

HESITATION BLUES

Traditional Old-Time Blues Song; **DATE:** Early 1900's, W.C. Handy- 1915; **CATEGORY:** Old-Time Blues Songs; **RECORDING INFO:** Jerry Garcia and David Grisman; Kenny Hall and the Sweets Mill String Band; Holy Modal Rounders; Bascam Lamar Lunsford; Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers; Doc and Merle Watson; Old Crowe Medicine Show; **OTHER NAMES:** If the River Was Whiskey; The Hesitating Blues; **NOTES:** There are many different sources and versions of this blues song. The main versions are: WC Handy's "Hesitating Blues"; Charlie Poole's "If the River Was Whiskey"; Rev. Gary Davis's "Hesitation Blues." The lyrics from Hesitation Blues are generally floaters from other songs, especially the "Rye Whiskey/Jack O'Diamonds" group.

1. If riv - er was___ whis - key and___ I was___ a duck, I'd
 dive___ to the bot - tom and___ ne - ver come up. Oh, tell me
 how long___ do I have to
 wait?___ Oh can I git you now?
 Or must I hes - i - tate?

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 1. If the river was whiskey and I was a duck
D7
 I'd dive to the bottom and I'd never come up
G **D**
Chorus: Oh, tell me how long have I got to wait
A7 **D**
 Oh, can I get you now, must I hesitate?

2. If the river was whiskey and the branch was wine
 You would see me in bathing just any old time. *Chorus*
3. I was born in England, raised in France
 I ordered a suit of clothes and they wouldn't send the pants. *Chorus*
4. I was born in Alabama, I's raised in Tennessee
 If you don't like my peaches, don't shake on my tree
5. I ain't no doctor but the doctor's son
 I can do the doct'rin' till the doctor comes
6. Got the hesitation stockings, the hesitation shoes
 Believe to my Lord I've got the hesitation blues