**Les Paul   
Solid-body electric guitar**

When Les Paul was about your age, he was very interested in music. At the age of eight, he invented a harmonica holder that he could wear around his neck. This allowed him to play the harmonica hands-free while also playing the guitar.

As a teenager, Les performed in local drive-ins (outdoor movie theaters) and restaurants. In order to make the sound of his guitar heard above the noise of the people talking, he experimented with different materials such as old car and radio parts and railroad tracks to build a guitar which could project sound at a maximum volume. His first solid-body electric guitar known as “The Log” was made from a chunk of pinewood with strings and a pick-up arm. The design wasn’t commercially successful and he continued to experiment and make improvements.

Les also invented a method of multi-track recording. He would record, or “cut” a guitar track to a disc, play it back while cutting a second guitar part, and so on until he was happy with the musical arrangement.

Today, Les Paul guitars are considered some of the finest made electric guitars in the world. In 2007, President Bush presented Les with the National Medal of Arts and praised the musician and inventor for “his innovation as a musician, his pioneering designs of the electric guitar, and his groundbreaking recording techniques that have influenced the development of American jazz, blues and pop music, and inspired generations of guitarists.” Les Paul (1915 – 2009) was a lifelong resident of Mahwah, New Jersey.