

Shenandoah

Traditional American Folk Song

G C - - D - E G A G
C F Cmaj7

A wanderer loved an Oneida maiden,

C-B-A G A G E-G
F Dm7 G7sus4 C Cmaj7

Away you rolling river,

E G A B A
Em7 Am Em Dm7

With life's needful things,

E G E D-C
F6 F Em7 Dm7

Their canoe was la - den.

G C G C A-G
C Em7 Em7

Away, we're bound away;

G-C D E C D C
Am7 Fmaj7 G7sus4 C G7sus4

Across the wide Missouri.

C F Cmaj7
C F Cmaj7
 In all these years, when e'er I saw her,

F Dm7 G7sus4 C F6
 Away you rolling river,

Em7 Am Em7 F6 F
 Oh Shenandoah,

C Em7
 I do adore her;

C Em7
 Away, we're bound away;

Am7 Fmaj7 G7sus4 C
 Across the wide Missouri.

Lead in **red** but play not upon the **reddened** strings.

C F Cmaj7
 Oh Shenandoah, I love your daughter,

F Dm7 G7sus4 C
 Away you rolling river,

Em7 Am Em7
 I'll take her 'cross,

F6 F
 The rollin' wa-ters.

C Em7
 Away, we're bound away;

Am7 Fmaj7 G7sus4 C
 Across the wide Missou - ri.

C F Cmaj7
 Oh Shenandoah,

We're bound to leave you.

F Dm7 G7sus4 C
 Away you rolling river,

Em7 Am Em7
 Oh Shenandoah,

F6 F
 I'll not deceive you.

C Em7
 Away, we're bound away;

Am7 Fmaj7 G7sus4 C
 Across the wide Missouri.

Songs as you go

History

"Oh Shenandoah" (aka "Shenandoah" or "Across the Wide Missouri") is a traditional American folk song of uncertain origin, dating at least to the early 19th century.

The song appears to have originated with Canadian and American voyageurs or fur traders traveling down the Missouri River in canoes, and has developed several different sets of lyrics. Some lyrics refer to the First American chief "Shenandoah" (Oskanondonha) and a canoe-going trader who wants to marry his daughter. By the mid 1800s versions of the song had become a sea shanty heard or sung by sailors in various parts of the world.

Until the 19th century only First Americans, adventurers and those who sought their fortunes as trappers and traders of beaver fur ventured as far west as the Missouri River. Most of these Canadian and American "voyageurs" were loners who befriended, and sometimes married, First Americans.

Some lyrics from the early 1800s tell the story of a trader who fell in love with the daughter of the Oneida (the People of the Upright Stone, or standing stone; one of the five founding nations of the Iroquois Confederacy in upstate New York, near the Great Lakes), pine tree chief, Oskanondonha (1710–1816). His name means "deer antlers" (Oh-skan-ohn-doh in Oneida). Also called John Shenandoah or John Skanandoa, the chief lived in the central New York state town of Oneida Castle. He was a co-founder of the Oneida Academy, which became Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, and is buried on the campus grounds.

The canoe-going fur-trading *voyageurs* were great singers, and songs were an important part of their culture. Also in the early 19th century, flatboat-men who plied the Missouri were known for their shanties, including "Oh Shenandoah". Sailors heading down the Mississippi River picked up the song and made it a capstan shanty sung while hauling in an anchor. This boatmen's song found its way down the Mississippi River to American clipper ships, and thus around the world.

Wikipedia



The Trapper and his Family (1845) depicts a voyageur and his First American wife and children by Charles Deas