

# Central Illinois Teaching with Primary Sources Newsletter

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
EDWARDSVILLE

## TAKING THE STAGE: OPRY

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## TAKE THE STAGE

Welcome to the **Central Illinois Teaching with Primary Sources Newsletter**. Our goal is to bring you topics that connect to the Illinois Learning Standards as well as introduce you to amazing items from the Library of Congress. Opries are not specifically mentioned in the Illinois Learning Standards but music is found within the following Illinois Learning Standards (found within goal, standard, benchmark or performance descriptors). 25-Know the language of the arts. 26-Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced. 27- Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society and everyday life.

The Grand Ole Opry has been the home of country music for 85 years. For a country music artist, playing the Opry means they have finally made it to the big time. To perform on the same stage as country greats Hank Williams Sr., Loretta Lynn and Garth Brooks has to be the dream of a lifetime for an up and coming country artist.

Membership into the prestigious Grand Ole Opry is even more coveted by country music stars.

The Grand Ole Opry began in 1925, just five years after commercial radio was born in the United States. The show, then called the WSM Barn Dance, was actually used to advertise insurance policies. In 1927, the Barn Dance was renamed the Grand Ole Opry. The show proved immensely popular, with crowds filling up the hallways to watch performers. Soon a new auditorium was designed that could hold 500 fans but even this space would not suffice with the numerous fans flocking to the Opry every Saturday night. In 1943, the Ryman Auditorium would

become the home for the Grand Ole Opry until 1975 when it moved into a multi-million dollar complex the Grand Ole Opry House.

Until 1938, instrumental acts were the stars of the Opry and any vocal talent was considered second to the band. When Roy Acuff joined the cast that all changed. His performance of "The Great Speckled Bird" would bring singers to the forefront. Acuff's performance paved the way for country greats like



Patsy Cline, Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson. Through the years, the Opry has held true to tradition but has also embraced technology. The Grand Ole Opry became an hour long television show in 1955. The PBS Television Network took the Opry to the next step, a live show which aired from 1978 until 1981.

In 2010, Tennessee experienced the worst flooding in over 100 years. Nothing in middle Tennessee was spared, including the Grand Ole Opry which was under more than ten feet of water. Treasures such as Roy Acuff's fiddle from his first performance at the Opry and Minnie Pearl's shoes that she wore for over 50 years of performances were quickly relocated to other facilities. The Opry showed resilience by not missing a show. The Opry continued finding a stage at former homes, the Nashville War Memorial Auditorium and the Ryman Auditorium.

An evening at the Grand Ole Opry can include performances by top country artists but not only country music is performed, bluegrass and gospel acts have found a home at the Opry. It isn't all about music, great comedians also make appearances. No matter what the performance, the Grand Ole Opry is a show not to be missed.

*Grand Ole Opry, Accessed 1.25.11*



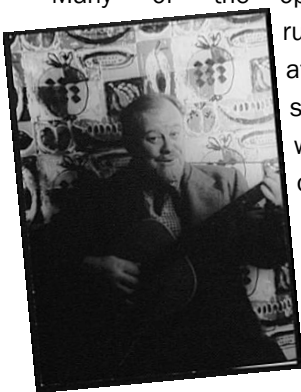
## CONNECTING TO ILLINOIS

Kevin Cronin of REO Speedwagon wrote a song titled "The Ballad of the Illinois Opry". One of the verses is, "Now I don't want you people to think that all there is around Springfield, Illinois are landmarks telling 'bout the good old Lincoln years cuz just north of town I saw a sign that said the Illinois Opry is open tonight and the sweet sound of country music fills my ears." This song has a point, while we are extremely proud to be the Land of Lincoln, Illinois also has a deep connection to its music. All across the state you can find small town opries that showcase talent grown in Illinois.

Many of the opries in Illinois are in small towns or rural communities. They are family affairs providing entertainment suitable for everyone. With a welcoming atmosphere, these opries provide entertainment for locals and visitors alike. In small towns like Bible Grove, Illinois, where the local stores have all closed and even the post office is gone, the opry continues. Don't

sell these small town opries short, the Bement Country Opry showcases talent from Nashville and Branson. What is amazing about these opries beyond the talent, is the fact that many are run on donations and volunteers. The opry in Altamont was once a local church. The Altamont Living Museum is a non-profit organization relying on people who want their Tuesday night country music performances to continue.

Many great country artists call Illinois home. Alison Krauss was born in Champaign, Illinois. Alison learned the violin when she was five and by eight she was fiddling. She became a member of the Grand Ole Opry in 1993 at 21 years old. Alison was the first bluegrass artist to be inducted into the Opry in 29 years. Country artist Suzy Bogguss is a guest artist at the Grand Ole Opry. She was raised in Aledo, Illinois and earned her degree from



Illinois State University. She started out touring from a van to earn extra money and skyrocketed to songs in the top 10 by 1991. She was honored with the Country Music Association's Horizon Award in 1992. The country group Steel Magnolia's Joshua Scott Jones hales from Charleston, Illinois. He and Meghan Linsey formed the group Steel Magnolia in 2006 and set out to conquer country music. After winning the second season of CMT's *Can You Duet*, Steel Magnolia has tasted success with top 10 hits and an AMA nomination.

If you are looking for an evening out for the whole family check out an Illinois country opry near you. You're guaranteed a night of fabulous music. You just might find yourself tapping your toes and singing along with the next member of the Grand Old Opry.

*Heartland Highways, Eastern Illinois University, Accessed 1.26.11*

*REO Speedwagon Official Site, Accessed 1.26.11*

*Altamont Living Museum, Accessed 1.26.11*

*Bement County Opry, Accessed 1.26.11*

*Grand Ole Opry, Accessed 1.26.11*

*CMT, Accessed 1.26.11*

### Close to Home—Heartland Highways



Each month we share a link to a relevant episode of **Heartland Highways** that provides additional information featuring people and places right here in central Illinois. Heartland Highways is a production of WEIU and episodes

are available to view online at <http://www.weiu.net/hh> (select the season on the right side of the page and then the episode).

**Season 8-Episode 803:** In this episode Lori and Kate visit three country opry sites across Illinois. The Altamont Living Museum, Edgewood Opry and Bement Country Opry. Each have a different story and feature unique and interesting people and song choices. Your toes will be tapping before you know it!

## LEARN MORE WITH AMERICAN MEMORY COLLECTIONS

### Fiddler Tunes of the Old Frontier: The Henry Reed Collection

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/reed/index.html>



Henry Reed's fiddle music provides an excellent example of the historical dynamics of folk culture in the Upper South. Reed learned the fiddle and banjo before the turn of the century and showed an amazing ability to absorb and remember music wherever and whenever he encountered it. The fiddle, that is, the modern European violin, arrived in North America in the

seventeenth century. European manufacturers made the violin cheap and readily accessible. As it became the new instrument of choice, its democratization fostered a revolution in dance music in the English speaking world. Many different types of music are found in this collection but some of the twentieth century tunes bring Reed's tradition closer to the present with influences garnered from radio, records, and modern styles such as bluegrass and country music.

*Library of Congress, American Memory, Accessed 1.26.11*

### Tending the Commons: Folklife and Landscape in Southern West Virginia

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/tending/index.html>

This collection with its numerous essays focuses mainly on the land of Coal River Valley but there is a side that shows celebrations and good times had by the people who live in these mountains. While you will not find any opries and even a search for country music will turn up only one result there are photographs of the Turner family rehearsing gospel music and images



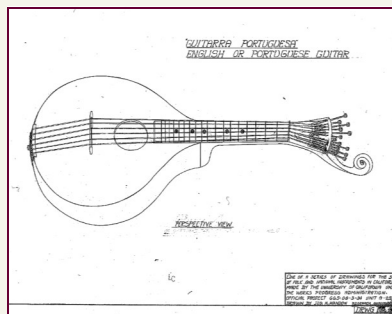
from the Stanley Heirs reunion showing musical performances. A search for family reunions will produce a good amount of images with singers, fiddlers and mandolin players.

*Library of Congress, American Memory, Accessed 1.26.11*

### California Gold: Northern California Folk Music from the Thirties

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/afcchtml/cowhome.html>

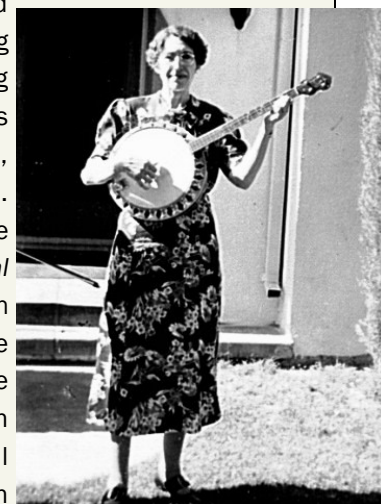
During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Work Projects Administration (WPA) was created by the U.S. Government to provide jobs of all kinds including work for artist and historians. The WPA California Folk Music



Project was organized by Sidney Robertson Cowell, and it was under her direction that the materials found in this collection were obtained. Cowell and her staff

recorded over 35 hours of folk music for the project. *California Gold* also contains photographs of some of the performers, notes and correspondence made during the project and an interesting variety of musical instruments that were recorded, photographed and sketched.

Students can explore the *Glossary of Musical Instruments* to get an overview of the instruments in the collection or search for individual Instruments such as guitar or banjo.



*Library of Congress, Teacher's Page, Collection Connection, Accessed 1.26.11*

## IN THE CLASSROOM: LESSON PLANS, ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

In this section you will find items pertaining to the current theme that can be used in your classroom. This is a small sample of items available through the Library, conduct your own search to find more.

### Prints and Photographs

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/>

#### Lomax Collection

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/lomax/>

### Today In History

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/today.html>

#### April 28, 1884: Henry Reed

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/apr28.html>

### Wise Guide

<http://www.loc.gov/wiseguide>

#### January 2010: For the Birds

<http://www.loc.gov/wiseguide/jan10/byrds.html>

#### May 2004: LC Presents Music, Theatre and Dance

<http://www.loc.gov/wiseguide/may04/singing.html>

### America's Library

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov>

#### Explore the States

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/index.php>

#### Tennessee: Birthplace of Country Music

[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/tn/es\\_tn\\_bristol\\_1.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/tn/es_tn_bristol_1.html)

#### North Carolina: Ole Time Fiddler's and Bluegrass Festival

[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/nc/es\\_nc\\_banjo\\_1.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/nc/es_nc_banjo_1.html)

#### Kentucky: National Thumb Pickers Hall of Fame

[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/ky/es\\_ky\\_thumb\\_1.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/ky/es_ky_thumb_1.html)

### See, Hear and Sing

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/sh/index.php>

#### Uncommon Instruments: Stringed Instruments

[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/sh/oddball/sh\\_oddball\\_string\\_1.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/sh/oddball/sh_oddball_string_1.html)

### Webcasts

<http://www.loc.gov/webcasts/>

#### Carter Family Tribute

[http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=701](http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=701)

#### Kinky Friedman: Bookfest 01

[http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=3429](http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=3429)

#### Seeger Tribute: Politics, Theory and Folk Revival

[http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=4338](http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4338)

#### Bluegrass Odyssey

[http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=3338](http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=3338)

#### Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver

[http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=4355](http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4355)

#### Sonny Burgess and the Pacers

[http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=4360](http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4360)

#### CMA Songwriters Series

[http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=5103](http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=5103)

### Performing Arts Encyclopedia

<http://www.loc.gov/performingarts/pae-home.html>

#### Dolly Parton and the Roots of Country Music (Web Presentation)

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.scdb.200033588/default.html>

### American Folk Life Center

<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/>

#### Lomax Collection

<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax>

#### Folk Song of America: The Robert Winslow Gordon Collection, 1922-1932

<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/Gordon/index.html>

# IN THE CLASSROOM: LESSON PLANS, ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

## Teacher's Page

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers>

## Themed Resources

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/>

## Music and Dance

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/america-music/>

## Lesson Plans

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/>

## The American Dream

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/american-dream/index.html>

## Collection Connections

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections>

## Fiddle Tunes of the Old Frontier: The Henry Reed Collection

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/fiddle-tunes>





## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

**Instrument Observations:** The link provided give an image and audio for a fiddle, guitar, mandolin and banjo. Using the links and Internet research answer the questions below.

### Look:

1. Name of Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many strings? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many sound holes? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the sound holes shape? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the body of the instrument made of? \_\_\_\_\_

### Listen:

1. Describe the sound it makes: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is it high-pitched or low pitched? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is it a happy, sad, rough or smooth sound? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is it played with a bow, strummed or plucked? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Does the sound remind you of something else you hear in nature or elsewhere? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Is this an instrument you would like to play? \_\_\_\_\_

### Links:

#### Images:

Fiddle: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lomaxbib:@field\(NUMBER+@od1\(cph+3b38018\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lomaxbib:@field(NUMBER+@od1(cph+3b38018)))

Guitar: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ngp:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(ndfahult+b502\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ngp:@field(NUMBER+@band(ndfahult+b502)))

Mandolin: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cdn:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(ichicdn+n085405\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cdn:@field(NUMBER+@band(ichicdn+n085405)))

Banjo: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2007660134>

#### Audio:

Fiddle: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/flwpabib:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(flwpabib000375\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/flwpabib:@field(DOCID+@lit(flwpabib000375)))

Guitar: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/flwpabib:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(flwpabib000081\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/flwpabib:@field(DOCID+@lit(flwpabib000081)))

Mandolin: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ftvbib,berl,afccalbib,cwband,coolbib,papr,cmns,flwpabib,afcreed,cowellbib,toddbib,afcnyebib,lo)

[bin/query/r?ammem/ftvbib,berl,afccalbib,cwband,coolbib,papr,cmns,flwpabib,afcreed,cowellbib,toddbib,afcnyebib,lo](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ftvbib,berl,afccalbib,cwband,coolbib,papr,cmns,flwpabib,afcreed,cowellbib,toddbib,afcnyebib,lo)  
[maxbib,raelbib,afcwip,omhbib,afcpearl,pin,qlt,ncr,afc911bib,afcesnbib,varstg,nfor:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(afccc+a4262b3\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ftvbib,berl,afccalbib,cwband,coolbib,papr,cmns,flwpabib,afcreed,cowellbib,toddbib,afcnyebib,lo)

Banjo: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/berl:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(berl+13485\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/berl:@field(NUMBER+@band(berl+13485)))

Lesson adapted from Shapes, Sound Holes and Strings: A Few Stringed Instruments and the Sounds they Make.  
 Teachers Guide, County Music Hall of Fame. [countymusichalloffame.org](http://countymusichalloffame.org)

## IMAGE SOURCES



Library of Congress  
Prints and Photographs  
The Stage on Broadway, Nashville, Tennessee



Library of Congress  
Prints and Photographs  
Detail, Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee



Library of Congress  
American Memory  
Built in America  
Union Gospel Tabernacle, 116 Fifth Avenue, North Nashville, Davidson, TN



Library of Congress  
Prints and Photographs  
Display of guitars and clothing related to Alabama, a Grammy Award-winning county music and southern rock band that originated in Fort Payne, Alabama



Library of Congress  
Prints and Photographs  
Johnny Cash, singing and playing his guitar in a recording session



Library of Congress  
American Memory  
Portraits by Carl Van Vechten  
Portrait of Burl Ives, holding guitar



Grand Ole Opry  
Artist Page  
Alison Krauss



Library of Congress  
American Memory  
Fiddle Tunes of the Old Frontier: The Henry Reed Collection  
Josh and Henry Reed, ca. 1903. Henry Reed age 19, plays banjo and his older brother Josh plays fiddle.



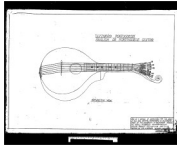
Library of Congress  
American Memory  
Tending the Commons: Folklife and Landscape in Southern West Virginia  
Amanda Lilly Delaware dancing to the music of the Lilly Brothers Band at the Stanley Heirs Reunion.



## IMAGE SOURCES



Library of Congress  
 American Memory  
 Tending the Commons: Folklife and Landscape in Southern West Virginia  
 Bill Grandhouse (Left), on mandolin, and Dodge Sears, on guitar, performing at the Stanley Heirs Reunion.



Library of Congress  
 American Memory  
 California Gold: Northern California Folk Music from the Thirties  
 Drawing caption: Guitarra portuguesa-English or Portuguese guitar. Drawing No. 5



Library of Congress  
 American Memory  
 California Gold: Northern California Folk Music from the Thirties  
 Photograph caption: "Accompanist for Mrs. Ben Scott".



Library of Congress  
 Prints and Photographs  
 Country Music Legend Hank Williams statue, Lister Hill Plaza in Montgomery, Alabama



Library of Congress  
 Prints and Photographs  
 Member of the Bog Trotters Band, posed holding their instruments, Galex, Va. Back row: Uncle Alex Dunford, fiddle; Fields Ward, guitar; Wade Ward, banjo. Front row: Crockett Ward, fiddle; Doc Davis, autoharp.



Library of Congress  
 Prints and Photographs  
 Band playing at Saturday night dance. Tulare migrant camp, Visalia, California



Library of Congress  
 Prints and Photographs  
 Tour bus for Alabama, A Grammy Award-winning county music and southern rock band that originated in Fort Payne, Alabama

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If you or your school is interested in learning more about the Library of Congress resources please contact us. Our program offers individualized professional development using the rich resources offered by the Library of Congress.

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