

**Early Country Musician Doc Williams (1914-2011): Contributions to the Development of  
Country Music and Applications for a General Music Curriculum, Grades 3-5**

**Josephine L. Cover**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Music  
(Music Education)  
in the University of Michigan  
2016

Thesis Committee:

Professor Marie McCarthy, Chair  
Associate Professor Kate Fitzpatrick  
Associate Professor Charles Garrett

© Josephine L. Cover

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

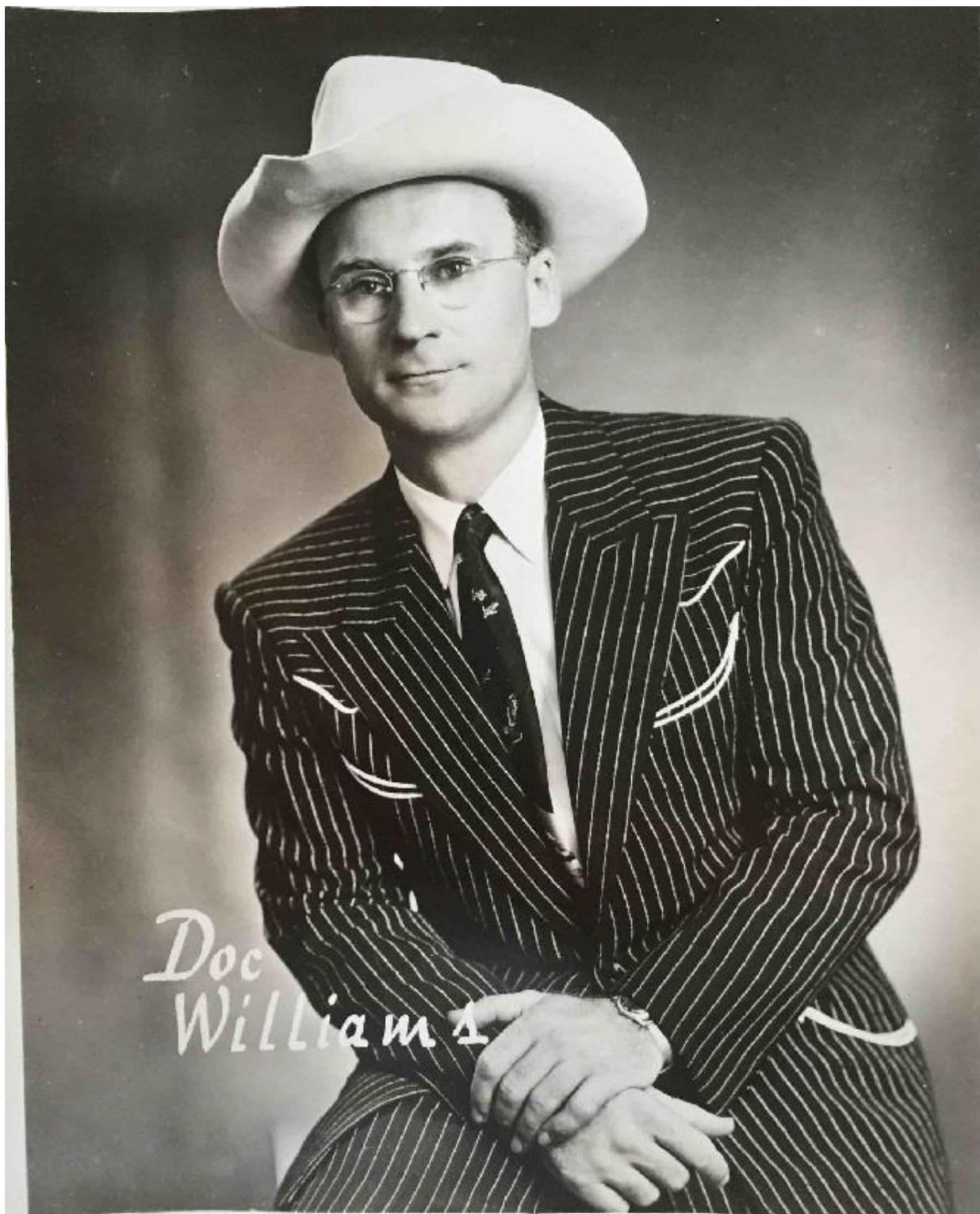
I would like to thank my husband for his patience with this project that began five years ago. We have three beautiful children, who in their young age are already learning that a family means supporting and loving each other unconditionally, which my husband demonstrates time and time again. I also thank my parents, who watched my children while I traveled to Wheeling for research and interviews, and, who in turn traveled to my home to help out while I wrote this thesis.

I would also like to thank my committee members, who devoted much of their time thinking about my thesis, reading drafts, and providing suggestions. Dr. Charles Garrett supported this project and shared his expertise; Dr. Kate Fitzpatrick planted the seed to make the study of early country music in our schools my thesis topic; and lastly, my chair Dr. Marie McCarthy, of whom I have the deepest respect. Through my correspondence with Dr. McCarthy I realized that she is a humble woman who genuinely loves what she does and gives her all to her students. This thesis transformed so many times and Marie was there through it all, encouraging and coaching me every step of the way. To Marie, I respectfully sign off, “Onward!”

I would be remiss to neglect mention of the Williams family, who welcomed me most graciously into their lives. Barbara Smik, Doc Williams’ eldest daughter, spent an unknown amount of hours helping me with my research, digging up primary materials and sharing her knowledge of her parents’ music. It goes without saying that I could not have completed this project without her help. As a result, we have developed a friendship and respect for one another, of which I am grateful.

In closing, I dedicate this project to my grandmother, Catherine Foltz, who first introduced me to Williams’ music. My grandmother has aged gracefully and has retained her

spryness through all the trial and errors of life. She is a force to be reckoned with; sharp and hardnosed, yet caring and welcoming to anyone she meets. I have an incredible and indescribable bond with my grandmother, and I hope she is proud of this work.



A 1940 publicity photo of Doc Williams. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION TO EARLY COUNTRY MUSIC AND DOC WILLIAMS.....	1
A Place for Early Country Music in the Elementary General Music Curriculum .....	3
Purpose Statement and Research Questions.....	6
Development of Early Country Music in America .....	7
Meet Doc Williams .....	8
Scope of Study .....	10
Outline of Remaining Chapters.....	10
CHAPTER TWO .....	12
COUNTRY MUSIC IN WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA .....	12
A Living Musical Tradition.....	13
A Commercially Born Genre .....	15
Country Music in Wheeling, West Virginia.....	18
Linking Early County Music Practices to Doc Williams .....	22
In Summary .....	26
CHAPTER THREE .....	27
METHODOLOGY OF STUDY.....	27
Method of Research .....	27
Collecting and Working with Primary Sources .....	28
Development of Curriculum Based on Primary Sources .....	29
Internal and External Criticism .....	31
Potential Ethical Issues.....	33

Organizing the Narrative.....	34
In Summary.....	34
CHAPTER FOUR.....	35
DOC WILLIAMS’ CAREER AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO COUNTRY MUSIC.....	35
Introduction.....	35
Developing a Musical Career as a Live Performer and Band Member .....	37
Williams Produces his Brand of Country Music.....	41
In Summary.....	59
CHAPTER FIVE .....	62
APPLICATIONS OF DOC WILLIAMS’ MUSIC FOR A GENERAL MUSIC CURRICULUM FOR GRADES 3-5 .....	62
Williams’ Music in the Context of Maryland State Music Standards.....	64
Listening to Williams’ Music.....	65
How to Listen .....	67
Song Selections.....	78
Merry Maiden Polka (1947).....	78
Beyond the Sunset (1947).....	83
My Old Brown Coat and Me (1949).....	91
Willie Roy the Crippled Boy (1947).....	101
The Cat Came Back (1955).....	108
In Summary.....	115
CHAPTER SIX.....	116
DOC WILLIAMS’ MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT, CONTRIBUTIONS TO COUNTRY MUSIC, AND APPLICATIONS FOR A GENERAL MUSIC CURRICULUM.....	116
Williams’ Musical Education and Development .....	116
Williams’ Contributions to Country Music.....	118
Williams’ Music in the General Music Curriculum.....	119
Suggestions for Further Research .....	121
In Closing.....	123
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	139

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Throckmorton's Grove in Rogersville, Pennsylvania was renamed Golden Oaks Park in 1927. The park featured country music entertainment on Sunday afternoons into the late 1940s. ....	2
Figure 2 Map of major cities and highways in West Virginia ( <a href="http://www.state-maps.org">www.state-maps.org</a> ). . . . .	19
Figure 3 Williams' guitar course earned the "bread and butter" to help support his family during World War II. Williams recorded transcripts to advertise the course over various radio stations. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	25
Figure 4 Williams' Wheeling Records label. ....	25
Figure 5 Williams' Musical Heritage, circa 1907. Left to right: Williams' father, Andrew Smik, Williams' grandfather, and Williams' uncle, Frank Smik. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	36
Figure 6 The Mississippi Clowns in Cleveland on WJAY, 1933. Left, Joe Stoetzer, right, Andy Smik (Doc). Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	41
Figure 7 The Kansas Clophoppers on WJAY in 1933-4. Left to right: Joe Stoetzer, 'Doc' McCaulley, and Andy Smik (Doc). Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	41
Figure 8 The Cherokee Hillbillies in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, 1935. Left to right: Dale Kuhn, Milo Smik (Cy), Leonard "Curley" Sims, and Andy Smik (Doc). Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	43
Figure 9 Doc Williams and the Border Riders at KQV, prior to their move to WWVA. Standing left to right: Hamilton 'Rawhide' Fincher, Cy Williams, Doc Williams. Seated left to right: Mary 'Sunflower' Calvas and Curley Sims. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	44
Figure 10 Left to right: Hiram Hayseed, Marion Martin, Cy Williams, Doc Williams, and Chickie Williams at the WWVA Transmitter Station in 1947. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	46
Figure 11 Doc Williams and the Border Riders' Family Album, 1940. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	48

Figure 12 Little Crow Milling Company, product sponsor for Doc Williams and the Border Riders' in the late 1930s. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	49
Figure 13 A poster from the 1950s advertising one of Williams' shows in South Burlington, VT. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	51
Figure 14 Williams recomposed the Border Riders' theme song from Gene Autry's "Ridin' Down that Old Texas Trail." These lyrics were published in the Border Riders Family Album in 1940. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	54
Figure 15 An example of how Sarah Prather's music was used in Williams' book, The Simplified By-Ear System of Guitar Chords. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	56
Figure 16 Marion Martin (1919-1990) is seated with his piano accordion. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	79
Figure 17 Chickie Williams, "The Girl with the Lullaby Voice," graced the cover of National Hillbilly News in 1949. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	86
Figure 18 Amos Riggle (1870-1948) (far right) visting relatives in Monaca, PA in 1942. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	91
Figure 19 The lyrics for "My Old Brown Coat and Me" were printed in Doc Williams Border Riders Family Album in 1940. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	92
Figure 20 "My Old Brown Coat and Me" as it was printed in the 1966 edition of Williams' guitar course. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	95
Figure 21 Lanny Hurst and his little brother are pictured with Tex Ritter. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	101
Figure 22 The Border Riders at a Christmas party for crippled children in 1942. Left to right is Cy Williams, Raymond Brown ("Quarantine"), Doc Williams, and Mary Calvas ("Sunflower"). Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. ....	102
Figure 23 "The Cat Came Back"/"Two Little Orphans" was recorded in 1955. Pictured is an original 45 RPM. Williams learned "The Cat Came Back" from Yodelin' Slim Clark. ....	108

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ..... 125  
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORMS ..... 127  
APPENDIX C: IRB EXEMPTION ..... 129  
APPENDIX D: TIMELINE OF EVENTS ..... 131  
APPENDIX E: LISTENING GUIDE..... 133  
APPENDIX F: THE CAT CAME BACK..... 135

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to document early country musician Doc Williams' musical career, to evaluate his specific contributions to early country music from 1932 to 1951, and to develop curriculum materials for grades 3-5 general music classes based on his music. I chose 1951 as the end point for this study because at that time Williams began frequent tours to the northeast and Canada. These later years, although worthy of attention, launched a new phase of his career, beyond the scope of this study. During the course of the study, I address the following questions: 1) What was the nature of Williams' musical education and development as a musician? 2) What are his contributions to country music? 3) In what ways can Williams' music be used in a general music curriculum for grades 3-5?

Doc Williams was born Andrew Smik Jr. in Cleveland, Ohio, on June 26, 1914. He began his life-long musical career playing country music on radio in 1932. His success on WWVA's "Wheeling Jamboree" contributed to his popularity in the Northeast and throughout Canada. Williams' practices in country music are the reason many regard him as a pioneer of country music. Radio broadcasts, personal appearances, songwriting, song publishing, and recording were all important components of his life-long career. His music is exemplary of the early country music genre. Therefore, his contributions to early country music make his music worthy of study.

Historically, country music has been marginalized in the music curriculum. This study demonstrates the relevance and value of early country music such as that of Williams in a general music curriculum.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO EARLY COUNTRY MUSIC AND DOC WILLIAMS

Country music has been a part of my life since childhood. I grew up 60 miles southwest of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, in Greene County, a “stone’s throw” from the West Virginia border. At family gatherings I heard the family sing old hillbilly songs passed down from my grandmother. My grandmother was born in 1929 and spent most of her childhood in Greene County, Pennsylvania. Her generation was one of a long line native to that area. Other small cities within an hour’s drive of Greene County include Wheeling, WV, Morgantown, WV and Washington, PA.

In Greene County, Grandma and her extended family all lived on dirt roads on farms with no electricity; the kids wore clothes made from flour sacks. Seeking a more financially stable life, some of the family moved away but returned permanently in 1974. While modern technologies such as electricity, gas, and phone lines had infiltrated the area, the landscape had not changed since 1929. Fast forward to 2016 and the only thing that has changed is the influx of Marcellus Shale Gas wells which have drastically altered the landscape throughout the once pristine remote areas of Greene County.

Many of the old hillbilly songs Grandma knows she says she learned listening to Doc Williams and the Border Riders on the radio or watching them perform at Golden Oaks Park in Rogersville, Pennsylvania (Figure 1). When I was an undergraduate at West Virginia University, I started an independent research project and found myself engrossed in the music of my grandmother’s memories and I became curious to know more about Williams’ country music.



Figure 1 Throckmorton's Grove in Rogersville, Pennsylvania was renamed Golden Oaks Park in 1927. The park featured country music entertainment on Sunday afternoons into the late 1940s.

When I was exploring the topic of country music in the general music curriculum as a research topic, I traveled to Wheeling, WV to meet Doc Williams' daughter, Barbara Smik for an interview in the Williams' family home. At the time, Williams was no longer giving interviews because of health reasons. To my delight, during my interview with Smik, "Doc" himself entered the room and very cordially asked me about myself and my interest in country music. I was in the presence of a legend and tried to take it all in. He sat in on the interview for quite a while, helped Smik answer many of my questions, and even sang snippets of songs for me.

My first question about Williams' music was what to call it, in which musical genre it fit, and I did ask him that. Historically, country music has been marketed under three labels: the first is "hillbilly," the second "western" or "country-western," and the third simply "country." Williams' music belongs to the genre of hillbilly music, which is a genre of American popular

music. It was commercially broadcast and recorded between approximately 1922 and 1942.<sup>1</sup> The use of the term “hillbilly” by the recording industry began in 1925. It wasn’t until after World War II that “hillbilly” was replaced with the term “country-western.”<sup>2</sup> During our meeting, Williams verified that his music was called “hillbilly music” in the early part of his career.<sup>3</sup>

The term “hillbilly” is used by scholars when referencing both the first generation of country music and the music that was commercially marketed (beginning with records).<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this study I use the term “early country,” in place of “hillbilly,” the reason being twofold: 1) “hillbilly” often refers to the music originating in the southern United States, of which Williams did not reside, and 2) because of the negative stereotypes are associated with the term “hillbilly” in American culture. In addition, for the purposes of this study, the use of the term “commercial” refers to the buying, selling, and/or production of music. “Country music has from its earliest days, been a commercial genre.”<sup>5</sup>

### *A Place for Early Country Music in the Elementary General Music Curriculum*

Music educators present at the influential Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 agreed that, Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belongs in the curriculum. The musical repertory should be expanded to involve music of our time in its rich variety, including currently popular teenage music and avant-garde music, American folk music, and the music of other cultures.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Joseph Huber, "Hillbilly music," in *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, Ed. Charles H. Garrett (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013). <http://books.google.com/books?id=kvWctgAACAAJ>. Historically, the term “commercial,” when used in conjunction with country music, refers to the buying and selling of the music itself.

<sup>2</sup> Archie Green, "Hillbilly Music: Source and Symbol," *The Journal of American Folklore* 78, no. 309 (1965): 222.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara D. Smik and Doc Williams, Interviewed by author, July 31, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Jocelyn R. Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*: xxv.

<sup>6</sup> Robert A. Choate, ed. *Music in American Society: Documentary Report of the Tanglewood Symposium* (Washington, DC: Music Educators National Conference, 1968).

How is it then, almost fifty years later, that we see so little about country music in the elementary music curriculum?

Pecknold argues that from the beginning, early country music was embraced by record companies and their consumers, and neglected by folklorists and preservationists.<sup>7</sup> Folklorists neglected early country music, only collecting what they defined as “folk.”<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the raw and natural qualities of early country musicians, consisting largely of amateur untrained voices characterized by rough ‘twangy’ accents could have been interpreted as negative aspects that needed to be purified before they could be presented in the schools.<sup>9</sup> In an article published in the *Music Educators Journal* in 1941, Clay Deemer, a music supervisor from Ohio, makes the following remarks about early country music:

I have had one archenemy stalking me in every measure, namely the bad influence of hillbilly music. The untiring efforts and accomplishments of a year may be broken down and smothered in the plastic souls of school children by one or two radio programs by some wild-eyed guitar picker with an irritating whine in his voice, who drives thirty miles before daylight to the nearest radio station, where for his efforts he is awarded the privilege of selling over the air to listeners (unfortunately they are many) a photograph of himself and his guitar.<sup>10</sup>

Deemer continues to lament the “mutilation of folk music” and that students are confusing folk tunes with “senseless trash.” He criticizes early country musicians, arguing that

---

<sup>7</sup> D. Pecknold, *The Selling Sound: The Rise of the Country Music Industry* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Donald K. Wilgus, "An Introduction to the Study of Hillbilly Music," *The Journal of American Folklore* 78, no. 309 (1965). W. G. Roy, "Aesthetic identity, race, and American folk music," *Qualitative Sociology* 25, no. 3 (2002).

<sup>9</sup> Wilgus notes that much of the folksong on commercial media (at the time of publication) was “highly arranged, restyled, or even vulgarized.” Donald K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1959).

<sup>10</sup> Clay Deemer, "So You Like Hillbilly Music!," *Music Educators Journal* 28, no. 1 (1941).

they are either versatile musicians who have disgraced the profession or “poor, thwarted” musicians who have “attained proficiency in this low order of entertainment.”<sup>11</sup>

Country music continued to be marginalized in music education; however, in recent years scholars have begun to exchange positive dialogue regarding popular forms of American music. Rasmussen writes that, “the absence of musical voices in any canon or textbook is not one of oversight but active exclusion” and that we should do more to give American music a place in the curriculum.<sup>12</sup>

Since the Tanglewood Declaration in 1967, music teachers have embraced multiculturalism and various methods of presenting non-Western music to children. Despite this, country music ensembles in public schools are hard to find. Volk states, “As a music educator, I have seen very little popular country music in the classroom and certainly not in the East coast bandroom even today”<sup>13</sup> while the study of other popular music genres, such as jazz and rock is increasingly present in many public schools.

Country music is after all, an American music; “one of the indigenous vocal styles in the United States.”<sup>14</sup> “Country music is useful for the classroom in that its history is recent and readily traceable”, and it is especially appropriate for study in areas in which the genre is part of the community culture.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, academia knows little about performers who are based in regions not established as rich in folk music, whose repertoires combine local and popular

---

<sup>11</sup> "So You Like Hillbilly Music!," 62.

<sup>12</sup> Anne K. Rasmussen, "Mainstreaming American Musical Multiculturalism," *American Music* 22, no. 2 (2004): 298.

<sup>13</sup> Terese M. Volk, "A Response to Carolyn Livingston, "Naming Country Music: An Historian Looks at Meanings behind the Labels"," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 9, no. 2 (2001): 104.

<sup>14</sup> Choate, *Music in American Society: Documentary Report of the Tanglewood Symposium*, 104.

<sup>15</sup> Carolyn Livingston, "Naming Country Music: An Historian Looks at Meanings behind the Labels," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 9, no. 2 (2001): 19.

traditions.<sup>16</sup> Lornell argues that scholars should examine more local and regional traditions to understand the history of country music.<sup>17</sup> Early country music scholar Norman Cohen comments on the lack of research on the “Wheeling Jamboree”: “There is probably no better way to introduce readers to this segment of country music history than with an account of the career of Williams, for many years one of the leading figures of the “Wheeling Jamboree,”<sup>18</sup> and a highly popular entertainer especially in the Northeast.”<sup>19</sup> Williams’ career on the WWVA (Wheeling, West Virginia) “Wheeling Jamboree” spanned 61 years.<sup>20</sup> His dedication to his profession and to the “Wheeling Jamboree” earned him a place in the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame and the title of “West Virginia’s Official Country Music Ambassador of Good Will.” Williams received many other honors and awards throughout his career. His music tells the story of an important era in the development of American country music and his music can be a worthy addition to general music curricula.

#### *Purpose Statement and Research Questions*

The purpose of this study is to document early country musician Doc Williams’ musical career, to evaluate his specific contributions to early country music from 1932 to 1951, and to develop curriculum materials for grades 3-5 general music classes based on his music. I chose 1951 as the end point for this study because at that time Williams began frequent tours to the

<sup>16</sup> James P. Leary, *Polkabilly: How the Goose Island Ramblers Redefined American Folk Music* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Kip Lornell, "Early Country Music and the Mass Media in Roanoke, Virginia," *American Music* 5, no. 4 (1987).

<sup>18</sup> The “Wheeling Jamboree” was an evening radio broadcast of live country music out of Wheeling, West Virginia’s radio station, WWVA. The name of the program varied through the years, but it has always had “Jamboree” in the title.

<sup>19</sup> Barbara Kempf, "Meet Doc Williams: Country Music Star, Country Music Legend," *John Edwards Memorial Foundation* 10, no. 1 (1974). Cohen wrote an introduction to the article.

<sup>20</sup> Doc Williams and Barbara D. Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back* (Wheeling, WV: Creative Impressions, 2006).

northeast and Canada. These later years, although worthy of attention, launched a new phase of his career, beyond the scope of this study. The songs I selected for the curriculum are some of Williams' signature songs, all which were recorded in the 1940s, except for one which was recorded in 1955. Although early country music is associated with the 1920s and 1930s, Williams' music making practices were purposefully reserved for the early country music style throughout his decades-long career. Therefore, any of his music can be categorized as early country music (or as country music in the style of early country music) and are worthy of study in a music curriculum for grades 3-5. During the course of the study, I address the following questions: 1) What was the nature of Williams' musical education and development as a musician? 2) What are his contributions to country music? 3) In what ways can Williams' music be used in a general music curriculum for grades 3-5?

The research is aimed to provide motivation for further research and to foster interest in the use of country music in the music classroom. Williams, despite public opposition towards early country music, maintained his musical career even though he never became a mainstream recording artist or a big name in country music. Williams is worthy of study not only because of his music, but also because his music is the kind that was overlooked by scholars and educators for decades. Before introducing Williams, I will provide some brief background on the development of early country music and how it became a commercial product. Chapter 2 will consist of a more in-depth review of the literature on country music.

### *Development of Early Country Music in America*

The advent of recordings and radio brought early country music to the forefront of the commercial media in the 1920s, first gaining a wide listening audience of rural residents in Appalachia and the South. The people had been listening to this music in their homes and

communities before it was commercialized;<sup>21</sup> therefore, country music does not have an exact “birthdate.”<sup>22</sup> “When the early country artists first began to step in front of a radio or phonograph microphone, they did not suddenly create a new type of music but rather performed the music they had already been playing for some time, in a new setting.”<sup>23</sup>

Soon after the developments of commercial country music, demand for this kind of music contributed to the development of the barn dance era. Early country entertainment on Saturday night radio was commonplace throughout the country. Radio stations such as the World’s Largest Store (WLS) out of Chicago, IL, We Shield Millions (WSM) out of Nashville, TN, and Wheeling West Virginia (WWVA) out of Wheeling, WV all programmed live barn dance shows in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>24</sup> Williams was one of the country music stars of WWVA’s “Wheeling Jamboree.”

### *Meet Doc Williams*

Hungarian, Italian, and Slavic immigrants arrived in Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia mining towns in the late nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> Ivan Tribe writes that the cities of Wheeling and Fairmont in West Virginia served as a “meeting place and melting pot for northern, southern, and even western styles,” perhaps symbolized by the widespread use of the accordion in bands in this region.<sup>26</sup> Doc Williams and the Border Riders, who first appeared on the “Wheeling Jamboree” in 1937, is an example of a band that exemplified these combined

<sup>21</sup> Ivan M. Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia," (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1984; reprint, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996.).

<sup>22</sup> Archie Green, "Early Country Music Journals," *JEMF quarterly* 16, no. 58 (1980).

<sup>23</sup> Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia," 18.

<sup>24</sup> For a detailed list of country radio stations and their locations see James Carney, "Spatial Diffusion of the All-Country Music Radio Stations in the United States, 1971-74," *JEMF Quarterly* 13, no. 46 (1977).

<sup>25</sup> Leary, *Polkabilly: How the Goose Island Ramblers Redefined American Folk Music*.

<sup>26</sup> Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia."

styles. While technically Williams' music qualifies as hillbilly, he called his music "country" after the term hillbilly had faded from use.<sup>27</sup> Original members of the Border Riders were from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Williams and his brother Cy were of Slovak heritage, Curley Sims was part Cherokee Indian, singer "Sunflower" Calvas was Italian-American, and comedian Hamilton "Rawhide" Fincher, according to Williams was from the south. Doc Williams, bandleader, made his home in Wheeling, West Virginia, where he spent the majority of his life.

Doc Williams was born Andrew ("Andy") Smik Jr. in Cleveland, Ohio, on June 26, 1914. His parents emigrated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire prior to World War I. When he was two years old, the family moved to Tarrtown, Pennsylvania, near Kittaning, where Smik attended school through the seventh grade. After living in Cleveland with his grandmother during 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade years, he moved back to Pennsylvania to work with his father in the mines during the day. In the evenings, he played for square dances, usually for free. In 1932 he landed a spot on the "Barn Busters," an amateur radio program, broadcasted on WJAY in Cleveland, Ohio (JAY because the president was known as "Jay"). In 1935, he moved to King of the Quaker Valley (KQV) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where his band leader Miss Billie Walker, suggested he give himself the stage name "Doc Williams."<sup>28</sup> His dreams of having his own band came true and in May of 1937 Doc Williams and the Border Riders moved to Wheeling, West Virginia's WWVA.

---

<sup>27</sup> In 1994 Williams put the term "pure" on an album title: *Doc Williams Family Values—Pure Country*. Williams describes the desire for clean country music in Doc Williams, "Rights of the Country Music Fan," *International Heritage Music Association* 1, no. 4 (1976).

<sup>28</sup> Like his father, whose friends nicknamed him "Doc," Andy was very conscientious of health and nutrition, so the nickname was a natural fit.

The most thorough source of information on Williams is the autobiography Barbara Smik (Williams' eldest daughter) co-wrote with Williams in 2006.<sup>29</sup> Smik also contributed a discography and biography to the *John Edwards Memorial Foundation*.<sup>30</sup> The newest edition of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Popular Music* includes Williams' biography. Other biographical information of Williams and his wife, Chickie, can be found in Kingsbury, Gentry, Tribe, and Lilly.<sup>31</sup>

### *Scope of Study*

This thesis focuses on Williams' contributions to country music and applications for a grades 3-5 general music curriculum. There are many facets to Williams' career that are beyond the scope of this study. I focus on sources relevant to the research questions and the development of a curriculum based on Williams' music: recordings, oral histories, personal testimonies, magazines, newspapers, fanzines. The primary sources were examined fully to document his musical career and to approach the introduction of Williams' music into a curriculum for students in grades 3-5.

### *Outline of Remaining Chapters*

Chapter 2 will focus on the literature on early country music, from its origins in the folk tradition through country music's commercial beginnings. Chapter 2 will also describe the roots of the country music tradition in West Virginia, and will conclude with how the prejudices against the country music genre have resolved. In Chapter 3 I will describe the historical

---

<sup>29</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>30</sup> Kempf, "Meet Doc Williams: Country Music Star, Country Music Legend."

<sup>31</sup> Paul Kingsbury, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music/Compiled by the Staff of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998).; Linnell Gentry, ed. *A History and Encyclopedia of Country, Western, and Gospel Music*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Clairmont Corporation, 1969).; Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia."; John Lilly, *Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from Goldenseal* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

methodology that was used in the study and include a description of primary sources that I examined. Chapter 4 will include a narrative of Williams' early career and his contributions to country music, and Chapter 5 will explore ways to implement Williams' music in a general music curriculum for grades 3-5. Chapter 6 will summarize the findings and give suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### COUNTRY MUSIC IN WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA

The purpose of this study is to document early country musician Doc Williams' musical career, to evaluate his specific contributions to early country music from 1932 to 1951, and to develop curriculum materials for grades 3-5 general music classes based on his music. During the course of the study, I address the following questions: 1) What was the nature of Williams' musical education and development as a musician? 2) What are his contributions to country music? 3) In what ways can Williams' music be used in a general music curriculum for grades 3-5?

The body of research on country music in the music classroom is limited. Some of the available literature on country music as it relates to music curriculum was discussed in Chapter 1. Country music as a whole did not gain acceptance in academia until the 1960s, led first by the establishment of the *John Edwards Memorial Foundation* (1962-1983), which called for the study of early country records, radio, performers, performances, and more. It was the first public forum for serious scholarly study of country music and other vernacular forms.<sup>1</sup> *The Journal of American Folklore* followed suit with its "Hillbilly Issue" in 1965.<sup>2</sup> Since then, other journals devoted to country music have come and gone: *The Journal of Country Music* (1971-2007), *Old Time Music* (1971-1989), published by Tony Russell in London, England, and *The Devil's Box* (1969-2000). *Bluegrass Unlimited* (1966-) is still in publication. There are, of course, numerous

---

<sup>1</sup> Nolan Porterfield, "Introduction," in *Exploring Roots Music: Twenty Years of the JEMF Quarterly*, ed. Nolan Porterfield (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004). Quarterly journals were printed from 1965 to 1985.

<sup>2</sup> American Folklore Society, "Hillbilly Issue," *Journal of American Folklore* 78, no. 309 (1965).

country music magazines, if not scholarly in nature, marketed to fans and consumers of the music.

The first section of this literature review will discuss the folk origins of country music and the academic, commercial, and community responses to the genre from its earliest conception through the advent of phonograph and radio. Next I will discuss the impact of radio and community response to the influx of early country music in the 1930s and 40s. I will discuss the manifestations of early country music in West Virginia, and I will link Williams' music to five components of early country music production identified in *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*, by Richard Peterson, which are: radio broadcasts, touring, song publishing, song writing, and recording.<sup>3</sup>

#### *A Living Musical Tradition*

Because of ballad collectors like Cecil Sharp, who in the early part of the twentieth century headed to the Appalachian Mountains to obtain evidence of old-world ballads before they disappeared, we have scholarly documentation of that musical tradition. Sharp was a music teacher from England who embarked upon American soil to document the existence of these songs which had been passed down over generations; however, railroad, steamboat, and industry had been breaking down the isolation and "purity" of the mountain culture prior to the early twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> In West Virginia, coal mining was well underway by the time Sharp began his song collecting efforts in 1916. Unfortunately, Sharp was not interested in the folksongs native to America that resulted from the mixing of mountain culture and industry; songs such as

---

<sup>3</sup> Richard A. Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Charles K. Wolfe, *Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1977).

“John Hardy,” “John Henry,” “The New River Train,” and “The Wreck on the C. & O.” He did not consider them “folk,” no matter their existence in the oral tradition. Sharp was not alone in this practice; other ballad collectors such as Josephine McGill and Loraine Wyman also neglected the “raucous new hillbilly music,”<sup>5</sup> but they did succeed in raising awareness of the rich musical culture of the Southern Appalachians.<sup>6</sup>

The living musical tradition of the 1910s and 1920s became the emerging genre of country music. Green, Wilgus, Malone, Peterson, and Neal discuss ways the emerging genre of country music was disseminated to the public — through medicine shows (traveling groups that peddled “miracle cures” in between entertainment acts), vaudeville or minstrel circuits, house parties, dances, county fairs, fiddle conventions and contests, celebrations, weddings, cornhuskings, political rallies, street performances, church music, and even professional concerts.<sup>7</sup> Record companies captured the music that evolved from these venues; the earliest sounds of country music.

On these recordings of early country music, one can hear old world ballads, some 300 and 400 years old, which can also be found in folksong collections of those collectors mentioned previously. However, the predominant tradition preceding early country music comes from the

---

<sup>5</sup> Allen Tullos, "Cultural Politics and Political Culture in Appalachia," *Radical History Review* 1989, no. 45 (1989): 182.

<sup>6</sup> Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*. Wilgus points out that collectors find what they are looking for and “restrictions” of certain music seem to be unconscious. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898*: 148.

<sup>7</sup> Green, "Hillbilly Music: Source and Symbol."; Donald K. Wilgus, "An Introduction to the Study of Hillbilly Music," *ibid.*; Bill C. Malone, "Radio and Personal Appearances: Sources and Resources," *Western Folklore* 30, no. 3 (1971).; Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity.*; Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*.

dance, frolic, and play party of the instrumental tradition.<sup>8</sup> From those traditions came the sources of early country music recordings, which include folksongs, fiddle tunes, ballads and songs that coincided with the British industrial revolution, ballads and songs reflecting lives and hardships of early American settlers and pioneers, ditties from the blackface minstrel stage, sentimental songs from the Gilded Age of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and early country songs written by the artists themselves. Early country is a folk derived style, but the non-traditional component has been predominant.<sup>9</sup>

What resulted was a blend of folk music and music that was distributed commercially prior to the first early country music recording. Archie Green states that early country music was born out of the marriage of a commercial industry and traditional Appalachian folksong,<sup>10</sup> a continuous blend of two performance modes, since the early colonial days.<sup>11</sup> During a 1946 folklore conference, Charles Seeger is reported to have proclaimed, “Hill-billy music seems to be a super-hybrid form of some genuine folk elements which have intruded into the mechanism of popular music...” and that early country music is a type of popular music made by the folksinger who gets in front of a radio microphone.<sup>12</sup>

### *A Commercially Born Genre*

The commercial media — record companies — marketed the living musical tradition. Recording scouts scrambled to record artists, even though they didn’t understand or have an

---

<sup>8</sup> Norman Cohen and Guthrie Meade, "The Sources of Old Time Hillbilly Music: Child Ballads," *JEMF Quarterly* 9, no. 29 (1973).

<sup>9</sup> Guthrie T. Meade, Jr., "Copyright: A Tool for Commercial Rural Music Research," *Western Folklore* 30, no. 3 (1971).

<sup>10</sup> Green, "Hillbilly Music: Source and Symbol."

<sup>11</sup> "Early Country Music Journals."

<sup>12</sup> "Conference on the Character and State of Studies in Folklore," *The Journal of American Folklore* 59, no. 234 (1946): 512. Charles Seeger’s quote can be found within the conference summary.

appreciation for the music.<sup>13</sup> For example, when recording scout Ralph Peer (who discovered blues singer Mamie Smith) recorded “Fiddlin’ John Carson in 1923, he did not expect the record to sell, so he did not assign it a catalog number. The raw quality of the early recordings such as Carson’s accounted for their success, which surprised recording executives.<sup>14</sup> As a result, radio executives simply asked an artist what they had, and recorded it for distribution. They made no attempt to polish or alter the material.<sup>15</sup> They knew it was big business, and records flew off the shelves.

Commercial country music hosted several names: old-time, hill country tunes, folk music, songs from Dixie, old familiar tunes, traditional, southern, hillbilly, country western, and more. Some names reflect a geographical location, others a style. The record companies who first recorded country music in the 1920s are partly responsible for the multiplicity of labels. Between 1901 and 1923 recorded native folk music was not cataloged appropriately by the commercial industry, nor was there a consensus on what to call this music. In 1923, records of unschooled performers started to be released, notably, Fiddlin John Carson’s “The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane” which Okeh Record Company placed in its “Popular Music Series.” Record companies used a variety of titles to label music such as Carson’s; Old Time Tunes (Okeh Records), Old Time Melodies of the Sunny South and Olde Time Fiddlin’ Tunes (Victor), Special Records for Southern States (Vocalion), and Familiar Tunes (Columbia).<sup>16</sup> By the end of

---

<sup>13</sup> Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*.

<sup>14</sup> Gene Wiggins, *Fiddlin' Georgia Crazy: Fiddlin' John Carson, His Real World, and the World of his Songs* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> Roderick J. Roberts, "An Introduction to the Study of Northern Country Music," *Journal of Country Music* 7, no. 1 (1978).

<sup>16</sup>Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music/Compiled by the Staff of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum*, ix. It should be noted that Columbia, Victor, and other record companies abided by Jim Crow laws and grouped recordings based on the race of the performer, not the sound. Columbia’s

the 1920s, consensus was reached and the subset of commercial country music was marketed as “hillbilly music.”<sup>17</sup>

Changes in the context of musical practices occurred with the invention of radio and the distribution of phonographic records in the 1920s. Rural dances moved from the barn to the studio when radio stations began to air live broadcasts of “barn dances” on the weekends and filled 15- minute weekday air slots with local talent. Even the most rural areas could tune in to radio stations at night, and the radio “barn dances” provided a new and wildly popular form of entertainment.<sup>18</sup> Country music became a booming business as an outcome of this development. Malone explains: “The barn dances provided formats in which the older entertainment threads could be brought together in one viable entertainment form.”<sup>19</sup> By the time radio programs began to call the live broadcasts of country music a “barn dance,” the music was no longer appropriate for square dancing. It had moved towards the vaudeville model. Still, listeners considered the shows to be authentic because of the nostalgic memories they stirred.<sup>20</sup>

To summarize thus far, the living musical tradition that flourished prior to radio was delivered to listeners through commercial media and other entertainment sources. Other than ballad collections, there were not sufficient scholarly efforts to document the living musical traditions of the Appalachians in the 1910s and 1920s. Green, Kahn, and Malone all state the importance of the commercial tradition in the evolution process from folk to country music.<sup>21</sup>

14000-D series consisted of African American artists and the 15000-D series were white artists. See Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*.

<sup>17</sup> Bill C. Malone, *Country music, U.S.A.* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1985).

<sup>18</sup> Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*.

<sup>19</sup> Malone, "Radio and Personal Appearances: Sources and Resources," 219.

<sup>20</sup> Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*.

<sup>21</sup> Green, "Hillbilly Music: Source and Symbol."; Edward Kahn, "Hillbilly Music: Source and Resource," *ibid.*; Malone, "Radio and Personal Appearances: Sources and Resources."

When the phonographic records of this music were produced, the rural community at large continued to support the music. The demand for this music continued to grow, and early country music was utilized and consumed in new ways, most notably through radio and the radio barn dances. What follows is a regional explanation of the development of country music in West Virginia.

### *Country Music in Wheeling, West Virginia*

When people think about country music, one of the first places that may come to mind is Nashville, Tennessee, home of the “Grand Ole Opry.” Many associate the “heart” of country music with the South. Indeed, this image is perpetuated by the southern location and development of commercial folk music.<sup>22</sup> The South did preserve, develop, and create its own materials while the North became more urbanized; however, to focus only on the South neglects the development of early country music in the North.<sup>23</sup> If early scouts had looked in areas other than the South, they would have found a body of music based on the same aesthetic in the North.<sup>24</sup> The first recordings were accepted by rural people whose musical heritage was similar to the southern early country musician. Because of these similarities, this music thrived in other regions.<sup>25</sup> Wheeling, West Virginia was one of those locations.

Wheeling, founded in 1769, is a city of Ohio County, located in the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia (Figure 2). It is bordered by Pennsylvania to the east, and the Ohio River and the state of Ohio to the west. This tri-state area is nicknamed “The Ohio River Valley.” Since its settlement by Colonel Ebenezer Zane in 1796, Wheeling’s economic and population growth was

---

<sup>22</sup> Wolfe, *Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee*.

<sup>23</sup> Simon J. Bronner, *Old-Time Music Makers of New York State* (New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987).

<sup>24</sup> Roberts, “An Introduction to the Study of Northern Country Music.”

<sup>25</sup> “An Introduction to the Study of Northern Country Music.”

stimulated by its location at the mouth of the Ohio River, and the old National road which ended there.



Figure 2 Map of major cities and highways in West Virginia ([www.state-maps.org](http://www.state-maps.org)). .

The Ohio Valley was settled by people of the Upland South, which consisted of Appalachia, the Ozarks and Quachita Mountains, the plateaus, hills, and basins between the Appalachians and Ozarks, which includes the Cumberland Plateau, the Allegheny Plateau, and others ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)). Beginning in 1681, throngs of immigrants inspired by William Penn's promise of religious freedom crossed the Atlantic to Pennsylvania. By the 1750s, the population had a mix of nationalities and religions, not necessarily Puritan or conservative Anglican, but Scotch-Irish Presbyterian, various German sects, English Quakers and their Welsh counterparts, who joined Swedes and Finns already in Pennsylvania. The Scots-Irish pushed farther west into the Pennsylvania countryside.

Many of these pioneers traveled on the Great Wagon Road (now interstate 81) which turns to the southwest upon reaching the Appalachians. They crossed over the small western band of Maryland into the Virginia valley, joined by westward traveling English settlers and

African slaves from Maryland and Virginia tidewater areas. Much of the West Virginia folk culture descended from this wave of immigration.<sup>26</sup>

Immigration to West Virginia peaked between 1910 and 1920, most coming to work in mining, manufacturing, and the steel mills. At this time, most immigrants were Italian, German, Polish, Hungarian, and Irish. Eighty percent of the immigrants were of southern European countries; about forty percent were from Italy, Poland, and Hungary. Remaining immigrants were English, Czech and Slovak, Greek, Yugoslav, Austrian, and Russian. “Only in Wheeling and Clarksburg are the foreign sections concentrated enough to be distinguishable.”<sup>27</sup> As a result of this immigration, the Northern Panhandle today is still culturally diverse, with many ethnic Orthodox churches thriving, and community dinners and ethnic festivals occurring regularly ([www.wvculture.org](http://www.wvculture.org)).

In his book *Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia*, Tribe discusses several musical factors that influenced West Virginia’s folk music heritage: the music of country dances, ballads, gospel songs and sacred folksongs of the camp meeting and rural church, and the music of African Americans, albeit the latter less so than in the south. In contrast, the music of East European immigrants contributed to northern West Virginia’s musical heritage. These immigrants fused polka sounds into country dance music, and even some incorporated the accordion into their sound.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Gerald Milnes, *Play of a Fiddle: Traditional Music, Dance, and Folklore in West Virginia* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> "West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State," ed. Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1941), 63.

<sup>28</sup> The music that came from these traditions created a sound which polka scholar Jim Leary calls “polkabilly.” These sounds likely originated in the hills and valleys of Western Pennsylvania, Eastern Ohio, and West Virginia, where settlers mingled. Children of these immigrants created the polkabilly sound by the 1950s. See Leary, *Polkabilly: How the Goose Island Ramblers Redefined American Folk Music*.

The pioneers of West Virginia, regardless of cultural background, played instruments and sang songs for their own amusement. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fiddlers played for weddings, barn raisings, and corn husking. Other instruments used during this time included the banjo, the guitar, and the piano. Dancing would continue late into the night, and sometimes into the next morning. The dance featured reels, square dances, waltzes, and hornpipes. Dances were a way for people to escape from the day-to-day labors of turning virgin forests into farmland. These dances, called country dances, remained popular in West Virginia into the twentieth century. Country musicians who became professionals “received their first impressions of music through the dance” and were influenced by old-time fiddling fathers and neighbors.<sup>29</sup> Fiddlers who sang held the instrument against their chest instead of under their chin. Usually if any instrumentalist sang it was the dulcimer player. The use of the dulcimer declined around World War I, but guitars and mandolins were widely used in string bands.

Ballad singers were also important to the West Virginia music tradition. Though old world ballads were passed down through oral tradition, singers also translated current events and myths into songs (native American ballads), a tradition they continued for decades. Commercial music, such as songs from minstrel shows, Broadway, and New York music publishers also entered the ballad singer’s repertoire. They supplemented their oral transmission with printed songsheets and eventually made use of radio, phonograph, and television.<sup>30</sup>

Radio broadcasts of early country music began in 1922 and could be heard far outside the local area. The first radio station KDKA out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania began broadcasting in

---

<sup>29</sup> Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia," 3.

<sup>30</sup> "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia."

1920.<sup>31</sup> WWVA (Wheeling West Virginia) received its license on December 6, 1926.<sup>32</sup> In the early days of WWVA, musicians played or sang popular music, but soon listeners began to request early country music. For several years prior to the official “Jamboree” inauguration date of April 1, 1933, WWVA hosted a late Saturday night studio program by the same name.<sup>33</sup> The “Wheeling Jamboree” is the second longest running live radio show in the United States (Nashville’s “Grand Ole Opry” is the first and still runs today).<sup>34</sup> Today the show is still broadcast live under the name “Wheeling Jamboree,” a syndication of “Jamboree USA” that is no longer aired on WWVA.<sup>35</sup> Saturday night broadcasts can be streamed online ([www.wheelingjamboree.org](http://www.wheelingjamboree.org)).

#### *Linking Early Country Music Practices to Doc Williams*

Peterson writes of five important components of early country music production: radio broadcasts, touring, song publishing, song writing, and recording.<sup>36</sup> Each of these relates directly to some aspect of Williams’ musical career, discussed below.

Artists could also go on live radio for little to no pay, and promote performances in the area, which Williams did from the start of his career. Although recording was a goal of most country music entertainers, in the early years, from the 1920s to World War II, country music reached most listeners via radio. Radio transmissions were done live by entertainers who likely

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Lippmann, "The Institutional Context of Industry Consolidation: Radio Broadcasting in the United States, 1920-1934," *Social Forces* 86, no. 2 (2007).

<sup>32</sup> Samuel P. Bayard, "Prolegomena to a Study of the Principal Melodic Families of British-American Folk Song," *The Journal of American Folklore* 63, no. 247 (1950).

<sup>33</sup> Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia."

<sup>34</sup> James T. Black, "Southern Sounds On the Air," *Southern Living* 32, no. 2 (1997).; Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia."; and Kingsbury, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music/Compiled by the Staff of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum*. The “Wheeling Jamboree” operated from 1933 to 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Ivan M. Tribe and Jacob L. Bapst, *West Virginia's Traditional Country Music* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*.

never made any phonograph records. Even if an artist did record, the record received little promotion. If the record sold well, the artist would be invited back to record again.<sup>37</sup> Doc Williams and the Border Riders did not record until 1947, on the label Williams created, Wheeling Records.

Personal appearances (tours) were also an important part of the dissemination of country music to fans within the listening area of the local radio station. These appearances were organized and publicized by the entertainers, who often coordinated their performance sites with areas from which the most fan mail was sent. These face-to-face interactions between the performer and the listener were partially responsible for a performer's commercial success.<sup>38</sup> Personal appearances were vital throughout Williams' entire career.

Another common thread of early country music practices was song publishing. A majority of country and blues song recordings were left unprotected by law in the 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>39</sup> Musicians learned by listening and integrating songs into their repertoires, which Williams did, and then eventually incorporating songs from radio, records, colleagues and friends, creating what Peterson calls a "collage" or "assemblages of melody, sound styling, rhythm, and words."<sup>40</sup> The collage developed from whatever songs were available to the artist, and then arranged to fit within the artist's style and particular situation. Peterson also notes that the stock of song elements was continuously enriched by oral traditions of ethnic immigrants and the reincorporation of songs that had been written for the commercial music industry.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*.

<sup>38</sup> Malone, "Radio and Personal Appearances: Sources and Resources."

<sup>39</sup> Guthrie T. Meade, Jr., "Copyright: A Tool for Commercial Rural Music Research," *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*: 23.

<sup>41</sup> *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*.

Record producers started to ask for new songs because they could be published and copyrighted. Subsequently, songs became property, “the rights to which could be bought, sold, and merchandised as sheet music or as recordings by other artists.”<sup>42</sup> In addition to borrowed folk songs, sentimental ballads popular in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and his own material, Williams’ repertoire also consisted of material which was composed by others in the early country style.<sup>43</sup>

Williams supplemented his income throughout his career through a variety of business ventures. He published a guitar instruction book, called *Doc Williams Simplified By-Ear Guitar Course*<sup>44</sup> that sold more than 200,000 copies (Figure 3). The book targeted beginning players, and it included diagrams and a helper recording. He made radio transcriptions to advertise the sale of the book over radio. Williams also operated Musselman’s Grove (1947-1949), a country music park near Claysburg, PA, at which country music and variety acts would be performed on Sunday afternoons. When the park closed, he began a long distance tour through Aroostook County, Maine, to Quebec and New Brunswick. Because of their popularity in Canada, Doc Williams and the Border Riders signed with Quality Records in Canada.<sup>45</sup> In addition to recording with Quality Records, Williams also started his own record company, Wheeling Records, or Wheeling Recording Company, in 1947 (Figure 4).

---

<sup>42</sup> *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*: 24.

<sup>43</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>44</sup> Andrew Smik, *The Simplified by Ear System of Guitar Chords* (1943).

<sup>45</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

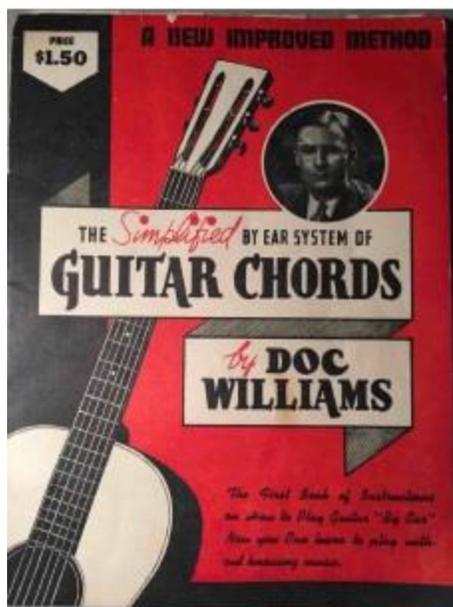


Figure 3 Williams' guitar course earned the "bread and butter" to help support his family during World War II. Williams recorded transcripts to advertise the course over various radio stations. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.



Figure 4 Williams' Wheeling Records label.

Through all these ventures, Williams continued making appearances on the “Wheeling Jamboree” and touring. He promoted his own Jamboree Reunion Shows, which started in 1979 and ran through the 1980s in Wheeling, WV. In 1998, Williams and his wife Chickie, did a farewell tour in the Maritime Provinces of Canada. In the same year, Chickie suffered a debilitating stroke, ending her 50-year performing career. Williams continued to perform despite not having her by his side.

*In Summary*

Early country music emerged out of instrumental music, folksongs, old world ballads, songs evolved from the Gilded Age, songs and ballads of the American pioneers, and music created by the artists themselves. Scholars agree that early country music is a folk derived style that was disseminated to the public via commercial media. The sudden unexpected success of the genre in the 1920s, coupled with the amount of material record companies harnessed from amateur musicians, contributed to the multiplicity of labels assigned to the music. In addition, radio and barn dance programs broadcasted live country music, contributing to the expansion of early country music prior to World War II.

The development of country music was not limited to the South. Wheeling, West Virginia is one of the central locations of this development, being it was the home of the “Wheeling Jamboree” and Doc Williams who joined the show in 1937. The musical traditions of Eastern European immigrants influenced musical practices in West Virginia. Williams’ music is evidence of these influences. Radio broadcasts, touring, song publishing, song writing, and recording were all components of early country music production during the early country music era. These components, in addition to Williams’ successful business ventures were vital to the success of his career.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to document early country musician Doc Williams' musical career, to evaluate his specific contributions to early country music from 1932 to 1951, and to develop curriculum materials for grades 3-5 general music classes based on his music. During the course of the study, I address the following questions: 1) What was the nature of Williams' musical education and development as a musician? 2) What are his contributions to country music? 3) In what ways can Williams' music be used in a general music curriculum for grades 3-5?

#### *Method of Research*

This is a historical study of which oral history given by members of the Williams family was a vital component. In the chapter, "Historical Inquiry: Getting Inside the Process," McCarthy discusses historical research as a mode of inquiry in music education, describes contemporary trends and developments, and outlines steps to conduct a study. She writes: "Historical knowledge can provide a foundation for understanding trends in music education and for evaluating new curriculum materials."<sup>1</sup> Examining early country music, particularly that of Williams, will provide a foundation for introducing country music into the general music curriculum. As was stated in earlier chapters, the study of country music in our schools has been largely neglected; a contemporary revisionist approach to the study of country music provides an

---

<sup>1</sup> Marie McCarthy, "Historical Inquiry: Getting Inside the Process," in *Inquiry in Music Education: Concepts and Methods for the Beginning Researcher*, ed. Hildegard C. Froehlich and Carol Frierson-Campbell (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 124.

opportunity to preserve and gather the memories of marginalized country musicians such as Williams.

*Collecting and Working with Primary Sources*

Many primary and secondary sources on early country music have been lost over time. It may seem a daunting task to find primary sources that are, in the words of Wilgus, “scattered and expensive even when they can be located.”<sup>2</sup> Sources on Williams’ life and music were available and accessible. Williams’ oldest daughter, Barbara Smik, helped my research by sharing private archived materials and providing a glimpse into her father’s life and career through several interviews conducted in her home, on the phone, and through email.

Early country music can be documented (most easily) through phonographic recordings<sup>3</sup> and other media. As I gathered primary sources, I organized them into the following categories: 1) recordings and published music, 2) interviews, 3) newspapers, magazines, fanzines, newsletters, and 4) artifacts, which included items such as song books, handbills, circulars, post cards, folk art, and family albums dealing with the country music tradition. Artifacts from Smik’s archives included photographs, advertisements, show programs, lyric sheets, costumes, fan letters, posters, a TEAC reel-to-reel machine, and much more. I utilized technology applications to help gather and organize my primary sources, by scanning sources, photocopying, taking photographic images, and compiling notes about the artifacts.

I researched within the archives of the Wheeling Room in the Ohio County Public Library in Wheeling, WV, and Smik’s archives of Doc and Chickie Williams to obtain primary sources appropriate to my study. WWVA (Wheeling, WV) radio station published family albums

---

<sup>2</sup> Wilgus, "An Introduction to the Study of Hillbilly Music," 199.

<sup>3</sup> Norman Cohen, "Early Pioneers," in *Stars of Country Music: Uncle Dave Macon to Johnny Rodriguez*, ed. Bill C. Malone and Judith McCulloh (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

to commemorate anniversaries and picture books of the show which were also used for research and were accessed from the Wheeling Room in the Ohio County Public Library. Barbara Smik has been working for over 20 years to archive her parents' work, and with her help I found what was needed for my research.<sup>4</sup> She also has in her possession historical early country publications and magazines, many of which are not available in libraries.<sup>5</sup> Two other primary sources used were Williams' autobiography<sup>6</sup> (which Smik co-authored) and the *Simplified by Ear System of Guitar Chords* by Doc Williams, first published under his birth name, Andrew Smik, in 1943.<sup>7</sup>

Other primary sources used were newspaper articles from various publications out of Wheeling, WV and the surrounding areas, such as *Country Music Beat: From Wheeling With Feeling*, *Lantern Tribune*, *Valley News*, *Sunday News-Register*, *Journal-Pioneer*, *Wheeling Feeling*, *Intelligencer*, *Country Time Review*, *Country Spotlight of Country Spotlight, Inc.*, and *Plain Dealer Magazine*.<sup>8</sup>

Some early country music magazines contained materials pertaining to the study: *Country Song Roundup* (first printed in 1949), *Jamboree USA*, *Country Weekly* (recently renamed *Nash Country Weekly*), and *WGMA Country*. These magazines, also in Smik's collection, gave first-hand accounts of bands, musicians, artists, and shows of the early country music era.

#### *Development of Curriculum Based on Primary Sources*

---

<sup>4</sup> Wheeling Music & Publishing Company Inc. is the family business that releases recordings and published works of Doc Williams. Williams' vinyl recording business is called Wheeling Records, or Wheeling Recording Company.

<sup>5</sup> Some universities have been in contact with Smik to house the collection of her father's life and work, however, she is waiting until she is done archiving the material before she hands it over.

<sup>6</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>7</sup> Smik, *The Simplified by Ear System of Guitar Chords*.

<sup>8</sup> Williams's obituary was published in several newspapers and music magazines such as *Bluegrass Unlimited* and *Country Music People*.

I examined five pieces that represent Williams' career in country music which can be used in a general music curriculum for grades 3-5. The criteria I used for selecting these pieces takes into consideration several factors including stylistic characteristics of country music, song type, appropriateness of song lyrics for children, and instrumentation.

I chose the following pieces from Williams' repertoire (dates refer to year of record release): "Beyond the Sunset" (1947) with his wife Chickie singing lead vocals; an old English folk song, "My Old Brown Coat and Me" (1949); one of Williams' originals, "Willie Roy the Crippled Boy" (1947); an upbeat polka tune, "Merry Maiden Polka" (1947); and fan favorite, "The Cat Came Back" (1955). There are, of course, many other songs in Williams' repertory that would be suitable for use a general music curriculum, grades 3-5; however, the songs I selected I believe are representative of the "Doc Williams Sound" as well as being "signature songs" of Doc Williams and the Border Riders.

The curriculum component draws from a variety of musical activities. The use of digitized audio recordings is suggested for all five pieces. The pieces showcase qualities and characteristics of Williams' music: 1) the duet style Williams preferred, both vocally and instrumentally, as heard in "Willie Roy the Crippled Boy" and "My Old Brown Coat and Me," respectively, 2) the ethnic European flavor Martin's accordion playing provides in "Merry Maiden Polka," 3) Chickie Williams' sweet, sentimental, voice singing "Beyond the Sunset" and reading the recitation "If You Go First, and I Remain," 4) Williams' vocal solo of a "story song," in ballad form in "My Old Brown Coat and Me," and 5) a long forgotten song from the vaudeville era turned folksong, "The Cat Came Back." Each piece is supplemented by a listening guide for teachers and historical information pertaining to the piece, lyrics, photos and images

that are relevant to the song's history, and suggestions for implementation into a general music curriculum for grades 3-5.

### *Internal and External Criticism*

Verification of primary source material is essential to all historical investigations. In certain cases, I needed to make assumptions or draw conclusions based on the sources available, but I consulted Smik when these situations arose. External criticism refers to the authenticity and reliability of a source. I evaluated sources for authenticity by asking these questions: When and where was the source produced? Who produced it? Is it in its original form? Is it a genuine source? What essential information is lacking, if any?<sup>9</sup>

For internal criticism I took care to look for biases, especially due to the extreme opinions of early country music. While the scholarly world overlooked early country music, the layperson was embracing it, and this was evident in my research. In working with primary sources, I evaluated their originality, veracity, relevance, and evidentiary value, relevance, and evidentiary value.<sup>10</sup>

Smik, who maintains the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams, was my most significant source. She was a key source of original information and insight, providing unique firsthand accounts and perspectives of not only her father's musical career, but of her own experience since she and her two sisters, Karen and Madeline, joined their father and mother on the stage. Williams' grandson, Courtney Ray Ferguson, also provided valuable insight during an interview. I also drew on some sources that Williams published himself in the 1940s, such as the *Simplified by Ear Guitar System of Guitar Chords* and *Doc Williams Border Riders Family Album*.

---

<sup>9</sup> McCarthy, "Historical Inquiry," pp. 135-136.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Williams' co-authored biography, published in 2006, was transcribed from his tape recorded memoirs. Other primary sources were published during the time period of study (1932-1951), during the peak of Williams' touring years (1950s and 1960s), or later. I took care to analyze conflicting evidence and present it accordingly when appropriate, honoring the historical record without distorting it.

In terms of veracity, Smik admits that it is difficult for her to think objectively about her parents' music, because she grew up within the culture of country music business, and then continued to work within the family business. Smik is proud of her father's work, and believes he was a pioneer in country music. She keeps the business going, but Smik has made it very clear that her goal is to spread the "joy" of the Williamses music to others, and to see her parents' legacy live on.

As the researcher, it was important to understand the framework of musical values during the early country music era, not just in the United States as a whole, but in Wheeling, West Virginia, where Williams resided for most of his life. As discussed in Chapter 2, early country music was marginalized until the 1960s when it began to receive scholarly attention. When I examined sources on a local level, I found this to be true in some cases, especially when I came across descriptions of the treatment of early country music radio artists throughout the 1940s and the push for the Top 40 format on radio after World War II. Williams believed that every local musician ought to have the same opportunities to be heard on their local radio station, instead of radio stations buying into the Top 40 format, which he viewed as a monopoly.<sup>11</sup> The material I found on these topics is fascinating, but not all of it is relevant to the study; however, I developed

---

<sup>11</sup> Lee Rector, "Williams Takes Stand for Regional Artists," *Hard Country Beat* 1994.

a deep appreciation for the efforts of the early country music pioneers. I organized this kind of material and saved it for possibly another study in the future.

I used my best judgement when deciding the evidentiary value of sources. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find many different viewpoints on Williams' music, partly because his music was contained to a regional area, and because most of the musicians who interacted with Williams during the early country music era have passed on. Karen McKenzie, Smik's sister, did provide a different perspective for the study. She was helpful in providing information about the musical aspects of Williams' career, because she toured with her father's band for many years. In addition, Ivan Tribe contributed a great deal because he answered questions about Williams in cases where Smik felt she could not answer adequately.<sup>12</sup> I conducted follow-up interviews through email and telephone as needed.

#### *Potential Ethical Issues*

Williams was an outspoken critic of music that had questionable lyrical content.<sup>13</sup> His daughter Barbara supported him on this front, and still does today. I kept the debate over appropriate music in American culture out of my study. Music teachers today are faced with difficulties incorporating popular musics into the classroom for many reasons that may have nothing to do with the degree of difficulty of the music, such as lyrical content or cultural nuances found in the music, which have to be treated with sensitivity when presenting them to students. Williams' insistence on playing clean, simple country music makes it easier to integrate

---

<sup>12</sup> Tribe is currently working on a book on country music in West Virginia which includes the Williams family.

<sup>13</sup> In 1975 Williams was interviewed for a segment called "A Chat with Country Music Artist Doc Williams" in which he discusses the moral code he and his family live by. See David Hopper, "A Chat with Country Music Artist Doc Williams," (Morgantown, WV: WWVU TV, 1975).

his music in a music curriculum, however, even though his music is family friendly, some terminology and world views of the historical era should be discussed with students.

I requested the written consent of Barbara Smik, Karen McKenzie, and Courtney Ferguson to be interviewed (Appendix B) and the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Michigan (Appendix C). Interview questions are included in Appendix A. I recorded interviews on my laptop computer and cell phone and gave opportunities for interviewees to review the transcripts. I treated negative attitudes and information that I came across in my research with sensitivity and where possible corroborated material collected during interviews with other evidence to determine its place in my study.

#### *Organizing the Narrative*

Chapter 4 will consist of the narrative of Williams' musical career and his contributions to country music up until the year 1951, which marked the beginning of the long distance tours to Canada. In Chapter 5 I will present five pieces of Williams' repertoire that I selected to showcase in a general music curriculum for grades 3-5. Chapter 6 will summarize the findings and give suggestions for further research and the use of Williams' music in the general music curriculum.

#### *In Summary*

I hope that by investigating Williams' career insight will be gained about the early country music tradition in Wheeling, WV and the historical significance of one of its many contributors to the tradition, Doc Williams. The study will help bring to the forefront the positive musical values associated with early country music and make it a valid area of study in public school music education. Additionally, I will add to the limited number of studies on country music in the general music curriculum.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## DOC WILLIAMS' CAREER AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO COUNTRY MUSIC

*Introduction*

Doc Williams' first experiences with music were the musical sounds in his home. Both of Williams' parents immigrated to the United States from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the early 1900s. Andrew Smik Sr. and Susie Parobeck, his mother and father, always called themselves "Slovaks" and spoke the Slovakian language.<sup>1</sup> The Smik family moved from Cleveland, Ohio, to Tarrtown, about three miles from Kittanning, Pennsylvania when Williams was a young boy. His coal mining father, Andrew Smik Sr., played fiddle around the house all the time. Smik Sr.'s repertoire consisted of Hungarian and gypsy music, but he also taught himself American country tunes he heard from radio and records.<sup>2</sup> He likely had some formal training in music, because he taught Williams how to read music by note. Evidence of Williams' father's musical heritage can be seen in Figure 4, which shows a young Andrew Smik Sr. with a clarinet, his brother, Frank, with a fiddle, and their father standing, likely taken in Hungary or shortly after arriving in the United States (Figure 5). As a youngster, Andrew Smik Jr. was also influenced by the musical acts he heard on radio and records. When he acquired his first guitar at 15, he began imitating what he heard. These first experiences shaped Williams' musical

---

<sup>1</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*. According to the papers from Ellis Island, Andrew came in 1909 from Tisovic, Hungary, and Susie (born in Klencovic, Hungary) came when she was 12. Williams' parents settled in Cleveland.

<sup>2</sup> Kempf, "Meet Doc Williams: Country Music Star, Country Music Legend."

vocabulary, which he molded into his own style of early country music. He stayed true to this style for the duration of his career.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 5 Williams' Musical Heritage, circa 1907. Left to right: Williams' father, Andrew Smik, Williams' grandfather, and Williams' uncle, Frank Smik. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

Williams considered his first experiences working in radio as “on the job training.” He watched and learned musical stylings and repertoire from his colleagues. While playing at a dance in Pennsylvania, he met his future wife, Wanda Crupe (later given the stage name “Chickie Williams”), and later her grandfather, Amos Riggle, both of whom had a profound influence on his career.

Williams’ music, like the music of his colleagues who also played on the “Wheeling Jamboree,” consisted of “old favorites, soft and simple songs of heart and home, uncomplicated,

---

<sup>3</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*. Doc preferred open strings and didn't like rhythm guitar played six string style or barred chords. In addition, drums were frowned upon in early country music. In later years Williams added electric guitar and bass, and finally drums, however Smik insists it did not interfere with Williams’ established sound and style.

emotionally appealing, sure-fire, heart-tugging melodies that stir fond memories of happier times and younger days.”<sup>4</sup> The songs tell a story about the good and the bad, tragedy and happiness.<sup>5</sup> In the midst of the sentimental songs the Border Riders played polkas, which incorporated an ethnic aspect to their music.<sup>6</sup> The old songs, ballads, sacred songs, and polkas became a part of Williams’ repertoire on stage and in the recording studio.

Williams went from humble beginnings as a coal miner’s son to a successful career as a country music entertainer. He became the longest-performing act in Jamboree history<sup>7</sup> and had a successful recording career in addition to touring for decades throughout the Northeast and Canada. His career was full of events and people he met by happenstance; however, he did not let challenges or hard times get the best of him.<sup>8</sup> What follows is the story of Williams’ career in country music from his childhood up until 1951, highlighting important events and musical influences that shaped the development of the Border Riders’ sound. Within this timeline I will also discuss the characteristics of Williams’ music and how they relate to the five components of early country music as described in Peterson’s book, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*; radio broadcasts, touring, song publishing, song writing, and recording. I will close with a summary of Chapter 4. The “Doc Williams Sound” is explained within the first section of the five components, radio broadcasts.

#### *Developing a Musical Career as a Live Performer and Band Member*

---

<sup>4</sup> Anonymous, "Jamboree USA Homecoming 1974," *The Wheeling Feeling* 1974, 8.

<sup>5</sup> "Homecoming Reunion Unites Country Music's Early Stars," *Country Music Beat*, May 1975.

<sup>6</sup> "West Virginia Country Music and Goldenseal Magazine," (Charleston, WV: West Virginia State Archives, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Chuck Miller, "Almost Heaven: Wheeling in the Years," *The Journal of Country Music* 23, no. 2 (2003).

<sup>8</sup> For example, Williams landed the job at WWVA from what he called a “dirty trick” by another entertainer in the business. The story is in Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

“Williams possessed a unique background for a hillbilly musician in that his heritage included no southern roots and little that could be classed as either Appalachian or rural.”<sup>9</sup> As Williams puts it, “Here I am a Slovak boy whose parents emigrated from Eastern Europe and I became an Anglo-Saxon folk singer. Kind of unusual to say the least.”<sup>10</sup> The music of his childhood had a great impact on his musical career. Williams recalls hearing early country 78RPM records drifting across the railroad tracks from the Tarr family’s neighboring home; sometimes the family would invite him over to listen to records in the parlor. “I loved Jimmy Rodgers records. Everyone liked Jimmie Rodgers, including me.”<sup>11</sup> They also played Vernon Dalhart records.<sup>12</sup>

Williams’ father taught him to play C cornet by note, enough that he could play the hymns in the family hymn book. Williams’ interest in music continued to grow; however, family finances and economic struggles during the depression era forced Williams to go live with his Slovak grandmother (maternal) in downtown Cleveland, where he attended 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade. His formal schooling ended there when he was called home to Tarrtown, PA to work in the mines.

In 1929, when he was about 15 years old, he begged his father for a guitar after hearing neighbor Dan River playing guitar runs. His father bought him a \$3.00 guitar from the pawn shop (although the neck was warped and the strings were too high). This had to have been a sacrifice at the time, because it was the Great Depression and the family had no electricity or running water in the house. In addition to coal mining, Williams’ father was a barber on the side. Despite the condition of the guitar, Williams managed to learn on it. He says he just played what

---

<sup>9</sup> Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia," 47.

<sup>10</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 113.

<sup>11</sup> Smik and Williams, Interviewed by author, July 31, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Barbara D. Smik, "We've Come a Long Way Together," *Doc Williams Country* 1, no. 1 (1992).

he heard. "I played it so much, one day my mother said, 'Andy, if you don't quit banging that guitar, I'm going to hit you with a shovel.' She got so tired of hearing me, hour after hour. I was fascinated by the guitar."<sup>13</sup> He reflected that he was "so interested and fascinated by country music as a youngster, I think it was inevitable that I'd become a country music entertainer."<sup>14</sup>

To realize his dream of being a band leader, Williams encouraged his younger brother Milo (Cy) to learn fiddle, while he played guitar.<sup>15</sup> The brothers played their first show north of Pittsburgh at a roadhouse (restaurant). Williams sang lead vocals and played guitar while Cy sang harmony vocals and played fiddle, and Dale Kuhn played banjo.<sup>16</sup> At that first show, Williams says, "I probably sang such songs as 'May I Sleep in Your Barn Tonight Mister' and 'I've Got No Use For the Women.'" Another song Williams sang in those days was written by Hoyt "Slim" Bryant (country music entertainer based in Pittsburgh) and Jimmie Rodgers titled, "Mother Queen of My Heart."<sup>17</sup> Williams admired Hoyt "Slim" Bryant's "uptown" style of country music that he first heard on KDKA radio. Bryant was from the south, and Williams says southern musicians who came north invaded in a positive sense, exposing listeners to a different sound through their broadcasts and records.<sup>18</sup>

After two years of mining, Williams headed back to Cleveland, with the \$3.00 guitar from his father. His grandmother bought him his first "good" guitar, an O-45 Martin, which

---

<sup>13</sup> Smik and Williams, Interviewed by author, July 31, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Smik, "We've Come a Long Way Together."

<sup>15</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*. Prior to guitar, Williams', for a short time, played his father's fiddle for square dances. For payment they used to pass the hat, which is called "busking." John Lilly and Ivan Tribe both talk about busking.

<sup>16</sup> Smik, "We've Come a Long Way Together."

<sup>17</sup> "We've Come a Long Way Together." As of 1992, he still sang Bryant and Rodgers song on stage now and then.

<sup>18</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 8.

played a key role in Williams' start in country music. Without that guitar he may have given up.<sup>19</sup> He says:

That dear old lady is the one that actually bought me that guitar with her money, to this day I must admit, without that guitar to encourage me to make my chords sound right, so they were properly placed and the neck was straight, the chords were accurate, I might have been discouraged in my need to become a country music entertainer. When you hit a D chord on that guitar, you got a D chord that was in tune.<sup>20</sup>

Williams formed a band with his neighbor, Joe Stoetzer, calling themselves the Mississippi Clowns (Figure 6). They played every Thursday afternoon on an amateur hour broadcast on WJAY (Cleveland), called "The Barn Busters." Doc McCaulley from Belington, West Virginia discovered them on this show and together they formed a band called the Kansas Clodhoppers (Figure 7).<sup>21</sup> This band played for a couple of dollars a night in "beer gardens" and for square dances. McCaulley's influence was great in that he introduced Williams to the Appalachian style of music, and Williams credits McCaulley's band as a very important part of his training.<sup>22</sup> He learned fiddle tunes such as "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down" and "Down Yonder," along with folks songs such as "The Prisoner at the Bar."<sup>23</sup> Curley Sims, a mandolin player from Ohio, replaced Stoetzer, who left the band to take a factory job. Sims continued with Williams when Williams, still on the track to become the leader of a country music band, decided to leave McCaulley. This is where Williams' professional career begins.

---

<sup>19</sup> Barbara D. Smik, Interviewed by author, March 29, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 5.

<sup>21</sup> Ivan Tribe comments that artists used titles of places they had never been to or lived in because they were trying to identify with those areas, such as the south or the west. After Gene Autry arrived on the scene in 1935, everyone emulated the look of the singing cowboy.

<sup>22</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back.*; Larry Wilson, "A Man Called Doc," *The Wheeling Feeling*, October 1973. There was also a fourth member who played a bass drum with a cord attached to it, since they couldn't afford a real bass.

<sup>23</sup> Williams recorded the "Prisoner at the Bar" in 1965 on LP, then later onto a CD.



Figure 6 The Mississippi Clowns in Cleveland on WJAY, 1933. Left, Joe Stotzer, right, Andy Smik (Doc).  
Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.



Figure 7 The Kansas Clodhoppers on WJAY in 1933-4. Left to right: Joe Stotzer, 'Doc' McCaulley, and Andy Smik (Doc). Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

### *Williams Produces his Brand of Country Music*

To provide a framework for organizing the many facets of Williams' professional career I used the components of the emerging country music genre as described by Peterson in *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*: radio broadcasts, touring, song publishing, song

writing, and recording (briefly discussed in Chapter 2).<sup>24</sup> The components refer to the emerging years of commercialized country music, and Williams' first radio gig began in 1932, ten years after the first hillbilly recording was released. Williams' career began slightly later than Peterson's timeframe, but the primary evidence I gathered shows that these components were present throughout his career. The first component- radio broadcasts- is discussed by examining Williams' professional career in radio.

### **Williams' Professional Career in Radio**

Williams won an audition at KQV (Pittsburgh) in 1935 and launched his professional career in radio. From a historical perspective, this was one year after the death of Jimmie Rodgers, when country music was still a "rural grassroots phenomenon."<sup>25</sup> Now back in hometown area of Kittaning, PA, Williams reunited with his brother Cy. Together with Sims they called themselves the Allegheny Ramblers. Later they changed their name to the Cherokee Hillbillies because of Sims' Cherokee heritage (Figure 8).<sup>26</sup> After six months they joined Miss Billie Walker's Texas Longhorns. Big Slim the Lone Cowboy was also a member of this group, however his stay was only temporary.<sup>27</sup> Miss Billie left KQV in 1936 for a job at WWL (New Orleans); Williams, Cy, and Sims decided to stay. A few months later, Williams took the stage name "Doc Williams" and formed the group Doc Williams and the Border Riders. They accepted a spot in a three station hook-up in Pittsburgh (WJAS, KQV, and WHJB out of Greensburg, PA).

---

<sup>24</sup> Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*.

<sup>25</sup> Anonymous, "The Old Time, Modern Country Sound of Doc Williams," *WGMA Country*, March 1969.

<sup>26</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>27</sup> Williams said he loved to hear Big Slim sing and he learned a lot of the old songs from him.



Figure 8 The Cherokee Hillbillies in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, 1935. Left to right: Dale Kuhn, Milo Smik (Cy), Leonard "Curley" Sims, and Andy Smik (Doc). Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

Doc Williams and the Border Riders took over Miss Billie's prime time 15-minute spot (8AM) Monday through Saturday. Members of the Border Riders included Williams on guitar, Dale Kuhn on banjo, Cy on fiddle, and Hamilton Fincher (Rawhide) did comedy. When Kuhn left, Williams added his first female vocalist, Mickie McCarthy, who due to ill-health was replaced by Mary Jane Mosier. Nine months later she was replaced by Mary Calvas, whose stage name was "Sunflower" (Figure 9). Williams recalled playing at the local street fair in Kittanning during this time, and he was so excited to play in front of 5,000 people that he doesn't remember if he was a big hit or not.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.



Figure 9 Doc Williams and the Border Riders at KQV, prior to their move to WWVA. Standing left to right: Hamilton 'Rawhide' Fincher, Cy Williams, Doc Williams. Seated left to right: Mary 'Sunflower' Calvas and Curley Sims. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

In May of 1937 Williams' group auditioned for and moved to radio station WWVA where the band played Monday thru Friday shows and on the Saturday night "Wheeling Jamboree." Speaking on the musical sound of the band at that time Williams writes:

Curley Sims was an excellent mandolin player and if he were around today he would be able to compete with most of the mandolin players. Therefore, we almost had a bluegrass band. In a way it wasn't bluegrass because it wasn't called that at that time. It was called hillbilly.<sup>29</sup>

Sims was one of many musical influences on Williams, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

### **Development of the "Doc Williams Sound"**

During the years of World War II, The Border Riders' sound continued to center around the fiddle and mandolin, with Williams' solid rhythm guitar and vocal leads. Cy and Chickie also sang some solos. When Sims left in 1946, he was replaced by accordion player Marion Keyoski, whose stage name was Marion Martin. Martin's addition to the band changed the sound for the

---

<sup>29</sup> *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 14.

next twenty five years.<sup>30</sup> The story of how the accordion came to be a part of Williams' band is unique. Just prior to the United States involvement in World War II,<sup>31</sup> Martin, a blind accordionist from Adena, Ohio, came to WWVA studios looking for a job, and Williams' first reaction was "I don't think I want accordion." He may have had this reaction because in country music, accordion was often used as a backup instrument in the 1920s and 1930s, but was dropped after the war because of the influence and addition of the steel guitar. However, in northern West Virginia the accordion was appreciated because of the Eastern European polka sounds infused into country dance music in the region.<sup>32</sup>

Chickie encouraged Williams to give Martin a chance. Williams asked Martin to change his style of playing from full fingered chords to more button-style accordion.<sup>33</sup> In another source, Williams describes asking Martin to play like a country harmonica, which incorporated a more traditional sound.<sup>34</sup> Martin played with the band for a short time before leaving to go to WIBC (Indianapolis) in 1943. He also spent time broadcasting on WSKT (New Castle, PA) in 1945.<sup>35</sup> He returned to the Border Riders after World War II in 1946. At this time, members of the Border Riders consisted of Cy on fiddle, Hiram Hayseed as comedian, Martin on accordion, Chickie on vocals and upright bass, and Williams on guitar (Figure 10).

DJs would later nickname the sound of this group the "Doc Williams Sound." The main characteristics of the "Doc Williams Sound" include 1) Cy and Martin's instrumental duet along

<sup>30</sup> Ivan M. Tribe, "Doc Williams: A Half Century at the 'Wheeling Jamboree'," *Goldenseal* 1987.

<sup>31</sup> Williams only says that Europe was at war but the United States was not involved yet. Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>32</sup> Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia." Up until World War II, Gene Autry featured accordion in all his network shows, and Autry was one whom many early country artists emulated.

<sup>33</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>34</sup> Barbara D. Smik, "We Remember...Marion Martin 'Famous Blind Accordionist'," *Doc Williams Country* 2, no. 1 (1993).

<sup>35</sup> This is Smik's best guess as to when Martin left the Wheeling area.

with 2) Williams' straightforward rhythm guitar, 3) a bass guitar pattern that was typical of early country music, centering around the root notes of the I, IV, and V chords, and 4) vocal leads by Williams (who also sang duets with Cy and Chickie) and Chickie. Tribe attributes the popularity of this sound to the Eastern and Southern European immigrants who resided in the tristate area of West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, and identified with instruments such as the accordion.<sup>36</sup> Accordion was used in these areas but not to the degree or manner in which Williams paired the instrument with the fiddle. In 1946, when Williams added accordion to his band, the instrument had already begun to fade from use in country music.



Figure 10 Left to right: Hiram Hayseed, Marion Martin, Cy Williams, Doc Williams, and Chickie Williams at the WWVA Transmitter Station in 1947. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

### **Touring and Selling**

The “Doc Williams Sound” turned out to be quite marketable. This brings us to the second component, “touring,” to which I added “selling,” because of how important advertising and selling products were to an artist’s survival. Artists made a living by making personal

---

<sup>36</sup> Specifically, Tribe mentions the northern panhandle of West Virginia, Clarksburg, Fairmont, and Morgantown West Virginia, southeastern counties of Ohio and the Youngtown area, southwestern Pennsylvania, and possibly even areas of western Maryland, such as Frederick and Oakland. Further south into West Virginia the musical sounds were more Appalachian in style and did not include accordion.

appearances (tours) and selling merchandise and/or records since they were not paid for their broadcasts.<sup>37</sup> Williams advises novice musicians in his article “Hints on How to Get Started in Radio:” “You are not asked to pay for this spot in any financial way nor do you ask to be paid.”<sup>38</sup> Prior to 1949 Williams established his popularity by touring in and around Wheeling, WV,<sup>39</sup> and broadcasting daily shows from WWVA studios in the Hawley Building, located in downtown Wheeling on Main Street.<sup>40</sup>

You’d go up to a studio, in our case the tenth floor of the Hawley Building, rehearse your program, tune up your instruments, put your program on live, then leave and go on and do your personal appearance.<sup>41</sup>

Doc Williams and the Border Riders maintained a busy schedule, playing shows almost nightly nearby in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.<sup>42</sup> They couldn’t travel far from the station because they had to get back in time for the next broadcast. These daily programs likely continued into the 1950s, and were phased out when the station hired a full-time staff band.<sup>43</sup>

Williams’ sold merchandise over the air which included photos and souvenir scrapbooks. In 1940 Williams published *Doc Williams Border Riders Family Album* of 39 photos and 14 song lyrics (Figure 11). The group was not making records, but no one at WWVA was either.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*.

<sup>38</sup> Smik, *The Simplified by Ear System of Guitar Chords*: 22.

<sup>39</sup> Ron England, "Two Million Miles and 35 Years Later, Doc Williams Show Still Going Strong," *The Journal Pioneer*, May 10 1969.

<sup>40</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*. Williams guesses he has done as many as a thousand live radio programs.

<sup>41</sup> *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 110.

<sup>42</sup> Williams made over 6,000 personal appearances in his career and an estimated one thousand radio shows.

<sup>43</sup> Ivan M. Tribe, Interviewed by author, April 18, 2016.

<sup>44</sup> "Doc Williams: A Half Century at the 'Wheeling Jamboree'." The exception was Hugh and Shug’s “Radio Pals,” who recorded for Decca in July 1937. At WSM, only Acuff and Monroe were recording then.

Book sales provided important supplemental income for Williams.<sup>45</sup> Another source of supplemental income for early radio artists were product sponsors. Williams' sponsor in the early days was Little Crow Milling Company, who produced COCO-Wheats, a breakfast cereal, which Williams advertised on the air (Figure 12). For every line of inquiry that came in (dubbed P.I.'s, short for Per Inquiries) with a product boxtop, the musician would receive a penny or two, and the fan would receive some sort of keepsake, such as an autographed postcard or photo.<sup>46</sup>

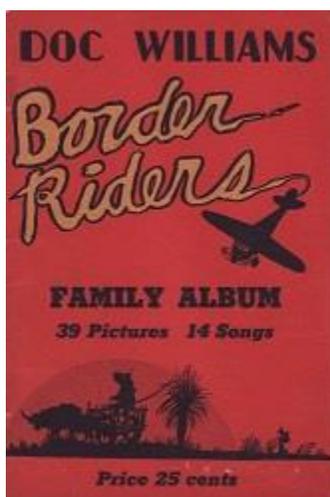


Figure 11 Doc Williams and the Border Riders' Family Album, 1940. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

---

<sup>45</sup> Primarily, the album was sold on the air and at personal appearances. WWVA received a cut of the profit for any orders of the album that were addressed to the station. From an email communication with Smik on May 19, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Tribe, Interviewed by author, April 18, 2016. The sponsors also were looking out for themselves; they wanted to sponsor acts that could sell their product. If an entertainer took in a lot of mail, then they knew he or she was popular. "As well as being good entertainment, you had to have a good line of advertising."



Figure 12 Little Crow Milling Company, product sponsor for Doc Williams and the Border Riders' in the late 1930s. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

Personal appearances soon moved beyond the local area and became a package deal. WWVA began the first “package tour” in 1939, comprised of seven bands including Doc Williams and the Border Riders. They performed six dates in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Williams was again part of the tour in 1940 and 1942. Big changes to early radio practices came with World War II; most notably, it became too difficult for artists to make personal appearances due to gasoline and tire rationing.<sup>47</sup> During the war year, Williams developed and advertised his instructional guitar course while continuing to do radio broadcasts, which will be discussed later.

In 1949, WWVA still required artists to be at the Jamboree on Saturday nights. Some nights there were as many as 13 acts on the stage and Williams felt it hurt his airtime. He fought for the right to tour beyond the local area in the early days of radio.<sup>48</sup> He asked the boss if he

<sup>47</sup> "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia."

<sup>48</sup> Smik, Interviewed by author, March 29, 2016.

could leave for one Saturday night, explaining that he had booked three dates in Northern Maine, and he received permission to go.<sup>49</sup> This was important because Williams was the first of the Jamboree to take a long distance tour, and it was risky because no one knew how the Border Riders would be received. Luckily, because of WWVA's strong 50,000 watt radio signal, they were celebrities even before they arrived there. Upon arriving in Maine, they advertised via broadcast on WAGM (Presque Isle). The response was so great that for the ten-day tour they had to do two shows instead of one. Williams missed one Saturday night Jamboree, as arranged,<sup>50</sup> and he made enough money to buy a new car when he got home.<sup>51</sup> Because of the band's success on the first long distance tour, they decided to tour into Canada in 1951, and they returned annually for 25 years.<sup>52</sup> Williams organized a significant number of annual tours to the Northeast as well; for example, they toured throughout Vermont annually for over 25 years (Figure 13).<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>50</sup> Doc Williams, "How Do You Write About a Lifetime?," *Hard Country Beat*, March-April 1996.

<sup>51</sup> Miller, "Almost Heaven: Wheeling in the Years," 23.

<sup>52</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>53</sup> Smik, Interviewed by author, March 29, 2016.

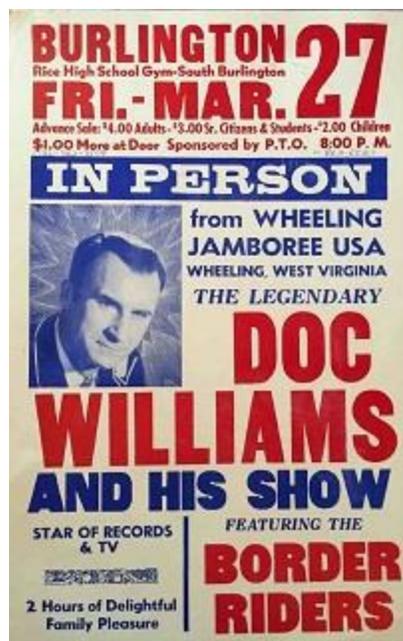


Figure 13 A poster from the 1950s advertising one of Williams' shows in South Burlington, VT. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

### Song Writing and Song Publishing

While on tour, Doc Williams and the Border Riders filled two-hour shows with music and variety and comedy acts. Song material for the shows came from a wide variety of sources, and it is important to understand how Williams developed a repertory before analyzing how song writing and song publishing applied. Peterson writes that out of the folk tradition from which country music came, songs came from local performers, vaudeville, and increasingly from radio and records. This allowed for continuous enrichment from diverse populations of immigrants and music of the commercial industry which was reinvented<sup>54</sup> and subsequently it corresponds to the way Williams' musical influences manifested themselves in his style and repertoire. He was influenced by early country musicians he heard on early radio, other professional entertainers,

---

<sup>54</sup> Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*.

some of whom he worked with on WWVA, and his wife Chickie's maternal grandfather, Amos Riggle.

In the early days of radio, Williams listened to KDKA (Pittsburgh), the world's first radio station, on a crystal set radio around the year 1927. The first country music performances on KDKA that Williams heard were duets, namely, Jack and Jerry Foy and the Moylan Sisters. Duets would go on to be a key component of Williams' sound; he showcased duets in both vocal and instrumental settings.<sup>55</sup> Artists learned by listening and molding songs from radio and records into their repertoires,<sup>56</sup> and in Williams' case, songs from other musicians as well. At WWVA, Williams worked with several entertainers and learned from them all. Big Slim the Lone Cowboy and Rawhide (Hamilton Fincher), both in Williams' band for a short time, taught Williams many songs.<sup>57</sup> Sims' southern roots influenced Williams as well; not only did Williams learn songs from him, Sims taught Cy many tunes on the fiddle. Until Sims joined the band, Cy only knew a half dozen tunes for square dances. Hugh Cross and Shug Fisher, the Radio Pals, were also at WWVA in 1937 and Williams says he watched professionals like the Radio Pals closely because he was a greenhorn. Later, the Border Riders would record some of their songs.<sup>58</sup> Maxine and Eileen, the blind Newcomer Twins, performed on WWVA in the early years and through World War II. They taught Williams "Polka Dots and Polka Dreams," a duet which he and Chickie sang on stage during their entire career.

---

<sup>55</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>56</sup> Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*.

<sup>57</sup> Smik and Williams, Interviewed by author, July 31, 2010.

<sup>58</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

Williams also learned many songs from Chickie's grandfather, Amos Riggle, who was from Aleppo, Pennsylvania.<sup>59</sup> Riggle was affectionately called "Grandad Riggle" by the family members. Speaking of her great grandfather, Smik says: "A lot of the songs Dad picked up from Grandad Riggle I never heard anyone else sing."<sup>60</sup> Williams recorded several songs learned from Riggle, including "Three Wishes," "Man in the Moon," and his signature song, "My Old Brown Coat and Me."<sup>61</sup>

Songs like "The Hills of Roane County," a ballad,<sup>62</sup> and "Ain't Nobody Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone," are two of Williams' songs out of many that were likely in the public domain. He may have learned them from radio, records, or another musician; there is no way to know for sure. In the early days of radio, many of the songs performed on the air were not copyrighted; however, artists started copyrighting songs, even if they weren't the original composer.<sup>63</sup> Smik explains, "If you see ten people claiming copyright, you can assume it's in the public domain."<sup>64</sup> Evidence of artists copyrighting public domain songs can be found in song books and family albums that they published.<sup>65</sup>

Looking at the song lyrics printed in the *Doc Williams Border Riders Family Album*, it is clear that Williams gave copyright credit to the original author or source when it was known. He also uses the terms "Compiled by" and "Arranged by" throughout the album. An example can be

<sup>59</sup> Aleppo, Pennsylvania is about an hour drive from Wheeling, West Virginia. Chickie was born and raised in the southwestern Pennsylvania area.

<sup>60</sup> Smik, Interviewed by author, March 29, 2016.

<sup>61</sup> Interviewed by author, March 29, 2016.; "Three Wishes" was a big hit in Newfoundland, He recorded it in 1968. In the song, you hear the word "Drummer" which meant "salesman" according to Williams.

<sup>62</sup> Smik refers to ballads as "story songs" or "songs that tell a story" throughout her communications with me.

<sup>63</sup> This is corroborated in Chapter 2 of Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*.

<sup>64</sup> Barbara D. Smik and Courtney Ferguson, Interviewed by author, September 26, 2011.

<sup>65</sup> Williams copyrighted "My Old Brown Coat and Me." Tribe writes Big Slim the Lone Cowboy claimed copyright on songs which he did not compose.

seen in The Border Riders' theme song, a tune Williams recomposed from "Riding Down that Old Texas Trail" by Gene Autry (Figure 14).<sup>66</sup>

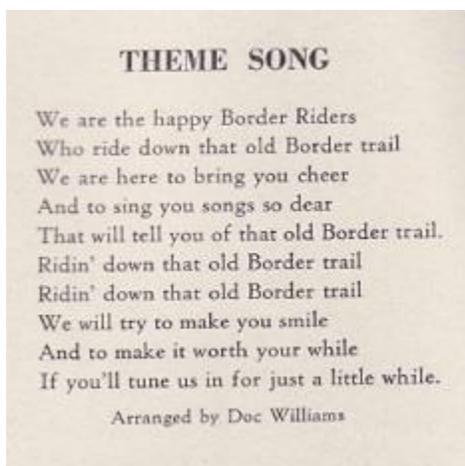


Figure 14 Williams recomposed the Border Riders' theme song from Gene Autry's "Ridin' Down that Old Texas Trail." These lyrics were published in the Border Riders Family Album in 1940. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

Song sharing was a common theme during Williams' time in early country music. For example, Williams recorded the song "Polka Dots and Polka Dreams," (1954) learned from the Newcomers. I asked Smik if recording songs learned from his contemporaries, such as "Polka Dots and Polka Dreams" caused any relational strife. Smik replied,

Not at all. The entertainers, I would say, Mom and Dad also, they were just so approachable, and they had many friends in the industry. Grandpa Jones for example, was here in the early years of WWVA in the 30s when Dad first came here, and they were friends for a lifetime.<sup>67</sup>

Williams received material in this way throughout his career. "Entertainers were always sharing music with each other, there wasn't that possessive, 'it's mine' attitude."<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Tribe, "Doc Williams: A Half Century at the 'Wheeling Jamboree'."

<sup>67</sup> Smik, Interviewed by author, March 29, 2016.

<sup>68</sup> Interviewed by author, March 29, 2016.

Chickie had a knack for finding story songs, like “The Baggage Coach Ahead.” When I asked Smik where Chickie found these songs, she replied: “People were just singing them, her parents, her grandfather, they were probably even then in the public domain.”<sup>69</sup> It is possible that this music that was in the public domain had roots in the vaudeville era. While forgotten in the cities, the songs flourished in the folk culture of rural people.<sup>70</sup> Smik and Williams discussed this briefly when I spoke with them in 2010, where I met Williams in person and spoke with him. Smik asked her father, “A lot of this kind of music evolved out of the vaudeville era, wouldn’t you say Dad? The turn of the century when they sang songs about mother, and...” Williams verified, “I don’t think there’s any question about it.”<sup>71</sup>

Smik shared some of the others ways in which Williams acquired original music. Williams of course wrote some of his own material, such as “Willie Roy, the Crippled Boy,” and “My Sinner Friend,”<sup>72</sup> but Smik relates that Williams generally was not known for his song writing abilities. Some material was written for the band by fans that came to see them on tour; “Wintertime in Maine” was written by a doctor from Thomaston, Maine<sup>73</sup> and it was one of Chickie’s most well-known songs. Mary Jane Shurtz, a country fan magazine writer from the 1940s, also provided poetry and songs, some of which Williams recorded. Other original material was courtesy of Sarah Prather, a poet with whom Williams worked. In some cases,

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 1 of *Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia*, by Ivan Tribe for a detailed exploration of the musical heritage of West Virginia.

<sup>71</sup> Williams always like to record Indian songs, a subgenre of Tin Pan Alley, and they were some of his most popular recordings. “He recorded any Indian song he could get his hands on.” As a result, Smik still hears from people in Saskatchewan because DJs in that area are still playing his music. The Indian songs recorded by Williams, though valuable, will not be included in my curriculum study.

<sup>72</sup> Chickie was also a songwriter. Her song, “Northwinds,” was recorded in 1967. From

<sup>73</sup> Mike O'Donnell, "Doc Williams Continues Colorful Vaudeville Road Show Traditions," *Valley News*, February 26 1970.



time in 1944 the family moved to Frederick, Maryland so Williams could broadcast on WFMD (Frederick, MD) and make radio transcriptions for the guitar course.<sup>76</sup> Williams bought 15-minute air time slots on radio stations to advertise the course. The advertisements included recordings of songs in the course (performed by the Border Riders) and moments of Williams playing guitar.<sup>77</sup>

### **Wheeling Recording Company and Beyond**

In addition to publishing, Williams also recorded. Peterson notes that in the early 1920s, record producers scouted artists, recorded them, and released the records with little promotion. If the record sold well, the artist would be invited to record in the company's studio.<sup>78</sup> Artists like Williams, however, would likely never get the chance to record because it was WWVA's station policy for their talent not to record.<sup>79</sup> To guarantee their talented musicians stay on at WWVA, executives in the 1940s held their artists to perform only live shows. Otherwise, artists' popularity might prompt them to move on.<sup>80</sup> Major record companies were told the hillbilly musicians were not able to record for them, and they (the artists) were satisfied as things were. The old ABC-Blue Network wanted to broadcast the "Jamboree" coast to coast, but WWVA management turned down the offer, because they were worried about what would happen to their

---

<sup>76</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*. Williams says he recorded in Frederick because they had the ability to get the recording quality he was seeking.

<sup>77</sup> The 15 minute taped transcriptions were recorded in Frederick, MD, and he used them to advertise the guitar course on air. Williams tailored the transcriptions for each radio station on his own reel to reel machine by cutting and splicing tape.

<sup>78</sup> Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*.

<sup>79</sup> Tribe, "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia."

<sup>80</sup> Miller, "Almost Heaven: Wheeling in the Years."

P.I. (Per Inquiries) line of income.<sup>81</sup> This may have been a factor in Williams' decision to establish his own record company, Wheeling Recording Company, in 1947. On a positive note, Williams found that the post-war environment demanded records for airplay; the development of the tape machine (by the Germans) made it easier for artists to record.<sup>82</sup>

Just before the year's end, Doc Williams and the Border Riders recorded for the first time at Cleveland Recording Company on the Wheeling Records label. Musicians of the 1947 Doc Williams and the Border Riders group included Williams on guitar, Cy on fiddle, Chickie on vocals and bass, Martin on accordion, Hiram Hayseed the comedian (who also played fiddle), and Jimmie Hutchinson who played tenor banjo and bass. Abbie Neal, who was not a Border Rider but was on WWVA, played steel guitar for the recording session. For the Cleveland session, they recorded six songs to acetate: "Silver Bell," "Bright Red Horizon," "Broken Memories," "Merry Maiden Polka," "Beyond the Sunset," and "Willie Roy."<sup>83</sup> When "Beyond the Sunset" hit #3 on *Billboard's Top 100 Country Songs*,<sup>84</sup> demand for the record grew. Williams' performance schedule made it difficult to keep up with distribution demands. He was a full-time entertainer and couldn't handle that part of the business and still perform. "My heart really was in being a performer. I loved the work itself, the actual entertaining on the stage, on

---

<sup>81</sup> Williams, "How Do You Write About a Lifetime?." Radio stations feared if an artist made enough money from recording, they wouldn't need the radio station, thereby affecting the amount of income the station received from P.I.'s.

<sup>82</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>83</sup> Kempf, "Meet Doc Williams: Country Music Star, Country Music Legend."

<sup>84</sup> The only evidence I found of number three placement in *Billboard* is in the column "Folk Talent and Tunes" from the November 26, 1949 issue. 92 DJs voted for "future disk hits," and Chickie's "Beyond the Sunset" came in third place. Johnny Sippel, "Folk Talent and Tunes," *Billboard* 61, no. 48 (1949): 30.

television and on radio stations wherever we were heard.”<sup>85</sup> Williams never was able to distribute worldwide, but he achieved regional popularity in the Northeast and in Canada.<sup>86</sup>

### *In Summary*

Williams’ first experiences in his home with music came from his father, a Slovakian immigrant with a rich musical heritage. In addition, Williams was influenced by early country music records and the musicians he heard on early radio. He began his musical career as a teenager playing for square dances before his breakout in radio. He likened the years he spent navigating the waters of early radio to going to college; he watched and learned business and music practices from many of the musicians and friends he met along the way. Williams played in several bands on the radio beginning in 1932 at WJAY (Cleveland) before settling at WWVA (Wheeling) in 1937. Landing a radio gig did not guarantee fame and fortune for the early country music artist. Radio, tours, recording, song writing, and song publishing were all very important components to his success. Williams never underestimated the importance of marketing his brand of country music; although he preferred to be on the stage, he was an astute businessman, and did the administrative job very well, along with help from Jean Miller, his secretary. In 1943, during the difficult days of World War II when gasoline and tire rations prevented personal appearances, Williams continued broadcasting on WWVA. It was hard to make ends meet, so Williams developed and published his own beginner’s guitar instruction course. Sales of the guitar course helped support his growing family. In 1947, he established his own record company, Wheeling Records, as a result, Williams’ family still owns all the company’s masters.

---

<sup>85</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 63.

<sup>86</sup> Williams signed with Quality Records out of Toronto, Canada

Musically, Williams preferred duets, and it is no surprise that the hallmark of the “Doc Williams Sound” was the fiddle and accordion playing in harmony. In addition, Williams sang in harmony with both his brother Cy and his wife, Chickie. Williams’ repertoire consisted of ballads, songs evolved from the vaudeville and Tin Pan Alley era that were in the public domain; songs learned from records, his colleagues on radio, or shared by people he knew. Williams composed some of his own material, set poetry to music, and also had people write music for him. Williams remained a traditional artist throughout his career, and after World War II, some fans of country music would say his music was outdated; however, Williams had a huge loyal fan base that continued to request the early style of country music.<sup>87</sup>

Doc Williams explained his success in the country music business: “I was fortunate in being located in the Northeastern part of the country. We blanketed the area from the live broadcast of the “Jamboree.” We went into Canada and had monster crowds. There was nothing to impede us.”<sup>88</sup> Williams truly loved working as a country music entertainer and he loved his fans. Smik describes her father as a “consummate entertainer.” In spite of all the successes and failures he had during his career he writes:

I was having so much fun and enjoying it so much, I forgot all about the tough times and remembered the excitement of those early radio days. Those live radio shows were really something special, and nothing made me happier than presenting a two-hour concert in front of a live audience.<sup>89</sup>

Williams contributed in important ways to the history of early country music, and this study is preliminary, viewed with an educational lens of how to incorporate Williams’ music into

---

<sup>87</sup> Tribe likens Williams’ traditional approach throughout his career to the popular phrase, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” In conversation with Smik, she related that some fans got upset when Williams added electric bass and guitar.

<sup>88</sup> Hopfer, “A Chat with Country Music Artist Doc Williams.”

<sup>89</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 126.

the curriculum of school music. Chapter 5 will showcase five pieces from Williams' repertoire for use in a general music curriculum for grades 3-5.

CHAPTER FIVE  
APPLICATIONS OF DOC WILLIAMS' MUSIC FOR A GENERAL MUSIC  
CURRICULUM FOR GRADES 3-5

Doc Williams' repertory of songs included traditional ballads, sentimental songs, sacred songs, polkas, songs about Indian maids (Native American), songs evolved from Tin Pan Alley and/or vaudeville, original songs written in the style of early country music, and cover songs. The five songs I selected for inclusion in a general music curriculum, grades 3-5, include a polka, ballad, sacred song, a song composed by Williams, and a cover song. Each piece will be supplemented with 1) historical and contextual background, as well as photos or images that are relevant to the song's history, 2) lyrics, 3) a listening guide for teachers, and 4) a suggested lesson plan for implementation in a general music curriculum, grades 3-5.

There are several recordings available in digital format today, or one can purchase vinyl recordings from Doc Williams Enterprises in Wheeling, WV ([www.docwilliams.com](http://www.docwilliams.com)). There are no recordings of Williams' first performances of country music. Doc Williams and the Border Riders did not record until 1947, ten years after they started at WWVA, not only because station management discouraged performers from recording, but many musicians were displaced because of conditions during World War II. At the Cleveland Recording Studio the band cut six sides between Christmas and New Year's Eve in 1947, three of which are included in this curriculum ("Willie Roy, the Crippled Boy," "Beyond the Sunset," and "Merry Maiden Polka"). The other two songs, "My Old Brown Coat and Me" and "The Cat Came Back," were recorded in 1949 and 1955 respectively.

“The Cat Came Back,” recorded in 1955, is past the upper limit of 1951 that I set for the study. The song itself, however, circled through folk veins long before it was recorded. This was also the circumstance of many other songs in Williams’ repertoire. Although early country music is associated with the 1920s and 1930s, Williams remained true to the early country music style when performing and in the recording studio throughout his decades-long career. Therefore, any of his music can be categorized as early country music (or as country music in the style of early country music) and are worthy of study in a music curriculum for grades 3-5.

As a teacher, consider also the social implications of studying early country music in the general music classroom. Williams’ music, although considered to be very “family friendly,” does contain typical stereotypes found in much of early country music, which reflected the world view during this historical period. Gender roles in country music were very well established. During World War II years, war songs generally depicted husbands leaving their families to fight overseas, many never to return. The types of songs women and men sang were very established as well. Women sang the “domestic” songs: sweet, sentimental parlor tunes, lullabies, ballads, and religious songs, while men sang songs and ballads of which lyrical content drew from a wide variety of topics (alcohol, women, and religion included). Country music has always identified with Christianity. In addition to recording religious songs, Williams performed some religious songs during a stage show and often concluded with one, such as “Will the Circle Be Unbroken.” Lastly, some terminology, although offensive and outdated today, was accepted in early country music. For example, the term “cripple,” which is used to describe Willie Roy in “Willie Roy the Crippled Boy” was not intended to offend. When reading the lyrics to the song, keep in mind that when this song was written, it was a very different world for a disabled child, especially for Lanny Hurst (whom the song is written about) suffering from a terminal illness. Today students

with disabilities are mainstreamed into the classroom and are able to contribute in meaningful ways and fulfill their hopes and dreams.

*Williams' Music in the Context of Maryland State Music Standards*

The selections of Williams' music I chose are developmentally appropriate for students in grades 3-5. Applicable music standards from the Maryland State Department of Education State Standards for grades 3-5 are included in the sample lesson plan for each piece

(<http://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/instruction/curriculum/arts/index.html>).<sup>1</sup>

Some of Williams' music is developmentally appropriate for lower elementary as well, especially the ballads and other story songs. Even the youngest of elementary students can sing "The Cat Came Back" and perform the eighth-eighth-quarter rhythm of the words. My first and second grade music students find the song engaging because of the shocking and funny storyline. Certainly Williams' music could be introduced to students in lower elementary, and revisited in upper elementary grades.

Students as young as kindergarten are expected to develop awareness of the characteristics of musical sounds and silence, and the diversity of sounds in the environment (Maryland State Music Standard 1). Classification and identification of instruments by sight and sound are included in grades 3-5 Maryland State Music Standards. To communicate this concept, teachers may use the sample lesson plan I included for "My Old Brown Coat and Me." In third grade, students should be able to aurally recognize chord changes, and by fourth and fifth grades, students should be able to perform chordal accompaniment patterns on instruments (Maryland State Music Standard 1). The majority of early country music, and that of Williams, is built upon

---

<sup>1</sup> I chose Maryland State Music Standards because I teach in the state of Maryland. Other state standards, or even the National Music Standards may be applicable.

I, IV, and V chords. The simplicity of the music is very accessible for students' first experiences with the chordal structure and progression.

The lyrical content of "Beyond the Sunset" with the recitation of "Should You Go First and I Remain," lends itself to the higher grades, perhaps even into the middle school years; however the element of the recitation can be introduced into a music curriculum for grades 3-5. Recitation itself is not part of Maryland State Music Standards, but studying the way the arts relate to other curricular subjects is and therefore I include it in the sample lesson plan for "Beyond the Sunset."

The historical, cultural, and social context (Maryland State Music Standard 2) of Williams' music is an important aspect of his contributions to country music, and can be easily integrated into the general music classroom instruction. The historical background and context presented for each piece can be included as part of the instructional delivery to students. For example, in addition to learning about "Merry Maiden Polka," students in grades 3-5 could learn a basic polka step. The basic polka step and others are detailed in the sample lesson plan for "Merry Maiden Polka." Older students can execute more complicated movement phrases or create their own.

There are, of course, many other songs in Williams' repertory that would be suitable for use in a general music curriculum, grades 3-5; however, the songs I selected I believe are representative of the "Doc Williams Sound" as well as being "signature songs" of Doc Williams and the Border Riders.

### *Listening to Williams' Music*

In the five songs, the listener will hear qualities of early country music typified in Williams' music — many instances of an instrumental duet (performed during introductions,

interludes, and during singing), a vocal duet between two brothers,<sup>2</sup> recording with the basic instrumentation of guitar, violin, accordion, tenor banjo, “dog house bass” (upright bass), and sometimes harmonica and steel guitar, typical chord progressions, and clean lyrical content. The sound of an accordion playing anything other than back up in country music was not a common practice; however, Martin’s style of playing accordion was an essential part of the “Doc Williams Sound.” Williams remembers Martin telling him that he came up with the sound by copying harmonica and steel guitar fills.<sup>3</sup>

The widespread incorporation of the accordion in bands, especially in West Virginia, is perhaps a symbol of the characteristic of Wheeling being a meeting place and a melting pot for northern, southern, and even western styles. Skilled practitioners like Martin, of Polish descent, often enjoyed a featured status like that enjoyed by the top fiddlers and banjo pickers in contemporary bluegrass.<sup>4</sup>

Stubbs described Williams’ music as traditional, with mostly acoustic music, strong vocals, and fluid rhythm guitar accompanied by fiddle and accordion, often played in harmony.<sup>5</sup> “It was very smooth music, nothing hard-edged or nasally.”<sup>6</sup> Tribe writes: “adding the accordion helped give Williams his distinct sound of straightforward country music with a strong dash of Eastern European influence, and the blended style was an asset in the Tri-State area (Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia) in which many immigrants resided.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Williams and Chickie sang many duets, especially after Cy retired from the band in 1953. “Polka Dots and Polka Dreams” is a good example of their vocal harmony.

<sup>3</sup> Smik, “We Remember...Marion Martin 'Famous Blind Accordionist'.”

<sup>4</sup> Tribe, “Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia,” 184-85.

<sup>5</sup> Eddie Stubbs, “Doc Williams (June 26, 1914 - January 31, 2011),” *Bluegrass Unlimited* (2011). In later years Williams added electric guitar and electric bass.

<sup>6</sup> “West Virginia Country Music and Goldenseal Magazine.”

<sup>7</sup> Tribe, “Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia.”

### *How to Listen*

In *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*, Neal presents a Listening Methodology Chart which contains three layers for listening to the musical selections in her book. Of the three, I suggest using two of the layers in this curriculum, “The Song” and “The Performance.” The third layer, “The Recording,” is not as relevant in this context, because all but one of the pieces I selected for study in Williams’ repertoire were recorded at Cleveland Recording Studios. In general, the listener will hear crackling and popping sounds, as well as soft, fuzzy, background noise on recordings from this era. It might be beneficial to gain student understanding of recording technology and how music was consumed by playing a vinyl record on a phonograph player. The sound of vinyl versus digital is quite different even to the untrained ear, and many of our 21<sup>st</sup> century students have never heard or seen a vinyl record in person.

For many teachers and students, this will be the first time hearing examples of early country music. For teachers, I suggest familiarizing themselves with Williams’ music by using the Listening Guide in Appendix E. The chart can easily be adapted for students as a listening activity prior to any student performances of the pieces.

Each piece in this curriculum is organized into sections. Section A provides historical and contextual background for each piece. Section B provides the lyrics, for teacher or student use. Section C includes a listening guide for teachers, and section D provides a sample lesson plan and other supplemental teaching materials, when applicable. Before introducing each of the musical selections, I included a profile of Doc Williams and the Border Riders as well as artist profiles of the “core” members: Doc Williams, Chickie Williams, Cy Williams, and Marion Martin. A condensed timeline of Williams’ career can be found in Appendix D.



### Artist Profile

Doc Williams (1914-2011) was widely known as a pioneer of country music; he became the longest performing member (61 years) of WWVA's "Wheeling Jamboree" (the northern equivalent of the "Grand Ole Opry"), and had a prolific performing and recording career, especially in the northeast and Canada. He said, "I was the only hillbilly country music entertainer that was born in Cleveland, Ohio." Personal appearances and record sales contributed to his regional popularity, but his most important attributes were his hard work, good business sense, natural stage presence, and dedication to clean, traditional country music. The photo shows Doc Williams with his D-28-1936

Herringbone Martin Guitar, courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

Doc Williams was born Andrew J. Smik, in 1914, the son of Slovakian immigrants. As a child growing up near Kittanning, Pennsylvania, Smik heard his father play traditional Hungarian tunes and American music on the fiddle as well as the country records of Jimmie Rodgers and Vernon Dalhart drifting across the railroad tracks from a neighboring house. Family finances during the Great Depression forced Smik to live with his Grandmother in Cleveland, Ohio, where he completed the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. Upon returning home to Pennsylvania to work in the coal mines with his father, Smik and his brother Milo played for square dances on the side, until the back-breaking work prompted Smik to return to Cleveland to try to make a career as a country music performer. In 1932, he got his first radio gig as a member of the Mississippi Clowns on WJAY. By 1937, Smik adopted the stage name "Doc Williams" and his band Doc Williams and the Border Riders accepted a weekday spot on WWVA (Wheeling, WV), and appeared weekly on the Saturday evening "Wheeling Jamboree."

For over a decade, Doc Williams and the Border Riders broadcast live on WWVA and made personal appearances in the Tri-state area of West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. During this era of early country music, radio artists worked in tandem with a product sponsor by advertising their product on air (Doc's sponsor was COCO-Wheats). Product sponsors gave the artist a cut of sales. Product inquiries, in tandem with personal appearances, provided Doc with important supplemental income.

Radio artists were discouraged from signing with record companies, until advances in television in the 1950s forced stations to relax their policies in order to remain competitive. Williams was an astute forward-thinking businessman and created his own company, Wheeling Recording Company in 1947. Just before the year's end, Doc Williams and the Border Riders cut six sides in Cleveland, Ohio, of which "Beyond the Sunset" became hit number 3 on the *Billboard* charts.

Disc jockeys dubbed Doc Williams and the Border Riders' sound as the "Doc Williams Sound," which consisted of the instrumental duet harmony of Cy Williams (Williams' younger brother Milo) on fiddle and Marion Martin on accordion, paired with Doc's straightforward rhythm guitar. Williams' and Martin's ethnic musical influences were infused into the Border Riders early country music style. Williams led the band with his lead vocals, sometimes singing in harmony with his brother, Cy. Doc's wife, "Chickie" Williams played "dog house bass" and sang as well.

Doc's repertoire consisted of rearranged folk songs, songs of the vaudeville era, polkas, originals, borrowed songs, and songs written by friends and songwriters. He was also known for his instructional guitar course for beginners titled *The Simplified By-Ear System of Guitar Chords*, which he published in 1943, and sold over 200,000 copies. The 1950s and 1960s were the most profitable for Doc, who took the show (sometimes joined by his three daughters) to the Northeast and Canada annually while maintaining a relationship with WWVA. Doc received many honors and accolades throughout his career and was loved by his fans, and his music remains popular. Even after retirement from the road, he continued performing and recording into his 80s. Doc was a prime representative of an older generation of country music artists who truly loved performing and making music- and who believed in the clean, simple, traditional format of country music.



### Artist Profile

Wanda Crupe (1919-2007) met Andrew Smik Jr. when she was 15 years old at a square dance Smik was playing in Reawood, Pennsylvania. Smik saw her beauty from across the room and arranged an introduction. He later declared it love at first sight and they were married in 1939.

Smik took the stage name Doc Williams and coined his wife as “Chickie Williams, the Girl with the Lullaby Voice,” because she too in her own right was a stand-alone musician. As a young girl, she used to play her guitar and sing songs in school, and then picked up the string bass. Chickie had a rich musical background, and says she grew up in country music from the time she could walk; her mother would take her to square dances even as a baby. Her father and her uncles all played country music. It was her grandfather, Amos Riggle, whom Doc met soon after meeting Chickie, who would make a great contribution to Doc’s career. Chickie’s

country music roots are evidenced in this picture of her family’s country music band. Pictured is her uncle, Jim Crupe (far left), her father, Fred Crupe, pictured with a cello, her uncle, Cal Amos, and Bill Dinch, a relative (far right). Photo courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.



Doc and Chickie had three daughters, whom Doc nicknamed “Peeper, Pooch, and Punkin.” Chickie joined Doc Williams in the Border Riders in 1946, which was only supposed to be temporary but turned into a 50-year career. Chickie loved to sing old folk songs, sentimental songs from vaudeville, and traditional American ballads, such as “The Baggage Coach Ahead.” She also composed her own song material, some which was recorded. Her daughters say she was a fine songwriter. In addition to singing solo, Chickie also sang many songs in harmony with her husband Doc, especially after Cy retired from Doc Williams and the Border Riders. One of their favorites to sing was “Polka Dots and Polka Dreams,” a song they learned from WWVA artists, the Newcomer Twins.

Chickie’s biggest hit record was “Beyond the Sunset” with the recitation of “Should You Go First and I Remain,” which was covered by many artists, including Hank Williams and Red Foley. The photo of Chickie is circa 1947, courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.



## Artist Profile

Milo Smik (1918-2006) was Andrew Smik Jr.'s younger brother. Andy wanted to expand his "one man band" so he encouraged Milo to play an instrument. Their father helped Andy buy a three-dollar guitar from a pawn shop, and purchased Milo a fiddle for \$7.50. Andy and Milo played square dances in Tarrtown, PA, but that was only their early initiation in country music.

When Andy returned to Pennsylvania from Cleveland in the 1930s, Milo took up with him once again. They formed the Allegheny Ramblers, with Curley Sims, who taught Milo many tunes on the fiddle, and was quick to learn. Milo's first professional gig was in 1935, with his brother and Curley, when the Allegheny Ramblers won an audition at KQV (Pittsburgh). After six months, the group had an audition lined up at KDKA (Pittsburgh), but it never came to fruition because upon arrival and opening up his case, Milo discovered his fiddle bridge was broken. They stayed on at KQV until the group passed an audition for a weekday spot on WWVA (Wheeling) in 1937. It was around this time that Andy took the name "Doc" and in turn he gave Milo the stage name "Cy Williams."

Doc titled Cy, "The Boy with the Silver-Voiced Fiddle" because of his special sound that everyone seemed to recognize. He said, "I bought this hand-made violin from a distant relative in Cleveland, my home town, and originally paid \$300 for it. My relative used it as a practice violin in the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. Curley Sims, who played mandolin for Doc in the early days at WWVA used to sandpaper his mandolin to get the right tone. So, I started doing this on my violin. I sandpapered the bridges and the body of the violin until I got the tone I wanted. I had really good tones on the high strings, like a gypsy tone." Cy recollected a memory from the early years of 1940 or 1941, in which Doc, while on air, asked for fiddle requests. He was prompted to do this because some people around the radio station didn't think the fiddle was very popular in country music. Within a week Cy received 900 cards.

In addition to playing fiddle, Cy sang upper vocal harmonies to Doc's melody on many songs. Doc and Cy's brotherly duet was a typical characteristic of early country music, popular in the 1930s. Doc's daughter, Barbara Smik, aka, "Peeper" recalls, "When Uncle Cy was singing with Dad- *that* was a duo, because they just blended, as brothers. Some of my favorite early recordings are Uncle Cy singing duets with Dad, and some of those were written by Dad." Doc said, "Cy had a unique, smooth sound on the fiddle; and, as brothers, we had a close harmony. Along with Marion Martin, my brother was an essential part of the original Doc Williams sound." To help create the "Doc Williams Sound" Cy played upper harmonies and countermelodies on his fiddle. Cy remained with Doc Williams and the Border Riders until he retired from the band in 1957. The photo above of Cy with his fiddle is courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.



### Artist Profile

Marion Keyoski (1919-1990) was born in Adena, Ohio and went blind from a bottle cap explosion accident when he was a young child. Nevertheless, he became a fine accordion player. Just before World War II, Marion came to the WWVA studios to audition for Doc, whose first reaction was “I don’t think I want accordion.” The accordion was often used as a backup instrument in 1920s and 30s country music, but it became less popular after the war because of the influence and addition of the steel guitar. However, the ethnic style in which Marion played was appreciated by the immigrant populations and their descendants in northern West Virginia. Chickie encouraged Doc to give Marion a chance, and he did. Marion adapted his playing style at Doc’s request to sound more like a button-style accordion. Marion also said he developed his sound by copying country harmonica and steel guitar fills. In later years Marion used an electronic accordion, preferring a Cordovox. The photo above of Marion with his keyboard accordion is courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

Peeper recalls that her father always had the best musicians in his band. Doc says, “Marion was a musical genius,” and Chickie remembers “he had a musical instinct, and always knew what to play and when to play it.” Peeper adds, “Everyone is always shocked to hear that my sisters and I never learned an instrument, but when we grew up on the stage to sing, and we sang as a trio normally...Marion remembered all of our keys, so we would go up, ‘Marion, we’re gonna sing a song, what key is it?’ And Marion would start the song out. He had all that memorized, so we didn’t have to do that.”

Doc’s grandson Courtney remembers how musicians would gather at the house when he was a young child. “Marion Martin would come over all the time, and he could just jam. When all these people were at the house, one of two things were happening; they were eating or playing music...My grandfather, you know, I never think he considered himself a musician... these other guys, they were struggling musicians, they were always playing their instruments. Marion would be at the dinner table, eating, with his accordion around his neck. There would be a whole bluegrass band in the house and they would start jamming.”

Marion worked with Doc for 45 years. Doc and Chickie loved his optimism and cheerful disposition, and considered him part of the family.



## Band Profile

Doc Williams and the Border Riders formed in the year 1937, when band leader Doc Williams accepted a daily spot to broadcast on WWVA radio in Wheeling, West Virginia. In the five years prior, Williams was a part of several other bands before leading his own. The original 1937 Border Riders seen in the picture on the left included Hamilton “Rawhide”

Fincher, comedian; Mary “Sunflower” Calvas, guitar; Cy Williams, fiddle; Curley Sims, madolin; and Doc Williams on guitar, courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams. Williams says: “Curley Sims was an excellent mandolin player and if he were around today he would be able to compete with most of the mandolin players. Therefore, we almost had a bluegrass band. In a way it wasn’t bluegrass because it wasn’t called that at that time. It was called hillbilly.”

The following year Doc Williams and the Border Riders were voted WWVA’s most popular act. Over the next decade the band continued playing on radio and on Saturday nights for the “Wheeling Jamboree” and making personal appearances in the Tri-state area of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. The band was limited to the local area because they were not allowed to miss the Saturday night Jamboree. World War II caused disruptions in the normal schedule of many country musicians, including Doc Williams and the Border Riders. Tire and gasoline rations curbed local appearances. The sound of the band changed after World War II when Curley Sims left and was replaced by blind accordionist Marion Martin. This was the group that produced what was dubbed “The Doc Williams Sound” by disc jockeys who played the Border Riders’ records on radio. By 1947, the Border Riders were household names in the Northeast and Canada because of the strong 50,000 watt signal of WWVA.

The original Border Riders never received an opportunity to record due to radio station restrictions and other circumstances. After WWII, Williams created Wheeling Recording Company and took the band to Cleveland Studios for their first session. Doc Williams and the Border Riders cut six sides to acetate: “Beyond the Sunset,” “Bright Red Herizon,” “Silver Bell,” “Willy Roy,” “Merry Maiden Polka,” and “Broken Memories.”

Performers on the 1947 albums are Doc Williams, guitar and vocal; Cy Williams, fiddle; Marion Martin, accordion; Rube Schafer; tenor banjo; Chickie Williams, upright bass and vocals; and Abbie Neal, steel guitar. The band's sound centered around Doc's solid rhythm guitar with Marion on accordion and Cy on fiddle harmonizing above. Doc and Cy's brother duet style of singing can be heard on many early recordings. Doc and Chickie sang duets as well especially when Cy retired in 1956, but their daughter Barbara does not consider them a duo saying: "They were so strong individually as soloists, in their solo music, each one of them came up with a different direction they wanted to sing about in early music."

Doc Williams and the Border Riders began long distance tours to the Northeast in 1949 (with permission from the radio station to miss one Saturday evening show), and to Canada in 1951. Doc Williams and the Border Riders changed their name to The Doc Williams Show, because their performances expanded beyond the Tri-state area. Audiences were very receptive to the Border Riders' entertainment, and the tours reoccurred annually for decades. Many musicians came and went throughout the Border Riders' history, but Doc, Cy, Chickie, and Marion remained the longest. Doc and Chickie continued to appear together in the Northeast and Canada through the 1990s, sometimes accompanied by their three daughters. Cy retired in 1956, and Marion officially retired in 1967, but continued to work for Williams occasionally. Pictured



from left to right are: Hiram Hayseed, Cy Williams, Chickie Williams, Marion Martin, and Doc Williams in the 1950s. Photo is courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

## Song Selections

### Merry Maiden Polka (1947)

#### A. Historical and Contextual Background

“Merry Maiden Polka” was a favorite song of Williams’ fans that featured Martin on accordion, Schafer on tenor banjo, and Cy on fiddle. From my research, it appears Martin and Williams are the original composers of “Merry Maiden Polka” and copyrighted the song in 1949.<sup>8</sup> During a three-hour stage show, Williams would have music, comedic skits, and feature performers. Williams always featured Martin on stage for about ten minutes. He would play softer songs, and then play a polka. Generally, the audience did not dance to the polkas, possibly because audience configuration in most venues did not allow for ease of dancing couples.

Polka is a genre of dance music that emerged around 1830 in Europe, near the Czech region of the Polish border. Couples dancing a polka execute a hop-step close-step pattern in 2/4 time. Immigrants brought the music to the United States, and the genre’s popularity grew, so much so that many polka bands formed in the 1920s.<sup>9</sup> Polka music usually has two clear sections, of which the first is repeated after the second section. The trademark instrument of polka music is the accordion. Often the accordionist displays virtuosic technique and improvises on the theme of the A section. Several examples of polka can be heard on YouTube. I recommend watching this video clip from a 1955 showing of the Lawrence Welk show for an example of the polka: ["Clarinet Polka" video with polka dancers.](#)

---

<sup>8</sup> "Catalog of Copyright Entries," in *Published Music*, ed. Library of Congress (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Copyright Office., 1949).

<sup>9</sup> Leary, *Polkabilly: How the Goose Island Ramblers Redefined American Folk Music*. In Smik’s biography of Williams, Williams mentions that he had a polka band, The Polka Jets, for about six months in 1957, which included Martin on accordion. Union troubles halted the band’s progress.

“Merry Maiden Polka” was originally recorded for Wheeling Recording Company (DW 1003) in 1947. Performers were Doc Williams, guitar and vocal; Cy Williams, fiddle; Marion Martin, accordion; Rube Schafer; tenor banjo, and Chickie Williams, upright bass. This polka is in the key of Bb and in 2/4 time. Structurally, there are two sections of 16 bars each, heard instrumentally in the beginning of the piece. Contrary to typical polka form, after the second section, the A section returns with lyrics, followed by the B section with lyrics, of which Williams and Martin co-wrote. Williams added instrumental variety by using both fiddle and accordion during the verses (Figure 16). Martin was not only vital to the Doc Williams Sound, but he was a family friend as well. Ferguson says, “After Marion passed it was like a huge void. Marion had a way with the family.”<sup>10</sup> Chickie testified, “He was like a brother, and I’ll never find another friend like him.”<sup>11</sup> It would be a disservice not to acknowledge the musical contributions of Martin to Williams’ band, hence the inclusion of this polka.



Figure 16 Marion Martin (1919-1990) is seated with his piano accordion. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

---

<sup>10</sup> Courtney Ferguson, Interviewed by author, March 31, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Smik, "We Remember...Marion Martin 'Famous Blind Accordionist!'."

**B. Lyrics****Verse**

There's a merry maiden who lives down in our town.  
Every night she dances, and swings the boys around.  
All the boys they love her, cause she smiles so sweet.  
She's a merry maiden, she sweeps them off their feet.

**Chorus**

La, la, la, la. Don't she look so sweet?  
La, la, la, la. She just can't be beat.  
La, la, la, la. She dances round and round.  
La, la, la, la. She's the sweetest gal in town.

### C. Listening Guide

<i>Merry Maiden Polka (1947)</i>			
Time	Form	Listening Cues or Verse Text	Discussion
0:00	Introduction	Accordion alone plays	Pickups descend in thirds, not in tempo with the rest of the song.
0:02	Instrumental A section	Accordion plays melody	The instrumental verse starts the tempo of a typical polka in 2/4 time. 2 phrases of 16 beats.
0:17	Instrumental B section	Accordion	This section has same phrase lengths as the A section, with different melody. There is a clear cadence to end the last phrase.
0:32	Lyrical A section	“There’s a merry maiden”	Williams sings the melody line alone with instrumental accompaniment. Accordion plays a typical back beat and then “fills” the ends of the phrases.
0:47	Lyrical B section	“La, la, la, la”	Full chorus on “La, la, la, la” with a stationary upper harmony added to the descending melody. Williams answers each time with a short segment of text.
1:02	Instrumental A section	Tenor Banjo	The tenor banjo takes the solo. Martin plays similarly to the previous A section.
1:16	Instrumental B section	Accordion	Notice the melody line played on the accordion resembles a yodel.
1:31	Lyrical A section	“There’s a merry maiden”	Martin plays a pattern of arpeggiated chords throughout this section while Williams sings.
1:46	Lyrical B section	“La, la, la, la”	Performed the same as the previous lyrical B section
2:02	Instrumental A section	Violin	Cy’s fiddle solo sings on top of the accompaniment. Williams nicknamed Cy “The Boy with the Silver-Voiced Fiddle”

2:17	Lyrical B section	“La, la, la, la”	The accompaniment plays I chord on the word “town,” (beat 1) then a V chord on beat 2, and the entire band shouts “Hey! Hey! Hey!” (beats 3 + 4) on a I chord.
------	-------------------	------------------	--

#### D. Lesson Plan

<b>Lesson Plan:</b> “Merry Maiden Polka”	<b>Grades:</b> 3-5
<b>Materials:</b> “Merry Maiden Polka” by Doc Williams (available for purchase on CD from <a href="http://www.docwilliams.com">www.docwilliams.com</a> ) and large open space for dancing	
<p><b>Maryland State Fine Arts Content Standards</b>  <b>Grades 3-5 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Indicator 2.</b> Become acquainted with the roles of music in the lives of people  <b>Objective b for grades 3-5:</b> Perform authentic songs and dances from a variety of historical periods and world cultures, including some connected to general classroom studies</p>	
<p><b>Description of Lesson:</b>  Students will listen to “Merry Maiden Polka” and explore typical rhythms found in polka music using body percussion. Students will gain knowledge about polka music by listening to and describing the musical style and characteristics of “Merry Maiden Polka.” Students will form a <b>longways set</b> (two straight lines facing each other) and learn basic polka steps within a phrase structure, practice, and perform.</p> <p><b>Possible Dance Steps</b> (modify or simplify based on the needs of the students)  <b>Basic Polka step:</b> Hop on one foot towards your left side (beat 1), touch your right foot down (the “and” of 1) and pick up and replace your left foot (beat 2). This step is performed to the count of “one and two” (8<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, quarter rhythm). Repeat on the right side. Perform alternating sides each time. (16 beats)  <b>Heel – Toe Polka step (in place or traveling):</b> Right heel (beat 1), Right toe (beat 2), step in place right, left, right in an 8<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, quarter pattern (beats 3 + 4). Repeat steps on the other side with left foot leading. Repeat entire sequence again (16 beats).  <b>Sashay:</b> Top Couple sashays down and up the set (16 beats).  <b>Cast off or Peel:</b> Top couple leads a “cast off” or a “peel” to the bottom of the set. Top couple meets at the bottom of the set and forms an arch. The remaining couples meet their partner and travel under the arch continuing towards the top of the set. After all couples pass under the arch there is a new top couple (16 beats).  <b>Arch:</b> Both lines reach across the aisle and create an arch and top couple travels down the arch to the bottom of the set (16 beats).  * If needed, <b>Arch</b> can be done in place of a <b>cast off</b>.</p>	
<p><b>Evaluate/Assess</b>  The performance of the dance by the students should demonstrate understanding of this polka. Students should be able to describe through formal or informal assessment qualities of the musical style and/or characteristics of “Merry Maiden Polka.”</p>	

## Beyond the Sunset (1947)

### A. Historical and Contextual Background

“Beyond the Sunset” with the recitation of “Should You Go First and I Remain” was a hymn and poem combination arranged by Chickie Williams, first recorded in 1947 on Wheeling Recording Company (DW 1001). Virtually every country performer incorporated religious songs into their repertoires. Doc Williams and the Border Riders recorded the hymn “Beyond the Sunset” with a poetic recitation of “Should You Go First and I Remain” in 1947, as part of the group’s first recording session in Cleveland, Ohio and the Williams family rerecorded it for an album of sacred songs in 1967.<sup>12</sup>

There were several events that happened which led to the first recording session of “Beyond the Sunset,” which involve Chickie, WWVA artists the Blind Newcomer Twins, Albert Kennedy Rowswell, and Williams’ secretary Jean Miller. Upon discovering the poem, “Should You Go First” in a battered up old book, Chickie found the words resonated with her; they described her marriage to Williams.<sup>13</sup> When visiting the Newcomer twins (also on WWVA), at their home, Chickie made a recording of herself reciting “Should You Go First and I Remain,” without melody, while the twins harmonized “I Love You Truly” in the background. The recording was made on the twins’ Webcor discutter. When it was completed, Chickie presented the recording to Doc as an anniversary present and he was so impressed he decided to record it.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Doc Williams, in *Doc Williams Family Sacred Album (WLP 1967): Plus More* (Wheeling, WV: Wheeling Recording Company, 1967).

<sup>13</sup> Chickie Williams, in *Chickie Williams Sings the Old Songs* (Wheeling, WV: Wheeling Recording Company).

<sup>14</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

Williams' secretary, Jean Miller, who played piano for her church, shared the hymn "Beyond the Sunset"<sup>15</sup> with Chickie, thinking it would be the perfect melody to go with the recitation.

The recitation was a poem originally titled "Should You Go First," written by Albert Kennedy "Rosey" Rowswell. Most Pittsburgh Pirates fans know Rowswell as the voice of the Pirates from the 1930s into the 1950s. One evening, he was conversing with his wife about what they would do if one passed before the other. His wife told him she hoped that he would go first, because she had so much pity for an old man "pottering about in the kitchen trying to get himself a cup of coffee and a piece of toast." That evening, he took a train to New York and the next day he wrote "Should You Go First" as a response to her words. This poem was published in a collection of poems titled *Rosey Reflections* in 1945.<sup>16</sup>

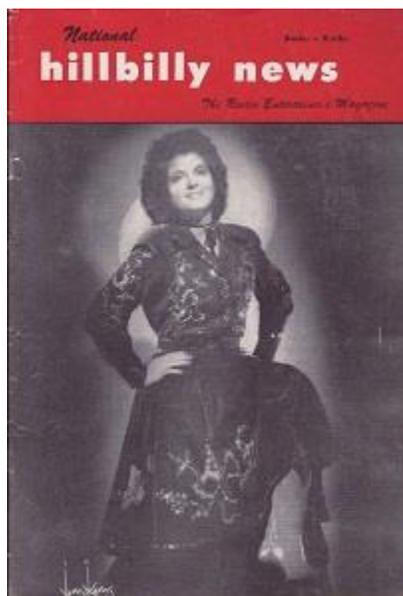
The hymn "Beyond the Sunset" is in A major, and in 4/4 time. The form is strophic; the melody of the hymn remains the same throughout the verses. For the recording, Chickie sang verse one of the hymn "Beyond the Sunset" then performed a poetic recitation of "Should You Go First and I Remain" (a lengthened title) while other band members played an instrumental verse of the hymn softly in the background. Performers on the album were Doc Williams, guitar; Cy Williams, fiddle; Marion Martin, accordion, Abbie Neal, steel guitar, and Chickie Williams on vocals. At the conclusion of the poetic recitation, Chickie sang the last verse of "Beyond the Sunset" (the traditional version of the hymn has four verses). Thus, a song was born, but that was not the end of its journey.

---

<sup>15</sup> The hymn "Beyond the Sunset" was written by Virgil P. and Blanche Kerr Brock, after viewing a sunset at Rainbow Point Winona Lake, Indiana.

<sup>16</sup> Albert Kennedy Rowswell, *Rosey Reflections* (Pittsburgh, PA: A. E. P. Kerr Company, 1945).

Williams knew “Beyond the Sunset” would be a hit but he also knew none of the major companies would want to record a sacred hymn with a recitation.<sup>17</sup> Most companies turned down “Beyond the Sunset,”<sup>18</sup> so Williams invested his life savings (about 1500 dollars) to issue and release the record himself. Rosalie Allen, disc jockey for WOV radio in New York City, played “Beyond the Sunset” and the switchboard lit up like a Christmas tree for half an hour.<sup>19</sup> Regionally, it was a hit in New York, Washington D.C., and Richmond, Virginia. The Williamses knew they hit it big when in 1949 Chickie graced the cover of *National Hillbilly News* (Figure 17). When the record was released in Canada on Quality Records in 1951, announcer John Corrigan said hundreds of people called in to the station (CKOY, Ottawa) and wanted to know where they could get the record.<sup>20</sup>




---

<sup>17</sup> Tribe writes, “The recitation within a song and the recitation as a song seem to be peculiarly West Virginian.” Tribe, “Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia.”

<sup>18</sup> Anonymous, “The Growth and Evolution of a Country Music Star and Family: The Doc Williams Story,” *Country Time Review*, July 1967.

<sup>19</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>20</sup> Chickie Williams, in *Fireside Songs* (Wheeling, WV: Wheeling Records, 1963).

Figure 17 Chickie Williams, "The Girl with the Lullaby Voice," graced the cover of National Hillbilly News in 1949. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

The record became an instant hit; record distributors and record stores all wanted it, but Williams had only 1500 copies of the 78RPM records, all purchased by the first distributor. RCA Victor was pressing the 78RPMs in Indianapolis but manufacturing took six weeks. Williams says:

If you wait that long in the record business, even back then you've waited too long. Other recording artists will be recording and covering the record with their own versions of your hit record. And that's exactly what happened with Chickie's recording.<sup>21</sup>

Dave Miller of Palda Records showed up on Williams' doorstep to pitch manufacturing the record. Williams' signed a contract with him and it was distributed mostly on the east coast. Two weeks later Mercury called and wanted to release the record, and another week or two after that Decca also wanted to release the record. Paul Cohen, the A&R man from Decca, suggested that Doc record it with his brother as a duet, but Doc declined because he didn't want to take recognition away from his wife's record. "This strictly was something that should belong to Chickie."<sup>22</sup>

Chickie's "Beyond the Sunset" sold one million copies<sup>23</sup> and hit number 3 on the *Billboard* charts in 1949, and was covered by many recording artists, including Hank Williams. Smik recalls:

That was the only major hit recording my mother ever had. And, as the story goes, it was recorded right after World War II and it just spoke to so many people because of the loss

---

<sup>21</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 27.

<sup>22</sup> *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 28.

<sup>23</sup> Anonymous, *The Doc Williams Show* (Churchville, NY: Kiwanis Club of Churchville). 185.

that they'd suffered. You know, they may have suffered the loss of a loved one. So that song got covered.<sup>24</sup>

Live audiences were receptive to the song as well. During a St. Johnsbury, Vermont performance in the early 1950s, Williams' show performed on the roof of the town swimming pool for a free 4<sup>th</sup> of July concert. There were between five and ten thousand people in attendance. The main highway, Route 2, was jammed with traffic. Williams says, "Chickie sang 'Beyond the Sunset' on the roof of the bathhouse on this warm July 4<sup>th</sup> evening and you could have heard a pin drop."<sup>25</sup> "Beyond the Sunset" remained Chickie's most requested song on their tours and on radio.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Barbara Smik, Interview with author. March 29, 2016

<sup>25</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 94.

<sup>26</sup> *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

## B. Lyrics

### Verse 1

Beyond the sunset, O blissful morning  
 When with our Savior heaven is begun  
 Earth's toiling ended, O glorious dawning  
 Beyond the sunset when day is done.

### Recitation

Should you go first and I remain  
 To walk the road alone,  
 I'll live in memory's garden, dear,  
 With happy days we've known.  
 In Spring I'll wait for roses red,  
 When fades the lilac blue,  
 In early Fall, when brown leaves call  
 I'll catch a glimpse of you.  
 Should you go first and I remain  
 For battles to be fought,  
 Each thing you've touched along the way  
 Will be a hallowed spot.  
 I'll hear your voice, I'll see your smile,  
 Though blindly I may grope,  
 The memory of your helping hand  
 Will buoy me on with hope.  
 Should you go first and I remain  
 To finish with the scroll,  
 No length'ning shadows shall creep in  
 To make this life seem droll,  
 We've known so much of happiness,  
 We've had our cup of joy,  
 And memory is one gift of God  
 That death cannot destroy.  
 Should you go first and I remain,  
 One thing I'd have you do:  
 Walk slowly down that long, long path,  
 For soon I'll follow you.  
 I'll want to know each step you take  
 That I may walk the same,  
 For some day down that lonely road  
 You'll hear me call your name.

**Verse 2**

Beyond the sunset, O glad reunion  
 With our dear loved ones who've gone before  
 In that fair homeland we'll know no parting  
 Beyond the sunset forever more.

**C. Listening Guide**

<i>Beyond the Sunset</i> with the recitation of <i>Should You Go First and I Remain</i> (1947)			
Time	Form	Listening Cues or Verse Text	Discussion
0:00	Introduction	Violin	Cy plays the last phrase of the verse as an introduction
0:09	Verse 1	"Beyond the sunset"	Steel guitar can be heard throughout
0:44	Recitation	"Should you go first"	Chickie Williams reads the recitation while fiddle and steel guitar alternate playing the hymn, both as solos and together. Accordion sometimes plays in harmony with the fiddle
2:11	Verse 2	"Beyond the sunset"	The accordion plays backup and fills throughout the verse
2:44	Closing	"forever more"	After the text is sung, you hear a classic "Amen" cadence (IV - I)

## D. Lesson Plan

<b>Lesson Plan:</b> “Beyond the Sunset” with the recitation “Should You Go First and I Remain”
<b>Grades:</b> 3-5
<b>Materials:</b> “Beyond the Sunset” with the recitation “Should You Go First and I Remain” by Chickie Williams (available for purchase on CD from <a href="http://www.docwilliams.com">www.docwilliams.com</a> )
<p><b>Maryland State Fine Arts Content Standards grade</b></p> <p><b>Grades 3-5 Standard 1.0 Perceiving and Responding: Aesthetic Education: Indicator 2.</b> Experience performance through singing and playing instruments in general, vocal, and instrumental settings, and listening to performances of others</p> <p><b>Grades 3-5 Standard 2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Indicator 3.</b> Explore the relationship of music to dance, theatre, the visual arts, and other disciplines</p>
<b>Terms:</b> The <b>recitation</b> in country music refers to a spoken narrative, often with a sentimental or religious theme. Elvis Presley, Conway Twitty, Kitty Wells, and Johnny Cash (and there are many more) all used recitations in their music.
<p><b>Description of Lesson:</b></p> <p>Prior to the physical aspect of learning this song, students should be given opportunities to actively listen to qualities of this music that make it a good representative of early country music. For example, students could listen for the song form, describe the instrumentation and the accompaniment pattern, and listen for lyrical nuances, such as the rhyming words at the ends of the phrases. Refer to the Listening Chart in Appendix E.</p> <p>Students will listen to ““Beyond the Sunset” with the recitation “Should You Go First and I Remain” for an example of how recitations were used in 1940s country music. Next students could listen to more modern examples of recitation in country music, such as Charlie Daniels Band’s “Devil Went Down to Georgia.” Students could compare and contrast the recitations in form and lyrical content.</p> <p>Next, students could write recitations, using their own poetry or found poetry, to include as part of a piece which they have already learned. Teachers can include appropriate guidelines and parameters according to grade level. Explore and rehearse ways to make the recitation stand out while the “original piece” is played and/or sung, perhaps changing lyrics to oohs and ah’s, learning appropriate parts of the known song on pitched instruments, adding dynamic contrasts, etc. Older students might be able to improvise over the chord changes of the original piece. Finally, students may perform the original piece with the recitation.</p>
<p><b>Evaluate/Assess</b></p> <p>Assessment of student learning can include the whole group performance of the song with a recitation, as well as any lyrics and that were written for the lesson.</p>

## My Old Brown Coat and Me (1949)

### A. Historical and Contextual Background

Smik speaks proudly of her father and his contributions to country music, “See, Dad wasn't a national star- he didn't go to the Opry- but most of the entertainers in the business who were, they knew Dad, and they respected him as a pioneer. ‘My Old Brown Coat and Me’ became one of his signature songs.”<sup>27</sup> “My Old Brown Coat and Me” is a traditional ballad learned from Chickie Williams’ maternal grandfather, Amos Riggle, of Aleppo, Pennsylvania (Figure 18). Chickie remembers that her grandfather would sing and tell stories at night around the fire.<sup>28</sup>

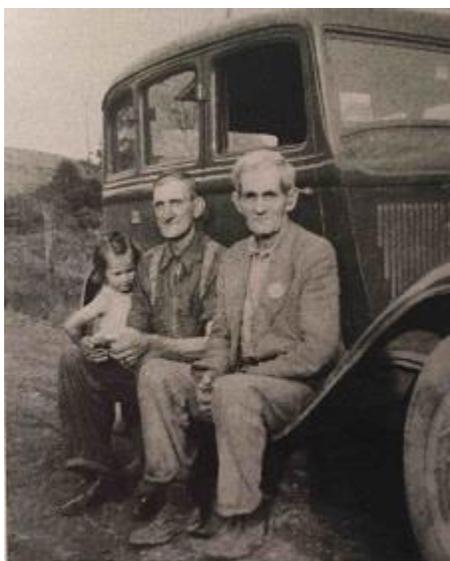


Figure 18 Amos Riggle (1870-1948) (far right) visting relatives in Monaca, PA in 1942. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

In 1946, the Williams’ were visiting relatives in Wheeling, West Virginia for a party in honor of Grandad Riggle, who was entertaining family and friends with old songs. A field

---

<sup>27</sup> Smik, Interviewed by author, March 29, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Chickie Williams, in *Chickie Williams: Just a Melody of Love* (Wheeling, WV: Doxx Records, 1974).

representative from the Library of Congress was there to interview him.<sup>29</sup> Although “My Old Brown Coat and Me” was collected that day, it is unclear if Grandad Riggle’s version ended up in any folksong collections.<sup>30</sup>

Early country music entertainers would copyright songs even if they weren’t the composer. Such is the case with “My Old Brown Coat and Me.” Williams gives credit for the song to Amos Riggle in the “Doc Williams Border Riders Family Album” from 1940 (Figure 19) then copyrighted it in 1942.



Figure 19 The lyrics for “My Old Brown Coat and Me” were printed in Doc Williams Border Riders Family Album in 1940. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

<sup>29</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

<sup>30</sup> “My Old Brown Coat and Me” can be traced to two folk song collections; “Traditional Ballads and Folk-Songs Mainly from West Virginia,” (Cox #26) and “Ozark Folksongs” (Randolf #791).<sup>30</sup> Melodic notation is provided in Cox’s collection; however, Grandad Riggle’s version differs greatly. All three have similar text and include the word “squire;” further evidence of the song’s European roots.

Although ballads and country music are often linked together, in actuality few were recorded by the first generation of country music artists.”<sup>31</sup> One exception is Doc Williams and the Border Riders’ recording of “My Old Brown Coat and Me.” Williams himself was surprised that the ballad “My Old Brown Coat and Me” became such a big hit because “it was an English folk song and not written for modern times.”<sup>32</sup> The song rose to fame in eastern Canada, the Maritimes, Maine, and Vermont when a disc jockey at CFMB (Fredericton, New Brunswick) played the 78 RPM on his nightly program.

“My Old Brown Coat and Me” was recorded for Wheeling Recording Company (DW 1008) in 1947. Performers on the album were Doc Williams, guitar and vocal; Cy Williams, fiddle; Marion Martin, accordion; and Chickie Williams, upright bass. Williams describes the sound of “My Old Brown Coat and Me” saying, “There is a tremendous ring of eastern Europe.”<sup>33</sup> Instrumentally, Cy’s fiddle work is evident in this piece. “Fiddle” (another name for violin) is a style of playing in which the instrumentalist uses folk techniques and improvisation.

<sup>34</sup>

The ballad tells a story about a farm boy who falls in love with Mary Braid, who would not associate with him because he wore an old brown coat. Instead she marries a lawyer’s son, who eventually becomes a pirate on the sea, while the farm boy grows up to become quite successful. This ballad teaches a valuable lesson not to pass judgement on those who are less fortunate; it may turn out that they were the fortunate ones all along.

---

<sup>31</sup> Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*.

<sup>32</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 113.

<sup>33</sup> Hopfer, "A Chat with Country Music Artist Doc Williams."

<sup>34</sup> Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*.

Williams' guitar course includes "My Old Brown Coat and Me" transcribed into guitar tablature, with a piano reduction in 2/4 time (Figure 20). Though the picture from the course shows the key of Eb Major, the recording of the song is D major.<sup>35</sup> "My Old Brown Coat and Me," being Williams' signature song and a heavily requested one, is probably one of the reasons it was included in the guitar course.<sup>36</sup> Williams sold over 200,000 guitar courses, and many fans testified learning to play through the course.<sup>37</sup> The guitar course was another way Williams' music was disseminated to the public. Williams, although not an educator, was a proponent of others becoming learned in early country music and encouraged others to learn how to play music. Releasing a guitar instruction book was likely a unique act. In the 1940s, it was not common practice for an early country music entertainer to develop and release instructional materials.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> In addition, the melody line printed in the guitar course is different than the melody on Williams' recording.

<sup>36</sup> In an email communication with Smik on June 4, 2016, Smik explained that the song was included in the course from 1957 on, perhaps even as early as 1952, because in this same year, the lyrics and chords for "My Old Brown Coat and Me" were included in Williams' Song Book Folio No. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Country star "Slim Lehart" says he learned to play guitar from Williams' course. Jennifer Compston-Strough, "Friends and Colleagues Remember Doc Williams," *Sunday News Register*, February 6, 2011.

<sup>38</sup> Tribe, "Doc Williams: A Half Century at the 'Wheeling Jamboree'."

# My Old Brown Coat And Me

Recorded by Doc Williams on "Wheeling" Records LP 1542

Moderato

Words and Music by  
DOC WILLIAMS

1. The moon was out, the stars were bright, the larks were sing - ing free; Come  
I fell in love with Ma - ry Braid, her fa - ther owned a store; There

lis - ten, while I sing a - bout MY OLD BROWN COAT AND ME. 2. I  
nev - er was a girl beloved so ten - der - ly be - fore. (3. But) land.

**EXTRA VERSES**

3. But Mary Braid was very proud and haughty as could be,  
She oft times said she ne'er would wed my old brown coat and me.
4. I did not stop to plead the case, for pleading was in vain,  
I bid adieu to Mary Braid, ne'er saw her face again.
5. There's forty summers o'er my head, there's riches in my store,  
My children play out on the green, my wife stands in the door.
6. I've land enough, I've money enough, I've houses tall and high;  
There's not a squire in all this land can wear such clothes as I.
7. Now, Mary Braid was very proud and haughty as could be,  
She was wedded to a lawyer's son who's name was Jasa Lee.
8. He wore a coat, all shiny black, and looked so very grand  
That Mary fancied he would make a noble and true man.
9. Now, Mary's husband he became a pirate on the sea,  
She oft times said she wished she'd wed my old brown coat and me.
10. Now girls, when you are called to choose the bank that bends the knee,  
Think of the fate of Mary Braid, my old brown coat and me.
11. Remember that an old brown coat, and not so very grand,  
Can cover up as warm a heart, as any in the land.

*\*Symbols for Guitar, Ukulele and Banjo.*

Copyright 1942 by Andrew J. Smik, Jr., Wheeling, W. Va.  
All Rights Reserved Made in U. S. A.

Figure 20 "My Old Brown Coat and Me" as it was printed in the 1966 edition of Williams' guitar course. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

**B. Lyrics**

Oh, the moon was out, the stars were bright,  
 The larks were singin' free,  
 Come listen while I sing about,  
 My old brown coat and me.

I lived upon my father's farm,  
 Till I was twenty-one,  
 I took a farm then of my own,  
 And a man's life begun.

I fell in love with Mary Braid,  
 Her father owned a store,  
 There never was a girl beloved,  
 So tenderly before.

But Mary Braid was very proud,  
 And haughty as could be,  
 She 'oft times said she ne'er would wed,  
 My old brown coat and me.

I did not stop to plead the case,  
 For pleading was in vain,  
 I bade adieu to Mary Braid,  
 Ne'er saw her face again.

There's forty summers o'er my head,  
 There's riches in my store,  
 My children play out on the green,  
 My wife stands in the door.

I've land enough, I've money enough,  
 I've houses tall and high,  
 There's not a squire in all this land,  
 Can wear such clothes as I.

Now, Mary Braid was very proud,  
 And haughty as could be,  
 She was wedded to a lawyer's son,

Who's name was Josa Lee.

He wore a coat all shiny black,  
And looked so very grand,  
That Mary fancied he would make,  
A noble and true man.

Now, Mary's husband, he became,  
A pirate on the sea,  
She 'oft times said, she'd wished she'd wed,  
My old brown coat and me.

Now, girls, when you are called to choose,  
The bank that bends the knee  
Think of the fate of Mary Braid,  
My old brown coat and me.

Remember that an old brown coat,  
And not so very grand,  
Can cover up as warm a heart,  
As any in the land.

## C. Listening Guide

<i>My Old Brown Coat and Me</i> (1949)			
Time	Form	Listening Cues	Discussion
0:00	Introduction	Bass run on guitar	The short bass guitar run is a typical pattern of Doc's. The accordion and fiddle harmonize the introduction.
0:17	Verse 1 and 2	"The moon was out"	The accordion plays a countermelody, filling up the space between the two phrases of each verse.
0:44	Verse 3 and 4	"I fell in love"	The fiddle takes over playing the countermelody; however, it is different than what the accordion played previously.
1:10	Verse 5, 6, 7	"I did not stop"	The accordion plays the countermelody. Notice in Doc's vocals how there is a subtle slide on the last word of each phrase.
1:50	Interlude	Fiddle and accordion	Cy and Marion play the introduction music here. Doc's simple strumming technique continues throughout the entire piece.
2:05	Verse 8 and 9	"Now, Mary Braid"	The accordion plays a countermelody, more pronounced than previously, especially after the text "haughty as could be." The snippet of a melody here is reminiscent of Eastern Europe.
2:33	Verse 10 and 11	"Now, Mary's husband"	The fiddle plays the countermelody one last time.
2:59	Verse 12	"Remember that an old brown coat"	The violin and accordion play together contrasting parts.

## D. Lesson Plan

<b>Lesson Plan:</b> “My Old Brown Coat and Me”	<b>Grades:</b> 3-5
<b>Materials:</b> “My Old Brown Coat and Me” by Doc Williams (available for purchase on CD from <a href="http://www.docwilliams.com">www.docwilliams.com</a> )	
<p><b>Maryland State Fine Arts Content Standards:</b></p> <p><b>Grades 3-5 Standard 1.0 Perceiving and Responding: Aesthetic Education: Indicator 2.</b> Experience performance through singing and playing instruments in general, vocal, and instrumental settings, and listening to performances of others</p> <p><b>Grades 3-5 Standard 2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Indicator 4.</b> Develop knowledge of a wide variety of styles and genres through the study of music history</p> <p><b>Objective a. for Grade 3:</b> Demonstrate an awareness of music history by performing songs, games, and dances representing a variety of composers, styles, genres, and world cultures</p> <p><b>Objective b. for Grade 4:</b> Identify specific musical instruments that are used in a variety of musical styles and genres throughout history</p> <p><b>Objective b. for Grade 5:</b> Describe how specific instruments are used in a variety of musical styles and genres throughout history.</p>	
<p><b>Description of Lesson:</b></p> <p>Prior to the physical aspect of learning this song, students should be given opportunities to actively listen to qualities of this music that make it a good representative of early country music. For example, students could listen for the song form, describe the instrumentation and the accompaniment pattern, and listen for lyrical nuances, such as the rhyming words at the ends of the phrases. Refer to the Listening Guide in Appendix F.</p> <p>Students will listen to “My Old Brown Coat and Me.” Students should listen for the accordion and the fiddle and the role they play in this piece. The accordion and fiddle play together in harmony, with the fiddle harmonizing above during the introduction and interludes. Notice the two instruments do not harmonize together during the verses, but take turns playing a countermelody. The teacher can share information about Martin’s accordion versatility from supplemental materials for “Merry Maiden Polka” and Cy’s style of playing which has been included with the supplemental information of this piece.</p> <p>Students in grade 3 can perform “My Old Brown Coat and Me” to teacher accompaniment. Older students (late 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades) could learn this simple chord progression (I – IV – I – V – I) to accompany student singing on pitched instruments. Of course, a more authentic performance of this piece would include the teacher (or competent student) accompanying student singing on a guitar.</p>	
<p><b>Evaluate/Assess</b></p> <p>At the end of class, students could listen to the piece and complete a listening assessment for “My Old Brown Coat and Me,” (see example below).</p>	

**Listening Assessment for “My Old Brown Coat and Me”**

Directions: For each question, circle all the correct response below.

1. What instrument(s) are playing during the Introduction?
  - a. Fiddle
  - b. Accordion
  - c. Both
  
2. Do you hear harmonization or a single instrument playing a countermelody during the Introduction?
  - a. Harmonization
  - b. Countermelody
  
3. What instrument(s) do you hear during Verse 1?
  - a. Fiddle
  - b. Accordion
  - c. Both
  
4. Do you hear harmonization or a single instrument playing a countermelody during Verse 1?
  - a. Harmonization
  - b. Countermelody
  
5. What instrument is playing the countermelody in verse 3?
  - a. Fiddle
  - b. Accordion

## Willie Roy the Crippled Boy (1947)

### A. Historical and Contextual Background

One of Williams' most requested songs, "Willie Roy the Crippled Boy," was written by Williams after meeting nine year old Lanny Hurst, from New Philadelphia, Ohio. Hurst had to have his legs amputated in an effort to stop cancer growth. Doc describes him as "a very cheerful lad" who impressed him.<sup>39</sup> A picture of Lanny below with a signed note to Williams (Figure 21) reads, "To Doc Williams for the many kind things he did to make Lanny's last days brighter."

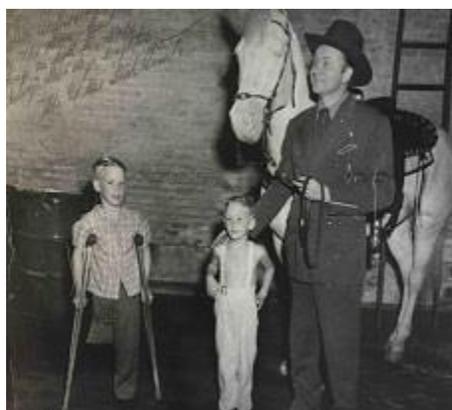


Figure 21 Lanny Hurst and his little brother are pictured with Tex Ritter. Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

Williams also performed charity events for disabled children. He says, "I realize how fortunate I've been, therefore, I try to give some of this goodness back."<sup>40</sup> At one charity event, Williams raised \$70,000 for a little girl who needed a kidney transplant.<sup>41</sup> Williams always gave a portion of his time to give concerts or perform at charity events for the less fortunate or overlooked members of society, such as sick and disabled children, orphans, prisoners, and in the later years of his career for senior citizens in nursing homes (Figure 22). See page 63 for notes

<sup>39</sup> Dorothy Horstman, *Sing Your Heart Out, Country Boy* (New York, NY: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1975).

<sup>40</sup> Wilson, "A Man Called Doc," 8.

<sup>41</sup> "A Man Called Doc."

about the terminology of the word “cripple” on an educational front and how students with special needs students are now welcomed without reservation and mainstreamed into our classrooms.



Figure 22 The Border Riders at a Christmas party for crippled children in 1942. Left to right is Cy Williams, Raymond Brown ("Quarantine"), Doc Williams, and Mary Calvas ("Sunflower"). Courtesy of the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams.

Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper recorded “Willie Roy the Crippled Boy” after learning it directly from Williams. Later the song went on to become a bluegrass standard, although Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper’s 1949 recording would have more influence than Doc’s.<sup>42</sup>

In Williams’ version, the listener will hear a prominent style of early country music- the brother duet, popular in the 1930s.<sup>43</sup> Williams and his brother, Cy, sang duets on many recordings and onstage. Most often, Williams sings the melody while Cy sings the upper harmony, and such is the case in “Willie Roy the Crippled Boy.” On some songs, brother acts would create an echo effect; one brother would sing a phrase of melody, and the other brother

---

<sup>42</sup> Tribe, "Doc Williams: A Half Century at the 'Wheeling Jamboree'."

<sup>43</sup> The sister act was also popular, and in relation to this study are the Newcomer Twins which I mention in background material for the “Beyond the Sunset” curriculum component.

would answer the phrase with a harmony. For an example, listen to Williams' original song, "My Sinner Friend."<sup>44</sup>

"Willie Roy the Crippled Boy" (originally titled "Willy Roy") was recorded in 1947 for Wheeling Recording Company (DW 1002).<sup>45</sup> Performers were Doc Williams, guitar and vocal; Cy Williams, fiddle and vocal; Marion Martin, accordion; Rube Schafer; tenor banjo, Chickie Williams, upright bass; and Abbie Neal, steel guitar. "Willie Roy the Crippled Boy" is in the key of F major, in 2/4 time. Technically, the song is a ballad because the melody remains the same throughout the piece; however, repeated lyrics (the refrain), occur after every verse. This ballad also has much fewer verses than a ballad of traditional form, which was common during that era because recording technology at the time was confined to about three minutes of music per side.

---

<sup>44</sup> The echo effect was a characteristic of gospel tunes. Source: Neal, *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*.

<sup>45</sup> "Willie Roy the Crippled Boy" was re-recorded in 1965. In the 1965 version, Doc and Chickie sing the harmony during the chorus.

**B. Lyrics****Verse 1**

His age was seven years today  
He don't know what it is to play  
Each night before he goes to bed  
This little prayer he always says

**Chorus**

Now I lay me down to rest  
Please Mom, please give me happiness  
I'm praying so my dreams come true  
So I can walk and play with you

**Verse 2**

His name they call him Willie Roy  
He's just a little crippled boy  
But now the tears roll down his cheeks  
I wipe them off so he can sleep

**Verse 3**

Someday I hope you can go out  
And play with me and walk about  
I won't scold if you should cry  
So Son, be good, my son good night

## C. Listening Guide

<i>Willie Roy the Crippled Boy</i> (1947)			
Time	Form	Listening Cues or Verse Text	Discussion
0:00	Introduction	Accordion alone plays the pickups	Pickups ascend in thirds in chromatic motion, fiddle plays a higher melody.
0:11	Verse 1	“His age is seven”	The accordion and banjo play backup accented off-beat patterns while steel guitar plays a countermelody, filling up the space between the two phrases of each verse, often playing an ascending or descending chromatic line.
0:33	Refrain	“Now I lay me”	The refrain is sung in harmony. Cy sings the upper harmony and Williams sings the lower harmony. Steel guitar plays countermelody throughout the verse, playing an answer to the vocals at the ends of the phrases. Hear the chromaticism again.
0:54	Interlude	Accordion repeats the intro music	The accordion plays the melody of the previous phrase, ornamenting the last few beats. Cy’s fiddle plays light and high in the background.
1:04	Verse 2	“His name they call him”	The accordion, banjo, and steel guitar continue in similar manner as during verse 1.
1:24	Refrain	“Now I lay me”	Similar material as the first refrain. If you listen carefully, an accordion ornament in the middle of the refrain is a bit more pronounced than it was in the first refrain.

1:45	Instrumental refrain	Tenor Banjo	The tenor banjo takes its turn playing the refrain, with typical ornamentations. The steel guitar occasionally plays a short response at the ends of the phrases. Cy's fiddle is light and high in the background.
2:05	Verse 3	"Someday I hope"	The violin continues in a similar manner as before.
2:26	Refrain	"Now I lay me"	Similar material as the first refrain. The ritardando at the end is typical in much of Williams' music.

#### D. Lesson Plan

<b>Lesson Plan:</b> "Willie Roy the Crippled Boy"	<b>Grades:</b> 3-5
<b>Materials:</b> "Willie Roy the Crippled Boy" by Doc Williams (available for purchase on CD from <a href="http://www.docwilliams.com">www.docwilliams.com</a> )	
<b>Maryland State Fine Arts Content Standards</b>	
<p><b>Grades 3-5 Standard 1.0 Perceiving and Responding: Aesthetic Education: Indicator 2.</b> Experience performance through singing and playing instruments in general, vocal, and instrumental settings, and listening to performances of others</p> <p><b>Objective b. for grade 3:</b> Sing and play a variety of music at a given tempo, using correct posture and clear diction or articulation</p> <p><b>Objective b. for grade 4:</b> Sing and play a variety of music with accurate intonation and characteristic timbre</p> <p><b>Objective c. for grade 5:</b> Sing songs accurately in simple two-part harmony using two-staff systems</p>	
<p><b>Description of Lesson:</b> Prior to the physical aspect of learning this song, students should be given opportunities to actively listen to qualities of this music that make it a good representative of early country music. For example, students could listen for the song form, describe the instrumentation and the accompaniment pattern, and listen for lyrical nuances, such as the rhyming words at the ends of the phrases. Refer to the Listening Methodology Chart.</p> <p>Students will listen to "Willie Roy the Crippled Boy" paying particular attention to the brother duet during the chorus, which is one of the most important musical elements of this piece. In grade 5, the teacher can model either the melody or the upper harmony part. The teacher will accompany student singing with a guitar as they learn the melody and the upper harmony. For performance, the melody and upper harmony can be sung together.</p> <p>In grades 3 and 4, when students have gained independence singing the melody, the teacher can sing the harmony for authenticity. If this song is taught in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and revisited in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, students may be ready to sing the harmony part as well.</p>	

**Evaluate/Assess**

Assessment of student learning can include the whole group performance of the song with a recitation, as well as any lyrics and that were written for the lesson.

\* Alternatively, “Willie Roy the Crippled Boy” could be approached in a similar way as “My Old Brown Coat and Me”

## The Cat Came Back (1955)

### A. Historical and Contextual Background

The earliest version of “The Cat Came Back” was written in 1893 by Harry S. Miller, who was a Tin Pan Alley songwriter. The song became popular in vaudeville circuits. The tonal center and melody of the original version differs greatly from Williams’ version, in D major. This piece is another example of how commercial music blended with folk elements.

Williams learned this comedic song in 2/4 time from Yodelin’ Slim Clark of Maine, and added it to his stage repertoire. Yodelin’ Slim Clark’s version was released in the 1950s on Continental Records (C-8063). Williams released his version of “The Cat Came Back” (A side) with “Two Little Orphans” (B side) in 1955 on the Wheeling Records label (DW 1025) and Quality Records out of Toronto, Canada (Figure 23). Performers were Doc Williams on guitar and vocals, Rube Schafer on tenor banjo, and Abbie Neal on steel guitar.



Figure 23 "The Cat Came Back"/"Two Little Orphans" was recorded in 1955. Pictured is an original 45 RPM. Williams learned "The Cat Came Back" from Yodelin' Slim Clark.

“The Cat Came Back” is evidence of how artists covered and borrowed songs from other artists. Clark was friends with Williams,<sup>46</sup> and while on tour in Maine, Clark gave him some 78 RPM records for Lee Moore to play on the radio. (Lee Moore was a late-night disc jockey on WWVA). Moore played “The Cat Came Back” for about three weeks before he dropped it and picked it up as his own and sang it every night on his show, Williams guesses, for about eight years.<sup>47</sup>

One interesting musical feature of “The Cat Came Back” is the phrase structure of the verse-chorus song. Typically, in 2/4 in country music, the listener would naturally expect to hear an even-numbered amount of beats in the vocal phrases, which will not be heard in “The Cat Came Back.” Williams often played in ways that disregarded the expected timeline. Advice given to musicians playing with Williams for the first time was “Just follow Doc.”

Courtney Ferguson, Williams’ grandson, recalls memories playing drumset with his grandfather when he was a teenager.

It was very difficult to back him up. He would, sort of like what Johnny Cash would do, jump into the next section, without it necessarily making 4/4 sense. Structurally, not everything was always 16 bars. Sometimes, it would be like 11. So that happened to me. Once I got comfortable, he pulled one of those on me, and the way that he jumped in, the downbeat was now the upbeat. I didn’t know what to do to fix this, but I knew it was wrong. I just kinda did what I could. Back then, once I had established the downbeat, that was the downbeat for infinity. I couldn’t put the downbeat anywhere else, it was locked in. I didn’t know what to do, I kept trying to do two bass drum pedals but my brain and body wouldn’t let me. That was terrifying!

He continues to describe how his grandfather “heard” music:

The way he saw music, was sort of more feeling, than sectionally. He wasn’t looking at things in terms of what leads into what. He had this part, this part, and this part, and they

---

<sup>46</sup> In addition to being friends, Clark, in 1953, cut 4 singles on Williams’ label Wheeling Records.

<sup>47</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

would go in this order. He would hear the song lots of different ways. Sometimes I would hear him perform it over and over again and it would be one way, and then he wouldn't play it for a year, and when he played it again and it would be different. He just kind of went with the flow.<sup>48</sup>

Williams' version of "The Cat Came Back" was in all the jukeboxes in Western Canada and sold over 1 million copies in Canada, becoming a gold record.<sup>49</sup> The song was even popular with Canadian prisoners. Williams says a jailor who worked the night shift in North Battleford, SK, liked to play Williams' records to the prisoners in the city jail.<sup>50</sup> Overall, live audiences loved the song, and laughed out loud at the story of the cat's nine lives.

---

<sup>48</sup> Ferguson, Interviewed by author, March 31, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> John Raby, "Country Singer Doc Williams Dies at 96," *Burlington Free Press*, February 2, 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*.

## B. Lyrics

### Chorus

The very next day the cat came back, Thought he was a goner but the cat came back,  
‘Cause he wouldn’t stay away.

### Verse 1

Ol’ Doc Williams had troubles of his own  
Had an old yellow cat that wouldn’t leave home;  
Tried everything he knew to keep the cat away,  
Even gave it to a preacher and he told him fore’ to stay  
But the cat came back.

### Verse 2

Now the cat had company’ out in the back yard,  
Somebody threw a boot and they threw it awful hard  
Took the cat behind the ear and he thought it was a slight,  
When down came a brick and it drove him out of sight  
But the cat came back.

### Verse 3

Now they gave the old cat to the man in the balloon,  
And they told him to leave him with the man in the moon;  
The balloon it busted and everybody said  
Ten miles away they picked the man up dead  
But the cat came back.

### Verse 4

On the telegraph wire the birds were sitting in a bunch,  
And he saw an even number said he’d eat ‘em for his lunch.  
Climbed softly up a pole until he reached the top  
Put his foot upon a electric wire and tied him in a knot  
But the cat came back

### Verse 5

Now the cat was a terror so they thought it would be best  
To give him to a fellow who was going out west  
Train went around the corner and it hit a broken rail  
Not a blessed soul aboard the train lived to tell the tale  
But the cat came back.

**Verse 6**

The farmer on the corner swore he'd kill the cat at sight,  
 He loaded up his gun full of nails and dynamite;  
 He waited in the garden 'till the cat came 'round,  
 Seven little pieces of the man is all they found  
 But the cat came back.

**C. Listening Guide**

<i>The Cat Came Back</i> (1955)			
Time	Form	Listening Cues or Verse Text	Discussion
0:00	Introduction	Acoustic guitar	Williams plays a typical ascending bass run as a pickup into the chorus.
0:04	Chorus	"The very next day"	Williams sings the Chorus, which consists of three vocal phrases, 13 beats long.
0:14	Verse 1	"Ol' Doc Williams"	Listening carefully for a common characteristic of Williams' music and of early hillbilly music; Williams drops a vocal rest between vocal phrases. Listen for how the word "tried" comes in a beat early.*
0:27	Chorus	"The very next day"	This chorus and all subsequent choruses are 14 beats long.
0:39	Verse 2	"Now the cat"	The accordion, banjo, and steel guitar continue in similar manner as during verse 1. All verses end with the words "the cat came back."
0:53	Chorus	"The very next day"	There is a strong rhythmic pattern (eighth, eighth, quarter) on the words "the cat came back."***
1:04	Verse 3	"Now they gave"	This story song is a quintessential example of the old adage "cats have nine lives."

1:18	Chorus	“The very next day”	Instead of thinking of the chorus as 14 beats long, it may help to think of it as 4 bars of 2/4 time, followed by 1 bar of 3/4 time, and ending with a bar of 2/4.
1:29	Verse 4	“On the telegraph wire”	Similarly to the chorus, think of the verse as 3 bars of 2/4 followed by 1 bar of 3/4. The last two vocal phrases occur over 5 bars of 2/4.
1:42	Chorus	“The very next day”	In all choruses, Williams plays the bass run from the introduction at the end of the chorus.
1:54	Verse 5	“Now the cat”	All the verses consist of a simple I - V chord structure.
2:08	Chorus	“The very next day”	The chorus is the same as earlier in the song.
2:19	Verse 6	“Now the farmer”	The cat “wins” in the end and comes back again.
2:35	Chorus	“The very next day”	The last Chorus is 12 beats long. You hear the steel guitar come in at the end of the last phrase.
** Williams says the audience would bang their beer glasses on the tables to the rhythm of “cat came back.”			

## D. Lesson Plan

<b>Lesson Plan:</b> “The Cat Came Back”	<b>Grades:</b> 3-5
<p><b>Materials:</b> “The Cat Came Back” by Doc Williams (available for purchase on CD from <a href="http://www.docwilliams.com">www.docwilliams.com</a>) and Orff instruments and/or unpitched percussion instruments. See Appendix F for a sample Orff arrangement.</p>	
<p><b>Maryland State Fine Arts Content Standards</b>  <b>Grades 3-5 Standard 1.0 Perceiving and Responding: Aesthetic Education: Indicator 2.</b>  Experience performance through singing and playing instruments in general, vocal, and instrumental settings, and listening to performances of others  <b>Objective a. for Grade 3:</b> Perform accurately simple rhythms at sight from standard notation: whole notes and whole rests, half notes and half rests, quarter notes and quarter rests, two eighth notes connected  <b>Objective d. for Grade 4:</b> Perform rhythmically and melodically correct ostinatos or chordal accompaniment patterns while other students sing or play contrasting parts  <b>Objective d. for Grade 5:</b> Perform accurately and independently instrumental parts while other students sing or play contrasting parts  <b>Grades 3-5 Standard 2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Indicator 4.</b> Develop knowledge of a wide variety of styles and genres through the study of music history</p>	
<p><b>Description of Lesson:</b>  Prior to the physical aspect of learning this song, students should be given opportunities to actively listen to qualities of this music that make it a good representative of early country music. For example, students could listen for the song form, describe the instrumentation and the accompaniment pattern, and listen for lyrical nuances, such as the rhyming words at the ends of the phrases. In this song, it would be interesting to have students count the number of beats in the phrases of the song.</p> <p>Students will listen to “The Cat Came Back” and explore body percussion patterns to use for the words “cat came back.” This part can be transferred to unpitched percussion instruments.</p> <p>This song lends itself to be played on pitched instruments. The chordal structure is simple enough, even for students who have limited experience playing chord changes, while the vocal phrase structure provides unpredictable elements (see the listening guide above) which can be exciting for students. For further enrichment, students can learn the accompaniment parts on Orff instruments. A simple Orff arrangement is included (Appendix F).</p>	
<p><b>Evaluate/Assess</b>  The performance of the song by the students could demonstrate understanding of this early country music song. In addition to singing Williams’ lyrics, students could be given opportunities to write new lyrics in the style of this piece to further their understanding of early country music.</p>	

*In Summary*

This curriculum is a guide to beginning instruction on Williams' music. It is not meant to be prescriptive or viewed as the only way to deliver instruction. Williams' music is comprised of many musical qualities that are appropriate for use in a grades 3-5 music curriculum, and teachers are encouraged to use his music in ways that can fit into their teaching style.

Country music continues to be marginalized in music education, and music educators have opportunities to break the stereotypes associated with country music and give students a deeper understanding of an American musical genre. Using Williams' music in instruction in grades 3-5 general music classes is one way to enrich student learning of country music. Chapter 6 will summarize the findings and draw conclusions on Doc Williams' music in the general music curriculum.

## CHAPTER SIX

DOC WILLIAMS' MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT, CONTRIBUTIONS TO COUNTRY  
MUSIC, AND APPLICATIONS FOR A GENERAL MUSIC CURRICULUM

The purpose of this study was to document early country musician Doc Williams' musical career, and to evaluate his specific contributions to early country music from 1932 to 1951, and to develop curriculum materials for grades 3-5 general music classes based on his music. During the course of the study, I addressed the following questions: 1) What was the nature of Williams' musical education and development as a musician? 2) What are his contributions to country music? 3) In what ways can Williams' music be used in a general music curriculum for grades 3-5?

With a musical career of Williams' magnitude, many of the ways in which Williams contributed to the development of country music are intangible, but by analyzing primary sources I was able to document many components of Williams' musical development and education, his contributions to country music, and develop a curriculum guide for general music students, grades 3-5.

*Williams' Musical Education and Development*

Doc Williams was born Andrew Smik Jr. in 1914, in Cleveland, Ohio. The nature of his musical education began in childhood. As a child his father taught him how to play the melody lines out of his family's hymnal on C cornet, but his formal training ended there. Williams also loved to listen to the radio and country music records; Jimmie Rodger was his favorite. His first experiences playing country music began when he picked up his father's fiddle, who used the instrument to play gypsy music and various American tunes. Williams, though, had a fascination with the guitar and dreamed of becoming a country music star. With his father's help, Williams

got a guitar at 15 and began his amateur career in country music by playing for square dances with his brother Milo around their childhood home of Tarrtown, Pennsylvania. Williams' musical tastes were developed and formed by his musical experiences of his childhood.

During the years 1931-1934, Williams returned to Cleveland to attempt a career as a country music artist, and we can begin to trace his contributions to country music. His musical education during this time was learning on the job and watching other professional radio artists. Several musicians with whom Williams worked contributed to his musical development, most importantly, Doc McCauley, who shared with him Appalachian musical styles. When Williams returned to Pennsylvania in 1935 to play on KQV, he was reunited with his brother Milo (whose stage name became "Cy"). Together with Curley Sims they formed the Allegheny Ramblers and broadcast daily at 8AM. Williams continued to learn from other musicians who crossed his path, and he continued to gain valuable on the job experience. His hard work paid off and in 1938, after just starting on WWVA in 1937, Doc Williams and the Border Riders won a popularity contest by receiving the most write-in votes. The band's success continued on from there.

Williams' wife, "Chickie" and accordionist Marion Martin joined Doc Williams and the Border Riders in 1946, forever changing the sound of the band. Martin and Cy played harmony over Williams' straightforward rhythm guitar and Chickie's doghouse bass. Williams sang lead and also sang harmonized songs with Chickie and Cy. This sound was the Border Riders' most famous, and was nicknamed the "Doc Williams Sound." The core members of Doc Williams and the Border Riders remained until Cy retired in 1956. Martin worked with Williams for over 45 years, and Martin's influence is perhaps more important than any other musician during the time period of this study. After analyzing and drawing conclusions from the sources, it seems that

Williams' musical education and development runs parallel to his contributions to country music.

*Williams' Contributions to Country Music*

Williams' music was called hillbilly music during the earliest years of country music development. Instead of hillbilly I used the term early country music for this study. Early country music is a folk derived style that developed into an American musical genre. The music has origins in old and new world ballads, instrumental music, dance music, and music from vaudeville. In the late 1800s, prior to records and radio, the predecessor of early country music was disseminated to the public via medicine shows, dances, barn raisings, political events, and more. Early country music relied heavily on commercial record companies, radio, and the public for its success. In West Virginia, the influx of European immigrants contributed sounds to the music from their ethnic backgrounds, molding it into a truly unique form of early country music. Doc Williams' music showcases this sound.

For Williams, radio broadcasts, personal appearances (touring), song publishing, song writing, and recording were key components for his success throughout the early country music era of the 1930s, 40s, and beyond. Williams used radio to not only perform his music, but to advertise personal appearances in the local area. Radio was the vehicle through which many fans heard country music. Williams also published song lyrics, family albums with band member photos, and other memorabilia to sell on air and at personal appearances. Throughout his career, Williams wrote his own song material, borrowed from other artists, used songwriters, and covered recordings of songs. In addition to performing, Williams started his own business, publishing an instructional guitar course in 1943, and creating Wheeling Recording Company in 1947. Most early country music artists during this time period were not making these kinds of

contributions (guitar manuals and recording companies) to the field. Williams remained at WWVA for 61 years, and his name is synonymous with the “Wheeling Jamboree.” Williams’ music deserves recognition in music education because his music is exemplary of early country music and during his career he engaged many of the typical components of early country music.

*Williams’ Music in the General Music Curriculum*

The country music genre continues to experience marginalization in music education curriculum, despite the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium call for the expansion of the study of various musical styles, periods, forms, and cultures. Country music artists, such as Williams, can be examined and studied to gain a better understanding of the country music (an American musical genre) and its history. Williams’ career spanned decades of country music development in the United States, and he witnessed the growth and evolution of country music firsthand. He is considered by many in the field as a “pioneer” of country music. Stubbs shares his thoughts:

Although he's not mentioned in as many history books as he should be, Doc Williams contributed greatly to traditional music-especially from the late 1930s through the 1960s. In tandem with WWVA, he plowed some tremendously deep furrows for traditional music. A true gentleman and well-loved performer whose career spanned more than seventy years, Doc Williams was far more than just a legend- he was a pioneer.<sup>1</sup>

Given the importance of early country music in the historical development of American music, its inclusion in the K-12 music curriculum is vital to a complete understanding of American music history. I chose to research early country music entertainer and musician Doc Williams for several reasons, which are 1) access to many primary sources through the archives of Doc and Chickie Williams, in care of their daughter, Barbara Smik, 2) elements that are particularly approachable for general music students in grades 3-5, such as the instrumentation of

---

<sup>1</sup> Stubbs, "Doc Williams (June 26, 1914 - January 31, 2011)."

early country music and Williams' unique band sound, simple chord progressions, lyrical forms such as verse-chorus and ballad, and vocal and instrumental duets within a song, and 3) personal reasons; my grandmother shared her memories of seeing Doc Williams and the Border Riders perform when she was a child and I became curious to learn more about the genre of early country music. Before I began this study, I thought I had a thorough understanding of the basic history of country music, but I discovered my knowledge only skimmed the surface. The historical, cultural, and social value of Williams' music itself stands on its own as valuable instructional material.

In Chapter 5 I demonstrated how Williams' music can be implemented in the general music curriculum. There are several musical features in the five curricular sections from Williams' music which can be the focus of student learning: recitation within a song, instrumental and vocal harmonies, phrasing, chord structure, song form, instrumentation and musical style. In accordance with the national standards, the historical, social, and cultural context surrounding the pieces and the artists who created the music are woven into the presentation of Williams' music.

Basic musical elements of form, melody, harmony, tone can be taught to students through the vehicle of Williams' music. I found the form of Williams' music, with simple straight forward chordal structure, to be simple, yet familiar, and in turn could be used to reinforce student knowledge of those concepts. The vocal tone qualities of Williams, Cy, and Chickie may not be polished or trained, but is typical of early country music and today's modern forms of the genre. Upon hearing Williams' music for the first time, the vocal qualities resonated with me the most; however, being a music educator, I am not discouraged by sounds of unfamiliar music. Some students may be quick to dismiss the music based on the sounds they hear, but if

encouraged to put those reservations aside they may develop an understanding of this American musical form. I did not address this in the lesson plans, because I believe music teachers can encourage tolerance of musical preferences in their own way.

The melodies heard in Williams' music are clear and easy enough for elementary students in grades 3-5 to imitate and reproduce. Vocal duets were common in early country music, and I found that the upper harmonies are easy to replicate as well after careful listening. Doc Williams and the Border Riders created their harmonies instrumentally by using fiddle and accordion, which was unique at the time. The instrumentation of early country music, such as that of Williams, is more closely oriented to folk music instrumentation: fiddle, guitar, mandolin, and upright bass. Students who have previously learned of the accordion's role in polka music may be surprised to learn it was an important instrumental addition to country music, courtesy of European immigrants. Williams took the existing standard country music instrumentation and expanded it to include fiddle and accordion harmonies. Not all country music sounds alike and this aspect was revealed to me while developing the curriculum component of this study.

#### *Suggestions for Further Research*

First and foremost, there are other country musicians like Williams perhaps in our own backyards, who contributed to the history and development of the genre and are worthy of study. Williams' wife, Chickie, whose family was known in the local community of musicians, was a respected artist in her own right, as were many of the other musicians with whom Williams worked throughout the years.

There are many aspects of Williams' career that were beyond the scope of this study. Doc Williams and the Border Riders took their show on the road to the Northeast and Canada

annually for decades, and their story should be documented more thoroughly.<sup>2</sup> Williams ran two-hour shows on these tours in the 1950s and 1960s, and the content of the shows and how they changed could be studied as well. Ferguson recalls his grandparents were true professionals onstage, having perfected their show through years of experience. Williams was a ‘natural’ on the stage and knew how to get the crowd going. The show would go on flawlessly, though you would never see it the same way twice.<sup>3</sup> His talents were not limited to music performance. Williams was an entertainer managing a business.

Other aspects of Williams’ career could be researched as well (although they may be more appropriate as part of a musicology study) and they are: Williams’ promotion of what he called “clean” traditional country music and his offstage music making culture. Williams was an outspoken opponent of the Top 40 format in radio and wrote extensively on the topic. He believed the modern format contributed to the decline of the consummation of “clean” traditional country music and forced local entertainers to leave the field, pushed out by country music stars. Williams and some of his colleagues established the *International Heritage Music Association* with the goal of promoting traditional country music. He also promoted the music by hosting his annual “Jamboree Reunion Shows,” in which Jamboree stars of old would gather to reminisce and perform. Music making was a part of Williams’ life both on and off stage. In later years, Williams had weekly “jam sessions” with musicians who would come to visit him at his home, some which were informally recorded. In addition, Williams would set up in the front of the Doc Williams Store and play and sing songs, and talk with fans.<sup>4</sup> When the “Jamboree” let out on

---

<sup>2</sup> The busiest touring years were the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>3</sup> Ferguson, Interviewed by author, March 31, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> This took place from the late 1970s to the 1990s.

Saturday nights, show goers would pour into the store, which was across the street from the Capitol Music Hall. Williams was always kind and gracious towards his fans.

### *In Closing*

We do not know the depth of country music instruction in the United States because of a lack of research. In speaking with Deanna Tribe, wife of Ivan Tribe, I learned that Wheeling Park High School, in Wheeling, WV has had a bluegrass band for at least ten years, and the band is not the only one of its kind in the area. The presence of country music ensembles in our schools needs to be researched. In addition, it would be valuable to research Williams' *Simplified By-Ear System of Guitar Chords* from 1943 and to compare it to other guitar instruction manuals of the time, if they can be found. Williams may have published one of the first instructional guitar courses for laymen and untrained musicians in the United States. His course precedes Mel Bay's *Orchestral Chord System for Guitar* by four years.

For those wishing to learn more about country music, a great place to start would be to pick up a copy of Neal's *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*. Several books on early country music history throughout the regions of the United States are available. In addition, the International Country Music Conference takes place annually in May in Nashville, Tennessee. For those more versed in the history of country music, the conference consists of papers presented by researchers and scholars in the field, as well as informal "pickin' sessions."

This study is significant in that it gives country music, particularly that of Williams, a voice in the canon of general music repertoire and study. This study can be used as a model to incorporate early country music into general music instruction for grades 3-5. I expect teachers can adapt the curriculum I presented in Chapter 5 for instruction in other grade levels. For example, the argument could be made that some of Williams' history and song content is more

developmentally appropriate for general music students in middle school. I would also use Williams' music perhaps in a choral setting, and in my performance oriented middle school music appreciation class.

Williams is one of many early country music artists worthy of study in our music education curriculum. While it is standard to be selective when choosing and planning the content our music students will learn, we should be careful not to marginalize American musical genres, based on our own musical preferences or that of our students. Less obscure artists of local and regional significance made contributions to country music and their contributions need to be highlighted and recognized in our K-12 music education curricula.

## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*Early Life*

Did Williams' parents encourage or support his musical endeavors as a young man? What did they think of the music he played?

In a musical sense, what influence did your mother have on your father?

How do you think Williams balanced family life and his career?

*Sound and Style*

What did Williams call the music he played and sang? At what point did he start calling it "Pure" country?

What are the qualities of Doc Williams' music that set it apart from others of the early country era?

Did any of the members of Doc Williams and the Border Riders have a profound effect on the sound and/or style of the band?

What are the qualities of Williams' music that makes it a good representation of country music?

Do you think Williams music changed or improved from his early career to his later career and in what ways?

Did any musicians have a particularly important impact on Williams? Describe their impact.

What were the relationships like between Williams and fellow country music artists in the field? Was it a friendly atmosphere or was it competitive? Did they share music with each other?

*Writing and Recording*

Where did Williams write his music? What was the process of writing a new song, or how did he write it? Did he have help writing music?

What prompted Williams to set up his own recording studio?

I've read that in the country music early days, artists would record songs they already knew, which had been circulating among the public for some time, such as folk songs or Tin Pan Alley songs. Did Williams "borrow" or record many songs he had learned from others? About how much of Williams' songs were truly "originals" and how many are arrangements of already existing songs?

*Performing*

Describe the importance of the “Wheeling Jamboree” to the success of Williams’ career.

What would you say was the hardest part about being a musician and performer for Williams?  
What did Williams enjoy the most about his career?

While on tour, did Williams repeatedly take the show to the same places? How did he decide where he would book his shows?

Was the “Wheeling Jamboree” supportive of Williams’ performance schedule away from the WWVA?

## APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORMS

“Pure Country” Musician Doc Williams (1914-2011): Contributions to the Development of Country Music and Applications for a 3-5 General Music

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to be interviewed for the project entitled “Pure Country” Musician Doc Williams (1914-2011): Contributions to the Development of Country Music and Applications for a 3-5 General Music Curriculum, which is being produced by Josephine Cover of The University of Michigan.

I certify that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in one or more electronically recorded interviews for this project. I understand that such interviews and related materials may be published in an academic journal or book.

I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewee

Final Consent Form

“Pure Country” Musician Doc Williams (1914-2011): Contributions to the Development of Country Music and Applications for a 3-5 General Music

*Dear Participant:*

*This form gives us final authorization to use material from your interview in “Pure Country” Musician Doc Williams (1914-2011): Contributions to the Development of Country Music and Applications for a 3-5 General Music. A draft of these materials should have been presented to you for your review, correction, or modification. You may grant use rights for this draft “as is,” or with the modifications you specify, if any. See “Conditions” at the bottom of the form.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby grant the right to use information from recordings and or notes taken in interviews of me, to Josephine Cover, and as presented to me as a draft copy. I understand that the interview records will be kept by the interviewer and the project, and that the information contained in the interviews may be used in materials to be made available to the general public.

\_\_\_\_\_ *By initialing here, I also agree to be identified by name in the project and related materials.*

\_\_\_\_\_ *By initialing here, I also agree to be identified by photograph in the project and related materials.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewee

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewer

**The following conditions limit the release of information, as agreed between the interviewer and the interviewee:**

\_\_\_\_\_ None needed \_\_\_\_\_ Material may be released once corrections I specified have been made

\_\_\_\_\_ Material may be released once it has been edited by a third part (please specify)

### APPENDIX C: IRB EXEMPTION



Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB-HSBS) • 2800 Plymouth Rd., Building 520, Room 1170, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800 • phone (734) 936-0933 • fax (734) 998-9171 • irbhsbs@umich.edu

**Subject:** Notice of Determination of “Not Regulated” Status for [ HUM00110673 ]

#### **SUBMISSION INFORMATION:**

Title: Doc Williams (1914-2011): Contributions to the Development of Country Music and Applications for a Music Curriculum

Full Study Title (if applicable): “Pure Country” Musician Doc Williams (1914-2011): Contributions to the Development of Country Music and Applications for a K-5 Elementary General Music Curriculum

Study eResearch ID: [HUM00110673](#)

Date of this Notification from IRB: 3/7/2016

Date of IRB Not Regulated Determination: 3/7/2016

#### **IRB NOT REGULATED STATUS:**

Category Outcome Letter Text

**Oral History** Based on the information provided, the proposed oral history project does not fit the definition of human subjects research requiring IRB approval. Interviews that gather, preserve and interpret the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events are a method of historical documentation and not human subjects research. While IRB review and oversight is not required, all investigators are expected to maintain the highest professional standards in the conduct of their work and to uphold the standards of the disciplines and professions with which they are affiliated.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thad A. Polk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'T'.

**Thad Polk**  
Chair, IRB HSBS

## APPENDIX D: TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1914: Andrew Smik Jr. is born at home on June 26 to Slovak parents in Cleveland, OH.

1922: The Smik family moves to Tarrtown, just outside of Kittanning, Pennsylvania.

1927: Andy moves to Cleveland to live with his grandmother and finishes 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Thomas Jefferson Junior High School.

1929: Andy is called back to Tarrtown to work in the mines with his father. At 15 years old, he was only making a dollar a day. Williams writes: "My knees got to be swollen at times and that was pretty tough on a 15 and a half year old boy. Truly, I was a coal miner's son."<sup>1</sup>

1932: The Mississippi Clowns appear on WJAY (Cleveland), a 500 watt station that featured *The Barn Busters* (a show for amateurs) on which Williams (still Andy) played guitar with a harmonica around his neck, and Joe Stoetzer played kazoo attached to a horn, spoons, and banjo.

1933-1934: Williams and Stoezer join Doc McCaulley in his band Doc McCaulley and the Kansas Clodhoppers. This was still WJAY (Cleveland). They sang in the "beer gardens," songs like "Red River Valley", "Cowboy Jack", and "Birmingham Jail."<sup>2</sup>

1935: The Allegheny Ramblers on KQV (Pittsburgh), consisted of brother Cy on fiddle and Leonard "Curley" Sims (Ohio) on mandolin. They also had a bass fiddle. <sup>3</sup> Later they changed their name to the Cherokee Hillbillies, because of Curley's Cherokee heritage. After six months they joined "Miss Billie Walker's Texas Longhorns."

1936: Doc Williams and the Border Riders take over Miss Billie's prime time 15 minute spot (8AM) Monday through Saturday on WJAS (Pittsburgh). It was a three station hookup WJAS, KQV (also Pittsburgh), and WHJB (Greensburg). Members included Dale Kuhn on banjo, Cy on fiddle, and Hamilton Fincher (Rawhide) did comedy. When Dale left, Williams added a female vocalist, Mickie McCarthy, who was replaced by Mary Jane Mosier, followed by Mary Calvas, whose stage name was "Sunflower."

May 1937: Curley Sims rejoins the group, and Williams' band joins radio station WWVA's "Wheeling Jamboree."

---

<sup>1</sup> Williams and Smik, *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*: 48.

<sup>2</sup> Hopper, "A Chat with Country Music Artist Doc Williams."

<sup>3</sup> Tribe, "Doc Williams: A Half Century at the 'Wheeling Jamboree'."

1937: Rawhide receives injuries from a house fire and Big Slim the Lone Cowboy (Harry McAulife) filled in until Rawhide returned.

1939: Williams' and the Border Riders become part of the first ever WWVA "Good Will Tour".

1942-1946: The "Jamboree" breaks their live broadcasting events because of WWII. Williams broadcasted over WWVA full time, with a brief stay in WFMD (Frederick, MD).

1946: Curley Sims leaves. Williams also hires William Henry Goodwin (stage name Hiram Hayseed) an old-time vaudeville performer to replace Froggie Cortez as comedian. He remained until his death in 1959.

1947: First recording session at Cleveland Recording Company.

1947-1950: Williams owned and operated a country music park near Claysburg, Pennsylvania, called Musselman's Grove.

1949: First long distance tour to Maine.

1950s: Began telecasting television performances.

1951: First tour to Canada (January 9 -February 2).

1952: First tour to Newfoundland.

1953: Tour to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (November).

1971: Second tour to Newfoundland

1972: Doc and Chickie Williams host the first "Jamboree Homecoming Reunion" show.

1973: Williams is voted Eastern States "Entertainer of the Year" at the Eastern States Country Music Incorporated convention.

1974: Tour to England. Williams toured England again in 1976.

1998: Doc and Chickie do Farewell Appearance in the Maritime Provinces.

APPENDIX E: LISTENING GUIDE

<b>Listening Methodology Chart</b>		<b>Source:</b> Joyceln R. Neal <i>Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History</i>	
The Song	The Words	What do they mean?	What is the story about?  What allusions or references are in the words?
		How do they sound?	What interesting vocabulary is used?  What poetic devise are used?
		How are they organized?	What is the form?  What is the rhyme scheme?  What words, phrases, or sections repeat?
	The Melody	What does it sound like?	What is its range (how high and low does it go)?  What are its rhythms and contours?  Does it quote or borrow from other sources?
		How is it organized?	What is the form?  Do phrases or sections repeat?
	The Chords	What is the chord progression?	What chords are used, and does the progression borrow from other sources?

<b>Listening Methodology Chart Continued</b>			
The Performance	Musical Style	What is the sound of the ensemble?	What instruments are used?  Are there identifiable instrumental techniques from a particular place or time?
		What is the arrangement of the song?	What rhythmic patterns or groove are used?  What are the musical roles of the different instruments?  What mood is conveyed?  What is the overall organization and form of the song as performed?
	The Singer	What does the voice sound like?	Is the voice smooth or raspy, high or low?  Does the singer use vibrato or a straight tone?  Is the sound pinched or resonant?
		What performance techniques are used?	Does the singer talk, yodel, use a regional accent, or sing flat?

# APPENDIX F: THE CAT CAME BACK

**The Cat Came Back**  
Arranged by Josephine Cover  
As sung by Doc Williams

The musical score is arranged for five instruments: Voice, Alto Xylophone, Hand Drum, Bass Xylophone, and Nylon Guitar. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes the beginning of the piece, with the voice part starting on the second measure. The lyrics for the first system are: "The ve-ry next". The second system continues the piece, with the voice part starting on the first measure. The lyrics for the second system are: "day, the cat came back. Thought he was a gon-ner but the cat came". The instruments provide accompaniment throughout, with the Nylon Guitar playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords, and the other instruments providing harmonic support.

6

day, the cat came back. Thought he was a gon-ner but the cat came

2

12

back 'cause he would - n't stay a - way. Well the Old Doc  
cat had

Verses

10

Will - iams had trou - bles of his own, had him a yel - low cat that  
comp - any' out in the back yard, some - bo - dy had a boot and they

21 3

would - n't leave home. Tried ev - ry - thing he knew to  
threw it aw - ful hard. Took the cat be - hind the ear and he

keep the cat a - way, ev - en gave him to a prea - cher and he  
thought it was a slight, when down came a brick and it

4

20

told him for to stay, but the cat came back. The  
drove him out-la sight,

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- American Folklore Society. "Hillbilly Issue." *Journal of American Folklore* 78, no. 309 (1965): 195-287.
- Anonymous. *The Doc Williams Show*. Churchville, NY: Kiwanis Club of Churchville.
- . "The Growth and Evolution of a Country Music Star and Family: The Doc Williams Story." *Country Time Review*, July 1967, 6-7.
- . "Homecoming Reunion Unites Country Music's Early Stars." *Country Music Beat*, May 1975, 6-7.
- . "Jamboree-- Born in 1933 and Still Rolling." *Billboard (Archive: 1963-2000)*, October 17 1970.
- . "Jamboree USA Homecoming 1974." *The Wheeling Feeling*, 1974, 8.
- . "The Old Time, Modern Country Sound of Doc Williams." *WGMA Country*, March 1969, 18-20.
- Bayard, Samuel P. "Prolegomena to a Study of the Principal Melodic Families of British-American Folk Song." *The Journal of American Folklore* 63, no. 247 (1950): 1-44.
- Bernard, Ryan Carlson. "The Rise and Fall of the Hillbilly Music Genre: A History, 1922-1939." East Tennessee State University, 2006.
- Black, James T. "Southern Sounds on the Air." *Southern Living* 32, no. 2 (1997): 32-33.
- Bronner, Simon J. *Old-Time Music Makers of New York State*. New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987.
- Carney, James. "Spatial Diffusion of the All-Country Music Radio Stations in the United States, 1971-74." *JEMF Quarterly* 13, no. 46 (1977): 58-66.
- "Catalog of Copyright Entries." In *Published Music*, edited by Library of Congress. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Copyright Office., 1949.
- Choate, Robert A., ed. *Music in American Society: Documentary Report of the Tanglewood Symposium*, vol. vi, 154 p. Washington, DC: Music Educators National Conference, 1968.
- Cohen, Norman. "Early Pioneers." In *Stars of Country Music: Uncle Dave Macon to Johnny Rodriguez*, edited by Bill C. Malone and Judith McCulloh, 3-39. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975.
- Cohen, Norman, and Guthrie Meade. "The Sources of Old Time Hillbilly Music: Child Ballads." *JEMF Quarterly* 9, no. 29 (1973): 56-61.
- Compston-Strough, Jennifer. "Friends and Colleagues Remember Doc Williams." *Sunday News Register*, February 6, 2011.
- "Conference on the Character and State of Studies in Folklore." *The Journal of American Folklore* 59, no. 234 (1946): 495-527.
- Deemer, Clay. "So You Like Hillbilly Music!". *Music Educators Journal* 28, no. 1 (1941): 62.

- England, Ron. "Two Million Miles and 35 Years Later, Doc Williams Show Still Going Strong." *The Journal Pioneer*, May 10 1969.
- Gentry, Linnell, ed. *A History and Encyclopedia of Country, Western, and Gospel Music*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: Clairmont Corporation, 1969.
- Green, Archie. "Early Country Music Journals." *JEMF quarterly* 16, no. 58 (1980): 140-46.
- . "Hillbilly Music: Source and Symbol." *The Journal of American Folklore* 78, no. 309 (1965): 204-28.
- Hopfer, David. "A Chat with Country Music Artist Doc Williams." 28:51. Morgantown, WV: WWVU TV, 1975.
- Horstman, Dorothy. *Sing Your Heart out, Country Boy*. New York, NY: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1975.
- The Grove Dictionary of American Music*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Kahn, Edward. "Hillbilly Music: Source and Resource." *The Journal of American Folklore* 78, no. 309 (1965): 257-66.
- Kempf, Barbara. "Meet Doc Williams: Country Music Star, Country Music Legend." *John Edwards Memorial Foundation* 10, no. 1 (1974): 1-13.
- Kingsbury, Paul. "The Celebrity Two-Step." *Journal of Country Music* 24, no. 1 (2004): 8-15.
- , ed. *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music/Compiled by the Staff of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum*, vol. xi, 634 p. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Larkin, Colin. "Doc Williams." In *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, edited by Colin Larkin: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Leary, James P. *Polkabilly: How the Goose Island Ramblers Redefined American Folk Music*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Lilly, John. *Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from Goldenseal*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999.
- Lippmann, Stephen. "The Institutional Context of Industry Consolidation: Radio Broadcasting in the United States, 1920-1934." *Social Forces* 86, no. 2 (2007): 467-95.
- Livingston, Carolyn. "Naming Country Music: An Historian Looks at Meanings Behind the Labels." *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 9, no. 2 (2001): 19-29.
- Lomax, John III. *Nashville: Music City USA*. edited by Lory Frankel New York, NY: Harry N Abrams Inc., 1985.
- Lornell, Kip. "Early Country Music and the Mass Media in Roanoke, Virginia." *American Music* 5, no. 4 (1987): 403-16.
- Malone, Bill C. *Country Music, U.S.A.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1985.
- . "Radio and Personal Appearances: Sources and Resources." *Western Folklore* 30, no. 3 (1971): 215-25.

- McCarthy, Marie. "Historical Inquiry: Getting inside the Process." In *Inquiry in Music Education: Concepts and Methods for the Beginning Researcher*, edited by Hildegard C. Froehlich and Carol Frierson-Campbell, 120-43. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.
- Meade, Guthrie T., Jr. "Copyright: A Tool for Commercial Rural Music Research." *Western Folklore* 30, no. 3 (1971): 206-14.
- Miller, Chuck. "Almost Heaven: Wheeling in the Years." *The Journal of Country Music* 23, no. 2 (2003): 18-26.
- Milnes, Gerald. *Play of a Fiddle: Traditional Music, Dance, and Folklore in West Virginia*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1999.
- Nay, Robert W. "A Proclamation Honoring WWVA Radio." In *Extension of Remarks*, edited by 107th Congress. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 2001.
- Neal, Jocelyn R. *Country Music: A Cultural and Stylistic History*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- "Northern Panhandle." West Virginia Division of Culture and History, [www.wvculture.org/arts/ethnic/northpan.html](http://www.wvculture.org/arts/ethnic/northpan.html).
- O'Donnell, Mike. "Doc Williams Continues Colorful Vaudeville Road Show Traditions." *Valley News*, February 26 1970.
- Pecknold, D. *The Selling Sound: The Rise of the Country Music Industry*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Peterson, Richard A. *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Porterfield, Nolan. "Introduction." In *Exploring Roots Music: Twenty Years of the Jemf Quarterly*, edited by Nolan Porterfield, ix-xxv. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004.
- Raby, John. "Country Singer Doc Williams Dies at 96." *Burlington Free Press*, February 2, 2011.
- Rasmussen, Anne K. "Mainstreaming American Musical Multiculturalism." *American Music* 22, no. 2 (2004): 296-309.
- Rector, Lee. "Williams Takes Stand for Regional Artists." *Hard Country Beat*, 1994.
- Roberts, Roderick J. "An Introduction to the Study of Northern Country Music." *Journal of Country Music* 7, no. 1 (1978): 22-28.
- Rowswell, Albert Kennedy. *Rosey Reflections*. Pittsburgh, PA: A. E. P. Kerr Company, 1945.
- Roy, W. G. "Aesthetic Identity, Race, and American Folk Music." *Qualitative Sociology* 25, no. 3 (2002): 459-69.
- Sanneh, Kelefa. "Man of Many Hats." *The New Yorker* 86, no. 22 (2010): 30.
- Sippel, Johnny. "Folk Talent and Tunes." *Billboard* 61, no. 48 (1949): 30.
- Smik, Andrew. *The Simplified by Ear System of Guitar Chords*. 1943.
- Smik, Barbara D. "We've Come a Long Way Together." *Doc Williams Country* 1, no. 1 (January 1992).

- . "We Remember...Marion Martin 'Famous Blind Accordionist'." *Doc Williams Country* 2, no. 1 (1993).
- Stubbs, Eddie. "Doc Williams (June 26, 1914 - January 31, 2011)." *Bluegrass Unlimited* (2011): 20.
- Tribe, Ivan M. "Doc Williams: A Half Century at the 'Wheeling Jamboree'." *Goldenseal*, 1987, 32-42.
- . "Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia." xiii, 233 p., [24] p. of plates. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1984. Reprint, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996.
- Tribe, Ivan M., and Jacob L. Bapst. *West Virginia's Traditional Country Music*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2015.
- Tullos, Allen. "Cultural Politics and Political Culture in Appalachia." *Radical History Review* 1989, no. 45 (1989): 181-85.
- Volk, Terese M. "A Response to Carolyn Livingston, 'Naming Country Music: An Historian Looks at Meanings Behind the Labels'." *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 9, no. 2 (2001): 41-43.
- "West Virginia Country Music and Goldenseal Magazine." Charleston, WV: West Virginia State Archives, 2013.
- "West Virginia: A Guide to the Mountain State." edited by Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1941.
- Wiggins, Gene. *Fiddlin' Georgia Crazy: Fiddlin' John Carson, His Real World, and the World of His Songs*. Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- Wilgus, Donald K. *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship since 1898*. Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1959.
- . "An Introduction to the Study of Hillbilly Music." *The Journal of American Folklore* 78, no. 309 (1965): 195-203.
- Williams, Chickie. In *Fireside Songs*. Wheeling, WV: Wheeling Records, 1963.
- . In *Chickie Williams: Just a Melody of Love*. Wheeling, WV: Doxx Records, 1974.
- . In *Chickie Williams Sings the Old Songs*. Wheeling, WV: Wheeling Recording Company.
- Williams, Doc. In *Doc Williams Family Sacred Album (WLP 1967): Plus More*. Wheeling, WV: Wheeling Recording Company, 1967.
- . "How Do You Write About a Lifetime?" *Hard Country Beat*, March-April 1996, 3.
- . "How Do You Write About a Lifetime?" *Hard Country Beat*, January-February 1996, 19.
- . "Rights of the Country Music Fan." *International Heritage Music Association* 1, no. 4 (1976): 8-9.
- Williams, Doc, and Barbara D. Smik. *A Country Music Legend: Doc Williams Looking Back*. Wheeling, WV: Creative Impressions, 2006.

Wilson, Larry. "A Man Called Doc." *The Wheeling Feeling*, October 1973, 8-9.

Wolfe, Charles K. *Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1977.