

## Notes from Along the County Line

by Betty Westmoreland

It was another perfect late fall Sunday afternoon in West Tennessee. Right on cue, the leaves began to fly and the air turned crisp as a shiny red apple! Also right on cue, musicians began to show up at around 2:00 PM Central at Collierville's Sheffield Antiques Mall (US 57 at US 72). It was December 7, 2008, and it was time for the second gathering of the County Line Old-Time Jam. The perfect backdrop for players of old-time string band music would, of course, be antiques. The music pre-dates bluegrass music by at least 100 years, so old rockers, jars, bottles, quilts, cabinets, knick-knacks, and Christmas memorabilia from another era provide the perfect setting.

THE COUNTY LINE OLD-TIME JAM provides an opportunity for players of all skill levels to gather on the first Sunday afternoon of the month and share old tunes from a by-gone era. The arrangement of the jam is a circle, with each player taking a turn when the song selection comes around to him/her. The player has the option to pass the choice to the next player on the right. The leader of the jam starts the first song, and the song choices move to the right from that point. The instruments also reflect an earlier time—old fiddles, mandolins, dulcimers, autoharps, guitars, an upright bass, and open-back banjos played in the “frailing” or “clawhammer” style. The sound is delicious! It is plinky and plunky, and it takes the listener back to Great-grandmother's day in her cabin ‘way back in the hills of East Tennessee, Eastern Kentucky, the Virginias, or the Carolinas.

Present on this December 7—a happier one than the ‘day that will live in infamy’ (sixty-seven years ago) were **Lee Cagle**, President of the Memphis Dulcimer Gathering, **Caroline Sanford**, **Hilary Scheel**, **Donna and Karl Gray**, **Cecelia Chilton**, **Mike Cannito**, **Mike Albert**, **Lawrence Fortney**, **Lea Talley**, **Matthew Jackson**, **Bill Erskine**, **Randy Sell**, **Christine Donhardt**, and **Don and Faith Peters**. The group is growing in numbers and enthusiasm. They go hard for more than two hours, playing familiar tunes and sharing remote jigs and reels they heard somewhere. Feel free to bring an old-time tune or two and join the circle next month.

The County Line Jam's selection of tunes: Several Carter Family tunes, Hazel Dickens/Alice Gerrard songs, and more, such as Last Letter Home, Green Pastures, What Are They Doing in Heaven Today, Cluck Old Hen, Angeline

the Baker (aka Angelina Baker), Forked Deer, Maggie, Three Men on the Mountain, Another Night, Beautiful Star of Bethlehem, Poor Wayfaring Stranger, Wildwood Flower, Rain and Snow, Lost Pattern, and Wreck on the Highway.

Next scheduled jam: January 4, 2009

Want to know more? Just Google the Carter Family, the Carter Family Fold, Hazel Dickens, and Alice Gerrard.

For more information: [Lee@LeeCagleDulcimers.com](mailto:Lee@LeeCagleDulcimers.com) or [www.LeeCagleDulcimers.com](http://www.LeeCagleDulcimers.com)