

TEACHER'S GUIDE



*Buck Owens, Merle Haggard,
and California Country*



HONOR THY MUSIC®

Introduction



Designed to support the exhibition *The Bakersfield Sound: Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, and California Country*, this lesson guide serves as a preparatory resource for classrooms making a visit to the Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum, and as a unique interdisciplinary teaching tool for English, History, Music, Visual Arts, and Science units. On view from March 2012 to December 2014, *The Bakersfield Sound* exhibition celebrates a groundbreaking strain of country music and offers an opportunity for students to examine how events shape identity and culture. The music and musicians of Bakersfield and the California country music scene of the 1930s to the 1960s present an opportunity to examine American history at a time of great cultural change.

About the Guide

These classroom lessons explore how artistic expression was born out of the hardships of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl migration. The lessons show how a group of people adapted the culture they brought with them in the face of adversity to forge a new identity and culture. This guide also demonstrates how other social, technological, and artistic influences contributed to a cultural evolution that continues today.

Each lesson contains materials for **teachers** and **students**. Instructions in the teacher section correspond to the materials provided in the second section. Teachers may select all or part of a lesson, depending on what is best for classroom needs. Suggested vocabulary words and project ideas are included for each lesson. Teachers may need to adapt lessons to suit their students' backgrounds, interests, and abilities.

For additional information, refer to the exhibition's companion book, *The Bakersfield Sound: Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, and California Country* (Country Music Foundation Press, 2012).

About the Bakersfield Sound

The term "Bakersfield Sound" is generally used to describe a hard-edged honky-tonk sensibility characterized by electrified, sharp, twanging Fender Telecaster guitars; crying pedal steel; and straight-ahead country vocals. However, the music was far from homogeneous, and the label is best understood as an umbrella term encompassing a number of strains developed by Merle Haggard, Buck Owens, and their West Coast contemporaries, including Wynn Stewart, Red Simpson, Joe Maphis, Fuzzy Owen, Tommy Collins, and Kay Adams.

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Lesson One:

From Dust Storms to California Cotton Fields

Primary curriculum connections: History/Social Studies

Secondary curriculum connections: English

Part A: "Our Only Means of Living at the Time": Culture and Migration

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will understand the ways in which Dust Bowl migrants used music to transport culture to the western United States in the 1930s.

Introduction to the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to write down one or two songs that mean something to them personally.
- 2) Read the text for discussion on page four and review these vocabulary words: vulnerable, destitute, minstrel, repertoire.

Suggested web searches: Woody Guthrie song or video; Dust Bowl; square dancing

Instructional Procedures

1. Direct students to a map of the United States. Discuss the route from Oklahoma, the center for the Dust Bowl, to Southern California, specifically the San Joaquin Valley. Have students locate Bakersfield on the map.

2. Have students read text silently, highlighting key ideas and details, or making notes on Post-its or in a notebook. (CCR Anchor Standards: Reading 1, 2, 10) (U.S. History Standards 7.4, 7.9, 8.1, 8.4).

3. Link the content to students' prior knowledge by using the following discussion questions:

- Besides simple enjoyment, what are the reasons that people listen to music?
- Has music ever evoked an emotional response or memory for you? Explain.
- Has a song ever reminded you of home?
- What music would you bring along if you had to go to an entirely new place where you were perceived as an outsider?
- Can you think of ways that music could bind people together?
- Have you ever used music as inspiration for problems that confront you?
- Think back to the songs you wrote down before reading the text. What do those songs mean to you? What is your connection with their sound or content?

Note: Allow ample time for students to discuss fully the role that music plays in their lives.

Project

Ask students to pick a song that means something to them then ask them to describe how the song makes them feel or what things (images, memories, thoughts, feelings, people) it makes them remember when they listen to it. Students should express their thoughts using one of the following (CCR Anchor Standards: Reading 2, 4, 7, 10; Writing 4, 9, 10; Language 1, 2, 3, 5) (History Standard 1):

- 1) A short story or poem
- 2) A visual (poster, drawing, painting, sculpture, etc.)
- 3) Multimedia presentation



*Migrant boy removing guitar before leaving for California.
At old homestead near Muskogee, Oklahoma, 1939.*

Photo by Lee Russell

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

Drought refugee's car on U.S. Highway 99 between Bakersfield and Famoso, California, 1936. Note: the photographer passed twenty-eight cars of this type (drought refugees) between Bakersfield and Famoso, thirty-five miles, between 9:00 and 9:45 in the morning.

Photo by Dorothea Lange

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division



Lesson One:

From Dust Storms to California Cotton Fields

Part A: "Our Only Means of Living at the Time": Culture and Migration

After the stock market crash of 1929, no American escaped the economic impact of the Great Depression, but residents in rural areas were especially affected. Farmers in the Midwest and South earned sparse incomes dependent on unstable crop production and prices. Families survived without electricity or indoor plumbing, quality medical care or adequate schooling. Unable to cover their taxes and loan payments, many people lost their farms. Modern machinery also drastically reduced the need for farmhands. Then in the mid-1930s, drought dealt a devastating blow to several Midwestern states. In the Southern Plains states, poor farming practices left topsoil vulnerable to massive windstorms that whipped up what one journalist dubbed the "Dust Bowl." The storms destroyed millions of acres of once-fertile land, leaving farmers destitute and desperate for work.

Stories of hope and opportunity in the West sparked a mass exodus during the 1930s, and in California alone,

more than 300,000 people from America's heartland arrived in search of a new life. Whether driven out by foreclosure, agricultural mechanization, dust storms, or drought, they became part of what is known as the Dust Bowl migration. Besides their meager belongings, they also brought along their rural way of life—a communal culture that revolved around church meetings, potluck suppers, homespun music, and dancing—a community spirit that allowed them to maintain a sense of identity in the midst of massive upheaval.

Music, especially, played a key role in the successful transplanting of culture. In their idle hours, the migrants entertained themselves by singing and playing the fiddles, guitars, and other instruments they brought with them. The music reflected a colorful range of styles: traditional ballads, as well as gospel, minstrel, cowboy, and hillbilly songs. Dancing also was a popular activity. This musical heritage laid the foundation for the Bakersfield Sound, both socially and artistically, as local musicians continued to identify with these migrants and draw from their tastes and repertoire.

Lesson One:

From Dust Storms to California Cotton Fields

Part B: “Sunny California:” Expectation and Reality

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will recognize the difference between the expectations of the Dust Bowl migrants and the reality with which they were met when they arrived in California in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Ask students to turn to the person next to them and tell about a time when they had high expectations for something, only to be disappointed when they were met with the reality of the situation. A few students may share their answers with the whole group, explaining how they handled their disappointment.

2) Read the text for discussion on page six.

Suggested web searches: images or video of shanty towns, boxcars, and tent camps; map of San Joaquin Valley

Instructional Procedures

1. Remind students that Bakersfield is located in the San Joaquin Valley, referring to the map used in Lesson One, Part A. (History Standard 3)

2. Have students silently read the text passage, using Post-its or highlighters to note key ideas and details. (CCR Anchor Standards: Reading 1, 2, 7; Speaking Listening 1; Language 4, 5, 6) (U.S. History Standards 7.4, 7.9, 8.1, 8.4).

3. Help students imagine the situation in Bakersfield, either through class discussion or a short role-playing activity in which some students are native Bakersfield students and others are migrant workers. Students should be able to imagine and deeply consider the following (CCR Anchor Standards: Speaking Listening 1, 2, 3):

- Bakersfield, as a small town, could not handle the influx of 70,000 migrant workers.
- There were not enough jobs, houses, or seats in schools to go around.
- Migrants turned to music to express their feelings about squalid living conditions, poverty, and lost dreams.

4. Instruct students to listen to the music about migration and analyze the lyrics in order to better understand some of the thoughts and feelings of the migrants. Ask students to read the lyrics as they listen to a song written and performed by a migrant and recorded at a government camp in the San Joaquin Valley: “Sunny California” (1940) by Mary Sullivan. (History Standards:1,6) (CCR Anchor Standards: Reading 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9)

5. Facilitate student discussion using the following questions: (CCR Anchor Standards: Speaking Listening 1, 2, 3) (History Standard 6).

- What disappointed the singer upon arriving out West?
- What did she miss about home?
- What do the words “nostalgia” and “irony” mean? Can you identify nostalgia and irony in this song?
- How does this song relate to the idea of expectation versus reality?
- Who do you think was the intended audience?

6. Leading with the following questions, facilitate a classroom discussion about the difficulties of mitigating poverty. (CCR Anchor Standards: Reading 1, 2, 7; Speaking Listening 1, 2) (History Standards 1, 2, 5, 6).

- What is a “culture of poverty”?
- How is it created? What things in society can cause it?
- What economic causes can contribute to it?
- Can you think of any current examples where a culture of poverty exists? What do you think contributed to that culture of poverty?

7. Ask students to read the lyrics as they listen to the Dallas Frazier composition “California Cotton Fields” as recorded by Merle Haggard in 1971. Encourage student discussion using the following questions: (CCR Anchor Standards: Reading 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8; Speaking Listening 1, 2, 3) (History Standards 1, 5, 6).

- How do these lyrics reflect what you know about the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression?
- How do they speak to the idea of expectation versus reality?
- Why do you think Haggard recorded this song in 1971, decades after the migration?
- What does this song say about the Bakersfield Sound’s connection to its migrant heritage?

Project

Students write two reflections in the form of journals or letters. One reflection should describe the move from Oklahoma to Bakersfield, from the perspective of an adolescent migrating to Bakersfield. The other reflection should use the perspective of a Bakersfield adolescent watching the town become overwhelmed by the influx of people. (CCR Anchor Standards: Writing 1, 4, 10; Language 1, 2, 3, 6) (History Standard 6). Students may want to share their reflections with the class.



Tom Collins, manager of Kern migrant camp, California, with migrant mother and child, 1936.

Photo by Dorothea Lange

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

Lesson One: **From Dust Storms to California Cotton Fields**

Part B: “Sunny California”: Expectation and Reality

Bakersfield is situated amid the rich farmland of California’s San Joaquin Valley. The promise of agricultural work lured more than 70,000 migrants to the town during the Dust Bowl era. Their experiences were common among the hundreds of thousands of migrants who flooded into the western states in search of work.

Cotton was the primary crop in the Bakersfield area, and many migrants arrived with experience picking cotton in the fields of the southern United States, like Arkansas, Alabama, and Georgia. In 1910, the census records indicate that just over 37,000 people lived in Kern County, where Bakersfield is the largest city. By

1940, that number was over 135,000. This sudden influx of people quickly overwhelmed the town’s resources. Jobs and housing became scarce. Employers exploited the glut of workers by enforcing long hours and low wages. Many families lived in the squalor of makeshift shanty towns or boxcars provided by employers: the federal government stepped in and created more sanitary tent camps with recreational facilities and entertainment halls, but these still couldn’t meet demand.

Faced with a lack of the very opportunity they had sought, and instead met with more hardship and discrimination, many migrants used music as a means to communicate their frustrations, fears, and longings. Besides playing the often-sentimental songs they brought from home, they also began composing songs that reflected their new circumstances.

“Sunny California”

Written and Performed by Mary Sullivan

I left Texas one beautiful day
I made up my mind that I would not stay
No longer in Texas the place that I love
Though it was like giving up Heaven above.

My old dad was growing old
His body was bent from hard work and toll.
My mother was sleeping in a gay little town
Where friends and her loved ones had seen her laid down.

My sisters and brothers they hated so bad
To see me go west like someone gone mad
To leave all my loved ones and kiss them goodbye
Just hoping I'd meet them in the sweet by-and-by.

I thought at first that I would not go
No further west than New Mexico
But the work it was scarce and the weather was bad
I felt like I'd left all the friends that I had.

We landed at Peori' one sad, lonely day
No place for a shelter but a rag house to stay
I felt like Arizona was too much for me
I cried 'til my heart ached and I scarcely could see.

Our next stop was California where the sun always shines
I know that is a saying but I'll tell you my mind,
In the little town of Colton hemmed up on a knoll
And the black water splashing 'til the hearts had grown cold.

Now I know you all heard of this awful fate
So many were drowned in this awful state
The state of California where the sun always shines
How I did wish for Texas that old state of mine.

The black water rolled and the homeless were brought
To this little knoll at Colton for shelter they sought
The radios broadcasting, begging people to stay
Off of the streets and off the highways.

The rain finally ceased and the sun shined out bright
How I prayed to Heaven and thanked God that night.
For our lives had been spared and all was made right
But I did wish for Texas and the old folks that night.

Further on in California over mountains and plains.
To the San Joaquin Valley we drew up our reins
For four years today we've lived it just fine
In the state of California where the sun always shines.

“California Cotton Fields”

Written by Dallas Frazier

My drifting memory goes back to the spring of '43,
When I was just a child in mama's arms.
My daddy plowed the ground and prayed that some day we could leave
This run down mortgaged Oklahoma farm.

Then one night I heard my daddy saying to my mama,
That he finally saved enough for us to go.
California was his dream a paradise wall he had seen
Pictures in magazines that told him so.

California cotton fields,
Where labor camps were full of worried men with broken dreams.
California cotton fields,
As close to wealth as daddy ever came.

Almost everything we had was sold or left behind,
From daddy's plow and the fruit that mama canned.
Some folks came to say farewell and see what all we had to sell
But some just came to shake my daddy's hand.

The Model A was loaded down and California bound,
And a change of luck was just four days away.
But the only change that I remember seeing for my daddy
Was when his dark hair turned to silver gray.

California cotton fields,
Where labor camps were full of worried men with broken dreams.
California cotton fields,
As close to wealth as daddy ever came.



Dallas Frazier and his father, Floyd, in a California cotton field, early 1940s. Frazier, a successful songwriter, was born in Oklahoma and began his music career as a child in Bakersfield.

Courtesy of Dallas Frazier

Lesson Two: Prejudice and Pride

Primary curriculum connections: History/Social Studies

Secondary curriculum connections: English

“You Don’t Know Me But You Don’t Like Me”: Unwanted Outsiders

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will understand the discrimination faced by Dust Bowl migrants by putting himself or herself in the shoes of another person.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Ask students to write a quick journal answering the following question: Have you ever felt like an outsider? When? Why?

2) Read the text for discussion on page ten and review the following vocabulary words: hostility, coveted, strained municipal services, abject, backward manner, taunted, assert, solidarity.

Suggested web searches: Buck Owens and Dwight Yoakam performing “Streets of Bakersfield”

Instructional Procedures

1. Read aloud together with the class, briefly discussing some of the vocabulary words from the text and emphasizing the visualization that the words and phrases create for the reader. (CCR Anchor Standards: Reading 4; Language 4, 5, 6) (U.S. History Standards 9.2, 9.4)

2. For students to understand how music can instill solidarity in the face of discrimination, listen to “Streets of Bakersfield,” recorded by Dwight Yoakam and Buck Owens in 1988. The video may be found easily online. Have students read along with the lyrics as they listen (CCR Anchor Standards Reading, 1, 2, 3, 7) (History Standards 1, 6).

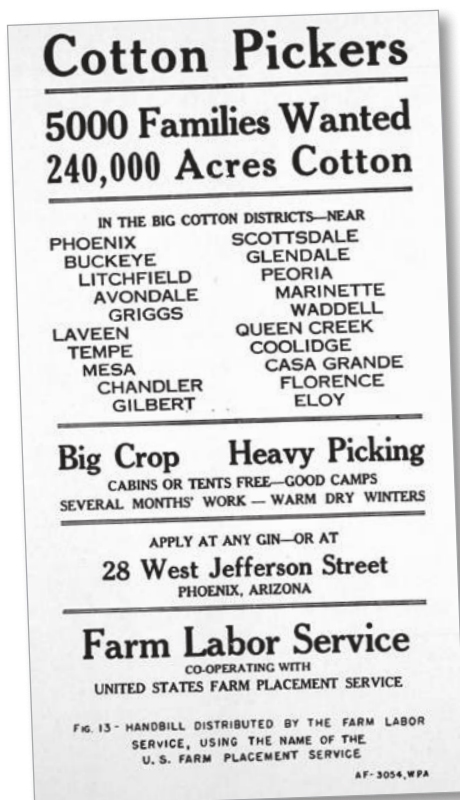
3. Use the following questions to continue the discussion (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 4, 8; Speaking and Listening 1, 2, 3) (History Standard 6):

- What does it mean when the singers sing the chorus, “You don’t know me, you don’t like me; You say you care less how I feel?”
- How does the singer convey an innate sense of honesty? Why was it so important? (Refer back to the verse “Left him my watch and my old house key . . .”)
- How do the lyrics speak to a continuing Okie identity, or at least group pride?
- How do Owens and Yoakam distinguish Bakersfield?
- As a class, compare the lyrics, “But how many of you that sit and judge me; Have ever walked the streets of Bakersfield?” to the saying “Walk a mile in my shoes.”

Teacher’s Tip: It may be helpful to explain to students that the earliest traces of this enlightening part of the proverb date back to the Cherokee tribe of Native Americans, who said “Don’t judge a man until you have walked a mile in his shoes.” Harper Lee, in her book To Kill a Mockingbird (Deckle Edge, 2010), was seemingly inspired by the Cherokee saying when she wrote “You never really know a man until you understand things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

Project

Ask each student to document a day in his or her life. This can be done with words or with images, videos, sounds, etc. Pair students into diverse sets of partners and ask each student to “walk a mile” in his or her partner’s shoes by compiling the partner’s words or media into a presentation such as a poem, a poster, a song, a video, etc. (CCR Anchor Standards: Speaking and Listening 1, 4, 5; Language 1, 2, 5; Writing 3, 4, 5, 10).



Handbill recruiting cotton pickers to Arizona, c. 1939.

Courtesy of the Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin

Migrant Worker Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

CALIFORNIA'S MIGRANT PROBLEM

BY HARRISON S. ROBINSON

Chairman, Committee on the Migrant Problem, California State Chamber of Commerce

Arizona Cotton-Growing Scheme Abets Migration to California

**Lessees of State Land Reap Big Profits and
Get Federal Benefits but, Season Over,
Do Nothing About Pickers They Lured**

By BYRON DARNTON
By Air Mail to THE NEW YORK TIMES

New York Times, Tuesday March 5, 1940.

Courtesy of the Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin
Migrant Worker Collection, American Folklife
Center, Library of Congress

New York Times, March 3, 1940.

Courtesy of the Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin
Migrant Worker Collection, American Folklife Center,
Library of Congress

Farm Migrants Again on March; California's Problem More Acute

**Additional Okies and Arkies Seek Land of
Milk and Honey Only to Increase the
Number Already Without Work or Hope**

The article that follows is the first in a series dealing
with conditions among the migratory workers in California.

By BYRON DARNTON
BY AIR MAIL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

Lesson Two: Prejudice and Pride

"You Don't Know Me But You Don't Like Me": Unwanted Outsiders

Besides enduring discrimination from employers, many migrants also faced open hostility from established locals. Though only an estimated 20 percent of migrants came from Oklahoma, the unwanted outsiders soon were labeled with an insulting nickname: "Okies."

Migrants caused resentment for understandable reasons. Many were competing with locals for coveted jobs, and their presence depressed wages. Their families crowded into the schools and strained municipal services. As a result, property taxes rose. But the resentment was also the result of prejudice, much of it based on class differences. Migrants were simply looked down upon for

their abject poverty and for what was perceived as their backward manner. And unlike the seasonal workers who had previously dominated the fields, these migrants didn't "go home" after the harvests ended. Resentment revealed itself in ugly ways. Migrant children were taunted and bullied at school. Stores and cafés refused migrants service. Ill and injured migrants were turned away at hospitals.

The trauma and hardship—as well as their determination to overcome it—bound the migrants into a tight community. Though the prejudice continued into the 1950s, the migrants and their descendants eventually embraced "Okie" as a mark of pride, using it to assert their group identity. As the music that became known as the Bakersfield Sound emerged in the 1950s, it acted as a cultural common ground where performers and listeners alike could express solidarity.

*News clipping from unknown source.
Early 1940s.*

*Courtesy of the Charles L. Todd and
Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection,
American Folklife Center, Library of Congress*

“Streets of Bakersfield”

Written by Homer Joy

Performed by Dwight Yoakam and Buck Owens

I came here looking for something
I couldn't find anywhere else
Hey, I'm not trying to be nobody
I just want a chance to be myself

I've spent a thousand miles of thumbin'
Yes I've worn blisters on my heels
Trying to find me something better
Here on the streets of Bakersfield

Hey you don't know me but you don't like me
You say you care less how I feel
But how many of you that sit and judge me
Have ever walked the streets of Bakersfield?

I spent some time in San Francisco
I spent a night there in the can
They threw this drunk man in my jail cell
I took fifteen dollars from that man

Left him my watch and my old house key
Don't want folks thinking that I'd steal
Then I thanked him as I was leaving
And I headed out for Bakersfield

Hey you don't know me but you don't like me
You say you care less how I feel
But how many of you that sit and judge me
Have ever walked the streets of Bakersfield?

Hey you don't know me but you don't like me
You say you care less how I feel
But how many of you that sit and judge me
Have ever walked the streets of Bakersfield?
How many of you that sit and judge me
Have you ever walked the streets of Bakersfield?

Lesson Three:

Signposts for the Next Generation

Primary curriculum connections: English

Secondary curriculum connections: History/Social Studies, Music, Visual Arts

Part A: "Your Kind and My Kind": The Grapes of Wrath and the Maddox Family

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will understand the lives of migrant workers by comparing the Joad family in *The Grapes of Wrath* and the Maddox family.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Ask students to write in journals or on scrap paper 10-15 words that they associate with the term "migrant worker."

2) Read the text for discussion on page thirteen and review the following vocabulary words: heft, dismal, rived, imbued, precursors, disparaged, regional.

Suggested web searches: Maddox Brothers and Rose, Joad family, John Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath*

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read the text overview of this lesson, taking notes as needed (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 10) (U.S. History Standards 9.2, 9.4).

2. Parallels can be drawn between the Maddox family and the Joad family portrayed in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. Have students read (Penguin Group, 2002) or watch (20th Century Fox, 1940) *The Grapes of Wrath* and then direct students to compare and contrast the Joad family and Maddox family. Have students identify at least three similarities and three differences between the Joads and the Maddoxes (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 3, 5, 7, 9) (History Standards 1, 3, 6).

Note: Allow ample time for students to discuss fully the role that music plays in students' lives.

Project

Ask students to think of anyone they know or have heard of whose life parallels some of the themes in both *The Grapes of Wrath* and the Maddox family (rags to riches, worker to celebrity, American dream story). What are the similarities that exist between all three stories? Create a visual or multimedia representation that communicates the similarities between the stories of the Joad family, the Maddox family, and the student's chosen person or family. (CCR Anchor Standards Language 1, 2, 3; Reading 2, 3, 9) (History Standards 1, 3, 6).



*Cal, Cliff, Rose, Don,
and Fred Maddox, 1948.*

Lesson Three:

Signposts for the Next Generation

Part A: "Your Kind and My Kind":

The Grapes of Wrath and the Maddox Family

Novelist John Steinbeck brought literary heft to the lives of migrants with his acclaimed masterwork, *The Grapes of Wrath*, published in 1939. Already a nationally prominent writer, Steinbeck spent considerable time with migrants, researching a series of newspaper articles by visiting labor camps and dismal shantytowns in the San Joaquin Valley. Under the title "Harvest Gypsies," these articles were published over seven consecutive days in 1936 in the *San Francisco News*. While the articles garnered significant attention, *The Grapes of Wrath* hit the public with a force that rivaled a dust storm. The story of the Joad family's relentless misfortunes turned into the best-selling novel of 1939, earned the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize, and inspired an acclaimed movie that was released a year later. Like Woody Guthrie's songs, *The Grapes of Wrath* turned sympathy toward the migrants and gave them a new source of pride.

Steinbeck imbued his story with the gritty details he had witnessed in his migrant visits, and the experiences of the Joad family rang true to readers. The Joads may have been fictional, but Steinbeck left no doubt they were based on thousands of real people still struggling in California's agricultural areas. Among them was the Maddox family, migrants from Alabama who went on to become among the most influential precursors of the Bakersfield Sound.

The start of the Maddoxes' musical career coincided with the development of *The Grapes of Wrath*; the family's early years are a striking parallel to the Joads' story. In 1933, Charlie and Lula Maddox, four sons, and a daughter hitchhiked and train-hopped to California. "Mama had always read these books, these western novels about California...where you go and just pick gold off trees, and she believed that," daughter Rose Maddox later recalled. Reality, though, was a grim life of picking fruit, placing the family in a group of migrant farm workers disparaged as "fruit tramps." Two of the brothers played



The Maddox family was featured in the Oakland Tribune, April 11, 1933.

instruments around campfires, and after four years of hard labor, another brother decided the family had had enough and "oughta go into the music business." Fronted by eleven-year-old Rose, the brothers performed their lively hillbilly music at dances and on local radio. Achieving regional popularity by 1941, the Maddox Brothers & Rose broke up when three brothers went off to military service, then re-formed in 1946. Once they added electrically amplified guitars, the band became a crucial link between Dust Bowl-era music and the honky-tonk style that would eventually become known as the Bakersfield Sound. The Maddoxes were known for their colorful western costumes; among their custom apparel were suits embroidered with grapes. While the image may have alluded to their fruit-picking days and to Steinbeck's Joads, the dazzling outfits signaled that they had triumphed over their humble beginnings.

Lesson Three:

Signposts for the Next Generation

Part B: “This World Is a Hard World”: Woody Guthrie’s Dust Bowl Ballads

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will understand the harsh economic and social conditions of the Dust Bowl and Great Depression as portrayed in the lyrics of Woody Guthrie’s *Dust Bowl Ballads*.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Display photographs of the Dust Bowl for the students and ask students to write briefly about how the pictures make them feel.

2) Read the text for discussion on page fifteen and review the following vocabulary words: prominence, sensitized, instill, biting social commentary.

Note: Many students will have heard Woody Guthrie’s “This Land Is Your Land,” but may not be aware of his impact on music that resulted from the Dust Bowl era.

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read the overview of the lesson and make notes as needed (CCR Anchor Standard Reading 1, 10) (U.S. History Standards 9.2, 9.4). Words in bold may need extra support or explanation.

2. Assign each student one song from the track list for Guthrie’s *Dust Bowl Ballads*. Students should then write a short essay on how the lyrics relate to what they already know about the realities of the Dust Bowl, or about how the style of the song lends itself to the subject matter. Lyrics to all songs are available at Woody Guthrie’s official website, www.woodyguthrie.org (CCR Anchor Standards: Writing 2, 4, 5, 6, 8; Language 1, 2, 3, 6) (History Standards 1, 4, 5).

1. “The Great Dust Storm (Dust Storm Disaster)”
2. “Talkin’ Dust Bowl Blues”
3. “Pretty Boy Floyd”
4. “Dusty Old Dust (So Long It’s Been Good to Know Yuh)”
5. “Dust Bowl Blues”

6. “Blowin’ Down This Road (I Ain’t Going to Be Treated This Way)”
7. “Tom Joad Part I”
8. “Tom Joad Part II”
9. “Do Re Mi”
10. “Dust Bowl Refugee”
11. “I Ain’t Got No Home in This World Anymore”
12. “Vigilante Man”
13. “Dust Cain’t Kill Me”
14. “Dust Pneumonia Blues”

Project

Joined by their passion for the underdog, Woody Guthrie and John Steinbeck crossed paths during their careers. Guthrie worked as Steinbeck’s music advisor for the novel’s film adaptation. “The Ballad of Tom Joad (Parts I and II),” which appears on Guthrie’s *Dust Bowl Ballads*, can be incorporated into the discussion of Steinbeck’s book and the Joad family. Ask students to think of songs that they know that specifically reference a historical or social event. Songs may be from any genre or era. Ask students to present their chosen song and lyrics to the class with a short explanation of the historical event the song references. Ask students to identify differences in the songwriter’s point of view versus a history textbook’s point of view. (CCR Anchor Standards: Language 1, 2, 3, 5; Reading 2, 6, 7, 9, 10; Speaking and Listening 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) (History Standards 1, 5, 6).



Movie card for The Grapes of Wrath, 1940.



Woody Guthrie.

Photo by Al Aumuller

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

Lesson Three: **Signposts for the Next Generation**

Part B: “This World Is a Hard World”: Woody Guthrie’s Dust Bowl Ballads

Americans would have to wait many years after the end of the Dust Bowl migration to hear its “children” interpret their experiences through the music of the Bakersfield Sound. But during the Dust Bowl era, a remarkable singer-songwriter rose to national prominence and gave voice to the migrants’ struggles. Woody Guthrie’s extraordinary body of work sensitized a country to a people’s plight, helped instill the first glimmers of Okie pride, and offered the next generation of musicians a textbook on how to turn their lives into artistic expression.

An Oklahoman born in 1912, Guthrie lived through Dust Bowl hardships even as his sights were set on a musical career. When he arrived in California in 1937, he knew the pain of being called an “Okie,” but he also found success singing his original music on local radio. Guthrie embraced his “outsider” status, and Dust Bowl migrants embraced his music. Many of the songs that he performed at labor camps contained biting social commentary and spoke directly to the migrants’ lives. With the release in 1940 of his album *Dust Bowl Ballads*, Guthrie found a national following that became increasingly attentive to migrant conditions. *Dust Bowl Ballads* was Guthrie’s first and most popular release, and the album remains an important work and a valuable historical resource in the study of migrant culture.

Lesson Three:

Signposts for the Next Generation

Part C: “Dance All Night, Dance a Little Longer”: A Culture of Music

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to discuss how national and international events have impact on a local level.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Ask students to briefly discuss with a partner what the terms “hip hop culture” and “pop culture” mean. Have a class discussion about these definitions and about what culture means in general.

2) Read the text for discussion on page seventeen and review the following vocabulary words: rarity, abounded, transplants, labor camps, pocket change, avid following, groundwork, workingman’s music mecca.

Suggested web searches: 1940s dance halls, guitar, fiddle, big band, western swing

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read text. Allow some time to clarify vocabulary words as needed (CCR Anchor Standards 1, 2, 4, 10; Language 4, 5, 6) (U.S. History Standards 9.2, 9.4).

2. Discuss how international and domestic events impact state and local culture and arts. Discuss how it is easy to feel removed from headline stories, but often the impact of significant historic events trickles down to affect the

lives of everyday people. Additionally, major news stories serve as a source of inspiration for artists and musicians and compel the creation of new works.

3. Ask students to find major news events that have impact on a local level or that generate responses from artists and/or musicians. Using digital news (i.e., CNN, AP, Yahoo online, *New York Times*, BBC News), allow students to look at headlines at the local, state, national and international level. (CCR Anchor Standards 1, 2, 6, 7, 9) (History 5, 6).

4. Allow students to choose from the list below in order to react to the news items discussed above:

- Create art in the form of song lyrics, a poem, visual art.
- Report the news for a paper or for television. The story should summarize the event and include a report on the local impact and/or response.
- Give a multimedia presentation.

Project

Instruct students to reflect on news headlines they have discussed. Have students write an opinion paper or blog post, or record a podcast, etc. on a news story that might be making an impact on their day-to-day lives. Students may need to help each other by discussing their chosen events and their opinions (CCR Anchor Standards Writing 1, 2, 3, 9; Language 1, 2, 3, 6) (History Standard 6). Ask students to cite textual evidence in their work as a reference for their opinion (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1).

*Saturday night dance at the
Tulare Migrant camp in Visalia,
California, 1940.*

*Photo by Arthur Rothstein
Courtesy of the Library of Congress,
Prints and Photographs Division*





Bakersfield's Rainbow Gardens, 1950s.

Lesson Three: **Signposts for the Next Generation**

Part C: "Dance All Night, Dance a Little Longer": A Culture of Music

The Maddox family's musicianship was hardly a rarity among the migrant population. In tough times, music and dance were a cheap form of entertainment, and a love and a talent for music abounded among the transplants. Guitars and fiddles invariably appeared at informal gatherings, and talent shows, sing-alongs, and dances were frequently organized at government labor camps. Historic recordings of camp performances reveal gifted amateur singers and instrumentalists.

Combined, all these activities were nurturing a culture that revolved around music. As the economy improved, an increasing number of migrants were able to put down roots, and many bought modest homes on the outskirts

of Bakersfield. World War II brought factory jobs, more financial security, and many more new arrivals. Pocket change was enough to gain entry into local taverns with live music by local musicians, as well as dance halls and large ballrooms. Big bands playing western swing—a mixture of musical styles, including old-time country—swept into Bakersfield and generated an avid following and local imitators.

The groundwork for the rise of a new kind of country music was being laid with an assortment of influences: devoted listeners who would pay to hear live performances, talented musicians who were self-taught or learned to play and sing from a previous generation, and the arrival of new musical strains that were being incorporated into older styles. By the late 1940s, Bakersfield was becoming a workingman's music mecca, attracting up-and-coming artists from out of state who wanted to become part of the scene.

Lesson Four:

Loud, Loud Music

*Primary curriculum connections: History/Social Studies,
Secondary curriculum connections: English, Music*

Part A: Work Hard, Play Hard: Music in Bakersfield

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will understand the social life of migrant workers in Bakersfield.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Ask students to describe briefly the kinds of dances that are important in their culture or favorite genre of music.

2) Read the text for discussion on page nineteen and review the following vocabulary words: communal campfires, shantytowns, congregated, synergy, eclipsed, venue, din, obliged, rockabilly, electrified sounds.

Suggested web searches: honky-tonk, rockabilly, Elvis, Bill Woods, Buck Owens, Merle Haggard

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read text, making notes about central ideas and highlighting details in preparation for class discussion (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 10) (U.S. History 9.2, 9.4, 9.12, 9.13).

2. In 1951, country guitarist Joe Maphis moved from Virginia to Southern California to join the music scene. On his first visit to the Blackboard, Maphis, a master musician, was so shocked by the rowdy crowd and blaring music that he was inspired to write the song “Dim Lights, Thick Smoke (and Loud, Loud Music).”

The song is now revered as a honky-tonk standard. Read the lyrics, listen to the song, and discuss the following questions (CCR Anchor Standards Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 3) (History Standards 1, 6).

- What do the lyrics tell us about the culture in Bakersfield?
- What do they tell us about the outside perception of the club and its crowd?

Project

Ask small groups of students to research cultural gathering places in the area (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1-9, Writing 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) (History Standards 1, 6). Students should interview someone who remembers when the site was created or has memories that predate the students’ experience (CCR Anchor Standards Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 3, 6). Students should present their findings to the class using a multimedia presentation that addresses the following questions:

- Who established the venue? When? Why?
- Why do people gather at this place and what do they do there?
- If the place is a music venue, what other cultural practices take place there?
- Why is the site important to your community?
- Why did you choose to write about it?
- Tell one good story about it that you learned from the person you interviewed.



Bill Woods and his Orange Blossom Playboys at the Blackboard, 1950s. Left to right (on stage): Ray Heath, Buck Owens, Oscar Whittington, Bill Woods, Lawrence Williams. Courtesy of Buck Owens Private Foundation.

Lesson Four: Loud, Loud Music

Part A: Work Hard, Play Hard: Music in Bakersfield

Beginning with the first wave of Dust Bowl migration, the transplanted population flocked to a continuous succession of cultural gathering places in the Bakersfield area. The communal campfires in shantytowns and the entertainment halls in labor camps soon gave way to churches, cafes, ballrooms, dance halls, bars, and honky-tonks. Wherever people congregated around a common interest, traditions could be reinforced, self-expression could be encouraged, and the possibility existed for “synergy”: an interaction between individuals that created something greater than any one individual could.

By the 1950s, the popularity of the large dance halls had been eclipsed by the honky-tonks, rough-and-tumble blue-collar clubs that dotted Bakersfield’s outskirts. Talented musicians made the rounds from venue to venue, but the most influential hotbed of nightlife was the Blackboard. What began as a small bar and cafe eventually grew in size to hold about 600 rowdy patrons who drank liberally, danced energetically, and swung fists with bravado. To rise above the din, the music had to be loud, and for much of the 1950s, Bill Woods and his Orange Blossom Playboys happily obliged. A native Texan, Woods migrated as a teen with his family to California in 1940; skilled at several instruments, he had already toured with a big act when he settled in Bakersfield and formed his own band. Buck Owens received his first paying job from Woods soon after arriving in Bakersfield in 1951, and Merle Haggard, who also became a big Bakersfield name, was a member of the Woods band for a time. “We played on the edge of speed,” Owens once recalled. The growing national influence of rock & roll and rockabilly music also crept into their electrified sounds.



*Outside the Blackboard, early 1950s.
Left to right: unidentified, Billy Mize, Herb Henson, Bill Woods.*

The town’s music scene soon reached a much wider following. Small recording studios cropped up locally, and bands began to lay down their sounds for homegrown labels. Just one hundred miles south lay Los Angeles, a national recording hub, and producers there began to take notice. Bakersfield musicians traveled to record at the larger studios and began to be signed by major labels. Regional television shows also broadcast musical performances, and radio stations played the growing list of recordings. By the late 1950s, Bakersfield musicians were reaching a national audience.

“Dim Lights, Thick Smoke (and Loud, Loud Music)”

Written and recorded by Joe Maphis

Dim lights, thick smoke,
And loud, loud music
Is the only kind of life you'll ever understand.
Dim lights, thick smoke,
And loud, loud music
You'll never make a wife to a home-loving man.

A home and little children mean nothing to you,
A house built with love and a husband so true,
You'd rather have a drink with the first guy you meet,
And the only home you know is the club down the street.

Dim lights, thick smoke,
And loud, loud music
Is the only kind of life you'll ever understand.
Dim lights, thick smoke,
And loud, loud music
You'll never make a wife to a home-loving man.

A drink and a dance to a honky-tonk band,
Is the only kind of life you'll ever understand,
Go ahead and have your fun, you think you've played it smart,
Well I'm sorry for you and your honky-tonking heart.

Dim lights, thick smoke,
And loud, loud music
Is the only kind of life you'll ever understand.
Dim lights, thick smoke,
And loud, loud music
You'll never make a wife to a home-loving man.



Joe Maphis, c. 1950s.

Lesson Four: Loud, Loud Music

Part B: “Act Naturally”: the Bakersfield Sound and the Nashville Sound

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to distinguish between the music made by the artists of the Bakersfield Sound and the Nashville Sound.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Ask students to write a quick journal answering the following question: What is the difference between “pop music” and “country music”?

2) Read the text for discussion on page twenty-two and review the following vocabulary words: supremacy, hybrid, unpretentious.

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read text, taking notes as needed (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 10) (U.S. History Standards 9.2, 9.4, 9.12, 9.13).

2. To understand the different sounds prevalent in Nashville and Bakersfield, instruct students to compare and contrast examples of both. Ask students to read the lyrics as they listen to “Crazy” (1962) by Patsy Cline and “Welcome to My World” (1962) by Jim Reeves to demonstrate the Nashville Sound. Then play “Act Naturally” (1963) by Buck Owens and “(All My Friends

Are Gonna Be) Strangers” (1964) by Merle Haggard (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 7, 9).

3. Facilitate student discussion using the following questions (CCR Anchor Standards Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 3,) (Music Standards 6, 7)

- What instruments can you hear in one sound but not the other?
- How does the subject matter addressed in each song relate to the songs’ respective sounds?
- What are three adjectives that you might use to describe each sound? (CCR Language 1)
- How would you describe the respective singing styles?
- What factors unique to each of the two locations, Bakersfield and Nashville, led to their respective sounds? How was each “true” to country’s roots? (History Standards 1, 3, 6)
- Describe what is meant by “raw, raucous, and ripe for improvisation.” (CCR Anchor Standard Language 5)

Project

Ask students to write a persuasive essay about what makes their favorite type of music worth listening to. Why do they consider it “good” music? What things make it good? Students should provide evidence for their claims. Essays should be convincing and may be shared with the class or school community. (CCR Anchor Standards Writing 1, 4, 5, 9, 10; Language 1, 2)



Buck Owens and his Buckaroos, 1962.

Left to right: Wayne “Moose” Stone, Don Rich, Buck Owens, Jay McDonald, Merle Haggard.

Lesson Four: Loud, Loud Music

Part B: “Act Naturally”: the Bakersfield Sound and the Nashville Sound

The throbbing, rough-edged music that eventually became known as the Bakersfield Sound was a compelling new offshoot from traditional country music. Two thousand miles east, another offshoot was growing in country music’s capital, Nashville, Tennessee. While Bakersfield musicians gravitated to the wail of amplified guitars and thrived on a spirit of gritty independence, the Nashville recording establishment was changing its ways in the midst of shifting musical currents fed by a new generation of young Americans, the rise of television, and national prosperity that supported a massive expansion in the music industry.

Crossover hits between country and pop markets were hardly uncommon by the late 1950s and early 1960s. Pop and country artists recorded many of the same songs, each employing their genre’s musical approach. But as

rockabilly and rock & roll captivated younger audiences, Nashville recording executives not only signed young rockers and tradition-based country acts, but also sought to win new adult listeners. Record producers began dropping fiddles, banjos, and steel guitars in favor of symphonic strings, pianos, and horns. Twangy singers gave way to velvet-voiced vocalists backed by smooth background choruses. Wildly popular, the country-pop hybrid increased country’s fan base and became known as the Nashville Sound.

The Bakersfield Sound, which attracted its own legion of fans, has mistakenly been described as a backlash against the more sophisticated and highly polished Nashville Sound. Indeed, between the two, the raw, raucous music of Bakersfield—unpretentious and proud of its humble origins—was more closely associated with the hallmarks of traditional country. By contrast, the Nashville Sound is more the product of a reaction to exterior forces. The musical style that evolved in Bakersfield is much more a product of its own heritage.



Los Angeles, California: Tommy Collins and Buck Owens at Capitol’s Hollywood studio, c. 1954.

Courtesy of Buck Owens Private Foundation and Capitol/EMI



Nashville, Tennessee: Owen Bradley and Patsy Cline at Bradley Studios, c. 1956.

*Photo by Elmer Williams
Courtesy of the family of Patsy Cline*

“Crazy”

Written by Willie Nelson

Recorded by Patsy Cline

Crazy, I'm crazy for feeling so lonely,
I'm crazy, crazy for feeling so blue.

I knew you'd love me as long as you wanted
And then someday you'd leave me for somebody new.

Worry, why do I let myself worry?
Wondering what in the world did I do?

Crazy for thinking that my love could hold you
I'm crazy for trying and crazy for crying
And I'm crazy for loving you

Crazy for thinking that my love could hold you.
I'm crazy for trying and crazy for crying
And I'm crazy for loving you.



Patsy Cline, 1957.

Courtesy of the family of Patsy Cline

“Welcome to My World”

Written by Johnny Hathcock and Ray Winkler

Recorded by Jim Reeves

Welcome to my world,
Won't you come on in.
Miracles I guess
Still happen now and then.

Step into my heart
Leave your cares behind.
Welcome to my world,
Built with you in mind.

Knock and the door will open,
Seek and you will find,
Ask and you'll be given,
The key to this world of mine.

I'll be waiting here
With my arms unfurled.
Waiting just for you,
Welcome to my world.

Knock and the door will open,
Seek and you will find,
Ask and you'll be given,
The key to this world of mine.

I'll be waiting here
With my arms unfurled.
Waiting just for you,
Welcome to my world.
Waiting just for you,
Welcome to my world.



Jim Reeves, at the microphone, recording in RCA Studio B, Nashville, Tennessee, early 1960s.

“Act Naturally”

Written by Johnny Russell and Voni Morrison

Recorded by Buck Owens

They're gonna put me in the movies,
They're gonna make a big star out of me,
We'll make a film about a man that's sad and lonely
And all I have to do is act naturally.

Well, I bet you I'm gonna be a big star,
Might win an Oscar you can never tell,
The movie's gonna make me a big star,
'Cause I can play the part so well.

Well, I hope you come and see me in the movie,
Then I'll know that you will plainly see,
The biggest fool that ever hit the big time
And all I have to do is act naturally.

We'll make a film about a man that's sad and lonely,
Begging down upon his bended knee,
I'll play the part but I won't need rehearsing
All I have to do is act naturally.



Los Angeles, California: Buck Owens and His Buckaroos at Capitol's Hollywood studio, c. 1967.

Left to right: Tom Brumley, Doyle Holly, Don Rich, Buck Owens, Ken Nelson, Willie Cantu.

Courtesy of Capitol/EMI

“(All My Friends Are Gonna Be) Strangers”

Written by Liz Anderson

Recorded by Merle Haggard

Oh, the love you promised would be mine forever
I would have bet my bottom dollar on
Well, it sure turned out to be a short forever
Just once I turned my back and you were gone

From now on all my friends are gonna be strangers
I'm all through, ever trusting anyone
The only thing I can count on now is my fingers
I was a fool believing in you and now you are gone

It amazes me not knowing any better
Than to think I had a love that would be true
Why I should be taken out and tarred and feathered
To have let myself be taken in by you

From now on all my friends are gonna be strangers
I'm all through, ever trusting anyone
The only thing I can count on now is my fingers
I was a fool believing in you and now you are gone



Merle Haggard in the studio, 1960s.

Lesson Five:

Picking and Strumming

Primary curriculum connections: History/Social Studies

Secondary curriculum connections: English, Science, Music

Part A: "I Love My Old Guitar": The Migration of a Musical Instrument

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to explain the evolution of the guitar and the innovations of American companies and individuals who worked to create the electric guitar.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Ask students to write a list of everything they know about electric guitars and/or steel guitars (what do they sound like, what do they look like, what kinds of music are they used for).

2) Read the text for discussion on page twenty-eight.

Suggested web searches: steel guitar, country guitar, Hawaiian steel guitar, country lap steel guitar, Chet Atkins, Pete Drake, Ralph Mooney, Don Rich

Instructional Procedures

Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with the music teacher and the science teacher for this lesson.

1. Have students read text, annotating the text as needed for class discussion (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 10) (U.S. History Standards 9.2, 9.4, 9.12, 9.13).

2. While most students will know what a guitar is, teachers should determine how much background knowledge their students have about guitars, electric guitars, and steel guitars. Time should be devoted prior to the reading to encourage students to listen to electric guitar and steel guitar music (CCR Anchor Standard Speaking & Listening 1, 2).

Teacher's tip: The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum has an instrument trunk that can be loaned to schools. Contact the school programs manager at 615-416-2088 for information about the trunk and the accompanying curriculum materials.

3. Use the following questions to facilitate discussion (CCR Anchor Standards Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 3) (History Standard 1) (Music Standard 6):

- What are the characteristics of the guitar that you think have made it such an important instrument in popular music?
- How have changes in musical instruments made an impact on changing musical styles and vice versa?
- Some musical instruments have remained relatively unchanged since their popularization, like the violin and the trumpet. Why do you think guitars have lent themselves to innovation?

Project

1) Ask students to invent their own adaptation for a current musical instrument. Have students draw a diagram of their new instrument and provide a sales pitch for it that explains what makes it different from the original and why it would be a useful new tool for musicians. (CCR Anchor Standards Language 1, 2; Writing 2, 4, 5, 10)

2) The guitar may have originated elsewhere, but Americans have embraced the instrument and made it their own. Americans design and manufacture quality guitars every day. Have students research the various American guitar makers, such as Gibson and Fender, and compare and contrast the companies' beginnings, designs, and growth. Students should also look into smaller, regional designers to note the difference between large companies and independent artisans. Students should compile their findings in an essay or as a multimedia presentation.



*Cal Maddox's 1951 Gibson SJ-200 guitar,
modified with a DeArmond electronic pickup*

Photo by Bob Delevante

Lesson Five:

Picking and Strumming

Part A: "I Love My Old Guitar": The Instrument Behind the Sound

Like the Dust Bowl migrants, the guitar made its own long journey to become an essential part of the Bakersfield Sound. The instrument didn't even play a starring role in country music's early ancestry, serving mostly as rhythmic support to the more dominant banjo and fiddle. Gifted African American musicians, playing jazz and blues, showcased the guitar's versatility and helped to popularize it, and the instrument began to take on a more central role in folk and hillbilly music circles by the early 1900s.

A close relative of the traditional guitar also invaded hillbilly music by the 1920s: the steel guitar. This variety of guitar is played horizontally, with one hand sliding a steel bar over the strings and the other hand picking at the strings. Developed in Hawaii, it created the now-familiar Hawaiian music that first captivated Americans after the islands became a U.S. territory in 1900. Rural musicians snapped up mass-produced steel guitars and avidly used them to translate their own musical traditions. Cheap, mail-order string instruments of all kinds were the rage in the 1920s, and many were among the few belongings that Okies brought along to California.

The advent of microphone, radio, and telephone technology inspired string musicians—and, especially, guitarists—to experiment with amplification by the early 1920s. "Pickup" devices, so named because they pick up sound vibrations, were added to acoustic guitars and then wired into primitive amplifiers. The first commercially produced amplified guitar was introduced in 1931. Four years later, pioneering western swing band Milton Brown & His Musical Brownies became the first country-style artists to record with an amplified instrument, a lap steel guitar. Amplified acoustic and steel guitars were essential in western swing, and for good reason: without amplification, the guitar strumming would be drowned out by the multitude of instruments. Though Nashville's *Grand Ole Opry* originally considered electric guitars incompatible with traditional music and banned them from its stage, their popularity eventually held sway, and guitar virtuosos such as Chet Atkins were wowing audiences with their play by the 1940s.

The first generations of amplified guitars and steel guitars were essentially acoustic versions with pickups. But innovators in the 1940s were inspired to rethink

basic guitar designs in ways that would revolutionize both electric instruments. Acoustic-guitar makers threw out the hollow resonating chamber and began experimenting with a solid body. Amplified, the resulting sound was capable of being brighter, cleaner, and more sustained. Meanwhile, steel-guitar makers morphed the amplified instrument into a guitar neck (or necks) mounted on a platform; underneath, foot pedals allowed musicians to change both tuning and pitch, slurring and bending the notes. Both innovations soon became trademarks in the evolving Bakersfield Sound.

*Buck Owens used this modified
Fender Telecaster, with an early
1950s neck and a 1962 body, at
recording sessions and performances.*

*Courtesy of Buck Owens' Crystal Palace
Photo by Bob Delevante*



Lesson Five:

Picking and Strumming

Part B: Electric Twang: A New Guitar Becomes an Instrument of Change

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how an electric guitar works with amplification, sound signals, and audio amplifiers.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Ask students to write down the first thing they think of when they hear the word guitar. Have students share their thoughts with a partner and briefly discuss other kinds of music in which the guitar is typically used.

2) Read the text for discussion on page thirty-two and review the following vocabulary words: teeming hub, legions, prominence, amplified instruments, solid-body guitar, headstock, distinctive sound, “sustain” of a steel guitar, pedal steel guitar, cumbersome.

Suggested web searches: Leo Fender, Fender guitars, Telecaster, Andy and Semie Moseley, Mosrite guitars, Don Rich

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read text, taking notes as necessary (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 10). Review vocabulary, working in pairs to define and use in sentences (CCR Anchor Standards Language 4, 5, 6) (U.S. History Standards 9.4, 9.12, 9.13).
2. A tremendous amount of commerce is necessary to sustain the sort of musical culture that thrived in Bakersfield and the rest of Southern California. Have students work in small groups to brainstorm businesses and industries that emerged as a result of the music business (e.g. artist representatives and agents, sound and light engineers, concert venues, etc.). Have students share their finding with the rest of the class (CCR Anchor Standards Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). Students should then construct an informative essay that explains how music is an economic, as well as cultural, force (CCR Anchor Standards Writing 2, 4, 5, 6; Language 1, 2, 3, 6) (History Standards 1, 2, 3, 6).
3. It's not uncommon for a single product to become so popular that it overtakes the marketplace and becomes a cultural phenomenon. In their lifetime, students have seen iPhones, YouTube, and Facebook make a splash in their respective markets that could be compared to the Fender Telecaster's impact on the electric guitar market (CCR Anchor Standards Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 3) (History Standards 1, 2).

Prompt students to think of other examples of products that have become successful enough to achieve an iconic status. (If needed, provide additional suggestions, such as *Star Wars*, Levi's Jeans, Nike, and Xerox).

4. Ask students to work with a partner to reflect on what the successful products have in common. Have student pairs identify the attributes of each that lend themselves to creating a marketplace sensation (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 8, 9; Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 4). Have students share their finding with the rest of the class in a creative presentation (CCR Anchor Standards Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

California electronics engineer Bob Crook designed and built Standel custom amplifiers, prized by Chet Atkins, Hank Garland, Speedy West, and other top session guitarists. This Standel 25L15 model with green upholstery was made in 1953 for Joe Maphis, a staff guitarist on Los Angeles TV program Town Hall Party.

*Courtesy of Jody Maphis
Photo by Bob Delevante*



Project

1) Divide students into small groups. Assign each group one of the following research topics (CCR Anchor Standards Speaking and Listening 1; Reading 1, 4, 7, 10; Writing 7, 8, 9) (Science Standards 3, 4) (Physics Standards 3, 4, 5):

Amplification

Sound Signals

Audio Amplifiers

2) Give each group the task of answering the questions below using new media resources. It may be useful to brainstorm as a class about what kinds of internet searches would yield the most useful results. Teachers may need to provide guidance on useful websites for the students to begin their queries. (CCR Anchor Standards Language 4, 6; Speaking and Listening 1)

3) Have students present their findings to the class. Wrap up class discussion by having the class create a visual representation of how an electric guitar works with an amplifier to produce sound. It may be necessary for small groups to create this visual representation first and then convene as a whole group to agree upon ideas. (CCR Anchor Standards Writing 2, 4, 6, 10; Speaking and Listening 1, 4, 5, 6) (Science Standards 3, 4) (Physics Standards 3, 4, 5)

Amplification

- What does amplification mean?
- Does amplification relate only to sound or can it relate to other sensory signals?
- What are some examples of amplifiers (musical and non-musical)?
- Have you ever observed or experienced amplification? Describe your experience.
- What are some important vocabulary words to know when talking about amplification?
- What questions do you still have about how the process of amplification works?
- Draw a visual representation to help you present your findings to the class.

Buck Owens's 1964 Fender Telecaster with custom silver-sparkle finish, used at countless performances, including his 1966 Carnegie Hall concert.

*Courtesy of
Buck Owens' Crystal Palace
Photo by Bob Delevante*



Sound Signals

- What is a signal as it relates to amplification?
- How is a sound signal transmitted?
- What kinds of sound signals are in the world (musical and non-musical)?
- Have you ever observed or experienced a sound signal? Describe your experience.
- What do sound signals look like?
- What are some important vocabulary words to know when talking about sound signals?
- What questions do you still have about how an amplifier works?
- Draw a visual representation to help you present your findings to the class.

Audio Amplifiers

- How does an audio amplifier work?
- What kinds of instruments are known for using amplifiers?
- Have you ever observed or experienced an amplifier? Describe your experience.
- How are magnets used in amplifiers?
- How are tone and volume controlled and affected by an amplifier?
- What are some important vocabulary words to know when talking about amplifiers?
- What questions do you still have about how an amplifier works?
- Draw a visual representation to help you present your findings to the class.



Fuzzy Owen's Fender 1000 double-neck pedal steel guitar. The pedal steel is an electric instrument that requires an amplifier to be heard.

*Courtesy of Fuzzy Owen
Photo by Bob Delevante*

Lesson Five:

Picking and Strumming

Part B: Electric Twang: A New Guitar Become an Instrument of Change

By the 1940s, Southern California had become a teeming hub of western swing and the hillbilly music that would soon be known as “country.” The legions of fans were supporting not only the performers, but also the many business interests that kept the music playing, including guitar manufacture. During the 1940s, three regional companies—Bigsby, Rickenbacker, and Fender—rose to prominence with their amplified instruments. Production, though, remained on a small scale until Leo Fender, a Los Angeles-area inventor whose background was in electronics, introduced a solid-body guitar designed for the masses. The instrument was deceptively simple: a wooden neck bolted onto a solid-wood body, the strings running from the headstock down into drilled holes so they could be anchored in the back. Introduced in 1951 as the Telecaster—a name inspired by the emerging video medium—the guitar has gone on to become the longest-running solid-body guitar in production.

Its affordability quickly put the “Tele” in the hands of country musicians across Southern California. But its distinctive sound was as much a selling point as its cost. The notes were sharp, straightforward, precise, and, in the right hands, the guitar could mimic the “sustain” of a steel guitar. The Fender Telecaster not only became the guitar of choice for Buck Owens, his sideman Don Rich, and Merle Haggard, but over the years, it also has turned into the electric guitar most associated with all of country music.

In Bakersfield, the Mosrite guitar company was launched by brothers Andy and Semie Moseley, whose family migrated from Oklahoma to Arizona and then to Bakersfield during the Dust Bowl years. Joe Maphis favored a custom-made double-neck Mosrite during his lengthy career. Attention also turned to pedal steel guitars, which received improvements and enjoyed mass production. Also in 1951, Fender introduced another instrument that would further revolutionize live country performances: the electric bass guitar. No longer would bass players have to haul their cumbersome acoustic instruments from place to place. The electric bass guitar, of course, has gone on to become a staple in most genres of popular music.



Joe Maphis's trademark double-neck guitar, custom made by Semie Moseley in 1954.

Photo by Bob Delevante

POST-VISIT

Lesson Six:

Image and the Bakersfield Sound

Primary curriculum connections: History/Social Studies

Secondary curriculum connections: English, Visual Arts

Part A: Television Tunes in to Country Music

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will understand how media, such as television and the Internet, affect country music.

Introduction to the Lesson

1) Ask students to brainstorm about television shows that they have seen or heard of that have a country or rural theme.

2) Read the text for discussion on page thirty-four and review the following vocabulary words: seized, employed, syndication.

Suggested web searches: singing cowboys, Cousin Herb, *Andy Griffith Show* introduction

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read text, underlining and highlighting as needed in preparation for class discussion (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 10) (U.S. History Standards 9.4, 9.12, 9.13).

2. Ask students to find music videos in which the artist is trying to evoke nostalgia by recreating a certain time or place from the past, similar to the country shows discussed in this lesson. Students should then write about the video, being sure to answer the following questions (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 7; Writing 2, 4, 8):

- Why do you think the artist chose this particular time and place? How does the song lend itself to the selected setting?
- Does the setting enhance the message of the song? Why or why not?
- What details in the video help set the stage for the viewer?
- What would you have done differently if you had directed this video?

3. Conclude the lesson with the following discussion questions (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 7, 8, 9; Speaking and Listening 1, 2, 3):

- What impact do you think television has had on music—and what impact has music had on television?
- How do you think the Internet has changed the way we experience music?
- How is it different from the way television and radio deliver music?
- Do you watch music television shows? Which ones? Do you think these are the same format as early music variety shows? How are they similar/different?

Project

Have groups of students survey different parts of the student body to see how many watch TV in their homes, and for how many hours a day. Students may also want to add questions to the survey if they would like to know something else about their peers' TV habits. Have groups visually represent their findings in a chart or graph and display them for the school to see. (CCR Math Standards HSS-ID.A.1, 2, 4)

*On the set of Cousin Herb's Trading Post, c. 1953.
Left to right: Herb Henson, John Cuiello, Billy Mize, Jelly Sanders, Bill Woods, Dallas Frazier, Carlton Ellis.*





*On the set of Cousin Herb's Trading Post, c. 1960.
Left to right: Herb Henson, Bonnie Owens, Rose Lee Maphis, Al Brumley Jr.
Courtesy of Billy Mize*

Lesson Six: Image and the Bakersfield Sound

Part A: Television Tunes in to Country Music

A distinctive voice, memorable melody and lyrics, and expert instrumentation: all are necessary for making crowd-pleasing music. Audiences also crave a charismatic personality and an engaging performance. In the 1950s the new medium of television suddenly—and literally—allowed musicians to project their images as never before. Radio and recorded music created star power on the strength of sound alone. For years, movies had featured visual performances, particularly those of “singing cowboys” such as Gene Autry and Roy Rogers; and stage shows gave smaller audiences real-life glimpses of their idols. But within a span of fifteen years, television allowed performances to be viewed in the comfort of almost every American home. In 1948, only 1 percent of the nation’s families owned a television; five years later, TV had entered 50 percent of all households; and by the early 1960s, this figure had topped 90 percent.

The national television networks—ABC, NBC, and CBS—did not spring up overnight. Instead, programming began regionally, and local stations

seized on the popularity of country music as a way to build audiences and attract advertisers. Regional shows let performers hone their stage skills, develop public personas, and promote their recordings and personal appearances. Bakersfield’s stations created several country music programs, but the best known and most enduring show was *Cousin Herb's Trading Post*. The house band on another show, *Chuck Wagon Gang*, featured Buck Owens on lead guitar. Merle Haggard was still a teenager when he was invited to sing on *Chuck Wagon Gang*, where he met Owens for the first time.

Programs like these gave country artists launching pads for national careers and network appearances, while inspiring a string of 1960s network series that employed country or rural themes, such as *The Andy Griffith Show* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Among the creators of the Bakersfield Sound, Buck Owens made the biggest network splash with the country music variety-comedy show *Hee Haw*, which ranked twenty-first in the Nielsen ratings in 1969, its debut year. Canceled after two seasons, it found an even larger audience in syndication. Owens left the show in 1986, but production continued until 1992.

Lesson Six:

Image and the Bakersfield Sound

Part B: Fashion as Self-Expression

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to connect his or her own choices about image with those made by artists of the Bakersfield Sound.

Introduction to the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to draw a sketch or make a list of attributes they think of when they imagine a country music star's clothing. Students may share their sketches and ideas with each other or the class. Repeat with another genre (jazz, classical, rock, pop, world music).
- 2) Read the text for discussion on page thirty-seven and review the following vocabulary words: gravitated, ragtag, gingham, perpetuate stereotypes, cowboy couture, mythic, permutations, spurn, bumpkin, opt, dapper, motifs, dinner jackets.

Suggested web searches: Western wear, Nathan Turk, Nudie Cohn, Nudie suits, gingham, Maddox Brothers & Rose costumes, Buck Owens stage wear

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read text, highlighting central ideas in preparation for class discussion (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 10) (U.S. History Standards 9.12, 9.13).
2. While cowboy costumes typically exploited western or musical imagery, such as six-shooters, steers, guitars, and treble clefs, many artists considered the clothing as canvases for personalized expression. Share pictures of costumes of well-known country musicians, such as Buck Owens and the Buckaroos, the Maddox Brothers & Rose, Merle Haggard, Porter Wagoner, and Hank Williams.
3. Invite students to describe and assess their own personal style, including important aspects of their wardrobes that reflect their personalities. Have students write a short essay that addresses the following questions (CCR Anchor Standards Writing 2, 4) (History Standards 1, 6).
 - What images did you include and why are they significant to you?
 - Does your style connect to your heritage? If so, please elaborate.
 - What does your style say about your identity?



Bolero jacket, with embroidery and rhinestones, made for Buck Owens by Nathan Turk.

*Courtesy of Buck Owens' Crystal Palace
Photo by Bob Delevante*

Projects

1) Many popular singers, across all musical genres, are famous for the clothes they wear during their performances. Assign students to work in pairs to select a popular contemporary artist with a signature style and gather a series of stage images (CCR Anchor Standard Writing 8, 9). Have students work with partners to plan a presentation that addresses what the artist appears to be communicating to the audience with the outfits (CCR Anchor Standard Writing 7, 8, 9; Speaking and Listening 4, 5, 6) (History Standards 1, 6).

2) Create a Pinterest board that conveys your personal style. For each “pin” write a brief description of what that “pin” says about your identity or why you chose it. (CCR Anchor Standard Language 3; Speaking and Listening 4, 5, 6; Writing 2, 4, 6)

3) Have students write a longer informative piece addressing how fashion conveys a message about, for example, gender, economic status, age, political persuasion, geographic region, and/or music genre. (CCR Standard Writing 2, 4, 5; Language 1, 2, 3, 6) (History Standards 1, 6).



Above: Bill Wood's gold ring, with diamonds set into his initials.

*Courtesy of Ray Urquhart
Photo by Bob Delevante*

Right: Rose Maddox's stage costume, made by Nathan Turk.

*Courtesy of Marty Stuart
Photo by Bob Delevante*



Lesson Six:

Image and the Bakersfield Sound

Part B: Fashion as Self-Expression

How performers dress is an essential part of their image, and the creators of the Bakersfield Sound gravitated toward costumes inspired by cowboy culture. Though their Okie roots tied them far more to the ragtag hillbilly dress of gingham and overalls, these children of the Dust Bowl era weren't drawn to perpetuate stereotypes associated with their years of discrimination and hardship. Instead, cowboy couture connected artists to a more mythic era of American life and its heroic figures. The dress also signaled country's overlapping heritage with cowboy music.

By the time Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, Wynn Stewart, and many others adopted the cowboy look, however, it had gone through so many permutations that it hardly resembled the work clothes worn by the real riders of the range. In the 1930s, the popularity of western movies inspired many southern performers to spurn the bumpkin typecasting and opt for a stylized version of cowboy attire; western swing bands naturally selected dapper and eye-catching cowboy styles, as well. But as Hollywood's singing cowboy craze took off in the late 1930s, the movies began re-imagining cowboy clothing in increasingly flamboyant motifs. The country artists based in Southern California took note and went calling on costumers Nathan Turk and Nudie Cohn, known as Nudie the Rodeo Tailor, to acquire some of their own. Each custom-made outfit was a visual feast: bright colors, glistening rhinestones, intricate embroidery, and dazzling sequins that communicated glamour and showmanship. The Maddox Brothers & Rose were among the first stage performers to seek out a movie costumer, and their vivid, crowd-pleasing outfits earned them the title of "America's most colorful hillbilly band."

The musicians' proximity to Hollywood turned them into national trendsetters by the 1950s, as country artists elsewhere were eager to imitate the styles. In the 1960s, though, the popularity of the Nashville Sound, a smooth, sophisticated musical style that moved away from country's hillbilly heyday, inspired many artists to exchange the rhinestone cowboy look for glitzy gowns, cocktail dresses, and dinner jackets. At the height of his own popularity at the same time, Buck Owens and his band, the Buckaroos, proudly wore their Nudie suits, created by Nudie the Rodeo Tailor—yet another way he distinguished himself from what was occurring in Nashville.



Three-piece suit with rhinestones and embroidery. Made by Nudie the Rodeo Tailor and worn by Merle Haggard in the 1970s.

Photo by Bob Delevante

POST-VISIT

Lesson Seven:

Legends: Buck and Merle

Primary curriculum connections: English

Secondary curriculum connections: History/Social Studies

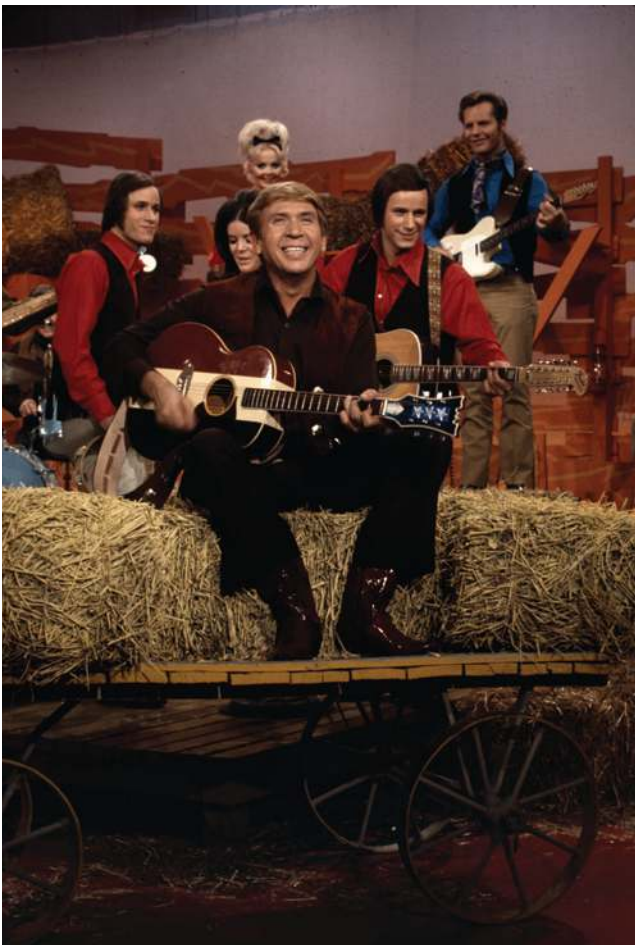
Part A: “Gonna Make a Big Star Out of Me”: Buck Owens the Businessman

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to explain the American Dream using the life of Buck Owens or a similarly successful entrepreneur.

Introduction to the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to brainstorm names of celebrities or entrepreneurs who built successful businesses from the ground up. (If needed, provide suggestions, such as Bill Gates, Sam Walton, Henry Ford, and Oprah Winfrey.)
- 2) Read the text for discussion on page thirty-nine and review the following vocabulary words: syndicated, variety shows, brand, assault, presumptive, standard-bearer.



Suggested web searches: Carnegie Hall, the Palladium, *Hee Haw*, *Buck Owens Ranch Show*

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read text, making notes as needed in preparation for class discussion. (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 10) (U.S. History Standards 9.12, 9.13).
2. Divide students into small groups. Assign each group a name from the list of entrepreneurs and celebrities created at the beginning of the lesson. Each group should research the person and create a multimedia presentation about the business that answers the following questions (CCR Anchor Standards: Reading 2, 4, 7, 10; Writing 4, 9, 10; Language 1, 2, 3, 5):
 - Why did this person start his or her business?
 - What makes the business unique and successful?
 - What need did this business meet that hadn't been met before?
 - Who does this person count as an inspiration or mentor?
 - What lessons can you take from this person's business practices? Are there any aspects that you would avoid? What would you strive to emulate?

Project Idea

Using Buck Owens as an example of someone who turned childhood poverty into adult success, discuss the American Dream with students. Ask students to consider whether the American Dream is still possible today. Have students write an opinion or argumentative essay about whether the American Dream is possible in the digital age of marketing. (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9; Speaking & Listening 1, 2, 3; Writing 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) (History Standards 1, 2, 3, 6).

*Buck Owens on the set of Hee Haw, c. 1969.
Left to right: Jim Hager, Susan Raye, Owens,
Gunilla Hutton, Jon Hager, Doyle Holly.*

*Courtesy of Buck Owens Private Foundation
and Capitol/EMI*

Lesson Seven:

Legends: Buck and Merle

Part A: "Gonna Make a Big Star Out of Me": Buck Owens as a Brand

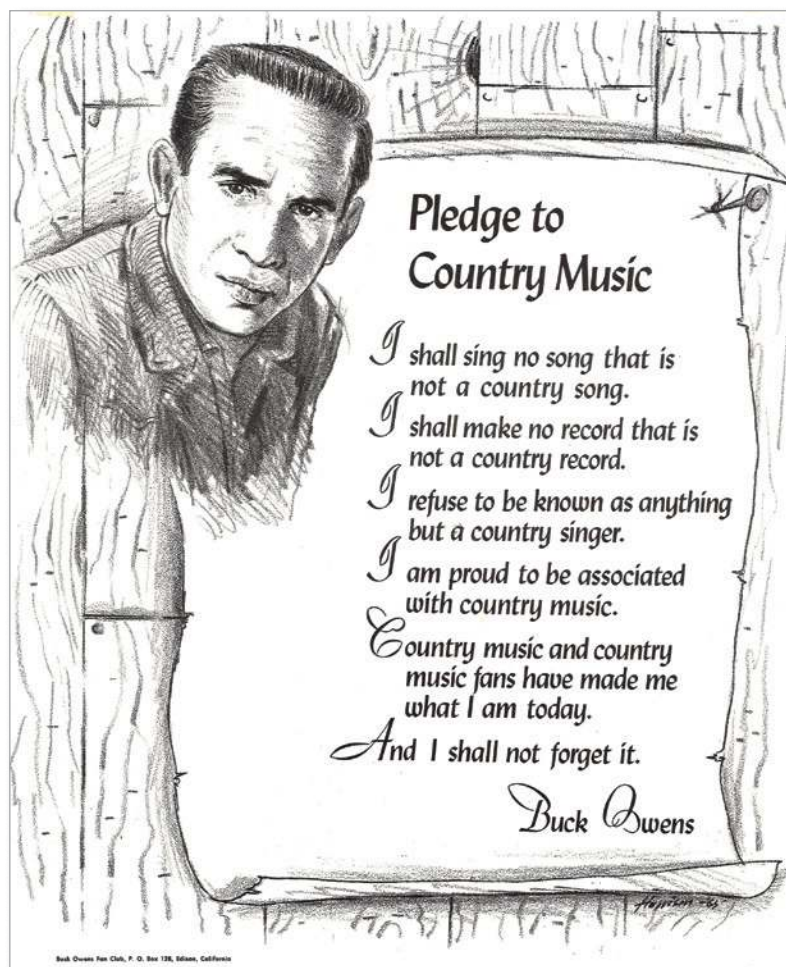
As a recording artist, live performer, and television host, Buck Owens dominated country music in the 1960s. Between 1964 and 1967, he released fifteen consecutive #1 country songs and twenty-six more that hit the Top Ten. He played Carnegie Hall in New York City, the Palladium in London, and hundreds of other major venues. Before he achieved national success on television with the network program *Hee Haw*, his syndicated series, *Buck Owens Ranch Show*, reached a hundred markets, and he made multiple guest appearances on national variety shows.

In Bakersfield, he built a business empire consisting of radio stations, a music publishing company, a recording studio, and a booking agency. Like a rare handful of performers, he turned his stardom into a brand. Bakersfield became known as "Nashville West," but

Owens's influence was so profound that one journalist dubbed it "Buckersfield."

Owens also can be credited with keeping alive the spirit of country music at a time when it was under assault by the twin tidal waves of rock and pop music. He fanned the flames of his musical heritage—the rough-edged honky-tonk styles that evolved from hillbilly and folk songs—even as the presumptive capital of country music, Nashville, was pursuing a pop hybrid. In 1965, Owens defiantly published his famous "Pledge to Country Music" in a Nashville trade publication, saying, in part, "I shall sing no song that is not a country song."

Throughout his career, Owens never hid the fact that the source of his drive lay in his Okie roots. "I hated being poor," he once said. "I remember as a little kid saying, 'Boy, when I get big I ain't never gonna be poor again.'" In his final years, he resumed live performing, and he was able to re-establish his reputation as a major standard-bearer of the Bakersfield Sound and one of the great groundbreaking forces of modern country music.



"Pledge to Country Music" in Music City News on March 1, 1965.

Lesson Seven:

Legends: Buck and Merle

Primary curriculum connections: English

Secondary curriculum connections: History/Social Studies

Part B: “We Still Wave Old Glory”:

Merle Haggard and the 1960s Counterculture

Learning Objective

After completing the lesson, the student will understand Merle Haggard’s contribution to the 1960s counterculture.

Introduction to the Lesson

- 1) Ask students to brainstorm a definition for counterculture. It may be helpful for students to give examples of counterculture as part of the definition.
- 2) Read the text for discussion on page forty-one and review the following vocabulary words: circuitous, junior, delinquency, wayward, stint, prolific, political lightning rods, turbulent, din, disaffected, anti-establishment upheavals, doubled down, stridently, pardon.

Instructional Procedures

1. Have students read text, making notes as needed in preparation for class discussion. (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 10) (U.S. History Standard 9.12, 9.13).
2. Instruct students to listen to “Okie from Muskogee” while reading the lyrics. Ask students to review the lyrics in light of the political climate of the 1960s. (If necessary, review the Vietnam War and the protests that occurred across the country). Engage students in discussing the following (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 7, 8; Speaking and Listening 1, 2, 3) (History Standards 1, 5, 6):
 - What kinds of activities mentioned in the song are associated with the countercultural movement of the 1960s?
 - From what you read about him, would you consider Merle Haggard conservative or progressive? Point to specific passages of the text to support your opinion.
 - Do you think “Okie from Muskogee” is a conservative song or a countercultural song? Could it be both? Explain your opinion with specific examples from the lyrics. Teachers may need to encourage students to think about the fact that while Haggard was standing up for “square” culture, he was also countering the popular countercultural movement.

3. In small groups, have students use the Internet to pick out two or three images that illustrate Haggard’s political point of view. Students should then present their images to the class and explain the choice. (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 2, 4, 6; Speaking and Listening 1, 2, 6; Language 3, 5) (History Standards 1, 6).

4. Have students consider the music they listen to and discuss contemporary songs that make political commentary. Allow students to submit their choices for consideration, with the caution that the teacher reserves the right to edit as needed for classroom use. An important part of this discussion might be the impact of music and how the language used within the songs supports or inhibits widespread use for political commentary. (CCR Anchor Standards Reading 1, 4, 7, 9; Speaking and Listening 1, 4, 5) (History Standards 1, 6).

Project

Merle Haggard used images in his song to support his political point of view. Help students think of a social issue about which they have an opinion (for example: civil rights, immigration, health care, etc.). Students may choose a written or visual response to communicate their opinion on their social issue. In either approach, students’ audiences should be able to form a clear idea of their political point of view. (CCR Anchor Standards Writing 3, 9, 10; Speaking and Listening 2, 4, 6) (History Standards 1, 4, 5, 6).

Written: Write a poem, song, rap, etc. that uses at least three images to illustrate your point of view on your social issue.

Visual: Visually represent (poster, diagram, digital art, video, etc.) a political issue using images that communicate your point of view on your social issue.



45 RPM single of “Okie From Muskogee.”

Lesson Seven:

Legends: Buck and Merle

Part B: “We Still Wave Old Glory”:

Merle Haggard and the 1960s Counterculture

The other major architect of the Bakersfield Sound, Merle Haggard, had a more circuitous—and troubled—route to country superstardom than Buck Owens. Eight years Owens’s junior, Haggard didn’t suffer from the severe poverty of the Dust Bowl era, but his childhood and youth were marked by tragedy and delinquency. At age nine, he lost his father, and he embarked on a wayward life that eventually led to a thirty-three-month stint in San Quentin State Prison for burglary. These experiences, as much as his strong connection to the Okie underclass, shaped the messages Haggard has communicated in his prolific songwriting.

His attention to working-class issues and traditional values has earned him the nickname “the poet of the common man.” But views that may be perceived as refreshingly blunt by some have also turned into political lightning rods, particularly in the turbulent 1960s. Amid the din of the youth movement and protests against the controversial Vietnam War, Haggard wrote and released “Okie from Muskogee” in 1969. Immediately, it was embraced as an anthem for the everyday Americans who were disaffected by the anti-establishment upheavals; in the Bakersfield area, the song also became a rallying cry for the survivors and descendants of the Dust Bowl migration. Haggard doubled down a year later with an even more overtly angry anthem, “The Fightin’ Side of Me,” in which he ranted, “If you don’t love [the U.S.], leave it.” His later explanations of these musical statements, though, seem to reflect a complicated man with intense empathy for the underdog rather than a stridently political animal himself.

Haggard was granted a full pardon in 1972 by Ronald Regan, who was then governor of California. The singer considered the pardon to be his “greatest award.” His eclectic body of work encompasses thirty-eight #1 singles and styles that range from honky-tonk to bluegrass and jazz. He has achieved iconic status as a distinctive singer, a gifted songwriter, a versatile bandleader, and a fiercely independent artist, all of which earned him the prestigious Kennedy Center Honors in 2010. Performers in a wide variety of styles, across generations, have cited him as a major influence and recorded his music. In so many ways, though, his career output is firmly rooted in the Bakersfield migrant identity: the proud outsider, decent and hard working, but still rough around the edges.



Later in life, Merle Haggard visited his former prison cell at San Quentin.



Merle Haggard and fellow award recipients at the Kennedy Center Honors gala, Washington, D.C., 2010. Standing, left to right: Haggard, Bill T. Jones, and Paul McCartney. Seated: Jerry Herman and Oprah Winfrey.

Photo by Ron Sachs-Pool

“Okie From Muskogee”

Written by Merle Haggard and Roy Edward Burris

Recorded by Merle Haggard

We don't smoke marijuana in Muskogee,
We don't take our trips on LSD,
We don't burn our draft cards down on Main Street,
We like living right and being free.

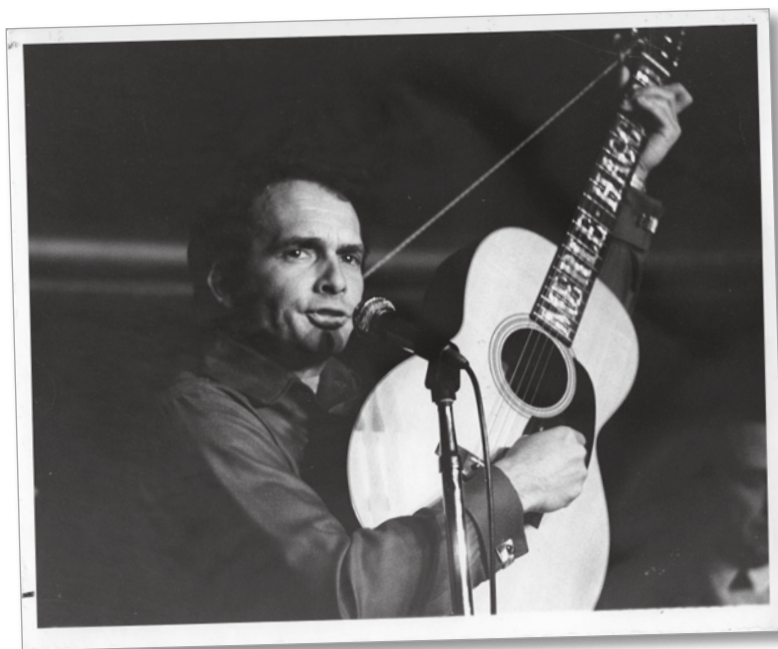
We don't make a party out of loving,
We like holding hands and pitching woo,
We don't let our hair grow long and shaggy,
Like the hippies out in San Francisco do.

And I'm proud to be an Okie from Muskogee,
A place where even squares can have a ball.
We still wave Old Glory down at the courthouse,
And white lightning's still the biggest thrill of all.

Leather boots are still in style for manly footwear,
Beads and Roman sandals won't be seen.
Football's still the roughest thing on campus,
And the kids here still respect the college dean.

And I'm proud to be an Okie from Muskogee,
A place where even squares can have a ball.
We still wave Old Glory down at the courthouse,
And white lightning's still the biggest thrill of all.

We still wave Old Glory down at the courthouse,
In Muskogee, Oklahoma, USA.



*Merle Haggard,
c. late 1960s.*

Additional Resources

Books

- Bull, Debby. *Hillbilly Hollywood: The Origins of Country & Western Style*. New York: Rizzoli International, 2000.
- Burke, Kathryn. *The Dust Bowl, the Bakersfield Sound, and Buck*. North Charleston, SC: BookSurge Publishers, 2007.
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- Grissim, John. *Country Music: White Man's Blues*. New York: Coronet, 1970.
- Haggard, Merle, with Tom Carter. *Merle Haggard's My House of Memories: For the Record*. New York: Harper Collins, 2002.
- Haggard, Merle, with Peggy Russell. *Sing Me Back Home: My Story*. New York: Times Books, 1981.
- Haslam, Gerald W., with Alexandra Haslam Russell and Richard Chon. *Workin' Man Blues: Country Music in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Kienzle, Rich. *Southwest Shuffle: Pioneers of Honky-Tonk, Western Swing, and Country Jazz*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
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- La Chapelle, Peter. *Proud to Be an Okie: Cultural Politics, Country Music, and Migration to Southern California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- McNutt, Randy. *Guitar Towns: A Journey to the Crossroads of Rock 'n' Roll*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
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- Nickell, Jeff, and Sarah Woodman. *Hard Drivin' Country: The Honky Tonks, Musicians, and Legends of the Bakersfield Sound*. Bakersfield: Kern County Museum, 2009.

Recordings

- Haggard, Merle. *Down Every Road 1962-1994*. Capitol 7243-8-35712-2-2 (1996).
- Haggard, Merle, & Bonnie Owens. *Just Between the Two of Us*. King KSCD-5119 (2000).
- Maddox Brothers & Rose. *America's Most Colorful Hillbilly Band: Their Original Recordings 1946-1951*. Arhoolie CD 391 (1993).
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- _____. *Bound for Bakersfield 1953-1956: The Complete Pre-Capitol Collection*. Rockbeat B005DZMMBC (2011).
- Owens, Buck, & His Buckaroos. *Carnegie Hall Concert*. Sundazed SC 11090 (2000).
- Various Artists. *Just Around Bakersfield: Rock Bop Country*. Classics 724 (2009).
- Various Artists. *Road to Bakersfield*. IMC Music Ltd./Country Stars CTS 55511 (2004).

Lesson Guide Evaluation

Thank you for taking a few minutes to give us some feedback and suggestions on this resource. We appreciate your help in making it as meaningful and useful as possible.

School: _____ Grade: _____ Subject: _____

1. Please grade the lessons found in the guide. If you didn't use a lesson, please circle N/A.

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Lesson 1: From Dust Storms to California Cotton Fields | A | B | C | D | N/A |
| Lesson 2: Prejudice and Pride: Unwanted Outsiders | A | B | C | D | N/A |
| Lesson 3: Signposts for the Next Generation | A | B | C | D | N/A |
| Lesson 4: Loud, Loud Music | A | B | C | D | N/A |
| Lesson 5: Picking and Strumming | A | B | C | D | N/A |
| Lesson 6: Image and the Bakersfield Sound | A | B | C | D | N/A |
| Lesson 7: Legends: Buck and Merle | A | B | C | D | N/A |

2. Please comment on how you used the Teacher's Guide to meet your teaching objectives.

3. What changes would you suggest to make the guide better?

4. Which lessons or activities did your students most enjoy?

5. Did you teach any of the lessons collaboratively with another teacher? If yes, please explain that process.

6. Use the space below to provide any additional comments about the guide.

Please send completed evaluations to:
Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum
Attention: School Programs Manager
222 Fifth Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37203



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