



Crockett, Texas has a rich music history and was host to some of the great blues performers of the early 20th century.

"Juke Joints" dotted this part of Crockett, featuring music, dancing, gambling, and drinking, primarily operated by African American citizens. These establishments were the hub and heartbeat of the African American community in Crockett bringing in some of the blues greats of the time.

Visit these venues in Crockett for amazing music!

Camp Street Cafe

215 S. 3rd
(936) 544-8656
www.campstreetcafe.com

Bear Hall

229 East Goliad
(936) 243-2178



This tour sponsored by the Crockett Area Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the Houston County Historical Commission and Dr. Perky Beisel, Associate Professor, Stephen F. Austin State University.

CROCKETT

Blues Tour



1

T-Bone Walker was a pioneer and innovator of the jump blues and electric blues sound. In 2018 Rolling Stone magazine ranked him number 67 on its list of "The 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time". T-Bone had just performed in Dallas and was traveling to Crockett for a performance when he was detained and held in the Houston County Jail, located on the top floor of the Courthouse at the time. Dallas authorities wanted him for alleged drugs and gambling-related charges.

2

Frankie Lee Sims was Louisiana-born but moved to Marshall, Texas in 1920. He recorded songs with his cousin, Lightnin' Hopkins, and performed with T-Bone Walker. He was arrested once in Houston County and put on a "work gang". His first recorded hit was "Lucy Mae Blues". He often played at the corner of Goliad and Camp Street, Larue Pharmacy, at the time. "Lucy Mae Blues" was later recorded by Buddy Guy and Eric Clapton.

3

Lightnin' Hopkins, born Sam John, from Centerville, Texas played the blues all up and down Camp Street in business establishments and for tips on the vacant lot that was located behind Larue Pharmacy. This was the African American business center which included the Starlight Barber Shop, a cafe, taxi stand, pool hall, and other businesses. Visit the Lightnin' Hopkins statue across the street from the Camp Street Cafe which housed some of the businesses mentioned above. One of Hopkins's most famous songs was "Katy Mae".

5

The musicologist Robert "Mack" McCormick opined that Hopkins is "the embodiment of the jazz-and-poetry spirit, representing its ancient form in the single creator whose words and music are one act".

4

Train Depot Museum

The Gay Paree was located at 802 Cottonwood Street. This establishment still stands but has changed ownership several times as well as its name. The Gay Paree rooming house/hotel was located next door and served as a place for the Paradise Inn entertainers to stay. The Paree, later called Hy Top Club, was a well-loved dance and pool hall with a restaurant.

6

Scan to listen to Lightnin' Hopkins



7

The Paradise Inn was located at the dead-end of Cottonwood Street. Only part of the concrete foundation remains. The Paradise Inn was a beloved "Juke Joint" hosting many touring bands of color. Among them were Amos Milburn, Gatemouth Brown, B. B. King, Johnny Taylor, and Big Mama Thornton. Big Mama Thornton's originally recorded "Hound Dog" was later recorded by Elvis Presley.

"Hound Dog" was Thornton's most famous recording.

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The W. M. Henry Gymnasium, Ralph Bunche High School Gym, was the location for many performances during the late '50s and early '60s. The Five Blind Boys performed at the Gym as well as the Hampton Memorial Church of God and Christ on Rusk Street. Well-revered musician Ray Charles was a member of this group before going solo and becoming a major musician in the rock/blues genre.

