

MEMORY | ART | & AGING



**A RESOURCE
& ACTIVITY GUIDE**



TRADITIONAL ARTS INDIANA

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Above: TAI Director Jon Kay interviews Harold Williams.
Front cover: Participant paints at Brown County Memory Painting Workshop.
Opposite: Bill Larkin's roadside display
Back cover: IU students talk with Bob Taylor about his memory carvings.

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From the Director



Above: Jon Kay stands with accordion player Helen Kiesel.

I am thrilled to present *Memory, Art, & Aging: A Resource and Activity Guide*. This book has been years in the making. Traditional Arts Indiana (TAI) began the project with the belief that everyday creative practices are important to the well-being of older adults. In 2015, the Gallup Healthways Well-Being Index ranked Indiana forty-six out of fifty U.S. states in the health and wellness of older adults. For more than twenty years, TAI has worked with elders to document and share the traditional arts of our state. We have learned much about how everyday practices support older adults and their communities. By leveraging the folk arts, TAI is working to improve the quality of life for older adults.

Many elders face challenges resulting from what gerontologists call the “three plagues” of aging: isolation, boredom, and helplessness. This guide identifies community-based, culturally appropriate strategies to help elders address these challenges. Much of this guide was inspired by TAI’s fieldwork and programs conducted in South Central Indiana, but we look forward to collaborating with communities in other regions in order to produce guides that feature and support older adults there.

This guide is about inspiring elders. It is filled with profiles of people who employ a range of traditional arts and knowledge to help them flourish in their later years. These inspiring artists are fiddlers, storytellers, quilters, cooks, carvers, and more. In addition, this guide aims to inspire. It is chock-full of actionable activities for both individuals and groups, making it useful for older adults while they are alone as well as for caregivers and activity directors in group settings.

We do not claim to have all of the answers. Rather, *Memory, Art, & Aging* is intended to start a conversation with older adults, caregivers, elder-care professionals, and community organizations. We welcome your thoughts, and please share how you use the guide!

Looking to the future,
Jon Kay

How to Use This Guide

Traditional Arts Indiana produced this guide to show how older adults' creative practices improve their overall well-being. It is full of everyday people who have become exemplary artists and tradition bearers by doing what they enjoy and find meaningful. Each unit includes approachable activities to help readers begin their own creative journey.

The profiles throughout this guide are based on hundreds of conversations with older adults as well as observations at community gatherings and local events. Each spotlight introduces you to an artist who helped shape our understanding of the importance of creative pursuits, especially in later life. We hope

that reading about these individuals will encourage you to think deeply about the artistry embedded in everyday practices.

To complement the elder artist spotlights, each unit includes activities that prompt you to reflect on and engage with creative aging concepts and practices. These activities can be easily adapted to suit a variety of contexts. Some activities aim to stir elders to reflect on the role of everyday practices in their personal lives. Others may be more appropriate for group or community settings.

If you are approaching this guide as an individual, we recommend reading and working through the book with friends.

The activities encourage you to connect with others: contact old friends to create a memory map (p. 13), ask a grandchild to help you record your stories (p. 18), or make a generativity list to identify the things you want to share with the next generation (p. 50).

It is not necessary to read this guide from front to back, as each unit, spotlight, and activity stands on its own. However, the spotlights in each unit complement the activities, providing diverse examples of creative aging. The people represented here have expanded our understanding of how arts, crafts, and traditional practices can improve daily life. While we hope that anyone can use this guide, we specifically designed it as a resource for older adults and their caregivers in Indiana.



Road signs near Gosport, Indiana

Introduction

FLOURISHING THROUGH CREATIVE PRACTICE

Memory, Art, & Aging aims to help older adults flourish in Indiana, but what does that mean? In the book *Flourish*, positive psychologist Martin Seligman identifies five major elements that contribute to human well-being: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (2011, 16–25). He uses the acronym PERMA to refer to what he theorizes as the “building blocks” of human well-being.

Positive Emotion refers to a feeling of enjoyment in your life. It may include happiness, joy, satisfaction, contentment, love, and/or interest.

Engagement is the intense focus and involvement in the activities in your life, which often leads to a “flow state”: that feeling when time stands still and you lose yourself in an activity.

Relationships are the social bonds that we forge and maintain in our lives, which connect us to our families, friends, and communities.

Meaning is finding purpose in your life, feeling as if you are part of or contributing to something bigger than yourself.

Accomplishment is to achieve a significant goal, or to gain mastery in a specific area in one's life.

While Seligman concedes that PERMA is not an exhaustive list of factors that contribute to our well-being, we believe that doing activities that support these five elements can help one flourish throughout their life. As you read the spotlights of artists in this book, consider how PERMA is reflected in their stories. Also, ask yourself these questions:

- P:** When do I feel joy and/or contentment? What interests me?
- E:** What causes time to pass quickly and what requires me to focus?
- R:** What activities help me bond with others? Who do I feel close to and when?
- M:** What is my purpose? What makes me feel like I am part of something important?
- A:** We all have “mastered” skills or practices. Which one(s) are meaningful to me?

By working through this volume, you will begin to recognize how the five elements of PERMA help older adults flourish in later life.

Works Cited

Seligman, Martin. 2011. *Flourish*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Reflect, make, share, and repeat – this is a recurring pattern in the artmaking practices of older adults. Many elder artists value process over product; artmaking fills their days and structures their lives. While some dedicate themselves to a single artform, many maintain multiple creative pursuits. Keep this in mind as you begin, revive, or maintain your own personal pastimes.

Key Concepts

GENERATIVITY

Psychologist Erik Erikson coined the term generativity to refer to a sense of concern for others that begins in middle age and increases as we age. It is generally expressed as a need to nurture and guide the next generation.¹This relates to “traditionalizing” in folklore scholarship; both concepts recognize that people add value to cultural practices when they pass them to the next generation.²

PLAGUES OF AGING

Geriatrician Bill Thomas identified the plagues of aging as “loneliness, helplessness, and boredom.” He recognized that these pervasive feelings often challenge many older adults.³

FOLKLORISTIC GERONTOLOGY

Jon Kay first invoked the concept of folkloristic gerontology to refer to an area of research, study, and practice in the field of folklore that aims to improve the well-being of older adults. A fundamental tenet contends that arts and aging therapies work best when they align with an individual’s personal and cultural identity.⁴

FLOW

Named by psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, flow describes a state of complete immersion in an activity. Feelings of focus and energy often accompany this enjoyable mental state.⁵For many older adults, time passes quickly while experiencing a flow state or being “in the zone.”

1. Erikson, Erik H. 1950. *Childhood and Society*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
2. Hymes, Dell. 1975. “Folklore’s Nature and the Sun’s Myth.” *Journal of American Folklore* 88, 345-369.
3. Thomas, William. 1999. *The Eden Alternative Handbook: The Art of Building Human Habitats*. Sherburne, NY: Summer Hill.
4. Kay, Jon. 2018. “Introduction: Folklore and the Expressive Lives of Elders.” In *The Expressive Lives of Elders*, edited by Jon Kay, 1-24. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
5. Csíkszentmihályi, Mihály. 1990. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper and Row.



Left to Right: Terese “Terry” Urban, Fred Markle, and Sandra Turk

UNIT ONE Folklife & Later Life

SPOTLIGHT: Dee Nierman

Brownstown, IN



Fourth generation rag rug maker Dee Nierman continues to weave using the same barn loom that her great-grandmother used. She explains, this loom has “seen many, many miles of rugs and carpets come off of there.” Growing up, Dee remembers when neighbors would bring rags to her mother for weaving. “We needed a little income, and my mother would weave some rugs. And when I was young, I wound the shuttle. I’d be too little for my feet to reach the treadles.”

Although born out of subsistence, weaving has remained a hobby throughout Dee’s life. She and her niece, who is also a weaver, exhibit their rugs at regional fairs and festivals. As Dee puts it, “you’ve got to either sell the rugs or stop making them.” Dee gets more than a supplemental income from her weaving practice. “That’s where I do my thinking,” she reflects, “maybe the years gone by, my childhood, some happy thoughts. You know, the world’s so busy nowadays, and I just enjoy having my time for myself to do my own thinking—my own thoughts.”

BEGINNING AT AGE SEVEN, WEAVING HAS REMAINED A CONSTANT IN DEE’S LIFE.

Creative undertakings can be a kind of meditative practice. Many older adults note that the hours fly by when they are playing music, carving wood, or, in Dee’s case, weaving rugs. This is also when many elders engage in life review. While we may reminisce about the past at other times, it is often when we are immersed in a creative practice that we search for the deeper meaning in our memories.



Watch a short video about Dee Nierman here:
go.iu.edu/2dk8

“I can still hear mother running the warp, before she would get it onto the loom. I can hear that noise just thinking about it.”

~ Dee Nierman



SPOTLIGHT: Keith Ruble

Terre Haute, IN



Keith Ruble started making hand-hewn wooden bowls over forty years ago, picking up the practice from bowl hewer Bill Day. Keith cultivated his mastery of the craft as a “stress reliever” during his long-standing career as superintendent of parks in Vigo County.

Today, Keith produces dozens of creative designs, including bowls in the shape of farm animals, hearts, and the state of Indiana. He distinguishes his style by accentuating the hand-hewn quality of his bowls. With a hand adz, Keith hews excess wood out of the bowl’s interior, each chop leaving behind small chip marks. Rather than sanding out these marks, Keith leaves them in place to create a distinctive rippling texture that serves as evidence of the hewing process.

DELICATE WITHOUT BEING FRAGILE, KEITH’S THINLY HEWN BOWLS ARE AT ONCE RUSTIC AND ARTFUL.

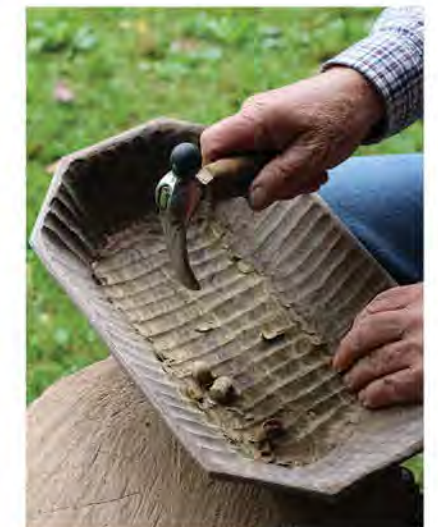
An advocate for learning life skills at a young age, Keith encourages others to develop a creative practice that they can continue throughout their lives. Keith teaches his family as well as classes and workshops how to make hewn bowls. He also provides for his community by practicing other tree-related arts including building log houses for the Indiana State Fair and distributing his homemade maple syrup.

“I could make a bowl in the evening and just totally relax my body. And that is the kind of thing that everybody has to have in their life.”

~ Keith Ruble

See Keith Ruble demonstrate bowl hewing here: go.iu.edu/2mvg

Watch a related video of Dave Voges making a bowl adz here: go.iu.edu/2mvh



ACTIVITY: The Folklife Game

We all have family or community traditions, which connect us to others. This activity encourages people to share their memories, stories, and personal histories. The game highlights both the group's common experiences and each participant's individual experiences, but without getting too personal. This game works as an icebreaker or as a regular activity for your facility.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Photocopy the question cards (see next page) and cut them out.
2. Place in a hat or bucket to distribute. Let people choose a card they would like to answer. Encourage them to pick quickly.
3. One by one, have participants read and respond to their cards.
4. Encourage follow-up examples and participation from others in the group as appropriate.
5. Answers should be shorter than two minutes each to ensure that there is enough time for everyone to speak.

In smaller and more familiar groups, elders may want to go into more detail and share more personal information. See the Life History Interview Activity on page 18 for more personal questions.



The "Buck A Book" sale at the Orange County HomeGrown Market in Orleans



A doll made by Marva Noland and Judy Thompson



Mike Lindauer's restored Kitten steam engine from Ferdinand

Recite a jump-rope or hand-clap rhyme.	What is your favorite family food? Share a memory of it.
Describe a haunted place in your community.	Have you ever played a game with marbles or pocket knives?
Tell the story behind something special that your family passed down to you.	What do you do when you have a cold? Have you always done this?
Describe an outdoor game you have played.	What do you do for good luck?
Sing a lullaby.	Tell a joke.
Have you ever gathered food from the wild?	What is the story of your name?
What is your favorite holiday? How do you celebrate it?	What do you eat on Thanksgiving?
What is your hometown known for?	Who tells the best stories in your family or community?

SPOTLIGHT: John Schoolman

North Webster, IN



John Schoolman (1909-2009) always hiked and carried a walking stick, but after his wife died, he started decorating his sticks. He painted them with bright colors and intricate designs, and wood-burned a poem, song, or story on each cane. Stickmaking filled the hours when he was alone. This craft also enriched his social life; as John walked around town with his colorful canes, strangers would stop him and ask him about his creations. He would often recite the poem, tell the story, or sing the song inscribed on the stick.

PEOPLE IN NORTH WEBSTER REMEMBER JOHN AS "THE CANE MAN."

John developed a distinctive method for making canes. First, he would dig up a small sumac tree, so that the root could serve as the cane's handle. He would then strip the bark and set it aside until "something popped into [his] head." He would often work late in the night designing, painting, and burning his sticks. Both finding and making his colorful canes became a meditative practice for John, who lived to be one hundred years old and stayed artistically active to the very end.

"When I was a kid, I used to go out and dig up some sticks and make little walking sticks and that grew into it. And it kept growing, growing, growing...I have a lot of 'em now and I enjoy it. I enjoy for other people to enjoy them. It's a lot of fun."

~ John Schoolman



View the colorful canes of John Schoolman here: go.iu.edu/2kVT



SPOTLIGHT: Bill Poynter

Crawfordsville, IN



Bill Poynter (1940-2016) learned to make canes from his father. One time when Bill was young, his father sprained his ankle and sent Bill to the woods to harvest the materials to make a cane. When he returned, Bill watched his father craft the t-handled walking stick. Years later, Bill remembered this and started making walking sticks himself. One day, he went to the lodge at Turkey Run State Park, where he noticed that the walking sticks they sold were from Arizona. He asked, "why not sell sticks from Indiana?" They said they didn't know anyone who made them. He replied, "Are you going to be here Monday?" The next week, he brought several for their gift shop and continued to supply them until his passing in 2016.

CRAFTING WAS A WAY OF LIFE FOR BILL.

Bill recalled, "My dad was industrious, he did a lot of different things. My mother was kind of crafty, she did a lot of different things...Back then we'd go around to different farms, and people made things for themselves that they needed. So we just naturally kind of got crafty."

An avid mushroom hunter, Bill made wooden mushrooms in the off-season, which was another craft he remembered from his childhood. He specialized in carving realistic mushrooms, sometimes using half of a hazelnut shell for the cap."

"I am retired, and I need something to do to keep me out of pool rooms and off street corners. And making sticks is it."

~ Bill Poynter



Listen to a podcast featuring Bill here: go.iu.edu/2kWO

SPOTLIGHT: Glenn Hall

Paoli, IN



When Glenn Hall was five or six years old, his father “fixed him a sandpile” next to the porch at their family home in rural Orange County. Observing the tools his father used on their farm, young Glenn knew he needed his own little implements to work the sand. Glenn cut metal plough shears from an old baking soda can and tied it together with bailing wire to make a small four-tine plow to pull behind his toy tractor. Ever since, his life has been filled with making and repairing things on his family farm.

Since retiring from farming, Glenn has entertained himself by making his creations out of found and repurposed objects. Old gates, gas tanks, and railroad spikes are transformed by his imagination into impressionistic tractors and humorous figures. While he started making replicas of farm tools when he was young, more than eighty years later he continues to produce a variety of whimsical art pieces.

GLENN TAKES HIS METAL SCULPTURES TO AREA FESTIVALS, COUNTY FAIRS, AND TRACTOR SHOWS.

Many older adults in Indiana suffer from chronic boredom. They may distract themselves with a variety of unfulfilling forms of entertainment: endlessly watching television, playing games on their phones, and scrolling through their social media accounts. This is not true of Glenn! He stays busy with his metalwork, and never has time to be bored. For instance, when a telemarketer told Glenn that his television warranty was about to expire, Glenn replied, “That’s funny. I’ve never turned it on.”

“It keeps you going; it keeps you moving, it keeps you active...I don’t want to sit and look out the window.” ~ Glenn Hall



UNIT TWO Memory Art



SPOTLIGHT: Harold Williams

Wheeling, IN



Harold Williams makes miniatures of remembered places from his hometown of Wheeling in Gibson County. When he was young, the small town included several churches, a general store, and even a covered bridge, near which he grew up. After nearly thirty-four years working as a supervisor at Hansen Manufacturing Company in Princeton, Harold retired and began making wooden miniatures of area churches, barns, and log houses. He uses reclaimed wood from an old house, so the materials he uses are as old as the original structures his miniatures replicate.

THOUGH HE IS QUIET, HAROLD'S MINIATURES GIVE HIM SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT.

In 2013, Harold built a scale model of Wheeling's covered bridge that spans the Patoka River. His scale replica mimics not just the appearance of the bridge, but also employs the same construction techniques used in the historic structure. Harold enjoys showing his bridge and other replicas at community gatherings, where he can share stories about growing up in Wheeling and discuss the design elements of the covered bridge.



Listen to TAI Director Jon Kay's conversation with Harold here: go.iu.edu/2mZH

"And one of the first questions they asked me is, 'the bridge is so old, where did I get a print to build it?' And I said, I had no print. I took a half a dozen measurements. And I built it using a half inch scale."

~Harold Williams



SPOTLIGHT: Bill Root

Story, IN



After retiring from construction, Bill Root volunteered to demonstrate his woodworking and art at the Indiana State Fair's Pioneer Village. Alongside quilters, woodcarvers, and bowl hewers, Bill built a miniature replica of his childhood home in Knott County.

WHILE BILL DRAWS, PAINTS, AND SCULPTS, HE ALSO LOVES CARVING AND MAKING THINGS OUT OF WOOD, A PRACTICE HE BEGAN AS A YOUNG BOY.

Bill remembers the home of his youth in great detail. Without blueprints or measuring, he built his house from memory. "I knew that the dining room was sixteen by sixteen, and my room upstairs was a certain size," he explains. From his intimate knowledge of the house, he worked to make it as accurate as possible, however, he also made a few intentional alterations. He installed windows and lights in the attic, so that viewers could see the remembered items he placed there, such as a spinning wheel and his grandfather's violins.

Creations like Bill's little house are sometimes called "memory objects" because the making and displaying of this kind of creation helps their maker reflect upon and share information that they find important to their lives. Since building his miniature, Bill has displayed his replica at historical societies, fairs, and museums across Southern Indiana.



"I actually built the house off of memory and a few pictures."

~Bill Root



SPOTLIGHT: Bob Taylor

Columbus, IN



Bob Taylor began carving when he was eight years old using a pocketknife his grandfather gave him. Once grown, Bob apprenticed as a patternmaker. From engineers' drawings, he carved prototypes that manufacturers used to produce molds for metal castings. While carving professionally, he continued to whittle for his own enjoyment. In the 1980s, he discovered the work of Rupert Kreider (1897-1983), an itinerant carver who occasionally worked as a farm hand in Bartholomew County. Though Bob never met him, he was impressed by the landscapes Kreider cut into flat boards. When Bob retired in 1999, he began creating pieces that reflect upon his life: church festivals, family outings, and circus trains.

BOB INVESTS MONTHS INTO MAKING EACH OF HIS MEMORY CARVINGS IN NEAR-PHOTOGRAPHIC DETAIL.

His special carving projects are a dynamic system of life review which requires him to research and reflect upon important times from his childhood. Once he compiles his memories into a story, he starts the creative process of designing and making. He spends months carving the evocative scene, drawing and redrawing until the image holds all of the important narrative elements. Once completed, he takes the panel to area woodcarving clubs, county fairs, and other public gatherings where he can share his stories and carving.



Watch a video of Bob Taylor carving here: go.iu.edu/2miC

"I had this idea that I would like to carve a memory of the Mission Festival at St. John's Lutheran Church in White Creek in Indiana...We would go there in the summer to Mission Festivals every year."

~Bob Taylor



ACTIVITY: Memory Maps & Diagrams

Our memories are often lodged in places. Have you ever recalled specific people, things, or stories after returning to a location that you hadn't visited in a long time? This is because we distribute our memories; other people and things hold parts of our stories, and we rely on them to help jog our minds. What do you do when you can't access specific memories anymore? Memory maps are fun ways to mentally return to places from your past. You may be surprised how many recollections this activity can awaken.



Give it a try! Below are a few steps to get you thinking and planning.

HOW TO MAKE A MEMORY MAP

For ease of implementation, try this practice exercise using memories of your childhood home. Alternatively, your map or diagram can reflect the neighborhood where you grew up, your grandparents' farm, your first apartment, or any meaningful place you want to remember.

MATERIALS CHECKLIST

Tip: While you can use a large sheet of paper, a dry-erase board is even better—you may need the eraser to make revisions.

- Paper or dry-erase board
- Pens, markers, or pencils
- Sticky notepads

1. Sit and think about the place and all of the things that happened there. See if you have any pictures to remind you of the basic outline or layout of the space. If you can, draw a basic floor plan. It doesn't have to be to scale, or even correct; it is not about making it perfect, it is about remembering.
2. Make a list of things you want to include in your diagram: the woodstove, the television, the mantel clock—whatever comes to mind. Once you have a list, write each item onto a sticky note so that you can move them around and start situating them on your basic diagrams (you do not need to use sticky notes if you are using a dry-erase board).
3. Once you have the sticky notes in place, think more about what they represent and see if any stories or memories emerge. If so, write in what you remember in the appropriate place on the diagram, using fresh sticky notes as needed. Repeat until the home of your mind is recreated.
4. Once completed, take a picture of the dry-erase board to save the information, or you can choose to transfer it to paper and even make it into an art project.

EVEN BETTER IN A GROUP

Collaborative Reminiscence is when a group of people mutually recall and share their memories of people and places. Make your memory map a fun activity for you and your siblings, cousins, and friends. Invite them over and lead them in making a group memory map!

SPOTLIGHT: Gerald Goecker

Brownstown, IN



Gerald Goecker (1918-2014) made brooms in the milk house behind his log home in Jackson County. When Gerald was young, he would help a man make brooms in his hometown of Tampico. He recalled that the maker peddled brooms from his horse and buggy throughout the region.

GERALD TOOK PRIDE IN HIS MEMORY ART AND SIGNED EACH OF THE BROOMS THAT HE MADE.

Later in life, Gerald bought a broom winder, similar to the one he remembered from Tampico, and taught himself to make brooms. Many older adults revive traditions that they recall from their youth to create their objects of memories. They find purpose and satisfaction in mastering and sharing these meaningful practices, and recalling people and events from youth. While they often look for a younger person to teach their traditions, they may never see the fruits of their labor.

Just as the maker in Tampico probably never thought that Gerald would pick up broom making, Gerald may have influenced someone younger who will pick up the tradition when in retirement. For Gerald, broom making was a hobby inspired by his memories that flourished later in life and created a material legacy to leave to his family and friends.



“Well, I wish that some young person would take it up, you know? I’ve got lots of grandkids, but a young person ain’t interested in that, you see? They got to get old and don’t know what to do and then they get interested in something like that.”

~ Gerald Goecker

SPOTLIGHT: Gustav Potthoff

Columbus, IN



Born in the Maluku Islands near Australia, Gustav “Gus” Potthoff (1922-2016) was sent to an orphanage after his father died and his mother was unable to take care of him. He stayed at the Dutch colonial orphanage until Germany declared war on the Netherlands. Young Gus then enlisted and learned to be a mechanic for the Netherlands Army Tank Battalion in Bandoeng, Java. In 1941, just seventeen years old and only four weeks into his deployment, the Imperial Japanese Army captured Gus, and he remained their prisoner until the end of World War II. While imprisoned, his captors subjected Gus and the other POWs to a brutal regimen of labor that included construction of the Hellfire Pass and the infamous bridge over the River Kwai.

GUS IMMIGRATED TO THE U.S. IN 1966, AND MADE HIS HOME IN COLUMBUS, IN, WHERE HE WORKED FOR CUMMINS ENGINE COMPANY.

After retiring, Gus took up painting as a way to remember his fellow prisoners of war. Concerned that those sixteen thousand fallen soldiers would be forgotten, Gus painted to tell his story and to find peace among the horrors of war by commemorating those who died while building the Thailand-Burma Railway. Not only did his memory paintings help him process the trauma of his imprisonment and memorialize those left behind, his art gave him a new identity. He volunteered weekly at a local veterans museum, where he made friends and got to display his paintings and share his stories.



“I never knew how to paint. I never learned art. Art came after I retired.”

~Gus Potthoff



SPOTLIGHT: Zoe Dean & Amanda Mathis

Memory Painting in Spencer & Nashville

Memory painting provides an opportunity for older adults to revisit, reshape, and retell the stories of their lives. The method of painting can vary depending on the needs in your group or community. For example, Zoe Dean used watercolors when she led a memory painting workshop in Spencer, but Amanda Mathis taught her class in Nashville to create imaginative scenes using acrylics. Designed for beginners and those new to painting, both workshops employed photographs to inspire the participants' remembered scenes.

THE FACILITATORS OF BOTH WORKSHOPS ASKED PARTICIPANTS TO BRING PHOTOGRAPHS OF SPECIAL PLACES, PEOPLE, AND THINGS.

Pictures of significant places and people from the past can prompt memories and help older adults engage in life review. At the Spencer workshop, Zoe asked attendees to look at their photos and think about the sounds, smells, and feelings associated with this place. They chose a color palette that evoked the mood they wanted to create. After looking at their images, attendees at the Nashville workshop began by creating a simple structure for their painting, unlocking new memories in the process. Zoe and Amanda invited each attendee to add as much detail as possible to their paintings, from dancing shoes to wreaths on doors. The narrative nature of their paintings emerged from this attention to detail.

Throughout the process, workshop participants had a chance to share their memories. Many people chose photos of family homes, which often unlocked early childhood memories.



Above: Nashville workshop participant



Top: Zoe Dean with a participant; Center: Amanda Mathis holding a painting; Bottom: Spencer workshop participant

“It’s not an ending, but another beginning when you’re allowed to become artful.”

~Zoe Dean

ACTIVITY: Memory Painting Workshop

Memory painting is a particularly powerful activity, both for individual and group settings. Organizing a workshop in your community provides an opportunity for social engagement.

What memories are unlocked through painting?

Work with a local painter to help lead others through this creative life review. The final product is not as important as the process. Great workshops invite participants to share their work and discuss what happened while painting their memories.



HOW TO ORGANIZE A WORKSHOP

1. Find a local artist who feels comfortable teaching beginners. The medium does not matter.
2. Find a venue to host your event. Local libraries often provide free spaces for community events. Other options include community centers and senior centers.
3. Set a date and advertise your event. If it is open to the public, opt for advanced registration to get a headcount for supplies.
4. Request a supply list from the teaching artist and purchase necessary materials. Reimburse the artist for any materials they supply.
5. Ask participants to bring a photograph(s) that stirs their memories: houses, schools, or farms work well.
6. During the workshop, the teaching artist leads participants in translating their photographs into a painting.
7. After people have completed their paintings, hold a group discussion about the process. What memories were unlocked through painting? What feelings did the activity produce?

WORKSHOP CHECKLIST

- Local artist
- Photographs of memories
- Community gathering spot
- Art supplies



“Once you have the basic structure, have fun adding in all the little details!”

~ Amanda Mathis, teaching artist

ACTIVITY: A Life Story Interview

For many older adults, recalling and documenting their memories is a fun and thoughtful exercise. It should be noted, however, that while this activity may be enjoyable for some, it may not be appropriate for all. Make sure that you identify an elder who is comfortable with being interviewed and be mindful that some topics may stir strong emotional responses. Before the interview, discuss whether it will be recorded and, if so, who will have access to this recording in the future. Inform the interviewee of potential options (archives, cloud storage, personal collections, etc.) and privacy concerns, so that they can make an informed decision.

HOW TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

1. Decide how to record the session. If you don't have a recorder, select one of the many free smartphone applications that can be used to record interview audio. Always practice with your recording equipment beforehand.
2. Schedule a time for the interview in a quiet place.
3. Place the recording device close to the interviewee to record clearly.
4. At the beginning of the interview, say who is being recorded, by whom, where, and when. This information may be important for the future.
5. If the interview is to be archived, obtain the interviewee's verbal consent on the recording.
6. When you finish, remember to thank the interviewee for their participation.

***TIP:** Often, it is best if the older adult is interviewed by someone they care about, but who doesn't know a lot about their personal history. Grandchildren are ideal, but anyone can do this.*

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Your interview may cover one specific topic or many topics. Begin by asking interviewees to introduce themselves. Follow up with open-ended questions that will spark conversation, rather than one-sentence answers. Below is a list of potential questions pertaining to childhood and family:

- ♦ Where did you grow up? What was it like?
- ♦ What are your earliest memories of childhood?
- ♦ Where did you go to school? Who were your teachers and friends? What was school like?
- ♦ Tell me about your parents and siblings? What were they like? What did they do? Do you have any favorite stories of them?
- ♦ What games did you play? Inside and/or outside? What were your favorite pastimes?
- ♦ What chores did you do when you were young?
- ♦ What foods did you eat? Who prepared them?
- ♦ Did you know your grandparents? What are your memories of them?
- ♦ When did you leave home? How did this make you feel?

ONE-QUESTION CONVERSATIONS

- ♦ If you could talk to yourself when you were young, what would you say?
- ♦ Tell me something you deeply believe.
- ♦ Tell me about a happy time.



UNIT THREE Connecting Through Music

SPOTLIGHT: Hilary & LaVerne Begle

Ferdinand, IN



Hilary Begle and his wife LaVerne both grew up working hard on their families' farms in Huntingburg, but they also found time for fun. There were six dance halls in the community when they were young, so it was never difficult to find a place to dance. On Thursday and Saturday nights, he recalls, "My wife and I would tear the floor up with the waltzes and the polkas."

HILARY ROUTINELY HUMS THE TUNES HE GREW UP PLAYING BY MEMORY.

"I think it's good for your mind," explains Hilary. "Absolutely, I hum songs all the time. I get every note in my head because, when I play, I've got to know every little note." Having only partial lung capacity, his doctors encourage him to keep playing the harmonica. Not only does the music help Hilary with his breathing, he contends that it keeps his mind sharp.

For many years, Hilary and LaVerne played music at community festivals and nursing homes. Hilary played guitar and harmonica at the same time, while LaVerne sang and played the stumpf fiddle. Musical friends often joined the couple and played at area performances for older adults.

"We probably played close to twenty years in the nursing homes all together...I've seen one man get out of his wheelchair, take his oxygen off, and stand up and just wiggle around—he could not sit there any longer. He was probably a dancer. I had tears in my eyes; it's hard to play like that."

~ Hilary Begle



Listen to Hilary play the harmonica here:
archive.org/details/hilary-begle

SPOTLIGHT: Helen Kiesel

Haubstadt, IN



Growing up, accordion player Helen Kiesel went to the dancehall and tavern across the road from her parents' home in Hornville, in rural Gibson County. The old waltzes, schottisches, polkas, and fiddle tunes sparked her interest in music. She took accordion lessons from Sister Johnette Finis, a Benedictine nun from nearby Ferdinand. She later studied at the Campbell Accordion Studio in Evansville.

From a young age, the accordion was Helen's passion. By the time she was a senior in high school, however, she grew tired of playing and set the instrument aside. Like so many others, she married, raised a family, and didn't have time for music. Years later, after her children were grown, Helen's parents asked her to play music for a party with their seniors' group. After much persuading, she agreed to perform for the Darmstadt Retiree Club. She enjoyed the performance, so she started playing regularly again at area senior centers and nursing homes.

HELEN OFTEN GETS ELDER AUDIENCES MOVING AND SINGING "HAIL, HAIL, THE GANG'S ALL HERE."

Today, Helen plays at least sixteen times per month, not counting the weekly church services she accompanies at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Haubstadt. She still enjoys playing at nursing homes, where residents sing along and even leave their wheelchairs to dance to familiar tunes.

"I never get bored...I like what I'm doing and I like the people I play for."

~ Helen Kiesel



Listen to a podcast featuring Helen:
go.iu.edu/2mZl



SPOTLIGHT: Archie Krout

Crawfordsville, IN



Archie Krout grew up going to play-parties and square dances in Montgomery and Parke Counties. When he expressed interest in learning to play music, his father made him a cigar-box fiddle and a cornstalk bow. It was on this simple instrument that he learned local variations of old tunes such as "Arkansas Traveler" and "Redwing." His father played fiddle for square dances in Parke County. Archie would eventually back him up on guitar at local dances.

During World War II, Archie served in the Navy. He took his guitar along, but opportunities to play were few and strings were difficult to find. After the War, there was little time for music; he got married, they adopted a daughter, and he took a job at a phone company. After thirty-six years of working for Indiana Bell, he retired and picked up his fiddle again. For over thirty years since then, he has fiddled with friends at local nursing homes and senior centers, where others enjoy hearing the old tunes from his youth.

ARCHIE EVEN BUILDS VIOLINS, WHICH HE HAS GIVEN TO YOUNG PLAYERS.

Archie remains a regular at fiddle contests throughout the region, where he is frequently celebrated for his military service and for his rustic style of playing. He often wins the Old-Time Fiddle Prize at the Indiana State Fair Fiddle Contest. Archie's practice is a kind of musical reconciliation; when he plays, he brings his ninety-eight years of life full circle. He communicates who he is to himself and to others through music.

"I'm up where all my generation is about gone now. All you can do is make new friends, you know?"

~ Archie Krout



Archie holds a photo of his father.



Listen to Archie play at the 2014 Indiana State Fair here: go.iu.edu/2kVR

ACTIVITY: Performing for Older Adults

Many musicians featured in this guide volunteer to play at local senior centers, as well as independent-living, assisted-living, and long-term care facilities. If you are a practicing musician, consider what you may have to offer to your local senior community. Performing for older adults is a way to add purpose to your week, while also entertaining others. If you are a coordinator of a facility, you may want to share this activity with interested musicians.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

1. While a few facilities have funds to pay musicians, most do not. Expect to donate your time.
2. Will you perform solo or with a group? Performing with a group of friends will often make it more enjoyable.
3. How frequently will you play? Schedule a day and time with the facility. Some musicians play in a senior community monthly, while others make a weekly commitment. Consistency is important.
4. What will you play? Consider playing music that is familiar to the audience. When determining your performance repertoire, think about the age range of the attendees.
5. Will your performance be interactive? Some musicians expect an audience to simply listen, while others encourage singing along, clapping, or moving to the music. In general, older adults will enjoy your performance more if it is participatory.

TIP: Contact the facility before you prepare your performance. They may already have a schedule or be able to offer ideas about how to make your visit more enjoyable for you and the audience.



Above: Andy Mahler leads a music jam on guitar.
Below: Stephen Dickey provides accompaniment on fiddle.
Below left: Dave and Maria Crecelius sing a duet together.



SPOTLIGHT: Rev. Dennis Freeman

Indianapolis, IN



March 6, 2020 marked Rev. Dennis Freeman's eightieth birthday and seventy-fifth year playing piano. "So, I've always been interested in music," he recalls, "I guess I've always had the ears to listen and be open. I started playing when I was nearly five years old. I went to church and I heard a man sing 'Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho' and it just stuck in my ear."

REV. FREEMAN TAUGHT HIMSELF TO PLAY BY EAR ON AN UPRIGHT PIANO IN HIS AUNT'S ROOMING HOUSE.

Soon his parents and church sent him to take lessons at Jordan Conservatory of Music and he has played ever since. He inherited the tradition of gospel music and spirituals from both sides of his family. Rev. Freeman started playing in Baptist church services as a child, accompanying his grandmother, who was a gospel singer. At the age of twenty-three, he enlisted in the army and began to play as a chaplain's assistant. From that point on, he started playing for multiple churches.

Today, Rev. Freeman serves as the Artist in Residence at Wither-spoon Presbyterian Church, a Minister of Music at Miracles and Blessings United Methodist Church, and the leader of a gospel choir at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Indianapolis. He has also written over fifty pieces of music. Music is deeply ingrained in Rev. Freeman's spirituality; it is his faith, hope, and ministry. "I don't think there is any bad music," he says, "I think that music comes from God."

"I don't want to know what I would do if I can't play. I guess the strands of my hair on my head would try to force the keys of the piano or some instrument to play."

~ Rev. Dennis Freeman



SPOTLIGHT: Kara Barnard & Silver Strings

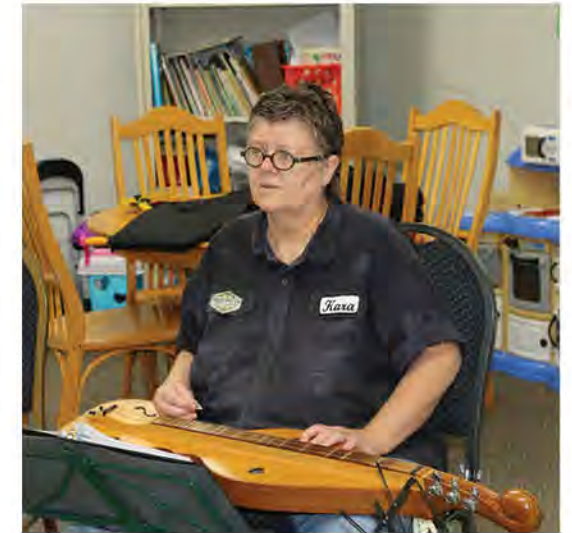
Salem Public Library Workshop

In the winter of 2018, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Indiana Arts Commission, Traditional Arts Indiana partnered with music instructor Kara Barnard to host the Silver Strings program at the Salem Public Library. Through this program, Kara uses mountain dulcimers to help older adults improve their social engagement and general well-being by learning how to play a musical instrument. Throughout South-Central Indiana, local musicians have gathered for decades to play old-time and country music. In the last thirty years, the dulcimer has become increasingly popular at these community music jams in Washington County. For this reason, Kara has offered the Silver Strings program in Washington, Green, and Brown Counties.

KARA NOW LEADS DULCIMER WORKSHOPS THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN INDIANA AND BEYOND.

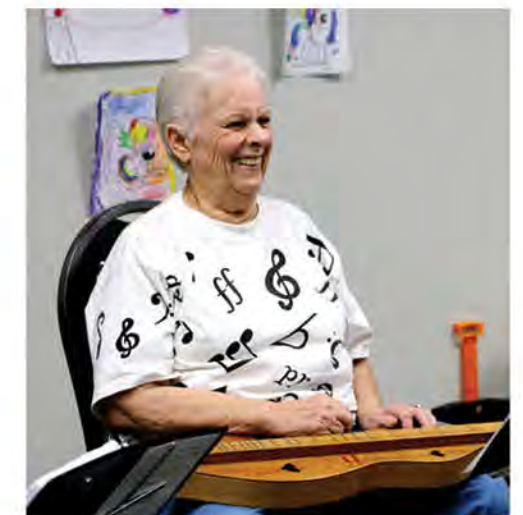
With strings tuned to an open D chord (D-A-D), the mountain dulcimer is relatively easy to play. Workshop participants learn to strum and play simple melodies on the instrument. Before the end of Kara's course, participants are able to play chords and harmonize together. The Silver Strings program not only helps fight loneliness and boredom, it instills in participants a sense of mastery and purpose through their newfound creative practice.

Watch Kara talk about the Silver Strings program here: go.iu.edu/2pnj



"I love playing the dulcimer, the lessons have been awesome...it gives you a purpose as you get older."

~ Washington County participant



ACTIVITY: Host a Music Jam

Watching and participating in live music events can be an exciting way to connect with others. One way to do this is to host an event in an easily accessible public setting. This activity provides instructions and suggestions for hosting a successful music jam or song circle.

BEFORE THE EVENT

1. Consider the people who would be interested in participating and the kinds of music or instruments they play. Decide if this event will be open to the public or limited to a private group.
2. Schedule the event with a public venue. A music jam could happen in a local library, a farmers' market, a coffee shop, or any space with plenty of seating.
3. Determine a time frame. Plan to host the event for one to three hours.
4. Invite participants. Personalized invitations are the most effective way to ensure attendance.

AT THE EVENT

1. Arrive early and set up the space. Arrange chairs in a circle large enough for people to comfortably sit side by side.
2. Once musicians have arrived and are ready to play, begin with a song that they may already know. Choosing familiar songs will likely keep musicians more engaged, having more opportunities to participate.
3. Proceed around the circle so that all participants have a turn to lead. It is okay if someone does not know a particular tune or song – this is a good opportunity to learn!



Left: Betty Harbin, Jack Harbin, and Bill Robison play a tune at the Brown County Historical Society.

MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Armless chairs
- Instruments
- Music stands and sheet music (optional)
- Any necessary tools for music making such as tuners, guitar picks, capos, or amplification equipment

TIPS

- Help participants feel welcome; facilitate introductions at the beginning of the event and during breaks in the music.
- Introduce a song by announcing its title and the key you will play it in.
- Be mindful of taking turns. Watch and listen to the leader's cues carefully, making sure you do not interrupt or play over other musicians.
- Listening to the person who is leading a song is more important than playing it how you think it should be played.
- Play tunes at a tempo that the group can comfortably follow along.
- Be considerate of the venue. Clean up after yourself and, if a business is hosting the event, encourage participants to purchase something.

UNIT FOUR Quilting & Community

SPOTLIGHT: Viola Hall

Gosport, IN



At the annual Owen County Fair, Viola Hall's award-winning entries fill the Open Class Building. Her home-made jellies and baked goods have ribbons, including several Grand Champions. Baking is just one of Viola's creative passions.

VIOLA HAS A REPUTATION FOR HER BEAUTIFUL QUILTS.

While her mother was a quilter, Viola taught herself later in life and makes most of her quilts for her family. She quilts by hand because they feel more "homemade" that way. Without using a sewing machine, one quilt can take her up to a year to complete. As she has begun to have some age-related issues with her hands, some of her granddaughters and great-granddaughters are now picking up this family tradition.

At a time when many older adults feel helpless, she remains engaged in her community. Viola stays active baking, quilting, and playing euchre every Friday night. She also helps run a food pantry at her local church. The 82-year-old exemplifies how aging gracefully includes aging creatively. She wishes more people would engage in creative activities, such as entering baked or canned goods in the state fair competitions.



"I'm not ashamed of my age, I'm glad I'm still here and able to do things!"

~Viola Hall

SPOTLIGHT: Amelia Culpher

Fort Wayne, IN



Amelia Culpher was born and raised in the Hanna-Creighton neighborhood in Fort Wayne. Around the age of six, a seamstress neighbor hired Amelia to help her hem her customers' clothing. Before long, the neighbor was teaching Amelia the art of sewing. By the time she was a teen, Amelia was a skilled seamstress. After graduating high school, she took a job at the local Magnavox plant. With her first paycheck, she bought a Singer sewing machine, which she used to make clothes for herself, her family, and the community. She sewed throughout her life, but she began making quilts after she retired.

SINCE 2002, AMELIA HAS DEVOTED HERSELF TO MAKING QUILTS AND SHARING HER KNOWLEDGE OF SEWING.

Amelia raised her niece, Andrea Faust, in a home filled with sewing and creativity. Through Traditional Arts Indiana's Apprenticeship Program, Amelia has been teaching her niece to sew and quilt. Andrea learned "the basics," which include making squares, triangles, rectangle pieces, and doing appliqué, along with quiltmaking aesthetics and techniques.

While apprenticeships encourage the transmission of traditional knowledge, they also help form or sustain connections with others. Andrea explains, "She doesn't always think that I am interested in the things that she does—but I am. I was always interested in her creations." Making quilts is about more than making art, it is a creative process that can foster self-discovery and deepen personal relationships.



"It is just a joy to know that I am passing this on."

~ Amelia Culpher



SPOTLIGHT: Sisters of the Cloth

Fort Wayne, IN



“There are some people in the group who have never sewn a stitch in their lives. And they see these quilts and the kind of work we do—it’s like a whole new adventure for them.”

~ Letha Anderson

Founded in 1999, the Sisters of the Cloth Quilt Guild has a membership of over thirty African-American women from Fort Wayne and beyond. The guild exists for the mutual inspiration of its members through the art of quilting. During their monthly meetings, they exchange quilting techniques and ideas, but the guild is as much about social interaction and community support as it is about quilting. While some were already experts when they joined the group, others were just beginning their quilting journey. Their motto, “Each one teach one,” reflects their commitment to community building through making quilts. Founding member Jacquei Seals explains, “We come together for a common cause. We love to quilt, to share, to cook. I love the sisterhood of us; we have a lot of fun.”

AN INTERGENERATIONAL GROUP, THE SISTERS INCLUDES MEMBERS FROM THEIR TEENS TO THEIR NINETIES.

Throughout Indiana and beyond, quilting groups provide a welcoming space for elders to gather, share, learn, and feel a part of a community. Gladys Gorman (1940-2019) was an active member of the guild. She often served as the “storyteller of quilts” for their bed turnings. She used these opportunities to share her knowledge and reflect upon her life, all the while encouraging and complimenting her fellow “sisters.”

Watch a Sisters of the Cloth bedturning at the Indiana State Fair here: go.iu.edu/2kW1

Right: Janie Wyatt and Kathy Muhammad show a quilt at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 2012.



ACTIVITY: Quilts in Conversation

They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This activity adds color and imagination to an elder’s day, and provides a prompt for social engagement. While bed turnings are a fun way to engage with both the narrative and visual aspects of quilts, what do you do if you do not have quilts, or if the activity is too difficult for your organization? Why not do a digital bed turning?

The link below provides a high-resolution PDF file that includes images of eighty-five quilts made by members of the Sisters of the Cloth Quilting Guild in Fort Wayne. Using a computer and a projector, you can show these images to members in your senior group and discuss the patterns, designs, colors, and names of the quilts. This might prompt other conversations. You can make this a special event and spend a period of time discussing each quilt, or you can make it part of a daily or weekly gathering exercise. Show one quilt at the beginning of a group meeting each week and encourage the older adults to discuss.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Download and open the PDF file from the internet here: archive.org/details/sotc2012
2. Review images before you begin to make sure they are appropriate for your group.
3. Use a projector, monitor, or tablet to show the images.
4. Encourage participants to look carefully at an image of a quilt. What colors, patterns, and other details do they see?
5. Tell participants the name of the quilt and who made it. Then engage them with open questions, such as “What do you think this quilt is about?” or “How does this quilt make you feel?”
6. Repeat or paraphrase the participants’ comments and observations to affirm that their thoughts matter and are valid.



Quilt made by Amelia Culpher

VARIATIONS

There are at least two ways to use this activity:

1. Show several images and discuss each quilt briefly, or
2. Choose one or two quilts and focus the conversation around them.

SPOTLIGHT: Jane Eberhart & the Piecemakers



Evansville, IN

In 1982, Minnie Marchant visited the Indiana State Fair's Pioneer Village and saw that no one was demonstrating quilting. She quickly volunteered her home quilt group, the Piecemakers, from the Salem United Methodist Church in Evansville to fill this void. Jane Eberhart, another member of the group, volunteered to quilt with the Piecemakers weekly for the next twenty-five years and to demonstrate during the fair annually in Indianapolis.

EACH YEAR, SOME OF THE MEMBERS PREPARE A SPECIAL QUILT FOR THE STATE FAIR AUCTION.

Through the years, members grew older, some passed away, others joined, but Jane and the Piecemakers continued to gather at the church to quilt each Wednesday. Each of the members came to quilting in different ways. Some learned to quilt at their mother's knee while others taught themselves. Quilting has been a lifelong pursuit for Jane, one that the Piecemakers have helped cultivate for decades. Though the group does not volunteer at the State Fair anymore, they still meet at the church to quilt each week. For Jane, the group is more than about making quilts; it is about making and nurturing friendships through this creative practice.

Watch "The Piecemakers: Master quilters from Vanderburgh County" (2004) here: go.iu.edu/2kVP



Above: Minnie Marchant (far left) quilts with the Piecemakers.
Above right: Jane Eberhart (left) and Roberta Smith (right) demonstrate at the Pioneer Village at the Indiana State Fair in 2015.



"Putting a quilt together is an art—putting the colors and designs together, and being able to see it in your mind before it actually happens."

~ Jane Eberhart

SPOTLIGHT: The Brown County Pioneer Women

Brown County History Center, Nashville, IN



Left to Right: Janice Amidon, Connie Pockovich, June Wolpert, and Brenda Fowler

Every Wednesday, the Pioneer Women meet at the Brown County History Center to create textile arts and prepare for their annual quilt show. Ever since the club's establishment in 1965, new members pay annual dues of only one dollar. The women teach each other how to spin, weave, quilt, knit, make baskets, and more. Mary George Kipp, who joined twenty years ago, says "It's a wonderful group of women who support each other."

THE MOTTO OF THE PIONEER WOMEN'S CLUB IS "A WOMAN WHO GOES BEFORE, PREPARING THE WAY FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW."

The Pioneer Women have hosted an annual quilt show fundraiser for more than forty years. This event attracts visitors from around the state to view a gallery of exquisite quilts, visit textile vendors, share a meal, and take part in activities such as the "Jelly Roll Race," where teams compete to sew a quilt at high speed.

A new feature of the quilt show is a bed turning event. In preparation for the bed turning, the Pioneer Women gather a selection of quilts from their own personal collections, including quilts passed on from family members as well as quilts of their own making. During the bed turning, visitors learn the quiltmakers' personal stories, as well as the interesting details about the patterns and vintage fabrics they presented. The Pioneer Women demonstrate how a deep appreciation for household crafts, such as quilts, can bring people together.

"We have a lot of talented people. We have weavers, knitters, crocheters, people in the arts. If you have a question and someone is a good knitter, you go to that person and say, 'how do I resolve this issue?' It's a great, supportive group."

~ Connie Pokavitch



Above: Joyce Shook and Vicki Smith collaborate on a quilt.
Below: Donna Marks displays one of her quilt pieces.



ACTIVITY: Bed Turning

Many find comfort and community in making quilts. You do not need to be a quiltmaker to appreciate the stories and memories associated with them.

Bed turnings allow community members to come together to learn personal stories about quilts and their makers.

In Fort Wayne, The Sisters of the Cloth commonly host bed turnings that highlight the legacy and heritage of quilting. In Nashville, The Pioneer Women hold a bed turning focusing on patterns and family stories at their annual quilt show.



The Pioneer Women at Brown County History Center

HOW TO ORGANIZE A BED TURNING:

1. Ask community members to lend you a quilt for the demonstration. Aim for a total of fifteen to twenty quilts.
2. Compile information about the quilts: Who made it? What was it made for? How long did it take to make it? Which patterns are used?
3. Collate the short stories into a single document (optional: make copies for every audience member so they can read along).
4. Invite the community to come see your show.
5. Set up an air mattress and layer the quilts in the order of presentation.
6. Two volunteers hold up the first quilt while another provides narration.
7. After telling the story of each quilt, gently fold the quilt to the end of the bed.
8. Encourage questions and comments from the audience throughout the event.
9. Repeat steps until each quilt has been presented or time has run out.

MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Air mattress
- Fitted and flat sheets
- Quilts (vintage and/or new)
- Information for each quilt (Approx. 200 words)
- Gloves for handling quilts



The Sisters of the Cloth at the Indiana State Fair

“When someone hands you a quilt, they are trusting you to take care of it. We treat it with respect for its age, condition, and love from the family who’s lending it.”

~ Connie Pockavich,
member of the Pioneer Women at the
Brown County Historical Society

UNIT FIVE Foodways



SPOTLIGHT: Sister Jean Marie Ballard

Ferdinand, IN



At the Monastery of Immaculate Conception, the Sisters of St. Benedict practice the creative tradition of baking springerle cookies, German biscuits with embossed designs. Year round, the sisters work with their hands to bake and package the cookies for distribution. They first prepare the dough and add anise oil for the cookie's distinctive flavor. They then use molds of birds and other natural imagery to adorn the cookies.

FOR THE BUSY CHRISTMAS SEASON, THEY PRESS THE COOKIES WITH HOLIDAY DESIGNS.

Sister Jean Marie Ballard came to the convent in 1976 after earning her degree in mathematics. She worked as a treasurer at the monastery before transitioning to the bakery. From participating in 4-H as a child, Sister Jean Marie had a basic knowledge of baking. She developed her skills as a baker by observing her mentor, Sister Barbara Jean Luebbehusen. Together, the two sisters would bake breakfast rolls for the community, including cinnamon rolls, pecan rolls, and the traditional German pastry kuchen.



Sister Jean Marie also learned from the late Sister Mary Jude, a resourceful baker known for her ability to creatively interpret recipes using available ingredients. "She was a very smart woman and knew how to make things last." After inheriting Sister Mary Jude's Betty Crocker cookbook, Sister Jean Marie found handwritten recipes on blank pages and on the backs of Christmas cards, tucked away within it. Through baking springerle cookies and other sweets, Sister Jean Marie serves her spiritual community, honors the memory of her mentors, and carries forward the monastery's tradition of baking together.

Watch the Sisters of St. Benedict making spingerle cookies here:
[youtube.com/watch?v=1zBGhLmznyE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zBGhLmznyE)



Sister Jean Marie Ballard displays a mold for making springerle cookies.

"I just like to keep my hands in dough."

~ Sister Jean Marie Ballard

SPOTLIGHT: Ernestine Ferry

Linton, IN



Ernestine "Ernie" Ferry started making noodles when her children were young because "most children love noodles." Each year at the annual fundraiser for St. Ann's Altar Society, she and her fellow volunteers make large batches of fresh noodles by hand for a community dinner, which lasts from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. One year, they used an astounding "two hundred dozen eggs." They also annually donate noodles for a free Thanksgiving dinner in Linton.

NOODLE MAKING KEEPS ERNIE SOCIALLY ENGAGED AND ACTIVE IN HER HOMETOWN.

While Ernie enjoys working in a group to feed her whole community, she also loves to make noodles at home for her family. "It helps me fill my days," she explains. At the same time, Ernie knows first hand the importance of social interaction and travel. "I can't imagine just sitting so much," she adds. "There's so much out there to do if you want to do it."

When she is not making noodles, traveling, volunteering, or connecting with her grandchildren on social media, Ernie stays busy baking banana bread and other treats to share. A lucky visitor might even get a frozen baked good to take home! Ernie's socially active lifestyle works well for her. "I'm ninety-three. I will be ninety-four in December," she laughs. "Time goes fast." At this stage in her vibrant life, Ernie finds balance by giving back to her community.

"If you want to stay busy, there is always something you can find to do—because there is always somebody who needs some help out there."

~ Ernestine Ferry



SPOTLIGHT: Jody Voelker

Spencer, IN



Jody Voelker inherited her love of cooking from her mother, who was her best friend. Their family tradition traces back to Jody's grandmother, who was a cook in Austria before immigrating to the United States. Jody inherited the recipe for galuskijs, cabbage rolls stuffed with meat and vegetables, which is now one of her signature dishes.

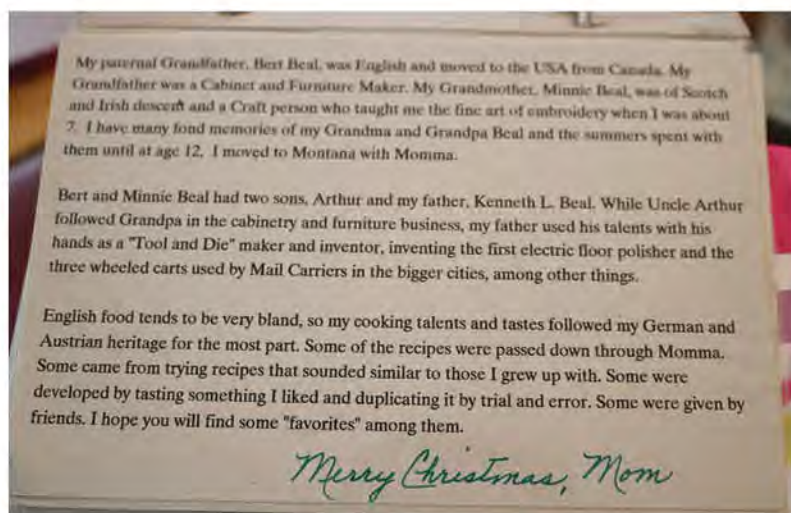
JODY COMPILED A BOOK OF RECIPES PAIRED WITH STORIES FROM THEIR FAMILY HISTORY.

Jody's memory of family dishes motivates her to document and share her knowledge of these recipes. "You always think that you have forever to pick up and learn things," she reflects. "My mother had so many recipes and I could just kick myself because I didn't write them down."

Along with her book of recipes and stories, Jody also passes on to her children and grandchildren a penchant for life-long learning. Like many older adults, she engages in a variety of everyday creative practices, such as painting, gardening, and canning fruits and vegetables.



Jody Voelker poses with her daughter T.J. Voelker.



"I have a couple of recipes that my mother wrote out for me and I treasure those. They're worth gold to me."

~ Jody Voelker

ACTIVITY: Family Recipes

Recipes are the tastiest of family traditions. This activity is designed to help you document your favorite family recipes and preserve your family history.

With inspiration from her daughter T.J., Jody Voelker created recipe books to share with their family. Their practice is the model for this activity. Jody's recipe book begins with this story:

"My mother, Rosaline (Lee) Wenzel Beal Spint, was a fabulous cook who came by it naturally. My grandmother, Paulina Sturza Wenzel, was reported to have cooked for Franz Josef, Emperor of Austria, when she was fourteen years old. Grandma came to America with her parents and siblings in 1903, when she was sixteen."

Optional: make this activity intergenerational by trying a recipe with a family member. Consider including historic photographs, images of food, or photos of family gatherings.

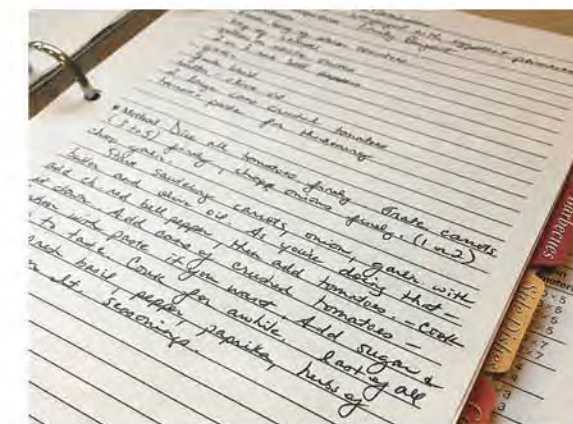


HOW TO COMPILE RECIPE BOOKS

1. Identify your favorite recipes from your existing collection or ask family members for their favorites.
2. Write or type each recipe onto an index card (if possible, jot down where or from whom you got this recipe).
3. Write down your family history and/or particular memories related to the recipes on index cards.
4. Arrange and insert the recipe and family history index cards into the album or binder.
5. Once compiled, your recipe book is ready to share with family and friends.

MATERIALS CHECKLIST:

- Photo album, three-ring binder, or blank recipe book
- Index cards
- Writing utensil (pen, pencil, or computer tablet)
- Family recipes



SPOTLIGHT: Sorghum Making

Brown County, IN



On the first weekend in October, members of the Kelp family and their friends gather to host the annual Farm Fest in Brown County. The event includes sorghum making, hayrides, homemade desserts, and more. Bob Kelp (above) operates the horse-powered sorghum mill at the festival. For years, Sonny Smith (below) has cooked down the sorghum juice into a sweet syrup using a multi-chambered evaporator. Visitors from across the state come to Brown County to attend the event and take a bottle of sweet sorghum home with them.



ACTIVITY: Second Servings Podcast

Over the years, TAI has produced several podcasts on a range of topics, from working in the limestone industry to making fiddles. However, none were more popular than Second Servings, our ten-part podcast series on Indiana foodways. Below, we have cherry-picked a few episodes that older adults may enjoy hearing and discussing. Listen to the podcast and consider these questions: What memories do you have of the food? Where were you when you first had it? Who made it? If you were going to make your own food podcast, what food would you choose to present? What about it would you want to share?

WITH A GROUP

While this activity can be done alone, it works better with a group. Play the podcast and ask the participants to share their memories and responses. Remember, food provides more than just nutritional value; it can hold cultural importance as well. Think about the conversations and stories you share with your friends and family at the dinner table or a cookout. What foods connect you to your family and friends?



Turtle soup

HERE ARE A FEW TO LISTEN TO:

- ♦ [Breaded Pork Tenderloin](https://archive.org/details/SecondServingsPodcastBreadedPorkTenderloin)
archive.org/details/SecondServingsPodcastBreadedPorkTenderloin
- ♦ [Morel Mushrooms](https://archive.org/details/SecondServingsMorelMushrooms)
archive.org/details/SecondServingsMorelMushrooms
- ♦ [Turtle Soup](https://archive.org/details/SecondServingsTurtleSoup)
archive.org/details/SecondServingsTurtleSoup
- ♦ [Meat of the Matter](https://archive.org/details/SecondServingsMeatOfTheMatter)
archive.org/details/SecondServingsMeatOfTheMatter
- ♦ [Persimmon Pudding](https://archive.org/details/SecondServingsPersimmonPudding)
archive.org/details/SecondServingsPersimmonPudding



From left to right: Junie Theoharis (1934-2012) with hand thrown chocolates; women making Serbian palačinke in Merrillville; Judy Shaw's persimmon pudding with whipped cream in Mitchell

SPOTLIGHT: Orange County HomeGrown

French Lick and Orleans, IN

Farmers, artists, musicians, and other locals gather every summer at the Orange County HomeGrown market that pops up in both French Lick and Orleans. Kim Arnold has served as its manager for eight years and values putting money directly into the hands of vendors. One of the most charming aspects of the market is that it requires participating vendors to make their crafts by hand, grow their own produce, or bake their own breads and pastries. “I wish every city had a farmers market,” Kim reflects, “it’s good for people for a lot of different reasons.”

MARKET-GOERS CAN EXPECT TO FIND AMISH-MADE PIES, JAM PRESERVES, AND SEASONAL PRODUCE.

Since 2002, the “Jammers” have set up a circle of chairs under a pavilion to play music during the market. “The one form of social engagement that I was prepared to commit to on a regular basis was playing music,” says jam leader Andy Mahler. “So, my commitment was to be at the farmers’ market every week.” Locals bring their acoustic guitars, banjos, dobros, dulcimers, fiddles, mandolins, and harmonicas. Sometimes someone will have an upright bass to fill out the sound.

Taking turns, musicians call out memorable songs that the group likely heard growing up in the area or on the radio. Whoever chooses the song then leads it with the group, singing and sharing in the performance for the enjoyment of all. During a morning of shopping for fresh food and local crafts, the music at the market draws people together.



Andy Mahler leads a music jam at the Orange County HomeGrown Market in Orleans.



“Some vendors come because it supplements their income, some because it is their income, and then there’s a lot of vendors that come for the fellowship because they’re lonely and they love being out talking to people.”

~ Kim Arnold

UNIT SIX Generativity

SPOTLIGHT: Alan Richards

Morgantown, IN



Generations of Alan Richards' family have lived in Brown County, where log houses and split-rail fences have remained part of the landscape. Once his grandchildren were old enough, he recruited them to help him split rails at the local Antique Tractor and Gas Engine Show in Nashville. Crowds gather to watch the Richards family do what was once a commonplace activity.

ALAN LEARNED TO SPLIT RAILS FROM HIS FAMILY AS A WAY TO MAKE OLD-STYLE FENCES.

His grandson Porter is especially talented at splitting out rails from straight-grain red and black oak trees. Each log is about eight inches across and eight or nine feet long. Alan starts to split the log with an ax; once the log cracks, Porter uses a set of wooden wedges and a splitting maul to cleanly split the length of the log. They repeat this until the log is split into quarters. They can spend all day transforming a pile of logs into a length of fence. Of course, Alan is teaching his grandchildren more than just how to make a fence—he is teaching them how to work and is forging a special bond with them through that work. Tradition bearers like Alan are important for the continuation of cultural knowledge and skills. He serves as an important bridge between past and future generations, and he finds satisfaction in the process.

Watch a video of the Rail Splitters of Brown County featuring Alan and Porter Richards here: go.iu.edu/2mvf

What everyday skills and knowledge do you have that could be shared with others?



SPOTLIGHT: Jim Cooper & Danny Cain

New Harmony, IN



Above: Danny Cain (left) with Jim Cooper (right) in 2003

Below: Danny Cain instructs his apprentices, David Guffey and Ruby Norris.



“I get a lot of satisfaction out of making this net and taking it out there and putting it in the river and watching it catch fish. It’s just something that you have accomplished that not many people can do.”

~ Danny Cain

Like generations before him, Jim Cooper (1942-2005) made hoop nets for catching catfish and other non-game fish from the Wabash River. Jim Cooper's nets were both traditional and practical. Nearly twenty years ago, Traditional Arts Indiana's Apprenticeship Program paired Jim Cooper with Danny Cain to encourage the continuation of net-making in this community. Danny recalls, “I grew up camping and fishing along the Ohio and Wabash rivers with my father; that's where I met Mr. Cooper, the net fisherman,” Danny recalls. Jim made Danny a few nets and they became lifelong friends.

“I DON'T WANT TO TAKE THIS TO MY GRAVE.” – JIM COOPER

Even though Jim passed away in 2005, his practice of making and fishing with hoop nets continues through his apprentice. In 2018, Danny taught the skill to his apprentice and son-in-law David Guffey. “I met Danny and went [hoopnet] fishing with him a few times,” David recalls, “and I was hooked right from the beginning. No pun intended.” Danny taught David the same way his mentor taught him: carving needles and tying knots. Danny has also passed his net-making knowledge on to his sister Ruby, who sees it as an important way to honor her family's fishing tradition.



SPOTLIGHT: Becky Sprinkle

Bedford, IN



In retirement, Becky Sprinkle loves playing music and singing the old country songs that her dad introduced to her when she was young. She sings these songs for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, visitors at the Spring Mill State Park in Mitchell, and at informal gatherings and farmers markets. “We would sit outside in the summer on the picnic table and [dad would] play the guitar and later both of us would play guitars,” Becky recalls, “and we would sing for hours.” Today, Becky and her 91-year-old father Bob Gibson continue to perform songs by Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Ernest Tubb, and many others whose music they first heard on the radio.

BECKY HAS AN EXCELLENT MEMORY FOR THE SONGS SHE HEARD HER FATHER PLAY GROWING UP.

When she performs for an hour or more, Becky brings along a binder of music to help keep track of the songs she knows. In her binder, there are several pages of typed and hand-written song lyrics with chords that she consults as she accompanies herself on guitar and harmonica. Whether she learned them from her father, from friends, or on her own, the songs of Becky’s core repertoire represent the connection she shares with her father and others of his generation.

“One of my early memories was sitting on dad’s lap... I remember listening to the Grand Ole Opry just sitting on his lap next to that dial radio with the lights on it.”

~ Becky Sprinkle



Above and below: Becky Sprinkle performs with her father, Bob Gibson.



ACTIVITY: Make Your Own Songbook

When musicians encounter songs, whether they are brand new or generations old, they are building their musical repertoires. While some commit meaningful songs to memory, others use binders to collect and organize their music. This songbook is useful not only as a personal reference for performance and practice, but it could also become a valued family heirloom one day. This activity presents two methods for making your own songbook.

It is very easy to lose track of song sheets, but some musicians prefer the flexibility of rearranging their songbooks. Method A allows for a more dynamic upkeep of song sheets, which makes it more appropriate for daily use. Method B results in a more permanent collection of songs that preserves your musical repertoire.

METHOD A:

1. Locate song lyrics and chord sheets on the internet and print them out. Consider using a font size large enough to see from a short distance.
2. If you prefer to handwrite the song lyrics, use a dark-colored pen or pencil to write them clearly on a sheet of loose-leaf paper.
3. Use a three-ring hole punch to prepare the lyric sheets or insert them into a transparent sheet protector before arranging them into a three-ring binder.
4. Decide on a system for putting your songs in order. For instance, you can alphabetize them, organize them by genre, or by frequency of use.

METHOD B:

1. Reserve the first few pages of the notebook as an index for keeping track of your ever-growing songbook. This is where you will write down song titles and their corresponding page numbers.
2. Repeat step one and two of Method A, writing directly into the spiral-bound notebook.
3. If you chose to print songs from the internet, cut them out and glue them into your notebook. Be sure to note the page number and song title for your index.

Note: With Method B, you will be unable to reorganize the songs later.

METHOD A MATERIALS

- Three-ring binder
- Three-ring hole punch or sheet protectors
- Loose-leaf or printer paper
- Pen or pencil

METHOD B MATERIALS

- Spiral-bound notebook
- Pen or pencil
- Scissors
- Glue stick

OPTIONAL

- Music stand
- Printer and computer
- internet access

SPOTLIGHT: Roy Spight

Indianapolis, IN



Drummaking allowed Roy Spight (1942-2018) to combine his two lifelong passions: woodworking and African music. Roy first learned woodworking as a Boy Scout, and later his brother introduced him to West African culture and music. After studying many of the handmade instruments in his brother's collection, Roy was inspired to build his own drums.

Roy received much of his training and knowledge about drums from his best friend, Prince Julius Adeniyi, a master drummer and leader of the group Drums of West Africa. Prince and Roy spent hours together talking about playing techniques, drum design, and construction methods. As Roy's drummaking abilities evolved, Prince enjoyed visiting with his friend and trying out the new creations.

A CENTRAL FIGURE IN INDIANAPOLIS'S ACTIVE DRUMMING SCENE, ROY BUILT AND REPAIRED DRUMS FOR MANY OF THE CITY'S BEST PLAYERS.

After Prince's passing in 2011, Roy continued to build drums and participate in weekly drumming circles. In the face of his own failing health, he created a legacy to leave to his community. When simple daily tasks became difficult, he still made drums. With chisels and saws, he hollowed sections of tree trunks, transforming fallen neighborhood trees into beautiful musical instruments. To the very end, he loved to make and share his percussion instruments, which helped give his life purpose and connected him to his family and friends.



"I put something physical into the drum, so that my spirit will be transmitted to the drum and the final sounds will have more meaning."

~ Roy Spight



SPOTLIGHT: Elmer Schlensker

Milltown, IN



Elmer Schlensker (1930-2012) was a fourth-generation broom maker from Milltown. As a child, he helped sew the brooms that his father made, but Elmer never made a complete broom until many years after his father passed. A coordinator for the Lanesville Heritage Festival approached Elmer to demonstrate at the event. He went home and took apart several of his father's old brooms to remind himself how they were made. Through trial and error, he taught himself the craft. During retirement, he worked year-round to make enough brooms to sell at the Lanesville Festival.

While he used the same broom-making equipment that his father used, he did not grow his own broom corn, as his father did. Instead, he ordered his materials from a large broom factory. Since his father always placed a label on each of his brooms, Elmer continued the tradition by cutting rural pictures out of *Country* magazines to make labels for his creations.

BROOM MAKING WAS ONE WAY ELMER CONNECTED TO HIS COMMUNITY

For years, Elmer worked in the basement of his home making a few brooms each week in anticipation of the Lanesville Festival. He taught his daughter how to make brooms and hoped that she would take it up when she gets old enough to retire. A few years before he passed, Elmer taught his grandson to make a broom, which marked a sixth generation of broom makers in his family. By teaching his daughter and grandson to make brooms, Elmer was engaging in the process of generativity, the care and guiding of future generations. This is a human process that helps older adults experience fulfillment, and families and communities retain important cultural knowledge.



Watch Elmer make a broom here:
go.iu.edu/2kV0

"Different makers told me a little bit about broom making. [The brooms] didn't look too good to start with, but they got better over the years. People seem to like them."

~ Elmer Schlensker

ACTIVITY: Generativity List

We have all heard of bucket lists: those things we want to do before we are unable. While these lists may be fun to contemplate and accomplish, this activity is about making another kind of list. “Generativity” is an aspect of later life that refers to an elder’s “concern for establishing and guiding the next generation.” Folklorists often call this process “tradition.” A generativity list inventories the skills and knowledge that you want to pass on to the next generation.

What do you want to share with others? Your persimmon pudding recipe? How to play the accordion? How to make a split-rail fence? It is totally up to you! Generativity lists can include different kinds of practices. You can teach some activities in an afternoon, while others will take months or years for a student to fully accomplish. Make a list of the important skills and knowledge that you hold, identify who you think might be willing to learn these things from you, and make a plan to teach your tradition.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- ♦ Be proactive, purposeful, and specific in your generativity! What do you want to teach? To whom? How? When?
- ♦ You cannot force someone to learn something they don’t want to learn. Generativity must be negotiated. Maybe someone is interested, but does not have the time to learn. Consider adapting the practice for the student’s needs.
- ♦ Things may not work out the way you planned. The point is to plant the seed so that years later it may resurface. Many people are exposed to traditions when they are young, only to pick them up again after they retire or once their children are raised.

OTHER FORMS OF GENERATIVITY

Not everyone gets to pass their knowledge directly on to future generations. Like a seed bank, many older adults write books, make recordings, or produce videos as a generative act. That is, they make something that documents their knowledge and skills which can be reconstituted later when someone wants or needs it. Consider other ways to share your knowledge:

- ♦ Start a blog
- ♦ Write a book
- ♦ Make a recording
- ♦ Draw a map
- ♦ Compile your recipes
- ♦ Label and caption your family photographs



Far left: Amelia Culpher teaches quilt-making to her niece, Andrea Faust.
Left: Jim Smoak instructs his daughter, Johanna D. Rippey to play banjo.

UNIT SEVEN

Daily Practice

SPOTLIGHT: Jenny Kander

Bloomington, IN



Born in South Africa, Jenny Kander traveled throughout her life, giving her memories and stories to share. For years, she has enjoyed writing poetry and making collages. Then one day, while she was in the hospital, a scarlet rat came to her in a dream. At this time, she had also been learning about primitive doll making, so she decided to make a sequined doll in the scarlet rat's image. This would be the first of Jenny's many narrative dolls, which are both whimsical and serious. She blends her love of needlework with storytelling, conjuring up fanciful worlds and characters for her dolls. Her creations often offer subtle social commentaries, especially on what life can be like for aging women.

JENNY'S DOLLS MAKE PLAYFUL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE WORLD.

Whether writing poetry, making dolls, or doing collage, being creatively engaged is a daily habit for Jenny, which focuses her attention and fills her time. She explains, "I'm no good at meditating – in the classic meditation style – but I certainly meditate when I'm sewing." Time seems to pass quickly when she is making a doll; only when she starts to feel hungry does she realize that she has been sewing all day. This compression of time is part of the "flow" state that many experience when engaging in a creative practice. Artists like Jenny who experience flow also benefit from increased focus, enjoyment, and energy through the process.

"I'm enjoying life more and more; the older I get, the more meaningful it is. So I've spent a lot of time wondering where creativity comes from."

~ Jenny Kander



Listen to Jenny speak to a class about her poetry and dolls here:
go.iu.edu/2FQ2

SPOTLIGHT: Robert Hamm

Bloomington, IN



It is a challenge to keep up with Robert Hamm as he demonstrates his power tool skills, shows off his beautiful collection of local lumber, or explains the history of his tiny barbershop on Hamm Farms. He also curates a collection of antique tools and artifacts passed down from his relatives, whose occupations included woodworking, plumbing, farming, and blacksmithing. Gerontologists warn of boredom as one of the "plagues of aging," but at eighty-three years of age, Robert is far from bored. Like generations of his family before him, he is industrious and possesses a variety of talents.

OVER THE YEARS, ROBERT HAS CULTIVATED MANY SKILLS TO KEEP HIMSELF ACTIVE AND ENGAGED.

You can find Robert's rustic furniture for sale at the Owen County Farmers' Market or stop into his barbershop along State Road 46. His customers sit in a vintage chair with a little spittoon in the arm and get a healthy dose of local history to accompany their haircut. Sitting in his barber chair, you might hear the history of the region, from the arrival of electricity to the impact of hippie hairstyles on his local business. Robert Hamm demonstrates how staying engaged, creative, and active can support an older adult's well-being.

"I am from a long line of woodworkers. My great-granddad had a woodshop/blacksmith shop with his brother-in-law in Hendricksville, Indiana. And they made wagons, buggies, garden plows, and chairs."

~Robert Hamm



SPOTLIGHT: James & Jenny Yang

Bloomington, IN



James and Jenny Yang embody the notion of “creative aging.” This couple cultivated a life of art, culture, and community. They often presented public programs about the Chinese traditions they practiced. While Jenny became locally known as a talented Tai Chi and Chi-Kung practitioner and mentor, James devoted himself to the practice of calligraphy, writing, and playing the erhu.

THE COUPLE SETTLED IN BLOOMINGTON IN 2001 AFTER JAMES RETIRED FROM THE NATIONAL TSING-HUA UNIVERSITY IN TAIWAN.

Throughout his childhood, James Min-Ching Yang (1936-2018) practiced calligraphy using the “four treasures” – the brush, ink stick, ink stone, and rice paper. The skills he learned in his youth remained a creative pursuit during James’s life. He and Jenny often hosted calligraphy demonstrations and workshops.

Towards the end of his life, James remembered a craft from his youth: paper folding. He showed his grandson how to make traditional Chinese pagodas out of folded paper blocks. James would fold heavy paper into progressively smaller blocks so that each piece would nest within the next, resulting in a tower that stands on its own. After retiring to Bloomington, James taught paper folding techniques and calligraphy to students at Indiana University, as well as others in the community. Both James and Jenny enjoyed sharing their artistic talents and cultural knowledge.

Whether practicing Tai Chi, playing erhu, or doing calligraphy, the Yangs’ creative undertakings are meditative practices that have been central to their daily routine.

“When doing [art], we don’t think, ‘Oh, I’m old, so I do it.’ No. It’s because we forget about our age. Because we love it.”

~ James Yang



Watch Jenny practice Tai Chi here: go.iu.edu/2KVQ

SPOTLIGHT: Heritage Place Ladies of the Dance

Indianapolis, IN



Above: Minnie Jackson (in front) dances with Odessa Higginson (behind).

A few times each week, a group gathers to dance and socialize at Heritage Place of Indianapolis, an older adult service organization. More than twenty-five years ago, Katie Davis approached Heritage Place to see if they could find someone to teach line dancing. Heritage Place hired seasoned dance instructor Kathy Rucker, who teaches a variety of dance styles across Indianapolis.

KATHY CONTINUES TO SERVE AS THE CHOREOGRAPHER AND INSTRUCTOR FOR THE HERITAGE PLACE LADIES OF THE DANCE.

The Ladies perform throughout the Indianapolis area, dancing at area nursing homes and local events, as well as large celebrations like the Indiana State Fair and the Indiana Black Expo. Amid their performance and rehearsal schedules, members of this group support one another in the face of some of later life’s greatest challenges, such as the loss of a loved one or a cancer diagnosis.

Some members dance to get exercise and stay limber, while others join the Ladies of the Dance to make friends and ease into retirement. The late Odessa Higginson, founding member and self-described “elder of the club,” explained the importance of dancing in her life: “I’m ninety-two years old and I love dancing. I intend to keep dancing as long as I can keep moving.”



“The older you get, the more you need to try to keep moving. Keep socializing. Don’t sit at home looking at the television, ain’t nothing on it no way.”

~ Odessa Higginson (1926-2019)



Kathy Rucker (in front) leads the Ladies of the Dance.

Watch the Heritage Place Ladies of the Dance here: go.iu.edu/2RFX

SPOTLIGHT: Jan Boettcher

Thorntown, IN



Jan Boettcher practices rosemaling, a type of traditional decorative painting. Her desire to connect with her Norwegian ancestry led her to learn the art from her Aunt Dorothy. Jan now works closely with her husband, Roger, who creates the wooden pieces that she paints. This allows her to produce works of art for her Norwegian-American customers that evoke the natural landscapes of their ancestral homeland.

JAN AND ROGER MOVED TO THORNTOWN FROM WISCONSIN IN 1999.

Each day, Jan goes to her studio to paint. Whether filling an order, adorning a piece of antique furniture, or making something completely new, she is never at a loss for something to do. Studying photographs and older pieces informs her art, making new pieces based on historical motifs, color combinations, and patterns. She also takes classes in rosemaling at the Vesterheim Folk Art School in Iowa. Today, she continues to practice and expand her repertoire of styles and techniques. Although she sells her art to collectors all over the United States and beyond, rosemaling provides more than an income; it is a daily practice that connects her with her heritage and community.



Watch a video short about Jan's rosemaling here:
go.iu.edu/2dkc

“Rosemaling keeps me busy, keeps me active, keeps me connected with people...It’s something to look forward to everyday. I always say, if I live to be two hundred I’ll never finish everything I have in my mind.”

~ Jan Boettcher

SPOTLIGHT: Jan Hamm

Spencer, IN



Beautiful objects abound in Jan Hamm's apartment. She has arranged frames, canvases, photographs, porcelain, and paintings throughout her space. A life-long learner, Jan constantly challenges herself to keep creating. Free online painting shows and lessons play on her television while she paints at her easel.

Jan was first inspired by her Aunt Olaf Pegg, a self-taught still life painter from Indiana. Aunt Olaf's paintings are displayed in Jan's living room art gallery. Jan also loves to share her family's creative pursuits with her granddaughter.

WITH A PASSION FOR NATURE, LANDSCAPES ARE SOME OF JAN'S FAVORITE SUBJECTS TO PAINT.

Having painted for most of her life, Jan stays engaged in all sorts of creative activities with her local community. She teaches an acrylics class at the community-run Owen County Art Guild. These practices help combat feelings of boredom, a challenge that many older adults face.

Painting is an everyday practice for Jan, one that helps her appreciate the beauty all around her. "Painting is all about seeing and ideas. You might just see a little bitty thing and think, 'Hey, it could be a painting!'" Jan also demonstrates her love of nature by collecting and arranging beautiful found objects. For instance, she carefully placed blue stones within a tiny heart-shaped bird's nest, transforming it into a work of art. Between her appreciation of nature and her family's creative practices, Jan lives an abundantly artistic life.



“It’s about seeing... Learning to see.”

~ Jan Hamm



SPOTLIGHT: Don Baker

Bloomfield, IN



Don Baker spends every day building and repairing wooden objects. Ever since woodshop class in high school, Don has loved working with wood. He came from a handy family; his mother would make doll clothing while his father was a mechanic. He enjoys being imaginative with his decorative craft by making birdhouses, fairy houses, and dollhouses. He even built a model Route 66 in his garage with his grandson.

AT ANY GIVEN TIME, DON KEEPS BUSY WORKING ON THREE OR FOUR BIRDHOUSES.

Using repurposed wood, rocks, and found materials, Don adds natural items to his birdhouse scenery. He wants birds to use his houses, so he includes miniature wooden tables on which the birds perch. "You'd be surprised how many sit on those little wooden tables before they go in the house," Don remarks. "A lot of times they sit on their roof and sit there and look around their neighborhood." He can both identify species of birds and recognize the particular birds that come and live in his houses.

"I just enjoy making the birdhouses. I enjoy watching the birds and the birds have to have somewhere to nest, so I'm the guy that makes them for them."

~ Don Baker



SPOTLIGHT: Bill Larkin

Loogootee, IN



After working in data processing for thirty-six years, Bill Larkin decided that the first thing he would do in retirement was plant flowers. What started as a truckload of plants, over the next fourteen years, grew to over thirty thousand. Bill's home in Loogootee became something of a roadside attraction after his garden was featured in a local paper. However, after a drought in 2011, Bill had to adapt his creative practice.

That first autumn, Bill made one thousand brightly colored birdhouses, but when he put them in his yard the following summer, it still was not enough color. Not wanting to do carpentry in the hot summers, he started painting rocks that he purchased from a local landscaper. He continued in this way, making birdhouses in the fall and painting rocks in the summer, for three years.

BILL REGULARLY INVITES VISITORS INTO HIS HOME AND SENDS THEM OFF WITH A HANDMADE BIRDHOUSE OF THEIR OWN.

Bill now sees around five thousand visitors a year from all across the country who discover his birdhouses from numerous websites. Individuals come looking for a way to spend a day outdoors, while others come by the busload to witness his colorful display.

"It gives me something to do. Especially when I went through the knee and hip replacement surgeries, I'd lost my mind if I couldn't have done something. It is so much fun to paint them."

~ Bill Larkin



ACTIVITY: Finding Your Creative Practice

Having a creative practice can positively affect your life, but what if you do not already have a personal pastime, meaningful hobby, or artmaking habit? Though starting a creative practice at a young age can lead to a lifetime of enriching experiences, there is no reason to let obstacles such as a perceived lack of time or confidence keep you from starting today. Like saving for retirement, make small and consistent contributions to your creative practice over time. The later you start, the more time you may need to invest to get the returns you desire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Make a list of creative practices that interest you.**
You might begin by listing things you have done in the past that you might want to revive. Another approach may be to skim through the spotlights in this guide and note the ones that appeal to you. You might also ask your friends what they enjoy and give that a try. Embrace the freedom to explore your interests.
- **Decide on one or more practices you want to try.**
Keep in mind that everyone is different. Some may want to revive a passion from their youth, while others may try something completely different from anything they have ever done.
- **Find a group of people who share your creative interests.**
Though many practices are possible to do alone, they may also have a community built around them. For instance, you can play your instrument at home, but you can also go to a music jam. If you have limited mobility or are homebound, your social network may be online. The main thing is to have a time and space where you can practice your creativity both in solitude and with others.
- **Remain open to trying new things.**
Even after you have tried something, you can change your mind at any time; you may not enjoy the creative practice as much as you thought you would. Try something else! If you had trouble connecting with the group, consider trying a related practice. If you tried knitting, maybe quilting is for you. If you tried the classic car club, perhaps antique tractors are more your speed. Remember, it is totally up to you.

Top: Ray Major plays guitar and harmonica.
Center: Leslie Asher holds her jar of preserved banana peppers.
Bottom: Wayne Byerley holds his finished wooden bowl.



UNIT EIGHT Show & Tell

John Bennett shows his ironwork.

SPOTLIGHT: Gene Shipp

Bloomington, IN



“I served my country,” recalls 101-year-old Gene Shipp, a resident of Bell Trace Senior Living. Drafted into military service in 1941, just after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he would remain in the Army for thirty years. He served in three wars: World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

THE SHELF OUTSIDE HIS DOOR ARTFULLY PRESENTS HIS MILITARY SERVICE.

On the shelf outside Mr. Shipp’s apartment door, he proudly displays his helmet, a small American flag, and a toy jeep and tank. He explains that the decorated ledge displays some of the “equipment” associated with his work as a Master Sergeant. He has changed, rearranged, and added to the shelf over the years, which garners attention from visitors and fellow residents.

Most of the residents at Bell Trace place personal items on the shelves outside their doors. Some displays hold seasonal decorations, art projects, and family photographs. Mr. Shipp’s display reflects his life story. These displays aid in life review and improve sociability by introducing residents to their ever-changing community of neighbors. They remind elders of their experiences and help present their personalities, interests, and stories to others.

“My military life was very exciting...I was blessed to go through all of that and I didn’t get a scratch. I’m very blessed.”

~ Gene Shipp



ACTIVITY: Shelf Outside My Door

Outside the door to many independent and assisted living apartments are shelves. Residents commonly use these shelves for finding their way around their new community, transforming mundane entryways into personal spaces.

From found objects and pictures of grandchildren to holiday decorations and art projects, these shelves can say a lot about the person who lives there. What was their job? Where are they from? What do they value? These shelves are both creative acts and a chance to connect with other residents.

Tip: If your facility does not have shelves for this activity, the same principle can be used on bulletin boards or doors.



SHARING SHELVES:

1. Explain the reason for the shelf outside their door. Encourage residents to express themselves by decorating their shelves.
2. Pair residents and have them talk with their partner about their shelves.
3. Have them ask questions such as: What does this display mean to them? Why did they choose these particular items? Where did these items come from?
4. Take a picture of each resident’s shelf and compile a slideshow.
5. Gather participating residents for a program to present the slide show of photos.
6. Invite the pairs of residents to take turns sharing their partner’s shelf and life story.

MAKE IT INTERGENERATIONAL

Partner with a local school and have students interview the residents. The students may make a poster or slide show about the story of each shelf.

MATERIALS & OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

This activity can be done independently without steps 3, 4, and 5. If you choose to do the last three steps you will need:

- Digital camera or smart phone
- Computer with a slide show program
- Projector



SPOTLIGHT: Stephen & Nancy Dickey

Paoli, IN

Music from the Home of Stephen & Nancy Dickey CD Release Party

Stephen and Nancy Dickey play music with their friends and family in and around rural Orange County where Stephen has lived all of his life. They became the first artists featured in Traditional Arts Indiana's Elder Music Project through which they recorded songs and fiddle tunes. This recording reflects a vibrant fiddle tradition that connects the Dickey family to Orange County and an extensive network of pickers, players, and listeners. While Stephen composed some of the newer tunes on this album, he and Nancy also play music that Stephen learned from his father, Lotus Dickey, as well as other tunes commonly played at community jam sessions. Stephen and Nancy are steeped in the eclectic fiddling traditions of Southern Indiana. Fiddlers may play hoedowns and waltzes as well as popular tunes and older folk songs.

THE ALBUM RELEASE PARTY DEMONSTRATED THE JOY OF SHARING AND PARTICIPATING IN MAKING MUSIC TOGETHER.

On October 4, 2019, *Music from the Home of Stephen & Nancy Dickey* was released at the Orange County Community Center in Paoli. With about one hundred and fifty friends and family members in attendance and at least forty locally-based musicians ready to play music, the event was a gratifying experience for all. The album release party demonstrated the joy that can be found in sharing and participating in music making as a community.



ACTIVITY: Music Listening Guide

Traditional Arts Indiana produced *Music from the Home of Stephen & Nancy Dickey* in order to document an important music tradition of Orange County and make it freely available to others. Music has the capacity to transport us to different places and times. If this music is familiar to you, it may help you recall and share your memories.

Think of a recording or album that has been meaningful to you. Maybe your family members played it repeatedly in your home, or perhaps you heard it at a school dance, your wedding, or another important event in your life. Below are a few questions to help you listen deeply to the music of your choice. These prompts work especially well when discussed in a group, but they can also be pondered individually as a journaling exercise or used as your soundtrack for an art project.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (or Journal Activity)

- What does this music remind you of?
- Who does this music remind you of?
- Do you sing, hum, or whistle along when you hear it? Can you play it on an instrument?
- Where do you think it was played?
- Does it evoke any memories?
- Does this music remind you of other music you have heard? How is it similar?



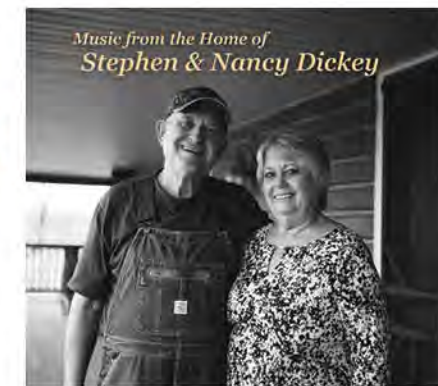
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES:

- Try humming along.
- Make up your own lyrics to the music.
- Create a dance to this music.
- Draw a picture while listening to this music.

THE ALBUM OF OUR LIVES

If you were going to make a recording or playlist about your life, what songs would you include? Would it include jump-rope rhymes from your youth or lullabies you sang to your children? How about the music played at social gatherings or that you listened to in your first car? Make a list of the songs you would like to include. If you want, you can even draw album art or write liner notes.

Listen to *Music from the Home of Stephen & Nancy Dickey* here:
go.iu.edu/2kVV



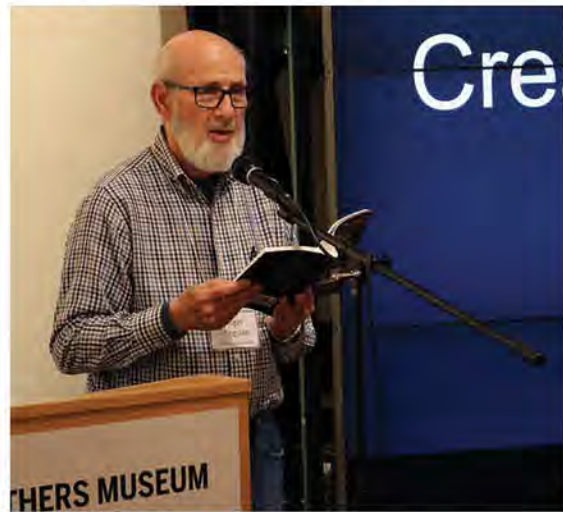
SPOTLIGHT: Creative Aging Summit

Bloomington, IN

Indiana University, June 13, 2019



Below: Roger Pfingston reads his poem.
Below right: Sue Medland tries the mountain dulcimer.



“I’m just having so much fun being creative and forming those social networks.”

~ Leslie Asher, painter and dress maker

Elder artists from South Central Indiana came to the IU campus in Bloomington to enjoy a full afternoon at Traditional Arts Indiana’s first Creative Aging Summit. The event experimented with a show-and-tell style format as attendees stood up one at a time to introduce themselves and their creative practices. Painters, musicians, gardeners, weavers and knitters, and other kinds of artists were in attendance. The artists were invited to bring their artwork, tools or instruments, and works in progress that they wanted to present at the summit.

THE GOAL OF THE SUMMIT WAS TO CONNECT ARTISTS AND TO SPARK IDEAS FOR IMPROVING THE LIVES OF OLDER ADULTS THROUGH CREATIVE PRACTICES.

The program featured a demonstration by Kara Barnard on her dulcimer workshops; a poetry reading by the Tuesday Poets of Bell Trace Senior Living; a presentation by creative aging consultant Julie Hill on expression through storytelling; and, finally, a music jam led by Becky Sprinkle to close out the event. Participants also identified some of the problems facing older adults, such as transportation, poverty, and affordable housing. They discussed existing social service organizations and made suggestions for what they would like to see in their communities. We learned that older adults seek more engaging activities, from “information about library programs and resources” to “playing cards” and “more community art programs or projects.”



SPOTLIGHT: Creative Aging Summit

Ferdinand, IN

Ferdinand Public Library, September 25, 2019

On a sunny September day, “Ode to Joy” filled the room at the quiet Ferdinand Public Library. Retired church organist Vita Bartley played the anthem on her portable keyboard after sharing her story of performing music in her community for over sixty-five years. Vita was one of forty Dubois County residents who gathered for the Creative Aging Summit. Harmonica players, German-speaking storytellers, quilters, painters, and stained-glass artists shared their talents in the show-and-tell portion of the event.

PARTICIPANTS DISCUSSED THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVE PRACTICE IN LATER LIFE.

TAI Director Jon Kay shared his ongoing research about the role of place-based traditional arts in the well-being of older adults. Afterwards, attendees offered examples of their creative practices as Jon facilitated a discussion reflecting on how these practices are meaningful to them. The artists were asked about the role that arts play in their lives: how they combat boredom, helplessness, and feelings of loneliness or isolation.

The gathering also included an informal community conversation, providing the chance for elders to discuss their ideas, concerns about access, and advocacy for creative practices in their community. Finally, the two presenting organizations, Traditional Arts Indiana and Traditional Arts Today, asked participants to share their thoughts in a questionnaire. Attendees hung around long after the summit had concluded to express their delight in witnessing the group’s collective abilities.



Participants take turns sharing their creative practices.



Above: Kathi Mathies holds the microphone for Vita Bartley.
Below: Mike Lindauer shares local history.



“Everyone has a story to tell.”

~ Kathi Mathies

ACTIVITY: Organize an Elder Show & Tell

Show-and-tells are not just for kids. Many older adults enjoy sharing their talents and showing the products of their creative pursuits. These can be art objects or crafts, but you can also share songs, stories, riddles, or jokes. Everyone has something they can contribute. By participating in this activity, elders will share their work and encourage others to do so as well. Whether a small group of friends meeting around a table, or a larger group assembling in a senior center, these gatherings are sure to inspire elders and build community.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A SHOW & TELL

1. Invite local elders to bring an example of their creative practices to share with the group.
2. Select a facilitator who can keep track of the time to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak.
3. One at a time, have each person share their creative practice with the group.
4. Once everyone has shared their practice, discuss themes and similarities that emerged during the activity. As a group, consider the following questions: Why is creativity important in later life? How can we encourage creative aging in our community?
5. Encourage participants to stay after the event so they can chat informally. They may wish to meet with others who share their interests.

WORKSHOP CHECKLIST

- Venue
- Facilitator
- Microphone (optional)
- Light refreshments (optional)



Jan Stenftenagel shows her art project at the Ferdinand Public Library.



LaVerne Begle talks about the quilts she makes.

Additional Resources



Suggested Reading & Viewing

BOOKS & ARTICLES

Boyer, Johanna Misy. 2007. *Creativity Matters: The Arts and Aging Toolkit*. New York, N.Y.: National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts.

nationalguild.org/resources/resources/free-guild-resource/creativity-matters-the-arts-and-aging-toolkit

Hanna, Gay & Susan Perlstein. 2008. "Creativity Matters: Arts and Aging in America." *Monograph*, September 2008. Americans for the Arts.

giarts.org/sites/default/files/Monograph_Creativity-Matters-Arts-and-Aging-in-America.pdf

Hufford, Mary. 2008. *From West Africa to West Philadelphia: Storytelling Traditions of Philadelphia's Liberian Elders*. The Center for Folklore and Ethnography, University of Pennsylvania, and the Agape African Senior Citizens Center. Philadelphia, PA.

westphillyhistory.archives.upenn.edu/exhibits/west-africa-stories

Kay, Jon. 2016. *Folk Art and Aging: Life-Story Objects and Their Makers*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Free Download via IU Scholarworks)

hdl.handle.net/2022/20906

Kay, Jon, ed. 2018. *The Expressive Lives of Elders: Folklore, Art, and Aging*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Free Download via IU Scholarworks)

hdl.handle.net/2022/22075

North Dakota Council on the Arts' (NDCA). 2017. "Sundogs and Sunflowers: An Art for Life Program Guide for Creative Aging, Health, and Wellness Toolkit." Bismarck, ND.

arts.nd.gov/art-life-program

VIDEO MEDIA

Water from Another Time (1982, 28 mins)

folkstreams.net/film-detail.php?id=133

Mr. Jimmy's Birthday Challenge (2009, 26 mins)

folkstreams.net/film-detail.php?id=250

The Grand Generation (1993, 27 mins)

folkstreams.net/film-detail.php?id=111

Through the Eye of the Needle (2011, 30 mins)

youtu.be/HCVlhYCKruQ

Modeling Historical Solsberry (2015, 4 mins)

youtu.be/318dtf4iR9Q

Meet the Women Behind L.A.'s African American Miniature Museum (2019, 10 mins)

youtu.be/fBzSkiA8is

The online world is constantly changing. All of the links in this publication can be found in their most updated form on the TAI website: traditionalarts.indiana.edu

Related Programs

Traditional Arts Indiana

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships are a time-proven way to pass on traditional music, crafts, skills, and knowledge. Each year, TAI's Apprenticeship Program funds up to six master artists and their apprentices. go.iu.edu/2tflk

INDIANA HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS

TAI's Indiana Heritage Fellowship Awards recognize the lifetime achievements of Indiana's traditional craftspeople, musicians, artists, dancers, and other creative Hoosiers. go.iu.edu/2tftp

ELDER MUSIC PROJECT

The Elder Music Project raises awareness of Indiana's musical diversity, celebrates the talent of older adults, and creates a rich archive by producing and freely distributing recordings of older musicians in Indiana. go.iu.edu/2RHA

Other Organizations

INDIANA ARTS COMMISSION

Funded by the Indiana General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) supports the work of artists and arts organizations through professional training, public programs, and grant making. in.gov/arts

INDIANA ARTS COMMISSION'S REGIONAL ARTS PARTNERS

Regional Arts Partners are arts agencies or cultural organizations that support the work of the IAC and the arts in their region. These organizations serve specific counties; see the IAC website to find the arts partner for your county. in.gov/arts/2358.htm

INDIANA HUMANITIES

As a statewide nonprofit, Indiana Humanities offers grants, facilitates public programs and events, and supports communities through the public humanities. Their Speakers Bureau may be of interest to older-adult service organizations. indianahumanities.org

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) supports communities across the US through grants, programs, and services. The NEA Heritage Fellowships recognize the distinct contributions of folk and traditional artists, who are frequently older adults. arts.gov/artistic-fields/folk-traditional-arts

INDIANA UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR RURAL ENGAGEMENT

IU's Center for Rural Engagement utilizes the research, teaching, and service of Bloomington faculty, staff, and students to address the challenges facing rural communities. Their work often employs the arts and humanities to improve quality of life. rural.indiana.edu/

AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

Indiana's Area Agencies on Aging provide case management, information, and referrals for various services to older adults and people with developmental disabilities. To apply for services, call toll-free 1-800-986-3505. in.gov/fssa/da/3478.htm

MEMORY | ART | & AGING

“There are elderly people all over America, waiting only to be asked about their stories and folk art. Their memories and works are stored in boxes, in cellars, in trunks, in attics...needing only a witness to bring them to light, a recipient to complete the interchange that is requisite to all cultural transmission.” Barbara Myerhoff, anthropologist

