

Southwest Bluegrass Club presents:

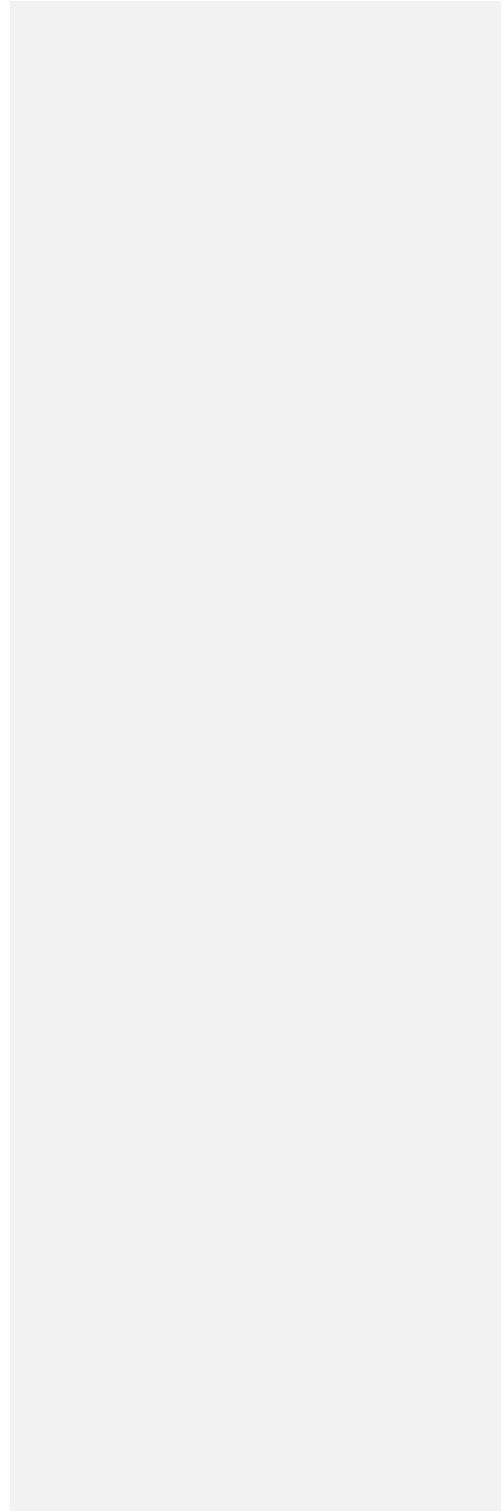
An
Introduction

to

Bluegrass Jamming
2nd edition

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Richard Lang



Welcome!

If you are reading this, we think we know a little bit about you: at the very least, you are interested in exploring what it takes to play bluegrass music with others – since that’s what the Southwest Bluegrass Club is for. You may be new to bluegrass, or new to playing your instrument, or new to playing with others. It doesn’t matter! This is our attempt to ease your way in – to give you tools that will have you return and continue.

Along the way, we aren’t going to engage in music history – there are plenty of good books out there regarding bluegrass and its place in America, if you want to go that route. There are even a couple written about Texas Bluegrass by Braeden Paul, one of our club members! We aren’t going to endorse any particular “school” of playing and singing, nor argue which artists are better than others, nor debate which songs are better than others. Good music that can be played acoustically with others is our benchmark, whether it be traditional or recent.

To that end, most of the music here is older and traditional. It’s what you might find anywhere people get out their instruments and jam together. That common heritage (as well as a regard for copyrights and fees) makes this mostly a collection of traditional tunes.

Part of our intention is to address what it takes to make those first steps into playing with others, from having material that you can learn, to some understanding of relevant music theory, to setting up some of the more common patterns and styles of songs, and, most importantly, to give you something to work with. Enjoy!

Many people hear “music theory” and go running in the other direction! Given how vast that field is, it’s no wonder. Here, we are going to present

the basics that we think you want to know in order to play with others. This isn't meant to give you degree-quality information – we want this to be practical, usable and useful. And please keep in mind, we aren't musicologists or music teachers. You may already know some or all of what follows – if you do, and you've found an error or a failing, let us know and we'll get it corrected – or it may all be new to you. Or the truth may lie somewhere between the two. Whatever the case, here goes.....

Musical Scales

There are 8 notes in the scale and then they repeat:

C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C

In addition, the distance between notes can be divided into half-steps (noted by either sharps # or flats *b*). However, there are no half-steps between E and F, and between B and C. Relating all that to a fretboard on guitar, banjo, ukulele, or mandolin, every fret marks a half step. (It's the same for the bass, but only bass guitars or u-basses have frets).

Each one of the notes in the scale (including the #'s) can be the starting or "root" note of a key.

Chords

The next piece to learn are chords. Simply stated, chords are combinations of notes that are related to one another by virtue of their position in the scale. They are intervals – distances between notes – and saying much more will strain our ability to coherently explain things. Chords in a key have positions related to the root chord. Since not everyone can sing in every key, by assigning numbers to chords, music can be transposed to one easier to sing – or perhaps easier to play! The chart below presents the important groupings. From left to right, you have the root tone, and then the chords for each subsequent step until the alphabet repeats. Concentrating on the major keys, note how the 1, 4 and 5 chords are always major, the 2, 3 and 6 chords are always minor. In the minor keys, things get a little more

Key Chord Chart

Major Key	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
A	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m	G#dim
B	B	C#m	D#m	E	F#	G#m	A#dim
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	Bdim
D	D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm	C#dim
E	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m	D#dim
F	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm	Edim
G	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em	F#dim
Minor Key	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Am	Am	Bdim	C	Dm	Em	F	G
Bm	Bm	C#dim	D	Em	F#m	G	A
Cm	Cm	Ddim	Eb	Fm	Gm	Ab	Bb
Dm	Dm	Edim	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C
Em	Em	F#dim	G	Am	Bm	C	D
Fm	Fm	Gdim	Ab	Bbm	Cm	Db	F#
Gm	Gm	Adim	Bb	Cm	Dm	Eb	F

complex.

We are going to start with basics: the Major Chords played in the open position, often referred to as “cowboy chords.” The major chords are A, B, C, D, E, F and G. A chord is an arrangement of tones – put them together one way and they are major. Change one note and they become minor. Change a note and they become seventh chords. Learn those three types (major, minor and sevenths) and you will be able to play a majority of bluegrass songs.

So, part of your practice is to learn the three variations for all seven letters. And the next step becomes changing from one chord to another. As to what the chord shapes are and how to change from one to the other (and which changes make sense to practice), we hope to be able to include that

at some point in the future. For now, however, that's where other people and even You Tube can provide guidance.

Extras you might consider

Along the way to being able to sit in on jams, I discovered that simply having an instrument wasn't all it took. There are a few items that you'll find most folks have – or, in some cases, wish they had!

A Capo

Simply put, a capo is something that is laid across the strings of your instrument, is held in place and allows you to change the sound of your instrument without having to learn new chords. As I write that, I realize just how valuable they've proven to be. Some keys are better than others for a singer – but some keys are significantly harder to play in than others. By using a capo, I can use familiar fingering patterns to play in a different key. There are many manufacturers and types - all meant to accomplish the same thing but doing so by different methods. Ask others why they use what they use, and then factor in how much you are willing to spend. But eventually be sure you have one!

A Strap

Straps have multiple purposes. One is obvious – it allows you to stand up and play – and others may not be so obvious. They can hold extra picks for your use. They can also keep the guitar in position, which helps with playing.

A Case

Guitars and other instruments used to be routinely sold with a case, but increasingly, as margins have gotten tighter, manufacturers will either not include one (and charge extra, obviously), or provide a soft-sided "gig bag." The primary advantage of a hard shell case is protection – especially if you've spent large sums of money on your instrument. An additional purpose is for storage of the various things you need (like those things mentioned above, for instance), as well as allowing you to keep your instrument in a relatively controlled environment where you can monitor the humidity. Interestingly enough, gig bags actually tend to provide more

storage spaces, since they often have outside pockets. However, gig bags offer less protection from the accidents that can happen.

Strings and things

Keep backup set of strings in your case. You can never predict when a string will break; sometimes it's while you are playing; other times it happens while you are tuning. And some times it just happens! While you may not yet be at the point where you are confident changing your strings, if, at a jam, you break one, having a backup set will allow someone to come to your rescue – or teach you how to change a string with one you have. As a “rule,” lighter gauge strings are easier on the fingers but tend to soften the sound of an instrument; heavier gauge strings are tougher on the fingers but tend to make your instrument sound louder. As to what kind you should use – well, use what you have and get another set like that, or start asking your fellow jammers what they use and experiment as you wish.

In addition, I favor carrying a string winder/cutter/pin puller – a 3 in one tool that does what it suggests. It gives you leverage for turning the tuners when winding on new strings, it allow you to cut off the excess, and also can pull the bridge pins without damage.

A Tuner

You are undoubtedly aware that your instrument can go out of tune. Some more readily than others – so the dilemma of getting in tune faces us all. Before the current era of personal electronics, you learned to tune your guitar to itself (and you still should); if you were lucky, you had some external source of steady notes (a piano or a tuning fork or even another instrument). Getting everyone in a group fully in tune frequently was the toughest part of a jam!

However, we have come a long way! We now have guitars with built-in tuners, smartphone apps (a number of them free) that can listen to your guitar and give you guidance, and most commonly, clip on tuners – small devices that react to the vibrations strings make in an instrument and allow you to be in tune when you walk in the door to a jam.

I personally have three or four different clip on tuner types – all my instruments have their own, plus I usually travel with a spare either in my

case or in my bag. I've spent next to nothing on some, and significantly more on others. Find one you see people using and ask for details.

Batteries

"Wait, Richard, I play an acoustic instrument – why do I need batteries?" Not for your acoustic instrument, but for your tuner! Or, in the case of acoustic-electric instruments, for the internal pre-amp they use. Much like strings break, batteries die. Keeping a tuner battery in your case takes up little room but sure has you prepared!

Extra Picks

Because they can drop and disappear (I lost a costly one in the drain hole on an outdoor porch once). Because someone else may need one. As with many of the items mentioned, you can get them free (a friend handed me her "business card" – a pick with her name and number on it); you might get them in lieu of a case with a new instrument, or you can spend lots of money on them. Walk into a music store and you'll find a wide variety of them. Figure that you will probably buy more than a few you stop using before you find the ones you swear by.

Songs with two chords

The first set of songs have only two chords. When someone asks “what key are you going to play it in,” the 1 chord will be that key. Most stringed instrument players will stick with these keys – it’s when you add in singers and/or other instruments that you include incidentals (also known as sharps and flats).

KEY	1 chord	5 chord	5 ⁷ chord
A	A	E	E ⁷
B	B	F	F ⁷
C	C	G	G ⁷
D	D	A	A ⁷
E	E	B	B ⁷
F	F	C	C ⁷
G	G	D	D ⁷

I'm Working on a Building

Bill Monroe

VERSE 1

1

If I was a preacher, I tell you what I would do

5

1

I'd keep on preachin' and I'd work on the buildin' too

CHORUS

1

I'm workin' on a building

1

I'm workin' on a building

1

5

1

I'm workin' on a building for my Lord, for my Lord

1

It's a holy ghost building, it's a holy ghost building

1

5

1

It's a holy ghost building for my Lord, for my Lord

VERSE 2

1

If I was a drunkard, I tell you what I would do

1

5

1

I'd quit my drinkin' and I'd work on the buildin' too

VERSE 3

1

If I was a gambler, I tell you what I would do

1

5

1

I'd quit my gamblin' and I'd work on the buildin' too

VERSE 4

1

If I was a sinner, I tell you what I would do

1

5

1

I'd quit my sinnin' and I'd work on the buildin' too

Jimmy Brown The Newsboy

A.P. Carter

¹
I sell the morning paper, sir ⁵ My name is Jimmy Brown,
¹
Everybody knows I am, The Newsboy of the town.
¹ ⁵
You will hear me yelling "Morning Star", As I run along the street,
¹
I have no hat up on my head, No shoes upon my feet.
¹ ¹
I have no hat up on my head, No shoes upon my feet

¹ ⁵
I'm awful cold and hungry, sir, My clothes are worn and thin,
¹
I wander 'bout from place to place, My daily bread to win.

¹ ⁵
Never mind, sir, how I look, Don't look at me and frown,
¹
I sell the morning papers, sir, My name is Jimmy Brown.

¹ ¹
I sell the morning papers, sir, My name is Jimmy Brown.

¹ ⁵
My Father died a drunkard, sir, I've heard my Mother say,
¹
And I am helping Mother, sir, As I journey on my way.

¹ ⁵
Mother always tells me, sir, I've nothing in this world to lose,
¹
I'll get a place in Heaven, sir, To sell the Gospel News.

¹ ⁵
Never mind sir how I look, Don't look at me and frown,
¹
I sell the morning papers, sir, My name is Jimmy Brown.

¹ ¹
I sell the morning papers, sir, My name is Jimmy Brown

Mama Don't Allow

Hank Thompson

VERSE 1

1 5⁷ 1
Mama don't allow no guitar playin' around here
1 5⁷
Mama don't allow no guitar playin' around here
1 F
We don't care what mama don't allow We're gonna play the guitar anyhow
1 5⁷ 1
Mama don't allow no guitar playin' around here
GUITAR(S) PLAY BREAK

VERSE 2

1 5⁷ 1
Mama don't allow no fiddle playin' done around here
C 5⁷
Mama don't allow no fiddle playin' done around here
1 F
We don't care what mama don't allow We can play the fiddle anyhow
1 5⁷ 1
Mama don't allow no fiddle playin' done around here
FIDDLE(S) PLAY BREAK

VERSE 3

1 5⁷ 1
Mama don't allow no banjo playin' done around here
1 5⁷
Mama don't allow no banjo playin' done around here
1 F
We don't care what mama don't allow We're gonna play the banjo anyhow
1 5⁷ 1
Mama don't allow no banjo playin' around here
BANJO(S) PLAY BREAK

OTHER POSSIBLE VERSES

Mama don't allow no bass playin around here....
Mama don't allow no mandolin playin around here....
Mama don't allow no harmonica playing around here....
Mama don't allow no dobro playing around here....
Mama don't allow no music played around here....

Songs with three chords

The next set of songs have three chords, adding the 4 chord into the music:

KEY	1	4	5	5 ⁷
A	A	D	E	E ⁷
B	B	E	F	F ⁷
C	C	F	G	G ⁷
D	D	G	A	A ⁷
E	E	A	B	B ⁷
F	F	B	C	C ⁷
G	G	C	D	D ⁷

It's been said that more than 70% of all songs can be played with just the 1-4-5 chords. Which key should you learn? One answer is "all of them – eventually" (and that includes the sharps and flats if you are somewhat serious); another approach is to find a key where you learn not only the basic chords, but common runs and patterns. For many, the keys of C and G fit that measure.

You will notice that all the songs included here have lyrics – they are meant to be sung. And that's where you get to find the keys that best allow you to sing. When you know your vocal range you can learn the chords in the keys you favor (or employ the capo, the tool we mentioned earlier in this document).

A Hundred Years From Now

Flatt and Scruggs

CHORUS

¹ Well a hundred years from now I won't be crying ^{5⁷}
A hundred years from now I won't be blue ¹
My heart will have forgotten that you broke every vow ⁴
^{5⁷} I won't care a hundred years from now ¹

VERSE 1

Lord it seems that it was yesterday you told me ^{5⁷}
You couldn't live without my love somehow ¹
Now that you're with another it breaks my heart somehow ⁴
^{5⁷} I won't care a hundred years from now ¹

CHORUS

VERSE 2

Now do you recall the night sweetheart you promised ^{5⁷}
Another's kiss you never would allow ¹
That's all in the past dear it didn't seem to last ⁴
^{5⁷} I won't care a hundred years from now ¹

CHORUS

Angel Band

VERSE:

1 4 1
My latest sun is sinking fast,
 5 1
My race is nearly run
 4 1
My strongest trials now are past
 5 1
My triumph has be-gun

CHORUS

5 1 5 1
Oh come, Angel Band. Come and a-round me stand
 4 1 5 1
Oh bear me away on your snowy wings, to my im-mortal home
 4 1 5 1
Oh bear me away on your snowy wings, to my immortal home

VERSE

1 4 1
Oh bear my longing heart to him
 5 1
Who bled and died for me
 4 1
Whose blood now cleanses from all sin
 5 1
And brings us victo-ry

CHORUS

VERSE

1 4 1
I've almost reached my heavenly home
 5 1
My spirit loudly sings
 4 1
The holy ones behold they come
 5 1
I hear the sound of wings

CHORUS

Are You Missing Me

Jim and Jesse McReynolds

VERSE 1

1 4 1
The day that I kissed you and told you goodbye
5 1
Your lips told me that you would wait
4 1
But your lips deceived me and told me a lie
5 1
While your heart was sealing my fate

CHORUS

1 5 1
Are you all alone ... with a memory
1 5 1
Now that I am gone ... darling are you missing me

VERSE 2

1 4 1
Out of the clear sky a letter then came
5 1
And just like a bolt from the blue
1 4 1
My castles came tumbling as I read it o'er
5 1
I still can't believe that it's true

VERSE 3

1 4 1
It said that in spite of the vows you had made
5 1
The glitter of gold turns your head
1 4 1
And while I was trying employment to find
5 1
You married another instead

Banks of the Ohio

Maybelle Carter

VERSE 1

I asked my love, to take a walk Take a walk, just a little ways
And as we walked, along we talked Of when would be ... our wedding day

CHORUS

And only say, that you'll be mine In no others arms entwined
Down beside where the waters flow Down by the banks ... of the Ohio

VERSE 2

I asked her if she'd marry me And my wife forever be
She only turned her head away And had no other ... words to say

CHORUS

VERSE 3

I plunged a knife into her breast And told her she was going to rest
She cried Oh Willie, don't murder me I'm not prepared ... for eternity

CHORUS

VERSE 4

I took her by her golden curls And drug her down to the riverside
And there I pushed her in to drown And I watched her as ... she floated down

CHORUS

VERSE 5

And going home between twelve and one And cried Oh Lord, What have I done
I've killed the only girl I love Because she would ... not marry me

Bluebirds are Singing for Me

Mac Wiseman

VERSE 1

There was a girl ... I loved so dearly

She lived away ... back in the hills

When the bluebirds sing ... I miss my darling

She loved me I know ... she always will

CHORUS (echo every phrase during pause)

And the bluebird singing ... In the Blue Ridge Mountains

Is calling me ... back to my home

Oh I can hear ... the bluebirds calling

Is calling me ... back to my home

VERSE 2

Tonight I'm afar ... from the Blue Ridge Mountains

Far from my home ... back in the hills

Well I'm going back ... to the Blue Ridge Mountains

These memories ... haunt me still

VERSE 3

When I reached my home ... I was oh so lonely

The one I loved ... had gone away

That sad sad news ... came from her mother

She's sleeping there ... beneath the clay

Blue Moon Of Kentucky

Bill Monroe

VERSE 1

1 1⁷ 4
Blue moon of Kentucky keep on shining
1 1⁷ 5
Shine on the one that's gone and proved untrue
1 1⁷ 4
Blue moon of Kentucky keep on shining
1 5 1
Shine on the one that's gone and left me blue

CHORUS

4 1
It was on a moonlight night the stars were shining bright
4 1 5
When they whispered from on high your love has said good-bye
1 1⁷ 4
Blue moon of Kentucky keep on shining
1 5 1
Shine on the one that's gone and said good-bye

VERSE 2

1 1⁷ 4
Blue moon of Kentucky keep on shining
1 1⁷ 5
Shine on the one that's gone and proved untrue
1 1⁷ 4
Blue moon of Kentucky keep on shining
1 5 1
Shine on the one that's gone and left me blue

Blue Night

Bill Munroe

1
Blue night I got you on my mind
4
Blue night I can't keep from crying
1 4
You met someone that was new
1
You quit someone that you knew was true
5 1
Blue night I got you on my mind

1
Blue night blue as I can be
4
I don't know what'll become of me
1 4
Where we used to walk I walk alone
1
With an aching heart because my love is gone
5 1
Blue night blue as I can be

1
Blue night cause I'm all alone
4
I used to call you on the telephone
1 4
I used to call you when it made you glad
1
Now I call and it makes you mad
5 1
Blue night cause I'm all alone
1
Blue night all by myself
4
Since you've put me on that shelf
1 4
There's just one thing you must know
1
You're gonna reap just what you sow
5 1
Blue night all by myself

Blue Ridge Cabin Home

Flatt and Scruggs

There's a well beaten path in the old mountainside
Where I wandered when I was a lad
And I wandered alone to the place I call home
In those Blue Ridge hills far away

CHORUS

Oh I love those hills of old Virginia
From those Blue Ridge hills I did roam
When I die won't you bury me on the mountain
Far away near my Blue Ridge mountain home

Now my thoughts wander back to that ramshackle shack
In those Blue Ridge hills far away
Where my mother and dad were laid there to rest
They are sleeping in peace together there

I return to that old cabin home with a sigh
I've been longing for days gone by
When I die won't you bury me on that old mountain side
Make my resting place upon the hills so high

Blue Ridge Mountain Blues

Recorded by Jim & Jesse McReynolds

¹ When I was young and in my prime ⁵ I left my home in ¹ Caroline
⁵ Now all I do is sit and pine ¹ For all those folks I left behind.

CHORUS

¹ I've got the Blue Ridge Mountain Blues ⁵ And I stand right here to say ¹
⁴ My grip is packed to travel, and I'm ⁵ scratchin'gravel ¹ To that Blue Ridge far Away.

¹ I'm gonna stay right by my Pa ⁵ I'm gonna do right by my Ma ¹
⁵ I'll hang around the cabin door ¹ No work, nor worry any more.

CHORUS

¹ I've got the Blue Ridge Mountain Blues, ⁵ Gonna see my old dog Tray ¹
⁴ Gonna hunt the 'possum, where the corn-tops blossom ⁵ On the Blue Ridge far away. ¹

CHORUS

¹ I see a window with a light ⁵ I see two heads of snowy white ¹
⁵ It seems I hear them both recite ¹ "Where is my wandering boy tonight?"

CHORUS

¹ I've got the Blue Ridge Mountain Blues ⁵ And I stand right here to say ¹
⁴ Ev'ry day I'm countin', 'til I climb that mountain ⁵ On the Blue Ridge far away. ¹

CHORUS

Bury Me Beneath the Willow

Traditional

1 4
Tonight I'm sad my heart is lonely
1 5
For the only one I love
1 4
When will I see her, oh no never
1 5 1
Till we meet in heaven above

CHORUS

1 4
So bury me beneath the willow
1 5
Under the weeping willow tree
1 4
So she will know where I am sleeping
1 5 1
And perhaps she'll weep for me

1 4
She told me that she dearly loved me
1 5
How could I believe it untrue
1 4
Until an angel softly whispered
1 5 1
She could never care for you

1 4
Tomorrow was to be our wedding
1 5
Oh god, oh god, where can she be
1 4
She's gone a-courting with another
1 5 1
And no longer cares for me

Can't You Hear Me Calling

Bill Monroe

The days are long and the nights are lonely
Since you left me all alone
I worry so my little darling
I worry so since you've been gone

CHORUS

Sweetheart of mine can't you hear me calling
A million times I love you best
I mistreated you Lord and I'm sorry
Come back to me is my request

I'll never forget the night we parted
A big mistake had caused it all
If you'll come back sunshine will follow
If you stay away it'll be my fall

The days are dark my little darling
Oh how I need your sweet embrace
When I woke up the sun was shining
When I looked up I saw your face

Cripple Creek

Bill Monroe

VERSE 1

1 4 1 5 1
I got a gal at the head of the creek goin up to see her bout the middle of the week
1 4 1 5 1
kiss her on the mouth just as sweet as wine wraps herself around me like a sweet potato vine

CHORUS

1 4 1 5 1
Goin' up Cripple Creek goin' in a run Goin' up Cripple Creek to have some fun.
1 4 1 5 1
Goin' up cripple creek goin in a whirl Goin' up Cripple Creek , see my girl

VERSE 2

1 4 1 5 1
I got a girl and she loves me She's as sweet as sweet can be
1 4 1 5 1
She's got eyes of baby blue Makes my gun shoot straight and true.

CHORUS

VERSE 3

1 4 1 5 1
Cripple Creek's wide and Cripple Creek's deep I'll wade old Cripple Creek before I sleep
1 4 1 5 1
Roll my breeches to my knees I'll wade ol' Cripple Creek when I please

CHORUS

VERSE 4

1 4 1 5 1
I went down to Cripple Creek To see what them girls had to eat
1 4 1 5 1
I got drunk and fell against the wall Old corn likker was the cause of it all

CHORUS

VERSE 5

1 4 1 5 1
girls up cripple creek bout half grown jump on a man like a dog on a bone
1 4 1 5 1
Roll my breeches to my knees I'll wade ol' Cripple Creek when I please

CHORUS

Repeat twice

Dooley

The Dillards

1 4 1 5
Dooley was a good ole man He lived below the mill
1 4 1 5 1
Dooley had two daughters And a forty-gallon still
1 4 1 5
One gal watched the boiler The other watched the spout
1 4 1 5 1
And mama corked the bottles When ole Dooley fetched 'em out.

CHORUS

1 1 4
Dooley slippin' up the holler Dooley try to make a dollar
1 5 1
Dooley give me a swaller And I'll pay you back someday.

1 4 1 5
The revenuers came for him A-slippin' though the woods
1 4 1 5 1
Dooley kept behind them all And never lost his goods
1 4 1 5
Dooley was a trader When into town he'd come
1 4 1 5 1
Sugar by the bushel And molasses by the drum.

CHORUS

1 4 1 5
I remember very well The day ole Dooley died
1 4 1 5 1
The women folk looked sorry And the men stood round and cried
1 4 1 5
Now Dooley's on the mountain He lies there all alone
1 4 1 5 1
They put a jug beside him And a barrel for his stone.

CHORUS

Footprints In The Snow

Bill Monroe

1 4
Some folks like the summer time when they can walk about
5⁷ 1
Strolling through the meadow green it's pleasant there no doubt
1 4
But give me the winter time when snow is on the ground
5⁷ 1
For I found her when the snow was on the ground

CHORUS

1 5⁷
I traced her little footprints in the snow
1
I found her little footprints in the snow
1 4
Bless that happy day when Nellie lost her way
5⁷ 1
For I found her when the snow was on the ground

1 4
I dropped in to see her there was a big round moon
5⁷ 1
Her mother said she just stepped out but would be returning soon
1 4
I found her little footprints and traced them through the snow
5⁷ 1
For I found her when the snow was on the ground

1 4
Now she's up in heaven she's with the angels band
5⁷ 1
I know I'm going to meet her in that promised land
1 4
Every time the snow falls it brings back memories
5⁷ 1
For I found her when the snow was on the ground

Girl from West Virginia

Doyle Lawson

VERSE 1

1 4
She told me that her name was Jenny
1 5
She lived in a cabin on the hill
1 4
In a coal mining town in West Virginia
5 1
I love Jenny and I guess I always will

CHORUS

1 4
I thought I would always want to ramble
1 5
I thought I would never settle down
1 4
Well I met her in the hills of West Virginia
5 1
In the heart of a coal mining town

VERSE 2

1 4
I like the sound of the coal trucks
1 5
Back in the hills a-hauling coal
1 4
With the beautiful mountains all around me
5 1
West Virginia you have won my heart and soul

Goodnight Irene

George Vaughn

CHORUS

1 5 1
Irene Goodnight Irene goodnight
1 4 5 1
Good night Irene Good night Irene I'll see you in my dreams

VERSE

5 1
Last Saturday night I got married Me and my wife settled down
4 5 1
Now me and my wife have parted Gonna take another stroll down town

CHORUS

VERSE

5 1
Sometimes I live in the country Sometimes I live in town
4 5 1
Sometimes I take a fool notion To jump in the river and drown

CHORUS

VERSE

5 1
Stop rambling stop gambling Stop staying out late at night
4 5 1
Go home to your wife and family And stay by the fireside bright

CHORUS

Gotta Travel On

Bill Monroe

CHORUS

¹ I've laid around and played around this old town too long

¹⁷ Summers almost gone, yes winters coming on

¹ I've laid around and played around this old town too long

⁴ And I feel like I've gotta travel on

¹ Well Papa writes to Johnny but Johnny can't come home

¹⁷ Johnny can't come home, no, Johnny can't come home

¹ Papa writes to Johnny but Johnny can't come home

⁴ 'Cause he's been on the chain gang too long

¹ High sheriff and police riding after me

¹⁷ Riding after me, yes, coming after me

¹ High sheriff and police riding after me

⁴ And I feel like I've gotta travel on

¹ Want to see my honey, want to see her bad

¹⁷ Want to see her bad, oh, want to see her bad

¹ Want to see my honey, want to see her bad

⁴ She's the best gal this poor boy ever had

How Mountain Girls Can Love

Ralph Stanley

CHORUS

4 1
Get down boys go back home
5 1
Back to the girl you love
4 1
Treat her right never wrong
5 1
How mountain girls can love

VERSE 1

1 1
Riding the night in the high cold wind
5 1
On the trail of that old lonesome pine
1 1
Thinkin' of you feeling so blue
5 1
Wonderin' why I left you behind

VERSE 2

1 1
Remember the night we strolled down the lane
5 1
Our hearts were gay and happy then
1 1
You whispered to me when I held you close
5 1
We hoped that night would never end

I Couldn't Believe It Was True

Eddie Arnold

¹ Last night I came home ⁴ And I knocked on my door ¹

And I called to my love ⁵ As I oft' had before

¹ I knocked and I knocked ⁴ No answer there came ¹

⁵ No kisses to greet me ¹ No voice to call my name

CHORUS:

¹ And I couldn't believe it was true, Oh Lord

⁴ I couldn't believe it was true ¹

My eyes filled with tears and I must've aged 10 years

⁵ And I couldn't believe it was true ¹

¹ The shock was so great ⁴ I am quivering yet ¹

And I'll try to forgive ⁵ But I cannot forget

¹ My heartbreakin' loss ⁴ Is another man's gain ¹

⁵ Her happiness always ¹ I hope will remain

CHORUS:

I Saw the Light

Hank Williams

1 1⁷
I wandered so aimless life filled with sin
4 1
I wouldnt let my dear savior in
1 1⁷
Then Jesus came like a stranger in the night
1 5 1
Praise the Lord I saw the light.

CHORUS

1 1⁷
I saw the light I saw the light
4 1
No more in darkness no more at night
1 1⁷
Now I'm so happy no sorrow in sight
1 5 1
Praise the Lord I saw the light.

1 1
Just like a blind man I wandered along
4 1
Worries and fears I claimed for my own
1 1⁷
Then like the blind man that God gave back his sight
1 5 1
Praise the Lord I saw the light.

1 1⁷
I was a fool to wander and stray
4 1
For straight is the gate and narrow the way
1 1⁷
Now I have traded the wrong for the right
1 5 1
Praise the Lord I saw the light.

I Wouldn't Change You If I Could

written by Jim Eanes

¹ I wouldn't change a single thing about you if I could ^{5⁷}

The way you are just suits me too a tee ¹

A princess in a storybook a king upon his throne ^{5⁷}

That's what we are and you belong to me ¹

CHORUS

⁴ I wouldn't change you if I could

¹ I love you as you are you're all that I would wish for ⁴

¹ If I wished upon a star an angel sent from heaven ^{5⁷} ¹

You're everything that's good ^{5⁷}

You're perfect just the way you are ^{2m}

^{5⁷} I wouldn't change you if I could ¹

Your eyes your lips your tender smile ^{5⁷}

I'd leave them as they are

And come what may I'd never change a thing ¹

And if I were a potter and you a piece of clay ^{5⁷}

The only thing I'd change would be your name ¹

CHORUS

In the Pines

Bill Monroe

VERSE 1

¹ ⁴ ¹ ⁵ ¹
The longest train that I ever saw went down that Georgia line.
¹ ⁴ ¹ ⁵ ¹
The engine passed at six o'clock and the cabin passed at nine.

CHORUS

¹ ⁴ ¹
In the pines, in the pines, where the sun never shines
¹ ⁵ ¹
and you shiver when the cold wind blows.

VERSE 2

¹ ⁴ ¹ ⁵ ¹
I asked the Captain for the time of day, He said he threw his watch away.
¹ ⁴ ¹ ⁵ ¹
A long steel rail and a short cross tie, I'm on my way back home.

VERSE 3

¹ ⁴ ¹ ⁵ ¹
Little girl, little girl, what have I done, that makes you treat me so?
¹ ⁴ ¹
You cause me to weep, and you cause me to moan,
¹ ⁵ ¹
You cause me to leave my home.

VERSE 4

¹ ⁴ ¹ ⁵ ¹
If I listened to what my Mama said, then I would not be here today.
¹ ⁴ ¹ ⁵ ¹
Well the same old train that brought me here, will soon take me away.

Little Glass Of Wine

Written by Carter Stanley

1
Come little girl let's go get married My love is so great how can you slight me
4 1 4 1
I'll work for you both late and early And at our wedding my little wife you'll be

4 1
Oh Willie dear let's both consider We'll both too young to be married now
4 1 5 1
When we're married we're bound together Let's stay single just one more year

4 1
He went to the bar where she was dancing A jealous thought came to his mind
4 1 5 1
I'll kill that girl my own true lover Before I'll let another man beat my time

4 1
He went to the bar and he called her to him Said Willie dear what you want with me
4 1 5 1
Come and drink wine with the one that loves you More than anymore else you know said he

4 1
While they were in the bar a-drinking That same old thought came to his mind
4 1 5 1
He killed that girl his own true lover He gave her poison in a glass of wine

4 1
She laid her head over on his shoulder Said Willie dear please take me home
4 1 5 1
That glass of wine that I've been drinking Has gone to my head and done me wrong

4 1
He laid his head over on her pillow Let me read you Lord let me tell you mine
4 1 5 1
Molly dear I'm sorry to tell you We both drank poison in a glass of wine

4 1
They folded their arms around each other They cast their eyes into the sky
4 1 5 1
Oh God oh God ain't this a pity That the both true lovers are bound to die

Long Black Veil

Danny Dill and Marijohn Wilki

VERSE 1

1

Ten years ago, on a cold dark night

5

4

1

Someone was killed, 'neath the town hall light

There were few at the scene, but they all agreed

5

4

1

That the slayer who ran, looked a lot like me

VERSE 2

1

The judge said son, what is your alibi

5

4

1

If you were somewhere else, then you won't have to die

I spoke not a word, al-tho' it meant my life

5

4

1

For I'd been in the arms of my best friend's wife

CHORUS

4

1

4

1

She walks these hills in a long black veil

4

1

4

1

She visits my grave when the night winds wail

4

1

4

5

1

4

1

Nobody knows, nobody sees Nobody knows but me

VERSE 3

1

The scaffold is high and eternity's near

5

4

1

She stood in the crowd and shed not a tear

But sometimes at night, when the cold wind moans

5

4

1

In a long black veil, she cries o'er my bones

Man of Constant Sorrow

recorded by the So^ogy Bottom Boys

1 1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
I am the ma-n of constant sorrow I've seen trouble on my days
1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
I bid farew-ell to old Kentucky The place where I was born and raised

1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
For six long yea-rs I've been in trouble No pleasure here on earth I find
1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
For in this wor-ld I'm bound to ramble I have no friends to help me now

1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
Hey it's fair the we-ll my old true lover I never expect to see you again
1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
For I'm bound to ri-de that northern railroad Perhaps I'll die upon this train

1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
You can bury m-e in some deep valley For many years where I'll be laid
1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
And you may lea-rn to love another While I am sleeping in my grave

1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
Maybe your friends th-ink I'm just a stranger My face you'll never see no more
1⁷ 4 5⁷ 1
But there is one prom-ise that is given I'll meet you on God's golden shore

Molly and Tenbrooks

Bill Monroe

1 4
Run old Molly run, run old Molly run
1 5 1
Tenbrooks gonna beat you, to the bright shining sun
1 5 1
To the bright shining sun, Lord, to the bright shining sun

1 4
Tenbrooks was a big bay horse, wore a shaggy mane
1 5 1
He ran all 'round the Midwest, and beat the Memphis train
5 1
Beat the Memphis train, Lord beat the Memphis train

1 4
Out in Californy, where Molly did as she pleased
1 5 1
Come back to old Kentucky, got beat with all ease
5 1
Beat with all ease, Lord, beat with all ease

4
Tenbrooks said to Molly, what makes your head so red
1 5 1
Running in the hot sun, with a fever in my head
5 1
Fever in my head, Lord, fever in my head

4
Molly said to Tenbrooks, you're looking mighty squirrel
1 5 1
Tenbrooks said to Molly, I'm leaving this old world
5 1
Leaving this old world, Lord, leaving this old world

4
See old Molly coming, she's coming around the curve
1 5 1
See old Tenbrooks running, straining every nerve
5 1
Straining every nerve, Lord, straining every nerve

Kyper, Kyper, you're not riding right
Molly's a-beating old Tenbrooks, clear 'round the side
Clear 'round the side, Lord, clear 'round the side

Kyper, Kyper, Kyper my son
Give old Tenbrooks the bridle, and let old Tenbrooks run
Let old Tenbrooks run, Lord, let old Tenbrooks run

Women's all a-laughing, children's all a-crying
Men folks all a-hollerin', old Tenbrooks a-flying
Old Tenbrooks a-flying, Lord, old Tenbrooks a-flying

Go a-catch old Tenbrooks, said hitch him in the shade
We're gonna bury old Molly, in a coffin ready made
Coffin ready made, Lord, a coffin ready made

TAG

Let old Tenbrooks run, Lord, let old Tenbrooks run

Mountain Dew

Traditional

Down the road here from me there's an old hollow tree Where you lay down a dollar or two
If you hush up your mug they will fill up your jug With that good old mountain dew

CHORUS

They call it that good old mountain dew And them that refuse it are few
You may go round the bend But you'll come back again
for that good old mountain dew

Way up on the hill there's an old whiskey still That is run by a hard working crew
You can tell if you sniff and you get a good whiff That they're making that old mountain dew

The preacher came by with a tear in his eye He said that his wife had the flu
We told him he ought to give her a quart Of that good old mountain dew

My brother Mort is sawed off and short He measures just four foot two
But he thinks he's a giant when they give him a pint Of that good old mountain dew

My uncle Bill has a still on the hill Where he runs off a gallon or two
The birds in the sky get so high they can't fly On that good old mountain dew

My aunt Jane has a brand new perfume It has such a sweet smelling pew
Imagine her surprise when she had it analyzed It was good old mountain dew

My Little Georgia Rose

Bill Monroe

VERSE 1

Now come an⁴ listen to my story A story that I know is true
A little rose that bloomed in Georgia With hair of gold an⁴ a heart so true

CHORUS

Way down in the blue ridge mountains Way down where the tall pines grow
Lives my sweetheart of the mountains She's my little Georgia Rose

VERSE 2

Her mother left her with another A carefree life she had planned
Baby now she is a lady The one her mother couldn't stand

VERSE 3

We often sing those songs together I watched her do her little part
She smiled at me when I would tell her That she was my sweetheart

New River Train

Traditional

VERSE 1

1
Darlin' you can't love one Darlin' you can't love but one
1 4 1 5⁷ C
You can't love one and have any fun No darlin' you can't love one

CHORUS

1
I'm Riding on that new river train Riding on that new river train
1 4 1 5⁷ C
Same old train that brought me here And soon gonna carry me away

VERSE 2

1
Darlin' you can't love two Darlin' you can't love two
1 4 1 5⁷ 1
You can't love two and your little heart be true Darlin' you can't love two

VERSE 3

1
Darlin' you can't love three Darlin' you can't love three
1 4 1 5⁷ 1
You can't love three and still love me No darlin' you can't love three

VERSE 4

1
Darlin' you can't love four Darlin' you can't love four
1 4 1 5⁷ 1
You can't love four and love me anymore No darlin' you can't love four

VERSE 5

1
Darlin' you can't love five Darlin' you can't love five
1 4 1 5⁷ 1
You can't love five and get money from my beehive No darlin' you can't love five

VERSE 6

1
Darlin' you can't love six Darlin' you can't love six
1 4 1 5⁷ 1
You can't love six that kind of love don't mix No darlin' you can't love six

Nine Pound Hammer

Bill Monroe

VERSE 1

Well this nine pound hammer ¹ it's a little too heavy, ⁴
Yes for my size, ⁵ buddy for my size. ¹

CHORUS

Well roll on buddy, ¹ Don't you roll so slow, ⁴
How can I roll, ⁵ when my wheels won't roll? ¹

VERSE 2

I went up into the mountain just to see my honey, ¹ ⁴
And I ain't coming back, ⁵ Lord I ain't coming back. ¹

VERSE 3

It's a long way to Harlan, and a long way to Hazard, ¹ ⁴
Just to get a little brew, ⁵ just to get a little brew. ¹

VERSE 4

Well an eight pound hammer that's in this tunnel, ¹ ⁴
Got a ring like mine, ⁵ got a ring like mine. ¹

VERSE 5

This old hammer rings like silver, ¹ ⁴
rings like silver and shines like gold ⁵ ¹

On And On

Bill Monroe

VERSE 1

1 4 1
Traveling down this long lonesome highway

5⁷
I'm so lonesome I could cry

1 4 1
With memories of how we once loved each other

5⁷ 1
And now you are saying good-bye

CHORUS

1 4 1
On and on I'll follow my darling

5⁷
And I wonder where she can be

1 4 1
On and on I'll follow my darling

5⁷ 1
I wonder if she ever thinks of me

VERSE 2

1 4 1
I've cried I've cried for you little darling

5⁷
It breaks my heart to hear your name

1 4 1
My friends they all so loved you my darling

5⁷ 1
And they think that I am to blame

VERSE 3

4 1
I had to follow you little darling

5⁷
I can't sleep when the sun goes down

1 4 1
Cause by your side is my destination

5⁷ 1
The road is clear and there's where I'm bound

Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms

Flatt and Scruggs

CHORUS

1 5
Roll in my sweet baby's arms Roll in my sweet baby's arms
1 4
Lay round the shack Till the mail train comes back
5 1
And roll in my sweet baby's arms

VERSE 1

1 5
I ain't gonna work on the railroad Ain't gonna work on the farm
1 4
Lay around the shack Till the mail train comes back
5 1
And roll in my sweet baby's arms

VERSE 2

1 4
Now where were you last Friday night While I was lyin' in jail
1 4
Walking the streets with another man
5 1
Wouldn't even go my bail

VERSE 3

1 5
I know your parents don't like me They turn me away from your door
1 4 5 1
Ha4 my life to live over Wouldn't go there any more

Swing Low Sweet Chariot

Traditional

1 4 1
Swing low, sweet chariot,
5⁷
Comin' for to carry me home.

1⁷ 4 1
Swing low, sweet chariot,
5⁷ 1
Comin' for to carry me home.

1 4 1
I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
5⁷
Comin' for to carry me home.

1⁷ 4 1
A band of angels comin' after me,
5⁷ 1
Comin' for to carry me home.

1 4 1
If you get there before I do,
5⁷
Comin' for to carry me home.
1⁷ 4 1
Just tell my friends that I'm a comin' too.
5⁷ 1
Comin' for to carry me home.

1 4 1
I'm sometimes up and sometimes down,
5⁷
Comin' for to carry me home.
1⁷ 4 1
But still my soul feels heavenly bound.
5⁷ 1
Comin' for to carry me home.

Commented [RL1]:

Take This Hammer

Traditional

CHORUS

Take this hammer, carry it to my captain
Take this hammer, carry it to my captain
Take this hammer, carry it to my captain
Tell him I'm gone Oh Lord, you tell him I'm gone

If he asks you, was I running If he asks you, was I running
If he asks you, was I running Tell him I was flying
Oh Lord, you tell him I was flying

If he asks you, was I laughing If he asks you, was I laughing
If he asks you, was I laughing You tell him I was crying
Oh Lord, you tell him I was crying

I don't want your, old darn shackles I don't want your, old darn shackles
I don't want your, old darn shackles It hurts my leg
Oh Lord, it hurts my leg

I don't want your, cornbread 'n' molasses I don't want your, cornbread 'n' molasses
I don't want your, cornbread 'n' molasses It hurts my pride
Oh Lord, it hurts my pride

Wabash Cannonball

Carter Family

VERSE 1

1 4
Out from the wide Pacific to the broad Atlantic shore
5 5⁷ 1
she climbs flowery mountains over hills and by the shore
4
Although she's tall and handsome and she's known quite well by all
5 5⁷ 1
she's a regular combination of the Wabash Cannonball

VERSE 2

1 4
Oh, the eastern states are dandy, so the western people say
5 5⁷ 1
Chicago, Rock Island, St. Louis by the way
4
To the lakes of Minnesota where the rippling waters fall
5 5⁷ 1
no changes to be taken on the Wabash Cannonball

CHORUS

1 4
Oh, listen to the jingle, the rumble and the roar
5 5⁷ 1
as she glides along the woodlands over hills and by the shore
4
She climbs the flowery mountains, hear the merry hobos squall
5 5⁷ 1
she glides along the woodlands, the Wabash Cannonball

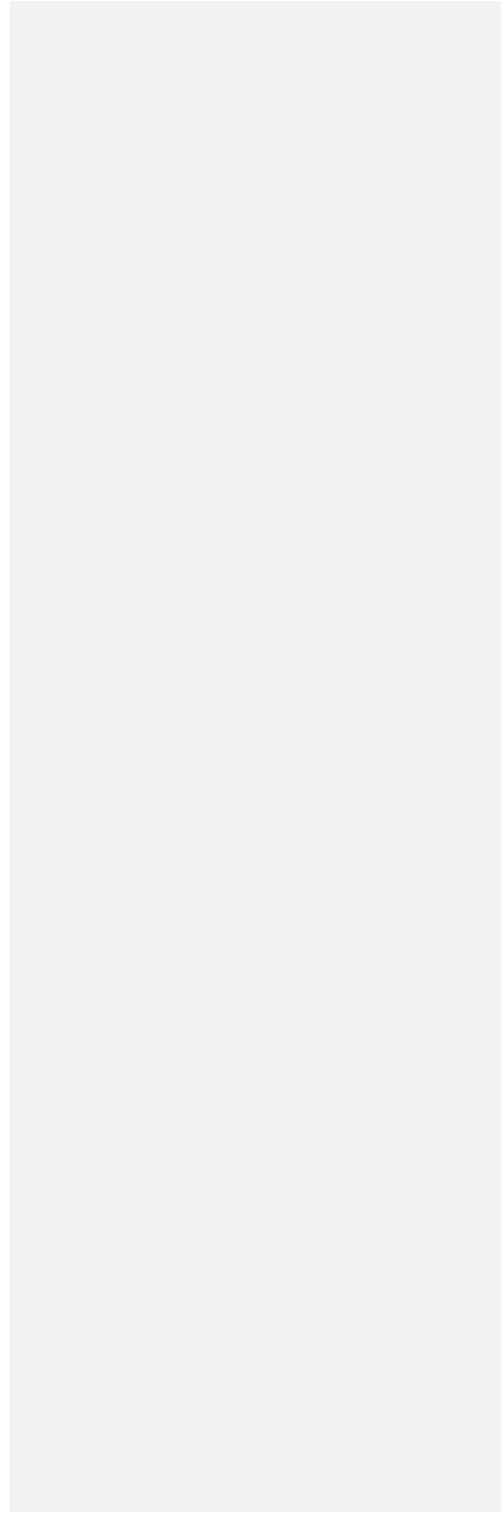
VERSE 3

1 4
Oh, here's Old Daddy Cleton, let his name forever stand
5 5⁷ 1
and long be remembered 'bo's throughout the land
4
For he is a good old rounder, till the curtain round him fall
5 5⁷ 1
he'll be carried back to victory on the Wabash Cannonball

VERSE 4

I have rode the I.C. Limited, also the Royal Blue
5 1 5 7 4 1
across the eastern countries on mail car number two
4

I have rode those highball trains from coast to coast that's all
5 5 7 1
but I have found no equal to the Wabash Cannonball



Where The Arkansas River Leaves Oklahoma

Don Williams

CHORUS

¹ Where the Arkansas River leaves Oklahoma
¹ It runs free and rambles muddy and wide
¹ Where the Arkansas River leaves Oklahoma
¹ It's gone forever and never looks back

VERSE 1

¹ I met her in Stillwell she just turned twenty
¹ A spirited beauty like I've never known
¹ And me a dirt farmer who lived by the river
¹ But she said she loved me and the free life I owned

VERSE 2

¹ We married in April and lived by the river
¹ We worked that land from spring till the fall
¹ But I guess when the winter howled at our window
¹ She couldn't help hearing that wild river call

VERSE 3

¹ She tried to conquer that wild rage within her
¹ But something too strong ran deep in her soul
¹ But I know she loved me she cried like a baby
¹ That cold winter evening she answered the call

White House Blues

Bill Monroe

¹
McKinley hollered McKinley squalled
Doc said McKinley I can't find the cause
You're bound to die you're bound to die

Doc told the horse he'd throw down his rein
He said to the horse you gotta outrun the train
From Buffalo to Washington

The Doc came a-running he took off his specs
He said Mr. McKinley better cash in your checks
You've bound to die you're bound to die

Look here you rascal you see what you've done
You shot my husband and I've got your gun
I'm carrying you back to Washington

Roosevelt's in the White House he's doing his best
McKinley's in the graveyard he's taking his rest
He's gone for a long time

Worried Man Blues

Stanley Brothers

CHORUS

¹
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
⁴ ¹
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
^{5⁷} ¹
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long

¹
I went across the river, and I laid down to sleep
⁴ ¹
I went across the river, and I laid down to sleep
I went across the river, and I laid down to sleep
^{5⁷} ¹
When I woke up, there the shackles on my feet

¹
Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg
⁴ ¹
Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg
Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg
^{5⁷} ¹
And on each link, the initial of my name

¹
I asked the judge what might be my fine
⁴ ¹
I asked the judge what might be my fine
I asked the judge what might be my fine
^{5⁷} ¹
Twenty-one years on the Rocky Mountain Line

¹
The train that I ride is sixteen coaches long
⁴ ¹
The train that I ride is sixteen coaches long
The train that I ride is sixteen coaches long
^{5⁷} ¹
The girl I love is on that train and gone

Songs with multiple chords

As you might imagine, while songs with two and three chords account for a large percentage of bluegrass songs, they aren't all of them. More than a few songs that are popular at jams contain more than 3 chords. Without going into extensive theory and detail, here are some examples of popular bluegrass songs using more than 3 chords.

For reference, here's an expanded chart of chords, keys and numbers (although it is not complete, it's here to give you an idea of things):

KEY	1	2*	4	5	6*
A	A	B	D	E	F#
C	C	D	F	G	A
D	D	E	G	A	B
E	E	F#	A	B	C#
G	G	A	C	D	E

- Generally, the 2 and the 6 chords are minor (we mark the 2^m if they are minor)

Amazing Grace

Traditional

CHORUS

1 1⁷ 4 1
Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound

1 5
That saved a wretch like me

1 1⁷ 4 1
I once was lost, but now am found

6m 5 1
Was blind, but now I see

1 1⁷ 4 1
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear

1 5
And grace my fears relieved

1 1⁷ 4 1
How precious did that grace appear

6m 5 1
The hour I first believed

1 1⁷ 4 1
Through many dangers, toils and snares

1 5
We have already come

1 1⁷ 4 1
'Twas grace hath brought us safe thus far

6m 5 1
And grace will lead us home

1 1⁷ 4 1
When we've been there ten thousand years

1 5
Bright shining as the sun

1 1⁷ 4 1
We've no less days to sing God's praise

6m 5 1
Than when we first begun

I Wonder How the Old Folks Are At Home

Traditional

VERSE 1

Well I wonder how the old folks are at home
I wonder if they miss me while I roam
I wonder if they pray for the boy who went away
And left his dear old parents all alone

CHORUS

You could hear the cattle lowing in the lane
You could see the fields of blue grass where I've grown
You could almost hear them cry as they kissed their boy goodbye
Well I wonder how the old folks are at home

VERSE 2

Just a village and a homestead on the farm
And a mother's love to shield you from all harm
A mother's love so true a sweetheart that loves you
A village and a homestead on the farm

I'll Fly Away

Albert E. Brumley

VERSE 1

1 1⁷ 4 1
Some glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away
1 1 1 5⁷ 1
To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away

CHORUS

1 1⁷ 4 1
I'll fly away, O glory, I'll fly away
1 1 6m
When I die, hallelujah, by and by
1 5⁷ 1
I'll fly away

VERSE 2

1 1⁷ 4 1
When the shadows of this life have grown, I'll fly away
1 1 1 5⁷ 1
Like a bird from prison bars has flown, I'll fly away

VERSE 3

1 1⁷ 4 1
Oh how glad and happy when we meet, I'll fly away
1 1 1 5⁷ 1
No more cold iron shackles on my feet, I'll fly away

VERSE 4

1 1⁷ 4 1
Just a few more weary days, and then, I'll fly away
1 1 1 5⁷ 1
To a land where joys shall never end, I'll fly away

Kentucky Waltz

Bill Monroe

VERSE

1 3 6 1
We were waltzing one night in Kentucky
5⁷
Beneath a beautiful harvest moon
2 5⁷ 2 5⁷
And I was the boy who was lucky
1 5⁷
But it all ended too soon
1 3 6 1
As I sit here alone in the moonlight
1⁷ 4 2
I see your smiling face
4 5^{bdim} 7
And I long once more,
1 6⁷
for your embrace
2 5 1
And that beautiful Kentucky Waltz

VERSE 2

1 3 6 1
Then I lift up my head from my pillow,
5⁷
To find it was only a dream.
2 5⁷ 2 5⁷
Of the night that we spent together,
4⁷
and you were my everything.
1 3 6 1
As I sit here alone in the moonlight
1⁷ 4 2
I can see your smiling face
4 5^{bdim} 1 6⁷
And I long once more for your embrace
2⁷ 5⁷ 1
and that beautiful Kentucky waltz

KEY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m	G#dim
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	Bdim
D	D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm	C#dim
E	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m	D#dim
G	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em	F#dim

An example of the above (in the key of D):

VERSE 1

D **F#m** **Bm** **D**
We were waltzing that night in Kentucky
D **D#dim** **A7**
'Neath the beautiful harvest moon
Em **A7** **Em** **A7**
And I was the boy who was lucky
A7 **Aaug** **D** **A7**
But it all ended too soon
D **F#m** **Bm** **D**
As I sit here alone in the moonlight
D **D7** **G** **Em**
I can see your smiling face
G **G#dim** **D7** **B7**
And I long once more for your embrace
E7 **A7** **D**
In that beautiful Kentucky waltz

VERSE 2

D **F#m** **Bm** **D**
Then I lift up my head from my pillow,
D **D#dim** **A7**
To find it was only a dream.
Em **A7** **Em** **A7**
Of the night that we spent together,
A7 **Aaug** **D** **A7**
and you were my everything.
D **F#m** **Bm** **D**
As I sit here alone in the moonlight
D **D7** **G** **Em**
I can see your smiling face
G **G#dim** **D7** **B7**
And I long once more for your embrace
E7 **A7** **D**
and that beautiful Kentucky waltz

NOTE: For simplicity's sake, the aug and dim chords don't have to be played.

Old Home Place

Webb and Jayne (The Dillards)

1 3⁷ 4 1 5
It's been ten long years since I left my home In the hollow where I was born
1 3⁷ 4 1
Where the cool fall nights make the wood smoke rise
5 1
And the fox hunter blows his horn
1 3⁷ 4 1 5
I fell in love with a girl from the town I thought that she would be true
1 3⁷ 4 1 5 1
I ran away to Charlottesville And worked in a sawmill crew

CHORUS

5 1 2⁷ 5
What have they done to the old home place Why did they tear it down
1 3⁷ 4 1 5 1
And why did I leave the plow in the field And look for a job in the town
1 3⁷ 4 1 5
Well the girl ran off with somebody else The taverns took all my pay
1 3⁷ 4 1 5 1
And here I stand where the old home stood Before they took it away
1 3⁷ 4 1
Now the geese fly south and the cold wind moans
1 5
As I stand here and hang my head
1 3⁷ 4 1
I've lost my love I've lost my home
5 1
And now I wish that I was dead

CHORUS

5 1 2⁷ 5
What have they done to the old home place Why did they tear it down
1 3⁷ 4 1 5 1
And why did I leave the plow in the field And look for a job in the town?

Rocky Top

Osborne Brothers

VERSE 1

1 4 1 6 5 1
Wish that I was on ole Rocky Top Down in the Tennessee hills
1 4 1 6 5 1
Ain't no smoggy smoke on Rocky Top Ain't no telephone bills

VERSE 2

1 4 1 6 5 1
Once there was a girl on Rocky Top Half bear the other half cat
4 1 6 5 1
Wild as a mink, but sweet as soda pop I still dream about that

CHORUS

6 5 7b 4
Rocky Top, you'll always be Home sweet home to me
4 1 7b 1
Good ole Rocky Top Rocky Top Tennessee
1 7b 1
Rocky Top Tennessee

VERSE 3

1 4 1 6 5 1
Once two strangers climbed on Rocky Top Lookin' for a moonshine still
1 4 1 6 5 1
Strangers ain't come down from Rocky Top I reckon they never will

VERSE 4

1 4 1 6 5 1
Corn won't grow at all on Rocky Top Dirt's too rocky by far
1 4 1 6 5 1
That's why all the folks on Rocky Top Get their corn from a jar

VERSE 5

1 4 1 6 5 1
Now I've had years of cramped up city life Trapped like a duck in a pen
1 4 1 6 5 1
Now all I know is it's a pity life Can't be simple again

Salty Dog Blues

Doc Watson

1 Standing on the corner, with the low down blues
2 Great big hole, in the bottom of my shoes. Honey let me be your Salty Dog.

CHORUS

1 If I can't be your Salty Dog, Well I ain't gonna be your little man at all,
5 Honey let me be your Salty Dog.

1 Well I'm sittin' on the corner with my hat in my hand,
2 waitin' for the woman who ain't got no man, honey let me be your Salty Dog.

1 Well Aunt Donna took a little spill broke my liquor jug all to pieces,
5 Honey let me be your Salty Dog.

1 Listen here Sal well I know you Run down stocking and a worn out shoe,
5 Honey let me be your Salty Dog.

1 Down in the wildwood sitting on a log
2 Finger on the trigger and eye on the hog Honey let me be your Salty Dog.

1 Pulled the trigger and they said go Shot fell over in Mexico,
5 Honey let me be your Salty Dog.

TAG the last line

Will The Circle Be Unbroken

Traditional

VERSE

1 **1⁷** **4** **1**
I was standing by the window On one cold and cloudy day,
6 **1** **5⁷** **1**
When I saw the hearse come rolling For to carry my mother away.

CHORUS

1⁷ **4** **1**
Will the circle be unbroken by and by Lord, by and by
6 **1** **5⁷** **1**
There's a better home awaiting In the sky Lord, in the sky.

VERSE

1 **1⁷** **4** **1**
Lord I told the undertaker, "Undertaker, please drive slow,
6 **1** **5⁷** **1**
For this body you are haulin' Lord, I hate to see her go."

VERSE

1 **1⁷** **4** **1**
I followed close behind her, Tried to hold up and be brave,
6 **1** **5⁷** **1**
But I could not hide my sorrow When they laid her in the grave.

VERSE

1 **1⁷** **4** **1**
Went back home lord - My home was lonesome; Yes my mother she was gone.
6 **1** **5⁷** **1**
All my brothers, sisters cryin' What a home so sad and alone.

VERSE

1 **1⁷** **4** **1**
We sang songs of childhood Hymns of faith that made us strong
6 **1** **5⁷** **1**
Ones that mother Maybelle taught us Hear the angels sing along

Playing well with others

The title of this section isn't meant to stir childhood memories of instructions from parents and teachers, although it might. Our point is simply that there are things that are known to many who attend bluegrass jams without having written existence anywhere. Essentially, *the unspoken rules of jamming*. The following collection of "Traditional Unspoken Ground Rules" is derived from Pete Wernick's "Bluegrass Jam Basics" as well as a lot of personal experience. These aren't hard and fast rules – no one has signed their names to promises to keep them, for instance – but things you can expect to encounter. Or that you wouldn't be out of place asking of people.

Some things are "musts"

- Be in tune! Whether you use a clip-on tuner, reference a tuning fork (I'm showing my age), tune to others or use a smartphone app, there are countless tools to use so your instrument is not only in tune to itself but to others as well.
- Learn your chords! If people are playing tunes you don't know, watch the left hand of other guitar players (primarily).
- Keep the beat.

Then there are the unspoken rules.....

- The person singing lead or kicking off an instrumental generally leads the group through the song, including saying who takes instrumental solos ("breaks") and when to end.
- Typical arrangement formats:
 - When there are few or no instrumental soloists, a singer can start by playing simple rhythm on the root chord ("Mac Wiseman Beginning"), let others come in, then sing until verses run out. Or the singer can give a solo to anyone willing, following format:
 - On a song when some instruments can solo: Break ("kickoff"), verse, chorus,
 - Break, verse, chorus,
 - Break, verse, chorus — optional: add solo(s) and final chorus

- On instrumentals, the same person usually starts and ends, with solos going around in a circle to those willing. Most common end: double “shave and a haircut” lick.
- Regarding solos (“breaks”):
 - Breaks for songs generally follow the melody and chords of a verse.
 - At the beginning of a song, the song leader asks if someone can play a kickoff break. Near end of each chorus, the song leader offers breaks:
 - Head and body language (nodding) are used to offer, accept/decline.
 - If no one can solo, the singer just keeps singing verses and choruses to the end.
 - If there are more soloists than there are verses of the song, some solos can be grouped together to give everyone a turn. Or the singer can repeat verses to lengthen the song.
 - If there are more than enough spots for breaks, some soloists can take an extra turn.
- If an instrumental soloist starts late, listen for whether the break is starting from the top or from a later point in the song. If different players realize they seem to be at different points in the song, try to resolve it quickly, usually by falling in with the soloist, even if he/she is mistaken.
- When the lead singer doesn’t start a verse on time, keep playing the root chord and wait until the singer starts before going to the chord changes.
- Sing harmonies on choruses only normally. Verses are sung solo. But in less advanced jams, people may often sing along on the verses too, even if not singing a harmony.
- Use signals to help everyone end together: Foot out, hold up instrument, end after “one last chorus” or repeat of last line. Listen for instrumental licks that signal ending.

Don’t let the length or even the complexity of all that throw you. By its very nature (unspoken ground rules) it’s more a collection of suggestions than iron-clad rules and directions.

Some other ideas to enhance your experience of participating:

- Practice and prepare three to five songs that you can lead
 - You can use any material to help you, from printed material to iPads or Kindles. As you get better, make it a goal to practice those songs without extraneous help.
 - Play them through, start to finish, without stopping to correct your misses or mistakes. Do it repeatedly so it becomes automatic.
 - Add words and continue practicing. As you add new tune to your repertoire, don't forget to keep practicing the first ones you learned; you may discover new things about them.
 - You don't "own" them – it's not uncommon for someone ahead of you in a song circle to pick one of them – and that's why we suggest three to five.
 - If you aren't prepared to lead one, it's okay to pass. It just means that if it comes around to you again, you may not get another opportunity. It's okay to attempt it and fail, by the way. We learn from our mistakes – not our successes! EVERYONE in every song circle has been in your shoes at one time or another – take advantage of the opportunity.
 - As for playing breaks – if the opportunity is offered, you have the choice. Again, you grow by taking the chances. Go for it!

But most importantly, enjoy yourself! If things didn't work out well for you, be sure to speak to someone before you leave and sort that out. If you leave with some unvoiced concerns or complaints, you enhance the chance that you won't return. The only dumb question (as many of us know) is the one that doesn't get asked!