

ON THE LEFT FOOT, PEG FOOT

I got chills the first time I heard this song in about 1959. It must have been **The Weavers'** version, because I don't know if anyone else had recorded it yet. The song was first published in 1928 by the Texas Folklore Society. The A major IV chord at the beginning of the chorus gives the song a very interesting Dorian mode flavor. The Weavers are actually performing it in E flat minor, so to play along with them you could tune down a half step, or transpose it to D minor and capo up one. The drinking gourd is, of course, the Big Dipper constellation in which two of its stars point to Polaris, the north star. Pete Seeger tells more of the story of the song in the intro to their recording, which you can hear at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwUsFWIVoYE>.

FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD

Traditional

CHORUS:

A **Em** **A** **Em**
Follow the drinkin' gourd, follow the drinkin' gourd.

G **D** **C** **Bm**
For the old man is a-waitin' for to carry you to freedom.

Em **D** **Em**
Follow the drinkin' gourd.

Em
When the sun comes up and the first quail calls,

Em **D** **Em**
Follow the drinkin' gourd.

G **D** **C** **Bm**
For the old man is a-waitin' for to carry you to freedom.

Em **D** **Em**
Follow the drinkin' gourd.

CHORUS

Now the river bank will make a mighty good road.
The dead trees will show you the way.
On the left foot, peg foot travellin' on
Follow the drinkin' gourd.

CHORUS

Now the river ends between two hills, follow the drinkin' gourd.
There's another river on the other side.
Follow the drinkin' gourd.

CHORUS