

CHAPTER FIVE: "ST. LOUIS BLUES": RACE RECORDS AND HILLBILLY MUSIC

Chapter Outline

I. The Music Business: Race Records and Hillbilly Music

Introduction

1. Many of the bestselling songs of the 1920s and 1930s were produced by the Tin Pan Alley establishment.
2. The music industry was more interested in guaranteeing profits than in encouraging musical diversity or experimentation.

Musical diversification

3. Record companies targeted new audiences between World War I and World War II (1918–40) and recorded music derived from the folk traditions of the American South.
4. Encouraged by the migration of millions of people from rural communities to cities such as New York, Chicago, Detroit, Atlanta, and Nashville in the years following World War I
5. These migrants constituted an audience for music that reflected their rural origins and for new, distinctively urban styles of music derived from the older oral traditions.

Race records and hillbilly music

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6. Terms used by the American music industry from the early 1920s until the late 1940s to classify and advertise southern music
7. Race records
 - a) Recordings of performances by African American musicians, produced mainly for sale to African American listeners
8. Hillbilly or old-time music was performed and marketed to southern whites.
9. Record companies usually advertised in racially segregated catalogs and brochures.

Race records and hillbilly music: similarities

10. Rooted in long-standing folk music traditions in the American South
11. As they entered the mass marketplace, blended these older rural musical styles with aspects of national popular culture
12. Grew out of the music industry’s efforts to develop alternative markets during a national decline in record sales
13. Disseminated across the country by new media—including electric recording, radio, and sound film
14. Affected by the process of urban migration

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15. Provided the basis for forms of popular music that emerged after World War II

Race records

16. In the 1920s, the record business began recording material closer to African American folk traditions for sale to an African American audience.

17. The music industry’s discovery of black music (and southern music in general) can be traced to a set of recordings made in 1920 featuring the black vaudeville performer Mamie Smith (1883–1946).

Mamie Smith

18. Replaced Sophie Tucker, a popular Jewish American vaudeville star who specialized in “Negro songs,” in a recording session for the Okeh Record Company.

19. Known as “The Queen of the Blues”

20. A pioneer blues singer, pianist, and black vaudeville performer

21. In 1920, recorded the bestsellers “Crazy Blues” and “It’s Right Here For You, If You Don’t Get It, ’Tain’t No Fault of Mine”

22. Mamie Smith’s success as a recording artist opened up the record industry to recordings by and for African Americans.

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Race music

23. The term was first applied by Ralph Peer (1892–1960).

- a) A Missouri-born talent scout for Okeh Records
- b) Had worked as an assistant on Mamie Smith's first recording sessions

24. The term was soon picked up by other companies and was also widely used by the black press.

The performances released on race records included a variety of musical styles:

25. Blues

26. Jazz

27. Gospel choirs

28. Vocal quartets

29. String bands

30. Jug-and-washboard bands

Verbal performances

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31. Sermons

32. Stories

33. Comic routines

Race records

34. Okeh Records, under the direction of Ralph Peer, was the first label to send mobile recording units into the South, seeking out and recording local talent.

35. Paramount Records, the second company to enter the race music market, began in 1922 as a subsidiary of the Wisconsin Chair Company.

36. The large record companies took several years to catch on to the new trend:

- a) Columbia Records started its successful race series in 1923.
- b) Vocalion/Brunswick Records entered the field in 1926.
- c) The conservative Victor Company—which had heard and rejected Mamie Smith in 1920—waited until 1927.

37. The 1920s also saw the emergence of African American–owned record companies.

- a) The first of these was Black Swan.

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(1) Founded in 1921 in New York by Harry Pace, a former partner of the bandleader and songwriter W. C. Handy

38. By 1927, a total of some five hundred race records were being issued every year.

II. Classic Blues

Classic blues songs were performed by high-class nightclub singers

1. Alberta Hunter (1895–1984)
 - a) Billed as the "Marian Anderson of the Blues"
2. Ethel Waters (1896–1977)
 - a) Entertained the growing African American middle class in New York, Chicago, and other northern cities

Singers who performed in a somewhat rougher style

3. Gertrude "Ma" Rainey (1886–1939)
 - a) Popularly known as the "Mother of the Blues"
4. Bessie Smith (1894–1937)
 - a) "Empress of the Blues"

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5. Rainey and Smith developed their singing styles in the rough-and-tumble black vaudeville and tent shows.
6. Their early recordings
 - a) Released during the height of the so-called blues craze (1920–26)
 - b) Sold well among both whites and blacks
 - c) Signaled the emergence of a style of performance more directly and deeply informed by African American musical traditions than either nineteenth-century minstrelsy or the ragtime-tinged pop songs of the early twentieth century

Bessie Smith (1894–1937)

7. The most important and influential of the woman blues singers from the early twentieth century
8. Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee; began recording in 1923
9. Stylistically a blues singer even when performing novelty and vaudeville numbers; had a majestic voice
10. The centerpiece of Columbia's race record labels

W. C. Handy (1873–1958)

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11. “Father of the Blues”
12. The most influential of the classic blues composers
13. Born in Alabama
14. Son of a conservative pastor who forbade him from playing the guitar
 - a) Learned to play the cornet instead
15. Went on to college, received a degree, and became a schoolteacher
16. Cofounded the first African American–owned publishing house
17. His music owed much to Tin Pan Alley as well as African American folk traditions.
18. His biggest hit was “St. Louis Blues,” written in 1914.
19. Moved to New York City, where his dance band became successful and made several recordings

Listening: “St. Louis Blues” by W. C. Handy, sung by Bessie Smith (1925)

20. This was the type of recording that introduced much of white America to the blues.

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21. It represented a hybrid approach to the blues, somewhat removed from the “down-home” interpretation by country blues performers/composers such as Charley Patton and Blind Lemon Jefferson.

- a) Accompaniment—reed organ and cornet
- b) Call and response between cornet and Smith
- c) Form

(1) Based on the AABA model commonly seen in Tin Pan Alley songs

(2) The final section is really a C, having a new melody but relating to the earlier A section of chords.

(3) The A and C sections represent the twelve-bar blues.

III. The Country Blues

Also referred to as “rural,” “down-home,” or “folk” blues

1. Itinerant male folksingers traveled the rural South/Delta region.
2. Country blues had existed for decades before the first vaudevillian blues songs appeared on record.
3. The blues was the music of the impoverished black work force.

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4. Provided a dynamic, flexible framework for publicly recounting aspects of their experience
5. The rural musicians who played this style of music were not recorded until the mid 1920s.

Charley Patton and “Tom Rushen Blues” (1929)

6. Charley Patton (ca. 1881–1934)
 - a) One of the earliest known pioneers of the Mississippi Delta blues style
 - b) The son of sharecroppers
 - c) A charismatic figure whose performance techniques included rapping on the body of his guitar and throwing it into the air
 - d) His powerful rasping voice, strong danceable rhythms, and broad range of styles made him ideal for Saturday night dances and all-day picnics.
 - e) Patton’s reputation and ability to secure work were boosted by his work as a recording artist.
 - f) Between 1929 and 1934 Patton recorded nearly seventy songs—blues, African American ballads, ragtime, Tin Pan Alley hits, and even church songs.

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g) Unlike European-derived ballads, in which a story is usually presented in narrative fashion, Blues songs are more frequently like a series of evocative snapshots, assembled around a theme or set of themes: lost love, sexual desire, work, violence, loneliness.

7. Listening: "Tom Rushen Blues"

- a) Performed by Charley Patton
- b) Recorded in 1929 by Paramount Records
- c) Twelve-bar form
- d) Three chords
- e) AAB text (with a few minor variations, typical of rural blues performances)
- f) Patton sings in the rough, heavy voice typical of Delta blues.
- g) His emphatic approach to guitar playing is also representative of the style.
- h) The lyrics of the song focus on Patton's overnight incarceration in the Bolivar County, Mississippi, jailhouse, after being arrested for drinking moonshine:

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Lay down last night, hopin' I would have my peace

I lay down last night, hopin' I would have my peace

But when I woke up, Tom Rushing was shakin' me

When you get in trouble, it's no use to screamin' and cryin'

When you gets in trouble, it's no use to screamin' and cryin'

Tom Rushing will take you back to Cleveland a-flyin'

It was late one night, Holloway was gone to bed

It was late one night, Holloway was gone to bed

Mr. Day brought whiskey taken from under Holloway's head

Awww it's boozey-booze now, Lord, to carry me through

It takes boozey-booze Lord to carry me through

Thirty days seem like years in the jailhouse when there is no booze

I got up this mornin', Tom Day was standin' 'round

I got up this mornin', Tom Day was standin' 'round

If he lose his office now he's runnin' from town to town

Let me tell you folkses just how he treated me

I'm gonna tell you folkses just how he treated me

Aw he dogged me here an' I was drunk as I could be

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Blind Lemon Jefferson: The first country blues star

8. Born in Texas
9. Traveling blues performer
10. First records released in 1926
11. East Texas style
 - a) Vocal quality is more nasal and clearer than Mississippi Delta style
 - b) Guitar accompaniments are sparse and less rhythmically steady
 - c) Guitar is used as an extension of the voice
 - d) Little feeling of chord progression—more single-note playing and less strumming of chords
12. Listening: “That Black Snake Moan”
 - a) Written and performed by Blind Lemon Jefferson
 - b) Recorded by Paramount Records in 1926
 - c) Melody consists of brief repeated ideas

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d) Each of the six three-line stanzas has basically the same melody

e) Call and response between voice and guitar

f) Lyrics

(1) There is no precise chronological ordering of events.

(2) Certain stanzas could be placed in a different position without affecting our overall understanding of what transpires.

(3) Obviously, a sexual encounter is being described:

Aay, ain't got no mama now.

Aay, ain't got no mama now.

She told me late last night, "You don't need no mama no how."

Mmm, black snake crawlin' in my room.

Mmm, black snake crawlin' in my room.

And some pretty mama had better come an' get this black snake soon.

Oow, that must be the bedbug—baby, a chinch can't bite that hard.

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Oow, that must be the bedbug—honey, a chinch can't bite that hard.

Ask my sugar for fifty cents, she say, "Lemon, ain't a dime in the yard."

Mama, that's all right, mama, that's all right for you.

Mama, that's all right, mama, that's all right for you.

Mama, that's all right, most any ol' way you do.

Mmm, what's the matter now?

Mmm, what's the matter now?

Tell me what's the matter. "I don't like no black snake no how."

Mmm, wonder where my black snake gone?

Mmm, wonder where is the black snake gone?

Black snake, mama, done run my darlin' home.

13. Blind Lemon Jefferson was denied any share of the profits generated by his hit records.

14. He died destitute.

Robert Johnson: Standing at the crossroad

15. Robert Johnson (1911–38)

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- a) No country blues artist had a greater influence on later generations of blues and rock musicians than Johnson.
- b) His work was especially revered by the British guitarist Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones, and by Eric Clapton, whose band Cream released a celebrated cover of Johnson's "Cross Road Blues" in 1968.
- c) When his complete output was reissued on compact discs in 1990, the set quickly became a surprise million-seller.
- d) Robert Johnson's brief life is shrouded in mystery and legend.
- e) Little is known of his early years.
- f) His guitar playing was so remarkable and idiosyncratic that stories circulated claiming he had sold his soul to the devil to play that way.
- g) When performing for an audience, he apparently turned in such a position as to conceal his hands so that nobody could see what he was doing to produce his sounds.
- h) Only eleven records (twenty-two songs) by Johnson were released during his lifetime.

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- i) Johnson died in 1938, apparently a victim of poisoning by a jealous husband.

16. Listening: “Cross Road Blues”

- a) Performed by Robert Johnson
- b) Vocal like intensified speech
- c) Melody/vocal moving freely over rhythm
- d) Guitar accompaniment and response to voice
- e) Call and response between vocal and guitar
- f) Rough, untrained vocal timbre
- g) Free approach to the blues form (not always twelve bars to a chorus)
- h) Lyrics:

I went to the crossroad, fell down on my knees,

I went to the crossroad, fell down on my knees,

Asked the Lord above, “Have mercy, save poor Bob, if you please.”

Mmm, standin’ at the crossroad, I tried to flag a ride.

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Mmm, standin' at the crossroad, I tried to flag a ride.

Didn't nobody seem to know me, everybody pass me by.

Mmm, the sun goin' down, boy, dark gon' catch me here.

Mmm, the sun goin' down, boy, dark gon' catch me here.

I haven't got no lovin' sweet woman that love and feel my care.

You can run, you can run, tell my friend-boy Willie Brown

You can run, you can run, tell my friend-boy Willie Brown

*Lord, that I'm standin' at the crossroad, babe, I believe I'm sinkin'
down.*

IV. Early Country Music: Hillbilly Records

Hillbilly or country music

1. Commercially produced music associated with the rural white South and Southwest
2. Country music reflects the values and traditions of the performers, who were rural, mostly poor, southern whites. It is a regional music with an international following.

Musical elements

3. Clear, honest vocal style

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4. Southern dialect (accent)
5. Nasal vocal timbre; no vibrato
6. Most other elements of country music come from other sources:
European folk music, parlor songs, jazz, and blues.

The balance between traditional and outside elements has defined the fundamental tension in country music (tradition versus change, old country versus new country)

Hillbilly music

7. Like the race records of Southern rural African Americans, "hillbilly music" was the designation for recordings of early country music.
8. The first commercially successful hillbilly record, featuring a North Georgia musician named Fiddlin' John Carson, was made by Okeh records in 1923 during a recording expedition to Atlanta.
9. This expedition was led by Ralph Peer, a talent scout/record producer who later discovered the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers.

Radio

10. Important in the rapid growth of the hillbilly market
11. Made the music accessible to a larger audience

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12. Early radio played a large role in popularizing hillbilly music but had a lesser role in popularizing race music.

- a) Most radios and all radio stations were owned by whites.
- b) There were no black disc jockeys until the 1930s, when Jack Cooper started his race music show in Chicago.

13. The first station to feature country artists regularly was WSB in Atlanta, which began broadcasting in 1922.

14. Soon followed by WBAP in Forth Worth

Grand Ole Opry

15. Nashville, home of the *Grand Ole Opry*, is the center of country music.

16. The *Grand Ole Opry* was a radio show broadcast from Nashville on WSM.

Vernon Dalhart (1883–1948)

17. Texas-born light-opera singer who recorded the first big country music hit

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18. Began his recording career in 1916 singing light opera but convinced the Victor Company to let him record a hillbilly album to cash in on the new genre's popularity.

19. He recorded two songs in 1924:

- a) "Wreck of the Old 97," a ballad about a train crash in Virginia
- b) "The Prisoner's Song," an amalgam of preexisting song fragments

20. He adopted a southern accent and sang in a plaintive way that country music fans found appealing.

21. This record was the first big hillbilly hit, a million-seller.

22. It made Dalhart a major star and helped ease the Victor Company's financial troubles.

23. Dalhart's recording represents the hybridization between southern folk music and Tin Pan Alley pop music.

24. It is an early example of the "crossover hit."

V. Pioneers of Country Music: The Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers

The Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers were both discovered at a recording session in Bristol Tennessee in August 1927.

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1. Their fame was boosted by hit records and radio appearances, and they had a profound impact on generations of country and western musicians.

The Carter Family

2. Regarded as one of the most important groups in the history of country music
3. The Carter Family presented more conservative elements of country music - God and home; high moral values.
4. They were from the isolated foothills of the Clinch Mountains of Virginia.
5. The Carters were not professional musicians when their recording career started in 1927.
6. The leader of the group was A.P. "Doc" Carter (1891-1960), who collected and arranged the folk songs that formed the inspiration for much of the group's repertoire and sang bass.
7. His wife, Sara Carter (1899-1979) sang most of the lead vocal parts and played autoharp or guitar. She had a classic Appalachian singing style rooted in early English ballad singing
8. Maybelle Carter (1909-1978) sang harmony, played steel guitar and autoharp, and developed an influential guitar style, which involved

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playing the melody on the bass strings while brushing the upper strings on the offbeats for rhythm.

9. The Carter Family preserved the traditional music of their native Appalachian Mountain home by arranging and adapting old songs from the Anglo-American folk music tradition.

10. Their repertoire also included old hymns and sentimental songs reminiscent of the Tin Pan Alley tradition at the turn of the century.

11. Between 1927 and 1941, they made over three hundred recordings for a half-dozen companies.

12. Their most popular songs include the following, all of which are still performed by country musicians today:

- a) "Wildwood Flower"
- b) "Wabash Cannon Ball"
- c) "Keep on the Sunny Side"
- d) "Can the Circle Be Unbroken"

The Carter Family's image was one of quiet conservatism.

13. Their stage shows were simple and straightforward.

14. They generally avoided the vaudeville circuit and promotional tours.

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A. P. Carter collected material from his periodic song-collecting trips that he arranged and adapted to suit the Carter's instrumental and vocal format.

15. At the urging of Peer, A. P. copyrighted all of the songs.

16. They were published by Ralph Peer's Southern Music Company.

VI. Southern gospel music, black and white

A. Commercial recordings of sacred music were popular in the South.

1. Sacred music was important in southern culture.
2. There were significant differences between white and black styles of gospel music.
3. Two examples of southern gospel music:
 - a) "Gospel Ship," recorded by the Carter Family in 1935
 - b) "The Sun Didn't Shine," recorded by the Golden Gate Quartet in 1941

B. Carter Family

1. The unprecedented popularity of the Carter Family as recording and performing artists opened the gates for a succession of family-based acts.
2. There was no firm separation between secular and religious music.

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3. They recorded both types extensively.
 4. Their gospel recordings include arrangements of old folk hymns:
 - a) “Can the Circle Be Unbroken”
 - b) “Gospel Ship”
 5. The Carters’ straightforward, unadorned performance style on such records is indicative of the humility and devotion that marked authentic religious faith.
 6. This aesthetic of plainness was a longstanding feature of the culture of Protestant immigrants from Britain and Ireland.
 7. The unique dark vocal timbre of lead singer Sara Carter calls immediate attention to the significance of the words she is singing.
 8. The firm, clean guitar style of Maybelle Carter, whose “Carter Family lick”—her technique of playing melody on the lower strings of the guitar while strumming higher-pitched chords above it—became one of the most widely imitated guitar sounds in country music.
- C. In African American communities, religious music has tended to be centered more exclusively in the church.
1. Rural black churches made extensive use of music.

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2. Encouraged the development of a distinctive style for African American gospel music
3. Led to the emergence of talented performers in the style
4. The great black gospel groups, such as the Golden Gate Quartet, were not family acts but typically comprised unrelated individuals who came together to sing religious music, often in a local church or school choir.
5. Black gospel music thus developed an identity separate from white religious traditions.
6. Black gospel music also separated itself from other musical traditions in the black community itself.
 - a) Black gospel artists were expected to perform sacred music only, not to indulge in "dirty" music like the blues.
 - b) This explicit division between religious and secular music remained an important characteristic of African American culture for a considerable time.
 - c) A major sign of change came in the 1960s, when "soul music" emerged as a new term applied to secular music that consciously incorporated stylistic elements from black gospel.

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7. In contrast to restrained white gospel music, black gospel music tended to favor extroversion and an intense expressivity.
 - a) This music can be highly ornate.
 - b) It emphasizes the personal and ecstatic aspects of religious experience.
 - c) These characteristics are clearly evident in the Golden Gate Quartet's performance of "The Sun Didn't Shine," with its remarkable displays of vocal virtuosity and rhythmic intricacy.
 - d) Of particular interest in this performance is the extended, seemingly improvised, virtually textless buildup to the final chorus.
 - e) Here, the background voices assume the sound and role of insistent percussion instruments (portraying "the hammer . . . heard in Jerusalem's streets"), while the lead vocalist, Henry Owens, hums and moans in a sacred transformation of blues techniques, immersed in his contemplation of the Crucifixion.
8. Especially when it is juxtaposed with the brilliance of "The Sun Didn't Shine," the homely simplicity of the Carter Family's "Gospel Ship" might strain the appreciative faculties of today's sophisticated, largely urban audience for popular music.

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VII. Jimmie Rodgers (1897–1933)

First inductee to Country Music Hall of Fame

The most versatile, progressive, and widely influential of all the early country recording artists

Ex–railroad brakeman from Meridian, Mississippi

1. Known as the “Singing Brakeman”
2. Early country music’s biggest recording star
3. The quintessential rambler
4. Celebrated the allure of the open road and chronicled the lives of men who forsook the benefits of a settled existence
5. His influence can be seen in the public images of Hank Williams, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, and almost every contemporary male country music star.

Listening: “Blue Yodel No 11”

- a) Written and performed by Jimmie Rodgers, recorded in 1929
- b) Particularly close to rural black models
- c) Typical blues song—text, melodic style, form

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- d) Highly personal tone
 - e) Singing style rooted in blues: rhythmically free and unstilted delivery
 - f) Highly inflected phrasing
 - g) Vocal style more expressive than pretty
 - h) Yodels between stanzas
 - i) Rodgers uses the guitar strictly as accompaniment, making no attempt to set up any kind of melodic response (as with Blind Lemon Jefferson) or rhythmic counterpoint (as with Robert Johnson) to his vocal.
6. Listening: "Waiting for a Train"
- a) written and performed by Jimmie Rodgers, recorded in 1928
 - b) A hobo song with a dark mood, reinforced by Rodgers's lonesome yodel
 - c) Based on a strophic form, but Rodgers employs a number of strategies to avoid monotony
 - d) Freely varies the basic melody

7. Structure

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a) Rodgers achieves a large-scale structural shaping by varying the close of every third strophe to produce a firm cadence, while allowing the other strophes to end inconclusively.

8. Instrumentation

a) Instead of the typical solo guitar accompaniment, an ensemble consisting of steel guitar, cornet, clarinet, and string bass joins the standard guitar in backing up Rodgers’s vocal.

b) The steel guitar is a particularly progressive touch here, and it makes the record sound remarkably modern in comparison with many others of its time.

c) The cornet and clarinet clearly evoke the small jazz ensembles of the late 1920s and link “Waiting for a Train” to the wider spheres of mainstream dance and pop music.

“Dreaming with Tears in My Eyes”

9. Written by Jimmie Rodgers and Waldo L. O’Neal

10. Performed by Jimmie Rodgers, recorded in 1933

11. Lyrics:

*My heart is longing for you, dear, I cared
for you more than you knew.*

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*Though you have broken each promise,
and yesterday's dreams are untrue,
Alone I'll be yearning tomorrow, when
sunshine brings mem'ries of you.
My sunshine will turn into sorrow, as I
dream of the love we once knew.*

- a) Provide a wonderful example of humble, virtually invisible artistry
- b) Abundant open vowel sounds that “sing” beautifully
- c) The triple meter of the music is already explicit in the natural rhythms of the words.

12. Its prominent triple meter clearly recalls the waltz songs of the late nineteenth century.

Jimmie Rodgers died in 1933 of tuberculosis, eight days after recording “Dreaming with Tears in My Eyes.”

VIII. Popular Music and the Great Depression

The Great Depression (1929–ca. 1939)

- 1. Threw millions of Americans out of work
- 2. Had a major impact on the music industry

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- a) In 1927, 106 million phonograph discs were sold nationwide; by 1932, sales had plummeted to only 6 million.
- a) Many small record companies were wiped out overnight.
- b) Large companies such as Columbia and Victor were forced to reorganize and consolidate.
- c) Most people simply did not have the spare income to spend on records.

Race records

- 3. The race record market was crushed by the economic downturn
- 4. During the early 1930s, the first black-owned music-publishing and film-producing companies were also wiped out.
- 5. Record companies relied on established artists and cut back on the field expeditions that had characterized the early years of the race record business.
- 6. The most successful African American musicians of the depression era were those whose records were featured in the mainstream record catalogs, particularly jazz-oriented dance orchestras.

Hillbilly records

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7. Hillbilly record sales were also affected by the depression, although not as severely as race record sales.
8. However, although sales declined in absolute numbers, hillbilly music actually increased its share of the overall market during the economic downturn.
9. In 1930, rural and urban hillbilly records accounted for 25 percent of the total American market.
10. It was during the depression that the country music business was really established, with the biggest stars signing lucrative advertising contracts and appearing on radio and in Hollywood movies.

Hillbilly and blues singers injected a note of social realism into popular music

11. They chronicled the suffering of the homeless and unemployed
 - a) The Dust Bowl farmers whose way of life was threatened by ecological, as well as economic, disaster
 - b) The textile and mine workers of the South, whose attempts to unionize were resisted—sometimes violently—by big business.
12. Examples of songs that dealt with the depression include the rare down-to-earth Tin Pan Alley song.

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- a) “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” (A Number One hit for crooners Bing Crosby and Rudy Vallee in 1932)

- b) Hillbilly star Uncle Dave Macon’s “All in Down and Out Blues,” which argued that “Wall Street’s propositions were not all roses”

- c) Casey Bill Weldon’s “WPA Blues,” which described a government demolition crew destroying dilapidated housing still occupied by African American families

Woodrow Wilson “Woody” Guthrie

- 13. One of the musicians most closely associated with the plight of American workers during the Great Depression

- 14. Born in Oklahoma in 1912

- 15. Began his career as a hillbilly singer, performing the songs of the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers

- 16. With his father dead and his mother committed to an asylum, Guthrie quit school at sixteen and spent years wandering throughout the Southwest.

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17. In the late 1930s, he migrated to California as part of the stream of impoverished "Okies" described in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.

18. These experiences turned Guthrie toward composing songs that were more overtly political in nature, including "This Land Is Your Land," "Talking Dust Bowl Blues," and "Ludlow Massacre."

19. After 1940, he was known primarily as a protest singer.

a) His political orientation was summarized by a sign on his guitar that read, "This Machine Kills Fascists,"

b) Guthrie had a direct influence on later urban folk musicians such as the Weavers and Bob Dylan.