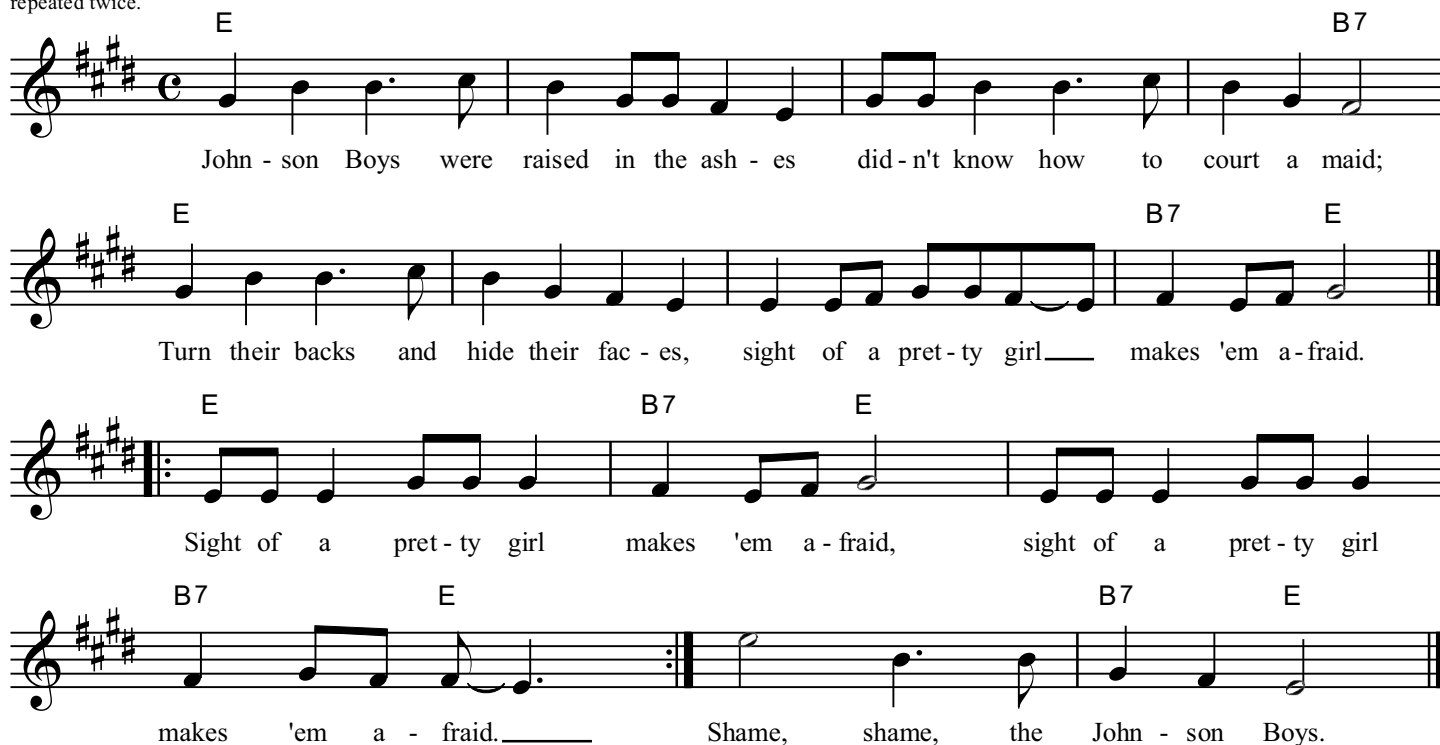


JOHNSON BOYS

Traditional Old-Time, Song and Fiddle Tune; **DATE:** Tune older (mid 1800's); Words early 1900's; **CATEGORY:** Fiddle and Instrumental Tunes; **RECORDING INFO:** Al Hopkins & His Buckle Busters (1927); Grant Brothers (1928); New Lost City Ramblers; Flatt & Scruggs & the Foggy Mountain Boys; Freight Hoppers; Hillbillies; J. E. Mainer & the Mountaineers; Frank Proffitt; Wade Ward; The Tenneva Ramblers; **OTHER NAMES:** "Meet the Johnson Boys;" "Kentucky Boys;" "Legend Of The Johnson Boys;" **RELATED TO:** "Aunt Sal's Song (The Man Who Didn't Know How to Court)" (theme); "Mister Booger;" "Doran's Ass/Dolan's Ass;" "Spanish Ladies/The Spanish Lady;" "Billy Taylor/Willie Taylor;" "Finnegan's Wake." **NOTES:** Banjoist Frank Proffitt (North Carolina), who learned the tune "from his father's picking and picked up verses from people on Beech Mountain, friends from Virginia, and others here and there" [Warner]. Paul Clayton identifies this as an old courting song, comic in nature. Warner (1984) says, "This is a dance tune for the fiddle and banjo - one of the oldest in the mountains. The words are incidental." Meade notes: "The tune is an adaptation of 'Doran's Ass' (see Laws Q19), dating from around 1860. It was also used with other Irish songs of the period." The earliest textual reference Meade gives for "Johnson Boys" is the Brown Collection vol III, #338, 394. In Ireland the tune is known as the comic song "Doran's Ass" and also is the tune for "Finnegan's Wake." Speculation about the Johnson Boys being a Civil War song has yet to be proven. The chorus is the last line of the verse repeated twice.



John - son Boys were raised in the ash - es did - n't know how to court a maid;
Turn their backs and hide their fac - es, sight of a pret - ty girl makes 'em a - fraid.
Sight of a pret - ty girl makes 'em a - fraid, sight of a pret - ty girl
makes 'em a - fraid. Shame, shame, the John - son Boys.

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E **B7**
Johnson boys, raised in ashes, Didn't know how to court a maid;
E **B7** **E**
Turned their backs and hid their faces, Sight of a pretty girl makes them afraid.
E **B7** **E**
Chorus: Sight of a pretty girl makes them afraid.
B7 **E**
Sight of a pretty girl makes them afraid.

I hear them Johnson boys a-coming, Singing and a-hollering and shooting off their guns;
All the other fellers scared as the devil, Johnson boys has got'em on the run. *Chorus (Repeat last line)*

Johnson boys went to the mountain, They didn't reckon long to stay,
Met up with some high-borned ladies, Didn't get back till the break of day. *Chorus*

Johnson boys, they went a-courtin', Johnson boys, they didn't stay.
Reason why they went no further, Had no money fur to pay their way. *Chorus*