

Transcription HIST 4950

Interviewee: Bill Smith

Interviewer: Merneth Andagan

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List of Acronyms: MA= Merneth Andagan, BS= Bill Smith

Transcript by Hannah Stanley

Transcript

00:00:12 MA

OK, Mr. Smith, what kind of music exactly do you play with type typing?

00:00:19 BS

I play stream music and various whistles and I play historical type music from the era between I would say 1820s through 1860s, the Civil War era, and maybe even further back, sometimes I like colonial music, from the colonial era.

00:00:39 MA

How long you been involved in this kind of ...?

00:00:42 BS

Oh, goodness, probably 10-11 years.

00:00:45 MA

Who'd you learn from?

00:00:48 BS

Self-taught. I've been a musician all of my life and I first got involved as a civil war reenactor and went to reenactments as a soldier.

00:00:58 BS

You know, decided to get involved in the mid summer.

00:01:00 MA

So you were actually, in the civil war, not so much the civil war.

00:01:03 MA

Just something like it.

00:01:04 MA

That's way too far.

00:01:05 BS

I know that's 135 years ago, I'm strictly a reenactor and I got involved in the music end of it several years back.

00:01:16 MA

OK.

00:01:17 MA

Was this within your family or? Like like you said, there's something.

00:01:20 BS

I have some heritage. Yeah, I had people in my family that lived in that period and actually fought in the war between the states.

00:01:29 MA

When you say reenactor. What I mean, can you explain who that is?

00:01:32 BS

A reenactor is a person or persons who dress up, have the actual guns of that period or or replicas of that, those guns of that period and actually do mock battles.

00:01:47 MA

Had you become involved in that?

00:01:49 BS

Went to see one and fell in love with it and decided I wanted to do that.

00:01:51 MA

Ohh really.

00:01:53 MA

So it's like one of those theater things, right where you reenact that stuff.

00:01:55 BS

But it's outside. I mean you are you are playing the role of a Civil War soldier.

00:02:01 MA

You became involved in that like you said, 10 years ago, 10, 10, 11 years ago. So you.

00:02:04 BS

Yeah, I think it was (19)89'.

00:02:07 MA

You were watching civil war enactors and then you became interested in it.

00:02:11 BS

I got involved about a year later, after first seeing one.

00:02:14 MA

When when do these people where do they perform? I mean, you are one of them, right?

00:02:18 BS

They're just people like me and they're teachers, they're lawyers or doctors. They all kinds of walks of life.

00:02:23 MA

And they perform everywhere.

00:02:25 BS

It's not a performance so much as just a kind of a gathering of these people, and the battles are scripted, but they're not scripted in detail and you've got guidelines and all this and the people go out on the field and they March and they they come together and they actually load their guns, not with real bullets, of course, but with powder and make lots of noise.

00:02:48 MA

Oh kind of like the when they do medieval reenactments?

00:02:52 BS

Exactly. Exactly.

00:02:52 MA

Like, right?

00:02:53 MA

So you told me, like, 10 years ago you went. I mean, was this just something that 10 years ago, somebody invited you to and then you've watched it and.

00:03:00 BS

Just out of curiosity, I went to see when I've always been interested in that period of history anyway and went To see one and.

00:03:06 MA

Civil war period.

00:03:07 BS

Well, this looks like a lot of fun. Want to try it

00:03:09 MA

So you became interested in the reenactment part, and you you yourself became involved.

00:03:15 BS

Music came later.

00:03:17 MA

Yeah. How did? How did music come into it?

00:03:18 BS

Just seeing other people doing that.

00:03:21 MA

Part of the group, part of the Civil War. People doing that, this group, is it something that?

00:03:24 BS

I decided I wanted to do it too.

00:03:27 MA

OK.

00:03:31 MA

So you're like as far as your tradition within your family, it wasn't really something it was just not really something that was like brought on, brought down to you with so much like like you said, your granddad and your other people in your family were fought in the Civil War. And then ten years, 10 years ago, you said you are friend of yours a friend of yours invited to do to one of these events and got interested in it, and then the music came right.

00:03:55 BS

Right.

00:03:56 BS

Not too long later, maybe a year later.

00:03:58 MA

So I mean just the type, the people that were in the group played that kind of music, civil war music, and that's how you became interested in that's how that's how you were exposed to this type of music, OK.

00:04:13 MA

It says here what role have books or the mass media played in learning music? I mean this type of music is this type of music even. It's not really popular now these days.

00:04:25 BS

It's it's not a real wide range of popularity, but there are a lot of people that play this kind of music now, and they're in these circles and the circles of reenactors and people that go to see reenactors, they're where we actually have tapes and CD's that we had made they buy these things and so that's that's a lot of people out there listening. And it's not like.

00:04:45 MA

I mean is it just around this area or all over the?

00:04:47 BS

Over the world, really.

00:04:48 BS

Those all over this country, they're reenactors, even out California, where they didn't even fight the civil war.

00:04:53 MA

Is it part? Ok I'm kind of confused. Is it part of like I said, is it kind of like, a theater thing where you guys are a group and?

00:05:00 BS

In a sense, it's.

00:05:02 BS

It's not like you have lines or anything.

00:05:05 BS

Nobody has lines because it's just men out on the football field

00:05:07 MA

I've never seen one. Yeah.

00:05:08 BS

I don't know.

00:05:09 BS

Not football field uh a field and and they're they're dressed up.

00:05:13 MA

Y'all got something like the wigs and the you talk about like.

00:05:16 BS

No that's further back. That's colonial era there.

00:05:17 MA

That's colonial.

00:05:19 MA

OK, the civil war oh the civil war.

00:05:21 MA

I mean what do you? Describe like what you guys wear and all that.

00:05:24 BS

OK, I would I would wear what a typical Confederate soldier would wear in that area grey uniform with a grey coat and grey pants and a hat and belts and.

00:05:39 MA

Who writes the scripts? I mean do y'all create different scripts?

00:05:41 BS

Look, they don't write scripts that it's. It's not like that. It's like you've got maybe 5 or 600 guys with one side and 5 or 600 guys on the other side.

00:05:51 MA

That many and I and I just did.

00:05:52 BS

Oh, no. Yeah.

00:05:53 BS

Yeah, yeah, that many. I mean, in Gettysburg this past summer up in the Gettysburg, they had 30,000. You know, it's the largest. It's the largest reenactment event I've ever seen. Have been a part of.

00:06:02 MA

I mean, how often did the did this this this event occur?

00:06:06 MA

You see what I'm saying really.

00:06:06 BS

There's something going on every weekend somewhere in this country that I mean to spread all over, but there's something going on every weekend.

00:06:14 MA

So you being a reenactor that's what brought this type of mood into your life with other people influencing me as far as as far as that's how it got.

00:06:26 MA

OK, I'm getting it now.

00:06:29 MA

Have you made any recordings? I just heard you say something.

00:06:31 BS

Yeah, we have one of the groups I play with we have 5 cassettes and CD's out and half of what we do is songs from that actually came from that period and the other half of the songs that we've written are songs that we've written in the style of that period of music comes out that period.

00:06:51 MA

What kind of? What kind of instruments?

00:06:53 BS

OK, now I play.

00:06:54 MA

What kind of instruments?

00:06:57 BS

With band I play mandolin, banjo and guitar.

00:07:00 BS

And whistles and flute.

00:07:02 BS

And we have.

00:07:03 MA

Can you play all?

00:07:04 BS

Yeah. I can play all those.

00:07:07 MA

I can play the flute. So I still play once in a while so.

00:07:10 MA

It's that like like like you say that's that's kind of.

00:07:11 BS

And there's another guitarist, and we have a drummer

00:07:15 MA

Because when I think of war and civil war and old time, maybe it's more colonial.

00:07:19 MA

I'm thinking like, you know, you've seen the movies.

00:07:20 MA

I guess I watch too many movies.

00:07:21 BS

Drumming in fact.

00:07:22 MA

And like and like.

00:07:23 BS

I do that too.

00:07:24 MA

And kind of like you hear.

00:07:27 MA

Uh, what do you call it? Bagpipes

00:07:29 MA

That's, that's what I I visualize.

00:07:30 BS

Yes, yes.

00:07:31 MA

Because, you know, books and stuff that we read in history classes.

00:07:33 BS

We see those a lot. In fact, I'm going to win this this weekend over in Darien, Georgia, and it's going to be the theme is Scottish. So we'll have a lot of bagpipers, but we'll be doing our thing too. We'll be playing our mandolins and banjos and whistles and something.

00:07:49 MA

You said there are many, many groups organizations of the actors around the United States.

00:07:55 MA

But you are you part.

00:07:55 BS

There are a lot of us.

00:07:56 MA

Are you part of 1 particular type or I mean one particular particular like?

00:08:01 BS

I was with a unit called the 26th Georgia Regiment out of Waycross, GA. This is a group of reenactors theres probably 25 or 30 of them at one time.

00:08:13 MA

So you guys been together for 11 years?

00:08:16 BS

Well, they have been. I'm I'm not a member of that anymore.

00:08:19 BS

Because I went into the music. I've I'm strictly musician now.

00:08:23 BS

I have a band that goes to these reenactments.

00:08:25 MA

So you, you were a reenactor. That's how it all began. And then you said about 10 years ago, that's probably like what 1980 nineties, 89, 89.

00:08:34 MA

And then maybe. So that's what inspired you as far as like you. First of all, you became a reenactor that that civil war reenactment thing kind of got to you and stuff like that. And then, like, how many years would you say later on and that the type of music they played as far?

00:08:52 MA

So you guys play the black background music as far as while they're reenacting, right am I correct?

00:08:57 BS

No, it's too noisy. We, we actually play in the camp areas where when, after the battles are over and people are walking, milling around.

00:09:06 MA

So it's kind of like when you go to the ? and these people are playing the roles of people in back in those days, and then you're you're sitting there beside the campfire and you guys play the music and stuff like that.

00:09:16 MA

How many years after the civil war reenactment thing got to you. How many years would you say after that? Did you start playing music? Actually start.

00:09:28 MA

Did they ask you to come to play or did you just say hey, I want to do that?

00:09:31 MA

I can play instrument.

00:09:32 MA

Did you think you've been a musician all your life, right, or you've been interested in music?

00:09:36 MA

Right? I mean how old?

00:09:37 MA

I mean, was that something you've always.

00:09:39 BS

Ohh, 5th grade.

00:09:39 MA

Wanted to do.

00:09:40 MA

Or really, you were in band and stuff like that.

00:09:40 BS

I've been playing music since 5th grade.

00:09:44 MA

Oh yeah.

00:09:45 MA

I mean, did you just because I know, I mean, not like me.

00:09:48 MA

I mean, I used to like, say I want to be this and that and that, you know, I've never known, you know, some people know like they want to be this and go through the whole lives know they're going to be that

00:09:56 MA

So it means that just something that you wanted to do ever since you were little? Music, going to be a musician or a band.

00:10:01 BS

As long as I can remember, yeah.

00:10:04 MA

OK, so like you said, how many like did somebody ask you to come in there to play or like, did just one day you said I can, you know, can I can I play?

00:10:14 BS

No, I just kind of took it upon myself to get something going and some friends and I just kind of so we can do that too, so we'll form our own group and.

00:10:23 MA

OK, I see.

00:10:25 BS

Just kind of happened.

00:10:27 MA

Well does your group have a name?

00:10:29 BS

Well, one, I've played with several groups, actually.

00:10:32 BS

One of them is called Sawgrass, and that group is more of a colonial Scottish Irish heritage type band we play that kind of music, there's another group that I play with the one has the most recordings. It's called the Revelaires and we're we're more of a Civil War reenactment group we do music from the Civil War era.

00:10:54 BS

And I also play with another Civil War group called the Georgia Volunteer Fife and drum pool. We played strictly fifes and drums. Marching March Marshall type music.

00:11:06 MA

Now these these groups that you talk about where they form like separate from each other and like.

00:11:06 BS

Which would be marching, yeah.

00:11:13 MA

You just took it upon yourself to be part of this group.

00:11:15 MA

Part of this, you're kind of like you know.

00:11:16 BS

Yeah, I have too many groups.

00:11:19 MA

I mean was are these like how many years, would you say have you been in each of these groups.

00:11:23 BS

Oh goodness. Let's see.

00:11:25 BS

The Revelaires have been together seven years. The Sawgrass groups have been together about two and I played with Georgia Fife for about six, I believe.

00:11:33 MA

And each

00:11:33 BS

But I I had been dabbling in it way back further than that.

00:11:37 MA

So you are basically an all around musician you you play basically when you think band director are you a band director or is it just?

00:11:43 BS

No, I'm a music teacher. I'm the elementary general music teacher

00:11:46 MA

Have you have you ever, like, wanted to teach higher level grades? And as far as like band director band director, you know like he like to say?

00:11:52 BS

Not once. I love this age

00:11:56 MA

Just music. Now we're trying to remember back when I was in elementary school.

00:12:01 MA

You said you just basically teach basic music like, you know the you know.

00:12:05 BS

Several classroom music I have a choral group of about 90 something children.

00:12:09 MA

Now in each of the groups that you say you were sawgrass, reveler, revelar. Yeah, and the fife

00:12:15 BS

Fife drum core

00:12:16 MA

Do you have recordings in each one of them, or really are they for sale to people?

00:12:18 BS

I sure do.

00:12:21 MA

Are people really?

00:12:21 BS

People buy it, but the people that buy it are people that go to these things and we're just not like I can put these in Kmart and nobody's going to buy it at Kmart. But no, you can't do that.

00:12:30 MA

Oh, that's what I was thinking about. I can go to this jockey you're showing. It's just one of those things, you make your own CD and you get it.

00:12:35 BS

Right. It's a homemade CD's and and tapes. And we take them with us and.

00:12:41 MA

Did you guys have to get like a copyright thing and all that other stuff or no?

00:12:44 BS

These are what's what's the word? Public domain these songs that were written back then are 75 I believe it's 75 years back. Anything that was written before that is a public domain. That means you don't have to get a copyright to actually record them.

00:13:00 MA

So the type of music you guys play, since you're in like a bunch of groups, you know, you're in a bunch of like the sawgrass that they just. What I mean, did each group play different type of music? Or can you describe each type?

00:13:11 MA

Are you ready to describe each type or no?

00:13:12 BS

Yes, Sawgrass is more like I said earlier, Irish, Scottish, that era. Whistle tunes, that kind of thing. And some vocal numbers and the Revelaires like I said was Civil War era tunes and songs that we've actually written about them. So, we're kind of half and half of them and the Drummer Fife Core is strictly instrumental in this fifes and drums only. Fife is a flute type instrument. It's fingered pretty much like the flute.

00:13:46 BS

No, it's it's a side hole instrument and.

00:13:47 MA

Well, is it is it?

00:13:50 BS

Very loud and shrill.

00:13:51 MA

Is it wood made, wood?

00:13:51 BS

It was used, yeah, this this wood made.

00:13:54 BS

The purpose of the fife and drum was to signal and during actual battles they would play certain tunes that would signal the armies to do certain things.

00:14:04 MA

I mean, what part was that used in the Civil War that time now?

00:14:07 BS

Sure was, and even more so in the colonial era, Revolutionary War and French and Indian Wars, 1863.

00:14:17 MA

The music that you just told me the type of music each one plays. I know the Sawgrass, it seemed more is you guys took the music that was already written back then and just replayed.

00:14:29 BS

Right.

00:14:30 MA

And you know.

00:14:30 BS

Yeah, none of the songs that we do in that group are songs that we've written. They are songs from that era.

00:14:35 MA

How about any of the other groups? Have you written any of have your groups written any of your songs and played it out like as far as the Revelaires or the the Fife?

00:14:47 BS

All authentic music from that era in the Civil War era.

00:14:51 BS

In the Revelaires is the only group that we've actually done our own writing.

00:14:57 MA

I mean, did you just you guys? I'm wondering, did you just OK like when you said, you know, I'm going to be part of this group. I know that people in that group already. Did you help form this group or were they already formed then you decided to join them or what?

00:15:12 BS

Just one of those things that just kind of happened.

00:15:13 MA

Kind of happened.

00:15:14 BS

And yeah, I mean I I was instrumental in getting the groups going.

00:15:17 MA

Like I mean how as far as like the music did you guys just say let's go look at Civil war music and let's replay it or.

00:15:22 BS

Well, a lot of what we actually found at reenactments is there will be what they call suppers settlers.

00:15:29 BS

Or people that are. They're like stores at reenactments. There's not a really stores like a tent with people with different wares, like 1-1 store has like the clothing of the era and the guns of the era and other things that go along with that. And then another store may have, there's one that history and music stuff and it has different books and all the different instruments.

00:15:51 MA

So it's kind of like where you have things passed on down and these musics were like these, these. Yeah, the music you guys play as far as none of them didn't being written by you guys. You guys have bought it through like settlers like settlers and where did they get those? Kind of like history manufacturers.

00:16:11 BS

There's there's there's a market out there for these things and there's. I mean, there's a guy and somewhere up in ? something like that that sells nothing but drums from the area.

00:16:21 BS

It's called Couple and Drummer company and builds drums and builds the best drums in the world and he has a full time job doing that.

00:16:33 MA

Now I know you describe each style of music as far as like you said, you know the sawgrass, more civil war.

00:16:39 BS

No the Sawgrass is more colonial. The Revelaires

00:16:44 BS

Just remember, rebels, Confederates were rebels.

00:16:49 MA

Did you name some of the major characteristics of each one already, like as far as we've already covered that like as far as like instruments and stuff like.

00:16:55 BS

Pretty much, yeah.

00:16:57 MA

Has the style changed over time or do you guys just keep strictly?

00:17:01 BS

We try to, we try to stay authentic, I mean. We're playing on instruments that not a totally correctly, offenders in that area, but we try to stay as close to authenticity as possible. And it's.

00:17:18 MA

So you guys don't go out there and find a new flute kind. It's kind of an honor code. You know, you just play it.

00:17:22 BS

Right, we're, we're we're using instruments that would fit in that era.

00:17:23 MA

You guys stick to the and you try to reenact it as best as you can.

00:17:31 MA

Do you have any like as far as like music like any of your favorites as far as any favorites coming? Do you have like I'm sure you have plenty of tapes and stuff, but.

00:17:43 BS

Are you asking me what's my favorite tunes or whatever?

00:17:46 MA

Yeah, yeah. There's so many.

00:17:46 BS

Oh, God, I don't know.

00:17:51 BS

I've set myself now some of the songs I've written are I've taken poems that were actually written during the Civil War era, and I've set them to music and I'm not a lyricist, I said I don't write lyrics, so I'll borrow from somebody else.

00:18:06 BS

I'll take the poem and set set its to music

00:18:07 MA

So as far as like just now you said you've written music. But none of that written music you guys use for any of the other groups do you, because like you said, you stay authentic and you, but it's kind of like more of your own enjoyment. You just for fun you.

00:18:22 BS

Yeah, but we write in that style.

00:18:25 MA

Right.

00:18:26 BS

The music that was sounds like music that may have been written.

00:18:30 MA

But you do you guys actually play that to audiences and stuff like that and record it and sell it.

00:18:32 BS

Yeah, sure.

00:18:36 BS

We have a following.

00:18:37 MA

But most, but most of the time you play stuff that's already been written, right?

00:18:42 BS

About half and half with with the Revelaires.

00:18:46 MA

But that and then, but like you say, you can take stuff and you borrow it from other people and change it your own way, but not so much change the style, yeah.

00:18:50 BS

Well, I just take like a poem. I mean, set poem and I will set music to that poem.

00:18:55 MA

Ok.

00:18:57 MA

How do you learn new tunes? You go, you go to the reenactments and hear.

00:19:01 BS

A lot of, yeah, a lot of it, I just buy other tapes of other artists and.

00:19:07 MA

From these reenactment places right? You can't buy them from like, the Eminem or or.

00:19:11 BS

No you can't.

00:19:12 MA

But yeah, that's how you that's how you learn. You just listen by ear and you just kind of play along with it.

00:19:20 MA

Have you written of your own music? And you said yes, you've written your own music and sold it too.

00:19:25 BS

I have sold quite a few tapes

00:19:27 MA

Did they call you Bill Smith or is it? I mean, is it under your name?

00:19:29 BS

Sure. Yeah, I don't. Yeah.

00:19:30 MA

Or do you have like one of those?

00:19:31 BS

I don't have a reenactment name here it's Bill Smith

00:19:32 MA

Yeah, yeah.

00:19:34 MA

Do you actually have like uniforms and stuff that you own, like at home and stuff like that?

00:19:37 BS

I have lots of them

00:19:39 MA

Wow, how often do you reenact? Whenever like you said there's something happening every week, but like everywhere around.

00:19:45 BS

Couple of times a month.

00:19:48 MA

Like everywhere In Georgia and stuff like do you travel a lot?

00:19:49 BS

I try to stay pretty close.

00:19:51 BS

There's couple we do in South Carolina. We do a lot in Georgia and a lot in Florida.

00:19:56 BS

We've been to Virginia, we went to Gettysburg, PA did that.

00:20:00 MA

That's the next question too where do you perform what kind of?

00:20:02 BS

All right, we got next.

00:20:03 MA

Audiences like you said, just people that are.

00:20:06 BS

Oh well, a lot of the audience are other reenactors, they'll come hear us and a lot of it's the public that just has come to see these things and out of curiosity and a lot, a lot of people that are actually interested in the history of those periods and they'll come and watch.

00:20:23 MA

Do you have little children that are reenactors?

00:20:23 BS

And Oh yeah.

00:20:27 MA

But is it the family?

00:20:27 BS

I mean, they don't carry guns anything.

00:20:28 MA

I mean, is it a family thing too or.

00:20:29 BS

There are a lot of families about I mean there, there'll be families of five or six people. They all are dressed out and the.

00:20:35 MA

Do you? Do you have to like sign up to be in arena?

00:20:35 BS

Sure do. For safety reasons

00:20:36 MA

For safety reasons

00:20:42 MA

You don't get paid for, you get paid for doing these things for?

00:20:45 BS

I get paid, my band gets a fee.

00:20:48 MA

Which band?

00:20:49 BS

Revelaires. Sawgrass.

00:20:50 MA

That's that's the civil.

00:20:52 BS

Sawgrass. We make them too.

00:20:53 BS

But Revelaires is a.

00:20:54 MA

Now each group has different people, right?

00:20:56 MA

The Revelaires and the Sawgrass have different people.

00:20:58 BS

Some are common

00:21:04 MA

You say you guys just play outdoors like you say, get his go to Gettysburg. Do you play any, like, indoor?

00:21:10 BS

We play.

00:21:11 BS

Yeah, we do. Some indoor ones too.

00:21:13 MA

Like in like kind of like Fine Arts ring

00:21:15 BS

Yeah, we did a ball downtown ? years back and packed house.

00:21:22 MA

We already described the audience as people who are interested in, you know, kind of intrigued.

00:21:25 BS

Yeah, people interested in history are out of curiosity.

00:21:29 MA

Cases do you play different tunes or songs for different audiences?

00:21:33 MA

Np, you guys don't choose audiences and just you just play like basically this is.

00:21:36 BS

What was question you asked?

00:21:38 MA

Do you play different tunes or songs for different audiences?

00:21:42 BS

Yeah. Yeah, sometimes. They know what we've got, I mean if it's a if it's a groof that wants to hear dance music and they want to get out there and dance and do some of the old time dances we tend towards towards doing more of that kind of stuff.

00:21:56 BS

If it's the listening crowd, we'll do the listening type thing.

00:21:57 MA

Now what? Like OK, but the main stuff you play is like with the what's what's the group that you basically like like to play with as far as not so much you like, but you spend more time

00:22:10 BS

Revelaires. We say a lot.

00:22:10 MA

Revelaires.

00:22:14 MA

That type of music is like you said, the Civil War War Yeah, right. Civil civil war.

00:22:17 BS

Yeah. Civil War era

00:22:19 MA

Now is that that's not get up and dance music necessarily, right.

00:22:21 BS

Some of it is, yeah, we do dances.

00:22:22 MA

It's really, really what when they dance, is it just regular dancing?

00:22:30 BS

I mean, it's like a couples dances and.

00:22:33 MA

Kind of like a waltz.

00:22:33 BS

Waltzes and and reels, reels is kind of like a square dance.

00:22:34 MA

Yeah, because right now we're in class, we're talking about ,when I do pay attention, we're talking about how they they dance with their feet and stomps and stamps and clap and do the do the call and response thing where one says something and do do...

00:22:45 BS

Right.

00:22:53 MA

..you have that in civil war music or no, or?

00:22:55 BS

Yes, we sure do. There'll be a dance caller. We have, we call them the dance master. They come and they, they call it and they they lead all the dances, they teach the dances, we they'll take 5 or 10 minutes and they'll...

00:23:03 MA

What did they say?

00:23:07 BS

...Say, who knows how to do the Virginia reel, and if half of them say they don't know how to, he'll stop and actually show them how to do that, then you know.

00:23:14 MA

What now? What is that? I mean, is it with the feet? Most of the year is it. Or, like you said, couples dancing.

00:23:18 BS

I'll give you a description of it.

00:23:19 BS

In fact, I taught this to my third graders about two weeks ago I have they'll have.

00:23:22 MA

This is the Virginia reel?

00:23:23 BS

Yeah, there'll be like 6 couples facing each other and they basically do things like right hand round left hand round, both hands round dosey doe and and they'll do what they call the reel where they go down the line spinning their partners

00:23:36 MA

So that's kind of like country, the you know the square dancing thing that that's it.

00:23:38 BS

Yeah, it that's where square dancing came from.

00:23:40 BS

This dates back.

00:23:42 MA

To the civil war?

00:23:42 BS

Say it again.

00:23:43 MA

Does it use fiddles or anything like that in civil war?

00:23:48 BS

Yeah there's a lot of fiddle players during the Civil War

00:23:48 MA

So more like old time country kind of thing like old time music.

00:23:51 BS

Yeah, you can compare them.

00:23:51 MA

Like how do you spell reel as far as it Rea?

00:23:55 BS

R-E-E-L

00:23:56 MA

OK, just just have to write down on my paper but.

00:24:02 MA

So, but most of the time though, it's like that it's a variety of songs like, say, get up and dance songs like like, say like kind of like a square dancing, then you have like waltzes where just couples. You know more of a serious tone.

00:24:13 BS

Polkas. Polkas. Yeah.

00:24:15 MA

Polkas, really?

00:24:16 MA

I used to take some was like some kind of dancing elective and in middle school without you might know her was Norman and we did a lot of polkas in my class. Yeah, we had to do the little skip things and all that. But I remember that.

00:24:33 MA

So you know, a lot of people who place this kind of music, obviously, like you said, there's many, many people that reading that and that's how you got started.

00:24:41 MA

But are you more involved in the reenacting now or the music like you said, I think you said the music is more, but if this is now.

00:24:48 BS

Well, you got to think of it this way. The music is actually part of the reenactment, now that's right.

00:24:53 MA

That's right.

00:24:57 MA

So music is your life.

00:24:58 MA

Basically you're teacher because it says, yeah, how does music influence your life?

00:25:00 BS

Pretty much, I'm always doing something with music.

00:25:02 MA

Life do you ever...

00:25:04 BS

All day long.

00:25:05 MA

Were you ever interested in like watching bands or anything?

00:25:07 MA

Like do you ever go judge for them do they ever ask you to actually do that?

00:25:09 BS

No, I'm. I'm. I'm. I'm not a band director. Have no inclination to do that. My son. I was in marching band in high school, my son's in marching band now and definitely a good.

00:25:18 MA

What school did you go to?

00:25:23 BS

East of Valdosta

00:25:24 MA

I think I had some questions of my own.

00:25:25 MA

Let's see.

00:25:28 MA

So as far as personal influence that led you to play such music. It is the fact that one day you went to a civil war reenactment

00:25:35 BS

Well, heritage too, heritage.

00:25:36 BS

My my family heritage, not musicians that were reenactors but my great grandfather would also so were my great uncles and all they did too.

00:25:45 MA

OK.

00:25:46 BS

Just to say

00:25:47 BS

Personal interest in that..

00:25:48 MA

Have you heard civil war stories from here?

00:25:51 BS

From my father?

00:25:51 MA

You know that...

00:25:52 BS

Yeah, he. In fact, he, he passed on several stories from not his great grandfather. His grandfather, really.

00:26:00 MA

This says here what social or economic influences has played into your musical interest?

00:26:07 MA

Not really anything

00:26:07 BS

Say that again.

00:26:08 MA

What social or economic influence is played in your musical interest?

00:26:15 MA

Not really much, since you weren't really in civil war.

00:26:16 BS

I've got to eat and I got to make money to eat is that.

00:26:19 MA

Yeah, that's true.

00:26:21 MA

But let's see.

00:26:26 MA

OK, this is uhm, are these type of music well liked or respected by audiences now or in the past?

00:26:33 MA

Would you say I mean?

00:26:34 BS

It's a it is a phenomenon it is reenacting has grown. I mean, just probably it's probably doubled since I started.

00:26:45 MA

How long has this been?

00:26:47 BS

Oh golly, the 100. The 100.

00:26:48 MA

Been been going on since you got interested.

00:26:50 MA

About '89, '90

00:26:52 BS

Anniversary of the Civil War in 1861 and 1961, I think there were people reenacting before that, but that's when it really started catching this that people.

00:27:01 MA

Which were 1861

00:27:03 BS

1861 was when the War Between the States started the Civil War and 1961 is when they marked the 100th anniversary. While then people started reenacting a lot and it's just grown steadily.

00:27:18 MA

It's it's still growing now or because I've I've never really heard?

00:27:18 BS

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:27:19 BS

They estimate there's way over 100,000 people who do it in this country there are Germans and French on the other side of the world that are reenactors.

00:27:29 BS

They have reenactment units in Europe.

00:27:31 MA

Wow, so this thing is huge.

00:27:33 BS

Civil War in it

00:27:34 MA

Bet that thing that you went when? When did you say you went to? Yeah, last summer or was?

00:27:37 BS

Gettysburg. Yeah, there were 30,000 reenactors. There were 35,000 spectators each day. It was a.

00:27:46 MA

Each day. Wow.

00:27:46 BS

Three, yeah. So we're talking close to 100,000 people came through and saw that.

00:27:51 MA

How did these? I mean, how did this get started? Like you said, it didn't get really started until the hundred hundredth, you know marking of it.

00:27:57 BS

Well, a lot of people don't realize that with the the War Between the States. I mean its probably the defining moment in this country and there's always just been an interest in that.

00:28:07 MA

Just to go back on my history on the off on my history, civil wars, the the when the South. North and the South, right.

00:28:13 MA

And this slave, the slave issue and all that, right?

00:28:15 BS

Slavery is part of it, but there was a lot more to it than that, and I don't think I can get into all that right now, but this.

00:28:21 MA

Yeah, but yeah, I was just trying to get my all my causing. All these wars were to learn during classes and stuff like that but so iyt's it's growing, actually growing in size and as far as as far As for you is

00:28:30 BS

Reenacting is still growing

00:28:30 MA

And that's good because you provide the music for the reenactments

00:28:37 BS

Right. Well clients.

00:28:39 MA

I mean do you that my question is it it. It started 9, let's say 1961 like you said

00:28:46 BS

The yeah, the hundred 1961, right.

00:28:48 MA

The yeah, that's when more people were reenacting it.

00:28:51 MA

Did they just form groups and say, OK, we're gonna be reenactors? And then pretty soon it grew.

00:28:56 MA

Is it a business is, I guess, is that's what?

00:28:58 BS

It is for some people.

00:28:58 MA

I'm asking.

00:28:59 BS

There are there people, there are people that make a living doing this.

00:29:00 MA

Like you said, you gotta eat you know you, you, you provide.

00:29:03 MA

Yeah, I mean the, the the.

00:29:05 BS

The settlers with settlers that I mentioned, the ones that have the wares, they are actually they're going somewhere every week into a different unit selling their things.

00:29:06 MA

Yeah, yeah.

00:29:12 MA

Going there, yeah.

00:29:14 MA

But I mean to date it's kind of like kind of like you know when you apply for a job. Do you? You don't really so much apply for do you apply for it or how do you become one of these reenactors?

00:29:21 BS

Oh, no, no, you just, you just go to one of these groups meet and say, oh, I sure I want an interest of to join your group I'd like to start being a reenactors or show me how to do this and then our dues, 15 bucks a year, or 25 bucks a year and.

00:29:35 MA

OK, OK.

00:29:37 MA

Kind of like at the Knights of Columbus where you have like dues. Like do you do stuff like that?

00:29:41 MA

If you were interested in music as far as like, say I played the flute and I just, you know, interested me too. And I just like to playing the music part and I was like, Mr. Smith, I want to.

00:29:48 BS

There's a lot of people that play the fife which is the instrument I was telling about.

00:29:52 BS

Oh, there's people.

00:29:52 MA

Is it much harder to play than the flute? Cause I know the flute is hard

00:29:57 BS

It's hard. But not as hard as flute pretty much.

00:29:59 MA

But it's the same fingerings and stuff like that?

00:30:03 BS

But you can you can take, you can take learning to fife up and you can go join a reenactment group and be their fifer. Find a drummer and and be their drum and fife core or whatever.

00:30:14 MA

Now the music you guys play, the Revelaires, which is the main, the main group you play with, the Civil War type music and you said you try to be authentic and you guys play music that were written in during that period.

00:30:30 BS

Half and half.

00:30:31 MA

Yeah. What are the major composers, maybe people that have written those music. What are the do, you know, maybe basic types or?

00:30:38 BS

Oh Lord, people like Stephen Foster with Swanee river and stuff like that. These are obscure people and I really don't know who wrote all these tunes, they mean, but. They're not real well known composers, I mean Daniel Emmett, who wrote Dixie, Southern National anthem, unofficial national anthem

00:31:04 MA

OK. My next the next question here is says what impressions do your type of music try to convey? Basically, serene civil war to give people, the feeling of.

00:31:12 BS

And to convey the the heritage of that time.

00:31:17 MA

In that time, which was with the.

00:31:19 MA

1863.

00:31:24 MA

To what extent has the has the?

00:31:52 MA

It's actually interesting to me. I'm I mean. I've never heard of the reenactment, Sir.

00:31:58 MA

OK, that should be good. So as far as the music you play influencing your life, you're gone every week.

00:32:05 BS

I'm gone a lot, yeah.

00:32:06 MA

A lot.

00:32:07 MA

Knowing your, does your family take part in this?

00:32:07 BS

At least I'm not really my son did for a while.

00:32:09 MA

Did they go see you? Did they go listen to you?

00:32:12 BS

But he's has other interest in it.

00:32:15 MA

Is it you just have one son?

00:32:16 MA

That it or you guys just OK.

00:32:17 BS

I have a daughter.

00:32:20 MA

So you still play this type type of music. You probably will for the rest of your life. So music's been your life, huh?

00:32:28 MA

Do you teach and encourage your your son or daughter to play? I mean, did have they grew interested in this stuff? Music, as they grew up or did, did you make that a part of their life, your music, or did you just try to stay clearer?

00:32:39 BS

My son, like I said, my son had an interest for a while. But that's kind of fallen off like he's a 17 year old, he's got other things on his mind?

00:32:49 MA

But so they they really don't. That's not do you think, do you think that's something to be passed on? Not really as far as like probably not?

00:32:56 BS

Probably not.

00:33:01 MA

Why do you play these type of music? Because you're musician, you enjoy your heritage.

00:33:06 BS

Heritage, I'm a musician and I actually enjoy the music of that period.

00:33:10 MA

So your daddy told you a bunch of civil war civil war stories.

00:33:14 BS

A few

00:33:16 MA

But you haven't really. Like you said, you've been interested in using since probably since you were five. But you didn't, really, not so much say. I mean, as far as civil war aspect of the music that you play that came into play later whenever like, like you said, you saw the reenactment and then that kind of all fit into, like, your daddy's stories. And like I said, your heritage, right?

00:33:36 BS

Yeah, readings.

00:33:37 MA

Readings OK.

00:33:38 BS

Reading books about it

00:33:40 MA

I see. It says would you consider yourself a musician of your time?

00:33:47 MA

I'm using.

00:33:47 BS

What does that mean?

00:33:48 MA

I don't know. I mean, it just says would you consider yourself a musician of your time? I guess like a.

00:33:53 BS

Well I play Rock and roll. So if if rock'n'roll is of this time, I guess so.

00:34:05 MA

Let's see. I think I got, but basically all of it this I mean I can I think I can do this paper actually.

00:34:16 MA

Would you tell me about the reenactors and everything? So that's the basic that's that's that's the basic basic go of it.

00:34:18 BS

Well, good.

00:34:22 MA

That's how you became a star and you're still going as far as like the Revelaires. Just what you're really getting involved with as far as the Sawgrass and the fife. And how's that fitting with all your other scheduling?

00:34:35 BS

It's hard.

00:34:36 MA

It's hard.

00:34:36 BS

I you know there is conflicts sometimes and sometimes I'll have to just say well, the Revelaires right now has priority.

00:34:44 MA

Do you guys get asked to play like as far?

00:34:46 BS

Yeah. Yeah, we, we.

00:34:46 MA

As I know the Revelaires the basic basic you guys basically play for free, really.

00:34:50 BS

Then we have a website and everything.

00:34:53 MA

Really, wow. What's what's the website?

00:34:55 BS

I don't remember.

00:34:56 BS

The address me is like the Revelaires, just just punch in the Revelaires

00:35:00 MA

How do you? How do you spell that? I just, I don't know.

00:35:01 BS

R-E-V-E-L-A-I-R-E-S. Aires. It's one word. Just if you will type in the Revelaires or the Revelaires, we should come up somewhere there.

00:35:14 MA

You had Sawgrass, and now I'm saying just the group.

00:35:14 BS

No, we don't have a Sawgrass website.

00:35:18 MA

No, I'm just saying just the group.

00:35:18 BS

Oh yeah, and the Georgia Volunteer Fife and Drum Corp

00:35:26 MA

How do you spell fife?

00:35:29 BS

F-I-F-E and drum corp

00:35:34 MA

Drum Corps

00:35:36 BS

But it's pronounced Core.

00:35:38 MA

Yes. Do you guys get like like I know the Revelaires basically like you said, Civil war music. So you guys basically I guess play for audiences at Civil War reenactments, correct.

00:35:47 Speaker 1

Yes, that's.

00:35:47 BS

And other things too.

00:35:49 MA

For like what?

00:35:50 BS

Oh, wow.

00:35:53 MA

Veterans balls?

00:35:53 BS

Sons of Sons of Confederate Veterans. Those organization dances and that kind of thing, which is reenactors but not at a reenactment, I mean they'll be they'll put on their normal thing.

00:36:04 MA

How about the sawgrass? You said this is more colonial, right? Right here, colonial.

00:36:09 MA

That's before the Civil war and.

00:36:10 BS

Irish Scottish music. American colonial music.

00:36:15 MA

What do you do you guys get asked to play somewhere? I mean

00:36:19 BS

A little bit not like this group. This group is rather popular. We get asked to play all of over the South

00:36:33 MA

Do you you guys just as far as the sawgrass and the Georgia volunteer, you just get kind of, it's like kind of like a gathering for just the members of the group to just have fun and.

00:36:41 BS

Yeah, this group can have anywhere from two members to 8 members, you know, depending on who shows up. And we may just have one fife and one drum and then they have a.

00:36:52 MA

So the people.

00:36:53 BS

Whole bunch.

00:36:54 MA

The people from each one of these groups, like the people of your the, your group mates or whatever are like from different areas of United States.

00:37:00 BS

Yeah, the Revelaires. The other three guys in Waycross, I grew up in Waycross, my brother

00:37:06 Speaker 1

How many are there in the Revelaires?

00:37:08 BS

4. Saltgrass is 4 people from. Two officers from that also Lynch, Waycross and. The other is from this one girl from Brunswick and these are from all over Florida.

00:37:33 MA

OK.

00:37:36 BS

Does that help?

00:37:37 MA

It sure did. I think I've got most of the. I mean, I hopefully I can make 5 page pages out of it.

00:37:41 BS

I wish I'd think about it. I would have brought a well, scrapbook. Would that help you?

00:37:47 MA

I mean, yeah, yeah.

00:37:47 BS

And borrow some pictures or something, OK?

00:37:49 MA

I mean, so I was just maybe like you guys have brochures or something that you know like while y'all are good.

00:37:56 BS

Now I don't think we'll have that. We got flyers and I've just got a scrapbook with a book full of pictures that you know you could.

00:38:02 MA

I mean, if you've got some to spare or if I can just look at it so I can, it could better help me and get a picture of, of visual learner.

00:38:09 MA

And I'm doing some room break. I'm going to try to get started on the main meat of the paper. So yeah.