

## **Guitar Pull**

**A 'guitar pull' is a southern tradition where a small group of musicians sit around and take turns playing songs on a guitar. Over the years, guitar pulls have grown to include a variety of instruments: guitars, mandolins, harmonicas, ukuleles, all types of percussive instruments (including authentic Native American drums), tin whistles, juice harps, and even kazoos.**

**The "guitar pull" is a tradition unique to country music, and it probably originated in a living room or out on a back porch. Typically, several would-be singer-songwriters would gather at a friend's house and take turns singing songs they wrote or playing old favorites.**

**The late Roger Miller imagined that the term "guitar pull" came from the fact that there was usually only one guitar to be shared, and the singers would have to "pull" the guitar away from one another to take their turn.**

**The whole thing is pretty relaxed and loose. Usually, there is a lot of levity. The evening has the feel of sitting around the campfire. Usually, a song is accompanied by a story, dedication, or both. Some are serious, some are funny, and some are originals.**

**Many Nashville legends such as Hank Cochran, Willie Nelson, and Roger Miller to name a few have been born from late night/early morning "guitar pulls!" Groups of musicians or songwriters frequently gather for a "guitar pull," so they can try out or test new songs. Trisha Yearwood and Garth Brooks did this a lot in their early years in Nashville. From Tennessee, to Kentucky, Texas to Arkansas, Alabama to Louisiana, guitar pulls are a regular occurrence all over the south! Many musicians with their origins in the south have moved to the east and west coasts then started a living room or back yard tradition of having a monthly or yearly guitar pull at their homes.**

**Down in Waco Texas, every guitar pull I ever attended began with a big covered-dish dinner. Then we would pull up our chairs, pull out our guitars, sit in a circle, and play songs all night. Usually, we lasted into the wee hours of the morning. We were having too much fun to notice the time or the exhaustion that our bodies felt. Thus, I always thought "guitar pull" meant we would "pull" our "guitars" out of their cases and have a ball singing and playing all night long. But after doing some research, if I had to give it a definition now, I'd say a guitar pull is an old Nashville tradition from early in the 20th century when no one had money. People would sit in a room or on a back porch and pass a guitar around, with everyone taking their turn to play or sing. As a footnote, for those of you that don't know, a covered-dish dinner is like a potluck dinner, but with good down home southern cooking!**