

HILL COUNTRY BLUES ...

Although Delta blues often claims the spotlight, other styles of the blues were produced in other regions of Mississippi. In the greater Holly Springs area, musicians developed a *Hill Country* blues style characterised by a few chord changes, unconventional song structures, and an emphasis on the groove or a steady, driving rhythm.

In the 1990s this style was popularised through the recordings of local musicians R.L.

Burnside and David 'Junior' Kimbrough. Hill Country Blues refers to traditional forms of blues music played in the hilly areas of northeast Mississippi as well as in adjacent areas of Tennessee. The term wasn't used widely until the 1990s in the wake of Robert Mugge's documentary *Deep Blues*, which featured David 'Junior' Kimbrough, R.L. Burnside, and Jessie Mae Hemphill from the Como/Senatobia area, the popularity of rock-blues groups including the North Mississippi All stars, and media coverage of albums by Kimbrough, Burnside, Robert Belfour, Kenny Brown and others on the Oxford-based Fat Possum label.



Some local musicians have embraced the term, **Hill Country blues** although David Kimbrough insisted that he played *Cotton-patch blues* at juke joints that he ran across the area, including in Holly Springs and in Chulahoma.

David's legacy continues to be celebrated at the annual Kimbrough Cotton Patch Soul Blues Fest, and regional music was also publicised widely via the North Mississippi Hill Country Picnic, founded in 2006 by Brown, Burnside's long time guitarist, and his wife, Sara Davis.

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