

Mississippi Sawyer

"Mississippi Sawyer" is a fiddle tune found throughout the United States since at least 1839. The title may refer to an early sawmill owner who set up his mill somewhere near the place where the Ohio and Mississippi rivers meet. But it is more likely that the title has to do with a scary thing that can occur during floods on the Mississippi River. Sometimes when large trees are pulled from the bank and dragged underwater by the raging waters, one end may become stuck on the bottom. With the moving water, the other

end of the tree might suddenly rise to the surface, threatening approaching riverboats. In the 19th century, these dangerous trees became known as "Mississippi sawyers." The great American writer Mark Twain knew much about riverboats and the "Mississippi sawyer" trees. This is one reason why he chose the name of one of his heroes to be Tom Sawyer. Some folks say that the rocking of the fiddler's bow in this tune is like the bobbing of a tree in a Mississippi river flood.



Basic Tune

American Hoedown

Lively (♩ = 130)

Mississippi Sawyer

Advanced Tune

American Hoedown



Lively (♩ = 130)

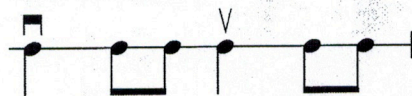
Back-up Directions

Basic back-up — play the notes in each measure as printed.

Regular back-up — play the notes in each measure using the Shuffle Pattern.

Advanced back-up — play the notes in each measure using the On/Off Pattern.

Shuffle Pattern



On/Off Pattern



Lively (♩ = 130)

Back-up Part

Improvised back-up — On your own, try making up a rhythm pattern and deciding what notes to play (choose from the printed notes, or talk with your teacher about using other chord tone)