

Traditional fiddler Willie David Jones of Old Town, was born in Dixie County in 1923, just a few miles from where he lives today. He comes from a long line of fiddlers that includes his brothers, father, aunt, and great-uncle. Southern old-time fiddling is a blend of Anglo-Celtic dance music traditions and early popular music styles such as ragtime, county, and blues. It is distinguished by hard-driving rhythm, sliding notes, and ringing "drone" strings. Several of the tunes Jones plays, such as "Charleston No. 1," for instance, have been handed down in his family through several generations.

Willie David Jones was born near Old Town (Dixie County) in 1923, just a few miles from his present home. Jones began playing the fiddle when he was twelve. He learned from his brother and by listening to the tunes he heard at the local dances. His great-grandfather, great-uncle, great-aunt, and father also played the fiddle. Some of his earliest recollections are of his father's playing. "My daddy passed away when I was 6," he told a St. Petersburg Times reporter, "but I remember him playin' Charleston No. 1. Whenever I hear that I think of him."

A carpenter and mechanic, Jones also served as a deacon at Faith Baptist Church, which he attended with his wife and three children. He devoted much of his life to the performance and preservation of Florida's music. After the State Fiddle Contest began in 1981, he often placed among the top four in his division. In 1982, 1986, and 1989, he took first place awards. In less competitive settings, Jones helped young musicians at workshops and inspired the aged during performances in nursing homes. In 1991, the Florida State Fiddlers' Association, by unanimous vote of its board of directors, chose Jones as the first recipient of the Florida Fiddler Award "in recognition of his lifetime contribution to traditional fiddling in Florida and his embodiment of the true spirit of old-time music."

Jones described his style as a "smooth kind of fiddlin'," between the long pull or short pull of most other fiddlers. He developed this style as he grew up playing with other popular Dixie County fiddlers. Until his death in 2006, he continued to play at the monthly meetings of old-time fiddlers in his area.