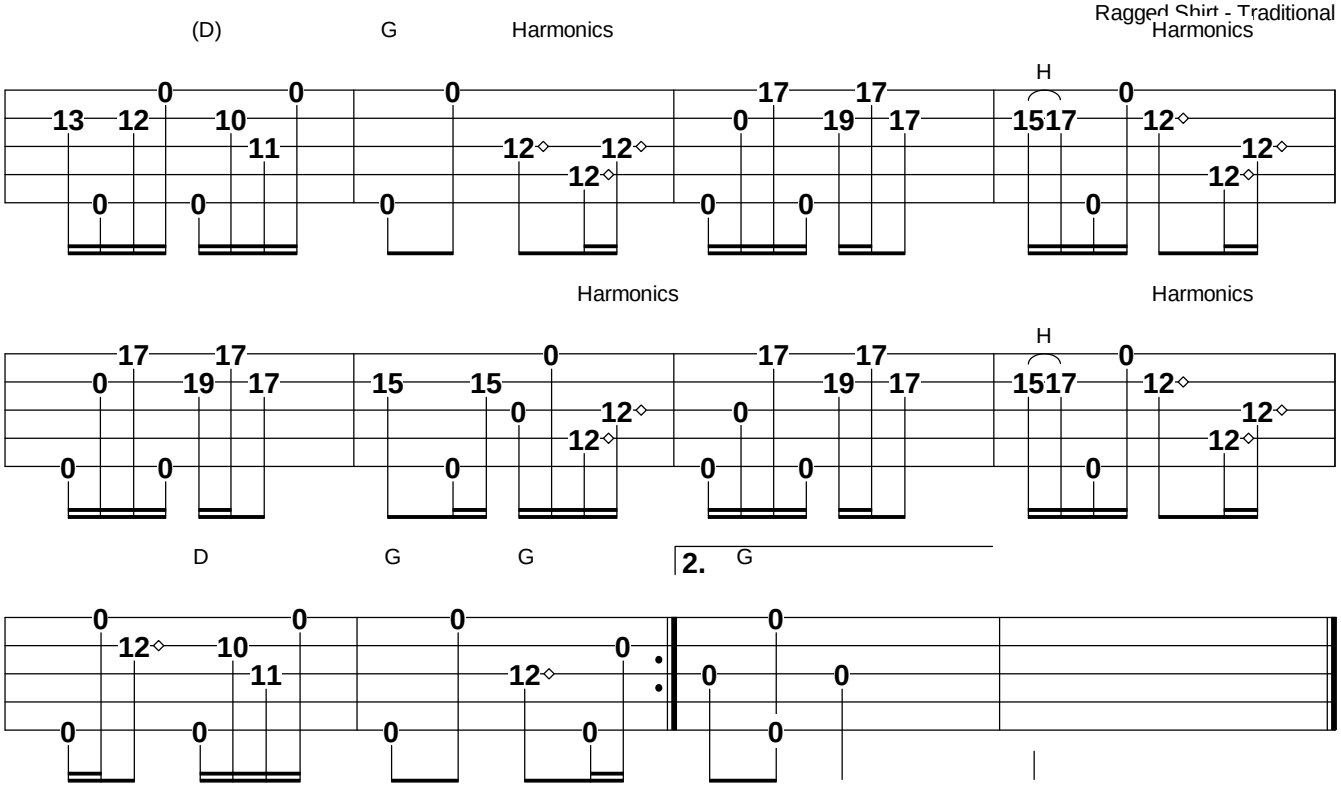

This hypnotic tune comes from the playing of Ralph Roberts of Frametown, West Virginia, who is, as I first learned form his wife Charlie, kin to the Hammons. The tune is deceptive; when you listen carefully to the notes as Ralph plays them on the fiddle, it is not quite as simple as it first sounds.

Note my liberal use of harmonics in the up the neck variation. I am looking for the sustain that continues after the finger is removed, as if it were an open string, as much as I am the bell like clarity of the tone. The back up stays almost entirely on the tonic chord, the G chord, throughout this piece, with just the suggestion of a V (D) chord at the cadence at the end of each final strain. When we first played this tune with Ralph camping at Clifftop in 2012, that's how the guitar player, Don Couchie, of Ontario, Canada, heard it, and I think he was right.