

Sloop John B

1. We come on the Sloop John B,
My grandfather and me.
Around Nassau town we did roam.
Drinking all night,
Got into a fight,
Well I feel so break up, I wanna go home!

**Hoist up the John B sails,
See how the main sail set,
Call for the captain ashore, let me go home.
Let me go home, I wanna go home.
Well I feel so break up, I wanna go home!**

2. First mate he got drunk,
Broke up the people's trunk,
Constable had to come and take him away.
Sheriff Johnstone
Why don't you leave me alone?
Well I feel so break up, I wanna go home.

**Hoist up the John B sails,
See how the main sail set,
Call for the captain ashore, let me go home.
Let me go home, I wanna go home.
Well I feel so break up, I wanna go home!**

3. The poor cook he caught the fits,
Throw away all my grits,
Then he took and ate up all of my corn.
Let me go home, I wanna go home,
This is the worst trip since I been born.

**Hoist up the John B sails,
See how the main sail set,
Call for the captain ashore, let me go home.
Let me go home, I wanna go home.
Well I feel so break up, I wanna go home!**

Listento [The Kingston Trio](#) (1958 remastered) at https://youtu.be/8SQ_hVTQdNo

Compare this with [The Beach Boys](#) (1966) at https://youtu.be/09dQmeB_NgU

The language used (eg "break up"), along with the calypso rhythm, point to the song's West Indian origins.

Notes:

Names: The John B Sails, Nassau bound, The Sloop John B, the wreck of the John B.

[Bruce O, in [mudcat.org](#), 1999] wrote: "*The John B. Sails*" or "*The Sloop John B.*" has been collected in slightly different versions at least 3 times in the West Indies.

The earliest copy is one that I don't know has been printed. It's in Vol. 8, #1887, in the *Gordon manuscripts* in the Library of Congress Folklore Archive. It was "Sung by Negros of Bahama Island 1916-1919".

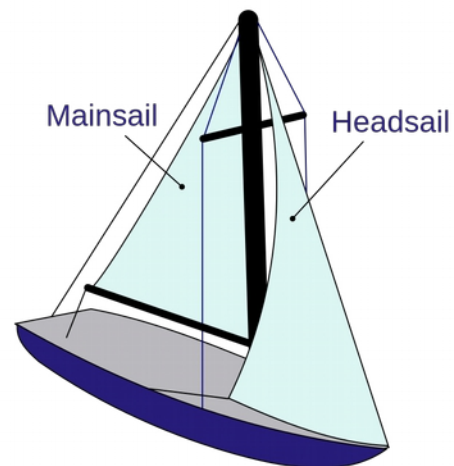
The next is "*The John B. Sails*" in Sandburg's *The American Songbag* p. 22, 1927.

The last is of the same title, collected by Alan Lomax, at Nassau, 1935, and given in *The Folk Songs of North America*, p. 530, 1960.

In 1958 it was recorded on the LP *The Kingston Trio* as *Sloop John B*. There are versions by the Weavers and Jimmy Rodgers, and [The Beach Boys](#) recorded theirs in 1966.

What is a sloop?

A **sloop**, (from Dutch sloep, in turn from French chaloupe) is a sailing boat with a single mast and a fore-and-aft rig. A sloop has only one head-sail. [wikipedia]



*Kevin Murray & Malyszcz,
Sails of a bermuda rigged sloop.
from [Wikimedia.org](#), 2011*

John Scatchard, U3A, wrote: my book defines a sloop as having a single mast, fore and aft rig and a single headsail. The mainsail can be either a gaff or Bermudan (also termed Marconi) which is a triangular sail with the leading edge (the luff) attached to the mast.

The foot is attached to the boom, either continuously or just at each end.