

TOTW Jack's Creek Ridge

Jack's Creek Ridge is in one of Bruce Greene's great CDs called "Five Miles of Ellum Wood, Old Time Kentucky Fiddle Solos." In the liner notes Bruce states, "Over in that [eastern Kentucky] country around Hyden was a good fiddler named Charles Hoskins, who was recorded by Peter Hoover in 1961. I learned Jack's Creek Ridge from his playing. He tuned in the Drunkard's Hiccoughs key of AEAC#...I could not imagine any way to improve on his arrangement of it."

On this [website](#) we read: "Robert Bruce Greene is known worldwide for preserving and playing old time Kentucky fiddle music. He is also a skilled old time banjo player, singer, and collector of traditional Appalachian music and culture. Bruce has lived and worked among the people of Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina for more than forty years, bringing to his playing the intimacy and dignity he absorbed through his apprenticeships with musicians born as far back as the 1880's."

I hadn't researched much about Peter Hoover until this presentation. He had a big impact on old-time music collecting and, as stated in this [Field Recorders' Collective](#) article by John Hoffman: "The breadth and depth of Peter's field recording resume includes a veritable who's who of old-time fiddlers. Indeed, Peter was most fortunate to have spent time recording, photographing, playing, and talking with Manco Sneed, Santford Kelly, Sidna and Fulton Myers, [Marcus Martin](#), Dan Tate, James Crase, Norman Edmonds, Glen Smith, [Uncle Charlie Higgins](#), [Wade Ward](#), [Dale Poe](#), Bayard Ray, Heywood Blevins, and many others. In fact, Peter was the first person to have made recordings of a number of these players, most notably Manco Sneed, Santford Kelly, and the Myers brothers."

A friend and admirer, Megan Merker, wrote this about Peter when he passed on October 13, 2019, remembering a conversation they had once had: "...I thanked him for all the music he had recorded and so generously shared over the years, he replied in true Peter fashion: 'No problem. It was all very selfish at the time I did it. I just wanted to learn how to play all those great old crooked tunes, and nobody up north knew how.'"

When Jack's Creek Ridge became a TOTW on the Instagram platform, I was taken by its mesmerizing A part and ethereal B part. Though it's not in the Jeff Todd Titon's book and CD, [Old-Time Fiddle Tunes from Kentucky](#), it belongs in that category of tunes found throughout that collection, which Bruce Greene significantly contributed to. Jeff categorizes fiddle tunes in his book into three types. Jack's Creek Ridge fits Type 2 with this description in the book (see page 20): the tune includes variable phrase length, accented downbeats, "archaic solo instrumentation", Scots-Irish origin, found in southeastern Kentucky.

There is a Jack's Creek in Leslie County, Kentucky and some good fiddlers have come from there, including our source fiddler, Charles Hoskins. The Lomaxes, recorded 250 of their tunes and songs from that county (see a description here: [Leslie County and the Lomax collection](#)). On a last note, I came to appreciate the music of eastern Kentucky when [Jim Reed](#) was interacting with us here on Banjo Hangout. Some of you may remember his fluid, delightful banjo picking.

Though Jim never recorded Jack's Creek Ridge, he was the closest I knew of a banjo player with that special quality I associate with eastern Kentucky.

Notation is found in the [Traditional Tune Archive](#).

Have a good listen:

[Bruce Greene](#)

[David Bragger](#)