Social Studies

# The Blues

Bessie Smith,
legendary blues singer

Blues music has its roots in tribal African music. Though they were forbidden to practice traditional ways, Africans slaves held onto their rhythms and melodies through song. As in their homeland, African-American slaves sang rhythmic songs as they planted and harvested crops. They also created spirituals, a form of religious song, out of traditional melodies combined with Biblical themes. These songs expressed religious faith while also expressing the terrible hardships of slavery. After Emancipation, the distinct rhythms and melodies carried over into free African-American culture, finally evolving into blues music. Still played today, blues are the root of many other forms of modern music, including rock and roll and jazz.

## Word scramble!

Unscramble the letters to form the word that completes the sentence.

1. The African-American spiritual came about when traditional African religion and music mixed with African-Americans' new _____ beliefs. ANHRSSCIT
2. Blues music originated in a region of the United States called the _____ _____. EPED HOSTU
3. Many traditional and contemporary blues songs tell the story of an individual character. This type of song is known as a _____. ADALBL

Do you have a favorite rock and roll, blues or jazz song? What makes it special?

NAME: _____ CLASS: _____ DATE: _____ RATING: _____

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