

# Cotton-Eyed Joe

Words & Music:  
Traditional

*There are several lyric versions to this song; and also two chord variations that I've found. I refer readers to the great discussions about the rich history of this song on The Mudcat Café. Also, Wikipedia's entry on this song is a good 'un.*

## 1. Antebellum Lyric Version:

G C G D G  
'Way back yonder a long time ago, Daddy had a man called Cotton-Eyed Joe.  
G C G D G  
Blew into town on a travelin' show, nobody danced like the Cotton-Eyed Joe

### CHORUS:

G Em  
Cotton-Eyed Joe, Cotton-Eyed Joe  
G D G  
Where did you come from, where did you go?  
G Em  
Where did you come from, where did you go?  
G D G  
Where did you come from, Cotton-Eyed Joe?

Mama's at the window, Mama's at the door,  
She can't see nothin' but the Cotton-Eyed Joe.  
Daddy held the fiddle, I held the bow,  
An' we beat the hell out of Cotton-Eyed Joe.

### CHORUS:

Made himself a a fiddle, made himself a bow.  
Made a little tune called "Cotton-Eyed Joe".  
Hadn't oughta been for Cotton-Eyed Joe,  
I'd a-been married a long time ago.

### CHORUS:

#### Verse 4:

Whenever there's a dance all the women want to go,  
And they all want to dance with the Cotton-Eyed Joe.  
Daddy won't say, but I think he knows,  
Whatever happened to Cotton-Eyed Joe.

## 2. Major Key/Minor Key Chord Variation:

*Per Sounghound Thomas Loomis, this should be sung slowly, all but a capella. This kind of "playing with the keys" is common in folk music; especially that from The Isles.*

A.....

Where do you come from?

A .....E.....

Where do you go?

A.....E.....A.....

Where do you come from, Cotton-eyed Joe?

..... A.....

Well, I come for t' see you,

...A.....E.....

I come for t' sing

...A..... E..... Aminor.....

I come for t' give you, a diamon' ring....

## 3. The "Wronged Love" Lyric Version:

*This version was recorded by folklorist Dorothy Scarborough and published in 1925. The patois is how it was published.*

Don't you remember, don't you know, don't you remember, Cotton-eyed Joe?  
Cotton-eyed Joe, Cotton-eyed Joe, what did make you treat me so?

CHORUS:

I'd 'a' been married forty year ago

Ef it had n't a-been for Cotton-eyed Joe!

Cotton-eyed Joe, Cotton-eyed Joe, he was de nig dat sarved me so, ?  
Tuck my gal away fum me, carried her off to Tennessee.

CHORUS:

Hi's teeth was out an' his nose was flat,

His eyes was crossed, ? but she did n't mind dat.

Kase he was tall, and berry slim an' so my gal she follered him.

CHORUS:

She was de prettiest gal to be found anywhar in de country round;  
Her lips was red an' her eyes was bright,  
Her skin was black but her teeth was white.

CHORUS:

Dat gal, she sho' had all my love, an swore fum ne she'd never move,  
But Joe hoodooed her, don't you see, an' she run off wid him to Tennessee,

CHORUS: