

A SONG A WEEK

for the
Native American Flute
& Accompanying Guitar



by John Ellis

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PREFACE

A Song a Week for the Native American Flute & Accompanying Guitar is a self-instruction and songbook specifically for the Native American style wooden flute to be played with guitar accompaniment. Instruction is provided on the techniques for each the flute and the guitar, and playing them together. The songbook contains 52 public domain songs (with two provided in two keys), with the flute melody rendered in flute-fingering symbolic tablature, obviating the need for the player to understand standard music notation. The accompanying guitar chord names also include suggested fingerings. This book comes with two standard audio CDs that contain three tracks for each of the songs in the book: one with the flute and guitar parts mixed, and one for each of the instruments by itself.

Recordings on the CDs that accompany this book were made solely on instruments made by the author at Turtle Mound Flutes (www.turtlemoundflutes.com).

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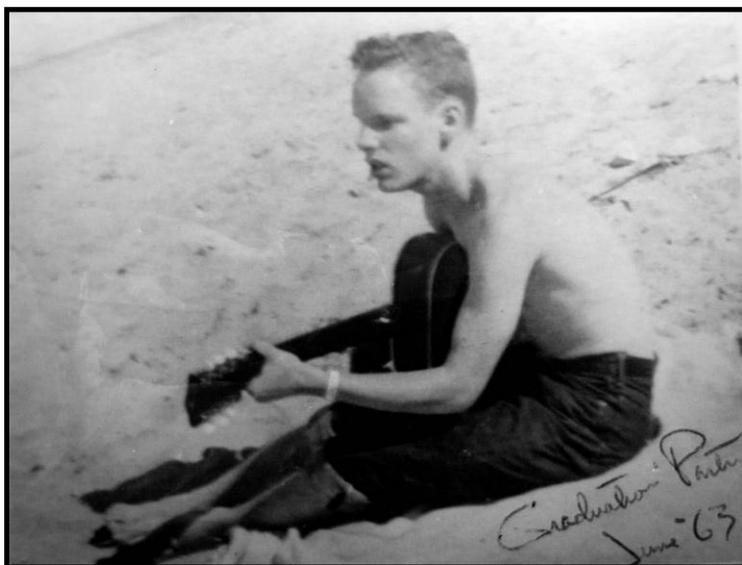
1. Introduction

Relatively few people explore the versatility of the Native American Flute. We generally teach a new flute player the basic pentatonic minor scale, tell him/her that any combination of those notes will sound good, and direct him/her to go “play from the heart.” This approach works because of the special nature of the pentatonic minor scale in playing improvisational music. This scale is also well known to jazz and rock guitar soloists, for example.

For some flute players, this solo *improv* playing is all they are looking for and they derive great pleasure from it. That’s great!!! There is no reason for them to look for anything more.

But the Native American Flute is more versatile than solo improv playing. At a minimum, flutes play nicely with a rhythmic background, such as from a hand drum, rattle, or shaker. Also, most modern Native American Flutes are tuned against an electronic tuner, so they should be able to play in tune with other instruments. Finally, it’s natural to want to play familiar songs, and the Native American Flute can play quite a few, such as those in this songbook.

This songbook provides a guide to playing familiar songs on the Native American Flute, either solo or with accompaniment by a chorded instrument, such as a guitar.



As an old guitar picker for over 50 years [see photo at the left of me at Bradford Beach on Lake Michigan, Milwaukee, for our high school graduation party, June '63], it occurred to me that the guitar would provide a great complement to flute music. My thought was not original though, as there are a number of flute/guitar duos performing, such as Elysium Calling, Golana, Painted Raven, and Rae Denton & Paul Warren. Bigger groups, such as Mark Holland’s Autumn’s Child and the Jeff Ball Band prominently feature a guitar to back the leader’s flute.

I’ve included chord names and guitar chord diagrams with the songs in this songbook. These chord diagrams suggest rather basic fingerings. Experienced guitarists are encouraged to build accompaniments in their own style with appropriate fingerings. Of course, other chorded instruments, including keyboards, can use the chord names to play along too.

Background

Because the narrative in this book will make many references to the Native American Flute, henceforth I'll use the acronym NAF to refer to it.

As is often the case that I've observed when introducing new players to the flute, I'll assume that the flute player using this book has no musical training and quite possibly has no desire to learn to read standard music notation. Further, since the NAF is not a chromatic instrument (*i.e.*, able to play in all, or at least several, keys), it is not practical to play arbitrary sheet music on any arbitrary flute. Therefore a tablature notation, such as the one used in this book, make sense for even those players who are musically trained and can read standard music notation.

This book will touch lightly on some basic music theory, mainly on the types of scales for which the NAF is tuned and those needed to play the songs in this book. I use this approach because there are some fundamental limitations in the NAF that may make their ability to accurately play some of these songs vary from flute to flute. A basic understanding of the nature of both the NAF and Euro-American music will explain some of the problems a flute player might encounter when playing some of these songs. This could help the player adapt them to his/her flute, and also be used to help the flute player choose flutes that can play these songs more successfully.

Beyond the relatively brief narrative on some basic music theory, the songs in this book present the flute part using a tablature notation that uses little symbols that represent the fingering for a particular note on the flute. I call these symbols "*fluties*." This obviates the need to learn to read common music notation, reducing the playing of individual notes to matching the fingering of the fluties. The same notation may be used on flutes of any key, allowing the songs to be transposed by merely picking a flute tuned to a different key.

Once you become familiar with a song, such as those in this book, do not feel constrained by the melody or temperament of the song as transcribed. Remember that the NAF is first and foremost an improv instrument. Build off the provided "traditional" version and create your own version. Some songs, such as *Wayfaring Stranger* and *St. James Infirmary* that rely heavily on the pentatonic minor scale, are a great place to start.

As you work through the songs of this book, start with the ones that are familiar to you and then explore others. There are some great songs that you may never have heard that go very well on the NAF.

So, have fun and explore some of the possibilities...

1.1 Playing Euro-American Music on the Native American Flute

The NAF faces some significant challenges in playing most Euro-American music. Its primary limitations are in the range and selection of notes that it can produce. Couple that with the variations among flutes that allow playing Euro-American songs to a greater or lesser degree depending on the individual flutes. In this section, I'll address all of these as we go along.

For the purpose of this book, I'm going to refer to Euro-American music as "Western" music. That's not "western" as in the country & western genre of music, but referring to music written by and for the Western culture embodied in the cultures of most European and North American countries.

Western music is primarily in one of two general "*modes*", which are commonly called *major* and *minor*. Further, most Western songs are written in the major mode, which creates a problem for the NAF because it's *de facto* "standard" tuning is to a particular minor scale. In the following sections, we'll explore a little music theory to understand what this means. Understanding this theory is not absolutely necessary to play the flute and guitar together, but it will help explain why the instruments may not always mesh the way you want them to and what you can do when they don't.

Scales

A scale is a sequence of notes played in ascending or descending order by pitch. Of course, there is a continuous range of frequencies from well below the range of human hearing to well above. We call the range of frequencies that we can hear the *audible range*. By convention, specific frequencies within the audible range are assigned names. These named frequencies are the notes that are used to construct scales. The relationship between these named notes is defined mathematically, but that relationship is generally unimportant to our discussion here.

The Octave

There is one mathematical relationship that is somewhat important. That is the one that defines a musical concept called the *octave*.

Mathematically, two notes are an octave apart if the frequency of one is exactly twice the frequency of the other. You can identify these octave-separated notes because they have the same name. For example, if we assign the note A the frequency of 440 Hz, then the A one octave higher has the frequency of 880 Hz. Notes an octave apart may be considered the beginning and end of a scale. In reality, the notes of scales repeat in successive octaves up and down. So the "end" note of one scale going up becomes the "beginning" note of the same scale the next octave above.

The Chromatic Scale

The first scale we'll consider is the *chromatic scale*, the scale from which all other scales are derived. This scale consists of all 12 of the named notes in an octave (the octave note is normally not counted). For example, beginning with the note that's called "C", the chromatic scale consists of:

C – C# – D – D# – E – F – F# – G – G# – A – A# – B – C

The spacing between each consecutive pair of the notes in the chromatic scale is one-half step, sometimes called a *semitone*. Envision these notes of the chromatic scale as all of the keys on the common keyboard (piano, organ, synthesizer, etc.). Then the *natural* notes (*i.e.*, the "plain" letters) correspond to the white keys, as illustrated in Figure 1. The "#" sign is called

a sharp, and raises the pitch one half step over the natural note. For example, C# (pronounced “C-sharp”) is one half step (a semitone) above C. These sharped notes are the black keys on the common keyboard.



Figure 1 The chromatic scale on the common keyboard

Notice that there is no semitone between E and F, or between B and C. These pairs of naturals are one half step apart.

While the sharp raises the pitch one half step, another symbol, (“b”) called the *flat*, lowers the pitch one half step. The same chromatic scale we identified above, which was written with sharps, can also be written with flats as:

C – D_b – D – E_b – E – F – G_b – G – A_b – A – B_b – B – C

So, depending on your point of reference, the note one half step above C may be called C# (one half step above C) or D_b (one half step below D). Which name you would use depends on the key (*i.e.*, the reference scale). We’ll discuss the concept of *keys* further when we get to scales other than the chromatic scale.

As a side note, some flute makers make a flute in the key of E_b, while others make a flute with the same tuning and call it the key of D#. From the preceding discussion you should now understand that those two flutes have been tuned to the same key. These makers just used a different but equivalent name for that key.

As we have seen, the piano is a chromatic instrument because it can play all of the notes of the chromatic scale, and for a number of octaves. More important to the topic of this book, the guitar is also a chromatic instrument, with each fret moving up the neck one half step above the previous note at the previous fret.

As a chromatic instrument, the guitar differs from the keyboard in two important regards:

1. Unlike the keyboard, which has white and black keys, there is no obvious way to identify the natural and accidental notes on the guitar. In fact, it is becoming common for guitar

players to use “alternate tunings” where the open (unfretted) strings are not tuned to the most commonly used standard EADGBE tuning. Twelve-string guitars may be detuned (tuned down) by anywhere from one half to one and a half (or even two) steps to reduce the tension on the neck and at the same time create a deeper sound. So you can’t just look at a guitar and necessarily identify the notes.

- Whereas a specified note is assigned to only a single key on the keyboard and may not be played anywhere else, the guitar may sound most notes from several combinations of strings and fret positions. As a simple example, in the standard tuning, an A may be sounded on the sixth (lowest) string fretted on the fifth fret, or on the fifth string played open. Guitarists use such relationships to tune one string relative to another. I’ll assume the guitar-playing reader is aware of such relationships.

Part of intermediate to advanced guitar playing includes learning to play “moveable” scales, taking the notes for a specific scale relative to one fret position and moving the same fingerings to a different position on the neck by using a different fret position as the “home” reference position. For the purpose of this book, we’ll work mostly from the “open” scale (where the unfretted strings form the basis of the notes of the scale, and first few frets are used extensively). Guitar players interested in pursuing this are encouraged to find a good book on the subject or a good instructor.

The Major Scale

Other scales are made up of notes selected from the chromatic scale. A particular scale is defined by its starting point in the chromatic scale and the spacing between the notes selected from the chromatic scale. The first scale we’ll discuss is called the *major scale* (technically called the *Ionian mode*). The major scale is called heptatonic (from the Greek for “seven notes”), meaning it has seven notes from the chromatic scale in its octave. The spacings between the notes of the major scale are: full step, full step, half step, full step, full step, full step, half step. A major scale may begin on any note of the chromatic scale and that note specifies the *key* of the scale. The following illustrates the notes of three major scales used with songs in this songbook:

Spacing (steps):	full	full	half	full	full	full	half
Key of C:	C	D	E	F	G	A	B C
Key of G:	G	A	B	C	D	E	F# G
Key of F:	F	G	A	B \flat	C	D	E F

Figure 2 Examples of the Major Scale

In these examples, notice that there are no sharps or flats in the C major scale. There is one sharp (F#) in the G major scale and one flat (B \flat) in the F major scale. On the music staff, one sharp (on the top line, F) designates the key of G and one flat (on the middle line, B) designates the key of F. The signature for the key of C has no sharps or flats.

The major scale is the one most commonly used for Western music, so we need to pay special attention to it if playing this kind of music is important to our flute playing goals. Because of this widespread popularity, it is also the most familiar to people of the Western culture. In fact,

there is a popular song from the play and movie **Sound of Music** that teaches the popular names for the notes of the major scale. These are the lyrics of that song:

Do [doe], a deer, a female deer.
 Re [ray], a drop of golden sun.
 Mi [me], the name I call myself.
 Fa, a long, long way to run.
 Sol [sew], a needle pulling thread.
 La, a note to follow Sol.
 Ti [tea], a drink with jam and bread,
 Which will bring us back to Do, Do, Do.
 Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do.

Most of the songs in this book are in a major key, meaning they use the major scale of that key.

The Natural Minor Scale

Another common scale used in Western music is called the *natural minor scale* (technically the *Aeolian mode*). Also a heptatonic scale, the spacings of the minor scale notes are: full step, half step, full step, full step, half step, full step, full step. The following illustrates the notes of three minor scales:

Spacing (steps):	full	half	full	full	half	full	full
Key of A minor:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G A
Key of E minor:	E	F#	G	A	B	C	D E
Key of D minor:	D	E	F	G	A	B \flat	C D

Figure 3 Examples of the Minor Scale

It is no accident that I chose these three particular minor keys. Notice that the notes of these scales are the same as those in the three respective major scales in Figure 2; they just start on a different note. To be specific, for each major scale there is a corresponding minor scale, called its *relative minor scale*, that begins on the sixth note of the major scale and uses the same notes as the major scale.

It is interesting that the same sequence of notes can sound so different depending on where you start. Some people describe the major scale as sounding “happy” while the minor scale sounds “sad.” If you start on other notes of the major scale to play a different scale, you will discover a different *mode* with its own personality.

The Pentatonic Minor Scale

As just described, the natural minor scale is a heptatonic minor scale. Of particular interest when discussing the NAF is a pentatonic (five note) subset of that scale. Although there are several pentatonic scales that are considered minor, the most common (and the one most applicable to the NAF) uses tones 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 of the natural minor scale. For the natural minor scales illustrated in Figure 3, the corresponding pentatonic minor scales are:

Spacing (steps):	3-half	full	full	3-half	full	
Key of A minor:	A	C	D	E	G	A
Key of E minor:	E	G	A	B	D	E
Key of D minor:	D	F	G	A	C	D

Figure 4 Examples of the Pentatonic Minor Scale

On the “standard” tuned NAF, this scale is played as follows on the flutes in the corresponding keys:

Key of A minor:	A	C	D	E	G	A
Key of E minor:	E	G	A	B	D	E
Key of D minor:	D	F	G	A	C	D

Figure 5 Playing the Mode 1 Pentatonic Minor Scale on the NAF

The convention used in this figure and throughout the remainder of this book is that the mouthpiece end is toward the bottom and the flute “foot” is at the top. Solid dots represent holes that are covered when playing while the empty dots are the holes that are uncovered. This orientation suggests the flute as you look at it while you are playing it. The holes are numbered beginning with hole 1 nearest the foot and counting “up” to hole 6 nearest the mouthpiece (counting top to bottom on the flutie symbols). *[Note that others use the opposite orientation, with the mouthpiece at the top, suggesting they way you would look at a flute someone else is playing.]*

In the NAF world, this is called the mode 1 scale and may be played on either the 5-hole or 6-hole NAF. Note that the hole “missing” from the 5-hole flute is hole 4 (remember, counting from the “foot”), which remains covered for all notes in the above illustration (Figure 5) of the 6-hole flute fingering.

The 6-hole NAF is called a mode 1-4 flute because, in addition to the mode 1 scale described above, it can play another pentatonic minor scale called the mode 4 scale. This is illustrated as follows:

Key of A minor:	A	C	D	F	G	A
Key of E minor:	E	G	A	C	D	E
Key of D minor:	D	F	G	B \flat	C	D

Figure 6 Playing the Mode 4 Pentatonic Minor Scale on the NAF

Appendix C – CD Contents

The accompanying CDs contain three tracks for each of the songs in the songbook of Chapter 4. One track provides the song played on the NAF complete with the guitar accompaniment. This is followed by additional tracks that break the song to each the guitar alone and then the NAF lead alone. The below table identifies the disk/track numbers on which you will find each of the songs, as well as a cross-reference back to the page containing the song's music sheet.

#	Song Title	Key	Plays		Disk	Track			Time (each track)	Page
			Half-Hole	2 nd Octave		NAF & Guitar	Guitar	NAF		
1	Amazing Grace - I	D	X		1	1	2	3	:36	34
	Amazing Grace – II	F		X	1	4	5	6	:32	35
2	America - I (My Country 'Tis of Thee)	C	X		1	7	8	9	:29	36
	America - II (My Country 'Tis of Thee)	D		X	1	10	11	12	:29	37
3	America the Beautiful	G	X	X	1	13	14	15	:43	38-39
4	Angels We Have Heard on High	D		X	1	16	17	18	:45	40-41
5	Auld Lang Syne	D	X	X	1	19	20	21	:46	42
6	Aura Lee	F		X	1	22	23	24	:38	44-45
7	Away in a Manger	F		X	1	25	26	27	:29	43
8	Banks of the Ohio	C		X	1	28	29	30	:35	46
9	Barbry Allen	C		X	1	31	32	33	:18	47
10	Battle Hymn of the Republic	G	X	X	1	34	35	36	1:09	48-49
11	Beautiful Brown Eyes	D			1	37	38	39	:41	50-51
12	Beautiful Dreamer	C	X	X	1	40	41	42	1:15	52-53
13	Bury Me Beneath the Willow	F		X	1	43	44	45	:44	54-55
14	Careless Love	D		X	1	46	47	48	:38	60
15	Carry Me Back to Old Virginy	F		X	1	49	50	51	1:10	56-57
16	The Caisson Song	C		X	1	52	53	54	:42	58-59
17	Cherokee Morning Song	C			1	55	56	57	:23	61
18	The Cruel War Is Raging	F			1	58	59	60	:42	62
19	Down in the Valley	F		X	1	61	62	63	:38	63
20	The Erie Canal	Dm/F		X	1	64	65	66	:48	64-65
21	Every Night When the Sun Goes Down	C		X	1	67	68	69	1:10	66-67
22	Frankie and Johnny	C		X	1	70	71	72	:27	68
23	Freight Train	C	X		1	73	74	75	:19	69
24	Go Down Moses	Dm			1	76	77	78	:35	70-71
25	Greensleeves	Dm		X	1	79	80	81	:48	72-73
26	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	D		X	1	82	83	84	:42	74-75
27	Hava Nagila	B/Em	X	X	2	1	2	3	1:22	76-77
28	Home On the Range	F		X	2	4	5	6	:50	78-79
29	Home Sweet Home	C		X	2	7	8	9	:52	80-81
30	House of the Rising Sun	Am	X		2	10	11	12	:25	82

#	Song Title	Key	Plays		Disk	Track			Time (each track)	Page
			Half-Hole	2 nd Octave		NAF & Guitar	Guitar	NAF		
31	The Huron Carol	Dm	X		2	13	14	15	:37	84-85
32	Hush, Little Baby	D			2	16	17	18	:14	83
33	Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho	Am	X		2	19	20	21	:26	86-87
34	Just a Closer Walk with Thee	G	X	X	2	22	23	24	1:01	88-89
35	King of Kings	Em	X	X	2	25	26	27	:23	90
36	Kum-By-Ya	C	X		2	28	29	30	:38	91
37	Marines Hymn	C		X	2	31	32	33	:42	92-93
38	Midnight Special	F			2	34	35	36	:50	94-95
39	Old Folks At Home (Swanee River)	A	X	X	2	37	38	39	:55	96-97
40	Old Rugged Cross	G	X	X	2	40	41	42	:56	98-99
41	Red River Valley	D	X		2	43	44	45	:34	100
42	Row, Row, Row Your Boat	C		X	2	46	47	48	:11	101
43	St. James Infirmary	Am			2	49	50	51	:24	102
44	Scarborough Fair	Dm		X	2	52	53	54	:31	103
45	Silent Night	F		X	2	55	56	57	:43	110
46	Softly and Tenderly	F		X	2	58	59	60	:56	104-105
47	Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	D	X	X	2	61	62	63	:37	106-107
48	Three Ravens	Dm		X	2	64	65	66	:39	108-109
49	Tom Dooley	F			2	67	68	69	:18	111
50	Wayfaring Stranger	Am			2	70	71	72	:56	112-113
51	When the Saints Go Marching In	C			2	73	74	75	:47	114-115
52	Will the Circle Be Unbroken	F		X	2	76	77	78	:23	116

\$35

A Song a Week for the Native American Flute & Accompanying Guitar

This book explores expanding the range of music played on the Native American Flute to include traditional Euro-American ("western") music. It also illustrates ways that the guitar can be used to join in and accompany the flute player. Included in this songbook are 52 time-honored public domain songs with "*flutie*" symbolic flute tablature and guitar chords.

Amazing Grace (in 2 keys)	Hava Nagila
America (in 2 keys)	Home On the Range
America the Beautiful	Home Sweet Home
Angels We Have Heard on High	House of the Rising Sun
Auld Lang Syne	The Huron Carol
Aura Lee	Hush, Little Baby
Away in a Manger	Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho
Banks of the Ohio	Just a Closer Walk with Thee
Barbry Allen	King of Kings
Battle Hymn of the Republic	Kum-By-Ya
Beautiful Brown Eyes	Marines Hymn
Beautiful Dreamer	Midnight Special
Bury Me Beneath the Willow	Old Folks At Home (Swanee River)
Careless Love	Old Rugged Cross
Carry Me Back to Old Virginny	Red River Valley
The Caisson Song	Row, Row, Row Your Boat
Cherokee Morning Song	St. James Infirmary
The Cruel War is Raging	Scarborough Fair
Down in the Valley	Silent Night
The Erie Canal	Softly and Tenderly
Every Night When the Sun Goes Down	Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Frankie and Johnny	Three Ravens
Freight Train	Tom Dooley
Go Down Moses	Wayfaring Stranger
Greensleeves	When the Saints Go Marching In
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	Will the Circle Be Unbroken

Accompanying this book are two audio CDs that provide three instructive tracks per song: one with the mixed flute lead and guitar accompaniment, and one track for each of the instruments alone, to teach the parts or to play along with.

Cover photography by Claire Ellis

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