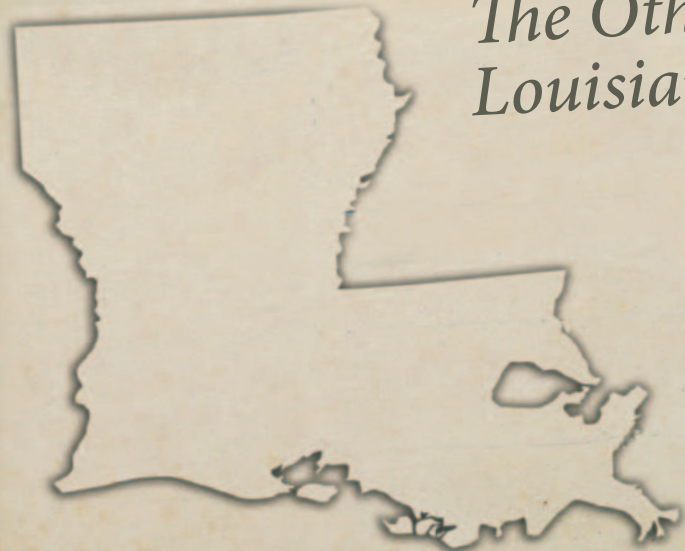


North Louisiana

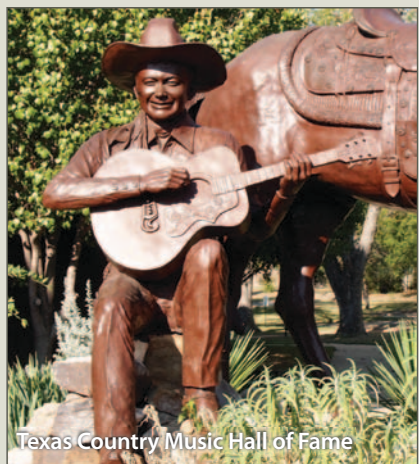
The Other Half of the Louisiana Music Story



While South Louisiana is known for jazz, Cajun, and zydeco music, North Louisiana's influence on blues, rockabilly, and country music is well established by homegrown heroes like Jerry Lee Lewis, Huddie Ledbetter, and James Burton, and current stars like Kenny Wayne Shepherd. The northern part of the state has its own music trail, stretching from Carthage, Texas, west to Ferriday, Louisiana, with musical pit stops along the way.

BY CHERIE YURCO

It would be a shame to suggest a tour starting in Northwest Louisiana that didn't include the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame and Tex Ritter Museum located just about one-half hour from the Louisiana border. The museum includes memorabilia from numerous Hall of Fame inductees from Gene Autry to Dale Evans to Mac Davis.



Texas Country Music Hall of Fame

Heading into Louisiana, the area surrounding Shreveport has a rich music history. Iconic folk and blues singer Huddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter was born and raised in Mooringsport, about 15 minutes north. You can visit his grave at the Shiloh Baptist Church, and there is a statue in his honor in downtown Shreveport that points to an area of town named for him.

There are numerous other historic sites and venues in Shreveport including its Municipal Auditorium, where you can still visit Elvis's dressing room. Home to the Louisiana Hay Ride from 1948 to 1960, it's been called "The Cradle of the Stars" for its role in helping launch the careers of greats like Hank Williams, George Jones, Johnny Cash, and Elvis Presley. Shreveport's Hirsch Memorial Coliseum is where the phrase "Elvis has left the building" was first uttered.

Across the street from the Municipal Auditorium is the headquarters of the

James Burton Foundation and Sound Studio, where the former lead guitarist and bandleader for Elvis Presley mentors young musicians. The foundation also donates guitars and instruction to children and veterans all over the country. James and his wife, Louise, will be happy to show you around if they are in town.

Thanks to Shreveport's five casinos there's never a shortage of live music and big name artists passing through. Other venues for live music include Lee's Liquid Assets and Noble Savage, which also host weekly jam sessions.

The final resting place of rockabilly singer Johnny Horton, famous for historic ballads like "The Battle of New Orleans" is just outside Shreveport at Hillcrest Cemetery. He had an eerie premonition of his death at the hands of a drunk driver, and his 28-year-old widow placed a headstone that reads: "Here lies a perfect man, my husband."



Elvis's dressing room at the Municipal Auditorium



Delta Music Museum



The band Airheart at Noble Savage



James Burton Foundation



For more pictures and videos, scan this QR Code or go to www.makingmusicmag.com/destination/northlouisiana.html

Continuing West to the center of the state is Ruston, hometown of Kix Brooks and Tracy Adkins. Rabb's Steakhouse in Ruston has live music every weekend and hosts some of the biggest names in country music on its large outdoor stages. Further west, closer to Monroe, Enoch's Irish Pub & Café hosts frequent live concerts as well as bluegrass jams.

Moving Southwest to Jonesboro you can visit the small Jackson Parish Museum, including memorabilia from former singer/governor Jimmie Davis famous for his rendition of "You Are My Sunshine." Nearby is the Jimmie Davis Homeplace, where you can peek into the tiny house where he and his 10 siblings grew up, and also see his tabernacle and burial site.

Ferriday, Louisiana, claims to have produced more famous people per square mile than any other US small town. This claim to fame includes cousins Mickey

Gilley, Jimmy Swaggart, and Jerry Lee Lewis. The town's Delta Music Museum salutes musicians that have roots in the Mississippi Delta. Through a guided tour you'll hear their intimate stories. Next door, the historic Arcade Theater hosts a Country Music Showcase on the second Saturday of each month.

At the Jerry Lee Lewis Family Museum, former home of the Ferriday native, you can take a guided tour led by none other than Jerry's sister, Frankie. It will probably be one of the most personal, interesting, and entertaining music tours you'll ever take, as she shares colorful anecdotes of life with Jerry. The Frogmore Plantation, just outside Ferriday, offers music tours that include professional vocalists singing traditional slave songs.

Many of these places have irregular hours, so call to schedule tours. Visit www.makingmusicmag.com/destination/northlouisiana for contact information.



Jimmie Davis Homeplace



Jerry Lee Lewis Family Museum

Photos: Cherie Yurco