

The late great super-star of country music and vaudeville, Jimmie "The Blue Yodeler"/"The Singing Brakeman" Rodgers is considered "The Father of Country Music," and was the first person to be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville. His 'big innovation' that made him the 'patriarch of C&W music,' was adding a tag-line yodel to all of his blues songs, instead of an instrumental turnaround tag-line at the end of each verse, as in most standard blues songs. Here's a rare video of him singing/playing/yodeling:
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=qEIBmGZxAhg>

One of the finest examples of 'cross pollination' between American cultural musics/roots musics is a quote from the biography of one of the best known blues musicians of all time, Howlin' Wolf. When Howlin' Wolf was asked how/why he developed his signature 'moan' (ala his songs 'Smokestack Lightnin',' etc.) he replied, "Well, I couldn't yodel like Jimmie Rodgers, so I created my own thing." The music of Jimmie Rodgers was deeply rooted in African American blues, as he learned to sing and play blues music from the African Americans he worked with on the M&O Railroad.

'Cross pollination' of musical form and style from African American to white C&W music is what Rodgers did in adapting the yodel for use in traditional blues, and then 'cross pollinated' again when iconic African American bluesman Howlin' Wolf was influenced by the white country music star Jimmie Rodgers in Wolf developing his own vocal 'signature,' the 'moan,' as influenced by the innovation of the yodel that Jimmie Rodgers added to traditional blues music.

Jimmie "The Blue Yodeler"/"The Singing Brakeman" Rodgers publicity photo:



Photo: earliest known photo of Chester "Howlin' Wolf" Burnett - performing at a grocery store opening in West Memphis, Ark. - photo by Dr. Ernest Withers - *Note, Wolf is playing a National solid-(small) body elec. guitar.

