WELCOME
TO 2023’S SCOPES TRIAL PLAY
We look forward to having you with us this July for a dramatization of the Scopes Trial, *Destiny in Dayton*.

As you will read on the following pages, *Destiny in Dayton* is a dramatic adaptation of the transcript of *Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes*, the 1925 case that focused the world's attention on Dayton. We trust you will enjoy the play and your time in Dayton and Rhea County.

This digital brochure will give you some information about the trial, the men involved in the case, the issues that were argued (and why yesterday’s news sounds so up-to-date), and some hints to enhance your experience while in Dayton.

We certainly invite your comments and questions, and will do our best to respond as appropriate.

We’ll see you soon at the Scopes Trial Play!

Sincerely,
Rhea Heritage Preservation Foundation
Ninety-eight years ago, a Tennessee court heard a misdemeanor case that the world is still talking about. That isn’t because of the defendant; he almost got lost in the details of the case. It isn’t really because of the lawyers; two of them were among the most famous people in America at the time.

Yet the case is as current as today’s headlines. Who should control public schools? (Ask the people of Virginia if they care about that.) Who sets the rules for society; the “majority” or the “minority?” (Ask anyone whose ideas differ from social norms.) What role should religion play in public life? (Ask a baker in Colorado.)

William Jennings Bryan, Clarence Darrow and their teams argued the guilt or innocence of a school teacher charged with violating a law that prohibited teaching any theory of human origins that conflicts with the Biblical account. Creation and evolution may not be the hot-button issues today that they were in 1925, but behind that law lurked issues as diverse as control of public schools, parental rights, academic freedom of teachers (and students), majority and minority rights, and the relationship of science, religion, and society.

These questions go to the heart of what it means to be an American. Where we stand (in this case, with the defense or the prosecution) often comes down to our view of our Constitution, our history as a nation, our religious views, as was the case in 1925.

As you listen to the dialogue in Destiny in Dayton, you will hear the arguments on both sides. What makes those arguments relevant to us today is that little about the reasoning has changed; the circumstances are just a bit different.

Aside from the very serious topics, the Scopes Trial had its elements of fun. It was a chamber of commerce event before there was a chamber of commerce in town. There was “big city” Chattanooga vs. “little town” Dayton. There was a not-so-subtle plea for business and industry to locate in Dayton.

And there were monkeys - big ones, little ones, dolls and monkey watch fobs, even a “monkey fizz” soda at Robinson’s Drug Store.

Perhaps William Jennings Bryan gave the best explanation for why we remember the Scopes Trial: “Here has been fought out a little case, of little consequence as a case, but the world is interested because it raises an issue that someday will be settled right, whether it is settled on our side or the other side.”

We hope your visit to Dayton and the Scopes Trial play will help you better understand why this little case continues to draw the attention of the world.
In January 1925, Representative John Washington Butler introduced a bill to prohibit teaching, in any public school, any theory of human origin that contradicted the account of creation as recorded in the Bible. Despite some misgivings, Governor Austin Peay signed the bill into law on March 21 with a comment to the effect of “The legislature has had its say; we’ll never hear of this again.”

But when the American Civil Liberties Union in New York learned of the law, they decided to challenge its constitutionality. They advertised for a Tennessee teacher to support the challenge, and on May 4, civic leaders in Dayton learned of the request. They recruited first-year teacher John Scopes to be the defendant, even though he said he did not remember teaching the Darwinian theory.

William Jennings Bryan, three-time candidate for President, former Secretary of State, former member of Congress, America’s foremost orator and one of the leading spokesmen for traditional understanding of the Bible and Christianity, was speaking in Memphis, Tenn., about this time. He was asked by a reporter if he would be willing to prosecute the case. He responded that he would, if invited. He also was invited by the World’s Christian Fundamentals Association to represent their interests in the case.

Attorney Sue K. Hicks in Dayton issued a formal invitation to Mr. Bryan, and he accepted.

With Bryan’s entry into the case, Clarence Darrow, America’s premier defense attorney and a noted agnostic, volunteered to defend Scopes. Mr. Darrow, who campaigned for Bryan during his first presidential campaign, offered his services to the defense without charge, viewing the case as an opportunity to challenge Bryan’s religious beliefs.

On July 10, Judge John Raulston called court into session before a packed courtroom. More than 100 reporters covered the trial, the first American trial broadcast live over a national radio network.
The state maintained that the only issue at bar was whether Scopes broke the law, but the defense argued the law was unconstitutional. After several days of argument over the law and whether experts could testify, the judge ruled in favor of the state. He said appellate courts would be a more appropriate venue to determine the law’s constitutionality.

In 1925, the most prominent issue was that of human origins – creation or evolution. But much courtroom time was spent debating questions of the role parents should play in controlling their children’s education, majority and minority rights, academic freedom of teachers (and students), and the role of religion in public life.

Blocked from offering expert testimony on science and religion, the defense called Bryan to testify as an expert on the Bible. On the next-to-last day of the trial, Darrow realized his opportunity to challenge Bryan’s religious and scientific views. For about two hours, Darrow offered what has been described as “the village sceptic’s” questions: Where did Cain get his wife? How many people were on earth 3,000 years ago? Did Joshua make the sun stand still.”

As tempers flared, Judge Raulston cut short the examination and adjourned court until the next day.

On July 21, the defense asked that Scopes be found guilty, to allow an appeal of the case.

Scopes was convicted, but the Tennessee Supreme Court in January 1927 overturned the conviction because the judge rather than the jury had set the fine. The court also upheld the law’s constitutionality.

The law remained on the books until 1967 when it was repealed, although no prosecution was attempted after 1925.
MEET THE MEN BEHIND THE CHARACTERS

**WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN**
He had served as a U.S. representative from Nebraska from 1891-93, Democratic party candidate for president in 1896, 1900 and 1908; secretary of state for President Woodrow Wilson from 1912-1915, editor-in-chief of the Omaha (Nebraska), World-Herald; founder and editor of *The Commoner*, a weekly paper, for 23 years with circulation of 140,000; and was a champion of the fundamentalist movement of his day. He believed in the divine verbal inspiration of the Bible, the deity, virgin birth and miracles of Christ and the sufficiency of Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross for the sins of all who believe in Christ as their personal savior.

**CLARENCE DARROW**
From Chicago, he was America’s leading defense lawyer of his day, although considered by some to be radical and sensational. The year before (1924), he defended two college boys, Leopold and Loeb, accused of the brutal murder of a young man. He did not win an acquittal, but managed to avoid the death penalty for his clients by arguing that society, not the defendants, was responsible for the crime. He had supported Bryan during his first presidential campaign.

**TOM STEWART**
He was district attorney general for the 18th Judicial Circuit, and regularly prosecuted cases before Judge Raulston throughout the district. Gen. Stewart was elected to the United States Senate in 1942.

**J. GORDON MCKENZIE**
A Dayton attorney and county judge (similar to today’s county executive), he assisted in the prosecution. Mr. McKenzie was son of Ben McKenzie, another prosecuting attorney in the case.
MEET THE MEN BEHIND THE CHARACTERS

BEN MCKENZIE
He was a Dayton attorney, former district attorney general, father of J. Gordon McKenzie. He and Clarence Darrow became friends during the trial. Ben McKenzie was host when Darrow returned to Dayton in 1928, and he visited Darrow in Chicago.

SUE K. HICKS
Immortalized in the Johnny Cash song, “The Boy Named Sue,” Sue Hicks was a young Dayton attorney in practice with his brother, Herb. He was named for his mother, who died at his birth. Sue Hicks went on to a distinguished career as a lawyer, state representative, and judge.

DUDLEY FIELD MALONE
A divorce lawyer with an international practice based in New York, he participated in the trial on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union. Malone had been Bryan’s undersecretary of state in the Wilson administration. Following the trial, and his own divorce and remarriage, he became a Hollywood actor for about 10 years.

ARTHUR GARFIELD HAYS
He was partner with Dudley Field Malone in his international divorce practice and participated in the trial on behalf of the ACLU. He was of the Jewish faith, although an agnostic. He has been credited with masterminding much of the defense strategy.

JOHN R. NEAL
He was the official counsel for the defense and lived in Spring City, Tenn., 17 miles north of Dayton. Dr. Neal was dean of the University of Tennessee Law School for many years, and for a time taught his own law school. He was considered a brilliant but eccentric lawyer and expert in constitutional law.
JUDGE JOHN TATE RAULSTON

He was the presiding judge for the 18th Judicial Circuit, which included Rhea County. Judge Raulston lived in Winchester, Tenn., and was a devout Baptist. Pay particular attention to his relationship with Mr. Hays in the courtroom. The trial took place a little more than a year before the 1926 election, in which Judge Raulston was a candidate to continue on the bench. He was not re-elected.

JOHN T. SCOPES

The defendant in the case, John Scopes actually had a very minor role in the proceeding. He had been hired the year before as a coach, mathematics, physics, chemistry and general science teacher at Rhea Central High School. He substituted briefly for the regular biology teacher in the spring of 1925. When he returned to Dayton in 1960, he said he could not recall actually teaching the theory of evolution that year. He had been in the graduating class at Salem, Ill., High School when William Jennings Bryan gave the commencement address, a fact which Mr. Bryan and Mr. Scopes discussed before the trial in Dayton.

FRANK EARLE (F.E.) ROBINSON

Mr. Robinson, owner of Robinson’s Drug Store, was known as “The Hustling Druggist.” He served as chairman of the Rhea County school board, and his drugstore was the “depository” where students could buy their school books. In his Master’s thesis on the trial, Warren Allem said of Mr. Robinson, “He was full of ideas of his own for civil betterment, and was seldom adverse to pushing the ideas of others.” He served as a founder, incorporator and chairman of the Board of Trustees of Bryan College.
It’s probably not too far-fetched to say the play and movie *Inherit the Wind* is in part responsible for Dayton’s Scopes Trial play.

By the late 1970s, *Inherit the Wind* had become the popularly accepted version of the trial that put Dayton in the map in 1925, but most people probably didn’t realize that theatre and history, in this case, were not in sync.

One of the men who didn’t realize the conflict between the facts and fiction of the Scopes Trial was Frank Chapin, a writer-producer who came to Dayton in early 1988 with a dream to produce *Inherit* in the courtroom where the trial was held in 1925. He quickly learned of Dayton’s tempestuous relationship with play, and that it had been presented several times in the historic courtroom.

Instead, Mr. Chapin was directed to Bryan College, where he met with Dr. Richard Cornelius, an English professor and the college’s expert on the Scopes Trial and William Jennings Bryan. Dr. Cornelius persuaded his visitor that the trial transcript had much better “material” than *Inherit’s* script, and Mr. Chapin accepted the challenge of writing his own historically correct play.

*The Scopes Trial: Destiny in Dayton* debuted that July to an appreciative audience. In the cast were relatives of Trial participants, Bryan College faculty and staff members and community residents interested in history and theatre.

*Destiny in Dayton* set the standard for each script which followed: an engaging story told in a way that gives the audience a glimpse of the historical figures, the legal and cultural issues, and the humor and drama that keep the Trial alive to this day.
HISTORY OF THE SCOPES PLAY & FESTIVITIES

Two years later the play became the Scopes Trial Play and Festival, as activities were added on the courthouse lawn in an effort to remind guests that the trial in 1925 was as much a circus as a legal battle. From the first, local musicians Tom and Mary Morgan drew on their extensive contacts in the Appalachian music traditions to invite performers who could evoke the musical traditions of days gone by.

After 10 years, the festival debuted a new play, The Scopes Trial: Monkey in the Middle, by Dayton playwright Gail Johnson. Like Destiny, Monkey was largely adapted from the trial transcript, but added authentic lines to offer better context for the legal proceedings. Monkey held the stage for 10 years.

The festival was produced and underwritten by Bryan College for 20 years, until the college handed the reins to the Dayton Chamber of Commerce in 2008. Staffing issues that year forced a last-minute substitution of a one-man show about William Jennings Bryan, which included excerpts from Bryan’s trial testimony.

In 2009, with the support of MainStreet Dayton, the festival featured a new play by local writer Curtis Lipps. One Hot Summer took a humorous look at the trial and told a few local stories that helped portray the Rhea County community outside the courtroom.

By 2013, the festival steering committee decided a return to a more serious version was warranted, and engaged Tennessee playwright Deborah DeGeorge Harbin to write a new play. Front Page News brought more of the trial background to the stage, and gave patrons a closer look at William Jennings Bryan and Clarence Darrow than had been offered in previous versions.

Casting issues forced cancellation of the festival in 2014, but in 2015 Jim Crabtree, then producing director at the Cumberland County Playhouse adapted Front Page News to include musical numbers, familiar hymns and tunes written for the show.
COVID hit the nation in 2020, and the festival was cancelled. With effects of the pandemic lingering in 2021, the festival selected Cara J. Clark to write a one-act play with a small cast. *How It Started* debuted that year, and since then has been used as an educational tool for school groups both in Dayton and the region.

As the play has evolved over the years, so has the festival. From a music- and vendor-heavy event the festival has changed this year to feature a classic car cruise-in with music on Friday night, and limited activities on the courthouse lawn on Saturday of play weekend.

The musical part of the festival has changed as well. Originally music was performed on the courthouse lawn throughout the weekend, but logistics demanded a change. Since 2018, with lead sponsorship from Nokian Tyers, the Rhea Heritage Preservation Foundation offers a month-long series of free concerts in June. Local and regional musicians play anything from country to rock on Friday nights on the courthouse lawn.

RHPF President Rick Dye said support from businesses and industries in Rhea County, governments, has made these concerts – as well as the ongoing Scopes play – possible. “The foundation board, as well as city and county leaders, saw a need to offer activities downtown during the summer, and we were happy to step in,” he said. “Their support and the enthusiastic response of the community has helped us build the festival and the Nokian Tyres concerts.

“As we look toward celebrating the centennial of the Scopes Trial in 2025, we are looking for people who are willing to help continue and build these activities. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact the Rhea Heritage Preservation Foundation at 1475 Market St., Suite 200 C in Dayton, by calling 423-680-9896 or by email at admin@rheaheritage.com.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

City of Dayton
Rhea County, TN

Tennessee
Arts Commission

Photos courtesy of Bryan College Archives and Rhea Heritage Preservation Foundation
WHAT TO DO

CHEROKEE REMOVAL PARK – Eleven miles east of Dayton is the historic Cherokee Removal Park, one of the main staging areas for the Trail of Tears. In 1838 approximately 9,000 Cherokees and Creeks camped here waiting to cross the Tennessee River at Blythe Ferry. The park includes a boardwalk and wildlife overlooks at the top of the bluff (open year-round), a Visitor’s Center, the Cherokee Genealogical Library, and a granite Memorial Wall. The park is open from sunrise to sunset and admission is free. Call for information about the Visitor’s Center hours. Located at 6800 Blythe Ferry Lane, Birchwood, TN, off State Route 30. (931) 484-9571

CRYSTAL SPRINGS SKATE CENTER – This indoor rink is open year-round. Lace ’em up and come join in. Located at 2605 Old Graysville Rd., Dayton (423) 421-3614

CRYSTAL LANES BOWLING – 2565 Old Graysville Rd, Dayton (423) 775-1547

TENNESSEE VALLEY THEATRE – This community theatre produces a minimum of four plays each year including two musicals and regularly hosts a variety of talent from concert pianists to bluegrass and rock and roll bands. Located at 184 West Jackson Ave, Spring City. Phone (423) 365-PLAY (7529) TennesseeValleyTheatre.com

WATTS BAR LAKE & DAM – The 38,000-acre Watts Bar Lake offers exceptional opportunities for sport fishing and water sports, and its shorefront features rustic camping, picnic facilities and hiking trails. Watts Bar Lake features 783 miles of shoreline and provides the largest inland nesting population of ospreys in the Southeast. Ospreys nest May-July. Concentrations of great blue herons, black-crowned night herons, and great egrets may be seen near Long Island. Waterfowl and bald eagles are common in winter and be sure to look for white-tailed deer, raccoon, woodchuck, muskrat, fox, mink, skunk and coyote. Access is off State Route 68, east of Spring City. Phone (423) 775-6171 or (888) 238-3263 PIN 1318
WHAT TO DO

LAUREL SNOW STATE NATURAL AREA – The Laurel-Snow Section contains an area of gorges deeply cut into Walden Ridge of the Cumberland Plateau by Morgan, Henderson, Laurel, and Richland Creeks. The site is named after two scenic waterfalls, Laurel Falls (80 feet) and Snow Falls (35 feet). The area features scenic creeks, steep gorges, geologic features, a small stand of virgin timber, and a wide variety of plants and animals. On the northeast end of Dayton on US 27, turn northwest on Walnut Grove Road. In 0.7 mile, turn left on Back Valley Road and then in another 0.7 mile turn right at the sign for Laurel-Snow. The trail begins where the road dead-ends in a parking area in 1.0 mile.

cumberlandtrail.org/trail-segments/laurel-snow-segment/laurel-snow-sna-section

CHATTANOOGA AREA – Chattanooga and the surrounding area offer a world of opportunities for a day trip or a longer stay. Visit the Chattanooga Convention and Visitors Bureau at visitchattanooga.com for more information.
**WHERE TO EAT**

**Ayala's Grill**
3035 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton
(423) 428-9494
ayalasgrillbar.com
Authentic Mexican experience

**Ayala's Mexican Restaurant**
1423 Maley Hollow Rd, Dayton
(423) 775-2102
restaurant.com/ayalas-grill-bar-dayton-pid=244590
Authentic Mexican experience!

**Banjo's BBQ**
1410 Maley Hollow Rd, Dayton
(423) 785-7606
apspurling.wixsite.com/banjosbbq
Smoked meats, dry rub BBQ

**Carrabelle’s Low Country**
4363-4387 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton
(423) 428-9441
carrabelles.net
Emphasis on a Low Country influence from the South Carolina coast

**Monkey Town Brewing Company**
287 1st Ave, Dayton
(423) 775-1800
monkeytownbrewing.com
Micro-Brewery and restaurant

**Screen Door Cafe**
449 Delaware Ave, Dayton
(423) 777-4868
screendoorkitchen.com
Specializing in home style foods made from scratch.

**Vietnamese Bistro**
200 Able Dr, Dayton
(423) 570-0100
myvietbistro.com
Vietnamese restaurant with a variety of authentic dishes and soups.

**Mo-Mo's BBQ**
7474 US-27, Dayton
(423) 775-6868
Specializes in pulled pork, chicken, beef & ribs
**WHERE TO STAY | HOTELS/MOTELS**

**America’s Best Value Inn**  
7875 Rhea County Hwy  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 775-9190

**Econo Lodge**  
8763 Rhea County Hwy  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 664-0667

**PB Lodge**  
405 Chickamauga Drive  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (855) 707-3474

**Best Western**  
7835 Rhea County Hwy  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 775-6560,  
toll free (800) 437-9604,  
or 423/775-3244

**Grand Hotel**  
22500 Rhea County Hwy  
Spring City, TN  
Phone (423) 365-9191  
or (423) 365-9195

**Holiday Inn Express**  
2650 Rhea County Hwy  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 570-0080  
or (423) 570-0801

**Scottish Inns & Suites**  
3914 Rhea County Hwy  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 775-9718  
or (423) 775-5734

**Blue Water RV Resort & Marina**  
220 Bluewater Campground Rd  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 775-3265

**Sleep Inn and Suites**  
4450 Rhea County Hwy  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 693-0963  
or (423) 693-0964

**WHERE TO STAY | HOME RENTALS**

**Angler’s Oasis Lake Front**  
Main Home or Guest Home  
696 Bluff Road, Dayton, TN  
Phone (770) 616-3505

**City TreeHouse**  
Dayton, TN  
http://airbnb.com/h/citytreehouse

**Eden’s Acre Estate**  
2853 Double S. Road, Dayton, TN  
Phone (904) 755-2558  
or (904) 755-2558

**Lakefront 4 Bedroom Fishing Rental**  
765 Locke Road, Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 421-2693  
or (423) 827-7860

**Large 5 bedroom/3 bath home**  
336 Goins Lane, Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 421-2693  
or (423) 827-7860

**Market Street Manor**  
Market Street, Dayton, TN  
Phone (219) 898-5837

**Neverbend Farm**  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 580-3261

**Rocky Top Cabin at Sunset**  
221 Sunset Dr, Graysville, TN  
Phone (423) 554-4051  
or (423) 645-5269

**The Lake Lodge at Chickamauga**  
250 Rose Robinson Lane  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (865) 773-5329

**Trinity Cottage**  
Dayton, TN  
Phone (423) 428-9696  
or (423) 618-8441

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