

## FEEL THE BEAT OF NORTH ALABAMA

The history of North Alabama and the evolution of American music are deeply intertwined. From front porches and church pews to radio studios and recording halls, the region has shaped the sound of a nation. The Music Trail of North Alabama celebrates the artists, producers, and songwriters whose work reached far beyond county lines, carrying the spirit of the Tennessee Valley to audiences around the world.

In the early twentieth century, rural communities across the Shoals, the Tennessee Valley, and the Appalachian foothills nurtured traditions rooted in gospel, blues, and folk. Fife and drum music echoed through Colbert County. Shape note singing filled country churches. Along the Tennessee River, musicians blended sacred harmonies with the rhythms of work and daily life, laying the groundwork for future genres that would define American music.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the Shoals emerged as an unlikely epicenter of popular music. At studios such as FAME Studios and Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, local session players crafted a sound that drew artists from across the country. The Swampers, as they became known, backed legends and helped produce hits that blended soul, rock, country, and rhythm and blues into something distinctly North Alabama. Artists including Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, Cher, The Osmonds, Bob Seger and The Rolling Stones traveled to record in the Shoals, leaving with songs that would define an era.

North Alabama also gave rise to influential performers whose roots remained central to their artistry. Country storyteller Hank Williams shaped generations of songwriters with his raw honesty. Pop and country star Lionel Richie carried the warmth of Tuskegee to international stages. From bluegrass virtuosity to Southern rock anthems, the region's musicians reflected both tradition and innovation.

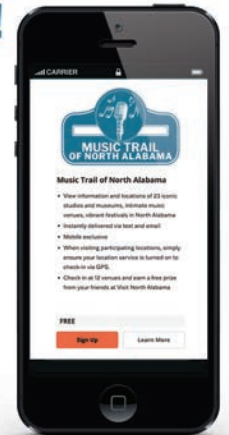
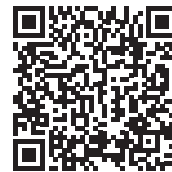
Today, the Music Trail of North Alabama connects legendary studios, iconic venues, murals, festivals, and hometown landmarks

across the region. Stops include the Alabama Music Hall of Fame, historic theaters, vibrant live music spaces, and communities that continue to nurture new talent. Visitors can follow the trail, check in at participating locations, and experience firsthand the stories behind the songs.



### SEND ME A GIFT!

*Scan to receive your  
Music Trail of North  
Alabama Passport!*



#### Step 1 - Get Your Pass

This mobile exclusive passport is a collection iconic studios and museums, intimate music venues, vibrant festivals in North Alabama

#### Step 2 - Receive Text

Your passport will be instantly delivered to your phone via text and email and is ready to use immediately! There is no app to download. Your pass can be saved to your phone's home screen for easy one-tap access.

#### Step 3 - Redeem

When visiting a participating location, check in through the digital pass. Check in at 12 venues and receive a free gift\* from Visit North Alabama.

[WWW.NORTHALABAMA.ORG](http://WWW.NORTHALABAMA.ORG)

*\*Commemorative gift is available while supplies last*





RECORDING STUDIOS • MUSEUMS  
VENUES • MURALS • FESTIVALS



NORTH  
**ALABAMA**  
ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES  
TOURIST ASSOCIATION

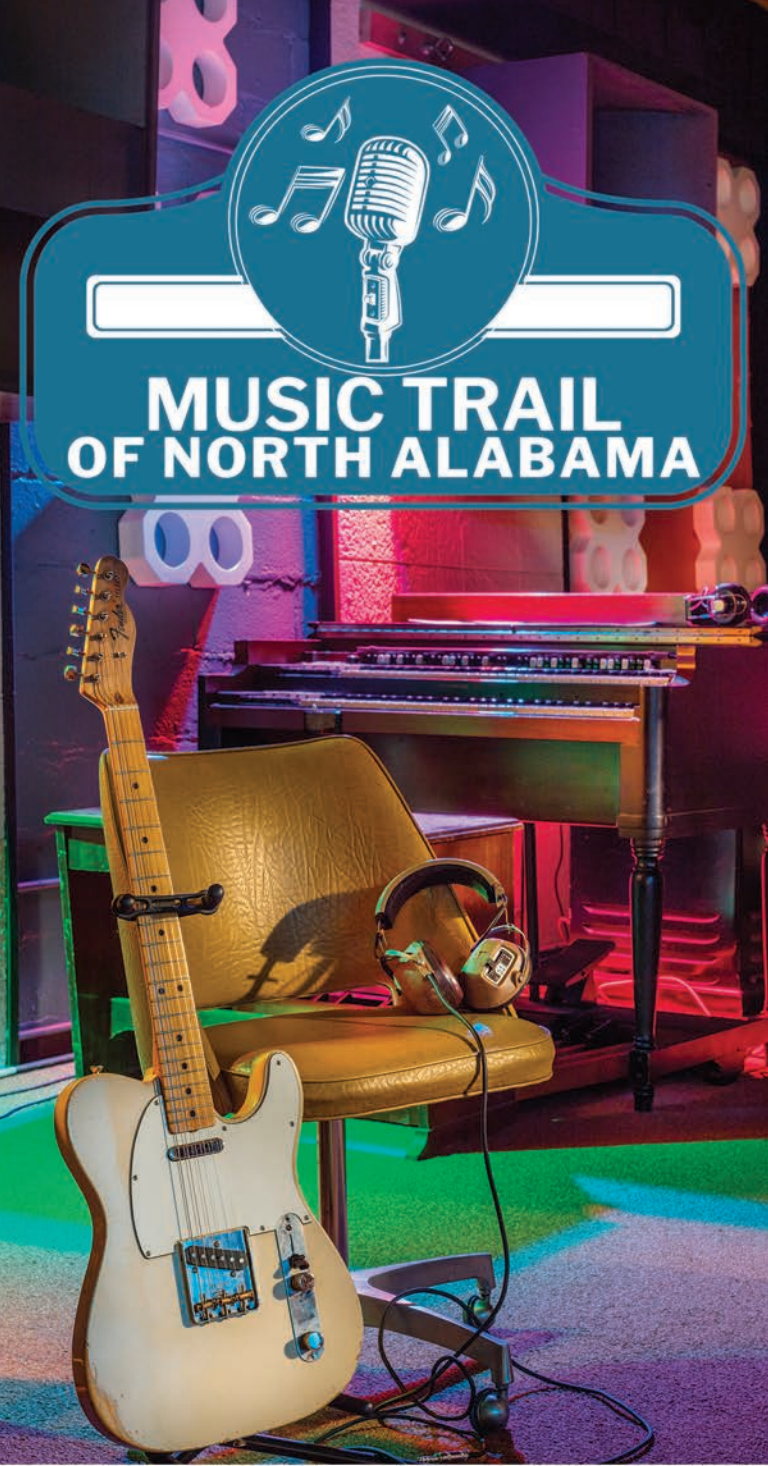
| 800-648-5381 |

[www.NorthAlabama.org](http://www.NorthAlabama.org)

Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association

402 Sherman St., SE • P.O. Box 2537 • Decatur, AL 35602

@VisitNorthAL

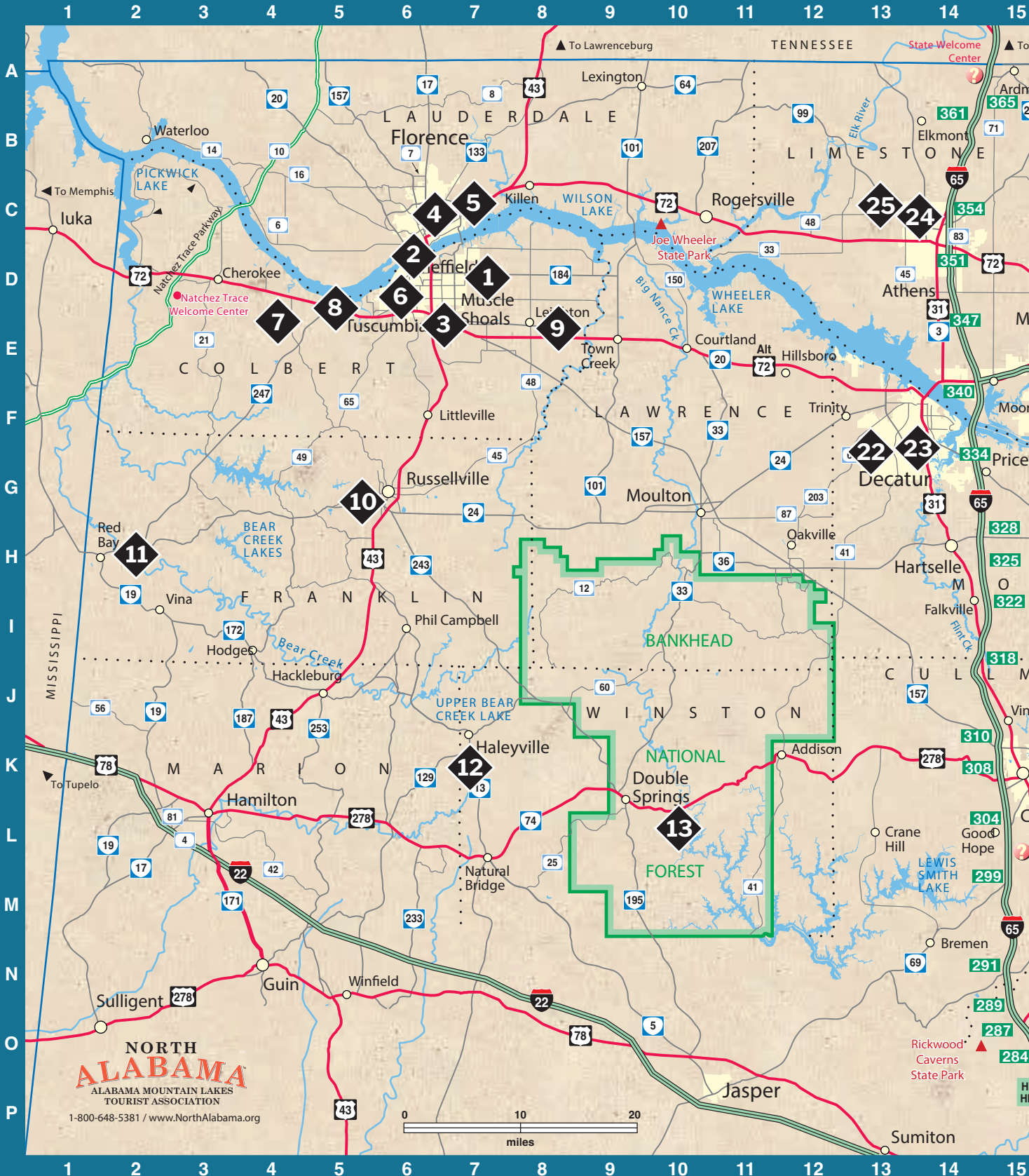


MUSIC TRAIL  
OF NORTH ALABAMA

[www.NorthAlabama.org](http://www.NorthAlabama.org)

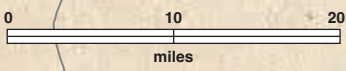
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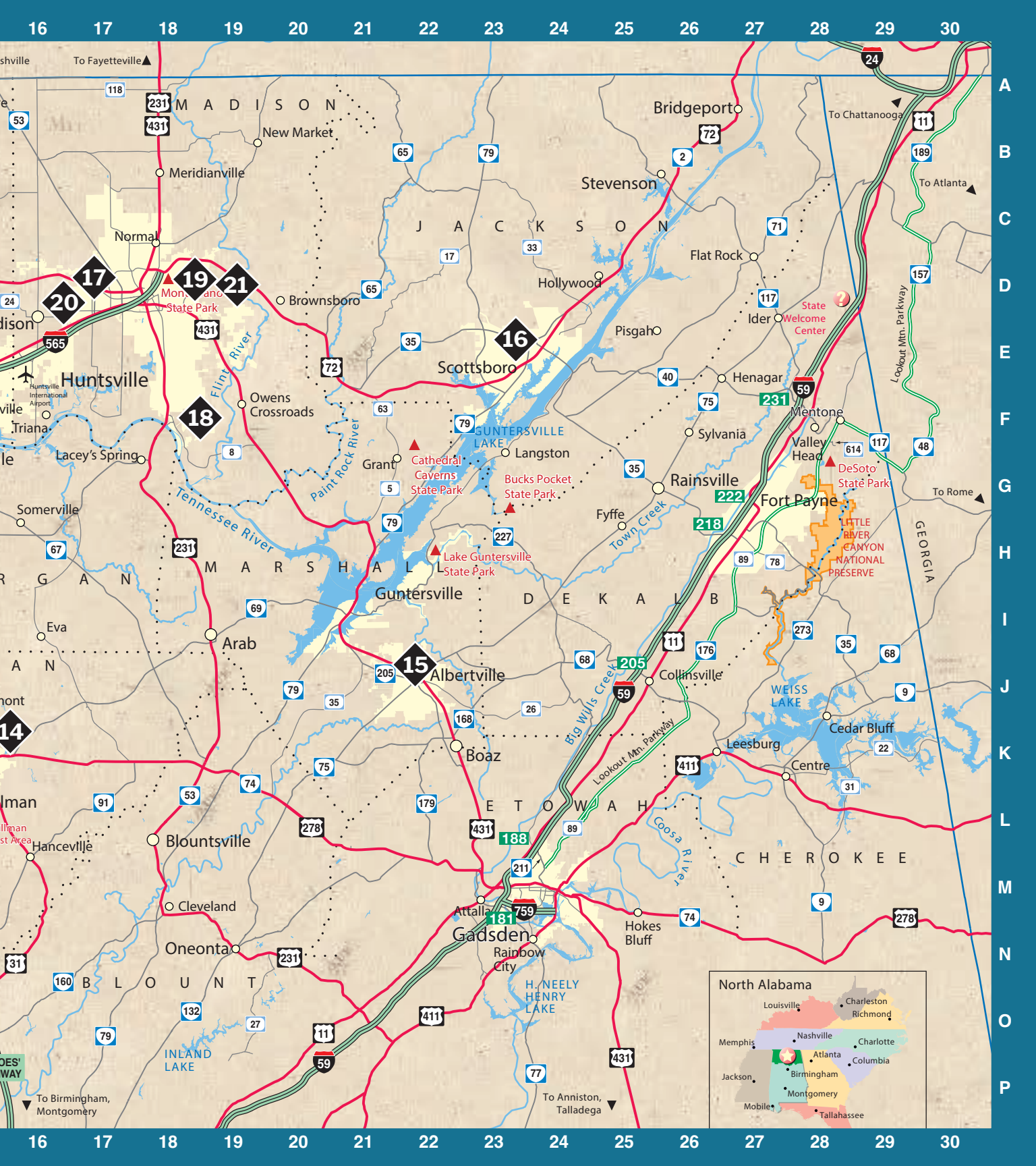
ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES TOURIST ASSOCIATION



**NORTH ALABAMA**  
ALABAMA MOUNTAIN LAKES  
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Follow the rhythm of North Alabama, a region whose sound has shaped music history and continues to inspire artists today. The Music Trail of North Alabama invites you to explore iconic recording studios, intimate music venues, colorful murals, and vibrant festivals, along with the hometowns and communities that influenced generations of musicians. From the soulful roots of Muscle Shoals and its world-famous studios to small-town theaters, outdoor amphitheaters, and lively local stages, this self-guided journey celebrates the people, places, and stories behind the music that made North Alabama known around the globe.

## THE SHOALS/FLORENCE

### 1. FAME Recording Studios

603 East Avalon Avenue, Muscle Shoals, AL 35661, (256) 381-0801  
www.famestudios.com



Established in 1959, FAME was the first successful, professional recording studio in Alabama. FAME, along with Muscle Shoals Sound and a host of other recording studios,

made Muscle Shoals, Alabama, the Hit Recording Capital of the World in the 1960s and 1970s. Arthur Alexander's 1961 hit, "You Better Move On," cut here, launched the famous Muscle Shoals Sound. The internationally acclaimed documentary, "Muscle Shoals", released in 2013, and told the story of FAME, has sold over 350 million copies worldwide. It remains a working studio and continues to attract major recording artists. Open limited hours for tours. Admission charged.

### 2. Muscle Shoals Sound Studio

3614 Jackson Highway, Sheffield, AL 35660, (256) 978-5151

www.muscleshoalssoundstudio.org  
Muscle Shoals Sound Studio (MSSS) opened in early 1969 by the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, also known as the Swampers, which consisted of David Hood on bass, Jimmy Johnson on rhythm guitar, Roger Hawkins on drums, and Barry Beckett on keys. They began working together at Rick Hall's FAME Studio in Muscle Shoals, Alabama where they became well-renowned in the record-

ing industry for playing a unique style of funky R&B with artists such as Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett and Etta James. In late 1969, the Rolling Stones cut "Brown Sugar" "You Got To Move" and "Wild Horses" for their 1971 album Sticky Fingers. Admission charged.

### 3. Champy's

120 Second Street, Muscle Shoals, AL 35661, (256) 389-9985

www.facebook.com/ChampysShoals

Champy's, a unique, somewhat divey, and quirky vibe restaurant located in the heart of Muscle Shoals, is known for its famous fried chicken and lively atmosphere and often features live music, particularly on weekends.

### 4. GunRunner Boutique Hotel

310 E. Tennessee Street, Florence, AL 35630, (855) 269-4724

www.gunrunnerhotel.com

The GunRunner is a boutique hotel located in the heart of downtown Florence. The hotel contains 10 themed suites are uniquely designed to showcase the legendary musicians, world-class fashion designers, architectural icons, thoroughbred racehorses, historical landmarks (and outlaws) who shape the fabric of this corner of Northwest Alabama. The hotel is within walking distance of restaurants, bars, live music venues and historical attractions.

### 5. Renaissance Shoals Resort & Spa

10 Hightower Place, Florence, AL 35630, (256) 246-3600

www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/mslbr-renaissance-shoals-resort-and-spa



Located on the banks of the Tennessee River, Renaissance Shoals Resort & Spa is decorated to showcase the Shoals musical heritage including the guestrooms,

suites, gallery hallways, common area bathrooms and Swampers Bar & Grille, which offers live music every night of the week. Caution! Stones Ahead, a tribute to the Rolling Stones, is a museum within the resort featuring the largest private collection of Rolling Stones memorabilia.

## 6. The Ritz Theatre

111 W 3rd Street, Sheffield, Alabama 35660,  
(256) 383-0533

[www.tennesseevalleyarts.org/theatre](http://www.tennesseevalleyarts.org/theatre)

The Ritz Theatre is a 1927 former silent movie house renovated in 1985 by the Tennessee Valley Art Association to accommodate the organization's performing arts programs. The original art deco interior style has been preserved. The Ritz hosts theatrical productions, concerts, and films and is available as a rental space.

## 7. Rattlesnake Saloon

1292 Mount Mills Road, Tuscumbia, AL 35674,  
(256) 370-7220

[www.rattlesnakesaloon.net](http://www.rattlesnakesaloon.net)

Rattlesnake Saloon sports an old-fashioned saloon feel, with swinging doors and a large porch that hosts live music from local artists. The Saloon is situated under a bluff where Native Americans took shelter hundreds of years ago. When you arrive, you'll park and then catch a ride down into the cavern in a flatbed truck, which is an experience in itself. The saloon is known for their burgers, but its location under a natural rock bluff provides a unique and rustic setting for the live music performances, making it a truly memorable experience for diners and music lovers.

## 8. Alabama Music Hall of Fame

617 Hwy. 72 W., Tuscumbia, AL 35674,  
(256) 381-4417

[www.alamhof.org](http://www.alamhof.org)



Alabama is home to many great singers, songwriters, producers, and musicians. From Hank Williams, Lionel Richie, The Temptations, Jamey Johnson, Riley

Green, Jason Isbell, and many more, here you can find their incredible stories of how it all began and see who the next music legend will be to land in the Hall of Fame. Admission charged.

## 9. Tribute to Percy Sledge and Jimmy Hughes Mural

8779 Main Street, Leighton, AL 35646

This mural highlights two remarkable artists from Leighton, Alabama. Percy Sledge and Jimmy Hughes are cousins that both experienced fame in the music industry and played huge roles

in the development of Muscle Shoals Sound that the world came to know and love. Percy Sledge's song "When a Man Loves a Woman," written by Calvin Lewis and Andrew Wright, was released in 1966 from Norala (Sheffield, Alabama) under the Atlantic label. The mural's mid-century design was inspired by the atomic design on the Fame label, as Jimmy Hughes's song "Steal Away" was the first hit for Fame Recording Studios.

## RUSSELLVILLE/RED BAY

### 10. The Historic Roxy Theatre

208 N. Jackson, Russellville, AL 35653,



(256) 810 2711  
[thehistoricroxy-theatre.org](http://thehistoricroxy-theatre.org)

The Historic Roxy Theatre, a beloved fixture of downtown Russellville since 1949, serves as a venue for

concerts, talent shows, recitals and movies.

### 11. Red Bay Museum

108 4th Ave SE, Red Bay, AL 35582,  
(256) 356-8758

[www.redbaymuseum.com](http://www.redbaymuseum.com)

The Red Bay Museum brings local history to life with immersive displays of the town's artifacts but the highlight is a framing spotlight exhibit honoring Tammy Wynette, who spent her childhood in Red Bay. On display are items from her career from stage gowns to everyday clothes and even her personal makeup train case. Covers from all 50 of her vinyl albums are shown, as well as a seat from her private airplane. At this time, this is the largest collection of Tammy Wynette items on display. Donations accepted.

## HALEYVILLE/DOUBLE SPRINGS

### 12. 9-1-1 Festival

911 21st Street, Haleyville, AL 35565

Over fifty years ago, the first 911 emergency call was made in the United States and the call was placed in the North Alabama town of Haleyville. To celebrate the monumental occasion, the Haleyville Area Chamber of Commerce and the town come together each year to host a two-day festival in June. The 9-1-1 Festival offers activities for kids, arts and crafts vendors, parade, live music from nationally-known acts, motorcycle, classic car and antique tractor show and more.

### **13. Looney's Tavern**

22400 US-278, Double Springs, AL 35553, (205) 489-6569

Situated in the heart of the Bankhead National Forest, Looney's Tavern Entertainment and Cultural Center includes a 1500-seat outdoor amphitheater and a 300-seat indoor theater where a variety of shows and concerts are held year round.

## **CULLMAN**

### **14. Alabama Strawberry Festival**

309 1st Avenue NE, Cullman, AL 35055, (256) 798-2325

[www.alabamastrawberryfest.com](http://www.alabamastrawberryfest.com)



Typically held the last Friday & Saturday in April, the Alabama Strawberry Festival celebrates the region's rich agricultural heritage, offering two days filled with family-friendly activities, live entertainment from nationally-known acts and fresh strawberries.

## **ALBERTVILLE**

### **15. Sand Mountain Park and Amphitheater**

915 W. McKinney Avenue, Albertville, AL 35950, (256) 891-8240

[www.sandmountainpark.com](http://www.sandmountainpark.com)

An open-air venue, the Amphitheater features general admission upper-level lawn seating, fixed ground-level seating, and VIP upper-level box seating, along with two LED video walls and two concessions areas with high-quality food and beverage options. It hosts a wide range of musical genres, from country and rock to pop and more, featuring both local and national touring acts. Additional amenities in the park include 16 tennis courts, 14 outdoor turf fields, an 8-lane indoor competition pool, an outdoor water park, playgrounds, an RV park, and a 5,000+ sq. ft. state-of-the-art fitness center.

## **SCOTTSBORO**

### **16. Two Sisters Square**

116 E Peachtree Street Scottsboro, AL 35768; (256) 679-0849

[www.twosisterssquare.com](http://www.twosisterssquare.com)

Located in the heart of downtown Scottsboro, Two Sisters Square is a vibrant open-air music venue and pocket park created to celebrate live

performance, art, and community connection. Once a simple parking lot, the space has been transformed into an intimate gathering place featuring a covered stage, murals, fountains, and an inviting space designed for unforgettable live music experiences.

## **HUNTSVILLE**

### **17. Orion Amphitheater**

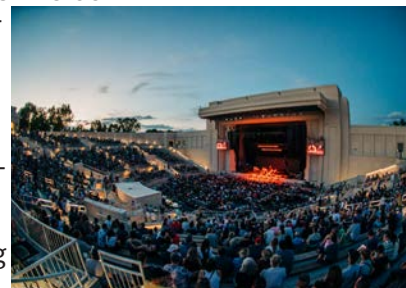
701 Amphitheater Drive NW, Huntsville, AL, (256) 964-9556

[www.theorionhuntsville.com](http://www.theorionhuntsville.com)

Located in the bustling MidCity District, The Orion and surrounding Apollo Park are utilized year-round for concerts, community events and more.

This award-winning 8,000 capacity

destination venue has hosted some of music's biggest names such as Lana Del Rey, Brandi Carlile, Snoop Dogg, James Taylor, John Legend, Luke Bryan, Kenny Chesney, Stevie Nicks, the Steve Miller Band and more. The Dome and Jeff & Blues, both located adjacent to the Amphitheater in Apollo South, offer multi-purpose spaces that encourage diverse and cultural programming. The campus has no shortage of variety in their refreshments, boasting over a dozen bars with unique offerings and regularly hosting local food trucks.



### **18. Ditto Landing**

293 Ditto Landing Road SE, Huntsville, AL, (256) 882-1057

[www.dittolanding.org](http://www.dittolanding.org)

Every summer, Ditto Landing hosts a sunset concert series featuring various artists monthly on Tuesdays. Admission and parking are free. Concert goers can expect great food from food trucks (outside food and beverages are welcome), fabulous tunes and the best sunset view in the City of Huntsville.

### **19. Von Braun Center**

700 Monroe Street, Huntsville, AL, (256) 533-1953

[www.vonbrauncenter.com](http://www.vonbrauncenter.com)

Von Braun Center (VBC) is the go-to entertainment venue. On any given night, there's something spectacular happening at this premier multi-purpose complex. Venues inside the VBC

include the Propst Arena, the Mark C Smith Concert Hall, the Playhouse, and the Mars Music Hall, which all work seamlessly together to bring in a variety of entertainment options from large-scale to intimate. A full-service restaurant and rooftop bar, Rhythm on Monroe offers delicious cocktails, craft brews, and freshly prepared, locally sourced urban fare. The VBC has hosted a wide array of top performers in recent years.

### **20. Little Richard Mural**

1030 Mid City Drive, Huntsville, AL  
Located in the MidCity District is a bright and vibrant 40'x30' mural of Little Richard by artist Logan Tanner. Richard Wayne Penniman, better known as "Little Richard," attended Oakwood University and is buried at the Oakwood Memorial Gardens in Huntsville.

### **21. Panoply Arts Festival**

200 Church Street SW, Huntsville, AL  
[www.artshuntsville.org/event/panoply](http://www.artshuntsville.org/event/panoply)  
Art and music come together each year the last weekend in April for a three-day celebration in Big Spring Park located in the heart of downtown Huntsville. The Panoply Arts Festival offers three days of live music from over 20 local and regional musical acts in a variety of genres – jazz, rock, R&B, indie rock, blues, pop and more. Additional activities include shopping for original works of art, demonstrations and hands-on activities along with two nights of fireworks. Admission charged.

## **DECATUR**

### **22. Princess Theatre**

112 2nd. Avenue NE, Decatur, AL, (256) 350-1745  
[www.princesstheatre.org](http://www.princesstheatre.org)  
A landmark listed on the National Register of historic places, the Princess Theatre is a historic venue known for its Art Deco design and intimate setting, making it a beloved spot for various live performances, including concerts. The theater boasts a 677-seat main auditorium, providing an intimate experience for concertgoers, and hosts a diverse range of genres, including country, southern rock, pop, blues, jazz, and folk.

### **23. A Tribute to Johnny Sandlin Mural**

217 Moulton Street East, Decatur, AL  
The mural in downtown Decatur is a tribute to Johnny Sandlin, a renowned record producer who worked with many notable musicians, including the Allman Brothers, Widespread Panic, and Wet Willie. And it doesn't just commemorate Sandlin's music career, it also showcases

the many famous artists who created music in Decatur with him including musician David Hood from the band the Swampers, Jimmy Hall of Wet Willie, Derek Trucks with Tedeschi Trucks Band, along with John Bell from Widespread Panic. The mural, painted by Steven Teller, a muralist from St. Augustine, Florida, aims to celebrate Sandlin's musical contributions and showcase the rich musical heritage of Decatur.

## **ATHENS**

### **24. Merchant's Alley**

107 N. Jefferson St., Athens, AL, (256) 232-9040  
A project of Athens Main Street, Merchants Alley features a series of music-themed murals, each one paying tribute to the city's musical legacies. The focal point of the alley is entitled "Playing the Sound of the Wind." Spanning 20' high and 40' wide, the mural aims to pay respect and acknowledge one the city's top annual events, Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention. It was designed and painted by Adam Stephenson and Pamela Tellez Coria. The alley also includes art passages created by students at the Alabama Center for the Arts, selfie murals made by local high school artists and a Brittany Howard mural. Howard is best known as the lead singer and guitarist for the American rock band Alabama Shakes and is a native of rural Athens.

### **25. Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention**

On the campus of Athens State University, Athens, AL  
[www.athensfiddlers.org](http://www.athensfiddlers.org)



Typically the first full weekend in October, the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention attracts approximately 15,000 folk music fans and more than

200 musicians who compete for prize money in 19 different categories of competition, including several fiddle and guitar categories, mandolin, bluegrass, banjo, old time singing and Appalachian buck dancing. The Convention culminates on Saturday evening when the new Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddle champion is announced. The three-day event also offers concerts, food vendors and arts and crafts while celebrating traditional old-time music. Admission charged.