

Prairie State Fiddling Traditions

Some Historical Background

Paul Tyler

A landscape exists, in the eyes of romantics and realists alike, in which the traditional fiddler appears to fit best. He (rarely she) has ties to southern climes, especially to the mountainous regions where life supposedly was isolated from the currents of fashion and progress. Thus viewed, the fiddler could not be from the upper classes, because he has neither the dedication nor the inclination to the hard toil required to make something of himself. Nor could he belong to the elite, for he has not acquired the polish of education or polite culture. Thus mapped, fiddling belongs with the homespun and the roughhewn. When he speaks, the fiddler drawls.

In truth, the social and geographical sources of the Prairie State's fiddling traditions are more richly varied. This collection attests that Illinois fiddlers (more than ever are women), whatever their style or genre, come from many communities, circumstances, and walks of life. It has always been that way.

Pioneers

To be sure, there were fiddlers aplenty in Illinois who fit the conventional profile. Jonathon Browning (1805-1879) "was born on the Brushby fork of Bledsoe Creek, in Sumner County and grew up in the wild Tennessee hills where his father taught him to play the fiddle."¹ The family moved to Quincy, where Jonathon converted to Mormonism. After witnessing the Battle of Nauvoo, he left for the West. That many other residents of the southern reaches of the state were fond of fiddlers and of dancing is evident in memories of corn huskings from the first half of the 1800s.

. . . after supper came the dance. Swiftly were the tables stripped of dishes, and no less quickly were they drawn aside and the room swept by eager hands . . . The only music was the violin, and "fiddlers" were in great request. The figures most in favor were the reel and the jig, in which all were moving at the same time, and all participated with a zest and abandon unknown in the modern ballroom.²

Dancing to the fiddle was an equally favored pastime among the upper levels of society, such as those who visited George Flower's fine home in Albion. One guest wrote of a ball in the winter of 1825: "I led off with Mrs. Carter in a country dance. Afterwards in the course of the evening, we danced a Kentucky reel, but except that, only country dances. I saw no one in the room at all intoxicated . . ."3

Northerners who settled in Illinois also deserve musical respect. One of Chicago's earliest pillars was businessman John Kinzie. Born in 1763 and raised in New York, he became a silversmith and an Indian trader in the original Northwest Territory. He spent the winter of 1789-90 in Miamistown, Indiana, where he pulled out his fiddle to play for dancing in the homes of the French fur traders. Drawing on a diary kept by Henry Hay, a British agent and Kinzie's partner in revelry, regional historian M.M. Quaife summarized their frolicking:

Neither social nor religious consolation was lacking, and Hay played his flute and Kinzie his fiddle indifferently for drinking bout and mass. At times the two classes of entertainment followed each other so closely that the musicians went reeling from one to the other. "Got infernally drunk last night with Mr. Abbot and Mr. Kinzie," wrote the journalist [Hay] on one occasion. 4

By 1804, Kinzie had relocated to Chicago, where he provided music for an American army officers' Christmas ball at the newly built Fort Dearborn.

Another diarist from the 1800s provides a valuable glimpse of life in Illinois before the Civil War. Daniel Storer, a twenty-one year-old from Maine, arrived in Morris to work on the new Illinois & Michigan Canal before moving on to Minnesota. His journal records that he also played for many dancing assemblies:

[Nov. 1849] Worked till p.m. of the 9th and went home, and went to a party in the evening at the Rices. I played with a Mr. Goudin, a pretty good player. They dance here about the same as they do in Maine The eve. of the 17th they had a little party at a Mr. Linkhams here in town, and I played for them. They dance Cotillions here mostly. They get up a gay crowd and fine Supper &.5

All the fiddlers represented thus far—Northern and Southern, polished and roughhewn—are from the Anglo-American mainstream culture. Yet almost certainly, the first fiddlers to come to Illinois were French. From the 1760s on, many travelers to Kaskaskia reported that fiddling and dancing were the chief amusements of the French, who had stayed through the British rule and the eventual American takeover. Historian John Francis Snyder left a colorful description of French and other fiddlers in his reminiscence of boyhood visits to Kaskaskia. On one occasion

in 1839, he witnessed a ball at Judge Pope's mansion where his parents led the dance in the first set of a quadrille or cotillion. What most tickled his youthful fancy

. . . was the music, or rather, the musicians. There were two of them, both fiddlers—not violinists—playing together, one a mulatto, the other a white native Creole. The latter wore a gaudy, red-figured calico shirt and buckskin breeches with a red sash around his waist and a bandana handkerchief tied around his head. They both played well, the Creole calling the figures in a loud clear voice, at the same time keeping perfect time by tapping the floor with his foot, his very soul enwrapped in the performance.⁶

Another anonymous fiddler was described by Eastern journalist Charles Fenno Hoffman, who arrived in Chicago just in time for a New Year's Day dance in 1834. Hoffman was taken with the many ranks and professions represented in the assembly, but especially the fiddler:

An orchestra of unplanned boards was raised against the wall in the centre of the room; the band consisted of a dandy negro with his violin, a fine military-looking bass drummer from the Fort, and a volunteer citizen, who alternately played an accompaniment upon the flute and triangle. Blackee, who flourished about with a great many airs and graces, was decidedly the king of the company . . .⁷

A classified ad in the *Chicago Democrat*, published just a week later, provides the likely identity of Hoffman's African-American fiddler:

Notice.

The subscriber begs leave to inform the inhabitants of Chicago, and its vicinity, that he will be ready at all times to furnish MUSIC, at *Assemblies, Balls* and *Parties*; on as reasonable terms as can be furnished in this place.

Nelson P. Perry, *Man of Color*.⁸

Movers and Shakers

Illinois fiddlers came from many lands, bringing their own musical traditions along with them. Most often they played dance music, and in some New World communities, dancing and music easily transcended national boundaries and cultural differences. In Lake County, near Deerfield, in the late 1800s, some of the most popular musicians to perform for kitchen hops or house dances were fiddlers of German descent. The tunes named below are still standard in the Anglo-American repertoire and, in this reminiscence, an Irish family anchored the community's social life.

The Carolan home was the center of amusement for the country around. Even when they lived in the “old house,” when they were about the only people who had a hardwood floor in their kitchen and a piano in the “front room,” a crowd would descend on them on Saturday nights, move the kitchen range out into the yard and dance all the old-fashioned dances till the wee sma’ hours. The music being furnished by John and Charlie Horenberger or the Hinterbergs who with their fiddles sawed out such tunes as “Turkey in the Straw,” “Irish Washerwoman,” “Little Brown Jug,” etc.⁹

The dance music of immigrants from Northern and Central Europe blended more easily with the sounds and styles of the dominant British-American culture than with traditional music from the southern shores of Europe or other continents. This sums up the legacy of many of the French Canadian (*See Track 3*), Irish, and German fiddlers who came to rural and small town Illinois. But some ethnic communities worked to keep their own music at least partly distinct, as attested by the experience of the Norwegian-American Nyen family of musicians heard on this anthology (*See Track 11*). Others, especially those immigrant communities who settled in metropolitan area of Chicago, chose to conserve their music and cultural identity through conscious separation from the mainstream. Such is the case of the Slavic music included here, that of the lowland and highland Poles (*See Tracks 5 and 9*) and the Serbo-Croatian *tamburitza* bands (*See Track 19*).

Homesickness provided strong motivation to preserve and promote Old World music styles and repertoires. A compelling example is provided by the life of Sigurd Olsen, a Swedish immigrant born in 1901 in Dalarna, a province with a rich fiddling heritage. When Olsen arrived in Chicago in 1927, he settled on the Southeast Side, married an immigrant girl, and raised a family. A carpenter by trade, he built the house in Hinsdale where his daughter Anita still lives. Olsen missed Sweden, and when he met fellow immigrant Ture Anderson, he prevailed on him to teach him to play the fiddle. Music lessons at the Olsen home—both men played by ear—turned into weekly music parties that continued until Olsen’s death in 1979. Out of these sessions came an informal group known as Pickled Herrings. One member, Don Peterson, eventually retired to Paxton, Illinois, where he now operates a Swedish shop and gives fiddle lessons (*See Track 16*).

The Chicago Irish, for the most part, also preserved a separate musical identity and created their own cultural institutions, even though much of their dance music is interchangeable with the traditional Anglo-American repertoire. The strong identity that traditional Irish music

maintained for more than a century can be traced to the sustained efforts of Chief Francis O'Neill, head of the Chicago Police Department at the dawn of the twentieth century. O'Neill diligently gathered in the "waifs and strays" of Irish melody, primarily the reels, jigs, hornpipes, marches and set dances played by local fiddlers, pipers, and flautists. With the help of Sgt. James O'Neill, a fiddler from Belfast who could "note down" a tune with ease after hearing it played a few times, the Chief compiled 1,859 Irish song "airs" (without lyrics) and dance tunes into *O'Neill's Music of Ireland*. Four years later, the dance tunes, with the addition of another few hundred jigs, reels, and other tunes, were published as *The Dance Music of Ireland*. In the century since, one or both collections have been continuously in print, and the *Dance Music* is often described as the "bible" of traditional Irish music. Both have played a tremendous role in the preservation of Irish folk music, especially in the traditional music revival of the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Chicago fiddlers who contributed tunes to the O'Neills included Timothy Dillon, a Chicago police officer born in 1846 in County Limerick; James Kennedy, born circa 1863 and the son of a farmer and famous fiddler in County Leitrim; the secretive O'Malley, who played "like a house on fire," despite missing a finger on his left hand; and an improvident youth named George West, who was forced to relocate to the western states. West was the source for the hornpipe, "The Boys of Blue Hill" (*See Track 15*), "heard from a strolling fiddler named O'Brien, [the tune] was entirely new to our Chicago musicians."¹⁰

While the story of Irish music in Chicago reveals remarkable efforts to maintain an older heritage, other fiddling traditions did not fare as well. For some immigrant communities, and some musicians, to assert one's identity and independence in the big city meant the cultural baggage of the countryside would be jettisoned. This is what happened to William "Big Bill" Broonzy when he came to Chicago in the early 1920s after time in Scott, Mississippi and Helena, Arkansas. That he became known as a good blues singer was important to Broonzy. Back home, he fiddled at country parties for both "white peoples" and his own, sometimes at the same events, where each stayed on separate sides of the stage. In Chicago, Broonzy played fiddle for early blues singer and guitarist "Papa Charley" Jackson and learned the guitar himself. In 1925, when he made his first recordings, he accompanied his blues verses with his own finger-style guitar playing and always brought his guitar into the recording studio after that. In 1934-35, however, Broonzy picked up the fiddle once more to record "C C Rider," as well as a few

numbers with the State Street Stompers. Those fiddle performances represent a minuscule portion of his prolific recorded output in a career that spanned four decades.

Nostalgia and Professionalization

Fiddlers who came to Illinois, especially the Chicago area, were part of a flood of migrants and immigrants who seized the opportunities offered by America's growing industrial economy. The flip side of such an intense transformation to city life was a longing for what was left behind. Old-time fiddle music offered a ready symbol for the more intimate pleasures of rural and small town life, and fiddlers from the countryside could be found everywhere in Illinois. During the decades on either side of the turn of the century, fiddle contests popped up as excursions in nostalgia all over the United States. The Midwest served as a center for this growing movement. In 1899, several newspapers reported on a contest in Charleston—one of several in the area that year alone—that attracted one hundred and twelve fiddlers. None of the fiddlers were named in the news reports, but we do know that “Granny, Will Your Dog Bite?” and “Possum Up a Gum Stump” were among the tunes performed.

The fiddle contest phenomenon approached a mania in 1926, and one of the largest contests anywhere in North America was the Midwest Fiddle Championship sponsored by the *Chicago Herald & Examiner*. One hundred and twenty fiddlers from five states, all over the age of fifty, traveled to Chicago to compete at the Midway Dancing Gardens and the Coliseum. While many of the fiddlers—including several Irish musicians and one Dane—were residents of Chicago or surrounding towns, the top winner was Leizime Brusoe, a French Canadian from Rhineland, Wisconsin. Part of his prize was a recording contract, apparently never executed, and a vaudeville tour in the region. A few years later, Brusoe performed as part of Rube Tronson's Texas Cowboys, the house band on the WLS National Barn Dance.

As the national craze for old-time fiddling peaked in the mid-1920s, the emergence of two media--phonograph records and radio broadcasting--forever changed the way Americans listened and responded to music. On the one hand, these media selectively preserved aspects of older music traditions. Chicago became an important recording center, especially in the “specialty” genres of blues, jazz, country, and ethnic music. Phonograph catalogs included performances recorded in Chicago by an astonishing array of rural American fiddlers, along with many immigrant fiddlers who adapted Old World village traditions to community life in the

shadows of the region's mills and factories. The Columbia and Victor companies, as well as smaller independent companies like Vocalion and Gennett, captured in wax and lacquer the fiddle music of Greek, Polish, Ukrainian, Irish, and Mexican traditions. The 1920s also witnessed the growth of radio. As Chicago's airwaves became the busiest in the nation, one of the most popular broadcasts was the WLS National Barn Dance, which began in April, 1924 as a weekly program of old-time fiddling.

On the other hand, the new entertainment media forever changed the musical experiences and expectations of musicians and audiences alike. A new musical marketplace stimulated innovation and encouraged the development of new sounds. A craving for novelty, as well as the popularity of jazz improvisation and soloing, expanded both the artistic possibilities and demands that working fiddlers faced. On spinning discs and radio waves, fiddlers now entertained not a hall full of dancers, but unknown public listeners who consumed music in the comfort of their living rooms. Fiddlers who thrived as professionals were those who could best operate in the progressive styles of jazz, swing, and bluegrass.

Older fiddling styles slid out of the limelight, but did not disappear. Traditional fiddlers in Illinois kept the old sounds alive throughout the twentieth century in smaller, more intimate contexts, ranging from living-room jam sessions to community dances. When the post-World War II urban folk revival renewed public interest in traditional fiddling, many senior fiddlers were still there for a new generation that hoped to learn the older styles. As this anthology demonstrates, the Prairie State's fiddling traditions were mined and revitalized with considerable success. What's more, this anthology also shows that proponents of newer sounds and styles of drawing the bow have also made remarkable contributions to the state's musical heritage, innovating as they extended tradition and carried us forward.

Notes

¹. Elaine Johnson, "Jonathon Browning: 22 October 1805-21 June 1879." <<http://www.ida.net/users/elaine/Jonathon%20Browning%20201805.pdf>.>

². John Moses, *Illinois: Historical and Statistical*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Fergus Printing Co., 1895), 232-33.

³. William Owen, *Diary of William Owen: From November 10, 1824 to April 20, 1825* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1909), 119.

⁴. Milo M. Quaife, *Chicago and the Old Northwest, 1673-1835* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1913), 145-46.

- ⁵. "Daniel Storer Diary, 1849-1905," MS Minnesota Historical Society.
- ⁶. John Francis Snyder, "The Old French Towns of Illinois in 1839: A Reminiscence," in *John Francis Snyder: Selected Writings* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1962), 96.
- ⁷. Charles Fenno Hoffman, *A Winter in the West: Letters Descriptive of Chicago and Vicinity in 1833-4*, Fergus' Historical Series, no. 20, (Chicago: Fergus Printing Co., 1882), 17.
- ⁸. *Chicago Democrat* (Jan. 7, 1834).
- ⁹. Marie Ward Reichelt, *History of Deerfield, Illinois* (Glenview: Glenview Press, 1928), 181.
- ¹⁰. Capt. Francis O'Neill, *Irish Folk Music: A Fascinating Hobby* (Chicago: E.P. Publishing, Ltd., 1910), 41-42.

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Artists and Repertoire

1. Garry Harrison & the Mule Team: “Green Sleeve” (Public Domain)

Garry Harrison, fiddle; Randy Marmouze, banjo; Sam Bartlett, guitar; and Abby Ladin, bass. Original release on *Red Prairie Dawn*, self-produced, recorded Bloomington, Indiana, 2000. Recording used by permission.

Garry Harrison was born in 1954 in rural Coles County, Illinois, to a father who fiddled in string bands in his younger days and a mother who had been downstate radio’s “Singing Cow Girl.” Her father, whom Harrison never knew, was also a fiddler from Bushton. Still, due to family health problems, no ongoing tradition of homemade music existed when the Harrison family moved to Charleston. To cope with the change to town life, an older brother handed down a banjo to his twin brother, Terry, and Garry got out their dad’s old fiddle. Another friend from the country, John Bishop, swapped a knife for a cheap guitar. Eventually Clifford Harrison showed his sons a few old standards like “Lop-Eared Mule,” and the string band soon to be known as the Indian Creek Delta Boys was born.

The band added Lynn “Chirps” Smith on mandolin (*See Track 20*) and Dave Miller, a banjo-playing instructor at Eastern Illinois University. Miller introduced the concept of “collecting” tunes from senior fiddlers. Through most of the 1970s, the “Crick Delters” made trips to search for the elders who had played rural socials during the first half of the century. Through leads dug up at barbershops and gas stations, they found over a hundred musicians, from Pete Priest of Mattoon and Jesse James Abbott of Toledo to Bill Clerc in Prairie du Rocher and Jim Reed in Benton, a community in Illinois’ “Little Egypt.” Perhaps their most important discovery was one of their first, Harvey “Pappy” Taylor of Effingham (*See Track 14*). Many of their original field recordings are archived at the Tarble Arts Center, Eastern Illinois University.

Garry Harrison later moved to Bloomington, Indiana, where he recorded *Red Prairie Dawn*, a CD of mostly original tunes. Three of the four “collected” tunes on the CD are pieces he learned from the David McIntosh collection of southern Illinois folk songs. “**Green Sleeve**” was collected in 1956 by one of Professor McIntosh’s students at Southern Illinois University, Millie Angleton, a school teacher, who recorded the piece from Henry Hall, her husband’s grandfather.

2. Martin, Bogan, & Armstrong: “Knox County Stomp”

Howard Armstrong, fiddle; Ted Bogan, guitar; Carl Martin, mandolin [see notes below]; and L.C. Armstrong, bowed bass [see notes below]. Original release on *Barnyard Dance*, Flying Fish 2003, recorded Chicago, 1972. Recording used by permission.

Howard Armstrong (1909-2004) from Dayton, Tennessee, was playing mandolin in a family band by the age of nine. Roland Martin, a blind musician who fiddled for the coal miners on payday, inspired Armstrong to take up the fiddle, and soon they teamed up with Roland’s half-brother, Carl Martin. They worked dances and fish fries and broadcast on Knoxville radio. In 1930 they recorded two tunes as the Tennessee Chocolate Drops. “Knox County Stomp” showcased Armstrong on violin and Carl Martin in a virtuoso display on bowed bass. The two soon joined Ted Bogan, a medicine show musician, to form a trio that would still be performing a half-century later.

After several years on the road, the trio arrived in Chicago in 1932. Their wide-ranging repertoire made them well-suited for the Windy City. Besides busking for tips at the Maxwell Street market, they were booked into bars and clubs, even in white neighborhoods, helped along by their unique mix of jazz, blues, country, and pop novelties, along with Polish polkas and German waltzes. They played requests in several languages, featuring the singing of the self-educated, multi-lingual Armstrong.

Family responsibilities and the increasing use of jukeboxes eventually caused the trio’s breakup, after which Armstrong moved to Detroit. Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong reunited in 1970 and recorded three albums as “the last of the Black string bands.” The song included here appears to feature L.C. Armstrong, Howard’s brother, reprising Martin’s bowed bass part from the 1930 recording. (The mandolin is not easily discerned in the mix, so it is possible that Martin played bass again.) Howard Armstrong survived both Martin and Bogan by two decades and performed until his death.

3. Tommy Dandurand & His Barn Dance Fiddlers: “Larry O’Gaff” (Public Domain)

Tommy Dandurand, fiddle; Rube Tronson, fiddle; and Ed Goodreau, caller. Original release, Gennett 6101, recorded Chicago, ca. March 24, 1927. Recording used by permission.

U.S. Census records tell of Tommy Dandurand’s changing fortunes: in 1920, he was a streetcar motorman in Kankakee, but by 1930 he worked as an orchestra musician in Chicago. Dandurand served as staff “old-time fiddler” for the WLS National Barn Dance, beginning in

1924. Dandurand (1865-1943) was born to immigrants in the “Petit Canada” settlement, now Bourbonnais, in Kankakee County. That area along Davis Creek had a long history of square dancing to the music of fiddlers as ethnically varied as French Canadians Elois Marcotte and Joe LaTroumaine and the Michigan-born Scotsmen Greer and David McElvain. One famed early dance venue was a large house built by Virginian Samuel Davis: “The entire upstairs was devoted to a dancing floor and was lighted with tallow candles that glimmered feebly over a varied company of young people from the country and the town.”¹

Tommy Dandurand & His Barn Dance Fiddlers recorded fourteen traditional dance tunes for the Gennett label in 1927, preserving rare examples of an archaic Anglo-American regional tradition of “seconding” on the fiddle. Dandurand played melody, while Rube Tronson, a young Wisconsinite, bowed rhythmic chords on the lower strings. Ed Goodreau, also of Kankakee, provided square dance calls. This is the first Dandurand 78 rpm recording to be reissued on CD.

4. *Sones de México* Ensemble: “Cielito Lindo” (Public Domain, new lyrics Juan Dies). Juan Rivera, fiddle and vocal; Victor Pichardo, fiddle, *huapangera* and vocal; Renato Cerón, fiddle and vocal; Juan Díes, *guitarrón* and vocal; Lorena Íñiguez, *vihuela*; and Joel Martínez, drums. Recorded Steve Yates Studio, Morton Grove, Illinois, June 15, 2005. Steve Yates, engineer; Bucky Halker, producer.

Since its inception in 1994, *Sones de México* Ensemble has spawned a public revival of traditional Mexican music in Chicago and throughout the United States. With the recent addition of virtuoso violinist Juan Rivera, the fiddle often takes center stage among the twenty-plus instruments used in performance.

Rivera was born on a farm in 1977 in Michoacan, in southwestern Mexico, near the Pacific Coast. At age four, he began singing with his brother. Their parents sent the teenage brothers to Mexico City for further schooling in Mexican music, where Juan was introduced to the violin. Rivera chose to study traditional music under Rolando Hernández, famed leader of the *Trío Chicontepic* and proponent of *son huasteco*, a popular regional style of folk music characteristic of the Gulf Coast. After three years of study, he joined the National Folkloric Ballet. Juan then relocated to Chicago, where he found work in *mariachi* bands. After a hiatus in southern California, he decided “I’m not a *mariachi* man,” and returned to Chicago to focus on *huapango* and other traditional styles as a member of *Sones de México*.

Sones was formed when ethnomusicologist Juan Díes was introduced to Victor Pichardo, also newly arrived in Chicago. Pichardo was born in Mexico City in 1961, and made a name as a member of the traditional trio *Zazhi* and as accompanist for singer Ampara Ochoa. A multi-instrumentalist, Pichardo was especially enraptured with the fiddle-led *son huasteco* (also known as *huapango*). With his vast background in research and performing, and a large collection of traditional folk instruments, he became the artistic director of the group. Concurrently, he started a *mariachi* program at Benito Juárez High School in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood. There he identified a promising student, Renato Cerón, who apprenticed with Victor, learning fiddle, harp, accordion, and a variety of stringed instruments. Later Cerón became a full-fledged member of *Sones de México*.

All three violinists can be heard on this distinctive *son huasteco* rendition of “*Cielito Lindo*,” a widely known Mexican folk song. Díes lays down a bass line on the *guitarrón*, while Pichardo strums the 6/8 *huapango* rhythm on the guitar-like *huapanguera* and Lorena Íñiguez plays a similar plucked lute, the *vihuela*.

5. Fr. Dukli Wiejska Banda: “Pomalusku Nawracajcie (Slowly Return) Obertas”

Franciszek Dukla (also Dukli), fiddle; Jan Wanat, vocal; additional musicians unknown. Original release, Victor 79445, recorded Chicago, June 17, 1927. Recording used by permission.

By the second decade of commercial recording, record companies discovered a market in various urban ethnic enclaves for Old World folk songs and melodies. Company representatives first turned to trained singers and orchestra arrangements. But in the 1920s, a remarkable Polish merchant in Chicago, Władysław Sajewski, worked with Victor and Columbia to recruit talented but untrained musicians among working class immigrants who patronized his North Side store.

One of the first musicians to record traditional Polish dance music in the Old World village style was Franciszek Dukla, a Carpathian immigrant. Dukla's *Wiejska Banda* (Village Orchestra) played in an authentic rural style featuring violin and clarinet lead, with two chording fiddles and a bowed bass. Over the span of two years, beginning in December 1926, Dukla's ensemble recorded forty-four sides for Victor. Most were polkas, waltzes, *krakowiaks*, *obereks*, and other folk dance pieces. In the mid-1970s, Alvin Sajewski, who worked in his father's store for sixty years, remembered the Dukla group:

. . . they were all old musicians, and they all played by ear. None of 'em played from music. Maybe some of them did, but they didn't have any arrangements or anything. They just went in, sat down, and said "Well, what are we going to play?" . . . "Well, this one or this one?" "You start, okay?" And there they'd go.²

6. Artie P. Crowder & the Tennessee Railsplitters: "Sail Away Ladies" (Public Domain)

Artie P. Crowder, fiddle; Bill Jackson, banjo; and Vern Henning, bass. Original release on *Fiddlin' Sounds of the Old Man from the Mountain*, self-produced, recorded Gary, Indiana, ca. 1975. Recording used by permission.

"Artie P. was the best old-time hoedown fiddler I ever heard. I used to dance my fool head off when he played." So said Acie Cargill, a transplanted Kentuckian and bluegrass musician living in Dolton. Crowder inspired several generations of old time and bluegrass musicians in the south suburbs and greater Chicago area.

Crowder (1908-1986) was born in Lincoln County, Tennessee. His father was a fiddler who passed on the tradition to his five children. Artie P. lived his first forty years in Tennessee and worked as a logger for the Jack Daniels Distillery before moving in 1951 to Illinois, where Crowder's wife had family. They eventually settled in Harvey. A machinist by trade, Crowder retired in 1973, but continued to perform until his death.

From the 1950s onward, he performed every weekend at house parties, taverns, lodges, and festivals in the vicinity of the south suburbs. A long-time associate was Harold Lamb, a younger guitar player, who was often at the Crowder house for Sunday dinner followed by music sessions. For some years, they played informally. Then a local musician started booking them at folk music events, including a job at Moraine Valley Community College, for which they needed a name and a publicity photo. Crowder said, "I always worked as a logger, so call us the Railsplitters." The band became a favorite at bluegrass and folk festivals in Illinois, Indiana, and beyond. They recorded two self-produced, long-playing albums at Bud Pressner's studio in Gary, Indiana, one of which featured only Crowder's fiddling. His "Sail Away Ladies" is like no other version of the tune.

7. Liz Carroll: "Medley of Reels: A Paddy Fahey Reel/The Tempest" (Public Domain)

Liz Carroll, violin. Recorded Woodside Avenue Music, Evanston, Illinois, June 11, 2004. Steve Rashid, engineer.

Liz Carroll (1956-) grew up with Irish music all around her. In 1951, her father, Kevin Carroll, arrived from County Offaly with a button-box accordion. Carroll started on accordion at

age five, but when she was nine, she followed the tradition of her maternal grandfather and took up the fiddle. Like John McGreevy (*See Track 15*) a generation before her, Carroll was introduced to the violin by nuns at school, but chose the aural tradition of Irish instrumental music. Though it was unusual then for American-born Irish kids to be learning Irish music, she immersed herself in the traditional music she heard at Irish Musicians Association sessions, learning both tunes and techniques. Again, like McGreevy, she developed a style singularly her own but completely Irish; she composed a large stock of new tunes that sound traditional.

Carroll made her mark early in 1974 when she took first place in a youth division at the All-Ireland competition. The next year she won first place in the senior division. By 1988, she had three solo albums to her credit and she recorded two more in the 1990s as part of the group Trian. She has since recorded three more solo albums.

The “Paddy Fahey reel” that opens this medley is one of the many compositions of a Galway fiddler with a strong preference for the key of G minor. “The Tempest” found in *O’Neill’s Music of Ireland* is written in a standard major key signature. Following traditional practices, Carroll plays the tune in what some call “dorian mode,” by flattening the third and seventh steps of the scale.

8. Eddie South & His Orchestra: “Gotta Go!” (Scholl-Rich).

Eddie South, violin and vocal scattling; Everett Barksdale, guitar and vocal; Antonia Spaulding, piano; Milt Hinton, bass; and Jimmy Bertrand, drums. Original release, Victor 24343, recorded Chicago, June 12, 1933. Song and recording used by permission.

Eddie South (1904-1962) was a violin prodigy given early tutelage in popular and classical music. South continued his classical studies at the Chicago College of Music, where he also received coaching in jazz. When he discovered the doors of the symphonic world closed to African-Americans, the teenaged South began working in nightclubs. By his early twenties, as jazz emerged, South fronted Jimmy Wade’s Syncopators at the Moulin Rouge, and soon led his own group, the Alabamians.

South’s career spanned jazz history from the traditional ensemble sound of early jazz through the swing era and the emergence of be-bop. The 1930s saw several trips to Europe, California, and New York, but he always returned to Chicago. On a 1937 visit to Paris, he recorded some memorable duets with Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli. Through the 1950s, South led his own groups and enjoyed long engagements in New York, Los Angeles, and

Chicago. South, known as “The Dark Angel of the Violin,” worked at the DuSable Hotel in Chicago just prior his death.³

9. Polish Highlanders: “Medley of Wedding Tunes” (Public Domain)

Maciej Stopka, lead fiddle; Andrezej Chrobak, second fiddle; Jacek Sek and Andrew Tokarz, *kontras* [violins tuned Hungarian style]; Kuba Baraniak, *basy* [old-style cello]; and Zdzislaw Miernicki and Robert Skik, vocals. Recorded Woodside Avenue Music, Evanston, Illinois, July 15, 2004. Steve Rashid, engineer.

The Polish Highlanders are musical ambassadors for the Polish Highlanders Lodge on the Southwest Side of Chicago. Their *muzyka Góralaska* hearkens back to rural music-making in the Podhale region of the Tatra Mountains in southeastern Poland. First recorded commercially by immigrants in Chicago in the 1920s, this style still thrives as emblematic of their distinctive immigrant culture, and the lodge provides a place for the community to mark weddings, christenings, and even funerals. Music and dance form an integral part of such celebrations.

Attired in traditional costumes with elaborate hand-stitched embroidery, the Highlanders perform an archaic mountain music that features two or more fiddles—one playing lead, the others playing “*kontra*” or rhythm—and a bowed cello held horizontally on a strap, giving the musicians the freedom to parade. Though instrumentation is similar to the old-style Polish village orchestra (*See Track 5*), this is a completely different musical idiom. Formerly, the music was a male domain in public, but today the performing groups often include young women as instrumentalists, dancers, and singers.

The leader of the group, Andrew Tokarz, was born in Chicago in 1957 to immigrant parents. Interested in carrying on traditional music, he studied the violin to master rudimentary instrumental techniques and musical structure. By hanging out at the lodge where older musicians would play, Tokarz also received the encouragement and informal training by which traditional music is passed on. Aside from Tokarz, only Miernicki (1974-) had reached the age of thirty at the time of this recording. Most came from Zakopane, the capital of the Podhale region.

10. Noah Beavers: “Going to London to Get Me a Wife” (Public Domain)

Noah Beavers, fiddle; and Garry Harrison, guitar. Previously unreleased. From the collection of the Tarble Arts Center, Eastern Illinois University. Recorded Charleston, Illinois, April 28, 1977. Engineer: unknown. Recording used by permission.

Noah Beavers (1899-1990) lived most of his life in Elkhart, Jackson County, Illinois. During the 1970s, he provided music at the state historical site in Prairie du Rocher and made several appearances at the annual Celebration of the Arts at Eastern Illinois University. A number of Beavers' old-time square dance tunes—"Old Kentucky Whiskey," "Billy Butler," and "Rabbit in the Woodpile"—have been recorded by musicians from succeeding generations, such as the Indian Creek Delta Boys, the Volo Bogtrotters, and Lynn "Chirps" Smith (*See Track 20*). "**Going to London to Get me a Wife**" is a version of the well-known "Cotton-Eyed Joe."

11. The Nyen Family: "Waltz in A" (Public Domain)

Konrad Nyen, fiddle; Alvin Nyen, mandolin; Ray Nyen, guitar; and, Kerry Nyen, guitar. Original release on *Tunes from the Amerika Trunk: Traditional Norwegian-American Music from Wisconsin*, Folklore Village Farms Records, FVF 202, recorded Cross Plains, Wisconsin, ca. 1984. Recording used by permission.

The Nyen brothers were born and raised in Blair, Wisconsin, where their father Albert taught them to play. For decades, Albert Nyen and his three brothers, known as the "Big Four," had played for dances around Blair. At age twelve, Albert's son Ray (1930-) went to live with a family who soon moved to Roscoe, Illinois, where he has lived ever since. Konrad (1926-) moved to Belvidere, Illinois, around 1947; he and Ray played together for about fifty years. In Illinois, they played for family-based events, such as music parties, wedding receptions, and anniversary parties. They traveled frequently to Wisconsin, where, according to Ray, "The people really like old-time music."

Old-time music for the Nyens means schottisches and waltzes, mostly Norwegian, with some barn dances and country and western songs mixed in. Ray speaks Norwegian, but sings most often in English. Kerry (1959-) joined the family band on mandolin and fiddle and still preserves the old tunes.

12. Banjo Ikey Robinson: "Without a Dime" (Public Domain)

Bobby Waugh, fiddle; Jimmy Flowers, piano; and Banjo Ikey Robinson, banjo [possibly guitar, recording unclear]. Original release, Brunswick 7068, recorded Chicago, March 1, 1929. Recording used by permission.

Little is known about the fiddler on this straight-ahead example of early Chicago blues. Most discographies identify him as Robert Waugh. Before World War II, his fiddling was

recorded on eight sides, including two 1928 jazz pieces by J.C. Cobb & His Grains of Corn. The other six sides were waxed in 1929 with Banjo Ikey Robinson & His Bull Fiddle Band.

Other traces left behind, mostly from his local union membership records, suggest that the full story of Harold Robert “Bobby” Waugh would be worth knowing. Born in 1905, he joined the American Federation of Musicians in 1923 at age eighteen. In Chicago, that meant Local 208, since the dominant Local 10 was limited to whites. Bobby Waugh was his stage name and he listed his instruments as violin and guitar. He married sometime around 1959, and in 1970 was awarded a “Gold Life Membership Card” from the union. According to his 1975 death certificate, Waugh was born somewhere in Illinois. His usual occupation was listed as “Postal Clerk.”

Banjo Ikey Robinson, on the other hand, was professionally active from age fourteen until a year before his death in 1990. Born in 1904 in Virginia to parents who were semi-professional musicians, he relocated to Chicago in 1926 because work was plentiful, including a stint with the Alabamians (*See Track 8*). Robinson played blues and jazz on a variety of instruments.

13. Prairie Ramblers: “Kansas City Rag” (Public Domain)

Tex Atchison, fiddle; Chick Hurt, mandola; Jack Taylor, bass; Ken Houchins, guitar; and unknown caller. Original release, Conqueror 8831, recorded Chicago, March 9, 1937. Recording used by permission.

The Prairie Ramblers enjoyed a long tenure as a string band and western act on the WLS National Barn Dance. The band got their start in broadcasting in Davenport, Iowa, but changed their name from the Kentucky Ramblers when they came to WLS in 1932. For seven years they were paired with western singer and yodeler Patsy Montana, and became mainstays on the Barn Dance until they disbanded in 1958.

The fiddle was always prominent in the band’s sound. Eight fiddlers would eventually play with the Ramblers, including Alan Crockett, part of the Crockett Family who introduced mountain music on California radio, and Wade Ray, a Hoosier who later retired to southern Illinois. But it was fiddler Tex Atchison who set the high mark for the others: a creative blend of driving hoedowns and inventive take-off solos in the manner popular in jazz.

Shelby David “Tex” Atchison (1912-) was born in Rosine, Kentucky, the birthplace of Bill Monroe (*See Track 14*). Because of a broken wrist, the impatient teen learned to play left-handed on a right-handed fiddle. Before his twentieth birthday he was performing on radio in Evansville and playing fiddle, clarinet, and sax in a band that did old-time country and jazz-influenced pop music.⁴ Both musical idioms shine through in the Ramblers’ many records from the 1930s. Atchison left the Prairie Ramblers in 1938 and landed in California. He enjoyed a long career there as a fiddler and singer. He also appeared in over thirty western movies. He retired to Kentucky, but lived in Collinsville, Illinois when he died.

“Kansas City Rag” is a distinctive and highly melodic version of a fiddle breakdown known by a variety of names, such as “Devil on a Stump” and “Fun’s All Over.”

14. Alison Krauss & Union Station: “Windy City Rag” (K. Baker, Winwood Music)

Alison Krauss, fiddle; John Pennell, bass; Brent Truitt, mandolin; Jeff White, guitar; and Mike Harmon, banjo. Original release on *Two Highways*, Rounder 0265, recorded Nashville, Tennessee, 1989. Song and recording used by permission.

Alison Krauss (1971-) was raised in Champaign, Illinois. She started playing violin in kindergarten, and at age nine entered her first fiddle contest. Within a few years, she was exposed to large contests like the National Oldtime Fiddlers' Contest in Weiser, Idaho. At twelve, she was attracted to the bluegrass music of such young artists as Ricky Skaggs and J.D. Crowe. Krauss quickly emerged as a bluegrass star, and at fifteen recorded her first album for Rounder Records. In 1990, at age eighteen, she won a Grammy for her second Rounder album, *Two Highways*. Today Krauss is best known as a vocalist and her fiddle prowess is relegated to secondary status.

Composer credit for “Windy City Rag” goes to Kenny Baker, longtime sideman for fellow Kentuckian Bill Monroe, the “father of bluegrass.” Monroe began his musical career when he left the Whiting, Indiana, oil refineries for a square dance troupe on the National Barn Dance. A fifty-year member of the Grand Ol’ Opry, Monroe maintained his Chicago ties throughout his career. He and his Blue Grass Boys, often with Baker on fiddle, performed annually at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago.

15. Pat Roche's Harp & Shamrock Band: "The Boys of Bluehill/ The Stack of Wheat (Public Domain)

John McGreevy, fiddle; Eleanore Kane, piano; Pat Roche, step dancing; Jim Donnelly, fiddle; Pat McGovern, flute; Packey Walsh, button-box accordion; and Pat Richardson, drums. Original release, Decca 12007, recorded Chicago, October 25, 1934. Recording used by permission.

John McGreevy's parents came from Counties Connemara and Mayo in Ireland to Chicago, where John was born in 1919. After hearing an uncle play the accordion, he felt the urge to learn an instrument. After a few violin lessons from nuns at school, McGreevy began to play by ear, picking up Irish tunes and figuring out a distinctive Irish style for ornamenting melodies with the left hand and working the bow with the right. A major influence was a friend, Jimmy Neary, a native of County Mayo, whose Chicago home was the scene of many traditional Irish music sessions.

McGreevy spent many hours studying and recreating the classic 78 rpm recordings of the great *Sligo* fiddlers, Michael Coleman, James Morrison, and Paddy Killoran. But geographical regions had little influence in the immigrant community, thousands of miles away from their homeland. Stylistic dialects are easily transcended when a musician learns from recordings and personal contacts with a large number of musicians. John rightfully claimed, "I've got a kind of a style of my own."

Though he played only semi-professionally, John's role as an important musician in Chicago's Irish community was established while he was a teenager. In 1934, he recorded for Decca with Pat Roche's Harp and Shamrock Band, a group featured at the Irish Village at the Century of Progress World's Fair in Chicago that year. This was the first American Irish ensemble to record in the *ceili* band lineup promoted by such nationalist groups as the Gaelic League. Through the 1940s and '50s, McGreevy appeared at *ceilis* (social dances), *feisanna* (Irish dance competitions), benefit concerts for Ireland, and with an historic 1959 tour of Ireland, as part of a troupe of sixteen Chicago-born musicians, singers, and dancers. Tour organizer Frank Thornton recalled that "Johnny McGreevy played like a house a-fire" in the twenty-three concerts given to demonstrate the strength of Irish traditions in Chicago. McGreevy died in 1990 at age seventy-one.

16. Harvey “Pappy” Taylor: “Wolf Creek” (Public Domain)

Harvey “Pappy Taylor,” fiddle. Previously unreleased. From the collection of the Tarble Arts Center, Eastern Illinois University. Recorded by Garry Harrison, Pappy Taylor home, Effingham, Illinois, April 15, 1979. Recording used by permission.

Harvey “Pappy” Taylor (1894-1987) was born near Effingham, Illinois, and lived at times in West Virginia, Ohio, and Arkansas, as he followed the trade of a railroad “tie-hacker.” Unlike many in his generation, he played continuously throughout his life. For forty years, he got together every Sunday with guitarist Mike Wilson for sessions that often included recording tunes on a disc-cutting machine that Wilson built from a kit. In later years, Taylor played every Saturday night at the Midway Tap, near Effingham, for older audiences who danced schottisches to his old-time tunes.

Pappy Taylor’s repertoire included numerous rare, older breakdowns of the kind that led the Harrison brothers (*See Track 1*) to his door. In 1984, Pappy received the Illinois Traditional Musician Award, given by the Adler Cultural Center in Libertyville. In welcoming the crowd to the award concert, he said:

You know, I’ve been doing this for fifty-eight years at little places around here. And I thank you all for coming out, you know what I mean, and listening to what little I’ve got to do with the old time music, where I’ve tried to keep it going for all those years. I’ve lived and I’ve worked hard, but I still played music at night. I played every Saturday night, I hardly ever know when I had one at home. And I had two wives, and both of them is dead. But I played music, you know, before I got either one of them. I’m glad that you people like the old time music, because I think that’s the only kind of music there is in the world.

17. Nordic Cowboys: “Vallerskogsvalsen” (Public Domain)

Don Peterson, fiddle; Joe Hafer, five-string fiddle; and Paul Stewart, tenor banjo and keyboards. Original release on *Nordic Cowboys*, self-produced, recorded Champaign, Illinois, 2004. Recording used by permission.

Don Peterson (1933-) learned this traditional waltz out of a published tunebook from the Swedish province of Värmland. Born in Chicago, he grew up surrounded by Swedish music and culture in Norwood Park’s thriving ethnic community. His parents were immigrants, and Swedish was his first language. According to Peterson, when company came they often brought along instruments: “guitar, fiddles, accordions. We’d go down in the basement and they’d

dance.” He started by studying classical technique at North Park College, but his repertoire remained Scandinavian.

Peterson participated in a Swedish folk dance group as a youth and taught folk dancing as an adult. In the 1980s, when Peterson taught a few dancers to play the *nyckelhärpa* (Swedish keyed-fiddle), his dance group helped spawn a musical ensemble, Pickled Herrings,. After retirement, he moved downstate to Paxton, once the largest Swedish community in Illinois. In nearby Sibley, he found fiddler Joe Hafer, who appeared regularly at the country music “Opry” in Bellflower. They added multi-instrumentalist Paul Stewart and formed the Nordic Cowboys for a mix of bluegrass, country, and Scandinavian music.

18. Johnny Frigo & His Quintet, with Dick Marx: “What a Difference a Day Made”
(Grever-Adams).

Johnny Frigo, violin; Dick Marx, piano; Cy Touff, bass trumpet; Vic Val, tenor sax; Ray Brown, bass; and Phil Faieta, drums. Original release on *I Love John Frigo, He Swings*, Verve/Mercury B0001456-02, recorded Chicago, 1957. Song and recording used by permission.

Johnny Frigo, born in Chicago in 1916, began taking violin lessons at age seven from the local ragman’s son. After three years, the family could no longer afford 25 cents a week for lessons, so Frigo’s formal training ended. In junior high, he took up the instrument no one else wanted, the tuba, then borrowed a string bass to join the high school dance orchestra. He joined the Al Diehm Orchestra during his senior year, broadcasting nightly on KYW. For the next half century, Frigo’s violin gathered dust while he made his living as a bassist with Vic Abbs and the Four Californians, the Chico Marx Theater Touring Orchestra, Jimmy Dorsey, and others. He also played in a trio in New York with legendary jazz guitarist Herb Ellis and pianist Lou Carter.

Frigo returned to Chicago around 1950, where he teamed with Dick Marx and later Dick Reynolds for a long stint at the famed Mr. Kelly's on Rush Street. He began an incognito daytime engagement as strolling violinist at a hotel, and also had a Saturday night gig playing fiddle on the National Barn Dance with the Sage Riders.

After feature stories and rave review by jazz critics, multiple appearances on the *Tonight Show*, and a handful of new and old recordings issued on CD, the septuagenarian Frigo was hailed as the world's greatest jazz violinist. Not bad for a man whose first half century in the music business was associated with the bass fiddle! This 1957 recording of “What a Difference

a Day Made,” however, shows what some jazz lovers knew three decades earlier about the artistry Frigo achieved with jazz improvisations.

19. Sar Planina: “Oj Je Senske Duge No i/ Danilo’s Kolo” (Public Domain)

Mel Dokich, violin; Walter Pravica, violin; Marty Kapugi, *brac* and vocal; Frank Kapugi, vocal and *bugarija* [see notes below]; and Horace Mamula, bass. Previously unreleased. Recorded live, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, 1985. Recording used by permission.

Marty Kapugi (1910-), along with his younger brother Frank, was baptized in a Serbian church on Chicago’s South Side. Their mother soon moved them to Croatia, where Marty learned Serbian songs and was taught to play *tambura* (members of a family of guitar-like stringed instruments). In 1925, the brothers returned to the U.S. and eventually to Chicago. At first, Kapugi found it difficult to play with other Serbs and Croatians because they did not know the same tunes or dances.⁵ But a number of new immigrants wanted to dance *kolos* (Serbian circle dances), the music that Kapugi knew. So, with the support of a local Serbian lodge, Kapugi began teaching and playing *kolos* at weekly assemblies that attracted more than three hundred dancers. He took over a fifteen-piece *tamburitza* orchestra, *Sar Planina*, in 1930. They made their first recordings in 1933, and a decade later the Kapugi Brothers began recording under their own name with either Bela Balog, a Hungarian-Romany, or Mel Dokich on violin.

Milovan “Mel” Dokich was born to Croatian parents in Pittsburgh. He learned violin from his Serbian stepfather, Djoko Dokich, a professional musician. After World War II, Dokich and his stepfather lived in Detroit, but traveled regularly to Chicago to play with the Kapugi Brothers at their west side Tamburitza Café. When the tavern closed in the 1950s, Kapugi went on the road and Dokich relocated to Chicago for long stints in several small *tamburitza* ensembles. During the 1980s, Dokich played in groups led by Marty Kapugi under the names Balkan Strings and *Sar Planina*. Dokich died in the mid-1980s, shortly after the live concert excerpted here.

Walter Pravica also played violin in this lineup, with Marty Kapugi on *brac*, Frank Kapugi on *bugarija* (both four-stringed plucked lutes, slightly smaller than a guitar), and Horace Mamula on string bass. “*Oj Je Senske Duge No i*” is a Serbian song about autumn evenings, which is followed by the fast-paced dance tune, “*Danilo’s Kolo*.” The latter, a standard in the repertoire of Chicago-area *tamburitza* bands, was brought to the region from Yugoslavia by

Danilo Kozarski. Displaced by the war in Europe, Kozarski had been part of a band of six brothers who were popular there before World War II.

20. Stephanie Coleman, Chirps Smith & Paul Tyler: “Ol’ Woodard’s Tune” (Public Domain)

Stephanie Coleman, fiddle; Chirps Smith, fiddle; and Paul Tyler, fiddle. Recorded at Woodside Avenue Music, Evanston, Illinois, January 31, 2004. Steve Rashid, engineer; Paul Tyler and Bucky Halker, producers.

The last fiddler on this collection is the youngest: Stephanie Coleman of Glenview (1986-). Her father was a violinist who got turned on to old-time fiddling during the 1960s and ’70s folk revival. With others from that circle of musicians around the Chicago Barn Dance Company, he made annual pilgrimages to old-time music festivals in Indiana and West Virginia. When his daughter expressed an interest in the fiddle, he sought out Paul Tyler, a fiddle teacher at Chicago’s Old Town School of Folk Music. Starting at age nine, she came to the Tyler house every Saturday morning to soak up tunes. Soon she received an Illinois Arts Council-sponsored apprenticeship with Lynn “Chirps” Smith of Grayslake. Both Tyler and Smith were members of the old-time string band, the Volo Bogtrotters, and Coleman’s education in fiddle came from spending time with the band. In 1997, Coleman won the Junior Division fiddle contest at the Appalachian String Band Festival at Camp Washington Carver in West Virginia. She has been one of five finalists in the Open Division three times, placing third in 2005.

Chirps Smith (1952-) was born in Pekin and raised in Charleston, where he would later meet the Harrison brothers (*See Track 1*). Inspired by Garry Harrison’s ability and passion for old-time fiddling, Smith took up the mandolin and eventually the fiddle. After moving to Chicago in 1978, he played at weekly dances sponsored by the Chicago Barn Dance Company, and helped form the Volo Bogtrotters in the mid-1980s.

“Ol’ Woodard’s Tune” might not actually be from “Ol’ Woodard.” Smith learned it from a tape dubbed from Garry Harrison’s field recordings. If he didn’t get the tunes mixed up, this one came from Eldon Skaggs of Stoy, Illinois, who got it from Ol’ Woodard, probably a fiddler from a previous generation. Coleman plays the melody, Smith plays high harmony, and Tyler fiddles low harmony.

Notes

¹. Genealogical information on Dandurand provided courtesy of Dave King, Momence, IL. The Davis quote appears in Burt Burroughs, *Legends and Tales of Homeland on the Kankakee* (Chicago: Regan Printing House, 1923), 72.

². Richard K. Spottswood, "The Sajewski Story: Eighty Years of Polish Music," in *Ethnic Recordings in America: A Neglected Heritage* (American Folklife Center. Library of Congress, 1982), 143.

³. John Chilton, *Who's Who of Jazz*, (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Co., 1972), 349.

⁴. Wayne W. Daniel, "The Prairie Ramblers and Their Fiddlers," *The Devil's Box* 30 (Fall 1996), 14-20.

⁵. From a 2005 conversation with Milan Opacich, leader of the *Drina* Orchestra. Many Chicago-area bands included both Croatian and Serbian members, but they had to be careful about audiences. Serbs wanted "a thousand *kolos*," whereas Croatians wanted only a few *kolos* mixed in with polkas, waltzes, and tangos. Croatians also danced a circle dance known as *drmes*.

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