

## New Book Offers a Tour of Jazz and Blues

Written by Jimmie Jones

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Blues Highway: New Orleans to Chicago by Richard Knight 304 pages Trailblazer Publications \$19.95 This book is written primarily for jazz and blues enthusiasts who might be interested in what it would be like to spend three weeks touring what author Richard Knight calls "Blues Highway," the New Orleans-to-Chicago path (that includes the Quad Cities) where much of jazz and blues originated. The book provides information on all of the necessities to make the trip, and the most important places and things to see. It would make an excellent addition to the music library of any Quad Citian, as well as people interested in the history of jazz and blues.

The route begins in New Orleans, the first stop being Baton Rouge followed by Lafayette mentioned specifically for its zydeco musical history. The guide also includes stops in Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, and of course Memphis and Nashville. Recommended Iowa stops include Keokuk, Fort Madison, Burlington, Muscatine, and Davenport. The final stop is Chicago.

Three pages are devoted to information on festivals and other musical events. Information is also provided on costs for transportation (including from overseas), lodging, restaurants, and music venues. Knight also gives tips on getting around by car, RV, bus, train, and even paddle-steamer. In addition to clubs, bars, and juke joints, Knight also mentions significant non-musical sites.

The book features 17 pages devoted to Davenport and the Quad Cities, including the area's history. Also mentioned is the fact that the first bridge to span the Mississippi was built from Davenport to Rock Island, plus a discussion of the John Deere plow business and the Rock Island Arsenal.

The Quad Cities section features three pages of maps as well as instructions on how to get around, things to see, and places to eat. Bix Beiderbecke merits two complete pages, and Wright also includes an interview with Michael "Hawkeye" Herman. The author asked Herman to expound on the Quad Cities' role in the development of jazz and blues, and Hawkeye mentions jazz influence brought on by Louis Armstrong and King Oliver through Beiderbecke.

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A column entitled "Blues and Bix" discusses the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society's annual festival and the Bix youth band. In the same column, a paragraph about the Mississippi Valley Blues Society touts that the group was twice named blues organization of the year by the Blues Foundation and that its annual blues festival "attracts some of the greatest names in blues."

*Blues Highway: New Orleans to Chicago* is a must for Quad Cities' jazz and blues lovers.