

When I first heard Duck River I immediately liked it and when it was associated with Kentucky fiddler John Salyer's (1882 – 1952) repertoire I wanted to learn more, as I respect and enjoy so much of his music. The challenge has been to compare tunes said to be very similar, such as Dubuque, Old Dubuque, Hell on the Nine Mile, Trouble on the Nine Mile and many more.

John Salyer's sons recorded him at home in 1941 as he was reluctant and distrustful about getting involved in any commercial venture in music. Duck River is said by Jeff Titon in [Old-Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes](#) to be part of a larger family of tunes. Read here about [Duck River alternate titles and as part of a tune family](#).

Duck River:

[John Salyer's original recording of Duck River](#)

[Duck River by Matt Brown, Paul Brown, Beverly Smith](#)

[Hilarie Burhans Duck River tutorial](#)

[Dan Gellert and Brad Leftwich play Duck River as Hell on the Nine Mile](#)

Dubuque, or Old Dubuque is as popular as Duck River, but is associated with mid-west fiddlers. Charlie Walden has it on his 100 Essential Fiddle Tunes. The source recording is Uncle Richard (Dick) Blaine Hutchison (1897 – 1986), a native Missourian who moved to Oklahoma. Uncle Dick also called it Trouble on the Nine Mile. R. P. Christeson of Missouri recorded Nebraska fiddler Bob Walters in 1951, playing it as Old Dubuque, #91 in The Old Time Fiddlers Repertory, Vol. 1. More information is found in [Tune Archive discussion of the tune Dubuque with history of the town called Dubuque](#), located on the Mississippi River in Iowa.

There is also a good discussion on Fiddle Hangout of Bob Walter's recording of Old Dubuque with references to older sources for similar tunes, including a minstrel one with lyrics, Possum Up a Gum Stump -- [Fiddle Hangout discussion of Old Dubuque](#).

Dubuque:

[Uncle Dick playing Trouble on the Nine Mile](#)

[Bob Walters playing Old Dubuque](#)

Sometimes recordings interchange the A and B part of one with the other, but the flavor of the song remains the same and unless you really study them you'd be hard-pressed to tell the difference. In one case the entire tune called Duck River was just like Uncle Dick's version of Old Dubuque. I needed to play each fiddler's recording with the two tabs I created from my two sources, John Salyer and Uncle Dick Hutchison, to hear which version is being played. To help me learn them as separate tunes I recorded a medley of them, so you can hear them side by side and see how similar you think they are.

Don't forget your contribution here is most welcome. It's what makes TOTW interesting and fun.