

The musical score consists of three staves: Melody (Mel.), Harmony (Har.), and Accompaniment (Acc.). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody starts at measure 9 with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The harmony and accompaniment are also in the same key signature. The melody is written in a simple, slow, rolling style. The harmony and accompaniment provide a steady accompaniment. The guitar chord diagrams are as follows:

| Measure | Chord | Fingering |
|---------|-------|-----------|
| 9 | vi | 3 |
| 10 | V | 1 2 3 4 |
| 11 | I | 1 |
| 12 | I | 3 |
| 13 | I | 3 |
| 14 | I | 3 |
| 15 | I | 3 |
| 16 | I | 3 |
| 17 | I | 3 |
| 18 | I | 3 |
| 19 | I | 3 |
| 20 | I | 3 |
| 21 | I | 3 |
| 22 | I | 3 |
| 23 | I | 3 |
| 24 | I | 3 |
| 25 | I | 3 |
| 26 | I | 3 |
| 27 | I | 3 |
| 28 | I | 3 |
| 29 | I | 3 |
| 30 | I | 3 |
| 31 | I | 3 |
| 32 | I | 3 |
| 33 | I | 3 |
| 34 | I | 3 |
| 35 | I | 3 |
| 36 | I | 3 |
| 37 | I | 3 |
| 38 | I | 3 |
| 39 | I | 3 |
| 40 | I | 3 |
| 41 | I | 3 |
| 42 | I | 3 |
| 43 | I | 3 |
| 44 | I | 3 |
| 45 | I | 3 |
| 46 | I | 3 |
| 47 | I | 3 |
| 48 | I | 3 |
| 49 | I | 3 |
| 50 | I | 3 |
| 51 | I | 3 |
| 52 | I | 3 |
| 53 | I | 3 |
| 54 | I | 3 |
| 55 | I | 3 |
| 56 | I | 3 |
| 57 | I | 3 |
| 58 | I | 3 |
| 59 | I | 3 |
| 60 | I | 3 |

Shenandoah, an Algonquian word meaning "daughter of the stars," is a river in Virginia, but it is both a person and a river in this sea chantey. In the early nineteenth century the song was solely about a trader in the Missouri River area who fell in love with the daughter of the Algonquian chief Shenandoah. American sailors heading down the Mississippi River took up the slow, rolling melody for the slow, rolling work of hoisting the ship's anchor, changing words to suit their purpose.

*Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you,
 Away, you rolling river!
 Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you,
 Away, I'm bound away,
 'Cross the wide Missouri!*

*Oh, Shenandoah, I love your daughter.
 Away, you rolling river!
 For her I'd cross the rolling water.
 Away, I'm bound away,
 'Cross the wide Missouri.*

*Oh, Shenandoah, I'm bound to leave you.
 Away, you rolling river!
 Oh, Shenandoah, I'll not deceive you.
 Away, I'm bound away,
 'Cross the wide Missouri.*