

# Basic Detail Report

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## Tenor resonator banjo

### Date

1923 ca.

### Primary Maker

Gibson Mandolin-Guitar Company

### Description

This Gibson Mastertone tenor banjo features a short-lived resonator design that allowed the player to open a hinged door to, what Gibson literature called, the "tone projector." This feature led such instruments to be nicknamed "trap-door" banjos. Though the trap door allowed easy access to the interior of the instrument and permitted it to be used as an open back or resonator banjo, the design did not catch on and was soon discontinued. This TB-4 banjo was originally sold with a pickguard, which was removed from the instrument at some point. Neck: maple medium curl, finish shaded from golden to dark brown; brown-stained maple stripe runs length of neck Peghead: maple with black-lacquered hardwood veneer on front and back, with ivoroid binding around front; mother-of-pearl inlays on front: [small cross] / The Gibson [in cursive text]; abalone fleur-de-lis inlay above nut Fingerboard: ivoroid-bound ebony; 27 nickel-

silver bar frets under top two strings, 24 frets under 2nd-lowest string, 23 frets under lowest string; single mother-of-pearl dots inlaid behind 5th, 7th, 10th, and 15th frets; two mother-of-pearl dots inlaid behind 12th fret; single imitation tortoiseshell-celluloid side dots behind 5th, 7th, 10th, 12th, and 15th frets Heel cap: ivoroid-bound black-lacquered hardwood Head: calf skin Tone ring: hollow nickel-silver tube ring with 70 holes Rim: laminated maple with ivoroid binding Bracket hooks: 22 silver-plated steel Shoes: silver-plated brass tube ring with holes for bracket hooks runs around circumference of rim Tension hoop: silver-plated brass Armrest: nickel-plated brass Resonator: ivoroid-bound maple plywood trap-door style with sunburst finish, light and dark hardwood stripes inlaid in a circle on back 12 mm (15/32") from edge; trap door on the back of the resonator does not exceed the diameter of the resonator and is set up so that only about ¾ of the back will only open partially. There is a nickel-plated brass mechanism that served to unlock the door and prop it open by means of clipping to the bottom coordinator rod. There is an ivoroid-bound oval hole in the back of the door that serves to release sound when the trap door is shut, which allows the banjo to be played much more quietly. Dowel stick: 2 silver-plated brass coordinator rods Nut:

mother-of-pearl Tuners: 2 sets of worm-gear tuners with silver-plated brass plates and silver-plated brass rollers with mother-of-pearl heads; floral and leaf pattern stamped onto plates Tailpiece: aluminum Finish: clear lacquer

### **Dimensions**

Total instrument length: 726 mm (28-19/32") Vibrating string length: 479 mm (18-7/8") Fingerboard length: 388 mm (15-9/32") Fingerboard width at nut: 30 mm (1-3/16") Fingerboard width at body: 40.5 mm (1-19/32") Head diameter: 265 mm (10-7/16") Resonator diameter: 266 mm (10-15/32") Rim and resonator depth: 75 mm (2-15/16") Fingerboard width at nut: 30 mm (1 3/16 inches) Fingerboard width at neck base: 39 mm (1 9/16 inches) Diameter of trap door resonator: 268 mm (10 9/16 inches)