THE OLD-TIME
HERALD
A MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO OLD-TIME MUSIC
Volume 13, Number 2
$7.50

OLD-TIME WEEK
Fiddle:
Beg. - Rafe Stefanini
Intm. - Dave Bing
Adv. - James Bryan

Banjo:
Beg. - Rebekah Weiler
Intm. - Hilarie Burnham
Adv. - Frank Lee

Guitar: Rachel Combs
Mandolin: Chance McCoy
Bass: "Joebass" DeJarnette
Coordinator: Joe Newberry

DANCE WEEK
Nic Gorellis (Flatfooting), Wendy Graham (Centers & Squares) (Calling Centers), Matthew Olwell (Body Rhythms), Tyler Crawford (Centers & Squares) (Calling Southern Traditional Squares), Edwin Ron (Argentine Tango) (Nightclub Salsa), Brian Cunningham (Irish Sean Nós Dance), Junious Brickhouse (Hip Hop & House), Emily Oleson & Rhiannon Giddens (Afro-Cuban Roots), Laurie Cours (Afro-Cuban Dance), and Tony Hernandez (Spanish Salsa for Dance), with staff musicians Jeremiah Melane, Eden MacAdam-Somer, Aaron Olwell, and Ralph Gordon. Coordinator: Matthew Olwell

OCT. OLD-TIME WEEK
Mountain Dulcimer:
Phyllis Gaskins

Fiddle:
Beg. - Claire Millner
Intm./Adv. - Dave Bing
Intm./Adv. - Chance McCoy

Banjo:
Beg./Intm. - Anna Roberts-Gewalt
Intm./Adv. - Walt Koken

Guitar: Bob Heyer
Coordinator: Gerry Milnes

2012 Calendar
April 22-27 Spring Music Week
July 8-13 Early Country Music Week
Cajun/Creole Week
Guitar Week
July 15-20 Blues Week
July 22-27 Irish/Celtic Week
July 29-Aug. 3 Bluegrass Week
Swing Week
August 5-12 Old-Time Week
Dance Week
Vocal Week
August 10-12 AUGUSTA FESTIVAL
Oct. 28-Nov. 4 October Old-Time Week
November 2-4 FIDDLERS’ REUNION

Old-Time Music on the Augusta Stage
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ALSO: Clyde Davenport, Vol. 1, Ernie Carpenter, Banjo Bill Cornett, Lonnie Seymour, Cecil Plum


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To order via US mail, send a check made payable to the Field Recorders’ Collective to the address below: $15 each CD, $20 each DVD PLUS $5 for US domestic priority mail. (Ohio residents please include applicable sales tax). Please check our Web site for additional discs and discounted sets. We accept Paypal and credit cards on our Web site.

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The Old-Time Music Group, Inc. celebrates the love of old-time music. Old-time music—grassroots or homegrown music and dance—shares origins, influences and musical characteristics with roots musics throughout America. Our magazine, the Old-Time Herald, casts a wide net, highlighting the Southeastern tradition while opening its pages to kindred and comparable traditions and new directions. It provides enlightening articles and in-depth reviews, opportunities for musical learning and sharing, and a forum for addressing the issues and questions that bear upon the field.

Cover: Fries Fiddler’s Convention 2010, photo by Alan Teichman
Cover design by Steve Terrill, 97 watt creative group, Greensboro, NC
Printed at Sutherland Printing, Montezuma, IA, www.sutherlandprinting.com
Thank You!

The Old-Time Music Group / Old-Time Herald sincerely thanks all of the supporters who contributed during our annual fundraising campaign.

The fundraiser always comes at the close of one calendar year and the beginning of the next. For those of us who work for the OTMG, it’s a wonderfully energizing start to the year—this fresh reminder of the grassroots enthusiasm of the old-time music community, and the important role of the Old-Time Herald in our community’s life.

You make it possible. Thank you for your generosity and dedication.

The staff of The Old-Time Music Group / Old-Time Herald

Responses to “Ladies’ Fancy”

A couple of helpful OTH readers have come forward with information about two of the photos that I included in my “Ladies’ Fancy” feature that appeared in the “Attic” series in the previous issue of OTH (vol. 13, no. 1).

1) In response to my note that the photo of two ladies playing guitar and fiddle on the front steps of a house or cabin had a “Southern feel to it,” Harry Taylor of Charlotte, North Carolina, offers this comment: “A clue to ‘Southern feel’ is that the siding and door casing on the house is southern yellow pine. That prominent grain is a dead giveaway.”

2) Reader Cynthia Richardson of Wilmette, Illinois, really went above and beyond the call in researching Emma Robichaud, the young lady pictured in another of the images in the piece. With the help of a friend who is knowledgeable about the history of clothing, Ms. Richardson was able to peg the photo as having been taken c. 1895-1900. Armed with this information, plus the fact that the photo came from a studio in Greenville, New Hampshire, and the knowledge that young Emma was 13 years old when the picture was taken, Ms. Richardson was able to track her via census records. Although we cannot be 100% sure that we are dealing with the same person, it appears that the young lady in the photo was born in December 1881, and was of French-Canadian heritage. She lived much of her life in Belmont, New Hampshire. She never married and spent her life working in the clothing and textile mills of the region, as did many other Franco Americans of the time. Two obituaries from the Laconia, New Hampshire Evening Citizen indicate that she died April 16, 1961. The writer of the obituaries gave her age at the time of death as 84, though this is at odds with the birth date of 1881 given in the census records.

Hearty thanks to our sharp-eyed and energetic readers!

Paul Wells
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Hosted by Eli Smith
Here & There

Events

Jubilee Community Arts in Knoxville, Tennessee, will host the annual Jubilee Festival March 8 – 11. The event features traditional Appalachian music and dancing, and will close on Sunday with old harp singing.

March 9 – 11, the Wild Goose Chase Cloggers will host the Moosejaw Dance Weekend, at the Maplelag Cross-Country Ski Resort near Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. Callers include Sue Holsether, calling to the music of Foghorn Stringband. Other attractions include music and dance workshops, skiing, and Minnesota’s largest hot tub. For more information visit www.wildgoosechasecloggers.org, or email moosejawdanceweekend@gmail.com.

On March 13, the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North Carolina will present “A Tribute to Son House.” Beginning at 5 pm, in the Center for Historic Preservation Studies in Mt. Carroll, Illinois.

Labor Day Weekend
Friday · Saturday · Sunday
Aug. 31 · Sept. 1 · Sept. 2

Instructors for 2012:
Garry Harrison & The New Mules
Charlie Walden
Lynn “Chirps” Smith
others to be announced

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Callers include Sue Holsether, calling to the music of Foghorn Stringband. Other attractions include music and dance workshops, skiing, and Minnesota’s largest hot tub. For more information visit www.wildgoosechasecloggers.org, or email moosejawdanceweekend@gmail.com.

On March 17, the date for this year’s Old-Time Fiddlers’ Convention in Dothan, Alabama. The contest, which begins at 1 pm, is part of Landmark Park’s Spring Farm Day festival. The park’s one-room schoolhouse will be available all day for jamming. Visit www.landmarkpark.com or call (334) 794-3452 for more information.

On March 23, the Southern Folklife Collection will host “Music from the True Vine: A Tribute to Mike Seeger” in the Pleasants Room at the University of North Carolina’s Wilson Library. At 5 pm, Bill Malone will discuss his book Music from the True Vine: Mike Seeger’s Life and Musical Journey, followed by a panel discussion with Alice Gerrard, John Cohen, Ginny Hawker, and Tracy Schwarz. At 7:30, at the same location, Gerrard, Cohen, Hawker, and Schwarz will give a concert. The entire event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Liza Terll (liza_terll@unc.edu, 919-548-1203), or visit “SFC Tribute to Son House” on Facebook. To purchase tickets to the concert, visit http://carolinaunion.unc.edu or call (919) 962-1449.

The annual Suwannee Banjo Camp will be held March 16 – 18 at O’Leno State Park in High Springs, Florida. This year’s instructors include Greg C. Adams, Cathy Barton Para, Mac Benford, Paul Brown, Mark Johnson, Brad Leftwich, Chuck Levy, and Ken Perlman (old-time banjo); Scott Anderson, Janet Davis, James McKinney, Alan Munde, and Tony Trischka (bluegrass banjo); and Erynn Marshall (old-time fiddle). Visit www.suwanneebanjocamp.com to find out how to register.

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Fiddler Bobby Taylor and friends will be presenting a concert at 6:30 pm on Saturday, March 24 at Merritt Store and Grill, 1009 S. Columbia St., in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Taylor is the Director of Cultural Arts and History for the state of West Virginia. He will perform on fiddles that belonged to Clark Kessinger and Ed Haley. Food and drink will be available. For ticket information call: (919) 942-4897.

This year’s Surry Old Time Fiddler’s Convention will take place March 30
and 31 at Surry Community College in Dobson, North Carolina. The convention includes dances, contests, drawings and raffles, cake walks, workshops, jamming, and displays. To find out more visit www.surryoldtime.com or call (336) 755-1771.

On April 6 and 7, the Florida Old Time Music Championship will be held at the Pioneer Florida Museum, in Dade City. The event features competitions, workshops, concerts, and more, and this year’s guests of honor are Moonshine Holler (Paula Bradley and Bill Dillof). For information visit www.fotmc.org, or call Jim Strickland (813-758-6591) or Ernie Williams (352-588-4734).

Dahlonega, Georgia’s Bear on the Square Mountain Festival is held the third weekend of April every year. Pre-festival events for the 16th yearly festival will take place on Friday, April 20, with the start of jamming on the Square, as well as master classes in the afternoon and the auction that evening. Saturday and Sunday’s schedule includes main stage performances, more jamming on the Square, additional workshops, a gospel jam, an old-time mountain dance, and kids’ activities. More details about the festival can be found at www.bearonthesquare.org.

Virginia’s Dare to Be Square dance gathering takes place this year from May 4 – 6 at Homestead Farm in Riner, Virginia. Callers include Michael Ismerio, Phil Jamison, and Bill Ohse. There will be workshops, dancing, music, and jamming. Workshop tuition costs $40, and camping is an additional $15. Volunteer opportunities and scholarships are available. Visit www.daretobesquare.org for more information.

The Banjo Fraternity will present a free concert of 1900s banjo music on May 19, at 7:30 pm, at the Pantall Hotel in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Visit www.banjo fraternity.org for details.

**Workshops and Other Learning Opportunities**

Old-time dancers and musicians interested in college programs in Appalachian music and dance will find performance and scholarship opportunities at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, West Virginia.

D&E is expanding its academic program in Appalachian Studies in partnership with the Augusta Heritage Center. To apply and schedule an audition, students should contact Gerry Milnes at the Augusta Heritage Center (milnesg@dewv.edu, 304-637-1334).

From March 16 – 18, the Chestnut Creek School of the Arts in Galax, Virginia, will offer its Masters Weekend Workshop on Old-Time Music of Southwest Virginia, taught by Alice Gerrard, Gail Gillespie, and Kay Justice. Kay and Gail’s workshops will focus on the song repertoire of traditional singers from Southwest Virginia, and Alice’s classes will teach fiddle techniques of Luther Davis and Roscoe Parish. For information about tuition, registration, and lodging, contact Marianne Kovatch (marianne@chestnucreekarts.org, 276-236-3500, 276-744-0244, or 276-237-5866).

Joe Newberry and Val Mindel will give a weekend workshop in duet singing in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on March 17 and 18. The two-day workshop for intermediate and advanced singers will focus on early country-style close harmonies. Preregistration is required, and space is limited. Tuition is $100 for both days, or $60 for just Saturday; two-day participants are given priority in registration. To sign up, contact Linda Prager (lindamprager@aol.com or 919-240-5406).

The Peach Bottom Farm Fiddle and Strings Camp will take place this year June 12 – 15, at Peach Bottom Farm in Independence, Virginia. Instructors this year include Paul Anastasio, Matt Combs, Brandon Davis, Shane Cook, Brian Grim, Kyle Dean Smith, and Stanley Widener. In addition to workshops there will be dances, special meals, visits to local Crooked Road venues, and more. To find out about registration and tuition, visit www.peachbottomfarm.com.

The Cowan Creek Mountain Music School will be held this year from June 24 – 29, in Whitesburg, Kentucky. Classes in traditional music, dance, and storytelling are offered for participants of all skill levels. There will be performances by Lee Sexton, Lewis and Donna Lamb, Jackie Helton, and Rich Kirby, a singing at the Big Cowan Old Regular Baptist Church, and a nightly square dance. Visit www.cowan creekmusic.org or call (606) 633-3187 to find out more.
In Print, On the Air

WAMU’s Old Time Jam, hosted by Rosemarie Nielson, is broadcasting at a new time, on Fridays from noon to 3:00 EST. You can tune in at 105.5 FM in the Washington, DC, area, or at www.bluegrasscountry.org.

Phil and Vivian Williams and Terry Wergeland have released a new recording, Tunes from the Haynes Family Manuscript. The 26 tunes included are drawn from handwritten nineteenth-century manuscripts from the Willamette Valley in Oregon. See the Voyager label’s ad in this issue for ordering information.

Final Notes

Banjo player Ronnie Poe died on January 12, during a jam session at his home in Amissville, Virginia. 79-year-old Poe was one of the central figures in the traditional music of the Northern Virginia hills.

Poe was a member of the Free State Ramblers, the Virginia Travelers, and the Shenandoah Travelers, and beginning in the 1960s hosted a Thursday-night, mens-only bluegrass jam in the garage in his back yard. He was also a mechanic, and for 32 years the proprietor of the Old Towne Texaco in Warrenton.

Poe is survived by a large family. His funeral was held on January 17 at the Amissville Baptist Church, with interment at the Amissville United Methodist Church Cemetery.

On the evening of February 20, fiddler and National Heritage Fellow Joe Thompson died in Burlington, North Carolina. He was 93 years old. Born in rural Orange County, North Carolina, in 1918, Joseph Aquilla Thompson, along with his older brother Nate and their first cousin Odell, grew up farming. From their fathers, John Arch and Walther Thompson, Joe, Nate, and Odell learned a tradition of African American string band music that, by the time the younger Thompsons were growing up, had grown very rare. In their family, though, it was still a central part of life. “All of us did it,“ he recalled to Wayne Martin in a 1988 interview published in the Old-Time Herald (vol. 1, no. 8, May-July 1989). “. . . my brothers, the cousins and all of them did it. We grew up in it. I learned how to play the music from my father. He was a great musician, as were his brothers.”

Thompson became interested in playing music when he was only five or six years old, he recalled. When his mother’s cousin gave him a fiddle, and he replaced two missing strings with wires from a screen door, he was playing “Hook and Line” within a couple of days. His father’s reaction on first hearing him fiddle was, “God durn boy, you playing that thing, ain’t you.” John Arch Thompson gave Joe his own fiddle, and by the time Joe was seven years old he and Nate were playing for dances. He remembered playing half-hour sets when he and his brother were still so little that, sitting in straight-back chairs to play, their feet didn’t reach the floor.

Joined by their cousin Odell, Joe and Nate played music together all through the late 1920s and the ’30s. He told interviewer Mary Eckstein in 2007, “Whenever we had a corn shucking, a big corn shucking, we would have a dance. And Christmas time, we would have a dance every night somewhere, square dance, corner single, stuff like that. All would dance through the night.” By World War II, though, the black string band tradition was fading fast. Nate found a factory job in Philadelphia and settled there. After service in the military, Joe Thompson made his home in the town of Mebane, North Carolina, near where he had grown up, and began to work at White’s Furniture. “We went for 20 years not playing nothing,” Odell would later recall.

Mebane is only 20 miles from Chapel Hill and the University of North Carolina, which in the 1960s and ’70s became one of the pulse-points of the old-time music revival. Kip Lornell, followed by other UNC and Duke graduate students, learned of and became interested in the music of the Thompson family. Thus began a second musical career for the cousins. In the ’80s and ’90s Joe and Odell gained wide recognition in the world of old-time music for the importance and excellence of the by-then-rare music that they played. In 1991, they received the North Carolina Heritage Award. They would tour around the country and internationally, often playing with banjo player Bob Carlin, performing at Carnegie Hall, the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes in Port Townsend, Washington, and other far-away and prestigious venues.

Back in North Carolina, Joe and Odell Thompson were featured performers at MerleFest in 1994. One evening during the festival, Odell was returning on foot to his and Joe’s motel, after supper at a nearby restaurant. While crossing the highway Odell was struck and killed by a passing car. For Joe, the tragedy of losing his cousin and companion carried the additional sorrow of losing his musical partner. Prayer and the encouragement of friends brought Joe through this crisis, and in time he returned to his music career. The same strengths brought him through another crisis several years later, when a stroke nearly deprived him of his ability to play.

The last decade of Thompson’s life brought many honors and recognitions. A new generation of roots music listeners have learned about him, and Piedmont black string band music, through the Carolina Chocolate Drops, who credit Thompson as their mentor. He received the National Heritage Fellowship in 2007 from the National Endowment for the Arts.

On the occasion of Thompson’s 90th birthday, David Brower interviewed him for the Old-Time Herald (vol. II, no. 9, February-March 2009). Thompson, he wrote, “has lived through the Great Depression, World War II, wars in Korea, Viet Nam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. He is the grandson of a slave. He voted for Franklin Roosevelt, survived the Jim Crow era, and last year voted for the first African American to be elected President of the United States.” He also lived through the low ebb of the musical tradition of which he was a master, followed by a resurgence, in which he played a central role. Joe Thompson is survived by his wife Pauline Thompson, and many relatives and friends.
Steve Kaufman's Acoustic Kamps

June 10-16: Old Time Banjo, Mt. Dulcimer, Bass, Flatpicking, Fingerpicking, Old Time Fiddle, Songwriting, Celtic Harp

June 17-23: Flatpicking, Bluegrass Banjo, Mandolin, Bluegrass Fiddle, Singing, Dobro™, Bass and Kid’s Kamp

Old Time and Traditional Week - June 10-16: Flatpicking: Rolly Brown, Mark Cosgrove, Dan Crary, Steve Kaufman, Chris Newman, Eric Thompson; Fingerpicking: Pat Kirtley, Harvey Reid, Richard Smith; Bass: Rusty Holloway; Old Time Fiddle: Brad Leftwich, Suze Thompson; Mountain Dulcimer: Joe Collins; Old Time Banjo: Evie Ladin; Songwriting: Steve Spurgin; Celtic Harp: Máire Ní Chathasaigh

Bluegrass Week - June 17-23: Flatpicking: John Carlini, Beppe Gambetta, Adam Granger, Andy Hatfield, Jeff Jenkins, Chris Jones, Wayne Taylor; Mandolin: Bruce Graybill, Emory Lester, John Moore, Don Rigsy, Roland White, Radim Zenkl; Bluegrass Banjo: Gary Davis, Murphy Henry, Alan Munde, Jeff Scroggins; Dobro™: Ivan Rosenberg, Mike Witcher; Bass: Rusty Holloway, Missy Raines; Bluegrass Fiddle: Dennis Caplinger, Bobby Hicks; Singing Class: Sally Jones; Kid’s Kamp: Marcy Marxer; Jam Instructors Both Weeks: Keith Yoder, Tony Anthonisen; 101 Instructor: Cindy Gray

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In the following pages you’ll find information about old-time music and dance festivals, contests, workshops, and camps, as well as events in closely related traditions. Before planning a trip, be sure to visit the event’s website or contact its organizers to verify that the information here remains correct—and to find out about admission cost, registration rules, handicapped accessibility, appropriateness for children and pets, and lodging or camping information. Workshops and camps usually charge tuition, and have limited enrollment, so plan well in advance. Enjoy festival season!

Photos by Alan Teichman: “Flags of Clifftop, 2011.”

ALABAMA

March 17 (Dothan)

August 17 - 19 (Mentone)

September 17 - 20 (Nauvoo)

October 5 - 6 (Athens)

November 1 – 5 (Nauvoo)

ALASKA

April 9 - 15 (Juneau)

ARIZONA

September 14 - 16 (Flagstaff)

ARKANSAS

April 20 - 21 (Mountain View)

April 26 - 28 (Mountain View)

CALIFORNIA

May 20 (Agoura Hills)

June 15 - 17 (Santa Ynez)

August 24 - September 1 (Boulder Creek)
Alisdair Fraser’s Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling School, Camp Campbell. Workshops, jamming. Info: www.valleymoon.org, (415) 566-4355.

September 12 - 16 (Berkeley)

October 14 (Santa Barbara)
COLORADO


DELAWARE


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA


FLORIDA


April 6 - 7 (Dade City) Florida Old Time Music Championship, Sertoma Youth Ranch. Workshops, concerts, performances, competition, jamming. Info: www.fotmc.org, (813) 758-6591.

May 4 - 6 (St. Augustine) Gamble Rogers Folk Festival. Concerts, performances, jamming, camping. Info: www.gamblerogersfest.com.


GEORGIA


October 12 - 14 (Savannah)

IDAHO

June 18 - 23 (Weiser)

July 28 - August 4 (Rexburg)

INDIANA

May 31 - June 2 (Bean Blossom)

June 22 - 24 (Battle Ground)

IOWA

August 27 - September 2 (LeMars)

KANSAS

September 12 - 16 (Winfield)

KENTUCKY

June 10 - 16 (Hindman)
July 20 - 21 (Natchitoches)

October 12 - 14 (Lafayette)

October 26 - 27 (Lafayette)

MAINE
July 26 - 29 (Cornish)

August 24 - 26 (Bangor)

MARYLAND
June 2 - 3 (Glen Echo)

July 7 - 8 (Westminster)

September 9 (Takoma Park)

MASSACHUSETTS
April 13 - 15 (Charlestown)

April 13 - 15 (Charlestown)

April 20 - 22 (Mansfield)

May 18 - 20 (Charlestown)

July 13 - 15 (Greenfield)

July 27 - 29 (Lowell)

July 28 - Aug. 4 (Plymouth)

September 7 - 9 (Charlestown)

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September 17 (Greenfield)
John Putnam Fiddlers Reunion,

MICHIGAN

June 8 - 10 (Olivet)
Midwest Banjo Camp, Olivet College.

July 20 - 22 (Marquette)

MINNESOTA

March 2 - 4 (Minneapolis)
Winter Bluegrass Weekend: A Festival of Bluegrass and Old-Time Music & Dance, Radisson Hotel and Conference Center. Workshops, concerts, dance, children’s events, jamming. Info: www.minnesotaoldtime.org. (800) 635-3037,

March 9 - 11 (Detroit Lakes)

May 17 - 20 (Lanesboro)

June 1 - 3 (Richmond)

August 9 - 12 (Richmond)

MISSOURI

April 13 - 14 (Boonville)
June 15 - 16 (West Plains)

NEBRASKA

October 5 - 7 (Fremont)
Olde Time Rural Music Gathering, Christensen Field House. Workshops, concerts, jamming, dance, competition, children’s events, open stage. Info: www.orgsites.com/ia/oldtimemusic.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

July 1 - 8 (Littleton)

September 29 - 30 (Portsmouth)

NEW JERSEY

August 31 - Sept 2 (Woodstown)

NEW MEXICO

May 25 - 28 (Socorro)

June 1 - 2 (Albuquerque)

NEW YORK

May 27 - 29 (Altamont)
Black Creek Fiddlers Reunion, Altamont Fairgrounds. Workshops, jamming. Info: www.oldsongs.org, (518) 765-2815.
June 22 - 24 (Altamont)
Old Songs Festival, Altamont Fairgrounds. Workshops, concerts, dance, children’s events, jamming, open stage. Info: www.oldsongs.org, (518) 765-2815.

June 24 - June 30 (Olivebridge)
Ashokan Fiddle and Dance Western and Swing Week, the Ashokan Center. Workshops, concerts, dance, jamming, open stage. Info: www.ashokan.org, (845) 246-2121.

July 6 - 8 (Sherman)

July 19 - 22 (Oak Hill)

July 19 - 22 (Trumansburg)

Old-Time Week, July 22-28
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ALSO:
• Traditional Song Week, July 8-14
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www.mhc.edu/oldtimemusic
July 15 - 21 (Olivebridge) Ashokan Fiddle and Dance Northern Week, the Ashokan Center. Workshops, dance, concerts, jamming. Info: www.ashokan.org, (845) 246-2121.

August 12 - 18 (Olivebridge) Ashokan Fiddle and Dance Southern Week, the Ashokan Center. Workshops, dance, concerts, jamming, open stage. Info: www.ashokan.org, (845) 246-2121.

NORTH CAROLINA

March 10 (Robbins) High Falls Old-Time Fiddlers' Convention, North Moore High School Auditorium. Contest, jamming. Info: (910) 464-3600.


June 3 - 9 (Mars Hill) Blue Ridge Old-Time Music Week, Mars Hill College. Workshops, jamming. Info: www.mhc.edu/oldtimemusic, (828) 689-1646.

June 4 - 9 (Black Mountain) Dulcimerville Workshops, concerts, jamming, open stage. Info: www.dulcimerville.com.


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August 31 - September 3 (Hamlin)

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Lyons Fiddle Festival, Lyons Commu-

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TENNESSEE

March 16 - 17 (Clarksville)

March 23 (Chattanooga)
Great Southern Old Time Fiddlers Convention, Lindsay Street Hall, Concerts, dance, competition, jamming. Info: www.tinyurl.com/23te5ga.

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July 23 - 27 (Big Stone Gap)

July 26 - 29 (Floyd)
Floyd Fest, Blue Cow Arts Pavilion. Concerts, dance, children's events. Info: www.floydfest.com, (888) VA-FESTS.

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August 10 - 19 (Thornhaugh, Peterborough)

September 7 - 9 (Hastings, East Sussex)
Sweet Sunny South, Fairlight Lodge Hotel. Info: www.sweetsunnysouth.co.uk.

FINLAND

June 25 - July 1 (Haapavesi)

GERMANY

May 4 -6 (Freising)

THE OLD-TIME HERALD WWW.OLDTIMEHERALD.ORG VOLUME 13, NUMBER 2 21
In 2007, an unexpected series of events led me to Gambia where, amongst the Jola people and under the care of musician and scholar Daniel Laemouahuma Jatta, I would learn to play the akonting, a banjo-like instrument from that region. (Although he is known to many Westerners as Daniel, I’ve learned that Jatta actually prefers his birth-name, Laemouahuma.) Laemouahuma arranged my lodging and transportation in the Gambia, and introduced me to his cousins Remi Diatta and Ekona Diatta, master Jola musicians. Laemouahuma was always kind and eager to share as we visited different sites in Banjul (the capitol), the busy urban area of Serekunda, and Laemouahuma’s hometown of Mandinari. I quickly fell under the spell of the akonting and the Jola culture. In fact, I returned the following year for another dose, again under Laemouahuma’s stewardship. During my visits, I was able to introduce Laemouahuma to the field of Arts in Medicine, an interest of mine as a physician and banjoist. We visited the Royal Victorian Teaching Hospital, and played music, which opened the doorway to conversation with the patients.

It has been a little over a decade since Laemouahuma and Swedish banjo scholar Ulf Jägfors presented their groundbreaking work on the origins of the banjo to the Annual Banjo Collectors Gathering in the United States. I believe their work was a catalyst to a renewed interest in the banjo, and a deeper understanding of its African roots. The influence of this work can be seen and heard today in the music of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, Béla Fleck’s *Throw Down Your Heart*, and PBS’s *Bring Me the Banjo*, among many other instances.

In 2010, Laemouahuma sent me an email describing his work with people with developmental disabilities in Sweden, where he currently lives. He was visiting residential centers and using African music and song to engage with them, and inspire them to sing and dance. I am the Chair of the Advisory Board for the Center for Arts in Healthcare, Research and Education at the University of Florida, and we invited Laemouahuma to enroll in our two-week summer intensive course. He did, and in 2012, I was able to host Laemouahuma in Gainesville. Thus it was my pleasure to conduct this interview with my friend.

[Note: The interview has been edited for continuity and length. The original transcript can be seen at the author’s website, www.banjourneys.com.—ed.]
Laemouahun Jatta playing the akonting under a mango tree outside of his childhood home in Mandinari, the Gambia, 2008.

Chuck Levy
I started by asking Laemouahuma about his upbringing.

[I grew up] in Mandinari, in the western part of Gambia, West Africa. [I have] four brothers and one sister. It was not a big village at that time. Maybe 1,000 or less. Jolas, Manjagos, were on one side, and Mandikas were on the other side . . . The reason why there were two groups is because we raise pigs and we drink, and they don’t do that [because they are Muslim].

**What is the name you were given at birth?**
Laemouahuma Jatta.

**What does Laemouahuma mean?**
Laemouahuma means the middle child in the family, and a strong child.

**What is your earliest memory of the akonting?**
I think I got to know the akonting when I was between 3 and 5. [I heard it first] from my father. My father is an akonting player, a farmer, a fisherman, an herbal medicine man. He was a rice grower, animal farmer. He does almost everything.

**Was he different than anyone else in the village? Or was his life the life of a typical Jola man in Mandinari?**
Well, it was not every man who was an akonting player. But most of the things he was doing [were] typically traditional [things] that almost every Jola can do, like farming rice, raising animals, healing people with herbal medicine. These are some of the basic traditional knowledge that most Jolas will teach to their children, but then it depends on people who can use it to [a] higher level. Some can use it to only a basic level, some can use it on a higher level. He was somebody who could use a lot of herbs to heal us or to cure us.

**When would he play? Would he play everyday?**
He plays when he feels [like] playing. There was no really regular time, or, say, fixed time. But mostly [in] the evenings when we finished work and we [were relaxing] at home. He would play especially for the children of the village.

**In your half of the village, how many other men were playing the akonting?**
In my young days there were many, because we normally have people from...
Cassamance coming to tap palm wine in the Gambia, and the akonting was really [part of their] culture. It was very common.

In the life of a Gambian rice farmer, are there seasons where you are very busy, and seasons where you are not so busy? When is it busy?

[In April] they start really fertilizing the land. Like my mother used to take the cow dung or the chicken [droppings] and all this to the farm to spread them before the rain starts. So the activity actually starts around April to May when they start fertilizing the land, and then between June and July is the making of what you call the fore-seedlings, that you grow to be able to transplant them to the main rice fields [in time for the] really heavy rain that is in August to September. So between June and July is growing the seedlings upland where it is not very muddy. And then July, the end of July, or the beginning of August, they start transplanting when the rains start coming heavy. They make the beds so that they can contain water, making sort of sandbars to [prevent] the water from going away from these beds. August and September are the busiest rainy days.

Some Jolas don’t come home [after the day’s work]. After the rice work, after working for the day, they tap palm wine in the evening. This is the time they climb the palm wine trees and tap them, and then stay around with certain friends or relatives, and drink and play the akonting there instead of coming home.

What is the first song you remember?

The first song which my father taught me, and which I think he said was the origin of the whole process of the akonting, is the “Alinom.”

And “Alinom” means—?

“My younger sister.” Or, “My sister who goes around looking for a job in the urban area, and I wish her not to have certain possibilities to stay there because of love or something.” So they sing for their girlfriends not to stay there, [and that] they should only go and work, and when it is time to come back home during the summer, they come back.
Does “younger sister” mean your sister, or any young woman in the village?

It could mean any one.

Were you interested in playing the akonting when you were young?

Well, we played with it, but I was not very much into playing it professionally as I am now.

A lot of kids when they grow up, the things their parents do seem old-fashioned, and aren’t the things that kids necessarily want to learn. Was that the case with the akonting?

Yeah, in fact, when we were growing up we never thought the akonting was really an instrument of value, economic value. We were just seeing it as [being used to] entertain, as my father was doing, [and I didn’t] see anybody in my family who really wanted to take it [up] as my father did.

Did you ever see women playing the akonting when you were growing up?

No, I have not. I have not. But with the Ekona [people] I have seen some girls trying to play; but they just like to play with it, but not to [study it].

How did you get the name Daniel?

I was baptized in my church school.

How did you end up going to school?

The missionaries were going around to convince our parents to send us to school, and also to look for members. Well, when the missionaries came and started explaining the benefits of knowing how to read and write, [my parents] didn’t object. They thought it was a good idea. But what they have always kept on telling us was we must also learn the tradition. We must know how to survive in the Jola way, despite the fact that we were going to school. And this they continued doing with us, until we finished school.

[After attending Catholic grade school, Jatta took an entrance exam that qualified him for further schooling at a Catholic high school. Following graduation, he enrolled in Friendship College, in Rock Hill, South Carolina.]

Tell me about the first time you heard the banjo.

[It was in 1974], when we sat in our student lobby on our campus [at...
Chuck Levy

l-r, Ekona Diatta, Lamehauuma Jatta, Remi Diatta, and Therese Senghor (Correa) in Lamin, the Gambia, 2008.
Friendship College] to watch American football. This music, beautiful music, came up [on TV]. I started getting curious to know about the instrument, and luckily I [thought] that it was an African instrument—I was surprised because it sounds like my father’s instrument. The sound was really unique, compared to guitar or any other instrument. I asked the nearest friend to me, who was an African American, and he started explaining that this was an African slave instrument which was played by many generations of blacks before it became what it is now. He told me it [used to be] made of gourd, which is calabash. And then that really made me interested to know what it looks like, and how it was played, and how it was constructed. And eventually I started to connect, because watching my father when I was small, I knew he was using two fingers to play the akonting. And the way he was using his fingers [was like the descriptions of banjo playing].

In the beginning it was just like a hobby, to know more about how it was. And eventually I started getting more and more interested as I got more and more information.

Was there a moment when you [first realized that the akonting was connected to the banjo]? Was it from the very beginning?

From the very beginning I knew I saw something like this, but I had no good evidence to back my observations. But I was never confused with the facts I was getting, because they were so clear to me all the time; especially when I started looking at the old pictures, when I started looking at the old descriptions of how it was made, of how it was played. Most scholars, when I read their research, they always generalize things. [Because I knew the African instruments scholars referred to, instruments in the ngoni/xalam family] I knew that most of [what they wrote] did not fit with most of the instruments. They did not have much empirical evidence. Maybe those instruments were more recognized in those days because those were the only instruments they had. But I never had any doubt, as I started working with my father and started seeing the similarities I was looking for [between the akonting and the banjo].
Three akontings built by Ekonia Diatta and his nephew Remi Diatta, and a "Banjonting" designed by Chuck Levy and John Catches, and built by John Catches. The banjonting (second from the left) maintains the string relationships and tunings from the akonting, but has a flat fingerboard and tuning pegs like those found on banjos and European stringed instruments.
Jatta lived in the United States for about ten years. In 1983 he moved to Sweden, having received a scholarship to attend Stockholm University. He stayed on in Sweden after graduating, and got a job. During his vacations, Jatta would return to the Gambia.

What did your father think when you came back and all of a sudden were very interested in the akonting?
He was happy that at least [he] has somebody in the family who wants to take over.

Was he a good teacher?
Yeah, he was. He would never like me to play like him, [but] he would show me how to play, and tell me to play [in my own style].

Were there other instruments like the akonting that you discovered?
Yeah, buchundo. I was the first person to show it to the world.

The buchundo is an instrument of which people?
The Manjagos.

What’s the relationship between the Manjagos and the Jola?
I don’t have much research on that, but what I know is that we have very [many] similarities—in language, words, rituals, in traditional things, and more importantly, we have almost the same identical instrument.

Both the akonting and the buchundo are gourd instruments, they both have floating bridges, they both have a neck of papyrus that goes all the way through the instrument. What’s different about them?
The playing style. [Manjago musicians] use thumb and brush, or they only use the thumb. But the Jolas don’t play like that.

Do they tune the instruments the same?
No.

In the little that I have seen of the buchundo, it looks like they are doing some up-picking. Is that right?
Sang Gomez—whom I studied most with Ulf [Jägfors], [and] who was the highest bunchundo player we could find in the Gambia—mostly he [played with] the thumb. Because [that was] his playing style. But it varies from person to person. So I don’t know. I have not studied most of the Manjagos. But he [played with] only the thumb.

Do you have any idea as to why [scholars may previously have been unfamiliar with the akonting]?
I don’t know, really, but [according] to my theories, most of the scholars in those days, when they [would] go to Africa—the griots are their archive, so most of them interviewed the griots.

So they came looking for the banjo, and [West Africans they met may have] said, “The people who know about music are the griots,” and then the griots would talk to them about the music that they [the griots] knew?
That is my assumption, because none of them have ever reached the Manjagos or the Jolas.

[In September of 2000, Jatta shared his research on the akonting at a conference in Sweden. This led to his collaboration with Swedish banjo scholar Ulf Jägfors, who had traveled around the world researching the roots of the banjo. In November of that year, Jägfors invited Jatta to go with him to the Annual Banjo Collectors Gathering in Boston, where they both presented their research.]

When you looked out [at the audience during the presentations], what did you see?
There was only one African American. The rest were [white] Americans. Well, for me, it was a big surprise, because I was thinking that I would meet a lot of African Americans—because this culture belongs to them. I don’t know why I didn’t find [African American banjo scholars], but I would have been very pleased to see them, and to also find out from them their perspective of these things.

So you go out and present the akonting.
Yeah, I presented it for almost one and a half hours, both theoretically and practically.

And what was your reception?
Well, [the audience] asked some questions, but none of them could refute my facts because they were very clear and very vivid. But they were questioning a lot about my [knowledge] of the instrument, and also how did I come out with such an instrument, that has never been detected by any scholar?

I happened to go with Ulf [to Gambia] in July of 2001, and that was when the whole truth came out. First we spent a week in the Gambia, then we went to Cassamance for three days and Guinea Bissau for two days. And these are the only areas that have this instrument. There is no other place in Africa that has it. But anywhere we went, you could see the same facts [that I had presented], the same explanation, the same playing style, the same construction. There was no difference from Gambia to Senegal to Guinea-Bissau.

Yeah, some people were using all-academic arguments to say that this was not possible. But for me, I had no doubt that what I said was never a fabrication . . . I knew in time they will change, or they will come to understand. [And] that was what happened.

[Over the coming decade, Jatta and Jägfors continued their research in West Africa, and shared their work in the United States, including at the Black Banjo Gathering at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Jatta believes that the akonting “is one of the fathers of the banjo.” His position is that the akonting has many similarities with the banjo, that the people who play the akonting were from an area from which slaves were taken to the New World, and that the “oo’teck” downstroke style of playing the akonting is related to stroke-style and clawhammer banjo technique. Jatta has also pointed out in our conversations that the akonting, like the banjo, is a people’s instrument, that its use is not restricted to the griot caste.]

What has been rewarding about doing this work?
The akonting has given [the banjo community] another opening to understand the Jolas, and to understand more about some of these instruments, and the cultural context of these instruments. Before I came to the picture, many people didn’t know that we have what you call folk instruments and non-folk instruments in that region. [Some believed that] every lute [stringed instrument] is a folk instrument. But this is not true [from] the African perspective. Most of these instruments are not folk instruments. They have certain roles in our society—and I am not saying this to minimize their importance, because all of them are important—but they
have different roles. So I think what is rewarding with the akonting is people have now started to know that we have different instruments, even though they are within the same environment.

You've gotten a chance to listen to [American] banjo and fiddle music a fair amount. Do you like it?

Yeah. [Smiles] It’s interesting.

You’ve had a chance to personally introduce at least a handful of Americans to the akonting in Gambia. You’ve hosted Paul Sedgewick, Greg Adams, myself, Ulf from Sweden, Nick Bamber, Rhianne Giddens, and Ben Nelson. What’s been the reaction of the people you have introduced to the akonting?

The people I know who came to Gambia to work with this thing, some were so fascinated that they came twice. My biggest surprise is [that] . . . all the people I have seen in the Gambia [studying the akonting] are still highly interested in the akonting, and going around to talk about the akonting. So this to me is a big achievement, because I never thought it would generate that kind of interest, you know, for people to continue working with it . . . I’ve seen all these people doing different things with the akonting. Ulf travels now all over Europe with the akonting knowledge—and the banjo, the other instruments, but he speaks mostly of the akonting.

What about people like [banjo researchers] Paul and Therese Correa? What role do they play?

I cannot thank them [enough], because definitely they were the first people to help me to lay the foundation in the Gambia. And they are the people to help me, if I am not there to receive people, to help them understand what I was doing and am doing. I am very much grateful to their sacrifice.

Therese tracked down some of the Jola sources you have been able to feature. Did she find Remi and Ekona [Diatta]?

Yeah. She knows the Cassamance better than me, better than all of us, because she was more frequent[ly] there than us. I also appreciate the way I see you work with the akonting. It is marvelous, because now it’s showing me that this instrument, if it dies in Africa, it will be alive in the States.

One of the observations that I had when I was in Mlomp, with you and Greg, and Remi and Ekona, and everybody, was it seemed that the majority of Jola people didn’t think that the akonting had much value. In the United States there was a time when fiddling and banjo playing were widespread, and then things changed, and many people put down the tradition until a new generation picked it up. It seemed to me that the people of the village were glad we were there, but few people were playing the akonting regularly, and most people were concerned with farming and day-to-day activities.

Yeah, the new generation today in the whole of Africa, since our instrument did not create any economic [gain for] most of the people
who play, they don’t see any value in [playing the akonting]. Because life is not like before, when things were easy. You need money to send your child to school, you need money to take care of yourself, so many people don’t really want to identify with this instrument because there is no economic benefit in them. But they need somebody to help them raise this instrument to an other level, and I believe with the success of the research on the akonting, if we are successful [in creating] a market [for] buying and selling these instruments, to create a market to attract people to come and learn this instrument, it will start changing the mentality of the people. But at the moment, they have not seen any benefit much in it, and they are not really convinced that they can [make a living] with such an instrument. Times have changed [and] one has to understand the world today, that to work with an instrument that does not give you much money, it is not easy to respect as before. Because the new generation now, they go to school and they think different.

In your father’s generation, I am guessing, if you wanted music you made it yourself.
Yeah, yeah. That is also another thing. In my father’s time the influence of foreign music was not strong like today. Today, the influence of foreign music is all over Africa even in the remote places.

What’s next for you? What would you like to see happen in the next five years or the next ten years?
My goal is to set [up] a center in the Gambia, which can be the gateway for everyone who wants to understand these folk cultures that are the foundation of our music, culture, and history—to understand it and be able to use it as it was used before, to develop our societies in all forms. Because the instruments and the cultures that were able to create all the thinking we have today [represent] a kind of a creative knowledge . . . that we must look into again, to be able to [regain] the creativity that was there before. Unless we do that, with an institution that is prepared to involve these people who still have the knowledge, we [will] not be able to go beyond what we have.

[The official opening of the Akonting Center is scheduled for November 22-25, 2012. The Center’s mission is to host and encourage research, documentation, and preservation of Senegambian folk music and cultural heritage.]

Are you surprised that you are kind of the major ambassador of the Jola people to the world through the akonting?
I think I should give credit to the people who showed me these instruments, like my cousins Ekona, Remi, and the rest, plus my father. I am just their facilitator for the world to understand. Without them, I would not have been able to be where I am today, and I think the credit should be to all of us.
TALES FROM THE ‘WOODS, PART 2: SCHOTTISCHE
By Walt Koken

Our visit to Ward came to an end, and we toodled on down the mountain, past the city of Boulder and east across the plains. Mac’s panel truck’s top speed of about 55 miles per hour was slightly enhanced by the downhill nature of the direction we were headed. Our pledge to each other to stop smoking cigarettes on the trip had led us, in our nicotine withdrawal, to try not only cigars, but also Red Man chewing tobacco as alternatives. Consequently, the passenger side of the truck was becoming slick with dried sugary tobacco juice, expectorated at highway speed, a fact which didn’t go unnoticed by folks we came in contact with. It would be another 20 years or so before some of us could break out from the grip of the tobacco industry.

After a drop in altitude for the day’s journey of about 7,000 feet, we found a state park in central Kansas where we could camp for the night. The campground was on a recently man-made lake, devoid of trees, and set up for vacationers with power boats. My father, an avid sailor with an inherent dislike for motorboat wakes and the accompanying smell of two-cycle gasoline floating on the water, called them “putt-putts.” The only other campers were a father-and-son pair, much too close to us, and we had to listen to Daddy expounding loudly to his unfortunate young offspring on all sorts of much-too-serious issues within the solitude of their tent. We made the best of it. Mac cooked up a stir-fry, we had a few tunes, and then hit the old sack.

The next hop was a short one, taking us to Gardner, Kansas, which in 1971 was a rural town about a half-hour from Kansas City. The attraction there was newlyweds Hank and Sandy Bradley. Musical friends of ours from California, they had had us play at their wedding a few months earlier. They had recently taken up residence in Gardner, where Hank was the new city engineer. Their nice house was in a quiet spot outside of town, and Sandy had a garden, which provided us with epicurean delights during our brief visit there. Hank, as a fiddler of note, and Sandy, a guitar and piano player in her own right, had discovered the meetings of the local branch of the Kansas state fiddlers’ association, and their monthly gathering was the very next afternoon. Of course, we were very intrigued, and we immediately adjusted our itinerary to include attending it.

The next day we all squeezed into Hank’s VW station wagon and headed out to the event. It was in a Grange hall situated on one of those Kansas square miles of dusty roads amidst corn and wheat, and we anticipated hearing some great fiddling. It wasn’t clear whether it was the Grange or the fiddlers’ association, but the wives had made refreshments, and it was quite a social scene with lots of folks wearing their Sunday best. However, it was all a bit disappointing for us, and the whole affair came off as somewhat stiff. There was only one band, which played in a bluegrass style, and they backed up the few fiddlers who were there, most of whom enjoyed playing waltzes in a very slow manner, and the reels that were played seemed a bit far-fetched to be called old-time music. There was an emcee who signed people up to play on stage, so it was a regular indoor show, with no jamming. The 50 or so folks who were in attendance were mostly older retirees, and it seemed that many of them were taking relief from their nursing homes. Every piece that was played was followed a few seconds after its start by a very polite round of applause from the audience, as was each break the band members took. The highlight for us was a pair of older jokers, apparently let loose from some sort of asylum, who had a comedy routine which seemed to be a regular part of these meetings. They were no Laurel and Hardy, but they had some great lines like, “He’s so crooked he has to screw his socks on!” We were the only ones there who appreciated the humor. No one else laughed. I think the clincher for us was when we asked if we could play a couple tunes on stage and they refused because we didn’t have the right costumes. Oh well.

There were coffee and doughnuts and pies after the show, and it was actually a very nice atmosphere. Hank and Sandy introduced us to several people there and they remarked it was too bad they didn’t get to hear us play. As we were lingering outside afterwards, some folks started ribbing a younger man who had just arrived to pick up his wife. He’d obviously just gotten off his tractor. His blue overalls were a bit soiled around the turned-up cuffs, his boots were dusty and his hands were dirty. Somebody hollered, “Hey Junior, how about a schottische?” Junior was a big fellow, about 6’ 6”, and after several other onlookers also prompted him, he grinned shyly and told them he would if he could find his wife. After much ado somebody escorted her out of
the hall. She was not much over five feet tall, wearing a flowery print dress, and together they made an imposing picture, one I’ll never forget. One of the hecklers took his fiddle out of its case. The young couple held hands in a promenade-like stance facing the impromptu audience, and when the fiddler started his easy-paced tune, they counted off the first four beats and then they leaned . . . and step, step, step, kick, and they leaned back . . . beautifully in tandem in the dusty gravel of the parking lot of the Grange hall in the middle of Kansas farmland. Then pivoting and leaning the other way, still holding hands, they danced around gently and lightly to the delight of all who watched—a lovely sight to behold, the big lug and his dainty mate, leaning so gracefully, stepping, turning, and swaying back and forth together.

Later, after we had gotten back to Hank and Sandy’s house, we had a fiddlers’ convention of our own, the five of us resurrecting the tunes and songs that we loved, and Hank playing us his recent fiddle compositions. He and Sandy had to work in the morning, so they retired early, and Mac was not far behind them. Bob and I stepped out into the yard so as not to disturb folks, only to find a beautifully clear starry night sky with a full moon. Accompanied by our locally acquired brown jug of Platte Valley corn whiskey, we spent the next couple hours playing “Nancy Rollin,” like a couple of coyotes serenading the moon.

Our brief but memorable stay in Gardner was coming to an end. We would not see Hank and Sandy again for a couple of years, until they came east for Galax. By that time the band had expanded to include Jenny and Doug, and all the Highwoods members were living in Spencer/Van Etten and Alpine, New York. This trip with Mac and Bob, however, had many more musical adventures to come, including hooking up with Jenny and Doug. The three of us were anticipating the Southwest Virginia fiddlers’ convention in Marion, where Mac had seen Tommy Jarrell playing two years before. No telling who we might see there.
Classifieds

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Reviews

Anchored in Love:
Music of the Home Craft Days, 2001-2005


Home Craft Days has been an annual event at Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, since 1972. Over the years, musical highlights from the festivals have been recorded. This two-CD set, the fifth in the series, covers the years 2001 to 2005, and was originally released in 2006.

In compiling this retrospective, producers Sue Ella Boatwright-Wells and Tom Bledsoe have succeeded in covering the variety of music to be found at the festival. Among the 47 tracks are old-time fiddle tunes, ballads, gospel numbers, bluegrass, folk, country, singer-songwriter compositions, and one story. They’ve not been shy about including “L’Anceaux Pailles,” sung in Cajun French by Christine Balfa and Dirk Powell, complete with triangle and accordion, or about including a catchy and entertaining bluegrass version of the ’70s pop hit “I Can See Clearly Now.” They’ve also included contemporary songs by Ron Short (“Down at the Carter Fold”) and Ed Snodderly (the Dylan-like “Basket of Singing Birds”), and a cover of Merle Haggard’s “The Farmer’s Daughter,” on which 16-year-old Christopher Malpass performs a surprising vocal impression throughout.

At the forefront, however, stands the Carter Family, as might be expected in that area. No fewer than seven of the tracks are associated with the Carters, and five feature Janette Carter or her son Dale Jett, or both, backed by Oscar Harris on mandolin and Steve Davidson on bass. After opening the recording with an almost obligatory turn through “Wildwood Flower,” Janette and Dale offer their version of A.P. Carter’s last composition, a lovely gospel number called “Live On Down the Line,” the chorus of which concludes “… where the Sabbath never ends.” Later, they perform A.P.’s “On the Sea of Galilee” and “Anchored in Love,” both well done, and Dale turns in a world-weary cover of Fred Eaglesmith’s tale of losing the farm to debt, “Go Out and Plow.”

Disc one comes across as the better of the two. There are good tunes on Disc Two, including Hobart Crabtree’s lilting banjo and vocal rendition of the parlor-like “Picture On the Wall,” Joe Smiddy, Rich Kirby, Doug Dorschug, Tommy Bledsoe, and Nina Ketron’s rollicking “Wise County Jail,” and the bluegrass group Moccasin Gap’s aforementioned version of “I Can See Clearly Now.” The stronger material, though, is on Disc One. There, in addition to the all of the Carter tracks mentioned above, Carol Elizabeth Jones, backed by Rayna Gellert, John Herrmann, and Joe Fallon, is powerful on the ballad “Railroad Boy” (“Butcher’s Boy” under a different name), and Bill McCall gives a dead-on reading of “Mississippi Moon,” capturing the relaxed flow that was the Jimmie Rodgers style, the use of banjo-mandolin adding an antique quality to the track. On “Deep Settled Peace,” written by the late Kate Peters Sturgill, singer George Reynolds wonderfully conveys the comfort that the title suggests, while on “Fair and Tender Ladies,” Ken Childress’ high and clear and rounded vocals, sung over his and Jimmy Mullins’ lightly bouncing guitar rhythm, revive what has become a well-worn standard.

Also on Disc One is the hidden gem “Kentucky Gambler,” performed by banjo historian George Gibson. “Kentucky Gambler” is a variant of “Roving Gambler,” but what is most attractive is the archaic rhythm found in the song’s structure. Just when you think the lyrics will run out of the rhythm or that the syllables will need to be stretched awkwardly to fit, there is a twist and it’s all brought back together. Gibson exploits this perfectly and in doing so garners (at least for me) highlight-status on what is a predominantly good set of recordings celebrating the Home Craft Days.

Bill Wagner

To order: (276) 523-7489; sboatright@me.vccs.edu

Various Artists
In the Field Behind the Stage:
Recordings from Galax Old Fiddlers Conventions 1967 & 2010

Old Blue OB CD 708


These 34 tunes, recorded in 1967 by Charlie Faurot and Rich Nevin, and in 2010 by Charlie with Matt and Will Faurot, this are a nice cross-section of music that one might hear at the convention. All string band music—comprised of the “big band” sound with fiddle, guitar(s), mandolin,
banjo(s), bass; some fiddle-banjo-guitar; and a few fiddle-banjo or fiddle-guitar duos—the recording includes standards as well as some more unusual tunes.

It’s all great music. Highlights for me were the New Ballard’s Branch Bogtrotters’ “Breaking Up Christmas,” and “Reuben” with Eddie Bond singing, Leake Caudle and Oscar Jenkins with their fiddle-banjo versions of “Leake Caudle’s Tune” and “Birdie,” John Ashby with Oscar Jenkins on “Sally in the Garden,” Southern Pride’s version of “Jimmy Sutton,” Oscar Jenkins on fiddle and Leake Caudle on guitar playing a neat “Girl of My Dreams,” and Kirk Sutphin’s “Belle of Lexington.” It was really nice to hear old Galax tunes like “Belle of Lexington,” and “Piney Woods Gal” (played by Betty Vornbrock) being resurrected and played well.

The Faurots have included a good cross-section of musicians, young and old. There is a lot of information on the CD cover panels, so you know who’s playing what. The Faurots are to be commended for choosing well and giving us a sampling of some of the best of the many sounds of the Galax Old Fiddlers Convention.

Alice Gerrard

To order: www.oldbluerecords.com; Old Blue Records, 4300 Elmstone Rd., Midlothian, VA 23113

**OB-708** 34 TRACKS - 16 FIDDLERS

John Ashby - Oscar Jenkins
Leake Caudle - T.J. Lundy
Billy Hurt, Jr - Eddie Bond
James Burris - Andy Edmonds
Adrian Shepherd-Powell - Jerry Correll
Corrina Logston - Kirk Sutphin
Buddy Pendleton - Bill Birchfield
Kilby Spencer - Betty Vornbrock

**OB-707** - 18 tracks of the powerful “Galax Sound” bluegrass, recorded between 1962 and 1971, when Ted had surrounded himself with equally great musicians: fiddlers Sonny Miller, Jerry Lundy and Joe Edd King and Fred Hannah, Bob Paisley and Wes Rineer.

The Supertones have augmented the low end of the audio frequency range by adding Hilary Dirlam’s plucked bass, carefully miked and tastefully played — grounding the rhythm without overwhelming it.

As with their earlier offerings, the Supertones present a lively, balanced program, with instrumentals and songs in about equal proportions. The instrumentals feature solid old-time music orchestration: ensemble playing, with the fiddle leading the way while the banjo mostly follows along, but also adds filigree to the main tune, deviating just enough to be interesting without being distracting. Guitar and bass fill in at the low end to produce a nicely balanced sound. The tunes are mostly unfamiliar to me, even the ones with familiar titles: “Green Corn” is not the Leadbelly tune, and “Polly Put the Kettle On” is not the same as the one the Skillet Lickers played. Nonetheless, they’ll all hold your attention. Walt even includes one of his own compositions, “Peace Train,” an interesting take on the old fiddle-imitates-train tradition. If you’re a fiddler, several of these tunes are worth learning, although of varying difficulty. I haven’t tried them
yet, but the beautiful “Alexander Waltz” sounds fairly easy, while “Rymer’s Favorite” (from Allen Sisson) has a lot of notes. But, fiddlers, take heart. Last year, Mudthumper published the magisterial Milliner-Koken Collection of American Fiddle Tunes, collected and transcribed by Clare and Walt — an astounding feat, the fruit of years of hard work, and an excellent reason for an ear musician (like me) to brush up on note-reading. Sheet music for the fiddle parts to the instrumentals on this CD (with the exception of “Peace Train”) are in the book, along with about 1,400 other tunes. Learn even a few of them, and you’ll get some idea of the depth of the Supertones’ knowledge of old-time music. And other fiddlers will be envious.

A strong selection of songs make up the other half of the album. Most of them feature Pete singing lead and Kellie adding harmony. Some favorites are Charlie Poole’s “Beale Street Blues,” and “Alabama Jubilee” and “Whistling Rufus” from the Skillet Lickers (the latter with revised words, fortunately). Their interesting “Liza Jane” is not like the two versions I’ve heard before, but instead uses a verse from Fiddling Powders’ “Did You Ever See the Devil, Uncle Joe” plus other floating verses. Walt and Clare sing the Carter Family’s “Single Girl, Married Girl” and Vernon Dalhart’s “Wreck of the Old 97” (although the Supertones, unlike Dalhart, got Henry Whitter’s words right).

Congratulations to the Supertones for including notes with sources, as well as for producing a high-quality album. LYLE LOPFREN
To Order: www.mudthumper.com; Mudthumper Music, Box 791, Kennett Square, PA 19348

Nadine Landry and Sammy Lind
Grandad’s Favorite

DVD GW834

Nadine Landry: guitar, vocals; Stephen “Sammy” Lind: fiddle, banjo, vocals.

Down in the River I Go / Parlez-nous a Boire / Must You Throw Dirt in My Face / Tippy Toeing / Brown’s Dream / I’m Beginning to Remember / Les Oiseaux Vont Chanter / Trouble in Mind - Sweet Marie / A Fool Such As I / 16 Days ‘til Georgia / He’ll Hold to My Hand / Turn the Cards Slowly / Une Ange pour Toute de la Louisiane / Grandad’s Favorite

Nadine Landry and Sammy Lind are members of the Foghorn Trio and other incarnations of the Foghorn folks. This is their first duet CD, and with the very first two songs on the CD it is set apart, and defines itself not only as a superb instrumental effort, but as a great vocal one as well. Starting with Craig Johnson’s beautiful version of “Down in the River I Go,” sung in an easy-going, contemplative style by Sammy, and then with Nadine’s powerful hard-edged voice on the Balfa Frères’ classic “Parlez-nous a Boire,” the CD firmly establishes itself as a singers’ album.

Nadine and Sammy cover a lot of musical territory, from Cajun to early country to traditional old-time: the Harden Trio’s wonderful “Tippy Toeing,” Bill Anderson’s “Must You Throw Dirt in My Face,” the Birchfields’ “Brown’s Dream,” Melvin Wine’s version of “16 Days ‘til Georgia”—it all works. With Nadine’s straightforward, solid guitar backup and Sammy’s fine fiddling and banjo playing, they manage to find accompaniment to the variety of songs that makes sense and gives them all a timeless quality.
Nadine holds down much of the solo singing, and definitely joins the ranks of powerful, flat-out, nail-you-to-the-wall women singers. When the two sing together they have that particular strong blend that a softer, lower-range voice (Sammy’s) often gets when paired with a laser-like, higher-range voice (Nadine’s). There’s nothing contrived or unnecessary about their singing and playing—just real good stuff. Nicely recorded by Joel Savoy in Eunice, Louisiana, it feels very natural with a minimum of recording hoopla—very relaxed and at-home.

Singers and players both will appreciate and enjoy this CD. I myself love it.

ALICE GERRARD

To order: www.cdbaby.com/cd/landrylind

The Swamp Nots

Dippermouth Blues / My Darling Nellie Gray / High Society / Yes, Pappy, Yes / Sleepwalk / Paper or Plastic / Elul - Hunn Panni Nachella / Little Stream of Whiskey / Panama / Left All Alone Again Blues / Cumberland Blues / Hangman’s Reel / An Old Watermill By a Waterfall / Russian Waltz

Little biographical information could be gathered from the liner notes to this CD from the Swamp Nots, but a search of the good old Internet proved helpful. There I found a recent interview/review by a writer named D. Calhoun, which did give a glimpse into their past. It mentioned their late ‘70s origin as an old-time string band called the Swamp Cats, a migration from New York to their current base of Greensboro, North Carolina, and a gradual amalgamation of ragtime, traditional jazz, swing, klezmer music, and the hokum blues into their sound. The band’s principal members and instruments are Gary Silverstein on mandolin, Charles Silverstein on guitar, Benny Moore on bass and lead vocals, and Doc Fribush on clarinet, Hawaiian steel, and harmonica. Eight guests and many more instruments contribute to the recording.

Listening to these 14 tracks reveals that, at least for this project, the Swamp Nots have enthusiastically embraced the jazzier end of their interests. Four of the titles do have roots in the old-time genre, but, with the exception of “Hangman’s Reel,” they’re each given a jazz/swing setting, underpinned by the closed-chord guitar sound associated with Django Reinhardt or Teddy Bunn, or the cowboy rhythm of Karl Farr. The closest track to the old-time genre is the mandolin and harmonica duet on “Hangman’s Reel,” which does, as the notes state, have the feel of a fiddle tune blended with the old fox chase recordings of DeFord Bailey or Henry Whitter. “Little Stream of Whiskey” also has hints of old-time, but largely swings along and finds Gary on cornet, Doc on clarinet, and guest trombonist Dillard Moss wailing in Dixieland style near the end. Both of those take on new life in their new form, as does “Cumberland Blues” and “My Darlin’ Nellie Gray,” the latter of which guest Rich Hartness opens with a six-string banjo solo that lulls you into a sort of 1860s mood before giving way to some bluesy swing.

By contrast, their modification of the Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong tune “Yes, Pappy, Yes” works in reverse. On that one, they take a hokum-style tune in which “Pappy” asks the boys if they’ve finished a whole string of chores and the boys respond, and between each verse add in a chorus or so of fiddle tunes such as “Ragtime Annie” and “Soldier’s Joy.” Guest Kirk Sutphin handles the fiddle, Tom Mylet the banjo, and Scott Manring joins in on guitar, and in a way this hybrid version is reminiscent of the old skit records of the ‘20s.

Of the balance of the tracks the focus decidedly leans to jazz and beyond, highlighted and propelled throughout by the hot licks and clear melodic lines of mandolinist Dan Silverstein. “Dippermouth Blues,” “High Society” (with overtones of Klezmer), and “Panama” come direct from the Dixieland/Chicago jazz repertoires of the ‘20s. “Left All Alone Again Blues” is a Jerome Kern composition done in back-and-forth duet by Moore and Judy Bean, while “An Old Watermill By a Waterfall” is from Milton Brown’s Western swing band. “Elul / Hunn, O Panni Nachella” and “Russian Waltz” both have ties to the Jewish tradition, and are underpinned by the cello and bass of Scott and Landon Walker, respectively. They even manage a cover of Santo and Johnny’s pop hit “Sleepwalk,” a brilliant choice dominated not by the Hawaiian steel, as you might guess, but by Silverstein’s velvety mandolin tremolo.

Some may find all this swinging and giving a bit outside the norm for this magazine, and maybe it is. On the other hand, old-time musicians creating string band-style versions of jazz tunes goes way back, as does the mixing and matching of instruments. That willingness to cross lines is a large part of what made the early bands so attractive. Moreover, the Swamp Nots lay it out so well. With Doc’s clarinet drifting in and out; some slides and swoops here and there; Charles’ guitar hitting on four to the bar in tandem with the bass; Benny Moore giving you the wink and the nod with his vocal blend of Louis Armstrong and Tommy Thompson; and Silverstein spraying mandolin all around, it’s hard to resist. Recommended.

BILL WAGNER

To order: www.cdbaby.com/cd/swampnots

The Hot Seats

Betsy Likens / Plowboy Hop / Jack Wilson
- Sugar Hill / Evite Gabriel

The Hot Seats are a five-piece band from Richmond, Virginia: Josh Bearman, Jake Sellers, Graham DeZarn, Ed Brogan, and Ben Belcher. (The lack of liner notes prevents me from describing who plays what.) They play old-time music at a rather frantic clip, close to clogger speed, and achieve a sound clearly rooted in old-time music but distinctively their own.

As you would expect from a band that approaches old-time music in an eclectic manner, the five tunes played here are from five widely separated sources. “Betsy Likens” (or “Betty Likens”) is from Henry Reed, probably via Highwoods, who did it in a medley with “Kitchen Girl.” “Plowboy Hop” sounds the most like the source recording: the Grinnell Giggers’. (But the Grinnell Giggers didn’t use that wonderful banjo-mandolin!) Even after repeated
As I have said of other bands (like Jubal’s Kin, which takes a completely different approach), this is one of the ways in which old-time music could grow and change in the years ahead. These are good tunes, played by excellent musicians who are clearly having fun making music together. Four tunes just wasn’t enough—I want to hear a full-length CD (album?) from the Hot Seats!

Pete Peterson

To order: www.thehotseats.net

The Todalo Shakers

Tickled, Too

Suzy Thompson: fiddle, guitar, vocal; Eric Thompson: mandolin, resophonic guitar, banjo-guitar, vocal; Frannie Leopold: guitar, vocal; WB Reid: banjo-guitar, fiddle, vocal; Matt Weiner: bowed bass

Don’t Be No Fool - Salt Lake City Blues / My Baby’s Got Something / Podunk Toddle / Mama, Don’t Give All the Lard Away / Georgia Craw / 1931 Depression Blues / Baby, How Can It Be / My Walking Stick / It Is So Good / East Texas Drag / Memphis Blues / Banks of the Kaney / Sweet Lovin’ Old Soul / I’m Satisfied

There’s a West Coast phenomenon, which I think of as centered in Berkeley, of bands that form to produce specific types of traditional music for a short time, disappear for years, then reappear as if they’d never been gone. There should be a name for them: neither “ad hoc” nor “occasional” seems appropriate, given that they don’t disband. They just seem to go to sleep for a while. Part of the reason, I suppose, is that the band members tend to live in different cities. There’s one other unusual aspect to these bands: Eric and Suzy Thompson are in a lot of them (at least five, devoted to Cajun, bluegrass, old-time Appalachian, and jug band music). One of the astounding features of these groups is that, although they seldom assemble, they manage to sound as if they lived next to each other and practiced every day. How do they communicate so well? By ESP? I suppose it helps to be talented.

The Todalo Shakers are a case in point: phenomenal musicians (from Berkeley, Mendocino, and Seattle) who specialize in good-time music from the urban South, particularly jug band music. Unless I lost track somewhere, this is only the second Shaker release; their first one, the estimable 4th Street Messaround (circa 2000), is evidently out of print, unfortunately. This one is labeled, “Fresh & funky party music of the 1920s and 1930s,” and that describes it pretty well. It’s good-time music, with no depressing subjects. Even the “1931 Depression Blues” (an instrumental) sounds happy. Although some of the pieces, such as “Podunk Toddle,” are from jug band repertoire, most of this album is devoted to more uptown, unfamiliar songs (at least, they’re unfamiliar to me — most are not in the standard jug band anthologies). The most extreme example here is “My Walking Stick,” an Irving Berlin song from the 1938 musical film Alexander’s Ragtime Band.

The band’s default lineup is Suzy on fiddle, Eric on mandolin, Frannie on guitar, WB on banjo-guitar, and Matt on bass. On the older jug band pieces, they play as an ensemble, with the fiddle typically taking the lead, and the other instruments playing along. Fine examples of this style are “Podunk Toddle,” “Georgia Craw,” and “East Texas Drag” (this last is a beautiful fiddle duet by Suzy and WB). The more urbane pieces, such as “Don’t Be No Fool” or “Sweet Lovin’ Old Soul,” feature individual solos, reflecting the stylistic changes that occurred in the genre during the 1930s.

Matt is particularly talented at making a bowed bass sound exactly like a jug, a feat that probably would have amused or bemused Gus Cannon. The band members share vocal responsibilities about equally, and all are good singers. I’m particularly fond of the well-blended duet singing by Suzy and Frannie on the choruses of several cuts.

The first cut on the album is an interesting take on a medley. They start out with WB singing “Don’t Be No Fool,” followed by an instrumental break that turns out to be the “Salt Lake City Blues.” The original song returns at the end for one more verse.

The title is from the last cut on the record, a cover of Mississippi John Hurt’s “I’m Satisfied,” an expression to which Hurt added, “tickled, too.” By the time I got to this last cut, I was satisfied and tickled, as well.

The performances were recorded in Reid’s living room, with very nice, lively results. The CD jacket stated that notes
Clyde Davenport. Wow. The band goes songs are from Tommy Jarrell, the Sweet well as the key, the first five tunes and liner notes, which give fiddle tuning as According to the excellent yet concise tasteful, understated backup guitar, con-
brushes across the strings, and Tii plays
vocal cuts, Woody switches to rhythm

Fiddler's Convention. In their usual con
ter of New Hampshire, not too far from
People. Bradford is in the northeast quar-
friend Tii McLane are the Bradford Bog

Beth plays the melodies with very little ment mental work is solid without being flashy:
concentrates on singing. All of the instru-
mental work is solid without being flashy: Beth plays the melodies with very little ornamentation; Woody usually doubles the melody line with a few sparse chordal brushes across the strings, and Tii plays tasteful, understated backup guitar, connecting the chords with a few runs here and there. The three musicians blend well into a band with a good traditional sound; I suspect they have been playing together for a long time.

A good CD starts from good sources. According to the excellent yet concise liner notes, which give fiddle tuning as well as the key, the first five tunes and songs are from Tommy Jarrell, the Sweet Brothers, Leadbelly, Benton Flippin, and Clyde Davenport. Wow. The band goes on to include Kentucky tunes such as Sa-
tune a little slower, and most of the instrumen-
tical breaks are more bluegrass
than in the older recording. The fiddling
is smooth and notey, recalling but not
replicating Snodrley’s. The fiddle itself—
built by Brevard instrument maker Lyle
Reedy—has a sweet and slightly gritty
tone, a really rich-sounding instrument.
(I’ve coveted Lyle’s fiddles for years.)
Also adding to the band’s strong sound
is the resophonic guitar playing contrib-
uted here by Aaron Ballance.

While Western North Carolina music
is well represented in this album, Tim
seems to have an affinity for West Vir-
ginia tunes too, as demonstrated by the
pairing of (North Carolina’s) Marcus
Martin’s “Booth Shot Lincoln” with
(West Virginia’s) Ernie Carpenter’s
“Gunboat.” Tim’s playing of the mod-
al tune “Squirrel Munster” (identified
as “traditional,” which I’m not sure
about) has a very West Virginian sound
before segueing into a more Irish bow-
ing pattern and rhythm. There’s also
a really nice version of Edden Hammons’
wistful “Waynesboro.”

This is a mostly-instrumental album,
but there are a couple of songs. “Lazy
John” has here has a tougher, more
modern-country feel than it has in most
recently-recorded versions, which tend
to follow Clyde Davenport’s gentle sing-
ing style. “Cherry River Line” is per-
formed as a slow, atmospheric bluegrass
song, with singing by Darren Nicholson.
Nicholson is one of the members of
the explosively talented bluegrass band
Balsam Range, from nearby Haywood
County. Nicholson sings in a very con-
temporary bluegrass style, which many
old-time listeners may not be used to; but
he’s a wonderful singer. (For those OT
readers who do like contemporary blue-
grass music, I highly recommend Balsam
Range’s albums.)

Gardner plays banjo in a melodic claw-
hammer style in the medley of “Rachel”
and “Forked Deer.” The banjo is tuned
low, giving a mellow balance to the bouncy
style of playing. It sounds great,
both the playing and the instrument
itself—which Tim built. (He and his
father Lo Gordon are the luthiers of Cedar
Mountain Banjos.)

The album closes with an expertly-
bowed, loping, solo-fiddle version of
“Stony Point,” the old style of which is
emphasized all the more by the fact that it
was recorded onto a wax cylinder by Mar-
tin Fisher. It’s got the faraway sound of an
early field recording, but even without the

Sarah Bryan

To order: www.myspace.com/fiddlintim; 223
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The Twilite Broadcasters
The Trail of Time

North Buncombe Gallop / Coal Miner’s
Blues / I Can’t Keep You in Love with
Me / Weary Blues from Waiting / Fidd-
ler’s Dream / Where is My Sailor Boy? /
Lorene / Land of Lincoln / There Stands
the Glass / The Trail of Time / Lead Me /
Valley of Peace

Most of this second release from the
Twilite Broadcasters is right up there
with the music of any group working
today in the brother-duet format. When
they’re at their best on The Trail of Time,
which is most of the time, Adam Tanner
(mandolin, fiddle and vocals) and Mark
Jackson (guitar and vocals) cease being
two guys recreating an old style of per-
formance, becoming, instead, two guys
working in and contributing to an old
style of performance.

The Trail of Time opens with a moder-
ately quick mandolin instrumental
called “North Buncombe Gallop,”
the only band original here and, along
with “Land of Lincoln” and “Fiddler’s
Dream,” one of three instruments
included. Written by Tanner, “North
Buncombe Gallop” presents a bright,
slightly raggy melody over a standard
one-five progression (D to A) in the A
section, punctuated briefly by a stop-
time descending run. For the B section,
Tanner shifts to a B-flat-to-F-sharp pro-
gression, and adds a bit more rag flavor.
The effect is guaranteed to grab your
attention and recalls the quirker ways
tunes used to be written.

Their take on the Carter Family’s “Coal
Miner’s Blues” follows, but whereas the
Carter Family brought to the song an an-
guished urgency, the Broadcasters add
slap-bass and Everly-like vocals, as if
reminding us that the blues are as much
about lifting the spirit as about feeling
down and sorrowful. Listen particularly
for the Everly-like sound on the third vo-
cal line of each verse and for Tanner’s
mandolin interpretation of Mother May-
belle’s guitar line. Both are dead-on.

From the Carters, the Broadcasters turn
to the Louvins’ “I Can’t Keep You in
Love with Me,” and give a performance
that has an irresistible freshness. As the
mandolin riff walks down to the shuf-
fling guitar and bass, and as the vocals
strut along, you’d swear you’re hearing
an outtake from the Byrds’ Sweetheart of
the Rodeo, underscoring the debt that the
country rock crowd, and the rock crowd
of the ’60s in general, owe to the Lou-
vins. Only a couple of the tracks on this
recording come close to matching the
overall effect and the performance. One
tune that does match it is the one that fol-
lows, Hank Williams’ “Weary Blues from
Waiting.” With their bluesy backing and
their duet singing, the Broadcasters make
a convincing argument that the tune is a
perfect vehicle for the brother format.

Almost in that class is the Delmore Broth-
ers’ “The Trail of Time,” with its buoyant
bounce and its nifty half-step chord shift.
Also of note is the parlor-esque gospel
of “Lead Me,” a traditional song recorded
by the Delmores in 1937. “Land of Lincoln,”
a 1969 Bill Monroe composition, would
also rank in there, offering a welcome
minor-key contrast, which, despite being
among the most recently written pieces
here, sounds the oldest. The “ancient
tones” approach was, of course, a Monroe
hallmark, and Tanner captures his intent
quite well and cleanly. Rounding out the
highlight tracks is Arthur Smith’s show-
piece, “Fiddler’s Dream.” Playing one of
any master’s showpieces is always treach-
erous, but Tanner tackles Smith’s role
and his wailing, bluesy tone and gives a good
account of himself.

Earlier, I said that when the Twilite
Broadcasters are on their game, they’re
right up there with any brother-style
duet working today. But I think if we’d
heard their recordings of “Coal Miner’s
Blues” on an old Crosley in the 1930s
or “Weary Blues from Waiting” or “I
Can’t Keep You In Love With Me” in
the 1950s, we’d probably have been im-
pressed then too.

Bill Wagner

To order: www.twilitebroadcasters.com
In considering the history of country music, we often think of the music as flowing from the churches, porches, and parlors of rural communities into the songs and styles found on popular commercial recordings. More simply put, we often think of old-time music as representing the roots of bluegrass and country music. Rarely do we consider that music actually travels on a round-trip ticket.

Country music struck out from home and followed the road to Nashville, gradually making its way to the Opry stage and the Billboard charts. But as everyone knows, country music is prone to get lonesome and homesick. It’s only natural that it would hang up its Nudie suit and go back to its roots. The result is music such as is found on this CD, by Floyd, Virginia, singer and autoharp player Janet Turner: songs of earthly heartbreak and heavenly joy, many recorded by the greats of country music in the ’50s, ’60s, and ’70s, which Turner and friends reinterpret through old-time and traditional bluegrass music.

Listening to Turner’s singing, I thought of how many of my favorite female singers of country music, broadly defined, sing in a plain, straightforward way, with little ornamentation, and an earnest but subtly-wrought delivery. Sara and Maybelle Carter come to mind first, of course. Modern-day heiresses to this style include such wonderful old-time singers as Susie Goehring and Paula Bradley. In the generations in-between, Molly O’Day took a similar approach to her songs of faith; and Kitty Wells held firmly to her straight-ahead style through the decades that brought us from Patsy Cline’s croon to Tammy Wynette’s sob to today’s American Idol-style country power balladry. It’s all good music—I love the singers who wear their hearts on their sleeves too—but there’s just something arresting about musical straight talk. Janet Turner carries this style perfectly. Few flourishes or emotive devices—just heartfelt directness. I would imagine that she’s been particularly inspired over the years by Kitty Wells.

Turner’s voice is also remarkable in its tonal quality. She’s a lady of retirement age, but her voice might easily be that of a girl in her early teens, or younger. It’s not a lightweight quality at all—there’s strength and much skill in her delivery, and her pitch is great. She’s a mature singer with a very youthful voice. The closest comparison I can think of, in terms of vocal range, is Retta Spradlin, the Tennessee singer and banjo player who appears on the County set Traditional Music from the Cumberland Plateau; but Turner’s singing lacks Spradlin’s ferocity, and is more conventionally tuneful.
Turner’s autoharp stays somewhat in the background in much of this mix, an integrated part of the overall band sound; I’d like to have heard more, because what is highlighted here sounds really good. Joining her on this recording, in various band configurations, is a group of outstanding instrumentalists and singers. Dave Fason—who also produced the album—and Greg Ward provide just-right bluegrass harmonies on several of the cuts. Abe Goorskey is the one musician other than Turner who plays on every track; he provides nice rhythm mandolin throughout, with understated and pretty melodic breaks. Mac Traynham, one of today’s masters of old-time music in the Virginia hills, accompanies Turner on almost all of the tracks, giving much of the recording a solid old-time feel—particularly with his chinning clawhammer banjo. Among the several instruments Fason plays here, his Dobro adds a smooth flair, giving a sonic counterpoint, for example, with Traynham’s clawhammer playing on “When My Time Comes to Go.” (I love a resophonic guitar in a string band, whether old-time, bluegrass, or somewhere in between, and it sounds especially nice here.) In all, nine other musicians join Janet Turner on this CD, and every one of them makes an excellent contribution; the performances mentioned above are highlights of the work of an excellent ensemble.

The most affecting performance here may be the second track, “Don’t Be Angry.” This was Stonewall Jackson’s breakout song in 1958. Janet Turner’s high voice gives the song a wrenching vulnerability, and her solid autoharp lead emphasizes the simplicity of the delivery. Also really wonderful is “Matthew 24.” The song, written by Lonnie Glosson, has been recorded by various singers, but Turner’s version is probably closest to that of Molly O’Day. O’Day sang it with her characteristic on-fire, testimonial strength; Turner is more gentle, but equally sure. The Carter Family’s plain-tive version of “Gold Watch and Chain” suits Turner well, as one might guess it would. Another song recorded by Molly O’Day, and many others, is the gospel barnburner “When My Time Comes to Go,” which Turner and her bandmates slow down considerably without losing its tent-revival quality.

I really loved the choice of songs on this album. And what a lineup of country music’s celestial host Turner draws from: the Carter Family, O’Day, Jimmy Martin, the Louvins—she’d make a great deejay. If your taste runs more to the songs of foggy origin, about moonshine and murder, this record may not be as compelling to you; but if you enjoy the whole spectrum of country music, from Old Bangum to Old Possum, you’ll like it very much. SARAH BRYAN

Barbecue Any Old Time Blues From the Pit 1927-1942


Even longtime vegetarians will enjoy this compilation of blues 78s that reference barbecue—some of which are actually about meat cooked over charcoal. The styles of blues represented range from country blues singing with guitar, to jazzier blue bands with piano and horns, to the jook bands with kazoo and tambourine. Some of the artists are well known, but not necessarily for these songs—Memphis Minnie, Blind Boy Fuller, Bo Carter. Others are more obscure. It’s mostly pre-War material, some of it as late as the 1940s.

Teddy Edwards, with Papa Jackson on banjo (I think probably banjo-guitar) and Big Bill Broonzy on guitar, kicks it off with “Who Did You Give My Barbecue To?” and appears later with Part 2 of the same song. Bo Carter’s unissued “Pig Meat is What I Crave” is here in a vastly superior remastering to what I’ve previously heard.

The 20-year-old Les Paul (at his first recording session) plays every damn hot lick in his arsenal behind the classic blues singer Georgia White’s “Pigmeat Blues,” and it’s always great to hear Barbecue Bob’s ringing 12-string guitar—this is a tiny quibble, but it should have been identified as such in the liner notes. His playing sure reminds me of George Carter’s playing, and both were associated with Atlanta. I have to wonder if they might have been the same person.

Of course, I liked some cuts more than others. Nobody ever covered Bessie Smith’s “Gimme a Pigfoot” until Frankie Half Pint Jaxon did, in 1940, but forget it. Nobody ever can do that song like Bessie. When she sings, “Give the piano player a drink because he’s bringing me down,” you can bet someone’s going to uncork the bottle. The Jaxon version sounds kind of sanitized and his voice sounds like he’s on helium.

Instrumentals here are presumably included because of their titles: “Pig’s Feet and Slaw” (Tiny Parham), “Barbecue Bust” (Mississippi Jook Band), and the spacey “Barbecue Blues” by Hank Jones and his Ginger. The latter group is identified here as Lonnie Johnson with his brother James; I’ve previously seen them identified as Henry Johnson and group. The fiddling doesn’t sound anything like the other Lonnie Johnson fiddle pieces I’ve heard, so I’m a bit dubious about this identification, although after thumbing through Codrigh & Dixon I am starting to be convinced! This band has a loopy quality with the celeste tinkling away, and Lonnie Johnson playing guitar with so many bent notes that it almost sounds like a slide, then quickly putting it down and picking up the fiddle. That is, if it’s really him.

As usual with Old Hat releases, the packaging (designed by David Lynch) is exemplary. The booklet is a work of art.
The essay is about actual barbecue, i.e. pork, chicken, beef, or lamb cooked on charcoal. Of course this is not actually what most of the singers are singing about. . . you really think Memphis Minnie is singing about ham hocks when she sings “Pig Meat On the Line?” The booklet also includes excellent notes about each selection, with discographical information, and short notes about the artists.

The mastering is also excellent; clearly Old Hat went to some pains to obtain the best copies of these 78s, some of which are rare. I compared some of these cuts with other versions on other CDs (mostly Document CDs, notorious for their funkiness – but to a completist, it’s worth it), and the Old Hat remasterings are superior in every instance. Kudos to Christopher King and Jeff Carroll.

I’m feeling kind of hungry – think I’ll go across town and get some of those ribs at Everett and Jones. Not that it will be the style of BBQ these folks are singing about, but it’s the closest thing that’s at all nearby. This is great mood music, perfect for the next time you fire up the barbecue!

SUZI ROTHFIELD THOMPSON

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Memphis Stomp
Hokum Records

Some of you will remember the jug band revival in the early 1960s, the craze that brought us Dave Van Ronk’s Jug Stompers, the Even Dozen Jug Band, Jim Kweskin’s Jug Band, and many more. Most disappeared within months, it seemed, with Kweskin’s band surviving for a few years. There have been a couple minor scares since and pockets of jug band music aficionados/musicians lingering around the country. But it appears to me that there is a new revival of this music in full sway, including several festivals like the one-day Jug Band Jubilee in Louisville, the Santa Cruz Jug Band Jubilee, and the Minneapolis Battle of the Jug Bands. Actually, the Minneapolis event just celebrated its thirtieth anniversary this year with dozens of participating bands vying for the coveted grand prize: the Waffle Iron trophy.

The Memphis-based Side Street Steppers fit right into this good-time music movement. The band consists of Christian Stanfield on guitar, mandolin, and tenor banjo; Vera Stanfield on uke/banjo uke and five-string banjo; Emily Breckinridge on washboard; and Nathan Breckinridge on bass. They all sing, but the bulk of the lead vocals are by the Stanfields and they are certainly the real core of this band. On the CD they are joined by another half-dozen players adding harmonica on most tracks, plus some fiddle, more banjo, and even sax on one cut.

Although most of the material springs from the blues/jug band/vaudeville repertoires, there are a few from the hillbilly
songbag, including Uncle Dave Macon’s “Keep My Skillet Good and Greasy,” performed here with slide guitar, the Delmores’ “Deep River Blues” by way of Doc Watson, “Mythological Blues” from Ernest Rogers’ 78s, and “The Blackest Crow.” The liner notes indicate that the band does a lot more material like this, and fiddle tunes, in performance, but they just didn’t end up on the CD. I do prefer their treatment of the bluesier numbers like “Southern Blues” (arguably a hillbilly number, coming from the Scottsdale String Band via Adam Tanner), “Memphis Stomp” (from the Mississippi Sheiks circle and with floating blues verses added, as far as I can tell), an energetic “Dallas Rag,” and “Elevator Papa, Switchboard Mama.” It looks like I picked out three numbers with mandolin lead in that last statement; it’s true that the ones with mandolin really catch the spirit of the music.

Possibly the hardest thing to tackle in this sort of musical endeavor is the vocals. The Stanfields have made this leap amazingly well for players who have only been involved with this music for a few years. I’ll be interested to hear them again in a few more years when they are more seasoned performers, comfortable in the jug band persona they have taken on. I particularly like their vocals on the give-and-take numbers “Elevator Papa” and “Hottest Stuff in Town,” with Vera’s saucy responses as a foil to Christian’s cocky swagger. Sometimes the singing is a bit uneven, but mostly enjoyable, and all in the spirit of the genre.

The packaging is very attractive, a vintage-looking digipak with notes folded in an inner pocket. However, here is where the confusion comes. I was not always sure who was doing what, as the playlist order on the outer panel and the one on the notes sheet do not agree. The order on the outer panel is correct, I think; still, the key to who’s playing/singing what does not seem to coincide with either list. Of course, that doesn’t interfere with the fun of the music and the band’s evident enthusiasm for it, but I always like to know these details.

I call this a successful first effort, something all their fans will want to take home with them and other jug band music lovers would want too. I look for more good things from this band in the future, but until then, give this CD a try.

BOB BOVEE

To order: www.sidestreetsteppers.com, (901) 335-7141

Wayne Toups, Steve Riley, and Wilson Savoy
The Band Courtbouillon

Courtbouillon / It’s Lonesome in Prison / The Bosco Blues / The Convict Waltz / La Vie Malheureuse / Chère Alice / The Hathaway Two-Step / Nobody Wants Me / The Patassa Two-Step / La Valse de la Belle / Les Flammes de L’Enfer / The Kaplan Waltz / The Midland Two-Step / She Made Me Lose My Mind

I remember the courtbouillon that Joel Sa- jovoy, the grandfather of the Joel who pro-duced this CD, made for us the first time we were in Louisiana. He cooked it in a cast iron pot, in the fireplace of Marc and Ann Savoy’s house (which had belonged to grand-père Joel’s father, I believe). I don’t remember exactly what was in there – fish and green onions for sure, but probably also peppers, a roux, maybe some tomatoes? Like all great Cajun food it was so much greater than the sum of its parts. Some kind of alchemy takes place with that food – simple ingredients, no fancy presentation, but it all combines to create something really great.

This CD is aptly named: three virtuoso Cajun accordion players, spanning different generations, playing and singing their hearts out. All three men are known for the way that they hold nothing back in performance – each sings like it’s his last chance on earth, and they’ve all been doing this at every single dance, festival, or other performance that they’ve done (for many decades, in the cases of Toups and Riley). Each of them is known as a front man, a band leader, a fireball, a sparkplug, and each is also known as a flawless accordion player, able to play fast, strong, and with the intensity, elegance, and emotional depth that are the marks of a great Cajun accordion player.

Wayne Toups in particular is well-known for his crowd-pleasing antics, grand-standing and over-the-top wild-ness onstage, yet teaming up with Steve Riley and Wilson Savoy on this CD, these guys prove that they are all still capable of channeling their intensity and chops to make music which is devoid of postur- ing – it’s all about the music.

The material pays homage to the greats—Lawrence Walker, Amédé Ar-doin, etc.—and includes many standards of Cajun music including “Chère Al-ice,” “Midland Twostep,” and “Kaplan Waltz.” But there are other songs that I was unfamiliar with, and they are beauties culled from the repertoires of Shirley Bergeron, Ambrose Thibodeaux, and D. L. Menard. There are no side musicians; Steve Riley and Wilson Savoy take turns playing guitar and fiddle. There is some overdubbing, but it’s seamless, and at least one song (Lawrence Walker’s “La Vie Malheureuse”) is ALL Steve Riley. Steve and Wilson’s fiddle styles are each instantly identifiable, yet both are as Cajun as they can be, another great example of individual styles becoming subsumed in (yet also shining through) a regional traditional style.

“Les Flammes d’Enfer” features all three of them playing accordion (not simulta- neously), with each singing one verse, and it is so fun to hear each one’s take on this classic of Cajun music. Wilson sings a very strange third verse which I have never heard before. Students of Cajun accordion should take note of the three very different ways of playing this stan-dard tune, each of which is wonderful in its own way.

Wayne Toups’s cackling laugh as he counts off “Bosco Blues” kicks off a track that is the most rocking version of this song that I’ve ever heard. Who says you need drums to be rocking? They sound like they are having so much fun. I haven’t heard any recording of Cajun music that is this lively (but not manic or mannered) in a long time.

The eco-packaging and cover graphics look good, but the tiny light colored letters against the black background are very hard to read. Fortunately you can view them as large as you want from the PDF file included on the CD. The notes include the French lyrics and English translations, as well as the information about who is playing and singing on each track.

This is the best new Cajun CD I have heard in years. It is both relaxed and super-energetic; you can tell that they are playing for each other (and for Joel), and what a treat it is to be a fly on the wall at this music session! Very highly recommended.

SUZY ROTHFIELD THOMPSON

To order: http://valcourrecords.com
Having produced some ten country blues guitar teaching DVDs for Stefan Grossman’s Guitar Workshop, covering styles from Memphis, Jackson, and Atlanta, to Texas blues (and more), Seattle-based guitarist John Miller next turns his considerable playing skills and relaxed teaching approach to the blues styles played by white country guitarists of the 1920s and ’30s. As has long been acknowledged and studied, white musicians of that time learned and assimilated much from their interactions with black musicians (and vice-versa)—on no instrument more so, arguably, than the guitar. Miller’s DVD focuses on the resulting styles the white guitarists created from what they’d learned, styles that he and others gather beneath the label hillbilly blues guitar.

The format here offers nothing but a tried-and-true method. Miller, set against a plain background, introduces each song, plays it through up to speed, then in the teaching segment breaks it into smaller segments, examining the techniques, fingerings, and plucking skills needed. Each song is then played again in a slow, split-screen segment. The bonus section includes an audio-only version of the original recordings. Printable tab and lyrics are click of your mouse away.

Of the seven performers represented by one tune each, most should be familiar names to followers of early country guitar. As would be expected, there are tunes from Sam McGee and Frank Hutchison. You could not examine white country guitar styles and not include them. The same might be said for Maybelle Carter, though blues might not be the first thing you think of her playing. A bit lesser-known perhaps are Clarence Greene, remembered more for his fiddling, and Dick Justice, a West Virginia guitarist whose scant recording career included an early version of the classic “Cocaine Blues.” Also here is Emry Arthur, known more for his singing than his instrumental ability; his guitar work, represented by “Reuben, Oh Reuben,” is somewhat rudimentary and though his playing is not completely without some interest or merit for what it can teach, I might have included a piece by Wesley Long or David Miller, or even Vander Everidge instead. Hobart Smith, a player from a later recording period (1950s) rounds out the list of stylists covered.

Interestingly, while the title of the DVD includes the word “blues,” only Justice’s “Brownskin Blues,” with its rhyme scheme of AAB, and Smith’s “Graveyard Blues,” with its AAAB scheme, follow that classic blues form. “Graveyard Blues” sounds the most like what you think when you hear the word “blues.” The rest, with the exception of “Cumberland Gap,” lean more toward ragtime blues, as is the case with McGee’s “Franklin Blues,” or are more in keeping with the pre-blues or songster tradition. Greene’s “Johnson City Blues,” full of a small but ever-changing palette of melodic and rhythmic ideas, and Carter’s “The Cannon Ball,” which she arranged a bit statically in the first part
Seattle guitarist John Miller’s latest project for Stefan Grossman’s Guitar Workshop is a welcome addition to the 800-series of teaching DVDs, this one examining the guitar stylings of several St. Louis-based guitarists of the 1920s and ’30s. When we think of St. Louis guitarists of that period, the names that most come to mind are Peetie Wheatstraw, Henry Townsend, Big Joe Williams, and Lonnie Johnson—legends all. As it turns out, none of those players is covered here, and while that may sound disappointing to some, it should not be so, for the four players and six tunes included have much to recommend them, for both the techniques and the interest they offer.

None of the four guitarists is what you would call a household name. The two most obscure of them, little more than names in blues history, bookend the set. Blind Teddy Darby, a Kentucky-born transplant to St. Louis who recorded some 22 sides between 1929 and 1937, opens the DVD with “Lawdy, Lawdy Worried Blues,” an almost hypnotic, single-chord blues with shifting measure lengths, performed in the rare open tuning of D minor. Though the tune itself is not overly difficult, the thumb work used as both a timekeeper and as a melodic punctuation takes some practice, and Miller justifiably focuses much of his teaching there. Closing the set is the little-known, little-recorded Lane Hardin’s 1936 12-bar piece “Hard Time Blues.” Insistent and pulsing rhythmically, the tune largely revolves around, as Miller explains, moving your middle finger back and forth along the third string; once that’s mastered, the rest of the tune’s figures fall easily in line.

In between are two selections each from Clifford Gibson and Charley Jordan. Both men are a bit better known than Hardin and Darby. According to historian Don Kent, Gibson was more an urban player, and this can be heard in his two pieces here. In the first, a slow, bewitching-themed blues in another rare open tuning (DGDFAD), titled “Don’t Put That Thing On Me,” Gibson substitutes a minor two chord for the four chord, resulting in a light, melodic sound that reminds me of tunes played by the Grateful Dead. His second tune, “Brooklyn Blues,” is a 12-bar taken in shuffle time. In that one, it is easy to hear the influence of Lonnie Johnson’s urban approach.

The first of Jordan’s two entries, his boogie-like, eight-to-the-bar “Big Four Blues,” is, as Miller explains, the most challenging of the six songs taught. Here, as on “Lawdy,” the thumb work needed is essential to mastering the song, and, again, Miller expertly breaks the concept down in the teaching segment. As he says, “It’s a rockin’ tune.” Jordan’s other tune is the raggiest of the six, with its with its six-two-five-one progression and its lines reminiscent of John Hurt. Of the six, it proved to me to be the easiest tune to learn.

As with all of Miller’s teaching DVDs for the Grossman Workshop series, each song gets an intro, performance, teaching, and slow, split-screen performance treatment. Each song also gets the benefit of Miller’s conversational and precise instruction, and that should make this DVD of interest to any guitarist of intermediate or advanced skill. Bonus features include audio-only tracks of the original recordings. Tab and words can be printed from your computer.

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Readers of The Old-Time Herald certainly do not need to be told about the important role that families have always had in playing and perpetuating old-time music. The names Pickard, Stoneman, Powers, Jarrell, Crook, Hammons, and many others loom large in our consciousness, and the music of these folks casts a long shadow of influence over all who enjoy and play old-time music today. But these people are just the tip of the iceberg, those whose music has come to widespread attention through recordings, both commercial and field. What of the many, many families in the past whose music was heard only by those who happened to be present when they were playing? Who were some of those who joined their fathers, brothers, sisters, or cousins in sharing a few tunes of an evening on the front porch, or providing music for dancing in the kitchen? Or who gained local renown through playing at community gatherings but whose music is beyond hearing today?

The photos reproduced here give us a glimpse of the faces of some musical families of the past, even if they cannot convey the sounds of their music. In only one image are the people identified. A hand-written note on the reverse of the shot of the four folks standing in front of the sheet hung on the fence tells us that they are Albert Thomas Hoffman with the banjo; Edith Love Hoffman and Walter Nelson Hoffman playing “violin” (the note writer’s term); and May Ella Hoffman with the mandolin. There is no hint of location or date, though judging from the clothing and the hair-styles I would place the photograph somewhere in the early 20th century. No doubt some sharp-eyed OTH reader who is knowledgeable about banjos can give us a not-earlier-than date based on Mr. Hoffman’s handsome five-string. The presence of the music stand, and written music, tells us that at least one member of the Hoffman family was musically literate. This, plus the use of the word “violin” rather than “fiddle” to describe the instruments held by the boy and the woman on the left side of the shot, might make us question whether the Hoffmans really were old-time musicians. But there are enough other clues in the image—the way the “violinists” hold their instruments, and the presence of the banjo and mandolin—to feel confident that they could get peoples’ feet moving to the strains of “Sugar Hill” or “Forked Deer,” regardless of what other sorts of music might have been in the family repertoire. Unfortunately, the image is so faded that even with a 600 ppi
scan, and zoomed way in, the music on the stand is not readable. However, the configuration of the note patterns that are discernible suggests that the music might be fiddle tunes, an idea that is reinforced by the fact that the notes are unquestionably hand-written, rather than printed.

In the absence of identifying information regarding the people in the other two images, we can only assume that they represent family groups. However, a close look at the faces of those in the group of 14, with the left-handed banjo player and fiddler in the back, makes it obvious that these folks shared a good bit of DNA. Trying to figure out just what the family groupings are, though, makes for an amusing game. Clearly, in the middle row on the far right, we have a father and mother, with their three young children—and Pa’s malevolent glower makes one wonder what might have transpired between him and the photographer during the course of this session!

All the other men in the shot, and the woman sitting front-and-center with the baby on her lap, have eyes that are similarly deep-set, if not quite so remarkably penetrating. I speculate that these five people are four brothers and a sister, of whom the man with the fire in his eyes is the oldest, and either the woman in the middle or the banjo player is the youngest. Further, I suggest that the woman on the left with the ribbon in her hair was married to the balding man behind her, and that the girl in front is their daughter. Then, the woman third from the left, with the black collar, might have been the wife of the man standing over her left shoulder. The young woman in the middle is dressed in black. Widow’s weeds, perhaps? There is no male in the photo who is an obvious candidate to be her baby’s father.

This is all pure guesswork, of course, and I also speculate in regarding the three—much friendlier-looking!—people in the final shot as a family. My sense, though, is that the woman in the middle and the fiddler are a married couple, and that the guitarist on the left is perhaps a sister of one or the other. The only identifying information on this image is: “G.C. Mace, Abbott, WVA, Amateur.” Google maps does not locate any town of Abbott in West Virginia, but does indicate a small town by that name in Virginia, twenty-some miles west of Roanoke and roughly the same distance east of the border with West Virginia.

NOTE: The author and editor welcome contributions from OTH readers regarding identification of any of the people in these photos, or the pictures’ dates. Send information editor@oldtmeherald.org
Please visit our website www.fieldrecorder.com for more details about all our CD and DVD releases.


ALSO: Clyde Davenport, Vol. 1, Ernie Carpenter, Banjo Bill Cornell, Lonnie Seymour, Cecil Plum


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Intm. - Hilarie Burnham
Adv. - Frank Lee
Guitar: Rachel Combs
Mandolin: Chance McCoy
Bass: "Jobbass" Delamarre
Coordinator: Joe Newberry

OCT. OLD-TIME WEEK
Mountain Dulcimer:
Phyllis Gaskins
Fiddle:
Beg. - Claire Millener
Intm./Adv. - Dave Bing
Adv. - Chance McCoy
Banjo:
Beg./Intm. - Anna Roberts-Gewalt
Intm./Adv. - Walt Koken
Guitar: Bob Heyer
Coordinator: Gerry Milnes

DANCE WEEK
Nic Gareiss (Fiddling), Wendy Graham (Centres & Squares) (Calling Centers), Matthew Otwell (Rhythm, Rhythm), Tyler Crawford (Centres & Squares) (Calling
Southern Traditional Squares), Edwin Roa (Argentine Tango) (Nightriders Salsa), Brian Cunningham (Irish Session Dance), Junious Brickhouse (Hop Hop & Hoop), Emily
Oleson & Rhiannon Giddens (Afro-American Roots), Laurie Cours (Afro-Brazilian Dance), and Tony Hernandez (Fibbing Square Dance), with staff musicians
Jeremiah Mclean, John MacAdam-Somer, Aaron Olwell, and Ralph Gordon. Coordinator: Matthew Otwell

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Guitar Week
July 15-20 Blues Week
July 22-27 Irish/Celtic Week
July 29-Aug. 3 Bluegrass Week
Swing Week
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Dance Week
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