



WELCOME!

Welcome to the [Birthplace of Country Music Museum](#) Educator Newsletter! The Birthplace of Country Music Museum has an important educational mission, and we strive 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.



EDUCATOR FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

As part of a recent grant allocation, the Birthplace of Country Music Museum is offering two (2) paid Educator Fellowships to local and regional teachers for summer 2023. Educator Fellows will utilize their creativity, insight, dedication, and expertise in classroom practice and knowledge of state standards to enhance and expand the museum’s educational resources and opportunities for students and teachers.

There are still a few days left to apply before the deadline on April 30, 11:59pm. If you are interested in applying, you can check out the full description of the opportunity [HERE](#), including the projects and activities it will focus on, tentative time frame, stipend amount, and application process. If you have any questions, please email rroddgers@birthplaceofcountrymusic.org.

WHAT’S COMING UP AT THE MUSEUM?

PICK ALONG SUMMER CAMP

The Birthplace of Country Music Museum’s [Pick Along Summer Camp](#) is back, and registration is now open for both beginner (June 19–23) and intermediate (June 26–30) students. Beginner camp is specialized for students aged 8–14, while intermediate camp is designed for ages 10–16; no previous experience with an instrument is necessary for the beginner session.

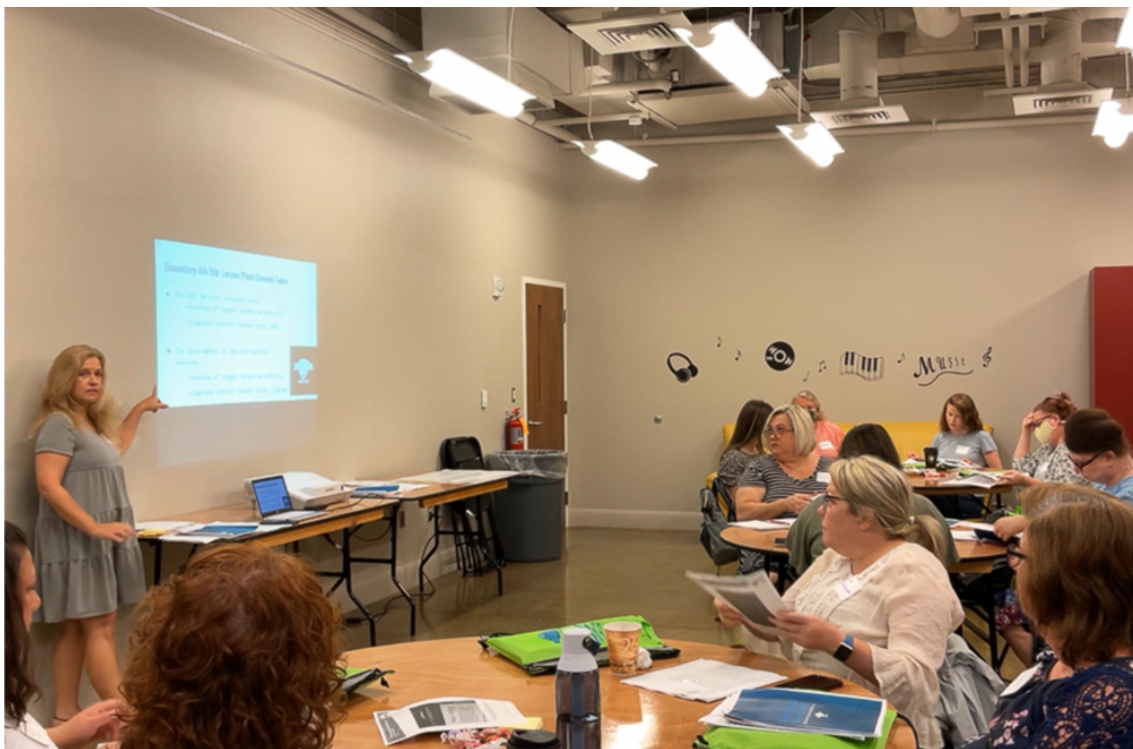
Campers receive instruction on the same style of acoustic instruments played on the 1927 Bristol Sessions recordings – banjo, guitar, and fiddle. They also learn Appalachian music history and get the chance to experience the museum, receive instruction in folk singing and dancing, and work on activities with the museum’s in-house radio station, WBCM Radio Bristol. While busking in Historic Downtown Bristol, campers hone their skills as budding musicians, and at the end of camp week, they give a final performance for family or caregivers in the museum’s Performance Theater. If you have a child in your life or know of a student who would enjoy this camp experience, further details and registration forms can be found on [the museum’s events page](#). Scholarships are available on a case-by-case basis.



EDUCATOR IN-SERVICE

This summer the Birthplace of Country Music Museum is offering a free **K-12 Teacher In-Service**. These workshops are scheduled for Monday, July 17 (elementary) and Tuesday, July 18 (middle and high school) and will include:

- An introduction to the museum and its educational resources:
 - Museum permanent exhibits tour
 - *I've Endured: Women in Old-Time Music* special exhibit tour
 - Various lesson plans tied into Tennessee and Virginia state standards
 - Educational materials that can be downloaded or borrowed from the museum
 - Classroom and outreach activities, like Banjo Bingo, Science of Sound, and History of Listening
 - Field trip opportunities
- Lunch
- TBC soon: We are hoping to have a guest institution to share additional educational resources and experiences – watch this space!
- The workshops will be 9:00am—12:30pm with an additional two (2) hours if the guest institution is confirmed (i.e. extending the workshops to 2:30pm). Participating educators will receive a door prize, and licensure credit for 3½ OR 5½ hours will be available. [Sign up HERE](#) for a music- and history-filled, distinctively fun professional development opportunity to learn more about museum education and resources. We look forward to seeing you!



I'VE ENDURED: WOMEN IN OLD-TIME MUSIC SPECIAL EXHIBIT AND MORE!

The museum’s new special exhibit – *I’ve Endured: Women in Old-Time Music* – opened in March and will be at the museum through December 31, 2023. Created in-house, this exhibit explores the 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 provides an educational and engaging experience for visitors. The exhibit has [an extensive website](#) with a multitude of resources, including bios of women featured in the exhibit, along with ones we weren’t able to include; additional related resources such as books, articles, and films; video interviews with contemporary female musicians; and a Spotify playlist. A K-12 lesson plan is in production now and will be uploaded to the site soon. A wide variety of complementary programs are also on offer in the coming months (see [our Events page](#) for further details):

- Tuesday, May 23, 7:00pm, FREE – [“Music as Work” discussion panel](#) with Dr. Dena Jennings (luthier), Emily Spencer (musician, educator), and Carla Gover (musician, Appalachian dancer)
- Thursday, May 25, 12:00pm – Radio Bristol Book Club: [Katherine Jackson French: Kentucky’s Forgotten Ballad Collector by Elizabeth DiSavino](#)
- Tuesday, June 13, 7:00pm, FREE – Speaker Sessions: Guest TBC
- Friday, July 7, 7:00pm, Ticketed – **Hazel Dickens tribute performance** with musician Karen Collins
- Thursday, July 27, 12:00pm – Radio Bristol Book Club: [Run, Rose, Run by Dolly Parton and James Patterson](#)
- Thursday, August 24, 12:00pm – Radio Bristol Book Club: [Singing Family of the Cumberlands by Jean Ritchie](#)
- Thursday, September 28, 6:30pm, FREE – Film screening: TBC
- Tuesday, October 10, 7:00pm, FREE – Speaker Sessions: Murder Ballads with ballad singer Donna Ray Norton
- Saturday, October 28, all day, FREE – Community Day with family activities
- November – TBD
- Thursday, December 7, 6:30pm, FREE – Film screening: TBC



MUSEUM RADIO PROGRAMS

The museum hosts two radio programs on our in-house station [WBCM-Radio Bristol](#). *Museum Talk*, which shares stories about and interviews with museums and other cultural institutions across the country, airs every Thursday

(except the 4th Thursday) at 12:00pm. **Radio Bristol Book Club**, a partnership with the Bristol Public Library that airs at 12:00pm on the 4th Thursday, explores books about country music, regional musical heritage, and Appalachia – from novels to non-fiction and children’s to adults' books. You can tune into these shows live on the dial at 100.1FM or [via our website](#) or the Radio Bristol app. After airing, each show is also archived [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). We’ve recently worked with Virginia Middle School’s after-school program to include students on both programs – on *Museum Talk*, the students provided a wide range of great “What Are You Wondering?” questions for the curatorial team to answer, and on our upcoming April 27 episode of *Radio Bristol Book Club*, they will discuss this month’s book, *Mountain Jack Tales* by Gail E. Haley! Be sure to check out these fun student-museum partnerships, and let us know if you are interested in your class joining us on-air in the future!



COMING LATER THIS YEAR

Keep an eye out for further information about the **VMFA on the Road Artmobile**, which will be free and open to school groups on September 6—7, 2023. Free entry to the museum's special exhibit about women in old-time music will also be offered with a visit to the Artmobile.

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 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, an exploration of the science of sound, 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.

MUSICAL MEDLEY WORD SEARCH

C	H	E	I	F	S	H	L	X	C	M	M	B	Q	W	Z	R	K
J	A	W	H	A	R	P	N	B	L	R	F	V	L	Z	L	B	L
R	R	S	C	T	B	A	N	J	O	R	T	R	R	E	H	R	S
E	M	W	L	Z	O	S	M	M	F	N	Z	E	A	C	N	I	Q
Z	O	V	F	L	M	H	M	X	K	W	E	D	U	D	I	S	Q
K	N	R	I	W	I	M	M	M	F	B	L	S	V	A	I	T	J
Q	I	G	F	C	P	T	M	Y	L	Z	A	D	M	N	J	O	I
M	C	N	U	X	T	V	L	B	X	Y	A	L	D	F	R	L	M
F	A	Z	X	I	U	O	W	K	A	Z	O	O	L	I	H	S	M
N	Q	C	A	R	T	E	R	F	A	M	I	L	Y	D	A	E	I
E	L	O	P	V	B	A	U	N	X	Y	G	G	D	D	E	S	E
Q	U	F	S	M	I	C	R	O	P	H	O	N	E	L	K	S	R
W	K	R	D	J	D	H	R	U	R	M	L	N	D	E	T	I	O
W	U	H	R	A	L	P	H	P	E	E	R	P	O	D	L	O	D
F	L	B	N	E	P	B	Y	S	C	B	C	K	G	V	T	N	G
W	E	R	N	E	S	T	S	T	O	N	E	M	A	N	A	S	E
P	L	L	O	K	D	W	I	N	R	A	A	U	A	Y	D	A	R
Z	E	S	U	Y	N	C	N	W	D	J	I	Q	R	N	S	F	S

FEATURED HISTORY

In the 1920s, country music became a commercialized genre as more and more artists were recorded. Many significant recording sessions took place before the 1927 Bristol Sessions, though none were to achieve the commercial success of

Bristol’s recordings. Prior to 1927, country artists from the South – such as Eck Robertson, Gid Tanner & His Skillet Lickers, Charlie Poole and The North Carolina Ramblers, and the Powers Family – traveled great distances to make professional recordings.

Generally, country music records predating the Bristol Sessions were recorded in New York City, but other major sessions also occurred in places like Atlanta, Georgia and Richmond, Indiana. For instance, the first commercial country music recorded in the South is attributed to Fiddlin’ John Carson. An old-time fiddler from north Georgia, Carson recorded “The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane” and “The Old Hen Cackled and the Rooster’s Going to Crow” on June 14, 1923 for O’Keh Records in Atlanta, Georgia. Ralph Peer, one of the supervisors during the recordings, would eventually become the producer for Victor and the 1927 and 1928 Bristol Sessions.

Around 1927, with the development of the electric microphone and technological advances within the recording industry, producers were now able to travel away from the studio to discover regional talent on location and record a large number of artists at lower costs. Victor Talking Machine Company – along with other major companies such as Gennett, Brunswick, O’Keh, and Columbia – engaged in a variety of location recording sessions in the South, going to locations where they were sure to find a large variety of acts specializing in what would soon be known as “hillbilly music.”

On the same trip as the 1927 Bristol Sessions, Ralph Peer also did location recording sessions in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. Columbia Records hosted sessions in nearby Johnson City, Tennessee, in October 1928 and October 1929, while another label, Brunswick Records, conducted location recording sessions in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1929 and 1930. The Johnson City and Knoxville recordings boasted several significant recordings in both hillbilly music and race records (the genre name for recordings by Black artists and acts), including Clarence Ashley, The Tennessee Chocolate Drops, Charlie Bowman, and The Tennessee Ramblers.


Below: Fiddlin’ John Carson. From the Guthrie T. Meade Collection, #20246, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill




FEATURED RESOURCE

Celebrate April being the month of Earth Day and Earth Week, along with all things environmental, by checking out a variety of Smithsonian resources –


[from an exploration of the history of Earth Day to the Ocean Portal website to citizen science projects to Earth Optimism Youth Action!](#)




Smithsonian Spotlight
A History of Earth Day
Buttons, posters, and memorabilia reflect nearly 50 years of Earth Day (April 22) celebrations.




Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center
Bird Friendly Coffee
Learn about the benefits of organic, shade-grown "Bird Friendly®" coffee.




National Museum of Natural History
Ocean Portal
Join the Smithsonian Ocean Portal website in exploring the ocean and its life.




Office of Facilities Management & Reliability
Sustainability Initiatives at the Smithsonian
We work on sustainability practices as a daily part of our work at the Smithsonian.




Citizen Science at the Smithsonian
Smithsonian researchers enlist volunteers for an array of tasks, both onsite and online.



Smithsonian Voices
Earth Optimism Blog
Read about conservation success stories across the Smithsonian.



Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
TRóPICOS
Read the latest issue of TRóPICOS, the magazine of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama.



Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
Shorelines Blog
Located in Edgewater, Maryland, SERC researchers focus on understanding ecosystems for a sustainable future.

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.



Funding has been provided by Humanities Tennessee, Virginia Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act economic stabilization plan of 2020.

Copyright © 2023 Birthplace of Country Music, Inc., All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because you are a subscriber of the Birthplace of Country Music's e-newsletter.

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

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).