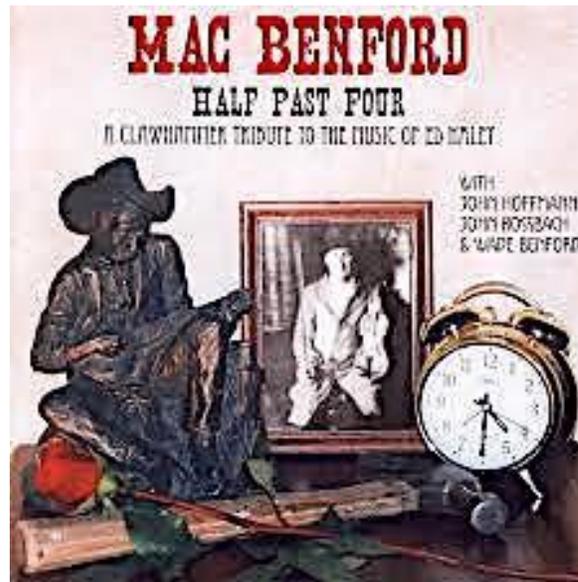


## TUNE OF THE WEEK – 4/16/14

### CABIN CREEK

This week's tune is Cabin Creek. I first heard an Ed Haley version by Mac Benford, who devoted an entire, excellent clawhammer CD to his fiddling, entitled "Half Past Four." I learned it by listening to both [Ed Haley's 4-part Cabin Creek](#) and [Mac Benford playing Ed Haley's Cabin Creek](#). You can learn more about Mac on his website. Chances are there are several Hangout members who have attended his classes and workshops: <http://macbenford.com/index.html>



Two other source WV fiddlers recorded the tune: [Ernie Carpenter's Cabin Creek](#) and [Henry Reed's Cabin Creek](#) (as recorded by Alan Jabbour in 1966). Ed's has four parts, Ernie's has two and Henry's has three. You can hear similarity in the *second part* of Ed's and *third part* of Henry's; in the *last* of Henry's and the *first parts* of Ed's and Ernie's; in the *first two* parts of Ed's and Ernie's; and finally in their *fourth and second parts*. If you can keep all that straight you're doing well!

Henry Reed's Cabin Creek resembles Barlow Knife-- something Mac Benford noticed—but Henry called it Cabin Creek. In the Fiddler's Companion of the ceolas.com website there is very little information on Cabin Creek, other than to equate Henry Reed's with Barlow Knife. Henry (1884 – 1968) was a contemporary of Ed Haley (1885 – 1951). Ernie Carpenter lived later, from 1907 – 1997 (probably best known for the tune Shelvin Rock which is associated with his great-grandfather's birth). I'd tentatively conclude that Ed's Cabin Creek was Ernie's source, since Ernie's only overlaps Henry with one part, but overlaps Ed's in both parts.

Another difference to be noted is that only Mac Benford begins with the high part. He's accessible via email, so I asked him why. He responded, "I just figured that was how it was supposed to go - maybe I was subconsciously thinking of Barlow Knife, which it's obviously

related to - in any case, I can't imagine any other order of the parts which would be as satisfying..."

In my Skype lessons with Adam Hurt we've worked on several Ed Haley tunes. Adam explains that Ed's incredible skill on fiddle manifested itself in having several variations in each tune. (One lesson from Adam involved learning 8 versions of a two-part tune by Ed Haley!) This may explain why there are four parts to Cabin Creek. Adam plays it here with Mike Compton (my husband's mandolin Skype teacher for several years): [Ed Haley's Cabin Creek](#)

The region of West Virginia called Cabin Creek is noted as the location of an intense coal mine controversy involving the miners' union and a violent strike (see [West Virginia article and video on Paint Creek/Coal Creek coal mine strike of 1912](#) and [mine war, 1912-1913](#)). All three source fiddlers came from West Virginia so I'm led to believe the tune may have been associated with the incident. In Oklahoma there were also Cabin Creek wars during the Civil War: [Oklahoma Cabin Creek Civil War battles](#), but I have no way to know if that relates to the tune.

Other recordings of Cabin Creek on-line are all Ed Haley's version:

[Mike Sawyer, Minnesota clawhammerist](#)

[Molly Tenenbaum with Rich Hartness](#)

[Katie Henderson on fiddle](#)

Here are my two MP3s with all four parts in SRB, aka Cumberland Gap tuning, (fDGCD) (something Adam highly recommends to try with any tune in the key of G)—one on a Whyte Laydie openback and the other on a Gold Tone cello banjo played an octave lower with my husband on mandolin.

One tab I've arranged (in PDF files below) is for Ernie Carpenter's version, which is easiest to learn and is in open G tuning—the same in which Mac plays it. One is Henry Reed's Cabin Creek, sounding like Barlow Knife, but having an additional third part. The third tab follows my MP3 and is my SRB tuning arrangement combining Ed Haley and Mac Benford.

If you're interested in listening to Ed Haley's original recordings (something John Hartford became obsessed with towards the end of his life), I was able to locate them on amazon.com in a series of Fiddlers of Country Music, Volumes 5, 6, and 7. Cabin Creek is the first tune on Volume 5: [Fiddlers of Country Music series, Ed Haley, Vol. 5](#) It's a shame that the book John began about Ed Haley's life hasn't been published. This blind fiddler, originally from West Virginia, led an extraordinary music-filled life with his blind musical wife. Hartford contacted their son, Laurence Haley, in the 90's and recorded fiddle tunes learned from the father. Interesting reading may be found here: [Biographical information on Ed Haley from liner notes of Forked Deer](#).

[MP3 link to my site](#) and [Tabs on my site](#)

Hope you give Cabin Creek a try and add to the tune discussion.