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A Comparison of Bluegrass Bands: 2013 Bands Versus the 1940s-1960s Bands

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A COMPARISON OF BLUEGRASS BANDS:

2013 BANDS VERSUS THE 1940S-1960S BANDS

A Dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Music
The University of Mississippi

by

Elizabeth Rosanne Butler

November, 2013
ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the bluegrass music genre of 2013 and compared it with bluegrass found in the 1940s and 1960s. To date, only one similar study has been identified. In 1963, L.M. Smith completed a study entitled, *Bluegrass Music and Musicians: An Introductory Study of a Musical Style in Its Cultural Context*. In the conclusion to his study, Smith listed five major characteristics found in the bluegrass genre:

1. “Bluegrass is hillbilly music, played by white Southern musicians for a Southern audience.”
2. “Bluegrass is not dance music and is seldom used for this purpose.”
3. “Bands are made up of 4 to 7 male musicians playing acoustic stringed instruments.”
4. “Instruments function in three well defined roles and each changes roles according to predictable patterns.”
5. “Bluegrass is the only string band style which uses a banjo in a major solo role.”

Subjects for the present survey study were bluegrass bands (N=183) located across the United States. An online survey instrument was emailed to the 2400 bands listed as members of the *bluegrass* association. One hundred eighty-three bands responded to the open-ended and free response questions in the survey instrument. The survey indicated that bluegrass has not changed dramatically over the past fifty years. Participants acknowledged that 65% of bluegrass bands are no longer made up of

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predominantly white males. Fifty percent of the participating bands were located in the South and the rest were located around the rest of the country. Consistent with Smith’s report, 81% of the bands had four to seven musicians. Acoustic string instruments still followed the set predictable patterns established in 1940 with Monroe. The survey indicated that although progressive bands use more electric instruments, 95% still chose the traditional acoustic instruments.

Society has changed dramatically over the past fifty years and has brought some significant changes to bluegrass music along with it.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Bluegrass music is perhaps one of the most misunderstood musical genres of modern America. Accused of being “one of the most racist elements of society,”[^1] bluegrass music is considered to be the product of a “backward and uneducated” people.[^2] Many believe this exotic mountain music is linked to the old country lifestyle of log cabins deep in the woods, moonshiners protecting their stills, feuding families, and community square dances. Steven Price, author of *Old as the Hills: the Story of Bluegrass Music,* described it as “twanging banjos, whining fiddles, and acoustic guitars.”[^3] However one describes it, bluegrass has evolved into a sub-genre of country music that is now heard and appreciated worldwide.

Musicologists define bluegrass as “polyphonic vocal and instrumental music played on certain unamplified instruments, based on music brought from the British Isles to Appalachian

[^1]: Miyake, Mark Y. *The Discourse on Race within the Bluegrass Music Community.* [PhD diss., Indiana University, 2009], p. 7.


regions and refined by additions of Negro and urban music.” Combining elements of “ole-time mountain music, square dance fiddling, blues, gospel, jazz, and popular music, bluegrass allows performers to improvise and take turns playing lead. Its distinctive timing surges slightly ahead of or anticipates the main beat, creating an energized effect. Its vocal range is rather high, and it makes frequent use of close-harmony duets, trios, and quartets.”

Steven Price, author of *Old as the Hills: the Story of Bluegrass Music* (1975), describes bluegrass as “country music’s equivalent of Dixieland jazz; just plain ol’ foot-stompin,’ ear-to-ear grinning, good-time music.”

Bluegrass, along with jazz and the blues, are considered to be the only authentic American music. Originating from cultural influences that occurred only in the United States, it promotes good feelings and old fashioned values about family, home, individualism, hard work, and God. Unlike some contemporary music, bluegrass is not rebellious but supportive and encouraging. According to Bill Malone in *Country Music, U.S.A.*, “bluegrass is a catch-all phrase for any kind of country music, usually acoustic in nature.”

Robert Cantwell, author of *Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound*, calls it an “emblem of our folk tradition, by echoing blues and

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4 Price, S., p. 2.


6 Price, S., p. 5.


A Short History of Bluegrass

In his book, Old as the Hills, Steven Price proposed the idea that Bluegrass music dates back to a time before the founding of America. As America was being colonized during the Baroque Period, string music was a common form of entertainment, both in the royal courts and in the homes. The violin was quickly replacing the folk instruments at social gatherings. It was lightweight, compact, easily transported, and within reach financially. Because lessons were expensive, most violin owners taught themselves to play it in a way that suited them personally. They held the violin slightly in front of the body rather than tucked under the chin, and they handled the bow differently from the court musicians. Colonists brought their fiddles and music with them from Europe for home entertainment and community events. “The fiddle was often the only musical instrument played in many white settlements, and its importance and relevance quickly integrated into early American psyche.”

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10 Cantwell, p. 60.

11 Price, S., p. 6.

Not every colony was impressed with the violin/fiddle. The more religious communities objected to the rowdy fun-loving colonists that played the secular music from Europe and quickly convinced them to move on. These less desirable colonists travelled westward, through the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Cumberland Gap and settled in the hills known as the Appalachian area. This area stretched from New York southward through Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi.13

The Appalachian area is a long range of steep ridges, some 4,000 feet high. The only way through the ridges were gaps produced by the rivers. Even when a new gap was discovered, it was usually blocked on the other side with another ridge.14 The area was generally covered in thick forest-like foliage entanglements between valleys of agriculturally useless soil. Travel into and out of the region was very dangerous and usually took days. The isolation and undesirable land was ideal for the poorer Scotch, Irish, and Welsh settlers.15 Those that could not afford to purchase land hired themselves out as indentured servants and worked on the areas’ immense plantations.16

13 Price, S., p. 6.
15 Price, S., p. 6.
Until the discovery of the Cumberland Gap in 1750, settlers stayed mainly between the Piedmont valleys to the coast. In 1835, President Jackson relocated the local Native Americans into Oklahoma and opened the way for people to move into the new lands. Those settlers with money quickly purchased the rich fertile lands south of the Cumberland Gap in the state now known as Kentucky. Settlers that had finished their indentured servant contracts had no money and could not afford the expensive land, so they were happy to settle in the less desirable mountainous areas.\textsuperscript{17}

Although the settlers were known as a rowdy people, they were an ultra-conservative, religious, family oriented culture, and opposed to change.\textsuperscript{18} The Appalachian people loved social events centered on community and family. They were not interested in tempered concerts which required one to sit and listen quietly.\textsuperscript{19} These country folk enjoyed and encouraged wild dances and rowdy public gatherings. “Out of this grew the necessity for dance music, and old-time string band music was born.”\textsuperscript{20} As new settlers came into the area, they introduced new dimensions of rhythm, new string band motifs, and new fiddle-playing techniques which were added to the existing country music and resulted in a new form of music that was not heard elsewhere.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{17} McClatchy, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{18} Price, L., p. 12.

\textsuperscript{19} Price, L., p. 12.

\textsuperscript{20} Price, L., p. 11.

\textsuperscript{21} Price, L. p. 12-13; Price, S., p. 8.
ballads were changed to fit the new lifestyle of the settlers. Because of the isolation, “the music traditions remained untouched from other influences” for years. Traditional music of the Appalachian area “is mostly based upon Anglo-Celtic folk ballads and instrumental dance tunes [that were] almost always sung unaccompanied, and usually by women who were generally responsible for keeping the families’ culture heritages.” Music for these Appalachian settlers served both therapeutically and psychologically. The communities worked extremely hard during the week and then played hard on weekends. “The drudgery of the coal mines, the tedium of a 72-hour work week in the cotton mills, and the relentlessness of housekeeping, coupled with the sheer poverty endured by so many” was taxing on the settlers. They turned to their music to “lend them hope, joy, solace, and even exhilaration, lightening their burden, and spreading happiness along the way.” Everyone in attendance at the event was expected to participate, whether by clapping, singing, playing, or even dancing.

The church was another major influence on traditional Appalachian music. Although racial segregation was strongly encouraged and even enforced due to the issues of slavery, the African-American population and the whites came together through the tent revivals of the Second

22 Price, S., p. 2-3.
23 McClatchy, p. 2.
25 Irwin, intro.
26 Cantwell, p. 74.
Awakening. Due to social standards, each race was duly separated during the services even though both shared the tents. During these revivals, shaped-note singing was used to help introduce non-musicians to reading music so that everyone could sing together on the same pitch. In addition to shaped-note singing, lining out was introduced. Lining out is a method of singing where a leader shouts out the line to be sung and the congregation echoes back what was sung. African-Americans referred to this style as “raising a hymn.” African-American music was a great contributor to Appalachian music. “There were three types of religious music [in this time]: ballads, hymns, and revival spiritual songs.” The spirituals were direct descendents of the African call and response song tradition. The ease of learning the spirituals with the call and response system made them appeal to the revival congregations and helped produce an emotional response desired by the clergy. Many of the spirituals are still used in bluegrass gospel today.

Instrumental music of pre-Civil War Appalachia was a combination of the Anglo-Celtic dance tunes, African rhythms, and available instruments. African slaves brought percussion rhythms to America. The syncopated rhythms were passed aurally into the white community through imitation. Other immigrants from Germany, Ireland, Britain, and Wales brought their folk songs, reels, jigs, ballads, and instruments to the area and over time combined them with the folk music of

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27 Price, L., p. 4.
28 McClatchy, p. 3.
29 McClatchy, p. 3.
the plantation slaves, the medicine show, and the minstrel bands with their banjos, fiddles, tambourines, and “bones,” to produce the rich musical heritage of the Appalachian mountain area.\textsuperscript{30}

“In the 1740s, Neil Gow, a Scottish fiddler, is credited with developing the powerful and rhythmic short bow saw-stroke technique that eventually became the foundation of Appalachian mountain fiddling.”\textsuperscript{31} The Irish brought the drone of their pipes which added a two-string at a time technique. Ragtime added the rocking of the bow to the Appalachian fiddle technique. Appalachian dances changed so that the frequent changing of partners became a tradition. It also kept the fights down at the dances. “By the 1930s, liquor and fighting had ended most southern mountain dances.”\textsuperscript{32}

Appalachian music spread across the country via minstrel shows and travelling vaudeville presentations. The derisive humor and heavy racism of the shows exploited the backward nature of the South and created a misguided public perception that persists today. “The use of the banjo in the minstrel shows became a symbol to newly freed African-American slaves who wanted to distance themselves from the plantation slave stereotype that minstrelsy portrayed. It was this that brought African-American folk musicians to play the banjo less frequently. Thus, the banjo was removed from the African-American folk music narrative and transferred to the white Southern Appalachian heritage.”\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{30} Cantwell, p. 74.

\textsuperscript{31} McClatchy, p. 4

\textsuperscript{32} McClatchy, p. 4

Old-time string music developed in Appalachia primarily as instrumental dance music. With a fairly fast tempo and set form, ole-time string music was made by banjo, fiddle, guitar, and any homemade instrument that could join in. Rarely does it have vocalizations because they would distract from the dance. However vocals do exist in old-time and generally have a rhyming pattern of AABB. Improvisation and displays of virtuosity are limited in ole-time because of the need to stick with a specified dance step.

President Wilson’s draft for World War I brought men together from all over the United States. Music was a common form of entertainment for the soldiers, and by sharing their musical backgrounds, Appalachian music was introduced to others in the country. Radio became an important part of the music culture during World War I. Ole-time country music became a known voice on the radio. New ideas were imitated and new skills developed as a result of radio programs as a result of hearing other groups. The first known recordings of this mountain music was made in 1922 when Erk Robertson the Texas fiddler, and his friend Henry Gilliland, recorded duets of “Arkansas Traveler” and “Turkey in the Straw” for Victor record studios in New York. Robertson later recorded “Sally Goodin” and a couple of other songs by himself. In 1924, Ernest Stoneman and the Dixie Mountaineers recorded “The Sinking of the Titanic” using acoustic guitars, a Jews Harp, and an

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34 Price, L., p. 7.
36 Bernard, p. 23.
37 Bernard, p. 23.
autoharp. As The Victor Talking Machine Company began recording the country music popularity gained even more strength.

   The Depression of the 1930s devastated the string-band recording industry. Poor country people had no money to buy records and relied on the radio for musical entertainment since it was free. Although country music had developed into a style very different from earlier old-time string band, community dances were still very popular for fiddle music. After Prohibition was repealed in 1933, square dances and other country dances moved into the taverns that opened. Most country-style dances remained in these taverns until electricity and the juke box superseded them in the late 1940s.38

   World War II also had an impact on country style music. Country music was being heard around the world over the radio waves. Moving into the big cities to find work, Americans missed the country life they left behind and longed for the old familiar sounds and feelings. They discovered and fell in love with the nostalgic qualities found in the pre-bluegrass songs with their basic country values toward life and its issues. Themes included heartsick love ballads of a long-lost sweetheart, the grey-haired mother and father waiting for the children’s return, comic novelty songs, and gospel songs that assisted memories to run together and make the singer long

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38 Leivers, p. 10.
to return to that world left behind. Even the album covers picture nostalgic themes like isolated mountain cabins or rolling hills and valleys.39

Although bluegrass music “is a direct descendant of the early hillbilly string bands,”40 its history dates back only to the 1940s when Bill Monroe formulated the style and introduced the key repertoire.41 In an interview with Bill Monroe, Doug Benson, a Canadian bluegrass enthusiast, asked what bluegrass music was and what elements went into its composition. Monroe replied, “To start with, I wanted to have a music different from anybody else; I wanted to originate something. I wanted to put all of the ideas that I could come up with that I could hear of different sounds and, of course, I’ve added the old Negro blues to bluegrass. And we have some of the Scotch music in it – the bagpipes – and we also have hymn singing.”42

In an interview with Steve Rathe, published in Pickin,’ in February 1974, Monroe said, “I hear different things in everybody’s music that I like. And if I heard something in your music, and you were a jazz musician and I wanted to save it, I would save it, and you would never know it [came] out of your music. I don’t take nobody’s licks. I originate lick, different ideas, different notes. Then if I come up with something that I want to save, I show it to Kenny Baker or Billy

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42 Ewing, p. 45.
Box, and have them help me remember it. It’s a way that I do music.” Monroe also said, “I knew what I was adding at each step.”

Bluegrass became an instant success because everyone could relate to some part of it. Old favorite songs from the past, traditional ballads, instrumental dance tunes, and even religious songs were presented with new syncopated swinging rhythms, lightning-fast tempos, instrumental virtuosity, showmanship, and blue notes. *Newsweek Magazine*, June 29, 1970, was “the first publication to say without reservation that ‘Bill Monroe is the Father of Bluegrass,” However, Monroe did not create the genre single-handedly. Bluegrass developed along three distinct styles: Bill Monroe’s style, Flatt & Scruggs’ style, and the Stanley Brothers’ style.

Flatt and Scruggs got their start as members of Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys from 1945 to 1948. In 1948 they left the Bluegrass Boys and formed their own group called the Foggy Mountain Boys. After a successful career together, the two men split up in 1969 for business and musical reasons and went on to form their own bands shortly afterward. Flatt and Scruggs are

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43 Ewing, p. 70.
44 Ewing, p. 52.
45 Ewing, p. 53.
best remembered for “The Ballad of Jed Clampett,” theme song for *The Beverly Hillbillies* network television show and “Foggy Mountain Breakdown.”

“Lester Flatt invented the famous bluegrass lick called the ‘Flatt run’” found at the end of many bluegrass pieces. Figure 1 is an example of the Flatt run. Stories tell that Monroe’s music was so fast that Flatt could hardly keep up, so he used his special run at the end of the song to catch up with the band. Soon the run lick became so popular that he used it automatically with most tunes. When the Foggy Mountain Boys broke up, Flatt started another band called Nashville Grass.

![Flatt Run in G](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:G_run_in_G.png#filelinks)

**Figure 1: Flatt Run in G**

Earl Scruggs, known as a banjo prodigy at an early age, developed the definitive three-finger banjo style which replaced the claw-hammer style in bluegrass. Interested

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48 Kingsbury, p. 173.


51 Kingsbury, p. 174.

in progressive styles, he included electric bass, electric guitar, piano, drums, and banjo in the new group formed by his family, the Earl Scruggs Review.\textsuperscript{54}

The Stanley Brothers were important to bluegrass development because they combined “the snappy, quick rhythms” \textsuperscript{55} of Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys with the elements of old-time music. They are remembered for their “unique trio harmony structure”\textsuperscript{56} and for being the first bluegrass band to use a lead guitar in secular numbers.\textsuperscript{57}

Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys

Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys set the standards for bluegrass bands early in the 1940s. Due to electricity not being readily available in many parts of the country, especially rural areas, Monroe chose to use acoustic instruments. Many combinations were experimented with over the first few years, and the group finally chose the fiddle, mandolin, guitar, banjo, and upright bass. For most performances, the band dressed in suits, Stetson hats, ties, and dress black shoes. They gathered around one microphone on stage and moved around each other to allow lead parts to access the microphone as needed. Close harmonies in vocal parts were standard as were very high, almost

\textsuperscript{53} Kingsbury, p. 173.
\textsuperscript{54} Rosenberg, “Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs.” p. 271.
\textsuperscript{55} Kingsbury, p. 502.
\textsuperscript{56} Kingsbury, p. 502.
\textsuperscript{57} Kingsbury, p. 502.
strident solos by Monroe. According to a video recorded interview with Monroe in 1986, the band was constantly changing personnel.\(^{58}\) Members would move on after three or four years with Monroe. Monroe accepted and even encouraged this practice. He was also known to employ women for his group from time to time.

First Generation Bluegrass Bands
1940s-1960s

Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys were held in high esteem by all bluegrass performers in the 1940s. The sound produced by the group was copied by most aspiring groups, as were other aspects of their performances. Like Monroe’s band, most groups were limited to one microphone and the members had to change places on stage to get their chance at the microphone for solos. Stetson hats, suits, ties, and dress shoes were the accepted attire. Facial expressions remained straight and emotionless. The vast majority of bluegrass bands were made up of five men. Many groups were beginning to be a little more relaxed by the late 40s and 50s, trying to be more informal with their performances by telling jokes and making comments on various subjects. Hair styles were short and slicked back.

Known as the Golden Age of Bluegrass,\(^{59}\) this era boasts of many bluegrass greats including Carl Story, the Father of Bluegrass Gospel Music, Ervin Rouse, known for the famous

\(^{58}\) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0igq2oR1Kk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0igq2oR1Kk)

Orange Blossom Special, Jimmy Martin, the King of Bluegrass, the Stanley Brothers, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, and Reno and Smiley, known for Feuding Banjos which was later renamed and became “the hit of the 1972 movie Deliverance.”

With the introduction of Rock & Roll and electrified country in the late 50s, bluegrass lost a multitude of followers. Flatt and Scruggs, the Osborne Brothers, and a few other groups began adding some elements of the new sounds to their music and were able to appeal to a crossover audience. Thanks to their efforts and the efforts of others in this era, bluegrass had a comeback in a folk revival, especially on the college campuses across the country.

Second Generation Bluegrass Bands
Mid 1960s-Mid 1980s

“A major shift in the social focus of bluegrass” occurred in 1965 with the first bluegrass festival. Bands that formed and performed during this era had generally gotten their start by working with the first generation bands at some time. Having grown up under the influence of Rock & Roll and bluegrass, the new generation combined the two into a “new grass” style by incorporating electric instruments, heavy rhythms, and lyric styles that were popular. Lines and phrases from Bebop were also added at times. The bands were becoming more relaxed with their

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performances, and yet still followed many of the standard performance practices started by
Monroe. With electricity more available, each band member had the luxury of having his own
microphone and sometimes even two if needed. Uniforms changed from the formal suit to nice
slacks and shirts to appear relaxed and yet still tasteful. Hairstyles lengthened, however, the
bands kept a clean cut look without ponytails. With the arrival of the feminist movement,
females were beginning to come into the band front, both vocally and instrumentally. However,
the bands remained majority male.

One of the well known bands of this second generation was The Dillard, who appeared
periodically as the Darlings on The Andy Griffith Show. Although they appeared very backward
and rustic on screen, the Dillards were actually very innovative with introducing orchestral
arrangements, drums, and pedal steel guitar to their performances off screen.62 The pedal steel
guitar is a horizontal table style guitar with two necks of ten strings each. The basic sound is made
from the strings vibrating on top of a magnetic board. It has no resonator box but instead has foot
pedals and knee levers that are used to bend the chords to make the distinctive wailing sound it is
known for. The player uses both hands on the strings, one hand plucks the strings while the other
hand slides a metal bar across them.

Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver became known for their famous a cappella gospel arrangements along with their hard driving instrumental work.\textsuperscript{63} John Hartford, who wrote “Gentle on My Mind,” made famous by Glen Campbell, was known for his unorthodox lyrics and rhythms in his arrangements.\textsuperscript{64} Tony Rice was one of the dominant bluegrass guitarists of this era.\textsuperscript{65} Bill Keith, one of the outstanding banjo players, invented the Keith Tuner, “a device that permits rapid, accurate pitch changes while playing.”\textsuperscript{66}

Third Generation Bands
Mid 1980s – 2013

Progressive bluegrass, with all of its substyles, including new grass and jazz grass became more common during the third generation. Many of the popular entertainers of the earlier eras are still performing, while many of the beginning generation are retiring. Those that still perform are holding fast to their established routines on stage. While they may be adding electrified instruments, orchestral backgrounds, new subject matter, new and more complex chord progressions, and more instruments, these professionals are still in the forefront upholding their reputation.

\textsuperscript{63} Kingsbury, p. 292.

\textsuperscript{64} Kingsbury, p. 231.

\textsuperscript{65} Kingsbury, pp. 441-442.

The younger, upcoming bands are more relaxed, dress more informally, and have females in lead positions. Jeans appear to be the uniforms of the day, with cotton shirts or tee-shirts, sometimes not even tucked into the jeans. Hats are not seen much on stage or in jam sessions by the younger bands, but they are still considered a necessity for the older bands. The look and sound of progressive bluegrass is hard to distinguish from country music. According to www.BeanBlossom.com, website of Bill Monroe’s cherished bluegrass campsite, “it is almost entirely different from the original [bluegrass].”

Females are making bluegrass albums and videos for the 2013 market. A few noted female bluegrass performers include Allison Krauss, Rhonda Vincent, Rebecca Frazier, and Della Mae. Some of the first female bluegrass albums were recorded by Dolly Pardon and Patty Lovelace. New leading groups acknowledged by the IBMA association include Daughters of Bluegrass, Windy Hill, IIIrd Tyme Out, Lonesome River Band, Elephant Revival, and Sleep Canyon Rangers. Of course, there are many more upcoming stars not mentioned.

Characteristics of Bluegrass

Bluegrass has two subsystems: one involves solo and group singing and the other involves instrumental only. The performance focus is constantly shifting from individual to group and back. Usually, each member has a turn in the spotlight.

Bluegrass music falls into three categories: secular, sacred, and instrumental. Although variations occur, both vocal and instrumental songs tend to follow the following two-part strophic outline:

1. Instrumental introduction
2. Vocal solo – verse
3. Vocal harmony – refrain
4. Instrumental solo
5. Vocal solo – verse
6. Vocal harmony – refrain
7. Instrumental solo
8. Vocal solo – verse
9. Vocal harmony – refrain
10. Instrumental solo
11. Tag

The instrumental version has individuals come to the front and play a solo in place of the verse with the whole group joining in on the chorus part. Most bluegrass numbers last two and a half to four minutes so that the strophe is repeated between five and ten times. This time limit began when the record industry began cutting recordings. The equipment would only record two and a half minutes per side of the 78 rpm discs being used at that time. Bluegrass recording stars

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68 Smith, Master Theses, p. 48.
accepted the time limit and adapted their repertoire accordingly, even on stage. Since bluegrass musicians imitate what they hear, the tradition has continued through today. There are exceptions to the rule. For example, bluegrass medleys last longer than four minutes.

The singing style of bluegrass clearly shows stylistic links to the 18th Century singing schools of New England. Close two-four part harmonies were derived from the shaped note hymnbooks and passed down through the generations both orally and aurally through the churches. Lining out and call-and-response singing was also picked up from the singing schools and the early tent revivals. All of these singing styles have been adopted into bluegrass style.

Many bluegrass melodies are based on gapped pentatonic scales; however, most melodies are diatonic in nature. The melodic contours are generally an upward arc and rarely go below the tonic pitch except for an occasional fifth or sixth scale tone below. Phrasing is everything in bluegrass, and the singer’s impulse is to concentrate their vocal force on the highest note in the phrase and hold it long enough to give it full and exhaustive expression. Many times the men sing in their falsetto voice and reach as high as the C above middle C.

Noted for the close harmonies, bluegrass songs are built on the triad structure. Two part harmonies consist of the lead singer on the melody and the tenor singing a third above, moving

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70 Smith, Master Theses, p.49.
71 Dries, p. 4.
72 Cantwell, p. 128.
in parallel harmonic lines. When the harmony dictates three parts, a baritone joins in on the missing tone of the triad, usually the fifth of the chord. Quartets add the bass who always sings the tonic. Instead of using vibrato, singers slide from pitch to pitch with a nasal tone which is indicative of the culture. Anticipations and passing tones are also used regularly; however, care is taken to not cross parts.

Bluegrass harmony tends to follow the basic 12-bar blues progression of I, IV, I, V, I. Other progressions commonly used include I, iii, IV, and I, vi, ii, V. It is rare to have more than four basic chords in any piece. Key changes are rare in the songs, but they do occasionally appear in instrumental pieces.

Bluegrass rhythms are basically simple. Basic duple and triple meters are used with the eighth note grouped in two and three as the basic unit. Accents fall on the off-beat regularly. Rhythm is played mainly by the bass and mandolin with other joining in as needed. “Once the rhythm pattern emerges, it tends to retain a steady tempo.” Tempos are moderate to fast with a few slow songs sprinkled in for special moods and situations. Many of the common rhythms used

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76 Smith, An Introduction to Bluegrass, p. 83.
are adopted from Western Swing. Some of the more popular rhythms are shown in Figure 2.

![Western Swing Rhythms](image)

**Figure 2: Five of the more common rhythms used in bluegrass**

One of the most important elements of Monroe’s bluegrass style was the African practice of uncoupling the rhythm and meter into a new beat only to rejoin the original beat through the use of syncopation. This technique was especially important as a means of bringing the rest of the band back together. Solo players were able to maintain their individual identity through their use of improvisation.\(^{78}\) According to one survey respondent, “Bluegrass, ‘real bluegrass,’ is the hardest music in the world to play. It all pertains to timing. Timing must be precise.”\(^{79}\)

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\(^{77}\) Cantwell, p. 83-85.

\(^{78}\) Cantwell, p. 71.

\(^{79}\) Johnson, John, “Pickin’ in 2013” Survey. 28 May 2013.
Subgenres of Bluegrass

Bluegrass music has four major subgenres: Traditional, Progressive, Gospel, and Neo-Traditional. Each subgenre has its own distinct sound depending upon the instruments used and the type of songs performed. Traditional bluegrass bands use acoustical string instruments, sing folk songs, and use traditional chord progressions (I-IV-V). Progressive bluegrass groups use electric instruments and drum set, import their material from other genres, especially Rock & Roll, and sometimes use unusual chord progressions. Gospel bluegrass usually sings gospel music with Christian lyrics and use acoustic string instruments with microphones. A cappella choruses are popular and the three or four part harmonies are somewhat different from traditional choir harmonies. Neo-Traditional bluegrass groups are generally headed by a solo artist with an accompanying band.

A typical performance context for bluegrass falls into one of three styles. The formal concert lineup presents the band in a straight line before the audience. During this type of performance, the soloist moves to the main microphone or somewhere in front of the group until finished with the solo. The band moves back into place as the soloist returns to his own designated spot in the lineup. In most jam sessions, the band stands in a circle so they can hear each other better. In this type performance, audience members usually stand/sit outside the circle. Arrangements for solos are made as the session progresses, but there is usually no centered
microphone for the soloist. Everything happens in the circle. The recording session is a combination of the other two performance setup styles. Since there is no audience, the musicians decide how they wish to stand or sit. Since it is a more specialized music session, the band usually has the music lineup set before beginning. Of course, different venues may require changing the customary context used for concerts.80

Instruments Used in Bluegrass

The string instruments used in bluegrass belong to the folk music family and typically consist of any combination of guitar, double bass, fiddle, banjo, mandolin, and resonator guitar (dobro). A bluegrass band usually includes two rhythm instruments, the guitar and double bass, and several melody instruments, fiddle, banjo, mandolin, guitar, and steel guitar.81 The banjo and fiddle are historically connected to southern music dating back to pre-Civil War times and the blackface minstrels.82 The mandolin, the most modern instrument of the group, dates back to the 1890s, where it shared the home parlors with the zithers, mandolas, and ukuleles, as entertainment for the middle class.83

83 Cantwell, p. 221.
The guitar, brought to America by the Spanish, has the rural connotation of the “Old Wild West” and the singing cowboy. The steel guitar, known as the dobro, was popularized by the touring “Hawaiian” bands after the Spanish-American War.

Acoustic instruments must have microphones to be heard in crowded rooms or outdoors. Electric instruments, though used by some country bands and sometimes by the Progressive and Neo-Traditional Bluegrass groups, are generally not accepted as true bluegrass instruments.

Fiddle

The term “fiddle” is the colloquial term for violin and refers to the way it is played and presented. As mentioned earlier, the fiddle is held in front of the body, rather than being tucked under the chin like the violin. The bow is also handled differently when used with a fiddle style. However, some bluegrass fiddle players have the fiddle tucked under the chin like the violinists. The fiddle was brought to America by the Scottish and Irish immigrants and was used largely for dance music. It is the smallest string instrument of the bluegrass band and usually plays an accompanying part or the lead. Vibrato, although frequently used in orchestral music, is rarely used in bluegrass; however, the fiddle is known for using a fast tremolo for special “bluesy” effects. A tremolo is a very

84 Cantwell, p. 220.
86 Smith, Master Theses, p. 41.
fast movement between the main note and the adjacent note above it, similar to a trill in wind instruments. Long moaning notes are also a special effect played by the fiddle. The fiddler helps keep the rhythm of the band by bouncing the bow across the strings to produce a percussive sound.

Mandolin

The mandolin was made popular by Bill Monroe. Sized between the fiddle and the guitar, the mandolin is perfect for children to play and to be a part of the family band. It has a shallow, metallic, and sometimes toy like sound that generally confines it to the background voices unless asked to take the lead. Its short neck, tiny frets, and double strings give it a technique all of its own. Since the mandolin cannot sustain a tone like the fiddle, it depends on the tremolo for longer tones. The double strings of the mandolin are tuned to produce an undercurrent of overtones when played. Striking or scraping the strings will cause the strings to vibrate openly and the whole instrument will resonate sympathetically to make it louder. The mandolin stresses the upbeats as a background and rhythmic instrument.

Guitar

Bluegrass bands use two types of guitars. The regular six-string guitar and the twelve-string guitar. Being about the same size, they are larger than the mandolin and smaller than the

87 Cantwell, p. 50.

88 Smith, Master Theses, p. 42; Cantwell, p. 49-50.
double bass. Usually the guitar player used a strap to hang the guitar across his neck and shoulder. Acoustic guitars are made of various types of wood and the strings are made of nylon, animal gut, or steel. Most bluegrass bands prefer the steel strings because they get more sound. The tone is produced by vibrating strings and amplified by the hollow body of the guitar which acts as its resonator. The neck is fretted to help the player with the correct notes and/or chords. Guitars are generally picked or strummed with the fingers or a special pick. Pitched between the fiddle and the bass, the guitar is used for rhythm and harmony. It fills in gaps between the phrases and helps establish chord changes. When playing the lead, it generally plays fast eighth notes.  

**Banjo**

The banjo is a rhythmic and melodic force in the bluegrass band. It has five strings, one of which is five frets shorter than the others. The shorter string is fastened to the fingerboard neck at the fifth fret and is tuned higher than the other strings, creating a reentrant style of tuning. This fifth string causes the drone sound on the banjo. An additional device called a capo is used to help with tuning. Slipping over and under the strings, the capo is squeezed to help get correct pressure on the neck to change chords and notes.

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89 Smith, Master Theses, p. 39-40.
The banjo was brought to American plantations from Africa as the banjar. It was originally made of a hollowed calabash or gourd. Later, the hoop of a cheese box was used for the body. The body had a hide or skin stretched across it and was fitted with a long fretless neck holding five strings of vine, gut, silk, or wire. The melancholy sound of this highly percussive stringed instrument made it a popular attraction in the blackface minstrel shows. It took about 300 years for the banjo to transform into the instrument we know as “America’s only indigenous folk instrument.”\textsuperscript{90} The banjo, like the guitar, is hung off the shoulder of the player and played with the fingers. Using the fingernails as picks, the player actually lifts the strings so that they snap and slap the banjo head. This gives the percussive “twang” that only the banjo can produce. The banjo player’s fingers are crooked and move so that they appear to be strumming all of the strings at once. It is interesting to note that banjo manufacturers recommend not using the fingernails as picks; however, that is precisely what bluegrass banjo pickers do.\textsuperscript{91}

Dobro

The dobro is a particular type of resonator guitar that combines the guitar and the steel guitar. Basically, it is an acoustic guitar with an inverted metal bowl attached on top of the resonator box. The strings run across the metal bowl and attach at the top of the neck. The bridge rests upon the metal frame. The metal sits on three shallow cones of aluminum which vibrate

\textsuperscript{90} Cantwell, p. 91-93.

\textsuperscript{91} Cantwell, p. 91-102.
with the strings and produce a loud, sharp tone. The dobro can copy the background beats with the banjo and mandolin, but usually it plays the melody or harmony. It creates tension in the music by adding long glissandos and tremolos. The dobro is picked using the thumb and two fingers, or with picks, much like the banjo.\footnote{Smith, Master Thesis, p. 38, 42-43.}

**Double Bass**

Unlike many popular bands of today, bluegrass still uses the double bass to play the bass chords and rhythms. Playing only the major beats of the measure, the bass player plucks the downbeats unless he does the well-known walking bass part of the “runs” between the chords. Seldom does the bluegrass bassist use a bow. The rhythm is accentuated by slapping the strings against the fingerboard on the upbeats. The strings are tuned in fourths rather than in fifths like the other stringed instruments. The neck is unfretted and there are only four strings. While there is a choice of gut or steel strings, most bluegrass groups prefer the gut strings because they provide a better “thump” sound to help with the rhythm. Also, the instrument sounds an octave below what is notated.\footnote{Smith, Master Thesis, p. 39.}
Purpose and Need for the Study

Acknowledging the fact that music evolves over time, the purpose of this study is to investigate what is happening with the bluegrass genre in 2013. To date very few studies have been made of bluegrass music other than historical and observational. The aim of this study is to discover what is happening today by administering an open-ended electronic survey to bluegrass bands across the United States. Data received from the survey will be analyzed and compared to the list of bluegrass characteristics by Smith in 1963.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter Two: “Review of Literature” will discuss the articles and research studies that are relevant to this project. The vast majority of the articles are about the historical development of string-based music into bluegrass. Some of the articles deal with society’s acceptance of bluegrass traditions. Many of the historical articles have interesting views on the country’s political scene during the time bluegrass was being created.

Chapter Three: “Methods and Procedures” will discuss how the research for this paper was completed. It discusses the pilot study performed in early 2013 and compares the date discovered in the pilot study to the data received in the survey.

Chapter Four: “Study Results” will discuss the data received in the survey. Figures are included for pictorial presentations of the data received. Personal opinions
from several of the survey participants are also shared where appropriate to further aide in an understanding of the world of bluegrass in 2013.

Chapter Five: “Discussion” will further discuss ideas gained from the research project. It will also suggest ideas for future research into the bluegrass field.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bluegrass has been accused of being “one of the most racist elements of society”\textsuperscript{94} and to be the product of a “backward and uneducated” people.\textsuperscript{95} Very little research has been conducted on this fairly young music genre in part due to the bad publicity it has received. The majority of studies found on bluegrass are concentrated on the development of the genre, descriptions of the lyrical content, and the acceptance of the music by society.

Development of Bluegrass

In her honors thesis, \textit{Bluegrass Nation: A Historical and Cultural Analysis of America’s Truest Music}, Leslie Price explains that string-band music is also referred to as ole-time and bluegrass. According to her research, the genre is still considered to be from ‘a backward and uneducated society.’\textsuperscript{96} Many times an entire family made up a bluegrass band, and many times a band spans two or three family generations.

\textsuperscript{94} Miyake, Mark Y. \textit{The Discourse on Race within the Bluegrass Music Community}. [PhD diss., Indiana University, 2009], p.7.

\textsuperscript{95} Price, L., p. 6.

\textsuperscript{96} Price, L., p. 6.
According to Price, string band music developed after the Civil War and bluegrass developed after World War II. “Bluegrass was considered quite progressive during the 1940s,” and has since expanded and developed into many substyles. Bill Monroe was credited with fusing the existing blues style, old-time string style, and country style elements into the new genre called bluegrass. It was an instant hit because its elements appealed to many people.

Price gave a descriptive history of the development and infusion of the string instruments used in bluegrass. An interesting thought from the text was that bands are somewhat territorial about their music. Professional bluegrass bands generally decline playing another band’s songs out of courtesy to the other band. They also try not to play the same old standby songs that everyone else plays. Recreational bluegrass bands are not as strict on this code of conduct and will play almost anything requested. Because bluegrass festivals are known to be family oriented, alcohol and drugs are not condoned on the grounds during a festival. Bluegrass musicians have an understanding among themselves that substance abuse is inappropriate for performances; therefore, they do not partake when “on the job.”

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97 Price, L., p.6.
98 Price, L., p. 22.
99 Price, L. p. 35.
100 Price, L., p. 37.
Price also discussed women’s roles in bluegrass. Although encouraged to participate in
bluegrass bands, women were considered inferior to the male members of the group. Allison
Krauss was mentioned as an example showing that women are now gaining a place in bluegrass.

Kenneth Leivers made a detailed report of the development of fiddling during the
Depression, World War I, and World War II. His article, *A Short History of Fiddling and of the
California State Old-Time Fiddlers’ Association*, began by discussing the popularity of the fiddle
as the USA was being settled. He mentioned several famous people that owned and played the
fiddle, such as Thomas Jefferson, Davy Crockett, Andrew Jackson, and both Lewis and Clark.
Social events such as weddings, husking bees, and barn raisings were cited as a few reasons for
early use of the fiddle. Saturday evening dances at the school house and early fiddling contests
were described in detail.

Leivers mentioned that by the 19th Century, each area of the USA had developed its own
style of fiddling, “the most important variables [being] combinations of bowing patterns or
phrasings, bowing style, occasional special effects and accents, and note rhythms within the bow
strokes.”101 Four styles were found in the southern states alone: “Blue Ridge Style, [which]
follows a line parallel to the east of the Appalachia mountains; Southern Appalachian style, from
West Virginia to Mississippi along the line of the mountain range and west; Ozark Style; and

http://www.csotfa.org/state/A_Short_History_of_California_Fiddling.pdf
Western Style, principally the tradition of Texas and Oklahoma.102 Other styles of fiddling included Cajun style in Louisiana; New England, which blended Irish and Scottish styles; Wisconsin, with its Scandinavian influence; and Pennsylvania with its Dutch-German flavor.103

The introduction of the banjo and guitar into the southern United States took place between 1880 and 1910. Along with the use of the banjo, “the ballads changed lyrically, melodically, and rhythmically into more of a Negroid style.”104 The minstrel shows used this style extensively. With the addition of guitar, the string band was developed. The music changed from mainly dance style into more of an accompaniment for popular and sentimental songs. The guitar took the bass and rhythm elements. Decorative parts came from the banjo and guitar. Chord structure became important rather than linear lines “marking an important departure from traditional old-time fiddling.”105 Aided by the radio and phonograph industries, almost all styles of country music had come into existence by the end of the 1920s.

Leivers discussed the development of country music around the World Wars and during the Depression in detail. Bluegrass development in the 1940s was also covered before the paper changed into the history of fiddling in California.

102 Leivers, p. 4.
103 Leivers, p. 4.
104 Leivers, p. 4.
105 Leivers, p. 4.
In History of Bluegrass: The Segregation of Popular Music in the United States, 1820-1900, Allen Farmelo discussed two very different views of racial segregation in the South before and after the Civil War. He proposed that blacks and whites interacted much more than the history books and society teach. Upper class and middle class whites segregated themselves by class. However, the poorer white class, the ones with no money, lived in the same communities, attended the same parties, worked beside each other, and attended church with the black community. According to the research presented, it was during these interactions that music ideas were exchanged and adopted. Over the years, the new styles developed into country and bluegrass repertoire.¹⁰⁶

In 2009, Mark Miyake studied the effects of race in bluegrass music. In his paper, The Discourse on Race within the Bluegrass Music Community, he stated that “The American popular media often portray bluegrass music as the music of choice for the most racist elements of society, and many Americans assume that bluegrass music is characterized by white supremacy and nationalistic jingoism.”¹⁰⁷ He also proposed that those racist ideas are the reasons behind the lack of research in the bluegrass genre. His historical and ethnographical dissertation


¹⁰⁵ Miyake, Mark Y. The Discourse on Race within the Bluegrass Music Community. [PhD diss., Indiana University, 2009], p.7.
discussed community acceptance of bluegrass music and how the bluegrass community maintained its boundaries and practices within itself.

**Lyrical Content**

Steven Sweet, author of *Bluegrass Music and Its Misguided Representation of Appalachia*, 1996, investigated the lyrics of popular bluegrass and country songs to discover how the words actually portrayed life in Appalachia. He discovered that the song lyrics do not describe life in Appalachia truthfully. The songs upheld the idea that Appalachian life was the best life in the world, family and community were close, and times were good. Truthfully, life in Appalachia was not a happy place to live. Times were tough and the people were poor. Sweet found that 90% of the songs were about life’s problems: loneliness, love affairs, family death, and social situations like drinking parties. The lyrics were negative about city life and generally positive about country life. His survey also showed that the listeners of bluegrass music outside of Appalachia were convinced that life in Appalachia consisted of a backward culture.108

Erica Andrus, *High Lonesome Gospel: The Role of Evangelicalism in Shaping an American Music Culture*, discovered that gospel bluegrass followed a protestant view due to that “being the dominant religion of Appalachia and the Southern United States.”109 The South became protestant oriented during the tent revivals of the late 1800s. The lyrics of bluegrass

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gospel “generally reflected Christ-centered, born-again understanding of religion, drawing on Biblical stories of the Old and New Testaments.” Idealizing family life, gospel lyrics portrayed the love between man and woman as an example of the “ideal love demonstrated by Jesus: that true love is redemptive and unconditional.” Ms. Andrus discussed several songs in depth with the symbolism hidden behind the words.

In his PhD dissertation, *The Modern Origins of an Old-Time Sound: Southern Millhands and Their Hillbilly Music, 1923-1942*, Patrick Huber discussed the historical context of recreation time in the South for the hardworking white citizens during the societal changes taking place around both world wars. He mentioned the fact that the songs produced are a good indication of the duress the people were going through. Although the record companies were quite diligent to censor the lyrics of new songs released, the messages were perfectly clear to the listeners. Hillbilly music “was the product of an emergent urban, industrial South,” rather than just the product of the rural mountain folk in a commercialized setting. This was “the first time in history that the southern white working classes played a central role in directly shaping American popular culture.” Their music “provided an outlet of public, self-expression and

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110 Andrus, p. 7.

111 Andrus, p. 7.


113 Huber, p. 7.
creativity usually denied them on account of their poverty and illiteracy.”\textsuperscript{114} The songs rarely spoke about work, but rather the emotions felt centering around a world being swallowed up by modern technology and industrialization, the alienation felt as they watched hopelessly at the changes taking place, and their responses to this “evolving modern society.”\textsuperscript{115} Huber discusses the musician’s plight at having to work at an extremely hard daytime job with the same hands that were expected to play for audiences at night, and their having to choose between being a worker or musician. An interesting fact was how excited the musicians were to bring in $200 for their performance… gate admission was 25¢ for adults and 15¢ for children. The impact of radios and phonographs on the acceleration process of combining new ideas and styles into one new genre was also discussed.

During this time, “hillbilly musicians stood at the center of a complex musical revolution.”\textsuperscript{116} Huber mentioned the fact that history has stereotyped Southern musicians as being “socially unsophisticated, culturally backward, and hopelessly ignorant.”\textsuperscript{117} He disagreed with that concept and disputed it within his paper.

\textsuperscript{114} Huber, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{115} Huber, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{116} Huber, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{117} Huber, p. 13.
Popularity of Bluegrass

In *Bluegrass Grows All Around: The Spatial Dimensions of A Country Music Style*, George Carney, Oklahoma State University, showed the spread of country music throughout the United States with a series of maps and charts. After a short but thorough explanation and history of country music and bluegrass, Carney displayed a chart showing the location of bluegrass performers. By charting these locations on a map of the USA, Carney showed that the majority of bluegrass bands were in the South, especially Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. A few are shown to be from Texas and Ohio. An interesting chart in his research showed the geographical places named in some of the popular bluegrass songs, such as Kentucky, Ohio, Knoxville, Foggy Mountain, Piney Woods, Clinch Mountain, and so forth. Carney stated that bluegrass “has moved away from its traditional origins”\(^\text{118}\) and is now in almost all of the United States and even outside the states. He cited that most of this was due to the “rapid increase in outdoor festivals held annually since 1965.”\(^\text{119}\) He charted this expansion from 1965 to 1972 on maps of the USA. Other interesting charts and displays included the migration routes of Bill Monroe’s band, the Osborne Brothers, and the Lewis Family in 1972. Carney concluded his report with the statement:


\(^\text{119}\) Carney. p. 40.
“Within the span of approximately thirty-five years, bluegrass music has migrated from the Appalachia South to all sections of the United States.”

Kenneth D. Tunnell of Eastern Kentucky University and Stephen B. Groce of Western Kentucky University studied the social world of semiprofessional bluegrass musicians. They discovered that bluegrass musicians have a tendency “to be more conservative than other musicians [and] indicate strong family values, do not value the consumption of alcohol and other drugs during practice and performance, and have little regard for formal musical instruction.”

In 1996, Donald A. DePoy and the National Endowments for the Arts studied the popularity and stereotypical associations of bluegrass music. His PhD dissertation, Cultural Context of Bluegrass Music: Preference, Familiarity and Stereotype, 1996, involved administering a paper and pencil questionnaire to two groups of undergraduate students, one in Maine and the other in Arizona, to discover how they reacted to bluegrass music. He discovered that the sample population was not impressed with the lyrics of the music and that many displayed negative feelings about its sound. These students had been exposed to all forms of popular music other than bluegrass including Rock & Roll, country, hip hop, and others. In 2004, Robert O. Gardner, wrote his dissertation, “Welcome Home:” Performing Place, Community, and Identity in the New West Bluegrass Music Revival,” in which he discussed how bluegrass

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120 Carney, p. 54.
festivals help bluegrass fans escape from the reality of their problems long enough to get a new perspective on life, enabling them to return home refreshed and ready to face their problems in a new light. Throughout the history of bluegrass, the fans have found themselves displaced from their homes due to societal and job changes. Locating a bluegrass band performance in their new area helped them relieve their anxiety and homesickness for a few moments of pleasant remembrance of the old life.122 Joti Rockwell’s 2007 dissertation, *Drive. Lonesomeness, and the Genre of Bluegrass Music*, discussed how the perceived sounds and concepts of the genre actually shape the music itself. Research was done via interviews, group discussions, and performance critiques. It was found that concepts of the way one perceives bluegrass music should sound and concepts of the bluegrass performers do affect how one hears the music, “down to the most subtle sonic detail.”123

One of the most impressive research articles discovered was “An Introduction to Bluegrass,” by L.M. Smith, 1963. An avid bluegrass participant himself, he developed a list of five basic characteristics of bluegrass:

“1. Bluegrass is hillbilly music: it is played by professional, white, Southern musicians, primarily for a Southern audience. It is stylistically based in Southern musical traditions.”

“2. In contrast to many other hillbilly styles, bluegrass is not dance music and is seldom used for this purpose.”


“3. Bluegrass bands are made up of from four to seven male musicians who play non-electrified stringed instruments and who also sing as many as four parts.”
“4. The integration of these instruments and voices in performance is more formalized and jazz-like than that encountered in earlier string band styles. Instruments function in three well defined roles, and each instrument changes roles according to predictable patterns.”
“5. Bluegrass is the only full-fledged string band style in which the banjo has a major solo role, emphasizing melodic over rhythmic aspects.”

Smith wrote the article to describe bluegrass in 1963 as opposed to retelling its history and development. The list of characteristics was developed in an effort to help distinguish bluegrass from other forms of country music. The last three characteristics are the most important in determining bluegrass status. Smith’s basic definition of bluegrass music is “a style of concert hillbilly music performed by a highly integrated ensemble of voices and non-electrified stringed instruments including a banjo played Scruggs-style.”

The main definitive trait of bluegrass is the banjo. Every bluegrass band “includes a banjo played in Scruggs style or some derivative thereof.” The main instruments in a bluegrass band include the fiddle, Spanish guitar with steel strings, mandolin, banjo, dobro, and bass. Recordings of the bluegrass bands may add extra instruments, but most of the time the additional instruments are the idea of the recording studio, not the band. Instruments have three distinct roles in a bluegrass band: lead, backup, or bass. The lead carries the melody and is usually played by the fiddle, banjo, dobro, or mandolin. The backup plays a contrasting melody or

\[124\] Smith, p. 246.
\[125\] Smith, p. 246.
contrasting rhythm for interest and is usually played by the guitar. The guitar and bass usually handle the bass part which is also responsible for the rhythm. All of the instruments play all three roles at some time, but each instrument has its own main role in the performance. The overall impression of the instrumental performance is “multiple parts in continual interaction.”

Much like the instrumental side of bluegrass, the vocal side has specific roles including lead, tenor, third, and bass. The lead focuses on the melody. The tenor sings above the lead. The third part sings either above the tenor or lead, but usually below both. The bass is the lowest part. The voices are added to the song in that specific order. Ornaments are added for interest and include “a slight flatting of held pitches, rising attacks, falling releases, and grace notes.” The ornaments purposely create dissonances.

Keys for the songs are chosen in an attempt to pitch the voices as high as possible. The high notes are usually sung in falsetto or a head tone. Vibrato is rarely used. Words stress mountain vowel sounds and few final consonants. The lyrics are stressed similarly to the stress in everyday speech. Although the text determines the identity and mood of a song, the musicians are not as concerned with the lyrical meanings as they are on the instrumental parts. Bluegrass texts are categorized as sacred or secular, serious or comic. There are very few light-hearted bluegrass songs. Those that exist are expressing joy in a religious experience or fond memories of the childhood home. Lyrical songs show sorrow over lost love or

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127 Smith, p. 246.
128 Smith, p. 247.
bewail nostalgia for parents or the rural home of childhood. Ballads describe violent death stories or punishment for crimes.\textsuperscript{129}

Bluegrass was developed by professional musicians in the 1940s, at a time when the pressure was building for the South to conform to northern economic and political values. The music “is both a symptom of and a reaction against this pressure.”\textsuperscript{130} For this reason, bluegrass is generally performed in an informal atmosphere resembling the gathering of friends for an evening of musical fun. Most of the bluegrass fans are rural-and-blue-collar Southern-based groups.\textsuperscript{131}

The research found on bluegrass was basically the history and development of the genre. Smith and Miyake wrote about their observations while participating in the field with other bluegrass musicians. Other authors wrote about their historical research completed. Miyake also wrote about his experiences and acceptance as a different race in the bluegrass community. Smith was the only researcher that gave any statistical evidence in his paper.

The intent of this research project is to discover the characteristics of bluegrass in 2013. What changes have been made over the last fifty years? Is bluegrass still just a Southern style music? Does the audience still refrain from dancing to bluegrass? How large are the bands in 2013? Have the instruments changed? What effects have society changes made on the genre?

\textsuperscript{129} Smith, p. 249.
\textsuperscript{130} Smith, p. 255.
\textsuperscript{131} Smith, p. 255.
A pilot study was administered in December 2012 for the purpose of establishing a baseline for reference. This pilot study intended to show the changes that have taken place by comparing the state of bluegrass today with the list of bluegrass characteristics made by L.M. Smith in his 1963 study of bluegrass. Ninety-seven bluegrass bands (4%) were randomly chosen from the list of 2400 member bands of the bluegrass association. Random selection was done by the computer program Flash Random Student Selector. Data for this pilot study was taken from the information found on each band’s description page in their personal website. Specific information gathered for the pilot study included

1. Band location - state and region of the United States
2. Number of men and women in the band
3. Total number of band members
4. Specific style of bluegrass performed

The current study investigated the changes that have taken place in the field of bluegrass music over the past fifty years since L.M. Smith wrote his master’s thesis on bluegrass music. To gather data, the researcher administered an online survey using Qualtrics software. A sample survey
was sent to four professors and two graduate students to test the effectiveness of the Qualtrics Program and to provide any feedback on changes that needed to be made. The final version of the survey was sent to 2400 bluegrass bands across the United States along with a letter explaining the project and inviting them to participate by filling out the questionnaire. The survey, designed to take minimal time for answering, consisted of six short answer questions and nine bubble questions. Spaces were left for comments if the responder wished to provide more information. A copy of the survey can be found in appendix A.

In order to acquire a list of participants, the researcher located names of current bluegrass bands, their locations, and their email addresses through the website, www.ibluegrass.com. This website was compiled and is maintained by Mr. Skip Ogden of iBest.net, LLC. It had a current list of bluegrass bands across the United States. The list included pictures of most bands and links to their personal websites so that anyone desiring information can easily access what they are looking for. Mr. Ogden granted permission to contact the members of ibluegrass and to use information posted on his website. Over the course of several months, the researcher visited all 2400 websites, gathered email addresses, and entered them into a Microsoft excel database for further reference.

As the data was received, it was immediately entered into a Microsoft excel spreadsheet according to the region of the United States and specific state it represented. The only identification used in the survey was the response number assigned by Qualtrics. All information
remained anonymous unless the responder submitted a name; however, the submitted names were not recorded on the data sheet. A copy of the data sheet can be found in appendix B.

As part of the study, data from the pilot study and the present study was compared to find any discrepancies between the two. Also, by comparing the two sets of data, a larger picture of bluegrass today can be seen.
CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY RESULTS

As of 2013, almost every state in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, has its own bluegrass association. Figure 3 indicates the location of the bands registered with the *bluegrass association* headed by Mr. Skip Ogden. The states were divided into areas according to their location for ease of discussion.

Location of Bluegrass Bands in the United States

Figure 3: As of 2013, there are over 1800 registered members of the *bluegrass Association*. Bluegrass bands are located throughout the United States.

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As of 2013, the northern states of Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming had 0.97% of the nation’s bluegrass bands. The Pacific northwest area, including Alaska, Oregon, and Washington, had 1.25% of the registered bands. Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, the southwestern states, had 3.15% of the bands while California, Nevada, and Hawaii, the west coast, had 3.93%. Oklahoma and Texas, the south central states, listed 5.76% of the registered bands while New England states, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont claimed 7.59% of the registry.

Figure 4: Number of Bluegrass Bands by Region
Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, DC, and West Virginia, the mid-Atlantic states had 16.35% of the bands. The South, including Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee, had 18.50% of the bands. The largest group of states, the midwest, had 20.78% of the member bands. Those states included Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The southeastern states of Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina have 21.65%, the largest number of registered bands. Figure 4 clearly indicates that the majority of bluegrass bands were found in the states traditionally considered “southern.” These states include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Fifty percent of the registered bluegrass bands were located in these

Figure 5: Number Comparison of Traditional to Progressive Styles.
states. These states were also located in the area defined as Appalachia. The next largest collection of bands were located in the midwest where 20.78% were found. According to these research findings, the majority of bluegrass bands were still centered in the southern United States.

Styles of Bluegrass Found in the United States

The survey allowed personal comments about bluegrass performance styles. Seventy percent of the respondents preferred traditional and gospel bluegrass while 30% preferred progressive. Figure 5 indicates this was particularly true in the midwest, South, southeast, mid-Atlantic, and New England states. Survey results also indicated that 89% of the progressive bands also play traditional bluegrass. Forty-two percent of the traditional bands did not perform traditional gospel tunes and nine percent performed only gospel music.

Figure 6: Preferred Bluegrass Styles. Out of 130 “traditional” bluegrass bands, 9 play only gospel music and 53 do not play gospel music at all. Of the 53 “progressive” bluegrass bands, 47 also play traditional numbers.
The survey allowed personal comments about bluegrass performance styles. One respondent commented, “It [bluegrass] still has traditional bands and ties but many bands today tend to lean to the contemporary side.” 131 Another respondent commented, “The labels ‘traditional’ and ‘progressive’ don’t mean much anymore. It would be better to talk about the division between those who want to use bluegrass as a vehicle to validate their lifestyle, which would include conservative and hippies, and those who are interested in keeping the progressive, musical soul of bluegrass alive – followers of Bela Fleck, Stuart Duncan, Edgar Meyer and so on.” 133

According to another respondent, “Bluegrass is often misunderstood - very stereotyped.” 134 Still another commented, “Bluegrass music has many definitions and certainly lots of flavors. Bluegrass and the Newgrass music of today does not follow the conscripts of LM Smith and what is exciting is how the music has evolved from that traditional definition of white hillbilly music. At most bluegrass or music festivals on the west coast, bands perform traditional bluegrass tunes, and if they are successful, add their own personalized styles and influences to make it a rich Americana sound.” 135 An anonymous commenter stated that he had been involved in bluegrass in several areas of the United States and had noticed that each area had its own regional shadings and twists toward how bluegrass should sound. 136

Bluegrass instrumentation has remained the same from the beginning with few exceptions. Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys settled on the sound produced by the acoustic guitar, mandolin, banjo, fiddle, and upright bass. As shown in Figure 7, the majority of bluegrass bands are still concentrating on the traditional instrumentation chosen by Monroe, whether the band called itself traditional or progressive. The chart also indicates that although progressive bands sometimes used electric instruments, they still continued to use the traditional acoustic instruments most of the time. This tendency was true regionally as well as nationally. Electric guitars, keyboards, and drums were listed as being used by a few bands, as were a few other instruments like accordian, concertina, and some wind instruments.
Not all bands used the same instrumentation. The majority of bluegrass bands still used the traditional acoustic guitar, banjo, mandolin, fiddle, and upright bass. The dobro is used when available. Both traditional and progressive bands sometimes used the electric bass rather than the upright bass due to ease of travel possibilities. Even though the banjo is considered a bluegrass requirement, not all bands used the banjo. However, almost one hundred percent of the bands surveyed used the mandolin. Another surprise was that the fiddle was not always a part of the band instrumentation.

Ethnic Makeup of Bands

Figure 8: Of the 183 responding bands, 22% reported having ethnic groups represented. Eighty-eight percent of the reporting bands were totally white.

L.M. Smith reported that in 1963, bluegrass bands consisted of “white southern
musicians [playing] for a southern audience.” While this is somewhat still true, the survey told another interesting story. Out of the 183 bands responding to the survey, eighty-eight percent were white bands and twelve percent were ethnically mixed. Of the twenty-two bands reporting to be ethnically mixed, 50% had Native American members, including Alaskan and Hawaiian, 22.7% had Hispanic members, 13.6% had European members, 2% had Asian members, and 4.5% had Jewish members. As far as the other half of his statement, “to a Southern audience,” bluegrass was played all around the world in 2013.

Figure 9: Of the 183 responding bands, 12% reported being ethnically mixed. Of the 12%, 50% had Native American members, 22.7% had Hispanic Members, 13.6% had European members, 2% had Asian members, and 4.5% had Jewish members.

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137 Smith, p.245.
In response to the survey, one respondent wrote, “We play to audiences of all ages, races, and definitely not to just Southern white folk. African Americans enjoy our music as well as Native Americans. We just have a good time and enjoy being musicians.”

Women in Bluegrass

Bluegrass has traditionally been considered to be a male dominated activity. According to the survey, 65% of the bands responding had women members. Women have always been allowed in bluegrass bands if they were related to one of the men – wife, sister, daughter, and so forth.

Figure 10: Of the 183 responding bands, 700 members were male and 182 members were female.

---

According to the survey, 58% of the women in bluegrass bands were related to one of the men in some fashion. However, 42% of the women were not related to the men. Women today play instruments and sing solos for the bands. The survey responses reported 700 male to 182 female members, meaning 26% of bluegrass performers were women and 74% were men in 2013.

Figure 11: About half of the women involved in Bluegrass are related to the men in their band

Importance of Lessons in Bluegrass Bands

Formal music lessons are lessons involving a teacher imparting knowledge of instrumental skills and music theory. Many bluegrass performers boast that they are self-taught, which means they did not have formal lessons on their instrument. Some players may have been able to purchase an instrument and learn to play it without help, but most players had some kind
of help whether it was a parent, sibling, or friend. Many bluegrass players do not read music, so
music lessons are not that important. Music is learned by listening to records and working with
band members. Bluegrass jam sessions and workshops are known to be the places where the
players learn new skills and songs. The survey shows that twenty-one percent of the bands
participating wanted their members to have formal music lessons while seventy-nine percent did
not care about lessons as long as the member could play.

Figure 12: Music lessons are important to a few bands, but most bands do
not require members to have them.
Age Range of Bluegrass Bands

Bluegrass players start playing at young ages and usually continue for most of their life.

According to the survey, the youngest band member is seven and the oldest is eighty-seven.

Younger band members generally are part of a family band consisting of mom, dad, brothers, and sisters.

Figure 13: Bluegrass band members range from 7 to 87 years old.

Bluegrass and Dancing

“Bluegrass is not dance music and is seldom used for this purpose,” according to Smith’s list of characteristics. Band responses to the survey told a different story. The amount of dancing depended upon the kind of bluegrass and the venue. Figure 12 indicates that dancing occurred all around the USA to some extent. Very little dancing was done to traditional gospel music, but quite a bit was done to progressive styles. Dancing to traditional bluegrass depended upon the song being played and the tempo used. Several responses were made in the survey concerning
dancing. One person wrote, “In general, no, people do not dance when we’re just playing at a festival.”\textsuperscript{139} Another respondent mentioned, “It still is not dance music and probably never will be.”\textsuperscript{140} One person said, “Almost everywhere we play, some people dance, especially in bluegrass venues with dance floors, such as area music “barns.” People clog and “slow dance” to the slower songs.”\textsuperscript{141} Another person wrote, “The question about dancing is interesting. With the

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{Dancing is seen at bluegrass performance all over the USA.}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{139} Dudding, Keith. “Bluegrass 2013,” Survey. 8 April 2013.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Beckley, Dick. “Bluegrass 2013,” Survey. 3 June 2013.
\item \textsuperscript{141} McClellan, Janet. “Bluegrass 2013,” Survey. 4 June 2013.
\end{itemize}
exception of one elderly gentleman, who occasionally would buck dance a few steps for a lively banjo tune, no one in a traditional bluegrass audience ever danced. However, on rare occasion some people, usually young people, might dance a little.”

Survey responses indicate that dancing at a bluegrass performance does happen, but it depends on the area of the country and the type of bluegrass being played.

Popularity of Bluegrass Around the United States

One of the survey responders wrote, “Bluegrass music is a culture all its own. You either like it a lot or you can’t stand it.” The chart indicates that most people accept and enjoy

![Figure 15: Popularity of Bluegrass](image)

It appeared to be more popular in the Mid-Atlantic states and less popular along the west coast

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bluegrass to some extent. One responder wrote, “It is becoming increasingly harder to draw crowds to bluegrass specific events. I think there is still a misconception that bluegrass is hillbilly music and the majority of the public don’t know the difference between Blue Highway and The Possum Pickers. This makes it very hard for promoters to draw a crowd and justify booking the top-tier bands. Traditional bluegrass purists are struggling to gain a new audience, and their audience is aging. In order for bluegrass to reach a new audience, it will have to open its doors and minds to new forms of this genre. Just like country music has changed, bluegrass is changing.” 144

According to one respondent, “The music has definitely changed since 1963. The Beverly Hillbillies Theme song was about the only bluegrass most people knew back then. Some great bands are never heard out of their home area. The music changes in different parts of the country.” 145 Another responder, stated, “We find that crowds respond in a positive way to our music. Many do not realize that bluegrass is much more than one sound that they recall from the past. They most always respond to the upbeat tempo and energy.” 146

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Another responder was quick to point out in his response, “The audience is getting older and the economy makes it hard on these fixed income seniors to make all the shows. So several festivals have fallen by the way side.”

Out of the 183 bands responding to the survey, 14% had not recorded a CD. Nineteen percent of responding bands had recorded one CD, 54% reported having recorded between two and four CDs, and 11% had recorded five or more CDs. One band reported recording 18 CDs. Ninety-one percent of responding bluegrass bands charge for their performances on a regular basis. Only 65% of the responding bands belong to a bluegrass association.

\[^{147}\text{Respondent } P2aF. \text{ “Bluegrass 2013,” Survey. 30 May 2013}\]
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

The intent of this study was to discover the characteristics of bluegrass bands in 2013. Fifty years have passed since Smith studied bluegrass and listed its characteristics. During those fifty years, the United States has transformed from an agrarian society to an electronic communication society. Almost every aspect of life has changed. Has bluegrass kept up with society? Or has it remained locked in the past?

Hillbilly Music Played by White Southern Musicians for a Southern Audience

Society has a method of labeling what it does not understand. This is a prime example of bluegrass being a misunderstood musical genre. It is definitely not hillbilly in 2013. It is played all over the world today, so it is definitely not just southern musicians and southern audiences. Of the twenty-two bands reporting to be racially mixed, 50% had Native American members, including Alaskan and Hawaiian, 22.7% have Hispanic members, 13.6% had European members, 2% had Asian members, and 4.5% had Jewish members. This indicates that this characteristic is no longer totally valid.
Bluegrass is not Dance Music and is Seldom used for that Purpose

Bluegrass was danced to in its inception. It was the music of the community for parties and social events. Many of the bluegrass tunes are based on jigs and reels brought over from Europe with the settlers. Over the years, some phases of bluegrass were considered not dance music, such as the gospel tunes and ballads; however, many tunes are so rhythmic that the audience can’t help but tap their toes and dance a little. Some of the tunes are used regularly for clogging. The dance factor depends upon what part of the country the performance is located and for what group of people. However, the survey shows that dancing is done more than people realize. Even Monroe was known to dance with the music occasionally. Today’s progressive music is similar to other styles of popular music and the younger generation has no problems dancing to it. Therefore, the second characteristic is no longer completely valid in 2013.

Bands Consist of Four to Seven Male Musicians Playing Acoustic Stringed Instruments

Bluegrass has traditionally been considered to be a male dominated activity. When Monroe began his first bluegrass band in 1940, he employed male musicians. This was the standard set from the beginning. “At the genre's inception—and for decades after—women were relatively scarce. It's actually pretty astounding when you think the first bluegrass band was put together in 1945 by Bill Monroe, and it was basically five guys,” says Alison Brown, a
virtuosic, jazz-influenced banjo player and the first female winner in any IBMA instrumentalist category… "and bluegrass music continued to be basically five guys with very few exceptions until probably, like, the '90s things started to really change.”

In their book, *Finding Her Voice: Women in Country Music, 1800-2000*, Mary A. Bufwack and Robert K. Oermann, explore “theories about why so few women played and sang bluegrass early on.” They “point to emphasis on instrumental flash, aggressive vocals, and conservative social structure, plus the difficulty women faced balancing touring and homemaking.” “Allison Brown notes that traditionally, women's work kept their hands busy, but men could more easily pick up an instrument after their work in the fields and factories was done.”

According to interviews of local bluegrass bandmen, men were chosen to travel together without being accompanied by the wives who were needed at home to take care of the family. Also, the men would be less distracted on the job without their women around. Most of the traveling was within a small distance from home and overnight trips did not happen as much in the 1940s as today. Monroe backed down from his beginning standard by hiring female

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musicians to cover parts while on the road. Sally Ann Forrester played accordion with Monroe from 1943 to 1946, and Bessie Lee Mauldin played bass for his band periodically.

Today, females are found in sixty-five percent of the bluegrass bands in the survey. Three percent of bands surveyed were totally female. Only thirty-six percent of bluegrass bands are totally male in 2013. While the number of band members still range in the four to seven range, the part about being male no longer applies. Other female pioneers in bluegrass include “Wilma Lee Cooper, and Roni and Donna Stoneman; family bands including the Lewises, Whites, and McLains; and later path-breaking performers such as The Buffalo Gals and other all-girl bands, Laurie Lewis, Lynn Morris, Missy Raines and many others.” Today females are more involved in bluegrass and are making albums and music videos. Some of the more recent female bluegrass artists include Allison Krauss, Rhonda Vincent, Rebecca Frazier, and Della Mae.

**Instruments Function in Three Well Defined Roles and Each Changes Roles According to Predictable Patterns**

The acoustic string instruments still follow the set predictable patterns established in 1940 with Monroe. The guitar and bass are rhythm oriented. The fiddle, mandolin, banjo, and voice are generally used for lead parts. Sometimes the guitar plays a solo, but the guitar, along with the bass, are basically used for harmony and rhythm. The banjo and mandolin play
percussive upbeat rhythms. All of the instruments take turns being featured as soloist. The majority of bluegrass bands still concentrate on the traditional instrumentation chosen by Monroe, whether the band calls itself traditional or progressive. The survey also indicated that although progressive bands supposedly use more electric instruments, they still choose the traditional acoustic instruments. One of the surprises in the research was that not all bluegrass bands employ fiddles and banjos.

Bluegrass is the Only String Band Style Which Uses a Banjo in a Major Role

While this characteristic is still true, banjos are not always present in bluegrass bands today. The survey discovered that only eighty percent of bluegrass bands have a banjo listed, and they do not have the banjo full time. Twenty percent of the bands surveyed do not use a banjo at all. The mandolin is present in almost one hundred percent of all bluegrass bands. Both the pilot study and the survey study concur on the results with few exceptions.

Figure 14 compares the characteristics of bluegrass in the 1940s, 1960s, and 2013. While many of the characteristics are still present, there have been a few significant changes to take place over the past fifty years. For example, when bluegrass began, very few bands had members of other ethnic groups other than caucasion. Women were not as present in the band front as they are today. Very few total women bands existed in the 1940s. Dancing was not seen at bluegrass events in the 1940s; however, in 2013 dancing is not an unusual occurance. Band
instrumentation has remained basically the same. Electronic instruments have been added in a few bands, but even those bands still use the five basic bluegrass instruments. Bluegrass has experienced a few significant changes over the past fifty years. Change is inevitable in all music genres. Society has changed dramatically over the past fifty years and has brought changes to bluegrass music along with it.

Figure 12: Bluegrass Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>1940s</th>
<th>1963 (Smith)</th>
<th>2012 Pilot Study (Butler)</th>
<th>2013 Survey (Butler)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White racial origin</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern musicians</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern audience</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance music</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7 musicians</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All male members</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic instruments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well defined instrument Roles</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banjo important solo Instrument</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information on the 1940s was taken from historical research on Monroe’s Bluegrass Boys. Formal statistics were not available.

Suggestions for Future Study

Very little has been said about the women in bluegrass. Upon finishing this study I ran across several new books being released about women in bluegrass. A few ideas from the books
have been discussed. More women are becoming involved daily, and a study seems an
appropriate proposition.

Since bluegrass music has not had many formal studies, a study of bluegrass styles
around the world would be interesting. Other countries play traditional bluegrass music on the
instruments specific to their country. Red Grass, an Asian style of bluegrass, is a prime example
of the band members playing Oriental instruments along with traditional bluegrass instruments to
achieve an Asian feel to the music. Red Grass videos can be viewed on www.youtube.com.

Other countries around the world are adding their cultural tones and developing their own
style of bluegrass. Bluegrass bands are found in Europe and Australia as well. Many countries a
have their own bluegrass associations. Several can be found on the internet. With all of the
genres that bluegrass music has borrowed from, the music appeals to almost everyone at some
point.
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APPENDIX ONE:

COPY OF SURVEY
Greetings fellow bluegrass lovers!

My name is Elizabeth Butler. I am studying bluegrass bands as a part of my doctoral studies at the University of Mississippi. Mr. L.M. Smith did a similar study in 1963 and listed several characteristics that he found in the bluegrass groups studied. I plan to expand the study to cover as many bands located in the United States that will participate and explore any changes made over the last 50 years.

L.M. Smith’s characteristics include:

1. “Bluegrass is hillbilly music, played by white Southern musicians for a Southern audience.”
2. “Bluegrass is not dance music and is seldom used for this purpose.”
3. “Bands are made up of 4 to 7 male musicians playing acoustic stringed instruments.”
4. “Instruments function in three well defined roles and each changes roles according to predictable patterns.”
5. “Bluegrass is the only string band style which uses a banjo in a major solo role.”

I located your group through the internet site, ibluegrass.com. You are invited to participate in this study by filling out the following questionnaire about your group.

Thank you so much for your time and participation. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth R. Butler
Number of men in band. (Please include temporary members.)

Number of women in band. (Please include temporary members.)

According to research, the majority of women in bluegrass are related to other members in the group... either a wife, sister, mother, etc. How are the women in your band related to other members?

What ethnicities are represented in your group? (white, hispanic, black, Native American, etc.)

Age range of group

Band Classification.... you may choose more than one answer.

☐ Traditional: acoustical strings, folk song style, basic I-IV-V chords
☐ Gospel: acoustic strings, Christian lyrics, 3-4 part harmonies, a-capella choruses
☐ Progressive: electrical strings, drum sets, keyboard, complex chords (more than I-IV-V), imports material
☐ Neo-Traditional: solo artist with band accompaniment, electric instruments, drums
☐ Other

Do people generally dance at your performance?
☐ Not At All
☐ Occasionally
☐ Frequently
Where do you perform? (You may choose more than one answer.)

- [ ] Contests/Festivals
- [ ] Churches
- [ ] Shopping Centers
- [ ] Bars/Restaurants
- [ ] Fairs
- [ ] Others

Instruments used in your group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Most of the Time</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic Guitar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banjo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobro</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Bass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiddle</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonica</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Bass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboard</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drum Set</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandolin</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Guitar</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How popular is bluegrass in your city/town?

- [ ] Not at all
- [ ] A few people are interested
- [ ] Several people are interested
- [ ] Most people are interested
Are formal music lessons important to your group?

- Yes
- No

Do you belong to a bluegrass association?

- Yes.....please list the one(s) you belong to
- No

Have you made any CDs/DVDs?

In what state is your band located?

Do you charge for your performances?

- Yes
- No

Do you wish to add any more information?

Please include name and email address if you are willing to be contacted (optional).

Thank you for your participation.

IRB Approval
This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and University policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or
reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482. By taking this survey you are giving consent to use the information provided.

Survey Powered By Qualtrics
APPENDIX TWO:

SURVEY RESULTS
SURVEY RESULTS

States are grouped according to *bluegrass association* grouping.
Ethnics code:  W=all white; Mixed=other nationalities belong to group
Style code:  Prog = progressive band; Trad = traditional band
Dancing code:  Freq=dancing happens frequently; Some= some dancing occurs; No=dancing does not occur at performance
Popularity code:  Most= most people like it; Sev= several people like it; Few=not many people like it
Lessons code: Yes= require lessons to belong to group; No= no lessons required for membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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APENDIX THREE:

SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENTS
SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENTS

“Have traveled the entire U. S. as well as Ireland, Scotland, England, Spain, and Australia to perform. Band members instruct at Allegheny Echoes Summer Workshops on instrumental instruction to students from all age groups and from all over the U. S. wanting to learn.”

Ri5v

“I grew up listening to traditional Hawaiian music, then started bluegrass in high school, I was the only one in my high school who like it. I play banjo, guitar, and dobro. I studied classical guitar in college, took dobro lessons from Mike Auldridge, foremost player on the planet. I teach dobro now. The music has definately changed since 1963, The Beverly Hillbillys Theme song was about the only bluegrass most people knew back then. We still use all acoustic except our bass player plays electric. We use more than standard I-IV-V, lots of miners, 7 chords and so on. We use 3-5 vocal harmonies at times. Check us out on youtube, or our website. Flatland Drive Good luck with your work, something like this is needed, when you get into regions, some great bands are never heard out of their home area, the music changes in different parts of the country.”

eKPj

“Bluegrass "real Bluegrass " is the hardest music in the world to play. It all pertains to timing. Timing must be precise to play Bluegrass Music”

Rm6N

“We are first a Christian family group; secondly, we play a mixture of bluegrass and old-timey country style of music; we label it "Down Home Gospel Music". Our soundtracks and recordings do not always have acoustic instruments and some songs do have drums in them. Our son also plays a variety of rhythm instruments: washboard, spoons, paper bag, sanding blocks, bottle of corn, & shakers. (He also plays guitar, harmonica and mandolin.) Our concerts vary from being all acoustic to singing with soundtracks and a vocal harmonizer”

AE29

“We Support the local Associations at their shindigs . Also do festivals and other functions. We charge for festivals and private functions.”

6WHz

“I am glad your study will update the previous' outdated information”

u9tb

“the woman in the band is the percussionist. Depending on the song, she plays bones, washboard, spoons, or shakers. She is the wife of the guitar player. I have listed the title tracks of the 4 CD's we have produced. Members of the band still have day jobs, so we will only travel on the weekends (no more than 6 hours each way). We all play multiple instruments and will change around and play different instruments during the set to get a different sound on certain songs.”
We find that crowds respond in a positive way to our music. Many do not realize that bluegrass is much more than one sound that they recall from the past. They most always respond to the upbeat tempo and energy.”

The problem with the money issue is that we all love playing, so when an organization/festival... pleads hardship, sometimes we underrate ourselves by charging less. Sometimes, we choose to donate our services to good causes. We hope then to charge profitable organizations our regular fee to compensate for this.”

We are an Association which hosts monthly jams, winter concerts by traveling bands, and print a quarterly newsletter. We are NOT a band. To critique Mr Smith's characteristics as follows. Bluegrass is no longer considered hillbilly music. It still has traditional bands and ties but many bands today tend to lean to the contemporary side. It still is not dance music and probably never will be. Bands still consist of 4-7 members but today, many bands have one or more women playing in them and also acting as vocalists. #4 and #5, I think are still that way today”

The question about the popularity of bluegrass in our town does not provide a way to reasonably estimate the number or percentage. Bluegrass is very popular. More than several and less than most”

I am wondering who Mr. Smith got his information from. Unfortunately, anyone can write a book and equally unfortunate, many that read such books think the author knows what he is writing about.”

We play traditional music and styles, and also play "newgrass" and/or add our own flavors to reflect our rock, pop, swing and other influences.”

This band is brand new; I formed it during my last winter stay in Tucson for the primary purpose of playing at the Vets' Home there, but we've begun to add an occasional performance as requested. Our band name, which was suggested by the residents there at the Vets' Home, is the Bluegrass Six-Pack, although sometimes we are seven.”

It is becoming increasingly harder to draw crowds to bluegrass specific events. I think there is still a misconception that bluegrass is hillbilly music and the majority of the public don't know the difference between Blue Highway and "The Possum Pickers". This makes it very hard for promoters to draw a crowd and justify booking the top-tier bands. The festivals that are traditional bluegrass purist are struggling to gain a new audience, and their audience is aging. In
order for bluegrass to reach a new audience, it will have to open it's doors and minds to new forms of this genre. Just like country music has changed, bluegrass is changing, and some of the best music being made is steeped in that tradition, but bands like The Punch Brothers, The Steeldrivers, and many more are pushing the envelope.”

CusR

“I would like to have the study results when you get them. Good luck!”

W7UV

“we're a newly formed band of bg vets. we enjoy playing together.”

llep

“We also attend regular monthly jams and parties, as well as play for charitable causes, non-profits and assisted living facilities and nursing homes”

OcRL

“The bluegrass music industry is divided into two basic groups: the strong traditionalists and the progressives. There are a few that are in between (I include myself in this area), but this is a small contingent, and the two main sides seem to have an attitude that you MUST be on one side or the other. The traditionalists are very stern about what they expect from bluegrass (must have a banjo, must have an upright bass) are still in strong control of the associations (especially SPBGMA) and do not allow the format to grow. The progressives have found other outlets (Americana most notably), and while they still have a respect for the "elders," they realize that they won't make it in the bluegrass format and, with Americana, they don't need to”

zmV7

“We are contemporary and traditional, without electric instruments but with more than i, IV, V chords”

N5K5

“We are a trio who performs Bluegrass and Old-Time Country Music”

8xYp

“Our band is somewhat unique in that we do have two women, both playing lead instruments (fiddle and mandolin)”

szFH

“We get paid a little some time”

kH0V

“Bluegrass was born as a progressive, fusion form of music. Most of the new strands of bluegrass are acoustic (no electric bass), and are divided between real virtuoso players and the jam band type of players. The labels traditional and progressive don't mean much anymore. It would be better to talk about the division between those who want to use bluegrass as a vehicle to validate their lifestyle, which would include conservative and hippies, and those who are interested in keeping the progressive, musical soul of bluegrass alive–followers of Bela Fleck,
Stuart Duncan, Edgar Meyer and so on.”

“Bluegrass has become very popular in Ireland over the past 25 years”

“We never refer to ourselves as strictly "a bluegrass band." We're a "string band" that plays music from a variety of styles, including bluegrass, old-time, bluegrass, folk, blues/roots, etc. One member is a really good Scruggs-style banjo player. If he can make the gig, we tend to play a lot more bluegrass. When he's not there, we play the best material we can. We are paid to perform (though sometimes we do play for free), but no one has ever had to paid an admission just to see us. So for the venue, we're a paid act; for the audience, we're free entertainment. When I answered people occasionally dance at our events, those are occasions when we are playing a contra dance. In general, no, people do not dance when we're just playing at a festival. We live across the river from St. Louis. Most of our gigs are in Illinois, through we do play across the river occasionally. The greater St. Louis area is a "pretty good" bluegrass environment. Given the area's history, it should be a better one.”

“We play a variety of genres most of which use bluegrass "stylings".”

“We play a variety of genres most of which use bluegrass "stylings".”

“We play a variety of genres most of which use bluegrass "stylings".”

“Please read our biography. We are a pretty interesting and unique example of a bluegrass band, or at least in the state of Missouri. Glad you are looking into this! Also, I would certainly not only classify Bluegrass as "Bluegrass is hillbilly music, played by white Southern musicians for a Southern audience." That has changed since the 1960's! Thank you. Alex Riffle Biography: "Based upon the performances by Alex Riffle and his friends, I would have to conclude that the future of bluegrass music appears to be in very good hands." - Johnny Pearce - "Bluegrass Now Magazine" July 2006 Biography When most teenage men have hobbies, they usually consist of playing sports and hanging out with friends after school. For Alex Riffle, his hobbies include playing the banjo, performing and hanging out with his friends who are attorneys. That is not what the usual teenager would do, but Alex is not like the usual teenager. In fact, Alex has an unusually amazing musical gift, and that gift has been worked on and tuned up with the help of two of Alex's friends, Steve Walsh and Doug Kennedy. After much practice and hard work, the three musicians have joined together to make up part of, what is now, one of the best bluegrass bands in Missouri, The Alex Riffle Band. - Excerpt from the February 19, 2009 issue of "The Semo Times - Alex Riffle and the Stiff Riffs: Bringing Bluegrass Back" Alex Riffle is a 20-year-old banjo player from Poplar Bluff MO, who has been playing banjo for 7 years. Alex recorded his debut CD, 'Pickin' Toward Perfection', at 13 years of age, after only one year of playing the banjo. Within the 7 years of Alex playing music, he has played music with such greats as John McCuen of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Pam Tillis, The Dillards (The Darling Boys on the Andy Griffith Show), Joe Issacs, Former Bluegrass Boys Wayne Lewis, Danny Jones, and Kenny
Baker, Rob and Ronnie McCoury, Terry Eldridge of the Grascals, Mike Bub, Charlie Cushman, Hoot Hester of the Grand Old Opry house band, Richard Bailey of The Steeldrivers, Shad Cobb of the John Cowan Band, and many other musicians. Alex has also played music at such venues as the World Famous Station Inn in Nashville, the Sheldon Concert Hall in St. Louis, Silver Dollar City in Branson, and many others. He has also been featured on the Cumberland Highlanders T.V. show on the RFD network and X.M. Radio's Folk Channel 15 station. Alex has also performed at various events including Missouri Governor, Jay Nixon's inauguration in 2009 and various other political fundraisers and has also opened up for bands and musicians including Dr. Ralph Stanley, the SteelDrivers, Kenny & Amanda Smith, and others. Alex is currently an undergraduate student at Saint Louis University pursuing a degree in biology. In 2006, The Alex Riffle Band was formed. The group, along with Alex, consists of four other members, all of which have played music together for over 30 years straight. Doug Kennedy, an attorney in Poplar Bluff, plays the acoustic bass and sings lead and harmony vocals with the group. Steve Walsh, who is also an attorney in Poplar Bluff, plays the mandolin and fiddle along with singing lead vocals on most of the songs and singing harmony vocals. Bill Watkins, a school teacher from Bourbon MO., plays the acoustic guitar and sings lead and harmony vocals with the group. Larry Light, a carpenter from Sullivan, MO., plays lead acoustic guitar and sings harmony and some lead with the group. Larry is known by many as being one of the best flat-picking guitarists in the state of Missouri. The Alex Riffle Band has a highly diverse repertoire for a Missouri-based bluegrass band. The band plays and sings most classic bluegrass songs one can think of, including songs by Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, the Stanley Brothers, etc.. Along with the classics, the Alex Riffle Band also plays and sings classic rock, country, and pop tunes. The band plays songs by the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Grateful Dead, the Byrds, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, U2, Bob Dylan, Buddy Holly, Bruce Hornsby, Jackson Browne, the Marshall Tucker Band, the Band, and more. The Alex Riffle Band is a bluegrass band that's an enjoyable band for both a bluegrass music-loving crowd and a crowd that has never heard bluegrass music before. FOR BOOKINGS, CALL 1-573-429-1293, 1-573-776-4589 OR EMAIL ALEX AT alex_riffle@hotmail.com. In 2007, The Alex Riffle Band played a series of concerts at the Wine Rack in Poplar Bluff and recorded a live album entitled "Live at the Wine Rack". The album includes 22 live tracks. The band has recently recorded a series of tracks in St. Louis, MO. and hopes to release them in an album by the beginning of summer 2013.”

DiHH

“Re: point #1 from Mr. Smith. Bluegrass started in the southern U.S. by the 1960's had spread nationally, and by the 1970's internationally. Starting in 1939, it was enjoyed by audiences as far-reaching as the WSM signal would go, which was predominantly, but by no means limited to, the South. It has never been purely Hillbilly music. Bill Monroe, the Father of Bluegrass, was influenced by blues (namely Arnold Shultz, an African-American bluesman), mainstream country (he co-wrote songs with Hank Williams), Western Swing (he used harmony fiddles a la Bob Wills), and, some would argue, jazz (hence the well-defined instrumental solos). I've never heard of Mr. Smith, but his points above indicate to me that he was not a player of the music, and could have delved a bit more deeply than he apparently did”

CZnL

“Bluegrass is a slow growing but steady venue in our area. 20 years ago there were no jams or open mics and now there is one most every weekend within nominal driving distance. Our band
is 34 years old and we were the only bluegrass band in our area back when we started. Now there are 5 or 6 within an hour drive. Many folks still don't know what it is and confuse it with blues. The radio stations won't play it either. But, we're having phun!!”

YXxB

“i'm surprised you didn't ask if we were on a record label. we are on daywind which is a major label. i apologize for not using capitol letters. i'm filling this out on my phone and capitol letters aren't working for some reason.”

akAD

“Where we live on the Gulf Coast, bluegrass is not that popular, but we have carved a niche for ourselves with a good following of mostly non bluegrass audiences. That is, the only bluegrass they listen to is us. They usually listen to other genre's of music. We may fit more into the Americana side. Also, we can and often do play traditional songs and honor the roots of traditional bluegrass. But because we do our own "swing grass" style, we get frowned upon by the traditionalists. Because of that attitude, I'm afraid that hard core traditionalists are a dying breed. If there is anything else that I can help you with, please let me know. I'm community minded and like to help our genre' or other musicians, etc, anyway that I can. Good luck with your project! thanks for including us!”

cqll

“We do charge for most performances, however church concerts are performed on a 'love offering' basis. About the Farnum Family The Farnum Family, from Galena, Missouri, consists of six children with dad & mom all performing American and European-originated folk music from the early 1800's thru mid-1900's and beyond. With influence gleaned from bluegrass, folk, gospel, Irish, old-time standards, and cowboy & western, their diverse blend of music is styled in an acoustic string-band fashion – with 5-string banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin and upright bass, supported by piano, penny whistle and occasional Bodhran, washboard, resophonic guitar and harmonica. Their homespun and entertaining presentations – whether for music festival, theater concert, church congregation, school assembly or RV Park – is suitable for all ages. Band Members include… Dad (aka Norm) is the bandleader, picks the five-string banjo & rhythm guitar, sings lead and harmony vocals, and has nearly 40 years of stage experience under his belt. His musical credits include five seasons at Silver Dollar City, three at The Roy Clark Theatre and seven aboard the Lake Queen paddle wheeler (often accompanied by his lovely and talented wife, Trish). At the 2012 Grand Lakes Festival he placed 2nd in the banjo competition. Mom (her friends call her Trish) is the pianist for the group, is featured on lead and harmony vocals, and also plays the pennywhistle. She grew up playing music in church, for recitals, school concerts and 4-H programs. In 1987 she first performed in Branson playing the ragtime piano for the Vaudeville Show at the Shepherd of the Hills, later joining Norm on his Lake Queen cruises. They married in early 1988, and played music as a duet... In July 2003, their two oldest sons, Daniel and Benjamin, began taking music lessons. It wasn't long before they were able to do a song or two with Dad and Mom, and eventually became a full-time part of the band. Their younger sister, Hannah, followed suit in November of that year, and have been playing together ever since! Daniel, at 20, is doing a great job on the upright bass and lead vocals. A fan of Josh Groban, Tim O'Brien, Marty Robbins, the Bar-J Wranglers and Sons of the Pioneers, his rich baritone voice is featured on many of the songs. Daniel is also our “Regency Dance” caller &
instructor, always available for the occasional English Country Dance, Virginia Reel, Patty Cake Polka and many more. Benjamin, at 18, makes his mandolin ring as he plays rhythm, melodic fills and intricate lead. His skills on the mandolin are exceptional playing bluegrass, Irish or Texas Swing. He took 2nd Place at the 2012 Grand Lakes Festival. He also plays the guitar and harmonica... and no one knows if he can sing! Hannah, at 15 years old, handles a good percentage of the instrumental leads for the family band, and has a confident style playing bluegrass, gospel, Irish or Texas swing. She also sings some sweet gospel & bluegrass songs. Hannah takes fiddle lessons from World Champion fiddle player Ricky Boen, with the Sons of the Pioneers. In her own right, she is also an award-winning fiddler placing 4th at the 2011 & 2012 Branson Fiddle Fests, 2nd at the 2012 Grand Lakes American Heritage Music Festival in Grove, Oklahoma, and 3rd in the Walnut Valley National Old Time Fiddle Championship in Winfield, Kansas! Nathaniel, now 13-years old, joined the group in August of 2006 singing an occasional specialty number, and is learning to play the lap-slide resophonic guitar. He often adds Ozark percussion on spoons, washboard or the Irish Bodhran. His spirited rendition of Joshua with his siblings is a real foot stomper! Maggie, at 9-years old, is learning to play the fiddle, and already an award winner – placing 3rd in the 2012 Branson Fiddle Fest! With her big sister, Hannah, the two are featured on some sweet fiddle duets. And 7-year old Matthew often makes his stage appearances with sister Maggie, both singing on gospel & novelty tunes. An award-winning family band, since forming in 2004 they have played venues in Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming and many times in their home state of Missouri. Besides their many church dates, they enjoy performing fairs, festivals, historic theatres, RV Parks, assemblies and other family oriented venues and special occasions. They average about 100 live performances per year and hope to eventually go into “full-time” music! They were first invited to play at Silver Dollar City’s (Branson, Missouri) Bluegrass & BBQ Festival and Southern Gospel Picnic in 2006, and have been invited back every year since for similar festival events. They have also enjoyed 3 concert appearances at the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, Arkansas. By a special recommendation, the entire Farnum Family was awarded a scholarship to attend the O’Flaherty Irish Music Retreat in Midlothian, Texas in October of 2009 and again in 2011. The whole family traveled to the Rio Grande Valley in 2012 for a 5-week music tour for the Winter Texans and some other venues, and plans to return again in 2013. This year marked a second trip to Cody, Wyoming to perform for the July 4th Stampede Parade celebration. A favorite scripture reference which embodies their music performances and ministry is Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Please contact the Farnum Family (www.FarnumFamily.org) to book your special event! Approved by the Missouri Arts Council as Missouri Touring Performers.”

“Good luck with your survey.”

X07X

“My band is a family band with a friend who frequently plays banjo with us. Most of our performances are unpaid shows for local fundraisers. We also play at some local "pass the hat" theaters in which we are compensated some gas money. We play about once a month, but frequently have to turn down shows due to living about 3 hours apart.”
“We sometimes play for free, if it benefits someone in need and is pretty close to our hometown.”

“Bluegrass Music is culture all it's on, u either like it alot of u can't stand it. Those of us that like it look for every opportunity to pick together. Either in a jam session for fun or a festival to entertain an audience. The audience is getting older and the economy makes it hard on these fixed income seniors to make all the shows. So several festival have fallen by the way side. Bluegrass is not a commercial music and can't be readily heard by the public. You have to search it out to find it. We have started a Bluegrass In The School (BITS) program to allow a younger generation access to the music. We find that when they hear it they love it and want to get involved. We hope to build a younger audience to carry oon the traditions of the music.”

“We Charge festivals , but not churches, We play for a love offering”

“I believe bluegrass is much bigger than most people think.”

“MR.SMITH NEEDS TO PERSONALY REVIEW THE INSTRUMENTS ,MUSIC, AND THE MAKE-UP OF THE BANDS, BLUEGRASS IS NOT HILLBILLY MUSIC !!!”

“We have been play since 1989 and have keep the core of the group together from the begaining. Thank you for ask me to be a part of this study.”

“We have been together around 6 years as a band and have grown from 25 local/ half of them free gigs to 75 corporate/wedding/festival/listening room gigs a year. Our 2nd cd is going to be produced by Phillip Barker of Town Mountain and recorded in Nashville at Scott Vestel's studio. Personally I have been making string music for nearly 40 years and my banjo player is close to that.”

“Bluegrass is often mis-understood - very stereotyped”

“A little problem on your instruments question - the page forces you to select something on every line (even blank 'other' fields) - that might throw people off a little. After years of playing together, Amanda and her dad Scott Anderson began performing together regularly in 2008, with Amanda handling most of the lead vocals and supplying sweet fiddle lines and swampgrass master Scott adding harmony and lead vocals as well as guitar and banjo. Their repertoire includes original Americana and bluegrass songs and covers from Nickel Creek, Andrea Zonn, Andra Zonn,
Alison Krauss, The Dixie Chicks, and many others. Their dazzling fiddle and banjo duets are favorites at every show. Along with guitarist and vocalist Darren Wainright, mandolinist and vocalist Danny Smith, and bassist Jimmie White, the band serves up a variety of bluegrass, country, and folk flavors. Amanda and Scott also perform occasionally with The Bluegrass Parlor Band and the Walker Brothers, Cory, Jarrod, and Tyler. Amanda Anderson started singing before she was two years old, and now her crystalline voice is often compared to that of Alison Krauss. She made her recorded debut singing and playing fiddle on her critically-acclaimed debut project with her dad Scott, “Another Day”, in 2009. Her vocals were also featured very prominently on Scott’s “Tales from the Swamp,” where she shined in the studio among bluegrass legends such as Sam Bush, Jim Hurst, Stuart Duncan, and Barry Bales. She has performed with The Amanda and Scott Anderson band and duo as well as with The Bluegrass Parlor Band since 2008. She did all of this before graduating high school, where she also excelled as a National Merit Scholar. She is currently a pre-dental student at the University of Florida. Scott Anderson has been a fixture on the Southeastern bluegrass and gospel circuit for almost two decades. He began with the contemporary and Southern gospel of First Light, then played the traditional bluegrass sound of the Bluegrass Parlor Band, followed by the driving grungegrass of Endless Highway, the sweet gospel of Gentle River, and the hot bluegrass of The Jim Hurst Band. Now he's melded these and other influences into the powerful acoustic sound and beautiful family harmony of the Amanda and Scott Anderson Band. In 2011, following the critical success of his first solo project Rivers, stints as banjoist and vocalist with The Jim Hurst Band and Keith Sewell, and a breakthrough CD project with his daughter Amanda on Another Day, Scott Anderson dredged up a swampy soup of originals and favorites on Tales from the Swamp. Amanda and Scott Anderson's "Another Day" is a tasty buffet of Americana and bluegrass tunes. In addition to Amanda on vocals and fiddle and Scott on vocals, guitar, and banjo, "Another Day" features spicy musical support from friends Michael Godwin, David McMillan, Mark Schatz, Tommy Slaughter, Cory Walker, Jarrod Walker, and Austin Wilder. "Amanda Anderson has thrived under the gentle watch of her father and Gainesville musician-extraordinaire, Scott Anderson. Now the daughter-dad duo steps out in this thoughtful, timely collection of songs, "Another Day." Surrounded by slick musicians, their star is destined to rise over the great state of Florida and shine high over the Southeast. I’m proud to be their friend and fan." -Claire Lynch "I love this recording! It's FABULOUS!!! Awesome job! Everything about it filled my heart with so much joy, but particularly Amanda's singing - what a sweet and gorgeous tone she has to her voice!" 

"We tour over a large part of the country playing for a wide variety of folks. I'd wager you that the stereotype of traditional/bluegrass music is much more ingrained in the minds of folks who aren't from the South than those who grew up with this music. Our band doesn't fit the mold of a typical bluegrass band in most ways either. We feature lots of close harmony singing ala the Carter Family, not so much Bill Monroe or Flatt and Scruggs and draw from a wide variety of sources. Within the context of the three instruments we play, there's a lot of variation with different songs taking different leads. I'll be curious as to how this study turns out. Not sure what I've written will help at all.”

zGol
“While we charge for performances we also play many benefits. Many of the members also participate in local jam session where musicians of all levels come together.”

RWKx

“Weve been together eight years and we are touring Norway this summer”

GAXH

“Our repertoire is mostly original songs, but we do play some original arrangements of bluegrass and folk standards and original acoustic arrangements of some pop/rock covers. I grew up in Mississippi and began my love affair with bluegrass music there in a little town called Steens!”

Q7v7

“Bluegrass music has many definitions and certainly lots of flavors. Whistlin' Rufus features blazing fiddle tunes on guitar, mandolin and fiddle with the traditional 3 and 4 part harmonies of old time and bluegrass music. We incorporate fiddle tunes in our arrangements of traditional songs and classics from the Buffalo Springfield to the Beatles. Our sets are defined by our original songs and ballads that might be classed as bluegrass inspired folk americana. Bluegrass and the Newgrass music of today does not follow the conscripts of LM Smith and what is exciting is how the music has evolved from that traditional definition of white hillbilly music. Not bluegrass anymore. At most bluegrass or music festivals on the West coast, bands perform traditional bluegrass tunes, and if they are successful, add their own personalized styles and influences to make it a rich Americana sound”

67UF

“Most of the band members play in several bands and we do pursue different styles of Bluegrass and country music(square & round dance style) We do alot of benefits and fund raising(no charge) work also. We also are paid at church and coffeehouse events with donation or free will collection”

UHaz

We are a progressive style bluegrass band with traditional acoustic instrumentation and harmonies. Our band had a fishing theme that permeates many of our original and cover songs. Bluegrass With A Rock and Roll Attitude. One foot in the tradition and one in the moving waters.

wXlh

We generally play for fun, but regularly play for pay

N7zT

I think it is awesome that bluegrass bands are being studied. I'm curious how "bluegrass" is defined. I play clawhammer banjo, not the Scruggs style typically associated with bluegrass. While some of our material is bluegrass we mix in quite a few other genres such as Oldtime, Classic Rock, Funk, Blues, etc. Traditional bluegrassers would not call us bluegrass. The rest of the world see's banjo, fiddle, acoustic guitar, and sometimes mandolin and they automatically label us as "bluegrass".
KS2h

Charge at some venues. Other venues we don't charge (benefits, churches)

bcm9

Band name: Kentucky Tundra, a play off of Ricky Skaggs' band, Kentucky Thunder. Great name, because it says Bluegrass and Alaska. People instantly "get it".

EOz3

I have never considered Bluegrass a "hillbilly" music although I know it has roots there. It is more of a real, earthy music that tells stories of real life in a way that touches you. Real music with real (not electrically generated) tones. It's warm, sometimes sad, but mostly a happy music you want to hear over and over. My Dad had a band in the Hudson Valley of NY in the 1950's-1980's. He was neither a southerner or a hillbilly.

f9t3

"Red White & Bluegrass" Red White & Bluegrass has been around for many years. The group was started by Bluegrass Patriarch, Red White, and is now continuing with 2nd, 3rd & 4th generation Red White Family. The oldest daughter Gwen, began singing with her Father at the age of 8. At the age of 12, she was playing the guitar and began playing the upright bass in her father's band. She has performed on radio and television. She sang her first song on WTAB Radio out of Tabor City, NC and at the age of 12 began her television career with her father on The Red White Show on WECT Channel 6 out of Wilmington, NC. The show ran for 16 years. Gwen's favorite Bluegrass singer is Ralph Stanley. She grew up listening to Ralph, Jimmy Martin, Jim & Jesse, The Lewis Family, The Osborne Brothers and many more. Gwen was totally Bluegrass when Bluegrass wasn't cool! She enjoyed traveling up and down the eastern seaboard singing with her father and sister, known as Red White & Bluegrass from Conway, SC. She has performed with all the greats... Bill Monroe, Jim & Jesse, The Osborne Brothers, Ralph Stanley, Doyle Lawson, JD Crowe and many more. She was in an accident in 1993 and the family had to take a break from Bluegrass as Gwen couldn't stand and play an instrument but they continued on singing with tracks. Barbara began her career at the age of 13. Her first gig was playing snare for Benny Martin! After hearing the sound and the drive it gave the music, she continued playing snare for the group! She traveled as well with her father, playing festivals, concerts and in churches. Both the girls began their singing careers in Church and singing in the school choirs. She has also performed with greats ...from George Jones to Bill Monroe, Jim & Jesse, The Osborne Brothers, The Crabb Family and many more. Barbara has no problem talking with anyone. She is a pleasure to be around and truly has the gift of gab! She is kinda like her dad in that way.....once the conversation started, hard to get away from her!! Chris Holmes, is Gwen's son. Chris makes up the third generation of The Red White Family. He has always loved music...as did the rest of the family. He began singing in Church but did not get involved in the group until November, 2008. He purchased a doghouse bass and was going to learn to play it and decided to go with the dobro. When you hear him play you will hear how God has richly blessed him with his efforts. Chris sings lead and harmony. Josie, Emily Grace & Lee are Chris' children and make up the fourth generation of The Red White Family. Josie plays banjo. Emily Grace plays fiddle and Lee is learning the mandolin! They are playing for Red White & Bluegrass full-time as the rest of the band. We know our father would be very proud! If you would like to have
our band perform for you, please call Barbara at 843-360-9000. We play for churches, festivals, private parties, etc. Visit us at our web www.redwhitebluegrass.org or on facebook! Looking forward to picking in your area real soon!

FSWF

In reference to the last question about charging: Our band accepts love offerings at churches, and will play just for food or free if a church is unable to provide a gratuity. We consider our band a "missionary" venture and do not put a price on an opportunity to present the gospel through music and testimony. Our "festival" or "event fee" is always negotiable. In reference to the question of music lessons, two of us participate in the ETSU Bluegrass Program which offers private instruction, and other opportunities to learn and study the aspects of Bluegrass performance and history. Another member has taken private lessons in the past. The other two are primarily self taught. In reference to our instruments, we have two guitars, one lead and one rhythm.

TFch

We include non traditional songs if requested and have originals

2B9j

We charge for town festivals, and according to how far we have to travel. For nursing homes and churches we do not charge, we do ask for a love offering or donation to defray gas expenses.

4cER

Bluegrass has changed since 1963. I hope you will find it favorable and become a fan.

qj3L

We are a family band that was started by our father, Red White. I started singing when I was 8 years old. Then my sister came on board when she was 13. We traveled with our father up and down the eastern seaboard playing Bluegrass festivals. We were on television for 16 years and radio for 10 years. Five (5) years ago, Gwen’s son, Chris, begin pickin and singing with the group. About two (2) years later, his children started getting involved. We now have 4th generation "Red White" family "Carrying on the Family Tradition" of our dad! Emily Grace (11) plays fiddle, Lee (7) plays mandolin and Josie (12) banjo. Chris (their father) plays dobro. Gwen plays guitar and her sister, Barbara plays bass

4k3r

Wanted to add a little info to clarify some of the answers above. We performed at a level of what I would term semi-professional (i.e. paid but not our primary income, which comes from self-employment in advertising & graphic design) primarily from 1999 through 2009 primarily as a husband and wife duo primarily at festivals in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Missouri and Iowa, but also other events and clubs, in addition to private performances, most recently this past February after a gap of many years. The question about dancing is interesting. With the exception of one elderly gentleman who attended festivals we performed at in La.-Miss. who occasionally would buck dance a few steps for a lively banjo tune, no one in a traditional bluegrass audience ever danced. However, when you would play for non-traditional audiences at
other events and festivals, on rare occasion some people, usually young people, might dance a little. And there was one time at an Irish pub in Mississippi (Fenian's in Jackson) where an Irish step dancer went out to his car to get his shoes and danced for a number or two...much fun but memorable in its rarity. Previously we belonged to organizations such as the Southeast Texas State Bluegrass Association and the Magnolia Bluegrass Association (Miss.), though we are no longer members since we retired from most performing. We are self-taught musicians, with the exception that my wife took several years of voice lessons from a retired opera singer when we began performing. My wife now informally teaches voice to a couple of students. We performed primarily as a duo, supplemented on occasion for certain performances by friends and fellow musicians on mandolin, bass and fiddle. My wife is the lead singer, I sing occasional harmonies. As a duo, she plays guitar, while I will switch between dobro, banjo, mandolin and finger picked guitar as lead instrument. We retired from active performing to have the time to devote to other interests. Always loved the music, but certainly got tired of the music business end...i.e. the constant need to promote, travel and secure performances. Who knows, we may update our woefully out-of-date website some day and pursue it again once we're retired in a few years ;-) Our regards and best wishes for your research project.
yR4V

We play to audiences of all ages, races, and definitely not to just Southern white folk. Almost everywhere we play, some people dance, especially in bluegrass venues with dance floors, such as area music "barns." People clog and "slow dance" to the slower songs. African-Americans enjoy our music as well as Native Americans. We just have a good time and enjoy being musicians. We are not hillbillies, as I have never lived in the mountains of any state. We are all from the Piedmont area and Southern Coastal plains of NC, and we all live in or near small towns or cities. We have all graduated from high school and two of us have graduated from college. Bluegrass has grown in popularity since the sixties and has spread to urban areas, with most young musicians now growing up in urban or at least "town" areas. And, many bluegrass musicians are extremely talented in their craft. Thanks for helping to educate and inform others of the truth about bluegrass
Rztb

The name of the group is The Groundhawgs. I'm a professor of English and am interested. Contact me at 770-548-0263, I have some opinions about the Banjo. My band recorded with Stranger Malone--clarinet and flute. Quite odd, but used to be a tradition
xuIn

Although we have had a formal band for several years, we all play in more than one band, and substitutions are quite frequent. We have a couple occasional women members who play whenever needed. None are related to other band members, but are friends who were recruited on teh basis of their musical abilities. Many of our temporary members would play permanently with our band if they did not have commitments to other groups.
q5ff

This has been a full time gig for maybe 20 years, now supplemented by a variety of musical endeavors, as we have limited touring drastically the past ten years.
v3Ex
We've been together as a band for 20 years. We haven't had a personnel change since 2001.

Blistered Fingers' obvious love of bluegrass, their fans, and field picking makes Blistered Fingers a special group with their delightful mix of original material, soulful ballads and hard driving traditional bluegrass music with a little good humor thrown in. Blistered Fingers has been awarded Maine's #1 Bluegrass Band of the Year by the Maine Country Music Association in 1998, 1999 & 2000 and also placed in the “All Time Greats” category! In 2004, 2005, & 2006 Blistered Fingers was also voted “Bluegrass Band of the Year” by the Maine Academy of Country Music. Blistered Fingers delivers high-energy musical entertainment and renders a truly superb stage show, which will long be remembered by everyone who sees it.

Whistlin' Rufus plays at Bluegrass Festivals, Irish events (St. Patrick's Day, etc), Folk Festivals, you name it. We prefer our original music but love bluegrass and fiddle tunes and play bluegrassy instruments and sing tight 3 and 4 part vocal harmonies. We would love to come to Mississippi to play!, Mr. Smith's definition of bluegrass music is completely and totally incorrect. Bluegrass is blues and jazz and folk and Americana all wrapped up in one package.

Most Oregon pickers and fans generally seem to like eclectic material, new approaches and varied material. I reckon we’ve made the music distinctively our own….a personal expression of what’s inside us but still “heartfelt” in a uniquely individualistic way.

We have been performing for 33 yrs, traveled over 1/2 the USA & Canada, Performed for the Prime Minister of Australia and the Ambassador to Japan

2006 The Tennessee Gentlemen did a European Tour of Germany, Switzerland, Holland, The netherlands, Czech republic, Five times in Canada, and Hosted the Candian Bluegrass awards show. Awards from SPIGMA. Troy Castleberry was the founder of the Tennessee Gentlemen he passed away in 2000. When Troy passed away me and my Brother Donny Catron took over the band. This is our website. www.tennesseegentlemen.com thanks

We consider our genre to be "NewGrass" - Bluegrass instrumentation playing a broad range of pop-to-classical as well as the standards. We compile our setlists based on our audience and we are booked for the majority of March-October of most years.
VITA

Elizabeth Rosanne Butler is the daughter of Betty Joy Gambrell and the late Billie Joe Gambrell, Sr. Presently widowed, she has one adult daughter, Leah, who is married to Mr. Chris Bargery.

Ms. Butler earned her Associate of Arts Degree in Music from East Mississippi Community College, 1975, graduating summa cum laude in her class. She earned her Bachelor of Music Education degree, 1977, emphasis in piano, from the University of West Alabama where she graduated magna cum laude. In 1981, Ms. Butler completed her Master of Arts in Music Education at the University of North Alabama. She completed her Doctorate in Music Education at the University of Mississippi in 2013.

Ms. Butler is a member of the National Association for Music Education and the Mississippi Music Educators Association. Throughout her career, she has also been a member of the American Choral Directors Association, Mississippi Band Directors Association, Alabama Bandmaster Association, and the Alabama Music Educators Association. Ms. Butler is Orff certified. Ms. Butler has taught music in both Alabama and Mississippi for the past thirty-six years in a variety of areas including choir, band, and elementary music. She has taught music in
the Mississippi school systems of Meridian Public Schools, Newton County Schools, Lauderdale County Schools, and Desoto County Schools. Employment in Alabama school systems include Choctaw County Schools, Marengo County Schools, and Colbert County Schools. Ms. Butler is presently the music teacher at Desoto Central Elementary School where she teaches music to all students in grades three through five. She also directs the children’s choir, Kydz Beat, and the children’s recorder ensemble, the Black Belt Club.

Ms. Butler has served as pianist and organist at several churches during her career. She has also helped with church orchestras and children’s choirs. Ms. Butler teaches private piano lessons.