

Notes from Along the County Line

by Betty Westmoreland

Goodness gracious! The summer solstice is rapidly approaching, and old-time players and fans are gathering like flies to a picnic. **The County Line Old-Time Music Jam** on Sunday, June 7, 2009, was nothing if not remarkable! Set in the perfect location of the Sheffield Antiques Mall (near the junction of US 57 and US 72) in Collierville, TN, the jam had its largest gathering yet. Pickers who gathered at 2:00 PM for the monthly first-Sunday old-time jam were: **Dean Dameworth, Randy Sell, Casey Luttrell, Lee Cagle, Richard Lewis, Matty O'Shea, Melissa Arleth, Cecelia Chilton, Caroline Sanford, Hilary Scheel, Daniel Fleck, Nancy Chase, Bill Erskine, Donna Gray, Karl Gray, and Richard McFalls. Valerie Gray**, several casual onlookers, and this writer, were there to show appreciation and support. Players were seated in a circle, the leader selected the first song, and she passed the next selection to her left. That player had the option to choose a tune or pass, and around the circle it went.

Old-time music is just that—it's old! It pre-dates country music, and it even pre-dates bluegrass music. Real old-time music comes from the hills and hollers in the rural Eastern portion of the United States. Grandparents with several 'greats' in front of their names brought the music with them to America when they came over from Scotland, Ireland, England, and Wales. Many of the songwriters' names have been lost in the mists of time. There are dance tunes, jigs and reels, hornpipes, songs of love lost and found, songs of life and death, songs about travel and adventure. The instruments used in old-time music are guitar, fiddle, mandolin, resophonic mandolin, dulcimer, autoharp, open-back banjo (played clawhammer or drop-thumb style), upright bass, tin whistle, and bagpipes. Imagine the excitement in the antiques mall on June 7, when our piper began to play! She gathered a crowd from around the store!

The song selection for the afternoon: Wildwood Flower, No Place Like Home, Peach Pickin' Time in Georgia, My Dixie Darlin', Banks of the Ohio, Mountain Dew (Dean's version), San Antonio Rose, When First Unto This Country, I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes, God Gave Noah the Rainbow Sign, Mountain Dew (Melissa's version), Erie Canal, Sittin' on Top of the World, Whiskey Before Breakfast, The Water Is Wide, Oklahoma Hills, Lost Lover Blues, Dream of a Miner's Child, Sister Mary Wears a Golden Chain, The

Sunny Side of Life, No Depression, Give Me the Roses While I Live, Linoleum Has Lost Its Pattern, Dark Hollow, Johnny Jump Up, Turkey in the Straw, Mississippi Sawyer, Dark as a Dungeon, I've Just Seen the Rock of Ages, Bury Me Beneath the Willow, and Beulah Land.

Next scheduled jam: **July 5, 2009, at 2:00 PM CDT**

Thanks to the owners and staff of Sheffield Antiques Mall in Collierville, TN, for the space and time (and refreshments!) for old-time string band music!

Need more information? You can Google the Carter Family, the Carter Family Fold, Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerard. Or check out Virginia's Heritage Music Trail known as The Crooked Road at www.thecrookedroad.org. Also see The Museum of Appalachia at www.museumofappalachia.com. While you're at it, check out the schedule for the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, AR at www.ozarkfolkcenter.com (Hint: Old-time string band week at the OFC is July 6-9, 2009)

For more information about old-time string band music in Tennessee: www.nashvilleoldtime.org or www.boogertowngap.com or www.fiddleandpick.com (Pegram, TN) or www.clemmerdulcimer.com (Townsend, TN)

For local dulcimer and old-time music information: Lee@LeeCagleDulcimers.com or www.LeeCagleDulcimers.com