

APPALACHIAN MUSIC & DANCE

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Council



Roots to Offshoots with The Shoe String Band and Dance Caller Liz Slade April 13, 2013

Evolution

- ★ Early field recorders to Appalachia found songs and tunes that were well known but already considered archaic in the Anglo-Celtic traditions. Many of these tunes were stylistically very similar to the way they were played centuries before.
- ★ Bluegrass (developed post-WWII) grew out of Oldtime music and shares the instruments and some repertoire but individual and ensemble playing styles are markedly different.

Regionality

- ★ Southern Appalachian oldtime music is the most typical form of the traditional styles of the South and Midwest.
- ★ Northern (New England and Quebecois) fiddling traditions are perhaps more stately and serious and stylistically distinct from Southern styles.
- ★ Midwestern traditions are parallel to oldtime music traditions of Appalachia but differ stylistically and in repertoire. Regional differences exist in the mid-West as well.
- ★ Texas goes its own way and while a history of Texas players of oldtime music exists, the most well-known fiddle music of Texas bears little resemblance to oldtime Appalachian music.



Themes

- ★ Rural life: agriculture, hunting, food and drink
- ★ Boy/girl relationships: dancing, courting, marriage
- ★ Current events: politics, transportation, nonsense and humor
- ★ The Dark Side: murder and mayhem; drunkenness; race issues; innuendo

18th - 19th century oldtime music in North America

- ★ Eighteenth century roots of oldtime music consisted of solo fiddle in white society and banjo (possibly fiddle) in black society
- ★ Early 19th century Minstrel music is a primary source of old time music
- ★ A solo fiddler is known to have accompanied Lewis and Clark
- ★ [Richmond Cotillion](#), played at the inauguration of Thomas Jefferson
- ★ Tunes dating back to the Civil War, e.g. [Soldier's Joy](#), are still common today.



Early 20th century players (dawn of recording age: Brunswick, Victor, Vitaphone labels)

- ★ [Earliest recordings](#) of Oldtime music occurred in the 1920's and were of [semi-professional musicians throughout southern Appalachia](#).

Mid 20th century folk revival (Lomax, Harry Smith, 50's – 60's folk festivals)

- ★ The early 1940's and 1950's – **field recordings** uncovered regional styles and fiddle tunes played by amateur musicians for community gatherings.
- ★ Players from this era: John Salyer, Luther Strong, Eddon Hammonds.
- ★ **The purpose of these field recordings was preservation rather than commercial release, though some eventually became available.**
- ★ The **folk revival** of the 1960's – new audience and first of the old time music festivals started in Galax, Virginia



Late 20th century Oldtime music – present (Oldtime festivals 70's -present)

- ★ Old Time music became available as LP recordings towards the end of the 1960's and early 1970's
- ★ Young musicians sought out and learned from the older musicians who were captured by the field recordists in the 1940's and 1950's. These young musicians formed their own semi-professional string bands: Hollow Rock String Band; Fuzzy Mountain String Band; The Highwoods String Band; The Double Decker String Band
- ★ Music festivals are a large part of the old time music community some 5000 – 8000 musicians and friends across the country. Many festivals have contests (individual and band with cash prizes) but more time is spent jamming and socializing
- ★ [Appalachian String Band Festival](#), commonly known as Clifftop, in WV .



Internet resources

- ★ [Oldtime Herald](#)
- ★ [Remembering Old Songs](#)
- ★ [The Old Time Music Home Page](#)
- ★ [Fiddlejammer](#)
- ★ [Carter Family lyrics](#)
- ★ [Internet Archive of 78 rpm and cylinder recordings](#)
- ★ [Traditional Music Library \(UK\)](#)
- ★ [Appalachia Webquest - New Paltz K-12 students and Lisa St. John](#)

Hudson Valley Oldtime Music groups on Facebook – Jamming, concerts, dances

- ★ [Hudson Highlands Old Time Hoot Society](#)
- ★ [Old-Time Jam Session and Potluck at Hilltop Hanover Farm](#)
- ★ [Capital District old time jams and events](#)
- ★ [The Shoe String Band](#)
- ★ [Hudson Valley Community Dances](#)

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