



WELCOME!

The Birthplace of Country Music Museum has an important educational mission, and we are working hard to support our teachers in their learning and student needs, both virtually and on the ground. In this newsletter, you will find details about museum resources, programs, and virtual tours and lessons, along with some interesting historical and cultural stories. If you would also like to be included on **education-specific eBlasts**, please send your name, email address, and school to Erika Barker.

Dr. René Rodgers, Head Curator, rrodgers@birthplaceofcountrymusic.org

Erika Barker, Curatorial Manager, ebarker@birthplaceofcountrymusic.org

WHO WE ARE

The Birthplace of Country Music Museum, an [affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution](#), tells the story of the 1927 Bristol Sessions recordings, explores how evolving sound technology shaped their success, and highlights how this rich musical heritage lives on in today's music. Through text and artifacts, multiple theater experiences, and interactive displays – along with a variety of educational programs, music performances, and community events – the exciting story of these recording sessions and their far-reaching influence comes alive. Rotating exhibits from guest curators and other institutions, including the Smithsonian, are featured throughout the year in the Special

Exhibits Gallery. The museum also houses a collection of related objects, photographs, paper ephemera, and digital items that help tell our story and can be used for research purposes.



WHAT’S COMING UP AT THE MUSEUM?

NEW SPECIAL EXHIBIT!

On Thursday, March 23, the museum is opening our new special exhibit – ***I’ve Endured: Women in Old-Time Music***. Created in-house, this exhibit explores the stories of women who have influenced old-time, country, and bluegrass music over the years, the challenges women face to make a career in music, and the way contemporary female musicians are innovating and pushing the genre’s boundaries today. Through text and image panels, artifacts and objects, and audio-visual elements, the exhibit will provide an educational and engaging experience for visitors. There will also be monthly programs to go along with this exhibit – keep an eye on [our events page](#) for these. We are offering a **FREE educator introduction to the exhibit on Monday, March 27, 4:00—5:30pm** where we will share information about booking school group visits, related resources and lessons, a curator-led tour of the exhibit (starting at 4:30pm), and refreshments! Please RSVP for the educator introduction [HERE](#).



SPEAKER SESSIONS

The museum is hosting several interesting speakers for our **monthly Speaker Sessions** over the coming months. These events are free and open to the public, and they are offered either hybrid (in-person and virtual) or by Zoom only. You can also check out past Speaker Sessions programs [HERE](#). Upcoming Speaker Series programs are listed below:

- [Tuesday, February 21, 7:00pm](#) – Musician Greg Cornett on the influence of Jimmie Rodgers and other music-makers on his craft; with special guest luthier Wayne Henderson
- [Tuesday, March 14, 7:00pm](#) – Jen Larson on the Grand Ole Opry archives and collections
- Tuesday, April 11, 7:00pm – Barter Theatre actors and playwright about the upcoming production of *Keep on the Sunny Side*, based on the story of The Carter Family

NEW PROGRAM: MUSEUM STORY TIME

The museum has started a new program aimed at babies, tots, early learners, and their grown-ups! **Museum Story Time** is held the first Friday of every month at 10:30am – each program includes a music- or Appalachia-themed children’s book, a live song performed by musician Momma Molasses, and an activity or coloring sheet. The next Museum Story Time is on [Friday, March 3](#), when we will be reading *Cowboy Dreams*.



RADIO BRISTOL BOOK CLUB

On the fourth Thursday of each month at 12:00pm, the Bristol Public Library and museum host [Radio Bristol Book Club](#) on Radio Bristol. For this program, readers discuss a new book about music, Appalachian stories and culture, or the 1927 Bristol Sessions, and where possible have an interview with the book’s author. Books include fiction, non-fiction, poetry, prose, graphic novels, and discographies – and we always try to choose at least one middle-school or young adult book. This year we are reading our April book with Virginia Middle School’s after-school program and will air our discussion with the students! If you would like to work with us for a book club partnership between the museum and your class OR be a teacher reader in the future, please reach out to Erika at ebarker@birthplaceofcountrymusic.org. In the meantime, check out the full book list for 2023:

- January 26 – *Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company that Addicted America* by Beth Macy
- February 23 – *Never Seen the Moon: The Trials of Edith Maxwell* by Sharon Hatfield
- March 23 – *To Live Here You Have to Fight: How Women Led Appalachian Movements for Social Change* by Jessica Wilkerson

- April 27 – *Mountain Jack Tales* by Gail E. Haley
- May 25 – *Katherine Jackson French: Kentucky’s Forgotten Ballad Hunter* by Elizabeth DiSavino
- June 22 – *Affrilachia* by Frank X. Walker
- July 27 – *Run Rose Run* by Dolly Parton and James Patterson
- August 24 – *Singing Family of the Cumberlands* by Jean Ritchie
- September 28 – *The Place Setting: Timeless Tastes of the Mountain South* by Fred Sauceman
- October 26 – *The Ballad of Laurel Springs* by Janet Beard
- November 30 – *The Coal Tattoo* by Silas House
- December 28 – *Grandma Gatewood’s Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail* by Ben Montgomery

AVAILABLE: SMITHSONIAN EARLY LEARNING RESOURCES

The museum has two Smithsonian early learning resources to share with our community for free. The **Coloring Our World: Celebrating Women Throughout History** coloring book includes well-known women like Amelia Earhart and lesser-known but equally important pioneers like “Stagecoach” Mary Fields. The **Look, Talk, Play** cards provide activities about colors and shapes; nature; transportation; self-expression and hair; food and culture; symmetry; and communication. Both resources are available in English and Spanish. If you would like to use these resources in your classroom, please email René at rrodgers@birthplaceofcountrymusic.org with the number of each and the language you need. Please also share this opportunity with other educators and community groups who might be interested. We will be distributing these on a first-come, first-served basis until March 31.

Do More

Is there an older kid looking for something more challenging? Try this activity.

Make a paper airplane.

Give it a try and record your observations. Make another plane but change the design a little bit. (Try changing the wing shape or using a different kind of paper.) How did changing the design affect the way the plane flies? Which plane flies the farthest? The straightest? The fastest? Why do you think changing the design affected the way the plane flies?

1. Pattern side down, fold paper in half, then unfold.

2. Fold both top corners in to center crease.

3. Fold both sides in again so the corners meet at the middle crease.

4. Fold plane in half.

5. Fold down both wings so the top corners meet the bottom edge of the plane.

6. Unfold wings so they lie horizontal when the plane is in flight.

YOU'RE READY TO FLY!

Create Your Own Paper Airplane activity, How Things Fly, Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum

Look

Talk

Play

Bicycles and Biplanes

Bicycles and biplanes are both forms of transportation.

That means they help people move from one place to another. In this guide, you will find fun and easy activities about bicycles and biplanes, and how they work. You will also learn the stories of two people who used bicycles and biplanes to chase big dreams.

Look, talk, and play! Learning happens everywhere. These activities provide easy ways to help kids build skills in literacy, creativity, and communication while using everyday materials and exploring interesting topics brought to you by the Smithsonian! This activity is part three of a series of five.

This resource was created by educators from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and National Air and Space Museum.

COME JAM AT THE MUSEUM!

Did you know that the museum hosts two community jams each month? On the second Saturday, we hold an **old-time, country, and blues jam session** from 2:00 to 5:00pm – all ages and experiences welcome. And on the fourth Saturday, we hold a **bluegrass jam** from 2:00 to 5:00pm in partnership with the East Tennessee Bluegrass Association – this program focuses exclusively on bluegrass music and instruments. Both programs are a great opportunity for kids and adults to practice playing music in group settings and to learn new songs, tunes, and more. Free and open to the public, musicians and non-musicians alike are welcome! To learn more about jamming, check out our blog post [HERE](#).

STAY TUNED!

Keep an eye out for further information about a variety of education-focused opportunities in the coming year, including:

- **Pick Along Summer Camp** – Beginner (June 19—23) and intermediate (June 26—30) camp weeks for children ages 8—16
- **Educator In-Service Workshops** – Tentatively scheduled for July 17 (elementary) and July 18 (middle and high)
- **VMFA on the Road Artmobile** – Free and open to school groups on September 6—7

MUSEUM EXPERIENCES AND RESOURCES

The museum offers engaging [educational tours for all ages and grade levels](#) that include a docent-led introduction to the museum and its content, a scavenger hunt, and time to interact with and explore the exhibits. These **museum tours** can have a wide focus, or they can be tailored to a specific topic such as music, local history, or technology – we can also work with teachers to learn about other subjects in relation to the museum’s content. We also offer **special exhibit tours** as part of your museum experience, or you can book a tour of the special exhibit only. Our staff and volunteers can also provide **virtual tours** focused on museum content. Check out [this video](#) to get a glimpse into a typical museum tour.

The museum can come to your classroom – in-person or virtually! We offer **learning activities** like the “history of listening,” an exploration of different music recording and playback technologies. Our Banjo Bingo/Name that Instrument game gives students a chance to listen to and identify different types of musical instruments and learn about them. Introductions to artifacts from our collection, lessons on storytelling or ballads, and other options are also available.



You can access the museum’s **lesson plans and related resources** on our [Education page](#), ranging from the history of the 1927 Bristol Sessions to the instruments of early country music. We will be working on and uploading new lesson plans throughout 2023.



We have several short educational **videos about museum content**, which can be found on our [YouTube channel](#). We also have a [video introducing the 1927 Bristol Sessions and why they are important](#), and one about [the contributions of Black musicians and culture to early country music](#).

You can access and print out [student activity sheets](#) related to 1927 Bristol Sessions artists, technology, musical instruments, and history from our website.

FEATURED HISTORY

Old-time music is described and experienced in different ways and for different purposes, but **at its heart, old-time is mountain folk music with strong ties to Appalachia and the diverse peoples who have called it home**. While old-time music has primarily been related to “hillbilly music” and its roots and branches can be found in the development of country and bluegrass, it is one of the melting pots of American culture, connecting to multiple genres, influences, and instruments.

Women have always been central to old-time music – in the home and on the stage, and as instrumentalists and singers, preservers of this music, activists, promoters, and cultural memory keepers. Our upcoming special exhibit *I’ve Endured: Women in Old-Time Music* explores the stories of these women. Here are just a few of the women featured in the exhibit:

Ola Belle Reed was a musician, singer, and songwriter from North Carolina. Her family was steeped in the traditional music of the region, and she learned to play clawhammer banjo from her uncle, guitar and organ from her aunt, and traditional ballads and songs from her mother and grandmother. She performed on the radio and at events as part of the North Carolina Ridge Runners and the New Valley Boys and Girls. Ola Belle also wrote and performed her own songs, touching on the themes of her Appalachian heritage, family traditions, religious values, and social justice issues. Some of her best-known songs include "I've Endured," "High on a Mountain," “Tear Down the Fences,” and “Only the Leading Role Will Do.”

Musician **Elizabeth (Libba) Cotten** played guitar and banjo, teaching herself to play the guitar left-handed and upside down. Her repertoire included blues, ragtime, and original compositions, and she composed “Freight Train,” her best known song, at the age of 12. Married at age 15, she gave up her music for family and the church. Twenty-five years later, while working for Ruth and Charles Seeger, Libba was discovered playing one of their guitars, and they encouraged her to keep on playing. A well-loved artist at the festivals of the folk revival in the 1960s, her guitar style has been emulated by many players and her songs continue to ring today.

Elsie McWilliams was the first woman to make a career as a country music songwriter, though many people are not familiar with her story. Her sister Carrie was married to Jimmie Rodgers (known as “the father of country music”), and Elsie played the piano and sang in his dance band. After Rodgers’ signed a recording contract with the Victor record label in 1927, Elsie began collaborating with him, and she wrote over 20 songs for or with him.

Luthier **Audrey Hash Ham** learned instrument building from her father Albert Hash. From the age of three, she was fascinated by his workshop, turning her hand to dulcimer building in her teens and then starting on fiddles in her early 20s. She worked with her father for years, crafting instruments, hand-carving many of the decorative elements, and mentoring other makers. After his death, she continued his legacy and took on several of her own apprentices who carry on her skills and passion for Appalachian instruments today.



FEATURED RESOURCE

The Smithsonian’s [National Postal Museum](#) explores the history of the US Postal Service and highlights history, art, science, literature, national and international events, and more through the different stamps that have been issued over the years. To connect to both Black History Month (February) and Women’s History Month (March), check out a couple of their relevant online resources:

- [African Americans in the Postal Service and Philately](#)
- [Women in the Postal Service and Philately](#)

Women on Stamps: Part 1

Pioneering Women and Early Government Leaders

Virtual Exhibit

Women's Stamp on History

Stamps provide an opportunity to learn about the nation’s past, each stamp commemorating important events and people in our history. Beginning with the first image of a woman on a stamp in 1893, the United States has issued hundreds of postage stamps honoring the accomplishments and achievements of women in America.

Many women have left their ‘stamp’ on history. This virtual exhibition is the first in a series focusing on the accomplishments of women featured on stamps. In *Women on Stamps: Part 1*, we acknowledge the efforts of pioneering women and early government leaders who entered previously unexplored territories - from the frontier to the Senate floor. In each place they left behind an indelible mark.

The actions of women such as Martha Washington, Sacajawea, Sojourner Truth and Susan B. Anthony provided a foundation upon which others could build. Despite challenges, the achievements of these women influenced later generations, empowering them to effect change. Their triumphs allow all Americans today the opportunity to exercise their rights and achieve their dreams.



The Women Support War Effort stamp was issued on February 18, 1999.

[Español](#)

Women on Stamps: Part 1	
Forming the Nation	▼
Fighting for Equality	▼
The Women's Rights Movement	▼
Political Firsts	▼
Conclusion	
Outline	



Mujeres en
Sellos: Parte 1

THANK YOU!



The Birthplace of Country Music seeks to perpetuate, promote, and celebrate Bristol, TN-VA's rich music heritage; to educate and engage audiences worldwide regarding the history, impact and legacy of the 1927 Bristol Sessions recordings; and to create recognition, opportunities, and economic benefit for our local and regional communities.

BCM accomplishes this mission through its three primary branches, the Birthplace of Country Music Museum, the Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion music festival, and Radio Bristol, special projects and events, and a multitude of community and educational outreach programs.

For more information about the Birthplace of Country Music, visit BirthplaceOfCountryMusic.org.

Questions or comments? Just reply directly to this email.



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Our mailing address is:
Birthplace of Country Music
P.O. Box 1927
Bristol, VA 24203

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