



The Texas Fiddler



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From time to time, the Board of Directors (particularly the President) will receive a message about various topics. I received a message of a different kind around the holidays. I am a sucker for history and genealogy, so when someone asks me about family or an old fiddler from long ago, it piques my interest.

A gentleman by the name of Tad Bailey wanted to know why there was no mention on the Texas Old Time Fiddlers Association website of a man called Fiddlin' Jim Pate. In taking the time to reply and correspond to this gentleman, I discovered a whole new person who greatly impacted the music industry and helped bring the old style of fiddling to the masses.

I have included the article written by Mr. Tad Bailey, the program chairman for the Timpson Area Genealogical and Heritage Society. I hope everyone finds it as interesting as I did. If you have access to the internet, I encourage you to look the recordings up online.

~ Jordan Bankston, President

TAGHS Hears About Fiddlin' Jim Pate at November Meeting

An ad appeared in the January 17, 1930 edition of The Timpson Times announcing that Bussey's Drug Store had received the new Fiddlin' Jim Pate record. The ad went on to say that "Jim Pate is an old-time fiddler, lives in the Arcadia Community, just south of Timpson." Though few in Shelby County remember Mr. Pate's recording career, his records are prized by collectors of early country music and digital recordings are available on the internet. In an effort to learn more about Fiddlin' Jim Pate, the Timpson Area Genealogical and Heritage Society viewed old photographs and newspaper clippings, heard from his grand and great-grandson, and listened to some of his recordings at their November 15 monthly meeting.

Throughout human history, the only way to hear music was to be in the presence of the musician until Thomas A. Edison invented the phonograph in 1877. Just as language was learned from hearing others speak, music was learned by hearing others play, and that created local dialects and accents in language and styles of music. For example, even though the "Cajuns" of South Louisiana live only a

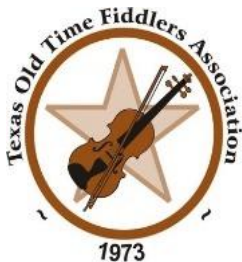
relatively short distance from Texas, their accents and music are very different. "Texas-style Fiddling", of which Fiddlin' Jim Pate was a master developed in the same way.

Though musical performances had been recorded since the earliest days of the phonograph, record companies considered country music too unsophisticated to be commercially viable. Music historians generally cite the recordings done by then 35 year old Texan Eck Robertson and partner Henry C. Gilliland for Victor records on June 30, 1922 as the first country music ever recorded. Though their recordings of "Sallie Gooden" and "Arkansas Traveller" were released in September of 1922, they were not in wide circulation until April of 1923. The person responsible for boosting their popularity in 1923 was Fiddlin' John Carson.

Born in Georgia in 1869, Fiddlin' John Carson had long been a fixture at old-time fiddling contests in the South when, in 1923, he recorded "The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane" and "The Old Hen Cackled and the Rooster's Gonna Crow" for Okeh Records. Doubting that the record would be successful, Okeh pressed only 500 copies, but it was an immediate hit and the first pressing sold out in days.

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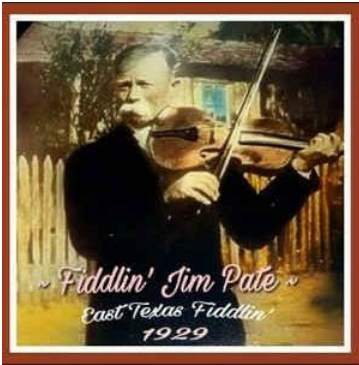
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Record companies now realized their error in avoiding country music and began scouring the South for country musicians. One of those discovered was East Texan Jim Pate.

Born August 8, 1867, James Rankin Pate was, like Eck Robertson, the son of a Confederate veteran. A resident of Shelby and Nacogdoches Counties, Jim Pate was a master of old-time Texas style fiddling and a frequent winner of the old-time fiddling contest at the Louisiana State Fair in Shreveport. A clipping from the October 29, 1922 Shreveport Times, supplied by Jim Pate III, features a photograph of the contestants and the first place winner, Jim Pate of Timpson. According to James Pate of Chireno, Texas, his grandfather won the contest so many



times the organizers told him not to come back.

The article erroneously states that Jim Pate was 80 at the time, though he would have actually been 55. It is noteworthy that Mr. J. F. Gary, also of Timpson, placed fourth.

Jim Pate III shared that his great-grandfather, Jim Pate, and his grandfather, Tom Pate, boarded a train in Nacogdoches bound for Dallas in October of 1929, where, at the invitation of Captain James Bonner, himself a renowned Texas fiddler and Victor recording artist, they made a record. Accompanied by his son Tom on guitar, Fiddlin' Jim Pate recorded "Texas Farewell" and "Prisoner Boy". Jim Pate III revealed that he has been in contact with Tony Russell, a historian of American country music in London, England who knows of Fiddlin' Jim Pate and owns a copy of the record. Mr. Russell says "I own a copy of his record, which is a treasure. I know other collectors of old-time 78's also have a high regard for your great-grandfather's fiddling. It's a great pity he was not asked to make further recordings". Mr. Russell has researched the Victor record files, establishing that the record sold 3591 copies, which was about average for a new artist but not enough to merit a second record. Fiddlin' Jim continued to play for the rest of his life but never recorded again. He died in 1935 at the age of 68 and is buried in Chireno.

Though his recordings were not big hits and his name is hardly a household word today, Fiddlin' Jim Pate was a contemporary and the artistic equal of others who are better known. He worked in the first decade of recorded country music and, as evidenced by Tony Russell's comments, historians and collectors in other parts of the world know of and prize his records.



~Written by Tad Bailey~

Jan/Feb Birthdays

Robert Frost	January 11
Dennis Ludiker	January 11
Karissa Nugent	January 18
Jesse Mears	January 19
Roxanne Lingenfelter	January 2
David Looper	January 21
Jill Baker	January 22
Lanelle Hopson-Lemons	January 24
Sheryl Sultenfuss	January 27
Matt Wills	February 4
Ted Williams	February 21
Hyatt Hopkins	February 25
Mary Stockton	February 26

41st Llano Open Fiddle Contest

Saturday, April 7th, 2018

The Llano Open Fiddle Contest is comprised of four divisions; Youth (age 0-15), Legends (age 65 and up), Open (any age but can only compete in one division) and Accompanist. Contest will start at 9:30 a.m. and compete in the following order: Youth Division, Legends Division, Open Division, and Accompanist Division. The Accompanist Division will compete before the top 5 championship playoffs.

PRIZE CATEGORIES AND RULES

<u>Divisions</u>	<u>No. of Places</u>	<u>Prize Money</u>
Youth/0-15	25	Prizes and gifts awarded to all places.
Legends/65 and up	5	\$200, \$90, \$75, \$60, \$50
Open	15	
Grand Champion		\$1,000
First Runner up		\$800
Second Runner up		\$600
Third Runner up		\$400
Forth Runner up		\$200
Places Six – Ten		\$150
Places Eleven – Fifteen		\$100
Best Accompanist		
1 st place		\$200
2 nd place		\$125
3 rd place		\$80
4 th place		\$50
5 th place		\$45

Llano Open Fiddle Contest Rules

There is no entry fee for contestants.

Registration starts at 8:30 am

1. *This is an open, individual contest and all fiddlers are eligible.*
2. *Entrant can only compete in one division*
3. *Order of play within each division will be determined by a drawing.*

4. *Contest will start at 9:30 am and compete in the following order; Youth Division, Legends Division, Open Division, and Accompanist Division. The accompanist division will compete before the top 5 championship playoff round for Grand Championship.*
5. *The open division will consist of three rounds. All contestants will compete in the first round. The second round will consist of the 10 to 15 players with the highest scores (to be determined by judges). The top five contestants of the second round will play off for the championship. Additional call backs are at the discretion of the judges.*
6. *A contestant shall be allowed to register until the drawing in their division has begun.*
7. *Number of tunes in each division and rounds will be determined by judges based on number of competitors.*
8. *When contestants are called to play, they shall have five minutes to report to the stage.*
9. *The specific number and type of tunes will be determined by the judges. No tune shall be played twice by an individual.*
10. *A fiddler will be allowed no more than four accompanists. All players will play into a microphone. Amplification of instruments will not be allowed.*
11. *A contestant may not enter both the fiddle and accompanist contest.*
12. *A fiddler breaking any rule of the contest shall be disqualified. Judges shall have complete control of contest rules and results.*
13. *Judges shall sign each score sheet and score each tune 70 to 100 points.*
14. *No recording made during any contest by any party shall be offered for sale in any form without written permission of the Llano Fiddle Fest.*

Anything Goes - Tricks & Licks Contest Prizes & Rules **Friday, April 6th, 2018**

Prize Money per place

1 st Place	\$150
2 nd Place	100
3 rd Place	75
4 th & 5 th Place	50

Competitor can play any tune with fiddle tricks, singing, etc. provided a fiddle is included in the performance.

Competitors may compete as a group.

Competitor may perform with accompanists.

Judging will be based on skill and entertainment value.

TEXAS OLD TIME FIDDLERS ASSOCIATION



NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____ BIRTHDATE: _____
(Year is optional) ____ / ____ / ____

New Member

Renewal

Change of Address

\$ _____ Musician \$30/yr. (Contest Fiddler or Accompanist)

\$ _____ Associate \$30/yr. (Parent, Supporter, Sponsor, Etc.)

COST-EFFECTIVE OPTIONS

We are a multi-membership TOTFA family and agree to receive only one issue of "The Texas Fiddler" each month.

Please save paper and postage by sending me "The Texas Fiddler" via full-color instant email rather than in black & white print via USPS.

MAIL APPLICATION AND CHECK TO:

Texas Old Time Fiddlers Association
c/o Jordan Bankston
1712 Melissa Lane
Cleburne, Texas 76031

Or renew online via PayPal at <http://www.totfa.org>

TOTFA Use Only:

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