

# The Artists & Personalities of the 1927 Bristol Sessions

RESOURCE DOCUMENT

*Images*







Early 20th-century Bristol was a vibrant place with a host of hotels catering to the city’s visitors, along with restaurants, retail shops, and other businesses. In this postcard of State Street, you can see the Taylor-Christian Hat Company building with its painted advertisement on its side.

Credit: Reproduced with permission from the [Bristol Historical Association](#)





**George Massengill, leader of the Tennessee Mountaineers,  
is seen here with the Ford he drove to Bristol.**  
Credit: Reproduced courtesy of Nancy Taylor, daughter of Georgia Warren





**Ralph Peer in the 1950s.**  
Credit: Courtesy of [peermusic](#), Peer Family Archives





**Ralph Peer with a horticultural drawing of his other passion: camellias.**  
Credit: Courtesy of the Charles K. Wolfe Collection





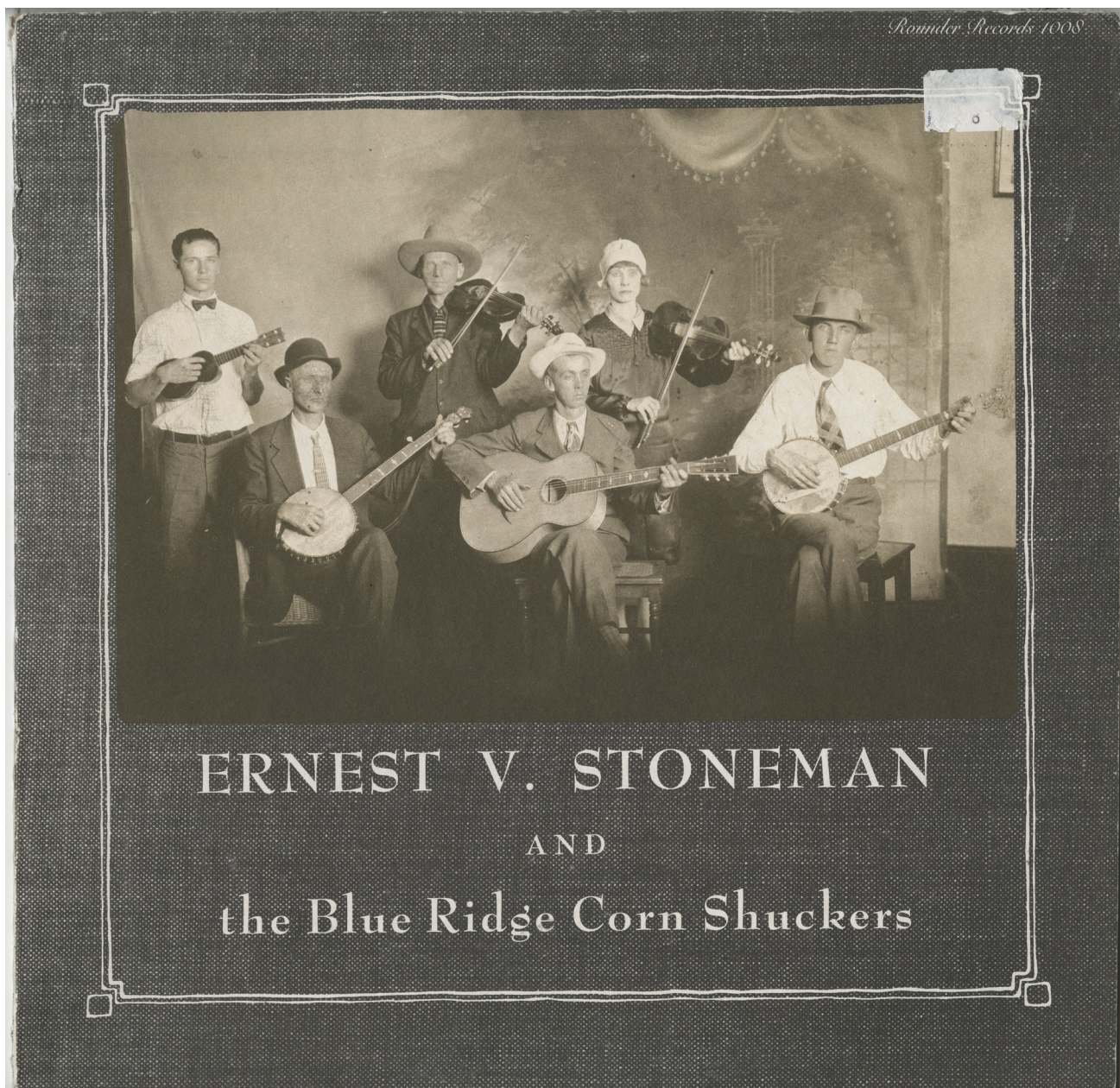
**Hattie and Ernest Stoneman in their later years; he is holding his autoharp.**  
Credit: From the [Mike Seeger Collection](#), #20009, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library,  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill





Record labels for Stoneman's two Titanic-themed songs, one on the OKeh label and the other released by Edison.





This later LP, released by Rounder Records in 1975, is labelled as “Ernest V. Stoneman and the Blue Ridge Corn Shuckers,” though most of the songs on it were released under other band names used by Stoneman. Credit: From the Birthplace of Country Music Museum Collection





CARTER FAMILY

**The Carter Family.**

Credit: From the [John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001](#), Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill





The record label for The Carter Family's border radio favorite, "Keep on the Sunny Side."





**The Carter Family Museum, once A. P. Carter's general store.**  
Credit: Photograph by Amy C. Evans for the [Southern Foodways Alliance](#)





Promotional photograph of Mother Maybelle and the Carter Sisters.  
Credit: Courtesy of the [Grand Ole Opry Archives](#)





A photograph of the border radio station XERA in the late 1930s.  
The base of the massive transmitter can be seen behind the building.

Credit: From [www.theradiohistorian.org](http://www.theradiohistorian.org)





**Johnny Cash escorting Maybelle and Sara for a performance at the Carter Family Memorial Festival at the Carter Fold in Hiltons, Virginia. Cash was Maybelle's son-in-law; he married her daughter June in 1968.**  
Credit: From the Robert Alexander Collection at the Birthplace of Country Music Museum





Portrait of Jimmie Rodgers.

Credit: Courtesy of [Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum](#)



Jimmie Rodgers with The Carter Family in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1931.  
Credit: Courtesy of [Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum](#)





**Jimmie Rodgers embraced different personas during his short recording career – from the suave crooner to the singing cowboy as seen here to a railroad worker.**

Credit: From the [John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001](#), Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill





**There is some speculation that this picture of Uncle Eck Dunford was a self-portrait. The portrait highlights his musical instruments, including a guitar he bought in 1912 from Sears Roebuck and which he played on most of his recordings.**

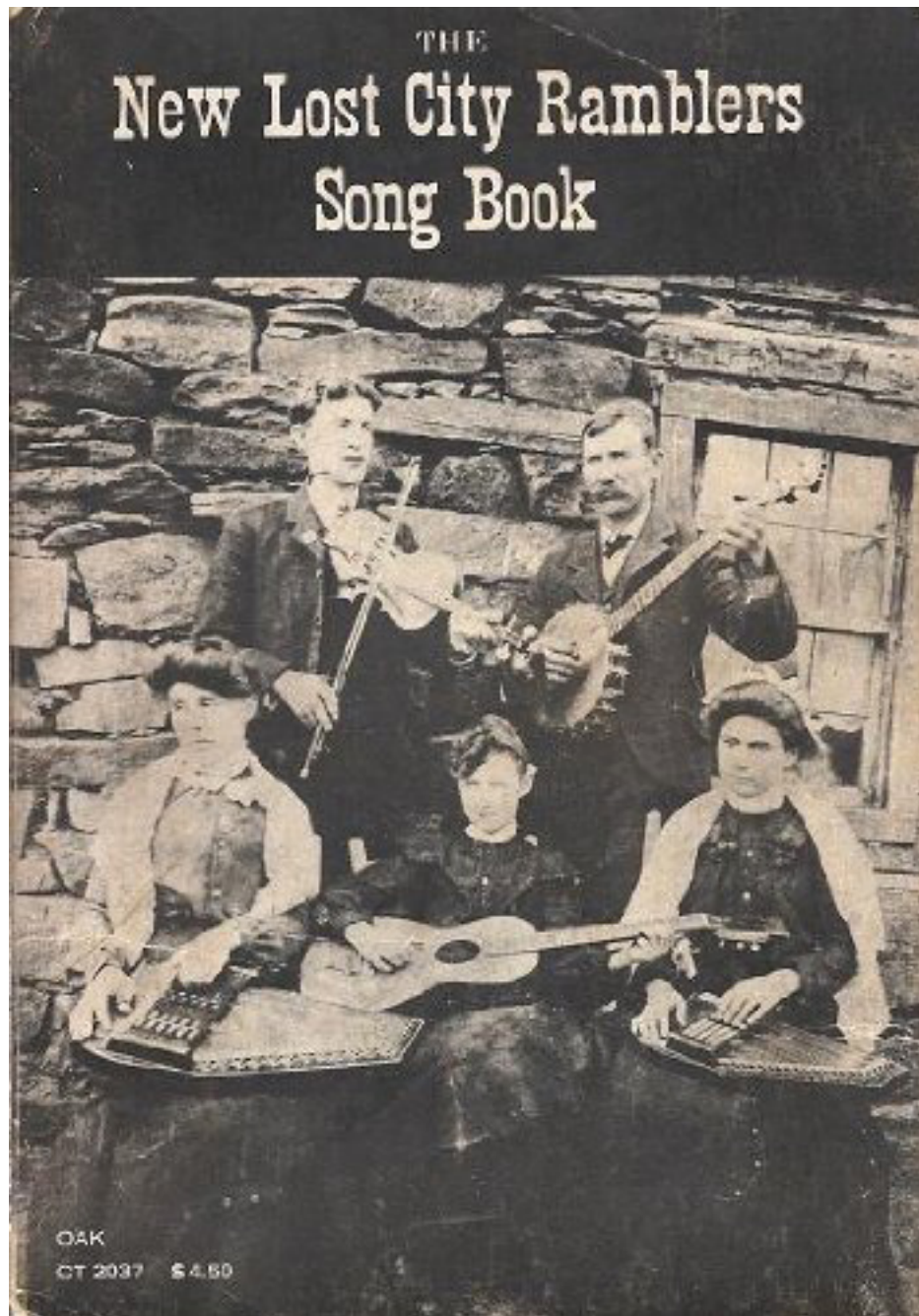
Credit: Courtesy of Doris Brown





Uncle Eck Dunford's guitar on display in the *Hometown Stars* special exhibit.  
Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music





A photograph of Galax musicians by Uncle Eck Dunford is on the cover of *The New Lost City Ramblers Song Book*.



**The Johnson Brothers.**

Credit: From the [John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001](#), Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill





A portrait of Alfred Karnes as a young man in the U.S. Navy, along with another sailor.  
Credit: Courtesy of Debbie O'Shea





Certificate of Ordination

This is to certify, that Brother Alfred G. Karnes  
 Was, Ordained to the work of the Gospel Ministry, by prayer  
 and the laying on of the hands of the Eldership, on the 24  
 Day of October 1926. He was call  
 ed to Ordination by the West-Carolina Baptist Church  
 Of which He was a member whic had ample opportunity to become  
 acquainted with His piety and Ministerial gifts.

The Ordaining Council was composed of A. B. Johnson  
A. G. Pennington, Rev. E. P. Bruner  
Rev. G. H. Shain & Rev. C. R. Brock

Who after a deliberate and thorough examination of the candidate cordially recommend him for ordination.

Our beloved Brother, the bearer of this Paper, has, therefore, the entire approbation of the ordaining Council in being set appart to preach the Gospel and Administer the Ordinances of Christ.

May He like Barnabas, Be full of the Holy Spirit and of Faith," And through Him may, "Much people be added to the Lord".

C. R. Brock  
A. B. Johnson

This card records Alfred Karnes's ordination as a minister.  
Credit: Courtesy of Debbie O'Shea





**Alfred Karnes with his harp guitar and standing in front of signage listing out different Biblical verses.**  
Credit: Image from the *Hometown Stars* special exhibit, courtesy of the [Blue Ridge Institute and Museum at Ferrum College](#)





**Ernest Phipps with his second wife Zola, possibly a wedding photograph.**  
Credit: Donated to the Birthplace of Country Music Museum by Teresa Phipps Patierno in the memory of her grandfather, Ernest Phipps, a coal miner & Holiness preacher from Kentucky, a simple man who loved his Lord



**Ernest Phipps's military dog tags from World War II.**

Credit: Donated to the Birthplace of Country Music Museum by Teresa Phipps Patierno in the memory of her grandfather, Ernest Phipps, a coal miner & Holiness preacher from Kentucky, a simple man who loved his Lord





Blind Alfred Reed holding his fiddle and standing before a sign advertising his music performance. Credit: Courtesy of [Goldenseal Magazine](#)





The museum is fortunate to have relationships with several 1927 Bristol Sessions artists' descendants, which gives us the opportunity to hear stories about the musicians who recorded in Bristol, see old photographs of them, and sometimes even get a glimpse of one of their instruments! This is the fiddle played by Blind Alfred Reed at the 1927 Bristol Sessions, brought to the museum by his relatives in 2017. Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music





**The Shelor Family.** Credit: From the liner notes by Ted Olson and Tony Russell, *The Bristol Sessions, 1927–28: The Big Bang of Country Music*, 2011



**B. F. Shelton after a successful day of fishing.**  
Credit: Courtesy of the Charles K. Wolfe Collection





Victor label for the Tennessee Mountaineer's recording of "Standing on the Promises."

Credit: [www.rateyourmusic.com](http://www.rateyourmusic.com)



**Georgia Warren at her high school graduation.**  
Credit: Courtesy of Nancy Taylor





**Georgia Warren cuts the ribbon at the grand opening of the Birthplace of Country Music Museum on August 1, 2014. Roni Stoneman, daughter of Ernest Stoneman, stands behind her.**

Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music; photographer: Angela Freese

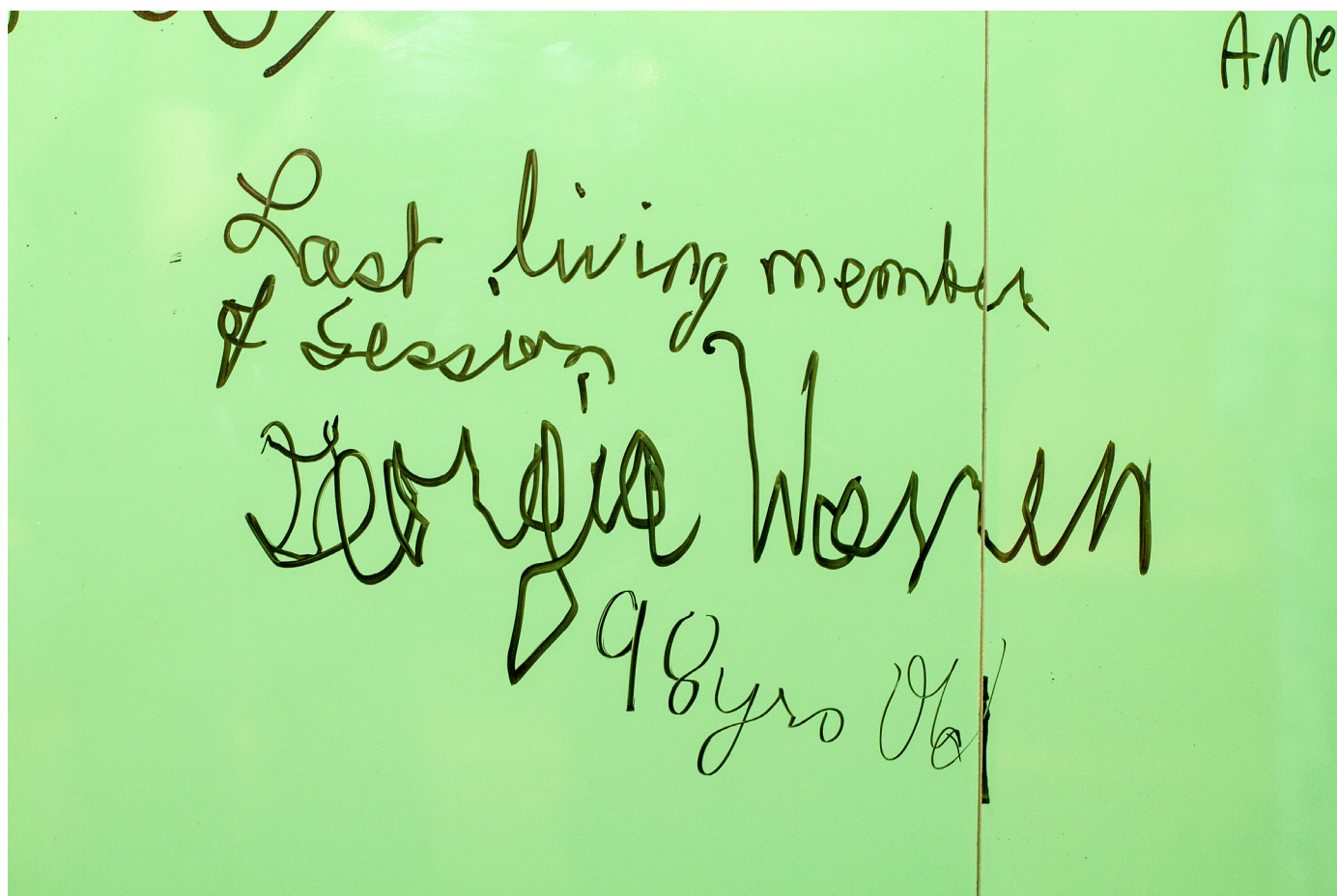




**Georgia Warren, last surviving artist from the 1927 Bristol Sessions, signed the museum's Green Board at the 2014 grand opening.**

Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music; photographer: Angela Freese



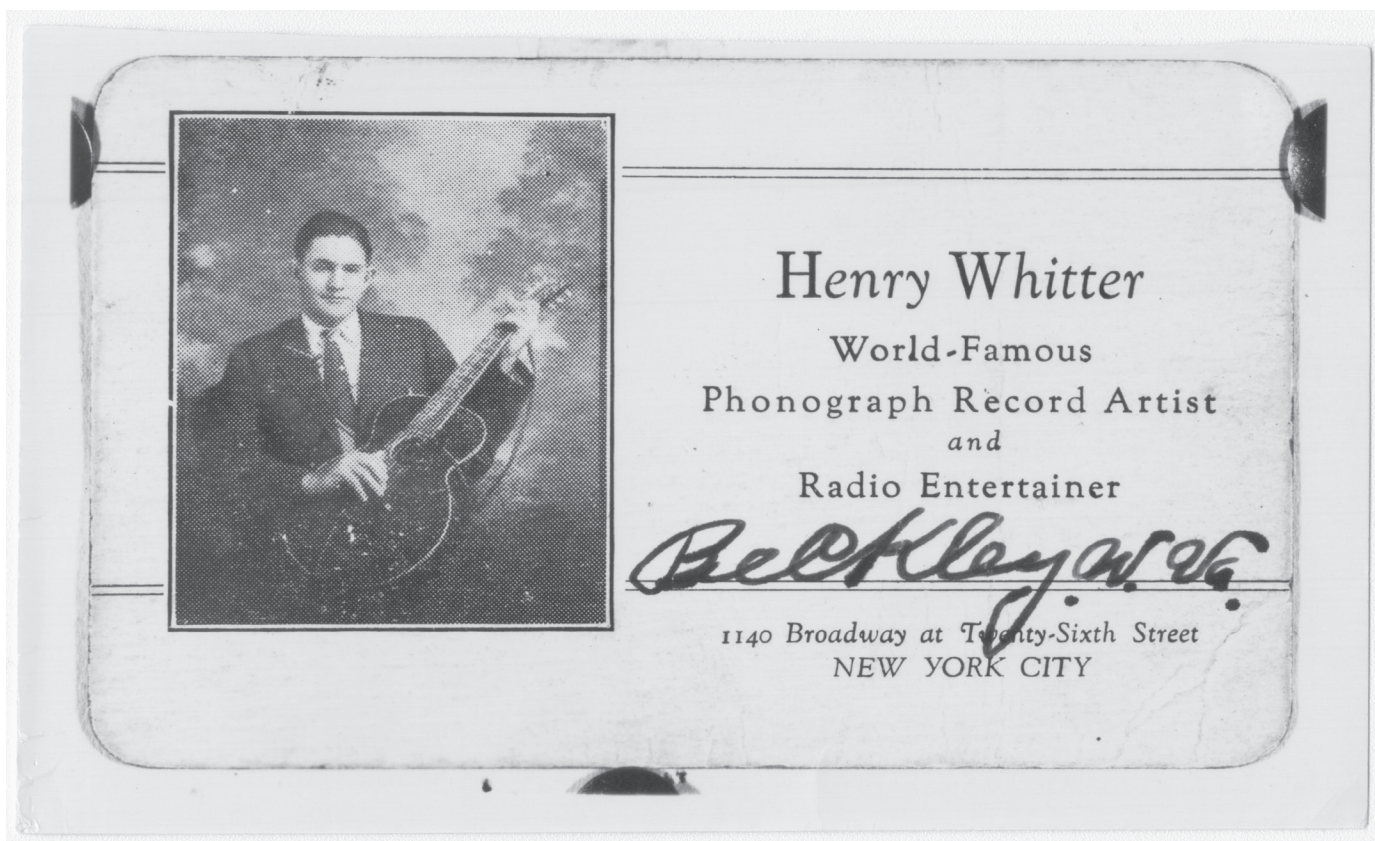


Georgia Warren, last surviving artist from the 1927 Bristol Sessions, signed the museum's Green Board at the 2014 grand opening.  
Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music; photographer: Angela Freese



**This promotional photograph of Henry Whitter underlines his identity as a recording “star” as he formally poses with some of his records and his guitar.**  
Credit: From the [John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001](#), Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill





Henry Whitter further emphasized his professional musician status with his card identifying him as a “world-famous phonograph record artist and radio entertainer.”  
Credit: From the [John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001](#), Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill





**G. B. Grayson and Henry Whitter.**

Credit: From the **John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001**, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill





**Henry Whitter with his guitar and harmonica rack.**

Credit: From the [John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001](#), Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



**The Alcoa Quartet.**

Credit: From the liner notes by Ted Olson and Tony Russell, *The Bristol Sessions, 1927–28: The Big Bang of Country Music*, 2011





**J. W. and Flora Baker with their sons.**

Credit: From the liner notes by Ted Olson and Tony Russell,  
*The Bristol Sessions, 1927-28: The Big Bang of Country Music*, 2011





**Charles McReynolds of the Bull Mountain Moonshiners  
and his daughter Maggie.**

Credit: From the liner notes by Ted Olson and Tony Russell,  
*The Bristol Sessions, 1927–28: The Big Bang of Country Music*, 2011





**Jesse McReynolds playing his grandfather Charles McReynolds' fiddle at a 2017 *Farm and Fun Time* live radio show at the museum.**  
Credit: © Birthplace of Country Music; photographer: Billie Wheeler



**Norman Edmonds.**

Credit: Courtesy of Mark Sanderford





**Jimmie Rodgers (standing with banjo) is seen here with Jack Pierce and Claude and Jack Grant of the Tennesse Ramblers.**

Credit: From the [John Edwards Memorial Foundation Records, #20001](#), Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



The Victor record label for El Watson's "Pot Licker Blues."  
Credit: [www.discogs.com](http://www.discogs.com)





**The West Virginia Coon Hunters, standing left to right: Fred Belcher, Clyde S. Meadows, Jim Brown, and Vernal Vest; seated left to right: Dutch Stewart, Wesley “Bane” Boyles, Regal Mooney, Fred Pendleton, and Joe Stephens. Only five of the musicians seen here recorded at the 1927 Bristol Sessions.**

Credit: From the Birthplace of Country Music Museum Collection, gift of Denise Smith