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**HISTORY OF THE BLUES IN  
THREE PARTS**

**PART 2 – 1920s THROUGH 1960s**

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# Brief History of Music Distribution

- The original phonograph was invented by Eduardo-Leon Scott in 1857. it was able to record on a glass plate but was unable to play back sounds. It was designed to evaluate acoustics.
- The first phonograph capable of playing back sound was invented by Thomas Edison in 1877. A patent was issued in 1878 The first song recorded was “Mary had a Little Lamb”.
- By 1901 mass produced wax cylinders allowed artists to record in large quantities. By 1913 the device began using discs rather than cylinders – the precursor to the “record player”
- The record player was the way to listen to music until the 1980s. The Sony Walkman was released in 1979 making cassettes a popular media. By the early 2000s, as CDs became popular and replaced cassettes as the way to listen. Now, most everything is available in on the internet. Records and Turntables have become popular again in recent times
- The original discs had a physical limitation of playing 3 minutes of music. The average hit song was up to 4 minutes in the 80s. In the 90s it decreased to around 3 minutes Current hit songs average between 2.5 to 3.5 minutes

# The Great Migration

- Sometimes known as the Great Northern Migration or the Black Migration
- Typically thought of as starting in the 1910s and continuing through the 1970s
- The South was heavily segregated,. Opportunity was severely limited due to Jim Crow laws and the history of slave ownership.
- The migration was enabled by the expansion of, and access to, the railroads. Other forms of expansion included the steamboat and the automobile to a far lesser degree..
- 6 million African Americans moved from the rural South to the Northeast, Midwest and West expanding their blues and their history during this time.
- Music is always evolving. “The one constant in life is change”. Blues is no different. Blues styles evolved as blues artists and enthusiasts moved to different cities with different cultures.

# John and Alan Lomax

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- John Lomax, Sr. documented a variety of musical genres. In association with the Library of Congress, he began traversing the South with a portable recording machine in 1933 recording local music and musicians with his son, Alan, and his wife, Ruby
- They recorded Lead Belly in prison in 1933. In 1934 they returned with better equipment and recorded hundreds of songs. When Lead Belly was released from prison, he became a driver and assistant to John Lomax for a short time. Signature songs include “Midnight Special” and “Goodnight Irene”
- Alan Lomax is credited with the early recording, and promoting of, Robert Johnson, Lead Belly, Blind Lemon Jefferson and Muddy Waters, He also recorded folk artists in America and Europe.

# Early expansion of the Blues I

- Delta Blues – where it all began. Guitar and harmonica were dominant instruments. Early Delta Blues also introduced Slide Guitar. Delta Blues artists included Robert Johnson, Son House, Charlie Patton, Blind William Johnson and others. Delta Blues remained popular through the 1940s
- Piedmont Blues – our area – emphasis on finger picking on acoustic guitar. Similar to Delta Blues but more upbeat and incorporating more rhythmic feels. Piedmont Blues artists include Reverend Gary Davis, Blind Boy Fuller, Etta Baker and others. Popular from ~the 1940s through the '60s.
- Swamp Blues – based in the Louisiana Bayou, it incorporates accordion and harmonica. Swamp Blues artists include Slim Harpo and Lazy Lester and others. Also Popular from ~the 1940s through the '60s
- St. Louis Blues – Pianos or small combos with the Piano dominate this style. It has a strong rhythmic component. St. Louis Blues artists include Roosevelt Sykes along with artists such as Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong who performed on awarding recordings of W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues. Popular from ~the 1920s through the 1940s

# Early expansion of the Blues II

- Jump Blues – Emerged in the 1940s. It is highly rhythmic and up-tempo. Heavily influenced by the ‘big band’ sounds, songs often include the saxophone. Key artists include Louis Jordan and the Tympani Five, Roy Brown, Big Joe Turner and others. Remained popular through the 1960s
- Chicago Blues – influenced by Delta Blues, incorporates electric guitar, harmonica, bass and drums. Chicago Blues became popular after WWII. It heavily influenced Rock ‘n Roll. Key artists include Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, James Cotton, Little Walter, Willie Dixon, Koko Taylor. Still popular today
- Texas Blues – incorporates jazz style arrangements with electric guitar. Early artists such as Blind Lemon Jefferson were popular before the electric guitar. Other artists include Blind Willie Johnson, T-Bone Walker, Lightnin’ Hopkins. Modern day Texas Blues is often associated with Stevie Ray Vaughan and his brother Jimmy. Texas Blues has been evolving since the 1920s to present day
- West Coast Blues – Originated with Texas artists who moved to California such as T-Bone Walker. West Coast Blues is known for incorporating jazz chord change into the Blues. West Coast Blues has been evolving since the 1930s to present day.