



European Evolution of Cajun Music Secondary



Historic Homes • Gardens • Artifacts • Costumed Crafts People
Boat Tours • Gift Shop • Restaurant



Standards

Standards as developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Available online at <http://www.vermilionville.org/vermilionville/educate/lesson-plans>.

Grade 7

Social Studies

Physical and Human Systems

- **GLE #6:** Identify selected racial, ethnic, and religious groups that settled in the United States and explain the political, cultural, and economic reasons for immigration (G-1C-M4)

Grade 8

Geography

The World in Spatial Terms

- **GLE #2:** Locate major landforms and geographic features, places, and bodies of water/waterways on a map of Louisiana (G-1A-M2)

Places and Regions

- **GLE #5:** Describe and analyze the distinguishing physical and/or human characteristics of Louisiana regions (G-1B-M1)
- **GLE #9:** Explain ways in which goals, cultures, interests, inventions, and technological advances have affected perceptions and uses of places or regions in Louisiana (G-1B-M4)
- **GLE #11:** Explain why humans settled and formed societies in specific regions and why immigrant groups (e.g., Acadians) settled in specific areas of Louisiana (G-1C-M3)
- **GLE #12:** Describe the causes and effects of cultural diffusion and the effects of cultural diversity in Louisiana (G-1C-M5)

Louisiana History

- **GLE #74:** Describe the causes and effects of various migrations into Louisiana (H-1D-M1)
- **GLE #75:** Describe the contributions of ethnic groups significant in Louisiana history (H-1D-M1)
- **GLE #81:** Explain cultural elements that have shaped Louisiana's heritage (e.g., festivals, music, dance, food, languages) (H-1D-M6)

High School

World Geography

Standard 1 - World in Spatial Terms and Uses of Geography

- **WG.1.1:** Describe the impact of technology on the study of geography and gather geographic information using technological tools

Standard 3 - Region

- **WG.3.2:** Determine the unifying characteristics that regions possess and explain changes that they have experienced over time

Standard 4 - Place

- **WG.4.1:** Determine the physical and human characteristics that comprise the identity of a given place
- **WG.4.3:** Identify and analyze distinguishing human characteristics of a given place to determine their influence on historical events



- **WG.4.4:** Evaluate impact of historical events on culture and relationships among groups

Objectives

After completing the lesson, the student will be able to:

1. Obtain information about cultural influences and settlements in Louisiana using interactive maps.
2. Describe the evolution of Cajun music through European influence.
3. Understand the migration of some Europeans to Louisiana.
4. Collect information through interviews.
5. Identify the different instruments in early Cajun music.

Additional Information

Materials needed: Document #1, Document #2, computer with Internet access and projection, recording device, pen and paper (note taking)

Pre-Visit Activity

Teachers. We have made two introduction documents available to you on our website – a word document as well as a PowerPoint with pictures depicting the cultures that we represent. Please take some time to review these two documents with your class prior to your visit here. You can access them [here](#), by clicking on

- Introduction to Vermilionville and
- Vermilionville PowerPoint

In the classroom, distribute copies of Document #1 and Document #2 (students can be put in groups and share these to save paper) and go over both documents with the students. Next, using a computer hooked up to a display, bring students to www.Lomax1934.com. Here, sample songs from each of these instruments:

- Ballad (voice) - [Julien Hoffpauir – “La Caille et La Perdrix”](#)
- Violin - [Wayne Perry – “Waltz”](#)
- Accordion - [Oakdale Carrière – “The Perrodin Two-Step”](#)

Ask students if any of this music sounds familiar. Do their parents or grandparents play or sing anything like this?

Finally, bring the students to the [Interactive Maps](#) section of the website and locate each of the above musicians (use the search bar to access each one quicker). Study where each lived in 1934. Ask the students where they think each of the family names originate in Europe. Do their European origins have anything to do with where they settled in Louisiana? How did the mixing of these cultures change the music as well as the cultural landscape of South Louisiana? Aside from music, what other contributions did these European cultures make? Does Cajun music today still sound like this? Why or why not?



Show students some examples of how Cajun music sounds today:

[Lost Bayou Ramblers – Mammoth Waltz](#)

[Bonsoir Catin – Blues à Tac-tac](#)

Anchor Activity

While at Vermilionville, ask different artisans if they know an old song (French or English) that was either sung to them or that they remember when they were young. Ask the artisan if he/she knows the story behind the song or even how old it is. Ask the artisan what his/her last name is and where he/she is from. Have students take short notes on their responses.

Observe the village and imagine how life might have been in those days. What would *you* have sung about? Are some of those instruments from Document #2 in the village? What about the hay rake? In L'École, there is a musician who is able to play examples of some of these old songs. Just ask!

Post-Visit Activity

Little Lomax

Have students reach out to a family member and record them singing a song that was sung to them by their parent or grandparent. If the song is in a language other than English, have the family member translate the song to share with the class later.

After all students have completed this activity, have them answer questions such as:

- How old is the song?
- How was the song taught to them? Orally? Formal or informal?
- Who taught the song to them?
- What language is the song in?
- What country does it come from? If not certain, take a guess but explain why you think this is so.
- What do the lyrics talk about?

You can then use these answers to create an in-class discussion so students can see the different backgrounds present and even share some of the songs they found. Are there other cultures that are non-European? How do they mix into the cultural landscape? What other genres of regional music can they be found in?

Have students create a map showing where they live now, where the person they interviewed/recorded grew up, and where their family originates. Students can then upload their audio to their home computers to begin their very own family archive just like Alan and John Lomax!



Evaluation

Ask students to write 2-3 sentences in response to the following questions: Why is what the Lomax's did important? How did early European immigration change the music of South Louisiana?

With the information obtained from student interviews, have them individually present in front of the class and share the story behind their song. This can be a great opportunity to have them utilize technology for the presentation by using PowerPoint or Prezi to share their findings. For each presentation conclusion, have students give an example of how the song's country of origin has contributed to Louisiana's cultural landscape.

Differentiation of Instruction

Hearing impaired: these students can be accommodated by using headphones to listen to recordings.



Resources

Document #1

Recording the Past

In 1934, father and son folklorists Alan and John Lomax came to South Louisiana in a car rigged with recording equipment to document a variety of French and English songs along with the folks who sang them. These recordings proved to be an important resource for understanding the cultural influences in Cajun music and later became part of the Lomax Collection of American Folk Music housed at the Library of Congress in the American Folklife Center. The Lomax's did not just record music from South Louisiana, however, their collection is composed of American folk music from all over the country and shows just how many different cultures have come together and how they've influenced one another.

Inspired by the documentation of songs in South Louisiana, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette created the Archives of Cajun and Creole Folklore to continue to preserve the stories, songs, and ways of life of Louisiana's peoples. Alan and John Lomax's recordings have played a crucial role in the renaissance of Cajun and Zydeco music in Louisiana. Modern Cajun and Zydeco musicians reference these recordings to create unique arrangements that link to the early days of settlement and beyond.



Mobile recording studio fitted into a car used for the trip to South Louisiana.



*Fiddle player Wayne Perry
from Indian Bayou, LA*



Document #2

Ballads

Songs that were passed down orally and generationally and brought to Louisiana by early Acadians. These are tales sung *a cappella* or with just the voice. Common themes for ballads are life's hardships and love. Some of these songs are so old they date back to medieval France.



Inez Cantalon from Kaplan, Louisiana singing a ballad.

Violin

Violins made their way into South Louisiana around the late 18th century. Songs were brought from Acadie with influences from the Scots-Irish, French, and Native American.



Fiddlers Sady Courville & Dennis McGee from Eunice, Louisiana playing violins.



Document #2

'Tit Fer (little iron)

This percussion instrument emerged around the same time as the violin in South Louisiana. They were made from the tines of a hay rake or rice rake. People still make these today, however since hay rakes are no longer used in farming other materials are substituted.



'Tit fer and striker.



Hay rake

Accordion

The accordion arrived in Louisiana around 1884 and was brought by German immigrants who lived alongside the Acadians. In the early 1900s, accordions were slowly becoming adopted into the local French music.



Alphonse "Bois Sec" Ardoin from Duralde, Louisiana playing an accordion



