

OH, SWEET MAMA

Growing up in Dallas in the 1950s, I was aware there was a place east of downtown called Deep Ellum, but I knew very little about it. I did know that it was inhabited by folks with considerably darker complexions than ours, but I did not know that much of the music that represents mainstream 20th century American blues was being invented and performed there. Most importantly, I knew that Mom and Dad didn't think it was any place us kids should be going. In the 1920s and '30s, Leadbelly, Robert Johnson, Blind Lemon Jefferson and Bessie Smith all performed there. The 1950s still saw the likes of Lightnin' Hopkins, Blind Willie Johnson and T-Bone Walker performing there, among many others. Today, Deep Ellum's status has been elevated to that of a historical district, but I think this song captures well the flavor of the place in its heyday. You can hear Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead perform this tune at: <https://youtu.be/PsbHkR4QHeE?si=ZwCJtkM9awDGiYO5>

DEEP ELLUM BLUES

Traditional

E

When you go down to Deep Ellum to have a little fun

E7

Have your fifteen dollars ready when that big policeman come

Chorus:

A

E

Oh, sweet mama, daddy's got them Deep Ellum blues

B7

E

Oh, sweet mama, daddy's got them Deep Ellum blues

When you go down to Deep Ellum put your money in your shoes

The women in Deep Ellum, they give you the Deep Elem blues

Chorus

Once I had a girlfriend, she meant the world to me

She went down to Deep Ellum, now, she ain't what she used to be

Chorus

Once I knew a preacher, preached the bible through and through

He went down to Deep Ellum, now, his preaching days are through

Chorus

When you go down to Deep Ellum put your money in your pants

Women in Deep Ellum, they don't give a man a chance

Chorus