King Studios is a community-led non-profit that celebrates the unique cultural & social contributions made by historic King Records from 1943-1968 in the neighborhood of Evanston in Cincinnati. As part of our outreach, King Studios has developed innovative programs that leverage the history and legacy of this influential record label to teach elementary, middle school, high school and university curriculum.

JOIN OUR LATEST EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE!

Thanks to recent grants from the Dater Family and Elsa Heisel Sule Foundations, we are currently seeking K-12 educators interested in joining a “design” team to help develop one or more of our “Traveling Suitcases.” Suitcases are educational toolkits available for free to area educators that use replica artifacts, technology and lesson plans to tell the King Records’ story through art, music, entrepreneurship, civil rights and science. A list of Suitcase descriptions and suggested grade and teaching levels are provided below. King Studios will provide stipends and early access to suitcases for successful design collaborators. Suitcase lesson plans will be tied to state standards - you can visit our site to view sample lesson plans and learn more: http://curiosity.cs.xu.edu/kingstudieseducation/

Interested educators should contact Sean Rhiney, King Studios Education Chair and Director of the Eigal Center for Community Engaged Learning at Xavier University, with your questions. To apply today, send your name, school, teaching area and grade, and Suitcase preference to rhineys@xavier.edu by January 15, 2016.

KING STUDIOS TRAVELING SUITCASES

Music/Fine Arts: King Studios recorded both Country (called “Hillbilly”) and Rhythm and Blues (called “race” or “sepia”) songs and artists, and it had the first racially integrated session band. The diverse artists and styles at King led to musical creativity and innovation. King recordings that changed the musical landscape in the 1950s and contributed to the birth of Rock and Roll include “Fever” by Little Willie John, “Twist” by Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, and “Good Rockin’ Tonight” by Wynonie Harris.

K-6 Music and/or Visual Art Standards.
**Economics and Entrepreneurship:** This suitcase will examine King Records’ success as a small business. Syd Nathan’s career can be used to illustrate topics in entrepreneurship, business models including facilities and operations, management, musical analysis and comparison, youth culture, marketing and promotions, venue comparison, and finances.

_High School Economics and Financial Literacy; content that satisfies state standards for Entrepreneurship and Business Education._

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**Science, Technology and Popular Culture:** Syd Nathan’s King Records took advantage of changes in popular music in the mid-twentieth century. Smaller phonographs and transistor radios allowed young people to become consumers of new musical genres. These trends can be traced in advertising and media as well as science and technology. Materials in this suitcase could be used for science as well as history lessons.

_K-6 Science; High School American History and English Language Arts._

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**Civil Rights:** Materials in this suitcase would include transcripts of interviews with African American King artists who have spoken about their experiences living in a segregated Northern city, traveling and performing in the South, and the reception of their recordings by black and white audiences. Recollections of Evanston residents who attended local high schools in the fifties and sixties will amplify these stories. Lyrics and YouTube videos of James Brown’s classic “Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud)” will be used to examine the ways music contributes to social movements.

_High School Social Studies, American History_

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**The Great Migration from Appalachia and the South to Cincinnati:** King Records was successful in recording Country, Rhythm and Blues, as well as cross-over hits because Cincinnati was a hub of Southern migration to industrial centers in the North in the middle of the twentieth century. White Appalachians came from Kentucky and West Virginia to settle in Over-the-Rhine, while African Americans from the deep South moved to the West End. Syd’s Records originated on Central Avenue between these two population centers.

_3rd and 4th Grade Social Studies; High School Social Studies, American History_
LEARN MORE ABOUT KING RECORDS’ HISTORY!

King Records was the brainchild of Syd Nathan, who founded a company that would record and promote music being neglected by the major labels in the mid ‘40s. Country, Rhythm & Blues, Bluegrass, Jazz, Gospel, Rockabilly, Soul, Pop, and Funk were all recorded, manufactured, warehoused, and marketed inside King Records at 1540 Brewster Avenue in the Cincinnati neighborhood of Evanston and exported around the globe.

Country singers such as Grandpa Jones and Cowboy Copas recorded at King and the label helped introduce R & B music to white audiences. It was this music that influenced The Everly Brothers, Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley as teenagers.

King was the birthplace of many classic titles in the American Songbook: Good Rockin’ Tonight, Freight Train Boogie, Blues Stay Away from Me, Kansas City, Train Kept a Rollin’, Honky Tonk, Fever, The Twist, Papa’s Got a New Bag, and Hideaway. It was also at King Records that a young, unknown singer, signed in 1956, exploded onto the international music scene in the 60s. His name was James Brown, the Godfather of Soul and the Grandmaster of Funk. Cold Sweat, which has been cited as the first true funk song, was recorded by James Brown at 1540 Brewster Avenue in 1967.

With vision, drive and determination, Nathan created a complete, vertically integrated operation with its own recording studio, pressing plants, art department, and international-distribution system. At one point, King had become the sixth-largest record label in the United States.