

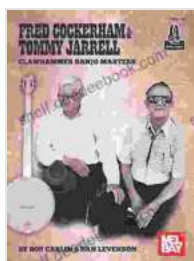
# Fred Cockerham and Tommy Jarrell: Masters of the Clawhammer Banjo

Fred Cockerham and Tommy Jarrell were two of the most influential clawhammer banjo players of the 20th century. Their unique styles and approaches to the instrument helped to shape the sound of old-time music and inspire generations of musicians.

In this article, we will explore the lives, music, and legacy of these two banjo masters. We will also provide some tips on how to play the clawhammer banjo in the style of Cockerham and Jarrell.

## Fred Cockerham

Fred Cockerham was born in 1889 in Fannin County, Georgia. He learned to play the banjo from his father, who was a local fiddler. Cockerham quickly developed a reputation as a skilled banjo player, and he began to perform at local dances and gatherings.



## Fred Cockerham & Tommy Jarrell Clawhammer Banjo

**Masters** by Nan Mogar

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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In the 1920s, Cockerham began to record his music. His first recordings were released on the Victor label, and they quickly became popular among old-time music fans. Cockerham's recordings helped to spread the clawhammer banjo style to a wider audience, and he soon became one of the most influential banjo players of his time.

Cockerham's clawhammer style was characterized by its driving rhythm and intricate fingerwork. He often used a syncopated picking pattern, and he would often add in slides, hammers, and pulls to create a unique and complex sound.

Cockerham was also a gifted singer and songwriter. He wrote many of his own songs, and he often performed traditional ballads and folk songs. Cockerham's songs were often humorous and full of wit, and they reflected his love of life and his deep connection to the Appalachian Mountains.

Cockerham continued to perform and record throughout his life. He died in 1976, but his music continues to inspire musicians today.

## **Tommy Jarrell**

Tommy Jarrell was born in 1901 in Alleghany County, North Carolina. He learned to play the banjo from his uncle, who was a local musician. Jarrell quickly developed a reputation as a skilled banjo player, and he began to perform at local dances and gatherings.

In the 1960s, Jarrell began to record his music. His first recordings were released on the Folkways label, and they quickly became popular among old-time music fans. Jarrell's recordings helped to spread the clawhammer

banjo style to a wider audience, and he soon became one of the most influential banjo players of his time.

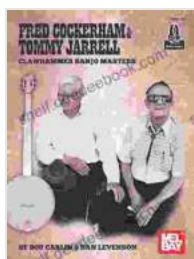
Jarrell's clawhammer style was characterized by its relaxed and melodic approach. He often used a simple picking pattern, and he would often add in slides, hammers, and pulls to create a unique and beautiful sound.

Jarrell was also a gifted singer and songwriter. He wrote many of his own songs, and he often performed traditional ballads and folk songs. Jarrell's songs were often full of humor and wisdom, and they reflected his love of life and his deep connection to the Appalachian Mountains.

Jarrell continued to perform and record throughout his life. He died in 1985, but his music continues to inspire musicians today.

## The Legacy of Fred Cockerham and Tommy Jarrell

Fred Cockerham and Tommy Jarrell were two of the most influential clawhammer banjo players of the 20th century. Their unique styles and approaches



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