

## **Kenton County Legend Ballard “Pappy” Raborn Taylor Brought Mountain Music to the Mainstream**

Ballard “Pappy” Taylor (1908-1998), a 1920s-1960s radio personality, helped popularize mountain music and folk songs, or “hillbilly music” as it was known at the time. After leaving Adair County for Covington, Ky. in 1928 hoping for work in the music industry, Taylor’s first radio spot was on Sunday nights through Cincinnati’s WLW – the first station to make 50,000 watts and reaching a national audience.



Taylor played throughout the south during his career with bands like “The Carolina Troubadour,” “Uncle Henry’s Original Kentucky Mountaineers,” and “The Blue Ridge Mountain Boys.” During a 1940s radio broadcast with “Uncle Henry’s Original Kentucky Mountaineers,” Taylor played the part of “Grandpappy Nerit,” a cantankerous old man character which stuck with him through a 1951 six-week Grand Ole Opry tour.

Taylor officially retired in 1965 to his home in Covington, Ky., but continued to play old-time music and has often been honored for his contribution to country and hillbilly music.

Oral history interviews with Ballard “Pappy” Taylor and Kentucky musicians can be found at <http://passtheword.ky.gov>. (Photo courtesy of Kenton County Public Library)

Pass the Word” is a discovery tool for oral histories throughout the state of Kentucky. To learn more about this topic, visit <http://passtheword.ky.gov>.