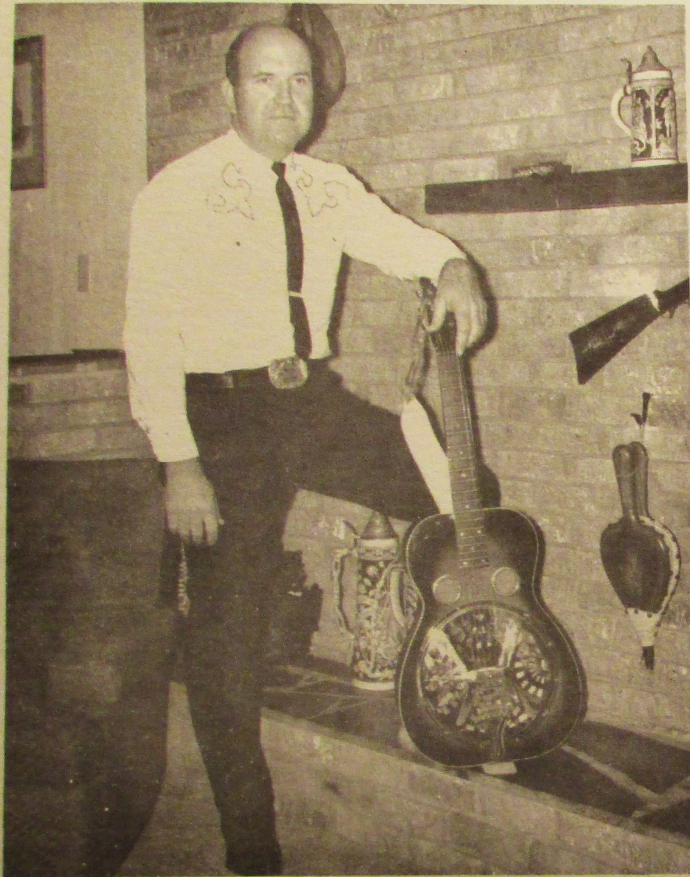


Volume No. 1

"HOW TO PLAY THE DOBRO"
FLAT PICKING OR WITH FINGER PICKS
by Robert "Tut" Taylor

To Be Used With Accompanying LP Record

Copyright 1964 by Robert A. Taylor
211 Linda Dr.
Milledgeville, Georgia



Robert " Tut " Taylor was born in Baldwin County, Georgia and has spent most of his life there except for a while in the professional service of the Boy Scouts of America. He is a sign artist by trade and has his own shop. He has played music since 14, first the mandolin and then the Dobro. His interest in the Dobro goes back to when Roy Acuff was playing on the Grand Ole Opry using Oswald on the Dobro. It took him about a year to find out what a Dobro was and when he did he finally found one and began playing. Not being able to manipulate the finger picks he had to learn with a flat pick, which style he has developed today. While in Hollywood recently he was auditioned by World Pacific Records and it was decided to an album using the 12-String Dobro that Tut developed. The album was done with Bill Keith on Banjo and Glen Cambell on regular 12-string guitar. Later it was decided to do another album. On this one Tut used Clarence and Roland White and Billy Ray of the Kentucky Colonels. This album has just been released. Both are available from Tut. As this is going to press Tut will be in Nashville playing the Dobro with a well known Grand Ole Opry star on another album that will be out about September.

Tut has a very fine collection of Dobros and buys, sells and trades instruments, namely, old Martin guitars, Gibson Banjos and Mandolins. He would be pleased to hear from you about instruments and especially about the course.

My appreciation and thanks to:

Fred Rinehart and B. W. Cummings

HISTORY AND COMMENTS ON THE DOBRO

Welcome to the Dobro..... one of the finest instruments you can listen to today. Almost extinct but back in full swing, thanks to some of the more hardy souls and some of the finest country music groups in the country. The Dobro is being used now, more than anytime in it's history. The sometime mournful, sometime blues sound of the instrument has no equal.

The Dobro is the invention of the Dopera Brothers, Rudy, John and Ed of California. There were five brothers, five letters in the word dobro (which means " good " in the Slavic language) so after considering this, the brothers named the instrument. They began their operation in the middle twenties and continued until about 1941 when the shortage of metal due to war conditions curtailed the manufacture of the metal parts.

They manufactured guitars and mandolins and sold more instruments out of this country than in. There were about five hundred metal Dobros turned out also. I bought a new Dobro mandolin in 1941, sent it over to the South Pacific to a brother and he traded it off. I've never seen another one of the mandolins until a few months ago when I found one. To my knowledge there are no plans at present to manufacture the mandolin again.

Several models, about six I think, were manufactured, including one with a four-way matched back owned by Leroy Mack in California. A carved or engraved model in the collection of Tut Taylor. There were sixteen made before the serial numbers were used. Of these three are known, one in the possession of Curtis Burch, Jr., Brunswick, Georgia; Ed Pearl of California and Tut Taylor owning the others. Dobros were also manufactured by other companies under agreement with the Doperas. All the resonator parts, however were manufactured by the original company. There are some of these others in Tut Taylor's collection, namely, Regal, Gretsch, Marcia and some of unknown origin. Anyone having an unusual Dobro or copy is invited to contact the writer, who would like to further his knowledge on the background of the Dobro.

Dobros were first manufactured in California and about three hundred were made with the resonator being turned. After these were finished a die was manufactured and the others were stamped out. During the time of manufacture the Dopera Brothers were issued two patent numbers for their instruments. Later the operation was moved to Chicago and Dobros were made in that city until they were again made in California.

Just recently Ed and Rudy began the manufacture of Dobros again for the market. They first turned out one hundred which were distributed by the Standel Company in California. These were followed by custom built models and then a special Uncle Josh model and a model for Deacon Brumfield. There is also a special student model made especially for this course.

The greatest major change in the Dobro was accomplished by Tut Taylor who added a twelve string neck. The first two strings being tuned in unison and the others an octave apart. This instrument was used to record the album " Twelve-String Dobro " released by World Pacific Records in California. After seeing this one the Dopera Brothers made a special 12-string model for Tut which was used on three numbers on the new album " Dobro Country " also released by World Pacific. In the new Dobros being made there are a few changes over the old ones, namely, a different way of attaching the neck making it easier to remove, the plate or cover style being fashioned after the old metal cover, using a metal bridge (the bridge and spider being cast as one piece) and using a metal upper nut. They are available in most any kind of wood you wish. The necks are 14 fret instead of the customary 12 frets. The new student model developed for Tut was used exclusively on the " Dobro Country " album and also on the record for this course. It is

It is realized that every fact could not be presented on the colorful background of the Dobro. There are many things left unsaid. If you have authentic information we would appreciate hearing from you. Note... it is the custom of some people through lack of knowledge to call any guitar with a resonator a Dobro. This isn't so. There is nothing but the old original, and some of these heavy metal body guitars that are being found just aren't Dobros and never will be. They will do until you can obtain a Dobro.

ABOUT THE COURSE

It is felt that there has been a need for a course such as this for some time, hence this introduction to our method of playing the Dobro. How well you play will be up to you. We are furnishing the know-how and you will do the rest. We are confident of your ability. A pleasant surprise awaits you as you learn to tune your instrument, hold the pick, place the bar and start on what may be the greatest experience of your life.

If you don't have a Dobro don't let this stop you. Take your regular guitar, loosen the strings, slip a nut under the strings over the upper nut or saddle and take off. You won't have a Dobro sound but you will have enough to learn to play. If you have a regular Spanish style Dobro you will have to do this anyway. Dobros were made with Hawaiian necks, commonly called "square necks" and the regular Spanish neck which is used like any regular guitar. Study the page showing the Dobro with all the parts named. This will familiarize you with the instrument. Also, carefully study all the drawings and pictures. If you find ways that are better for you in doing some of these don't hesitate to use them. After all we are doing it as we like it best. And most of the time because it is the easiest. You owe it to yourself to improve our technique. Incidentally there were some schools in the old days that taught the Dobro. If you know of any of these please get in touch with me. I would be interested in any old material pertaining to this very fine old instrument.

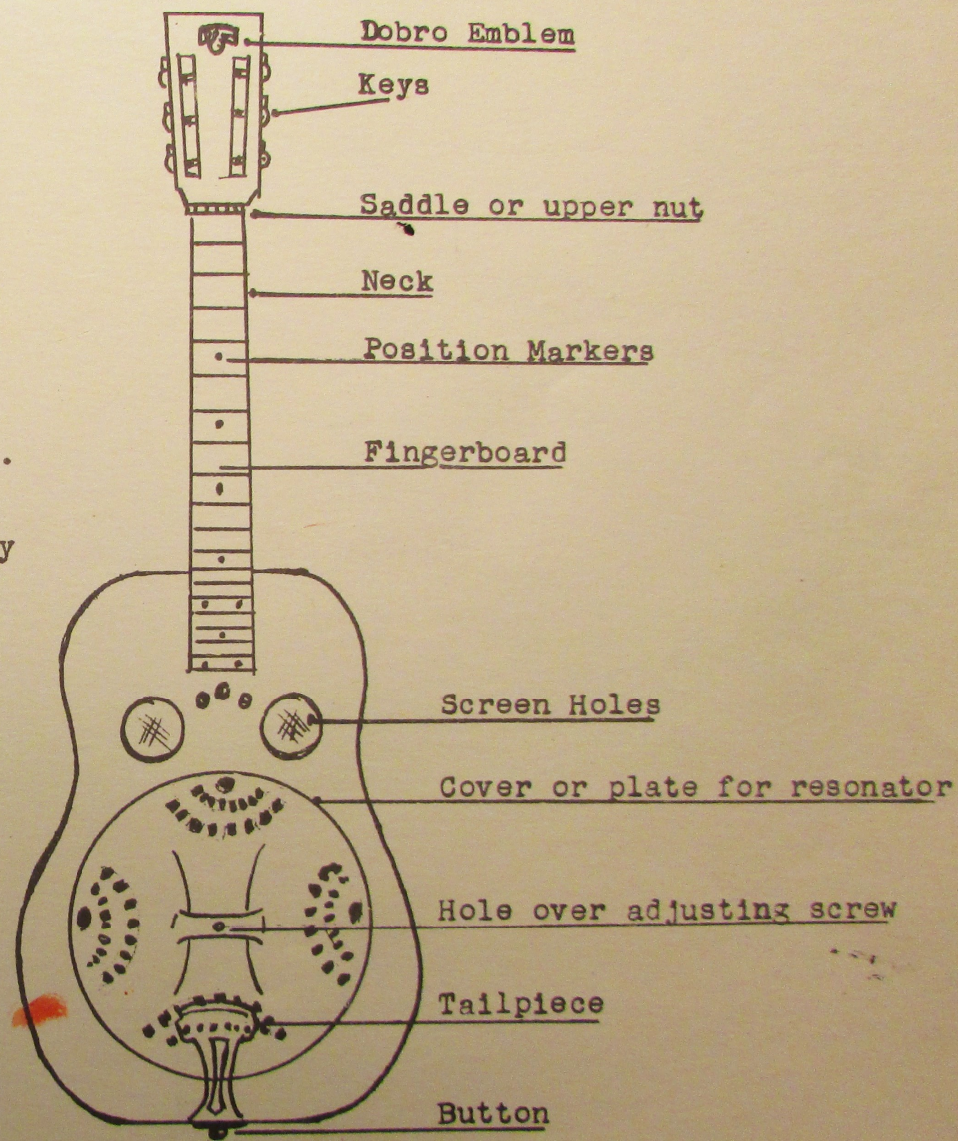
We hope you will realize that it would be impossible to include every thing you want in a course such as this one. We tried to find an instruction course on the Dobro but our efforts were in vain. Through the long-play record and this booklet we will try to give you enough to whet your appetite so you will continue to practice and learn to play.

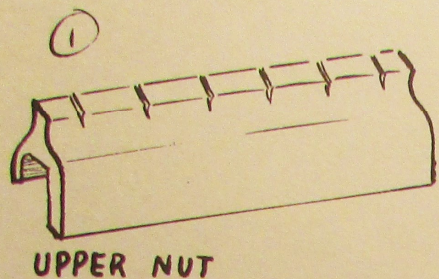
We are including several drawings and some photographs so you can become acquainted with what you want to do. Read the complete course over a couple of times before starting to be familiar with the contents so you can refer to the information you want quickly.

The main thing to remember is that the TABLATURE METHOD HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MUSIC.... Carefully study the page devoted to explaining the tablature, then listen to the record, get it in your mind and then proceed. We feel that you will be well pleased with the results as soon as you practice some. Please remember that the best musicians are people that learn the basics and then start to add their own ideas. There is a need for Dobro players today, and as the man said "there just ain't enough to go around."

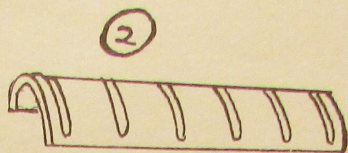
If you run into problems or difficulties please don't hesitate to let us hear from you. We wish you every success in your endeavors and hope you will practice, practice and practice.

Your Dobro may be different from this one. Some have "f" holes instead of the usual round screen holes. Some have solid heads instead of slotted as this one. This one has a Hawaiian or square neck. Some have the regular neck. Some have different position markers, however they are usually between the same frets. Some do not have the three little holes at the end of the fingerboard. The ones without the three holes are usually later models. The cover plates come in at least three or four different patterns. They all have the little hole for the purpose of adjusting the tension of the bridge on the resonator. There are two different tailpieces. One has two pieces that are fastened with four screws on the end, with the button in between. Some have trim top and bottom of body and up the neck. Some have just trim on top and bottom of body. Some have trim just on top of body. The keys are sometime black and occasionally white. Some diaphragms have four holes, some none. Some have lugs with a shorter spider bridge. The thickness of the Body varies. The wooden sound wells inside are made differently. There are two metal models, with one probably being made by another company under lease. There are two different positions of the screws that hold the cover plate. Some Dobros have natural Spruce tops. Some have the wood artificially grained. Some have varnish finish, some lacquer. All Dobros, if adjusted correctly and have the correct strings, sound good and all have enough volume if you will learn how to get it out.

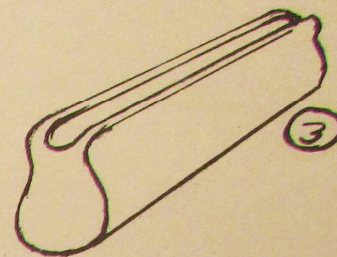




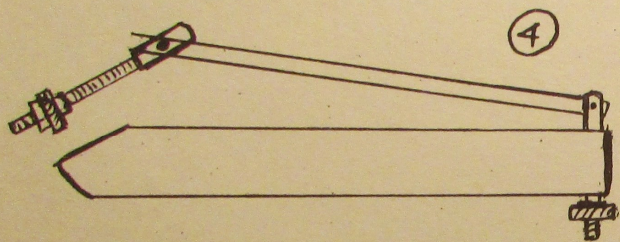
UPPER NUT



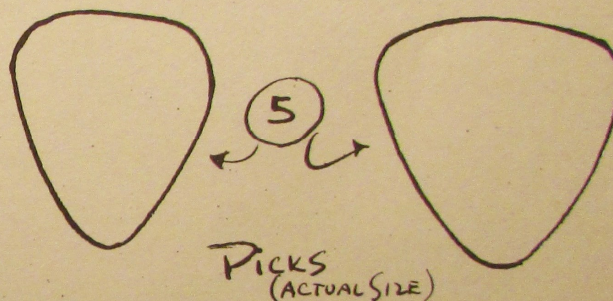
UPPER NUT



BAR OR STEEL

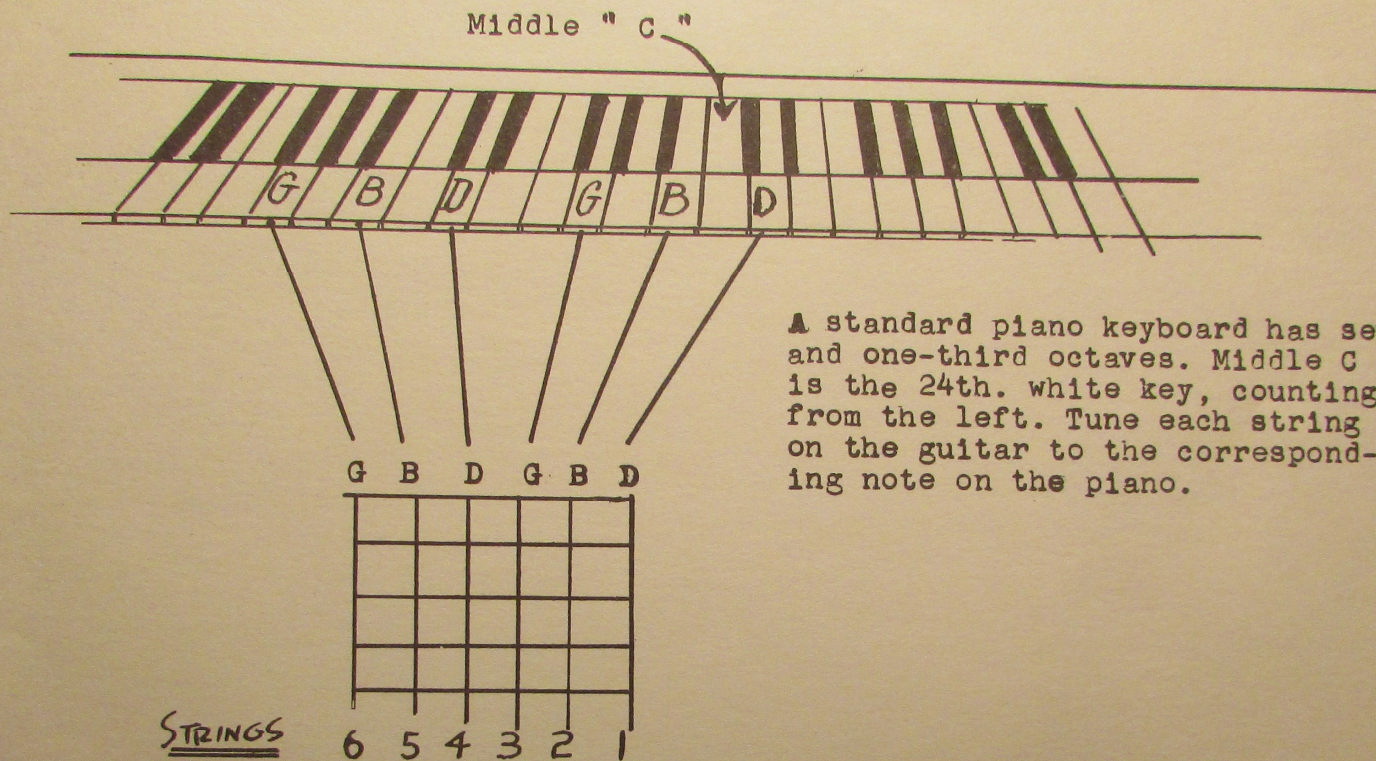


MILLER CAPO

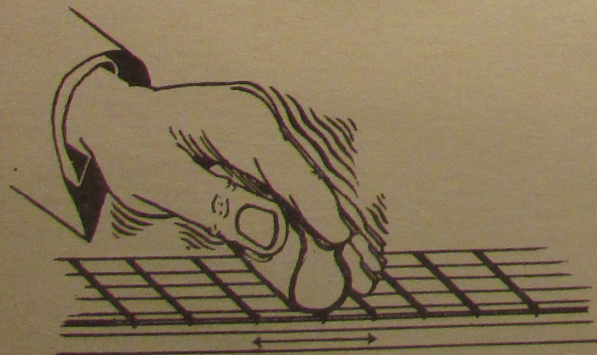


1. If your guitar has a regular spanish neck loosen the strings and place the upper nut over the saddle. This will raise the strings.
2. Another style upper nut.
3. The proper type bar to use with the Dobro.
4. The Miller Capo is placed underneath the strings with the top bar being fastened in place with knurled nuts. It may also be paced upside down if your strings are not high enough the neck. A small churck key may be used instead of the Miller capo.
5. The left pick is medium, the other heavy. I use both.

TUNING TO A PIANO



A standard piano keyboard has seven and one-third octaves. Middle C is the 24th. white key, counting from the left. Tune each string on the guitar to the corresponding note on the piano.



MAKING A VIBRATO WITH THE BAR

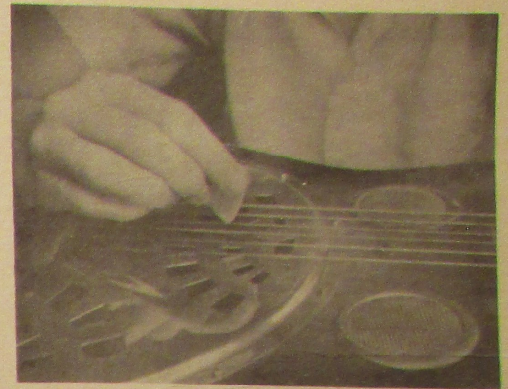
In order to lend a certain charm to music played on the Dobro the Vibrato is used on certain songs especially at the end. It is a sort of nervous quiver of the left hand which moves the bar up and down the neck over the fret being played, usually about three-fourths of an inch. You may place the fingers behind the bar in the regular bar position, and in the tip position you can put the fourth and fifth fingers on the strings to use as a pivot. Try it the way most comfortable.



SITTING POSITION



STANDING POSITION



HOLDING THE PICK



HOLDING THE BAR

A. SHOWS: PICK MOVEMENT · TIP POSITION ·
MILLER CAPO UPSIDE DOWN.

SLANT BAR

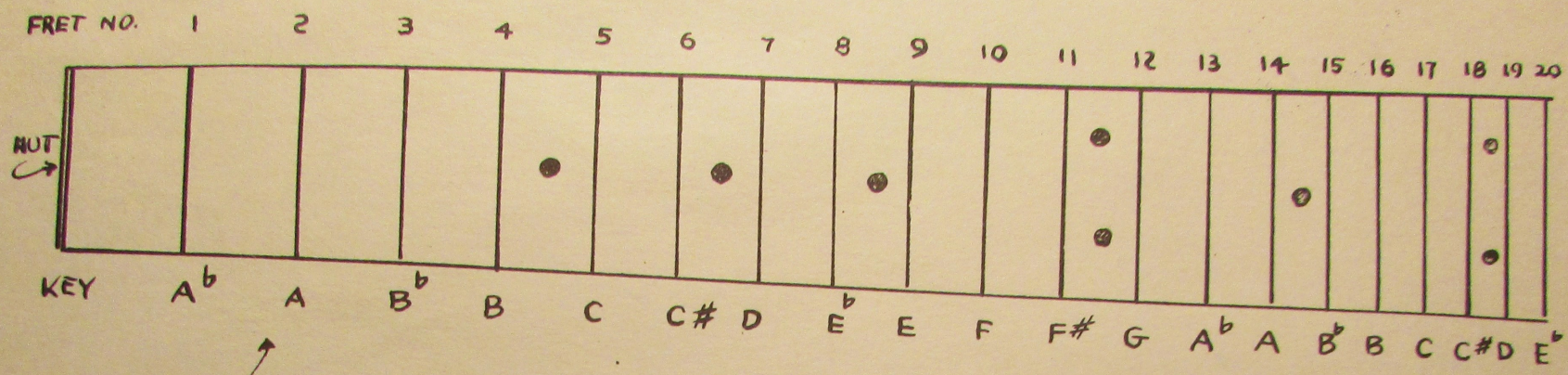


TIP POSITION

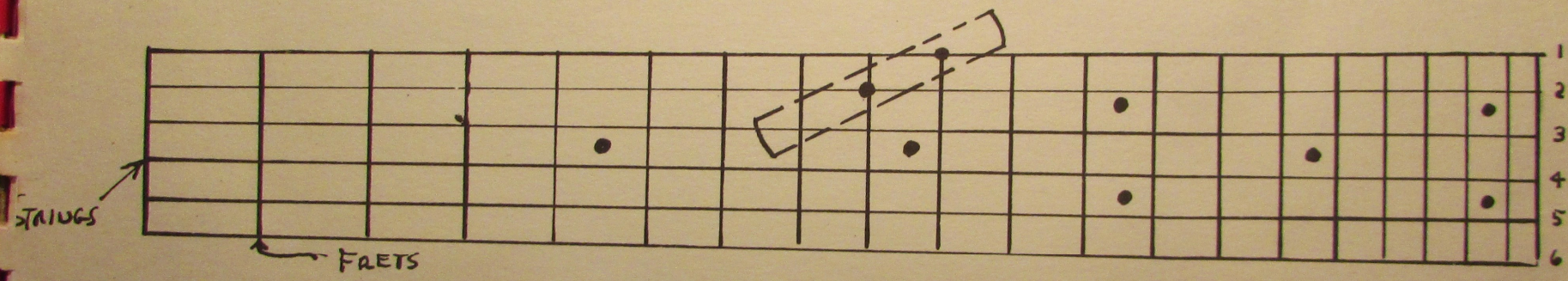


A





FINGERBOARD SHOWING FRET NUMBERS and KEYS

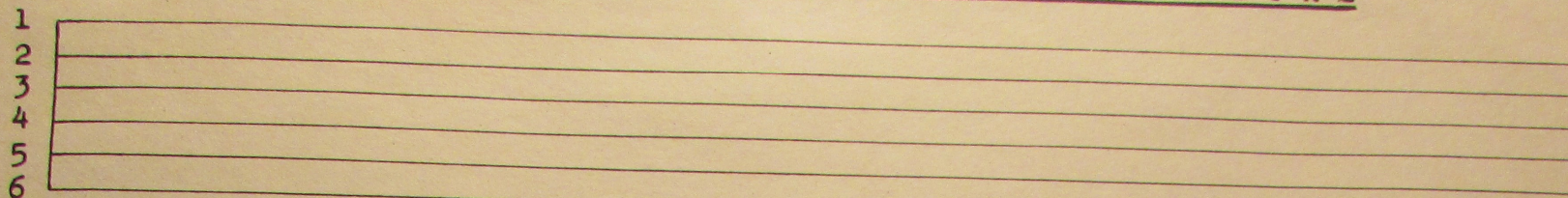


SLANT BAR POSITION

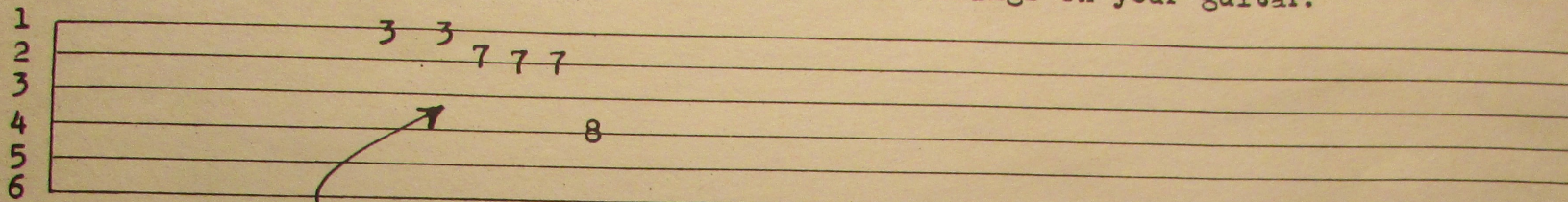
In addition to the Bar and Tip positions another frequently used formation is the Slant position. The above diagram shows how the bar is slanted to play the note at the 9th. fret on the first string, and the note at the 8th. fret on the second string. The Slant Position photo shows the position of the left hand reversed.

To play these two notes, the bar is slanted so that it touches the the first string directly over the 9th. fret, and the second string directly over the 8th. fret. These strings are then picked according to the tablature. There is another often used position on the first and third strings at the 4th. and 6th. frets. There are some others with the bar reversed, as shown in the photo.

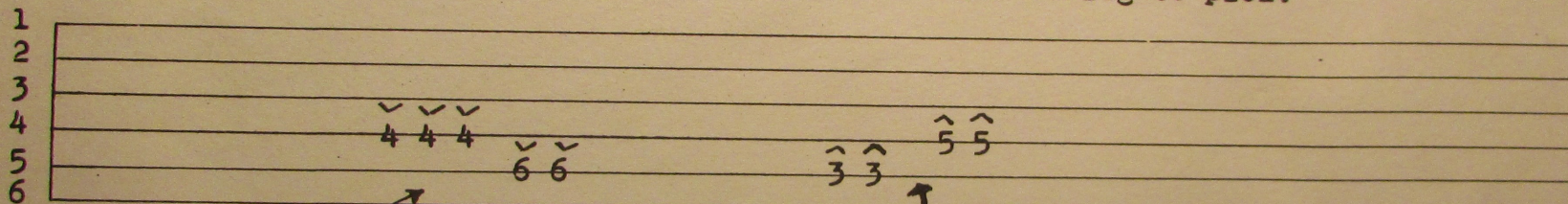
EXPLANATION OF TABLITURE



The horizontal lines are the strings on your guitar.

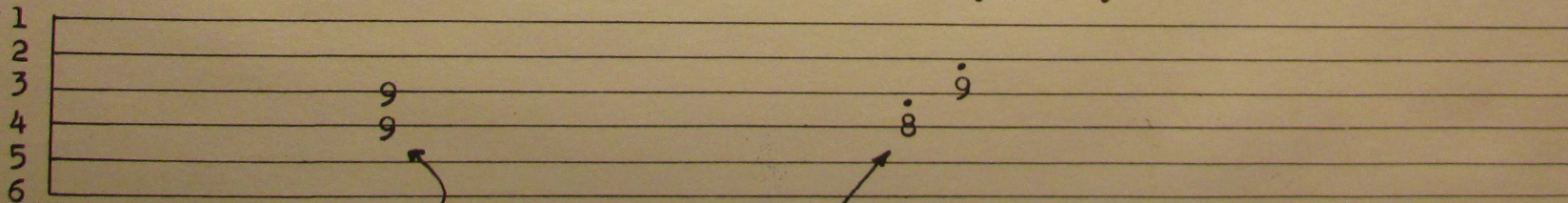


Numbers show fret to place bar and string to pick.



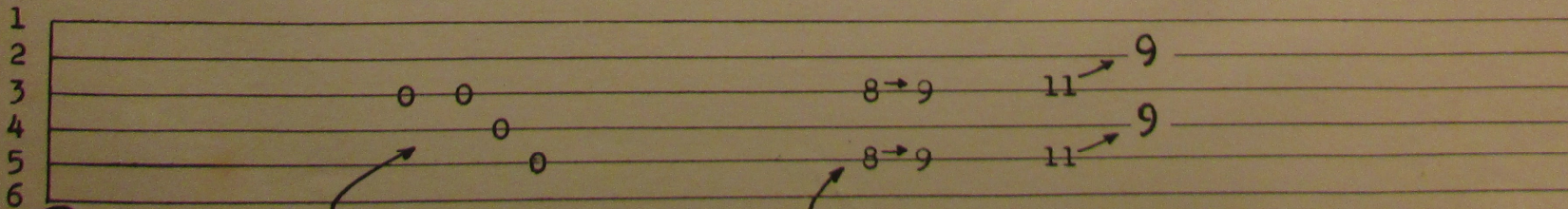
Pick toward you.

Pick away from you.



Pick these together.

Mute with right hand after picking.



Pick string open.

Arrows mean to slide bar.

(E) Key

PICK PATTERNS

D

C - D **D - C** **A - B** **B - A** **D** **A**

REUBEN JAMES

This is played with the capo on the second fret.

(A)

2 4 7 0 2 5 6 6 7 4 5	4 6 7 6 4 4 6 4 2 4 5 4 2 2 4 2 0	REPEAT ONCE
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11 11 9 7 7 6 4 9 9 7 5 5 4 2	4 5 5 4 2 2 3 3 2 0	2 0 2 4 4 6 6 5 6 0 2 2 4 4 3 4
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6 2 2 4 4 2 2 2 2 2	We have purposely left off the pick direction marks and the mutes, Practice this one well. It can be played in the open key of G if you do not have a capo.
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CRIPPLE CREEK

(G)

^ ^ ^ v 5 5 2 0 0 0 0 0	^ ^ 5 5 0 2 → 4 4 → 2 0 2 0 4 0	^ ^ 0 0 2 0 4 0	REPEAT ONCE
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Chorus

^ ^ v 2 → 4 0 0	4 → 2 0 2 2 → 4 0 0	^ ^ v 2 4 0 0 4 → 2 0 2 0 4 0	0 4 0
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LONESOME DOBRO

(E)

\checkmark 9 7 \wedge	\checkmark 9 11 12 \wedge	\checkmark 12 13 14 14 14 14 \wedge	$\hat{9}$ $\hat{7}$ $\hat{9}$ \checkmark 9 $\hat{9}$
\wedge	\wedge	\wedge	$\hat{9}$ $\hat{9}$ $\hat{9}$ \rightarrow 11 $\hat{9}$ $\hat{7}$
\wedge			$\hat{9}$

$\hat{6} \rightarrow \hat{4}$ $\hat{4}$ 4 \wedge	\checkmark 9 7 $\hat{9}$ \wedge	\checkmark 9 11 12 \wedge	\checkmark 12 13 14 14 14 14 \wedge	$\hat{7} \rightarrow \hat{9}$ \checkmark 9 $\hat{9}$	\checkmark 9 9 \rightarrow 7 7 7 \wedge

Bridge

\checkmark 8 \rightarrow 9 9 9 \wedge	\checkmark 9 9 9 \wedge	\checkmark 14 14 14 14 \wedge	\checkmark 14 14 12 \wedge	\checkmark 12 9 \wedge	$\hat{9}$ $\hat{9}$ 11 $\hat{9}$ \checkmark 11 \wedge	\checkmark 9 11 13 13 \wedge
\wedge	\wedge	\wedge	\wedge	$\hat{9}$	\wedge	\wedge
\wedge					\wedge	\wedge

\checkmark 16 \wedge	\checkmark 9 7 \checkmark 9 \wedge	\checkmark 9 11 12 \wedge	\checkmark 12 13 14 14 14 14 \wedge	$\hat{9}$ $\hat{7} \rightarrow \hat{9}$ \checkmark 9 $\hat{9}$
\wedge	\wedge	\wedge	\wedge	$\hat{9}$
\wedge				

\checkmark 9 8 \rightarrow 7 7 \wedge	\checkmark 8 \rightarrow 9 9 9 9 \wedge		
\wedge	\wedge		
\wedge			

DOBRO COUNTRY

(D)

1 6→77	6→77	6→77 77	99 10 10 9 9 77 7
2 7 7	7 7	7 7	77
3 7 7	7 7	7 7	
4 7 7	7 7	7 7	
5			
6			

00 00 00 22	2→33220	22 22	0 0 3→20
00	0	7 7	7 7
		7 7	7 7
		7 7	7 7
		7 7 7	7 7 7

Bridge

7 7 7 9̇	10 10 10 9̇	7 7 7 9̇	10 10 10 11	12 12 12 14	15 15 15 15̇
5→7 7 7 9	10 10 10 9	7 7 7 9	10 10 10 11	12 12 12 14	15 15 15 15

7 7 7 9̇	10 10 10 10̇	22 22	0 0 3→20	7 7 7 7 7 9̇
7 7 7 9	10 10 10 10	22 22	0 0	7 7 7 7 7 9

10 7	00 22→33→220	22 22	0 0 3→2
7	7 6 5 5̇	7 7	7 7 7
10 7 7	7 6 5	7 7	7 7 7
7		7 7	7 7 7
		7 7 7	7 7 7