

SALLY ANN

Musical score for Sally Ann in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. Chords are indicated above the notes: A, D, A, E, A, E, A, E, A.

The tune, Sally Ann, stems from the same tune family as Sail Away Ladies and Great Big Taters in Sandy Land, sounding like variations of each other with the main difference being what area of the country they were predominantly played. All three tunes are thought to be from the mid-19th century, but which tune came first and from where is unclear.¹

Sally Ann is associated with West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina; being so popular in Surry County, NC, that it is considered the unofficial 'national anthem'.² It is played both in standard tuning (GDAE) and crosstuning (ADAE) with famous instrumental versions performed by Doc Roberts in 1931³ and later, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs in 1961.⁴

The song, Sally Ann, makes appearances in English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians Vol 2, collected by Cecil Sharp and edited by Maud Karpeles.⁵ The tune was sung to Sharp and Karpeles by Mrs. Dellie Hughes on October 9th, 1918 in Burnsville, NC.

O where are you going, Sally Anne? (x3)
 I'm going to the wedding, Sally Anne.
 O shake that little foot, Sally Anne, (x3)
 You're a pretty good dancer, Sally Anne.

It is also included in Folk Songs of North America, Alan Lomax,⁶ published in 1960, but it is not certain where or when it was gathered.

Did you ever see a muskrat, Sally Anne,
 Draggin' his slick tail through the sand,
 Pickin' his banjo an' raisin' sand,
 Did you ever see a muskrat, Sally Anne?

Chorus:
 Ever see a muskrat, Sally, Sally
 Ever see a muskrat, Sally Anne?

Sally Ann makes a more recent appearance in 1990, when the New Nashville Cats, fronted by John Cowan and Mark O'Connor, performed a new arrangement of Sally Ann with lyrics written by Alice Randall that include a race lynching.⁷

Johnny got married in his one good suit
 But the ride from church bore strange fruit
 Down by road you can hear her cry
 As he hung from a tree, she watched him die

Refrain:
 Who's gonna dance with Sally Ann
 Who's gonna touch her tremblin' hand
 When the fiddler takes the stand
 Who's gonna dance with Sally Ann

¹https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Great_Big_Taters_in_Sandy_Land

²[https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Sally_Ann.\(1\)](https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Sally_Ann.(1))

³<https://youtu.be/bVMH45dqSWI>

⁴https://youtu.be/zpv_8xEJFYg

⁵Sharp, Cecil J. and Maud Karpeles. English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians Vol 2, Oxford University Press, 1932, No 240, p 351.

⁶Lomax, Alan. Folk Songs of North America, Doubleday and Company, 1960, p 230.

⁷<https://youtu.be/B4-52uUYoK8>