

FEST ON THE FOURTH

THE PICTORIAL STORY OF THE ANNUAL ATLANTA INTERNATIONAL POP FESTIVAL



THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND
LIVE AT THE

ATLANTA INTERNATIONAL POP FESTIVAL

2nd

ANNUL

FREE
CAMP

FREE
CAMP

JULY
MIDDLE GEORGIA
RACEWAY



35.1970
TAKE I-75 TO THE
BYRON EXIT

THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND

LIVE AT THE

ATLANTA INTERNATIONAL POP FESTIVAL



In July, the weather down in middle Georgia is always hot and humid, so thick you can touch it, feel it envelop you in a sticky warm embrace. The summer of 1970 was even hotter than usual, a real scorcher, a burn-burning kind of heat. The 4th of July weekend would prove to be a burnburner as well in so many other ways.

That summer the political climate in America also was on fire and had reached a boiling point. The war in Viet Nam moved into Cambodia — and our troops moved onto college campuses across the

The rock festival was a relatively new phenomenon. The Monterey Pop Festival was staged in 1967. Woodstock was in August of 1969 followed by Altamont that December. The first two were magnificent successes. From both musical and cultural standpoints they represented the joyous and empowering gatherings of a generation. The ideals of peace, equality, free love and drugs — and the power of musicians to convey these ideals to the people — were a heady and powerful intoxicant. Not all the festivals were peace and love events, however. Altamont was

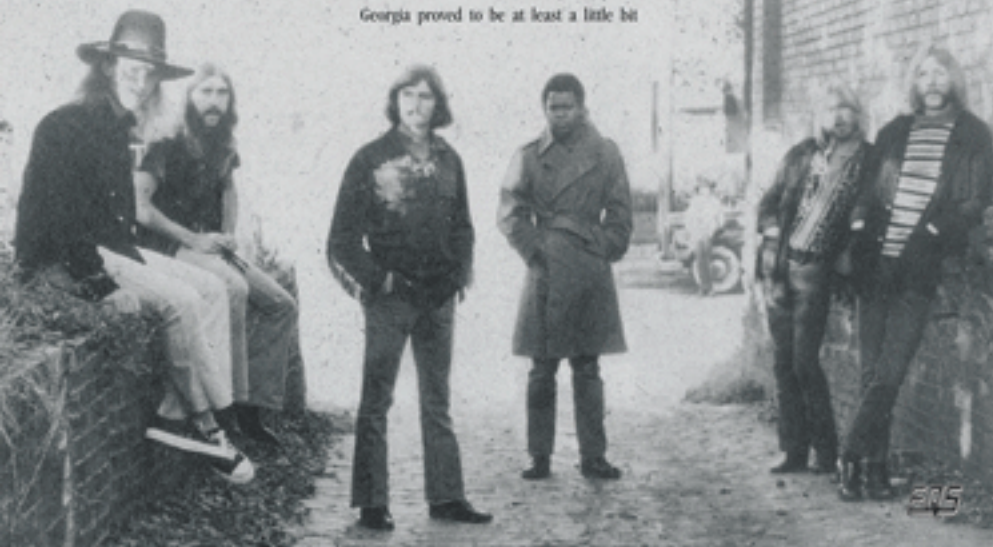
more welcoming. It wasn't all rosy though. Georgia's infamous racist governor Lester Maddox campaigned hard to block the event, but couldn't. The Georgia State Patrol, the Bibb County and the Peach County Sheriff's departments all kept close eye on the promoters and arriving participants, arresting dozens and generally making everyone nervous until the crowds arrived en masse and proved to be gentle and peaceful. Thousands of stoned, naked kids were much easier to watch over than to try to arrest or disrupt. It all turned out fairly groovy, actually.

country as the youth of America rose up in protest. A flash point had occurred at Kent State in Ohio where four students laid dead at the hands of the National Guard. The Nixon White House was waging war in the jungles of southeast Asia and in the streets of our hometowns across the nation. The Black Panthers, the SDS, the Weathermen, the Chicago Seven trials — all this turmoil thrust the young people into an exciting new world, a world where people believed that they held the power to affect cultural change. The music of the day was the loudest voice this generation had for a while — and they used this voice for radical change.

proof enough of that. Dark, dangerous, deadly and demonic, the Rolling Stones just never got the hang of the hippie thing.

The big festivals got all the attention, but dozens of summer rockfests took place or were attempted throughout 1969 and 1970, ranging from Atlantic City, Randall's Island, Texas International, Kickapoo Creek, Miami Pop, Galeru, White Water, Powder Ridge, the Celebration of Life, etc. The first Atlanta Pop Festival occurred in Hampton, Georgia in July 1969 and was a great success. The outlook for the second Atlanta Pop Festival was bright. The Atlanta Speedway wouldn't host part two, but a racetrack 75 miles further south down I-75 in the little hamlet of Byron, Georgia proved to be at least a little bit

The promoters from Atlanta had prepared well with weeks of stage and fence-building, advertising, signing major acts, fending off police and politicians. Alex Cooley and his partners expected 100,000 or so groovy hippie kids each paying \$14.00 for a three-day 4th of July celebration. The acts were impressive: Jimi Hendrix, Jethro Tull, Ten Years After, Grand Funk Railroad, B. B. King, Mountain, Captain Beefheart, Johnny Winter, Spirit and several local favorites, among them the Hampton Grease Band and some boys from Macon called The Allman Brothers Band.



POP FESTIVAL



Macon, Georgia was a sleepy deep South city of 90,000, and was the home of some amazing music. Otis Redding, James Brown and Little Richard had all called Macon home; now a whole new kind of musical thing was happening there. Otis Redding's former manager, a powerful R&B booking agent named Phil Walden, signed session guitar player Duane Allman and formed a record label to release his new band's music. The Allman Brothers Band moved to Macon in 1969 from Jacksonville, FL for the same reason bank robbers rob banks — because that's where the money is.

Macon was quiet. Otis was dead. Little Richard and James Brown had moved on, and the Brothers were freaky hippies in a town more curious and fearful of them than they had been of the black soul giants that had lived among them before.

The Allman Brothers Band released their first album in November 1969 and was in the process of recording their second LP in the summer of 1970. Duane continued to do sessions to help supplement the band's income. Atlantic Records had him playing with an amazing cross

compound that served as party and musician central — and the only air conditioned spot in a backstage area that was basically little more than Port-O-Johns and large army tents.

The band's new tour manager, Willie Perkins, had been on the job about 30 days at that time (Triggs Lyndon, the original tour manager, was awaiting trial in Buffalo, NY, accused of killing a club owner who had refused to pay the band for the night's performance). Willie was just developing his tour managing skills and learning how to control a rock band, typically a group of unruly, single-minded musicians who are more prone to getting high and playing than being on time and dependable.

So it was that on the opening day of the Atlanta Pop Festival, as the starting time drew closer and closer and with 200,000 music fans awaiting the opening band, Duane Allman was nowhere to be found. In the days before cell phones and pagers, Duane was on his way back from a Miami recording session, driving alone

in his old Ford Galaxie. The rest of the band was hanging in the backstage Winnebago, chilling. The single biggest problem was people — too many of them. With between 100,000 and 200,000 freaks on site and crowds that grew to 500,000 before the weekend was over, traffic on the roads to the festival was gridlocked. The festival site was only 2 miles off I-75 so the traffic backed up on the interstate, sometimes as far as 70 miles. The prospect of Duane getting caught in this mess was a big problem — but not too big for Skydog. He just parked his old Ford at a truck stop and hitched a ride on the back of a motorcycle. Driving on highway shoulders and through the pecan groves, Duane arrived with minutes to spare and saved Willie's sanity for the weekend. The band took the stage and the second Atlanta Pop Festival kicked off with "Statesboro Blues." The Allman Brothers Band tore it up.

section of talent from their roster. In fact, during the last week of June 1970 Duane was down in Miami doing a session.

The promoters' idea was to have The Allman Brothers Band, the local heroes (it was 14 miles from the band's Big House in Macon to the stage in Byron), open and close the festival: the only band to play twice. In those days the band toured in a large Winnebago mobile home since this was long before the day of the tour bus. Early the week before the festival they parked their Winnebago backstage. Phil Walden rented one himself and parked it next door. That along with a couple more vehicles and the boys created a great little

About one hour into the band's set, the stage emcee took the microphone to announce that the gates were being thrown open and that it would be a free festival. Word spread and the crowd swelled in the heat of that July in Georgia to estimates of 500,000 to 600,000, with little trouble but for countless delays. The first arrived during The Allman Brothers Band set. While playing, a typical tropical thunderstorm popped up, drenching the crowd with welcomed rain; but since there was no roof on the stage the band had to stop for thirty minutes. The Brothers came back, picked up where they left off in "Mountain Jam" and just kept on grooving.





The first set by the ABB started about 3:00 PM on July 3rd and lasted a couple hours, including the rain delay. Joining the band on harmonica was Thom "Ace" Doucette, long-time friend and frequent guest player, almost a part-time band member really. Thom didn't want to join the band because that would be too much like having a job, and if you were a great harp player with a good line of b.s., who needed a job anyway?

The song list for the first set included several songs the band had just recorded for their second album *Capricorn*, that would be released later that year. "In Memory Of Elizabeth Reed" was a majestic instrumental, the first written by Dickey Betts: a song that over time would become one of the ABB's greatest musical pieces. "Hoochie Goochie Man" was a Muddy Waters song penned by Willie Dixon that when sung by Berry Oakley had more venom than a 12-foot cottonmouth. Oakley, always the gentle father figure, family man of the ABB, would just terrorize the crowd, spittin' the words out with all the power Howlin' Wolf ever had. A fairly dangerous man, that Oakley was.

The second set was way late on the last night of the festival, 3:50 A.M. on July 6th to be exact. The crowd had experienced some amazing things during this hot weekend in the South. Jimi

Hendrix playing the "Star Spangled Banner" while fireworks exploded overhead at midnight on the 4th of July. As I sat on my huge 48-star American flag laid out on the dusty red Georgia clay, trippin' my brains out on good, pure LSD, I wondered aloud what country could be better than the good old USA. Hendrix, acid, fireworks and the "Star Spangled Banner" on the 4th of July - what a great country America is!!!

So, to cap it all off, the Brothers came on and burned the place down until dawn. Johnny Winter sat in with them on "Mountain Jam." Ace Doucette played harp again throughout the set, and the tape machines kept rolling. This was a hometown band "hittin' the note," hittin' their stride on their way to the Fillmore East, to Watkins Glen, to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and to more than thirty years of playing some of the world's greatest rock and roll music. Thank the Lord those tape machines were loaded and rolling; that and the fact that I made it home in one piece. The Brothers all made it home fine... the front porch was only 14 miles away.

-Kirk West
9/11/2002

Kirk West is currently The Allman Brothers Band tour magician and has been since 1989. In 1970 he was a 19-year-old hippie boy from Chicago who lived in a van going from rock fest to rock fest selling his wares to earn money to move on to the next rock fest. He later figured out an easier way. The Allman Brothers have always been his favorite band.



D. P. B.

J. J. Ashaway, R. Oakley, R. Zenger

*

Section left hand, rows 1-8: 1 (flow)

Bert Rodman, Todd Slater, Ron Current,
John Ogden, Bob Irwin, Stacey Boyle, Adam Block, Jeff Jones,
Chuck Fleckenstein, Michael Caplan, Paul Matheny,
James Douglas, G.I.

~~~~~

7. Mountain Jam 28:30  
D. Smith, D. Allen, C. Allen

"Scotchboro Blues" and "Whipping Post" originally released in edited, alternate mixes on *The First Great Festivals Of The Seventies* (G.SX38805 released August 1971)

★

## SO AVAILABLE BY GROSS AMOUNT

THE BEST OF GREGG ALLMAN

What are you going to listen to next?  
For a complete listing of titles available from  
Legacy Recordings, please visit us at:  
[www.legacyrecordings.com](http://www.legacyrecordings.com)

