

# The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down

Words and music by Robbie Robertson



Fictional character Virgil Caine narrates over a somber chord progression in "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," mourning the personal and financial toll of the US Civil War. Speaking through the voice of a Southerner, songwriter Robbie Robertson provides insight to the cost of war in a relatable way that is every bit as contemporary as it is historical.

On the original recording (from the Band's self-titled 1969 album), the piano provides much of the accompaniment, while the acoustic guitar traces the chords with arpeggios and simple fills like those notated here. For a solo-guitar arrangement,

work to create your own strumming pattern, paying particular attention to the first beat of each chord change. By giving each a little extra breathing room, you'll help bring just the right amount of life into this classic song. At the end of each chorus, play the tag shown below. Watch out for the delayed C chord, which comes in on beat two.

—DAN APCZYNSKI

**Chords**

<b>Am</b> x02310	<b>C/G</b> 3x2010	<b>F</b> xx3211	<b>Dm</b> xx0231
<b>C</b> x32010	<b>D</b> xx0132	<b>Fmaj7</b> 1x3420	<b>G</b> 210034

**Verse Leads**

**Chorus Tag**

1. **Am C/G F Am Dm**  
Virgil Caine is the name and I served on the Danville train
- Am C/G F Am Dm**  
'Til Stoneman's cavalry came and tore up the tracks again
- Am F C Dm**  
In the winter of '65, we were hungry, just barely alive
- Am F**  
By May the tenth, Richmond had fell
- C Dm D**  
It's a time I remember oh so well

*Chorus*

**C/G Fmaj7 C/G**  
The night they drove old Dixie down

**Fmaj7**  
And the bells were ringing

**C/G Fmaj7 C/G**  
The night they drove old Dixie down

**Fmaj7**  
And the people were singing

**C/G Am G F C**  
They went na, na, na, na ...

2. **Am C/G F Am Dm**  
Back with my wife in Tennessee when one day she called to me
- Am C/G F Am Dm**  
"Virgil, quick, come see—there goes Robert E. Lee!"

- Am F**  
Now I don't mind choppin' wood
- C Dm**  
And I don't care if the money's no good
- Am F**  
You take what you need and you leave the rest
- C Dm D**  
But they should never have taken the very best

*Repeat Chorus*

3. **Am C/G F Am Dm**  
Like my father before me, I will work the land
- Am C/G F Am Dm**  
And like my brother before me, who took a rebel stand
- Am F**  
He was just eighteen, proud and brave
- C Dm**  
But a Yankee laid him in his grave
- Am F**  
I swear by the mud below my feet
- C Dm D**  
You can't raise a Caine back up when he's in defeat

*Repeat Chorus, piano interlude*

*Repeat Chorus and fade*