

Contest Calendar

The Life & Legacy of
George Morris

The
**'Fiddling
Sheriff'**

—Pages 4-11

The
Missouri
State
Old Time
Fiddlers
Association



The 1984 Calendar



DESIGN: SPENCER GALLOWAY

This is the third edition of the Missouri State Old Time Fiddlers Association *Contest Calendar*. For 1984-85 the number of contests listed has increased once again. The purpose of the *Calendar* is to provide contest sponsors with an inexpensive means of advertising fiddling contests and also provide the fiddlers

with a ready reference source for contests throughout the year.

We do not claim that all contests are listed, but we have done our best to contact the organizers of all contests which have come to our attention and offer them the opportunity to participate. We have carefully recorded the dates and other pertinent information provided by the contest sponsors. We have also requested that any contest changing a date or time for their event should send notice to all persons receiving the *Calendar*.

Included in this edition is a feature article prepared by Charlie Walden describing the life of George Morris, "The Fiddlin' Sheriff." Many people contributed information to this project and we are grateful for their assistance. In particular, we would like to thank Howard "Rusty" Marshall and the Missouri Cultural Heritage Center (University of Missouri-Columbia) for supporting the research effort which permitted this article to be completed.

In Memoriam

Bob Jones 1891-1983

Born at Holliday, Missouri, in Monroe County, Bob Jones played often at house dances and fiddling contests accompanied by his brother Charlie on the banjo. His occupational life included work as a blacksmith and farrier at Florida and Vandalia, Missouri, and as clay miner in the rich clay deposits of the region. He died on November 4, 1983.



John Journagan 1909-1983

He is probably best remembered as a violin dealer and repairman. Born in Boone County, Arkansas, he played for many square dances and won fiddling contest trophies in many states. Upon moving to Kansas City in the 1940s, he became quite interested in violin making and repair, so much so that this became his main hobby. In his lifetime, he supplied many fiddlers and violinists with fine instruments and bows. John Journagan died on April 19, 1983.

Contests & Events

May

- May 3, Wellsville, Montgomery Co., Wellsville Optimist Spring Festival, Kiwanis Park 7:30PM \$265 in prizes, six places Larry Schwendker
- May 4, 5 & 6, Tina, Carroll Co., Tina Community Hall, Old Time Fiddlers Reunion Begins Friday at 2:00PM Ends Sunday at 5:00PM Free Camping, Jam Sessions, Old Time Dance. NO CONTEST. Glenn Keller 816-738-4490
- May 20, St. Charles, St. Charles Co., Kister Park on South Main Street, 4:00PM, 100 1st prize, 3 places, \$6.00 entry fee. Joel H. Watkins 314-231-7847

June

- June 8, Warsaw, Benton, Co., Warsaw Jubilee Days, Warsaw Community Building, 7:30PM \$500 prize money, E.L. 'Bill' Wherry 816-438-6840
- June 30, Lee's Summit, Jackson Co., Cole Younger Festival, Lee McKeighan Park, Chipman & North Douglas Rd. (parking *only* at West. Electric Co, Hwy 50 & Chipman Road, shuttle provided) 8:00PM 5 prizes, \$125 1st prize Nellie Shaw 816-483-0825

July

- July 1, Hannibal, Marion Co., National Tom Sawyer Days, Central Park, 5th & Broadway, 4:00PM \$800 total prizes, Al Cooley 314-221-2550
- July 4, Perry, Ralls Co., Old Fiddlers Contest, Perry City Park 3:00PM \$100 cash prizes and trophies Alice Ann O'Haver 314-565-3260
- July 7, Bolivar, Polk Co., Annual Country Days Fiddlers Contest, Bolivar Town Square, 7:00PM \$275 total prizes Gretchen Pulley 417-326-5257
- July 8, Tebbetts, Callaway Co., Tebbetts Picnic Contest, 5:30PM \$200 total prize money Polly Burre 314-295-4591
- July 14, Paris, Monroe Co., Mark Twain Old Threshers Fairgrounds, 5:30PM, 7 places. Charles T. Robinson 816-327-4419
- July 15, Union, Franklin Co., Franklin Co. Youth Fair, Fairgrounds Beer Garden 1:00PM \$250 total prizes, 4 places, Ewald Strubberg 314-583-2290
- June 16, Columbia, Boone Co., Hickman High Auditorium, Heart of Missouri Senior Olympics and Festival, 2:00PM, contestants must be 55 years of age or older to compete, trophies and ribbons for winners. Cookie Hagan 314-874-7473
- July 17, Ava, Douglas Co., Fiddle Contest, Douglas Co. Fairground, 7:30PM 1st place \$75, 3 places LaVelle Clinkingbeard 417-683-2592

- July 19, Chillicothe, Livingston Co. Bluegrass Fest, McCullough Park Campground 7:00PM \$100 1st prize, trophies Don McCullough 816-646-2795
- July 20, Lewiston, Lewis Co. Old Fiddlers Contest, Lewis Co. Fairgrounds, 1 mi. east of Lewiston on Hwy. 16 8:00PM \$250 total prizes Chester Gaus 314-494-3460
- July 21, Eldorado Springs, Cedar Co., Fiddle Contest, City Park 1:30PM \$150 total prizes & 1st place trophy Linda Roseman 417-876-4154
- July 26, Forsyth, Taney Co. Taney County Fair, Shadow Rock Park 7:00PM \$185 total prizes and 4 trophies Jim McKillip 417-546-5046

August

- August 4, Columbia, Boone Co., Boone County Fairgrounds, 8:00PM, \$100 1st prize, 7 places. Glenn Whitesides 314-442-5503
- August 4, Smithville, Clay Co., Smithville Lake Fest, Courtyard, 6:00PM, cash prizes. Bum Williams 816-873-2120
- August 4, Odessa, Lafayette Co., Puddle Jumper Days, downtown Odessa 7:00PM \$325 total prizes, 7 places Mrs. Merle Douthit 816-633-6877
- August 4, Callao, Macon Co. Callao Harvest Festival 6:00PM \$100 1st prize, 4 places, Barry Ford 816-768-5448
- August 5, Washington, Franklin Co., Washington Town & Country Fair Registration at 3:00PM \$300 & trophy for 1st place, 8 places Lynne Thomure 314-239-2715
- August 5, Monroe City, Monroe Co., Monroe City Fall Festival Lion's Club Pavilion 8:00 PM \$100 1st place, 10 places Bob Carson 314-735-4244
- August 9, Fulton, Callaway Co. Callaway County Fair Callaway County Fairgrounds 7:30PM \$300 total prizes and trophies Polly Burre 314-295-4591
- August 11, Sullivan, Franklin Co., General Harney Mansion Grounds, 5:30PM, \$50 1st prize, 5 places. Dorothy Gleason 314-468-6160
- August 11, Ramore, Cass Co. Cass County Homecoming Days, Memorial Park, 7:30PM Open Division 5 places, \$75 1st place, Junior Division 3 places, \$25 1st place Nellie Shaw 816-483-0825
- August 17, Montgomery City, Montgomery Co. Montgomery County Old Thresher's Show, Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds 7:00PM 5 places, \$75 1st place Virgil Smith 314-564-2400
- August 25, Sedalia, Pettis Co. Missouri State Fair Fiddling Championship, Fairgrounds (Gate 11, Hwy 65) Registration 12:00 Noon Open Division, \$1,000 cash prizes & plaques Bill Shull 816-747-7101, 429-2260

(cont. on Page 12.)

Tracking down the legendary 'Sheriff'

Some said contacting him would be fruitless
since he was too feeble to play anymore.

By Charlie Walden

My experiences with the fiddle began 10 years ago while I was still attending Hallsville High School. Although I started out playing with folks my own age, I was soon introduced to a fine old-time fiddler, Taylor McBaine of Columbia. Taylor was a true veteran, having played for more than 60 years in his native Boone County.

Besides sharing the skill and tunes he had acquired over a lifetime, my informal education also included the lore and history of fiddling in central Missouri. One name that stood out above all others in Taylor's reminiscences was that of "The Fiddlin' Sheriff," George Morris. George had gained considerable local notoriety from his several years of performing at KFRU-Radio in Columbia.

George had moved from Boone County many years before I began playing. Many of his former acquaintances had lost track of him. Apparently he had moved to the St. Louis area, but no one seemed to know how to reach him. Some said that contacting The Sheriff would be fruitless since he was too feeble to play anymore.

I was quite surprised and excited to meet the then 86 year old Morris in the museum of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis at a fiddler's and thresher's reunion in May of 1980. George was a participant in a workshop on Missouri fiddling. After the program I introduced myself as a fiddler from Hallsville and we hit it off immediately (George had been raised very near Hallsville).

I saw George again in the summer of 1981 at a fiddler's contest in Olivette, Missouri. I was placed in the position of having to judge his playing. He took second in the senior division.

In September of 1981 I visited George for the first time at his home in Afton, Missouri, in south St. Louis County. George was living by himself at the time. Although he was visited frequently by nearby relatives, George was nearly a shut-in. In that session George played for me, permitted an extensive interview, and allowed me to record some 78 rpm home discs which he had cut in Columbia in 1952.

I visited George again in March, 1982. George's health seemed to be considerably declined from the previous fall. He was still more than willing to talk and even played a few pieces.



St. Louis Globe Democrat photo

George Morris accompanied by Charlie Walden at St. Louis Gateway Arch, May 1980.

The "Fiddlin' Sheriff" passed away on May 4, 1983 at age 89. I never got back to see him again before then.

From the two interviews with George, and discussions with N.C. Ficklin (a former member of one of George's KFRU bands) and mid-Missouri fiddlers, Taylor McBaine, Jake Hockemeyer, and Pete McMahan, the use of various public records, and the invaluable assistance of George's nephew, George McCrary, I have pieced together the story of George Morris' life as presented in this article.

Besides having been a remarkable musician and an interesting person, George's life has importance for anyone interested in Missouri fiddling. He is an important example of a fiddler who, with a minimum of formal instruction, gained the skill necessary to play what he called "semi-classics." Through the medium of radio, George disseminated his vast repertoire to all of Mid-Missouri. Many of the "pop" and "book" tunes George played have become a part of the local tradition in Boone and surrounding counties. In a way, such pieces and the techniques employed in playing them are in large part what makes central Missouri fiddling unique.

I hope this article will serve as a proper tribute to one of the most influential Missouri fiddlers of this century.

The Life & Legacy of George Morris

The 'Fiddling Sheriff'

By Charlie Walden

George Wesley Morris was born on June 27, 1893, near the Boone County community of Brown's Station, Missouri. The Morris family lived on what was known as the "old Pigg family farm" a few miles north-east of Columbia. George was the second youngest in a family of seven children, 4 girls and 3 boys. His father was David H. Morris and his mother Dull Cenia. The Morris clan had been in Missouri since before 1846, George's grandfather and grandmother having immigrated to the Show-Me state from Kentucky and Virginia, respectively.

George first started playing the fiddle when he was only seven years old: "I swiped my dad's fiddle out and started fiddlin'. They didn't know I was playin'. Then some of the fellas said (to my dad), 'You oughta hear George play the fiddle.' Boy, I was really cuttin'. I was really sawin' fiddle then."

He started out playing the various hoedowns that were popular locally. His dad and older brother, Ernie, both played and were undoubtedly among his earliest influences. With his younger brother, Dave, George would ride horseback to play for dances in the area. Dave would accompany him on the banjo or guitar. Later, Dave became a competent fiddler himself, particularly on the old breakdowns. The Morris brothers became a most formidable combination at fiddler's contests in later years.

George played in his first fiddler's contest in Columbia

in 1906 when he was thirteen years old. Daniel Boone Jones of Stephens won first, John A. Hill of Hallsville got second, George won third, and Aaron Oliver of Columbia took fourth. "That was my first prize. I believe I got ten dollars. I never saw so much money in my life. Boy, that was spendin' money. A dollar looked like a cart-wheel then. I went out and bought some new boots."

George described Aaron Oliver's fiddling as "tough". He remembered Daniel Boone Jones "played a good fiddle and he (was) a very popular man. And I remember the tune he played was 'Marmaduke's Hornpipe' which later became a very famous tune, 'Marmaduke'."

His acquaintance with John A. Hill, the second place winner, marked a turning point in his musical career. Hill

was "only the best fiddler I ever heard." George recalled, "I haven't heard anyone could even pack his bow." George was seventeen when he began to study intensively with John Hill.

George described his experiences with Hill:

I'd go back and forth, stay two or three days or a week with him and we'd fiddle and talk. But he was so much better than me that I wouldn't pick up the fiddle around him. That's how good Mr. Hill was.

... he was teaching me to play the fiddle. I sent to Carl Fisher for an instruction book, but I played the fiddle by ear until I was seventeen.

... he was a great big man, oh, I guess about six-foot tall. He said a man ought to be six-foot tall to keep his butt up out of the snow.

... he was an old time fiddler and he could play modern music if he wanted, too. He played all the standard waltzes and what-have-you."

John A. Hill, 59 at the time he began teaching George, lived and farmed north of Hallsville about halfway to Sturgeon. He was born in Ohio in 1851. He lived for a time in Iowa, and moved to Missouri sometime in the 1890s. His name appears in the Missouri census no earlier than 1900.



KFRU Rural Ramblers
circa 1935 (left to right)
Gordon Goodwin,
George Morris, Lou
Martin, Bill Edmonds,
and N.C. Ficklin.

Courtesy Spencer Galloway

“The papers called me
“Gentleman George.”
Boy, I was a long way
from a gentleman.”

R.P. Christeson of Auxvasse, author of *The Old-Time Fiddler's Repertory* (University of Missouri Press, 1973) believes Hill was the school violin teacher in Hallsville. Taylor McBaine indicated that Hill was often referred to as “Doc Hill” and he believes Hill was a highly educated man.

There is little doubt that Hill could read music. Much of George Morris' repertoire, particularly the many hornpipes he played, were learned from Hill as he played from Ryan's *Mammoth Collection*. (Elias Howe, Boston, 1883).

In spite of their productive master-apprentice relationship, Morris and Hill had a parting of the ways while George was still a young man: “There's something more I should tell you about Mr. John A. Hill ... they had a contest in Hallsville, and I was unfortunate enough to beat him ... he was never friendly to me anymore, so that ended our friendship. I guess (that was) the worst thing that happened to me, 'cause I couldn't touch old man Hill when it came to playing the fiddle. I was playing 'Marmaduke's Hornpipe' and he was playing 'Money Musk' (a much more technically demanding tune).”

During the 1920s George Morris's reputation grew. He played at WOS radio in Jefferson City on a few occasions. Surprisingly, he is not pictured in a group photo of fiddlers who participated in the WOS Radio 1925 State Championship held at the State Capitol. Although George did not recall playing in this contest, legend has it that he was disqualified after stating over the air the complete and uncensored title to the tune “Rye Straw”. This title contains a reference to canine excrement which no doubt would have offended the sensibilities of the contest promoters and listeners.

Although the details are somewhat fuzzy, it is worth mentioning that George played in a big “national” contest in Joplin, Missouri, sponsored by the Ozark Playground Association in the mid-Twenties. George remembered that it lasted two days and there were 102 fiddlers involved. Apparently, the contest was held to select a fiddler to compete in a state contest to be held at Paris, Missouri later that year.

“My brother, Davy, begged me to come. So he got me

a room at the Connors Hotel, which was a top hotel then. He finally talked me into coming.”

The trip down to Joplin from Boone County was not without incident. George and his companion over-extended themselves and ended up with their Ford car tangled in a barbed-wire fence. A local farmer came along, extricated their vehicle, and sent them on their way.

Upon his arrival, George was confronted by another fiddling champion: “Well, this fella come to me, ... I was playin' around a music store, and they had a good piano player. He come to me and we talked. He says, ‘I hear you already got it won.’ That's the way it goes, isn't it. I said, ‘I tell you.’ That's the words I said to him. I was a young man then, I says, ‘I'm sure in hell goin' to try to win it!’ ”

This outspoken rival fiddler was none other than Thomas Jasper Massie of Nevada, Missouri, the winner of the 1925 State Championship held at Jefferson City and broadcast over WOS Radio.

I went and got him a room and we played up there and he says, “There ain't no use for me to play in this contest.” He was as feeble as I am (now) and he said, “I believe I'll go back to Nevada.”

It's (the contest) held in a great big building. Well, I went over there and they says it's going to be decided by applause. Hell, I didn't want to go there. So my brother's wife and another fella from Columbia happened to be there and they talked me into going. Well, this old man (Massie) couldn't hardly hold up his fiddle and darned if they didn't tear the house down for him and me, too. The man (running the contest) came and said, “George, I don't know if it would be fair to say who won or who didn't. I can't send him (to Paris), he can't play the fiddle.” So we just kept trying. Finally, I went to Paris.

I won first prize and fiddlin' Sam Long was there, also. I believe he had played in that there contest at Jeff City. He was a fiddler from Oklahoma. After the contest, a booking agent booked us in at the Electric Theater. We was there three days and three nights. Then I signed a contract with the Gennett Recording Company to make some records. Sam Long made some, but I never took the time.

In the papers down there I was called “Gentleman George”. Boy, I was a long way from a gentleman though. Well, boys will be boys, I guess.

In addition to all this contest playing, George was in demand as a dance fiddler. His band included Roy Ethington on piano, and N.C. Ficklin on guitar. Often, a saxophone or other wind instrument would be included



Courtesy George McCrory

George Morris's father, David H. Morris, a fiddler himself and undoubtedly one of George's earliest influences.

cluding KMBC, Kansas City; WHO, Des Moines and KXOK, St. Louis. He did most of his playing at KFRU in Columbia.

KFRU began operation at Stephens College in the late 20s but soon came under private ownership. George Morris was among the early performers at KFRU. He played there from as early as 1933. His first radio group was dubbed the "Blue Goose String Band." To begin each program one of the band members would make a sound like a goose. The name was shortly changed to "Rural Ramblers," however.

Ficklin, now retired from the University of Missouri-Columbia and living in Arkansas, got his start playing guitar and singing at KFRU. He eventually wound up playing bass and rhythm guitar for the Rural Ramblers both over the air and at dances. Everyone in the group had a radio name. George Morris was the "Fiddlin' Sheriff," Ficklin was "Cornfield Canary," Lou Martin was "Granpappy," Gordon Goodwin was "Snuffy Smith," and the announcer was Bill Edmonds. Also, an accordion player, Dan Foster, often sat in with the group.

Ficklin remembers his experiences at KFRU well and those involving George, in particular:

I made my first dollar singing songs for Central Dairy with Roger Whitesides. Somebody else would do the advertising and the talking. They'd say, 'Here's N.C. Ficklin and Roger Whitesides gonna sing one.' It was in a room with all the equipment and everything else. They didn't have any studio. You just sat in there with the announcer in front of a big microphone.

George was considerably older than everybody else down there (at KFRU) that played with him. He'd come on in the morning. Sometimes he'd get there on time, sometimes he wouldn't. Most of the time

he would if he was playing the early morning program. Old George would come in, his old coon dogs out in the car and his old stinking, smelly clothes on. Nobody saw it, of course. He'd been out coon huntin' all night with the old coon hounds. That car was a dog kennel. He'd do that two or three times a week. Fiddlin' and coon huntin' was all he lived for.

There is no doubt that George had a passion for coon hunting. His two dogs, Red and Rowdy, were locally famous and he was very proud of them. At 88 years old George remarked:

"What a fine pair of dogs. They became better known than I was. I've had some other fine dogs. 'Course, coon dogs, and huntin' and fiddlin' have been my life. Every time I wasn't fiddlin' somewhere, I was coon huntin'." I

along with a bass fiddle. For most of the dance jobs, the group would perform popular songs as well as traditional melodies. A favorite gathering spot was at Midway, Missouri, just west of Columbia. At one time there were numerous roadhouses and dance halls in this tiny community and many local fiddlers (George Morris among them) played in these establishments.

George Morris was perhaps best known as a radio performer. In the 1930s and early 1940s, a "circuit" of radio stations existed which featured many fine fiddle players. George played at numerous stations during this era in-

still try to fiddle, but my coon huntin' days are over."

George's coon hunting was featured in a *Columbia Missourian* front page article February 10, 1939:

Fiddles All Day, Hunts Coons All Night. George Morris, KFRU Entertainer Makes Big Catch.

The only thing George Morris likes better than playing the fiddle is coon huntin', and he likes that better than sleep. At least, his friends say the "Sheriff" fiddles all day and hunts coons all night, but no one knows when he sleeps. Morris is no ordinary sheriff, but KFRU's famed "Fiddlin' Sheriff."

The Sheriff's ardor for this sport has brought him good results. His latest coup, "Old Peg Leg," big, fat, and weighing twenty pounds, was the largest coon to come to town this year. The Sheriff says he's forgotten all about the other eighteen coons he got this year since the thrill of bagging this one. He so named the coon because part of one leg was gone as well as an ear — probably lost in a trap or fight he figures.

He's mighty proud of his two dogs, Red and Rowdy, and justly too, for they are a beautiful pair of coon hounds. He couldn't be more proud of a Stradivarius fiddle if he owned one.

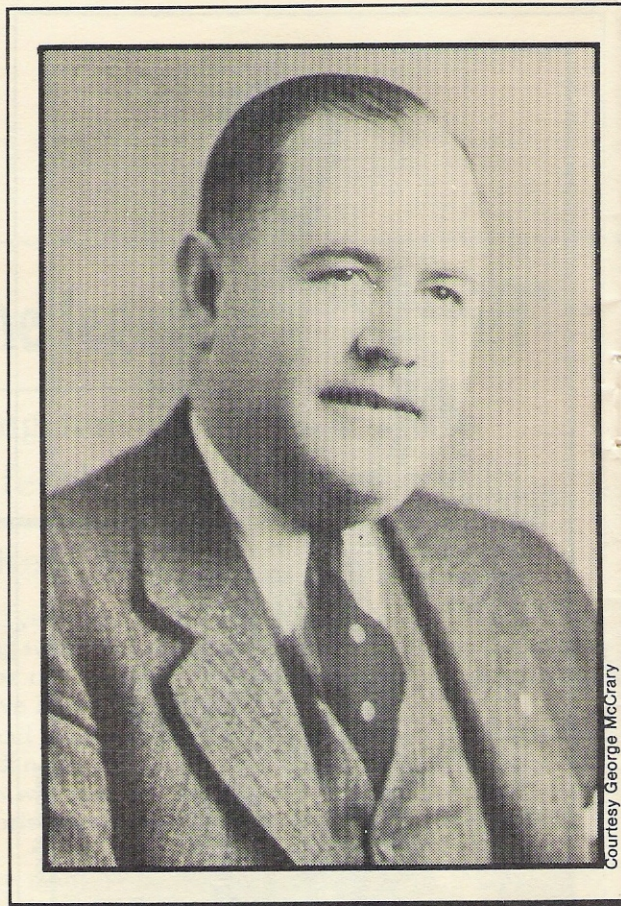
Since the Sheriff has to be on the air at 6 o'clock in the morning, and the show must go on, he usually quits hunting around 3 o'clock. Sometimes by prearrangement Jimmy Campbell, KFRU announcer, will do his fiddlin' for him. Campbell is a coon hunting enthusiast, too, and often accompanies Morris.

Once one of the Sheriff's dogs was running a track when suddenly his master realized it was time for him to get back to his program. But the dog wouldn't leave the track in spite of his calling and whistling. Morris left, went on the air at 6 o'clock, and then came back at 9:30. After a while he found the dog sitting under a tree. The coon was in it.

It cannot be determined when George retired from performing at KFRU. However, he continued to play in fiddlers contests in and around Columbia with his brother Dave. The Morris brothers were tough competition at any fiddlers contest.

Ficklin recalled: "George played hornpipes like nobody could. Always in B flat. I will never forget one time we were playing 'round at a fiddler's contest and somebody made the remark, 'If George doesn't win, it's crooked!' At that time, George was the best. George always won every contest there was. Nobody could touch George."

10 MSOTFA Contest Calendar, 1984



Courtesy George McCrary

Concerning Dave Morris, Taylor McBaine commented: "He set down an awful heavy type of beat. He'd play 'Dusty Miller' and 'Sally Goodin' and tunes like that. Neither him or George played those hornpipes in the contest. Judges didn't like 'em. Just old, old fiddle tunes."

An undated newspaper clipping from the Morris scrapbook describes the action at a typical Boone County fiddlers contest, circa 1950:

Brothers Win First and Second Prize in Caldwell's Fiddling Contest.

Two brothers won first and second prizes as nine men played for the title of "grand champion fiddler" last night in the Jefferson Junior High School auditorium. About 300 persons, including the crippled children from Noyes Hospital, listened to the contest sponsored by Luther Caldwell, one-armed fiddler.

'George played hornpipes
like nobody could.
I will never forget one time...
somebody made the remark
'If George doesn't win,
it's crooked!'"...Nobody
could touch George.'

George Morris circa 1939.

Five prizes were awarded. Dave Morris, St. Louis, won the \$50 first prize. His brother, George Morris, Hallsville, won \$35 as second, and a Columbian, Pete McMahan, won a \$15 third prize. Fourth and fifth prizes, merchandise contributed by Columbia merchants, were won by George McCleary (McCrary), St. Louis, a cousin (nephew) of the Morrises, and Charles Cook, Columbia.

The program opened with a show by the Melody Ramblers and Caldwell, who had announced that they would donate their talent to any program for the benefit of crippled children. Caldwell played "Up the Lazy River," the first piece he learned after receiving the mechanical contrivance which moves the bow.

According to contest rules, each man played one warm-up tune which could be any style. Then they

played a square dance or "hoe down" tune and a waltz, polka, or other old-fashioned tune.

One of the features of the evening was a performance by Jame A. Oliver, 68. He was introduced as the oldest fiddler attending and in response to popular demand played a tune. He told the audience that he played the same violin 51 years ago in a contest in the University Auditorium and won fourth prize. He said, "I love the old time fiddle music. It will live forever."

Judges were Wayne Crane and Clarence Acton, Columbia, and Leon Burkey and J.P. Turner, Hallsville.

Other fiddlers who participated were Nolan Boone, Mexico; Huey Garrison, Clarksburg; Earl Moore, California; and Walter Bone, McDonald County.

George continued to play in fiddlers contests until he was well into his eighties. He recalled that the only people to ever beat him in a fiddling contest were his brother Dave; his nephew, George McCrary; and Jimmy Gilmore of Jefferson City.

Sometime in the early 1950s George moved to Afton, Missouri, in south St. Louis County. He played on a few occasions with Wade Ray, a renowned radio fiddler and singer in the St. Louis area. George complimented Wade Ray's playing, describing it as "wicked." In a phone conversation Ray recalled that he learned many fine hoe-downs from the Sheriff.

George worked for a time at a St. Louis area mental institution and then retired in the late fifties. He spent the rest of his days in St. Louis County. He died at home on May 4, 1983, 89 years and 10 months old.

George Morris has left Missourians a considerable legacy in his personal legends as described above, and also in tunes and techniques. The "Sheriff" is particularly responsible for there being so much popular music in the repertoires of mid-Missouri fiddlers. Around Columbia, tunes such as "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "Kiss Me Again" have become as much a part of the local tradition as the more ancient melodies like "Liberty" and "Soldier's Joy." Also, George Morris can be directly credited for infusing so many of the nineteenth-century hornpipes into the playing of the region. Such tunes as "Thunder Hornpipe," "High Level," and "Liverpool" can be traced from the pages of *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*, to John A. Hill, the mysterious music-reading fiddler from Hallsville, to the Sheriff, out over the KFRU airwaves and eventually into the local fiddle tune tradition of Boone County. This is the legacy of George Morris, the "Fiddlin' Sheriff", perhaps the most influential mid-Missouri fiddler of the 20th Century.

Contests & Events

(cont. from Page 3.)

August 25, Salem, Dent Co., Dent County Fairgrounds, 5:00PM, \$60 1st prize, 5 places. Larry Edwards 314-729-5629

September

September 1, Mokane, Callaway Co. Mokane Lion's Festival 2:00PM \$300 total prizes Jake Hockemeyer 314-676-5895

September 1, Independence, Jackson Co. Santa-Caligon Days Independence Square 7:00PM \$325 total prizes & trophies Donna Watkins 816-252-4745

September 7, Humansville, Polk Co. Humansville Fall Festival Dimmitt Memorial Park 7:00PM \$100 total prizes Earl Ball 417-754-2329

September 9, Marshall, Saline Co. St. Peter's Church 1:30PM (registration at 12:30) 2 divisions: open, 1st place \$100; over 60, 1st place \$100 Mike Dillon 816-886-2107

September 14, California, Moniteau Co. Cal-Mo Arts & Crafts Fair Moniteau Co. Fairgrounds 8:00PM \$300 total prizes, 9 places L.R. Robertson 314-796-2447

September 15, Columbia, Boone Co., Missouri State Old Time Fiddler's Championship and Boone County Folk Fest, Nifong Park, 2:00PM, over \$800 in prizes and trophies. In case of rain contest will be held at Rockbridge Senior High Auditorium at 7:00PM the same day. Cookie Hagan 314-874-7473

October

October 13, Joplin, Jasper Co. North Park Mall Fiddlers Contest 10:00AM \$850 total prizes and trophies Chuck Stearman 816-665-7172

October 14, St. James, Phelps Co. Old Iron Works Days Meramec Spring Park 1:00PM \$525 total prizes, Ford Hughes 314-265-7124

November

November 3, Higbee, Randolph Co. High School Auditorium 6:30PM \$225 total prizes, plus banjo contest Donald Newman 314-456-7658

November 23, 24, 25, Hannibal, Marion Co. Land of Mark Twain Fiddle Championships and Bluegrass Festival, Holiday Inn, Open Division, 10 prizes; Junior Division, 3 prizes; Senior Division, 4 prizes Delbert Spray 314-853-4344

March 1985

March 23, Boonville, Cooper Co. Laura Elliot Speed Junior High 7:30PM \$70 1st prize & trophy, 7 places Clinton McCleary 816-882-5197

12 MSOTFA Contest Calendar, 1984

Address correction requested

P.O. Box 7423

Columbia, Missouri 65205

