

HANK WILLIAMS TRAIL CONNECTS ALABAMA MUSEUMS

MONTGOMERY --- The Hank Williams Trail links four museums and additional points of interest important to the life and career of country music's first superstar.

A 20-page brochure created by the Alabama Bureau of Tourism & Travel guides visitors to sites in Georgiana, Montgomery, Alexander City, Birmingham and Tuscumbia.

The Trail begins in the rural Mount Olive community off I-65 where young Hank sat on a stool next to the church organ his mother played in the Baptist church. The small church still has services on the second and fourth Sundays of the month and welcomes visitors. The stool is displayed along with other personal mementoes nine miles away in Georgiana in the Hank Williams Boyhood Home.

A stage behind the museum hosts the annual Hank Williams Festival the first weekend of June, reuniting fans, current country musicians and surviving members of his Drifting Cowboys band.

Sixty miles north on I-65, officially named the Hank Williams Memorial Lost Highway, is Montgomery, the city where the singer began his career with a live radio show while a teenager.

The Hank Williams Museum in downtown Montgomery contains the largest collection of costumes, boots, records, photographs and documents related to the careers of Hank and Audrey Williams. The powder blue Cadillac convertible in which the singer died on Jan. 1, 1953, is on loan from his son, singer Hank Williams, Jr.

The museum is two blocks from the street where Hank Sr. not only began his radio career and won his first talent contest, but it is also the street where he last performed in public four days before his death.

The Montgomery Municipal Auditorium, where 25,000 gathered for his funeral, is on the Trail route. The cemetery where Hank and Audrey Williams are buried is a mile from the auditorium.

A life-sized statue of Hank faces the auditorium across Perry Street. Just a block and a half away on Dexter Avenue is Chris' Hot Dogs, Hank's favorite place to eat. It has been open since 1917.

Many of the signer's personal items are on display at the Alabama Department of Archives & History across the street from the Alabama State Capitol.

On his final weekend while heading to "comeback" gigs in West Virginia and Ohio, Hank and his teenage driver Charles Carr spent the night in Birmingham in rooms on the second floor of the Redmont Hotel.

Displays related to Hank Williams' career are also featured at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in Tuscumbia in northwest Alabama.

For information on the Hank Williams Trail, contact Alabama Tourism, P.O. Box 4927, Montgomery, AL 36103. Phone 1-800-Alabama or visit www.hankwilliamstrail.com.