



SOUTHEAST TENNESSEE

# MUSIC TRAIL

*Stories* AND MUSICAL *Places*



OUR MUSICAL HERITAGE

A hand holding a smartphone at a night concert with bokeh lights in the background.

WELCOME TO OUR SONG

# MUSIC TRAIL

SOUTHEAST TENNESSEE'S MUSICAL SIGNATURE IS BROAD AND WIDE,  
INFLUENCED BY MY MANY CULTURES STRETCHING ACROSS CENTURIES.

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**T**he musical heritage of this region has no doubt been inspired by the lush natural world, contoured by rivers and mountains, as well as the joys and tragedies of life within this rugged landscape.

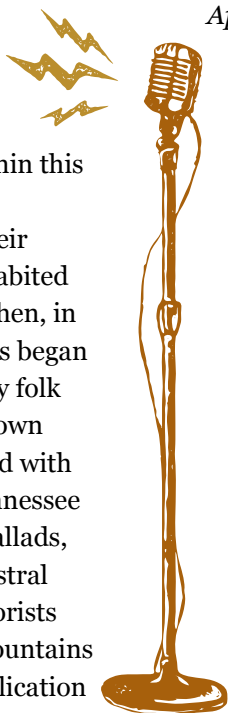
The Cherokee and their early ancestors first inhabited Southeast Tennessee. Then, in the 1700s, other cultures began settling the region. Early folk song collectors were known to be especially intrigued with traditional music in Tennessee because it was rich in ballads, passed along from ancestral homelands. These folklorists traveled through the mountains collecting songs for publication

in *The Journal of American Folklore* (1912) and *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* (1932).

Prior to the abolishment of slavery in 1865, enslaved blacks were known for their emotional spirituals and work songs. Thomas Talley, a black folklorist and chemistry professor at Fisk University in Nashville, began collecting rural black folk songs later in his life. He published 349 secular songs and spirituals in his 1922 book *Negro Folk Rhymes*, the first compilation of folk songs in Tennessee.

Chattanooga was a hub for railway service in the South in the late 1800s and early 1900s

*Continued on next page*





## CONTINUED

and was put on the map with songs like *Down in Chattanooga* by Irving Berlin (1913) and Glenn Miller's song *Chattanooga Choo-Choo* (1942). During this time, the traditional singing, fiddling and banjo-playing that was prevalent throughout the South was popularized through radio, the phonograph record and mass-produced songbooks.

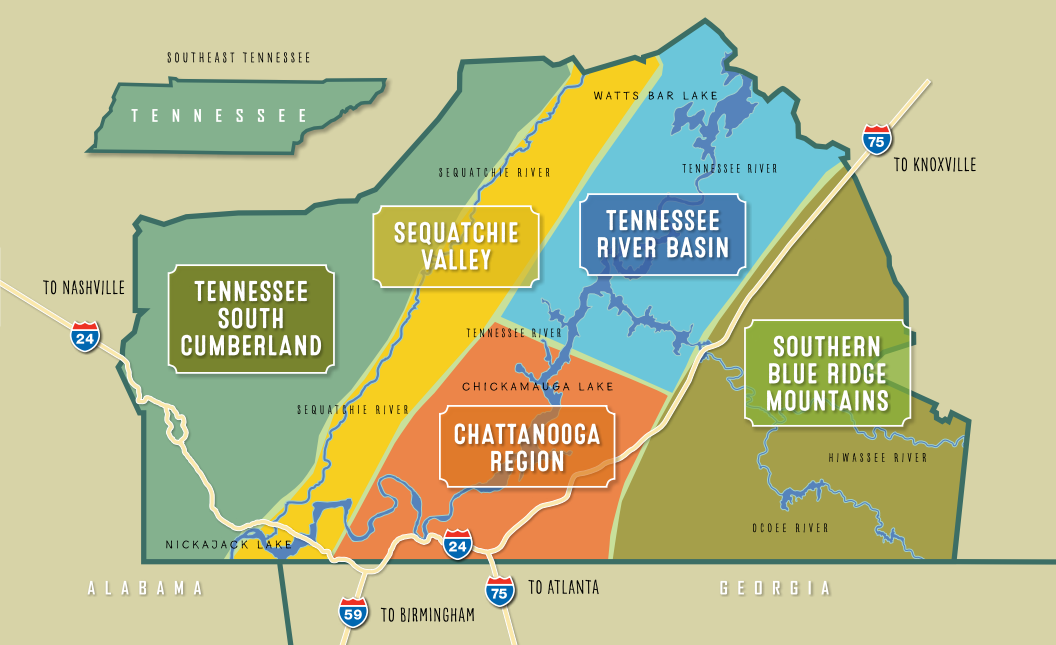
In the early 1900s to mid-1960s, Chattanooga featured some of the best live blues, rhythm and blues, jazz and soul in the South. The talent and influence of the black artists who hailed from Chattanooga and performed on Ninth Avenue (today

MLK Blvd.) rivals the musical heritage of Memphis's Beale Street and New Orleans's Bourbon Street. During this same time period, the Red Back Hymnal – the world's most well-known hymnal – was conceived and printed in Cleveland, Tenn., by the Tennessee Music and Printing Company.

Explore the Southeast Tennessee Music Trail Guide to learn more about the musical heritage of the region and discover where to immerse yourself in musical traditions today.



[SOUTHEASTTENNESSEE.COM](http://SOUTHEASTTENNESSEE.COM)



## SOUTHEAST TENNESSEE

### Chattanooga

One of the most notable songs about Chattanooga is the 1941 big band tune *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, which features the historic Southern Railway terminal station, Track 29.

### Tennessee River Basin

More than 200 reporters from all over the country descended on Dayton, Tenn., in July 1925 to report on the Scopes Trial, and a number of songs followed in the days and months after the trial.

### Tennessee's South Cumberland

The hymn *We Shall Overcome* has a long history, with input from many people and places. Today's version is linked to the historic Highlander Folk School formerly in Monteagle, Tenn.

### Sequatchie Valley

The bluegrass band Track 145 recounts the story of John Murrell, an outlaw who died in Pikeville in 1844 who has inspired many ghost stories through the years.

### Southern Blue Ridge Mountains

The Red Back Hymnal, one of the best collections of gospel hymns in the world, was developed and printed in 1951 by the Tennessee Music & Printing Company in Cleveland, Tenn.

# CHATTANOOGA

## Great Southern Old Time Fiddlers Convention

901 Lindsay St., Chattanooga, TN  
oldchattanooga.com

Chattanooga used to be a popular hub for string instrument contests in the 1920s and 1930s. The Old Time Fiddlers Convention revives these old memories with a competition every year in March. Musicians come to show off their fiddle, banjo, song, dance, and string band skills for a chance to win cash prizes.

## Moon River Festival

150 River St., Chattanooga, TN  
865-523-2665 | moonriverfestival.com

Chattanooga's biggest festival of the year features Americana music with the backdrop of the Tennessee River and the sun setting over Lookout Mountain. The Coolidge Park event brings big name acts like Sheryl Crow, Jason Isbell, Brandi Carlile, and the Avett Brothers for the 2-day event every September.

## THE BIG 9: CHATTANOOGA'S VIBRANT MUSICAL PAST

From the early 1900s to the 1960s, Chattanooga was a destination for some of the best live rhythm and blues, jazz and soul in the South.

Ninth Street in downtown Chattanooga – renamed Martin Luther King Blvd. in 1981 – was the epicenter of the black community and a mecca for live music and entertainment.

Known as “The Big 9,” the area was a hotbed for live blues, rhythm and blues, jazz and soul music. Some of the era's biggest stars stayed at the Martin Hotel which was located where the Bessie Smith Cultural Center is today.

The musical influence of these artists, who hailed from and played on “The Big 9,” brings a musical heritage to Chattanooga that rivals Memphis's Beale Street and New Orleans's Bourbon Street.



*Ninth Street in the '60s*





## Riverbend Music Festival

200 Riverfront Pkwy., Chattanooga, TN  
423-756-2211 | [riverbendfestival.com](http://riverbendfestival.com)

Since 1982, Riverbend has been hosting a multi-day summer music festival with rock, bluegrass, jam, country, and pop artists at Ross's Landing. The main stage is a converted barge that floats on the Tennessee River with views of downtown Chattanooga.

## Nightfall Concert Series

850 Market St. Chattanooga, TN  
423-265-0771 | [nightfallchattanooga.com](http://nightfallchattanooga.com)

From May to August, every Friday night a free outdoor concert in Miller Plaza brings excitement and community to downtown Chattanooga. All of Chattanooga's citizens come together to listen to local and nationally known artists rock out at the newly renovated Miller Park. Gather with friends and neighbors, enjoy local beer and vendors, and start your weekend on a good note.

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**Chattanooga's 1st radio station** – *In the 1930s, the first radio broadcasts sent music out into the air. On April 13, 1925, WDOD signed on the air as Chattanooga's first radio station. WDOD is still in operation today, with offices on Broad Street at the foot of Lookout Mountain.*

## CHATTANOOGA'S EARLY JAZZ & BLUES GREATS INCLUDE:

- American blues singer **Bessie Smith** sang on the street corners of The Big Nine as a little girl and became the most popular female blues singer of the 1920s and 1930s.
- **Sam Gooden** and **Fred Cash** played on Ninth Street before forming The Impressions, one of the greatest vocal groups of all time.
- Jazz musician **Jimmy Blanton**, a member of Duke Ellington's band, is credited with developing Bebop jazz.
- Legendary drummer **Clyde Stubblefield**, best known for his work with James Brown, grew up in Chattanooga during the bustling 1940s.
- American jazz musician **Valaida Snow** was born in Chattanooga and helped spread jazz across Europe and China after World War 1.
- **Cora "Lovie" Austin** worked with **Louis Armstrong** and was known as one of the top jazz piano players of her time.





MUSIC GUIDE TO

# CHATTANOOGA

## RISE

423-402-0452 | [risecha.org](http://risecha.org)

Formerly known as Jazzanooga, the one-day jazz heritage festival has now evolved into RISE. RISE is a minority-led organization offering an arts incubator, Youth Music Academy, radio program, and year-round concerts. By breaking down cultural barriers, RISE is bringing more opportunities to underprivileged communities to express their experiences through art and music.

## 3 Sisters Bluegrass Festival

*Ross's Landing, Chattanooga, TN*

[3sistersbluegrass.com](http://3sistersbluegrass.com)

Each October, people travel from far and wide to attend this free bluegrass event on the riverfront at Ross's Landing. For over ten years this family-friendly festival has brought traditional and contemporary bluegrass artists to the stage.

## Songbirds

*35 Station St., Chattanooga, TN*

423-531-2473 | [songbirdsfoundation.org](http://songbirdsfoundation.org)

Located in the Chattanooga Choo Choo, Songbirds is an interactive learning experience and live music venue. The venue features several historical exhibits that spotlight Chattanooga's vibrant music history, the career of The Impressions, and the cultural impact of the electric guitar. A Celebrity Guitar Room features guitars owned by B.B. King, Mary Kaye, Duane Allman, Carl Wilson, Chuck Berry, Loretta Lynn, Mel Bay, Hank Snow, John Entwistle, and more.

## THE IMPRESSIONS

*200 E. MLK Blvd., Chattanooga, TN*

Stop by the Bessie Smith Cultural Center & Museum to see the Tennessee Music Pathways marker

honoring The Impressions. Band members

Sam Gooden

and Fred Cash

are Chattanooga

natives and in their early days played on Ninth Street (today MLK Blvd.). The Impressions were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame after scoring 17 pop hits from 1958-74.







## SONGS INSPIRED BY CHATTANOOGA

Located along the banks of the Tennessee River, Chattanooga was incorporated in 1839 and quickly became a river and railroad hub for commerce. By the 1930s, the city was known as the Dynamo of Dixie, with visitors hailing from all over the country, including singers and songwriters inspired by this bustling Southern town.

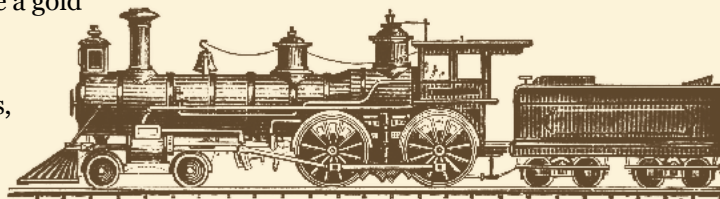
One of the most notable songs about Chattanooga is the 1941 big band tune *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, which features the historic Southern Railway terminal station, Track 29. The tune was made famous by Glenn Miller and His Orchestra and was the first song to receive a gold record.

Johnny Cash wrote more than 1,000 songs, and several of his hits referenced the

Chattanooga area, including *Ruby Falls*, *Chattanooga City Limit Sign* and *Monteagle Mountain*.

Johnny Cash also covered one of picking legend Norman Blake's most popular songs, *Chattanooga Sugar Babe*, which was featured on Blake's 1998 Grammy Award-winning album of the same name.

From Bessie Smith to modern R&B star Usher, Chattanooga continues to launch and inspire some of the country's most popular musicians and songwriters.



# CHATTANOOGA

*Four large-scale murals overlook MLK Blvd., featuring the faces of the musicians whose voices were once the soul of the city.*



## Martin Luther King Mural

300 E. MLK Blvd., Chattanooga, TN

This Martin Luther King-themed mural was inspired by Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech and includes depictions of 20 people who represent aspects of M.L. King Blvd. and Chattanooga. There are also four hidden number "9"s hidden in the mural, in honor of the street's historic name, "The Big 9." The painting wraps around the city block at 42,1789 feet long, making it the largest mural in the southeastern U.S. and one of the largest in the nation. Philadelphia-based muralist Meg Saligman created the mural with assistance from local artists. It was unveiled in 2016.



## Big 9 Legends Mural

763 E. MLK Blvd., Chattanooga, TN

Once known as "The Big 9," M.L. King Blvd. (formerly East Ninth Street) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its significant black history in Chattanooga. This multimedia mural collage celebrates the street, which was home to generations of blues, jazz, R&B, funk and gospel musicians from the turn of the century through the 1960s. The mural measures 60 feet long by 18 feet high and features Bessie Smith, Frazier Benefield, Mary Bessie Brown, Dorothy Courtney, Cortez Greer, Tiny Kennedy, Wilfred Middlebrooks, William Price, Johnny Screane, Willie "Papa" Stubb and Rick Upshaw, among others. This mural project was facilitated by Mark Making and completed in 2012.



## Robert Johnson Mural

*500 E. MLK Blvd., Chattanooga, TN*

Robert Johnson (1911-1938) was a blues guitarist, singer and songwriter from Mississippi known for his incredible skill and unusual technique of strumming chords to make the guitar sound almost like a piano. Johnson acquired his skill in such a short time that it inspired a rumor that became a legend — that Johnson must have sold his soul to the devil. His influence on blues, from Muddy Waters and Eric Clapton to the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin, is legendary. This 20-foot-tall portrait of Johnson by Kevin Bate was unveiled in 2013.



## Bessie Smith Mural

*500 E. MLK Blvd., Chattanooga, TN*

Bessie Smith (1894-1937) was the most popular female blues singer of the 1920s and 1930s. Her powerful, soulful voice earned her the title of “Empress of the Blues.” Smith was born in Chattanooga, and lived near what is today known as the Blue Goose Hollow section of the Tennessee Riverwalk. At an early age, she began performing on the streets with her brother as a way to earn money for their impoverished household. Reportedly, their preferred location was in front of the White Elephant Saloon, which was located at the corner of 13th and Elm streets (no longer in existence). Bessie left Chattanooga in 1912 to join a traveling minstrel and vaudeville show as a dancer and singer with Pa and Ma Rainey. Before the Great Depression, Bessie was the highest-paid black entertainer in the world, collecting as much as \$2,000 a week to sing her songs. This portrait of Bessie was painted by Kevin Bate.

# TENNESSEE RIVER BASIN

## DAYTON, TN

### **Nokian Tyres Summer Nights Music**

1435 Market St., Dayton, TN

423-775-9847 | [scopesfestival.com](http://scopesfestival.com)

Every Friday in July, the Summer Nights series performs at the Rhea County Courthouse stage in downtown Dayton. The free concerts are separated into a different category each week such as gospel night, rock night, a bluegrass competition, and karaoke. Between plenty of vendors and a big lawn to play on, Summer Nights is fun for everyone.

## DECATUR, TN

### **Decatur - Downtown Summer Nights**

116 North Main St., Decatur, TN

423-334-5496 | [MeigsChamber.org](http://MeigsChamber.org)

Decatur hosts a free summer concert series every Saturday at the downtown courthouse square. Different musical acts perform each week from bluegrass to quartets.



## BLUEGRASS JAMS:

*Check out these bluegrass jams that take place throughout the year:*

### **Fiddlers Anonymous Bluegrass Jam**

2248 Dayton Blvd., Chattanooga, TN

Weekly jam on Sundays from 4 – 8 pm ET.

### **Kimball Fire Hall Bluegrass Jam Sessions**

925 Main St., Kimball, TN | 423-595-5356

Bluegrass jam sessions held on the first Saturday of every month (6 pm CT).

### **Clayton Blevins Pickin' Barn**

New Hope, TN | 423-837-8575

423-718-4826 – Quinton Choate

First paved road to right after crossing the Shelby Rhinehart Bridge from South Pittsburg into New Hope, Tenn. Bluegrass bands perform on the third Saturday of every month.

### **The Jam at Legacy Hall**

146 Scenic Dr., Copperhill, TN | 423-496-2849

Every first and third Tuesday of the month acoustic jam sessions are held at the First United Methodist Church in Copperhill, Tenn. Admission is free for listeners and players. Legacy Hall welcomes beginners who want to learn from experienced musicians.





# THE SCOPES TRIAL

**T**he Scopes Trial took place in Dayton, Tenn., in July 1925 and featured the prosecution of science teacher John Scopes for teaching evolution in a Tennessee public school, which was considered illegal after the passing of the Butler Act earlier that year.

However, truth be told, the trial was deliberately staged by locals to attract attention to the small town of Dayton and stimulate the economy. It worked, because the trial turned Dayton into a circus, with hordes of people and journalists jammed into the smoldering Rhea County Courthouse and surrounding town.

Clarence Darrow, a well-known attorney and leading member of the ACLU, presented the case for evolution, while three-time presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan volunteered to present for the prosecution. The trial lasted two weeks, but the jury took only nine minutes to pronounce Scopes guilty.



*In the days and months that followed, a number of songs were recorded about the event:*

## **“The John T. Scopes Trial”**

Written by Carson Robison

Recorded by Vernon Dalhart

On the day the trial began July 25, 1925

## **“Scopes Trial”**

By Charles Nabell, Oct. 1925

## **“Bryan’s Last Fight”**

By Carson Robison, Aug. 1925

## **“The Death of William Jennings Bryan”**

By Charlie Oaks, Aug. 1925

## **“The Bible’s True”**

By Uncle Dave Macon, April 1926

## **“You Can’t Make a Monkey Out of Me”**

By the Gentry Family, Oct. 1928

Visit **[RheaCountyHeritage.com](http://RheaCountyHeritage.com)** to learn more about visiting the Rhea County Heritage & Scopes Trial Museum in historic Dayton, Tenn.

# TENNESSEE'S SOUTH CUMBERLAND

## PELHAM, TN

### The Caverns

*Home of Bluegrass Underground*

*555 Charlie Roberts Rd., Pelham, TN*

*931-516-9724 | thecaverns.com*

Tucked into a mountainside along Tennessee's South Cumberland region, The Caverns beholds a surreal subterranean

amphitheater where visitors experience the "the greatest show under earth." This unforgettable venue is naturally cool, acoustically sound, and full of natural

cave features. The Caverns boast an eclectic lineup of bluegrass and other genres with shows from notable musicians. The Caverns also offers public cave exploration tours.



## MONTEAGLE, TN

### Music on The Mountain

*Jim Oliver's Smoke House*

*846 West Main St., Monteagle, TN*

*931-924-2091 | thesmokehouse.com*

Every Friday and Saturday, the Smoke House Patio Grill provides complimentary live entertainment during their Music on the Mountain events.





# WE SHALL OVERCOME AT THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

**T**he Highlander Folk School operated on a 200-acre campus in Monteagle, Tenn., from 1932 to 1959, setting the foundation for organized labor and the Civil Rights movement in the South. The school was founded “to provide an educational center in the South for the training of rural and industrial leaders, and for the conservation and enrichment of the indigenous cultural values of the mountains.”

It was here that the song *We Shall Overcome* developed into the unofficial anthem for the Civil Rights Movement. The song has a long history, with input from many people and places, but the origins of today’s version are linked to the Highlander Folk School.

Zilphia Horton, the music director at Highlander Folk School, first heard the song in 1946 when she went to help tobacco workers with a labor strike in Charleston, S.C. She was said to be struck by the moving simplicity

*Continued on next page*



▲  
*On September 2, 1957, Martin Luther King joined with the staff and the participants of a leadership training conference at the Highlander Folk School to celebrate its 25th anniversary. In his closing address to the conference, King praised Highlander for its “noble purpose and creative work,” and contribution to the South of “some of its most responsible leaders in this great period of transition.”*



# TENNESSEE'S SOUTH CUMBERLAND

## SEWANEE, TN

### Sewanee Summer Music Festival

The Sewanee Summer Music Festival explores the beauty of our natural world and the intimate connection between music and nature. Programming reflects a broad range of music that is inspired by the beauty of our natural surroundings.



## CONTINUED

of it and how one picketer, Lucille Simmons, would sing it very slowly and powerfully.

Horton taught the song to folk singer Pete Seeger when he visited the Highlander Folk School. In 1957, Seeger performed the most well-known rendition at the school to an elite crowd, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and the Rev. Ralph Abernathy.

Dr. King was so moved by the song that he recited the lyrics in his final Memphis sermon before his assassination. Shortly after, the song was played during his funeral in Atlanta.

Through the years, *We Shall*

*Overcome* has spread around the world, becoming one of the most well-known songs among freedom movements everywhere.

Today, a historic marker on Hwy. 41 in Monteagle commemorates the former location of the school.





*Zilphia Horton, the music director at Highlander Folk School, taught the song to folk singer Pete Seeger when he visited. In 1957, Seeger performed the most well-known rendition at the school to an elite crowd, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and the Rev. Ralph Abernathy.*



# SEQUATCHIE VALLEY

## SOUTH PITTSBURG, TN

### National Cornbread Festival

*South Pittsburg, TN*

423-837-0022 | [nationalcornbread.com](http://nationalcornbread.com)

Each April, thousands of foodies and festival-goers gather in historic South Pittsburg – cast iron capital and home of Lodge Manufacturing – to celebrate cornbread, considered the cornerstone of southern cuisine. The festival features four stages, including the historic Princess Theatre, with more than 40 musical acts throughout the weekend, as well as food and artisan booths and exhibits.



### Princess Theater

*215 S Cedar Avenue, South Pittsburg, TN*

904-334-3222 | [f princessofsouthpitt](https://www.facebook.com/princessofsouthpitt)

The renovated Princess Theater is a performance arts venue for concerts, community events, and live acts. The theatre was originally used for movies dating back to the silent-film era.



▲ *Skillets from the Lodge factory store in South Pittsburg*

### Opera House Music:

*230 South Cedar Ave.,*

*South Pittsburg, TN | 423-837-6650*

Unique full-service music store featuring new, vintage and antique musical instruments, CDs, tapes, vinyl records and music accessories.

▼ *Opera House Music Store in South Pittsburg*





## DUNLAP, TN

### Valley Fest

15643 Rankin Ave., Dunlap, TN  
423-593-1444 | [Valleyfestonline.com](http://Valleyfestonline.com)

Mark your calendar for the first weekend of May when the annual Valley Fest takes over the town of Dunlap to showcase a diverse mix of music genres on outdoor stages. From car shows to kid zones, there is something for everyone during this fun-filled community event.

### Dunlap Coke Ovens Bluegrass Festival

381 Walnut St., Dunlap, TN  
423-949-2156 | [Cokeovens.com/festival](http://Cokeovens.com/festival)

For over 30 years, the annual summer Dunlap Coke Ovens Festival has been celebrating local bluegrass at the historic Dunlap Coke Ovens park where miners used to turn coal into coke for iron foundries before the operations were shut down in 1927.

## PIKEVILLE, TN

### Nine Mile Bluegrass Festival

21008 Old State Hwy 28, Pikeville, TN  
423-533-2462 | [Ninemilebluegrass.com](http://Ninemilebluegrass.com)

Enjoy live bluegrass outdoors during select summer weekends starting in May and ending in September. The event benefits the Nine Mile Fire Department and supports the opportunity for local musicians to play for their community.

### Mountaineer Folk Festival at Fall Creek Falls State Park

2009 Village Camp Rd, Spencer, TN  
423-881-5298 | [Fallcreekfalls.org](http://Fallcreekfalls.org)

Step back in time for a true mountain music cultural experience. The Mountaineer Folk Festival, held the first weekend after Labor Day, offers pioneer-era immersion with activities like country cooking, square dancing, handmade crafts, storytelling, and more. The festival takes place at Fall Creek Falls State Park where you can enjoy waterfalls, lakes, and hiking trails.

▼ Visit the Dunlap Coke Ovens Park



# SEQUATCHIE VALLEY

## Robert Emmett Winsett

3095 Main St., Pikeville, TN

Robert Emmett Winsett (1876-1952) was an American composer and publisher of Gospel music. He was born in Bledsoe County, Tenn., and graduated from the Bowman Normal School of Music in 1899. Winsett is buried at Buttram Cemetery, located at 8000 Rhea County Hwy. in Dayton, Tenn.



Winsett was inducted into the Southern Gospel Museum and Hall of Fame, and the Gospel Music Hall of Fame.



*Tennessee Music Pathways marker for R. E. Winsett in Pikeville*



# OUTLAW JOHN MURRELL BY TRACK 145

The notorious outlaw John Murrell (1806-1844) is referenced in Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*, fictionalized in several movies, and has influenced folklore tales throughout the 19th century. Murrell's story begins in Middle Tennessee and comes to a gory end in Pikeville, Tenn.

Murrell was born in 1806 and grew up in Middle Tennessee, with a father who was a preacher and a mother who taught him to steal. His habits continued as a young man and he was imprisoned for six years after stealing horses. Once he was released, he persisted his theft with a band of outlaws along the Old Natchez Trace, a historic trail extending from Southern Mississippi to Nashville. He became known as the "Great Western Land Pirate" who roamed the Southeast stealing horses, pillaging, and stealing and reselling enslaved people.



Nearly 180 years later, the bluegrass band Track 145 from Pikeville wrote a song about the notorious bandit John Murrell.



In 1834, Murrell was captured with the help of Tom Brannon, an enslaved man. Murrell tried to recruit Brannon into his group of outlaws, but instead Brannon told the police of his whereabouts and was awarded \$100 (the equivalent of \$2,000 by today's standards).

After nearly a decade in jail, Murrell was granted early release after contracting tuberculosis. He died nine months later, in Nov. 1844, in the bustling railroad town of Pikeville, Tenn. A local carpenter, AP Green, made Murrell's casket. Murrell was buried in Smyrna Cemetery outside of Pikeville, but the story doesn't end there. Just days after his burial, his corpse was discovered, dug up with the head removed. His skull was never found, but his mummified thumb somehow ended up at the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville.

Nearly 180 years later, the bluegrass band Track 145 from Pikeville wrote a song about the bandit called *John Murrell*. The catchy bluegrass tune includes lyrics like "all his evil deeds ran like poison through his veins."

Track 145 won the Scopes Festival Band Competition in 2018 and the local Dunlap Coke Ovens Jam Band Competition in 2019. One of the most distinguished honors they received was being the first band to record *Rocky Top* in the original Gatlinburg room where the lyrics were written in 1967. Along with this list of accolades, Track 145 has embraced local history by recounting the story of John Murrell – the man who inspired dozens of Sequatchie Valley bandit and ghost stories.

# SOUTHERN BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

## CLEVELAND, TN

### **Blue Springs Valley Anniversary Singing**

150 Bryson Ln., Cleveland, TN

423-472-2421 | [singingechoes.com](http://singingechoes.com)

Each year in mid-July, this festival brings together gospel music quartets and artists to sing inspiring hymns and praises in an intimate outdoor setting with more than 100 camping sites. The four-day festival sells admission tickets and offers free morning devotions.

### **BBQ, Blues & Bluegrass Festival**

755 Raider Dr. NW, Cleveland, TN

423-486-7597 | [BBQbluesandbluegrass.com](http://BBQbluesandbluegrass.com)

Come listen to free live music, compete in BBQ cook-offs, and vote for your favorite smoked selections in the “people’s choice” category. While the parents are busy eating and dancing, kids can enjoy bouncy houses and crafts.

## CHARLESTON, TN

### **International Cowpea Festival & Cook-Off**

Charleston City Park, Charleston, TN

[cowpeafestival.com](http://cowpeafestival.com)

The Cowpea Festival celebrates the history of the cowpea, featuring a cook-off, local food, crafts, musical performances by local and nationally known artists.

# RED BACK HYMNAL

### **Red Back Hymnal Exhibit**

*At the Museum Center at Five Points*

200 Inman St. E, Cleveland, TN

423-339-5745 | [museumcenter.org](http://museumcenter.org)

The Church Hymnal, commonly referred to as the “Red Back” because of the color of its binding, is a timeless classic in Southern Gospel music. Developed and printed in 1951 by the Tennessee Music & Printing Company (now Pathway Press) in **Cleveland, Tenn.**, it is known for being one of the best collections of gospel hymns in the world.



The 410 pages of the hymnal contain 429 selections, featuring standard hymns and traditional gospel songs, as well as Christmas and patriotic pieces. What sets it apart from other hymnals are the convention songs, some of the greatest quartet and convention songs from the 1930s and 1940s.

Each hymn is written in the seven-shape-note “doremi” format, a visual system that designates

musical notes by shape and syllable. Shape notes are often associated with American sacred music, specifically with singing schools, musical conventions and community “singings.”

The book, and the songs within, have inspired generations and influenced many successful musicians across all musical genres. Chattanooga-born Cleavant Derricks wrote *Just a Little Talk with Jesus*, *When God Dips His Love in My Heart*, and *We'll Soon Be Done with Troubles and Trials*.

The Museum Center at Five Points, a regional history museum in Cleveland, Tenn., features a permanent exhibit about the Red Back hymnal and is an official location on the Tennessee

Music Pathways trail, a program that promotes and preserves music events, locations and stories across the state.

The exhibit, *The Red Back: America's Best Loved Hymnal*, explores the book's history and continuing influence on Christian music. Visitors can listen to some of the most famous songs in the hymnal and recorded commentary by local gospel musicians. A hands-on shape note activity station helps explain shape note music, and a fully functioning linotype machine and proofing press display the amount of time and effort that went in to publishing a book like the Red Back in 1951.

*Red Back Hymnals  
on display in  
Cleveland, Tennessee*



# RED CLAY STATE PARK

1140 Red Clay Park Road S.W.  
Cleveland, TN 37311

**R**ed Clay State Historic Park was the site of the last seat of Cherokee government before their forced removal by federal troops along the Trail of Tears. From 1832 to 1837, it was the site of 11 general councils, some attended by as many as 5,000 Cherokee people. It was at the council meetings at Red Clay that the Cherokees learned that they would have to leave on Nunahi-Duna-Dlo-Hilu-I, or the “Trail Where They Cried,” on their way to Indian Territory .

It was almost 150 years before the Cherokee met again in council at Red Clay. The Cherokee Council Reunion in April 1984 was



commemorated by a return of the Eternal Flame to Red Clay. This symbol of the council fire remains burning to honor those Cherokee who died during their forced removal, and the Cherokee living today and tomorrow.

Today these Cherokee council grounds form the core of a Tennessee State Park. The park is a certified site and interpretive center on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and is honored as sacred ground. Throughout the year, the park hosts events that honor the legacy of the Cherokee people.





# SOUTHERN BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

## TURTLETOWN, TN

### Camp Reggae Festival

204 Calvender Rd.,

Turtletown, TN | [campreggae.net](http://campreggae.net)

Camp Reggae takes place over Memorial Day weekend near the Ocoee River and mountains. The festival encourages upcoming reggae, jam, rock, and jazz bands to perform in an intimate setting amid the woods. With Turtletown Creek Falls nearby, participants have a full spectrum of activities to enjoy at this authentic Jamaican-influenced getaway retreat.



▼ *Patrons enjoy the Apple Festival in downtown Cleveland, Tennessee*



# SOUTHERN BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

## Ocoee, TN

### Ocoee River Jam

599 US-64, Ocoee, TN | [ocoeeriverjam.com](http://ocoeeriverjam.com)

Every July the Ocoee River Jam Festival showcases nationwide musical talent during a family-friendly weekend.

▼ *The Ocoee River Jam is an annual music festival held in Ocoee, Tennessee*







▲ *Copper-hauling mules on the Old Copper Road*

## FIDDLING FOR MULES

**T**oday, one section of the Old Copper Road features a beautiful trail along the Ocoee River where runners can enjoy the peaceful landscape of the Cherokee National Forest. But the area's history wasn't always full of lush woods and blue river waters. In the mid-1800s, the Old Copper Road was used to transport thousands of pounds of copper from mines in the Copper Basin to the railroad terminus in Cleveland, Tenn.

The path was completely bare and gullied during this era of mining when copper haulers transported materials up and down the winding road with their fellow mules. The work was dirty and mundane, but

**George B. Barnes** (1811-1859) and his fiddle served as a beacon of hope in the otherwise treacherous days of copper hauling.

The load limit per mule was 500 pounds of copper. It was not unusual to see teams with as many as eight mules per wagon to pull the weight. Oftentimes the mules would get stuck in the rutted mud. While most haulers used whips to get the mules out of the muck, Barnes took a more humane approach by encouraging the mules with his fiddle. Supposedly, his musical tactics worked every time.

From 1860 to 1878, Barnes was known as a revered musician

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## CONTINUED

who played his tunes while copper hauling in the Basin. He was even invited to play the fiddle at parties around the Basin area. But most nights, Barnes performed at the Basin's Halfway House – located halfway between the copper mines and Cleveland - to liven the copper hauler's spirits after a long day of work. Halfway House owner Captain Julius Raht was so inspired by Barnes' melodies that he gifted him a violin. Barnes also used the violin to play for the mules.

Today, the tattered remains of Barnes' fiddle can be admired at the Ducktown Basin Museum in Ducktown, Tenn. Visitors can see the old Burra Burra Mine photographs depicting a desolate landscape that has since been transformed into a scenic town surrounded

by forests and a culture embedded in the picking tunes of fiddles and violins.

The Old Copper Road is now a section of US-64, linking Ducktown to Cleveland. The 12 miles that winds through the Ocoee Gorge is known as the Ocoee National Forest Scenic Byway. A 5-mile section of the original roadbed is now a hiking and biking trail that launches from the Ocoee Whitewater Center.

*Copper hauler and  
fiddler George Barnes* ►



# SOUTHERN BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

## ATHENS, TN

### Sounds of Summer Concert Series

*Athens Market Park Pavilion*

*106 S. Jackson St., Athens, TN*

*willsonthropic.org*

Every Saturday evening in the summer the Farmer's Market in Athens offers free music during an annual concert series with food trucks and more. The bands range from a variety of genres, including Appalachian Americana and folk.



## ETOWAH, TN

### Gem Theater

*700 Tennessee Ave.,*

*Etowah, TN*

*423-263-3270*

*cityofetowahtn.com*

This restored 1927 theater now hosts live concerts and acts. The Gem Theater is home to the Gem Players, the designated resident community performers. The Players produce several family-oriented plays and musicals each season.



# SOUTHERN BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

## ETOWAH, TN

### **"Cousin Jake" Tullock Memorial Bluegrass Festival**

*Gem Theater, 700 Tennessee Ave., Etowah, TN*

423-263-7608 | [etowaharts.org](http://etowaharts.org)

Each March, the Cousin Jake Festival honors the late Jake Tullock. Tullock was a bluegrass musician from Etowah known for commercially popularizing bluegrass in the 1950s. The two-day festival has been celebrating bluegrass and gospel music since the early 1990s.

### **John F. Studdard Memorial Gospel Concert**

*Gem Theater, 700 Tennessee Ave., Etowah, TN*

423-263-7608 | [etowaharts.org](http://etowaharts.org)

The Gem Theater hosts the annual John F. Studdard Concert every March to remember the founding member of the Hiwassee Ridge bluegrass band and founder of the Cousin Jake Bluegrass Festival. Studdard's passion for music forever changed his community, and the gospel concert continues to inspire listeners. One special aspect to the show is the final act when all the bluegrass performers come together to play a collaborative melody.

# PIANO ROLLING ALONG

**J**ean Lawrence Cook was known as the most prolific piano roll artist in history. He recorded between 10,000 and 20,000 unique rolls for blues, jazz, ragtime, hymn, and rock artists alike from 1921 up until his death in 1976.





Born in **Athens, Tenn.**, in 1899, Cook's relatives introduced him to music. He was immediately drawn to the player piano in his house.

The player piano is a self-playing piano using perforated sheets of song recordings called music rolls. The popularity of the player piano peaked in 1924 right as Cook became a music roll expert.

Upon moving to New York in 1920, he tapped into the music industry and started working at QRS Music Roll Company. He remained with the business for nearly 50 years and sometimes produced over two piano rolls each day. It took Cook three to six hours

to create one piano roll. His training was in classical piano, which took less time for him to produce

Occasionally, Cook's rolls were released under pseudonyms like Sid Laney, Pep Doyle, Walter Redding, and even Fats Waller.

The J. L. Cook Memorial Park in Athens is named after Cook's preacher father, Jacob. Jean Lawrence Cook's piano arrangements are on display at the American Treasure Tour in Oaks, Pennsylvania. If you have piano rolls in your home, read the label to see if the respected Cook created your tunes.



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