

HANK WILLIAMS TRAIL



MONTGOMERY
KOWALIGA
ANDALUSIA
GEORGIANA
MOUNT OLIVE
GREENVILLE

Welcome to Alabama's Hank Williams

You are invited to spend several days (and nights) in Alabama experiencing the Hank Williams Trail. He was born in rural Butler County in 1923. See the small Mount Olive church where he learned to sing. His Georgiana Boyhood Home is a popular museum that hosts a music festival each June.

Stroll the streets of Greenville where his mentor “Tee Tot” lived, and visit downtown Andalusia, where Hank married Audrey Sheppard in 1944.

Some 55 miles north of Georgiana on “The Lost Highway,” the Hank Williams Museum is the perfect place to begin a tour of many Montgomery landmarks. The baby blue Cadillac



This sign designates the stretch of I-65 between Georgiana and Birmingham as “The Lost Highway”



Hank's death inspired many tribute records



Chris' Hotdogs

(Walk about a block north and photograph the life-sized Hank Williams statue that Hank Williams Jr. donated.) Enjoy Hank's favorite meal of a chili dog and bottled Coca-Cola at Chris' Hot Dogs, open since 1917. Walk to the old city hall where more than 25,000 people came to see his funeral service.

Visit the graves of Hank and Audrey at the Oakwood Cemetery Annex. Fans gather each New Year's on the anniversary of his death in 1953.

A monument to Rufus “Tee-Tot” Payne, who taught young Hank his first chords on the guitar stands in Lincoln Cemetery on Lincoln Road, North of I-85.



Monument to Rufus "Tee-Tot" Payne

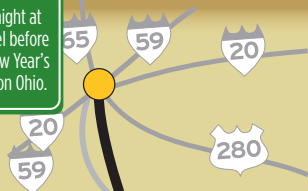
Less than an hour north of Montgomery, arrange to stay overnight in the “Hank Williams” cabin at Kowaliga, where he



The Hank Williams cabin at Kowaliga

The

Birmingham
Hank spent the night at the Redmont Hotel before leaving for the New Year's Day show in Canton Ohio.



Kowaliga Beach
Hank retreated to a vacation cabin here in the summer of 1952.

Montgomery
Hank lived here from 1937-48. He is buried here.

Hank Williams Memorial Lost Highway

Highway 31
The highway that Hank traveled

Mount Olive
Hank was born here on Sept. 17, 1923

Greenville
Hank's home from 1934-37

Georgiana
Hank's boyhood home 1930-34

Andalusia
Hank married Audrey - 1944

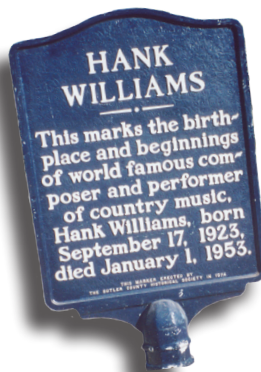
Mount Olive



Baptist church at right

Hiram Williams was born in a double-pen log house on a hill southwest of Georgiana, Alabama on Sept. 17, 1923. Today a red barn occupies the location. (Private property.) It is a half-mile beyond Mount Olive West Baptist Church.

It was at this church he attended services with his mother and developed a love of gospel music that he would later feature in live performances, radio shows and recordings.



Directions: Take the I-65 Grace/Garland exit 107 and turn west on Hank Williams Memorial Road. Go 4 miles. Services at the church are on the second and fourth Sunday mornings at 11. Fans of Hank are welcomed. The birthplace marker and organ stool are displayed in the Georgiana Museum (Hankmuseum.com).

Georgiana



Boyhood Home & Museum

Lillie Williams moved her family to 127 Rose St., where they lived from 1930-34. During these years, Hiram Williams got his first guitar and met black street performer Rufus “Tee-Tot” Payne who taught him his first chords. The City of Georgiana purchased the house and opened the **Hank Williams Boyhood Museum** in 1992. Photos, records and clothing are displayed. A portion of Thigpen’s Log Cabin dance hall where Hank played for years has been relocated here.



Bedroom in the Boyhood Home & Museum

The Hank Williams Festival is held on the grounds the first Saturday each June. Hank’s daughter **Jett Williams** has been a regular performer.



Directions: From I-65 Exit #114 (Georgiana/Starlington).

Turn left onto AL-106 and travel 2 miles. Turn right on Miranda St. and go 0.4 miles. Turn left on Rose St., the boyhood home is 0.1 miles on the right.

Greenville



As a boy of 11, he sold peanuts and shined shoes near the Butler County Courthouse in Greenville. While in his teens, his band performed occasionally at the Ritz Theater on Commerce Street. On Aug. 15, 1952, the singer performed two concerts at Tiger Stadium during his “Greenville Homecoming” sponsored by the Rotary Club. He and his mother rode in a convertible in a parade past the Ritz. He died four months later. The theater interior, now restored, hosts community performances.

Directions: Take I-65 Exit 130.

Andalusia



The garage as it looked in the 1940's

Nineteen-year-old Hank Williams was singing in a medicine show in Banks near Troy, Ala., in the summer of 1943 when he met and began dating Audrey Sheppard. She was estranged from her husband, with whom she had a daughter Lycrecia, age 2. Hank and Audrey lived in a trailer in Andalusia in late 1944 while his Drifting Cowboys band performed at the Riverside Inn on the east bank of the Conecuh River near River Falls.

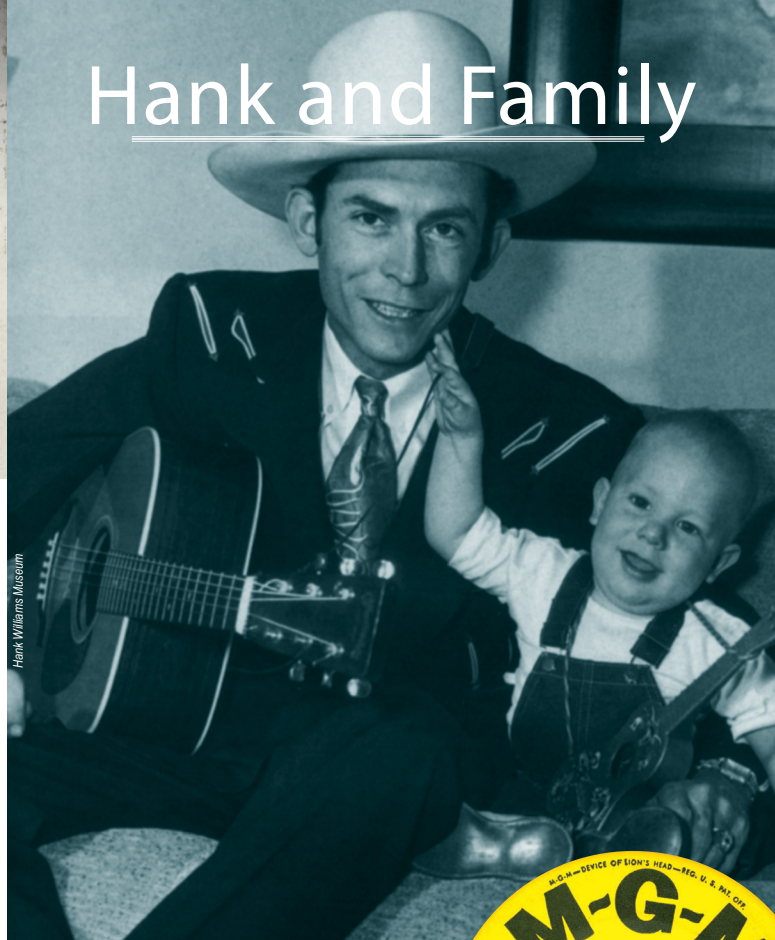


Hank and Audrey around the time of their wedding.

Ten days after her divorce was final, Audrey and Hank were married by Justice of the Peace M.A. Boyett on Dec. 15, at John G. Wright, Sr.'s automotive garage at 120 East Three Notch Road, a block east of the courthouse square.

Directions: From Georgiana, travel U.S. 31 to State 55 and go south. Go east on U.S. 82 to South Three Notch into downtown. Pirate Graphics is located in the former garage, a block east of the town square.

Hank and Family



Hank and Hank Jr.

The highs and lows of the marriage provided inspiration for many of Hank's most popular songs.

Randall Hank Williams Jr. was born to the couple on May 26, 1949.



Montgomery

Lillie Williams moved her family to Montgomery on July 10, 1937, where she operated a succession of downtown boarding houses. The first was north of the Governor's Mansion at 114 South Perry St. The one at 236 Catoma St. was next to the Jefferson Davis Hotel where studios for radio station WSFA were housed. Son Hiram renamed himself "Hank" and by age 14 was singing on WSFA. (The WSFA call letters stood for the "South's Finest Airport," since the station's first location was at Montgomery's Airport. It's nighttime beacon would later inspire "I Saw the Light.")



He won his first talent contest at age 14 in the Empire Theater in 1937 with a ditty called "WPA Blues."

He dropped out of Sidney Lanier High School on South Court Street in the 10th grade at 16 to concentrate on his Drifting Cowboys band and his music career. Meanwhile, Lillie drove the band to live performances at schools and road houses in South Alabama.

Chris' Hot Dogs, young Hank's favorite place to eat while living in Montgomery, is still open for business at 138 Dexter Ave.

The Elite Café, a block down the street from the Empire Theatre, was the venue of his final performance.



Chris' Hot Dogs has been owned by the Katechis family since 1917.



Hank and the Drifting Cowboys at WSFA - 1940
From left: Caldwell Stewart, Announcer, Paul Dennis, "Mexican" Charlie Mays, Lillie, Hank, Clyde "Boots" Harris, Ann "Tootsie" Fuller, Shorty Seals

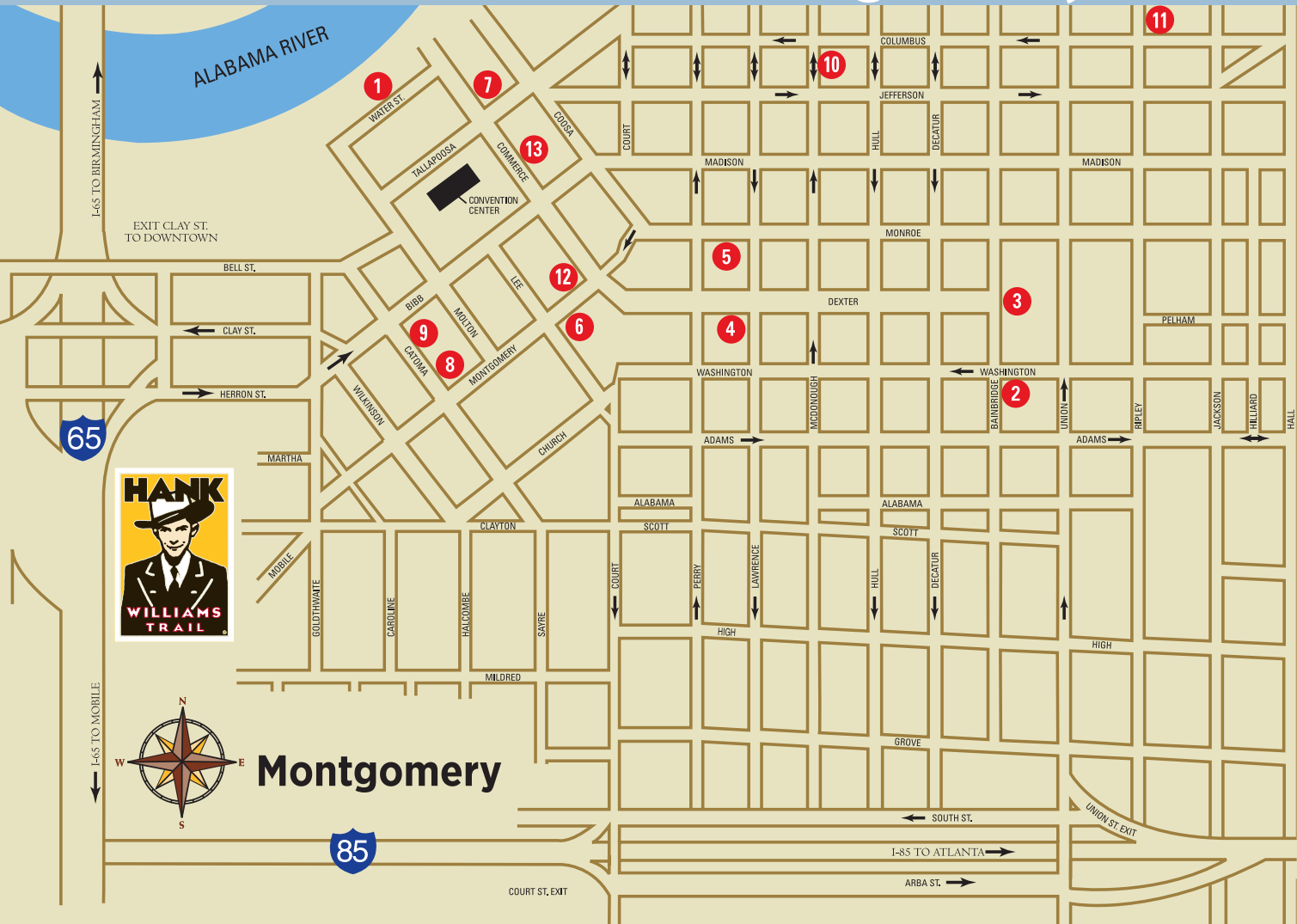


The Hank Williams Museum is the best place to begin a visit to Hank's beloved hometown. The largest collection of Hank Williams clothing, records, paintings and personal items - many on loan from son Hank Williams, Jr. - is at 118 Commerce Street. More than a dozen of his famous handmade Nudie suits, as well as hats and boots, are on display.



The most memorable exhibit is the powder blue Cadillac convertible in which the singer died in the early morning of Jan. 1, 1953.

Hank Williams' Montgomery



1 *Montgomery Area Visitor Center*
300 Water St., Historic Union Station, 262-0013
Where Hank boarded trains.

2 *Alabama Department of Archives & History*
624 Washington Ave., 242-4363
Hank Williams items on display.

3 *Alabama State Capitol Building*
624 Washington Ave., 242-4363

4 *Chris' Hot Dogs*
138 Dexter Ave., Open Mon.-Sat.
Hank's favorite eatery opened 1917.

5 *City Auditorium*
Perry at Monroe Street
Where Hank's funeral was held on Jan 4, 1953

6 *Elite Cafe Site (Now Club 50/50)*
119 Montgomery St.
Where Hank had his last performance.



The Alabama Department of Archives and History at 624 Washington Ave. displays costumes and documents pertaining to his life and career.

7 *Hank Williams Statue*
Commerce on Tallapoosa Street

8 *Jeff Davis Hotel where WFSA was housed (now private)*
344 Montgomery St.

9 *Site of Lillie's Rooming House*
1940-46 near Jeff Davis Hotel
236 Catoma St.

10 *Site of Lillie's Rooming House where Hank laid in state (Center of block, south of Tucker Pecans)*
350 N McDonough St.

11 *Oakwood Cemetery*
Upper Wetumpka Road, go east on Jefferson St. Follow signs.
Where Hank and Audrey Williams are buried.

12 *Empire Theater Site (Now Rosa Parks Museum)*
252 Montgomery St.

13 *Hank Williams Museum*
118 Commerce St., 262-3600. Open daily.



Kowaliga



Kowaliga is an area on Lake Martin that Hank Williams made famous after spending weekends throughout 1952. He frequented a cafe where guests were greeted by a carved statue of an Indian. Local legend told of a lovesick boy who waited so long for his girl to return that he finally turned to wood. *"Pore ol' Kaw-liga, He never got a kiss ... he don't know what he missed."* The white frame cabin where Hank wrote "Your Cheatin' Heart" during his last summer on earth still stands near Kowaliga Bridge. The cabin is restored, right down to the red vinyl padded chairs in the kitchen, and is owned by the nonprofit Children's Harbor retreat. It's not open for tours, but can be reserved for an overnight stay. Call 334-857-2040 or visit childrensharbor.com for availability and directions.

A replica statue of Kowaliga welcomes guests to Kowaliga Restaurant, which sits on the site of the cafe where Hank ate.

For restaurant hours and directions, call 256-215-7035 or visit kowaligarestaurant.com



Final Perform-

You can drive past what was once the Elite Café, where Hank Williams last sang in public four days before he died. The frail singer attended a Christmas benefit for musicians in the lounge of the Elite. He sang "Jambalaya," "Cold, Heart," "You Win Again" and "Lovesick Blues." *129 Montgomery St.*



Cold



The Elite Cafe at 129 Montgomery St. as it looked in Hank's day.

Birmingham

You can stay overnight on the second floor of the historic Redmont Hotel, where Hank spent his final night. At dawn on New Year's Day, 1953, Hank Williams was pronounced dead near Oak Hill, W. Va.



The Redmont is located at 2101 5th Ave. N. in Birmingham. Call 205-957-6828 or visit redmontbirmingham.com

Fort Payne



Beason's Barber Shop has the historic barbers chair

On Wednesday, Dec. 31, Williams stopped in Fort Payne for a haircut, a shave and some moonshine. At Beason's Barber Shop, 1719 Gault Ave N, in Fort Payne, you can still see the barber chair, now carefully roped off, in which Hank got his last haircut. (56) 845-9888

Alabama's Largest Fu-



Hank's body being placed in the hearse

On Sunday, Jan. 4, family members viewed Hank's body at his mother's boarding house at 318 McDonough St. (now demolished) before the casket was carried four

blocks to the Municipal Auditorium on Perry Street. Some 2,750 mourners crowded inside for the service while an estimated 20,000 stood vigil outside in the cold. The funeral was one week after his last performance. Mourners walked a mile along Jefferson Street to Oakwood Cemetery for the burial.

End of the Lost High-



Hank and Audrey are buried at Oakwood Cemetery

A major highlight of your visit along the Hank Williams Trail is paying respect at Hank and Audrey's final resting place. On any given day, Oakwood Cemetery Annex is visited by people from all over the world. On New Year's Day, join the memorial celebration at the gravesite, with other Hank fans and Drifting Cowboys who sing Hank's songs, pay homage to the great musician and lay wreaths.



The Alabama Music Hall of Fame in Tuscumbia boasts a wax figure of Hank in one of his original suits. Visit them on the web at alamhof.org

HANK WILLIAMS TRAIL



Annual Events

Hank Williams Day - Boyhood Home & Museum, Georgiana, first weekend in June.

Birthday Celebration - Hank Williams Museum, Montgomery, nearest weekend to September 17.

Hank Williams Memorial Day - New Year's Day, Oakwood Cemetery Annex, Montgomery. Wreath-laying ceremony. Music and refreshments at the Museum.

Museums

The Hank Williams Museum (Montgomery)

118 Commerce St., Montgomery, AL 36104

334-262-3600 • thehankwilliamsmuseum.net

The Hank Williams Boyhood Home & Museum (Georgiana) P.O. Box 310, Georgiana, AL 36033

334-376-2396 • hankmuseum.com

For information about historic markers, visit
hankwilliamstrail.com
www.alabama.travel