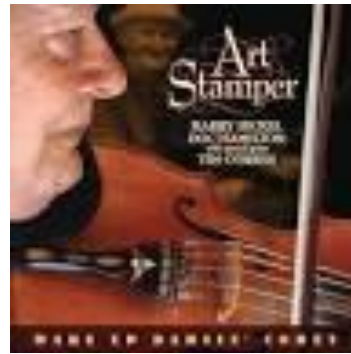


TUNE OF THE WEEK – 6/24/16

JOSIE-O/JOSIE GIRL

This week's Tune of the Week is Josie Girl/Josie-O. Most of us associate Josie-O with Art Stamper. Then in 2010 Adam Hurt did a great recording of it on a gourd banjo in his Earth Tones CD. After enjoying those two versions I recently discovered Tennessee fiddler Charlie Acuff's Josie Girl, learned from his grandfather, and concluded it was an older resource.



Charlie Acuff was from Alcoa, Tennessee and died at age 93 in 2013. He was a left-handed fiddler. There's a DVD available to hear him in concert: [Charlie Acuff, East Tennessee Fiddler](#). He's cousin to Roy Acuff and states that all the Acuffs are musical, but only Roy made any money from it! Charlie worked in an aluminum plant for 40 years, but was a dedicated fiddler, too.

Charlie sang these lyrics for Josie Girl:

Where's that girl, where's she gone?
Where's that girl with the josie on?
She stole my heart, where'd she go?
Where's that girl with the josie-o?

He first explained that a josie is a long overcoat with a cape. I looked up josie and learned its multiple meanings: a girl's or boy's nickname, an overcoat originally called a joseph worn by a lady in the 1800's, a term for underclothes worn by slaves, and a dance. Here's an interesting blog: [suggestions for the term josie](#).

I found yet more musical connections for Josie Girl after a friend, Linda Gunderson, gave me a keepsake given her during a jam with Charlie Acuff. It's a type-written, alphabetized list of Mr. Acuff's repertoire which left out Josie Girl until the very end -- surprising because he performed it often. At the bottom of the list, hand-written in beautiful calligraphy it says "Josie Girl or The Girl with the Blue Dress On, from Charlie Acuff from his grandfather." It's followed by musical notation, but my copy gets cut off right there (see photo below).

John Hartford recorded The Girl with the Blue Dress On, mentioning Charlie Acuff and Ed Haley as also having played it. John sourced his version to Samuel Bayard, No. 246 where it was said to be a "cousin" to Shane O'Neill's March. When I compare Josie Girl with The Girl with the Blue Dress On, I hear

melodic differences. I conclude they're related, but not at all identical. You can listen to John Hartford on [Wild Hog in the Red Brush, Track 7](#). Another title elsewhere is "Who's Been Here Since I've Been Gone?"

Art Stamper said this about Josie-O: "I think my version here is like Uncle Charlie Acuff's. I associate myself with him a lot. He plays that version almost like I play it. So I got a lot of the feeling from his fiddling, which I dearly love. He's a good guy."

I think Adam Hurt's Earth Tones CD is one of the best clawhammer CDs out there. He plays Josie-O in SRB (Sandy River Belle) tuning – fDGCD on Track 4. Listen to it below and you can also check out the tab I've included.

Interestingly, the first two parts of Josie-O closely resemble Clyde Davenport's Cornstalk Fiddle and a Shoestring Bow. The subject of a prior TOTW (<http://www.banjohangout.org/archive/292931>), here's [Clyde Davenport playing Cornstalk Fiddle and a Shoestring Bow](#). Mississippi fiddler Frank Kittrell recorded this as early as 1939.

Enjoy these recordings of Josie Girl and Josie-O. It's really a fun 3-part tune!

[Charlie Acuff at Museum of Appalachia, 1998](#)

[Charlie Acuff on Slippery Hill playing and singing Josie Girl](#)

[Songs of Appalachian Music interview with Charlie Acuff](#), Frank Alvis on banjo

[Art Stamper](#)

[BHO member Sean Bonham playing Art Stamper's version](#)

[Adam Hurt's gourd banjo](#) and [Adam's Earth Tones version](#)

[BHO member Leon Ballard](#)

[Ken Elkington \(VancePants\)](#)

[Noah Cline on mountain banjo](#)

[Wayne's underwater dive video, #435](#) (it's awesome!)

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

Adam kindly gave me permission to post a tabbed version of his Josie-O. When I learned this tune from him in our fourth Skype lesson he also taught me the Galax lick, which appears in the B part. Learning it has opened up a world of options when I arrange fiddle tunes (though it took me a few lessons to get it down). It was also the fourth tune he taught me using SRB (Sandy River Belle) tuning (and called by other names) – fDGCD – which also has opened up a world of options for arranging fiddle tunes and creating my own compositions.

Hope you give Josie Girl or Josie-O a try and share with us here.