



Johnny Cash Arkansas Icon

Johnny Cash was born February 26, 1932 in the small town of Kingsland, roughly 30 miles south of Pine Bluff, in Cleveland County. Cash was one of seven children, born during the Great Depression, the worst economic crisis in American history. In 1935, Johnny moved with his family to Dyess in Mississippi County in the northeastern Arkansas. Johnny's father wanted to take advantage of a New Deal program that was helping farmers. In Dyess, the Cashes got a new house that the family could pay for as they worked. The family also received 20 acres of land and some livestock. Despite the opportunities Dyess provided for poor farmers, life was hard. Johnny grew up in a house that had no



In the 1960s, although rich and famous, Johnny Cash struggled with drugs and his marriage. He rarely saw his daughters. But by 1968, he had overcome his drug addiction, married his lifelong love June Carter, and made hit albums. He played concerts for Governor Winthrop Rockefeller throughout Arkansas to help promote prison reform. With Cash's help Gov. Rockefeller won reelection. The next year, Cash played a concert for the inmates at Cummins prison farm.



In the 1990s, with the help of music producer Rick Rubin, Cash had another comeback. He visited Kingsland again in March of 1994, to "touch my roots," as he put it. Cash recorded a string of successful records until his death in 2003 at age 71. The only man ever elected to the Rock, Country, and Gospel Music Hall of Fame, Johnny Cash truly is an Arkansas icon. His music and life story continues to inspire people in Arkansas and around the world.

February 26th, 1932

1950s

1960s

1970s & 80s

1990s & 2000s



electricity or running water. The Cash family spent long, hot days picking cotton. In 1937, the family had to leave Dyess to avoid the flood water from the nearby Mississippi River.

Johnny Cash loved music from a young age. As a boy, he sang hymns in the cotton patch and listened to country music on the radio. After graduating from high school, he joined the Air Force. Stationed in Germany, he bought an acoustic guitar

and began writing songs. When he returned home, he moved to Memphis, where he became a country and rock and roll star on the Sun Records label.

In the late 1950s, Johnny Cash moved to California. He kept making music, but he also wanted to be on television and star in movies. When he could, Cash returned to Arkansas, where he visited family, fished with friends, and played concerts.



In the 1970s, Cash kept making music, but he was more focused than ever on his religious life and his family. In the 1980s, his career hit another low, as he relapsed into drug addiction and struggled to sell records. Cash kept his sense of humor, but he made few trips to Arkansas and no longer played concerts for prisoners.