



**DYLAN'S**  
**AMERICA**  
**UNCUT**

**A UNIQUE GUIDE TO THE  
UNITED STATES OF BOB**

# UNCUT DYLAN'S AMERICA



## FIND OUT

«Where Dylan claimed to have grown up as an orphan»

«Who lived in Ashtabula»

«Where Dylan worked in a diner»

«How The Never Ending Tour started»

«Where Dylan wrote *Blood On The Tracks*»

«Who rode over Niagara Falls in a skull»

Uncut's *Dylan's America* was written and compiled by  
Allan Jones, Damien Love, Nigel Williamson and John Robinson

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# DYLAN'S AMERICA

## 1 CALIFORNIA

"Hard Times In New York Town", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3 (1991)*. Written 1961

"I'll take all the mesquite in Cal-i-for-ne-ay / 'N' every bit of dust in the Oklahoma plains / 'N' the dirt in the caves of the Rocky Mountain Mines / It's all much cleaner than the New York kind." Dylan sang on "Hard Times In New York Town", wryly putting down the town where he was shortly to become a star. "The coast of California" is further evoked on 1963's "Farewell", an unreleased outtake from *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. In "Yea! Heavy And A Bottle Of Bread", from *The Basement Tapes*, California's the destination after "headin' out for Wichita in a pile of fruit". It's also where the singer's former girlfriend runs off to with her new boyfriend in "Sign On The Window", from 1970's *New Morning*.

## 2 CONCORD

The Never Ending Tour begins at the Concord Pavilion on June 7, 1988. Dylan is backed by a three-piece band, featuring GE Smith (guitar), Chris Parker (drums) and Kenny Aaronson (bass), with a guest appearance by Neil Young. Dylan performs a 13-song set, opening with the first-ever live performances of "Subterranean Homesick Blues" and "Absolutely Sweet Marie". The tour subsequently has featured 16 musicians in at least 14 different lineups. Among the special guests at shows over the years have been Bruce Springsteen, Neil Young, Willie Nelson, Patti Smith, Van Morrison, Roger McGuinn, Paul Simon, Ronnie Wood, Tom Petty, Bono, Chrissie Hynde, Jack White and Elvis Costello.

## 3 SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco has been home since 1951 to poet/publisher Lawrence Ferlinghetti and his City Lights bookstore, the spiritual HQ of the beats on the West Coast. Dylan wrote to Ferlinghetti as a young man and the poet performed at The Band's Last Waltz Concert at San Francisco's Winterland. San Francisco gets its first mention in a Dylan song as early as 1961's "Hard Times In New York Town" ("It's a mighty long ways from the Golden Gate / To Rockefeller Plaza 'n' the Empire State") - and is further mentioned in *Freewheelin'...*'s "Down The Highway", *The Basement Tapes*' "Tiny Montgomery", "You're Going To Make Me Lonesome When You Go" - sandwiched between Honolulu and Ashtabula. The Golden Gate Bridge also features in 1985 album *Empire Burlesque*'s "Clean-Cut Kid" - the 'kid' of the title jumps off it, wearing boxing gloves. "I always like San Francisco. I was there for a party once," Dylan recalls more jovially on *Knocked Out Loaded*'s "Maybe Someday".

## 4 CANNERY ROW

"Sad-Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands", *Blonde On Blonde (1966)*

A waterfront street in Monterey, California, Cannery Row was the setting for John Steinbeck's novel of the same name and also features in Dylan's epic love song, in which "sheet-metal" memories of the Row are attributed to the subject of the song's affections.

## 5 SOLEDAD PRISON

"George Jackson", 1971 single

The prison in California's Salinas Valley where Black Panther George Jackson wrote *Soledad Brother*. He was shot dead in August 1971, allegedly attempting to escape from San Quentin. Three months later Dylan released "George Jackson" ("He couldn't take shit from no-one / He couldn't bow down or kneel") as a standalone 7".

## 6 CARMEL

After appearing at the Monterey Folk Festival in May 1963, Dylan stayed with Joan Baez at her home here on the Pacific coast. It was the start of their affair. Later that year he began writing the manuscript that became the 'novel' *Tarantula* (officially published 1971) at her house.

## 7 BAKERSFIELD

The birthplace of Merle Haggard in 1937 and the home of Californian country music, with its own twanging style, quite distinct from the Nashville sound. Dylan's "Workingman's Blues #2" on 2006's *Modern Times* was inspired by Haggard's similarly titled song.

## 8 POINT DUME

Dylan bought a house on the peninsula here, near Malibu, in 1972. He and then-wife Sara had it heavily refurbished (including the addition of a striking onion dome), but by 1974 she had moved out. Dylan kept the property and the Traveling Wilburys convened here in his garage in 1988.

## 9 HOLLYWOOD

"Things Have Changed", *The Essential Bob Dylan (2000)*

"This place ain't doing me any good / I'm in the wrong town, I should be in Hollywood" Dylan sings on 2000's "Things Have Changed", his first new song since *Time Out Of Mind*, three years earlier. It was written for the Curtis Hanson film, *Wonder Boys*, and happily enough won Dylan an Oscar and a Golden Globe award. Dylan for years has had a replica of his Academy Award on stage with him on the Never Ending Tour.

## 10 RESEDA

The Vineyard Fellowship to which Dylan belonged in his 'born again' years was located in the San Fernando Valley but held Bible study classes above a real-estate office in this LA suburb. Dylan attended four days a week for three months in early 1979.

## 11 SANTA MONICA

Dylan rehearsed and recorded here at Rundown Studios on Main Street between 1977-81. He abandoned the building after filmmaker Howard Alk committed suicide there. Dylan almost met his own end in Santa Monica's St John's Hospital in May 1997, after contracting a life-threatening heart infection, brought on by histoplasmosis.

## 12 LOS ANGELES

"Who Killed Davey Moore?", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3 (1991)*. Written 1963

Performed for the first time at Dylan's New York Town Hall concert on April 12, 1963. "Who Killed Davey Moore?" was Dylan's angry response to the death of the boxer who gives his name to the song. Moore was featherweight champion of the world and in a bloody contest in Los Angeles against Cuban biter Ulfimino 'Sugar' Ramos was beaten into a coma. He died three days after the fight, provoking a clamour for the abolition of professional boxing.

## 13 TARZANA

In 1989 Dylan bought a marital home for himself and the second Mrs D - backing singer Carolyn Dennis - at 5430 Shirley Ave in this anonymous LA suburb. Dennis kept the property following their 1992 divorce.

## 14 ARLINGTON

"Gypsy Lou", unreleased (written early 1960s)  
See under Arkansas [No 74]

## 15 SEATTLE

"Ballad Of Donald White", unreleased (written 1962)

In Dylan's telling of his story, Donald White, a 24-year-old black man, born in Kansas City, fetches up in "the old Northwest, Seattle, Washington", where a life of petty criminality leads first to desperation then murder. In *A Volcano Named White*, the TV documentary that inspired the song, White is interviewed on Death Row, where he's waiting to be hanged, the world in his opinion to blame for a life gone wrong. Dylan recorded the song for radio in June 1962 and never returned to it.

## 16 THE GRAND COULEE DAM

"Idiot Wind", *Blood On The Tracks (1975)*

Like the adult child to Dylan's great put-down anthems of the '60s, such as "Positively 4th Street", this is *Blood On The Tracks*' great hate-hymn, displaying his wit at its meanest. It's the song single-handedly responsible for the record being dubbed "the divorce album". The furious and weary narrator is besieged by the world, confronted everywhere - in the press, in the street, in his house - by people who relate to him not as who he is, but as who they think he should be. What has really set his horror raging, however, is the stark realisation that even his lover, the "sweet lady" with whom he thought he'd found shelter, has no idea who he is either. When he looks up from their broken relationship, he finds

the force of their separation has derailed all America. Everywhere around are fatal accidents, blood, war, fire, flies, crucifixion, lightning. Even the Grand Coulee Dam, the great man-made wonder Woody Guthrie once eulogised, has been touched. Slashed along by white-fingered stabs of organ, played by Dylan with all the jagged gothic fury of a betrayed Phantom Of The Opera, it's a soaring, swirling spew that lays waste to the landscape.

## 17 OREGON

"Gypsy Lou", unreleased (written 1962)  
See under Arkansas [No 74]

## 18 IDAHO

"Let Me Die In My Footsteps", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3 (1991)*. Written 1962

See under Nevada [No 19]

## 19 NEVADA

"Let Me Die In My Footsteps", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3 (1991)*. Written 1962

Dylan's first recognised 'anthem' - composed a month before "Blowin' In The Wind" - "Let Me Die In My Footsteps" is a defiant response to the threat, very real at the time, of a nuclear holocaust. Dylan in the song preferring to stand his ground rather than hide under it in a fall-out shelter. It also celebrates the country he loves with the vigour of vintage Guthrie: "Go out in your country where the land meets the sun / See the craters and the canyons where the water falls run / Nevada, New Mexico, Idaho / Let every state in the union seep down in your souls..."

## 20 UTAH

"Ballad For A Friend", unreleased (written 1963)

"Sign On The Window", *New Morning (1970)*

"Ballad For A Friend" evokes a tangible nostalgia for the North Country of Dylan's youth. Here a teenage friendship, possibly imagined, is touchingly recalled, the friend for whom the song is written lost to the singer - "dead on a Utah road" after being hit by a truck.

One of six songs recorded for a publishing demo for Leeds Music in January 1963, it was originally called "Reminiscence Blues". "Sign On The Window", meanwhile, that great ballad from *New Morning*, features one of that album's most famous verses. "Build me a cabin in Utah / Marry me a wife, catch rainbow trout / Have a bunch of kids who call me 'Pa' / That must be what it's all about," Dylan declares, but even as he's singing these lines you feel he no longer believes that domesticity will bring him happiness.

## 21 LAS VEGAS

"Went To See The Gypsy", *New Morning (1970)*

This was written about a trip Dylan made with his wife to Las Vegas in 1970, where at the International Hotel, they saw Elvis Presley - the 'Gypsy' of the song's title, who is invested by Dylan with supernatural powers.

## 22 ARIZONA

"Let Me Die In My Footsteps", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3 (1991)*. Written 1962

See under Nevada [No 19]

## 23 PHOENIX

Increasingly harassed in New York by obsessive fans - including the notorious AJ Weberman [see *Greenwich Village panel*] - Dylan moved his family to the Southwest, where they lived quietly in Phoenix for most of 1972.

## 24 GALLUP, NEW MEXICO

"Dusty Old Fairgrounds", unreleased (written early 1960s)

Dylan boasted of a colourful past when he arrived in NYC. In one version, he was an orphan raised in Gallup, New Mexico; spent six years working on a carry around the Mid-West; was a motorcycle racer in the Dakotas; a farm hand in Sioux Falls; met Woody Guthrie in California and played with Gene Vincent in Nashville. Not a single word was true. See also Florida [No 119]

# DYLAN'S AMERICA

## 25 | TOMBSTONE

"Tombstone Blues", *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965)

Recorded on July 19, 1965 the most ferocious cut on *Highway 61 Revisited* is Dylan as proto-punk, a scalding roar that blasts off from a Chuck Berry-style chug, full-tilt into a sulphated, sneering surge of sound. With Michael Bloomfield's lightning guitar biting savagely at his heels, Dylan uses a blues framework to set free one his most fevered – even sickened – freeform lyrics, a flashing chain of images aimed at all society's hypocrisies. The cast in this whirlpool includes Jack the Ripper, John the Baptist, Paul Revere's horse, blues singer Ma Rainey, Beethoven, the frontier bandit queen Belle Starr, a hysterical bride, a medicine man, Gypsy Davey and The King of the Philistines. Along the way, he seems to take a swipe at God, "the commander-in-chief" a swaggering superhero who, in one of Dylan's most quotable lines, quips "the sun's not yellow, it's schicken". Elsewhere, revelling in his mastery of language, he tosses out "the geometry of innocent flesh on the bone".

Tombstone, Arizona, of course, was the site of the Gunfight at the OK Corral, and one of the deadliest places in the West.

In the narration to underrated 1993 movie *Tombstone*, Robert Mitchum describes the town's birth: "Harsh and inhospitable, this had always been an accursed place, a virtual hell on earth where it was thought life itself could never prosper, much less civilisation. Then in 1879, a prospector named Ed Schiefflin set off alone in the Dragoon Mountains. Friends told him he was crazy, that the only thing he'd find would be his tombstone. Instead he found silver, lots of it, and overnight the town sprang up..."

## 26 | MONTANA

"Three Angels", *New Morning* (1970)

"The wildest cut from Montana passes by in a flash" Dylan intones on this somewhat mawkish 'hymn', an image that makes the song more interesting than it perhaps actually is.

## 27 | CHEYENNE

"Gypsy Lou", unreleased (written 1962)

See under *Arkansas* [No 74]

"Wanted Man", unreleased (written 1969)

See under *Shreveport* [No 59]

## 28 | DENVER

"Cry A While", "Love And Theft" (2001)

"Feel like a fighting rooster – feel better than I ever felt" Dylan sings on this raw blues vamp, before adding more ominously: "But the Pennsylvania line's an awful mess and the Denver road is about to melt..." Gypsy Lou [see *Arkansas*, No 74] also passes through Denver in the song to which she gives her name.

## 29 | CRIPPLE CREEK

"Rambling, Gambling Willie", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3* (1991). Written 1962

"Up in the Rocky Mountains in a town called Cripple Creek/There was an all-night poker game, lasted about a week," Dylan sings in this attempt from 1962 to write a picaresque narrative about a mythic itinerant, a colourful outsider, bound by no man's law. Dylan's Will O'Conley roams hither and yon – from Washington, to the Rockies, and down the Mississippi to New Orleans – before being shot in the head by a bad loser in a poker game. "...Willie" was recorded in 1962 for the original pressing of *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* that Dylan recalled prior to release and was one of four tracks he replaced with new songs.

## 30 | COLORADO

"Wanted Man", unreleased (written 1969)

See under *Shreveport* [No 59]

## 31 | TAOS

"Billy", *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid* (1973)

See under *Tularosa* [No 37]

## 32 | RIO PECOS VALLEY

"Billy", *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid* (1973)

See under *Tularosa* [No 37]

## 33 | SAN PEDRO

"Billy", *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid* (1973)

See under *Tularosa* [No 37]

## 34 | ALBUQUERQUE

"Wanted Man", unreleased (written 1969)

See under *Shreveport* [No 59]

## 35 | NEW MEXICO

"Let Me Die In My Footsteps", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3* (1991). Written 1962

See under *Nevada* [No 19]

## 36 | LINCOLN COUNTY

"Señor (Tales Of Yankee Power)", *Street Legal* (1978)

"Señor, señor, do you know where we're headin'/? Lincoln County Road or Armageddon?" Dylan asks in the opening verse of this magisterial track. Lincoln County was where in 1878 a ferocious range war raged in the New Mexico territory, the conflict providing the historical backdrop to Peckinpah's *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*, which Dylan appeared in and wrote the music for. The answer to the song's question may to a certain extent be irrelevant: for Dylan here, every where is a kind of hell.

## 37 | TULAROSA

"Billy (The Ballad Of Billy The Kid)", *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid* (1973)

Dylan wrote a ballad with umpteen verses for the soundtrack to Sam Peckinpah's movie, although the song in its near-entirety is only heard over the closing credits to the 1984 Director's Cut that restored the heavily cut original to something like Peckinpah's original vision for the film. Reflecting the movie's restless itinerancy, Dylan's song roams the Southwest, tracking Billy's flight across New Mexico, from Tularosa, through the Rio Pecos Valley to San Pedro and El Paso. The Taos business cartel who want him dead are also mentioned, and in the restored version we see they also do for Billy's killer, his old friend Garrett. A amazingly, Dylan on the opening night of his 2009 European tour gave a live debut to the song in Sweden.

## 38 | EL PASO

"She's Your Lover Now", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3* (1991). Written 1965

"Billy", *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid* (1973)

"It's true, I just can't recall/San Francisco at all/I can't even remember El Paso, uh, boney..." Dylan sings on the great "She's Your Lover Now", a song seething with jealousy and contempt, written around the same time as *Blonde On Blonde*'s "Visions Of Johanna", but never recorded to Dylan's satisfaction, and eventually released in an abridged version. El Paso is also one of the many places Dylan's "Wanted Man" has a warrant out for him, and on "Billy", written for the Sam Peckinpah movie *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid*, Billy is advised: "Hang on to your woman if you got one/Remember in El Paso, once, you shot one..."

## 39 | AMARILLO

"Brownsville Girl", *Knocked Out Loaded* (1986)

In the epic "Brownsville Girl", Amarillo is where we find the mysterious Henry Porter, who owns "a wreckin' lot outside of town about a mile". About the only thing anyone knows about Henry Porter, meanwhile, is that his name isn't Henry Porter. See also *Brownsville* [No 63]

## 40 | LUBBOCK

Buddy Holly was born and lived all of his short life in this Texas town. Dylan saw him perform in Duluth on January 31, 1959, just three nights before his death in a plane crash on his way to North Dakota.

## 41 | CHAYNEE COUNTY

"John Wesley Harding", *John Wesley Harding* (1967)

According to the three-verse, chorus-less title track of Dylan's 'comeback' album, this was where the notorious Texas gunfighter made a some kind of stand, gunfire no doubt ensuing. In fact, there is no such incident applicable to the noted outlaw. Not that it matters to Dylan, who is anyway more interested in the creation of a mythic identity than historical fidelity.

## 42 | THE NORTH COUNTRY

"North Country Blues", *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964)

The 'North Country' of Minnesota in which Dylan grew up prospered during the first half of the 20th century from rich iron-ore deposits. But once the mining had been exhausted, the region fell into rust-coated decay, graphically chronicled in *The Times They Are A-Changin'*'s "North Country Blues". The area is also referenced in "Ballad For A Friend" and, perhaps most famously of all in "Girl From The North Country", written in '62 for *Freewheelin'*... and reprised on '69's *Nashville Skyline* as a duet with Johnny Cash.

## 43 | FARGO

In his only known job outside music, in 1959 Dylan worked as a busboy at the Red Apple Cafe in this North Dakota town, where Bobby Vee was born. He also played piano at a couple of local gigs with Vee and his band.

## 44 | HIBBING

The mining town in Minnesota where Dylan lived at 2425 Seventh Avenue. In his teens, he hung out at the L&B Cafe and the Moose Lodge on Howard Street, until at 18 he hit the road that would eventually take him to New York. Hibbing is also recalled in "11 Outlined Epitaphs", the sleeve notes for *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, where Dylan describes the "old stone courthouse... decayin' in the wind... long abandoned", the school his mother went to, dogs howling in a local graveyard, a place generally so deserted "it was as though the rains of wartime had left the land bombed-out or shattered".

## 45 | MINNESOTA

"Dusty Old Fairgrounds", unreleased (written early 1960s) See under *Florida* [No 119]

## 46 | DULUTH

Dylan born here on May 24, 1941 to Abraham and Beatrice Zimmerman, who also gave him the Hebrew name Shabtai Zisel ben Avraham. He lived here until 1947, when the family moved 75 miles up country to Hibbing. "Something There Is About You" from 1974's *Planet Waves*, meanwhile, evokes the "phantoms" of Dylan's youth – "Rainy days on The Great Lakes/Walkin' the hills of old Duluth" with characters called "Danny Lopez" and "Ruth".

## 47 | SOUTH DAKOTA

"The Ballad Of Hollis Brown", *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964)

The most harrowingly bleak moment on a stark album is this long unadorned blues, based on the murder ballad "Pretty Polly", and showcasing the young Dylan at his most elemental. As he relentlessly flat-picks the same hypnotic guitar figure, Dylan lays out in spare but nightmarish detail the scene at the South Dakota farm where, as unremitting hardships pile up, the desperate and destitute Hollis Brown is driven to kill his wife, their five children and then himself with a shotgun, rather than endure more misery. Most chillingly, at the close, even as he records their seven bodies lying in the dust, Dylan notes that "somebere in the distance, there's seven new people born" in a cycle that will never be broken. A song of utter hopelessness, Dylan chose it to open his party-pooping set at Live Aid [see *Philadelphia*, No 110]. One of the most abandoned, least-heard Dylan covers came when Iggy Pop cut a poisonous guitar-and-drum-machine version in 1973; never quite officially released, it turned up on the soundtrack to Todd Haynes' Dylan film "I'm Not There".

## 48 | ABERDEEN

"Dusty Old Fairgrounds", unreleased (written early 1960s) See under *Florida* [No 119]

## 49 | CROW RIVER

In the early 1970s, Dylan bought an 80-acre farm on the Crow River, northeast of Minneapolis. He wrote *Blood On The Tracks* here in summer 1974. Several tracks on the LP were recorded nearby at Sound 80 Studios in Minneapolis.

## 50 | MINNEAPOLIS

Dylan enrolled at the University of Minneapolis in autumn 1959, initially living on campus in the Jewish fraternity house, Sigma Alpha Mu. He spent most of his 15 months as a student in bohemian Dinkytown, however, playing at the Ten O'Clock Scholar and The Purple Onion in neighbouring St Paul.

# DYLAN'S AMERICA

**51 | WISCONSIN**  
"Dusty Old Fairgrounds", unreleased (written early 1960s) See under Florida [No 119]

**52 | RED WING**  
"Walls Of Red Wing", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3 (1991)*, Written 1963  
Red Wing, some 40 miles south of Minneapolis, was home to the Minnesota State Reform School, a juvenile detention centre, grimly described by in 1963's "Walls Of Red Wing". Joan Baez recorded a version for her '68 LP, *Any Day Now*.

**53 | MADISON, WISCONSIN**  
Dylan spent Christmas 1960 in Chicago before heading for Madison, Wisconsin to see Pete Seeger perform. On January 23, 1961, he hitched a ride in a '57 Impala Sedan from Madison on a thousand mile drive through Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania to New York.

**54 | OMAHA**  
"I Shall Be Free No 10", *Another Side Of Bob Dylan (1964)*  
"I'm going to ride into Omaha on a horse/Out to the country club and the golf course/Carry the New York Times, shoot a few holes, blow their minds..." busks Bob on this piece of humorous whimsy, during the performance of which he seems greatly amused by his own daft wit, cracks up and has to do a re-take.

**55 | MISSOURI**  
"Tryin' To Get To Heaven", *Time Out Of Mind (1997)*

"When I was in Missouri, they would not let me be/I had to leave there in a hurry, I only saw what they let me see," Dylan sings on one of the major songs from *Time Out Of Mind*, a meditative reflection on love and loss, the vacancy of the present, the richness of times past and the passing of time, full of weary regret and fretful anticipation for what happens next in a life that may actually already have seen too much. The song makes further reference to New Orleans - "where everything is gonna be all right" - and Baltimore, where the singer recalls riding in a buggy with a Miss Mary-Jane.

**56 | KANSAS CITY**  
"Ballad Of Donald White", unreleased (written 1962)  
"Meet Me In The Morning", *Blood On The Tracks (1975)*  
"High Water (For Charley Patton)", *Love And Theft (2001)*

Among the startling images Dylan contrives in "High Water..." is a vision of "Big Joe Turner lookin' east and west/From the dark room of his mind", and arriving on 12th St and Vine in Kansas City and finding nothing but destruction and a hard rain falling. Kansas City is also the hometown of Donald White, the Death Row prisoner Dylan writes about in "Ballad Of Donald White" [see entry for Seattle, No 15]. Kansas is also mentioned in "Meet Me In The Morning".

**57 | WICHITA**  
"Gypsy Lou", unreleased (written 1962)  
See under Arkansas [No 74]

**58 | DALLAS**  
On November 22, 1963 America was stunned when president John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Dylan visited the scene of JFK's murder in February 1964 just three months after the event. He and his companions took a detour of several hundred miles to do so.

**59 | SHREVEPORT**  
"Wanted Man", unreleased (written 1969)  
Composed during the *Nashville Skyline* sessions in February 1969 for Johnny Cash, who performed it six weeks later at his San Quentin concert (where Johnny claimed co-authorship). "Went to sleep in Shreveport, woke up in Abilene," Cash growls on his landmark album, to cheers from the cons. Dylan's "Wanted Man" was evidently so notorious there was a price on his head also in California, Buffalo, Kansas City, Ohio, Mississippi, Albuquerque, Syracuse, Tallahassee and Baton Rouge, not to mention Kansas City, "old Cheyenne" and the whole of California.

**60 | HOUSTON**  
"If You Ever Go To Houston", *Together Through Life (2009)*

On this barnstorming track from the new *Together Through Life*, driven by riffing accordion courtesy of David Hidalgo from Los Lobos, Dylan rowdily advises that "if you ever go to Houston keep your hands in your pockets and your gun-belts tied", and sounds like a man who knows what he's talking about. The Houston Astrodome was also the venue for a second 'Night Of The Hurricane' benefit concert for boxer Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter that in January 1976 turned into a financial disaster - the Astrodome was only a quarter full and the organisers lost over \$50,000.

**61 | SAN ANTONIO**  
Dylan's beloved bluesman Robert Johnson made his first recordings here, at the Blue Bonnet Hotel, where on November 23, 1936 he cut 16 tracks, plus alternative versions, including "Cross Road Blues", "Kind Hearted Woman Blues" and "Come On In My Kitchen". San Antonio - or "San Anton", as he calls it - is also one of the many places the lovers-on-the-lam in "Brownsville Girl" briefly stop over - "We slept near the Alamo, your skin was so tender and soft". In "Lo And Behold", from *The Basement Tapes*, the song's narrator is heading out of San Anton, what he's done wrong unclear, on his way to Tennessee via Pittsburgh.

**62 | CORPUS CHRISTI**  
"Brownsville Girl", *Knocked Out Loaded (1976)*  
In Dylan and Sam Shepard's great musical road movie, the song's narrator and his girlfriend are on the run, like Kit and Holly, perhaps, in *Badlands*. She's impressed when a picture of her desperado boyfriend appears in the *Corpus Christi Tribune*, captioned: 'A man with no alibi.'

**63 | BROWNSVILLE**  
"Brownsville Girl", *Knocked Out Loaded (1986)*

*Knocked Out Loaded* takes its title from the blues standard "Junco Partner", but pretty much sums up the record itself, which sounds like one he just knocked out, while loaded, with booze and, possibly, a bad flu. Not one of the greats, then; but, cussed as ever, in "Brownsville Girl", it contains one of his greatest recordings. Co-written with playwright, actor and former Holy Modal Rounder Sam Shepard, it's Dylan at his most cinematic, a beautifully delivered epic that begins with the narrator recalling an old Gregory Peck movie (1950's *The Gunfighter*), then entering a maze of memories and moments in 17 shifting verses that somehow see the speaker himself caught up in the events of an old B-movie: some bordertown noir of lovers on the run, making for Mexico - Bonnie and Clyde by way of an RKO Robert Mitchum film and Sam Peckinpah. The song began life as the much-bootlegged "Danville Girl", a tip of the hat to Woody Guthrie's "Danville Girl" (with her Danville curl), but the location switch intensified the shimmering, across-the-borderline mood: situated on the US-Mexico border, Brownsville, Texas, is well known as a place of illegal crossings. Shepard has said the song started as an answer to Lou Reed's "Doin' The Things That We Want To" - which itself begins with the narrator attending a Shepard play.

**64 | MICHIGAN**  
"Dusty Old Fairgrounds", unreleased (written early 1960s) See under Florida [No 119]

**65 | JOLIET PRISON**  
"Percy's Song", *Biograph (1985)*, Written 1963  
Recorded for *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, but dropped from the final track listing and unreleased until 1985, this long and windswept ballad about the injustice of a 99-year sentence in Joliet for manslaughter handed down to the singer's friend was memorably recorded in 1969 by Fairport Convention.

**66 | CHICAGO**  
After his initial love affair with the rural blues, it was the tough-edged sound of the Chicago-based Paul Butterfield Blues Band to which Dylan turned when he first went electric in 1965. The sound of Chicago blues continues to run through his music, not least in the influence of Muddy Waters on 2006's *Modern Times*, and the walloping sound of 2009's *Together Through Life*. Dylan's 1974 'comeback' tour with The Band - his first for eight years - also began here, at Chicago Stadium, the start of a 40-show trek in January and February that took Dylan to 21 American cities. Promoter Bill Graham later claimed there had been more than 12 million ticket applications for the dates. The first number Dylan played on the tour's opening night in Chicago was "Hero Blues" - previously never played live. Before *The Flood*, a double album recorded at shows in New York, Seattle, Oakland and Los Angeles, was released in June '74.

**67 | CHAMPAIGN**  
"Champaign, Illinois", unreleased (written 1969)

Written in Nashville around the same time as he knocked off "Wanted Man" for Johnny Cash, "Champaign, Illinois" was recorded by another of Dylan's musical heroes, Carl Perkins. In September 1985, Dylan appeared here at the first Farm Aid concert, just months after his calamitous performance at Live Aid [See also Philadelphia, No 110].

**68 | DAYTON, OHIO**  
Dylan played the 2,000th date of the Never Ending Tour here on October 16, 2007.

**69 | CUMBERLAND RIVER**  
"Floater (Too Much To Ask)", *Love And Theft (2001)*  
See under Ohio River [No 71]

**70 | TENNESSEE RIVER**  
"Floater (Too Much To Ask)", *Love And Theft (2001)* See under Ohio River [No 71]

**71 | OHIO RIVER**  
"Floater (Too Much To Ask)", *Love And Theft (2001)*

"They all got out of here any way they could/The cold rain can give you the shivers/They went down the Ohio, The Cumberland, The Tennessee, All the rest of them rebel rivers," Dylan sings on "Floater...", his prismatic vision of the South a mix of glimmering myth, history and anecdote, where the past and the present are blurred, his imagined world hallucinatory and lost.

**72 | NASHVILLE**  
The home of country music and a major influence on Dylan's pop education. He recorded *Blonde On Blonde*, *John Wesley Harding*, *Nashville Skyline* and *Self Portrait* there, sometimes staying at the home of Johnny Cash in nearby Hendersonville.

**73 | MEMPHIS**  
Home to Elvis Presley and Sun Records and the birthplace of rock 'n' roll. When Presley died in 1977, Dylan claims he didn't speak to anyone for a week. Memphis Minnie was another Dylan hero and, of course, there's "Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again". Dylan's Gypsy Lou [see No 74] ended up there, while in "If I Don't Be There By Morning" - co-written by Dylan with backing singer Helena Springs in 1978, around the time of the *Street Legal* sessions and subsequently recorded by Eric Clapton - the song's narrator, on the lam, has "been runnin' from Memphis to LA". In "Tight Connection To My Heart", the opening track of 1985's *Empire Burlesque*, a "hot-blooded singer" croons "Memphis in June" while someone is "beatin' the devil out of a guy who's wearing a powder-blue wig".

# UNCOMMON GUIDE TO DYLAN'S AMERICA



## LIVE ACROSS AMERICA

From the first electric gigs to the initial legs of The Never Ending Tour...

**1965 FIRST ELECTRIC GIGS**  
 (...with pick-up band, pre-Hawks)  
 July 25 Newport, Rhode Island  
 Aug 28 Forest Hills stadium, New York  
 Sept 3 Hollywood Bowl, L.A., California  
**1965 (...with the Hawks/The Band)**  
 Sept 24 Austin, Texas  
 Sept 25 Dallas, Texas  
 Oct 1 Carnegie Hall, New York City  
 Oct 2 Newark, New Jersey  
 Oct 9 Atlanta, Georgia  
 Oct 15 Baltimore, Maryland  
 Oct 16 Worcester, Massachusetts  
 Oct 17 Princeton, New Jersey  
 Oct 21 Providence, Rhode Island  
 Oct 23 Burlington, Massachusetts  
 Oct 24 Detroit, Michigan  
 Oct 29 Boston, Massachusetts  
 Oct 30 Hartford, Connecticut  
 Oct 31 Boston, Massachusetts  
 Nov 5 Minneapolis, Minnesota  
 Nov 6 Buffalo, New York  
 Nov 12 Cleveland, Ohio  
 Nov 14/15 Toronto, Canada  
 Nov 18 Cincinnati, Ohio  
 Nov 19 Columbus, Ohio

Nov 20 Rochester, New York  
 Nov 21 Syracuse, New York  
 Dec 1 Seattle, Washington  
 Dec 5 San Francisco, California  
 Dec 7 Long Beach, California  
 Dec 9 San Diego, California  
 Dec 11 San Francisco, California  
 Dec 12 San Jose, California  
 Dec 18 Pasadena, California  
 Dec 19 Santa Monica, California  
**1966**  
 Feb 5 White Plains, New York  
 Feb 6 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
 Feb 7 Louisville, Kentucky  
 Feb 10 Memphis, Tennessee  
 Feb 11 Richmond, Virginia  
 Feb 12 Norfolk, Virginia  
 Feb 19 Ottawa, Canada  
 Feb 20 Montreal, Canada  
 Feb 24/25 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
 Feb 26 Hempstead, New York  
 March 3 Miami, Florida  
 March 11 St. Louis, Missouri  
 March 13 Lincoln, Nebraska  
 March 13 Denver, Colorado

**1974 COMEBACK TOUR**  
 (...with The Band)  
 Jan 8 Chicago, Illinois  
 Jan 4 Chicago, Illinois  
 Jan 6 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
 Jan 7 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
 Jan 9, 10 Toronto, Canada  
 Jan 11-12 Montreal, Canada  
 Jan 14 Boston, Massachusetts  
 Jan 15, 16 Washington, DC  
 Jan 17 Charlotte, North Carolina  
 Jan 19 Miami, Florida  
 Jan 21 Atlanta, Georgia  
 Jan 22 Atlanta, Georgia  
 Jan 23 Memphis, Tennessee  
 Jan 25 Fort Worth, Texas  
 Jan 26, 29, 30 Dallas County, New York  
 Jan 30-31 Madison Sq. Gdn., New York  
 Feb 2 Ann Arbor, Michigan  
 Feb 3 Bloomington, Indiana  
 Feb 4 St. Louis, Missouri  
 Feb 6 Denver, Colorado

**THE NEVER ENDING TOUR**  
**First leg: June-August 1988**  
 June 7 Concord, California  
 June 9 Sacramento, California  
 June 10 Berkeley, California  
 June 11 Mountain View, California  
 June 13 Park City, Utah  
 June 15 Englewood, California  
 June 17 St. Louis, Missouri  
 June 18 East Troy, Wisconsin  
 June 21 Columbus Falls, Ohio  
 June 22 Cincinnati, Ohio  
 June 24 Holmdel, New Jersey  
 June 25 Holmdel, New Jersey  
 June 26 Saratoga Springs, New York  
 June 28 Canandaigua, New York  
 June 30 Winstagh, New York  
**July 1** Winstagh, New York  
**July 2** Mansfield, Massachusetts  
**July 3** Old Orchard Beach, Maine  
**July 4** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
**July 8** Montreal, Canada

July 9 Ottawa, Canada  
 July 11 Hamilton, Canada  
 July 13 Charlevoix, Michigan  
 July 15 Indianapolis, Indiana  
 July 17 Rochester, Michigan  
 July 18 Rochester, Michigan  
 July 20 Columbia, Maryland  
 July 22 Nashville, Tennessee  
 July 24 Atlanta, Georgia  
 July 25 Atlanta, Georgia  
 July 26 Memphis, Tennessee  
 July 28 Dallas, Texas  
 July 30 Mesa, Arizona  
 July 31 Costa Mesa, California  
 Aug 2 Hollywood, California  
 Aug 3 Hollywood, California  
 Aug 4 Hollywood, California  
 Aug 6 Carlsbad, California  
 Aug 7 Santa Barbara, California

**THE NEVER ENDING TOUR**  
**Second leg: August-October 1988**  
 Aug 19 Portland, Oregon  
 Aug 20 George, Washington  
 Aug 21 Vancouver, Canada  
 Aug 23 Calgary, Canada  
 Aug 24 Edmonton, Canada  
 Aug 26 Winnipeg, Canada  
 Aug 29 Toronto, Canada  
 Aug 31 Syracuse, New York  
 Sep 2 Middletown, New York  
 Sep 3 Manchester, New Hampshire  
 Sep 4 Bristol, Connecticut  
 Sep 11 Fairfax, Virginia  
 Sep 13 (township), Pennsylvania  
 Sep 15 Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
 Sep 16 Columbia, South Carolina  
 Sep 17 Charlotte, North Carolina  
 Sep 18 Knoxville, Tennessee  
 Sep 19 Charlottesville, Virginia  
 Sep 22 Tampa, Florida  
 Sep 23 Miami, Florida  
 Sep 24 Gainesville, Florida  
 Sep 25 New Orleans, Louisiana  
 Oct 13 Upper Darby, Pennsylvania  
 Oct 14 Upper Darby, Pennsylvania  
 Oct 16, 17, 18, 19 New York City, New York

Corpus  
 ("Brownsville Girl",  
 "Knocked Out Loaded")



# DYLAN'S AMERICA

## 74 | ARKANSAS

"Gypsy Lou", unreleased (written early 1960s)

Dylan's Gypsy Lou is a familiar figure from the blues songs that inspired him – "a ramblin' woman with a ramblin' mind", the rowdy female equivalent of "Rambling, Gambling Willie". The song's narrator follows Lou "the whole country through", picking up her trail in "old Cheyenne", and pursuing her through Denver and Wichita, to Arkansas, then Arlington, Washington and out to Oregon, although by the time he gets there she's back in Arlington. The last he hears of her, "she's in a Memphis calaboose".

## 75 | OXFORD

"Oxford Town", *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1963)

The home of the University of Mississippi and the scene of rioting in 1962 by white protestors opposed to the admission of the campus' first black student, James Meredith. Dylan performed the song he wrote about the incident when he played there in 1991.

## 76 | MUSCLE SHOALS

Dylan recorded *Slow Train Coming* with producer Jerry Wexler at the Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, Alabama between April 30 and May 4, 1979. The studio was established in 1969 by session musicians who had broken away from the nearby FAME studio.

## 77 | MOUNT OLIVE, ALABAMA

The 1923 birthplace – in a log cabin – of Hank Williams, described by Dylan in a 1964 poem for the sleeve note of a Joan Baez album as his "first idol".

## 78 | KINGSLAND

A tiny settlement in Arkansas (total pop. 449 in the 2000 census), but notable as the birthplace in 1932 of Johnny Cash. He only lived there until he was three, but it was enough to ensure geographical immortality.

## 79 | CLARKSDALE

"High Water (For Charley Patton)", *Love And Theft*, 2001

Released on September 11, 2001, "Love And Theft" was a rag-bag of innards plucked from the corpse of 20th century American pop culture, mixed up with portents of fiery skies, dark clouds, thunder rolling, things falling apart that he is able to joke about. The sense he was up to something uncanny, divining weird currents, was intensified when his song "High Water..." seemed to accurately predict the next great tragedy to knock the American psyche, the 2005 devastation of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina. Of course, Dylan didn't know the future, just knew his history, rooting his song in the countless blues that sprang out of the apocalyptic Mississippi flood of 1927; the disaster which helped spawn Delta Blues, as local artists created songs out of their personal miseries. Historically prone to flooding, Clarksdale, Mississippi – "the birthplace of the blues," and supposed location of the crossroads where Robert Johnson met the Devil (at the intersection of Highways 49 and 61) – was badly hit when the levees broke. In particular, though Dylan is thinking of Charley Patton's great, raw 1929 document of the disaster "High Water Everywhere," but Dylan's song also stirs memories of his own careening "Highway 61 Revisited" ("They got Charles Darwin trapped out there on Highway Five"), and looks much further back, factoring in a snippet of the weird ancient ballad, "The Coo Coo Bird". All the while, plucking bluegrass banjo circles merrily, a celebration sound spun around stunned desolation.

## 80 | ALABAMA

"Slow Train", *Slow Train Coming* (1979)  
"Cross The Green Mountain", *Tell Tale Signs* (2008)

"I had a woman down in Alabama/She was a backwoods girl, but she sure was realistic" sings Dylan, recently converted to 'born again' Christianity, on "Slow Train" from *Slow Train Coming*. This was the first of his three 'religious' albums, followed by *Saved* and *Shot Of Love*, widely unpopular among long-standing fans, but nevertheless important works, not easily disregarded. "Stars fell over Alabama" he meanwhile sings on the great Civil War epic, "Cross The Green Valley", from the soundtrack to 2002 movie *Gods And Generals*, which reappeared on 2008's *Tell Tale Signs*.

## 81 | DOCKERY PLANTATION, RULEVILLE

The plantation where Charley Patton grew up and learned the blues. Now marked with an historic Mississippi Blues Trail plaque, other noted blues musicians to have lived on or around Dockery's include Son House, Robert Johnson and Howlin' Wolf.

## 82 | MONEY

"The Death Of Emmett Till", unreleased (written 1961)

The Delta settlement where Emmett Till, a black teenager from Chicago, was killed by white racists in August 1955. Dylan wrote his first protest song about the murder.

## 83 | GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI

Dylan saw the segregated south for himself for the first time when he flew to Mississippi with Pete Seeger and others to attend a black voter registration rally here in July 1963. He performed "Only A Pawn In Their Game" – the song's live debut – and joined in on the civil rights anthem "We Shall Overcome".

## 84 | VICKSBURG

"High Water (For Charley Patton)", *Love And Theft* (2001)

The surrender of the Confederate garrison at Vicksburg to the Union army in July 4, 1863, the day after the South's defeat at Gettysburg, was one of the major turning points of the American Civil War. In Dylan's apocalyptic "High Water...", he imagines water pouring into the Mississippi city and "coffins droppin' in the street".

## 85 | JACKSON

"Only A Pawn In Their Game", *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964)

"Outlaw Blues", *Bringing It All Back Home* (1965)  
Medgar Evers was a civil rights activist working for the National Association for the Advancement Of Coloured People (NAACP) in Mississippi, who was assassinated outside his home in Jackson on June 12, 1963. Less than a month later, Dylan played "Only A Pawn In Their Game" for the first time at the rally in Greenwood he attended with Pete Seeger and recorded it the next month. Jackson is also where in "Outlaw Blues" the singer has a woman, although he "ain't gonna say her name".

## 86 | SELMA

The marches in this Alabama town in March 1965 were a touchstone for the civil rights movement. At the time Dylan was on a joint tour with Joan Baez, who gave support nightly from the stage. He referred to the events in the *Biograph* booklet and in his autobiography, *Chronicles*.

## 87 | MONTGOMERY

Martin Luther King Jr preached for six years in this key Alabama town in the civil rights struggle. It was also the home of Rosa Parks and the famous bus boycott. The third Selma march, led by Dr King, arrived here on March 25, 1965.

## 88 | MISSISSIPPI

"Mississippi", *Love And Theft* (2001)

The world first got to hear "Mississippi" when Dylan gave the song to Sheryl Crow, who buried it away in a dim, lacklustre, over-sugared version on her 1998 album *The Globe Sessions*. It wasn't until he released his own shining, self-produced recording in 2001 that the song stood revealed as one of the greatest compositions of his late career. A quite majestic thing, it has Dylan cast, yet again, as the nameless "stranger nobody sees" come from the country to the town, and turning over perennial concerns of loneliness, the inability to really know other people or be known by them, and the relentless passing of time: "Four days are numbered, so are mine/Time is piling up, we struggle and we scrape/All boxed in, nowhere to escape..." All the same, even as he's "drowning in the poison" there's a strident, defiant optimism about the recording, as he insists "my heart is not weary, it's light and it's free, I've got nothing but affection for all those who've sailed with me". Dylan had earlier tried recording the song for inclusion on *Time Out Of Mind* but was dissatisfied with the results – although, God knows why, given how beautiful his very first take was: a very different, stripped-down, lilting blues lullaby that finally saw light of day on 2008's *Tell Tale Signs* Bootleg Series set.

Mississippi is further referenced in "Rambling, Gambling Willie", "Poor Boy Blues", "The Ballad Of Emmett Till", "Oxford Town" and "Wanted Man".

## 89 | ANGOLA

The site of Louisiana State Penitentiary where Leadbelly served time for murder in the 1930s. Dylan was given a set of Leadbelly 78s at his graduation party in 1959 and a number of Leadbelly songs featured in Dylan's early repertoire.

## 90 | BATON ROUGE

"Wanted Man", unreleased (written 1969)

See under *Shreveport* [No 59]

## 91 | NEW ORLEANS

Inspired by the spirit of Kerouac's *On The Road*, Dylan and a bunch of friends spent three weeks driving across the country in early '64, arriving in the Crescent City for Mardi Gras. He began writing "Mr Tambourine Man" there and returned 25 years later to record *Ob Mercy*, "Bob Dylan's New Orleans Rag", one of the new songs given its debut at the April 1963 New York Town Hall concert is a raffish, rueful account of a visit to a New Orleans bordello, originally scheduled for the unreleased *Bob Dylan In Concert* album. New Orleans is also mentioned in "Rambling, Gambling Willie", "Brownsville Girl" and "Tryin' To Get To Heaven".

## 92 | MOBILE

"Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again", *Blonde On Blonde* (1966)

"That thin, that wild mercury sound," was how Dylan once famously described the sound he hears in his head. Just as famously, he named *Blonde On Blonde* – the double album largely blasted out in two three-day sessions in February and March 1966 with the session musicians of Columbia's Nashville studios. Dylan often writing on the hoof in the studio – as the record that came closest to capturing it: "Stuck Inside Of Mobile With The Memphis Blues Again" is one of the album's wildest, most mercurial long moments, a freewheeling ride through the chaotic whirl that was Dylan's existence in 1966, the sound of the insanity smashing against him. Driven by precise guitar solos and Al Kooper's gleeful, bubbling organ, it's a dive-down a rabbit's hole of not-quite nonsense, the narrator trapped inside an absurd world.



# DYLAN'S AMERICA

surrounded by "neon madmen" and unable to communicate with anyone around him. Knowing there's no escape, he's reduced to "waiting to find out what price you have to pay to get out of going through all these things twice". From WC Handy on, many blues artists recorded songs called "Memphis Blues". There are two candidates for Mobile: the town in Alabama, built on slavery and cotton trade; or the community in Arizona, specifically founded in the 1930s as a place for African-Americans to live. Of course, Dylan was most likely just alert to the perverse notion of being stuck in a place called Mobile.

## 93 | DELACROIX "Tangled Up In Blue", *Blood On The Tracks* (1975)

*Blood On The Tracks'* majestic opener skips, rolls and tumbles all across America, from the East Coast to out West, from The Great North Woods down to New Orleans and Delacroix Island, the tiny community just south, where the road runs out and the drifting narrator winds up working on a fishing boat. "Tangled Up In Blue" is the key to the album, the song that contains all the songs to follow. Women, love and, most of all, being adrift in the ocean of time are the album's subjects. Dylan tells the same tale of abandoned love over and over across the album, sometimes playing the lover who gets left, sometimes the lover who leaves, and sometimes the narrator who records it all from a distance. Here, he's playing all at once. The song jump-cuts around like a Jack Kerouac novel viewed through a kaleidoscope, time and perspective sliding and colliding. "I wanted to defy time," Dylan said of it in 1985, "so that the story took place in the present and the past at the same time."

## 94 | NIAGARA FALLS "Man Of Peace", *Infidels* (1983)

"He can be fascinating, he can be dull/He can ride down Niagara in the barrels of your skull," Dylan sings on this song from *Infidels*, which imagines a smooth-talking, duplicitous Satan as an agent of insidious evil, charming but malign, his demonic intent disguised by reassuring words, but ruin and disaster riding in his wake.

## 95 | BUFFALO "Wanted Man", unreleased (written 1969)

See under *Shreveport* [No 59]

## 96 | ATTICA "Joey", *Desire* (1976)

See under *Brooklyn* [No 107]

## 97 | SYRACUSE "Wanted Man", unreleased (written 1969)

See under *Shreveport* [No 59]

## 98 | LOWELL

The Massachusetts town where Jack Kerouac was born in 1922 and buried in 1969. Dylan and Ginsberg visited his grave in Edson Cemetery during the Rolling Thunder tour, a scene which is featured in the film *Renaldo & Clara*.

## 99 | BOSTON "Highlands", *Time Out Of Mind* (1997)

Dylan chose Robert Burns' "My Love Is Like A Red, Red Rose" as his inspiration as part of HMV's advertising campaign in 2008, but gave a far bigger doff of the cap to the Scottish bard with *Time Out Of Mind's* astonishing final track. Built around Burns' 18th-century poem, "My Heart's In The Highlands",

the narrator turns again and again to an idealised vision of some ersatz-Scottish pastoral retreat: an imagined escape he'll reach someday, where bluebells blaze, Aberdeen waters flow and highlands and border country are somehow jumbled together. In the meantime, he floats like a bubble through contemporary American city streets, regarding life around him from an almost narcotised distance: "everything looks far away," he mutters; yet he describes the moments smashing into him in piercing close-up. The centrepiece is his long, seven-verse description of an unsettlingly absurd encounter with a belligerent waitress in an empty restaurant in Boston. Woozy, bright and shadowy, ticking and unwinding over an endless, spacey 17 minutes of dream-time, the song is a slight return to those epic hallucinatory closers of the '60s, "Desolation Row" and "Sad Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands", but more baffled, wry, ominous and entrancingly addled than before. Piano-player Jim Dickinson recalls: "When we finished 'Highlands', one of the managers came out and said, 'Well, Bob, have you got a short version of that song?' And Dylan looked at him and said: 'That *was* the short version.'"

## 100 | PLYMOUTH

On October 30, 1975, Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue tour opened at the War Memorial Auditorium in Plymouth, Massachusetts, with a stellar cast including Joan Baez, sharing the stage with Dylan for the first time in a decade, Roger McGuinn, Bob Neuwirth, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Allen Ginsberg and a band featuring T-Bone Burnett, Mick Ronson, Rob Stoner, Steven Soles and David Mansfield.

## 101 | WOODSTOCK

Dylan bought a house here on Camelot Road, Byrdcliffe in 1966. The famous motorcycle crash that July occurred on the road to manager Albert Grossman's house in nearby Bearsville. *The Basement Tapes* were recorded close by during 1967 at Big Pink, the house The Band had rented West Saugerties. In 1969, Dylan moved to a mansion on Ohayo Mountain Road, but soon abandoned it and returned to NYC. Dylan famously turned down an appearance at the 1969 Woodstock festival, but was on the bill for the 1994 festival.

## 102 | NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

The Newport Folk festival became an annual event in 1959 and was a vital date on the calendar for thousands of America's earnest folkies. When Dylan first played there in 1963 and 1964, he was the crowd's young hero, cheered for his protest songs, the noble upholder of traditional virtues. In 1965, however, Bob famously plugged in and shocked them with electric versions of "Maggie's Farm" and "Like A Rolling Stone", after which nothing was quite the same. See also Murray Lerner's film *The Other Side Of The Mirror*, which has astonishing footage of Dylan at the festival.

## 103 | BEAR MOUNTAIN "Talkin' Bear Mountain Picnic Massacre Blues", *The Bootleg Series Volumes 1-3*, 1991 (written 1961)

A popular song in Dylan's early Greenwich Village sets and recorded for his debut album before being discarded, "Talkin' Bear Mountain..." was inspired by a newspaper account of the disastrous charter of the Hudson Belle riverboat by the Harlem Social Club for an excursion to Bear Mountain State Park in the Hudson Valley, upstate New York.

## 104 | ASHTABULA "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go", *Blood On The Tracks* (1975)

One-time Columbia A&R rep Ellen Bernstein has said her relationship with Dylan during his separation from wife Sara partly inspired elements of *Blood On The Tracks*, and this song in particular. A yawping not-quite-love song, it's the most plainly upbeat moment on that great, wounded masterpiece. Dylan revelling in a moment of bucolic bliss, already undercut by his certain knowledge that it isn't going to last. The song paints a picture of an easy, idyllic affair, one that sets the countryside around blooming like a Disney cartoon, sung by a man less in love with a particular person than with the idea of love itself. Like the woman glimpsed in the song, Bernstein had "crimson hair" and recalls pointing out white Queen Anne's lace flowers to Dylan while walking the fields around his Minnesota farm. Her claim that this is her song is borne out by the moment Dylan, revelling in his mastery of words with a mischief reminiscent of his younger self, bends "Honolulu" to fit in a rhyming mention for Ashtabula - Bernstein's Ohio hometown.

## 105 | NEW YORK

"I slammed the door shut behind me, waved goodbye, stepped out onto the hard snow. The biting wind hit me in the face. At last I was here in New York City," Dylan recalls in his autobiography *Chronicles*. It was January 24, 1961 and he headed straight for Greenwich Village and Café Wha? at 115 MacDougal Street. Over the coming months, he played there regularly and also at Gerde's Folk City on West Fourth Street; The Gaslight and The Commons on MacDougal and the Bitter End and the Village Gate on Bleecker Street. After staying for a time in Miki Isaacson's apartment at 1 Sheridan Square, he and Suze Rotolo took an apartment at 161 West Fourth Street. He later stayed regularly at the Earle Hotel, Washington Square with Joan Baez and in 1965 moved into the Chelsea Hotel, with Sara Lownds and her daughter, Maria.

On his return to NYC in late '69, he lived at 94 MacDougal Street. When putting together the Rolling Thunder Revue in '75, he lived on Houston Street and stayed at the Gramercy Park Hotel. Uptown landmarks include Columbia's Studio A on Seventh Avenue where he recorded his first five albums; Carnegie Hall, where he made his first public appearance after the motorcycle crash and Madison Square Garden, the site of the Concert for Bangla Desh (1971) and his own 30th anniversary bash (1992).

Finally, there are lyrical references in "Talking New York"; "Hard Times In New York Town"; "Down The Highway"; "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream"; "Spanish Harlem Incident"; "Positively Fourth Street"; "Tangled Up In Blue"; "Joey"; "Hurricane"; "Sara" and "Where Are You Tonight? (Journey Thru Dark Heat)". See also *Greenwich Village* panel overleaf

## 106 | NEWARK

The New Jersey birthplace of Allen Ginsberg, born there in 1926. Dylan first met the poet in 1963 and they remained friends and occasional collaborators until Ginsberg's death in 1997.

# DYLAN'S AMERICA

## 107 | BROOKLYN "Joey", *Desire* (1976)

On April 7 1972, Brooklyn mobster "Crazy Joe" Gallo was gunned down by three killers while celebrating his 43rd birthday with family in Umberto's Clam House in New York's Little Italy. Dylan and his co-writer, playwright Jacques Levy, shared some acquaintances with the gangster, and penned *Desire's* swooning epic "Joey" in tribute. A romanticised biography, the song, haunted by fluttering café accordion, sketches Gallo's swaggering life and death: from his birth in the Red Hook neighbourhood, through his street fighting years and 10-year stretch in the infamous Attica prison, to the moment of his murder and aftermath of his funeral, as "the sun turned cold over President Street and the town of Brooklyn mourned." A vitriolic review from critic Lester Bangs accused Dylan of dabbling in mafia-chic, glamorising a ruthless assassin and racist thug. In 1981, Dylan defended the song to DJ Dave Herman as being in a folk tradition that stretched back to the ballads of Robin Hood. "It amazes me that I would write a song about Joey Gallo... [but] if I didn't who would?"

## 108 | PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

"Day Of The Locusts", *New Morning* (1970)  
In 1970, Dylan was awarded an honorary degree by this Ivy League institution. He invited David Crosby to attend the ceremony with him and chronicled the experience in the song, "Day Of The Locusts", in which the acid-tripping Crosby is the man whose "head was exploding".

## 109 | NEW JERSEY "Hurricane", *Desire* (1976)

In Paterson, New Jersey, on June 17, 1966, at the Lafayette Grill three men were brutally murdered on a "hot New Jersey night", shootings subsequently attributed to boxer Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter, who was subsequently indicted for triple murder and given a life sentence. Convinced of his innocence, a decade later Dylan visited him in Rahway State Prison and wrote the epic "Hurricane" about him. The first leg of the Rolling Thunder Tour, meanwhile, culminated with the 'Night Of The Hurricane' concert at Madison Square Garden. When he first arrived in New York, Dylan became a regular visitor to the bedside of the ailing Woody Guthrie, hospitalised with Huntington's Chorea at Greystone Park Hospital.

## 110 | PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia's RFK stadium was the scene of Dylan's notoriously shambolic Live Aid performance on July 13, 1985. Windily introduced by Jack Nicholson as "one of America's great voices of freedom - the transcendent Bob Dylan", Bob was meant to bring the concert to a suitably heady climax. Instead, he shuffled on stage looking nervous and distracted, in the charismatic but woefully hapless company of Keith Richards and Ronnie Wood. What followed was a musical debacle, and if this wasn't for many horrific enough, Dylan, looking increasingly distraught, followed "Ballad Of Hollis Brown" with a plea to Live Aid organisers to divert some of the money donated to Africa's starving millions to American farmers, to pay off their mortgages. Bob Geldof, watching from London, was apoplectic. "It was a crass, stupid and nationalistic thing to say," he raged. Dylan's remarks struck a chord in America, however, and two months later, he redeemed himself

musically, at least, at the first Farm Aid concert in Illinois, Willie Nelson and Neil Young both coming out in support. "Proof positive," said *Rolling Stone*, "that when Bob Dylan mutters, the world still listens."

## 111 | ATLANTIC CITY "Caribbean Wind", *Biograph* (1985)

Written ca 1979/80

"Atlantic City by the cold grey sea / I bear a voice cryin' 'Daddy', I always think it's for me," Dylan sings on this fragmented, allusive outtake from *Shot Of Love*, which was also one of the highlights of Dylan's shows at San Francisco's Warfield Theatre in November 1980.

## 112 | WILMINGTON

The port in Delaware where the future Sara Dylan was born Shirley Marlin Noznisky in 1939. Her father was shot dead during an argument there in 1956. She moved to NYC in 1960, where she met Dylan four years later.

## 113 | BALTIMORE

"The Lonesome Death Of Hattie Carroll", *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964)

Long before *The Wire* got there, Dylan laid out how race, class, corruption and violence intertwined in Baltimore society in this stark, piercing "finger-pointing" ballad of 1963. Ripped from the pages of the day's newspapers, but set in a timeless frame, the song recounts the true story of how a young, wealthy and well-connected Maryland tobacco farmer, 24-year-old William Zantlinger, drunk during a night on the town, struck black hotel barmaid Hattie Carroll with his cane when he felt she was slow in bringing him his bourbon. Carroll, a 51-year-old mother of 11, died from a brain haemorrhage a few hours later. Zantlinger got six months - but lived the rest of his life under the heavy sentence of Dylan's song. He died in January 2009, aged 69.

## 114 | WASHINGTON DC

On August 28, 1963 Dylan joined Martin Luther King on his march on the capital and sat feet away from him on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial as he made his 'I Have A Dream' speech. Afterwards, Dylan performed "Only A Pawn In Their Game" and "Blowin' In The Wind".

Washington is also mentioned in "Rambling, Gambling Willie" - "He gambled in the White House and in the railroad yards" - "Quit Your Low Down Ways" and "Idiot Wind".

## 115 | ATLANTA

Home for many years to Blind Willie McTell, who was discovered and first recorded here in 1927. Coincidentally, Dylan recorded his song "Blind Willie McTell" in 1983 on the 80th anniversary of the Georgia bluesman's birth.

## 116 | GEORGIA "Po' Boy", *Love And Theft* (2001)

See under Florida [No 119]

## 117 | MACON

The birthplace in 1932 of Little Richard, 'The Georgia Peach'. Dylan wrote in his 1959 high school yearbook that his ambition was "to join Little Richard" and one of his early juvenile compositions was titled "Hey Little Richard".

## 118 | TALLAHASSEE "Wanted Man", unreleased (written 1969)

See under Shreveport [No 59]

## 119 | FLORIDA "Dusty Old Fairgrounds", unreleased (written early 1960s)

"Po' Boy", *Love And Theft* (2001)

Dylan's self-mythologising when he arrived in New York in 1961 knew no bounds. He'd already tried to pass himself as an orphan, raised in Gallup, New Mexico, who subsequently worked in the Mid-West in carnivals, a motorcycle racer, and a farm hand - a completely fabricated history further embellished by this fictionalised account of a youth spent working with a travelling fair, from Florida, to Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Aberdeen, the Black Hills of Dakota, St Petersburg and "the sands of old Montana". It's also in Florida - "dodgin' them Georgia laws" - that the narrator of "Po' Boy" finds himself in an establishment called the Palace Of Gloom, where he "calls down to room service, says send up a room".

## 120 | ST PETERSBURG "Dusty Old Fairgrounds", unreleased (written early 1960s) See under Florida [No 119]

## 121 | MIAMI

In January 1997, Dylan and producer Daniel Lanois moved into Criteria Studios, Miami and over 11 days recorded *Time Out Of Mind*. Eric Clapton and The Allman Brothers are among other famous acts to have used the studio. The Florida city is also namechecked on "Caribbean Wind", from *Biograph*: "I was playing a show in Miami in the theater of divine comedy..."

## HIGHWAY 61 "Highway 61 Revisited", *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965)

Now eroded by the interstates, the staggering American highway had one end in the Gulf of Mexico at New Orleans and the other in Thunder Bay, Ontario, up along the chilly Canadian border; and on its way, it ran right through the small town of Duluth, Minnesota. The great south-north artery, it was the road jazz and blues first travelled up, the blacktop equivalent to the Mississippi River, which Highway 61 runs alongside for a great stretch. All the culture the young Dylan soaked up came pouring at him along that route, and in turn it offered his metaphorical escape out of his cold parochial surroundings, down into that big world. Countless bluesman had cut songs about Highway 61 before Dylan revisited it and turned it inside out as the totemic title track of his incredible 1965 album, the record that marked his next great escape, out of the folk straightjacket and into the chaotic freedom of his own kind of electric rock 'n' roll. Thumping, galloping, almost out of control, the track is Dylan at his wildest, mixing up the beat poets and The Bible in a savagely gleeful apocalyptic nonsense rhyme. Many have noted that the opening reference to the story of God testing Abraham could also be a reference to his own father, Abe, with Dylan as the son who has to be killed. It also features the best slide-whistle in rock.

ROUTE 66  
Winding 2,000 miles from Chicago to Los Angeles, Route 66 is the most celebrated road in American popular culture. Dylan never specifically hymned the route in song, but it's there running down the core of his work like an invisible super-highway.

# UNCUT