



Arkansas Delta Music Heritage Research Project - Part II



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Prepared for
Department of Arkansas Heritage
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Helena-West Helena
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Helena, Arkansas

December 31, 2015

I'm Goin' Over' n Ol' Helena . . .
Delta Music Heritage Research Project
Part II

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December 31, 2015

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The Growth of Popular Music

By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, American popular music—commercially oriented music intended for a wide audience—was the music of minstrel shows, vaudeville and music halls. It might be said that popular music in this country had its real beginnings in the 1890s. Songwriters realized that they could make real money selling sheet music, and Tin Pan Alley—a block on New York’s 28th Street between Broadway and Sixth Avenue where dozens of music publishers had offices—boomed. Reams of sheet music rolled off the presses and music publishers made fortunes.

By the 1920s, new forms of popular music were gaining popularity, and they stood in sharp contrast to the polished, homogenized music coming out of Tin Pan Alley. African American musicians combined European harmonic structure with African rhythms to create ragtime and jazz. The blues was born from the old work songs and field hollers of the post-emancipation era of the “Jim Crow” South and the life experiences they recorded. All three forms of black music became increasingly popular with white audiences as they became widely available either through recordings, live performances on stage, or on the radio.¹

The advent of the phonograph, most of which were owned by upper and middle class whites, made black music readily available. The popularity of black female blues singers like Ma Rainey, Ida Cox and Bessie Smith soared. A recording of Smith’s *Down Hearted Blues* sold an incredible 750,000 copies in six months.² The advent of radio in the early 1920s made popular music available on a scale unimagined before, although it would be the late 1930s and early 1940s before radio reached many rural areas. Early radio broadcasts had two attractions that drew listeners—the sound of the human voice and music. Because the quality of recordings was poor, almost everything on radio was live. It was the first electronic mass medium and it helped spread different styles of music—blues, jazz, and country.³ Later, television would join radio in making popular music available to millions.

Popular music continued to evolve as recording methods improved. A major breakthrough came in 1948 when vinyl was introduced. Radio broadcasts began to incorporate more

1 International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, “Definition of Popular Music,” <http://www.iasa-web.org/selection/definition-popular-music>; Larkin, ed. *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, pp. 17-18.

2 Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, “Popular Music,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/art/popular-music>; Larkin, ed. *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, p. 17.

3 The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, “Popular Music,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/art/popular-music>; Christopher H. Sterling, “Radio Broadcasting,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/radio>.

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recorded music into their programming and the disc jockey became a station staple. In the 1930s and 40s Rudy Valley became wildly popular with young women, as did ‘crooners’ Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. It was the golden age of Tin Pan Alley when the great American songwriter, exemplified by Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Oscar Hammerstein and the Gershwin brothers, was born.⁴ By the 1950s, popular (not pop) music had become defined as the music associated with dance bands and movies.

In the 1940s and early 50s a few blues players began to experiment with a non-traditionalist style of boogie blues. It formed the basis of what is now known as the biggest single development in popular music—rock and roll. Sam Phillips, who owned the small Memphis record label, Sun, reputedly said to his secretary one day: “If I could find a white man with the Negro sound and the Negro feel, I could make a billion dollars.” Phillips found his performer. On June 7, 1954, “That’s Alright Mama,” recorded by Elvis Presley on the Sun label, aired on WHBQ in Memphis. Listeners went wild—repeated requests resulted in the song being played fourteen times in a row that day. The rest is history.⁵

Young people embraced rock and roll, rhythm & blues, doo-wop and rockabilly, to the dismay of their elders who almost universally condemned the music as unchristian, obscene and immoral. Colin Larkin, the compiler and editor of the *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, defines rock and roll as the “perfect synthesis of gospel, work song, spirituals, ragtime, jazz, folk, swing, country, and blues.” Early rock, personified by its first star, Elvis Presley, was packaged to appeal to the white teenager on the street.

The 1960s is generally considered the single most important decade for popular music. It was during this “vintage decade” that rock and roll gained a modicum of respectability through the wide acceptance of The Beatles. It was then that pop, rock, blues, soul, jazz, country, and folk developed both on their own and together. Since that time, the genre has seen divisions and the emergence of new forms, and the variety of popular music is now broader than it has ever been. The Arkansas Delta produced or influenced a number of country, folk, gospel, jazz, and rock-and-roll performers. A brief discussion of each follows.

Country Music

Country music, then known as “hillbilly music,” was one of the genres to be regularly broadcast on American radio.⁶ The earliest roots of country music are hopelessly intertwined with folk and gospel music. Much as the blues grew out of the rural African American

⁴ Larkin, editor, *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 3rd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 20-21.

⁵ Larkin, editor, *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 3rd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 21-22.

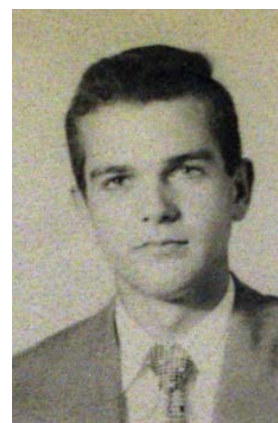
⁶ Larkin, ed., *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, p. 19.

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experience, country music was born of the experience and culture of the working class, generally rural whites. Early country music came out of the west and often featured cowboy songs and yodeling. Elton Britt, born in Marshall, Arkansas, was one of the most popular country stars of the 1920s and 30s. He was known as the unofficial yodeling champion of the world after winning an international competition organized by cowboy star Tom Mix. One of the best known female yodelers was Hot Springs native Patsy Montana. She recorded and sang on the radio and had her own radio network show in the late 1940s. The yodeling craze died by the 1950s, and the country music of today came of age in the years following World War II.⁷ KFFA in Helena, which went on the air in 1941, played country music as well as blues. A 1944 listener's guide listed several country music shows including "Western Serenade," "Morning Jamboree," "Bob Willis," and "Roy Acuff." The first local act to play on KFFA was a country band called the Copeland Cowboys. They played schools, clubs and other venues in the region as well as playing each Saturday at Copeland Brothers Store in Helena Crossing, the show's sponsor.⁸

It was during and just after the Second World War that the radio program "Grand Ole Opry" gained a national reputation as a Mecca for country music fans. It was in the flush post-war years of the 1950s that country music had its first commercial boom. Not only country singers but suddenly pop singers began to cover country tunes. No longer was country music the sole provenance of the blue-collar and rural male. Out of these flush times came two Arkansas giants —Johnny Cash and Conway Twitty.⁹

Native Arkansan Johnny Cash grew up in government housing in Dyess, Arkansas. Cash left the state and joined the air force during the Korean War. After his discharge he settled in Memphis, where he recorded his first songs for Sun Records, *Hey Porter* and *Cry, Cry, Cry*. Cash got lucky the first time out, *Cry, Cry, Cry* hit Number 14 on the pop charts. It was the first of many of his records to be embraced by fans of both country and pop music. Cash also successfully crossed into the gospel field with albums such as *The Gospel Road* recorded with Kris Kristofferson.¹⁰



*Harold Jenkins, aka
Conway Twitty, 1951.*

In 1943, Harold Jenkins moved to Helena with his family from

⁷ Larkin, ed., *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, p. 553; Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds*, p. 77; Bill C. Malone, "Country Music," in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1002-1005.

⁸ King Biscuit Papers, "KFFA Program Schedule, February 6 to March 5, 1944," Box 1, Folder 5; Phillips County Historical Quarterly, "The Copeland Cowboys," *Phillips County Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 30, Nos. 1&2, 1992, p. 19.

⁹ Malone, "Country Music," in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1005.

¹⁰ Larkin, ed., *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., pp. 731-734, 1563.

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Friar's Point, Mississippi and by age twelve he was part of a band called The Arkansas Cotton Choppers that had a Thursday night slot on KFFA. Sometime later Jenkins hooked up with another Phillips County boy, John Hughey, who played steel guitar. The pair formed the Phillips County Ramblers with Wesley Picket and James Henry, and they also found a slot on KFFA. The Ramblers played at schools and churches until they graduated from high school.¹¹

After graduation, the Ramblers broke up. Hughey went to Memphis where he played with a local band. Jenkins was drafted into the army in 1953, and while in the service played in a band called the Cimmarons. After his discharge, Jenkins returned to the states to find the country going crazy over rock and roll. He recorded a song he had written for Sun Records and adopted the stage name Conway Twitty. He hit the charts with a new label and a song called *It's Only Make Believe*. In the early 1960s, Twitty decided to drop rock and roll, which he felt was a passing fad, and return to his roots in country music. Hughey and Twitty reunited in 1964 and for twenty years Conway Twitty and his band The Twitty Birds topped the charts in country music.¹²

The success of country music over the last forty-five years has been phenomenal. It has gone from a regional genre to a world-wide industry. In the 1970s, Colt native Charlie Rich had hits in both the country and pop charts and his songs were featured in movies. Rich, like many others, moved to Memphis after a stint in the service. He failed to interest Sam Phillips in his music, but was hired as a studio musician at Sun Records. He and his wife, Margaret Ann, penned songs other Sun artists recorded. He bounced from label to label until 1973 when he hit the big time with *Behind Closed Doors* and *The Most Beautiful Girl*. Rich, dubbed "The Silver Fox," grabbed the Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year Award in 1975.¹³



Charlie Rich, ca. 1965.

Though Arkansas is not as synonymous with Country Music as Tennessee, the state's contributions to the genre are unmistakable. Artists from the Delta alone—Johnny and Tommy Cash, Conway Twitty, Charlie Rich, and Barbara Fairchild—cement Arkansas' place in country

11 "John Hughey." *AllMusic*, <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/john-hughey-mn0000093980/biography>; "John Hughey Bio." *John Hughey Music*, <http://www.johnhughey.com/bio.html>; "Biography, undated typescript," Subject file, "Conway Twitty," Phillips County Public Library, Helena Arkansas.

12 "John Hughey," *AllMusic*, <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/john-hughey-mn0000093980/biography>; "John Hughey Bio," *John Hughey Music*, <http://www.johnhughey.com/bio.html>; C.L. Bledsoe, "Conway Twitty (1933-1990)," in *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=608>.

13 Robert B. Cochran, "Charlie Rich (1932-1995)," in *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2519>.

music history.¹⁴

Gospel Music

The roots of all gospel music are found in the ballads of the British Isles. A vibrant part of the culture of the South, gospel music is part of what makes southerners who they are. Following the segregation of religious services after the Civil War, the hymns white and black congregations sang took on differences in phrasing and tempo. Black gospel incorporated the rhythms of ragtime and blues, while its white counterpart utilized folk and pop sounds.¹⁵

Professional artists did not perform gospel music prior to the 1950s. White gospel was dominated by quartets accompanied by piano. Often, the quartets were under contract to a music company and would make money by selling music books. Singing schools, which taught singing based on the use of shaped notes, were popular throughout the South. In 1940 a huge “all-night sing” was held at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas by Vaughan Music Company, taking gospel music out of the church and into a popular social setting. All of these activities created a huge demand for new gospel songs, a demand that radio only intensified. Albert Brumley, Luther Presley and E.M. Bartlett wrote and published gospel songs in Arkansas. Bartlett’s Hartford Music Company of Hartford, Arkansas was one of the nation’s largest publishers and promoters of gospel music. In addition to publishing, they taught aspiring songwriters and singers at their Hartford Music Institute. Central Music Company of Little Rock, Jeffress Music Company of Crossett and Eureka Music Company of Siloam Springs all published gospel music.¹⁶

Black gospel is a combination of gospel lyrics, jazz rhythms and blues singing. The result is music with a very distinctive sound that is difficult to categorize. Thomas Dorsey, more than any other, was responsible for this fusion. Dorsey began his career singing both blues and gospel. In his later career he adapted gospel lyrics to traditional blues music. During his career he penned over 500 gospel songs including *There Will be Peace in the Valley*.¹⁷

14 Malone, “Country Music,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1005; Larkin, ed., *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., pp. 3480-3481.

15 Don Cusic, *The Sound of Light: A History of Gospel Music*, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, Bowling Green, Ohio, 1990, pp. 86-87; Kip Lornell, “Gospel Music, Black,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1012-1013; Charles K. Wolfe, “Gospel Music, White,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1013-1014.

16 Charles K. Wolfe, “Gospel Goes Uptown,” in William Ferris and Mary L. Hart, *Folk Music and Modern Sound*, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, Mississippi, 1982, pp. 81-92; Kay Hively and Albert E. Brumley, *I’ll fly away: The life of Albert E. Brumley*, Mountaineer Books, Branson, Missouri, 1990, pp. 22-24; Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds*, pp. 33-34; Wolfe, “Gospel Music, White,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1014.

17 Cusic, *Sound of Light*, 88-91; Lornell, “Gospel Music, Black,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1012.

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Prior to the secularization of gospel music many songs crossed racial lines and some gospel songs became commercial successes. *A Wonderful Time Up There* by Lee Roy Abernathy reached Number 10 on the Billboard charts when Pat Boone recorded it in 1958. It was also recorded by a black quartet called the Pilgrim Travelers and by Cotton Plant native Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Gospel composer Albert Brumley wrote a number of songs that were recorded by all sorts of performers, including the Supremes, Elvis Presley, the Oak Ridge Boys and the Boston Pops Orchestra.¹⁸

Though not specifically products of the Delta, many gospel musicians who have excelled at this form of music were born or spent their formative years here. Dale Evans, who went on to a very successful radio, movie and TV career, went to high school in Osceola. It was there that she honed her skills as a singer. After graduation she began singing on the radio in Memphis. Eventually she made her way to Hollywood, where she married Roy Rogers. Evans penned the gospel song *The Bible Tells Me So*. Barbara Fairchild from Knobel, Arkansas, began in country music but turned to gospel late in her career. In the 1980s she became a member of the gospel group "Heirloom." After that she recorded a solo gospel album and continues to make gospel music.

The best known gospel musicians from the Delta are probably Al Green and Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Green began his career in a gospel group with his family in Michigan before hitting it big on the R&B charts. He became a pop sensation in the 1970s, only to have a personal tragedy lead him back to gospel and into the ministry. The Reverend Al Green is pastor at the Full Gospel Tabernacle in Memphis, Tennessee, less than an hour away from his birthplace in Forrest City, Arkansas. Green was ordained in 1976, the same year he released a gospel-themed album. As Green said, "You can't expect to come to the Deep South and not expect people to have some good things to say about the Lord."¹⁹

Most Africa America singers in the early part of the twentieth century chose between secular music and the church. Rosetta Nubin did not. Born to a single mother and evangelist in Cotton Plant, she began performing at age four with her mother. The duo toured the South before relocating to Chicago in the 1920s. In the 1930s, she moved to New York, where she married and acquired her last name, which she changed from Thorpe to Tharpe after divorcing her husband. In 1938, she was featured in John Hammond's *Spirituals to Swing* concert at Carnegie Hall.



Sister Rosetta Tharpe.

18 Wolfe, "Gospel Goes Uptown," in Ferris and Hart, *Folk Music and Modern Sound*, pp. 88-90; Hively and Brumley, *I'll Fly Away*, pp. 136-142.

19 Scott Spencer, "Al Green's Gotta Serve Somebody," *Rolling Stone*, September 28, 2000, p. 69.

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She ventured into popular music and jazz, her style influenced by Cab Calloway among others. Though she returned to the church, she never left the worldly stage. She recorded successfully, toured Europe, and continued to play small jazz clubs across the country. A remarkable guitarist, she was influenced by her mother, who played mandolin, and her Cotton Plant piano teachers Arizona Dranes, and composer Florence Price. Tharpe performed until her death in 1973.²⁰

Today gospel is an important part of the music industry. It has its own award, the “Dove,” and many artists have made the transition from gospel to more secular forms of music and vice versa. The Oak Ridge Boys are former gospel performers who are now mainstream country.²¹

Jazz

Jazz trumpeter Miles Davis wrote in 1965: “I also remember how the music used to sound down there in Arkansas when I was visiting my grandfather . . . So when I started taking music lessons I might have already had some idea of what I wanted my music to sound like.”²²

Jazz is perhaps the most amalgamated of all forms of music. Like the spiritual and work song that preceded it, jazz provided African Americans an avenue for expression. This music was exported from the South by black and white musicians of every possible ethnic background. It came from New Orleans, from the Gulf Coast, from Kansas City, and from up and down the Mississippi Valley with strongholds in Memphis and St. Louis. The music was born in bordellos and bars, which did not facilitate its acceptance by middle-class America. The music took hold in the late nineteenth century, latching onto ragtime, church music, blues, and the brass band tradition of New Orleans. In short, it took whatever it wanted and made it all “Jazz.”²³

In 1899, Scott Joplin, a Texarkana native born on the Texas side of town but raised on the Arkansas side, published *Maple Leaf Rag*. The song began his career as a composer, and while not jazz in the strictest sense, it exemplified a musical form from which jazz borrowed heavily. It was “rags” that propelled one of the most influential early jazz bands to fame, The Original Dixieland Jazz Band of New Orleans. Its success brought wide-spread acceptance of jazz across the country.²⁴

20 William K. McNeil and Terry Buckalew, “‘Sister Rosetta’ Tharpe, (1915-1973),” in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=1781>; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 8 vols., Muze UK Ltd, London, 1998, p. 5350.

21 Sutherlin, *Arkansas Handbook*, p. 63.

22 Sutherlin, *Arkansas Handbook*, p. 30.

23 William J. Schafer, “Jazz,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1016-1018.

24 William J. Schafer, “Joplin, Scott,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, pp. 1066-1067; Schafer, “Jazz,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1017.

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As with other forms of music, the people of Arkansas have left their mark on jazz. Little Rock native Volly DeFaut played both clarinet and saxophone during the height of the “Swing Era.” He performed with many of the leading bands of the day and recorded with Jelly Roll Morton. Junie Cobb of Hot Springs played several instruments and toured the U.S. and Europe in the 1920s-1940s. He wrote the World War II song *Put the Axe to the Axis*. Bob Dorough of Cherry Hill recorded with jazz great Miles Davis. The Porter family holds a special place in the hearts of Arkansas jazz lovers. Art Sr. shunned a national career to stay in his beloved Little Rock. The reverence the state felt for the family is shown in the legislation passed to allow his underage son, Art Jr., to perform on stage with him. The tragic death of Art Porter Jr. in 1996 cut short a promising career.²⁵

Perhaps the most influential of Arkansas jazz musician was Louis Jordan, one of the most important post-war musicians in this country. Jordan combined musical ability with showmanship, singing in a smooth voice with a strong blues feeling. Jordan was the embodiment of what would become rhythm and blues, but his music was more than that. It was a confluence of the music of the past and the music of the present with music yet to come; of rhythm and blues, jazz, blues, pop, and rock and roll combined with humor and swing. Jordan and his band still resist classification. His innovative combination of musical styles, use of showmanship, and his distinctive shuffle-boogie style, adopted by Bill Haley in 1953, laid the foundation for rock and roll.²⁶

Helena native James L. “Red” Holloway lived in the city until he was four years old, when his seventeen-year-old mother took him to Chicago. Holloway’s mother played piano in churches and taught him to play. In the 1940s, he abandoned piano and learned the saxophone, the instrument that would become his trademark. In the 1950s he was a studio musician for Vee-Jay records and played with various artists before moving to New York in the early 60s. By the end of the decade he was in California. There he recorded with B.B. King, Freddie Robertson, Charles Brown and others. He even had a small part in the movie *Lady Sings the Blues*.²⁷ Other Delta jazz musicians include Leonard Davidson, a Jonesboro native who played multiple instruments in a career spanning some fifty years. He began working professionally in Kansas City before relocating to California. Joe Bishop of Monticello was a founding member of the Woody Herman Band where he played trumpet and wrote and arranged songs, the most famous of which was *Woodchopper’s Ball*. Born in Dermott, Zilner Trenton Randolph studied in North

25 Barry Kernfield, *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2 vols., Grove’s Dictionaries of Music, Inc., New York, 1988, p. 233; John Clifton, *Who’s Who of Jazz: Storyville to Swing Street*, Da Capo Press, New York, 1985, p. 74; Larkin, ed., *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, pp. 1119, 1223; Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame, *Arkansas Directory*, Little Rock: Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame, 1996, p. 25.

26 Larkin, ed., *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., pp. 2221-2222.

27 Bill Greensmith, “Red Holloway,” *Blues Unlimited*, January/February, 1976, p. 4.

Carolina and St. Louis before embarking on a professional career. He played trumpet and wrote and arranged music. Randolph played with or arranged music for such greats as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Woody Herman and Earl Hines.²⁸

Rock and Roll

There is a debate as to when the first rock and roll song was recorded, and who first called the music “rock and roll.” What is known is that, despite what was written in the early press, rock and roll has not brought down America. Our civilization as we know it has not fallen into ruins, nor has the fad died out. One thing is certain—rock and roll is part of the American cultural landscape and is here to stay.²⁹

In its early days, 1955-1958, rock and roll was largely a Southern phenomenon. New Orleans and Memphis served as focal points for this new breed of music.³⁰ In the early 1960s, rock and roll had changed directions, but was still being influenced by music from the South. That changed with the “British Invasion” of the early to mid-1960s. English bands, led by The Beatles, Rolling Stones and The Animals came to this country recycling the blues. The blues, which had not gotten much air play on mainstream radio stations in America, was now everywhere. But rather than coming from the African American artists who created the music, it was coming from working class Englishmen who were in love with it. In the liner notes of the 1964 album *The Animals’ Eric Burdon* stated that he wanted to tour the country and meet bluesmen “on their own ground.”³¹ The Rolling Stones’ first album consisted almost exclusively of covers of blues songs.³²

In the late 1950s, Ronnie Hawkins, a native of Huntsville, Arkansas, took the band he had formed in Helena to Canada. Ronnie Hawkins and The Hawks were very successful in Canada and later recorded a couple of Top 40 hits in the United States. When he returned to Canada, he took only one member of the original band with him, Turkey Scratch native Levon Helm, filling the remaining slots with Canadian musicians. Levon Helm and some other members of The Hawks eventually left Hawkins and Canada to explore opportunities in the U.S. Initially known as Levon Helm and the Hawks, they eventually adopted the simple name, The Band, and went on to become one of the most influential rock groups of the 1970s.³³

28 John Clifton, *Who’s Who of Jazz: Storyville to Swing Street*, pp. 87, 273; Kernfield, *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, Vol. 1, p. 110 and Vol. 2, p. 349; Peabworth, *A Directory of 132 Arkansas Composers*, pp. 7-8, 57.

29 Nick Tosches, *Country: The Twisted Roots of Rock and Roll*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1996, pp. 25-32.

30 Stephen R. Tucker, “Rock and Roll,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1028.

31 The Animals, *The Animals*, liner notes, MGM Records, 1964.

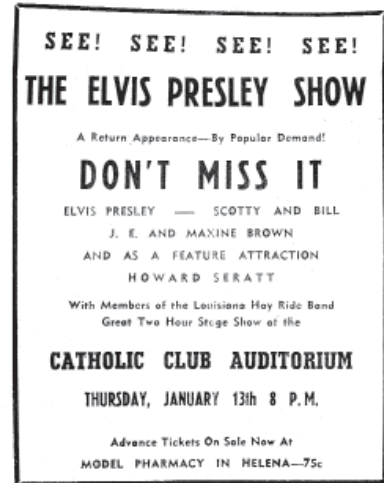
32 Tucker, “Rock and Roll,” Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1029.

33 Stambler and Landon, *Folk, Country and Western Music*, pp. 308-309; Jay Cocks, “Down to Old Dixie and Back,” *Time*, January 12, 1970, pp. 40-44; Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds*, pp. 75-76.

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Rockabilly is a subset of rock and roll. An unlikely combination of country and rhythm and blues with gospel elements, it came out of Memphis. The sound is perhaps the true extension of the old Sun Studio sound created by Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and other early rock-and-roll pioneers. Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, Charlie Rich, Billy Lee Riley and Conway Twitty all recorded rockabilly in Memphis for legendary Sun Records.³⁴

In the mid-1950s, Helena witnessed the raw energy of Elvis Presley as his career was just taking off. Presley, with Scotty Moore on guitar and Bill Black on bass, played the Catholic Club four times, the first on December 2, 1954. Sonny Payne and Larry Parker paid \$15.00 to rent the club for the show and charged 75¢ admission. In 1955, the trio made three more appearances. The first on January 13, 1955 was again arranged by Payne and Parker. Elvis returned on March 8, 1955. All 500 tickets for the final show on December 15, 1955 sold out two days in advance. Helena resident Lynne Von Kanel remembered the shows: “This new rock ’n roll was what the teenagers in my group were really eating up. We really loved it.”³⁵



Billy Lee Riley, who grew up in Osceola, Arkansas, helped create the sound with his early Sun recordings *Flying Saucer Rock and Roll* and *Red Hot*. Though he never hit the big time he did become a very successful studio musician. In the late 1970s, his career took off as Europeans discovered rockabilly. Riley toured Europe and played festivals in the U.S. and continued to record until his death in 2009.³⁶

In the 1970s, as rock and roll music continued its evolution it gave birth to a number of new kinds of rock, including country rock. Stuttgart, Arkansas, native John Dillon wrote songs and played guitar and fiddle for the Ozark Mountain Daredevils. This band hit the charts in 1973 with *If You Want to Get to Heaven*, which was co-authored by Dillon. The music of the Ozark Mountain Daredevils reflected the roots of the members who were steeped in the string band music of the Ozark region. The band, based in Springfield, Missouri, continues to play though there have been a number of personnel changes.³⁷

34 Tucker, “Rock and Roll,” in Wilson and Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, p. 1028.

35 James V. Roy, “The Catholic Club, Helena, AR,” *The Venues, Scotty Moore: The Official Website*, <http://www.scottymoore.net/venues.html>.

36 Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds*, pp. 44-45; Joyce Riley, “Billy Lee Riley,” *Rockabilly Hall of Fame*, <http://www.rockabillyhall.com/blr.html>.

37 Larkin, ed., *Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., pp. 413, 3146.

Popular Music Artists of the Arkansas Delta

Bennett, Alvin Silas (Al)

Music Executive

Born: September 26, 1926, Joiner, Arkansas

Died: March 15, 1989, Sherman Oaks, California

Bennett was born to a farming family in Joiner, Mississippi County, Arkansas. He grew up on the farm where he worked with his family and attended high school. He graduated from high school in 1943 and joined the army in 1945. He served in the military for a year before returning to Arkansas. In 1946 he married Cathleen Whitlock of Sheridan, Grant County, Arkansas. The couple would have three children.

In 1948, after a series of problems with the farm and other financial issues he sought a new career path. He found a job in nearby Memphis as a salesman for Decca Records. Though he knew little about the record business he proved successful. In 1956, he left Decca and secured a job in Gallatin, Tennessee with Dot Records, as the label's national sales manager. Two years later he moved to Los Angeles, California to take the position of vice-president with Liberty Records. He came on board to help the record company, which was struggling under massive debt.

Si Waronker, the president of Liberty Records, met with Bennett over dinner. They hit it off and Waronker later recalled: "I then added that if he lasted one month, he would get 10 percent of the stock of Liberty. Al turned out to be exactly what was needed to bring Liberty to its full potential. He could sell a burnt match (Kelly: 43)." Soon after Bennett took a trip visiting record distributors, while he was on the road promoting rock-and-roll records, Liberty released a record that became its biggest hit ever.

In 1958 Liberty Records released two novelty records, recorded by Ross Bagdasarian, under the pseudonym David Seville. The first was *Witch Doctor* and the second *The Chipmunk Song*. *The Chipmunk Song* sold four million copies in seven months. Alvin and the Chipmunks, featured chipmunks, Alvin, Simon and Theodore, who were named after Liberty Records executives, Alvin Bennett, Simon Waronker and Ted Keep, the revenues from the novelty songs put the label in the black.

The record company which featured such acts as: Eddie Cochran, Bobby Vee, Fats Domino, Ricky Nelson, and Johnny Rivers sold in 1963 for \$12 million dollars to Avnet. Two years later after the label again experienced losses, Simon Waronker bought it back. The company, which now included Jan and Dean, Gary Lewis and the Playboys, Jackie DeShannon, Randy Newman and the California blues band Canned Heat, was again sold in 1968 for \$38 million.

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After the second sale Bennett left the company and formed Cream Records. In 1977, Cream bought the Memphis-based soul label Hi Records. Bennett also acquired the publishing companies of Stax Records, another Memphis label that was in financial meltdown. He more than doubled his investment with the Stax properties when he sold them in 1982. In the end Bennett kept the Hi masters, which several years after his death his daughter Adalah Bennett Shaw began successfully reissuing the classic songs.

Bennett not only served as a record company executive, he also served as an officer for various recording industry groups including American Record Manufacturing and Distribution Association, the Hollywood Museum and Radio Free Europe. Bennett, who kept and operated Benschaw Farms in Mississippi County, Arkansas, was named Arkansas Man of the Year in 1964. He died in California in 1989, but his remains were brought back to Arkansas and he was buried in Bassett Cemetery in Mississippi County.

Sources: Toney Butler Schlesinger, "Alvin Silas (Al) Bennett," *Arkansas Encyclopedia of History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=7366>; Colin Larkin, *The Encyclopedia of Popular Music*. 3rd Edition, pp. 3232-3233; Robert Gordon, *Respect Yourself: Stax Records and the Soul Explosion*, pp. 360-362; Michael "Doc Rock" Kelly, *Liberty Records: A History of the Recording Company and Its Stars, 1955-1971*; Larry Nager, "History of Hi Records," *Hi Records*, <http://www.hirecords.com/>.

Bishop, Joe

Big Band musician

Born: November 27, 1907, Monticello, Arkansas

Died: May 12, 1976, Houston, Texas

Joe Bishop's first professional work was as a tuba player with the Louisiana Ramblers in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, in 1927. He played tuba with Al Katz and Austin Wylie in 1930, and then spent five years with Isham Jones' Orchestra playing "hot trumpet." While with Jones he composed the music to the 1933 national dance hit *Blue Prelude* with lyrics by Gordon Jenkins. In 1936, he became a founding member of the Woody Herman Band. He played flugelhorn and did some arranging for the band until 1940 when ill health forced him to resign. He returned to the band as staff arranger in 1942. His arrangements include versions of *Woodchopper's Ball* and his own composition *Blue Flame* (1941) recorded on the Decca label. After 1942 he worked as a free-lance arranger until, in 1951, further health problems forced his permanent retirement. Other compositions include *Jealously*, *Out of Space*, *At the Woodchopper's Ball*, *Blue Evening*, *Blue Lament*, *New Orleans Twist*, *The Cobra and the Flute*, and *Ain't It Just Too Bad*. Frequent collaborators included the lyricists Gordon Jenkins, Gene Clifford and Leo Gorby.

Sources: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, eds., *ASCAP Biographical Dictionary*, 4th edition, 1980, p. 43; John Clifton, *Who's Who of Jazz: Storyville to Swing*

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Street, 1985, p. 35; “Joe Bishop,” unidentified clippings on one page labeled, “1923-24-25 Monticello,” Mary Dengler Hudgins Collection, Box 18, University Library Special Collections, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; Barry Kernfeld, *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, p.110; James R. Pebworth, *A Directory of 132 Arkansas Composers*, pp. 7-8.

Bruce, Ed

Country singer, songwriter, actor

Born: William Edwin Bruce, Jr., December 29, 1940, Keiser, Arkansas

Ed Bruce’s career began when, after graduating from high school in 1957, he was given the money to make a demo for Sun Records. He signed with the label and recorded several rock-and-roll singles as Edwin Bruce. Bruce moved to Nashville in the early 1960s, working odd jobs and continuing to write. His first financial success came when his song *Save Your Kisses* was recorded as the B-side of the Tommy Roe hit *Sheila* in 1963. He signed with RCA, producing a number of singles. Bruce had some success with *Walker’s Woods* and *Last Train To Clarksville* (both 1967) and *Painted Girls and Wine* (1968). In 1968 he moved to Monument Records and made a well-received album, *Shades of Ed Bruce*. His biggest songwriting and recording success came in 1976 with the UA Records single *Mamas Don’t Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys* co-written with his then-wife Patsy. The song rose to number one in 1978 when recorded by Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson and received a Grammy and a nomination for the Country Music Association’s Song of the Year. Bruce’s next success came in 1980 with three hit singles: *Diane*, *The Last Cowboy Song* and *Girls, and Women and Ladies*. Over the next several years he wrote and recorded his only number one song, *You’re the Best Break This Heart Ever Had* (1981). This success was followed by others including *I Write It Down* (1982), *You Turn Me On (Like A Radio)* and *Nights* (both 1984).

Bruce regards himself primarily as a songwriter, and he has written hits for Tanya Tucker (*The Man That Turned My Mama On*), Crystal Gale (*Restless*), Kitty Wells (*Too Much Love Between Us*), Charlie Louvin (*See The Big Man Cry*) and Kenny Price (*Northeast Arkansas Mississippi County Bootlegger*). His LPs include *Ed Bruce*, *Mamas Don’t Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys*, *The Tennessean*, *I Write It Down*, *The Best of Ed Bruce* and *Night Things*. Bruce’s rugged good lucks led to a part in the television mini-series “The Chisolms” in 1981, and in 1982 he was featured as Tom Guthrie in the television series “Brett Maverick” with James Garner.

Sources: Donald Clarke, *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, p. 170; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, pp. 23-24; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, p. 594.

Cash, Johnny

Country music entertainer and songwriter

Born: John R. Cash, February 26, 1932, Kingsland, Arkansas

Died: September 12, 2003, Nashville, Tennessee

Johnny Cash was one of six children born to a very poor family. His parents were sharecroppers who believed in hard work, the importance of religion, and the value of music. His musical background was rich in folk songs, gospel music and the country music he heard on recordings and on the radio. Cash began to write songs when he was twelve. When he was in high school he sang on KLCN-AM Blytheville, Arkansas. He began his music career in earnest after his discharge from the air force in the early 1950s.

Cash began his recording career in 1955 with a single issued by Sun Records. The single, which was a moderate hit, was *Hey Porter* backed by *Cry, Cry, Cry*, with credits to Johnny Cash and the Tennessee Two (the “Two” were Luther Perkins and Marshall Grant). The following year Cash had an even bigger hit with *Folsom Prison Blues*, a song composed while in the Air Force. A number of top-ten hits followed including *I Walk the Line*, *There You Go*, *Guess Things Happen That Way* and *Ballad of a Teenage Queen*. Differences with Sun led Johnny to join Columbia in 1958. His first release was *Don't Take Your Guns to Town* which stayed in the number one spot on both pop and country charts for many weeks. Over the next seven years more hits followed—*Ring of Fire*, which hit number one, *The Ballad of Ira Hayes*, *Understand Your Man*, and two duets with June Carter, *Jackson*, and *Guitar Pickin' Man*. Cash was now an undisputed star. He appeared on television shows and was constantly on the road, playing to full houses wherever he went. His private life, however, was far from perfect. Every biographer is compelled to mention Cash's addiction to amphetamines and barbiturates and his subsequent recovery, made possible not only by his own determination but with the help of June Carter. The two were married in 1967 after Cash had defeated his drug problems.

In 1969, Cash was at the top. He won six country music awards, one in every category in which he was nominated. He had a television show, “The Johnny Cash Show,” on ABC and his LPs *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison* and *At San Quentin* went gold. In 1972 he started his own recording studio, House of Cash. Over the next two decades Cash continued to pour out a string of hits— *A Boy Named Sue*, *See Ruby Fall*, *Man in Black*, *If I Had a Hammer*, *There Ain't No Good Chain Gang* (with Waylon Jennings), the list goes on and on. He joined Mercury Records in 1986 and released the whimsical *The Night Hank Williams Came to Town*, which was an immediate success. Cash also made several movies, his best role opposite Kirk Douglas in *A Gunfight* (1972). He has also appeared in *Five Minutes to Live* (1960), *Stagecoach* with Kris Kristofferson and Willie Nelson (1986), and the made-for-television movie *The Pride of Jesse Helm*.

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Cash toured, often with the Carter Family or the *Highwaymen* with Kris Kristofferson. He became a living legend in the music industry. His music often crossed over from pop to country to gospel and back again. Cash helped launch the careers of Bob Dylan and Kris Kristofferson. He was the subject of a 1969 television documentary, *Johnny Cash—The Man, His World, His Music*. The first Cash biography, *Winners Got Scars Too* by C.S. Wren, was published in 1971. Four years later Cash's autobiography, *Man In Black* was published. Cash made over seventy albums of original material. Most feel his best is *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*, which some argue is a contender for the best country record of all time. Other notable LPs include *Johnny Cash: The Legend*, *Ring of Fire*, *I Walk the Line*, *At San Quentin*, *One Piece at a Time*, *Rockabilly Blues*, *The Rambler* and *The Highwaymen* (with Kris Kristofferson, Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson).

During the 1990s, Cash was honored by several organizations. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (1992), the Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame (1996), the Kennedy Center Honors for Lifetime Contribution to American Culture (1996), and in 2000 he received a Grammy Award for Lifetime Achievement. Never one to stand still, Cash signed a contract with rap producer Rick Rubin in 1994. He released *American Recordings* and he was “discovered” by a whole new audience. He followed with a series of critically acclaimed albums—*Unchained* (1996), *American III: Solitary Man* (2000), and *American IV: The Man Comes Around* (2002), featuring songs written by alternative rock performers such as Soundgarden, Beck, and Nine Inch Nails. In 2003, Country Music Television called him the “Greatest Man in Country Music.”

On May 15, 2003, June Carter Cash died following heart surgery; less than four months later, on September 12, 2003, Johnny Cash died in Nashville, Tennessee. He is buried near his wife at Hendersonville Memory Gardens in Hendersonville, Tennessee. Two years after his death, a major motion picture, *Walk the Line*, documenting a portion of his life was released. Several posthumous albums have been released, including a “lost album” recorded in the early 1980s: *Out Among the Stars* (2014). In 2011, Arkansas State University purchased and restored Cash's boyhood home. On August 16, 2014, “The Historic Dyess Colony: Boyhood Home of Johnny Cash,” opened to the public. The United States Postal Service recognized Cash in 2013, releasing a stamp in his honor.

Sources: Kristin Baggelaar and Donald Milton, *Folk Music: More Than a Song*, p. 61; Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 87; Mike Clifford, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rock*, p. 39; Stanley Sadie, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, p. 856; Robert Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds: A Celebration of Popular Music in Arkansas*, pp. 68-69; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, pp. 30-31; Phil Hardy and Dave Laing, *Encyclopedia of Rock*, p. 94; Brock Helander, *The Rock Who's Who: A Biographical Dictionary and Critical Discography Including Rhythm-and-Blues, Soul, Rockabilly, Folk, Country, Easy Listening, Punk, and*

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New Wave, p. 75; Sharon S. Hoffman, *Who's Who in Entertainment*, p. 103; Eric Lensing, "Johnny Cash (1932-2003)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=9>; David Ragan, *Who's Who in Hollywood, 1900-1976*, p. 77; Melvin Shestack, *The Country Music Encyclopedia*, 1973, pp. 39-42; Irwin Stambler and Grelun Landon, 2nd. ed. *The Encyclopedia of Folk, Country & Western Music*, 1983, p. 100; Ronald Zalkind, *Contemporary Music Almanac, 1980/81*, p. 187.

Cash, Tommy

Country music singer

Born: April 5, 1940, Dyess, Arkansas

Tommy Cash learned to play guitar when he was sixteen by watching his older brother, Johnny. At the age of eighteen he joined the army and became a disc jockey for the Armed Forces Network in Frankfurt, Germany, where he had his own show "Stickbuddy Jamboree." He began appearing with a band at service nightclubs and made his professional debut in 1965, performing alongside Hank Williams, Jr. in Montreal, Canada. He recorded several songs including *That's Where My Baby Used to Be*, *Tobacco Road* and *Jailbirds Can't Fly* before scoring his biggest success with *Six White Horses* in 1969. *Rise and Shine* and *One Song Away*, both recorded in 1970, were also successes, as was *Sweet Gypsy Woman*. During the 1970s he continued to tour with his band *The Tom Cats*. He is popular at country festivals in Great Britain and tours frequently in Europe. Cash won a Broadcast Music, Incorporated (BMI) award for his composition *You Don't Hear*, which was a hit for Kitty Wells. In 1991 he released *The 25th Anniversary Album* which featured guest appearances by Johnny Cash, Tom T. Hall, George Jones and Connie Smith. Earlier albums include *Here Comes Tommy Cash*, *Six White Horses*, *Rise and Shine*, *Cash Country* and *Only a Stone*.

After Johnny Cash died, Tommy Cash honored him with a concert where he performed his brother's classic hits. *A Tribute to My Brother* (2004) and *Fade to Black: Memories of Johnny* (2008) were issued as homage to his legendary brother. To reward his contributions to the state he had called home for decades, Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen named Tommy Cash an honorary colonel in the Tennessee National Guard.

Sources: Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 87; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, pp. 31-32; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., p. 735; Melvin Shestack, *The Country Music Encyclopedia*, p. 42; Colin Edward Woodward, "Tommy Cash (1940-)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=7824>.

Clemmons, Rod

Vocalist, keyboardist, producer

Born: Pine Bluff, Arkansas, 1962

Rod Clemmons, who was born blind, began studying piano at age three and for the next twenty years trained to be a classical pianist. He graduated from the Arkansas School for the Blind in 1980. He went on to study at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, earning a degree in classical piano and graduating with honors. While a student at IU Clemmons learned to play drums, flute, organ and saxophone. He also discovered a love for pop music and production and changed the focus of his career.

Clemmons explored R&B, funk, and jazz, and was a keyboardist in the rock band, *The Manhattan Project*. He was a session musician and played clubs nationwide before founding Verdict Records, of which he is the CEO, president and premier solo artist, in 1994. The following year he released the LP *Love Stories* on the Verdict label. Clemmons wrote most of the material and produced it and a video of the LP's lead single *I'm Not Supposed to Feel This Way*. He released his debut CD, *What's Up? It's Me* in 2015. Clemmons has said that his inspiration is Stevie Wonder. He recently announced that 50% of the proceeds from his 2015 tour will benefit Seva Foundation's programs in preventable blindness. He lives in New York. Sources: "About the Artist: Rod Clemmons," press release, Verdict Records, New York, no date; "Blind R&B Musician Rod Clemmons," Seva Foundation website, http://www.seva.org/site/PageServer?pagename=events_Rod_Clemmons; "Jacobs alumnus, major infant product manufacturer, partner to offer free baby CD," press release, September 18, 2008, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news-archive/8855.html>.

Davidson, Leonard

Jazz musician

Born: July 13, 1896, Jonesboro, Arkansas

Died: unknown

Not much is known about the life and career of Leonard Davidson. His first regular work was as a violinist with the Roland Bruce Band in Kansas City about 1918. He worked in Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas before moving to Hollywood in 1924. By this time, he was playing sax and clarinet. He worked briefly with Reb Spikes before joining Sonny Clay, with whom he remained from 1924 to 1933. Over the next five years he worked with both drummer Alton Redd's band and the Atwell Rose Band. In 1936, he joined Sammy Franklin's Orchestra, playing with them until he retired from music in the mid-1950s.

Sources: John Clifton, *Who's Who of Jazz: Storyville to Swing Street*, p. 87.

Davis, Jeanette

Vocalist

Born: Dorothy Davis, November 2, 1917, Memphis, Tennessee

Died: April 25, 2005, Naples, Florida

Davis began her professional singing career with several appearances on KOTN radio, Pine Bluff. She went on to perform on a daily show with KWKH in Shreveport, Louisiana. She changed her name to Jeanette Davis before she began singing on regular programs with WLW Cincinnati. In the early 1930s Davis began her long association with network radio. She was a regular on the sixty-minute NBC radio variety show "The Breakfast Club" which premiered in 1933. The program, later broadcast by CBS, served as a basis for a television show of the same name. In 1938, Davis became a regular on the thirty-minute NBC radio program *Avalon Time* hosted by Red Foley. The show, sponsored by Avalon cigarettes, featured "music and comedy set against the background of a sophisticated hillbilly barndance" (Terrace: 21). Other regular performers were Red Skelton and the Phil Davis Orchestra. When the musical variety program "Danny O'Neal and His Guests" premiered on CBS radio in 1946 Jeanette Davis was a regular cast member. That year she began a show of her own. "The Jeanette Davis Show," a fifteen-minute musical variety show, began broadcasting on ABC but in 1948 was picked up by CBS.

In 1945, Davis began a long professional association with Arthur Godfrey. She was a regular on the CBS radio program "Arthur Godfrey Time" and later on "Arthur Godfrey Digest" which premiered on CBS in 1950. Davis, along with most of the cast of "Arthur Godfrey Time," made the move to television with Godfrey when his television show "Arthur Godfrey and His Friends" premiered on CBS in January of 1949. Davis remained with the show until 1957.

Sources: Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, 3rd. ed. *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows, 1946-Present*, 1985, pp. 51-52; Tim Brooks, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time TV Stars, 1946-Present*, p. 232; Ray Poindexter, *Arkansas Airwaves*, pp. 277-278; Vincent Terrace, *Radio's Golden Years: The Encyclopedia of Radio Programs, 1930-1960*, pp. 18, 21, 39, 69, 136.

Dee, Sylvia

aka: Josephine Proffitt and Josephine Faison

Lyricist

Born: Josephine Moore, October 22, 1914, Duncan, Arkansas

Died: June, 1969, New York, New York

Sylvia Dee was an advertising copywriter, newspaper writer, and author as well as a lyricist. She collaborated with Sidney Lippman, Arthur Kent, George Goehring, Al Frisch, Guy Wood and her mother, Elizabeth Evelyn Moore. Her first big hit was *Chickery Chick*, followed by

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a number of popular tunes including *After Graduation Day*; *A House with Love In It*, *Angel Lips*; *Angel Eyes*; *I'm Thrilled*; *It Couldn't be True*; and the 1963 hit *Have You Changed*, which reached number one. She is perhaps most well known for her lyrics to *Too Young*, which stayed at number one for twenty-one weeks, was awarded the Michael TV/Radio Award, and was recorded with great success by Nat King Cole. Dee also authored the score of the 1947 Broadway musical "Barefoot Boy with Cheek."

Sources: American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, eds., *ASCAP Biographical Dictionary*, 4th edition, 1980, p.117; Sylvia Dee to Mary Hudgins, February 11, 1967, Mary Dengler Hudgins Collection, Box 19, University Libraries Special Collections, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; Mary Hudgins to Alice (no surname given), August 3, 1970, Mary Dengler Hudgins Collection, Box 19, University Libraries Special Collections, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; New York Times Company, *The New York Times Directory of the Theater*, p. 231; James R. Pebworth, *A Directory of 132 Arkansas Composers*, p. 20.

Dillon, John

Country-rock musician, songwriter

Born: February 6, 1947, Stuttgart, Arkansas

Dillon grew up on a farm in Arkansas. His mother, who played harmonica, encouraged his interest in country music and Delta blues and taught him to play the guitar. Dillon became increasingly interested in country-rock after hearing local groups like Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks. In 1965, he entered Drury College in Springfield, Missouri. His interest in songwriting and music grew and as soon as he was out of school he left for Nashville. He was signed by a management company but was unhappy with the way his material was handled. He returned to Springfield, unsure of what step to take next.

While working as a session guitarist Dillon met Missouri natives Steve Cash and Larry Lee. The three formed a band which played under several names, including The Buffalo Chips and The Burlap Socks, before finally settling on the Ozark Mountain Daredevils. By this time Mike "Supe" Granda from St. Louis, who had played with them off and on, had joined the group. Efforts on the part of their manager, Steve Plessner, eventually brought them to the attention of A&M records. They were signed and sent to London to record their first album, *Ozark Mountain Daredevils*, in 1973. A single from the LP, *If You Want to Get to Heaven* made it to the Top30 on the U.S. charts. The group released their second album *It'll Shine When it Shines* in 1975. It contained their second successful single *Jackie Blue* which reached number three on the charts.

The group followed with the LPs *The Car Over the Lake Album* and *Men From Earth*. All exhibited the strong harmonies and excellent musicianship for which the Daredevils

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were known. The group, now with some new members, toured the U.S., Canada, Europe, Scandinavia and Great Britain. In 1977, they released the LP *Don't Look Down*. That year Dillon, along with Steve Cash, played on Paul Kennerley's concept album on the Civil War, *White Mansions. It's Alive*, a live double album released in 1978, was their last for A&M. By this time only Dillon, Cash and Granda remained of the original group. With the addition of new members the Daredevils cut their first release for Columbia in 1980, an LP simply titled *Ozark Mountain Daredevils*. In 1989, they released the LP *Modern History*, their own blend of Ozark country and contemporary music. The Ozark Mountain Daredevils continue to be popular with live audiences and John Dillon still plays and writes songs.

Sources: Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, p. 128; Phil Hardy and Dave Laing, *Encyclopedia of Rock*, p. 328; Colin. Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., p. 3146; Irwin Stambler and Grelun Landon, 2nd. ed. *The Encyclopedia of Folk, Country & Western Music*, 1983, pp. 543-546; Ronald Zalkind, *Contemporary Music Almanac, 1980/81*, pp. 285-286.

Dunlap, Louis M.

Composer

Born: May 19, 1911, Pine Bluff, Arkansas

Died: May 3, 1976, Paterson, New Jersey

Louis Dunlap composed songs for revues including the tunes *You Can Depend On Me*, *Blue Because of You*, *Ev'rything Depends on You* and *Where You Should Be*. He acted as personal dresser to Earl Hines, Dizzy Gillespie and Billy Eckstine between 1934 and 1950.

Sources: The Lynn Farnol Group, eds., 3rd. ed., *ASCAP Biographical Dictionary of Composers, Authors and Publishers*, 1966, p. 191; James R. Peabworth, *A Directory of 132 Arkansas Composers*, p. 23.

Evans, Dale

Singer, actor

Born: Frances Octavia Smith, October 31, 1912, Uvalde, Texas

Died: February 7, 2001, Apple Valley, California

Dale Evans was born at her grandparent's home in Uvalde, Texas. Her father was a middle-class farmer and owned a hardware store in nearby Italy. Her parent's home was there, and it was there she made her debut, singing a gospel song at the Baptist church at the age of three. When she was seven the family moved to Osceola, Arkansas, where she attended school for the first time. At the age of fourteen she lied about her age and eloped. The couple moved

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to Memphis, Tennessee, where their son was born. Evans was seventeen when her marriage ended in divorce. She took classes at a business school and worked as a secretary, later finding a higher-paying job as a stenographer at an insurance agency. Her boss heard her singing at her desk and helped her get occasional work as a singer at WMC and WREC on programs sponsored by the insurance agency. She was soon a local radio show regular under the names Frances Fox and Marian Lee. Encouraged, Evans decided to pursue a career in music. A move to Chicago, Illinois, proved fruitless and she moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where she found a job at radio station WHAS. There, station manager Joe Eaton convinced her to change her name to Dale Evans, saying it was easier for radio announcers to pronounce. Evans moved to station WFFA in Dallas and then moved to Chicago to become the vocalist with the Jay Mills Orchestra and the Anson Weeks band, one of the top organizations in Chicago. In 1940, she headlined at the Chez Paree Night Club in Chicago. That year she was signed on the weekly CBS radio show "News and Rhythm." During the 1940s she was a guest on many radio shows including the "Chase and Sanborn Hour," "Jimmy Durante Show," "Jack Carson Show." Appearances on the very popular "Charlie McCarthy and Edgar Bergen Show" made her a star.

In 1940, Evans made her Hollywood movie debut in *The East Side Kids*. It was the first of more than forty films she made between 1940 and 1951. In *Swing Your Partner* (1943) she played the part of a cowgirl opposite Leonard Slye, whose screen name was Roy Rogers, and who was being groomed as the next Gene Autry. Evans appeared opposite Rogers in a number of films and the two married in 1947. In the 1950s they were the top-rated western stars. From 1951 to 1964 they starred in the "Roy Rogers Show" on CBS television, which featured the theme song *Happy Trails* written by Evans. They made a number of records for RCA-Victor, including the long-time best-seller *Dale Evans and Roy Rogers* recorded in the early 1960s.

In the early 1960s Evans and Rogers hosted a one-hour television variety show while continuing to appear at rodeos and filming commercials. Evans wrote numerous magazine articles and several books, including *Angel Unaware*, the true story of her bringing up a mentally handicapped child. Rogers' and Evans' careers slowed in the 1970s, but had a revival in the early 1980s when they were guests on many television variety shows and asked to do a number of commercials. After retiring they lived on their ranch in Apple Valley, California, where they operated the Roy Rogers Museum and were active in many charitable foundations dedicated to helping children. Rogers died July 6, 1998, Evans less than three years later.

Evans' movie credits include: *Orchestra Wives* (1942); *Casanova in Burlesque*, *The Cowboy and the Senorita*, *The Yellow Rose of Texas*, *Song of Nevada*, *San Fernando Valley*, *Lights of Old Santa Fe* (1944); *Utah*, *The Man From Oklahoma*, *Sunset in El Dorado*, *Don't Fence Me In*, *Belles of Rosarita* (1945); *My Pal Trigger*, *Along the Navajo Trail*, *Rainbow Over Texas*, *Roll On Texas Moon*, *Home in Oklahoma*, *Heldorado*, *Rainbow Over Texas*, *Under Nevada Skies* (1946); *Apache Rose*, *Bells of San Angelo* (1947); *Slippy McGee* (1948); *Susanna Pass*,

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Down Dakota Way, The Golden Stallion (1949); *Twilight in the Sierras, Bells of Coronado, Trigger, Jr.* (1950); *South of Caliente and Pals of the Golden West* (1951).

A talented songwriter, Evans authored *The Bible Tells Me So; Aha San Antone; Will You Marry Me; Mr. Laramie? ; Down the Trail to San Antone; Lo Dee Lo Di; T for Texas; I'm Gonna Lock You Out-a My Heart; Buckeye Cowboy; No Bed of Roses and Happy Birthday, Gentle Savior*. She recorded a number of albums with Roy Rogers including *In the Sweet Bye and Bye, The Good Life and The Bible Tells Me So*.

Sources: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, *ASCAP Biographical Dictionary*, 4th edition, 1980, p. 426; Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 144; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, p. 52; Linnell Gentry, *A History and Encyclopedia of Country, Western, and Gospel Music*, p. 220; Leslie Halliwell, *Halliwell's Filmgoer's Companion*, p. 222; Nancy Hendricks, "Dale Evans (1912-2001)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2334>; Ted Holland, *B Western Actors Encyclopedia: Facts, Photos and Filmographies for More than 250 Familiar Faces*, pp. 323-327; Ephraim Katz, *The Film Encyclopedia*, p. 426; James R. Peabworth, *A Directory of 132 Arkansas Composers*, p. 24; David Ragan, *Who's Who in Hollywood, 1900-1976*, p. 135; Melvin Shestack, *The Country Music Encyclopedia*, pp. 65-66; Irwin Stambler and Grelun Landon, 2nd. ed. *The Encyclopedia of Folk, Country & Western Music*, 1983, pp. 221-222; Diann Sutherlin, *The Arkansas Handbook*, p. 58; Vincent Terrace, *Fifty Years of Television: A Guide to Series and Pilots, 1937-1988*, p. 621; John T. Weaver, *Forty Years of Screen Credits, 1929-1969*, p. 481.

Fairchild, Barbara

Country singer, songwriter

Born: November 12, 1950, Knobel, Arkansas

Barbara Fairchild wanted to be a singer from the time she was small. At the age of five she was performing in talent contests. With her family's move to Saint Louis when she was twelve a world of opportunity opened up. At fifteen she had a regular spot on a weekday television show and a recording contract with Norman Records, leading to the release of the single *A Brand New Bed of Roses*. She was seventeen when she moved to Nashville, where she managed to meet publisher Jerry Crutchfield. He was impressed with her husky "torch singer" voice and liked one of her songs, but told her to go home and write six more just as good. She returned with fifteen songs and Crutchfield signed her to a writing contract with Knapp Records. He also arranged an audition with Columbia Records and she soon released a hit single of her composition, *Love is a Gentle Thing*. Fairchild continued to record, including her songs *What Do You Do, Love's Old Song*, and *A Sweeter Love*. A single from her LP *A Sweeter Love*, issued

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in 1972, proved to be a breakthrough for her career. *The Teddy Bear Song*, written by a St. Louis policeman was released as a single and topped the country charts and crossed over to the pop charts.

Although she never repeated the phenomenal success of *The Teddy Bear Song*, Fairchild repeatedly made the charts through the 1970s with such singles as *You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling* and *Mississippi*. Two of her releases, *Kid Stuff*, and *Baby Doll*, made the top five on the country charts. During this time she toured the U.S., performing at country nightclubs, fairs and rodeos. In the late 1970s she again made the charts with the top twenty hits *Cheatin' Is* and *Let Me Love You Once Before You Go*. Fairchild left the music business for a few years but returned in 1980 with the successful single *The Answer Game*, a duet recorded with Billy Walker.

Among the LPs recorded during Fairchild's country music career are *Something Special*, *Love's Old Song* (originally titled *The Barbara Fairchild Way*), *The Teddy Bear Song*, *Kid Stuff*, *Standing in Your Line*, *Free and Easy*, *Mississippi*, *This is Me!*, *The Answer Game* (with Billy Walker; reissued as *It Takes Time*) and *The Biggest Hurt*. Her song *This Stranger (My Little Girl)* was recorded by Loretta Lynn, Dottie West and Liz Anderson.

After her success with *The Answer Game*, Fairchild's country career plateaued. In the 1980s, she moved to San Antonio, Texas, to spend more time with her family, and changed her focus to gospel music. She married gospel singer/songwriter Roy Morris in 2002 and has since recorded several albums with him. As a part of the gospel group Heirloom she found success with the album *Apples of Gold*, which featured two successful singles, *Prayin' up a Storm* and *Suffer the Little Children*. Soon afterward, Fairchild recorded her first solo gospel album, *The Light* (1991). A year later she relocated to Branson, Missouri, where she spent two years performing on "The Mel Tillis Show." After a one-year run with "The Jim Stafford Show" in 1993, she started her own show in Branson and with her husband began a weekly Sunday morning worship service at Music City Centre Theater. In 2003, Fairchild was inducted into the George D. Hay Music Hall of Fame, and into the Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame in 2010.

Sources: Darby Burdine, "Barbara Fairchild (1950-)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=5327>; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., p. 1392; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, pp. 54-55; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., 1995, p. 1392; Irwin Stambler and Grelun Landon, 2nd. ed. *The Encyclopedia of Folk, Country & Western Music*, 1983, pp. 226-227; Melvin Shestack, *The Country Music Encyclopedia*, pp. 68-70.

Green, Al

Singer, songwriter

Born: Al Greene, April 13, 1946, Forrest City, Arkansas

Green's family moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the late 1950s. Soon afterward, he and his brothers began singing gospel as The Greene Brothers. Green stayed with the group about seven years. In 1964, at the age of seventeen, he formed a short-lived pop group, The Creations, with Curtis Rogers and Palmer Jones. They recorded some sides for Zodiac with an apparent lack of success. In 1967, former Creations members Rogers and Jones persuaded Green to sing a song they had written so that they could produce a disc for the Hot Line Music Journal label. The 1968 release of *Back Up Train*, credited to Al Greene (with the third 'e') and the Soul Mates, was a top-ten R&B hit and crossed over into the top fifty in the pop charts. Later releases were less successful, and the group split up, prompting Green to perform as a solo.

His career stagnated for almost two years before he was heard and signed by Willie Mitchell, the renowned R&B musician/writer/producer for Hi Records in Memphis. Green tried a number of musical styles before he hit the charts with a blues-funk rendition of *I Can't Get Next to You* which topped the charts in 1969. He had less success with subsequent releases, however, and he again changed his approach. With the 1971 release of his composition *Tired of Being Alone* Green returned to his gospel roots. He poured all of the devices of a successful gospel singer into an R&B ballad and hit on the vocal formula that made him one of the superstars of the 1970s. *Tired of Being Alone* shot to the top of the charts, making it into the top ten on the R&B charts and the top twenty on the pop charts. The single *Let's Stay Together* topped both the R&B and pop charts in 1972 and the album of the same name went gold. A series of hits followed. His next album, *I'm Still in Love with You*, had two big hit singles, *I'm Still In Love With You* and *You Ought to be With Me*. The album *Call Me* had two more chart toppers, *Call Me (Come Back Home)* and *Here I Am (Come and Take Me)*. During this period Green was a frequent guest on network television shows such as "Soul Train," "Hollywood Palladium 1975," "Dinah!," "Sammy and Company" and "The Tonight Show." All added to Green's growing reputation as a major artist.

In 1974, Green was attacked by a former girlfriend who poured boiling grits on him and then killed herself. The traumatic incident changed the direction of his life. While recovering from his burns Green decided that he should devote more time to God. He ended his relationship with Hi Records and opened his own recording studio, American Music. The album *Full of Fire* released in 1976 contains religious imagery only hinted at in previous releases. That year Green was ordained as a minister. In 1977 he released *Belle*, a soulful ballad which made it to the R&B top ten. *The Belle Album* was highly acclaimed by critics but had lackluster sales, as did the 1978 LP *Truth N' Time*. In 1980, Green released the pop-gospel song *The Lord Will Make a Way* which won him a Grammy Award for Best Vocal Performance. Green has

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continued to record sacred material and about 1981 became pastor of his own church, the Full Gospel Tabernacle in Memphis, where he continues to preach. In 1985 he teamed again with Hi Records to produce the album *He is the Light*. His 1989 secular single *Put a Little Love in Your Heart* did well in the U.S. and made the charts in the U.K. Green continues to tour in this country and abroad and to record sacred music and pop-gospel. Green was voted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995. Additional notable albums include *Green is Blues; Livin' for You; Al Green Explores Your Mind; Al Green is Love; Greatest Hits Vol. 1; Take Me to the River-Greatest Hits Vol. 2; The Lord Will Make A Way; Higher Plane; Tokyo. . . Live; I Can't Stop; Everything's OK and Lay It Down*.

Sources: Mike Clifford, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rock*, p. 95; Robert Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds: A Celebration of Popular Music in Arkansas*, p. 74; Phil Hardy and Dave Laing, *Encyclopedia of Rock*, p. 199; Brock Helander, *The Rock Who's Who: A Biographical Dictionary and Critical Discography Including Rhythm-and-Blues, Soul, Rockabilly, Folk, Country, Easy Listening, Punk, and New Wave*, pp. 228-229; Jack W. Hill, "Al Green (1946-)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2773>; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., 1995, p. 1740; Edward Mapp, *Directory of Blacks in the Performing Arts*, p. 193; Dave Marsh and John Swenson, eds., *The New Rolling Stone Record Guide*, pp. 205-206; Ronald Zalkind, *Contemporary Music Almanac, 1980/81*, p. 228.

Harden, Arleen

Singer

Born March 1, 1945, England, Arkansas

From her teens until 1968 Arleen Harden performed with her brother, Bobby, and her sister, Robbie, as the Harden Trio. In 1967, Arleen soloed on "Midwestern Hayride" on WLW radio Cincinnati and on "American Swingaround" in Chicago. She signed with Columbia as a solo artist that year and had some success with *Fairweather Love* and *You're Easy to Love*. After the Trio split up in 1968, she and Bobby sang a duet on *Who Loves Who* which enjoyed moderate success. Her first hit *Lovin' Man* in 1970, was followed by *Crying* in 1974 and *Leave Me Alone (Little Ruby Red Dress)*, which was released after she had moved to Capitol Records. Between 1968 and 1978 she totaled seventeen chart entries, though none placed very high. Her last chart entry was *You're Not Free and I'm Not Easy* in 1978 for Electra Records. Harden's albums include *Sings Roy Orbison, I Could Almost Say Goodbye* and *What Could I Say*. For more on her early career see "Harden Trio, The."

Sources: Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 196; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, p. 74; Michael

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Erlewine, *All Music Guide to Country*, p. 199; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., 1995, p. 1831.

Harden, Bobby

Singer, songwriter

Born: c. 1936, England, Arkansas

Died: June 2, 2006, Nashville, Tennessee

From his teens until 1968 Bobby Harden performed with his sisters Arleen and Robbie as the Harden Trio. When the Trio split in 1968, Bobby continued his career as a solo artist. In 1968 he sang a duet with Arlene on *Who Loves Who*, which enjoyed moderate success. In 1969 he released the album *Nashville Sensation* and he had a minor chart entry in 1975 with *One Step*. Shortly afterward, Harden retired from performing to concentrate on songwriting. His work was recorded by Conway Twitty, Gene Watson, Kenny Rogers and George Jones to name a few. Top-ten hits included Reba McEntire's *Today All Over Again*, Loretta Lynn's *Home* and Mark Chesnutt's *Too Cold at Home* and *Old Country*. For more on his early career see "Harden Trio, The."

Sources: Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 196; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, p. 74; CMT News, "Funeral Services Held for Singer/Song writer Bobby Harden," June 2, 2006, <http://www.cmt.com/news/1533493/funeral-services-held-for-singer-songwriter-bobby-harden/>; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., p. 1831.

Harden Trio, The

Vocal group

Members: Arleen Harden, Bobby Harden and Robbie Harden Siblings Arleen, Bobby and Robbie Harden grew up in an area rich in musical tradition and as children were exposed to country, western and folk music. As teenagers they achieved quite a reputation singing at local dances. They began their professional career as members of the cast of "Barnyard Frolics" on KLRA radio Little Rock. Soon they were appearing on other radio programs including "Ozark Mountain Jubilee" in Springfield, Missouri, and "Louisiana Hayride" in Shreveport, Louisiana

In 1965, the trio was asked to join the "Grand Ole Opry." The national exposure afforded by the Opry led to a contract with Columbia Records and appearances on a number of network television shows such as the "Bill Anderson Show" and the "Stu Phillips Show." The Trio was a guest on WSM radio's "Opry Almanac" and they toured extensively, making appearances in all fifty states. Their first release was one of Bobby's songs, *Poor Boy*, backed by *Let it*

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Be Me. Their first top-ten hit came later that year with the release *Tippy Toeing*, written by Bobby. The song stayed on the charts for twenty-one weeks. Over the next two years the group had a number of hits. Another song written by Bobby, *Sneakin' Across the Border*, made the country top-twenty. Other hits included *Seven Days of Crying*, *Don't Remind Me* and *Husbands and Wives*. Their last single to make the charts was the 1968 release, *Everybody Wants to be Somebody Else*. The Trio disbanded in 1968, each member going out as a soloist. Albums released by the Harden Trio include *Tippy Toeing*, *Sing Me Back Home*, and *Great Country Hits*.

Sources: Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 196; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, p. 74; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., p. 1831.

Harden, Robbie

Singer

Born Date Unknown, England Arkansas

See **Hardin Trio, The**

Hawkins, Ronnie

Rock-and-roll musician

Born: January 10, 1935, Huntsville, Arkansas

Ronnie Hawkins, like many Arkansas musicians, was influenced as a young man by a number of musical styles. His grandmother taught him gospel songs and ballads. His uncle, who played on the "Louisiana Hayride" in Shreveport, taught him country and western songs. He learned about the blues and jazz from trumpeter Buddy Hayes, who worked in the same barber shop as Hawkins' father. These influences came together for Hawkins in a country rock-and-roll style that has been called 'high octane' and 'hopped-up hillbilly.' Hawkins formed his first band in 1952 and tried his luck in Memphis, unsuccessfully auditioning as a rockabilly singer for Sun Records. On the advice of Conway Twitty he moved the band to Canada, where he met with the enthusiasm he had hoped to find in Memphis. His group, Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks, was a draw at the Le Coq D'Or in Toronto for years.

In 1959, Hawkins cut the singles *Forty Days* and *Mary Lou* for Roulette Records. Both made the charts, with the first reaching number forty-five and the second number twenty-six. *Mary Lou* would be the best selling record of his career. In the early 1960s, Hawkins released a number of albums—*Ronnie Hawkins*, *Mr. Dynamo*, *Folk Ballads of Ronnie Hawkins* and *Ronnie Hawkins Sings the Songs of Hank Williams*. None made him a star in the U.S. though they did well in Canada. In 1963 he released his classic version of *Who Do You Love* on

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Roulette. His recordings for Atlanta-based Cotillion Records include the LP *Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks* and the single *Down in the Alley* which made the U.S. charts in 1970.

Over the years, several members of Hawkins' backup band left for opportunities in the U.S., the most notable being Levon Helm and Robbie Robertson, who later formed The Band. Hawkins replaced members as they left, recruiting some of the best rock-and-roll musicians Canada had to offer. Through the years, he has continued to play his own brand of rock and roll. In 1977, he was one of the stars of The Band's farewell concert, which was recorded in the film *The Last Waltz* (1978). Hawkins appeared in the Bob Dylan film *Renaldo and Clara* (1978) and opposite Kris Kristofferson in *Heaven's Gate* (1980). He continues to play genuine rock and roll for appreciative Canadian audiences in his club The Hawks Nest. Other Hawkins' albums include *Rockin'*, *Rrrracket Time*, *Ronnie Hawkins*, *The Hawk*, and *Best of Ronnie Hawkins with The Band*.

Hawkins hosted his own variety series, "*Honky Tonk*," on Canadian television in the 1980s. He has been recognized in Canada for his contributions to that nation's musical heritage. In 1996, Hawkins received the Walt Grealis Special Achievement Award at the Juno Awards for his role in building a strong music industry in Canada. He was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame on October 4, 2002, the day was declared "Ronnie Hawkins Day" by the City of Toronto. He received a Special Achievement Award from SOCAN for his contributions to the Canadian music industry in 2007; and in 2013, was made an honorary Officer of the Order of Canada. Hawkins was also honored in his native state of Arkansas, where he was inducted into the Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame in 2008.

Sources: Mike Clifford, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rock*, p. 101; Robert Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds: A Celebration of Popular Music in Arkansas*, p. 75; Thomas Cochran, "Ronnie Hawkins (1935-)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=621>; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, p. 77; Phil Hardy and Dave Laing, *Encyclopedia of Rock*, p. 211; Betty Nygaard King, "Ronnie Hawkins," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ronnie-hawkins/; Leonard Maltin, *Leonard Maltin's Movie & Video Guide: 1997 Edition*, pp. 573, 1103; Irwin Stambler and Grelun Landon, 2nd. ed. *The Encyclopedia of Folk, Country & Western Music*, 1983, pp. 308-309; Diann Sutherland, *The Arkansas Handbook*, p. 66; Ronald Zalkind, *Contemporary Music Almanac, 1980/81*, p. 234.

Helm, Levon

Rock-and-roll musician

Born: Mark Lavon [sic] Helm, May 26, 1940, Turkey Scratch, Arkansas

Died: April 19, 2012, New York City

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Levon Helm was the son of a cotton farmer. Growing up he heard the music of Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys, the F.S. Walcott Rabbit Foot Minstrels, Sonny Boy (Rice Miller) Williamson and a young Elvis Presley—at that time still playing club and high school dates in Helena and Marianna. It all came together for Helm in rock-and-roll drumming, though he also played mandolin and guitar. As a teen he appeared in school and county fair talent contests with his sister. The duo once won first prize with Helm on drums and his sister on a homemade washtub bass. In 1958, Helm met Ronnie Hawkins and joined his new band, Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks. Helm was the only member of the group to accompany Hawkins to Canada when he moved there permanently in the late 1950s. Hawkins reformed his band with Helm and newly recruited Canadian musicians. Helm remained with Hawkins' group through numerous personnel changes for six years.

In 1963, Helm, Rick Danko, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel and Robbie Robertson left Hawkins' group. They moved to the U.S. and formed their own group, Levon and The Hawks. They recorded for Atlantic Records and in 1965 began working as the backup band for Bob Dylan; learning from him and in turn, he said, teaching him something (Cocks: 41). The group's music was complex, with layers borrowed from folk tunes, commercial rock and roll, Bach, and hymns combined in an “. . . intricate, syncopated modal sound . . .” (Cocks: 40). While playing with Dylan they were often referred to as simply “the band” and sometime around 1968 they adopted it as their official name. The Band went to Dylan's home in Woodstock, New York, after he was injured in a motorcycle accident in 1966. As Dylan recuperated they played music and some of those songs made it onto their 1968 LP *Music From the Big Pink*, which was followed by *The Band* in 1969. The LPs *Stage Fright*, *Rock of Ages* and *Northern Lights—Southern Cross* followed. The Band broke up in 1976. Their final concert is on the LP *The Last Waltz* and is captured in the film, *The Last Waltz* (1978).

After the breakup, Helm, who had become a fine, intense vocalist, made solo recordings. He formed the RCO All-Stars, which recorded a few times and he was featured as Jesse James on the concept album *The Legend of Jesse James*. In 1990 he joined with former Beatle Ringo Starr in his All-Star Band. Helm did some acting, playing the part of Loretta Lynn's father in *Coal Miners Daughter* (1980). He cut *Blue Moon of Kentucky* for the soundtrack album and used the same musicians on a country album, *American Son*. In 1982, Helm released the LP *Levon Helm*. He continued his acting career in *The Right Stuff* (1983), and the 1984 made-for-television movie *The Dollmaker*. Mary Steenburgen was executive producer of, and had a role in, his last film *The End of the Line* (1987), which was shot in Arkansas. The Band got back together in 1991, releasing *Jericho* in 1993. That year Helm published his autobiography, *This Wheel's on Fire*. In 1996, The Band released *High on the Hog* and their final album *Jubilation* in 1998. Its release ended a three-decade run for one of America's most beloved bands.

Helm was diagnosed with throat cancer in 1998, which ended his singing career for several years. He began singing again in 2005, and two years later released his first new studio album

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in ten years, *Dirt Farmer*. The recording earned him a Grammy for “Best Traditional Folk Album.” He released *Electric Dirt* on June 30, 2009 and it also earned a Grammy, this time for “Best Americana Album.” Helm died from throat cancer in 2012. A year later, Jacob Hatley’s documentary film, *Ain’t in It for My Health*, was released in Manhattan. Set in Helm’s New York home, it featured interviews with the artist reminiscing about his music and Arkansas.

Sources: Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 37; Robert Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds: A Celebration of Popular Music in Arkansas*, p. 76; Jay Cocks, “Down to Old Dixie and Back,” *Time*, January 12, 1970, pp. 40-44; Levon Helm and Stephen Davis, *This Wheel’s on Fire: Levon Helm and the Story of the Band*, pp. 308-310; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., pp. 1902-1903; Leonard Maltin, *Leonard Maltin’s Movie & Video Guide: 1997 Edition*, pp. 250, 355, 396, 1119; Dave Marsh and John Swenson, eds., *The New Rolling Stone Record Guide*, p. 26; Bryan Rogers, “Levon Helm (1940-2012)” in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=628>; Diann Sutherlin, *The Arkansas Handbook*, p. 67.

Holloway, James L. “Red”

Jazz musician

Born: May 31, 1927, Helena, Arkansas

Died: February 25, 2012, Morro Bay, California

Red Holloway’s mother and father were musicians and he grew up with an appreciation for music. He learned to play the piano but while in school took up the baritone saxophone and then switched to tenor sax, the instrument for which he is known. After graduating from high school Holloway studied at the Chicago Conservatory of Music. Somewhere along the way he learned to play clarinet, flute, piccolo, bass, violin and drums, but the sax remained his chosen instrument. Holloway played in and around Chicago for a while before joining Gene Wright’s band in 1943. He played with Wright until he entered the U.S. Army in 1946, where he was a member of the 5th Army band.

After his discharge, Holloway returned to Chicago and resumed playing with jazz and blues musicians such as Yusef Lateef, Dexter Gordon, Lloyd Price, Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Chuck Berry and Roosevelt Sykes, with whom he toured in 1948. Holloway organized his own quartet in 1952, played local clubs, and toured with Lionel Hampton and ‘Brother’ Jack McDuff in the mid-1960s. Except for a brief residency in New York, Holloway remained in the Chicago area, playing with prominent jazz artists, until the late 1960s. In 1967, he moved to Los Angeles. Holloway toured Canada and the U.S. with the “Jimmy Dean Show” and he did studio work before securing a long residency at the Parisian Room in Los Angeles where he acted as talent coordinator and leader of the house band for seventeen years. He continued to do studio

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work, performing on the sound track of the 1972 film *Lady Sings the Blues*. In the early 1970s Holloway toured Australia, Europe and Canada with the John Mayall Combo. He returned to LA where he played with Ray Brown and Sweets Edison.

In 1977, Holloway teamed with Sonny Stitt beginning a partnership that lasted until Stitt's death in 1982. It was during this tenure that Holloway received international attention for his work as a lyricist and technically assured jazz musician. After Stitt's death, Holloway resumed touring as a soloist and occasionally worked with other artists including Jay McShann, Clark Terry, singer Carmen McRae and Knut Rusnaes.

During the earlier years of his long career, Holloway played with a number of prominent bluesmen including Willie Dixon, Junior Parker, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry and B.B. King. He also played with equally prominent jazz artists such as Billie Holliday, Ben Webster, Jimmy Rushing, Sonny Rollins, Lester Young, and Wardell Gray. Holloway also worked with Juggernaut and other big bands. He has been described as a driving sax player with a rich and bluesy sound who deserved wider recognition. Selected LPs include *The Burner*, *Cookin' Together*; *Sax, Strings & Soul*; *Red Soul*; *Just Friends* (with Sonny Stitt); *Red Holloway and Company*; *Fine and Mellow* (with Carmen McRae) ; *Locksmith Blues* (with Clark Terry); and *The Gemini Twins* (with Knut Rusnaes).

Sources: Jonathan Buckley, ed., *Jazz: The Rough Guide*, pp. 204, 614; Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 216; Leonard Feather and Ira Gitler, *The Encyclopedia of Jazz in the Seventies*, p. 178; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., pp. 1971-1972; Leonard Maltin, *Leonard Maltin's Movie & Video Guide: 1997 Edition*, p. 734.

Hughey, John

Steel guitar

Born: John Robert Hughey, December 27, 1933, Elaine, Arkansas

Died: November 18, 2007, Nashville, Tennessee

John Hughey's family moved from Elaine, Arkansas, to Mississippi and then when he was nine years old to Helena, Arkansas. He attended school in Helena where he met Harold Jenkins, who would become famous as Conway Twitty. Hughey began playing guitar with Jenkins after school. When he was in high school his father took him to the KFFA studios in Helena, where he observed the steel guitar player with the "Arkansas Cotton Choppers." Hughley decided then and there that he wanted to play that instrument. A year later, his father bought him a Sherwood Deluxe steel guitar at the Montgomery Ward store in Helena. Soon, Hughley, Jenkins, Wesley Pickett and James Henry had formed the "Phillips County Ramblers." The group got a slot on KFFA and played at school and church events throughout high school.

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Hughey's first professional job was with the group Slim Rhodes and the Mother's Best Ramblers in 1953. He continued to work with the Ramblers on and off through the 1950s and 60s. In 1968, he joined his childhood friend Harold Jenkins—now known as Conway Twitty—and his band, The Lonely Blue Boys, which later became the Twitty Birds. Hughey's crying steel guitar was featured on a number of Twitty's number one singles including *Next in Line*. He worked with Twitty for twenty years, leaving the band in 1988.

After leaving the Twitty Birds, Hughey worked with Loretta Lynn. He then joined Vince Gill, with whom he played for twelve years. He also worked with other notables including Elvis Presley, Joe Diffie, Reba McEntire, Dolly Parton, Alan Jackson and Dean Martin. Hughey was inducted into the Steel Guitar Hall of Fame in 1996. For the last years of his life he recorded and played in Nashville with a group of session musicians known as the Time Jumpers. Sources: CMT.com Staff, "Steel Guitarist John Hughey Dead at 73," *Country Music Television*, <http://www.cmt.com/news/1574573/steel-guitarist-john-hughey-dead-at-73/>; "John Hughey," *AllMusic*, <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/john-hughey-mn0000093980/biography>; "John Hughey Bio," *John Hughey Music*, <http://www.johnhughwy.com/bio.html>.

Keene, Kahn

Trombonist, composer

Born: November 1, 1909, Cotton Plant, Arkansas

Died: October 1984, Savannah, Georgia

Kahn Keene's family moved to Kansas when he was a child and he later studied music at the University of Kansas and the Kansas Conservatory. He later moved to New York to study with composer and arranger Tom Timothy. Keene returned to Kansas to work with the University of Kansas Symphony and later played with the Roxy Theater Orchestra in New York and other well-known bands. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943, where he joined Glen Miller's Army Air Corps Band. After his discharge in 1946, Keene played trombone with the Roxy Theater Orchestra and Skitch Henderson's Orchestra, and did freelance work with various recording orchestras. He joined the Savannah [Georgia] Symphony in 1957 as a trombonist, and later held the position of first trombonist and acted as the symphony's business manager. In 1980, Keene left the Savannah Symphony to organize his own dance orchestra, the Kahn Keene Kwintet & River Street Ramblers.

Keene composed a number of popular songs including *Charming Little Faker*, *The Key to My Heart*, *Moonlight and You*, *Scatterbrain*, *Throw Your Heart in the Ring*, *They'll Never Take the Texas Out of Me*, *Too Late* and *Say When*. His chief collaborator was Johnny Burke. Keene also composed several instrumental works including *April Fool*, *I Remember You from Somewhere*, *Bossa Nova Blues* and *Hominy Grits*.

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Sources: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, *ASCAP Biographical Dictionary*, 4th ed., 1980, p. 265; James R. Pebworth, *A Directory of 132 Arkansas Composers*, p. 40.

Meeks, Larry

Pianist, lyricist

Born: April 15, 1930, Pine Bluff, Arkansas

Larry Meeks received his music education at the Memphis Conservatory of Music, the United States Navy School of Music, and New York University. He worked as a composer and lyricist for the navy, and wrote music and lyrics for the musical *Prairie Navy*. Meeks also served as a pianist with the touring Admiral's Band, U.S. 6th Fleet Flagship between 1950 and 1952. After leaving the navy, Meeks worked with RKO-Teleradio-Unique Recording Company for three years. During his sixty-plus year career he worked with Benny Goodman, Les Elgar and Buddy Morrow. He accompanied shows for Tennessee Ernie Ford, Phil Ford and Mimi Hines, Julie London and others. He was a publicity writer with Mike Hall Associates, and press secretary for Benny Goodman for four years.

Meeks settled in Denver, Colorado, after accepting a position as a pianist with the Denver Orchestra. He was the conducting pianist/conductor for Denver shows with Helen McConnell, and others; and the composer/arranger for Carousel Productions in Denver. The Denver Broncos football team adopted his composition *Make Those Miracles Happen* as their theme song highlighting their first Super Bowl appearance in 1978. Meeks wrote lyrics for the popular tunes *Me and My Bestest Feller* and *I Heard Ya the First Time*. In addition to *Make Those Miracles Happen*, he composed music for *The Moment*, *Darned Good Country*, *Butterscotch Morning*, *Wicked Western*, *Bossa Nova Scotia*, and *One Day At A Time*, among others. He also composed the instrumental works *Benny Happy Returns*, *Shoppin' Spree* and *The Code*. He often collaborates with Maryruth Weyand and Gladys Shelley.

Sources: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, *ASCAP Biographical Dictionary*, 4th edition, 1980, p. 341; James R. Pebworth, *A Directory of 132 Arkansas Composers*, p. 48; "Windjammers Jazz Orchestra featuring Larry Meeks on Piano," *Doing Denver for Less*, press release for August 2, 2014, performance in Littleton, Colorado, <http://www.doingdenverforless.com/cal/events/index.php?com=detail&eID=8461>.

Randolph, Zilner Trenton

Jazz musician

Born: January 28, 1899, Dermott, Arkansas

Died: February 2, 1994, Chicago, Illinois

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Zilner Randolph studied at Biddle University in North Carolina and then spent several years in St. Louis, where he studied theory, trumpet and harmony at the Krueger Conservatory, and played trumpet and piano in clubs. He moved to Milwaukee in 1927 to study music at the Wisconsin Conservatory. He performed in Milwaukee and joined trumpeter Bernie Young's band, playing at the Wisconsin Roof Ballroom and touring with the group for almost four years. In spring 1931, Randolph moved to Chicago, where he became musical director for Louis Armstrong. Randolph worked for Armstrong as an arranger and trumpeter for a year, touring and recording. He arranged and played on the single *Swing You Cats* and wrote *Old Man Mose*, which Armstrong recorded in 1935.

Randolph left Armstrong's band in 1932, but returned to work with him in 1933, and for a few months in 1935. In between, he worked with Carroll Dickerson and Dave Peyton. In 1936, Randolph formed his own big band in Chicago. In the late 1930s, he was a staff arranger for Woody Herman and wrote arrangements for Earl Hines, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Blanch Calloway and others. In the 1940s he led his own quartet and played in a musical act with his children. During that time Randolph began to teach music, an activity he continued into the 1970s.

Sources: Barry Kernfeld, *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, Vol. 2, p. 349; John Clifton, *Who's Who of Jazz: Storyville to Swing Street*, p.273; James R. Peabworth, *A Directory of 132 Arkansas Composers*, p. 57.

Rich, Charlie

Country artist

Born: December 14, 1932, Colt, Arkansas

Died: July 25, 1995, Hammond, Louisiana

Charlie Rich grew up on a small cotton plantation, surrounded by music. He heard southern gospel at church and from the quartet his parents belonged to. He learned to play blues piano from C.J., a black sharecropper who worked on the family farm, and he heard country music listening to the "Grand Ole Opry" on the radio. In high school he became a fan of jazz—Stan Kenton and Oscar Peterson in particular—and learned how to play tenor saxophone. After high school, Rich studied music for one year at the University of Arkansas, but dropped out to join the Air Force during the Korean War. He was stationed at a base in Enid, Oklahoma, where he played with a small jazz combo called the Velvatoness and also did some moonlighting with another combo in town. In 1952, he married the Velvatoness' vocalist, Margaret Ann Greene. After his discharge in 1955, Rich tried farming but returned to music. The couple moved to Memphis, Rich playing piano in clubs for ten dollars a night. When they had time Rich and his wife wrote songs. Margaret Ann tried to interest Sun Records in their music, with no success. Sun felt that the songs lacked commercial potential but they liked what they heard of Rich's

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piano work on the demo tape and hired him as a session musician.

As a Sun session musician, Rich backed Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison and others. During this time, several Sun artists recorded songs Rich and his wife had written. Cash recorded *The Ways of a Woman in Love* and *Thanks A Lot*. Ray Smith and Jerry Lee Lewis recorded *Break Up. I'm Comin' Home* was covered by both Carl Mann and Elvis Presley. Finally, in the late 1950s, Sun agreed to release Rich as a solo. The studio released ten singles and one album, but only the rockabilly single *Lonely Weekends*, which reached number twenty-two on the country charts, was a success. In 1962, Rich moved to Groove, a subsidiary of RCA. He had a minor hit with *Big Boss Man* but again failed to generate subsequent successes. He left Groove and signed with Mercury; *Mohair Sam* almost made the top-twenty but was his only success. A move to Hi Records was no more fruitful.

In 1968, Rich joined Epic, a subsidiary of Columbia. It proved to be the turning point in his career. He was teamed with producer Billy Sherrill, who believed in Rich and worked to get him the attention he felt he deserved. Under Sherrill's direction, Rich concentrated on ballads set with classy but comfortable arrangements. The result was a string of minor top-fifty hits between 1968 and 1972—*Set Me Free*, *Life Has Its Little Ups and Downs* (written by Margaret Ann), *A Woman Left Lonely* and *A Part of Your Life*. Rich's mature years and prematurely gray hair fit well with the material he was recording and he was dubbed "The Silver Fox."

Rich's first real break came in 1972 when *I Take It On Home* made the country Top twenty. His next single, released in 1973, was *Behind Closed Doors*. It made Rich a star. The song reached number one on the country charts, crossed over into the pop charts, and sold over one million copies. Rich's next release *The Most Beautiful Girl* did even better, earning Rich a platinum disc. In 1973, Rich won a number of awards—a Grammy for Best Country Male Vocalist; the Country Music Association's award for Male Vocalist of the Year, Single of the Year and Album of the Year for *Behind Closed Doors*. RCA released a compilation of his earlier work on *Tomorrow Night*. The next year, Rich had another string of hit singles including *A Very Special Love Song*, *I Love My Friend*, and *There Won't Be Anymore*. That year, 1974, he was named Entertainer of the Year by the Country Music Association.

Through the remainder of the 70s Rich continued to produce hit records, though not with the same intensity. There was *Every Time You Touch Me* and *Rollin' with The Flow*, which hit number-one in 1977. The next year *Beautiful Woman* made the Top ten and *On My Knees*, a duet with Janie Frickie, made the top of the charts. Rich closed out the 70s with "*I Still Believe in Love*, *Puttin' In Overtime at Home* and *Nobody but You*. In 1979, Rich moved to Electra and had a big hit with *I'll Wake You Up When You Get Home*. After 1980 there was a long period when Rich was inactive in the recording industry but in 1992 he returned with the LP *Pictures and Paintings*. It was something of a departure for Rich, mixing jazzy originals and reinterpretations of some of his older material. Some reviewers felt that it was his most

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satisfying work since *The Fabulous Charlie Rich* recorded twenty-two years earlier.

Rich released over twenty albums during his career. Recommended LPs include *Behind Closed Doors*, *Boss Man*, *Original Charlie Rich*, *Classic Rich*, *Nobody But You*, *Silver Linings* and *Pictures and Paintings*.

Sources: Mike Clifford, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rock*, pp. 177-178; Robert Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds: A Celebration of Popular Music in Arkansas*, pp. 79-80; Robert B. Cochran, "Charlie Rich (1932-1995)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2519>; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, p. 145; Phil Hardy and Dave Laing, *Encyclopedia of Rock*, pp. 367-368; Diann Sutherlin, *The Arkansas Handbook*, pp. 84-85; Colin Larkin, *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., pp. 3480-3482; James R. Pebworth, *A Directory of 132 Arkansas Composers*, pp. 58-59; Melvin Shestack, *The Country Music Encyclopedia*, pp. 224-227; Irwin Stambler and Landon, 2nd. Ed. *The Encyclopedia of Folk, Country & Western Music*, 1983, pp. 604-606; Ronald Zalkind, *Contemporary Music Almanac, 1980/81*, p. 301.

Riley, Billy Lee

Rock-and-roll musician

Born: October 5, 1933, Pocahontas, Arkansas

Died: August 2, 2009, Jonesboro, Arkansas

Billy Lee Riley was born into a poor Arkansas sharecropping family, receiving only three years of formal education before he quit school to help the family by picking cotton. His father, a house painter by trade, was forced into sharecropping by the economic misfortunes of the Depression, employment that necessitated frequent moves. Riley's family moved from Pocahontas to Osceola when he was three. Riley was fascinated by blues music even as a child, and by the time he was six he could play the harmonica. When he was ten, his father bought him a used Sears Silvertone guitar. As a child he listened to blues music as it issued from honkytonks and jukeboxes. When Riley was thirteen his family moved to a plantation in St. Francis County, twenty miles from Forrest City, Arkansas. It was there that Riley learned to play blues guitar, taught for the most part by his friend Jericho Leon "Lightning" Carter, a name he'd gotten after being struck by lightning as a child. Riley's family stayed on the plantation for about two years and then moved to Tupelo, Mississippi. Riley joined a traveling street preacher there, singing gospel songs on corners and in court squares. The next year he was back in Osceola. In 1949, at the age of fifteen, Riley joined the U.S. Army. After his discharge four years later he went to Jonesboro, Arkansas, where his parents were then living. He formed a band and played high school dances and nightclubs and appeared on three radio shows, two live and one taped.

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Riley moved to Memphis in 1955 and met a group of country musicians that included Cowboy Jack Clement. Clement and his partner, Slim Wallace, founded the small Fernwood label and cut Riley's debut recordings, *Trouble Bound* and *Think Before You Go*. Clement took the tapes to Sam Phillips at Sun Records so that he could master a single. Sam Phillips agreed to release *Trouble Bound* on the Sun label if Riley could come up with another song for the second side. He brought in *Rock With Me Baby* and Sun signed Riley to a recording contract. He also hired Clement to produce. In 1957, Sun records launched Riley as a probable successor to Elvis Presley. He released two cuts that year, *Flying Saucer Rock and Roll* and *Red Hot*. Jerry Lee Lewis backed Riley with pounding piano on the first cut and James Roland played guitar on both. Despite the raw energy provided by the music and Riley's screaming vocals the cuts were only minor hits. After recording, Riley formed a band that he called Little Green Men in tribute to his first single. The group became the de facto Sun house band. Riley released a couple more singles for Sun but neither was much of a success. He left the label in 1959, after Sam Phillips canceled a tour promoting his single *Red Hot*, which was becoming widely recognized, and instead endorsed Jerry Lee Lewis' *Great Balls of Fire*.

After Riley left Sun, he and Roland James formed the RITA label and in 1960 scored a pop hit with Harold Dorman's *Mountain of Love*. Soon afterward, Riley sold his interest in RITA to start a label of his own, Mojo. In 1961, he produced the blues classic *You Don't Love Me* by Willie Cobbs. Riley also cut some records of his own, scoring a couple of minor hits. During these years Riley was a sought-after session musician in Nashville, with a reputation as a talented multi-instrumentalist. As one Sun historian remarked, "Win, lose or draw, Riley always had one of the hottest working bands in the mid-south" (Cochran: 45).

Riley moved to Los Angeles in 1961 or 1962, where he was a very successful session musician backing Glen Campbell, Leon Russell, Hal Blaine, Jimmy Bryant, and the great jazz guitarist Barney Kessel. He was the lead guitarist on Herb Alpert's first hit, *Lonely Bull*, and the featured harmonica soloist on recordings with Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Johnny Rivers, The Beach Boys, John Davidson and Rick Nelson. Riley also worked in promotion and produced other artists.

Riley returned to the South in 1966. He worked as a freelance producer for the Memphis soul label, Stax, and was one of the first artists signed to Shelby Singleton's reactivated Sun Records in 1969. He left the music business for a while in the 1970s, but returned after rockabilly revival singer Robert Gordon introduced him to a new generation with his recordings of *Flying Saucer Rock and Roll* and *Red Hot*.

In 1979, Riley returned to live performing, making his debut in Memphis at the "Memphis in May Beale Street Blues Festival," where he became a perennial act. He performed in clubs and festivals across the U.S. and toured England, France, Germany and Sweden, where he had a loyal following. In the early 1990s, the Smithsonian museum interviewed Riley for its archives.

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In 1996, he impressed a new generation with a blues-dominated acoustic set at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. In 1992, Riley released his first all-blues album, *Blue Collar Blues*. His 1997 Capricorn/Mercury LP *Hot Dam* was nominated for a Grammy award. In 2005 he headlined at London's Barbican Centre as part of the "It Came from Memphis" festival. His final performance was in June 2009 when he appeared with his old Sun label-mate Sonny Burgess at an event at Memphis' Downtown Rock and Soul Museum.

During his career Riley recorded vocal and instrumental discs in every style of rock related to blues and country. At one time or another he has recorded country, blues, rock, rhythm and blues, and soul for labels such as Sun, Mojo, Pen, Hip, Entrance, Brunswick, Home of the Blues, Dodge, Checker, Smash, Fire, Fury, and Myrl. Although big-time success as a recording artist proved elusive, Riley never stopped rocking. Columnist Bob Meer described Riley as Sun Records' 'lost giant' and said of him, . . . he possessed the myriad musical gifts of Carl Perkins, the unhinged spirit of Jerry Lee Lewis, and the punkish insouciance of Elvis Presley—yet fate never rewarded Riley beyond cult acclaim.”

Sources: Garth Cartwright, "Billy Lee Riley, Pioneer of rockabilly and star of its revival," *The Guardian* [London] August 3, 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2009/aug/03/billy-lee-riley-obituary>; Robert Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds: A Celebration of Popular Music in Arkansas*, pp. 44-45; Dillinger Funeral Home, Billy Lee Riley, October 5, 1933-August 2, 2009, http://www.meaningfulfunerals.net/fh/print.cfm?type=obituary&o_id=403048&fh_id=11786; Phil Hardy and Dave Laing, *Encyclopedia of Rock*, p. 370; Kayla, Kesterson, "Billy Lee Riley (1933-2009)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2785>; Bob Mehr, "Sun Records' 'lost giant' Billy Lee Riley dies at 75," *The Commercial Appeal* [Memphis, Tennessee], August 2, 2009, <http://www.commercialappeal.com/go-memphis/sun-records-giant-billy-lee-riley-dead-75>; Joyce Riley, "Billy Lee Riley," Rockabilly Hall of Fame, <http://www.rockabillyhall.com/blr.html>.

Taylor, Johnnie Harrison

Singer

Born: May 5, 1934, Crawfordsville, Arkansas

Died: May 31, 2000, Dallas, Texas

Johnnie Taylor left home and moved to Cleveland, Ohio, when he was fifteen. He sang with a number of gospel groups, including the Highway QCs and the Five Echoes. Taylor later toured with Mahalia Jackson and the Soul Stirrers, and in 1957 replaced his mentor, Sam Cooke, in the group on Cooke's recommendation. Taylor left the Soul Stirrers and gospel music in 1963 and moved into soul-blues and rhythm & blues. He recorded on Cooke's Star label for two years. In 1965, when the Star label went bankrupt, he signed with the Memphis label,

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Stax. Over the next three years Taylor had a number of moderately successful releases, but his first big hit did not come until 1968 with the release of *Who's Making Love*. The single went to number one on the R&B charts and crossed over into the top five on the pop charts. Over the next five years Taylor released a number of top-ten R&B hits including the number-one singles *Jody's Got Your Girl and Gone*, *I Believe in You (You Believe In Me)*, *Take Care of Your Homework*, and *Cheaper to Keep Her*.

The biggest hit of Taylor's career came in 1976 with *Disco Lady*. Columbia released the recording just as disco was becoming a national craze; it hit number-one and went platinum. Taylor continued to record funk-flavored disco dance tunes through the 80s. A number were successful on the R&B charts, though they failed to edge into the pop market. In 1984, Taylor signed with Malco. On his first LP for the label, *This Is the Night*, Taylor returned to a more gritty blues approach in his vocals; a sound which he continued on *Wall to Wall*, *Lover Boy*, and *Crazy Bout You*. In 1996 the Rhythm and Blues Foundation gave Taylor a Pioneer Award for "lifelong contributions that have been instrumental in the development of Rhythm & Blues music." He remained a popular performer with Southern R&B audiences for the rest of his career.

Taylor recorded over thirty albums. His early work with Star is found on *The Roots of Johnnie Taylor*. The best from his years with Stax is contained on *Raw Blues*, *Wanted: One Soul Singer*, *Who's Making Love* and *Tailored in Silk*. The LP *Somebody's Getting It* is a compilation of his best from Columbia. He released his final album, *Gotta Get the Groove Back*, in 1999.

Sources: Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 432; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., pp. 4100-4101; Bryan Rogers, "Johnnie Harrison Taylor (1934-2000)," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=637>; Robert Santelli, *The Big Book of Blues*, pp. 390-391.

Tharpe, "Sister" Rosetta

Singer

Born: Rosetta Nubin, March 20, 1921 (sources vary), Cotton Plant, Arkansas

Died: October 9, 1973, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Rosetta Tharpe's choice of music was greatly influenced by her mother, Katie Bell Tharpe, a talented singer and traveling Holiness Church evangelist. Tharpe grew up listening to the spirituals her mother sang at home and as an evangelist. At the age of six Tharpe was already touring as a singer and guitarist, performing both religious and secular material. By the time she was a young woman Tharpe had established a reputation in Chicago as a singer-evangelist. She moved to New York, to Harlem, where she became known for her compositions and the electrifying performances she gave at her church. In 1938, she performed in John Hammond's

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famous “Spirituals to Swing” concert at Carnegie Hall with fellow Arkansan Bill Broonzy. She later sang with Cab Calloway’s orchestra at the Cotton Club and the swing orchestras of Benny Goodman and Count Basie. Tharpe’s vocal style was closest to that of blues singer Big Bill Broonzy, whose guitar technique she also emulated.

Tharpe cut her first record, *Rock Me*, in 1938. The song was actually a lively, rhythmic version of the spiritual *Hide Me in Thy Bosom*. She performed both a secular and a spiritual version of the song for live audiences, in churches, and in theaters, varying the lyrics to fit her audience. *Rock Me* was an unqualified success. Later that year she had an even bigger hit with *The Train*. She followed with the equally successful *God Don’t Like It* and *I Looked Down the Line and I Wondered* in 1939. Tharpe had invented a new form of music—pop gospel. She later sang in Lucky Millander’s jazz band and cut a number of records with him including *Rock Daniel* in 1941 and *I Want a Tall Skinny Papa* in 1942. In 1943 she performed at the Apollo Theater and in 1944 she recorded with Sammy Price’s trio and had a big hit with *Strange Things Happening Every Day*. Between 1946 and 1949, Tharpe cut several outstanding duets with her mother, Katie Bell Nubin, and with Marie Knight, accompanying the vocals with her remarkable guitar playing. *Up Above My Head*, recorded in 1946 with Marie Knight was one of the biggest hits to come out of these sessions.

Toward the end of her career Tharpe recorded a number of religious releases backed by choirs and accompanists such as the Richmond Harmonizing Four and The Sally Jenkins Singers of the Church of God in Christ in New York. Unfortunately, the increased backing did not enhance her vocals, but tended to obscure them and her brilliant guitar playing. To offset the effect, she began using an electric guitar. Her 1960 release, *I Have Good News To Bring*, exemplifies her later work. Tharpe made two tours of Great Britain and Europe in the late 1950s and early 60s with *Chris Barber’s Jazz Band*. In 1960, she performed at the Apollo Theater and in the 60s was nominated for a Grammy Award. She performed at the Newport Folk Festival in 1967. Tharpe was active in music up to the day of her death. She was killed by a stroke on the morning of a planned recording session.

Tharpe was a remarkable woman. She used her flair for the dramatic, her remarkable guitar playing and her bright, clear voice to their best advantage. She was not afraid to offend fans of her religious music by performing in nightclubs; nor was she reluctant to display her deep faith before the club set. She was responsible for creating a new form of music, pop gospel, which has not only persisted but has grown into a sizable share of the music market. During her long career she sang and played with all types of musicians and groups—from blues legend Muddy Waters, to jazz great Cab Calloway to gospel groups such as the Dixie Hummingbirds. Tharpe’s LPs are *Precious Memories*, *Sister Rosetta Tharpe* and *Singing in My Soul*. In 2014, she was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame for her recording of her composition *Strange Things Happen Every Day*, issued in 1945 on the Decca label.

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Sources: Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 435; Robert Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds: A Celebration of Popular Music in Arkansas*, pp. 82-83; Leonard Feather and Ira Gitler, *The Encyclopedia of Jazz in the Seventies*, p. 323; Barry Kernfeld, *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, pp. 528-529; Edward Mapp, *Directory of Blacks in the Performing Arts*, p. 492; William K. McNeil and Terry Buckalew, “ ‘Sister Rosetta’ Tharpe (1915-1973),” in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=1781>; Stanley Sadie, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, p. 725; Diann Sutherlin, *The Arkansas Handbook*, p. 95.

Twitty, Conway

Country singer, songwriter

Born: Harold Lloyd Jenkins, September 1, 1933, Friars Point, Mississippi

Died: June 5, 1993, Springfield, Missouri

Conway Twitty’s father was a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi. The boat made a run between Mississippi and Arkansas, and when Twitty was a boy his family moved to Helena on the Arkansas side of the river. He was five years old when his father gave him his first guitar. He taught himself to play and frequently practiced in the pilot house while riding the river with his father. When he was ten he formed a country group, the Phillips County Ramblers, which was good enough to have a radio program on KFFA in Helena. Twitty attended high school in Helena, working at least for a while at the Green Hat drive-in as a car hop. He was drafted in 1954, soon after he graduated, and served two years in the army. While in the service he formed a county group called the Cimarrons and played in service clubs all over Japan. Twitty was a high school baseball star and had planned to make a career of baseball—the Philadelphia Phillies had offered him a contract before he was drafted. He changed his mind after hearing Elvis Presley and Carl Perkins when he returned to the states following his discharge. He could see that rock and roll was the new darling of the recording industry and thought he might be able to make it in this new, young, music field.

Twitty’s manager, Don Seat, decided that “Harold Jenkins” lacked the flair necessary for a career in the music business. Seat pulled two names off of a map—“Conway” from Conway, Arkansas and “Twitty” from Twitty, Texas— and his new persona was born. Twitty formed a rock band and began to perform his own compositions. He didn’t have much luck initially so he took the band to Canada, where he played the Flamingo Lounge in Hamilton, Ontario, for eighteen straight weeks and wrote a lot of songs. Twitty returned to Nashville and recorded his composition *It’s Only Make Believe* for MGM. When the song didn’t go anywhere for several months, Twitty returned to his father’s farm, just about convinced he didn’t have what it took to be a star. He soon found out differently. His 1958 recording of *It’s Only Make Believe* easily surpassed the one million mark in sales, earning Twitty a gold record. Between September

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1958 and April 1961 he was rarely out of the pop charts. His second gold record, *Lonely Boy Blue* came in 1960. His group toured widely and he made a number of appearances on Dick Clark's "American Bandstand" and on the "Ed Sullivan Show." He appeared in six teen movies and wrote the scores for three of them—*Platinum High School*, *College Confidential* and *Sex Kittens Go to College* (all 1960).

In the mid-60s Twitty left rock and roll and the MGM label. He moved to Oklahoma City and formed a country band he called the Lonely Blue Boys and signed with Decca. The "Conway Twitty Show" began in June 1966 on KLPR-TV and was soon in syndication, but Oklahoma City proved to be too far off the beaten path for a fledgling country star. Twitty moved back to Nashville in the late 60s and soon became a featured performer on the "Grand Ole Opry" and a frequent guest on the television shows "Johnny Cash" and "Hee Haw." In 1966, Twitty had his first U.S. country chart hit with *Guess My Eyes Were Bigger Than My Heart*. Two years later, *Next in Line* became his first number-one country hit.

Over the next thirteen years Twitty had an incredible twenty-five number-one solo records—*I Love You More Today*, *To See My Angel Cry* (1969); *Hello Darlin', 15 Years Ago* (1970); *How Much More Can She Stand* (1971); *[Lost Her Love] On Our Last Date, I Can't Stop Loving You, She Needs Someone to Hold Her* (1972); *You've Never Been This Far Before* (1973); *There's A Honky Tonk Angel, I See the Want To in Your Eyes*, (1974); *Linda on My Mind, Touch the Hand, This Time I've Hurt Her More Than She Loves Me* (1975); *After All the Good is Gone, The Game That Daddies Play, I Can't Believe She Gives It All to Me* (1976); *Don't Take it Away, I May Never Get To Heaven, Happy Birthday Darlin'* (1979); *I'd Love To Lay You Down* (1980); *Rest Your Love On Me, Tight Fittin' Jeans*, and *Red Neckin' and Love Makin' Night* (1981).

In the mid-70s Twitty recorded an impressive series of duets with Loretta Lynn, five of which made it to the number-one spot—*After the Fire is Gone*, *Lead Me On*, *Louisiana Woman*, *Mississippi Man*, *As Soon As I Hang Up the Phone* and *Feelin's*. Lynn and Twitty were voted Vocal Duo of The Year for four straight years, 1972 through 1975, by the Country Music Association.

Twitty, who was always an astute business man, opened "Twitty City" in 1982. The quasi-theme park complex in Hendersonville, adjacent to Nashville, included views of Twitty's home and those of his mother, and his four children as part of the attractions. That year, he also moved from Decca to Elektra and almost immediately had three records at the top of the charts—*The Clown*, *Slow Hand* and *The Rose*. The next year he switched labels again, this time to Warner, and had three more chart-toppers in 1984 – *Somebody's Needin' Somebody*, *Ain't She Somethin' Else* and *I Don't Know About Love (The Moon Song)*.

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Twitty's success continued, if at a slower pace, through the 1980s and into the 90s. He continued to make the charts with songs such as *Don't Call Him a Cowboy*, *Desperado Love*, *I Wish I Was Still in Your Dreams* and *Crazy in Love*. In 1992, Twitty put most of his business interests on the market so that he could devote more time to his music. In 1993, shortly after an appearance in Branson, Missouri, Twitty was taken ill. He died on June 5 of that year. Twitty City closed after his death.

Twitty was one of the most successful country artists of all time. His phenomenal number of chart-topping records stands at forty-one, a number unlikely to be surpassed. His album count is equally impressive, and he was a prolific songwriter. Recommended albums include *Classic Conway*, *Songwriter*, *Georgia Keeps Pulling on My Ring*, *Conway*, *Cross Winds*, *Crazy in Love*, *Even Now*, *House on Old Lonesome Road*, *Making Believe* (with Loretta Lynn) and *Borderline*. The story of Twitty's life is told in *The Conway Twitty Story—An Authorized Biography* by Wilbur Cross and Michael Kosser. He was inducted into the Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame in 1998 and the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1999.

Sources: C.L. Bledsoe, "Conway Twitty (1933-1990)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*; <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=608>; Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 446; Lisa Dyer, *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Country Music*, 1994, p. 177; "Helena's Harold Jenkins Making It Big as Twitty," unidentified clipping dated February 28, 1959 from subject file "Conway Twitty," Phillips County Public Library, Helena, Arkansas; Colin Larkin, ed., *The Guinness Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 2nd ed., pp. 4254-4256; Melvin Shestack, *The Country Music Encyclopedia*, p. 282; John T. Weaver, *Forty Years of Screen Credits, 1929-1969*, p. 1352.

Zack, Jimmie

Singer, songwriter

Born: Henry Z. Yingst, January 2, 1924, Fair Oaks, Arkansas

Died: September 10, 2004, Sun City, Arizona

Jimmie Zack attended elementary school in Fair Oaks, Arkansas, before moving with his family to Ames, Iowa. After graduating from high school in 1942, Zack entered the U.S. Navy, serving for four years as an aviation radio operator and pilot. After leaving the navy Zack worked and toured with the Wayne Raney band from 1953 to 1958. For two of those years, 1955-56, he also worked part-time for WLBC radio in Muncie, Indiana.

In 1956, Zack joined the "WWVA Jamboree" out of Wheeling, West Virginia, remaining with the station into 1957. In the early 1960s, he diversified his interests in the music business,

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becoming president and co-owner of Poor Boy Record Company and the president and co-owner of Oleta Publishing Company, both of Muncie, Indiana. Zack authored several popular and religious songs including *Wake Me Up*, *Somebody's Been Rocking My Boat*, *Same Old Thing*, *Why Don't You Heed His Call* and *Jesus Has Saved My Soul*.

Sources: Charles Eugene Claghorn, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of American Music*, p. 489; Linnell Gentry, *A History and Encyclopedia of Country, Western, and Gospel Music*, p. 350.

Classical Music

In 1870, the McCulloch-Brignoli Italian Opera troupe performed the first opera in Little Rock. It was only marginally successful as ticket prices were high, but the classics, while not the mainstay of entertainment in Arkansas, have endured and become an important part of the state's heritage.¹



Frances Greer, ca. 1960.

The practitioners of opera and classical music from Arkansas have and continue to make important contributions in their fields. William Grant Still, who grew up in Little Rock, became the first black composer to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra. In 1935, Florence Price Smith, also of Little Rock, became the first black woman to have her work performed by a world class orchestra. Frances Greer, who grew up in Helena in the 1930s, sang locally and earned a scholarship to Louisiana State University. After graduation, she sang lead soprano with the Memphis Open Air Theater for two years. Greer toured Europe and in 1942 joined the New York Metropolitan Opera Company (the Met), retiring in 1951.

Robert McFerrin, another veteran of the Met, was born in Marianna, but moved to St. Louis as a child. McFerrin became the first black man to sing with the New York Metropolitan Opera Company. Both Greer and McFerrin taught for many years after their retirement.²

Classical pianist Jimmy McKissic of Pine Bluff was the subject of the PBS documentary *How Do You Get to Carnegie Hall*. He performed eleven concerts at Carnegie Hall, playing well known classical material and hymns. William Warfield, who was born in Helena, moved with his family to New York. He sang on Broadway and as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Warfield, who was awarded New York City's George Frederic Handel Medallion, always

¹ Workers of the Writers Program of the Works Progress Administration in the State of Arkansas, *Arkansas: A Guide to the State*, Hastings House, New York, 1941, p. 117.

² Berkley Hudson, "Still, William Grant," in Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, eds., *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1989, pp. 1084-1085; Stanley Sadie, *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, McMillan Publishers Limited, London, 1992, p. 688; Souvenir Program of Helena 150 Celebration, "Frances Greer," Helena, Arkansas, 1983; Edward Mapp, *Directory of Blacks in the Performing Arts*, p. 325; Sadie, *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, Vol. 3, p. 119; Adam Bernstein, "Robert McFerrin Sr. Was First Black Man to Sing With the Met," *Washington Post*, November 29, 2006.

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considered himself a child of Arkansas.³

Today the classical arts are alive in the Natural State. Arkansas' many colleges and universities offer training in music and give students the opportunity to perform. In addition, the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra and Ballet Arkansas in Little Rock, the Pine Bluff Symphony, South Arkansas Symphony at El Dorado, and Warfield Concert Series at Phillips County Community College in Helena offer the people of Arkansas the opportunity to enjoy classical music at its best.⁴

³ Eva Marie Pearson, "Jimmy McKissic's Returning to Carnegie Hall," *The Commercial* [Pine Bluff], April 7, 1997; Rick Joslin and Michael S. Lee, "PB native and acclaimed piano virtuoso proclaimed his faith through music," *The Commercial* [Pine Bluff], February 14, 2013; Michael B. Dougan, "William Caesar Warfield (1920-2002)," in *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2789>.

⁴ Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism, *Arkansas Tour Guide 1998*, Cranford Johnson Robinson Wood, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1998, pp. 79, 113; Warfield Concerts, "History: Samuel Drake Warfield," <http://www.warfield-concerts.com/history/>.

Classical Artists of the Arkansas Delta

Greer, Frances

Opera singer

Born: January 12, 1917, Piggott, Arkansas

Died: June 28, 2005, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Greer grew up in a family that loved music. Her mother was an organist and her father a soloist at the Presbyterian Church where Greer was member of the choir. Her family later moved to Helena and Greer graduated with honors from Woodruff High School in West Helena. She won two four-year scholarships to Louisiana State University, one offered by the College of Arts and Sciences and the other by the College of Music. Greer chose to enter the music school. Throughout her college career Greer appeared in musicals and operas produced by LSU. In 1937, she sang the lead female role, Marguarite, in *Faust*. The opera went to the Spring Festival in New Orleans where a critic with the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* described Greer's voice, "Her soprano is one of sweetness and clarity, lovely in every register with fine, ringing top notes." The next week, a popular nationwide radio program was devoted to LSU and Greer performed the "Jewel Song" for a national audience.

By the summer of 1937 Greer was well known. Orchestra leader Paul Whitman offered her a place with his orchestra and told her that he believed she had great potential as a film and radio star. When she was studying music in California that summer she was offered a contract by a major motion picture studio. Greer declined these offers. Her goal was to perform with a major opera company and she knew that her voice was not yet fully developed or trained.

In 1938, Greer took the lead role of Violetta in the LSU production of *La Traviata*, singing opposite Sidney Raynor, a tenor with the Metropolitan Opera. The opera again went to the Spring Festival and Greer won accolades for her performance. She graduated in 1938 and immediately left to accompany the LSU symphony orchestra on a tour of Europe. Her professional debut came in Philadelphia, where she performed in *La Boheme* with the Philadelphia Opera Company. She studied voice in New York and for two seasons was first soprano with the Memphis Open Air Theater. She auditioned for the Metropolitan Opera in 1942 and was offered a contract. She sang with the Met for nine years, retiring in 1951. After her tenure there, Greer taught music privately, worked in television and radio, was a soloist with Jimmy Clopton's Seaport Serenaders, and again worked with the Memphis Open Air Theater. In September, 1954, Greer joined the music faculty at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she taught for ten years. Greer later endowed a scholarship in her name in voice at Louisiana State University.

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Greer had a very successful career with the Philadelphia Opera Company and the Metropolitan Opera, sang in over eighty performances at the Memphis Open Air Theatre, and made appearances on numerous television programs. She sang at numerous United Nations functions, the White House and Carnegie Hall, and was honored as an “Arkansas Traveler.”

Sources: “Arkansas Singer Gets Opera Contract,” *Arkansas Gazette*, March 23, 1942; “MOAT Lovers Parted at Reno,” undated clipping, subject file, “Greer, Frances,” Phillips County Public Library, Helena, Arkansas; Harold Smith, “Singer Frances Greer Returns to Visit Her Mother at Helena,” *Arkansas Gazette*, August 29, 1954; “Piggott’s opera star was Frances Greer,” *Clay County (Arkansas) Times Democrat*, Friday, October 21, 2005; Willene Overton Winkler, “Opera Singer From Arkansas,” *Arkansas Gazette Magazine*, July 7, 1940.

McFerrin, Robert, Sr.

Opera singer

Born: March 19, 1921, Marianna, Arkansas

Died: November 24, 2006, St. Louis, Missouri

Robert McFerrin was born in Arkansas but raised in St. Louis, where his family moved when he was about six years old. His father was a pastor and as a child McFerrin sang in the church choir. He pursued his music education in the St. Louis public schools and later attended Fisk University in Nashville. He graduated from the Chicago Musical College with a bachelor’s degree in music in 1948. He moved to New York, where he studied voice at the Kathryn Turney Long School. In 1942, McFerrin won first place in the Chicago Tribune’s national contest, leading to an appearance at the Chicagoland Music Festival. After that he began to sing professionally with opera companies, in musicals, and with jazz orchestras.

In 1949 and 1950, McFerrin was associated with Mary Cardwell Dawson’s National Negro Opera Company, singing the role of Amonasro in Verdi’s *Aida* and Valentine in Gounad’s *Faust*. He sang in the 1949 New York Opera Company production of William Grant Still’s *Troubled Island* and in 1950 began a long association with the New England Opera Company. McFerrin sang in a number of Broadway musicals including *Lost in the Stars* (1949), *The Green Pastures* (1951) and *My Darlin’ Aida* (1955). In 1955, he made his debut with the Metropolitan Opera, singing the role of Amonasro in *Aida*. He became the first black singer to have a permanent position with the Metropolitan Opera. During his tenure there he sang the title role in Verdi’s *Rigoletto* among many others. McFerrin toured in the U.S. and abroad and was best-known for his roles as Orestes in Gluck’s *Iphigenia in Taurus*, as the voodoo priest in Still’s *Troubled Island*, and as Tonio in Leoncavallos’ *I Pagliacci*.

After retiring from the Metropolitan Opera, McFerrin was active as a teacher, recitalist and lecturer. In 1959, he sang the role of Porgy to Adele Addison’s *Bess* for the soundtrack of the

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film version of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. That year he became the artist-in-residence at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. In 1961, he accepted a staff position at the Nelson School of the Fine Arts in Nelson, British Columbia. He later returned to St. Louis, where he taught voice at the St. Louis Institute of Music Conservatory, established a voice studio, taught in the local community college, and participated in local musical productions. In the 1970s he remained active as a national concert artist, appearing with symphony orchestras, giving solo recitals and singing oratorios. McFerrin taught voice as a visiting professor at Roosevelt University in Chicago in 1976 and 1977. In 1979 he sang in Scott Joplin's opera *Treemonisha*, staged by the National Association of Negro Musicians in St. Louis. McFerrin suffered a stroke in 1989, but recovered enough to appear on his son, Robert McFerrin, Jr.'s, 1990 album, *Medicine Music*. He appeared as a soloist with the St. Louis Symphony in 1993 with his son as guest conductor. In 2003, his son, Bobby, told the Associated Press: "His work influenced everything I do musically. When I direct a choir, I go for his sound . . . I cannot do anything without me hearing his voice."

Sources: Adam Bernstein, "Robert McFerrin Sr., Was First Black Man to Sing With the Met," *Washington Post*, November 29, 2006; Michael B. Dougan, "Robert McFerrin, Sr. (1921-2006)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=3266>; John Gray, *Blacks in Classical Music: A Bibliographical Guide to Composers, Performers, and Ensembles*, pp. 195-196; Edward Mapp, *Directory of Blacks in the Performing Arts*, p. 325; Stanley Sadie, *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, Vol. 3, p. 119; Eileen Southern, *Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians*, p. 258.

McKissic, Jimmy

Classical pianist

Born: March 16, 1941, Little Rock, Arkansas

Died: February 13, 2013, Pine Bluff, Arkansas

Jimmy McKissic was raised in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. His father, Rev. James E. McKissic, was pastor of Mount Cavlary Baptist Church and his mother, Rosa, played piano for the church. By the time he was three years-old McKissic was playing church hymns by ear. As a young man he played piano at several area churches. His mother gave him piano lessons until he turned thirteen, when she decided he needed a professional instructor.

McKissic attended Arkansas Mechanical and Normal College (now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) and after graduating studied with Marjorie Petray of Berkeley. In 1969, he won the Hertz Scholarship, which allowed him to study piano in Geneva, Switzerland. He then moved to Paris where he worked with young adults at the American Church. He was introduced to Pierre Sancan, professor of piano at the Paris Conservatory. After he auditioned,

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Sancan told him, “You are a born musician, and you do not need me or anyone else. Everything you need is within you and it is up to you to get it out.”

McKissic made his debut at New York’s Carnegie Hall in 1986, playing Robert Schuman’s *Carnaval*. It was the first of twenty-eight performances he gave there, playing the classical music of Beethoven, Schubert, Debussy and Chopin as well as religious material. He played for three U.S. presidents and also served on the musical faculty at the University of California Berkeley.

McKissic established residency in Cannes, France, where he regularly performed at the Hotel Martinez as well as in venues in Paris, Biarritz and Nice. He became an entertainer of world-wide renown, performing in Switzerland, Morocco, England, Kenya, Syria, Holland, Bangkok, Singapore and Brazil among others. McKissic was as colorful as he was talented. His trademarks were custom-made suits embroidered with sayings and Scripture and deliberately mismatched shoes—one red and the other yellow; he said they made people happy.

The Sandra Norton Productions PBS documentary, *How Do You Get to Carnegie Hall*, chronicled McKissic’s journey from Pine Bluff to New York, with all of the stops and detours in between. He spent forty-nine years abroad, but returned to the U.S. regularly to visit family and perform at Carnegie Hall and other venues. McKissic gave generously of his talent, often inviting people to attend his concerts “without charge” and performing at charitable events in his home state. By 1995, he had rented Carnegie Hall nine times to give recitals, filling each of the 2,804 seats with patrons given free tickets. In 1996, he presented a recital entitled *Hymns I Love Best: Love Songs to God* at Carnegie Hall and in Pine Bluff. He played at a fundraiser for the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock in 2006. He returned four years later to play to a full house at the newly opened museum, and also played at the Clinton Presidential Center. McKissic returned to Pine Bluff permanently in late 2011, at the age of seventy. He died of chronic health problems in 2013. His memorial service was held at the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff. McKissic was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame in 1994.

Sources: Bill Bell, “Pianist Picks up Tab at Carnegie Hall,” *New York Daily News*, April 10, 1995, <http://www.nydailynews.com/archives/news/pianist-picks-carnegie-hall-tab-article-1.684805>; “Black History Month Spotlight—Jimmy McKissic,” *Little Rock Culture Vulture*, <http://lrculturevulture.com/2015/02/13/black-history-month-spotlight-jimmy-mckissic/>; Rick Joslin and Michael S. Lee, “PB native and acclaimed piano virtuoso proclaimed his faith through music,” *The Commercial* [Pine Bluff], February 14, 2013; Eva Marie Pearson, “Jimmy McKissic’s Returning to Carnegie Hall,” *The Commercial* [Pine Bluff], April 7, 1997; Lindsey Tugman, “Ark. Musician Jimmy McKissic dies at 72,” *THV11*, <http://archive.thv11.com/news/article/248668/2/Ark-musician-Jimmy-McKissic-dies-at-72>.

Warfield, William

Singer, actor

Born: William Caesar Warfield, January 22, 1920, West Helena, Arkansas

Died: August 26, 2002, Chicago, Illinois

William Warfield's family moved from West Helena, Arkansas, to Rochester, New York when he was a child. Growing up he took piano lessons and sang in his father's church choir. Warfield began to seriously study voice in high school and as a senior won first place in the national auditions of the National Music Educators League Competition. The award was a scholarship to the institution of his choice. Warfield entered the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, graduating with a bachelor's of music in 1942. That year he entered the armed forces, serving through 1945. After his discharge he returned to the Eastman School of Music for a year of graduate study.

Warfield had begun to sing professionally while still a student, giving concerts and appearing in musical productions. During 1946 and 1947, he toured with the national company of *Call Me Mister*. He made his Broadway debut in 1948 in Dorothy Heywood's *Set My People Free*. The following year he was back on Broadway in *Regina*. He studied with the American Theatre Wing and continued his voice studies with Otto Herz, Yves Tinayre and Rosa Ponselle. Warfield made his debut as a concert baritone in March, 1950 at New York's Town Hall. Thereafter he toured widely in the U.S. and abroad. He made six 'good will' world tours alone under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State. In 1951, he sang the lead role of Joe in the film version of Jerome Kern's *Showboat*. He was back on Broadway as Porgy in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* in 1952 and that year he married Leontyne Price, who played Bess (the marriage was dissolved in 1972). Warfield toured as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Eugene Ormandy in 1955 and played DeLawd in the now-famous 1957 NBC-TV "Hallmark Hall of Fame" production of *Green Pasture*. Warfield reprised the role of Porgy in revivals of *Porgy and Bess* in 1961, 1964 and 1965, and again in Vienna between 1965 and 1972. He sang in the Broadway production of *Showboat* in 1966 and repeated the role for the Vienna Volksper in 1971 and 1972. In 1974, Warfield joined the music faculty of the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign and at Northwestern University in Chicago, but continued to tour as much as possible, occasionally sharing the stage with fellow Arkansan, Robert McFerrin, Sr.

Throughout his career Warfield made numerous appearances on radio and television and recorded a great deal. He sang with leading symphony orchestras at major music festivals all over the world including the Brussels World's Fair in 1958, the Pablo Casals Festival in 1962 and 1963, the Arts Festival in Brazil in 1963, the Athens (Greece) Festival in 1966, and the Pacem in Terris II Convocation in 1967. Warfield was the recipient of many awards and honors including an alumnus citation from the Eastman School of Music, an honorary doctorate from the University of Arkansas, and New York City's George Frederic Handel Medallion. He

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performed in the Warfield Concerts in Helena on October 23, 1987. Warfield published his autobiography *My Music and My Life* in 1991. In it he wrote, "I do consider myself, in some important sense, a child of Arkansas . . . I was an Arkansas boy from tip to toe . . ." (Sutherlin: 99). Warfield performed until his death in August 2002. His last work, *Something Within Me*, was released in 2004.

Sources: Michael B. Dougan, "William Caesar Warfield (1920-2002)," in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2789>; John Gray, *Blacks in Classical Music: A Bibliographical Guide to Composers, Performers, and Ensembles*, pp. 229-239; Sharon S. Hoffman, ed., *Who's Who in Entertainment*, p. 659; Edward Mapp, *Directory of Blacks in the Performing Arts*, pp. 523-524; Raymond D. McGill, *Notable Names in the American Theater*, p. 1207; New York Times Company, *The New York Times Directory of the Theater*, p. 954; Walter Rigdon, ed., *The Biographical Encyclopedia & Who's Who of the American Theatre*, pp. 899-900; Eileen Southern, *Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians*, p. 391; Diann Sutherlin, *The Arkansas Handbook*, p. 99.

Interpreting the Arkansas Delta's Music Heritage

The object of the Arkansas Delta Music Heritage research project is to find information that can be used in formal settings to educate residents about their musical heritage, and to make information available to visitors who come to the Arkansas Delta because they have an existing interest in that heritage. Many people come to Helena because they have an interest in the blues. They have read about KFFA and “King Biscuit Time.” They want to experience the place where the blues was born and to see first-hand the environment that produced the musicians who first gave voice to the music bluesman Arthur Lee Williams described as, “Downheartedness, that’s all it is, hardship. You express it through your song.” The Delta Cultural Center and DCC Depot Museum give visitors an introduction to the blues and the place it rose from but people want more. Identifying places associated with the blues, developing programs, developing tours and interpretation can help satisfy that desire.

It was outside of the scope of this project to create an interpretive plan. What follows is a list of projects that could be undertaken to interpret the musical heritage of the Arkansas Delta. The research indicates that the people and places are out there and that those stories merit telling.

Interpreting the Blues

Prepare a Delta Blues Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF)

The research being undertaken for the music heritage project could be used to prepare one component of an MPDF—a comprehensive context under which individual properties can be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The MPDF also defines property types and sets standard for determining their eligibility. A listing in the National Register would recognize the significance of these properties and help foster their preservation. Listing of a property could also garner tax credits which could help with rehabilitation some of the structures. A survey could be conducted in conjunction with the preparation of the MDPF to identify extant properties and make a preliminary determination of their eligibility. This information would greatly aid those interested in preparing National Register nominations.

Create a King Biscuit Entertainers Trail

In 1947 and 1952 the King Biscuit Entertainers with Sonny Boy Williamson took the show on the road. The act played at grocery stores and other places across the Arkansas and Mississippi Delta. The trail route can be platted using the itineraries located in the King Biscuit Papers at the University of Georgia—Hargrett Rare Books & Manuscripts Library. Visitors will be able to follow the route of the tour, taking them into several counties in Arkansas and Mississippi. In Arkansas there are over seventy possible sites, of that number at least forty-eight are in

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King Biscuit Entertainers in Marvel 1947. Hargett Rare Book Library, University of Georgia

song. There are no known recordings of the tour broadcasts but playlists for two tour stops are extant. Songs recorded by the performers later than the tour, but time-appropriate to the year of the tour, could be used. The audio component could be added to the tour with a cell phone app, Tour-Mate® or Digital Sound Post® system or other means.

Recreate the KFFA Studio

There are several photographs of the original 1940s KFFA studio, which was on the second floor of the Floyd Trucking Company Building at 215½ York Street, in the Ivey Gladin collection at the University of Mississippi Special Collections. These photographs could be used to create a replica of the studio peopled with museum figures of the performers and others and furnished with vintage radio equipment, and playing recordings of blues music. The York Street building is no longer extant. However, the studio later moved to the Helena National Bank/Solomon Building on Cherry Street. Placing the re-created studio in the room that housed the studio would preserve the location of the last live broadcast of KFFA's "King Biscuit Time." Visitors would learn that this was where the last live broadcast took place and could be directed to York Street to visit the site of the original KFFA studio.



King Biscuit Entertainers ca. 1944 at KFFA's York Street studio.

Recreate the 1952 King Biscuit Tour Bus

There are photographs of the red and white bus that took the King Biscuit Entertainers to their 1952 tour engagements. A vintage bus painted in authentic colors and with the text and

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images shown on the photographs would create a wonderful photo opportunity and a tangible remainder of Helena's music heritage. It would not be necessary to recreate the interior of the bus.

Develop a Delta Blues Interpretive Center

Using the report prepared for American Music Museum, Inc. by Economics Research Associates in 2009 as a baseline study begin looking into the possibility of building a new facility or rehabilitating an existing structure on Cherry, Walnut or elsewhere in the downtown core. The Economics Research Associates report suggests that an interpretive facility is feasible and that there is a base of visitors that would use it. They report that 40,000 people visit the Delta Cultural Center each year; it is reasonable to assume that most if not all would visit another facility in the city with a regional music focus.



*The 1952 King Biscuit Entertainers tour bus.
Hargett Rare Book Library, University of Georgia*

There are two large buildings on Walnut: 301 Walnut at the corner of Walnut and Elm and 401 Walnut at corner of York and Walnut. These building might suit the purpose and may make costs less for the interpretive facility. Building a facility at the site of Interstate Grocer Company, 201 Walnut, would create infill in an area that needs it and complement the work done in the area by local entrepreneurs.

By creating partnerships within the city and county, the facility could work with area schools of all levels to educate students about the Delta's musical heritage. An artist-in-residence program would attract serious students of the blues. A blues-in-schools or similar program would attract students to the facility. The emphasis of the interpretive center would be Delta country blues—the original acoustic music created in the Delta in the first two quarters of the twentieth century—rather than the later “Chicago Blues.” Keeping this heritage alive is as essential to regional identity as keeping a native language alive would be in other sections of the nation.

Recreate a Juke Joint

Every blues musician in the Delta played juke joints—informal establishment featuring music, dancing, gambling, and drinking. Jukes, a word believed to derive from the Gullah word *joog*, meaning rowdy or disorderly, were often grocery stores or cafés by day. Recreating or restoring an existing building on Missouri, Walnut or Elm Street or other appropriate location in downtown Helena would provide visitors with another blues experience (without the gambling and, perhaps, alcoholic beverages). A vendor might be found to operate the club featuring a jukebox and regular live music. A private individual or group, existing not-for-profit, or a not-

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for-profit formed specifically for the purpose could rehabilitate the building, the Dreamland Café on Missouri might be one possibility, and rent it to a vendor.

Develop Partnerships

Creating partnerships will be essential to the success of the Music Heritage project. Using Civil War Helena as a model, reach out in the community and find individuals or organizations interested in the region's musical heritage, then find a way to work together. The funding for this plan is an excellent example. The Delta Cultural Center and Helena-West Helena A&P Commission funded the project and, with others, were also instrumental in funding Civil War Helena. If a strong coalition with good working relationships can be developed, this project will succeed.

Other national and regional organizations could also become partners. Approach the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame* in Cleveland, Ohio about becoming a partner in interpreting the blues in Helena. Find out if they would be willing to have a blues branch in Arkansas and perhaps lend artifacts, technical assistance and, especially, their name. The link between Cleveland and Helena is well established by Robert Jr. Lockwood, who lived in Cleveland for many years. Other partners might include:

- Southern Bancorp Community Partners
- Phillips Community College
- Phillips County Schools
- Helena-West Helena A&P Commission
- Sonny Boy Blues Society
- Delta Blues Museum
- Delta Heritage Area
- Mid-South Community College
- STAX Museum of American Soul
- Gibson Guitar Factory, Memphis

Explore Creating a Delta Blues National Heritage Area

Investigate the possibility of adding Arkansas Delta counties to the existing *Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area* to create a *Mississippi and Arkansas Delta Heritage Area*. Should this not be possible, work with your congress and senate delegations to create an *Arkansas National Delta Heritage Area* or *National Blues Roots Heritage Area* that would include the Mississippi and Arkansas Delta counties and the Memphis area.

Create a Blues Artist Weekend

Create a program based on the Las Vegas concept, "Rock Star for a Day." Participants would pay a fee to come to Helena and play with local and/or national blues musicians for a day, weekend or week. At the end of the program, the participants would stage a concert at the

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Malco Theater or other venue. A small admission charge would be levied or the concert might be underwritten by area businesses and free to the public.

Teach the Blues to Students

Blues in Schools has been successful in some areas, and there was discussion of having a *Blues in Schools* program at the Boys & Girls Club of Phillips County. This activity would involve children in a positive after school activity and help them develop skills that would assist them in other educational and life skills. Learning to read and write music could help with school curriculum. Learning an instrument or working with sound or lights would create skills, develop teamwork and help create a positive self-image. Not all students who choose to engage in this activity will become musical artists or work in the music industry. However, a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence and the life skills learned—teamwork, organizational abilities, and setting and achieving objectives—will help them in whatever endeavors they choose to pursue.

Offer a Blues Course or Courses

Partner with Phillips Community College to develop a for-credit course on the blues—origins, musical structure, place in the region's cultural heritage, and its influence world-wide. The course would be directed toward the general student population.

Interpreting Classical Musicians and Performers

Classical Music Performers of Phillips County

While the list of individuals associated with classical music in Phillips County may not be long those individuals are of note. Helena and Phillips County College are associated with classical music through the annual Warfield Concerts. Investigate the possibility of creating an interpretive display to be installed at one of the spaces at Phillips Community College that is used by the Warfield Concerts. This exhibit could be wayside panels or bronze plaques on walks that highlight the individuals from the county that made their mark in the classical arts.

Create a Delta Music Trail

A number of possible sites have been identified during research that can be interpreted for visitors. The trail could use the 2009 *Sounds from the Soil & Soul* trail as a starting point. Funded by a Preserve America grant to the Department of Arkansas Heritage, the trail had/has twenty-two stops in nine Delta counties. A CD/DVD created as part of the trail package was provided free of charge.

Expanding and reworking the existing trail and making the information available could help bring more visitors to the region. The new/expanded trail could adopt the existing *Sounds from the Soil & Soul* signage design or new signage could be developed. The new trail should have its own website and, if possible, incorporate an audio component.

A pilot project in one or two counties could develop signage and other interpretive media. As the pilot project is being implemented, the local Arkansas Music Blues Trail partners can begin the process of creating a Delta-wide Arkansas Delta Music Coalition, adding partners and beginning the process of creating a fully-interpreted Arkansas Delta Music Trail.

Each wayside panel that features a specific genre of music could have its own look. For instance the blues panels could feature a blue frame or perhaps a panel background color as was done with the Civil War Helena interpretation. On the Union signs the panel background was light blue, the Confederate panels were gray and the civilian panels are tan. Something similar could be done with the musical genres to set them apart.



Interpretive marker from 2009 project.

Interpreting Country Music

KFFA-AM played country music as part of its original programming format when it went on the air in 1941. According to one source, the Copeland Cowboys were the first local act to play on the station. Harold Jenkins, who was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame as Conway Twitty, is Phillips County's biggest Country Music draw. A legend in Country Music Twitty had more than 50 number songs, began his musical career at KFFA.

The site of Conway Twitty's boyhood home could be marked as could the house where John Hughey, who played steel guitar player with Twitty for over 20 years, lived while he was in Helena. While KFFA is best known nationally for the blues another KFFA marker could interpret other local talent who got their start on the radio station. Other area places in Phillips County and in the Delta associated with well-known country music performers could also be interpreted.

Interpreting Rock-and-Roll Music

Numerous musicians associated with the legendary Sun Studios in Memphis came out of the Arkansas Delta. Johnny Cash, Colt's Charlie Rich, and Pocahontas native Billy Lee Riley all cut records for records for Sun. The tie in with Sun Studios would create a draw if the birthplaces or other important places associated with these men could be marked. Cash played on radio stations in West Memphis and Blytheville before he hit the big time. Other places are probably associated with other musicians of the genre. It is well documented that Elvis Presley

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played four shows at the Catholic Club in Helena in the 1954-55. Marking the site of the Catholic Club and Presley would be appropriate.

The most famous rock and roll musician in Phillips County is Levon Helm. His boyhood has been moved to Marvell and efforts are underway to produce a bronze sculpture honoring him. Helm and his band, which later became The Band, visited Helena in 1965. On that visit they jammed with Sonny Boy Williamson at the Rainbow Inn in West Helena. It would be very appropriate to interpret this historic meeting.



Levon Helm's boyhood home now in Marvell with the concept drawing of the proposed bronze.

These are but a few of the places associated with rock-and-roll music that could be interpreted in Helena/Phillips County and the Delta region. As the project unfolds other places and sites will become known as individuals and organizations seek to interpret people and places.

Interpreting Other Musical Genres

Musicians, singers and songwriters all hail from various parts of the Delta in other musical genres that merit interpretation. Forrest City's Al Green, Cotton Plant's Sister Rosette Tharp, Brinkley's Louis Jordan, Osceola's Dale Evans and Pine Bluff's Jimmy McKissic, to name but a few, all merit interpretation as important players in their musical genres. If the idea of a Delta Musical Trail is to become a reality it will require that individuals or organizations in other parts of the region must step up and bring ideas and funding into the effort. While the Delta Cultural Center may provide technical assistance for any organization within their twenty-seven county region it is unlikely that they could provide funding for local interpretation.

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Appendix 1

Artists Listed Alphabetically

Appendix 1: All Musicians

Name	Description	Bio Location
Altheimer, Joshua “Josh”	Blues artist	Blues
Anderson, Little Willie	Blues artist	Blues
Bennett, Alvin Silas (Al)	Music executive	Popular Music
Bishop, Joe	Big band musician	Popular Music
Broonzy, William Lee Conley “Big Bill”	Blues artist	Blues
Bruce, Ed	Country singer, songwriter, actor	Popular Music
Cash, Johnny	Country music entertainer and songwriter	Popular Music
Cash, Tommy	Country music singer	Popular Music
Clay, W.C.	Blues artist	Blues
Clemmons, Rod	Vocalist, keyboardist	Popular Music
Cobbs, Willie	Blues artist	Blues
Cotton, James	Blues artist	Blues
Curtis, James “Peck”	Blues artist	Blues
Davidson, Leonard	Jazz musician	Popular Music
Davis, CeDell “Big G”	Blues artist	Blues
Davis, Jeanette	Vocalist	Popular Music
Davis, Larry	Blues Artist	Blues
Dee, Sylvia	Lyricist	Popular Music
Dillon, John	Country-rock musician, songwriter	Popular Music
Dunlap, Louis M.	Composer	Popular Music
Evans, Bob	Music promoter/singer	No Bio
Evans, Dale	Singer, actress	Popular Music
Fairchild, Barbara	Country music singer, songwriter	Popular Music
Frazier, Calvin H.	Blues artist	Blues
Frost, Frank Ottis	Blues artist	Blues
Green, Al	Singer, songwriter	Popular Music
Greer, Frances	Opera singer	Classical

Appendix 1: All Musicians

Name	Description	Bio Location
Guydon, Chester	Blues artist/teacher	No Bio
Harden Trio, The	Vocal group	Popular Music
Harden, Arleen	Singer	Popular Music
Harden, Bobby	Singer, songwriter	Popular Music
Harden, Robbie	Singer	Popular Music
Hare, Pat	Blues artist	Blues
Harris, James D. "Jimmie/Jimmy"	Blues artist	Blues
Hawkins, Ronnie	Rock and roll musician	Popular Music
Helm, Levon	Rock and roll musician	Popular Music
Holloway, James L. "Red"	Jazz musician	Popular Music
Howlin' Wolf	Blues artist	Blues
Hughey, John	Steel guitarist	Popular Music
Jackson, Lee "Warren Lee"	Blues artist	Blues
Johnson, Robert	Blues artist	Blues
Johnson, Rogerline	Blues artist/photographer	No Bio
Jones, Floyd	Blues artist	Blues
Jordan, Charley	Blues artist	Blues
Jordan, Louis	Blues artist	Blues
Keene, Kahn	Trombonist, composer	Popular Music
King, Albert "Al"	Blues artist	Blues
Lawhorn, Sammy	Blues artist	Blues
Lawlars, Ernest "Little Son Joe"	Blues artist	Blues
Leavy, Calvin "Slim"	Blues Artist	Blues
Lockwood, Robert "Junior"/"Jr"	Blues artist	Blues
Love, Willie	Blues artist	Blues
Lucas, William "Lazy Bill"	Blues artist	Blues
McFerrin, Robert	Opera singer	Classical
McKissic, Jimmy	Classical pianist	Classical

Appendix 1: All Musicians

Name	Description	Bio Location
Meeks, Larry	Songwriter	Popular Music
Mickle, "Drifting Slim"	Blues artist	Blues
Nighthawk, Robert	Blues artist	Blues
Parker, Junior "Little Junior"	Blues artist	Blues
Payne, John William, "Sunshine Sonny"	Host of KFFA's "King Biscuit Time"	Blues
Payton, Earlee	Blues artist	Blues
Perkins, Pinetop	Blues artist	Blues
Pittman, Sampson "Buddy"	Blues Artist	Blues
Pugh, Joe Bennie "Forrest City Joe"	Blues artist	Blues
Randolph, Zilner Trenton	Jazz musician	Popular Music
Rich, Charlie	Country music singer, songwriter	Popular Music
Riley, Billy Lee	Rock and roll musician	Popular Music
Ross, Charles Isiah "Doc/Doctor"	Blues artist	Blues
Seals, Son	Blues artist	Blues
Shields, Lonnie	Blues artist	Blues
Shines, Johnny	Blues artist	Blues
Simmons, Mack "Little Mack," Mac Sims"	Blues artist	Blues
Smith, Claude "Blue Smitty"	Blues artist	Blues
Smith, George "Harmonica"	Blues artist	Blues
Smith, Willie "Big Eyes"	Blues artist	Blues
Stackhouse, Houston	Blues artist	Blues
Stidham, Arbie	Blues artist	Blues
Sykes, Roosevelt	Blues artist	Blues
Taylor, Johnnie Harrison	Singer	Popular Music
Taylor, Robert "Dudlow"	Blues artist	Blues
Tharpe, "Sister" Rosetta	Singer	Popular Music
Twitty, Conway	County music singer, songwriter	Popular Music
Warfield, William	Singer, actor	Classical Music

Appendix 1: All Musicians

Name	Description	Bio Location
Washboard Sam	Blues artist	Blues
Weldon, Casey Bill	Blues artist	Blues
Wells, Junior	Blues artist	Blues
Weston, John "So Blue"	Blues artist	Blues
Wheatstraw, Peetie	Blues artist	Blues
Whitman, Essie Barbara	Blues artist	Blues
Wilkins, Joe Willie	Blues artist	Blues
Williamson, Sonny Boy "Rice Miller"	Blues artist	Blues
Woodfork, "Poor" Bob	Blues artist	Blues
Zack, Jimmie	Singer, songwriter	Popular Music

Appendix 2

Helena-West Helena Music Heritage Places

Appendix 2: Helena-West Helena Music Heritage Places

City	Street	Address	Name/Description	Year(s)	Significance
Helena	?		Jack Greenfield's Drugstore	1922	Where Floyd Campbell began playing professionally
Helena	Biscoe	128	Residence	1930	Sonny Payne's residence
Helena	Broad Alley	415c	Residence	1961-62	Possible residence of James Peck Curtis
Helena	Broad Alley	614	Residence	1964 & 68	Possible residence of James Peck Curtis
Helena	Cherry	205-207	Katz Clothing	1955, 1962	Sponsored KFFA show
Helena	Cherry	304	KFFA studio	1964-1968	Studio location, inside Solomon/Helena Bank Bldg.
Helena	Cherry	307	Gist Music	1962-1968	Sonny Boy and others bought instruments here
Helena	Cherry	713	The Green Hat	1944	Harold Jenkins aka Conway Twitty worked here.
Helena	Cherry	517-519	Habib's Restaurant	1941-1972	Levon Helm mentioned eating here
Helena	Elm & Cherry		Joe Lee Store	10/4/52	1952 KBE Tour (Across from Helena & NW RR depot)
Helena	Elm	311	Gist Music	1952	Original Location
Helena	Elm	421½	Rooming House	?-1965	Sonny Boy's last Helena residence and place of death
Helena	Elm	421½	Place of death Aleck Ford "Sonny Boy Williamson," "Rice Miller"	5/25/65	Blues musician
Helena	Elm	424	Residence or Rooming House	1955	Robert Nighthawk's residence
Helena	Elm	511	Elm Street Cafe	1950s-60s	Popular venue for King Biscuit Entertainers and others
Helena	Franklin	308½	Residence	1948	Robert Nighthawk's residence
Helena	Hospital Alley	828	Residence	1930	Robert Jr. Lockwood's residence
Helena	Market	222	Residence	1940	Sonny Payne's residence
Helena	Missouri	101	John Andrew's Cafe	1937	

Appendix 2: Helena-West Helena Music Heritage Places

City	Street	Address	Name/Description	Year(s)	Significance
Helena	Missouri	101	Commercial Hotel and Restaurant	1941-1943	
Helena	Missouri	101	Nick's Cafe	1955-1971	
Helena	Missouri	101	Pat's Cafe	1972	
Helena	Missouri	113	Liquor Store-various names	1937-1972+	Mentioned by Johnny Shines in interview
Helena	Missouri	117	Kitty Kat Club	1955-1968	Robert Johnson and others said to have player here
Helena	Missouri	119	Blue Moon Cafe	1955-1964	Robert Johnson and others said to have player here
Helena	Monroe	604	Residence	unknown	James Starkey residence
Helena	Pecan	1008	Residence	1940s-50s	Boyhood home of Conway Twitty
Helena	Phillips	unknown	Roger Cafe	1947	Located at 128 Walnut in 1955; King Biscuit Entertainers played here
Helena	Phillips	322½?	Hole-in-the-Wall		Many musicians played here (possibly White Rose Café on Phillips)
Helena	Phillips	306	White Rose Cafe	1940s-50s	Many blues artists played here
Helena	Truempter's Quarters	241	Rooming house	1955	Houston Stackhouse residence (rear of 815 St. Mary's)
Helena	Walnut	103	Pastime Billiard Parlor	1937	
Helena	Walnut	103	Buford's Pool Room	1955	
Helena	Walnut	105	Buford's Café (Buford McKinney)	1952-1972	
Helena	Walnut	105	Thelma's Grocery	1971	
Helena	Walnut	112½	Plaza B Social Club	1968	
Helena	Walnut	114	Johnson Photography Studio	1955-1968?	Rogerline Johnson played in a dance band; documented African American life in Helena
Helena	Walnut	118	Plaza Theater	1940s-50s	King Biscuit Entertainers played here on Saturdays
Helena	Walnut	120	Plaza Theater		Address listed in 1937

Appendix 2: Helena-West Helena Music Heritage Places

City	Street	Address	Name/Description	Year(s)	Significance
Helena	Walnut	128	Roger's Cafe	1955	King Biscuit Entertainers played here
Helena	Walnut	141	Dreamland Café (John Davis, prop)	1941-1972	Mentioned by many blues artists
Helena	Walnut	201	Interstate Grocer Company	1955	King Biscuit Time sponsor
Helena	Wire Road		Magnolia Cemetery		Graves of Robert Nighthawk and Frank Frost
Helena	York	215½	KFFA Studio	1941-1964	
Helena	?		Place of death James "Peck" Curtis	11/1/70	Blues musician
Helena	?		Birthplace CeDell "Big G" Davis	1927	Blues musician
Helena	Frank Frost Street		Place of death Frank Ottis Frost	10/12/99	Blues musician, buried in Magnolia Cemetery
Helena	?		Birthplace Robert Lee McCullum "Robert Nighthawk"	11/30/09	Blues musician
Helena	?		Place of death Robert Lee McCullum "Robert Nighthawk"	11/5/67	Blues musician, buried in Magnolia Cemetery
Helena	?		Birthplace Allen George "Harmonica" Smith	4/22/24	Blues musician
Helena	?		Birthplace Willie "Big Eyes" Smith	1/19/36	Blues musician
Helena	?		Place of death Houston Stackhouse	9/23/80	Blues musician
Helena	?		Birthplace John "So Blue" Weston	12/12/1927	Blues musician
West Helena	E. Plaza	304	Handy Dandy Grocery Store		1947 KBE Tour
West Helena	E. Plaza	304	Handy Dandy Grocery Store	8/2/52	1952 KBE Tour
West Helena	?		Simpson's Store	10/4/52	1952 KBE Tour
West Helena	Plaza	401	Palace Theater		King Biscuit Entertainers played here
West Helena	?		Pekin Woodworks		Several blues musicians worked day jobs here

Appendix 2: Helena-West Helena Music Heritage Places

City	Street	Address	Name/Description	Year(s)	Significance
West Helena	?		Birthplace Lonnie Shields	4/17/56	Blues musician
West Helena	?		Silver Star Theater		King Biscuit Entertainers played here
West Helena	Hwy 49	unknown	The Delta Club	1967-1972	Skeet and C.W. Gatling played here
West Helena	412 N Sebastian St		Rainbow Inn	1965	Levon Helm & the Hawks jammed with Sonny Boy Williamson here
Helena Crossing			unknown	10/11/47	1947 KBE Tour
Helena Crossing			unknown	8/2/52	1952 KBE Tour
Helena Crossing			Copeland Store		Copeland Cowboys were the first act on KFFA
Helena Crossing			unknown		Many blues artists played in Helena Crossing, but no mention of where

Appendix 3

Other Phillips County Music Heritage Places

Appendix 3: Other Phillips County Music Heritage Places

City	Address	Name/Description	Years	Comments
Barton		C.R. Gibson Store	1947	1947 KBE Tour
Crumrod	Across the RR track on CR 528 in Crumrod	Crumrod's Store No. 1	09/13/52	1952 KBE Tour
Cypert		Oliphant Bros. Store	06/28/47	1947 KBE Tour
Cypert		Oliphant Bros. Store	09/27/52	1952 KBE Tour
Elaine		?	07/19/47	1947 KBE Tour
Elaine		?	07/05/52	1952 KBE Tour
Elmar		Residence	1/31/06	Birthplace Roosevelt Sykes (near West Helena)
Ferguson	Was next to Crumrod post office	Ferguson's Cash Store	09/13/52	1952 KBE Tour
Helena (mailing address)?	Approximately 1.25 miles west of Hwy 20 Spur on Hwy 20	C & N Lindsey's Store	07/05/52	1952 KBE Tour
Kindall		J.B. Gibson Store	8/9/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lake View	Located where city hall is today	Lakeview Store	06/28/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lake View	6/10 of a mile N of Highland Lake Store on Hwy 44	L.M. Harrington	07/05/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lake View	At intersection of Hwy 44 & Hwy 85 where Lake View sign is today	Highland Lake Store	07/05/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lake View	6/10 of a mile S of intersection Hwy 44 & Phillips County 356	Jesse Carter	07/05/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lexa		W.T. Kingman and C.C. Warfield	07/12/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lexa		William's Cafe	1941-1943	
Lexa		?	07/26/47	1947 KBE Tour

Appendix 3: Other Phillips County Music Heritage Places

City	Address	Name/Description	Years	Comments
Lundell	Was located west of RR tracks in Lundell	Lundell Plantation Store	07/19/47	1947 KBE Tour
Lundell	Was located west of RR tracks in Lundell	Lundell Plantation Store	09/13/52	1952 KBE Tour
Marvell	Near depot	Joe Smith Store?	08/09/47	1947 KBE Tour
Marvell		Phillips County Fair	09/20/52	1952 KBE Tour
Mellwood	East of Mellwood on Phillips County 524 across from old school	Oscar Burke's Store	07/19/47	1947 KBE Tour
Mellwood	East of Mellwood on Phillips County 524 across from old school	Oscar Burke's Store	09/13/52	1952 KBE Tour
North Creek		Frank Bryant Store	08/09/52	1952 KBE Tour
Old Town		Old Town Cash Store	09/13/47	1947 KBE Tour
Old Town		Old Town Cash Store	7/19/52	1952 KBE Tour
Oneida		Dipsy Doodle Club (Jim Seals, prop.)		
Oneida		T-99 Club (Willie Bloom, prop.)		
Oneida		Willis Gent's Cafe	1957	
Oneida		W.F. Burney Store?	9/13/47	1947 KBE Tour
Oneida		?	8/2/52	1952 KBE Tour
Southland		J.M. Byrd Store	7/26/47	1947 KBE Tour
Turkey Scratch		Residence		Birthplace Levon Helm
Turkey Scratch		Residence	3/27/15	Birthplace Robert "Junior," "Jr" Lockwood, Jr.
Turner		F.M. Norton & Bowan Bros	06/28/47	1947 KBE Tour

Appendix 3: Other Phillips County Music Heritage Places

City	Address	Name/Description	Years	Comments
Turner		Bowan Brothers Store?	09/27/52	1952 KBE Tour
Turner?		Turner Cash Store	06/28/52	1952 KBE Tour
Wabash	Across railroad track from Hwy 44 on Phillips County 433	Howe Lumber Company Store	06/28/52	1952 KBE Tour
Wabash	Phillips County 432	Old concrete tennis court	May 1965	Sonny Boy Williamson's last concert
Walnut Corner		?	7/26/47	1947 KBE Tour
Walnut Corner		?	08/09/52	1952 KBE Tour
Wycamp		H.H. Mullens	10/4/47	1947 KBE Tour
?	Hwy 20	James Grocery	10/4/47	1947 KBE Tour
?	Hwy 20	Joe Smith Store	10/4/47	1947 KBE Tour
?	Hwy 20	Dudley Broom Store	10/4/47	1947 KBE Tour
?	Hwy 20	Richard Herring	10/4/47	1947 KBE Tour
?	Old Town Road	B & S Grocery – Warren Spivey	10/11/47	1947 KBE Tour
?	Hwy 44?	C & N Lindsey's Store	07/05/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	Probably between Turner & Creigh	Whitfield Store	09/27/52	1952 KBE Tour (Intersection AR 316 & Co. Rd. 623?)
?	South of Marvell	B.A. Anderson Store	09/27/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	6 miles west of Marvell	Howell's Trading Post	08/23/47	1947 KBE Tour

Appendix 4

Other Arkansas Delta Music Heritage Places

Appendix 4: Other Arkansas Delta Music Heritage Places

County	City	Address/Location	Name/Description	Year(s)	Comments
Arkansas	Stuttgart		Blue Flame Club, Willie Cobbs, prop.		Blues artists performed here
Arkansas	Stuttgart	213-215 N. Main St.	Riceland Recording Co.		Blues artists recorded here
Chicot	Lake Village		Birthplace Robert "Poor Bob" Woodfork	3/13/25	Blues musician
Crittenden	Earle		Birthplace James D. "Jimmie" Harris	4/12/21	Blues musician
Crittenden	Horseshoe Lake		Place of death Joe Bennie "Forest City Joe" Pugh	4/3/60	Blues musician
Crittenden	West Memphis		Birthplace Herman "Little Junior" Parker	3/27/32	Blues musician
Crittenden	West Memphis		Birthplace Little Willie Anderson	5/21/1920	Blues musician
Crittenden	West Memphis	8th St.	Be-Bop hall		Blues artists performed here
Crittenden	West Memphis	3600 E. Broadway St.	Plantation Inn	Opened 1943	Many great blues artists performed here
Crittenden	West Memphis	231W. Broadway St.	Radio Station KWEM		Sonny Boy, Howlin' Wolf and blues artists others performed here
Crittenden	West Memphis	9 th & Polk streets	Sonny Boy Williamson's house	1947-49	Williamson, his wife and band members lived in this house – it burned c.1949
Cross	Cherry Valley		Birthplace Pat Hare	12/20/30	Blues musician
Cross	Parkin		Carrie Hudson's		Blues artists performed here
Cross	Twist		Birthplace Mack "Little Mac" "Mac Sims" Simmons	1/25/334	Blues musician
Cross	Wynne		Birthplace William "Lazy Bill" Lucas	5/29/18	Blues musician
Desha	Deerfield		Crumro's Store No. 3	09/13/52	1952 KBE Tour
Jackson	Auvergne		Birthplace Frank Ottis Frost	4/15/36	Blues musician
Jefferson	Pine Bluff		Birthplace Will "Casey Bill" Weldon	7/10/09	Blues musician

Appendix 4: Other Arkansas Delta Music Heritage Places

County	City	Address/Location	Name/Description	Year(s)	Comments
Jefferson	Pine Bluff		Birthplace Josh Altheimer	1910	Blues musician
Jefferson	Pine Bluff		Bill Broonzy's farm		
Jefferson	Pine Bluff		Jack Rabbit Club		CeDell Davis and other blues artists performed here
Jefferson	Pine Bluff		Jungle Club		CeDell Davis and other blues artists performed here
Lawrence	Walnut Ridge		Birthplace Robert "Washboard Sam" Brown	7/15/10	Blues musician
Lee	Aubrey		W.S Shackleford?	07/12/47	1947 KBE Tour
Lee	Aubrey		?	08/02/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee	Gill		Birthplace Lee "Warren Lee" Jackson	8/18/21	Blues musician
Lee	Haynes		?	06/21/47	1947 KBE Tour
Lee	Haynes		?	07/12/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee	LaGrange		?	06/21/47	1947 KBE Tour
Lee	LaGrange		L & N Cash Store	07/12/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee	Marianna		Birthplace Floyd Jones	7/21/17	Blues musician
Lee	Marianna		?	06/21/47	1947 KBE Tour
Lee	Marianna		?	07/12/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee	Moro		Moro Supply Co?	07/12/47	1947 KBE Tour
Lee	Moro		?	08/09/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee	Postelle		R.P. Magee's Store	08/23/47	1947 KBE Tour

Appendix 4: Other Arkansas Delta Music Heritage Places

County	City	Address/Location	Name/Description	Year(s)	Comments
Lee	Rondo		L.F McGinnis?	07/12/47	1947 KBE Tour
Lee	Rondo		X.J. Boals	08/02/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee	Vineyard		Bennett's Grocery	08/02/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee?	?		H.S. Ramey Store	07/12/47	1947 KBE Tour
Lee?	?		H.S. Ramey Store	08/02/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee?	?	Hwy 79 west of Marianna	H.M. Bonner's Store	08/30/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee?	?	Hwy 79 west of Marianna	J.C. Neighbor's Store	08/30/52	1952 KBE Tour
Lee	?	Between Rondo and Aubrey	J.F. Turner & James Bennett Store	07/12/47	1947 KBE Tour
Lonoke	Keo		Birthplace Elmon "Drifting Slim" Mickle	2/24/19	Blues musician (outside of Delta?)
Mississippi	Blytheville		Radio station KLCM		Blues artists performed on station
Mississippi	Osceola		Birthplace Calvin H. Frazier		Blues musician
Mississippi	Osceola		Birthplace Frank "Son" Seals, Jr.	8/13/42	Blues musician
Mississippi	Osceola		Birthplace Essie Barbara Whitman	7/4/1882	Blues singer
Mississippi	Osceola		Radio station KOSE		Al King and other blues artists performed on station
Mississippi	Osceola		Blue Goose Club		Blues artists performed here
Mississippi	Osceola		Harlem Club		Blues artists performed here
Mississippi	Osceola		Dipsy Doodle Club, Frank (Son) Seals, prop.		Blues artists performed here
Monroe	Blackton		?	08/23/47	1947 KBE Tour

Appendix 4: Other Arkansas Delta Music Heritage Places

County	City	Address/Location	Name/Description	Year(s)	Comments
Monroe	Brinkley		Birthplace Louis Jordan	7/8/08	Blues musician
Monroe	Brinkley		Frank Brooks' Place, aka the Supper Club		Blues artists performed here
Monroe	Creigh	On Monroe County. 623	Jesse Peters Store	09/27/52	1952 KBE Tour
Monroe	Holly Grove		?	08/30/52	1952 KBE Tour
Monroe	Monroe		Birthplace Willie Cobbs	7/15/1932	Blues musician
Monroe	Monroe		?	08/30/52	1952 KBE Tour
Monroe	Palmer		Gilbrech Plantation	08/23/47	1947 KBE Tour
Monroe	Smale		Johnny's Club	1967-1991	John "So Blue" Weston's club could be the same club as Lee McCullough's.
Monroe	Smale		Lee McCullough's store/juke		McCullough was Willie Cobbs' uncle KBE and other blues artists performed here
Prairie	De Valls Bluff		Birthplace Arbie Stidham	2/9/17	Blues musician
Pulaski	Little Rock		Birthplace Sammy Lawhorn	7/12/35	Blues musician (outside of Delta?)
St. Francis	Forrest City		Place of death James D. "Jimmie" Harris		Blues musician
St. Francis	Forrest City		Cotton Night Club		Blues artists performed here
St. Francis	Forrest City		Radio station KXJK		Lee "Warren Lee" Jackson performed here
St. Francis	Gill (area)		Alf Bonner's juke	Mid-30s	Associated with "Warren Lee" Jackson
St. Francis	Greasy Corner		?		Blues artists performed here
St. Francis	Hughes		Birthplace Ernest "Little Son Joe" Lawlars	5/18/1900	Blues musician
St. Francis	Hughes		Birthplace Joe Bennie "Forest City Joe" Pugh	7/10/26	

Appendix 4: Other Arkansas Delta Music Heritage Places

County	City	Address/Location	Name/Description	Year(s)	Comments
St. Francis	Hughes	Love St.	Robinson's Café		Blues artists performed here
St. Francis	Hughes	Love St.	Chatter Box		Blues artists performed here
St. Francis	Hughes		Tin Top, Willie Cobbs, prop.		Blues artists performed here
St. Francis	Hughes		Radio station WDIA? (This is in Memphi)		Blues artists performed on station
St. Francis		Six miles north of Hughes	Bob James		Blues artists performed here
St. Francis	Poplar Grove		?	08/09/47	1947 KBE Tour
St. Francis	Widner		Lula McCoy's		KBE and other blues artists performed here
?	?		J.W. Carey	09/13/47	1947 KBE Tour
?	?		Planter's Mercantile Co.	09/13/47	1947 KBE Tour
?	?		Robert Sanders Store	09/13/47	1947 KBE Tour
?	?		W.C. Story Store	09/27/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		Hall and Sutton Store	09/27/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		John Simpson's Store	06/28/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		R.M. Merritt Store	06/26/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		E & U General Store	06/28/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		Howe Lumber Company	06/28/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		H.M. Pursley Store	07/12/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		Waters Farm Store	08/09/52	1952 KBE Tour

Appendix 4: Other Arkansas Delta Music Heritage Places

County	City	Address/Location	Name/Description	Year(s)	Comments
?	?		W.H. Graves Store	08/09/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		J.W. Carey	07/19/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		Riverside Mercantile	07/19/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		Morton's Cash Store	07/19/52	1952 KBE Tour
?	?		Ocie Broadway grocery	08/02/52	1952 KBE Tour

Appendix 5

1947 King Biscuit Entertainers Itinerary

Appendix 5: 1947 King Biscuit Entertainers Tour Itinerary

Date	Place name	City	County	State	Comments
06/21/47	?	LaGrange	Lee	AR	
06/21/47	?	Marianna	Lee	AR	
06/21/47	?	Haynes	Lee	AR	
06/28/47	Oliphant Bros. Store	Cypert	Phillips	AR	
06/28/47	Hal P. Brown	?	Phillips	AR	South of Marvell
06/28/47	W.A. Batchelor	?	Phillips	AR	South of Marvell
06/28/47	B.A. Anderson	?	Phillips	AR	South of Marvell
06/28/47	A.G. Hill Office	?	Phillips	AR	South of Marvell
06/28/47	F.M. Norton & Bowan Bros	Turner	Phillips	AR	
06/28/47	Jesse Peters & Crisp Cash Store	Creigh	Phillips	AR	
07/12/47	L.F McGinnis?	Rondo	Lee	AR	
07/12/47	J.F. Turner & James Bennett Store	Vineyard	Lee	AR	Between Rondo and Aubrey
07/12/47	H.S. Ramey Store	?	Lee?	AR	
07/12/47	W.S Shackleford?	Aubrey	Lee	AR	
07/12/47	Moro Supply Co.?	Moro	Lee	AR	
07/19/47	Lundell Plantation Store	Lundell	Phillips	AR	Was located west of RR tracks in Lundell
07/19/47	Oscar Burke's Store	Mellwood	Phillips	AR	East of Mellwood on Phillips County 524 across from old school
07/19/47	?	Elaine	Phillips	AR	

Appendix 5: 1947 King Biscuit Entertainers Tour Itinerary

Date	Place name	City	County	State	Comments
07/26/47	J.M. Byrd Store	Southland	Phillips	AR	
07/26/47	Henry Roach Store	?	Phillips?	AR	County not confirmed
07/26/47	?	Lexa	Phillips	AR	
07/26/47	?	Walnut Corner	Phillips	AR	
08/02/47	?	Friar's Point	Coahoma	MS	
08/02/47	806 5th Street - corner of S. Vine & Sunflower	Clarksdale	Coahoma	MS	
08/09/47	?	Kindall	Phillips	AR	
08/09/47	?	Poplar Grove	St. Francis	AR	
08/09/47	?	Marvell	Phillips	AR	
08/16/47	?	Bob	?	MS	
08/16/47	?	Alligator	Bolivar	MS	
08/16/47	?	Duncan	Bolivar	MS	
08/16/47	?	Shelby	Bolivar	MS	
08/23/47	Howell's Trading Post	?	Phillips	AR	6 miles west of Marvell
08/23/47	R.P. Magee's Store	Postelle	Lee	AR	
08/23/47	Gilbrech Plantation	Palmer	Monroe	AR	
08/23/47	?	Blackton	Monroe	AR	
09/13/47	J.W. Carey	?	?	?	

Appendix 5: 1947 King Biscuit Entertainers Tour Itinerary

Date	Place name	City	County	State	Comments
09/13/47	Planter's Mercantile Co.	?	?	?	
09/13/47	Old Town Cash Store	Old Town	Phillips	AR	
09/13/47	Robert Sanders Store	?	?	?	
09/13/47	W.F. Burney Store?	Oneida	Phillips	AR	
10/04/47	H.H. Mullens	Wycamp	Phillips	AR	
10/4/47	James Grocery	?	Phillips	AR	Hwy 20
10/4/47	Joe Smith Store	Marvell	Phillips	AR	Hwy 20
10/4/47	Dudley Broom Store	?	Phillips	AR	Hwy 20
10/4/47	Richard Herring	?	Phillips	AR	Hwy 20
10/11/47	B & S Grocery – Warren Spivey	?	Phillips	AR	Old Town Road
10/11/47	Copeland/Maggio's?	Helena Crossing	Phillips	AR	

Appendix 6

1952 King Biscuit Entertainers Itinerary

Appendix 6: 1952 King Biscuit Entertainers Tour Itinerary

Date	Place name	City	County	State	Comments
06/28/52	John Simpson's Store	Lake View	Phillips	AR	1.5 miles E of Carter Store on W side of Hwy 44 across from Salem Missionary Baptist Church
06/28/52	Lake View Store	Lake View	Phillips	AR	Located where city hall is today
06/26/52	R.M. Merritt Store	Lake View	Phillips	AR	3/10 of a mile N of intersection of Hwy 44 & Phillips County 470
06/28/52	E & U General Store	?	?	?	
06/28/52	Howe Lumber Company Store	Wabash	Phillips	AR	Across railroad track from Hwy 44 on Phillips County 433
06/28/52	Turner Cash Store	Turner?	Phillips	AR	
07/05/52	C & N Lindsey's Store	Helena (mailing address)?	Phillips	AR	Approximately 1.25 miles west of Hwy 20 Spur on Hwy 20
07/05/52	L.M. Harrington	Lake View	Phillips	AR	6/10 of a mile N of Highland Lake Store on Hwy 44
07/05/52	Highland Lake Store	Lake View	Phillips	AR	6/10 of a mile S of intersection Hwy 44 & Phillips County 356
07/05/52	Jesse Carter	Lake View	Phillips	AR	At intersection of Hwy 44 & Hwy 85 where Lake View sign is today
07/05/52	?	Elaine	Phillips	AR	
07/12/52	H.M. Pursley Store	?	?	?	
07/12/52	W.T. Kingman and C.C. Warfield	Lexa	Phillips	AR	
07/12/52	L & N Cash Store	LaGrange	Lee	AR	
07/12/52	?	Marianna	Lee	AR	
07/12/52	?	Haynes	Lee	AR	
07/19/52	J.W. Carey	?	?	?	
07/19/52	Riverside Mercantile	?	?	?	

Appendix 6: 1952 King Biscuit Entertainers Tour Itinerary

Date	Place name	City	County	State	Comments
07/19/52	Morton's Cash Store	?	?	?	
07/19/52	Old Town Cash Store	?	Phillips	AR	
07/19/52	Copeland/Maggio's?	Helena Crossing	Phillips	AR	
07/26/52	?	Friar's Point	Coahoma	MS	
07/26/52	?	Farrell	Coahoma	MS	Hwy.1
07/26/52	J.H. Sherard & Sons	Sherard	Coahoma	MS	Hwy. 1
07/26/52	?	Rena Lara	Coahoma	MS	Hwy. 1
07/26/52	?	Hillhouse	Coahoma	MS	Hwy. 1
07/26/52	?	Round Lake	Bolivar	MS	Hwy. 1
07/26/52	Toby's Place	?	Bolivar?	MS	One mile from Deeson, MS
07/26/52	?	Deeson	Bolivar	MS	Hwy. 1
08/02/52	Handy Dandy	West Helena	Phillips	AR	
08/02/52	X.J. Boals	Rondo	Lee	AR	
08/02/52	Bennett's Grocery	Vineyard	Lee	AR	
08/02/52	H.S. Ramey Store	?	Lee?	AR	
08/02/52	?	Aubrey	Lee	AR	
08/02/52	Ocie Broadway Grocery	?	Lee?	AR	
08/02/52	?	Moro	Lee	AR	

Appendix 6: 1952 King Biscuit Entertainers Tour Itinerary

Date	Place name	City	County	State	Comments
08/09/52	?	Oneida	Phillips	AR	
08/09/52	J.B. Gibson Store	Kindall	Phillips	AR	
08/09/52	Waters Farm Store	?	?	?	
08/09/52	W.H. Graves Store	?	?	?	
08/09/52	Frank Bryant Store	North Creek	Phillips	AR	
08/09/52	?	Walnut Corner	Phillips	AR	
08/16/52	Roland's Store	Clarksdale RFD	Coahoma	MS	
08/16/52	Rosa Mae Brown's Store	Davenport	Coahoma?	MS	
08/16/52	Hawes Bros. Store	Bobo	Coahoma	MS	
08/16/52	?	Alligator	Coahoma	MS	
08/16/52	At depot?	Duncan	Bolivar	MS	
08/16/52	J.A. Harris Store	Booger Bottom	Bolivar?	MS	
08/23/52	?	Merigold	Bolivar	MS	US 278
08/23/52	At depot?	Shelby	Bolivar	MS	US 278
08/23/52	?	Clarksdale	Coahoma	MS	At viaduct on Issaquena St., near IC depot
08/30/52	H.M. Bonner's Store	?	?	AR	Hwy 79 west of Marianna
08/30/52	J.C. Neighbor's Store	?	?	AR	Hwy 79 west of Marianna
08/30/52	?	Monroe		AR	

Appendix 6: 1952 King Biscuit Entertainers Tour Itinerary

Date	Place name	City	County	State	Comments
08/30/52	?	Clarendon	Monroe	AR	
08/30/52	?	Holly Grove	Monroe	AR	
09/06/52	?	Lambert	Quitman	MS	MS 3
09/06/52	?	Marks	Quitman	MS	US 278 and MS 3
09/06/52	?	Belen	Quitman	MS	Off of US 278/MS 6 and MS 316
09/06/52	?	Jonestown	Coahoma	MS	MS 316
09/06/52	L.S. Powell Estate	Lula	Coahoma	MS	
09/13/52	Crumrod's Store No. 3	Deerfield	Desha	AR	Aka Deerfield Store SR 85 at intersection of Cane Ridge Rd and Deerfield Rd
09/13/52	Ferguson's Cash Store	Crumrod	Phillips	AR	Was next to Crumrod post office
09/13/52	Crumrod's Store No. 1	Crumrod	Phillips	AR	Across the RR track on CR 528 in Crumrod
09/13/52	Lundell Plantation Store	Lundell	Phillips	AR	Was located west of RR tracks in Lundell
09/13/52	Oscar Burke's Store	Mellwood	Phillips	AR	East of Mellwood on CR 524 across from old school
09/20/52	Phillips County Fairgrounds?	Marvell	Phillips	AR	Phillips County Fair
09/27/52	?	Turner	?	AR	
09/27/52	Whitfield Store	?	?	?	
09/27/52	C. Crisp Store	Creigh	Phillips	AR	
09/27/52	Jesse Peters Store	Creigh	Phillips	AR	
09/27/52	B.A. Anderson Store		Phillips	AR	South of Marvell

Appendix 6: 1952 King Biscuit Entertainers Tour Itinerary

Date	Place name	City	County	State	Comments
09/27/52	W.C. Story Store	?	?	?	
09/27/52	Hall and Sutton Store	?	?	?	
09/27/52	Oliphant Bros. Store	Cypert	Phillips	AR	
10/04/52	Simpson's Store	West Helena	Phillips	AR	
10/04/52	Joe Lee Store	?	?	?	Across from H & N.W. depot
10/11/52	L.A. Ross Store	Clarksdale RFD	Coahoma	MS	
10/11/52	William Springer (?)	Clarksdale RFD	Coahoma	MS	
10/11/52	T.W. Delany	?	?	MS	
10/11/52	?	Dubbin	?	MS	
10/11/52	Mattson Cash Store	Mattson	Coahoma	MS	Old US 49
10/11/52	J.R. Adams Estate	Clairmont	?	MS	