

# **Country Music (and Bluegrass)**

Week 7 – Oct 2, 2020

# What is Country?

Country – as in the “USA?”

Or as in “the Countryside?”

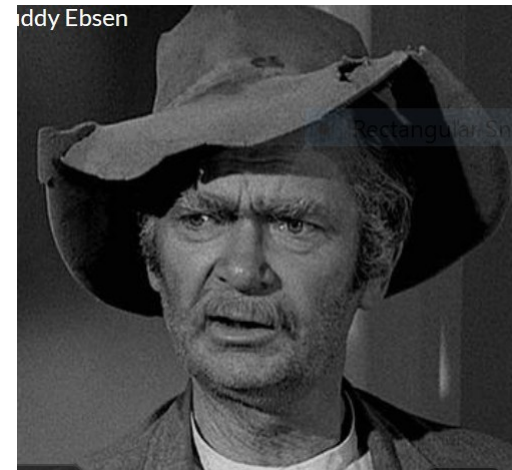
Hillbilly music – Country Music (transition around 1940s)

# What is “Hillbilly?”

Hill – image of the country, open rural space

“Billy” – a common American name (William)

A (usually) unkind word for  
poor, white, uneducated  
people from Appalachia

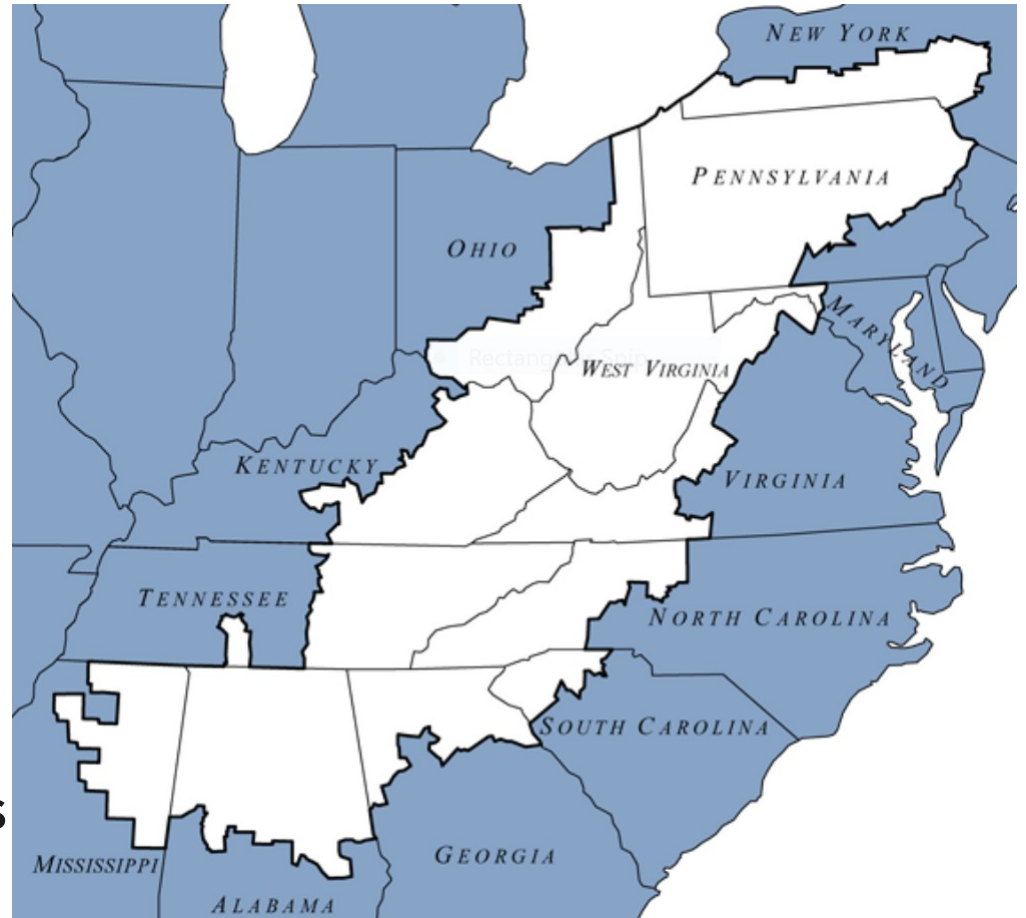


# What is Appalachia?

Historically, poor region in the Eastern USA

Long exploited, impoverished and polluted by the coal and logging industry, both of which are contracting industries ... it's gotten a lot poorer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Subject of many negative stereotypes in broader American culture



# Representations of Appalachia and “hillbillies” in American Culture

*The Real McCoys – 1960s*

*The Beverly Hillbillies – 1970s*

*Deliverance (1972)*

# A word on the politics of the word “hillbilly”

While there is significant opposition to Trump in Appalachia, that region does overwhelmingly support him.

“Hillbilly” is both a term of condemnation for a perceived lack of sophistication, education, etc, but also a term that some people use to describe themselves.





# Poverty in Appalachia



# Musical features of Country

## Banjo

– oddly, it's actually an African instrument

## Kora

## Banjo

## Simple Forms

## Slide guitar/pedal steel (originally, Hawaiian)

-Demonstration, Ralph Mooney (1:28 ff), Left Frizzell, Webb Pierce

## Yodeling/crooning

## Emmet Miller, Hank Williams



# Some important names in Country Music

## 1. Hank Williams

Lovesick Blues

## 2. Kitty Rogers

It wasn't God who Made Honky-Tonk Angels

## 3. Loretta Lynn

Coal Miner's Daughter

# Politics of “Country”

It's generally accepted that Country “belongs” to the American right-wing (i.e. Republican Party).

“I love my Country” – Florida Georgia Line

“Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue” – Toby Keith

Famous cases of political scandal with country music:

Merle Haggard, Okie from Muskogee (1969)

Dixie Chicks – criticize Bush for the war in Iraq, receive angry criticism from their fan base

# Left Wing Country?

Woody Guthrie, Tear the Fascists Down

Willie Nelson, Vote Em Out

Dolly Parton, Deportee