

The Indigenous Roots of Rock and Roll

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What does Link Wray's biography say about how Native Americans lived in the first half of the 20th century, and what role did Wray's upbringing have on his music?

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students watch clips from RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked The World and explore Link Wray's position as an influence on later Hard Rock and Heavy Metal musicians. Students will investigate the history of the Shawnee Tribe, and use Wray as a case study to consider what life might have been like for a Shawnee in the American South during the early 20th Century. Finally, students debate ways Wray's early life might have contributed to his future musical achievements, and find common themes between the song "Rumble" and the poem Nationhood by Laura 'Da.



Many would argue that Rock and Roll has historically been the music of rule breakers. It turns out that Rock and Roll is also the music of guitar amp breakers. Beginning in 1953 with guitarist Willie Kizart's crackling part on Jackie Brenston and his Delta Cats' "Rocket 88," which was performed on a "broken" guitar amp, many guitarists in the emerging genre of Rock and Roll sought to overdrive and distort their sound. The Rolling Stones' Keith Richards used a hi-tech new "fuzzbox" to achieve the menacing distortion heard on the 1965 hit "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction." And, like many young guitarists did at the time, The Kinks' Dave Davies slit the speaker cones on his amp to get the fuzzy tone of the 1964 hit, "You Really Got Me." However, it likely wasn't another British rocker, or even Kizart that Richards and Davies were emulating. It was Link Wray, a Native American from rural North Carolina.

In January 1958, brothers Link, Doug, and Vernon Wray were performing as the house band in Fredericksburg, Virginia for a record hop organized by local DJ and TV personality Milt Grant. Shortly into the show, audience members requested the band play "The Stroll," a song released a month earlier by The Diamonds. Link, the group's guitar player, had spent much of the previous year in the hospital recovering from tuberculosis, and didn't know "The Stroll." Doug, the drummer, counted the song off anyway. Link had no choice but to play *something*. That something, which they named "Rumble," was mostly three chords and a riff, sustained above Doug Wray's lumbering 12/8 beat by the crunchy tone of Link Wray's deliberately slashed speakers.

OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

“It changed everything,” says Robbie Robertson in the film *Rumble: The Indians who Rocked the World*, “‘Rumble’ made an indelible mark on the whole evolution of where Rock and Roll was going to go.” Wray’s guitar part, simple to the ears of many, encapsulated the powerfully defiant attitude that would become a defining characteristic of future Rock subgenres such as Hard Rock, Punk, and Heavy Metal. Both Pete Townshend of The Who and Led Zeppelin’s Jimmy Page cite “Rumble” as a defining influence. Vocalist Iggy Pop remembers, “‘Rumble’ had the power to push me over the edge...it helped me say, ‘I’m going to be a musician.’” Pop wasn’t the only person who felt “Rumble,” an instrumental, might push one “over the edge.” Fearing that “Rumble” could inspire juvenile delinquency, it was banned by several radio stations, even in major cities such as Boston and New York. Though the song is over 60 years old, “Rumble” continues to evoke strong feelings in many, and it has been placed in films and TV Shows such as *Pulp Fiction*, *Independence Day*, and *The Sopranos*.

Some suggest the raw emotional power of “Rumble” is a musical reflection on the Wrays’ tumultuous childhoods. The Wray brothers were born in Dunn, North Carolina, to a Shawnee mother. “While Elvis grew up white-man poor,” Link often said, comparing himself to one of his idols, “I grew up Shawnee poor.” His mother was crippled by racist violence she experienced as a child, his father shellshocked by his experience as a soldier World War I. As a child, Link sometimes hid with his brothers under their beds as the Ku Klux Klan terrorized their segregated neighborhood. But at the same time, Link’s childhood in Dunn positively contributed to his musical development. His mother, a street preacher, instilled in him a love of song, and a local blues musician known as Hambone gave him his first guitar lessons. As filmmaker Antonino D’Ambrosio suggests in *RUMBLE*, these musical influences might have allowed Wray to take his difficult past and translate it in proactive ways.



OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- How racism affected Native Americans in the mid 20th century
- A basic history of the Shawnee tribe
- About Shawnee-U.S. Government interactions under Presidents Jefferson and Jackson
- About the Shawnee role in the War of 1812
- About The Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears
- How segregating communities resulted in tight family units and the transmission of culture among different minority communities
- The effects wars can have on American veterans
- Connections between poverty and health in the United States
- The role faith and religion played in Link Wray's development
- The extent to which a musician's personal life might influence their music
- Connections between Link Wray's "Rumble" to the poem *Nationhood* by Laura Da'

2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- By examining videos and autobiographical accounts of Link Wray's early life students will be able to imagine what life for a Shawnee person might have been like in the first half of the 20th Century, and how such an experience might have impacted Wray's music.

ACTIVITIES

MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Tell students that they will begin with a free writing exercise. Ask students to choose a musician, actor, athlete, or other public figure, and to consider how what they know about that person's upbringing might have contributed to their current career. If students do not know much about the biographies of their choices, encourage them to write creatively and imagine what that person's young life might have been like. Then, ask students to volunteer to share their responses.
2. Ask the class:
 - In what ways do you think a person's childhood might affect their future?

PROCEDURE:

1. Explain to students that in this lesson they will be learning about Link Wray, half-Shawnee Native American from North Carolina who was a major influence on Rock, Hard Rock, Punk, and Metal guitarists. Play **Clip 1, "The Birth of Rumble."** Ask students:

- What is it about the guitar sound of "Rumble" that seems to have influenced so many guitarists, including those interviewed in this clip?
- How would you compare the guitar playing on "Rumble" with the early footage of Wray that opens Clip 1? (Consider replaying the first few moments of Clip 1 if necessary).
- How might you describe the sound of "Rumble"? How might you describe Wray's demeanor on stage in Clip 1? What about this might have influenced young musicians in the late 1950s?
- Though it is an instrumental song, "Rumble" was banned on many radio stations, including those in major cities such as New York and Boston. What about the song do you think some found so threatening? (*Note to teacher: The song title, "Rumble," was thought to reference gang fighting—West Side Story was popular at the time—and many thought the sound might "contribute to juvenile delinquency"*).

2. Tell students that you will now consider how the "distorted" sound of guitar was developed, and what it might have represented to some at the time. Play Clip 2, "Soundbreaking - The Development of the Fuzz Tone," and ask students:

- How do the musicians in this clip describe the sound of the guitar? What are some of the terms they use to describe this unique sound?
- Can you think of a song you like that has a distorted guitar?
- Why might a guitar that sounds "distorted," "aggressive," like a "monster" or a "villain" be a desired quality for musicians?
- (Optional: ask students if there are any guitar players in the class, and if they use distortion on their guitar, and why.)
- When do you think this sound might have first been created? Do you think it happened before the creation of the fuzz pedal mentioned in the clip?
- *Note to teacher: If you would like students to have a hands-on experience with guitar effects, try the TeachRock Guitar Effects TechTool.*

3. Tell students that to consider Link Wray's early life in North Carolina as a Shawnee, they will first explore Shawnee history. Distribute **Handout 1 - "The Shawnee,"** and read it aloud as a class. Then ask:

- Where do you think the Wray ancestors fit in among the Shawnee who grappled with the limited options they faced throughout the early 19th century? (*Encourage students to recognize that because they remained on the East Coast, Wray's ancestors must have chosen to attempt to "assimilate."*)
- What do you imagine life for an "assimilating" Shawnee in the American South may have been like in the 19th and early 20th century? Do you think Shawnee people would have easily fit in within existing communities? Why or why not?

4. Tell students they will be thinking about how Link Wray's upbringing as a Shawnee may have inspired "Rumble," and the distorted guitar sounds that Wray helped pioneer. Split students into groups, and give one copy of **Handout 2 - "Questions for Stations"** to each group. Tell students they will be moving as a group to three different stations. In each station there will be a sheet of quotations from Link Wray, his daughter Beth Wray Webb, and his niece, Sherry Wray. Have each group read the quotes and then discuss the questions. Stations are as followed:

- Station 1: Health and Poverty
- Station 2: Racism and Segregation
- Station 3: Faith and Family

5. As a class, discuss each of the questions in the handout. Then ask students:

- How might each of these factors in Wray's life be interrelated? (*For example, discuss how the racism of the time might have influenced Wray's health, or how Wray's close family might have been a result of poverty and segregation*).

6. Play **Clip 3, "Antonino D'Ambrosio on Rumble."** Ask students:

- In the clip, what does D'Ambrosio suggest was the motivation behind Rumble? (*If necessary, remind students of D'Ambrosio's comment that Wray was "annoyed and disappointed" by the fact that as Shawnee his family had been treated so badly*).

- What does D'Ambrosio mean when he says that Wray took the bitterness he felt about his childhood and created something not "reductive, but proactive"? How was Wray's response "proactive"?

- Based on what you read in the activity, do you think Wray would agree with D'Ambrosio's argument that Rumble isn't about fighting, but more about "disrupting" and "being active?"

7. Pass out to each student **Handout 3 - "Debating the Inspiration of Rumble."** After completion, ask students to share what they wrote.

8. Pass out to each student **Handout 4 - "Nationhood, Laura Da'".** Read the poem together as a class or individually. Then ask students:

- Personally, what do you think Laura Da' is expressing in this poem?
- How would you describe the relationship between the first and second paragraph of the poem? How are they connected?
- What claims might Laura Da' be making about the United States of America in this poem?
- What similarities do you find between Link Wray and Laura Da'? How might this poem be similar to "Rumble"?
- Do you see this poem as being "disruptive," similar to Rumble? Why or why not?

SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Ask students:

- Can you think of another musician that, like Link Wray, came from a marginal setting and faced discrimination? Is their music a “proactive” means to address these issues, as D’Ambrosio describes of Link Wray?
- Why might people from marginal places who have led difficult lives be inspired to create music?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

1. Beyond Link Wray, the Shawnee have contributed to American culture in a myriad of ways. Have students choose one of the following figures, and write a short biography on them, including their influence on American society, culture, or history.

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| • Benjamin Harko, Jr. (Artist) | • Cornstalk (Politics) |
| • Big Jim (Politics) | • George Drouillard (Explorer) |
| • Heidi Bigknife (Artist) | • Ruthe Blalock Jones (Artist) |
| • Black Bob (Politics) | • Keith Longhorn (Artist) |
| • Catecahassa or Black Hoof (Politics) | • Nas’Naga (Writer) |
| • Tecumseh (Politics) | • Nonhelema (Politics) |
| • Weyapiersenwah or Blue Jacket (Politics) | • Ernest Spybuck (Artist) |
| • Yvonne Chouteau (Artist) | • Tenskwatawa (Politics) |

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (K-12)

Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Reading 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Reading 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Reading 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Reading 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (K-12)

Writing 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Writing 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Writing 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (K-12)

Speaking and Listening 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Speaking and Listening 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

Theme 1: Culture

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change



Theme 4: Individual Development and Identity

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 9: Global Connections Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

Core Music Standard: Responding

Analyze: Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response.

Interpret: Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators' and/or performers' expressive intent.

Evaluate: Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Core Music Standard: Connecting

Connecting 11: Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding.

NEW JERSEY STATE LEARNING STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading

NJSLSA.R1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences and relevant connections from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

NJSLSA.R6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

NJSLSA.R8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

NJSLSA.R9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Writing

NJSLSA.W1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

NJSLSA.W7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.



NJSLSA.W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

RESOURCES

VIDEO RESOURCES

- Rumble – Link Wray: Birth of Rumble
- Soundbreaking – The Development of Fuzz Tone
- Rumble – Antonino D'Ambrosio on Rumble

HANDOUTS

- Handout 1: The Shawnee
- Handout 2: Questions for Stations
- Handout 3: Debating the Inspiration Behind Rumble
- Handout for Station 1 - Health and Poverty
- Handout for Station 2 - Racism and Segregation
- Handout for Station 3 - Faith and Family
- Handout for Station 4 - *Nationhood*, Laura Da'

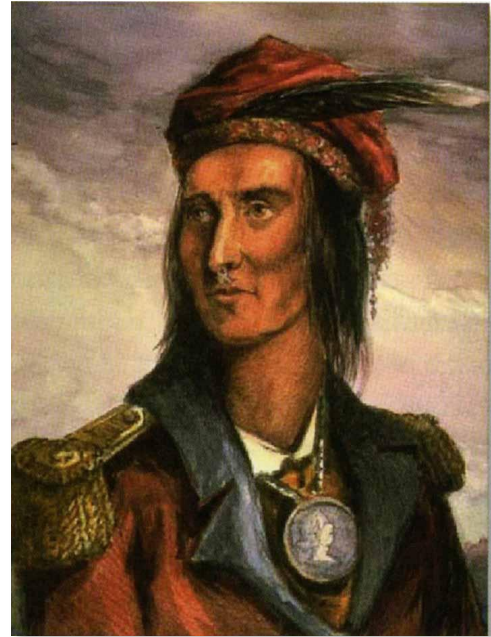
Lesson Materials



Handout 1 - The Shawnee

Before the arrival of Europeans, the Shawnee lived in the Ohio River Valley, spanning what is today Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Illinois. For centuries they were semi-nomadic agriculturalists and hunters, constructing seasonal villages along the Ohio riverbank. Shawnee society was complex, made up of five political divisions which oversaw multiple tribes and clans spread across many villages. The Shawnee operated markets and exchange networks with other tribes and early European settlers, once they arrived.

Given the Ohio River's strategic importance as a major waterway, Shawnee lands became a battlefield between French and British forces during the French and Indian War (1754–63). As both world powers vied for control over the Americas, the Shawnee somewhat reluctantly allied with the French and fought against the British and their allies, the Iroquois nation. Ultimately, the French surrendered and relinquished its lands in America to the British and Spanish.



Tecumseh

The victorious British made peace with the Shawnee through the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which ensured all lands West of the Appalachian mountains belonged to the tribe. However, American colonists such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry viewed the Proclamation as British interference in American affairs, and pushed into Shawnee held lands nevertheless. A series of conflicts erupted between Shawnee and the colonists, the largest of which was the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774. During the battle, the Shawnee, under the leadership of Cornstalk, failed to hold back a West Virginian militia intent on expanding the colonies. Cornstalk signed a peace treaty which further diminished Shawnee lands, and a few years later, was murdered along with his son by American militiamen while on a diplomatic mission.

Cornstalk's murder heightened tensions between the Shawnee and the American colonists. Thomas Jefferson, then governor of Virginia, oversaw frequent raids into Shawnee territory. America's newfound independence in 1783 only further emboldened colonists in their bloody expansion westward, as they felt England's defeat allowed them to claim ownership of all lands west of the colonies. Despite attempts to forge confederacies among the various tribes, the Shawnee continued to lose ground to settlers who burned their villages and crops to make room for themselves.



Tenskwatawa

In July 1787, Congress issued the Northwest Ordinance, the first step to expanding the nation westward by adding new states. With the establishment of states like Ohio, the Shawnee were quickly overwhelmed by new settlers. President Jefferson took office in 1801 with a passion for land expansion and the steadfast belief that Native Americans were a “problem” to be solved in the process. Jefferson supported several methods of expansion. In an 1803 communication, Jefferson detailed a plan to confiscate lands through debt manipulation, stating, “we shall push our trading uses and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them run in debt... We observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by a cession of lands.” Later in his second term, Jefferson supported a policy of forced assimilation through which Native Americans might become “American” and give up tribal living and lands altogether. Jefferson’s tone also grew more stark; he warned a

group of Native American leaders in 1809 that U.S. forces were ready to, “extirpate from the earth or drive to such a distance as they shall never again be able to strike us” any who might physically resist such policies.

Some, who had heard threats such as Jefferson’s, and had seen enough to know they were not empty, made attempts to abandon traditional ways of life and assimilate in the Euro-American society. Other Shawnee, however, refused to assimilate. Most famous among these were the brothers Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh. Fiercely proud of their heritage, the two spoke out against tribal chiefs who sold their lands for personal enrichment. With Tenskwatawa acting as a spiritual leader and Tecumseh acting as a military strategist, the two traveled throughout the Ohio river valley encouraging various tribes to retain their ancestral homelands, resist the calls or urges to assimilate to European culture, and to return to traditional Native American lifestyles.

In their travels, Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh forged a confederacy, and an army, of more than two dozen Indian nations, all of whom spoke different languages and had varied cultural traditions. They then allied their force with the British against the U.S. at the outbreak of the War of 1812, in return for the promise that England would return ancestral lands upon victory. Though Tecumseh’s forces won several early battles, he was killed and his men defeated by the American army of William Henry Harrison in 1813.

The Americans defeated the British, and over the next 20 years more than 100 treaties resulted in the westward relocation of Indian Tribes. The Indian Removal Act, signed into law by President Andrew Jackson in 1830, resulted in a forced resettlement of more than 15,000 Natives of the American Southeast. As many as one-third of those people perished on the journey, which is now known as the “Trail of Tears.”



Handout 2 - Questions for Stations

Station 1: Health and Poverty

1. How did the social position of the Wray family affect their health? Provide some examples of the ways the health issues confronted by the Wrays were more due to circumstance than to genetics.
2. How did the Wrays respond to their bad health conditions? Would you say they responded in positive or negative ways?
3. In what ways did Link Wray's health troubles contribute to the sound he created in "Rumble"?



Station 2: Racism and Segregation

1. How does Wray see himself similar to Elvis Presley? In what ways does he see himself as different?
2. How does Wray see himself having shared experiences with whites? What experiences does he share with blacks? Drawing from the quotes, would you say he has more of a connection with one group over the other?
3. Do you think if Wray lived in white neighborhoods, he would have the same access to the stranger that tuned his guitar and the circus musician Hambone? Why or why not?
4. How might have Wray's experience as a Shawnee in the American South contribute to his musical style?



Station 3: Faith and Family

1. How would you describe Link Wray's family life?
2. How might have his mother's position as a preacher influenced Wray's musical career?
3. Would you say Wray had a musical childhood? In what ways?
4. In what ways did Wray's close relationship with his brothers help his musical career?



Handout 3 - Debating the Inspiration Behind Rumble

Writing Prompt:

Without lyrics, it is difficult to prove what a song may be about, or what feelings inspired it. In the second clip you watched, author and filmmaker Antonio D'Ambrosio argues that "Rumble" came about due to Wray's difficult upbringing and his bitterness at being treated badly as a Shawnee. But in the first clip you watched, Wray does not draw such a connection, rather saying that the song came to him by a sort of divine inspiration while he was on stage.

Drawing upon what you learned from the activity, write about the ways Wray's life might have led to the song "Rumble," but also the ways "Rumble" might have been otherwise inspired. Do you find one explanation more convincing than the other? Why?



Station 1 - Health and Poverty

Link Wray: "I'm half Shawnee Indian, born to a Shawnee mother. I had a Shawnee dad, and he was in the First World War. . .and he was shell-shocked. . . I had to go to work when I was 10 years old to help feed the family."

Sherry Wray: "My grandmother was Shawnee. She was crippled at 11. There were kids who teased her. . .when one of the girls put her knee in Lilly's back, it broke her back. The indians were the ones who build a brace out of buckskin and bone for her, so when she stood her body could be supported."

Link Wray: "My daddy was a war hero, but he was like a casualty, ya know, he couldn't go out and work and everything. So we were very very very poor in North Carolina until he went to work in the Navy Yard Portsmouth, Virginia."



Link Wray's Recording Shack

in

"We were born in a little hut - no floors in our house, just dirt, no electricity, just kerosene lamps and candles"

"I went days and days and days in North Carolina without food. No shoes. I mean, my mother would go to bed crying, ya know, praying 'please help us with food.' There were plenty of times when I went to bed hungry. No food at all. I'd go to school and when the kids went to the place to eat, you know, I had to go outside and sit in the swing 'til lunchtime was over cause I didn't have no food to eat. This one little girl in the school, she was totally in love with me, she'd come out and gave me a peanut butter sandwich she had, that her mom and dad gave her. She would divide her peanut butter sandwiches with me. "

Beth Wray Webb: "They struggled; they were very poor and I'm sure he probably fished in the pond to try to get food because, you know, times were really rough."

Link Wray: "After they cured the pneumonia [I got serving in the Korean War] I started hemorrhaging right away. Every time I breathed, I breathed out blood. They had five doctors operating on me for eight hours, took my left lung. . . After they sewed me back up and I recovered from the surgery the doctors said, 'now you're gonna have to sit on the couch the rest of your life.' And I said, 'Well there's a mightier power than you that's gonna tell me I can't go out and play my music.'



"I couldn't do the Elvis, I couldn't do the Jerry Lee Lewis, I couldn't do the Chuck Berry and the Little Richard. I couldn't do all that stuff, even though I wanted to. If I'da had two lungs and I was healthy, man, I would have been boppin' along with the rest of them, and there would have been no "Rumble," ya know. And so I just poured all my heart and my soul into my guitar and searchin' for sounds. So like I said I punched holes in my speakers to get the distortion with "Rumble" and I bought an old off-brand guitar for 60 dollars at it was in a guitar magazine. I hooked up outdoor speakers to my amplifiers to get a weird sound."

"From watchin' my Momma sell butter door to door for five cents a stick, and seein' my daddy standin' in the corner shakin,' his hair and teeth all fallin' out and nobody givin' a s*** about it. That's where the pain in my music comes from"

Station 2 - Racism and Segregation

Link Wray: “I was from the poorest part of North Carolina --Dunn, where I was not white and it was not safe. Elvis was brought up poor in Tupelo, Mississippi, but he was still a poor white guy -- and the whites ruled the world down South. My mother was Shawnee down South, right? Ku Klux Klan country. Livin’ among the black people, and they were livin’ in misery, we were livin’ in misery, and the poor whites was livin’ in the same misery. But the only thing about it was the whites were hating us and the blacks.”

“There was a school for whites, and a school for the blacks, and a school for the indians, which was the one I went to.”

“The klan would come with their caps and burning crosses. I seen the sheets come, pull out the black people, tie ‘em to a tree and beat

‘em. We’d hide underneath the bed, hopin’ they wouldn’t come for us. It was just one big hell until my daddy got us outta there and to Portsmouth, Virginia, and that’s where I saw a little better way of life.”

Beth Wray Webb: “You didn’t go around telling everybody you were Native American; everybody hid it because of the way other people looked down on them.”

Link Wray: “I was just out on the porch -- my dad had bought my brother Ray a guitar, and all Ray wanted to do was ride bicycles and go out, he didn’t care about the guitar. So I picked it up. It wasn’t even tuned. I didn’t know what I was doin’. And this here guy comes walkin’ across the street, ‘hey boy, lemme tune your guitar.’ So he tuned it up, started playin’ bottleneck, man, and singin’ the blues. I just fell in love with the music.

“My mom and dad would take me to the circus to see the elephants and the tigers and then I’d say, ‘I wanna see this black guy’--guitar, horns, drums, Hambone played everything. He was like a one-man show. . I learned a lot from him.”



Ku Klux Klan Rally, 1951



Station 3 - Faith and Family

Link Wray: "My mom, she would get out on the streets of Dunn and Benson and Raleigh and Wilmington, and you know preached to blacks who were drinkin' and not livin' a good life, you know, killin' each other, knockin' each other, gettin' drunk. You know, low morals. And she'd preach to them and preach to poor whites. The poor white people were livin' right outside of us. They were poor downtrodden people too, you know. Even though it was in the South where the blacks and whites didn't mix. She was preaching to all of them."

"I lived very close to my mom. You know, she brought me up with a very close love. "[We weren't] mixin' with anybody. Not mixing with the whites, not mixing with the blacks, even though we lived around them, you know? We just lived a very quiet life."



From left to right: Doug Wray, Vernon Wray, Link Wray

Sherry Wray: "[Link's mother] would take the children on a picnic and sing to them all day long while she picked cotton, to keep their focus on her, and as they got older they sang with her."

Link Wray: "God zapped 'Rumble' into my head, you know. I'm not religious, I'm very spiritual, and that's from my Shawnee Mommy."

"I wasn't a churchgoer. My mother never went to church. She went to brush meetin's out in the fields. Me and Doug and Ray would play songs while she was preachin' while we were kids."

"When we recorded in our studio, [my brother] was the technician. He was a good technician, he helped me get my sounds."

Sherry Wray: "My father, Vernon Wray, was the first of the three to get a record deal. Through that deal and the ensuing session, is how my uncle, Link Wray got to do the demo that became "Rumble." My father's youngest brother, Doug Wray, was their drummer. . .They started playing together as kids. There are a lot of families who were in business together, but I can't think of a single one who is as close as mine was. It was like having three fathers. They were in the studio every spare minute, and they toured together all the time."



Handout 4 - *Nationhood*, Laura Da' (*Eastern Shawnee*)

Laura Da' (1979-) is a writer and teacher living in the Pacific Northwest. She is the author of Instruments of the True Measure and Tributaries, which won an American Book Award.

I am a citizen of two nations: Shawnee and American. I have one son who is a citizen of three. Before he was born, I learned that, like all infants, he would need to experience a change of heart at birth in order to survive. When a baby successfully breathes in through the lungs, the heart changes from parallel flow to serial flow and the shunt between the right and left atriums closes. Our new bodies obliterate old frontiers.

North America is mistakenly called nascent. The Shawnee nation is mistakenly called moribund. America established a mathematical beginning point in 1785 in what was then called the Northwest Territory. Before that, it was known in many languages as the eastern range of the Shawnee, Miami, and Huron homelands. I do not have the Shawnee words to describe this place; the notation that is available to me is 40°38'32.61' N 80°31'9.76' W.