A JUMPIN' JIM'S UKULELE SONGBOOK







blues
standards
arranged
for the
ukulele
by
fred
sokolow

BLUES UHULELE

ARRANGED BY FRED SOKOLOW

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Introduction

hat music they call "the blues" is a great communicator. It reaches people. Maybe that's why the ukulele-playing public is crying out for a blues songbook. Not only do they want to strum and sing the blues, they want to play blues licks on the uke.

Finally, you have found the definitive ukulele blues songbook. Most of the songs in this collection are ever-popular blues standards that have been performed and recorded by hundreds of famous blues players and singers. Many of them go back as far as the early 1900s, some even further.

There are two arrangements of each song in this book:

- The first one gives you lyrics, melody, and uke chords to strum while singing.
- The second is a chord/melody arrangement for uke soloing written in tablature with chord grids. In other words, like a blues guitarist or pianist, you play the song's melody and chords, simultaneously, with a lot of blues licks thrown in.

Of course, you can combine the two: sing/strum the tune, then play the chord/melody arrangement as an instrumental solo.

A peek at the contents list reveals that there is a great variety of sounds included in what they call "the blues." There are classic twelve-bar blues tunes here, like "C. C. Rider," "St. Louis Blues" and "Stagolee," jazzy or ragtimey blues numbers like "T'ain't Nobody's Biz-ness, If I Do" and "Oh Daddy Blues," and a few Tin Pan Alley songs that are about the blues, like "Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives To Me" and "Limehouse Blues." There are slow blues laments and blues that rock.

Learn these arrangements and you'll be playing some all-time great blues hits, plus a few lesser-known gems. You'll also pick up a number of blues licks that can be applied to other blues tunes, in many different keys. You probably already know this, but it's worth repeating: Playing the blues can help you lose the blues!

Here's to more picking and strumming, blue and otherwise!

Fred Scholow

www.sokolowmusic.com

P.S. When playing chord/melody solos on guitar, it's best to put the melody on the first or second strings, and if the melody note is on the second string, one often does not play the first string. This makes the melody note the highest note in the chord, giving it the emphasis it deserves. The same goes for playing chord/melody solos on uke, except the uke's high-pitched fourth string sometimes provides a handy melody note as well. In the arrangements that follow, you'll occasionally find the melody shifting from the first or second string to the fourth string.

The CD that comes with this book includes both arrangements of each song. It's always helpful to listen to each tune several times before learning the arrangement.

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Chords Used In This Book

Most of these chords are good for general use. The unusual "partial chords" (some are only two notes) work in the arrangements in this book, sometimes as passing chords.

| Ab 3 | A ^b 7 | A | A O 4 | A6 ° | A6 9 | Am | Am O | Am 7 | Am7 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| A7. | A7 ° | A7 | xA7 | x A7 x | A7+ | A769 | A9 | A9 | A9 |
| A9 | Adim | Adim | B | B ^b 6 | B♭6 | B 6 | B 6 | B♭add9 | B ^b m |
| Bbm6 | Bbm7 | B ^b 7 | Bb7b5 | Bb9 | Bm | B7 | B7 | B7÷ | B769 |
| Bdim | C | C | C | C x | C6 | C6 | C6 | Cmaj7 | Cmaj7 |
| Cm | Cm | Cm6 | Cm6 | Cm7 | . C7 | C7 × | C7 | . C9 | C9 |
| C9 | Cdim | C#7 | C#9 | Db6 | D [♭] 7 | D | $\bigcup_{i=1}^{D} 2$ | 5 D | D6 |
| Dmaj7 | Dm | Dm 5 | Dm6 | Dm7 | Dm7 | Dm7 | Dm7 ¹ 5 | D7 | D7 |
| D7#5 | D13 | Ddim | D [#] x | D [#] dim | E | Eb | E 6 | E ^b 7 | Eþ7þ9 |
| Eb9 | E | E _x 7 | E6 | Em | Em | Em7 ^b 5 | E7 | E7 | E7 |
| E7#5 | E7 ^b 9 | E7 ^b 9 | E7 ^b 9+ | E9 | E9 * * * * 5 | E13 | E13 ^b 9 | F | · |
| F 5 | F 5 | F | F6 5 | Fmaj7 | Fm | Fm 3 | Fm6 | Fm7 | Fm(maj7) |
| Fmll | F7 . | F7 | , F9 | F9 | F13 | Fdim 4 | F#m _o | F#7 | F#9 |
| F [#] or G ^b | o G | . G6 | Gadd9 | Gm | Gm | Gm 5 | Gm6 | Gm7 | Gm7♭5 |
| . G7 | G7sus | . G9 . | G9 3 | G9 | G13 | Gdim | Gdim | x G # 7 x | G#9 |



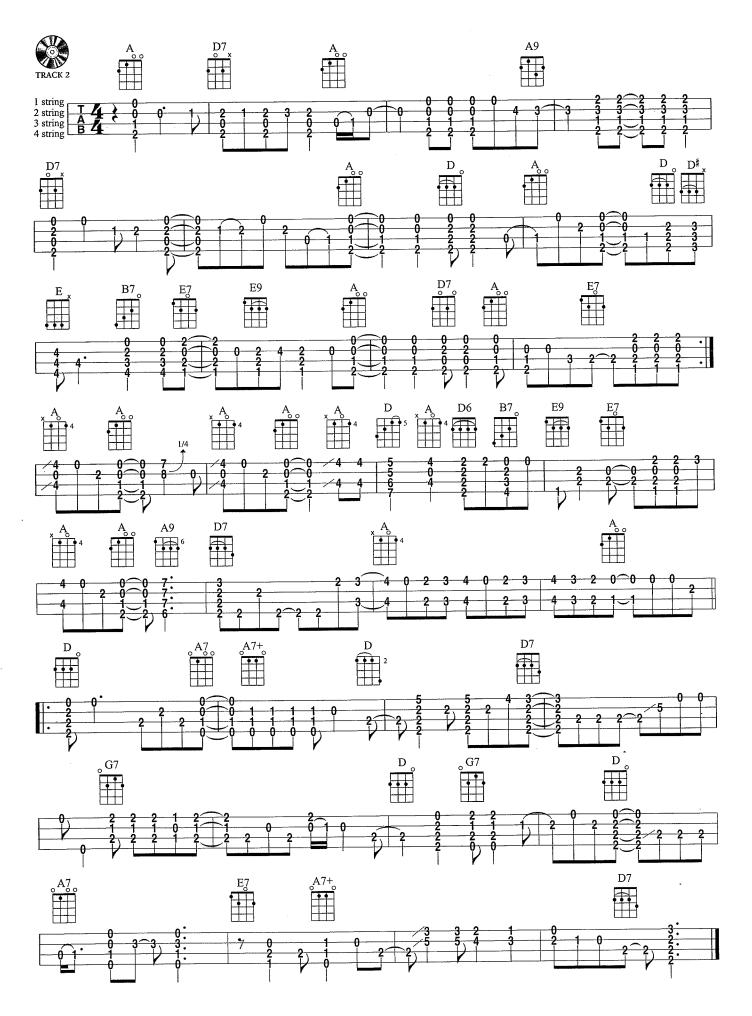
Beale Street Blues

In 1907, when W. C. Handy and his blues band moved to Memphis, Tennessee, their headquarters were on Beale Avenue. In 1916, Handy's song "Beale Street Blues," a tribute to the colorful neighborhood, became a big hit, and it's been "Beale Street," ever since then. It was then, and still is, one of the blues capitals of the world.



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Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives To Me

This rollicking number was written by Arthur Swanstone, Charles McCarron and Carey Morgan in 1919. Spike Jones performed it in the 1950s, and contemporary jug bands and swing bands know it from Jim Kweskin's early 1960's version.

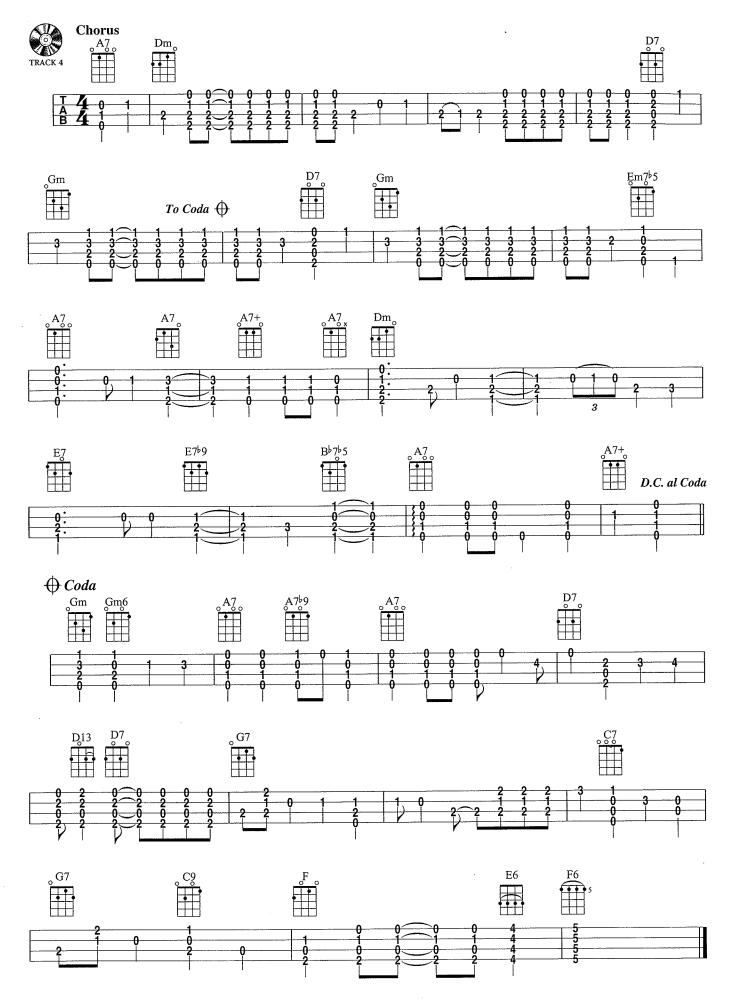




Additional Lyrics

2. There are blues that you get from sweetie, when she phones to another guy, and there are blues when your honey spends all of your money, and blues when she tells you a lie.

There are blues that you get when married, wishing that you could be free. But the kind of blues that always stabs, comes from hiring taxicabs, the blues my naughty sweetie gives to me.

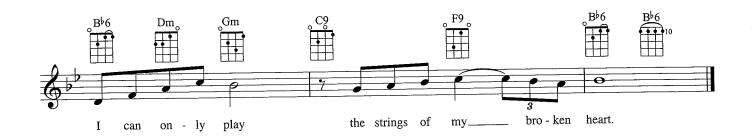


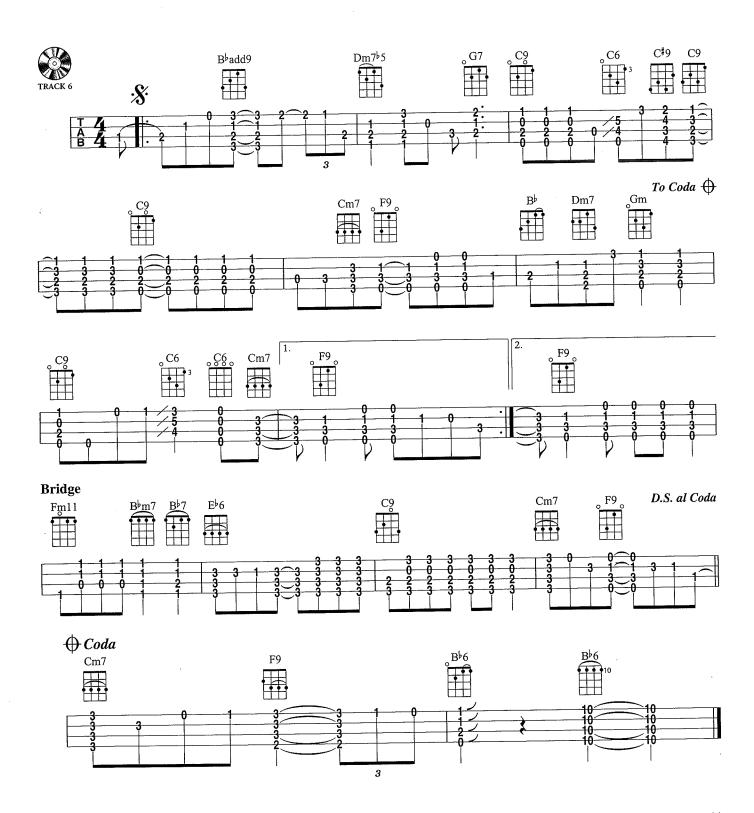


Blues On A Ukulele

Asy, it's not technically a blues, but it's *about* the blues, and how could we not include a song that starts "They say you can't play blues on a ukulele...but there they are wrong?" This jazzy number is on a CD called *The Finer Things*, which consists of tunes written by Jim Beloff and Herb Ohta.



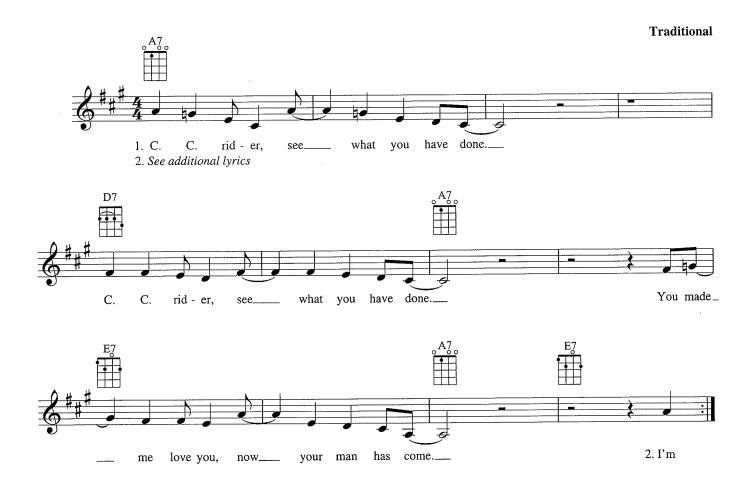






C. C. Rider

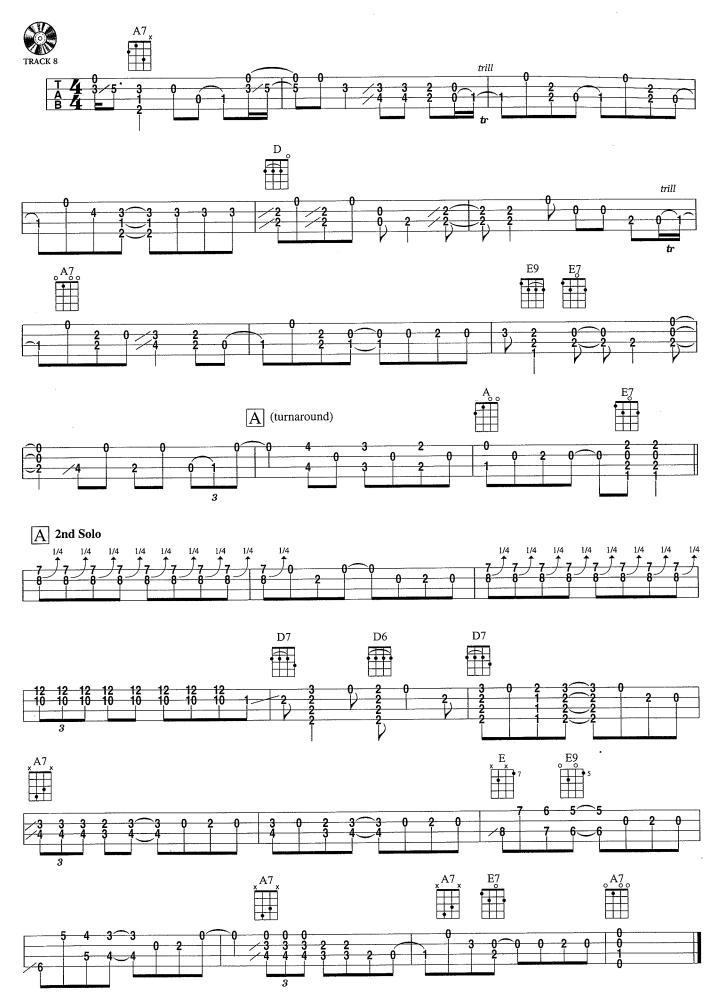
This twelve-bar blues has been recorded by countless blues, R&B and rock artists, starting with Ma Rainey in 1924. It has been a hit on the R&B or pop charts in every decade since then, notably by Chuck Willis and Mitch Ryder. The tune has also been sung as "See See Rider," or "easy rider," meaning a back door man (who a married woman sees on the side, when her husband's away), or a woman of easy virtue, or a prostitute, or a pimp, depending on whose interpretation you believe! The first uke solo expresses the song's melody, the second solo is an improvisation with some classic blues licks.



Additional Lyrics

- 2. I'm goin' away, baby, I won't be back 'til fall. Goin' away, baby, won't be back 'til fall. If I find me a good gal, I won't be back at all.
- 3. C. C. rider, where'd you stay last night?C. C. rider, where'd you stay last night?You come home this morning, the sun was shining bright.

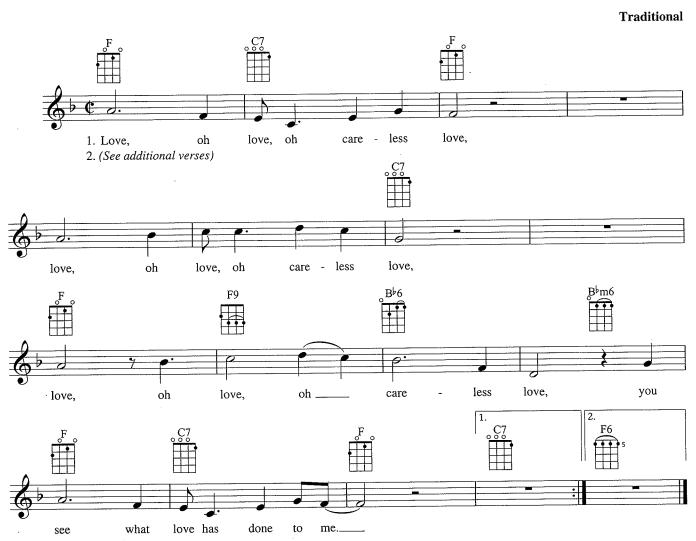
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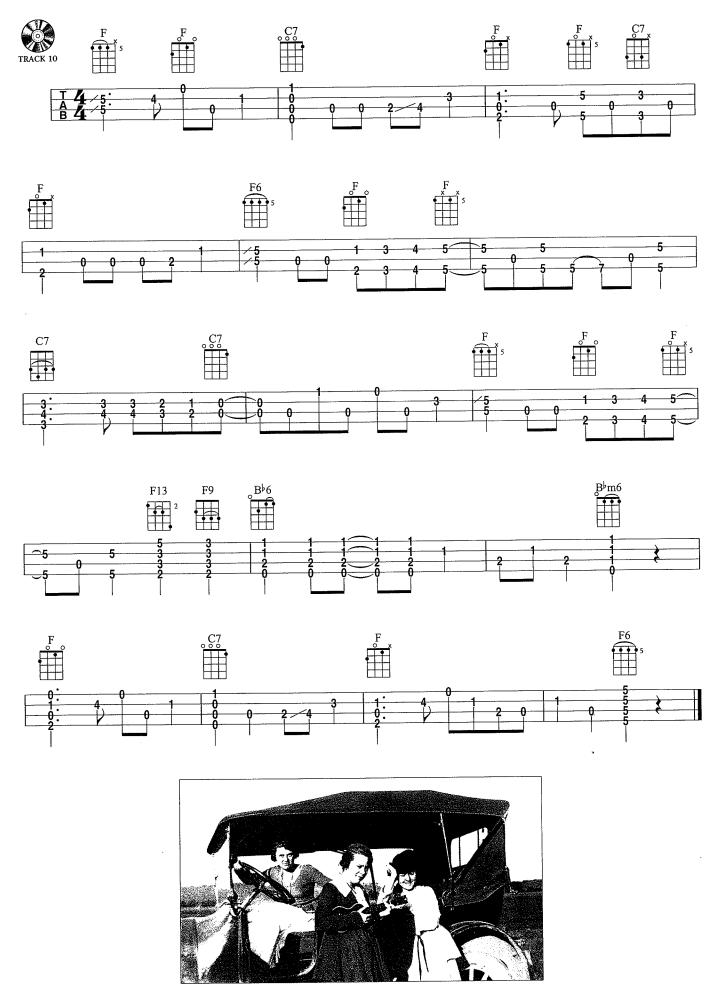


Careless Love

Probably from an old Irish folk song, this tune is a lament by a girl whose man got tired of her, after he got her pregnant. Made famous around 1900 by Buddy Bolden, one of the originators of jazz, the tune has been recorded by blues artists like Bessie Smith, Lonnie Johnson, Leadbelly and Big Joe Turner, folksingers like Pete Seeger and Joan Baez, R&B artists like Fats Domino and Ray Charles, rockers like Elvis, Dr. John, Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin...plus Louis Armstrong, Frankie Laine, Madeleine Peyroux, Bill Monroe and Johnny Cash, just to name a few more!



- When I wore my apron low, when I wore my apron low, when I wore my apron low, you'd follow me through ice and snow.
- Now my apron strings don't pin.
 Now my apron strings don't pin.
 Now my apron strings don't pin.
 You pass my door and you won't come in.
- 4. I cried last night and the night before.
 I cried last night and the night before.
 I cried last night and the night before.
 Gonna cry tonight, then cry no more.

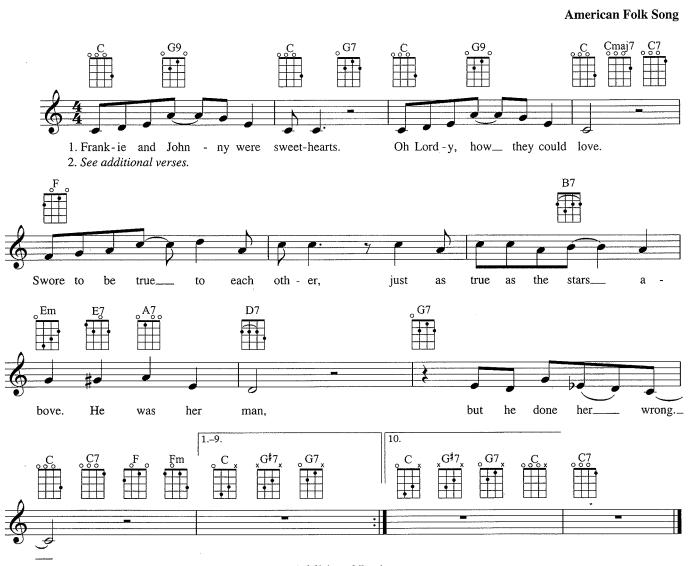




Frankie And Johnny

There are hundreds of recorded versions of this tale of infidelity and murder, and some are about Frankie and Albert, real people who played out the drama told in the song, in St. Louis in 1899. But many folklorists claim that major parts of the song go back a half century before that incident.

Several movies and plays have been based on the story, and like most of the songs in this collection, the tale has enough drama to have inspired an incredibly diverse group of artists to record it. They include such seminal musical luminaries as Leadbelly, Johnny Cash, Sam Cooke, Lonnie Donegan, Bob Dylan, Mississippi John Hurt, Charlie Patton, Charlie Poole, Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis Presley, Jimmie Rodgers, Gene Vincent, Fats Waller, Van Morrison, Stevie Wonder, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman.



- 2. Frankie went down to the corner, just for a bucket of beer. She says, "Mister bartender, has my lovin' Johnny been here? He's my man, he wouldn't do me wrong."
- 4. Frankie went down to the hotel. Didn't go there for fun. Underneath her kimono, she carried a fourty-four gun. He was her man, but he was doin' her wrong.
- 3. "I don't want to cause you no trouble, I ain't gonna tell you no lie. I saw Johnny an hour ago with a girl named Nellie Bly. He was your man, but he's doin' you wrong."
- 5. Frankie looked over the transom. She saw, to her surprise, there on a cot sat Johnny, makin' love to Nellie Bly. He was her man, but he was doin' her wrong.

- 6. Frankie threw back her kimono, took out her old forty-four.

 Rooty-toot-toot, three times she shot right through that hardwood door.

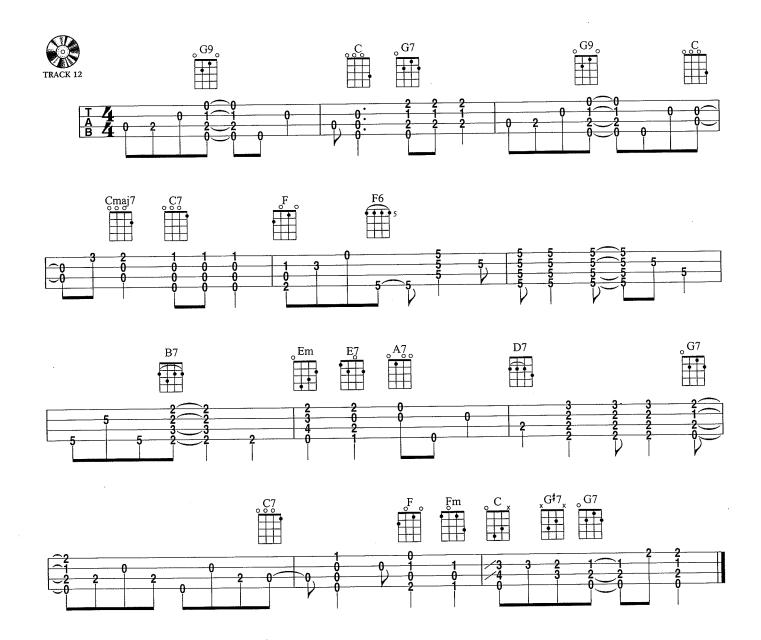
 Shot her man, he was doin' her wrong.
- 7. "Bring out the rubber-tired hearses, bring out the rubber-tired hacks.

 They're takin' my Johnny to the graveyard, but they ain't gonna bring him back.

 He was my man, and he done me wrong."
- 8. "Bring out a thousand policemen to carry me away.

 Lock me down in a dungeon cell and throw that key away.

 I shot my man, he was doin' me wrong."
- 9. Frankie she said to the warden, "What do you reckon they'll do?" The warden, he said to Frankie, "It's the electric chair for you, 'cause you shot your man, he was doin' you wrong."
- 10. This story has no moral, this story has no end. This story only just goes to show that there ain't no good in men. He was her man, and he done her wrong.

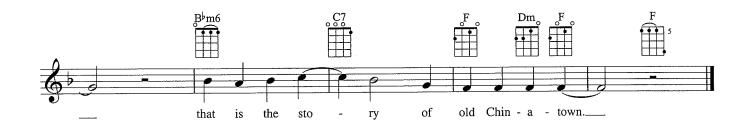


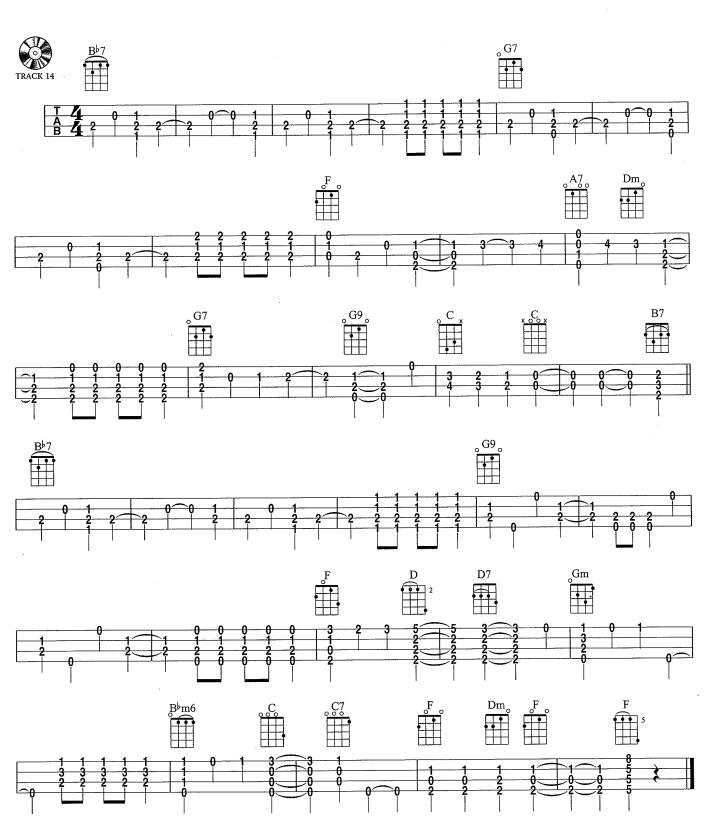


Limehouse Blues

Tt's not a blues, but this bluesy Tin Pan Alley song was written in England in 1918, just as the W. C. Handy-inspired blues craze was kicking in...hence, the title. Limehouse was London's Chinatown.









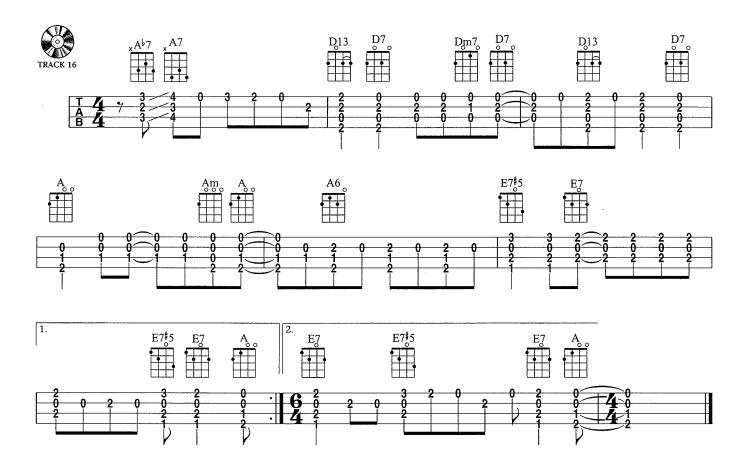
Midnight Special

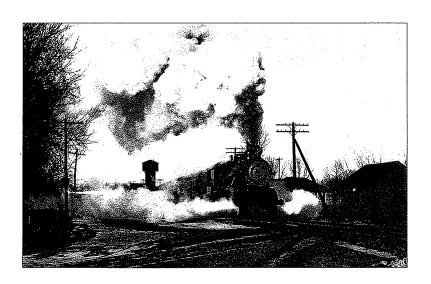
Leadbelly popularized this old folk tune, which goes back at least as far as the early 1920s. It's sung by a prisoner about a train that leaves the depot every midnight and passes the penitentiary. The song has been recorded by a long list of blues, folk, R&B and rock artists, including many UK rockers like Eric Clapton, Van Morrison, Spencer Davis and Paul McCartney, possibly because it was popularized in England by Lonnie Donegan. He started the skiffle (acoustic/folk) craze there, that motivated many a pre-teen, future British rock star to pick up a guitar.



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- 2. Yonder comes Miss Rosie. How in the world did you know? By the way she wears her apron, and the clothes she wore. Umbrella on her shoulder, piece of paper in her hand. She come to tell the governor, "Turn loose of my man."
- 3. If you're ever in Houston, well you'd better walk right. You'd better not swagger, and you better not fight, or the sheriff will arrest you, he's gonna take you down. You can bet your bottom dollar, you're penitentiary bound.





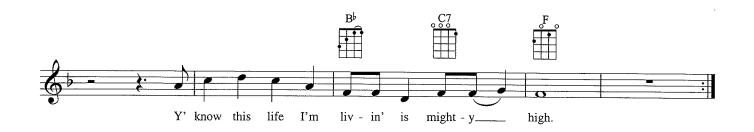


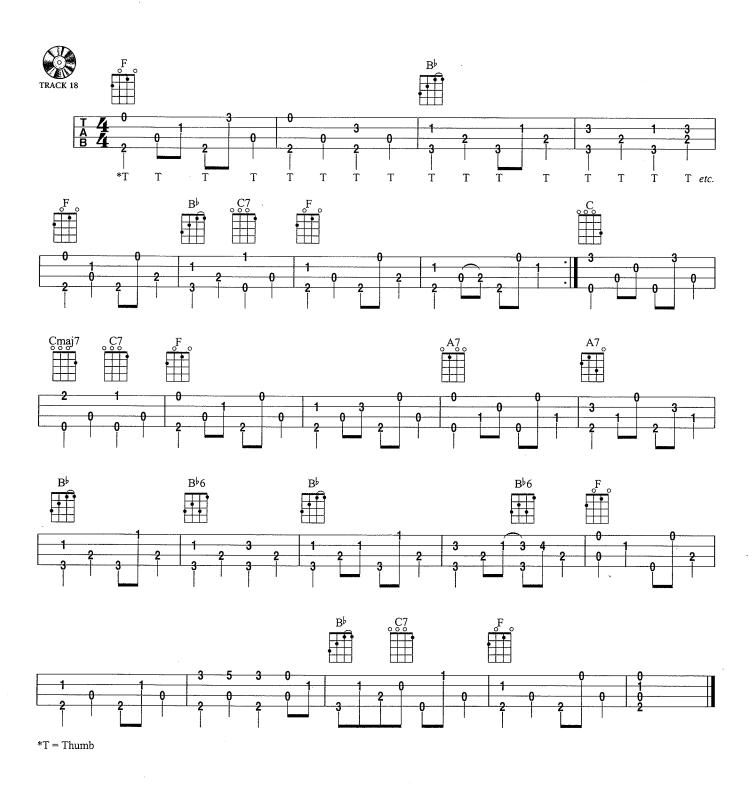
Oh, Babe, It Ain't No Lie

Elizabeth Cotten, who wrote the famous tune "Freight Train," popularized this old folk blues, which comes from North Carolina. Cotten played guitar and banjo upside down, left handed, but strung normally. She was a housekeeper for the Seeger family (Pete's parents) and when they discovered her musical talent, they helped launch her career. She performed on the 1960s folk circuit and recorded for Folkways Records (their catalog, now owned by the Smithsonian, is still available). She continued to perform into her eighties, and "Freight Train" became a must-learn tune for fingerpicking guitarists.

This uke arrangement of "Oh, Babe, It Ain't No Lie" imitates Cotten's alternating-thumb bass/fingerpicking guitar style. The "T"s under the tablature indicate which notes are picked by the thumb.





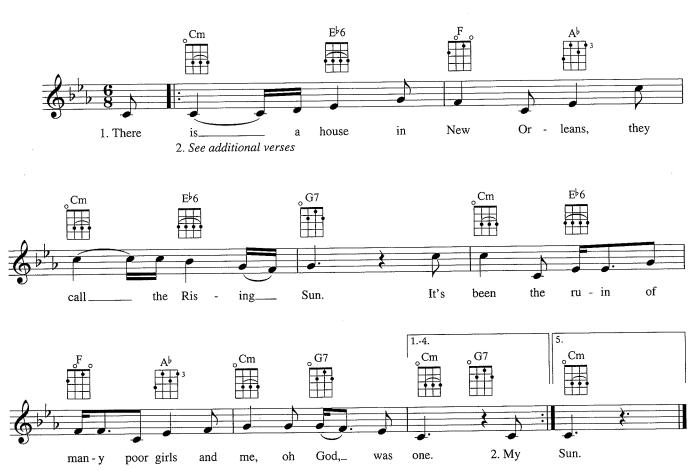




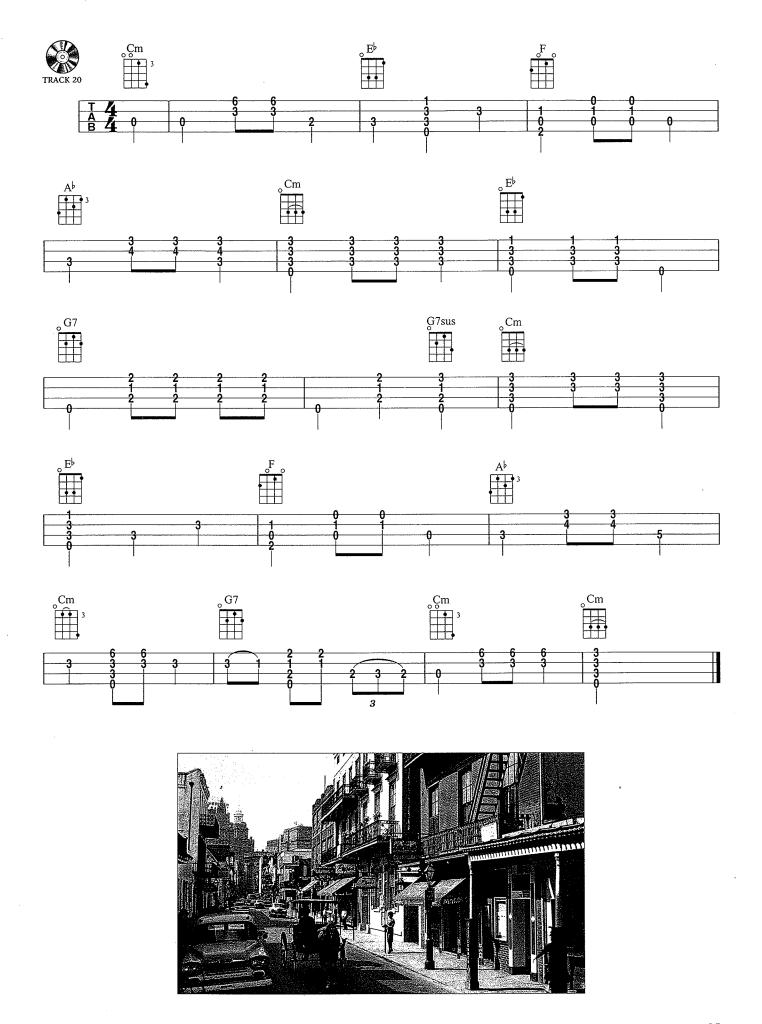
Rising Sun Blues

It may be a brothel, may be a women's prison, but countless blues, folk and rock performers have sung about the "House of the Rising Sun." The first recording was by Clarence Ashley in 1933, but the song is much older than that.

Traditional



- My mother was a tailor, she sewed my old blue jeans.My father was a gambling man, down in New Orleans.
- 3. The only thing a gambler needs is a suitcase and a trunk, and the only time he's satisfied is when he's on a drunk.
- 4. Go and tell my baby sister not to do what I have done, and shun that house in New Orleans they call the Rising Sun.
- 5. I'm going back to New Orleans, my race is nearly run.
 I'm going to spend the rest of my life beneath the Rising Sun.





St. James Infirmary

Lalso called "Gambler's Blues." The song goes back as far as the 18th century. Blind Willie McTell recorded a variant in the early '30s, and Bob Dylan's excellent song "Blind Willie McTell" has a similar melody and chord structure (and mentions the St. James Hotel). "St. James Infirmary" is one of many blues songs in which the singer, anticipating his demise, leaves funeral instructions to anyone who might be listening.



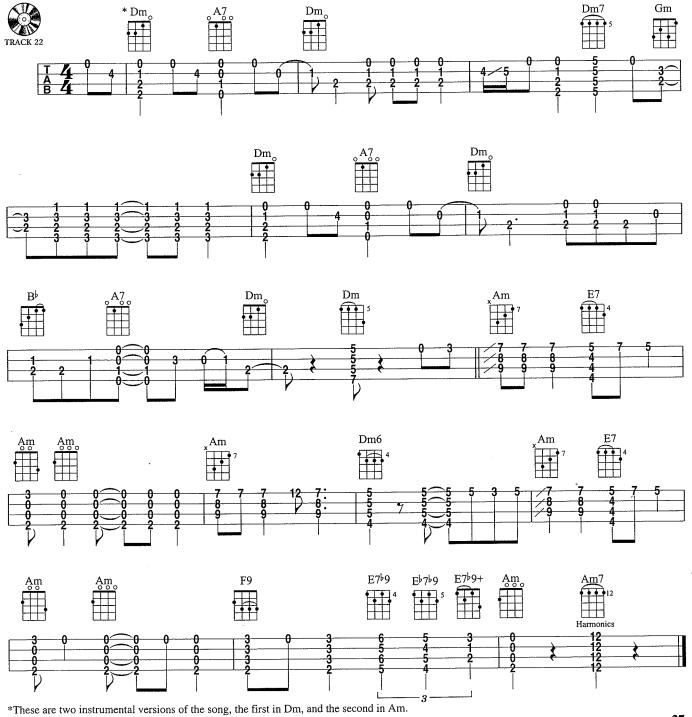
- "I went down to St. James Infirmary. I saw my baby there, stretched out on a table, so still, so cold, so fair.
 Let her go, let her go, God bless her, wherever she may be.
 She may search this wide world over, she'll never find another man like me.
- 3. When I die boys, won't you bury me in my brand new Stetson hat.

 Put a twenty dollar gold piece on my watch chain, so the boys'll know I died standing pat.

 Give me six crap shooters for my pall bearers, and a chorus girl to sing me a song.

 Put a jazz band on my hearse wagon just to raise hell as we roll along.
- 4. And now that you've heard my story, let's have another round of booze.

 And if anyone ever should ask you, I've got the St. James Infirmary blues."



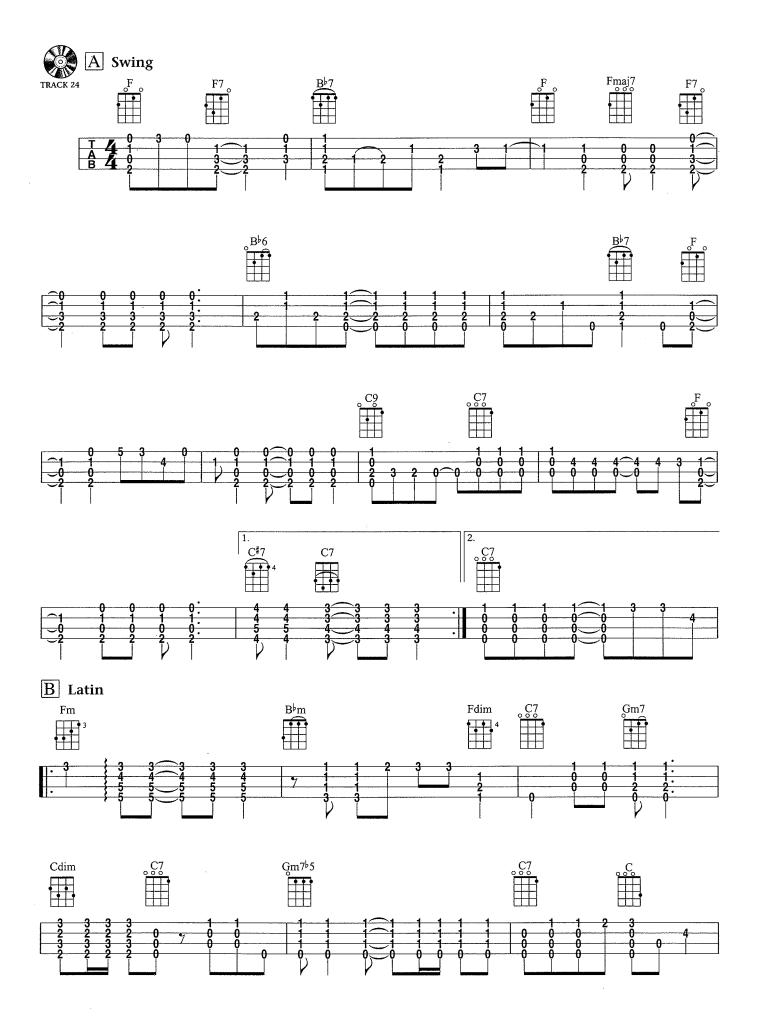


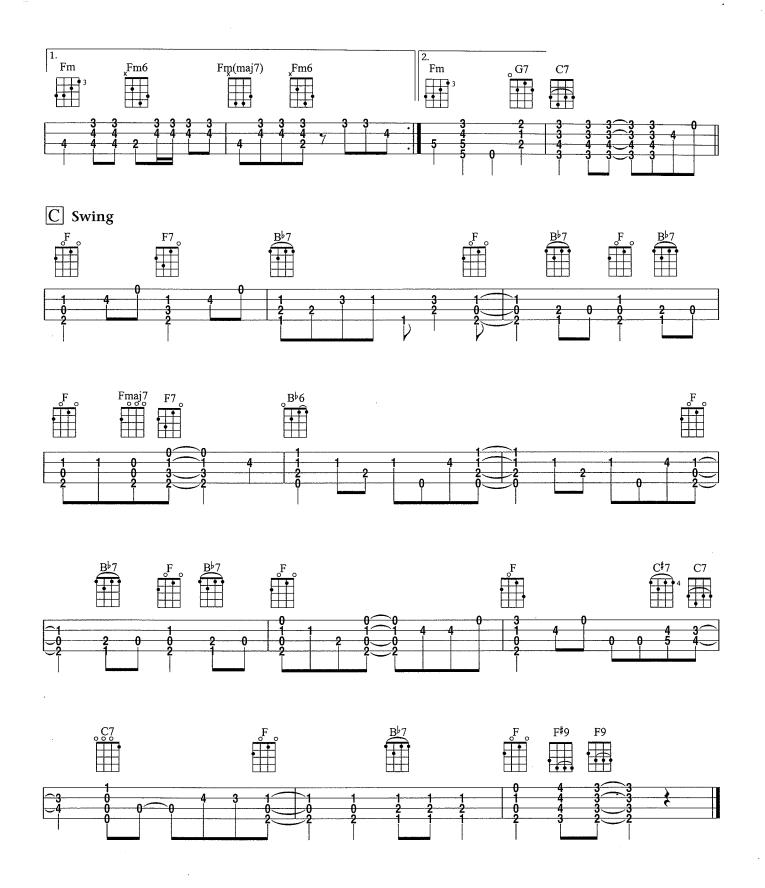
St. Louis Blues

W. C. Handy was the first composer to achieve great success publishing blues tunes he wrote or collected from Southern blues singers. Practically every jazz player or singer has recorded his biggest hit, "St. Louis Blues," published in 1914. Bessie Smith recorded a definitive version in 1925, and sang it in a film of the same name. The first and third sections of the song are in the typical twelve-bar blues format, but the middle, minor-key section is an eight-bar phrase, and often played with a Latin rhythm.







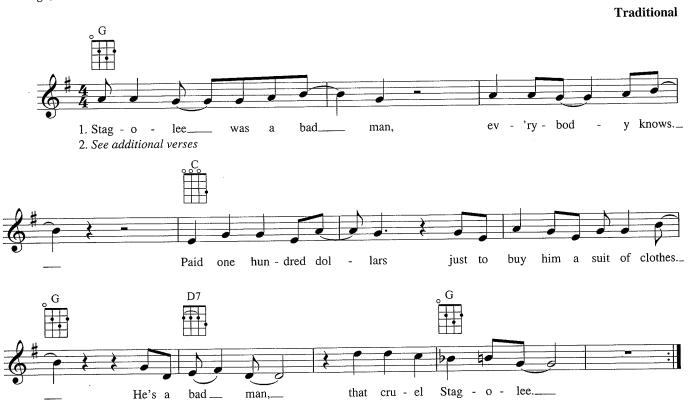


MSAINT LOUIS BLUES



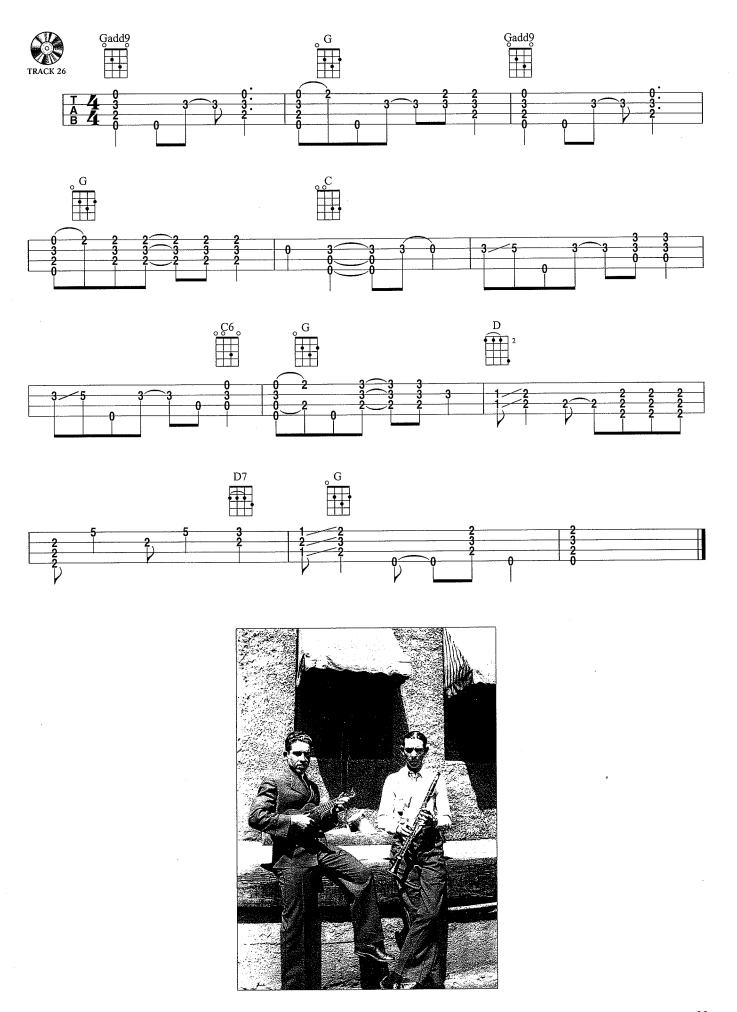
Stagolee

In 1895, in a barroom on Christmas eve, a St. Louis pimp named Lee Sheldon (nicknamed Stag Lee) got into a political argument with his friend, William Lyons. They were both drunk. Lyons grabbed Sheldon's hat, and Sheldon drew a revolver and shot and killed Lyons. Though he walked away from the crime, Sheldon was later arrested, convicted and did prison time. For some reason, the incident has been immortalized in song (called Stagolee, Stackerlee, Stagger Lee, etc.) and the many variations of the tune have resulted in numerous hit recordings in many genres: blues, rock, r&b, jazz, folk and country. In the 1990s and 2000s, rock artists continued to perform and record variants, and several movie soundtracks have included some version of the tune (*Porky's Revenge, Black Snake Moan, Grindhouse*).



- Billy Lyons told Stagolee, "Please don't take my life.
 I got two little babes at home and a darlin', lovin' wife."
 He's a bad man, that cruel Stagolee.
- 3. "What do I care 'bout your two little babes, what do I care 'bout your wife? You done stole my Stetson hat and I'm bound to take your life."

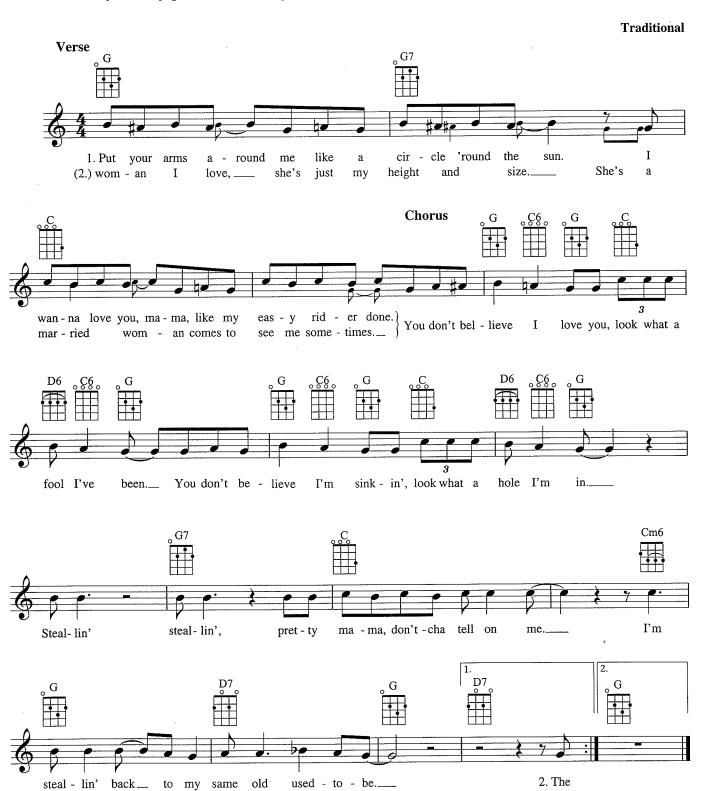
 He's a bad man, that cruel Stagolee.
- Stagolee, cruel Stagolee, pulled out a forty-four.
 When I spied poor Billy Lyons he was lyin' dead on the floor.
 He's a bad man, that cruel Stagolee.
- Gentlemen of the jury, what do you think of that?
 Stagolee killed Billy Lyons 'bout a five dollar Stetson hat.
 He's a bad man, that cruel Stagolee.
- Standin' on the gallows, Stagolee did curse.
 The judge said "Let's kill him now, before he kills one of us."
 He's a bad man, that cruel Stagolee.
- 7. Standin' on the gallows, with his head held high, At twelve o'clock they killed him, they were all glad to see him die. He's a bad man, that cruel Stagolee.



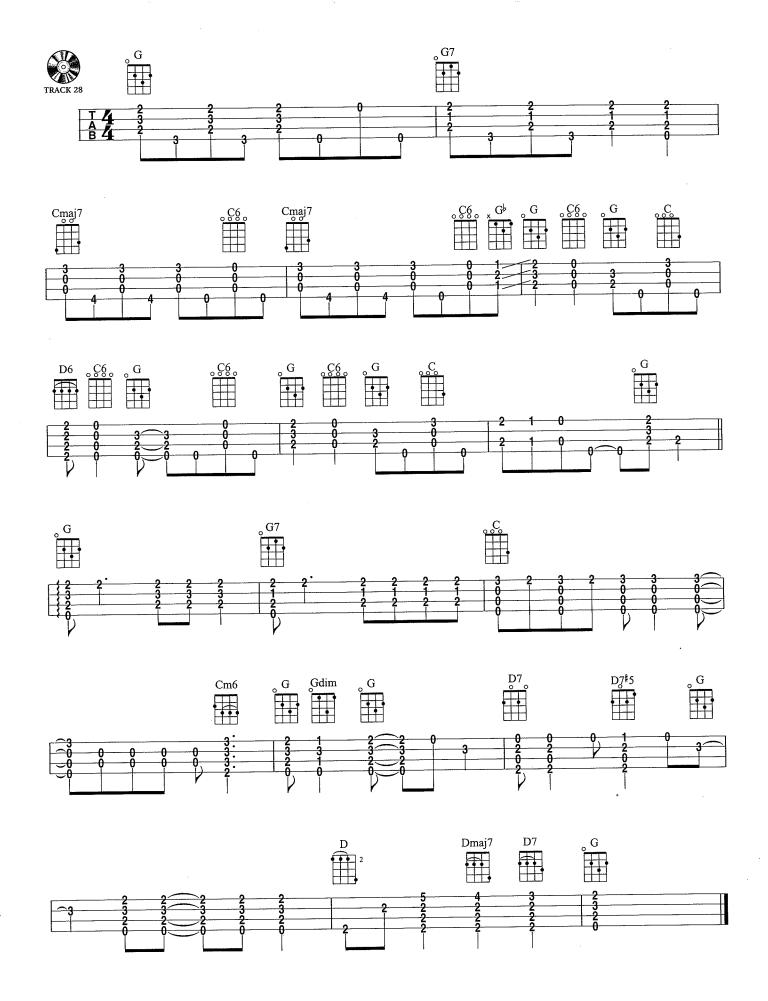


Stealin'

Stealin'" seems to have come from Southern jug bands in the teens or 1920s. It became very popular among the 1960s folk singers, who based their arrangements of the tune on a 1928 version by the Memphis Jug Band. In the early 2000s, jug band music is experiencing a revival in college towns all over the U.S.



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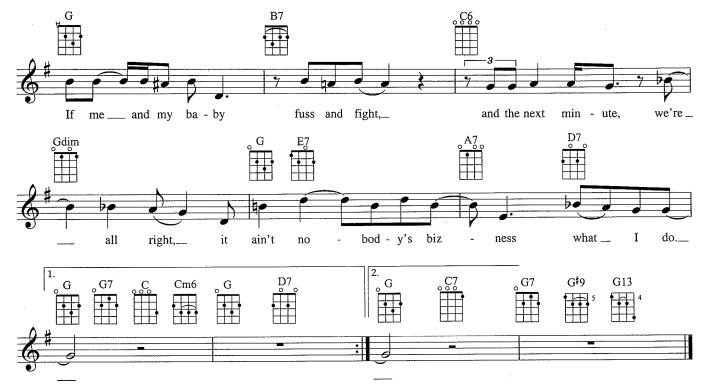




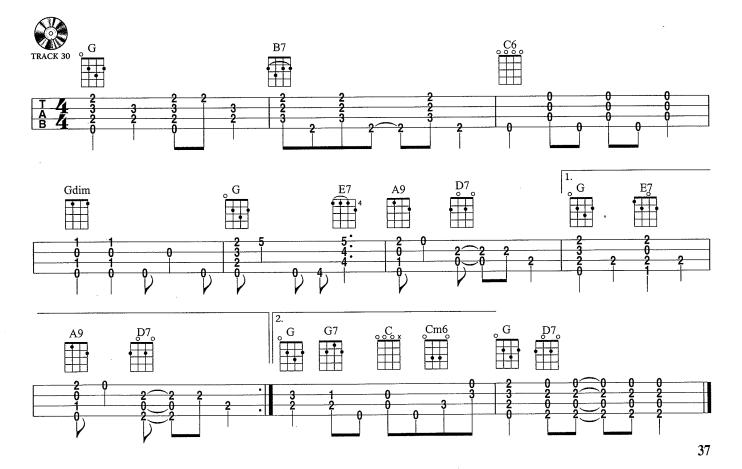
'Tain't Nobody's Biz-ness, If I Do

 ${f B}^{\rm essie}$ Smith first recorded this classic tune in the '20s. Billie Holiday released a fast swing version, and Jimmy Witherspoon waxed a tortuously slow, soulful interpretation of this blues/jazz classic in the late '40s. Note the Tin Pan Alley-style introductory verse.





- 2. I'm three times seven and that makes twenty-one, so it ain't nobody's biz-ness what I do, do, do, do. If I go to church on Sunday and cabaret all night Monday, it ain't nobody's biz-ness what I do.
- 3. If my friend runs out of money and I say "Take all mine, honey," it ain't nobody's biz-ness what I do, do, do, do. If I give her my last nickel and it leaves me in a pickle, it ain't nobody's biz-ness what I do.
- 4. If one night we have ham and bacon, and the next night, ain't nothin' shakin', it ain't nobody's biz-ness what we do, do, do. Oh Lord, Lord, Lord, oh Lord, Lord, Lord, it ain't nobody's biz-ness what I do.

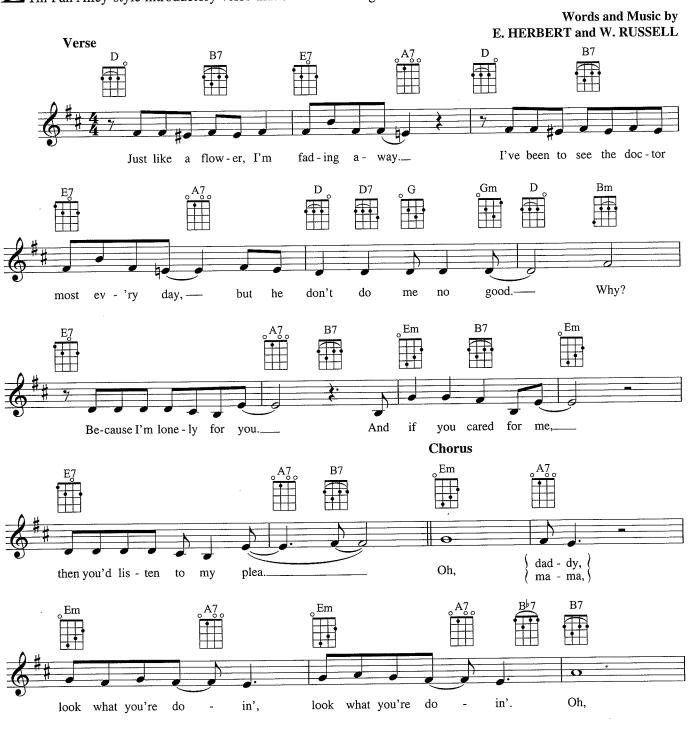




Oh, Daddy, Blues

2000

Ethel Waters recorded this blues-tinged pop song in 1921, and Bessie Smith waxed it a few years later. It has a Tin Pan Alley-style introductory verse that's almost as long as the chorus.





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