

Ida Red

Traditional

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G (A) C (D) G (A) See notes

D7 (E7) G (A) C (D) G (A) See notes

D7 (E7) G (A) D7 (E7) G (A) C (D) G (A) See notes D7 (E7) G (A)

C (D) G (A) See notes 1. D7 (E7) G (A) Up the neck break

C (D) G (A) D7 (E7) G (A)

C (D) G (A) D7 (E7) G (A) D7 (E7) G (A) C (D)

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G (A) D7 (E7) G (A) D7 (E7) G (A) Ida Red - Traditional
C (D)

33

G (A) D7 (E7) G (A) 2. D7 (E7) G (A)

This is a very old tune that probably began as an African-American slave era banjo song. It is found throughout the South in many variations, some of which are almost identical to Cripple Creek. This version has that low E (F#) in the melody in both parts, not found in all variations, that properly sets it apart from the latter tune. I learned this tune from Mike Roguska, a Boston area fiddle player who comes regularly to the Monday night jam at Sandy's Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Note that in measures 5, 9, 13, and 17, there is an inside reverse roll. This is one of the prominent places where the right hand middle finger is called upon to pick the second string, but there are several other places where this is required, as well. It is a little awkward for a Scruggs picker, at first, but it is not really that difficult.

I think the Flatt & Scruggs song "Down the Road" is clearly derived from the original Ida Red song, where lyrics are sung to the B part. Here are some that I like (and try to remember):

Ida Red, Ida Red, I'm in love with Ida Red,
Ida Red, pearly blue, my little honey don't I love you.

Ida Red who lives uptown, weighs three hundred and forty pounds,
Down the road and 'cross the creek, don't get a letter but once a week.

Ida Red, Ida Blue, Ida bit a hoecake half in two,
If I'd a-heard what Ida said, I'd a-been sleepin' in Ida's bed.