

January 2022 Volume 38 Number 1

GENESIS: THE ORIGINS OF A SONG

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane by Mary Calvert Brown (aka Lady Outlaw)



Mark and Lady Outlaw

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane, a popular bluegrass song, was first recorded by Georgia's own Gid Tanner and His Skillet Lickers with Riley Puckett in 1926.

Recorded many times in a variety of styles including country, cajun, jazz, mountain, bluegrass, rock and roll, and acoustic and electric blues, the diverse artists include Gid Tanner and His Skillet Lickers with Riley Puckett who borrowed their form from minstrel shows, Jerry Lee Lewis (1956), Bing Crosby (1961), Norman Blake, (1976), Porter Wagoner (1977), and many others. There has been a long-standing diversity of verses with either more upbeat or darker allusions ever since the Skillet Lickers 1926 recording proclaiming salvation, versus Ernest Stoneman's 1927 recording declaring all his sins to have overtaken him, at least at the time. Now, take your choice.



It is believed by some sources to have been written in 1880 by the African-American minstrel James Alan Bland (1854-1911), artistic heir to Stephen Foster, although its exact origins could easily have been from popular spiritual or folk music of the time.

In The Tin Pan Alley Song Encyclopedia, author Thomas Hischak dates the song to c1865, referring to it as "a traditional American spiritual that compares dying and going to heaven to grabbing a cane and catching the midnight train now that 'all my sins are taken away'". If this is the case, it rules out James Bland as the songwriter.

The line "Hand me down my walking cane" appears in other songs, including *Please Don't Bury Me* (1973) by John Prine, which also references the 1936 song *It's a Sin to Tell a Lie.*

Bob Dylan also sings the line in his song *Ain't Talkin'* (2006).

The earliest documented references to the song were from James Bland, a prolific composer and entertainer who wrote sentimental songs about the American South for use in minstrel shows. He graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1873, but soon abandoned academics in favor of music.

Initially rejected by other minstrel groups that preferred Caucasian males playing in blackface, Bland began his professional career in the

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Membership renewals in December: **Dan Daniel & Georgia Grass**

SEBA Breakdown & Publications

Breakdown@sebabluegrass.org

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(not shown)

How about vou?

The **SEBA Breakdown** is a monthly production of: The Southeastern Bluegrass Association, Inc. P.O. Box 7286, Marietta, GA 30065. Copyright 2022, all rights reserved. Address all inquiries to the P.O. Box, or email the appropriate member of the Board. **SEBA's Mission Statement**

The Southeastern Bluegrass Association (SEBA) is a nonprofit organization consisting of members, fans, bands, promoters, businesses, vendors, musicians, and friends of Bluegrass Music working together to reach a common goal: the preservation and promotion of Bluegrass Music, bringing it to the community through performers, instructors, jam sessions, venues and events, and providing information to all through our publications, the SEBA Breakdown and the SEBA websites.



From the Editors

Hello SEBA Members, pickers, singers, professionals, and just plain-old foot tappers who enjoy Bluegrass Music! Hope your Holidays went well and were filled with fun and enjoyable Music.

The new year is looking good with Bluegrass Music Jams springing up all over the place (see a list on Page 5). We are Wintering well and just imagine what Spring will bring! There are many Festivals and Events on the way and we will have more to say about that as they get closer.

There is a change in your Breakdown Newsletter. Don't look for a printed copy - that time has passed. The Breakdown will now be all electronic and delivered by email and website.

Speaking of the SEBA website, our current website has served well for many years but a new website is on the way to be here soon. It will give you the ability to edit your Member Profile and see your Membership expiration date among other new features. We will say more about that when the new website arrives.

When you see Garry Motter, please give him a big Thank You for the excellent job he has done as Breakdown Editor for the past 3 years. Good work, Garry, and Thank You!

As Rebecca and I move into the Editorship position we encourage you to support the Breakdown, SEBA, and Bluegrass Music everywhere by sending us articles, write-ups, reviews, information about festivals and jams, and anything else of interest to our Bluegrass Community. We can spread the word by publishing in the Breakdown and website.

Be proud of SEBA and your part in it! The Editors.

Rebecca Lawson and David Belcher



Please copy and use the SEBA Logo on your web site, in your email, or on your Facebook page You can help get the word out that SEBA is here to help everyone in our Bluegrass Music Community.

Home-Cooking Jamming by Wayne Robertson

Nine years ago I picked up guitar (some say I should go ahead and set it down now), and once I achieved three-chord proficiency, I wanted some folks to play with. Not having the nerve to go to an open jam, I started with some sympathetic friends at home. Turns out I didn't have any so I widened the net via meetup.com.

First I attended a couple backyard jams to get the hang of it, and found out these people didn't bite or even snarl, at least not right away. Thus encouraged, I decided to host my own so I didn't have to drive. As many as a dozen came and one was a neighbor who told me about a bluegrass jam group out in Tucker. Really, I thought; Tucker's not that far.

He risked his reputation and took me, and I've been showing up ever since. In an obvious attempt to shake me they've changed locations several times, but I've tracked them down each time. But seriously folks, the Tucker BG jammers are very welcoming and always overcome their grave and understandable misgivings to let me take a lead.

Back to meetup.com and backyard jamming. Meetup is very handy, particularly if you travel and want to find a sympatico group, be it music, karate, knitting, yoga, you-name-it; there are thousands of interest groups. There's a BG meetup jam in Jupiter, FL that I go to. They too keep moving around to foil me, but I try to keep on the trail.

For my jams, up to a dozen might come (although eight's a better number) and each was asked to bring 5-6 copies of 3-5 tunes they'd want to lead in singing and playing. I make it clear that this is not a "performance" venue but rather a singalong, and, I encourage folks to bring tunes that are relatively familiar and relatively simple.

As host I provide beer, wine and soft drinks because the more you drink, the better I sound. Initially I provided snacks but those went were pretty much untouched so I ceased. It's hard enough to drink and play but when you add in snacking, well, one doesn't have enough hands.



Wayne and friends backyard jamming!

As host, be patient and tolerant; some players will be rank beginners and should be encouraged, while others are very advanced (they usually do not return after hearing me play). The majority are more-or-less intermediates or, as I would describe myself, "adequate." Adequate is what my father used to call a "Gentleman's B."

The jams are described simply as "acoustic" with no delimiter of genre so we get blues, ballads, bluegrass, Americana, folk, soft rock, country and most anything else non-electric. Thus, you get to try some new tunes and hear some new music.

With covid I took a vacation from hosting and attending jams as well as many other things, but now am thinking of resuming backyard jams around the firepit in Spring. I look forward to seeing how well people can sing with marshmallows stuffed in their mouths!



Ready for Marshmallows and Music

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Hand Me Down My Walking Cane

.... late 1870s as a member of the first successful all-black minstrel company, the Georgia Minstrels, who wore blackface and used exaggerated stereotypical movements and dances in the style of traditional all-white minstrel groups such as the Virginia Minstrels

Using the minstrel show as a platform for introducing his composed work, he wrote and published his best-known and most successful song, a nostalgic ballad entitled *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny* in 1878. This marked his first major success as a composer; and in 1940, almost thirty years after his death, the state of Virginia adopted it as its official state song. Later, in 1997, Virginia retired the song and designated it as the "state song emeritus" due to controversy over its racial nature.

Bland wrote many other songs during his minstrel career including *In the Evening by the Moonlight* (1879) and *Oh! Dem Golden Slippers* (1879), the theme song for the long-running Philadelphia Mummers Parade. The Georgia Minstrels became an established company renamed the Minstrel Carnival of Genuine Colored Minstrels, toured the Pacific Coast, and eventually crossed the Atlantic, where they became popular in British music halls. When the show returned to the United States in late 1881, Bland chose to stay in London for the next twenty years, playing as a singer/banjo player without blackface at

command performances for Queen Victoria, in addition to performances in Scotland and Germany.

Bland developed a taste for extravagant living and was said to have been presented with a gold-headed ebony cane from Edward III. At one point he was believed to have been earning a staggering income even for a college educated black man, but spent recklessly and when minstrelsy was eclipsed by Vaudeville, his talents were no longer in demand.

Returning to the United States in 1901, he found himself without money or friends, playing the black Vaudeville circuits and dying alone from tuberculosis in poverty and obscurity on May 6, 1911.

Bland was buried in an unmarked grave, but in 1939 the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) with the assistance of the editor of The Etude magazine, located his burial spot and erected a headstone to commemorate his life. The Lions Club of Virginia assisted, also sponsoring a music contest for students and establishing the Annual Bland Music Scholarships Program in 1948 to assist and promote cultural and educational opportunities for the musically talented youth of Virginia.

James Bland was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1970.

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane

by Mary Calvert Brown (aka Lady Outlaw)

If you are interested in hearing the song and seeing some action, take a look at these links:

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane, Gid Tanner & Skillet Lickers with Riley Puckett https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IJ4O9jN5ek&t=5s



Hand Me Down My Walking Cane, Flatt & Scruggs Show https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmqfZ0k2mxQ



From SEBA Events:

SEBA Central Chapter is alive and well thanks to our awesome leader **Walter Stark**. We are meeting second Sunday 3-6 at Emory Presbyterian Church in Decatur. We are back inside for cold weather but social distancing is available for those who need.

Come on by your own **Home Chapter** or any other Chapter near you and join in with the good times. Schedules for the Chapters are below in this newsletter and on the web: https://www.davidbelcher.net/seba_web/chapters.php

There are 3 active Jams in Tucker each week also. Sunday and Wednesday at Colossus Pizza and Matthews cafeteria on Thursday 6-8. I understand the **Marietta Jam** is back on Tuesday night also.

Many **more Jams** are active around the area, too. See the schedule below or on the web: https://www.davidbelcher.net/seba_web/jams.php

If you want your Jam listed here email me.

Rebecca Lawson rlawson.seba@gmail.com

And, encourage your kids, your neighborhood kids, church kids, school kids, and any other kids you can find to join you at these Jams. Theirs is the generation that will keep the Music going. Just imagine the satisfaction you will have when your kids grow up, make their own Band, and invite you to join them!



Dean Motter (http://deanmotter.com/)

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SEBA Membership

The Benefits of being a SEBA Member are many.

Are you interested for in joining yourself or thinking of inviting a friend to be a member?

Take a look: <u>SEBA Membership Benefits</u>

To start your New Membership or to Renew your Membership, please visit the <u>SEBA Membership</u> web page.. Ignore the Membership Levels on that webpage.

Our new Membership Levels are Individuals (\$25), Families (\$30), Professional (\$40). Professional Membertship includes Bands, Promoters, Business, Music Instructors.

If you have questions or concerns about SEBA Membership, please contact the <u>SEBA Board of Directors</u>

Regularly Scheduled Jams

This list shows Regularly Scheduled Jams around the area.

If you have a Regularly Scheduled Jam that is not on this list, please tell us about it and we can add it to this page.

And if corrections or updates are needed in this list, we can fix that, too. Send your Jam's information to us at: breakdown@sebabluegrass.org

You can find a list of one-time or few-times Events and Jams on SEBA's Live & Pickin' page.

These Jams and Events meet weekly, Others not so often. See Below

Tuesday - Australian Bakery Tuesday Jam, 6pm - 10pm

In Hibernation until March

(but may meet during unseasonably warm times. Contact Spencer for late breaking detals!)

Australian Bakery Cafe, 48 South Park Sq NE, Marietta, GA

Spencer Oliver: soliver@northmetro.org, www.australianbakery.com

Tuesday - Little Italy's Tuesday Bluegrass/Music Jam, 6:30pm - 10pm

Little Italy Pizzeria and Restaurant, 111 South Magnolia Drive, Suite 17, Tallahassee, FL

Ken Towcimak: Co-ordinator (850) 386-4843, www.littleitalytlh.com/

Wednesday - Tucker Bluegrass Jam, 6pm – 8pm

Colossus Pizza, 4368 Hugh Howell Rd., Tucker, GA

David Belcher: davidbelc@gmail.com, www.davidbelcher.net/Bluegrass_Jams_In_Tucker_GA/

Wednesday - SEBA Woodstock Reformation Brewery Jam. 3pm - 6pm

Reformation Brewery, 105 Elm Street, Woodstock, GA

Terry Fletcher:clawgrass1@comcast.net, reformationbrewery.com/

Thursday - Matthews Cafeteria SEBA Jam, 6pm - 8pm. This an Official SEBA Jam Site

Matthews Cafeteria, 2299 Main Street, Tucker GA

David Belcher: davidbelc@gmail.com, www.davidbelcher.net/Bluegrass Jams In Tucker GA/

Saturday - Weekly Jam Sessions, Everett's Music Barn, 7pm-12am

4055 Stonecypher Rd, Suwanee, GA

renamacd@bellsouth.net, 770-945-5628, www.everettsmusicbarn.net

Saturday - Dahlonega Appalachian Jam, 2pm -5pm

1 Public Square N, **Dahlonega, GA** on the Gold Museum Lawn

Danielle Bell: dbell@dahlonegadda.org

https://www.dahlonega.org/events/live-music-and-concerts/appalachian-jams/

Saturday Afternoons - Old Time and Bluegrass Jam, 2pm - 5pm, 3rd Saturday, 6:00 pm

Slopes BBQ, 200 Johnson Ferry Rd Atlanta, GA

Doc Byrd: 678-640-2719, www.bbgsandysprings.com/

Saturday - Canton Georgia Bluegrass Jam, 11:00am - 2:00pm Paused until Spring

Reformation Brewery, 225 Reformation Parkway, Canton, GA

Mary Russo: mleerus@windstream.net, reformationbrewery.com/

Sunday - Tucker Bluegrass Jam, 6pm - 8pm

Colossus Pizza, 4368 Hugh Howell Rd., Tucker, GA

David Belcher: davidbelc@gmail.com, www.davidbelcher.net/Bluegrass Jams In Tucker GA

Sunday - Ball Ground Bluegrass Jam, 1pm - 5pm Paused until Spring

Ball Ground City Park, 177 Dawsonville Rd., Ball Ground, GA

Mary Russo: mleerus@windstream.net, cityofballground.com/parks-recreation/

Sunday - RockSolid Brewing Company, 1pm – 4pm

345 Gilmer Ferry Rd., Ball Ground, GA, www.rocksolidbrewingco.com/

These Jams and Events meet one time only or maybe once each month...

2nd and 4th Tuesday each month - Rochelle Georgia Bluegrass Jam, 6pm.-8pm

Cabin In The Orchard, Rochelle, GA

Bob McGuinty: mcapple1@windstream.net 229-276-5852

First Wednesday - Waller's Jam, 8pm - 11pm

Waller's Coffee House, 240 DeKalb Ind. Way, **Decatur, GA** (Near Farmers' Market),

404-975-3060, www.wallerscoffeeshop.com/events

1st & 3rd Saturdays - Pickin' on the Square, 10:30am - 2pm

Court House, 72 Greenville Street, Newnan, GA

Art Arace: Art.Arace@delta.com

First Saturday - Acworth Bluegrass Jam, 6pm – 9pm (January Jam is moved to Sat 8th – one time)

South Bartow Gym, Allatoona Resource Center

6503 Glade Road, Acworth, GA

Jon Austin: jonaustinsr@gmail.com, Website

Second Sunday - SEBA Central Chapter Jam, 3pm - 6pm

Emory Presbyterian Church, 1886 N Decatur Rd, Atlanta, GA

Walter Stark, puppetstark@comcast.net, 404-444-6740, www.emorypresbyterian.org/

Various dates - The Crimson Moon, Dahlonega, GA, 7pm - 9pm

24 N Park St North, **Dahlonega, GA**

Please call or check the website to see who's playing. The lineup varies and each night is special! Laura Mae Bain, crimsonmoonpublicist@gmail.com, http://www.thecrimsonmoon.com

All SEBA Chapters hold once-a-month Jams after a brief Chapter meeting.

Check out the <u>Chapters</u> listing for date and places.

Things going on around here



http://evansmediasource.com/index.htm

Walkalla Performing Arts Center

101 East North Broad Street Walhalla SC

www.walhallapac.com

Tickets: https://ci.ovationtix.com/36289

Live From Nashville Jan 15

Sister Hazel Feb 4

Malpass Brothers Feb 12

Bellamy Brothers Mar 4

Little Roy & Lizzy Apr 8

Ryman Auditorium

Nashville Tennessee

https://www.boxofficeticketsales.com/ryman-auditorium

Bela Fleck: My Bluegrass Heart Jan 7

The wonderful people at **WoodSongs** are gathering musical instruments for the recent Kentucky tornado victims. Think about an instrument donation....



www.woodsongs.com/Tornado/

Bear On The Square

Dahlonega, Georgia

Planned for April 22 – 24

https://bearonthesquare.org/

Watch this space.





SEBA Chapters

All SEBA Chapters hold once-a-month Jams after a brief Chapter meeting. Stop in to a SEBA Chapter Meeting to meet up with other Bluegrassers in your Community, get in some Jammin', learn about other Jammin' opportunities near-by, and maybe even swap a Tall Tale or two!

During hot weather, cold weather, wet weather, and holidays, it's a good idea to call or contact the Chapter Leader to verify that the Chapter Meeting is actually happening. It's a good idea to call, anyway, to make sure the Meeting you are going to is on for that day.

SEBA Central (Atlanta Metro)

Walter Stark 404-444-6740 **Emory Presbyterian Church** 1886 N. Decatur Rd. Decatur GA 30307 2nd Sunday, 3:00 - 6:00

Looking for new Venue Chattanooga, TN 37421

SEBA TAG (Chattanooga TN)

Mitchell Kent 423-624-3063

SEBA RABUN (Clayton GA)

Dean English 706-782-9852 Blueridge Music Store 629 Duggan Hill Rd, Clayton, GA 30525 1st Saturday, 12:00 - 3:00

SEBA DAHLONEGA, GA Looking for new VP

Looking for new Venue

SEBA MARIETTA, GA

Dan Daniel 770-900-7472 Woodstock Community Church 237 Rope Mill Rd, Woodstock, GA 30188 4th Sunday, 1:30 - 4:30

On hold right now because of covid

SEBA MACON COUNTY, NC

Jay Baird 828-200-1932 Apr – Oct: Macon Heritage Center 51 Cowee School Drive, Cowee 28734 Nov – Mar: Whistle Stop Depot 145 River Rd, Franklin, NC 38734 3rd Saturday, 12:00 - 3:30

SEBA MIDDLE GEORGIA (Macon GA) Joe Choo

Young America Music School 6361 Zebulon Rd, Macon, GA 31220 2nd Sunday, 2:00 - 5:00 On hold until School gets repaired!

SEBA WINDER, GA Scott & Lizabeth Weber 770-207-9223 Winder, GA 30680

1st Sunday, 3:00 – 6:00

Looking for new Venue

Advertize with SEBA

Do you have Bluegrass related services or products for sale?
Talk with our Advertising Department advertising@sebabluegrass.org
to have your service or product shown to our Bluegrass Community here.

Classified Ads FREE FOR ALL SEBA MEMBERS

All SEBA members with a current (non-expired) membership are eligible for 1 free want ad each membership year.

Free ads for instruments or related merchandise run for 3 months - free ads for music instruction run for 6 months.

After the free ad expires, members may extend the ad or purchase a new 3- month ad for a cost of \$10. Want ads are limited to a maximum of 50 words in length.

CONTACT US breakdown@sebabluegrass.org

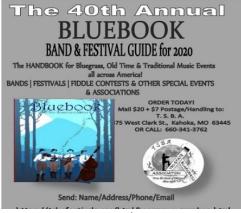
Regular Advertisements:

Ad Size	3 Month	6 Month	12 Months
1/8 Page	\$25	\$50	\$75
1/4 Page	\$50	\$100	\$150
1/2 Page	\$100	\$200	\$250
Full Page	\$150	\$250	\$350

Banjo Ben Clark is your online home for learning to play guitar, banjo, and mandolin.







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