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PERFORMING COMMUNITY: THE PLACE OF MUSIC, RACE AND GENDER IN PRODUCING APPALACHIAN SPACE

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PERFORMING COMMUNITY: THE PLACE OF MUSIC, RACE AND GENDER
IN PRODUCING APPALACHIAN SPACE

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

Deborah J. Thompson

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Richard H. Schein, Professor of Geography

Lexington, Kentucky

2012

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

PERFORMING COMMUNITY: THE PLACE OF MUSIC, RACE AND GENDER IN PRODUCING APPALACHIAN SPACE

Traditional, participatory music is a powerful medium through which people express and shape their ideas about identity, mobility, social relations, and belonging, and through which people are in turn shaped. The everyday cultural practices of playing, sharing, and dancing to traditional music, as well as discussions about the nature of traditional music and production of events involving traditional music, all work to construct the region called Appalachia.

Through this dissertation, I seek to answer some simple questions that have complicated answers involving place, identity, power, and social relations, with economic, social, and emotional ramifications: Who gets to be an Appalachian musician? How is this accomplished? Who gets to decide? Using a social constructionist theoretical base and drawing on such literatures as cultural geography, music geography, musicology and ethnomusicology, Appalachian studies, and critical regionalism, I employ ethnographic techniques, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and discourse analysis to understand the workings of old time music and the self-understanding of musicians that play and sing traditional music in eastern Kentucky, a core area of Appalachia.

This dissertation shows that vernacular roots music in eastern Kentucky is both an inclusive and a contested phenomenon. In describing and analyzing the spaces for music in Appalachia, the old-time community in eastern Kentucky, the dynamics of festival hiring negotiations, and interviews with white and African American musicians, both male and female, I show how Appalachian space is produced simultaneously on many different scales. This construction is a dialectical process, articulating between the power expressed on a micro scale between individuals and the power used by individuals and institutions to define the region through representation. This dissertation demonstrates two main processes: how Appalachian space is negotiated and produced through interactions at jam sessions and other events, and how the musicians perform community in these interstitial moments.

Contributions of this dissertation include attention to micro scale interactions and embodiment as a key component of spatial production, participant observation as a research method in music geography, and increased understanding of the performance of race and gender in cultural and spatial production.

KEYWORDS: Appalachian music, music geography, African Americans in Appalachia, gender and music, social production of space

Deborah J. Thompson

Student's signature

April 11, 2012

Date

PERFORMING COMMUNITY: THE PLACE OF MUSIC,
RACE AND GENDER IN PRODUCING APPALACHIAN SPACE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iii
List of Figures	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Appalachia, Authenticity, and Authority: Emplacing the Music	3
1.2 Power of Music, Embodiment, Performance	6
1.3 Contributions of This Dissertation.....	9
1.4 Plan of Work	12
Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks and Literature Review.....	17
2.1 Music Geographies	17
2.1.1 Music, Identity, Region, and Representation.....	23
2.1.2 Identity.....	26
2.2 Producing Appalachian Space.....	27
2.2.1 History of the Production of Appalachian Space	29
2.2.2 Authenticity and Insider/Outsider Distinctions	31
2.2.3 Appalachian Identity: Its Definition and Value.....	33
2.3 Integrating Concepts.....	37
2.3.1 Scale.....	37
2.3.2 Community.....	40
2.3.3 Power	44
2.3.4 Habits.....	46

2.3.5	Interstices.....	47
2.4	Contributions to the literature.....	48
Chapter Three: Defining the Music		50
3.1	Is it Folk? Vernacular? Traditional? Roots Music?	51
3.2	Old-Time Music and the Search for Authenticity.....	59
3.3	Bluegrass Style and Instrumentation	66
3.4	Distinctions between Old-time and Bluegrass Music	68
3.4.1	Instrumentation	69
3.4.2	Instruments and Gear-heads	73
3.4.3	Retuning, Banjo Jokes, Race, and the Image of the Banjo Player	74
3.5	So...What Does It Sound Like?.....	79
3.6	Participatory versus Presentational Musics	81
Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology.....		85
4.1	Introduction to Sites and Subjects.....	85
4.2	Introduction to Research Design and Rationale for Methodology.....	89
4.2.1	Dissertation Activities.....	95
4.2.2	Ethnography and Participant Observation	98
4.2.3	Interviews	102
4.3	Content Analysis.....	107
4.4	Focus and Politics of the Research	108
4.4.1	Power Dynamics, and the Social Construction of Fieldwork.....	110
4.4.2	Personal Background and Insider/Outsider Status	111

Chapter 5: Old-Time Music’s Community: People and Places.....	116
5.1 Eastern Kentucky’s Old-Time Music Network.....	116
5.1.1 Mobility	121
5.2 How Music Works to Create Appalachian Space	125
5.2.1 Authenticity and Connections of Music with People and Places	125
5.2.2 Authenticity as a Function of Scale	128
5.2.3 Networks and Authority in the Reinscription of Privilege	129
5.3 Spaces for Vernacular Roots Music in Appalachia.....	132
5.3.1 Production of Space through Old-Time vs Bluegrass Tension	150
5.5 Conclusion: How Music Produces Communities and Localities	162
Chapter 6: Jam Sessions	166
6.1 How Jam Sessions Work.....	167
6.1.1 How Old-Time Jams Work	174
6.1.2 How Bluegrass Jams Work	176
6.2 Jam Sessions under Consideration.....	177
6.2.1 Appalshop Jam Sessions.....	178
6.2.2 Jam Sessions at Berea College’s Appalachian Center	182
6.2.3 Jammin’ on the Porch: Old Town, Berea	184
6.2.4 “Pickin’ in the Pound:” Pound, Virginia Town Hall.....	186
6.2.5 Jam Session at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park	191
6.3 Time and Place of Jam Sessions	193

6.4 Leadership and Audience Presence	195
6.4 Mechanisms at Work in Old-Time Jam Sessions	199
6.4.1 The Music.....	200
6.4.2 Social Elements of Old-Time Jam Sessions	203
Chapter 7: Gender in Appalachian Music	211
7.1 Gender in Recent Studies of Old-Time Music	213
7.2 Representations of Gender in Appalachian Music.....	218
7.3 Female Participation in Eastern Kentucky Music Communities.....	225
7.4 Gendered Mechanisms in the Old-Time Music Community	228
7.4.1 Inclusion/Exclusion in Old-Time Music.....	232
7.4.2 Gendered Instrumentation	236
7.4.3 Embodiment	239
7.4.3 Prestige and Value System in Old-Time Music	241
7.5 Conclusions	248
Chapter 8: Berea College’s Celebration of Traditional Music	251
8.1 Introduction to Berea College and the Celebration of Traditional Music.....	256
8.2 Context of American Festivals.....	258
8.3 The Celebration of Traditional Music: Its Beginning and Purpose.....	263
8.4 Documentation of the CTM	266
8.5 Defining the Region and Authenticity: The Importance of Networks	268
8.6 African American Performers in the CTM: The Limits of Networks.....	279
8.7 Participation of Other Ethnic Groups in the CTM	288

8.8 Gender in the CTM.....	291
8.9 Conclusions.....	294
Chapter 9: Traditional African American Music in Appalachia	297
9.1 The Carolina Chocolate Drops: Race, Region, and Authenticity.....	298
9.2 History of African Americans in Appalachia and Their Music.....	303
9.3 Interviews with African American Appalachian Musicians.....	313
9.4 Research Findings.....	315
9.5 Conclusions.....	333
Chapter 10: Conclusions.....	336
10.1 Future Directions for Research and Models for Inclusion.....	336
10.2 Conclusions.....	340
Appendices.....	346
Appendix A: Musical Events for Field Research.....	346
Appendix B1: Interview Questions for Old-Time Musicians, version 1	349
Appendix B2: Interview Questions for Old-Time Musicians, version 2	352
Appendix C: Questions for Music Producers.....	355
Appendix D: Record of Interviews	356
Appendix E: Record of Archival Information on the CTM.....	358
References	361
VITA	378

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 7.1:Percentage of musicians by race and gender in selected recent studies of old-time music214

Figure 8.1: Participation of women in the Celebration of Traditional Music, 1974-2004.....293

Chapter 1: Introduction

Traditional, participatory music is a powerful medium through which people express, shape and are shaped by ideas about identity, mobility, social relations, and belonging. Its “pre-industrial” sounds evoke and connect its players to the past and to a place, whether that past and place are specific to the musicians through association of particular tunes to the people from whom they learned them, through remembering past contexts when they played the tunes, or through an imagined re-enactment of an idealized heritage. Old-time music, as symbolized by its name, conjures the past, with deep roots in and constant referencing to Appalachia, a place that is also often connected to the past as well as to rural, egalitarian and self-sufficient values.¹ Old-time music is grounded in participation; through face-to-face contact and “sonic bonding” it is repeated and ritualized. Although made in the context of the past, the social bonding produced through enacting the music and responding to the minute shifts and intensive variation of the musicking creates a suspension of time, leaving the participants in the present (Turino 2008). The cultural practices of playing, sharing, and dancing to traditional music, and of producing events involving traditional music, thus fix community in place and create a place some have described as utopian (Wooley 2003).

The social construction of a close-knit community and an idealized Appalachian region, however, excludes as well as includes, and despite discourses of egalitarianism in this “conjured utopia,” normative power relations are reinscribed in the music-making,

¹ Old-time music has both a general meaning that includes European-based folk music from other parts of the United States, and a more specific, Appalachian string band-based music with a national following. I am using the more specific definition here, although my observations might be extended to include other participatory old-time musics.

especially those created through the workings of race and gender. Which musicians and singers belong to this community, which of them are chosen to represent the music and the region in various venues, and who does the choosing are important questions with economic, social, and emotional ramifications. This dissertation seeks to answer some simple questions that have very complicated answers involving place, identity, power, and social relations: Who gets to be an Appalachian musician? How is this accomplished? Who gets to decide?

I explore the power of music and its claims and links to Appalachian authenticity to produce a place called Appalachia. I challenge the social boundaries created by institutions that attempt to define the region through its music. I seek to understand the workings of music and the representations and self-understanding of musicians that participate in vernacular roots musicking in Appalachia. In order to do so, I draw on literatures of music geography, musicology and ethnomusicology, folklore studies, Appalachian studies, and critical regionalism. I employ critical feminist methodologies, including ethnographic techniques of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, as well as discourse analysis.

Using a theoretical lens of social construction helps tease apart actions and discourses that are so embedded in daily life they are difficult to see. Through this lens, the dissertation focuses on three sites of the complex musical life of Appalachia that help answer my questions: 1) the old-time music community in eastern Kentucky; 2) the structure and production of a folk festival, the Celebration of Traditional Music (CTM), which strives to represent a diverse cross-section of the traditional music of Appalachia; and 3) Appalachian African American singers and musicians.

Before introducing my theoretical frameworks and the literatures that support my research, it is important to introduce the region, ideas of authenticity, and the importance of music to our understandings of Appalachia.

1.1 Appalachia, Authenticity, and Authority: Emplacing the Music

Appalachia is a region often represented in the American psyche as a place where the past lives on, and nostalgic desires are often projected onto the region by mainstream culture (Hufford 2002b). The lived experience of Appalachian people, however, is firmly in the present, and there is a great variety of localities with differences in geology, economy, and local histories. As with all socially constructed places, Appalachia is shifting, fluid, and contingent on the experiences of people who occupy simultaneous positions in society. The region is quite diverse and large; depending on how it is defined; about 25 million people occupying over 200,000 square miles might be considered to be Appalachian as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission. The region contains a wide variety of population patterns, from large, metropolitan statistical areas such as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Knoxville, Tennessee; to smaller urban centers, including Pikeville, Kentucky, and Clarksburg, West Virginia; university towns such as Morgantown, West Virginia, and Athens, Ohio; all the way to the small county seat cities and rural areas that the word Appalachia usually brings to mind.

Appalachian-ness is highly embodied and highly place-oriented. Expressions of Appalachian authenticity rely greatly on birth location and length of time an individual lives in the region, as well as the birth locations and residence of nuclear and extended families. This will be shown in Chapter 8's discussion of which musicians may be invited to the Celebration of Traditional Music. Cultural traits, such as foodways, naming conventions,

and dialect mark Appalachians as different from the rest of America (Allen 1994, Jones 1997). Histories of exploitation and appropriation of cultural productions – in addition to land and resources – by outsiders and local elites contribute to defensive postures by Appalachians that rely on insider status conferred through embodiment, such as those expressed by Christine Ballengee Morris in her dissertation on cultural colonialism (1995), leading to entrenchment of divisions between insiders and outsiders and questions about who can speak for Appalachia (Fisher 1993). Representations of Appalachia also involve embodiment in terms of skin color and race, as they are overwhelmingly white, contributing to black invisibility in the region, and serving to construct black Appalachian people as “other” in a land already designated as “other” to America (Pudup, Billings and Waller 1995, Turner and Cabbell 1985, Walker 2000, McGhee 2008a). Gender is certainly an important component of any representation, though it is so normalized that attention to it is minimized (Engelhardt 2005). Appalachia continues to be portrayed as being more patriarchal or male-dominant than middle-class America, yet there are also stock male and female characters in fiction, film, and non-fiction that create the comically hen-pecked hillbilly husband in the mold of cartoon characters Snuffy Smith and Loweezy to emasculate Appalachian males (Williamson 1995).

Because music is a very embodied and spatial mode of expression, geographical theories of space and social relations help dissect the power relations that produce the spaces in which the music is played and influence the work of music in producing a sense of Appalachian space. In eastern Kentucky, the topography, history, and social relations combine to form particular spaces that influence and are influenced by the music. Public space for participatory music has declined because of school consolidation and closure of

post offices and stores, all of which were exacerbated by road construction and relatively cheap gas prices which have encouraged mountain residents to travel farther for shopping and services. The semi-public spaces, such as churches, youth centers, and even gymnasiums that exist in the mountains are mostly supported by religious groups, whose orientation certainly affects the types of music played in those spaces. The particular religious beliefs of these groups might also affect the acceptance of secular music, or even whether musical instruments are welcome, and what kinds of instruments are deemed proper in that space.

One issue that remains contentious in Appalachia is the question of who can claim Appalachian identity. Ruralness continues to be part of the defining characteristics of Appalachian identity and its music, with most folk music collecting projects focused on rural areas, despite the fact that an increasing majority of the region lives in urban and metropolitan counties (Berry 2007:x, Thompson 2006c). Whiteness has long been used to define the region, including focus on the lingering impact of the ethnic heritage of such groups as the Scots-Irish, Germans, Celts, and Anglo-Saxons. Urban and rural African Americans in Appalachia struggle for recognition as a legitimate part of Appalachia, with their music being somewhat representative of that struggle. It exists, it is beautiful and authentic, and yet, their music rarely recognized as authentically “mountain.”

Folk music and the production of festivals and other representations of the music often straddle such lines of inclusion and exclusion, with issues of authenticity being central and dependent upon place (Connell and Gibson 2003). Claiming Appalachian identity is a political statement that depends on birth location and genealogy, but may also be expressed through speech and lived practices, including making music.

1.2 Power of Music, Embodiment, Performance

While music is far from being the universal language that is often claimed, scholars, musicians, and listeners alike agree that music is a powerful force. Music has been valued as a medium of emotional communication precisely because it allows for the expression of feelings that cannot – perhaps should not – be put into words (Langer 1942 cited in Wood, Duffy and Smith 2007). Music has been about the unspoken and unspeakable, the emotionally precious, the personal, the hidden, the repressed. The importance of music as an integrating force for individuals and social groups is well-accepted, and more scholars are acknowledging its power as a force for change. Music geographers Wood, Duffy, and Smith have all experienced this first-hand, and write, “Musicking is an emotional process that builds identities, creates spaces of community and belonging, and has the potential to challenge paradigms and empower agency” (Wood, Duffy and Smith 2007:885). People who have a hard time expressing themselves in words or through other social processes might be able to do so through music. As one of my informants related, “Sometimes I’m a little socially awkward, so sometimes it’s nice to just sit down and shut up and play music” (Roberts-Gevault 2009).

“Music” here means much more than just notes written on a page or hanging in the air, and extends to include the following: relations among the musicians themselves; the action of their play together; the dissemination and distribution of the music through recordings, broadcasting, or teaching; and the associations carried with the music into the memories and identities of players and listeners. Music is a very embodied practice, and has been demonstrated to be closely linked to the construction and performance of identity and representation, even among geographers, who have historically been more visually oriented

(Barkin and Hamessley 1999, Cohen 1994, Frith 1996a, Kong 1995, Smith 1997, Wood 2002). Ethnomusicologist Tom Turino cites Gregory Bateson's ideas of the integrative function of the arts – including music –in not only bringing together groups of people, but also integrating individuals with themselves, and these individuals with the world through participation and performance (Turino 2008:3).

Music is full of signs, symbols, icons, and indices of meaning which operate on many levels, sometimes communicating through the sound alone, through the image of an instrument connected to the music, or even by simply recollecting a memory connected to the music. The banjo is an example of a sign that conjures up a complex concoction of ideas about race, gender, class, region, ruralness, and even intelligence or morality. The sound of its picking often inspires people to move, almost automatically, in an imitation of clogging or country dancing. Other signs have to do with the connection of a song or tune to the place where it was first heard, or to the person from whom someone learned a song or tune. Many musicians I have spoken with reacted viscerally in thinking about the relationships and the continuity with the past that their music represents, because it has been passed on from one person to another, and the music is inextricably intertwined with their memories and identity. Angelyn DeBord, an old-time singer, fiddler, and professional storyteller told of her young self pumping away on the organ while her grandmother worked in the kitchen, which helped me understand the grounding she received from her female family elders, in part through their musical relationship. Felecia Ballard, a piano player who described herself as a “legacy player,” teared up as she spoke about a special song from her uncle that encapsulated the connections of family and faith. Over and over again, interviews with my informants revealed the importance of music shared between husband and wife duos, family

bands, siblings, and friends or mentors who had passed along special tunes and songs. The reverberations of the tunes and songs continued to provide signs that connected people to their place and their communities long after the notes had faded from the air.

This is certainly true of my background, where singing is a central part of my identity, and singing folksongs connects me with my early family life. The songs and tunes I've learned on the banjo, guitar, and dulcimer are inextricably linked with the people who taught them to me. In addition, I became involved in old-time music during a key era of the folk revival of the 1970s, with all the music's connections to the political and social movements of that time in civil rights, feminism, peace, and environmentalism. The signs that connected me to that music also included my growing awareness of Appalachia as a culture hearth of the music I loved, as a repository of the rural skills I craved, and as a battleground of environmental and human rights issues. The music brought me to study in the region, but it wouldn't have been enough by itself. It was in large part the connections between place and music that have fueled my feelings of being at home in the mountains. My involvement in old-time music and dance created further opportunities to spend time with like-minded people, immersed in creating music that seemed to suspend time and plunge us into an ideal world of cooperation and beauty, where we could work and play together at whatever level was comfortable, and be accepted for who we were; to enter into a state of *flow*.

Ethnomusicologist Tom Turino turns to psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi to explain how the phenomenon of *optimal experience*, or *flow*, helps integrate the self and creates a sense of well-being and belonging in a group that shares values and expectations. The practice of playing music together creates muscular and sonic bonding, helping

“articulate the collective identities that are fundamental to forming and sustaining social groups, which are, in turn, basic to survival” (Turino 2008:2). The deep emotional quality and the embodiment of music make it a fundamental expression of self and a vehicle for communication that transcends language. Its power is that it helps articulate the embodied knowledges that are “not fully knowable, that are on the edge of being articulable” (Rose 2003:49).

1.3 Contributions of This Dissertation

Music geography has emerged as an exciting and innovative sub-discipline that addresses these important issues of personal and collective identity, emotion, and embodied knowledges, and yet there is much work to be done. While a large percentage of studies in music geography focus on music’s work in identity formation, few engage with theories of performativity and performance (Nash 2000, Wood and Smith 2004, Revill 2004). There is a tendency to study music as a text, or product, rather than as a practice (Anderson, Morton and Revill 2005). As I explain in Chapter 4, relatively few studies of music geography rely on participant observation and other ethnographic techniques as does this dissertation. My study contributes to the little-understood micro scale working of music performance and how musical practices and interactions create particular, regional spaces and musical communities. Key to analyzing these interactions is uncovering the power relations that are enacted by musical players, which includes the impact of gender, race, and class on the spaces of musical performance.

Gender issues in Appalachia received quite a bit of attention during the second wave of feminism, into the 1980s, but research and writing on women and women’s issues in Appalachia has slowed considerably in the last two decades. Issues of gender and power in

the region have been addressed in economic, rather than cultural, arenas (Keefe 2000) and there are only a handful of scholars working on issues of gender and music in the region today. I contend that power is played out in social realms, and that cultural productions and expressions are a strong expression of the habits, norm, and expectations that shape social relations, especially the micro-workings of everyday encounters and gender performances that operate below the level of consciousness of most people (Yancey Martin 2003, Butler 1990). This dissertation investigates the work of music in producing contemporary Appalachian space, contributing to a critical politics of place by emphasizing the power relations that may be traced through music and musical practices, and adding much-needed attention to the scale of interpersonal interactions.

There have been some very encouraging trends in the last few decades, in which the contributions of African Americans to the music of Appalachia have become recognized as significant, and yet black *people* themselves remain all but invisible in festivals, recordings, and other presentations of Appalachian music. It has become so white that its whiteness has become taken for granted, and therefore invisible to the people who participate in it. Black people themselves often do not recognize and place themselves in discussions of traditional music or recognize the importance of their own traditions (Roy 2002). This dissertation seeks to tease out the everyday performances of whiteness that keep the music white, and by interviewing black singers and musicians from the region, to understand their musical experiences in comparison with the white musicians' experiences and attempt to add some color to understandings of traditional music in Appalachia.

By centering the workings of race and gender in vernacular roots music production in Appalachia, this study adds an important critical perspective on Appalachian culture. Reid

and Taylor rightly singled out in their 2002 article that Appalachian cultural productions, such as music, dance, and visual arts, are typically presented in an uncritical fashion. Race in Appalachia is still under-researched and little understood. Despite the writings of Ed Cabbell and Bill Turner, Wilma Dunaway, Wilburn Hayden, John Inscoc, Henry Louis Gates, Barbara Ellen Smith, Frank X. Walker, Crystal Wilkinson, and Ancella Bickley and Linda Ewen, the silences around African American Appalachians are still deafening. African American women, in particular, have been under-represented in discussions of Appalachia in general, and in culture and music, in particular.

Recognizing the traditions of African American Appalachians is an important part of making this group visible, especially in a region such as Appalachia, which is so connected to the past and ideas about tradition. The Appalachian region continues to be constructed as white in the minds of most Americans, with music being among the most important cultural productions that promote confusing ideas about the mountains and mountaineers (Olson and Kalra 2006, Malone 2004). Many attempts at the inclusion of African American culture in Appalachia, like the Affrilachian Poets and the Celebration of Traditional Music, draw from African American traditions from outside the region as well as within, which can also create confusion about what it means to be black in Appalachia today. The danger in this confusion is that it furthers an assumption that if these traditions exist at all, they are “just like” black traditions everywhere, essentializing blackness and eliminating the particularities of place and time that make up human existence. My research included interviews with African American Appalachians in place to better understand how music and place are mutually constitutive, identifying some of the mechanisms that construct racial identities in Appalachia. This dissertation, and the journal articles I generated from early stages of the

research (Thompson 2006c, Thompson and Hacquard 2009), contribute to the much-needed literature about African American culture in Appalachia, and also help expose how important ideas about race and music have been in producing the idea of Appalachia.

The vast majority of books and research on old-time music focus on stories of people from the past, and attempt to uncover the beginnings of what we now call country music, often becoming tangled in the search for purity in origins, obscuring the hybrid nature of vernacular music. An over-emphasis on race and gender roles of the past sometimes works to perpetuate inequalities into the present. My study examines the contemporary old-time scene as a living entity rather than as a museum piece, and will contribute to understanding Appalachia as a region firmly grounded in the present, rather than as backward and mired in the past.

1.4 Plan of Work

In this dissertation, I seek to understand the workings of music in producing Appalachian space, addressing questions of authenticity and authority in my attempt to answer the following questions: 1) who gets to be an Appalachian musician? 2) how is this accomplished? and 3) who decides?

Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature, laying out my theoretical frameworks from music geography, musicology and ethnomusicology, Appalachian studies, and critical regionalism to explain how music and its primal connection to emotion and the body makes it a powerful marker of Appalachian culture and a self-identified community of interest. Among the most important concepts I employ are authenticity, habit, identity, community, region, place, space, and power, also relying on Turino's analysis of *flow* and musical performance, which includes comparisons of participatory and presentational music forms.

Chapter Three defines the focus of this study on vernacular roots music, in particular, describing old-time music and its participatory nature, contrasting it with bluegrass music, which is a related presentational music. Among the characteristics described are the instruments used and their associated roles, including a section addressing the racialized and gendered representations of a key instrument in Appalachia, the banjo.

Chapter Four lays out my methodology, describing my research design and field sites, including a brief history of the development of the dissertation and consideration of the politics of research. Participant observation and ethnography are at the center of my research, with supplemental interviews of musicians involved in the study.

Chapter Five sets the greater context of the musical space in Appalachia and describes the musical events that help enact the old-time musical community. Here, I introduce the old-time community under study, including the activities that enact the community, such as music parties, jam sessions, and festivals. I introduce the role of music producers and institutions in promoting and perpetuating this music in the region, including a more in-depth discussion of one festival series that well represents the issues and challenges of presenting participational music and describing how participatory music becomes presentational.

At the heart of the current traditional music scene are jam sessions. **Chapter Six** begins by describing the phenomenon and making distinctions between old-time and bluegrass jam sessions. I compare several of both types in terms of their use of space, gender balance and other gender-related issues, whatever racial components I can glean, repertoire, concerns about authenticity, and participational versus presentational modes. I also seek to

describe the work of the music itself in creating Appalachian space, as well as the social relations surrounding the music.

Chapter Seven delves into the influence of gender on old-time music in eastern Kentucky, beginning with representations of gender in descriptions and histories of music. Next I describe the gendered participation in the old-time community and the mechanisms that contribute to it, including how gender is expressed and maintained in choice of instruments, vocalizations, or dance; in leadership and participation in musical events; and in the professionalization of old-time music.

Chapter Eight examines an annual festival in eastern Kentucky that one authority described as “perhaps the most authentic regional festival of music in the South” (Wolfe 1982:161), the Celebration of Traditional Music (CTM) at Berea College. This chapter continues considering the authenticity of music and its connection to place and to issues of race and gender. Through discourse analysis of some of its early organizational meetings, the importance of networks and habits in the definitions of authenticity are revealed. I also describe my own participation in producing the CTM, and ask the question, if the festival is ostensibly dedicated to representing the variety of traditional music in the region, how accurate are the committee’s attempts to include black music and black performers in the festival?

Chapter Nine attempts to answer this question by first discussing the history of African American people and their music in Appalachia, and considering the contemporary old-time group, the Carolina Chocolate Drops, for the implications of this group on ideas of race, gender, and Appalachia. I then analyze interviews with eighteen African American

musical informants to understand their ideas about traditional music and its relation to their music, as well as their place in Appalachia.

So, who gets to be an Appalachian musician and how? Who gets to decide?

Chapter Ten attempts to answer these questions through considering the conclusions of the previous chapters. Old-time, bluegrass, and African American gospel musics all express some important elements in representing the Appalachian region, but each genre has its own preferences and contexts that separates it from the other. Each has presentational and participatory elements, and is played within a community of interest.

Music is often presented as neutral in terms of race and gender, but musical preferences are part of the stabilizing group of habits that help constitute cultural cohorts and cultural formations (Turino 2008:121). These habits that control everyday activities seem to be much more powerful than ideas of the way the world should be, as people often behave in ways that express their unconscious beliefs while saying things they know will be accepted by society. Musicians, like other agents, thus both produce their communities through conscious and unconscious expressions. As Terence MacMullan describes: “Propositions that define concepts are the products of habits of thought that have proven useful in a person’s attempt to find harmony in their environment” (MacMullan 2009:79). This dissertation shows that instrumentation of the music is very important in this construction of space; it not only helps carry gender roles, but also epitomizes racial differences between groups: string band instrumentation and accompaniment in white old-time music versus piano, drums, and a cappella vocals in African American gospel music. Different musics create different habits, and carry markers of race and gender encoded in social relations that are sometimes challenging to tease out, but they need to be named. Even

whites who want to change society still assume the authority of whites, as speaking from objective authorial invisibility of whiteness. There needs to be more marking of white musics in tradition so they are not seen as the normative standard “against which others are judged, enabling conditions for white supremacy/privilege and race-based prejudice” (MacMullan 2009:144, Wray and Newitz 1997).

Arts and cultural activities are essential components of a healthy, diverse community when they are connected to such things as allowing for construction of racial and ethnic identity and fostering genuine diversity, which ultimately leads to intergroup understanding, compassion, more equitable distribution of resources and opportunity (Jackson 2009:229). As Jackson notes in her study of multicultural festivals, the quest for a diverse society that “celebrates difference and promotes compassion” is not always comfortable. It “takes time, will, focused intention, and resources” (Jackson 2009:231). It is my hope that by addressing the nature of traditional, participatory music in Appalachia and teasing apart the musical activities of a community of musicians, I can begin to identify the mechanisms of race, gender, and power constructions that affect the music, and understand how the music works to reproduce these mechanisms and create Appalachian space.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks and Literature Review

My consideration of the place of music in the production of local and community space in Appalachia utilizes multi-disciplinary conceptual frameworks, beginning with literatures in music geography and its larger context of cultural geography in the U.S. and social geography in the U.K. Other useful bodies of literature may be found in musicology and ethnomusicology, folklore studies, Appalachian studies, and critical regionalism. With the spatial turn in the social sciences, musicology now addresses questions of space, place, and identity, and while ethnomusicology has always addressed issues of music within societies, it is becoming more critical in its considerations of music and place. Folklore studies is also a very important literature in understanding the place of music in cultural productions, as it is concerned with the context of folk music and helps define the musical genres I investigated. Both ethnomusicology and folklore studies have previously dealt more with non-Western cultures and emphasized traditional forms of expression, but in recent decades have been more open to diversities of Western cultures and modern and popular cultural expressions as well. Critical regional geography and Appalachian studies literatures are essential to understanding Appalachia's definitions and representations. Feminist and critical humanistic geographies' theories of the body, emotions, and social relations have provided crucial threads to tie some of these other disciplines' ideas together.

2.1 Music Geographies

Cultural geographers have traditionally emphasized connections between culture and the natural environment, which includes the diffusion of cultural phenomena such as music, with its accompanying activities, behavior, and transformation of the landscape (Cosgrove 2000). Sauer's morphological method continued in traditional music geography, with its

focus mostly on diffusion of musical phenomena and resulting delimitation of music regions and cultural hearths, portrayal of place in music, or attempting to “ground” the sounds in showing cause and effect, particularly the effects of music on the landscape (Carney 1978 and subsequent editions of this volume, Carney 1998). This included mapping and documenting such phenomena as the construction of opera houses, birthplaces and residences of musicians, and locations and broadcasting patterns of radio stations (Carney 2003, Sinton and Huber 2007). Literature on country music is rife with biographically-based descriptions of individual musicians, but these may also be written by geographers (Rehder 2004, Carney 2002). Several sources enthused about music as an innovative way to teach geographical ideas, and one which engages students (Carney 2001, Byklum 1994, Gerlach 1988).

George Carney was, from the 1970s until the mid-2000s, the most prolific – and seemingly the only – music geographer, but he remained firmly in the traditional mode of cultural geography throughout his career. In 1994, he identified a series of themes to be addressed through music geography: perception (image of place, sense of place, place perception, place consciousness, place-specific); cultural hearth and cultural diffusion (diffusion agents, diffusion processes, diffusion paths, and diffusion barriers); culture region (formal and functional, nodes and cores, and macro and micro); spatial interaction (migration, connectivity, transportation routes, and communication networks); human/environment relationships (cultural ecology) (Carney 1994:28).² These themes did not

² While Carney has been discredited since these publications due to accusations of taking credit for others' work, he was still influential in calling attention to music geography in a traditional mode. As will be apparent in this chapter, I do not base any of my research or conclusions on Carney's work, as I am making a case for more critical music geographies.

address the important critical issues of later music geography that I employ, such as questioning definitions of the musical canon or what is “natural.”

Norm Cohen, a well-known figure in folk music scholarship, reviewed one of Carney’s books in 1988, voicing a challenge to music geographers in his review that might still be asked today: “What can a geographer tell readers of this journal [musicologists] about American music that they don’t already know?” (Cohen 1988). Sadly, then as now, music geographers are not in the forefront of applying theories of space and place to music. Music geography has been very slow in coming, and has only since the mid-2000s emerged from the “periphery of cultural geography,” as it was described by Peter Nash in 1979 (Nash 1979). As late as 1984, folklorist Kip Lornell, whose work is actually very geographic, identified music geography as an “important research frontier” (Lornell 1984). In 1988, music geography was described as a “very narrow sub-field of human geography,” which indicates its marginal status, but Gerlach goes on to say that this is “not to suggest that its value is in any way diminished” (Gerlach 1988). Despite a noticeable increase in music geography through the 1990s and a definite improvement in its critical capabilities, it was still considered scarce in 2001 (Balachandran and Bhardwaj 2001).

Why so few, for so long? I agree with Peter Nash when he said, “It is...a mystery why cultural geographers have paid such little attention to music because it influences virtually all aspects of culture and manifests itself in numerous spatial ways” (Nash 1996). Economist, musician, and writer Jacques Attali goes even further, to assert that sound, whether constructed as music or noise, is *the* most important component in the construction of a community or other social entity (Attali 1985). Perhaps the delay was because in the United States, music geography is a subdiscipline of cultural geography, which traditionally

displayed a preference for working with material objects and landscapes, and a reluctance to work with “less tangible manifestations of human behavior” like music (Mikesell 1978:5). Susan J. Smith described music as the last of the arts to be considered in geography, only taking hold as the role of other senses beyond sight has increased, which supports Mikesell’s observation (Smith 2000b, Smith 1997).

Besides its intangible nature, music’s connection with emotion has perhaps made music more difficult to study because, as explained by I. G. Simmons, it is “one of the human experiences less mediated by language than most” (Simmons 1999). Wood, Duffy, et al describe the difficulties of addressing music as it is happening, which, they assert, leads researchers to fall back on researching music in the past or focusing on other elements that are easier to document (Wood et al. 2007). This is perhaps why Mikesell characterized traditional cultural geography as more historically-oriented than future-oriented (1978:4). Sauerian cultural geography has come to stand for a limited, non-critical description of the landscape, but more recent revisiting of Sauer’s work indicates that “old style” cultural geographies need not be apolitical exercises. Mitchell’s comment that “[a] focus on grounded cultural particularity, for Sauer, insured the maintenance of a bulwark against modern, Western hubris” is in line with the twenty-first century emphasis on localness as a way to fight against the homogenizing forces of globalization (Mitchell 2000:24). This reverberates with Harvey’s call for militant particularism, which Reid and Taylor have applied to Appalachia in their call for more critical study of Appalachian cultural expressions (Reid and Taylor 2002).

Music geography seems to have come into its own since the “cultural turn” in the social sciences and critiques of the ocularcentricity of geography. Most important in the

distinction between traditional and contemporary critical music geographies is that the former accepts musical categories and phenomena as “natural,” and not questioning such representations, i.e., Carney’s assertion that a map is “the best way to prove that no two places are exactly alike” (Carney 2003: 204). The latter, in contrast, questions representations and the place of music in their creation.

More recent cultural geographers expand on traditional approaches by not simply representing space or place and its accompanying categories and assumptions, but by also questioning how and why these categories are created, reproduced, and negotiated (Leyshon, Matless and Revill 1998). Among the important themes in contemporary critical music geography are the language of signs in music as well as the creations of musical canons, genres, and other processes of institutionalization. Musical performance is analyzed as a geographic act, constituting space in very specific ways, and the politics of music and representations in music are in the forefront. Questions of authenticity, tradition, and how recordings are used test our ideas of music as a “natural” phenomenon.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a real surge in scholarship on popular and vernacular musics in geography as well as cultural studies, musicology, folklore studies, and musicology. Music geography flowered in the mid-2000s, its maturity evident through the many special issues of journals devoted to the subdiscipline, including *Social & Cultural Geography* in 2005, and *GeoJournal* and *Symbolic Interaction* in 2006. Music in sociology paralleled this development, with a special music-focused issue of *American Behavioral Scientist* in July 2005 with such geographical themes as embodiment, gender power among blues queens, music in social movements, and transgression (Vol. 48, No. 11).

Susan J. Smith is among the early and influential critical music geographers, whose 1994 article, "Soundscape," was an important call to expand geographers beyond their visual bias in landscape study. Her 1997 article considered the interconnections of race and music, and her 2000 article explored the performance aspects of music, which she has continued through collaborations with Nichola Wood and Michelle Duffy, two other important music geographers (Smith 1994, Smith 1997, Smith 2000c, Wood and Smith 2004, Wood et al. 2007). Keith Negus and Andrew Leyshon focused on the economic geography of popular music and the music industry (Negus 1992, Negus 1995). Lily Kong's research investigated questions of identity and music (Kong 1995, Kong 1996). Byklum was an early advocate for music geography, especially its use in geographic education (Byklum 1994). Leyshon, Matless, and Revill published the earliest compendium of critical music geographies in their essay collection, *The Place of Music* (1988), which included attention to cultural politics (Rycroft); hybridity, identity, and networks of musical meaning (Revill); desire, power, and modernism (Leppert); musical commodification in the global music industry (Lovering); and the "sensuous production of place" (Cohen). Probably the most common goal in contemporary music geography or any writings on music and place was and continues to be seeking cultural clues to issues of identity; in fact, one collection of geographically-based essays on music is subtitled *Popular Music and Cultural Identity* (Whiteley, Bennett and Hawkins 2004). Though none of the contributors is actually a geographer, the title, *Music, Space, and Place*, grounds the expectations of the readers.

The early 2000s also witnessed a rise in critical musicology, which provided great theoretical utility for the music geographer, dealing with music as social behavior and titles

like *Rethinking Music* (Cook and Everist 1999) and *Constructing Musicology* (Williams 2001a). The latter includes chapters on Traditions, Discourses, Voices, Identities, Places, and Positions, which in turn include discussion on modernity, postmodernity, orientalism, embodied music, and many other themes that resonate with geography.

Ethnomusicology defines itself in many ways by opposition to musicology, which is the study of Western art music. Bruno Nettl spent the first twelve pages of his 2005 edition of *The Study of Ethnomusicology* defining the term, noting that another major ethnomusicologist, Alan Merriam, stopped at 40 different definitions (4). Basically, it is the study of non-Western and folk, popular, and vernacular music, especially focusing on music in culture (Nettl 2005, Connell and Gibson 2003). The discipline has evolved greatly since Nettl's 1983 edition of the same book, now including more on questions involving power relations, nationalism, globalization, scholarship in non-European nations, and one chapter on women's music and women's contributions to music scholarship.

In the case of this dissertation, I am not simply seeking to document the existence and extent of Appalachian music, but I am "using music as a tool of discovery to question value systems – not just highlighting the differences between genres or subjects, but how the divides themselves are constructed and negotiated" (Leyshon et al. 1998).

2.1.1 Music, Identity, Region, and Representation

Music is a form of culture that has been well demonstrated in geographical literature to be closely linked to the construction of identity and representation, and conceptualizing regions as socially constructed (Pudup 1988, Lefebvre 1991, Gregory 2000). This theoretical stance more adequately addresses the changing nature of regional representations, the co-existence of multiple and even conflicting perspectives, leading us

away from irrelevancies such as whether a certain perspective is true or false (Lefebvre 1991). Theorizing Appalachian communities as produced space, then, eliminates the ultimately useless exercise of attempting to prove or disprove the region's existence or delineate its "actual" boundaries. The Appalachian Region exists in artistic creations, government programs, measurements of landforms, t-shirt slogans and therefore, for better or worse, Appalachian spaces are produced and maintained.

Questions of identity and representation are revealed through investigating the work of music in the creation of contemporary Appalachian space. I focus on culture "as a signifying process of self," which involves asking ontological and epistemological questions about music, region, and identity (Cosgrove 2000). Identity is viewed in postmodern, post-structural epistemologies as multiple, shifting, and fluid; as historically and locationally contingent and relational. It is one thing, however, to state theoretically that identities are multiple, fluid, and shifting, but another thing to show how that happens in daily practice. Music is one such arena in which a constellation of daily spatial practices can be shown to place the individual within a cultural community and also make distinctions between an individual and other groups (Berland 1998, Cohen 2000).

The "placing" can occur not only in terms of physical location, but also within representations of space, such as the conception of Appalachia as a discrete region with particular characteristics. Appalachian music has certainly been used to help define past representations of the region, one example being the White Top Folk Festival of the 1920s, which carefully allowed only white performers as "authentically Appalachian" musicians in order to craft a historical narrative of "worthy" (read "white") American ancestors (Whisnant 1983). Many representations of Appalachian music also emphasize a gendered

kind of music, with men documented as the primary instrumentalists and women mostly described as singers. Female musicians are either left out of most of the historical sources, or at best described as passive tradition bearers.

Many contemporary old-time musicians view their music as a connection with the region, especially if they or their ancestors were from the region. Many Appalachian people today are on board with a politically-charged message of self-determination created by the media center Appalshop, whose radio station, film production, recording label, and affiliated Roadside Theater, all rely on music to carry the message.

The representational spaces of the music itself are yet other locations that embody producing Appalachian spaces. As Lefebvre describes these representational spaces, their “imaginary and symbolic elements...have their source in history – in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people” (Lefebvre 1991). To follow on with Lefebvre’s definition, much of the music of the Appalachian region speaks of African American and European American intertwining and interdependence, even though representations of the music have emphasized the European qualities of the music. This may be appreciated and understood through conscious efforts to educate – such as bringing out the history of the banjo, an instrument which combines the two cultures – or unconsciously, through appreciation of poly-rhythms and blue notes which appear in otherwise white-sounding music.

In any case, music is tied inextricably to memory, nostalgia, and personal relationships in each individual’s past, as will be discussed. Identity, in other words, is produced through such performances and as are provided by and such memories as are provoked by music and other cultural productions.

2.1.2 Identity

Identity is a term that is used rather loosely to denote social difference, subject formation, and connections to particular places. Until recently, much of social geography “located specific stable, coherent identities in particular places” and called it social area analysis (Johnston et al. 2000). With the influence of identity politics and post-structuralism in 1980s, the subject received more attention and there were some critiques over the lack of attention to a variety of subject positions (such as those represented by race, gender, etc.) and continuing over-generalizations from the “humanistic” subject (i.e. white male heterosexual).

Humanist versus anti-humanist debates emerged in scholarship over concerns with agency and structure, but with the rise of postmodernism and post-structuralism, debate in the discipline has shifted more toward de-centering the subject and focusing on subject formation as an effect of power relations created through and entwined with discourses, which are polyvalent. Facing critiques that this answer totally eliminates any human agency, the response has been to locate agency at the disjuncture of various subject positions, possibly allowing for variation and change through the repetition of performativity. New possibilities for critical multiculturalism and hybridity also allow for the emergence of agency within human subject formations. Throughout the debate, the centrality of location is preserved, as this is part of the constitution of perceptions of the self. One may see oneself differently in different places, and the constitution of one area as “other” is essential to the construction of another area as “same” (Johnston et al. 2000). Iris Marion Young reiterates this tendency, that identity generates dichotomies rather than unities, and calls for a halt on defining groups as “other,” as it represses the heterogeneity of social difference, leading to

an impoverished public. She, instead, calls for people to unite *through* their differences, rather than excluding some groups or denying difference (Young 1997).

Subject formation and identity are central to questions of the politics of place, and questions of identity are often framed in a musical context, or music is used as a way of interrogating identity (Young 2002, Frith 1996a, Whiteley et al. 2004) among many others. Stuart Hall has done the most for me to try and separate out the distinction between identity and representation (Hall 1997). The question of how subject formation occurs and how people construct identities are worked out through people's connections with place.

2.2 Producing Appalachian Space

While my research involves consideration of what is “Appalachian,” my purpose is not to create another definition of the region, or to carefully analyze existing definitions of the region. Raitz and Ulack accomplish this in the introductory chapter of their 1984 geographical study of Appalachia, their purpose being to bring attention to “one of America's most important, least understood, and least appreciated regions” (Raitz, Ulack and Leinbach 1984). Even using a more traditional definition of a region as “a more or less bounded area possessing some sort of unity, or organizing principles that distinguish it from other regions” (Gregory 2000), geographers such as Raitz and Ulack are well aware of the limitations of these definitions: “In a sense, regions do not have truth – they have only utility” (Raitz et al. 1984). They stress the diversity of the region, explain that the use of different criteria results in very different boundaries (9), and acknowledge that even some of the criteria for their boundaries may be arbitrary (26).

Concern with representing the “truth” of the region may be contrasted with recognizing the very real impact of representations of Appalachia, and the “real” lived experience of particular places in particular times.

Appalachia is as ‘real’ as nature, self, and humanity – and ‘real’ in the same way as these are, a way that defies a certain kind of analysis. In all these cases the problem lies not with the thing but with the analysis, or perhaps more often the conclusions drawn from it. The problem, to be exact, lies in the assumption that we have to define something with positivistic precision – or at all – *before* we can deal with it effectively (Cunningham 2003) (emphasis supplied).

The important message Cunningham communicates is that we must recognize that Appalachia exists as an idea (or set of ideas), as an influential part of America, and as a geographical region. But regions must be defined, not as bounded, homogeneous containers of space, for that flattens out and elides the specific histories of each locality, placing the inhabitants in stasis, removing their agency and complexity. Geographers now view regions as “more or less impermanent condensations of institutions and objects, people and practices that are intimately involved in the operation and outcome of local, trans-local and trans-regional processes” (Gregory 2000). John A. Williams’s postmodern consideration of the region (Williams 2001b, Williams 2002) emphasizes these processes, representing Appalachia as a “zone of interaction,” a palimpsest of ghostly names, abandoned structures, and obsolete fencerows that testify to a specific set of historical processes and local influences with an overlay of modernity virtually indistinguishable from other parts of the U.S. The processual, historically contingent nature of a region and its entanglement with various networks of social relations makes it hard to characterize or describe, as it is

constantly changing and evolving, with different parts changing at different rates and continually forming new webs of connection. Meanwhile, regional structures in government, education, religion, and publishing “become sedimented in imaginative geographies, in physical landscapes, and in public policy” (Gregory 2000), creating more layers of meaning.

By recognizing its reality and influence, by continually attending to questions of how and why Appalachia persists and its place in American cultural life, and by engaging in conversations and other dialectical processes, we help to create the region. Douglas Reichert Powell’s recent book, *Critical Regionalism*, expands the term that began as an architectural movement into this kind of rich, postmodern theoretical construction of Appalachia. He answers a common question: Is it the place itself or the people in a place that make it what it is? Reichert Powell contends that it is not who wins the argument but the debate itself that makes a place (33). “Practitioners of critical regionalism” can “recognize and engage with the awareness of the partiality and the rhetorical character of their ideas of region” by understanding the layered nature of ideas about the region, “[engaging] in a reflexive awareness of one’s own located-ness...” (36). He uses a geological metaphor for Appalachia, characterizing the layering of meaning as described above more like metamorphic rock than sedimentary, as the layers are folded, twisted, and melted by the pressures of social and historical processes. The region is simultaneously transformed by all these processes and an agent of transformation (Reichert Powell 2007).

2.2.1 History of the Production of Appalachian Space

Appalachia has a history of at least a century and a quarter wherein its space has been produced as homogeneously racialized, gendered, and classed according to notions set

in opposition to mainstream America, where it has both transformed and been transformed by America (Shapiro 1978). If America is represented as being a land of progress, Appalachia is created as a “land that time forgot,” full of “Yesterday’s People” and “our contemporary ancestors.”³ Traditional skills are celebrated as being distinctly regional, its folkways being spatialized as the “other to modernity” (Becker 2003, Hufford 2002a). Whether this has positive or negative connotations often depends on the reader’s notion of progress. If modernization is problematized, then the region’s population and traditions may be held up as morally superior. If mainstream white America is full of anxiety about increased immigration or power moves by brown-skinned people, then Appalachia is nostalgically produced and represented as white, Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, or “native” American according to the most useful opposition to the threat⁴ (Shapiro 1978, Becker 2003, Thompson 2006c). Normalization of whites as economically successful leads to concepts of “white trash” to denigrate those who do not live up to their racial standards (Newitz and Wray 1997).

The whiteness of the region has been emphasized to the point that African Americans, Native Americans, and other peoples of color are nearly invisible in writings and popular imagination about the region (Turner and Cabbell 1985, Inscoc 2001). Class issues also intersect with racial characterizations, as stereotypes of “hillbillies” resound with the implied humiliation found in the term “white trash:” white people who have not fulfilled the promise of their race (Newitz and Wray 1997). Following Henry Shapiro’s

³ These characterizations are variously quoted from works by James Watt Raines, Jack Weller, and William G. Frost.

⁴ This was the case particularly in the years after Reconstruction, in the late 1920s leading to immigration reform and the rise of the KKK, and in the 1960s when the Civil Rights Movement was becoming more powerful.

groundbreaking study, it is now often seen as a region of the mind, but still as a place of “otherness,” in contrast to an American norm (Shapiro 1978).

Political activists and Appalachian Studies scholars in the last quarter of a century have promoted a positive interpretation of Appalachian identity, mostly in opposition to hegemonic constructions of Appalachia as an inferior part of America or to the exploitations of the region’s environment and people. The most striking accounts of Appalachian people claiming this regional identity come from those who feel a sense of disconnection from the hegemonic American culture. It often arises from feelings of unease or self-hatred exacerbated by the judgment of non-Appalachians, which may finally be alleviated by understanding a “double consciousness” similar to that first characterized by Du Bois in describing African-American culture (Allen 1994, Gray 1989).

2.2.2 Authenticity and Insider/Outsider Distinctions

Because of the stigmas associated with being Appalachian noted above, many mountaineers attempt to downplay their origins. It also may form a point of pride, or a mixture of pride or shame. Appalachians may have a complex relationship with regional cultural constructions such as language or music (Jones 1997). In addition, distinctions between insiders, or those who “belong” to the culture and outsiders, may be attributed either to the ignorance and clannishness of the Appalachian people, or by the exploitation of Appalachian resources and people from “colonialists” from outside the region. In Appalachia, there is a certain importance to being born in the region, followed closely in importance by one’s family having lived here for generations. If a person has parents from the region, that counts to some extent but it only helps somewhat if the child is born and/or raised outside the region (Keefe 2000).

Having grandparents from Appalachia, especially if that grandchild has come to stay for long periods of time with the grandparent, helps establish the insider credential to some extent. One of my informants, Rich Kirby, grew up in New York City although he visited his Appalachian grandmother and shared her music into his adulthood. He has lived in the region since his young adulthood and usually seems to inhabit insider territory, though another of my interviewees identified him as being an outsider. Nikki Finney claims to be an Appalachian Poet, even though she is from coastal South Carolina, as she spent many summers visiting her grandmother in the mountainous area known as the “upstate.” Black Appalachian scholar William Turner’s discomfort with the term “Appalachian” stems partly from questioning how much lived experience is connected with who can claim the region (personal communication).

Consideration of who may represent certain musics and cultures is a very important one, and is a central tension in the folk revival, where authenticity is very tied to place and stability and revivalists are separated out from the “real” (Rosenberg 1993). Embodiment, birthplace, immersion in and long experience of a culture from birth is central to these distinctions. Kip Lornell, whose interdisciplinary training includes folklore studies and cultural geography, speaks strongly about revivalists as “foreigners,” who may have learned to speak the musical language of a culture but will never be true folk musicians (Lornell 2002:19). Christine Morris’s dissertation criticizes many institutions that present traditional music in West Virginia – and the outsider, revivalist artists on whom they rely – as cultural colonialists who usurp the rightful place of what she calls Mountain Cultural artists. Yet, among those who do not have family in the region or whose families are not musical, establishing a musical genealogy from a revered player may be used a substitute for a blood

genealogy, as a way of attempting to establish authenticity (Morris 1995). Whether that is a positive or negative may depend on the view from inside or outside the culture.

2.2.3 Appalachian Identity: Its Definition and Value

While there may be a general sense of pride in being an insider, many residents of Appalachia, perhaps most residents, do not necessarily identify themselves as “Appalachian,” as demonstrated by Raitz and Ulack and others. One reason may be a different reaction to the blatant and rampant stereotyping of the region and its negative historical consequences, with residents wishing to be disconnected from that rather than embracing that. The term was not really in popular use anywhere until 1960s documentaries brought TV viewers into the black and white world of poverty in the region. A person’s identification with the region might depend greatly on what s/he views as the motive behind the question and who is asking. For example, if being “Appalachian” means being seen as backward, impoverished, and ignorant, residents would likely demur. Availability of funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for economic development or health care, on the other hand, might be a great incentive for local governments and individuals to embrace the term. Related identifiers with less derogatory associations, such as “mountain” or “Eastern Kentuckian” may be used by Appalachian people, instead, or they may only identify themselves with their community, county, state, and nation, without any sense of regional identity at all. I suspect, however, that the lack of identification with the Appalachian Region might be because it is such an abstract concept, with little meaning for most people living here. Associating with a region might really just translate into mountain

residents identifying with a local culture and feeling at home, wherever that might be. To quote Wendell Berry, regionalism might be “local life aware of itself”⁵ (Berry 1972).

The Appalachian Region is an abstraction, and David Harvey’s discussion of levels and kinds of abstraction based on Raymond Williams’s work might be instructive here. He asks, “...what level and what kinds of abstraction should be employed [to create social change]?” (Harvey 1996) He uses Ingold’s distinctions from quite a different context, but quite effectively, to describe the difference “between a vision of the world as a sphere which encompasses us or as a globe upon which we can gaze: “ ‘the local is not a more limited or narrowly focused apprehension than the global, it is one that rests on an altogether different *mode* of apprehension – one based on an active, perceptual engagement with components of the dwelt-in world, in the practical business of life, rather than on the detached, disinterested observation of a world apart” (Harvey 1996). Perhaps those who acknowledge the region as being meaningful are employing the global apprehension of space: a “more detached, disinterested observation of a world apart” than those employing a local mode of abstraction. Harvey continues: “Yet, Williams seems to be saying, we cannot do without both kinds of abstraction any more than we can do without the conflicting modes of representation that necessarily attach to them” (37). This seems to indicate that, once again, dialectical processes are at work to create a sense of region. It is not merely one way of viewing the world or the other that might define Appalachia, but the conversation between the two.

Some scholars, like Reid and Taylor, promote the importance of a critical regionalism, “forg[ing] a critical politics of place and region that refuses to allow the earth to

⁵ To be fair, Berry does not really even like the term ‘regional.’ He also says, “I find that the term very quickly becomes either an embarrassment or an obstruction, for I do not know any word that is more sloppily defined in its usage, or more casually understood.”

be reduced to global economic space” (Reid and Taylor 2002). They, like Harvey, have social justice as their goal. They begin their 2002 article with an epigram from Harvey’s *Justice, Nature & the Geography of Difference* – quoting Donna Haraway – making the distinction between differences that matter and those that don’t (Reid and Taylor 2002). While I agree wholeheartedly with what I perceive as their main emphasis – which is that Appalachian Studies needs to resituate itself in “the new geography of economic globalization” and that academics should engage in more “civic professionalism” (Reid and Taylor 2002) – I’m not sure that regional identity is essential for resisting the cultural disempowerment that forces of globalization imply for local culture. It might be a difference that doesn’t matter, and a distinction, even in their own words, as assuming “one unfortunate tendency...to reinforce an outsider/insider perspective fixed in reifying assumptions about region, place, and identity” (Reid and Taylor 2002).

Being place-based might better involve Williams’s dialectic of local and global perspectives rather than expanding “local” into “regional,” the latter actually being a more global abstraction – one that is more often formed from an outsider’s perspective – and one that is not simply another step in scalar processes. The *significant* differences to which Harvey refers can occur *within* the region as well as between the region and another place. While it may be true that “a regional perspective gives scope and resources to tackle problems that are insoluble at the local level” (Reid and Taylor 2002), this also implies a level of similarity within a region that may not be felt by the residents. The intersections of other identities, such as those supplied by one’s religion, age, class, gender, or other characteristic may provide differences within the region that prevent a feeling of similarity here, but may help create communities of experience across regions and across the globe.

Barbara Ellen Smith questions the political importance of defining an Appalachian Region at all, also citing new patterns of economic and cultural geographies but emphasizing how they exacerbate differences within the region and make an Appalachian Region even more meaningless:

Amidst the manifold dislocations of global capitalism, ‘place’ becomes in these diverse struggles a powerful symbol of all the human/ environmental bonds and values worth fighting for. But ‘place’ in this context is also specific, personal, and concrete: the neighborhood, the small town, the communities along a watershed. Can an abstraction such as Appalachia evoke analogous meanings and political force? What exactly are community activists in the region defending – Appalachia, or something else? Do their efforts involve regionally specific goals, dilemmas, or identities? Does sustainability for the Appalachian communities lie in thinking regionally? If critical regionalism is to have political meaning and relevance, we need to face such questions. (Smith 2002)

She rightly points out that the dangers and limitations of regionalism might outweigh any political weight achieved by rallying ’round a region, as the promotion of an Appalachian identity seems to have most utility as an opposition to stereotypical degradation of “hillbillies” or in creating an insider-outsider binary that might devolve into xenophobia or racist nationalism (Smith 2002). She concludes by suggesting that “new geographies of solidarity” might be preferable and more useful than “critical regionalism,” that “the most strategic relationships we need to create may not be intraregional but trans-local” (48), moving beyond identity politics to coalition-building based on a commonality of politics

(Smith 2002). Appalachia is an abstract idea, and it seems that Reid and Taylor, as well as Smith, are really promoting the important political role of “place” and “the local” in combating globalizing forces of inequality rather than trying to identify or quantify the region. Appropriateness of scale seems to be an essential part of this discussion.

2.3 Integrating Concepts

2.3.1 Scale

Rather than attempting to create boundaries around either the region or the music, perhaps attempting to understand how the creation and sharing of music helps produce communities in Appalachia will shed some light on how scale works in power relations. Investigating different kinds of musical communities allows for consideration of appropriate scales (or levels of abstraction) that might allow for local empowerment, and of how communities of different scales (or levels of abstraction) might work together to create local identities. Dialectical and multivalent relations between local and extra-local networks and communities (whether they are international, national, intraregional, intrastate, or even intra-county relations) are important in creating communities and identities, and this includes musical communities. Local music communities, such as eastern Kentucky’s old-time music community, also interact with national conceptions and networks of old-time musicians.

Concepts of scale are central to a geographic perspective and to the differentiation of space, but because “scale” has so many meanings, it can be confusing to engage it. In my study, methodological scale is the choice of scale made by researcher in answering a problem- such as census tract, city, or county – which tends to be imposed upon by the outside. For example, some investigations of Appalachia have tended to be based on a county scale, since that is the level at which much demographic and economic data is

available, and that is the unit of measure in the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition of the region. The methodological scale of this study begins with the individual music-maker, and focuses mostly on the embodied relations of these people. The spaces of music I consider are on a local scale, but I then consider these spaces in regional and national scale.

Social constructionists and post-structuralists consider the appropriate study to be the production of scale, rather than scale itself (Marston 2000). An important understanding from research on scale is that in no sense is it "natural" or ontologically given; it is a construct contingent on historical and geographical contexts. Marston's understanding of scale is useful: "a contingent outcome of the tensions that exist between structural forces and the practices of human agents" (220). Currently, scale is defined as a "loose, . . . somewhat nested hierarchy" ranging from the micro scale of the body through the local, region, nation, or globe, but it is also recognized that these are not mutually exclusive (Smith 2000a). The simultaneity of scales is part of the social construction of space and the multiplicity that individuals experience: we interact locally, regionally, or globally even if the outcomes of these interactions are not overt. The metaphor of a musical scale can be nicely adapted in my study, to focus on the relational qualities of geographic scale, rather than ideas of size or level (Howitt in Marston 2000:220). Scale may also be "jumped" as a way of gaining political power, and the intersection of scales is not necessarily smooth or even, though it may be fluid.

Scale is central to my research, especially through my social constructionist approach, as I negotiate the meanings of region, locality, community and "social relations of empowerment and disempowerment and the arena through and in which they operate"

(Swyngedou in Marston 1997). It is important that scale is not necessarily an enduring quality and never all-encompassing or singular, so I can expect the meanings of “regional” or “local” scale to change and be contested in response to socio-spatial dynamics. Like the Appalachian Region, scale may not be tangible or visible but is “real,” with material consequences.

I am concerned with the meanings of scale in terms of region and locality, but also on a micro scale. Because I’m focusing on how musicians produce space, I must necessarily engage the concept of scale: not only the size and level of the space, but its relation to other spaces and places, and how it helps structure the relations between people. Marston’s work points to the importance of scale and its connections to activism (219), as do the work of others cited in Smith (726). Micro scale interactions prove to be very important in understanding habits and the possibilities that exist in interstitial moments for decisions that may either challenge the status quo or collaborate with it (Bhabha 1994). This may be the scale at which lasting change is made.

Scale may also come into play in understanding levels of abstraction and their relevance for engaging in social change, especially as described by David Harvey, and Harvey’s interpretations of Williams (Harvey 1996). Doreen Massey engages Harvey’s ideas of local versus universal by challenging his idea that “local” necessarily implies a concern with aesthetics and politically reactionary tendencies (Massey 1997) as well as his ideas that larger scales are necessarily more abstract. She critiques a confusion she sees between the binaries of concrete/abstract and whether one is talking about place, space, or locality – pointing out that these are defined quite differently. She also brings up the concept of “copresence” and posits whether it really matters in intersections of concrete social

relations and social processes, in social groupings which may also include concepts of community (Massey 1997).

2.3.2 Community

The concept of community is perhaps central to understanding the place of music in Appalachia. I have learned through my own experience and from others that the draw of old-time music is not simply the joy of playing the tunes and reproducing the sounds, but in feeling part of something larger than oneself and being in communion with like-minded people. Several scholars have identified a community surrounding old-time music, and point to ways this community is created and maintained (Bealle 2005, Wooley 2003, Turino 2008). This study provides me an opportunity to interrogate the meaning of community and explore how group identity is formed through music and social relations.

Community is certainly a problematic term, used by such diverse groups as sociologists, social justice activists, and government officials to cover any and all social relations, with an overly positive connotation and a simplistic conception of unity. “Community is unusual among the terms of political vocabulary in being, I think, the one term which has never been used in a negative sense,” says Raymond Williams, going on to say that in some ways, we should be suspicious that the community is always right (Williams 1989:112). Jones’s 1977 colorful and evocative description of the term as “the aerosol word of the 1970s because of the hopeful way it is sprayed over deteriorating institutions” is used by Guijt and Shah to explain how the term covers up negative aspects of life and helps protect existing power relations (Guijit and Shah 1998: 7). Even more than *region*, the word has been sloppily and too widely applied, with a multiplicity of meanings that are usually not explicated (guilty as charged), and it is invoked for political purposes as

a unitary concept, usually indicating an inordinate and unrealistic sense of solidarity. Even in a book like *It Comes from the People*, which delves into the specificities of community development in Appalachia, the term is used quite unproblematically and is never actually defined. On the first page, “community” is used a total of fifteen times; seven times in first paragraph alone! The “community” being developed is presumably in a specific location in the region, but the religious and theological “community” is invoked as the real audience for the book (Hinsdale, Lewis and Waller 1995). The same word is used to mean two very different entities.

Increasingly, the term is used to designate a group of people sharing some characteristic, like the black community or gay community (which may or may not include territory); or people working together, sharing values. Because of this confusion, some scholars who engage with concepts of social groups have found it useful to change their terms to be more precise. *Communion* may be a more accurate term to designate the sense of belonging and deep understanding that grows out of shared experience. Ethnomusicologist Tom Turino uses the term *cultural cohort* to describe a group of people sharing values and cultural experiences (2008).

Community is usually defined by geographers as connected to place: “A social network of interacting individuals, usually concentrated into a defined territory” (Johnston 2000:101). Rural “communities,” in particular, are still viewed romantically as encapsulating an ideal sense of belonging, meaning, and relationship. Current obsessions with globalization and the anxiety it has generated over loss of local particularity have siphoned off much interest in community, but have also served to hone the debate and come up with new terms that will accumulate the morass of meanings that now constitute the “c”

word. Now the term *local* seems to be absorbing some of the miscellaneous values and characteristics once ascribed to community.

Sometimes a sense of community may emerge only when it is threatened, when community members are more willing to put aside their differences to fight an external threat. The term is useful for political purposes, as a way of bringing people together, necessarily also excluding others, but perhaps the exclusions are more harmful than helpful. Iris Marion Young urges those committed to social justice to create or use a different term other than community, as she interprets its use as being too exclusive and leading towards separation of people through an over-identification with specific and narrow cultural characteristics. “The dream [of community] is understandable, but politically problematic...because those motivated by it will tend to suppress differences among themselves or implicitly to exclude from their political groups persons with whom they do not identify” (Young 1990:320).

Young’s understanding of community as over-valuing unity to the point of suppressing difference may be true to some extent of the old-time community, but a group of old-time players needs a certain amount of diversity to maintain itself and to be healthy. My research supports Turino’s assertion that achieving *flow* in music leads to group formation, which may be thought of as a community. Even though participants must be unified in their goal and even in their style, there is a need for both core and elaboration of the music, for both improvisation and repetition, for continuity and change to achieve *flow* and group formation. A variety of roles and a collection of instruments are needed to keep the music community going, though unity of purpose and harmony in practice are essential. Although there is a danger that solidification of habits and inattention to problematic

ramifications of our habits may lead to sexist or racist behavior, a community can be open to changing those unhealthy habits. Perhaps the term used by Turino, “cultural cohort,” is more accurate than community, but my research also supports an understanding of the term *community* that appreciates differences as it strives for unity.

I use *community* in my study partly because of the connection to place, but also because of the emotional and relational quality that is evoked by term which is not present in *cultural cohort*. Raymond Williams brings up two meanings of community that inform my work. He opposes *community* to *society* – the latter which previously meant “our active relations with others, being in society as distinct from being alone or being withdrawn,” but now generally used to mean “the systematic set of political and general arrangements by which a given people live: society as a social system” (Williams 1989). Community is invoked as an alternative to the state, now sometimes referred to as *civil society* (a whole other literature). Perhaps the appeal of the idea of community is also that it is created and maintained through the more informal mechanisms of custom, rather than through the rule of law.

Williams also brings forth an emphasis on lived relationships away from “centres of power and display” and a full sense of what being a “neighbor” means: recognition of certain kinds of mutual responsibility (Williams 1989). The emotions that are involved in neighborliness and relationships again bring a softer edge to a group designated as a community. These meanings are closely associated with my concern over scale, identity, and power as well, because my questions are concerned with how music helps create communion between people, both people who live near each other and those who don’t, but place is still involved.

Identity creation is related to the sense of belonging entailed in being in communion with others, and identity is closely related to place, as is community. However, as is exemplified by Guijt and Shah in their collection exploring gender issues in participatory development, the myth of community all too easily obscures questions of who may speak for a group and whose interests are being represented. Understanding how networks and meaning are created is related to ideas about community, and communities must be interrogated regarding their power relations. The power differentials inherent in social relations, and the power relationships inflected by gender, race, class, and other social markers are inherent in all communities.

2.3.3 Power

Understanding space as socially constructed means that power relations are inevitably involved. “Social geographies of power are synthesizing projects that often tackle the messy, mixed-up and mutually constitutive qualities of social differences through various formations (e.g. group identities, ‘communities’, ‘places’), social relations and struggles (e.g. contests over material conditions, social participation and key sites. Considering how power is understood and experienced enables us to see that these dimensions overlap and influence each other” (Panelli 2004:160). Structuralists and post-structuralists, such as Henri Lebovre, center power as one of the motivations for space production (Marston 2000). Foucault’s work, in particular, has been extremely influential to human geographers, especially his connection of power to knowledge and discipline. He saw power as not necessarily concentrated in those in positions of power, or imposed from on high, but as a web, or net-like organization “an incessant, decentred and malleable ‘force field’ of strategic relations among individuals, groups, and institutions that works ‘within the

social body' and facilitates (rather than reflects) the development of capitalism and the nation-state...and is simultaneously constraining and enabling" (Campbell 2004, Panelli 2004:164). The constant circulation of this power means that those in the web are being acted upon by the power as well as exercising the power.

Certainly, feminism places concerns with power at its very center. Gendered power is one of the most pervasive characteristics of music throughout genres. Connell and Gibson characterize folk music as "women's music" (Connell and Gibson 2003), but there are still barriers to women's participation in almost every level, and one of the goals of this project is to see how this is expressed, how this gendering works on a small scale, to see how the power relations embedded in the gendered musical expression of the old-time community create Appalachian space.

My concern with power relations in Appalachia have been part of my earliest engagement with the region, and John Gaventa's book, *Power and Powerlessness*, was very influential to me and to others in Appalachian Studies in uncovering the very embedded, multi-level quality of power (Gaventa 1980). Musical performances and transmissions may have the power to summon or focus political dissent, or express a politics of place, but "at the same time their 'subversive power is reabsorbed into dominant structures of power and ordered norms of culture' " (Mitchell quoted in Connell and Gibson 2003:208).

Although power may be achieved and sustained through force or manipulation, it seems that in the old-time community, it is more through persuasion and creation of consensus, and through the creation of authority that power relations are maintained. The successful legitimation of power creates less conflict and less need for coercion by bringing

all members of the community along in service to a legitimated power, such as the power of melody and the fiddler to be established as the leader of the community (Hatch 1989).

2.3.4 Habits

Power may be maintained through habits, as is shown in MacMullan's study of the habits of whiteness (2009). Contemporary vernacular music in Appalachia emerged out of two quite different habits of thought that are expressed through participatory musical systems, on the one hand, and capitalist cosmopolitan systems with their emphasis on presentational musics, each producing very different value sets (Turino). This has given rise to old-time music and bluegrass music, both genres of music that are associated with the region. Although bluegrass music is definitely more in the presentational mode, the old-time music community, with both presentational and participatory elements, exemplifies the disconnect between ideas and habits that Terence MacMullan explores in his book, *Habits of Whiteness*. Applying his analysis of the importance of habits in maintaining racist attitudes in America helped me understand some unconscious or unexamined behaviors that – along with institutional and outright racism – help keep old-time music white. Habit formation is inherently transactional; influenced by past actions – therefore acquired to some extent - and creates ways of making our lives meaningful (MacMullan 2009:76). Turino further explains how these habits help in the process of identity formation, and “issues of personal, social, and economic security [which are] at the heart of social group formation and identity” (Turino 2008:105).

Music “works” when musicians understand the rules and speak the correct language, relying on habits that help recreate a sense of personal and social security in their contributions to a successful outcome. Circumscribed behavior and entrenched habits

facilitate this, “because music making is as much about social relations and fostering participation as it is about sound production and the creative drives of participants” (Turino 2008:184). Social relations and fostering participation are a big part of creating a community like the old-time music community. Patriarchal and racial habits are also entrenched, however, which lead to masculinist, virtuosic behaviors that coexist with participatory values. It is often true that humans are able to encompass conflicting beliefs and actions, but I share MacMullan’s optimism that habits may be changed “through a period of *conscious reconstruction of concept and habit through inquiry*” (MacMullan 2009:75) (emphasis supplied).

2.3.5 Interstices

Many of these habitual thoughts and actions take place in small, repeated increments and are difficult, though not impossible, to identify. As Bhabha has noted, these small, repeated increments are the places where change might best take place.

What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the necessity of thinking beyond initial categories and initiatory subjects and focusing on those interstitial moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of ‘differences’. These spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood and communal representations that generate new signs of cultural difference and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation. It is at the level of the interstices that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. (Bhabha 1994:269)

The interstitial moments or processes that are produced in the *intention* of sameness may actually produce differences that are selectively accepted or rejected by others in the group. By recognizing these opportunities for repeating or challenging our habits, we might create “innovative sites of collaboration and contestation.” As the old-time music community performs its activities, there are competing value systems at work so that small shifts of realignment may occur within a single activity. In order to maintain the flow of a satisfying jam session, for example, participants must be “in the moment,” paying attention to the evolving scene and the ever-shifting personnel, with an ever-expanding opportunity for potential challenges. At the same time, the reactions of the group and the ear of each musician allow for constant feedback on how well participants are fitting in and accomplishing their goals (Turino 2008). Minute articulations of difference in the “cracks” of an old-time music experience can create collaboration or contestation, as will be demonstrated through close examination of two jam sessions. This is where participants can make choices instead of just following habits, where they construct their social space and can change their behavior (Bhabha 1994:270).

2.4 Contributions to the literature

Through this dissertation, I contribute to the emerging body of literature discussed above, in three ways: by extending the understanding of music’s connection to social relations in the region; creating a space to make under-represented groups (such as African Americans and women) more visible in literature about the region’s music; and reliance less on understanding the music as an extension of the past, in favor of emphasizing current perceptions and beliefs about the music. As previously mentioned, I also hope to contribute to a critical understanding of how music helps to create community or “geographies of

solidarity” in the Appalachian Region, whether that is in terms of critical regionalism, or further knowledge of the local-global dialectic. Perhaps most importantly, I hope to contribute to understanding the micro scale of social interactions in their ability to produce space.

Chapter Three: Defining the Music

There is a “magic appeal” to the idea of mountain music, with its accompanying notions of purity and authenticity, and there has been a romantic fascination with the music of the Appalachian region that shows no sign of abating after more than a century, as music historian Bill C. Malone notes. He goes on to say, unequivocally, “there is no such thing as Appalachian music,” the message, instead, being that there are many different kinds of music played by Appalachian musicians and that the music found in the region has many influences (2004:115). Nevertheless, of the many different kinds of music and musical groups that may be found *in* the region, including classical, jazz, rock, punk, hip hop, and country, the music he then describes – and which most scholars consider to be characteristic *of* the region – may have had diverse influences, but today are encompassed by the labels old-time, bluegrass, and gospel.

These musics might also be described as folk, traditional, vernacular, or roots music. In this chapter, I define the music under consideration in this dissertation, including the implications of these categories on how the music creates space and place. Another important consideration in the work of music in Appalachia which will be considered in this chapter is a distinction between presentational and participatory musics as defined by Turino, which create different matrices of values and characteristics. The old-time music which forms the center of this dissertation’s focus is participatory music with presentational elements, while bluegrass is more presentational with participatory elements.

I will return to this discussion at the end of the chapter, but first define and describe old-time music in terms of instrumentation, keys and time signatures, and aesthetics. I do this in part by distinguishing it from bluegrass music, because this conversation is an

important part of the discourse about Appalachia, but also to set up an understanding of how the music is expressed in the events of the next chapter. The two styles are often confused by non-specialists, but there are important differences that are debated and experienced in everyday practices, such as in the use and choice of instruments, and in spaces for and practices in jam sessions and festivals. Appalachian space is produced by these debates and contested practices, and the music and these practices will be analyzed in the following chapters in terms of how it works to create the region called Appalachia (Reichert Powell 2007:33).

3.1 Is it Folk? Vernacular? Traditional? Roots Music?

The Appalachian Region is well recognized as a hearth area for folk music in the United States (Carney 2003, Malone 1968, Raitz et al. 1984). The birthplaces of folk legends like Jean Ritchie are valorized, and revivalists make pilgrimages here to study with masters and just soak in the atmosphere. Festivals and fiddle contests abound, including the Appalachian String Band Festival held at Clifftop, West Virginia, every August since 1990, which has become the premier national old-time event of the year, along with more venerable festivals such as Mt. Airy, North Carolina, (since 1972) and Galax, Virginia, (which bills itself as the largest and oldest, having started in 1935 as a fund-raiser for the local Moose Lodge).

The term “folk music,” however, has become nearly meaningless unless describing music of the past. Bohlman describes a “thrashing about” to attempt to name the type of music under consideration in this study, because the term “folk music,” in its connotations of purity and stasis, isn’t really working in today’s world (Bohlman 1988xv-xvi). If something is to be defined as folk music today, the definition has to be flexible, expanding

with narrowing gaps between folk, popular music and what is now labeled as “world” music (Cohen 2006). It is rare, indeed, to find any culture in the United States that can meaningfully be described as a folk society today, though elements of folk music or folk culture may still exist in a type of music that would work to produce community or locality in the region, that would be played by local musicians, and accessible to ordinary people (Booth and Kuhn 1990).

Booth and Kuhn’s economic definition of folk music works reasonably well by focusing on the *process* of producing the music rather than on folk music as a product. Folk musicians are not specialists; therefore, there are “relatively or completely indistinct boundaries between musicians and listeners.” Transmission of the music occurs informally and aurally/orally, “primarily through...communal participation in music activities that are normally tied to specific sociocultural events or settings” (Booth and Kuhn 1990:418). While it is true that many of the musical activities are performed for their own sake, it is usually done in leisure time, so the additional characteristic including “communal suspension of direct sustenance activities” may be applicable today, but is no longer as meaningful as in the past (Booth and Kuhn 418).

The participatory, “folk” ethos may be ascribed to the old-time music at the center of this study, where the “success of performance is more importantly judged by degree and intensity of participation than by some abstracted assessment of the musical sound quality” (Turino 2008:33), but Turino does not use the moniker “folk.” Therefore, while skill or talent in playing the music is desirable, in a participatory event, the value system is based more on participation of as many people as possible and the everyone working together to create a harmonious sound, rather than in producing a finished product for consumption by

others. I much prefer his use of the term “participatory” because old-time music actually also contains some pop music characteristics as defined by Booth and Kuhn. They define pop music as transmitted through “informal training or self-selection from mass-disseminated musical content,” which is certainly true for many old-time, bluegrass, or gospel musicians learning from recordings and attendance at concerts, despite any “folk” characteristics as defined earlier (437). Old-time music today also enjoys “indirect patronage by a mass audience,” with “intermediaries perform[ing] merchandising functions” (Booth and Kuhn 1990:437). Many of the musicians who play “traditional music,” and learned through traditional means of transmission (informal, aural/oral), have produced compact discs and other musical products that are mass-disseminated, sometimes through intermediaries, and perform for paying audiences. Although it is not usually thought of as pop music, certain economic and transmission factors in much of old-time music place it somewhere between folk and pop, or even squarely in the pop category, as defined by musicologists Booth and Kuhn (Booth and Kuhn 1990).

But *participatory music* in and of itself does not describe the music in specific enough terms. The term *traditional* is one that I use quite often to describe music that, like “folk” music, is played by regular people who are not necessarily professional, and is based on pre-existing cultural material more than on innovation. The term has become used to also mean *conventional* or *customary*, although these terms indicate intervention of a larger society more than the term *traditional* as I have described it above. For example, the term *custom* is understood by folklorists to mean “a traditional practice...that is transmitted by word-of-mouth or imitation, then ingrained by social pressure, common usage, and parental authority” (Brunvand 1968:198).

Perhaps most important for understanding traditional music is that there should be some transmission person-to-person, although written music or tablature or recordings may also be used for transmission and learning. This means that there are also emotional connections to the music based on the relationships expressed or created in the transmission, as well as a connection to the past. As will be illuminated by quotes from some of my interviewees in Chapter 5, performers of traditional music often express a sense of the material being a gift or a valuable glimpse into the past (Becker 2003), although individuals may vary in how closely or which aspects of the music are the important materials to carry on.

Many of my interviewees understood the term *traditional* as being the opposite of *modern*. Questions of innovation and stasis pervade discussions of folklore and authenticity, with most folklorists explaining traditional cultural practices as somewhere along the continuum between what folklorist Barre Toelken calls the “twin laws” of conservatism and dynamism (34). He helps explain the balancing of these forces by defining *tradition* as “not some static, immutable force from the past, but those pre-existing culture-specific materials and options that bear upon the performer more heavily than do his or her own personal tastes and talents” (32). This definition alludes to the complexities involved in playing traditional music, in that there are many forces that “bear upon the performer,” influencing his or her choices – but – they are always choices, not “immutable forces.” While oftentimes the popular understanding of tradition or folklore is that of being “stuck in the past” or fossilized, the folklorist will identify modernizing influences, including writing and other conserving technologies, as actually contributing to increased conservatism. Oral tradition and performance often results in more dynamic expressions of culture (Toelken 1979:38).

To add to this, perhaps also of more relevance than the labels “folk” or “pop” might be the term “vernacular roots music” as defined by public historian Benjamin Filene. The term ‘vernacular’ suggests

songs employing a musical language that is current, familiar, and able to be manipulated by ordinary people. In contrast to fine art or classical music, vernacular music demands only minimal formal training and material resources to produce...[The term] ‘Roots’...identifies musical genres that, whether themselves commercial or not, have been glorified as the ‘pure’ sources out of which the twentieth century’s commercial popular music was created. (Filene 2000)

Filene is not concerned over whether the sources are actually *pure*, rather, the *perception* of the purity of the sources is crucial. This idea coincides with the interests of this study, which is also concerned with perceptions of musicians and promoters of Appalachian music, in particular.

Filene includes pop music as well as folk music in his definition of vernacular music, which is also why it works for old-time or Appalachian music. Vernacular roots music found in the region today is usually played by music specialists, the music being transmitted through informal training or self-selection, but the musical content would be both from mass-disseminated musical content and from communal participation in music activities tied to specific sociocultural events and settings. There are distinctions between musicians and listeners, but it is less distinct than in most pop music, as many listeners are also players. The distinction would be made in some settings that promote performance, but other settings, such as jam sessions, would not make the distinction so sharply. Therefore, particular places and spaces produce different kinds of music, even within the same genre.

The region itself is one of great diversity, which allows for both localization and globalizing influences of vernacular roots music in the region. The region developed quite differently in different places, depending on a myriad of factors, including transportation routes, resource availability, proximity to urban areas, and the influence of particular people and families, and so the music itself has diverse influences. For example, the lap dulcimer, often seen as the quintessentially Appalachian instrument, was common in localized areas, such as Perry County, Kentucky; Beech Mountain, North Carolina; or around Wheeling, West Virginia, while being virtually unknown to people in other mountain counties of these states, even those right next door. Through the availability of recordings, the influence of various folk revivals and musicians such as Jean Ritchie, and the validation of folk music through government patronage, some of these rather localized manifestations of old-time music, such as the influence of the lap dulcimer, have become more homogenized throughout the region, and then even more so on a national level (Booth and Kuhn 1990:435, Bealle 2005). In 2003, the Appalachian dulcimer was declared the state instrument of Kentucky, even though guitars, pianos, and many other instruments were more widespread, played by more people and were much better known by the general public – the people who are typically considered to be part of the “folk.” Through this governmental act, the distinctiveness of one contribution of Appalachia to Kentucky’s identity was acknowledged.

“Appalachian vernacular roots music” includes a variety of genres, and has not really been categorized or pinned down in any academic way, although much has been written about certain components, such as early commercial country music, Anglo-American ballads, and African American spirituals. Much has also been written about the

collectors of music in Appalachia, especially the celebrated English “songcatcher,” Cecil Sharp and less often, his female associate, Maud Karpeles⁶ (Malone 2004, Rehder 2004, Gold and Revill 2006, Olson and Kalra 2006). Information on the subject must be drawn from a variety of sources, including those addressing rural southern folk music both sacred and secular, the roots of commercial country music, bluegrass, music for folk dancing, country blues, banjo songs, fiddle tunes, African American folk music including spirituals, and the evolution of blues and gospel music.⁷ The most comprehensive and useful sources on the vernacular music of the region describe the history and sociology of “pre-commercial country music” (Malone 1968, Malone 1993, Wolfe 2002). Again, there is a reference to the past both in the music itself and in the perception of the music. The most well-respected scholars of Appalachian vernacular roots music today understand its origin and influences as a combination of Euro-American and Afro-American musical instruments and styles, usually with a heavy dose of archaic commercial popular music mixed in (Malone 1993, Cantwell 1984, Wolfe 1987, Olson and Kalra 2006).

As already indicated, there are many other kinds of music found in the region, including cowboy songs, jazz, Western classical, Delta-style blues, rock, soul, brass band, and hip hop. Public schools, mainstream churches, and hotel lounges in the region provide venues for music that is little different than that found outside the Appalachian Mountains. Access to cable and satellite television, radio, and the internet, of course, ensures that most Appalachian residents have wide access to national and international musics as well. The

⁶ More will be said about gender and authority in song collecting and production in Chapter 7.

⁷ Examples include Montell, L. 1991. *Singing the Glory Down: Amateur gospel music in south central Kentucky, 1900-1990*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, Malone, B. C. 1979. *Southern Music, American Music*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, Tribe, I. 1984. *Mountaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, Tilton, J. T. 1977. *Early Downhome Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

simple availability of some music in the region doesn't automatically confer Appalachian-ness on it, but its presence does influence the place and culture in some ways. Because the region is produced through social relations and because the region and its music are both special and ordinary in relation to America as a whole, much depends on the context of the discussion. The region and its musics are simultaneously separate from and a part of America.

Many of the components of Appalachian music, such as Anglo-American balladry or string band music, have been collected and researched in some depth, even to the point of acknowledging and investigating the power relations embedded in the music and its representations, though often the influence of gender is underplayed or absent in the discussions (Whisnant 1983, Linn 1991, Conway 1995, Pen 2003?, Wolfe 1987, Gold and Revill 2006). Investigations into the origin and history of individual instruments and their distribution patterns reveal settlement and migration patterns as well as the contributions of various ethnic groups to the musical culture in the mountains (Carney 1978, Tallmadge 1983, Gibson 2002, Thompson 2006c). These studies have served to make some previously invisible groups (such as African Americans) more visible in the region, and writings on race and recorded music have further identified some of the forces working to silence some of those groups (Titon 1977, Jamieson 1990, Malone and Stricklin 2003, Wolfe 1987, Thompson 2006c).

Early recordings of "hillbilly music," especially those considered to be field recordings, are sometimes viewed as the closest thing we have to the roots of contemporary Appalachian music. They are then sometimes held up as proof of certain trends, such as whether songs are accompanied or not, how much ornamentation the vocal songs receive, or

other clues to earlier music and its origin. While it is tempting to assume that the oldest is the most authentic, it is important to question, as some scholars have done, why certain musics, musical style, and musicians are represented in the early recordings, and why others have been omitted (Titon 1977, Kenney 1999, Pecknold 2002). Power relations involving race, gender, and class have always affected the way music creates Appalachia, such as exclusion of black Appalachian string band musicians from “hillbilly” recordings and their segregation into “race” record labels.

Another assumption implicit in the belief that early commercial music was a proper reflection of all that had come before furthers the concept of an undifferentiated Appalachian past, which then furthers the impression of Appalachia as “a land time forgot,” and therefore, less “progressive” or complex than the mainstream society. Contemporary Appalachian music has largely been investigated in terms of its continuity with the past, which may contribute to this static view of the region and its culture. My identification of Appalachian vernacular roots music as the subject of this study does acknowledge the past, but focuses more on current perceptions and beliefs about the music. Documenting the music itself provides “snapshots” of contemporary vernacular roots music in parts of Appalachia.

3.2 Old-Time Music and the Search for Authenticity

The community of musicians and singers that occupy the center of this study call the music that they play “old-time music.” Old-time music is a challenging genre to define, as it incorporates elements of folk, popular, traditional, contemporary, sacred and secular musics. It runs the gamut from purely instrumental, adding occasional singing, to accompanied

songs, and unaccompanied singing, both solo and ensemble. One of my informants, Beverly May, gave some examples of how wide-ranging it can be:

To me, when you say old-time music, it means so many different things. It means the singing down here at the Old Regular Baptist Church, and it means the lone fiddler on the porch, and it means the jam band, and it means the Old Crow Medicine show, and it means the Tri-City Messengers doing that tight four-part harmony...and Addie Graham singing ballads...but it's all old-time in my book. I would have a hard time excluding anybody from that tent.

DT: What unites it, then?

Bev: I think it comes out of some sort of tradition that's passed from musician to musician rather than something that's passed through music or recordings. And usually you don't really know where it came from, and you don't know where it goes. There's a few modern tunes you can do that with, but most of it you can. It's all community favorites. You get tunes that are associated with a particular person. They happen to be the conduit at that particular time.

DT: Public domain.

Bev: Well...yeah. I think public domain is kind of a legal thing. I think community property explains it better. It's your birthright, I think describes it better, and what is authentic old-time, and I think the best way to handle that is just to avoid the question!

It is fundamentally a participatory music, but has become presentational as well. It has rural roots, but became the music of urban and suburban white youth looking for alternatives to mainstream lifestyles, being closely associated with the back-to-the-land movement of the 1970s. More than with other styles of vernacular music, communities of old-time players seem pre-occupied with issues of authenticity (Bealle 2005).

Perhaps ironically, the designation “old-time” has more to do with commercially recorded music than with traditional, face-to-face transmission. The term was coined by early record companies in the 1920s to sell music through evoking nostalgia for rural life, but it didn’t really stick as the label to a specific kind of music until the 1950s. The development of bluegrass music in post-World War II America with its smooth instrumentation and polished harmonies highlighted the archaic and primitive sound of the early recordings, which became source material in the search for authenticity. First, Harry Smith’s iconic multi-disc *Anthology of American Folk Music* (1952) recorded musicians that embodied the old-time sound and modeled the later ideal of the heroic, driven young (white male) urbanite in search of roots music. The New Lost City Ramblers, a band that based its sound on prewar recordings, released their first album in 1959 and Columbia’s marketing emphasized the term. “In effect, if not intent, this distinction established for old-time music more prestigious antimodernist credentials and the potential for authentic experience as a key performance component” (Bealle 2005:12).

Old-time music is a distinct community of players, dancers, and appreciators of acoustic music connected to the southern Appalachian Region as its hearth. It is connected to both bluegrass music and the folk revival, but perhaps more in the minds of those outside the old-time community than for those who participate. Activities that enact old-time music

are also very similar to those in bluegrass and folk circles: playing acoustic instruments, dancing, and singing together are the focus and these take place at festivals, jam sessions, parties, concerts, workshops, dances, and other friendly get-togethers. There are magazines, websites, clubs and organizations that promote it and provide networking opportunities as in many other communities of interest. All three musical communities celebrate and lay claim to traditional music, debate questions of authenticity, and share a concern that their music is disappearing. They have an impulse to preserve it, feeling a sense of performing a public service in that preservation.

More than the other groups, however, the old-time community seems extremely concerned with continuing its legacy as a separate entity, and in separating itself from bluegrass in particular. There is a worry that “bluegrassers” will take over the music or event, and visible wincing might take place when an audience member tells an old-time musician that they just “love bluegrass!” This anxiety is produced in part because bluegrass music can essentially silence old-time music because it is usually played louder and faster. Each genre has its own repertoire, which overlaps less than an outsider would imagine. Some of this has to do with the emphasis on vocals in bluegrass and on instrumentals in old-time. Each genre uses space quite differently, and the social relations resulting from and contributing to sharing the music reflect different values, part of which stem from the differences between participatory (old-time) and presentational (bluegrass) music, more of which will be explained at the end of the chapter.

Exclusionary behavior emerges when the place of old-time music is threatened by misunderstanding or by the more powerful sweep of another kind of music, like bluegrass, that competes with its regional authenticity. The Old-Time Music Revival (not a religious

event!) – which will be described in Chapter 5 – is an excellent example of resistance to perceived bluegrass hegemony by purposely excluding musicians that might play it, and of constructing a place to express and reproduce old-time music, ironically reinventing itself as presentational music in order to control the outcome. By contrast, bluegrass players seem to make fewer distinctions between the two styles, particularly among older players who grew up during the 1940s and ‘50s when bluegrass was developing. Musician and music producer Brett Ratliff explained that they didn’t really distinguish between the two genres, but just thought of it as old bluegrass and new bluegrass, and that the latter was “what’s going to get you on the radio.” It is hard to tell if what is being referred to as “old bluegrass” is more participatory, or if it was just more well-known presentational music, and therefore not as fashionable to learn. It does indicate, however, that the “new bluegrass” is, indeed, a presentational style of music as it would help a player get on the radio. Perhaps the lack of distinction from the bluegrass side, but very conscious distinction on the part of old-time players may indicate the relatively privileged status of bluegrass, which allows its players, like other privileged positions, to not have to be so reflexive about their actions (Yancey Martin 2003:357).

Old-time music today, as indicated by its name, emphasizes its continuity with the past and is completely acoustic. Perhaps its most essential value is participation, either as a player, singer, or dancer (Turino 2008), though aural fidelity to historical understandings of the music is also very important (Bealle 2005). Among players, aural fidelity may be achieved preferably through traditional transmission from family, neighbors and friends. The next most prestigious transmission is by emulating an old master, again best in person, and less preferably by internalizing a body of recordings, both early commercial and field

recordings. While there are transcriptions of the music and tablature used to teach, it is nearly impossible to reproduce the music through reading alone.

String band dance music is its core, although singing, either accompanied by instruments or unaccompanied, is also important. Unaccompanied singing is often performed completely solo, although among more skilled participants or in a rehearsed ensemble, unaccompanied harmony singing is valued. Otherwise, it is an ensemble-type of music, with melody at its heart, supported and embellished by chordal accompaniment, which also provides the rhythm. Close harmonies are common, as are bass runs, but the rhythm is usually rather simple and strong, and often provided by dancers, especially by cloggers.⁸ Polyrhythms do not have much of a place in old-time music, and instruments designed for rhythm only have limited use.

The fiddle is the most important lead instrument, with the open-backed banjo a close second. Few banjo players play the tune closely enough and without extraneous or missing notes, however, so that without a fiddle or a singer, the melody often gets lost and others find it hard to learn tunes from them. The flat-picked mandolin may be used as a melody instrument, but without the amplification used in concert or recording sessions, it is so soft that it is hard to hear among many other instruments. Therefore, unless singing is the focus of a session or performance, few old-time music events can be successful without a fiddle, as a strong melody line is essential. The fiddle as a core element contrasts with the banjo, which is typically only part of the core when it is the only rhythm instrument. Otherwise, the banjo might best be considered as part of the elaboration.

⁸ Although individual rhythmic step dancing may be referred to as flat-footing or buck dancing the most common term used is “clogging.” This term is sometimes used specifically to describe more contemporary team-style dancing, which tends to use pre-recorded music, jingle taps, flashy high steps and costumes.

Of the other instruments involved, guitar is the most important, usually being a six-string, flat-top guitar, though arch-top guitars have a certain caché among those who include many bar chords or swing-type licks in their repertoire, or who associate their sound with the era of early recordings. Guitarists may take occasional leads, but their usual function is already quite multi-valent: to provide rhythmic, bass, and chordal accompaniment to the melody. Although much is made of the fiddle-banjo combination as the quintessential string combination, the guitar is currently perhaps the second most important core instrument as it provides the background on which to string the melody.

Bass instruments are important, though not essential, to this music. At times, the cello has filled this role, both in the 1920s and in more recent revivals. Banjo bands of the 1920s used bass banjos, and they are becoming popular enough now for Gold Tone to offer one popularized by Marcie Marxer. Stand-up “doghouse” bass accompaniment has become prized - especially for dancing - though it is not always available due to the challenges of transporting such a large instrument. The use of an electric stand-up bass is creeping into old-time music, but guitar-style electric bass has so far been rejected from the old-time community. Alternative bass instruments used occasionally include the washtub bass, guitar-style acoustic bass, eclectic instruments from other ethnic music such as the Mexican guitarrón, or the new wooden beat boxes.

Historically, piano was part of old-time music, but is no longer used so much in the South except in contradance communities. Inclusion of other instruments waxes and wanes with fashion and availability, and should be unobtrusive unless the player is extremely skilled. The lap dulcimer has a large drawback in playing with other instruments, in that it usually is only played in D. Other stringed instruments such as the hammered dulcimer,

tenor guitar, or the current favorite -- the ukulele -- are welcomed though not very common in Kentucky. Ukuleles are sometimes welcomed in the form of banjo ukes, such as played by the Horseflies from northern Appalachia. The only non-stringed instruments that are typically accepted would be the harmonica or Jew's harp. Rhythm instruments that are used occasionally (and most musicians hope, sparingly) are spoons, bones, dancing doll, plastic egg shaker, and hand clapping or rhythmic dancing such as clogging. Though some avant-garde dance bands might have more pervasive and extensive rhythm instruments and players, these are highly contested and hardly ever extend into a non-dance music session.

String band music means just that in this case: in other parts of the country, such as dance bands might include woodwind instruments (New England) or brass (Southwest), or even accordion⁹. While there is a strain of old-time music that is experimental, eclectic, and inclusive that may include percussion or wind instruments, most players in Eastern Kentucky are rather conservative and reject instruments outside of those mentioned in the previous paragraph. Contest hosts have created an "alternative band" category to encompass the strange and wonderful creativity that includes non-traditional instruments and settings, but to keep it being judged separately from the standard old-time band. Local jams or musical gatherings have their own standards for how much deviation is tolerated. Old-time singing is inarguably part of the tradition and genre, but it has a contested place in jam sessions.

3.3 Bluegrass Style and Instrumentation

Although it has roots in old-time music, bluegrass is a performance style of acoustic music that emerged in the late 1940s in America. Bill Monroe is usually given credit for

⁹ Though there is one accordion player that shows up regularly to the jam sessions at Appalshop and some other events, who is well-known to other participants and joins right in.

putting together the sound through his band Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys, though all the pieces were already present in both European-American and African-American musics. The classic bluegrass sound consists of flat-picked mandolin; smoothly-bowed fiddle; 5-string banjo played in a distinctive 3-finger, thumb lead, up-picking style using metal or plastic fingerpicks; plucked stand-up bass, and rhythm guitar with added bass runs. Inclusion of dobro or steel guitar is acceptable. Many bluegrass festivals still emphasize acoustic instruments only, but electric guitar-style or stand-up basses are increasingly found in some jam sessions or performances.

Although instrumental accompaniment is essential to the style, bluegrass centers around singing rather than dancing, which may help explain its popularity in the Baptist-dominated South and areas of Appalachia where dancing traditions have waned. The vocal style has roots in the shape-note tradition of religious harmony singing, with at least one line of high tenor harmony above the lead as well as baritone and/or low bass harmonies. It is now well-known that Bill Monroe was greatly influenced by African American music and musicians, notably guitarist and fiddler Arnold Shultz, in the development of this style (Lightfoot 1990a). One of the hallmarks of the style is the practice of taking instrumental breaks with an improvised quality, with “blue” notes and arpeggios that play around the tune. These qualities, along with a call-and-response setup in some songs and instrumental chops that fall on the backbeat, all reflect black influence on the style. The goal is a tight, fast, loud, well-rehearsed ensemble sound.

Bluegrass may be described as either “traditional” or “progressive,” with many other sub-genres that are sometimes traced to a particular performer (such as David Grisman’s “dawg music”). Gospel music has, more and more, become an important part of bluegrass.

Most bands include at least one gospel tune in their performances, usually at the end of a set or performance, although there are a large proportion of bluegrass bands, especially in Appalachia, who play only gospel music. Bluegrass “jam sessions,” music parties, or other informal events most often consist of a number of bands performing for an audience in sequence rather than everyone playing together. Different groups often do not even hear the other groups playing, as they are sequestered somewhere to practice their act before taking the stage.

3.4 Distinctions between Old-time and Bluegrass Music

Bluegrass and old-time music might coexist in a festival situation, such as in the iconic Mt. Airy and Galax festivals, or might attract the some of the same audience, but there are few players who are comfortable in both settings. Many of these players that are comfortable in both settings are middle-aged or older now, with parents who played old-time music, while they grew up with the new bluegrass sound as it emerged in the 1940s to 1960s. Some of the songs and tunes are common to both repertoires, but some of the techniques and expectations are quite incompatible. One of the biggest differences is that bluegrass is a presentational music with some participatory elements, while old-time is mainly participatory. There certainly are old-time bands that are presentational as well, but that is not the main impetus of that style of music.

Old-time music, when played at dance tempo, is easily as fast as bluegrass, but usually a slightly more relaxed tempo is taken than in bluegrass tunes. Idiosyncratic old-time players are known for making a statement by their slow tempo, as if they feel it is more “authentic” or in order to separate themselves more completely from bluegrass or more modern musics. The use of extra-fast or extra-slow tempos seem to happen more among

revivalists and northerners, and may be one subtle distinction that separates old-time musicians, or in ascribing authenticity.

Old-time music has acoustic, string-band dance music as its core, and one of the reasons for its decline in parts of Appalachia may be the decline of community folk-dancing in the mid-twentieth century. Some bluegrass music is suitable for individual step dancing, but is rarely used for square dancing or other kinds of couple dancing. Perhaps this is because of its evolution and popularity in Appalachia and other areas more noted for conservative Baptist traditions that frown on dancing, especially couple dancing. In any case, bluegrass, rather than old-time, seems more comfortable with the more conservatively religious indigenous Appalachian population, with its emphasis on hymn-singing and incompatibility with couple dancing.

Many of the distinctions between the two styles are expressed by differences in the way the same instruments have evolved to better accommodate the ideal sounds. Smooth, virtuosic playing in bluegrass allows for individuals and their instruments to stand out at various times, while old-time music values a denser texture that results from different setup and playing of the instruments. Banjo, in particular, is indicative of the differences.

3.4.1 Instrumentation

The solo banjo was the preferred accompaniment for songs in old-time music for whites and blacks alike well into the twentieth century (O'Connell 1998). The black banjo songster is likely a continuation of the griot tradition of West Africa, the griot being a bard – almost always a man – who kept the history of the community and would compose and sing songs about the great accomplishments of its leaders (Conway 1995, Carlin 2007). Old-time banjo continues to be an excellent solo accompaniment for songs, while the complex

melodic lines of the bluegrass banjo competes too much with most singing, so is typically only used in the context of a full band to accompany songs, being highlighted during instrumental breaks or between the song's phrases. One of the differences that perhaps has the biggest impact on incompatibility between bluegrass and old-time players is the latter's preference for retuning in order to play in different keys with a maximum number of open strings for resonance, using either the open G tuning or a double-C tuning (gCGCD) and a capo to easily play in D and A. This means that bluegrass jams rarely take a breath to allow for retuning so the old-time player has to either 1) become extremely proficient in retuning quickly, 2) play out of tune, 3) drop out and not play until the key comes around again.

The playing style and structure of the banjo are perhaps the most notable differences that distinguish old-time from bluegrass, and some that have gendered consequences. The most distinctive physical attribute of the bluegrass banjo is a wooden resonator, which concentrates the sound and directs it forward, away from the player. This contributes to the large size and heavy weight of the instrument. Bluegrass banjo should sound loud and sharp, with the industrialized metal and plastic of its construction evident in its ringing sound. Picking should be fast and smooth, with lots of fretwork up the neck and full chords picked along with the melodies and harmonies, often described as "hard-driving." Both the weight and more brash playing style make the bluegrass style of banjo playing more compatible with normative male characteristics.

The fiddle in old-time music is usually more rhythmic than in bluegrass, and sometimes scratchiness is valued as evocative of the quintessential old-time sound, as opposed to the smooth, lyrical quality of bluegrass fiddle. Both use double stops (bowing more than one string at a time), though other bowing techniques might depend more on

regional styles and emulation of certain players rather than referring to old-time vs. bluegrass distinctions¹⁰. Bluegrass fiddlers often create intricate arpeggiated lines of notes that mirror the backward and forward rolls of the bluegrass banjo. The fiddle now most often maintains the standard tuning (GDae), especially in bluegrass, because the ensemble performance style lends itself to standardization and where a pause to re-tune would be detrimental. Old-time fiddle has a long history of solo playing, which lends itself more to a variety of tunings. Combining the fiddle with the banjo, guitar, and other instruments led to a gradual discarding of the open tunings, but those are being revived, and are valued for their use in achieving an older sound or emulating a master fiddler who used them. Most common is the AEae or GDgd tuning to play in those keys, but fiddlers might also just change one string to achieve a certain sound, and there are also a wide variety of idiosyncratic combinations that might be used for just one or two tunes.

Time signatures for both musical styles are typically 4/4 or 2/4 – the tunes often referred to as reels – with rhythmic stress on the first note of the measure, or the downbeat, with a secondary stress on the third. This results in most people clapping along on the downbeat, a practice more associated with Anglo-American musics rather than African-American musics. Occasional tunes and songs in ¾ time might be played, typically referred to as waltz time even if the songs are not waltzes. Bluegrass musicians do not typically play for folk dances and tend to know fewer actual waltzes than old-time musicians, the latter of whom are often called upon to play for dances.

¹⁰ For example, Kentucky fiddling is known for circular bowing techniques, with John Morgan Salyer, Owen “Snake” Chapman, or J.P. Fraley being held up as exemplars of the Kentucky old-time tradition. Bluegrass fiddlers often emulate Curly Ray Cline or Kenny Baker. All these fiddlers mentioned are male, and this emulation of heroic males helps contribute to the consciousness of fiddle music as a male domain.

Old-time tunes are usually played in the keys of D, A, and G, A minor and E minor. Instrumental tunes (usually and hereafter just known as “tunes”) are typically known and played only in one key (e.g. Soldier’s Joy is a D tune, while June Apple is played in A), while songs might be played in the best key for the voice of whoever is leading it. Bluegrass banjo is typically played out of the open G tuning, which is a key better suited to a high male voice than a female voice, though sometimes the keys of C, E, or B might be used, and are usually achieved by playing up the neck of the banjo. Most old-time banjoists prefer not to play in E or B, and will sit out those tunes if they are played in a mixed jam session.

While the fiddle and banjo are now regarded as the quintessential old-time band, this was not always the case in Appalachia or America as a whole. Banjos, when known as African American instruments, were first played with drums, and then other percussion instruments, such as bones. Fiddle was often played solo, or accompanied by guitar or piano. Combining the two instruments has straightened out and changed much of the music in the old-time repertoire, which has only been exacerbated by the addition of more instruments in the band. The fiddle now is played much more in standard tuning, and less in open or cross-tunings. The timing of the tunes has standardized and straightened out, especially with the influence of more recent styles of folk dance like contradance, which relies heavily on a 64-bar tune, with AABB form (see below for more discussion of old-time music and dance). The introduction of the guitar – and later, the upright bass – provided the rhythm and bass support for a successful dance and freed the banjo from its previous role as mainly providing rhythm, increasing its use as a melody instrument.

There is a class of tunes known as “crooked,” which don’t fit this standard (such as some versions of Fire on the Mountain or John Salyer’s Featherbed), as well as a few three-

part tunes like Hangman's Reel or a version of Ragtime Annie. Crooked tunes and non-standard tunings flag the player as somewhat non-traditional and some players specialize in these, to the delight of others who might get together to specifically play these unusual tunes. In a regular jam, however, including too many of these tunes will cause dissension in the ranks (one method of so-called "jam busting"), so they must be judiciously inserted. Sometimes a particular group will request playing one tune on regular basis until the group learns it and it becomes part of the regular repertoire.

3.4.2 Instruments and Gear-heads

The instruments chosen transmit information about the player, and the ability to converse about the instruments knowledgeably helps identify an insider in the old-time community, even for non-players. It is a way to display one's dedication to one's art; of course, it's a status symbol to have a well-made and good-sounding instrument, and certain rare models will also convey an insider's knowledge of excellence. Vintage instruments are perceived as being most authentic to play old-time music on, but contemporary instruments made by certain contemporary craftsmen have status (like Wayne Henderson, Bart Reiter) and a local favorite, David Large of Ashland, Kentucky, who started making 6-string banjos (like 5 string but with another low string, so not strung like a guitar), also are desirable. When someone in a group purchases a new instrument, or when someone plays with a new person, politeness if not true interest requires attention to their instrument. As described above, certain brands are sometimes connected to one style of music over another as well, so possession of what might be considered to be an "off-brand" might spark interest among other, if only to try and understand what might have possessed the player to go over to the dark side.

There are certainly a sub-group of musicians I would call “gear-heads” who are very particular about the brand and age of the instruments they own and play, spending a great deal of time – and sometimes money – acquiring many instruments. Finding a good deal on a rare or excellent instrument is certainly prized. Connection of a particular instrument with a master implies an inheritance of some of the master’s talent or approbation of the apprentice by the master, thereby increasing the authenticity of a player and his or her musical genealogy.

3.4.3 Retuning, Banjo Jokes, Race, and the Image of the Banjo Player

- Q. What’s the difference between an onion and a banjo?
A. Nobody cries when you chop up a banjo.
- Q. What is perfect pitch for a banjo?
A. Getting it in the dumpster from all the way across the parking lot.
- Q. How can you tell if the floor is level?
A. The drool comes out of both sides of the banjo player’s mouth.

Much tension, as well as hilarity, occurs as a result of old-time banjo players’ constant re-tuning and in the inherent instability of the instrument, with its flexible head, particularly when playing outside. In a courteous and inclusive old-time jam, the group will play tunes in the same key for some time before changing keys, or check with the banjo player to see if they mind re-tuning. Some fiddlers prefer not to play with banjos so they can play in a variety of keys without enduring the grumbling or having to wait for the banjo player to tune, or worse, when the banjo player tunes hastily and not completely when changing keys. Banjo jokes are proliferated by banjo players as well as others, most having some illusion to the difficulty of keeping the instrument in tune and/or the intelligence or reliability of the banjoist, the latter to be discussed in more detail below. Professional players often carry more than one banjo to keep in different tunings for concert situations.

Fiddle players often use tunings beyond the standard GDae in old-time music. They are much less likely to want to retune in between songs, but because of the smallness and lightness of a fiddle, are more likely to carry more than one instrument, each tuned differently. At a recent performance at Cowan Creek Music School, in which fiddler Bobby Taylor was designated as a “master musician” but banjoist Kim Johnson was his accompanist rather than being a master musician in her own right, Taylor kept up a running monologue about having to wait for Ms. Johnson to retune. Mr. Taylor, on the other hand, carried four fiddles, all tuned differently, and merely picked each one up as he desired to play in different tunings. While I became increasingly more indignant, no one else commented on what I saw as a situation that went over the top in asserting the masculinist hegemony of the fiddle.

So, what is going on with banjo jokes? I tried turning them around and transferring them to a different instrument, but they didn’t work, with the exception of the accordion, which has its own body of jokes. Banjo players tend to find them funny as well, but perhaps do not tell them with quite the vigor that others do. George Gibson, a white banjo player, maker, scholar, and collector from Knott County, Kentucky, says that the banjo is the instrument of the Other, first of African Americans, and now with more female banjo players than female fiddle players. The banjo continues to represent the Other, but is also a liminal instrument, playing both core and elaboration, being a combination of black and white, but neither fish nor fowl.

Some of the image of the disreputable banjo player may be derived from the minstrel shows, which have clear race and gender implications. All the earliest descriptions and depictions of the banjo and similar instruments portray it as the quintessentially

Southern, African American instrument, mostly but not exclusively played by men.¹¹ By the 1840s, working class European American men had begun to lay claim to the instrument as the centerpiece of the minstrel show, in which parodies of black life figured prominently. The central figures were, like many white parodies of black men, either the shiftless, ragged Jim Crow, who was naïve but had some unschooled but “native intelligence” or Zip Coon, the urban dandy whose current incarnation might be the hip hop artist or pimp. The rough nature of the minstrel show and the carnival life that went along with it, meant that even when (black) female characters were (rarely?) included in the shows, they were played by white men (Carlin 2007).

By the beginning of the minstrel era – around 1840 – music historians credit white minstrels with making two important changes in the instrument: replacing the fragile gourd body with a hoop or frame over which the skin head was stretched, and adding a fifth string to increase its melodic capabilities (Conway 1995, Carlin 2007).¹² Besides looking for datable examples and connecting them with individual players and makers, the marriage of

¹¹ Gura, P. F. & J. F. Bollman. 1999. *America's Instrument : The Banjo in the Nineteenth Century*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. This source contains one of the few illustrations of an African American female banjo player, in a chromolithograph from *Comic Sketches of American Life*, ca. 1855 (18), and the earliest image the authors found of a white female banjo player was around 1860 (93). On a related note, the minstrel shows were an entirely male phenomenon on the part of the performers, but some of them impersonated females as well as impersonating African Americans (Carlin, B. 2007. *The Birth of the Banjo: Joel Walker Sweeney and Early Minstrelsy*. Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, Inc.).

¹² This was actually the low string rather than the short drone string now referred to as such; the short string has always been integral to the banjo. Interestingly, a parallel development in the early 21st century has been the addition of an even lower 6th string to further the melodic capabilities of the instrument and allow it to be played in more keys without retuning.

A further note on the Europeanization of the banjo: there is little documentation about early banjos, their construction, and playing style, and the instrument was not mass-produced until the 1840s, so it is hard to know how these changes might have emerged with a folk instrument that was idiosyncratically hand-created. The more I have learned about early black music in America, along with research and analysis by Conway, Carlin, and Linn, the more it seems that most African American persons of that time would probably not be interested in adding a string to more easily play European-style melodic banjo, but would continue to explore the rhythmic possibilities of the instrument, thus obviating the utility of an additional string. A black musician of that time desiring to play European-style music would most likely take up the fiddle.

the African American emphasis on rhythm and European American emphasis on melody was made apparent in the construction of the instrument itself.

Although it seems quite likely that white banjoists first learned from black banjoists and there might have been considerable black-white musical interchange historically (Tallmadge 1983, Conway 1995), the banjo became more and more an instrument of white America with the decline of the 19th century. The intimate connection of the banjo with black slavery, plantation life, rural backwardness, and of course, the denigrating and pervasive minstrel show combined with the rise of more urban, guitar-based blues to make the instrument less appealing for African Americans. At the same time, a wave of improvements in the design, construction, and playing style which paralleled industrial developments in the U.S. brought this once-crude instrument into the parlors of even the most genteel, with marketing targeted especially at white ladies.¹³ Classical and popular music, rather than folk music, was the style promoted to be played on the new, improved instrument (Linn 1991). The rise of ragtime and jazz caused its popularity to fade even among whites in the early twentieth century, until the rise of bluegrass music in the late 1940s and 1950s, which once again centered this most American of musical instruments, this time firmly in white popular culture.

The happy-go-lucky, rough songster was thus portrayed historically by Josiah Combs, a native chronicler of Appalachian music in the early twentieth century:

‘Gentlemen!’ so spoke the famous and eccentric Judge Patten who used to live in eastern Kentucky, ‘Whenever you see a great big overgrown buck

¹³ In fact, one of the most sought-after Vega old-time banjo styles was called the White Laydie, and the advertising showed engravings of white women playing the banjo in parlors. Ad copy touted the finish of the banjo, which was guaranteed not to pick the fine fabric of a lady’s clothing (Linn).

sitting at the mouth of some holler, or at the forks of some road, with a big slouch hat on, a blue collar, a celluloid, artificial rose on his coat lapel, and a banjo strung across his breast, and a-pickin' of 'Sourwood Mountain,' fine that man, gentlemen, fine him! For if he hasn't already done something, he's a-goin' to! (quoted in Campbell 1921:144)

Certainly, musicians over time have been portrayed as ne'er-do-wells and fiddlers and guitarists also have a reputation for playing the "devil's box" or selling their souls to the devil. Banjo players are not usually portrayed as associated with the devil, but more as being irresponsible or not too bright. So, despite the previously mentioned feminization of the banjo in popular culture, the banjo's rough character persisted in the mountains. Those promoting more genteel culture, such as the ladies of the settlement school movement in eastern Kentucky, promoted the dulcimer over the banjo, and ballads over banjo songs.

In terms of the latter, the impact of the 1972 movie, *Deliverance*, on ideas about Appalachia and its music – particularly the banjo - cannot be overstated. The theme song of *Dueling Banjos* remains popular even 40 years later, even requested of a lone banjo player when it is clearly a duet. Interestingly, it is actually a "duel" between a banjo and a guitar, not between two banjos. The white, middle-class outsider with a guitar is the only one who can communicate effectively with any Appalachian in the movie, and that is only through music, with a wordless, apparently developmentally delayed young man sitting in a porch swing, picking the banjo. The guitar in this case represents "civilization," while the banjo has wilder connotations; the two instruments could not be reversed, and the symbolism would not work if the outsider also had a banjo.

Forty years later, the symbolism is alive and potent. Recently spotted T-shirts with the legend, “Paddle faster – I hear banjo music!” refer to the connection of the banjo to the dangerous, sexually deviant, inbred, masculine, white, mentally deficient stereotype of Appalachia – and by extension, banjo players – promoted by *Deliverance*. In the spirit of many banjo jokes, these shirts are sometimes embraced not only by banjo enthusiasts, but even by those who are sympathetic to Appalachia and might not openly embrace the stereotypes suggested by the movie. These connotations continue to haunt the musics represented as Appalachian.

3.5 So... What Does It Sound Like?

Old-time dance tunes are lively acoustic ensemble pieces, with the typical ensemble consisting of stringed instruments only: fiddle, banjo, guitar, and sometimes bass or mandolin. The tunes might be described as reels, with a 4/4 or 2/4 rhythm, and are usually fairly bouncy, with strong emphasis on the downbeat and secondary emphasis on the third beat of each measure. A waltz will be played for variety, and often at the end of the night if the music event is a dance, less likely at the end if it is a jam session. The fiddle plays the tune with a combination of notes defined by the up and down movement – or shuffle – of the bow, or by slurs where the bow maintains contact with the strings. In the Kentucky style, the shuffle of the bow has an almost circular movement. Clawhammer banjo plays a close approximation of the tune as well as some rhythmic accompaniment. The guitarist(s) are mostly responsible for a strong rhythm but also provide some bass accompaniment by either picking alternating bass notes and/or bass runs.

Most all of the instruments use a “bum-ditty” rhythm (or long-short-short or quarter note, eighth note, eighth note), with two groups of notes per 4/4 measure. The emphasis is

on the first, long note of each group (the one and three beat of the four), with the second and third notes each half as long (together forming the two and four beats – the off-beats) which mostly provide a rhythmic background. The rhythm of the latter group of short notes is kept by the shuffle of the fiddle bow, the brush of the banjo, and the strum of the guitar and provides almost a sense of lift after the strong downbeats. Each instrument ideally contributes two different components at once, encompassing both tune and rhythmic accompaniment.

A statement of the key is a usual signal to start a tune, with most tunes played in major keys of D, A, G and C, and occasionally A minor. Courtesy to the banjo players requires playing several tunes in the same key before requesting a key change, so the key is not re-stated until it changes. Fiddle often starts things off – if not expecting others to join right in on beginning, will just start off with the tune, with other instruments falling in, usually by the end of the second part of the tune. In a more formal situation, or if the fiddler has the attention of the group, he might play four groups of long-short-short notes called “potatoes” or just four beats or “chunks” to set the rhythm and timing of the tune before launching into the A part of the tune. Sometimes the banjo will play “potatoes” or “chunks,” or someone will count it off.

The tunes typically have two sections, each played twice, in an AABB form, and the two sections are usually fairly different from each other at the beginning of the phrase so they can be fairly easily distinguished from one another. Because these are dance tunes, this structure aids the caller, the musicians, and the dancers to locate themselves in the trajectory of the tune. If the tunes have words, the A part would be the verse and B part would be the chorus. If the tune has words, it is usually a lyric song rather than a ballad, and the words are

sometimes nonsensical, humorous, or related to life on the farm. In other words, the words typically do not tell a story, and the singing might be seen more as a vocalized form of the tune. Tunes are often played 6-8 times through.

Repertoire is somewhat different, although there are some tunes, especially old tunes, which are shared between the groups. Common tunes found in bluegrass music include Foggy Mountain Breakdown, Salt River, John Hardy, Will the Circle Be Unbroken, Little Maggie, Mountain Dew, and Billy in the Lowground. Orange Blossom Special is an iconic tune played by bluegrass fiddlers as a virtuosic specialty, but rarely by old-time fiddlers. Shared tunes include Soldiers Joy, Liberty, Boil Them Cabbage Down, Buffalo Gals, Leather Britches, Lost Indian, various versions of Liza Jane, Sally Goodin, Sally Ann, and Bill Cheatham. Old-time tunes commonly played at festivals, or with groups that are not necessarily the “home” group, are Angeline the Baker, Arkansas Traveler, Black-Eyed Susie, Cherokee Shuffle, Cluck Old Hen, Forked Deer, Sail Away Ladies, Saint Anne’s Reel, Shady Grove, Sourwood Mountain, Uncle Joe (also known as Did You Ever See the Devil, Uncle Joe or Hop High Ladies or Hop Light Ladies), and Wild Horse (also known as Stony Point). Most old-time players play some version of Cumberland Gap, but this tune tends to be so idiosyncratic that it is not a jam session tune. Other common Kentucky tunes include Briarpicker Brown, Martha Campbell, and The Yellow Barber.

3.6 Participatory versus Presentational Musics

Many of the elements of old-time music described above produce a music that is very participatory. One of the biggest differences between old-time and bluegrass music is that old-time music is essentially a participatory music, while bluegrass developed as a

presentational style of music. These produce an entirely different set of values, as described by Turino:

...these situations of participatory music making are not just informal or amateur, that is, lesser versions of the 'real music' made by the pros but that, in fact, they are something else – a different form of art and activity entirely – and that they should be conceptualized and valued as such. (Turino 2008:26)

In participatory music, it is the interaction that is valued, the sonic and kinesthetic bonding that occurs when musicians and dancers play and move together, producing an activity rather than a product; or, rather, the activity and interaction *is* the product. The focus on the here and now of the experience, with the subtle shifts and changes that each player employs to create the music, help produce that sense of *flow* that proves so satisfying and rewarding. The short, repeated, and relatively simple forms of participatory music help to bring in more players and allow for those elaborating the melody to have a strong framework, providing “security in constancy” which can create “social synchrony” (Turino 2008:41). These same redundant phrases and chord changes might be boring in a presentational setting, but allow for satisfying participation.

In presentational music, a sense of *flow* is valued among the performers, but it may be achieved due to preplanning and orchestrating arrangements, including instrumental breaks, beginnings and endings, and including variety in tempo, key, and density to keep the audience interest. As Turino notes, the audience is then brought back time and again to the “*indexical nows* that draw listeners’ attention back to the moment of performance” (58). Therefore, presentational music strives to keep the listeners in the present and anticipating

the future, as opposed to the participatory indexes that tend to draw participants back to previous meanings and connects them more to the past. Turino goes on to describe the changes in old-time dense textures of scratchier fiddle bowing and clawhammer banjo styles to clearer, more virtuosic fiddle and picked banjo styles as participatory old-time music transformed into presentational bluegrass (60).

This dichotomy between the different styles has implications for musical events and how they produce certain kinds of spaces. Some of the key differences between presentational and participatory musics may be shown by their connections to economic systems. To return to Booth's and Kuhn's economic definition of folk music, participatory musics would be in the same category of those that are not typically supported by payment, but would be more open to participation by ordinary people. Musician and music producer Brett Ratliff described this music as being associated with lower standards of living, and not seen as productive. He felt it was "unnatural to earn a living with this music. It's not designed to be a money-maker" (Ratliff 2008).

The music at the center of this dissertation, then, is at its heart, music made by ordinary people and valued for its connection to the past and to the Appalachian region. The instruments as well as the instrumental, vocal, and dance styles associated with old-time music and promoted by the community of players in eastern Kentucky are fairly proscribed. While much of the instrumentation and history of old-time music is shared with bluegrass music, there is a sense of competition between the two styles for authenticity as Appalachian music. At least within the old-time community, discussions about the similarities and differences help define the spaces of the music and its place in Appalachia. These

“discussions” might be held as musical conversations as well as through words, and they are often framed in the context of the musical events that promote and share the music.

In order to hear and understand these musical conversations, I spent several years of more intentional listening and participation in the musical life of the old-time community in eastern Kentucky, following years of playing in the area and hosting jam sessions. The next chapter will explain my ethnographic research design and methodological considerations. Chapters 5 and 6 will return to the music, explaining and analyzing some musical events including both presentational and participatory Appalachian musics, including old-time and bluegrass as described in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter, I describe the methods I used to investigate my questions, including short descriptions of my sites and subjects, and a brief recounting of the path my research has taken. I describe my research design and the techniques I employ, including the rationales that led me to choose these. Along the way, I consider such issues as the politics of research, insider/outsider dynamics and their accompanying power relations, and the social construction of fieldwork.

4.1 Introduction to Sites and Subjects

In order to investigate the questions described in Chapter 1 as being at the center of my research, namely 1) who gets to be an Appalachian musician, 2) what are the criteria, and 3) who gets to decide, it is important to start with Appalachian space and representations of the region and its music. Regardless of the definition of Appalachia, it is too large a space to investigate completely in one dissertation, covering 112,000 square miles in its smallest common definition (Campbell 1921:10). This would not be necessary, in any case, because I am not seeking through this dissertation to demarcate the boundaries of the region by attempting to uncover the place on the landscape where music and music-makers leave off being “Appalachian” and become something else. Instead, I seek to discover the actions, speech, and power relations that construct Appalachian space. As this is a matter of discourse, it is more important to consider *perceptions* of the region than to attempt to define or delineate the boundaries.

Nevertheless, Eastern Kentucky is a part of the region whose study has dominated both popular perceptions and scholarly understandings of Appalachia (Couto 2007). I investigated three musical networks and webs of interaction centered in this part of

Appalachia, contextualizing them in spaces created for music in Appalachia, which impacts not only the kinds of music that might be accepted in or used to represent the region, but also colors who is an acceptable presenter of that music.

As defined in Chapter 3, old-time music is a participatory, roots-based music closely associated with the Appalachian region (Milnes 1999:3). There is an active network of (white) musicians in eastern Kentucky that has no central gathering place, but uses a variety of locations to meet. They may gather at musicians' homes, at jam sessions at institutions like Appalshop media cooperative¹⁴ and other public or semi-public places, at festivals, or through participating in various musical performances. Through analysis of participant observation and other ethnographic techniques, supplemented by interviews, this dissertation addresses first how old-time music and the social relations of its players produce Appalachian spaces and places. Because the music is mainly participatory, it is important that I document and analyze its spaces of participation, contrasting these spaces with events like concerts, contests, or festivals that rely on presentational music.

Bluegrass is another genre closely related to old-time music which is also inextricably connected with the Appalachian region. While this dissertation does not give equal weight or attention to bluegrass music or musicians, it was important to document and describe it to some extent because of its competition with old-time music in discussions of authenticity. Listeners and consumers often confuse the two, but the musicians themselves are very aware of the distinctions. Indeed, there is a deep antipathy to bluegrass music on the

¹⁴ I must acknowledge Appalshop's importance as an organization that provides space for traditional music in eastern Kentucky, and helps define the music of the region through its recording label, the soundtrack for its films, its concert series, radio station, artist residency programs and festival production, including a position defined as a traditional music coordinator. However, I did not want this dissertation to focus too much on institutional definitions of music, and because Appalshop is a cooperative, I would have had to interview too many people to get the institutional perspective on the music, which would have steered my research in a different direction.

part of many old-time players because of the perceived hegemony of bluegrass music not only in representations of authentic mountain music, but also in musical encounters, where the louder, faster bluegrass overpowers old-time music. There seems to be some kind of insider/outsider dynamics playing into the choice of whether musicians play bluegrass or old-time which I still do not quite understand. I don't think it is a class divide, but "native" Appalachians seem to be more likely to play bluegrass music, even when they acknowledge that their parents played old-time music. Many of the people involved in old-time music in the region seem to do so partly as a political statement, and as a more conscious choice similar to being proud of having an Appalachian identity. Musician Brett Ratliff described it as a desire to be part of the "lifestyle" associated with the music, which also included wanting to be part of a community that values participation. Part of the story of this dissertation, then, is defining old-time music in opposition to bluegrass and delineating some of the arguments and negotiations about authenticity that involve the two genres, because it is conversations like these that produce Appalachian space (Reichert Powell 2007).

Festivals are some of the places where these arguments and negotiations are enacted, not only because they bring musicians together and re-enact musical communities, but because they have also become some of the most important modes of transmission of ideas about authenticity and authority in traditional music in contemporary society (Bronner 2002, Williams 2006, Cohen 2008, Whisnant 1979, Whisnant 1983). Festivals include both participatory and presentational elements. The Celebration of Traditional Music (CTM), produced at Berea College since 1974, is a very important festival in these discussions that define Appalachian music, with a reputation for presenting "authentic" musicians and an emphasis on representing the region (Wolfe 1982). Old-time music is an important part of

the festival, though not the only music presented there. Berea College's founding values of racial and sexual equality and its emphasis on being "anti-caste" were enacted through inter-racial and inter-sex co-education and classes and programming to further its mission, so race, gender, and class considerations have always been very important to festival organizers. Examination of the organizers' attempts to represent Appalachian traditional music in an inclusive and diverse way, and of the lineups at the festivals, address questions of how race and gender impact networks, habits, and determinations of authenticity and authority.

Embedded in discourses of Appalachian authenticity and authority are representations of race, and race plays a part in the social production of Appalachian space. With authenticity at the very heart of the Celebration, I especially questioned the decisions that were made, by me and by others, regarding the African American musicians invited and the black music that was represented in the festival. I was concerned that perhaps the definitions of authenticity held by African Americans in Appalachia might not be reflected in the choices the white producers made for including them and their traditions in the festival. It was more common to include in the festival African American performers who resided outside the region, or whose origin was from elsewhere, than it was for white performers. I wanted to hold the same standard of authenticity for whites and blacks, and wondered how black Appalachians define traditional music for themselves. There is such a paucity of literature on the subject that the only way to do so was to conduct primary research, which included interviewing musicians and scholars knowledgeable on the subject or related subjects, and attending musical events.

Likewise, gender relations are a very important part of the social production of space (Rose, Massey, Jones, McDowell, and many others) and understanding notions of authority and authenticity in Appalachian music. Gender issues seem to be even less well-represented in literatures about vernacular roots music than issues of race. One of my motivations for initiating this study was noticing that many of the sites that represent Appalachian music are quite male-dominated, but very little attention is paid to attempting to understand why and how that is. One of my goals was to tease out and identify some of ways gender works through the micro-processes of musicking described below, which in turn produces a certain kind of Appalachian space. Therefore, while observations and discussions of gender will occur in each chapter, Chapter 7 will be devoted to bringing these together to further my understanding of the role of gender in producing Appalachian musical space.

4.2 Introduction to Research Design and Rationale for Methodology

Music works to produce Appalachian space through the everyday practices of people and a negotiation of “correct” production of the sounds and social relations surrounding the music. This might be described as the act of “musicking” (Wood et al. 2007), also requiring a deep understanding of a musical tradition that connects body, mind, and soul, as music is inevitably connected with emotions and integration of self and self with society (Turino 2008, Wood and Smith 2004, Meyer 1956). Musicians are not only athletes of the small muscles, as famously stated by Leon Fleischer, but are tasked with conveying and expressing emotions without letting the emotion overwhelm the performance. Indeed, success of musical performance is never couched only in describing technical prowess, but must be emotionally expressive in a controlled way, and in a way that communicates effectively with the listener. Music is not universal; while it may transcend

language in its communicative possibilities, musics are grounded in specific times, places, and cultures, and are claimed as symbols of group identity; therefore, speaking the proper and accepted musical language is essential in order to be understood and recognized (Roy 2002, Turino 2008, Connell and Gibson 2003).

Because it is a human activity, musicking also involves the negotiation of power relations which are inflected by race, gender, age, and other social roles, constructions, and characteristics. All aspects of musicking are implicated and involved in this negotiation, from the choice of instrument played or not played, to the level of improvisation or pre-composition of a piece, to designations of canons or “standard” musical pieces, and all the myriad details of appropriate ornamentation, rhythmic expression, and whose vision is being followed. These power negotiations may take place at different scales, from the micro scale of body to the level of the local community, to region and nation.

This is a constantly-evolving process that is re-negotiated and re-presented with each iteration of a musical piece. Theorizing a social construction of place through musical activities, therefore, requires an understanding of music as changing over time and as contingent, ever-shifting and multi-faceted. It also requires making connections throughout the scale of musical production, from body-in-group to group-in-place, to place-in-region. For all these reasons, it was essential for me to observe and be part of the music-making as it happened, as a musicking body re-enacting my membership in a group (at least semi-) aware of its place in the region, and as a producer of musical productions that serve to represent the region, to understand the music and music-making as discourse (Clarke and Cook 2004).

There is an art to “doing (geographies of) music” (Wood et al. 2007). Because of its connection to emotion and the ephemeral quality of each performance, scholars tend to focus on certain aspects of the musical experience that are easier to fix, quantify, or otherwise control, including studying past performance rather than performance as it is happening. Although music geographies have become much more common in the last decade, few studies contain “answers to the thorny issue of how to explore and experiment with what music is and how it works *as* music in the world.” We scholars tend to distance ourselves from studying the emotional and embodied work of our own music-making, or “musicking” (Wood et al. 2007:868).

For these reasons, an ethnographic, place-based approach through participant-observation was essential to documenting and understanding the music, the making of the music, its practitioners, and their communities (Denzin 1997), because I am dedicated to uncovering the “place” of music, both materially and metaphorically. I wanted to explore the act of making music and the micro-scale of how space and social relations are performed in the act of making music. Playing old-time music with others and paying attention to the act of musicking forms the heart of this study of participatory music. In the old-time music community today, the activity that best expresses the music and its values are jam sessions, especially ones which occur on a regular basis. These allow for participation of regular musicians over time, leading to traditionalizing of behavior as well as local expression of a regional or national phenomenon. Each jam has its own personality reflecting the local leadership and place-specific customs and tunes. Because they are also open jams and are publicized, they allow for the influence of visitors who inject small amounts of other locally-

specific traditions while also sharing the regional and national phenomenon that is old-time music. Sometimes their participation helps highlight the local aspects of a particular jam.

Participating in the jam sessions and observing them “from the floor” helps me better understand the social relations that create them, including understanding why some people do not participate. In this dissertation, I describe five different jam sessions, two old-time, two bluegrass, and one which is a mixture of several styles. By paying attention to the power relations expressed by the participants through the music, I can get some insight into the social construction of Appalachian space.

Among the other events that include old-time music, festivals are perhaps the next most important and influential events that make statements about what is important in the music community. Most festivals include a variety of components that, taken together, recreate in a compressed space the many activities that contribute to learning old-time and other traditional musics, such as a place to learn from masters (workshops), a place to practice and participate in playing (jam sessions), a place for new, untested, or unknown performers to be heard (open mic or open stage), a place for masters to perform (concert), a place for audience members to participate through dancing, and possibly a contest to display and compare skills. Participant observation of festivals allows for an embodied experience of a music community’s value system and displays the organizers’ understanding of who is in authority to teach and represent the music. In this dissertation, I analyze two festivals that help illuminate the working of music to construct Appalachian space, one that had a long history, and one that began during my research period. I am particularly interested in the newer festival because it was started by an old-time player who was a recent arrival in the community in order to “restore” old-time music to his county of residence. He set up the

festival in opposition to the dominant bluegrass musical culture surrounding him, in part by making old-time music, which is usually participatory, into a presentational music in order to protect that space from intrusion by local bluegrass musicians. I conducted ethnographic research on this festival as an advisor and performer in four out of six of the festival's dates.

The long-standing festival investigated in Chapter 8 is the Celebration of Traditional Music (CTM) that has been identified as an important site in definitions of traditional music in Kentucky. Through archival research in both written, sound, and video records, I sought to discover the mechanisms behind its creation and early organization, especially how race and gender influenced the festival, and the power of networks and habits in the patterns of allocation of authenticity and authority regarding the musicians and producers. Through participant observation as its producer from 2006-2009, I sought to understand on a more embodied level how the social relations surrounding the festival – and the music produced at the festival – combined to create Appalachian space.

One of the perennial questions emerging from the CTM regarded who to invite to represent African American traditional music and what kind of music would be included. A 2006 study identified vocal religious music and guitar-based music, especially some kind of blues, as the most commonly represented (Kalra 2006). My 2006 study documented that most years of the festival had one, but nearly always only one, African American individual or group represented, and questioned whether the black people and musical traditions were held to the same standards of authenticity as the white music, and whether we organizers were truly representing black Appalachian traditions in the festival (Thompson 2006b).

With the help of a student intern, I located and interviewed African American musicians and

singers in Appalachia to attempt to understand the nature of their traditions and to locate musicians to invite to the festival.

Our snowball method, combined with the central role played by black churches in the lives of so many African Americans – especially in Appalachia - means that the people we interviewed were mostly involved with religious music. We did not intend to investigate only religious music in the black community, instead asking our informants about other musicians they might know and attempting to find out if they played music that was not religious. Additionally, these musicians and singers were not interviewed in an attempt to understand their religious traditions, but to understand the place of traditions in their music and how the music works along with social relations to create Appalachian space. African Americans in much of Appalachia, have limited spaces where they can gather to create music. For them, even more so than for white Appalachians, religious spaces are important sites of public space in which to enact their traditions. Therefore, it was not necessary to “balance” the study of traditional music that happened to be religious with spaces specifically involving white religious music. Based on the information we received from our informants, however, as well as observation of other events involving black music, research through written sources, and other incidental information that informs my work, I contend that understanding the traditional religious music of African Americans in Appalachia provides important knowledge about how vernacular roots music, in general, creates their particular Appalachian space.

Participant observation allowed me to place myself as far inside the situation as possible, to question from the shared, embodied experience of musicking (Rose 2003) and to expose “the affective content of those ‘tacit knowledges’ which subjects can enact but not

necessarily articulate verbally or even consciously” (Wood and Smith 2004:535). Engaging in verbal conversations with the musicians that make up the described networks and communities was also essential for my study. Interviews among members of both the white and black musical communities and traditions helped me make sense of my observations and gave me a chance to further research the self-understanding of the musicians and the symbolic use to which they put their music (Gilroy 1993).

4.2.1 Dissertation Activities

My fieldwork for the dissertation took place mainly from 2006-2010, beginning with more regular attendance at the old-time musical events in which I was already involved in my network. I was made aware of the events through word of mouth, through emails from friends and event organizers, sometimes through flyers I had picked up at another event, and occasionally from invitations received through the mail or by telephone. I typically attended two to three jam sessions per month, although I did not record them until 2008. I attended and recorded four out of six of the Old Time Music Revival events held in Whitley County, Kentucky, in 2008 and 2009 for which I was also an advisor. I sampled a variety of bluegrass and gospel events for comparison, but mostly attended these only once each. Appendix A contains a complete list of the dates and locations of my activities. In 2008 and 2009, I interviewed fifteen members of the old-time music community, seven females and eight males, many of whom were also music producers. Those interviews are detailed more below.

My activities at Berea College began with a two-month fellowship in January and February 2006 in the Berea College Sound Archives, where I spent at least forty hours per

week investigating the Celebration of Traditional Music (CTM).¹⁵ The CTM was documented extensively by the college each year from its inception in 1974, including nearly complete audio recordings of all of its activities throughout the annual weekend and videotapes from many years. These activities included, for most of the years, a participatory folk dance (held at various times), a Friday evening concert, Saturday workshops, academic symposium, Saturday evening concert, and Sunday hymn singing. A jam session replaced the Friday evening concert beginning in 2001. The two activities with much less documentation over the years were the dances and the jam sessions, but all concerts and most of the workshops were recorded. Recording media ranged from open reel tapes to cassette tapes and compact discs, and videotapes to DVDs.

Because there were approximately 12-17 hours of recording per weekend over thirty-two years in 2006, I could not do complete transcriptions or studies of the entire body of material. I focused on the entire first festival in 1974, then chose representative recordings of three to four hours from each weekend for nine years from 1975-1995. Because my focus for this site was on gender and race participation in the CTM, I chose the years based on increased participation of women and non-white men. The archives had already created a list of titles and performers for each recording, so I transcribed the words in between songs and some song lyrics. I also listened to and transcribed cassette recordings of six meetings of the Traditional Music Committee (TMC), the advisory board for the CTM. There was a tape made of one meeting before and one after the first CTM in 1974, and then one each in 1975, 1976, 1978, 1979, and 1983.

¹⁵ Please see Appendix D for a full list of information consulted in the Berea College Special Collections in studying the CTM.

I investigated all the print materials available for the CTM in the archives, which were housed in six manuscript boxes in the Berea College Collection. Among the materials were memos, minutes of meetings, and reports from the Appalachian Center. From these folders and supplemented by requests to the Appalachian Center, I was able to view a full collection of posters, flyer/schedules, photographs, and the Center's newsletter, which provided documentation of festival events, performers, and TMC members for each year.

Following my fellowship in 2006, I was hired as a project specialist in the Appalachian Center to produce the festival that fall. The following year, I was hired as a part-time programming director for the Center to produce a number of other events as well as the CTM. I maintained that position until February 2009. Since then, I continued to serve on the TMC and presented the 2011 symposium on my dissertation research. In fall of 2010, I was hired to coordinate Country Dance Programs and teach Appalachian Studies and General Studies, so I am an employee of Berea College but not the main organizer of the festival.

Meanwhile, I initiated the third section of my field work in 2008 when I engaged the services of a Berea College student, Darrin Hacquard, through a Folk Arts Internship, to help with interviews of African American Appalachian musicians. Through contacts I had made at Berea College, Just Connections¹⁶, and the Appalachian Studies Association, we identified other informants through the snowball method. In all, we interviewed fourteen black singers and instrumentalists from the region, and several black scholars with connections to the region and its music.

¹⁶ An organization of community members and faculty at Appalachian colleges and universities devoted to social justice through service-learning. I was a charter member when the organization was formed in 1995 and remained active until 2002.

4.2.2 Ethnography and Participant Observation

Although oral histories and documentaries of old-time and traditional musicians abound (Conway, Appalshop films, Roberts-Gevault), and there are many studies of musical families such as the Stonemans of Kentucky (Tribe), the Hammons Family of West Virginia (Jabbour and Fleischhauer), and the Hicks family in North Carolina, there are few ethnographic studies of old-time music in America. This seems surprising in that traditional music is so enclaved, with authenticity very tied to place (Connell and Gibson 2003). The two ethnographic studies that have been most useful in my study are John Bealle's and Thomas Turino's studies of Midwestern old-time music and dance communities, along with Thomas Gruning's ethnographic study of the 1980s folk music revival (Gruning 2006). Jennie Noakes also studied elements of the same old-time community centered at Appalshop in her ethnographic dissertation on the politics of participation in the coalfields (Noakes 2008). One other recent dissertation, *Conjuring Utopia* by Amy Wooley, relies on ethnographic methods as well as interviews, but another focusing on so-called "mountain cultural artists" and the West Virginia cultural production scene of the 1990s relies more heavily on interviews (Morris 1995). While Erynn Marshall makes good use of interviews and takes context into consideration in her study of West Virginia "fiddle-song," hers is not an ethnographic study.

Geographers have investigated the activities of ordinary life to uncover a wealth of meaning, which includes musical activities (Pile 1996). Ethnography is an ideal method to uncover the meanings and richness of everyday life, but was identified by Herbert in 2000 as a "rare" geographical research method. He identified two important journals in human geography, the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and *Environment and*

Planning D as only including research relying on ethnographic field data in less than five percent of the articles from 1994 to 1998 (Herbert 2000:550). The use of ethnography still seems relatively uncommon, as a search of “ethnography” as a key word has resulted in a mere handful of entries for the journals *Social & Cultural Geography* and *Progress in Human Geography* in the decade since that article was written. A wider search resulted in many more articles combining ethnographic methods and geographical topics, but they were often published in non-geographic journals. This trend seems to continue in music geography. In Leyshon, Matless, and Revill’s important 1994 edited book of music geography, only one chapter out of twelve had any ethnographic content – and that was really more biographic – focusing on one man and extrapolating from his experience to that of other Jews in Liverpool (Leyshon et al. 1998). Geographer Sara Cohen was the author of that study, and she has had several publications based on her ethnographic fieldwork from 1991-1995, which were cited, among others from the 1980s and ‘90s, in a later music geography, *Sound Tracks* (Connell and Gibson 2003).

Connell and Gibson advocate for more ethnographies of music, to counteract more old-style, cartographic studies focusing on a musical “sense of place,” which is a limited view of music “because of [its] failure to engage with social and political contexts in which music is produced and the socially constructed nature of human understandings of place and space” (13). Another recent edited book focusing on music, space, and place made up of research from non-geographers seemed to have a much higher proportion of studies based on field work than geographers (Whiteley et al. 2004). I say “seems to” because five out of the eleven studies included as least a vague reference to “field work,” but no methodology

was explained, so some of the studies could have been based on interviews rather than ethnography.

Ethnographic field work is essential to understanding the current place of music and how music constructs space and place, particularly in the study of live musicking. At the heart of ethnography is participant observation, where the researcher devotes considerable time entering into the daily life of a group of people in order to understand their symbolic constructions of the world. Ethnography as a methodology acknowledges and documents the everyday practices of life, exposing the researcher to embodied experiences encompassing the senses and emotions. Because music is so embodied and connected to the emotions, it is not something that can just be understood through interviews and language. Participating in music-making events allows the researcher to experience the sonic and kinesthetic bonding that creates a space of belonging for the group, which makes her more able to communicate the mechanism of the bonding to others.

Participant observation exposes the researcher to “what people *do* as well as what they *say*. It thus enables an insightful examination of any discrepancies between thoughts and deeds” (Eyles, 1988, cited in Herbert 2000:552). This is one of the most important strengths of ethnographic methods, especially when teasing apart the influence of race, class, and gender on social constructions. Because societal and community pressures push people toward normalization of their behavior, they often say things they know will be accepted by society, but behave in ways more indicative of their unconscious beliefs. Understanding the influence of race and gender on behavior depends greatly on habits and performing the roles we have learned to make us acceptable to others. As also noted by MacMullan, attempting to understand the power of habits requires the same ability to make

distinctions between people's ideas and their actions (4). It is only through dedicating time to observe and interact with people that this can be done.

Ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl described a difference between “doing” ethnography and writing ethnography, also acknowledging that the definition of ethnography has changed over the decades. In the 1990s, the meaning of “doing” ethnography changed from a comprehensive study of an entire culture to including such small-scale studies as description and analysis of a single event, provided it is done in a detailed and holistic way (Nettl 2005). The ethnographer's job is to generalize and interpret a culture through observation of particular events and interaction with the people through their activities, endeavoring in writing the ethnography “to describe real people systematically and accurately, but...weav[ing] facts into a form that highlights patterns and principles” (Peacock 1986:83). In this way, ethnographic generalization employs both scientific rigor and portrayal of people and their culture using symbolic understanding in a more literary style.

In the writing and analysis, the challenge is to interpret a culture comprehensively, doing justice to the perspective of the people whose culture is being represented while communicating meaningful information to the reader (Nettl 2005:233). Since it is impossible to describe all aspects of a culture, a further challenge is to be familiar enough with a culture to choose to describe and evaluate behavior that is characteristic or customary. It is important to not get caught up in the minutiae of everyday life, but to be able to allow order “to emerge *from* the field rather than be imposed *on* the field” (Silverman 1985, quoted in Herbert 2000:552). Therefore, my goal in this study is to be able to communicate

the rich, complex life of the old-time community through my immersion in its practices, which allows me to highlight representative samples of the activities in which I participated.

4.2.3 Interviews

To supplement these primary actions, I also chose to interview many of the participants to gain a more in-depth knowledge of individuals, their networks, their intentions and self-understandings of how they construct their communities representationally and conceptually (Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte 1999, Bernard 2002). I was careful not to privilege the words of the musical participants over their bodily expressions and actions, however, as there is often a disconnect between our ideas and our habits (MacMullan 2009:4). I strove to make these interviews as ethnographic as possible, as I wanted to understand how my informants understand their world through exploring the meaning of their actions, language, and relationships (Spradley 1979). Audio recordings were made of the interviews and of some other events and field notes were recorded to aid transcription and analysis.

I interviewed seven female white musicians and eight male white musicians in the old-time community from 2008-2010. Because this is an open-ended network, I'm not sure I can quantify the percentage of old-time music community members I actually ended up interviewing, but it would certainly be much less than half. I did not intend to only interview white musicians, but there was little racial diversity in the network, which is one of the issues I addressed through my interviews. I also interviewed one female African American musician and storyteller from north Georgia who was from outside the network, but who spent several months in Berea on a music fellowship and had also played quite a bit at a local camp. I felt she had an interesting perspective in being both a geographic and racial

outsider who, nevertheless, interacted successfully and regularly with mainstream white eastern Kentuckians. She was the only African American musician I interviewed who did not primarily play or sing religious music.

I set up the interviews either in person, through the telephone, or by email, usually suggesting that we meet in their home or workplace, wherever they would feel most comfortable. One interview was held in my home for a musician that was traveling through the area, one at a Berea restaurant, and several were held at Berea College while the musicians were working in the sound archives. Two interviews were held and recorded over the telephone, but they were with people I knew well and covered material we had previously discussed in person.

Many of the musicians were also music producers, and my interviews with them included questions about both their roles as musicians and music producers. One such person, Rich Kirby, had such a wealth of experiences and knowledge that I held two long, separate interviews on his different roles. I also interviewed one male white music producer who was not a musician himself (one who was “instrumental” in creating the Kentucky School of Bluegrass & Traditional Music). Many of the people in this network are semi-professional musicians, and music jobs or special events often serve as an incentive to gather people together.

The old-time musicians in this study live in Eastern Kentucky and southwest Virginia, with networks emanating from their homes and workplaces in Pike, Letcher, Knott, Jackson, Rowan, Whitley, Floyd, and Johnson counties, and such music centers as Appalshop in Whitesburg and Morehead State University’s Traditional Music Program. Several regulars live in Wise, Scott, and Dickenson counties in Virginia. The area covered

by regular travel by the members runs from its northern extent of southeastern Ohio to east Tennessee in the south. Its east-west extent runs from Louisville, Kentucky (an important migration destination), to border areas of West Virginia and southwest Virginia. Music parties, festivals, dances, and playing gigs all provide opportunities for members of this group to get together with other old-time musicians. Like churches, their reunions and parties might be considered to be semi-public space, though certainly leaning more toward private space.

The musicians in this portion of the study were chosen because I knew them, have played with them, and knew they would have insight into the questions motivating this study. Every musician in this network would have been worthy of interviewing, and it was mainly a question of the need to keep it manageable that I reluctantly made my decisions to limit the numbers. I interviewed as many female musicians as I could, in order to get a better sense from them the impact of gender relations and expectations on them and their place in the community, as it is often the case that those who benefit from normative gender expectations (men and heterosexuals) are less aware of oppressive conditions (Yancey Martin 2003). I also wanted to center their experiences to counter the prevailing notion of female musicians' marginality (Williams 2001a:51). Otherwise, I attempted to get a variety of perspectives from people who were fairly experienced in old-time music and who were regulars in attending old-time music events in the network to attempt to approximate representativeness in the network (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). Quotations from musicians were taken solely from the interviews conducted as part of this study. A list of all the interviewees consulted, with their hometowns and the dates and locations of the interviews, may be found in Appendix D. I interviewed adults only for this dissertation, although some

of the musical events I documented through note-taking and audio recording included children as young as eight years old. Most of my interviewees were middle aged, between 50 and 60 years old, the youngest being in her mid-late twenties, with a few in their 30s, and several between 60 and 80 years old. All in the old-time community I interviewed were apparently white, and about evenly split between male and female.

I started most of my interviews with questions of how, when, and from whom the musicians learned to play, when they first became aware of old-time music, also seeking out information about other musical experiences that might have influenced them. This is a very standard beginning to investigations about traditional music and the people who play it, and one with which most studies begin and end, such as those described in Chapters 2 and 7. These are mostly the life-story approach to understanding music, which does not really get into the mechanisms behind understanding how music works. I then attempted to get beyond these biographical details to less-common questions about their musical communities and issues of race and gender that influence their experiences with old-time music. Several versions of my interview schedule may be found in Appendix B, meant for musicians, and Appendix C, where the questions were designed for music producers.

Almost all of the information gathered for analyzing and discussing the Celebration of Traditional Music was gained through archival research and participant observation, with the exception of one interview with Loyal Jones, the festival's founding producer. For Chapter 9, a student intern and I interviewed seven female African American singers/musicians¹⁷ and scholars and eleven male African American singers/musicians and scholars during 2008-2009. The African American musicians lived in the Knoxville-

¹⁷ Those I interviewed were careful to not claim to be a musician unless they played an instrument, although most of the people we interviewed were singers.

Maryville-Alcoa area of east Tennessee; Lee, Wise, and Scott counties, Virginia; and Johnson, Madison, and Harlan counties in Kentucky.¹⁸ These interview subjects also are listed in Appendix D with the interview date and location.

In both sets of interviews, I conducted semi-structured interviews which lasted from one hour to three hours in length, and were based on the interview schedules provided in Appendix B1 or B2 for most musicians, and C for music producers. In the interviews, I took a more conversational approach as I looked on my interviewees as equals with whom I could work to understand complex issues, although I mostly wanted to hear from my interviewee. I almost always started with the questions on my schedule, then allowed the interview to follow the course that seemed most natural, consulting the schedule again when I hit a dead end, sometimes ending by scanning through the questions and asking several at the end to make sure I had covered the points that seemed most important or relevant.

I chose my interviewees not in an attempt to be representative of numbers or proportions of male to female or black to white, but with some knowledge of each person and feeling that their story would provide some perspective on my research questions and because their stories would combine to create a representative sample of the communities I was investigating. Because my focus was on the mechanisms that might prevent participation by women and African Americans, and to ask why there weren't more in the networks of old-time music, it was important that I make a greater effort to reach them and attempt to understand as many of their perspectives as possible in order to not present a unified subject of "woman" or "African American" (Jaggar and Bordo 1989, Rose 1993).

The African American interviewees I approached using the "snowball" method, since I was

¹⁸ Preliminary observations from these interviews have been published in Thompson, D. J. & D. Hacquard (2009) Region, Race, Representation: Observations from interviews with African American musicians in Appalachia. *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, 15, 14.

not well-connected in their networks (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). This meant that most of them were connected through religious music, since my initial contacts were almost exclusively religious singers. One disconnection between the white musical community I researched and the black musicians I interviewed was that the white music was mostly secular, whereas the African American musicians were connected through religious music. There was no attempt made to balance this aspect of the music by contacting and interviewing white religious singers, as will be described in Chapter 9, because the questions asked of the religious singers focused on their views of tradition and traditional music rather than on any perceived differences or similarities between religious and secular musics.

4.3 Content Analysis

The following chapters describe and analyze the musical events and interviews that served as the data for this dissertation. Denzin and Lincoln describe the work of the qualitative researcher as that of a *bricoleur*, constructing a whole out of various pieces and making use of multiple methodologies (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). Embodied knowledge as a participant in music-making informed my work, as my long experience as an old-time musician allowed me to interpret the activities in a holistic, intuitive way and to participate in the flow of the situations (Turino 2008, Flyvberg 2001:21). Music is embedded in discourse (Williams 2001a), but it also has its own discursive structures and meanings (Lidov 2005). Discourse analysis was the primary method I used to make sense of my qualitative data (Coste 1989, Rose 2001), also comparing information received from interviews with what I observed during musical events to help “triangulate” or verify the information (Clarke and Cook 2004:64). Because this is a geographical dissertation as

opposed to a musicological dissertation, my analysis of the music is spatially-oriented, rather than note-oriented.

In order to uncover how music creates Appalachian space and how my research questions are answered, I transcribed audio recordings of jam sessions and other events, as well as interviews with musicians. I coded the transcripts, looking for themes that informed my topic, including the following themes:

- gender: gendered instrumentation, gendered roles in musical events, gendered spaces
- race: racialized instrumentation, racialized spaces, characteristics of music that seem to be “white” or “black”
- inclusion, exclusion, and belonging, including participatory nature of the music
- community and networks, including connections of music to people
- connection of music to place, especially to Appalachia
- scale, including local, regional, and national scales
- authenticity, which might overlap with connection of music to place but also include ideas of purity
- identity
- creating community or belonging through other social practices besides music
- distinguishing between old-time and bluegrass music
- habits

4.4 Focus and Politics of the Research

The focus of this dissertation is on these difficult questions of how old-time music works in the world, particularly on the work of old-time music in producing Appalachia, and how race and gender work through the music to create contested space. Despite a community that seems from the inside to be open to others and embraces a revisionist history of the music that highlights African American influences, old-time music in Appalachia (and nationally) has remained very white, as has the typical view of the region (Thompson 2006c). There are insider/outsider politics that come to the forefront especially

when the music is most connected to place. The participatory nature of the music also coexists with a masculinist prestige system that ostensibly invites all to play along, but subtly disciplines players along gendered lines, particularly as the music becomes more professionalized and presentational.

Today's old-time music is embedded in discourses from the folk revival of the 1950s and '60s, as well as the back to the land movement of the 1970s, and many old-time musicians see their musicking as a subversive statement about the importance of personal relationships, rural lifestyles, and simpler ways of life, contrasting these values with the corporate capitalist culture of the mainstream (Turino 2008, Bealle 2005, Rosenberg 1993). The development of the commercial music industry and rise of radio in the early twentieth century began an ever-increasing emphasis on presentational music at the expense of participatory music that continues today. Many non-music specialists are reluctant even to try to play their own music as they feel more and more intimidated that they could never reach the level of musicianship they hear on highly-produced recordings, concerts with large and expensive sound systems, and computer programs that correct pitch (Turino 2008). In this contemporary American presentational value system, creating one's own music can be an act of resistance against a hegemonic message that the average person's musical abilities are not good enough to be spoken or shared aloud (Wooley 2003). The message from second wave feminism that "the personal is the political" has taken hold in the old-time community (Bealle 2005). I take the stance that participating in democratic, homemade, inclusive music-making can be a political activity in resistance to a cultural milieu that silences the average person.

4.4.1 Power Dynamics, and the Social Construction of Fieldwork

Feminist methodologies emphasizing reflexivity, awareness of power dynamics, specificity of situated knowledges, and self-consciousness of the social construction of fieldwork are all important to understanding the impact of the field researcher on the field. Reflexivity and self-disclosure must be handled with some care, not as a license to “parade...any and all emotional ups and downs, moral agonizings, and ‘intimacy trophies’ ” (Emerson 1983), but with the purpose of situating the knowledge. There are at least three good reasons for incorporating reflexivity into the research process. Feminist scholars have demonstrated the impossibility of “objective” research, that everyone has situated knowledge, and the only way to be as objective as possible in conducting research is to expose and acknowledge the subjectivity of the researcher as well as the intersubjectivity of the participant and the researcher (Clarke and Cook 2004:64). Being part of two of the communities I am studying also means that my experiences, actions, and points of view have perhaps a greater impact on the communities and on the research events. For example, I am part of every jam session I recorded, and was the leader of some of them. In situations where I attempted to sit out the jam sessions, my actions were sometimes interpreted not as attempts to have less influence on the situation, but as acts of unfriendliness or as a lack of desire to play music with others. I was also the producer of the CTM for four years, so had a great impact on the atmosphere of the festival and choices made in hiring musicians.

My experiences and observations as a white female banjo and guitar player and singer, as well as my story as a producer of the Celebration of Traditional Music means that my musical story must also be represented in these pages. To this end, I asked two friends who are professional oral historians and members of the old-time community to interview

me prior to the research, in the same manner and with some of the same questions I intended to ask my interviewees (Thompson 2005).

4.4.2 Personal Background and Insider/Outsider Status

My research on Appalachian musical spaces began with my teenage involvement in and subsequent pursuit of folk, bluegrass, and old-time musics. By the time I identified my dissertation topic, I already had over a quarter century of experience and an insider's perspective in Appalachian musicking. With both undergraduate and graduate degrees in Appalachian Studies, my undergraduate thesis focusing on the musical culture of Summers County, West Virginia, and twelve years of teaching Appalachian Studies at the undergraduate level, I have also been immersed in regional literatures for many years. Some of the key texts have been noted in Chapter 2. I have benefited from and participated in the presentational value system I sometimes struggle against, as I am hired to play and educate about traditional music, representing the old-time music of Appalachia to audiences and students.

My study, therefore, involved participation in a network in which I was already well established. When I moved to Kentucky in 1991, I had been playing old-time music for at least fifteen years, with a decade spent in North Carolina playing old-time music, organizing and calling folk dances with live old-time music, and attending regional festivals and fiddler's contests. My first home in Kentucky, Knox County, had few old-time musicians, so most of my musicking was with bluegrass or folk musicians. As time went on, I gradually built up a network of old-time musicians with whom I would play through my participation in the contradance community, through playing music professionally in central and eastern Kentucky, and through attending jam sessions and festivals. By 2005, when I officially

began working on my dissertation fieldwork, I was well-known and accepted in the old-time music community in eastern Kentucky.

As described in Chapter 2, insider/outsider status is an important consideration in Appalachian communities, and it is also of importance in discussions of folk music and authenticity (Rosenberg 1993). While I do claim insider status in the old-time music community, my speech instantly identifies me as being a “foreigner” in Appalachia, despite my decades of residence in and study of the region (Lornell 2002). My skin color and other physical features immediately mark me as being outside the black community, but generally allow me to interact among other whites in a racially neutral manner. While a scholar may take issue with these demarcations and speak at length about the contingent, shifting identities that to some might complicate a simple dichotomy of insider/outsider, my research shows that these assignments are important, though they might be mitigated through fictive kinship stories and relations with important regionally placed individuals. The lesson I have learned in jam sessions that can be applied here is to approach such questions of belonging with humility.

Academic research, especially that which depends on field work, is often an exercise in re-inscription of privilege. My status as an academic investigating Appalachia, a culture that has often been exploited, is uncomfortably reminiscent of the imperial and colonial relations from which field research has descended (Emerson 1983). Power relationships in most research are established by the researcher in determining the agenda; deciding where, when, and how the results are published, and how the material is interpreted (Denzin 1994). Although I strove to ask open-ended questions and generally allowed my interviewees to

express themselves, I was still the initiator of the research and stood to benefit the most from this study.

Ownership of the results is also a question that reveals underlying power relations. Several of the musicians I interviewed asked that any quotes I use from them be cleared by them to make sure their words are appropriately interpreted, a common approach in research (Clarke and Cook 2004:64). My desire to make this research available to others has caused me to notify my interviewees and fellow musicians that it may be placed in a public archive following the dissertation, so that knowledge with the consent of the actors may influence our words and actions to some extent.

While this is not specifically action-oriented research or participatory action research (PAR), I have approached the community as the “experts” and struggle with ways to share the “ownership” of the research. The aim of my research is not to change public policy or solve a specific social problem as is usually the case in PAR, but it is my hope that by treating the participants as co-researchers in the study, there will be “deep” participation and some community projects that grow out of this study (Pain 2003). For example, one important person that helped me make many connections in the Alcoa/Knoxville area was Shirley Clowney, who spearheads an effort known as AAABC: African American Appalachians in Blount County. I am hopeful that my interviews will contribute to their project to document the history and contributions of the black community in Blount County.

Like many researchers, my position as a member of the community I am studying poses special challenges. I struggle in reporting my findings with wanting to portray my interviewees and the subjects of my research in a flattering light, but also having to shine a harsh light on my own and other’s actions and words in order to deconstruct the social

relations that work with the music to create the particular representation of Appalachian music that emerges from our actions and discourses.

Many of my interviews were interactive, a long-standing feminist methodology, understood to be “a joint construction of researcher and study participant as meanings are negotiated and consensus reached” (Dyck 1997:189). Instead of asking questions and remaining as silent as possible to achieve a false sense of objectivity created by obscuring the researcher, the record was more of a conversation between equals, where the researcher and the interviewee work together to achieve a new understanding of a challenging topic or situation. In my research, I strive to create a new space between the two worlds of the researcher and researched (England in Sparke 1996, Tsing 1993). It is my hope that the partial perspective I claim as a geographical observer creates unexpected openings and personal intersections that inform my work, allowing for greater understanding (Haraway 1991).

I approach this research with an awareness of the intersecting influences of race, class, and gender and recognize that these inflect each other, not just in a layered, sedimented form, but also recognizing that a person can fill the role of oppressor and oppressed simultaneously (Hill Collins 2000). While social expectations of both men and women and their “proper,” gendered place will affect all people, special awareness of women’s contributions is needed, as women are often discouraged from seeking the limelight and displaying their talents. It is essential to take into account the situated knowledges brought by people occupying various subject positions in any given activity or encounter.

All research is situated, and the gender and race of the researcher will have its effects on the words chosen and the overall activities being observed, along with the interpretations of the words and activities by the researcher. My female gender role means that I may be less privy to the masculine world, and that both males and females will react to me and disclose to me differently than if I presented myself as male. One of my African American female informants suggested that my difficulties in finding other female informants was influenced by black women's reluctance to engage with white women, an issue that has been discussed in feminist literature. While male researchers might be less privy to the world of women, female researchers may also be subject to dismissing female contributions to musical events and traditions, as Conway confessed she did in her important book on African American banjo traditions (Conway 1995). The flashier world of men and their experience in being the public face of their community means that they gain more attention and are more used to being the public face of traditional music, as well. Women may not put themselves forward or agree to be interviewed for a variety of reasons that may also include protecting themselves and their communities. The issues of who may speak and who may be granted authenticity, in particular, are at the heart of this dissertation and it is my hope that I can contribute to this discussion.

So, at last, I turn to musical spaces in Appalachia and begin detailing my findings.

Chapter 5: Old-Time Music's Community: People and Places

Data for the next four chapters are drawn from my participant observation in various field sites, and serve as the heart of the dissertation. This chapter first describes the old-time music network and its participants, including some demographic information and thoughts from musicians as to why they are involved in old-time music. The second section focuses on exploring the themes of this dissertation, relying on information from both interviews and my participant observation to describe the workings of music to create Appalachian space, including addressing issues of authenticity, connection of the music with place, community, habits, insider/outsider distinctions, and power. The third section describes where there is space for music in Appalachia, to illuminate how space also shapes the music, to provide another part of the complex picture. I finish with an analysis of an old-time music series that was intentionally created to counteract perceived bluegrass dominance in Appalachian musical space.

5.1 Eastern Kentucky's Old-Time Music Network

Old-time musicians have a healthy and well-developed network throughout eastern Kentucky that extends into surrounding states and somewhat selected areas in the U.S., as well as internationally for some participants. I have worked my way into being part of this network since I moved to Kentucky in 1991, through being an active old-time musician and singer, also playing banjo, dulcimer, and guitar. Being active includes seeking out others to play with, holding music parties in my home; and being invited to and attending music parties, family reunions, and other musical events. All of these include a willingness and ability to travel throughout the region. Becoming and remaining active may include putting oneself forward as an authority or accepting invitations to be an authority through teaching

individuals or classes at music schools and camps as well as producing, playing in and organizing concerts, dances, jam sessions, and festivals. Not everyone follows this path, but remaining in the network does involve some amount of activity in one or more of the types mentioned above: playing music with others and maintaining some sociability including reciprocity. An unwillingness or inability to travel would seriously limit a musician's participation in the network, unless, such as in the case of older musicians such as Lee Sexton, one has built up a reputation or is in demand by the network. Producing events that involve other musicians is another important area of participation which many of my interviewees enact.

Most of the musicians I interviewed learned to play some instrument(s) as children, or remember some music in their families, but many interviewed here came to old-time music as adults. Many musicians expressed a conscious choice to embrace old-time music which was connected with actually living in the region. For Beverly May, music in her early years had been a source of pain, with the unwanted expectation that she be the pianist in her family's Methodist church. In her college years, old-time music had been the background to having fun with dancing and meeting boys. Although she had picked up the fiddle a little later during some traveling, her decision to study the instrument seriously coincided with moving back home to eastern Kentucky: "I got it in my mind that when I moved back to eastern Kentucky I would learn to play the fiddle" (May 2008). Brett Ratliff was attracted to the lifestyle associated with the music, and his exposure to the music came at a time when he was questioning what he wanted to do and where he wanted to be, searching for a connection with his homeland of eastern Kentucky.

Perhaps by definition, traditional music has a connection to the past, and Appalachia's connection to the past was discussed in Chapter 1. Many old-time musicians strive for a scratchy or plunky sound that evokes the past, as described in Chapter 3, which Beverly May described when she said, "I knew I wanted to play pre-industrial fiddle."

At the time I was conducting my interviews, I had not yet settled on the term "vernacular roots music" to describe what I was looking for. While I do think it is an appropriate academic term to use in this dissertation, I'm not sure it is the best way to speak of it in everyday life. For that, I prefer "traditional" because it is the term used most commonly, and it does refer to a very specific mode of transmission, which is that the music is passed on from person to person. This doesn't mean that recordings can't be used, but they are not the ideal because then the focus turns to aural fidelity rather than the type of learning through emulation that occurs in traditional transmission (May 2008, Turino 2008).

I asked many questions about traditional music and how it was understood by my informants. When I asked about what authenticity in traditional music meant to them, it was often connected to place. Sometimes the "place" is the connection to people, or a particular person. Music works as traditional music *because* it is emplaced – it creates a whole series of indexical and iconic signs that circulate, tie music with place, and condense into meaning, creating layer upon layer that cross-reference and become tangled together. Donna Lamb is well-known for her singing and guitar-playing, especially for accompanying her father, Lewis, an old-time fiddler. She is also an instrument builder and teaches lessons on fiddle and banjo as well as guitar. She grew up playing music in her family and identified her music community as being very localized. When I asked: "What do you think is the most important part of traditional music?" She answered, "I'd say the music part of it. The tunes,

the songs. You listen to your old time traditional music. It was written within a community.” Suzanne Savell also acknowledged that it was the music that was most important.

The music is clearly seen by most of my informants as being part of a community in which there are some restrictions, but it is not a closed community. Donna was critical of people who gave the message, “like a government official,” that “this is ours, and you’re intruding.” Beverly May had a similar view, that the music was quite clearly emplaced within a community, but open to participation of others. She gave credit for her understanding to an Irish music educator, Michael O’Sullivan, who described the Irish music tradition as being like a well, with the need for people in the community who take care of the well, and keep it maintained. She explained,

But I do think that there are some places where the music is still part of community life, and that is sort of the well-head, you know? And that’s what I think of Cowan or Carcassonne, who keep music in its context of community life, and anybody that wants to can join in, can share.

So, the music is emplaced, but participation in making the music is not restricted. But a big part of Beverly’s understanding of old-time music is that the *authority* for the music must be kept local:

Yeah, as John Harrod said, it’s not a smorgasbord. [At Cowan Creek Mountain Music School] you’re going to learn Kentucky music from Kentuckians, people who have a foot into the tradition. So you probably won’t be taking a Cajun dance class at Cowan any time soon. It may be a little ethnocentric, but in a good way.

May's description of the "good" ethnocentricity of having only local people teaching local music relates to MacMullan's message that some white traditions might be useful in disrupting habits of white privilege if they correspond to the "gift of race" as expressed by W.E.B. Du Bois. Rather than a homogenized, abstract, national old-time sound which she expressed discomfort with elsewhere, the music presented is localized and specific to certain people and places. Old-time music that is tied to place may be a "cultural gift" that can contribute to projects of cultural diversity, rather than overwhelming other ethnic groups and their contributions with the "cultural numbness or emptiness" of white privilege (MacMullan 2009:2-16)..Local people, then, become the gatekeepers of their music. One of the biggest motivations for having local teachers is to continue the relationship with the local children who are the target constituency for the local mountain music school. Having local teachers allows for continuing contact and reiteration between them and their pupils. May felt the music needed to be taught by someone who has a foot in the tradition – but then tempered that by saying she also thinks it is best not to question authenticity *too* much.

Donna Lamb explained the importance of place in that traditional music had become more entrenched in the mountains because of the relative lack of travel and stasis. She felt it was very important to reproduce the music faithfully to how it was learned. When I asked further about the importance of highlighting or including authentic music, she answered,

I think it's very important. Because if you're going to put it out as a heritage type deal – that word, "tradition?" That locks it. You're going to use the heritage of the people – say, somebody that does basket-making, that's their heritage. Their heritage is traditional music, that's what you're going to work

for. That's what you're staying with. You're not drifting off into the more modern. It stays within that boundary.

Place is inextricably bound up with the music, especially in terms of authenticity, as described above by May and Lamb, and also in the literature of folk studies and music geographies, such as described in Chapter 2. Yet there remains a tension between stasis and change, between local and national styles, and vernacular roots music today depends greatly on the participants being able to travel to musical events and to each others' homes, and for accessibility to recordings which both document local styles and expose musicians to influences far beyond their home territories.

5.1.1 Mobility

Because musicians might travel great distances to maintain their networks, and might have no regular old-time gatherings in their local area, geographic mobility is essential to creating and maintaining these networks (Gardner 2004). Their networks may be quite spread out geographically as festivals and music and dance camps often have a regional or national draw, and the musicians meet people at festivals and create friendships based largely on shared music. For example, many of the semi-professional musicians in this network have traveled as far as the Pacific Northwest, New England, or Florida to participate in festivals and music and dance camps – either as staff or general attendee - based on connections they made in local festivals. Nevertheless, many express a desire to have a local music community and become music producers, like Richard Mandell, who started the Old Time Music Revival to attempt to develop more old-time musicians living close to him so he would not have to travel so far to play.

Anna Roberts-Gevault is a young musician who is searching for a “sweet spot” where she can live near musical friends and contribute to the community. “But right now there’s no one place, partly because we live out in the Boonies because that’s part of our personalities.” She feels that her musical community “involves a lot of time in my car, and it always will.”

People who play old-time music often express the feeling that the music community is their “true” community, and will place a high priority on attending these annual festivals, making plans to meet with their friends (Wooley 2003). Anna described one summer in which she went from one festival to another. The public face of such festivals is displayed through presentational concerts and contests, but many musicians in these “portable communities” rarely make it out of their campsite and mainly engage in closed jam sessions. Plans to reunite at future festivals are made at the current festival, and groups often stake out their favorite campsites from year to year.

Musical connections often depend on key people, who may be self-selected by their exhibiting a high level of activity, including their willingness to travel to other events, their hospitality in hosting events, and their generosity in teaching others or otherwise contributing to the community. They also are selected by others who perceive them as good musical companions: playing an instrument that fits into the group or is needed by the group (such as playing fiddle if another melody instrument is desired, or playing stand-up bass – which is a less commonly-found instrument), being fun to play with, being good musicians, or knowing interesting tunes. The participatory values mean that musicians don’t necessarily have to play well to be fun to play with. As Anna Roberts-Gevault says, “You don’t have to be amazing or recording-worthy to just hang out with your friends. And that’s what’s so

cool about this music.” Their selection is also based on social characteristics such as how well they fit into the community, which includes someone who fits in well with expectations, playing by the rules, and having a pleasant personality. Performing gender properly may also fit under the category of being good company.

Because this music is based on participatory string band dance music and harmony singing – and much less often on solo work – playing with others is a key component of the music. The old-time network under study here includes few musicians who live close enough to each other to get together easily to play regularly. They must be quite intentional to get together, as they wouldn’t just happen to bump into each other in the course of other aspects of their lives such as shopping, going to church, or having children in the same schools. While many of these musicians practice on their own and might get together in twos and threes, it usually takes a special event to get more of them together. Because of this, many people in the network look for other opportunities to bring them into the neighborhood of their musician-friends, such as hosting a radio program on Appalshop’s WMMT radio station (as described by musician Beverly May) or staying overnight with musician friends when traveling for work (Russ Childers).

One other regular participatory musical event that may take place in private homes is an open band rehearsal, where the main purpose is to practice a presentational old-time band, but it is typically known in the community and understood as being open to visitors on a limited basis. Music parties in private homes create spaces that allow the re-enactment of the old-time community, but sometimes they are limited by size of the space, by necessity to clean house, or expense in hosting people. Notions of hospitality might impel hosts to feel pressured to provide food and drink for their guests, so they might forgo holding a music

gathering in their own home because of the expense or trouble. Outside of the special annual events described earlier, they might be more likely to gather their friends together through creation of an outside special event, and many of them take advantage of their connection with an institution to host a jam session in a semi-public place. Travel to jam sessions or other non-economic events may be prioritized if the producer is considered to be a friend, if other good musicians plan to be there, or in order to increase the reach of old-time music.

One of the most important ways musicians in this network find to get together is by creating a way to get paid for playing a music job at a wedding, conference, festival, or dance to help defray travel expenses and music supplies. Many of the musicians are semi-professional, and many serve a dual role as music player and producer. There are a few established bands within the network, but it is very common for various combinations of singers and instrumentalists to get together and practice in a pick-up band for a particular gig, especially for a dance. The importance of an economic component to this music is that it moves it away from participatory ethos to a presentational one, which does affect the way the music is played, as described by Turino. One of the strong characteristics of this old-time network is that most of the musicians seem able to move back and forth between these two modes.

Events without monetary compensation are often still enough of a draw if it is to support a cause or non-profit organization, or simply to support a friend and fellow musician. Robert Blythe, one of my informants who is also a minister and choir director, explained that people stay together when they make opportunities to get together:

What keeps the musical community together? It comes about because, first of all, from a hunger for fellowship. What keeps it together I think is sort of

like, not a paradox. What keeps it together is the opportunity to get together.

Now that sounds strange, but the group stays strong simply because opportunities are made for the group to have interaction. Now folks get hungry; they want something to do, and when the group gets together it makes them stronger because they came together.

Rev. Blythe is not an old-time musician, but his description fits this community as well as his community of religious-based music. By creating musical events, the desire is created for more musical events.

5.2 How Music Works to Create Appalachian Space

In Chapter 4, I outlined several themes I addressed in my field work to tease out how music works to create Appalachia space. In this section, I bring in the themes, grouping them into conversations that help describe the shape of the space that is produced through old-time music, the activities, and the discussions surrounding it.

5.2.1 Authenticity and Connections of Music with People and Places

Fiddler Anna Roberts-Gevault emphasizes relationships with people as being essential, while also bringing up insider/outsider issues. “In terms of authenticity, I’m always aware of the fact that I’m not from here. Which is partly from other people and partly from me. Now I’m just kind of like, no, I’m not from here, but I’ve been adopted by people from here.” Part of the importance of the music in the old-time community is the connection it brings to other people in the network, particularly to mentors or old masters who are passing along the music of a particular area. Musicians from outside the region acknowledge the importance of the music’s connection to place and that they are not from the region, but that they want to spend time in the region with the music and people in place.

Having a relationship with those people transfers a validation that they are playing the music properly, belong in the region, and have been brought in to the musical genealogy.

Actually knowing and spending time with those people seemed very important. Roberts-Gevault criticized musicians at festivals who referred to Tommy Jarrell, whose iconic fiddle style is the touchstone of the national style developed out of Surry County, North Carolina, as “Tommy,” and the abstract nature of middle class outsiders emulating someone they never knew except through recordings. “It’s just this interpersonal thing. Paul David is not just a character from a CD, then anything he says that I’ve learned, then I’ve learned it. And I have his permission to have that tune in my repertoire and pass it on to other people” (Roberts-Gevault). Authority is not something taken on by an outsider to the tradition, but something that must be given from an insider to the tradition.

Morris criticizes the metaphor of kinship that outsiders use to become part of mountain culture and then become the authority figures that represent “her” tradition. She sees it as a way outsiders take over the power of local music. Sociologists Griswold and Wright address the practice of what they call “cosmopolitan cultural cowbirds,” who move into a region and adopt local culture, in the process encouraging, shaping, and perpetuating that culture. The authors do not place a moral judgment on the cowbirds, but view them as one of many factors that create a dynamic social context, which, “far from chipping away at enduring regionalism, actually produces it” (Griswold and Wright 2004:1412).

For some, authentic music is not just free-floating, where anything goes. The connection of the music to individuals and places gives it more meaning, but then there is a bounding of the music, where a musician who learns a song or tune traditionally is not free to embellish and change at will. Donna Lamb thought the music should be reproduced with

little to no change, likening the music learner to being an archaeologist: “Play it like you heard it.” As she describes above, traditional, “heritage” music was written within a community, and bounding that community is a way of remaining true to the tradition of that heritage.

For Paula Larke, the genealogy of the music is very important, with relationships and people being the “location” of the music rather than a particular place. It’s a way of locating identity. By acknowledging our influences, we locate the song, and therefore, we prevent individual people and whole groups of people from becoming invisible. Through her musical archaeology, she is establishing her genealogy, always looking for echoes of her father, whose passion for music took him away from her family. Passion and its connection to grounding musical relationships was also invoked by multi-instrumentalist Rich Kirby, both in his own meaningful connection with Buck Maggard, a non-musician who, nevertheless, through his passion for the music created close relationships with musicians and disseminated his knowledge through his radio programs on WMMT. Kirby says it was the essence of old-time music, “where so much of the power of music derives from the personality of the person playing it...that if you can’t deal with that personality, you’re missing out.” The music, again, is not just free-floating and enjoyed for its own sake, but is enriched and its power amplified through connections with particular people and their personalities, by extension and sometimes explicitly through the places those people inhabit.

Beverly May identified particular people as the conduit, as a gift that she should pass on without charge, identifying it both as community property and “your birthright,” though I am not clear about whose birthright she is referring to – if it is somewhat restricted or open to anyone who claims it. Others, such as Brett Ratliff, seemed to echo Donna Lamb’s words

when he said “authenticity is learning tunes the way you *hear* them,” but somehow his change of verb tense moved it from a sense of reproduction and passing along of the past to a more individualistic interpretation. This was emphasized when he followed up by saying, “whatever you make a connection with, you should play” (Ratliff).

5.2.2 Authenticity as a Function of Scale

The conversations above show how important the interpersonal connection of music and people remains, but also how people are also emplaced both in relationships and in locations. Considerations of scale show up quite often in discussions of old-time music, and many of my interviewees especially contrasted a national old-time style versus the local. In many cases, such as with May and Roberts-Gevault, Kentucky styles of playing seemed to be both viewed as both local and regional simultaneously. Both of these fiddlers described the importance of local communities of music maintaining some autonomy from the national style, also recognizing that each local style is as valid as another, or at least that the Kentucky style is as valid as any other. They were especially cognizant and critical of the bias toward Round Peak style from the Virginia/North Carolina line in the Blue Ridge as popularized by some of the iconic recordings of Tommy Jarrell and the Camp Creek Boys, which was also cited by fiddler Ron Pen as being the source of the national old-time string band sound. May expressed strong words and emotions on remembering a national arbiter – Alice Gerrard, editor of the *Old Time Herald* magazine – saying that J.P. Fraley’s style wasn’t “old-time,” so that he wasn’t qualified to judge an old-time fiddle contest. Fraley’s smooth style of playing fiddle is one identified by Titon as representative of a northeastern Kentucky style incorporating “a cosmopolitan combination of southeastern breakdowns with a northern tune tradition found along the Ohio River” (Titon 2001:18).

Perhaps it's a matter of proportion – of maintaining enough local musicians so that outsiders don't over-run the locals to the extent that the local authority is lost – and investing in local people the power to be their own gatekeepers. Cowan Creek Mountain Music School is an example of allowing outsiders in, but making it clear that the gatekeepers are local and the target audience is local, thus minimizing the power of the “cultural cowbirds” without throwing them out of the nest.

5.2.3 Networks and Authority in the Reinscription of Privilege

The old-time music community has a variety of gatekeepers, some of whom I have interviewed, and others that I have alluded to in this study. Jam session leaders would certainly have influence as gatekeepers in controlling the flow and providing authority or authenticity.¹⁹ Producers of other events, such as the Old Time Music Revival and Celebration of Traditional Music described in this study, or the Fraley Family Festival in Olive Hill, Kentucky, would certainly be gatekeepers. People with the power to invest authority through their position as an employee of an institution – such as Berea College, or Cowan Creek Community Center, or Richard Mandell as the proxy of agricultural extension agency – would also qualify. Gatekeepers are also granted authority by people in the community by virtue of their demonstrated knowledge and sometimes by their proper behavior, which has limits but perhaps is also expected to stray a bit beyond limits. Authorities might control the music produced in a situation through inviting people who are determined to play the “proper” music, but also through messages given during the jam session or other event, such as Beverly May described about Homer Crabtree. Crabtree is an

¹⁹ Those I have identified as leaders in jam sessions as described in this dissertation would be Donna Lamb, Beverly May, Rich Kirby, Richard Mandell, and Deborah Thompson. Other musicians also served as jam session leaders by their behavior during the described events, even if they weren't *de facto* leaders, and some of the musicians, such as Ron Short, led jam sessions that were not part of my participant observation for the dissertation.

old-time banjo player with strong opinions, who would give the bluegrass musicians who showed up “the look,” which tells a musician he is out of line musically, too loud or fast (May, personal conversation). Crabtree – and May – would also be considered to be nurturers of the music and of newcomers, and they certainly have an influence on new participants in this music.

Authority is conveyed not only by authenticity, as expressed through relationships and connection to place, but through the sanction of institutions, which are often maintained through the reproduction of privilege for some groups and not for others (Johnson). In academia as well as in governmental agencies that bestow awards and grants for folk arts, white male heterosexual nondisabled privilege is often not even recognized so that change can be made. Therefore, acknowledging privilege and identifying the societal mechanisms that help perpetrate inequalities are an important first step. In this dissertation, I do this in Chapter 8 through investigating the process of decision-making for the Traditional Music Committee at Berea College as they²⁰ discuss the hiring of staff for their annual Celebration of Traditional Music.

One of the challenges of reproducing traditional music today is to attempt to do so without reproducing historical expressions of privilege. For example, some old-time songs include reference to African Americans using derogatory terms. By eliminating the songs, the offending words may be banished, but with them goes the presence of African Americans in the historical record. Some of this culture may be retained and softened, and there is also the possibility that the music may be reproduced with accompanying discourse to set it in historic context and new contexts and knowledges may be created. For example, I often preface singing murder ballads that tell stories of women’s oppression by explaining how

²⁰ At times, this should be “we,” as at times I was also part of the decision-making process.

they can be used to empower women, but also by calling to attention their documentary aspects. Then, I might sing a song that tells a different story, with women as self-activating agents of change and control. The recent reclaiming of the banjo by African Americans is part of a move by some black musicians to look history in the face, but also reinterpret and reclaim traditional music and culture in a postmodern style, such as The Carolina Chocolate Drops' recent album, *Genuine Negro Jig*. I delve more into the dynamics of the Chocolate Drops and their place in old-time music in Chapter 9, but revisionist histories have been very important to the place of women in old-time music as well, as described in Chapter 7.

In a truly local music scene, presumably, specific people, including African American people or women, would be known by their community as being authorities. With the working of privilege, however, certain authorities might be created by who is sanctioned by the recording industry, or who is hired by the festival organizer, and it would be their versions of songs that become more well-known. In jam sessions and other events involving traditional or vernacular roots music, it is important to give the genealogy of the song to document its connection to the past. That means that in a previously male-dominated system, males get extra credit for being the source, because they were previously attributed with being good players. These mechanisms will be described in more detail in chapters 7, 8, and 9, but this kind of genealogy is also important for those who would seek to change these systems of privilege. As historical records are mined further by revisionists searching for those silenced voices, genealogical information on the music also becomes a way of reclaiming the contributions of the less powerful, and creating the space for them to then claim the music as their own. Understanding the dialectics between place and social

relations, then requires understanding where there is space for music in Appalachia, and the kinds of musical spaces that have been created.

5.3 Spaces for Vernacular Roots Music in Appalachia

In this section, I begin by describing my observations of general trends regarding space for vernacular roots music, to create a context for the specific sites I observed in researching this dissertation. The information in this section of the chapter has been gathered through my previously-described thirty years of being an old-time musician, through my participation in this particular network over the last twenty years, and through my more intentional participant observation since 2006. Examples might be drawn from these long-term involvements, but any quotations are from musicians interviewed for this dissertation.

Traditional or vernacular roots music in Appalachia is perhaps as strong as it ever was, although the music itself, of course, includes change as well as continuity, and the spaces where it might be played have changed somewhat over the years. Who is playing the music, defined by attributes such as race, gender, and class may also change somewhat over the years. String band musics that purportedly were exchanged between white and black musicians are now almost exclusively white, following decades of racial discrimination against black musicians in commercial recorded music and radio, and black musicians' responses to this as well as their own development into other musical styles such as jazz, rhythm and blues, rock, soul, and hip hop. White women now express more freedom in taking up instruments that were historically more the province of males, such as fiddle in the old-time community. Black women are becoming more involved in playing acoustic instruments and participating in the old-time community.

Analyzing the kinds of spaces and places where music is made yields geographical information that aids in understanding how questions of authenticity and authority are posed and answered regarding Appalachian vernacular roots music. In the following discussion, among the factors that influence space for music in Appalachia, perhaps the most important is the simple availability of buildings or other places where music might be played and how open they are to the “public.” Other factors include the type of music played and instruments used, sacred versus secular content, gender of the musicians, race of the musicians, the degree to which the musicians are paid, and purpose of the music. Commercial establishments, churches, schools, government buildings, non-profit organizations, and parks all host musical events that include vernacular roots music.

Other “spaces” for music may be found online, in chat rooms and listserves, such as Banjo Hangout, Black Banjo, and Fiddle-L. Print publications such as *Bluegrass Unlimited* and *Old-Time Herald* also provide “space” for music, with discussions and explorations of the proper place of music. These spaces allow for verbal conversations about music, promotion of musical events including jam sessions, and opportunities for listening to recordings. Certainly, compact disks, mp3 downloads, and other sources of recorded music are important to the continuation and changes of vernacular roots music and also might be considered to be “space” for music. In this dissertation, I am most interested in space where people are physically together, interacting and participating in musicking together, so those are the kinds of spaces I am considering here.

Because of the dialectical nature of space and culture, the types of spaces available for musical performance and participation also influence the kinds of music played in the community, including the people who are encouraged or allowed to play in those spaces.

Probably the most important type of space for music – both in the past and in the present – is private space, especially in the homes of the musicians themselves. Music-making and transmission among families, neighbors, and friends form the backbone of traditional music. Historically, music sessions and dances were held in homes and barns, and many musicians tell stories of learning to play instruments by taking them down off the walls of their homes, where they were kept. One of my interviewees, fiddler Paul David Smith, described the kitchen of one of his friends as the place that kept him and many of his friends together.

Private spaces are perhaps the most important spaces for music in Appalachia, especially in terms of traditional transmission methods. Musicking among family and friends enacts and promotes social relationships in a situation that may involve minimal observation of others, and completely private spaces for practices. Although the jam sessions documented in this dissertation were chosen in part because they are open to the public, private jam sessions or “open practices” of bands are more widespread than public gatherings. At times, however, the close proximity of other family members may serve as a damper on musical activities if they are overly critical or too sensitive to discordant sounds. The music played here is much more likely to be participatory than presentational, and less attention may be paid to getting every note right. Music parties and practices most often take place in living rooms, basements, yards, and porches of private homes. Porches, in particular, were named by many of the participants in my study as appropriate places for their music to be played. These are areas that mark the intersection of the natural world, the private world of the home, and the public world. The importance of the front porch to musical gatherings, with its informal and friendly connotations, is illustrated by the inclusion of the name for Berea, Kentucky’s weekly musical gathering, Jammin’ on the

Porch. In fine weather, the musicians literally gather on the porch of a reconstructed log house in a city park, and the audience sits around picnic tables or their own brought-on lawn chairs out in the surrounding yard. On the porch, the musicians occupy the liminal space between public and private, not really putting on a performance, but allowing people to observe their somewhat private interactions.

Private spaces continue to play an important role as many rural areas have very few areas considered to be public space. This is has resulted in large part from the centralization of economic and community functions in population centers resulting from cheap gas, improvement of roads, and closing of local post offices. Such changes, combined with the rise of large chain discount stores in urban areas, influenced the closing of local country stores that served as community gathering places that encouraged participatory music. There are some gas station/convenience store combinations that have become the new general store, often selling prepared food items and providing community gathering space, and sometimes providing space for music.²¹

Different types of music create different kinds of gatherings, shaping the relationships between people and the spaces they are using, as will be shown in this dissertation. Certainly, one major difference that shapes musical space most profoundly is the contrast, already discussed, between presentational musics, which require large audience space and which direct the musical activity outward from music producer to music consumer, and participatory musics, in which case the audience is small or non-existent, and the activity is directed more exclusively within and between the musicians. Participatory

²¹ I have heard of two such jam session sites in Madison County, Kentucky that have been active in the time period of my dissertation research, 2006-2010, but there are many more in the region.

music generally requires smaller spaces than presentational music, which can be a benefit in rural areas that lack large auditoriums.

This is somewhat related to economic concerns which affect musical spaces and who may participate in the creation of music: for example, there are different expectations for professional musicians and amateurs. The presence of a professional musician may impact the participation of non-professionals, perhaps encouraging those who want to play with a professional musician. On the other hand, some non-professionals may be intimidated and not participate if a professional is involved. If musicians depend on the income from their musical jobs, they may be less likely to play in a participatory session, choosing to spend their time on presentational musics.

Sacred and secular musics also create different spaces, with different rules of participation based not only on the sacred/secular divide, but also on the religious tradition represented. These lines seem to be blurred in Appalachia, perhaps more so than in other places, where sacred music and statements of belief (almost all Protestant Christian) are not limited to private space. For example, the only one of my sites where a jam session opened with a prayer was in the most “public” of all places, the Pound, Virginia, City Hall and it was led by the mayor. The old-time jam sessions held at Christian colleges, such as Union and Sue Bennett colleges, were perhaps more secular in tone than those put on by the city of Berea’s tourism office (Jammin’ on the Porch) or the state-funded Cumberland Falls Park lodge. Public and private spaces seem to be important components of musical spaces, but do not always lead to expected outcomes regarding sacred and secular musics. Religious content may also be found in the public schools in Appalachia, especially of the conservative Christian variety. I have experienced Christian programming in some public

schools in eastern Kentucky, and have been told by one teacher that I would not be invited back to their school because the music teacher objected to my teaching the children a song that included a devil.

Public schools, which often have large, public spaces to hold musical events, are now quite far away from most rural areas due to school consolidations. Gone is the neighborhood school which may have doubled as a community center in the past, although a few of the old buildings remain that have been transformed into full-time community centers where music is played regularly; the old schools in Carcassonne and Cannon, both in Letcher County, Kentucky, are two such centers.²² Children may travel up to two hours to attend a county school and therefore are less likely to return to the school for public gatherings, as are their families. Security concerns in this era of school shootings and other violence at schools further limit availability of the schools for community events.

Music is taught in the schools, though funding for it and all the arts has diminished over the years. Even at its height, however, the music taught in the schools was and is almost always in the classical or popular vein rather than folk music. Today there may be some attention to vernacular or folk music in the schools only if there is a particular teacher interested, willing, and able to include it in his or her curriculum, such as Emily Spencer, who teaches a string-band class at Mount Rogers Elementary School in Whitetop, Virginia, during the school day. The intervention of arts councils or other non-profit funding sources have been essential for promotion of traditional music programs. These were more common before the economic downturn of 2008, which has resulted in drastic cuts in arts funding.

²² Carcassonne Community Center hosts the longest continuously running community square dance in Kentucky, held once a month in good weather, having begun in 1969. Cannon Community Center has initiated a weekly jam session in the last few years, which is attended by some of the people in this network and is serving as an important place for the traditional transmission of local music.

The Hindman Settlement School, in Hindman, Kentucky, is a wonderful example of an institution founded in the late nineteenth century to educate mountain children that needed to reinvent itself in order to survive after public schools took over this function. Hindman Settlement School now holds a week-long summer folk arts camp for families, also supporting a full-time traditional performing artist who provides music and dance programming for schools, nursing homes, and other institutions in Knott County and environs. The Pine Mountain Settlement School invites local musicians to entertain groups that participate in their environmental education programs and other arts- and nature-related workshops.

The non-profit media cooperative Appalshop is an important cultural producer in Eastern Kentucky that strives to create a positive regional identity and provides a large amount of space for traditional music. Initiated by the Office of Equal Opportunity in 1969 as a job training program in film production for disadvantaged youth, Appalshop continued and expanded their programs with additional grant money from various agencies like National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) (Hanna 1997). Early on in their history, the addition of their June Appal recording label, an associated theater group called Roadside Theater, and WMMT community radio station expanded their impact on the musical culture of Appalachia. They started an annual festival called Seedtime on the Cumberland, which celebrates local arts and community. Another of their important contributions to the community is a facility with performance and gathering spaces, although they also rely on other public and private spaces in the nearby area to hold musical events. One of the most important initiatives for my research was the traditional music program, in which they took a multifaceted approach to building and reviving the traditional music of the region. They

added more components such as Old-Time Music Days designed as teaching workshops, after-school lessons for children in stringed instruments, and a central piece, a week-long summer school in traditional music designed for local children, but also open to adults. One of my interviewees, Beverly May, was serving as their traditional music coordinator when she spearheaded the establishment of the Cowan Creek Mountain Music School (CCMMS) in nearby Cowan Creek Community Center in 2001. This has further institutionalized Appalshop's dedication to traditional music and expanded their reach on local, state, and national scales.

Many of their programs operate at several scales simultaneously: they serve their local Whitesburg, Kentucky, community through their many programs and projects, but also reach into surrounding areas through their community radio station, festivals, and internship programs. They distribute their films, videos, and musical recordings (through their record label) nationally and internationally, also creating partnerships with other arts organizations outside the region. Even when their projects are not ostensibly *about* the music, they nearly always *include* music, so choices are made about what kinds of music suit their purpose, how and when to include it. They actively work to make choices that promote gender equality and racial and ethnic diversity in the music that is represented there.

While traditional music has never been commonly taught during the school day, the number of after-school programs that encourage traditional music is growing in the region. Appalshop provides one called "Passing the Pick and Bow," with their teachers drawn from the local area. Another after-school "Pick and Bow" program was sponsored by the Appalachian Music Preservation Program (AMPP), a cooperative venture between musicians and other interested parties in Pike County, Kentucky, and the University of

Kentucky's Appalachian Center. AMPP was active in the early 2000s, until various people involved in the program either moved away or passed away. This group sought not only to encourage traditional musicians and preserve their heritage by increasing venues for learning and performing traditional and roots music in their home county, but also to use the music as a tool for economic development by highlighting their Appalachian heritage through their music, thereby offering a unique product to tourists. Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM), is a non-profit organization which began in North Carolina in 2000, was incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization in 2008, and now includes affiliates in twelve counties in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Their vision is that "All children throughout the Appalachian Mountains have access to the joy of participation in the music of their heritage," which they define as "old time and bluegrass music and dance traditions" (Junior Appalachian Musicians, Inc.). North Georgia has its own Georgia Pick and Bow Traditional Music School in Lumpkin County which provides music lessons, sponsors local dances and holds a summer traditional music camp for children. All of these previously named programs define traditional music using white heritage instrumentation and musical forms, for the most part, though they do not say outright that they are racialized versions of vernacular roots music.

Higher education institutions in the region also have provided space for vernacular roots music in Kentucky, both historically and today. Berea College has been a repository of traditional music since at least the 1890s, when a tour of students from Berea were described singing "quaint ballads, negro melodies, and hymns common in the mountain region" (Berea Quarterly, Feb. 1896, quoted in Rice 2009). Faculty members James Watt Raine, Gladys Jameson, and John F. Smith collected ballads from their students at least as early as 1908,

while Jameson started a fiddle contest on campus that ran from 1915 to the late 1920s.²³ More will be said about Berea College's connection and contributions to vernacular music in the region in Chapter 8, but perhaps it will suffice to say that this institution has been in the forefront of scholarship and controversy for their mixed history of representations of the Appalachian region and its culture since at least their third president's tenure in the 1870s. Chapter 8 tells the history of the Celebration of Traditional Music, a small, but important festival which began in 1974 as part of the college's commitment to the region, and helps define traditional music in Appalachia.

Other colleges in the region, such as Alice Lloyd, Pikeville, Sue Bennett, and Union colleges in Kentucky, Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, and University of Virginia at Wise, have contributed to providing space for music as well since their beginnings, including faculty and students studying and collecting the local music, classes on folk music and other forms of folk culture, ensembles of folk musicians, and festivals of folk culture. Two programs teaching traditional music in eastern Kentucky institutions of higher education have begun in the past decade at Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky, and Hazard Community and Technical College's School of Bluegrass and Traditional Music in Hyden, Kentucky. These programs provide space not only for their music programs, but also for concerts and workshops open to the public, and will no doubt have a long-lasting effect on vernacular roots music in the region. Morehead

²³ In Special Collections, a lengthy 1989 report on Appalachian Studies by Gerald Roberts, chair of committee includes an Appendix (1) which outlines the history of the Appalachian commitment at Berea College, including this information (Archive Record Group 6.12). Other excellent information on the college's "two spheres of music," classical arts music and folk music, may be found in Rice, H. (2009) A Perfect Wild Flower and the Straightjacket of Lines and Spaces: Berea's Two Spheres of Music. *Berea Digital*. <http://www.berea.edu/bereadigital/gstr210/musicessay.asp> (last accessed January 3, 2012).

State University has four-year programs in old-time and bluegrass, also broadcasting radio programs on traditional music through its radio station, MSPR. Hyden's curriculum is more focused on bluegrass and music production and only lasts two years. Both programs have musical instrument instruction as a central feature of their programs. One other long-standing program in bluegrass and traditional music that has some effect on this region is at East Tennessee State University.

Young people have increasing opportunities to learn and play traditional music, as do adults who attend and support the jam sessions described later in this chapter. In many rural areas, however, churches are the main spaces large enough for people to gather, which means that much of the secular vernacular roots music has limited public space. Churches and schools, because of their concerns for "moral" content of entertainment and gatherings, are not open to hosting gatherings of honky-tonk musicians or often not even string band music meant for dancing. Gospel music flourishes in these areas, not only because of the availability of musicians and appreciation for that kind of music, but also because churches are some of the few places people can gather without a personal invitation.

Singings (sometimes known as singing conventions) at various churches are common musical events in Appalachia, whether they are a regular event, usually held on a monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or annual basis – or in the case of Big Stone Gap – on the fifth Saturdays whenever they occur. They might be rotated from place to place within a network of churches, either from the same denomination or through a ministerial association. They are often promoted through an article or notice in a local paper, through word of mouth by people and churches affiliated with the singing, or by being published in church's bulletins. They might also be held as a special event held to raise money for

medical treatment or a funeral. Some communities host rotating singings, such as in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, where the ministerial association sponsors a fourth-Saturday singing that is hosted by various member churches each month, encouraging anyone to participate. In this case, there is often some black/white interchange in the musical groups and between different styles of sacred music. Roles in music and music production are certainly gendered in these situations, but religious music seems to be at least more balanced in terms of amounts of male/female participation than some of the secular musical events described earlier.

Religious music - especially gospel music - may be sung a cappella, may be compatible with string band ensembles, or accompanied by pianos, drums, and electric instruments. White gospel groups are likely to feature acoustic guitars and perhaps even other stringed instruments such as mandolin or bass as well as the more traditional piano. African American gospel groups in the region predominately use piano as accompaniment, and possibly drums, electric bass, or electric guitar, and less likely the saxophone at times. Another increasingly common accompaniment to singing consists of pre-recorded musical sound tracks, which is simultaneously an adaptation to communities' lack of appropriate instrumental accompanists and a cause of it. Churches may vary widely in the acceptable styles of music and who may perform it, although women typically are able to be more involved in sacred music than secular. Another characteristic that affects sacred music styles is that churches often remain quite segregated.

Family reunions have become important venues for gospel musicians as they are perceived as providing wholesome entertainment and will draw a crowd. Reunions have become public events, with invitations published in local papers and a sense of friendly

competition between families to see who can attract the most people. Musicians invited to play at the reunions are often compensated by passing the hat and requesting donations from reunion attendees, similar to a love offering at a church to pay traveling musicians and visiting preachers. Reunions that regularly attract musicians may become opportunities for participatory singing and playing if there is some quiet time away from the staging area, and if there is a significant presence of other musicians wanting to play with each other. If a single musician shows up wanting to perform, other musicians may offer to accompany, but most often, musical groups perform in their own sets and do not all play together. The presence of performing musicians may restrict other people playing together because there is no quiet space for them to gather with the performers' use of sound systems, and because it is not considered polite to play while someone else is playing. The exception to this would be for anyone who is performing later to gather somewhere private to practice and warm up.

Family reunions and the importance of music in them recreate a sense of genealogy and tradition to the music, even though it might not be passed on traditionally, and even though they might actually inhibit participation by including presentational music only. Participation in these events is typically through being audience members, enjoying old favorites and hearing familiar bands playing familiar songs. It does, however, provide a performing space for local groups, which encourages their formation. One other factor that involves family reunions and music might be that families would tend to be more racially homogeneous than some other sectors of population, so it might be less likely for musicians and singers of different races to come together in a family reunion.

Like the reunions in rural Kentucky, individuals in the old-time community may create an annual party during a particular weekend or holiday time, which is open to friends

and friends-of-friends, though they would not be published in a newspaper. Attendees to old-time parties, in similar fashion to reunions, would also tend to bring their spouses and families, and food to share, but a big difference is that they would not attend without their instruments. Non-playing spouses or friends might be heavily involved in food preparation, serving, and cleaning up, but few people would attend such a party just as an observer or audience member. The highlight and major activity of the day would be participatory playing and singing. Control over people's actions would rest on generally accepted notions of etiquette, but simply appearing without any personal connection would be somewhat suspect and generally unlikely.

Other cultural patterns in Appalachia that impact the availability of space for music include the prevalence of “dry” counties - where alcohol sales are illegal - and this means there are few local “watering holes” for socializing or listening to music. Most restaurants in Appalachia that have survived the commercial onslaught of chain and fast-food restaurants do not offer musical entertainment. Without the sale of alcohol, its wide profit margins, and its accompanying extended hours of operation into the late hours of the night or early morning, many venues wishing to offer music can't stay open. Occasionally, specialty coffee shops, particularly near college and university locations, may take the place of bars in offering music – including open stage nights – that encourage local musicians and especially amateurs. One such coffee shop, Summit City in Whitesburg, no doubt may offer music partly because it is also licensed to sell alcohol, which allows for enough sales throughout the evening hours to keep its doors open. The owners of Summit City are personally connected to the local art and music scene, and are becoming a great center of performance and participation in the music scene of eastern Kentucky.

There are some privately-owned music and dance locations, often old barns or commercial buildings that are transformed into performance spaces with the use of old carpets, church pews, sawmill lumber, and walls decorated with rural implements. Some, such as Black's Barn in Conway, Kentucky, sell refreshments to help cover their costs, but charge no admission. Bands are not paid to play there, but the space, like family reunions, allows for performance space for local groups, which encourages them to continue. These music halls that basically just depend on the love of music to keep open may or may not have signs and advertising to bring people in. Some "halls" might operate as an extension of someone's home, and may have more strict rules and expectations than with a place operated as a commercial venture. For example, one such music hall, held in the garage of a musician and trucking company owner in Knox County, Kentucky, did not welcome any kind of dancing at his venue, even square dancing. This prohibition would certainly influence the music played there, and might help explain why bluegrass has become the music of choice there, with its connection to gospel music, rather than old-time, with its dance connections.

Festivals are perhaps the most public locations for vernacular music, and these have become more numerous and more important in disseminating and transmitting vernacular roots music in recent years. These often include local talent, which tend to play bluegrass and/or gospel, such as at the Tri-State Gospel Convention, held in Big Stone Gap, Virginia's Bullitt Park since 1921. Or, they may include a talent competition, such as that held at the Daniel Boone Festival in Knox County. In the latter, the majority of the talents displayed are singers performing with pre-recorded backup CDs. Headliners at most local festivals, even Poage Landing Days in Ashland, Kentucky, which hosts the Ed Haley Fiddle Fest in honor

of a local, but nationally-known old-time legend, are likely to feature a regionally-famous rock band.

Many of the public buildings that have recently housed jam sessions are re-purposed from private concerns that had some public functions, although most of these are in urban areas. These include the former Sue Bennett College in London, Kentucky, a private Methodist-related college that closed in the 1990s and whose campus is now used as conference and social service space; one of Jackson County, Kentucky's oldest houses that has been purchased and renovated by the county as a visitor's center; and Lay's Hardware Store in Coeburn, Virginia, now a center for the arts along Virginia's heritage trail known as the Crooked Road. Regular jam sessions or music halls may also be established in empty buildings that previously held private businesses, such as one monthly session in Clover Bottom, Kentucky, that took place for several months in a closed rural gas station located along a major road.

State park lodges in Kentucky and Virginia have been used to host festivals such as the Fraley Family Festival at Carter Caves State Park in Olive Hill, Kentucky, a May festival at The Breaks on the border of Kentucky and Virginia, and the Great American Dulcimer Convention at Pine Mountain State Resort Park near Pineville, Kentucky. Weekly square dances have been a mainstay at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park (near Corbin, Kentucky) and Jenny Wiley State Resort Park (near Prestonsburg, Kentucky) at various times, and Cumberland Falls has established weekly jam sessions since about 2005.

Among these many options described so far in this chapter may be found space for the musical events detailed below, most of which are jam sessions. Several events are held in buildings paid for by tax dollars and therefore, perhaps, the most public of the sites. These

are also more likely to be in urban areas. Berea, Kentucky's tourism office hosted jam sessions in their building, the former passenger railroad depot, every Thursday night during inclement weather and outside on the porch of a relocated log house during warm weather. Pound, Virginia's Town Hall hosts a bluegrass jam every Friday night. Hindman, Kentucky's senior citizen's center is the site of Tuesday night bluegrass jams. Monday nights, Cumberland Falls State Resort Park outside of Corbin, Kentucky sponsors a bluegrass jam. The Old-Time Music Revival (not a religious event!), was a series of small festivals which included jam sessions, concerts, a dance, and workshops, all held in a former funeral home in Goldbug, Kentucky, that is now used as Whitley County's agricultural extension office. Other events described later in this chapter are held in sites that are privately owned, but regularly invite the public in for events. Appalshop, the media center in Whitesburg, Kentucky, described earlier, is an important center of traditional music and has held a monthly Saturday afternoon jam session as part of its constellation of offerings since 2001. I started a monthly jam session on Tuesday evenings at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, in 2007, which continued until 2009.

All of these spaces are gendered, even though the mechanisms might not be overt. It is usually men (rather than women) who spend time hanging out in public spaces at feed stores and make up the "breakfast clubs" at Appalachian restaurants. Men tend to gather more than women to work and visit together outside the home, while the rural women spend more time working in their own homes. Women's gatherings tend to occur more around church, child care, and holidays, rather than work-related events. Festivals or concerts are sometimes held in shopping malls²⁴, and those kinds of shopping areas do tend to attract

²⁴ One example I have performed in as a musician was held in a mall in Harlan, Kentucky, during the Thanksgiving weekend.

women, men, and children. Another commercial space that often hosts music is the neighborhood barbershop – a male-dominated space – such as Phillip Akemon’s Sand Gap, Kentucky, establishment. Beauty parlors are not known as bastions of participatory music. Why? Is it because the hair dryers make too much noise, or because so many women are getting manicures? Do women not see a female-only space as a space for musicking?

Nearly all the spaces described in this chapter are ostensibly open to all members of the public, but I observed that nearly all the attendees and performers there were white, and the traditional musics being celebrated or represented are mostly from white traditions. Is it the music presented there, or the space itself, that inhibits black participation as musicians or audience? Even with the Latino population growing in the region, there are still relatively few who attend these musical events, most often in small numbers accompanying a white friend, and there may be language as well as culture issues keeping their participation small. Spaces are “raced” as well as gendered, and it is often less obvious to persons of privilege where these dividing lines occur (Johnson 2001). Questions like these, involving gender and race, are perhaps best addressed by research using participant observation and interviews of the people involved, as in this dissertation.

These musical events each have their own personalities based on their leaders, their locations, and the participants, but also on the style of music they are based on. The bluegrass jam sessions also have large audiences compared to the number of players, while the old-time jams do not. There are two exceptions to this “rule,” during the Old-Time Music Revival in Goldbug, which adopted presentational strategies to promote a participatory music, and at the Berea “Jammin’ on the Porch” which is so inclusive it has elements of both.

Because jam sessions are a very important component in re-enacting the musical community in Appalachia, I will now describe six jam session cultures to set the stage for Chapter 6, which analyzes elements of the events in order to understand how music works to produce Appalachian space. As laid out in the introduction and literature review, understanding how music works to produce Appalachian space requires attending to the debates about vernacular roots music in the region, and jam sessions are good places where different sides of the debate are enacted, about which musics most authentically represent the region.

5.3.1 Production of Space through Old-Time vs Bluegrass Tension

Festivals are certainly important spaces for music in Appalachia, and for continuing vernacular roots music anywhere in the U.S. I investigate the Celebration of Traditional Music in depth in chapter 8 for its role in the creation of Appalachian space through the workings of music and its accompanying networks. In this chapter, I investigate another festival series which was almost entirely created from members of the old-time community in this study, and it was created in opposition to the prevailing bluegrass music found in the area. It is illustrative for its role in the conversation about whose definition of music is allowed to be considered to be local and representative of southeast Kentucky. One of the questions I hope can be answered by investigating the Old-Time Music Revival is, what happens to participatory music when it becomes presentational? How does it change the music, and how does that affect the social relations surrounding the music?

The Old-Time Music Revival, Goldbug, Kentucky

The Old-Time Music Revival (OTMR) was a series of Saturdays that included performances, instrument workshops, and a dance from August through November 2008,

and in August and September, 2009, in Goldbug, Kentucky, near Williamsburg in Whitley County. I attended and participated in four out of the six events, also serving as an advisor for the producer. Richard Mandell, an old-time banjo player who has lived in Whitley County since around 2000 conceived and spear-headed the series, after becoming frustrated at having to travel so far to play old-time music with others, and being dissatisfied with the local jam sessions. His purpose was to “re-establish” old-time music in that area and inspire others to play the music, so the activities were tightly controlled to present only old-time music and not allow bluegrass or gospel music. In fact, he started adding “(not a religious event!)” to his promotional material because of the local religious connection to the term “revival.” Musicians and a dance caller were invited and paid an honorarium for coming (including my husband and I), almost all of whom were from the old-time music network centered around Appalshop, with which Richard is an active participant. The very first festival also included a historical retrospective of old time musicians from that local area by John Harrod and quite a bit of teaching along with the concertizing.

Richard engaged in a partnership with the county agricultural extension agency, at whose office the events were held. The building, a former funeral home, is located in a rural area of Whitley County, but close to an interstate exit. Funding through the Kentucky Arts Council for folk arts projects was crucial in supporting the series. Therefore, the drying up of state funds in 2010 led to a severely curtailed schedule; only a couple of jam sessions and dances were held that year, and 2011 found no events scheduled in the area.

Each Saturday followed a similar schedule, with activities that are standard to many festivals in the old-time music community, including concerts, playing workshops, a presentation by a scholar, and a dance. A farmer’s market opened early in the morning,

under the *porte cochere* previously used by the hearse to conveniently load the casket from the chapel. The musical events began at 10 a.m. with an instrumental jam session outside while the farmer's market sellers still had some produce to sell and it was still cool. The circle of chairs for musicians in the jam session expanding as musicians showed up. At first, most of the participants were the invitees, but others joined in at later festivals. There was some socializing around the edges, and some of the male onlookers interacted with the musicians, suggesting tunes or expressing appreciation at the music. The sellers who were close to the music also interacted with the musicians to some extent.

Food vendors were invited to sell lunch on all days, and dinners for the first year. The schedule took shape once the musicians arrived and was negotiated by the informally designated emcee in consultation with Richard. The main activity was a series of concerts from artists that took place in the former chapel, now community room, from about 11:00 am-4:00 pm. The audience was mostly middle aged and older white people, both men and women, perhaps two-thirds of whom were from the Whitley County and the surrounding area. Fiddle and banjo playing workshops from 2:00-4:00 pm competed with the performances, attracting six to twelve people each, a mix of ages and both sexes. A clogging workshop at 4:00 pm was led by Carla Gover, a young woman who was also a singer and banjoist/guitar player and had performed earlier in the day. The workshop attracted female students of all ages, but no male participants, though men played the music for the dancing.

An old-time dance was held at 7:00 pm after a 2-hour supper break. For the first dance in the series, many people showed up expecting to be entertained by watching, rather than coming to dance. The caller had to work very hard to get anyone to participate. Each time after that, more people came expecting to actually dance, but there were several people

who liked to just come and listen to the music and watch. Dancing allows more people to participate since playing an instrument requires an investment of time, money, and the value of owning a personal instrument while the dancing can be picked up that night – as long as those attending can be persuaded to get up and try it. Quite a few people were elderly or had health problems that made it hard for them to dance.

As time went on and the OTMR became somewhat traditionalized in the community, the audience gradually became more participatory, not only dancing more, but bringing in baked goods to share, helping with setup and cleanup, and being less hesitant about jumping into jam sessions. T-shirts helped make people feel a part of things: they were first made to identify the people who worked the festival, and later made to give to performers and sell to others as demand grew for them.

Sociability versus content may seem somewhat spurious, but it is an important consideration. Sociability seems directly connected to participation, which is a central component of old-time music, and yet without attention to content and some bounding of the music, old-time music often becomes subsumed by bluegrass music. Jammin' in the Porch is an example of strict rules enforcing sociability, but not restricting content. In other jams that are either well-defined as bluegrass or old-time, it is content that takes precedence, but within that more strict content, sociability again reigns and influences the behavior of the participants. This includes following expected gender roles and other expectations of the group.

Analysis of Old Time Music Revival

The Old Time Music Revival provides an instructive context for understanding the themes explored previously, and for particularly addressing the ongoing construction of

Appalachian space that occurs through negotiations of old-time versus bluegrass music as the authentic music of the region.

In his 1993 article comparing bluegrass and folk revival communities, Robert Nusbaum argues that the value of sociability provides a base for both communities, being modeled and repeated throughout the “experiential domain” (Nusbaum 1993), based loosely on Berger and Luckmann’s concept (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Nusbaum is not concerned with demonstrations of authenticity other than the fact that concern with the issue is a recurrent theme which, by its very invocation, helps to traditionalize the activity. His main conclusion is that experiential domains in both communities provide structural similarities, most notably the value of sociability. There are important differences in content and key reference points that provide enough “experienced differences” for the two communities to remain somewhat separate, but he seems to indicate that they are quite compatible.

From an outsider’s perspective, old-time and bluegrass music seem to be basically the same thing, but as described in Chapter 3, there are significant differences that do not lend themselves to the two styles being played together. Sociability, as defined by Georg Simmel (Simmel 1961), emphasizes acceptance as the prevailing norm which leads communities to be open to people and activities that are reminiscent of their domain (215). This term is being used more specifically than just the idea of friendliness. Sociability contributes to the participatory nature of both the bluegrass and old-time communities. If I understand Simmel correctly, the term “sociability” is not applicable to the old-time community and certainly not to the Old-Time Music Revival, unless it is applied just within a group. Simmel is clear in separating out the content of relationships, emphasizing instead

that the purpose of sociability is all about play, lightness, and lack of connection to strong ideas or opinions. Indeed, expressing a particular point of view brings a heaviness and boundedness to conversations and relationships that may inhibit sociability.

While the settings and activities of old-time events do encourage community and social connections, old-time musicians and aficionados do not typically enjoy themselves unless they bound their experiences, as they are so often forced to subsume their interests under the louder and more popular bluegrass and country genres. Boundedness in the old-time community, including increased gatekeeping around festivals and jam sessions, is deemed necessary for the survival of old-time music. Richard Mandell, the main instigator of the Old-time Music Revival, explains the centrality of content to his experiential domain:

RM: In Kentucky, there's only a few places that have regularly available old-time music...In Somerset, there's no old-time unless I play there.

DT: Is that a jam that is more bluegrass or country?

RM: Most jams around here are Nashville country, bluegrass, or gospel.

DT: You've gone to some others – I think Cumberland Falls [State Resort Park] has one, too, don't they?

RM: Yeah. There was another one in Williamsburg where I started to play an Art Stamper-type tune and some other guy started singing Michael Row the Boat Ashore. In other words, he thought this wasn't bluegrass, and some other guy actually said, "That's not bluegrass." They didn't say it had to be bluegrass, and if you didn't fit in with what they were trying to do there was no place for you. I stopped going to that one. I go to places where they'll at least tolerate me, but if you're the only one doing it there, and the audience

as well really doesn't know what they're listening to, then there isn't a lot of incentive.²⁵

This was but one example of Richard's disaffection with local jam sessions in southeast Kentucky that led to his desire to create a music festival that was strictly old-time, stemming from a feeling of being misunderstood and put down, and the music that matters to him not being accepted or included. Not only is Richard's music negated by not conforming to the norms and repertoire of bluegrass music, but it is lumped together with outdated, simplistic, white bread versions of folk revivalism. If sociability was the most important component of the music, Richard would have just played with whomever he encountered and whatever types of music were presented. It must be noted that he has often gone to jam sessions that feature bluegrass music and has done just so, but has gotten tired of doing so without the nourishment of also playing music that feeds his soul.

After several years of traveling throughout central and eastern Kentucky to attend jam sessions and music classes that were specifically old-time, Richard felt that the only way to establish the kind of events he wanted to attend was to do it himself, inviting those he felt represented "true" old-time music, particularly the music traditional to Kentucky, to come to his local area. As he explains,

There's almost nothing of that [truly traditional music in eastern Kentucky] left, which is why we started this old-time music revival – the idea was to re-implant it in place, see if it took off. But, I guess in some selfish way, I thought: hey, why don't I get them all to come here? I'm tired of all this driving around.

²⁵ All quotations are taken from an interview by the author. Mandell, R. 2008. Interview. ed. D. J. Thompson. Corbin, Kentucky.

He and his wife held several parties in their home with a strong music jam component. The county agricultural extension agent, who met the wife through the gardening classes he offered, came to the parties and became enamored with the music, eventually partnering with Richard to create a series of Saturday music and dance events. The extension office was moved to a new location in a former funeral home, with an excellent space for community events and plenty of parking, close to the interstate. The extension office also sponsored a farmer's market and it was seen as being a compatible activity with the musical events, in which each activity could help bring in participants for the other. Funding was received by the state arts council and I was asked to consult on the project as well as perform musically. These connections show the importance of personal connections and networks to having the ability and authority to put on a festival such as this. Connections through family members and their other interests (gardening) with local governmental employees (extension agent) are solidified through social events in the home of the musician. The musician's connection to another musician (me) who has some experience with the folk arts grant process perhaps led to better success in being granted some money through the state arts council.

A few attempts were made to document the music and musicians that actually came from that area, but nearly all the performers and "experts" were from elsewhere in Kentucky, mostly from further east into the Kentucky mountains. Musician and music historian John Harrod presented quite a comprehensive history of old-time music and musicians from the tri-county area during the opening day, and someone put together a picture board of old-time musicians with captions to make a connection with the local music history. There were some local musicians who attended the festivals as audience members,

but they were not asked to play, lest the purity of the music be lost. The performers were encouraged to educate the audience about old-time music, the instruments and performing styles and to teach the “correct” way to play old-time music.

Having a venue where the music could be *heard* in its purest form was Richard’s major goal – geared especially, though not exclusively, toward adults: “They can hear it and judge whether they want it to be a part of their life and their community.” While creating a certain community in which he can participate was perhaps his ultimate goal, aural fidelity to the music itself was the most important value he held. Through his dedication to this ideal and selection of musicians that also were good at sharing the music, we were able to create a sense of community and friendliness. Mandell avoided involving current local musicians as he worried that they would not play old-time music correctly, worried that they would instead represent bluegrass music as old-time and then people would not actually hear anything different from what they were used to.

Richard wanted to change his community to something closer to his ideal, to develop a shared culture that was closer to his view of proper music for his local area. Although his experiences of music were very grounded in particular people and places, his view of old-time music, in attempting to “bring it back” to his community, was on a greater level of abstraction than that of the local people. Although he might have wanted to try to recreate the music as it was in that place, he felt there was no one there from whom he could personally draw it out. All the local musicians were perceived as being tainted by bluegrass, unlike those in the Cowan Creek Mountain Music School area. He did not seek out Kentucky natives only, instead seeking to establish an old-time style more in terms of an authentic sound.

David Harvey asks: so what level and what kinds of abstraction should be employed [to create social change]? And what might it mean to be loyal to abstractions rather than to actual people? What is it that constitutes a privileged claim to knowledge and how can we judge, understand, adjudicate, and perhaps negotiate through different knowledges constructed at very different levels of abstraction under radically different material conditions (Harvey 1996:23)? Paradoxically, the music Richard feels closest to is the music that has been rejected by the people in his local area, yet he continues to believe that this music belongs to this place and that people just need to hear it again to accept it. The connection of music to place is a common element of authenticity, but there seems to be a level of abstraction that is being maintained here. One young male fiddler was introduced as being born on “wrong” side of Ohio River, but he quipped, “don’t hold that against me.” He as an obvious outsider was, nevertheless, invited to demonstrate the music that “should” be played in Whitley County. A father and son from Wolfe County demonstrate the continuing value of passing down the music through the generations, particularly within a family. The values demonstrating the concrete connections of music to place are celebrated, but in an abstract way.

A young female singer-songwriter who plays banjo and guitar performs during the day and is also the clogging workshop leader, but she doesn’t participate in many of the jam sessions or play for the dances in a string band formation. She is something of an anomaly in this community, as her music is informed by old-time music, with some of the themes of family, rurality, and connection to the land, but she mostly plays in a singer-songwriter, “folk” genre rather than old-time. Many of her techniques were learned in the old-time genre, but she rarely participates in the community’s jam sessions. The fact that she was

born and raised in Letcher County helps keep her in this old-time community, so while she stretches the boundaries of the music itself into more abstract expressions of tradition, she claims authenticity through her past lived experiences. These embodied, lived experiences and genealogies also help qualify her as a teacher in the Cowan Creek Mountain Music School, another key component of the old-time community in Eastern Kentucky.

The music is connected to the farmer's market and other activities that evoke an old-time, rural locality. The first few events were catered by the local cattleman's association, though in the later year, the local food vendor brought a hot dog wagon. I associate hot-dog wagons with an urban setting, but it is run by a local family who runs a stand in nearby Corbin, so even the food component of the festival is a combination of concrete and abstract in terms of local traditions. Old-time music fits in with this re-imagining of what it means to be local and self-sufficient, by a community producing its own food and fun.

Again, though, the paradox is that it seemed less important to have truly local musicians as part of the presented authenticity. A larger-scale, regional notion of authenticity seems to trump the local community, and one connected more to a sense of being true to the sounds of the music. One local musical family was brought in on the edges but none were hired to be fully vetted performers and teachers, as the organizer still viewed them as somewhat tainted by bluegrass music. Even though they are probably the closest thing to an authentically local traditional music group in the area, they are not "old-time" enough to represent the local music, which in the organizer's mind is more abstractly regional and less grounded in that locality.

Names of bands included a class reference (Rich and the Po' Folks) and a place reference (Red State Ramblers) which also referred ironically to these old-time musicians – presumably who voted Democratic in recent presidential elections, who lived in a state that did not generally reflect their political persuasion.²⁶ Both include the idea of something just this side of acceptable in polite society, and address themes of identity in a humorous way. There seems to be a desire among many old-time musicians to emphasize their liminality, their daring, and not quite fitting into polite society. Is this a sign of non-traditionality? Or is it a healthy embracing of the image of the rakish banjo player as described in Chapter 3? Even the name of the community, “Goldbug,” gives the festival that slightly funky, off-kilter ruralness that is embraced by many people in the old-time music community, and seems to be part of a more abstract view of the local.

The space where the event was held was yet another unexpected juxtaposition of the locally concrete and the abstract that actually contributed a great deal to the community feeling of the event, not just because it was convenient, an appropriate size for the activity, and had many amenities. Interestingly, the aesthetics did little to invoke the typical old-time venue which usually refers to times gone by. This was a modern, brick building with a tile floor and mint-green walls throughout. The fact that it was a government office could have been off-putting if it hadn't been an agricultural extension agency, whose very purpose is to get out into the community and help make rural people's lives better. The fact that the building used to be a funeral home was perhaps the most important factor influencing community engagement with the building. Many of the attendees had their own stories of attending the funerals of families and friends in the building. The large community room

²⁶ Television election-coverage maps from the 2008 presidential election represented Democratic votes with a blue color and Republicans with the red color, and it became common to refer to states in terms of their majority map color.

used to be the chapel of the funeral home, complete with the pink spotlight that used to be trained on the face of the deceased.

In conclusion, the Old-Time Music Revival has an assertive quality that increases its focus on content, decreasing its sociability as a participatory event, but increasing its quality as a presentational old-time event. Nevertheless, the festival organizers strove to create a very welcoming atmosphere, with free entertainment in a comfortable setting, with excellent musicians and a somewhat abstract connection to place. Interestingly, the place in which it was held (local funeral home turned agricultural extension office), helped create a more concrete local connection to place and to the past even while its more office-like ambience seemed antithetical to typical log-cabin-style abstract recreations of the past. It attracted a very white audience in a very white area, as do many events featuring traditional music in Kentucky. It is produced and organized by a governmental-educational-community liaison and staffed by local people, even if they are not necessarily long-standing natives. It paradoxically claims to represent the Appalachian-ness of a particular area of eastern Kentucky while somewhat discounting the current local musical traditions. Its emphasis on a rather abstract view of local music, however, can create a sense of community and re-enactment of regionality through repetition, which traditionalizes the music, and through the welcoming and open mediation of talented people from nearby communities that play good music.

5.5 Conclusion: How Music Produces Communities and Localities

Music in eastern Kentucky is both an inclusive and a contested phenomenon. While the musical communities thrive from being welcoming and participatory, there are limits which are perceived by the community as necessary to maintain its integrity and continue

providing meaningful experiences for its members. These limits help create authenticity, which remains an important concept both for players, producers, and listeners to the music. Authenticity is related not only to aural fidelity, but also to embodiment in many forms. This includes the everyday and repeated practices of performing music together, with all the emotional and kinesthetic bonding that occurs and connection to place. The connections of musicians to other people and to places is also highly embodied in music whose essence and aesthetic is passed on through the traditional transmission methods of emulation and person-to-person contact. Sometimes this embodiment is expressed through flesh and blood, such as with expectations placed on the descendants of revered master musicians, and sometimes through racial expectations, such as will be explored in Chapter 9. Fictive kinship might be invoked by musicians that want to assume authenticity through their connections to other musicians.

The connection of music to place – and its resulting concerns with authenticity – have been explored in this chapter, and will be explored through conversations in chapter 7, 8, and 9. While I challenge the conventional view of authenticity as being closely tied to stasis, I do find that certain places in the old-time network I explore do form a nucleus, or power center which serves as a node to connect people to the music and to each other. These musical centers, like Appalshop, Cowan Creek Mountain Music School, or Morehead University's Center for Traditional Music, do benefit from becoming institutionalized but are ultimately created and maintained through the social relations of the people whose vision and practice are expressed therein. These centers, however, are often shifting and changing, depending on the movements of people in and out of them, the economic climate, and myriad other influences, so they are anything but static.

Mobility is also crucial to the maintenance of these musical networks and communities, and probably always has been. Mobility is tied to scale, as there are local communities which are also part of the regional network, both of which circulate through and with a more national, or generic expression of old-time music. The old-time community in eastern Kentucky thrives, in part, because its members typically have the resources and ability to travel to participate in face-to-face transmission in jam sessions, playing gigs, or even non-musical events that reinforce musicians' relationships, such as weddings or funerals. The music itself has mobility, as certain tunes run through the circuit, perhaps becoming part of what is humorously referred to as the "top ten" tunes of the year or perhaps fading from popularity. These tunes and songs are connected to individuals who have been responsible for their transmission, if not their composition, and these genealogies reinforce the connections of individuals to the networks, adding meaning to the experience of the tunes by other musicians and listeners.

Authority is tied into these naming conventions, as certain tunes or versions of tunes that were played by masters become the standard by which other versions are judged. As touched on in Chapter 3, authority is partially designated by playing the styles properly and understanding the rules. As will be explored in the remaining chapters, authority is also bestowed and shaped through embodiment: through blood connections, through gender performances, and through racialized expectations. The embodiment resulting from a connection to a certain place and time may also result in bestowal of authority. Some musicians believe that the content of the tunes and songs themselves must be reproduced faithfully as heard, while others interpret fidelity to the music as being loyal to the spirit and style, or as being so embedded in a place and its resultant relationships that anything

produced in such a state must have the authority of authenticity. Authority may be recognized by gatekeepers who produce and control musical events, but they also may aid in allowing musicians to be acknowledged as authorities because of their invitations to events, such as festivals and fiddlers conventions.

Conversations and conflicts around authenticity and authority that result from the engagement of old-time music with bluegrass music are an important part of the production of Appalachian space. This has been demonstrated in part by this chapter's analysis of the Old-Time Music Revival, but will be explicated even more in Chapter 6, in which I describe in detail some of the micro scale interactions that form these conversations and arguments.

Chapter 6: Jam Sessions

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, there is space for traditional, participatory music in Appalachia, and jam sessions have become one of the most accepted and popular places for people to get together to produce music informally on a regular basis. While originally coined as a term to describe an informal performance of jazz musicians, the term has become common today to describe any such informal gathering that involves some improvisation, one that is not a rehearsal *per se*. Jam sessions run the gamut from being purely public, to being completely private, and everything in between, but they work best over time if people return because they've had a good experience either musically or personally, and preferably both. The traditionalizing effects of repeated behavior, familiar tunes, and the relationships built over time create a safe space for participation of ordinary people in a social setting. A good experience for an old-time musician, however, may be different than for a bluegrass musician, because of the different repertoire, playing style, keys, and practices of each style, although they are not completely incompatible, as shown in Chapter 3.

In this chapter, I will first describe the setup and working of jam sessions where old-time and/or bluegrass musics are played, including both the elements that are particular to each kind of music, and those that both kinds of sessions share. Next, I briefly describe the settings and practices of the jam sessions in which I participated for this study, and follow up by focusing in on some defining moments of particular jam sessions that illustrate how social relations within the jam are expressed through the music, and how they work to produce certain kinds of space. Because the events that I describe are open jams, advertised to and open to the public, they are one important site for music to work to create public

Appalachian space, but these social relations are certainly also reproduced in private settings.

As described in the previous chapter, jam sessions may be held in a variety of settings and with a number of leadership styles. Though the overall goals of harmonious ensemble playing and achievement of *flow* in the music are basically the same in bluegrass and old-time jams, this may be achieved in very different ways. The purpose of this dissertation is not to actively compare the two kinds of musics, however, or even the two kinds of jam sessions, so this chapter will not include a full analysis of bluegrass jam sessions. Observation of the bluegrass jams was mainly in an effort to better understand the old-time jams, so this section will mainly analyze the elements of old-time jams.

6.1 How Jam Sessions Work

Establishment of regular, informal gatherings in publicly accessible places has become very important to the increase and popularity of both bluegrass and old-time music in Appalachia and nationally. Jamming at festivals, often taking place at the RV park or campground, is widely accepted as being more important than attending the staged shows, and in creating a “portable community” that may be recreated at each temporary location (Gardner 2004). Jam session etiquette is usually unspoken, but is very important to the continuing perceived desirability of a musician’s participation by other musicians. Before focusing specifically on the workings of old-time jam sessions, I will explain more of the range of practices that help define old-time and bluegrass music. The rules vary somewhat, depending on the leader and culture of each place, but they have also been published in such disparate publications as the *Old-Time Herald*, *Bluegrass Unlimited*, and newsletter of the

Country Dance and Song Society, as well as various websites such as *Banjo Hangout*, and there are a few rules that are generally agreed upon.

The various jam sessions appeared to operate with similar rules; first of all, to encourage participation and sociability among the participants while making music together. Playing the music appropriately so it sounded good, courtesy to others, and encouraging participation among all the players was important, as was a certain amount of humility, especially in approaching an unfamiliar scene. The sessions were, however, very different in terms of their orientation to the audience versus the players, how much each individual was permitted and encouraged to stand out from the group, and in how much learning went on in the sessions.

Simple rules like making sure instruments are in tune and everyone plays with the same timing, as well as not drowning out the lead players and singers are supplemented by admonishments to choose tunes that are neither too esoteric nor too simple for the group. Pickers are warned to play softly or in the outer circle if they can't keep up with the tunes. All of these rules help the session achieve flow. "Hogging" the session by not adhering to the established order of taking turns, choosing and leading too many tunes, or by standing out too much might lead to "jam busting," where musicians vote with their feet and leave a jam prematurely. While musicians are encouraged to play their best, the overwhelming value is that the music overall sounds good, and that individuals subsume their differences for the good of the community – though this latter is achieved differently between bluegrass and old-time musicians.

All the above rules are shared by old-time and bluegrass musicians, which might lead the uninitiated to ask why these musicians don't play together more. As described in

Chapter 3, there are several differences, which include re-tuning the banjo, emphasis on vocals in bluegrass versus the dance-band emphasis of old-time, and differences in ideal tempo and volume. Another important difference between bluegrass and old-time jams is that bluegrass musicians take turns with the lead, which improvises around the tune but rarely just reproduces the tune. Individuals are thus allowed some individuality and virtuosity in service of the overall sound. In old-time all the melody players pretty much play the melody throughout, with small variations, and rarely are individuals encouraged to stand out, unless they are singing lead. One joke encapsulates these differences: it is said that in bluegrass music, the players all know the tunes before they start playing, but old-time musicians know the tune once they're done playing (Draughon).

The differences between the use of space in jam sessions or music parties can be quite striking, depending on the type of music involved. Bluegrass jams might be held with most musicians standing, perhaps because of the emphasis on performing, while old-time musicians tend to sit down. Old-time and bluegrass music parties tend to have very different expectations, in large part because of the differences in their being participatory and presentational musics. Old-time musicians tend to gather without a sound system in a large group, all playing the same tunes, grouping them according to key so the banjo players are not all constantly retuning, but all participating in every tune. Bluegrass musicians would tend to not all play together, but take turns leading songs with minimal backup from musicians that are not in their group, or even with various bands just taking turns playing sets, so they present to each other sequentially.

In order to adhere to the ideals of democratic participation, the practice of going around the circle to give different people the chance to take turns suggesting tunes has

evolved. This is the way Donna Lamb runs Berea's Jammin' on the Porch, where a microphone on a stand is passed around from right to left, which allows whoever is choosing the tune or leading the song to be heard (somewhat) among the high volume of everyone joining in. Each person is allowed one tune or song to lead, or to request another person lead. Each one may also simply pass the microphone on to the next person. In a session where there are many regular participants, there is generally a high level of playing, and people know each other well, this practice might be less strictly adhered to, such as at Appalshop. In this ideal of democratic participation, taking turns is less formally demonstrated, with the understanding that everyone will have an equal opportunity to speak up and suggest or lead as many tunes as is comfortable. Beginners or those who are more quiet have advocates that will invite them to suggest a tune, or who might suggest an easy or well-known tune that the beginner is likely to know. In a session like Berea College's Appalachian Center, which has more beginners and fewer participants that are familiar with old-time tunes, the leaders are more responsible for suggesting or leading tunes. Some jams, such as the Monday night Cumberland Falls bluegrass jam, have designated leaders who call on individuals to lead songs. Other bluegrass music events are termed "jam sessions," such as in Pound, Virginia's Town Hall, but they are mostly an opportunity for each group to play and they perform for a crowd. Various musicians might play together for the cakewalk, but the main stage has pre-formed groups performing for a large audience rather than being a chance for musicians to play together informally. There is a welcoming atmosphere, but the setting in the city council chambers with an audience of hundreds makes it much more presentational. The spaces that actually encourage people to play together are the hallways,

parking lot, and the small room where the cakewalk takes away some of the presentational quality, allowing the cakewalkers to participate more actively.

Each jam session has developed its own personality based on the desires of the organizer/leader, but it also depends greatly on the abilities and preferences of the people that show up for them. The default mode for public jam sessions in eastern Kentucky and environs seems to be bluegrass music, with a heavy dose of gospel thrown in. Many of these bluegrass jam sessions begin by being more like informal performances by a particular group of musicians rather than being purely participatory, as there are often more people in the audience than there are participants. Many of these jams attract regular audience members who become very active listeners, requesting tunes, singing along, and otherwise interacting with the musicians and leaders, so the jams may become more participatory as time goes on. Some audience members may even gather up their courage and start participating after they become more comfortable in that setting.

This also may be true of old-time jams, where people may attend for awhile to get a better sense of the music before joining in. Old-time jam sessions are almost always advertised specifically as such and sometimes pointedly as not being bluegrass, for fear that the “bluegrassers” will take over, with their louder instruments and faster songs. Old-time music is not as well-known in the general population, so a new jam such as the one I started at Berea College might limp along for awhile because more people are unfamiliar with the tunes and the style than are familiar at first. Several times, a new person would show up and listen awhile, and only go out to their car and bring in their instruments after they talked with us a bit and got a sense of what kind of music was being played and what kind of atmosphere was displayed. Despite the awkwardness of having to teach many of the tunes or

having many of the musicians playing below their capacity because of the unfamiliarity of the style, it was important to me to keep at least somewhat to the old-time repertoire to maintain the integrity of the session, rather than just playing whatever anyone wanted to play. This said, however, I did encourage some suggestions of tunes and songs from everyone in order to allow everyone to enjoy themselves and share what they knew along with learning the old-time style and repertoire. Because it was difficult for many inexperienced players to follow the melody on the clawhammer banjo, I found myself often choosing songs so I could sing a clear melody. I also played fiddle more than I usually do, and even though I am a terrible fiddle player, others could more easily follow the simple melodies I played on that instrument.

There are a few mechanisms that might be used to turn the music in the direction of old-time through inclusion. One technique involves inviting a significant number of experienced old-time musicians to show up to show how it's done and to carry the session, which was Richard Mandell's strategy as described in the previous chapter. One of my strategies, widely used elsewhere as well, was to have a slow jam during the first hour of my event to more intentionally teach the tunes to the newcomers, which also allowed me to play fiddle more since I can only play slowly. Having words available for people to read the words to old-time songs made it much more likely that people would join in. At one jam, a student searched the internet for the words to a song that was suggested but not widely known, so he was able to participate in a way that was more comfortable for him.

Other strategies are designed to exclude people who want to play other styles of music, or to more pointedly eliminate competing styles of music. One simple technique is for the musicians to simply say that they do not know a particular tune, or that they can't

play in a particular key. They might pointedly not play on a particular tune, perhaps talking loudly to each other over a tune that is played in an unwelcoming style. Beverly May described the beginnings of the old-time jam at Appalshop, and how for many years bluegrass musicians would show up, eventually getting the message that bluegrass music was not welcome. As introduced in the last chapter, she described “the look” given to the offending players by regular old-time banjoist Hobart Crabtree as a major source of discipline to keep the old-time genre in place.

Jam sessions are not for everyone. They are a fairly modern expression of participatory music. Participants do need a certain level of confidence and knowledge, and it may not be the best place for everyone to learn to play the tunes or to play with others. One musician I interviewed, Homer Skeens, played a nonconformist style of banjo and decided he was tired of having other people tell him he wasn’t playing correctly, so he rarely participates in open sessions. This type of open criticism of other musicians goes against the participatory ethos of jam sessions, but there are also other musicians who see the value in them, but are intimidated by the way they are set up, feeling exposed and yet not able to hear themselves play, at the same time.

Beverly May was emphatic that some of the older musicians did not participate in jam sessions, further underscoring the modern nature of the sessions. “They didn’t jam. Roger [Cooper] will tell you that it just gets under his skin. He never would have played over Buddy Thomas.” She describes the phenomenon of jam sessions as “fairly modern. I don’t think it’s a bad thing. I think it’s a good thing. But it does help to remember that there are different ways to promote it. It was intended for one fiddler on one porch, with one dog to listen. Maybe several dogs.”

6.1.1 How Old-Time Jams Work

As described in Chapter 3, old-time jam sessions rarely have more listeners than players, and they gather in a tight circle facing each other. In an ideal old-time jam session, there is not a designated leader nor is there a strict rule of going around the circle. In this case, the leaders and certain participants might call on different individuals in the circle if they notice that they have not been playing much or haven't had a say, but there is an understanding that anyone can suggest a tune. Here, there is a process of deciding what tune to play, which might begin by someone suggesting a key and then asking for a good tune in that key, or by someone simply asking if anyone has a suggestion. The tune's name might be put forward as either a statement or question, followed by the tune, or the tune might also simply be started, with other people coming in as they recognize it. The person that suggested the tune might also be the one to start it, although in some cases, the fiddler is viewed as the default leader of a session and the proper person to choose tunes (Roberts-Gevault 2008). Often, there is a tacit understanding that anyone can start a tune, but if the suggested tune is not well-known among the group, others might have a hard time joining in unless they can hear a clear melody. A rhythm guitar player, bass player, or even a banjo player might have a hard time getting the melody across to the group. Sometimes a general inertia or tendency to want to talk might delay playing a tune, so an avid or more controlling player may simply begin a tune during the discussion. The group's members may or may not join in, depending on whether they know the tune or like it.

The person who started the tune is typically the one to end it, which may further increase the control a fiddle player has over the session. If it goes on too long for the group as a whole and that person shows no interest in ending it, someone else may do so without

obvious penalty, though they would likely look around to see if there was some consensus so they would not be seen as too forward or controlling. The desire to end is now popularly indicated by lifting up a foot, though there may be musical signals as well, such as a lift at the end of a phrase or the guitar player strongly emphasizing the beat while allowing more space between beats. If it's a small enough group and people are looking around, a nod of the head and significant look might suffice. It is no longer fashionable to add a tag such as "shave and a haircut, two bits," so most want to just finish on the final B phrase. Whether the ending is successful or not depends on the rest of the group tacitly acknowledging the signal, but also being ready to quit.

After some time, smaller groups may break off into separate corners or rooms if the space is available and if some players want to play specific tunes or songs not embraced by the rest of the crowd. A group that wants to sing is most often the one that will break off from those who just want to play tunes, but there may be some awkwardness in some players leaving a larger group. Those people might be viewed as snobbish from the larger group, or people might stay in the larger group for fear they will be considered snobbish.

Many of these jam sessions are begun and hosted by musicians looking for more old-time players, and these are not oriented as much to listeners. For several years in the late 1990s, Darrel Hignite hosted such a monthly session at the former Sue Bennett College campus. Darrel also worked with Phillip Akemon to try to get more of an old-time presence at the Stringbean Memorial Festival in Annville, Kentucky, which Akemon began to honor his late uncle, country music star David Akemon, known as Stringbean. Although I hosted a monthly jam session from 2007-2009 at the Appalachian Center at Berea College as another way to build the audience for the Celebration of Traditional Music and get more college

students involved in old-time music, I also wanted to find other old-time musicians since Berea's Jammin' on the Porch was too eclectic for my taste on a regular basis. Richard Mandell, with a great deal of support by his local agricultural extension office, created the Old-Time Music Revival in 2008-2009 because he was tired of having to drive long distances to other jam sessions and wished to develop an old-time music community closer to home (personal communication).

6.1.2 How Bluegrass Jams Work

Bluegrass musicians tend to gather in more of a performance space, where many more people are listening than playing. A sound system is set up, and groups tend to perform for each other, rather than all playing together. An informal group may be gotten up to play together, especially if unattached individual musicians known to the others are present, but more often, the groups that play are actively and formally rehearsing and performing together outside of the party. Therefore, many bluegrass "jam sessions," such as the one advertised in the Pound Town Hall, are not truly set up for all the musicians to play together and are not correctly named. Set arrangements are typically performed, and the leaders are established before the event. The audience may sing along, and an occasional audience member may be called up to perform a few songs with a group. The bands that are not performing may also listen in the audience, but are more likely to gather outside of the performance space and practice their own songs in preparation for their performance. Some members of the audience may then drift towards these more informal sessions, and here is where there may be some interaction between groups. Because songs are often performed that have been arranged, it is unusual for there to be much variation in the arrangement, aside from individuals perhaps being invited to play an instrumental break. Certain songs are

sometimes designated as “belonging” to a certain person, so if he or she is not present, the song might not be sung.

In the case of a true bluegrass jam, people take turns leading a tune or song and the leader of the moment will then be responsible for designating different people to take a solo break at various times by nodding at or looking at another player, perhaps calling that player’s name. If the current leader is less experienced, the overall jam leader may be the one to designate the breaks. Either way, the leader – whether the temporary or the overall leader – often relies on asking players she knows that are experienced enough to be able to play a decent break. Being asked to take a break is a courtesy sometimes extended to visiting players. It is considered acceptable to decline to take the break by a shake of the head, or by passing it on to someone else by catching his eye or nodding in her direction. Bluegrass jams tend to not stay in any one key for any length of time. The expectation is that players will accommodate the leader, and because singing is so important, the lead singer may choose the key.

6.2 Jam Sessions under Consideration

The jam sessions in this study are a small sample of those held in public spaces in eastern Kentucky and nearby southwest Virginia. The jam session as a form of entertainment and transmission of vernacular roots music has grown greatly in the last decade or so. Open jams are advertised publicly as being open to anyone, through paper flyers, websites,²⁷ and word of mouth. Regular musicians and listeners ask each other whether they will attend each week, and tell each other they are missed when they don’t attend. The jam sessions described in this section are held at Appalshop, in Whitesburg,

²⁷ <http://appalshop.org/projects/traditionalmusic/>, <http://www.berea.com/events/>, <http://www.bluegrassmusicjams.com/jam-virginia.html>

Kentucky; Berea College's Appalachian Center; the tourism office in Berea, Kentucky's Old Town area (Jammin' on the Porch); Town Hall in Pound, Virginia; the lodge of the Cumberland Falls State Resort Park outside of Corbin, Kentucky; and the Old Time Music Revival in the Whitley County agricultural extension office in Goldbug, Kentucky. While I am mainly focusing on old-time musical events (Appalshop, the Old Time Music Revival, and Berea College Appalachian Center), I also describe some bluegrass sessions (Pound Town Hall and Cumberland Falls Park), and one which includes some elements of both old-time and bluegrass (Berea's Jammin' on the Porch), in order to continue to monitor the "conversation" between old-time and bluegrass in terms of authenticity and authority.

Some of the jam sessions are offered as entertainment sessions for the public as much as they are chances for musicians to get together (Pound Town Hall, Cumberland Falls Park, and Berea's Jammin' on the Porch). The Old Time Music Revival, while strictly old-time, was conceived by its organizer as a way of reinvigorating old-time music in the Whitley County area, but did so by offering a combination of presentational and participatory events. Appalshop and Berea College's Appalachian Center jams were meant to be participatory. Many jams advertise themselves as "mountain music," then detail the genres included (old-time, bluegrass, gospel, and traditional country).

6.2.1 Appalshop Jam Sessions

Appalshop has a long-standing jam session that meets the first Saturday afternoon of each month from September through May, beginning at 1 pm and ending between 4 & 5 pm. Jamming is also part of the Seedtime on the Cumberland festival held every June. The jam is held on the stage in the theater of the Appalshop building in Whitesburg, Kentucky. It was started by Gene Boyer, Beverly May and Cathy Gore (Williams) in 1994 just because

they wanted to get together and have a place to play, and they thought Appalshop would be the best place to hold it. It was publicized on Appalshop's radio station and on posters, and ended up becoming an important piece in the cooperative's multifaceted approach to reinvigorate traditional music in eastern Kentucky (Kirby personal communication). I attended sporadically since then, especially when there was another event in the area, such as a meeting to plan the Cowan Creek Mountain Music School, or another performance later that evening.

When there was a full-time traditional music coordinator in 2007 and 2008, she set up a table in the lobby with coffee, homemade cookies, and other snacks. A refreshment table continues somewhat sporadically since that position has become less than full-time. Musicians arrive mostly around the starting time, but also trickle in during the afternoon. They set down their cases on the arms of the chairs or on the floor alongside the aisle of the theater, and form a circle using folding chairs on the stage. They ideally space themselves evenly around the circle. There is no apparent organization of instruments in sections or of people in particular places, although sometimes people will situate themselves so they can see the hands of someone, especially a good guitar player who can show the proper chords. I tend to place myself next to instruments different than mine so I can hear myself better and hear a mixture of sounds. Sometimes people already on the stage will call out and interact with the newcomers and invite them to sit down in particular empty chairs.

Many of the musicians that attend this jam are part of the old-time music community being investigated in this dissertation, and are semi-professional, working full-time jobs but also making time to play music for pay. Several of the musicians are also employed by institutions – such as Morehead State University's Center for Traditional Music and

Appalshop – that support and encourage these musicians and their networks by offering classes, festivals, concerts, workshops, and dances which promote and educate about traditional music and related topics. The regulars include musicians from eastern Kentucky and southwest Virginia, with semi-regulars from Louisville, Frankfort, and the border of Kentucky and Ohio. Occasional visitors show up that have connections to Appalshop through the radio program, films, or festivals. Those who are not able to come too often, especially senior members and those with health problems, are welcomed especially enthusiastically.

There are no designated leaders for this jam session, though there are many regulars who feel comfortable calling out or starting tunes. In this jam, anyone in the circle is allowed and encouraged to suggest or start tunes regardless of their ability. There is a balancing act between making sure everyone in the circle, even the beginners, get included in some of the tunes, and playing higher-level, interesting tunes to keep the more advanced players coming back. This combination helps create the sense of *flow* which seems to be understood by most of the regulars. When there are children or beginners present, certain people tend to take the role of inviting them to call the tunes, or suggest tunes that they might know. Some of these people are their teachers, but some are just caretakers or nurturers. There are others that tend to just play what they want to without consulting with others. Sometimes, partnerships form across the circle or between neighbors where two players play off and support each other, singing or playing harmony, and backing up tunes that are less well known by the group.

A second group may form in the lobby or sometimes in the conference room off the lobby, especially when Ken Childress comes. He is a high tenor singer and guitar player

who often arrives with another musician, either guitarist and singer Jimmy Mullins or another person from Virginia. In fine weather, this group will sometimes meet outside, although a group may also form outside around someone who has brought their dog with them or someone who wants to smoke while playing (although this is rare).

Appalshop's monthly jam sessions were conceived as a way for old-time musicians to play the music they love, but they have become an integral part of their traditional music initiative. These jams are not advertised widely as a place for listeners, although other aspects of Appalshop's mission includes listeners, including their community radio station, Seedtime on the Cumberlands festival, regular concerts, and June Appal record label. The few spectators include a spouse or parent of a musician who may sit in the theater seats watching the jam on the stage, or an occasional local enthusiast. More than once, however, we were interrupted by documentarians that wanted to film or otherwise record the session, a by-product of being well-known in media circles, and an indication of Appalshop's importance in representations of Appalachian culture.

Other events tend to piggyback on that jam session, particularly the organizational meetings for the Cowan Creek Mountain Music School, which are held from January – June, and an occasional jam session especially for children held from noon to one o'clock. Although that jam session is open to any child, those who participate in Appalshop-related traditional music events are those most likely to attend. Community dances are often scheduled at the Cowan Creek Community Center for the same evening to try and increase their attendance by taking advantage of musicians and dancers traveling to the Appalshop jam. Some of the musicians gather for supper in a local restaurant after the jam, and may

move on to the community dance in nearby Cowan Creek if it is scheduled for the evening after the jam.

6.2.2 Jam Sessions at Berea College's Appalachian Center

I started holding jam sessions at Berea College the second Tuesday evenings of the month in 2007, with the intention of building up both musicians and an audience for old-time music in support of the Celebration of Traditional Music. I also wanted to play more often with old-time musicians in particular, rather than with the eclectic and bluegrass-oriented crowd at the Berea Jammin' on the Porch. At the time, I was performing quite often with a musical group on the weekends, and wanted to choose a night that would conflict less with that, so I chose to meet on the second Tuesday of each month. This was not necessarily the ideal time for optimum attendance, however, as a weekend day or evening time would most likely attract more participation.

One event that influenced my decision of that day was that on Tuesdays, a Farmer's Market was also held outside on a grassy spot between the public parking lot and the College's visitor's center. The organizers of the Farmer's Market also felt the music would attract people to their concern, and it seemed like a public venue that also would be beneficial in attracting people to my event. The timing was not quite transferable, as most of the Farmer's Market traffic was in the afternoons, and I did not want to start the jam until after supper time. My concerns revolved around providing enough chairs as well as possible tents in case of inclement weather, as well as offering an attractive place for musicians to meet, and to have a somewhat regular place and time so people could drop in and plan ahead. Once the weather changed, we met in a "connector" glassed-in space between two Berea College buildings that is often used for social events. It does not have great acoustics,

but it is a visible place where we might attract people who normally would not think about coming to such an event. I had to think carefully about who I wished to attract, as community people are often put off by attending events on campus even when they are welcome. I received an offer from the Berea Arts Council to meet in their space, but I decided I wanted to be more visible to the students so declined that. My choice of space had clear implications for the type of crowd I wished to attract.

Meeting outside sometimes led to more visibility, which in turn led to more musicians taking part, but having a changeable location and time depending on the time of year made for some confusion about when and where the jam would be held. This turned out to be more of a teaching jam than any of the others I attended, because I wanted to have a different atmosphere than the one on Thursday nights where anything goes. I wanted the group to play old-time music, but it turned out to be fairly difficult without having a regular fiddler to ensure a solid lead instrument. For some reason, there are more banjo players than any other type of instrumentalist in Eastern Kentucky and many nights we had way more old-time banjoists in this jam. The next most common instrument was the mandolin, though many of these players were beginners. Guitarists showed up semi-regularly, but finding fiddlers to come to this jam turned out to be very challenging in the Berea area. A beginning violinist came fairly often but was not familiar with the tunes we played, so he could not lead them. Every now and then, an accordionist or bodhran player would show up. Because of a lack of fiddlers, we perhaps turned more to singing songs so we could have a strong melody lead. After realizing that so many people were either beginners at this style of music or on their instrument, I instituted a slow jam for the first half-hour.

Students often stopped by the jam session and in some cases they came to study in the Appalachian Center during the jam. They enjoyed the music, but were mostly spectators. One of the ways students got involved was to look up words on the internet for songs we were trying to sing. The flow rarely took off in this jam session, as it was often a teaching situation and there were often more people there from outside the old-time tradition than those who knew the tunes and could follow along or lead comfortably. Occasionally people would show up to watch at first to see what was going on, before being encouraged to bring in their instruments and join in. Occasional travelers just passing through town would hear of the session and come; these would vary from old-time players from out of state to folk musicians from nearby Lexington, Kentucky.

6.2.3 Jammin' on the Porch: Old Town, Berea

The Berea Tourism Office began their open jam in 2006, due in large part to the intersection of the tourism director's desire to play music and to offer a regular musical event to draw in visitors, with a longer-term goal of making Berea a destination for performance folk arts as well as crafts. The series has grown into a major entertainment event for listeners as well as players, especially in the summer when it is held outside, fulfilling its name, "Jammin' on the Porch." Donna and Lewis Lamb are the hosts for this, and their reputation as excellent musicians and generous hosts draws in musicians as much as the fun of playing with others. No particular style of music is spelled out as associated with this jam, though there is a banjo featured on the posters. Donna and Lewis consider themselves to be traditional musicians, but are able to bring together bluegrass, country, gospel, and popular music in addition to their old-time core. It is held outdoors in good weather and indoors during cold and rain, and has always been open to the public, with a

large audience. Usually there are more listeners than musicians. Like the Pound “jam,” this one seems to be as much for the audience’s entertainment as it is fun for the musicians. The musicians arrange themselves in a long oval, either against the back wall of the restored former train depot that serves as the Berea Tourism Office, or along the porch of the reconstructed log house that stands on a grassy area in front of the depot. Therefore, even though there is definitely an awareness of the audience and an interaction to some extent, the musicians essentially form a circle and some have their backs to the listeners, so they are stating with their body language that it is a participatory event rather than a performance. The audience is either crammed into rows of chairs in the rest of the front area of the depot or spread out under large tents outside in front of the log house, depending on the weather or time of year.

The leaders and core musicians are Donna Lamb, a singer and rhythm guitar player, and her father, Lewis Lamb, a fiddler. Lewis may play a lead instrument, but Donna is definitely in charge. She is the ultimate accompanist, adapting her playing to highlight and support the lead, but she can also jump in and take the lead in singing. They have been staples in the music scene around Berea since Donna was a teenager in the early 1970s. Donna and Lewis begin the session with a welcome and a tune, then one microphone on a stand is passed around the circle clockwise. Each musician then gets a turn to choose and lead a tune or song, or to pass their tune on to the next. There are many guitarists and banjo players, both bluegrass and old-time styles being represented. Among the genres of songs and tunes played are hymns, gospel songs, bluegrass, old-time, country, popular, and Broadway. More or less anything goes. Though electrical instruments are not encouraged, they are tolerated. As time has gone on, Donna has cracked down more to only allow one or

two electric basses, and to have more say over the volume of the amplifiers. Some people just sing, and the others attempt to accompany as well as they can. Some just play instrumentals.

There is no attempt to play in the same key for more than one song. Each person has complete freedom to call the key that they prefer, so for the old-time banjo, there is a lot of retuning and capo action. The ability of each person is honored and no criticism is offered by anyone, even if someone plays or sings the same tune or song each week, if they have difficulty with the timing, or if they do not sing in tune. Each song or tune receives applause as the microphone is moved to the next person. There is usually time to go around the circle 2 or 3 times, and the ideal is to give everyone an equal chance and equal number of songs, but once 9:00 pm is reached, Donna will stop the jam, thank everyone for coming, invite them to come next week, and sing the good-night song.

The ideal sometimes breaks down outside the magic circle, however. One night, a (male) musician left his guitar propped up against the wall behind an empty chair and when another (male) musician went to sit in the empty chair, the guitar fell. Later on, the two men almost got into a fistfight, each blaming the other for the guitar mishap. Certainly, there are interpersonal relationships between the participants, so ideals of peace and harmony may not always be maintained, but the Lambs strive to create a family-oriented atmosphere, as Donna says, being “drug-free, alcohol-free, no rough talk or anything of that nature,” and they do succeed at that.

6.2.4 “Pickin’ in the Pound:” Pound, Virginia Town Hall

The jam session at Pound, Virginia was held on Fridays (now on Thursdays) at the Town Hall, a large masonry structure with a proportionally large parking lot on the edge of

the town. The bluegrass jam session in Pound includes potluck food and cakewalks to involve the audience, but the vast majority of people are there to listen to a series of professional and semi-professional groups perform in succession, rather than to participate musically. Some musicians do play informally in the side hallways and rooms, but more often they are simply rehearsing for their later turn “on stage,” which is the open space in front of the town council’s raised dais.

I drove to Pound as part of an international, multi-racial and multi-age group from a Creativity Seminar sponsored by the Fourth World Movement in Clintwood, Virginia. Fiddler Jason French, an English long-term volunteer with the organization, has worked in the area for several years and learned to play bluegrass style fiddle while here, and became more interested in old-time music as well. I first met him at the Appalshop old-time jams. He has been a regular at the Pound jam session and was the focus of our group that performed there.

A huge audience made up of perhaps 200 people was gathered in the pews in the town council chambers, the first room on the left when you enter the public building. Offices and a large multi-purpose room may be found down the hall to the right, in which the cakewalk was held. Six or seven chairs for musicians were positioned on the floor in front of the raised platform semicircle where the name plates defined the seats of the town council and mayor. The audience benches were padded, in two rows, with the entrance door and aisle interrupting the near row of pews closer to the front than the rear. Two rows of pews sat in front of this aisle, which also had a prominent table with a notebook and pen to sign in – and a little flag on the table, too. Drinks were in a barrel on that side. On the far

side were two long tables laden with all kinds of finger foods, coffee, hot dogs, salads, cookies and cakes.

The Seminar participants were ready to participate in any way they could, and being activists working for social change, they were comfortable meeting and talking with the locals even though they kind of clumped together fairly far up front on the left hand side facing the dais. They were more gregarious and eager to interact than many groups that come as strangers to a local event, but they also happened to sit near the musicians' family members and regulars, whose regular place seemed to be up near the front on that side. Clacking of bones and a dancing doll I had given to some of the Seminar participants could be heard along with eager conversation and social interaction among the audience. The mayor told Jason we have around 30 minutes for our group; "then we'll have somebody else."

The mayor opened the festivities with a prayer and a welcome to the visitors; that is to say, the Seminar participants. The regulars were enlisted to help make the newcomers feel welcome. "Our group" was a motley crew of people who had never all played together. Fiddler Jason led the tunes, and we had a pretty good selection of instruments to play old-time/bluegrass music, with fiddle, banjo, mandolin, Dobro, guitar, and a bass player joining us partway through. I was the only woman in the group, the rest being middle-aged white men, though Jason was on the young side, being in his thirties. One English visitor had a bodhran that he played at times – not the usual instrument for such a performance. We gathered together toward the front, tuning our instruments and identifying a few tunes we can play together.

Jason was the glue holding us together, having played with all of us separately at one time or another, and he was a regular at the Pound jam session, so besides being the fiddler, he often called the tunes as he knew both what we could play and what might please the crowd. He introduced us as “a mixed band we’ve got here – old-time, Irish...” Starting with Nine Pound Hammer, a bluegrass standard, he asked me for an old-time tune, then “whatever you want.” A slow, country-type song was requested; a local favorite obviously, as many people in the audience sang along on the chorus, including singing harmony.

In the middle of this song, a petite blond teenage girl-woman came in lugging a standup bass and just set up and began to play with a great, matter-of-fact vigorous style. After the song ended, she took out her cell phone and focused all her energy texting until the next song began. Once we got a good fast fiddle tune going, the aisles were filled with mostly women, but some men as well, flat-footing, and the whole audience clapped, cheered, and hollered. They may have been there to listen, but the whole audience seemed fully involved, talking back to the musicians, requesting songs, singing along, dancing, talking to each other, getting up to fill their plates or coffee cups, going in and out of the chambers to go outside and smoke.

After our designated thirty minutes was up, the Messengers were brought in. They proved to be a very well-rehearsed professional bluegrass group that was obviously also well-known to the crowd, but not completely local. All were middle-aged white men. They were joined by the father of one of the men who seemed to be the local connection, who was an excellent musician in his own right but did not appear to play regularly with the group. They had a good repartee with the audience, but it was more obviously a polished performance than our jamming had been.

Throughout the first floor of Town Hall, small groups gathered in the hallways and outside (especially the smokers). Bands waiting for their time to perform gathered in various rooms to practice or just to jam, rather than listening to those performing or joining in with them. Aside from me, the only female player was the texting young bass player, but she seemed perfectly comfortable moving from group to group. Most of the musicians seemed well-known to each other and there was some cross-group sharing, as well as a few audience members who would pick at a guitar in the non-performance venues. Many girlfriends of musicians stood by, sometimes holding the instruments but laughing self-deprecatingly when asked if they played.

Cakewalks are a common fund-raising device in Appalachia and the south, which also brings in non-specialized participants/audience members at the jam. The cakewalk was held in the large community room, down the hall – a large open room with a quilting frame, piano, desk, and an open square of tables. One area of the large room had a row of cabinets, and had a corner that was more of a sitting room, with padded chairs and tables with lamps. The cakewalk took place around the quilting frame with small numbers on the floor printed on tape. The tape looked like a permanent fixture – most cakewalks are held in temporary circles defined by numbers drawn with felt markers on cheap white paper plates. This seemed to indicate that it is a fixture of this weekly gathering. Musicians typically gathered on one edge of the circle. Participants were invited to join in by paying a dollar to step from plate to plate in time to the music, and when the music stopped, they stopped on one plate. A number was pulled from a bowl and read out. Whoever stood on the plate with that number won their choice of donated cakes set up on one of the desks. The process repeats a few times, depending on the number of cakes available and audience interest.

I heard no announcement of why the money from the cakewalks was being raised. The cakewalks were spread out somewhat through the evening, serving, like door prizes, to maintain audience interest in and attendance at the entire evening. The less professional bands and musicians were typically the ones playing for the cakewalks, and a couple of times I jumped in and played solo banjo when the organizers wanted to hold the cakewalk and the walkers were willing, but musician interest was elsewhere. My jumping in brought some interest from the other musicians but as I located myself in the center of the circle, it was harder for me to get with the other musicians. The “main” entertainment in the town council chambers continued on and was not curtailed for the cakewalks.

6.2.5 Jam Session at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park

Cumberland Falls State Resort Park has hosted a weekly jam session on Monday evenings for many years both as an attraction for lodge guests and an activity for the local community, who seem to view the park very favorably as a recreation center and meeting place as well as local employer. One of the park rangers described the lodge to me as the “living room” of the local community. The jam includes bluegrass, gospel, and folk music, including stringed instruments as well as singing. Most of the instruments are acoustic, but one of the two leaders played guitar plugged into an amp and the other had an electric bass. The third had a resophonic guitar, and all three of these white men sat in a corner of the main lounge while a fourth stood near the fireplace and played acoustic guitar like a frailed banjo. The park naturalist had set up three microphones and a set of speakers. On Monday nights, people start gathering at the lodge at the park more than an hour before the jam begins.

The family members of the leaders sat together at a picnic table in the center of the room, and others were arranged in easy chairs and couches throughout the large main lounge/living room. Attendees included regular local people (the early birds, including one man who seemed to designate himself as the official greeter and his lady friend who was supportive but not demonstrative) and park guests, who looked on with bemused interest, either waiting to be clued in or engaging the regulars in conversation. Occasionally, a guest would request a song or pose a question to the group, but the majority of the interaction and control was among the locals.

The music mainly consisted of heavy-duty atonement-laden gospel music, vocals with some harmonies supported by guitars and the electric bass. An older couple sat nearby, the woman an excellent singer, the man playing a pink fiddle. They played along or sang on some of the songs, and were obviously both well-known to the crowd and well-versed in the music presented that night. There were many gender-related jokes regarding the color of the fiddle, but it was not new to many of the regulars. One big organizer/supporter of the jam was one of the off-duty park lodge desk clerks, who sat busily crafting inspirational bookmarks to send to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, singing along with the gospel music on the side, but not as a leader.

I set up with my banjo and guitar near the leaders, playing and singing along as best I could. I was the only woman playing an instrument in the main room of the lodge, and only one of two that participated at all, while there were seven or eight male participants, all of whom played instruments and most of whom also sang. There was another male instrumentalist who started to set up next to me (on the other side from the leaders) and I wondered if I had taken his usual spot. I felt somewhat awkward in that I was mostly

oriented to the leaders but kept turning around to him so it wouldn't seem that I was ignoring him. Every few songs the leaders asked if I would lead one. They didn't know most of the songs I suggested (nor did I know theirs) but they seemed enthusiastic and supportive of my contributions. Every so often, another person would be called up/invited up to lead a song. These were regulars and they seemed to often sing songs that were well-known to the audience. These songs were also mostly gospel songs, though some old country favorites – such as Hank Williams's Jambalaya - were also brought in.

A secondary group whose core seemed to be made up of dulcimer players set up in a much smaller, enclosed sun-porch area, across the lobby and front desk area, without a sound system. This group seemed to be more leader-less, and the numbers swelled as the night went on until there were more people crammed into that small corner than the larger living area. The songs and tunes seemed to be more mixed secular and sacred, including some folk-style songs and dulcimer-friendly tunes. There seemed to be more mixture of ages and greater equality of sexes in that group, but again, everyone there was white.

Apparently, there is a band that makes a habit of showing up later in the evening, as many of their members have to work late. When they began arriving, they also seemed to be part of the regular gathering around the sun-porch, and they seemed to invigorate the group. The leadership of the session seemed to skew their way and more in favor of well-known bluegrass and gospel songs – rather than the earlier folk music – as the night wore on.

6.3 Time and Place of Jam Sessions

The location and timing of jam sessions is always an important consideration, in order to allow as many people as possible to join in. Regularity of the date – such as holding it on the same day or night of the week, or the same weekend of the month – is a typical

strategy for traditionalizing the behavior, making it easier for people to remember the date, plan ahead and put it on their calendars. Musical events, including jam sessions, might be planned to coincide with another event, such as farmer's markets (Old-Time Music Revival, Berea College jam session). Producers of farmer's markets think of music as a draw, not only thinking of the entertainment value, but making a connection between home-made music and home-made farm produce. Classical, rock, or jazz is not the music they look for; instead, they want bluegrass, country, or old-time music, genres that bring to mind rural authenticity. They don't necessarily work together, however, as the farmer's market in Whitley County begins at dawn, not a time when musicians are at their peak unless they've been up all night! The timing of the Berea farmer's market also didn't typically work, as it was scheduled for 4-7 pm, and I wanted to have the jam session after the work day and supper time, so often wanted to begin at 7 pm. Playing music outside is also a romantic idea, as the vagaries of weather often make it less than desirable to play outside, and attempting to play outside caused some confusion in changing meeting times to accommodate the changes in day length in the Berea College jam session.

The length of time a jam session has been running is also important to its being participatory, as the behaviors expected at the jams became traditionalized. As people knew more of what to expect, they tended to become more involved in one way or another. If they played instruments or sang, they might play their favorite songs more often, and others could prompt them in their choices if they didn't know what to play. When someone new showed up at the Berea College jam, they would sometimes leave their instruments in the car until they checked out the kind of music that was being played and the atmosphere in the jam, to see how welcome they would be, if the music was familiar, and if they could

contribute. I learned to ask new audience members if they had an instrument and would like to participate. In other events, such as in Pound, Cumberland Falls, or the Old-Time Music Revival, if they did not play music, they did other things to facilitate, such as welcome other visitors, bring food, or participate more eagerly in the dancing.

Finding the right location is very important, as it must be large enough to accommodate the musicians but not too cavernous. The right kinds of chairs must be available (without arms, for example), and the acoustics must be decent. Being outside is a lovely idea, but only in ideal conditions. Even in warm weather, a tent is helpful, as rain can come at any time in Kentucky, and even in dry weather the dew falling at night is harmful to instruments. The Berea College jam I started is perhaps the most instructive in demonstrating how the location made a statement about who was the preferred audience. Having a location that was comfortable and convenient for students to stop by was not always a welcoming location for the community at large, and vice versa.

6.4 Leadership and Audience Presence

Leadership was a very important determining factor in the character of the jam sessions, and in the number and gender of the participants. A strong leader might either keep the jam session narrowly focused on a certain type of music, even more narrowly focused on only songs led by the leader, or keep the group strongly egalitarian and therefore, very inclusive of different styles, such as in Jammin' on the Porch. A certain level of knowledge of the music among at least a significant minority of the group was also important to keeping things going. The presence or absence of an audience might also influence the type of music played at a jam session, leading to more participation especially among more shy members if there are few observers.

The jam sessions that were the most characteristic of my understanding of an ideal old-time session were those held at Appalshop, which had a number of participants that were not only regulars and knew each other well, but were also proficient on their instruments and had a good repertoire of tunes. They therefore seemed to need less official membership, as each person could take some responsibility for keeping the jam going and choosing tunes. Joining the circle meant taking one's place side by side the others, but also could include placing one's back to any audience that might materialize, even though there were usually few people just listening. Leadership in the circle was assumed by many of the people there, and there seemed to be the opportunity for anyone to suggest or lead tunes without having to be scrupulous about going around the circle, so the session could evolve in a seemingly more organic fashion. Even in situations where it seemed that strong individuals might take over the session, the group responded to more democratically spread the tune-choosing and keep the session accessible to all. This will be detailed in another section of this chapter.

The Berea College jam sessions I led did have a small audience, but they were mostly the spouses of the musicians, or students and staff of the college that would drop in and out of the sessions, thus seeming less like an audience that expects to be entertained. Because of the unevenness of familiarity with old-time music among the musicians who showed up, my leadership style varied from time to time, though my ultimate goal was to have everyone who wanted to choose tunes do so in a relatively equal amount. I usually would use the approach of asking for tunes around the circle, but then allowing for some concentration of tune choice and leading among a pocket of people who had suggestions to

allow for more flow of the music. After a spate of those tunes, or when changing keys, I would then ask those who had been quiet to suggest tunes.

The jam sessions I attended that featured bluegrass music (Pickin' in the Pound and Cumberland Falls) were much more presentational, with a much higher percentage of male players and a much larger audience. The leaders took care to include the people that put themselves forward, but that required singers or instrumentalists to place themselves at the "head" of the hall, near the sound system and the leaders, facing a large audience. Most of the players seemed reluctant to join in on songs they did not already know. Except for me and one young bass player, the only females that participated in these were singers that took an occasional lead, and they often needed much persuading and encouragement, though they seemed eager to share. These sessions featured many more men than women as performers. These jam sessions might feature gospel music, in which case there would be no dancing. Sometimes there was a combination of sacred and secular, and experienced audience members would learn to expect that and act accordingly.

When appropriate, females and some males participated as dancers, a liminal activity that seemed to be part audience, part performer. The dancers rarely got up in front of the audience; more often they danced in the aisles of the audience-space rather than in the performer-space. I was most often the only female instrumentalist, and was a novelty by being an outsider to those jam sessions and because I played in an old-time style. Because of my bluegrass banjo beginnings and the fact that I have continued to play some with other bluegrass players, I knew enough of the standard repertoire, chord changes, and conventions to be able to fit in, but because I didn't excel in the style or even play that style of banjo, I

did not really threaten the status quo. There was usually about an equal number of males and females as audience members.

Berea's Jammin' on the Porch, led by Donna Lamb with the assistance of her father, Lewis, was an interesting hybrid, where there was so much democracy that everyone got a turn by going around the circle as many times as the evening would allow. The level of music was quite uneven, as was the style of music being played at any given time. Although the instrumentation was almost completely acoustic (a few electric guitars and basses would be tolerated if they were not too loud), the music might range from old-time to country or bluegrass, folk, singer-songwriter, gospel, or Broadway tunes. Old-time banjo players, in particular, had difficulty feeling the flow and feeling satisfied, as the change of key to accommodate the current leader resulted in constant re-tuning or sitting out. Old-time instrumentalists playing guitar, mandolin, or fiddle seemed to be able to fit into the session more easily.

When I asked Donna what her idea of an ideal jam session was, she replied, "Everybody gets a turn. I have been to one or two over the years where one or two people have to be dominant. Where they have a mic set up. They say you're going to do this, instead of letting the people do what they want to do." She felt it was very important for people to feel empowered in a jam session, and the way she did this was to invite them in: "Hi, how are you, glad to see you tonight. Give them the hospitality. We're welcoming you into our community. And you ask, hey, do you play a musical instrument? Well, we've got plenty here. In other words, you share."

She and her father had such a high level of musicianship that they were able to support almost any song or tune that someone brought to the group, regardless of their

ability sometimes to even stay in tune or in time, so this helped things move smoothly along, even if the level of playing and choice of tunes or songs was uneven. Sometimes the next person would choose a tune or song that would flow from the previous person's key or style, but more often they would have something in mind to share that would have no relation to the previous or next song. With only one song to sing per round, some musicians may end up doing the same tunes every week because they are such favorites of the group. In this jam and some bluegrass and general jams I have attended, some people will end up with certain songs they often do, that will end up "belonging" to them, and other regulars will hesitate to perform the songs generally accepted as belonging to others. This is less likely to occur in an old-time jam, even though some songs might be considered to be favorites of certain people, perhaps because everyone plays on every tune if they can.

6.4 Mechanisms at Work in Old-Time Jam Sessions

Successful jam sessions in the old-time music community balance two seemingly contradictory value systems. On the one hand are the egalitarian, participatory aspects of the music, in which melody and rhythm interact and many players work together to create a piece of music, taking turns at choosing, leading, and ending tunes. Appalachian communities encourage musicians to be modest about their accomplishments (Jones 1999:33-35). When asked if they play the instrument they are carrying, the accepted answer is something along the lines of, "Oh, I pick a little." On the other hand is the community's valorization of virtuosic melody playing and setting up the great players as heroes and fictive kin, sometimes romanticizing the idiosyncratic personalities of the players, as if that helped explain why they stood apart from ordinary people.

The most successful jam sessions need a certain number of players of various instruments whose tune knowledge is wide and who may carry a tune through when others around them might falter, but also players who understand the abilities and repertoire of other people in the jam and who are willing to play standard or simple tunes in addition to bringing tunes that might be a little different, but still accessible to the group. The jam session I started at Berea College often suffered from having too few people who knew the old-time repertoire who could carry through the evening, and from not attracting a fiddle player or other clear melody instrumentalist on a regular basis. We had so many banjo players that it was difficult for beginners or newcomers to the genre to catch hold of the tunes. As described in the previous chapter, old-time banjo includes rhythmic chording as well as an approximation of the tune, sometimes missing key notes. We had plenty of the participatory ethos, but found it difficult to maintain a satisfactory flow of the session without enough players to keep the tunes going. Clearly, either more advanced players or more teaching sessions were required to create a satisfactory old-time jam session.

6.4.1 The Music

The Appalshop jam sessions most closely approximated what I would consider to be an ideal old-time jam session, with a good variety of the standard instruments of fiddle, banjo, and guitar, with occasional bass, accordion, or dance accompanists. Many of the musicians enjoyed playing more than one instrument, so they could fill in if we were missing an instrument. Also importantly, accomplished players could satisfy themselves while playing simple tunes by attempting them on an instrument that was new to them, thus bringing back a challenge to keep them engaged. Most of the time, there were enough accomplished players there to carry the tunes, but there was a real emphasis on bringing

along less accomplished players, including occasional children. There are a number of good singers in that community, though often the tunes trump the songs. Sociability and building community is very important, with the virtuosity of the players and the need to play certain tunes taking a far back seat to creating a cohesive sound, for the most part. Occasionally, someone may attend the sessions who attempts to take over by leading too many of the tunes or playing too loudly, but the group usually reacts to politely correct that person either through quiet resistance or through more overtly attempting to bring in other voices.

As Turino describes, the beginnings and endings in a participatory music session are often “feathered,” with no cohesive start or stop. A tune might be started without any preamble, or while others are talking, so the instruments will come in bit by bit, almost always by the end of the first time through the tune. When it’s a tune we know and we have some notice, we all start together but it is not essential to do that. There are a number of routine signals that might start a tune. Often a statement of the key is followed by calling the name of the tune – either just stated – or someone might ask, “how about...?” or someone else might ask someone else to lead it: “Do you know that...?” Four potatoes might be sawed out to start, but even then, people might not all come in together.

Ending the tune together is the most satisfying and desirable outcome, perhaps accomplished more often than beginning together. The person who begins the tune is expected to end it, as it somehow “belongs” to them for the moment. It is considered proper for another person to finish if the group seems “done” with the tune, so that usually only happens after the tune has gone on for some time. Although the use of tag endings is common and popular with songs, it is hardly ever used anymore as it has fallen out of

fashion. Specific tunes, like Turkey in the Straw, may end with “shave and a haircut, two bits” but this is more common in bluegrass music.

The most common current signal to end is a foot lifted in the air, either modestly or jokingly very high up, during the last B part – or during the A part, then last B part if someone *really* wants to end or feels that others won’t notice just the B part. When people seem to really be listening, a simple lifting of notes, and small spaces during the last B part on the fiddle or banjo is all that is needed to bring the group to a close. A less subtle signal might be heavy strumming on banjo or guitar toward the end of the last phrase, again with some spaces in between for emphasis and sometimes accompanied by a significant look around the circle or movement with the instrument.

What happens when things aren’t going well with a tune, when the group is not together in its timing or tuning, or some people are not playing the correct tune? People who know the tune, those who started it, or those who perceive themselves as the leaders might lean into it, playing a little more loudly and deliberately to get their tempo or tune across. Sometimes this results in things getting faster, either on purpose to try to bring people along with them, or it may be unintentional. Some players will alter their tempo or timing to go along with the loudest instrument or the one they perceive to be the leader. The tune might become flattened out to clash less or fit in better with the disparate parts. Talking and nervous laughter begin as people either try to figure out where the problem is or assign blame. Eye contact is attempted between participants. Some people may stop playing altogether. After several attempts to save the tune, one or more members may play discordant chords to signal an end, to humorously call attention to the problem, or “train wreck!” might be called out. Depending on how much the group wants to play the tune, the

leader/person who brought the tune may attempt to set it right by demonstrating how the tune goes or explaining where they thought the problem or misunderstanding was, and then starting again.

In rare situations, a tune may be played badly for the whole span of the tune, even among experienced players. This may be due to some players not hearing what is going on. Sometimes this is a real attempt to learn an unfamiliar song or play a familiar song on an unfamiliar instrument. Some players might be convinced that they are playing the tune correctly and will stubbornly stay with their rendition, rather than adjusting to others to make the song or tune itself sound as good as possible. Some leaders are so used to their position of authority that they are unable to take direction from others, and are so used to others accommodating them that they have a hard time playing with other people. In these latter instances, it is less a case of the music at work, and more distinctly the social relations of the group, that causes discord within the community.

6.4.2 Social Elements of Old-Time Jam Sessions

Old-time jam sessions may be focused on the music, but they are very much social events. Overall, there is much laughter and talking, sometimes to the detriment of the music. Some musicians might spend much of their time calling people back to the tunes, and some people try to do this by playing tunes over the talking. Social connections are expressed, including greetings when new people come in, unless the group is in the middle of a tune. Absent members are recalled, by asking how they are and who has seen them recently, or by telling stories about or in reference to absent members. Stories are told on other people who are there, or on oneself, especially a funny story, but hardly ever something that would really be embarrassing and never about something hurtful. Stories told are often self-

deprecating, establishing the person's history at other jam sessions, performances, or festivals, perhaps explaining their absence at an important event.

The tone overall is one of gentle teasing, with jokes that seemed designed by their makers to make connections to another person in the room. Banjo jokes and comments about tuning run amok. These jokes are usually self-deprecating even while it calls attention to that person. Musical instruments, as might be expected, are a common subject of conversation. Expressing interest in another person's instrument is considered to be polite, and cherishing instruments that connect the owner to another player/owner/ member of the group is shared. The history of particular instruments, repair or tricks to improve the sound might be shared; even stories about a mislaid capo or flatpick might be shared. Playing techniques or new chords might be explained.

Knowledge or information might be shared or requested about tunes, above all, what key the group or a tune is in! Unless a tune is a "standard," information about when and where a tune was learned is often delineated, especially if there is more than one version of a tune or more than one tune associated with a name. Sometimes an unusual tune that's brought to the group remains connected to a person, especially if he or she is needed to get the tune started. The names brought up are often white male fiddlers, whether living or dead: Jimmy McCown, John Salyer, Lewis Lamb, and Ray Slone were all mentioned in one of the jams at Berea College as sources of tunes. Sometimes it's a tune learned from a particular album, and although learning directly from another person is more valued, there seems to be little stigma in learning tunes from recordings. In the Berea College jam, the "Ray Slone tune" mentioned was from an album, but people talked about him personally to establish a connection with him, and he was a person well-known to some people there. In one

Appalshop jam, Ron Short talked about wearing out an album by Kentucky Wild Horse (including fiddler, Paul David Smith, who was present at the jam) and he requested a tune from that album. There are stories connected to tunes that must be told, and arguments about how they go.

Other events, including music classes, will be discussed during the jam sessions, whether they were attended or whether musicians knew about them but were unable to attend. Other mundane, but related information might come up, such as questions about music store hours, asking other musicians about opportunities like getting on the arts education roster, or how to get a gig or play in a festival. Invitations to other jam sessions, festivals, or events might be extended. Different musicians might be invited to choose a tune or to be a leader for a tune; to take a “break” or sing a verse. Arrangements might be made to meet after the jam for food or drink, or for another session. Announcements might be made of births, deaths, or other important family changes, or something like going to a music or dance camp in Florida, or a play being produced next week; in other words, catching up on events. A family event or characteristic might be connected to something in the conversation.

Opportunities to teach may arise. For example, I helped one female banjo player, Bonnie, with some advice about banjo technique – but not until she asked about it. Among people who know each other, a definite student-teacher relationship may be set up. When fiddler Beverly plays the guitar, a new instrument for her, she casts Roy in a definite teacher role: “sit somewhere we can see your hands.” Beverly has put herself out there as a guitar student often, saying it publicly, inviting others to help her. Beverly is usually the teacher, taking many opportunities to teach beginners at festivals and jams, as well as being a long-

time “Pick & Bow” after-school music teacher for kids. She is a great combination of humble teacher and humble student, which, along with a good dose of confidence and humor, makes people want to play with her. Various other teaching moments may arise within the playing of a tune, such as in one Appalshop jam, when fiddler Ron Short helped others pick up a tune, saying “here you go” to mark an unusual chord change, but only for the first few times until he felt the group had it down. Teaching must not be done in a heavy-handed manner, however, and should really only be offered when requested. Too much teaching in a jam setting may (rightly) be interpreted as assuming too much leadership.

Typically, humility about playing is demonstrated throughout the session, and helps keep things going. When asked to pick a tune, Bonnie was uncertain, responding by asking questions such as “Just anything I know?” or “What key are we in?” Later, she said, “I don’t know if I want to be heard. I don’t want to torture other people.” Humility might be displayed by a typical remark when a tune is requested, “Let’s try it.” (Of course, we know this tune and have played it a thousand times, but we never know how this time is going to turn out.) This humility also leads to small compliments that again lubricate the social wheels. Roy told a fiddler, “Good job, Ron!” to which Ron returns the compliment: “Oh thank you; a good strong guitar.”

As discussed in chapters 3 and 5, and throughout this chapter, jam sessions are a key location for the enactment of Appalachian music. According to most of the old-time musicians I interviewed, a successful jam session is one where everyone gets to play, but also where “good” tunes are played, so both experienced and novice players are satisfied. This translates to the concept of *flow* as described by Turino, where a sense of oneness and timelessness is achieved among the musicians through heightened concentration and

meeting of the needs of both challenge and security. Immediate feedback from fellow players help the players stay within the bounds of the jam session that keep the distractions of the outside world at bay. Often, time will seem to fly by as the players are totally absorbed by playing and by the world inside the jam circle.

The old-time jams are highly participatory, but they still are constructed through power relations that can make them hazardous for the sensitive, uncertain, or those who already lack some social power and authority. Like many group activities, the success and the feeling of the jam can change greatly, depending on which people are there and which are not. Extroverted personalities and those who are used to being in charge might run over those who are less comfortable with speaking out. A masculinist atmosphere may be created by males and females alike who focus on competition and virtuosic playing of lead musicians to the exclusion of others, as they “circulate models of idealized masculinity,” especially when they “remov[e] a dominant form of masculinity from the possibility of censure” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:838, 834). I have heard many women, but no men, complain about “too much testosterone” in a jam session, which indicates the workings of a hegemonic masculinity, in which complicit masculinities serve to support a dominant masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Bird 1996).

Jam etiquette requires all to be welcome, but many people will opt out of a session if they don't feel comfortable with the people there, and there are strategies for excluding others from within a jam. One of the less confrontational ways to “opt out” is to start one's own session in another room at the same time, or even to create an entirely new event in a different location. Exclusion by a group may be expressed either through body language or musically, even though it would be a true breach of etiquette for overt conflict in a session

or for someone to openly express it in language. Although I did not observe this in the jam sessions I attended for this dissertation, my informants spoke of other situations where the circles closed very tightly and backs were presented to others who walked up, trying to gain access. Participants may claim not to know any of the tunes suggested by others, or may refuse to play in certain keys. The volume of each player may also be a factor in leadership and in participation. Leaders should be heard in order to be followed, but should not drown out others. People who play loudly may become *de facto* leaders simply because they are the ones heard, or they may become jam session pariahs.

Playing together in time and in the same key is an unspoken and perhaps obvious value in a musical session, but sometimes this is sacrificed in a power play for leadership. A dominant player might attempt to alter the tempo of a tune according to his or her sense of what is “correct,” and the rest of the musicians may or may not follow along. I have been in only one session where many of the tunes were played for the entire duration by musicians who stubbornly refused to acquiesce to another player’s tempo. It was a painful process.

Other breaches of etiquette include playing favorites by leaders in only requesting tunes from certain musicians, or allowing one person to control too many of the choices. Playing too many difficult tunes when beginners are present is considered to be rude, though, depending on the session, insisting on playing too many easy tunes when the majority of the players want to play interesting and difficult tunes can also be a problem. In one jam I attended, a dominant male fiddler spent much of the time courting the older male fiddlers, requesting difficult and obscure tunes, even though there were children present and other people who were beginners. The rest of the musicians reacted in various ways to counter the power plays and attempt to restore balance to the session. The “master”

musicians deflected his attentions by downplaying their abilities (“I used to play that one”) and other members of the jam resisted his moves by actively engaging the beginners to bring them into the session by suggesting particular, simple songs they knew could be played by all.

When mistakes are made, the resolution might depend on the relationships between the musicians, or how easy it is to achieve satisfaction through the resolution. A song like Buffalo Gals might either be played in a song format, ABAB, or like a typical fiddle tune, AABB,²⁸ or a song like Angeline the Baker will have different traditions over which is played as the A part and which is the B part. Musicians playing them differently will cause confusion, which might be resolved in various ways. A dominant musician might attempt to strongarm the rest of the group into going his or her way, or everyone might start flattening the tune out so it will clash less. In one case where this happened, some of the fiddlers started playing a high harmony which worked with either part. These kinds of clashes also may happen unintentionally, in a session with many inexperienced instrumentalists and unwillingness on the part of the leadership or the general consensus of the group to slow down and address the needs of those people. One or more players might end the tune prematurely, and might even explain in words what happened, gain consensus about which way it should go, and then start the tune again.

Who gets to choose, who starts and who ends a tune are all important leadership signals, which often focuses on the fiddle, since it is often the clearest melody instrument.

²⁸ Please see Chapter 3: Defining the Music for more information on this notation. Most fiddle tunes are made up of two parts, designated A and B, which are each played twice and notated AABB. Many songs have the format AB, with A being the verse and B being the chorus, and each part is only sung one time through the music before moving to the next part.

As will be shown in the next chapter on gender in Appalachian music, many of the musical and social elements of the jam sessions and other musical events have gendered components. For example, instrumentation has clear implications for leadership, as described above, but there are many social signals that guide people to choose specific instruments through family expectations, competition, and personal expectations, which also are gendered. The stories we tell of great musicians in the past have gendered messages, whether they be enacted without comment, or articulated. By looking closely at the music and the social relations surrounding the old-time music scene in eastern Kentucky, the mechanisms that produce gender in Appalachian space may be made more plain.

Chapter 7: Gender in Appalachian Music

This chapter addresses the dialectical nature of gender as it shapes and is shaped by the music and social relations that create Appalachian space in eastern Kentucky and environs. This dissertation research grew, in part, out of observing the representation of gender roles in old-time, bluegrass, and gospel music and questioning the mechanisms behind gender expectations that seemed to constrain me, and other women I knew, as female players. At the same time, I ask in what ways gender works in vernacular roots music to favor male players, and in what other ways gender shapes various aspects of old-time music in Appalachia.

Gender dialectics is a topic that is extremely under-represented in folk studies, musicology, ethnomusicology, and even in music geography. Few studies of old-time music include any overt attention to gender and its workings, though even a cursory examination of recordings, photographs, and stories about old-time musicians will show that males are over-represented in almost every category, except perhaps in singing and dancing. The main intent of much of the literature that does address gender and old-time music is on unearthing women's contributions and participation in the music, especially in commercial music. Perhaps this is because commercial music is valued over homemade or non-commercial music. It may be because of the possibility that there will be at least some documentation in the form of photographs or other publicity materials, reviews, or recordings. Maybe it is because the assumption is that females participate in the homes (private space) but have been inhibited or lost in the public domain. In any case, much of the writing has focused only on documenting that female musicians *do* exist in the old-time music community and

have historically played traditional music, and sometimes in showing that female musicians were the equal of males.

This chapter, in contrast, articulates gender, with my main intent being to show how gendered social relations work through music to create Appalachian space. After a short description of representations of gender in old-time music, I describe the gendered makeup of the people and places that make up my research sites. The data for this section was gathered through participant observation in my research sites, as well as through the interviews I conducted with all my interviewees. It is contextualized from my long history of playing old-time music in the Appalachian region. In particular, I attempt to tease out the social production of gendered spaces for old-time music, with some observations about bluegrass and African American gospel music to help highlight my main community of interest. To this end, I analyze the events described in early chapters and statements made in interviews with musicians and singers.

This research begins with the assumption that women, indeed, are and have been involved in old-time music, but that their participation has been shaped by gendered expectations. It attempts to understand *how* this happens, how the females and males are involved, and how the social relations of musicking in the old-time community discipline the players and create a certain kind of Appalachian space. Among the themes that emerged in my research were the gendering of instrumentation and gendered musical expression, which seemed to follow a normative pattern of feminine association with more embodied forms of expression such as singing and dancing.

7.1 Gender in Recent Studies of Old-Time Music

Enthusiasts of old-time music often point to the egalitarian ethos of the genre (Turino 2008, Wooley 2003, Bealle 2005), but why is it that so many of the studies done, even today, include so many more men than women? If it is so egalitarian, why are so few women documented as being involved, and why does this obvious imbalance continue with so little comment? In preparation for writing this dissertation, I surveyed some recent studies of old-time music for their representation of gender and race in old-time music. Most of these, which rely on life histories of prominent musicians and their families, are heavily male-oriented, and all describe a predominantly white constituency. The contributions of black women, in particular, are unrepresented in all the literature about music in Appalachia, indicating that the mechanisms of race and gender, especially when combined, are quite strong in influencing who is recognized as an Appalachian musician or an old-time musician. The black women in my study played and sang mostly religious music, which also has its own mechanisms for creating a certain kind of gendered space. Some of these will be discussed in Chapter 9.

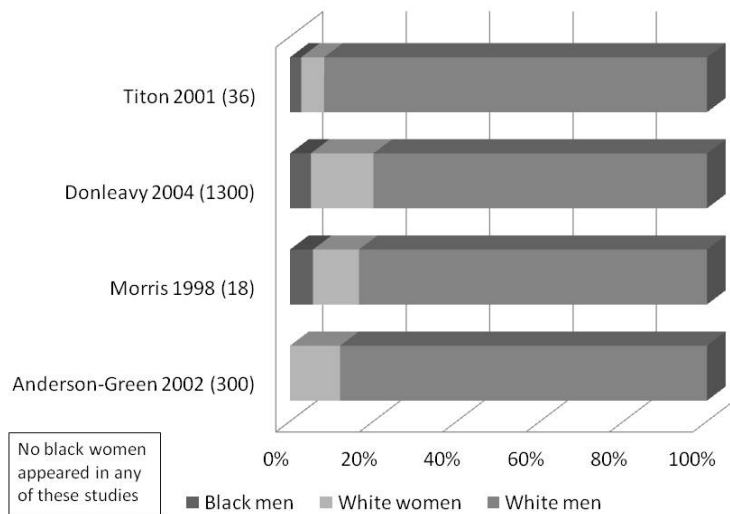


Figure 7.1: Percentage of musicians by race and gender in selected recent studies of old-time music

Three recent studies show women making up about twelve to fifteen percent of all old-time players covered. Anderson-Green’s historical study of southwest Virginia musicians named only thirty-six women out of the three hundred listed in the appendix (Anderson-Green 2002). This volume adopted a common approach to redressing inequalities by heavy documentation of one exceptional female musician, Ola Belle Reed, who earned her own chapter, with only one other man earning similar honors. No racial characteristics were named in the book, but all the photographs and all the names with which I’m familiar are of white people. Christine Ballangee Morris’s dissertation study of what she termed mountain cultural artists of West Virginia focused on a ratio of two women per fifteen men, with only one African American man, and no African American woman or other non-white person was included (Morris 1995).

Kevin Donleavy’s 2004 *Strings of Life: Conversations with Old-Time Musicians from Virginia and North Carolina*, identified only forty black players out of the 1300 total,

with no active black fiddlers or banjo players, but he attempts to deal with the “curiosity” of the “scarcity of black musicians playing old-time music in the late twentieth century” right up front (2). He himself quantified the percentages in his study as fifteen percent women and five percent black of the musicians he documented. As far as I could tell, none of the black musicians were women, and he made no comments about the relative scarcity of female players. He did, however, seem to do a much better job of attempting to locate female musicians than many scholars, and also gave credit to female musical family members who were not well-known for their individual prowess, but were no doubt very important in passing along musical knowledge within families. Sometimes this role is known as a “passive” tradition-bearer, which further tends to characterize women in a less-than-active role.

Gerry Milnes’s 1999 study of West Virginia’s musical traditions is similar to those above, including the mention of a few women, and extensive information on two important West Virginia female musicians, Maggie Hammonds Parker, and Phoebe Cottrell Parsons, who were active parts of two exceptionally musical and talented families. Unfortunately, there is very little comment on why there are so few documented. The great value of information on these women perhaps lies in the possibility of extrapolating from their contributions to imagining that there were many more women like them in musical families that have not been documented, as they were not commercial musicians. Milnes, like many scholars, includes much more information about African American men’s music than about gendering in music (Milnes 1999). Again, the mechanisms of gendering are basically ignored, and in order to find out about female musicians, the most important skill of the reader is to be able to tell the women’s names from the men’s.

When the sample is limited to fiddlers, the percentage of female musicians in a study usually goes down dramatically, to under six percent in one study and zero in another digital collection I will discuss later. Jeff Todd Titon's 2001 *Old-Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes* is typical, in containing biographies of thirty-four men, but only two women. Only one of the men is identified as African American, with reference to another black man that was influential to the playing of other white men but who is not included in the fiddler's biographies (Titon 2001). No African American women are featured or discussed in the book. One of my interviewees complained about another study of old-time music that lacked any documentation of female players as "lame" scholarship, which angered her enough to decide to become a gender studies major. She had just begun playing old-time music, and described such a study, which had "a little teeny section on women musicians and it's part of a chapter and it's maybe four pages including one whole page that is a photo. [It basically said,] 'A lot of women played with their families, but I couldn't really find much about them.' The end. That's pretty lame scholarship" (Roberts-Gevault).

Erynn Marshall's study of West Virginia fiddlers is a notable exception to the literature, as it is based on interviews with a rare ratio of four men to three women, all of whom are apparently white, but she also includes some information about five other (white) women "whose musical lives have contributed to the gender and repertoire findings in this book" (48). A map of the musicians' home counties in the beginning of the book actually refers to ten women and four men, the reverse of the gender ratio in even the best studies. Interestingly, Marshall's study focuses on the interconnection of fiddle tunes and song, which perhaps automatically ties into the more feminine, embodied area of song. There

were many well-known male fiddlers in West Virginia she excluded from her study, presumably because they did not exhibit the fiddle-song connection she was interrogating.

As demonstrated in my study and that of Erynn Marshall, female musicians are “out there” and are playing, but they are often unacknowledged, perhaps because they are not playing the kind of music that gains attention from writers. Perhaps their presence does not fulfill the average person’s expectations of what an Appalachian musician should be, and therefore they fly under the radar. Their lack of inclusion may stem from male researchers not being in the network of female performers, of reinforcing habits that keep researchers focused on male virtuosic performers and not on the participatory musicians that keep the music going, or of the habits of patriarchal social relations that put males forward and females in the background.

In searching for photographs to include in my 2006 journal article on “silenced voices,” I ran up against some of the barriers that cause women’s voices – and their instrumental capabilities – to be silenced. The Kentuckiana Virtual Library houses a collection of digitized photographs and accompanying oral history documentation of fiddle players in Kentucky. No women were photographed or interviewed. I noticed, however, that some of the men had wives that played guitar and accompanied them and were sometimes photographed along with the men, such as Annadene Fraley and Clela Alfrey. Because they were not the intentional subject of the study, however, a search of their names did not reveal their photographs in the collection. A subsequent search for guitar players revealed no parallel study to the fiddle collection, and when I read through the documentation on one couple, the Alfreys, I found that the descriptions of guitar playing focused on the husband’s history of guitar playing, not the wife’s, even though he was featured as a fiddle player!

Very little was said about Mrs. Alfrey's background, only that she accompanied her husband.²⁹

Gender is thus a very important – but under-theorized – component of vernacular roots music that deserves scrutiny. Because of the sedimentation of beliefs that may occur in representations of the music of Appalachia, my observations of gendering in the production of Appalachian space must be set in the context of previous writings and understandings about the music. I begin the next section with a story told to me at a festival by a musician in the old-time network that helps illuminate the some of the mechanisms that perpetuate gendered representations of old-time music.

7.2 Representations of Gender in Appalachian Music

Who is on the cover of a brochure of the Fraley Mountain Music festival held each year at Carter Caves State Resort Park in Kentucky? Chances are it is a middle-aged white man with a beard and long hair, playing the banjo. This particular man described to me, laughing, how the photographer had asked to take his picture for the brochure. The musician had demurred, saying he wasn't a very good banjo player, but that young lady over there was a great banjo player and should be the one on the cover. The photographer protested, saying that she didn't have the right image he was going for. Attractive young women are usually the ones chosen as cover photographs in this day and time, but not when the requirement is for demonstrating expertise in an activity. A bearded white man in overalls has become the image associated with Appalachian string band music at least since the Kentucky band, the Hill-Billies, made their way to a New York recording studio in the

²⁹ The collection, known as the Vintage Fiddlers Oral History Project, 1984-1985, is digitized on the website of the Kentuckiana Virtual Library, <http://kdl.kyvl.org>. The persistent link for information on the Alfreys is <http://name.kdl.kyvl.org/KMM-VFIDDLERS-ALFREY02>.

1920s, and so that is what the photographer wanted to get across as the “correct” and expected representation of a musician at the festival (Green 1965). This image, to the photographer, telegraphed authenticity and authority in terms of mountain music, which would attract tourists to come to the festival.

A brief aside to describe the development of this image of banjo players is a fascinating case study in the capricious nature of discourse on gender and race, and helps illuminate the mechanisms of power and the intimate connections of race and gender that may be seen in vernacular roots music in Appalachia. Shortly before the Hill-Billies became famous with their white, male comic image, the banjo was marketed by Columbia records in 1920 as having a “barbaric vigor...that carries us away from the staid music room of our home out under the stars over Southern levees [sic] where groups of dark-faced negroes, with shining teeth and eyes, sing plantation melodies to the strumming strings; back to the Senegambian savages with their bania³⁰...” (Titon 1977). Within the same decade, the banjo was able to encompass not only a comic white group from Appalachia, but also play on white nostalgia for the banjo as a slave instrument that harkened back to “savage” African roots. Just a generation before, sprightly young white banjo-picking gals were common in late nineteenth-century illustrations in popular magazines (Bufwack and Oermann 1993, Linn 1991), and the generation before that witnessed white men in blackface as the ubiquitous banjo player in minstrel shows. Before the minstrel shows, the banjo and its ancestors were basically instruments only played by African slaves, accompanied by a drum, and only documented in illustrations and writings as being played by men (Southern and Wright 2000). The changeable nature of expectations of a banjo player’s race and gender thus illustrates the fluidity of ideas about them, and their socially-constructed nature.

³⁰ The bania was an ancestor of the banjo or an archaic name for a banjo in America.

The history of the changing image of banjo players, and the story of the musician chosen to represent authentic mountain music by posing as a banjo player for a publicity piece illustrate how race and gender expectations also shape Appalachian music, how changeable yet influential they are on our concepts of normality. Gender, in particular, is rarely foregrounded in writings about music in the region, as it is one of those social constructions that is so often described and viewed as “natural” that it is very difficult to tease out how our habits, actions, expectations, and performances create the normative roles we live by (Sarkissian 1992:337). Because gender is a central component of identity and social relations, which in turn produces a certain kind of space (as demonstrated by Henri Lefebvre and others), it is also central to determining the types of musics that are produced, the way they are produced and consumed, and who is producing and consuming the musics.

Uncritical writing about Appalachian music abounds, which might bring up the gendering of music and musical instruments without attempting to tease out why, simply describing the situation as it appears, reinforcing gender expectations. Gender is thus often *enacted* without being *articulated*, as described by ethnomusicologist Beverly Diamond. Some scholars deny women any historical identity as fiddlers at all, underscoring the sedimentation of beliefs which continue to obscure the visibility of female musicians and giving support to the importance of those studies that focus on highlighting women’s contributions. For example, the only cultural geography study of the Appalachian region, John Rehder’s *Appalachian Folkways* (2004), makes the strong and false statement that “only men played fiddles” (249). Even though others describe fiddle-playing historically as a masculine domain, he over-generalizes from cultural tendencies and conventional behavior, creating a falsely black-and-white picture of Appalachian folk practices and

obscuring well-documented contributions of women. He seems to extrapolate from this statement to conclude that women were not important as instrumentalists in general, even to the point of denying the famous contributions of Maybelle Carter and her iconic guitar style. He makes a point of saying that A.P. Carter “always played a guitar throughout his recording and broadcasting career” (245) although his sister-in-law, Maybelle Carter, was actually the one most known for this instrument, and the vast majority of photographs of the Carter Family show only Maybelle and Sara holding instruments, not A.P.

Rehder never even mentions Maybelle’s guitar playing. Instead, he describes her being “very pregnant” and wearing calico, thus emphasizing traditional female gender expectations instead of her accomplishments and high standing in the musical world (256). According to Carter Family biographer, Mark Zwonitzer, A.P. had a tremor in his hands throughout his life that made it difficult for him to play instruments, which further underlines that it was the women in the family that played, not the man (Zwonitzer and Hirshberg 2002). Even though A.P. Carter’s contributions to traditional music cannot and should not be denied, the over-emphasis on his instrumental capabilities in addition to the denial of obvious female capabilities demonstrates that even the contributions of well-known women may be underplayed in favor of the expectations of masculine superiority.

While female documenters and historians may feel a personal stake in researching women’s contributions, or have a gendered position that might facilitate research among other women, that is not a given. In Cecelia Conway’s important study of African American banjo players, she states that “women banjo players have been about as hard to find as black banjo players,” but she further acknowledges that there were female players she knew about, but did not document. She confessed to regretting that she let chances to document women

slip away by being “bewitched by the ready and flashy performances of the men” (Conway 1995:9). A cultural bias toward virtuosic performances of men is part of the constellation of practices that favors male players over female players. Women that are mentioned in such studies often only emerge relationally to these virtuosic men, such as the women Conway names in her 1995 study: Odell Thompson’s mother’s sister (4), many others in Etta Reid Baker’s birth family (5), and Mary Snipes Poteat, sister to one of Conway’s major informants, John Snipes (9). Conway does mention that women played stringed instruments less often than men (9), but keeping in mind her confession that she did not follow up on working with even an accomplished musician such as Mary Poteat, the chances are high that women have, indeed, played stringed instruments more often than is documented.

Interestingly, two black women she does mention, Louise Baldwin Burnett and Becky Foushee, are described as probably playing blues or slow drag rather than dance music, though no reasons are given (47) so there is no way to tell if that was because of social conventions that discouraged women from playing dance music (such as described by old-time musician Lily May Ledford) or simply because they preferred it.

Women are associated with the vocal tradition of ballad singing and are sometimes held up as prodigious sources of family-based folklore (Smith 1998), or as the tradition-bearers rather than the innovators (Miles 1975). The female “song-saving tradition” fits in well with gendered expectations (Bufwack and Oermann 1993:13), and perhaps this is why the field of ethnomusicological documentation has been more populated by women than some other fields, with such well-known collectors as Frances Densmore and Zora Neale Hurston. There are certainly many women who have contributed to collecting in the Appalachian region, such as Olive Dame Campbell, Maud Karpeles, Jean Thomas, and

Dorothy Scarborough, not to mention several faculty members at Berea College whose student collections may be accessed in Berea's Hutchins Library's Special Collections. Although it was not a documentary, the popular 2001 film, *Songcatcher*, which was set in western North Carolina portrayed the story of a female ballad collector.

The gentle sound of the dulcimer and the non-mobile piano and organ both have been historically connected to female players, instruments which also allowed the player to keep her arms modestly down, unlike the less-genteel fiddle, banjo, or guitar. The associations of singing, piano, and organ with religious and family-based music also does not challenge traditionally feminine gender roles (Thompson 2006a, Bufwack and Oermann 1993). The private world of the parlor and music room, and perhaps even the front porch's connection of private and public spaces, are considered to be appropriate for women's music (hooks 2009, Ritchie 1980), but the dance hall is not, even if women are among the dancers (Ledford, Bufwack and Oermann 1993).

Much of the writing on vernacular roots music associated with Appalachia has focused on early country music, especially on recording stars and radio programs (Bufwack and Oermann 1993, Malone 1968, Berry 2008, Tribe 1984). Some writing has begun to focus on other forms of music, such as blues, gospel, and rock and roll in the region³¹ (Hay 2003), but it is not as well developed or detailed. The world of commercial music has historically been the domain of men for both whites and African Americans, though the earliest and most well-known blues singers were women and some were even from Appalachia, such as Chattanooga Bessie Smith.³² Many beloved early white country stars were women, including comedienne and banjo picker Cousin Emmy, Lulu Belle Wiseman,

³¹ See also Ted Olson's section on "Music" in the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, 2006.

³² Even so, the Appalachian background of many African American musicians such as Bessie Smith has not been adequately analyzed or accepted.

Coon Creek Girl Lily May Ledford, and singing cowgirls such as Patsy Montana and the Girls of the Golden West, and these are the subjects of most of the writing to date on gender in commercial music (Bufwack and Oermann 1993). They highlight the accomplishments of individual women involved as performers in presentational music rather than finding the patterns of ordinary people, which is the subject of this dissertation.

Women have, indeed, been involved in all aspects of old-time and country music, and have also had their contributions ignored or explained away. Perusing the huge compendium of information provided by Bufwack and Oermann on women in country music from 1800-2000, for example, can convince the reader that the women were there all along; they just hadn't been recognized. An uncritical acceptance of the information might lead some to conclude that gender issues are sad elements of the past; that women are now considered to be equal to men and all that is required for understanding women's past accomplishments in country/ folk/ rockabilly/ blues/ folk revival/ etc. is to unearth their hidden contributions.

It is vitally important to shine a spotlight on women's history, and to pay extra attention to bring out female voices and influences, as do some of these sources. It is also essential to keep asking questions about how gender works today, not only on the level of presentational, commercial music, but also in the realm of homemade, participatory music. Men are still more connected to the virtuosic instrumentalism of bluegrass music and the rambunctious and somewhat morally suspect world of dance music, as well as professional music and its public face (Adler 2004, Henry 2004). Women are still a minority in most jam sessions and presentations on old-time music, especially as virtuosic instrumentalists. There are some writings on gender that look deeper to understand the mechanisms that help

maintain gender roles in vernacular roots music, such as McCusker's recent study of the role played by the National Barn Dance and other Depression-era radio programs in promoting an image of "a traditional, stable, constant family" through careful and conscious scripting of gender role expectations (McCusker 2008), but much remains to be done.

Gender is a fluid concept whose parameters change over time, and there are still important questions to ask to uncover how it works in and through music. Old-time music is a fascinating case study of the workings of gender. As one of my informants so well described it, women didn't seem to be sexualized in old-time music in the same way as they have been in other kinds of music. "Those women were treated with the same kind of respect as the men were, but at the same time there weren't that many of them" (Roberts-Gevault). How, then, does this happen?

I turn now to analyzing my own observations to attempt to uncover some of the mechanisms that create gendered Appalachian space, beginning with describing female participation in the old-time community, including the ratios of male to female participants and authorities. I then move to analyzing my research sites for the mechanisms that produce gendered space, first focusing on the relationship between gendered instrumentation and musical embodiment. My second analytical pairing involves the tension between a masculinist, presentational, virtuosic prestige system and an inclusive, participatory, community-building ethos that pervades the old-time community in Eastern Kentucky.

7.3 Female Participation in Eastern Kentucky Music Communities

Despite representations such as those detailed above, of women as non-instrumentalists and the difficulties surrounding women's participation in musical activities, women are quite well-represented in eastern Kentucky's old-time music community. In the

jam sessions and other events documented for this research, women typically made up about twenty to forty percent of the participation in the old-time music-making events I recorded, which is well over double the representation of women in the recent studies of old-time music described above. In leadership roles, women were well-represented in the old-time community. The two jam sessions that had leaders, Jammin' in the Park and Berea College, were both women. Of the four part-time traditional music coordinators for Appalshop since 2001, three have been women. Women are the driving force behind the Cowan Creek Mountain Music School, with several men serving as support for them; however, they are less likely to be the teachers actually passing on the songs, tunes, and instrumental techniques. In the early days of the school, the proportion of female to male instructors was quite low, with only one or two females out of twelve or fourteen (about 8-13 percent). Recently, the proportions have gone up dramatically, to forty seven percent in 2010, the tenth anniversary of its founding. One role that is still quite male-dominated is the visiting "master musician." Of the four slots available each year, only in two years out of five was there even one female master musician who visited, making up about ten percent of the total master musician contact. Women still seem to take more of a leadership role in more traditional female roles, such as nurturing children and bringing them into the traditional music fold and are still not as often acknowledged as masters in performance.

In the two bluegrass jam sessions, and the one bluegrass festival I attended, women were much more scarce, more likely to be supporters of male musicians and less likely to be in positions of leadership. At Pickin' in the Pound, there was only one young female bass player there, aside from me, and all the rest of the musicians – about fifteen - were men. Interestingly, however, the mayor of Pound is a woman, and it was she that orchestrated the

evening, also offering the opening prayer to the evening. The only other woman in my section of the bluegrass jam at Cumberland Falls State Park was an older female vocalist who only sang one or two songs, in contrast to eight men, who all played musical instruments and most of whom also sang and led several songs apiece. There were several female lap dulcimer players in the jam session taking place in the next room who made up perhaps a third of the group to start with, but their percentages declined as the night wore on and more males joined the jam session. Female performers at the Stringbean Memorial Festival in Annville, Kentucky, were limited to a few vocalists out of eight acts, which ranged from one male soloist to mostly bands consisting of four to six men, so the percentage of women performing in a presentational bluegrass activity was quite low, about three percent.

There were two other older females who populated a table for the organization Friends of Bluegrass Music, which put on shows at a venue in Clay City, Kentucky. There was a husband-wife team who produced the sound for the festival as well, which in my experience is quite unusual. They did this as volunteers, which might influence the likelihood of a woman being part of the normally male world of sound production. Otherwise, the majority of women who were active at the festival were spouses and other family members of the bands selling band merchandise. Women might have made up approximately half of the audience, but were not active in actually producing the music, especially the instrumental music.

Jammin' on the Porch in Berea has a strong female leader and several women that sing during the jam on a regular basis, being perhaps about ten to twenty percent of those who contribute. Here are many fewer female instrumentalists than in the old-time jams,

however, making up perhaps only five to ten percent of the total pickers. Most of those play guitar or dulcimer, with an occasional banjo player. This jam, though led by old-time musicians, is very friendly to bluegrass and country musicians as well.

The information for this section was gained through my participant observation of the jam sessions as detailed in Chapter 6. The rest of this chapter will further tease apart the mechanisms that reproduce gender in the old-time music community in eastern Kentucky, including special attention to the social relations in the jam sessions that create gendered experiences and contribute to the higher proportion of women in the old-time community.

7.4 Gendered Mechanisms in the Old-Time Music Community

Mechanisms for reproducing the old-time community include family expectations and training, as well as the social relations embedded in face-to-face transmission of musical knowledge such as those found in music camps, after-school programs, jam sessions, and music lessons. Events such as festivals, concerts, dances, and contests also provide places for people to interact with each other, though in a more temporary setting. Finally, recordings, magazines, and instruction books all provide more private and self-directed learning opportunities, which may be more gender-neutral music instruction, though they also include exposure to musical and social expectations. The social relations that make up musical events discipline males and females along different lines, but different communities also have different standards for acceptable behavior, as has been demonstrated through Chapters 5 and 6.

Gendered expectations are common among families, and children often take on a strong “script” from their parents regarding musical expectations (see Borthwick 2000, discussed in Clarke and Cook 2004:63-66). This could then involve an acceptance of the

script, or resistance which might be active or passive. Felicia Ballard became the pianist at her church following her grandfather and her mother, but she seemed more than willing to follow in their footsteps, though humbled by the high expectations this involved. She did not consider piano to be a gendered instrument, and her family background supported this. Beverly May, on the other hand, was not happy with the expectation that she become the pianist in her church, as demonstrated by this short exchange:

I'm convinced that the only reason I was born was so that I could be the pianist in the Methodist Church. That was the agenda – so that I would learn to play so I could be the church pianist – which I was all through high school. I'm still recovering from that! (laughs!)

DT: Was it so bad?

BM: Yes.

When she found out the previous young lady was graduating and leaving the position to her, she was distressed: “I don't mean I shed a few tears, I mean, I bawled. And my mother came up to me because she was embarrassed, and she smacked me on the back of my head” (May 2008). This story describes common gendered scripts regarding appropriate instrumentation and the proper place for a young woman to play music in eastern Kentucky, as well as a young woman who did not choose to follow the gendered musical script laid out for her. Beverly later pursued fiddle playing and now is working on playing guitar.

Storyteller and musician Angie DeBord described her early musical training and family expectations in western North Carolina as quite gendered. Her grandmother was a great influence. “I would play organ while she cooked, I would pump away at the organ,

play hymns, and she would sing along.” Her brothers were excluded from the female world of ballad singing, bean stringing, and organ music, but everyone would dance in the kitchen to a Saturday afternoon program that played clogging music. Traditional gender roles were further enacted by great uncles who played fiddles, and another uncle who called dances for tourists and was helped by his wife. She cites a photograph she has of her uncles playing fiddle outside, in the woods, which also is often a male space, in contrast to the kitchen and porch she mentioned. Angie has broken out of these gender roles to some extent by learning to play fiddle herself, but although she is a masterful storyteller who performs publicly and is a great nurturer of others, she shows a reluctance to put herself forward as an instrumentalist or singer.

Traditional gender expectations in society often prevent or elide the contributions of women to music, especially in terms of instrumental virtuosity or even simply playing an instrument. Childbirth, marriage, caretaking of children and ailing or special needs family members continue to affect women’s participation in musical activities more than for men, as was evidenced by the stories of many of the women in my study. Women’s connections to singing and dancing sometimes allow women to be musical while still fulfilling these many expectations, since singing may be part of housework or child care. Instrumental music requires concentration of time with hands unoccupied by domestic activities, small children, or work.

Within my study group, Ada McCown’s musical activities, more than her husband’s, has been severely curtailed for some time now by caring for her elderly mother. Some examples from outside my study, but still within the realm of vernacular roots music in Appalachia, illustrate these points well. Ora Watson, an accomplished fiddler from Western

North Carolina, put the fiddle down during her married life and only picked it up again after the death of her husband in order to not compete with him, as well as being too busy raising her family. Guitar virtuoso Etta Baker, from the foothills of the North Carolina Blue Ridge, had a similar story, and both women became active in their musical communities in their older age, recording their music, and performing regularly and widely in public. Kentucky banjoist and fiddler Blanche Coldiron was poised for a career as Blanche the Mountain Girl when she married and began raising a family. Having a special needs daughter and then a husband that needed her care further postponed a career in music, though Blanche continued to play and nurtured other players in her later years. Men may also become more active in playing music in their later years, but this is often due to their retirement from wage-earning jobs as well as the pressures of family obligations lessening. There might be similar life-courses in the slackening or quickening of time spent on musical pursuits, but the details may still be tied to gender roles.

Men's music is most supported by family members historically, and many women continue to play supportive roles through music by accompanying their fiddle-playing fathers, husbands, or brothers on guitar, such as eastern Kentuckians Donna Lamb, Annadeene Fraley, Clela Alfrey, and Ada McCown. On the other hand, women also often receive a great deal of support in their own instrumental playing by these same family members, and it is becoming more common for women to be the musician of the family. These same women are recognized as authorities in their own right and looked up to by the old-time community, even if they are not valorized by scholars and the contest system of old-time music. Male and female children alike in this network appear to be supported by their family members, who drive them to and from musical events, pay for instruments and

lessons, and sit through performances and jam sessions. Support and encouragement of playing may also occur through other family members, such as siblings, nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles, and grandparents. As one example, Paul David Smith was supported greatly by his brother Jerry in his later years as his health prevented him from driving himself to musical jobs and events.

7.4.1 Inclusion/Exclusion in Old-Time Music

Despite the increasing numbers of women involved in old-time music, over and over again women complain that they are subtly and sometimes not so subtly excluded from music-making. Nearly every woman I interviewed said she had been excluded from a jam or other event due to her gender. Sometimes they blame themselves, or their exclusion is accepted as just another example of “too much testosterone,” as several of my informants characterized some jam sessions where certain males took over. Suzanne Savell served up a good rural Southern metaphor when she said, with a smile, resignation, indulgence and acceptance, “They’re just being roosters.” Although men have also described feeling intimidated by being part of jam sessions, I heard that more from females. Of the white females interviewed for this study, most agreed that they were often the only female musician at some of the jam sessions they frequented, and that gender was an important variable in their musical lives. Not everyone is comfortable with jam sessions as ways of developing their musicianship or in relating to other musicians.

Yancey Martin’s study of gender in work situations provides useful theories on how the social relations in a jam session reflect power relations, creating certain kinds of space that might be more or less comfortable for a musician, depending on his or her gender. Attention to the practicing and performing of gender produces insights into how inequalities

are created in social spaces, such as a musical space (Yancey Martin 2003). Paying attention to how gender is socially constructed – talked about, acted on, used, denied, and ignored (343), as well as when, where, and how gender is acknowledged is important, as not everything signifies gender (344). In a jam session, as in a workplace, men and women socially construct each other by means of a two-sided dynamic of gendering practices and the practicing of gender. This dynamic significantly affects both women's and men's experiences, but the gendering practices produced through interaction may impair women workers' (or players') identities and confidence.

As Yancey Martin points out,

Men need not invent schemes for excluding women from daily work processes in order for women to experience exclusion. As men engage in gendering practices consistent with institutionalized norms and stereotypes of masculinity, they nonetheless create social closure and oppression. If women simply go along with institutionalized norms and stereotypes of femininity, they remain outside of men's informal networks and usually formal ones, too. (Yancey Martin 2003:360)

Habits are often responsible for social behavior, and often people stay in the comfort zone to which they've been socialized. As Yancey Martin also points out, people practice performing their gender their entire lives. It is not surprising, then, that we are so good at it and it becomes such a habit that we are not aware of it. Masculinities in musicking may be performed in such a manner that they are viewed simply as "normal" behavior, and it often is difficult to tease out when musicians are being masculinist and when they are simply being egotistical. According to Sharon Bird, masculinities are encouraged more often in

homosocial environments than in heterosocial environments such as the jam sessions I attended, so perhaps one of the results of increasing participation by women in instrumental music is a decreasingly masculinist environment in many ways.

More and more, women are constructing their own informal networks that allow for movement and status in the old-time community. Anna Roberts-Gevault calls up the importance of networks in her story of how she became involved with the eastern Kentucky old-time music community through her college in New England. An old-time player she knew also knew Suzanne Savell, the traditional music coordinator at Appalshop. “She said, you know Sarah – oh, do you want to be my intern and live in my house?”

The prestige system of the old-time community values leadership and virtuosity, as implied by the previous focus on exclusion and competition, but also values inclusion and nurturing, so there may be mixed messages sent and received about the place of an individual within the community. There also may be a variety of roles that may be negotiated to help a person find a more-or-less comfortable and acceptable mode of participating. Nurturing may be one role which, while adopted by both sexes, might find a different expression according to gender socializing. Suzanne Savell thought that perhaps women are more competitive about their hospitality and nurturing than men were, and perhaps that is true, as women definitely were the ones providing homemade snacks and treats during jam sessions. The men wanted to get on with the music and be nurtured there. With that said, I would define about an even number of men and women in this old-time community as nurturers of the music. For example, both Beverly May and John Haywood often take the time to teach someone a tune rather than being part of a hot jam elsewhere. Roy Tackett and I were eliciting tunes from the less experienced musicians during

Appalshop jams and making sure that there were tunes they could join in on, especially when more experienced players kept suggesting less common or more difficult tunes. Rich Kirby nurtures people, but also nurtures the Appalshop cooperative, WMMT radio, and many of the programs that promote old-time music. Both men and women in this community are viewed by their compatriots as repositories of tunes, which also means they are viewed as authorities. Tunes identified as “Kentucky tunes” form the backbone of the material, but individuals who bring in new tunes that fit in well with the abilities and aesthetic of the group are called on to lead them and teach them if they are not easily picked up. These tunes can then become identified with particular people, which leads to indexical meanings being layered on to these tunes to deepen their emotional content.

Although it is at heart a participatory style of music, old-time music has become more presentational, and the more presentational it becomes, the greater the enactment of masculinities, which tends to exclude women or downplay the contributions of women who perform more feminine gender roles. Men’s networks and perceptions of males as being more capable definitely results in their being more likely to form bands with each other, and become successful presentational musicians, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 8 (Yancey Martin 2003). Producing old-time music events relies heavily on networks and informal connections, which in turn rely on successful negotiation and reproduction of appropriate social roles to some extent. In eastern Kentucky, the producers of these musical events are likely to come from within the group, and they have their own stakes and behaviors that are brought to the events.

Networks are essential for getting paid – or unpaid – musical jobs, invitations to parties, and for acceptance at festival campfires and jam sessions, so people have to figure

out how to stay in those networks. In these social networks it is important to behave properly and follow musical rules as well as social rules, to remain within acceptable limits of expected roles. Many of these networks are forged through active playing, which involves mobility and the ability to spend quite a bit of time practicing and improving one's musicianship, and through the musicians' capabilities of organizing and/or being invited to musical events.

7.4.2 Gendered Instrumentation

As pianist Leon Fleisher famously said, "Musicians must think of themselves as athletes of the small muscles," and men are more often connected with athletic feats and manipulation of technological creations such as musical instruments. Women's involvement with the music often seems more embodied than the men's, as they are more likely to be dancers and singers rather than instrumentalists. If they do play instruments in vernacular roots music, they are more likely to be accompanists rather than lead or melody players. While there are certainly notable exceptions to these "rules," the purpose of this chapter is not simply to point those out, but to use theoretical perspectives from critical music geography and musicology, as well as feminist scholarship in both disciplines, to help test generally accepted ideas of what seems "natural," helping expose the mechanisms behind the gendering of music in the region.

As described earlier in the chapter, the dominance of the fiddle in folk music of the Appalachian region is a central tenet of music scholarship on the region, and may be followed by another statement either that it was played mainly by men (Bufwack and Oermann 1993:12, Milnes 1999:34) or that it was played only by men (Rehder 2004:249), thus articulating gender (Diamond 2000:107). Interestingly, this situation is also noted by

Diamond in her study of Nova Scotia musical traditions, one that is often compared with Appalachia because of its Scots-Irish ethnic majority. As also described earlier, this statement is then sometimes followed by a listing of the female exceptions that “deserve mention,” though rarely are they then discussed in depth, nor is the fiddle as “manly prerogative” questioned or explained.

Despite its importance to old-time music as a lead instrument, the jam sessions I attended had relatively few fiddle players of either gender, with the Appalshop jam typically attracting the most (three to five out of twelve to twenty total players). Jammin’ on the Porch often only included Lewis Lamb, who led the session along with his daughter, Donna. The Berea College jam did not have a regular fiddler, but was periodically enlivened by a visiting fiddler from out of town, such as Anna Roberts-Gevault or Alan Jabbour. There seems to be a sense that some fiddlers don’t want to have too much competition around them (Roberts-Gevault), but I have also experienced jams where a big crowd of fiddlers can really enjoy having a fiddle section.

Among the jam sessions I attended, there were thirteen male fiddle players and six female fiddle players, but there seems to be a change occurring where more young women are taking up the fiddle. As Beverly May states, when she and her buddy, Cathy Gore, were playing together in the 1990s, there were “not many womenfolk. And that’s changed. That’s changed dramatically. It seems that the women fiddlers outnumber the guys now. I don’t know why that’s changed, but it seems to have really taken off.” Anna Roberts-Gevault identified the rise of music schools like the Cowan Creek Mountain Music School that help break things down and make it easier for most people to learn as one mechanism allowing for more women to feel comfortable learning the fiddle. They are thus able to have long-

term and intentional mentorship that keeps people going through feelings of discomfort or insecurity. She explains, “Now there’s more a sense that anyone can learn it. They’re integrating different techniques from different genres of music even if music doesn’t come easily to you.” She compared this to the common method of learning described by women in the past, like Dora Mae Wagers, who learned to play despite having to hide her playing by learning in a closet, which could only be accomplished by a hyper-talented person. Diamond credits more women becoming fiddlers because of changes in gender roles in American society, and by extension in music, where women are more accepted as leaders (2000:99).

Banjo is an instrument that seems to have more parity in numbers of male and female players in the old-time community, and is an interesting instrument in its dual roles in old-time music as both melody and rhythm, as both lead and accompaniment. As described in the section on banjo jokes in Chapter 3, the five-string, old-time banjo is somewhat unstable in its ability to keep in tune, but also occupies a shadowy ground where it rarely reproduces all the notes of a tune. It, rather, plays with the tune, skipping notes and approximating the melody, all the while embellishing with rhythm, chords, and stray notes that make it delightful to listen to but sometimes hard to pick out the main notes. As further described in Chapter 3, it has a history of being the instrument of the “other,” which banjo scholar George Gibson cites as one reason the banjo has been an instrument considered to be acceptable as a woman’s instrument. After all my ruminating about this, I was surprised to count up my research subjects and learn that the numbers above were actually not that different for the banjo than for the fiddle. Out of the seventeen banjo players in my study, seven were women, which is about forty one percent of the group.

Bufwack and Oermann cite piano and pump organs as female-identified instruments, discussing the huge market between 1860-1920 in rural America, and the image of woman leading singing of family at the piano, women as collectors and keepers of children's songs (12-13). Certainly, Angie DeBord's earliest musical experiences as described earlier in this chapter fall into these gendered instrumental roles. A few other men did play piano, especially with religious music, and it is possible that some of the other men in my study learned piano but did not mention it. Felecia Ballard did not think of the piano as a particularly feminine instrument, but Jake Ravizee described it not being considered "manly" when he was younger. It is certainly not an instrument much associated with the old-time community in this day and time, at least in the South, although old-time musicians that play contradance music have adapted to its usage. It was more commonly used in secular, vernacular roots music in Kentucky in the past than it is today.

7.4.3 Embodiment

The egalitarian ethos of the musical community, as described in Chapter 5, would seem to lead to a more-or-less equal number of men and women playing and singing, but in fact the percentage of female players is quite low, compared to the number of listeners and dancers. Dancing is the role that females seem to take part in the highest percentages in the old-time and bluegrass communities. This is true not only of community dances, where it is quite common that females dance together and some females assume the male role, but it is much less common in the reverse. It is only in certain contradance communities where gender roles are downplayed and stretched, or some extreme male-only situations – such as logging camps or Boy Scouts – that men commonly will dance with other men or fill feminine gender roles. Until reaching the professional level, there are usually many more

women dancing. In checking the winners of Clifftop dance competition, I noticed that the numbers are about even or maybe even more men.

In my study sites, there were only female participants in the afternoon [clogging] dance workshops held at two of the Old-Time Music Revivals, and the teacher was female. Males participated only as musicians and observers in the dance workshops. The community dance had a much larger participation by women than men, and some of the women played the male dance role, as they often do. During the jam sessions at Appalshop, two women regularly danced as part of their participation, even though one was an accomplished and enthusiastic banjo player; in other words, she had other skills to bring to the jam besides dancing, but chose that mode of participation. At another jam session I attended in Boone, North Carolina, two women came early to the jam and set up their “step-a-tune” dancing boxes (made from 3’ x 3’ plywood) and it was obvious that this was a regular practice for them. The Cumberland Falls jam consisted mostly of gospel songs, and there was no dancing to accompany the music. The Berea Jammin’ on the Porch is usually too crowded in the winter to allow for dancing. Although there is a little dancing from both children and adults when it is outside, I have noticed more children of both sexes dancing there. Neither the Berea College jam nor the Sue Bennett old-time jams included dancing. The Pound jam had a large and enthusiastic percentage of audience members dancing in the aisles, which included both men and women. Along with the blatant embodiment involved in dancing, where the body itself is the instrument, there are perhaps two other main reasons women are the most likely to be amateur dancers. One is the connection of dance with emotional expression, which is much more accepted among women. The other is the presence of the male gaze, under which women are used to performing, but which seems to feminize men.

Women are also more involved in singing and religious music. Citron says that women crave more direct expression of texts and embodiment of the music (which I interpret partly as dance), and that men are more comfortable with abstractness (which includes instrumental music). She explains women's propensity for singing in this way: "Narrative genres such as song and character piece have held a greater attraction, probably because they have provided a more direct means of female self-expression... Women seemed to crave the potential for their own involvement or literal embodiment in the process of that communication, in other words, the performance" (Citron 1994:22). Gender roles and relations are reinscribed through practices that are often unconscious and are also implicated in the types of instruments chosen by different people. As described in Chapter 3, the instruments are gendered in part because of the roles they play in the musical events that constitute traditional musical space. Privileging instrumental over vocal music is a nineteenth-century phenomenon in classical music as well, which "marks the ascendance of a music in which the social trace is the most embedded and hardest to track" (Williams 2001a:52), referring to the more abstract nature of instrumental music.

7.4.3 Prestige and Value System in Old-Time Music

In old-time music, instrumental music is the mainstay, even though singing also has a privileged place. The fiddle has become valorized as the carrier of the melody, the "lead," falling into the anthropological pattern that certain instruments that are most valued are usually or always played by men (Sarkissian 1992:343). The fiddle is much louder than most voices, as is the bluegrass banjo, so these instruments can drown out singers, effectively silencing them. Conventions reinforce and reflect social values (Citron 1993:122), which includes one of the elements that accompanies the fiddle as a lead

instrument is the pressure to keep current on tunes and be able to lead them, to be able to respond to the requests of others. One female fiddler expressed the desire to not always have to be that person, to sometimes be able to just follow along and not have to be the one to choose the tunes.

Anna Roberts-Gevault reflected quite a bit on gender in old-time music. She was critical about the masculinist prestige system, especially the national-scale, more abstract understanding of old time music that is represented in festivals. She says, “it’s become this experience for some people that it’s so much more about how good you are and it’s not about how good of a community member and how generous you are.” On the other hand, she also participates in this very system: “I like going balls to the wall, and there’s totally a gendered phrase.” She enjoys demonstrating her virtuosity, and flying in the face of gendered expectations. “That’s why I like to play fast tunes sometimes to show that girls can really kickass...I played this fast tune and this guy said I didn’t expect to hear you play like that because you look like such a sweet little girl.” She expressed an emotion I have felt and other women have expressed to me, that there is also something exciting about exceeding expectations, and in being an exceptional woman. This is a mechanism for perpetuating gendered ideas that indicates there is a reward for oppressed groups to be complicit in their oppression. As Anna states, “maybe I like that kind of attention, maybe that’s part of it. Maybe I like being the only girl.”

In old-time music, there is a parallel to the classic theme of the heroic quest and accompanying transcendence of everyday life in abstract, composed Western music. This classic story in old-time music is the young man from the city going in search of the old man fiddler in the country – “The socialization process encourages separateness, exploration, and

adventure, which result in personal change.” (Citron 1994:23). Such men are accepted and embraced in lieu of the people whose musical feet they have sat at and embraced (Bruce Greene, John Harrod, Mike Seeger). Jean Ritchie also did this in England, but she has been valued more over the years for exploitation of her own Appalachian family background, which may be more feminized but also can be viewed as most desirable universally in terms of traditional music.

Perhaps the more abstract the idea of music is, the more masculinist it might be. In attempting to understand what makes this antithetical to traditional music, I turn to musicologist Citron, whose attempt to make sense of the relative lack of women’s engagement with the sonata form of classical music might be paralleled to the dichotomy in old-time music between more abstract instrumental music and more grounded vocal music. “The metaphysical and transcendent characteristics of absolute music, therefore, might seem alien and alienating” though because most female composers are socialized in mainstream society they may “as a result experience ambivalence and conflict. Perhaps a psychology of contradiction aptly characterizes a crucial aspect of women’s relationship with absolute music” (Citron 1994:24). Separating the technical prowess of the music from its relationships and from its community embeddedness, as described by Anna Roberts-Gevault above, perhaps brings old-time music closer to what Citron calls “absolute music.” There does seem to be some conflict in the relationship of some women to the music, and this may be part of what holds them back.

It seems that understanding the music as tied to places and people brings it closer to a feminist ideal, where individual positions are better understood and not abstracted into an undifferentiated whole: Because the universal is often represented as masculine ((Rose

1993) among others), paying attention to individual differences emphasizes sociohistoric specificity which entails historical grounding, positionality and involvement of the individual in relation to the group. In the postmodern understanding of author-text-reader, the reader or responder is granted more importance than the author, so that even though the person passing on the tune is remembered and interpellated, the *process* is emphasized, which might help de-valorize the masculinist emphasis on the great performer. Giving credit to the musician who is passing on the music, as the “conduit” of the music, decenters the author and creates a genealogy for the music that further emphasizes the relationship between the cultural practice and all the people who participate in it (Barthes and Foucault).

While I focus on the players of the music in this dissertation, I also acknowledge how audiences become participants in this music in my discussions of music events, such as the Old Time Music Revival in Chapter 5 or Pickin’ in the Pound in Chapter 6. Brett Ratliff also credits the audience of the Morehead Old Time Fiddlers Convention with being very participatory in getting the event started and keeping it going. Through repetition and accessibility, the events become traditionalized and audience members start bringing food, interacting with the musicians through dance, singing along, requesting favorite tunes and songs, and even getting up the courage to join in after learning by watching and listening. Women often make up a larger part of the audience than the players, but they also help create the conditions in which this music is performed and appreciated. They are steeped in the social and aesthetic conditions in which a work is written or fashioned and can bring in their “reader” sensibility to influence the “text” of the music (Williams 2001a, Citron 1994). Perhaps valorizing the “reader’s” influence and de-centering the “author” of the text further

credits the community as a more feminist ideal than the more masculinist vision of the lone virtuosic player.

One question I attempted to answer but did not get much feedback on was to see if women's contributions and music were discounted by the members of this community – including from the players themselves. It was not easy to find obvious evidence of this, partly because of habits and mechanisms that I am embedded in, which blind me to their workings. Polite society also covers up such bald evidence of inequality and unpleasantness. One male informant, in fact, expressed extra support of and belief in female musicians, and liked to give them extra encouragement as he felt they were unjustly discriminated against. For these reasons, I still think that detailed observations of both actions and words are useful in teasing out the beliefs of a community.

Women were more likely to express insecurity at their own abilities, but they did not discount women as a whole. Probably the most obvious negative expression I encountered had to do with all-female bands rather than the abilities of women, and this had to do with how my interviewee felt female bands were viewed rather than with her being critical of other women. When I asked if she had to work hard to find a group of women to play with, she replied,

It probably wouldn't happen by chance. It could definitely happen, because there are so many amazing women that play old time music. Oh we're all chicks, cool. Uncle Earl³³ is a really interesting phenomenon right now. This whole girl band is not really something I'm interested in – it just seems so limiting. Because then you cease to be anything else – you're just a girl

³³ An all-female band popular in the 2000s, but now on hiatus.

band. Another group of all girls will be compared even if they're nothing like them. (Roberts-Gevault)

Obviously, there are innumerable all male bands that would not be described as “all boy bands,” so even when the term “girl band” is used ironically, it points out the power differential that exists between men and girls. They are not identified that way, because they are the norm, but these homosocial groups also help perpetuate masculinist ideals. As Bird notes, heterosocial environments tend to downplay hegemonic masculine tendencies, while homosocial groups tend to perpetuate hegemonic masculinities (Bird 1996). One of the characteristics of the eastern Kentucky old-time community is its relatively heterosocial atmosphere, as evidenced in the relatively high percentages of women participating as musicians, as well as a wide variety of ages. This variety of people participating, I believe, helps dissipate the move toward dominant masculinity that can occur in such activities as jam sessions, as described earlier in this chapter.

The prestige system set up in the old-time community emphasizes connections to Old Masters, which are more likely to be male because of historical forces that favored their development. Place of origin is also very important, privileging growing up in the mountains. Traditional methods of transference are much preferred and valorized, especially learning within families or from a neighbor in the community. Virtuosity on an instrument and availability for playing and traveling to festivals and other events are very important in becoming recognized as an authority in old-time music. All of these characteristics taken together can perpetuate a system which prefers male players, in the same way that male artists have received preference over time as described by Linda Nochlin when she asked “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” (Nochlin 1994).

As already noted several times, when a couple plays music together, the man tends to play fiddle (“lead”) and the woman tends to play guitar (“backup”). Musical accompaniment, like being in the “follow,” or traditionally female role in dancing, is often undervalued, and not valorized as the lead position. As a leading expert on dance, Richard Powers, notes, the “follower” is interpreting signals with active responsiveness that also allows for expression of individuality. In the best relational music, both dancers (or players) achieve a state of flow in which they are actually responding to the other, rather than it always being a one-way stream (Powers 2010). Erynn Marshall describes among her research subjects in West Virginia that husband-wife teams were important in the generation that came of age in the mid-twentieth century and that playing accompaniment was not necessarily seen as an inferior or easier role, but the point is that women’s choices were limited and “women were seldom given a chance to be leaders” (Marshall 2006:118).

In many ways, the old-time community with its participatory emphasis also has a more feminist value system, valuing the development of community and relationships, with less emphasis on “stars” and more on the music as a compilation of many voices and many different abilities. The old-time community has room for a wide variety of roles which may be fulfilled through broad interpretation and performance of gender roles. Feminist musicologist Citron identifies “women’s musics” with descriptors that ring true with most old-time music: a focus more on the here and now, “personal growth through interaction with others and for the benefit of the larger group, occurring in the context of interconnected systems within a tangible reality of finite time and space” (Citron 1994:24).

While I don’t think of performance-oriented music as necessarily masculine and participation as necessarily feminine, the professionalization of music creates a more

masculine atmosphere and more men are represented proportionally as authorities on music, and being validated through economic reward. The masculine author is de-centered in traditional music, but has been replaced by the iconic tradition-bearer. The musical canon – especially of fiddle tunes - and the valorization of the great men of the past, the emulation of their styles and repertoire all promote a very masculinist vision of old-time music.

Therefore, I see a masculinist virtuosic prestige system in tension with a feminist relational prestige system in the old-time community in eastern Kentucky as well as nationally.

Anna Roberts-Gevault saw the Kentucky music scene as less masculinist than other places, and contrasted valorization of local masters with the more masculinist search for prestige through technique. For her, it was creating relationships with those “local heroes” like Paul David Smith, who she valued as being down to earth, humble, and generous with sharing their music. “Here there’s a bigger focus on local heroes and less on stunning technique.”

7.5 Conclusions

Though there tend to be many girls who play classical violin and other band instruments, as they get older, the percentage of women seems to diminish and the higher the skill level, the lower the percentage of women involved. In old-time music, women tend to come to instrumental playing later in life, to learn as adults, and to not spend as much time with it as the men. Many women expressed to me that they disliked having music classes along with children because the children picked things up so much more quickly that it made them feel bad and less motivated. In the beginning fiddle classes I have attended where this was obvious, it seemed to help keep us motivated if we spent more time together and bonded socially as well as musically. A couple of the women I interviewed in this

situation became somewhat impatient when I asked them about their music, as they really put their identity in other aspects of their lives, and other talents. Men tend to spend more time with their instruments, practicing, building, tweaking. Women tend to spend more time being social, tending relationships, and they often have to take care of children, but perhaps also may use this as a reason to not go through the tedium of practice. In my research, I found that there were both men and women that I consider to be nurturers of the community and of other peoples' music, but there were few women that I found to be as focused on developing their own professional musical capacity as the men were. Women tend to be disproportionately represented as producers of Cowan Creek Music School, though not as the "talent" actually doing the teaching and performing.

When females do play instruments, they often fill accompaniment roles rather than playing lead instruments such as the fiddle. Women also expressed, more than men did, a feeling of being unwelcome at a jam session or other musical event, observations that called their talents into question, or insecurities over their abilities. Women and men both seemed to take leadership, teaching, documentation, and music production roles in this old-time music community, but there were still gendered interpretations of these activities. Virtuosoic expectations in playing old-time and bluegrass music are a masculinist expression of the music that may be embraced by males or females, but more often by males. Masculinist prestige systems are tempered or balanced by feminist relational tendencies in old-time music and its community. Expressions of dominant masculinity may be met by challenges and by resistance, both of which may be somewhat institutionalized in the old-time music community.

Power relations such as those discussed in this chapter are also expressed and sometimes amplified in festivals and other presentational versions of vernacular roots music. Here, the habits of privilege may be reinscribed in the networks that facilitate participation by certain groups of people (whites and males) over other groups of people (African Americans and females) as authoritative figures. Analysis of one festival in the next chapter attempts to show how these habits are reproduced on the micro scale of the decision-making interactions between committee members.

Chapter 8: Berea College's Celebration of Traditional Music

Folk festivals are important arenas for the display of traditions, contributing to cementing ideas about authenticity and tradition by who is invited and how they are presented (Williams 2006). Festivals have become “portable communities” for musicians and fans of the music (Gardner 2004), as well as important reinforcers of larger musical networks and communities. The music itself, along with accompanying conversations and negotiations among organizers, audience members, and performers are among the texts that circulate and produce both musical communities and regional space. Festival organizers become “gatekeepers,” and their networks of power influence others’ definitions of authenticity, by controlling access to positions of authority in the presentation and representation of the region’s music.

By investigating and analyzing the organization and lineup of one small, but key festival in eastern Kentucky, this chapter demonstrates the important role of festivals and their accompanying discourse about tradition, race, and gender in producing Appalachian space and Appalachian musicians. To accomplish this, after a brief introduction to this festival, the Celebration of Traditional Music (CTM) and its importance to my research, I set its context by considering the history of American folk festivals and their role in defining traditional music, authenticity, and the Appalachian region. I then turn back to the CTM to describe its history, organization, and the documentation and methods I used for my research, which included archival research of printed material as well as audio and video recordings and participant observation as a producer of later festivals. Networks emerged as an important structure in producing the festival and its accompanying portrayal and representation of race and gender. I analyze some of the early organizational meetings for

evidence of networks and their accompanying habits, then turn to describing the impact of race and gender on the festival over the years.

The annual Celebration of Traditional Music (CTM) has been produced by one of the region's premiere Appalachian centers – at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky – since 1974. The College itself has been at the center of discussions about Appalachian identity and scholarship at least since its third president, William Goodell Frost, famously identified its Appalachian constituency as “Our Contemporary Ancestors” in 1899.³⁴ The College, founded on principles of “anti-slavery, anti-rum, and anti-caste” also has an historic and continuing dedication to interracial and co-gendered education and activism on the part of social justice, which means that conversations about the festival's organization and lineup also include discussions that consider race and gender as well as how the region should be defined and represented.

The CTM has an advisory board comprised of regionally and nationally recognized scholars, musicians, and music producers. The festival is viewed by both its producers and audience as an important regional event, showcasing the most traditional Appalachian music while also striving to represent a diverse cross-section of the traditional music of Appalachia, minimizing the presence of bluegrass and revivalist influences.³⁵ The newsletter and other promotional materials over the years describe the festival as “strictly

³⁴ Frost, W. G. (1899) Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains. *Atlantic Monthly*, 83, 311-319.

³⁵ Parrish, Tom and Loyal Jones, “Traditional, Traditional” BCAC Newsletter Vol. 6, No. 4 describes the festival as “what, we may say in all modesty, has become recognized as a major Appalachian musical event.” In “Traditional Music—Seeing is Believing,” BCAC Newsletter Volume 7, No. 4 (1978) states, “This year's celebration, supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, was No. 5 in the series, which already seems to have developed a special standing in the world of traditional music.” “Celebration!” Vol. 14, No. 3 (1985): “...what we can describe without undue immodesty as one of Appalachia's top musical events.” A caption to a photograph of the 1975 concert finale states, “By its second year, the Celebration of Traditional Music had already become an Appalachian institution” (Vol. 18, No. 3 (1989)). The musicians are often referred to as “stars” or “stellar performers” or the word “constellation” is used to imply an arrangement of stars.

old-time,”³⁶ but they also often promoted the star quality of the performers, which in some ways seems antithetical to the idea of authenticity. There is a place for the virtuosic musicians in the vernacular roots community, to bring in new tunes and inspire others, but it is important that they not shut down the voices of the non-virtuosic musicians. This same dialectic of virtuosity and inclusivity, of popular and folk elements to the music, is present in the old-time community, as described in earlier chapters.

My analysis of meetings of the festival’s organizers in the early years (1974-76, 1978, 1979, and 1983) and the lineup over the years regarding composition in terms of race and gender reveals the importance of networks – with their embedded racialized and gendered preferences – in decisions made about the festival. The influence of networks is sometimes obscured by the continuing discussion about the nature of tradition, authenticity, and representation of the Appalachian region, as well as the influence of the professionalization of folk music. Discourse analysis of planning meetings from the early years shows how habits of whiteness and male privilege – especially when they are somewhat unconscious – affect decisions in hiring musicians to perform at the festival, so that the majority white male committee hired mostly white male musicians, and rarely hired more than one African American group or singer per year. Female musician participation declined with further professionalization of traditional, old-time music, though then may have increased along with an increase in the numbers of professional female old-time musicians, or through increasing pressure and support from festival organizers to overcome patriarchal habits.

Through this analysis and through my own tenure as the organizer of the festival, I discovered that one of my biggest concerns concerning race in the CTM was the festival’s

³⁶ Newsletters Vol. 3, No. 4; Vol. 4, No. 4; and Vol. 6, No. 4.

history of hiring African American performers from outside the region to represent the music from inside the region. The committee had difficulty identifying traditional African American musicians and singers from the region, which seemed to stem not only from the previously identified reliance on networks reflecting habits of whiteness, but also from entrenched ideas – on the part of black and white people alike – of Appalachia and folk music as being white. The relatively small black population in the region is no doubt an obstacle to finding significant numbers of traditional musicians appropriate for the festival, but I also questioned whether the committee and organizers - including me - really understood traditional music in the black Appalachian community and whether we were representing it accurately.

For example, the young, black, revivalist Carolina Chocolate Drops string band is perhaps the most compatible African American group with the old-time aesthetic of the Celebration of Traditional Music, but neither the musicians nor their Piedmont style are from the Appalachian region. Inviting them to represent “black music” in the CTM may fulfill a desire on the part of the organizers or audience to invite more African American performers, but I question whether their music accurately represents the traditional music of the region and whether African American Appalachian people would recognize this music as traditional in their communities. The musical and geographical imprecision may help contribute to the invisibility of African American Appalachian traditional music and musicians by implying that black Appalachians and their musics either do not exist or can be equated to African Americans and black music from anywhere. On the other hand, the emergence of the Carolina Chocolate Drops may signify the beginning of reclamation of black traditions from the shadow of white minstrelsy of the nineteenth century and racist

practices of the commercial music industry of the twentieth century. The importance of the Chocolate Drops in recent discussions of race and authenticity is further investigated in Chapter 9. Meanwhile, their presence at the CTM and in the old-time music scene helps bring up the following question: what value is there in attempting to bound the music presented in the CTM, or in adhering, at least loosely, to boundaries of region when presenting a festival of traditional music?

While music is often used as a marker of aesthetic identity of both “our” music and “their” music (Roy 2002), it is dangerous to essentialize certain musics as belonging only to one race or another. Conversely, however, there is danger in not acknowledging that different ethnic or cultural groups have their own modes of expression, their own methods to commemorate their history, and their own context in which people can make sense of who they are individually and as a group (Jackson 2009:230). Ensuring acknowledgement of the source of the traditions passed down, and accuracy of rendition are two ways that several of the musicians I interviewed explained as being very important to the continuation and valuation of their music (Lamb, Larke).

Another major concern for the committee, at least in its recent incarnation, was in inviting a balanced number of male and female performers. The fact that the majority of the performers and organizers were male seemed to reflect both the networks that were key to the festivals’ organization, as well as ideas of authenticity and authority. Inviting older musicians who were viewed as more “authentic” or more skilled usually involved men, as they have been the ones most involved in presentational versions of vernacular roots music, so insuring that older performers were invited often weighted the scales on the male side, after the first few festivals which featured more women.

8.1 Introduction to Berea College and the Celebration of Traditional Music

Berea College prides itself on being the oldest interracial and coeducational institution in the South, having begun that legacy before the Civil War. Dedication to these principles of equality was re-stated by a committee composed of faculty and administrators in 1969 who created a reaffirmation of the College's "Great Commitments" that continue to guide their policies. Early in its history, Berea was supported by missionary associations and other beneficent organizations, first for its service to African Americans and then to support its connection with the education of mountain youth. As described earlier, Berea's connection to Appalachia was forged mostly with its third president, William G. Frost (1892-1920), who also initiated the student craft program, beginning Berea's close association with the traditional arts, emphasizing and celebrating the connection of folk traditions to the mountains. This was continued especially by W.D. Weatherford, president from 1967 to 1984, under whose tenure the Appalachian Center was created and the CTM begun.

Though the College's dedication to interracial harmony has waxed and waned and not always been successful or wholehearted on the part of the (mostly white) administration and faculty, the Appalachian Center, formed in 1970, made a special effort to provide racially inclusive programming at least since the beginning of the CTM in 1974. Meant to be both educational and entertaining from its inception, the CTM creates a particular sense of the Appalachian culture as accessible, participatory, grounded in family and relationships, and community-minded, while also including scholarship. It fulfills musicologist Simon Frith's claim, that "the folk festival seeks to solve the problem of musical 'authenticity'; it

offers the experience of the folk ideal, the experience of collective, participatory music making, the chance to judge music by its direct contribution to sociability” (Frith 1996b:41).

The problem of representing the “folk ideal” involves three inter-related issues that have been central to the CTM throughout its history which include geographical questions about race, gender, region, and representation: 1) tensions over what counts as “traditional” music and who may be designated as a “traditional” musician; 2) definitions of the region whose traditions the festival is representing; and 3) how to adequately represent the diversity of traditions found in the region. In all three cases, the idea of authenticity is crucial to the festival’s very existence.

Ideally, the musicians are chosen for their abilities to sing, play an instrument, and entertain, but also because they learned their craft in a traditional manner – as contrasted with formal music education – and because they perform music common to the Appalachian region or representative of the region. They may be chosen for their ability to play well with others, to contrast or blend with others. Because a dance is always part of the program, there must be a string band to play for that. The organizers also seek to create a diverse program, with various instruments and singing styles represented. Headliners are balanced by lesser-known artists who might be chosen for their “authenticity.”

Although women were fairly well-represented in the beginning years of the festival (about forty percent), the percentage declined over the years to about twenty percent. Their participation was not really an issue discussed during the recorded early meetings, but there were several women who helped with early leadership, including musicians Jean Ritchie and Betty Smith, and dance leader Ethel Capps. In later years, women have not always been on the first list of potential performers, but are sought after and added in a conscious effort

to include them on the second or third round of discussions. During meetings of the Traditional Music Committee, it is often but not always the female members who bring up the female performer possibilities or point out the discrepancy in the percentages of males and females suggested on the first round. African Americans have been included in the festival for most of its years, but often they are not well-integrated into the festival and, again, the committee struggles to discover appropriate musicians to invite. Their inclusion has even been contested by previous committee members. Native Americans have been involved in only four of its thirty-six years and special invitations and attention are typically needed to ensure their participation. Other ethnic groups have rarely been featured in the weekend.

In this chapter, I address how the CTM works to create or consolidate communities, also creating a sense of locality and region through its presentation of music. I address how musical networks are expressed through the festival, and how they recreate power relations in the region, or in communities within the region. I undertake to understand how the music is localized within the region and endowed with form, addressing the question of whether it can and does “solve the problem of musical ‘authenticity’.”

8.2 Context of American Festivals

Fiddle contests have been documented as early as 1736 in Richmond, Virginia, and still continue today as part of the revitalization and celebration of vernacular roots music, “[b]ecause fiddling appeared to represent the historic purity and patriotism of white society” (Cohen 2008:4). Musical gatherings and concerts have certainly been held throughout America’s history, especially participatory events including religious music. Folk music festivals have not always been in vogue, however, and may be distinguished from other

musical gatherings in their celebration of music of the past or perhaps the music of particular ethnic groups. Cohen identifies the beginnings of the modern folk festival in various mid-nineteenth century ethnic festivals put on by their own groups to preserve their traditions they felt were “threatened by outside cultural forces,” such as German singing festivals in Texas and Pennsylvania and a Swiss music festival in Wisconsin designed to attract tourists (Cohen 2008:1). The 1910s, ’20s, and ’30s witnessed a real variety of festivals, such as the Colored Music Festival in Atlanta, which featured refined versions of African American culture in contrast to the crude minstrelsy of earlier times. The National Folk Festival was started by Gertrude Knott, being located in various places around the country from year to year, bringing the traditions of different ethnic and occupational groups to a national stage, including Native American tribes and African American groups as well as various white ethnic groups. Many fiddlers’ conventions that are still going strong today, such as in Mt. Airy, North Carolina and Galax, Virginia, had their beginnings at this time. The current folk festivals and other institutions that document, archive, and represent folk music, then, have many influences and historical precedents, most recently the folk revivals of the 1950s and 1960s, but also including the public recreation movement of the last half of the nineteenth century and the enthusiasm for historical pageantry of the early twentieth century (Williams 2006:13).

The progressive movement (ca. 1890-1920) was also influential in the development of early festivals, and included changes in ideas about education, work and play, the role of children in society, and institutional reform. Reverberations of progressive politics still ring in treatments of vernacular roots music, including promotion of the concept of “improvement” as a general moral and social philosophy and the selective use of folk

traditions as wholesome activities. This popular movement took place in the context of increased industrialization in America, which quickly led to romanticization of the agrarian past, with its talismans of folk arts and crafts, music, and dance. Through the work of such people as William Goodell Frost; the “fotched-on”³⁷ women of Kentucky settlement schools such as May Stone, Katherine Petit, and Lucy Furman; and the originators of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild, Appalachia became a focus of attention as a repository of these ancient skills and a canvas on which they could stitch new traditions.

Appalachia was the site of several early festivals, three in particular that helped define vernacular roots music in the region. The Mountain Dance and Folk Festival in Asheville, North Carolina began in 1928, coordinated by Bascom Lamar Lunsford for its first 45 years and still going strong today. Jean Thomas established the Festival of American Folksong near Ashland, Kentucky, soon after (1930-72), and the more short-lived White Top Mountain Folk Festival in Virginia, was held from 1931-1939. The blossoming of folk festivals in North America in the 1920s and '30s coincided with the rise of the recording industry and the earliest country music, now referred to as the “big bang” of commercial country music, especially the Bristol recording sessions of RCA Victor.³⁸ At this time, an anti-immigrant mood, deepening Depression and unemployment, and increased labor union activity combined to create great interest in the expression of the common person in folk music as emblematic of the “true” American. Race was an important component of the search for American culture as the “common people” and their folklore were constructed as white in the white middle class (Campbell 2004). While the Harlem Renaissance was flourishing, the Ku Klux Klan gained momentum and Appalachia was once again tapped for

³⁷ So-called because they were fetched, or “fotched” from somewhere outside of the mountains.

³⁸ This term was coined in Wolfe, C. K. & T. Olson. 2005. *The Bristol Sessions: Writings about the “big bang” of country music*. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, Inc.

evidence of Anglo-Saxon superiority. Henry Ford actively promoted American folk dance and other forms of folk culture in an anti-Semitic attempt to promote white culture. The Depression-era Works Progress Administration was charged with collecting folk music and other cultural artifacts to put unemployed artists and documenters to work.

Folk music and traditional culture has long been implicated in the search for authenticity and national identity, and the early twentieth century was a very active time in establishing patterns for later festivals (Bronner 2002). Around this same time in Canada, a series of festivals was produced by John Murray Gibbon, general manager of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, designed as a tourist attraction to encourage travel on the railroad and to the hotels they owned. They celebrated the idea of Canada's "mosaic of cultures," highlighting various immigrant groups that made up Canada's population rather than promoting the concept of the 'melting pot' of American assimilation. Although they perhaps unsurprisingly celebrated only folk cultures of European extraction, on "an immutable background of white Anglo-Celt (male) hegemony" (Henderson 2005), there was still the possibility that presenting various folk cultures' traditions would increase understanding and appreciation of the Canada's immigrant populations. This is in contrast to the Appalachian festivals, which typically did not celebrate the diversity and variety indicated by a "mosaic of cultures." Apparently, Bascom Lamar Lunsford, while conducting fieldwork in the diverse folk traditions of African Americans and Cherokee as well as European Americans, produced a very monocultural festival in Asheville (Williams 2006: 11). Twentieth-century American festivals ran the gamut from very diverse (National Folk Festival) to monocultural ethnic festivals, but often the monoculture was undifferentiated white American folk culture.

Post-World War II America became increasingly fascinated with American history, which included a rise in folksong collecting by the Lomaxes and Warners. These trends combined with a leftist anti-commercial music movement to form the folksong revival of the 1950s and 1960s. Festivals like the Newport Folk Festival, begun in 1959 as a commercial event, became in the mid-1960s more of a celebration of traditional musicians, with fewer “stars” and more “authentic” folk musicians. The 1970s witnessed a rise in the numbers and variety of festivals, including many small festivals held at colleges like Berea College, and many festivals established then which continue today. The last two decades has witnessed a rise in the number of festivals promoting and celebrating local culture, often meant as tourist attractions, with themes drawn from local resources and products, such as the Mushroom Festival in Irvine, Kentucky, and the Spoonbread Festival in Berea, Kentucky. The tension between invited headliners and local musicians, including a concern with authenticity remain central issues in the presentation of folk festivals, including contention over which traditions to highlight and who is allowed to do so, the central questions in this dissertation (Williams 2006, Gruning 2006).

Some contend that modern festivals are saturnalian, establishing sacred time and space in which normal social codes are suspended (Whisnant 1979:12). Wooley also describes the establishment of sacred time and space in old-time festivals and jam sessions, but emphasizes the creation of an ideal community. Cohen agrees with Wooley, saying that festivals create unity in diversity, drumming up tremendous enthusiasm for the rural traditions of the music and creating an atmosphere of creative unity (84-5). “Folk festivals are often more than the music and the performers. For some, and perhaps for most, they can briefly become complex communities, particularly for those who settle in for the weekend

or longer” (Cohen 2008:83). I contend that successful folk festivals, instead, attempt to create an ideal community, creating a sense of suspension of time, but more-or-less recreating and reinforcing social norms through heightened enactment of everyday activities. Those who produce festivals have a great deal of influence on what vision of vernacular music is presented and who is granted authority and authenticity, but festival goers also play a role in supporting the producers’ vision through their attendance and their contributions to the “portable community.”

8.3 The Celebration of Traditional Music: Its Beginning and Purpose

As described earlier, the Celebration is part of the Appalachian Center’s overall mission of encouraging and coordinating many of the Berea College’s special Appalachian programs, involving students and faculty, serving the region, and documenting the region’s culture. A Traditional Music Committee (TMC) was organized in 1972 “to advise on music collections, records, video tapes and sound tapes for the library and musical instruments and other materials for the museum”³⁹ (Parrish 1974). The first committee’s members were musicians Jean Ritchie, Bradley Kincaid, Asa Martin, and Buell Kazee; music producer, impresario, and creator of the Renfro Valley Barn Dance, John Lair; and the following Berea College faculty: Dean William Jones, Ethel Capps (Director of Country Dance Programs), Raymond McLain (English teacher and musician), Dr. Rolf Hovey (music faculty), and Appalachian Center director Loyal Jones. An early report by Loyal Jones for the period August 1970-September 1971 states that they were “developing a series of concerts that will give us an opportunity to make videotapes of traditional singers for our

³⁹ This manuscript and sound archives have grown to be very important regional collections, serving as the repository for important representations of traditional music in particular, such as field recordings from John Harrod and Barbara Edwards, and including fiddler John Salyer’s home recordings after he refused commercial company’s offer which is a “famous story that almost approaches legend status in the [old-time] community” (Wooley 174).

collections.” In a later conversation with the TMC in January 1974, Loyal Jones shows that those plans became consolidated into the idea of the CTM: “I feel that in the fall, we ought to have the best old-time festival that you could find anywhere.”⁴⁰

Jones’s ultimate goals in creating the festival continued to be documentation and spreading knowledge about traditions from Appalachia, and to approximate oral transmission of the traditions:

I would like to have enough tapes and records, and videotapes, and so forth, to where any scholar might come in and listen to most any traditional artist or other such artists that have come from the mountains. Or to hear practically any song, and hear how it was performed from the oral tradition, rather than learn the way most people have to learn them these days, I think. I don’t mean to knock that. I hate to see the oral tradition begin to die out as I think it has some places. Maybe we can regenerate some interest in these old songs and I think there is a lot of interest now. (TMC recording 1974a)

The Traditional Music Committee’s duties were duly expanded to include advising Loyal Jones and the Appalachian Center on policies and performers for the Celebration. “The celebration is being held both for the sheer fun of it and for the advancement of music scholarship” (Newsletter 3:4: p.1) by the Appalachian Center, with the help from the music department and the Berea College Country Dancers. The combination of education and entertainment has continued into the present, including interpretation and context for the music by the hosts in their introductions. The musicians have always been encouraged to provide their own contexts and communicate that to the audience as well.

⁴⁰ From tape of Traditional Music Committee meeting, January 1974, housed in the Sound Archives in the Special Collections of Hutchins Library at Berea College. Transcribed by Deborah Thompson, January 2006, hereafter described as TMC recording 1974a.

Over the years, committee members included musicians Betty Smith, Jim Gage, Rich Kirby, John Harrod, Gerald Milnes, Bobby Fulcher, Atossa Kramer, Donna Lamb, and Al White, many of whom are also cultural historians, folklorists, and writers; John Rice Irwin, founder of the Museum of Appalachia; Gerald Roberts and Harry Rice from Berea College's Special Collections, and later directors of Country Dance Programs, Susan Spalding and Deborah Thompson (also a musician and folklorist, and coordinator of the festival from 2006-2009). Other staff of the Center who had an impact on the festival were former AC directors Helen Lewis and Gordon McKinney, and associate director Lori Briscoe Pennington, who produced the festival from 2001-2005. All of these committee members are white, although I invited a black female faculty member during my tenure as CTM director, not simply because of her race and gender, but because of her interest in and knowledge of African American traditional music, including spirituals, which are sometimes featured in the CTM.⁴¹ Other groups that have had a great influence on the festival are the Kentucky Arts Council, who provided funding for many years through the Folk Arts Project grants, and Kentucky Educational Television, who video-recorded the first festival.

The schedule and activities included in the festival has remained remarkably consistent over the years, including both presentational activities – mainly concerts and an academic symposium - and participatory activities such as jam sessions and workshops on playing styles or particular instruments. The festival includes an afternoon symposium in which some aspect of traditional music is explored by an authority in the field. Subjects for

⁴¹ I asked Kathy Bullock, music faculty and director of the Black Music Ensemble, to be on the committee due to her special interest in African American music in Appalachia and traditional African American music, but she declined, citing her duties as chair of the music department and multiple other duties and obligations. Despite Berea's dedication to an interracial student mix, there are still very few minority faculty members, especially women, and they are often asked to represent the voice of their race and gender on campus. This leads to over-working of minority and female faculty members, and the common practice of asking one person to represent their entire race: "And what is the black view on this?"

the symposium have ranged from music of the Civil War, to shape note music, Kentucky fiddlers, women banjo players, and biographical presentations on influential musicians. Dancing has played a prominent role, though its space and staging requirements have sometimes created difficulties in its inclusion. A Sunday hymn-singing, held in a nearby church, provides a specific context for sacred music, and has typically also been a venue for audience participation, in singing along and sometimes requesting songs to be sung.

8.4 Documentation of the CTM

Archival materials on the festival are located in several places within the Weatherford-Hammond Mountain Collection in Berea College's Hutchins Library. One of the most valuable things about the Celebration is the fact that it was carefully and consistently recorded on audio tape over the years, according to its original purpose of being a source of traditional music recordings. These have been indexed according to artist and name of song performed, along with a "container" list that also documents the order in which the music was performed. Besides this extensive collection of sound recordings, there are some videotapes from various years. The first year, especially, was documented by Kentucky Educational Television, and is a nearly complete record of the festival. The public relations office took photographs of many of the performers over the years, and good quality black and white photos exist, as well as some color photographs and negatives of some of the later years. The Appalachian Center has digital images of most of the recent festivals, some of which are posted on the website (Loyal Jones Appalachian Center). Tapes of several organizational meetings of the Traditional Music Committee are available (1974-1976, 1978, 1979, and 1983), and these provided fascinating insight into the context of the formation of the festival idea, as well as reasons behind some of the decisions made

concerning the festival. My research made use of all recordings of the TMC meetings and a large number of audio and video-recordings from over the years. Please see Appendix E for a detailed list of materials used to research the CTM.

Various Appalachian Center files in Special Collections contain some documentary material, including all of the Center's quarterly newsletters. There were three issues that had several photographs on the festival along with a short article. Volume 6, Number 1 (1977) took care to explain the diversity of performers – "all ages" (from a young boy to an old lady) and "all styles, from Sparky Rucker to Betty Smith." Volume 6, Number 4 (1977) included photographs of two women and two men. Volume 7, Number 4 (1978) identified only men in the photographs, though there was a photograph including many different participants in the Sunday morning hymn singing that were unidentified. Overall, the newsletter's coverage of the Celebration reveals thirteen women as compared with ten men represented and named in the photographs, although nine of the thirteen women photographed are in one group, the Mountain Women's Cooperative String Band. All performers in the photographs are white, except for African American singer and guitarist Sparky Rucker. From the captions and the majority of the coverage, I would say there was an attempt to show performers of both sexes, and the earliest festivals actually had the highest percentage of women as performers in the festival. The actual racial balance is also demonstrated somewhat in the photographic coverage, as there was often only one black performer each year, with the rest being white.

In addition to investigating these archival sources, I have attended the festival several times over the years as an audience member, and have either been the main organizer for the festival or on the Traditional Music Committee and have therefore been

instrumental in organizing it and inviting performers, from 2006-2011. Data for my research has thus also been provided through participant observation as an audience member, TMC member, musician, host/emcee, and coordinator.

The following sections detail my findings, beginning with addressing the importance of networks in producing the musical spaces of the festival, and in the festival's production of Appalachian space. That is followed by consideration of African American performers and the representation of race in the festival, then of female performers and the representation of gender. Both race and gender inflect the networks and other power relations which socially construct not only the festival, which also produces ideas of regional authenticity. Conversations about authenticity, whether musical or verbal, are crucial in the circulation of texts which create Appalachian space.

8.5 Defining the Region and Authenticity: The Importance of Networks

Folklorist Neil Rosenberg specifically points to the fact that by the establishment of the National Folk Festival in 1934 (held in St. Louis, Missouri), festival performers and organizers created a network that persists to this day (Rosenberg 1993:6). The CTM is no exception here, as the Traditional Music Committee (TMC) which made decisions about who would be hired and how the festival would be represented and run was and is intimately tied in with other musical events in Kentucky, in the folk festival circuit, with early country music stars and promoters, and with networks of academic scholars of folk music and traditional arts. The TMC members themselves are chosen from these networks, and they – in turn – make decisions about who is chosen to participate, based on their awareness of musicians and their backgrounds. Publicity opportunities for the festival were also

acknowledged by the committee to be affected more by who they knew than by the quality of their festival.

By the mid-1970s, the folk revival was mature and the number and variety of festivals were increasing, including the Celebration. The year 1974 saw not only the first Celebration of Traditional Music at Berea College, but also the establishment of the Folk Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, which increased federal funding of such events as folk festivals every year until 1982, when the Reagan administration instituted its first drastic cuts (Jackson 1993:79). Through such governmental funding and popular support, smaller, local folk festivals became common throughout the U.S., especially on college campuses such as Berea's.

In a conversation with the advisory committee for the CTM in January 1974, in preparation for the first festival, Loyal Jones reported that he had sent in a proposal and application for consideration for funding from the National Endowment for the Arts even though Berea College had missed the March first deadline. Jean Ritchie, who was on the advisory board for both groups, had told Loyal Jones that the NEA "was saving a little money for us in the hopes that we would send one in. So we did send one in" (TMC recording 1974a). This small report in the first meeting of the organizers of the CTM indicates not only that Berea College had the attention of a national arts funding agency, but also that the network in which Berea College was already established allowed for funding opportunities and even extra consideration on missing a deadline.

Berea, Kentucky is only about 15 miles from Renfro Valley, home of the Renfro Valley Barn Dance, one of the most significant early country music radio programs, and still an influential site regarding country and gospel musics. John Lair, the impresario and

originator of the Renfro Valley Barn Dance, was a TMC member for many years and the Special Collections has many of their archival materials, including historic recordings. More recently, though, Berea College or city have rarely connected themselves to this history, but rather promoted their music and culture as traditional, in opposition to the more commercial country sound such as promoted in Renfro Valley. Questions of authenticity in the CTM, then, also have an economic component in the form of tourism and support of Berea College. Continuing the conversation at a meeting of the TMC:

Bradley Kincaid: What I want to know is why can't Berea be known, not necessarily just in Berea, but throughout the country as being the seat of folk music? And whatever else that you have in mind in developing in this vein.

Loyal Jones: Well, I think a lot of people do look to Berea in that way. Certainly Dr. Hovey has done an awful lot with that, with the chapel choir and with other groups and with "Wilderness Road" [outdoor drama] and so forth. I think, though, that we can probably do a much better job of not only in getting better collections [of folk music], but letting people know about it. (TMC recording 1974a)

These are goals that continue today. The Berea Tourism Office works with the college to promote other programs they produce that include folk music and dance, such as Christmas Country Dance School, the Mountain Folk Festival, and the CTM. The Jammin' in the Park jam session described in earlier chapters was designed to help promote Berea as a center for folk music and dance along with the city's current designation as "folk arts capital of Kentucky." The tourism office moved ahead with their plans to begin establishing

a school of folk arts in the summer of 2011, using the model of such places as the Augusta Heritage Center, Blue Ridge Old Time Music Week, and Swannanoa Gathering.

The earlier quotation about funding from the NEA highlighted the importance of having folk legend and committee member Jean Ritchie on the TMC, as she had a connection to the NEA as well as donated some recordings to the archives. Another important national connection of the CTM was Gertrude Knott, originator of the National Folk Festival, who was supposed to have come to the first CTM but didn't show up. At the meeting of the TMC after the festival, Loyal Jones reports:

She's very much interested in this. She's perpetually mad at Berea for not helping do this [promote folk music] in Western Kentucky and everywhere else. She won't accept the fact that we're primarily trying to serve the Appalachian Region and not do everything. She's always chiding us, Raymond [McLain] and Ethel [Capps] and everyone. (TMC Recording 1974b)

This shows that network connections don't always mean that everyone has the same vision for presenting or preserving folk cultures and traditions. Overlapping and conflicting interests of different constituents in the networks might result in less support rather than more. In fact, competition within the networks is an accepted part of life, and even though the committee wants to put on "the best old-time festival that you could find anywhere," there is less talk of getting attention due to quality, and more discussion of knowing the right people that can help get the word out and bring in funding. Jones's remark below also highlights the importance of networks in Appalachian life, which supports my observations among the old-time community today.

LJ: I've noticed that certain people do get more consideration than others in the archive of folk song. Certain people can't break into that magic circle; other people can do right well. It's kind of like the way things are done right here in the mountains. You have to know somebody.

[Unknown voice]: When you know those people, you wonder how they broke in.

LJ: It's sort of like this festival. We have been unable to get this festival on National Public Radio.

Raymond McLain: I think you have to try on the local level. Our festival [the McLain Family Festival] is on National Public Radio, but we had nothing to do with initiating it. The people at the radio station did it, first in Athens, Ohio; then the Richmond people took it away from them rather unceremoniously. The local station has to almost take the initiative...I think it's a matter of people - somebody has to be personally interested enough to see it through, and to involve their station...

LJ: Well, that's right. And there are so many festivals now and it's easy for them to continue with the things they know. (TMC recording 1978)

The committee seemed to agree that gaining the attention of desirable media publicity had more to do with making a personal connection than with any other strategy, and that once you get the attention of a media outlet it might be easier to continue with that relationship.

Networks and knowing one of the gatekeepers for the festival are also very important ways of getting invited to perform at the CTM, as demonstrated by an exchange

from the first planning meeting among the TMC (1974a) following a discussion and remark by Asa Martin:

Loyal Jones: Well, you're suggesting, then, that the performers would be invited and not open.

Asa Martin: Invited and also scheduled out. It's just like running a program anywhere. You have so much time to do things and if we just take them as they come, you know how it is, Ray, both of you, and Buell, and everyone, there's just dozens of them come up and want to perform. But we already have the schedule made out and then let's just select who you'd want and the type that you want. You know the groups, and without hurting anyone's feelings, not telling them that we can't use them, well, no we have this day made up, we have the next; we'll put you down for the next time, we'll keep you in mind. And that's always the way....However, that's the only way that I've ever been able to handle that. Because on the spur of the moment, if you just take them as they come, you're going to hurt someone's feelings there, but just, well, we already have it selected, but we would like to have you next year. Sorry you didn't get here in time, and use a little psychology.

Bradley Kincaid went on to say that "I think you'll want to invite all your talent. You must keep that, or you'll have the poorest kind of, well, things you don't want. You'll have good, maybe, but it wouldn't be what you want." This exchange focuses on maintaining the quality of the performances as well as controlling the type of music that is presented: making sure it is "what you want." From the beginning, the performers were to be invited, and not just taken as they showed up. Despite the admonitions of folklorists and

others who have been concerned that folk culture is in danger of disappearing since the invention of recording technology, the idea that “dozens of them” will want to come up and perform seems to indicate that it is alive and well. Considering that some of them might be of poor quality or not adhering to “strictly traditional” standards, as described in the festival’s promotional materials, might also be judged based on the committee’s referents of what they consider to be traditional.

The tension between presenting traditional musicians that are not well known – or possibly not being very good performers even if they play well – and having “headliners,” or commercial, professional stars that will attract a wide audience and will guarantee a good show, has not been resolved in the CTM, or indeed, in most festivals (Cohen 2008, Williams 2006). The committee clearly wanted to represent mountain traditions in their diversity, but did not want to include much bluegrass or recent, composed music, so the notion of how much change could be tolerated remained contested. The committee was not always in agreement as to what constituted the traditions or who represented the traditions.

RM: Well, [in the past,] a lot of performers were very commercial, just as commercial as they could be in their time. And we see them now as old time performers. But you can’t not be commercial, because that means they were good enough to be accepted in their time, in their way. (TMC recording 1979)

While it often remained unstated as time went on, it was the traditions of the Appalachian region that were typically represented and that helped to make this festival distinctive. A nationally-known performer, “on the circuit,” was viewed at least by some of the committee members as a liability for inviting that artist to perform on the CTM, even if

it meant the artist was well-respected for the music, because he or she would not represent the local traditions.

JR: I think that's confusing. Several of us travel a lot and we go all around. You see the same people all over the United States and it's just, there's nothing regional about it. [Performers are presented] because they're drawing cards and they don't make any effort to present people from their region and I think our strong point is that and we should stick to that.

LJ: People who aren't on these circuits and don't get much of a chance...

JR: Yes, I think [bring in some] little-known people and give them a chance to be heard. (TMC recording 1979)

Being able to demonstrate a relationship to the region or to establish a musical genealogy to particular people in the region was a benefit to being included. The suitability of artists who played the music well but who had no personal connection to the region, or who were considered to be revivalists, was questioned. Artists who could play extremely well or represent the music well might be considered even without the personal connection.

Loyal Jones: we had some that were recommended that aren't strictly mountain. What do you feel about this Fuzzy Mountain String band? Most of them are fotted-on people, they're not natives...Last year we had Bruce Greene – he's from New Jersey, but he's as fine of an old time fiddler as you can find.

Jean Ritchie: Well, if they're living and playing here, that's what our criteria should be.

LJ: [There was a] band from Bloomington. No doubt they're very good, but...what should I call, revivalists, who are trying to be professional...We do have a reservoir and a waiting list and the primary purpose of this festival... There's for various reasons that our preferences only and they seem to come back and say, "I'm Appalachian" so you just have to deal with that. But in most cases, I probably have more problems with them and the music they're playing and their competitiveness than I do with their being from somewhere else. (TMC recording 1983)

Arguments about who should represent traditional mountain music were not only place-based, including such things as birthplace, family connection, or current residence in the region, but also culture-based, including lifestyle, attitude, and competitiveness. Being "exceptional" as described by John Harrod below, often allows a bending of the rules, but he also takes pains to appeal to embodied connections to the region, such as lived rural experiences in hilly terrain and exposure to mountain culture in family life.

John Harrod: The only problem [with bringing in Lotus Dickey as a performer] – and we've encountered this problem before – is - he lives in Paoli, Indiana. He lives in old rough hill country. He lives in an old log cabin. If I didn't tell you he was from Indiana, [] although I'm not just trying to invite people from anywhere. He's just really an exceptional person and exceptional performer. I was really taken with him and would like to see him come...My feeling is that the culture is not necessarily defined by strict geographic boundaries - and his family is in fact from Kentucky. His father

migrated from Kentucky, and I think it's the culture and the spirit of the person and that's why I suggested Lotus. (TMC recording 1983)

Making decisions based on the strength of connections to the region often provided a protection for the committee in turning down artists they did not want to invite for other reasons.

LJ: As I've said to John, we've protected ourselves by saying, we're primarily interested in the mountain [culture], but John is really arguing for a sort of cultural identity rather than a geographical one. Makes it a little bit hard because there are scads of musicians on the fringes of the Appalachians and I suppose I've sloughed off a few things by saying, sorry.

JH: Well, it's a judgment call.

LJ: No, we can just say that...No, I don't have any real problem with that. We've gone down to Atlanta for Buddy Moss and we're going out to Hickory [sic - Morganton] for Etta Baker next year...

LJ: What do you all feel about it?

Jim Gage: I don't have any real problem with it. I don't think it's difficult at all to use the geographical [definition] when it's convenient to use it. (TMC recording 1983)

In these conversations, a sincere attempt was made to limit participants to those native to the region. A few concerns might trump this overall criterion, though, one of which was mentioned regarding both Bruce Greene and Lotus Dickey: their excellence and connection with the region, either through ancestry in the case of Dickey or because

Greene's repertoire was gained through his long-standing relationships of learning regional tunes from Appalachian fiddlers.

As indicated in the above quote about bringing in African American musicians Buddy Moss and Etta Baker from outside the region, the organizers also often stretched their ideas of the region's boundaries to make sure a good variety was presented, particularly to include African American musicians, and sometimes women, from Atlanta, the Piedmont of North Carolina, or Washington, D.C. if their music was traditionally linked to the region. In one meeting, the name of John Jackson came up.

JH: He's never been here? I'm surprised he's never been here.

LJ: Well, we've just never got around to him, and or maybe it's because he's from Fairfax [Virginia]...

JH: He's another one. You wouldn't want to [have] too rigid geographic boundaries. (TMC recording 1983)

In attempting to convince the committee of his suitability for the CTM, Harrod brings up both stylistic and interpersonal connections to Appalachia. A further comment by Loyal Jones makes a normative statement about Etta Baker to connect her with other Appalachians, perhaps further demonstrating her suitability for inclusion in this festival that celebrates and represents mountain music.

JH: He's a black guitar player and singer, used to play a lot with Billy Williams up in Greenup County, Kentucky. Carter Caves Festival, he used to come to Fraley's festival all the way across Virginia. He's good. Well, he's sort of – well – the same kind of guitar player.

LJ: We might want to have Etta back. I have a feeling that she's going to really...

Betty Smith: Oh, she's fantastic. I've never seen her in person.

LJ: She's like a lot of mountain blacks I've seen who – in her mannerisms and speech and everything is – you would never know she was black...She sounds just like the rest of us. (TMC recording 1983)

8.6 African American Performers in the CTM: The Limits of Networks

Loyal Jones's normalizing the accent of mountain blacks may be somewhat problematic, but belies Jones's dedication to including black performers in the Celebration and his dedication to racial equality, when he sometimes went against other committee members to ensure African American participation in the CTM. Representing the African American experience in Appalachian traditional music has been important from the beginning of the Celebration, partly because of Berea's historical interracial mission, but also greatly because of Jones's insistence. Not too much was said on the subject in the recorded committee meetings, but race definitely impacted some of the committee members' ideas of what could be considered to be traditional Appalachian music. Committee member Harrod below describes different kinds of musicians running in different circles which prevent them knowing about each other and their traditions. This statement underlines the importance of acknowledging networks as a major factor in the habits of whiteness that prevents understandings of African American traditions and musicians.

LJ: I'll write him [Traditional Music Committee member, Bradley Kincaid] and say, we had a good festival this year, and he'll write back and say, well, I

see that you also felt that the festival wasn't what it should be, as if he and I agree that it wasn't going along too well, but that's Bradley. I think he has a strong - sort of - mountain paranoia about... Well, he'll even say things... we sure don't need any more of the Foddrell Brothers.⁴² That's not what mountain music is all about.

JH: That's right. There's different conceptions of mountain music – it may be partly regional, but it may be partly social. The families that played the dulcimers didn't associate or pay much attention to listen to each one of them to find what mountain music is and you're going to get different definitions even though they're right in the same area.

JG: Bradley – he's an old man, and he's also a racist.

BS: When he was in the Grand Ole Opry there wasn't but one black in the whole thing.

LJ: There weren't any when he was there. 1940-46?

BS: The one they had wasn't even there by that time.

LJ: That's right. Deford Bailey was already gone by then and Charley Pride hadn't... (TMC recording 1983)

Besides full-out stating the impact that racism on the part of the committee may have on decisions about who gets to be an Appalachian musician, this discussion also highlights the fact that one of the biggest problems that is faced by African Americans in the region

⁴² The Foddrell Brothers were an African American duo, sometimes appearing with their nephew, Lynn Foddrell, who were the parents of Berea College students and residents of Patrick County, Virginia, which has recently become part of the ARC Appalachian Region. They were part of an influential musical family in that area, but often included more popular songs in their repertoire. In a conversation with Loyal Jones, he explained that he thought Kincaid might have had some issues with their race but also their inclusion of popular music.

continues to be their invisibility (Turner and Cabbell 1985, Hayden 2003). While the region's population of African Americans is overall about eight percent, the majority of blacks are clustered in urban areas (Hayden 2003) and the more rural Central Appalachian subregion only had an average of about 1.8 percent black population in 2009 (Pollard, Jacobsen and Bureau 2011). Research on traditional music and other folklore subjects typically takes place in rural areas, which has a much lower population rate, and white committee members have little knowledge of African American performers.

When non-white musicians do participate, just one performer or one group at a time is usually invited, which ends up further isolating the performers and, even if unintentionally, can portray tokenism rather than truly addressing diversity (Baskin 2008, Rucker 2008). This is one reason the geographic boundaries might be stretched, in order to invite more than one black performer, or to vary the black performers invited in order to serve the greater good of diverse performers. In this next interchange, Loyal Jones expresses the problems that accompany finding black performers for the CTM, and documents the fact that some of the performers expressed their dissatisfaction with their under-representation.

LJ: We have a hard time getting black performers; it would be kind of nice to have the Foddrell Brothers and Etta [Baker] and him...

JH: all at the same time.

LJ: I have such a hard time. I don't like to have a lily-white festival again. Some years...unless we invite Sparky. Ed⁴³ makes fun of me for having Sparky – yeah – he's your n-----.

⁴³ Ed Cabbell, a great singer in his own right, Appalachian Studies scholar, and participant in the CTM.

Jones again expresses a problematic sentiment which stems from his concern with the issue and his frank engagement with African American performers and scholars with whom he works. Nevertheless, the CTM was relatively successful in including black performers, as they participated in twenty-nine out of thirty-six years.⁴⁴ Other races and ethnic groups participated less often. With the exception of Berea College's Black Music Ensemble which has both male and female members and that performed twice, only three out of these eighteen acts (approximately three out of forty-three performances) featured black women. The styles of music played by the African American performers include guitar and harmonica (and vocal) blues; the songster tradition; old time string band music; country blues; gospel; and balladry. Guitar-based music predominated (seventeen out of twenty-nine years), including more traditional country and Piedmont blues styles, but also such popular styles as ragtime, boogie-woogie, rhythm and blues, Tin Pan Alley classics, Chicago blues, and other post-war urban blues (Kalra 2006). Religious music (gospel) was the next most predominant, most often unaccompanied, but with occasional piano, electric guitar or bass, and drum accompaniment, from eight groups over eleven years. Most religious acts were all-male groups in the gospel quartet style. The rare stringed instrument players, including fiddle (2) and banjo (1) were all male. Among the CTM's African American musicians that were actually from the Appalachian region were Sparky Rucker, Nat Reese, Ed Cabbell, the Foddrell Brothers, "Uncle" Homer Walker, Tri-City Messengers, and Robert "Bud" Garrett. The rest of the black performers lived outside the Appalachian region, and most of these were never really associated with Appalachia.

⁴⁴ Black performers participated in 1974-1978, 1980-1984, 1986-1991, 1994-1999, 2001-2004, 2006, 2009, 2010 (black performers were lined up to come in both 2000 and 2008, but were ultimately unable to come).

Some of the performers emphasized connections between black and white traditions, while others gently or more forcefully explained differences. In some cases, there was an attempt to link black and white music from the region together. For example, Joan Salmon-Campbell, a minister from Washington, DC, who was invited to perform in the 1977 CTM while she was on campus for another event, introduced her rendition of “Black is the Color” in this way:

I’ve done lots of festivals, but this is the first time I’ve done an Appalachian festival, and I’m delighted to participate, because you made me do some homework. I am delighted to find out that a lot of the traditional music of my people really come out of and feed a lot of the music we’ve been singing tonight, especially the music that this gentleman just finished playing⁴⁵.

Ed Cabbell, a scholar, singer, and founder of the John Henry Memorial Festival in West Virginia, was on the CTM schedule in 2000 and 2001, although he only was able to come in 2001. He presented a number of spirituals in a moaning style he learned from his grandmother. He also loved to sing gospel, old-time, and just about anything else, and was a great flatfoot dancer. In 1978, he introduced “Uncle” Homer Walker, a fine “pre-blues” banjo player who sang and played some songs from slavery times and was one of the musicians that worked very actively with the John Henry Festival:

...one of the things we try to do here, seeing he’s sitting here, now with Uncle Homer playing the banjo, is to make an awareness of blacks in the mountains and the kind of music that we have done along with everybody else in the mountains since we’ve been over in here. Since, according to my research, about 1716 in what is now called West Virginia, so our heritage

⁴⁵ I believe she was referring to dulcimer player I.D. Stamper.

goes back about as long as anyone else's in the mountains. And Uncle Homer is going to do a few standard tunes here on the banjo.

Ed Cabbell takes pains to normalize "Uncle" Homer's performance and his repertoire by placing him "along with everybody else in the mountains" and characterizing his banjo tunes as "standard," even though Mr. Walker's style is somewhat more free-flowing than many white banjo players and he performs songs learned from slave traditions. Walker also displayed a distinctive African American aesthetic of playing single-chord accompaniment to the spiritual Steal Away, rather than the European aesthetic of including dominant and sub-dominant chords along with the tonic.

Several other black performers over the years might be considered to be "cross-over" performers, with repertoire and styles that are shared by many white musicians. Bill Livers was a fiddler and singer from Monterey, Kentucky, that benefited from the folk revival. He was "discovered" by young, white, urban "back-to-the-landers" in the 1970s and enjoyed a burst of musical activity late in his life. While his place of birth and residence by no means could be considered Appalachian, he was a Kentucky native, and did play and sing many pieces also common in white repertoires. Sparky Rucker, a singer, banjoist, and guitarist from Knoxville, Tennessee, was a frequent performer at the CTM (1975, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1994, 2002, and 2009) and presented the 1994 Symposium on Civil War music. His music includes a mixture of blues, gospel styles, old-time, and country. Earl White, fiddler and founding member of the Green Grass Cloggers, performed in 2004 and spent several days on campus speaking with students about his experiences. Part of his presentations included discussions of being African American in the music and dance scene of old-time string band music dominated by white participants.

Sparky Rucker has been a longstanding and valuable contributor to the CTM over the years, being a remarkable performer, scholar, and tireless advocate of peace and social justice. He was also extremely unusual in that, besides actually being from Appalachia (Knoxville), he worked in the mountains of southwest Virginia for many years on mountain issues, and has close relationships with many other traditional musicians, black and white. He has been a mainstay of the festival, and is able to play with almost anyone, although he has his own distinctive style. In 1975, as he was introducing his next song, Black Snake Moan, he made a joke/remark about John McCutcheon, his white friend, doing a song called Pink Snake Moan, referring to McCutcheon's skin color, but also taking a poke at his masculinity.

There have been many guitarists in the CTM line-up, the majority of whom were African American. Nat Reese, from Princeton, West Virginia, plays "a mixture of country blues and Delta blues," but most comfortably places himself in the songster tradition. He performed several times: in 1980, 1990, 1991, 1998, and 2006. The Foddrell Brothers, from Patrick County, Virginia, performed in 1978, 1982, and 1983, in the final year also accompanied by their nephew, Lynn Foddrell. They were from the edges of Appalachia, from a well-known local musical family, and one of the brothers was the proud parent of three Berea College alumni. I would also place them in the songster tradition. Bluesman Robert "Bud" Garrett (1984), was originally from a black community called Free Hill in Clay County, Tennessee, near the western margin (but still in) the ARC-defined Appalachian Region.

Many blues guitarists were drawn from areas marginal to the region, including Etta Baker (1983), from the North Carolina Piedmont (Morganton, North Carolina); Buddy

Moss, from Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington, DC (1978); Drink Small from Columbia, South Carolina (1980); and Moses Rascoe in 1989 (York, Pennsylvania). Eddie Pennington from western Kentucky (1999, 2011), and Cliff Carlisle (formerly of the Carlisle Brothers with his brother Bill from Lexington, Kentucky) are white guitarists who also play blues guitar and performed in the Celebration.

Black religious music has been represented at the festival by Berea College's Black Music Ensemble (1974 and 1995), a song or two by Uncle Homer Walker (1978), Northern Kentucky Brotherhood from Covington (1995), Sons of Glory from Wilmore, Kentucky (1996), Mighty Gospel Harmonizers from Lexington, Kentucky (1997), Tri-City Messengers from Lynch-Benham-Cumberland, Kentucky (2002), and Sister Lena Mae Perry and her accompanist, Wilbur Tharpe (2010), from the Raleigh, North Carolina area. Besides the late Uncle Homer Walker, who was from West Virginia, the Tri-City Messengers are the only ones truly from the region, although I have been told that some of the members of the other groups were originally from Appalachia, having moved away to find work. In 1999, symposium speaker, Carl Smith from Kentucky State College spoke on "African-American Lined Hymns," but he mainly focused on one Old Regular Baptist Church in Red Fox, Kentucky, which has a small, integrated congregation rather than undertaking generalized research on black music in the region.

There is no doubt, then, that despite questions about the birthplace of the performers and desire on the part of most organizers to include even more black musicians in the Celebration, there was a concerted effort to present African American musicians and their music throughout the years. Even with their inclusion, audiences to the CTM remained overwhelmingly white over the years, which caused me to wonder whether the music

represented as traditional black Appalachian music in the festival truly represented this cultural group. This question led me to interview black musicians in the region, which is discussed in Chapter 9, but ethnomusicologist Ajay Kalra spent two months in 2006 studying African American participation in the CTM, which also shed some light on my question. He addressed the same question by “comparing the history of specific music genres associated with African Americans in the larger American historical backdrop and searching for contemporaneous, perhaps parallel, or contiguous developments within Appalachia to the extent they have been documented” (Kalra 2006:3).

In his analysis, guitar-based music is “preponderant” among black musicians in the CTM, which he questions as a significant or even valid representation of traditional African American music in Appalachia. Given the relatively late arrival of the guitar to the mountains and the pre-bluegrass definition of traditional music assumed by the CTM organizers, he points out that there is a small window of time for the guitar to be established as a “tradition” among African Americans in the region. He questions the admission of Piedmont blues guitar styles in the CTM because 1) the Piedmont is so different racially and culturally from Appalachia, and 2) this guitar style isn’t even specific to the Piedmont region, but is instead a more widely-spread non-regional style. Given the lack of documentation of the guitar styles of black musicians “living or itinerating through the region” at that time, and the lack of a new generation of black musicians to whom the tradition is being passed down, the main audience for these traditions being white revivalists, he concludes his analysis with two very important questions:

...even if these styles were featured as part of communal music making for a while, are these traditions or the times and African American experiences

they represent valued by and speak for contemporary blacks in the region?

So which communities do such African American guitarists represent when they present such putatively communal traditions? (Kalra 2006:14)

He concludes, "...the only musical realm where this [hip-hop] generation apparently continues to connect with older traditions is religious music where spirituals are still sung and allusions to nineteenth-century performance of these songs still made. Older instrumental styles from R&B, soul, and gospel also continue largely only in the religious music sphere" (Kalra 2006:14-15). I tested his assertion of the central role of religious music in black Appalachian traditions and address my findings in the next chapter, which analyzes a series of interviews with black singers and musicians in Appalachia to continue searching for answers to his questions.

8.7 Participation of Other Ethnic Groups in the CTM

Ethnic groups outside the African American and northern European American traditions have been poorly represented in the festival. A few Native Americans have performed in the CTM: Cherokee Walker Calhoun visited twice, by himself in 1989 and with his Raven Rock Dancers in 1990. Paula Nelson came in 2002, and four members of the Lossiah Family Singers appeared in 2007. I had invited another male Cherokee musician to come in 2006, but was unable to get him to return my phone calls and contact attempts after the initial contact.

I was eager to feature a Cherokee group or individual, but was afraid that the lack of engagement exhibited by that performer would be a cultural response to a non-Indian institution's request and the fact that we were so far away from Cherokee. I was excited about including an a cappella singing group of women, the McGuire Sisters from nearby

Rockcastle County, and creating an exchange with a Cherokee family gospel group to help facilitate the Cherokee group feeling a connection with Berea and being more likely to follow through and actually come to the festival. When I contacted Maggie Lossiah about this idea, it seemed feasible, so in September, the McGuires and I traveled to Straight Fork Baptist Church for a singing, including a big potluck meal. It was very like other church singings I've attended, except that along with the fried chicken and potato salad, we had bean bread and wild greens. Some of the groups sang in Cherokee, but the majority sang in English. The Lossiah Family sings religious songs in both English and Cherokee, with one member playing acoustic guitar accompaniment. Their reserved style of singing was very typical of all the groups that performed that night, and many of the accompanists worked with more than one group.

Joseph Fulaytar is the only representative of an Eastern European heritage to have performed: his 2002 appearance with his cymbalum (Hungarian hammered dulcimer) was an important, but unfortunately singular, representation of the large Eastern European immigrant presence in early twentieth century Appalachian coalfields. In 2007, folklorists Michael and Carrie Kline were invited to present their work among the northern Appalachian coalfields of Eastern Pennsylvania, and they presented recordings and photographs of various ethnic groups from that part of Appalachia for the symposium, which included Vietnamese, Polish, Ukrainian, Greek, Chinese, and Italian heritage.

In 2006, our invitation to a local Mariachi group to represent the traditions of the newest ethnic group in Appalachia, Latinos, caused quite a bit of controversy among audience members who had been attending the festival for a long time. Including them in the festival was very labor-intensive, involving language- and cultural-interpreters and

brokers, Berea's Spanish department, and the Hispanic Students Association. I spent time speaking with restaurant- and tienda-owners, people in campus offices that work with Spanish speakers, a Latina professor at nearby Eastern Kentucky University, and a social worker in the Foothills Community Action Agency, before my colleague found a mariachi band performing in another local restaurant and invited them.

We were fortunate to have booked a family mariachi band that was rather non-traditional, in that instead of the usual male-only lineup, it included two sisters who were cousins to the three men. They appeared in full mariachi dress and put on a very professional show that was in marked contrast to the old-time band, whose members performed in various casual outfits including jeans, flannel shirts, and polo shirts. A Spanish professor served as interpreter and they explained many of the songs and customs during their time onstage. During the afternoon concert, they played their version of the bluegrass song, "Rocky Top," to the surprise of the audience.

During the evening concert, I attempted a little cross-cultural connecting by then suggesting that maybe all of us could sing and play Rocky Top together as a final, group song. The negativity I received back from the old-time players was complete and dismissive, with most of them saying that they didn't know it and wouldn't do it. My understanding was not that they were hostile to playing with the mariachi band – many of the performers hadn't even considered that that would be possible or desired – but that they were hostile to the idea of even admitting that they knew Rocky Top, much less playing it. For many old time musicians, that song exemplifies the old time players' worst nightmare of being misunderstood as bluegrass musicians and being treated as a jukebox. This story exemplifies

how musical behavior might be interpreted as inter-ethnic hostility, but is really a reaction to intra-ethnic tensions.

8.8 Gender in the CTM

Gender is one of those social characteristics that is often taken for granted, and naturalized even more than race. Its influence on such cultural productions as music is often ignored, partly because it is so difficult to tease out, partly because it is threatening to the status quo. It is inflected by other social characteristics, such as race, age, and class, and its effects and connection to biology makes it often treated as though they were simply natural, veiling its very socially constructed origins. Its very prevalence makes the study of gender on everyday life difficult.

Understanding the effects of gender on the CTM can begin by examining the artists themselves. How many females vs. males are invited to perform in the CTM? Is there a pattern in the instruments that are played by the different genders or whether they are vocalists? For example, are female musicians more likely to be vocalists than their male counterparts? Are traditional fiddle players usually male, as is often asserted (Rehder 2004, Bufwack and Oermann 1993)? What roles do people of different genders take on in the festival atmosphere and in the music world?

Other constructions of gender may be considered, including the music itself, which may be evaluated as to its feminine or masculine characteristics (McClary 1991). The lyrics to the songs may be evaluated as to their gender-related topics and references. Biographical statements and host's introductions to the performers can be examined for gender-related characterizations and assumptions. The dress and appearance of the performers may be examined for gender performance.

Because traditional music is often passed on through families and close neighbors, family music groups are very common in the CTM. Almost any combination of related persons might be found, such as wife-husband duos (Annadeene and J.P. Fraley); parent-child duos (Lily May and Tim Pennington or Lewis and Donna Lamb); grandparent-grandchild (Addie Graham and Rich Kirby); siblings (the Foddrell Brothers) or larger family groups (McLain Family Band, Lossiah Family Singers, or Grandpa, Ramona, and Alisa Jones).

The music itself often has gendered implications, from a tune's name like "Soldier's Joy," to the point of view of the song, like "Banjo Pickin' Girl," although this is not a given, as the song "Wagoner's Lad" is actually sung from the point of view of a woman who's "always been courted by the wagoner's lad." Musicians may be influenced by gendered points of view in the songs they sing. For example, will men or women sing songs from the point of view of the opposite gender role? If so, will they change the pronouns or any of the other words to conform to their own gender and gendered experience? Many humorous songs trade on the competition between men and women, especially husbands and wives. For example, "Four Nights Drunk," a very widely sung song by both sexes, tells the story of a wife's attempts to deceive her drunkard husband by claiming that various articles of clothing and body parts of her extramarital lover are actually things her granny gave to her. There is a male part and a female part, and the female part is usually sung in an unattractive falsetto, even by females. Males and females can and do sing songs about both genders, but there does tend to be some correlation between the gender of the song's protagonist and the musician performing it, especially in terms of songs about women's experiences. For example, "The Housewife's Lament" was not sung by any male performers in the CTM, but

it must be said that it was also not sung by the vast majority of females, either. All artists have a gendered experience, and this is often expressed in the music they choose to sing. Janette Carter, for example, in the 1978 CTM sang a song she wrote about her experience as a mother. One of David Morris's 1977 songs was dedicated to a man who helped him survive his experience as a Vietnam War veteran.

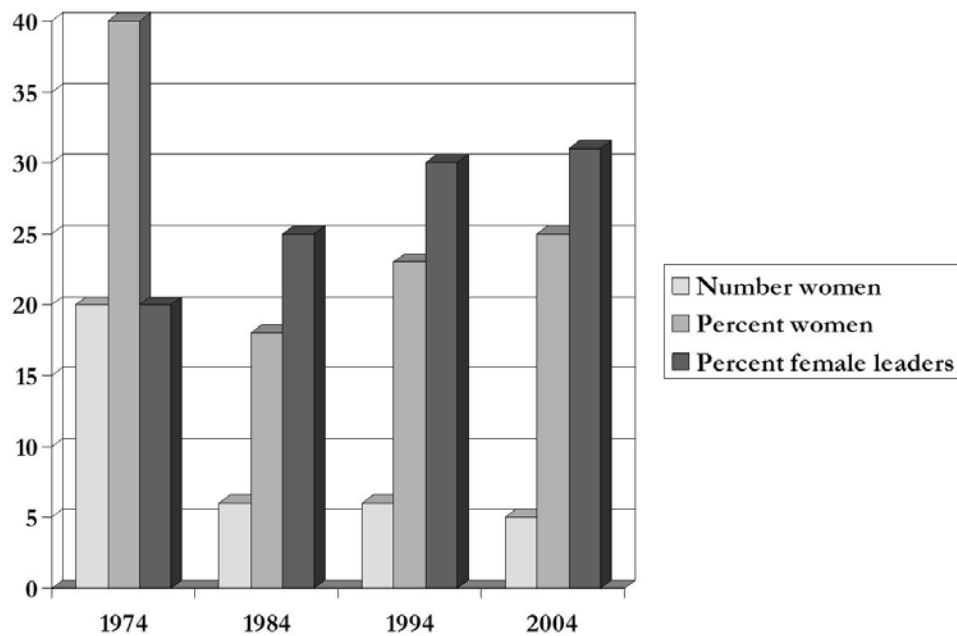


Figure 8.1: Participation of women in the Celebration of Traditional Music, 1974-2004

In investigating the influence of gender on the festival, I found, through a survey of the 1974, 1984, 1994, and 2004 programs, that the first festival had the largest representation of women proportional to the total musicians (40 percent), with a drastic drop in the 1980s to 18 percent, and a gradual increase, but still low, to 25 percent in 2004. The percentage of women serving in a leadership position throughout the years appears to be relatively good, rising from 20 percent in 1974 to about 30 percent in 1994 and 2004, but only two women, Betty Smith and Jean Ritchie, filled most of these capacities. They served

as emcees, members of the Traditional Music Committee, or workshop leaders over many years, so from year to year they represented a large number, but over the years added up to a smaller proportion overall because the remaining 80 or 70 percent male leaders changed somewhat from year to year. From the years 2000-2009, two women, Lori Briscoe Pennington and me, were the main organizers of the festival. Women have dominated in the leadership of the sacred music portion of the weekend on Sunday morning, which I have taken over since 2006. This is consistent with other cultural patterns in which women are often more associated with church attendance, and in which female leadership is more accepted.

Even though the TMC, at least since my involvement in 2006, seems very open to the idea of creating a gender-balanced program, it took constant vigilance to create a program that had more than a token female presence. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the bias toward including older musicians meant that many of the performers brought up in the first round of suggestions were men, and many of the bands that play professionally are dominated by men.

8.9 Conclusions

The practicalities of organizing and putting on a festival placed me in a unique position to understand the challenges and realities faced by the festival's organizers. Networks and the habits revolving around them are very influential in decision-making about cultural productions such as the Celebration of Traditional Music. These habits, by definition, reinscribe normative patterns, helping to cement destructive patterns that maintain a white patriarchy. As quoted in MacMullan's *Habits of Whiteness*, George Lipsitz identifies

insider networks that channel employment opportunities to the relatives and friends of those who have profited most from present and past discrimination, and especially through intergenerational transfers of inherited wealth that pass on spoils of discrimination to succeeding generations. (MacMullan 93)

In this case, “intergenerational transfers of inherited wealth” might also include the musical heritage of black Appalachians which, as detailed in the next chapter, became derailed through a combination of discriminatory practices and representations of tradition as a white phenomenon. Black invisibility in the Appalachian region is a clear-cut example of “the insidious ideology of Anglo-Saxonism” (Glaude in Macmullan:93). The Celebration of Traditional Music suffers from what Eddie Glaude calls “the American problem...a simultaneous commitment to democratic ideals and undemocratic practices” (Glaude in MacMullan 93).

Including more African American musicians in such festivals as the CTM may be accomplished by resisting the privileges of whiteness and maleness, as well as pushing through already existing networks to making new connections with different networks. MacMullan concludes that “the answer to how to solve this problem lies in somehow *building up connections*: between different groups of people now living, between the present and the past, between the human and the natural” (MacMullan 139). We must create social networks that truly bring people of different races together, and some of this may be accomplished by white people spending time in the spaces of African American culture.

White music producers need to take time to ask what counts as “traditional” music and who may be designated as a “traditional” musician in black communities, to understand what is meant by authenticity in their context. To this end, the next chapter describes and

analyzes my third research site, which includes interviews and limited participant observation with African American musicians in Appalachia.

Chapter 9: Traditional African American Music in Appalachia

This chapter addresses a portion of my research in which I interviewed African American musicians and scholars in Appalachia to discuss what musics they considered to be traditional to their communities, to locate black musicians meeting those criteria, and consider how these findings might impact the Celebration of Traditional Music. This portion of the study contributes to the overall purpose of this dissertation, which is to better understand the influence of race and gender on notions of who gets to be an Appalachian musician and how Appalachian space is constructed through its music. The data for this chapter were mainly gathered through interviews with thirteen singers and musicians and a few other scholars, mainly located through the snowball method. The context for this discussion was also better understood through my attendance of a variety of events in black Appalachian communities, mainly church services, singings, and services honoring longtime leaders. Before addressing the body of my research, I lay out a short discussion of the current assumptions and understandings about contemporary African American vernacular roots music in Appalachia, including the main point that black people and their music have typically been silenced in connection to the region (Titon 1977, Thompson 2006c). I then recount a short history of African Americans and their music in the region, in which many of the mechanisms which contributed to this silencing set up the context for the interview findings, which take up the majority and remainder of the chapter.

As outlined in Chapter 3, many discussions of old-time and bluegrass music now acknowledge the historic contributions of African Americans to American roots music associated with Appalachia after decades of invisibility in which Appalachian music was represented as purely Anglo-Saxon, then Celtic (Lightfoot 1990b, Malone 2004, Olson and

Kalra 2006, Thompson 2006c). The banjo, in particular, has been celebrated as an African American instrument in the last few decades of the twentieth century after several decades in mid-century when the banjo and its history became very whitened (Tallmadge 1983, Linn 1991, Conway 1995, Jägfors 2003-4). African American *people* in Appalachia, and their contemporary vernacular roots musics, however, still remain obscured, and are rarely represented in the many folk festivals, jam sessions, recordings, and magazines which claim to represent Appalachian music.

Only very recently have the African roots of the banjo been celebrated and reclaimed by African American people themselves, in large part through the efforts of Tony Thomas and Sule Greg Wilson in establishing a yahoo group on the internet called Black Banjo: Then and Now (BBT&N) and their collaboration with banjo scholar Dr. Cecelia Conway, Mark Freed, and others to create a Black Banjo Gathering at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina in 2005. It was at this gathering that the old-time string band, the Carolina Chocolate Drops, was formed. Band members Rhiannon Giddens, Justin Robinson, and Dom Flemons were brought together and inspired especially by the playing of Joe Thompson, one of the few remaining fiddlers in the black Piedmont style of old-time music.

9.1 The Carolina Chocolate Drops: Race, Region, and Authenticity

The Carolina Chocolate Drops named themselves in homage to an historic black band, The Tennessee Chocolate Drops, whose members – Howard Armstrong, Ted Bogan, and Carl Martin – were Appalachian and played in the 1920s and '30s. As they say on their website, “The band name itself is part quip and part challenge,” as they receive many comments about their name (Carolinachocolatedrops.com). Their band includes spirited

singing, banjo, fiddle, bones, spoons, and jug, with the members switching around and playing different instruments. They have become an overnight sensation, and continue to ride a great wave of popularity at festivals and other venues throughout the United States and abroad. Appalshop has sponsored several workshops with them and we at Berea College invited them to be the opening act for the Celebration of Traditional Music in 2007 along with Joe Thompson, who unfortunately, was unable to make it to the festival at the last minute. One other significant African American old-time group also formed in the early 2000s, The Ebony Hillbillies, who live in New York and built up their musical following through performing at subway stations. Both groups, along with several other individual musicians, appeared at the 2010 Black Banjo Gathering which was also held in Boone and which I attended. Since 2010, New Yorker Hubby Jenkins replaced Justin Robinson in the Chocolate Drops, and his connection to that city was initially foregrounded in his biography on the band's website, but his updated biography strengthens his connection to North Carolina(Carolinachocolatedrops.com).

The Carolina Chocolate Drops (CCD) specialize in the Piedmont style of old-time music, in which the banjo takes more of a lead and the fiddle becomes more of a rhythm instrument than usually found in mountain styles of old-time music. The band's rise in popularity since the beginning of my dissertation research has contributed greatly to continuing discussions about contemporary vernacular roots music in Appalachia. All three musicians are African American "revivalists" and bring up questions of authenticity regarding their music because of their birthplace and family connections being outside the region of the tradition they have adopted, especially Dom, who is from Tucson, Arizona. Giddens's background studying opera at Oberlin College is invoked as being antithetical to

the notion of traditional music, along with their college educations. Because of their race alone they are viewed by some, however, as being more authentic successors to the black Piedmont string band tradition than some of Joe Thompson's white apprentices. Other voices in the conversation about the CCD feel that although they are playing old-time music, that their Piedmont style is not a mountain style and should be differentiated. So, even if the musicians' personal places of origin are left out of the arguments about authenticity, the place associated with the musical style is still brought in.

Differences between Piedmont and mountain styles of music are not limited to the CCD. The origins of bluegrass music lie outside the region, from Bill Monroe's western Kentucky origins to Earl Scruggs's home in Piedmont Shelby, North Carolina, but the music itself has come to be associated with Appalachia. Certainly other seminal bluegrass musicians, like Ralph Stanley and Lester Flatt, are from Appalachia, but the importance of the textile mills in the Piedmont Carolinas were important in bringing together flat-land Southerners with mountaineers who had migrated there for work. Considering that there has long been musical as well as residential and other kinds of exchange between different areas of America, and that musicians rarely consider the origins of music as a factor in whether they want to learn or play that music, makes the notion of attempting to bound music locationally a questionable one, indeed.

Bounding music racially is also problematic, and yet considering the differences in style that may be heard between Piedmont string band music and mountain string bands make me wonder about statements such as that made by Ralph Peer that the black string band music he heard in an audition was unlike anything he'd ever heard. Perhaps the string band he heard was more Piedmont in style, with the banjo as the lead instrument and the

fiddle as a backup, which also seems to indicate more black influence with its emphasis on the banjo. Perhaps that string band, like the Tennessee Chocolate Drops, had a more jazzy, swingy sound. The descriptors of “black music” and “white music” are still somewhat meaningful to people, so whether or not they are “true” are not the important thing in theorizing space as being created by discourse, social relations, or other cultural constructions like music.

The addition of race to the mix highlights embodiment as part of discussions of authenticity. Chocolate Drop Dom Flemons invokes the importance of the body by saying, “You don’t have to be born in the Piedmont to feel the music in your blood” (Carolinachocolatedrops.com). The CCD are not afraid to address issues of race, from their name that celebrates brown skin, to the names of tunes they play, like Genuine Negro Jig which names their new CD, to the complicated and sometimes uncomfortable history of old-time music’s minstrel roots. Their importance to current understandings of old-time music and its connections to issues of race and gender should not be underestimated, but their very singularity at this time is worthy of comment and means that they are often named in references to race in old-time music. They must contend with being the only black musicians in many of the festivals and other venues in which they appear. One of the elements of their music that is not often discussed but is connected to race in old-time music is their focus on secular music, which is an element that ties it more closely to current white vernacular roots music than to current black vernacular roots music. Black religious music is most often the type of music represented in traditional music festivals as authentically black, and the type of music documented in this dissertation through interviews with musicians and scholars.

Documentation of the influence of the internet chat group Black Banjo Traditions Then and Now, the Black Banjo Gatherings, Ebony Hillbillies, and Carolina Chocolate Drops on the course of old-time music in the twenty-first century will be very interesting. The Carolina Chocolate Drops, especially, are a fascinating phenomenon, because they help tease out ideas about insiders and outsiders as well as what old-time music is and its connection to Appalachia through their embodiment as African American revivalists. Many people, black and white, invoked this band when they heard I was researching African American Appalachian traditional music. This included the musicians and singers I interviewed for this chapter. They often suggested I interview the Chocolate Drops instead of themselves, perhaps because so few of them thought of their own music as “traditional.” I could not tell how much their reluctance was due to discomfort with inviting a white person into their personal spaces and histories, with being unsure of what I would do with the information, or their doubts that their music would fit in with my definition of “traditional.”

I struggle with the notions of bounding the music presented in the CTM because of concerns with authenticity and its connection to place, as well as allowing for and encouraging regional variations rather than only national, homogenized expressions of culture. One of the things that bothered me about the CTM was the necessity, perceived or otherwise, of drawing our musicians from outside the region, even though the CTM ostensibly celebrates traditions from inside the Appalachian region, as explained in the previous chapter. This kind of imprecision helps contribute to the invisibility of African American Appalachians, their traditional music, and the presence of singers and musicians in the region. Something inside me does feel that it is important that people who grow up

with traditional music and carry it on should receive some special recognition over revivalists or other people who take on the music consciously.

The interviews described in this chapter were undertaken in order to answer my overall question of who gets to be an Appalachian musician. Black invisibility in Appalachia is still a serious issue, and music, surprisingly, is one area that is most silent. I say surprisingly because if there is one area African Americans have received recognition, it is in music, unless it might be in sports today. Many factors contribute to silencing African American Appalachians and their music (Thompson 2006). Primary among these are historic (and continuing) discrimination and violence against African Americans in the United States, which is expressed in many ways. Lack of access to jobs, educational opportunities, and power networks in rural Appalachia resulted in black outmigration in many parts of the region (Billings and Blee 2000; Hayden 2003). Rampant segregation included separation of black and white music and suppression of much black music almost from the beginning of commercial recordings and radio (Titon 1977). It does not seem fair to bypass people who live in the region to invite musicians from outside the region, just because outsiders are easier to locate. Misrepresentation of Appalachia as a “white” region and invisibility of black people in Appalachia remains in the popular understanding, and inviting musicians from outside the region to represent the region’s music in a venue as important as the CTM seems to aid this process.

9.2 History of African Americans in Appalachia and Their Music

African American people, both free and enslaved, have resided in the Appalachian Region since the earliest years of European re-settlement, though their numbers as a percentage of the total population were substantially lower than other places in the South

and they were unevenly dispersed (Williams 2002). African Americans lived throughout the Appalachian Region in antebellum years, working in early industries such as salt production, iron mining and smelting, timbering, and agriculture (Inscoc 2004, Billings and Blee 2000). While slave numbers were low relative to other areas of the south, the region was an important source for slaves traded into the Deep South (Dunaway 2003). Turner's 1985 demographic study showed that the southern subregion (Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Tennessee) had the highest percentage of black population in his "core" region for most years since the census began in 1790, and a relatively stable population until 1900, when the proportion of blacks declined in relation to the white population.⁴⁶ From 1820 to 1860, the population of blacks in the region ranged from 15.1 percent to 19.5 percent, although there was quite a bit of local variation. Alabama's and South Carolina's black proportions of about one-third somewhat skewed the statistics for the region, but all of Turner's Appalachian portions had double-digit proportions at this time with the exception of West Virginia (Turner and Cabbell 1985:238). Central Appalachia has generally housed much lower populations of African Americans than other areas of the region over time, with the exception of edge areas with extensive agriculture, such as Garrard and Madison counties in Kentucky and some coal mining areas. This industry attracted African American workers and their families from the 1880s to the 1930s in West Virginia, Virginia, and Tennessee and 1900-1930 in Kentucky, but in the region as a whole, the black population has declined since 1870. Another regional pattern is steady migration

⁴⁶ Turner's definition of Appalachia relied on ARC counties as of 1985, but not all the states included in the ARC definition. He excluded Maryland, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Therefore he only included Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia in his definition of Appalachia.

into standard metropolitan statistical areas since the 1930s and '40s (Turner and Cabbell 1985:239-241, Hayden 2003).

These changes indicate a dynamic African American population in the region highly dependent on the availability of work opportunities open to them. Billings and Blee, in their meticulous study of nineteenth-century Clay County, Kentucky, suggest that land ownership and kinship ties were less useful to African American Appalachians than for white Appalachians in avoiding poverty and maintaining residency in the region, especially in rural areas.

Enslavement of Africans and their descendents meant that many of their native cultural forms were suppressed, but the segregation of blacks and whites also allowed for the development of a distinctly African American culture, where the cultures of many different African ethnic groups were forced together but were still more-or-less separate from white culture. Cultural interchange did occur between whites and African Americans, with influences passing in both directions (Sobel 1987, Hatch 1989, Joyner 1999). For example, just in terms of instrument adoption, African Americans took up the European-descended fiddle, while European Americans began playing the African-descended banjo, which means that any string band tradition in the United States has a combination of white and black influence. Most slave-owning households in the mountains were rather smaller than the lowland plantations and existed alongside non-slave owning households, so that slaves and their owners were more likely to associate with one another than in the large plantations. This does not imply that social relations were any more equal between blacks and whites, but that there was more opportunity for interchange than is sometimes credited (Dunaway 2003).

The banjo itself as an artifact is testimony to the connections and interchanges between blacks and whites (Linn 1991, Conway 1995). The transformation of the early three and four string gourd banjo to its current five string hoop-style body makes apparent its African American emphasis on rhythm and the European American emphasis on melody. The first documentation of a banjo in the Appalachian region was in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1798 (Conway 1995:59). Cecelia Conway identifies an early transportation route through northwestern North Carolina that may have been an early source of diffusion for the banjo from black lowland Southerners to white mountaineers (Conway 1995:146), demonstrating the possible importance of that section of the region as a site of cultural interchange. The banjo fell out of favor among blacks after the Civil War, probably due in large part to the success of the minstrel shows among whites and the connection of the instrument to this music that both celebrated and demeaned black music. The instrument became quite industrialized as it was mass-produced and marketed to whites as a genteel instrument (Linn 1991).

While the fiddle and banjo combination was noted as early as the 1770s, it was not really common until much later, probably the mid-nineteenth century (Conway 1995). The original accompaniment for the banjo was the drum, but the ban on drums during slavery throughout most of the South - due to fears that a slave rebellion might be organized and communicated through drums - meant that other percussion instruments, especially clappers or friction instruments made of bones, were adopted instead.⁴⁷ Using one's body as an instrument, or "patting juba," was also used as accompaniment for instruments or for

⁴⁷ Reference to playing the bones is found in the song, "Angelina Baker," a "slave song" attributed to Stephen Foster, probably one he adapted: "She left me here to weep a tear and to beat on the old jawbone." Bone clappers, called simply "bones," became an essential instrument in the minstrel show and were used to display the virtuosity of the player. This instrument also became adopted by Irish string bands in the twentieth century.

dancing, and evolved into the practice of “hambone,” probably through the mediation of minstrel and vaudeville shows. Another early instrument related to the mouth bow and developed by African Americans is the washtub bass, descended from an earth bow or ground harp (Courlander 1976). The washtub bass, hambone, and bones playing were all Africanisms that were adopted by whites at different times as part of the comic hillbilly image, which contributes in the twisted way of racial stereotyping to Appalachians being seen as white trash (Newitz and Wray 1997).

The voice was the most important instrument for African Americans historically, and that continues until the present. Spirituals, or “sorrow songs,” are perhaps the earliest documented songs of black America. They were identified by white collectors as important folk material by the late 19th century. Work songs are another genre that are somewhat well documented among African Americans (Williams 2003). Twentieth-century collectors documented some children’s songs and games, though not from the Appalachian region.

Although ballad-singing in Appalachia no doubt did descend from the European American tradition, this may not be its only provenance. The essential nature of the ballad-singer as telling stories through song also has a West African counterpart in the *griot* tradition, though the influence of this tradition must be inferred as there is no direct documentation of this in Appalachia. The *griots* are “praise singers, oral historians of prodigious recall, and keepers of the people’s memory” (Conway 1995). Preachers and deacons in black churches seem to fulfill this role (Blythe 2009); judging from the power enjoyed by many black women in the church, I would daresay some of the senior women might also be credited with this role, though I understand the African *griot* tradition to be associated with men. Accompanying the ballads with an instrument, whether it is a guitar or

a banjo, may also be an Africanism, possibly also a continuation of the *griot* tradition in America (Milnes 1999). American ballads such as “John Henry,” “Staggerlee,” and “Frankie and Johnny” are popular with singers from a variety of backgrounds, but are generally accepted to have African American protagonists and are usually sung with accompaniment.

Ballad collection in Appalachia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a perfect example of the “sedimentation” of meaning that can occur in the discourse of culture. Ballad collectors were directed to singers by locally placed cultural brokers such as Olive Dame Campbell or settlement school teachers, who were all white. The fact that Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles were specifically looking for remnants of English culture would have also made it unlikely that they would consider African Americans as informants. Later scholars then built their research on these collections, interpreting them as representative of the culture as a whole, rather than as collecting projects focusing on a certain kind of music. Sharp’s and Karpeles’s (English) nationalist project has come to stand in for “authentic” Appalachian culture, even though defining American regional music was far from their intent.

As described in the beginning of this section, African American populations in the mountains experienced a steady decline from at least 1870 to the present, but many African Americans from the Deep South migrated into the region when jobs were available in the coal industry or railroad construction, bringing their music with them, including the guitar. The guitar is originally a European instrument that diffused through the South from Hispanic Mexico (Carney 1994). The ballad, “John Henry,” tells the story of a black railroad worker whose historical protagonist is claimed in southern West Virginia, an area that

retains a relatively large rural African American population, though more recent research by Scott Nelson places John Henry in Alabama. Such workers, almost always male, are generally credited with introducing the guitar to Appalachian music (Thompson 2006c). In addition, many mountain servicemen returned home from the Spanish-American War with “Spanish” guitars or Hawaiian guitars they had bought while overseas, or with the experience of the instruments.

There are no doubt connections between black and white Appalachians in terms of religious music, despite the prevalence of segregated churches today. Early in the history of the region, blacks and whites tended to worship together if they worshipped at all, even if they weren’t seated in the same areas. Different congregations treated the formalities and rights of membership differently, though slaves were often active church members. Camp meetings, with their “plain folk singing” influenced both black and white Appalachians, and sacred music sung by reading shape-note hymns may also be found in both traditions (Boles 1983). The use of a call and response technique called “lining out” may be found in both white and black religious music, and the use of the pentatonic, or “gapped” scale has both European and African ancestry.

Much of what we know about early Appalachian music and its origins has actually been inferred from twentieth century documentation, especially the early commercial recordings of the 1920s and ’30s. By that time, however, many folk songs in America had already undergone the transformation from ballad to lyric, or were standardized in some way, either by much vocal music becoming accompanied, or by the rise in popularity of the string band, which regularized many of the old fiddle tunes to strict metrical time and eliminated some keys that weren’t easy to play on other instruments, as well as some ancient

tunings. Unaccompanied singing was not typically marketed, “identifiable” Child ballads making up less than one percent of country music recording (Wolfe 2002), and therefore its prevalence in folk society cannot be gauged by its popularity on recordings (Abrahams and Foss 1968). Ironically, though “songcatchers” sometimes treated them as though they were the only true mountain music, ballads were not part of the popular, commercial rendition of such music. Lyric songs and instrumental music were the main types of music on early recordings. All these factors indicate the danger of extrapolating backwards.

The black string band tradition in Appalachia and throughout the South is well documented at least as early as the 1770s (Wolfe 1987), and interviews with blues musicians into at least the mid-twentieth century reveal many who were well-acquainted with string band music. DeFord Bailey, harmonica player and the only black musician on the early Grand Ole Opry, defined this as “black hillbilly music” and is quoted as saying, “Everybody around me grew up playin’ that” (Wolfe 1987). Nevertheless, when these musicians tried to audition for white record company producers in the early days of commercial recordings, the best they might be told was, “Sorry. Can’t use you.” C.F. Lyons, an “A & R” man (artists and repertory) for Vocalion records, listened to one black string band in Knoxville in 1930 and dismissed them after a few minutes. White recording artist, Uncle Dave Macon, was also there and asked him to give the band a chance. Lyons replied, “That music doesn’t sound like anything I’ve ever heard” and walked away (Wolfe 1987). This quote does raise questions about possible stylistic differences between white and black musicians of the time, but the dearth of recordings makes it difficult to reconstruct those sounds. Even into the 1940s, when guitarist Brownie McGhee, a well-known blues musician, wanted to record some dance music, he was told by the record company that it was not “his kind of music.” If

the company wanted hillbilly music, it would record hillbillies (meaning “white hillbillies”) (Titon 1977). This hillbilly music is the basis for old-time music.

Early commercial recordings of both “race music” (black) and “hillbilly music” (white) were separated along with many aspects of culture, and were marketed at a time when the Ku Klux Klan was on the rise, the Harlem Renaissance was at its height, and Americans were continuing to sort out what it meant to be a multiracial society. Although traditional music has long been an arena of interchange and cross-fertilization between black and white Americans, recordings of black music by black people were only made in any number after black promoters could prove to white-owned recording companies that a lucrative market for it existed. There was a question of whether African Americans, generally poorer, could and would spend the money. The question of a white market for black music was not even brought up, although it, too, was a worthwhile market.

The great variety of music created and performed by black musicians was ignored in favor of only that music that could easily fit into the three categories of jazz, blues, or gospel, in order to fit in with market predictions (Kenney 1999). Black string bands like Gribble, Lusk, and York, for example, or the Tennessee Chocolate Drops, black old-time string bands from east Tennessee, were rarely ever recorded (Jamieson 1990), and this led to a decline in string-band music among blacks in Appalachia and throughout America. Instead, African American orchestras who played for more modern social dances were recorded, James Reese Europe’s orchestra being one of the more famous. Companies such as Okeh and Victor carried both race music and hillbilly music, but rarely if ever allowed for any recognition that much of the music found in America was a melding of different traditions. There is an intriguing handful of records with black and white musicians playing

together dating from the late 1920s and described by country music writer Charles Wolfe, but this was by far the exception rather than the norm (Wolfe 1987). This separation was further reinforced by the practice of numbering the recordings into different series according to the companies' conceptions of the genres.

And so it was with the influence of blacks in Appalachia on radio and recorded music – their presence in the region and connections between blacks and whites only acknowledged behind the scenes. For example, the center of the influential guitar scene in western and central Kentucky in the early twentieth century was a black man named Arnold Shultz. He is now recognized informally as the genius behind the styles of Merle Travis, Chet Atkins, Bill Monroe, and countless other white musicians that have defined the bluegrass and country music of today, but he died at the relatively young age of forty-five, destitute and forgotten (Cantwell 1984, Lightfoot 1990b).

Lesley Riddle was another casualty of the Jim Crow south. He is now known as a major influence on “Mother” Maybelle Carter’s iconic guitar style, but was unable to become a star on his own or become part of the early country sound because of racial discrimination in the early days of recording. Riddle also accompanied A.P. Carter on many song-hunting trips through the mountains to find new material to continue the recording career of the Carter Family. Despite the fact that Riddle was often the one to put Carter in touch with other musicians, the two men often had to stay in different lodgings because of racial segregation conventions (Zwonitzer and Hirshberg 2002). There are no known recordings of Shultz, but folklorist Mike Seeger did make some field recordings of Riddle from 1965-1978, which are available now. These are but two examples of African Americans prevented from having the opportunity to directly represent their own music in

the mass media because they were not playing music in the style considered appropriate by the recording companies.

From these segregated commercial beginnings, aesthetic identities became hardened, with cultural alignment of artistic genres with social groups so that genres became identified with different racial groups as “our music,” with all the indexical and iconic signs that continue to reinforce those identities (Benzon 1993). Folk music is an urbanized concept, and always the music of the “other,” with the concept of folk music created by academic elites. During the late 1930s and 1940s, white academic elites and political activists constructed the genre of “folk music” as an alternative to the racialized genres of commercial music (Roy 2002). Despite this lofty ideal, however, the concept of folk music has not been embraced by African Americans to describe their own traditions, and traditional music is considered by blacks and whites alike as mainly a white cultural phenomenon (Benzon 1993). The folk revival of the 1950s-1970s was mostly a white phenomenon, furthering ideas that traditional music revolved around fiddles, banjos, and ballads, as old-time music was also being defined at this time. Rural America and the music associated with it became more alienated from black culture as African Americans migrated north for greater economic opportunities in the twentieth century. Even the blues revival had a mostly white audience (Titon 1993). These patterns continue into the present, with folk music festivals such as the Celebration of Traditional Music presenting traditional music with more of a white inflection and appeal.

9.3 Interviews with African American Appalachian Musicians

In the summer of 2008, a (white) Berea College student intern, Darrin Hacquard, and I went in search of African American musicians to interview and potentially invite to

future Celebrations. We began by assuming that there are, indeed, African American traditional musicians in the region, but that we just didn't know about them and perhaps our understanding of "traditional music" was based on a definition of white traditional music rather than those who would be considered as such in their own communities. Our immediate purpose was threefold: 1) to discuss with our interviewees what musics they consider "traditional" in black Appalachian communities, 2) to locate black musicians meeting those criteria, and 3) consider how these new understandings will impact the Celebration of Traditional Music (CTM).

We interviewed thirteen African American singers and several other people for background information in the following communities in Central and Southern Appalachia: Lynch, Wheelwright, Richmond, and Berea, Kentucky; Alcoa, Maryville, and Knoxville, Tennessee; Pennington Gap, Gate City, and Big Stone Gap, Virginia. Our sample was gathered using the "snowball" method: acquaintances recommended musicians and other knowledgeable people for us to interview.⁴⁸ As is probably true of most white Appalachians, the black Appalachians were more likely to talk with us if someone they knew brought us together, but this was sometimes compounded by mild racial mistrust. Consultants ranged from fifty to eighty-three years old. Most were natives of Appalachia, living in the region currently, though a few were originally from outside the region.

Early on, we discovered that the word *musician* meant *instrumentalist* to our acquaintances and contacts, so we had to also specifically ask for singers to interview, a tradition in black music as documented by Bontemps's and Hughes's 1958 collection of Negro folklore (cited in Floyd 1995:49). Since we were in search of traditional musicians,

⁴⁸ With special thanks to Shirley Clowney, Paula McGhee, Bill Turner, and Kathy Bullock for their thoughts and introductions.

we started out explaining what *we* meant by “traditional music” (connection to the past, unknown authorship, transmitted from person to person, created by people informally) as well as asking for their definition. In time, we even dropped that term and just asked for people who sang or made their own music because the word had so little meaning for them.

9.4 Research Findings

One question asked of all consultants was their identification with the word “Appalachian.” As with white residents of the region, there was a range of opinion, from people who embraced the term to people who seemed almost offended by it. Unlike white Appalachians, however, several of our interviewees felt that racial identity trumped regional identity. It was enough of a stigma to be black; why would they want to identify with Appalachia, another stigmatized group? Many people, like Andrew Baskin or Lowell Parker, were very clear about Appalachia being a geographic term (meaning locational) and not necessarily a cultural term.

Lowell Parker: I am native born—I am born in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, and I was raised in Wheelwright.

DT: So, when you talk about your identity or yourself, do you use that term, Appalachian? Is that something that feels like you, or is that an outside...

LP: No, I just know that I live in a part of the Appalachian Mountains, and I realize that it’s not just Kentucky; it’s West Virginia and Tennessee too, Virginia. I understand that it’s more than just here.

DT: When you think about where you’re from, or your identity, or whatever, what words come to mind?

LP: I’m from the extreme eastern part of the state. I live in the mountains...

DT: Eastern Kentucky?

LP: I live in the mountainous part of the state.

DT: Do you think about being “country”?

LP: I just use the term loosely... (pause)

DT: Not necessarily?

LP: Not necessarily. I don't think you're necessarily country, you know, you ain't gotta be country just because you live in the mountains—you can actually be educated, and that'll remove a lot of that stigma of “country.”

Being “country” was a word that resonated more for our consultants than the term Appalachian, but more in terms of its being derogatory, in opposition to the more privileged urban sophistication. Larry Ervin learned about being Appalachian once he came to Berea College in the late 1960s, and even learned to respect what that meant, but still didn't identify with it. He identified himself as being from a specific community, Alcoa, rather than from a region, and seemed to consider the distinction between city and country to be more important:

I've had many black friends that had the Appalachian linguistic style, and we would talk about them 'talking country' even though in Alcoa we considered ourselves to be 'city-country-city'. For my generation, it was saying that you were backwards, that you were extremely poor, usually, and you had that accent, and maybe even uneducated, to a certain extent. Out in the country, yes. Even though they might still have quirks about the moonshine and it even became a sort of hip thing to wear overalls. But we had to let

people know that we were really from the city, so we would leave one gallus off. I still do it. To let you know (laughing).

Being rural and Appalachian held a stigma for Ervin which he was not willing to embrace and which held no meaning for him, but he did express a great deal of pride in being from the predominantly black community of Alcoa.

LE: Many of my predecessors, when they went to Berea [College], they'd tell people that they were from Knoxville. When we went we told them we were from Alcoa. You don't even know anybody from Knoxville. Don't be 'frontin''. Because of our pride, a lot of people learned about Alcoa and what it stood for.

DT: So, around here in some ways, saying you were from Alcoa was making a statement that you were from a black community?

LE: Yes.

DT: Not just part of greater Knoxville.

LE: Yes. Right.

Ervin's clear statement of pride in being from an identifiably black community, disdain for rural life, and lack of connection with an Appalachian identity seemed to perpetuate the notion that Appalachia was basically a region made up of white people, or possibly that it was "country" and included moonshine, special speech patterns, and being backwards. On the other hand, some people we visited did identify with being Appalachian, and felt that others dismissed their regional connection because of their African American heritage.

Paula McGhee: My thing is about Appalachia. I'll get my spiel in – I'm Appalachian as well – it's almost a chip on my shoulder because history and myths have made "Appalachia" white – banjos – barefoot – blue jeans. [But] that's us. Everything Appalachian we do. We are as Appalachian as any white person up in any mountain area, because that's what my Dad came from...What's been portrayed as what Appalachia is does not look like me. So I've always been in search of black hillbillies. That's what I think I am, that I'm as much Appalachian as I am black. And that doesn't make me any less black, and my blackness doesn't – I like that convergence and he [my father] just embodies that to me – of being a black Appalachian.

Several of the people we interviewed lived in the region now but were not originally from the region. Jeanie Melton was from non-Appalachian Georgia, but shared the same aversion to being considered to being "country" as expressed by Larry Ervin. Jill Carson was from suburban New England, and grew up in a high Anglican church, but loves living in the mountains in the native town of her husband, and the music from the region. "I love the singing, I love the music. The music itself, the instruments, and it's a different type of music that you hear here than what I was used to. It tells a story. You get to know people through music here."

Mobility in and out of the region and between communities within the region is valued to improve the quality of life. For example, people have to travel great distances to get their hair done, or find stockings in the right color, decreasing their dependence on their local (mostly white) community and increasing their connection to larger urban centers and their larger black populations. Many ministers to churches in these communities travel long

distances from their homes outside the region, such as the ministers to two Madison County churches. Black Appalachians have many relatives outside the region, which may also dilute a regional identity.⁴⁹ Lynch, Kentucky, was populated in its coal mining days by Alabamans, and many, like singer and preacher Jake Ravizee, maintain family ties there. Interestingly, Ravizee spoke of the Alabama branch of the family as more instrumentally inclined, while those in Kentucky were mainly vocalists. This supports our findings that there seem to be fewer African-American instrumentalists in the mountains.

Segregation and racism, including the manipulation of commercial music and its markets, impacted our interviewees greatly. Local radio stations only exhibited a token attempt to play black music, if at all. The radio station in Cumberland, Kentucky, only played black gospel music for a short time on Sunday mornings, the rest of the format being (white) country (Ravizee). While many of our consultants historically listened to the Grand Old Opry, the iconic country music radio program broadcast out of Nashville, Tennessee, this program was much more emphasized among white musicians. Instead, a radio program on WLAC out of Nashville called Randy's Record Shop (or Mart) was cited by all our black consultants as the main radio program they preferred, and the only place to purchase their music (through mail-order). White consultants and interviewees for this dissertation were only vaguely aware of this show.

Small communities separated by mountainous terrain, along with a relatively high percentage of whites in much of Appalachia, meant that our consultants lived in a predominantly white world. Felecia Ballard, a younger woman (about forty years old) who lives in Berea, Kentucky, had a somewhat different musical experience than some others in

⁴⁹ For data on concentrations of black populations in Appalachia see Hayden, 2003. For nineteenth-century outmigration of black Appalachians, see Billings and Blee 2000.

our study due to the relatively high level of integration between black and white communities there. She cited one of her early musical influences as performing in the outdoor drama, *Wilderness Road*, although she did not then go on to recount further connections with string band music. Because of their age, most of our other interviewees had previously lived a much more segregated existence. Along with the pain this created, many spoke of the strength of the local black schools and segregated communities as carriers of their African American culture, including the music. Desegregation, at least initially, resulted in lowering prestige and opportunities for teachers and other community leaders and a dilution of black traditions, as described by Clowney, Ervin, and Turner especially. One of the few places where black Appalachians remain in the majority is in their churches.

Politicians, scholars, and community organizers agree that the church is the center of the black community, and the communities we investigated are no exception. Jill Carson identified that the white population in her community also centered around the churches (though predominantly white churches in this case): “Yes, in this area, you’ll find that most of the socialization that takes place is in the churches, so [the Evangelistic Choraliers] really works to bring people together. The choir has become really diverse – and it’s a real community-builder.” All the people we interviewed had a strong connection with the church, though we acknowledge that this may not be true of all African American people in the region. Because of our “snowball” methodology, it was more likely that we would meet other church-goers and performers of religious music. Our consultants almost always listened to gospel music because they prefer it, but no one we spoke to had a strong moral aversion to secular music. People we talked to like “all kinds of music, except rap and hard

rock” or “rap and opera.” Several spoke of preferring country music to other kinds of “white” music because it tells a story (Massey, Ravizee).

Religious music, for many of our informants, fulfilled many aspects of life and represented heritage, tradition, memory, and the importance of family members, all layered in together. Turino describes this kind of condensation of meaning and emotion in the iconic and indexical signs created by music as *semantic snowballing* (9). This is very true for white Appalachians as well. Elsewhere I have described the emotion-filled reaction of Felecia Ballard when thinking of her uncle singing *The Old Ship of Zion*. Lowell Parker also had some very specific memories that brought together his childhood, family, and religion.

And you realize that the same songs that gave them joy in the early '40s, '30s, '20s—they still give you joy today in the spiritual realm. “Oh Happy Day” is a good song, but it’ll never take the place of “Amazing Grace”—it’ll never take the place of “Blessed Assurance,” “The Old Rugged Cross”—it’ll never take the place of those, because they have so much significance in your memory. They have so much bearing on you, that you just can’t ever forget how you heard others sing it and you heard them reminisce about their loved ones, or our forefathers used to listen to it all the time, or used to sing it all the time.

DT: So it would bring back memories? When they would sing those songs they might think about a certain person?

LP: Yeah, like our uncle would say: “Papa used to sing this all the time; this was papa’s favorite song.” And papa was a granddaddy, or great

granddaddy to us—and so, we're able to tie into our heritage through that, too.

The oldest music we found consisted of lined-out hymns sung with a strong beat; a beat that could be worked to: “a corn-chopping song” (Paula McGhee). Jill Carson alluded to the beat when she said, “when I think of gospel, I think of old time, pat your foot, gospel music,” but that she couldn't get past the beat of the new gospel music to even find out if she appreciated the content, so it's a different beat than that found in contemporary rap-style gospel music. Several people mentioned the importance of the women's heels contributing to the rhythm of the songs. While drums were almost always played by men in the churches, women contributed to the rhythm through an iconic symbol of their gender, worn on their feet rather than manipulated by the hands. A wooden floor, which is more likely to be associated with a traditional church building rather than the carpeted modern style, is also thus connected to the traditional musical life of the congregation.

Lined hymns (where the song leader sings a line at a time, followed by the congregation singing the same words, sometimes with a different tune) is one style shared by black and white traditions. While mainly confined to Old Regular Baptists in white communities, it was more widespread in black denominations, though becoming rarer due to the popularity of more contemporary styles and use of written hymnals. Jeanie Melton described encouraging the lined hymns among the deacons in her Knoxville church, but their desire to sing instrumentally accompanied written hymns. These hymns are more likely to be led by the deacons in the beginning of the service, which is also more likely to be the time during the service when instrumental accompaniment is eschewed, the most old-fashioned part of the service, and a time led exclusively by males. Besides the lined hymns,

call and response characteristics are still very important in black music and worship practices, with their basis in tradition. As a former pastor, Robert McGhee says, “The object was to get the congregation involved in the service. Call and response – part of the black church – it was an art to getting them involved in the service” (McGhee 2008b).

Another form of unaccompanied religious music mostly sung by males is the gospel quartet music which was very popular from the 1940s through the '60s. This makes it seem relatively new to be considered “traditional,” though it seems to be regarded this way by both festival organizers and black Appalachians. This style of singing comes from earlier twentieth-century styles, somewhat related to the Jubilee choral singing of the nineteenth century. Formally trained pianist and music teacher, Jeanie Melton, now of Knoxville, said, “I heard quartet music when I stayed with my uncle [in southwest Georgia]. I thought it was country and backwards. I’m at a church where we have a piano and a Hammond B-3. I didn’t understand the concept of quartet music” (Melton 2008).

Bennie Massey, of Lynch, Kentucky, explained the importance of learning the quartet tradition from older members of his groups, and how embedded singing was to relationships in the community, all of which contribute to understanding quartet music as a traditional musical form.

I been here all my life and I been in a lot of different quartets, singing a cappella. Around here, quartet groups were common—you had four or five of ‘em. When I was still in high school, I was in a group called the Bald Eagles, the first quartet I was in. It was some older men. I watched them, then they kinda took me under their wing. I was singing in church, in the choir, and some of the Bald Eagles were singing in our church and they took

me with them. They had a group that would go around to the different churches and sing a cappella music. Most of it was hymns out of the Baptist hymn book; they just took the music out... I learned from them guys, the timing, and it takes a lot of practice to do quartet music. We've got about fourteen or fifteen men in the church now and we mostly sing quartet music.

Mostly, I sung in the mine, and that's when I learned a lot from some of the older guys I worked with. That made the day go a little faster. We'd sing gospel songs, we'd practice. You get used to doin' it, you work together, you know, with people. You learn how to relate to people, and you learn what they're about and you get close to 'em—and that's what we're doin' at the church now.

It's not the singin', it's the relationship.

Once again, the music integrates many aspects of a music-maker's life through iconic and indexical signs, through semantic snowballing. The mentorship of the older men in Massey's religious life combines with his working life in the intimate and masculine world of the eastern Kentucky deep mine, integrating spiritual, physical, emotional, artistic, and practical aspects of his life. The relationship between the singers and the music produced Appalachian space.

Regarding the differences and similarities between black and white musical and religious practices, Rev. Joe Maddox said one preacher told him that white people tend to "sing too fast and preach too slow." Singer Paula McGhee says, "an Appalachian hymn that white and black sing is Bound for the Promised Land (you know that, 'On Jordan's stormy banks I stand and cast a wishful eye') – but we get more into the chorus." Repetition and

dwelling in the rhythmic groove of music allow for greater social synchrony and sonic bonding, which contribute to “security in constancy” which further integrates the individuals in their communities (Turino 2008).

Rhythm and the connection of music to movement are perhaps the most important aspects of traditional black music that separates it from white music, which Floyd characterizes as “Dance, Drum, and Song” in traditional African societies, along with subsuming individuality into the community (1998:33). One interviewee, singer and preacher Robert McGhee, stated: “That’s one thing that really gives the music its effect. Black music has its rhythm. If you see a black choir sing – they’re moving together in harmony. That’s one of the things that distinguishes black Appalachian music from white Appalachian music.” Once again, the connection of music and movement creates that sonic bonding that integrates many aspects of the individual and the community. McGhee describes the rhythmic swaying of the choir as yet another aspect of harmony, not just as the melodic use of the term.

Differing emphasis on the downbeat or the backbeat is an important cultural difference between white and black populations. During a square dance including only white people in Letcher County, Kentucky, one young man I was dancing with got completely off-balance and had to stop dancing when I started clapping to the backbeat of the music. During a celebration honoring Richard Lomax, an influential (black) choir director in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, a few of the white faces in a mostly African-American mass choir were conspicuous not by the color of their skin, but by their clapping on the downbeat and their stillness in the sea of gospel rocking (note: not all white singers behaved this way – but none of the black singers did).

There seemed to be very few instrumentalists today in the black communities we visited, outside of band programs in the schools, which contrasts sharply with the predominance of instrumental music among whites, including most white gospel groups. If an instrument is played in the black religious communities, it tends to be the piano, followed by the organ. Other instruments may be accepted in churches (especially drums, electric bass and guitar, and possibly woodwinds like saxophone and clarinet), but a surprising number did not have any instrumentalists at all. Compact discs are commonly used to accompany singers. Interestingly, there doesn't seem to be the same restriction on types of instruments played on recordings as there is with actual instruments in the churches.

Piano is often learned in a traditional way: by ear, through apprenticeship with an older person, especially a woman, though we certainly found plenty of examples of male pianists. One male said he did not learn piano as a boy because it was considered to be "unmanly," though now he wishes he had (Ravizee). Other people felt piano was open to anyone, including Robert Blythe, although he said he knew of many men who had felt that way when young, but regretted it later. Though piano lessons were not uncommon, and most churches have pianos, our interviewees knew of very few pianists currently. Most had uncles, aunts, or mothers that played, in the generation that passed away decades ago. Lowell Parker's uncle not only played in church and conducted the choir, but played piano and guitar in many other groups, including honky-tonk and boogie-woogie, at various clubs and "on the circuit," and also in the basement of their home, where they had a little social club that included a jukebox and there was dancing. The previous generation, which included Parker's uncle, Ron Carson's father, and Bill Turner's mother, seemed to have

more of a secular repertoire than their children who are in their 50s and 60s at the time of this research.

On the piano, a characteristic “gospel chord” was identified by Jill Carson as being the proper sound for the music. This chord might be described as an iconic sign, where the resemblance of this chord’s sound to other gospel music creates a sense of recognition and security, as well as indexical connections to previous experiences with similar music, the people, places, and events that give meaning to the music.

The idea of “traditional music” is somewhat foreign to these singers. Lowell Parker contrasted the word “traditional” with “modernized.” Andrew Baskin thought African American traditional music meant call-and-response, spirituals, and lined-out hymns, but when you add the modifier “Appalachian” to the mix, then you went off into the realm of white culture. Although several people we interviewed acknowledged the importance of their families and immediate musical communities, they also cited nationally-important black musical traditions in their discussion of traditional music.

Pianist Felecia Ballard describes herself as a “legacy” player, placing herself in a line from her grandfather through her mother, and making musical connections with other members of her family, but she mainly situated the centers of her traditional music in Chicago and Detroit, making distinctions between the traditional gospel music of Thomas Dorsey, Sister Sally Martin, and Rev. James Cleveland. Rev. Robert Blythe connected the idea of traditional music with a more conservative Predestinarian Baptist church in his hometown of Richmond, and with older songs and hymns sung in his church, but also described making a yearly pilgrimage to the Church of the Deliverance in Chicago to soak up the atmosphere and traditions there, naming the Martins, Mahalia Jackson, James

Cleveland, and Dr. Thomas Dorsey as artists that embody black traditional religious music. Traditions in the music of these musicians was identified both locally and extra-regionally.

The question, then, may be asked, why is there so much emphasis on religious music in African American traditions in Appalachia, and why does this dissertation not have a parallel in studying white spiritual traditions? The answer may be found in considering where space may be found for black music in Appalachia, and historic patterns influenced by segregation and racism that have become sedimented in traditional music practices. As detailed earlier, black populations in Appalachia have declined and become much more urbanized than white populations, leaving a smaller percentage of African Americans in rural areas and small towns. Many of the spaces for music detailed in Chapter 5 were ostensibly open to all people, but really promoting majority white traditions rather than truly promoting all traditions. Desegregation actually created fewer public spaces where African Americans could be in the majority, leaving churches as one of the very few public places where they could carry on their traditions in relative freedom. In addition, Floyd and others identify a syncretized “preaching, praying, singing” product that “would sound over and over again through the decades as a theme in the music of African Americans” (Floyd 1995:62). With this in mind, the remainder of this chapter continues investigating ideas of traditional music discovered through interviews with African Americans in Appalachia.

Robert Blythe perhaps had the most developed ideas about traditional music among the African American Appalachians we interviewed. He identified it as non-commercial, “the fundamental hymns of the church – some of the basics – now I’m Baptist – the Amazing Grace; and...Jesus, Keep me Near the Cross; and What a Friend We Have in Jesus; Holy, Holy, Holy; Standing on the Promises.” It is everyday music: “It’s one of those

things that furthers our faith. It's one of those things that's a part, an integral part of our worship, our daily lives."

He, like the other ministers we interviewed, made it clear that any religious music must be scripturally sound to be acceptable, regardless of their feelings about the music. This seems to represent not only the Christian minister's emphasis on the Word, but also the African American cultural emphasis on the importance of words, as celebrated in hip hop music, "playing the dozens," and speech contests.⁵⁰ Rev. Blythe had no problem with the fact that many of the legends of traditional gospel music had been blues musicians, but did not like some contemporary gospel music, such as that sung by Kirk Franklin. He felt that it was too commercial and did not give the proper messages about faith. Traditional music has already gone through that process and has survived because it has passed that test. "So the point is, some of the traditional probably went through the same scrutiny that some of what we call contemporary goes through now." So, he understood tradition as being part of a winnowing process which works to ensure that the music that survives is meaningful.

Traditional music is not like contemporary praise songs, where

You get a line that sounds good, and then you drive it home.... until it beats you up... The traditional has more meat, more substance – tells a story even – or fully details the experience. The more contemporary music comes under the heading of what my cousin calls one-liners...In fact, even the spirituals

⁵⁰ The importance of related traditions in African American folk culture on words was celebrated in the 2009 Smithsonian American Folklife Festival. One of its themes was titled, "Giving Voice: the Power of Words in African American Culture." One of our informants, Lrry Ervin, described his mother, Eloise Ervin, as "a great orator. I have recordings of her speaking, and that was a very proud portion of her life, when she could go and do things like that. And she was very well known in this area for her skills, and even when the Lord took her home, a lot of people told our family how she had inspired them to learn poetry."

have more substance, there's more meat. Even if it's something like Steal
Away – there's something in there...besides just a good chorus.

While Rev. Blythe focused on the song itself, it can be argued that the meaning is also created by the reiteration of the music with all the iconic and indexical connections people make as they associate the music and words with other parts of their lives and other times they experienced the same music.

Both Blythe and Ballard made a distinction between playing and singing a song “straight,” or as written in a hymnal or other music, and singing it in the style they learned through aural transmission, which includes dwelling on certain notes, and perhaps a looser melodic line. Rev. Blythe explains more of what he means:

Do you remember what I did a couple of Sundays ago when we sang Higher Ground? You know, I said, there are probably four different ways folks are thinking of singing that song, so let me play it straight first of all from the music. That way anybody who can halfway follow it knows where we are at all times. And you notice that in that last chorus and we put little bird's eyes – little pauses in there – where they're not written. When we get to that last line on the chorus, [singing] ‘A higher plane...than I have found...’ - a stop. And in fact, many times they would stop on ‘Lord,’ or they'd just get happy on ‘Lord’ ...[Singing] ‘Than I have found, LOOOOORD, plant my feet...’ See, we didn't do it that way, but that's the way folks most often sing it when they're just *singing* it, you know. So, that's traditional, in that sense. There's more meat, more of a story in that traditional stuff.

The delivery of the hymn is important to the meaning of the hymn. “Just *singing* it” implies imparting the song with the feeling and devotion that carries the story and fully expresses the music, rather than the more surface rendition that arises from reading it out of a hymnal, “straight.” The importance of such traditions in the religious music also transfers to secular black music, as has been examined in many sources on black music (Cone 1991, Reed 2003). The decorated delivery of the old hymns also has a very traditional method of transmission, from person to person, and was not something that could be captured on paper. The hymns would be sung while walking around, shaking hands and greeting fellow congregation members, so being written down would eliminate the power they held from being sung with and to others, accompanied by kinesthetic movements. These movements would help cement and augment the meaning of the music, further integrating the singers as members of a shared community and of their identity as part of that community:

My mother and others- now let’s talk about metered or lined hymn - that was traditional. You asked a question a little while ago and you thought I’d missed it. Your question was, are these things passed on; are they written? Let me give you an example. There is a hymn – one of the lined hymns – that we sing as a lined hymn. She always asks because her husband was one of the deacons. [singing with lots of decoration Blest Be the Tie That Binds] and folks are walking around, shaking hands – see? A fellowship hymn. Those, other than the lyrics, are not written – and were it not for the fact that I loved them so much – because they were part of my childhood, and I heard the old senior deacons and the older ladies of the church singing them and

the older ladies and they stayed with me, had that not been, my teens here would not know what we call an old hymn, See?

[Sings, “A Charge to Keep I Have.”]

And I tell, you folks will just get happy, they’re blowing their nose, wiping their... it’s only of those things that’s *truly* emotional. So, that kind of thing is not written down. Now before you leave – I won’t do it right now. I’ll show you something. I have something my shelf – there’s been an attempt to capture some of those as well as possible and put them on paper. It’s hard to capture all that emotion, but you can give some of the basics. Yes, indeed, it’s like the Kunta Kinte thing – if it’s not passed on by word of mouth, then it will never be known.

Rev. Blythe references Kunta Kinte, the slave ancestor from Alex Haley’s iconic study of black heritage, *Roots*, which further emphasizes the importance of the oral/aural tradition among African Americans. He centers his references to religious music, but writes about black music, from Dena Epstein to Paul Gilroy, discuss the importance of oral transmission. Blythe feels so strongly about passing on the traditions of his church that they schedule regular “old-fashioned days” in their church, where people will dress in older styles of clothes, make old-fashioned food, and sing old hymns.

...in our old-fashioned service...there will be some of the ladies, even, that will lead the hymns. Much of that is spontaneous. Sometimes we’ll program it. But in that devotional period, sometimes we’ll just sit and somebody will strike up out with it. Now sometimes we’ll say [singing] I Know I’ve Been Changed, [speaking] and folks join in. I...folks just sit back, pat their feet –

And you look at the old people, and they'll just close their eyes. And someone will strike up a verse – [singing] I haven't been to heaven but I've been told, The angels in heaven done signed my name, that the streets are gold and the gates are pearl. The angels in heaven done signed my name. [He gets up and walks around.] And they just get up and walk around. Oh, I know...It's just free and easy...That's what I was raised on.

Again, patting feet, and getting up and walking around illustrates the importance of movement to black spiritual music (Floyd 1995, Gilroy 1993). The embodiment of the response to the music, the sonic and kinesthetic bonding created through sharing the old music with its connection to God, family, place, and community, all combine to provide a powerful space for music in Appalachia in its black churches, and to produce Appalachian space.

9.5 Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to investigate the meaning of traditional music in African American communities in Appalachia, but the people we interviewed tended not to think about or define their music in those terms. Religious music seemed to be the most important and recognizable traditional music in their lives, according to our understanding of traditional music being from ordinary people transmitting the music orally/aurally, and perhaps according to their understanding that it was older music learned from and connected to our ancestors. Our snowball method, combined with the central role played by black churches in the lives of so many African Americans – especially in Appalachia – means that the people we interviewed were mostly involved with religious music. We did not intend to investigate religious music only in the black community. Perhaps we are missing a whole

group of tradition-oriented African-American mountaineers who play secular traditional music.

Based on the information we received from our informants, observation of other events involving black music, research through written sources, and other incidental information that informs my work, I contend that understanding the traditional religious music of African Americans in Appalachia provides important knowledge about how vernacular roots music, in general, creates their particular Appalachian space, which should be recognized as such. There may be truth in Floyd's assertion that African survivals drive the musical tendencies of African Americans, but exist as an unconscious 'cultural memory' and may not be pinned down to particular genres (5-8). The traditional musics of African American Appalachians seem to derive a special power from their doubleness, as described by Gilroy, "their unsteady location simultaneously inside and outside the conventions, assumptions, and aesthetic rules which distinguish and periodise modernity" (73). Perhaps more than white music, black music tends to move forward and innovate rather than looking backward for inspiration (Benzon 1993, Phinney 2005), perhaps because of the painfulness of past injustices. And yet, as shown by my informants' words, there is traditional music experienced and remembered in the settings with meaning to them, including family, church, and sometimes school. The doubleness of the experiences of African Americans in Appalachia as being "simultaneously inside and outside conventions, assumptions, and aesthetic rules" of white Appalachia has created a black Appalachian aesthetic that both connects them to and separates them from their home region (Gilroy 1993).

This chapter is based on a very small sampling of Appalachian African Americans involved with music, many of whom are also observant about regional identity. All the

singers and musicians we interviewed were also primarily involved with religious music, and ideas about traditional music were thus also bound up with ideas of traditional religious practices and beliefs. So, what is traditional music in the African American communities of Appalachia?

Other than an awareness of the Carolina Chocolate Drops as an exciting new group playing vernacular roots music, our African American consultants had no apparent connection to the black string band and country blues traditions that are sought after by presenters of festivals. Kalra's concern that guitar-based music was over-represented in the CTM seems justified given the lack of instrumentalists we found. But religious music continues to provide a musical identity and tradition for African Americans in the region, young and old. The prevalence of sacred music among black mountaineers indicates both a connection to a broader Appalachian identity and a connection to African American communities nationwide, which indicates a sense of doubleness in identity as defined by Gilroy building on Du Bois's ideas. Our small interview sample indicates that traditional African American Appalachian music has typically developed to unify and affirm the black community's own aesthetic and social networks, rather than along the lines of white concepts of tradition (Cone 1991).

Chapter 10: Conclusions

I am a firm believer in the power of music with its accompanying ability to construct and perform identity, with bringing people together as well as establishing boundaries that divide. One of my motivating factors in conducting this research is to identify mechanisms attached to constructions of race and gender that limit the participation of some people in vernacular roots music production. To that end, I intentionally brought to the forefront some of the voices that I perceived as having been written out of the musical conversations of the region while identifying some of the ways they continue to be marginalized in negotiations over the space of music in Appalachia. I continue to question the value of attempting to bound the region in discussions of its music, because I have seen, through my research, how limits and boundaries are sometimes helpful in providing space for the less powerful to be heard. It is necessary to write the margins into the center, to sing oneself into existence and bring more voices into the conversation, because it is through the interactions, conversations, discussions, and arguments that space is produced.

10.1 Future Directions for Research and Models for Inclusion

It is not only necessary for mountain people to continue to represent themselves to help counter representations by outsiders, but in continuing to create art and music that represents the values of the artists and musicians, the conversation can be changed. Conscious attention must be paid to who represents a region, a locality, a community, and often those who wish to change society must pay attention to the small things, to the micro politics of interpersonal interactions, whether they be through language or music, in order to be part of that representation. Habits are so ingrained and run below the consciousness of most people that they are often ignored as a site for change, but positive habits may also be

inculcated through and traditionalized by embodied action. Therefore, even though gender performance creates gender (as demonstrated by Butler and others), gendered expectations may be changed over time and people may choose to become agents of change. Privilege, and the authority designated through privileged expectations, must change through attention to the small details that make up our everyday interactions, as well as broad, sweeping institutional reforms. Indeed, those broad, sweeping changes may only come about through maintenance of those small details.

As explained in detail in my 2006 article, *Searching for Silenced Voices in Appalachia*, there are many avenues for expanding Appalachia's image and engaging in the conversations and arguments that produce Appalachian space. Instead of attempting to create one homogeneous region to foster change, more attention needs to be paid to hearing a multiplicity of voices in Appalachian Studies, creating communities of interest such as imagined by Barbara Ellen Smith, and described in Chapter 2. A participatory conversation of many Appalachian musics would include the expanding Latino population, Cherokee people, and urban people in the region, especially African Americans. When people hear voices that sound like theirs, as when they recognize "their" music, they are more likely to want to engage in that conversation. Embodied interaction also allows for these voices to be heard and incorporated into the kinesthetic experiences that create social bonding.

Broader conversation about Appalachian music, and more attention to the power relations expressed through the music, will help define a more interesting and inclusive region. Simple invitations or a declaration that "all are welcome" do not always work, however, as shown through the examples analyzed in this dissertation. Power relations are often reproduced, and boundaries are sometimes necessary to limit participation of the

privileged, allowing for silenced voices to be heard. For example, The Black Banjo Gatherings held in Boone, North Carolina, in 2005 and 2010 were very important in providing a space to privilege and highlight the voices of black people as they reconnected with a sometimes painful part of their heritage and worked on reimagining connections of that past into a positive future. It was a very important event for the kinesthetic and sonic bonding and social integration that musicking can provide.

There is a great need for more events such as The Black Banjo Gathering that focus on African American traditional musics in Appalachia and throughout the United States, and the importance of those events and the networks that led to them and were grown as a result of them cannot be overstated. I took issue, however, with the silencing of women that took place during at least the 2010 gathering I attended. It was obvious, at least to the women I spoke with, that power relations favoring men were in place. The practice of expecting women to postpone their rights in favor of the promotion of the “race” still seems prevalent and unhealthy. This event and the OTM Revival were very similar. In both cases, the producers were calling on “experts” to perform to show what the music was about without being too much “taint” from the audience who came to learn. There was a definite feeling that there was a particular point of view that was perceived as not having been heard, and a real sense of control was exerted. Boundaries had been erected to allow for some voices to be heard, but were maintained in such a manner that they silenced others who needed to be part of the conversation.

One inspiring model for inclusion in traditional music and its representation in Appalachia is the community production of *Higher Ground*, a play written by Jo Carson from hundreds of interviews conducted by Appalachian Studies students of Southeast

Community College and the people of Harlan County, Kentucky. The play included both original and traditional music, both sacred and secular, with influences and contributions both from the black and the white members of the cast who were both male and female and included a variety of ages. Many voices were heard, and the simple embodiment of the practices brought people together in kinesthetic and sonic bonding to recreate the community in a richer form.

Finally, Appalshop serves as an excellent model for working with things as they are but also envisioning a different future and working toward that. They create partnerships with other media groups in the U.S., especially those created by minority groups such as Junebug Theatre in New Orleans and Carpetbag Theatre in Knoxville. This involves residencies both here in Eastern Kentucky, which bring in individuals and groups that represent a variety of lived experiences, as well as filmmakers, Appalshop's Roadside Theater and other artists, to travel to other places. The importance of emplaced music and art is reinforced while mobility provides for the establishment and maintenance of traditions. They provided funding and structure for Randy Wilson to coordinate musical connections with other communities such as an Inuit community in Alaska, and with an Arab-American community in Dearborn, Michigan, after 9/11. They bring other groups such as the Carolina Chocolate Drops to expose people of eastern Kentucky to more diverse American traditions as well as international groups like Indonesian film-makers. Their radio programming both brings out music that is familiar but also some music that helps push the boundaries. The jam sessions held there promote participation in old-time music by inclusion of a variety of skill levels and roles. Despite some inevitable reinscription of privilege and gender roles,

they create an atmosphere that helps a variety of voices to be heard, thus producing a participatory Appalachian space.

10.2 Conclusions

So, whose Appalachia is it? Who can be an Appalachian musician, who gets to decide, and what criteria are used? This dissertation tells various stories of Appalachian space as it is produced, attempting to show the ongoing, contested nature of the social construction of space. As shown in this study, it is not only necessary to bring the marginalized into the discussion, but it is essential to understand the mechanisms that operate on both a conscious and a subconscious level to marginalize or privilege different actors. In describing and analyzing the spaces for music in Appalachia, the old-time community, the dynamics of festival hiring negotiations, and interviews with white and African American musicians, both male and female, I show how Appalachian space is produced simultaneously on many different scales. This construction is a dialectical process, articulating between the power in the room between individuals and the power used by individuals and institutions to define the region in a representational sense.

The construction of Appalachian space often takes place in the interstitial moments, such as I defined in Chapter 2 using Bhabha's framework, but I substitute concepts of region for this emphasis on nation. In either scale, this is where "the intersubjective and collective experiences of [regionness/nationness], community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (Bhabha 269). To paraphrase his statement, new strategies of selfhood and communal representations may be elaborated in the small, repeated increments, such as those I describe in these pages, "that generate new signs of cultural difference and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation" (269). This dissertation, then,

demonstrates two main processes: how Appalachian space is negotiated and produced through such interactions as in jam sessions, and how the musicians perform community in these interstitial moments.

Traditional music continues as a strong site for creating meaning, especially for the people who sing and play it, including providing a well-developed connection to the places from which the music emerged and the places imagined to be connected to the music. My research on traditional music in eastern Kentucky supports Turino's assertion that music not only integrates individuals within their music community and society at large, but also integrates the self. Musicians and singers emphasize connections to the past and to traditional, face-to-face transmission of the music from others, further connecting emotional meaning with the music through indexical signs, as people hold in their minds connections between the music they play and the people from whom they have learned (Turino 2008). I contend that an important measure of the health of a vernacular roots music community is a balance between virtuosity and inclusivity, of participatory and presentational elements.

The music provides something larger than each individual in whose service the musicians and singers might stand, subsuming yet focusing their desires on something beautiful that is at once something outside themselves but also within themselves. Communities created around traditional music often have a utopian air; communicants share more than just the music and often wish to spend non-music time together (Wooley 2003, Gardner 2004). Music events such as jam sessions are also important community time, as spaces between tunes are punctuated by jokes, pokes, and banter; by announcements of important personal milestones and families, by sharing information about past and future musical events or information about the tunes, or by taking the opportunity for showing

something on or about an instrument. There are limits to an ideal experience, however, as the social relations that constitute the community are inflected by race and gender, providing privilege to some and limiting the contributions of others.

In the old-time music community today, the activity that best expresses the music and its values are jam sessions, especially ones which occur on a regular basis. These jam sessions provide a location for the constitution of Appalachian space through the micro politics of negotiation as they allow for participation of regular musicians over time, leading to traditionalizing of behavior as well as local expression of a regional or national phenomenon. Each jam has its own personality reflecting the local leadership and place-specific customs and tunes. Because the sessions I investigated are also open jams and are publicized, they allow for the influence of visitors who inject small amounts of other locally-specific traditions while also sharing the regional and national phenomenon that is old-time music. Sometimes their participation helps highlight the local aspects of a particular jam.

When females do play instruments, they often fill accompaniment roles rather than playing lead instruments such as the fiddle, although this is changing slowly over time. Women often play banjo, an instrument that fills dual roles of lead and accompaniment, but which has also been associated with other marginalized people (Gibson). Women also expressed, more than men did, a feeling of being unwelcome at a jam session or other musical event, observations that called their talents into question, or insecurities over their abilities. This seems to be a reaction to their discomfort in occupying men's spaces, or spaces where the "work" of musicking relies on men's informal networks and institutionalized norms, in which men may create "social closure and oppression," even if unintentionally (Yancey Martin 2003:360). Women and men both seemed to take

leadership, teaching, documentation, and music production roles in this old-time music community, but there were still gendered interpretations of these activities. Virtuoso expectations in playing old-time and bluegrass music are a masculinist expression of the music that may be embraced by males or females, but more often by males. Masculinist prestige systems are tempered and somewhat balanced by feminist relational tendencies in old-time music and its community, but while women's participation is increasingly varied and taking over some roles previously granted mostly to males, it is still somewhat limited by current gender expectations and performance. Expressions of dominant masculinity may be met by challenges and by resistance, both of which may be somewhat institutionalized in the old-time music community.

Maintenance of the old-time community requires a variety of instruments and roles, with a necessity for balance to keep things moving. Both core instruments and those which elaborate are needed for a satisfying musical experience. There need to be leaders as well as followers, fiddles, banjos and guitars at least. There needs to be a minimum level of "insiders" to the culture to keep its integrity, such as was demonstrated by the Old-Time Music Revival and difficulties I experienced in keeping the Berea College old-time jam going, but excitement and movement are provided by people from outside the local community to bring in new tunes and appreciation for the local culture that can be lacking by people who are surrounded by it daily.

But traditional music also carries the heavy baggage of past injustices which have shaped the music, often a combination of admiration and disdain such as the phenomenon of minstrel music in the nineteenth century. Recreating a rural past and the nostalgia around traditional music may have the effect of further oppressing women and minorities who

suffered in the past by bestowing authority on those figures, and by connecting notions of authenticity to embodied characteristics. Reinscription of privilege may also take place through the authority created by attribution of tunes and songs to the great masters from whom they were learned, who often were able to spend time and gain recognition for making music through having a privileged place in the community. Attribution of tunes, or genealogical descriptions of their transmission over the generations, is not only a tool of the powerful. It may also be embraced by those wishing to restore credit to those whose contributions may have been erased over time, such as the contributions of women or African American. Finally, these genealogies also reinforce the connections of individuals to the community, adding meaning to the experience of the tunes by other musicians and listener.

As shown by this dissertation, authority is conveyed not only by authenticity, as expressed through relationships and connection to place, but through the sanction of institutions, which are often maintained through the reproduction of privilege for some groups and not for others (Johnson). My analysis of the process of decision-making for the Traditional Music Committee at Berea College showed that even those who wish to be equitable and make change in the world find it hard to not reproduce white male heterosexual nondisabled privilege. Gatekeepers who are influential in representing Appalachia find authority through allying themselves with institutions, whether it be to consciously make decisions that influence others' notions of Appalachia and its music, or whether it is to find a place to play, monetary compensation for performing music, or access to grants to bring friends together and put on a musical event. Individual musicians rely on institutions to be acknowledged as authorities because of their invitations to events, such as

festivals and fiddlers conventions, or by being invited to teach. The sanction of an institution may compete with or replace the authority bestowed by connection to place or blood, a situation which may be criticized by those who wish to establish lines of belonging through insider/outsider politics, such as expressed by Morris (1995).

Authority in traditional music is customarily bestowed and shaped through embodiment and belonging: through blood connections, through gender performances, and through racialized expectations. Connections to places and participation in events are embodied experiences that help increase authenticity and authority and this may be achieved through mobility as well as stasis. Embodiment itself implies a certain amount of stasis, in that we inhabit a body that we remain tied to throughout our lives. Through our lived experiences we perform gender, which affects and shapes the spaces we inhabit. But, of course, our bodies are mobile, and maintaining networks in today's old-time community is facilitated through mobility to allow for the embodied experiences in musicking that create the emotional, sonic, and kinesthetic bonding that not only brings the community together, but also integrates individuals with themselves, and these individuals with the world through participation and performance (Turino 2008:3). Music in Appalachia, thus, functions as a powerful arena for demonstrating the mechanisms of social relations as they articulate between the micro scale relationships of friends and fellow musickers , on the one hand, and the representations of a region, on the other.

Appendices

Appendix A: Musical Events for Field Research

This is a list of most of the music and dance events I attended during my field research for this dissertation and from which I draw for background research on eastern Kentucky old-time music events. Most jam sessions last at least 2 hours, but more commonly 3-4 hours. Within each category, I have listed them in relative order to their importance in the dissertation.

1) Old-time and bluegrass music events

- Appalshop jam sessions, Seedtime on the Cumberland festival (Whitesburg, Letcher County, Kentucky) regularly at least since 2005 (3 hour sessions). Those I recorded, in field notes and audio recording:
 - December 6, 2008
 - January 3, 2009
 - March 7, 2009
 - April 1, 2009
- Berea College (Berea, Madison County, Kentucky) old time music jam (I organized and played in) Second Tuesday nights each month (2007-2009, from September - May) (3 hour sessions). Those I recorded, with field notes and audio recording:
 - January 8, 2008
 - March 10, 2009
 - May 12, 2009
- Celebration of Traditional Music organizer 2006-2010; prior to this I had been a regular attendee since 1991. I attended all events for these four years, often serving as emcee, coordinating volunteers, hosting the Sunday morning hymn sing, playing and singing during the open mic time, and attending to all manner of other tasks as the main organizer. I contacted artists and created schedules, ensured publicity went out, and managed the budget for the festival. I also played in various jam sessions, including the Friday night “official” jams and some others not officially on the schedule.
- Old Time Music Revival (Not a religious event!) (Goldbug, Whitley County, Kentucky) Saturdays (August 16, September 20, and November 15, 2008; and September 5, 2009 (five full days, 10 am-10 pm). There were two revival days out of the series I did not attend and participate in (Oct 2008 and Aug 2009). On September 5, 2009, I also conducted interviews with three women who grew up in Whitley County and ranged in age from their 50s to their 80s about their experiences with music when they were growing up around the area.
- Jammin’ on the Porch (Berea, Madison County, Kentucky) Thursday evenings off and on since its beginning in July 2006 – probably eight visits total (3 hour sessions)
- Cowan Creek Mountain Music School (Cowan, Letcher County, Kentucky) participated June 20-24, 2005 and June 26-30, 2006; on staff teaching dulcimer November 24-25, 2006; some observation during 2002-03 and 2007. The school

consists of five days of instrumental instruction, jam sessions, dances, concerts, and other activities from 9 am – 9 pm each day.

- J.P. Fraley's Mountain Music Gatherin', Carter Caves State Resort Park, Olive Hill, Kentucky (September 5-6, 2008 and September 11-13, 2009) I attended and played on the program in 2009.
 - "Pickin' in the Pound," Pound, VA town hall Friday nights only once, April 2009 (3 hour session)
 - Cumberland Falls State Resort Park (Corbin, Whitley County, Kentucky) jam session Monday evenings only once, March 8, 2010 (3 hour session)
 - Mountain Music Teachers Association Retreats (Hindman, Knott County, Kentucky) (November 11-12, 2005, March 25, 2006, and February 3, 2007) several hours of meeting and jamming each day
 - Black's Barn (Conway, Rockcastle County, Kentucky) only one Sat. night, September 26, 2009 (3 hour session)
 - Black Banjo Gathering, April 2010, (Boone, Watauga County, North Carolina) (attended two full days, 12 noon -10 pm Friday and 10 am-midnight Saturday). Participated in a jam session, otherwise, just an observer.
- 2) Music performances outside of churches (some participation)
- Observed Tri-State Gospel Singing Convention (Big Stone Gap, Virginia) Sunday afternoon (June 14, 2009) (four hours)
 - Big Stone Gap Fifth-Saturday Singing (Big Stone Gap, Virginia) Saturday evening only once, August 29, 2009 (mainly observation though I did participate as the others by singing two songs that night) (3 hour session).
 - Family reunions (in Knox and Jackson counties, Kentucky) - observation and participation about half the years from 1992-present (most reunions last 4-6 hours)
 - Rock Lick Festival (Kirby Knob, Jackson County, Kentucky) observation and participation, September 20, 2008, October 2009-10 (again, 4-6 hours)
 - String Bean Festival (Annville, Jackson County, Kentucky) attendance various years but only really paid attention during the festival on June 18, 2010 during the concerts (3-11 pm). One year (2003) the organizer, Phillip Akemon, tried to increase old time participation so a number of us, initiated by Darrel Hignite, organized a "stage" and jam area away from the main stage. We garnered limited interest by non-participants but did not pursue this and were not invited back to further the cause. That same year, my husband Frank Jenkins (who has been a dance caller since 1985) and I worked through a Teacher Initiate Project grant from the Kentucky Arts Council through the Jackson County Agricultural Extension agent during a weekday to teach dance to school children at a fall version of the festival (September 11-12, 2003), and I visited three schools in the county that fall to present Appalachian music and/or dance to fourth and fifth graders as a follow-up.
 - Since 1991, I have performed regularly (an average of perhaps ten performances per year) at local venues, including state and national parks, festivals, historic re-enactments, parties, weddings, and colleges. The dissertation research slowed down during this time, but I still play with a band called Skipjack, whose other

members live in Louisville. We bill ourselves as old-time and Americana, but we also play some Celtic music and English country dance music.

- 3) African American churches or events celebrating a member of the black religious community (most events about 1-2 hours in length):
 - Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Middlesboro, Kentucky (August 30, 2009)
 - Hale's Chapel Methodist Church, Gate City, Virginia (August 31, 2008)
 - First Baptist Church, Middletown, Berea, Madison County, Kentucky (June 15 and July 6, 2008 (11am-6pm special event)
 - Farristown Baptist Church, Farristown, Madison County, Kentucky (May 17, 2009)
 - First Baptist Church (Francis & Collins Streets) Richmond, Madison County, Kentucky) Regular service (May 24, 2009) and Old Fashioned Day (May 31, 2009)
 - Appreciation service for male elder Rev. David Chenault – Pleasant Run Baptist Church, Buckeye, Garrard County, Kentucky (May 17, 2009)
 - Celebration of male choir director Richard Lomax, founder of The Evangelistic Choraliers, Christian Church, Big Stone Gap, Virginia (August 31, 2008)
- 4) During 2005-2010, I also participated and taught at Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins, West Virginia (during themed weeks involving Cajun and Irish music and dance) teaching old time banjo and guitar; as well as Family Folk Week at Hindman Settlement School in Hindman, Kentucky (most years since 2002). I also have many years of teaching at the Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina (1985-2006) and many other traditional music venues. All of these venues are well-known and well-respected venues for teaching and learning old-time and other traditional skills, and all promote themselves as Appalachian, or teaching mountain culture.
- 5) The following background experiences in Kentucky and surrounding area helped inform my fieldwork, but took place outside of the 2006-2010 time period:
 - Participant in Webb's Restaurant Friday night jam/open mics (Cumberland Gap, Claiborne County, Tennessee) many years in the 1990s (at least a dozen 3 hour sessions))
 - Participant in Bennett Center, London, Laurel County, Kentucky, old time jam sessions (2001-2004?)
 - Organizer and participant in Union College, Barbourville, Knox County, Kentucky, jam sessions (1996-98?)
 - Fifth Saturday dances called and organized in Barbourville 1992-1996
 - Tuesday night "Pickin' and Grinnin'" at Senior Citizens Center in Hindman, Kentucky (once in 2008?) (3 hour session)
 - Calling and playing at various folk, contra, square dances and playing at various festivals and workshops throughout the Appalachian region and nearby, 1980-present

Appendix B1: Interview Questions for Old-Time Musicians, version 1

I. Characterizing and documenting the music

What instruments do you play? Do you sing?

If you can classify your music, how would you define it?

What kinds of music do you think have most influenced the kind of music you do? (folk, soul, gospel, rock, rap, hip hop, jazz, blues, classical, acoustic, bluegrass, electric, country, religious, sacred, secular, etc.)

Which particular musicians have been most influential for you? (Either ones you know personally or from recordings or written music)

What other kinds of music do you hear (live) from other musicians in your community, whether you feel it influences you or not?

II. Musical transmission

How and where did you learn to play music? [Leave this open-ended, but then ask about specifics with follow-up questions]

- People: families, friends, neighbors?
- Recordings: which artists? how did you learn about the recordings? on the radio, from a friend, etc.
- School? favorite music teacher or other teacher that included music in the classroom?
- Listening to radio? Any particular programs or stations?
- Watching TV? Any particular programs or stations?
- Church? Choir? Sunday School? services in general?
- Festival/singing convention/other social gatherings? (name them?)

Ask for childhood stories – did other members of your family play or sing, even if you never really played with them or played a different kind of music?

Do you remember making a conscious decision to play music?

What are some of the influences in your life that keep you from playing music or that have kept you from it in the past?

How do you find time to play music? Do you get paid to practice and play music? What are some of the other benefits to playing music? What do you give up in order to play music?

What do you think is the impact of recorded music, radio, TV, or the internet is to keeping music going in your community? What is the negative impact of the media on music in your community?

Are there particular people or events you can think of in your lifetime that had an important influence on what kind of music was played, or even whether music was played or not?

How and where do you share your musical knowledge and repertoire? Have you taught others to play music/sing?

Where does your music come from? (Prompts: the heart? your background? your sense of what's right for you? God? learned from books?)

III. Musical spaces

Where do you play your music? Who do you play with?

- At home, with friends, family, neighbors
- At church
- With children
- Perform at festivals, singing conventions, on the radio, or other venues (list)

Where is there space for music? Is there public space for music in your community?

Where else do you go to listen to music? (larger city, out of the county, other churches, festivals, etc.)

What do you think is most important to keeping music going in your community? How else can music be encouraged? [Individual, influential people, places to play, money to pay artists and buy instruments, etc?]

How have your musical spaces changed over the years?

How far will you go to play music?

IV. Music and identity

How does your music express who you are?

- Choice of instrument
- Words of songs expressing values, important things
- Feeling of music
- What musics would you feel most accurately represent your community to yourself or others (even if it's different from what you play)? Why?

What do you consider to be your community?

- Who is included and why?
- Who is not included and why?
- Do you consider yourself to be part of more than one community? How would you describe them?
- Do they overlap or intersect or are your different communities pretty separate?

Is your musical community different from your residential community, are they part of each other, do they overlap somewhere?

What are some of the words you would use to explain who you are?

In thinking about your identity,

- Do you consider yourself to be from the mountains? What do you think this means?
- Do you consider yourself to be Appalachian? What do you think this means?
- Do you consider yourself to be Southern? What do you think this means?

What does it mean if someone says they are “country”? Would you identify with being “country”?

How does music help create community or keep your community together?

How have other people’s ideas of you and your music influenced you? (positive or negative reinforcement; what you get paid to do, or not to do?)

V. Networking and mobility

How far do you travel to play with other musicians? Do other musicians travel to your home area to play with you? Where do they come from?

How do you learn about other musicians?

Are there people in your network of different races or ethnic groups?

How many women do you play with, compared with the number of men?

What do you think is most important to keep musicians playing together?

What do you think is most important to keep music going?

Appendix B2: Interview Questions for Old-Time Musicians, version 2

1. What is your musical background?
2. How is/was your family involved in music?
3. When you hear the phrase “traditional music” (TM) what do you think of?
 - a. What is included?
 - b. What is not included?
 - a. How important is authenticity in traditional music?
 - b. What is the most important part of traditional music?

(My definitions of traditional music in case I’m asked or to start the conversation:)

- Played by people who are not “professional” – “regular” people (not to say professionals don’t also play it)
 - Part of everyday life – used informally – though also used in formal occasions – especially rites of passage
 - Learned from other people – music & recordings may be used, but there must be some transmission person-to-person
 - No one official version – OR if there is an actual author, it has been played by so many people so many ways that they have made it their own and there are many different versions
4. Who do you picture as a traditional musician?
 5. Do you think of yourself as a traditional musician, as a singer/player of traditional music, an interpreter of...?
 6. Is there more than one kind of traditional music?
 7. What instruments do you think belong in TM?
 8. What is the role of the _____ in traditional music? Do these “belong?”
 - a. String instruments: Banjo, Guitar, Fiddle, Mandolin, Bass
 - b. Piano
 - c. Singer
 - d. Harmonica
 - e. Horns
 - f. Woodwinds
 - g. Drums or other percussion
 - h. Electric instruments
 - i. Other?

9. What do you think of the use of recordings to accompany singers? How has that impacted music in your community?
10. Does it matter what instruments are used in the recordings in terms of them “belonging”? Is it different in church than in secular musical events?
11. In terms of playing with other people, how important would you say are the following:
 - a. Knowing the same tunes
 - b. Playing within the same genre
 - c. Agreement on the rhythm or beat
 - d. Being friends
 - e. Being on the same “wavelength”
 - f. Having a strong leader
 - g. Encouraging everyone to be a leader
 - h. Conducive surroundings – good atmosphere
 - i. Food, drink, and other social lubricants
12. What do you think is the role of traditional music in the community?
13. How would you define the word “community”?
14. Where is your community?
15. What keeps your community together? What separates people?
16. Where is your musical community?
17. What keeps your musical community together? What separates people?
18. How do you forge your musical networks?
19. What do you think is most important to create a community of traditional music?
 - a. What about - what is most important in keeping traditional music going? Is there a difference in the two?
 - b. What are some other things that help?
20. Do you attend jam sessions?
21. What are some jam sessions you know about or attend?
22. What is your description of an ideal jam session?
23. Have you ever felt unwelcome at a jam session? Why do you think that is?

24. Have you ever felt tension between others at a jam session? Why do you think that is?
25. Do you ever play/sing with musicians of a different race or ethnicity than you?
 - a. Does this change the things you play/sing or the way you play/sing?
26. Do you ever play/sing with children?
 - a. Does this change the things you play/sing or the way you play/sing?
27. Are you ever the only woman at a jam session or other musical gathering?
28. Have you ever played/sang only with women? Is there any difference in the feeling or practices?
29. Do you feel any tension within yourself when playing traditional music?
 - a. Desire to play other kinds of music
30. What are the expectations you face as a female musician? (or some special conditions)
31. What musical events have you produced or helped produce?
32. As a music producer (or even as an attendee at a musical event), what are your goals?
 - a. How important is it to have everyone feel welcome and empowered?
 - i. How do you accomplish this?
 - ii. What do you do to make this happen?
 - iii. What gets in the way of this happening?
 - b. How important is it to have authentic music or musicians?
 - i. How do you accomplish this?
 - ii. What do you do to make this happen?
 - iii. What gets in the way of this happening?
33. How do you think traditional music can be used to empower people?
34. How do you think traditional music can be used to improve economic conditions in Appalachian communities?
35. How do you think TM can be used to divide people?

Appendix C: Questions for Music Producers

1. Tell me about your connection with Appalshop/KY Center for Traditional Music:
 - a. How long have you been connected with Appalshop/KCTM?
 - b. What is your position and what are your main responsibilities here?
 - c. What other positions have you held here or elsewhere relating to music?
2. Are you a musician? (If so, use musician interview schedule also)
3. What kinds of music are promoted at Appalshop/KCTM?
 - a. Is there any distinction made between “regional” music and “non-regional” music?
 - b. What kinds of messages do you think are conveyed by the music promoted at Appalshop/KCTM?
 - c. What kinds of music best express Appalshop/KCTM’s purpose?
4. How is music used here at Appalshop/KCTM? (film score, radio programs, concerts, etc. maybe there’s something I don’t know about or hadn’t thought of)
5. What are the musical programs promoted here?
6. What kind of space is there for music at Appalshop/KCTM?
 - a. In Whitesburg/Morehead?
 - b. In Letcher County/Rowan County?
 - c. In Eastern Kentucky?
7. How have things changed since Appalshop/KCTM was started in terms of the kinds of music that’s played – used in films - how the music is presented to the public?
8. WMMT is promoted as “Community Radio.” (Might have asked about MSPR station at Morehead also.) Where is Appalshop/KCTM’s community?
9. How would you describe the level of support the community gives Appalshop/KCTM and its music programs?
10. What do you think is most important to keeping music going in a community?
 - a. What do you think Appalshop/KCTM does that’s most successful in keeping music going here?
 - b. What could Appalshop/KCTM do better or that it’s not doing now?
 - c. What is the value of music in creating a sense of community or the expressing the special qualities of this place (or any other place)?
11. How would you describe Appalshop/KCTM’s musical network?
 - a. How far do people travel to attend musical events here?
 - b. Where does Appalshop/KCTM take its musical events outside of Whitesburg?
 - c. How are connections made between Appalshop/KCTM and other musicians?
 - d. How well do you think Appalshop/KCTM’s musical network is inclusive of people of different backgrounds, both sexes, different ethnic or racial groups?

Appendix D: Record of Interviews

<i>Name</i>	<i>City of residence</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Place of interview, if different than residence</i>	<i>Date(s) of interview</i>
Suzanne Savell	Blackey	Kentucky		3/7/2008
Paul David Smith	Belfry	Kentucky		5/28/2008
Kathy Bullock	Berea	Kentucky		6/27/2008
Bennie Massey	Lynch	Kentucky		7/10/2008
Jake Ravizee	Lynch	Kentucky	Cumberland, KY	7/10/2008
Lisa Perry	Wheelwright	Kentucky		7/11/2008
Lowell Parker	Wheelwright	Kentucky		7/11/2008
Shirley Carr Clowney	Maryville	Tennessee		7/16/2008
Jeanie Melton	Knoxville	Tennessee		7/17/2008
Paula McGhee	Maryville	Tennessee		7/17/2008
Robert McGhee	Maryville	Tennessee		7/17/2008
James "Sparky" Rucker	Maryville	Tennessee		7/17/2008
Rhonda Rucker	Maryville	Tennessee		7/17/2008
Joe Maddox	Knoxville	Tennessee		7/18/2008
William Turner	Berea	Kentucky		8/7/2008
Ron Pen	Lexington	Kentucky		8/12/2008
Andrew Baskin	Berea	Kentucky		8/13/2008
Russ Childers	Batavia	Ohio	McKee, KY	8/15/2008
Jill Carson	Pennington Gap	Virginia		8/30/2008
Ron Carson & "New Beginnings" vocal group	Pennington Gap	Virginia		8/30/2008
Rich Kirby	Dungannon	Virginia	Whitesburg, KY (7/29/2009)	8/31/2008 & 7/29/2009
Brett Ratliff	Morehead	Kentucky		9/8/2008
Jesse Wells	Morehead	Kentucky		9/8/2008
Homer Skeens	Morehead	Kentucky		9/8/2009
Richard Mandell	Corbin	Kentucky		11/14/2008
Beverly May	Maytown	Kentucky		3/13/2009
Paula Larke	Clarkston	Georgia	Berea, KY	5/06/2009, 7/15/2009 & 7/16/2009
Jason French	Clintwood	Virginia	Telephone interview	5/11/2009

<i>Name</i>	<i>City of residence</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Place of interview, if different than residence</i>	<i>Date(s) of interview</i>
Anna Roberts-Gevault	Berea	Kentucky		5/20/2009
Robert Blythe	Richmond	Kentucky		5/26/2009
Donna Lamb	Paint Lick	Kentucky		5/28/2009
Tim Glotzbach	Berea	Kentucky		6/24/2009
Beth Bingman	Dungannon	Virginia	Whitesburg, KY	7/29/2009
Felecia Ballard	Farristown	Kentucky		10/9/2009
Larry Ervin	Maryville	Tennessee		11/24/2009
Angelyn DeBord	Gate City	Virginia	Telephone interview	6/23/2010
Julie Shepherd-Powell	Nonesuch	Kentucky		6/30/2010
Loyal Jones	Berea	Kentucky		11/30/2011

Appendix E: Record of Archival Information on the CTM

All of this information on the Celebration of Traditional Music may be found in Special Collections in the Hutchins Library at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky.

Written materials:

Archives Record Group 6.12: 6 is Academics, 12 is Appalachian Studies

- **Record Group 6.12.1** has early paperwork on the formation of the Appalachian Center (AC).
- **6.12.2** has documentation from the AC divided into decades 1970 on, which included an incomplete collection of promo materials for CTM and related information on music at the Center, memos and reports.
- **6.12.3** Appalachian Center Newsletter 1972-present the quarterly newsletter had at least a short paragraph and at least one – sometimes many – photos about the CTM each year, usually in the issue right before to publicize it. Much of the copy got re-used from year to year.

Archives Record Group 11: Programs (these are listed alphabetically by title)

- Box 3 includes a Folder of CTM: has an incomplete collection of brochures, posters, and schedules.
- Box 15 includes a Folder of Country Music
Very small schedule of Country Music Symposium Oct 8-11, 1970 - includes talk by Bill C. Malone, Panel Discussion, Fiddler's Convention at Indian Fort [Theater], Instrument Workshop, Street Dance, Saturday Nite [sic] Special Concert, Gospel Singing. This was a precursor to CTM - hardly any paper associated with it, some recording but mostly poor quality.

Other written materials used came from records of the Appalachian Center:

- Posters (most years), flyer/schedules for all years that list all performers and events - Flyers also include members of the TMC for that year
- Programs for hymn singing 1974 & 1976 – I think early on it was more varied than it later became – sometimes in the afternoon or evening?

Somewhat off track but related is a lengthy 1989 report on Appalachian Studies by Gerald Roberts, chair of the Appalachian Studies Committee with an Appendix (1) detailing an outline of the history of the Appalachian commitment at Berea College. This shows ballad collecting at the college starting in 1908 with James Watt Raine. Here it states that in 1972, the Appalachian Center & library began the Sound Archives.

Photographs:

Record Group 11, mirroring the manuscript program folders

The CTM was documented through black and white photographs by the Public Relations department at the college from the years 1974-2001, with a few color photographs. There is a full box (half a linear foot), which contains seventeen folders of CTM photographs. Some digital images from the years 2001-2004 and 2006-2010 are published on the Appalachian Center website.

Sound archives:

Every year has been recorded, especially the concerts and symposium, resulting in approximately 450 hours of audio tape. Each year's recordings have been indexed in a database cross-referenced by artist, year of performance, name of tune/song, some by genre. Each item is numbered, with 005 as the main number for CTM for audio media, and the original format abbreviations are noted, including

- OR=Open Reel
- CT=Cassette tape
- VT=Video tape
- CD=Compact disk
- DVD=Digital video disk

The first year, 1974, was fully video-recorded by KET, and the following years have significant amounts of video recording, mostly recorded by the college's media services. Most were originally recorded on medium-quality VHS: 1975, 1977, 1979, 1987- 94, 2000, 2001, 2004-08, and 2010. According to sound archivist Harry Rice, all the analog videotape will be digitized by the end of the school year 2011-12.

Concerts were the main activities recorded; workshops and dances were much less recorded. I listened to approximately sixty hours of tape of the CTM, transcribing spoken words and noting the names of songs and tunes. I also listened to and transcribed about 6 hours of Traditional Music Committee meetings.

Early in the fellowship, I explored whatever documentation was in Special Collections of the Cumberland Valley Folk Festival, held in Barbourville, Kentucky from 1978-79, in preparation for possible comparison with the CTM. I listened to selected portions of open reel audio tape, checking performer lists to see if it could be compared to the CTM with similar questions concerning involvement of women and non-white men. It became apparent after perhaps 20 hours spent on that that there was more than enough info on CTM to just focus there, and that there was little female participation in the CVFF and no black participation, as well as much less documentation overall.

I transcribed the following CTM events, beginning with all of 1974, then choosing the following years based on larger participation of female and non-white male performers. I found after awhile that many of the performers repeated songs over the weekend, even from one evening concert to the next, so I maximized my time by limiting the number of events I listened to for each weekend, especially focusing on Saturday "workshops." They are somewhat misnamed, as they are really more focused concerts, where each performer/band gets 30 minutes or more instead of 10 minutes as in the evening concerts, so it was a more effective way of gaining a sense of the performers' repertoire. The two early symposiums

were also quite useful, as they were panel discussions about traditional music, which included the participants' definitions of traditional music.

- 1974: all (Fri eve concert, Sat workshops, symposium, Sat eve concert, Sun hymn singing)
- 1975: Sat workshops, symposium
- 1977: Fri eve, Sat eve
- 1978: Fri eve, Sat workshops, Sat eve, Sun singing
- 1981: Sat workshops
- 1989: Sat workshops
- 1990: Convocation of Cherokee dance; Sat workshops
- 1991: Sat workshops
- 1992: Sat workshops
- 1995: Sun morn

Recordings of Traditional Music Committee meetings:

- 1974a (January)
- 1974b (November)
- 1975
- 1976
- 1978
- 1979
- 1983

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Zwonitzer, M. & C. Hirshberg. 2002. *Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone? The Carter Family and Their Legacy in American Music*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

VITA

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EDUCATION

- May 2004 Graduate certificate in Women's Studies, University of Kentucky
- May 1988 M.A. in Appalachian Studies, Appalachian State University; Boone, NC
- January 1982 B.A. in American & Appalachian Studies, Hampshire College; Amherst, MA. Joint Thesis with Randi Silnutzer: "The Musical Culture of Summers County, West Virginia."

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

- 2010-2012 Instructor of General Studies, Coordinator of Country Dance Programs: Berea College, Berea, KY
- Spring 2010 Part-time Faculty: Department of Geography and Geology, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY
- 2006- 2009 Project Specialist and Programming Director: Berea College Appalachian Center, Berea, KY
- 2004-2006 Part-time Instructor and Graduate Assistant: Women's Studies and Geography, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY
- 1991-2001 Assistant Professor and Instructor of Appalachian Studies, Director of Appalachian Semester: Union College, Barbourville, KY
- 1990-91, 1987-89, 1985 Principal Investigator for Historic Sites Survey: North Carolina Division of Archives and History; Transylvania, Watauga, and Avery counties, NC
- 1987-1989 Executive Director: Ashe County Arts Council; Jefferson, NC
- 1985-1987 Resident Director: National Collegiate Honors Council, Boone, NC; El Paso, TX; Puebla, Mexico
- 1985-present Visiting Artist and Instructor: Week-long and day-long workshops and residencies in banjo, guitar, dulcimer, and Appalachian studies

1982-1985 Graduate Assistant: Center for Appalachian Studies, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

1976-present Freelance Musician, Dance Caller, and Dance Organizer

GRANTS AND HONORS

2009-2011 Arts Education Roster, Kentucky Arts Council (juried selection)

2006-2009 Kentucky Arts Council Folk Arts Program Project Grants

2007 Rotary International Group Study Exchange to Poland and Ukraine

2006 Association of American Geographers Dissertation Award

2006 Berea College Appalachian Music Fellowship, Berea, KY

2005 James S. Brown Award for Research in Appalachia, University of Kentucky Appalachian Center

2002-06, 2009 University of Kentucky Graduate Student and Appalachian Center Support Grants

2001-04 Multi-Year Fellowship, Reedy Quality Fellowship at University of Kentucky

2000-01 Mellon Foundation Teaching and Technology Grant through the Appalachian College Association, as a member of non-profit educational organization, Just Connections: "Participatory Research Across the Curriculum"

2000 Fellow at the Freeman Foundation Symposium "East Asia – the United States: A Search for Common Values" in Salzburg, Austria

1999 Appalachian College Association Planning Grant for writing a Teaching and Technology Grant through Just Connections

1999 Willie Parker Peace History Book Award, North Carolina Society of Historians for *Transylvania: the Architectural History of a Mountain County*, co-authored with Laura A.W. Phillips

1999 Mellon Fellow for Salzburg Seminar on "The Arts, Religion, and the Shaping of Culture" in Salzburg, Austria

1997 Union College Student Government Association Distinguished Professor Award

1992-2000 Travel grants from Union College and Appalachian College Association

1996, 1999, 2000 Union College faculty research grants

1982 Threshold Grant from Hampshire College

1981 National Endowment for the Humanities Youthgrant

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

- 2010 with Darrin Hacquard: "Region, Race, Representation: Observations on Traditional African-American Music in Appalachia," *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, Vol. 16, Nos. 1 & 2.
- 2009 Contributor to *The Architectural History of Watauga County, North Carolina*, Dan Pezzoni, ed. Boone, NC: Watauga County Historical Society.
- 2008 Contributor to "Teaching Appalachian Studies: a collection of syllabi, assignments, and other resources," Third Edition. *ASA Resource Materials for Teaching*, compiled and edited by Chris Baker. Washington, D.C.: American Sociological Association.
- 2007 Contributor to liner notes for re-issue of Buell Kazee recording by Appalshop, Whitesburg, Kentucky.
- 2006 with Irene Moser: "Folklore and Folkways" chapter in *A Handbook to Appalachia*, Grace Toney Edwards, JoAnn Aust Asbury, and Ricky L. Cox, eds. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- 2006 "Searching for Silenced Voices in Appalachia," article for special issue of *GeoJournal* 65: 67-78, Stanley Waterman and Stanley Brunn, eds. Berlin and New York: Kluwer Springer Publishers.
- 2006 Writer and Section Editor on "Intentional Communities," co-editor (with Shirley Stewart Burns and Shaunna Scott) for "Families and Communities" section, writer on "Music" section for *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, Jean Haskell and Rudy Abramson, eds. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- 2005 Book review of *The Magic City: Footnotes to the History of Middlesborough, Kentucky and the Yellow Creek Valley* by Ann Dudley Matheny (Bell County Historical Society), in *Appalachian Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 4.
- 2004 *Under the Bottle Tree*, self-produced compact disc of traditional and Americana music by Skipjack.
- 1998 with Laura A.W. Phillips: *Transylvania: the Architectural History of a Mountain County*. Raleigh, NC: Marblehead Publishing Co.

- 1997 Book review of *Traveling the High Way Home: Ralph Stanley and the World of Traditional Bluegrass* by John Wright (University of Illinois Press), in *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1.
- 1986 “Avery County Historic Sites Survey” (co-written with Elizabeth C. Stevens) in *Avery County Heritage* Vol. IV Historical Sites by Avery County Historical Society. Banner Elk, NC: Puddingstone Press.

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