



January  
2023

[Tim Jumper on Blues on the Banjo](#)

[The Wayne Adams Old Classic Banjo Collection 1897-1952](#)

**Eclectic Clawhammer**

[12 Gates To The City](#)

[Oh Babe It Aint No Lie](#)

[Louis Collins](#)

[Make Me a Pallet On Your Floor](#)

**Reischman's Corner**

[Suzanne's Journey](#)

## The Wayne Adams Old "Classic" Banjo Collection 1897-1952

By *Gerard De Smaele*

(From the liner notes)

### THE OLD CLASSIC BANJO

The earliest known banjo recordings were made in 1889 for the Edison Laboratory by Bill Lyle, the stage name of William Lomas (1859-1941). In the same year, one of them was exhibited among other cylinders presented to the public at the Paris World Fair. The neice of this forgotten musician had married the son of John Henry Buckbee (1837-1890), the founder of what was considered in the last third of the 19th century to be the largest banjo factory in the world. It is likely that Lomas had his instruments made there, before letting them be distributed by Bruno & Son, a major musical instrument wholesaler.

If the once famous names of the Buckleys, Frank Converse, the Dobson brothers, Samuel Swain Stewart and others such as Vess Ossman, Fred Van Eps, Alfred Farland or Frederick Bacon<sup>2</sup> are nowadays forgotten by the general public, the so-called 'classic' banjo still plays a major part in the history of the five-string banjo, and certain aspects of the playing technique are still evident even in modern bluegrass. From the end of the American Civil War and for more than half a century afterwards, this classic style still prevailed both in the United States and in England. It even seems that it has spread a little in France, too.

It was during this time that the instrument was perfected, ultimately leading to a physical design that remains the same today. Its eclectic repertoire, comprising a mixture of traditional melodies and more elaborated classical music, is surprisingly diverse: dedicated compositions, adaptations of purely classic works, rags and other popular tunes of the time. This body of work shows that, in addition to its traditional (folk) repertoire, the banjo offers a whole range of other possibilities.

*Download the complete liner notes for [Old Classic Banjo Collection](#) here*

**Old Classic Banjo Collection CD**

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