

Field Notes

News from Traditional Arts Indiana

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Second Annual Traditional Arts Indiana Music Day at the State Fair

Mariachi and bluegrass music graced the stage of this year's Indiana State Fair. For the second year in a row, TAI has partnered with the State Fair to present some of Indiana's finest traditional musicians.

Nuevo Jalisco, a ten-piece traditional mariachi band from Tequila, Jalisco, in northern Mexico, spends half the year performing in the Indianapolis area; the other half, for tourists in the tequila factories of Jalisco.

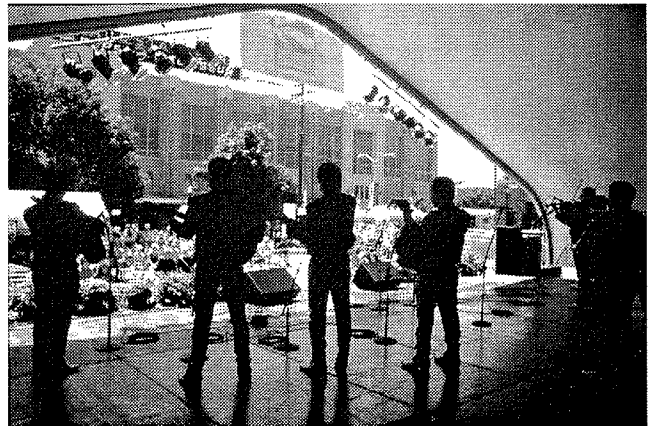
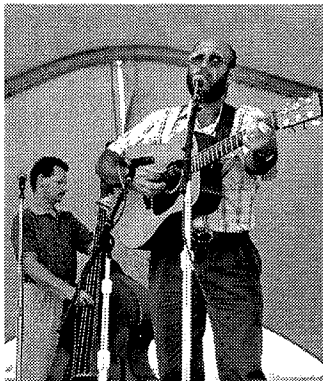
Mariachi music is integral to community events such as weddings and quinceañeras. It features trumpet, violins, guitars, guitarrón (bass guitar), vihuela (high-pitched guitar) and vocals. Indiana's growing Latino community has heralded a wave of talented Mariachi musicians.

The Bunkum Valley Boys, an accomplished 21-year-old bluegrass band from Daviess County, performed original songs and bluegrass standards. The band includes Jim, Mark and Josh Malone of Odon and Chip Jackson of Bloomington.

Indiana's passion for bluegrass music goes back to the father of bluegrass, Bill Monroe, who was a regular performer at the famed Bean Blossom festival in Brown County. Bluegrass is especially popular in the Upland South and migrated north to Indiana as people moved here from Kentucky and Tennessee in search of

work. From camp-grounds and conservation clubs to state parks and churches, bluegrass continues to be a vital Indiana tradition.

Jim Malone (guitar) and Chip Jackson (bass) play to an enthusiastic audience at the State Fair. — *Photo by Andy Kolovos.*



Nuevo Jalisco performing a unique rendition of the Orange Blossom Special, a traditional fiddle tune at the State Fair.

— *Photo by Erin Roth.*

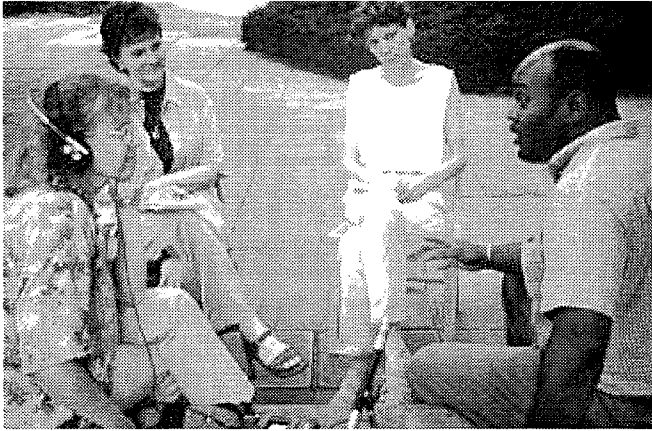
Traditional Arts in Classrooms

Field School

In July, Bloomington residents became teachers to 15 participants from all over the country in a 3-week, residential, hands-on field school called "On the Square." Students received training and practice in photography, audio recording, and interviewing. Students' interests ranged widely, from storytelling to youth culture, from foodways to arts. One group concluded that the town square had always been a place for political rallies: a place for "chanting and ranting." During the final week, participants gave public presentations of their research.

More than 1000 slides and several dozen audio interviews are being deposited at the Monroe County Historical Society Museum.

The field school was a joint venture of IU's Folklore Institute, Traditional Arts Indiana, the Evergreen Institute on Elder Environments, and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Its goal, and a measure of its success, is perhaps best expressed by reflections after the experience: "Succeeding and failing in the classroom



From left, ReaAnn Trotter, Lynne Schuetz, Collette Lemmon, and Ron Stephens in practice interview session.

— Photo by Inta Gale Carpenter

teaches several lessons, but succeeding and failing in the field teaches the real lessons,” said one participant, while another commented, “I came to realize just how much there is to know. I would go in with five questions and come out with 10.”

On the Road . . .

A Different Kind of History Conference

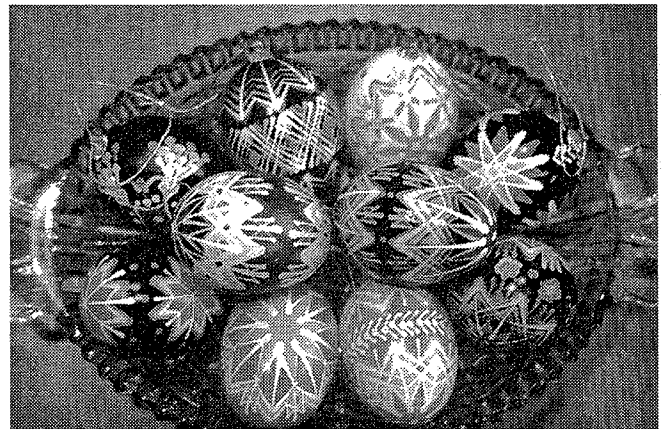
TAI has teamed up with the Indiana Historical Society and local groups from northwestern Indiana to develop a different kind of history conference — a lyceum — to explore how residents express regional, communal, and personal meaning through a creative life pursued outside of — but sometimes in relation to — the workplace.

Scheduled for 29 September to 1 October, the lyceum, *Our Other Lives: Work and Creativity in the Region*, is being held in the Merrillville high school. Participants will have a chance to learn how to make Greek pastries from Mary Halkias or African American bar-be-que Gary-style from Larry Pruitt. Panel discussions on the lyceum’s theme, evening performances, and a Sunday afternoon tour of some of the Region’s most

distinguishing cultural and historical sites will also be offered. To register, please contact the IHS at 317/233-5659 or 800/447-1830 or visit the website at www.indianahistory.org/lyceum.htm.

Minnetrista Cultural Center

This summer marks the beginning of a partnership with the Minnetrista Cultural Center in Muncie to document local cultural resources in and around Delaware County. With support from TAI and MCC, folklorist Lynn Hadley has spent the summer combing county roads, interviewing traditional artists, attending community events, and compiling a database for local museums, educators, arts agencies. Originally from Indiana, Hadley traveled from her home in Oregon to work with Minnetrista’s folklorist and historian Beth Campbell. TAI and MCC expect to continue hiring summer interns in the coming years.



Eggs hand decorated by Ted Sumara, Polish-American egg decorator and retired teacher. He is leading a master class for the Lyceum.

— Photo by Andy Kolovos

Exploring the Ohio River Valley

“Work and Life: Voices of Perry County,” a community oral history project to document the county’s work traditions, received a boost with the help of IU anthropology graduate student and

From the spoken word to the hand-made object, individuals express themselves in ways firmly grounded and deeply connected to community. Traditional Arts Indiana, a partnership of the Indiana Arts Commission and the Indiana University Folklore Institute, works with arts agencies, schools, museums, historical societies, and others to

provide cultural documentation and public programming. Funding comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Indiana Arts Commission, Indiana University, and private donations.

For more information, contact Erin Roth, Program Manager, Traditional Arts Indiana, 812-855-0418, <tradarts@indiana.edu>.

The TAI Team

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Fieldworkers 2000: Donald Braid, Inta Carpenter, Sam Cronk, Lynn Hadley, Kinsey Karchka, Andy Kolovos, Erin Roth, Ethan Sharp, Eric Weddle



“Canjos” made by Eli Jackson of Delaware County, one of the artists Lynn Hadley interviewed this summer. Jackson was born in London, Kentucky, nearly eighty years ago. His father, a minister, taught him that whatever he needed could be made rather than purchased. His mother played the organ in church. A former wireworker, he devotes his retirement to making stringed instruments: banjos made from cookie tins (“canjos”), mandolins made out of ham cans (“ham-dolins), and dulcimers. He ministers on Sunday in Parker City and frequently performs on his instruments. — Photo by Lynn Hadley

native Hoosier Kinsey Katchka. “From the Field” (below) features Kinsey’s work. Voices of Perry County is funded by the Indiana Humanities Council Community Partnership Grant, one of two awarded in 1999.

Frankfort, Indiana

Contract fieldworker Donald Braid has been enjoying vegetarian tacos at a local roadside taqueria on his travels between Indianapolis and Frankfort. From a 99-year-old tatter to Latino low-riders, Donald’s work has revealed a rich array of traditional artists in Clinton County.

From the Field . . .

[Excerpted from Kinsey Katchka’s fieldnotes, July 30, 2000]

Petersburg, Indiana

I was excited finally to do this interview. I arrived after about a two-hour drive and drove around looking for a non-fast food lunch, finally taking a chance on a place called “Fish Hut Pizza,” which had the best Beef Manhattan I’ve ever had for \$3. I was clearly the only non-local person there among regulars. A few tables of folks were there

having coffee when I arrived, and still there, showing no sign of leaving, as I left after my leisurely lunch.

I found the nursing home with no trouble: easy directions, really: “go to the stoplight and turn left.” I had good timing; Mr. Clark and his son were just returning as I walked in. The nursing home was nice enough, though very much like a hospital with the P.A. system, various dings for calling nurses, monitors etc. When I went into the room the lady had indicated (#107), the son wasn’t in there, just Mr. Clark in his easy chair.

I asked if he was, indeed, Mr. Clark, and he said “Who’s that?” I explained I was looking for Mr. Clark to talk to him about Clark Pottery in Cannelton. “Where’s that? Is that Can-nelton ‘k-u-n-e-l . . .’” And I’m there thinking uh-oh, I must have come on a bad day. Then his son walked in the room and said, “Don’t listen to him, he’s sharp as can be, he’s just toying with you.” And he was. Mr. Clark, Sr. is a total ham, as became apparent during the entire visit. And he always has been a ham as I learned during the interview.

His name had been suggested in connection with Clark Pottery despite the fact that he didn’t end up going into the family business, but Mr. Clark turned out to be a source of many other aspects of tradition related to the project: he is a musician, which I wouldn’t have known to ask about except that Ralph Irvin had told me they played trombone together in the first Cannelton H.S. band way back when. Mr. Clark continued with the music after high school, playing in a couple different band/vaudeville groups. He wrote their stand up material, and he still has some of the scripts he wrote and photos of the different groups, the Catfish Band and the Hoosier Ramblers.

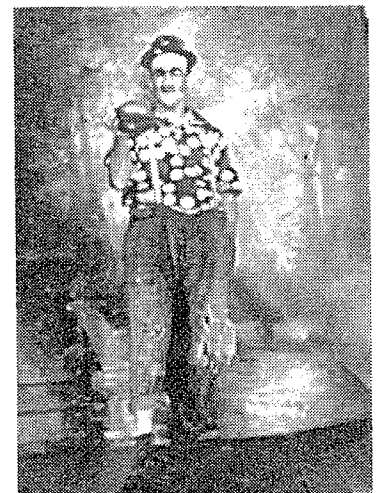


Photo of a young Charles Clark during his vaudeville days in the 1930s in Perry County.

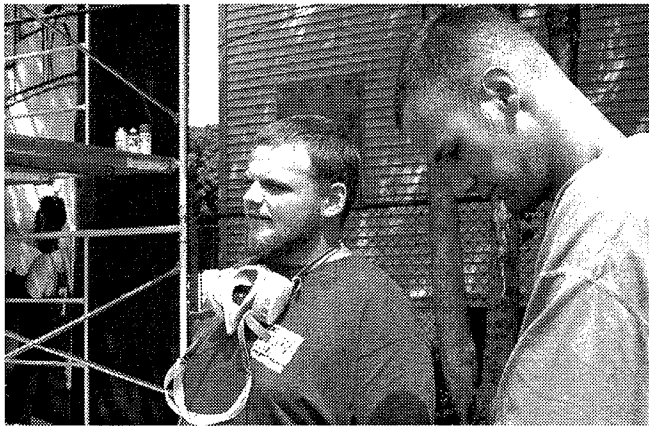
— Photo by Kinsey Katchka

Creating, Changing, Renewing Portraits of Indiana's Traditional Artists

You learn not to fall in love with your work.

— Benjamin Long

Herron Art School students Benjamin Long and his partner Dan Thompson are quick to admit that what they know about being artists could not be taught in school. They learned under bridges, at times dodging railroad security and police. Long's high school classmate, transplanted to Indianapolis from New York City, taught him the art of graffiti. Long later taught Thompson. Each artist may spend days creating a work, only to have it painted over by other artists or landowners, sometimes on the



Dan Thompson, *left*, and Benjamin Long, *right*, take a break from painting to speak with TAI staff.



Fab Crew's handiwork adorns the entire face of Calvary Temple Central on E. 22nd Street in Indianapolis.

— Photos by Erin Roth

very next day. Long adds that his most prized possession is a photo album of his creations.

Long and Thompson say that graffiti art tends to be about egos and reputations. It is not conducive to teamwork. Shortly after high school graduation, Long turned his skills into a profit and ensured his art a permanent and legitimate home by starting his own business, The Fab Crew. Currently, the company is completing commissioned work for the Calvary Temple Central on E. 22nd Street. They rely upon their graffiti skills for their murals, but call it aerosol art. Using cans of spray paint, they create subtle color changes to produce stunning work. Thompson is majoring in painting; Long in visual communication at Herron. If you're interested in commissioning The Fab Crew, they can be reached at 317/209-8598.