

SONG HISTORIES

“You Are My Sunshine” is a song about the sorrow of losing a lover. It first became a hit for early country artist Jimmie Davis and his collaborator, Charles Mitchell, in 1940. It was one of the first songs that combined the sounds of earlier stringband music of the 1920s and 30s, also called “hillbilly” music, with sounds that were developing into what we call popular country music now. It has been covered by many artists representing many different genres since then.

“Mole in the Ground” is a song about wishing and wondering where you might be next in life. It’s also known as “I Wish I Was a Lizard in the Spring” or “Tempie Let Your Bangs Hang Down”. The song was first recorded by Bascom Lamar Lunsford, who learned it from his neighbor Fred Moody in North Carolina in 1901, and was later included in Harry Smith’s Anthology of American Folk Music, released by Folkways Records in 1952.

“Angeline the Baker” is a song that was originally written and published in 1850 by composer Stephen Collins Foster, who created it for a minstrel group. The original song, titled “Angelina Baker”, included lyrics about an enslaved woman who was sold by her owner to a different plantation. Parts of the melody and verses have carried over to modern versions, but the lyrics you are more likely to hear today are about the missed chance to marry a baker named Angeline.

“Cripple Creek” can refer to a meandering or crooked stream. The song may have originally been named after a specific place called Cripple Creek in Colorado, where there was a famous gold strike in the 1890s. There is also a Cripple Creek in Wythe County, Virginia that some people associate with the name of the song.

“Sourwood Mountain” is a song about two people courting (to be seeing someone romantically) and the feelings of being far away from a lover. Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) is also a tree that is native to the southern Appalachians. Many versions have been recorded, including one from Earl Johnson of Georgia, who taught it to LD Snipes of Lumpkin County, who then taught it to Ray Knight of Lumpkin County.