

Kinston's Tobacco Warehouses: Music Venues and Dance Halls ^[1]

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by the North Carolina Arts Council.

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A tobacco town, Kinston was dotted with large tobacco warehouses which served as music venues and dance halls, as well as centers of regional commerce. The warehouses were frequent stops for some of the world's most famous jazz bands in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Advertising Cab Calloway's 1947 appearance, the *Kinston Daily Free Press* noted that it was the only stop the band would make in eastern North Carolina on its tour, an indication that Kinston had a large enough base of ticket-buying music lovers to attract performers of that caliber.

After the big-band era, Kinston's tobacco warehouses hosted major rhythm and blues bands. According to Michael Moseley [vocalist and mental health professional, originally from Kinston], "Fats Domino would come through, Chubby Checker and all of those acts came to little old Kinston. It was pretty centrally located between the major [military] bases, and so everybody came to Kinston."

Ray Charles's visit remembered

Ray Charles's visit to Kinston was remembered by many, among them the saxophonist [Maceo Parker](#) ^[2], a leading innovator in funk and jazz music:

I got into Ray Charles really early—really, really, really early. And he came to perform here, once or twice before we graduated from high school. I mean, Ray Charles, my goodness! It was a lot of segregated stuff back then, too. I used toثير

James Brown's visit remembered: The Night the Fence Went Down

[Alfred Fisher](#) ^[3] a retired chemist and African American resident of Pamlico County, reminisced about coming inland for dances at Kinston's tobacco warehouses in a 2007 interview with David Cecelski with the *Raleigh News & Observer* ("Alfred Fisher: Bay River," August 12, 2007).

I remember one night James Brown came to Kinston. He was late. He got there about 12 o'clock. But when we left that morning, he was still there; he had quit singing, and he was playing the organ. He played the organ real well. It was 6 o'clock

But that night, about 12 o'clock, that fence went down! I don't know who tore it down, but that fence went down. Everybody was dancing together! The cops just threw their hands up! Everybody was dancing till the morning, and then we all we

Keep reading >>[James Timothy "Tim" Brymn](#) ^[4] ➡ ^[4]

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References

Bryan, Sarah, Beverly Bush Patterson, Michelle Lanier, and Titus Brooks Heagins. *African American Music Trails of Eastern North Carolina*. (China, 2013), p. 5-7.

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