

- **Phil Rice's Banjo Instructor of 1858.** This book proceeds to explain the motion through a series of STRIKES. It says on page 9: *"In making a strike, the first finger and thumb should come down at the same time on the first and thumb string; sound the note on the first string by letting the fingernail slide off, then sound the thumb string immediately after with the thumb. The fingers should not rest on the head, or skin of the banjo. The wrist of the right hand should be held immediately over the bridge. The first and second fingers of the left hand can be down or up in practicing a STRIKE."*

Executing the repertoire of STRIKES from the Rice Book.

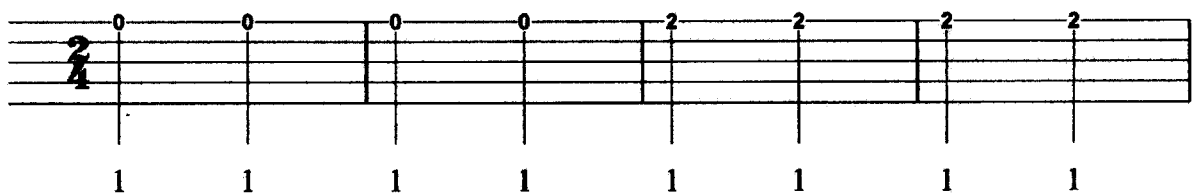
The first and most basic motion is simply the hand coming down and having the nail of the first finger hit the first string. This is called a half-strike, the strike being the complete motion of the finger and the thumb. The finger should remain in its fixed position as it comes down. The finger is supported by bracing it against the other fingers, creating a relaxed but controlled motion as it comes down to strike the string with the back of the nail. Frank Converse later mentions something called a "Hammer Stroke," which simply places the thumb on the first finger, giving it even more control and support for single note execution. First, try the half strike on the first string in the open position (not pressing down on the string) and then the second "fret".

When you see the symbol "1" under the note, this represents the first finger of the right hand. In the Briggs' notation, this will be replaced by an "F" for "finger". "X" will represent the thumb.

Let's try the half-strike.

The Half-Strike

Rice 1855



The next page is directly from the Phil Rice Banjo Instructor and illustrates the basic variations on the "STRIKE", leading into the first piece "Juba."