



BIRTHPLACE OF COUNTRY MUSIC BLACK HISTORY MONTH RESOURCES

The Birthplace of Country Music (BCM) connects with Black history and culture in a variety of ways based around music and place, specifically Appalachia. The Birthplace of Country Music Museum tells the story of the 1927 Bristol Sessions, including El Watson, the only Black musician to record there, and explores related history such as the early segregation of sound in recording and marketing; the origins of the banjo, an iconic country and bluegrass instrument today; and the collaboration between The Carter Family and Black musician Lesley Riddle. BCM's public programs, educational resources, and blog further highlight the roots and branches of country music, including the rich history of Black music and musicians within the genre, along with the history and culture of Appalachia. And our radio station, Radio Bristol, and annual music festival, Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, share music and stories of Black musicians, past and present.

These resources are relevant to interested learners (adult and youth), teachers and students, museum educators, curators, and families.

BCM BLOG

General

[African American History in a Country Music Museum? Exhibits and Programs Explore the Connections](#)

[A Celebration of Black Contributions in Country Music](#)

Special Exhibit Connections

[The Power of Music: Five Songs for Civil Rights](#) (*For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights*)

[The Great Golden Gathering: African American Living History through School Traditions](#) (*For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights*)

Banjo

[Instrument Interview: The Creole Banjo, the Oldest Existing Banjo](#)

[The Banjo Gathering: Exploring Banjo History and the American Experience](#)





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Lesley Riddle

[In Search of Lesley Riddle](#)

[The Night I Met Lesley Riddle: June 14, 1974](#)

Black Musicians and Music

[Off the Record: Big Mama Thornton and Nina Simone](#)

[Songs of Our Native Daughters: A Note from a Native Daughter](#)

[Pick 5: Black Fiddle Traditions in Early Commercial Country Music](#)

[Instrument Interview: The Bones](#)

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEETS

[The Banjo](#)

[Lesley Riddle](#)

SPEAKER SESSIONS RECORDINGS

* Please note that these videos are of varying quality based on technology used; upcoming Speaker Sessions will be more consistent and higher quality.

[Dr. Bryan Pierce on the National Museum of African American Music, Nashville, TN](#)

[Dr. Kristina Gaddy on the early history of the banjo](#)

[Musician and storyteller Kelle Jolly on ukulele music and Black musicians](#)

[Dr. William Turner and Dr. Ted Olson on Black music and history in Appalachia](#)

[Storyteller Lynette Ford on Appalachian spooky stories](#)

[Charlie Dahan on Black music producer Henry Glover](#)

[Tim Duffy on the work of the Music Maker Relief Foundation and his photography](#)

[William Isom II and Alona Norwood on the work of Black in Appalachia](#)





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LESSON PLAN RESOURCES

Two museum lesson plans connect to Black music history – *The Instruments of the 1927 Bristol Sessions* and *The Artists & Personalities of the 1927 Bristol Sessions*. They can be accessed on [the museum's Education page](#). Two videos go along with the museum's lesson plans: "[Introduction to Banjo](#)" and "[Introduction to Genre.](#)" More lesson plan materials are being added to the BCM website over the next year so keep checking back!

I'VE ENDURED: WOMEN IN OLD-TIME MUSIC WEBSITE

The museum's in-house special exhibit – *I've Endured: Women in Old-Time Music* – was on display March 23–December 31, 2023; it is now transitioning to a traveling exhibit. The [exhibit's robust website](#) includes numerous stories, resources, songs, and videos related to hidden heroines, iconic musicians, progressive leaders, cultural tradition bearers, luthiers, educators, dancers, and more who have impacted the genre, past and present.

RADIO SHOWS

The museum hosts two radio shows on our in-house radio station, Radio Bristol. [Museum Talk](#) is a weekly show where the curatorial team interviews guests from other museums, historic sites, cultural organizations, gardens, and zoos about their work; it airs every Thursday at 12:00pm. *Museum Talk* gives the 4th Thursday of each month over to [Radio Bristol Book Club](#), a partnership with the Bristol Public Library. On this show, museum and library readers discuss books related to Appalachia and music, including interviews with the authors when possible. These shows can be listened to live [online](#) and via the [Radio Bristol app](#); you can also access archived episodes on the show pages. Keep an eye on the museum's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to find out who will be on *Museum Talk* each week, and the *Radio Bristol Book Club* page also has the full book list for the year.

