

Old Joe Clark

Traditional, arranged by Joe Miller



See video of "Old Joe Clark" at AcousticGuitar.com/oldjoeclark



One of America's best-known fiddle tunes, "Old Joe Clark" has been recorded by Doc Watson, Pete Seeger, Bill Monroe, and many others. Early recordings by Fiddlin' Powers and the Skillet Lickers were big country hits in the 1920s. Although there are conflicting stories about where the tune was written, there is a historical marker in Sextons Creek, Kentucky, where Old Joe Clark is supposed to have once lived. In part, it reads:

"Joe Clark, born 1839, lived here; a shiftless and rough mountaineer of that day. His enemies were legion; he was murdered in 1885."

This arrangement is played harp-style, in which the melody constantly moves from one string to another. If you are careful to let each string ring for as long as possible, a beautiful legato effect can be achieved. The picking-hand patterns may seem awkward at first, but they are quite comfortable once you get used to them. The important thing is to avoid using the same finger of the picking hand twice in a row.

In measures 6, 10, and 18, feel free to substitute your own licks where there are pauses in the melody. Use a capo on the second fret to play in the key of A (the key that fiddlers usually use for this tune), or higher up the neck to make the fretting-hand stretches easier.

—JOE MILLER

Tuning: $\text{D } \underline{\text{G}} \text{ D G B E}$

D7 **G**

m i p m p i p i m i p i p i m i m i p m p m p i m i p m i p i

G **D7** **1.** **2.** **G** $\frac{1}{3}$ B III

m i p m i p m p m i p p

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