

# GREAT SOUTHERN CRACKER ROADSHOW

Cornbread-Fed, Whipcracking, Downhome Traveling Cracker Revival

Featuring Cracker Authors

Janis Owens & Dana Ste.Claire

Pure Bluegrass Music, Cracker Kitchen Cooking, General Store Yarns  
& Other Particulars of the Cracker Kingdom



## About The Roadshow

From the front porch of rural America comes a full-blooded celebration of the stories, songs, and essential spirit of the Cracker culture. The ways of the Cracker are brought live to the stage in an authentic traveling roadshow that features two homegrown Crackers, pure picking bluegrass music, traditional foods, homespun folklore, and a mess of surprises. It is a fun, entertaining Cracker sampler, a quilting of nearly all things Cracker, from cowhunter whip-cracking demonstrations to buck dancing dance-offs. Noted Southern author Janis Owens delights the audience with her kith and kin and their epic struggle with faith, food and their place in modern life.

From her cornbread kitchen, she navigates us through the down-home and sometimes unusual world of Cracker cuisine, from road kill to Lane Cake. Cracker writer and expert Dana Ste.Claire entertains with vignettes on what makes a Cracker a Cracker and the centuries-old history of this rogue and tenacious breed of Southern pioneer. The foot-tapping, audience-friendly roadshow is a delightful journey through all things Cracker and then some. It's coming to your town soon, so grease your favorite frying pan and keep an eye on the mailman.

For ticket and show information: [www.crackerroadshow.com](http://www.crackerroadshow.com).

## Cracker Authors



**Janis Owens** is the award-winning author of *My Brother Michael*, *Myra Sims*, and most recently *The Schooling of Claybird Catts* (Harper Collins). Her latest offering is a memoir/cookbook with Scribner, *Cracker Kitchen: In Celebration of Food, Family, and a Great American Tradition*. Janis is considered one of the finest contemporary Southern writers of the day, and is known for her lively, story-filled presentations. She was born a few miles south of the Alabama-Georgia border in the small town of Marianna, Florida in 1960. Janis was the last child and only daughter of a Pentecostal preacher-turned-insurance salesman and his story-telling, biscuit-baking wife. Her Cracker upbringing is the basis for her books and a great part of her unique personality.

"Owens' fine writing and the ring of her natural voice will carry readers along like a tale told on a porch on a sultry Southern night." – Publishers Weekly



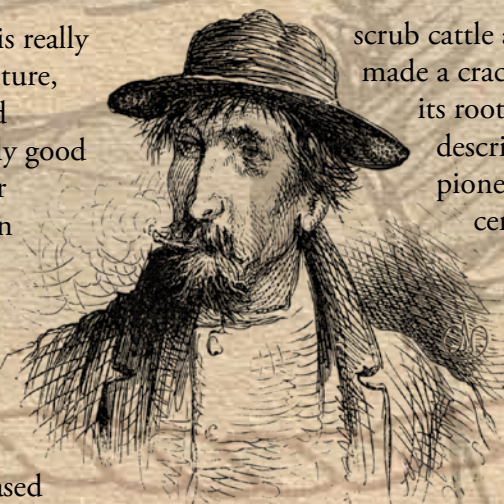
**Dana Ste.Claire** was born in central Florida, and raised every summer of his childhood deep in the Ocala National Forest near Scrambletown. His early immersion in the Cracker way of life led to his interest in Crackers as a culture. He was one of the first historians to view Crackers this way. Ste.Claire is a former feature columnist with the Orlando Sentinel, a PBS television host (*Florida Crackerbarrel*), and has authored three books, including the award-winning *Cracker: The Cracker Culture in Florida History* and

*Borders of Paradise* (University Press of Florida). He has been featured on *The History Channel* and in the *Wall Street Journal*, among other media.

"Ste.Claire has given this often maligned group their just dues. Crackers aren't only a part of Southern history... to a great extent, they are Southern history" – Rick Tonyan, Author, *Guns of the Palmetto Plains* (Pineapple Press)

## The Cracker

So often belittled and beleaguered, Cracker culture is really nothing more than an ancient American fusion culture, rooted in colonial America and characterized by rugged individualism, love of family, lack of pretense, and really good cornbread. Like the culture itself, the very word cracker has a long and colorful history, and has been in usage in America since the first big wooden ships brought our forefathers to the mosquito-swarmed shores of the South. Some trace its origins to Elizabethan England, where it meant braggart or bigshot. Others point to colonial slang for poor people: "corn cracker" - so poor they only ate cheap corn. In the deepest South, the term can be traced to pioneer cow hunters who chased



scrub cattle across the palmetto plains and swamps with whips that made a cracking sound that could be heard for miles. Whatever its roots, by the turn of this century, Cracker had come to describe an underclass of poor or working-class Americans of pioneer stock, who preferred to live a life of modest simplicity, centered around hearth and home and family, where money was scarce, but an intractable pride of place reigned supreme, and the ability to tell a funny story covered a multitude of sins. Today's Cracker hasn't strayed far from this central persona, and has evolved into a proud breed of American, still fiercely independent and armed with a strong will, homespun wit, and a matchless ability to know when it's going to rain.