



# Traditional Voices Group

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## **Riddlefest**

Second Annual Event to Recognize the Burnsville Musician, Lesley Riddle, for his Role in Shaping Early Country Music.

Burnsville, NC—The Traditional Voices Group, the Yancey County Cultural Resources Commission and Carolina First Bank of Burnsville, NC will host the second annual **Riddlefest** whose theme is: “Water Tank Jam—A Tribute to Lesley Riddle” on February 21, 2009 at 7:00 in the Burnsville Town Center. Admission is \$10.00 with children under sixteen admitted free.

Tickets may be purchased on-line at <http://www.etix.com/ticket/servlet/onlineSale?>, Mountain Heritage Center, Burnsville Town Center, Yancey Chamber of Commerce, and the Toe River Arts Council in Burnsville and Spruce Pine

Nationally known musicians who are appearing at the Water Tank Jam are: Mike Seeger, Bill Clifton, Bruce Greene and A.P. and Sara Carter’s grandson, Dale Jett. Local musicians appearing are: Roberta Whiteside and the Griffith Chapel Choir (which contains many of Lesley’s relatives), Debbie Phillips, Ronnie Robinson, Glen Nance, Terry McKinney, Ron and Minnie Powell, Anthony Hensley, Brandon Bailey, the Front Porch Pickers, Rob& Hannah Levin and Rhonda Gouge.

The audience will also be treated to a preview of the upcoming Parkway Playhouse production of a musical based on the life of Lesley Riddle.

The proceeds from the event will assist the TVG and CRC in their Video Heritage project of the Toe River Valley, which will be produced in the Lesley Riddle Recording Studio at the Mountain Heritage Center in Burnsville.

Riddle (1905-1979) was an African-American musician who was introduced to A.P. Carter of the Carter Family in Kingsport, TN shortly after the Carter’s had finished their first recording session with Ralph Peer of Victor Records. A.P. immediately recognized the talent of the young musician and invited him to come with him to his home in Mace’s Springs, VA. Indeed, over the next five to six years Lesley was a frequent guest in the Carter home, where he helped Sara, Maybelle and A.P. rework and craft the old hymns and blues numbers that he knew into versions acceptable to Peer. Maybelle even learned some of her licks from Lesley although he later insisted that he never gave her a lesson, that she just watched him and adapted his style to her own including using a pocket knife to play slide guitar.

Eventually Lesley and A.P. had to hit the road in search of new tunes. A.P. would write down the lyrics and Lesley would play along on guitar and memorize the melody. These trips sometimes lasted two to three weeks and extended over much of the upper South.

Lesley's association with the Carter's ended after he married and moved to Rochester, NY. He played music infrequently there and soon sold his guitar.

Maybelle Carter told musician and folklorist, Mike Seeger, in the early 1960's that she had learned "The Cannonball" from Lesley Riddle. Mike eventually found him in Rochester and persuaded Lesley to be interviewed and recorded. Those recordings done in Lesley's living room and in his "shine stand" are on "Step by Step" posthumously released by Rounder Records in 1994.

Jeannette Carter Jett and Joe Carter were in attendance at Lesley's funeral in Burnsville in 1979.