

Goldie at Home: Music at Montauk Historic Site

Activity Overview: As pianos and other musical instruments became more available in Iowa during the 1800s, people began to learn how to play different types of instruments - from brassy trumpets to grand pianos. This Goldie at Home musical activity was created in partnership with the Montauk Historic Site. Iowa Governor William Larrabee and his wife, Anna, raised their seven children surrounded by the arts and music at their large home, Montauk, located in Clermont, Iowa. Create your own instruments and learn how to make music much like the Larrabee children did over 100 years ago.

Connection to Iowa History

Learning how to play an instrument was an important activity for a wealthy and upwardly-mobile Victorian family like the Larrabees. Early in William Larrabee's life, besides farming and chores, he found music was very meaningful. He played the cello and also taught vocal lessons. His future wife, Anna, was one of his pupils.

All of the Larrabee children were taught to sing and to play instruments. Their daughter, Anna, was sent to music schools in Chicago and New York. She would eventually serve as the organist at the Union Sunday School in Clermont for 60 years. Between the seven children, they could play the piano, banjo, guitar, clarinet, harp, melodeon, organ, mandolin and drums. The family would often sit in their parlor before dinner and play the piano and sing. They also often hosted concerts at their house, and invited residents of the town to come enjoy the music.



For more information about the Larrabee family, please check out the [Goldie at Home Activity: Snapshots of Montauk](#).

Mini Mandolin Instructions

- 1 If using a circular plastic lid, cut out the center of the ring, leaving only the outer rim.
- 2 If using an embroidery hoop, separate the inner and outer rings of the hoop.
- 3 Wrap the 4 rubber bands around the embroidery hoop, the cake pan or the plastic ring. Make sure to leave some space between each rubber band.
- 4 If using an embroidery hoop, place the inner hoop inside the outer hoop, and tighten the screw.
- 5 Lay your instrument flat on a surface and pluck upwards to create sound.



Mini Mandolin Materials

- Small embroidery hoop/ circular cake pan/ circular plastic lid
- Paint/markers
- Four rubber bands

Learn how to make a homemade tambourine on the next page

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Paper Plate Tambourine Instructions

- 1 Using markers or crayons, decorate the bottom side of each paper plate.
- 2 Flip over one plate. Add a handful of dried beans or beads to that plate.
- 3 While keeping your plate with your beans or beads on the table right-side up, take your second plate and place it bottom-side up onto the other plate with the beans.
- 4 Make sure the edges of both plates line up. Moving around the outer rim of the plates, use the stapler to attach the rims together around the entire perimeter.
- 5 Use a hole punch to punch holes around the outer rim, in between the staples. This will be used to attach your ribbon.
- 6 Cut small pieces of ribbon and tie them in each hole. If you would like to add bells to your tambourine, tie them onto the paper plates using this ribbon.
- 7 Now it is time to shake your tambourine.



Tambourine Materials

- Two paper plates
- Markers/crayons
- Dried beans/beads
- Stapler
- Hole punch
- Ribbon
- **Optional:** Bells

8 Questions to Spark Learning

- What is your favorite musical instrument to play or listen to? What aspects of that instrument make it so appealing to you?
- Why do you think music concerts, like the ones held at Montauk, would be exciting for people to attend? Why do you think the Larrabees wanted to invite young children from the town to these concerts?
- Iowa has served as the inspiration for four Broadway musicals, most famously "The Music Man." Why do you think musicians and composers would choose to write music about Iowa? If you had to write a musical about Iowa, what would you write about and why?

9 Additional Resources

Explore these resources below to learn more about the history of music in Iowa.

- [Iowa's Music-History Mashup - Iowa Culture Blog](#)
- ["Music in Iowa," The Goldfinch Magazine, Vol. 20, No. 4 \(1999\)](#)
- [Video: Montauk - Clermont, Iowa](#)
- [Teacher's Guide: Montauk](#)
- [Montauk Historic Site History](#)