

Old Joe Clark (traditional American)

First system of musical notation for 'Old Joe Clark'. It consists of a treble clef staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is written with quarter and eighth notes. Below the staff is a TAB line with the following fret numbers: 0 2 3 2 | 0 5 4 | 0 2 3 2 | 0.

Second system of musical notation. It continues the melody from the first system. The TAB line has the following fret numbers: 0 2 3 2 | 0 5 4 | 4 0 2 6 | 0. The system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Third system of musical notation. The melody continues with quarter and eighth notes. The TAB line has the following fret numbers: 0 2 4 5 | 0 5 4 | 0 2 4 0 | 5.

Fourth system of musical notation. It concludes the piece. The TAB line has the following fret numbers: 0 2 4 5 | 0 5 4 | 4 0 2 6 | 0. The system ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

This song is about the murder of traveling salesman Herbert Brown by his wife Betsy and Joe Clark in Maryland. I don't remember the year, but I seem to recall that it was the latter part of the 19th century. Betsy and Joe killed Herbert and then put out the story that he was on a trip to the north. Many versions of this tune have the chorus including "Goodbye, Betsy Brown." Of course, the melody could be older than that, but it's a likely source for the name of the tune.

There are many sets of lyrics to the tune; for example:

*Old Joe Clark was a preacher's son,
Preached all over the plain.
Highest text he ever knew
Was High-low-jack-and-the-game.*

But the chorus is usually something like this:

*Fare thee well now Old Joe Clark,
Goodbye Betsy Brown,
Fare thee well now Old Joe Clark,
It's time to leave this town.*