

the farm



It was simply known as the Farm. Staked out by settlers in the Oklahoma land run, it was a 5 bedroom house on 149 acres located just west of what would become Stillwater and Oklahoma State University. The family grew, the kids moved on, and the original settlers died. It sat empty for years. Then, in 1979, a couple of college boys moved in and for the next 20 years it became the unofficial

headquarters of what was to become the Red Dirt music scene.

There's really no need to go into detail about who was there, why they were there, or how they got there. It suffices just to say that they came. And just kept on coming!

The Farm was as much an attitude as a physical structure. It allowed a setting where freedom rang and

all things were possible. Out of this setting came the music.

With the spirit of notable Okie musical forefathers (Woody Guthrie, Bob Wills, Leon Russell) and the Texas Outlaws (Willie, Waylon, Ray Wylie Hubbard) held close, the Farm helped create an openness that made it possible for the music to flourish and grow any way it needed to.

The first major music party featured a reggae band that jammed until well past sun up. From there, a myriad of singers and songwriters, instrumentalists, bands, students, poets, painters, free-thinkers, farmers, and fuzz heads came to the Farm to "get their freak on".

The human focal point at the Farm was the man who held the place together for those 20 years, Danny Pierce. Pierce was the "keeper of the flame". He always made sure the place was fairly clean, the grass was mowed, the bills were paid, and all those that lived there put their \$20 in the rent jar each month. (In 1999 he received a PH.D from OSU) Thanks Danny!

But the music, oh the music! Endless jam sessions around endless campfires. The songs that were written, many still played today. The performances on the porch, in the yard, in the Gypsy Cafe (a garage/venue behind the main house) and inside the Farm itself.

of the Ragweed guys about it. Or Tom Skinner or Mike McClure or Childers. Ask any of the Red Dirt Rangers or the guys who were in Medicine Show. Ask any of the hundreds of musicians or thousands of people who came to Farm parties about it. The Farm will live on for those who remember. The music from there lives on today. It's heard at every Stoney LaRue show, in every Jimmy LaFave song, and even on every Garth Brooks record. It was a special place in space and time. The thing that was the Farm still is the Farm. The house burned to the ground in '03 but the spirit of the place will remain in our hearts, in our souls, and in our music.

John Cooper moved into the Farm with his friend Danny Pierce and lived there from '79 thru '87. He is a founding member of the Red Dirt Rangers and currently resides in Payne county, where the Farm was located.



~John Cooper
www.reddirtrangers.com

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