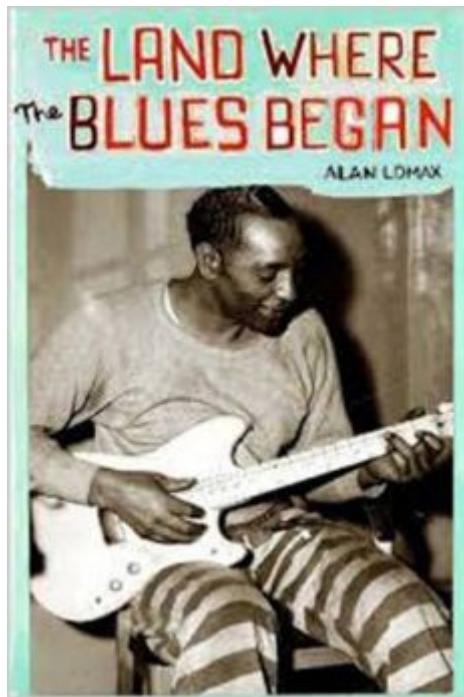


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# The Land Where The Blues Began



## Synopsis

A self-described "song-hunter," the folklorist Alan Lomax traveled the Mississippi Delta in the 1930s and '40s, armed with primitive recording equipment and a keen love of the Delta's music heritage. Crisscrossing the towns and hamlets where the blues began, Lomax gave voice to such greats as Leadbelly, Fred MacDowell, Muddy Waters, and many others, all of whom made their debut recordings with him. *The Land Where the Blues Began* is Lomax's "stingingly well-written cornbread-and-moonshine odyssey" (Kirkus Reviews) through America's musical heartland. Through candid conversations with bluesmen and vivid, firsthand accounts of the landscape where their music was born, Lomax's "discerning reconstructions . . . give life to a domain most of us can never know . . . one that summons us with an oddly familiar sensation of reverence and dread" (The New York Times Book Review). *The Land Where the Blues Began* captures the irrepressible energy of soul of people who changed American musical history. Winner of the 1993 National Critics Circle Award for nonfiction, *The Land Where the Blues Began* is now available in a handsome new paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*The Land Where the Blues Began* is one of the finest books on any subject I've ever read in my life. Every magical benefit of reading came poring forth from its pages, including deep and fascinating discovery, chills, outrage, tears, joy, laughter, amazement and finally, understanding and awe. Alan Lomax embarked on a personal odyssey to the Mississippi Delta serving up one of the great

vicarious thrill rides any reader with a hankering to learn where rock and roll, and rhythm and blues came from. Armed with primitive recording equipment and a lifetime's experience researching the folk and popular music of the world (following in his father's distinguished footsteps in this endeavor), Lomax plunges us directly into the redneck towns and the plantations, where the Blues emerged from a fascinating combination of African musical roots, Folk...Popular...and Church Music, and the hollers which slaves, prisoners, levee workers, rail gangs, mule drivers, sharecroppers and roustabouts would sing out to express their rage, pain, heartsickness, loneliness, hopelessness and frustrations. Finding giants of the blues in dilapidated shacks in the middle of nowhere, Lomax coaxed many into performing for his acetate machines. Also haunting the bars, with names such as the Dipsy Doodle, in the black sectors of heavily segregated towns, Lomax (who is white) repeatedly puts his personal safety in jeopardy as he defies the redneck deputies' orders and ends up swigging homemade whiskey and eating fresh barbecue while recording legendary performances. If all this weren't enough, the book weaves the evolution of the Blues in with poignant memoirs of impoverished childhoods, family life, prison life, farm labor, Jim Crow, unthinkable mistreatment, murder, and devastation.

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