

The American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress presents

HOMEGROWN
2005
The Music of America

Traditional music and dance "homegrown" in communities across the United States

AN ACQUISITIONS AND PRESENTATION PROJECT

DALE JETT AND THE CARTER SINGERS
PERFORM A
CARTER FAMILY
TRIBUTE

IN HONOR OF
JANETTE CARTER'S 2005 NEA
NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIP

Tuesday
September 20, 2005

12 NOON - 1 PM

Coolidge Auditorium

Ground Floor, Thomas Jefferson Building

Library of Congress

10 First Street, SE

Washington, DC

**FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**



Cosponsored with the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage

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A MUSICAL FAMILY AND A DUTIFUL DAUGHTER

The original Carter Family was a working band for only 14 years. Their recordings were issued on two-sided 78 RPM discs, and they did no national touring. The companies that recorded them did virtually no promotion, and they were never associated with any well-known venue, such as the Grand Ole Opry.



Their entire career was accomplished during the Great Depression and its lingering aftermath. But 64 years after the demise of the group, every recording The Carter Family made is still in print. Thousands of artists have recorded their songs, and the three members of the group are revered icons of country music.

Natives of Scott County in the Clinch Mountains of southwestern Virginia, each of the three Carters possessed special talents that were complemented and amplified by the other two members. A. P. Carter was a superb songwriter and arranger: No other vernacular composer; not even Irving Berlin, made a greater contribution to American song. He was also a fine harmony singer; one who even knew when not to sing. Sara Daugherty Carter; wife of A. P. during the tenure of the group, has to be considered one of the finest lead singers to have performed in country music. A model for hundreds of later female singers, she was an also an exemplary rhythm presence on guitar and autoharp. Maybelle Addington Carter; wife of Ezra, A.P.'s brother; was age 18 when the band began its recording in Ralph Peer's famed Bristol Sessions for the Victor company at Bristol, Tennessee, on the Virginia border. She must be remembered among the most influential of American guitarists, and no other guitarist has garnered so many imitators. She was also an excellent harmony and lead singer with impeccable timing.

The Victor recordings made The Carter Family known to a few thousand record buyers, but a larger impact came from their broadcasting on the "border blaster" stations in Mexico beaming direct sale advertising northward to the USA. At a time when American radio stations had no more power than 50,000 watts, these stations had 200,000 or 250,000 and one had a half million watts. They could be heard from pole to pole, and were the hottest point on the dial throughout North America. The Carters had fans in Australia and New Zealand, and many in South America, for their "Good Neighbor Get-Together," two fifteen minute sets broadcast nightly. A.P. and Sara's daughter Janette, then a teenager; and Maybelle's daughters Helen, June, and Anita, all pre-teens, participated in the broadcasts. Listeners throughout the USA and many distant lands came to think of the Carters as family friends.

During the past 30 years Janette Carter has operated the Carter Family Fold, a performance hall and museum at Hiltons, Virginia, which honors a promise she made to her father: She told him she would keep his music alive by providing a place

where his music and other traditional music would be heard. Janette has become a hero to people in her region of the mountains, and to Carter fans everywhere, for her steadfast keeping of the promise. Her brother Joe, - recently deceased, did much of the work in building the performance hall, and Janette

worked as a cook at the local school, spending her earnings to build the hall. It is a holy place to some, one with a message about the music of an important American musical family and also about the resolute Courage of the most dutiful daughter in the Clinch Mountains.

This year, Janette Carter will receive the Bess Lomax Hawes Award, a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, for her lifelong advocacy for the performance and preservation of Appalachian music. To honor Janette's accomplishments, and the those of the original Carter Family, this month's concert features Dale Jett and the Carter Singers.

The grandson of A.P. and Sara Carter of the original Carter Family, and the son of Janette Carter; Dale Jett is also a keeper of The Carter Family Fold, performing with his mother; and hosting thousands of visiting musicians and fans. Skilled at stagecraft, he makes sure that a fine experience awaits all who come to this historic spot in the Clinch Mountains. Dale is also the third generation Carter most skilled in performance. Tall like his grandfather; he also has A.P.'s skills with bass vocal harmony. Like his grandmother Sara, he is a fine lead singer and autoharp player. Like his great-aunt Maybelle, he is a top guitarist. He differs from them in not becoming a professional music due to what he calls "a mild disregard for motel life."

Joining Dale are Linda and David Lay of Bristol, and Deborah Jean Sheets, who has roots in Grayson County. Linda Lay grew up spending weekends at the Carter Family Fold, first taking to the stage as a dancer; but later with various bands from the region. She and David Lay are members of a great acoustic band, Springfield Exit. Deborah Jean Sheets performs most often with her husband, Randy, a fine old-time banjoist and singer:

Joe Wilson

National Council for the Traditional Arts

The American Folklife Center was created by Congress in 1976 and placed at the Library of Congress to "preserve and present American Folklife" through programs of research, documentation, archival presentation, reference service, live performance, exhibition, public programs, and training. The Folklife Center includes the Archive of Folk Culture, which was established in 1928 and is now one of the largest collections of ethnographic material from the United States and around the world. Check out our web site www.loc.gov/folklife

