

**RESOURCE GUIDE**

**THE POWER OF MUSIC:**

**PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS OF AMERICANS AND THEIR MUSICAL  
INSTRUMENTS, 1860-1915**

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## **Pre-Visit Classroom Discussion and Projects**

The Power of Music exhibit provides an opportunity to explore both the history of American popular music and the history of photography. Students can research online and through encyclopedias the lives of American composers such as Stephen Foster or African-American James A. Bland. Original sheet music and even recordings are also available online at the web sites provided in this resource guide. There is also much good information available online on the history of photography.

Try to find out who the early photographers were in your community. Do students have family photographs taken by these photographers? The lives of the photographers themselves can be quite interesting. A visit or call to the local library or historical society, which generally hold early city directories, is a good start.

Ask students if they have musical instruments at home. What are they, and what musical family do they belong to (stringed, brass, woodwind, percussion)? Who plays these instruments and why?

Listen to the music samples available on the web sites listed in this resource guide. Try to distinguish the sounds of the different instruments. How is this historic music different from the music heard today on the radio or TV?

Ask students if they could pick one item to be photographed with, what would it be? A bicycle? Doll? Pet? When was the last time students went to a photography studio to have their portrait taken?

## **Gallery Activity**

Help students "read" photographs. That is, look beyond the obvious. Some photographs have painted backdrops behind the sitters. What do these painted backdrops portray? Look for other objects in the photographs in addition to the musical instruments. For example, one image in this exhibit depicts a fiddle player with both his fiddle and a pocketknife. Have a team of students put together a list of objects in the photographs that are not musical instruments.

Have students keep track of the kinds of instruments that are pictured in this exhibit. Which instrument is the most common? Which is the least common?

Pay close attention to the hair styles, clothing, headgear, and footwear of the musicians. These change over the several decades represented in this exhibit. Where is the change greater – women, men, or children? Is there a difference in the clothing between photographs made in the East and those in the West?

Look for the names of the photographers in the exhibit, either on the image itself or in the label description. Are any of these photographers from your local community?

Younger students may be asked to count the strings on the stringed instruments. The parlor guitar has six strings. The banjo has five strings. But what about the harp guitar? The autoharp?

Younger students may also be asked to find familiar shapes in the instruments. A parlor guitar is in the shape of a figure 8. The body or "pot" of a banjo is in the shape of a circle. Are there other shapes?

## BOOKS

An attempt at a complete bibliography of books on historic American music and instruments would run dozens of pages. The following selected titles are recommended.

Armstrong, Janice Gray, ed. *Catching the Tune: Music and William Sidney Mount*. Stony Brook, New York: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1984.

Axlerod, Alan. *Songs of the Wild West*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991.

Carter, Walter. *Gibson Guitars: 100 Years of an American Icon*. Los Angeles: General Publishing Group, 1994.

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Dwyer, Richard A., and Richard E. Lingenfelter, eds. *The Songs of the Gold Rush*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964.

Epstein, Dena J. *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977.

Fife, Austin E., and Alta S. Fife, eds. *Cowboy and Western Songs: A Comprehensive Anthology*. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1969.

Finson, Jon W. *The Voices that are Gone: Themes in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century American Popular Song*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Gardner, Mark L., ed. *Jack Thorp's Songs of the Cowboys*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2005.

Gura, Philip F. *C. F. Martin and His Guitars, 1796-1873*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Gura, Philip F., and James F. Bollman. *America's Instrument: The Banjo in the Nineteenth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

Hunter, Dave. *Acoustic Guitars: The Illustrated Encyclopedia*. London, England: Backbeat Books, 2003.

Langellier, John P., and Thomas C. Railsback. *The Drums Would Roll: A Pictorial History of U. S. Army Bands on the American Frontier, 1866-1900*. Poole, England: Arms and Armour Press Ltd., 1987.

- Linn, Karen. *That Half-Barbaric Twang: The Banjo in American Popular Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.
- Loeffler, Jack, Katherine Loeffler, and Enrique R. Lamadrid. *La Musica de los Viejitos: Hispano Folk Music of the Rio Grande del Norte*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999.
- Moloney, Mick. *Far from the Shamrock Shore: The Story of Irish-American Immigration Through Song*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2002.
- Musical Instruments of the World: An Illustrated Encyclopedia by the Diagram Group*. New York: Facts on File, 1976.
- Nathan, Hans. *Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962.
- Randolph, Vance, ed. *Ozark Folksongs*. 4 vols. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980.
- Silber, Irwin, ed. *Songs of the Civil War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.
- Spaeth, Sigmund. *A History of Popular Music in America*. New York: Random House, 1948.
- Tawa, Nicholas E. *Sweet Songs for Gentle Americans: The Parlor Song in America, 1790-1860*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1980.
- Teagle, John. *Washburn: Over One Hundred Years of Fine Stringed Instruments*. New York: Music Sales Corp., 1996.
- Toll, Robert C. *Blackening Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Trevino, Adrian. *Hispanic Violin Playing in the Southwest*. Albuquerque: Trellis Publishing Co., 1987.
- White, John I. *Git Along Little Dogies: Songs and Songmakers of the American West*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975.

## **WEB SITES**

### **Online Recordings/Music Files**

#### **The Acoustic Age Podcast**

(<http://web.mac.com/asboisseau/iWeb/theacousticage/music/music.html>)

Recordings of cylinder records from the early 1900s played on an Edison Standard Phonograph model D cylinder player with a model K reproducer.

#### **Classic Banjo Jukebox**

(<http://www.members.tripod.com/~wtalley/>)

#### **Cylinder Preservation and Digitization Project, University of California, Santa Barbara**

(<http://cylinders.library.ucsb.edu/>)

With funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the UCSB Libraries have created a digital collection of nearly 7,000 cylinder recordings held by the Department of Special Collections. In an effort to bring these recordings to a wider audience, they can be freely downloaded or streamed online.

#### **Public Domain Music**

(<http://www.pdmusic.org/>)

Copyrighted MIDI files, and text files of their lyrics, created by Benjamin Robert Tubb; based on original sheet music sources in the public domain. The site also contains useful biographical sketches of 17 American composers.

### **Music and Instrument History**

#### **Banjo Orchestra**

(<http://www.forgottenwisdom.com/banjoorchestra/index.html>)

#### **BanjoOnMyKnee.com**

([www.banjoonmyknee.com](http://www.banjoonmyknee.com))

#### **The Classic Banjo Resource**

([www.classicbanjo.com](http://www.classicbanjo.com))

#### **The Concertina Library**

([www.concertina.com](http://www.concertina.com))

#### **A Guide to the Irish Flute**

(<http://www.firescribble.net/flute/index.html>)

#### **FluteHistory.com**

([www.flutehistory.com](http://www.flutehistory.com))

**FretlessZithers.com**

([www.fretlesszithers.com](http://www.fretlesszithers.com))

**Mugwumps Online**

([www.mugwumps.com](http://www.mugwumps.com))

**The Rag Time Ephemeralist**

(<http://home.earthlink.net/~ephemeralist/>)

### **Historic Sheet Music**

**African-American Sheet Music Digitizing Project, Brown University**

(<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/sheetmusic/afam/index.html>)

The sheet music in this digital collection (1,305 pieces) has been selected from the Sheet Music Collection at the John Hay Library at Brown University. The digital collection consists of African-American sheet music dating from 1820 through 1920. It includes many songs from the heyday of antebellum black face minstrelsy in the 1850s and from the abolitionist movement of the same period.

**Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads, University of Oxford**

(<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ballads/ballads.htm>)

The Bodleian Library has unparalleled holdings of over 30,000 ballads in several major collections. The original printed materials range from the 16th- to the 20th-Century. The Broadside Ballads project makes the digitized copies of the sheets and ballads available to the research community.

**Historic American Sheet Music, Special Collections Library, Duke University**

(<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sheetmusic/>)

The Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at Duke University holds a significant collection of 19th and early 20th century American sheet music. The Historic American Sheet Music Project provides access to digital images of 3,042 pieces from the collection, published in the United States between 1850 and 1920. This web site's sheet music timeline is especially worthwhile.

**Indiana University Sheet Music Collection**

(<http://www.letrs.indiana.edu/s/sheetmusic/>)

This web site allows you to search some of the holdings from the Lilly Library's approximately 150,000 pieces of sheet music, including those for which there are digitized images available.

## **The Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music, John Hopkins University**

(<http://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/>)

The Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music is part of Special Collections at the Milton S. Eisenhower Library of The Johns Hopkins University. It contains over 29,000 pieces of music and focuses on popular American music spanning the period 1780 to 1960. All pieces of the collection are indexed on this site and a search will retrieve a catalog description of the pieces. An image of the cover and each page of music will also be retrieved if the music was published before 1923 and is in the public domain.

## **Music for the Nation, American Sheet Music, 1820-1885, Library of Congress**

(<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mussmhtml/mussmhome.html>)

*Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music* contains more than 62,500 pieces of historical sheet music registered for copyright: more than 15,000 registered during the years 1820-1860 and more than 47,000 registered during the years 1870-1885. Included are popular songs, operatic arias, piano music, sacred and secular choral music, solo instrumental music, method books and instructional materials, and music for band and orchestra. The collection documents the attitudes and tastes of a bygone era with music of many varieties and sources, all of it published in the United States.

## **Vintage and Reproduction Instrument Dealers and Manufacturers**

**Aquila** – Manufacturer of gut and synthetic strings

([www.aquilausa.com](http://www.aquilausa.com))

**Bernunzio Vintage Instruments, Rochester, New York**

([www.bernunzio.com](http://www.bernunzio.com))

**Elderly Instruments, Lansing Michigan** – New and vintage instruments, parts, accessories, books and CDs.

([www.elderly.com](http://www.elderly.com))

**Gruhn Guitars, Nashville, Tennessee** – Vintage and new instruments

([www.gruhn.com](http://www.gruhn.com))

**James J. Hartel, Franklin, New York** – Early banjo and minstrel banjo maker

([www.minstrelbanjo.com](http://www.minstrelbanjo.com))

**The Music Emporium, Lexington, Massachusetts** – Vintage and new instruments

([www.themusicemporium.com](http://www.themusicemporium.com))

**George Wunderlich, Hagerstown, Maryland** – Minstrel banjo maker

([www.wunderbanjo.com](http://www.wunderbanjo.com))