



Campbell Culture  
Coalition

## Campbell Culture Coalition

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*The mission of the Campbell Culture Coalition is to enhance cultural opportunities of the citizenry, preserve the culturally significant past, and to educate, support and promote the cultural and artistic talents of our youth.*

The Campbell Culture Coalition (CCC) was founded in 2006, and launched its first project in the spring of 2007 that included storytelling, art, and roots music heritage based on the example of nationally famous black string band musician, William Howard Taft Armstrong (stage name "Louie Bluie") with emphasis on his roots in Campbell County. Armstrong's musical story was performed at Jacksboro Middle, LaFollette Middle and Jellico Middle Schools with students from White Oak School bussed from the mountain. On June 6, the first Louie Bluie Music & Arts Festival was held at Cove Lake State Park featuring two open air stages organized by Culture Coalition leadership and more than 100 community volunteers. It was immediately and immensely popular within the community.

Without sparing a moment, in the spring of 2008 the Culture Coalition became the first in the state of Tennessee to host the Smithsonian Institute Main Street America Traveling Exhibit "New Harmonies", which required developing a companion exhibit celebrating outstanding musicians who were natives of Campbell County. Research turned up a surprisingly large number. Outstanding artists featured were opera great Grace Moore, sacred music pioneer Homer Rodeheaver, and of course, Howard Armstrong. There was also a revival of the rich history of the LaFollette Fiddlers Convention, and early radio shows.

This was followed in September by the second Louie Bluie Music & Arts Festival, which grew exponentially to provide more sophisticated accommodations for attendees on the grounds such as large tents, stages and professional sound engineering, more food, craft and non-profit vendors, a kids activity area, judged art and quilt exhibits, and always, musicians performing the traditions of the LaFollette Fiddlers Convention and the multiple genres of the legendary Armstrong. To execute an important educational aspect of the festival, headliner performers were contracted to perform at local mountain schools on Friday before the festival date. A pattern was set that continues today.

By 2010, the festival expanded to include "Sounds Like Home - A Night of Music From the Cumberlands". The 2010 pre-festival performance was produced as the first Friday night bluegrass concert starring six-time IBMA Female Vocalist of the Year Dale Ann Bradley with Steve Gulley. Additionally, the evening featured a reunion of the Pinnacle Mountain Boys, a group founded in the 1930s by Steve's father, Don Gulley. Later versions included hugely popular homegrown musicians Grand Ol' Opry star Charlie Collins and the famous television banjoist Larry McNeely.

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By now, the mission of the Culture Coalition was realized as well through outreach programs (now called ArtReach) such as community theater, Tennessee state education standard youth programs designed to supplement art in schools and homeschools, and concerted efforts to bring the best performers our budget will allow to the stages of the festival - stages that currently number three but have numbered five. Attendance for this one-day event averages an astounding 7000 attendees! There's always room for more!

There have been many adaptations to constantly refresh the two major thrusts of our mission: ArtReach and The Louie Bluie Music & Arts Festival. Our vision extends into the future infinity.

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***Proud Producer of the Louie Bluie Music & Arts Festival and Youth & Adult Community Art Projects***