

## JAMES TALLEY • ARTIST PROFILE

Legendary Oklahoma born singer/songwriter, James Talley, is an artist whose vision of the American experience, as author David McGee has said is “startlingly original.” As a youth, James’ family moved from Oklahoma to the state of Washington, where his father worked as a chemical operator in the now infamous Hanford plutonium factory. After five years in Richland, Washington, and realizing the hazards his father’s employment presented, the family relocated to Albuquerque, New Mexico. James grew up in the rich tri-cultured environment of the Southwest, and graduated from the University of New Mexico with a degree in fine arts. After college, James soon began to write songs that drew upon the culture of the Southwest he had experienced. These early songs eventually became *The Road to Torreón*, a saga of life and death in the Chicano villages of northern New Mexico. Released in a boxed edition by Bear Family Records in 1992, it is a powerful collaboration of photography and music, with a photographic essay contributed by James’ lifelong friend, photographer Cavalliere Ketchum.

In 1968 James moved from New Mexico to Nashville to try and get his songs released. Over the years Johnny Cash, Johnny Paycheck, Gene Clark, Alan Jackson, Hazel Dickens, and most recently Moby, and others, have appreciated the honesty revealed in his songs and have recorded them. Joining country music and the blues, B.B. King, played his first Nashville session with James in 1976, as his lead guitar player.

James’ distinguished recording career now spans more than a quarter-century. The late John Hammond, Sr. at Columbia Records in New York was his first mentor, and championed his writing in the early 1970s, as he had the careers of Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen and Bruce Springsteen. When Hammond could not get James’s more country-flavored sound signed at Columbia in New York, he sent him to Jerry Wexler, who was starting a new Nashville operation with his Atlantic label at the time. Wexler signed James to his first recording contract at Atlantic Records at the same time he signed Willie Nelson. Atlantic’s Nashville operation, however, did not do well at the time and Atlantic closed its Nashville office. James then moved to Capitol Records where he released four now legendary albums during the mid-1970s: *Got No Bread, No Milk, No Money, But We Sure Got a Lot of Love* (1975); *Tryin’ Like The Devil* (1976); *Blackjack Choir* (1977) and *Ain’t It Somthin’* (1977). *ROLLING STONE*, and other music publications, have declared these albums American classics for their time. During the 1980s and 1990s, James recorded four albums, which were released in Europe by the German Bear Family Records, *American Originals* (1985); and *Love Songs and The Blues* (1989); *The Road To Torreón* (1992) and *James Talley: Live* (1994). In 1999 James started his own artist’s label, Cimarron Records, and released *Woody Guthrie and Songs of My Oklahoma Home* (2000); *Nashville City Blues*, (2000), and was named **Amazon.com’s Folk Artist of the Year 2000**. In 2002 *Touchstones* was released – a fresh retrospective of the songs from his early career. It was recorded in Texas with the help of James’ old friends, Joe Ely and Ponty Bone. In 2004 *Journey* was release, a live, in-concert recording made on his recent tour of Italy. It displays some of his classics as well as five powerful new compositions. In February 2006, James’ classic first album, *Got No Bread, No Milk, No Money, But We Sure Got a Lot of Love* was reissued in a special 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition.

James’s music continues to inspire listeners worldwide. It is available at your favorite music stores, or by visiting [www.cimarronrecords.com](http://www.cimarronrecords.com) or [www.jamestalley.com](http://www.jamestalley.com), where you will find MP3 sound-samples, biography, recording history, and a voluminous press file.