

# Mississippi Sawyer

The musical score for "Mississippi Sawyer" is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G, A, B, and C. A first ending bracket labeled 'A' spans the next two measures, which contain quarter notes D, E, F#, and G. A second ending bracket labeled 'B' spans the final two measures, which contain quarter notes G, A, B, and C. The second staff continues the melody with quarter notes D, E, F#, and G, followed by quarter notes A, B, C, and D. The third staff features a first ending bracket labeled '1.' with a D chord above it, and a second ending bracket labeled '2.' with a D chord above it. The fourth staff continues with quarter notes D, E, F#, and G, followed by quarter notes A, B, C, and D. The fifth staff features a first ending bracket labeled '1.' with a D chord above it, and a second ending bracket labeled '2.' with a D chord above it. The score concludes with a double bar line.

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"Mississippi Sawyer", also known as "Downfall of Adam", "The Downfall of Paris", "Fish on a Snag", "Mississippi Jubilee", "Love from the Heart" and "*Quadrille des seigneurs 5ème partie*" is an old-time breakdown in D Major (most versions) or D Mixolydian (S. Johnson). The parts are played AABB.

It is an extremely well-known old-time fiddle tune. One of the earliest printings of a tune by this title is in George P. Knauff's **Virginia Reels, volume IV** (1839) where it appears under the title "Love from the Heart". The tune has been known to American fiddlers since the early 19th century and older fiddlers frequently give the tune's title as "The Downfall of Paris". The melody was known particularly in Texas around 1935 as "Downfall of Paris" and was recorded in 1939 for the Library of Congress under that title. "The Downfall of Paris" in the Irish section is an Irish set dance and is a very different tune.

A 'sawyer' was a boatman's term for an uprooted tree whose roots had become partially anchored to the bottom of the stream bed. Though anchored, the river's currents would cause the trunk to bob up and down, often causing the tree to break surface rather suddenly in front of a river craft. On the Mississippi it was enough of a problem that special government 'snag boats' patrolled the river in order to protect against such menaces.

A 'crooked' version of the tune was recorded in 1929 by Montreal fiddler J.O. LaMadeleine as "*Quadrille des seigneurs 5ème partie*", the last part of a quadrille set.

The tune was printed in Adam's **Old Time Fiddlers' Favorite Barn Dance Tunes** (1928), Woodchopper's **Square Dance Calls with Music and Instructions** (1940), Bayard's **Dance to the Fiddle** (1981), Beisswenger & McCann's **Ozarks Fiddle Music** (2008), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Christeson's **Old Time Fiddler's Repertory, vol. 1** (1973), Ford's **Traditional Music in America** (1940), S. Johnson's **Kitchen Musician No. 4: Fine Tunes** (1983) (revised 1991, 2001), Kaufman's **Beginning Old Time Fiddle** (1977), Messer's **Way Down East** (1948), Messer's **Anthology of Favorite Fiddle Tunes** (1980), Phillips' **Fiddle Case Tunebook: Old Time Southern** (1989), Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994), Reiner's **Anthology of Fiddle Styles** (1979), Reiner & Anick's **Old Time Fiddling Across America** (1989), Ruth's **Pioneer Western Folk Tunes** (1948), Silberberg's **Fiddle Tunes I Learned at Tractor Tavern** (2002), Songer's **Portland Collection** (1997), Sweet's **Fifer's Delight** (1965/1981) and Thede's **The Fiddle Book** (1967)7 (two versions).

It was recorded by The Skillet Lickers, The Old Virginia Fiddlers on **Rare Recordings**, Cape Cod Fiddlers on **Concert Collection II** (1999), Charlie Acuff, Don Richardson (1916), Earl Johnson & his Clodhoppers on **Old Time String Band Tunes** (1975) (Appears as "Mississippi Jubilee"), Emmett Lundy on **Round the Heart of Old Galax** (1980), Kirk Sutphin on **Old Roots and New Branches** (1994), Al Hopkins and His Buckle Busters on **The Hill Billies/Al Hopkins and His Buckle Busters**, A. Robic (Bruce Molsky) and the Exertions on **Old Time Music Dance Party** (1987), Bill Spence & Fennigs All Stars on **The Hammered Dulcimer** (1973), Mark Graham on **Natural Selections** (1987) and John McCutcheon on **The Wind that Shakes the Barley** (1977).