

The Mouth of the Tobique

Musical score for "The Mouth of the Tobique" in G major, 3/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music.

Staff 1: Starts with a triplet of eighth notes. Chords: G, D7, G, D7.

Staff 2: Contains a first ending bracket. Chords: G, D7, G.

Staff 3: Contains a second ending bracket. Chords: G, C, D7, C, D7.

Staff 4: Chords: G, D7, G, C, D7, C, D7.

Staff 5: Chord: G.

"The Mouth of the Tobique" is a Canadian reel in G Major. The parts are played AABB (Brody, Hinds, Messer) or AABBCB (Songer).

A Canadian reel that has had long currency as a vehicle for American contra dancing, popularized by Canadian radio and TV fiddler Don Messer.

The Tobique River is in the northwest of the Province of New Brunswick.

Collector Peter Rolland said:

During my Nat'l Endowment for the Arts research project in 1977 into fiddling styles, New Brunswick fiddler Clarence Langen told me that "Mouth Of The Tobique" (named after the Tobique river in New Brunswick) is better known as "Grumbling Old Woman Growling Old Man". Clarence's aunt was the music teacher of the composer, an Indian fiddler named Francis Sowish. The famed Canadian radio fiddler Don Messer in his tunebook mistakenly switched the name of two Sowish compositions and published Sowish's tune "French Mary" under the name "Mouth of the Tobique". I don't know whether or not Francis Sowish "published" his tunes or merely composed them whence they passed into oral tradition. Don Messer got hold of them somehow.

Rolland guessed that the reel was composed between 1910 and 1930.

It was printed in Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Hinds/Hebert's **Grumbling Old Woman** (1981), Messer's **Way Down East** (1948), Messer's **Anthology of Favorite Fiddle Tunes** (1980) and Songer's **Portland Collection** (1997).

It was recorded by Don Messer & His Islanders on **The Best of Don Messer & His Islanders** (1942), Graham Townsend on **Fiddling Favorites with Graham Townsend**, Yankee Ingenuity on **Kitchen Junket**, Patrick Street on **All in Good Time**, Kevin Burke et al on **The Celtic Fiddle Festival** (1992), Sharon Shannon on **The Best of Sharon Shannon: Spellbound** (1999), Northern Spy on **Choose Your Partners!: Contra Dance & Square Dance Music of New Hampshire** (1999), Graham and Eleanor Townsend on **The Great Canadian Fiddle** and Rodney Miller on **Rodney Miller's All-Round Collection of Jigs, Reels and Country Airs**.