

Missouri State Old Time Fiddlers Association

JOURNAL



DANIEL BOONE
JONES

Courtesy Missouri State Historical Society

Fall — 1985

Price: \$2.00

Editorial:

Introducing the Journal, a few changes

Something old, something new.

We are proud to present the first issue of the *Missouri State Old Time Fiddlers Association Journal*. It takes its place in the family of MSOTFA publications alongside the *Contest Calendar* and the *MSOTFA Newsletter*.

The Journal is dedicated to the promotion, preservation and study of traditional Missouri fiddling. Though historical research is the *Journal's* primary focus, we hope also to provide a forum for opinion and commentary relating to fiddling both past and present.

We make no pretense that the *Journal* is a scholarly publication, nor do we desire it to be perceived as such. Rather, we hope that both layman and scholar will find it interesting and informative.

The Journal will be published on an occasional basis

and will be distributed free to all active MSOTFA members. A limited number of additional copies will be available for \$2.00 each.

The introduction of the *Journal* is the final phase of a restructuring of MSOTFA's publication efforts designed to allow for future expansion. You may have noticed the change in the *Contest Calendar* you received last Spring. We hope you found the new streamlined format a readable and handy reference. Historical features and photographs formerly appearing in the *Calendar* are continued in the *Journal*. The In Memoriam column, renamed "Remembrances," also moves to the *Journal*. The *MSOTFA Newsletter* will continue as usual, unaffected by this restructuring.

We invite readers' letters, comments and criticisms.

— S.G.

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The Journal is published by the Missouri State Old Time Fiddlers Association, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion, preservation and study of traditional Missouri fiddling.

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WOS Reunion

(Left) More than 100 musicians participated in the WOS Radio Reunion & Fiddling Championship Oct. 27, 1984, at the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City. The commemoration was sponsored by the Missouri Cultural Heritage Center (UMC) and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources with partial funding by the Missouri Arts Council.

Remembrances

Bud Ravenscraft

Born in Columbia, Mo., Bud Ravenscraft started playing for dances in the area when he was about 16. He was proficient on the fiddle, but in later years he was most active as a guitar accompanist for Jake Hockemeyer and other fiddlers at contests state-wide. Despite illness, he continued attending and enjoying fiddle contests until the last year of his life.



Floyd Wheelbarger

Carroll Countian, Floyd Wheelbarger lived most of his life in the small northwest Missouri hamlet of Tina. Inheriting a love and talent for music from both his mother and father, Floyd received his first fiddle on his sixth birthday. Floyd played at contests and gatherings in the area for many years, and participated in the frequent dances at Tina for many years.



Irwin C. Welch

Known to all his friends as Ted, Irwin C. Welch was a long-time resident of the Palmyra area. His love for fiddling transcended the loss of his noting hand in a hunting accident, and he re-learned to play left handed. A cordial host of many musical gatherings, his enthusiasm was summed up in his response to recent plans for a jam session at his home: "Nothing suits me any better."



Capitol Studios, Jefferson City

The Missouri fiddling scene in the early days of radio continues to emerge from Charlie Walden's on-going research into the events and personalities of that era. This, the third in a loosely related series, focuses on Daniel Boone Jones and the Interstate Championship. Sidebar articles on "Uncle Jimmy" Thompson and Sam Long, two of Jones' most famous competitors, are included to provide historical perspective.

S.G.

There are scant few surprises for the radio listener in the 1980s. Music is controlled by a well developed and sophisticated industry which purports to know what we want better than we do. A tour across the radio dial reveals that broadcast music throughout the nation is, by and large, homogenized.

When the broadcast industry was just getting underway in the 1920s, commercial recordings of suitable quality for airing were virtually nonexistent. Stations had to rely heavily on live entertainment to attract listeners. Much of it was of necessity drawn from the region in which the station was situated. Thus it would not be surprising to hear a wailing saxophone from a station in New York City, Cajun music from New Orleans, and perhaps a few Latin melodies from a Southwestern station.

While listeners to big city frequencies were gyrating to what Henry Ford termed "that infernal jazz," folks in the midwest and south were tapping their toes to lively melodies provided by old-time fiddlers. Programs such as the "WLS Barn Dance" and WSM's "Grand Ole Opry" broadcast the kind of music which was most familiar and pleasing to the rural listener.

Propelled by radio, the popularity of fiddling rose to a pitch approaching a national mania. In early 1926 *Radio Digest* proclaimed in headline type: "GRANDDAD FIDDLERS All the Rage As Colleges Join Movement to Displace Jazz. Everybody's Doing It." Fiddling contests, always popular local entertainment, proliferated on radio during this period reaching vast audiences and conveniently filling lengthy time slots at little expense.

Among the old-time fiddling "super stations" of the day was the Missouri State Marketing Bureau's radiophone WOS. Originating from studios in the dome of the State

DANIEL BOONE JONES

EARLY RADIO FIDDLER

Capitol, the official station of Missouri broadcast fiddling from as early as June 1923 until the demise of the station and the Bureau in the early 1930s.

Literally hundreds of old-time fiddlers and stringbands from throughout the state made the trek to Jefferson City to perform in live broadcasts on "Pioneer and Old-Time Music Night." In addition, the station broadcast numerous fiddling championship and other traditional music competitions.

Several old-time fiddlers at WOS became regular performers and achieved widespread notoriety. Included in these ranks were Bill Caton and Ola Gathright, black old-time fiddler and accompanist from Tebbetts, Vee Latty, champion fiddler from Fulton, and Louie Barton and Tony Gilmore of Jefferson City.

Among the most prominent and well-remembered of the WOS fiddlers was Daniel Boone Jones. Jones, a merchant from Stephens in Boone County, Missouri, won the 1926 Interstate Old-Time Fiddlers Contest at WOS.

The famed "Fiddlin' Sheriff," George Morris recalled going up against Jones in a fiddling contest held at Columbia, Missouri, shortly after the turn of the century. Jones won first, Aaron Oliver of Columbia was second



Missouri Historical Society

By Charlie Walden

and George took third. He remembered Jones "... played a good fiddle and (was) a very popular man. And I remember the tune he played was 'Marmaduke's Hornpipe' which later became a very famous tune."

Jones has been closely associated with this perennially favorite Missouri fiddle piece. Taylor McBaine, well-known fiddler of Columbia, Missouri, remembers Jones and his association with the tune. He has remarked that when he learned the tune as a boy it was actually called "Dan Jones," in the Columbia area.

Interestingly, some fiddlers contend that it was the "Fiddlin' Sheriff" who actually made "Marmaduke's Hornpipe" into a "real tune." This may explain Morris' comment that it "later became a very famous tune."

Much of what we know about Jones' experiences as a radio performer comes from the *Missouri Marketing Bulletin*. This was a free publication of the State Marketing Bureau which was mailed out to farm families all over the state. The monthly publication carried fairly detailed listings of upcoming WOS programs.

What may have been Jones' broadcast debut occurred on Wednesday, August 6, 1924. The listing appeared as follows: "Musical Program of Old-Time Barn Dance Tunes by trio under the direction of D.B. Jones."

Jones is listed again for a program on December 19,

1924, in the *Missouri Clipsheet*, an occasional publication of the State Board of Agriculture which contained newsworthy information sent to papers throughout the state. This time he is featured with the Oliver brothers of Columbia. The same ensemble appears in the *Marketing Bulletin* to perform on WOS on December 26, 1924, as presenting an "Old-time barn dance program of fiddlin' tunes ..." He is also listed on September 26, 1925.

WOS listeners were no doubt quite at home with Mr. Jones' fiddling by the close of 1925. This may have been a factor in his strong finish at the first State Fiddling Championship held at the Capitol on December 31, 1925, and broadcast over WOS. The listeners were the sole judges for the contest and made their choices known to Marketing Bureau officials via telephone, postcard, and telegraph.

After tabulating the 5,500 communications received, T.J. Massie of Nevada, Missouri, was declared the winner, Jones was second and Louie Barton of Jefferson City was third.

The success of the State Championship led to a more adventurous contest which was slated for early April, 1926. It would pit a two-man team from Missouri against like teams from each of the eight adjoining states. Of the many contests aired on WOS, the Interstate Championship would enjoy the most notoriety, drawing such eminent contenders as Uncle Jimmy Thompson and Sam Long. (See related stories, Pages 10-13.)

A contest was held at WOS on February 20, 1926 to determine who would represent the Show-Me state. The *Daily Capitol News* carried the following account of this elimination contest:

Ten of Missouri's Best Fiddlers Compete Over WOS Here Last Night. Thomas Jasper Massie of Nevada, Winner of Former Tournament Unable to Attend; Louie Barton Among the Contestants.

Ten of Missouri's twelve best fiddlers played before the microphone of State Radio Station WOS here last night competing for places on the two-man team to represent Missouri in an interstate tournament to be held early in the spring.

Thomas Jasper Massie of Nevada, winner of the

elimination state tourney broadcast from the station New Year's eve, notified the marketing bureau officials, under whose auspices the contest was held, he was unable to compete.

So a new champion of Missouri will be crowned.

Judge Sturdy, St. Louis, considered a strong contender, also was absent. Both were eligible to compete by their placing in the previous contest.

To the winner, a loving cup symbolic of the state championship will be awarded, and a cash prize also will be presented him. His runner-up, the second man on the Missouri team, also will receive a cup.

Judging will be left to the listeners-in. Telephone calls, telegrams, letters and post cards are the counters. The winner will be announced February 28.

Yesterday the early arrivals serenaded Governor Baker, and other state officials, and transformed the rotunda of the capitol into the scene of a barn dance, witnessed by many state employees.

The interstate contest between Missouri and eight adjoining states will be radiocast from WOS.

The performers were R. Emmett Laughlin, Fulton; Jess Burgess, Stoutland; Louie Barton, Jefferson City; D.B. Jones, Stephens; J.A. Oliver, Columbia; Charles D. Young, Richmond; Edwin and Elliot Thorpe (*Eluet Tharpe*) of Columbia; C.S. Cary, Speed; Charles D. Smith, Chamois; and Wade Williams, Kansas City. (*Daily Capitol News*, Jefferson City, Feb. 20, 1926.)

Despite their optimistic projection, the Bureau did not release the final count of votes until March 5. The report was as follows:

"L. Barton Named On State Fiddling Team. D.B. Jones of Stephens, Mo., Won First Place in the Contest.

D.B. Jones, Stephens, Mo., and Louie Barton, Jefferson City, were yesterday announced as winners of the elimination old fiddlers contest broadcast from State Radio Station WOS, February 19. The elimination contest was held to select two old-time bow wielders to represent Missouri in the interstate contest to be held at the station the night of April 2.

Jones and Barton will constitute the team to defend the fiddlin' honors of Missouri. Two teams from eight other states adjoining Missouri will compete in the interstate contest.

The votes received by the lead five in the elimina-

tion contest, as announced last night by C.P. Anderson, state marketing commissioner and director of the radio station, follow:

D.B. Jones, Stephens, Mo., No. 2, 6,674; Louie Barton, Jefferson City, No. 10, 4,081; C.F. Young, Richmond, Mo., No. 7, 2,051; E.J. Tharpe, Columbia, No. 8, 2,440; Jesse Burgess, Stoutland, Mo., No. 1, 1,909. (*Daily Capitol News*, Jefferson City, March 6, 1926.)

The Interstate Old Fiddlers Contest turned into the biggest event held at WOS. The following pre-contest report appeared on the *Daily Capitol News* front page on April 2, 1926:

Inter-State Fiddlin' Contest Opens on WOS at 8



O'Clock Tonight. Local Residents May Vote For Louie Barton By Depositing 24 Cents At Twelve Branch Offices Established By Western Union.

Everything is ready for the fiddlin' teams from seven states (*sic*) who will invade Missouri tonight in an attempt to carry back to their respective states the midwestern old-time fiddlin' championship.

Missouri's champions selected after two contests, will meet the invaders to defend the honor of "Old Mizzou" over State Radio Station WOS on the night of April 2. The sixteen bow wielders will play old fashioned numbers, starting at 8 o'clock and ending in the wee small hours of Saturday morning.

State marketing bureau officials, who are sponsoring the fiddlin' marathon, anticipate a half-



Photos courtesy Taylor McBaine

The 1925 Missouri Championship brought together several musicians who would play roles in the Interstate Championship and as WOS radio performers as shown by these two details from a photograph taken at the 1925 contest. Above: Ed Tharpe (*standing, upper right*) with his brother Eluet (*standing, with guitar*) participated in the run-off to select Missouri's team, as did Louie Barton (*seated at left*) who advanced to a place on the team. Left photo: Daniel Boone Jones (*upper left*) completed the two-man team. Vee Latty (*seated, lower right*) was a frequent WOS performer and later State Champion. Jimmy Gilmore (*middle row, third from left*) also played at WOS.

million listeners-in, and they expect that about one hundred thousand of these will send telegrams, letters or make long distance calls on the night of the tourney. As an added feature, the marketing bureau expects to give a prize to every person who communicates with the State Radio Station. These prizes have all been donated by Missouri enterprises, and range from baby chicks to a house and forty acres in southeast Missouri.

The southeast Missouri farm, which will be the grand prize, will be given outright to the winner.

The lucky person will be decided by Governor Sam Baker. All communication will be numbered and corresponding numbers placed in a huge box. The state's chief executive will be blindfolded and led into the room containing the box of numbers and asked to select one. The first number picked by the governor gets the capitol prize the officials say.

Marketing bureau heads also expect to decide winners for the other gifts in the same manner, they said.

Each state which has an entry in the tourney is getting squarely behind their champions, asking for a popular vote from the listeners. The winner for the contest will be decided by the invisible audience, each person voting by letter, wire, or phone call.

On account of the fact that Louie Barton, one of the contestants, resides in Jefferson City, the Western Union Telegraph office has established 12 branch offices where parties desiring to vote may deposit 24 cents and do so.

This arrangement has been made in order for the voters in this vicinity to participate in the gifts for this contest. The State Marketing Bureau feels it would be unfair to the contestants outside the state to have local phone calls and in this way it will be fair to all. These telegrams or deposits at the places designated entitle voters to participate in all the gifts.

The time for voting has been extended until 6 o'clock p.m., Monday, April 5. (*Daily Capitol News*, Jefferson City, April 2, 1926.)

With the means of judging clearly outlined to the listeners in both the press and over the air, the contest could commence:

Thousands of Telegrams and Telephone Calls in Old Fiddler's Contest. Inter-State Tourney Was Still in Progress Early This Morning; Governors of Three States Send Messages.

Old-time fiddlin' champions from nine states



Courtesy Missouri State Historical Society

The Interstate Championship contestants from nine states and their accompanists posed on the steps of the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City prior to the WOS broadcast. Famed "Grand Ole Opry" fiddler "Uncle Jimmy" Thompson of Tennessee (*white-bearded man, front row, fourth from right*) was among the favorites. Louie Barton of Jefferson City (*second row, third from right*) was, of course, the hometown choice. But it was his fellow Missourian, Daniel Boone Jones (*third row, third from right*) who won the all-night fiddling marathon with a large out-of-state vote. There was nearly a three-week delay in tabulating the results due to an overwhelming quarter-of-a-million responses to the broadcast.

vied with each other last night at State Radio Station WOS here, for the championship of the Midwest.

Starting at 8 p.m., the bow wielders, who represented Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, launched into a contest which lasted throughout the entire night.

The fiddlers, fifteen in number, came in answer to a challenge issued by Governor Sam A. Baker to meet the Missouri champions — Louie Barton, this city, and Dan B. Jones, Stephens, Mo. — to decide to which state go the middle western fiddlin' honors.

Each state was represented by a two-man team, with the exception of Arkansas, Illinois and Kentucky. Only one of the fiddlers from those states was present.

The winners are to be decided by popular votes, of the listeners-in. Each telegram and long distance phone call is to count as a vote for what ever con-

testant they endorse. Votes can be so received until 5 p.m. today.

After the bow wielding contest had been underway for about an hour last night, more than 4,000 telegrams and phone calls had been received at the station.

At 12 o'clock this morning 5,500 telegrams and messages had been received.

While the frigid winds of the northland played about the dome of Missouri's capitol, there floated out yesterday evening over the ether strains of melodies that were once familiar to old-time denizens of the state. "The Turkey in the Straw," with all its alluring air; "Listen to the Mockingbird," "Echoes of the Ozarks," "Fisher's Hornpipe," and similar elements of the music of our pioneer countrymen, passed forth to the listeners-in at WOS, the state marketing bureau's radio broadcasting station.

Messages from governors of states were wafted over the wires to the head of the Missouri Station, as contestants in an "old fiddlers contest" tore the air with their seductive refrains.

There was a long list of contestants, men and women coming from all ranks of life, but facilitous on their manipulation of the fiddler's strings.

In the list were the following:

Louis Barton of Jefferson City and Dan B. Jones representing Missouri.

D.W. Davis, Des Moines and Eugene Richmond representing Iowa.

H.A. Gish of Rock Creek and W. Workman of Perry, Kansas.

Thomas Fisher of Minatare and Jas. Moore of Seward, Nebraska.

Sam Long and June Martin of Oklahoma.

John C. Calico of Drake's Creek and Bob Steward of Nashville, Arkansas.

Otto Funk of Irvin and E.S. McGoon of Arora, Illinois.

I.W. Jenkins of Repton and J. Mangram of Paducah, Kentucky.

Fulton Mitchell and "Uncle Jimmy" Thompson of Martha, Tennessee.

First tune on the program came from Jenkins,

then Otto Funk, picturesque figure from the Illinois plain, produced rhythm and melody that was almost beyond belief. Thomas Fisher of Nebraska played "Listen to the Mockingbird" in a way which reminded one of the days of long ago.

Then followed the strenuous efforts of the rest of those "good old scouts" who were striving to win a prize by the judicious wielding of the fiddle and the bow.

Meanwhile, the radio world listened in and paid the "old fiddlers" the tribute of their attention.

Some of the messages from the governors follow:

From Governor Trap of Oklahoma: "Entire citizenship of Oklahoma is interested in the outcome of the old fiddlers contest."

From Governor Len Small of Illinois: "I hope people will listen attentively to the program, consider carefully the merits of the contestants; judge impartially as to their excellence and then vote unanimously for our Illinois representative."

From Governor Hammill of Iowa: "I want to

The Grand Ole Man of the 'Opry'

By Spencer Galloway

Uncle Jimmy Thompson, pioneer fiddler of Radio Station WSM's Grand Ole Opry was perhaps the best known of the heavyweight contenders who assembled in Jefferson City to vie for Interstate Championship crown. Certainly, from an historical perspective, he is the most important figure to attend.

Though born in Tennessee, he spent his formative years in Texas returning to farm in his native state around 1912. A Texas influence is unmistakable in his fiddling. Retiring from farming, he and his wife became itinerant performers traveling and living in their Ford truck on which he had fashioned a snug little camp cabin. They performed at fairs and various functions where Uncle Jimmy would fiddle and Aunt Ella would buck dance.

His considerable reputation in Tennessee soon led him to the then infant medium — radio. Uncle Jimmy saw radio as a means to "throw my music out all over the American (sic)." No doubt Missourians caught some of it, and took note.

He first appeared on WSM in November, 1925.

Though he was not the first traditional musician to perform on the Nashville radio station, the 77-year-old fiddler's immediate and immense popularity is generally cited as a major factor in WSM's decision to establish a regular old-time music program in December of the same year. Uncle Jimmy was fast gaining a national reputation.

When the "flivver king" Henry Ford pronounced Melodie Dunham grand champion fiddler, *Radio Digest* ballyhooed the Tennessee champion "who never yet has been defeated in more than one hundred fiddling contests ..." and called for a showdown. The trade journal quoted Uncle Jimmy:

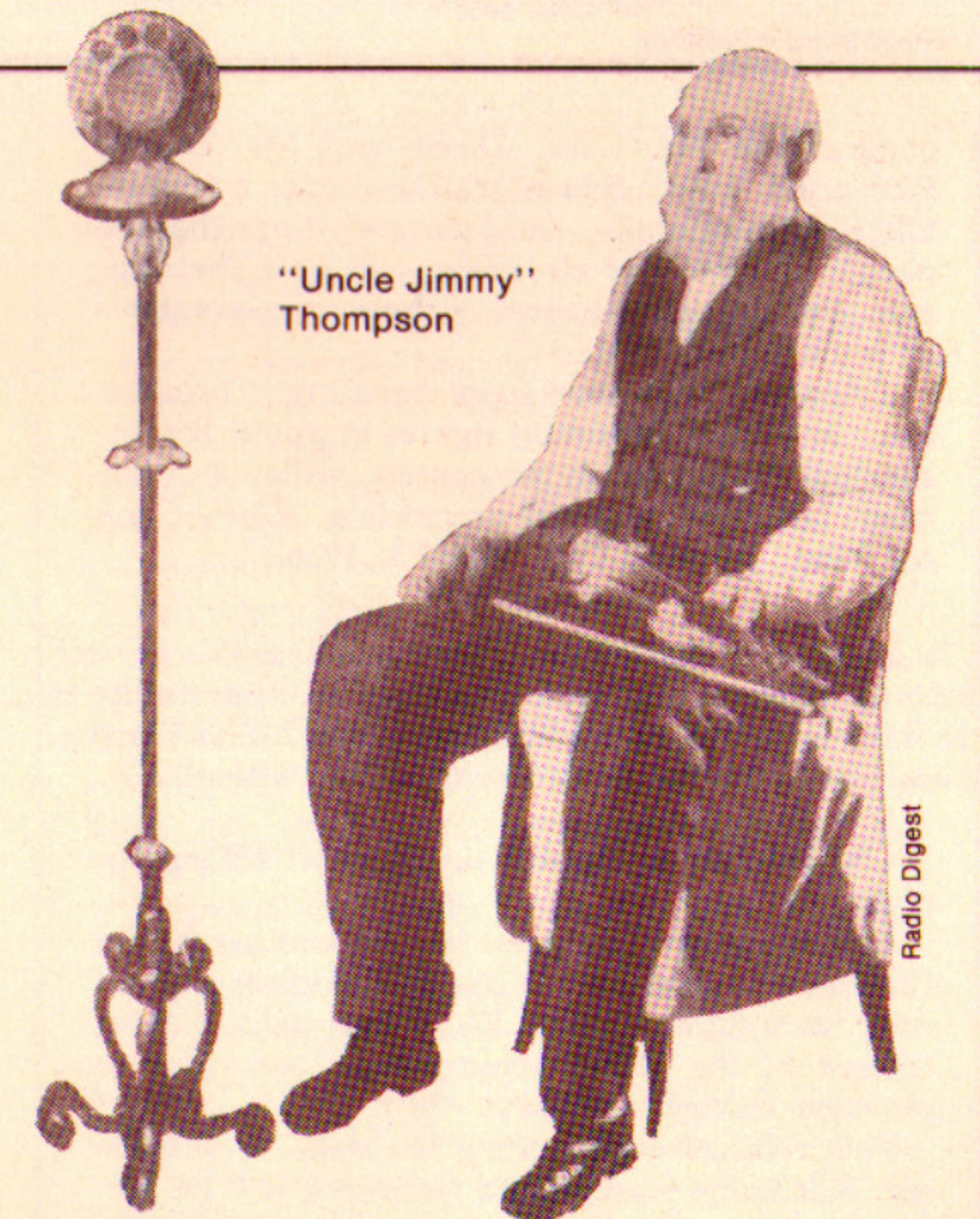
You tell that up-Maine feller that any time he wants to meet a real fiddlin' champeen I'll be listen' to proposals. But it ain't fair for a youngster like him to hope to beat a real ol' timer like me who's been fiddlin' at the dances since he was a baby on his mother's knee. Why, he's only seventy-two. I was plowin' a field 'fore he was born.

But in Louisville on January 20, 1926, Uncle Jimmy

Thompson lost his bid to become "Champion of Dixie" and represent the South at Ford's "World Championship" to be held in Detroit. He was eliminated by another Tennessean, "Uncle Bunt" Stephens, who went on to claim the Detroit title. Ironically, Uncle Jimmy had beaten Uncle Bunt in the Tennessee Championship where Stephens placed third.

As Tennessee champion, Thompson had an opportunity to avenge the Louisville defeat by representing his state in the Interstate Championship. But he was again disappointed. Weather may have been a major factor in Uncle Jimmy's lack of support. Few returns were received from the southeastern United States because of static which prevented clear reception of the broadcast in the seat of Thompson's popularity.

Undaunted, on November, 1, 1926 he entered the third phase of his musical career — that of recording artist — by waxing the first of the six tunes he was to record. Fortunately, this valuable legacy has been preserved and provides a rare glimpse of an historically significant traditional musician whose repertoire was developed well before the turn of the century. (See discography, Page 13.)



"Uncle Jimmy" Thompson

Radio Digest



78 r.p.m.
record label

Courtesy Spencer Galloway

Sam Long: 'Echoes of the Ozarks'

By Spencer Galloway

Sam Long, of Commerce in the Oklahoma Ozarks, was the first of the few traditional Ozark musicians to preserve their music on phonograph records. He made four sides for Gennett Records in 1926. These sold well throughout the Mid-West despite their poor sound quality.

His "Echoes of the Ozarks," a tune melodically similar to the popular song "Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane," is still well known in the region.

The Gennett label owned by the Starr Piano Company of Richmond, Ind., as much as any other recording company, was a pioneer in developing the so-called "hillbilly" or old-time market. But because Sam Long recorded so early, the acoustic rather than the electrical process was used. This produced a rather flat sounding recording compared to the newer process.

The Sam Long sides are not listed in Gennett's "New

Electrobeam" catalog of "Old-Time Tunes," published in January, 1928, suggesting that Gennett phased out its earlier acoustic masters when it converted to the superior electrical process. But all four sides reappeared on Challenge, an associated label pressed for Sears, Roebuck & Company and sold through its mail-order catalog.

These issues kept the original tune titles but used pseudonyms for the artist credits. Thus, Sam Long became "Fiddlin' Dave Neal." (See left.) At least two of the Challenge sides went into a second pressing indicating that they enjoyed some popularity.

An old trade journal alleges that Gennett talent scouts first noticed Sam Long and signed him to a contract after he had won a big contest in Missouri. However, George Morris, the celebrated "Fiddlin' Sheriff" of station KFRU, Columbia, who was a rival of Long in a contest held at Joplin in the mid-1920s, provided a

slightly different version of the occurrence:

I won first prize and Fiddlin' Sam Long was there, also. I believe he played in that there contest at Jeff City (*Interstate Championship*) ... After the contest, a booking agent booked us in at the Electrical 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.

It is interesting to ponder the possibility that other area musicians of the period received recording offers and like George Morris "never took the time" to make the nearly 1,000-mile round trip to Richmond, Indiana. But Sam Long took the time and his "Echoes" still reverberate. Two of his tunes have been reissued and are currently available. (See discography, below.)

congratulate Mr. D.W. Davis and Mr. Eugene Richmond, Iowa's representatives in the Interstate Old Fiddler's Contest, and I sincerely hope that the people of Iowa and elsewhere will vote their approval of the performances of these representatives of Iowa in their contest."

Telegrams were read from Senators, Congressmen, and other important figures in public life, indicating the interest in the contest, which at a late hour, last night, was still proceeding. (*Daily Capitol News*, Jefferson City, April 3, 1926.)

In addition to hearing the contestants over the air, residents of Jefferson City were also given an opportunity to see them in person at the Jefferson City's Miller Theatre. Jones was either not invited or unable to attend.

Old Fiddlers to Appear on Stage at Miller Tonight.

Something new, a chance to hear and see the old fiddlers who took part in the Old Fiddlers Contest over State Radio Station WOS last night is being offered by the Miller management, according to manager Barney Dubinsky.

Four fiddlers, representing the states of Tennessee, Kentucky, Kansas and Nebraska will be presented as an added attraction to the already big Miller Theatre program. They will appear between

the regular first and second shows tonight.

The contestants will be J.U. Jenkins, Repton, Kentucky; William L. Holloway, Marysville, Kansas; Fulton Mitchell, Nashville, Tennessee and Ed Moore, Schuyler, Nebraska.

These four men will present old-time tunes fiddled as only champions in their states can play. They are each excellent bow wielders, and their numbers will be some of the most popular old-time songs and dance hits, spiced with a few modern tunes.

Cash prizes will be awarded the old fiddlers in their contest here, and winners will be judged by the audience. (*Daily Capitol News*, Jefferson City, April 3, 1926.)

The Jefferson City papers continued to encourage local residents to vote for Louie Barton into Sunday, April 4. The voting was officially closed on April 5, at 6:00 p.m.

This somewhat premature announcement appeared on April 9:

Fiddling Champions to be Named Tonight. Announcement of Winners in Inter-State to be Made Over WOS.

Winners of the inter-state fiddlin' contest are to be named from Radio Station WOS tonight. C.P.

Anderson, state marketing bureau commissioner, announced yesterday. It is estimated that it will take until late Friday to count all the votes and ascertain the number each contestant received.

At six o'clock Monday night, when the time limit for voting had expired, more than 40,000 telegrams and 7,000 telephone calls had been received, each casting ballots in the bow wielding tourney.

Officials of the local telegraph office estimated that messages were being taken Monday afternoon at the rate of 115 an hour. This, they said was virtually a record in this division for handling telegrams.

At one point where voting was heaviest, Miami, Oklahoma, 500 telegrams were filed at one time, according to the officials handling the returns.

The directors of the affair were pleased with the results obtained but were disappointed in the condition of the air. According to Commissioner Anderson, very few returns came in from states in the southwestern portion of the country, due to weather conditions.

The northwest and especially Canada, turned in a large number of telegrams, he said.

Many messages were received Tuesday morning, although they had been filed prior to six o'clock, as the conditions specified. (*Daily Capitol News*, Jefferson City, April 9, 1926.)

Discography

"Uncle Jimmy" Thompson (*with accompaniment by Eva Thompson Jones*):

"Nashville — The Early String Bands," Vol. 2, County Records, No. 542.

Karo (Flop-eared Mule)

Billy Wilson

"Grand Ole Opry Past and Present," Hilltop Records 6022.

Lynchburg

Early Opry Reel

Flying Clouds

Leather Britches

"Grand Ole Opry," Sears 114.

(Same titles as above).

Sam Long (*with guitar accompaniment by Ray Kastner*):

"Echoes of the Ozarks," Vol. 3, County Records, No. 520.

Echoes of the Ozarks

Seneca Square Dance

Source: Country Music Recorded Prior to 1943: A Discography of LP Reissues, John Edwards Memorial Foundation Special Series, No. 14, compiled by Willie Smyth.

The next night the newspapers announced that the results would apparently not be ready until the following week. Finally, on April 20 the results were released:

Boone County Old-Time Fiddler is Contest Winner. Daniel Boone Jones of Stephens, Mo., won Inter-State Contest Over WOS.

Daniel Boone Jones, Stephens, Mo., won the championship old-time fiddlin' contest of the mid-lewestern states staged here at State Radio Station WOS on the night of April 2, it was announced yesterday by C.P. Anderson, state marketing commissioner and director of the station.

The number of votes for Jones and the other candidates was not given out.

"The task of compiling the votes in the Inter-state old fiddlers contest over WOS April 2, has been completed," the announcement said, "and Daniel Boone Jones of Stephens, Mo., won by a large majority. Outside of the nine states competing, Mr. Jones received a very large vote. Many votes were cast for him from as far as the New England States and also far south. A great many votes were cast by the states adjoining Missouri, but not so many as were expected for the reason that the static was very bad the night of the contest. Thousands of letters have been received by the state marketing bureau. About ninety percent of these state they could not get WOS on account of static."

Votes for the various contestants in the tourney were cast by listeners-in by telegrams, long distance telephone calls and letters. Approximately 250,000 communications were received, it was said. (*Daily Capitol News*, Jefferson City, April 20, 1926.)

As might be expected, Jones' victory in the Inter-State Old Fiddler's Contest made him a hot property for WOS. Although a gap of several months in the available issues of the *Missouri Marketing Bulletin* exists between late 1925 up until May 1927, from May of '27 Jones was a regular performer at WOS. He appeared at least monthly over WOS, proudly touted as "Inter-State Old Fiddling Champion." His accompanist for these broadcasts was pianist Pete Schell, owner of Schell Music Company in Jefferson City.

In an effort which was no doubt intended to further fan the flames of the inter-state champ's popularity, the bureau published a biography of Jones in the September issue of the *Bulletin*. It is reproduced here in its entirety:

Daniel Boone Jones, Inter-State Champion Old-Time Fiddler, was born at LaDue, Henry County, Missouri, March 8, 1880. Moved to Boone County



Courtesy Missouri State Historical Society

where he spent his boyhood days and received his educational training. (He) Entered the mercantile business at Stephens, Missouri, at the age of twenty-three (in 1905), and has been continuously engaged in the same business ever since.

At the age of five years, Mr. Jones manifested an unusual interest in music and played the violin with such ease as to attract unusual interest. At the age of fifteen he took up study of the violin under Professor Frederick Pannell at Columbia, Missouri, where he took lessons for twenty months, during which time he progressed remarkably and soon became the idol of lovers of violin music.

From the beginning Mr. Jones seemed to realize that music was a serious but delightful pursuit and applied himself diligently spending many hours in memorizing many of the old-time tunes rich in melody and harmony. Lead, Kindly Light, Rock of Ages, Old Black Joe, Carry Me Back to Old Virginia, When you and I Were Young, Maggie, Silver Threads Among the Gold, are among the old-time tunes of which he never tires. But his ability is not confined to sacred or old-time tunes. He is equally proficient in hoe-down tunes of pioneer days. Turkey in the Straw, Arkansas Traveler, Fisher's Hornpipe, Leather Breeches, Billy in the Low Ground, and many other old-time tunes.

Mr. Jones is one of the few violinists who experi-

ences real pleasure from his own playing. He frequently appears on the stage in high school entertainments, church benefits and other similar entertainments.

In the Old Fiddler's Contest held by WOS April 2, 1926, in which all of the states adjoining Missouri, namely, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Oklahoma, participated, Mr. Jones won a \$500 prize as champion fiddler, and a beautiful loving cup, to say nothing of 22,000 telegrams, letters and postal cards of merit received by him from radio fans from every state in the Union and from Canada, Old Mexico, and Cuba.

Mr. Jones has been frequently appearing on our programs for the last two years, and has afforded much entertainment to the listeners-in on WOS. (*Missouri Marketing Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 31, Sept. 1, 1927.)

Jones and Schell continued to perform regularly over WOS. They were scheduled for nearly every last Friday night of the month from late 1927 to December 1929. Jones does not appear again until September 1930, after which he only missed a couple of months in the next two years. The bulletin was discontinued in December of 1931, and WOS ceased operation in 1933.

In 1929, Jones performed in the Marketing Bureau's booth at the State Fair in Sedalia. Earlier the same year, Jones had an audience with automobile tycoon, Henry Ford:

D.B. Jones Plays for Henry Ford.

Daniel Boone Jones, 201 Price Avenue, has returned from Detroit, Mich., where he displayed his talent as a fiddler before Henry Ford. Mr. Ford heard him play for a half-hour on Monday and asked him to return the next day. Mr. Jones entertained Mr. Ford for an hour and a half in the private hall of the Ford administration plant. James Shumaker, of Columbia, accompanied Mr. Jones to Detroit and was with him when he gave the program with his fiddle.

Mr. Jones, who has played over KFRU (*Columbia*), WOS, WHO (*Des Moines*), and other radio stations, is a well known fiddler. He says Mr. Ford is interested in old-time music and has a choice collection of instruments. (*Columbia Daily Tribune*, Columbia, MO, Feb. 1, 1929.)

It has not been ascertained how Jones came to be invited to play for Ford. Perhaps he was in Detroit to participate in one of the several national championships sponsored by the industrialist. Or, it could be that Jones' reputation as a fiddler was such that he was invited to appear merely for Mr. Ford's personal enjoyment, a command performance of sorts.

Daniel Boone Jones died a few years later on October 12, 1934 at the age of 54.

Epilogue

It is significant that Daniel Boone Jones and "The Fiddlin' Sheriff" George Morris (featured in the 1984 MSOTFA *Contest Calendar*) shared common geography and musical backgrounds. Both were Boone Countians who are well-remembered primarily for their radio performances.

Jones and Morris each received some degree of violin training in their formative years. Both possessed wide ranging repertoires which included popular as well as traditional tunes.

The degree to which broadcasting executives ever seeking to broaden radio's audience actively encouraged the inclusion of popular music is a subject worthy of further study. But one fact is clear — because of the combined influence of Jones' and Morris' radio performances, 'pop' music of the 1920s is still an important component of the Mid-Missouri fiddle repertoire.

Inter-state Old Fiddlers Contest Friday Night.

Radio Station W. O. S., Jefferson City, Mo., will conduct an inter-state old fiddlers contest on the evening of April 2nd.

D. B. Jones of Stephens, Mo., who was recently declared Missouri's champion old-time fiddler, will represent our State in this contest. He is well-known in New Haven being a brother of Mrs. Oscar Grannemann, and his many friends here are anxious to see him win in this contest.

The winners of this contest will be decided by the "listening-in" public, the voting to be done by telegraph and telephone messages to the radio station.

The following are the rules of the contest:

The music must consist of old time tunes. Every contestant will be allowed one person to accompany him either with guitar, mandolin, banjo or piano. After their arrival the contestants will draw numbers to decide who will play first and so on down the line and will also decide as to how to divide the time. In the last contest each fiddler was allowed to play ten minutes each. However, at this contest they expect to play all night and probably further time will be allowed each one. That will be decided by the contestants upon arrival. The winners of this contest will be decided by listeners-in voting by telegram and long distant calls. Telegrams and telephone messages must be received at this office by 6 o'clock p. m. April 3, 1926.

Courtesy Barry Bergey

An old newspaper clipping, its type slightly askew, provides a few more details about the Interstate Championship. It is interesting that fiddlers were allowed only one accompanist and that the cello, still a common backup instrument in 1926, was not permitted.

Address correction requested

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