



2009 SFA Field Trip: June 25—27, 2009
Mountain Empire: Fast Cars in Bristol and Cornbread at the Carter Fold

June 25, 2009

Dear Southern Foodways Alliance Members and Friends,

Welcome to the Mountain Empire! We're delighted that you've chosen to explore the food and the music of Southern Appalachia with us. Strawberries are still in season, pots of soup beans are simmering, and fresh hams are smoking.

You may wonder exactly where the Mountain Empire is. There are no clearly defined borders. It's East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, generally, but when it's convenient or expedient, we've been known to claim a corner of Southeast Kentucky or a swatch of Western North Carolina, too. You'll find the Mountain Empire name on a college, a furniture store, a realty office, an oil company, a credit union, an animal hospital, an arts alliance, and a motel. It's a name some folks around here tried to kill, but it wouldn't die. And we're glad, for we think it captures the glory and majesty of the area we call home.

Another moniker we embrace is the Birthplace of Country Music. That's Bristol -- both Tennessee and Virginia. The Big Bang of Country Music occurred here in the summer of 1927 when Ralph Peer recorded the music of the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers, the Stonemans, and other groups during the monumental Bristol Sessions. As the late Johnny Cash once said, "These recordings in Bristol in 1927 were the single most important event in the history of country music."

From the First Family of Country Music, the Carters of Scott County, Virginia, come food traditions as well as mountain ballads. Sara Carter made ravioli, stuffed with chicken, spinach, and cheese. Her daughter Janette and son Joe cleared out the garden late in the season and boiled down pots of chow-chow, a relish sweetened with brown sugar and spiced with cinnamon and turmeric.

Working class themes and flavors come together to define Bristol: NASCAR, railroads, bluegrass breakdowns, and pure sugar stick candy. (During the 20th century, the Twin Cities were home to some 10 candy companies, making simple, striped peppermint sticks; this year, Helms Candy on Lee Highway in Virginia marks 100 years in business.)

Bristol means an Arvil Burger at Tootie's, the oldest restaurant on the Tennessee side; a red-dyed hot dog at the Corner Dog House over in Virginia; a Circle Burger at the last remaining Blue Circle, between the Dental Arts building and the putt-putt course; a Pal's sweet tea; and a meringue-topped pie at the Blackbird. Best of all, those delicious edible artifacts can be had for a song.

Fred and Jill Sauceman
East Tennessee State University
Co-hosts, Scholars and Cooks



ANSON MILLS

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Southern Foodways Alliance Field Trips are made possible by generous support from Anson Mills. Bristol Hospitality is courtesy of all the locals. Please be sure to thank them both while you enjoy the weekend.

Thursday, June 25

Early afternoon Exploring on your own

3:00-5:00 p.m. Registration
Raceway Condo Recreation Room

*For the GPS: 210 RaceDay Center Drive, Bristol, TN 37620
Building #2, headquarters for the Mountain Empire, is up the hill
on your right. Look for the condo pool. To access the gated drive,
use gate code 35700.*

7:00 p.m. Supper the Way it Ought to Be
Ridgewood BBQ

A Conversation with Larry Proffitt
Proprietor of Ridgewood BBQ
Moderated by Amy Evans

Explore the Pits
Drive your own car on the Bristol Motor Speedway
**Guests may walk or drive to the track from Raceway Condos*

Supper and events at the Bristol Motor Speedway

Friday, June 26

8:30-9:15 a.m.

Breakfast of Sauceman Family Stack Cake
Carla Perkins of Blackbird Bakery

Registration

Make a pot of coffee in your room and carry it down to share

Raceway Condo Recreation Room

9:15-10:45 a.m.

The Food and Music of the Mountain Empire
Fred Sauceman

Raceway Condo Recreation Room

11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Experiential Learning in Bristol

Pickle Beans and Cornbread Cookery
Raceway Condos
Sheri Castle

*Pit Tour
Ridgewood BBQ
Larry Proffitt

*Trout Cooking Class
The Troutdale Dining Room
Jassen Campbell

*Birthplace of Country Music Walking Tour
Country Music Mural in Downtown Bristol
Bill Hartley

**Participants should meet buses in Raceway Condo parking lot at 10:45 a.m. Guests will be transported from experiential learning workshops to downtown Bristol for lunch.*

12:30 p.m. Lunch with the Ghost of Hank Williams
Sean Hyler
Burger Bar

In the shadow of downtown Bristol's Country Music Mural. Guests will pick up a sack lunch at the restaurant and walk downtown to picnic by the murals.

1:30 p.m. The Bristol Sessions
Ted Olson

Buses will return guests to the Raceway Condos after the talk ends.

2:30 p.m. Explore on your own

6:30 p.m. Trout, Trout and More Trout
An Anson Mills Mountain Empire Dinner
Sean Brock, native of Wise, Virginia

Mountain Empire Photography Exhibit
Fred Sauceman and Larry Smith

Farm and Fun Radio Hour
Presented by Wayne Winkler and Friends
of ETSU Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

Supper and festivities at the Bristol Train Station

Saturday, June 27

8:00 a.m. Cream Pie for Breakfast
Both kinds: Coconut AND Butterscotch
Carla Perkins of Blackbird Bakery

Make a pot of coffee in your room and carry it down to share

Raceway Condo Recreation Room

9:30 a.m. Tour of Abingdon Farmer's Market
Anthony Flaccavento of Appalachian Sustainable Development

**Buses leave the Raceway Condo parking lot at 9:00 a.m.*

- 11:00 a.m. Explore downtown Abingdon, Virginia
**Buses depart Abingdon at 12:15 p.m. for lunch.*
- 12:30 p.m. Anson Mills Appalachian Foothills Vegetable Luncheon
at the Flaccavento Farm

Karen Urie and John Shields of Town House
Chilhowie, Virginia

Buses will return guests to the Raceway Condos after lunch.
- 3:00 p.m. Explore on your own
- 6:00 p.m. A Night at the Carter Family Fold
Hiltons, Virginia

Soup Bean Supper
Prepared by descendents of A.P. And Sara Carter

A Conversation with the Carter Family
Moderated by Amy Evans

Saturday Night Show
The Larkins

**Buses will leave the Raceway Condo parking lot at 5:15 p.m.
At evening's end, about 9:30 p.m., transportation will be available
back to the Raceway Condos.*
- 10:00 p.m. Toast to the Weekend
Herbal Dr. Enuf and Moonshine Cocktails
And, goodbye



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Eating and Drinking and Exploring the Mountain Empire

Leisurely Dining – Virginia

The Harvest Table and Farmer's Guild

P.O. Box 601
Meadowview, VA
The Harvest Table Restaurant 276-944-5142
www.meadowviewfarmersguild.com
Farmer's Guild 276-944-5140

Located at Exit 24 off I-81, on Meadowview Square, in a pair of renovated buildings that house two small businesses: the Harvest Table, and a general country store. Both focus upon local goods that support local economies.

Suppers of chicken gravy over creamy grits and Carolina crabcakes with herb remoulade are served Wednesday through Saturday from 5:00-9:00 p.m. Lunch is served from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday

Town House

132 E. Main St.
Chilhowie, VA
276-646-8787
www.townhouseva.com

You likely read the rave piece by Christine Muhlke in the *New York Times*. You may have ogled that picture of the reinvented minestrone soup that chefs John Shields and Karen Urie are serving: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/17/dining/17town.html?_r=1&ref=dining. No matter what you do, don't forget to consult sommelier Charlie Berg, the man with the golden palate.

Driving directions from the SOUTH (traveling NORTH on I-81 N):

Take exit 35. Turn left on to Whitetop Road. Continue over bridge and past the railroad tracks. Turn right on Main Street and travel half a block. Restaurant is on the right.

Supper is served Tuesday through Saturday 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Leisurely Dining – Tennessee

The Troutdale Dining Room

412 6th St.
Bristol, TN
423-968-9099
www.thetroutdale.com

At this Victorian manse, look for chef Jassen Campbell's oysters Cordon Blue with country ham and Brie, as well as his parmesan trout with lemon mayonnaise, and an incomparable way with whiskey drinks.

From I-81 North or South: Take exit 3. Drive to the 6th traffic light, and turn left on Anderson Street. Turn right again at the first traffic light onto 6th Street. The Troutdale Dining Room is located in the 4th house on the right.

Troutdale Bistro

724 State St.
Bristol, TN
423-989-3663
www.troutdalebistro.com

Like it's sister restaurant, the Bistro sources from farmers associated with Appalachian Sustainable Development. Try the iceberg wedge with blue cheese and local peanuts, or the almond-crusted pork tenderloin with shaved asparagus.

From I-81 North or South: Take exit 3. Drive to the 5th traffic light, and turn left on State Street. Troutdale Bistro is located on the right, on the corner of State Street and 8th Street.

Short Order Dining – Virginia

Corner Dog House

102 East Mary St.
Bristol, VA
276-669-2231

This walk-up business has carried on Bristol's boiled red hot dog tradition since 1962. If you insist you can also get a Nathan's dog or a Dixie. Steve estimates that over the years 9 million customers have been served at the Corner Dog House.

Pal's

2937 Lee Hwy.
Bristol, VA
276-645-6168

960 Volunteer Pkwy.
Bristol, TN
423-652-2291

www.palsweb.com

You'll know it when you see it – bright aqua with a giant hot dog on top (and, yes, fries do come with that) – there are ten Pal's in the immediate area and more throughout the region. Started in 1956, Pal's is still the only restaurant company in America ever to have won the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

The Dip Dog Stand

2035 Lee Hwy.
Marion, VA
276-783-2698
www.dipdogs.net

Pam and Grant Hall preside over a business that's been serving Dip Dogs (not corn dogs) for 51 years. And the Web site is not to be missed.

The Burger Bar

8 Piedmont Ave.
Bristol, VA
276-466-6200
No credit cards

Although best known for their burgers, the jambalaya with rice and the daily plate lunches make this place more than just a stop on the country music tour of downtown. (This is where Hank Williams ate his last burger.) Save room for the hand-battered fried mushrooms.

Short Order Dining – Tennessee

Ridgewood Barbecue

900 Elizabeth Hwy. (Old 19E)
Bluff City, TN
423-538-7543

Fred Sauceman notes The Ridgewood has an extensive menu, with chicken, country ham, shrimp, oysters, catfish, and hamburgers, but never, in his many trips, has he been able to pull himself away from the pork barbecue.

Tootie's

1310 Virginia Ave.
Bristol, TN
423-764-6215

Current owner Arvil Vance is a pipefitter by trade. He inherited the business from his father, Arvil “Tootie” Vance, Sr. Try the Avril burger.

The Blue Circle

333 Bluff City Hwy.
Bristol, TN
423-764-4732

The only remaining Blue Circle restaurant, it serves 30,000 of those square, slider-style hamburgers a month. The owners, June and Mike Marshall, are always on premises.

The Bean Barn

515 East Church St.
Greeneville, TN
423-638-8329
No credit cards

Owners, Jerry and Donna Hart carry on the legacy of founders, Romie and Zella Mae Britt in a restaurant where you can get *beans all the way* (a combination of soup beans and beef stew) or just soup beans, beans with stew, beans with onions, or beans “super soupy. Try cornbread on the side and buttermilk to wash it all down.

The Dari Ace

1105 Jackson-Love Hwy.
Erwin, TN
423-743-7050
Cash only

It's perhaps the cleanest restaurant you've ever stepped foot in. The Dari Ace closes each year not for vacation but for a thorough cleaning! Work your way through the short order menu but save room for the lemon milkshake. And, abide the "No Profanity" sign on the wall. They're not kidding.

Engle's Roadside Restaurant

2403 Temple Hill Rd.
Erwin, TN
423-743-7500

Ask for brown salt on your fries but don't ask how it's made. They won't tell you. Save room for a hand made (not machine mixed) milk shake.

Greg's Pizza

109 Broyles St.
Johnson City, TN
423-282-4541
Take out only

Open since 1963, Greg's pizza is baked on a brick and made with fresh (never frozen) ingredients. Cooks make 120 pounds of fresh meatballs each week, 3 ounces at a time, for the nearly 300 gallons of meat sauce, Mike Cunningham sells each week. On your way out, pick up a half gallon of fresh brewed tea.

Family-Style Dining—Tennessee**Shirley's Home Cooking**

3266 Hwy. 321
Hampton, TN
423-768-2092

Located on Watauga Lake, Shirley's offers white gravy with cubed steak on Fridays, brown gravy with roast beef on Saturdays, and always cornbread salad. Ask for your meal "family-style" and over a dozen bowls, plates, and platters come forth.

The Farmer's Daughter

7700 Erwin Hwy. (Hwy. 107)
Chuckey, TN
423-257-4650

With a squeeze bottle of Arland Johnson's sorghum syrup on every table and, this time of year, Styrofoam cups of green onions, The Farmer's Daughter serves the food of the mountain farmhouse, some 14 dishes at every meal. The cornbread is made from stoneground cornmeal and baked in cast-iron skillets.

Coffee Houses**Java J's**

501 State St.
Bristol, VA
276-466-5282
Free internet

Julie Marion will gladly serve you coffee or a generous scoop of her Italian-style gelato. The downtown location is just across the street from The Paramount theater. The Paramount is in Tennessee; Java J's is in Virginia.

Zazzy'z**Roastery, Café, Bookseller**

380 East Main St.
Abingdon, VA
276-698-3333
www.zazzyz.com

Saturday morning in Abingdon you'll have plenty of time to stop in and enjoy a cup of coffee. If you'd like, leave with a pound (or two) of their locally roasted beans.

Bakeries**Blackbird Bakery**

56 Piedmont Ave.
Bristol, VA
276-645-5754
Free Internet

Cake donuts and cream pies are what Carla Perkins and her staff do best. Don't miss the coconut donuts and the mini cream pies.

Wild Flour Bakery

24443 Lee Hwy.
Abingdon, VA
276-676-4221

Cinnamon rolls by day, seared salmon by night, and fresh bread all day. This roadside restaurant is favored by locals and travelers alike.

Other things to do and see**White's Mill**

12291 White's Mill Rd.
Abingdon, VA
276-676-0285

A National and Virginia Historic Landmark, this grist and flour mill is one of the only water powered mills in existence in Southwest Virginia. Milling demonstrations and trout fishing in a well stocked pond are available and the site includes a blacksmith shop and a gift shop.

The Crooked Road

www.thecrookedroad.org

Stretching west from Rocky Mount in Franklin County all the way to Breaks in Buchanan County, The Crooked Road, Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, winds through the mountains of Southwest Virginia. Bluegrass, old time, and traditional country music are celebrated, as are the people who created and still nurture those musical traditions.

Virginia Creeper Trail

www.vacrepertrail.com

Your online guide to The Virginia Creeper Trail, a former rail bed that passes through the back country of Southwest Virginia and stretches 35 miles from Abingdon, Virginia thru Damascus, Virginia to the NC State Line near Whitetop, Virginia. The Virginia Creeper Trail is open to hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding.

Birthplace of Country Music Museum

500 Gate City Hwy.

Bristol, TN

276-645-0035

www.birthplaceofcountrymusic.org

Hours: Mon. - Sat. 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.; Sun. 1:00 – 6:00 p.m., open year-round

Right now the Museum is located inside the Bristol Mall. Soon, it will move to a 24,000 square foot space in downtown Bristol. The new facility will include temporary and permanent exhibits that trace the history, cultural influences, and development of country music through a sequence of audio-visual experiences which will allow visitors the opportunity to listen to the melodies and encounter the rich musical tradition first hand. In the meantime, visit the BCMA Web site to learn about local concerts and local/national music preservation efforts.

The Floyd Country Store

206 South Locust St.

Floyd, VA

540-745-4563

Admission: \$3

Floyd County, Virginia has more musicians per capita than New York City. At 6:30 every Friday night, the Jamboree starts. Folks sit and listen during the gospel hour then get up dance for the rest of the night.

The Down Home

300 W. Main St.

Johnson City, TN

423-929-9822

www.downhome.com

Well known and well loved live music venue in Johnson City. The primary emphasis is on quality music, and the performance atmosphere promotes listening rather than socializing. There is plenty of time for friendly conversation before the show and between sets.

Abingdon Vineyard & Winery

20530 Alvarado Rd.

Abingdon, VA

276-623-1255

www.abingdonwinery.com

Located on 53 acres in Washington County, Virginia, along the South Holston River, they are committed to growing quality grapes and producing quality wines.



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