

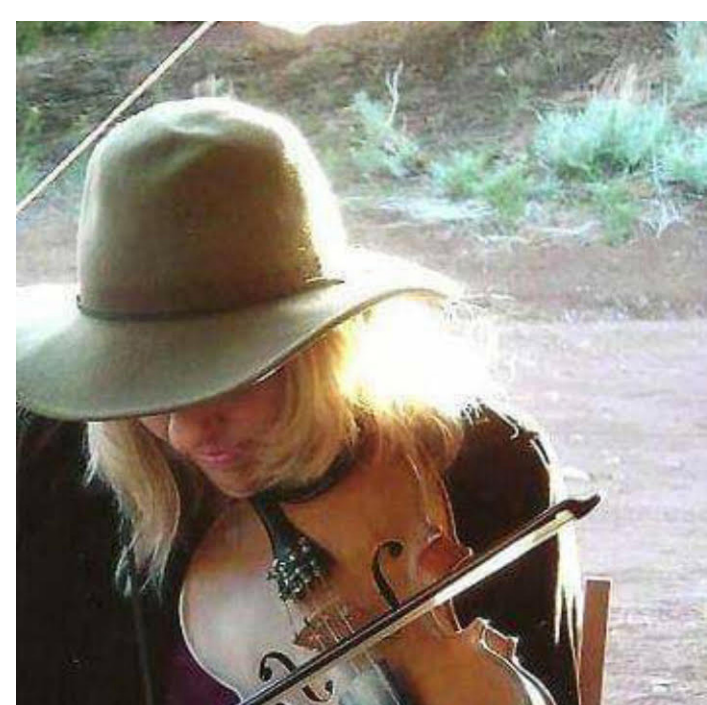
# The Blues Revival Comes to Cedar Falls

When Eddie Bowles picked up his guitar again after not having played for over 25 years, a lot had changed. Rock and Roll musicians, such as Elvis Presley, drew heavily from traditional blues music, but that legacy was rarely acknowledged. However, around 1960, enthusiasts rediscovered and began collecting old blues recordings from the 1930s, and some aficionados began searching out the musicians who had made some of the earliest blues records.



Mississippi John Hurt (1964)

The result was that musicians like Mississippi John Hurt, Bukka White and Sleep John Estes had second careers, playing in the coffee houses and folk festivals that were popular at this time. A wave of British and American rock musicians, including some of the most popular acts of the 60s and 70s—the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, the Animals—played blues-influenced rock and recorded or performed with classic blues artists like B.B. King, Muddy Waters and Howling Wolf.



Linda Smith

Bowles had first stopped playing guitar before the era of recorded blues had begun, so there were no old Eddie Bowles 78s to be collected. However, in Cedar Falls in the 1960s and 1970s,

when Bowles was once again playing, a generation of guitarists both learned from and performed with him, often meeting him when he was playing guitar outside of his house.

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**“Musically, the thing Eddie passed down to me was his impeccable timing. It was slow and steady and always right on the beat as you can hear from his recordings.”**

**—Linda Smith**

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Linda Smith recalled, “Musically, the thing Eddie passed down to me was his impeccable timing. It was slow and steady and always right on the beat as you can hear from his recordings.

People have told me I have impeccable timing and I know I got it from hanging out with Eddie...I can still hear his smooth transitions in my head.”

Rush Cleveland noted, “Eddie lived on the Old Dump Road. He’d run an extension cord out to the road and play guitar. I would play with him. I’d get to feeling down, so I’d go see Eddie. He’d lift you up just by being him. He had an enduring quality that people could feel. He was one of the characters from Cedar Falls’s Golden Era.”



Rush Cleveland

Other area guitarists like Al Eacret, Denny Garcia and Jimmy Price also credited Eddie Bowles with inspiring or teaching them to play blues guitar. Local musicians often visited the Bowles’ residence to sit in for a session, knowing that the door would be open.



Al Eacret (right) with members of Dahcotah