The Instruments of the 1927 Bristol Sessions

RESOURCE DOCUMENT

Images
A facsimile of the 1927 edition of the *Sears, Roebuck Catalogue*.
Credit: Birthplace of Country Music Museum Collection
A page showing the variety of guitars for sale from the instrument section of the 1927 Sears, Roebuck Catalogue.

Credit: Birthplace of Country Music Museum Collection
This 1919 fiddle was owned by early country music player Herbert Sweet. The inside of the fiddle case is decorated with a record of the different places he played, including WOPI in Bristol, and artists he played with, including Ernest Stoneman.
Credit: Birthplace of Country Music Museum Collection, donated by Ruth Roe.

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A formal photograph of Ernest Stoneman (seated center with guitar) and family and friends who joined with him to perform and record. Uncle Eck Dunford and Hattie Stoneman with their fiddles can be seen standing at the back.

Credit: From the John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
This Creole bania is the earliest known banjo to still exist, dated to sometime before 1777.
Credit: Creative Commons
Music and Dance in Beaufort County (also known as The Old Plantation), attributed to John Rose, Beaufort County, South Carolina, circa 1785.
Credit: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller
Jimmie Rodgers (wearing glasses) and Jack and Claude Grant with banjos and what looks to be a banjo uke; Jack Pierce holds a guitar. At the 1927 Bristol Sessions, Rodgers would end up recording as a solo artist, while the two Grants and Pierce recorded as the Tenneva Ramblers. Credit: From the John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
This five-string banjo was made by Charles Rauch and the Dayton String Instrument Company in the 1920s. Credit: Birthplace of Country Music Museum Collection

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A. P. Carter’s 1936 Martin guitar, which he played on “border radio” in the 1930s. It is now owned and played by his grandson, Dale Jett.
Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music

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An early photograph of The Carter Family. Maybelle holds her guitar, while Sara has her autoharp on her lap. Credit: From the John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
An Oscar Schmidt guitar once owned and played by Jimmie Rodgers is on display in the museum.
Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music, on loan from the collection of Joseph R. Gregory
Jimmie Rodgers with his custom-decorated guitar. His name – written out in an inlay script – is seen on the neck of the guitar.
Credit: Courtesy of Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum
Bill Monroe owned and signed this 1992 F-5L Model Gibson mandolin, which he played on the Grand Ole Opry stage in Nashville, Tennessee. It is currently on display in the museum.
Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music, on loan from the collection of Joseph R. Gregory

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This statue of famous mandolin player Bill Monroe stands beside the “Birth of Bluegrass” sign outside the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee.

Credit: © Brian Crawford, Creative Commons
Luthier Jayne Henderson playing one of her ukuleles.
Credit: Courtesy of Jayne Henderson of [EJ Henderson Guitars and Ukuleles](https://www.ejhenderson.com)
Anthony Zablan playing the ukulele at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, in 1901.
Credit: Courtesy of Hawaii State Archives
Janette Carter’s Orthey autoharp – she played this instrument at The Carter Fold in Hiltons, Virginia, and later signed it. It is currently on display at the museum.

Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music, on loan from the collection of Joseph R. Gregory

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Ernest Stoneman playing the autoharp and harmonica.
Credit: Courtesy of Patsy Stoneman
Maybelle became so well-known for her autoharp playing that companies like Sears sold affordable autoharps with “How to Play Like Mother Maybelle” instructions, as seen here in a display from the museum’s Hometown Stars special exhibit in 2017.

Credit: Birthplace of Country Music Museum Collection, donated by Charles and Nancy Casey
Harp guitars, like this model by the Gibson Company that is currently on display in the museum, became popular in the 1910s and appeared throughout the United States as part of mandolin orchestra ensembles.

Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music, on loan from the collection of Joseph R. Gregory
Alfred Karnes photographed with his harp guitar.
Credit: Courtesy of Blue Ridge Institute and Museum at Ferrum College

Credit: Photograph by Henry Horenstein, Collection of the National Museum of American History
This circa 1920 Hohner harmonica was known as the “Tuckaway.” It is seen here with its original box.
Credit: Birthplace of Country Music Museum Collection

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Henry Whitter wearing a harmonica “rack” and holding his guitar.
Credit: From the John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
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A jaw harp.
Credit: Public domain

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Two sets of bones, circa 1927.
Credit: Birthplace of Country Music Museum, donated by Dom Flemons

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Fragment of a terra cotta red-figure kylix or cup, Greek, 510-500 BC. The image is of a dancer using a bones-like instrument as part of the performance. Credit: Public domain
Lithograph after William Sidney Mount’s The Bone Player, 1857. The bones could be held in one or both hands, as seen here. The player would move his hands in such a way that the bones would knock against each other. Credit: Public domain courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Leonard L. Milberg Gift, 1998
The majority of 20th-century kazoos – like this metal one on display in the museum – were made by George D. Smith and his company, The Great American Kazoo Company. Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music, donated by Kazoobie Kazoos.

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