Flatpicking Guitar Magazine
Free Monthly Lesson - November 2015

Colored Aristocracy

Arranged by Dan Miller

Welcome to the free on-line lesson for November 2015. For this lesson I've selected the old-time tune "Colored Aristocracy." This is a tune that I learned many years ago from my friend Steve Palazzo in Santa Cruz, California. The tune was written sometime during the late 19th century and was first recorded in 1936 by fiddler Sanford Rich, a resident of Arthurdale, West Virginia. Musicologists catagorize this tune as a "cake walk."

Mike Seeger learned this tune from the recording of Sanford Rich that his father, musicologist Charles Seeger recorded and it became one of the first tunes that was recorded by Mike Seeger's group the New Lost City Ramblers in the late 1950s (John Cohen on guitar). This tune is also sometimes known as "Southern Aristocracy" or "The Young Man Who Wouldn't Hoe Corn."

Many groups have recorded this tune over the years and it has appeared in Flatpicking Guitar Magazine twice. Both occurances of this tune in the magazine were during our 6th year of publication. This first arrangement was in Volume 6, Number 2 and was a transcription of John Cohen's solo on the New Lost City Ramblers recording. This transription, in the key G, was transcribed by Dix Bruce. The second occurance was in Volume 6, Number 4 and was arranged in C by Steve Kaufman. Steve said that he learned the tune when he was 19 years old and he heard Orrin Star play it in the National Flatpicking Guitar Championship. I hope you enjoy this great tune.

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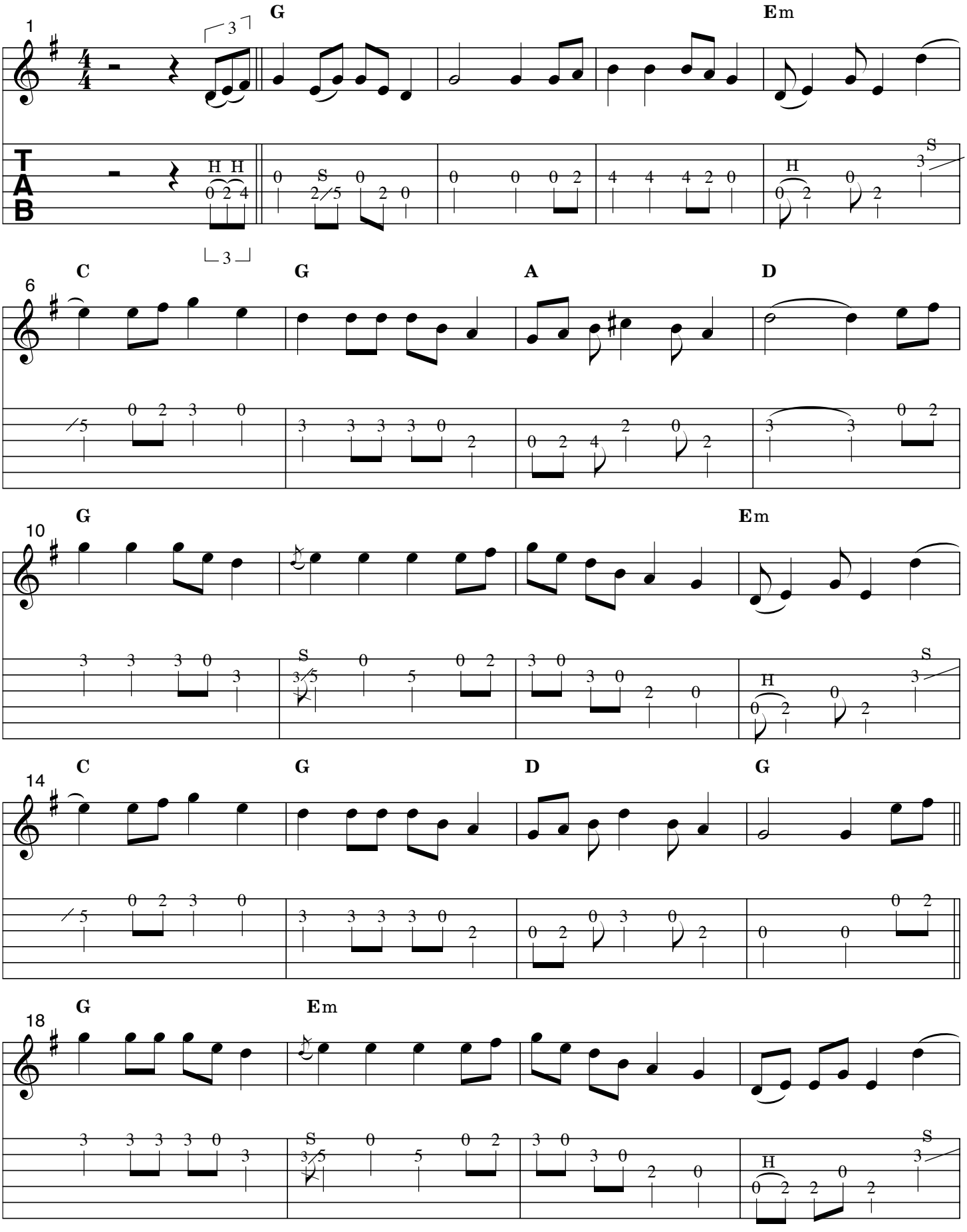
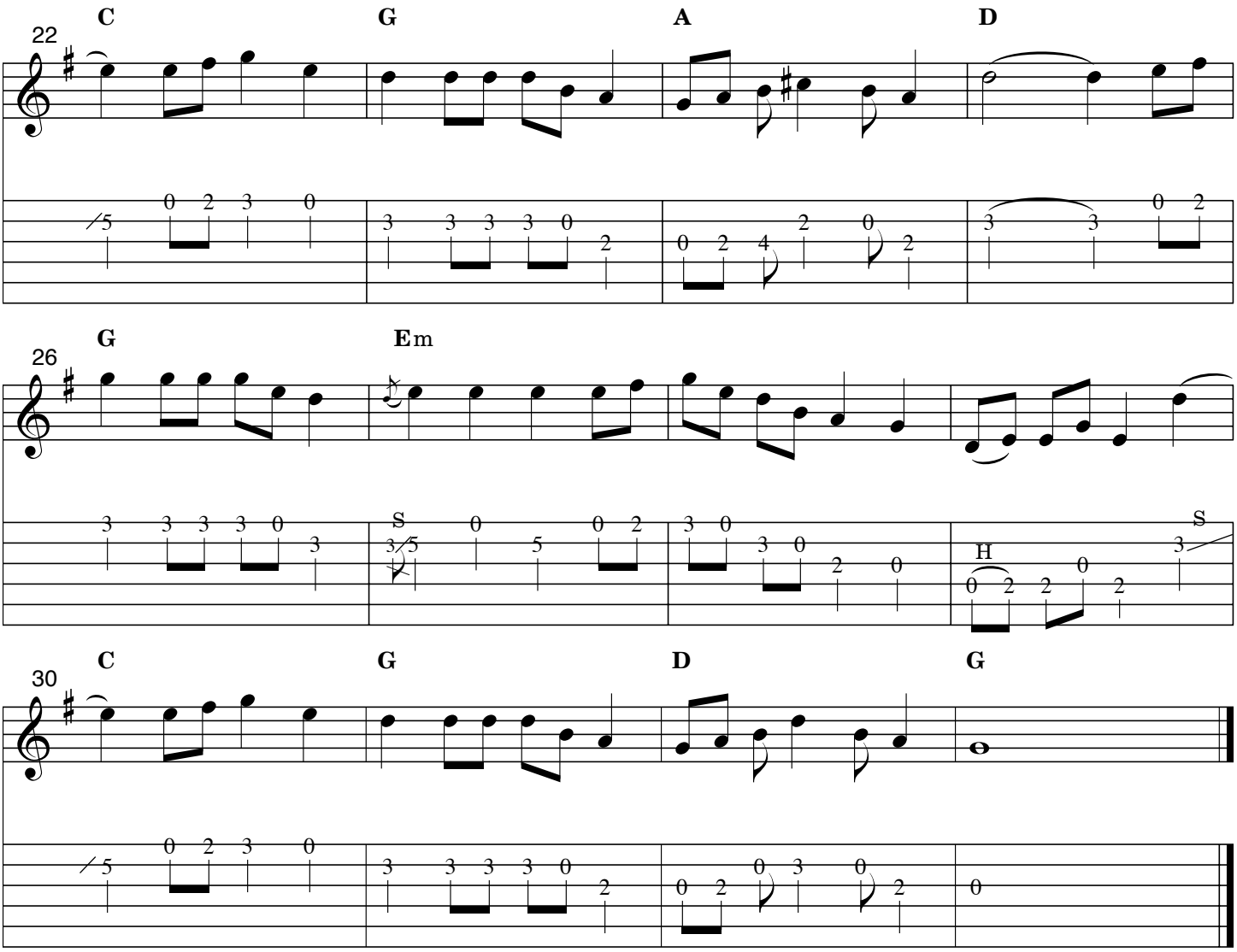
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